



Emotional Intelligence as Zeitgeist, as Personality, and as a Mental Ability

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E*motional intelligence* and *EQ* were selected as the most useful new words or phrases of 1995 by the American Dialect Society (1995, 1999; Brodie, 1996). And as this volume attests, work on the topic is proliferating. The impetus for this sustained interest in emotional intelligence began with two 1990 articles in academic journals (Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and follow-up work, much of which was popularized in a best-selling book entitled *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 1995b). From there, the concept of emotional intelligence made it to the cover of *Time* magazine (Gibbs, 1995). Since then, emotional intelligence has been defined and redefined so many times that it would be impossible (or at least, quite a lengthy job) to outline all the ways the phrase has been employed.

It does seem of value, however, to understand the various ways the term *emotional intelligence* is used. In this chapter, we examine three meanings. The first, broadest, meaning is as a designation of a zeitgeist, or cultural trend. The spirit of an age is often referred to as the zeitgeist, an intellectual or passionate trend that characterizes the moment. In a complex world culture there exists not one, but multiple, interwoven, zeitgeists. We suspect emotional intelligence somehow fits into such zeitgeists, and the first meaning of emotional intelligence we

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explore in this chapter is a cultural and political one. A second, generally popular use of the term is to designate a group of personality traits that are believed important to success in life, such as persistence, the drive for achievement, and social skills, as emotional intelligence. The third and final meaning of emotional intelligence, and the one we favor, is found—indeed began—in the scientific literature and designates a set of abilities having to do with processing emotional information.

Our review of emotional intelligence covers both the popular and academic sources. Our purpose is to bring some semblance of order to the various usages of the term *emotional intelligence*, and some consideration of how those different meanings might be confusing if ignored, but contribute to constructive cultural and scientific discussion if attended to. After this introduction, the central section of this chapter examines the three meanings of the term: emotional intelligence as zeitgeist, as personality, and as mental ability. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE ZEITGEIST

The popularization of emotional intelligence culminated, perhaps, with 1995 cover stories in *Time* and *USA Today Weekend* magazines on the importance of emotional intelligence to success in school and at work (Gibbs, 1995; Goleman, 1995a). These reports were a mixture of sensationalism and science. The idea was that an overlooked part of personality—one that could be acquired—would greatly improve a person's chances of achieving his or her goals. Still, the attention these articles received was more than a product of their promise of success; more fundamentally, interest in these articles was a consequence of their intersection with two areas of cultural tension. First, was the tension in Western thought between emotion and reason. A term that joined emotion and intelligence could well be considered an oxymoron by some, it was said, because emotions convey the idea of unreasonableness (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 185). Several years earlier, Payne had foreseen an age in which emotion and intelligence would be integrated by teaching emotional responses in schools, and governments would be responsive to the individual's feelings (Payne, 1986, pp. 440–441). The second tension in Western thought was that between egalitarianism and elitism. At about the same time as the popularization of emotional intelligence, Herrnstein and Murray (1994) published *The Bell Curve*, which argued for the importance of IQ in understanding social class in American (and other) societies. When the book *Emotional Intelligence* was published, its author implied it served in some ways as an egalitarian rebuttal

to Herrnstein and Murray's arguments, which were widely seen as elitist (Goleman, 1995b, p. 34).

Historical Overview: Stoicism Versus Romanticism

The battle between respecting and denying emotions is a longstanding one in Western thought. The Stoic movement of ancient Greece (approximately 200 BCE to 300 CE) was concerned with the role of emotion in leading a good life. The Stoics viewed moods, impulses, fears, and desires as too individualistic, too unique, and too self-centered to be reliable. Within Stoic philosophy, the wise person admitted no emotion or feeling whatsoever. Rather these were willed away in the process of self-control until all that was left was rationality and logic (Payne, 1986, pp. 17–19). The stoic philosophy became as much religion as philosophy. First, it influenced certain lines of Jewish thought (Guttman, 1964, pp. 21–23), then early Christianity. It finally collapsed after the third century CE, absorbed but still felt in the emerging Christian religion: "Stoicism bequeathed no small part of its disciplines, its dogmas, and its phraseology to the Christianity by which it was ingathered. . . . Stoicism . . . evolved moral and social conceptions that have become an heirloom of Western civilisation, and are embedded in the inmost structure of the Christian state" (quote by Rendall as cited in Payne, 1986, p. 15). The consequence was a strong anti-emotional flavor in much of Western thought.

To be sure, that anti-emotional trend has been punctuated frequently in history. For example, an emotional uprising began in eastern European Jewish circles in the mid eighteenth century. Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov ("Possessor of the Good Name"), founded the Hassidic movement so as to introduce emotionality and mysticism into what he perceived as the overly intellectualized Jewish traditions of the day. In the later eighteenth century, the European romantic movement stressed how empathic and intuitional thought (which included emotions) could provide insights unobtainable by logic. Writers, painters, and musicians expressed emotional rebellions against the rigid, rational rules of the then-dominant classical movement in the arts. Their emotionality often expressed a feeling of alienation in response to the emerging industrialization of society. To counteract such alienation, expressions of personal love often dominated their poetry, prose, and drama (Upshur et al., 1995, pp. 622–623).

Far closer to the present was the emotional expressiveness of the 1960s in North America and Europe. The 1960s represented a decade-long emotional rebellion against the forces of rationalism. It was also a time that many of the present-day researchers of emotion and intellect came of age. It was a time of energetic political activism that saw the rise of the civil rights movement, of student activism in opposition to the Vietnam War, social movements including hippies and yippies, and the rise of the women's movement. As one participant

put it, "there was the promise of universal liberation, there was the profaning of everything holy . . . there was a leap toward equality, there was a degradation of standards, there was disgust with the Pentagon's perversion of reason, there was a flight from the rigors of intellect" (Gitlin, 1993, p. 341). The "flight from the rigors of intellect," included a heady dose of emotionalism. Interestingly, emotionality was closely tied to personal growth.

