

Indifference

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UUFS Theme: Emotional Intelligence

May 6, 2018

“To remain indifferent to the challenges we face is indefensible. If the goal is noble, whether or not it is realized within our lifetime is largely irrelevant. What we must do therefore is to strive and persevere and never give up.”

— Dalai Lama XIV

“Desire is half of life; indifference is half of death.”

— Kahlil Gibran, Sand and Foam

“Only love that continues to flow in the face of anger, blame, and indifference can be called love. All else is simply a transaction.”

— Vironika Tugaleva, The Love Mindset: An Unconventional Guide to Healing and Happiness

Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph.

Haile Selassie

Read more at:

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/haile_selassie_540912?src=t_indifference

SUUF – Emotional Intelligence – May 6, 2018 – “Indifference”

Indifference is a concept that requires some definition. Delineating indifference from equanimity, and apathy, will most conveniently be done by comparing, and contrasting them.

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Equanimity vs Indifference

The near enemy of equanimity is indifference or callousness. We may appear serene if we say, “I’m not attached. It doesn’t matter what happens anyway, because it’s all transitory.” We feel a certain peaceful relief because we withdraw from experience and from the energies of life. But indifference is based on fear. True equanimity is not a withdrawal; it is a balanced engagement with all aspects of life. It is opening to the whole of life with composure and ease of mind, accepting the beautiful and terrifying nature of all things. Equanimity embraces the loved and the unloved, the agreeable and the disagreeable, the pleasure and pain. It eliminates clinging and aversion.

Although everything is temporary and dreamlike, with equanimity we nevertheless honor the reality of form. As Zen master Dogen says, "Flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds spring up with our aversion." Knowing that all will change and that the world of conditioned phenomena is insubstantial, with equanimity we are able to be fully present and in harmony with it.

This excerpt is taken from the book, "Bringing Home the Dharma: Awakening Right Where You Are"

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The wizards of Wall Street "discovered" Emotional Intelligence after many MBAs blew up successful, functioning businesses when they tried to lead businesses "by the numbers." Financiers hate proven 'cash flows' that go away. They went looking for answers as to why sound businesses were disrupted. They attracted lots of attention with bags of money, and to no one's surprise, they found many willing sellers.

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Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist helped to popularize emotional intelligence, in a manner compatible with Wall Street's goals. According to one of his recipes, there are five key elements to it:

Self-awareness.

Self-regulation.

Motivation.

Empathy.

Social skills.

Emotional Intelligence in Leadership - from MindTools.com

<https://www.mindtools.com> › newLDR_45

His books on Emotional Intelligence (often denoted as EQ), have been very prominent.

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More recently, Linda Elder (and others) have found Goleman's recipes lacking. My excerpt from her "Critical Thinking" follows:

"What is intelligence? In Standard English usage 'intelligence' is understood as "the ability to learn or understand from experience or to respond successfully to new experiences"; "the ability to acquire and retain knowledge (Webster's New World Dictionary)." Its possession implies the use of reason or intellect in solving problems and directing conduct.

What is emotion or feeling? In standard usage, the term 'emotion' is used to designate "a state of consciousness having to do with the arousal of feelings (Webster's New World Dictionary)." It is "distinguished from other mental states, from cognition, volition, and awareness of physical sensation." Feeling refers to "any of the subjective reactions, pleasant or unpleasant" that one may experience in a situation.

Given these understandings, how might "emotional intelligence" be provisionally conceptualized? Most simply, emotional intelligence can reasonably be conceived as a measure of the degree to which a person successfully (or unsuccessfully) applies sound judgment and

reasoning to situations in the process of determining emotional or feeling responses to those situations. It would entail, then, the bringing of (cognitive) intelligence to bear upon emotions. It would encompass both positive and negative emotions. It would be a measure of the extent to which our affective responses were "rationally" based. A person with a high degree of emotional intelligence would be one who responded to situations with feeling states that "made good sense," given what was going on in those situations. Appropriately generated feeling states would serve as a motivation to pursue reasonable behavior or action. Emerging naturally out of "rational" emotions would be "rational" desires and "rational" behavior.

Now let us consider how critical thinking fits into this picture. What is critical thinking and how might it relate to "the bringing of intelligence to bear on emotions?" If we provisionally understand critical thinking as Robert Ennis defines it, namely, as "rational reflective thinking concerned with what to do or believe," then it clearly implicitly implies the capacity to bring reason to bear on emotions, if for no other reason than that our emotions and feelings are deeply inter involved with our beliefs and actions. For example, if I FEEL fear, it is because I BELIEVE that I am being threatened. Therefore I am likely to attack or flee. More on this point later.

I shall argue that critical thinking cannot successfully direct our beliefs and actions unless it continually assesses not simply our cognitive abilities, but also our feeling or emotion states, as well as our implicit and explicit drives and agendas.

