

Assessing Your Emotional Intelligence

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To develop your Emotional Intelligence (EI), you have to know where you stand now, what is your starting point. The question is: how can you assess yourself accurately?

There is a major difference with IQ: IQ is measured by a battery of standardized tests. The score you get with these tests, divided by your age, gives your IQ score. This means, by the way, that your IQ varies with time. And the bad news is that as your age will definitely get higher, your IQ will decrease slowly...so be prepared!

While there is a standardized way of measuring IQ, there is none for EI. This doesn't mean that there is no valid measurement of EI, but just that these measurements will not carry as much "authority" as IQ tests. But what should matter most to you as a leader is how useful they can be in leading better. The good news here is that there are useful tools in the market for that.

In the past 10 years, a good number of EI assessment tools were developed. Many of them are what we call "self-assessment tools". It means that you answer a questionnaire about yourself, usually online, and you get a report about your own EI.

The problem is that an EI self-assessment may not be very reliable because the way we see ourselves is actually not very objective. Many studies have shown that we usually rate our own EI higher than other people rate our EI. I see this very frequently in my work with leaders: those with the lower EI (from my point of view) tend to see themselves as high-EI leaders.

Besides, in most self-assessments, questionnaires are quite transparent: it is easy to know what to answer if you want to look good. For instance, you have to answer questions like: "Are you good at picking up emotions in others?" or "Are you sometimes getting over angry?" For people with low-EI, this could be as useful as immigration forms in some countries which ask you if you are a terrorist!

(An exception here is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). In my opinion, this self-assessment gives you the most objective view of your EI,

because it is ability-based. The problem is that it is not developed for leadership purposes and it is a bit remote from a leader's practical considerations).

Does it mean that self-assessments have no value? No, not necessarily. They can give you an idea of your relative strengths and areas to develop. For instance, they can point out that, although you handle your own emotions in a resourceful way, you need to develop your ability to detect emotions in others.

In general, one should not expect too much from self-assessments on Emotional Intelligence. Still, if I had to recommend one, it would be the Emotional Quotient-Inventory (BarOn EQ-i). Both the EQ-i and the MSCEIT can be purchased and done online on: <http://www.mhs.com/mhs/Info.aspx?id=OnlineAssments>.

Another kind of assessment which can provide you with more insights is the 360-degree assessment. In a 360-degree assessment, your EI is assessed by people who know you well: peers, bosses, team members, sometimes even business partners such as vendors, clients, etc.

Note that you don't get the real picture with a 360-degree assessment simply because there isn't such thing as "the real picture". Results won't be more "real picture" than your self-assessment. Reality can't be framed, as each person who perceives you has a share of it. But at least, results will tell you how others see you. And this is crucial for a leader, as "others" precisely are the ones supposed to follow you.

These results may come as a shock to you. This is because your EI as seen by people who know you is usually lower than your EI as you see it. But at least you will know what to work on if you want to change the way you are perceived.

360-degree EI assessments are not cheap but are very valuable. There are plenty of different versions in the market. I would recommend two of them for leaders who would like to apply the results to their leadership practice: the 360-degree version of the EQ-I (same website as the one mentioned above) and the Emotional Competence

Inventory 360 (ECI 360 – for more information, see www.haygroup.com/TL). Please note that in both cases you will need to hire a consultant to interpret the results.

Here is one word of caution if you are considering using a 360-degree assessment. It will be useless if there is a lack of trust in your company or in your team. If participants to the survey have the slightest doubt that their answers will be traced back and eventually used against them, they will protect themselves by giving you very high ratings. Results would become meaningless. Building high trust is a vast topic that would require a whole book, but let's mention here that one of the keys to make a 360-degree assessment meaningful is to explain the process clearly and give a strong guarantee of total confidentiality.

Even with such precautions, in some companies, due to the company culture or to particular events (a temporary leadership crisis, for instance), the level of trust is too low to conduct a valid 360-degree assessment. It can be the case in some companies in Mainland China, where, in the past, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, people were invited to give honest feedback and were severely repressed right after. The Cultural Revolution took place 40 years ago but its impact on mentalities still linger.

There would be much more to say on assessing EI, but to keep this E-zine easy to read for busy people like you, I will have to limit it to less than 1000 words. In case you have any question, feel free to contact me. I'd be happy to help.

Warmly,

Sebastien



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

Sebastien is convinced that leaders who know how to strengthen and use their Emotional Intelligence can make a big difference in their respective organizations because they are leaders for whom people want to commit and give their best.

Sebastien worked in an Asia-Pacific regional position at a multinational company and has also worked with Japanese and Chinese teams in Tokyo and Shanghai, respectively. His experience allowed him to practice the art of leading and listening across cultures and to experiment 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.

Sebastien draws the tools he uses and shares from several areas of his life: his business experience as a corporate executive, his intensive practice of mountaineering and rock climbing (7a on-sight and more than 50 alpine routes), his involvement in teaching and coaching prisoners, and his daily meditations for more than six years.

He has coached several high-ranking executives, including an Asia/Pacific General Manager, a Country General Manager, and Department Heads.

His native language is French, but he also speaks and writes in Mandarin, English, and Japanese.

His credentials include:

- 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).

Sebastien gives one-to-one executive coaching, key note speeches, and group seminars and workshops.