**What is Emotional Intelligence?**

Over the last decade, there has been extensive research done on emotional intelligence (EQ). Peter Salovey, Jack Mayer, and Reuven Bar-On are some of the pre-eminent researchers in this field and Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* published in 1995 really ignited the current interest in the subject. Goleman’s follow on books *Working with Emotional Intelligence* and *Primal Leadership* shifted the focus of EQ from a general discussion to the powerful role that emotional intelligence plays in the workplace in general and leadership in particular.

For understanding the RightPath Emotional Proactivity Instrument, EQ will be defined as an awareness of emotions (ours and others) and then the ability to respond appropriately to that information. This general concept is often referred to in EQ studies as the Four-Fold Model. For our purposes, we call this the *Awareness – Response Emotional Intelligence Model* and the graphic below depicts this concept of EQ.

On the “Self” side *Awareness* enables us to **Understand** our own emotions. Next comes our **Response** as we apply that information to **Manage** our own behaviors.

On the “Others” side, *Awareness* is our ability to **Perceive** the emotions of others and then develop a **Response** that enables us to **Relate** in an appropriate manner.

![A Skill-Based Emotional Intelligence Model](image)

The emphasis in this model is on the development and deployment of the skills for gaining emotional awareness and then responding appropriately to effectively manage our own emotions and respond in the most effective way to others. This recognized model provides the foundational psychological framework for behaviorally describing EQ in action.

The RightPath Emotional Proactivity Instrument takes EQ evaluation a step further via another model for relating these skills to responses to four major/dominant emotions. The construct for this additional model is built upon some of the latest research on how emotions work within the brain. This model helps us understand how both positive and negative choices relate to basic emotional impulses. We call these choices “proactive” and “reactive” responses/behaviors. The following illustration depicts the four major
The emotions of anger, sadness, joy, and fear are acknowledged by many neuroscientists to be the fundamental origins and most influential sources for emotionally-based behaviors. The light colored circles between these primary emotions represent the possible blends of emotions that we can experience. For example, the blending of sadness and joy could create nostalgia.

Notice also that this Response-Based Model highlights two possible (although not limited to these two alone) paths we can choose in interpreting, evaluating and responding to emotional stimuli. We can choose a proactive (positive) response or a reactive (negative) response. The proactive responses are assertiveness, empathy, optimism and discernment. The reactive responses are hostility, pessimism, impulsivity and anxiety.

At the bottom of this graphic, you see the three areas of the brain that are responsible for rapidly generating emotional impulses as a result of external stimulation or internal dialogue. These chambers or sections are located at the lower part of the central section of the brain in what some refer to as the limbic system. These chambers are the thalamus, which connects bodily sensation to neurochemical reactions; the amygdala, which seems to be responsible for the rapid appraisal of threat and danger; and the hippocampus, which helps to encode emotional memories. Each of these chambers has two hemispheres which allow for even further specialization in processing emotions. When these areas are triggered, impulses are translated into feelings, and feelings are
cognitively interpreted and evaluated in the rational center of the brain called the **neocortex**. It is at this point (all of this is happening at a very rapid rate) we decide how we are going to respond to the initial stimulus. Research has shown that the more developed our appraisal and evaluative capabilities are, the less we are prone to respond to an emotional stimulation in a reactive or negative fashion.

Now let’s bring all that scientific talk down to an everyday example. Consider a typical external stimulation that might come to you as you are driving to work. A reckless speeder suddenly crosses three lanes of traffic and just misses you as he cuts in to make the next exit. Your amygdala receives this information and appraises it as a severe threat/danger. Based on your own natural wiring and your past experience your hippocampus may remember that the knee-jerk reaction to such threats is extreme Anger (adrenaline for fight or flight). Your impulse at this stage may be to have what some have termed and “amygdala hijack” – your animal instincts take over and **hostility** (reactive behavior of Anger) prevails. Your initial response may be to blow your horn, scream, give a hand gesture, or possibly you may find yourself wanting to “ram the jerk.”

