

## Emotional- Social Intelligence

Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) refers to the competencies linked to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management, which enable people to understand and manage their own and others' emotions in social interactions. The study of ESI came out of research on multiple intelligences, personality studies, psychology of emotion and neuroscience (through MRIs and many other imaging techniques). It established that just as we take in data about ourselves and our environment through our minds and our bodies, we also process data through our emotional center.

Leaders who master ESI competencies have a distinct advantage by being able to access the data available to us in our emotional centers, as written about in the 2001 Harvard Business Press bestseller, *Primal Leadership* (co-authored by Teleos founder, Annie McKee and her colleagues, Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis). IQ and technical skills will only get you so far. In fact, it is the competencies associated with emotional and social intelligence, not IQ, that account for the significant difference in performance between great and average leaders. Unlike an intelligence test score, which is said to be fixed, emotional intelligence can be learned and improved over time.

Psychologists, medical practitioners, psychotherapists, educators, and other professionals have known for a long time that thoughts and feelings influence each other. Both thoughts and feelings are involved in shaping a person's behavior. Brain research in the last three decades has established that thinking and feeling originate from separate centers of the brain. The centers have been termed the "thinking mind" and the "emotional mind" respectively. The thinking mind is located in the cortex part of the brain while the emotional mind is in the area of the brain known as the limbic system. In particular, the amygdala in the limbic system is the structure that stores emotional experiences associated with various events. That structure is, therefore, the emotional center.

One of its functions, from what research has shown, is to communicate information of an emotional nature to the cortex – particularly to the prefrontal lobe of the cortex, instructing it to go into action or behavior mode. The prefrontal lobe considers the instructions from the amygdala in the context of the actual situation. Directly following that, it then decides whether to ignore the instructions or carry them through to action. If a person's physiology is compromised – from drugs, alcohol, or moderate to high stress – the prefrontal lobe may fail to block the instructions from the amygdala, as it would in a more healthy state. In other words, we feel before we think. Emotions turn into action before the cognitive processes have a chance to interrupt the reaction.

For many years, intelligence tests scores, commonly known as IQ (Intelligence Quotient), based on thinking or logic have been considered the most important and critical factor in determining how well or successful an individual was likely to be in life or work. However, it has become apparent over the years that intelligence test scores only explain some of the factors that account for a person's success in life or at work.

The work by McKee, Goleman and Boyatzis has shown that the missing link in providing a much more accurate explanation of how an individual was likely to be successful in work or life is the role played by how an individual handles feelings or emotions.

Consequently, feelings:

- Direct us to what we want and/or need.
- Determine our behavior or actions toward what we want and/or need.
- Allow us to access and act upon empathy for others.
- Facilitate relationship forming and inspire others.
- Create bonds and a sense of higher purpose in groups, families, organizations, and more.

## The Components of Emotional Intelligence

Many factors during the course of growing up play a part in shaping the development of appropriate or inappropriate use of emotional skills. Traditional schooling, in general, tends to place emphasis on the development of the qualities of the “thinking mind,” such as logic and rationality. Qualities of the “emotional mind” have largely been neglected. It is, therefore, necessary to tune our emotional skills so that we can use them in an appropriate way, leveraging our own and others’ emotions to carry out our responsibilities and reach our aspirations.

In *Primal Leadership*, the authors identified four main dimensions or building blocks of the “emotional mind” that are essential for learning of emotional intelligence. The first two come under the umbrella of personal skills and the last two are social skills. The dimensions include: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management.



A person who masters the first three is in a better position to effectively manage relationships. Each of these four domains comprises a number of functional units or competencies. Developing competencies across these four main areas is essential for success in life and the workplace. The domains are described as follows:

**Self-Awareness:** ability of an individual to be in tune with her/his own feelings and to recognize the impact that his/her feelings have on others. The competency that underpins this dimension is emotional self-awareness.

**Self-Management:** ability to keep negative emotions and impulsive behavior under control, stay calm and unflappable even under stressful situations, maintain a clear and focused mind directed on accomplishing a task. The required competencies for this dimension are positive outlook, emotional self-control, achievement orientation, and adaptability.

**Social Awareness:** ability to read or sense other people’s emotions and how they impact on the situation of interest or concern. The competencies for this dimension include empathy and organizational awareness.

**Relationship Management:** ability to influence, guide and handle other people’s emotions. The competencies that underlay this dimension include inspirational leadership, influence, coach and mentor, conflict management, and teamwork.

Adapted from *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, Harvard Business School Publishing, 2001.

<http://www.teleosleaders.com/howwedoit/emotional.php>