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Have you ever been here?

Mayra Porrata



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"People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost."

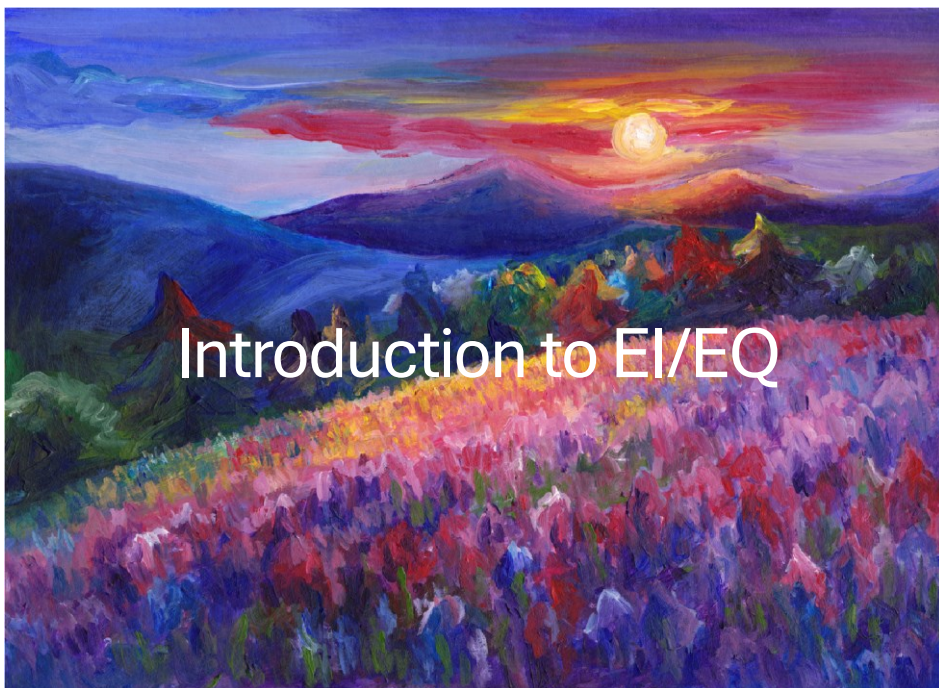
H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Lay of the land

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Introduction to EI/EQ

Introduction to EI/EQ

Emotional intelligence (EI/EQ) is the ability to recognize and decipher emotional information for the benefit of self and others. EI/EQ plays a crucial role in personal and professional relationships, decision-making, and our overall health and wellbeing.

Though invisible, emotions are part of our human physiology. Expressed through language, art, and as behaviors, emotions expand human intelligence and inform our bodies and daily lives.

There's a growing body of evidence suggesting that our fascia plays a role in how we store and process our emotions. Fascia is the connective tissue in the body that surrounds muscles, bones, nerves, and blood vessels-- what gives it structure and support.

Some theories suggest that our fascia holds emotional and physical trauma-- which when triggered, results in emotional dysregulation and physical pain in our body.

Our neurofascial network which includes our central nervous system, nerves, and our fascia are all interconnected. This helps explain why light, sound, and movement modalities are often more effective than talk-therapy. These types of interventions aid in actively dissolving these deeply held energy/information clusters.

Befriending and partnering with our emotions and emotional landscape enables us to live with less friction, less suffering, and more energy for living our lives with greater ease and joy. This simple guide is just one of many tools to help us better understand and appreciate this aspect of our biology and shared experience as human beings.



Introduction to the landscape

Introduction to the landscape

Though the terrain is unique to each of us, we all have an emotional landscape. The emotions you've experienced, are aware of, or are currently living are determined by many factors some of which are under your ability to observe and self-direct. But how?

Emotional awareness and regulation are life skills. They're the living practice of translating emotions by uncovering what's beneath them, understanding what the emotion is telling us about ourselves, and what action, if any, we should take. This book aims to help readers become acquainted with the scope of emotional experiences so that

they're better equipped to respond to emotional stimuli in kind and productive ways.

This body of work was first informed by the hearts, minds, and spirits of two dear friends (Mayra Porrata & Crystal Pirri) who over the course of several weeks in the summer of 2010, worked together to discuss all the soul-sucking and soul-enriching places we go to as human beings.