But since you are a rational person, you allow a split second for your neocortex to process this information and decide just to let the fool go on his way and be thankful that he didn’t cause an accident. In this case, you **assert** discipline over yourself (hippocampus memory says slow down) to enable reason (neocortex brings a rational perspective) to override a potential negative reaction behavior. The old saying “better think twice before you do something you’ll regret” provides a practical example of the self-management associated with EQ. Of course much of our self-management comes from learned behavior. It’s very possible that your ability to respond with high EQ to the traffic situation above may be related to a time in the past when you operated a vehicle in foolish manner or perhaps just a good understanding of the dangers of road rage.

Research on negative leadership behaviors offer compelling examples of how emotion-based **reactive** behaviors lead to executive derailment and what one could logically term low EQ. For example, an executive who perceives a threat when someone disagrees with his logic and then reacts with hostility soon cuts himself off from any reality feedback or “bad news.” (You’ve probably heard the joke about the graveyard outside the boss’s office where they bury the messengers who bring bad news.)

Derailment can also occur when a pro-active behavior response is overdone because it eventually leads to negative results. For example, assertiveness (Proactive behavior of anger) can provide energy and focus to get things done. However, when overdone, it can become controlling even without being hostile. Likewise, the pro-active behavior of Discernment can be powerful but when overdone leads to “paralysis by analysis.”

Biographies and the literature on leadership are replete with examples of executives who have profound disruptions in their careers when their strengths are over-deployed or relied on too heavily. Consider General McArthur, an exceptional military leader, who was fired by President Truman due to his arrogant response to Presidential authority.
Thus, a weakness could not only be defined as the absence of a certain competency or talent, but equally important the over-use of a strength.

McArthur was indeed brilliant but as General Eisenhower said of him: ““MacArthur could never see another sun, or even a moon for that matter, in the heavens as long as he was the sun.”¹ McArthur’s strong ego and sense of self-confidence was essential to his strategic battlefield success but when he over-relied on these strengths he lost the ability to listen to others.

**Summary of the EQ Models and the Emotional Proactivity Instrument**

EQ is about how we manage our emotions in various situations involving self and others. It starts with an awareness of our own emotions and then our ability to manage our responses to those emotions. It is also about learning to recognize the emotions of others and respond by relating appropriate to the needs of the person and circumstances.

Each of the four dominant emotions (Anger, Sadness, Joy and Fear) has the potential for a proactive (positive) response and a reactive (negative) response. Those with high EQ have learned to slow down their responses sufficiently to make proactive, rational based choices that are likely to bring positive outcomes. Finally, when a person overuses or overextends proactive strengths, he or she may be unaware of the negative impact on others. Thus the central theme of EQ is to gain awareness and respond appropriately. It sounds easy but it’s a challenge for all of us. The good news is that unlike IQ which is fairly fixed for each individual, EQ is about choices and can be raised through awareness and learned behaviors.

**A Word or Two about Feedback**

The purpose of a multi-rater assessment is to provide you with feedback on your behaviors. The idea sounds good but the reality is that even constructive feedback on something that you know is true can sting. Typical first reactions can vary from a wounded self-esteem (I’m really not as good as I thought.) to denial (they are not seeing things accurately, and even to defensive anger, (they are jealous, out to get me etc.). So expect feedback to sting and move through it quickly to react in a proactive way to use it to your advantage.

Almost without exception, your raters have given their honest, best effort to the process in order to help you. However, it is possible that someone sees this as an opportunity to “fix” all the ways you irritate them. Remember to process your feedback in context. Use it as appropriate but don’t allow yourself to react with an amygdala hijack. If something seems out of context reflect on it yourself and check it out with those you trust. If it doesn’t fit, just let it float; don’t let it burden you.

