

The Interplay of Stereotypes and Emotional Intelligence Around Men and Women

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ABSTRACT

Stereotypes can aid or destroy one's life. Ultimately, the mind holds the power to determine if we let stereotypes affect our day-to-day life. This is where emotional intelligence can be useful. In this thesis, I highlight how emotional intelligence is something that can change people's perspectives. I provide the definition of emotional intelligence and then break it down into sections on why it is important. I explain why emotional intelligence is often hard to measure and the many benefits of becoming more emotionally intelligent both in the workplace and in one's personal life. I list common stereotypes and societal pressures that can become such a pressure on one's life that people forget to enjoy the little things. I explore stereotypes of men and women and how to retrain the brain. This thesis highlights many actions that can be done to help one increase their ability to deal with one's emotions as well as the emotions of others. I research many methods that can help one gain power emotionally. Increased self-confidence and relational skills are key points that one is likely to achieve if one utilizes the tools given in my research.

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Introduction

The Power Intelligence Holds

Intelligence helps individuals through life changes, and it holds value. The ability to form conclusions and analyze data from different perspectives makes people unique. Children enter the educational systems at young ages. Students spend years of their lives pursuing higher education. People often compare one another based on academic accomplishments. There are positive incentives to being educated, and many people believe the pros outweigh the cons when investing in an education. Those who do not choose to go to college are often judged. The individuals who decided to reject the societal values of education usually find themselves working retail or lower-paying jobs, although there are exceptions. Whether one accepts it or not, education holds value throughout the world. Knowledge is often seen as something of significant importance. For instance, an article arguing for higher education states that higher education “Successfully competes for resources because it provides most of the personnel to the other educational media and much of the knowledge and ideas transmitted by them” (Bowen, H., 2018:11). People take pride in being intelligent. Intelligence is often measured through IQ tests and degrees. Other forms of intelligence can help people advocate for themselves and separate the good from the great.

Most everyone wants to be acknowledged for doing good. Some individuals are born with more skills in particular fields. One's ability to understand one's specific skills can help one find like-minded individuals, which creates a sense of belonging. The human ability to adapt can help individuals improve their intelligence. One study

examines college students in China comparing cortisol levels to self-esteem (Yang, J. et al., 2014:214). After qualitative analysis, this study concludes that the correlation between self-confidence and wanting to fit in fluctuates because it is difficult to gather authentic data about vulnerable topics. This is not only an issue in China but in the United States as well. Often, students pursue advanced educational institutions for their passion, some go for titles, and others go to build relationships. Institutions often hold ceremonies and celebrations to recognize those who accomplish something rigorous or academically challenging such as getting accepted into medical school or making the Dean's list. Awards recognizing intelligence are generally highlighted on resumes and can elevate an individual within a society or marketplace. Intelligence, or IQ, holds undeniable value. When people take the time to see the value that emotional intelligence, or EQ, holds, they can use this to better advocate for themselves.

The Power Emotions Hold

Cultivating an understandable definition of emotions can help one visualize why emotions hold such power. Emotions can be best and most simply defined as internal "Stereotypical energetic patterns; energy in motion they are emotions" (Watkins, A., Ted Talk, 2016). The concept of emotions being energy in motion is often mentioned by scholars. Yet individuals will most likely perceive this definition differently due to the unique perspective each one of us holds. Energy can have a different interpretation from person to person. Yet, almost everyone has experienced how emotions can be draining. The speaker goes on to talk about how many emotions the average person feels. He states, "There are thirty-four thousand emotions that you can experience; most people go through their life with ten or twelve" (Watkins, A., Ted Talk, 2016). Twelve out of 34,000

is an exceedingly small amount, yet the prevalent emotions we can feel and understand have an incredible impact on how we view the world around us.

Taking the time to finely process how one is feeling internally can change their whole outward perspective. Sometimes individuals do not want to build their emotional capacity because it is so much easier to stick with the current emotions they already know how to feel. Building emotional awareness can help a person make the best of unexpected situations and new experiences. The mind is a powerful tool that can make or destroy one's perception of life. Identifying what one is feeling can lead to a dramatic difference in how that person relates to others. Expanding one's emotional capacity and identifying ways to understand and utilize emotions instead of keeping everything inside can be life changing. Energy and emotions go hand-in-hand and understanding what is going on internally in one's mind can aid in all areas of life. Since emotions are so prevalent and hold such variance among individuals, it is crucial to understand one's emotions for one to reach their full potential.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence can be difficult to define in simple terms, but it promises many benefits to those who understand it. Intelligence, in general, allows us to articulate accurate and educated responses to the questions being asked. Emotional intelligence aids in adapting to changes that are out of one's control. For instance, one scholar says those navigating into adulthood face necessary trials that influence their future success (Moore, B. J., 2012:7). Those who take the initiative and decide to become more emotionally intelligent often overcome the negative while others mask these feelings. Society constantly changes, and how one responds to external and internal factors can

significantly influence who an individual becomes. Due to the constant changes people face entering the workforce or continuing a career in their current workplace, being in touch with their emotions and the emotions of others is an opportunity for growth.

