



What is intelligence? Is there a single universal way to be intelligent? And if yes, should the metrical-mathematical ranking scale (**IQ Test**) still be used and estimated as the best measuring procedure for a true evaluation of anybody's intelligence level?

Some doubts have meanwhile come out, showing that this was a much too easy conclusion...

The very widespread *tenet* that intelligence has only to be understood as a form of logical and mathematical performance no longer holds. *The obsession with IQ* was a product of the 20th century's model of mechanistic and military mentality. On the contrary *EQ (Emotional Quotient)*, focusing on empathic skills, is a stronger element of success when we are supposed and expected to act "socially".

Intelligence shows its multiple forms, indeed: artists, writers, politicians, managers, human science scholars and many other individuals may succeed in their life even if they do not achieve highest performance scores or own mathematical competence. Conversely: mathematicians, experts in the so called "hard sciences" and, generally speaking people highly "*gifted*" for math and logic, may fail in establishing satisfactory relationships with others, or may just try hard to find valuable solutions when coping with other people: they simply may not be so emotionally "clever" as "*lower IQ-scorers*" are.

Daniel Goleman argues that intelligence is more a matter of a certain capacity and *craft* to cope with different situations in our everyday life: intimate relationships, work and career, family, school, groups. Goleman's book made clear that emotional intelligence can matter far more than any highest *IQ* score. Hence: saying that *IQ* is not a particularly good predictor of achievement, means to understand that it is only one of many possible 'intelligences': it may not be the most strategic one.

First things first: the brain. The brain structure was designed for '*acting before thinking*': a structure that is typical of our ancient *brain layers*, and was highly important for evolutionary purposes in the human species. This biochemical mechanism *triggers* when we are suddenly in danger, or must instantly react to unexpected situations, like stress. Indeed we are people walking around in the 21st century with the brains of *cave-dwellers*: Goleman tells us about the '*emotional hijackings*': this can completely turn our mind upside down by transforming us even into a potential killer, under high stress conditions, or by simply making us react to the environment in the worst and most unpredictable way possible. This occurs every time we cannot avoid an instant and violent reaction of rage. Did this ever happen to you?

EQ skills can be defined also as a form of "*social competence and intelligence*": thus emotionally talented people will be able to: organize group working, negotiate solutions, establish personal bounds, *understand situational settings at a glance*, be patient and able to wait for **long-range results**, control their own impulses like *wrath* and rage, have compassion for others, *think twice and thrice before speaking*, avoid "*toxic*" thoughts, accept critics, present their own ones with tolerance and without prejudice, be creative by finding unexpected solutions others do not see at all, empower and boost group intelligence and circulation of ideas, control anxiety, help other to do the same, give trust, be able to communicate and to recognize one's own shortcomings and failures. In one word: be open minded.

Highly important are in Goleman's view *Control of impulse* and *Compassion*: the former avoids being captured by the '*emotional hijackings*'. We must promptly recognize and stop this very dangerous reaction. Goleman, trying to make his thesis more clear, quotes 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.' If a person cannot control his impulsiveness, he will be dangerous to others and to himself. The latter, *Compassion*, can be defined as the *ability to appreciate what others are feeling and thinking*. Both are basic to emotional intelligence, and therefore basic attributes of the moral person: they strongly contribute to one person's *successful cooperation* with others. This attitude leads also to positive thinking: so even our health can gain better and higher quality.

***Daniel Goleman (1946-)** Psychologist and science journalist. Born in Stockton, California. He has got his Ph.D. from Harvard, where he has also been a visiting lecturer. He is a co-chairman of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations, based in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. Its major task is based on recommending best practices for developing emotional intelligence abilities, and promoting rigorous research on the contribution of emotional intelligence to workplace effectiveness. Goleman authored the internationally best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995, Bantam Books),

Notes for the Lecture

- IQ vs. EQ
- Emotional Hijackings and their consequences. Ancient and reptile brain vs. control of emotions.
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It is almost three hundred closely typed pages long with endless case studies and footnoting, but the thrust of *Emotional Intelligence* can be summed up in three dot points:

- Through the application of intelligence to emotion, we can improve our lives immeasurably;
- Emotions are habits, and like any habit can undermine our best intentions;
- By unlearning some emotions and developing others, we gain control of our lives.

If this were all there was to it, it would not be a very interesting book, but *Emotional Intelligence* is one of most successful self-help tomes of the last decade, and has reached well beyond what would normally be considered a traditional self-help reading audience. Researchers had been expanding our idea of what intelligence is for some time, but it took Goleman's book to catapult the idea of emotional intelligence into the mainstream. In saying that IQ is not a particularly good predictor of achievement, that it is only one of many 'intelligences', and that emotional skills are statistically more important in life success, *Emotional Intelligence* was bound to be well-received.

