

DANIEL GOLEMAN: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Thinker 053

» INTRODUCTION



Daniel Goleman (1946-), a psychologist and writer, is usually credited with challenging the traditional view of IQ (intelligence quotient) by drawing together research on how the brain works and developing this to promote and popularise the concept of emotional intelligence (EI, sometimes referred to as EQ) in a highly accessible form.

In *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (1998), Goleman defined emotional intelligence as a capacity for recognising our own and others' feelings, for motivating ourselves, and for managing our emotions, both within ourselves and in our relationships.

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» LIFE AND CAREER

Goleman gained his PhD in psychology from Harvard, where he also taught. His best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Matters more than IQ*, was published in 1995 and in 1998 this was followed by *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Goleman has frequently written for the *New York Times* on behavioural science. He is co-chairman of the Rutgers University-based Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations and a co-founder of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning at Yale University Child Studies Center, now at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is also a board member of the Mind and Life Institute.

Goleman's interest in EI arose from a realisation that a high IQ is not necessarily a prerequisite for having a successful life. In *Emotional Intelligence* he identifies many people who, while brilliant academically, were nevertheless failures socially or in corporate life. Conversely, he identifies others who were not well qualified or distinguished in academic terms, but were still highly successful in terms of their lives and business achievements. Goleman went on to relate business acumen to emotional intelligence. In the later *Working with Emotional Intelligence* he identified 25 EI competencies, or surface behaviours, and discussed how high emotional intelligence can make all the difference between success and failure.

Emotional intelligence and the brain

In Emotional Intelligence, Goleman describes how the evolution of the brain has implications for our emotions and behavioural responses. He outlines how, during its evolution over millions of years, the brain has now come to comprise three main areas:

- › the brain stem is situated at the base of the brain and at the top of the spinal cord. It controls bodily functions and instinctive survival responses, and is the most primitive part of the brain
- › the hippocampus evolved after the brainstem and is situated just above the latter. It includes the amygdala region, the importance of which was identified by Joseph LeDoux during the 1980s. Here, the brain stores emotional, survival-linked responses to visual and other inputs. The amygdala seems able to 'hijack' the brain in some circumstances, taking over people's reactions literally before they have had time to think, and provoking an immediate response to a situation. Mammals or human beings who have had their amygdala removed show no signs of emotional feeling at all. The amygdala can catalyse the sort of impulsive actions that may sometimes overpower rational thought and the capacity for considered reactions.
- › the neo-cortex is the large, well-developed, top region of the brain which comprises the centre for our thinking, memory and reasoning functions.

Because of this course of evolution, our emotions and thinking intelligence - the two main functions of the brain regulating our behaviour - are situated in separate areas. Furthermore, our emotional centres receive 'input' before our thinking centres, and can react very quickly and very strongly in some situations. The results of this for human behaviour can be catastrophic in that, unless we are aware of the situation and practised in controlling our initial feelings, we may allow inappropriate emotional responses to pre-empt behaviour based on consideration of more appropriate options. Our emotions have a 'wisdom' of their own that we should learn to use more, particularly in terms of the intuitive sense they offer. Yet, when people first confront stimuli that prompt, for example, extreme fear, anger, or frustration, their first impulse to active response comes from the amygdala. Unless intelligent control is exerted, the brain moves into survival mode, stimulating instinctive actions that, while possibly right for the situation, are not rationally considered, and may be very wrong.

Today, we usually have no need to fight or run away from dangers of the sort faced by prehistoric people. While some instinctive reactions may be wise in given circumstances, we need to be aware of how the primitive response in the brain's emotional centre precedes all rational evaluation and response. Emotional intelligence is largely about understanding this and making use of our EI, while also controlling our responses to take account of it.

Goleman's framework of emotional intelligence

Goleman developed a framework to explain emotional intelligence in terms of five elements he described as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Each of these elements has distinctive characteristics, as outlined below:

- › Self-awareness: examining how your emotions affect your performance; using your values to guide decision-making; self-assessment - looking at your strengths and weaknesses and learning from your experiences; and being self-confident and certain about your capabilities, values and goals.
- › Self-regulation: controlling your temper; controlling your stress by being more positive and action-centred; retaining composure and the ability to think clearly under pressure; handling impulses well; and nurturing trustworthiness and self-restraint.
- › Motivation: enjoying challenge and stimulation; seeking out achievement; commitment; ability to take the initiative; optimism; and being guided by personal preferences in choosing goals.
- › Empathy: the ability to see other people's points of view; behaving openly and honestly; avoiding the tendency to stereotype others; and being culturally aware.
- › Social skills: the use of influencing skills such as persuasion; good communication with others, including employees; listening skills; negotiation; co-operation; dispute resolution; ability to inspire and lead others; capacity to initiate and manage change; and ability to deal with others' emotions - particularly group emotions.

Goleman claims that people who demonstrate these characteristics are more likely to be successful in senior management, citing research from various sources that suggests senior managers with a higher emotional

intelligence rating perform better than those without. He gives several anecdotal case studies to illustrate ways in which emotional intelligence can make a real impact in the workplace.

The Emotional Competence Inventory

Goleman believes that emotional intelligence can be developed over a period of time and he developed an Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), in association with the Hay Group, to use in assessing and developing EQ competencies at work. The ECI reduces the original five components of emotional intelligence to four:

1. Self-awareness

- › being aware of your emotions and their significance
- › having a realistic knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses
- › having self-confidence in yourself and your capacities.

