

BOOK REVIEWS

Ruth Hamm, Editor

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, by Daniel Goleman. Bantam Books. \$23.95.

In *Emotional Intelligence*, author Daniel Goleman addresses the question, "How can we bring intelligence to our emotions?" As he states in the preface, he is concerned that "the problem is not with emotionality, but with the appropriateness of emotion and its expression."

Emotional Intelligence has five parts, divided as follows: (1) the emotional brain, (2) the nature of emotional intelligence, (3) emotional intelligence applied, (4) windows of opportunity, and (5) emotional literacy.

In the beginning of his book, Goleman gives us a short history of early brain development, from the Age of Reptiles (a root brain stem around the spinal cord) through the arrival of mammals. New layering changed the brain gradually, and the evolution of the emotional brain evolved from the development of the olfactory area. There was a great hastening of brain growth about one hundred million years ago. Over time, an expanding brain — a thinking brain — took us from animal-mammal to Homo Sapiens. What follows is to me one of the most fascinating parts of the book. I was intrigued by the startling revelation of the neurological functioning of different parts of the brain and the mapping of the brain's structure that affects emotions, and how these centers influence the operations of the rest of the brain. (Yet the author in the preface states that readers might not be interested in this neurological development and may

wish to go directly to the next section!)

Humankind, the thinking animal, has emotional reactions that surge from the far-distant past, when man was in need of quick responses to save his life. The author tells us that when we feel fear, blood rushes to our large skeletal muscles so we may flee or hide. Anger stimulates the blood flow toward our hands and gives power to club or stab at the enemy. All emotions create biological changes triggered by the brain. In pre-history, man's condition gave him split-second reaction time, which probably came in handy for survival, but in today's world of automatic weapons the picture differs. The growth of the brain in a human embryo substantially follows evolution's pattern.

The essence of "emotional intelligence" is the motto we learned from Socrates, "Know thyself." The author translates this as self awareness. He gives examples from psychological studies which show how difficult this may be for some people who do not understand their emotions in the context of social contacts, who are enmeshed in emotional turmoil and cannot release themselves, who live in depressive states and, in varying degrees, other states of unconstraint. Those areas of the book that relate to teacher-student relationships are full of frightening statistics on emotional stress, to name a few: teen murder, drugs, ineffectual day-care centers, child abuse and erosion of the nuclear family. Tragically, it is not only in the United States but worldwide.

As teachers we recognize behavioral problems that occur when the emotional brain engulfs the student and the thinking brain is in chains. Example after example is given throughout the book. By examining the neuro-biological studies cited, we teachers may help students control emotional outbursts that hinder learning, sound physical health and a positive self-image. Neither teachers nor students can program the occurrence of strong emotions, but *controlling them can be learned*. However, these lessons to aid the understanding of "emotional intelligence" should begin in the early stages of life, should be repeated continually in proper relationship to the age of the child and go beyond into adulthood, if necessary.

Teachers are familiar with the many strategies, such as the power of positive thinking, standing up to defeat, practicing the adages "try, try again" and the golden rule, finding mood "lifters" and "shifters," creating a sense of empathy, etc. — all discussed in the book.

The author gives us insight into discussions he had with Howard Gardner, author and educator at the Harvard School of Education. Also, he reviews the teachings of E. L. Thorndike as early as in the 1920s. He recognizes the work of Peter Salovey at Yale, to whom he owes the concept of "emotional intelligence," as well as the outstanding research of many others.

There is a fine chapter for those in the throes of a rocky marriage, telling how to recognize and mini-

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mize emotional problems, and find cures for hostile words and actions; also a chapter on corporate management, the pitfalls of poor staff relationships, and how to bring about an emotionally integrated work force. Another chapter deals with mind and medicine. He adds still another chapter on parenting and one on emotional trauma.

How may teachers learn to teach "emotional intelligence"? There are reports of specific studies taking place in classrooms, where there are concrete results. Data confirms that changes do happen, but not overnight, and a better "tone" is created in the school. In the Child Development Project in Oakland, CA, and three others in Seattle, Yale-New Haven and New York City, the consensus was that improvement in classroom behavior occurred along with more positive skills in managing emotions.

In conclusion, Goleman states that "no single kind of intervention, including one targeting emotions, can claim to do the whole job of creating 'emotional intelligence.' But to the degree emotional deficits add to a child's risk — and we have seen they add a great deal — attention must be paid to emotional remedies not to the exclusion of other answers, but along with them."

At the time of this review, *Emotional Intelligence* has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for more than a year, attesting to the fact that it has struck a responsive chord among the American public. I recommend that teachers read *Emotional Intelligence*, or at least some of its chapters. There is much in it that is good common sense, and it is never amiss to be reminded of it.

-Ruth Hamm, Ohio

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