

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Why it can matter more than IQ

Daniel Goleman

Goleman begins by quoting Aristotle:

Anyone can become angry - that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - this is not easy. (The Nichomachean Ethics)

Goleman highlights the many reports of the disintegration of civility and safety, and the onslaught of mean-spirited impulse running amok and claims that these only reflect back to us, on a larger scale, a creeping sense of emotions out of control in our own lives, and in the lives of those people living around us. He seeks to make sense of the senselessness and bring about change which will help our children fare better in life.

He also wonders what factors are at play when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well. He argues that the difference quite often lies in the abilities which he calls *emotional intelligence*, which include, for example self-control, zeal and persistence. He believes that emotional intelligence can be taught and that this is a moral imperative, because selfishness, self-absorption, violence and meanness of spirit seem to be rotting the goodness of our communal lives. Those who lack self-control suffer a moral deficiency. The two moral stances that out times call for are, in his opinion, self-restraint and compassion.

The book is in five parts. Part One deals with new discoveries about the brain's emotional architecture that offer an explanation of those most baffling moments in our own lives when feeling overwhelms all rationality. The neurological data suggest an opportunity for shaping our children's emotional habits which can undermine their best intentions. The data may also help our youngsters (and, perhaps, ourselves!) to subdue our more destructive or self-defeating emotional impulses. (I should point out that as I am not drawn to neurological detail, I proceeded rather quickly to Part Two).

In Part Two, Goleman explores how the neurological givens play out in the basic flair for living called *emotional intelligence*: being able for example to rein in emotional impulse; to read another person's innermost feelings; to handle relationships smoothly - thus the quotation from Aristotle. This expanded model of what it means to be "intelligent" puts emotions at the centre of aptitudes for living.

Part Three examines some key differences this aptitude makes: how these abilities can preserve our most prized relationships, or their lack corrode them; how the market forces which are reshaping our work-life are putting an unprecedented premium on emotional intelligence for work-place success; and how toxic emotions put our physical health at as much risk as does chain-smoking, even as emotional balance can help protect our health and well-being.

In Part Four, Goleman agrees that our genetic heritage endows each of us with a series of emotional set-points that determines our temperament. But he argues that the brain circuitry involved is extraordinarily malleable; temperament is not destiny. The emotional lessons we learn at home and at school shape the emotional circuits, making us more adept - or inept - at the basics of emotional intelligence. This would suggest that childhood and adolescence are critical for setting down the essential emotional habits which will govern our lives.

Part Five explores what hazards await those who, in growing to maturity, fail to master the emotional realm - how deficiencies in emotional intelligence heighten a spectrum of risks, from depression or a life of violence to eating disorders or drug abuse. And it documents how pioneering schools are teaching youngsters the emotional and social skills they need to keep their lives on track.

Perhaps the most disturbing single piece of data in this book comes from a massive survey of parents and teachers. It shows a worldwide trend for the present generation of children to be more troubled emotionally than the last: more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive. Goleman foresees a day when education will routinely include inculcating essential human competencies such as self-awareness, self-control, and empathy, and the arts of listening, resolving conflicts, and cooperation.

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PART TWO REVISITED

Goleman suggests that academic intelligence has little to do with emotional life. People with high IQs can be stunningly poor pilots of their private lives. One of psychology's open secrets is the relative inability of grades and IQ, despite their popular mystique, to predict unerringly who will succeed in life. Goleman admits that there is a relationship between IQ and life circumstances for large groups as a whole: many people with very low IQs end up in menial jobs, and those with high IQs tend to become well-paid - but by no means always.

Good academic grades tell us nothing about how people react to the vicissitudes of life because academic intelligence offers virtually no preparation for the turmoil - or opportunity - life's vicissitudes bring. Goleman asks why our society fixates on academic abilities while ignoring *emotional intelligence*, a set of traits - some might call it character - that also matters immensely for our personal destiny. Emotional life is a domain that, surely as Literacy and Numeracy, can be handled with greater or lesser skill, and requires its unique set of competencies. And how adept a person is at those is crucial to understanding why one person thrives in life while another, of equal intellect, dead-ends: emotional aptitude is a *meta-ability*, determining how well we can use whatever skills we have, including raw intellect.

Much evidence testifies that people who are emotionally adept - who know and manage their own feelings well, and who read and deal effectively with other people's feelings - are at an advantage in any domain of life, whether romance and intimate relationships or picking up the unspoken rules that govern success in organizational micro-politics. People who cannot marshal some control over their emotional life fight inner battles that sabotage their ability for focused work and clear thought.