I shall argue, in other words, that critical thinking provides the crucial link between intelligence and emotions in the "emotionally intelligent" person. Critical thinking, I believe, is the only plausible vehicle by means of which we could bring intelligence to bear upon our emotional life. It is critical thinking I shall argue, and critical thinking alone, which enables us to take active command of not only our thoughts, but our feelings, emotions, and desires as well. It is critical thinking which provides us with the mental tools needed to explicitly understand how reasoning works, and how those tools can be used to take command of what we think, feel, desire, and do."

Linda Elder – (continued near closing remarks)

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Sue Johnson

Hold Me Tight

Suppressing Emotions

How shutting down your feelings can be disastrous to your relationship

Posted Apr 22, 2010

"Research has shown that suppressing your emotions pretty well shuts down communication within that relationship. Let's chat about what the findings from one study might mean for your relationship. James Gross, a scientist who studies emotion, found that when we try to suppress emotion, this is what happens:

- It's very hard to do - basically it doesn't work. We have to work very hard to shut an emotion down once it is up and running, and in the process, we often get more agitated and tense. This is especially true in close relationships when the trigger for the emotion, the other person, is still there giving us signals that get us all fired up.
- Emotion doesn't stay inside our skin. When we try to shut feelings off, the people we are relating to also get more and more tense.

When we are denying our feelings, our partners probably get tense because our faces register our feelings way faster than the thinking part of the brain can shut them down. So our partner knows there is something going on when we say "Oh, nothing is wrong. I am fine." This partner also knows that we are shutting them out. When partners can't read our cues, they can't predict our behavior. We say one thing but they see another. It makes sense that they get tense. Probably this uncertainty puts everyone off balance and adds to the likelihood that the conversation, or even the whole evening, goes sour.

Emotions are fast. It takes about 100 milliseconds for our brain to react emotionally and about 600 milliseconds for our thinking brain, our cortex, to register this reaction. By the time you decide that it's better not to get mad or to be sad, your face has been expressing it for 500 milliseconds. Too late! The emotional signal has been sent. It's like pressing "send" on your email before you double-check content and email address. Not only that, but when you deny the message, this is puzzling for your partner and makes it harder for them to feel relaxed and safe with you. You are suddenly someone who can shut them out as if they don't matter!

What does all this tell us as lovers and partners? It tells us that the shut down and suppress strategy should be used with care. That it doesn't do what we usually hope it will do, namely calm us down, lower the tenor of a conversation or bypass a fight. Most of the time, we shut down out of habit. We do it because we don't know what else to do. What I see, as a couple therapist, is that it really isn't so dangerous to just say that you are mad, sad, scared, surprised, somehow ashamed or full of joy. This list is about it for the real core universal emotions. When we name our emotions we often feel more grounded, more in control. And we give our partner the chance to respond - to empathize.

And in the end, giving our partner a chance to show us they care, that they can be with us and be there for us, is one of the magic ingredients of a loving relationship."

www.dr.suejohnson.com

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The better someone knows you, the more they see through you. Indifference can be abuse, as noted in the legal definition of "deliberate indifference (below)."

Deliberate Indifference Law and Legal Definition

Deliberate indifference is the conscious or reckless disregard of the consequences of one's acts or omissions. It entails something more than negligence, but is satisfied by something less than

acts or omissions for the very purpose of causing harm or with knowledge that harm will result. In law, the courts apply the deliberate indifference standard to determine if a professional has violated an inmate's civil rights. Deliberate indifference occurs when a professional knows of and disregards an excessive risk to an inmate's health or safety. Even though it is difficult to identify what does and does not constitute deliberate indifference, courts have recognized several factual scenarios where deliberate indifference exists. For example, intentionally refusing to respond to an inmate's complaints has been acknowledged as constituting deliberate indifference. [Gutierrez v. Peters, 111 F.3d 1364, 1366 (7th Cir. Ill. 1997)]; Intentionally delaying medical care for a known injury (i.e. a broken wrist) has been held to constitute deliberate indifference. [Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825 (U.S. 1994).]

Real or feigned, indifference is a pernicious influence in today's world. Apathy, numbness, and overwhelmed shock are various conditions used to describe modern life, especially "where the action is." Youth congregating in cities are often acting according to group or gang norms, instead of middle class expectations.

Many experts have chronicled the effects of sensory overload, and/or intense demands of modern life, to switch people from engaging life using logic to determine optimal outcomes, to emotional reactions. Marketing prefers people to react emotionally, because they are easier to manipulate. Daniel Kahneman's "Thinking Fast and Slow," provides insights comparing emotional (fast) to logical (slow) decision making.

Marketing wants to avoid logical evaluations, by appealing to emotions. Getting your "unfair share" requires pushing, tricking, beguiling people into emotional states.

