

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

A Scientific Inquiry

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CONTENTS

About the Editors
 Contributors

viii
 ix

Emotional Intelligence and Everyday Life: An Introduction

John D. Mayer, Joseph Ciarrochi, and Joseph P. Forgas

xi

PART I
 FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES



A Field Guide to Emotional Intelligence

John D. Mayer

3



Measuring Emotional Intelligence

Joseph Ciarrochi, Amy Chan, Peter Caputi, and Richard Roberts

25



Affective Intelligence: The Role of Affect in Social Thinking and Behavior

Joseph P. Forgas

46



PART II
 APPLICATIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH TO EVERYDAY LIFE



Low Emotional Intelligence and Mental Illness

Graeme J. Taylor

67




Emotional Intelligence and Self-Actualization


Reuven Bar-On


82

v


Emotional Intelligence and Intimate Relationships 98

Julie Fitness

Emotional Intelligence and Empathic Accuracy 113

Judith Flury and William Ickes

Emotional Intelligence and Education 133


Maurice J. Elias, Lisa Hunter, and Jeffrey S. Kress

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace 150

David R. Caruso and Charles J. Wolfe

Applied Emotional Intelligence: Regulating Emotions to Become Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise 168

Peter Salovey

PART III INTEGRATION AND CONCLUSIONS


Measuring the Intelligence of an Idea: How Intelligence is the Idea of Emotional Intelligence? 187

Robert J. Sternberg
References 195

Author Index 217

Subject Index 223

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Joseph Ciarrochi received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh, a postdoctoral fellowship in emotion research from the University of New South Wales, and currently has a position as lecturer in psychology at the University of Wollongong. He has been conducting cutting-edge research in how emotions influence thinking and behavior and how emotional intelligence can best be measured and used. His findings have been published in the top journals in psychology and have been presented at numerous international conferences. In addition to conducting research, Dr. Ciarrochi has been developing training programs that are designed to increase people's social and emotional intelligence.

Joseph P. Forgas is a Scientia Professor of Psychology at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He received his DPhil degree from the University of Oxford and subsequently was awarded a DSc degree from the same university. He has written or edited 14 books and is the author of more than 120 scholarly articles and chapters. He is a fellow at the Academy of Social Sciences, Australia; the American Psychological Society; and the Society of Personality and Social Psychology. His current research focuses on the role of affect in social thinking and interpersonal behavior. This work has received international recognition, including the Research Prize from the Alexander von Humboldt foundation (Germany) and a Special Investigator Award from the Australian Research Council.

John (Jack) D. Mayer pioneered research in emotional intelligence. Since the late 1970s, he has studied the interaction of emotion and thought. Between 1990 and 1993, Dr. Mayer coauthored the first peer-reviewed scientific articles on emotional intelligence, with his colleague Dr. Peter Salovey of Yale University. Since then Dr. Mayer has further examined how to measure and use emotional intelligence. At the same time, he has developed a conceptual model for the more general study of human personality. He has published more than 70 scientific articles, book chapters, and tests. Dr. Mayer is currently a professor of psychology at the University of New Hampshire; he has served on the editorial boards of

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE: AN INTRODUCTION

John D. Mayer
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Joseph P. Forgas

Few areas of psychology have generated so much popular interest as emotional intelligence (EI). In the last five years, EI has been a topic of best-selling books, magazines, and newspaper articles. It has also been the topic of considerable scientific research. There are several explanations for the explosion of interest in EI. One explanation is that EI somehow fits the zeitgeist—the intellectual spirit—of the times. A persistent theme of contemporary life is that we can solve technical problems far better than human problems. The promise of EI is that it might help us solve at least one aspect of human problems, namely, conflict between what one feels and what one thinks. A second, everyday explanation for the interest in EI is that the EI concept implies (to some) that people without much academic ability might still be highly successful in life if they are high in EI. Another reason for its popularity may be that the concept provides critics of traditional intelligence tests with ammunition to attack those tests (after all, one might not need traditional intelligence to succeed). And finally, journalists and writers have written lively, popular accounts of EI and its potential role in everyday life. Such accounts have challenged the view that human nature involves a continuous conflict between the head and the heart. Moreover, they have led people to believe that EI may make us healthy, rich, successful, loved, and happy. Such bold and important claims need to be evaluated scientifically. This is what our book sets out to do.