Emotional intelligence can be utilized in almost every field because almost every field involves human interaction. Unlike robots, humans have authentic emotions and different perspectives, making human interaction distinctive. This is why there are so many different perceptions of the definition of emotional intelligence. From a business perspective, scholars talk about emotional intelligence stating that, "the appraisal, expression, regulation, and use of emotion develop through experience and social interaction in much the same way as do other psychological processes" (Roberts D. R. et al., 1988:990). Social interaction is a key word in this quote that helps define what emotional intelligence is. Emotional intelligence requires time and energy directed toward others as well as oneself. The connections that are made through emotions are extensive. Learning to regulate emotions is crucial to the development of emotional intelligence. Although individuals may not be able to change their initial thoughts, they can control how they react to these emotions. Without expressing emotions, these feelings can become bottled up, pushing people further from dealing with root problems. Emotions play a large role in many individuals' choices and there are ways to learn how to deal with feelings in a healthier manner than many can comprehend. Too often people mask their emotions to fit in academically or socially when, on the contrary, dealing with one's feelings can add to their validation.

Other scholars define emotional intelligence with a more psychological approach, but still have a similar premise in their definition of what emotional intelligence is.

Emotional intelligence "refers to our capacity to effectively perceive and process emotion" (Zysberg, Leehu, and Sivan, R., 2014:3). With what was previously mentioned about a business perspective of emotional intelligence, we can see that there is a correlation between the psychological definition and the business definition. The business definition is influenced by the psychological aspect because it has to do with how we perceive information. Both articles mentioned how outward factors influence emotions. The definition of emotional intelligence in different fields of study still revolves around the same concept of proactively being able to deal with one's personal thoughts and emotions as well as how one perceives the thoughts of minds they cannot control. Becoming more emotionally aware is a process that challenges oneself and others for the better.

Challenges in Data Collection and Research

Overall, emotional intelligence is tricky to measure because, in the end, no one can read minds. There are many misconceptions about emotional intelligence. Some think that all intelligence flourishes as we age, while others think we are innately born with a certain amount of intelligence, thereby making it impossible to change. Yet, these are both broad interpretations about the different forms of intelligence. Ultimately delving into more research will help individuals better understand the concept of how to become more emotionally intelligent. One business study examined 100 students and found that emotional intelligence is challenging to measure due to its heavy reliance on an individual's self-reflection (Roberts, D. R. et al., 1988:993). Too often, the intense pressure to do well can skew real emotions and emotional statistics. Collecting data

regarding emotional intelligence is challenging due to the data mainly being based on opinions.

As a result, scholars question the measuring of emotional intelligence. "Is this self-esteem rooted in a realistic understanding of one's emotional competencies, or is it more narcissistic in nature?" (Zeidner, M. et al., 2009:18). The concept of protecting oneself can help explain why collecting data on emotions is so difficult. Not being utterly transparent about emotions is often easy to do and not questioned, making the statistics harder to prove accurate. Unintentionally, one's thoughts regarding their emotional intelligence can vary from day to day. Emotions vary from one individual to another, making it challenging to collect quantitative research without asking extensive personal questions. Questions asked to collect qualitative data can make people feel uneasy, causing individuals to steer away from collecting personal information about others. Nevertheless, researching both qualitative and quantitative data can allow people to get a real human understanding of emotions and statistics to understand emotions better. Understanding how to become more emotionally intelligent is beneficial and can increase self-confidence.

In numerous studies, research data on emotional intelligence was still difficult to measure on a larger scale. Another study evaluating men and women published by *The Psychology of Women Quarterly* studied a group of around 100 undergraduates. The authors found that "consistent with previous research, women generally evaluated their same-sex friendships more positively than did men" (Veniegas, R. and Peplau, L., 1997:279). Men's and women's emotions can differ daily due to circumstances that do not necessarily have to do with gender. This can skew the data collected in any study to

fit a certain bias. One of the reasons people should check multiple sources before making assumptions on data is to avoid biased results. Time is another factor that can skew data; this study was conducted in 1997 and the results may differ from today's opinions. Often, people want fast factual information, which is why they choose to rely on those they trust. Sometimes this method works. Yet, it is easy to fall into the stigma of stereotypes. This is why it is extremely important to know what a person believes and why they believe the way they do. Quantitative emotional intelligence statistics can help one clarify how they feel about certain stereotypes about men's and women's ability to deal with their emotions. Yet, there is always room for personal growth in emotional intelligence to minimize stereotypes.

Statistics compare how men and women view themselves showing factual evidence but have many added variables. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test is a common method used to measure emotional intelligence. The Self-Rated Emotional Intelligence Test is a self-study of emotional intelligence that is often utilized. A study published by the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* examines college-aged men and women and identifies ways in which gender influenced emotional intelligence measurements. The study showed that men had less empathy than women, while men had higher psychological well-being scores on both the MSCEIT and the SREIS (Brackett, M.A. et al., 2006:788). This study utilizes quantitative data, yet once again still leaves room for error because the control group is a small number of people, thus the complexity of emotions is less likely to be captured. Overall, scholarly statistics on emotional intelligence are still difficult to measure at times due to the personal aspects of learning about oneself.

