September 2006

Message from the National COP Chair

Gina McCredie

As the incoming national Chair, I would like to begin by acknowledging Denis Flores and the significant contribution he has made to the APS College of Organisational Psychologists over many years. Denis has not only been the Chair of our College, but has previously also held the Membership Secretary position nationally, been the VIC COP Chair as well as held numerous other roles in various committees. He has been a strong and active representative of the interests of organisational psychologists in Australia, particularly in representing us within the Australian Psychological Society. While he will not have a formal role in the College in the months ahead, he will continue to contribute through his involvement in the 2006 APS/NZPS Conference in September. On behalf of the College, thank you Denis! You will be a hard act to follow!

One priority for me in taking on the Chair role is to ensure that COP develops a strong value proposition for its members. We need to be clear about what's in it for organisational psychologists to join the College, and why they actually do (or don't) join. From a numbers perspective, our Student and Affiliate numbers are on the rise, but the number of Full Members is declining. Associate Members are often not going the next step to become Full Members. We need to better understand these trends, and act to address the issues underpinning them. The National COP Committee has established a sub-committee for this purpose.

The sub-committee has researched how similar organisations and associations handle such membership issues, as well as reviewing recruitment, engagement and retention models for organisations like ours. Under development now is an online survey to seek the opinions of current members (full, associate, students) and affiliates of the College, and potential members, on our current performance, their relationship with COP and opportunities for improvement.

Our aim is use the results of the survey to develop products and services that create a high value relationship for all members. As a consequence, we hope to attract new members and encourage continued and increased engagement with COP.

I look forward to sharing more information about the survey in due course, and encourage you to participate in it. With your help, we will ensure COP can better meet the needs of its members and develop the profession in Australia.

Gina McCredie, July 2006

Denis J Flores

Achievements and Challenges

Having just handed over the role as National Chair to Gina McCredie after three years, I have taken the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the College in that time and to consider the challenges that still lie ahead. There have been some notable successes.

We now have a very strong membership marketing and application process and overall, membership has increased. A major support element of this work has been the development of Core and Specialist competencies for (Organisational and other) Psychologists at the DPPAG level. Consistent with the recent changes to College membership criteria, we now also have a robust, competency based avenue to membership, As well, the Committee is undertaking a membership survey to further improve our communication with members. We have an endorsement from the Di-

rector of Professional Practice for the survey and funding has been sought from the APS to complete this work.

New State committees were established in Western Australia and the ACT and all six state/territory Sections are operating at a very high standard with frequent, high quality and well attended professional development events.

An Award of Distinction has been established and the inaugural recipient of the COP award is Dr John Champness, who received his award at a formal dinner in Melbourne on 6th September. This award recognises substantial and significant contributions to the College and its special area of psychology over a long period of time. As an Organisational Psychologist of fifty years standing, John is a very worthy recipient of this award.

Very successful and profitable IO Conferences were held in 2003 and 2006. Speakers were of an exceptionally high standard and participants came from all states and many overseas countries. In July 2007 the South Australian section will host the 7th IO Psychology Conference and the First Asia Pacific Congress on Work and Organisational Psychology. The theme will be "Expanding the Footprint of Work Psychology through International Collaboration in Research and Practice." I urge all of you to consider attending this landmark Conference. The Elton Mayo Awards were presented in 2003 and 2005 and the recipients are recognised on the APS website.

Some of the challenges that remain are quite interesting.

Clearly, Organisational Psychology and the way it is practised are different from other specialisations. Consequently, much of the support services for Organisational Psychologists are an ill fit because frequently they are designed around the medical model. Some examples are **insurance, referrals and registration**.

The current insurance provider, on the advice of the APS national office, utilises a single practitioner model, where a separate policy has to be taken out for each practitioner. This may be satisfactory for clinicians and counsellors who operate as sole practitioners but many organisational psychology practises employ multiple psychologists in the same business but often in separate locations. The current available insurance is incompatible with the service provided by many organisational psychologists.

The APS referral service is also biased towards the individual practitioner model. Of the 81 categories available in the Referral Checklist, only 5 could be reasonably considered to be relevant to Organisational Psychology. I am unaware of the percentage of COP members who use the referral service, but I suspect that it is much lower than the other specialities. In its present form the referral service is of little or no value to organisational psychologists.

