



***The Emotionally  
Intelligent  
Pastor***

**A GUIDE FOR CLERGY  
AND OTHER CHURCH LEADERS**

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# Introduction

In 1989, I was a licensed minister and pastor's spouse—and I was stressed to the breaking point.

Our congregation was worshiping in an unconventional building that had residential tenants living on the upper floor. Odd perhaps, if we were working in the United States (US), but not so strange in our overseas assignment ministering to US military personnel and their families off-post. Our tiny “parsonage” connected to a worship center our church shared with another flock.

Unfortunately, one upstairs tenant didn't appreciate the loud, pounding worship music that routinely emanated from the other congregation's services. Consequently, during the entire worship service, this renter would purposely (and angrily!) bang on the pipes above our apartment. Specifically, he banged on the pipes directly over the only chair available to me during the other congregation's weekly service!

This passive-aggressive behavior happened regularly. The situation escalated and became increasingly nerve-wracking. Externally, I developed a stress-induced rash. Internally, I wrestled with the question, Is this what the ministry is supposed to be like?

Your story is likely different from mine. You might not have to listen to clanging pipes early in the morning or all hours of the night. However, it might be that you would *gladly* swap whatever you're facing—continual criticism, resistance to change, unrealistic expectations, or the tense conflicts that are all too common in “church world”—for one simple noisy neighbor!

Let me ask: What's your ministry version of an angry, pipe-banging tenant? What's the problem you face that keeps getting louder and more exasperating? Do you find yourself asking questions like: Is this what ministry is supposed to be about? How did I get here? How long can I keep doing this?

Here's what we know is true: some pastors are thriving. They're not only making a difference for the kingdom of God, but they're finding their efforts rewarding and satisfying. They're loving life!

Meanwhile, another group of pastors is having a radically different experience. They're finding the ministry so unrewarding and unsatisfying, they're leaving in droves each year. The numbers are shocking. The stories are heartbreaking. Each situation is unique, but two common themes are *stress* and *burnout*.

I wrote this book for every pastor—young and old, inexperienced and seasoned, those who are prospering and simply want to sharpen their leadership skills and those who are discouraged and on the verge of quitting, and everyone in between.

My goal is to show you some startling research and help you understand a few, very powerful leadership skills. These practices—if cultivated and employed proactively—can help you avoid some ministry frustrations altogether. Used in response to existing problems, these skills are remarkable correctives. I have seen them make happy leaders even healthier and more effective! I've also seen them help weary leaders recover a sense of balance and joy. Almost like a vaccine, these practices have been shown to protect pastors against burnout and pave the way to transformational leadership.

Even if you are a pastor who is doing pretty well right now, my desire is to help you sharpen your self-awareness, people skills, and relational abilities. I want to help you leverage the good things that are happening right now in your ministry for even greater things.

But first, a disclaimer: If you are looking for a book of flashy quick fixes or foolproof ministry hacks, this is not that book.

I'm reminded of John Wooden, legendary UCLA basketball coach in the 1960s and '70s. Wooden led the Bruins to seven straight national championships (and ten in twelve seasons). No other team or coach has come close to equaling these records.

Former players still talk with amusement about how Coach Wooden would use a portion of the team's first practice each season to show his players the proper way to put on their socks and lace up their sneakers! Why? Because he knew that one bad blister could sideline a player for days. So, before teaching tricky zone defenses or practicing fancy passes, he ensured that his team had mastered this vital but often overlooked skill.

In some ways, the contents of this book—developing emotional intelligence—probably seems obvious, elementary, and even old-fashioned. So be it. Because here's what is true: only by learning such rudimentary concepts and skills—what makes you tick (and what ticks you off), self-mastery, and how to read people and situations—can you become effective in ministering to others. Like right-fitting basketball socks and shoes, emotional intelligence can keep you in the game—and off the ministry sidelines.

