

# UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

*Dr. Shivanand Pandey*

Assistant Professor, S.M.R.D. P.G College, Bhurkura, Gazipur(U.P.)

## **Abstract**

*This paper presents a framework for emotional intelligence, a set of skills hypothesized to contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life. It starts by reviewing the model presented by Salovey and Myers's on the basis of both personal and professional. Next, it reviews the debate about importance of emotional intelligence (EI) versus Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The paper then explores the literature on intelligence and examines the place of emotion in traditional intelligence conceptions. It closes with a case study discussion.*

**Keywords:** *Intelligence Quotient, Regulation, Frame work, Feelings*

Emotional Intelligence has a great role in our lives –both personal and professional. EQ (Emotional Quotient) has become the hallmark to decide the way a person works to achieve his personal and organizational goals.

Let us understand what actually Emotional Intelligence means as it is different from just Intelligence which has been stressed so far.

Goleman's books on emotional intelligence reorganized Salovey and Mayer's model into five broad categories:

## **Self-Awareness**

People with a healthy sense of self-awareness are "comfortable in their own skin." They understand their strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and impact on others. One of the most telling signs of self-awareness is how well a person responds to constructive criticism.

## **Self-Regulation**

Not only do the emotionally intelligent understand their emotions, but also they can demonstrate maturity and restraint when revealing them. They do not squelch their feelings, instead expressing them in a

manner that shows a high level of judgment and control.

## **Motivation**

Managers generally are ambitious. However, emotionally intelligent leaders are motivated by a strong inner drive, not simply money or titles. They are resilient and optimistic in the disappointments. It takes a lot to break their spirit or thwart their confidence.

## **Empathy**

Managers with empathy are not necessarily easy on their staffs. They do, however, possess the compassion and understanding of human nature that enables them to connect emotionally with others. Empathy allows them to provide stellar customer service and respond genuinely to an employee's frustration or concern.

## **People Skills**

Emotionally intelligent managers are widely respected by their bosses, peers, and employees. They like people and are savvy enough to know what makes them tick. Their ability to quickly build rapport and trust with those on whom they depend

seems almost second nature. Power wars, backbiting, and duplicity are not their style.

### More than IQ

Most people intuitively recognize what Goleman's books expertly put into words: analytic intelligence is not the most important criterion for success. For many years, employers have put a premium on specific aspects of intelligence, such as math, verbal, and logical reasoning abilities. While relatively easy to measure, these skills clearly were not enough of a predictor of ability, as evidenced by the scores of people with exceptionally high IQ scores who were performing poorly in the workplace.

According to Goleman, cognitive skills "get you in the door" of a company, but emotional skills help you thrive once you're hired. Psychologist Steven Stein, a marketer of tests that assess employees' emotional intelligence quotient, cites an example of this theory with the story of a bright Harvard business graduate who was pleased to receive numerous job offers. The honeymoon was over quickly, however, as she embarked on several jobs. She butted heads with her employers over one issue after another until she eventually was terminated from each job. Her story is not unusual.

Studies of close to 500 organizations worldwide, reviewed by Goleman in his second book, indicate that people who score highest on EI measures rise to the top of corporations. "Star" employees possess more interpersonal skills and confidence, for example, than "regular" employees who receive less-glowing performance reviews.

"Emotional intelligence matters twice as much as technical and analytic skill combined for star performances," Goleman writes. "And the higher people move up in

the company, the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes."

According to Warren Bennis, author of *On Becoming a Leader*, "In those fields I have studied, emotional intelligence is much more powerful than IQ in determining who emerges as a leader. IQ is a threshold competence. You need it, but it doesn't make you a star. Emotional intelligence can."

Emotional intelligence is not about "being nice." Too much niceness can indicate low confidence and assertiveness, indicating a lack of emotional intelligence. You may have witnessed the debris that certain "harmony-hungry" managers leave behind. They crave peace so much that important issues and performance problems fester far too long, sometimes to the point of no return.