Registration is also a vexed issue. Whilst other psychologists operate in individual consulting rooms and sometimes in several locations, they almost always operate within the boundaries of the State in which they are registered. This is the normal way they work. We, on the other hand frequently are engaged by national and international clients and across State boundaries. The advice from the APS has been to suggest that organisational psychologists should write to the registration boards in other states advising them of their intention to practice in that state. This is a reasonable approach but strategically short sighted. National reciprocal registration should be the minimum target for organisational psychologists in their dealings with the registration process.

International Membership

My final comment is on international membership. COP has had much international exposure over the past three years because of the level of international research and the highly visible and successful IO Conferences. We have had many enquiries from eminent, overseas based psychologists who wish to join or be associated with our College. Currently, they must first join the APS and then seek COP membership, even if they are members of the relevant psychology association in their home country. I would very much like to see an alternative arrangement whereby some form of recognition and dialogue is established to embrace the wider international organisational community.

Denis Flores FAPS

Submission Guidelines

The Chief Editor and Editor welcome all constructive input, articles, letters and ideas from Organisational Psychology College Members. We would just like you to help us out by abiding by some simple house keeping rules:

- **Please ensure that any articles are formatted properly, spell checked and proofed prior to being submitted for publication.** (while we reserve the right to fix your copy or modify the formatting, we may not do so!)

- **Obtain the Chief Editor's (Gina McCredie) approval prior to any articles being written on commercial sponsors.**

- **Please do not submit material that is defamatory, libellous, racist or discriminatory in nature. We will not publish it.**

- **All images, artwork and fonts to be submitted as separate files! Do NOT include Artwork or photos as a part of a Word file without submitting separately. Prefered format for photos are TIFF or high quality JPG.**

- **Please submit all TOP content to Martha Knox-Haly at marthaknox@bigpond.com**

- **Our next issues will have these themes:**

Occupational Stress - Submission date: 31st October 06

Leadership - Submission date: 28th February 2007

Training & Capability Development: May 31st 2007

Organisational Change: August 31st 2007

Online Testing: October 31st 2007

Membership Matters

Building the Value of COP Membership

A national research project examining membership of the College of Organisational Psychologists (COP) was kicked off in July 2006. The research aims to build understanding of the value by COP offered by to professionals in order to retain and attract new members, particularly full members.

A review of membership numbers identified that while overall membership numbers had risen in the last year, the number of full members had declined. The project team involves National COP Chair Gina McCredie, Dr Elisabeth Wilson-Evered, and two Organisational Psychology doctoral students from Monash University – Melissa Giles and Lisa Interligi.

According to Gina McCredie, the future of COP depends on its ability to attract and retain active, full members.

"The College needs full members as they play a critical role in furthering development of our profession. While we recognise the importance of all COP participants, full members are the only ones that can sign up new members, hold official roles and provide supervision to Associates," Gina said.

"The National COP Committee meeting in December 2005 recognised that sustainability of membership was a key issue that required attention and member consultation. This is the first stage in that process."

"At the end of the day, we recognise that COP needs to be able to deliver professional and personal value to our members to keep them engaged and active. We really need to understand that value proposition for all membership categories, especially our full members," Gina said.

The project team has identified a number of issues for examination, including why many of COP's Associate members are not electing to upgrade to full membership.

The project team has completed a review of current literature to develop the research model, which has also drawn on similar projects conducted by the Canadian Psychologists Association and the British Psychological Society.

An online survey is currently under-development, will be distributed to Full, Associate, Student and Affiliate members in the next few weeks. The project team also will seek participation from organisational psychologists eligible for membership and who have either left COP or have not sought to join. Psychologists in that category who would like to participate can contact Lisa Interligi at Lisa.Interligi@med.monash.edu.au.