Because of my dual experience in pastoral ministry and in counseling hundreds of people, including clergy, I'm now convinced that successful, satisfying ministry rests on two fundamentals. The first is connecting with God and following his call. The second is connecting with people—understanding *yourself* so that you are able to relate wisely with others and influence them for eternity. This book is all about that second fundamental.

Hear me again: This book is not a challenge to imitate the ministry program of some other church or pastor. This is a roll-up-your-sleeves look at what it means to be emotionally intelligent.

It's a timely topic. The church, particularly the Western church, finds itself at a challenging moment in history. We stand at a crossroads between the familiar, traditional church that has flourished for most

of the last fifty years, and the unknown form of church God is taking us toward as we seek to minister to a rapidly morphing culture. Like never before, we need healthy, self-aware leaders who have heard from God and who are equipped to come alongside people, love them well, and take them to new and better places.

I commend you for your desire to develop the critical set of emotional and relational skills known as *emotional intelligence*.

Shall we get started?



**PART 1**

***The Pain  
and Problems  
of Pastors!***





## ***Meet Susan, Bill, and Jim***

Susan, Bill, and Jim glanced absent-mindedly at their menus and made small talk—sharing travel anecdotes, making comments about the swanky host hotel, and speculating about Clayton’s whereabouts.

Soon after a young, impeccably dressed waiter brought their drinks, Jim’s phone dinged. He checked it, frowned, and stared blankly at his companions. “Looks like Clayton won’t be joining us after all.”

“For dinner?” Susan asked.

Jim shook his head. “For the whole conference. In his words—and I quote: ‘Sudden church emergency.’”

Bill groaned loudly. “Isn’t that just like the ministry? You look forward to a getaway for *months*. Then at the last possible second, something—or someone—torpedoes your plans. Brutal.”

The others nodded knowingly. Susan abruptly raised her glass of water, “To Clayton. God bless him!”

“Here, here . . . to poor Clayton!” the other men said, grabbing their drinks to join the impromptu tribute. After a few seconds, Susan leaned forward and lowered her voice, “I know this is Chicago, not Vegas, but am I correct in assuming that we’re operating by the old ‘whatever is said here, stays here’ rule?”

“Absolutely,” Jim replied. “We pastors need settings like this, if for no other reason than to have a place to let down our hair.” Then rubbing his mostly bald head, “Not that I have that much left to let down . . . hair, I mean.”

Susan smiled broadly. “I knew I liked you guys right from the start! Okay then, true confession: I actually turned off my phone at 5 p.m. yesterday for that very reason. I didn’t want to risk getting one of those calls. I needed to get out of Dodge or else . . . , if you know what I mean—and I think you do.”

Jim and Bill laughed heartily.

Then Jim, in keeping with his type A, take-charge personality, called the waiter over to take their orders. Afterward he said, “Okay, how about this, while we wait on our fifteen-dollar gourmet hamburgers. The conference organizers put us in these groups and asked us to meet before tomorrow’s opening session to get acquainted. How about it? Susan, tell us about yourself. You mentioned getting out of Dodge. Does that mean you’re from Kansas?”

Susan laughed. “Funny, I *do* live in Kansas. But not Dodge City. I’m a new pastor at an older church in rural Claymore, Kansas. Little town of 2,700 people. I actually grew up here in Illinois. I’m married to an overworked, underpaid high school basketball coach. We do not have children . . . not yet, anyway. Mark keeps saying, ‘Babe, I’ve already got fifteen boys I can’t keep up with!’

“As far as hobbies, hmmm, I like to bike. And I’ve been doing some family genealogy lately. Don’t tell anyone, but I think I might actually be a distant cousin of Benedict Arnold.”

The men laughed. Jim asked, “New pastor, huh? So what’s that like?”

Bill interrupted, “No, no, Jim! Remember the ground rules? No shoptalk tonight. Our assignment was just to get to know each other. We’re supposed to save all our bellyaching for tomorrow.”

