When I asked Gardner about his emphasis on thoughts about feelings, or metacognition, more than on emotions themselves, he acknowledged that he tended to view intelligence in a cognitive way, but told me, "When I first wrote about the personal intelligences, I *was* talking about emotion, especially in my notion of intrapersonal intelligence—one component is emotionally tuning in to yourself. It's the visceral-feeling signals you get that are essential for interpersonal intelligence. But as it has developed in practice, the theory of multiple intelligence has evolved to focus more on metacognition"—that is, awareness of one's mental processes—"rather than on the full range of emotional abilities."

Even so, Gardner appreciates how crucial these emotional and relationship abilities are in the rough-and-tumble of life. He points out that "many people with IQs of 160 work for people with IQs of 100, if the former have poor intrapersonal intelligence and the latter have a high one. And in the day-to-day world no intelligence is more important than the interpersonal. If you don't have it, you'll make poor choices about who to marry, what job to take, and so on. We need to train children in the personal intelligences in school."

CAN EMOTIONS BE INTELLIGENT?

To get a fuller understanding of just what such training might be like, we must turn to other theorists who agree with Gardner's view—most notably psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer. They have mapped in great detail the ways in which we can bring intelligence to our emotions.[12] This endeavor is not new; over the years even the most ardent theorists of IQ have occasionally tried to bring emotions within the domain of intelligence, rather than seeing "emotion" and "intelligence" as an inherent contradiction in terms. Thus E. L. Thorndike, an eminent psychologist who was also influential in popularizing the notion of IQ in the 1920s and 1930s, proposed in a *Harper's Magazine* article that one aspect of emotional intelligence, "social" intelligence—the ability to understand others and "act wisely in human relations"—was itself an aspect of a person's IQ. Other psychologists of the time took a more cynical view of social intelligence, seeing it in terms of skills for manipulating other people—getting them to do what you want, whether they want to or not. But neither of these formulations of social intelligence held much sway

with theorists of IQ, and by 1960 an influential textbook on intelligence tests pronounced social intelligence a "useless" concept.

But personal intelligence would not be ignored, mainly because it makes both intuitive and common sense. For example, when Yale psychologist Robert Sternberg asked people to describe an "intelligent person," practical people skills were among the main traits listed. More systematic research by Sternberg led him back to Thorndike's conclusion: that social intelligence is both distinct from academic abilities and a key part of what makes people do well in the practicalities of life. Among the practical intelligences that are, for instance, so highly valued in the workplace is the kind of sensitivity that allows effective managers to pick up tacit messages.[13]

In recent years a growing group of psychologists has come to similar conclusions, agreeing with Gardner that the old concepts of IQ revolved around a narrow band of linguistic and math skills, and that doing well on IQ tests was most directly a predictor of success in the classroom or as a professor but less and less so as life's paths diverged from academe. These psychologists—Sternberg and Salovey among them—have taken a wider view of intelligence, trying to reinvent it in terms of what it takes to lead life successfully. And that line of enquiry leads back to an appreciation of just how crucial "personal" or emotional intelligence is.

Salovey, with his colleague John Mayer, offered an elaborated definition of emotional intelligence, expanding these abilities into five main domains:[14]

1. *Knowing one's emotions*. Self-awareness—recognizing a feeling *as it happens*—is the keystone of emotional intelligence. As we will see in Chapter 4, the ability to monitor feelings from moment to moment is crucial to psychological insight and self-understanding. An inability to notice our true feelings leaves us at their mercy. People with greater certainty about their feelings are better pilots of their lives, having a surer sense of how they really feel about personal decisions from whom to marry to what job to take.

2. *Managing emotions*. Handling feelings so they are appropriate is an ability that builds on self-awareness. Chapter 5 will examine the capacity to soothe oneself, to shake off rampant anxiety, gloom, or irritability—and the consequences of failure at this basic emotional skill. People who are poor in this ability are constantly battling feelings of distress, while those who excel in it can bounce back far

more quickly from life's setbacks and upsets.

3. *Motivating oneself*. As Chapter 6 will show, marshaling emotions in the service of a goal is essential for paying attention, for self-motivation and mastery, and for creativity. Emotional self-control—delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness—underlies accomplishment of every sort. And being able to get into the "flow" state enables outstanding performance of all kinds. People who have this skill tend to be more highly productive and effective in whatever they undertake.

