

Classic Guide to Emotional Intelligence



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Contents

Introduction	2
What is Emotional Intelligence?	3
What Defines People with Emotional Intelligence?	4
How can you improve your Emotional Intelligence?	4
Contact Classic Consulting	5

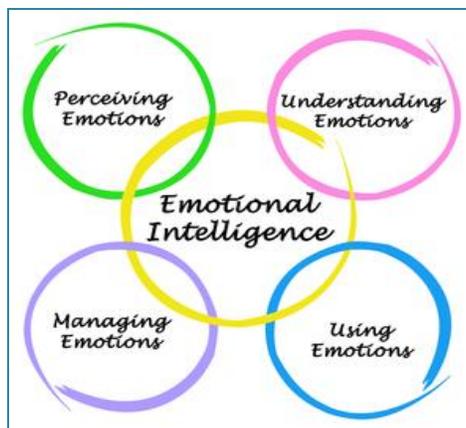
Introduction

Looking for a new job is a tough business and can feel like a full-time job in itself. There are roles to search for, agencies and job alerts to subscribe to, CVs to update... Every application form seems to get longer and is different from the last one, so if you are cutting and pasting content this needs to be done with care and precision. Cover letters and statements of intent always need refining. Explaining how you meet the person specification and what you've achieved to date are nuanced and time-consuming. Then, there's the waiting... and the gauging when to stop waiting in the absence of news.

If successful, there are interviews to prepare for, more research to be done and presentations to be perfected; and if, that isn't enough, there's serious competition to beat, or a second or even third interview to overcome.

While this all adds stress to the potential employee, it can be equally exhausting and unpredictable for employers. Making difficult decisions about who to appoint and who to turn down has a big impact on team morale, business performance, increased or reduced confidence in the decision-makers, and carries a huge burden of responsibility for whether the new employee will fit in, do their job well and not threaten existing employees' positions and workplace styles.

In a previous era when people could stay in the same job for 20, or even 40 years, technical skills and academic qualifications were often paramount. Recently however, employers and their business plans and targets are needing other qualities to be present, such as emotional intelligence, flexibility and adaptability to an ever changing technological and multi-media based working environment.



What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotion Intelligence (EQ - emotional quotient) is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships wisely and empathetically in any given situation, either planned or unplanned. In a culture of immediacy, sound bites and real-time news, it is even more essential for EQ to anchor our thoughts and actions before we dive in and create chaos.

People with high levels of EQ are more likely to stay calm in stressful situations, resolve conflict more easily, lead by example in the workplace, and show empathy towards colleagues. EQ is the key to personal and professional success, and is therefore highly desirable in any team or organisation. This is why many interviews are conducted by asking what appears to be indirect questions to the positions applied for, e.g. *'How would you like to be remembered?'*, *'How do you deal with disappointment?'* or *'What gives you joy?'* The interviewer is trying to gauge what's behind your initial presentation of yourself. They're not trying to catch you out - rather, they want to see what motivates you deep down, and what your world view and focus are. All these other factors shape how we behave and so are crucial indicators of our ability to fit into an organisation.

Most jobs require more than just knowledge. They demand the ability to relate to, and communicate with, a diverse range of other people who do not think like us, who do not work in the same way as us and do not approach tasks or people in the same way as us. We have to find ways of bridging gaps, negotiating and compromising, and understanding that there are many other ways to see and solve problems, manage deadlines and competing expectations.



What Defines People with Emotional Intelligence?

'Anyone can be 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 - The Nichomachean Ethics

Many employers report that employees with high EQ admit to, and learn from, their mistakes more readily, are highly articulate and able to conduct well thought-out discussions and debates. They control their emotions, even when provoked, value criticism and listen just as much, if not more, than they talk. They are measured and value regular reflection rather than needing to be seen to contribute in every meeting.

How can you improve your Emotional Intelligence?

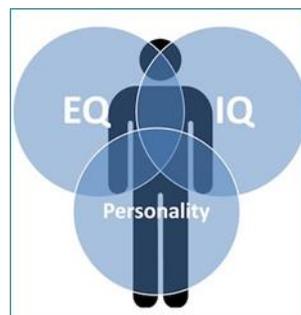
According to one of the leading exponents of EQ - Daniel Goleman, in his bestselling book – *'Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ'* - he lists the following components:

Self-awareness	Personal decision-making	Self-acceptance
Managing feelings	Handling stress	Insight
Empathy	Communications	Assertiveness
Self-disclosure	Personal responsibility	Group dynamics
Conflict resolution		

Looking at the list, you may like to reflect on which you feel are your strengths and your weaknesses, which ones you find hard and which you find easy to handle. All of these components are crucial in the work environment and take time, wisdom and honesty to develop.

You may also like to consider what type of job and environment would help you develop these attributes. If you feel you are not an assertive person do you want a job/workplace where that is important, a job/workplace where you can learn this with support or in a job/workplace where this isn't a necessity?

Whatever career you carve out for yourself, EQ can make all the difference to you both professionally and personally.



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