

# EQ

## Equals Well-Being

BEING BOOK SMART  
IS NOTHING IF  
YOU'RE NOT  
STREETWISE, AND  
THAT TIES IN WITH  
HAVING SOMETHING  
CALLED EMOTIONAL  
INTELLIGENCE

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### YOU CAN'T GO

through life using nothing but cold hard logic. Our emotions play a big role in how we navigate and respond to our social and physical environments, and if we don't have emotional intelligence, we'll have a tough time using any amount of knowledge and skills we may have to our advantage.

#### WHAT IS IT?

Having emotional intelligence, also known as EI or EQ, which stands for 'emotional quotient' (as opposed to IQ – intelligence quotient), means that you are able to not only identify your own and others' emotions, but also how to manage them. The term was first coined in 1990 by Peter Salovey and John Mayer who defined it as: 'The ability to recognise, understand, utilise, and regulate emotions effectively in everyday life. In practical terms, this means being aware that emotions can drive our behaviour and impact people (positively and negatively), and learning

how to manage those emotions – both our own and others.' Emotions are at the core of what it means to be human. They influence our behaviour, the way we think, how we interact with others and how we respond to different situations. They're often very complex and difficult to understand, which is why we often hear people saying things such as, 'I don't know why they're acting like this' or 'I can't explain the way I feel'. In light of this, emotional intelligence can be so beneficial in our everyday lives, that's why we should all work on improving it. Having said that, just like IQ, some have a higher EQ than others, but in contrast to IQ that is mostly based on genetics, a big part of our EQ is developed by our background, upbringing and environment.

#### THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF EQ

According to Daniel Goleman, psychologist and author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Emotional Intelligence*, the five elements of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Someone with a good self-awareness can perceive and understand their own emotions and the consequences thereof, is aware of their strengths and limits, and has the self-confidence to know their worth and potential. Self-confidence is the most important component because the other components are entirely dependent on it.

Self-regulation means being able to manage and express your emotions appropriately and being open to new

ideas or information. Having a high EQ also means having a naturally higher level of motivation, because you are more driven by your personal goals than anything else. You are constantly trying to improve yourself, can take initiative, are committed and are more optimistic to persevere despite failures and setbacks.

To have empathy is to be able to put yourself in someone else's position and feel what they are feeling, or experience something from their perspective. Finally, those with a high EQ tend to have better social skills, meaning that they are able to socially interact in such a way that allows them to build relationships, communicate clearly, be good leaders, manage conflicts and work well with others.

#### EQ ADVANTAGES

Having a high EQ can be very beneficial. It not only makes for a more rounded and stable individual, but it also contributes to the quality of our relationships and interactions with people. Research shows that those with a high EQ are more likeable, respected, resilient, more likely to be successful, less likely to suffer from addiction and depression, more self-assured, less likely to be violent or aggressive, more socially developed, and they perform better academically. Bottom line: EQ makes us happier and healthier people in general because our emotions lie at the heart of our psyche and if we can identify, understand, control and use them effectively then we will be able to achieve good health overall.

### Quick Questions

You can ask yourself in the moment to enhance your EQ

- Does this need to be said?
- Does this need to be said by me?
- Does this need to be said now?

#### LEVELLING UP EMOTIONALLY

Ready to work on improving that EQ? Remember that the cornerstone of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. If you don't know and understand yourself yet, you will have trouble understanding others and their emotions. The best way to gain self-awareness is through doing a bit of self-reflection. Therapy tends to be the best form of self-reflection and is a sure-fire way to get to know yourself better and gain a deeper insight into your emotional composition. But of course there are simpler, more practical ways to enhance your EQ. Here are a few suggestions: **Practice mindfulness** – try mindful meditation or even yoga. Throughout your day, try to be more aware of your emotional states, their causes and consequences.

**Ask yourself how your actions will affect others** before they happen and be willing to admit and apologise if you make a mistake or overreact.

**Identify your emotions** and label them to make them more concrete. Don't try to fix them. There's a reason you feel this way – just try to figure out why.

**Ask for feedback from those closest to you** – what, in their opinion, are your strengths as well as your weaknesses. Then explore these and consider why they say so.

**Identify recurring behavioural patterns** – what are your typical reactions to specific situations?

**Keep a 'feelings journal'** – it can help to write our feelings down to be able to make more sense of them. **EL**

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