
Emotional Intelligence - Self Awareness

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Abstract

Self-awareness is the building block to which all elements of Emotional Intelligence are built upon. It is important to gain a full understanding of our emotions and how they relate to others in order to effectively make decisions both in and out of the workplace. By developing self-awareness, one will be more prepared to make decisions that will not only increase one's emotional satisfaction, but also the satisfaction of the people one interacts with.

Emotional intelligence is based on the idea that one must first become aware of our emotions before one is able to alter one's behavior for better results. Studies show that managers who maintain a high level of self-awareness possess more aspects of EQ and are therefore rated as more effective by both superiors and subordinates than those who are not self-aware. Knowledge about the nature of one's personality is vital to making sound decisions. In other words, it's the ability to take a step back from the situation to become aware of what's happening rather than become immersed in it and lose control.

Self-awareness is not getting carried away with emotions, but rather objectively identifying them in order to take control of the subsequent actions resulting from these emotions. By acknowledging our emotions, one can manage them, deal with them and then move on. This is very difficult for some people to do. It is much easier at times to just ignore, deny or rationalize your emotions. It is crucial, however, for us to develop an understanding of what we are feeling in order to use our emotions intelligently.

This paper emphasizes on comparing the three gurus on their views of Self Awareness and also finding the similarities of their views on the topic.

Self Awareness – The 1st Component of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Being emotionally intelligent is another way of being smart. Self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social awareness are the five basic components of emotional intelligence [1].

The following steps describe the five components of emotional intelligence at work. Goleman is the leading expert in emotional intelligence and has authored three books on the subject, "Emotional Intelligence" "Primal Leadership" and "Working With Emotional Intelligence."

Self-awareness. The ability to recognize and understand personal moods and emotions. It drives their effect on others. Hallmarks of self-awareness include self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and a self-deprecating sense of humor.

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Self-regulation. The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, and the propensity to suspend judgment and to think before acting. Hallmarks include trustworthiness and integrity; comfort with ambiguity; and openness to change.

Motivation. A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money and status. A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence. Hallmarks include a strong drive to achieve, optimism even in the face of failure, and organizational commitment.

Empathy. The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people. A skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions. Hallmarks include expertise in building and retaining talent, cross-cultural sensitivity, and service to clients and customers.

Social skills. Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, and an ability to find common ground and build rapport. Hallmarks of social skills include effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, and expertise building and leading teams.

Self Awareness can be defined [2] as being aware of both - our mood and our thoughts about that mood. Basically it is being aware of our moods as we are having them. Self aware people have higher degree of sophistication about their emotional lives. These people are extremely sure of their own boundaries and are as a result in good health. They have a positive attitude on life. Self aware people get into bad mood at times but they don't ruminate & obsess about it and they are able to get out of it sooner.

Emotions can tell us through instant feedback whether a decision or act is right for us. What we call "gut feelings" or "intuition" are feelings that have been formed by experiences in our past. By tuning into these gut feelings, we are able to use information about similar situations that we have experienced in the past. This is particularly important in recognizing what is important to you, knowing what you want and how you feel in different situations. Gut feelings can identify your true intentions in a situation. If you feel happy, satisfied, or content with a decision, it is a good indication that your decision coincided with your true intention. However, if you start to resent, or feel uneasy in a situation, you probably did not go with

your true intention. Self-awareness allows you to connect with emotions, thoughts, and actions [3].

Emotions are not just psychological impulses; they are also physiological "feelings." One way of identifying an emotion is to understand where in your body you feel that emotion. For example, think about where in your body you feel fear. Does your stomach ache, or do parts of your body grow tight? What about love or anger [4]? If you can become aware of where these emotions physically occur in your body, it will be easier for you to identify them and act accordingly.

Along with becoming emotionally aware, you must also learn to become aware of your actions. One way to do this is by examining how you make appraisals. Appraisals are all of the different impressions, interpretations, evaluations, and expectations you have about yourself, others, and situations [5]. These appraisals are largely influenced by your personal filter. It takes everything you gather as sensory data, information gathered through your five senses, and interprets it through a filter of information already stored in you mind. People with a high self-awareness are conscious of the filtering process and how it affects their perceptions [6]. Negative appraisals can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. However, being aware of this allows you to change your attitudes and actions. Becoming aware of your thoughts allows you to understand how they influence your feelings, actions and reactions thus allowing you to alter them accordingly.

