



The Punk Edition

Dynamic Designs for Education and Change

Energy. Excellence. Tenacity

"For an effervescent life, keep your thoughts fearless, your emotions constructive and your actions venturesome..."

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence The 3 keys to becoming more Emotionally Intelligent

This issue of the Punk Edition provides an overview of the history of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and poses PunkPD's Trinity Model of EQ through which the essential components of EQ are explored.

My life's work is in the field of EQ. This intense love affair began nearly 25 years ago when, as a spotty and awkward teenager, I came across a copy of a book simply titled 'Making Friends.' Swallowing my humiliation over the title, I bought the book and read the whole thing that same afternoon, enamoured with the content. Luckily this love affair began about the same time that Daniel Goleman first introduced the world to the term 'emotional intelligence', and so I had a name for this obsession that has never failed to pique my interest and has now morphed into a love of positive psychology as a whole. Since that day, decades ago, I have consumed everything I could find that remotely related to understanding ourselves and understanding others. I have applied this knowledge to myriad situations, from working with teams in

crisis, to developing culture change programs, to executive and couples coaching. This experience and study has led me to develop my own model of EQ which I explore below.

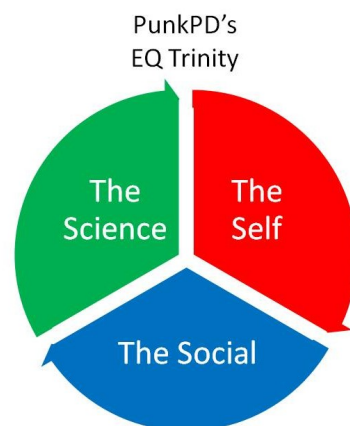
The History of EQ:

To give a brief and orienting history of EQ, Daniel Goleman is often touted as the 'Father' of EQ, and while this is true for the actual term 'Emotional Quotient', his model followed Salovey and Mayer's model which was the first of its kind. Their model was born in the early 90's and included 4 elements: understanding emotions, managing emotions, using emotions and perceiving emotions. Goleman's model was developed in 1995 and included 5 elements of Emotional Intelligence: empathy, motivation, social skills, self-regulation and self-awareness. It was this model and Goleman's book that put EQ on the map!

A few years later (1998), Martin Seligman won his long-standing battle to introduce Positive Psychology to the world!

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence

Issue 7, February 2017



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The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence: Why EQ?

Seligman posited that traditional psychology studied mental maladies and this was helpful in enlightening us about what was wrong or could go wrong for humans psychologically. However, it did not study what made people flourish- what were the elements that existed in people who were happy, well-adjusted, resilient and generally winning at life. EQ is now a major component of the ever-growing field of Positive Psychology which has changed the way we view happiness, wellbeing and resilience.

Why EQ?

Numerous studies have indicated that people with high EQ (which, incidentally does not correlate to having a high IQ or vice versa) are happier, suffer less physical illness, have more fulfilling relationships, live longer and even earn more money. And so, the traditional scales which once weighted IQ (Intellectual Intelligence or Intellectual Quotient) so heavily began to shift to include EQ. Job interviews, which once focussed solely on assessing a candidate's evidence of specialist skills (hard skills) now include a hefty focus on EQ (soft skills) as companies across the globe suffer under the weight of intelligent and hard-skilled managers and leaders who have no capacity to relate to, lead or manage people.

Have you ever known people who seem to have a view of themselves that is not consistent with how they show up in the world? Perhaps they call themselves 'honest' but this polite term is a thin veil for the reality of their vicious and harmful comments. Perhaps you have wondered why the same event may cause people to react so differently? Consider a minor car accident between two reversing drivers in a parking lot. There is little damage and no one is hurt. Yet for one driver this

EQ is the level of conscious capacity we bring to our own emotions and those of others, and in responding to diverse social situations in appropriate and helpful ways.

will ruin her entire day, as she carries anger and resentment with her to every other appointment and even responds in a short-tempered way to people at these appointments. While the other driver simply accepts the event, and moves on without the event colouring her day. Have you ever had to give feedback to someone about their behaviour and they seem to have very little personal insight into their actions? Consider the person who regularly sits in the board meeting, arms

outstretched, yawning, eyes rolling, snide comments slipping here and there, who is aghast at the feedback he receives from his manager on his low-level of demonstrated professionalism. Or the manager who responds with bias towards the people in his team that

he has bonded with most closely (nepotism), extending extra opportunities to these team members first.

