

# Connecting Emotional Intelligence to Success in the Workplace



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## Part One: A Brief History of Emotional Intelligence

### Emotional Intelligence: Roots in IQ Measurement

The idea of measuring intelligence took hold in the early part of the twentieth century and resulted in the concept of the intelligence quotient or IQ, which places people on a bell-shaped curve with the “average” intelligence at 100. As Cary Cherniss explains in his article, “Emotional Intelligence: What it is and Why it Matters,” the early developers of IQ tests understood that “non-intellective” abilities are as important for predicting an individual’s success in life as those of general intelligence. David Wechsler, for example, writing in the early 1940’s, asserted that “in addition to intellective there are also definite non-intellective factors that determine intelligent behavior” and that “we cannot expect to measure total intelligence until our tests also include some measures of the non-intellective factors” (Cherniss, 2000).

Nevertheless, the IQ test as we know it developed mostly as a measure of mathematical and verbal abilities. In his book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, published in 1983, Howard Gardner wrote about multiple intelligences, including “intrapersonal” and “interpersonal” intelligences, which would later become major aspects of Emotional Intelligence definitions and assessments.

### Defining Emotional Intelligence

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, the social and emotional factors of intelligence received more attention among researchers. One clinical psychologist, Reuven Bar-On, focused his research by asking a couple of questions: “Why do some people succeed in possessing better emotional well-being than others? Why are some individuals more able to succeed in life than others?” Bar-On performed a systematic review of various abilities, capabilities, competencies, and skills that are generally thought to determine success as well as gaining and maintaining positive emotional health. His research revealed that what we call IQ, basically cognitive intelligence, is not always the sole predictor of success. Bar-On developed the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), defining Emotional Intelligence as “an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures” (Bar-On, 1998).

Other psychologists, including Peter Salovey and John Mayer who receive credit for coining the term “Emotional Intelligence,” were researching similar concepts, however, it was Daniel Goleman, a science writer for the *New York Times* and a Harvard-trained psychologist, who wrote and published the book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ* in 1995, greatly boosting popular interest in Emotional Intelligence. Goleman attempted to demonstrate that emotions play a significant role in thought processes and decision making, and that Emotional Intelligence is an important factor to individual success. He defined Emotional Intelligence as a set of skills, including control of one’s impulses, self-motivation, empathy and social competence in interpersonal relationships.

Since Goleman's 1995 book, there has been a great deal of research and published writing about Emotional Intelligence—including several other books written by Daniel Goleman either on his own or in collaboration with others. His book, *Social Intelligence* (2006) makes the case for the “social brain” that is wired to connect with other brains and thereby mold both our experience and our neural circuitry. Goleman asserts, “The brain-to-brain link allows our strongest relationships to shape us on matters as benign as whether we laugh at the same jokes or as profound as which genes are (or are not) activated in T-cells, the immune system's foot soldiers in the constant battle against invading bacteria and viruses” (Goleman, 2006).

An Internet search can easily result in two million or more references to Emotional Intelligence, and a number of organizations have developed that are devoted to studying the concepts and applying them to personal and community life, education, and the workplace. The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations at Rutgers University maintains a website ([www.eiconsortium.org](http://www.eiconsortium.org)) that includes an extensive bibliography of articles and books on this topic.

### Assessment and Enhancement of Emotional Intelligence

A number of assessments have been developed for measuring both individual and team Emotional Intelligence. One of the oldest and most validated assessments is the EQ-i (mentioned above) developed by Reuven Bar-On, a self-report measure of fifteen different factors divided among five realms that Bar-On has delineated to define Emotional Intelligence. Other assessments purport to test Emotional Intelligence abilities through a presentation of emotion-based problems. A number of other assessments, mainly of the self-report type, have been developed and are widely available.

Whatever assessment is used, the purpose for measuring Emotional Intelligence in most arenas is the idea that people can indeed learn ways to enhance their own skills and competencies—not only to improve their scores—but to be more successful in their personal lives and in achieving their goals in the workplace. The game, *Creating An Emotionally Intelligent World*, was designed and developed to provide an experience that will provoke participants to understand how their own levels of Emotional Intelligence influence their everyday actions, reactions, and interactions—and thus their success.

