

## Understanding emotional intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is a phrase that is used frequently, particularly in the work-place. You will find that recruitment consultants use it, it is included in psychological tests and if you are a manager of staff you will probably have to discuss it at interviews. It is therefore wise to understand what this doctrine is all about.

In a 1994 report on the current state of emotional literacy in the U.S., author Daniel Goldman 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..."

### Exactly what is Emotional Intelligence?

The term encompasses the following five characteristics and abilities:

1. **Self-awareness**--knowing your emotions, recognising 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**--recognising feelings in others and tuning into their verbal and nonverbal cues.
5. **Managing relationships**--handling interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution, and negotiations.

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. 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. Hence, the great interest in Emotional Intelligence on the part of corporations. 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.

Corporations have been hampered by not developing its employees EQ's. Emotions run at their highest in a crisis so managers need to ensure that their staff and managing their interpersonal relationships. There are currently several EQ evaluation tools on the market and it is advisable to find out your team members EQ scores. One of the tenets of the EQ theory is that unlike IQ you can improve your Emotional Intelligence. Apparently some of us have more of it than others, so it is advisable to adopt of dual strategy of recruiting people with high EQ while developing existing employees. However you will need to incentivise people – you won't get them to buy into EQ unless you persuade them there's something in it for them – that they will be more effective and successful.

The higher up you apply the principles of EQ the more impact it will have on the company. People resonate with each others emotions, and research shows that leaders set the emotional climate within an organization.

Organisations have Emotional Intelligence too. It's manifested in thinking styles, the way people are treated and the awareness the organisation has about itself and the companies it deals with. A successful company will support and nurture EQ behaviours. Helping people to understand their own emotions will lead to more effective management, greater motivation and less stress.