That decade's chief proponents of humanistic psychology, Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers, were politically active within psychology and beyond, confronting and contradicting psychological "truths" that had been handed down from earlier in the century—that people were inherently weak, easily manipulated pawns in the family and in society more generally. Instead, they said, people could, indeed must, exercise self-determination (Herman, 1992, p. 90). Humanistic psychology espoused, among other things, that one urgent human need was "to feel good about oneself, experience one's emotions directly, and grow emotionally" (Herman, 1992, p. 88).

In the 1960s, as the inequalities of society were progressively uncovered, unmet emotional needs seemed woven into the very fabric of society. Psychiatrist Alvin Pouissant recalled that southern civil rights workers experienced "acute attacks of rage" in their struggles, requiring many doses of tranquilizers as an antidote (Pouissant, 1970). Implicitly, however, these rebels viewed uncontrollable feelings not as an irrational defect in human nature, but rather as a consequence of, and a message about, a faulty society. When Abraham Maslow (1969, p. 8) posed the rhetorical question, "What shall we think of a well-adjusted slave?" his statement was plainly understood to mean that sometimes angry emotions are a necessary signal of injustice.

Later in the decade, those who were part of the women's movement and the radical psychiatry movement similarly turned to feelings as messages about oppression. "It is imperative . . . that we maintain and deepen our contact with our feelings," wrote one early member of the movement. "Our first concern must not be with whether these feelings are good or bad, but what they are. Feelings are a reality" (Allen, 1973, p. 273). The exploration of feelings was not always part of an organized political movement such as the quest for women's rights. Sometimes feelings were explored, exaggerated, or otherwise altered as a part of the active, often underground, drug culture of the time. Drugs that altered mood, such as marijuana and hashish, were in common use, as were drugs that altered both mood and reality perception, such as the hallucinogen LSD-25.

One of the first mentions we have found of emotional intelligence is in "Emotional Intelligence and Emancipation," which is the translated English title of a German article describing adult women who, apparently because of their low emotional intelligence, rejected their social roles (Leuner, 1966). The author attributed the women's difficulties to being separated too early from their own mothers as

infants. In an apotheosis of 1960s culture, the author treated this deficit by administering the hallucinogenic drug LSD-25 to the women during psychotherapy!

Conflict Versus Integration

The relationship between emotion and reason is often viewed as a conflict. Payne (1986) contended that throughout most Western history, those with reason prevailed, whereas the more emotional among us were labeled mentally ill and institutionalized and tortured in (pre-eighteenth-century) mental hospitals, as a means of suppressing emotionality. Those lacking in empathy often ended up as jail keepers and torturers. Payne writes, "Many of us fear uncontrolled emotional expression, such as weeping, with an intensity that rivals our fear of death. Is it any wonder, when we consider the strength of its suppression among our ancestors? Some of us are direct descendants of the people who were locked up and tortured for expression [of] emotion. Others of us are descendants of those who administered the torture" (Payne, 1986, p. 21).

Emotional intelligence, by contrast, can be interpreted as describing societal practices that integrate emotion and thought. As new brain research suggests, the emotional and cognitive systems in the brain are far more integrated than originally believed (Damasio, 1995; LeDoux, 1998).

Many of those writing about emotional intelligence addressed the issue of emotional learning in the schools. For some psychologists and educators, emotional intelligence was viewed as an integrative concept that explained competence in social and emotional skills (Elias et al., 1997, pp. 27–28; Goleman, 1995b) and, perhaps, justified teaching it explicitly. Others went further, however. Payne (1986), for example, believed that emotional intelligence could be fostered in the schools by liberating emotional experience through therapy. Liberating feelings, he wrote, "will be no easy task, politically . . . in terms of the social unrest it will likely create. But we must come to terms with this or continue to raise generations of adults who behave in emotionally ignorant—and, therefore, destructive—ways" (Payne, 1986, p. 441).

Emotional Intelligence as an Equalizer

A second element of the zeitgeist is the conflict between recognizing differences among people and emphasizing people's equality. In 1994, Herrnstein and Murray published the *Bell Curve*—a lengthy tome that combined a review of the intelligence field with public policy on class in the United States. The gist of the book was that people were normally distributed in intelligence, with some people low in intelligence, most in the middle, and some high in intelligence, and that such differences were difficult to change. The authors further added that low intelligence accounted in part for why some people were poor and unemployed, whereas high intelligence accounted for why others were employed and wealthy. Pointing out such nonegalitarian notions in a nation whose founders

penned "all men are created equal" in their Declaration of Independence is asking for controversy. Add into that mix (as the authors did), a discussion of intellectual differences among different gender, religious, ethnic, and racial groups, and one can pretty much count on a pitched battle. The book was much commented on in the press and was followed up by other books with such titles as *The Bell Curve Wars* (Fraser, 1995).

The popularization *Emotional Intelligence* was positioned in part as a reply to the *Bell Curve*. Immediately after discussing the *Bell Curve*, Goleman contrasted emotional intelligence to general intelligence by stating that "it can be as powerful, and at times more powerful, than IQ," and that "crucial emotional competencies can indeed be learned" (Goleman, 1995b, p. 34). From this perspective, the cultural spirit of "emotional intelligence"—its zeitgeist value—was egalitarian, for anyone could learn it. For the skeptical, however, it suggested a dumbed-down picture of the future in which reason and critical thinking no longer mattered. The comic strip *Dilbert* is about an engineer facing the irrationalities of postmodern life, and Dogbert, his dog. In one strip, Dogbert announced he was testing his theory that "people get dumber every minute," and clicked his stopwatch on. "It's not so simple," Dilbert replied, "You also have to consider my 'emotional intelligence,' which is defined in a book I haven't read." Dogbert clicks off the stopwatch and announces triumphantly, "Twelve seconds" (Adams, 1997/1998).