Jim smiled. ‘You’re right. You’re absolutely right! See there, I can go from zero to sixty *broken rules* in less than 4.3 seconds! You guys better watch me like a hawk. Okay, what about you, Bill? Give us a quick bio. You got any traitors in *your* family tree?’

Bill shook his head, while swallowing a sip of tea. “No traitors that I know of. Matter of fact, I grew up in a very patriotic military family. So

I've lived all over. But Nashville is home now—coming up on thirteen years. Longest I've ever lived in one place.”

“Nashville? Really?” Susan sounded wistful, almost envious. “Wow. Music City . . . I bet you have some killer worship at your church.”

Bill smiled. “I can confirm that there is no shortage of talented musicians within a ten-mile radius of our church.” He paused, and continued, “I have also learned that talent and flakiness seem to be directly proportional.”

Susan and Jim laughed. Then Susan whispered loudly, “Still, I would *gladly* trade you three un-flaky church members for one talented singer. Whaddya say?”

“That’s very tempting. Let me mull that over. Now, where was I?”

“Nashville,” Jim said.

“Of course, Nashville. Thirteen years. Before that, I was an associate pastor for about a decade in North Carolina. I am married to Celeste, my high school sweetheart. She has a very successful cupcake business.” Bill patted his gut and added, “Can you tell?”

“She and I are empty nesters. Twin sons—one is newly married and the other has zero desire to settle down. So, no grandkids yet.”

“What do you do for fun?” Susan asked.

“Fun?” Bill responded in mock ignorance. “I know I’ve heard that word before. Remind me what it means? No, seriously, I don’t know. I play golf. Badly. At least once a year. I actually used to fish and read a lot. Lately I don’t have the energy for either. Celeste accuses me of having a mistress named Netflix. But that’s enough about me. What about you, Jim?”

“My turn already? Okay, let’s see. Back in the nineties I had a growing software company, but I kept feeling a pull toward vocational ministry. So I finally sold the company and went to seminary. Took a church in Dallas. We were there for nine years. Good years. *Great* folks! Saw tremendous growth. Then we got the call to go to Denver.”

Jim paused, took a drink, and cleared his throat. “Been there now for a year. *Big* suburban church . . .” He paused and pursed his lips. Susan

and Bill could almost see the wheels turning in his head. He wanted to say more, and he finally did.

“A *big* church with *big* problems that I *really* wish someone had told me about eighteen months ago—but, I know, I know. We’re not supposed to get into all that ‘professional stuff’ tonight, so let me get back to the personal.” He took a sip, swallowed, and continued.

“I’m a couple months away from hitting the big 5-0. Not so sure how I feel about that. My wife, Rebecca, and I just celebrated our twenty-fifth anniversary. We have a son who’s a freshman at UT. We have a daughter in tenth grade.

“Like you, Susan, I enjoy cycling. Genealogy, not so much. Probably because I’m too afraid of what I might dig up! But I do like to get on my bike. I actually did my first mini-triathlon a few weeks back. I’m thinking all that intense training is probably what’s kept me sane the last couple months. I guess we can talk more about all that tomorrow.”

The burgers arrived. The consensus was that, while they *weren’t* worth fifteen dollars, they beat airport food hands down. The new friends laughed and shared more about their childhoods and families. About 7:45, they settled up with the waiter, and Jim said, “I need to answer some e-mail. But, hey, this has been fun. I’m glad they put us in a group together. I look forward to talking about our ministries tomorrow. Maybe the two of you can help me figure out what to do with a certain—ah, never mind. Tomorrow, right?”

Laughing, they got in one of the downtown hotel’s ornate elevators together. One by one they exited.

Back in Room 418, an exhausted Bill talked briefly to his wife, Celeste. Afterward, he flipped on the TV. By 8:15, he was snoring, remote control still in his hand.

In Room 603, Susan worked up the courage to check her messages and voicemails. No crises! She breathed a sigh of relief and opened her fancy conference workbook. She read with interest the updated list of

breakout seminars being offered the next two days—especially one entitled “Leadership Challenges for Women in Ministry.”

