EQ & SQ: A Healthy Way to Handle Workplace Stress

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Abstract

Modern life has brought many comforts its train, but also carries a red signal called “stress”. Stress is experienced when demands exceed resources. There are various kinds of demands that are placed on an individual. The physical demand includes excessive heat, coldness, lack of oxygen, and so on. There are also personal demands such as appearing at an examination, facing an interview, completing an important assignment, fulfilling a promise. In stress literature, there are two catchy expressions; RUSS and BUSS. RUSS stands for rust-out stress syndrome, whereas BUSS denotes burn out stress syndrome. The implication is clear and unambiguous. Both under stimulation are negative of wellness. Role stress is a major form of stress in organizations. It is also otherwise known as job stress or occupational stress. This job stress affects one’s health, performance, overall work atmosphere. So there is need for the hour to combat stress through increasing positive and spiritual quality. In the early part of the 20th century, IQ became a big issue, the measuring of our ‘intelligence quotient’. In the mid-90s, Daniel Goleman took the research of neuroscientists and psychologists and popularized the notion of another quotient - EQ, emotional intelligence. Now, a third wave of scientific research suggesting we may be 'hard wired', neurologically, for spirituality has prompted the creation of SQ, the spirituality quotient. Both EQ and SQ have been linked to improved leadership, sales, customer service, learning, relationships and personal success. This paper tries to highlight some important aspect stress and how to reduce it by increasing EQ and SQ which is very essential to solve managerial problem.

Key Words: Workplace Stress, EQ, SQ

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Introduction

The management of stress requires awareness of stress. A person needs to be aware of stressors. There are some broad stress signals. Physical stress signals include tiredness, sleeplessness, rapid or shallow breathing, tenseness of Muscles, perspiration and tightening of stomach. Similarly, irritability, procrastination, sadness, worry, racing thoughts, brooding and forgetfulness are psychological stress signals.

Origin of Stress

A causal model of stress is represented by the following figure.

As indicated by the figure, stress can originate in one of the domains: individual, organizational and environmental. An example of individual source involves a conflict between what the individual does and what he/she believes. An instance of organizational source of stress is the lack of communication in the organization. In the environment, the stressors may originate in the family or in the neighbourhood or in a broader environment (region or state). The threat of epidemic or natural calamity is a stressor in the broad environment.

These stressors are likely to generate stress in the person. However, the amount of stress experiences depends on the individual personality. Some aspects of stress-prove personality has been identified. The experience of stress leads to three types of consequences or outcomes: physical, psychological and psychophysiological. Increased heart rate, perspiration and blood pressure are indicative of physical outcomes. Worry, anxiety, and sleeplessness are psychological
factors. The diseases like asthma, hypertension, and peptic ulcer are examples of psychophysiological consequences.

The most important distinguishing feature of stress experiences is its psychological nature. As pointed out earlier, the way an individual evaluates a situation is very crucial. Stress experience is based on the perception of harm threat and challenges. It is highly subjective. A player experiencing pain in his or her knee would experience much more stress than a common man experiencing similar pain. The interpretation of the situation is a determining factor.

When persons start evaluating, they assess the severity of the situation. This is followed by the stock-taking of their resources. What is the amount of resource they possess? Are these resources sufficient to overcome the situation? Will the resources be available at the time of need? These questions are considered. If an employee losing the job feels that he or she has necessary skills to get another job, the stress would be minimal. It is also important to recognize that appraisal process is not a fixed entity. It may so happen that the individual has one type of evaluation. But an abrupt recall of reinformation may change the list of his or her resources. For example, he or she may suddenly remember a person who promised to help in the past. Now the inclusion of this new element may tip the scale to a positive side. Thus, the mode of appraisal on the part of individual is a crucial process. Accordingly an efficacious appraisal is needed for the effective management of stress.

**Workplace Stress**

Work stress is a major form of stress in organizations. It is important to recognize that an employee in the organization is member of several groups such as family and neighborhood. These groups place demands on the individuals. Consequently, stress is experienced. Since the individual’s role is the source of stress, it is known as role stress. It is also otherwise known as job stress or occupational stress.
Emotional Quotient

The phrase "emotional intelligence" was coined by Yale psychologist Peter Salovey and the University of New Hampshire's John Mayer (1990) in the early nineties to describe qualities like understanding one's own feelings, empathy for the feelings of others and "the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living." This basic idea was popularised as EQ (Emotional Quotient) by Daniel Goleman, a Harvard psychologist. His goal, as announced on the cover, was to redefine what it means to be smart. His thesis: when it comes to predicting people's success, brainpower as measured by IQ and standardized achievement tests may actually matter less than the qualities of mind once thought of as "character". Some impulses seem to be easier to control than others. Anger, not surprisingly, is one of the hardest, perhaps because of its evolutionary value in priming people to action. Researchers believe anger usually arises out of a sense of being trespassed against--the belief that one is being robbed of what is rightfully his. The body's first response is a surge of energy, the release of a cascade of neurotransmitters called catecholamines. If a person is already aroused or under stress, the threshold for release is lower, which helps explain why people's tempers shorten during a hard day.

