

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (E.Q.)

**Author: Daniel Goleman, Publishing House Cartea Veche,
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Publishers consider that Daniel Goleman's book has produced an amazing revolution in psychology by its minute analysis of the emotions that shape the human personality. Inspired by the results of research on human brain and behaviour, the author proposed that the concept of intelligence should be expanded. Besides the well known term of I.Q. – the Intelligence Quotient – D. Goleman promotes the study of the intelligence of feelings, i.e. E.Q., which involves concepts such: as self consciousness, self discipline and empathy.

As concept and value, emotional intelligence was launched in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer and since then, research has extended while the new orientation in psychology has lead to a scientifically demonstrable theory and to a real formula which helps measure this ability to live better. Based on these discoveries, training programmes have been designed in order to build characters, to prevent violence and aggressiveness, to prevent drug consumption, and to improve school discipline. It has been prove that if we teach children to improve their self consciousness, to control their negative impulses and to develop their empathy, we shall obtain positive behaviours and improved school performance. The theory on delinquency and the thinking pattern of aggressiveness may also be improved by emotion education programmes, while the depressive conditions are considerably diminished.

The author also analyses the costs of emotional illiteracy which leads to delinquency, violence, suicide, drug consumption, severe aggressiveness, irrational impulsivity, adherence to life denying social groups of the emo type, and to other emotionally negative aspects.

Conceived in five parts, in Part One, the book presents the recent imagistic discoveries on the emotional architecture of the brain that offer locations both for the positive emotions and behaviours and for what is the most unfavourable in our lives. Understanding the interactions at the level of brain different structures which rule fury, aggression, fright or joy and passion, enables us to understand also the way we acquire our emotional impulses and habits.

In Part Two, the author shows us how the limbic system is an essential part of the emotional brain, a discovery that has been around for fifty years. Joseph Le Doux, who is quoted by Goleman, has demonstrated that the amygdala nuclei from the cerebral limbic system are connected through specialised circuits to the prefrontal lobes thus the neurologic mechanisms of our emotional lives are constituted.

The studies of the specialist in neurosciences, Joseph Le Doux, have also made it clear that each emotion is located in a specific area of the brain. All such areas have direct links with the limbic system, while the register of the emotional memory is achieved by this intercommunication. The activities of the emotional memory to which the hippocampus participates, too, are also determined by the human neuro-endocrinologic system, which is driven by the cerebral emotional centres, i.e. hypophysis and adrenal glands. Thus we should remember that the amygdala is responsible for the immediate and direct impulsive vegetative reactions, while the positive prefrontal neocortical reactions are slower. It is important to know that we may train the emotional reactions of children through educational programmes which could help them know and understand their positive and negative feelings.

It is clear that the educational benefit of emotions is very important for the corresponding developmental

age. In the past century, when prefrontal lobotomy was in use, the link between the cortex and the basal limbic system (cerebral amygdalae) was thus cut off. Following those ablations, the patients became unresponsive, losing all their emotional abilities. Taking into consideration the structures of the brain, the author makes an analysis of the possibilities of harmonizing the thoughts and emotions, which are included in the psychic life, and he concludes that “we have two brains, two minds and two different types of intelligence: the rational one and the emotional one”.

From this part of the book one may retain that the cerebral neurological support has an essential role in the experiences of emotional intelligence. This second part of the volume, entitled ‘The Nature of Emotional Intelligence’, presents sets of advantages of people endowed with interpersonal intelligence.

Goleman agrees with Salovey’s five main components of emotional intelligence:

1. Knowing one’s own emotions, which implies the recognition of a feeling when it happens, respectively, the realization of one’s own self (called by the translator Margareta Nistor “self awareness”), this feature being the cornerstone of emotional intelligence. This attribute was made famous by Socrates who urged us: “Know thyself”;

2. Managing emotions, by keeping them under control;

3. Motivating oneself, which means summoning up emotions in order to achieve a goal;

4. Recognizing emotions in others or empathy, which is the basis of the capacity to understand the others.

5. Handling relationships, that is, the skill to establish relationships or “the capacity to manage other people’s emotions”.

In the book, we also find an analysis of optimism, of the so called learning in a state of flow (an aptitude described by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly), of empathy.

Empathy is the most investigated of all abilities during the last 20 years. The notion was initially used in modern psychology by E.B. Titchener starting with 1920, from the greek word *empathia* which comes from (en), “in, at” + (pathos), “passion” or “suffering”. Present studies have established that empathy is built

on self-awareness: the more open towards our own emotions, the more capable to get near and to interpret other people’s feelings. The capacity to understand what the others feel is a human and humanitarian ability. The lack of empathy (apathy or alexithymia, i.e. the difficulty in describing and feeling one’s own emotions) is detected in criminals, sadistic aggressors, rapists, in child, animal and people abusers.

Our empathic capacity allows us to establish good and correct relationships with our fellow beings. Those children with empathic aptitudes expressed in their body language by means of non-verbal signals mainly at face mimicry level, are liked the most by their peers. Researchers have demonstrated that 90% of emotional communication is non-verbal.

Empathy is rooted in early childhood. Practically speaking, the newborn and the infants suffer when they hear another child crying. This manifestation might be called an early precursor of empathy. The developmental psychologists have discovered that the infants react more understandingly to their mother’s or someone else’s suffering. It is known that child empathy develops by imitating the reactions of the adults the when they suffer. By imitating what they see, the children develop a reactive empathic repertory, helping those in need.

Daniel Stern is the first to sustain that “when they interact with their babies, mothers transmit the emotional connection minute by minute” and the child must feel mother’s emotions, too, not only hear her words. When the baby starts to feel that other persons can and do transmit emotions, it will share the same emotions with them. The transmission of emotions is a skill that appears at the age of around 8 months, when the infants start to realize they are separate entities and that they can take over empathic states.

