Book Summary: Emotional Intelligence, by Daniel Goleman

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This is a preview of the Shortform book summary of Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman. Read the full comprehensive summary at Shortform.

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1-Page Book Summary of Emotional Intelligence

Many cultures, particularly Western ones, place a lot of emphasis on intelligence as a barometer of success. We've even developed
tests to measure our intelligence, resulting in a score known as our intelligence quotient, or IQ. But data suggests that IQ only accounts for about 20% of success in life, with the remaining 80% being made up by other factors, emotional intelligence included. And much more research has been done on IQ than on emotions and emotional intelligence, despite the fact that emotions are hard-wired in the human brain and make us the species we are.

IQ is fixed: what we're born with is what remains throughout our lives. But emotional intelligence can be taught and learned -- we have the ability to improve upon our emotional intelligence throughout our lives. In this one-page summary, we cover a broad overview of what emotions are, what emotional intelligence is, and how we can use it in a couple different areas of life. The full summary goes into much more detail about each of these categories.

**Emotions**

**What Are They**

Emotions are strong impulses that urge us to take immediate action. They're based on fundamental needs (usually survival), and neurologically designed to propel us into action without overthinking: “run from the tiger before considering options gets us killed!”

There’s nothing wrong with feeling emotions -- the problems arise when the emotions are out of tune with the situation and when we don’t express our emotions productively or safely.

**The Science Behind Them**

The human brain was built from the bottom up:

- The brainstem is responsible for all our basic necessary functions (breathing, eating, sleeping).
- The limbic system built on the brainstem, and this system is responsible for our basic emotions. It also gave us the ability to learn things and remember them, which allowed us to adapt to new environments.
- Then our neocortex formed on top of the limbic system, and this is our rational mind. This gives us the ability to choose how we respond to our emotions, reflect on our actions, and feel empathy for other people.

We essentially have two minds: a thinking one and a feeling one. Our feeling mind is associative, categorical, absolutist, and individual -- and it reacts to information before our thinking mind even gets all the information and has an opportunity to weigh out the best action.

Our feeling mind is more fully-formed at birth, while our neocortex can learn, change, and adjust throughout our lives. This means our emotional reactions to things are formed before we have high-level thoughts to make sense of them. **We can’t change our emotional reactions to things, but we can learn how to respond to our emotions differently.**

Emotional hijackings occur when our limbic system receives the information first and responds with an emergency alert. This sends our body into panic mode and makes it more difficult for our neocortex to control the actions we take based on our emotional impulses.

**Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence encompasses the following skills:

- Knowing your emotions.
- Managing emotions.
- Motivating yourself.
- Recognizing emotions in others (empathy).
- Handling relationships.

**Knowing Your Emotions**

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize a feeling as it’s happening to you. Being able to monitor our feelings as they’re occurring helps us understand ourselves and our psychology. **The more certain we are about our feelings, the easier it is to make personal decisions.**

People who know their emotions are aware of their moods as they happen but can be mindful about how they deal with them. They’re more sure of their boundaries since they know how they’ll feel. They tend towards a positive outlook on life since they
know they can manage whatever moods are thrown at them. They don't dwell on bad moods and can get out of ruts faster. They can be mindful of their emotions and manage them successfully.

The goal is to be self-aware in relation to our emotions, but most people deal with their emotions in one of two unhealthy ways:

- **Engulfed.** People who deal with emotions this way aren't aware of what's happening to them. Their moods shift often and overpower them. They do little to change their feelings, and feel out of control often.

- **Accepting.** These people are more clear on what they're feeling, but they also don't feel like anything needs to change. They're either in good moods, so they don't have any motivation to change their moods, or they're in bad moods but are resigned to feeling like there's nothing they can do about it.

**Managing Emotions**

Once we're aware of our emotional responses as we're having them, we can start to regulate how they influence our actions.

There are 3 emotions that most people find hard to regulate: anger, anxiety, and sadness.

- We get angry when we feel attacked. The worst thing you can do for anger is dwell on it. Instead, try challenging the assumptions that are making you angry, physically cooling off with exercise or distraction, using relaxation techniques, or writing down your angry thoughts to reflect on them.

- Anxiety is a form of worrying, a kind of rehearsal of what could go wrong and potential ways we might deal with it. Relaxation techniques can help anxiety, and challenging the anxiety by asking realistic questions (like “Does it actually help to go through these thoughts over and over again?”).

- Sadness is usually the mood people want to change the most, but they do it in ways that can worsen the sadness: isolating themselves, or dwelling on the sadness under the guise of analyzing it. Try challenging the sad thoughts to find a positive spin on them, scheduling pleasant distractions, or engineering small successes for yourself.