Emotions in the Workplace and Emotional Intelligence at Work

Dealing with emotions and being emotionally intelligent while trying to balance a work and a personal life can sometimes seem impossible. Taking the time to be there emotionally for oneself and others can improve the quality of both home and work. Some employees and managers increasingly worry about how they will provide for their families rather than how well they perform. Deficiency needs and growth needs are both advocated for in Maslow's Motivational model that pushes for understanding human needs. The chart summarizes that you must have your basic needs met for concepts such as self-actualization to occur (McLeod, S., 2023:1). Being intentional with oneself and others can often get pushed to the side when basic financial needs are lacking. Motivation is essential to work environments. Motivation can fluctuate daily, but feeling comfortable enough to let others into one's life and share their emotions can result in many benefits. Employees and employers are more willing to cut corners and not perform to the best of their abilities to live in temporary comfort. Being emotionally intelligent in any role in a business is beneficial because it helps ensure that people feel safe and secure in their workplace. Human needs must be met to become more emotionally intact, which leads to more satisfaction in one's work and personal life.

There is value in becoming more emotionally intelligent. A study states, "Overall, participants valued a leader who was open, willing to self-disclose, and indicated interest in self-improvement. They also valued a leader who could recognize moods and issues in the work culture in general" (Sy, T., 2006:4). Being emotionally intelligent can help others to see one as a leader. Delving into self-awareness and improvement usually takes time and effort that could be spent on other areas of improvement. Being more aware of

your emotions and skillsets can encourage others and open new connections between peers. Meaningful relationships can shape a company and its culture. As one realizes how to deal with their own emotions, they can become a leader to others and empower self confidence in the workplace. Emotional intelligence can increase one's approachability and self-confidence.

A push to be more aware of one's own emotions can have a chain reaction on the feelings of others in a work environment. For instance, some scholars state, "Training emotional intelligence in schools, workplaces, and psychiatric clinics then offers a viable, and valuable, solution to perceived individual, community, national, and global needs" (Zeidner, M. et al, 2009:3). Having emotional connections within a business is crucial and can be used as a positive asset to build a positive culture for the company and improve people's ability to connect. Emotions can ruin relationships or build them. There are layers involved in emotions, and they can get extraordinarily complex. One's role in a company is to work through barriers and be there to build one another up. Working through barriers does not mean that one is emotionally unwell. Even though most companies strive to be as close as they can to perfection, not everyone is going to be best friends with everyone. Being emotionally aware of this can help you avoid potential conflict. Issues can get out of hand and emotions are not always at the top of the priority list.

Stereotypes and Emotions

Background Information on Stereotypes

In general, stereotypes have strongholds on society. Stereotypes are not always bad and can push people in good ways. Yet they can also have the opposite effect. Men

and women are often categorized into different stereotypes. From a young age, society pushes children to act in certain ways. For instance, in an elementary school study that talks about stereotypes of boys and girls, Sullivan (2019) states, “Girls like to care and boys like to build. Blocks are for boys, girls are only allowed to use pink or purple ones. A boy builds a castle; a girl is encouraged to just be the princess and wait inside the castle for her knight. She can only be the princess.” Children are vulnerable and society uses that vulnerability to mold individuals from a young age. When a quote like this is normalized, it can majorly affect the psychology of a child because they are bound to think that something is wrong with them if they do not fit into this stereotype. Stereotypes typically do not have malicious intent but can have unintended consequences from birth to adulthood.

From a young age, individuals are taught what is expected of them by society. It is important to note, “The historical evolution of the brain and emotions is mirrored in each human being's individual development. Ontogeny (development of an individual organism) often recapitulates phylogeny (evolution of a particular species)” (Lindner, E.G., 2006:271). If a little boy is playing with blocks and an adult comments that they should be the one who is protecting the castle this can impact how he processes the world around him. Words hold incredible power and children often follow adults, especially if they see them as role models. As individuals age their childhood can continue to influence them into adulthood. Stereotypes are deeply rooted and can give people purpose or make them feel worthless.

To seek validation, many people try to fit into the status quo. When individuals fall into stereotypes, one scholar goes on to talk about the "disease of meaning" which he

describes as when people are unsatisfied following these stereotypes and do not know why (Watkins, A., Ted Talk, 2016). Men and women often believe they must be perceived in a certain way. Being outwardly perceived as the person who has it all figured out can temporarily boost esteem yet, internally, many are still struggling to find meaning alone. Stereotypes can be accurate, but one's mind has the power to decide if one wants to fulfill a stereotype or not. Stereotypes can influence anyone, and their prevalence impacts our emotions.