- Shortcomings in Emotional Intelligence come from habit learned early on. Self-awareness is the first step to identifying and changing your behaviors. In order to change a habit, you must first notice when you're falling into it, and second, practice a different response. "By being aware, you can do a little better each time you try" [7].

e.g. Once a lady had taken her son to a park and there despite severe warnings the son let himself loose and started climbing some dangerous rocks. Those rocks had many dangerous edges and one wrong step would mean that the child would have fallen and hurt himself badly. The lady started screaming at the top of her voice. With such screaming the boy would have easily toppled and fallen. He got scared and sat on the rock. He was beginning to climb rock. One teenager

climbed up & got the boy down. The lady slapped the boy hard and then dragged the boy out of the park: Much to the shock and amazement of the people at the park.

If the lady was aware of her emotions and controlled it such confusion was uncalled for. The boy was safe and unhurt, so there has no reason for the anger on the part of the lady. Knowing oneself is a very important aspect in this case.

Many such incidents have been noted in everyday life. Boss – Subordinate, Mother-in-law – daughter-in-law, husband – wife relationship would have been better if this aspect of emotional intelligence would have been addressed.

The Conscious Mind:

If we try to hold our left hand in our right hand, then it is easy enough. But, if we try to hold our right hand in our right hand itself, then it is not easy at all. Well, the message to be conveyed is that understanding human behavior begins with *understanding the mind* [8]. It is a very difficult task because we have to use our mind to understand our mind. That is like trying to hold our right hand in our right hand itself. It is necessarily a difficult and inaccurate process. 'Difficult, but possible'.

What is Self Awareness

Definition of Self Awareness

Self awareness [9] is defined as understanding what is important to you, understanding how you experience things, knowing what you want, knowing how you feel, and knowing how you come across to others.

Emotional awareness as per Goleman [10] is knowing what emotions you are feeling and why, and understanding the links between your feelings and your actions.

Self-awareness is the first component of emotional intelligence. Goleman [11] defines it as "It means having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. People with strong self-awareness are neither overly critical nor

unrealistically hopeful. Rather, they are honest with themselves and with others".

People who have a high degree of self-awareness recognize how their feelings affect them, other people, and their job performance. Thus, a self-aware person who knows that tight deadlines bring out the worst in them, plans their time carefully and gets their work done well in advance. Another person with high self-awareness will be able to work with a demanding client. They will understand the client's *impact on their mood and the deeper reasons for their frustration*.

Self-awareness extends to a person's understanding of his/her values and goals. Someone who is highly self-aware knows where he/she is headed and why. For example, he/she will be firm in turning down a job offer that is tempting financially but does not fit with his/her principles or long-term goals. A person who lacks self-awareness is apt to make decisions that bring on inner turmoil by treading on buried values. The decisions of self-aware people mesh with their values, consequently, they often find work to be energizing.

How can one recognize self-awareness, according to Goleman? [12] First and foremost, it shows itself as candor and an ability to assess oneself realistically. People with high self-awareness are able to speak accurately and openly although not necessarily effusively or confessionally about their emotions and impact they have on their work. Self-awareness can also be identified during performance reviews. Self-aware people know and are comfortable talking about their limitations and strengths, and they often demonstrate a thirst for constructive criticism. By contrast, people with low self-awareness interpret the message that they need to improve as a threat or a sign of failure.

Self-aware people can also be recognized by their self-confidence [13]. They have a firm grasp of their capabilities and are less likely to set themselves up to fail by, for example, overstretching on assignments. They know, too, when to ask for help and the risks they take on the job are calculated. They *will not ask for a challenge that they know they can not handle alone*. They will play to their strengths. "People who assess themselves honestly, that is, self-

aware people, excel as managers or leaders in their organization" [14].

