

**Old? New? Borrowed? True?**

Some questions about the rise of emotional intelligence

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## ABSTRACT

A very brief history of the concept of emotional intelligence is followed by an examination of the idea's dissemination through Goleman and others and its migration into management topicality. A number of concerns are then raised. Principally, these relate to academic isolationism and the attendant cultural myopia, academic partiality, a focus on the individual to the exclusion of the group, the eclipse effects of overshadowing other intelligences and the isolation of emotion from the rest of our being. A conclusion follows.

## CONTENTS

<b>PAGE</b>	<b>ITEM</b>
3	Introduction
4	The growth and spread of the idea of emotional intelligence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- History</li> <li>- The Goleman Factor</li> <li>- Merchandise</li> <li>- Managerial interest</li> </ul>
7	Some reservations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isolationism:      Cultural Difference                                  Academic partiality</li> <li>- Individual Focus</li> <li>- The Eclipse Effect:    Other Intelligences                                  Isolating Emotion</li> </ul>
13	Conclusion
14	Appendix "A"
15	Appendix "B"
16	Bibliography
19	Endnotes

## INTRODUCTION

When I started to work in an office (in 1965), the world was a different place. Overhead, an old jet bomber, fitted with engines for the prototype Concorde, roared and rumbled. Below it, Wales was being linked to England by the first Severn Bridge. In the cities, slums were being enthusiastically torn down and replaced by dream homes in the sky. Later these became known as tower blocks. Technology was the coming thing and was bringing untold benefits; it even had it's own Government Minister, the centrist Anthony Wedgwood Benn. Later he became known as Tony Benn.

And technology had a friend called science, also a hot item. You could sell anything by labelling it "scientific". The telly was full of ads featuring serious men in white coats and Buddy Holly spectacles, assuring us that scientific tests proved that X washed whiter, that Y removed acne, and that Z cured headaches. They usually had fancy graphs and diagrams to prove it.

At work, too, science was the way of the future, and my boss was forever talking of "M by O" and "Scientific Management".

We even had our very own white - coated and bespectacled Social Engineer. His job was to observe, measure, and time the work done by our best craftsmen. The data he generated were used to design production systems which reproduced the work of these experts. Workers were given bonuses based on work measurement to ensure that they complied with the new way. The underlying philosophy was that you had to measure everything and pin it down. If left to their own devices, workers would simply do nothing but smoke cigarettes, bet on horse races, and make tea. To avoid this, their every moment must be organised and accounted for.

Being of an impressionable age, I initially accepted all this as Gospel. As time passed however, I noticed that the Social Engineer – a numerate, skilled, but socially inept man – remained in his job while other more sociable characters got promoted. Even I (with one soft "O" level to my name) overtook him and got to run the office.

I concluded that getting on with people mattered more for business success than being good with figures. I also concluded that if you were nice to people, they would usually be nice to you, and if you trusted them to do something, they usually did it.

I finally discovered (in the course of professional studies) that there were two opposing schools of thought about the way to manage people – the humanistic and the Scientific. Occasionally to my cost but usually to my benefit, I followed my instincts and adopted the humanistic approach.

Time passed, and in the 1990's I became aware that it seemed that the scientific approach was making something of a comeback *via* the analysis of "how to " abilities that the competencies approach to management required.

I was a little alarmed by this and pleased to hear that emotions – through a book by Daniel Goleman – were back on the agenda. "Must be a good thing", I thought, and bought the book. Reading it I was aware of a vague disquiet about the claims made by the book –there seemed to be nothing new, certainly no striking revelations – and when the opportunity came, chose to take a deeper look at Goleman's take on emotional intelligence, seeking to test weaknesses which I had vaguely perceived on initial reading.

What follows is largely a record of that testing.....

## THE GROWTH AND SPREAD OF THE IDEA OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

### History

Having become astonishingly popular in the four years since the publication of Daniel Goleman's best-selling "Emotional Intelligence – why it can matter more than IQ", it is worth asking the question "what, actually, is Goleman selling?"

