

THE BIG IDEAS

IQ vs. EQ

The battle of Qs! :)

Hundreds & Hundreds

Of ways to succeed.

Self-Awareness

Enter: the witness.

Self-Mastery

vs. "Passion's slave."

Ten Thousand Hours

That should do the trick!

A Master Aptitude

It sure is.

Impulses

And marshmallows.

Worrying

& Self-fulfilling prophecies.

The Science of Hope

The will and the way.

Emotional Intelligence

Why it can matter more than IQ

BY DANIEL GOLEMAN · BANTAM © 1997 · 368 PAGES

"What factors are at play, for example, when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well? I would argue that the difference quite often lies in the abilities called here emotional intelligence, which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself."

~ Daniel Goleman from *Emotional Intelligence*

Emotional Intelligence. This is one the most influential psychology books ever written that kicked off a bit of a revolution in redefining what it means to be "intelligent."

It's PACKED with goodness and in this Note we'll explore some of my favorite Big Ideas on how we can live with more emotional mojo. Let's jump in with a look at IQ vs. EQ! :)

IQ VS. EQ

"At best, IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other forces..."

Even Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, whose book *The Bell Curve* imputes a primary importance to IQ, acknowledge this; as they point out, 'Perhaps a freshman with an SAT math score of 500 had better not have his heart set on being a mathematician, but if instead he wants to run his own business, become a U.S. Senator or make a million dollars, he should not put aside his dreams. ... The link between test scores and those achievements is dwarfed by the totality of other characteristics that he brings to life.'

My concern is with a key set of these 'other characteristics,' *emotional intelligence*: abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think to empathize and to hope."

Fantastic. So, we often have a common notion that IQ means success, happiness, health and all the other wonderful things we aspire to in life. But... might wanna check that assumption because there's actually a rather weak correlation between IQ and all that jazz.

What makes the difference?

As Goleman says: "a key set of these 'other characteristics,' *emotional intelligence*: abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think to empathize and to hope."

Let's check some of them out, shall we?!?

HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF WAYS TO SUCCEED

"The time has come,' [Howard] Gardner told me, 'to broaden our notion of the spectrum of talents. The single most important contribution education can make to a child's development

"For better or worse,
intelligence can come to
nothing when the emotions
hold sway."

~ Daniel Goleman

" We too often confront postmodern dilemmas with an emotional repertoire tailored to the urgencies of the Pleistocene."

~ Daniel Goleman

is to help him toward a field where his talents best suit him, where he will be satisfied and competent. We've completely lost sight of that. Instead we subject everyone to an education where, if you succeed, you will be best suited to be a college professor. And we evaluate everyone along the way according to whether they meet that narrow standard of success. We should spend less time ranking children and more time helping them to identify their natural competencies and gifts, and cultivate those. There are hundreds and hundreds of ways to succeed and many, many, many different abilities that will help get you there."

Howard Gardner is the Harvard psychologist who came up with the idea of "multiple intelligences"—suggesting that rather than the narrow vision of IQ, we can see the range of intelligences we can all possess: from Logical, Linguistic, Visual/Spatial and Musical/Rhythmic to Bodily-kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal and Naturalist Intelligence.

(He also has a great comment on the highly calibrated, and ultimately useless skill we develop while in school: *"In the course of their careers in the American school of today, most students take hundreds, if not thousands, of tests. They develop skill to a highly calibrated degree in an exercise that will essentially become useless immediately after their last day of school."* :)

As we embrace the fact that our potential is not limited by the # on our IQ test or how many scan-trons we successfully filled out, the game becomes discovering where our greatest aptitudes and passions lie, and discovering our unique path for fulfillment.

So... What are *your* natural competencies and gifts? And, how can you create a path among the hundreds and hundreds out there to create a life of meaning, fulfillment and (personally defined) success?

THE POWER OF SELF-AWARENESS

"Although there is a logical distinction between being aware of feelings and acting to change them, Mayer finds that for all practical purposes the two usually go hand-in-hand: to recognize a foul mood is to want to get out of it."