Stereotypical Emotional Expectations for Men

From generation to generation the world has emphasized positive stereotypes that men are expected to follow. According to Kimmel, M., and Hearn, J., “Men, oriented to the public sphere, are understood to be active, strong, independent, powerful, dominant, and aggressive...” (2004:223). First, although these adjectives may seem like positive aspirations, they can have the opposite effect internally. Society sees this exemplified over and over again whether this be shown through childhood interactions or in the latter parts of life in the workplace. So, when a boy or man does not like the idea of fitting into one of these stereotypes it often sticks out. Men have been programmed for millennia to be seen as strong and powerful. This is often portrayed in the media. When was the last time you saw a man crying in public? It is generally very rare. The reasoning behind this does not have to do with the fact that men are not enduring as much emotionally compared to women. A man could be experiencing more emotional pain than a woman, but expressing that pain in public is stereotypically wrong. Men showing emotional vulnerability does not exemplify the characteristics society often associates with men,

which include being strong and independent. Stereotypically, the notion that men deal with their emotions by being silent is continuously pushed by society.

Sometimes male stereotypes work in favor of men while other times they do not. For instance, one study that interprets gender differences “found that fathers (but, interestingly, not mothers) showed greater contingent responses to in-the-moment sadness and anxiety expressions by girls than boys and greater contingent responses to anger and disharmonious emotion expressions by boys than girls” (Chaplin T., M., 2015:1). Straight away this study may seem different because men are typically not seen as the ones who understand others’ emotions. Innately, one can treat their own children differently based on stereotypes they learned growing up. This could be a reason many men grow up to never show their emotions and anger is a more common stereotype of men. This study is not saying that all men fall into this stereotype of treating their children differently emotionally based on gender but brings up an important aspect of emotional intelligence which stems from generational influence where men and women both experience generational trauma. This study could validate that how one's parents taught them or how society has shaped them is very impactful on one's identity. The stereotype that boys grow into men who were stereotypically treated more harshly than the women in their lives can affect how they outwardly process emotions. Overall, it is seen that male stereotypes do not always fit every individual personality, which can affect their emotional intelligence.

Stereotypical Emotional Expectations for Women

Women can feel pressured under stereotypes as well. When describing women, one opinion states, "Women associated with the private sphere, are seen as passive, weak,

dependent, powerless, subordinate, and nurturing" (Kimmel, M., and Hearn, J., 2004:233). These stereotypes can make women feel underappreciated and misunderstood. When women do not fit into being nurturing or dependent this can deeply affect their feelings of purpose. Going back to the playing with blocks example mentioned earlier, the little girl is often told to be the one waiting for a prince. Women, past and present, have struggled and are struggling with identity problems because they find their worth in stereotypes, whether the stereotype is found in being married, having children, or being a strong independent woman.

When stereotypes that have been ingrained in little girls' brains do not come true, they can lose themselves and lose track of their emotions. One article talks about how custody battles used to be more based on the child's age than whether the defendant trying to win custody was male or female. They talk about how this is no longer how the court system works (Warshak, R. A., 1996:397). Many stereotypes are based on the observance of past behavior and often have to do with a specific time period and what was socially acceptable at that time. For instance, in today's era, a stereotype is that women will always get custody of their children. The way the court handles custody battles today would have been highly questioned earlier in the 1900s because women did not even have the right to vote then. It all has to do with what society expects of individuals. If men were seen as just as nurturing as women, then maybe some judges would change their minds, but that stereotype of the woman being the one to show empathy is still prevalent. These are difficult decisions for judges who have studied how to interpret emotions in the judicial system, let alone the average person. Although custodial battles have changed over time, these stereotypes can corrupt how people view one another. Stereotypes of

women present many strongholds on people's ability to become more emotionally intelligent because they can be unrealistic and change constantly.

The societal pressure to belong can cause women to avoid the negative stereotypes of women, but the stereotypes are still taking hold of emotions. Louisa (2013) summarizes a previous study and states, "The pressure for some senior women to hide their own emotions, or not be themselves – instead believing they have to act in a more 'alpha male' way – meant many were unfriendly or uninteresting bosses to work for, the study showed." Some women feel the need to act the opposite of the negative stereotypes of women to gain appreciation. Due to the continuous stereotypes of women being dependent and powerless, some try to fit into male stereotypes instead to show their dominance. Negative and positive stereotypes of women can be an incentive to some, while an insult to others. All stereotypes can toy with one's emotions. Women's emotions, in particular, can be greatly influenced by stereotypes.

The Power of Emotional Intelligence Internally and Externally

Internally, society holds both men and women to standards that are not always realistic, and being emotionally intelligent can help individuals be confident in who they are. "In the past 60 years, both psychology and consumer behavior researchers have accumulated a multitude of evidence, showing that environmental stimulus exerts robust and often irresistible influences on consumers' purchase decision even without their awareness" (Liu, Y. et al., 2013:830). Everyone wants fast results and if they do not get immediate gratification, many will give up. This is why companies pay so much for consumer behavior. Overcoming this need for instant satisfaction can lead to all sorts of mental health breakthroughs and increase self-confidence. If validation does not start

internally the fast dopamine will never be enough. As mentioned earlier, emotions hold energy, and one has the power to choose what they do with their energy. Knowing how to utilize one's emotions and grow emotionally can impact self-image and ultimately self-confidence.