An emotionally intelligent manager chooses his or her battles wisely, behaves assertively when necessary, and displays the courage to confront sticky situations with confidence. Strong emotional intelligence helps them do so without making enemies or damaging the self-esteem of others.

According to Yale's Salovey, "Emotional intelligence is not merely being emotional or controlling your emotions; it is both — it is understanding when emotional expression is going to be helpful and when it is going to be problematic.

Emotional intelligence is no respecter of gender. Contrary to popular belief, women are not more emotionally intelligent than men. They are, however, emotionally intelligent in different ways. An analysis of emotional intelligence in thousands of men and women found that women, on average, are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, and are more adept interpersonally. Men, on the other hand, are

more self-confident, optimistic, and adaptable, and they handle stress better.

In general, however, far more similarities exist than differences. Some men are as empathetic as the most interpersonally sensible women are, while some women are just as able to withstand stress as the most emotionally resilient men. In total, taking into account overall ratings for men and women, the strengths and weaknesses average out, so it's an even competition between both sexes.

As Paul discovered from his dismal results, emotional intelligence is crucial for those in leadership positions. While emotional intelligence deficiencies are career limiting for any employee, they can be suicidal for managers.

Emotionally astute managers are able to deal with contentious employees, a tyrannical boss, rapid changes in the workplace, and unexpected disappointments and triumphs while keeping a level head and strong sense of self. They do not let circumstances surrounding them define who they are or what they stand for. Their employees and peers depend on them for consistency, good judgment, and the ability to do the right thing at the right time.

Goleman defines emotional intelligence as part of what we mean by "good old street smarts," much of which involves good timing, knowing when and how to share sensitive information, understanding how what you say can affect others, and being able to quickly and accurately assess situations, moods, and underlying issues.

Bruce Tulgan, president of Rainmaker Thinking and author of *Managing Generation X and Winning the Talent Wars*, says that the quickest route to becoming a highly effective manager is to perfect your people

skills. "No matter what you do for a living, unless you want your productive capacity to be limited to your own time and energy forevermore, you are going to have to be great at interacting with people," Tulgan says.

He encourages managers to forget the old-fashioned ladder and focus on getting tons of work done very well and fast to add value in the marketplace. Considering that you can produce only so much on your own, you must leverage your contribution by harnessing the energy of others. To pull together a team of the best people so you can add tremendous value to your role wherever you are working, you must be great at engaging, listening, understanding others, and making yourself understood. Tulgan is convinced that "These are the real critical skills in the new economy: thinking skills and communication skills. Emotional intelligence is one way to describe the underpinnings of critical thinking skills and communications skills."

Strong emotional intelligence in the leadership of an organization directly affects retention of high-quality employees and overall productivity. Daniel Feldman, president of Leadership Performance Solutions and author of *The Handbook of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership*, explains, "Research suggests that effective leaders use their personal power to influence others as much as their position power. Position power is based on the authority from the formal position that one holds. Personal power is based upon one's relationship with others. Personal power is built through the use of the skills of emotional intelligence."

A Gallup Organization study shows that most workers rate having a caring boss even higher than money or fringe benefits. In

interviews with two million employees at 700 companies, Gallup found that the length of time employees stay at companies and their level of productivity are directly related to the relationship they have with their immediate supervisor. "People join companies and leave managers," said Marcus Buckingham, a senior managing consultant at Gallup and the primary analyst for the study.

Poor listening skills are a dead giveaway of low EI. Peter deLisser, author of *Be Your Own Executive Coach: Master High Impact Communications Skills*, provides communications coaching for results-driven executives who routinely interrupt people, cut them off in mid-sentence, and say things like "You are wrong," or "This is a waste of time." Some executives may even lose their patience and walk out in the middle of a meeting. deLisser has discovered that such executives can reduce these tendencies quickly by disciplining themselves to listen carefully, a skill essential for three of Goleman's five pillars of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy.