Critique

The term *emotional intelligence* conveys some aspects of present-day zeitgeists; it captures something of the many competing interests or spirits of our age. In some contexts, it refers to an integration in the war between emotion and rationality throughout human history. In this sense, an emotionally intelligent society is one that understands how to integrate reason and emotion. In other contexts, emotional intelligence has been suggestive of a kinder, gentler, intelligence—an intelligence anyone can have. In this sense, an emotionally intelligent society is one in which anyone—even those previously thought of as not too bright—can be intelligent. Are these good uses of the term *emotional intelligence*? An answer to the question requires a more detailed understanding of what emotional intelligence is truly about. This scientific understanding may or may not support such descriptions of society.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS PERSONALITY

When we leave the popular realm and enter the scientific realm, we are obliged to employ higher standards in terminology. Those standards include both that terms should be clearly defined and that existing (and new) terms should refer

to concepts that are coherently related to one another wherever possible. For example, as psychologists have divided up the mind into its constituent parts, both those parts and their interrelations have been conceived of very carefully (Mayer, 1995b, 1998). These parts include mental mechanisms, structures, functions, and processes. Ideally, labeling a new part of the mind should occur only when a new entity has been discovered; relabeling old parts should occur only when doing so more accurately depicts old concepts or groups of concepts. Personality psychology—the study of an individual’s psychological parts, the organization of those parts, and their development—is the most relevant subdiscipline here (Mayer, 1998). In addition, a goal of personality psychology is to connect parts of the mind to life outcomes.

Personality Psychology and the Terminology of Personality

Should the term *emotional intelligence* be used to describe all of personality? That depends on how one thinks of the personality system, but it does not appear to fit with current perspectives on personality psychology (Mayer, 1998; McAdams, 1996; McCrae & Costa, 1999). The difference between personality, on the one hand, and emotional intelligence, on the other, can be made clear from a very brief overview of personality and its parts. This same overview will be of importance to a later discussion of the difference between an intelligence and a nonability trait. To begin with, the terms people sometimes employ when talking about emotional intelligence—*motivation*, *emotion*, *cognition*, and *consciousness*—are typically considered in personality psychology as four basic processes that make up personality’s near-biological foundation (Mayer, 1995a, 1995b; 1998).

These four processes, and the mechanisms that bring them about, can be arranged from the most inward-looking and biologically based to larger, more outward-looking systems. Basic motivation is inward looking and concerns basic evolutionary needs such as those for food and water, as well as those for basic attachment and safety. The motivation system translates such needs into urges to eat, drink, attach to others, and sometimes to attack or escape from them (among many other needs).

The emotion system involves internal experiences that arise in response to models of external relationships. If a person believes significant others love her, it will make her happy. If she believes they have mistreated her, it will make her angry, and so forth. Although these internal models of relationships mirror the outside world, they are not identical to what is happening externally. We are reminded about the internal nature of models when we encounter someone who tells us that what we thought was going on in our relationship with him or her was not going on at all, and what was really going on was something we would not have dreamed of.

Cognition is the most outward looking of this set of mental mechanisms. True, one of its purposes is to help ensure the satisfaction of motivations and the maintenance of pleasant emotions. True, also, much thought concerns internal planning, including rumination and daydreaming. Nonetheless, cognition is responsible for taking care of daily business in some planned fashion. To do so it must create detailed maps of the world, test them through experimentation and experience, reason effectively, separate truth from fiction, and otherwise process information about the world.

Consciousness is the least well understood of the four basic modes of mind. It is the person's awareness of the rest of the mind. Such consciousness appears to be constantly maintained during waking hours, although it may change its states throughout the day as a result of the influence of fatigue, excitement, and other circumstances. Some believe that consciousness is directed toward creatively changing, interrupting, and redirecting ongoing mental operations when the mind is not solving problems adequately. For example, a person who is speaking at a party may suddenly become conscious of the bored expressions of his listeners and decide to refrain from talking for a while. From this perspective, conscious awareness monitors opportunities for change. The four modes are arranged in the bottom row of Figure 5.1.

These four processes and their associated mechanisms are far from constituting the whole personality, however. Another group of personality parts that has already been mentioned includes the models of one's self and the world, which must be constructed through learning. A chief developmental task of the individual is to create models of the self, the world, and the self in the world. These models incorporate aspects of individual motivations, emotions, cognitions, and conscious states but integrate them together in coherent maps of the self and the world. Thus, a child may develop a mental map of dinosaurs. In so doing, she may read about the *gigantasauros*, the largest dinosaur discovered thus far. The child will imagine the aggressive motives of a big, strong dinosaur; she may feel curiosity, fear, and awe about something so big and learn cognitive information such as that *gigantasauros*'s name refers to "large reptile of the south." Finally, she may become aware of the *gigantasauros* at a time when such information is particularly useful (such as when trying to find a good topic for a report in science class). These models draw on motivation, emotion, cognition, and consciousness but can be distinguished from them in that they integrate the modes together, and in that their chief function is to model the internal and external worlds. Examples of such models can be found in the second row of Figure 5.1.

