

**THE ROLE OF THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORK OF THE  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER - A BRIEF GUIDEBOOK TO THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

**Mihaiela DAVID**

*Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava*

E-mail: [emihaiela.david@gmail.com](mailto:emihaiela.david@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

Along with the development and the diversification of the duties that fall within the scope of the human resources department, the issue of reorganizing this sector as well as increasing the range of skills and abilities possessed by specialists working in *the human resources* has also been raised. If for the preparation of individual employment contract knowledge of the labor legislation was required, and for the preparation of a payroll elements of accounting were required, today the requirements for a *human resources* specialist involve a much more diverse range of knowledge and skills. Thus, the economic or administrative training is joined by knowledge in the fields of psychology, sociology and biology, without which it would be difficult for the human resources specialist to achieve performance both at the personal level and at the level of personnel management that administer it.

The access to information related to the personal development and the knowledge of the human behavior is no longer the exclusive right of psychology. Without diminishing the importance of an academic course in this respect, we would like to bring to attention a "shortcut" thereof, as a result of which any person can acquire a series of knowledge and skills specific to the field. This paper proposes to bring to the field of knowledge the category of information accessible as content, to the employees in the field of human resources who have studies in psychology. We thus connect to a universe of knowledge at the level of personal skills, self-motivation, empathy, identification and observation of emotions, and more concretely, to the ***emotional intelligence***.

The present paper came in response to the difficulties that the human resources personnel with predominantly economic education encounter in the activities that require understanding the behavior of employees, in their capacity as human resources. The paper summarizes the elements that define the concept of emotional intelligence and proposes a five-step guide to its development.

***Key concepts: emotional intelligence, emotions, human resource, development, management***

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to highlight the fact that the human resources specialists who underwent a change in responsibilities from the economic area to that of psychology, encountered difficulties in managing these new (recruitment, selection, training, motivation, counseling) duties. Without an academic training in this respect, they found themselves in the situation of emotionally regulating the staff they managed, without having received the necessary tools. The research was intended for a specific category of personnel, and as a result of the centralization of the answers, a proposal of a mini guide for the development of emotional intelligence was made, which would help this category of personnel in the effective administration of the new duties.

These duties are often not specified in the job description, as the HR staff receives these new tasks in a less official way, only through the verbal request of the head of the organization and many professionals find themselves in the situation to carry them out voluntarily because of the request to do so. The accounting/HR office has, over time, become a place where the organization's staff looks for emotional support and encouragement, whether it's a personal or professional situation.

## 2. Context

Aspects related to the work and management of personnel or human resources have existed over time in our country, under various names: "Personnel Department", "Personnel Office", "Work Organization", but they all performed the same function of work management. The traditional *HR* department could be found in the organizational chart of companies before the 1990s. The specific activities of the original (classical) human resources department relate to aspects involving the personnel administration, namely the hiring of future employees in an organization, their salary and personal file management. To carry out these types of activities, the staff employed in the former R.U. (HR) department had, according to the requirements of the job description, an education and training in the financial-accounting or in the administrative field.

These studies were necessary for the accounting and administrative management of wages, the preparation of accounting notes (calculation of net salary, contributions due to the state budget, medical leaves, vacations, length of service calculation, preparation and submission of declarations regarding the obligations to pay social contributions of income tax and the nominal record of insured persons). With the transformation of this department from

one with real specifics to one with requirements from the human domain (employment interview, motivation and counseling of personnel presuppose knowledge that addresses man, as an individual carrying emotions and feelings) the staff working in human resources saw themselves in the situation to develop new skills in the field of human knowledge (psychology, sociology).

The transition from routine tasks to tasks requiring openness and a type of human personality knowledge; it also imperatively demanded a personal and professional upgrade from the professionals in the human resources department.

Actions such as the recruitment, the selection, the motivation or counseling of staff have put human resources professionals in front of a great challenge, especially those of them who had an economic or administrative background. The need to know the person, to identify or recognize their potential since the very selection stage, raised the bar of the personal training for this category of staff.