In Room 1226, Jim unpacked, did his customary forty-nine push-ups (one for every year of his life). After a shower, he opened his laptop and answered thirty-six emails. At 10:47, he set his alarm for 4:45 a.m.—so he could get in an early morning run—and turned out his light.

The next morning—following a plenary session that featured uplifting music and an inspiring message on emotional intelligence for pastors, Susan, Bill, and Jim met up, grabbed some coffee, and plopped down in three comfy chairs in a far nook of the massive hotel’s lobby.

After sharing some thoughts on the morning gathering, Jim suddenly grinned broadly. He rubbed his hands together and announced, “At last. Finally! Now we get to talk about the juicy stuff.” He glanced at the instruction sheet they’d been given and read aloud: “Have each group member briefly share: (a) his/her reason for attending the conference, (b) one pressing ministry frustration, and (c) one known area of needed personal/spiritual growth.”

“Not that I’m eager to talk about ‘ministry frustrations,’” Jim said, making air quotes while he winked at his new friends, “but do you two mind if I go first?”

“The floor is all yours,” Susan replied with a smile.

“Okay, I uprooted my family and moved to Denver—because the board at my new church told me they wanted *change*. They looked at my resume, history in business, and track record at my previous church and saw that I’m a high-energy leader. I like to get things done. ‘You’re exactly what we need,’ they said. ‘You’re just the leader to get us unstuck and moving in a good direction.’ So it seemed a perfect fit.”

A cloud came over Jim’s face. “One year in, and we haven’t done diddly-squat. I’m banging my head against the wall—or maybe I should say, against *Greg*.” Jim’s voice was starting to rise slightly.

Susan’s eyes widened. “Who’s Greg?”

“A very influential board member . . . and a big donor.”

“So what’s Greg doing—or not doing—to frustrate you?”

Jim explained, “Let me back up and say that most of the board—and our key ministry leaders—are fully on board with my vision. Or it seemed like they were. But right when we got consensus on a plan and started the ball rolling, Greg balked. In our meeting two nights ago, he did a total about-face: ‘I’m not so sure. I feel like we’re moving too fast. I’ve talked to a number of other members who have reservations.’”

Susan and Bill noticed Jim’s voice was controlled but his jaw was tight. His face was starting to flush.

Bill chimed in, “So, how’d you respond?”

Jim’s expression changed. He looked glumly down at the floor and kicked at the marble floor with his boot. “Not great. I could have—should have handled that situation a lot better. All this took place right at the end of the meeting. Greg started in, and what can I say? I sort of went off on him. Then I told the board, ‘Looks like you have a decision to make’ and walked out the room.”

Susan’s mouth fell open at the same time that Bill’s eyebrows rose. Jim noted their expressions and said, “Exactly. Not my best moment. I’ve had a few phone conversations since. Swapped some texts and emails. But obviously, I’ve got work to do when I get home from this conference. Meanwhile, I need to learn how to deal more effectively with people who don’t want to change and who frustrate the heck out of me. A little ‘emotional intelligence’ maybe for the pastor who sometimes acts like an emotional idiot?”

Susan and Bill asked a few questions, and the more things Jim got off his chest, the calmer he got.

Finally Bill nodded empathetically. “Jim, for what it’s worth, if I had a dollar for every time I’ve overreacted in board meetings and put my big foot in my even bigger mouth, I’d be on the *Forbes* list. Let me jump in here, take the spotlight off you, and say a little about my situation.

“Like I said last night, I have been at my Nashville church for almost thirteen years now. We’ve done okay—most folks would say pretty well.

Our membership was about 325 when I arrived. It's about 400 now. Got a small but good staff. Faithful volunteers. Thankfully, a supportive board. No financial issues to speak of. But personally? Y'all, I don't know how else to say it. I am *out of gas*. It's all I can do most weeks to pull a Sunday sermon together, and lately I've even been getting comments about my preaching. Thank God for an associate pastor who is well-liked and great at pastoral care!"