A third aspect of personality—traits or themes—also exists. Such traits emerge when a given motive, emotion, or thought is repeatedly present within models of the self and the world (that is, within learned mental maps). For

Level 3: Mental Traits	Self-Relevant Traits		General Traits	
	Examples: self-esteem, self-consciousness, personal intelligence, ego strength		Examples: extroversion, verbal intelligence, conscientiousness, dogmatism, friendliness	
Level 2: Mental Maps	Models of the Self Examples: self-concept, ideal self, identity, life story	Models of the Self-in-World Examples: roles, attachments, identifications, rules of conduct	Models of the World Examples: knowing how to spell, expert knowledge of dinosaurs	
	Basic Motivations Examples: urges to eat, drink, sleep, join others, defend self	Basic Emotions Examples: feeling joy, sadness, anger, and fear, related psychophysiology	Basic Cognitive Operations Examples: learning, remembering, judging, comparing	Basic Consciousness Examples: awareness, attention, stream of consciousness
Level 1: Mental Mechanisms				

Figure 5.1. A schematic outline of certain among the major systems of personality (after Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000, figure 1, and Mayer, 1995b, figure 2).

example, if a child imagines battles with dinosaurs, imagines fights with her dolls, and argues with her parents more than usual, that child may be said to possess the trait of argumentativeness, assertiveness, or, in the extreme, aggression. Or a person's cheerfulness may be evident in his high self-esteem, love of friends, and caring for the world. Finally, a person's intelligence might be evident in her ability to arrange complex personal schedules, solve math problems, understand vocabulary, and perform well in school. These traits differ from simple motives, emotions, or cognitions in that they emerge from interactions between the motives and learned models of the self and world. Examples of such traits can be found in the third row of Figure 5.1.

This is a partial description of personality but it is enough to understand some of the issues of terminology concerning an emotional intelligence. We can see, for example, that emotion covers only one of four foundations of personality, with motivation, cognition, and consciousness distinct from it. Further, we can see that intelligence will involve cognitive problem solving in learned models. One way to view emotional intelligence, which we will discuss in greater detail later, is as a general ability trait (similar to verbal intelligence). In this sense, emotional intelligence employs cognitive and emotional mechanisms in processing the emotional aspects of the self, the world, and the self-in-world, as well as in processing any purely expert knowledge of emotion. To return to personality more generally, it can be seen that some of its parts are more closely related to one another than are other parts. The terms *emotion* and *intelligence* are relatively unrelated to such mechanisms as motivation or to such traits as optimism, sociability, or good relationships.

Mixed-Personality and Socioemotional Definitions of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is used by some researchers to refer to a long list of attributes or abilities that appear drawn from a number of aspects of personality. One such interpretation of emotional intelligence comes from the popular book *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 1995b). Therein, emotional intelligence is said to include five parts: knowing emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships (p. 43). Emotional intelligence is redefined and redescribed frequently through that book, each time including a somewhat different set of personality attributes. For example, a later definition retains knowing emotions and managing emotions and adds in "self-awareness, impulse control and delaying gratification, and handling stress and anxiety" (p. 259). The effect of these broad, only partly overlapping definitions is finally to cover almost all of personality. Included are traits based on motivation (motivating oneself), as well as on emotion (such as recognizing emotions in others), and also characterizations of broad areas of behavior (handling relationships) that encompass the entire model of how one

operates in the world (see Mayer, 1995a, 1998). It comes as almost no surprise, then, that Goleman pronounces that "there is an old-fashioned word for the body of skills that emotional intelligence represents: character" (p. 285).

It may seem improper to hold up Goleman's (1995b) theory as a scientific one. At first it was presented as a journalistic account of our own theory (Goleman, 1995b, p. 34; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Nonetheless, many scientists have treated Goleman's work seriously, and Goleman has accepted this blended role, recently writing, for example, "I've also gone back to my professional roots as an academic psychologist, conducting an exhaustive review of the research. . . . And I've performed or commissioned several new scientific analyses of data" (Goleman, 1998, p. 5).

Another definition, by Bar-On (1997, p. 14), characterized emotional intelligence as "an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures." He interprets findings from a self-report scale of emotional intelligence that he developed, the EQ-i, as indicating that it is divisible into five broad categories. First is intrapersonal EQ, which further divides into emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence. Second is interpersonal EQ, which divides into empathy, interpersonal relationship, and social responsibility. These first two factors are reminiscent of Gardner's (1983/1993) personal intelligences, which are also divided into intrapersonal and interpersonal functions. Third is adaptability EQ, which divides into problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility. Fourth is stress management EQ, which divides into stress tolerance and impulse control. Fifth and last is general mood EQ, which divides into happiness and optimism (Bar-On, 1997, pp. 43-45). Chapter Seventeen presents a revision of Bar-On's (1997) model, in which a number of changes are made, including that the general mood area is viewed as a facilitator of emotional intelligence rather than a part of it. Nonetheless, many of the attributes of the model, such as reality testing, stress management, and impulse control, seem to stretch beyond what is generally meant by emotion or intelligence.

Another definition of emotional intelligence is employed by Goleman in his more recent book, which focused on the workplace (Goleman, 1998). Now the five dimensions of emotional intelligence are broken down into twenty-five different emotional competencies, among them political awareness, service orientation, self-confidence, conscientiousness, and achievement drive (Goleman, 1998, pp. 26-28). Similarly, Cooper's (1996/1997) EQ map begins with emotional self-awareness, emotional awareness of others, interpersonal connections, and the like, but then goes on to include resilience, creativity, compassion, and intuition, among other areas. One begins to wonder what adaptive attributes would *not* be considered emotional intelligence.

Why do we take issue with relabeling all the parts of personality as "emotional intelligence"? If emotional intelligence does not refer exclusively to emotion or intelligence, then it becomes quite unclear to what it does refer. Qualities such as service orientation, interpersonal relationships, intuition, and self-actualization seem to have expanded the concept without any regard to its moorings. Perhaps the larger cost, however, is that labeling personality research as "emotional intelligence"—that is, a new-ish field—directs people away from the relevant research about the new claims being made. This allows a person to create a theory that is disconnected from other, similar theories, and so to be very imaginative—but the process can lead to disappointment once the connection between imagination and reality is reestablished. Empirical studies of the discriminant and convergent validity of scales based on the above approaches have only begun; they will reveal whether these new measures are reinventions of earlier tests or are actually measuring something new. Even with such studies pending, however, there is enough research in personality psychology to indicate what is likely and what is not.