EQ permeates everything we do, every interaction we have and every choice we make to respond or react to what is in front of us. Our levels of EQ dictate how we show up in the world, both in how others see us, and also how we see and relate to ourselves. And the great news is, we can continually develop, build upon and refine our EQ! Our capacity for change and growth is limitless!

So what is EQ?

EQ is simply the level of conscious capacity we bring to identifying, understanding and handling our own emotions and the emotional states of others, and responding to diverse social situations in appropriate and helpful ways. It is logical to then pose the question- what is an emotion? There is no single definition for an emotion. I favour the definition commonly used in NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) that an emotion is simply energy in motion.

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence: The Science

When we feel an emotion, we feel energy in our bodies as a result. It may be a massive energy boost (anger), or a consistent energy (calm) depending on what we are feeling and how we experience it. I have also heard emotions described as a feeling that is deeper and more lasting than a state or a mood. However, this definition is less helpful because our emotional experience is of course impacted by our state of mind, our mood, our physiology as well as external environmental factors.

In the last twenty years, there have been a number of models of EQ posed, all with slightly differing elements. I highlighted Salovey and Mayer's model and Goleman's model above. However, for me, these models leave out important elements. I see EQ as incorporating 3 distinct elements: The Science, The Self and The Social. These 3 elements make up PunkPD's Trinity Model of EQ.

*As a piece of interesting trivia, the word 'emotion' dates back to 1579 where it was derived from a French word *émouvoir*, meaning "to stir up".*

The Science:

The Science of EQ is important because, simply put, there are things we can control and there are things we can't and knowing the difference is essential in regulating ourselves and responding to others effectively. Consider the example of someone in the midst of rage. They may be throwing punches or breaking things while hailing verbal bullets on everyone who is nearby. Imagine this scene for just a moment. Now imagine someone walking directly to the raging person and saying "now hon, stop stressing. Nothing can be that bad. Let's just have a cup of tea and chat about it." What do you think the likelihood is that the raging person pauses, realises they are over-reacting, stops and sits and has a nice and calm cup of tea? I'd say slim to none. A more likely scenario would be that the person carrying the tea would be wearing it, and possibly a chair very quickly. You see, when a person is in a rage, they are emotionally hijacked by myriad chemicals flooding their brain. These chemicals are designed to stop the higher cognitive level of functioning to reserve energy for what our 'reptilian' brain thinks is required to survive the situation- to run or to fight. As a result we are no longer capable of responding in a rational and helpful way. This is commonly known as the Fight/Flight/Flood reaction. Chemicals such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine are released during this stage of the 'emotional hijacking' and these give us a

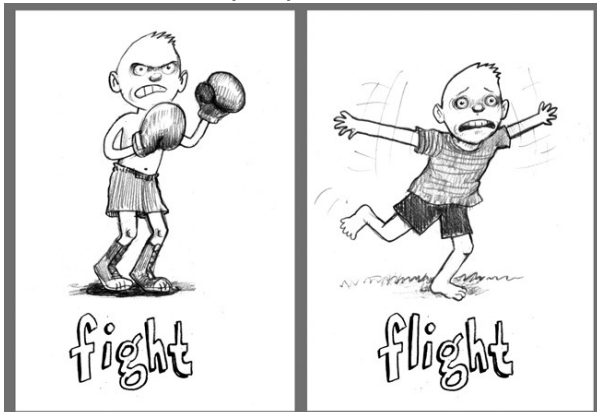


Image credit: <https://lawrules.wordpress.com/tag/fight-or-flight/>

large dose of energy and bring blood to our muscles so that we can move and respond quickly. This capacity was a key evolutionary necessity as we had an automatic response to life or death situations, which would have faced us regularly in prehistoric times. The short fall in today's world is that our brains cannot tell the difference between a lion approaching us or an intense emotional situation and so it will often 'misfire' and hijack our brains when we are not actually in physical danger.

