



The Incredible Journey

Reach Your
True Potential
IQ vs EQ

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**Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are
from the New King James Version**

**Published by The Incredible Journey
GPO Box 274 | Sydney | NSW 2001 | Australia**

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REACH YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL

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THE VALUE OF EQ

Have you ever wished for the IQ of Einstein? To be able to discover complex theories and formulas that could change the world in some remarkable way? It has been reported that an exceptionally bright 11-year-old girl in the UK in recent years scored a remarkable 2 points higher on an IQ test than famed scientists Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking's ^[1]! A result like this is exceptional, but for the rest of us who struggle to get our heads around algebra equations, what are our chances of changing the world?

If you have ever despaired of accomplishing anything outstanding based on your maths results at school, think again. A website advertisement querying, “She married him? And they have seven kids?” highlights a point that is illustrated at many class

reunions: the lives of schoolmates don't always turn out as anticipated. Individuals with a high IQ, whom we usually expect to be most successful, don't always reach their full potential. At the same time, others with mediocre academic performances sometimes go on to become outstanding achievers in the professional world.

As valuable as IQ (intelligence quotient) is, it turns out that IQ tests are notoriously poor at determining a person's success or failure in life. A study of Harvard graduates in the fields of law, medicine, teaching and business supports this. It found that entrance exam scores, which indicate IQ, had no correlation whatsoever with eventual career success. Out-of-control emotions can make even the most intelligent individuals behave in a manner that simply is not very smart. This explains why a high EQ, that

is, emotional quotient, is a better indicator of success than IQ alone. The importance of emotional intelligence in determining success in life has been a hot topic in psychological circles in recent years and is supported by an ever-growing body of scientific research.

UNDERSTANDING EQ

So what exactly is emotional quotient, or emotional intelligence? EQ is really a measure of characteristics that research has confirmed are important to successful and enjoyable living. People with high EQs have control of their impulses and emotions and are trustworthy, honest, conscientious, dependable and responsible. They are flexible and able to adapt to change. They are also open to constructive criticism, innovation, novel ideas, new approaches,

and new information. In addition, people with high EQs are aware of limits to their abilities and have reasonable expectations. Emotional intelligence has been shown to help people think more clearly, communicate more effectively, reduce polarising statements, and develop unity in group settings. These skills are particularly important in today's knowledge-oriented workplace, where harmonious team efforts are more critical than ever to organisational success. Emotional quotient is essentially a measure of emotional maturity: an openness and willingness to develop, grow, and take a considered approach to managing others and oneself. In personal relationships, an individual with high EQ has the ability to step aside from his or her emotional reaction to an upsetting event and look logically at what really happened. Honesty allows those with high EQ to understand other points of

view, and appreciate potential solutions to the issue.

Individuals with high EQ understand their emotions and feelings and can express, control, and manage them. They show insight into the emotions and views of others, and more easily understand the dynamics of a group and their role within it. They are willing to delay gratification in favour of the greater good. Those with a high EQ also are more likely to motivate themselves to achieve goals and maintain a positive but realistic attitude. As a result, they often earn promotions more quickly than those with only a high IQ. Essentially, people with high EQ see “the big picture”, so they are able to avoid emotional roller coasters.

There are five basic components of

emotional intelligence:

- Emotional self-awareness
- Emotional self-management
- Emotional awareness of others
- Relationship management
- Self-motivation to achieve goals

People with high EQ are aware of their own emotional states of sadness, frustration, and fear, and are tuned to what causes them. They are also able to manage these in a constructive way instead of taking negative emotions out on the people around them. In a similar manner, emotionally intelligent people can read the emotional signals of people around them and are able to show empathy in a way that builds relationships.

In addition to creating a more successful career, emotional intelligence helps to make

a person a better friend, parent, leader, and romantic partner. To be human is to be in relationships with others. Today, we live in a complex world of unprecedented stress and change. Perhaps you are wondering, how can I develop emotional intelligence so that I can meet these challenges successfully?