Goleman discusses the importance of heeding Socrates's injunction to "Know thyself" and describes the power of being aware of our internal emotional states while maintaining *"an interested yet unreactive witness."*

As he says: *"Self-awareness is not an attention that gets carried away by emotions, overreacting and amplifying what is perceived. Rather, it is a neutral mode that maintains self-reflectiveness even amidst turbulent emotions."*

We talk about this often in various Notes.

[Anthony de Mello](#) has a fun way to describe his relationship to his depression: *"Never identify with that feeling. It has nothing to do with the 'I.' Don't define your essential self in terms of that feeling. Don't say, 'I am depressed.' If you want to say, 'It is depressed,' that's all right. If you want to say that depression is there, that's fine; if you want to say gloominess is there, that's fine. But not: I am gloomy. You're defining yourself in terms of the feeling. That's your illusion; that's your mistake. There is a depression there right now, but let it be, leave it alone. It will pass. Everything passes, everything. Your depressions and your thrills have nothing to do with happiness. Those are swings of the pendulum. If you seek kicks or thrills, get ready for depression. Do you want your drug? Get ready for the hangover. One end of the pendulum swings over to the other."*

So, how aware are you of the emotions you're experiencing? Do you get overwhelmed by them and amplify the emotions or can you step back and SEE what you're experiencing, accept the emotion and then choose more effective thoughts and behaviors to enhance your level of happiness?

I like Dan Millman's take on the subject in his great book *Everyday Enlightenment* ([see Notes](#)):

" Anyone can become angry - that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way-that is not easy."

~ Aristotle

"There was an emotional brain long before there was a rational one."

~ Daniel Goleman

"Of course, we don't love painful feelings like anxiety or depression. We don't have to love or even like them, but we do have to accept them, as difficult as that can seem at times. Emotions, no matter how painful they are, are not the problem. The problem is dropping out of school or work, putting your family or duties of life on hold until such time as you can work out your emotional issues. Would you rather feel depressed while sitting alone in your room trying to figure it all out or feel depressed while getting your house cleaned or your project completed? (You may still feel depressed, but you have a cleaner house.)"

The heart of accepting your emotions (and, as you've seen, of reclaiming your will) is to do what you need to do despite what you are feeling. Accept and learn from your feelings, but don't let them run your life. By remaining productive during difficult emotional episodes, you are more likely to improve your emotional state than if you do nothing but ruminate and wait for sunny skies."

SELF-MASTERY VS. BEING "PASSION'S SLAVE"

"A sense of self-mastery, of being able to withstand the emotional storms that the buffeting of Fortune brings rather than being 'passion's slave,' has been praised as a virtue since the time of Plato. The ancient Greek word for it was *sophrosyne*, 'care and intelligence in conducting one's life; a tempered balance and wisdom,' as Page DuBois, a Greek scholar, translates it. The Romans and early Christian church called it *temperantia*, temperance, the restraining of emotional excess. the goal is balance, not emotional suppression: every feeling has its value and significance. A life without passion would be a dull wasteland of neutrality, cut off and isolated from the richness of life itself. But, as Aristotle observed, what is wanted is *appropriate* emotion, feeling proportionate to circumstance. When emotions are too muted they create dullness and distance; when out of control, too extreme and persistent, they become pathological, as in immobilizing depression, overwhelming anxiety, raging anger, manic agitation."

Ah, the virtuous mean and the ability to feel the right emotion at the right time to the right degree.