### A Model of Emotional Intelligence

The Model of Emotional Intelligence, which provides the framework for the game, draws on existing models and research (including Bar-On, Goleman, Freedman, Salovey and Meyer, Cooper and Sawaf) but specifically addresses the workplace and behaviors that contribute to achieving success in the workplace.

The model consists of five dimensions:

- Awareness of the Self
- Actions of the Self
- Awareness of Others
- Interactions with Others
- Resilience

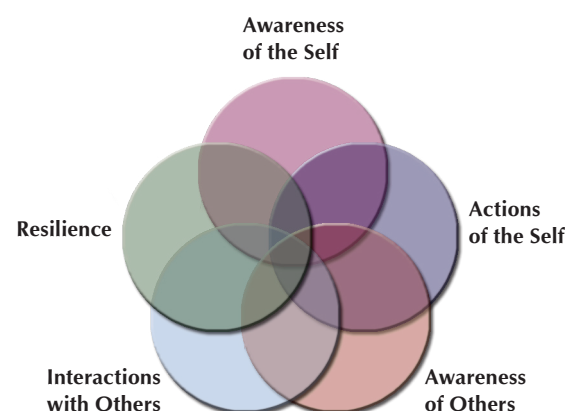


Figure 1. A Model of Emotional Intelligence

While there are distinct definitions for each of the five dimensions, the competencies of these dimensions are clearly interconnected. For example, most of the competencies are based on Awareness of the Self, the foundational building block of Emotional Intelligence. An individual can learn to modify his or her actions and reactions based on the ability to be self-aware, that is, the ability to identify emotions in the self and to perceive the impact one has on others.

Similarly, being competent in recognizing the emotions and feelings of others is related to the ability to empathize and interact meaningfully with others to form and maintain good interpersonal relationships and support networks. Strong competency in all of these dimensions helps an individual build resilience, the fifth dimension of the model.

## Definitions of the Five Dimensions



**Awareness of the Self:** The ability to identify emotions in yourself and to perceive the impact you have on others.

Self-awareness is the foundational building block of Emotional Intelligence. The first step in enhancing Emotional Intelligence is achieving a healthy level of self-awareness—the ability to identify emotions in the self and to perceive the impact you have on others at home, in the workplace, within the local community, and beyond that if you happen to have a wider sphere of influence.

Being self-aware means that you are realistic in appraising your own behavior, that you are able to recognize how people perceive you, that you are aware of how you respond to people in a variety of situations, and that you can identify your intent and attitude as you communicate with others.

Sample scenarios demonstrating Awareness of the Self in the workplace:

**Strength:** During a company budget meeting, Jonathan speaks with enthusiasm about the current needs of his department, but after five minutes, he notices that at least half of those at the meeting are no longer listening to him.

**Needs Development:** After putting in twelve to fourteen-hour work days for weeks on end, Michelle is surprised one morning to find herself flat on her back with muscle spasms as she tries to get out of bed.



**Actions of the Self:** The ability to manage your own emotions, especially in the midst of strong “negative” emotions in yourself or in your environment.

Individuals who are strong in this dimension are able to manage their own emotions. They can express a range of feelings appropriately and plan how to manage strong emotions in a given situation. They have developed ways to cope with those emotions that are perceived to be “negative” and thus maintain their equilibrium. People are sometimes surprised to learn that they can successfully manage (not “control”) even quite dramatic emotions such as anger, jealousy, and sadness.

Being aware of your emotions is a good first step in learning to manage them. If you can identify what it is you are feeling, you can learn to acknowledge the emotion, understand how it may be expressed in your physiological state, and plan a way to manage it if it involves negative consequences.

Sample scenarios demonstrating Actions of the Self in the workplace:

**Strength:** After an upsetting argument with her teenager, Miriam drives to work thinking about how to shift her focus from the emotional argument at home to a decision that she and her team will be considering today.