Something worth doing is worth doing right. There are many people in this world that believe in this attitude. They take it to work, school, and play. But suppose the individual is facing a challenge that is just too great. A challenge that is welcome, but just too overwhelming for the single individual to accomplish, by themselves. In a study done by Susan Wheelan and Donald Murphy [15], they state that, "More work is conducted by groups of employees not for frivolous reasons but because it is the only way to accomplish tasks. Too much knowledge and too many different skills are required for any individual to successfully accomplish such complex task alone." This is the basic idea of why we form teams. Work teams are formed to increase productivity, complete complex tasks, and solve elaborate problems.

In today's fast paced world, information and communication is moving at the speed of light. Companies need to solve problem, produce goods, and provide services faster and more efficiently than we did ten years ago. If companies are not able to compete and stay ahead of the competition they will not succeed [16]. Companies are using work team because the problems that the companies face are more complex than they used to be. Instead of wasting individual talents at one particular task for one employee, the companies have found it is more efficient to pull individual employees into teams to unit their talents. Each individual member brings his or her own set of unique skills and knowledge to the table. For example, some people are better at clerical work than others. Not only is a clerical worker better at their job than a non-clerical work, but they may also possess valuable skills, such as word-processing, organizational skills, and research skills. These may be very valuable to a team that has to produce a document or company handbook.

Additionally, each team member brings his or her own shared resources. Some members may have access to computers, tools, copy machines, supplies, or conference rooms. One will be surprised at the availability of resources at one's disposal when one works on a team with fellow employees in different departments. An individual may only have certain resources available to them. Accessing new resources

may only add to the frustration of having to complete a big project.

Another reason why teams are becoming more popular in the work place is for problem solving. First, everyone thinks differently. Secondly, we all have different experiences, and upbringings. Finally, we all have different outlooks on life. When put different people together to solve a problem, and add up all the variables, you can generate a lot more ideas on how to solve the problem than the individual person would.

As we move into the new millennium you will find a more integrated business environment. In any particular company, employees will all be connected. Work teams will become a dominant force in the work place. Working with people and interpersonal communication will become increasingly more important skills for the individual to possess. In addition, with the rise of technology and the international markets it has become more important for the company solve problems and complete tasks faster and better than it has in the past decade. This is why the work team has become more important in the business environment and why we form them.

Self awareness involves having an accurate understanding of how you behave; how other people perceive you; recognizing how you respond to others; being sensitive to your feelings; intents and general communication style at any given moment; and being able to accurately disclose this awareness to others. Here are some examples of self-awareness:

- Know when you are thinking negatively.
- Know when your "self talk" is helpful
- Know when you are becoming defensive.
- Know how you are interpreting events.
- Know what senses you are currently using.
- Know the impact you behavior has on others.

Personal competence involves self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation.

Goleman [17] describes each as follows:

Self Awareness—Knowing one's internal states, preferences, and intuitions. According to Goleman, perhaps the most important emotional competence is

that of Self Awareness - knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions.

Self Awareness - the key to increased personal and organisational performance

According to Goleman [18], perhaps the most important emotional competence is that of Self Awareness - knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions. Or as some psychotherapist's put it "bringing to the conscious mind an understanding of the compulsions that push us around".

For all of us, we grow up in life learning to cope as best as possible with less than perfect formative environments - provided through parents, teachers, significant others etc. And these coping mechanisms, some good, some not so good, get us through to adulthood one way or another. But for most people these mechanisms then move with us into adulthood and push us around in much the same way as when we were children. So the 'good little boy' who grew up believing that the only way to elicit loving strokes from his father was by succeeding at whatever he did, becomes a highly trained achiever - successfully running many different projects, departments, businesses; acquiring much material wealth through his material successes, projecting an image of success & achievement, to the point of not really knowing why he is doing this - simply to gain his positive strokes; to feel worthwhile. He lives by the inner rule which says that the task must be accomplished, at any cost.

But now let's consider the fact that his burning drive for success leads him to contract some serious illness, a break up of loving relationships and the signing of the 'deal of all deals' which ends up breaking the business; let alone the many broken business relationships along the way. Now you may start to ask "why did he do it? Why didn't he stop at the 3rd multi-million pound venture?"

