Emotional Intelligence

The 10th Anniversary Edition

Daniel Goleman

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Introduction

Tenth Anniversary Edition of **Emotional Intelligence**

In 1990, in my role as a science reporter at *The New York Times*, I chanced upon an article in a small academic journal by two psychologists, John Mayer, now at the University of New Hampshire, and Yale's Peter Salovey. Mayer and Salovey offered the first formulation of a concept they called "emotional intelligence."

Those were days when the preeminence of IQ as the standard of excellence in life was unquestioned; a debate raged over whether it was set in our genes or due to experience. But here, suddenly, was a new way of thinking about the ingredients of life success. I was electrified by the notion, which I made the title of this book in 1995. Like Mayer and Salovey, I used the phrase to synthesize a broad range of scientific findings, drawing together what had been separate strands of research—reviewing not only their theory but a wide variety of other exciting scientific developments, such as the first fruits of the nascent field of affective neuroscience, which explores how emotions are regulated in the brain.

I remember having the thought, just before this book was published ten years ago, that if one day I overheard a conversation in which two strangers used the phrase *emotional intelligence* and both understood what it meant, I would have succeeded in spreading the concept more widely into the culture. Little did I know.

The phrase *emotional intelligence*, or its casual shorthand *EQ*, has become ubiquitous, showing up in settings as unlikely as the cartoon strips *Dilbert* and *Zippy the Pinhead* and in Roz Chast's sequential art in *The New Yorker*. I've seen boxes of toys that claim to boost a child's EQ; lovelorn personal ads sometimes trumpet it in those seeking prospective mates. I once found a quip about EQ printed on a shampoo bottle in my hotel room.

And the concept has spread to the far corners of our planet. *EQ* has become a word recognized, I'm told, in languages as diverse as

German and Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, and Malay. (Even so, I prefer *EI* as the English abbreviation for *emotional intelligence.*) My e-mail inbox often contains queries from, for example, a doctoral student in Bulgaria, a schoolteacher in Poland, a college student in Indonesia, a business consultant in South Africa, a management expert in the Sultanate of Oman, an executive in Shanghai. Business students in India read about EI and leadership; a CEO in Argentina recommends the book I later wrote on that topic. I've also heard from religious scholars within Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism that the concept of EI resonates with outlooks in their own faith.

Most gratifying for me has been how ardently the concept has been embraced by educators, in the form of programs in "social and emotional learning," or SEL. Back in 1995 I was able to find only a handful of such programs teaching emotional intelligence skills to children. Now, a decade later, tens of thousands of schools worldwide offer children SEL. In the United States many districts and even entire states currently make SEL a curriculum requirement, mandating that just as students must attain a certain level of competence in math and language, so too should they master these essential skills for living.

In Illinois, for instance, specific learning standards in SEL abilities have been established for every grade from kindergarten through the last year of high school. To give just one example of a remarkably detailed and comprehensive curriculum, in the early elementary years students should learn to recognize and accurately label their emotions and how they lead them to act. By the late elementary years lessons in empathy should make children able to identify the nonverbal clues to how someone else feels; in junior high they should be able to analyze what creates stress for them or what motivates their best performance. And in high school the SEL skills include listening and talking in ways that resolve conflicts instead of escalating them, and negotiating for win-win solutions.

Around the world Singapore has undertaken an active initiative in SEL, as have some schools in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea. In Europe the U.K. has led the way, but more than a dozen other countries have schools that embrace EI, as do Australia and New Zealand, and here and there countries in Latin America and Africa. In 2002 UNESCO began a worldwide initiative to promote SEL, sending a statement of ten basic principles for implementing SEL to the

ministries of education in 140 countries.

In some states and nations SEL has become the organizing umbrella under which are gathered programs in character education, violence prevention, antibullying, drug prevention, and school discipline. The goal is not just to reduce these problems among schoolchildren but to enhance the school climate and, ultimately, students' academic performance.

In 1995 I outlined the preliminary evidence suggesting that SEL was the active ingredient in programs that enhance children's learning while preventing problems such as violence. Now the case can be made scientifically: helping children improve their self-awareness and confidence, manage their disturbing emotions and impulses, and increase their empathy pays off not just in improved behavior but in measurable academic achievement.

This is the big news contained in a recently completed meta-analysis of 668 evaluation studies of SEL programs for children from preschoolers through high school.[1] The massive survey was conducted by Roger Weissberg, who directs the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning at the University of Illinois at Chicago —the organization that has led the way in bringing SEL into schools worldwide.