**Needs Development:** When an employee speaks up in strong disagreement about a solution that Michael has presented, Michael feels the blood rushing to his face, and when he responds, he has difficulty controlling the sarcastic tone and loud volume of his own voice.



**Awareness of Others:** The ability to accurately perceive and understand the emotional states of others.

At the lower end of the range for this ability, individuals have a difficult time identifying and understanding what others are feeling whether through their words, actions, facial expressions, or body language. At the upper range are those individuals who are alert to what others are experiencing emotionally and are able to empathize with them.

The skill of listening to others—to the meaning of their words and to their intonation and tone—is a necessary aspect of awareness of others, but the ability to read how people are feeling by observing their facial expressions, their actions, and their body language is also part of such awareness. If you are unable to “read” how others are reacting or feeling, you will find it more difficult to communicate and to influence others.

Sample scenarios demonstrating Awareness of Others in the workplace:

**Strength:** Although Marilyn has only recently joined the college’s executive team, she quickly becomes aware that the Executive Dean rolls his eyes every time the Chief Financial Officer speaks up during a meeting.

**Needs Development:** Lester, determined to get through all eleven of his talking points, never notices the annoyance on several faces as the meeting goes twenty-five minutes overtime.



**Interaction with Others:** The ability to utilize awareness of others’ emotions to build relationships, teams, and support networks.

The ability to successfully interact with other people builds on an individual’s awareness of others’ emotions. An individual who is strong in this dimension utilizes that awareness to build strong relationships, teams, and support networks. Such an individual is capable of empathy and compassion in interactions with other people.

If you develop techniques for accurately evaluating the emotions of those you interact with, you will be less likely to make negative judgments and more likely to empathize—to put yourself in the shoes of those individuals—and to be able to develop relationships that are productive and satisfying. This ability is also important for building successful teams and organizations.

Sample scenarios demonstrating Interaction with Others in the workplace:

**Strength:** Jonathan calls his staff together after a merger is announced to allow them to ask questions and discuss how the change in management might affect their jobs.

**Needs Development:** When an employee fails to bring promised information to the meeting, Sharon reminds him in front of his peers that the success of the team depends on each person doing his or her part on time.



**Resilience:** The ability to maintain equilibrium despite the inevitable changes that occur both internally and externally in an individual's life.

Several other factors such as optimism, flexibility, the ability to learn from mistakes and to recover from setbacks are also significant aspects of Emotional Intelligence. In this model, they are combined in a dimension called resilience. It is resilience as much as any other aspect of Emotional Intelligence that is the foundation for an individual's ability to maintain equilibrium and balance amidst inevitable changes and even crises that one encounters over a lifetime.

Resilience is important in the make-up of the emotionally intelligent individual. This dimension is what fuels an individual's day-to-day motivation as he or she encounters internal changes—joy, sadness, boredom, love, intellectual curiosity, and anger to name just a few—as well as external changes that run the gamut from seasonal and weather changes to geographic re-locations to emotionally charged environments in one's personal life or workplace. These inevitable changes are more successfully handled if an individual is flexible, optimistic, and prepared to cope with and learn from disappointments and setbacks. All of these abilities are aspects of resilience.

Sample scenarios demonstrating Resilience in the workplace:

**Strength:** A production flaw that could mean a costly setback is discovered late on a Friday afternoon. On Monday, Leah is at her desk early ready to inspire her team to respond to the challenge and meet the production deadline.

**Needs Development:** With international sector sales dropping for the third straight quarter, Paul loses confidence in his ability as a manager, blames himself for the loss of company revenue, and begins to have difficulty sleeping.