4. *Recognizing emotions in others*. Empathy, another ability that builds on emotional self-awareness, is the fundamental "people skill." Chapter 7 will investigate the roots of empathy, the social cost of being emotionally tone-deaf, and the reason empathy kindles altruism. People who are empathic are more attuned to the subtle social signals that indicate what others need or want. This makes them better at callings such as the caring professions, teaching, sales, and management.

5. *Handling relationships*. The art of relationships is, in large part, skill in managing emotions in others. Chapter 8 looks at social competence and incompetence, and the specific skills involved. These are the abilities that undergird popularity, leadership, and interpersonal effectiveness. People who excel in these skills do well at anything that relies on interacting smoothly with others; they are social stars.

Of course, people differ in their abilities in each of these domains; some of us may be quite adept at handling, say, our own anxiety, but relatively inept at soothing someone else's upsets. The underlying basis for our level of ability is, no doubt, neural, but as we will see, the brain is remarkably plastic, constantly learning. Lapses in emotional skills can be remedied: to a great extent each of these domains represents a body of habit and response that, with the right effort, can be improved on.

IQ AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: PURE TYPES

IQ and emotional intelligence are not opposing competencies, but rather separate ones. We all mix intellect and emotional acuity; people with a high IQ but low emotional intelligence (or low IQ and

high emotional intelligence) are, despite the stereotypes, relatively rare. Indeed, there is a slight correlation between IQ and some aspects of emotional intelligence—though small enough to make clear these are largely independent entities.

Unlike the familiar tests for IQ, there is, as yet, no single paper-and-pencil test that yields an "emotional intelligence score" and there may never be one. Although there is ample research on each of its components, some of them, such as empathy, are best tested by sampling a person's actual ability at the task—for example, by having them read a person's feelings from a video of their facial expressions. Still, using a measure for what he calls "ego resilience" which is quite similar to emotional intelligence (it includes the main social and emotional competences), Jack Block, a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, has made a comparison of two theoretical pure types: people high in IQ versus people high in emotional aptitudes.[15] The differences are telling.

The high-IQ pure type (that is, setting aside emotional intelligence) is almost a caricature of the intellectual, adept in the realm of mind but inept in the personal world. The profiles differ slightly for men and women. The high-IQ male is typified—no surprise—by a wide range of intellectual interests and abilities. He is ambitious and productive, predictable and dogged, and untroubled by concerns about himself. He also tends to be critical and condescending, fastidious and inhibited, uneasy with sexuality and sensual experience, unexpressive and detached, and emotionally bland and cold.

By contrast, men who are high in emotional intelligence are socially poised, outgoing and cheerful, not prone to fearfulness or worried rumination. They have a notable capacity for commitment to people or causes, for taking responsibility, and for having an ethical outlook; they are sympathetic and caring in their relationships. Their emotional life is rich, but appropriate; they are comfortable with themselves, others, and the social universe they live in.

Purely high-IQ women have the expected intellectual confidence, are fluent in expressing their thoughts, value intellectual matters, and have a wide range of intellectual and aesthetic interests. They also tend to be introspective, prone to anxiety, rumination, and guilt, and hesitate to express their anger openly (though they do so indirectly).

Emotionally intelligent women, by contrast, tend to be assertive and express their feelings directly, and to feel positive about themselves;

life holds meaning for them. Like the men, they are outgoing and gregarious, and express their feelings appropriately (rather than, say, in outbursts they later regret); they adapt well to stress. Their social poise lets them easily reach out to new people; they are comfortable enough with themselves to be playful, spontaneous, and open to sensual experience. Unlike the women purely high in IQ, they rarely feel anxious or guilty, or sink into rumination.

These portraits, of course, are extremes—all of us mix IQ and emotional intelligence in varying degrees. But they offer an instructive look at what each of these dimensions adds separately to a person's qualities. To the degree a person has both cognitive and emotional intelligence, these pictures merge. Still, of the two, emotional intelligence adds far more of the qualities that make us more fully human.

4

Know Thyself

A belligerent samurai, an old Japanese tale goes, once challenged a Zen master to explain the concept of heaven and hell. But the monk replied with scorn, “You’re nothing but a lout—I can’t waste my time with the likes of you!”

His very honor attacked, the samurai flew into a rage and, pulling his sword from its scabbard, yelled, “I could kill you for your impertinence.” “That,” the monk calmly replied, “is hell.”

Startled at seeing the truth in what the master pointed out about the fury that had him in its grip, the samurai calmed down, sheathed his sword, and bowed, thanking the monk for the insight.

“And that,” said the monk, “is heaven.”

The sudden awakening of the samurai to his own agitated state illustrates the crucial difference between being caught up in a feeling and becoming aware that you are being swept away by it. Socrates’s injunction “Know thyself” speaks to this keystone of emotional intelligence: awareness of one’s own feelings as they occur.

It might seem at first glance that our feelings are obvious; more thoughtful reflection reminds us of times we have been all too oblivious to what we really felt about something, or awoke to these feelings late in the game. Psychologists use the rather ponderous term *metacognition* to refer to an awareness of thought process, and *metamood* to mean awareness of one’s own emotions. I prefer the term *self-awareness*, in the sense of an ongoing attention to one’s internal states.[1] In this self-reflexive awareness mind observes and investigates experience itself, including the emotions.[2]

This quality of awareness is akin to what Freud described as an “evenly hovering attention,” and which he commended to those who would do psychoanalysis. Such attention takes in whatever passes through awareness with impartiality, as an interested yet unreactive witness. Some psychoanalysts call it the “observing ego,” the capacity of self-awareness that allows the analyst to monitor his own reactions to what the patient is saying, and which the process of free

association nurtures in the patient.[3]

Such self-awareness would seem to require an activated neocortex, particularly the language areas, attuned to identify and name the emotions being aroused. Self-awareness is not an attention that gets carried away by emotions, overreacting and amplifying what is perceived. Rather, it is a neutral mode that maintains self-reflectiveness even amidst turbulent emotions. William Styron seems to be describing something like this faculty of mind in writing of his deep depression, telling of a sense "of being accompanied by a second self—a wraithlike observer who, not sharing the dementia of his double, is able to watch with dispassionate curiosity as his companion struggles."[4]

At its best, self-observation allows just such an equanimous awareness of passionate or turbulent feelings. At a minimum, it manifests itself simply as a slight stepping-back from experience, a parallel stream of consciousness that is "meta": hovering above or beside the main flow, aware of what is happening rather than being immersed and lost in it. It is the difference between, for example, being murderously enraged at someone and having the self-reflexive thought "This is anger I'm feeling" even as you are enraged. In terms of the neural mechanics of awareness, this subtle shift in mental activity presumably signals that neocortical circuits are actively monitoring the emotion, a first step in gaining some control. This awareness of emotions is the fundamental emotional competence on which others, such as emotional self-control, build.

Self-awareness, in short, means being "aware of both our mood and our thoughts about that mood," in the words of John Mayer, a University of New Hampshire psychologist who, with Yale's Peter Salovey, is a coformulator of the theory of emotional intelligence.[5] Self-awareness can be a nonreactive, nonjudgmental attention to inner states. But Mayer finds that this sensibility also can be less equanimous; typical thoughts bespeaking emotional self-awareness include "I shouldn't feel this way," "I'm thinking good things to cheer up," and, for a more restricted self-awareness, the fleeting thought "Don't think about it" in reaction to something highly upsetting.

Although there is a logical distinction between being aware of feelings and acting to change them, Mayer finds that for all practical purposes the two usually go hand-in-hand: to recognize a foul mood is to want to get out of it. This recognition, however, is distinct from the efforts we make to keep from acting on an emotional impulse. When

we say “Stop that!” to a child whose anger has led him to hit a playmate, we may stop the hitting, but the anger still simmers. The child’s thoughts are still fixated on the trigger for the anger—“But he stole my toy!”—and the anger continues unabated. Self-awareness has a more powerful effect on strong, aversive feelings: the realization “This is anger I’m feeling” offers a greater degree of freedom—not just the option not to act on it, but the added option to try to let go of it.

Mayer finds that people tend to fall into distinctive styles for attending to and dealing with their emotions:[6]

• *Self-aware*. Aware of their moods as they are having them, these people understandably have some sophistication about their emotional lives. Their clarity about emotions may undergird other personality traits: they are autonomous and sure of their own boundaries, are in good psychological health, and tend to have a positive outlook on life. When they get into a bad mood, they don’t ruminate and obsess about it, and are able to get out of it sooner. In short, their mindfulness helps them manage their emotions.

• *Engulfed*. These are people who often feel swamped by their emotions and helpless to escape them, as though their moods have taken charge. They are mercurial and not very aware of their feelings, so that they are lost in them rather than having some perspective. As a result, they do little to try to escape bad moods, feeling that they have no control over their emotional life. They often feel overwhelmed and emotionally out of control.

