

# Succeed In Life with Emotional Intelligence

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For decades, much emphasis has been placed on enhancing the different facets of intelligence such as logical reasoning, verbal, spatial and mathematical skills. However, there was something missing in the equation, namely, Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

A research in 1990 first conceptualised Emotional Intelligence. Subsequently, the concept was popularised by Goleman's best-selling book in 1995, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. According to him, EQ can be as powerful as, or even more powerful than IQ at times; and that EQ can be acquired and improved through training. The original research defines EQ as "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 actions."

EQ plays a role in helping a person attain optimal social skills, and its use can be extended beyond one's home to social settings such as schools and workplaces. Individuals may harness their EQ to influence others' beliefs and thinking in groups and society. EQ has a direct impact on a person's quality of life. Indeed, researchers in the field of psychology ask many questions regarding the ability of an individual to regulate emotions and how it affects important life outcomes. Examples include, 'Are there better ways of handling one's emotions? And if so, can we teach people to do so?'

As a result, various EQ training modules have been developed to address such issues.

## EQ Training Programmes

With growing social and economic pressures in the highly digitised world today, and the constant bombardment of external stimuli, the social and emotional needs of developing children are changing and growing, which in turn affect their life experiences. Hence, there has been an increasing need to help children develop competencies and skills to manage their emotions, behaviour and relationships with others.

In response to this need, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has become the conceptual framework to address these issues. The principles of SEL were put forward as an integrative framework aimed at helping children to manage their emotions and social issues by building their resilience to deal with change and uncertainty.

## Why Improve EQ?

The development of EQ can help to groom children's social and emotional competencies in managing stress, setting personal and academic goals, and planning for the future. Therefore, schools and homes play a crucial role in raising healthy children by fostering their cognitive development, as well as improving their social and emotional skills.

Well-implemented SEL programmes can help children to develop self-awareness, in terms of recognising emotions, identifying personal interests and strengths, and maintaining a down-to-earth sense of self-confidence. These programmes can also

train self-management by teaching children to regulate their emotions to handle stress, control impulses, set appropriate goals, overcome setbacks and express their emotions appropriately. Children will also develop social awareness and empathy by learning to recognise the similarities and differences among individuals and groups.

In addition, children can also learn to build healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation, hone their ability to resist inappropriate social pressure, and resolve interpersonal conflict in a constructive manner. Finally, SEL programmes can be applied to teach children about responsible decision making, by getting them to consider all relevant factors such as ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms, and evaluate likely consequences of different courses of action.

Recent studies have indicated a growing amount of evidence in support of SEL programmes. There is no doubt about the potential merits of developing children's social and emotional abilities. Moreover, the last decade has seen a significant growth in the emphasis that educational policies place on SEL across the globe, suggesting the potential benefits of EQ training. Educationalists and practitioners should implement SEL programmes with diligence and fidelity since EQ is an essential skill for everyone to succeed in life, in the context of today's competitive world.

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