

The Power of Emotional Quotient

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Emotional Quotient (EQ) is fast becoming a critical tool which helps individuals to achieve high career goals and have a sustained competitive edge over their competitors.

“If you don’t know what you want in life, a terrible thing happens—nothing. Don’t wait for opportunities, make them happen”.

– Alexander Lockhart.

A lot has been spoken and written about Intelligence Quotient (IQ), but nowadays, Emotional Quotient (EQ) is the in thing in the corporate world. EQ is the person’s ability to understand one’s own emotions and those of others with whom he/she will be interacting on a daily basis and acting/reacting meaningful using those emotions. It is also termed as Emotional Intelligence (EI). It’s the ability or the skill of perceiving, assessing and managing the emotions of one’s self, others and of different groups.

In today’s highly competitive business environments, EQ holds as much and even higher importance than IQ. EQ helps one to be people’s person and have a competitive edge over other. Experts claim that it has become as much important

for a person to be emotionally smart as to be intelligent in order to survive in the game irrespective of his job. In spite of the general assumption that people with high IQs will accomplish more in life, various studies suggests that a person's EQ might be a greater predictor of success than his/her IQ.

It has been observed that executives, irrespective of their gender, who have a successful and happy career, family life and a large number of intimate friends have one thing in common—their ability in knowing how to deal with others. Emotions, communication, and conflict are the three aspects present in all human interrelations and impact each other differently. One of the most powerful tools for personal and professional success in the world is one's ability to interact properly and effectively with others. EQ helps individuals to be less reactive to trivial issues, more inclusive, more creative, and more resilient and enroll others in a shared vision. It is termed as a sort of personal management and social skills that allows one to succeed both at the workplace and in life. In other words, EQ is a form of using one's emotions more intelligently than others. A person who is emotionally highly developed encompasses qualities that go beyond general intellectual and technical competency.

Case

Let's examine a case which will help us understand the importance of EQ in today's modern life. Rajiv, a 27-year-old software engineer was working for some MNC company in Delhi. He had a wonderful tract record to rely on and of which he was proud. He also had a loving and happy family. After working in the software company for a couple of months, his parents noticed a sudden change in his behavior. He was looking unhappy, dissatisfied and disappointed with his life. They felt very sad for him and enquired about him at his workplace. They came to know that Rajiv was having some serious problems with his team members and colleagues. Nobody in the office wanted him around. He used to get involved in heated arguments over trivial issues with everyone. His friends too found his behavior to be extremely impulsive and difficult to cope with. As a matter of fact, Rajiv's case is not an isolated one. In fact, there are hundreds and thousands of such cases today, where people have problems managing situations at offices that are emotionally charged, especially at a time when those emotions are of anxiety and anger in today's high demanding jobs. Such people behave normal, but will

explode in anger at very trivial and petty issue. What people like Rajiv lack is their ability to control their impulses and capacity to empathize with people around. The only remedy is to re-examine their emotional intelligence and the faster they do, the better will it be for them.

So, it is very much clear and evident that handling one's emotions at workplaces is very crucial and if managed properly, it can take you to places.

Though emotional intelligence has been practiced at workplaces from 1980s, it's only in recent times that it has gained popularity. Some define EI as one's ability to sense, understand and apply effectively the power and acumen of his/her emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence. EI is a part of our daily life. It is equally important, like common intelligence, to lead a normal and healthy life in the modern society.

People who lack EI have great difficulty in recognizing and understanding their feelings, and even expressing their feelings in an appropriate manner. They often have needless doubts in their minds about who they are and what exactly they need out of the life, their goals and achievements, in other words they indulge in critical self-analysis. They lack self-confidence and will power. They have trouble expressing the feelings of love, empathy and compassion for other people and are easily misunderstood. They find it hard to communicate and adjust with themselves and with others around them. These people don't like challenges, are afraid of change and have trouble staying motivated and focused in the face of setbacks. They fail to achieve the desired goals and give up easily. They become pessimistic about their present and future. However, EQ is not static in a person's life. A person who has low EQ can definitely increase his/her level of EQ at any point of their life; what is required is a desire to change from within and a positive frame of mind. People having low EQ should learn to identify their emotions and take up responsibilities on their own. There are many books which deal with EQ and social skills which can be of great help. Anger management and communication skill courses also help a great deal in improving one's EQ. They can also take the help of their friends, relatives, and well-wishers in self-analyzing and rectifying their flaws. By doing all these a person will be able to improve his/her EQ and can live a better, much healthier and happy life both professionally and personally.