Questions about the project can be directed to Lisa at **Lisa.Interligi@med.monash.edu.au** or Gina McCredie at **ginaCOP@netspace.net.au**

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Conference Information

Year	Date	Conference	Details	Papers Due
2007	27-29 April	22nd Annual SIOP Conference	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology http://www.siop.org/ New York, New York - USA	13-Sep-06
2007	May 9-12	13th EAWOP Congress	The Swedish Psychological Association http://www.eawop2007.org Stokholm - Sweden	3-Oct-06
2007	3-6 July	10th European Congress of Psychology	Union of Psychologists' Association of the Czech Republic http://ecp2007.com Prague - Czech Republic	30-Nov-06
2008	10-12 April	23rd Annual SIOP Conference	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology http://www.siop.org/ San Francisco, California - USA	Usually september
2008	20-25 July	XXIX International Congress of Psychology	German Federation of Psychological Associations www.icp2008.org Berlin - Germany	15-Oct-07
2009	2-4 April	24th Annual SIOP Conference	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology http://www.siop.org/ New Orleans, Louisiana - USA	Usually september
2009	7-10 July	11th European Congress of Psychology	European Congress of Psychology www.ecp2009.no Oslo - Norway	Usually september
2010	8-10 April	25th Annual SIOP Conference	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology http://www.siop.org/ Atlanta, Georgia - USA	Usually september
2011	14-16 April	26th Annual SIOP Conference	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology http://www.siop.org/ Chicago, IIlinois - USA	Usually september

Emotions in Cyberspace: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Communication

Nikola Balvin   **and**   **Melissa Conley Tyler**
Doctorate Candidate   **Senior Fellow**
Department of Psychology   **Faculty of Law**
University of Melbourne   **University of Melbourne**

One of last year's College of Organisational Psychologists professional development seminars in Melbourne focused on the topic of virtual teams and flexible working. The presenters, Dr. Neville Meyers from Queensland University of Technology and Mike Sinclair, Director of IT projects at Shell, indicated that virtual work teams are a common characteristic of many Australian workplaces and their current performance success is likely to lead to an increase in their application around the world. One of the most salient differences between the traditional office and the virtual office is that more communication is likely to take place via electronic media (Meyers & Hearn, 2000). Computer-mediated communication strategies such as email, instant messaging, NetMeeting and video or tele-conferencing are frequently used to disseminate new information, provide performance appraisal and feedback and engage in negotiation. It is therefore important to be aware of how computer-mediated communication differs from the traditional face-to-face alternative and in what instances one approach may produce more beneficial outcomes than the other. The following discussion reviews some of the research examining differences between face-to-face and computer-mediated communication, in an attempt to clarify the advantages and disadvantages of each approach across different contexts. Specifically, issues of online negotiation, feedback objectivity, applicability, fraud and accessibility are discussed.

Research on Online Communication

Some of the most studied areas of electronically-mediated communication in the workplace relate to performance appraisal and feedback intervention (Ang & Cummings, 1994; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Weisband & Atwater, 1999). The key issue in this body of research is whether providing computer generated feedback to employees is more advantageous to their performance and job satisfaction than providing face-to-face feedback. A meta-analytic review suggests that feedback intervention in general results in improved performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), but the most beneficial medium of feedback delivery varies according to task complexity and the underlying aims of employing such interventions. Two studies (Ang, Cummings, Straub & Earley, 1993; Ang & Cummings, 1994) examined the feedback seeking patterns of participants answering memoranda, in conditions where feedback was provided face-to-face, via a computer-mediated strategy or was completely computer generated. Both studies found that feedback seeking was highest when computer-generated, followed by the computer-mediated option and least common when involving face-to-face exchange. These results portray one of the advantages of using computer communication in performance appraisal: the removal of social cues and therefore lowered "face-loss costs" lead to more active self-evaluation seeking behaviours (Ang & Cummings, 1994). This suggests that when employees believe that their performance feedback is confidential and unscrutinised by someone else, they feel more comfortable viewing information reflective of their abilities. This is further evident in the finding that the face-to-face option was the least popular. It is likely that in such instances, employees perceive the experience of facing criticism from another person as more threatening, leading to temporary face-loss, embarrassment or lowered confidence. When feedback is provided objectively through a computer system, although an employee may still respond emotionally to their results, the emotions are private and do not pose the threat of public face-loss. Given these results, the area of performance feedback delivery may have more positive results on employee performance and satisfaction when delivered via computerised media rather than face-to-face.