For example, theories that define emotional intelligence as a diverse list of qualities such as political awareness, service orientation, self-confidence, conscientiousness, and achievement drive do not seem to hold up well. For one thing, such groupings bring together quite different parts of personality. Political awareness is a type of consciousness. Service orientation is a role. Self-confidence is a model-of-the-self (or self-schema), and so on (Mayer, 1995b, 1998). We know these separate parts often conflict with one another. For example, a high achievement drive often reduces conscientiousness about completing responsibilities and adhering to rules (McClelland & Koestner, 1992); similarly, high self-confidence can lead to taking advantage of others rather than serving them (Baumeister, 1997). It is highly improbable that any person could meet all twenty-five criteria at any time, let alone meet most or all such criteria over an extended period of time.

The field of personality psychology is largely centered on using groups of variables to predict future life outcomes. Some of the best researchers in the field have spent lifetimes studying groups of personality attributes so as to determine which ones actually lead to success at school and at work. The story, unsurprisingly, is not as simple as the "one variable fits all," approach implied by those who combine lists of traits under the label of *emotional intelligence*. The academic research literature is often excellent (although sometimes not) and well worth examining by those who have become interested in it from the popular literature. Claims by popularizers of emotional intelligence, for example, that it "outpredicts IQ" or is "twice as important as IQ" (Goleman, 1998, p. 34) stand in strong contradiction to such literature. In fact, when those claims have been examined by ourselves and others, they have appeared implausible

to begin with, and no serious evidence has yet been offered in support of them (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Mayer & Cobb, 2000; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000).

In contrast to popular approaches, scientific research must adhere to carefully developed standards. Chief among those most relevant to the field are that, first, there must be a good correspondence between a given concept (such as emotional intelligence) and any test that is used to measure it. This correspondence is referred to as the test's validity. Second, a new test should measure something above and beyond what prior tests measure. This is called incremental validity and, actually, is a specific form of test validity. An example may suffice to indicate how such issues work.

Schutte et al. (1998) developed a scale of emotional intelligence and then correlated it with several criteria. The scale was based on a self-report in which a person was to agree or disagree with questions such as "I often know how I feel" and others based on the domains of emotional intelligence elaborated in an early ability version of the concept (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The test's validity was compromised, however, because the test used the self-report approach, which assesses a person's self-perceptions rather than his or her actual abilities. Nonetheless, the authors used the scale and obtained a fascinating finding: the scale predicted end-of-the-year grade point averages for college students moderately well ($r = .32$). However, the scale was highly correlated with scales known to assess positive mood—an essentially universal characteristic of self-report emotional intelligence scales. The problem is that positive mood alone predicts higher grades (Wessman & Ricks, 1966, p. 123), and vice versa. This raised the following question of incremental validity: was emotional intelligence accounting for higher grades beyond what could be predicted from mood alone? Because mood was not measured independently, the answer is unknown. Such questions of method are essential to the scientist's craft and necessary for addressing the many claims made in the area of emotional intelligence.

Locating the list of proposed traits (including ability traits) within a more general personality framework has a number of other advantages as well. It permits comparison of theories and consequent measures with similar, competing theories and measures. For example, the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) is considered an omnibus inventory of personality. Its scales include Self-Assurance, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Self-Acceptance, Self-Control, Flexibility, Empathy, Dominance, and the like (Cohen, Swerdlik, & Smith, 1992). These scales appear rather similar to some of the scales used to assess emotional intelligence. For example, the EQ-i measures, among other areas, Assertiveness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Empathy, Impulse Control, Social Responsibility, and Reality Testing (Bar-On, 1997, pp. 45–46; see also Cooper, 1996/1997; Goleman, 1998). To be sure, the CPI includes many scales that the EQ-i does not, and vice versa. The issue is not whether these new tests are identical to earlier

ones, or whether they are good or bad. Rather, the two points we wish to make are that first, many of the attributes measured by newer scales of emotional intelligence have been carefully studied before, and second, such overlap as does exist suggests that new scales of emotional intelligence have a breadth of coverage that is not all that different from measures traditionally referred to as omnibus scales of personality. The term *emotional intelligence*, when used to designate tests that are not appreciably different from general scales of personality, may be more of a distraction than a clarification.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A MENTAL ABILITY

Above, we suggested that the term *emotional intelligence* is better reserved for a more focused portion of personality. Our own suggested use of the term stresses the concept of an intelligence that processes and benefits from emotions. From this perspective, emotional intelligence is composed of mental abilities, skills, or capacities. The central work we have been involved in during the last ten years is to conceptualize the abilities that make up emotional intelligence, to create methods for measuring those abilities, and to determine if emotional intelligence qualifies as a standard intelligence.

We chose to employ the term *emotional intelligence* after a careful review of the intelligence literature convinced us that an emotional intelligence—even more than a social intelligence—could be operationalized and measured as distinct from previously described intelligences (and other parts of personality; Mayer & Salovey, 1993, pp. 433–444). This early work marked the first formal use of the term defined as an intelligence and introduced the first tests that would begin to permit its empirical investigations (Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Intelligence is defined as a group of mental abilities. An ability (of any sort), in turn, is a characteristic of an individual when that individual can “successfully complete (i.e., obtain a specific, desired, outcome on) a task of defined difficulty, when testing conditions are favorable” (Carroll, 1993, pp. 4–8). For example, physical ability might be assessed by asking a person to lift a 100 lb weight; mental ability would involve measuring an individual’s performance in recalling seven digits in a row and similar tasks. From this perspective, mental ability is synonymous with mental capacity, similar to mental skill (which specifically connotes something learned), and similar to mental competence, which emphasizes the ability to meet a specific standard.

Mental abilities can be distinguished from other sorts of ability as involving thinking abstractly and solving mental problems. For much of this century, that was sufficient to describe the issue. Since that time, however, there has been a reassessment of what mental abilities are and are not—principally in response

to the writings of Howard Gardner (1983/1993), who proposed that, along with widely accepted intelligences such as verbal intelligence and spatial intelligence, there might exist other intelligences such as "physical/bodily intelligence." Gardner (1983/1993) also described "personal intelligences." Scarr (1989) and others have questioned whether such entities as physical/bodily intelligence really exist.

