

Faith and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract: This paper attempts to bring out the crux of Emotional Intelligence and how every individual can analyse his or her emotions. Self-analysis is the first step as it helps in introspection of one's thoughts, emotions and responses. This leads to awareness and awareness in turn helps to generate the right emotion which ultimately leads to success in all domains of life. Factors which hinder the development of Emotional Intelligence like fear, anger, depression are analysed with biblical examples. Religious teachings may serve as a guiding light as such precepts are found to be time-tested. Faith is inevitable in building up of self confidence and esteem. Thus research has proved that religiosity helps in developing emotional intelligence.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, hindrances, development, faith, fear, courage, stress, Anxiety.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term 'Emotional Intelligence' was first used in Wayne Payne's Doctoral thesis titled *A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence* in the year

1985. Daniel Goleman propagated the theory of Emotional Intelligence with the publication of his best seller of the same title. Various scientific studies have emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence. Earlier the emphasis was only on IQ or Intelligence quotient but when an analysis was done on the life of people with high IQ its astonishing to understand that those who were highly proficient in academics failed miserably in life. This provides ample proof that developing one's intelligence alone is not sufficient for ensuring success. One can be successful only when the head and heart work in unison in other words a right balance of intelligence and emotional intelligence is required.

Emotional Intelligence is the buzz word for becoming successful in all domains of life. Developing EI assures one of happiness, health, success and achievement. Before climbing the ladder of success let's analyse the factors that actually prevent a person from utilizing his talents to the fullest potential; they may be fear, anger, anxiety, inferiority complex, devastating experiences, abuses etc. These experiences are inevitable as life in this world is a mixed bundle. One may have fear of failure that may be because the person does not contemplate his/her own potential for success. Such fears hold individuals back from taking initiatives that would lead to success. Another reason could be anger, anger is a venomous emotion as metaphorically said by William Blake in his poem *A Poison Tree*. When this negative emotion is fed and nurtured it only yields poisonous fruits. An angry person can never arrive at 1. Dr. Tissaa Tony accurate judgements which again might lead to failure or dissatisfaction. Misleading perceptions of reality will certainly lead a person to face more challenges or problems. Hence, looking at life in the right perspective is necessary to wage the battles in our mind successfully.

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Self-awareness or understanding one's temperament and filtering out the negative emotions will help an individual lead a happy life. Perceptions or impressions formed at a highly emotional moment may not be true; it can be capable of misleading an individual. Understanding one's own emotions alone is not enough to develop the right perspective, understanding the emotions of other persons involved in the problem or situation and the situation itself must be ascertained objectively. Otherwise, it may lead to 'emotional hijacking' as Daniel Goleman calls it. Fanning or flaming up of unhealthy emotions leads to emotional hijacking. In order to bring out the best of ourselves in all circumstances one has to thoroughly analyse all the emotions and the root cause. In other words one has to know the situations or the people who make them happy or sad. Gradually, ascertain whether the atmosphere makes you happy or irritated or the presence of a person does that. Then one has to analyse whether the temperament or behaviour of a person causes that emotion or does the present emotion have a connection to a past experience with that place or person. This is because our brain records all instances as pleasant or unpleasant and at the recurrence of unpleasant experiences or situations it would auto suggest certain facts which would lead us to associate certain facts. This in fact would prompt us to react in relation to the preset assumptions. Mostly individuals fail to analyse emotions and the circumstances which generate a particular emotion. Individuals who develop the capability to sit back and think why they reacted in a particular manner to a particular person, was it right or wrong, will they like it, if they think from the shoes of the other person. The answers that evolve will help in attaining maturity in transactions. May be this does not happen at a single shot but gradually understanding and analysing one's emotions would help an individual to evolve into a better personality. On the other hand, individuals who fail to do such an analysis of emotions may misunderstand people, strain relationships and cause stress. Thereby, developing this skill becomes inevitable for life.

II. RESULTS

Religious beliefs and practices can aid development of Emotional Intelligence because these precepts or teachings are well researched and tested by practice over the years. The Bible for example is a ready reckoner which can be referred by an individual in any state of life. The answers are all there and it can be a yardstick with which one can ensure whether the actions are right or wrong. Bhagwat Geetha is a set of advice Lord Krishna gives to his devotee Arjuna.



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This can be called the greatest masterpiece on Emotional Intelligence because Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna on how he must not let his heart rule his head or in other words he must not be swayed by emotions. The Holy Quran which the Muslims believe to be a revelation from God is also a guide for mankind to lead a worthy life. Thus holding on to some religious precepts or ethics in life like a beacon light will help us from preventing our life boat from sinking. If an individual is of the opinion that one needs to stick on to religion then he or she must codify his or her own guiding principles. This may involve a lot of quest and seeking. If the search is earnest then the whole universe and all its powers will conspire to give an answer but the names with which the devotees or seekers address the supernatural power may be different but there is a super human power which guides or enlightens the devotees.

Research has proven that people who are involved in regular religious practices and rituals are much stronger mentally when compared to people who don't indulge in such activities. Such individuals don't fall into depression, alcoholism or bad behaviour. This fact is more evident in children who are brought up with such an orientation right from infancy. When they reach adulthood they are found to be Emotionally Intelligent when compared to their peers who fall into the snares of adolescence. The paper published by Adeyemo D. A and Adeleye A. T. in *Europe's Journal of Psychology* testifies this fact. Self-efficacy levels are found to be better in children who involved themselves in religious practices. Another paper by Garima (2012) stated that religious approach is highly influential in building self-esteem, emotional-intelligence and wellbeing of students. All these researches testify the fact that development of Emotional Intelligence through various practices helps the individual to develop better EQ (Emotional quotient) and IQ (Intelligence Quotient).

