

# Emotional Intelligence Theory



## What is Emotional Intelligence?

When Salovey and Mayer<sup>1</sup> first used the term emotional intelligence in 1990 they described it as 'a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and action.' Some of their initial studies produced some interesting results about the relationship between emotional clarity and intelligence. For instance when an individual was able to identify and name a mood or feeling they were experiencing, they generally recovered more quickly from the condition. Similarly individuals who were able to perceive accurately, understand and appraise others' emotions were better able to respond flexibly to changes in their social environments and build supportive networks.

## Which Is More Effective In Determining Success IQ Or EI?

IQ itself is not a very good predictor of job performance, Hunter and Hunter in 1984 estimated that at best IQ accounts for about 25% of the variance. Sternberg (1996) has suggested that 10% is a more realistic estimate. But in some studies IQ accounts for as little as 4 % of the variance.

Snarey and Valliant conducted a forty year longitudinal study of 450 boys who grew up in Massachusetts. Two thirds of the boys were from welfare families and one third had IQs below 90. The research findings suggested that IQ had very little to do with how well they did at work or the rest of their lives. What made the biggest difference was childhood abilities such as being able to handle frustration, control emotions and get along with other people.

Fiest and Baron found in their study of 80 individuals with PhDs in science who matriculated from Berkley in the 1950s that social and emotional abilities were four times more important than IQ in determining professional success and prestige.

Emotions are not new. The concept of Emotional Intelligence is not new. Our understanding of its importance is not new. However the recognition of its importance is relatively new and increasing.

A Definition of Emotional Intelligence :“The capacity to recognise our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.” Daniel Goleman.

## The Importance of Emotions

Our bodies communicate with us to tell us and others what we need. The better our communication the better we feel. Emotions help us to establish our boundaries. Emotions have the potential to unite and connect us. Emotions can serve as our inner moral and ethical compass. They are essential for good decision making.

### General principles

- All humans have emotional needs.
- Each of us has similar, but different emotional needs.
- Emotional needs vary more by degree than type. They also vary more than physical needs.
- Emotional needs are more basic and important than rights.
- Negative feelings are indications of our unmet emotional needs.
- Feelings are real and not debatable.

## Understanding Emotional Literacy

The knowledge that we might have about our own emotions and beliefs and those of others is of limited value if we are unable to properly identify and label emotions as we experience them. This is called emotional literacy. It is important to be able to separately identify our thoughts from our feelings. Our thoughts are innumerable and much too diverse to codify whereas our emotions generally fall into four categories:

- Sad
- Mad
- Glad
- Scared

(<sup>1</sup>Salovey, P. & Mayer, J. D. Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9, 185-211.1990)

Recognising that we feel these conditions when they happen is the starting point to becoming emotionally literate. Distinguishing between our different emotional states is the key to controlling the way in which we respond to different situations. Humans experience a number of feelings at the same time or experience them as a chain of emotions. Tracing these can provide powerful insights to unhelpful repeated behaviours.

### The Effects of Emotions Upon Behaviour

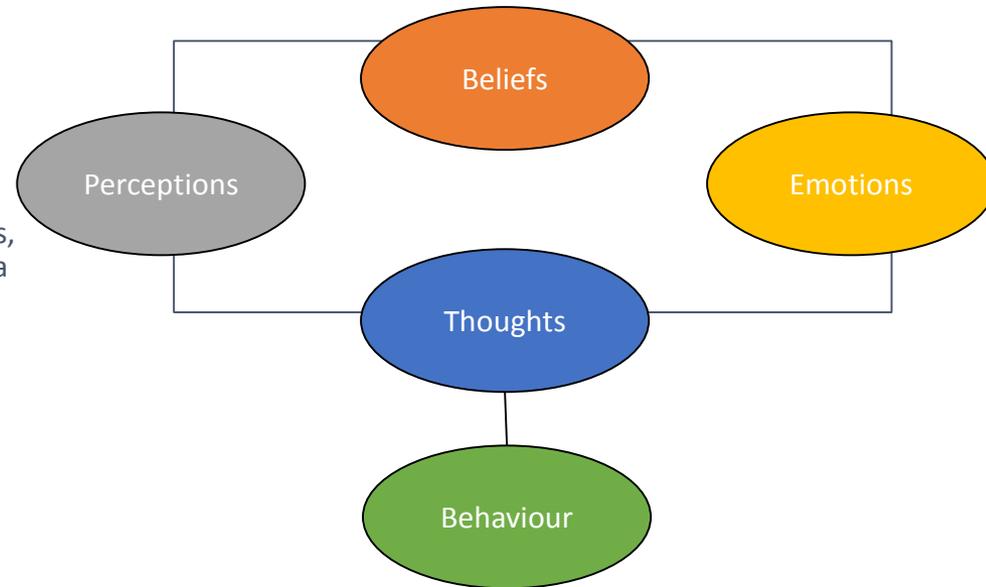
Our thoughts, perceptions and feelings impact upon behaviour.

