



#PERSPECTIVE

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In daily life and professional settings

In today's world, where cognitive abilities and technical skills are often highlighted as the primary contributors to success, the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) tends to be overlooked. However, EI – a concept popularised by psychologist Daniel Goleman – is a central factor that can noticeably improve our daily interactions and professional achievements.

Mohammad Moqsud Malaque, a seasoned consultant, trainer, facilitator, and practitioner in the mental health field at Monobikash Foundation, shares his valuable insights on EI.

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Often abbreviated as EI or EQ for “emotional quotient,” emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, evaluate, and manage emotions in oneself and others. He defines emotional intelligence as “the ability to manage our own emotions and understand the emotions of people around us.”

From the first cries of an infant signalling hunger to the complex emotional dynamics in a corporate office, EI is integral to navigating life's varied challenges. Malaque's extensive experience reveals that regardless of mental ability, “we all have intelligence,” pointing to the universality and importance of EI in enhancing personal well-being, fostering healthy relationships, and driving professional success.

EVERYDAY APPLICATIONS OF EI

In everyday life, emotional intelligence manifests in various practical ways.

Consider the scenario of a family disagreement. A person with high EI might first recognise their feelings of frustration and then choose to respond calmly rather than impulsively.

Drawing from his professional observations, Malaque highlights how EI is pivotal in maintaining personal relationships. He notes, “If you can't regulate your anger, you will eventually unleash it upon your loved ones, resulting in resentment and broken relationships.” This practical example underlines the necessity of emotional intelligence in fostering and sustaining deep, meaningful connections with others.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

In professional settings, EI is vital. Malaque explains that regardless of one's environment, from corporate offices with strict rules to more flexible workplaces, emotional intelligence is important.

“You need to learn to cope with the ingrained system of the organisation with emotional intelligence,” he advises. This skill helps professionals balance

responses, comply with team dynamics, and recognise personal strengths and limitations – thereby, fostering essential skills like conflict management, effective communication, and teamwork.

Even in the educational sector, EI plays a crucial role in classroom management and student engagement.

Teachers with high emotional intelligence can better understand student behaviours and craft responses that foster a supportive learning environment. This was illustrated in a study by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, which showed that teachers trained in EI strategies reported a significant decrease in burnout levels.

LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Leadership demands a high level of EI. Malaque elaborates on the foundation of leadership which includes mental strength built upon balanced emotion and cognition, manifesting through behaviour. He describes three types of leadership behaviours — passive, aggressive, and assertive — and argues that assertive behaviour, guided by emotional intelligence, is most effective.

“Leaders need to have assertive

behaviour as they are followed by many and looked towards for guidance,” Malaque states, highlighting how emotional intelligence facilitates the development of this leadership style.

DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The good news is that unlike IQ, which remains relatively fixed throughout life, EI can be developed. Activities like mindfulness meditation, journaling, and active listening exercises can enhance one's emotional intelligence. Training programmes and workshops designed to improve emotional regulation and empathy can also be beneficial.

As we advance into a future dominated by complex interpersonal dynamics and rapid professional shifts, the importance of emotional intelligence only grows. Reports from leading global forums suggest that emotional intelligence will be among the top skills needed in the 21st-century job market. This trend underscores the need for continuous development of emotional competencies in both current and future generations.

Emotional intelligence is a force that shapes how we interact, respond, and connect with the world around us. By fostering and applying emotional intelligence, we not only enhance our own lives but also contribute positively to those around us, paving the way for a more empathetic and understanding society.

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