

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR STUDENTS (Transcript of the Online Lecture)

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Abstract. *This is not a research paper on Emotional Intelligence (EI) but more of a transcript of the 45 minutes session I did online with the students of the University of Nis, Serbia, with the sole purpose of explaining the importance of EI in today's world. The primary aim of this paper is to address the importance of Emotional Intelligence for students in today's context by understanding the What, Why and How and for Whom factors of EI. Until a few years back emotions were understood as a psychological process but today medical science has proved that a small section of the brain helps us process our emotions making it both a psychological and physiological process. This explains how the body affects the mind and the mind affects the body. As subjective feelings, emotions make us feel in a particular way: angry, sad, happy, and each of these feelings impacts our performance. To be able to balance these emotions with logic and use them towards the betterment of performance is the purpose of enhancing our emotional intelligence.*

Key words: *Emotional Intelligence, Psychological process, Physiological process*

1. INTRODUCTION

History of EI: in the late 1930's an American psychologist Edward Thorndike developed an important distinction between three broad classes of intellectual functioning in human beings.

- abstract intelligence,
- mechanical intelligence,
- social intelligence.

Abstract intelligence can be measured by testing; mechanical intelligence is described as the ability to visualize relationships among objects and understand how the physical world works, and social intelligence is the ability to successfully function in interpersonal situations. Social intelligence is closely related to emotional intelligence.

Wanye Payne in 1985 coined the term Emotional Intelligence which was later taken up by Daniel Goleman.

2. WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

The most popular definition of Emotional Intelligence is by Daniel Goleman, with whom today we associate the term most widely. Goleman defines it as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions both in ourselves and in our relationships”. But it would be wrong to

assume that emotional intelligence had no recognition before Goleman. Two researchers, Peter Salovey and John Mayer put forward the definition of EI much before Goleman in 1990, stating that emotional intelligence involves the “abilities to perceive, appraise, and express emotion; to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth”.

Goleman further identifies five components of Emotional Intelligence.

1. Self- Awareness,
2. Self – Regulation,
3. Internal Motivation,
4. Empathy,
5. Social Skills.

Self awareness helps in self management and Social awareness in turn helps in building relationships. These are four skills dependent on emotional intelligence.

There are certain myths around the concept of emotional intelligence. It is often thought that emotional intelligence is about suppressing emotions or not feeling them at all. People who don't show their emotions in public are also assumed to be emotionally intelligent. Both these concepts are far from true. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive emotions, access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, ability to understand complex emotions and gain emotional knowledge, develop empathy and lastly develop the ability to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

There are 7 core skills of EI:

- Awareness of personal feelings and ability to control them,
- Emotional resilience (ability to perform consistently under pressure),
- Motivation (the drive and energy to achieve results),
- Ability to take other people's needs into account,
- Influencing and persuasive skills,
- Decisiveness (arrive at clear decisions and drive them through, problem solving),
- Conscientiousness (display commitment to an action plan and match words and deeds).

3. WHY DO WE HAVE TO BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT?

In 1995 the Association of Graduate Recruiters came up with a study that stated that “in the 21st century the most significant challenge for graduates will be to manage their relationship with work and with learning. This requires skills such as negotiation, action planning and networking, added to qualities like self awareness and confidence. These are skills required to be self-reliant in career and personal development, skills to manage processes rather than functional skills”.

Aristotle once said that anybody can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy.

Emotions vary in intensity and quality. They are rooted in our mental processes. The ability to use emotions to facilitate thinking, and problem solving is the sure sign of high emotional intelligence. Research shows that success depends 20% on IQ and 80% EQ.

Emotional quotient includes abilities that are distinct from, but are complimentary to academic intelligence. EQ is not a substitute for IQ.

Individuals with high EI have better life outcomes. As they are able to give their emotions a goal directed force they are less stressed, less depressed, more empathic, less lonely, better at friendships and relationships have higher self esteem and are happier. They are functional and effective even in emotion causing circumstances. High on emotional resilience they have the ability to perform even under pressure.

4. HOW DOES ONE DEVELOP EI?

Is one born emotionally intelligent or can it be developed at a later stage? Do certain type of people have higher EQ? Are the introverts more emotionally intelligent than the extroverts? These are a few questions that are commonly asked by most people. Ever since it has been proved that EI involves both psychological and physiological processes it is more than certain that anyone can develop the skills required to have a higher EQ. Since EI is based on self awareness and self management, training and programmes designed to bring about such awareness help. Apart from this, there are also courses that help an individual to become aware of the impact of his/her emotions through the mechanism of feedback. Psychometric instruments have also been developed to assess the level of EQ. Special training programmes focused of the development of EQ are developed to increase interpersonal effectiveness.

EI is not about negating one's feelings. On the contrary, it is about acknowledging the feelings within a self completely and then deciding what to do about them in the most effective way. A person with high EQ would use their anger to create rather than to destroy. It is important to hold the emotion and get to the roots of it in order to find the exact cause. Emotionally intelligent persons do not project their emotions on others, they take the responsibility of their emotion themselves, which then enables them to control it. For example, you will not hear a person with high EQ saying "You made me angry!" They will say "I am angry" and then look into what it is that is making them angry by introspecting themselves. This sort of self awareness helps them to take care of their emotions and prevents emotional outbursts. It must be understood that EI makes us hold the fine balance between Reason and Emotion.

5. FOR WHOM?

In one word, it's for 'everyone'; because everyone deserves to be able to lead a more successful life. As the saying goes 'catch them young'. If the awareness is brought in at the student's level it is better for them. They will learn to handle stress better and be more successful. Students often perform badly in exams because they are stressed. Students become victims of bullying because they are unable to ward off the projection of the bullies.

Today the prospective employees are being assessed by their employers by a different yardstick. Mere technical competence is not enough. IQ is not enough. As competition gets tougher, employers look for employees who are more stable and capable of teamwork. They want leaders who will lead their organizations. They look for fresh graduates with high EQ for higher productivity. More and more organizations will vouch for the fact that their employees look up to their leaders for strong support. These leaders

lead their organizations towards greater success because they remain undaunted by failures and do not break down at times of crisis. They contribute to their organizations in a positive way.

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