Belief systems are important because they define limits, our place in this world. They are generally inherited from those around us; we may not own them in a real sense but we subscribe to them. We create experiences on our journey through life and develop our perceptions and consciousness about them. The more self-aware we become of this process, the richer the experience. Changing behaviour necessitates a change in beliefs. We develop and grow through our moments of clarity and make clear decisions to change as a result of them.

Thinking is influenced by our beliefs. For example if we think we can climb Mount Everest, then our thoughts will align to this aspiration. The alternative is also true if we think that we can't do it then we never will.

**Negative or positive self-talk (thinking) is a self-fulfilling prophecy.**

Perceptions are ways of seeing and looking that are filtered in our brains in keeping with our beliefs and goals:



## **Emotions and Identity**

Emotional intelligence can play a critical role in conflict resolution. Fisher and Ury (1981) describe the process of resolving conflict as one of helping people move from no to yes. What makes conflict inevitable and often difficult to resolve is that we tend to identify with our position, so in order for us to change it there has to be a change in identity. This can mean changing our sense of who we are or what we expect from others.

Emotions play a critical role in identifying ourselves – in knowing who we are in the world and distinguishing self from other. After enough memories have been stored (generally around age two) the sense of familiarity with ourselves undergoes a profound transformation. We begin to think in terms of 'I', recognising our likes and dislikes, and owning our behaviour and feelings. Over time a sophisticated menu of preference and aversion is developed through a process of associational memory by which we define ourselves.

I know what I like and dislike and depending upon my level of confidence will express this to others.'

Our ability to remodel, update and even upgrade identity, to resolve problems and conflicts, and consequently to move ourselves and others from 'no' to 'yes' will depend upon how consciously or unconsciously we process our emotions.

If we are unconsciously embedded in the automatic sequence of stimulus-response conditioning, we will tend to be creatures of habit and will be liable to perceive ourselves as victims of the world. If, through self-reflective processes, we have been able to lengthen the amount of time between stimulus and response, to be more conscious of the processes that determine our behaviour, then we will be more flexible and tolerant. We will have available a more robust repertoire of behaviours and be able to generate better decisions and more creative solutions to the problems we encounter in our daily lives. This is perhaps the truest measure of emotional intelligence.

## **Emotional Power**

Emotional power is expressed through our relationship with others. It measures our ability to be at one with others, to exercise control, to appreciate and reflect, and to influence where it is right and appropriate. Geetu Orme (2001) suggests there are three strategic components for building quality in our relationships. They are tuning in, understanding and taking action. This allows us to make the most and not the least of our relationships.

## **The Value of Emotional Intelligence at Work**

Seligman has developed a concept called 'learned optimism'. It refers to the causal attributions people make when confronted with failure or setbacks. Optimists tend to make temporary, external causal attributions while pessimists make global, permanent, internal attributions. His tests involved working with sale personnel and college students. In both cases higher optimism scores were better predictors of sales and end of term grades than intelligence.

The ability to manage feelings and handle stress is another aspect of emotional intelligence that has been found to be important for success. A study of store managers in a retail chain found the ability to handle stress predicted net profits, sales per square foot, sales per employee and per dollar of inventory investment.

