

The Implications of Virtue Ethics on Emotional Intelligence

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Emotional intelligence is a concept that has been gaining in popularity over the past thirty years. The three main scholars on the subject, Daniel Goleman, Peter Salovey, and John Mayor define emotional intelligence as a “form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (Riopel). These thinkers recognize the importance of emotional intelligence and the role that it plays in determining how we fit into and interact with society. Additionally, scholars claim that emotional intelligence is an essential characteristic for an individual to become morally wise, or be a successful moral agent. “Moral wisdom is an extremely complicated kind of skill... We must have a great deal of emotional intelligence. The moral virtues, which all require moral wisdom, therefore also require a combination of intellectual and emotional maturity” (Shafer-Landau 139).

Virtue ethics is a branch of moral philosophy first set forth by ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, that explains why emotional intelligence is necessary for morality. Aristotle deals with larger ethical concepts such as what it means to live a good life, which he claims is done by striving to achieve eudaimonia, which he states means that we flourish to fulfill our human capabilities to the utmost degree (Aristotle 8). He claims that this can be done through being a good person who ultimately makes good decisions. Throughout this essay, I will make two major claims. First, an understanding of Aristotle’s philosophy surrounding virtue ethics is necessary for understanding and improving emotional intelligence; without a proper understanding of virtue ethics, emotional intelligence does not make sense, nor does it hold value; one would not

understand the necessity for emotional intelligence on a larger scale. Second, emotional intelligence, as Goleman, Salovey, and Mayor have claimed, is essential in order to be successful in all aspects of one's life.

Chapter 2: Aristotle's Virtue Ethics

Aristotle is an ancient Greek philosopher, who, along with Plato and Socrates, is recognized as laying the groundwork for much of western philosophy. Aristotle is responsible for many philosophical concepts, such as virtue ethics and eudaimonia, and theories that are still relevant to modern philosophical theories, such as agent-based moral theories, ethics of care, and feminist ethics (Athanasoulis). He focused heavily on larger questions about life, such as what it means to be a good person leading a good life, and how to have or live a good life. Such questions led to the formation of one school of moral philosophy, Aristotle's conception of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics is defined as "a broad term for theories that emphasize the role of character and virtue in moral philosophy rather than either doing one's duty or acting in order to bring about good consequences...a virtuous person is someone who has ideal character traits. These traits derive from natural internal tendencies, but need to be nurtured" (Athanasoulis). To understand virtue ethics, one must first understand Aristotle's philosophical theories on the conceptions of human nature, goodness, and eudaimonia.

One of Aristotle's main questions, as previously mentioned, is, essentially, what is the highest good that humans can achieve? What is the end for which humans should strive? According to Aristotle, the greatest good a human can reach is eudaimonia, "that the ultimate good of humans is happiness, blessedness, or prosperity" (MacKinnon and Fiala 159). He chooses not to say that the greatest good is simply happiness because of individuals' erroneous collective ideas regarding what happiness is. He claims that many individuals believe that happiness is equivalent to living well, living the life that you believe you want to live, seeking pleasure, wealth, or honor. However, he also states that

the many are, in fact, not the wise and that the wise and the many do not agree on what truly constitutes happiness. In contrast with the many, Aristotle claims that the wise look deeper than the material or surface-level “goodness” that causes the happiness conceived of by the many; they seek out a higher good which is good in itself, meaning it is good for no other end (Aristotle 3). The greater good sought by wise individuals is eudaimonia, or human flourishing, which means that an individual has reached his full function as a human through his capabilities. Martha Nussbaum, a contemporary philosopher, explains eudaimonia as “human excellence.” She states that “human excellence is seen...as something whose very nature is to be in need, a growing thing in the world that could not be made invulnerable and keep its own peculiar finesse” (Long 365). For the sake of later understanding virtue ethics, it is important to point out here that eudaimonia or human excellence is not always achieved through pleasurable or satisfactory experiences. In other words, according to Aristotle, what is good may not always feel pleasant.

Aristotle continues in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to discuss what constitutes eudaimonia.

