

Emotional Intelligence and Enterprise Handbook; Tools and techniques to help students succeed in life and work.

By Cheryl Buggy

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Abstract:

Cheryl Buggy's Emotional Intelligence and Enterprise Handbook (2008) is designed to help students gain appropriate attitudes and life skills that will not only complement their studies at school but also help them become more self-directed and responsible. Based on comprehensive research into such areas as neuroscience, emotional intelligence, enterprise and employability, it is aimed at taking students on a journey of self-discovery. This handbook is written with the belief that we are responsible for the future of our generations. We all will suffer if our forthcoming generations become "takers" and helpless and waste their potential. This handbook offers a practical and reader-friendly manual and resource guide for inexperienced students who may be interested in tapping their undiscovered potential. The author uses a combination of theory and practical examples to cover the field. Thus, this book endeavours to introduce tools and techniques to help students to succeed in life and at work, using their own emotions and those of others around them.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence; Enterprise; Life Skills; Self Discovery; Personal Development; Professionalism;

Emotional intelligence is a vital ability in today's competitive world. It is described as the ability to perceive, to integrate, to understand and to reflectively manage one's own and other peoples' emotions, which increases an individual's influence in his surroundings (Mayer, J.D, 1998). It is a different way of being smart. EI includes knowing what your feelings are and using your feeling to make good decisions in life. It is being able to manage distressing moods well and control impulse, being motivated and remaining hopeful and optimistic when you have setbacks in working toward goals. It is empathy; knowing what the people around you are feeling, and it is social skills: getting along well with other people, managing emotions in relationships being able to persuade or lead others." (O'Neil, William J., 1996) In the present day

scenario, EI is regarded as the key to success. It is being rated above intelligence quotient (IQ). It is very important for us to carefully manage ourselves and others to be efficacious. By developing emotional intelligence, we can enhance our standing in the eyes of people in the community.

Cheryl Buggy's *Emotional Intelligence and Enterprise Handbook (2008)* is designed to help students gain appropriate attitudes and life skills that will not only complement their studies at school but also help them become more self-directed and responsible. Based on comprehensive research into such areas as neuroscience, emotional intelligence, enterprise and employability, it is aimed at taking students on a journey of self-discovery and equipping them with knowledge about the way the world works. This handbook is written with the belief that we are responsible for the future of our generations. We all will suffer if our forthcoming generations become "takers" and helpless and waste their potential. Never before have had students so many choices in terms of courses, qualifications and career opportunities. Yet at the same time, the challenges are huge and many young people are unaware of the practices of the workplace or the qualities and attributes beyond professional qualifications that will make them employable. Similarly, not many in the younger generation realize how to overcome a lack of direction and make good choices for themselves, or how to overcome low self-belief and lack of confidence, or the need to be persistent and have strength to face whatever life throws at them. As a starting point for considering these and other important issues, the *Emotional Intelligence and Enterprise Handbook* offers a practical and reader-friendly manual and resource guide for inexperienced students who may be interested in tapping their undiscovered potential. The author uses a combination of theory and practical examples to cover the field. Thus, this book endeavours to introduce tools and techniques to help students to succeed in life and at work, using their own emotions and those of others around them.

The book is composed of an introduction, four sections based on four main themes, divided into nine sessions, including lesson plans, hand-outs and exercises plus the supplementary team activities and challenges at the end of the book. Each section has several self-evaluation questionnaires as well. The questionnaires and activities are designed to further embed the knowledge the students have gained from the book, and to provide some practical projects and creative tasks to help them become better EI and enterprise practitioners. There is also a self-assessment sheet for students which can be used after every session.

The author has structured her book around twelve key emotional intelligence and enterprise competencies, distilled from areas beyond education and business, such as neuroscience, psychology and personal development:

- Self-awareness
- Self-responsibility
- Positivity and Optimism
- Empathy and Respect
- Motivation
- Persistence
- Using Initiative
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Creativity
- Courage
- Confidence
- Curiosity

Those who are able to embrace and develop these competencies are generally successful, resourceful people and are able to achieve their set objectives and overcome all sorts of obstacles. Such people are sought by employers and people seeking consultancy in various aspects of their life.