The truth is that he probably was not aware of what he was doing. And so, he couldn't stop. He had no choice. Like many of the things we do, we simply don't know why we do them; we just carry on doing them.

Increasing our own levels of self awareness therefore, empowers us to make different choices. Not that we will automatically do things differently. After all, some habits die hard! But over time, as we build up these levels of catching ourselves doing things, we will have the choice to alter our behaviour, eventually, before the next repetition.

Don't expect however, to go on a course and suddenly become self-aware. Like most things in life, it is a journey upon which we can embark; a journey of self-discovery and if we want, powerful transformation. It really depends on how brave we are. After all, we will probably find out things about ourselves which we don't really like and may choose to deny.

But imagine being able to make better decisions, get more out of the people we work with, communicate more effectively by tailoring our message to the deeply held convictions of the other person, and being more creative.

Imagine an organisation where its staff members are able to take responsibility for their own 'problems' and move to a place of not automatically reacting in the same old inappropriate manner as before, so doing away with hidden agendas, power politics and the like. By supporting it's employees in their journey of self-discovery, the organisation becomes free-er, fairer and more creative.

In the example of the successful person above, this might translate in the way he steps on his team members' backs in order to get the job done - achieving the task (although probably not as effectively as it could have been achieved with collaboration), but leaving a trail of dead bodies along the way.

Attitude of Optimism

Optimism is a primary factor that influences our ability to stay motivated. It is [19] the ability to de-personalise problems or setbacks and see them temporary events that are solvable. Optimistic thinking promotes resilience and the capacity to bounce back from adversity and stay focused on goals.

Research shows that optimistic people persevere under pressure and more likely to succeed.

Optimism is a powerful factor in identifying achievers.

Comparison of study done by 3 gurus

Tuning into emotions is not easy for most people. Dr. John D. Mayer, a psychologist at the University of New Hampshire and Dr. Peter Salovey [20], had identified three categories that they believe people fall into when it comes to identifying and dealing with their emotions.

Self-aware. These people are aware of their moods as they are having them. Their mindfulness helps them manage their emotions. When they are in a bad mood they don't obsess about it, and are able to get out of it sooner.

Engulfed. These are people who often feel swamped by their emotions and helpless to escape them, as though their emotions have taken charge. They are not very aware of their feelings, so that they are lost in them rather than having some perspective. As a result, they do little to try to escape bad moods, feeling they have no control over their emotional life. They often feel overwhelmed and emotionally out of control.

Accepting. While these people are often clear about what they are feeling, they also tend to be accepting of their moods, and so don't try to change them. There seem to be two branches of the accepting type: those who are usually in good moods and so have little motivation to change them, and people who, despite their clarity about their moods, are susceptible to bad ones but accept them with a laissez-faire attitude, doing nothing to change them despite their distress- a pattern found among depressed people who are resigned to their despair.

Salovey & Mayer [21]

The emotionally intelligent person is skilled in four areas—identifying, using, understanding, and regulating emotions.

In one publication they describe these areas as follows:

The first, Emotional Perception, involves such abilities as identifying emotions in faces, music, and stories.

The second, Emotional Facilitation of Thought, involves such abilities as relating emotions to other mental sensations such as taste and color (relations that might be employed in artwork), and using emotion in reasoning and problem solving.

The third area, Emotional Understanding involves solving emotional problems such as knowing which emotions are similar, or opposites, and what relations they convey.

The fourth area, Emotional Management involves understanding the implications of social acts on emotions and the regulation of emotion in self and others.

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effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, and expertise building and leading teams.

Daniel Goleman [23] argues that far from being detrimental to rational thought, emotional intelligence is an integral part of our thought processes. He contends that emotional awareness includes self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, self-motivation, empathy and social deftness, and that these are qualities which mark people who excel, whose relationships flourish and who succeed at work. Emotional intelligence is not something that is fixed at birth but which can be nurtured. He cites neurological research on people whose emotional brain areas have been damaged. Daily functioning was severely impaired, although IQ and cognitive ability remained unchanged. Without access to their emotional knowledge, these people were unable to make decisions that superficially seemed to involve only rational thought - such things as making an appointment became the focus of endless agonising and difficulty.

