HOW TO PRACTICE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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As a starting point when discussing any conceptual model, it is important to remember the adage of British statistician George Box, Ph.D. (1953, Mathematics Genealogy, University of London) who wrote the famous line: "All models are wrong, some are useful" (1976, p. 972). His point was that we should focus more on whether something can be applied to everyday life in a useful manner rather than debating endlessly whether an answer is correct in all cases.

Daniel Goleman

Daniel Goleman, Ph.D. is an author, psychologist, and science journalist who popularized the concept of emotional intelligence. He completed his Ph.D. (1974) at Harvard University's Department of Social Relations, which was a program that combined psychology, anthropology, and sociology. His doctoral dissertation focused on the use of meditation as an intervention in stress arousal. As part of his post-doctoral research, he studied in India and wrote his first book, *The Varieties of the Meditative Experience* (Goleman, 1977), based on his travels in India and Sri Lanka.

Goleman returned to Harvard as a visiting lecturer. During the 1970s, his course on the psychology of consciousness was popular. His Harvard mentor, psychologist David McClelland, Ph.D., recommended Goleman for a job with the popular magazine, *Psychology Today*. In 1984, he was recruited by *The New York Times*. He received the Career Achievement award for Excellence in the Media (1984) from the American Psychological Association. It was in Goleman's (1998) *Working with Emotional Intelligence* that he developed the thesis that non-cognitive skills can matter as much as IQ for workplace success.

Emotional Intelligence

Goleman's model of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is often described by its five core components (or "realms"), which are further grouped into four domains (or "quadrants") for a more structured framework. As presented in Goleman's (1995) book *Emotional Intelligence,* here are the five realms:

1. Self-Awareness refers to the ability to recognize and understand our own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and values—as well as their effect on other people. In other words, it is related to knowing how we feel and—at times more importantly—knowing how our emotions and our actions can affect the people around us. Being self-aware also means having an accurate, clear picture of our strengths and weaknesses—combined with a sense of humility.

Self-awareness can be practiced in several ways: (1) Keeping a diary or journal can increase our introspection and insight into ourselves, (2) Paying attention to our body language can help us see what we may be communicating (unintentionally or otherwise) through our non-verbal actions, and (3) Slowing down or taking time to pause can improve our ability to respond rather than just react. Slowing down gives time to take a personal inventory and examine why we experience strong emotional reactions ("triggers") to certain people, places, and things. No matter what the situation we are in and no matter how powerless we are in it, we can always choose how we will respond. As a general principle, it is better to respond rather than to react.

2. Self-Regulation (or Self-Management) refers to maintaining cognitive, behavioral, and emotional control. It is the ability to control or redirect disruptive emotions, impulses, and actions—and to adapt flexibly to circumstances that change. Self-regulation is all about maintaining control—over ourselves.[1] People who regulate themselves effectively rarely make impulsive or emotionally-reactive decisions. Self-regulators do not compromise their values, violate ethical standards, stereotype people, or verbally attack other.

Self-regulation can be practiced in several ways: (1) Identifying and knowing our core values, (2) Holding ourselves accountable, (3) Admitting when we are wrong, (4) Remembering that with any emotion, "This too shall pass," and (5) Practicing being calm on the outside regardless of how we are feeling on the inside (i.e., "Fake it 'til we make it"). By acting "as if" we are calm and patient, we actually become calmer and more patient. [2]

3. Motivation refers to a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status (intrinsic motivation), and a tendency to pursue goals with energy, persistence, and perseverance. In this context, the word *passion* does not mean something that makes us "jump for joy." As clarified by behavioral economist and university teacher Rose Fres Fausto (2021), "Passion always includes some sacrifice and it is not something we go out looking for hidden in a secret valley. It is something we discover in ourselves as we engage, as we do the work."

