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Chapter **1**

Feeling Smart

When most people think about what makes a smart person, they think of the school valedictorian — someone who's a whiz at math, flies through chemistry class, masters French and German, aces English literature, and tops the debate club. Being book smart means you can compute, retain, reformulate, and regurgitate all kinds of information.

Although being smart in these ways can help you get through school with flying colors, it may not be all it's cracked up to be. Smart people do get ahead in many ways, often finding academic success and opportunities for good jobs. You need to be book smart, for example, to get into most professional schools, such as medical, law, and engineering schools. But being book smart doesn't guarantee success and happiness in life.

Being emotionally intelligent brings you much closer to achieving personal and even professional fulfillment.

Defining Emotional Intelligence

Psychologists have proposed several definitions of emotional intelligence (EI), but the original intent was to understand how some people who are so smart in some ways (who have book smarts) can be so dumb in other ways (lacking street smarts). A person can have book smarts, but not street smarts, because of a lack of emotional awareness and control, or *emotional intelligence*.

For example, you can probably think of a politician who was brilliant and ready to change the world. Then, out of nowhere (or so it seemed) came a sexual scandal or charges of taking bribes. The politician couldn't manage their sexual appetite or greed well enough (or long enough) to realize a successful political career.

In the opposite situation, say that a student in school has a great deal of difficulty mastering math, grammar, and literature. They find getting a grade as high as a C a real challenge. But they have this huge network of friends, get invited to every party, are the trendiest kid in class, keep up with everything and everyone, and are known as a great kid by adults, as well. They make all the right life decisions, in spite of academic challenges.

Not everyone struggles in this area, and the great news is that the right kind of practice makes you better — you always have the potential to improve. You can spot emotionally intelligent people pretty quickly. They're the people who

- » Successfully manage difficult situations
- » Express themselves clearly
- » Gain respect from others
- » Influence other people
- » Convince other people to help them out
- » Keep cool under pressure
- » Recognize their emotional reactions to people or situations
- » Know how to say the right thing to get the right result
- » Manage themselves effectively when negotiating
- » Manage other people effectively when negotiating
- » Motivate themselves to get things done
- » Know how to be positive, even during difficult situations



REMEMBER

Although these behaviors don't fit within any formal definition of emotional intelligence, they represent typical behaviors for a person high in emotional intelligence. If the bar sounds high, don't fret — with practice, you can build on your existing skills to become more emotionally intelligent.

Getting a Handle on Your Emotions

More than most people think, people judge you based on your actions, rather than on how much you know. We value the people who care about others more than those who can memorize the periodic table. The trick is being able to control your behavior — and you can't change how you behave if you're unaware of your emotions. (For more information on how to become aware of your emotions, see Chapter 5.)

Sometimes, the easiest way to explain emotional intelligence is to use an anecdote, which I do often in this book.

Claudio, for example, is unaware of his emotions — and therefore isn't in control of his behavior — when he ambles into his office, throws his papers on his desk, and slumps into his chair. The look on his face could read, "Beware of dog."

His assistant, Jan, comes into his office, bringing him his usual cup of coffee.

"Here's your coffee, Claudio," she chirps.

Claudio just grunts and has a "get out of my hair" expression.

"Something wrong?" she asks.

"Not really. Could you please fix the Jackson file and get it ready?" he snorts.

Jan's shocked. He never treats her like that. She must have done something terribly wrong to be spoken to like that. She finds it hard to pay attention to her work for the rest of the morning. She can only think about what she must have done wrong.

Claudio is in a bad mood. He can't quite put his finger on what's wrong, and that makes him angrier. He has already alienated several people at work and two people at the coffee shop. Something's eating away at him, and he can feel it in his stomach.

Claudio really uses the wrong way of dealing with bad feelings. By wallowing in them, you don't move ahead. In the 1950s and 1960s, many psychologists felt that you had to fully experience your bad or negative feelings in order to get over them. Most psychologists and psychiatrists now know that theory isn't true. The most prominent therapies today stress using behavior modification approaches — such as cognitive-behavior therapy — as opposed to *catharsis*, releasing your anger.



Focusing on bad feelings tends to keep you in the same rut. Eventually, much of the pain of the bad feeling goes away, but in the long run, you can't move past the feeling without some understanding of why you're feeling the way you do.

For Claudio, his day starts out badly when his wife tells him, first thing in the morning, that their son failed an important exam at school. Not only is Claudio angry at his son for not passing, he's also angry at himself for not having been on top of his son's schoolwork. He was too busy at work to pay attention to what was going on. The bad news leads to an argument with his wife.

After trying to ignore his feelings, he leaves for work. Claudio has a close encounter with a red BMW that cuts him off when it enters the highway. He's enraged over the experience. Had it not been for the bad start to the morning, it probably wouldn't have bothered him so much.