FACTORS THAT IMPACT EQ

Environmental factors, especially those experienced at a young age, play a tremendous role in a person's emotional intelligence. Of these, parental influence is almost certainly the strongest factor. If children experience trauma at a young age through abuse, or they regularly watch entertainment television, developing a high EQ is more difficult. However, it is not impossible. A person's current level of emotional support will impact his or her

EQ, along with factors such as lack of sleep and exercise. Nutrition is emerging as a particularly important factor^[2]. Studies show that an individual who might react calmly to a given situation if consuming a healthy diet, may react in a totally different way on a diet that is nutritionally unbalanced. People on poor diets are much more likely to lose control of their emotions, and allow these to spiral into rage or despair^[2].

As important as heredity, level of support, and lifestyle choices are in determining a person's EQ, one factor eclipses all else in terms of impact. Numerous emotional intelligence experts identify that factor as an individual's pattern of thinking. In other words, a person's moment-by-moment thoughts have a tremendous amount to do with his or her personal EQ. The good news is that negative patterns of thought can be

identified and changed. Let's find out how.

RECOGNISING FAULTY THOUGHTS

The first step toward positive thinking is to recognise faulty thought patterns. Research shows that negative thoughts nearly always contain gross distortions. On the surface, such thoughts may appear valid. However, when examined more carefully, their irrationality can be seen.

There are 10 main types of distorted thinking that contribute to emotional turmoil and stop an individual from reaching his or her full potential. This section lists the categories of negative thinking, provides examples of the types of words and behaviours displayed by people with these patterns, and suggests healthy alternatives with which they can be replaced.

1. All-or-Nothing Thinking

All-or-nothing thinkers tend to simplify the world by putting everything into extremes. They have unrealistically high expectations of themselves and other people. They believe that they, and often others, must be either a total success, or a total failure. In other words, they are perfectionists. Typically, they say things like, “If I can’t do it right, I won’t do it at all”; or, “My project was totally ruined by that mistake.” Expressions like these predispose a person to procrastination, frustration, pessimism, and total discouragement. Perfectionists find it difficult to acknowledge that we all make mistakes and that many things in life are actually learned through a series of small mistakes.

Let’s look at an example of all-or-nothing thinking. Jennifer stared intently at the vast

array of pastries, pizzas and snack foods laid on the sumptuous table before her. The room hummed with the sound of familiar voices, but all Jennifer could hear was her own repetitive thoughts: “To eat, or not to eat?” It was her 25-year class reunion, a weekend she had looked forward to for months. Wanting to look good, she had lost 16kg with this evening in mind. She’d even sworn off pizza, her favourite food. But now with the smell of melted cheese wafting through the air, she gave in and started piling one, two, then three pieces of pizza next to the growing pile of pastries and snacks on her plate.

“Guess if I’m going to do it, I might as well do a proper job,” she laughed.

Jennifer told herself that she had failed, and started a cycle of negative thinking

that easily spiralled into a broken diet and regained weight. She could have permitted herself to eat a slice of pizza or a few other treats without going overboard, but instead, her all-or-nothing thinking sabotaged the success she had worked so hard to gain, leading to feelings of discouragement and low self-worth.

Dr David Burns suggests a useful exercise for all-or-nothing thinkers is “thinking in shades of grey.” Try evaluating things on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. If something doesn’t turn out as you hoped, try thinking of it as a partial success instead of a total failure. If nothing can be done to “undo” the situation, learn what you can from it, and move on. To have happier relationships, adopt a realistic attitude that recognises both the strengths and weaknesses in your life. Forgive yourself and others for

minor lapses in behaviour. The Christian worldview acknowledges that people make mistakes, and provides a way for wrongs to be confessed and forgiven (1 John 1:9).

Here are some common cognitive distortions related to all-or-nothing thinking, and strategies to correct them.