### **3. The concept of emotional intelligence**

The concept of emotional intelligence, very "fashionable" nowadays, is subject to the analysis of the two camps; Specialists in psychology, sociology or human resources use, in less friendly conversations, a series of studies that support or deny the existence of such an approach to emotions and the management thereof.<sup>1</sup>

A summary of the elements that define the emotional intelligence combines several pieces taken from authors who have turned their attention to this topic. Reuven Bar-On, Ph.D. at Tel Aviv University, considered in 1992 that emotional intelligence could be characterized by a series of elements, which he grouped into five dimensions that concern the personal and interpersonal aspects, but all of which are related to emotions: their awareness, empathy, ability to solve problems, stress tolerance, happiness and optimism.

The phenomenon, however, attracted attention with the occurrence of the bestseller "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman. He took the ideas from the works of Mayer and Salovey from 1990, and formulated other attributes to define the emotional intelligence: the self-awareness, the adaptability, the empathy, the communication, the conflict management and the cooperation.

---

<sup>1</sup> D.Iliescu, A.Ilie (2011)*Relația stresului ocupațional cu inteligența emoțională. O investigație centrată pe două instrumente de evaluare a inteligenței emoționale* -Revista Psihologia resurselor umane vol 9, pag 16

Any of the definitions given by the researchers who focused on this concept can be summed up in a person's ability to observe his emotions, to name them, to identify the trigger, to take responsibility for his own emotions, to have the self-control to respond, not to react, and to seek out the trauma that downgrades the automatic reaction and heal it.

#### **4. Investigation**

To support our hypothesis we conducted an investigation in the form of a questionnaire that was filled-in by 42 employees working in the field of human resources. Of these, 61.9% (26 respondents) have studied economics, 14.3% of the respondents studied law, 7.1% of the respondents studied engineering, 2.4% of respondents studied psychology and 14.3% of the respondents have studied other fields of activity. The age categories of the respondents were: 76.2 fall between 36-55 years old (38.1% 36-45 years old, 38.1% 46-55 years old), 14.3% 20-35 years old and 9.5% over 55 years old.

The seniority in the field of human resources was divided as follows: 47.7% of the respondents have been working in this field for over 20 years, 23.8% of the respondents have been working in this field for 11-15 years, 19% of the respondents have worked between 6-10 years and 28.6 of the respondents have worked up to 5 years in this field of activity.

61.9% of the respondents carry out activities related to the human resources management, but only 33.3% of them have these duties written down in the job description. Although they do not have specialized training in the field of psychology, 47.6% of the respondents appreciate that they did not feel overwhelmed by these duties, 42.9% of respondents sometimes felt overwhelmed, 4.8% of respondents often felt overwhelmed and 4.8% of them also do not know how to manage these duties.

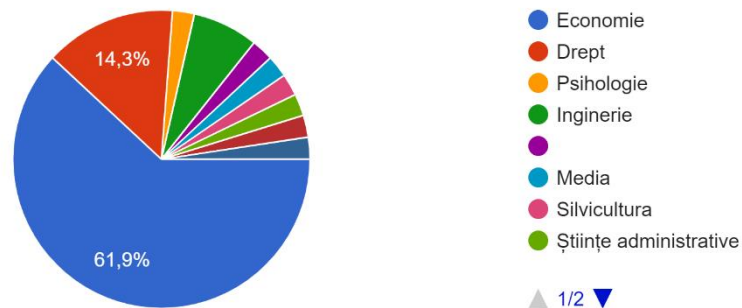
A percentage of 70.7% of the respondents considered that a guide for managing these situations would be useful, 24.4% of respondents believed that they can look for solutions themselves, while 4.9% of respondents did not consider such a guide useful.

92.9% of the people who were interviewed were familiar with the concept of emotional intelligence, but 50% of them have not delved into the subject and 7.1% have not heard of this topic.