Emotional awareness as per Goleman [24] is knowing what emotions you are feeling and why, and understanding the links between your feelings and your actions.

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During his research, **Dr Bar-On** [25] coined the term emotional quotient (EQ) and believes emotional intelligence can be viewed as having 5 composite factors and 15 subscales. These are:

1. Intrapersonal

Self Regard, Emotional Self Awareness, Assertiveness, Independence & Self Actualisation.

2. Interpersonal

Empathy, Social Responsibility & Interpersonal Relationship.

3. Adaptability

Reality Testing, Flexibility & Problem Solving.

4. Stress Management

Stress Tolerance & Impulse Control.

5. General Mood

Happiness & Optimism

1. Intrapersonal Realm:

This realm of emotional intelligence concerns what we generally refer to as the "inner self." It determines how in touch with your feelings you are, how good you feel about yourself and about what you're doing in life. Success in this area means that you are able to express your feelings, live and work independently, feel strong, and have confidence in expressing your ideas and beliefs.

Emotional Self-Awareness: This ability allows you to recognize your feelings and to differentiate between them, to know what you are feeling and why and to know what caused the feelings. Serious deficiencies in this area are found in those with alexithymia.

Assertiveness: Assertiveness is composed of three basic components: (1) the ability to express feelings (2) the ability to express beliefs and thoughts openly (3) the ability to stand up for personal rights. Assertive people are not over-controlled or shy, they are able to express their feelings without being aggressive or abusive.

Independence: The ability focuses on being self-directed and self-controlled in your thinking and actions and to be free of emotional dependency. Independent people are self-reliant in planning and making important decisions. They may, however, seek and consider other people's opinions before making the right decision for themselves in the end; consulting others is not necessarily a sign of dependency. Independent people are able to function autonomously. The ability to be independent rests on one's degree of self-confidence and inner strength and the desire to meet expectations and obligations without becoming a slave to these desires.

Self-Regard: This is the ability to respect and accept yourself as basically good. Respecting yourself is essentially liking the way you are. Self-regard is the ability to appreciate your perceived positive aspects and limitations and still feel good about yourself. This conceptual component of emotional intelligence is associated with general feelings of security, inner strength, self-assuredness, self-confidence, and feelings of self-adequacy. At the opposite end of the continuum are feelings of personal inadequacy and inferiority.

Self-Actualization: Being self-actualized means that you realize your potential capacities. This component of emotional intelligence is manifested by becoming involved in pursuits that lead to a meaningful, rich, and full life. Striving to actualize your potential involves developing enjoyable and meaningful activities and can mean a lifelong effort and an enthusiastic commitment to long-term goals. Self-actualization is an ongoing, dynamic process of striving toward the maximum development of your abilities and talents, of persistently trying to do your best and to improve yourself in general.

Similarities in the study done by 3 gurus

1. All the 3 gurus agree that alexithymia is the inability to express feelings verbally.
2. Their three models portray similar definitions of self awareness

Peter Salovey and John Jack Meyer

There are 4 branches. Three branches are related to Self awareness. Each area is further divided into two branches that range from basic psychological processes to more complex processes integrating emotion and cognition.

The first branch, *emotional perception*, is the ability to be self-aware of emotions and to express emotions and emotional needs accurately to others. Emotional perception also includes the ability to distinguish between honest and dishonest expressions of emotion.

The second branch, *emotional assimilation*, is the ability to distinguish among the different

emotions one is feeling and to identify those that are influencing their thought processes.

The third branch, *emotional understanding*, is the ability to understand complex emotions (such as feeling two emotions at once) and the ability to recognize transitions from one to the other.