There is another state of mind that happens in groups that inhibits normal engagement, empathy, and stymies helpful acts. The "Bystander Effect" has been shown to lead to inaction, even when simple actions could help someone.

Engaging people with a plan involving specific requests, has been shown to help break through the indifference, and inaction of the "Bystander Effect." This phenomenon was well studied after dozens of people (hearing/seeing the multiple attacks) did not get involved, while Kitty Genovese was brutally murdered over about 35 minutes. Not one person picked up the phone, to call the police.

One concrete social good that came out of the study (prompted by New York City Homicide Investigators) on the "Bystander Effect" is the instruction for First Responders, to make eye contact with one person, and to ask that one person to perform a needed task (call 911), instead of asking anyone/everyone. In a group of people (close enough so that interaction is difficult to avoid), the more popular term is "bystander inhibition."

"Pluralistic Ignorance" puzzled New York City homicide detectives in 1964. Understanding the mechanics of social interactions, can make individuals, and/or groups more effective.

Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence

From Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines, Winter, 1996. Vol. XVI, No. 2.

by Linda Elder — Conclusion “Critical Thinking “

“If we are concerned with developing our rationality in order to improve our lives, we must understand the powerful role that both emotions and thoughts play in our minds. We must understand the ways in which affect and cognition influence one another in determining both our outlook on life and our behavior. Most importantly, we must come to terms with those truths about the human mind that enable us to begin the process of taking charge of our minds: that thoughts and emotions are inextricably bound, that we have both egocentric and rational tendencies, that our inner conflicts are never best understood as a simple matter between emotion and reason, that self-command of mind takes both extended education and self-discipline, that our fullest rational development is dependent on the development of rational affect, that to bring intelligence to bear upon emotions we must take charge of the thinking underlying those emotions.

These important insights are more obscured than illuminated by analyses of the mind such as that offered by Goleman. To develop our awareness of the nature of the human mind and how it functions we must be careful not to over-emphasize the importance of "brain" research. Our most important knowledge of the human mind will always be, ultimately, knowledge drawn from the multiple constructs of the mind.

Any theory which we develop of the human mind must make intelligible how it is that minds could create such multiply complex phenomena as poems, novels, plays, dances, paintings, religions, social systems, families, cultures, traditions--and do such diverse things as interpret, experience, plan, question, formulate agendas, laugh, argue, guess, assess, assume, clarify, make inferences, judge, project, model, dramatize, fantasize, and theorize. All of these creations and all of these activities of minds are closely inter-involved with our emotional lives. We are far, very far, from accounting for these products, or their "emotional" connections, by the use of the data of brain research. I doubt we ever will.

Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence -

From Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines, Winter, 1996. Vol. XVI, No. 2. by Linda Elder

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Subliminal responses (stimulation below the conscious threshold), was found to occur at less than 3 milliseconds in the famous subliminal messages to boost popcorn & soda sales at the movies in the late 1950s, which required specialized equipment. Words projected for less than 0.003 seconds were not consciously visible, but they had monetary effects, from increased popcorn and soda sales. Today's gigahertz processors have a lot of capacity for timing, and can run multiple schemes simultaneously.

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Implicit Association Test (IAT) explanation Harvard video.

<https://youtu.be/ABSeKU2qJol>

[For online IAT consider using the public library computers (without signing in), to protect your privacy. If you want to understand more about your lack of online privacy, Paul Ohm wrote a classic paper: "BROKEN PROMISES OF PRIVACY: RESPONDING TO THE SURPRISING FAILURE OF ANONYMIZATION" with his 'mea culpa' quotes, as some who had helped to justify Congress changing the privacy protection (Personally Identifiable Information (PII) standard from being based on 'anonymized' data, instead of the extant 'anonymous' standard. Ohm's reflections include:

"Powerful reidentification will draw every one of us closer to what I call our personal "databases of ruin."

"This research unearths a tension that shakes a foundational belief about data privacy: Data can be either useful or perfectly anonymous but never both."]

Many IATs are available online. The one I took on racial bias (inspired by Malcolm Gladwell) was: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Because the IAT operates below what is known to be below our executive function threshold of conscious decision making, it is thought to be difficult (or impossible) to consistently manipulate. The ability to detect racial biases, suggests an interesting possible use.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) have shown through the use of police department issued body cameras (forced by many, many cellphone videos showing high levels of police violence against People of Color (PoC), and other minorities). The wireless broadcasting allowed a partial rebalancing of power.

Perhaps there is another step that can be taken to help reduce abuse. What if all police were assigned periodic IAT examinations?

The quantitative data has been validated for decades, over a wide area. America has been shown to have a more racist society than many others. Once upon a time, slavery was virtually ubiquitous. Now more Americans show higher racial biases than many European countries.

