

## 3.2: Emotional Intelligence

### Learning Objective

- Understand how emotional intelligence can impact your career success.

Emotional intelligence is a topic that has been researched since the early 1990s and has been found to be an important indicator of life and career success. In fact, our book is written around the ability to develop emotional intelligence skills. **Emotional intelligence (EQ)** refers to a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.<sup>[1]</sup> This is different from **intelligence quotient (IQ)** in that IQ measures intelligence based on a score derived from intelligence tests. The other main difference between the two is that IQ is stable over a lifetime, while EQ can grow and develop over time.

The original researchers of EQ, John Mayer and Peter Salovey,<sup>[2]</sup> provided the first hint of emotional intelligence in their research, but much of the later research on emotional intelligence was done by Daniel Goleman.<sup>[3]</sup> According to Goleman, there are four main aspects to emotional intelligence, which we will discuss later in this section. First, why is emotional intelligence necessary for success?

To begin with, different from what was previously thought, IQ is not a good predictor of job performance, happiness, or success. Goleman points out that if this myth were true, everyone who graduated at the top of their class with honors would be the most successful people. Because we know this isn't the case, we know qualities other than just IQ can help predict success. Research by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greves has shown that EQ makes up 58 percent of our job requirements and is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence.<sup>[4]</sup> Their research also showed that 90 percent of high performers at work had high EQ, while 20 percent of low performers had low EQ. In other words, you can be a high performer at work without EQ, but the chances are slimmer with low EQ.<sup>[5]</sup> EQ research by Bradberry and Greves shows a link between higher EQ and higher salary. In fact, for every point increase in EQ, there is a \$1,300 per year increase in salary.<sup>[6]</sup>

In one study performed by Virginia Tech,<sup>[7]</sup> six hundred undergraduate computer science students and twenty institutions participated in a survey that measured emotional intelligence and the ability to handle demanding curriculum. Although emotional intelligence was not directly linked to academic success in the study, students with higher levels of emotional intelligence had more self-efficacy (belief in one's own ability), which allowed them to handle problems better—creating higher academic success. For example, the ability to read body language and understand when someone is sad or mad and needs to talk is an emotional intelligence skill. These skills enable us to interact with others successfully. Consider a person who does not have a “filter” and continually puts down others and says exactly what is on their mind, even if it is hurtful. This clear lack of emotional intelligence affects this person's ability to have good, healthy relationships, both at work and in their personal life.

So, we know that emotional intelligence is important for success at work, at school, and in our personal lives. Let's discuss the four main components of EQ:

1. **Self-awareness.** **Self-awareness** refers to a person's ability to understand their feelings from moment to moment. It might seem as if this is something we know, but we often go about our day without thinking or being aware of our emotions that impact how we behave in work or personal situations. Understanding our emotions can help us reduce stress and make better decisions, especially when we are under pressure. In addition, knowing and recognizing our own strengths and weaknesses is part of self-awareness. Assume that Patt is upset about a new process being implemented in the organization. Lack of self-awareness may result in her feeling angry and anxious, without really knowing why. High self-awareness EQ might cause Patt to recognize that her anger and anxiety stem from the last time the organization changed processes and fifteen people got laid off. Part of self-awareness is the idea of positive **psychological capital**, which can include emotions such as hope; optimism, which results in higher confidence; and resilience, or the ability to bounce back quickly from challenges.<sup>[8]</sup> Psychological capital can be gained through self-awareness and self-management, which is our next area of emotional intelligence.
2. **Self-management.** **Self-management** refers to our ability to manage our emotions and is dependent on our self-awareness ability. How do we handle frustration, anger, and sadness? Are we able to control our behaviors and emotions? Self-management also is the ability to follow through with commitments and take initiative at work. Someone who lacks self-awareness may project stress on others. For example, say that project manager Mae is very stressed about an upcoming Monday deadline. Lack of self-management may cause Mae to lash out at people in the office because of the deadline. Higher EQ in this area might result in Mae being calm, cool, and collected—to motivate her team to focus and finish the project on time.

3. **Social awareness.** **Social awareness** is our ability to understand social cues that may affect others around us. In other words, understanding how another is feeling, even if we do not feel the same way. Social awareness also includes having empathy for another, recognizing power structure and unwritten workplace dynamics. Most people high on social awareness have charisma and make people feel good with every interaction. For example, consider Erik's behavior in meetings. He continually talks and does not pick up subtleties, such as body language. Because of this, he can't understand (or even fathom) that his monologues can be frustrating to others. Erik, with higher EQ in social awareness, may begin talking but also spend a lot of time listening and observing in the meeting, to get a sense of how others feel. He may also directly ask people how they feel. This demonstrates high social awareness.
4. **Relationship management.** **Relationship management** refers to our ability to communicate clearly, maintain good relationships with others, work well in teams, and manage conflict. Relationship management relies on your ability to use the other three areas of EQ to manage relationships effectively. Take Caroline, for example. Caroline is good at reading people's emotions and showing empathy for them, even if she doesn't agree. As a manager, her door is always open and she makes it clear to colleagues and staff that they are welcome to speak with her anytime. If Caroline has low EQ in the area of relationship management, she may belittle people and have a difficult time being positive. She may not be what is considered a good team player, which shows her lack of ability to manage relationships.

#### emotional intelligence for success



**Video 3.2.1:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJhfKYzKc0s>

*Author and Pulitzer Prize nominee Daniel Goleman discusses the importance of emotional intelligence in career success.*

To increase our self-awareness skills, we should spend time thinking about our emotions to understand why we experience a specific emotion. We should look at those things that cause a strong reaction, such as anger to help us understand the underlying reasons for that reaction. By doing this, we can begin to see a pattern within ourselves that helps explain how we behave and how we feel in certain situations. This allows us to handle those situations when they arise.