However, most of us in adulthood have developed a range of strategies we employ if we notice ourselves rising up the anger scale to manage both our feelings and our actions. We do things like remove ourselves from the situation, go for a walk, talk to a friend, or go to the gym to get the energy out. These are examples of emotionally intelligent strategies.

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence: The Self

Emotional reactions are a result of a complex interplay between our Brain Stem, Limbic system and our Cerebral Cortex (the Triune Brain). Our Brain Stem is the oldest component of our brain, commonly known as the 'reptilian brain'. This part of our brain is essentially responsible for keeping us alive (basic responses to eat, breathe, bonk and sleep) and it is from this part of the brain we experience the Fight/Flight/Flood response. The Limbic System, often known as the emotional centre of our brain, controls

Identifying our emotional triggers and understanding how we feel and react to various emotions is the essential first step in changing unwanted behavioural responses

how we respond or react to emotional stimuli, the hormones (dopamine and oxytocin for example) that are released and how we store and regulate memory. The cerebral cortex controls our rational, cognitive and executive functions.

Another key element to understand is how we develop behaviour patterns. Our brain functions to build neural 'short cuts' to free up our capacity for executive functioning (higher order thinking). This means that we may react or respond to a choice or situation once or twice in the same way, and our brain goes 'you beauty! I don't have to make this decision any more. It's already been made. We'll keep doing that thing every time this situation comes up' and a neural pathway is built. These reactions become like neural super-highways in the brain, and viola! A behaviour pattern or habit is formed! Our brain quickly and easily lays these pathways and what we think is our 'personality' is actually made up of a lot of (now) automatic neural responses to situations or events we have been in before! It is great when these are helpful patterns, but these can inhibit us when these are no longer helpful or even downright negative.



Image credit:
<http://annrusnak.com/understanding-and-managing-your->

This same structure of behaviour is also how we develop 'emotional triggers'. Triggers are events, words or situations that, when we are exposed to them, bring us instantaneous and intense emotional reactions. Consider a situation in which you have over-reacted.... Chances are you over-reacted because you weren't responding to the 'here and now' you were reacting a past event that was triggered with the current situation.

The short story is that while there are aspects that we cannot control, there are also many that we can! With reflection and enquiry into triggers and common behaviour patterns (particularly ones that are no longer helpful or productive) we can begin to make conscious changes to many of our previously unconscious responses.

The Self:

The Self incorporates two primary elements: identification and regulation. Understanding the self includes having the insight to be able to identify our own states, emotions, triggers and behavioural responses. This can be harder than it sounds because we often, particularly when we begin the EQ development journey, do not have the vocabulary to name distinctive emotions. We also may not be consciously aware of how different emotions affect us (although often people we live with or work closely with can give us this information!) or how we 'manage' these. For example, a person may react to a situation with anger but loss or abandonment may be the underlying triggers for this response. They may even state they are angry, and identify with that emotional state, however with reflection they will be able to identify that the anger is merely a well-developed coping mechanism for the loss and vulnerability they may be feeling.

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence: The Self

This type of personal enquiry can also allow us to examine our thinking around a particular behaviour pattern or emotional response. We can ask ourselves, have we been 'triggered'? Where does this trigger come from? Or perhaps the behaviour we are exhibiting is not really a reflection of how we are feeling, but of how we learnt to behave in this situation. For example, perhaps we watched our parents behave in a certain way and we repeat that behaviour pattern through our lives, not even realising that this behaviour is not actually our own, but we have been 'gifted' it through our environmental programming. Examining our emotional patterns through reflection is a key way we can begin to bring to the surface our previously unconscious reactions. Once we are aware of them, we can begin to consciously change them by making different choices.