For an answer, we have to go back to earlier psychologists, in particular E.L. Thorndyke who in 1920<sup>1</sup> (concurrently with his work on I.Q.), defined another form of intelligence - social intelligence - as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls – to act wisely in human relations"<sup>2</sup>. Since then, psychologists have sought to define intelligences other than those of the numerate/literate, with Howard Gardner (1983) summarising these<sup>3</sup> as linguistic, mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and bodily/physical.

In 1990, Salovey and Meyer<sup>4</sup> coined the term "emotional Intelligence" into which they subsumed intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences, and added more. They summarised the components of emotional intelligence as:

- ◆ **Self - Awareness:** Observing yourself and recognising a feeling as it happens.
- ◆ **Managing Emotions:** Handling feelings so that they are appropriate; realising what is behind a feeling; finding ways to handle fears and anxieties, anger, and sadness.
- ◆ **Motivating Oneself:** Channelling emotions in the service of a goal; emotional self-control; delaying gratification and stifling impulses.
- ◆ **Empathy:** Sensitivity to others' feelings and concerns and taking their perspective; appreciating the differences in how people feel about things.
- ◆ **Handling Relationships:** Managing emotions in others; social competence and social skills.

### The Goleman Factor

In 1995 (1996 in Britain), drawing partly on the work of Salovey and Mayer, American journalist and psychologist Daniel Goleman published "Emotional Intelligence - Why it can Matter more than I.Q."

Perhaps the great emphasis of theories of organisational commitment on affective, cognitive and behavioural consistency, and an attendant overlooking of emotion as a primary driver of organisations<sup>5</sup> led to the massive success of Goleman's book. Success it most certainly was. It was among the best-selling American books of it's year. It made the cover of "Time" and "Newsweek". It

was featured on an Oprah Winfrey Show. It spawned an industry of Emotional Intelligence tools, toys, and tests. It gained Daniel Goleman a Pulitzer Prize nomination and made him a wealthy man.

In terms of content, Goleman offers nothing particularly new. He defines emotional intelligence in much the same terms as Salovey and Mayer (Knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognising motivation in others, handling relationships)<sup>6</sup>, he dwells on such well-known theories as the role of the left and right hemispheres of the brain and the fight-or-flight response. His linking of neurological research with psychology (also a feature of Gardner's "Frames of Mind"<sup>7</sup>) is perhaps a key selling feature. For example, we are informed that:

*(The discovery that the human amygdala has a direct connection to the five senses) "overthrows the notion that the amygdala must depend entirely on signals from the neocortex to formulate it's emotional reactions.....the amygdala can have us spring into action while the slightly slower – but more fully informed – neocortex unfolds it's more refined plan for reaction"<sup>8</sup>*

Passages like the above (of which there are many) create the deterministic impression that finally there is some "real" science – neurobiology – to confirm the claims of soft, essentially speculative, psychology.

This connection with the wiring of the human brain may also explain why the book has sold very well outside its native land – physiology isn't greatly subject to cultural variation.

Whatever the reasons, the book was a runaway success, performing the useful service of giving the emotions a higher place in general – and later managerial – thought.

It was followed by two more from Goleman's fruitful pen, respectively focussing on the emotional intelligence of the Dalai Lama and the application of emotional intelligence to the workplace. Others (including Hendrie Weisinger<sup>9</sup> and Robert Cooper and Ayman Sawaf<sup>10</sup>) have also gone to press on the subject.

## **Merchandise**

When something achieves widespread popularity, there is often a migration into realms beyond the medium of original dissemination. Bulk milliners profited from the popularity of Davy Crockett in the mid-fifties, manufacturers of sportswear from the current popularity of soccer. So it is with emotional intelligence. Books are not the only fruit. A brief trawl of the internet yields a multiplicity of emotional intelligence-related sites and offerings. These include:

- Pleas (with examples) for the teaching of emotional intelligence in schools.

