Science Societies

Emotional intelligence

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This article is part of a series written by members of the Women in Science Committee: **www.agronomy.org/membership/women-in-science**, **www.crops.org/membership/women-in-science**, and **www.soils.org/membership/women-in-science**.



The idea of an equalizing factor in the lopsided equation between IQ and success was first introduced to the mainstream in Daniel Goleman's mid-1990s book *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, **1996**). In this text, Goleman expanded on the research of John Mayer and Peter Salovey who coined the term emotional intelligence to describe how individuals identify and manage their emotions and the emotions of others in everyday situations (Salovey & Mayer, **1990**). Have you ever received feedback, managed a change in the workplace, or navigated conflict? Your emotional intelligence (or emotional quotient—EQ) is what guided your reactions in these and other high-pressure scenarios. Luckily for everyone who has looked back on a situation and had

an “I sure wish I’d done that differently” conversation in their mind, emotional intelligence is something that can be learned and improved over time.

Understanding how to improve EQ begins with identifying related skills. Broadly, these can be broken down into two competencies. The first is how you identify and manage your own emotions. This requires a self-awareness of how you react in a situation and the ability to leverage that awareness into a reasoned and controlled behavior. The second is how you identify the emotions of others and associate those emotions back into your cycle of self-awareness and controlled actions.

Improving Your Emotional Intelligence: Why and How?

You might be wondering why you should spend time and effort improving your EQ. It is, after all, a soft skill in our world of science and technical expertise. In the April issue of *CSA News* magazine (**https://doi.org/10.1002/csan.20098**), Vanessa Corriher-Olson discussed the impact of conflict in her career and the importance of having difficult conversations in the workplace. When you think about it, from academia to industry, throughout graduate school, professional careers, and even in your personal life, conflict and high-pressure situations are inevitable. Even students who will soon be embarking on their first job search need to be developing the self-awareness that EQ is built upon.

“Emotional intelligence is one of the most common traits hiring managers use when selecting talent for open positions,” says Dr. Tracie Egger, Leadership Training Specialist and Women’s Network Chair at AgReliant Genetics, LLC. More broadly, she points to the importance of EQ in understanding your own personal strengths and weaknesses, so you can reduce your stress and let go of mistakes. This aspect is supported by research showing that emotional intelligence (EQ) is more related to happiness than cognitive ability (IQ), accounting for more than 50% of the variance in

happiness among subjects (Furnham & Petrides, **2003**).

There are many resources available to improve your understanding of EQ, including the original *Emotional Intelligence* text by Goleman and his subsequent publication, *Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence*. If you're interested in understanding your personal EQ, there are several assessment options available. The first is a quick (and free) self-assessment provided by the Institute for Health and Human Potential on its website (**www.ihhp.com/free-eq-quiz**). Additionally, Marilyn Orr, a leadership and mentor coach with Capacity Building Coaching, recommends the book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves and its accompanying online assessment as an entry point to the topic (Bradberry et al., **2009**). If you're interested in a deep dive into EQ, Orr suggests *The EQ Edge*, which correlates with the industry leading assessment, the EQ-i 2.0 (Stein & Book, **2011**). She notes that the book is valuable with or without the assessment, which is arranged through a qualified EQ-i 2.0 coach and involves a one-hour debrief once completed.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can improve communication, management, problem solving, and relationships, please join the Women in Science Committee as we welcome Marilyn Orr back to our ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Annual Meeting this fall to host a workshop focused on understanding and using emotional intelligence.

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