Essentially, when we are in control of our emotions, so that we run them and they don't run us, we can choose our responses to best suit the context we are in and our goals for that situation

In addition to insight and the identification of emotions, The Self element also incorporates being able to manage and regulate what we feel and how we respond or react to the event in front of us. Generally, this means regulating our behavioural responses to what is going to be most socially appropriate, leading us to be effective leaders, managers, team members, employees, family members and friends. For example, we may become increasingly exasperated in a meeting, but the emotionally intelligent person is able to manage this through breathing and self talk (or other effective strategies). The result of this is outward behaviour that remains calm and helpful. However, we may also choose to be socially inappropriate at times to really get a point across. Tony Robbins (author and coach) has stated that he uses swearing strategically for emotional shock value when he wants to drive a point home. This may not be what is most 'socially acceptable', but it achieves his end goal. Essentially, when we are in control of our emotions, so that we run them and they don't run us, we can choose our responses to best suit the context we are in and our goals for that situation. To illustrate this further, I recently chose to use a

strong tone of voice and a choice four-letter word when I encountered a person with a very large dog off-lead in an on-lead area. This dog raced away from its owner and became aggressive to our dogs (who were on-lead). I chose to respond in a way that was very assertive and demonstrated no tolerance for this owner's behaviour because I wanted to leave a lasting impression on this person about the importance of community safety for other dogs, owners and children who use the



Image Credit: Dreamtime.com

common area. Had my goal been to make new neighbourhood friends that I could invite over at cocktail hour, I would have chosen a vastly different strategy.

When we have the ability to regulate our behaviour, we get better and better at choosing our response. Responding over reacting simply means that we experience the event, consider our desired outcome and choose our behaviour accordingly. When we react, we experience an event, react through emotion and then deal with the consequences later. While we can never guarantee that our behaviour will have the desired impact on the other person, responding to an event is likely to achieve a far better outcome in most circumstances than reacting, driven purely by emotion, with no thought to the desired outcome.

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence: The Social

The Self element also includes self-care. While this term has, in my opinion, become an overused buzz-term recently, it is important to discuss. Consider a person who has a busy week ahead and knows that they will have limited time to tend to their own needs. They are already tired, and feeling 'stretched'. Imagine that this person has been asked to babysit for a friend as well. Someone with reasonable EQ and reasonable self-insight is far more likely to say no to this request because they know that although they want to help their friend, if they overstretch themselves any further, they will most likely become sick or even more tired and not be able to complete the current demands on their time. Someone with lower EQ will either accept the request with no regard for their own needs, or accept it and seethe with passive-aggressive resentment as a result!

Self care enables us to keep our energy in the black. It gives us a better starting point in our day to be able to respond rather than react, and respond as the best version of ourselves that we can be in that moment.

The 'take home' message for The Self element is that we can enhance our EQ by with regular enquiry into the reasons behind our thinking or behaviour. When we understand it (or understand it better) we can make conscious changes to previously 'engrained' behavioural patterns. When we continue this insight and begin to understand what we are feeling and when, and identify what we need to maintain a state of self-care, we also empower ourselves to be able to respond rather than react to a given situation or person. When we respond, we consider our own needs, the needs of others and the needs of the context before we act.

The Social:

The Social element contains within it 3 primary aspects: recognising, empathising and responding. The first



Brene Brown has a great video on the different between empathy and sympathy. It can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

is the ability to recognise that our truth or experience is not the same as someone else's truth or experience. As humans we are inherently egotistical. We often assume (without realising it) that our experience is the same as someone else's, when in fact, it may be vastly different. A simple example to illustrate this occurred on Christmas Day, 2016. My mother had a handful of things she needed to bin and she asked me to lift the lid on the bin for her. In her home, she uses a wide bin with a metal lid that has to be lifted by hand. In my home, I have a smaller and taller bin with a lid that lifts when you stand on a pedal. I looked at her

quizzically, walked over to the bin and stepped on the pedal which lifted the lid. She saw my foot and said "Oh, it's different to mine!" Such a simple example illustrates how often we make assumptions or take for granted that our experience or expectations are naturally going to match someone else's.

