

## Blue Ocean Emotion – 1

Emotional intelligence requires a measure of positive outcome.

*“There is no separation of mind and emotions;  
emotions, thinking, and learning are all linked.”*

— Eric Jensen

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This is the first of my 3-part series on emotional intelligence. Here is a [link to the second part](#), and here is a [link to the last part](#).

## Some Emotional History

Emotions have been discounted in Western thought, and their study was confined to biology, sociology, and anthropology. Even into the mid-twentieth century there was little interest in emotion in psychology, philosophy, or physiology. They were generally considered an afterthought, a vestige of one’s “animal nature,” or source of chaos and disorganization. The truth is simpler: emotions were discounted for reasons of paternalistic arrogance because they did not lend themselves to logic, control, and ownership.

For reasons that remain unclear to me, in the 1970s ideas started accumulating around the study of emotion and joined insights in neurology, mental pathology, and social psychology. It’s hard to imagine how people thought before they recognized their own emotions. Knowing what we do now, we cannot accurately understand how individuals and groups thought before more insightful notions of emotional awareness

became commonly understood.

Starting in the 1970s, academics searched for a deeper understanding of emotion. My current favorites are Carroll Izard, a research psychologist, and **Jaak Panksepp**, a psychologist turned neuroscientist. Panksepp's TED talk is worth watching.

Edward Bernays' 1928 book *Propaganda* begins:

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.”

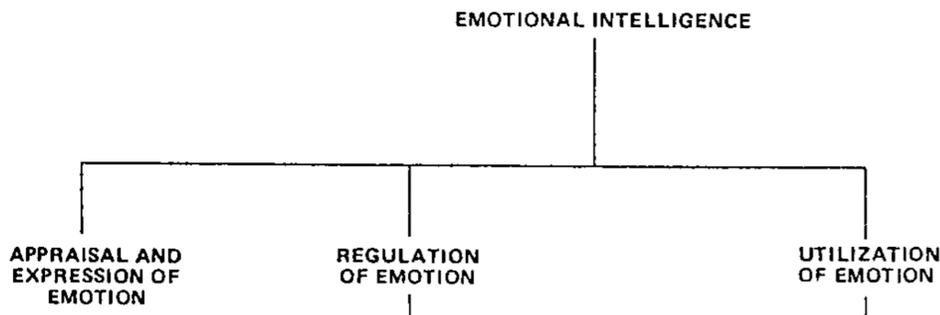
Bernays, who was not coincidentally Sigmund Freud's nephew, drew heavily on psychology in developing tools for the manipulation of emotion. With the success of Bernays' campaign to get women to smoke, *Propaganda* became the bible for the public-relations industry. The book is worth taking a look at, if only for the positive spin it puts on social manipulation, otherwise viewed unfavorably. You can freely download the book by **CLICKING HERE**.

Psychological operations were already practiced by all sides in World War II, and emotional naiveté may explain the extremes to which populations can be manipulated. Emotional naiveté continues to play a huge role in spite of our recently informed and presumably higher degree of emotional intelligence.

## Emotional Intelligence Becomes a Thing

Changing trends in commercialism, transportation, marketing, and social influence must have added to the academic interest. In 1990, a paper called “Emotional Intelligence,” by Peter Salovey and John Maher, suggested emotionality was a testable, developmentally advantageous, human trait essential for collaboration and happiness.

Their paper, published in the journal *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, was an attempt to corral emotionality into a kind of unity. They proposed that the appraising, expressing, regulating, and utilizing of emotion constituted a separate system of understanding. The following diagram is taken directly from their paper.



They coined the term “emotional intelligence” and defined it as:

“the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.”

But it was Daniel Goleman's 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence, Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, that started a revolution in management psychology.



## Dan Goleman

Goleman was trained and taught as a psychologist, but he has pursued a prominent career in science journalism at *The New York Times*. Goleman is called “the father of Emotional Intelligence.” I think of him as the undertaker of its careful study because, ever since then, there has been an avalanche of derivative business books following his direction, all saying the same thing.

The formal study of emotion in psychology and neuroscience has gone in other directions, following Izard, Panksepp, and others. Another noted author is the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio whose books include *The Strange Order of Things: Life, Feeling, and the Making of Cultures*, and *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*.

