

# How High Is Your Relationship Intelligence – Your RQ?

*By Lorraine Banfield*

When Archie Bunker told his wife Edith on the '70's TV sitcom *All in the Family* to "Stifle yourself!" he was showing his RQ. When President Elect Barack Obama turned to his wife Michelle on the Barbara Walters show recently and asked her opinion on something, he too was showing his RQ. RQ stands for relationship quotient or relationship intelligence. Archie Bunker's was low and Barack Obama's is quite high. Unlike IQ however, which can be high or low or somewhere in between and still not be the determining factor in our happiness or real success in life, having a high RQ affects happiness in a direct and measurable way. People with high RQ live happier, more successful lives, because the truth is, as we all know, life really is all about relationships.

From the first relationship we have with our mothers, to the one we have with our fathers, our siblings and the world at large as we move beyond home and hearth, life is always about relationships. Throughout our lives we develop and maintain relationships of all kinds. How those relationships turn out is dependent on the degree of relationship intelligence we have. If you have high relationship intelligence then you'll do well – you will have lifelong friends, do well in work and more than likely marry and stay married. But if you don't, then you will find yourself struggling with this most important aspect throughout your life.

So what is relationship intelligence or RQ and how do we get it? Is it learned or is it something we are born with – is it in our DNA or is it something we can acquire like learning math or how to play tennis? Is it nature or nurture that makes the difference in our success with personal relationships?

Of course, nature does play a role – some people seem to be born with a high level of RQ. They come out of the womb with a whole lot of relationship intelligence. They get along with their family members, make friends early and easily and when the time comes they choose a marriage partner that suits them and have careers that are successful. They are the pillars of their community and when they die they are sorely missed. People like Paul Newman and his wife Joanne Woodward come to mind, as well as Oprah Winfrey and Nelson Mandela.

But nature is only half the answer for I believe strongly that nurture also plays a key role. As a Relationship Coach and Psychotherapist, I have found that improving your relationship intelligence is a lot like improving your tennis game. Serena Williams may have natural ability but she also spent years and years learning the rules of the game, practicing the fundamentals and challenging herself not to give up when the going got tough. She also made sure she played with other skilled players so that she did not develop bad habits or settle for mediocre play. Well, developing relationship intelligence is no different.

I read the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell over the holidays and he says it takes 10,000 hours of practice to become an outstanding success at something. My guess is we have all spent way more than 10,000 hours in interactions with other people but unfortunately, this does not in and of itself translate into a higher amount of relationship intelligence. Unless like Serena Williams, we are using the rules of

the game in a way that improves our interactions, we could spend a million hours at it and not have high RQ.

A good example of this is the TV show Everybody Loves Raymond where virtually everyone on it has low RQ. It's a funny show but most people would not want to live a life like the one depicted on that show. Most people would prefer their relationships to be warm, loving, spirited and happy. The best way to gauge your RQ is to look at your past and current relationships and ask yourself "How am I doing?"

If you have a successful romantic relationship, good solid friends, children who interact with you in loving ways and you are well liked and respected in your work, then you're doing pretty well and probably won't need any help in this area. But if you have conflicted or unsuccessful romantic relationships, have conflicts with your children or have trouble with your co-workers then you might consider some Relationship Intelligence coaching.

I have a 90-day program that I guarantee will improve your RQ or I'll refund your money. Call me today for information on this program. I love helping people improve their RQ and would love to help you. Call me at 720-350-4092.

Happy Dating,

Lorraine