**Motivating Yourself**

We also need to be able to delay gratification and overcome our impulses to be more productive and effective -- this is where motivation, the ability to push ourselves to do something, comes in. Being able to manage our emotions is the first step to motivating ourselves to finish tasks and achieve goals.

Motivation mostly has to do with what you believe about your own abilities. People who are good self-motivators:

- View themselves as resourceful and try different ways to accomplish their goals.
- Tell themselves it will get better when times are tough.
- Try different approaches towards reaching their goal or switch goals if one proves too difficult to achieve.
- Break down large, scary tasks into smaller, more manageable goals.

**Empathy**

**Empathy is the fundamental people skill,** allowing us to interpret what others want or need. Empathy changes the way you look at the world: when other people are in pain, you work to understand their pain and help them through it. You also work not to cause people pain: this is where morals and morality begin. **Empathy makes you a better person.**

**Our most basic emotional life lessons are laid down in small, repeated life exchanges between us and our parents.** How our parents responded to our emotions is how we respond to others', and shapes our capacity for empathy and the emotional expectations we bring into our adult relationships. Treating children with empathy creates more empathetic adults in the future.

**Relationships**

The culmination of all the previous skills combined, when we recognize our own emotions, manage them, motivate ourselves to do better, and can empathize with others, our personal relationships are bound to improve.

The ability to manage relationships breaks down into 4 distinct and separate abilities:

- **Organizing groups.** An essential skill for leaders, this is the ability to initiate and coordinate the energy and efforts of a group of people.

- **Negotiating solutions.** This skill involves avoiding or resolving conflicts.

- **Personal connection.** Empathizing and connecting are the heart of this skill.
Using Emotional Intelligence

In Romantic Relationships

Relationship strife usually has to do with partners having differing expectations about how emotions will be handled. Agreeing how to disagree or confront each other is the key to a successful relationship.

Here are some things couples can do to improve their emotional intelligence in arguments:

- **Stick to one topic.** Keep the argument focused on the specific incident.
- **Use the XYZ formula.** X is the action, Y is how it made you feel, Z is what you'd prefer they did next time.
- **Give each person a chance to explain their perspective at the forefront.**
- **Show your partner you're listening.** Most people in the throes of any emotional distress just want to be heard and understood.
- **Learn how to soothe yourself first.** It'll be easier to deal with your partner's emotions.
- **Challenge toxic thoughts.** Intentionally remind yourself of all the good times or all the times your partner did what you want them to do more of.
- **Don't get defensive.** What feels like an attack to you is really just your partner having strong feelings about this issue and wanting to improve it.
- **Validate your partner.** Articulate to your partner that you can see things from their point of view and that their perspective is valid.
- **Take responsibility or apologize if you're in the wrong.** A simple and honest apology can go a long way to smoothing over the worst disputes.
- **Agree on a time-out.** Agree on a phrase or method of calling the time-out that both partners will recognize, and then actually use the cooling off time to cool off.

In Families

Parents who are emotionally intelligent set better examples for their children. If you want a better life for your kid, work on improving yours first.

3 common difficult situations parents have to deal with are: angry kids, depressed kids, and kids with eating disorders.

- **Angry kids** are at risk of becoming bullies or social outcasts. They usually perceive threats where there are none (and they most likely learned it from you).
- **Depressed kids** usually have trouble socializing and bouncing back from setbacks.
- **Eating disorders** stem from misinterpreting overwhelming emotions as signs of hunger, or misguidedly attempting to take control of emotions by controlling food intake.

Parents who address emotions healthily:

- **Take their kid's feelings seriously and try to understand them.**
- **View emotional moments as opportunities to coach their kids through what to do.**
- **Offer up positive ways to deal with emotional reactions.**
- **Practice these three steps in relation to their own emotional moments as well.**

At Work

Issues at work usually arise from prejudice in the workplace or friction among employees who have to work together.

Prejudices are any preconceived opinions that are not based on experience or fact, but we see this most commonly in discrimination against other races, genders, sexualities, or classes. Prejudices are passed down from our parents and taught to us emotionally before we understand the logic behind them. It's nearly impossible to change your own prejudices or anyone else's on a neurological level -- but it is possible for a workplace to suppress the expression of prejudice for the sake of a healthier and better-functioning workplace.
Friction among employees usually stems from low group IQ, or low emotional intelligence. People with high emotional intelligence are better at working together.

