

Using the Myers-Briggs® Instrument with the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory



The *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory* (Bar-On EQ-i) instrument was developed and is used to assess the presence and degree of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, or EQ, is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.¹ Consultants and facilitators have used the Bar-On EQ-i instrument extensively as a coaching and leadership tool that identifies diagnostically clients' EQ-related abilities and suggests how individuals can improve their overall EQ and establish additional competencies.

We know that operationally EQ involves how people understand and regulate their emotions. Furthermore, we know that EQ captures people's "street smarts" and common sense, or the kinds of intelligence people can develop, rather than the intelligence quotient, or IQ, with which they are born. Theoretically, IQ peaks by age 17, remains constant throughout adulthood, and predicts job success between 1% and 20%. In contrast, EQ can be developed and in fact rises steadily until people are in their 50s, when it becomes more stable. From an achievement standpoint, EQ has been found to be responsible for 27% to 45% of job success. Research shows that the presence of EQ can make or break performance and a person's career.²

We can look to MBTI® type theory to help us help our clients identify opportunities to develop their EQ. Type theory contends that people spend the first half of their life developing their dominant and auxiliary functions, or their function pair. This parallels the time when, according to the Bar-On EQ-i tool, they are establishing their EQ competencies. When combined, the information provided by the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI) and Bar-On EQ-i assessments yields a comprehensive psychological and behavioral analysis of the point at which people start to develop themselves interpersonally and intrapersonally. Because EQ does not capture personality, pairing the Bar-On EQ-i instrument with the MBTI assessment can provide clients with a fuller and richer understanding of themselves.

The keystone of EQ is emotional self-awareness; without this, it is nearly impossible to grow and change. The MBTI instrument provides an easy and effective way to augment this self-awareness. When individuals complete the MBTI assessment and receive their results, more often than not they experience numerous "aha!" moments that verify their personal style characteristics and potential for growth. This positive validation works well with the Bar-On EQ-i instrument because the EQ-i model is based on using strengths rather than on correcting pathology. In other words,

the EQ-i model says the best way to increase emotional intelligence is to build on existing strengths rather than to focus on rectifying deficits, which requires a much larger shift or behavioral change. As a next step in using the Bar-On EQ-i and MBTI assessments together, we can help our clients build on their foundation of understanding by diving into type dynamics so they can increase their EQ and their ability to flex their MBTI preferences. After clients learn about the drivers of type through understanding the function pairs, the facilitator can delve deeper into the grip experience and stress management.

The EQ-i instrument organizes emotional intelligence into categories that can translate to psychological competencies. An individual can enhance his or her sense of mastery of these competencies by flexing his or her type preferences. The chart below details for each EQ-i competency the underlying question to ask to increase the individual's awareness of how others may be affected by his or her behavior and of whether this is a competency he or she would like to develop further; the relation to the preferences; and the relation to the grip experience (discussed in the next section).

	EQ-i Competency	Question to Ask	Relation to the Preferences	Relation to the Grip Experience
Intrapersonal	Emotional Self-Awareness	What impact do my feelings have on others?	Do I think about how people will react to me before I speak? What kind of feedback have I received about how I use my dominant function? Which preferences do I use to tune into others?	What leads me to doubt my competent use of my dominant and auxiliary functions? What helps me return to equilibrium and feel more confident and secure?
	Assertiveness	Am I separating assertiveness and aggressiveness?	How much am I considering other people's feelings and thoughts?	Am I being unreasonably assertive or withdrawing?
	Self-Regard	Can I accept my flaws and still feel good about myself?	How often do I challenge myself to flex my preference to the opposite pole?	Do I spend too much time beating myself up or elevating myself when I feel insecure?
	Independence	Am I emotionally dependent on others?	Can I make sound decisions on my own or do I need feedback?	Do I ruminate on decisions I have made because I feel insecure about taking a stand?
	Self-Actualization	How much have I tapped into my potential?	Have I spent time developing my less preferred functions as well as my dominant function?	Do I tend to look at what I am doing well or what I am doing poorly?
Interpersonal	Empathy	How naturally do I tune into others?	Do I mistake empathy for sympathy or agreement?	How do I appreciate other people's feelings and thoughts when they are different from mine?
	Social Responsibility	How do I contribute positively to my community?	Is there something I feel passionate about doing that will make a difference for people?	Do I feel like I can and do make a difference when I make the effort?
	Interpersonal Relationship	Can I give and receive affection in a way that is satisfying to me and to others?	How comfortable am I with intimacy?	When I feel stressed do I want to be closer to people or have my own space?

