



Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Manage and Develop It

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Abstract:

Emotional intelligence (EI) describes the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, both in oneself and in others. It has strongly emerged as a game changer, playing crucial roles in various aspects of human development, including interpersonal relationships, academic and professional success, and overall well-being. Despite the unprecedented impact of emotional intelligence in human development, happiness and survival, it seems to have been given inadequate attention or ignored entirely by some people. Worse still, in some professional curricula, little or no attention has been given to it. This research paper explores the significance of emotional intelligence and presents strategies for enhancing emotional intelligence through strengthening self-management, self-awareness, relationship management and social awareness activities.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, relationship management, social awareness.*



The Meaning of Emotional Intelligence

One of the earliest scholars in emotional intelligence, Salovey and Mayer (1990), describes it as “a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action”. It was then popularized by Daniel Goleman who refers to it as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman, 1998). He later describes it as what determines our potential for learning the fundamentals of self-mastery, self-concept, self-understanding and the like (Goleman, 2005). It involves the ability to carry out accurate reasoning concerning emotions and to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought (Lopes et al., 2005). Emotional intelligence is the ability and capacity to understand and manage one’s feelings and the feelings of others, either as individuals or group. It is the capacity to master and be aware of one’s feelings and that of others. This necessarily becomes a function of self-mastery, self-definition, self-concept, self-regulation and self-discipline. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) explained that emotional intelligence is one’s ability to recognize and understand emotions in oneself and others, and one’s ability to use this awareness to manage one’s behavior and relationships. Thus, emotional intelligence is the ability to process one’s feeling and the feelings of others.

Domains of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman’s model made beautiful attempt to develop four domains out of five upon which emotional intelligence is domiciled (Goleman et al., 2002; Goleman, 1988). The four domains include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Olivier Serrat (2017), describes emotional intelligence as the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of

one’s self, of others, and of groups. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) give simplified explanation of Goleman’s four domains of emotional intelligence and Cherniss, Cary and Goleman (2001) explain how the domains can be measured and tracked.

Self-awareness

This is internal and so falls under the personal competence because it is the **ability to accurately perceive your own emotions** in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations. This becomes a recognition process. This self or personal emotional competence can be measured with emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence.

Self-management

This is external but falls under the personal competence because it is the **ability to use your awareness of your emotions** to stay flexible and direct your behavior positively. This becomes a regulation process. This self or personal emotional competence can be measured with emotional self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive, transparency, optimism and initiative.

Social Awareness

This also is internal but falls under social competence because it is the **ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people** and understand what is really going on with them. This is a process of recognition. This other or social emotional competence has to do with empathy, service orientation and organizational awareness.

Relationship Management

This is external and falls under social competence because it is the **ability to use your awareness of your own emotions to manage interactions** with other people successfully. It is a process of regulation. This other or social emotional competence has to do with developing others, influence, communication,

conflict management, visionary leadership, catalyzing change, building bonds, teamwork and collaboration.

Personal and Professional Benefits of Emotional Intelligence

Obviously, emotional intelligence has become so important today that it emerges in all aspects of human life and development. According to Serrat (2017), it is an increasingly important consideration in human resource planning, job profiling, recruitment interviewing and selection, learning and development, management styles, interpersonal skills and client relations and customer service, among others. Some of these personal and professional benefits can be highlighted as follows:

Increased in productivity

People with high emotional intelligence are more likely to be productive at work. They are better able to manage their time and resources, and they are more motivated to achieve their goals. This is because they are likely to be more disciplined and able regulate their emotions.

Increased Job Satisfaction

People with high emotional intelligence are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. They are better able to cope with stress, manage conflict, and build strong relationships with their colleagues.

Improved relationship

It is said that people with high emotional intelligence build stronger relationships. They are able to understand and empathize with others, and they are able to resolve conflict in a positive way. They have the courage to forgive others.