To combat both of these situations, managers must be good at both giving feedback and receiving it. Here's how:

- ...

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Here's a preview of the rest of Shortform's Emotional Intelligence summary:

**Emotional Intelligence Summary Shortform Introduction**

*Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman is a tricky book to summarize: it clocks in at 384 pages and is packed full of interesting ideas and information, practical advice, and anecdotes.

Goleman's career as a psychologist and New York Times reporter on the human brain and behavioral sciences gives him a lot of research to pull from, and the book is chock full of data from academic research studies. We've chosen to cut most of those examples due to 2 reasons:

1. This is already one of our longer summaries just based on information alone.
2. Goleman recounts most of the studies anecdotally and without rigorous supporting evidence.

Readers who revel in research should consider reading the original book to make use of Goleman's extensive examples.

We've also done some reorganization for this summary: though the rough structure of our summary follows the rough structure of the book, the individual chapters in the original book sometimes meandered or jumped around in ways that could cause a reader to get lost. Much of the useful content in *Emotional Intelligence* is either scientific information or practical advice, and we've generally used that distinction to organize this summary.

**Introduction to the Book**

IQ might reflect how smart we are, but it has nothing to do with how we handle our emotional lives. Passions and impulses can derail even those with the highest IQs.

- In the 1940s, a study followed 95 Harvard students into middle-age. Men with higher IQ test scores were not more successful than students with lower test scores in terms of productivity, status, or salary in their field. And they did not have more life satisfaction than other students either, in regards to personal relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners.

IQ determines how well we can handle cognitive demands -- that's why it's good for predicting what job you might be suited for. But, for example, if a company employs a handful of experts within any given field, IQ will not help determine which of those experts will be the most successful. Data suggests...
Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 1: Introduction to Emotions

What Are They

Emotions are strong impulses that urge us to take immediate action. The root of the word emotion is motere, the Latin verb meaning “to move.” Watch children or animals: they act almost immediately upon getting a feeling, before they know what they're doing.

It’s a widely-held belief that emotions aren't rational. But passionate emotional responses are designed to overwhelm reason. The more intense the emotion, the more it takes over.

Emotions have developed over centuries of evolutionary history. They're based on fundamental needs, and designed to prevent our brain from thinking about tasks that are too important to leave to intellect alone. Our most powerful emotions want us to:

- Avoid danger to survive.
- Suffer loss but survive.
- Reach a goal despite obstacles, usually to survive.
- Find a mate and bond with them, for ultimate survival in the form of children.
- Keep the family alive to ensure survival of genes.

These situations repeated over and over again throughout the history of humankind, and if the reactions kept us alive, then they got embedded more deeply into our systems and became automatic responses. Most of them involve life or death, surviving or perishing. This was useful for our ancient ancestors, but nowadays most people rarely face life or death scenarios -- yet our emotions still perceive things this way.

As we became more civilized, society had to develop and implement rules to rein in our emotional reactions, or create consequences for when we could not control our emotions. Humans can’t be expected to control their emotional responses unless there are negative results they understand. And there’s nothing wrong with feeling emotions---the problems arise when the emotions are out of tune with the situation and when we don’t express our emotions productively or safely.

The Science Behind Emotions

The development of the human brain -- both evolutionarily and in our biological development from conception to old age -- reflects the hierarchy between our emotional mind and our rational...

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 2: Emotional Hijackings

Have you ever looked back on an emotional response you had and thought, “I don't know what came over me?” This is what Goleman would refer to as a limbic or emotional hijacking, where the emotional center of your brain takes over without notice. We usually associate it with negative emotions, but it can be positive, too -- if you’ve ever laughed uncontrollably and felt like you couldn’t stop, that’s a hijacking.

Research shows that we unconsciously understand what something is and make a value judgement as to whether it’s a good or bad thing in the first few milliseconds of perceiving it.

- When people who are afraid of snakes are shown photos of snakes, their skin breaks out in sweat even if they say they aren’t afraid. Their skin still does this even if the photos are flashed so quickly they don't register they’ve seen it.

This has to do with how the brain is set up, and the balance between the epicenters of our two minds: the amygdala (the center of emotions) and the neocortex (the center of reason).

The Amygdala
There are two amygdalas on either side of the brainstem, at the base of the limbic system. The amygdala is the command center of our emotions, responsible for interpreting emotional signals and for storing our emotional memory. The human amygdala is much larger than the amygdala in our closest relatives, nonhuman primates. Animals and humans who have suffered damage to or the severing of their amygdalas completely lose the ability to feel emotion or understand emotion in others.