The emphasis and religious approach may also influence the well-being, self-esteem and emotional intelligence of students. This finding was supported by a study by Garima (2012). In their study, they explained that spiritual intelligence and religious practice have a positive relationship with students' self-esteem. Besides that, a study by Sarita Sood et al., (2012) showed that religious routines may influence an individual's well-being. This shows that religious routines lead to positive well-being, increase self-esteem and influence individual's emotional intelligence. This was also supported by a study by Mavrovelli et al. (2007) in which they explained the positive relationship between well-being and emotional intelligence based on the results of a study done among students. Mohammad Khaled Ian's et al., (2013) study also showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among students which was believed to contribute towards their emotional intelligence.

This shows how successful were the various approaches that were used by schools and how it catered to the development of emotional intelligence among students in different schools. The Holy Bible also offers several instances of people who were tossed in the tempest of life but they were miraculously withstood the difficulties because they held on to God strongly. I would like to bring in two characters from the Bible, they are Ruth and Job.

Ruth was a young beautiful Moabite girl. She married Mahlon, the son of Naomi but becomes a widow very soon. Her mother-in-law who is also a widow advises her to go to her village but Ruth is found to be an Emotionally Intelligent girl as she understands her own emotions as well as the emotions of her mother-in-law. Both are widows who have no other source of living and the country was facing a severe famine. Naomi is also an emotionally intelligent character because she knows the tribulations that were in wait for them. Hence, she is ready to take up the suffering and help the daughter-in-laws to have a better life. It is at this point the inner grit of Ruth is revealed, she tells her mother-in-law "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." Ruth 1:16-17. This quote from the book of Ruth talks about her faith in man and God. She also displays her care and concern for her mother-in-law, she understands her state and foresees that she needs her help. The second precept in this context is her faith in God. She never cries over her helplessness of being a widow but she offers to lend another widow is more vulnerable than her. This strength of the mind with which she battles against the odds is not from her physical strength. It is the strength she gains from her fellowship with God. It actually helps her to rise to a higher level of thinking, she thinks about her responsibilities and commitments rather than about self-interests. This ability to understand one's own emotions or state of mind as well as the emotions of people in transaction with her life help her resolve the struggles of her life. She generates the right emotions at the right time to tide over problems. Her mother-in-law advises her to flee from difficulties but she decides to face difficulties and not to desert people at times of adversities. This trait of understanding the emotions and generating the right emotion at the right time is emotional intelligence. Hence, Ruth is an emotionally intelligent character from the Bible.

Job was an upright and honest man who lived in Uz. He was prosperous and happy as God had blessed him abundantly. Hence, Satan pleads God to take away all his blessings and test him. As the tribulations increase even his wife and friends ask Job to curse God and die. But Job's faith is steadfast. But Biblical psychologists observe that in the heart of hearts Job had a fear that this prosperity and happiness might be stolen some day. The book of Job in the Bible discloses this fear in the following lines "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me" Job 3:25. And it is this fear that Satan takes advantage of his doubts and slowly brings them to reality. This is not only true for Job. It is true in the case of any person who permits negative thoughts to penetrate his/her mind. These doubts and fears slowly reduce the confidence and faith of the person which gradually leads to the ruin of the person's life. Job's life is a testimony for the generation of believer's. A small speck of doubt can eventually transform one's mode of thinking and action.

Faith as said by Christ as big as mustard seed can move mountains. Here again the trait of the mustard seed is that it is fully packed. There is no room for anything else to enter. This is the crux of faith; it is to be tightly packed with no space for negativity or doubts. Otherwise these weeds could actually invade and conquer your mind. Faith, which is not wholesome or full by itself, may not reach God irrespective of the names by which people address Gods. Jesus himself says faith can move mountains in Mathew 17: 20. Again faith is defined by St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrew's as " Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Heb 11:1. Faith is the prerequisite for prayers to be answered. Hence, faith cannot be treated as purely religious term. It can relate to faith in oneself, faith in relationships and ultimately faith in the path one treads. Faith therefore can be called as an attribute of the mind which is inevitable for growth in all domains of life. A person with faith in oneself can achieve success in life but a person who doubts about his calibre can never succeed in life as his/her mind will be full of doubts and fear of failure. An emotionally intelligent person would definitely have this quality. The person would have great faith in oneself at the preliminary level; the next level would be faith in ideologies or religious practices. When this faith is wholly packed like a mustard seed it nurtures the mind and does not allow negative thoughts to enter the mind. Thus a positive mindset is a framework developed by faith which is the stepping stone for a personality makeover. People who fumble in faith formation would eventually dwindle. There are millions of stories of people who are successful but unhappy, rich but feeling an inner void. The root cause of all these can be traced to lack of faith. The feeling of emptiness, loneliness all begin with the lack of conviction. Hence faith formation and emotional intelligence are closely connected because emotionally intelligent people have a deep trust in themselves and their convictions which helped them understand themselves and others better.

III. CONCLUSION

Understanding of self and one's emotions builds faith in oneself and this gradually will lead them to time-tested practices or ideologies which helps them evolve into better individuals. Thus awareness of the various emotions and analysing and managing them before reacting or reacting to circumstances or people can transform stressful lives into peaceful and add bliss to life.

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