Can we be fooled by our Emotional Intelligence?

(Some benefits of tapping into intuition)

By Sebastien Henry, Executive Coach & Trainer

Emotional Intelligence Expert for Progress-U Ltd.

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(THE BENEFITS OF TAPPING INTO INTUITION)

Part of Emotional Intelligence is awareness of our emotions – the ability to see them as signals and messengers bringing us important information about ourselves.

For example, an episode of anger tells us that some of our needs have not been satisfied. After getting this message, our next step is to act towards the fulfillment of these needs.

At the other end of the spectrum, joy signals that our most important needs have been met.

Emotions are very precious signals and are worth paying close attention to. The problem, however, is that sometimes, these emotional signals can also be misleading in decision making or in handling interpersonal relationships. When it comes to business, there can be a significant impact.

At this point, intuition comes in as a very precious resource -- more reliable than mere emotional signals.

I have recently developed a keen interest in intuition, specifically how to listen to it and how to develop it. I was privileged to attend a very interesting two-day workshop on this topic in Paris in November.

The beauty of intuition is that it cannot mislead us. However, we can mistake mere passing emotions for intuition and fool ourselves into making wrong decisions.

Why then can emotions mislead us, whereas intuition cannot?

Intuition is an aggregated message from a huge amount of information that we have collected out of awareness As a matter of fact, we process an incredible amount of information everyday through our five senses, yet, we are only aware of a tiny part.

Our intuition gives us an aggregated and often clear message from this pile of information. It has the capability of synthesizing and getting to the core message. And this is why it is so reliable.

Emotions, on the other hand, reflect a small part of the picture only. For instance, a surge of anger in a relationship may be sparked only by one particular need that has been neglected at one particular time. But it does not really take into account the other dimensions in a relationship.

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Whether or not this relationship is worth nurturing goes well beyond this episode of anger. Tuning in to our intuition at this point will prove to be very useful.

But how do we tune in to our intuition and how can we differentiate intuition from emotion?

Intuition can be easily mistaken as emotion because it is very much like a "gut feeling" like how it "feels" right or not to make this decision or how it "feels" right or not to build a partnership with this person. Intuition therefore has an emotional dimension.

Here is how to differentiate intuition from emotion.

To be able to listen clearly to what our intuition is telling us, we need to be in a calm state. To be in a calm state, we need adequate preparation.

In the workshop on intuition that I attended, we went trough a preparation stage of around 10 minutes (similar to a meditation process) before starting to listen to our intuition.

Whereas emotion is instantaneous or literally "jumps to your face", intuition is very different. Only by going through a preparation process can we be sure that intuition is filtered from emotional messages.

For us, business people, this exercise does not seem to be very practical!

The key idea here is that intuition is like any other skill -- the more we practice, the less time we need to put this skill into action. Experienced practitioners can tune in to their intuition almost immediately.

I will share more on this topic in future issues of "Leading with Emotional Intelligence". In the meantime, do not hesitate to get in touch with me for any question or comment.

With warm regards

Sebastien

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Sebastien Henry is **Progress-U's expert for Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and stress management**. He works with executives who want to:

- avoid feeling exhausted and uprooted as their career takes them to the top;
- become more inspiring leaders by developing their Emotional Intelligence (EQ) at work; and, as a consequence
- be able to motivate their people more and retain the best.

Having worked in an Asia-Pacific regional position at a multinational company, Sebastien has experimented extensively on how to develop Emotional Intelligence in his daily work life. He is currently writing a book on this topic. His articles on Emotional Intelligence in Leadership have been published in Human Resources and South China Morning Post.

He firmly believes in action, and the tools he uses and shares are derived from several areas of his life: his business experience as a corporate executive, of course, but also his intensive practice of mountaineering and rock climbing (7a on-sight and more than 50 alpine routes), his commitment to teach and coach prisoners, and his daily meditations for more than six years.

Positions of his clients as a one-to-one coach are: Asia/Pacific General Manager, Country General Manager, Department Head, etc.

Languages: Spoken and written Mandarin, Japanese, English, French (native language)

Credentials:

- MBA, BA in Psychology, BA in Philosophy
- Certified NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner
- Certified NLP Trainer (NLPU, USA)
- Certified Coach (ICC)
- More than 40 days of training with the Gestalt approach at the Paris School of Gestalt
- Certified Trainer of the "EQ Impact Learning" program (Talentsmart, USA)

Services offered: 1:1 Executive Coaching, Group Seminars and Workshops, Key Note Speeches