

Do Women Have Higher EQ?

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Participants to my seminars frequently ask me: “Do women have higher EQ?” Whenever that question comes up, I would feel the excitement in the room, with everybody quite impatient to hear my answer, especially if it is a woman who just asked the question!

There is no easy answer to that question. There seems to be a common view that women rank higher in almost all four main areas of Emotional Intelligence suggested by Daniel Goleman. Women rate higher in terms of self-awareness, social awareness (the ability to identify emotions in others) and relationship management (the ability to build trustful relationships with others). Men have the edge only in the area of self-management (the ability to manage our emotions in a resourceful way).

I actually haven't seen any comprehensive study on this question. And, to be honest, I never looked for one.

This is because it doesn't matter too much to me. I find the question rather limiting. As many personality tests do, it puts a label on your forehead, explaining to others that you behave the way you behave because it is the way you are (a male or a female, in that case).

A much more interesting question to me is: have we managed to integrate smoothly our masculine and feminine side? If not, how shall we do it?

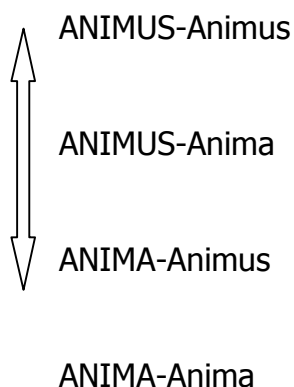
Although the Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung is not the only one to have worked on people's masculine and feminine side, he has written very inspiring pages on that topic. He suggested that we have two polarities: the Animus and the Anima. The Animus is the male polarity. This is where we feel like warriors, fully ready for competition. The Anima is the female polarity. There, we value our emotions, our creativity and our relationships with others.

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For the benefit of our personal growth, Jung suggests **we integrate these two polarities, to give existence to both**. Once we achieve this, we are a whole person, making the full use of our inborn potential.

Why does it matter for us as managers? **Because people feel and appreciate the wholeness of our being. They have more chances to feel inspired to work with us. And inspired means more engaged.** In the present context in Asia, where it is usually challenging to keep our best people, having our team members truly engaged matters a lot.

There is actually no rift between the Animus and the Anima. Instead, there is a smooth transition from one polarity to the other. Take a few minutes to position yourself on the scale below:



The word in capital letters is your dominant polarity. The other one is your secondary polarity.

I recently took part in a training in Europe with male managers. Everyone were asked to position themselves on this scale. Most positioned themselves towards the top of the scale, around ANIMUS-Animus, or between ANIMUS-Animus and ANIMUS-Anima. At the end of the training, most of them agreed that they would benefit a lot from developing their female polarity (or in other words, their feminine side).

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How can we develop the other polarity? There is some good news here. We don't have to mimic people from the other sex, or even to read books about them. It's already in us! We have these two polarities in us, and it is up to us to explore them. In many ways, this is a journey. It doesn't happen overnight.

A good start is to ask ourselves: as a manager, what is it that I don't really like about myself or that I don't feel familiar with. This is precisely where a few decisive steps can be taken, where it is worth looking at.

For example, a manager who would be strongly rooted in the top of the scale ANIMUS-Animus would not like to get "caught" developing too much empathy towards his team members. Being aware of this tendency allows him to choose to let himself show his care to his team.

Whether you are a man or a woman, this is a good starting base to develop your Emotional Intelligence.



Sebastien Henry is Progress-U's expert for Emotional Intelligence. Developing his Emotional Intelligence in his previous corporate career was a real priority (regional position in Asia at a multinational company). Now he focuses on helping business leaders to become more inspiring leaders, motivate their people and retain the best by developing their EQ.

Sebastien firmly believes in action, and the tools he is using and sharing are derived from 4 areas of his life:

- His business experience as a corporate executive
- Intensive mountaineering and rock climbing (7a onsight and more than 50 alpine routes)
- Teaching and coaching prisoners
- Daily meditations for more than 5 years

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