Emotional intelligence has invited this same debate. Researchers who use the term to describe multiple aspects of personality often characterize many mental qualities as *abilities* or *capacities*. For example, Bar-On (1997, p. 14) referred to noncognitive capacities such as assertiveness; Goleman (1998) included initiative and service orientation among such abilities. All those attributes can be of value in their place, but does portraying them in such a fashion constitute a fair use of the mental ability concept? Scarr (1989) has expressed grave concerns about a tradition that "lumps all manner of human virtues under the banner of several intelligences" (p. 76). She views such terminology as a threat to both the area of intelligence research and to other scientific areas:

There are many human virtues that are not sufficiently rewarded in our society, such as goodness in human relationships, and talents in music, dance, and painting. To call them intelligence does not do justice either to theories of intelligence or to the personality traits and special talents that lie beyond the consensual definition of intelligence. Nor does calling all human virtues intelligence readjust social rewards, the goal toward which I believe such theories are pointed. (p. 78)

Looking at broader personality and all its parts can help answer the question of what an intelligence is and is not (Mayer, 2000). This theoretical perspective makes clear that cognition (and emotion and motivation) saturate all of personality; and that the mere presence of some cognitive mental ability does not constitute an intelligence. Consider the case of artificial intelligence for a moment. We might refer to a "smart" toaster or other device, given that the toaster monitors information about its internal heat levels. Its information processing—which undeniably exists—is so limited, however, that to speak of the toaster as possessing artificial intelligence seems overstated. The term *artificial intelligence* is generally reserved for those devices whose primary focus is problem solving.

Similarly, people who are sociable undeniably process social information as they interact with others. The personality system always works by intertwining motivation, emotion, cognition, and consciousness. Nonetheless, the point of sociability is to interact with others; its point is not social problem solving. In contrast, social intelligence involves understanding how to convince others to do things, how to manage power relationships, how to build group cohesiveness, and the like. Sociability, however, is not social intelligence. More generally, personality traits such as sociability, conscientiousness, or optimism do

not, by themselves, indicate an intelligence is present, because none of them centrally concern problem solving. By way of contrast, one might say that social intelligence may determine the sophistication with which sociability is carried out. We view the term *intelligence* as best applied to mental traits whose primary purpose is problem solving in one or another content domains.

Now consider an emotional intelligence. Emotions do convey set meanings, which philosophers have been elucidating for centuries. For example, the experience of anger often designates the presence of a real or perceived injustice or blockage of a desired goal. The experience of sadness indicates a real or perceived loss. In addition, there are evolutionary bases for the meanings of basic emotions (Darwin, 1872/1955; Ekman, 1973). Moreover, emotions develop in predictable patterns that are interrelated with developments in complex social situations. For example, if a person is happy and sad at the same time, only a limited number of events could have brought about such a reaction, and intelligence is necessary to track down the sort of event that brings such feelings (such as a close-by friend finding a much-wanted job in a faraway city). Emotions, in other words, satisfy a complex, coherent, and consistent symbol system that can be puzzled over, understood, and planned for in abstract thought.

An Ability Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Elsewhere we have gone over the intelligence theory of emotional intelligence in greater detail, but it is useful to review some aspects of it briefly here (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Theories of intelligence vary, but there is a growing consensus as to the central parts of the intelligence system. This system consists of a capacity for identifying or inputting information, and a capacity for processing information through both immediate symbol manipulation and reference to expert knowledge (Mayer & Mitchell, 1998). Our model views emotional intelligence as operating across both the cognitive and emotional systems. It operates in a mostly unitary fashion but is still subdivisible into four branches (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The first of these branches, emotional perception and identification, involves recognizing and inputting information from the emotion system. The second and third branches, emotional facilitation of thought and emotional understanding, involve the further processing of emotional information with an eye to problem solving. In general, the emotional facilitation of thought branch involves using emotion to improve cognitive processes, whereas the emotional understanding branch involves cognitive processing of emotion. Our fourth branch, emotion management, concerns emotional self-management and the management of emotions in other people. These four branches are shown arranged in a circle in Figure 5.2.

Partly as a consequence of various popularizations, and partly as a consequence of societal pressures to regulate emotions, many people identify emotional intelligence primarily with its fourth branch, emotional management.

