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Emotional WHAT?

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Is "emotional intelligence" really an intelligence? How do we know, and what is an intelligence anyway?

Touted as the key to educational and corporate success, is emotional intelligence really just another "flavor of the month"?

The Harvard Business Review [1998 article](#) on emotional intelligence is their most requested reprint ever. What makes it such an intriguing notion?

There are half a million web pages on "emotional intelligence," and everyone wants to claim the "right" definition – so how many definitions do we need?

While you could read all 486,000 web pages, we asked several of the world's top experts and researchers to explain emotional intelligence. The conclusion:

There is an intelligence based on emotion, and people who have this capacity are less depressed, healthier, more employable, and have better relationships.

It all began about 2,000 years ago when Plato wrote, "All learning has an emotional base." Meanwhile [Publilius Syrus](#) said, "Rule your feelings, lest your feelings rule you." Since then, scientists, educators, and philosophers have worked to prove or disprove the importance of feelings. Unfortunately, for a large part of those two millennia, common thought was, "Emotions are in the way. They keep us from making good decisions, and they keep us from focusing."

This view has been a mainstay of traditional psychology. For example, in 1940, L.F. Schaffer wrote that emotions are "a disorganized response, largely visceral, resulting from the lack of an effective adjustment."

In the last three decades, a growing body of research is proving just the opposite.

In the 1950's, [Abraham Maslow](#) wrote about how people could enhance their emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental strengths. His work sparked the "Human Potential" movement that could be the greatest celebration of humanism since the Renaissance. In the 1970s and 80s this led to the development of many new sciences of human capacity. Serious research was occurring to define both emotions and intelligence. One of these researchers was [Peter Salovey](#), now Dean of Yale University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Salovey says that over the last few decades, beliefs about emotions and intelligence have both changed – where intelligence was once perfection, people were recognizing that there was more to life. Where emotion was once perdition, people were recognizing that it might have substantive value.

There is ongoing discussion about the origins of “EQ,” but consensus is that the seminal publication was an article called “[Emotional Intelligence](#)” by Peter Salovey and [John “Jack” Mayer](#) in 1990. The article defined EQ as a scientifically testable “intelligence.” Salovey says he and Mayer were equal coauthors, and he got his name first because of a coin toss. The team has gone on to publish numerous articles, and their definition of EQ has evolved to:

“Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions; to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought; to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.”

In other words, there are four parts:

1. Perceive or sense emotions;
2. Use emotions to assist thought;
3. Understand emotions;
4. Manage emotions.

As their colleague [David Caruso](#) writes, “It is very important to understand that emotional intelligence is not the opposite of intelligence, it is not the triumph of heart over head – it is the unique intersection of both.”

Daniel Goleman drew on the research of Salovey and Mayer, as well as several other key researchers and practitioners, for his bestselling book, [Emotional Intelligence](#). In addition to the research, Goleman reviewed best practice in education. He wrote about two school programs, Six Seconds’ “Self-Science” curriculum and the New Haven Schools’ Social Development program. He also spoke with many “hard” science researchers and saw how their work connected with what was occurring on the leading edge in schools and organizations.

In 1997, [Six Seconds](#)’ team sought to take those best-practices and create a framework for teaching and practicing the skills of EQ. They went beyond the scientific definition to capture the practical value of the concepts that are worth teaching and learning. Their definition of emotional intelligence is, “The capacities to create optimal results in your relationships with yourself and others.”

Six Seconds also developed a model that captures those practices in three areas: “Know Yourself,” “Choose Yourself,” and “Give Yourself,” with eight specific skills. Six Seconds’ approach mirrors David Caruso’s vision: The goal is to integrate thinking and feeling to live more effectively.

This approach points to a fundamental difference between EQ and other ways of looking at people. EQ practitioners are concerned with the whole person -- about the integration of thinking, feeling, and behavior rather than in isolation. This is particularly important as a growing body of science challenges the idea that reason and passion are even separate processes.

Another leading researcher whose work inspired both Goleman and Six Seconds is [Antonio Damasio](#). In [Descartes’ Error](#), Damasio outlines how emotions are functioning in the brain to create people’s sense of identity and guide rational decision-making. He continues to discuss this work in [The Feeling of What Happens](#), where he contends that our sense of being conscious comes from emotion.

Damasio’s contributions provide powerful evidence that it is specious to separate thinking and feeling. Other researchers would go further. [Candace Pert](#) is a leading neurobiologist who wrote [Molecules of Emotion](#), was the chief of the brain chemistry section of the NIH from 1982 to 1988, and is now a professor at Johns Hopkins Medical School.