Bill sighed and continued. "Celeste—my wife—is really worried about me. She's actually the one who heard about this conference and insisted I come. Especially when she saw the emphasis on pastors who are dealing with stress and burnout.

"So there you have it. The ugly truth is I'm fifty-five and I dread going into the office most days. Honestly, I'm wondering how much longer I can hang in there. That's why I'm here."

Jim and Susan fell silent as they looked at their colleague who was clearly weary.

Finally, Jim asked softly, "So, is this all a recent thing? Or have you been dealing with this for a while?"

Bill took off his glasses and cleaned them with his napkin. "It's probably been a long time coming. A combination of things. I'm a workaholic, always wanting to fix or save everybody. Ha, I'm on the job sixty-plus hours a week trying to keep everybody happy—and they're still not happy!"

Susan whistled softly. "Whoa. I've only been at this ministry stuff for a few months, but even *I* know that's a bad combination."

"Tell me about it," Bill nodded. "Celeste would say I'm a people pleaser. And she's right. I can't tell people 'no.' So I have few healthy boundaries. And I avoid conflict like the proverbial plague.

"Case in point. Celeste has been on me about not spending enough time with her. So, just the other week I said, 'Let's go out for a nice dinner.' So she gets excited and makes dinner reservations for a Thursday night.



“Well, wouldn’t you know it? The Tuesday before our fancy date, one of my council members informs me that the Boys & Girls Club that our church sponsors is having their awards ceremony on Thursday night. I tell him, ‘I’m sorry; I have plans.’ He says, ‘Bill, this has been on the church calendar for months.’ I say, ‘I never saw it.’ He says, ‘Look, this is a *big* deal. You need to be there to recognize some community members who are big donors.’ So, I cave.

“Then I spend the next twenty-four hours fretting about how I’m going to tell Celeste. She’s been looking forward to this date for a solid week. She keeps mentioning it. So when I finally break the news to her on Wednesday night, she bursts into tears. Story of my life. Saying yes to everybody but my family.

“And that’s not the end of it! Get this. After the ceremony, I get home and that same council member has the nerve to call me and chew me out for forgetting to mention the club’s newest board member! How am I supposed to know they have a new member? Apparently I can’t read minds very well!”

Bill sighed heavily. “Whatever. I have tried so hard to please these people! I can’t win for losing. And I’m to the point now where, honestly, I hardly care anymore.”

Susan asked quietly, “Bill, have you ever had a sabbatical?”

He looked incredulous at her. “You’re joking, right? I’ve never even had a two-week vacation where I really got to completely unplug. I get to the beach, and I’m staring at the gulf with a cell phone glued to my ear, counseling somebody back home!”

There was a long silence. Lots of nodding and pursed lips. “Well,” Jim suggested hopefully, “maybe this conference will give you—give us all—some good, practical help over these next couple days.”

“I sure hope so,” Bill said wistfully. “That would be a much-needed blessing. OK, enough of my sob story. What about you, Susan?” He glanced at his sheet, “Why’d you come? What’s frustrating you? What are you hoping to get out of this conference?”

“Wow, I hardly know what to say. You guys shared a lot. This is good. For perspective, you know? Maybe I shouldn’t feel so badly about my little church in Kansas? I was thinking I was the only one struggling . . . but then I hear your stories. Guys, you have my word. I will keep you both in my prayers.

“This is my first church, first ministry assignment. My undergraduate degree was in English. I taught for a couple years, but then I felt called to ministry, so I went back to divinity school.

“I just love to see people using their spiritual gifts. I love to help believers grow in the faith and steadily become disciples and leaders. I believe that’s the way the church grows.

“Some of my denominational friends warned me that this church might be difficult. I just kept seeing all this potential. It’s a small rural church with a lot of family generations. A few younger couples from nearby communities have started attending recently.”

Susan paused and sighed heavily. “But I’m confused. I’m six months in—and definitely in over my head. People are nice enough, but they don’t seem to understand my approach. They’re standoffish. I feel like they view me with suspicion and mistrust. A couple of the older members have even made comments about ‘remembering when *men* were the ones leading God’s church.’

