As you probably know, I recently met with Dr. Joshua Freedman, the CEO of Six Seconds, on Talk Time. He's one of the world's leading specialists on developing and applying emotional intelligence to improve performance in the workplace and in relationships.

During our chat Dr. Freedman talked about his fascinating work, including the differences between male and female brain function, his famous Six Seconds EQ Model, how we can learn about the state of the heart, and how stress and emotional intelligence make a huge impact on our lives.

Here is a brief review of what I think were the key elements of Talk Time Featuring Dr. Joshua Freedman.

EMOTIONS ARE PART OF THE STORY – LET'S NOT GET DRAMATIC ABOUT IT

Our thoughts and our feelings are physiologically and dynamically linked. We can think of emotion as the meta-filter through which we see and interpret the world. And we should normalize feelings. Emotions are part of the story.

To Normalize Feelings, take your emotions to the VET: Validate, Explore, Transform.

This is a three step process in awareness, pausing to be more intentional, and looking ahead to be more purposeful. Our job is be a self-scientist, a person who is curious about our inner world and the inner world of others, a person who doesn't judge emotional states and uses them as data for self-discovery.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ) STUDY

Dr. Freedman helps people see emotions as data points and recently published the State of the Heart Report, which started with 75,000 people. Using a random sampling methodology, they created a balanced sample group between males and females in three regions of the world, who were under 40 and over 40, and balanced by career level.

The two major findings from the report follow:

1. Higher Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is correlated with higher performance. In the study, 50-60% of the variation in performance could be predicted by emotional intelligence.
2. Over the last three years, EQ has been declining. This means demand is rising faster than the supply. This result may have something to do with our technological connections. Some studies show the more we're technologically connected, the less we're emotionally connected.

BLEND IQ & EQ TO GET HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY, PROFITABILITY, AND EFFICIENY

Emotions are simply electrochemical transmitters; they're not good or bad. In the brain, emotion and rational thinking are completely mixed together. And the degree to which the brain works in sync is how effective we are at processing information.

This means emotion (and connection) needs to be part of the equation, not only at home and in our personal relationships, but in the workplace. Dr. Freedman teaches businesses to quantify emotion, put it on the dashboard, and see how to increase value by developing capability. One great case study at Komatsu showed that training managers, through modeling, led to energetic, optimistic teams.

Sometimes we feel like emotions aren't our friends or that they limit us, but we can actually really use emotions intentionally (instead of just reacting), and they can be a resource that will help us become more whole and complete.

WE CAN CREATE FEELINGS

Artificial feelings, are on a neurochemical level, the same thing as real feelings. For example, if we started laughing right now, not only would it be fun, we'd produce neural hormones that would affect our whole physiology and change how we evaluate and respond to situations; it would change what we pay attention to and how open we are to new ideas.

From a business and interpersonal perspective, knowing you can accept and create feeling states dramatically affects productivity, creativity, and happiness in the workplace, in the classroom, and at home. Regulation of self and others often trickles dynamically from leadership.

Dr. Freedman emphasized repeatedly that emotions are just feelings. They're neutral, not good or bad. If we can unassign good/bad meaning to having emotions we become more human and open to paying attention to ours and others feelings. While some emotions are harder or more painful than others (like social rejection), they're there to tell us something. Our willingness to have some chaos, dissent, and challenge, will be a driving factor on our ability to innovate and solve problems, to get deep, to think differently, and explore ideas.

THE AVERAGE MALE AND FEMALE BRAINS HAVE OPPOSITE EQ STRENGTHS

One of the more surprising results from State of the Heart EQ Report showed males and females with opposite emotional strengths and weaknesses.

Some of the gaps:

1. Applying Consequential Thinking. This is about pausing to evaluate and responding instead of reacting. For the average male, this is the lowest score. Mr. Average is more impulsive and reactive and less likely to pause and think through the implications of his choices, whereas this is Ms. Average's biggest strength. She can track ahead to what will happen. Check out Dr. Freedman's fascinating FedEx Case Study.
2. Navigating Emotions. This is about harnessing and using emotions as a source to move forward. Ms. Average is more likely to get stuck within an emotional state and not have the emotional agility to move forward. She might hangout in a particular emotion like tension or sadness and get stuck there. That's the lowest score for Ms. Average, and it's the highest score for Mr. Average.

The report also found major differences in intrinsic motivation, exercising optimism, and creating empathetic spaces.

FROM AN ATTACHMENT PERSPECTIVE

From an Attachment perspective, we might deal with a standard heterosexual couple where a female partner needs help shifting out of an emotion by having contact from somebody who recognizes the state. We might then observe the partner seeing that tension and going the other direction. Both people can get stuck in their way of responding to that emotion.

Dr. Freedman's research confirms again that actively practicing validating and exploring the emotion makes it much easier to transform. And the best time to practice is not in the therapy office or on the yoga cushion. The best time to practice is when we feel ourselves reacting.

We want partners, and colleagues and friends, to send the message that feelings are okay; they're safe; they're normal. When we bring our accepting presence and non-judgemental curiosity to the table, that's huge for connection. It creates opportunities all over the map.

Dr. Freedman offers a lot of free educational materials at Six Seconds, and you should definitely check out Vitality, a week of free education and webinars March 16-20 on Five Vital Themes.

Thank you for being a part of Talk Time.