However, 61.9% of the respondents knew techniques for managing emotions at work and 33.3% had no knowledge on how to do it. However, an overwhelming percentage of 97.6% of the people interviewed would follow a course / would like to have information about the emotional intelligence and 95.2% would recommend the employer to follow such a course.

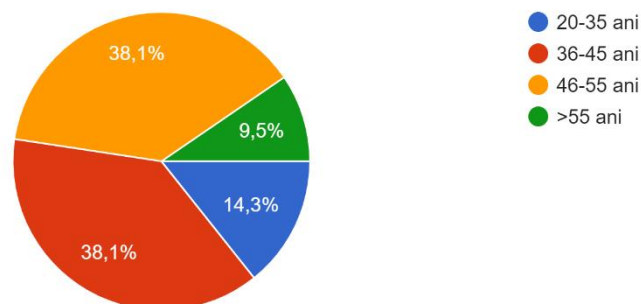
.Care este domeniul în care ați obținut licența?

42 de răspunsuri



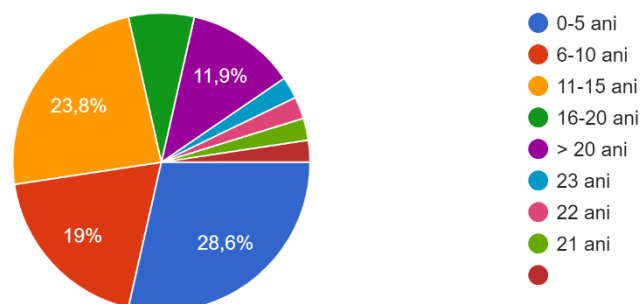
În ce categorie de vârstă vă încadrați?

42 de răspunsuri



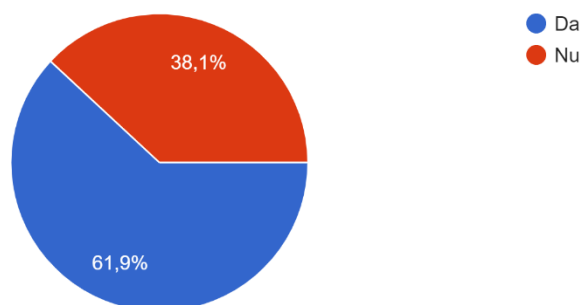
Care este vechimea dvs. in domeniul resurselor umane?

42 de răspunsuri



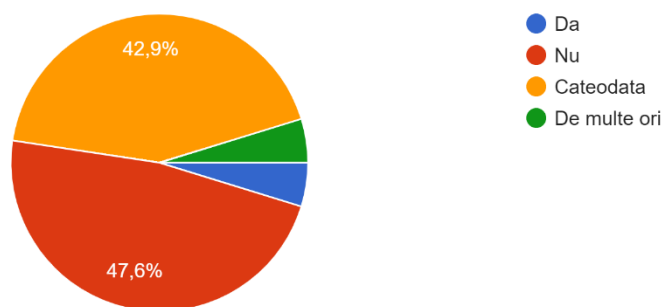
Desfășurați activități care țin de managementul resurselor umane (recrutare, acomodare, training, consiliere, motivare)?

42 de răspunsuri



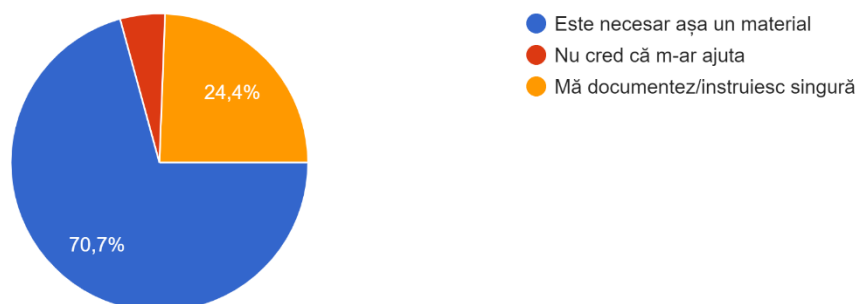
V-ați simțit depășit din punct de vedere personal/profesional de aceste atribuții ?