Research confirms that executives spend 45 percent of each day listening, but 95 percent of them have never taken a skill course in listening. According to deLisser, improved listening does wonders to increase EI in results-driven executives "because, of all the motivational types, they are most willing to take the risks necessary to try new behaviors, particularly when they witness the positive results that follow."

#### The Value of Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is arguably the most critical foundation of emotional maturity. Harvard School of Business noted in its June 1996 issue of *Management Update*, "Our candidate

for No. 1 managerial aptitude of the next decade is self-awareness." Because it is one's unconscious motivations and beliefs that drive the behaviors that can sabotage desired results, managers must be willing to face their blind spots. By themselves, assessments such as 360-degree feedback results are not sufficient, and neither are test results. Managers must possess the maturity and humility to listen to feedback, using it wisely to come to terms with and shore-up their foibles.

Holly Latty-Mann, president and co-founder of The Leadership Trust, regularly leads workshops for managers searching for a higher level of self-awareness. Latty-Mann explains the dynamics: "Based on the notion that change does not take place without an accompanying emotion, this special process allows the individual to hear negative feedback without a defensive posture but nevertheless while experiencing an emotion (whether it is fear, hurt, or sadness). This allows the person to own (perhaps for the first time) his or her role in creating the problem behavior itself."

Latty-Mann compares the manager desiring a deeper self-understanding to a woman who peers into a mirror and finds herself highly motivated to make the necessary adjustment after discovering misplaced lipstick. So it is with all success-minded human beings – they are just as naturally inclined to take control of their psychological negatives when presented properly and, thus, will seek to eliminate them accordingly.

#### EI Case Studies

According to Joe Jotkowitz, communications consultant for Communication Development Associates, "The true test of a leader's emotional intelligence is when

organizational change occurs, like a shift in the market or a change in organizational direction." This, Jotkowitz explains, is the litmus test for how well leaders know what makes their employees tick and are able to anticipate the results of their decisions – both key signs of emotional intelligence.

Jotkowitz shares the story of an international management and consulting firm in the midst of downsizing its work force. In doing so, it primarily focused on a reduction strategy. Its main objective was to make sure it could run the business with a minimal work force in each department. At first glance, this may seem like an efficient business strategy. However, in the long run it displayed a lack of EI. The company didn't concern itself with fair and equitable departing packages for employees who had given double-digit years of loyal service. It didn't assess where and how new responsibilities were going to be added to already-overextended workloads in certain departments. It didn't take into account how the remaining employees were going to react to the disregard and lack of empathy shown toward departing colleagues. As a result, the downsizing backfired and created more problems, not more efficiency.

On the flip side, Jotkowitz worked with a new dot-com start-up that was growing faster than it could handle. In all this growth, it realized that its top concerns were the happiness and satisfaction of its people. The EI of the company's leadership predicted that if the staff was happy, then people would put in the extra hours, go the extra mile, put up with the ambiguity, and stick with the company under strained conditions. This theory proved correct, and many staff members have been there for years, while other companies in the same

industry are experiencing high turnover.

The most interesting part is that it really didn't take much to display EI. The company merely instituted a few basic principles of operation. Everybody had a voice; everybody was heard. Everybody received a piece of the success. Rewards and recognition were given daily. Problems were looked at as obstacles to overcome without any finger pointing or blaming. All in all, the organization established an atmosphere of confidence, respect, motivation, and empathy – all qualities needed for a strong sense of EI.

The good news is that, unlike IQ, which is pretty much fixed at an early age, EI can grow with the right motivation and willingness to face flaws. Someone with low EI must first bone-up on the concept's nuts and bolts. As with most self-development efforts, awareness is the key. The manager also can greatly increase his or her EI by listening, asking for feedback, and watching others who have perfected their EI. A wide array of books, Web sites, and other tools can provide more information and guidance about EI. Finally, a true commitment to putting new knowledge into action can help build EI and communicate to colleagues that personal and professional change is occurring. Regardless of the methods, working to increase emotional intelligence in the workplace is a smart idea

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