In the years that followed, the 'emotional map' continued to take shape and was informed by several beautiful realizations:

a) not everyone has the language or verbal skills to express emotions; b) not everyone 'feels' them-- some people experience emotions as sensory information-- some as intellectual facts; c) some experience so many emotions at once, they need time to process before they even know how they feel; and d) some resist or project their emotions onto others-- unaware they're even doing this. Which of these groups do you identify with?

As you review the simple narratives of the emotional terrain most of us pass through, you may come to see yourself there or recall a time when you visited or escaped one of the unpleasant stays. In truth, all these places serve a profound purpose-even the soul-sucking places have much to teach us about life and about ourselves.

Your life and life journey are truly your greatest teachers. As more of us embrace this powerful pilgrimage and work to integrate the intelligence of our emotions, we can do so knowing that we're not alone. All of us pass by or through

these places. No matter where you go on the landscape, there's much wisdom waiting to be revealed by and for you!



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FACTORY OF FALSE BELIEFS

The Factory of False Beliefs is not so much a place we stay, but a place we've been through -- its products are scattered all over the landscape for us to notice at any time. You might find a Box of Lies sitting at the trailhead of the Canyon of Confusion, or someone in the Mire of Misery might hand you an Exploding Can of Drama.

Almost all the Factory's products are encoded with messages of fear, distrust, and reinforce separation from one another. This type of promotion enables travelers to discern fact from fiction and to choose messages and places that unite instead of divide.

THE CANYON OF CONFUSION

At first, it can be hard to understand that we're in the Canyon of Confusion at all. Like a house of mirrors, we look around frantically, trying to find something we identify with. The local radio station, WYOU, plays loud and clear here. We're tormented with thoughts of, "Why is this happening to me?" and "Where do I go from here?" It seems impossible to find a way out.

The Canyon of Confusion is often visited by people in the midst of a major life crisis. The very essence of what they believed is dramatically altered by an event they never anticipated-- the types of circumstances that can make us question our lives, ourselves, and our beliefs in God or the divine.

THE DUMP

The Dump is a dirt-lined pit for the collective, negative thoughts of everyone on the planet. When we're hanging out in The Dump, we're thinking our worst thoughts, and commiserating with the most fearful and oppressive thoughts of our friends and family. This is a misuse of The Dump!

The Dump is a necessary place for those limiting thoughts and habits to go, but instead of dropping things off, too many of us decide to stay awhile and go Dump Diving. We see something we recognize sticking up from the piles of garbage and think we can make something useful of it. In truth, those ugly thoughts are best left in The Dump and not carried with you.

THE BOMFIRE

The Bonfire is where we go, with many others, to burn our thoughts, belief patterns, emotions and stories that no longer serve us.

Once we go through a major emotional change, such as hiking through the Canyon of Confusion or slogging through the Mire of Misery, we find in our bags, pockets and even stuck to our hair bits and pieces of our old lives that we don't want or need anymore. We may have been hanging on to a map we created of what life should be like.

Sometimes, even a quick trip to the Fires of Anger helps us realize that map doesn't correspond to anything in real life and it's time to allow our stories, ideas, and obsolete thoughts that no longer serve us, go.

THE FOG OF FEAR

We've trained our minds to fear what we cannot see, so naturally the Fog of Fear leaves us terrified. We can't see the path, the foliage, the lakes and rivers. We peer deeply into the cloud in vain, hoping to catch a glimpse of light that will show us where to go.

Many of us spend so much time in the Fog of Fear that we aren't even aware of the incredible landscape the fog obscures.

CRITICS' CORNER

Found around most every bend and turn on the landscape is a tiny and temporary station where we battle with ourselves.

Any human traveler can find themselves here anytime doubt, criticism from another traveler, or fear derails them.

It's comforting to remember that although visits to the Critics' Corner are common, they are brief.

THE VALLEY OF DENIAL

It is nearly impossible to detect when one is in the Valley of Denial. In fact, it is far easier to see others in the valley, from nearly any other place on the landscape, than it is to comprehend that you are there yourself.

In the Valley of Denial, one feels much resistance to a very specific area in life. It could be family, friends, work, self- anything, really, but the resistance is tangible.