Emotional intelligence has as much to do with knowing when and how to express emotions as it does to controlling them. Affecting the mood of a group with positive, warm, cheerful expressions of enthusiasm will yield higher levels of co-operation, trust, fairness and performance than negative feelings. (Barsade,1998). Similar findings were uncovered by Bachman (1988) when he found that the most effective leaders in the US Navy were warmer, more outgoing, emotionally expressive, dramatic and sociable.

Rosenthal in 1977 discovered that people who were best at identifying other people's emotions were more successful in their work as well as in their social lives.

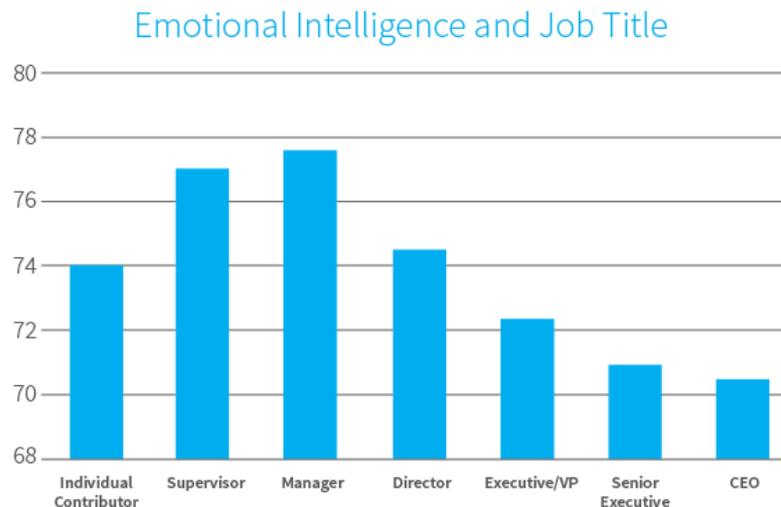
However this notion is misleading in a sense because emotional intelligence in itself is not enough. Both Goleman (1998) and Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (1998b) have argued that emotional intelligence is not a strong predictor of emotional competence. Rather it provides the bedrock for competencies that are. Goleman has tried to represent this idea by distinguishing between emotional intelligence and emotional competence.

Emotional competence refers to the personal and social skills that lead to superior performance in the world of work. 'Emotional competencies are linked to and based on emotional intelligence. A certain level of emotional intelligence is necessary to learn the emotional competencies (Gowing),

For instance, the ability to recognise accurately what another person is feeling enables one to develop a specific competency such as influence. Similarly, people who are better able to regulate their emotions will find it easier to develop a competency such as initiative or achievement drive.

### Emotional Intelligence and Job Title

Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves conducted a national employee survey in the United States using an emotional intelligence appraisal tool to measure EI in relation to occupational role. The results suggested that individuals were generally promoted because of what they knew or how long they have worked, rather than for their skills in managing others. Once reaching the top they usually spent less time interacting with others. Interestingly, they found that those senior managers who had the highest emotional intelligence scores were acknowledged to be the best performers.



## The Four Primary Emotional Intelligence Models

Of the many emotional intelligence models and assessment instruments, four have risen to prominence because of their validity and reliability. They are:

- Bar-On EQ-I
- Goleman and Boyatzis ECI 360
- Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's MSCEIT
- Orioli and Cooper's EQ Map

The **Bar-On EQ-i** is a researched self-report measure of social and emotional competency which has been developed over the past two decades. There are fifteen measures expressed through five scales. They are as follows:

