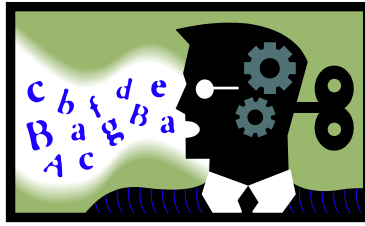


Emotional Intelligence



In a 1994 report on the current state of emotional literacy in the U.S., author Daniel Goleman stated:

"...in navigating our lives, it is our fears and envies, our rages and depressions, our worries and anxieties that steer us day to day. Even the most academically brilliant among us are vulnerable to being undone by unruly emotions. The price we pay for emotional literacy is in failed marriages and troubled families, in stunted social and work lives, in deteriorating physical health and mental anguish and, as a society, in tragedies such as killings..."

Goleman attests that the best remedy for battling our emotional shortcomings is preventive medicine. In other words, we need to place as much importance on teaching our children the essential skills of Emotional Intelligence as we do on more traditional measures like IQ and GPA.

Exactly what is Emotional Intelligence?

The term encompasses the following five characteristics and abilities:

1. **Self-awareness**--knowing your emotions, recognizing feelings as they occur, and discriminating between them
2. **Mood management**--handling feelings so they're relevant to the current situation and you react appropriately
3. **Self-motivation**--"gathering up" your feelings and directing yourself towards a goal, despite self-doubt, inertia, and impulsiveness
4. **Empathy**--recognizing feelings in others and tuning into their verbal and nonverbal cues
5. **Managing relationships**--handling interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution, and negotiations

Why do we need Emotional Intelligence?

Research in brain-based learning suggests that emotional health is fundamental to effective learning. According to a report from the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, the most critical element for a student's success in school is an understanding of how to learn. (*Emotional Intelligence*, p. 193.) The key ingredients for this understanding are:

Confidence

Curiosity

Intentionality

Self-control

Relatedness

Capacity to communicate

Ability to cooperate

These traits are all aspects of Emotional Intelligence. Basically, a student who learns to learn is much more apt to succeed. Emotional Intelligence has proven a better predictor of future success than traditional methods like the GPA, IQ, and standardized test scores.

Hence, the great interest in Emotional Intelligence on the part of corporations, universities, and schools nationwide. The idea of Emotional Intelligence has inspired research and curriculum development throughout these facilities. Researchers have concluded that people who manage their own feelings well and deal effectively with others are more likely to live content lives. Plus, happy people are more apt to retain information and do so more effectively than dissatisfied people.

Building one's Emotional Intelligence has a lifelong impact. Many parents and educators, alarmed by increasing levels of conflict in young schoolchildren--from low self-esteem to early drug and alcohol use to depression, are rushing to teach students the skills necessary for Emotional Intelligence. And in corporations, the inclusion of Emotional Intelligence in training programs has helped employees cooperate better and motivate more, thereby increasing productivity and profits.

*"Emotional Intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, either facilitating or interfering with them."--Daniel Goleman, **Emotional Intelligence**, p. 80.*

Successful Students	Struggling Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand emotional intelligence, using feelings as a compass for staying on course to their goals & dreams • Effectively reduce distress, managing & soothing emotions of upset such as anger, fear, & sadness • Create flow, feeling joyful & contentedly absorbed in their choices of work & play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow themselves to be overwhelmed by emotions, making unwise choices that push them off course • Take no responsibility for managing their emotions, instead acting irrationally on impulses of the moment. • Frequently experience boredom or anxiety in their lives.

Success requires more than a high IQ & academic success. It requires an understanding of emotions & the ability to control emotions so that success can flow naturally. Success requires emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence includes the ability to:

- recognise our emotions as they occur
- manage our distressing emotions in a positive way
- control impulses & motivate ourselves
- recognise others' emotions (empathy)
- handle feelings that come up in a relationship.

Knowing one's emotions is vital to handling emotions. Three self-defeating patterns developed in childhood might interfere with the ability to handle emotions.

1. Minimising – to become numb to one's current emotional state. A minimiser might say he/she is not feeling anything or might state what they are thinking & label it as feelings.
2. Maximising – to exaggerate feelings. Maximisers are often overwhelmed with their strong emotions.
3. Substituting – to replace an 'unacceptable' emotion with an 'acceptable' emotion. Substituters express an inappropriate emotion (for example, anger instead of sadness)

To become more attuned with emotions:

- Build a vocabulary of feelings. Try to classify emotions beyond anger, sadness, fear, & happiness.
- Be mindful of emotions as they are happening. Know how to distinguish between emotions (eg, sadness & depression).
- Understand what causes your emotion.
- Recognise the difference between a feeling & resulting action.

Distress is the emotional upheaval that many people feel when events or circumstances are not as they desire. Learning to deal effectively as a creator with life's distresses leads to personal success.

Creators	Victims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise, accept, and fully experience distressing feelings. - Make wise choices even in the grips of distress. - Take positive actions before being hijacked by emotional upset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make unwise choices that reduce distress in the moment while putting their future in jeopardy! - Respond with one immature, impulsive choice after another.

Anger

Healthy anger declares a threat or injustice against us or someone else. The brain then releases a hormone which allows us to fight.

- **Creators** recognise the signs of anger (flushed skin, tensed muscles, increased pulse rates). Remembering that emotions don't make rational choices, **creators pause & wisely choose their next move** rather than striking impulsively.

