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## Emotional Intelligence: Old Wine with a New Label

By **Lac D. Su, M.S.**

**“He who wishes to secure the good of others, has already secured his own...”**  
**-Confucius**

Emotional intelligence (EQ) wasn't “invented” when it was first introduced to the public a decade ago. The power of this method for describing the side of life that is more than mere “smarts” has generated demand for evidence that emotional intelligence is real and more than a flavor of the month. The roots of emotional intelligence can be traced back to the teachings of ancient Chinese philosophers. For a long time, emotional intelligence was nothing more than a philosophy. Today, our advancement in understanding human behavior and psychological measurement allows us to quantify this once intangible concept.

### **Emotional Intelligence at Work**

We're moving into an era where the personal side of doing business is no longer a “good-to-have” trait, but rather one that is a “must-have”. When you consider globalization's impact on the cross-cultural interactions in the workplace, it is easy to see why organizations' training and development initiatives are often driven by a focus on developing emotional intelligence. The call for people to mutually understand each other in the workplace has never been so essential.

TalentSmart® researchers have discovered, using data collected worldwide with the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal™ that EQ accounts for 58% of job performance. This means that those who perform well at work are effectively putting emotional intelligence to work.

If you look close enough, you can see the essence of emotional intelligence each time people interact. For example, you could observe a colleague of yours taking his anger out on his assistant as a result of the copy machine jamming up. Incidents like these impact how people perform on the job and how they spend the rest of their day.

Now let's look even closer at how culture factors in. How would people from Eastern culture differ from other cultures on how they use EQ skills? A research study conducted by TalentSmart® found relatively high scores in self-awareness and social awareness from a sample of people in Asia and North America.

However, results from the two groups were different in the self-management and relationship management components, with the Asian sample having lower scores. One explanation for the disparity in scores is the phenomenon of “saving face”; the Asian culture placing greater emphasis on keeping situations harmonized.

Self-awareness and tuning into what others are feeling to keep relationships in harmony are important principles in the Asian culture. To some degree, it is expected in the Asian culture to practice these components of emotional intelligence.

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Self-management skills that require standing up for yourself, making changes when situation requires it, and acting or speaking out when necessary are skills that can put situations in disharmony and cause others to lose face. Furthermore, handling conflict well, a required skill in managing relationships may have impacted the scores for the Asian sample. Harmonizing situations and avoiding conflict has always been important principles in the Asian culture.

Let's go back to the previous example about a colleague taking his anger out on his secretary, who is now revealed as a person from the Asian culture. After your colleague snapped at her about a minor issue, the secretary apologized, took it in silence and went about her business. Inside, she felt hurt but told herself, "He's angry at the copy machine and not me. I don't want to add fuel to the fire in front of all these people. He's upset and it's not the right time to talk. Let me 'save face' and not cause him to lose his." She was keenly aware of the situation possibly because she was taught in her culture to act or speak when the time is right.

### **An Ancient Wine Labeled: Emotional Intelligence**

Eastern philosophy has always placed emphasis on human relations and connection. Daniel Goleman, the messenger of emotional intelligence in America, has sought out to capture and build on the same emphasis of emotional intelligence for Westerners, through his work with the Dalai Lama. Goleman's model of emotional intelligence consists of many competencies that are based on Chinese or Confucian philosophy (i.e. awareness, conscientiousness, empathy, developing others).

For example, Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, emphasized the component of relationship management in a quote that translates to "Yourself what (you) don't want, don't do to others". In addition, he stressed the importance of self-management and relationship management in the quote, "Self desire established, also establish others".

A "collectivistic mentality" is bestowed early upon children in the Asian culture. It is taught that winning involves other people and not just yourself, and that you're not a victor if those around you are not winning as well. In an individualistic point of view, this is hard to comprehend. Goleman's framework of emotional intelligence is quite poignant for the person with an individualistic point of view; it enables a person to realize the benefit of including self with others for a collective gain. Goleman's framework of emotional intelligence is responsible for bringing this Eastern secret into Western minds in an exponential way.

It is often heard in the emotional intelligence community that the concept is "Old wine with a new label." The wine must really be matured since Confucius was drinking and sharing it in the time of B.C. TalentSmart® invites you to take a sip of this old wine. You can start by assessing your EQ using the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal™. Who knows, you just might fall in love with the taste.

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Self-Awareness	Self-Management
Social Awareness	Relationship Management

**Self-Awareness:** Your ability to accurately perceive your own emotions and stay aware of them as they happen. This includes keeping on top of how you tend to respond to specific situations and people.

**Self-Management:** Your ability to use awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and positively direct your behavior. This means managing your emotional reactions to all situations and people.

**Social Awareness:** Your ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and get what is really going on. This often means understanding what other people are thinking and feeling even if you don't feel the same way.

**Relationship Management:** Your ability to use your awareness of your emotions and the emotions of others to manage interactions successfully. This includes clear communication and effectively handling conflict.