## Real Emotion

In these formal studies—now largely decoupled from and ignored by management consultants—emotion is considered abstractly. Emotions are seen to originate in different parts of the brain, develop and progress differently, and serve different functions. Panksepp lists the primary emotional systems as: seeking, rage, fear, lust, care, panic, play. From these systems emerge the attitudes of motivation, destruction, protection, curiosity, and so on.

Several levels of emotion are recognized as distinct from each other in their development, neural connections, management, and function. Emotion itself is broken into multiple parts:

- Emotion
- Feeling
- Mood
- Affect (display)

- Action

These can then mix, like paints, to create hues of various emotional color and vibrancy.



## Pop EQ

In contrast, the emotional intelligence that follows Dan Goleman’s popular science exposition is flat and manipulative... but in a good way! It’s more attractive for its power in harnessing propaganda than as a basic science.

The *Harvard Business Review* hailed Goleman’s emotional intelligence as “a ground-breaking, paradigm-shattering idea,” one of the most influential business ideas of the decade. It’s even been claimed that “emotional intelligence is the key to both personal and professional success.”

That his book should become a “gold standard” took Goleman by surprise. On his website he says:

“In 1990, in my role as a science reporter at The New York Times, I chanced upon an article in a small academic journal... (that) offered the first formulation of a concept they called ‘emotional intelligence.’ Perhaps the biggest surprise for me has been the impact of EI in the world of business, particularly in the areas of leadership and employee development (a form of adult education).”

Goleman took Salovey and Mayer’s five main elements of emotional intelligence and turned them into a program for:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social Skills

None of these are, in fact, emotions. They are expressions that have emotional underpinnings.

Goleman focused on three emotions that most people find hard to regulate: anger, anxiety, and sadness. He developed these into a self-help and personality trait formula that could be applied to romantic, parent-child, and business relationships. And, you know, anything with romance as its target is going to be a bestseller!

In a 2001 article titled “Emotional Intelligence as a Standard Intelligence,” Salovey and Mayer joined forces with management consultants to form an emotional-intelligence metric called Emotional Quotient, or EQ, to contrast and complement IQ. It was claimed that while IQ is innate—which it is not—EQ could be learned—of which I have some doubt.

## The Business Element

This accelerated the careers of many consultants and the creation of new-age management workshops—such as this one called The Human Element, offered at a resort near me. I attended their one-day introduction and felt that whereas empathy was the goal, self-interest was the means.

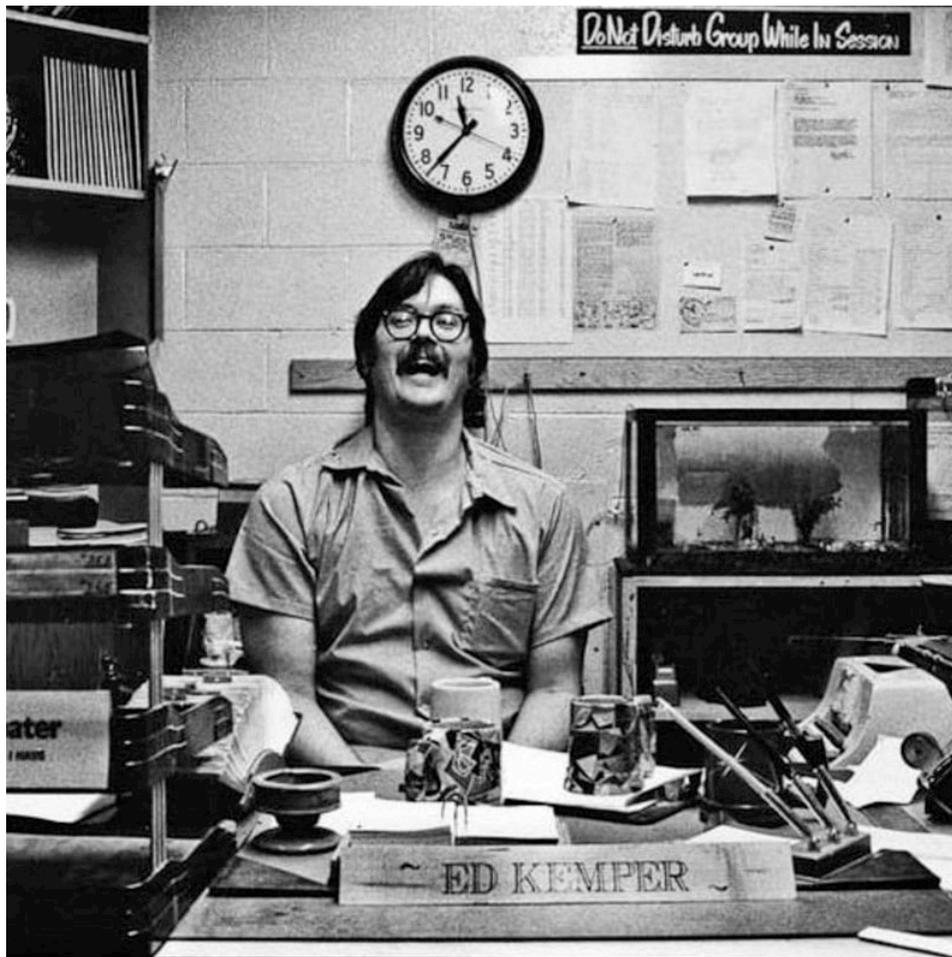
Measures of emotional intelligence have now been used to assess various populations, and I find that interesting. It turns out that successful business people are not highly emotionally intelligent, by and large. Emotional intelligence is most present where collaboration is in greatest need, which is in middle management. It’s the middle managers who coordinate people who score highest in EQ.