## Part Two: Using Games to Develop Emotional Intelligence

### Why Play a Game?

*Creating an Emotionally Intelligent World: A Computer-Based Game for Teams* is grounded in the concepts of Emotional Intelligence but inspired by the many studies that connect Emotional Intelligence and success. We know from research on adult learning that adults are motivated to learn when the learning is relevant to their experiences, practical and useful in their work, and helpful in attaining their goals. Playing the game provides a vehicle for greater self-awareness, a way to experience the power of emotions in the workplace, and evidence for the idea that individuals can build Emotional Intelligence skills for greater success. In playing the game with a small team, participants are immersed in an enjoyable experience that holds the promise of helping them make the connection between their own Emotional Intelligence and the successful achievement of their goals.



## Experiential Learning in Game Play

The game presents provocative tasks—representing experiences that are realistic to the workplace—in an experiential environment that calls for critical analysis, decision making, collaboration, and an understanding of one’s own feelings and emotions as well as an awareness of others’ feelings and emotions. The concept that underlies all the tasks is that individuals, teams, and whole organizations will be more successful if they think, plan, interact, speak, and take action based on a strong foundation of Emotional Intelligence.

For example, as participants are confronted during the game with multiple solutions to a given challenge or opportunity, participants learn for themselves to develop and analyze multiple solutions from multiple points of view for a more thorough and successful analysis. As they are asked to communicate an emotion by role playing a workplace situation, they learn for themselves to become more aware of how others may react to their words, their facial expressions, and their body language.

In another kind of game task, as participants facilitate agreement among team members about what is most important to their team, they learn and practice being aware of the feelings of others to create more successful interpersonal relationships. And as they are confronted with “unexpected life events” that arise during the game, they learn the significance of strong levels of Emotional Intelligence in helping an individual cope with external events and being resilient despite life’s inevitable changes.

## Creating an Emotionally Intelligent World: An introduction to the game

Creating an Emotionally Intelligent World is an interactive computer-based team game built on the PowerPoint platform. Fast-paced challenges relating to the five dimensions of emotional intelligence make for exciting game play as teams of up to six players per computer work together on a group project. The goal is to earn enough points to complete a 30-piece puzzle by correctly responding to seven different types of challenges. Unexpected Life Events (ULEs) randomly intervene, which either add or subtract puzzle pieces from the project. The game ends when a team completes the puzzle project, or runs out of time. At the end of the game, players learn their performance statistics, including an Overall Emotional Intelligence Awareness Rating, a Team Performance Score, and an assessment of how frequently the individuals players chose to act independently or collaboratively. A debrief activity completes the experience; a reproducible Participant Guide is included that helps reinforce the five Emotional Intelligence concepts introduced in the game.

## Game Tasks

There are seven kinds of tasks that challenge the players. In addition, there are random pop-up screens representing the unexpected life events—those events, both joyful and sorrowful, that occur in all our lives, no matter what our level of Emotional Intelligence. The game is designed to encourage collaboration and teamwork while also building awareness of Emotional Intelligence. Challenge screens include “tips” about Emotional Intelligence to help players connect their experience with the concepts of Emotional Intelligence.

### 1. What Would You Do?



Participants are presented with a brief workplace scenario and a multiple-choice list for deciding on which action would demonstrate Emotional Intelligence. The response to a player’s choice explains why one decision is better than the others in achieving success—in both the short run and the long term.

## 2. Picture This!



The ability to recognize and understand facial expressions and body language contributes to an individual's ability to empathize and interact with others. The challenge presented by these tasks, which are pictures of faces or body language, also helps participants build "emotional literacy"—language to describe emotional states and feelings, an important element in building awareness of Emotional Intelligence.

## 3. Taking Action to Improve EI



A typical screen in this category contains a list of five activities that could help enhance an individual's Emotional Intelligence in any of the five dimensions. Players learn to differentiate among the five dimensions while also picking up ideas for enhancing their Emotional Intelligence.

## 4. Survey Says



These tasks present the players with a multiple-choice list regarding a variety of workplace situations and statistics based on research related to concepts of Emotional Intelligence, such as stress in the workplace or problems caused by lack of communication. The player attempts to choose the "most important" item (according to a particular research publication) on the list, while also gaining insight into the connection of the situation to Emotional Intelligence.

