



Blue Ocean Emotions – 3

Emotions are not a viable component of intelligence unless they are an essential ingredient.

“I have always considered it as treason against the great republic of human nature, to make any man’s virtues the means of deceiving him.”

— Samuel Johnson

Lincoln Stoller, PhD, 2019. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)
www.mindstrengthbalance.com



Emotions Are Not an Option

The modern study of emotion has emerged from the dark ages of rationalism like science from the prison of the church. Those who first explored emotion were devalued as moralists if they thought reasonably, or dismissed as self-promoters if they did not.

This changed forty years ago as the result of a natural progression in hard and soft sciences, as well as work from the more distant disciplines of theology, economics, and sociology, which made it increasingly clear that reason, alone, explained nothing.

Dan Goleman's widely-read distillation of Peter Salavoy and John Mayer's 1990 paper—which built on the work of earlier authors—both quantified and qualified emotion for a popular audience. It opened a Pandora's Box of half-truths that fit the needs of competitive management and metric-based corporate governance. Goleman made emotions a commodity, and it's clear he hoped he would. As a science writer in the world's finance capital, his future depended on it.

Perhaps because of this, the academic study of emotion became popular, but the tinder was dry and other sparks could have set it off. Neuroscience was having a renaissance due to new and mysterious forms of *in vivo* imaging. Genetics, biochemistry, and pharmacology began pouring out new questions, questionable data, and treatments looking for diseases to cure. The ground was fertile.

Up until 1980, emotion lay in the province of psychotherapy and was managed by therapists. Then, Ronald Reagan's administration turned the tables to replace psychotherapy with pharmacology. Virtually overnight, pharmaceuticals became the standard treatment modality, HMO's began their ascendance to dominate medical care, and diseases like ADD/ADHD were created by decree.

Emotional management was no longer a therapy for disease as the problems were decreed to be chemical! Emotion management could be stripped of the onus of mental illness and fit for adoption by management. This fit the sensibilities of 30- and 40-year-olds entering the workplace at that time—young adults with fond but largely forgotten empowering memories from the 1960s Generation of Love.

With emotion on the corporate menu, the workforce could be enticed toward new levels of productivity. The dying battle cry of "Peace and Love" now echoed through the corporate towers as "Productivity and Teamwork." Goleman's recipe for a new crusade in management took off like a proclamation nailed to the church door.



Chuck Close, detail

Putting Science on the Menu

The science of emotion was shaped by other forces. The huge financial draw of emotion management has not had much effect on the direction of the science of emotion largely because there is little science to it. Management has all they need, so science drifts in more interesting directions. In doing so, science is largely

disengaging from and is going well beyond the thin bone-broth of emotional intelligence.

Science now recognizes emotions as developmental prerequisites to decision-making, not tools for it. You don't act with emotion for good reasons; your intellect is shaped by the emotions inside you. Science now sees emotions as something one personally develops, not socially manages. It's built up into character rather than being parlayed into profit.

An increase in emotional ability changes people, which isn't really what management wants. I'm reminded of a teacher of mine who trained military personnel to be more emotionally aware, and as a result they left the military. I don't think the story is true, but it could well be.

Neuroscience now talks about default neural networks, collections of emotional systems activated by certain tasks. Emotions are identified as behaviors, cued by ideas, resident in animals from primates to insects. Perhaps here, as emotion begins to explain insect behavior, science reconnects with the corporate vision. Take a look at the partners at Korn Ferry, one of the world's largest management consulting firms, and tell me if they don't **look to be born from the hive** of a Margaret Atwood novel.

“Ignoring isn't the same as ignorance, you have to work at it.” — Margaret Atwood



Stephen Hannock

Selling Human Nature

Psychotherapy has been scrambling for a new selling proposition since the Reagan-era defrocking and has settled on “Evidence-Based.” This is more a slogan than a method, as I have yet to meet a psychologist who can punch their way out of a paper bag when it comes to analyzing evidence. But coaching, counseling, and psychotherapy still have an audience among the wiser public who realize that pharmaceutical treatment was really a means of chemical warehousing, and see that they've been shortchanged. So, I'm all for it, as long as no one with any scientific discernment is in the room. Whatever it takes to get emotions back in the realm of personal growth, healing, and social welfare.



Stephen Hannock, detail

Improving E.Q.

Let's say we can storm the beachhead of management manipulation and introduce emotional authority into the workplace. This requires a change in structure, not a change in behavior. The object is not to make meetings better—it's to make them unnecessary. People should not need to hash it out in better ways; they should not need to hash it out at all.

There are two approaches to improvement: the first is autonomy and the second is self-awareness. They work together.



Vincent Van Gogh

Being AGILE

Autonomy emerges from the fundamental marriage of real authority with responsibility. Real authority means not only the authority to do a job, but the authority to fail and the responsibility to fix it. Flattening the waterfall model of management is a program for emotional learning. This was made evident to computer programmers of the last several generations who witnessed the abysmal rate at which software projects failed under the old top-down model.

These failures birthed the AGILE manifesto, a software development credo built on the idea that evolution must be built into both the process and the product, and evolution is a character trait from the start, not an afterthought. Translated for the rest of us, the four principles of AGILE are:

1. People Before Protocols
2. Results Before Descriptions
3. Customer Collaboration Before Corporate Management
4. Planning Changes Over Changing Plans

Twenty years of designing software with precursors of AGILE, along with certification as a Scrum Master, an AGILE methodology, have made me expertly agile. AGILE is applicable to any endeavor that's ready to evolve beyond the pond-scum level of pre-determinism. In AGILE, emotional intelligence is an essential ingredient you learn by doing, not a flavor enhancer.