He claims that eudaimonia qualifies as the end goal of human life as it possesses the characteristics of completeness, finality, and self-sufficiency. Eudaimonia is the end good that constitutes the basis or reason for all other actions considered good. In other words, eudaimonia is not pursued on behalf of any other good or end. It is not pursued to become wealthy or honorable, it is pursued because it is the highest good that can be achieved, and to achieve eudaimonia means that one has reached his or her potential for human functioning. Eudaimonia is in itself the thing that makes life worth pursuing. Consider this analogy; say an individual was taking philosophy courses for the sake of studying

philosophy. This individual is not seeking a degree; they do not wish for college credit; in fact, they have no plan for the knowledge that they will gain by taking these courses.

They have simply decided to take philosophy courses for the sake of studying philosophy. Studying philosophy is the end goal in this scenario, making it comparable to the concept of eudaimonia. Knowledge of philosophy is the thing in itself that makes it necessary to take the courses, read philosophical texts, and have discussions about philosophical theories. Thus, the action of taking courses, reading, and discussing is comparable to the actions, deliberations, and choices that we make in life, which will, we hope, lead us toward eudaimonia.

Aristotle claimed that it is not possible for everyone to achieve eudaimonia. In chapters eight and nine of *Nicomachean Ethics*, he explains the concept of severe misfortune and how this concept can impact one's ability to achieve eudaimonia. Aristotle explains that when individuals lack instrumental goods and are, therefore, unable to achieve or obtain other goods, then they cannot reach eudaimonia. He demonstrates this by claiming that "in many actions we use friends, wealth, and political power just as we use instruments. Further, deprivation of certain [externals] - for instance, good birth, good children, beauty - mars our blessings" (Aristotle 11). He claims that the nature of all things is to be as good and fulfilled as possible, and by severely lacking in instrumental goods, such as money, intelligence, support, etc., humans simply cannot fulfill their natural potential (Aristotle 11). For example, to fulfill one of the virtues, magnanimity, one must have sufficient means to do so, which in this case is money. If an individual is born into poverty and lacks the proper support and means to get himself out of poverty, he cannot achieve that virtue. Aristotle provides the

example of an acorn and an oak tree, claiming that if you plant an acorn in a shallow pot, it will not grow to be as big and full of an oak tree as an acorn planted in the ground with free range would. The same is true for humans; when one's environment imposes restrictions on our human capabilities, we will not be the most good and fulfilled human that we could have otherwise been, and that is misfortune. If individuals are born into generational poverty, or say, suffer horrible tragedy and trauma throughout their life, they will be stuck in survival mode, meaning that they really are not given the opportunity to flourish. Martha Nussbaum comments on the concept of severe misfortune in her book, the *Fragility of Goodness*. As the title of her book suggests, she claims that goodness is, in fact, fragile, and that to achieve goodness, so too should an individual achieve balance; "the most delicate balance between order and disorder, control and vulnerability" (Nussbaum 81). This relates back to the idea that people suffering severe misfortune, often simply trying to survive, face obstacles that further complicate the challenge to achieve goodness.

Since eudaimonia, or human flourishing is the end goal, Aristotle argues that it takes a lifetime of experience. One moment, one action, or one decision cannot lead to eudaimonia. In other words, Aristotle says that one cannot luck into morality, which makes sense if virtue ethics is based on one's character rather than their actions. Character is something that, Aristotle claims, must be developed over time. In Book II, Chapter 1, Aristotle says "virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching; that is why it needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from habit..." (Aristotle 18). After establishing the fact that becoming virtuous takes a lifetime of learning, growing, and

forming virtuous habits, Aristotle then discusses the importance of “proper upbringing.” In addition to emotion, he claims that virtue ethics has as much to do with the actions in which one finds or seeks pleasure or pain. “For pleasure causes us to do base actions, and pain causes us to abstain from fine ones” (Aristotle 21). His conception of the “proper upbringing” centers on the idea that from early on, individuals should be taught which actions to find pleasure or pain in. Proper upbringing allows for a more universal understanding of what things or actions are good, and which ones are bad. Furthermore, virtues give insight into which actions are the best actions for certain pleasurable and painful circumstances. Thus, becoming virtuous takes a lifetime of experience to understand how pleasure and pain affect each situation, as being a virtuous person is concerned with how one deliberates and chooses in any given situation.