	EQ-i Competency	Question to Ask	Relation to the Preferences	Relation to the Grip Experience
Adaptability	Flexibility	How easily can I adjust emotionally to situations?	How comfortable am I with ambiguity or without a plan?	What makes me feel out of control?
	Reality Testing	Can I see things the way they really are?	What kinds of information do I integrate when trying to be and stay grounded?	Is my reality based on my fears or the way I wish things could be?
	Problem Solving	What is my strategy for generating solutions to difficult problems?	Do I include more than my dominant preference when making important decisions?	Do I rush to solve a problem when it is uncomfortable for me to manage the ambiguity?
Stress Management	Stress Tolerance	Can I stay calm and maintain control in the face of a crisis?	How can I pause and collect more information before making an assessment of the situation?	What do I need to cope with an unpleasant situation?
	Impulse Control	Can I delay or resist the temptation to act if there are consequences?	Am I more risk averse and cautious or do I dive into things too readily?	Am I likely to project or overreact in an emotional situation?
General Mood	Optimism	Can I be positive in the face of adversity?	Do I see downturns as temporary or permanent?	Can I reframe a negative situation and stop personalizing my role?
	Happiness	Am I capable of feeling satisfied with my life?	Do I recognize what I do well and areas for development?	Can I remind myself that I deserve to do well and be content or do I spiral downward in hard times?

THE GRIP EXPERIENCE

Part of helping clients manage the appropriate use of type and EQ has to do with the extent to which we can help them understand type dynamics. Under normal circumstances, the four mental functions described by Jung (Sensing, Intuition, Thinking, and Feeling) operate in a specific order: #1 dominant function, #2 auxiliary function, #3 tertiary function, and #4 inferior function (see the chart on page 4). At such times individuals have access to the best parts of themselves, and they use the first two functions collaboratively and fluently to navigate both desirable and undesirable social situations. However, when individuals are fatigued or under great stress, they may experience unusual, out-of-character thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. “In the grip” of the inferior function, which is largely unconscious, people may act “beside themselves,” as Naomi Quenk describes the grip experience.³ It is almost as if they can’t stop themselves from making poor choices or behaving badly even though there is a conscious part of them that knows there will be a consequence for it.

This is where individuals can use their emotional intelligence to help them return to equilibrium. If they can enact their self-awareness and understand what they need to do for themselves to feel better, they are more likely to bounce back from such difficult situations and turn them into learning opportunities. When they are in the grip, people project their negative attributes onto others, overcompensate for what they feel they lack, and throw adult forms of temper tantrums because they feel unable to care for themselves appropriately in the moment. However, individuals can remind

Order of Functions for Each Type			
ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
Dominant: S _I Auxiliary: T _E Tertiary: F Inferior: N _E	Dominant: S _I Auxiliary: F _E Tertiary: T Inferior: N _E	Dominant: N _I Auxiliary: F _E Tertiary: T Inferior: S _E	Dominant: N _I Auxiliary: T _E Tertiary: F Inferior: S _E
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
Dominant: T _I Auxiliary: S _E Tertiary: N Inferior: F _E	Dominant: F _I Auxiliary: S _E Tertiary: N Inferior: T _E	Dominant: F _I Auxiliary: N _E Tertiary: S Inferior: T _E	Dominant: T _I Auxiliary: N _E Tertiary: S Inferior: F _E
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
Dominant: S _E Auxiliary: T _I Tertiary: F Inferior: N _I	Dominant: S _E Auxiliary: F _I Tertiary: T Inferior: N _I	Dominant: N _E Auxiliary: F _I Tertiary: T Inferior: S _I	Dominant: N _E Auxiliary: T _I Tertiary: F Inferior: S _I
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
Dominant: T _E Auxiliary: S _I Tertiary: N Inferior: F _I	Dominant: F _E Auxiliary: S _I Tertiary: N Inferior: T _I	Dominant: F _E Auxiliary: N _I Tertiary: S Inferior: T _I	Dominant: T _E Auxiliary: N _I Tertiary: S Inferior: F _I

Source: Adapted from Myers, I. B. (1998), *Introduction to Type®*, 6th ed. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc.

themselves that there are things they need that will soothe and help them regain their composure and release whatever barriers to productive and appropriate behavior might be in the way. By helping our clients develop their EQ capabilities, we can give them tools to lessen the impact of the grip experience.

