

LETTER to the EDITOR

Gender: An Emotional Intelligence Perspective

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Dear Editor:

The rising importance of emotional intelligence gives a clear idea of the significant differences between men and women, since men and women are emotionally intelligent in different ways. Understanding and appreciating such differences leads to the improvement of the existing relationships and to the establishment of new relationships in a satisfying manner.

One of the principal reasons for the above-mentioned differences is attributed to the different kinds of brain functions of men compared with woman. As emotional intelligence is acquisitive and of social origin, parents and children, thus, expose their emotions in an expressive way to one another, either consciously or unconsciously in their interactions. Another explanation of this difference would be a distinction in educational level of boys compared with the education received by girls. A suitable education ensures a high level of emotional intelligence, which contributes to the success in all life areas.

Emotional intelligence is described as the capability to recognize one's own emotions and to perceive those of others, applying this knowledge to direct one's decision making and action in a skillful and intelligent manner. The four cornerstones of emotional intelligence are the concepts of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills. The model by Dulewicz and Higgs (1999) has seven components (self-awareness, emotional resilience, motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, influence, intuitiveness, and conscientiousness and integrity). In contrast to cognitive intelligence, which stays relatively stable throughout an individual's lifetime, emotional intelligence can be improved as a result of learning and engaging in new skills (Posten, 2009).

Both biological and social explanations have received support from a diverse range of empirical studies on emotion which show greater emotional abilities in women. Some studies have reported gender differences fundamentally in experiential aspects of emotional intelligence, such as perception and emotional facilitation. Other set of studies have found gender differences in strategic aspects of emotional intelligence, such as understanding and emotional managing.

Studies of perception, cognition, memory and neural functions have found apparent gender differences. These

differences may be attributed to various genetic, hormonal, and environmental factors and do not reflect any overall superior advantage to either sex. Dr. John Grey explained that men and women communicate, think, feel, react, answer, love and appreciate in a different manner. The deep knowledge about these differences helps to eliminate the frustrations from humane relationships. The self-awareness of men is defined by their ability to obtain the results. The self-awareness of women is defined by their feelings and the quality of her relations.

A woman's brain is predominantly structured to feel empathy, while a man's brain predominantly seeks to understand and construct system. Maybe that's why in the medical and educational area more women work than men, while in the engineering and transporting area, for instance, men are more involved than women. A woman has the ability to see all the details and a man to see the whole situation. Male brain separates language in the left and emotions in the right, while the female's emotions are in both hemispheres. Women are better than men in human relations, in language, emotional and artistic expressiveness, aesthetic appreciation, verbal language and pre-planned tasks. Men are better in performing activities that require spatial skills or in the ability to mentally rotate the image in order to solve a problem.

The improvement of the emotional intelligence should start in the childhood by education given by the adults to the children. The emotional knowledge should be used as a guide in the social world for the children and the teenagers. It is known that parents talk to their daughters rather than sons about emotions. And many adults make the mistake to tell a little boy, for instance, "don't cry, you are not a girl." What message will the little boy get? He will assume that it is not allowed for a boy/man to show his emotions. And he will grow up with this misconception, he will try hard to hide his emotions in the future and this will further aggravate his way in life.

The emotional intelligence can be developed successfully during childhood through good education given by the adults to children, as well as during life through self-education, for both genders. Keeping a balance between emotions and judgments ensures unbiased judgments and avoid errors and prejudice.

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