The amygdala is constantly on the lookout for danger or dislike -- for negative emotional content. If it perceives a threat to our emotional health or physical safety, it reacts instantaneously and sends a crisis message out to the entire brain.

The brain is set up so that sensory information from the eye or ear goes first to the amygdala and then to the neocortex, meaning the amygdala can respond while the neocortex is putting the information through several levels of consideration. And since the amygdala is also the center of emotional memory,...

What Our Readers Say
This is the best summary of Emotional Intelligence I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

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Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 3: Phases and Physiological Symptoms of Emotions

Emotional reactions can feel very different to us, based on how long they last, how intense they are, and how they affect our bodies.

Emotional Phases
Goleman describes 4 different phases of emotional response: impulses, moods, temperaments, and on the extreme end, chronic disorders. We can distinguish between these phases primarily based on how long they last.

Emotional impulses are strong and immediate, but only last a few seconds. These are the knee-jerk reactions that happen before our conscious mind understands what's going on. (Shortform note: Think of "crimes of passion"--most of them were probably committed in these few, brief seconds where the emotional mind is in complete control.)

Moods are muted forms of emotions and last for much longer than the immediate emotional impulse. You've probably never been in a full, terrifying rage for a whole day -- but you might have been grumpy all day, where normal things make you angry that much faster. That's a mood.

Then, there's temperaments. Goleman suggests that temperaments are a product of nature, a predisposition from birth based on brain activity patterns, and that people generally fall into one of four temperaments: timid, bold, upbeat, and melancholy.

- **Timid people** have amygdalas that are more responsive to even low-level stress. They avoid new or unfamiliar situations and dislike uncertainty.
- **Bold people** have a higher threshold for arousal, and can withstand more stress and uncertainty. They don't scare easily, have no trouble meeting people, and seek out new things.
- **Upbeat people** have more activity in their left frontal lobes than their right. These people enjoy meeting others and seeing what life brings, and rally quicker after setbacks.
- **Melancholic people** have more activity in their right frontal lobes. They're more frequently in bad moods and generally take a negative view of life. Because they have a hard time avoiding anxiety and depression, they are more easily defeated by difficulty.

(Shortform note: Goleman touches on this very...
Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 4: Trauma and the Brain

PTSD occurs when the brain has lowered its setpoint for alarm due to traumatic experiences, making emergencies out of anything remotely resembling either a single, impactful traumatic event or prolonged periods of suffering cruelties.

PTSD also generally stems from traumatic events in which the victim felt helpless. The helplessness is part of what makes the initial traumatic event so overwhelming to the limbic system -- it increases the strength of the emotion because the brain feels like there's no action to take.

Here's how PTSD affects the brain:

- Key changes in a brain affected by PTSD happen in a structure that regulates adrenaline and noradrenaline, which are emergency hormones. This system turns hyperactive in PTSD, releasing extremely large doses of those hormones in situations that pose little to no threat to the person but resemble the traumatic event.
- But not only does the brain go into hyperactive threat mode as a result of PTSD, the opioid system in the brain also becomes hyperactive. In a healthy brain, the opioid system secretes endorphins to dull any feelings of pain. When this system goes into overdrive, not only does it dull feelings of pain, but also of pleasure, and emotion in general. This creates the numbness and emotional distance that many PTSD victims feel.
- These two changes together seem to increase the likelihood that a person will be further traumatized, since the changes increase the number of emergency alerts while decreasing any positive feeling or connection to the outside world that might offset the emergency.

Recovery from Trauma

But we can learn to handle our emotions better, as we already know, and PTSD victims can, with treatment, relearn a different, more normal response to their specific triggers. The amygdala will always retain its response to that initial emergency alert, but victims can work on developing an ability to suppress the emergency alert through their rational mind.

Trauma sticks on an unconscious level, so a great way to work through trauma is through art, which also...

Shortform Exercise: Identifying Your Temperament

It's useful to know what your default temperament is so that you can appreciate it or work against it when necessary. Use this exercise to explore your default mood and how it affects your life.

Reviewing the four basic temperaments (timid, bold, upbeat, melancholy), which one would you say you fall into?

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 5-1: Identifying Your Emotions

Now that we know what emotions are, we'll discuss emotional intelligence, break it down into 5 key skills, and then review those skills in greater detail. For clarity, each of the chapters will be numbered as 5-1, 5-2, and so on, to denote their relation to the major subject of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence encompasses the 5 following skills:
Knowing your emotions.
Managing emotions, specifically negative ones like anger, anxiety, and sadness.
Motivating yourself.
Recognizing emotions in others, or empathy.
Handling relationships.