Aristotle had this to say about it: *"For both excessive and insufficient exercise destroy one's strength, and both eating and drinking too much or too little destroy health, whereas the right quantity produces, increases or preserves it. So it is the same with temperance, courage and the other virtues... This much then, is clear: in all our conduct it is the mean that is to be commended."*

And the idea of having a full scope of emotional capacity reminds me of this passage from *The Power of Full Engagement* (see Notes): *"To be fully engaged emotionally requires celebrating what the Stoic philosophers called *anacolutia*—the mutual entailment of the virtues. By this notion, no virtue is a virtue by itself. Rather, all virtues are entailed. Honesty without compassion, for example, becomes cruelty."*

How are you looking on this front? :)

TEN THOUSAND HOURS, PLEASE

"Consider the role of positive motivation—the marshalling of feelings of enthusiasm, zeal, and confidence—in achievement. Studies of Olympic athletes, world-class musicians, and chess grand masters find their unifying trait is the ability to motivate themselves to pursue relentless training routines... likewise the best violin virtuosos of the twentieth century began studying their instrument at around age five; international chess champions started on the game at an average age of seven, while those who rose only to national prominence started at ten. Starting earlier offers a lifetime edge: the top violin students at the best music academy in Berlin, all in their early twenties, had put in ten thousand hours' lifetime practice, while the second-tier students averaged around seventy-five hundred hours.

"Emotional aptitude is a meta-ability, determining how well we can use whatever other skills we have, including raw intellect."

~ Daniel Goleman

What seemed to set apart those at the very top of competitive pursuits from others of roughly equal ability is the degree to which, beginning early in life, they can pursue an arduous practice routine for years and years. And that doggedness depends on emotional traits—enthusiasm and persistence in the face of setbacks—above all else."

Love it.

Malcolm Gladwell goes off on this phenomena in his great book *Outliers* where he tells a bunch of fascinating stories about extraordinary people—including one about how Bill Gates was lucky to be in a community with one of the computers in the world when he was a kid. AND he happened to be the kind of kid who'd SNEAK OUT OF BED at 2am and head to the computer lab where he could log in programming hours before sneaking back INTO bed before his mom caught him—wondering why he was always so tired.

Then, when the computers became affordable for mainstream use, guess who had logged his 10,000 hours and was in a position to capitalize on it? :)

Fascinating stuff.

On a related note, Michael Gelb, the author of *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci* ([see Notes](#)), talks about the research done on chess grandmasters, chess masters, and chess experts in his tape *Creative Genius*. It's amazing.

First, a little background: A chess master is so good that he can beat a room full of 25 chess experts—at one time!! A chess grandmaster is so good that he can beat a room full of 25 chess masters at one time?

The researchers wanted to know what made chess grandmasters grand masters. Was it superior IQ? Better memory? Better logic?

What they discovered was that the chess masters and grandmasters were, in fact, significantly more intelligent with significantly better memories, etc. than the chess experts. However, there was no significant difference between the grandmaster and the chess masters. They were, in essence, equally brilliant.

What then, distinguished the grandmasters and allowed them to so handily beat the masters if they had essentially the same intellectual capacity?

Passion.

The grandmasters were more passionate about chess. They loved it so much that they were always thinking about it—they lived, breathed, and ate chess—leading to a level of excellence that was far superior to any other players in the world.

So...

What are you most passionate about? Of what could you become a grandmaster?

My guess: The two are probably the same thing.

A MASTER APTITUDE

"To the degree that our emotions get in the way of or enhance our ability to think and plan, to pursue training for a distant goal, to solve problems and the like, they define the limits of our capacity to use our innate mental abilities, and so determine how we do in life. And to the degree to which we are motivated by feelings of enthusiasm and pleasure in what we do—or even by an optimal degree of anxiety—they propel us to accomplishment. It is in this sense that emotional intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, either facilitating or interfering with them."

Genius.

"Students who are anxious, angry, or depressed don't learn; people who are caught in these states do not take in information efficiently or deal with it well."

~ Daniel Goleman

"Hope was a better predictor of their first-semester grades than were their scores on the SAT."

~ Daniel Goleman

THIS is why emotional intelligence is a far better predictor of success in life than IQ. If you've got a super high IQ and super low control of your emotions, you simply WILL NOT manifest your highest potential. Period.