Pert's perspective is that "thinking" occurs in the brain and the body. All kinds of "information" is processed throughout the body – ideas, feelings, and maybe even spiritual impulses. While the brain has the most processing power, it is not necessarily driving the system. Pert's assertion is certainly a far cry from the notion that the "rational" brain is the center of human essence.

So, what does it matter? While some researchers have focused on defining the skills of emotional intelligence, others have looked at the effects. The links between EQ and performance are powerful -- from leadership to sales to teaching, high EQ correlates with greater effectiveness.

- The EQ pilot at L'Oreal realized a \$2.5 million benefit plus a 63% drop in turnover;
- The PepsiCo EQ pilot yielded over 1000% ROI with \$3.75 million in added value plus an 87% decrease in executive turnover;
- A 1994 study by psychologists Johnson and Johnson showed training in social and emotional skills reduced discipline referrals to school principals by 95 percent;
- Last year, [James Parker](#) showed that emotional intelligence is at least twice as effective as IQ at predicting college success.

Businesses, government agencies, schools, and hospitals are gaining powerful advantages from EQ implementation. To replicate these results and disseminate best practices, a coalition of EQ organizations created the first conference focused on the practices of emotional intelligence in 2000 in San Francisco. Since then, the NexusEQ Conference has been held in Durban, Halifax, and will be in Orlando in 2004 (<http://www.nexuseq.com/>).

One of the NexusEQ keynote speakers is [Reuven Bar-On](#), an organizational psychologist who has been interested in non-cognitive competencies since the mid-1980s. He developed a test that measures people's self-report of these competencies, called the [EQ-i](#).

Bar-On's definition is: "Emotional intelligence is an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures." Again, similar to Six Seconds' approach, Bar-On is focusing on the real-world results.

Dr. Bar-On explains how his work is similar to and different from Salovey/Mayer's: "We are both assuming a cognitive schemata and attempting to empirically demonstrate that this construct is not personality. They are relating primarily to a specific set of emotional abilities and a potential for behavior (emotional intelligence), while I am focusing on emotional and social functioning or behavior (emotionally and socially intelligent behavior)."

The EQ-i assesses five areas: Intrapersonal (awareness), Interpersonal (relationships), Stress Management (problem solving), Adaptability (stress tolerance), and General Mood (happiness).

Another useful definition comes from [Q-Metrics](#), the creators of the [EQ Map](#) (<http://www.EQstore.com>). They say: "Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, trust, creativity and influence." One key insight from this model is that having a capacity or skill is not enough to create real-world results.

Q-Metrics' CEO, [Esther Orioli](#), explains, "I know plenty of CEOs who have the skill to empathize or give positive support. They don't do it. Why not? Because they just don't think it important." Orioli points out that when leaders see how certain behaviors create more positive results, they do change their values. "Values dictate how we spend our time and resources. If we teach people skills in a vacuum, without relating them to their value and belief system, there is no real benefit," Orioli concludes.

Another measurement tool is the [Emotional Intelligence Appraisal](#). The EIA uses Daniel Goleman's four-quadrant model: Emotional intelligence is awareness of self, awareness of others, management of self,

management of others. The EIA is unique because it is such a focused tool -- it has 28 questions and can test your EQ in under seven minutes (<http://www.6seconds.org/ts>).

No doubt the field of emotional intelligence will continue to develop. Bar-On says the key is refining the research of development, effects, and assessment. He predicts we will also see, “a more clear connection between EI, individual/group performance, and group/organizational productivity. As a result of this activity, we will have a much more accurate and empirical view of what this construct is – and what it can and cannot do.”

Dr. Salovey offers a similar conclusion: “I agree with Dr. Bar-On. I think in the coming decade we will see well conducted research demonstrating that emotional skills and competencies predict positive outcomes at home with one’s family, in school, and at work. The real challenge is to show that emotional intelligence matters over-and-above psychological constructs such as personality and IQ that have been measured for decades. I believe that emotional intelligence holds this promise.”

Summary: Comparison of EQ Models

All the models touch on understanding yourself, taking charge of yourself, and then applying that awareness and ability in your interactions with others.

Thought Leader	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Application
Mayer/Salovey	Perceive Understand	Regulate	Generate
Bar-On	Intrapersonal	Adaptability Stress Management Mood	Interpersonal
Goleman	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Other-Awareness Other-Management
Q-Metrics	Sense	Understand	Apply
Six Seconds	Know Yourself	Choose Yourself	Give Yourself

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