Emotional Intelligence - Why it can matter more than IQ


Excerpts from the section titled Aristotle’s Challenge, (pp ix – xiv) Staff Development Library # BF 561 G65 1995

“Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—this is not easy.” Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics

What factors are at play when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well? Daniel Goleman argues that the difference quite often lies in the abilities of emotional intelligence, which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself.

This book is a guide in a journey through scientific insights into emotions, aimed at bringing greater understanding to some of the most perplexing moments in our own lives and in the world around us. The journey’s end is to understand what it means to bring intelligence to emotion, and how to do it.

The journey begins with new discoveries about the brain’s emotional architecture that offer an explanation of those most baffling moments in our lives when feeling overwhelms all rationality. Understanding the interplay of brain structures that rule our moments of rage and fear—or passion and joy—reveals much about how we learn the emotional habits that can undermine our best intentions, as well as what we can do to subdue our more destructive or self-defeating emotional impulses.

The next stop on the journey is seeing how neurological givens play out in the basic flair for living called emotional intelligence: being able, for example, to rein in emotional impulse; to read another’s innermost feelings; or to handle relationships smoothly. This expanded model of what it means to be “intelligent” puts emotions at the centre of aptitudes for living. Continuing on the journey, Goleman examines some key differences this aptitude makes, for example:

• how these abilities can preserve our most prized relationships, and how their lack corrodes them;
• how the market forces that are reshaping our work-life are putting an unprecedented premium on emotional intelligence for on-the-job success; and
• how toxic emotions put our physical health at as much risk as does chain-smoking, even as emotional balance can help protect our health and well-being.

Further, exploring how the emotional lessons we learn as children shape our emotional circuits, and how failure to master the emotional realm can impact our lives, we see that the challenge is to learn to manage our emotional life with intelligence. Our passions, when well exercised, have wisdom; they guide our thinking, our values, our survival. As Aristotle saw, the problem is not with emotionality, but with the appropriateness of emotion and its expression.

To reserve this book, please call 667-8198, or email kerri.fernandes@gov.yk.ca