By resisting what is, we place ourselves firmly in the Valley with no foreseeable way out. By wondering and wandering, travelers can often realize a new perspective. This ethereal place is easier to recognize after the traveler has left the Valley.

THE GUSTS OF GUILT

Though we never know when the Gusts of Guilt will hit us, we're well aware from where they originate.

Whether our guilt is borne from an actual event in our history, or something we wish we could re-do, the Gusts of Guilt are an invitation to release anything that no longer serves us-- or anything we've been carrying for someone else.

Similar to the unexpected pressure and force of a small tornado, the Gusts of Guilt demand our realization and adaption. It is only when we've forgiven ourselves and honored that which caused us to feel guilty or resentful, that this force of nature is tempered and transformed into a warm, gentle breeze.

REALITY CHECKPOINT

Arriving at the Reality Checkpoint can be self-initiated or suggested by a fellow traveler.

When we arrive, we see for a brief moment what we might be carrying from the Factory of False Beliefs or the Critics' Corner. Even the Canyon of Confusion can be clearly understood with a brief journey to the Reality Checkpoint.

Visiting Reality Checkpoint enables clearer vision and a new vitality for meeting the landscape's plot-twists and turns.

BITTERNESS BOULEVARD

Bitterness is a strong revulsion for something that's happened and a defiant resistance to a situation or event.

Strangely enough, we can find ourselves on Bitterness Boulevard in almost any area of the map. It winds through the Canyon of Confusion, the Mire of Misery, and even the Dark Night of the Soul Tunnel.

Once we understand and integrate the deep wisdom of life's bitterness, we're better able to contend with future failures and equipped to assist fellow travelers when they find themselves on this unpleasant street.

WAR ZONE

We enter the War Zone in many ways. We war with ourselves, with our loved ones, with “enemies”, and with entire countries. We align ourselves with people of power who are hanging out in the War Zone, too.

We may feel justified, angry, “right”, “better”, “smarter”, and “more advanced” than anyone else in the War Zone. It’s seductive and addictive-- and important to note that all of us pass through its spacious chambers at least once in our lives.

The way to know if you’re hanging out in the War Zone is to notice your thoughts about *the other*-- and if your heart is at peace. Our ability to see the divinity in fellow travelers is the only way to permanently leave the War Zone.

SHAME & BLAME LANE

To novice travelers, Shame & Blame Lane looks like a high mountain path where they can shout insults at other travelers.

It's easy to see what others are doing wrong, because we're so high and advanced, having traveled this lane and experienced so much. But beware: all of this is illusory.

From here, the landscape is actually distorted. Travelers seldom realize that the shaming, blaming, and criticizing is that which was previously unseen or unloved in them.

REACTION STATION WYOU

Some travelers listen to WYOU their entire journeys through the landscape and through life. Others scarcely hear it at all.

You can recognize the WYOU station by the messages it sends. “Why me?” “Why is this so hard?” “How come she has it better?”

Affectionately nicknamed The Victim Station, WYOU only broadcasts travel conditions for such places as the Canyon of Confusion, the Mire of Misery, and the War Zone. We can constantly hear the most recent updates from these areas, as well as the Weather Forecast and Traffic Reports for Bitterness Lane, Shame & Blame Lane, Valley of Denial, and the Addiction Lagoon. Proudly sponsored by the Factory of False Beliefs.

ADDICTION LAGOON

A lagoon, by definition, is a shallow body of water. Stale and moldy, this is a place where some weary travelers believe they've found the flowing waters of the Stream of Gratitude, the River of Dreams or the Sea of Serenity. The water is just enough for the traveler to drink, but because of its energy signature, it's not designed to satisfy his thirst.

Convinced he won't find better waters elsewhere, travelers often stay here for many years, developing sicknesses and health problems from standing in and ingesting the water from the stagnant lagoon.

MORE OF MISERY

The Mire of Misery, with its sinkholes, quicksand, muck and stench, is hardly a desirable destination. All roads from the Factory of False beliefs lead here, and as their boots get stuck in the mire and muck, weary travelers often stay here to “rest” far too long.

The mire is a place of gut-wrenching pain, self-loathing, rage, and hatred. Many travelers who would never otherwise have traveled near this place get stuck by listening to the stories of others, calling out from the bogs.

“Misery loves company” is a popular phrase, but the only thing misery truly loves is more and more misery.