Responding to anger:

1. Change your physiology – take 20 minutes to allow the hormones secreted by the brain to subside.
 - a. Separate – yourself from the situation
 - b. Exercise – this burns off the excessive hormones.
 - c. Relax – slow down & allow the anger to pass – just don't dwell on the situation – **truly relax**.
2. Change your thoughts:
 - a. Reframe – Look at the problem from another angle. Look for a benign explanation – look at it from the other person's perspective.
 - b. Elevate – Rise above the situation & see it in the context of your whole life.
 - c. Distract yourself – Shift your thoughts to something pleasant.
 - d. Identify the hurt – anger is often the result of hurt.
 - e. Forgive – Give yourself the emotional release of forgiveness even if you feel the other individual is unworthy of forgiveness.

Fear

Healthy fear delivers the message that danger is imminent. The brain then releases the hormones that fuel our energy to flee.

Victims exaggerate dangers & replace their healthy fear with paralyzing anxiety or terror. Creators become conscious of oncoming fear, terror, or anxiety through clear body signals (shallow breathing, increased pulse, 'butterflies' in the stomach).

Creators pause & wisely choose what to do next rather than fleeing impulsively from or constantly worrying about a non-threatening person or situation.

Responding to Fear

1. Change your physiology
 - a. Relax – slow down & reclaim mastery of thoughts & resulting emotions.
 - b. Breathe deeply – fear constricts – keep oxygen flowing through your body to reverse the physiological impact of fear.
2. Change your thoughts
 - a. Detach – yourself from the worry of the situation. Prepare & then let nature take its course.
 - b. Reframe – Ask what is the worst possible scenario.
 - c. Visualise success with safety- create a mental movie of yourself achieving your ideal outcomes.
 - d. Assume the best – Victims often use negative assumptions to fuel fear. Creators assume the best in every situation.

- e. Distract yourself – consciously replace fear with pleasant thoughts.
- f. Face the fear – Do what you fear, in spite of fear. Most fears are simply a **False Expectation Appearing Real**

Sadness

Healthy sadness overtakes us when we experience the loss of someone or something dear. We must fully grieve our loss in order to become healthy again.

Unhealthy sadness becomes a lingering depression when it makes us feel helpless and keeps us from moving forward.

Creators honour their grief by fully feeling the loss and using the memories of the past to help shape a successful future.

Responding to sadness.

1. Change your physiology
 - a. Exercise – helps the body create natural hormones that combat depression.
 - b. Laugh – Laughter is physiologically incompatible with depression. Rent a funny movie, go to a comedy club, read a joke book or cartoons, seek out your funniest friend.
 - c. Breathe deeply – depression constricts. Send oxygen throughout the body by breathing deeply.
 - d. Do something (anything) different towards your goals. Get moving . . . create an accomplishment, regardless of how small.
2. Change your thoughts
 - a. Challenge pessimistic beliefs – think optimistic thoughts about how the future will be better.
 - b. Socialise with friends & loved one – isolation intensifies depression.
 - c. Help others in need.
 - d. Focus on the positive – identify blessings & victories
 - e. Find the opportunity in the problem – see each problem as an opportunity for future growth.

Flow – from [Mihály Csíkszentmihályi](#)

Our emotions can remain in check when we live our lives by creating flow or highly enjoyable periods of time.

Flow is the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing by a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity.

Flow is based on:

- Specific goals and clear rules about how to achieve the goal.
- Challenges that can be adjusted up or down to match our skill level.
- Clear feedback about how we're doing.
- The capacity to screen out distractions

Creating flow

Skill level HIGH and challenge LOW = Boredom

Skill level LOW and challenge HIGH = Anxiety

Skill level EQUAL TO or SLIGHTLY BELOW challenge = **Flow**

Self-care

Self – love is the core belief that **I AM LOVABLE**

Develop a self-care plan

1. Nurture yourself physically
 - a. Eat right,
 - b. exercise,
 - c. get plenty of sleep,
 - d. avoid substance abuse
 - e. Take a recovery break every 90-120 minutes
2. Nurture yourself mentally
 - a. The key supportive mental muscles include mental preparation, visualisation, positive self-talk, self-love, affirmations
 - b. Mental energy that best serves is realistic optimism-seeing the world as it is, but always working positively towards a desired outcome or solution.
 - c. Physical exercise stimulates cognitive capacity.
3. Nurture yourself emotionally
 - a. Access pleasant & positive emotions: the experience of enjoyment, challenge, adventure, & opportunity.
 - b. Fuel the key emotional muscles of self-confidence, self-control, interpersonal effectiveness and empathy.
 - c. Seek activities that are enjoyable, fulfilling and life-affirming.
 - d. Show compassion,
 - e. Feel your emotions,
 - f. Share feelings with a trusted friend or journal
4. Nurture yourself spiritually
 - a. Develop your deeply held values & inculcate a purpose beyond self-interest.
 - b. Develop your sense of character – the courage and conviction to live by your deepest values
 - c. Support your sense of character by exercising your passion, commitment, integrity, & honesty.
 - d. Balance a commitment to a purpose beyond yourself with adequate self-care.
 - e. Expanding your spiritual capacity by pushing past our comfort in precisely the same way that expanding physical capacity does.