

Emotional intelligence at work:

The key to optimal team performance and wellbeing

Positive Intelligence® White Paper

Developing emotional intelligence helps individuals and teams become more resilient, optimistic, and collaborative.

The world's greatest success stories often begin with a vision, a gut feeling, and an intuition of opportunity. Yet society glorifies intellect and reason. Many people lean so heavily on their rational minds that they squander the vast potential in their emotional minds.

Raising emotional intelligence is the antidote. It's the opportunity to hone empathy and unleash our deepest potential as humans, at home and at work.

Positive Intelligence founder Shirzad Chamine has focused his professional life on helping people raise their emotional intelligence — because he's experienced its eye-opening benefits personally.

“It took me a long time to realize that intuition, gut feeling, and wisdom lived in a different place from my rational mind,” he says. “I didn't have access to that because I kept going to my intellectual toolbox.”

“But that meant I was only tapping into 20% of my powers as a human being or as a leader. We don't realize how important it is because we're not taught in school that that's where our wisdom lives.”

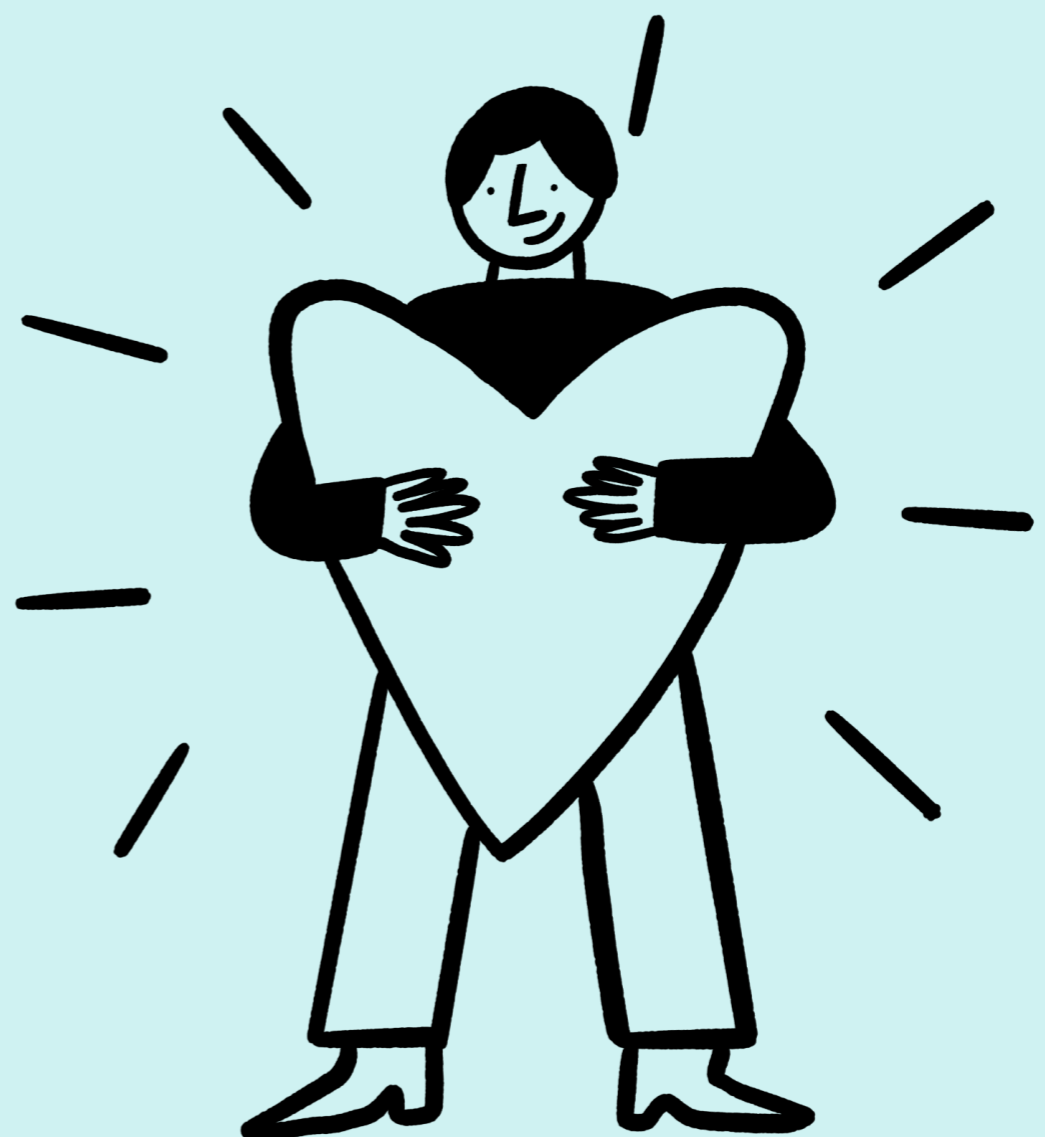
Understanding where that wisdom lives — and how to access it — begins with understanding brain science.