To discover what it takes to flourish, human beings must first understand the concept of “good.” Aristotle, along with other philosophers, believe that there are essentially two main categories of goods: intrinsic goods and instrumental goods. Intrinsic goods are good in themselves for no other end, while instrumental goods are things that are good because they help one obtain or achieve other goods, including intrinsic goods. Additionally, Aristotle claims that good is up for interpretation based on situation and circumstance; thus, there is no universal conception of the good (Aristotle 5). Based on this fact, Aristotle concludes that there is no single science to the concept of good; what is good is dependent upon circumstance. Essentially, what is good or right in one situation may not be considered good or right in another. Virtue ethics is important because it eventually teaches us to recognize, assess, and rationalize in any given situation to determine what is good or right. As Aristotle will argue in his discussion of

virtue ethics, following the virtues, making a habit of behaving in a virtuous manner, and pursuing the path to being a virtuous character is the responsibility of a good person; the right actions will follow. As previously stated, no two situations are identical, which Aristotle claims, is why he cannot set forth hard and fast rules for the individual to call upon to make decisions; he can only tell us what good people are like and how they act, and we must try our very best through practice, rationality, and the recognition of virtuous people, to be good and make the right decisions at any given time in the midst of any circumstances.

Because there is not a single science supporting the concept of goodness, virtue ethics must begin with a conception or idea of human goodness, which Aristotle essentially claims is the most natural human action. He discovers his idea of what is good, which later becomes the foundation for the entirety of virtue ethics, based on his analysis of the human soul. He claims that the human soul consists of multiple levels, including the nutritive, locomotive, perceptual, and rational. In the nutritive level of the soul, the most basic level, lies the ability for growth and development. The locomotive soul holds the ability for movement. The perceptual soul is a more complex level, containing the ability to experience emotions, passions, and desires. Each of the three levels of the soul mentioned so far are not just components of the human soul; they are present in many animals. However, the fourth and final level of the human soul is the rational level. This is the level that makes humans more complex than other living creatures. The rational level of ensoulment is the level that produces deliberation, contemplation, and decision-making.

Aristotle argues that our moral type is determined based on the decisions that we make and how we choose to act. Thus, he finds it necessary to explain choice as it relates to human nature and the rational level of the soul. “Those who say decision is appetite or spirit or wish or some sort of belief would seem to be wrong. For a decision is not shared with non-rational animals, but appetite and spirit are shared with them” (Aristotle 34). Decision cannot be a wish or a belief because one can wish for the impossible and believe in things that prove to be untrue, but one cannot decide on the impossible, nor the untrue. In simple terms, Aristotle claims that choosing is an action driven by an individual’s desire to control things that are, in fact, within our power to control. Additionally, one cannot make a decision without deliberation or contemplation hence the rational level of ensoulment is only present in the human soul.

Virtue ethics in itself is concerned with what constitutes a choice to be good, and how one makes good choices. Aristotle says that a choice is good if the good man would make it. So, then, how does one determine a good man from a bad one? A good man is someone who possesses virtuous characteristics. Note, here, that virtue ethics is not necessarily concerned with the actions or choices themselves, rather they are focused on the character of the person making them. As Aristotle claims, if men are good, then good actions will follow. One must be able to recognize the virtues in others’ characters in order to determine whether they are good, flourishing individuals, or not. Furthermore, virtues are fixed points or the middle ground between two extremes known as vices. The vices are associated with each virtue and are defined as the excess or deficiency of each specific virtue. The table below, illustrated in *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, demonstrates the relationship between each of the twelve virtues and their vices.