However, the lack of social cues that encourages workers to seek feedback about their performance may also influence them to misinterpret the quality of their own and others' performance. Weisband and Atwater (1999) found that when rating own and others' contributions to team performance on either electronically or face-to-face communicated tasks, participants' self-ratings were inflated and less accurate on tasks performed via a computer. These findings show that interaction with others through computerised media contributes to a sense of anonymity and lack of awareness of one's own, but also others' influence (Weisband & Atwater, 1999: 633). It seems that observing the input of others via a computer results in focusing on only the content of the delivered task and lacks sensitivity to the 'behind the scenes' work necessary for successful task completion. Contrastingly, lack of interpersonal interaction also leads to perceptions of increased individual performance, as one becomes more

aware of their own 'behind the scenes' work. These findings suggest that for accurate evaluations of within team performance, face-to-face interactions provide more precise reflections than computer mediated interactions.

Weisband and Atwater (1999) point out that it is important to carefully evaluate what one aims to achieve with performance ratings and choose the most appropriate communication medium accordingly. Electronically delivered performance allows raters to focus on task content more objectively and decreases the influence of social biases such as attractiveness (Weisband & Atwater, 1999). Therefore, when the objective of performance appraisal is task content, a less rich media such as that delivered by computerised communication provides a more appropriate approach to evaluation. On the other hand, when the goals of evaluation go beyond task content and require consideration of personal attributes such as honesty and trustworthiness, a richer medium such as face-to-face interaction is more appropriate (Weisband & Atwater, 1999: 637).

Implications for Negotiating

When considering which communication approach is more appropriate for negotiating, one is faced with the dilemma of whether the removal of 'social cues' is likely to lead to less emotional reactions and greater focus on the issue at hand or whether it is likely to exacerbate perceptions of dishonesty and mistrust towards the other person. Similarly to other computer assisted communication media, the area of online negotiation or online dispute resolution (ODR) is also

rapidly expanding. Negotiation service providers, such as eBay's SquareTrade, specifically focus on delivering negotiation and mediation services online. Since ODR is a new and expanding area, only a limited body of research has examined how online negotiation differs from face-to-face negotiation. In a recent experiment, participants assigned with the same conflict scenario were instructed to negotiate either face-to-face, via email or via synchronous computer conferencing (SCC; E.g. Instant Messenger) (Tan, 2005). Negotiated solutions were classified as either distributive, "where one party benefits only if the opponent makes a concession", or integrative, "where two parties work cooperatively to seek a mutually beneficial solution" (Tan, 2005: 1). Results showed that integrative outcomes were lowest in the face-to-face condition and highest in the SCC condition. When evaluating these findings, the researcher concluded that in a low-level conflict, lack of non-verbal cues is an advantage as it allows negotiating parties to focus on the message content and reduces the influence of additional distracters. However, it is important that parties feel comfortable using computerised applications to negotiate, because in highly emotional circumstances, lack of social cues may have the opposite impact of creating greater distance and mistrust (Tan, 2005: 9). This indicates that ODR applications seem most appropriate for business, low-emotion situations, while sensitive issues are best negotiated in person.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Communication

Many factors determine the appropriateness and applica-

bility of electronically-mediated communication. While online communication allows global exchange of information across various hierarchy levels and solves logistical problems of time and distance (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991; Carlson, 2001; Conley Tyler, 2005), it also isolates technologically disadvantaged communities (Primerano, 2005; Wahab, 2005). Some of the advantages and disadvantages encountered in computer-mediated communication as opposed to face-to-face communication are considered next.

Ease of information exchange

One of the reasons for the popularity of online communication is its ability to cross continents and time zones, allowing 24-hour global communication access. Economically, this is a great advantage, reducing the cost of travel and saving time.

Online communication is available both synchronously (for example, through Instant Messenger and chat) and in delayed forms such as email. This means that it is available at all times and communicators can attend to messages when it suits them, reducing the need to schedule meetings.

