

Beasley, K. (1987). The Emotional Quotient. *Mensa*, May 1987, p25.

*Text of original article*<sup>1</sup>

## **The Emotional Quotient**

*Is our EQ—Emotional Quotient—more important than our IQ? Keith Beasley believes it is.*

Intelligence may be Mensa's reason for existence, but are we not too preoccupied with what is, after all, only one characteristic of human personality?

There are many other aspects about each other which are as, if not more, important than IQ, in today 'caring society'. I'd like to consider EQ—Emotional Quotient, or 'Sensitivity'—as THE vital parameter against which to judge a person. EQ, probably best defined as one's 'ability to feel', IQ being one's ability to think'. Or, put another way, EQ is to the heart what IQ is to the brain.

The person with a high EQ is one who is easily 'moved' and who needs to openly express his or her feelings. At one level its Bob Geldof being so affected by starving orphans that he organises a whole crusade for them. At the 'day-to-day' level it's crying at *The Sound of Music*. To those with low EQ the outward (impulsive?) signs of affection shown by the more sensitive are 'soppy', or if displayed in negative ways, 'fanatical'. To those sensitive members of society, expressing their feelings is as important as using their brains is to Mensans.

Let me illustrate the effect EQ has on our society. Consider a village vandal, one of 'the gang' who roam around most villages smashing up the bus shelter, daubing paint on walls and generally making a nuisance of himself. Ten years later he's happily married and a loving father. So what happened? The man concerned has a high EQ, but as a lad the only way he could express it without losing face was violently. Luckily for him, and for the community, a girlfriend was able to encourage the positive side of his sensitive nature.

With increasing frequency we hear about riots and mindless violence, often in our nearest town. With a positive move necessary but a cure impossible, a preventative solution needs to be considered.

Some of you may recall a letter of mine in *Mensa* (April 1984, *Catch them while they're young*). In it, I suggested that potential terrorists could be identified at school and 'screened out'. Having defined EQ, we can now

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<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above article, Keith Beasley has completed his PhD (on 'transcending thought') which examines the integration of IQ and EQ traits. See [www.onereality.co.uk](http://www.onereality.co.uk)

pursue this idea by *encouraging* boys to show their feelings, and by lessening the stereotyped differences between the sexes. Give those with high EQ a *positive* way to express their feelings so they don't have to turn to violence. The emotionally 'gifted children' are the ones that need help.

Not being a psychiatrist or in the teaching profession, I can make few detailed suggestions on how high EQ can be recognized and encouraged, but there are some ideas already in operation which could show the way. Take the policy of 'normal' schools taking disabled children. A recent report on a Down Syndrome girl at a junior school concluded that 'everybody is benefiting'. Why? Because this particular disability makes the child more open in its emotions and those around naturally follow suit. Result, everybody's 'more open', therefore more relaxed and happier. Naturally high EQs are being released in a natural and positive way and not suppressed.

Many of the factors that effect IQ also have a bearing on a person's EQ—particularly social environment. As I hope I've shown above, the general attitude that 'men don't cry' could have a lot to answer for. The heredity factor is less certain—presumably there are genes that determine one's sensitivity. Can a 'latent EQ' be awakened?

Another question that springs to mind is "How do you measure EQ?". The Sunday newspapers may have made a start in this field—'Are you a type alpha person?' etc..

Many people are publicly sceptical of such 'quizzes', but I suspect that a fair proportion quietly do the test and maybe even admit to themselves that there *is* something in it. The measure of E of EQ may need to be in two parts—sensitivity and 'expressability'. Sensitivity measures the type and level of stimuli that 'moves' a person, and expressability the degree to which emotions are expressed. Traditionally an emotional person is one who cries easily (for example), and such people usually *are* caring members of society. But what about those who keep their feelings to themselves, yet quietly spend time and effort helping others? They are undoubtedly caring and have feelings which they are acting upon, but are they 'emotional'? Perhaps a psychiatrist member could throw some light on the terms 'emotional' and 'caring'—are they representative of the same basic personality type?

The purpose of this article is to pose the question here—is there a need for an EQ equivalent of Mensa? A society to foster and encourage those with high sensitivity of feeling. EQ has a population distribution, just as IQ does, and those with high EQs (i.e. the tail of the distribution) will, like Mensans, find their 'virtue' difficult to come to terms with. Just as highly intelligent people find it difficult to fit into normal life, so highly sensitive people can only really be themselves when in the company of those with similar EQ.

There are ways in which high EQ can be released and harnessed. I'm sure I'm not alone in having singing as my hobby as a way of expressing built up feelings. A stage may not 'mean' anything, but it feels pretty good to me! So ENSA could be right. Charity work, careers in nursing or acting are other

examples of ways in which those with high EQ gain fulfilment in life—maybe without realising why.

I've wasted many hours trying to understand my feelings and to come to terms with my needs, probably due to the combination of high EQ and IQ. Perhaps that what makes a good philosopher? My job satisfies my IQ and my hobbies give my EQ some release. I'm lucky in having these—there must be those with little opportunity to express their high EQ. Very frustrating.

There is rightly considerable discussion on the 'mind-brain duality', but where do the feelings that come 'from the heart' fit into the picture of what makes humans the people we are? Our emotions are just as important as our intelligence. In order to discuss EQ and such related topics, I would like to suggest a 'Sensitive SIG'.<sup>2</sup> The aims would be 'To promote, provide facilities for, and support the identification and fostering human sensitivity'. Doesn't your heart tell you that that's a good move towards 'doing something positive'?

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<sup>2</sup> SIG: Special Interest Group. Following the publication of this article, the British Mensa *Sensitive SIG* was formed and ran successfully for many years.