

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

What is emotional intelligence? Emotions are feelings and feelings give our lives definition and depth. Every feeling has significance and meaning and exists because of some past experience. Some feelings have grown out of pleasant, positive episodes, whilst others exist because of negative events, people, or situations. Whatever it is that has created the feelings we carry, those feelings tell a story about how a particular moment in time has affected us and helped shape who we are today. Emotions are such powerful forces which contain energy (positive and negative) gathered from our experiences. The word 'e-motion' means 'energy in motion' which gives us some insight into the true nature of our emotions. Emotions are 'waves of energy' that are designed to 'move through' our lives offering us insight, clarity, and direction, which we can then use to improve and enhance our interaction with the world. A healthy emotional state is one where emotions travel freely through the human organism and are constructively and creatively expressed. Any restriction to the flow of that emotional energy is, in fact, harmful and will create negative consequences such as: physical ill health, mood swings, deviant behaviour, and self-limiting perspectives and attitudes. Therefore, to deny, suppress or be divorced from our feelings is emotionally unhealthy and creates blockages, which in turn set up patterns of malfunction that deprive us of well-being.

Intelligence is difficult to define because it embraces a number of functions, e.g., the gathering of information, analysis of that information, creative ability, reason and discrimination, lateral thinking etc. Intelligence is not effectively measured by IQ testing or psychometric exercises because intelligence cannot be defined within these limited parameters. Intelligence is really about the 'best' application of one's resources, resulting in the optimum expression of one's talents, energy, and abilities. The factors that greatly influence the development of intelligence are upbringing (the nature of our nurturing), education (its quality and substance) and various other environmental components (class, culture, religion, geographic location etc). It is the intertwining of these factors, in conjunction with our genetic propensities, that determines our intellectual development. Thoughts are the primary fuel of the intellect (our thoughts can be responsible for the most wonderful of creations or the most hideous forms of destruction). When our thought processes are constructive and healthy the intellect has the power and control to govern our internal state in our best interests. Equally when thoughts are undisciplined, haphazard and lack purpose and direction, a state of chaos, instability and discontent is perpetuated, and both feelings and thoughts run riot. We are then, because of this upheaval, driven by the force of past experiences, incongruous motivations, absurd logic and seduced by various external forces. For many the energy of the mind is now caught up in waste and useless thoughts, thoughts that have no logic, purpose or value, all of which has brought about an ever-increasing loss of self.

Emotional intelligence is about understanding and respecting these two potent forces and bringing them together in order that healthy human functioning can be achieved. Only when we learn to apply our intelligence to our emotions can we reap the full benefit of our life experiences. Emotions are not designed to cripple or disable us and yet they often do. Why? Because we allow their incredible influence to pass through us and often without question or analysis we succumb to their power. Of course, we need to feel the energy of our feelings but if we simply become subordinate to their power and influence, we lose the opportunity to intelligently apply the insights being offered. And so, a person who is psychologically healthy is a feeling being - but a being who feels and yet does not apply the power and wisdom of intelligence, is actually a slave. Are you a slave? If so, it is time to emancipate yourself. Learn the art of listening to your emotions then apply the gift of your intelligence and your path will unfold before you.