

EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT - A CORPORATE NECESSITY

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Abstract:

Can science teach us about the emotional skill sets that are most important for professional and personal success? Can you improve your own emotional skills or the skills of others? The answer to both of these questions is unequivocally yes, but there's a lot of science and myth to untangle. In this article, you will explore the rich and complex world of emotions and emotion regulation and how emotions are almost continually at play in our lives. This will be presented through the framework of emotional intelligence, or EQ-a concept made popular in the late 1990s, when it was lauded as the most important ingredient for success.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, CSR, corporate, EI.*

What is Emotional Intelligence (EQ)?

The History of EQ:

The topic of emotional intelligence often triggers personal reactions. It's easy to relate to, but it might evoke pain pleasure, defensiveness, or moral judgment. This makes it essential to keep an open mind and to use any evoked emotions or cognitions as grist for the mill. Observe them, study them, and decide if you want to change them.

Emotional intelligence is the mental ability that lurks amid the emotions. The goal of this course is to provide a sort of emotional GPS, a navigational tool-but ultimately your destination depend son where you choose to go.

Emotional have been the subject of research, philosophy, art, and music for centuries. Even the ancient Greeks were writing about “temperaments” and their relationship to the 4 humeral elements of life: yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood-all predictive of emotional experience depending on how they were balanced. We see the emergence of Stoicism and the primacy of rationality with philosophers such as Socrates.

The Apollonian approach to life was pushing back. Emotions were to be tamed and controlled. Plato and Aristotle saw emotions as more than feelings or passions and argued that they include cognition and even affect our sensory perceptions and health.

Christianity developed its own ideologies about emotions and, for the most part, saw the passions as something to be overcome. You turn the other cheek, love one another, and live a life of compassion and kindness while suppressing envy, anger, and lust.

Reflecting on all of these complex and interesting historical and cultural influences is important because it helps you understand where your current beliefs and rules about emotions come from, and by knowing where they come from, you might have an easier time of deciding if you want to keep or change them. Western psychology began exploring emotions in earnest in the early 20th century. Carl Jung suggested that some people rely heavily on a “feeling” function to perceive and understand the world. This system was used by a mother-daughter team to create the Myers-Briggs personality inventory.

The Neo-Freudian psychoanalysts of the 1940s and 1950s talked about insight and understanding of emotions that may have been warped by psychological defenses. Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, taught us about the emotional power of unconditional positive regard and empathy and how they influence relationships and have the power to heal. But EQ isn't just about emotions. It is also about intelligence. Intelligence, too, has a very long and interesting history, starting with Pythagoras, who describes intelligence as "winds," or Descartes, who tells us that intelligence, is simply the ability to tell the difference between true and false.

The definition of intelligence that is probably most cited in modern times is that of David Wechsler, who said intelligence is "the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment." Although rationality is called out, emotions aren't excluded. As early as 1940, he referred to "non-intellective" as well as "intellective" elements, by which he meant affective, personal, and social factors. But where exactly does intelligence come from?

When considering the etiologic or origin of a trait or skill or even a disease or condition, we can consult the bio-psycho social model, which reminds us to consider variables that occur in 3 overlapping categories: biological, psychological, and social. For intelligence, this reminds us that our genetic inheritance undoubtedly plays a role.

We can also consider the classic enriched environment studies of Mark Rosenzweig in the 1960s. Studies compared the development of intelligence in rats raised in enriched versus impoverished environments.

We now know that parental attention, environmental stimuli, preschool programs, and the like are important in developing neural growth and IQ in our children. We've learned that exercise, nutrition, and stressors-particularly early childhood poverty, neglect, and violence-can have profound effects on IQ.

IQ culture, like many, seems to have ambivalent relationship with emotions. We may see them as the pinnacle of human experience: passion, love, joy-the stuff of poetry and plays and art. But we may also see them as a driving force for evil deeds, hate crimes, crimes of passion, or may be even much of the pain and suffering in the world.

It can be argued that emotions-a priori-are neither good nor bad. They may be experienced as pleasant or distressing, but that doesn't necessarily correspond with their value. Our goal is to understand the range of emotions we might experience and to achieve some clarity in why we have them and how to use them constructively.

Emotions are typically defined as multifaceted, whole-body responses that involve coordinated changes in the domains of subjective experience, behaviour, and peripheral physiology. Emotions arise when an individual attends to a situation and evaluates it as relevant to his or her goals. This definition presupposes a chronological sequence of events, involving, first, a real or imaginary situation; second, attention to and evaluation of the situation, where we need attention or focus (concentration) followed by a subjective cognitive appraisal; and third, an emotional response, which could be behavior, physiological changes, or following other urges the emotion generates. However, this emotion-generating process cycles pretty rapidly, and your responses feed back into the mix to shape subsequent cycles. This is why the way we respond emotionally is so important to understand and manage.

This well-studied process is called the modal model of emotions and was developed by James Gross, and emotion science researcher at Stanford University. In this linear model, we move from situation to attention and appraisal and then end with response. The response may then feed back to the situation.

According to the model, emotions involve person-situation transactions that compel attention, have meaning in light of currently active goals, and give rise to coordinated multi system responses that feed back in to the process in important ways.

Situation: the first step in the process is the situation. This refers to situation in its most obvious meaning: You are walking down the street and a growling dog jumps out at you. But situation can also be internal-

something that is only happening in your mind. When we recall a memory or have a fantasy, our internal situation gets the emotions process going.

Attention: You have to pay attention to what's happening in the situation. There's a lot of nuance to attention. Two people can be in exactly the same situation but can be attending to 2 different things and having a very different experience. Moreover, energy goes where attention flows. Attention directs our limited resources, meaning we have less to do something else-learn, think, grow, change. Attention can be automatic, such as when we orient to a loud noise, but it can also be effortful and intentional, and it can take years to master. Behaviors are at the bottom. To understand emotions, we need to look at thoughts and behaviours.