Using the chart below, we can help our clients understand their inferior function and how to apply their EQ knowledge to get back to their normal level of functioning. Once our clients can acknowledge what it is that they need, they can take action to improve or resolve the situation. Sometimes just recognizing the fact that they are in the grip will enable them to take care of themselves in a more empathetic and effective way.

When we clarify whether a function is introverted or extraverted, what we are really speaking to is the direction of energy of that function. Is it directed outside of us toward others or more internally toward ourselves? These functions reflect the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics as we understand our energy and where it goes during our interactions and thoughts. If a function is introverted, it is likely we are trying to understand it and organize our thoughts around it. If it is extraverted, we are showing others our enactment of the function externally through either conversation or interchange.

Inferior Function	EQ-i Competency to Enact	To Get Back on Track
Introverted Feeling	Allow yourself to reflect on your feelings (Self-Regard)	Seek support from those you trust
Extraverted Thinking	Ask others to validate your thoughts and feelings (Interpersonal Relations)	Recognize your need to feel valued
Extraverted Feeling	Give yourself space to feel (Emotional Self-Awareness)	Accept that you can feel vulnerable
Introverted Thinking	Take time alone to reflect (Reality Testing)	Trust yourself more
Introverted Intuition	Create a back-up plan (Problem Solving)	Allow yourself to explore possibilities
Extraverted Sensing	Shift priorities to ease up on schedule (Assertiveness)	Set more attainable goals
Extraverted Intuition	Recognize your own credibility (Self-Actualization)	Increase your flexibility
Introverted Sensing	Ask for care and support from others (Empathy)	Improve your ability to plan within structure

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Often when we are brought into a coaching situation, the executive or professional has been recognized for his or her potential in many areas. Whether we are working with a high-potential employee or someone who is exclusively technically proficient, we can use a two-step process in gaining the client's buy-in to commit to a development plan. We can start with the MBTI instrument, focusing on style and preferences. Ideally, the client will feel validated and able to acknowledge what feels more or less natural. Then we can add the Bar-On EQ-i assessment to look at behavioral competencies and elements that may need improvement. After we have had an opportunity to interpret and debrief the client's MBTI results (preferably using the Form Q [Step II™] assessment), we can create an action plan for further development in particular areas that correlate to the person's professional goals. When the Bar-On EQ-i results are added, the action plan can be made more robust and specific in terms of the competencies necessary for the person to rise to the next level in his or her organization or the next challenge in responsibilities.

If we are working with a person with a lower level of self-awareness, we can use the Bar-On EQ-i tool like a 360-degree instrument that offers feedback to which the client may not have been privy. In this situation, the results may seem more shocking or off-putting. By blending in the MBTI results, we can focus on what is working well and give the person a sense of agency or control. Then we can reframe the challenges so that they are more tangibly attainable as goals.

At times we may work with a client who is an expert in his or her field but is a poor manager. In such cases, we need to have a conversation about the relevance of EQ and how it relates to overall professional and personal success. Using the data presented above, we can give the client concrete research results that reveal what the consequences of low EQ could be regardless of how smart or capable the client is. In fact, the higher a person's IQ, the more imperative it is for that

person to develop his or her EQ simultaneously! Combining the results of the two instruments can allow multiple data points that reinforce one another and echo certain characteristics that are outside the person's awareness. The unique blend of behavioral competencies and preference style enables a more holistic and comprehensive view of what is necessary interpersonally and intrapersonally for success.

NOTES

1. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1994). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9, 185–211.
2. Salovey & Mayer, Emotional intelligence.
3. Quenk, N. L. (2000). *In the grip: Understanding type, stress, and the inferior function*, 2nd ed. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc.

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