Being able to regulate how both genders deal with their emotions and how they respond to outside stereotypes places incredible weight on self-confidence. Managing emotions is a crucial component of being more emotionally intelligent because of life's uncertainty. It is incredibly easy to be influenced by those around you and to be vulnerable to stereotypes that can affect everything about a person both internally and externally. From one's physique to their psychological needs, one can be influenced by the thoughts and opinions of others. Internally, everyone has a choice on whether they want to change. For instance, Lastner, et al., (2016:4280) note, "When outcome desirability is low, gratitude and satisfaction serially mediate the effect of recovery intentions...." One's mind holds great power and knowing how to deal with emotions internally and externally can make your life more satisfying and ultimately build confidence. Being able to overcome the emotions of unworthiness and being content wherever you are emotionally or environmentally can make a huge difference in one's day-to-day life. Stereotypes can fluctuate from situation to situation, yet most everyone will have an opinion on how one chooses to react. Feelings can be heavily influenced by outward factors so being emotionally aware of this and choosing to become more emotionally intelligent can impact one's personal view of themselves. Being more emotionally intelligent can increase self-confidence and happiness.

Externally, becoming more emotionally intelligent can influence how one's view of others changes. One article talks about how the brain processes outside interactions. It mentions first how our fight-or-flight response occurs in the amygdala, while the anterior cingulate reasons more through emotions (Lindner, E.G., 2006:272). Undeniably, living in a constant fight or flight mode is emotionally draining. If one can reason internally more often and understand why one's body feels in danger of being threatened, the situation becomes more manageable. One author studying how to become more emotionally intelligent highlights some of the benefits. He states it can "... help you to reduce negative emotional stress; establish, maintain, and enhance healthy intra- and interpersonal relationships; and understand, learn, and apply specific emotional intelligence skills" (Nelson, B. D., and Low, R. G., 2011:24). People often get worn out from work. Imagine a world where everyone enjoyed going to work. Most of the time the reason people do not want to go to work is because they have a poor mindset or attitude. As mentioned earlier, human interactions are vital. Processing information that can otherwise wear you out is incredibly powerful. One person's positive energy can do so much to an environment. If someone sees that one person has changed their mindset, then it can give them the initiative to do the same. Understanding how the brain works and controlling your emotions can increase your overall well-being at work and in your home life.

Once individuals become more emotionally intelligent, individuals are better at self-control and letting go. They get to decide how they spend their energy and how much energy they give to others. Societies thrive off communication. For instance," Guided by theory, reduced to mathematical function, a society's level of evolution was assessed

easily; it was the product of the amount of per capita energy harnessed and the technological efficiency of its conversion" (Eugene, A. R. et al., 1988:152). Evolving involves learning, which requires energy. Societies with advanced technology are typically better communicators. Ultimately, it is okay to fit into stereotypes and it is okay to not fit into stereotypes. In the end, taking the initiative to deal with one's emotions can change that person's view of the relationships they hold with others, both at work and in their home life.

How to Increase One's Emotional Intelligence

Take Initiative

There is probably never going to be a time in one's life when one feels completely ready to deal with their emotions, so getting into a positive mindset is crucial. This is likely due to the notion that, "The idea of rationality—and our interpretation of everyday events as being rational— has a social origin" (Boehner, K. et al., 2007:278). Family of origin plays a large role in how humans think, communicate, and deal with their emotions. It is extremely hard to unlearn what you always thought was right. Navigating through the positive and negative coping mechanisms of life can be one of the first ways to improve one's emotional intelligence. It can be a hard thing to navigate when first starting. Various methods work for some and not others.

Personalization is key in this process because people are in charge of their own thoughts. Finding what methods work best for the individual and what they can do consistently is key because life will always be changing. Figuring out what they are spending energy on and how to better themselves first is essential. Then, others will no longer have the power to regulate their emotions. Investing time and taking initiative to

understand oneself can help one become more emotionally aware and ultimately become more emotionally intelligent.

Create a Safe Environment

Relationships play a huge role in how well a person can manage emotions. Taking care of basic human needs makes it so much more accessible to reach one's full potential for emotional growth. If someone is constantly surrounded by negativity, then the odds are it will impact one's view of the world. Water makes up a large portion of the world and one book that discusses the crystallization of water talks about how impactful one human's energy can be. It states, "...within an individual – and even within a single cell – exists all the information in the universe" (Emoto, M, 2011:87). Your inward thoughts can determine who you are based on your ability to deal with your feelings, which makes an impact on your environment. As simple as it may seem to relate to others, one must be grounded in personal morals. If they are constantly clashing with those around them and believe they do not influence those people, then it may be time to set some boundaries. Often it is much easier to stay in the same environment because it can feel safe. Various articles study why people go back into abusive relationships and find that the decision is majorly impacted by feelings (Hayes, S. and Jeffries, S., 2013:60). As difficult as it is to break toxic cycles, doing so can create so much healing and ultimately self-confidence. Abuse is not always noticeable and can have grey areas, so making sure people are in a healthy place and setting boundaries is a breakthrough in healing. Creating a safe place internally can help them be more in touch with their emotions and lead to them finding a safer external environment. Balancing the giving and the taking from others is crucial in healthy relationships and ultimately improves your self-confidence.