Someone with high emotional intelligence can regulate her moods, control her impulses, motivate herself, empathize with others, and hope, within reason, that things will turn out all right. Emotional intelligence is really a meta-ability, an ability that determines how well we can put all our other abilities to use, including IQ.

Identifying Your Emotions

Knowing your emotions is really a form of self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize a feeling as it’s happening to you. Being able to monitor our feelings as they’re occurring helps us understand ourselves and our psychology. Failure to understand our emotional responses leaves us at their mercy. The more certain we are about our feelings, the easier it is to make personal decisions.

Even mild shifts in mood can change the way we make decisions. Making decisions in a good mood creates a perceptual bias that makes us more positive in our thinking -- in other words, making decisions when you're happy leads to happier decisions. And the opposite is true, too: making decisions when we're in a bad mood leads to more negative thinking -- you'll make worse, more negative decisions when you're in a worse mood.

Being aware of our feelings essentially means we can mentally take a step back from what we're feeling and observe it, instead of act on it right away. Though being aware of our feelings doesn't guarantee we can change what we're feeling, the two usually go together. Recognizing you're in a bad mood...

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 5-2: Managing Anger, Anxiety and Sadness

Once we are aware of our emotional responses as we’re having them, we can start to regulate them, working past emotions when they're not appropriate to the situation, soothing ourselves when we're experiencing negative emotions, and bouncing back quickly from setbacks. People who cannot manage their emotions expend a lot of energy fighting their emotional reactions.

There are 3 main emotions that are difficult to manage: anger, anxiety, and sadness.

Here are general rules for managing any negative emotion:

1. Don't dwell on the emotion and keep mulling it over. Ruminating on an emotion doesn't manage it -- it actually extends the emotional reaction and can even increase the emotional distress.
2. Self-awareness helps you catch a negative emotional response early and identify it correctly.
3. Most negative emotional responses are built on thoughts or assumptions that confirm the response -- so you can manage almost any negative emotional response by challenging the thoughts and assumptions that made you feel it in the first place.

Anger

What It Is

We get angry when we feel attacked. It could be someone actively threatening our physical safety, dangerously cutting us off on the road, insulting us with words, or it could be something frustrating us in our pursuit of a goal. All these are perceived forms of attack, and anger is our brain preparing us to fight.
We're also more prone to get angry when we're more stressed. It's much easier to shrug things off when your day is going well; if your day is going poorly, little things that might not even get to you on a good day can easily set off your temper.

How Not to Manage Anger

The quickest way to continue feeling angry is to dwell on what's making you angry. The longer we think about our anger, the more our brain comes up with self-justifications and good reasons that we should feel angry. Anger builds on anger.

Say someone dangerously cuts you off while driving and you get angry. “What was that person thinking? They could have killed me. What would happen to...

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Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 5-3: Motivating Yourself

Being able to identify and manage our emotions makes it easier to motivate ourselves to finish tasks and achieve goals. We also need to be able to delay gratification and overcome our impulses to be more productive and effective.

Controlling Your Impulses

Goleman says this is the most fundamental psychological skill. Because emotions are impulses, being in control of your emotions is resisting the urge to fulfill impulses that are harmful or counterproductive.

The ability to delay gratification in pursuit of a goal is necessary to achieve almost anything. Very little of what we do on a moment-to-moment basis is gratifying -- most of us have obligations we have to meet, big-picture goals we're working towards, or personal improvements we're looking to make. All of these require us to delay immediate gratification in favor of doing something that will be beneficial down the line.

• Think of eating a sweet versus working out. One will give us immediate gratification; the other takes time and energy but will ultimately be better for us.
The Marshmallow Experiment

There was a famous experiment done in the 1960s with children. They were left in a room with one marshmallow. They were told that if they didn't eat the marshmallow before the researcher came back, they could have 2 marshmallows. Or they could choose to eat the single marshmallow right away.

The study followed the children into their adolescence, and the kids who had delayed gratification and resisted their impulses to eat the first marshmallow were:

- Effective, assertive, confident, and self-reliant.
- Socially competent, trustworthy, and dependable.
- Cool under pressure, embracing of challenges, and still capable of delaying immediate gratification in pursuit of a goal.
- More successful academically, with higher SAT scores.

On the other side, kids who ate the first marshmallow were:

- Shy in social situations, jealous, envious, and combative.
- Stubborn, indecisive, and easily frustrated.
- Self-critical, prone to overreacting, and still incapable...