- A number of questionnaires aimed at giving an EQ (Emotional Quotient) rating<sup>i</sup>
- The (frankly bizarre) emotionally intelligent dolls “Peaches” and “Babin”<sup>ii</sup>

As well as the short questionnaires available on the internet, there is at least one more developed questionnaire on the market. This is the BarOn Emotional Quotient Indicator (EQ-i), which is apparently in use by the U.S. Air Force to select recruiters.<sup>11</sup>

### **Managerial interest in emotional intelligence**

The web demonstrates the high level of popular interest in emotional intelligence. What of it's application to managers and executives? Here too, it seems to have struck a chord. The press of a wide variety of professions has carried coverage, most of it offering either praise or acceptance as received truth. The following samples serve to illustrate:

From “Computing Canada”:<sup>12</sup>

*“.....a Toronto psychologist says his recent studies show that EQ or emotional intelligence, is just as critical to your career success as IQ and sadly, he says IT professionals have some catching up to do. Emotional intelligence is a measurement of how people cope with life.....”*

From “Chief Executive”:<sup>13</sup>

*“...five reasons your latest, brightest hire may fail you: The first is that as companies, we tend to put way too much emphasis on IQ and not enough on EQ.....it's difficult to measure this thing called Emotional Quotient. Dan Goleman wrote a wonderful book on emotional intelligence that's worth reading....”*

From “HR Magazine”:<sup>14</sup>

*“Science is proving that Emotional Quotient, or EQ, more than raw brainpower alone, underpins many of the best decisions, the most dynamic businesses, and the most satisfying lives....”*

From “TMA Journal” :<sup>15</sup>

*“....According to noted psychologist and best-selling author Daniel J. Goleman, Ph.D., who has studied more than 500 organisations, today's success is being measured by a new yardstick..... Goleman says the new rules have little to do with what we were taught in school. "The new measure takes for granted having enough intellectual ability and technical know-how to do our jobs; it focuses instead on personal qualities, such as initiative and empathy, adaptability and persuasiveness." Goleman calls these emotional intelligence skills "EQ." “*

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<sup>i</sup> See appendix “A”

<sup>ii</sup> See appendix “B”

And finally, from “HR Focus”:<sup>16</sup>

*“It seems that HR executives are the model of the very employees they seek, ranking above average in the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) administered by Toronto-based Multi-Health Systems Inc. (MHS). Emotional intelligence remains a reliable indicator of personal and professional success..... In a sample of 63 respondents from the United States and Canada, EQ-i scores averaged 110 – 10 points above the mean – indicating a psychologically healthy group....”*

The above are but a small selection, chosen to be representative of the tone of the transatlantic trade press, and are symptomatic of the promotion in the business world of the notion of emotional intelligence.

It makes some sense, therefore, to explore some of the possible pitfalls implicit in emotional intelligence. This exploration mainly focusses both on the “trigger” for the emotional intelligence explosion – Goleman’s books – but also refers to the concept in more general terms.

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE - SOME RESERVATIONS

During the reading and reflection for this paper, some reservations regarding Goleman's writings emerged. These are set out below.

### CULTURAL ISOLATIONISM

"Oh no! The muffler sounds bad.....What if I have to take it to the shop?..... I can't afford the expense....I'd have to draw the money from Jamie's college fund.....what if I can't afford his tuition?.....That bad school report last week.....What if his grades go down and he can't get into college?..... Muffler sounds bad....."<sup>17</sup>

The above (from "Emotional Intelligence") serves to illustrate the strongly American tone of Goleman's writing. A British-English re-write looks quite different:

"Oh no! The exhaust sounds rough...What if I have to take it to the garage?.....I can't afford the expense....I'd have to find the money from what we've put away to help Jim (*if Scottish, "Jamesie"*) through University.....what if tuition isn't fully covered by his grant?.....That bad school report last week.....What if he doesn't get good "A" levels and he can't get into Uni?..... Exhaust sounds rough....."