Know What is Influencing You

Exploring spirituality, motivational speakers, and/or quotes can help build one's emotional intelligence. "It is said that you cannot choose your parents, but you can choose your influencers. Choose wisely. You can benefit enormously, as I have. Choose people who have integrity, respect from others, dedication to helping others, and who have an interest in you" (Wrighton, S. M., 2019:1478). Those whom people choose as role models can affect people's emotional intelligence because they are purposely letting these role models influence them. Energy holds power, given or taken. Many people become more emotionally aware and intelligent when delving into their own beliefs and core values. Having the right community can truly build one up and let them reach their full potential. Core values can change over time and taking the time to understand why they believe what they do is influential.

Scripture and sayings are methods many use to become more emotionally intelligent. The concept of peace is found in many different religions. Buddhism is commonly linked with meditation. Fraser (2013) says, "Meditation reduces activity in the amygdala...and causes the amygdala to become smaller". The amygdala plays a vital role in our bodies when we are in danger but can cause more harm than good. Ultimately, what is focused on will be what is amplified in the mind. Relating this to increasing emotional intelligence, if individuals are constantly filling their minds with nonviolent thoughts and encouragement, they will most likely have better views of themselves and others. One of the major benefits of becoming more emotionally intelligent is an increase in confidence. When filling the mind with thoughts of peace, it is reaffirming positive

thoughts in one's mind. Exploring what aligns with a person's personal beliefs is a great tool. Advocating for beliefs can increase self-confidence.

Looking into specific Bible verses can offer great values. Even if one is not a Christian, one can still benefit from Bible verses. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (Proverbs 18:21). As mentioned throughout this thesis, the definition of emotional intelligence involves energy. Uplifting words can positively and powerfully affect the energy of others. Energy can be harnessed in becoming a better person or a worse person. There is plenty of wisdom found in history. Understanding that words can give life to others can help one learn to listen more and to be more intentional with others. This is another example of a peaceful message realigning one's thoughts. If someone surrounds themselves with positive individuals who have good things to say, they will benefit from that. Delving into scripture and other sayings can make a life-changing difference.

Utilizing acronyms can also help simplify thoughts and increase positive focus. An acronym is described as "A gift to communication" (Bloom D.A., 2000:5). Acronyms can aid in memorization and simplify hard-to-understand processes. This specific article showed the impact acronyms have had on those in the medical field in simplifying medical terms. This is also commonly used in business. Many books can guide beginners on how to use specific acronyms to help them with their emotions. Emotional health can affect physical health, so getting ahead and using these tips can help simplify the complexity.

Seek Professional Resources

One of the best ways to become more emotionally intelligent is by seeking professional advice or taking classes. Counseling is another widely available method. If one does not have access to this resource, one can find free podcasts or books that can also help with self-discovery and the regulation and benefits of understanding one's emotions. Different types of therapy can help one specifically advocate for their emotional health. One type is Emotion- Focused therapy. "Therapy thus involves changing both emotional experience and the narratives in which they are embedded" (Greenberg, L., & Angus, L., 2004:5). Emotions can be very difficult to process alone. Sometimes it can be easier to talk to a stranger than those who are closest to you, especially if they study exactly how to help one's emotional intelligence. Having someone who legally has to abide by HIPAA can also be beneficial. Therapy can seem unnatural at first but can ultimately free one from dealing with their self-esteem in isolation.

The Dale Carnegie classes are one popular method used to increase self-confidence and can help people deal with their emotions through conversations, games, and public speaking. Classes are often used in business because of how interactive they are. This method involves other peers in similar life paths who are also willing to grow. One individual talks about the relationship he had with his family and how much impact his family used to have on him until he moved environments (Katzenbach, J., R., 2003:4). The people individuals surround themselves with can have a big impact on how they deal with their emotions. Even though one cannot replace their immediate family they can take classes to help realign their minds. This class can provide the feel of a

family depending on what one envisions. The Dale Carnegie class forces individuals out of their comfort zone and moves individuals closer due to a common vision. Ultimately, people need relationships, and the relationships with trials can build strength. This is also a great method because it can help one see their strengths rather than flaws. Everyone is constantly being coached in the Dale Carnegie class and this method can help implement skills to incorporate into the rest of life's relationships.

