

## **An Overview of the Eight Principles**

By Jo Maddocks

Over the previous 8 issues of the ezine Tim Sparrow has provided a description of each of the eight fundamental beliefs that feature on the front page of this magazine. The reason they are given such prominence is because they form the basis for an understanding of the true nature of EI.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is now widely applied and accepted as an area for performance development, but despite a plethora of measures and applications it is often badly defined and confused with other psychological models. One reason for this is that most approaches to examining EI have tended to focus on the outcomes of being emotionally intelligent in terms of competencies. Instead we would recommend starting from the core of EI, which are these attitudes or philosophical beliefs.

Attitudes are what determine our feelings, these in turn create our behaviours with varying degrees of competence that ultimately leads to an outcome. The explanation given to attitudes that I most like is by Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrell from The Human Givens Institute (4). They describe a 'pattern matching' process between a given stimulus (activator) and our the emotional positions resulting from learning and experiences (attitudes). This happens within the Limbic system that releases 'emotional tags' (expectations) into the Thinking brain (neocortex). Our attitudes (emotional positions) are refined nightly (during REM sleep) and are the core element underlying our emotional and cognitive responses.

The 8 attitudes described here were put together by Tim Sparrow and taken from the usually un-stated underlying beliefs of humanistic psychology. We do not suggest that these are 'the gospel', but we do say that when people behave in ways that are not emotionally intelligent, as defined by the 'ie' scales, they will prove on examination to have breached one or more of the principles.

The implication here is that when developing emotionally intelligent behaviours we must look also at the person's underlying attitude that gave rise to their feelings and thinking. The clue to our attitudes is given by our feelings. Feelings do not appear from nowhere; they are the direct consequence of our attitudinal pattern matching. So this takes us back to the EI framework, which shows us that self awareness (noticing our feelings) is the source to EI development.

I shall now go on to describe the 8 principles linking them to some of the EI theories.

**Principle 1:** We are each of us in control of and responsible for our actions

This is a tough one as it implies that the buck stops here. Where this attitude has been adopted it will facilitate more empowering and responsible behaviour, but where the attitude is not adopted we are more likely to feel helpless and blaming of others: e.g. comments like "You made me", "I couldn't help it" and "It was the drink talking". This EI attitude is fundamental as it underpins all other EI scales including 'Personal Power' (being in charge of and responsible for your outcomes in life), and 'Trustworthiness' (inviting the trust of others by being reliable, principled, consistent and knowable).

**Principle 2:** No one else can control our feelings

This may sound obvious, yet everyday comments like 'You made me angry' or 'You upset me' suggest that the other person has some control over our feelings. Yet we know that what we feel is determined by our internal interpretation of the external event, otherwise we would all feel the same about the same situation. This has significant implications for our EI: if we hold the mindset that other people do control our feelings then we are likely to be Over-dependent on others and Emotionally under-controlled.

**Principle 3:** People are different:

*They experience the world differently, feel different things and want different things*

Most people nod sagely at this, yet in practice we often assume the opposite and are usually surprised, mystified or annoyed when people do not act the way we expect them to do. Taking the advice of Oscar Wilde 'Do not do unto others as you would have them do unto you as their tastes may not be the same'. Recognising and being flexible to adapt to people's differences is a core mindset for one half of EI, interpersonal intelligence, comprised of Awareness of others and Relationship management.

Variability of emotional intelligence within people needs also to be recognised. Reducing EI to a single EQ score, as is the practice of a number of EI measures, is a gross generalisation of an individual's relative strengths and weaknesses, in the same way that a single IQ score would be.

**Principle 4:** However you are, and others are, is OK.

This principle links directly into our wider framework of EI. (Fig 1). The EI framework divides EI into two parts (as identified by Howard Gardner<sup>(2)</sup>); intrapersonal intelligence (being good at sensing what is going on inside of you emotionally, knowing what to do about it and doing it) and interpersonal intelligence (being good at identifying what is going on outside of you and knowing what to do about that and doing it).

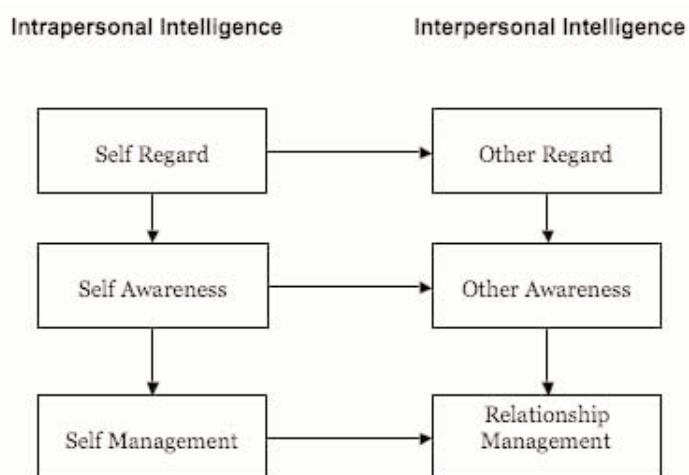


Fig. 1; The EI framework

As shown by the arrows, self regard is the cornerstone to developing EI; Self Regard links to Self Awareness (I may choose not to notice or to distort negative feelings), and may also affect my Regard for Others (e.g. projecting the disowned parts of the self onto others). Self Awareness is the link to Self Management (I can not manage feelings I am not aware of) and will affect my Awareness of Others (we use our own bodily cues to help us diagnose others' states). Similarly, Relationship Management depends on having Awareness of Others and will also be affected by my Self Management (e.g. If I fail to control my aggressive impulses when I feel angry, that is likely to affect my relationships adversely).