Increased in job performance

Travis Bradberry (2023), shows that the virtue of emotional intelligence accounts for 58% of performance in all types of jobs and more than 90% of top performers in leadership positions possess a high degree of emotional intelligence. It is actually a good predictor of educational and

occupational performance (Hackett & Hortman, 2008; Goroshit & Hen, 2012)

Improved leadership capabilities and efficiency

It is often said that people with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage conflict, and resolve problems. They are more inclined to make better and quicker decisions. People with high emotional intelligence are better able to make sound decisions. They are able to weigh the pros and cons of different options, and they are able to consider the impact of their decisions on others.

Greater Resilience in the face of challenges

It has been revealed that people with high emotional intelligence are likely to be happier, healthier, and more resilient in the face of stress. This is because of their optimism, adaptability and emotional self-control

Improved Communication

One of the personal and professional benefits of emotional intelligence is better and improved communication skills. People with high emotional intelligence are better able to communicate their ideas and feelings in a clear and concise way. They are also better at listening to and understanding others.

Academic and Professional Success

People with high emotional intelligence are most likely to make more money in comparison with those with relatively low emotional intelligence. This is confirmed by researchers who see emotional intelligence as an arrangement of educated abilities that may result into successes in various social spaces and platforms, for example, the academic and work environment (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2010). In fact, it is a critical skill for success in both academic, personal and professional life. People with high emotional intelligence are more likely to be promoted, earn higher salaries, and be seen as effective leaders.

Practices to Develop Emotional Intelligence

Naturally, some people are more gifted than others when it comes to the idea of emotional intelligence. Nevertheless, few practices can actually assist one develop high emotional intelligence. Admittedly, a growing number of researchers have agreed and maintained that emotional intelligence skills can be taught and learnt (Marina Goroshit & Meirav Hen, 2012). For this to be actualize, Serrat (2017), argued that those who want to learn and apply emotional intelligence must be personally motivated, practice vigorously what has been learnt, receive feedback, and reinforce their new skills. This is the most crucial part of this paper to assimilate.

People who wish to develop high emotional intelligence must be will to practice and develop the personal and social attributes of emotional intelligence (Consortium for Research, 1998). These practices include:

Emotional Awareness

They should be able to identify which emotions they are feeling and why; realize the connection between their feelings and what they think, do, and say; recognize how their feelings affect their performance and have a guiding awareness of their values and goals.

Accurate Self-Assessment

They should be aware of their strengths and weakness. They should be reflective and able to learn from experience. They should be open to honest feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development. Again, they should be able to display sense of joviality and humour about who they are.

Self Confidence

One attribute they must try to cultivate is self-confidence. That is to equip themselves with self-assurances and possess presence. They should have the courage to voice out and follow unpopular view provided they consider it the right way or thing to be done. They must be decisive and willing to make sound judgments and decisions despite irregular situations and pressures of any type.

Self-Control

Those who wish to develop high emotional intelligence should learn to manage their spontaneous feelings and painful emotions well. They should stay calm, serene, positive, and imperturbable even in trying moments. They should think clearly and stay concentrated under pressure.

Trustworthiness

They should act ethically and above reproach. They should prove to be reliable and authentic at all times. They should be willing to admit their own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others in the spirit of love. They should be exceptional trust through their integrity and be able to take difficult but principled decisions even when it is unpopular.

Conscientiousness

They should be able to meet commitments and keep promises. They should hold themselves responsible to meeting their set goals and objectives. They must be orderly and diligent in their work. They should be seen as organized.

Adaptability

They should be able to adapt their decisions and responses to fit fluid circumstances. They should be able to adjust to changes and shift priorities when the need arises. They should learn to be flexible when the need arises.

Innovativeness

An attribute that those who wish to develop high emotional intelligence should endeavour to cultivate is innovativeness. They should be creative and ready to produce new ways of doing things. They should create new ideas and be original in their thinking. They should be able to take risk and be entrepreneurial in action.

Achievement Drive

They should develop results-oriented ability. They should take decisions that geared towards achieving their objectives. They should try to get information and find ways to improve efficiency and performance.