□ A Dialogue about Human Nature

Beginning in the twentieth century, psychologists began to insert themselves into the debate on human nature. They helped inform political

scientists about why people vote in certain ways; provided input to aeronautical engineers about how to compensate for human weaknesses in the cockpit of airplanes; and informed computer scientists on the ways that people think. Most relevant here, they also began to tell psychotherapists and others about how people felt, and what those feelings meant.

Pronouncements about why people do the things they do, and the nature of human nature, long predate psychology, of course. As our species evolved tens of thousands of years ago, *Homo sapiens* must have found themselves increasingly self-aware in a largely mysterious and unpredictable world. This self-awareness prompted them to develop language and culture to communicate information about life and existence. From the earliest times, philosophers, religious prophets, mystics, and poets have provided greatly sought (and sometimes forcibly imposed) directions on how life should be lived. From Ancient Greece came political philosophy and the invention of democracy. From China came a code of family life evolved in the form of Confucianism. From the Middle East came monotheism and the commandments of Moses.

The forms of government, the religions, and the moralities in use today are descendants of earlier systems of thought. In general, those systems that survived and flourished did so in part because they worked. Thoughts evolve as well as organisms, and only those systems of thinking survived that were useful enough to assist with daily living. When the expertise is completely wrong, it is deemphasized and eventually ignored. The conversation between the experts and audience flourishes when experts are helpful, and vanishes when they are not. We can see the process today: Communism's view of humanity as "economic man" was simply too restrictive, too simplistic to properly channel human energy. Its followers finally brought about its demise. On a smaller scale, the members of isolated suicide cults die off because their own self-destruction makes it finally impossible to further spread their message. Likewise, the belief that emotions are irrational may be destined for extinction. Emotional intelligence has attracted the attention of the public because it suggests that emotions convey sensible meaning, which requires understanding.

□ Dialogue about Feeling

To add to the larger debates on governance, religion, and morality, experts also developed theories of how people should feel. The ancient Greek Stoics argued that thinking was reliable but that feelings were too subjective, idiosyncratic, and unreliable to be used in constructive ways by society. Although stoicism failed as a movement, its central tenets influenced the Judaism of the time to a slight degree and, to a greater degree, the

then-emerging tenets of Christianity. The Stoic ideas were therefore conveyed through the branches of some religions. Centuries later, the rational, scholarly, and empirical emphasis of the European Enlightenment appeared to further discredit emotionality. There were some rebellions against this trend, including the European romantic movement, in which artists, writers, and philosophers argued for the importance of feeling and of following one's heart.

Just a few decades ago, when many contemporary emotions researches were coming of age, the political rebellions of the 1960s also placed a high value on the emotions. For example, in the United States, then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara referred to himself as a "human computer" who would not let emotion interfere with his thoughts about the War in Vietnam. In contrast, demonstrators against the war followed their feelings of sympathy toward innocent people who were dying, anger at a government that was responsible for those deaths, and, perhaps, fear at having to serve in an unpopular war. They believed that the cold, computer-like arguments of people like Robert McNamara were being used to disparage those feelings. Whatever the merits of the arguments, the debate was often characterized as one of reason against feeling. There was little recognition that thought and feeling could be integrated [41].

□ Advent of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the latest development in understanding the relation between reason and emotion. Unlike earlier ideas, its unique contribution is to see thought and emotion as adaptively, *intelligently*, intertwined. Whereas Blaise Pascal wrote, famously, that "The heart has its reasons of which reason knows not" [1, p. 113], the concept of EI suggests the two may not be so far apart as supposed.

As with past developments in the view of human nature, there is interplay between the experts in the field and those who are interested in using the knowledge for more practical purposes. Today, EI spans two worlds: that of popular psychology, with its best-selling volumes on codependence, personality types, healing of the soul, and jazzy newspaper science, on the one hand, and that of careful, painstaking research science, on the other hand. This intersection creates a rather uneasy tension at times, and often misleading cross talk.

The scientist says, "Here is what I have been working on recently. . . ." The journalist replies, "This is really important," and then jazzes up the story in a way that seems close to lunacy: "EI is twice as important as IQ!" (This often-made, often-repeated claim cannot be substantiated, as is pointed out in a number of chapters of this volume).

Readers think the idea is important and follow the journalistic reports closely. Seeing this, the scientist thinks, “People are interested in what I do (even if they don’t quite get it). I’ll give them more” and then proceeds to write a carefully analytic piece that might be, however, off the topic, or so advanced as to be unathomable to nonpsychologists. (Much of EI writing really is not about EI, as several authors note in their chapters.)