Cognitive Distortions Corrections

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>“I really can’t deal with rejection.”</i> | <i>“I don’t like rejection, but I will get through it.”</i> |
| <i>“Now that I’ve eaten a cookie and blown my diet, I might as well eat the whole bag.”</i> | <i>“I can eat one cookie without gaining weight.”</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>“Good things never happen to me.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Some good things have happened to me.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“I’m a total failure.”</i></p> | <p><i>“I am good at some things.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“I’m too out of shape for this exercise program. I give up.”</i></p> | <p><i>“I can work up to this exercise routine and just trying will have a positive impact.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“My husband doesn’t agree with me. He’s so unsupportive” (sigh).</i></p> | <p><i>“We can agree to disagree without jeopardising our relationship.”</i></p> |

2. Overgeneralisation

This distortion uses limited factual evidence as the basis for a firm belief that actually is not true. People who overgeneralise tend to conclude that since something bad happened to them once, it will happen repeatedly for the rest of their lives.

For example: Taylor sighed deeply as Professor Mack passed out marked mid-term exams. She had a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach, a feeling that told her she hadn't done well. Her worst fears were realised when she caught sight of the red comments covering her paper.

"I'm not sure what happened here", Professor Mack looked concerned. "You've attended class every day. You do well on the homework and take lots of notes."

"I couldn't pass a test if my life depended

on it!” Taylor burst into tears, snatched up her books, and rushed from the room. “I’m horrible at taking exams! I always have been, and I always will be”, she sobbed.

If this scenario describes you, think again. Just because you failed once or even a few times does not mean you always will. Thomas Edison is an excellent example of this. He experienced endless setbacks and failures in his quest to create the light bulb. He was both the most successful and the most unsuccessful inventor of all time. With every new failure, he would say “I am not discouraged. I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” Through persistence and positive self-talk, he broke through the failure and created the success that he dreamed of. If you are down on yourself or others about bad habits or failures in your life, remember the story

of Thomas Edison and start reprogramming your thoughts and words for success.

3. Distorted Mental Filter

When we focus on minor aspects of a situation to the exclusion of others of greater importance, we look through a distorted mental filter. As we live each moment, events that make up our lives pass through the mental filter of our beliefs, values, and expectations, creating our daily reality. We tend to filter new data through old perceptions and models. Having the right model is absolutely essential to healthy thinking.

For example, your manager praises your report but wants a few changes. You choose to focus on the criticism instead of hearing the positive remarks, possibly because of baggage you have from a past experience.

The goal to overcome negative mental filters should be “realistic optimism”. This means to expect the best and talk positively, but be prepared for the worst should it eventuate. Realistic optimism is strongly associated with better stress management and the tendency to seek social support, both of which contribute to health and longevity. Practice turning your mental filter from negative to positive by avoiding negative speech for 14 consecutive days.

4. Mind Reading

Mind reading is the assumption that you know what another person thinks without asking. This often leads to quickly formed, but inaccurate, conclusions. Examples are, “If he really cared, he’d know that I’m too tired to go out tonight”; “I know what you’re thinking”; “You would never do that unless...”; or “I just know they are

talking about me right now.” Avoid jumping to incorrect conclusions and judgment of others by taking the time to ask people what they are actually thinking.

5. Fortune-telling Error.

A person with fortune-telling error is constantly thinking and worrying about worst-case scenarios, concluding that their predictions are 100% accurate regardless of the probability that they might ever occur. This approach tends to underlie tendencies to panic and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Typical phrases include, “My life is over”; “My career is finished”; “I will never recover”; or “I’ll never find anyone to love me.”

It’s possible to eradicate fortune-telling error by viewing every situation from a rational perspective. Carefully examine

the validity of any dramatic suggestions that pop into your head, and discard those that are extreme and unrealistic. By doing this, you can experience increased happiness, lowered stress, and improved relationships.