Commitment

They should develop the ability to learn to make both personal and group sacrifices to meet group objective. They should show signs of selflessness in pursuing group mission. They should seek out opportunities and core group values to fulfil group aims and objectives.

Initiative

They should be ready to seize opportunities and even do more than is expected of them. They should even show flexibility with the rules in order to get goals attained. They should be able to persuade others extraordinary means to achieve desired objective.

Optimism

They should learn to be positive in thoughts and views. They should be able to lay emphasis on the fact that achieving anything is possible with right people and appropriate moves. They should be able to learn how to inspire, motivate and get others to believe that the positive means will definitely bring about expected outcome.

Empathy

They should attentive to emotional needs of others and learn how to listen. They should understand the feelings of others and be a confidant. They should be considerate and sensitive. They should be empathetic to the feelings of others around them.

Service Orientation

They should be able to understand the needs of customers and match them to services or products. They should seek ways to improve customers' satisfaction and loyalty. They should identify customers' needs and perspectives. They should be able to offer needed assistance to others.

Developing Others

They should cultivate the ability to identify people's needs for growth and development so as to fill it. They should take delight in mentoring and coaching others to grow in skills and knowledge. They should learn to commend and

reward others for their contributions, accomplishment and growth.

Leveraging Diversity

Those who wish to develop high emotional intelligence should strive to perceive diversity as blessing and opportunities for creativity and growth. They should confront elements of bias, intolerance and bigotry. They should respect diverse worldviews and different backgrounds. They should be sensitive to group differences.

Political Awareness

They should be carefully enough to master key power relationships and vital power and social networks. They should identify voices that shape views and actions in the society. They should have working knowledge of external realities.

Influence

They should learn the principle of persuasion and initiate beautiful and dramatic events to effectively drive home their points. They should learn to apply complex strategies to gather support and consensus. They must learn to fine-tune their presentations to persuade their listeners.

Communication

They must be open to information sharing and dialogue. They must learn to accept ideas of others even be ready to listen to bad news. They have to be honest with feedback. Open communication should always be their target.

Leadership

They must act as transformational leaders who lead by example. They must guide the performance of others, motivate and inspire them while holding them accountable. They must be willing to show leadership capacities when needed regardless of their status and positions. They must create favourable atmosphere where people will be willing to share their vision and mission.

Change Catalyst

They must be willing to recognise the need for change and remove all obstacles. They must have the ability to challenge the status quo so as

to admit the need for renewal and transformation. They must lead the change effect and convince others to be part of it.

Conflict Management

They must learn how to resolve conflicts amicably and be able to identify areas of conflict and deal with it on time. They must learn to partner with those who are experts in conflict resolution. They must learn to encourage open discussions and discourage gossips. They must learn to handle difficult people and situations with needed diplomacy.

Building Bonds

Another attribute that those who desire to develop high emotional intelligence should cultivate is the ability to build rapport with people and avoid any visible act of discrimination. They should maintain extensive informal networks of connectivity and establish relationships that are mutually beneficial.

Collaboration and Cooperation

They should also learn how to maintain and enhance friendly and cooperative environment. They should be able to nurture opportunities for collaboration in different areas of planning, information, and resources.

Team Capabilities

Those who wish to develop high emotional intelligence should be able to practice team spirit and identity. They should learn to display team virtues such as respect, sensitivity, cooperation and faithfulness. They should be able to protect team culture and reputation.

Conclusion

By recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence and taking steps to develop and enhance these skills, individuals can unlock their full potentials and improve their personal and professional lives, fostering healthier relationships, making better decisions, improved communication, enhanced leadership capabilities, achieving higher levels of well-being, and greater resilience in the face of challenges. Neglecting emotional intelligence

can have detrimental effects on personal and professional relationships, leading to increased stress levels and diminished overall well-being. Developing emotional intelligence is a process and a long-term achievable process. Hence, one should recognize the significance of emotional intelligence and actively engage in practices that promote its development and application.

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