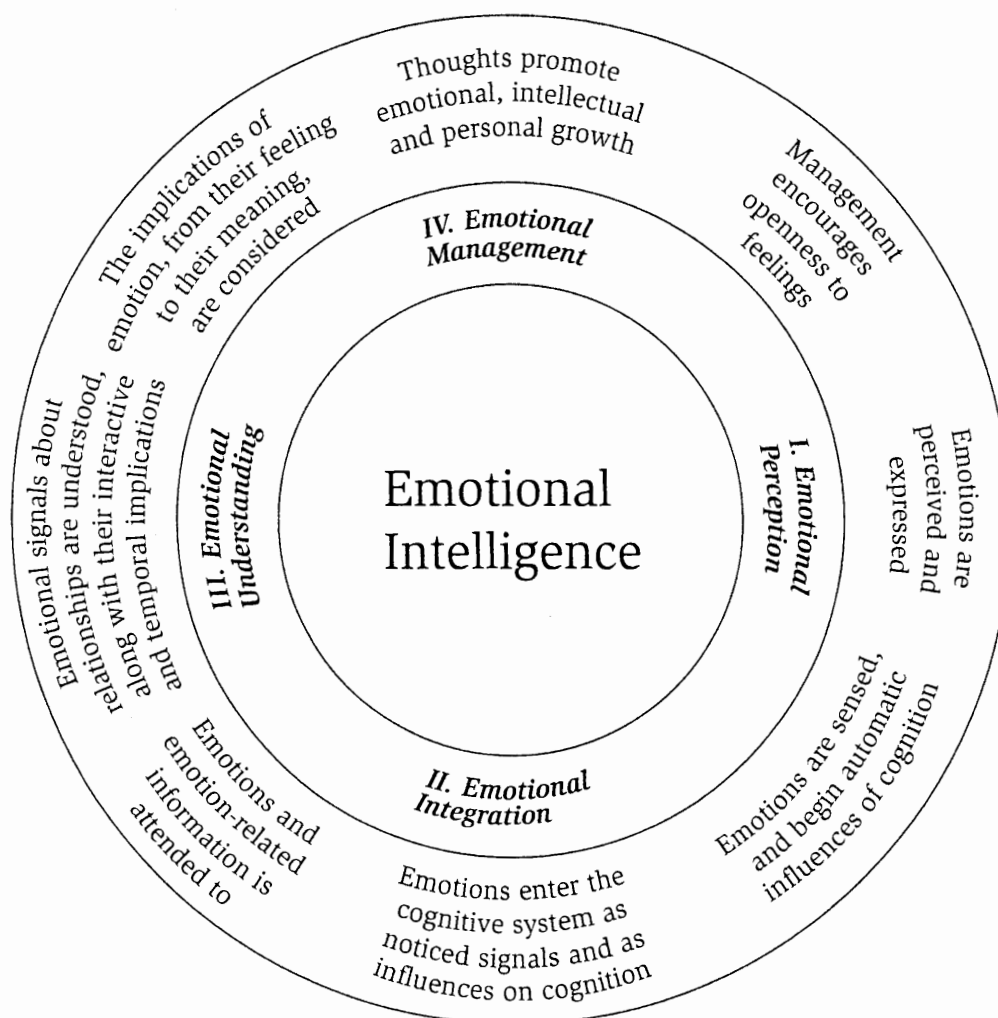


Figure 5.2. A circular depiction of the four-branch model of emotional intelligence (after Mayer & Salovey, 1997, figure 1).

They hope emotional intelligence will be a way of getting rid of troublesome emotions or emotional leakages into human relations and hope to control emotions. Although this is one possible outcome of the fourth branch, optimal levels of emotional regulation may be moderate ones; attempts to minimize or eliminate emotion may stifle emotional intelligence.

Emotional management might be thought of more profitably as beginning with a capacity for openness that allows emotions—both pleasant and unpleasant—to enter into (in other words, to be perceived or identified by) the intelligence system. That is, management encourages emotions to be experienced, although not always expressed. This is because the emotional management

branch—to which we will return—works hand-in-hand with the other aspects of emotional intelligence.

The first branch of emotional intelligence begins with the capacity to perceive and to express feelings (Figure 5.2, right). Emotional intelligence cannot begin without the first branch of emotional intelligence. If each time an unpleasant feeling emerged, a person turned his attention away, he would learn nearly nothing about feelings. Emotional perception involves registering, attending to, and deciphering emotional messages as they are expressed in facial expressions, voice tone, objects of art, and other cultural artifacts. A person who sees the fleeting expression of amusement in the face of another understands much more about that other's emotions and thoughts than someone who misses such a signal.

The second branch of emotional intelligence concerns emotional facilitation (Figure 5.2, bottom). Emotions are complex organizations of the physiological, emotional-experiential, cognitive, and conscious aspects of mental life. Emotions enter the cognitive system both as cognized feelings, as is the case when someone thinks, "I am sad now," and as altered cognitions, as when a sad person thinks, "I am no good." When emotions are recognized and labeled, the understanding of emotion (branch 3) is involved, to which we will turn in a moment. The emotional facilitation of thought (branch 2) focuses on how emotion enters the cognitive system and alters cognition to assist thought. Cognition can, of course, be disrupted by anxiety, but emotions can also impose priorities such that the cognitive system attends to what is most important (Eastbrook, 1959; Mandler, 1975; Simon, 1982) and even focuses on what it best does in a given mood (see Palfai & Salovey, 1993). Emotions also change cognitions, making them positive when a person is happy, and negative when a person is sad (Forgas, 1995; Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman, & Evans, 1992; Salovey & Birnbaum, 1989). These changes force the cognitive system to view things from different perspectives, for example, alternating between skeptical and optimistic points of view. The advantage of such alterations to thought are fairly apparent. The shifting of one's point of view between the skeptical and the optimistic encourages the individual to see multiple points of view and, as a consequence, to think about a problem more deeply and perhaps more creatively as well (see Mayer, 1986; Mayer & Hanson, 1995). It is just such an effect that may lead people with mood swings toward greater creativity than those who have stable moods (Goodwin & Jamison, 1990).

Branch 3 involves understanding and reasoning with emotion. As already suggested, emotions form a rich symbol set full of complex relationships that have puzzled and delighted philosophers for centuries (Figure 5.2, left). The person who is able to understand emotions—their meanings, how they blend together, how they progress over time—is truly blessed with the capacity to understand fundamental truths of human nature and of interindividual relationships.

This brief tour of the four branches returns us to the fourth branch (emotion management) shown at the top of Figure 5.2. It is now apparent why management must begin with perception. Only if one has good emotional perception in the first place can one make use of mood changes and understand emotions. And only with such understanding will one have the breadth of knowledge necessary to manage and cope with feelings fully. In fact, the emotionally intelligent individual must regularly cope with states of mood instability, and this requires considerable understanding of moods (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 1999).

How will such an individual manage? Emotions are complex, messy, fuzzy, and contain their own punishments and rewards. A good emotional manager, therefore, must follow some guidelines, but do so with flexibility. For example, openness to feeling is a must, but not all the time. Certainly there will be—for almost anyone—matters too painful to face at times, and emotionality is probably best closed off.