Although Goleman's tendency towards Americanisms could be dismissed as a matter of style, it highlights the fact that Goleman was writing for U.S. domestic consumption, which could lead to aspects of the work being more than mere distractions:

Almost without exception, the examples and academic authorities cited by Goleman are U.S. in origin. Thus, in a sample taken at random (Chapter 10 of "Emotional Intelligence"), we find references to five U.S. academics/academic studies. "Working with Emotional Intelligence" is based more on organisations than academia, but again the focus is overwhelmingly on either U.S. Companies or U.S.- based multinationals. This raises two issues:

**Cultural Differences:** One of the problems with Goleman's apparent isolationism is that the United States has its own culture. Things that are appropriate for that culture may not be for others. As Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner put it:<sup>18</sup>

*Management gurus like Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, Peter Drucker, Mike Hammer, James Champy and Tom Peters have one thing in common; they all gave.....the impression, consciously or unconsciously, that there was one best way to manage or organise.....how very American and in the case of Fayol, how French these assumptions were.... "*

And

*".....contingency studies are still searching for one best way in specified circumstances. They still believe their universalism is scientific, when in fact it is a cultural preference....."*<sup>19</sup>

Goleman, on the other hand, perceives emotional intelligence to be universally applicable:

*“At first I was amazed about (the way his first book became an international bestseller) but I was writing about some very deep commonalities among all people”<sup>20</sup>*

In dealing with emotional intelligence through a U.S. filter, Goleman may be exporting a “domestic” product to parts of the world where it is either less appropriate or totally inappropriate. At worst he may be guilty of cultural arrogance. At best, he may merely be a victim of that U.S. insularity described by Bill Bryson<sup>21</sup>:

*“Time magazine (used to) be full of stories about tottering governments in Italy and corruption scandals in South America....Even if you paid no attention to these despatches, they at least reminded you that you existed in a wider world. No longer. In the first three months of this year (1997) the U.S. edition of Time did not have a single report from France, Italy, Spain or Japan”*

For an example, one of the ways in which societies differ is through the extent to which the interest of the group prevails over the interests of the individual. According to Hofstede<sup>22</sup>:

*“Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as it’s opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout peoples’ lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioned loyalty”<sup>23</sup>*

Table 1 shows a number of ratings extracted from Hofstede<sup>24</sup> and Trompenaar<sup>25</sup>. These illustrate that U.S. cultural values veer towards the individual over the collective:

ITEM (Scored in percentages)	LOWEST	MID-POINT	HIGHEST	MEAN	U.S.
Quality of Life (Individual freedom)*	20 (Egypt)	54 (Norway)	89 (Israel)	54	69
Desire to receive individual credit*	40 (Egypt)	64 (Greece)	88 (Czech R)	65	72
Opting to take individual responsibility for mistakes*	16 (Indonesia)	43 (Netherlands)	69 (Cuba)	49	54
Belief that what happens to them is their own doing*	33 (Venezuela)	70 (Netherlands)	88 (Uruguay)	67	82
Individualism **	6 (Guatemala)	38 (Brazil)	91 (U.S.)	42	91

Table 1: Individuality and culture. Sources: \*Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner<sup>26</sup>, \*\*Hofstede<sup>27</sup>

Hofstede (whose definition of individualism is summed up as thinking of oneself as an “I” rather than part of a “we”, with loyalty to oneself rather than an in-group<sup>28</sup>) places the United States very much at the individualistic end of the spectrum. Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner’s more up-to-date work (in which they quote Parsons and Shils’ definition of the opposition between individualism – “a prime orientation to the self” and communitarianism – “a prime orientation to common goals and objectives”<sup>29</sup>) places the U.S. towards the individualistic pole.

The high level of individualism in the United States is reflected in Goleman’s writing. The example quoted at the start of this section is a case in point. In more collectivist societies there would be less *need* to obsess about College fees – the family or State would look after them.

Individual self-help is a constant in Goleman's book. "Success" is usually portrayed in individual terms - to practice self-mastery. This may be very relevant to U.S. culture, but is it in, say, Japan, Greece, or Singapore?

When Goleman *does* present the collective, he does so as if it's a "new" necessity. For example:

*"two abilities that mattered relatively little for success in the 1970's have become crucially important in the 1990's: team building and adapting to change"*<sup>30</sup>

My own experience encompasses working in teams with roles as diverse as meeting line production targets, marketing stationery, and managing a large retail business. In each of these (which date back to the early 1960's), the team and the group were vitally important for the business, as was the necessity for having social / non-authoritarian relationships with colleagues. Rather than "mattering relatively little", teams have been necessary for the whole of human existence. How *does* one person hunt, kill and butcher a woolly mammoth?