The Marshmallow Experiment

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 5-4: Empathizing with Others

Empathy is the fundamental people skill, allowing us to interpret what others want or need. This skill is especially important in what Goleman refers to as the “caring professions,” such as sales, management, or teaching.

How Empathy Develops

In the early stages of our development, we cannot tell ourselves apart from anyone else around us -- we interpret everything outside ourselves as part of ourselves. This is why babies mirror our facial expressions. Up until about one year of age, infants perceive any distress around them as if it were their own distress.

At around 2.5 years, toddlers can recognize that someone else's pain is not their own -- now, toddlers can begin to develop the skill of comforting someone else. This is generally the point where babies begin to diverge from one another: some babies become very sensitive toddlers, while others become less sensitive.

Something that seems to have a big impact on which direction toddlers go in is how they get disciplined by their parents.

- Discipline that hinges on negative judgements of the offending child--"That's naughty, you're bad, don't do that"--don't teach empathy, they teach punishment.
- Discipline that hinges on explaining how actions make other people feel--"When you hit her, you made her sad. See how she's crying?"--teaches empathy and builds a toddler's awareness of other people's feelings.

Another influencing factor is how their parents and other people react to emotional distress.

- Toddlers who are yelled at to stop crying will learn that this is how we handle emotions -- we punish them.
- Toddlers who see their parents comforting people in emotional distress, allowing emotions to run their course, and discussing what these emotions are and how we can deal with them, will have a much more positive model of how to deal with emotions.

Attunement

More than the dramatic events we experience as children, our most basic emotional life lessons are influenced by small, repeated life exchanges between us and our parents. Parents can either be attuned...
Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 5-5: Building Relationships

The culmination of all the previous skills combined, when we recognize our own emotions, manage them, motivate ourselves to do better, and can empathize with others, our personal relationships are bound to improve. Managing someone else's emotions is the key to successful relationships.

As children, we imitate others' emotions, and this tendency never really leaves us -- we do it throughout our lives. Emotions are contagious. Whoever's mood is stronger or whoever expresses their mood more forcefully will win out. This is called entrainment.

- You might be in a good mood at work, but if you get home and your partner's in a horrible mood, whoever's mood is stronger will start to sway the other one to their side.
- Good public speakers do this: they sway the emotions of the crowd by demonstrating their own emotions.

How in tune our emotions are with someone else's can also speak to how close we are to that person—the stronger the emotional connection we feel with someone, the more tightly we will mirror their physical movements and emotional moods when we're with them.

Social ineptitude is an inability to interact successfully with one's peers. It usually begins in childhood, and without learning emotional intelligence habits, socially inept children will find themselves trapped in a cycle that can last into adulthood.

- Think of children playing at recess. One child wants to join in the play. The socially adept way of joining is to watch the group for a while, join tentatively, and play by the existing rules, references, and routine. Someone who does this will be accepted into the group, and then the more they play together, the more the newcomer can start to do things like question the rules or suggest changes.
- A socially inept child will push their way into groups without knowing what's going on and often reject the given circumstances of the group play: they'll change subjects abruptly or pressure others to follow their new rules. This leads to the group ignoring them or rejecting them, which deprives them of their ability to...

Shortform Exercise: Improving Your Emotional Intelligence

Since emotional intelligence is a collection of abilities, most people aren’t totally devoid of any emotional intelligence skills. Use this exercise to analyze your own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to emotional intelligence.

Considering the five basic skills of emotional intelligence--knowing your emotions, managing emotions, motivating yourself, empathizing, relationships--which would say you're currently strongest in? List 3 ways you use this skill in your everyday life.

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 6-1: Applying Emotional Intelligence in Love

Freud said, “To love and to work are the twin capacities that mark full maturity.” Goleman would most likely add "to learn" and "to take care of yourself and others" to that list, and emotional intelligence is the key to loving, working, learning, and taking care of yourself and others to the best of your abilities.
We'll go through each of these categories -- love (romantic and familial), work, school, and health -- exploring their difficulties and some ways emotional intelligence can help overcome those difficulties. Similar to the last chapters, these chapters will be numbered 6-1, 6-2, and so on to denote their relationship to the major subject of using emotional intelligence.

Since social pressures are no longer the main catalyst for marriage, much more importance is placed on the emotional bond between two people. The current trend in divorce rates suggests we need a little more emotional intelligence in our marriages.

- In 1890, about 10% of all American marriages ended in divorce. In 1920, the rate went up to 20%. It went up to 30% in 1950, and 50% in 1970. By 1990, it shot up to 67%.