Executive managers, who do not rely on collaboration outside the boardroom, show less emotional skills. Think of Steve Jobs, who fathered Apple’s ascendance to world dominance, and his infamous temper. Or Harvey Weinstein, who “fathered” Miramax—pun intended—and his decades of sexual predation, which he alleges and honestly believes was consensual.

How much empathy did these guys have? More important, how tolerant of their emotional stupidity were their own organizations? Think of the US and Donald Trump.

This celebration of emotional intelligence is hypocritical. It’s not intelligence that’s being optimized—it’s greed. Steve Jobs was never recognized as a “bad apple”, and everyone was happy to throw one actress after another under the bus until they started to impede corporate traction.

I am certain Steve and Harvey would have passed emotional intelligence class with flying colors. When I think of the masters of emotional intelligence—leaders who have perfected managing, motivating, recognizing, and handling emotions—I do not think of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, or Abraham Lincoln; I think of Adolf Hitler, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Mao Tse-tung.



## The Good and the Bad

It's interesting to consider Edmund Kemper, the Santa Cruz Strangler. He was of genius intelligence as measured by IQ and would probably have scored high on EQ, as well. It was not his skills that were at fault—it was what he chose to do with them.

He was so pleasant, self-controlled, and well-mannered that he was let out of prison at twenty-one, six years after murdering his grandparents. He then murdered eight more people, including his mother. Actually, it was his mother whom he needed to murder all along; but once you go there, where do you stop?

Kemper was so sensitive that he even apologized for accidental, inappropriate touching of one of his teenage victims... before strangling her. When asked whether he felt empathy while killing people, he said—and I paraphrase—“Oh, no, I had to turn that off. Otherwise, I couldn't do it.”

He was so charming he even talked one young girl into letting him back in after he bungled his first attempt to kill her and locked himself out of his car and away from her. She let him in... and then he killed her. Now that's emotional intelligence!

## Exceptions Make the Rule

I realize that there are exceptions to every rule. My point is that having skills and using them are different. A proper measure of emotion should include virtue, balance, and sustainability. It's not enough to be a hunter with a high EQ, like Edmund Kemper; there should also be some measure of effect. We should be able to discern a saint from a psychopath.

Consider these two Daniel Goleman quotes in light of what little they say about virtue, balance, or

sustainability:

“If your emotional abilities aren’t in hand, if you don’t have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can’t have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”

“In a high-IQ job pool, soft skills like discipline, drive, and empathy mark those who emerge as outstanding.”

According to these distinctions, everyone from Ed Kemper to Martin Luther King, Jr., gets five gold stars. In contrast, consider these quotes from virtuous business leaders:

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” — Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric.

“In my 35 years in business, I have always trusted my emotions. I have always believed that by touching emotion you get the best people to work with you, the best clients to inspire you, the best partners and most devoted customers.” — Kevin Roberts, former CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi.

## Feeling Better

In my next post I’ll suggest that healthy emotion requires a measure of positive outcome: how much and for whom. And secondly, as anyone with bipolar disorder can tell you, awareness of emotional experience and self-awareness are completely different. This difference must be recognized.



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