By the time he gets to the office, everything's bothering him. The office waiting room is messy, nobody's available at the front reception desk, and he drops his keys on the way to his office. His mood is one big, angry blah.

Everyone in his path assumes that he's angry at them. Jan, for example, thinks of a number of things that she might have messed up and thus caused Claudio's anger.

If Claudio were more emotionally intelligent, he'd have the following advantages:

- » He'd know what each of his negative feelings was about:
 - Disappointment in his son
 - Anger for not paying enough attention to his son
 - Anger at arguing with his wife
 - Anger at the driver who cut him off
 - Anger at his office manager for not tidying up the reception area
 - Anger at his receptionist for not being at her desk
- » By identifying these emotions, he could contain them and keep them proportional, taking the following actions:
 - Let Jan know that he was upset about something that had nothing to do with her (allowing her to focus on her work).
 - Manage each emotion separately and not roll them all together into one big, undirected, angry ball.
 - Use his first 20 to 30 minutes in the office more constructively by cooling off his emotions through various coping strategies (see Chapter 6).

- Be more productive the rest of the day.
- Resolve how he plans to deal with his son in a constructive way when he gets home (instead of just being angry at him).
- Be better able, in general, to deal with small frustrations around the office.



REMEMBER

People can improve their emotional intelligence, but not everyone can be a superstar in all areas. Some people take to the skills like a duck takes to the water; and for others, changing is a struggle. Two important factors for people who can effectively change are their motivation and their willingness to practice.

BUILDING YOUR EMOTIONAL MUSCLE

Just like riding a bike, building your muscles in the gym, playing a musical instrument, or doing any other physical activity that requires synchronizing your brain and your body, you can hone your ability to manage your emotions and the emotions of others through practice.

Some people are naturals at emotional self-management and the management of other people's emotions. It's not too dissimilar from athletes, such as LeBron James, who are naturals in a certain sport. However, high levels of natural EI talent aren't widespread.

You may also identify limits to what you can accomplish through training. I know that as much as I practice my tennis, I'll never get to the level of Roger Federer. However, I'm good enough to stay on the court for the full two-hour doubles match with my friends, and we all improve the more often we play, especially when we play in a constructive, learning mode — as opposed to staying angry about that shot we just missed.

So, you can choose to go through life, day by day, without paying much attention to your emotions — or to anyone else's, for that matter. Being oblivious is an option, and many people seem to choose that route.

On the other hand, you can believe that improving your emotional intelligence is important stuff and make a commitment to improve your skills in this area. Ideally, then, take the time (something like three to four times a week, for a half hour or so) when you can devote your efforts to becoming more emotionally aware and in control. You're off to a great start just by reading this book. Complete the activities that appear throughout the book to put yourself well on your way. Just remember, practice lead to improvement.

Understanding the Emotions of Others

Social intelligence is a term sometimes used to describe a person's ability to understand how other people feel and, to some extent, to manage the emotions and behavior of those people. If you live like a hermit, you probably don't care what other people feel and think. Or if you're a shepherd and spend most of your time with sheep, you don't find much use for emotional intelligence. (Although you might like to know how the sheep feel once in a while.)

Because most people in the world have to interact with others on a regular basis, social intelligence can help make those interactions more satisfying. By knowing how other people around you are feeling, you can

- » Maintain good relationships
- » Encourage a person to feel good about you
- » Ask a favor from a person without alienating them
- » Sell a person on an idea or a product
- » Calm a person down
- » Be a helpful person to others in need
- » Have a network of friends and easily find others with whom you can do mutually satisfying activities

Consider this story of two men, Danny and Wilfred, who have contrasting levels of social intelligence.

Danny's plane was delayed for over five hours. He takes a cab to his hotel in Boston, where he's attending a convention. Unfortunately, he didn't guarantee his room reservation, and the hotel's now completely full.

"What do you expect me to do?" he screams at the reservation clerk.

"I'm terribly sorry, sir, but I can call another hotel a few miles away and see if they have a vacancy," the young clerk replies.

"Absolutely not!" he shouts, attracting attention from across the lobby. "This is where I made my reservation, and this is where I'm staying."

Needless to say, Danny alienates the one person in his world who can make a difference for him at this point in time. The clerk, familiar with people like Danny, stands her ground. In his flurry of anger, Danny eventually has to find another hotel on his own.

Wilfred, who overhears the entire performance, is in the same situation. However, he tries a completely different tact.

"It must be really tough for you dealing with people like that all day," he calmly says to the clerk.

"Not really, and it doesn't happen all that often." She smiles.

"Well, I'm really sorry to bother you, but I was on the same plane that was delayed," Wilfred tells her. "Was there anything available? I'd even sleep in a closet somewhere if you could find one."