42 de răspunsuri



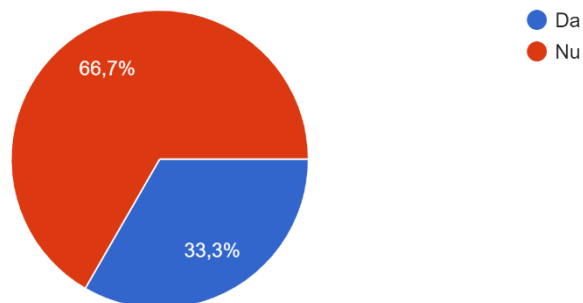
Cum ați aprecia un material (curs de formare, ghid) care să vă ajute în gestionarea acestor situații care țin de managementul emoțiilor în organizații?

41 de răspunsuri



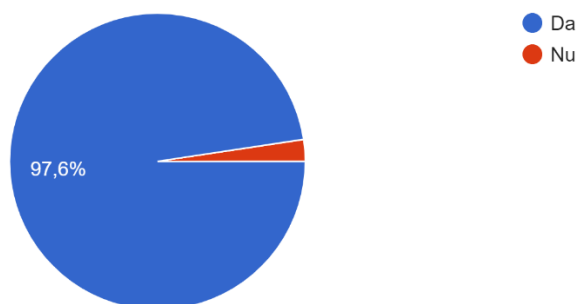
Aveți menționate în fișa postului aceste atribuții?

42 de răspunsuri



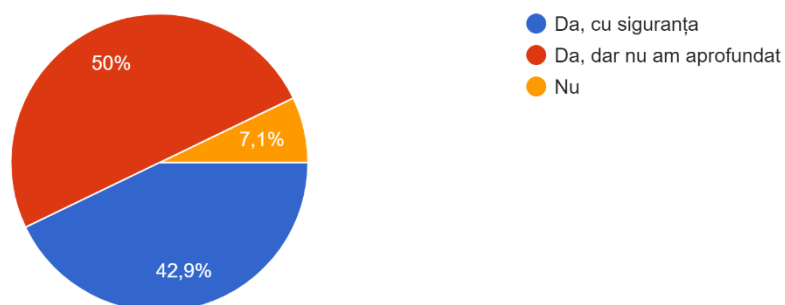
Ați considera util/ați urma un curs de formare în domeniul inteligenței emoționale?

42 de răspunsuri



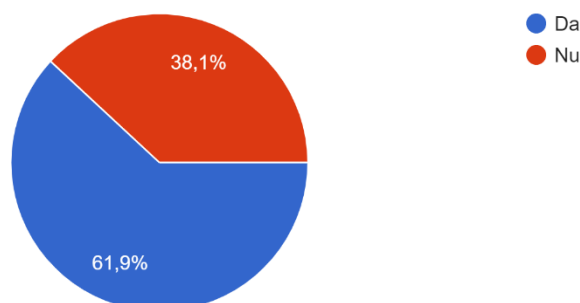
Sunteți familiarizat(ă) cu conceptul de inteligență emoțională?

42 de răspunsuri



Desfășurați activități care țin de managementul resurselor umane (recrutare, acomodare, training, consiliere, motivare)?

42 de răspunsuri



### **5.Conclusions and possible solutions. Mini Guide to Developing Emotional Intelligence in Five Steps recommended for HR professionals**

This article came about as a result of the difficulties that the HR personnel encountered with the diversification of the duties related to this field. Personally, I have a bachelor's degree in economics (accounting-finance) and a master's degree in the administration and training of human resources in organizations. This academic background was not sufficient for the optimal performance of human resource management activities and additional research and training was required. The present paper is the result of this research and it aims to provide a little guidance in the field of understanding oneself and those around, through the lens of developing skills related to the emotional intelligence.