To increase our self-management skills, we can focus on the positive instead of the negative. Taking deep breaths increases blood flow, which helps us handle difficult situations. Although seemingly childish, counting to ten before reacting can help us manage emotions such as anger. This gives us time to calm down and think about how we will handle the situation. Practicing positive **self-talk** can help increase our self-management. Self-talk refers to the thoughts we have about ourselves and situations throughout the day. Since we have over 50,000 thoughts per day,<sup>[9]</sup> getting into the habit of managing those thoughts is important. By recognizing the negative thoughts, we can change them for the positive. The following are some examples:

Positive	Negative
I made a mistake.	I am, or that was, dumb.

Positive	Negative
I need some work on xx skills.	I am an idiot.
It may take a bit more effort to show them what I have to offer.	They will never accept me.
I need to reprioritize my to do list.	I will never be able to get all of this done.
Let me see what seminars and training are available.	I just don't have the knowledge required to do this job.

Increasing social awareness means to observe others' actions and to watch people to get a good sense of how they are reacting. We can gain social awareness skills by learning people's names and making sure we watch body language. Living in the moment can help our interactions with others as well. Practicing listening skills and asking follow-up questions can also help improve our social awareness skills.

Strategies for relationship management might include being open, acknowledging another's feelings, and showing that you care. Being willing to listen to colleagues and employees and understanding them on a personal level can help enhance relationship management skills. Being willing to accept feedback and grow from that feedback can help people be more comfortable talking with you.

The importance of emotional intelligence, as we introduced at the start of this section, is imperative to being successful at work. Figuring out a plan on how we can increase our emotional intelligence skills can also benefit us personally in our relationships with others.

Emotional intelligence is the key to everything we will discuss throughout the book, and each aspect of our discussion relates back to emotional intelligence, as you can see from Figure 3.2.1.

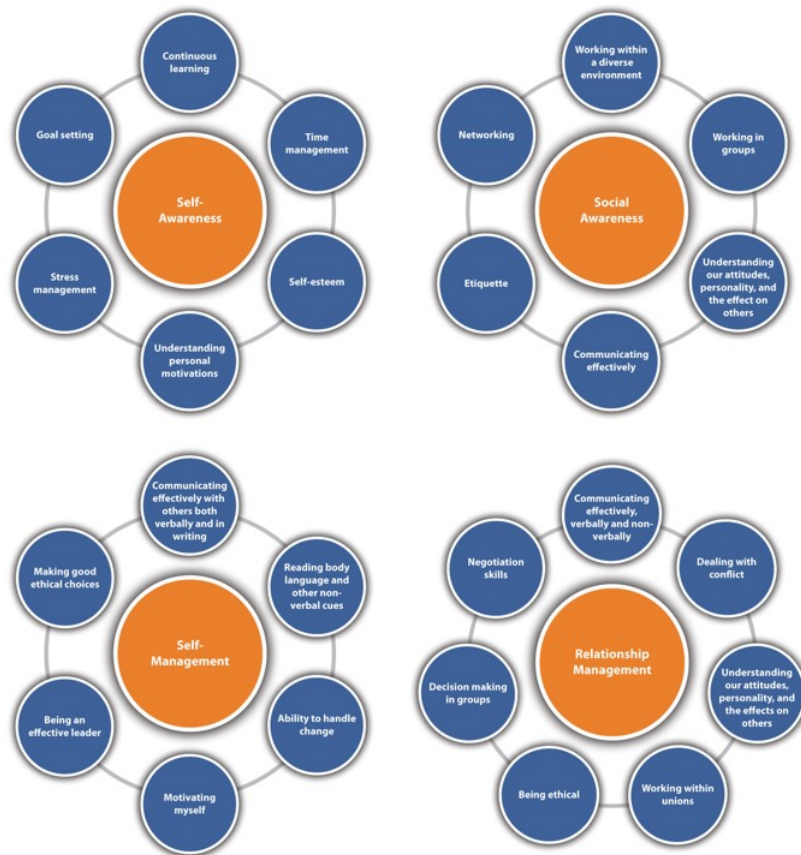


Figure 3.2.1: Emotional intelligence applies to all areas of our lives, both professionally and personally. We will be discussing each of these emotional intelligence aspects throughout the book. (Copyright; author via source)

## Key Takeaways

- Emotional intelligence (EQ) is different from intelligence quotient (IQ) in that EQ can help predict career success and can be improved over time, whereas IQ is stable over time.
- Emotional intelligence consists of four main components. Self-awareness is the first. This level of intelligence comprises the ability to understand one's own emotions and reactions to those emotions.
- Self-management refers to the ability to manage one's reactions and emotions.
- Social awareness refers to one's ability to read body language and social cues to develop positive relationships both professionally and personally.
- Relationship management skills require all of the three mentioned skills. This skill allows us to handle conflict and get along with others.
- EQ is important because the majority of successful people have both appropriate IQ levels for their job and EQ skills.

### Exercises 3.2.1

1. Reread the opening case. What emotional intelligence issues do you think Lynn will address with Reegan when they meet? If you were Lynn, what recommendations would you make to Reegan?
2. Visit [http://www.queendom.com/tests/access\\_page/index.htm?idRegTest=3037](http://www.queendom.com/tests/access_page/index.htm?idRegTest=3037) (you do not need to register) and take the 146-question quiz on emotional intelligence, which should take about an hour. Then answer the following questions:
  - a. Why do you think EQ predicts more career success than IQ?
  - b. What were the results of the quiz? Do you agree with them?
  - c. Formulate a plan to improve your emotional intelligence skills, with at least three goals and strategies to reach those goals.

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