Also within this framework can be placed other EI scales e.g. under Self management can be included Emotional Resilience, Goal Directedness and Personal Power, and under Relationship Management; Interdependence and Conflict Handling etc.

This principle is related to the OK Corral Model of Transactional Analysis, which include two scales; Self Regard (I am OK) and Regard for Others (You are OK). Regard in this sense is focussed on accepting and valuing a person for their 'being', not necessarily liking or approving of their 'doing' (behaviour). The Regard scales are combined to produce the four 'life positions' as shown in (Fig. 2).

	I'm not OK	I'm OK
You're OK	'Submissive'	'Healthy'
You're not OK	'Hopeless'	'Critical'

Fig. 2; The OK Corral Model

Strictly speaking these scales are not in themselves aspects of EI but they do provide a simple structure for tying together all other EI scales. For example, someone who is Over Trusting, Passive, Over-Dependent and Emotionally Over-Controlled may be coming from

the mindset "I am not OK; You are OK", while someone who is Over-Aggressive, Over-Independent, Emotionally Under-Controlled and Mistrusting may come from the mindset "I am OK, You are not OK", and someone who is Assertive, Emotionally Controlled and Interdependent etc will come from the mindset "I am OK and You are Ok".

This illustrates a common problem with most EI models that assume all EI scales are linear i.e. more is always better. In fact it is possible to have too much on certain scales as well as too little, e.g. Aggressive (too much) Assertive (just right) Passive (too little) as described above.

**Principle 5:** Feelings and behaviour are separate

Emotional Intelligence is literally intelligent use of our emotions, or by our definition 'is the practice of using thinking about feeling, and feeling about thinking, when choosing what to do. When people go straight from feelings to behaviour they may be having what Daniel Goleman describes as an 'emotional hijack', e.g. when feelings of anger get the better of us. Comments like 'I couldn't help it' suggest that the person has not learnt to separate their feelings from their behaviour, which in turn can result in emotionally unintelligent behaviour such as low Goal Directedness (and low impulse control), Emotional Under-Control, lack of Emotional Resilience and poor Conflict Handling.

An important aspect to our definition here is that EI is the 'practice' of managing the relationship between thoughts, feeling and behaviour. Most definitions of EI tend to describe it as a noun (a nominalisation) rather than a verb (the practice of being), which misses the point, that it is not just a matter of 'how emotionally intelligent you are' but 'in what ways you behave with emotional intelligence'.

**Principle 6:** All feelings are self justified, acceptable and important

Feelings tell us what we want, like, dislike, need and fear etc. If judgement is the enemy of perception, then judging our feelings as good or bad may lead us to deny those feelings which are unpleasant or less acceptable. If we are unaware of our feelings (the messages our body gives us) then we are unable to manage them appropriately, which will impair our being emotionally intelligent and may result in such phenomena as bottled up resentment, hostility, stress, ill health, defensive and rigid behaviour etc.

There are several steps or hurdles at which we may fail to acknowledge or act upon our feelings. We must initially notice our feelings, then pay attention to them, then give them significance, then think about our feelings and finally take them into account when deciding how to act. This applies both to our own feelings and the feelings of others; if I disregard others' feelings as unimportant then I am less likely to understand or relate effectively with people.

**Principle 7: Change is possible**

This principle is fundamental to those working in people development, and of particular relevance to EI, as EI is based on habits, attitudes and skills which are all learned / acquired and therefore changeable. Unfortunately many EI products attempt to justify their scales by correlating them with personality. In our view personality differs from EI in two distinct ways: personality is more constitutional (in the extent to which it is not derived from very early learning) and therefore less changeable, and personality is not about competence, which EI clearly is. We would therefore suggest that personal development does not require changing your personality, but rather learning how to *manage your personality*, which in essence is being emotionally intelligent e.g. moving outside of our comfort zones, changing a long running habit and adopting new attitudes. For this reason personality and EI go hand in hand, as EI is the practice of managing your personality.

**Principle 8: People have a natural tendency towards growth and health.**

Our approach to and view of emotional intelligence is that everyone can develop their EI, that it is not a fixed or limited capacity, but that owing to interference factors such as defences and rigidities our innate human potential is often underdeveloped. Aristotle illustrated his concept of Physis (the Greek for inherent nature), by using the example of a plant seed which if it is given the right environment will naturally grow and flourish. We find it helpful here to apply the formula  $\text{Performance} = \text{Potential} - \text{Interference}^{(3)}$ . In practical terms this means helping people to recognise their gifts and resources, identify and dismantle their blockers such as limiting beliefs and restrictive habits, and replacing them with emotionally intelligent attitudes, habits and competencies.

It is not our assertion that people should adopt these eight principles as 'truths' - people are entitled to believe whatever they want to - but we do observe that when people behave in ways that are not emotionally intelligent they will always not have applied one or more of these principles. Attitudes are only one aspect of EI but they help provide a core understanding of what EI is and how to develop and behave with emotional intelligence.

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*Applied EI Issue 9, November 2005*