

Intelligent Emotion

How clever are you?

Intelligence can be a slippery concept. We are all familiar with those people we grew up with who seemed to be very clever and yet had difficulty managing everyday situations. And then there are those that didn't do too well when it came to exams and yet who seem to navigate life with much greater ease. We may be familiar with the idea that there are different kinds of intelligence (Gardner 1983) but we often had a narrow view of what it means to be smart. In the age of readily available information, access to information, or even knowing "what to do", no longer seems to be enough.

Many of the problems that beset us - the things that keep us awake at night - do not seem to be cognitive challenges. "I wish I could find a solution to that problem", more often than not refers to a relationship problem, or a problem of identity, style or purpose. And it's not so much about what we think is the issue and the solution, but quite often, it's more about how we feel about it. And so handling our emotions, and the emotions of others in a positive and effective way, has become something that employers are looking for, even more than they are looking for the traditional "smarts". It also turns out that leadership is more about trust than it is about technique. And to that end, emotional intelligence becomes more and more important. Daniel Goleman found that success in a job depended more on emotional intelligence than IQ by a factor of 2-1. In leadership roles, the split was 85/15.

And now we see this everywhere. Only last week, both the Guardian (UK National paper) and the London Evening Standard carried articles about MI6 (the British secret service) citing emotional intelligence (as well as a high IQ) being high on the list of key requirements.

What you really need to join MI6: emotional intelligence and a high IQ (Guardian, Mar 2017)

Chances are, the concept of emotional intelligence is younger than you (well some of you...). Born in 1990, it served as the missing link in a peculiar finding: people with average IQs outperform those with the highest IQs 70% of the time. This anomaly threw a massive wrench into the broadly held assumption that IQ was the sole source of success, according to EQ expert Dr Travis Bradberry..

He goes on to say "decades of research now point to emotional intelligence as being the critical factor that sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack. The connection is so strong that 90% of top performers have high emotional intelligence."

Andrea Ovans suggests in a recent HBR article that anyone trying to come up to speed on emotional intelligence would have a pretty easy time of it since the concept is "remarkably recent", and its application to business newer still. She explains the term was coined in a research paper (in 1990) by two psychology professors, John D. Mayer of UNH and Peter Salovey of Yale. Some years

later, Mayer defined it in HBR this way:

From a scientific standpoint, emotional intelligence is the ability to accurately perceive your own and others' emotions; to understand the signals that emotions send about relationships; and to manage your own and others' emotions. It doesn't necessarily include the qualities (like optimism, initiative, and self-confidence) that some popular definitions ascribe to it.

You can read her full article here: <https://hbr.org/2015/04/how-emotional-intelligence-became-a-key-leadership-skill>

The Institute for Health and Human Potential makes it simpler - "We define EI as the ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions; and recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others"

So, what about you and how are you dealing with those emotion fuelled challenges at work, and at home. The good news is that unlike certain personality traits, EQ is something that can be learned. As well as improving with age, the behaviours associated with EQ can be described, identified and practised

Travis Bradberry presents the question in a tantalising manner in his recent article "Are You Emotionally Intelligent? Here's How to Know for Sure"

He suggests that, amongst other things, you can tell you are emotionally intelligent if:

- You're Curious about People
- You're a Good Judge of Character
- You Are Difficult to Offend
- You Disconnect
- You Stop Negative Self-Talk in Its Tracks

Read the full article : <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/242881> So, how clever you are probably has a lot less to do with qualifications than you may have thought.

How good you are at building trust with other people is probably a great place to start. As well as bringing greater intelligence to the way you manage your own emotions, and those of other people.