**Academic Partiality:** Goleman's writing ignores study and research that is not congruent with his thesis. For example, we are informed<sup>31</sup> that Robert Sternberg, the Yale psychologist and Wendy Williams, a graduate student...were seeking to understand why some groups are far more effective than others. As presented by Goleman, Sternberg and Williams' findings contradict those of Belbin<sup>32</sup> in that they found that teams work best when in harmony and possessing one particularly talented individual. Belbin found the opposite – that it is the creative tension between different types that makes for group effectiveness. Belbin's work was very well known by the time of Goleman's first publication. One is bound to ask why it was ignored.

More illustrious names than Belbin's fail to make it into Goleman's emotional intelligence *oeuvre*. In commenting on Sternberg and Williams, Goleman notes:

*"One surprise was that people who were too eager to take part were a drag on the group, lowering it's overall performance; these eager beavers were too controlling or domineering. Such people seemed to lack a basic element of social intelligence , the ability to recognise what is apt and what inappropriate in give-and-take. Another negative was having deadweight members who did not participate. The single most important factor was the degree to which the members were able to create a state of internal harmony...."*<sup>33</sup>

Elton Mayo, in *The Social Problems of an Industrial Society*, published in 1945 (but referring to experiments conducted at Western Electric in Chicago between 1927 and 1932) states:<sup>34</sup>

*"Man's desire to be continuously associated in work with his fellows is a strong, if not the strongest, human characteristic..."*

In elaborating the above point, Mayo refers to "rate-busters" and "chisellers". These are similar to Goleman's "eager beavers" and "deadweight members". Mayo concludes that work groups have their own means of bringing such

people into line. Such a central finding might have been deemed worthy of inclusion in “Emotional Intelligence”. The Hawthorne finding that groups have a rich extra-individual life outside of that provided by their employers might also have been remarked upon. Instead, we are informed that:

*“The idea that there is a group intelligence at all comes from Robert Sternberg, the Yale psychologist and Wendy Williams, a graduate student”<sup>35</sup>*

Thus Mayo is marginalised, replaced by people of more recent provenance.

Elton Mayo and Meredith Belbin are not alone. Goleman fails to cite quite a list of people with powerful insights into group and individual emotions. Apart from the above, these include Carl Rogers, Kurt Lewin and Hahn, Frederick Hertzberg, Eliot Jaques and Henri Piaget. Carl Jung, (described as “a Swiss psychoanalyst”) rates one mention *via* a quotation on the difficulty and undesirability of emotional detachment.

Exclusion is compounded by inaccuracy:

*“...with the rise of Freudian thinking, another wave of experts argued that in addition to I.Q., personality was an ingredient of excellence. By the 1960’s personality tests and typologies – whether, for example, a person was outgoing or introverted, a “feeling” or “thinking” type - were part of the standard measures of work potential...”<sup>36</sup>*

The above is misleading in at least three ways: It links personality testing with “Freudian thinking”, it inaccurately opposes “outgoing” (rather than the somewhat different “extraversion”) with introversion, and the Feeling/Thinking opposition is linked with outgoing/Introversion.

Whilst deception may not be intended, the meanings conveyed by the writing are ambiguous, tending to make things which have been the subject of long debate and reflection over many years look like the fresh insights of the younger group of researchers whom he *does* quote.

This is combined with a tendency to simplify which is stylistically reminiscent of the Readers’ Digest and is (Fineman 1999), crafted to appear “cogent and indispensable to organisations and management”<sup>37</sup>. An example :

*“to paraphrase business maven Peter Drucker, the purpose of business is not to make a sale, but to make and keep a customer”<sup>38</sup>*

Goleman’s work *does* refer to others. The most frequently quoted (in “Emotional Intelligence” and “Working with Emotional Intelligence”) are, in alphabetical order:

- ◆ Richard Boyatzis, Associate Dean of the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio (11 references)
- ◆ Kate Cannon, responsible for emotional competence programmes at American Express Financial Advisors (11 references)

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<sup>i</sup> This example serves to confuse as well as simplify. What is a maven? (the word used to describe Drucker in both books). How many people outside the United States know? How many *inside* the United States know? Not the compilers of the Microsoft Word thesaurus, which registers the word as “unknown” in American English.