Sphere of Action or Emotion	Vice (Excess)	Virtue (Mean)	Vice (Deficiency)
Fear and Confidence	Rashness	Courage	Cowardice
Pleasure and Pain	Licentiousness/ Self-indulgence	Temperance	Insensibility
Getting and Spending (Minor)	Prodigality	Liberality	Illiberality/Meanness
Getting and Spending (Major)	Vulgarity/ Tastelessness	Magnificence	Pettiness/Stinginess
Honor and Dishonor (Major)	Vanity	Magnanimity	Pusillanimity
Honor and Dishonor (Minor)	Ambition/Empty Vanity	Proper Ambition/Pride	Unambitious/Undue Humility
Anger	Irascibility	Patience/Good Temper	Lack of Spirit/Unirascibility
Self-Expression	Boastfulness	Truthfulness	Understatement/ Mock Modesty
Conversation	Buffoonery	Wittiness	Boorishness
Social Conduct	Obsequiousness	Friendliness	Cantankerousness
Shame	Shyness	Modesty	Shamelessness
Indignation	Envy	Righteous Indignation	Malicious Enjoyment/ Spitefulness

(Aristotle 104)

Aristotle says that in order to become virtuous beings, individuals must be able to recognize virtuous people, and he lists two ways that this can be done. First, individuals are born with the natural ability to recognize what is good, as well as to recognize goodness and virtuosic characteristics in other individuals. In other words, humans have the ability to perceive how others' character and actions affect those around them in both negative and positive ways. For example, an individual can improve upon the abilities

that they already possess to recognize virtuous characters by becoming familiar with and understanding the twelve virtues listed in the table above. When one understands, for example, what it truly means to be courageous, they can recognize this trait in others. When one can do this with all of the virtues, they can come to a clear understanding of what it means to be a good person who is on the path toward eudaimonia. The second way that we can improve our ability to recognize goodness in others is to understand the concept of emotional intelligence and work to improve that as well.

Based on the table above, and the demonstrated concept of distinguishing the proper amount, excess and deficiency, to become a virtuous person, one must possess emotional intelligence because, otherwise, they would not be able to gauge what is excessive, deficient, or virtuous. Without attributes of emotional intelligence, one would not have the ability to feel in the “right way,” which would be feeling in a way that leads us to carry out virtuous characteristics, thus performing virtuous actions. Recalling the discussion regarding the role of pleasure and pain, as well as proper upbringing, we can see that emotion and being taught to recognize and control emotion will assist us in feeling the right way in situations. Aristotle claims that when a man possesses practical wisdom, also known as phronesis, he must also possess control of emotion, desire, and actions. “Practical sense is a very powerful thing, and it would be very odd that the same person should have practical sense and lack of control at the same time...”(Aristotle 354). Recall here that the ability to control one’s emotions, desires, and actions is a component of emotional intelligence, making this concept of practical wisdom necessary for understanding virtue ethics, as well as achieving higher emotional intelligence overall.

Chapter 3: Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

In 1990, John Mayor and Peter Salovey coined the term “emotional intelligence,” defining it as a “form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (Riopel). Essentially, emotional intelligence describes an individual’s ability to identify their emotions as well as others’, assess what the presence of those emotions means, as well as what they could lead to, and finally, learning how they can manage their own emotions. Emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly important as psychologists continue to discover how it affects many aspects of our lives. Emotional intelligence, or lack thereof, can have a significant impact on our personal relationships, social abilities, job performance, and satisfaction, etc. In fact, good emotional intelligence is almost imperative in order to be successful in all aspects of life, especially in regards to relationships and careers.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence is also necessary in order to be a virtuous person. Recall here that virtue ethics is presented as a sort of roadmap to develop the characteristics needed in order to achieve eudaimonia, consisting of specific means that lie between excess and deficient versions of those traits. We discover those means through emotion in combination with reason. For example, we may know that a situation calls for courage, but it is up to us to determine what is considered courageous for that specific situation. Emotional intelligence allows us to gauge the situation, the emotions in others, and the emotions that arise in ourselves as a result. Reason allows us to understand the situation and the possible outcomes of our possible reactions so that we may inform ourselves to act to produce the best possible outcome. Both identifying the

emotions or emotional implications of any given situation and using reason to act in any given situation are attributes of both an emotionally intelligent and virtuous individual.