Listening to instinct in an analytics powerhouse

You might think the founder and CEO of one of the planet's most prominent data-driven organizations relies on analysis for all his strategic decisions. Think again.

“All of my best decisions in business and in life have been made with heart and intuition — not analysis. When you can make a decision with analysis, you should do so, but it turns out in life that your most important decisions are always made with instinct, intuition, taste, heart.”

Jeff Bezos



The neuroscience of emotional intelligence

Most of us know the left/right brain dichotomy — the analytical, rational parts live in our left brain, and the intuition and wisdom parts live in our right brain.

But recent advances in functional MRI, which measures how neural activity changes blood flow, have allowed scientists and psychologists to witness the real-time working of the brain.

Now we can pinpoint the brain regions involved in producing different thoughts or feelings and the neural functions that activate our instincts to thrive — or to survive.

The Survive region, the region of the brain where most of us operate, especially at work, is home to our inner naysayers or Saboteurs. These are the voices in our heads that generate negative emotions in response to challenges. They exist in the brainstem, limbic system, and parts of the left brain, and there they produce all of our stress, anxiety, self-doubt, anger, shame, guilt, frustration, and mind chatter. These negative emotions help alert us to dangers or issues — but only for a moment. Staying in these emotions hurts our ability to see clearly and choose the most impactful response.

The Thrive region, on the other hand, occupies an entirely different region of our brains. The middle prefrontal cortex is home to our empathy circuitry. It generates positive emotions while handling life's challenges. These include empathy, compassion, gratitude, curiosity, the joy of creativity, and calm, clear-headed laser-focused action. This region is wired for creativity and big-picture awareness of what is important and the best course of action. Activating this region releases endorphins that counter the negative impacts of stress-induced cortisol.

Every time we react to a threat in our environment, the human body experiences a physiological reaction that triggers our Survive mechanisms. For example, when you put your hand on a hot stove, the pain is an alert that you must pull your hand away.

Negative feelings can operate the same way. According to Harvard brain scientist Jill Bolte Taylor, the body processes those reactions in 90 seconds.

When a thought triggers anger, fear, or disappointment, a physiological response flushes the blood from the brain. At that moment, we have a choice — to pivot into the Thrive parts of our brain — or rerun the loop and stay in the Survive part of our brain.

And that's where emotional intelligence comes in.

What's your PQ Score?

Measure your mental fitness

To meet life's great challenges, you need to be mentally fit. This allows you to approach problem-solving from the Thrive portion of your brain versus the Survive.

We've developed a measure of your mental fitness called your Positive Intelligence Quotient — PQ for short.

Your PQ Score reveals your mental fitness level by measuring the strength of your positive mental muscles versus the negative. Take our [PQ Score Assessment](#) to discover how often your mind is serving you.

What is emotional intelligence (EQ)?

Emotional intelligence means being aware of your own emotions as well as other people's and utilizing that awareness to make better decisions. It's about recognizing you have a powerful analytical tool in your left brain but choosing to select tools from your right brain more often.

Emotional intelligence means drawing on your non-rational tools, such as empathy, and letting these tools claim power over your rational mind.

In the Positive Intelligence (PQ) Program, we call these tools your Sage Powers, which include:



Empathize



Explore



Innovate



Navigate



Activate

Emotional intelligence also means recognizing your most common causes of self-sabotage. Does your inner judge criticize too loud? Do you feel stress when your sense of control is diminished?

By calling these Saboteurs what they are, over time, you can lower their power over you.

You will automatically lower stress by intercepting your Saboteurs and activating your Sage Powers. And you'll experience other life benefits: relationship improvement, performance, selling and persuasion, creativity, leadership, resilience, and happiness.

These advantages happen when you rewire the brain at the root level rather than treating symptoms.



Avoider



Controller



Hyper Achiever



Pleaser



Stickler



Hyper Rational



Restless



Victim



Hyper Vigilant

Unlocking Positive Intelligence

The PQ Program provides the tools and operating system to thrive in high-pressure environments.

Our trusted, science-based system starts with a six-week app-guided program focusing on strengthening your team's mental fitness muscles. Offerings include daily practice, weekly video sessions, progress measurements, and community support like Pod meetings — all designed to drive performance and wellbeing.