IMPULSES AND MARSHMALLOWS

"Just imagine you're four years old, and someone makes the following proposal: If you'll wait until after he runs an errand, you can have two marshmallows for a treat. If you can't wait until then, you can have only one—but you can have it right now. It is a challenge sure to try the soul of any four-year-old, a microcosm of the eternal battle between impulse and restraint, id and ego, desire and self-control, gratification and delay. Which of these choices a child makes is a telling test; it offers a quick reading not just of character, but of the trajectory that child will probably take through life."

Love that image.

Can you imagine being that four-year-old choosing between one marshmallow you can get RIGHT NOW and the two marshmallows you'd have to wait for!?!? :)

That's called impulse control, and, according to Goleman, it's big. In fact, he says this about it:

"There is perhaps no psychological skill more fundamental than resisting impulse."

What's fascinating is that how a child performed on this test of delaying gratification was "twice as powerful a predictor of what their SAT scores will be as is IQ at age four; IQ becomes a stronger predictor of SAT only after children learn to read."

That's amazing.

And begs the question: Why is that? Because we NEED to be able to regulate our impulses if we're going to perform well at anything that requires sustained attention—whether it's studying for a test, building a business, or cultivating our relationships.

The good news is that even if we couldn't delay our gratification as a four-year-old, we can LEARN to develop emotional intelligence. (And, that's pretty much what these PhilosophersNotes are all about!! :)

So, what's the #1 emotional intelligence skill you're ready to rock in your life? And, as always, is NOW a good time to develop the skill? :)

WORRYING & SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECIES

"The number of worries that people report while taking a test directly predicts how poorly they will do on it. The mental resources expended on one cognitive task—the worrying—simply detract from the resources available for processing other information; if we are preoccupied by worries that we're going to flunk the test we're taking, we have that much less attention to expend on figuring out the answers. Our worries become self-fulfilling prophecies, propelling us toward the very disaster they predict."

Well, that pretty much sums it up, eh?

Key take-away: Let's reduce our worry and apply that energy to the challenge at hand. :)

Gay Hendricks says this about worry in his great book *The Big Leap* (see Notes): "Worrying is usually a sign that we're Upper-Limiting. It is usually not a sign that we're thinking about something useful. The crucial sign that we're worrying unnecessarily is when we're worrying about something we have no control over. Worrying is useful only if it concerns a topic we can actually do something about, and if it leads to our taking positive action right away. All other worry is just Upper Limit noise, designed by our unconscious to keep us safely within our Zone of Excellence or Zone of Competence."

THE SCIENCE OF HOPE

“Hope, modern researchers are finding, does more than offer a bit of solace amid affliction; it plays a surprisingly potent role in life, offering an advantage in realms as diverse as school achievement and bearing up in onerous jobs. Hope, in a technical sense, is more than the sunny view that everything will turn out all right. Snyder defines it with more specificity as ‘believing you have both the will and the way to accomplish your goals, whatever they may be.’”

Brilliant.

This: “believing you have both the will and the way to accomplish your goals, whatever they may be” sounds a lot like Nathaniel Branden’s description of self-esteem in his classic, *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem* ([see Notes](#)). I love this line for his great book: “Self-esteem contemplates what needs to be done and says, ‘I can.’ Pride contemplates what has been accomplished and says, ‘I did.’”

So, how’s YOUR hope? Do you believe you have both the will and the way to accomplish your goals, whatever they may be?!? If yes, ROCK IT! If not, let’s keep on hitting the optimism muscle gym with these PhilosophersNotes and other “training” as we develop our EQ and show up more and more radiantly alive in this precious hero’s journey of ours!

B

Brian Johnson,
Heroic Philosopher CEO

If you liked this Note,
you’ll probably like...

[The How of Happiness](#)

[Happier](#)

[Everyday Enlightenment](#)

[The Big Leap](#)

[The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem](#)

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson is the Founder + CEO of Heroic. He’s spent half of the last 25 years as a Founder/CEO and the other half as a Philosopher. Brian loves integrating ancient wisdom and modern science to help YOU become the best, most heroic version of yourself so we can create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by 2051. Learn more at heroic.us.