THE FIRES OF ANGER

With its seductive energy, fire is a fierce and powerful element. We arrive at The Fires of Anger anytime something that has become intolerable to us.

Our disbelief and rage fuel our pilgrimage into this volatile landscape where we're certain the offender or 'other' will finally meet their terrible fate. Paradoxically, when we arrive we find that the light of the fire is glowing and illuminating *us*. The heat is there to both warm and warn us--- for the Fire of Anger will burn the one who wields it.

Anytime we find ourselves in its intense energy, noticing the reason beneath that which brought us here-- into the awareness of our own unmet or unloved need, extinguishes the fire.

THE PORTAL OF GRIEVING

Though not all enter, travelers arrive at The Portal of Grieving from any point on the landscape.

Whether they've experienced a shocking trauma, a painful loss, or have circled the landscape without any real insight or relief, all travelers come to its edge before deciding if and when they'll enter.

When they do, travelers are often met by the silent voices of ancestors or fellow travelers who've been through the portal. This knowing is what comforts and supports each traveler as they connect dots, forgive, gain new insights, and integrate the deeper lessons of life and love.

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL TUNNEL

Travelers who forgo the Portal of Grieving, often find themselves in the Dark Night of the Soul Tunnel. Because of its darkness, there is nothing for them to see or appreciate. Here, travelers walking through are often screaming in pain, crying in confusion, and shaking with fear.

Paradoxically, entering the Dark Night of the Soul tunnel is often a sign of significant spiritual progress-- for it is not the soul (their higher Self) but the ego that is in darkness-- in denial of its light.

Like any dark tunnel, it feels as though you'll never reach the other side-- but focusing on the light within is the quickest and least painful way to get through.

SURVIVOR VILLAGE

For the weary traveler, the Survivor Village is a dream come true. Populated by fellow humans who have traversed the worst of the landscape, it's conveniently situated next to The Bonfire, where many stories are told.

Travelers must take their time here and move on at their own pace. Only after feeling heard, supported, and loved can they go on to further travel.

Some choose to stay here for many years, holding space for newcomers and ensuring there's always a welcoming hug for the weary. Some travelers have mastered the art of arriving at the village just when a dear friend needs them -- they share their story with the newest, and go on to other parts of the landscape effortlessly.

RIVER OF DREAMS

The River of Dreams is a magnetized flow of water that directs every traveler to his or her perfect place in life. At any time, we can check in with ourselves to see where the River of Dreams is leading us.

Sadly, many travelers go through life resisting the magnetic pull of the River of Dreams and walk others' paths with bitterness and resentment.

Seasoned travelers know that one can only find its location by tuning-in to the inner compass of their heart. As such, it is highly recommended that travelers do not go long without listening to their heart's wisdom, or they might find themselves completely turned around!

BEACHES OF BLISS

Thought to be a myth by some, the Beaches of Bliss are beautiful stretches of white sand, warm water, and amazing sunrises and sunsets.

This breathtaking place can be accessed at any time, but there is one stipulation for entry: travelers may not bring any baggage from any part of the landscape.

Once here, travelers are given all they need to recharge, restore, and regenerate themselves for future travel.

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

The Light of Truth shines only from within, strengthened occasionally by the shining inner lights of others. Just as two candles make a room brighter than one, two people sharing their truths illuminates the landscape more than one.

When many travelers come together in unity of purpose, the Light of Truth shines clear and bright enough to burn off the Fog of Fear and orient travelers towards the Sky of Grace.

SPIRIT SPA

The Spirit Spa is a place of fellowship for any traveler. The spas are hosted by Love Workers and exist as “training spots” that equip travelers to safely dwell anywhere on the landscape.

Unlike conventional spas the Spirit Spa is free of charge. Once here, travelers are reminded of their humanity, wholeness, and inherent goodness. Pampered, massaged, doted on, and loved, each one is treated to a refresher life course and birds-eye view of the landscape-- its highest peaks and darkest voids.

Coincidentally, Spirit Spa is openly recruiting new Love Workers. The benefits and pay are priceless.

SOUL FRIENDS SANCTUARY

Anytime two travelers come together with the intent of uplifting each other and helping them on their journeys can Soul Friends Sanctuaries be created. They can be created anywhere at any time and have the additional benefit of helping each traveler reach the Streams of Gratitude, Spirit Spa or the Beaches of Bliss more easily.

