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**When It's Emotional Intelligence and When It's Not**

**By Susan Dunn**

**When It's Emotional Intelligence and When It's Not by Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach**

As we all race to understand Emotional Intelligence, arguably the hottest thing on the business scene globally, there are many questions.

As 'Ask the EQ Expert' for a business website, I've been asked:

1. Isn't 'Emotional Intelligence' a contradiction in terms?
2. Isn't there such a thing as too much emotion?
3. It seems a 'natural' for relationships, but do you think emotions belong in the workplace??
4. How can I learn it?

**DO EMOTIONS BELONG IN THE WORKPLACE?**

We do business through people, and with people. Work is relationships, and whether you approve or not, emotions are at work. We don't leave them at home when we come to work. We are our emotions and we aren't a different person at work than we are at home.

**THE VALUABLE FLOODGATE**

Yes, there is such a thing as "too much emotion." The benefits of studying Emotional Intelligence are that you improve your understanding of your own feelings and how they influence you and those around you (as well as those of others), and how you think and behave, and ultimately, your emotions become more modulated.

## When It's Emotional Intelligence and When It's Not

One area that sabotages us, for instance, is when we become "flooded" or "hijacked." Something or someone makes you angry and you lose it. You might lash out, or withdraw, get physical and do something rash, use poor judgment, or sit in apoplectic silence, but whatever your reaction, what's happened is that the flood of anger has disabled your thinking brain, just when you need it the most. The aftermath can include regret, as well as fatigue, stomach pains, headaches, back aches, diarrhea ... you name it.

Research is showing us there's a "brain" in our intestines as well as in our heads that's hooked up to our emotions (via the powerful vagus nerve) . but we knew that. That's why we have "visceral" reactions to things, and why we can always check in with our bodies to see how we're feeling, if our heads are fooling us with rationalizations. (i.e., If he's really such a nice guy, why is your stomach in knots when you have to talk to him?)

### TOO LITTLE?

On the other hand, if you think you've checked your emotions at the front desk, #1 they're more likely to sabotage you because you aren't mindful, and #2, you're missing a great ally. Emotions give us information. One EQ competency, for instance, is intuition, and without the information you get from your "gut feeling" or "basic instincts" you'll call many plays wrong.

Emotional Intelligence is the interface between thinking and feeling. We can think through the data, but it can only take us so far; otherwise, we'd always be able to pick a winner!

And #3, if you aren't mindful about emotions you will be less effective with people.

This does not mean turning you into a wuss, or a bleeding heart, or that screaming or crying on the job is the desired results. In fact, it's about managing emotions; understanding your own and those of others, and responding, not reacting. This gives you choices!

Why more effective with people? Motivation is an example. It's not a thinking word, as you know if you've 'talked till you were blue in the face' trying to convince someone of something with logic and reason. Ultimately we are moved by our emotions, and we need to connect with others to access this. This has been said to be the difference between a "leader" and a "manager," which is a fair theoretical distinction, but in reality people's job titles don't always reflect what they do, or, more importantly, how they are.

### TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?

Why moderation? Let's take a look at Empathy, one of the Emotional Intelligence competencies. If you're low in Empathy, you need it, and it can be learned. Hook up with a certified EQ coach and get into it.

If you have a strong ability at Empathy, you need to be able to use it as a tool; in other words, you use

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IT, it doesn't use YOU. It matters how you manage it. Understanding the feelings of the other person is valuable. Getting infected by them is not. Neither is practicing Empathy with someone who is toxic.

In his book, "Coping with Toxic Managers, Subordinates ... and Other Difficult People: Using Emotional Intelligence to Survive and Prosper,"

( <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0131409956/susandunnmome-20> ) Roy H. Lubit, an academic, psychiatrist, and management consultant, identifies the behaviours of five types of toxic managers: narcissistic, unethical, aggressive, rigid and impaired. He suggests strategies for protecting yourself. Yes, protecting yourself.

When your Intuition (an EQ competency) informs you that you're dealing with someone toxic, it's time to take care of yourself, not try and "fix" them. People with strong Empathy often make this mistake. Lubit maintains these toxic behaviours are the manifestations of depression and fear. The Empathic person will pick up on the depression and fear, which is indeed worthy of compassion, but not at the expense of harmful behaviours coming your way. Misapplied Empathy leaves you wide open to abuse, as well as likely to stick around too close and too long.

"Understanding" the underlying feelings does not excuse the toxic behaviours, nor compel you to tolerate them.

Other EQ competencies would then come into play, such as Personal Power, Intuition, and Integrated Self.

Toxic behaviours are not confined to managers. You will meet them roaming around many offices and your ability to work around them will impact your career. As has been said, your EQ is more important to your success (health and happiness) than your IQ.

Julian Barling, Ph.D., professor of organizational behaviour at Queen's University, Kingston, says aggression in the workplace is more likely when 2 factors are present: psychologically unhealthy people and psychologically unhealthy organizations, and feels it's easier to try and make organizations healthier than to try and weed out psychologically unhealthy individuals.

With Empathy, you can understand where they're coming from, but it's your Intuition that tells you it's not a problem to be solved, but rather a fact to be dealt with, and Personal Power that allows you to take care of yourself rather than feeling "hopeless and helpless."

### HOW DO YOU LEARN IT?

Reading about Emotional Intelligence is the starting point, but to really 'get it' you have to put it into practice. Coaching is the suggested venue for the crucial active-learning stage. Social and interpersonal skills can't be practiced in a vacuum, and you need feedback.

Emotional Intelligence is about understanding and valuing emotions; managing them; and integrating them comfortably with thinking processes for the information, motivation, enrichment and connection

they give us.

Most people find Emotional Intelligence to be "the missing piece" and the best way to understand it, is to experience it.

To take an EQ assessment, go here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/z750> .

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### **Is It Possible to Have Too Much Emotional Intelligence?**

**By Susan Dunn**

#### **Is It Possible to Have Too Much Emotional Intelligence? by Susan Dunn, M.A., The EQ Coach**

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 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.

## When It's Emotional Intelligence and When It's Not

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](http://www.susandunn.cc) and <mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc> .



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