- ◆ Richard Davidson, University of Wisconsin psychologist (6 references)
- ◆ Howard Gardner, psychologist at Harvard School of Education (7 references, including a multi-page one)
- ◆ Joseph Ledoux, neuroscientist at New York University (8 references)
- ◆ David McLelland, Harvard Professor and Goleman's Ph.D supervisor and founder of Hay/McBer Consulting. (10 references between McLelland and Hay/McBer)
- ◆ Lyle Spencer Junior, co-founder and director of research and technology at Hay/McBer (7 references in his own right)
- ◆ Diane Tice, psychologist at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio (9 references)
- ◆ Egon Zehnder / Egon Zehnder International Consulting (14 references between them)

This list is all-American / American-based. Unlike the illustrious group of dead people previously listed, all are (or were when the books were written) alive and at work. The majority are Goleman's personal contacts. This raises the suspicion that Goleman may have either been lazy in seeking sources or editing history to make his conclusions seem newer than they actually were.

Whatever the cause, the strength of Goleman's arguments is undermined by inaccurate or misleading attribution of sources and by factual inaccuracies in his text. These amount to a re-writing of history.

## INDIVIDUAL FOCUS

Goleman's writing focusses very much on the individual, whether citizen or corporate executive. His view – frequently illustrated through the homilies with which each new topic commences - is that it lies with the individual to manage their own emotions so as to achieve: *“A sense of self-mastery, of being able to withstand the emotional storms that Fortune brings rather than being “passion's slaves” (which) has been praised as a virtue since the time of Plato.....indeed, keeping our distressing emotions in check is the key to emotional well-being;....the art of soothing ourselves is a fundamental life-skill...”*<sup>39</sup>

Goleman's works are couched throughout in the language of individualism. As illustrated, this is congruent with the culture which he addresses, but may not be applicable in the wider world.

Whilst it may be good for the individual to achieve self-mastery, it may not always be appropriate. Issues themselves may not be individually focussed and self-mastery may thus be a blind alley leading individuals to accept and cope with things which would be better changed. In this sense, Goleman is uncritical in his approach, taking the world as a “given” which must be coped with by the individual rather than changed. At the extreme, this may lead to the acceptance of the unacceptable – a blindness to the need to change, say, society or family relationships. Don't try to change the world.....just cope with it.

## THE ECLIPSE EFFECT

**Other Intelligences:** Writings promoting emotional intelligence seek to move the public / managerial agenda away from what is perceived as an

unhealthy reliance on IQ, and to balance this with a focus on the individual's ability to manage their emotions. The benefits of doing so are spelt out in academic papers: *Emotion can be used effectively as a tool of social influence in a variety of organisational roles*<sup>40</sup>, in the trade press:

*"You may have CNE, MCSE, and ASE on your resumé, but if you don't have EQ you are limiting your career potential"*<sup>41</sup>

and by Goleman:

*"I found that 67 percent – two out of three – of the abilities deemed essential for effective performance were emotional competencies. Compared to I.Q. and expertise, emotional competence mattered twice as much."*<sup>42 1</sup>

The work of promoting emotional intelligence is often seen by its proponents as a process of helping the emotions to emerge from the shadow cast by I.Q. and become part of the recruitment/promotion agenda. The enthusiastic promotion of emotional intelligence raises another fear – might it, in its turn, act to obscure the importance of other intelligences?