Reduced social cues

As outlined above, the reduction of communication cues can be an advantage and a disadvantage in online communication. Inability to observe the body language, facial expressions and tone of voice of the other communicator may assist in focusing on the issue at hand, but it can also lead to misinterpretation, frustration and mistrust. Tan (2005) reports that high levels of negative emotion prior to engaging in

negotiation increase the likelihood of mistrust, suspicion and sinister attribution error in the online world more than in the offline world. In e-commerce, absence of social cues often leads to lack of trust in online purchasing, with many consumers preferring to buy the old-fashioned way (Wingfield, 2004). Surprisingly, recent research suggests that lack of social cues does not encourage dishonesty amongst otherwise honest individuals (Chester, 2005) and eBay officials claim that occurrence of online fraud is "no different" to the offline world (Wingfield, 2004: A4). Chester (2005) found that student online representations accurately reflected their offline representations, with very little evidence of deliberate online deception. The results also indicated a tendency for displaying one's "true self", which led the researcher to conclude that online anonymity "appears to facilitate honest self-presentation, permitting users to reveal themselves in ways more truthful than in the offline world" (Chester, 2005: 8). It seems that as the internet grows to be a daily communication medium, individuals apply the same values to it as they do to other communication contexts. Those honest in person or over the phone also tend to behave in such manner online and vice versa.

To reduce misinterpretation of 'feelings' communicated via online text, email, chat and instant messaging services have invented symbols and norms, which assist in communicating the emotional content of messages. For example, symbols such as 'smileys' can be used to magnify the happiness or sadness of text-based information, while writing in caps typically signifies shouting. Ambiguity can also be reduced through simple, user-friendly system architecture, by including clarification options such as direct requests, time and date tracking and translation services. Finally, the capability to save all discussed materials may reduce feelings of mistrust in some cases, allowing communicators to feel confident that all agreements are recorded and can be presented as evidence in future communication.

Online hierarchies

The removal of social cues such as attractiveness and ethnicity disrupt hierarchies characteristic of the offline world, creating opportunities for 'offline disadvantaged' individuals to communicate on fairer ground. Communities disadvantaged by geographical location, confinement, threats of violence, mobility, sight or hearing impairments may use technology to access information otherwise not readily available in their environment (Conley Tyler & Bretherton, 2003; Hattotuwa, 2005). Nevertheless, the virtual environment comes equipped with its own, unique hierarchies. The most obvious disadvantage of online communication applies to those who do not have internet access or the appropriate hardware and software for proficient communication (Conley Tyler & Bretherton, 2003). The gap, between those with access to sophisticated technology and those without, is commonly referred to as the 'digital divide' and is of concern when wishing to market the internet as a global communication system, rather than just a tool for the technologically elite (Wahab, 2005). Among those who have access to online communication such as chat rooms, new hierarchies are formed according to internet connection speed or typing skills, with higher levels of speed earning higher status.

The impact of online hierarchies can be reduced by website providers as well as individual communicators. Website providers need to consider the scope of their potential customers and design their systems in user-friendly and accessible ways, while individual communicators need to consider the suitability of their chosen communication strategies. For example, chat is not going to be a successful communication medium for a 'one-finger' typist.

Synchrony bias

'Synchrony bias' occurs when one person sends an email and expects that its receiver will respond immediately. If this presumption is not fulfilled, the sender may feel that they are being ignored, resulting in increased uncertainty and negativity. Once again, this relates to perceptions of decreased control of one's social environment due to the inability to see what the other person is doing. However, technology is good at keeping up with consumer concerns, and most email programs come equipped with options such as notifying the sender once the receiver has read their email. In situations where asynchronicity cannot be tolerated, online options such as chat and instant messenger may prove the preferred communication medium.

Conclusion

The above overview highlights that increasing applications of computer-mediated communication in the workplace create new and unique advantages and disadvantages. The absence of social

cues may lead to more objective evaluations, while also increasing anonymity and decreasing self-awareness. Cross-cultural communication may become more difficult without non-verbal signs, as may the building of trust. On the other hand, computer-mediated communication defies logistic boundaries of time, place and hierarchy and allows focused considerations of task content and performance.

Prior to engaging in computer-mediated communication, it is important to consider whether decisions will be made about 'tasks' or 'people', as research shows that objective decisions about tasks are better made online, while decisions about people benefit from the presence of non-verbal cues. Prior to engaging in any type of communication, it is important to consider the needs, skills and communication preferences of all parties and choose the fairest and most efficient option.