The first section of the book is based on the theme “me-smart”. It explains why humans are the way they are and the remarkable capabilities of the human brain, such as the power of positive thinking. The section also shows ways to overcome fear, be it physical or emotional and whether it is sensible and rational or just an irrational fantasy created in our head. The author also helps the student to explore his/her personal uniqueness. Self-awareness is the corner-stone of emotional intelligence. It helps an individual to become the driving force behind his/her own life and claim responsibility for it. It also helps to improve one’s self-esteem as he can tackle his drawbacks, learn to respect himself and apply his strengths more effectively.

The second section of the book deals with becoming “people-smart”. Students understand how communication works, and learn and practise the valuable skill of active listening. It gives examples as to how what is said doesn’t matter but what matters is the way it is said. The emotional emphases behind words lead to comprehension of the emotional state of the speaker. Suitability of words, accuracy, better vocabulary, use of metaphors and similes, phrases and quotations, constructiveness, and avoiding ambiguity and jargon are useful tips in improving one’s communication skills. A good speaker shouldn’t talk about himself and instead connect actively with his audience, be aware of their feelings, allow for silence to give his audience time to pause and think, then sum up at the end of his speech. Good communication skills are essential qualities to have in employees, especially in terms of customer care. Thus employees should be experienced in having courageous conversations, giving compliments and being assertive.

One of the most important sessions in this book outlines ways to deal with challenging people. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.” In dealing with challenging people, one is actually dealing with challenging behaviour. This is a factor that ensures a person’s effect in his society. If he effectively deals with such difficult people, he is accepted by everyone to be a friendly and amiable person, who does not break down under pressure. However, if he comes down to abusive language or bursts into tears, he is an object of repulsion or a target of insincere sympathy, lowering his self-esteem. This dealing helps a person to establish complete control over his emotional temperature, after which he can command his actions thoroughly, helping him avoid any rash behaviour he might later regret.

The author has also sketched how embracing the twelve competencies can help a person to work more effectively with others and calmly weave his own ideas into those of others towards a common goal. Teams which have members who cooperate, listen to their colleagues, try to avoid being self-centred and bring out the best in each member emerge as winning teams.

In the next section of the book, labelled as “job-smart”, students are encouraged to think about how they appear to others physically, especially when it comes to first impressions, and how best they can sell themselves to others. It also gives advice on how to begin the search for a job, which builds on earlier foundations of self-awareness and the importance of optimism. Making good first impressions on employers is essential and one gets only one chance at it, so care should be taken for appearances. Mistakes should be avoided and one should dress in such a way and exhibit such manners that he knows will flatter him. Also, as research proves, looking good will help boost confidence, resulting in a positive frame of mind. Also, usually students have very little idea about what they really want to do after leaving fulltime education, causing confusion, demotivation and impulsive, reckless decisions. Those who fix their minds on a certain profession and work hard by researching and investigation through networking and persistence commonly get the job they want and tap their huge potential. The major difference between successful and unsuccessful job-hunters is not some factor in the industry, but the way they go about their job hunt (Bolles, Richard Nelson, 1970). Creative job-hunting approaches, applying to lots of employers then sifting through the best opportunities, asking friends and relatives, volunteering and using career counsellors can all be effective if

done with resilience and the ability to cope with rejection. One should keep his options open, target small companies than work his way through to the bigger fish, and not get discouraged. This section also contains tips for before and during interviews, also listing common questions asked at interviews.