One primary factor in the dissolution of marriage is differing expectations, and it all starts with how we raise children to approach emotions based on their sex.

Differing Expectations

In couples experiencing marital distress, typically the woman wants to engage with her husband, and the man routinely withdraws from his wife. This stems from the two different emotional realities in a heterosexual couple, his and hers.

Learning to Be or Not to Be Emotional

Emotional differences may be partially biological, but they are undeniably social. Boys and girls are taught different lessons about how to handle their emotions.

- Generally, parents discuss emotions more with daughters than sons, excepting anger. Parents display a wider array of emotions to daughters. When parents make up stories for preschool-aged children, they typically use more emotion words for daughters than sons. Mothers discuss emotions with daughters, and discuss...

READ FULL SUMMARY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 6-2: Managing Emotional Intelligence in Families

Our family is the first place we learn about emotions and how to handle them. Children learn not just through the things parents say, but the things they see parents do as well.

There are 3 common parenting styles that are harmful:

- 1) Ignoring feelings completely. This method leads children to believe emotions are inconveniences. These parents don't use emotional moments as teaching moments, and they don't usually develop closeness to their kids.
- 2) Being too accepting. These parents acknowledge their children's emotions but don't teach them acceptable and healthy ways of controlling their reactions to those emotions.
- 3) Treating emotions with contempt. These parents are harsh critics and disapprove of any emotional display. Ironically, they usually deal emotionally with their children, punishing out of anger and meeting emotional responses with bigger, more overwhelming emotional responses of their own.

We'll look at 3 common issues parents face with their children -- anger, depression, and eating disorders -- and the danger of letting these issues go unmitigated.

Anger in Children

Angry kids usually become bullies who, incapable of handling their own emotional reactions, take their anger out on other children, leading to social isolation, disciplinary actions, and judgement from teachers.

Bullies are more likely to drop out of school and end up with criminal records, and they're likely to pass their violence and aggression down to their kids -- not only through genes but through nurturing and the environment of the household -- which creates more bullies.
Bullies typically come from households where punishment is an emotion-based system. When parents are in a bad mood, the punishment for misbehaving is severe. When parents are in a good mood, the kids can do whatever they want without consequences. This volatility and lack of logic creates a kind of chaos that encourages letting emotions dictate one's actions, violence and aggression as the primary ways of dealing with negative emotions, and a lack of...

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 6-3: Bringing Humanity into the Workplace

Many jobs require people to work together, and good teams require harmony between the members and strong leadership.

It takes a lot of top-level teamwork to fly an airplane. When a crash occurs, 80% of the time it's because of a mistake made by a pilot that could have been prevented if the team had worked together better. Because of this, pilots in training must learn certain social intelligence skills, like open communication, listening, cooperation, and speaking up.

Of course, in everyday jobs, someone making a mistake isn't going to result in a plane falling out of the sky and potentially killing people -- but teams that are poorly managed experience low productivity, an increase in mistakes, missed deadlines, and the loss of team members to other, better workplaces.

Emotional intelligence is particularly important to the leaders in business -- CEOs, managers, and the like -- and yet these people are usually the biggest believers in cutting emotions out of business.

- One study in the 1970s surveyed 250 executives, and found that most of them thought their jobs required intellect but not emotion, “heads but not hearts.” They thought compassion would directly interfere with their work goals, that they wouldn't be able to make the necessary decisions without closing themselves off emotionally, and that they wouldn't be able to deal with their employees if they had to pay attention to their emotions.

The same negative effects we discussed in the Chapter 1 still happen in workplaces: stress and emotional distress make it harder to remember things, learn new things, make decisions, and work together.

Leadership shouldn't be about dominating people, it should be about persuading them to work together for a common goal. An ideal workplace is one where every member is attuned to each other's feelings, the team can handle disagreements without allowing them to escalate, and each member can get into a flow state while performing their job. To accomplish all that, we need emotional intelligence.

One major thing that gets in the way of...

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 6-4: Teaching Kids to Be Better Humans

In 1990, the US experienced the highest rates it had ever seen of juvenile arrests for violent crimes, teen arrests for rape, teen murder rates, suicide rates, and murder victims under the age of 14. Children at the time were also reported as doing worse in school, socialization, and mood. Wealth made no difference, and neither did ethnicity or race -- the problems were universal.

Internationally, families are plagued by financial worries and other stresses, meaning parents can't spend as much time with their children to teach them emotional intelligence. The need to make money has also increased mobility -- people move to where jobs are -- so kids have less connection to their extended family, another source of learning.