Gardner<sup>43</sup> traces thinking in the area of multiple intelligences back to the 37 "powers" identified by Franz Gall's pseudo-science of phrenology. A more conventional root is Jean Piaget who, through observing child development, identified a number of different fields of

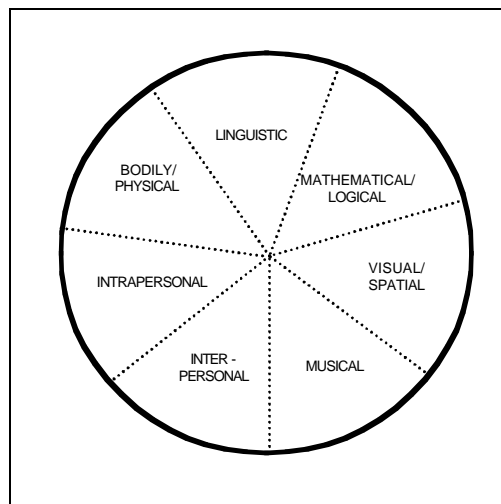


Figure 1: Gardner's Seven Intelligences<sup>44</sup>

intelligence, triggered at various stages of the child's development. This has limitations, particularly as development was viewed as a sequential process,

<sup>1</sup> Goleman's writing is prone to the sort of repetition exhibited in this quotation – 67 percent, two out of three, twice as much. He uses a kind of "Muslim Divorce" rule - say it three times and it becomes a fact.

with each stage dependent on the completion of its predecessor. Nevertheless, once this impediment is overcome, the route is open to identify and examine the multiplicity of intelligences, which Gardner characterises as seven (see fig 1).

<sup>45</sup>Goleman, whilst acknowledging Gardner, chooses to focus only on a corner of this multiplicity. In doing so, he merely shifts the focus away from IQ and towards what others term EQ. This leaves:

- A) A lot of intelligences languishing and
- B) This writer worried that the next guru will hit upon one (say bodily/physical) in which he's a complete duffer.

### The Isolation of Emotion

In a passage to which at least *my* emotions respond warmly, Fineman says:

*"...hunches, gut feelings, anger, resentment and love help focus and legitimise our cognitions; they stop them getting lost, or inform us when and how we are lost. They also get confused with one another. Thoughts are imbued with emotions and emotions with thoughts. We have feelings about what we think and thoughts about what we feel"*<sup>46</sup>

Goleman's work tends to separate emotion from the rest of our being, to isolate it into a set of competencies which can be managed to help us "succeed". As he puts it *"We're being judged by a new yardstick: Not just how smart we are .....but also how well we handle ourselves and each other"*<sup>47</sup> In case we didn't get the message, Goleman continues to beat us with his yardstick which *"is increasingly applied in choosing who will be hired and who will not, who will be let go and who retained, who passed over and who promoted"*<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, our minds and our emotions are deeply interlinked, immensely complicated and often confused. Emotions are not capable of isolation. Apart from a desire to simplify matters, why would anyone try to do this?

Perhaps the answer lies in the following passage:

*".....the strongest argument for the economic advantage of emotional intelligence in organisations can be read in data generated.....in a project sponsored by the Society for Human Resource Management. Since 1986 the institute has collected data from nearly six hundred companies, selected for profitability, cycle times, volume, and other similar indices of performance.*

*Searching for what these outstanding companies held in common, the institute identified the following basic practices in managing "human assets" ....."*

In other words, emotional intelligence increases profits by teaching the "human assets" how to isolate and use their emotions as another set of competencies. In another example, Goleman cites a process by which a company identifies emotional (and presumably other) competencies by a "systematic, objective" method<sup>49</sup>

And there it is. The method as described by Goleman is (apart from some HR bells-and-whistles) a classic piece of work-study.

It seems that Goleman's core message is thus highlighted as "Forget Kurt Lewin, Carl Rogers, Elton Mayo. Scientific management is conquering the emotions! Once we've got the competencies pinned down, we can teach them just like maths or Chemistry, and the world can move forward!"

## CONCLUSION

I started to look at emotional intelligence with hope, but hope tempered by an indefinable feeling of discomfort. I fully believed that this feeling was triggered by the Americanisms I had detected on first reading, and was inclined to write them off as my own prejudice.

On further examination I am unable to do so because the Americanisms mask something much more fundamental – a state of mind (Goleman's) which perceives emotions to be something that can be pinned down, analysed and managed like any other competence or trade skill. Others place emotions in a much more complex and confused matrix, interacting with, affecting, being affected by, thoughts and actions. Goleman's attitude is reductive. Theirs accepts the complexity of humanity.

