



## Emotional Intelligence

Looking at Ed now, it's hard to imagine that back in the day he was something of tear away.

Eddie, as he was known then, was always getting into arguments with people who didn't see things the same way as he did, and he blamed others for his own problems - it was never his fault. He wasn't one to let go of things either. If he felt someone had wronged him, he'd bare a grudge for a long time.

But he's come a long way since then.

The people who meet Ed now say things like: he treats them as equals, he's interested in them and their opinions. He's fun, enthusiastic and they feel safe and respected when they're with him.

This change didn't just happen. It was more, things happened to Ed and he learnt from them. Here are some of the things he learnt.

He learnt: to understand his strengths and weaknesses; to recognise, and be able to express, his emotions; and he now knows what's really important to him, and what motivates him

He also learnt: to hold his tongue and not lash out, and now instead of letting his emotions control him, he's able to control them.

He can now see things from another person's perspective and this has helped him to empathise with others' feelings. He's also found that he has much more respect for other people than he used to.

This better understanding of himself and others, along with being able to control his emotions and behaviour, have all helped him to manage his relationships both at work and at home.

These qualities are often what people associate with being mature.



Ed puts it down to learning lessons from life, and graduating from the school of hard knocks. He's grown in these four areas: his self-awareness, his self-management, his awareness of others, and his relationship management. Together they're described as emotional maturity or emotional intelligence.

When emotional intelligence is measured, it's called EQ which stands for emotional quotient. It's very different from our IQ or intelligence quotient. Our IQ is essentially a measure of our problem solving abilities and remains fairly constant throughout our adult lives, and there's nothing much we can do to increase it.

Our EQ, however, is centred around things we do have control over and can therefore change.

In Ed's case, as with many people, what he learnt happened over a long period of time. But the fact that it was learnt, means it can be actively, or deliberately, learnt. In other words, we can choose to develop skills in these areas.

In studies, people who report that they feel happy and content often have high EQ scores as well. Other studies have shown that having a high EQ is twice as important as a high IQ when it comes to success at work. And particularly where success means being able to work effectively with people.

This is partly because emotional intelligence is about being able to recognise our own and other people's emotions, and then to use this awareness to help us manage how we think and feel, how we behave, and how we relate to others.

There's a lot the older Ed would love to be able to tell his younger self, but he knows that you can't put an old head on young shoulders. The younger Eddie had to learn his own lessons. The question is, could he have learnt them earlier?

Learning about ourselves may not always be easy, and changing how we interact with others can be equally challenging, and some people will prefer to stay as they are.

Others see emotional intelligence as a set of skills they can develop over their lives that will serve them both in their careers, and in their personal lives.