Management also involves how a person understands the emotional progressions in his or her relations with others. These relations can be unpredictable. Thus, management involves the consideration of various different emotional paths and the choosing among them. Is a person angry at his or her spouse? If so, is it best to ignore the difficulty until both partners are more relaxed? Is it possible to forgive without getting angrier next time? Perhaps the person is sufficiently desperate to feel the anger privately for a few hours, days, or even weeks, while weighing against it the pain and sorrow that might ensue after losing the partner. On the other hand, is there some way to deal with the anger-provoking issue directly? Those are at least some of the possibilities that must be addressed.

To accommodate the many emotional reactions possible in situations, emotional management is by necessity plastic: it permits the person to proceed in ways he or she thinks best, on emotional, spiritual, pragmatic, or other grounds. Being emotionally intelligent does not necessarily mean a person will want to, say, stay in a job or save a marriage, just as being intelligent does not mean a person will want to read challenging books all day long. Rather, there are other parts of personality and other situations that must be taken into account to understand what will happen. It is this requirement for plasticity that explains why emotional intelligence, measured as an ability, does not correlate highly with optimism, cheerfulness, friendliness, and other such traits and yet still predicts important life outcomes.

There is a growing body of evidence that emotional intelligence, conceptualized as a mental ability and measured with objective tasks, actually does constitute a unitary intelligence. We review such findings in detail in our companion chapter in this volume (Chapter Fifteen), on ability measures of

emotional intelligence. Here, we conclude our consideration of emotional terminology.

CONCLUSION

We have encountered three uses of the term *emotional intelligence*, first, as a zeitgeist, or cultural movement of the times, next as a synonym or near synonym for personality, and finally, as an actual intelligence within personality that is concerned with processing emotions. These three definitions of emotional intelligence are widely different.

The zeitgeist definition refers to a cultural movement. It is unclear whether emotional intelligence is simply a passing fad or could conceivably qualify as some sort of historical movement. It is probably in a class with such historical movements as the stoic, classical, and romantic movements (although it has not yet exhibited the influence and perseverance of any of those movements). From this perspective, emotional intelligence might be said to integrate the stoic and the romantic movements. Still, it remains to be seen whether emotional intelligence has the staying power of, say, stoicism, the influence of which has lasted for more than two thousand years.

Turning to the realm of personality, using the term *emotional intelligence* to refer to broad areas of personality beyond the emotional and cognitive seems unnecessarily vague to us, and even more problematic when such usage is meant to refer to the entirety of personality or character. Much of what is identified in the emotional intelligence literature does not seem to belong there. Traits such as impulse control, self-actualization, zeal, and persistence pertain to motivation; assertiveness and interpersonal relationships involve social skills that include motivations, emotions, and cognitions together, and so on. Suggesting that these are new constellations of traits, in other words, *emotional intelligence*, takes their consideration outside of well-understood aspects of personality psychology. The consequence of separating this new research from the substantial body of personality research that overlaps with it is to ignore the many findings that contradict current claims on behalf of the concept of emotional intelligence. For example, one popular claim made for emotional intelligence is that, unlike other intelligences, it can be learned (see Goleman, 1995b, p. 34), yet a good deal of research into the many personality traits that are listed as a part of emotional intelligence indicates that they can have rather considerable genetic, biological, and early-learning contributions, which, as with other parts of personality, make them difficult, albeit not impossible, to change. (For further critiques of such claims, see Mayer & Cobb, 2000; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000.)

A slight change in terminology—to describe an emotionally intelligent constellation of personality traits—might make this definition more palatable. Then, a person's emotional intelligence could be compared with a variety of other personality types with admirable qualities. The *hardy personality* was Kobasa's (1979) description of personalities of people who could overcome hardships to contribute successfully to society. The *constructive thinker* is Epstein's (1998) description of a person who can learn and change for the better and lend a helping hand to surrounding people. *Ego strength* involves the overall ability of the individual to function rationally and self-regulate (see Block & Block, 1980). *Self-actualization* is the view of personality as reaching its potential in all spheres of life. There are other such concepts as well, more or less known, that resemble this emotional intelligence view of personality.

There remain, however, two problems with referring to emotional intelligence as a more-or-less broad constellation of traits. First, because use of the term is no longer constrained by the meanings of the terms *emotion* or *intelligence*, it is difficult to decide what list of traits belongs with the term. Such difficulty is becoming more evident as models by Goleman (1995b, 1998), Cooper (1996/1997), Schutte et al. (1998), Bar-On (1997; this volume), and others increasingly diverge from each other. Second, whatever the list of traits finally chosen, to the extent that they diverge from actual mental ability conceptions, they are unlikely to be integrated into the mental ability approach (see, for example, Chapter Fifteen on our research concerning ability measures).

The ability definition of emotional intelligence, finally, has its own set of competing constructs and concepts. Most closely related are such concepts as emotional competence (Saarni, 1990, 1999) and emotional creativity (Averill & Nunley, 1992). Next, there is a group of additional intelligences that can be called "hot" intelligences because they involve motivational, emotional, or other relations to the self (Mayer & Mitchell, 1998). These include intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983/1993), which is defined as the ability to accurately understand and assess oneself. It includes social intelligence, which is often defined as the ability to interrelate and manage others (Sternberg & Smith, 1985; Thorndike & Stein, 1937; see also Sternberg, 1988). Should a motivational intelligence exist (which has not yet been determined) it would also presumably need to be tested against that (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer, 2000).

The examination of the three meanings of emotional intelligence covered in this chapter proceeded in order from the most broad and popular to the most focused and (we believe) warranted by the terms *emotion* and *intelligence*. The fact that one term carries three meanings—and there are additional meanings we could review at the cost of overtaxing the reader—creates some problems if one travels among the meanings without indicating one's intentions. It is no secret by now that we believe *emotional intelligence* is a tantalizing term best applied to scientific research and, perhaps, to cultural practices. As we indicate

in our companion chapter in this volume (Chapter Fifteen), we believe emotional intelligence as an intelligence is a new concept, and one that may help us better explain how personality, and people, function.

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