We have shown that most of the personnel working in the field of human resources have training, at the level of a bachelor's degree, in the field of economics and they encounter difficulties in effectively managing the duties related to the management of human resources.

Jobs often have a stressful potential and the passing of these situations through the filter of the emotional intelligence (the prefrontal brain)<sup>2</sup> diminishes the negative automatic reactions and it puts the human resource in a position of observation, then of introspection and assumption. As a result, the response to aggressive stimuli does not disturb the relational comfort in the organization and its climate does not experience disturbances. A workplace free of conflicts or where, if they arise, they are quickly identified and canceled, creates a space of

---

<sup>2</sup> Goleman D.(2016) *Creierul și inteligența emoțională* pag.15 Ed.Curtea Veche București

trust where the attention and the energy of employees stay focused to the work tasks; this is an action that ultimately leads to an increase in the professional performance.

Unlike the academic intelligence (Q.I.) which is a static parameter throughout life, the emotional intelligence (E.Q./E.I.) has the advantage of being able to be improved through exercise<sup>3</sup>. Its development leads to a better understanding of oneself and subsequently of those around. Thus, we can understand how emotions arise within us, that they are created within us, and that it is within our power to manage them, because they belong to us. Therefore, statements that place the responsibility for the negative change in the emotional state on a personal level, such as: "you made me angry", no longer have a foundation. The personal pronoun "you" is removed and the focus shifts to "I," what can "I" understand to be happening within me, what emotion do I feel, and how can I respond to external stimuli without upsetting my emotional balance? The need to develop emotional intelligence arises as a result of the inner turmoil, a desire for self-knowledge and a better understanding of those around us.

If we remove the sciences that deal with the study of human personality from academia<sup>4</sup>, we can have the openness to accept that, in fact, this is about life and increasing its quality. A study<sup>5</sup> carried out by the Harvard Study of Human Development, which is also the largest study in the history of mankind, and which has been carried out since 1933 until the present day, states that in order to maintain a high quality of life we need to cultivate optimally relationships with the people around us.

**The first step** in developing the emotional intelligence is accepting the fact that in order to have harmonious relationships with others, it is necessary to take personal responsibility for building them. More specifically, let's acknowledge that the only person we have control over is our own person and this is the only one we can act on. We cannot direct the behavior of other people, we cannot make them behave in a given way (we exclude the manipulation, the emotional blackmail, the use of force, which are morally and socially condemned behaviors). Our sole strength lies in the response we choose to give in a situation where there are differences of opinion, regardless of what the interlocutor says or does.

This first conscious action occurs at the mental level and it implies intentionally creating a new way of looking at a situation. We start by making a change from the habit of

---

<sup>3</sup> Goleman D.(2018) *Inteligența emoțională* pag.10 Ed.Curtea Veche București

<sup>4</sup> Cei mai cunoscuți autori a materialelor care privesc inteligența emoțională sunt psihologi J.Mayer, P. Salovey, D. Goleman

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/10/85-year-harvard-study-found-the-secret-to-a-long-happy-and-successful-life.html>

seeing things only in one perspective - our own - to the openness to accept that there is also a different way of relating to a situation. The advantage lies in the fact that the new way of looking at things improves our lives. More specifically, we submit to the discomfort of turning an action that has become a habit, because it has been practiced for a period of time, into another response. The ultimate goal of this change is to achieve a higher quality of life. We try something new, to get something new, which is better than what we are experiencing at the moment, because identifying these emotions and changing them is to our advantage.

We believe that this step is the bearer of the most difficult task that the emotional intelligence entails. Shifting the focus from what others are doing and how they are responsible for how "they" make me feel is challenging. It takes attention and openness to accept that emotions are felt within me, and even if the context is different or even if I interact with various people, the common denominator is me. More precisely, the common element to all these situations in which I do not feel comfortable, the element that is always present, is me. Now, we will gently look at ourselves, we will start from the idea that there is nothing "broken" or wrong with us, that we do not need to change, but only to transform ourselves. This kind of approach positions us in a state of compassion rather than self-rejection, moving away from the idea that we are "flawed" and need to be "fixed."

