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Emotional Intelligence

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Daniel Goleman wrote in Harvard Business Review article “What Makes a Leader?” that Emotional intelligence proved to be twice as important as technical skills or IQ for jobs at all levels. Most likely, Emotional Intelligence can be more important than IQ when it comes to health and relationships.

The book was first published in 1995, 30 years ago and had a great influence for the behavior in private life and at work. Here are some insights.
Emotional Intelligence can be divided into four domains: self-confidence, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.
What factors are at play, when people with high IQ fail and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well? The difference quite often lies in the capabilities called here „emotional intelligence“, which include self-control, zeal, dedication, enthusiasm, persistence and the ability to motivate oneself.
When it comes to shaping our decisions and our actions, feeling counts often more than thought.

Emotions are warnings: She was overtaken by an internal state that compelled her to stop, pay attention, and be aware of a coming danger, and „move away“.
The root of the word emotion is motere, the Latin verb “to move,” plus the prefix “e-” means „move away”.
Stay and fight or flee? When you are angry, blood flows to the hands, making it easier to grab a weapon or attack an enemy; the heart rate increases and a surge of hormones such as adrenaline creates a burst of energy strong enough for powerful actions. Alternatively, when you are afraid, blood flows to the large skeletal muscles, such as those in the legs, making it easier to flee.

Emotional Intelligence could also mean that a person is direct or assertive when it comes to speaking unpleasant truths in certain contexts.
From the neurological perspective: we have an interplay with prefrontal cortex or neocortex, where thinking is done and the amygdala, where emotion will be carried out.
1. Self-confidence.
Knowing one’s emotions. Emotional Self-awareness, Self-confidence
Self-awareness means recognizing a feeling as it happens. It is the keystone of emotional intelligence. The ability to monitor feelings from moment to moment is crucial to psychological insight and self-understanding.

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Self-awareness would seem to require an activated neocortex, the language areas, attuned to identify and name the emotions being aroused.
It is crucial to maintain self-reflectiveness even amidst turbulent emotions. Useful is to step back from the emotional experience, giving place for a parallel stream of consciousness that is “meta”: hovering above the flow, aware of what is happening and get not immersed and lost in the emotional challenge.
A negative reaction would be to get engulfed, consumed by the situation. This happens with people who often feel swamped by their emotions and helpless to escape them.

2. Self-management.
Managing emotions. Dealing with feelings in an appropriate manner is a skill that builds on self-awareness. It is about the ability to calm yourself down and shake off anxiety, sadness, or nervousness.
Keeping our distressing emotions in check is the key to emotional well-being. For example, to reduce uncontrolled anger reframing a situation more positively is one of the most potent ways to put anger to rest. This generalized adrenal and cortical excitation keeps the emotional brain in special readiness for arousal and for subsequent reactions with quickness.
People are so much more prone to anger if they have already been provoked or slightly irritated by something else.

This can develop into a vicious cycle: anger builds on anger; the emotional brain heats up. At that moment, anger, unchecked by reason, easily erupts into violence.
Timing matters: the earlier in the anger cycle you act the more effective you are.
Mitigating information allows for a reassessment of the events that caused the anger. However, there is a specific window of opportunity for this de-escalation. When people were already very angry, they rejected the mitigating information.
During the cooling-off phase, the angry person can slow down the cycle of escalating hostile thoughts by looking for distractions.
One of his recommendations is to confidently recognize cynical or hostile thoughts as soon as they arise and write them down.

Far more effective was when people first cooled down, and then, in a more constructive or assertive manner, confronted the person to settle their dispute.
The task of worrying is to come up with positive solutions for life’s perils by anticipating dangers before they arise. A well-applied risk management can be helpful.
Motivate yourself. Focusing your emotions on a goal is essential for attention, self-motivation, self-control, and creativity. Emotional self-control, for example postponing satisfaction and suppressing impulsiveness, is the basis for any kind of achievement. To get into the “flow” state enables outstanding performance.

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Self-awareness and mindfulness: mindfulness—bringing your focus to your breathing and ignoring any distractions, that is a basic training for concentration.
With practice, people can recognize the worries in the spiral of anxiety earlier. They also learn relaxation methods that they can use the moment they notice the onset of worry and practice these relaxation methods daily.

3. Social Awareness.
Recognizing emotions in others. Empathy, another ability that builds on emotional self-awareness, is the fundamental “people skill.”
Empathy builds on self-awareness; the more open we are to our own emotions, the more skilled we will be in reading feelings.
Tuning in to the feelings and needs of others, be compassionate.

The key to capturing the feelings of others is in the ability to read nonverbal channels: tone of voice, gesture, facial expression, and similar non-verbal signs.
The most critical point in education is to let the child know her emotions are met with empathy, accepted, and reciprocated, in a process called attunement.
Reading emotion involves the amygdala-cortical circuitry, which has a key role in orchestrating the appropriate responses.
The research shows that the more empathy a bystander feels for the victim, the more likely it is that he or she will intervene.

The more empathic people are, the more they favor the moral principle that resources should be allocated according to people’s needs. Social thinking, solidarity, is more likely.
Empathy and attunement is a deep connection that enables attentive and sensitive interaction, in which you do not lose yourself while engaging with the other person.
Through attunement, you can recognize underlying emotions and needs, even if they are not directly expressed. It is an understanding beyond language.
This ability, learned especially in childhood, is crucial for building secure and healthy relationships.
4. Relationship Management.
Handling relationships. The skill lays in managing emotions in others. It is a social competence, a specific skill.

People are getting involved. These social skills underpin popularity, leadership, and interpersonal effectiveness. People who excel at these skills succeed in everything that relies on smooth interaction with others; they are social stars.

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The brain is remarkably plastic and constantly learning. Deficits in emotional abilities can be remedied: each of these areas largely represent a set of habits and reactions that can be improved with the right effort. Source: Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ (English Edition) by Daniel Goleman, 2012.

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