Motivation is related not only to setting goals but also to working consistently and persistently toward achieving the objectives that will lead to attainment of these goals. As one behavioral psychologist has observed, "Almost anyone can set goals, but not everyone can achieve them. As seen a few days or weeks after every New Year's Eve, goals are more easily set than met. One of the main reasons that people fail to achieve their goals is because they fail to define their *objectives*, which are the concrete, specific steps that one takes to achieve a goal. Whereas goals are often more future-oriented, objectives are more present-oriented. Objectives consist of the specific things that a person does each day to make progress toward the goal" (Doverspike, 2007, p. 1).

Motivation can be practiced in several ways: (1) Re-examining what we are doing and why we are doing what we are doing in terms of our career or our calling,[3] and (2) Being hopeful and focusing on something positive—no matter how bad things may appear—because motivated people are usually optimistic regardless of the challenges they face.

4. Empathy refers to the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people and treat them with respect to their emotional reactions. In contrast to self-awareness, the cognitive component of empathy requires "other-awareness." As a skill set, empathy involves the cognitive ability of perspective-taking and being able to mentally put ourselves in someone else's situation. Empathy often requires imagination, in which we strive to imagine how another person might feel in a situation. Empathic people often help develop and encourage others. Empathic people also challenge others who are acting unfairly, provide constructive feedback, and listen to those who deserve to be heard.

Empathy can be practiced in several ways: (1) Putting ourselves in someone else's position, (2) Paying attention to body language of others, and (3) Responding to feelings of others in a positive manner (i.e., validating the other person's feelings rather than demeaning, discounting, or dismissing their feelings).

5. Social Skills (or Relationship Management) involves proficiency in managing relationships and building networks to move people in desired directions. Social skills are the basis for good communication. People with well-developed social skills are often as open to hearing bad news as good news from others. Socially-skilled people are able to influence others, motivate others, and to get others to support their ideas and actions. Those with good social skills are effective at managing change and resolving conflicts diplomatically. They often set examples by their behavior. In other words, they not only talk the talk, but they walk the walk.

Social skills can be practiced in several ways: (1) Learning conflict resolution skills, (2) Improving our communication skills, and (3) Learning how to provide others with authentic and genuine praise—not flattering or patronizing statements (Doverspike, 2008). Learning how to encourage and praise others is an art as well as a science. When it comes to connecting with others, building bridges is more effective difficult than building walls.

Four Domains

Goleman et al. (2002) later refined his original model. While retaining the five components that were outlined in his original model, Goleman sometimes simplified the model by focusing on four domains (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management), which were categorized as Personal Competence (how we manage ourselves) and Social Competence (how we handle relationships). Table 1 illustrates five components of emotional intelligence grouped into four domains.

Table 1
Five EQ Components Grouped into Four Domains

Domain	Competence	Component(s)
Self-Awareness	Personal	Self-Awareness
Self-Management	Personal	Self-Regulation Motivation
Social Awareness	Social	Empathy
Relationship Management	Social	Social Skills

Note. Adapted from Goleman et al. (2002).

Notes

1. Executive functioning skills, which are neurologically based on prefrontal cortical functions, are a set of skills that are needed in all areas of life and they are especially relevant in terms of self-awareness and self-regulation.

Psychologist Thomas E. Brown, Ph.D. spent decades studying prefrontal cortical functions. He also developed the Brown Attention Deficit Disorder Scales (Brown, 1996), an assessment instrument designed to measure clusters of symptoms associated with ADD: (1) Activation (organizing, prioritizing, and activating to work), (2) Attention (focusing, sustaining, and shifting attention to tasks), (3) Effort (monitoring and self-regulating action, and sustaining energy and effort), (4) Affect (managing frustration, modulating emotions, and managing affective interference), and (5) Memory (utilizing working memory and accessing recall).

Three decades after he developed his widely used assessment instrument, Brown's (2006) model continues to influence clinicians and educators. The latest model includes six major prefrontal cortical functions, as well as associated tasks, that are affected in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): (1) Activation (organizing, prioritizing, and activating to work), (2) Focus (focusing, sustaining, and shifting attention to tasks), (3) Effort (regulating alertness, sustaining effort, processing speed), (4) Emotion (managing frustration and regulating emotions), (5) Memory (utilizing working memory and accessing recall), and (6) Action (monitoring and self-regulating action).