Dr. Goleman

Goleman [26] includes a set of emotional competencies within each construct of emotional intelligence. Emotional competencies are not innate talents, but rather learned capabilities that must be worked on and developed to achieve outstanding performance. Goleman posits that individuals are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. The organization of the competencies under the various constructs is not random; they appear in synergistic clusters or groupings that support and facilitate each other

Dr. Reuven Bar -On

Bar-On's model [27] of emotional intelligence relates to the *potential* for performance and success, rather than performance or success itself, and is considered process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented. It focuses on an array of emotional and social abilities, including the ability to be aware of, understand, and express oneself, the ability to be aware of, understand, and relate to others, the ability to deal with strong emotions, and the ability to adapt to change and solve problems of a social or personal nature.

Method to develop Self Awareness

Surely 21st century leadership calls for a new type of leader who understands him/herself well and can call others into a higher state of being, rather than the old style leader who simply knows how to manage finance, sales and marketing processes. It calls for leaders who can engage the hearts and minds of all members within the organisation, facilitating the psychological contract, so important for winning the market wars.

But how can this journey be started? And what tools are available to assist? Queue, the Enneagram [31].

The Enneagram gives you the chance to invoke your true reservoir of talents and skills, instead of operating out of habit from comforting convictions.

A centuries old eastern wisdom, the Enneagram has the power to help you make this journey. A tool which not only helps you uncover the real you, but then calls you out on to a higher plain, from where you become more real, more content and often, more effective in whatever you do.

For Dave Connelly and Johann Diaz [32], co-founders of ExecutiveAwareness.com, the Enneagram has been both a powerful personal transformational tool, but also one which they have used to support many people become more effective at work and at home.

“The Enneagram describes nine basic worldviews and nine ways of doing business. Each of the nine personality types is something of a pathway through life, with likely obstacles and pitfalls along the way. Each style has its own natural gifts, limitations, blind spots, its own distinctive ways of thinking, acting and being”.

The Enneagram builds upon the law of attention, which states that:

1. energy follows attention
2. to move attention and energy requires self-observation
3. self-observation never becomes habitual

For 'energy', read 'what you do' / your behaviour.

So in order to transform what you do, you must first become aware of where you place your inner attentions - what you are feeling and thinking, often para-consciously. The more you do this, the more natural and habitual it will become, and the more you will give yourself the chance to truly change your behaviour.

The Enneagram is both a very simplistic tool, describing nine world views, but it can also be a very complex tool, allowing for the fact that no two people are exactly the same. And here in lies one of its main differentiators from many of the other more common personality profiling tools. Not only can you fall generally within one particular personality profile, but

the system accepts that you will have shades of at least four other types within your make-up, plus one of three sub-types. So two people of the same basic type can act quite differently.

And not content to leave you rumbling around within your basic personality type, the self awareness program developed at Executive Awareness is designed to lead you out of these shackles, by way of simple self-awareness exercises which you can use at any time of the day, wherever you are, for as long as you want. You always remain in control.

Soon you will be able to stop yourself doing what comes automatically and change your behaviour to one which may be more appropriate to the person or situation.

The Enneagram obviously lends itself therefore to helping leaders become more effective, but it can also be used most effectively within team development; executive/management teams, project teams, client teams, process teams etc.

Corporations like BP, Motorola, Dupont, Toyota, Cisco, Kodak, Procter & Gamble, HP and Sony already use the Enneagram in one form or another, whether it be in individual work or corporate work.

But beware, it's not for the faint-hearted. Only those who know they are capable of being much more than they currently are, who want to improve their levels of emotional intelligence, should take the journey.

Conclusion

The late Earl Nightingale states "We become what we think about"[33].

It is our thoughts that determine who we are. *We all create tomorrow based on what we are thinking today.* So simply by changing our thoughts, we can change who we are and hence change every aspect of our life.

What is important is a strong sense of self. Human beings' desire to excel comes with ones' need to feel worthy, important and respected by ourselves and others.

We strive on for one success after another hoping that we will succeed one more time. We have to be aware that sooner or later, Murphy's Law [34] will pay a visit – whatever can go wrong, eventually will go wrong.

When we fail, we have negative thoughts and feelings. We begin to feel unworthy, undeserving and unimportant. In contrast, if we have strong sense of self, we would stop linking our success or failures to our self worth and self esteem.

In today's world, many people equate sense of self with their possessions and what they do for a living.

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