She laughs. "Well, let me see what I can do."

After about five minutes of computer clicking, she looks up and reports, "If you're willing to wait a few hours, I can get you a room. It's actually on the concierge floor and comes with breakfast and hors d'oeuvres. I can give it to you at the same price. You can check your luggage and wait in the bar, if you'd like."

"Wow, that sounds great. Thanks," he replies, very grateful.

When dealing with others, you often don't have to give very much in order to get the result you want. Paying attention to others and managing your own emotions can have tremendous payoffs.

Emotional intelligence isn't just about being nice to people. You also have to recognize another person's perspective and use your emotions appropriately. So, in some cases, emotional intelligence means that you must be tough with the other person or show them that you're frustrated. Emotional intelligence is about being able to read the other person and use your emotions appropriately, as described in the following sections.

Influencing a person's emotions

After you figure out how to read how someone's feeling, you're in a better position to influence the way they feel.

- » You may want to influence someone's emotions to convince them about the virtue of an idea, concept, plan, or product. Sometimes, of course, you may convince someone for their own good. You may want to change the behavior of someone you love for their own benefit.
- » At other times, you might want to put a depressed or angry person in a better frame of mind so that you can deal with them more effectively. Or you may want to engage in some cooperative activity with that person.

- » You may also want to figure out how to read other people's feelings so that you can better understand the other person. Being able to understand others comes with personal benefits. Think of it as a form of giving. For example, just by understanding the type of bad mood I'm in is enough for you to empathize with me and know I prefer to be left alone, that I don't appreciate being questioned, that I might enjoy a cup of hot tea, and so on. You may be helping someone simply by understanding them.

You need to be allied with someone you're trying to influence. If you both have the same goal, you can more easily work together to reach that goal. So, if you do anything to antagonize or aggravate someone, they become less likely to listen to you. If, on the other hand, you can show that you both have the same goal or end-game in mind, then they have at least one reason to go along with you. After all, you both have the same interest at heart.

Following the Golden Rule

Being nice to strangers can do more than score you points. At Oxford University, a math professor named Martin Nowak looked at this issue scientifically. He and his colleagues found that doing a good turn for a stranger today increases the chances that someone will do a good turn for you in the future.

The example they gave goes like this: If a man goes to a bar and buys a stranger a beer, it's generally expected that he gets a beer back in exchange, referred to as *reciprocity*. However, if a man goes to a bar and buys a round of beers for the house, with no expectation of being reciprocated, this random act of kindness is likely to be rewarded in the future. The theory holds that word will get around about the man's goodwill, so others will eventually treat him well.

The researchers mapped out various scenarios in computer models. Their model basically confirmed their theory, that being nice (even randomly with strangers) can pay off with future rewards.



REMEMBER

How do you know when to be nice and when to be tough? You can't easily generalize about this topic, but being nice usually pays more dividends. Like your grandmother may have said, "You attract more bees with honey than with vinegar." Here are some situations in which you can be more effective by being tough:

- » When someone is trying to take advantage of you, such as during a negotiation

- » When you need to take a strong position on an issue so that you can convince people of your sincerity
- » To stop an acquaintance from making inappropriate jokes by letting them know how serious you are about the subject

Be tough in moderation — don't overuse it.

Applying Emotional Intelligence at Work

One of the places that you can work on your emotional skills is in the workplace. Many years ago, before the concept of emotional intelligence was widely known, a senior executive at a large company told me that emotions have no place at work. You simply left half your brain at home and brought the other half with you to the office. Fortunately, most people's attitudes have changed since then.

The workplace, unfortunately, is a stressful place for many people worldwide, according to interviews that I've done and surveys that my organization (Multi-Health Systems Inc.) and others have carried out. We've helped pioneer the research that brought emotional intelligence to the workplace, and we found out much about how emotional intelligence can increase productivity, improve teamwork, and make you feel better about your work and your workplace along the way. You can improve your emotional intelligence skills by using some of the activities in this book at work.

The benefits of emotional intelligence at work

Based on a number of studies that Multi-Health Systems and others have carried out, increasing your emotional intelligence at work has many benefits, including the ability to

- » Better manage stress at work.
- » Improve your relationships with coworkers.
- » Deal more effectively with your supervisor.
- » Be more productive.

- » Be a better manager and/or leader.
- » Better manage your work priorities.
- » Be a better team player.



Because people who have high emotional intelligence are more in tune with the people and situations in the workplace, they generally get comparatively greater pay raises, according to a study by Stéphane Côté and his colleagues at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

The advantages of an emotionally intelligent workplace

After seeing many individuals in business settings improve in emotional intelligence (EI), I was surprised to see that the organizations themselves didn't necessarily change for the better. That's when I came up with the concept of the emotionally intelligent organization. An *emotionally intelligent organization* is an organization that can successfully and efficiently cope with change and accomplish its goals, while being responsive and sensitive to its people, customers, suppliers, networks, and society.