Scientists are not only discovering where anger comes from; they are also exposing myths about how best to handle it. Popular wisdom argues for "letting it all hang out" and having a good cathartic rant. But Goleman cites studies showing that dwelling on stress actually increase its power; the body needs a chance to process the adrenaline through exercise relaxation techniques, a well-timed intervention or even the old admonition to count to 10. Over-worrying about failing increases the likelihood of failure; a salesman so concerned about his falling sales that he can't bring himself to pick up the phone guarantees that his sales will fall even further.

But why are some people better able to "snap out of it" and get on with the task at hand? Again, given sufficient self-awareness, people develop coping mechanisms. Sadness and discouragement, for instance, are "low arousal" states, and the dispirited salesman who goes out for a run is triggering a high arousal state that is incompatible with staying blue. Relaxation works better for high-energy moods like anger or anxiety. Either way, the idea is to shift to a state of arousal that breaks the destructive cycle of the dominant mood.

In the corporate world, according to personnel executives, IQ gets you hired, but EQ gets you promoted. Goleman likes to tell of a manager at AT&T's Bell Labs, a think tank for brilliant
engineers in New Jersey, who was asked to rank his top performers. They weren't the ones with the highest IQs; they were the ones whose E-mail got answered. Those workers who were good collaborators and networkers and popular with colleagues were more likely to get the cooperation they needed to reach their goals than the socially awkward, lone-wolf geniuses.

EQ is not the opposite of IQ. Some people are blessed with a lot of both, some with little

**Spiritual Quotient**

Traditionally, spirituality had no place in business as the modern management concepts advocate that the business of business is business. Of late there is an awakening of spirituality in the corporate corridors of America which is evident from the best sellers like The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, and Chicken Soup for the Soul.

The standard IQ test measures rational intelligence—the skills we use to solve logical or strategic problems. For a long time, IQ results were considered the best measurement of a person's smarts and potential for success. At the beginning of the twentieth century, as psychologists discovered ways and means to measure intelligence, Aristotle's definition of man as "a rational animal" developed into an obsession with IQ. In the mid 1990's, Daniel Goleman popularized research into emotional intelligence, EQ, illustrating that EQ is a basic requirement for the appropriate use of IQ. Now, as we near the end of the twentieth century, there is growing collective evidence that there is a third "Q"—"SQ," or Spiritual Intelligence. But in the early 1990s Daniel Goleman (1995) pointed out that success is also dependent on emotional intelligence—the thinking that gives us empathy, compassion, and the ability to respond appropriately to pain or pleasure. Now, at the end of the 20th century, authors Danah Zohar and Dr. Ian Mitchell claim that there is another important Q to consider—the SQ, otherwise known as Spiritual Intelligence. IQ primarily solves logical, mathematical and linguistic problems. EQ makes us aware of our own and others' emotions, judge the situation we are in and behave appropriately. SQ motivates us to create new situations if necessary. Thus it determines our happiness as also our ability to meaningfully utilize IQ and EQ. SQ has many characteristics, most of which center on perception of the unchanging, non-temporal, divine aspect of life. Intriguingly, SQ has a scientific basis. In the 1990s, research at the University of California led to the identification of a 'Godspot' in the human brain. This area, located among neural connections in the temporal lobes.
of the brain, lights up during scans with positron emission topography whenever research subjects are exposed to discussion of spiritual topics. The existence of the Godspot indicates that the brain is programmed to ask ultimate questions. These are all things try to reduce stress and strain of our life. In an empirical study of spirituality in the workplace Mitroff and Elizabeth report that those associated with organizations they perceived as "more spiritual" also saw their organizations as "more profitable." They reported that they were able to bring more of their "complete selves" to work. They could deploy more of their full creativity, emotions, and intelligence; in short, organizations viewed as more spiritual get more from their participants, and vice versa. Mitroff defines "spirituality" as "the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe." If a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role that it plays in people's lives, that word is "interconnectedness." In general, the participants in the above study differentiated strongly between religion and spirituality. They viewed religion as a highly inappropriate form of expression and topic in the workplace. SQ qualities have been defined as wisdom, values, courage, integrity, intuition and compassion. Zohar states that the existence of spiritual intelligence leads us to question ourselves on the very existence of our being. The spirit is not attached to experiences and the outcome of events, but comes from the deeper recesses of self that govern our feelings of well-being.