Since family life doesn't necessarily offer the same connections and instruction it once did, schools have become the one place communities can depend on to educate their children and correct their behaviors. It's the one place most children go, and it presents a big opportunity to positively impact upcoming generations.
Emotional literacy is a bigger challenge facing today's students than any low scores in math or reading, and yet most schools do nothing about this incredibly important subject. Not only that, but emotional distress has significant negative effects on performance -- so schools looking to get better academic performance from their students should think about introducing emotional intelligence education.

Emotional Issues in the Classroom

Kids are building differently fundamental skills at different ages, and at different ages, schools and teachers can help them improve critical life skills:

- Preschoolers are building foundational skills, and teaching basic impulse control, self-soothing, and positive communication could go a long way down the line.
- Kindergarteners are entering their first real social world, and starting to feel the "comparison" emotions that come with it: insecurity, jealousy, pride, confidence, or humiliation.
- Late elementary school is when academic performance begins to solidify how...

Emotional Intelligence Summary Chapter 6-5: Emotional Intelligence for Your Physical Health

Emotions are deeply connected to sickness and health, how vulnerable a patient is to disease, or how fast a patient recovers -- and yet medicine and medical care often lack any trace of emotional intelligence.

- This is partially because of the high volume of patients any given facility or practitioner sees: caregivers are often overloaded with patients and must rush through their visits to see everyone, or they feel indifferent towards any one patient because they see so many in a day.
- Institutional imperatives -- timing the amount of care given, pricing out how much every step of the treatment costs -- put a greater emphasis on time and money saved than emotional care given.

Emotional interventions should be routine practice in medical care.

There's a subtle difference between disease and illness: disease is the thing a doctor can cure, but illness is the thing a patient suffers. Emotional wellness might not seem to have a correlation to how well a disease is cured -- but it has a great impact on how little or how much or just how a patient suffers through their illness.

This is not to say that emotional well-being can, on its own, cure a disease -- there are a lot of current trends that suggest people can cure themselves by thinking positively, which is dangerous, not only because it disregards the necessity of medicine in curing illnesses but also because it can make people feel like they're to blame if they get sick, that it must be in their minds or because they're not strong enough to "will" themselves to be well.

The Brain of Our Body

Our immune system is the brain of our body, deciding what belongs in our body and what doesn't, and rejecting the latter. When it recognizes cells, it leaves them alone; when it doesn't recognize them, it attacks. When it works correctly, our body fights off bacteria, viruses, even cancer -- but if it judges incorrectly, it can end up attacking necessary cells and leading to autoimmune diseases like lupus or allergies.

The nervous system is innately connected to our immune system, and,...
The issues discussed here are not simple issues and can’t be written off as having a single source that causes them. They’re complex, stemming from biological characteristics, family status, parental nurturing, class, location, and many other factors. Emotional intelligence won’t solve all these problems by itself— but alongside other solutions, emotional intelligence is a necessary component and should be more widely taught.

Research psychologists also can’t make the change on their own: we need better emotional intelligence training in our school systems, our homes, and our hospitals. Information isn’t enough. Handing out a pamphlet on emotional intelligence won’t help anyone solve their emotional issues. Practice and dedication are the only way to learn these skills.

Learning emotional intelligence can of course help us improve later in our lives, since emotional learning is lifelong learning. But many of our major societal problems could be positively offset by training children in emotional intelligence early in their lives, so that they have the skills they need to be resilient and bounce back later in life.

- Schools experienced the best results when they put long-term...

Shortform Exercise: Responding to Emotions

Self-awareness is one of the first major steps towards controlling your emotional responses. Use this exercise to help analyze your own emotional responses and improve the way you act on them.

Think of a situation where something small seemed to set off an overwhelming emotional response in your brain. Briefly summarize the situation, what it was that set you off, and what emotions it sparks in you (refer back to the list for emotion words in Chapter X).

Shortform Exercise: Identifying Your Top Priority

Once we begin improving our emotional intelligence skills in any arena of life, they translate over to other arenas— but we have to start somewhere. Use this exercise to explore which of the 5 life areas you’d most like to improve in, and how to start.

Which of the 5 arenas (romance, family, work, school, and medicine) would you like to improve your emotional intelligence in first? Why is that arena important to you?

Shortform Exercise: Articulating Your Biggest Takeaway

As we know, putting thoughts and feelings into words is one way to process them, reflect on them, and take ownership of them. Use this exercise to help solidify your biggest takeaway from the book.

In a few sentences, what was your biggest takeaway from the summary? What idea lodged in your brain, or what’s the first idea that jumps into your brain when you think about this summary?