“I came this week because I want to grow in my leadership. I am a continual learner. I need help figuring out how to work with these people, how to gain their trust.”

Jim scratched his head. “So it sounds like they view you as an outsider who wants to change ‘the way we’ve always done things around here.’”

Bill nodded. “And if they’re traditional—it might take them a while to get used to the fact that you’re a woman. But they’ll warm up. You’ve got a pastor’s heart—that’s obvious. They’ll eventually see that.”

“Any ideas for how I can speed up that process?”

“Probably by doing exactly what you did last night with us. Spend time with them. Listen to their stories. Tell them your story. Laugh and

cry with them. Let them see you're human. I would guess a lot of those folks are not nearly as educated as you. They might feel intimidated.”

The trio continued talking, asking questions of one another, sharing frustrations, and offering encouragement. Finally it was time for the pre-lunch breakout sessions.

As they stood up to go, Bill asked, “We’ve got a full day in front of us. Y’all want to get together in the morning here at the hotel restaurant for an early breakfast and debrief session?”

Jim smiled, “I was planning to do my morning run, but honestly, I think visiting with you two would be the healthier choice. I’m in.”

“Sounds good,” Susan said.

## **Why Are So Many Pastors Struggling?**

Recently while in a meeting with a group of pastors, I asked the question, “What is your number one problem in pastoral ministry?” One wise guy in the audience blurted out, “People!” Instantly the room filled with laughter and nodding heads.

This pastor simply expressed what every minister feels at times. It’s not that we don’t like people. In truth, people are the reason we went into ministry in the first place! However, we know all too well that people go off the rails and create drama. That’s true of some people all the time and all people some of the time. When they do, they leave plenty of dysfunction, tension, and mess in their wake. Often, we are the ones asked to step in and help restore order and sanity.

With his jokey quip, my clergy friend was simply referring to the challenge of working with people. And it *is* a constant challenge.

### ***My Journey with Emotional Intelligence***

Here’s my own clergy story in brief. See if you can relate.

I was young when I first got the chance to preach to some small gatherings of military families—and even to some US soldiers in a German prison. During these experiences I felt God’s hand upon me, and I began to sense a call into ministry.

In response to these stirrings I began extension studies toward a degree in Bible and also completed a ministerial internship. Before long I was not only a pastor's wife, I was also a licensed minister! My one desire was to please God and if that meant making sacrifices, so be it.

My husband and I lived in a German community, ministering primarily to American military personnel. It was rewarding, though the hardships of living in a different culture definitely wore on me. I felt isolated. I didn't really fit in with the locals, and sometimes I wasn't so sure I fit in with the military lifestyle either.

There were other pressures and stressors. As I mentioned in the introduction, financial strains prompted us to sublease the worship center to another church. This arrangement definitely helped with the bills—it did *not* help my mental health! We were sharing our kitchen and restrooms with an entire church—and the members didn't exactly grasp the concept of boundaries. Complicating matters was the fact that military congregations are always in flux, with soldiers getting reassigned on a regular basis. This constant turnover made us feel like every day was Groundhog Day—like we were starting over repeatedly!

When our upstairs tenant began his passive-aggressive pipe banging, I thought, *Is this what ministry is supposed to be like?* As I listened I imagined, *This must be what water drip torture is like.*

In truth, those clanging pipes overhead were a blessing in disguise. They functioned as a wake-up call. They were the impetus for my asking big questions about big issues. Even when we returned to the United States—and the outward clanging stopped, one question did not: Is that how the ministry is supposed to be?

I continued my biblical studies, continued observing churches and pastors. Though I saw many good things—changed lives, spiritual growth—I also observed other realities that concerned me at a deep level: countless pastors dealing with their own versions, large and small, of clanging pipes, and an alarming number of clergy burning out and walking away from vocational ministry.