At the same time, this intersection between the scientific and popular world can lead to genuine collaboration between the scientist and the public, but only if the scientist cares enough to write clearly and the interested reader is motivated to think critically.

□ Rationale for this Book

In the past few years, people have expressed a strong desire for information about EI, as is shown by the proliferation of popular books and magazine and newspaper articles. Scientists also have become fascinated by the topic; there has been a marked increase in serious research within the area. We were motivated to develop this edited volume in response to the curiosity about the concept and the availability of new information about it in the scientific literature.

In this volume, we have invited internationally renowned scientists and scientific practitioners to present their views and scientific findings related to EI. We have asked them to write in an accessible, accurate, and informative fashion, so that people from a wide variety of disciplines and walks of life can easily understand the book. We have asked them to keep their footnotes and citations to a minimum (although you will still find the most important references you need to other important works in the area). The result is a collection of essays that are frequently worthwhile and informative, often provocative, and sometimes (we think) wonderful.

These essays address: Why are experts now saying EI exists? What is the concept, and what does it mean? What does it say about aspects of our everyday life, including our health, economic decisions, relationships, and ability to have a successful career? This book explains what is known about each of those questions.

□ Book’s Contents

People approaching the area of EI do so with different interests, needs, and agendas. The chapters of this book will no doubt appeal in different

ways to different readers. To spare the reader the effort of striking out at random, we will introduce briefly the authors and chapters of this volume. This should help readers find what is closest to what they are looking for.

Part I: Fundamental Issues

The first part of the book is a general introduction to the field of EI and its study. It introduces some of the concepts, measures, and research underlying the general study of EI.

John D. Mayer, along with another contributor to this volume, Peter Salovey, have published a number of articles on EI, including what may be the first theoretical integration and measurement instrument in the field, in 1990. Dr. Mayer recounts some of that history in Chapter 1, “A Field Guide to Emotional Intelligence.” He sorts out some of the interweaving of popular and scientific psychology to provide a field guide of what’s what in defining EI, measuring it, and what ultimately might be the significance of the field. If you are new to the area, or unfamiliar with the different meanings or history of EI, this chapter is a good place to start.

When the first EI scales were introduced, Joseph Ciarrochi, Amy Chan, Peter Caputi, and Richard Roberts were among the first researchers to study the available scales and to publish articles on what they saw the scales as actually measuring. They served as important critics of the field of EI measurement. After all, what good is a scientific concept if it can’t be measured? In Chapter 2, “Measuring EI,” they examine a variety of psychological tests that have been developed to measure EI, all of which are quite different from one another. Here, they pool their collective knowledge and talents to provide a state-of-the-art look at what measures of EI tell us today. Their chapter critically evaluates the EI tests and describes the strengths and weaknesses of each.

The field of EI was influenced strongly by several related fields. One of these was the psychological study of “cognition and affect,” or, how emotions and thoughts interact. Joseph Forgas has been a central contributor to that field, and his *Handbook of Affect and Social Cognition* summarized much of that field. In Chapter 3, “Affective Intelligence: The Role of Affect in Social Thinking and Behavior,” Dr. Forgas describes processes that contribute to and detract from high EI. For example, he describes how emotions progress over time and how we tend to overestimate how long negative emotions last. Drawing on his knowledge of cognition and affect, he also describes an important, unexpected finding: The more we try to rea-

son about something, the more our irrelevant moods will bias our thoughts. His chapter describes a number of other ways that emotions influence our thinking and behavior and presents a model of these influences.

Part II: Applications of Emotional Intelligence Research to Everyday Life

The second part of the book examines how EI applies to clinical psychopathology, education, interpersonal relationships, work, health and finances, and psychological well-being.

In clinical psychology and psychiatry, there are a number of scientific and clinical concepts that are closely related to EI. Among the most important of these is the clinical syndrome of alexithymia. Alexithymia means “without emotion words” (“a”: without; “lexi”: words; “thymia”: emotions). Graeme Taylor is among the leading researchers on that condition, which overlaps, in important ways, with lower levels of EI. In Chapter 4, “Low EI and Mental Illness,” Dr. Taylor provides a comprehensive review of alexithymia research and shows how it may contribute to the development of problems in interpersonal relationships and in coping with distressing emotions and stressful life events. He also provides evidence for the important link between alexithymia and psychiatric disorders (e.g., substance abuse and eating disorders).

