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ENGL-1A

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Essay #1

17 October 2021

Understanding Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is an intricate part of communication because it can be a pathway toward better understanding yourself, as well as those you're surrounded by. What is emotional intelligence and how does it affect you in life? Emotional intelligence, often referred to as EI, is made up of multiple key skills formed over a lifetime. Throughout adolescence to adulthood you will constantly be evolving and learning about your EQ, or emotional quotient. In this essay I will be discussing what I believe are the most important points to living with and understanding emotions such as self management, self awareness and empathy for others around you.

According to Neethu George, "A highly emotional intelligent person showcases the ability to control, understand and being in other's shoes during the time of difficulties" (George 1).

Self-management is crucial to maintaining and forming healthy relationships in your life which can help you pick up on recognizing emotion. Managing emotions can seem difficult, especially when they tend to sneak up on us during high-intensity situations. What If I told you there are methods to help balance out these emotions? Self-management is different for everyone, but it helps us all the same by balancing out our negative and positive feelings. How we choose to do this differentiates between us all whether it be exercising, setting a goal for yourself, or simply keeping your mind away from negative thoughts. Managing our emotions in a productive way can help the way you carry yourself, and understand what others around you

are feeling. It can help you be more focused and engaged when having a conversation with others. It's a skill that helps you understand and take responsibility in different aspects of your life and easily relate to people. It ranges from controlling your actions, feelings, and thoughts. All of this ties into the way you carry and motivate yourself to meet goals, this will reflect in your self-image and people around you will notice.

Recognizing different emotions in the people that surround you is a factor in gaining an understanding of empathy for other people which is crucial to emotional intelligence. Raquel Gomez-Leal believes "Particular interest has been paid to the link between EI and empathy, since the latter constitutes a relevant factor in social interaction and prosocial behaviour" (Leal 1). From the time we are brought into this world, our minds process social cues and emotions based on what we observe around us. Our parents or caretakers then help us form opinions based on these perceptions, and their experiences shape us through our upbringings. One could argue that our individual upbringings and the amount of exposure we have of certain emotions could correspond to how we respond and react to specific situations. For example, Goleman notes in our textbook that most predatory people in society like serial killers and rapists often lack empathy and are categorized into groups called psychological faultlines. In a lot of cases, these types of people often suffer from some kind of overwhelmingly brutal trauma in childhood, which could change or warp their perception of what emotions look like. If this trauma is left untreated, it may impact their ability to feel empathy as well as other key emotions for the rest of their lives. Leal goes on to say "Empathy, as a multidimensional construct that comprises emotional, cognitive and motivational components is based on the abilities to recognize, understand, and share the feelings of others" (Leal 1). It is of the utmost importance to teach our

children how to process and perceive emotions and connect with others in a normal and healthy way so that they are able to thrive in the world in which they're surrounded.

Self awareness is understanding emotions and being able to realize triggers before, after and while they happen by stepping back and realizing what's causing you to feel the way you do, rather than being immersed. Neethu George states "Self-awareness is important to all of us because it helps us to find our strength and weakness" (George 1). I believe that when you have an understanding of why you feel the emotions you are feeling and how you handle it is a perfect example of self observation. It's the first step you can take in gaining control of your emotions. Developing self awareness differentiates from person to person and most individuals struggle with this skill at some point in their lifetime. It's an emotional response and it varies depending on how you decide to react to a high intensity situation. Someone may decide to distract themselves entirely as opposed to someone else who might overthink and analyze every detail. It comes down to two totally different attentional stances. Self awareness is important as it relates to so much more than your own thoughts and how you handle them, it can affect the way you discriminate regular emotion for example, "having butterflies in the stomach, palpitations, sweating and dizziness" are common symptoms for someone who "would not know why they are feeling anxious" (Goleman 71). Self awareness is important to understand and embrace, because it affects such a wide range of regular life interactions.

Emotional intelligence is more complex than people believe but if achieved you will see improved results in your communication, motivation and reasoning in all situations life throws your way. As we have learned in Goleman's textbook *Emotional Intelligence*, even people that test with the highest IQ scores can lack emotional intelligence so it's very important to educate and understand this crucial capability that affects the way you communicate and respond. PhD

student Lelia Karimi states “Research indicates that higher EI leads to enhanced psychological wellbeing and higher rates of positive emotional states” (Karimi 1). Learning this skill is not going to happen overnight, it's a very long process that you will learn throughout your lifetime. I believe people's understanding of EI is sometimes misunderstood and can easily be argued depending on the individual. We all learn from different life experiences but in the end these skills can bring anyone a healthier and more positive outlook on life. Being able to identify your feelings is a long and emotional process, but once achieved, will help balance out your frustration when trying to understand emotions that we are all faced with in our lives by thinking more rationally. After reading about EI do you believe that you previously had a full understanding of all the aspects emotional intelligence affects in our everyday lives? If not, I hope you now have the knowledge to take the next step in furthering your understanding and living a more fulfilling emotional lifestyle.

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