How can emotional intelligence benefit you and your team?

Employee growth and development is a significant budget expenditure. Corporations in the U.S. alone spent over \$87.6 billion on corporate training and development programs. On a per-employee basis, this investment in 2022 totaled almost \$1,700 for companies with 10,000 employees. Smaller businesses, with between 100 and 999 employees, spent almost \$1,400 per learner on training.

Is this training having its desired impact? Researchers have been studying the effects of emotional intelligence on performance and wellbeing for nearly 30 years, and they know that the employee's mindset significantly impacts the effectiveness of any learning program.

The results* are dramatic: 98 percent of people who focus on raising their emotional intelligence for six weeks succeed, demonstrating improvements in 17 of the 18 emotional intelligence competencies.

Highlights include:

97%

say raising their EQ has improved their empathy

92%

report teamwork and collaboration improvements

91%

feel more optimism

84%

find it easier to manage conflict



*Percent of Participants Reporting Improvement after only six weeks of Positive Intelligence Program

These benefits have profound ripple effects across our personal and professional lives. Raising emotional intelligence at home and work strengthens our relationships. Potential problems become opportunities. Teams unite around a shared experience.

The Four Keys to Emotional Intelligence

Though the body of research is varied, a common methodology has emerged to measure emotional intelligence competencies:

Self-Awareness

- Emotional self-awareness
- Accurate self-assessment
- Self-confidence

Social Awareness

- Empathy
- Service orientation

Self-Management

- Emotional self-control
- Transparency
- Adaptability
- Achievement
- Initiative
- Optimism

Relationship Management

- Developing others
- Inspirational leadership
- Change catalyst
- Influence
- Conflict management
- Teamwork and collaboration

How to raise your EQ and access its many benefits

It might seem daunting to look at the emotional intelligence competency areas and think about how to grow all of them. The good news is you don't need to tackle them individually but instead focus on building mental fitness to develop emotional intelligence.

Positive Intelligence uses factor analysis to get to the root of what enables emotional development and a growth mindset. Going to the root level provides a simpler way to develop all these emotional intelligence competencies.

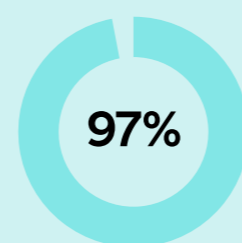
Every competency can be devastated by the Saboteurs — or wholly enabled by your Sage Powers.

So, this massively simple formula will help raise your emotional intelligence across the board: intercept your Saboteur, then shift your mindset to the Sage part of your brain.

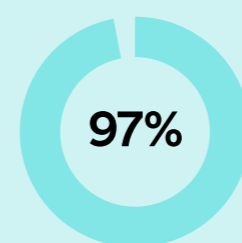
By exercising the positive parts of the brain and using mental fitness training, you will grow your emotional intelligence. That's all it takes to be extraordinary.

Effectiveness by the numbers

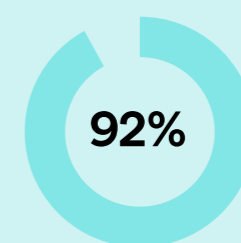
The percentage* of PQ Program participants reporting improvement in key EQ competencies:



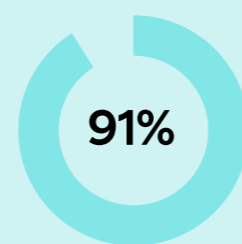
Emotional Self-Awareness



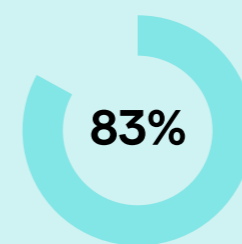
Empathy



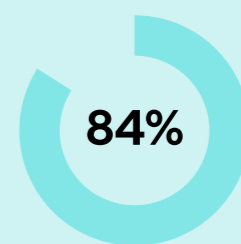
Teamwork and Collaboration



Emotional Self-Control



Self-Confidence



Conflict Management

The power of Sage in action

Let's say you're looking to grow your capacity for teamwork and collaboration.

