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Examples of Emotional Intelligence from Popular Songs

By Susan Dunn

Examples of Emotional Intelligence from Popular Songs by Susan Dunn, MA Clinical

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It's hard to find a song that isn't about 'the war of the brains'. Because we have three brains that are often in conflict with one another (reptilian, limbic and neocortex), we suffer conflict, guilt and shame.

And because our brains are the way they are, we are the way we are, — we endure love, grief, excitement, inconvenient passions, attempts at rational control, impotent anger and the need to push to the head of the line. And we do dumb things like fool around with Jose's faithless girl. (Don't go there!)

EQ is about experiencing and managing those emotions — yours and theirs — and it's in all our songs.

It used to be the Western tradition to have a poet laureate - starting in England in the 1600s, appointed for poetic excellence and being a salaried member of the royal household with no official duties, they spoke the feelings for the people. (Poets laureate of England included Jonson, Dryden, Wordsworth and Tennyson, among others.)

Though states in the US continue to appoint poets laureate, poetry is no longer "popular" (as in 'enjoyed by many people') and their original function is now filled by our popular music.

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1. Kodachrome (Paul Simon) / EQ can matter more than IQ, especially when it means being able to "read the writing on the wall"

When I think back on all the k*** I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all, and my lack of education hasn't hurt me none, I can read the writing on the wall.

2. Heaven's Just a Sin Away (The Kendalls) / Primitive (Reptilian) Brain's winning out over limbic and neocortex

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Heaven's just a sin away, just a sin away, can't wait another day, I think I'm giving in. How I'd love to hold you tight, be with you tonight, that still won't make it right, 'cause I belong to him. Way down deep inside, I know that it's all wrong, your eyes keep tempting me, and I never was that strong. The devil's got me now, gone and got me now, I can't fight him any how, I think he's gonna win ... Heaven help me when I say, I think I'm giving in.

3. The Girls All Get Prettier at Closing Time (Mickey Gilley) / Reality check, chemical , low impulse control and intentionality, low EQ

Ain't it funny, ain't it strange, how a man's opinion changes when he starts to face that lonely night... The girls all get prettier at closing time, they all begin to look like movie stars. If I could rate 'em on a scale from 1–10, I'm looking for a 9, but 8 could work right in. A few more drinks, and I might slip to 5 or

even 4, and when tomorrow morning comes and I wake up with a number 1, I swear I'll never do it any more.

4. Count on Me (The Statler Brothers) / Empathy, communication, interpersonal skills, intuition, high EQ, what a couple

I can tell by looking, you've got feelings in your heart you're hoping no one else can see. But you can't hide feelings from someone who cares. Open up and let it out, and count on me. Count on me (for doing my share), Count on me (you know that I care), Count on me (I'll always be there), Count on me. Count on me (when others won't hear), Count on me (when there's no one else near), Count on me (I'll be right here), Count on me. I hear the sounds you're saying, but the words don't ring true, there's something here that didn't used to be. If there's something deep inside you, tell me now what you need, and together we can heal it, count on me.

5. The Baptism of Jesse Taylor (The Oak Ridge Boys) / Social Responsibility, Self–Management, Authenticity

From now on Nancy Taylor can proudly speak to neighbors and tell them how much Jesse took up with little Jim. Now Jimmy's got a Daddy, and Jesse's got a family, and Franklin County's got a lot more man.

6. Rhythm Guitar (The Oak Ridge Boys) / Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork

He's written a song about what's gone wrong, and I'm singin' it to you now. Nobody wants to play rhythm guitar behind Jesus, Everybody wants to be the lead singer in the band. It's hard to get a bead on what's divine, when everybody's pushin' for the head of the line.

7. He's Gonna Smile on Me (The Oak Ridge Boys) / Resilience, bouncing back and retaining hope and trust through adversity

I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. Often there were times when I had to go without. I've been called a fool, and used just like a tool, but I still believe in the Golden Rule. And right now I'm so

happy as I can be.

8. Tell Him (The Exciters) / Communication, Verbal and Nonverbal

Take his hand in yours and tell him that you're never gonna leave him. Tell him, tell him, tell him, tell him right now.

9. Rose-Colored Glasses (Jon Conlee) / Learned Optimism, which is not always reality-based

These rose-colored glasses that I'm lookin' through, show only the beauty, 'cause they hide all the truth, and they let me hold on to the good times, the good lines, the ones I used to hear when I held you. And they keep me from feelin' so cheated, defeated, when reflections in your eyes show me a fool ... these rose-colored glasses ...I'll just keep on hopin', believin' that maybe by counting the many times I've tried, you'll believe me when I say I love you, and I'll lay these rose-colored glasses aside.

10. Come a Little Bit Closer (Jay and the Americans) / the three Fs - fight, flight or, canoodle ? (from the reptilian brain comes those powerful ones — territorial defense, aggression, violence, lust and fear)

She was sitting there giving me looks that made my mouth water, so I started walking her way. She belonged to that man Jose, and I knew, yes I knew, I should leave, but then I heard her say, "Come a little bit closer, you're my kinda man, so big and so strong, come a little bit closer, I'm all alone and the night is so long." We started to dance, in my arms she looked so inviting, and I just couldn't resist just one little kiss so exciting. Then I heard the guitar player say "Vamoos, Jose's on his way," and I knew, yes I knew I should run, but then I heard her say ...

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Is It Possible to Have Too Much Emotional Intelligence?

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Someone emailed me recently, "Do you think it's possible to have too much emotional intelligence going on? To the point that perhaps logic takes a backseat?"

Good question. The fact is, we need both IQ and EQ. You can't have "too much" emotional intelligence, but that doesn't mean at the expense of logic.

It's time to use logic, for instance, when figuring out a budget, or making a timeline for a project. Then there's a time to use emotional intelligence – using leadership skills, for instance, to get those people to

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make that timeline and project happen.

Emotional intelligence means using all your faculties, including logic and reason, to bring about results that are favorable. It means having the flexibility and creativity to see alternatives.

Say you're presented with a highly-charged emotional situation, for instance. You're furious with your partner and would like to hit him. Your EQ would tell you to manage that emotion, to stop and think. Your "thinking brain" would then consider the possible consequences of your act — seriously hurting him, going to jail, harming the relationship irreparably, feeling shame and guilt afterwards, and other things that are not in your best interest. At the same time, you could use your empathy to try and see things from their point of view.

There are times when logic does need to take a back seat, for instance when we need to use our hearts in managing a misbehaving toddler. Logic and reason aren't of much use with a two year old. They also aren't of much use in figuring out the big questions in life, like why bad things happen to good people.

Emotional intelligence means managing emotions so you can take action in the best interest of all concerned. This also requires using your thinking brain!

To learn more about emotional intelligence, go here: <http://www.susandunn.cc/EQ.htm>

Susan Dunn, The EQ Coach, offers personal life coaching, transitions, career, relationships, emotional intelligence. Visit her on the web at www.susandunn.cc and <mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc> .



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