Emotional intelligence is often measured as an emotional intelligence quotient or EQ. "EQ" may look familiar to some, as it is similar to the intelligence quotient, or IQ. Intelligence quotient is a measurement of an individual's ability to receive information, process it, and use it to answer questions and make reasonable predictions (Stevens). In an article discussing the relationship between or connection between intelligence quotient and emotional intelligence, authors Purificación Checa and Pablo Fernández-Berrocal claim that there is a positive correlation between intelligence quotient and cognitive control abilities, which include filtering out irrelevant or interfering information when necessary, as well as impulse control. Based on this information, one could conclude that emotional intelligence quotient and intelligence quotient are similar; in fact, they are essentially the same concept, but instead of processing and drawing conclusions based on knowledge and information, as the intelligence quotient focuses on, the emotional intelligence quotient focuses on the concept of processing and drawing conclusions based on knowledge and information related to an individual or group's emotional state.

For decades, IQ has been seen as an important factor in determining the outcomes in an individual's life, as it has essentially been a tool used to predict an individual's capabilities to complete certain tasks and perform in certain career paths. However, studies suggest that success does not always follow for someone with a relatively average or higher IQ (Serrat 2). Therefore, the focus has shifted from intelligence quotient to emotional intelligence. IQ and EQ are a bit different in the sense that emotional intelligence can be improved, and those who develop a higher sense of emotional

	assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development, and ● Able to show a sense of humor and perspective about themselves
	Self-Confidence	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present themselves with self-assurance and have presence ● Can voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right ● Are decisive and able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures
Self-Regulation	Self-Control	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage their impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well ● Stay composed, positive, and unflappable even in trying moments, and ● Think clearly and stay focused under pressure
	Trustworthiness	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act ethically and are above reproach ● Build trust through their reliability and authenticity ● Admit their own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others; and ● Take tough, principled stands even if they are unpopular
	Conscientiousness	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet commitments and keep promises ● Hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives; and ● Are organized and careful in their work
	Adaptability	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smoothly handle multiple demands, shifting priorities, and rapid change ● Adapt their response and tactics to fit fluid circumstances; and ● Are flexible in how they see events
	Innovativeness	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Entertain original solutions to problems ● Generate new ideas; and ● Take fresh perspectives and risks in their thinking
Self-Motivation	Achievement Drive	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are results-oriented, with a high drive to meet their objectives and standards ● Set challenging goals and take calculated risks ● Pursue information to reduce uncertainty and find ways to do better; and ● Learn how to improve their performance
	Commitment	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readily make personal or group sacrifices to meet a larger organizational goal ● Find a sense of purpose in the larger mission ● Use the group’s core values in making decisions and clarifying choices; and ● Actively seek out opportunities to fulfill the group’s mission
	Initiative	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are ready to seize opportunities ● Pursue goals beyond what is required or expected of them ● Cut through red tape and bend the rules when necessary to get the job done; and ● Mobilize others through unusual enterprising efforts
	Optimism	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persist in seeking goals despite obstacles and setbacks ● Operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure; and ● See setbacks as due to manageable circumstances rather than a personal flaw
Social Awareness	Empathy	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are attentive to emotional cues and listen well ● Show sensitivity and understand others’ perspectives; and ● Help out based on understanding other people’s needs and feelings
	Service	<p>Individuals with this competence</p>

	<p>Orientation</p> <p>Developing Others</p> <p>Leveraging Diversity</p> <p>Political Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand customers’ needs and match them to services or products ● Seek ways to increase customers’ satisfaction and loyalty ● Gladly offer appropriate assistance; and ● Grasp a customer’s perspective, acting as a trusted advisor <p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acknowledge and reward people’s strengths , accomplishments, and development ● Offer useful feedback and identify people’s needs for development; and ● Mentor, give timely coaching, and offer assignments that challenge and grow a person’s skills <p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds ● Understand diverse worldviews and are sensitive to group differences ● See diversity as opportunity, creating an environment where diverse people can thrive; and ● Challenges bias and intolerance <p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accurately read key power relationships; ● Detect crucial social networks; ● Understand the forces that shape views and actions of clients, customers, or competitors; and ● Accurately read situations and organizational and external realities.
<p>Social Skills</p>	<p>Influence</p> <p>Communication</p>	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are skilled at persuasion ● Fine-tune presentations to appeal to the listener ● Use complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support; and ● Orchestrate dramatic events to effectively make a point <p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are effective in give-and-take registering