Influenced by Howard Gardner, Goleman asserts that the time has come to broaden our notion of the spectrum of talents. The single most important contribution education can make to a child's development is to help him toward a field where his talents best suit him, where he will be satisfied and competent. We've completely lost sight of that. Instead we subject everyone to an education where, if you succeed, you will be best suited to be a college professor. And we evaluate everyone along the way according to whether they meet that narrow standard of success. Goleman argues that we should spend less time ranking children and more time helping them to identify their natural competencies and gifts, and cultivate those. There are hundreds of ways to succeed, and many, many different abilities that will help you get there.

Like Gardner, Goleman questions "the IQ way of thinking": that people are either smart or not, are born that way, that there is nothing much you can do about it, and that these tests can tell you whether you are one of the smart ones or not. There is not just one monolithic kind of intelligence that is crucial for life success, but rather a wide spectrum of intelligences, with seven key varieties: the two standard academic kinds, linguistic and mathematical-logical; spatial capacity; kinesthetic genius; musical and what Gardner calls "the personal intelligences" i.e. interpersonal skills and intrapsychic capacity that could emerge, on the one hand, in the brilliant insights of Sigmund Freud, or, with less fanfare, in the inner contentment that arises from attuning one's life to be in keeping with one's true feelings. Gardner gives these summaries of the personal intelligences:

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand other people: what motivates them, how they work, how to work cooperatively with them. Successful salespeople, politicians, teachers, clinicians, and religious leaders are all likely to be individuals with high degrees of interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence . . . is a correlative ability, turned inward. It is a capacity to form an accurate, veridical model of oneself and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life.

Gardner accepts that seven is an arbitrary figure for the variety of human intelligences; there is no magic number to the multiplicity of human talents. This multifaceted view of intelligence offers a richer picture of a child's ability and potential for success than the standard IQ.

Goleman departs somewhat from Gardner, however, when he claims that the predominant models among cognitive scientists of how the mind processes information have lacked an acknowledgement that rationality is guided by - and can be swamped by - emotion. Even so, Goleman states that Gardner appreciates how crucial these emotional and relationship abilities are in the rough-and-tumble of life. Gardner pointed out that "many people with IQs of 160 work for people with IQs of

100, if the former have poor intrapersonal intelligence and the latter have a high one. And Goleman asserts that in the day-to-day world no intelligence is more important than the interpersonal, especially as far as making appropriate choices at various stages in one's life is concerned.

Salovey (Salovey and Mayer, "Emotional Intelligence," p.189) subsumes Gardner's personal intelligences in this basic definition of emotional intelligence, expanding these abilities into five main domains:

1. *Knowing one's emotions.* Self-awareness - recognizing a feeling *as it happens* - is the keystone of emotional intelligence. People with greater certainty about their feelings are better pilots of their lives, having a surer sense of how they really feel about personal decisions from whom to marry to what job to take.
2. *Managing emotions.* Handling feelings so that they are appropriate is an ability that builds on self-awareness e.g. the capacity to soothe oneself, to shake off rampant anxiety, gloom or irritability. People who are poor in this ability are constantly battling feelings of distress, while those who excel in it can bounce back far more quickly from life's setbacks and upsets.
3. *Motivating oneself.* Marshaling emotions in the service of a goal is essential for paying attention, for self-motivation and mastery, and for creativity. Emotional self-control - delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness - underlies accomplishment of every sort. And being able to get into the "flow" state enables outstanding performance of all kinds. People who have this skill tend to be more highly productive and effective in whatever they undertake.
4. *Recognizing emotions in others.* Empathy, another ability that builds on emotional self-awareness, is the fundamental "people skill". Goleman asserts that there is a social cost for being emotionally tone-deaf. Empathy kindles altruism. People who are empathic are more attuned to the subtle social signals that indicate what others need or want. This makes them better at callings such as the caring professions, teaching, sales and management.
5. *Handling relationships.* The art of relationships is, in large part, skill in managing emotions in others. This involves having the specific skills involved in social competence. These are the abilities that undergird popularity, leadership, and interpersonal effectiveness. People who excel in these skills do well at anything that relies on interacting smoothly with others; they are social stars.

Goleman claims that IQ and emotional intelligence are not opposing competencies, but rather separate ones. We all mix intellect and emotional acuity; people with a high IQ but low emotional intelligence (or low IQ and high emotional intelligence) are relatively rare. All of us mix IQ and emotional intelligence in varying degrees. Still, of the two, emotional intelligence adds far more of the qualities that make us fully human.

People with high emotional intelligence are socially poised, outgoing and cheerful, not prone to fearfulness or worried rumination. They have a notable capacity for

commitment to people or causes, for taking responsibility, and for having an ethical outlook; they are sympathetic and caring in their relationships. Their emotional life is rich, but appropriate; they are comfortable with themselves, others, and the social universe they live in. Women of this type tend to be assertive and express their feelings directly, and to feel positive about themselves; life holds meaning for them. Unlike the women purely high in IQ, they rarely feel anxious or guilty, or sink into rumination.