Linda Karanzalis (2022), a former special education teacher in the areas of ADHD and learning disabilities, describes eight executive functions that are important in behavioral management, social-emotional learning, and social skills training. Her list has considerable overlap with Brown's (2006) categories.

Impulse Control involves the ability to think before speaking, resist temptation, and to think about choices and consequences of behaviors before taking action. It is the basis of taking a pause and responding, "Let me think about it."

Flexible Thinking involves the ability to think about different ways to solve problems, adjust to new situations, learn from mistakes, cope with routine changes, try new things, switch from one task to another, and learn new things. It involves the ability to change one's behavior in response to unexpected changes in others. It is the neural basis of the adage, "Think outside the box."

Emotional Control involves the ability to regulate emotions, choosing which emotions are appropriate in any given situation, and maintaining control over emotional expression when under pressure. It is the basis of the idea of acting calm or patient.

Working Memory involves the ability to follow instructions, pay attention, and use relevant information while in the middle of an activity. It involves maintaining focus on relevant information while using it.

Self-Monitoring is the ability to have self-awareness of how one is doing in the moment to make adjustments of actions/behaviors to the current situation. It is the basis of the 10th Step of Alcoholics Anonymous: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Planning and Prioritizing is the ability to plan daily tasks to meet short and long-term responsibilities.

Task Initiation is the ability to motivate oneself to begin tasks by directing behaviors and actions. It may involve taking the first step of action to get started on a task, in contrast to procrastinating and not getting started.

Organization is the ability to gather and keep track of information and belongings.

Various models of executive cortical functions have more similarities than differences. To keep it simple, there are basically three sets of skills that interact and work together:

Working Memory is the ability to temporarily remember and manipulate information for use in ongoing cognitive tasks, such as remembering a password, phrase, or phone number long enough to enter it.

Inhibition (or Inhibitory Control or Self-Control) is the ability to suppress unwanted actions, impulses, or thoughts in order to choose a more adaptive or goal-directed behavior. This ability allows a person to stop an automatic or impulsive reaction and take a pause before responding. It is the neural basis of the adage, "Respond rather than react."

Cognitive Flexibility (or Shifting) is the ability to shift attention and switch between different tasks, rules, or sets of thoughts in response to a changing environment or a new problem-solving strategy.

2. In one of his classic books, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, Dale Carnegie (1888—1955) makes this observation: "If you act "*as if*" you are interested in your job, that bit of acting will tend to make your interest real. It will also tend to decrease your fatigue, your tensions, and your worries" (Carnegie, 1985, pp. 259–260).

3. Rev. Dr. John Calvin Maxwell (b. 1947), author and pastor, makes this distinction between a career and a calling:

"Some people have a career and some people have a calling. There is a difference. One is not right and the other wrong; it's just that one is more significant than the other. I always look at a career as something I do for myself; a calling is something I do for others. A calling is bigger than me; a career is something that I can handle personally. I think sometimes our life begins with a career and, as we begin to be good in a certain area, we sometimes get a calling—a higher calling—to do something bigger and better than we ever imagined. I think with a career you can retire; with a calling you never retire. People ask me when I am going to stop, and I say, 'I'm not going to stop—not 'til I die. I mean, why would I?' Every day, what do I do? I add value to people. It's not a career; it's a calling. I don't do it for money; I do it for the return of adding value to people. I think it's possible to have a career and, with that, have a calling. I think it's possible to have a calling and not even have a career. But here's what I do know: People with a calling have found a purpose greater than themselves. And that is where fulfillment comes in. Fulfillment is the result of doing something not for yourself but for others—that you know truly made a significant, tangible difference in their lives. Once you have tasted significance, trust me, success will never satisfy you again."
(John Maxwell, 2020, Time 00:00–01:37).

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John Calvin Maxwell (b. 1947) is an American author, speaker, and pastor who has written many books, most of which focus on leadership. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. He currently resides in South Florida with his wife, Margaret. He is an ordained minister in the Wesleyan Church.

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