

Can we teach people to be more emotionally intelligent?

As mentioned before, despite some conflicting ideas, the majority of researchers agree that EI is something we can gain through experiences. Therefore, research suggests that EI competencies can be taught and contribute to important social, emotional and academic achievements in a person's life.

We all know that education starts in the family. If young people feel respected and accepted in the family and are given space to openly express themselves without fear of being rejected or judged, then they can develop higher EI.

After family, there is school. Research shows that school-based prevention programs produce a range of positive benefits for participants. Studies show that students who participate in these programs, with a curriculum including topics as; self-awareness, social-awareness, communication skills, responsible decision-making, risk-reduction strategies, goal-setting and stress management have significantly better attendance records, higher grades, and fewer discipline problems and school suspensions, which in return promote their success and well-being.

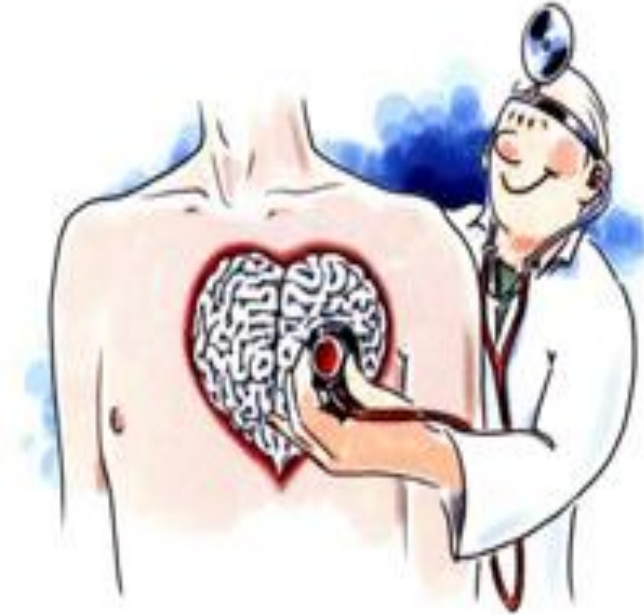
LET'S DISCOVER THE POWER OF OUR EMOTIONS!

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Emotional Intelligence



Which one is more important; IQ or EI?

Is it innate or learned?

How can we measure it?

Why is EI so popular, lately?

What is Emotional Intelligence?

It is very hard to define Emotional Intelligence (EI) in one or two sentences since it is a relatively 'young' term that started to appear in scientific literature only 25 years ago and also there are several versions of EI theory. Below are some dilemmas about EI as a theory still at an early stage in development and hypothesis-testing:

- **Intelligence Quotient (IQ) vs. EI:** IQ is generally referred to as the measurement of the cognitive capabilities (analytical, mathematical and logical reasoning) of a person and is expressed with a number. EI, on the other hand, is referred to as the use of one's own cognitive capabilities as well as emotional competences, mainly on awareness and management of one's own (and others') emotions.
- **Innate vs. Learned:** Among many researchers, there is a consensus that EI is something that can be learned and developed through time; whereas IQ is something that a person is born with and cannot alter.
- **Ability vs. Trait:** According to researchers supporting the 'Ability EI Model', EI is the cognitive ability of perceiving, understanding, integrating and regulating emotions in order to promote personal growth. Some other researchers, on the other hand, claim that EI should be investigated within a personality framework (Trait EI Model) since it encompasses behavioral tendencies and self-perceived abilities.
- **Measurement of EI:** It is crucial to keep in mind that EI has several different models which are still being studied and each has been measured in a different way. The Ability EI Model claims that EI is a type of intelligence, therefore the test is modeled on the ability-based IQ test, basically scoring a person's abilities of perceiving, using, understanding and managing emotions. On the other hand, in Trait EI Model, where EI is conceptualized in terms of personality, EI is measured by self reports, mainly organized under four factors; well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability. There is criticism of the measurements used in the Ability EI Model, claiming they measure knowledge, conformity and general intelligence rather than actual abilities. Also, there is criticism of the measurements used in the Trait EI Model, claiming people are susceptible to responding in a socially desirable way, in other words, faking!

The Components of Emotional Intelligence

Regardless of the different definitions and claims about what emotional intelligence is and how it is measured, almost all models recognize some common components.

People considered to have high emotional intelligence are good at:

- * Reading emotions (in faces, pictures, voices..etc.) both in themselves and others.
- * Adapting and coping in changing situations.
- * Relating well with people.
- * Decision-making and achieving intended goals.
- * Being flexible and creative when faced with a challenge.
- * Inspiring others, problem solving and managing conflict.
- * Recognizing the impact of emotions and controlling impulses.
- * Accepting and appreciating emotions, even negative ones such as fear and anger as motivational forces for personal growth.
- * Cooperation and teamwork.
- * Feeling content and being positive.
- * Being self-reliant and independent.

The Impacts of Emotional Intelligence

Many researchers, especially ones coming from the 'humanistic movement' who focus on 'well-being' instead of 'pathology' and that are presently referred to as 'positive psychologists' agree Emotional Intelligence has positive impacts on our life in the following ways;

- * **Academic and Occupational Performance** (realistic problem-solving, the drive to accomplish goals and optimism)
- * **Happiness** (efficient coping with daily demands, self-esteem and self-acceptance)
- * **Well-Being** (the feeling of satisfaction resulting from close and strong interpersonal relationships)
- * **Search for Meaning in Life** (attempting to understand who you are, how you want to be & what you want to do in life that is meaningful to you, what your potential is and striving to bring out 'the best' in yourself)