Intrapersonal EQ	Interpersonal EQ	Stress Management EQ	Adaptability EQ	General Mood EQ
<p>This measures the capabilities that are necessary to develop, maintain and assert one's self effectively within a social context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-Regard</li><li>• Emotional self-Awareness</li><li>• Assertiveness</li><li>• Independence</li><li>• Self-Actualization</li></ul>	<p>This looks at how we interface and engage these competencies in a social setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empathy</li><li>• Social Responsibility</li><li>• Interpersonal Relationships</li></ul>	<p>This measures how well we feel we manage the tensions, disappointments and challenges that arise from living in a less than perfect world. Stress management is composed of two factors: Stress Tolerance, which looks at how well we protect ourselves from the injurious effects of stress, and impulse control. This looks at how likely we are to project anger towards others or engage in behaviours which may be addictive or self-harming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stress Tolerance</li><li>• Impulse Control</li></ul>	<p>This explores our relationship with social reality and change. The reality testing sub-scale tells us how well we are in touch with objective consensus reality. Flexibility tells us how resiliently we adapt when the reality changes – especially when it is unexpected. Problem solving evaluates how effective we are at causing that reality to change when we want something new or different.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reality Testing</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Problem Solving</li></ul>	<p>This reflects how hopeful we are about the quality of the future we expect and happiness shows how satisfied we feel in the present moment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optimism</li><li>• Happiness</li></ul>

The Goleman and Boyatzis ECI 360 is a seventy-two question assessment that includes inputs from managers, peers, direct reports, customers and clients. It is based upon Goleman’s Emotional Competence Framework. The assessment measures personal competence (how people manage themselves) and social competence (how people manage relationships). It is composed of four domains each of which has associated competencies

	Self – personal awareness	Other – social competence
Recognition	<p><b>Self –awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-awareness</li> <li>• Accurate self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self confidence</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Social Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Service orientation</li> <li>• Organisational awareness</li> </ul>
Regulation	<p><b>Self-management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-control</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Conscientiousness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Achievement drive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiative</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Social Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change catalyst</li> <li>• Building bonds</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Teamwork &amp; collaboration</li> </ul>

## Self-Awareness Competencies

Awareness of feelings	Personal insight	Self Assurance
Recognising one's emotions and their effects	Knowing one's key strengths and frailties	Sureness about one's self-worth and capabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know which emotions they are feeling (can name why and label them)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware of their strengths weaknesses and emotional boundaries in relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present themselves with self-possession; have poise but with warmth</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realise the chain from emotion to action (the links between their feelings and what they think)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective, understanding the power of learning from experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can celebrate diversity within teams, voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise how their feelings affect their performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning and self-development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are decisive, able to make sound judgements using emotional and cognitive information despite uncertainties and pressures</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a guiding awareness of their values or goals and any gap between espoused values and actual behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective about feedback from others and able to generate positive strokes for themselves appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are generally recognised as self-confident</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to show a sense of humour and perspective about themselves</li> </ul>	

## Self-control Competencies

Self-regulation	Authenticity	Accountability	Flexibility	Self-motivation
Managing emotions and holding back unhelpful impulses	Being true to yourself and others	Taking responsibility, owning your performance	Embracing and adapting to change	Positively managing your outlook
Stop acting on impulse when it is an unproductive behaviour	Build trust through your reliability and congruent behaviour	Take responsibility for your actions and inaction	Take account of potential change in your planning	Be driven to improve or meet high standards
Remain collected, positive and unflustered even at testing times	Act ethically being above reproach and questioning of your motives	Clear up miscommunication and keep promises	Be able to let go, accepting shifting priorities and a challenging pace of change	Demonstrate commitment in all your relationships
Manage distressing emotions and reduce associated anxiety	Admit flaws and confront unethical actions	Hold yourself accountable to objectives	Be adaptable in how you perceive events or different peoples	Look for the opportunity first and not the problem
Think lucidly remaining focused under pressure	Stand up for your values even when in a minority	Prioritise what is important and urgent everyday at work	Be open to confronting change issues and exploring personal implications	Show persistence in pursuing goals and intentionally in overcoming barriers/ setbacks
	Treat yourself with compassion and humour when sometimes you fall back into old ways		Be innovative to account for change, generating and sharing ideas	

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso’s MSCEIT - This is a unique emotional intelligence test in that it seeks to measure intelligence rather than competence. The test is designed as an ability measure with objective right and wrong answers. This includes the ability to label emotions and understand the relationship between words and feelings, the ability to distinguish between authentic emotional expressions and those that are inauthentic or feigned, and the ability to manage emotions by strengthening positive ones and reducing negative ones.