Following is a breakdown of the book and some of its key points.

Civilizing the brain

In looking at the way the brain is wired, the book removes some of the mystery from our feelings, particularly the compulsive ones. The physiology of our brains is a hangover from ancient times when physical survival was everything. This brain structure was designed for 'acting before thinking', useful when in the path of a flying spear or in an encounter with an angry mammoth. We are people walking around in the 21st century with the brains of cave-dwellers, and Goleman tells us about the 'emotional hijackings' that can trigger spur of the moment murder, even of a longstanding spouse.

As Goleman emphasizes, the problem is not the emotions *per se*, but their appropriate use in given situations. He quotes 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.' Aristotle's challenge becomes all the more important in a technologically advanced world, because the meaning of 'civilisation' ceases to be technological, defaulting back to the nature of man and the quest for self-control.

Using emotional intelligence

Parts Two and Three go into the elements of emotional intelligence and its application in real life. Goleman notes that the problem is not the emotions *per se*, but their appropriate use in given situations. He quotes 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.' Aristotle's challenge becomes all the more important in a technologically advanced world, because the meaning of 'civilization' ceases to be technological, defaulting back to the nature of man and the quest for self-control.

Part Three applies the lessons of emotional intelligence to intimate relationships, work and health. The relationships chapter alone is worth more than many entire books on the subject, intricately describing the neuroscience behind the Martian and Venusian worlds of the sexes.

Emotion and morality

In making the link between emotional life and ethics, Goleman notes that if a person cannot control their impulsiveness, damage will be done to their deepest sense of self; control of impulse '...is the base of will and character' he says. Compassion, that other benchmark of character, is enabled by the ability to appreciate what others are feeling and thinking. These two elements are basic to emotional intelligence, and therefore basic attributes of the moral person.

Emotional intelligence makes a winner

Other major qualities of emotional intelligence are persistence and the ability to motivate oneself. These are not emotions *per se* but require self-control and the ability to put negative emotions and experiences into context.

Goleman validates 'the power of positive thinking' as a scientifically proven approach to achieving success, and says an optimistic outlook is a key clinical predictor of actual performance, borrowing from research done by Martin Seligman (see [Learned Optimism](#)).

The obsession with IQ was a product of the 20th century's model of mechanistic achievement; EQ, in its focus on empathic people skills and relationships, is a basic success element in a more fluid and creative 21st century economy.

The world of work

Goleman's work has had a significant impact on the workplace and business world. Though he only devotes one chapter to management, it is clear that the concept of emotional intelligence has struck a nerve with workers angry or hurt by the low emotional capacities of their bosses. Similarly, it has shined a light for many bosses and team leaders who wonder what they can do to improve maddeningly poor performance. As you suddenly see that half your organization is emotionally stupid, your standards will inevitably rise.

One fascinating chapter 'When smart is dumb', puts IQ in its place amongst several other types of intelligence. As everyone who has worked in an office environment will know, you may be producing the most exciting product around, but it will still be a miserable place to work if it is also an arena

for the clash of egos. Business success is the result of passion for a vision or a product. Though big egos are often associated with such success, better companies are notable for their ability to create harmony and excitement by focusing on the product or the vision, not the organization. These ideas are further spelled out in the spin-off *Working With Emotional Intelligence*.

Teaching EQ

Emotional Intelligence has its roots in the concept 'emotional literacy', and in the final part of the book Goleman expounds on the need for EQ skills to become part of school curricula. With facts and figures he has no trouble convincing us of the high costs - monetary and societal well-being - of not teaching children how to deal with their emotions constructively and resolve conflict.

Final comments

Part of Goleman's motivation in writing *Emotional Intelligence* was the thought of millions of readers relying on self-help books which 'lacked scientific basis', and indeed the book comes out of an impeccable academic and research milieu. Goleman appears to know all the key people in the field, notably Harvard intelligence researcher Howard Gardner, New York University's Joseph LeDoux, and Yale's Peter Salovey, who first provided the concept of emotional intelligence.

Yet this *Emotional Intelligence* a self-help book in the classic mould. Pointing to the extraordinarily malleable circuitry of the brain, and our ability to shape the experience of our emotions, one of his great points is that 'temperament is not destiny'. We are not beholden to our habits of mind and emotion, even if they seem like an unchangeable part of us.

The most alluring implication of *Emotional Intelligence* is that greater awareness and control of our emotions on a large scale would mean an evolution of the species. We believe that hate, rage, jealousy, etc. are 'only human', but when we look at the finest human beings of this century - the Ghandis, the Martin Luther Kings, the Mother Teresas - we find such negative emotions were remarkably absent. These people were able to express anger according to Aristotle's dictum - they could use their emotions instead of letting their emotions use them. What could be a better definition of civility or humanity?