¹ IKE THE SOLDIER As They Knew Him, Merle Miller, page 26, Perigee Books (The Putnam Publishing Group),1988,New York NY
Finally, keep in mind that the process of interpretation of your results will provide helpful insights into how you receive new information and respond. Also remember, you are the one who has to reconcile the various ratings with your own reality. And if you feel like somewhat of a paradox, then you’re normal. When we see ourselves clearly, we see that we are a combination of good – bad, strong – weak, and talented yet deficient. We are all a work in progress and that’s a worthwhile challenge no matter how high the EQ.

Interpreting the Emotional Proactivity Instrument

The Emotional Proactivity Instrument combines the Skill-Based and the Response-Based Models of EQ. This combination enables a process for rating a person’s Awareness and Response skills as well as all eight proactive and reactive responses. The beta test version of the instrument contains 131 EQ related items and is offered online as a multirater instrument.

Items (questions) are written at a tenth grade reading level and though the majority of statements are written in a positive tone approximately 25% are written from a negative perspective. A seven point Likert (low to high) scale is used to rate a person’s performance in all areas. This means that a score above 5 or higher shows proficiency in a specific skill or attribute, while a score below 3 or lower reveals the need for further work. Scores around 4 tend to be more neutral which indicates that the item is not a strength and probably needs work.

This online assessment also offers a section for open ended “comments” to give raters an opportunity to provide the participant further collaborative insight into his/her leadership strengths and struggles.

We know from the concept of EQ that both awareness and response are essential to high performance. Your EQ reports provide key insights (awareness) for understanding the impact your behaviors are having on others. The worksheets that you will receive with your final results (also shown below) are intended to help you respond and apply the information in order to grow as a leader and person. We wish you the very best as you go about this important process of personal growth to achieve growth as a leader.
**Sub-Category by Rater Type Worksheet**

**Manager**
1. Which Emotionally Proactive Behavior did your Manager rate you the highest?

2. Which Emotionally Reactive Behavior did your Manager rate you the lowest?

**Direct Reports**
3. Which Emotionally Proactive Behavior did your Direct Reports rate you the highest?

4. Which Emotionally Reactive Behavior did your Direct Reports rate you the lowest?

**Peers**
5. Which Emotionally Proactive Behavior did your Peers rate you the highest?

6. Which Emotionally Reactive Behavior did your Peers rate you the lowest?

**Overall**
7. Of these three rater groups, who rated you the highest?

8. Who rated you the lowest?

9. What does this tell you about the differences in how you relate to various groups?

**Question Averages by Rater Type**

**Manager**
1. What was your highest rated item(s) under your highest rated category from your Manager?
2. What was your lowest rated item(s) under your lowest rated category from your Manager?

3. What do you need to change in order to be more effective with him/her in your interactions?

4. What seems to be working that you need to keep on doing?

Direct Reports
1. What was your highest rated item(s) under your highest rated category from your Direct Reports?

2. What was your lowest rated item(s) under your lowest rated category from your Direct Reports?

3. What do you need to change in order to be more effective with them in your interactions?

4. What do you need to keep on doing?

Peers
1. What was your highest rated item(s) under your highest rated category from your Peers?

2. What was your lowest rated item(s) under your lowest rated category from your Peers?

3. What do you need to change in order to be more effective with them in your interactions?

4. What do you need to keep on doing?

Summary Comments Worksheet
1. What did others say were your strengths in leading and relating to people?
2. How do these strengths relate to your top EQ skills as shown in your reports?
3. What did others say were your struggles in leading and relating to people?

4. How do these struggles relate to your lowest ranked EQ skills?

5. What, if anything, surprised you about your feedback?

**Action Plan:**

Based on the awareness gained from your EQ reports, what will you do differently?

**Self**
1. How will you become more aware of your own emotions?

2. B. What will you do to respond by better managing your own emotions?

**Others**
1. How will you become more adept at recognizing the emotions of others?

2. What will you do to relate better to the emotions of others?