

A book review of  
*Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*  
By Daniel Goleman

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This book review is a collaboration of the group members above. Each member wrote a section of the report and used Google Docs to collaborate. Once the initial drafts were collected, each member read and edited the entire report before submission.

## Synopsis

Goleman begins this groundbreaking book with a look into the neuroscientific research literature outlining how the brain and other nervous system structures accommodate a variety of emotions including anger, fear, happiness, love, surprise, disgust, and sadness. He introduces the concept of two minds where one is the center of rational thought and the other, referred to as the primitive brain, being the center of emotions. Goleman continues on discussing the limbic system and amygdala and their role in beginning an emotional response before the neocortex begins its response. From an evolutionary standpoint, the beginning of the book makes several excellent points about the goals of emotions and how they have been developed throughout human evolution to ensure the survival of the human race. Goleman also begins to define emotional intelligence as the positive interaction between the limbic system and the neocortex, and presents a, “new paradigm [that] urges us to harmonize head and heart” (p. 29).

The next section of part one goes more into depth about how emotional intelligence works and Goleman contrasts it sharply with IQ and academic intelligence using Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, which includes interpersonal intelligence as well as intrapersonal intelligence. Each of these types of intelligence focus on a person’s ability to understand other people and oneself, respectively, effectively in life. Goleman also includes psychologist, John Mayer’s expansion of emotion intelligence which is five parts: knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships. He mentions that each person has a unique combination of these five traits which make up their level of emotional intelligence.

Further discussion of times when emotional intelligence dysfunctions, Goleman contrasts passion with indifference, describes alexithymia or lack of words for emotions, and praises our gut feelings for being highly intuitive attention signals. He continues on to remind us that although we have the capacity for both intense positive and negative emotion, we cannot control when we will be swept into these emotions including anger which may become rage which then could become violence when unhampered by rational thinking. Goleman describes anxiety and chronic worry as being, “expressed in the mind’s ear, not its eye—that is, in words, not images—a fact that has significance for controlling worry” (p. 66). Rumination and its tendency to increase feelings of depression are discussed in terms of how a person can better manage these intense feelings. Goleman makes further suggestions, including strategies and aerobic exercise, for handling each type of intense emotion to make it more manageable.

Chapter 6 sets up the discussion about how emotions and rational thought may interact to create intelligence. Goleman supports his argument that emotions overwhelm concentration using various studies regarding “working memory.” When a situation is particularly stressful or emotional, our working memory is commandeered by that situation, which robs rational thinking of resources that could be used to manage the situation in an effective way. This emotional block creates a foul mood, which affects how decisions are made and tends to lead to overly cautious decisions. Whereas people who can manage and regulate their emotions are typically better able to motivate themselves to prepare for a stressful situation and think more complexly throughout the situation.

Part two wraps up with discussions regarding the development of empathy and the social arts which include four abilities, identified by Hatch and Gardner, as component of interpersonal intelligence. These four components include: organizing groups, negotiating solutions, personal

connection, and social analysis, which Goleman describes as being indicators of social success. They can complement the other aspects of emotional intelligence such as monitoring one's own expression of emotion to create a genuinely socially successful person. Or they can be sought on their own which tends to lead to a hollow social success where a person is focused so much on outward displays of emotional intelligence that they lose sight of their own personal satisfaction.

Part three focuses on the application of emotional intelligence in a wide variety of social settings including emotionally overwhelming spouses, managers and bosses, and finally other relationships that require positive responses to emotional events. Goleman categorizes the behaviors, moods, and emotions seen in both men and women while describing how these each affect their partners. He highlights both advice for men and women who find themselves in these situations and presents ways for each gender to become more emotionally intelligent which resembles conflict resolution steps. Managers who are highly critical in order to motivate their employees are Goleman's next target as he suggests steps for them to take in order to successfully manage both their employees' professional behavior, but also their employees' emotional journey while at work. Finally, Goleman discusses the importance of relationships to our mental and physical health which provides motivation for becoming more emotionally intelligent.