Limit Technology Usage

Besides reaching out to others, there are other methods to improve emotionally. One example of this would be reducing the negative impacts of technology. We live in a world where people would much rather have a screen in front of them than be alone with their thoughts. One study talks about how roughly half of young adults use Instagram daily (Shabnoor S. et al., 2016:73). Younger generations are born into a society now where more and more opinions are more easily accessible. While older generations were not born into a digital society, almost everyone at some point is affected by technology in both negative and positive ways. Technology holds many benefits, but often gives people an excuse not to have face-to-face interaction, which creates a facade. Taking small steps like not getting on one's phone at night or first thing in the morning can be a healthy first step. For instance, one article concluded that, "mobile phone distraction stimulates cognitive emotional pre-occupation" (Chu, S. et al., 2022:10). Instead of thinking for oneself, technology preoccupies the brain so one does not have to be left alone with their thoughts. Yet, doing this is a negative way to cope with emotions. Once a person begins making new habits, the body will eventually adjust and find more pleasure in the little details of life. Taking the initiative to spend less time entertaining negative coping

mechanisms and focusing on positive mechanisms can help one think for themselves rather than relying on other people.

Go Outdoors and Increase Exercise

Finding a way to express energy without taking it out on others is an impactful tool. Spending time in nature can help renew the mind from the pressures of society. “It was found that adventure programmes resulted in an increase in mastery (improved self-efficacy and coping skills) and relatedness (more comfortable interacting with others) and decrease in emotional reactivity (ability to manage emotions when upset)” (Whittington, A., Aspelmeier, J.E., and Budbill, N.W., 2016:963). Spending time in nature can help people take time to escape. Even if they are unable to spend long periods of time outside, spending a little bit of time outside is still impactful. The benefits of sunlight and greenery can often be overlooked. Yet there is a richness that can be found by taking the time to notice it. Managing emotional reactivity is beneficial in thinking clearly and becoming more emotionally intelligent. Taking time to enjoy the little things can become a habit.

Often times people think they know everything, but nature holds such complexities that cannot all be taken in at once. One video talks about how a woman learned from her daughter something she did not learn getting her master’s degree. She learned that being in nature builds connections and allows people to live in the present moment (Brouwer, T., Ted Talk, 2019). Children often simplify the emotions that adults have. For instance, when you are little and upset you can throw a tantrum, while if an adult does this it would be seen as crazy. Yet, the simplicity of children’s brains can help adults learn about themselves. The importance of connection which is often seen in nature

can be observed within small and large capacities. Nature gives people something to get their minds off stressful things. It helps one explore the simplicities of life. If allowed, nature can renew the mind from the timeless loop of daily requirements.

Increasing one's physical exercise can motivate them in other areas of their life. Exercise can be done in many different forms and is not one size fits all, making it very versatile. For some, exercise means running marathons, to others it can mean yoga. Both hold many benefits and simply moving is a healthy step. Regarding exercise, one study says, "...it promotes all kinds of changes in the brain, including neural growth, reduced inflammation, and new activity patterns that promote feelings of calm and well-being" (Robinson L. et al., 2019:2). Growth is often found in the challenges of life. Exercise is important to emotional intelligence because it focuses on oneself. Going back to what was mentioned earlier about emotional intelligence, advocating for self-confidence through exercising can aid in one's self-esteem via challenges and rewards. Working out has many health benefits that can also help one's mental health, which heavily relates to emotional intelligence. Finding what is best for one person can be very different from another. The article continues and states, "You do not have to suffer to get results" (Robinson et al., 2019:5). Becoming more emotionally intelligent differs from person to person. Not everyone is going to benefit from the same workouts. One person may love running and another may feel completely defeated by running. Movement and investing in physical health can be impactful on emotional health.

Deep Breathing and Journaling

Deep breathing can increase your emotional intelligence. Taking the time to take deep breaths is a way of being intentional with oneself. This method can intertwine with

working out because working out often requires breathing techniques. One TED Talk discusses how a scholarly woman, who would be seen as “successful” by society's viewpoint of education, persistently felt sad and went on medication to help her regulate her emotions. She then found out that deep breathing exercises worked better for her and her stress levels (Sohdi, T., TedxWashabCollege, 2018). Finding the method that works for one may not work for another. Yet, everyone has lungs and sometimes spending extra time on the body holds many health benefits that can affect emotions and emotional health. Deep breathing slows one down and allows them to live in the current moment which can help regulate emotions.

Taking the time to deal with emotions is an investment and journaling is a tool that can be utilized to increase emotional intelligence. Writing things out can get emotions out of the head and bring clarity to one's mind. This can be a great method for those who like structure. One study says, “...engagement of both cognitions and emotions while journaling about a stressful or traumatic experience can raise awareness of the benefit of the event” (Ullrich, P.M., and Lutgendorf, S.K., 2002:248). Life's hardships normally happen quickly and many times people do not want to relive them so they push them away. Hardships lack comfort and stability. Yet even through traumatic experiences, growth is possible. When one seemingly feels like they have little control in a situation, being able to validate reactions or realize there was a better way to react to something can seem impossible. Journaling can show one that they are capable of gaining more control even in chaos. Once they are more aware, their ability to gain control moving forward becomes evident. Journaling takes the thoughts that are hard to process, puts them on paper, and allows one to slow down. This can lead to room for

understanding. Journaling can help one deal with the challenges that arise when attempting to become more emotionally intelligent.