## 5. Decisions, Decisions



This type of task is played by the entire team with one player serving as facilitator, with the goal of making a decision within a given time period. Participants experience the need for Emotional Intelligence as they seek to influence others as well as facilitate decision making in a team environment. While no decision is "wrong," the team is not rewarded if a majority decision is not made before time is up.

## 6. What Am I Feeling?



This type of task is played by the entire team with one player acting out the emotion contained in a "secret box" that appears on screen. This activity supports several concepts of Emotional Intelligence including awareness of the self, awareness of others, and emotional literacy.

## 7. From the Heart



All team members participate by speaking for 30 seconds or less on an easy, non-threatening topic. Sharing ideas and opinions builds trust among team members and can increase their understanding of Emotional Intelligence concepts including self-awareness, awareness of others, and interaction with others.

## 8. Unexpected Life Event (ULE)



This ULE (unexpected life event) pops up randomly during the game and presents an “external” event or occurrence—which may be either an advantage or a disadvantage to the player and/or team. (Example: The stock market takes a dive . . . ) The concept behind this activity is that the stronger one’s Emotional Intelligence, the better one can cope with events and changes in the external environment.



## References (with annotations)

Bradberry, Travis, and Jean Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* (San Diego, TalentSmart, 2009). Each book includes a passcode to take an online emotional intelligence test by the authors. The book offers brief strategies for increasing one's emotional intelligence.

Caruso, David R., Brian Bienn, and Susan A. Kornacki, "Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace," in *Emotional Intelligence in Everyday Life*, eds. Joseph Ciarrochi, Joseph P. Forgas, and John D. Mayer (New York and Hove, Psychology Press, 2006). In this chapter, the authors provide a "story" of a new hire, his manager, his team leader, and the organization they work in to illustrate the importance of emotional intelligence. They also provide a synopsis of the research on emotional intelligence.

Colapinto, John, "Brain Games: The Marco Polo of Neuroscience." *The New Yorker*, May 11, 2009. This is a fascinating profile of Dr. Vilayanur S. Ramachandran, an Indian-born behavioral neurologist who is the director of the Center for Brain and Cognition at U.C.S.D. He has a reputation among his peers for being able to solve some of the most mystifying riddles of neuroscience.

Cooper, Robert K., and Ayman Sawaf, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations* (New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1997). The authors organize their discussion around what they call the "four cornerstones of emotional intelligence:" emotional literacy, emotional fitness, emotional depth, and emotional alchemy. The book includes the "EQ Map Questionnaire" which can be self scored.

Ekman, Paul. *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communications and Emotional Life* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 2003, 2007). Ekman, who has been studying emotions for over 40 years, says that "emotions determine the quality of your life," and he discusses four "essential skills": becoming more consciously aware of when you are becoming emotional, even before you speak or act, choosing how you behave when you are emotional so you achieve your goals without damaging other people, becoming more sensitive to how others are feeling, and carefully using the information you acquire about how others are feeling. He has a website with more information: [www.paulekman.com](http://www.paulekman.com).

Ekman, Paul, and The Dalai Lama. *Emotional Awareness: Overcoming the Obstacles to Psychological Balance and Compassion*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008). This is actually a consolidation of conversations between The Dalai Lama and Dr. Ekman. Although the format lacks coherence, the book is interesting for bringing together the perspectives of science and spirituality to understand the nature and quality of our emotional lives.

Gardener, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983, 1993). Gardener's work helps explain how and why people learn in different ways and possess different skills and talents. Gardener discusses his idea that "intelligence" is actually made up of various intelligences, including INTERpersonal and INTRApersonal—concepts directly related to emotional and social intelligence.

Goleman, Daniel. *Social Intelligence: The Revolutionary New Science of Human Relationships* (New York: Random House, 2006). Goleman brought emotional intelligence to public attention with *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* in 1995. This book is a companion piece to that earlier book, providing information about social neuroscience and the variety of brain cells that help explain the neural dynamics of human relationships.

Goleman, Daniel. *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Random House, 1998). Goleman demonstrates how important it is for leaders to understand "emotional contagion," and the idea that a leader can infect a group with a positive or negative emotion, "like spreading a virus among unknowing victims."