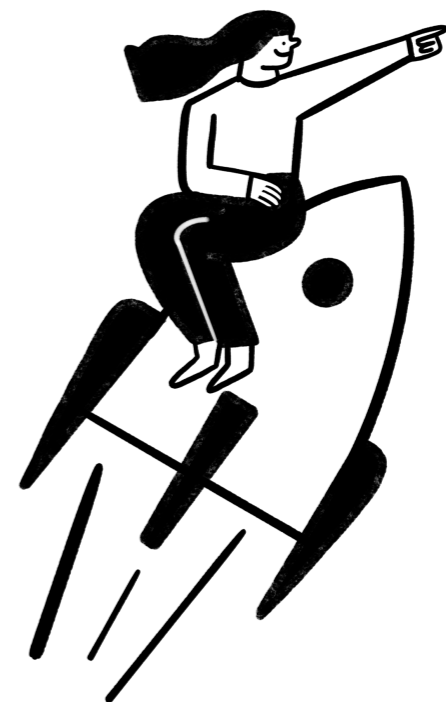
This aptitude can be devastated by any Saboteur, but let's use, for example, the Victim Saboteur. Approaching team projects with the feeling that you're being singled out or no one likes your ideas can bring down your energy or fuel resentment over time.

Instead, consider how activating your Sage Powers will play out.

By **Empathizing** and putting yourself in your colleagues' shoes, you can understand where they're coming from and equip yourself to reduce conflict.

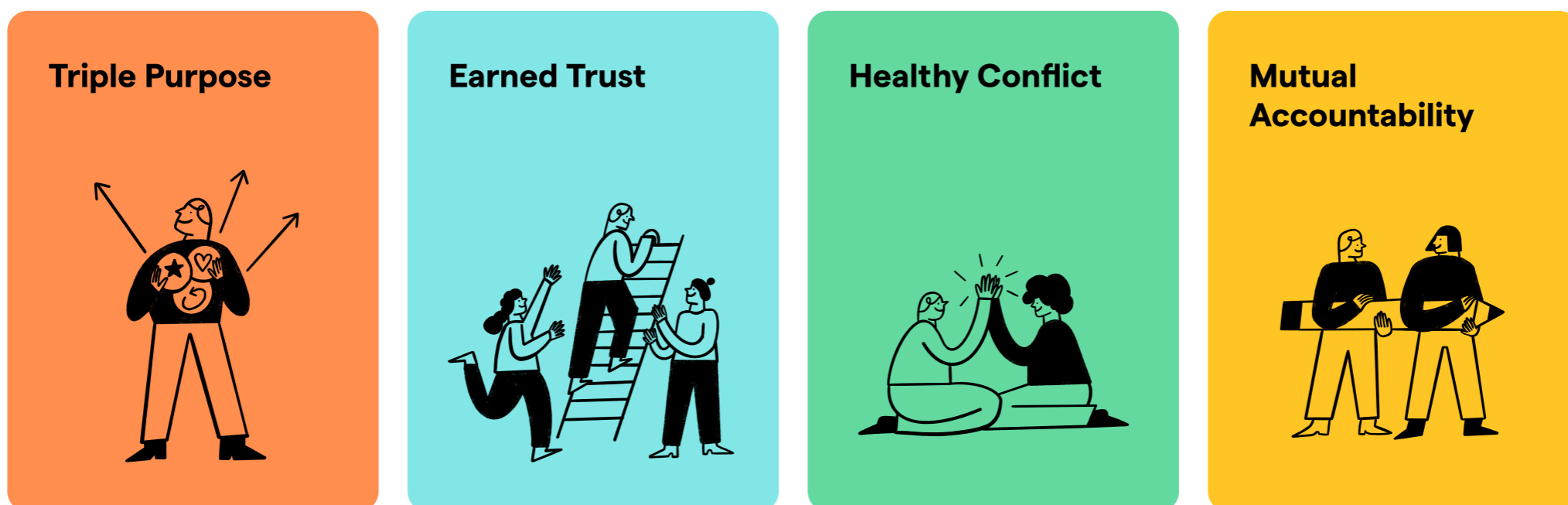
You can **Explore** more ideas instead of coming from a fixed position, which expands the opportunity to **Innovate** with trust and respect.

From there, you'll be able to **Navigate** a deeper purpose for your team and work collaboratively to **Activate** the best ideas.



The real key to emotional intelligence? Practice.

Most attempts at positive change fail because we don't recognize the power of building new behaviors incrementally over time. Sustained change towards a more positive mind requires laying down neural pathways to form new habits through consistent daily practice. And that's what the PQ Program empowers you to do.



We all possess a birthright to be our best selves. Your Sage is your true essence, the person you were born to be. You don't need to change who you are; you need to recognize how your Saboteurs have been covering up your true essence — and learn how to reduce their power over your thoughts and behaviors with regular mental fitness practice.

Organizational leaders have the chance to champion this journey to improve performance for individuals and teams alike.

**Learn more about the power of emotional intelligence —
and how to unlock it — with the PQ Program for Teams.**

And get a head start on strengthening your mental fitness

Take the PQ Score Assessment Today





Thank You

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