



Emotional Intelligence FAQs

Ei4Change

Emotional Intelligence FAQs

Emotional Intelligence – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that collectively establish how well you:

- perceive and express yourself
- develop and maintain social relationships
- cope with day to day and major challenges
- use emotional information in effective and meaningful ways

Put simply, emotional intelligence is how you combine your thinking with your feelings in order to build authentic relationships and make good, effective decisions.

2. What is EQ?

EQ refers to Emotional Quotient which looks at the parts of emotional intelligence that can be quantified and measured.

Researchers have defined emotional intelligence as an ability or a trait or a mixture of the two. There are many scientifically validated and reliable assessments of EQ commercially available to support recruitment, personal development, leadership development, executive coaching, team building, etc.

EI refers to emotional intelligence in a much broader sense so encompasses those elements of emotional intelligence that can't be measured. These include some aspects of motivation, attitude, integrity, perspective, and biases, to name but a few.

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3. So, how does EQ differ from IQ?

IQ, or Intelligence Quotient, is a measure of cognitive intelligence. IQ becomes fixed and peaks around the age of 17 years of age whilst emotional intelligence is not fixed and rises steadily with age. So this means that you can develop yourself and your emotional intelligence through learning and practise.

If someone has a high IQ, they are analytical, logical and will focus on tasks. They learn new things quickly. However, if they have low EQ, they may ignore their feelings and the feelings of others. If something doesn't turn out the way that they expect, they may lose their temper and lash out at others. If someone has a high EQ, they are more likely to get along well with people and manage their own emotions well. This makes them more effective in their work as a colleague, team player, manager or leader.

Emotional intelligence and IQ are not highly correlated, meaning that there is nothing to suggest that if you have average cognitive intelligence (IQ) you will only have average emotional intelligence. The best leaders may not have high IQ but they have high emotional intelligence and have learnt to use it well.

There is intelligence in emotions and intelligence can be brought to emotions. It means IQ defines how smart you are; EQ defines how well you use what smartness you have.

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4. How does emotional intelligence differ from other intelligences?

Howard Gardiner's Multiple Intelligence Theory was first published in 1983 and quickly became recognised as a model to understand and teach many aspects of human intelligence, learning style, personality and behaviour.

The seven basic intelligences are:

- Visual and spatial intelligence
- Linguistic – verbal intelligence
- Logical – mathematical intelligence
- Bodily – kinaesthetic intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a blend of all the intelligences within this model. The strongest is the combination of intrapersonal intelligence (self-awareness and self-management) and interpersonal intelligence (empathy and social skills) as recognised by most emotional intelligence models.

5. Why is emotional intelligence important?

Good levels of emotional intelligence help you to

- improve relationships
- maintain control in difficult circumstances
- lower stress levels
- maintain motivation
- communicate well
- influence others without conflict
- enhance your reputation inside and outside of work

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There are several people who were average students at school or college but later became well-known and successful. Their subsequent success has been due to the way they used their emotional intelligence as compared to their academic achievements.

6. Isn't emotional intelligence training all about being nice and friendly?

Far from it!

Aristotle purportedly said "Anyone can become angry, that is easy. But to be angry with the right person at the right time, and for the right purpose and in the right way - that is not easy." So, training people to use their emotions in an appropriate and effective way is not easy!

Soft skills are the hardest skills to train, which is why specialist trainers and facilitators are needed to work with emotional intelligence. Many trainers offer emotional intelligence training but do they have the emotional intelligence to be able to deliver it?

7. Is emotional intelligence an inherited quality or can it be nurtured?

Emotional intelligence is the outcome of both inherited tendencies and those delivered by experience.

The expression of who you are is a combination of your genetic make-up and your environment which includes many aspects up your upbringing. So, emotional intelligence is a bit of both.

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For instance, if a child has been shown by adults, repeatedly (conditioning), that impatience and being unreasonable is a way to solve problems, then no matter what nature has endowed upon that child with regards to patience, nurture will take over. Through reinforcement, the child learns that impatient behaviours solve problems and so will continually revert to this way of behaving as a means to resolve issues.

On the positive side, as emotional intelligence can be nurtured so more appropriate ways of behaving can be practised and learnt.

8. Is emotional intelligence needed in leadership and training?

Successful leaders can be an organisation's most powerful resource for increasing productivity, performance and profitability. The key to great leadership is managing the emotional environment of the organisation by working with and through people, empowering rather than directing.

Leaders recognise the importance of a focused team spirit within their workforce. They are aware of how their leadership style impacts upon emotional states. They are able to regulate their behaviour and actions to build and enhance performance. Emotionally intelligent leaders foster a positive emotional environment where people can flourish and thrive and by dealing with issues that arise firmly and fairly.

As change is constant and people behave in erratic ways, emotionally intelligent leaders are always looking to be better at what they do and how they work with others.

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Emotional intelligence can be developed through appropriate training. However, emotional intelligence should form the basic foundation of any leadership development programme NOT a module to be bolted onto as something to be considered as an additional option.

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