

## **21 Traits of Emotionally Evolved People**

**People often ask me what they must do to rise above anxiety or depression or how to not allow life to let them down so much. People seek happiness but don't always notice how their beliefs and their overall perspective on life and the meaning of life can block the very happiness they seek.**

**Below are just 21 examples of how the most emotionally healthy people tend to think. It is not a complete list but it is one that will get you started in the right direction. Find the ones you think you can begin embracing. Don't get stuck on the ones that seem too difficult to achieve. Making headway in a few areas can help you to make headway in the more challenging areas.**

**Dr. Paul Coleman**

#1: People who are the most emotionally healthy realize that the most important limitations to their happiness are self-imposed--not imposed from without. They don't allow health challenges, money problems, loss, or societal limitations to become reasons they cannot improve their situation or discover a deeper meaning to their life. They lean in the direction of what is good, positive, helpful, beautiful, or inspiring and reshape their inner-world so as to improve how they cope with their outer-world.

#2: They instinctively realize that their thoughts and beliefs become their mission statement. They know that how they think and what they think will dictate how they view themselves, others, and the world--and what actions they will take. They know that if they think angry thoughts they will find things to be angry about. They know that if they think worrisome and fearful thoughts they will focus on things that cultivate fear. They know that if they view themselves as a force for good they will overcome obstacles to become that force for good. When faced with a challenge, when you see a wrong that needs to be made right, how do you think?

What beliefs enter your mind? Lower level thoughts such as fear, anger, worry, guilt, cynicism, or hate? Or do you think higher-level thoughts of hope, faith, gratitude, perseverance, peace, or compassion? What do you want your mission statement to be?

#3: They endeavor to be honest with themselves about their strengths and weaknesses. They don't make excuses when they are wrong but neither do they beat themselves up about it. Their goal is self-improvement and mistakes are part of that process. Folks who need to improve their emotional well-being tend to either minimize or deny their faults or be overly self-critical. Neither leads easily to personal growth.

#4: They embrace uncertainty. They do not spend much time answering all the "What if?" questions their fears might raise but instead peacefully co-exist with mystery and uncertainty. They realize that some of the most life-altering events in one's life are not always predictable or controllable but just simply "show up." SO they allow for a go-with-the-flow mentality to operate side by side with a reasonable problem-solving mentality.

#5: They do not easily offend others or feel offended. They have enough self-respect not to go out of their way to offend others or to be offended. They view situations as opportunities to learn more about themselves or others and then act accordingly. When anyone gets easily offended they require others to change in order to feel better. Emotionally healthy people do not demand that others change in order for themselves to feel better. They feel better already. And if the other people are too toxic they simply ignore them as best as possible.

#6: They teach by example not by intimidation or force. They see no need to compel others to see things their way. They understand that everyone has their own journey of growth and learning and it is counter-productive to engage in a tug-of-war to get others to change their ways. But healthy people lead lives of significance and meaning and thus tend to inspire those who observe them.

#7: They grow out of the worry about what others think of them. They don't seek approval or fear rejection. They simply be who they are and let the chips fall where they may. They care much more about their character (who they really are) than their reputation (who others think they are).

#8: They understand through their personal evolution that seeking a life of meaning and purpose is ultimately more fulfilling than seeking happiness.

#9: They are good losers. And I don't mean they are simply "good sports." Even when they lose in a big way, when there is great pain, they are able to accept that life comes with joy and misery, pain and pleasure--and in fact that is what makes life the adventure it is. They still hurt if a loss is great but are able to appreciate all that life has to offer, remain grateful for what has been provided them, and that the price of great love may eventually be some sort of loss.

#10: They tend to define how they will act; what they will accept or not accept; put up with or not put up with; do or not do. They do not focus exclusively on defining how others should act. In other words, they do not make themselves dependent upon others acting a certain way for them to feel better.

#11: They are not easily rattled. They maintain composure. It is not so much a reluctance to engage or an unwillingness to speak up as it is a solid self-acceptance that allows them to feel they don't have to reflexively defend their beliefs or get caught up in other people's drama. They don't feel an obligation to explain themselves to people who really have no desire to listen or learn. They don't cajole or threaten or malign people who disagree with them. They are not so attached to their own beliefs that they get riled up when someone disagrees with them.

#12: They are in touch with their "reasons for being" and cannot let those reasons be set aside--at least not for long. They "must" do what they know they are capable of doing. They find ways to make it happen. It is a continual desire to expand and grow and "become" what they feel they must become.