For me, this insight into the underpinnings of emotional intelligence is a step across the line of credibility. When I started looking at emotional intelligence, I expected to find something simple, perhaps even over-simple, but fundamentally well-founded.

Now I see it as a tool for taming, not liberating, the emotions, for harnessing them in the service of personal and organisational "success" (whatever that is). Instrumentalism indeed!

I fear it will remain popular and even become more so. I feel sure that people will express, and feel, commitment towards it. I, however find that my own views chime with those from an unlikely source - Jack Mayer, co-originator of the concept of emotional intelligence, who recently said:

*"...it is coercive to dictate how people are supposed to feel at work or other places... coercion without a genuinely useful agenda"*<sup>50</sup>

I couldn't put it better myself.....

**Appendix “A” An “EQ” questionnaire:**

EQ, unlike IQ, is not an easily quantifiable measure. It pivots on such intangibles as social deftness, persistence, and empathy. Therefore, the quiz below is structured only to give you hints of your level of emotional intelligence; it is by no means definitive or foolproof. Give the test a whirl and see if you agree with its appraisal of your emotional quotient.

1. I'm aware of even subtle feelings as I have them.

Always                  Usually                  Sometimes                  Rarely                  Never

---

2. I find myself using my feelings to help make big decisions in my life

Always                  Usually                  Sometimes                  Rarely                  Never

---

3. Bad moods overwhelm me.

Always Usually                  Sometimes                  Rarely                  Never

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4. When I am ..  
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□ Disk Boot failure

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Disk Boot failure

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COMU<sup>a</sup>times

Rarely

Never

-

11. I can sense the pulse of a group or a relationship and state unspoken feelings.

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

-

12. I can soothe or contain distressing feelings so they don't keep me from doing things I need to do.

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

-

**APPENDIX “B”: Transcript (with pictures removed due to an inability to transcribe these) of the website of Dr. Pearson’s Toy Company, producers of EQ dolls:**

"Develop a child's emotional intelligence and you will make a happier, more successful adult."

Linda C. Pearson, Ph.D.

**Personal Message from Dr. Pearson**

I invented Emotional Intelligence Toys because as a psychologist I had seen what happens to adults who lack the kind of intelligence they need to form successful, happy relationships.

I had listened to the stories of men and women who "had it all", but who were miserable failures in their careers and/or their personal lives.

I had heard the unhappy intimate secrets of people who appeared to have brains, beauty, education, opportunity, wealth, all the trappings of success, but who were now coming to a professional for help because, despite their obvious talents, gifts and resources, their lives were in crisis. And with astounding regularity these crises were caused by the same problems with basic human emotions.

These problems were:

1. They did not know what they were feeling when they were feeling it.
2. They did not know how to communicate their feelings so that someone else could understand them.
3. They could not hear what other people were trying to communicate about their own feelings.

An ability to recognize feelings, to communicate them effectively and to hear what others are trying to communicate about their feelings, - these abilities are fundamental to emotional intelligence. Certainly adults can develop their emotional intelligence - I have seen this happen many times - but clearly it's easier, like most things, to learn these skills in childhood.

I invented (Pictures of Peaches and Babin) in order to develop emotional intelligence in children and thereby help them become successful happy adults.

How do the Emotional Intelligence Toys work?

Peaches and Babin are dolls with 7 FACES! Each doll is 15 inches long and comes with an adorable friendly face and six expressive face patches! Children change Peaches' and Babin's faces and feelings safely and easily, by peeling off one face patch and pressing on another.

Peaches and Babin help children explore and express their feelings  
 Peaches and Babin provide children with a method of communication  
 Peaches and Babin let children know that all feelings are acceptable

<Picture><Picture: 0>Home | Order | Guaranteed & Patented | New Toys | Play | Letters | They're Talking | Meet Dr. Pearson | Emotional Intelligence Toys

©1998 Dr. L. C. Pearson U.S. pat. 5,848,900. Can pat. pending. <Picture><Picture>

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