

performance in jobs where you have to deal with emotions every day, like sales, real estate, and counselling. If you're selling a house or helping people cope with tragedies, it's very useful to know what they're feeling and respond appropriately. But in jobs that lack these emotional demands—like engineering, accounting, or science—emotional intelligence predicted *lower* performance. If your work is primarily about dealing with data, things, and ideas rather than people and feelings, it's not necessarily advantageous to be skilled in reading and regulating emotions. If your job is to fix a car or balance numbers in a spreadsheet, paying attention to emotions might distract you from working efficiently and effectively.

Even in emotionally demanding work, when it comes to job performance, cognitive ability still proves more consequential than emotional intelligence. Cognitive ability is the capacity to learn. The higher your cognitive ability, the easier it is for you to develop emotional intelligence when you need it. (This is one of the reasons that emotional intelligence and cognitive ability turn out to **correlate positively**<sup>46</sup>, not negatively.)

As better tests of emotional intelligence are designed, our knowledge may change. But for now, the best available evidence suggests that emotional intelligence is **not a panacea**<sup>47</sup>. Let's recognize it for what it is: a set of skills that can be beneficial in situations where emotional information is rich or vital.

If you felt intense negative emotions while reading this post, it's an excellent opportunity to put emotional intelligence into action.

**Step 1:** recognize the emotion. Is it disgust? Probably not—that's **usually reserved**<sup>48</sup> for gross foods, sights, and smells. Is it hostility? More likely: **hostility**<sup>49</sup> is anger directed toward other people.

**Step 2:** analyze the causes of the emotion. Why are you feeling hostile? Years ago, the psychologist George Kelly **argued**<sup>50</sup> that hostility occurs when we are attempting to

“extort confirmation of personal hypotheses that have already proved themselves to be invalid.” In other words, you might be feeling hostile because the data are clear that emotional intelligence has been overrated, but you don't want to admit it.

**Step 3:** regulate the emotion. Maybe this isn't as terrible as it seems. You've been able to update invalidated beliefs before. Napoleon wasn't short. Pluto isn't technically a planet. Swimming after eating isn't dangerous. Miley Cyrus isn't actually a great role model. The LOST writers didn't really have a master plan.

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### About the Author

Adam Grant is an award-winning teacher, researcher, and tenured management professor at Wharton. He is the author of *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success*<sup>51</sup>, a *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling book that is being translated into more than two dozen languages and has been named one of Amazon's best books of 2013, one of *Fortune's* five must-read business books, one of the *Financial Times* books of the year, one of *Oprah's* riveting reads, and one of the *Washington Post's* books every leader should read. Malcolm Gladwell recently identified Adam as one of his **favourite social science writers**<sup>52</sup>, calling his work “brilliant.”

Adam received his Ph.D. and M.S. from the University of Michigan in organizational psychology and his B.A. from Harvard University, magna cum laude with highest honours, Phi Beta Kappa honours, and the John Harvard Scholarship for highest academic achievement.

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## How's the year been so far? How's business?

By Sunil Bali

A friend of mine runs a very successful recruitment company. His most successful recruiter, Sarah, has maintained her fee rate this year despite difficult market conditions.

Many of Sarah's colleagues have lowered their fees to try and win market share, but aren't as successful as Sarah who charges the highest price, but produces the most profit.

When questioned as to why she charges the highest fees, Sarah replied, “Because I'm worth it.” Her clients clearly think so as she has by far the highest levels of repeat business in the company and they worship her, or should I say *worthship* her, since they believe she is *worth* the fees that she charges.

The economy may be weak, as might be your particular market, but life's a result of your decisions, not your conditions. It's been estimated that over \$200,000Billion is spent globally every day. Opportunities are everywhere. Here's a message from those that seize them:

*Dear optimist, pessimist and realist,  
 While you were deciding how much water there was in the glass, I drank it.  
 Yours sincerely  
 The Opportunist*

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### About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

Ex Head of Talent for Vodafone Group and Santander, and having run a £50m business, Sunil has been responsible for hiring over 50000 people and has had the pleasure of working with some great entrepreneurs, professionals and leaders.

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