	<p>Leadership</p>	<p>emotional cues in attuning their message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deal with difficult issues straightforwardly ● Listen well, seek mutual understanding, and welcome sharing of information fully; and ● Foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good
	<p>Change Catalyst</p>	<p>Individuals with this competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission ● Step forward to lead as needed, regardless of position ● Guide the performance of others while holding them accountable; and ● Lead by example
	<p>Conflict Management</p>	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize the need for change and remove barriers ● Challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change ● Champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit; and ● Model the change expected of others
	<p>Building Bonds</p>	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks ● Seek out relationships that are mutually beneficial ● Build rapport and keep others in the loop; and ● Make and maintain personal friendships among work associates
	<p>Collaboration and Cooperation</p>	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balance a focus on task with attention to relationships ● Collaborate, sharing plans, information, and

	Team Capabilities	<p>resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Promote a friendly and cooperative climate; and● Spot and nurture opportunities for collaboration <p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Model team qualities such as respect, helpfulness, and cooperation● Draw all members into active and enthusiastic participation● Build team identity, esprit de corps, and commitment; and● Protect the group and its reputation and share credit
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(Serrat 7-13)

Reading through these attributes, one can begin to understand the importance of emotional intelligence for everyday life, especially within the workplace or when maintaining healthy relationships with others. To successfully operate within any environment that depends upon social connections, one must be able to accurately identify emotions (in themselves and others) and the impact that these emotions will create. It can be argued that without emotional intelligence and without the attributes listed above, one cannot reach peak performance in the workplace, nor can they develop and maintain healthy relationships with others. Daniel Goleman discusses this in his book, *Emotional Intelligence*, providing reasons why interaction with others is so reliant on emotional intelligence, claiming that, “some of the reasons are patently obvious - imagine the consequences for a working group when someone is unable to keep from exploding in anger or has no sensitivity about what the people around him are feeling. All the delirious effects of agitation ... operate in the workplace too: When emotionally upset, people cannot remember, attend, learn, or make decisions clearly” (Goleman 149).

Self-awareness, in short, essentially allows an individual to identify the emotions that they are experiencing, which is the first step to addressing any issues that occur as a cause or effect of the emotion. Without understanding the feelings that one has, one cannot begin to resolve the issue(s) at hand. For example, if emotionally intelligent individuals were feeling overwhelmed with their duties in the workplace, they would first identify the emotion that they are feeling, which in this case could be stress, exhaustion, anxiety, agitation, etc. Then, they would identify the cause for these feelings; it could be that they are given too many tasks to complete in a limited time. An emotionally intelligent person would be able to find the source for their emotions and work to address it. In this situation, maybe that person would talk to their supervisor about receiving more time for a given task. The point is this: self-awareness is essential to the skill of problem-solving. Continuing with this same example, self-management would mean that rather than giving in to the impulse to give up on tasks, an emotionally intelligent person would redirect their emotions and control their impulses, so as not to negatively impact their lives and others with a rash decision because they lack self-control.

Self-management leads to a happier work environment for everyone involved, as it reduces the possibilities for aggressive situations and negative interactions between individuals. Self-motivation is essential for morale in the workplace. “Those with low motivation are more likely to be risk-averse (rather than problem-solvers), anxious, and quick to throw in the towel. Their lack of motivation may also lead them to express negative feelings about project goals and duties, which can impact team morale” (La Trobe University). Social awareness is key in the workplace simply because of the factor of empathy. Empathy allows individuals to work together harmoniously because

empathetic people can gauge others' emotions regarding a task or situation, in addition to their own. Social awareness is also important because it allows for the reception and assessment of diverse perspectives, concerns, and contributions. Finally, social skills are also essential to workplace performance. Social skills allow individuals to interact with one another in a productive manner. In fact, without social skills, it is impossible for someone to be successful in the workplace because lacking social skills would mean that an individual lacks knowledge about how to communicate, how to read a room, form bonds, work with others, etc. Every aspect of emotional intelligence is essential for success in an individual's job or career.