By simply recognizing and appreciating Soul Friends when they come, travelers may see a remarkable rise in the frequency of their occurrences.

In truth, the entire landscape is one large Soul Friends Sanctuary. All travelers are directly or indirectly helping others to navigate the paths and terrain.

THE SKY OF GRACE

Though often overlooked, high above the entire landscape and inclusive of both the light and dense places we visit, is an infinite field of hope and information: the Sky of Grace.

We may encounter the Sky of Grace accidentally-- when we trip or fall and find ourselves in the Canyon of Confusion, The Dump, the Fog of Fear, or as we exit the Portal of Grieving or the Dark Night of the Soul Tunnel.

However, seasoned travelers know that they can simply call upon the Sky of Grace to lead them along the landscape any time they choose.

4 power practices

COMPASSION

By understanding the fundamental reasons why anyone suffers (including ourselves) we bring light to the dark corners of our shared human experience.

KINDNESS

Kindness is a helpful, generous, and unconditional approach to self and others. Kindness is not predicated on anyone's worthiness, but on the simple fact that we share a solidarity with fellow travelers.

PATIENCE

Patience is a learned behavior and a symptom of our ability to self-regulate and remain calm during personal discomfort.

Ways to embody and amplify patience:

- Understand/be aware of your own emotional triggers;
- Remember that we are all perfectly imperfect;
- Integrate contemplative practices such as mindful awareness, breathwork, silent prayer, journaling, or movement/energy practices like walking, jumping, moving, or doing focused vocalizations when you feel emotional discomfort or dysregulation coming on.

LISTENING

Listening is also a learned behavior and one of the purest forms of respect. Listening is about allowing what is, to *be* - without resistance, judgement, or attachment to our notions or beliefs or any particular outcome.

While we often associate listening with external stimuli and 'others', it's equally important to listen to ourselves and the silent knowing of our hearts.

Ways to amplify listening:

- Listen to your breath-- one of the fastest and powerful grounding practices.
- Listen to your thoughts-- are they fearful or kind?
- Listen to nature - the living soundtrack of life.
- Listen to the silence - where all true wisdom dwells.



Favorite quotes about emotions

- **Albert Einstein:** "It is not the intellect but the heart which experiences God." Ideas and Opinions.
- **Daniel Goleman:** "In a very real sense we have two minds, one that thinks and one that feels." Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ.
- **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." Nicomachean Ethics.
- **Maya Angelou:** "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Conversations with Maya Angelou by Jeffrey M. Elliot.
- **Carl Jung:** "There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion." The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious.
- **Thich Nhat Hanh:** "Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor." Stepping into Freedom: An Introduction to Buddhist Monastic Training.
- **Eckhart Tolle:** "Emotions arise in the place where your mind and body meet. It is the body's reaction to your

mind – or you might say, a reflection of your mind in the body." *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment.*

- **Hafez:** "Love sometimes wants to do us a great favor: hold us upside down and shake all the nonsense out."
- **Lao Tzu:** "He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened." *Tao Te Ching.*
- **Khalil Gibran:** "Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding." *The Prophet.*
- **Anne Frank:** "Feelings can't be ignored, no matter how unjust or ungrateful they seem." *The Diary of a Young Girl.*
- **St Rose of Lima:** "The gift of Grace increases as the struggle increases."
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." *All Men Are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections.*
- **Helen Keller:** "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." *The Story of My Life.*
- **Stephen Covey:** "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.*
- **Carl Rogers:** "The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change." *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy.*

- **John Dewey:** "We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience." Experience and Education.
- **St Joan of Arc:** "I am not afraid... I was born to do this."

Other works by Mayra Porrata

Unmasking

Honoring your grief

60 ways to know love

Until it happens to you (poetry)

All my mistakes

52 weeks

Gratitude Yearbooks

(2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023)

The intelligence of love

Essence Glossary™

The Workbook of Human Superpowers

GRATEFUL | 30-day self-care journal

People are like flowers

Emotional Intelligence: making sense of your
emotional data

A Nighttime Trip to Planet NUF

Soul Friends

Wake Up Beautiful Girl

Lilly's Life

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