#13: They appreciate--actually require--solitude for quiet reflection. They are not busy for the sake of being busy. The need to "do" is balanced by a need to simply "be." A quiet mind can lead to "that still, small voice" whereby guidance and insights are more readily heard.

#14: When unsure of where to go, how to get there, and what to do when they get wherever "there" is, emotionally healthy people just start "going" knowing that it will lead to a next step, and a step after that, until the destination becomes clearer. People who are more insecure or who cannot handle uncertainty very well will instead wait until they believe they know where they should go and where it will lead before they take any steps. That usually leads to procrastination and missed opportunities. It is difficult to know the true purpose of any journey. Healthy people understand that mystery lies behind intent and are willing to be open to surprises and learn from them.

#15: They do not rush to get answers to things that trouble them. The rush for answers is fed by fear or insecurity or a "need to know." Sitting with the questions allows people to instead better understand what the deeper fears and needs are which can lead to coming up with better answers. Emotionally healthy people thus tolerate discomfort well because they view discomfort not as a problem but a clue to something deeper they need to bring to the surface. They are patient with what is troubling them and keenly aware that fast "solutions" often miss the mark and make the problems worse.

#16: They are keen observers of themselves. They notice that when they get too defensive or over-react there is something more going on inside them. They recognize there is some unsettled need or issue getting provoked. Then they step away from whatever topic is at hand and look inward. "Why am I reacting this way? What truth about myself is trying to be exposed?"

#17: They become more and more aware (and at peace with) the idea that life is a balancing of opposites. For example, to have more control one must at times give up trying to control; having is accompanied by no longer having; losing, or being embarrassed, or failing can be a road to gaining wisdom and self-acceptance; faith is accompanied by doubts; love is accompanied by hurt; the more you know the more you realize you don't know; running away to reduce a fear increases the power of the fear; it is just a matter of time before holding on becomes letting go; less is more; and saying goodbye to one thing is saying hello to another. Emotionally healthy people do not fight or resist these paradoxes but embrace them. A full life, a meaningful life, requires the acceptance of ALL life has to offer.

#18: They are open to ideas and concepts beyond what is obvious. They have a curiosity about the unknown. Many such people have a strong curiosity about that which is spiritual or mystical. They simply know that they do not know; that there is something "else" unseen or as yet undetected or not fully understood that operates behind the scenes of their lives. As such, they don't require certainty in their lives, they don't need closure. The loose ends of one's life--unresolved relationship issues, dreams no longer achievable, and life's unpredictable twists and turns--can remain unsolved. Emotionally healthy people can be content with that. There is always a bigger possibility they are open to--that maybe events have

unfolded in a manner that still brings meaning to one's life even if they have not unfolded the way one would prefer.

#19: They rarely feel owed. They don't expect that life should be more fair to them than it is for anyone else. They are grateful for what they have and understand that everything they have is best thought of as a gift--and a temporary one at that. Still, they do their best to create fairness whenever possible. They don't expect others to do for them what they are capable of doing for themselves. Not feeling owed and appreciating what they have, they tend to not complain or whine. The world doesn't revolve around them. They will certainly stick up for themselves when needed but understand that sometimes things just won't go their way. Not feeling slighted, offended, or owed, they don't get bogged down in the past and miss the present.

#20: They often react to challenging situations the way most folks do--with defensiveness, or fear, frustration, or an attempt to preserve their usual ways of thinking. But shortly thereafter--sometimes in a matter of seconds--they step back from their ego and look upon the situation with new eyes. They realize when they are too attached to a group-mind that they have blindly gone along with "group-think" and step away from that mindset so they can think for themselves. They realize they have no need to defend their way of thinking to those who are not interested in listening. They are open to other perspectives--at least long enough to try to understand as best they can--although they may choose not to agree with those perspectives. Over time, they can more easily just "be" even in situations that others find frustrating or offensive. They will definitely protect themselves if they are in physical harm. But they do not need to protect a point of view they might later outgrow anyway. They simply stand by it until such time as they no longer see things that way.

#21: They can laugh at themselves. They are comfortable enough in their own skin that they can find humor in their own foibles. They can take a joke. If they trip over something, spill coffee on themselves in a group setting, have a price tag showing on the shirt they're wearing--they can laugh along with everyone else. Life's petty annoyances are not something to get all hot and bothered about. At ease with themselves they are also able to make others feel comfortable around them. (It is difficult to feel at ease with someone who is always so fastidious, serious, or prim and proper.) They realize that life is short and that having an "Oh well" attitude when things don't go as planned is a much more satisfying way to be.