Emotional intelligence is also an important characteristic for leaders in the workplace, rather than just employees. Goleman explains that many years ago, the boss with a lack of regard for emotion was commonly accepted, but there has been a shift in the workplace, which now values emotional intelligence immensely. It is obvious that people suffering emotional upset are likely to be less productive and less effective leaders than their emotionally intelligent counterparts. If individuals cannot be aware of and control their own emotions, they definitely cannot perceive and control the actions and emotions of a group of individuals.

Emotional intelligence plays a very similar role in relationships as it does in the workplace. The article, "Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Quality of Romantic Relationships: Review Research " by authors Amrita Sidhu, Pretty Bhalla, and Inass Said Salaah Ali explains that relationships can exist without both partners involved having a high emotional intelligence. However, a relationship between two emotionally intelligent people is going to be a relationship of higher quality than one between one emotionally

intelligent person and one emotionally unintelligent person, or a relationship between two emotionally unintelligent individuals. Sidhu, Bhalla, and Ali state that “Couples who are aware of their own feelings or those who understand their own feelings can enhance their intimacy level and problem-solving behavior” (1774).

The authors further explain that there are three dimensions of relationship quality. These dimensions are consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion; Consensus refers to the frequency of agreement, satisfaction to “a low frequency of separation discussions and high frequency of shared confidences and positive thoughts about the relationship, and cohesion refers to the sense of connectedness between partners as well as the frequency of shared activities” (Sidhu et. al 1775). Emotional intelligence is essential to improve these three dimensions, thus improving the overall quality of a relationship. Self-awareness, as well as social awareness, poses multiple benefits for intimate partner relationships, as these domains of emotional intelligence focus heavily on identifying one’s emotions as well as others’. Being aware of one’s own feelings in addition to their partner’s allows for the identification of what needs to be communicated in a relationship, and other domains of emotional intelligence, such as self-management (the controlling of one’s emotions and impulses), and social skills allow for that communication to be clear and successful for both partners. In addition to communication, emotional intelligence improves relationships through other aspects. To demonstrate how aspects of emotional intelligence contribute differently for men and women in romantic relationships, included below is a table used by Sidhu, Bhall, and Ali in their article.

Couple Relationship

Factors	Men	Women
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Identifying Emotions	Better at recognizing their partner's emotions than recognizing their own. This proficiency increases with the passage of time and close couple interaction.	Better at recognizing more complicated and a large number of emotions in both themselves and their partners. Women's ability to recognize the quality of a relationship is a bit higher than men's.
Relationship Quality	Quality of a relationship is not influenced by their partner's awareness.	Quality of a relationship is influenced by both their partner's and their own level of emotional awareness.
Relationship Satisfaction	Not influenced by their own or opposite partner's level of emotional awareness.	Negatively correlates with their partner's emotional self-awareness level. Partners who have poor abilities in recognizing their own emotions increase the dissatisfaction level of their partner in the relationship.
Emotional Awareness	Men with high emotional awareness have the ability to devote more to the relationship, thereby contributing toward the quality of the relationship.	Women's level of relationship quality is positively related to their partner's emotional awareness. Women experience a higher level of intimacy, closeness and relationship quality when their partner has a higher level of emotional awareness.
Discrepancies in Emotional Awareness	Diminished sense of relationship connectedness	Relationship dissatisfaction for women

(Sidhu et. al 1776)

Arguably one of the most important areas of life to improve through the improvement of emotional intelligence is personal growth. Our brains have a property called neuroplasticity, which basically means that they have the ability to change, and because our brains can continue to develop new connections, form new habits, and receive and process new information, so too does the individual have the ability to

change, form new habits, and receive and process new information to inform those changes (Voss, Thomas, Cisneros-Franco, and Villers-Sidani). As previously mentioned emotional intelligence can be learned and improved, which is a form of personal growth in itself. “For this to happen, people must be personally motivated, practice extensively what they learn, receive feedback, and reinforce their new skills” (Serrat 13). Developing skills related to emotional intelligence, such as the abilities to recognize and manage one’s emotions, recognize and empathize with the emotions and situations of others’ and the ability to motivate oneself can improve one’s overall mental health and provide the necessary tools to overcome trauma and hardships, which in turn reduce the risk negative actions and life circumstances such as physical diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, and sexual promiscuity (Tuck and Patlamazoglou).

