

# *Emotional Intelligence - The Missing Link to Academic Success*

by Johanna Vanderpol

Social and emotional skills create higher achievement (Ornstein, 1986; Lakoff, 1980). Emotions are more important and powerful to the brain than higher-order thinking skills (Eric Jensen, Brain Based Learning). Children with highly developed social skills perform better academically than peer who lack these skills (Grossman, et al, 1997). These research results are just a few examples of the power of emotional intelligence on academic success. But what exactly is emotional intelligence and what place does it have on our academic performance?

## **What is Emotional Intelligence?**

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize, honour, understand, manage and express our emotions in ways that are respectful of self and others. The result is a happier life in the school, boardroom or home.

The word “emotion” is from Latin “emovere” which means ‘to be moved by’. Emotions are what move us to action. The emotion of anger at injustice can move us to positive action of creating justice where none exists. The emotion of fear can move us to protect ourselves. The emotions of joy “gives us wings”. Think about it. Everything we undertake is motivated by some underlying emotional state. The emotion is a message with a call to action. We need to decipher the message and take the appropriate action.

Emotions are not bad. They just are. The way we deny them, suppress them and reject them is what causes problems in our lives. We were taught to judge ourselves negatively when we have an unpleasant emotion.

What is important is the attitude we have towards our emotions and the way we manage them. With improper attitude and poor management of emotions comes results that promote ill-health in all its various forms - spiritual, physical and psychological.

Emotions used in the way for which they were created are the driving force that brings innovation and creativity out of the individual in all areas of human endeavour including progress and problem-solving. Emotions that are denied or not accepted drive us to behaviours that are unhealthy.

The ideal solution for the schools is to have EI as a subject that is learned in the school just like mathematics AND for the teachers and students to recognize “learning moments” where they apply their EI skills in the classroom and on the school grounds. The way to start is to bring in extra programs or special presentations to educate the schools that these concepts exist. It could be a one hour presentation to the students or a training program implemented over a one-year period with baseline measurements, program implementation and post-program measurements to determine effectiveness. It could also be a five or ten week series of two hour sessions brought in to the schools for the students to take as part of their normal schooling. The possibilities are

endless. The obstacles are surmountable. Many schools are interested and ready for this. You can ask your school to bring it in.

I encourage you to find out more about this new evolutionary development of emotional intelligence. The research is bearing exciting results and people and institutions are ready. You can start your explorations by going to my website at [www.johannavanderpol.com](http://www.johannavanderpol.com) . There are many books and articles listed here. If you have any other ideas or questions, please feel free to contact the author at the email or phone number below.

Enjoy your explorations!

**About the Author:**

Johanna Vanderpol is an Emotional Intelligence Trainer, Coach, Speaker and Author for the classroom, boardroom or living room. She has recently released her first book in e-book and print version titled: *Honouring Your Emotions: Why it Matters*. It can be purchased at her website for \$14.95 for e-book and \$19.95 for softcover.

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