2. Self-management

- › controlling your emotions
- › being honest and trustworthy
- › being flexible and dedicated.

3. Social competence

- › being empathic, being able to perceive another's thoughts and points of view
- › being aware of and sensing a group's dynamics and inter-relationships
- › focusing on others' needs, particularly when they are customers.

4. Social skills

- › helping others to develop themselves
- › effective leadership
- › influencing skills
- › excellent interpersonal communication skills
- › change management skills
- › ability to resolve arguments and discord
- › ability to nourish and build good relationships
- › team-player skills.

Goleman, in association with Hay/McBer, was also involved in researching leadership styles, as he reported in the Harvard Business Review article Leadership that gets results. On the basis of findings with 3781 executive participants the research suggests that leaders gain the best results by using a combination of six leadership styles, each of which has a central characteristic feature and uses different components of emotional intelligence:

- › Coercive leaders - demand instant obedience. Coercive leaders are self-motivated, initiate change and are driven to succeed.
- › Authoritative leaders - energise people towards a goal. Authoritative leaders initiate change and are empathic.
- › Affiliative leaders - build relationships. Affiliative leaders are empathic and have good communication skills.
- › Democratic leaders - actively encourage team involvement in decision-making. Democratic leaders are good at communication, listening and negotiation.
- › Pacesetter leaders - set high standards of performance. Pacesetter leaders use their initiative, and are self-motivated and driven to succeed.
- › Coaching leaders - expand and develop people's skills. Coaching leaders have the abilities to listen well, communicate effectively and motivate others.

The research evidence suggests that the six leadership styles identified are each appropriate for different types of situations, and also that leadership styles have a direct influence on the working atmosphere of an organisation which, in turn, influences financial results.

Goleman along with Richard Boyatzis and Annie McNeen co-authored the best-selling book *Primal leadership* (2002) which explored the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and in particular how leader's positive or negative emotions can affect an organisation. Goleman then went on to write the books *Social intelligence* (2006) which explored the science of social skills and empathy and *Ecological intelligence* (2009) which considered the hidden impacts of purchasing decisions. More recently, in the book *Focus* (2013), Goleman explores the key ability to pay attention and focus on the matter in hand and how leaders can benefit from the triple focus on emotional intelligence, self-awareness and empathy.

» IN PERSPECTIVE

The conviction that success depends to a high degree on interpersonal skills is not new, and Goleman has often been criticised for taking others' ideas, to some extent, and repackaging them as a new concept. Goleman himself, however, freely discusses the origins of his ideas, and acknowledges fellow academics when he uses their work.

A critical article by Charles Woodruffe in 2001 reviewed Goleman's version of EI, and suggested that:

- › Goleman contradicts himself in claiming that emotional intelligence is inherent and biologically based, yet is a skill that can be learned and developed.
- › the self-report measures of emotional intelligence used by Goleman have considerable limitations, particularly in terms of accuracy.
- › the EI behaviours or competencies put forward by Goleman, such as self-confidence and leadership, are not at all new, and are factors that have often been recognised as commonly associated with high achievement levels.

Whatever truth there might be in these criticisms, Goleman has certainly promoted management thinking on the subject of EI and he remains influential. He has taken some quite complex ideas relating to human behaviour and biological evolution and put them into a more simple and comprehensible format. Now under the label of 'emotional intelligence' these ideas are easy to understand. As a result, many people have found his core proposition, that we can use intelligence to better manage our emotions and draw on our emotional intuition to guide our thinking, to be a helpful approach in both their lives and their work.

» KEY WORKS BY GOLEMAN

BOOKS

Emotional intelligence why it can matter more than IQ,
London: Bloomsbury, 1996

Working with Emotional Intelligence
London: Bloomsbury, 1998

Primal leadership: realizing the power of emotional intelligence, with Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee
Boston Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 2002

The new leaders: transforming the art of leadership into the science of results, with Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee
London: Little Brown, 2002

What makes a leader: why emotional intelligence matters
More than Sound LLC, 2013
(A compilation of articles and insights)

Focus: the hidden driver of excellence
London: Bloomsbury, 2013

These books are available for loan to members from CMI's library. More information at:
www.managers.org.uk/library

JOURNAL ARTICLES

What makes a leader

Harvard Business Review vol 76 no 6, Nov/Dec 1998 pp93-102, pp93-102

Leadership that gets results

Harvard Business Review, vol. 78 no 2, Mar/Apr 2000, pp78-90

Primal leadership the hidden driver of great performance, with Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee,
Harvard Business Review, vol 79 no 11, Dec 2001 pp42-51

Social intelligence and the biology of leadership, with Richard Boyatzis,
Harvard Business Review, vol 86 no 9, Sep 2008 pp74,76-82

The focused leader: how effective executives direct their own - and their organisations attention
Harvard Business Review, vol 91 no 12, Dec 2013, pp 51-60

FURTHER READING

JOURNAL ARTICLES

The "big idea" that is yet to be: toward a more motivated, contextual, and dynamic model of emotional intelligence, Oscar Ybarra, Ethan Kross and Jeffrey Sanchez-Burks,
Academy of Management Perspectives, vol 28 issue 2, May 2014, pp39-107

Gaia education, Michael Costello,
People Management, 15 July 2010, pp26-28

INTERNET RESOURCES

Website and blog of Daniel Goleman <http://danielgoleman.info>



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