The absence of a parent-child relationship is a severe emotional pain that transforms the child into an apathetic, non-communicative, depressive being. However, these deficiencies of empathy are corrected by relationships with relatives, friends or by psychotherapy. Empathy is a continuous, lifelong process.

At present, we consider that the empathic emotional life is located in the amygdala nuclei.

They communicate with the associative area of the visual cortex through circuits which constitute the fundamental part of the empirical life. Life without empathy generates many severe actions. Those who commit the worst of crimes (holocaust, gulags, the ethnic crimes from Armenia, Cambodia, etc.) are usually deprived of empathy. The psychological profile of extremely violent criminals and aggressors is the same: they are incapable to understand their victims' sufferings, thus, they are incapable of empathy. The blockage of empathy in these people during the moments when they torture their victims is a component part of certain emotional states which accelerate their cruel impulses. The victims' feelings of fright, horror, disgust, etc. are not taken into account by the aggressors.

Part Three is more pragmatic with its suggestive title: "Emotional Intelligence Applied and its content of clear examples which help the author support his ideas. We find out that "our genetic inheritance gives us a series of inborn emotions which shape our temperament", while the brain circuits are capable of a continuous, extraordinary flexibility which may be directed. The author expresses his confidence in the healing force of the emotional support, as well as in the benefit of the emotional intelligence for health care.

This is what Goleman demonstrates in Part Four saying that "the emotional lessons we learn in our childhood – at home and at school – shape our emotional circuits, making us more easily adaptable, or, on the contrary, inadaptably" to the expressions of emotional intelligence. This means that adolescence and childhood are windows of opportunity towards training the essential emotional manifestations that will dominate our existence. Part Four, entitled "Windows of opportunity", describes the most adequate emotional patterns used by parents:

- ignoring all feelings, treating any of their child's anger as unimportant or insignificant, when they should try to understand the child's feelings, instead;
- being too permissive, up to appoint where they buy the calmness and recovery;
- displaying contempt for the child's feelings, followed by severe interdictions.

In a section entitled "Abuse: The Extinction of Empathy" from Chapter 12, "The Family Crucible," Goleman explains that parents' beatings warp a child's natural bent toward empathy. Wickedness and violence replace empathy. The cruelty of children abused by their parents or by society (refugees, abandoned children or those whose parents are away at work or who are brought up by strangers, etc.) is the result of life circumstances where the emotional life was inexistent. Equally important are the sections "Trauma and Emotional Relearning", "Horror Frozen in Memory" and "The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as Limbic Disorder" by the examples and the neuro – endocrine motivation of negative behaviours like violence, aggression, distuction and murder.

Part Four ends with the chapter "Temperament is not Destiny". The author reminds us that there are four types of genetic temperament: shy, assertive, joyful and melancholic and that each of them is generated by a different type of brain activity. However, there are innumerable variations in temperament, each having as support the inborn variations at the level of the brain emotional circuitry (J. Kagan). In this chapter, Goleman presents not only the study of the neurochemistry of shyness but also "the taming of a too excitable amygdala". He quotes Torsten Nils Wiesel and David H. Hubel, both of them neuroscientists who studied the brain circuits and who, in 1981, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology for their discoveries concerning information processing in the visual system.

Part Five analyses "The Cost of Emotional Illiteracy," (Chapter 15), which is imputable to society and the "Taming of Aggressiveness" which is the problem of psychotherapists.

It should be noted that boys are predictable ever since their first school years when they will create problems, will be hostile, with a tendency to commit small offences which will turn into theft, unjustified fights, interest in drugs and subjection to organised gangs even before they reach 14 years. The girls with the same habits do not become violent, they become pregnant. It is possible to short-circuit these negative situations if children are taught to know and understand themselves and to acquire an

empathic thinking, thus avoiding school violence and depression.

Problems such as alcohol, drugs and medicine addiction are also dealt with together with the ones concerning victims of paedophilia and of practicing paedophilia.

The author proposes various schemes of promoting emotional literacy in agreement with the emotional development timeline, considering that the optimal structure is at very young ages continued during school years, too.

Without emotional education and empathy we might find ourselves on the verge of “a storm of delinquency and crime” which will come upon us in the following years.

It is well known the fact that murders committed by 14 -15 years old teenagers are on the rise, while severe misbehaviour increased at all age groups.

D. Goleman draws the reader's attention to certain errors that might be committed by generalizing the Emotional Intelligence through the myth according to which E.Q. “is more important than I.Q.” He advocates that emotional intelligence precedes I.Q. “especially in those areas of human life where the intellect is less relevant for the achievement of success”, in those situations where empathy and self-control might represent more remarkable abilities than the pure cognitive ones.

As an example, he presents the positive situation of those who are able to manage their emotional lives with calm and self-awareness. These people, according to Goleman, might be more clearly advantaged in maintaining their good health. One may conclude that there is no exclusion or competition between the two systems of quotients, I.Q. and E.Q., on the contrary, there is conjugation and correspondence of qualities. H. Gardner, who developed the “Theory of Multiple Intelligences”, has launched a new way of dealing with the functions of the brain. Thus, we can accept the existence of certain domains which have not been studied yet in the area of intelligences.

Let us not forget that D. Goleman is a journalist trained as a psychologist at Harvard. For a lifetime he has been implied in psychological studies and has supported every new discovery in these fields. He has also launched and supported the concept of Social Intelligence (S.I.) with its Social Quotient (S.Q.), to which we add the concept of Cultural Intelligence (still not tackled in psychological quantifications).

D. Goleman's four-hundred-and-thirty page volume, titled “Emotional Intelligence” is so captivating and full of associations which complete our knowledge in the field that I responsibly recommend it to be read by all psi specialists.