**Practical Aspect of EQ and SQ**

**Emotional intelligence (EQ) skill 1: Rapidly reduce stress**

High levels of stress can overwhelm the mind and body, getting in the way of your ability to accurately “read” a situation, hear what someone else is saying, be aware of your own feelings and needs, and communicate clearly. Being able to quickly calm yourself down and relieve stress helps you stay balanced, focused, and in control—no matter what challenges you face or how stressful a situation becomes.
Stress busting: functioning well in the heat of the moment

Develop your stress-busting skills by working through the following three steps:

- **Realize when you’re stressed** – The first step to reducing stress is recognizing what stress feels like. How does your body feel when you’re stressed? Are your muscles or stomach tight or sore? Are your hands clenched? Is your breath shallow? Being aware of your physical response to stress will help regulate tension when it occurs.

- **Identify your stress response** – Everyone reacts differently to stress. If you tend to become angry or agitated under stress, you will respond best to stress-relieving activities that quiet you down. If you tend to become depressed or withdrawn, you will respond best to stress-relieving activities that are stimulating. If you tend to freeze—speeding up in some ways while slowing down in others—you need stress-relieving activities that provide both comfort and stimulation.

- **Discover the stress-busting techniques that work for you** – The best way to reduce stress quickly is by engaging one or more of your senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Each person responds differently to sensory input, so you need to find things that are soothing and/or energizing to you. For example, if you’re a visual person you can relieve stress by surrounding yourself with uplifting images. If you respond more to sound, you may find a wind chime, a favorite piece of music, or the sound of a water fountain helps to quickly reduce your stress levels.

**Emotional intelligence (EQ) skill 2: Emotional awareness:**

Being able to connect to your emotions—having a moment-to-moment awareness of your emotions and how they influence your thoughts and actions—is the key to understanding yourself and others. Many people are disconnected from their emotions—especially strong core emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and joy. This may be the result of negative childhood experiences that taught you to try to shut off your feelings. But although we can distort, deny, or numb our feelings, we can’t eliminate them. They’re still there, whether we’re aware of them or not. Unfortunately, without emotional awareness, we are unable to fully understand our own motivations and needs, or to communicate effectively with others.
What kind of a relationship do you have with your emotions?

- **Do you experience feelings that flow**, encountering one emotion after another as your experiences change from moment to moment?
- **Are your emotions accompanied by physical sensations that you experience** in places like your stomach or chest?
- **Do you experience discrete feelings and emotions**, such as anger, sadness, fear, joy, each of which is evident in subtle facial expressions?
- **Can you experience intense feelings** that are strong enough to capture both your attention and that of others?
- **Do you pay attention to your emotions**? Do they factor into your decision making?

If any of these experiences are unfamiliar, your emotions may be turned down or turned off. In order to be emotionally healthy and emotionally intelligent, you must reconnect to your core emotions, accept them, and become comfortable with them.

**Developing emotional awareness:**

Emotional awareness can be learned at any time of life. If you haven’t learned how to manage stress, it’s important to do so first. When you can manage stress, you’ll feel more comfortable reconnecting to strong or unpleasant emotions and changing the way you experience and respond to your feelings.

**Emotional intelligence skill (EQ) 3: Nonverbal communication:**

Being a good communicator requires more than just verbal skills. Often, *what* you say is less important than *how* you say it, or the other nonverbal signals you send out—the gestures you make, the way you sit, how fast or how loud you talk, how close you stand, or how much eye contact you make. In order to hold the attention of others and build connection and trust, you
need to be aware of, and in control of, this body language. You also need to be able to accurately read and respond to the nonverbal cues that other people send you.

These messages don’t stop when someone stops speaking. Even when you’re silent, you’re still communicating nonverbally. Think about what you are transmitting as well, and if what you say matches what you feel. If you insist, “I’m fine,” while clenching your teeth and looking away, your body is clearly signaling the opposite. Your nonverbal messages can produce a sense of interest, trust, excitement, and desire for connection—or they can generate fear, confusion, distrust, and disinterest.