Conclusion

Be Kind to Yourself

Struggle is where growth is seen, and people should consider giving themselves grace. Emotional intelligence is a process and just like other types of intelligence there is always room for improvement. People should not let the process of becoming emotionally intelligent bring their esteem down. Releasing feelings that have never been felt is a breakthrough many people never reach. Finding people with similar mindsets who are willing to grow with you and offer encouragement can make a huge difference in one's life. Attempting to become more emotionally intelligent is a celebration in itself. Emotional intelligence requires resilience. Emotional intelligence is rewarding. For instance, "Perceived emotional intelligence, particularly mood clarity and emotional repair, were related in the expected directions to higher life satisfaction" (Rey, L., et al., 2011:231). Emotional intelligence is not meant to be something that lowers one's self esteem. It is supposed to help one process emotions. All of this is to say that, if one of the methods listed above does not work, then it is okay and normal. Everyone grows up in different environments and learns differently. Finding at least one method from those listed above that works to help one become a more emotionally intelligent being is enough because it shows intentionality. Remember, not everyone's brain is wired the same. Improving emotional intelligence is not a step-by-step process, which means it requires trials, errors, and time. People do not have to be perfect at every method listed

above; rather, they can find what works best for them. Being kind to oneself can relieve some of the pressure of increasing one's EQ.

Higher Emotional Intelligence Will Increase Self Confidence

There are many benefits of becoming more emotionally intelligent, and confidence is one of the main ones. Making sure there is a safe place is the best place to start to become more emotionally intelligent and confident. As time continues and one begins to find their niche of what works for them and helps give clarity, they can feel empowered by using the tools listed above. They can also begin new relationships, whether that be with counselors, teachers, or peers. Many do not take the time to let themselves feel because they would rather take the easy way out and escape to cope. Choosing not to settle can make all the difference in emotional intelligence. It requires persistence and cannot be achieved overnight. Whether it be finding a new hobby or removing an old one, they will see growth in themselves or others, which will play a large part in building confidence because it is proving they are willing to be better. The power of one's energy can be more impactful than one could ever imagine.

One of the biggest opportunities for growth in becoming more emotionally intelligent is the ability to see growth in oneself. It requires a different level of customization from individual to individual. In defining knowledge, one article states, "It is not related to how intelligent someone is, but rather to how well informed an individual feels about things that are important to him/her. The good of knowledge is based on the notion that people are fundamentally curious beings that possess the desire to understand aspects of themselves, their environments, and other people" (Serie, C. M. B. et al, 2021:4). The complexity of emotions is that no one feels the exact same, with different

reactions that make each person unique. If individuals grasp the concept of freedom and can gain from protecting their energy, then it is impactful. There are so many factors that influence how a person views themselves and the world around them. Pushing oneself to become more emotionally intelligent and resilient can allow one to explore life in a more positive impactful way. Emotional intelligence can help one feel emotions they have never felt before by expanding the mind. A lot of emotional intelligence has to do with one's personal intentions. There is plenty of room in everyone to overcome and to celebrate their accomplishments. Ultimately, becoming more emotionally intelligent builds self-confidence.

Better Relational Skills and Judgement

Having a high level of emotional intelligence sets one apart from others and increases healthy communication in work environments and in one's personal life. For instance, “Social skills, engaging communication, and inspirational motivation influence public projects directly and positively” (Fareed, M., Z., 2022:118). This example shows a specific study in the public sector. Hypothetically, one could go to work and build no connections and spend all their time with their family and friends. Yet gaining interpersonal relationships with colleagues can make the time they spend at work less like work and more relational. If becoming more emotionally intelligent can help engage more communication and motivation in a work environment, then it can also do so in other relationships, such as family or friendships. Now, with this being said, becoming more emotionally intelligent will not always make a person closer to those around them. It can, however, aid in breaking toxic cycles and help one have a better understanding of others. Emotional intelligence can help one build resilience and perseverance. Each

person has the power to inspire those around them. Healthy energy and intentions can help improve emotional intelligence, which can change lives.

Fewer Stereotypical Strongholds

To conclude, stereotypes are often misinterpreted and can create a stigma in one's mind regarding identity and behavior. By learning to control emotions and empathize with the emotions of others, anyone can build more meaningful connections internally and externally. Becoming more emotionally intelligent can help build self-confidence and prevent questions about an individual's identity. Individuals will see how impactful it is to be themselves and not be pushed by societal standards. There are so many reasons people are who they are, and being able to better advocate for oneself is a tool many miss out on. Men stereotypically deal with situations differently from women. Most men and women decide they need to play certain roles to protect themselves. It is freeing to know that all emotions are valid no matter the stereotype. Many people will never reach their full emotional capacity due to misconceptions of stereotypes and fear, but the guidance mentioned above can make all the difference. Fear is powerful but the mind has the power to analyze and control emotions. In the end, emotional intelligence is a gift that can change the perspectives of many.

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