Reuven Bar-On began his psychological career studying well-being and the many personality dimensions related to it, such as self-regard, reality perception, and stress tolerance. He developed a scale to measure those attributes, the current version of which, the Bar-On Eqi, is now a frequently used measure of the emotional quotient (EQ). His chapter 5, “EI and Self-Actualization,” describes his own approach to measuring EI. He then reviews evidence that suggests that EI is essential for realizing one’s full potential in life.

All of us enjoy the pleasures and suffer the pains of interpersonal relations. Julie Fitness has devoted her career to studying the role of emotions in long-term relationships and marriage. In Chapter 6, “EI and Intimate Relationships,” she discusses ways in which EI may be essential to maintaining a strong, healthy relationship. She also argues, however, that EI may not be enough for a happy relationship: Such intelligence could be used to manipulate and hurt the partner. Dr. Fitness then discusses the values and beliefs that are necessary in combination with EI to create and maintain happy, long-term relationships.

Interpersonal relations begin with a “getting to know you” period. Judith Flury and William Ickes have been conducting cutting-edge research on people’s ability to read the thoughts and emotions of others. In Chapter

7, “Emotional Intelligence and Empathy,” they discuss the processes that are involved in accurate emotion perception and ways in which such perception can be improved. They also describe research that suggests that being emotionally intelligent sometimes means deliberately not trying to know how the other person feels. In other words, sometimes delusions may be as necessary to our happiness as realities.

Educators have expressed a tremendous interest in EI. Maurice Elias is an eminent scholar in education and a major force in bringing EI into educational contexts. In Chapter 8, “Emotional Intelligence and Education,” he and his colleagues, Lisa Hunter and Jeffrey Kress, discuss the wide range of social and emotional learning (SEL) programs that have been implemented in schools and how some of these programs have brought about a number of positive changes in students’ lives (better academics, less aggression and drug usage). Dr. Elias and his colleagues’ chapter is essential reading for educators, parents, and anyone who is interested in how EI can be taught.

There has been a great deal of popular interest in how EI can be applied to the business world. David Caruso is not only a trained intelligence researcher and codeveloper of some central measures of EI, but he also has served as an executive coach in the business world. He and his business colleague Charles Wolffe describe the ways in which EI is essential to success in the workplace, making liberal use of examples. In Chapter 9, “Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace,” they describe how EI is relevant to selecting and developing a career and how EI can help people deal effectively with coworkers. The chapter further discusses how EI assessment can be integrated with other forms of assessment to provide people with feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. The chapter concludes with a blueprint for an EI training program within the workplace.

Peter Salovey codeveloped the theory of EI with John D. Mayer in the early 1990s and has continued work in the field since that time. In Chapter 10, “Applied Emotional Intelligence: Regulating Emotions to Become Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise,” he examines how EI may contribute to both our health and our wealth. He shows that the inability to manage emotions effectively can lead to health problems such as heart disease. He also shows how poor management of negative emotions can lead to disastrous financial decisions. His chapter is rich with illustrations of how using better emotional and cognitive strategies may lead us to more fulfilling lives.

Part III: Integration and Conclusions

Robert Sternberg occupies a unique position in intelligence research today, as both insider and critic. The developer of such concepts as practical

intelligence and creative intelligence, he also has served as an outspoken commentator on the field of intelligence, its foibles, and its promise. In the course of doing so, he has edited the most significant volumes in intelligence research, including, perhaps most centrally, the *Handbook of Intelligence*. In the commentary chapter, Chapter 11, "Measuring the Intelligence of an Idea: How Intelligent Is the Idea of Emotional Intelligence?" Dr. Sternberg surveys the EI area and examines its contributions to traditional intelligence research. He evaluates whether the idea of EI is "correct" or is consistent with available evidence, whether EI is novel and appropriate in accomplishing what it is supposed to, and whether EI is useful in understanding important life outcomes. Dr. Sternberg's comments tie together much that is in the book. In addition, the historical and scientific perspective he lends makes his chapter an important contribution in its own right.

Together, these articles represent a diversity of approaches, disciplinary outlooks, and perspectives on the concept of EI. The field of EI is still in its early stages; nonetheless, we are confident that each of the approaches represented in this volume will inform the reader about what EI is and how it may be important to all aspects of everyday life.

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES