

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT: Powerful communication skills enable us to be more effective at work and especially in those situations of everyday life where better relationships can make all the difference. Emotional intelligence is the key to effective communication and there is no denying the fact that the two are intricately intertwined. Emotional intelligence is the state of mind that balances the responses of human beings towards those stimuli that trigger an excessive flow of adrenalin. It is very much responsible for the way we express our thoughts and interchange our ideas.

If one were to attempt a rather offbeat definition of communication, it could very well be defined as B2B marketing. B2B, of course, does not mean Business-to-Business here but Brain-to-Brain, for what is communication if not a meeting of minds. Communication, per se, is independent of words, sentences, paragraphs and the entire gamut of linguistic tools and implements. In its purest form, it is the traversal of the contents of one nervous system to another. Effective communication happens when this traversal takes place in as unhindered a way as possible.

Effective communication is very commonly and mistakenly assumed to be that state of affairs in which there is no hiatus between the encoding and decoding of the message. Effective communication is the bridging of the emotional chasm that can and usually does exist between any two parties in a communication. This calls for the presence of a high degree of emotional intelligence in the mindspace of each participant of the communication process. Emotional intelligence is the sine qua non for any kind of effective communication to materialize.

INTRODUCTION: Communication is a multidimensional phenomenon. It is spread across a very large canvas of interpersonal chemistry. There are umpteen nuances embedded in the mechanics of communication, each with a significance of its own. In very simplistic terms, every case of communication can be viewed as a 'transaction'. Therefore, the best available Behavioural-Science model for the study of communication is 'Transactional Analysis (TA)'. In fact, the very existence of this conceptual construct bears ample testimony to the fact that the respective emotional environs of the parties involved in a communicative process are crucial for

its success. These emotional environs are technically referred to as 'ego states'. The appropriate mapping of ego states is the sine qua none for the consummation of communication. The TA model stipulates that three kinds of transactions can take place between the communicator and the communicatee. The first one is the ideal case, i.e., the complementary transaction. This happens when the sender of the message, who is in a particular ego state, is able to elicit an appropriate response from the recipient of the message, who is in the 'corresponding' ego state. Now, what is this 'corresponding' ego state? For instance, if the communicator is in the parent ego state and the communicatee is in the child ego state, and vice-versa, the out come is a complementary transaction; in other words, effective communication. This also happens when both the parties are in the adult ego state. A crossed transaction takes place when there is mismatch of ego states. An ulterior transaction is one in which the explicit communication does not coincide with its underlying connotation. All this serves just to reinforce the thesis that for a successful communicative transaction to materialize, it is vital that the parties involved are able to align their emotional environs with each other.

We can also take recourse to another very popular Organizational-Behaviour precept, i.e., the Johari Window. The sum and substance of this model also is that the best kind of communication takes place when there is maximum possible intersection of the mind spaces of the parties in a dialogue. In simpler words, effective communication happens once you've been able to read the other person's mind and he has been able to read yours.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Emotional Quotient (EQ) is a relatively recent behavioural model, rising to prominence with Daniel Goleman's 1995 book called ' Emotional Intelligence'. The early Emotional Intelligence (EI) theory was originally developed during the 1970s and 80s by the work and writings of psychologists Howard Gardner (Harvard), Peter Salovey (Yale) and John Mayer (New Hampshire). Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant to organizational development and developing people, because its principles provide a new way to understand and assess people's behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills and potential. Emotional Intelligence is an important consideration in human resource planning, job profiling, recruitment and selection, management development, customer relations and customer service, and more.

The EQ concept argues that IQ, or conventional intelligence, is too narrow; that there are wider areas of emotional intelligence that dictate and enable how successful we are. Success requires more than IQ (Intelligence Quotient), which has tended to be the traditional measure of intelligence, ignoring essential behavioural and character elements. We've all met people who are academically brilliant and yet are socially and inter-personally inept. And we know that despite possessing a high IQ rating, success does not automatically follow.

Practicing manager earlier couldn't quite digest how the human qualities like empathy, self-awareness and emotional control could be of any use in an organizational setting. But with the publishing of Daniel Goleman's 'Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ', all controversies came to rest. He gave the world a new dimension of emotional intelligence by quoting that EQ accounts for about 80% of a person's success in life (Goleman, 1996). Emotions are the intense feelings towards some individual, event or situation without any cause. It could be agitation, disturbance of mind, passion, anger, grief, fear, enjoyment, surprise, love, disgust, shame, etc. One's ability to balance the emotions with the reason to maximize long-term happiness, and capability to recognize and manage one's as well as emotional awareness or emotional management skills.

EI can even be considered as an umbrella term that captures a broad collection of individual skills and dispositions usually referred as soft-skills or inter or intra personal skills that are outside the traditional areas of general intelligence and technical or professional skills (Ravi, 2001). The ability of an individual to monitor one's own feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and to use the available information in steering one's own as well as other's behaviour has attained much significance even in the information age.

Emotions are a way of expression of intense feelings, views, ideas, etc. It can be verbal or non-verbal. The effectiveness of this expression is dependent upon whether the recipient is able to catch the very same emotions in the right context or not. On the other hand, it can be even inferred whether emotions have a direct impact on the exchange and transmission of the message or not and here the role of EI in EC comes into play.

Goleman identified the five 'domains' of EQ as:

- Knowing your emotions
- Managing your emotions
- Motivating yourself

- Recognizing and understanding other people's emotions
- Managing relationships, i.e., managing the emotions of others

Emotional Intelligence embraces and draws from numerous other branches of behavioural, emotional and communications theories, such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Transactional Analysis and empathy. By developing our Emotional Intelligence in these areas and the five EQ domains we can become more productive and successful at what we do, and help others to be more productive and successful too. The process and outcomes of Emotional Intelligence development also contain many elements known to reduce stress for individuals and organizations, by decreasing conflict, improving relationships and understanding, and increasing stability, continuity and harmony.

Maurice E. Schweitzer, Wharton Professor of Operations and Information Management, and Jennifer Dunn, a PhD student in the department conducted five experiments to determine the influence of four emotional states – happiness, gratitude, anger and guilt -- on trust. Each experiment confirmed that incidental emotions (emotions from one situation that influence judgment in a following, unrelated situation) affect how willing we are to trust others. For example, our anger over a speeding ticket is likely to affect how we judge someone later in the day. The researchers conclude that despite the feeling that we are rational beings who make clear, lucid judgments, in reality we all walk around in a sea of emotions that are likely to influence how we act in both business and social contexts.

EMPATHY: THE LINKING PIN BETWEEN EI & EC: "EQ" is two times as important as IQ in terms of overall success. Empirical evidence of the role of EI in EC continues to mount; yet the world, in general, and the business world, in particular, continues to await further quantitative substantiation. Before being able to face the fact that the emotional competencies of individuals are significantly impacting their communication efficiency, people want further proof. There continues to be an all-round reluctance to address issues when it comes to anything "emotional", even when the word "intelligence" is tacked on behind it.

Emotional intelligence increases when people commit themselves to building practical competencies in the context of everyday situations. Nothing can be more powerful than developing empathy skills during everyday conversations on the job.

One of the fundamental skills that contribute to an individual's success is empathy. It starts with self-awareness. The premise here is that a full understanding of one's own emotions is the vital substratum for the germination of the understanding of the feelings of others.

Lack of empathy is a primary cause of interpersonal difficulties that leads to the derailment of communication. Empathy as a competency skill is poorly understood by those who need it most, and it is even more difficult to train and acquire. Most people believe you either have it or you don't. Many hard-driving individuals lack a propensity for developing empathy because they assume it's for the more "touchy-feely" types. Some very 'intelligent' people are walking around blindly using only their powers of reasoning and wondering why everyone doesn't see things their way.

Research by the Center for Creative Leadership has found that the primary cause of derailment in communication is deficiency of emotional competence, i.e., a grossly inadequate capacity to understand the other person's point of view.

Empathy can be defined as the ability to see things from the other person's perspective, i.e., to be able to "walk in someone else's moccasins." Goleman defines it as the ability to read other people. Other definitions include the concept of identifying with the other person or their situation. This implies more than a cognitive understanding, more than just remembering a similar situation that you may have gone through yourself. Empathy means that you can recall some of those same feelings based on your own memories. There is a sharing and identifying with emotional states. Someone somewhere has very succinctly delineated the distinction between 'sympathy' and 'empathy': sympathy is "I know how you feel" while 'empathy' is "I feel how you feel".

Now, what does all this have to do with communication? Obviously, if people were to take the time to listen with empathy to everything that was said, nothing in the world would get done. Furthermore, one cannot fall prey to being swept up into every person's story.

According to Goleman, empathy is the bedrock for all the social competencies:

1. ***Understanding others:*** Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns
2. ***Service orientation:*** Anticipating, recognizing and meeting customers' needs
3. ***Developing others:*** Sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities

4. Leveraging diversity: Cultivating opportunities through diverse people

5. Political awareness: Reading the political and social currents in an organization

Empathy skills are those that involve paying attention to other people – things like listening, attending to needs and wants of others, and building relationships. When empathy skills are high, one is more likely to inspire the troops. When A understands B and communicates that to him, he is more liked and respected by B. And that is how practising empathy results in better rapport. When a person is respected, the people he leads are more likely to go the extra mile. Empathy and focus need to be balanced, and when they are, managing skills are optimally effective.

Both managers and employees need empathy in order to interact well with customers, suppliers, the general public and with each other. Managers need it even more when they are assigning a task to someone who won't like it; when offering criticism to someone who predictably will get defensive; when having to deal with someone we don't like; when dealing with employee disputes; and when giving bad news such as telling someone that they won't be promoted or that they're being laid off. The first step in dealing with any negativity is to empathize. The next step is to focus back to the goals and the tasks at hand.

When someone comes to you with negative feedback, what is the first thing you think to yourself?

1. Here we go again. Another annoying complainer. This is a waste of my time.
2. I'm going to sit here and pretend to listen to this and then give him the facts on his latest performance measures.
3. Why can't he pay attention to the really important issues, like getting this project completed on time?
4. Why is this an issue? I need to get more information.
5. What is this person really saying here? Or, rather, what is not being said and maybe needs to be addressed?

The first response is one in which you are focusing on yourself and your needs. Responses #2 and #3 focus on the goals and needs of the organization. All of the first three responses are lacking in empathy. Response #4 focuses on the other person. And response #5 focuses on the other person and the organization. The last response shows the most empathy because it goes beyond what is being said.

At the outset empathy involves real curiosity and a desire to know or understand. There is a genuine interest in what the person is saying and feeling. You cannot have empathy without asking questions. Some typical ones are:

1. "Can you say more about that?"
2. "Really? That's interesting. Can you be more specific?"
3. "I wasn't aware of that. Tell me more."
4. "I'm curious about that...let's discuss this in more depth."
5. "Let me see if I understand you correctly...here is what I hear you say..."

Managers and leaders who are high in empathy skills are able to pick up emotional cues. They can appreciate not only what a person is saying, but also why they are saying it. At the highest levels, they also understand where a person's feelings might come from.

Those that do not have empathy have a tendency to misread the other person. They do not ask questions to clarify. They do not pay attention to non-verbal cues. Those people who are analytical by nature will listen to the words, facts and figures and completely miss the real message of what is being said.

If we remember that only 7% of the message is carried in the words and the rest is in the non-verbal cues, then listening to the content of what is being said may actually be misleading.

How then to learn effective empathy if you are one of those task-oriented managers who is primarily focused on achievement? The good news is that your achievement orientation and focusing abilities will help you in acquiring empathy skills. The bad news is that it may not be natural at first. Fortunately, empathy is a learned capability and like other competencies, it can be acquired.

Like all the emotional competencies, empathy can also be developed. This skill must be learned experientially, that is, practised in the field in real time. Here are some steps to take to begin improving empathy as an effective management tool.

1. Keeping a log of situations in which we feel we were able to demonstrate empathy and a log in which we felt we did not. Also making a note of missed opportunities to respond with empathy.
2. Becoming aware of incidents where there may be some underlying concerns that are not explicitly expressed by others.

3. Making a note of possible emotions or feelings that the other person may be experiencing. Keeping an open mind and merely exploring the possibilities.
4. Developing a list of questions to be asked at next encounter with that person. Instead of objective type questions, the questions should rather be subjective and open-ended.
5. Listening without interrupting the other person. Viewpoints should only be offered once the other person is through.
6. Avoid being defensive in order to create an open dialogue where possibilities can be explored freely.
7. Allowing creative time for people to express opinions and ideas without judgment.
8. Practising active listening: checking out the meaning of what was said with the person speaking. Paraphrasing what was said helps to clear up misconceptions and to deepen understanding.
9. Not allowing conversation to drift and keeping it focused. Optimal effectiveness is achieved by a combination of focus and empathy.

10. Working towards the achievement of effective balance of focus, goal orientation and empathetic listening.

THE SYMBIOSIS OF EI & EC: In order to better comprehend the complex conundrum of the symbiosis that exists between EI and EC, it is in the fitness of things that we follow academic route, i.e., taking recourse to a few precepts of industrial psychology.

- a) **Understanding EI:** Daniel Goleman has defined EI as ‘The ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulse and delay gratification, to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think, to empathize and to hope.’ It has become a well-known fact that these days people are hired because of their high IQ but are fired because of their low EQ. To select the best recruiters the US Air Force considers both, the presence of cognitive intelligence as well as emotional intelligence. EI is the ability to perceive and express emotions, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in oneself and others. In other words EI represents a set of competencies that allow us to perceive, understand and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others. These emotional competencies are

learned capabilities based on emotional; intelligence that lead to superior performance. According to Goleman's model, EI can be organized into four dimensions representing the recognition of emotions in ourselves and in others, as well as the regulation of emotions in ourselves and in others. Each dimension consists of a set of emotional competencies that people must possess to fulfill that dimension of emotional intelligence.

- i) **Self-awareness:** Self-awareness refers to having a deep understanding of one's own emotions as well as strengths, weaknesses, values and motives. Self-aware people are in touch with their feelings and know what feels right to them. In other words, they effectively recognize their intuition or gut instincts.
- ii) **Self-management:** This represents how well we control or redirect our internal states, impulses and resources. It includes keeping disruptive impulses in check, displaying honesty and integrity, being flexible in times of change, maintaining the drive to perform well and seize opportunities, and remaining optimistic even after failure. Self-management involves an inner conversation that guides our behaviour.
- iii) **Social awareness:** Social awareness is mainly about empathy. This includes cognitively understanding another person's situational circumstances as well as actually experiencing his feelings. By being empathetic people are also able to know a customer's needs and expectations, even when unstated. Social awareness extends beyond empathy for other individuals; it also includes being organizationally aware, such as sensing office politics and understanding social networks.
- iv) **Relationship management:** This dimension of EI refers to managing other people's emotions. It includes inspiring others, influencing people's beliefs and feelings, developing others' capabilities, managing change, resolving conflict, cultivating relationships and supporting teamwork and collaboration. Each of these challenges requires competencies relating to communication and other forms of social interaction.

The four dimensions of emotional intelligence are not independent of each other. All these dimensions roughly form a hierarchy of emotional intelligence. Relationship management is the highest level of EI because it requires all three other dimensions.

adolescence and adulthood. The adult is the 'thinking ego state'. The child ego state represents the childish, dependent and immature part of a person's personality.

The interplay of these three ego states leads to the occurrence of three kinds of social or interpersonal transactions. The first one is the complementary transaction. In this kind of transaction, the message sent or the behaviour exhibited by one person's ego state receives the appropriate or expected response from the other person's ego state. The second kind of transaction is the crossed transaction, wherein the stimulus and response lines are not parallel. The third and the most complex one is the ulterior transaction, which is characterized by a high level of subtlety. The ulterior transaction involves duplicity (if not multiplicity) of ego states on the part of the sender of the message. The individual may say one thing but mean something quite different.

c) Understanding Johari Window: The concept was developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. This model likens the human personality to a window with four panes or a graph with four quadrants. The first quadrant is the open self, also called the public area, and in this the mutual understanding of people is highest. The second pane of the window is the hidden self, also known as the private or secret area, in which the person knows about himself but does not know about others. The third cell is the blind area, in which the person knows about others but not about himself. The last block is the undiscovered self or the dark area, in which the person neither knows about himself nor about others.

d) Understanding Life Positions: Each individual tends to exhibit one of four life positions. These life positions stem from a combination of two viewpoints: how an individual views himself and how he views others. Either a positive response (OK) or a negative response (not OK) results in four possible life positions.

I am not OK – You are OK

I am not OK – You are not OK

I am OK – You are not OK

I am OK – You are OK

Of the four life positions, the ideal one is 'I am OK – You are OK'. It shows healthy acceptance of self and others. The other life positions are less psychologically mature and less effective.

THE RELATIONAL DYNAMICS OF EI & EC: EI and EC can, in fact, be viewed as the two faces of the same coin. These twin phenomena are so intricately intertwined that the relational dynamics of the two can be visualized as Brownian movement, the absolutely random, haphazard,

no-holds-barred locomotion of molecular particles. The intersectional behaviour of these two entities does not follow any clear-cut pathways of cause-and-effect relationship, insofar as the determination of the precise locations of cause and effect are concerned.

Effective communication can very conveniently be assumed to be characterized by 'smoothness', which, in turn, is, and can only be, a product of an uncluttered mind. An uncluttered mind, in turn, is characterized by a propensity to steer clear of or surmount conflict. Therefore, conflict management becomes an essential concomitant of effective communication. The ability to efficiently manage conflict is one of the hallmarks of emotional intelligence. Thus, in a manner resembling the procedure followed in proving a mathematical theorem, it has been demonstrated that there exists a relationship of direct proportionality between EI and EC.

The aforementioned thesis can be reinforced by taking a cue from Transactional Analysis (TA). TA makes an attempt to study the moves that people make in their dealings with each other or, as the title of Eric Berne's bestseller goes, 'games people play'. The three different ego states, in which people are found, as per this model, are parent, adult and child. These ego states are nothing but differently manifested forms of emotional intelligence. Further, again according to this theoretical construct, the three kinds of social transactions resulting from the paired combinations of the three ego states are complementary, crossed and ulterior.

The complementary transaction is the only desirable one out of the three and this materializes when a high degree of emotional intelligence is present in both the parties involved in a communication. A crossed transaction is the classic example of ineffective communication and this takes place when the two parties are absolutely unaware of each other's emotional environs and also do not make any effort to rectify things. An ulterior transaction is a crooked case wherein the communicatee tries to be sarcastic.

Another Behavioural-Science handmaid at our disposal in our endeavour to unravel the intricacies of interdependence of EI and EC is the Johari window. The four panes of this window represent the four possible scenarios of interpersonal dynamics. The first cell, i.e., the open self, is the ideal situation and is one in which the highest level of emotional intelligence is observed and demonstrated through mutual understanding and respect. Predictably, the best form of communication is here. In the second cell, i.e., the hidden self, the individual remains hidden from others because of the fear of how others might react. It is a case of closed communication, with an underlying sentiment of potential antagonism. The blind self, which is the third quadrant

of this matrix, is characterized by the relative absence of EI. The individual is oblivious to the impact that his behaviour has on others. This is invitation enough for interpersonal conflict and what results is ineffective communication. In the last cell, there is darkness all around. There is an absolute dearth of mutual awareness or sensitivity of any kind in the interpersonal equation, if at all it is an equation. Any communication does not take place, nay, cannot take place herein.

The life positions model can also prove to be of instrumental significance in the analysis of the relational dynamics of EI and EC. The ‘I am OK – You are not OK’ life position is marked by emotionally unintelligent behaviour and is, in fact, better known as superiority complex. Needless to say, effective communication simply cannot be the outcome of such a state of affairs. The second life position, i.e., ‘I am not OK – You are OK’ is diametrically opposed to the previous one. Colloquially called inferiority complex, this scenario, again, suffers from a deficiency of EI and, consequently, does not lead to EC. ‘I am not OK – You are not OK’ is an abjectly impoverished life position in which there is an abysmally low level of psychological maturity and EI touches its nadir. Effective communication and, in fact, any kind of communication is conspicuous by its absence in this cell. The best life position is the ‘I am OK – You are OK’ one in which there is an air of general salubriousness all around. There is a robust and healthy acceptance of each other and the environment is most conducive for the germination of EC.

ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY: A study was undertaken by the researchers to get a first-hand insight into the ground realities of the interrelationship of EI & EC. The sample size for the purpose of research was 53. There were 27 respondents from the corporate sector and 26 from academia. The gender-wise breakup of the sample was: 41 males and 12 females. Primary data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire containing 20 statements, 10 relating to Emotional Intelligence and 10 to Effective Communication. A 5-point Likert scale (1 for unimportant and 5 for most important) was used.

FINDINGS:

	Average EI	Average EC	Correlation between EI and EC
Academia	38.08	37.92	0.83
Corporate	32.19	32.11	0.81
Male	35.00	34.92	0.88
Female	35.10	34.98	0.91
Overall	35.08	34.96	0.90

- For the purpose of this illustrative study, primary data was collected from 27 respondents from the corporate sector and 26 from academics. The coefficient of correlation between EI and EC for academics is 0.83 while for the corporate sector is 0.81. In both the cases, the correlation is on the higher side, but it is at a comparatively higher level insofar as academics is concerned. This can be attributed to the difference in organizational culture and climate between the two loci. The work environment in the corporates is more stressful and hectic as compared to that in academics where we find more peace and harmony in the system.
- There were 41 males and 12 females in the sample. The coefficient of correlation between EI and EC in the case of males is sufficiently high (0.88), while for the females it is even higher (0.91). This can very well be explained by the now-clichéd presumption that women certainly leave men way behind in terms of emotional balance and soft skills.
- The overall average of EI scores is 35.08 and that of EC scores is 34.96. The coefficient of correlation between the two variables is 0.90, which is superlatively high. This high correlation between the two proves the hypothesis of this study that emotional intelligence leads to effective communication and vice-versa.
- The levels of emotional intelligence and effective communication exhibited by people vary according to time and circumstance and also according to their natural mood swings. This randomness and variability of human behaviour is one major stumbling block in the establishing any contours of consistency in the topography of this behavioural research. Furthermore, a higher level of precision could have been achieved in the results arrived at had the sample been larger.

CONCLUSION: Powerful communication skills enable us to be more effective at work and in those situations of everyday life where better relationships can make all the difference. Effective communication is the key to emotional intelligence.

Our relationships with other people have a great impact on every aspect of our life. The essence of relationships is communication; and yet, even between people who care deeply for each other, communication sometimes becomes blocked. We cannot put our feelings into words. Our partner

speaks but we do not hear. We stare helplessly across an abyss of silence, or in frustration we hurl attacks that drive us further apart.

Poor communication skills can damage all our relationships. This can affect our performance at work, our self-confidence and our physical health. Misunderstandings and lack of communication are the basis for problems between people. Furthermore, if we are experiencing problems in our relationship and because of a lack of communication skills we inappropriately attempt to share our feelings, we may experience even more rejection, hurt and misunderstanding. This may result in avoidance of communication and erection of emotional walls. A wall of frustration or emotional 'charge' develops between two people (or between a person and an organization) when what is felt is not expressed, or what is expressed is not listened to with understanding and empathy.

The emotionally intelligent work group or organization has a culture that exhibits: organizational self-awareness of its internal and external needs; management of organizational emotions through leadership, celebration and environment; organizational motivation through meaningful work and the delivery of incentives; organizational empathy by maintaining effective and meaningful relationships with consumers and employees; mentoring of organizational social skills through training, productive personnel selection practices, performance appraisal and effective communication in order to get everything materialized properly. The distilled wisdom that flows from the whole of the preceding analytical brainstorming is that there exists a positive and obvious correlation and interdependence of the two.

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