It was oddly comforting to know that I wasn't alone in my "ministry struggles." At the same time, it was disturbing to see so many good-hearted ministry leaders trying to continue on fumes. Other questions bubbled up in my heart: Were the fulfilled pastors I knew less susceptible to discouragement because they were doing (or not doing) certain things? Is ministry burnout inevitable? Can it be avoided? These questions nagged at me, but I was still too busy to address them.

It was after completing my bachelor of biblical studies' degree that I felt a new call, one I never saw coming: counseling! It didn't take long to realize it was in my sweet spot. I completed a master's degree and started a Christian counseling center, which I still operate to this day.

As I continued to engage with other pastors and hear their unique clanging-pipe stories, the more I found myself wanting to help them. The old questions that had taken a back seat for a few years were still within me, but in a new form: What if we could help leaders develop the habits they need to be healthy and effective and stem the tide of clergy burnout? And, what if we could gain the skills needed to be more relevant to our church members and culture? More effective and influential in relating to others?

By this time I was in pursuit of my PhD in counseling psychology. As I pondered possible dissertation topics, someone suggested the idea of *emotional intelligence* (or EI). If you've read leadership books and articles, no doubt you've encountered this term or one of its many synonyms: cognitive empathy, emotional quotient (or EQ), emotional awareness, or emotional management. In simplest terms (a longer description follows in the next chapter), EI is the ability to understand the feelings and reactions of both yourself and others, and then to use this insight to skillfully avoid or solve relational problems.

I was intrigued. I read everything I could find on the subject and began wondering: Is this it? Do pastors who are emotionally intelligent actually experience greater success in managing the expectations of

others and leading them toward an agreed-upon vision? And if so, might those EI-savvy pastors experience less frustration and a greater sense of accomplishment in ministry as a result? And wouldn't it follow that a greater sense of satisfaction and accomplishment serves to inoculate leaders from burnout or at least reduce the chances of it happening? It seemed to me that increased influence just might lead to decreased burnout. I knew I had to find out.

I thought about *role conflict* (often cited as a leading factor in clergy burnout). Role conflict refers to the stress or anxiety one experiences while attempting to juggle conflicting roles or competing expectations. Could it be that pastors with higher EI are able to manage role conflict more easily and therefore be less susceptible to burnout?

I kept talking with and listening to pastors. Some admitted deep struggles with insecurity and identity, confessing a continual, almost obsessive need to prove themselves and to avoid failure at all costs. I discovered this performance-based success orientation is common among high-achieving individuals—and among victims of burnout.

Of course, I didn't only want to help pastors who were struggling. Proactively I also wanted to give up-and-coming leaders the tools they need to thrive in ministry and to avoid altogether the pitfalls of burnout. And I wanted to come alongside effective leaders, to help them—in the words of the apostle Paul—"excel still more" (1 Thess. 4:1 NASB) by sharpening their relational skills.

My research was uncovering the truth that business leaders with higher EI enjoy greater influence and an increased ability to spearhead change and transform their organizations. When I found a couple of studies demonstrating the effect of higher EI on pastors, I concluded that perhaps I was on to something that would make a difference.

# Notes

## Chapter 2

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## Chapter 3

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## ***About the Author***

***Dr. Jeannie Clarkson*** is the researcher behind a study linking emotional intelligence and performance-based self-esteem with burnout among Christian pastors. She is the founder of Christian Care Connection, a multi-staff professional counseling center in the greater Toledo, Ohio, area.

Jeannie is known as a counselor, entrepreneur, and leader in the local Christian community. Christian Care Connection, launched in 2000, provides distinctively professional Christian counseling. Jeannie's heart for pastors led her to join the South Monroe County Ministerial Association where she was elected president three years consecutively, 2005–2008.

Jeannie is a licensed psychologist and licensed professional counselor.

Her academic credentials include a bachelor of biblical studies from East Coast Bible College (now Lee University), a master of arts in counseling from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and a doctorate in psychology counseling from Walden University.