Developing Emotional Intelligence

**What you need to know**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is how somebody manages themselves to be both personally and interpersonally effective. Therefore, EI directly relates to an individual’s effectiveness and performance at work.

Over the last two decades, researchers have found EI to be a critical factor in distinguishing high performers and an important determinant of effective leadership and life success.

We can go about our working lives ignoring our emotions, unaware of how we really are or what is driving our behaviour. Or, by choosing to develop our EI, we can identify patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that are helpful and contribute to successful performance.

Emotional Intelligence is not soft or difficult to define; EI is a psychobiological process that people experience and it can be measured and developed.

**Emotional Intelligence, Personality and IQ are different**

Personality is concerned with certain characteristics, traits or preferences that are relatively stable, for example introversion and extroversion. In this way, personality can be used to describe what a person typically does, i.e. people with a preference for extroversion may have a tendency to talk more in groups. In practice, people with different personality styles achieve equally competent results but do so in a different manner. For example, having a preference for introversion does not make one ineffective at communicating in groups but may require different self-management (EI) strategies.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is concerned with cognitive intellectual thinking – IQ has also been found to be linked to job performance. However, IQ smarts do not always translate into effective performance. In the real world of deadlines, challenges, competition and targets, people low on emotional and social abilities are less able to manage their emotional state and suffer impaired cortical functioning – if you can’t manage your emotions, it is very difficult to use your intellect.

Both personality and IQ are relatively fixed resources upon which we draw in order to be effective. Neither leaves much room for change or development.

Emotional Intelligence is concerned with how you can get the most from your resources to be more effective at what you do in your environment. Emotional Intelligence is what you do in the present moment; it is about being emotionally intelligent.

**Emotional Intelligence can be developed**

Insights into neuroplasticity reveal that people can continually learn and develop. With continued focus and practice we can develop lasting new connections in the brain and make sustainable change.

Emotional Intelligence is a combination of attitudes, habits and skills which can be acquired, developed and enhanced.

Of the many thousands of Emotional Intelligence development programmes we have delivered, typically individuals make an 18% sustained improvement in their overall Emotional Intelligence.
The success of our Emotional Intelligence development programmes is based upon a number of key factors:

**Accurate diagnostics**
Raising self-awareness and understanding your own Emotional Intelligence is a fundamental starting point. The *Emotional Intelligence Profile* gives individuals an accurate assessment of their current Emotional Intelligence and provides a developmental route map for making sustainable change.

**Addressing underlying attitudes**
To change behaviour people must shift their attitudes. For example, teaching a person to say no assertively will not last for long if underneath they still believe they are inadequate.

**Applied neuropsychology**
Feelings are the primary driver of behaviour, therefore to change behaviour it is necessary to change the feelings behind them. Often, people know what they should do but don’t do it in practice. There is increasing research explaining how the ‘emotional’ and ‘thinking’ parts of the brain learn differently; our programmes address both.

**Making change experiential**
Change is experiential and interactive. Developing Emotional Intelligence requires both rational and emotional centres of the brain. Development that is carried out collectively is often far more powerful as it provides immediate feedback, and a sense of context and reality to the experience.

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