Vincent Van Gogh, detail

Being Aware

As much as I'm anti-pharmaceutical, there's a certain mechanism to being aware. You can't take a pill for it, but it does require a change in one's state of being. This is difficult for most people, and that's why it takes life-threatening motivation to force people to consider it. Unfortunately, strange as it may seem, the threat of death fails to compel change in most people.

It's the carrot of improvement that motivates people. I believe a lot of people would be cured of their mental and physical illnesses if they were offered a really rewarding path, which they are not, in either the doctor's office or the workplace. The doctor's office isn't even concerned with offering a rewarding path; to even suggest it would get you laughed onto the street.

I have greater faith that positive change can be implemented in the workplace, but I'm somewhat of a theorist. I see improvements happening in the field of software, but I don't see it happening more widely, and, aside from AGILE, I don't see other evolution-based methods.

Part of the problem is that awareness is not yet recognized as a trainable skill. It's not on the fast-food menu, and corporations are still feeding on 3-year time frames, exploiting nonrenewable energy, including human resources, and lacking in real emotional intelligence.



Ezra Stoller, photograph

Rhythm Is Awareness

Awareness is always of something, and what that "it" is must be in resonance with you. That is, awareness is being locked in phase with some frequency, whether it be visual, auditory, conceptual, or kinesthetic.

You can hear this when you attune to a piece of music. In that case, you mirror in your awareness the direction and movements of the melody and you entrain with the rhythm. When music surprises you, it's because it has deviated from the pattern you have settled into. This can be pleasing or not; that is not the point. The point is that you are sensitive to it and it affects you.

By tuning brain frequencies we tune awareness, just like tuning a radio. I introduce my clients to this, and it's a skill that can be learned through EEG feedback, but it takes more time than most of my clients have: they're looking for relief, not skill, and I have to convince them that it's this skill that will generate their relief.

It's the same with performance, but only the highest level performers recognize it. If you're an athlete or professional musician, then you are aware that skill lies in a combination of how you perform and what you perform.

Most people in business consider skill-building a luxury, something they'll do where necessary but do not make a way of life. This makes it impossible to develop real skill, which is exactly that: a way of life. The irony is that most business people do have the time and resources to improve their awareness; they just don't understand why it's important.



Ezra Stoller, detail

Feedback Is Not Progress

360° performance reviews are the epitome of time-wasting. These are reviews in which everyone evaluates everyone else, a form of wandering through a maze without knowing which way to turn.

360° reviews remind me of Shakespeare's Globe Theater in Elizabethan London, where audiences came prepared with baskets of rotten produce, regardless of the performance. They didn't throw tomatoes, because they hadn't been invented. They threw the cheap foods of the time: dried figs and oyster shells. Feedback alone is noise. Do not feed the animals.

A similar phenomenon is demonstrated in brainwave training. If you show a person their brainwave pattern and indicate how to change it, then they will. But if you show them only their brainwave pattern, they can make nothing of it.

The connection between emotional intelligence and awareness is that you cannot refine what you cannot discern. Talking about what you cannot feel will never change you, unless it causes you to go out and do something you haven't done before. In that case, you can improve if you encounter deficiencies you can't ignore. This is one of the purposes of illness: to show you what isn't working. The benefit of failure is the promise of change.

Unfortunately, success offers little chance for improvement. If you're already succeeding, there is nothing new to succeed at. This is why I get so little interest in self-improvement from happy business people: they are unmotivated. They are unmotivated at the very time when they can most afford to invest, plan, and train for the future. But later, when they are motivated, they won't know which way to turn.

Western business people are short-sighted. That's what they have been trained to be. They are trained to follow rewards, not learn from failures and, as a result, they don't improve unless there's a crisis. Without a crisis they just keep going up the ladder... like ants.

This phenomenon underlies the business cycle: when one part of the system fails, so do the others. In business—as in the game of **Pick-Up Sticks**—every part is balanced on another. Once organizations succeed, they stop developing; so, naturally, these systems die a natural death, just like the dinosaurs. It doesn't take an asteroid, only a disruption in the chain of supply or demand.



Mario Bejagan Cardenas

Attunement Is Balance

Slow frequencies reveal the future. These reflect things that change slowly, develop broadly, and support the present. They are the foundation, the drum beat of progress. But you cannot understand their effect on the present without also knowing how they affect the present. You must be attuned to both the foundation and the elements that operate in the present. It's not enough to have history and the future projection—you need "The Big Picture."

I am interested in working with successful people so that I can watch them fail. That may sound macabre, but that's what scientists do: we take things apart to see how they work. We start with mountains and pulverize them into dust. That's how you learn what they're made of.

If you're a successful person and you're riding on your success, you will encounter failure. Maybe not tomorrow, but eventually. This doesn't mean you will fail but that you might. You'll have to change and, be honest, that's where life gets interesting.

Unhappy people are in crisis. They may have missed their train. Happy people are complacent, having a picnic on the tracks. They're not looking at the schedule. Healthy people are planning for change and wondering what the next change will be.

To stay healthy, you have to be aware of reality. Too much anticipation and too little awareness and you'll be paranoid. Too little anticipation and too much awareness and you'll feel under assault. Real emotional intelligence puts you in the middle: mobile but not agitated. Self-awareness points you toward the clouds and sharpens your nose for the weather.

Look at yourself in the mirror. If you look like the consultants at Korn Ferry, now is the time to do something about it.



Mario Bejagan Cardenas, detail

To subscribe to this newsletter, click on **Newsletter-Subscribe**.

[Lincoln Stoller](#)