6. Magnification

Magnification is a common problem that involves majoring in minors. This thinking pattern is typified by low frustration tolerance when under pressure. Common expressions include “must”; “should”; “I can’t stand it when...”; “you always...”; or “you never...” when things don’t happen as expected.

Strategies for changing these behaviours include downgrading descriptions, rewording, deliberately choosing a calm reaction and emotionally cool words, and anger management. It is important to

remember that, no matter what the situation, you have a choice about how you will respond. Ask God for help to remain calm under pressure.

Instead of***Replace with***

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>I must, you must...</i> | <i>I would like to...</i> |
| <i>I can't stand it...</i> | <i>This is difficult, but I can stand it.</i> |
| <i>You always...you never...</i> | <i>It seems like you...</i> |

7. Personalisation

Personalisation is taking everything personally and get offended easily. For instance, after a terrible day at the office, Karen came home in a grumpy mood. When she stomped through the door, her hyper-

sensitive husband quickly assumed she was angry with him, and snapped at her. She returned the favour, and an evening of cold shoulders and snide remarks lead to one party sleeping on the couch.

An overactive personalisation radar that detects insults, rejection, and criticism at every turn can magnify relationship problems and cause all kinds of distress. Try giving people the benefit of the doubt. If they really are insulting you, take a break and think things through. You may be perfectly justified in your hurt feelings, yet you must ask yourself what will be gained through a confrontation. When you are slow to anger, you can more easily deal with the stresses life throws your way.

8. Emotional Reasoning

Emotional reasoning is relying on emotions

to determine your level of success. For instance, when you feel like a loser, you conclude that you must be a loser. When you feel inadequate, you reason that you must be a worthless person. When you feel overwhelmed and hopeless, you decide that your problems must be impossible to solve.

If you struggle with emotional reasoning, aim to look past the feelings of the moment and into the future. Find a balance between feelings and rational thought.

Your personal characteristics and worth are not determined by feelings. The Bible reveals the true value of each human being. God was willing to pay an infinite price so that you could have eternal life (John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:18,19). Ask God to help you remember this each time you are tempted to think your life is hopeless.

9. Mislabelling

Mislabelling is describing oneself or others with words that are heavily loaded emotionally and not completely true. By naming yourself or others based on past failures, you identify yourself with your shortcomings, making it all too easy to think things can never change. Instead of saying, “I made a mistake”, you might reinforce a negative sense of self-worth by telling yourself that you’re a born loser, a failure or an idiot. Parents may find themselves guilty of using labelling names such as “stupid”, “selfish”, “rude”, “lazy” or “messy” when frustrated with their children. What parents may not realise is that children who are labelled often grow up feeling inadequate, incompetent, and unloved. They develop a distorted self-image that creates a negative, self-fulfilling prophecy.

How can these patterns be changed? Instead of exclaiming, “You are so selfish!” a parent might take a deep breath, and say, “Can you think of a way to share with others?” Or in self-talk, replace phrases like “You are so stupid,” with “I made a mistake, but I will do better next time.” Instead of using demeaning labels, look for the good and focus on that.

10. Disqualifying the Positive

People who disqualify the positive may appear objective by acknowledging the good, but they will at the same time discount it as valueless by comparison with perceived mistakes. For example, if someone says, “You did a good job in your speech”, you might reply with, “Thank you, but didn’t you hear all the mistakes I made?” People who disqualify the positive often lack motivation to achieve realistic goals, because they

focus more heavily on problems than on possibilities.

Strategies for change from this habit include examining attainable goals, researching realistic, positive consequences, and keeping those positive consequences in mind by not discounting them.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

Now that you can recognise negative thought patterns, you are ready to apply cognitive behavioural therapy to improve your own thought habits. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a psychosocial intervention that aims to improve mental health. CBT focuses on optimising a person's brain by challenging and changing automatic thoughts and behaviours that are detrimental to that person's wholistic health.

CBT is the fast-track path that can enable you to develop emotional intelligence.