**The second step** consists in training the state of presence, in order to identify the emotions that a specific situation arouses in us. It's time for questions: What do I feel? How does this situation make me feel? What is the name of the emotion?<sup>6</sup> The main emotions are 8 in number - anger, sadness, fear, surprise, disgust, shame, love and joy. This is the core of emotions, on the basis of which a range of other secondary emotions can be derived (feeling proud, helpless, depressed, abandoned, embarrassed and unappreciated).<sup>7</sup> It is necessary to build and develop a vocabulary of emotions, which will allow us to correctly identify these affective reactions.

For a deeper analysis we can explore the personal universe of memories and find a childhood situation that made us feel this way before. Because the root of every state triggered by an emotion is in a childhood incident, when an "experience is lived in non-acceptance (...)

---

<sup>6</sup> Plutchik R. (1980) - Feelings Well Psychoevolutionary Theory of Emotion  
[https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780125587013500077?fbclid=IwAR2IQq5V05ghns\\_lxyM\\_M27Q6U9yfwpnQTiy59HoRdOBdf5RxckVdqPa5tM](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780125587013500077?fbclid=IwAR2IQq5V05ghns_lxyM_M27Q6U9yfwpnQTiy59HoRdOBdf5RxckVdqPa5tM) ; <https://www.6seconds.org/2022/03/13/plutchik-wheel-emotions/>

<sup>7</sup> Yeung R., (2012) - *The rules of E.Q.*, Ed. Meteor Press București, pag. 26, pag.30

and afterwards people endlessly attract circumstances and people who make them relive the same experience”<sup>8</sup>

**The third step** is a break. More specifically, this is a stop from having an immediate reaction to the external stimulus that has the potential to trigger a negative emotional response and shifting attention to the present moment. If we fail to do this, the amygdala (the emotional brain, the trigger point for suffering) has the right to take over the whole brain, a process known as amygdala hijacking<sup>9</sup> and it provides an answer for a situation that it perceives as a possible danger, "the classic fight, flight or freeze and the body receives a flood of stress hormones, mainly cortisol and adrenaline.”<sup>10</sup>

We thus obtain a sure recipe for a situation with a great potential for conflict, because a person who has entered into this hijacking process, no longer has contact with the present and no longer has the possibility to choose how to react. The information that the amygdala gathers from the environment is disorganized; as a result it often makes mistakes and it exaggerates the danger it perceives. Therefore, we experience reactions out of proportion to the situation we are in, which we later come to regret. Certainly, we will then look for a coping mechanism (an often automatic characteristic, an action or set of actions undertaken in the face of stress or threatening situations)<sup>11</sup> with the help of which we justify our action, although we know, deep down inside, that this is wrong.

This third step has, at first glance, the characteristic of a non-action, but this behavior of temporarily suspending action requires discipline and much practice. Therefore, it is the result of planned, repeated and sustained actions, and it is of crucial importance in how the events of our lives unfold.

**The fourth step** consists in choosing the answer we give. From the position of emotional neutrality, as a non-triggered person (trigger - stimulus that causes a reaction)<sup>12</sup> we can communicate effectively and give the conversation we are part of a linear course, without bringing our own negative emotions to the emotional carousel the interlocutor invites us into. Focusing on the positive state and keeping it diminishes the intensity of the other's negative state and it lowers it to an emotional level conducive to a rational conversation. However, it is

---

<sup>8</sup> Bourbeau L. (2017) - *Cele cinci răni care nu ne lasă să fim noi înșine*, Ed. Ascendent București, pag.7

<sup>9</sup> Goleman D.(2014) - *Creierul și Inteligența emoțională-noi perspective*, Ed. Curtea Veche București, pag.37

<sup>10</sup> Goleman D.(2014) - *Creierul și Inteligența emoțională-noi perspective*, Ed. Curtea Veche București, pag.18

<sup>11</sup> Dictionary of psychology Published(2002) by American Psychological Association 750 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20002 [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org) pag.252

<sup>12</sup> Dictionary of psychology Published(2002) by American Psychological Association 750 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20002 [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org) pag.1108

necessary to be able to maintain the state of emotional detachment as much as possible so that "mirror neurons"<sup>13</sup> that activates in the other our emotional states, to read our internal balance and adjust to us. We cannot mimic our own inner peace, because emotions are contagious and the interlocutor will automatically pick them up and reflect them back like a mirror. Let's keep in mind that our emotions are not a choice, but how we manage and then respond to them is.