• *Accepting*. While these people are often clear about what they are feeling, they also tend to be accepting of their moods, and so don’t try to change them. There seem to be two branches of the accepting type: those who are usually in good moods and so have little motivation to change them, and people who, despite their clarity about their moods, are susceptible to bad ones but accept them with a laissez-faire attitude, doing nothing to change them despite their distress—a pattern found among, say, depressed people who are resigned to their despair.

THE PASSIONATE AND THE INDIFFERENT

Imagine for a moment that you’re on an airplane flying from New York to San Francisco. It’s been a smooth flight, but as you approach

the Rockies the pilot's voice comes over the plane intercom. "Ladies and gentlemen, there's some turbulence ahead. Please return to your seats and fasten your seatbelts." And then the plane hits the turbulence, which is rougher than you've ever endured—the airplane is tossed up and down and side to side like a beach ball in the waves.

The question is, what do you do? Are you the kind of person who buries yourself in your book or magazine, or continues watching the movie, tuning out the turbulence? Or are you likely to take out the emergency card and review the precautions, or watch the flight attendants to see if they show signs of panic, or strain to hear the engines to see if there's anything worrisome?

Which of these responses comes more naturally to us is a sign of our favored attentional stance under duress. The airplane scenario itself is an item from a psychological test developed by Suzanne Miller, a psychologist at Temple University, to assess whether people tend to be vigilant, attending carefully to every detail of a distressing predicament, or, in contrast, deal with such anxious moments by trying to distract themselves. These two attentional stances toward distress have very different consequences for how people experience their own emotional reactions. Those who tune in under duress can, by the very act of attending so carefully, unwittingly amplify the magnitude of their own reactions—especially if their tuning in is devoid of the equanimity of self-awareness. The result is that their emotions seem all the more intense. Those who tune out, who distract themselves, notice less about their own reactions, and so minimize the experience of their emotional response, if not the size of the response itself.

At the extremes, this means that for some people emotional awareness is overwhelming, while for others it barely exists. Consider the college student who, one evening, spotted a fire that had broken out in his dorm, went to get a fire extinguisher, and put the fire out. Nothing unusual—except that on his way to get the extinguisher and then on the way back to the fire, he walked instead of running. The reason? He didn't feel there was any urgency.

This story was told to me by Edward Diener, a University of Illinois at Urbana psychologist who has been studying the *intensity* with which people experience their emotions.[7] The college student stood out in his collection of case studies as one of the least intense Diener had ever encountered. He was, essentially, a man without passions, someone who goes through life feeling little or nothing, even about an

emergency like a fire.

By contrast, consider a woman at the opposite end of Diener's spectrum. When she once lost her favorite pen, she was distraught for days. Another time she was so thrilled on seeing an ad for a big sale on women's shoes at an expensive store that she dropped what she was doing, hopped in her car, and drove three hours to the store in Chicago.

Diener finds that women, in general, feel both positive and negative emotions more strongly than do men. And, sex differences aside, emotional life is richer for those who notice more. For one thing, this enhanced emotional sensitivity means that for such people the least provocation unleashes emotional storms, whether heavenly or hellish, while those at the other extreme barely experience any feeling even under the most dire circumstances.

THE MAN WITHOUT FEELINGS

Gary infuriated his fiancée, Ellen, because even though he was intelligent, thoughtful, and a successful surgeon, Gary was emotionally flat, completely unresponsive to any and all shows of feeling. While Gary could speak brilliantly of science and art, when it came to his feelings—even for Ellen—he fell silent. Try as she might to elicit some passion from him, Gary was impassive, oblivious. "I don't naturally express my feelings," Gary told the therapist he saw at Ellen's insistence. When it came to emotional life, he added, "I don't know what to talk about; I have no strong feelings, either positive or negative."

Ellen was not alone in being frustrated by Gary's aloofness; as he confided to his therapist, he was unable to speak openly about his feelings with anyone in his life. The reason: He did not know what he felt in the first place. So far as he could tell, he had no angers, no sadnesses, no joys.[8]

As his own therapist observes, this emotional blankness makes Gary and others like him colorless, bland: "They bore everybody. That's why their wives send them into treatment." Gary's emotional flatness exemplifies what psychiatrists call *alexithymia*, from the Greek *a*-for "lack," *lexis for* "word," and *thymos for* "emotion." Such people lack words for their feelings. Indeed, they seem to lack feelings altogether, although this may actually be because of their inability to *express*