The data show that SEL programs yielded a strong benefit in academic accomplishment, as demonstrated in achievement test results and grade-point averages. In participating schools, up to 50 percent of children showed improved achievement scores, and up to 38 percent improved their grade-point averages. SEL programs also made schools safer: incidents of misbehavior dropped by an average of 28 percent; suspensions by 44 percent; and other disciplinary actions by 27 percent. At the same time, attendance rates rose, while 63 percent of students demonstrated significantly more positive behavior. In the world of social science research, these are remarkable results for any program promoting behavioral change. SEL has delivered on its promise.

In 1995 I also proposed that a good part of the effectiveness of SEL came from its impact in shaping children's developing neural circuitry, particularly the executive functions of the prefrontal cortex, which manage working memory—what we hold in mind as we learn —and inhibit disruptive emotional impulses. Now the first preliminary scientific evidence for that notion has arrived. Mark Greenberg of Pennsylvania State University, a codeveloper of the PATHS curriculum

in SEL, reports not only that this program for elementary school students boosts academic achievement but, even more significantly, that much of the increased learning can be attributed to improvements in attention and working memory, key functions of the prefrontal cortex.[2] This strongly suggests that neuroplasticity, the shaping of the brain through repeated experiences, plays a key role in the benefits from SEL.

Perhaps the biggest surprise for me has been the impact of EI in the world of business, particularly in the areas of leadership and employee development (a form of adult education). The *Harvard Business Review* has hailed emotional intelligence as "a ground-breaking, paradigm-shattering idea," one of the most influential business ideas of the decade.

Such claims in the business world too often prove to be fads, with no real underlying substance. But here a far-flung network of researchers has been at work, ensuring that the application of EI will be grounded in solid data. The Rutgers University-based Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (CREIO) has led the way in catalyzing this scientific work, collaborating with organizations that range from the Office of Personnel Management in the federal government to American Express.

Today companies worldwide routinely look through the lens of EI in hiring, promoting, and developing their employees. For instance, Johnson & Johnson (another CREIO member) found that in divisions around the world, those identified at midcareer as having high leadership potential were far stronger in EI competencies than were their less-promising peers. CREIO continues to foster such research, which can offer evidence-based guidelines for organizations seeking to enhance their ability to achieve their business goals or fulfill a mission.

When Salovey and Mayer published their seminal article in 1990, no one could have envisioned how the scholarly field they founded would be thriving just fifteen years later. Research has blossomed in this area; while in 1995 there was virtually nothing in the scientific literature on EI, today the field has legions of researchers. A search of the database for doctoral dissertations investigating aspects of emotional intelligence yields more than seven hundred completed to date, with many more in the pipeline—not to mention studies done by

professors and others not counted in that database.[3]

The growth of this area of scholarship owes much to Mayer and Salovey, who, along with their colleague David Caruso, a business consultant, have worked tirelessly on behalf of the scientific acceptance of emotional intelligence. By formulating a scientifically defensible theory of emotional intelligence and providing a rigorous measure of this capacity for effective living, they have set an impeccable research standard for the field.

Another major source of the burgeoning academic findings about EI has been Reuven Bar-On, now at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Houston, whose own theory of EI—and high-energy enthusiasm—have inspired many studies using a measure he devised. Bar-On has also been instrumental in developing and editing academic books that have helped give the field a critical mass, including *The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence*.

The growing EI field of study has met some entrenched opposition within the insular world of scholars of intelligence, particularly those who embrace IQ as the sole acceptable measure of human aptitudes. Nevertheless, the field has emerged as a vibrant paradigm. Any important theoretical model, observed the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn, should become progressively revised and refined as more stringent tests of its premises are made. That process seems well under way for EI.

There are by now three main models of EI, with dozens of variations. Each represents a different perspective. That of Salovey and Mayer rests firmly in the tradition of intelligence shaped by the original work on IQ a century ago. The model put forth by Reuven Bar-On is based on his research on well-being. And my own model focuses on performance at work and organizational leadership, melding EI theory with decades of research on modeling the competencies that set star performers apart from average.

Unfortunately, misreadings of this book have spawned some myths, which I would like to clear up here and now. One is the bizarre—though widely repeated—fallacy that "EQ accounts for 80 percent of success." This claim is preposterous.

The misinterpretation stems from data suggesting IQ accounts for about 20 percent of career success. Because that estimate—and it is only an estimate—leaves a large portion of success unaccounted for,