Similarly to other types of intelligence, emotional intelligence is learned and can be relearned throughout our lifespan. There are several opportunities for teaching children how to be emotionally intelligent, and the impact of parenting styles on this learning is profound because ignoring emotional responses in children teaches them that emotions are not important. Therapy and rehabilitation each serve vital roles in helping those with PTSD recover from traumatic events that may cause intense emotional reactions which become problematic as they disrupt a person's everyday life. Finally, Goleman suggests that people's temperaments do not determine how emotionally intelligent they can become and that learning is always possible.

In the final part, Goleman shares about the costs and outcomes related to emotional illiteracy which include withdrawal, social problems, and the loss of social resources that serve as buffers for negative emotions. He extensively describes the rising rates of both anxiety, depression, isolation, and addiction and how belief in a higher power may be an answer to short-circuiting depression. Hope is presented in the final chapter by way of discussing how curriculum can be developed and implemented by schools to help teach children to handle their emotions in the context of school-related emotional events. Goleman ends with a few poignant questions: "Shouldn't we be teaching these most essential skills for life to every child—now more than ever? And if not now, when?" (p. 287).

## Analysis

Dr. Daniel Goleman's claims for emotional intelligence (EI) have become quite popular and accepted by a large percent of the population. This has since launched a career for Dr. Goleman as a consultant to Fortune 500 companies and other firms that pay for him to come in and empower their employees with the power of emotional intelligence and how to harness that power for personal success. Goleman claims that if people can effectively control, manage and become aware of their emotions as well as others then they will be successful and grow. According to Goleman, this can be achieved by focusing on the five domains: 1) knowing your

emotions, 2) managing your emotions, 3) motivating yourself 4) recognizing/understanding your and other's emotions, and 5) managing the relationships in your life. Furthermore, Goleman claims that EI matters twice as much as an individual's IQ.

These claims and the natural fit of applying these concepts to businesses, schools, and organizations created a rapid rise in popularity of the EI Theory. This thrust EI into the spotlight, which led to polarizing opinions about the effectiveness and the accuracy of EI research and claims. On one hand you have researchers like Adam Grant who states that it would be better for businesses to spend time and money on assessing cognitive ability through traditional intelligence factors such as: reasoning, problem solving and being able to use analytical thinking to help customers and build relationships. On the other, you have other researchers such as Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso who have developed tests to determine the validity of EI and have stated that it was scientifically valid.

The problem arises in trying to scientifically assess the accuracy of Goleman's claims. Upon further research we find that it has been difficult to adequately measure (Becker, 2003) and that EI proves to be more of a popular myth than a science (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2002). While the importance of understanding and effectively managing the five clusters or domains that Goleman discussed can lead to personal growth and success in both business and personal relationships, it is hard to accurately assess and prove the statements claimed by Goleman.

Goleman's has brought EI into the public spotlight and as a result the scientific community has exploded with new research and tests into EI and the relationships it has with success. Many businesses and schools have used his techniques and reported that they have been effective but at this time there can be no accurate reporting to the scientific validity of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence. His claims on the power and the predictability of emotional intelligence just have not been proven as valid. Even the self-assessment developed and sold by Goleman, the ESCI, notes that it is a competency profile, not a psychometric model and it is based on a database of averages not scientific fact.

In conclusion, while there are some benefits to knowing how to manage your emotions, being able to read the emotions of others and managing emotions, the claims made by Goleman are far too great to say that they are scientifically valid or proven. The personal introspective you can gain by focusing on EI can be very beneficial for your own personal and mental health but nothing is proven and much *Emotional Intelligence* comes off as being a sales gimmick and not something that we could see as being completely beneficial to the school as a whole.

## Practical Application

A strong message of this book is that our society stresses the importance of academic education and yet spends little resources teaching children how to deal with emotions. Traditionally schools have taught children how to control their emotions via rules such as don't shout out in class, be nice to your classmates, share, respect personal space, etc. However, in some schools and in some classrooms, things have changed.

In Part 5 of *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman reports on several successful programs in schools throughout the United States. Some of the programs are geared to a specific student groups such as Duke University's anger-control programs for grade school boys (p. 238), a program for mildly depressed students at an Oregon high school (p. 245), and Friendship Coaching, a program developed by Steven Asher, for third and fourth graders (p. 251).

