

# **Emotional Intelligence: The Ability Model**

- While the concept of EI (the knowledge of, and ability, to influence emotions of others, as well as yourself) may sound relatively straightforward, there's actually quite a lot of debate among researchers and scholars as to what the precise nature of Emotional Intelligence is.
- There have been five models proposed as a means of better defining EI: the Ability Model, the Trait Model, the Mixed Model.

- The Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence is to be considered a new intelligence and confined thereby to the standard criteria for all new intelligence.
- The original research supporting this model initially defined EI as "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thoughts, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to promote personal growth."

**Ability Model recognizes that EI includes four distinct types of ability:**



# Emotional perception.

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Ability to:

- Identify emotion in a person's physical and psychological states
- Identify emotions in other people
- Express emotions accurately and express needs related to them
- Discriminate between authentic and inauthentic emotions

- Emotion perception is generally thought to be a very basic aspect of Emotional Intelligence, because it is necessary to complete any of the other processes involved in the Ability Model.

- In fact, the difficulty that people on the autism spectrum have with learning social cues is related to their inability, or limited ability, to recognize the emotions of others through their expressions; they often lack the ability to recognize the facial and body expressions of others that communicate their feelings.



# Use of emotion.

# Use of emotion

## Ability to:

- Redirect and prioritize thinking on the basis of associated feelings
- Regenerate emotions to facilitate judgment and memory
- Capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view
- Use emotional states to facilitate problem solving and creativity.

- The Ability Model relates to a person's ability to use emotions -- whether it is their own emotions or another person's emotions -- in order to achieve a desired outcome.
- When thinking and problem-solving, emotions often must be considered, and a person skilled at using emotions can typically make decisions based primarily on the emotions or moods of themselves or others.

- In practical terms, think of a child who knows the best time to ask their parents for permission to do something; the child who asks for permission during a time when a parent is fearful, anxious, or angry, is less likely to be successful at using emotions.
- However, any goodwill their parent has at the moment to their advantage, they are more likely to achieve their desired outcome.

# Understanding emotions.

# Understanding emotions

## Ability to:

- Understand relationships among various emotions
- Perceive the causes and consequences of emotions
- Understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states
- Understand transitions among emotions

- This ability is built upon an understanding of the complexity of emotions.
- While many people have the ability to recognize basic facial expressions, fewer of them are able to predictably recognize and understand emotion language and to appreciate the complex emotional relationships.

- A lower ability to understand emotions may present itself in someone who struggles with understanding why a death or divorce may result in seemingly conflicted emotions all at the same time.



# Managing emotions

# Managing emotions

## Ability to:

- Be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant
- Monitor and reflect on emotions
- Engage, prolong, or detach from an emotional state
- Manage emotions in oneself and others

- Managing emotions relates more specifically to someone's ability (or lack thereof) to regulate emotions in both themselves and others.
- As the highest level of ability in the Ability Model, someone with high Emotional Intelligence would be expected to be able to manipulate the moods of themselves or others, essentially harnessing the mood and managing it to achieve their goals.

- While emotional manipulation is generally thought of as negative, it can serve extremely important purposes and does not necessarily have to be used in a detrimental way, as people typically conceive it to be.

- For example, a supervisor at a job may recognize that an employee is struggling with something emotionally and it is affecting their work. The supervisor (if they have a high level of Emotional Intelligence, according to the Ability Model) may be able to help motivate the employee by meeting their emotional needs through pep talks, a heart-to-heart conversation, or even a spirit of competition -- whatever that individual employee will respond to. In this type of situation, the emotional manipulation is positive for both the individual being manipulated or affected, as well as solving the problem of having an ineffective worker.