The concluding section of the book, titled “future-smart”, covers all the competencies listed and draws on the students’ ability to plan effectually for the future. It teaches students to manage stress, and learn how to be motivated and adaptable, planning their lives in a way that can cope with any unforeseen changes and to not be disheartened if things don’t go the way they plan. It builds upon the notions introduced in the previous section, and reinforces on keeping one’s options open. It also looks upon the benefits of being inspired by others’ stories. In this way we can learn from their mistakes instead of making the same ones ourselves as well. Students should understand that things are always changing and that they should always be a step ahead in their lives, and give a little more than is expected of them. Getting on is not just about doing things well, it is also about how you get on with others and having a good, compatible attitude. Every day, try to play your strengths and work at your weaknesses, until they are no more of a hindrance in your journey towards success.

Furthermore, the author also helps students to work at stress busting. Stress is a part of life and is our natural response to an unexpected circumstance life throws at us, so how one deals with stress is what counts and how he maintains a healthy balance is what matters. We should not ignore stress when we feel it, but counter it effectively by learning how to relax, get organized, reframe our thinking and take one step at a time. We should be kind to ourselves, share our thoughts and fears with a sympathetic friend or treat ourselves to something we really like. Be determined to take control of stressful thoughts. However, don’t compare yourself or your situation with others. There is no right or wrong with stress levels. Each person deals with it differently and reacts differently as well. Stress can be a friend. If we stay in control in challenging situations, it can bring out the best in us. The problem arises when our stress reactions are too recurrent and uncontrollable. It throws us into panic and overwhelms us. Therefore, students should get perspective in times of worry, and focus their energy and attention on what can be done to counter it instead of fretting uselessly about things that they can have no impact on whatsoever at that moment as it is the past. They should focus on what they can do to make the future bearable.

In the final session of the book, the focus is on tackling the inner blockades and mind-sets that can hamper an individual’s success. It calls upon all the emotional intelligence and enterprise competencies highlighted at the start of the book that attack problems that we encounter. Students are taught to develop an understanding and perspective on the topic. They are to understand that life will always throw problems at them; they are totally normal and can vary in nature. They can often be solved and are not always bad news. To solve them one must believe in himself and not let fear and confusion command him. Different approaches to tackle the problem must be taken up and one must accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative in his mind. Persistence is the key, and knowledge that you can learn from every single mistake in your life is what helps you overcome it.

The author has also highlighted a few noteworthy points regarding achieving hopes, dreams and goals. The presence of a sharply focussed goal or dream is essential, and to be successful you have to have a deep desire for that to come true, building upon the principle of positive thinking. You should work on your beliefs and meet setbacks. Creative visualization can help you change your most basic attitudes in life. All you have to do is tap into your imagination and ask it to start working for you. Use all your senses to get in touch with it as your unconscious mind cannot distinguish between fact and fantasy. Focus as often as you can and feed your ambition with plenty of positive statements and thoughts.

Moreover, Buggy has also outlined how to be a winner. She says winner take responsibility for their lives, never start with a negative or make endless excuses. Winners make things happen. They invent their own futures and mould their own fate. They set goals, anticipate success, work hard and practise even harder.

They live in the present world instead of bemoaning the past or stressing over the future. They understand themselves and play to their strengths. Losers visualize the penalties of failure. Winners visualize rewards of success. (Gilbert, Dr. Rob, 1990s). Winners are able to cope with whatever comes their way as they know even a crisis can be seen as an opportunity, and a mistake is a chance to learn a useful lesson.

At the end of the book, there are several group and individual activities designed to reinforce everything the students have learnt throughout the program, which encourage students to flex their EI and enterprise 'muscles'. It is a sure way to help embed and reflect upon the twelve emotional intelligence and enterprise competencies.

To conclude, Cheryl Buggy's book is a very helpful work for students with a low self-esteem, who aren't able to manage their lives or those who can't understand how society works and how they can find a place in it. She has very ardently strived to ensure that anyone who reads this book can use it to bring around a positive change in his life. The use of questionnaires and five-tip hand-outs is very helpful. She has highlighted all the different attitudes and approaches to life a person can take to achieve success. It is aimed mainly at the youngsters who are deep into their educational career and are about to step into their professional lives. However, it can prove helpful for all ages as the competencies and skills mentioned should be found in all individuals who hope to rise above others.