Might instituting some trial IAT testing, with intensive follow up, and counseling reduce unnecessary police violence? Some people don't need to be put in situations where they need to make split second decisions. Some people may not do well when deployed in areas where they are likely to be faced with PoC, or other bias that testing shows them to be likely to react in tragic ways.

I'm surprised that I have not seen at least a pilot program on this. It seems like a natural step to reduce gun violence.

When Malcolm Gladwell took his IAT, he was surprised to find that he was biased against Black People, though he appears Black, and lives a very multicultural existence. My IAT also showed a racial bias. I have spoken with one member of SUUF who showed a positive bias on the IAT in

favor of Blacks. What that test result means, I don't understand. It just seems like a potential tool, to reduce bloodshed from biased law enforcement personnel. Can we do better?

The Cambridge Analytica (CA) organization is now attempting to cover their tracks, by downplaying their success, as well as burying unflattering stories. Robert and Rebekah Mercer (Breitbart Media, Steve Bannon), have used quantitative analysis to make dry high returns on Wall Street, providing many millions to their candidates/political actors.

Recently it was disclosed that the UK Courts have forced CA (and presumably their CO-conspirator parent company SCL Elections), to divulge information that they have on US Citizens, for a \$14.00 charge. ProPublica seems to have been instrumental in forcing that outcome. This undercover sting revealed techniques that they publicly trashed: <https://youtu.be/mpbeOCKZFfQ> . However, CA's CEO showed his Values all revolved around money, and power.

Technology changes reality. Whether information exchanges over long distances (broadcasting, air travel, and the Internet) made the Founder's structural barrier of space between power centers to protect our Republic from being subverted by "Factions" (see The Federalist Papers #10 – James Madison), or the fearsome power of high speed bullets, from rapidly firing guns, (AR15) to "CyberSpying. (US CIA – Russian FSB, international commercial corporate spying (browser extensions, cookies, malware, etc), quasi-government entities (Credit Rating Agencies [and their hackers]), location tracking (Google, and Apple Maps). If you have not gone to Google.com/takeout, you will almost certainly be surprised by the volume of data that they have collected. I'm too old for this to be of much interest commercially, but youths are another story.

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Washington Post May 1, 2018 - Today's WorldView

Edited by Max J. Rosenthal and Ruby Mellen

BY ISHAAN THAROOR

Remembering a past many Americans would rather forget

US Holocaust Museum @HolocaustMuseum

There's a misconception that Americans did not have information about the Holocaust as it occurred. As part of History Unfolded, people across the US research in local archives to uncover what their community knew about the Nazi threat & the Holocaust: (link: <https://newspapers.ushmm.org>) newspapers.ushmm.org

Both then and now, America's apathy and wariness did not come from a lack of information. The exhibit's curators combed archives to show how coverage of Nazism and the threat of the Third Reich appeared in newspapers around the country. "Antisemitism is the life and soul of Hitler's movement," wrote correspondent Dorothy Thompson in a famous 1932 profile of Hitler in Cosmopolitan magazine. "The Nazis lose no opportunity to insult the Jews."

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The Parkland Students have ignited a spark of activism that continues to expand. They happened to be very articulate, some had been on a debate team that practiced for gun

violence competitions. Others were charismatic, or blessed with the ability to connect with empathy. They expect to be able to solve challenges, not cope with them, as they have grown up with resources. Their discipline, and intrepid attitudes speak well for future problem solving.

The “March For Our Lives” (MFOL) has spawned “Vote For Our Lives” (VFOL) in Denver www.denverpost.com/2018/04/09/vote-for-our-lives/ , & Los Angeles. They have connected with a surprisingly powerful message, that seems to connect with many people. The Walkout -> March -> Vote Movements seem to continue to build momentum.

Building on the growing awareness of a need for society to change directions, MFOL/VFOL adds to existing movements/concerns about the environment (Human Caused Global Change), Black Lives Matter, and #MeToo, in a powerful fashion. I have used the analogy critical mass of change, and/or the straw that broke the camel’s back, at various times to describe the exceptionally powerful message that continues to ripple from MFOL/VFOL.

One compilation of observations of social movements that keeps coming back to me is “Extraordinary Popular Delusions, and the Madness of Crowds. Published in 1841 & again in 1852, Charles MacKay chronicled many bizarre social phenomenon. Are we in the midst of another? Historians will have the last word.

The once invincible National Rifle Association (NRA) has been humbled. We will see for how long. It would have been inconceivable in my youth for the NRA to be linked with a political influence scheme from Russia. This NRA, is NOT my Dad’s NRA.

Whatever the reason for increased engagement, I am glad. Woke Folks make me more hopeful for our future! The indifference railed against by Eile Wiesel, seems to be lifting.

The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.
The opposite of art is not ugliness, it’s indifference.
The opposite of faith is not heresy, it’s indifference.
And the opposite of life is not death, it’s indifference.