Goleman, Daniel, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2002). Goleman, along with researchers Boyatzis, and McKee discuss the neuroscientific links between organizational success or failure and "primal leadership." If a leader resonates energy and enthusiasm, an organization thrives; if a leader spreads negativity and dissonance, it flounders.

Hughes, Marcia, Henry L. Thompson, and James Bradford Terrell, eds., *The Handbook for Developing Emotional and Social Intelligence* (Pfeiffer; May 2009). The handbook offers a rich collection of knowledge and solutions that will appeal to

anyone involved in developing leaders and teams. It features case studies, best practices, and proven tools that show how emotional and social intelligence is being harnessed to deliver improved individual, team, and organization effectiveness. Contributions reach across multiple sectors, including telecom, healthcare, and government, focusing on learning hot spots such as leadership, recruitment, conflict resolution, team development, and stress management.”

Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner, *Encouraging the Heart: A Leaders's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others* (San Francisco, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2003). Although not directly about emotional intelligence, this book is a practical discussion of one of the five “leadership challenges” by Kouzes and Posner. It includes many of the elements of EI in practice. The authors explain that it is designed “to describe what leaders do, explain the principles underlying their practices, provide some examples of real leaders demonstrating these actions, and then offer suggestions on how you can get started putting them into practice.”

Salovey, Peter, “Applied Emotional Intelligence: Regulating Emotions to Become Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise,” in *Emotional Intelligence in Everyday Life*, eds. Joseph Ciarrochi, Joseph P. Forgas, and John D. Mayer (New York and Hove, Psychology Press, 2006). Salovey, one of the pioneers of emotional intelligence, focuses in this chapter on staying physically well and on making good financial decisions. He argues that the appropriate regulation of emotions is an important predictor of good health and a key to investing money wisely.

Seligman, Martin E.P. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (New York, Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2002). The author, Director of the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center, writes, “Relieving the states that make life miserable... has made building the states that make life worth living less of a priority. The time has finally arrived for a science that seeks to understand positive emotion, build strength and virtue, and provide guideposts for finding what Aristotle called the ‘good life.’” There is an interesting website associated with this book and concept: [www.authentichappiness.com](http://www.authentichappiness.com).

Seligman, Martin E.P. *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* (New York, Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2002). Dr. Seligman explains how to recognize your “explanatory style” — what to say to yourself when you experience set-backs — and how it influences your life. Like *Authentic Happiness* (see above), this book is based in the positive psychology movement, which can perhaps be summarized by saying that it “[shifts] the profession’s paradigm away from its narrow-minded focus on pathology, victimology, and mental illness to positive emotion, virtue and strength, and positive institutions.”

## Recommended Resources

[http://www.hrdqstore.com/Creating-an-Emotionally-Intelligent-World-A-Computer-Based-Game-For-Teams\\_c\\_415.html](http://www.hrdqstore.com/Creating-an-Emotionally-Intelligent-World-A-Computer-Based-Game-For-Teams_c_415.html) - Learn more about the game Creating an Emotionally Intelligent World and download a free playable demo.

<http://www.eiconsortium.org> - The mission of the EI Consortium is to advance research and practice of emotional and social intelligence in organizations through the generation and exchange of knowledge. The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations is currently made up of 8 core members and 56 additional members who are individuals with a strong record of accomplishment as applied researchers in the field. There also are six organizational and corporate members. The Consortium was founded in the spring of 1996 with the support of the Fetzer Institute. Its initial mandate was to study all that is known about emotional intelligence in the workplace.

<http://www.eqi.org/fw.htm> - for a list of over 3000 English words to express feelings.

<http://www.authentichappiness.com> - Authentic Happiness has almost 700,000 registered users around the world. You are welcome to use all of the resources on this website for free.

<http://www.paulekman.com> – Eminent psychologist Paul Ekman’s site, which includes some brief videos on gestures, universal emotions, and learning to recognize microexpressions to read emotions.