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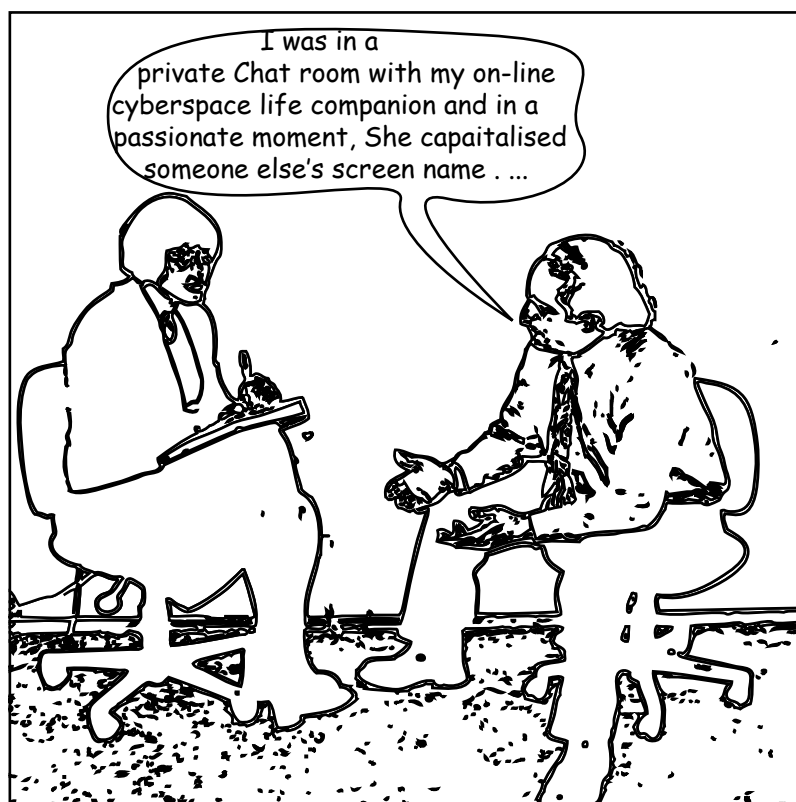
Emotional Intelligence: The current state of play.

By Nanette McComish

Nanette is a Master's Student from who's Master's research this article was derived

The tide of research into emotional intelligence may well be nearing a change of flow. Although debate continues between the different Emotional Intelligence (EI) models, there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the value of the ability based model and an associated measure, the MSCEIT. This model was developed by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2003).

More studies on emotional intelligence over the past 12 months are utilizing Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's MSCEIT in preference over other measures (such as Bar-On's EQ-i). A recent search of PsychINFO found 17 studies using the MSCEIT and 12 using EQ-i. Although the body of MSCEIT research is not yet as prevalent, or broad; the MSCEIT is solid, well based and gaining in momentum and diversity in regards to outcome measures and predictive validity.

It is generally agreed that the ability model (the MSCEIT) and the mixed model (typically epitomized by Bar-On's EQ-i) are measuring different constructs (eg Livingstone & Day, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that the MSCEIT is the more psychometrically sound measure (refer Bowman, Markham & Roberts, 2002; Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Livingstone & Day, 2005; Matthews, Zeidner & Roberts, 2002; Mayer, Salovey, Caruso & Sitarenios, 2003; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2001).

Much of the debate centers on what EI is - whether it is a trait, utilizing a moniker of intelligence, or whether it is an ability. There is sufficient evidence to question the validity of mixed models, where self report EI measures may not be sufficiently discriminating from the Big Five personality dimensions. There is evidence supporting the MSCEIT as an ability measure which is able to predict outcomes beyond those predicted by personality and intelligence measures.

The questions for practitioners in the field therefore are,

•   what is EI, and does their chosen measure reflect their definition of the construct?

•   is the research coming of age where the MSCEIT is a more valid and reliable measure of EI than the EQ-i?

Keeping abreast of the research is difficult in fields like EI which take off in public popularity whilst the research is still evolving. Hopefully the above information will assist in giving some clarity to current EI discussions.

What do you think about Emotional Intelligence? Write in and tell us.   Editor.

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