

What is Emotional Intelligence?

“We think we are thinking beings who have emotions, but in reality we are emotional beings who think. We think we are like Mr. Spock but we are really like Homer Simpson”

Dan Ariely

Nowadays, the practice of talking about emotional skills in educational and organisational environments is widespread. But do we really know what we are talking about?

Peter Salovey, a sociologist and psychologist, and John D. Mayer, a psychologist, are the pioneers of Emotional Intelligence, the “fathers” of the term. They defined emotional intelligence in 1990 as

“The ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions ... and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action”.

Subsequently, many people began to have a greater understanding of Emotional Intelligence, thanks to the dissemination work of Daniel Goleman, the American psychologist and writer.

Emotional Intelligence exists because emotions exist, and emotions have a high power to influence our lives, performance and well-being.

Emotions work with perception, preventing us from seeing reality as it is and influencing our thoughts and actions. You can get a sense of this idea by doing the following exercise:

Imagine you hear a strange noise when home alone. Fear sets in and you start to imagine different possible causes for the noise, all of them threatening. How do you feel? What thoughts arise? What do you do? Now, imagine that you hear the same noise in broad daylight while you are having lunch with your friends, chatting happily.

The reality is the same, but your emotions turn it into a different colour.

Daniel Goleman argues that the skills that make up Emotional Intelligence are the gateway to happiness and can be learned throughout life.

This consideration is important: *Isn't it comforting to know that there are tools that help us manage such difficult emotions as anger and fear properly?*

Following the work of David McClelland, Goleman created a structure, a work plan, very widespread and accepted, to advance the development of emotional skills in different environments. This is the one we will use as a basis to implement these learning pills focused on the first block:

Would you like to measure your Emotional Intelligence?

This test will take approximately 20 minutes.

Emotional Intelligence Test

The term Emotional Intelligence encompasses several competencies, so self-assessment tests have their limitations. However, they can be a good reference if answered honestly and you ask a trusted person to complete them, with you in mind.

Self-awareness

Identification of emotions, knowledge of our emotional states, objectives, values, strengths and internal motivations.

Emotional management

Management of internal states, both impulses and emotional resources (e.g. regulating anger or developing optimism) to respond adaptively.

Empathy

Perception of other people's emotions.

Appropriate relationship management

Empathetic communication and social skills to develop nurturing relationships.