While individualized programs are necessary, there is an equally important need to teach emotional intelligence to a broader audience, including teachers, administrators, parents, and all students. The nationally recognized Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five competencies that are taught in many school programs. They are self awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making ([www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)). Schools willing to invest the time, money, and administrative resources, can purchase comprehensive systems that help teach and incorporate these competencies. ZooU ([www.zoougame.com](http://www.zoougame.com)) and RippleEffects ([www.rippleeffects.com](http://www.rippleeffects.com)) are two such systems. These sites are designed to assess and teach through interactions, lessons, videos, ebooks, games and more.

When an elaborate, comprehensive system is not an option, teachers should consider finding fun, free resources. Games (both analog and digital) can be an excellent method of teaching children about emotions. A good game engages the player through a storyline, challenges, and rewards. There are many great websites that provide free, educational games. This is not to infer that games should replace the in-class lesson, but rather a game is an excellent method of introducing, enhancing or reinforcing the lesson. Games are also an excellent way to involve parents if the students are able to play the games at home.

A quick search on the internet identified three excellent resources for K-6 children. The first, do2Learn ([www.d2learn.com](http://www.d2learn.com)), offers a free Feelings Game and an Emotions Color Wheel, which helps students visually group emotions. Do2Learn is a website providing resources for individuals with special needs. However, many of the games and printable materials are well suited for all young children. PBSKids.org and Hitentertainment.com also have online games that teach children about about emotions, including how to recognize emotions in faces.

Since it has been 10 years since Goleman first wrote *Emotional Intelligence*, he starts this book with introduction that provides a lengthy account of how schools around the world have since integrated education on social and emotional intelligence in their curriculum. It is exciting to see the huge progress that has been made in awareness and continued research in the field of emotions.

## References

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Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ is a 1995 book by Daniel Goleman. In this book, Goleman posits that emotional intelligence is as important as IQ for success, including in academic, professional, social, and interpersonal aspects of one's life. Goleman says that emotional intelligence is a skill that can be taught and cultivated, and outlines methods for incorporating emotional skills training in school curricula. Or can intelligence be brought to emotions? The honest attempt had been made by Daniel Goleman to answer those questions through this groundbreaking book, Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ. Goleman was a science writer of New York Times, obtained his doctoral degree in psychology at Harvard University with a great interest on brain and behavior research. After the publication of this book the "Emotional intelligence, it becomes the Buzz word of the corporate America. This book basically concern about how to educating our child with emotional intelligence. In this present re... Your emotional intelligence and social intelligence are much greater determinants of the success you will achieve in life. iStock. 2. The ability to delay gratification is a primary indicator of future success. I have read and I quoted from Emotional Intelligence, Why it can matter more than IQ. But I have also read several other books by various authors which deal with or touch on the subject. I have posted reviews on some 146 books on Amazon.com. About half of the books I read deal with human development and or achievement. So while Goleman was probably the primary source, he was certainly not the only source. Hello and welcome to One Minute Book review, the show that brings books to life, I am your host Aun Abdi Today I will be reviewing Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ by Daniel Goleman. This book is an exploration into why EQ or emotional intelligence can be a greater indicator of intelligence than IQ. I have read many articles around this topic from top CEOs and Entrepreneurs who believe this to be true and recommended this book as an introduction into the topic. What struck me most about this book is how detailed Goleman explains how our experiences, especially in infancy, creates our tendencies and habits as we get older. The book explains details of our emotions, how they are created and are managed on a day-to-day basis. So like most other Emotional Intelligence books, "The Big Picture" chapter provides a good answer to the ubiquitous "What is Emotional Intelligence?" question. And also, a nice look at what Emotional Intelligence is not. Emotional Intelligence 2.0 is a rich resource. Starting first with an outline of why EI is important. Written for corporate and business readers, Freedman then provides clear-cut examples of how it is possible for us to harness Emotional Intelligence for enhanced performance. His anecdotes include work experiences from his time at FedEx and the US Navy, HSBC, and more.