As we consider the function of emotions, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate the incredible breadth of what we're talking about. Emotions include everything from irritation at an email, amusement by a meme on social media, anxiety about a job evaluation, pleasure when enjoying a piece of dark chocolate, and hopefulness at a medical appointment to see if your cancer's been curd.

But despite all this breadth, emotions are goal directed. In each instance, there is an implicit or explicit goal. It may be long term or short term, realistic or aspirational, but there's always a goal there. Knowing the goal helps you understand the emotion.

Why EQ in the Workplace Matters?

The average person spends nearly 100,000 hours at work during his or her lifetime, and U.S. workers currently put in around 1800 hours at work per year. We need a framework to help treat occupational stress. But we also need a framework that helps us understand success.

To determine what predicts success-such as intelligence, socioeconomic status, or ambition-we first have to decide what success means. Is it money, advancement, correct answer? Interesting research shows that objective measures of success and subjective success are often quite different things.

Let's take a middle-of-the-road definition and say that success isn't making millions and isn't being a CEO but does include advancement, recognition, compensation, and constructive relationships with peers, bosses, and/or supervisees. It includes a reasonable level of satisfaction and contentment.

What do you need to get there?

A 2006 study by Accenture of 251 executives in 6 countries concluded that while intelligence is important for career success, it's a matter of how you are smart. Interpersonal competence, self-awareness, and social awareness-all elements of emotional intelligence-are better predictors of who will succeed and who won't.

Recall the primary definition of EQ developed by John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David Caruso: "the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others.

Note the 4 elements, defined as abilities or skills that can be trained: The ability to express and perceive emotion, use emotion (harness for cognitive tasks), understand and reason with emotion, and regulate or manage emotion in the self and others. Remember the alternate model of EQ that was developed by Daniel Goleman. It is the one that is most commonly adopted by businesses, and variants of that model are taught in most business schools. Goleman conceptualized EQ as a set of skills and personal competencies.

He described 5 domains: knowing your emotions; managing gratification or entering flow states; recognizing and understanding other people's emotions; and managing relationships.

These competencies can be visualized in a 2-by-2 table with regulation and recognition on one side and self and social on the other side, giving us 4 quadrants that capture all 5 elements: 3 in the column for self and 2 for social. Keep in mind these 4 quadrants and their relationship to motivation and collaboration in the workplace. In 1998, Goleman presented specific business adaptations in his book working with Emotional Intelligence. In the book, he defines an emotional competence as a learned capability based on emotional

intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work. He identified a total of 25 relevant emotional competencies that fall into personal and social categories.

The social competencies are particularly relevant in a work setting.

Empathy: The awareness of other's feelings, needs, and concerns. Empathy competencies include understanding others, developing others, leveraging diversity, and political awareness.

Social skills: The adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. This category includes influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities—all of which are highly relevant to success in a work setting.

When it comes to predicting success, the outcomes we are interested in are somewhat more specialized than general studies of EQ. In work settings, metrics might include employee satisfaction, job turnover rates, job engagement, productivity, and even the overall success of the organization. There have been some big claims about EQ in business settings, and those were somewhat hyperbolic. It is important, though, not to dismiss EQ entirely. Research has shown that EQ can help predict positive outcomes, such as sales, high performance, stress management, and creativity. But it might also play a role in removing negative incidents, such as work-related accidents.

In one study, emotional abilities were 4 times more important than IQ in determining professional success and prestige. An analysis of independent studies found a correlation of 0.23 between EQ and performance. But EQ was also highly correlated with personality. A study of store managers in a retail chain found that the ability to handle stress predicted net profits, sales per square foot, sales per employee, and sales per dollar of inventory investment.

Emotionally Unintelligent Behaviors

What are some of the common emotionally unintelligent behaviours you might see at work, and what can you do about them? First, you want to regulate your own emotions and then perhaps do something to regulate the emotions in your co-workers. Remember all the categories in the ER continuum and try to rely more on antecedent-focused strategies: situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, and cognitive appraisals. You will also need to do some response modulation.

What kinds of emotional unintelligence emerge?

Insensitivity, or not taking into account the needs or preferences of other people, often stems from a lack of empathy and may reflect early family dynamics. As with most, because we often don't know what's driving a particular behavior, it's important to assume the best. Consider building a relationship with the individual, and use cognitive reappraisals to manage your own emotions.

Arrogance can often mask underlying emotions. Use somatic quieting to avoid escalation. You need to understand where the arrogance is coming from. It might be a long-standing pattern that's the product of family upbringing, culture, or privilege. To some, optimism might seem arrogant, so it might be a matter of interpretation. It might also be social anxiety masquerading as arrogance, which alienates other people. Giving these individuals 360 degree feedback often helps.

Rigidity may stem from many different causes, such as arrogance, anxiety, or even conscientiousness from someone who works really hard and wants to do a good job. Thank these types of people for their passion but request openness and flexibility, primarily through suggestions and role modeling.

Volatility reflects poor emotion regulation abilities. Volatile people don't have a filter and have emotional outbursts. This may be culturally driven. These individuals need mentorship and feedback using concrete examples of when they've been volatile and "I" statements. There are a number of cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectic behavior therapy skills that could help these individuals.

The Future of Emotional Intelligence

Emotions involve multiple response systems, and we have claimed that these responses are organized or coherent. Surprisingly few studies have tested this core hypothesis of the modal model, and

those that have done so yielded mixed results. Obtaining continuous measures of emotional experience, expression, and physiology and examining the conditions under which response coherence is evident. It has implications for helping us better understand when we're in complex, mixed states.

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