Once we understand that any one event or situation invites multiple 'truths', we are free to truly empathise with others. Empathy is different to sympathy. In empathy we seek to understand the unique experience of a person or people. In sympathy, we respond with sorrow or pity without enquiring into a person's own experience of the event. Sympathy also invites us to project our own feelings onto another person and we may respond in an unhelpful way.

The Essentials of Emotional Intelligence: Strategies for EQ

The third aspect of The Social element is the capacity to respond in a socially appropriate manner to the context at hand. This includes responding appropriately to a person once we have sought to understand their perspective. It also includes the ability to 'read' a social situation and behave in a way that is fitting with the social, cultural or contextual norms in that situation. We all do this, to a degree, subconsciously. For example, none of us had to read a book on 'How to line up at the Grocery Store'. There are no signs dictating behavioural expectations at the check-out, and yet most of us follow the same social conventions. It would feel very odd (though a lot of fun) to see someone singing and dancing while they waited in line, or randomly engaging passers-by in unsolicited conversation. We subconsciously gauge situations and modify our behaviour accordingly. The more adept we become at this, the more quickly we can develop rapport with people in new situations and the more at ease we will feel in a range of social contexts.

Strategies to Enhance our EQ:

EQ, like any other area of expertise, can be learned, expanded and refined. We are never 'done learning' in this area because, by virtue of being human, we are continually learning and evolving. However we can speed up the practice by consciously undertaking tasks and setting ourselves learning goals. The following exercises can assist us on the path to enhancing our EQ:

- Seek to recognise multiple 'truths' or perspectives in situations. Particularly if you are experiencing a conflict, stop and ask yourself how the other person might be seeing this situation? What values or beliefs or expectations might they bring to it that differ from your own?
- Reflect on your reactions. If you experience a reaction (as opposed to a considered response), consider what triggered it? Is this a pattern? Would others who know you well say this is a pattern? Is this helpful or unhelpful?
- Once we have inquired into a behaviour pattern that we consider unhelpful, we can consciously plan for and practice a new response. Decide, a head of time, what you would like to do instead. See this in a role-play in your mind as often as you can. Practice and rehearse it. The more we do this, the more able we will be to draw on this new response when we need it.
- Seek feedback on our behaviour and responses from others. This can help us identify our blind spots, or habits we may have been unaware of, and address these accordingly. A good rule of thumb when receiving feedback from others is to be open to it, but not defined by it!
- A quality coach can also help in the process to strengthen and build one's EQ

In Conclusion

EQ is no longer an 'optional extra.' If we want to be successful in today's workplace, build loving and supportive relationships, and expand our capability to respond to complex situations with confidence and fortitude, dedicating some time and resources to building our EQ is a wise and strategic decision!



Abby Elizabeth Rees is PunkPDs director, a self-confessed 'education junkie', University Lecturer, Education and Empowerment Writer, Behaviour and Change Specialist, Executive Meta-Coach and artistic thinker.

Energy, Excellence and Tenacity capture Abby's drive and personality.

Thriving on new challenges to design for education and change, Abby leads with a level of energy that earned her the nickname '240' (240 Volt) from her former colleagues. With the tenacity of a Rottweiler, Abby lives and breathes her design projects, providing her clients with a commitment to excellence that is unparalleled. Abby has a lively personal presence, strong interpersonal skills and uses a wide range of innovative and inventive techniques. With rich experience in facilitating diverse groups, Abby has delivered a range of corporate training and developed education, change and communication tools to meet individual needs.

In addition to being recognised with numerous National and International awards for her work, Abby embodies the cliché of 'life-long-learning' and has achieved:

Masters of Educational Leadership

Sustainable Leadership Fellowship Scholarship

New York Un-School of Disruptive Design

Bachelor of Education: Inclusive Education

Graduate Certificate in Public Relations

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