**Tips for improving nonverbal communication:**

Successful nonverbal communication depends on your ability to manage stress, recognize your own emotions, and understand the signals you’re sending and receiving. When communicating:

- **Focus on the other person.** If you are planning what you’re going to say next, daydreaming, or thinking about something else, you are almost certain to miss nonverbal cues and other subtleties in the conversation.
- **Make eye contact.** Eye contact can communicate interest, maintain the flow of a conversation, and help gauge the other person’s response.
- **Pay attention to nonverbal cues** you’re sending and receiving, such as facial expression, tone of voice, posture and gestures, touch, and the timing and pace of the conversation.

**Emotional intelligence (EQ) skill 4: Use humor and play to deal with challenges:**

Humor, laughter, and play are natural antidotes to life’s difficulties; they lighten your burdens and help you keep things in perspective. A good hearty laugh reduces stress, elevates mood, and brings your nervous system back into balance.

Playful communication broadens your emotional intelligence and helps you:

- **Take hardships in stride.** By allowing you to view your frustrations and disappointments from new perspectives, laughter and play enable you to survive annoyances, hard times, and setbacks.

Sahoo
• **Smooth over differences.** Using gentle humor often helps you say things that might be otherwise difficult to express without creating a flap.

• **Simultaneously relax and energize yourself.** Playful communication relieves fatigue and relaxes your body, which allows you to recharge and accomplish more.

• **Become more creative.** When you loosen up, you free yourself of rigid ways of thinking and being, allowing you to get creative and see things in new ways.

**How to develop playful communication:**

It’s never too late to develop and embrace your playful, humorous side.

• Try setting aside regular, quality playtime. The more you joke, play, and laugh—the easier it becomes.

• Find enjoyable activities that loosen you up and help you embrace your playful nature.

• Practice by playing with animals, babies, young children, and outgoing people who appreciate playful banter.

**Emotional intelligence (EQ) skill 5: Resolve conflict positively:**

Conflict and disagreements are inevitable in relationships. Two people can’t possibly have the same needs, opinions, and expectations at all times. However, that needn’t be a bad thing. Resolving conflict in healthy, constructive ways can strengthen trust between people. When conflict isn’t perceived as threatening or punishing, it fosters freedom, creativity, and safety in relationships. The ability to manage conflicts in a positive, trust-building way is supported by the previous four skills of emotional intelligence. Once you know how to manage stress, stay emotionally present and aware, communicate nonverbally, and use humor and play, you’ll be better equipped to handle emotionally charged situations and catch and defuse many issues before they escalate.
Tips for resolving conflict in a trust-building way:

- **Stay focused in the present.** When you are not holding on to old hurts and resentments, you can recognize the reality of a current situation and view it as a new opportunity for resolving old feelings about conflicts.

- **Choose your arguments.** Arguments take time and energy, especially if you want to resolve them in a positive way. Consider what is worth arguing about and what is not.

- **Forgive.** Other people’s hurtful behavior is in the past. To resolve conflict, you need to give up the urge to punish or seek revenge.

- **End conflicts that can't be resolved.** It takes two people to keep an argument going. You can choose to disengage from a conflict, even if you still disagree.

**Application of SQ**

1) **Take Three Deep Breaths:** Deep breathing engages the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) – this is the system that counteracts the stress response and brings the body back to a state of active balance. When our bodies react to a ‘stressor’ or ‘trigger’ the following happens: your heart pumps faster, your digestion and reproductive systems slow down, fats and sugars are dumped into your blood stream for quick energy, and your immune, vascular, ocular and mental systems are (overly) stimulated. This happens to keep you alive in the short term and is only meant to last a few minutes while you fight off or run from danger. When we engage this reaction multiple times daily or weekly, overwhelm, fatigue, anxiety, depression, digestive disorders, heart disease, auto-immune diseases, and cancers have the opportunity to develop. Build the habit of taking 3 deep breaths, five times a day, every day. When you feel stress-out, return to your breath and engage the PNS. Learn to actively relax within, during, and after a stressful.

2) **Knowing is Not Doing:** How often do you find yourself saying ‘I know I should relax’, or ‘I know I should take better care of myself’? The stress response prepares your body to take action. When you feel stress, your body is sending you a message – things must change. This action and change need not be huge and life-altering. By doing nothing you are reinforcing a message that you are powerless in your life. Disempowerment fuels stress. By ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’ you
reduce the experience of stress symptoms – i.e. headaches, fatigue, upset stomach, anxiety, and depression.

3) You are what you ‘eat’: Consume things that serve you well. These ‘things’ may be healthy food, engaging relationships, challenging practices, physical exercise, peaceful living situations, or well-paid, supportive work. We are all the sum of our experiences and choices. Choose to consume wisely.

References