Recent studies<sup>14</sup> reveal the brain's ability to change, reorganize or develop new neural networks. This information allows us to accept that we can learn new ways of responding to a situation, that we do not have to let ourselves be defeated by the helplessness we have experienced so far in the handling of conflict situations.

As a result, regardless of the events that come from the outside world, the way in which we internally process them and then send them back to others is a matter of personal discipline. For this it is necessary to analyze ourselves and identify words or actions with potential triggers and change the way we respond (not react!) to them.

**The fifth step** is the healing. The attachment theory<sup>15</sup> reveals four attachment styles that form during our childhood, between the child and the person who takes care of him, usually the mother. The attachment style is not unique to infant-caregiver relationships, but may be present in other forms of social relationships as well. Once we know this, we can deepen it by also identifying the emotional consequences we experience after creating such a connection. Also, a starting step is the research of emotional wounds also through the lens of the relationship we had with our parents<sup>16</sup>; these are wounds that form during the early childhood that create a filter through which we will view all our future relationships, regardless of their nature. Healing does not occur all of a sudden, it is a process that lasts, and each small step we take transforms us into a much improved version of ourselves.

The change that the healing process brings about comes with the reward of a greatly improved personal life. The character transformation is a rather painful process that causes discomfort, but according to the latest research it is achievable. Accepting that we are responsible for how we feel and starting to work on ourselves to lower our pride is essential to developing social skills. Also, increasing the level of empathy, creating the desire to understand those around you is the support for the development of our emotional intelligence.

---

<sup>13</sup> Goleman D.(2014) - *Creierul și Inteligența emoțională-noi perspective*, Ed. Curtea Veche București, pag.76

<sup>14</sup> Cherry K (2022) What is neuroplasticity <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-brain-plasticity-2794886>

<sup>15</sup> Bowlby J. Attachment Theory (1969) <https://simplypsychology.org/attachment.html>

<sup>16</sup> Bourbeau L. (2018) – *Vindecarea celor cinci răni* , Ed. Ascendent București, pag. 181

**References:**

- Bourbeau, L. (2017). Cele cinci răni care nu ne lasă să fim noi înșine. Ed. Ascendent.
- Bourbeau, L. (2018). Vindecarea celor cinci răni. Ed. Ascendent.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment Theory. Retrieved from <https://simplypsychology.org/attachment.html>
- Goleman, D. (2014). Creierul și Inteligența emoțională - noi perspective. Ed. Curtea Veche București.
- Goleman, D. (2016). Creierul și inteligența emoțională. Ed. Curtea Veche București.
- Goleman, D. (2018). Inteligența emoțională. Ed. Curtea Veche București.
- Iliescu, D., & Ilie, A. (2011). Relația stresului ocupațional cu inteligența emoțională. O investigație centrată pe două instrumente de evaluare a inteligenței emoționale. Revista Psihologia Resurselor Umane, 9.
- Plutchik, R. (1980). Feelings: Well Psychoevolutionary Theory of Emotion.
- Yeung, R. (2012). The rules of E.Q. Ed. Meteor Press București.
- \*\*\*Harvard Study (2023, February 10). 85-year Harvard study found the secret to a long, happy, and successful life. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/02/10/85-year-harvard-study-found-the-secret-to-a-long-happy-and-successful-life.html>
- \*\*\* What is neuroplasticity <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-brain-plasticity-2794886>, 2012