**Orioli and Cooper’s EQ Map** is a self-assessment and self-scoring tool that attempts to capture information on the current environment of the respondent in terms of life pressures and life satisfaction as well as the effects of the EQ profile on a variety of outcomes including general health, quality of life and relationships and optimal performance.

It is composed of two current environmental scales, fourteen EQ Dimensions and four outcomes. They are as follows:

Current Environment	Emotional Awareness	EQ competencies	EQ Values and Attitudes	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life pressures</li> <li>• Life satisfactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-awareness</li> <li>• Emotional expression</li> <li>• Emotional awareness of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionality</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Interpersonal connections</li> <li>• Constructive discontent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlook</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Intuition</li> <li>• Trust Radius</li> <li>• Personal Power</li> <li>• Integrated self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General health</li> <li>• Quality of life</li> <li>• Relationship quotient</li> <li>• Optimal performance</li> </ul>

### Correlating the four different EQ Measurement Models

Although each model has individual merit and may be distinguished by the emphasis it places upon one or more particular aspects of emotional intelligence, in the main there are high levels of commonality across all. Hughes, Pattison and Terrell (2005) have developed a matrix to map the competencies across each model using the Bar-On EQi measure as the framework for comparing each

## Exercising Self-control

Being able to distinguish between different kinds of emotion and understand how and why we experience different feelings at different times and in different situations is the route to becoming self aware. This in turn enables us to exercise greater self-control over what we feel and how we express our emotions. Self-control enables us to manoeuvre more flexibly and with greater agility around potentially emotional situations and to secure a broader internal perspective on the issue in hand. It resonates with the concept of viewing the situations we encounter from 'the balcony' instead of the 'dance floor' as advocated by Linsky and Heifetz in their analysis of effective leadership. The following competencies detail those behaviours associated with self-control:

### Developing the Internal Observer

We have the capacity to observe our own thoughts and behaviours from an internal perspective. This allows us to understand the motives and reasons for the way we emotionally respond to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Developing our internal observer capacity requires that we distinguish between feeling an emotion and thinking about it. Thinking about how we feel can be a prospective and reflective practice.

To change the way we behave it is often necessary for us to build a new neural pathway. When we change the way we work or how we do things we need to replace the old practice with a new technology. This change may be driven by the external requirements placed upon us but the role of the internal observer will be to identify the change we need to make at a personal and often subconscious level.

## Dealing With a Negative Emotional Reaction

To use our emotional intelligence effectively, we need to be aware of what is happening and the triggers that cause a negative reaction before, during or in the immediately after an event. By using our internal voice and the capacity to self-reflect we can deconstruct situations to understand why they happen. We learn the triggers so that when we next experience them we know that we are likely to act in a specific way unless we do something about it. Using the internal observer we can train ourselves to react differently and to use foresight rather than hindsight to manage our emotions.

### Creating an Effective Organisational Climate through Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

Organisational climate is the working atmosphere created within an organisation. It was first defined by Litwin and Stringer and subsequently refined by McClland and his colleagues from Hay/Mcber. They determined that six factors influence organisational climate:

- Flexibility - how free employees feel to innovate, unencumbered by regulation and control
- Responsibility – how much employees feel accountable to the organisation in which they work
- Standards – the level at which employees make their contribution
- Rewards – the way in which organisational value is communicated to staff

- Clarity – the understanding employees have of the mission, purpose and values of the organisation
- Commitment – the level of employee commitment to a common purpose

They also found a direct correlation between leadership styles and each of these drivers of organisational climate.

Daniel Goleman in his article, 'Leadership that gets Results' (Harvard Business Review) suggested that the most effective managers used an array of leadership styles. This is not a new idea but the connection between these styles and emotional intelligence is

### **Goleman's Six Leadership Styles**

- Coercive
- Democratic
- Authoritative
- Affiliate
- Pacesetting
- Coaching

### **Conclusion**

This information has been brought together to enhance your understanding of emotional intelligence. It draws upon a number of data sources to provide a comprehensive overview of what emotional intelligence means in relation to managing and leading inside organisations. You are encouraged to explore this field in more depth and detail by using the further reading list attached to this overview.