If you look closely at some of today's most successful companies, you can find many have been selected as Best Companies to Work For in various competitions. One example of a company that uses emotional intelligence organizationally is LinkedIn, the premier social media network for professionals. They start out by hiring the best people, not just technically, but with many of the emotional intelligence skills I refer to throughout this book, such as independence, assertiveness, and interpersonal relationship skills. Google realizes that emotionally intelligent people can manage themselves and require less training and supervision to get the job done.

Emotionally intelligent people also encourage their managers to take risks. LinkedIn doesn't frown upon taking a risk on something, even if it doesn't work out. Of course, the company expects people to be motivated and well-meaning, and giving employees responsibility for and control over their work pays off big time in generating an engaged workforce. Google's profits are nothing to sneeze at, either.

To achieve emotional intelligence in the workplace, you must consider three factors (see Chapter 12 for more details):

» **The people:** When dealing with staff, employers must ensure that they're

- *Hiring the right people:* Too often, organizations hire people for their technical skills alone. People who have emotional intelligence tend to be low maintenance, productive, and engaged.
- *Putting the right people in the right jobs:* Companies that match specific EI skills to the job get better performance.
- *Encouraging supportive coworkers or teams:* People who have high EI have good interpersonal skills and are more supportive of teammates.
- *Fostering an environment where coworkers can socialize and develop friendships:* Research has shown that having a best friend at work makes you significantly more productive. You also have someone to sound off to when work problems arise.
- *Training managers and supervisors:* People often receive promotions to management positions because of their technical or sales skills. But being a good manager means knowing how to be a good coach to others.
- *Providing great leadership:* Good leadership skills are directly related to EI skills, such as empathy, assertiveness, self-regard, and independence.

» **The work:** Critical to an emotionally satisfying job are

- *Having challenging work:* People who feel challenged at work, such as through setting and attaining specific goals, feel more motivated and engaged.
- *Not being overloaded or underworked:* Too much work leads to burnout, but too little work leads to boredom. Both emotions can make an employee underproductive.
- *Having the right tools to do the job:* Properly equipping people to do their jobs makes them feel better about their work and the organization.
- *Being fairly compensated:* It's not how much you pay someone that's important, it's whether they perceive their pay as fair. People are motivated by being paid fairly for their work.
- *Reducing low-value work:* Low-value or irrelevant work saps the drive from people who love the work they're supposed to be doing.
- *Being satisfied with the work:* People who love their work do a better job.

» **The purpose:** Emotionally satisfied employees perceive a reason for their work, such as

- *Seeing how the work benefits the community, society, country, or world:* This view further engages people in their jobs and helps organizational leaders win the hearts and minds of their staff.
- *Knowing what the company stands for:* By being aligned with the organization's mission and values, employees have a better fit emotionally with their work.



REMEMBER

Emotionally intelligent workplaces are productive, socially responsible, and profitable, and they attract the best talent. However, an emotionally intelligent workplace requires leaders who are committed to developing this environment.

Pursuing Successful Family Interactions

If you want to have a loving and meaningful relationship with your family, developing emotional skills — such as empathy and emotional self-management — can help you develop these deeper relationships.

Every interaction gives you an opportunity to improve your emotional skills at home. When was the last time that you could have been more considerate to your spouse? When could you have spent more time with one of your children?



TIP

Think of each interaction as a potential investment in the strength of your relationship. You can make deposits or debits. With each deposit (each positive interaction), you're building the bonds of trust and love in the relationship. With each debit (each negative interaction), you're weakening those bonds.

Each day, you have many interactions with your family members. By being more aware of how these interactions affect your long-term relationship, you can start to build better bonds within your family or improve the closeness of your family bonds.

Follow these basic steps to demonstrate your ability to accept your family members, to show how important they are to you, and to care about their well-being — to strengthen the bonds that tie your family together:

1. Become more aware of your own emotions during interactions that you have with family members.

What puts you in a bad mood or ticks you off? When do you get into a good mood and feel those warm fuzzies? You need to understand your reactions to situations and interactions at home to start to be able to manage them appropriately.

2. Manage (meaning control) your reactions to situations and family members.

Be patient with your child. Don't get angry with your spouse. Getting a handle on your emotional responses can pay big dividends at home: your family's confidence, trust, and love.

3. Listen and empathize with your family members.

Putting yourself in someone else's shoes allows you to think twice before thoughtlessly reacting to others. Why did your child make that request? What makes your spouse nag about that situation?

Seeing the other person's side can enable you to get a grip on your emotions, think about where the other person is coming from, and then respond constructively — lowering the temperature of a heated issue.