Elements of EQ
<p>Self-awareness To be aware of the negative thoughts and the impact your behavior has on others; to know when you are becoming defensive; and to know how you are interpreting events.</p> <p>Managing Emotions To act productively in anxiety-arousing situations; to communicate feelings effectively; to stay clam when you are the target of anger; and to be able to relax in pressure situations.</p> <p>Motivation To be able to change and stop ineffective habits; to be able to regroup quickly after a setback; and to be able to develop new productive patterns of behavior.</p> <p>Empathy To make others feel good; work out conflicts in reasonable manner; exhibit interpersonal communication and social skills; and recognize when others are in distress.</p> <p>Ways to Improve One's EQ</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be flexible; adapt quickly to the changing world. 2. Become aware of your emotions; when you feel angry take a 10 minute walk to clear your mind. 3. Include humor and laughter at work. Develop attitude of optimism. This will have positive impact on others. 4. Express your emotions; talk with friends. Don't keep things bottled inside. 5. Good self-start with adequate sleep and nutrition and regular exercise. <p>Love yourself and others: Appreciate yourself and cherish relationships.</p>
<p><i>Source: "Appreciating Yourself and Cherishing Will Help You Enhance Your EQ", Seema Hingorrany, Published in 'Times Wellness', The Times of India, February 19, 2006.</i></p>

To sum up, EQ is all about behaving in a more tactful manner and getting the work done efficiently along with winning the hearts. It is about trying continuously in becoming a better person than what he/she was yesterday. It has been rightly said that a high IQ will get a person a job, but it is the power of high EI that will determine whether the person can climb up the career ladder or not. In today's materialistic world, a person with high EQ will have an edge over their competitors as he/she reacts more tactfully towards his/her team members, subordinates, and to the everyday situations.

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Observing Yourself

By engaging in observation about your mental and emotional states, you will get better insight into your character: Your strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, interests, and non-interests. It is this evaluation of your feelings and thoughts and their origins that will ultimately eliminate extremes and make you a balanced person, more capable of coping with the surprises of life, overall.

It is impossible to go through life without feelings and thoughts. These feelings and thoughts affect your body and your mind and can bring about in you various mental states, from elation to devastation.

However, as you mature, you also learn that nothing lasts: Not elation, not devastation, and not anything in between. Feelings and thoughts come and go like the tides of a river. If your responses to emotions are like those of the majority of other human beings, you probably enjoy the feelings of elation and dread those of devastation. You may then have also learned that elation, devastation, and all in between states can engender in you the behavior, which could have been avoided, were you in a more moderate state of mind.

Fortunately, there is a way to establish better balance in your life, in which neither elation nor devastation, nor any state in between, will derail your acts or your perspectives about what makes sense, and what does not. That is the way of observation.

By observing your states mindfully you learn to see them in their right perspectives. You also learn to see their origins, so understand them better and consequently get rid of a number of misapprehensions that merely engorge their volume and, thus, blow them out of proportion. It is, after all, this blowing out of proportion that creates extremes such as elation and devastation.

This is not to say that mindful analysis of your feelings and thoughts will entirely eliminate extreme emotional experiences, as you are still part of this world, and there will still be events that will bring out intense emotions within you, at times, due to your connectedness with other living beings. However, it does imply that there will be fewer outliers and more balance in your states from then on.

So how do you observe yourself?

- 1) Examine your emotions and thoughts from an outsider's perspective whenever you think about them (For instance: "Boy, am I upset today!").
- 2) Realize what exactly it is that you are feeling or thinking now. ("I experience a feeling of disappointment".)
- 3) Analyze how this feeling or thought came about. ("I experience a feeling of disappointment because my colleague at work, whom I considered a friend, told others something I had shared confidentially with him or her".)

Once you have detected the nature of your feeling or thought (2) and its reason for existence (3), you can start working at it: In the above example, you can either decide not to trust the colleague anymore, or you can express your disappointment about his or her actions.

In either of the steps you decide to take in order to balance this emotion, you have to make sure it frees you from the excessive sentiment, and transforms this feeling into one that you can easily accept. Yet, it may also be wise not to forget the lesson you learned from this feeling or emotion, which, in this case, may be to remain friendly and kind, but to refrain from, or be more careful about, sharing confidential information with others in the future.

One thing you should definitely refrain from is becoming and remaining upset at yourself. You are the one closest to your feelings and thoughts, so you better keep them bearable toward yourself.

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Conclusion

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