Emotional intelligence improves an individual’s ability to cope with stress and trauma and increases resiliency. As emotional intelligence is focused on understanding the emotions of ourselves and others, it allows for a special insight to understanding how to allow these emotions to take a presence in our lives. This is especially important in dealing with mental distress and disorder. “Recent studies show that individuals with higher levels of EI have fewer mental health problems and that individuals with lower levels of EI are less resilient to mental disorders” (Tuck and Patlamazoglou). Individuals who possess the ability to identify emotions or feelings are better equipped to assess them and understand what to do with them in order to move forward. Recall here our discussion of Aristotle’s conceptions of misfortune, moral luck, and proper upbringing; if we are able to look within, understand what is happening emotionally, and rationalize how to cope with them and strive to place ourselves in better situations that do not cause

emotional hardship, we are simultaneously acquiring a tool to assist us in overcoming misfortune. At the same time, we are learning how to grow personally, thus propelling us toward eudaimonia or human flourishing.

To review, scholars including Daniel Goleman, Peter Salovey, and John Mayor, a few of the first scholars to explore the importance and substance of EQ have defined emotional intelligence as the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as others', and use their perceptions of those emotions in order to overcome stress and difficult situations, diffuse conflict, communicate effectively, etc. Thus far, I have also discussed the necessity for the presence and improvement of emotional intelligence in individuals' lives, as higher levels of emotional intelligence improves leadership skills, job satisfaction and performance, intimate partner relationships, and personal growth in areas such as mental health, physical health and resiliency. Since emotional intelligence has such a high impact on so many aspects of individuals' lives, it is therefore essential that we, as a population, pursue tools and schools of thought that have the potential to increase emotional intelligence.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Being emotionally intelligent means that individuals possess the ability to identify and control their emotions, as well as others' emotions, a concept that has gained much traction and popularity over the past thirty years. As I have demonstrated throughout the latter section of my thesis, many scholars highlight the importance of emotional intelligence for many aspects of everyday life: performance and satisfaction in the workplace, quality of romantic and interpersonal relationships, self-improvement and personal growth, overcoming stress and hardship, and more. Additionally, Aristotelian philosophy is a necessary set of theories needed to understand the underlying value and function of emotional intelligence. The benefits of emotional intelligence do not end with achieving or obtaining societal approval or even satisfaction for external things; higher levels of emotional intelligence improve our chances of achieving eudaimonia. As I have discussed throughout this paper, Aristotle claims that eudaimonia is the answer to the question, "what is the good life?" Achieving eudaimonia means that one has reached his human potential and fulfilled the set of virtues through deliberation, choice, habit, and experience.

Both achieving eudaimonia and emotional intelligence is based heavily on the concept of virtue ethics as relative to the understanding and controlling of one's emotions. As explained, emotional intelligence is based on the idea that individuals have the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate the emotions of themselves and others. However, another major aspect of emotional intelligence is the ability of individuals to improve their EQ. So, too, can individuals improve as people, which is a major aspect of virtue ethics. As Aristotle explains, it is impossible to be a virtuous person based on one

action, one characteristic, moral luck, etc. It takes practice and habit, and that is how individuals improve their character and become more virtuous people. Emotional intelligence works the same way; one may not be born as empathetic with the ability to perceive and decipher through others or their own emotions, but everyone does possess the ability to improve their EQ. Finally, as I have demonstrated, possessing both emotional intelligence and virtuous characteristics are important for improving in all aspects of life. I explained in detail how emotional intelligence is indicative of success in careers, relationships, resiliency, and more. The virtuous characteristics are important for success in each of these areas as well, as they are important traits that any emotionally intelligent individual would possess. Without understanding the importance of eudaimonia and other Aristotelian concepts, one could not have a true appreciation for the intrinsic goodness, or soul-related benefits of emotional intelligence, thus meaning, too, that he could not fully understand the concept of moral goodness as it is relative to virtue ethics, making it conceivably impossible to live a good life.

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