Here are the basic steps of cognitive behavioural therapy:

1. LISTEN to your internal dialogue

Practice becoming more aware of your internal dialogue, that is, your patterns of thinking and your emotions. Learn to recognise the effect of these thoughts and feelings on your behaviour.

2. ANALYSE your mental patterns

Take time each day to review your thoughts and feelings, and ask yourself why you feel the way you do. Use the list of distorted thought patterns to identify personal negative thoughts and cognitive distortions that may have become automatic.

3. RECONSTRUCT your thinking

Write down positive statements to replace negative thoughts. Once you have identified why you feel a certain way, you can then work on managing your mood through gently soothing your emotions and redirecting your thoughts into a pathway that is uplifting.

4. PRACTICE positive thinking

The more you practice new thought processes, the more they will strengthen. At the same time, the old pathways will weaken. Research shows it takes around 21 days to form a new habit, but it takes an additional 2 cycles of 21 days (total 63 days) to make that new positive habit or thought process automatic ^[5].

***CHANGE YOUR MIND,
CHANGE YOUR LIFE***

By learning how to change negative thinking

patterns through cognitive behavioural therapy, you can make genuine, long-term changes to both your mind and your life. But there are other key factors that influence brain health, and following these can make CBT easier to apply. Here are Dr Neil Nedley's top ten brain optimisers. Putting these steps into practice will enable you to achieve your full potential and become the person God designed you to be.

DR NEDLEY'S TOP 10 BRAIN OPTIMISERS

1. Regular physical aerobic exercise
Work towards becoming and staying fit by brisk walking, running, or equivalent activities. Plan for 30 minutes of exercise 3-6 times per week, with intermittent training alternating between low- and high-intensity exercise for increased positive benefits ^[4].

2. Do manual tasks in 3 dimensions

Develop the motor faculties of the brain by doing manual activities such as gardening, washing dishes or playing a musical instrument continuously for at least 20 minutes daily.

3. Enhance brain health by eating nutrient-dense foods and avoiding foods high in arachidonic acid

Plant foods, especially those high in anti-oxidants, tyrosine, and omega-3 fats, are especially important for brain health. Broccoli, kale, berries, walnuts and pumpkin seeds are some of the best sources of these nutrients. Foods of animal origin, especially chicken, eggs and pork, increase inflammation of the brain, and are best avoided.

4. Stay hydrated

Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily to maintain optimum brain and body health.

5. Listen to melodic, classical music

Classical music helps to boost frontal lobe activity in the brain, while rock/pop suppresses it.

6. Practice the power of focus Avoid screens for 3 hours before going to bed to enhance melatonin production and sleep.

7. Manage emotions through Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Learn to recognise distorted thinking patterns and implement effective strategies to change negative thoughts.

8. Early to bed, early to rise

Aim to be asleep by 10.00PM and get up by 6.00AM. Bright light exposure in the

early morning is more effective in reducing negative thoughts than anti-depressants.

9. Develop a gratitude list

Make a list each day of blessings received, and thank God for these in prayer ^[3].

10. Daily spiritual focus time

Reading the Bible, especially Hebrew poetry such as Psalms and Proverbs, strengthens the mind. Also take time to connect with God daily through prayer.

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Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have an IQ like Einstein? To be able to create complex theories and formulas that could change the world in some remarkable way? However, it turns out that having a high EQ – or emotional quotient – is one of the best indicators for success.

Learn the essential ingredients of emotional intelligence; find out how to develop more of it in your own life, and discover more fulfilling relationships with less conflict.



Pastor Gary Kent is Speaker for **The Incredible Journey** ministry. He has produced and presented numerous documentaries on subjects including the Bible, Bible prophecy, world events and natural health. His passion is to share the good news of Jesus' imminent return.



Neil Nedley, MD, developed the highly successful 10-day residential Depression Recovery Program for treatment of resistant depression and anxiety.

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