

Jessica
KENNEDY

P'shaw to proponents of IQ

Emotional smarts surmount search for intelligence

Last Friday marked the anniversary of the theory of relativity — an earth-shaking proclamation from a rather simple man.

Albert Einstein, now regarded as one of science's leading men, started life as an academic misfit. After spending most of his early life unable to function within traditional educational paradigms, Einstein proceeded to wow the world with his discoveries.

To overcome such disparities and reach such remarkable heights required more than sheer genius. Einstein seemed to possess that elusive "something" that made him different.

All too often, children (and adults) are labeled according to their IQ — limited because of their placement on the bell curve.

The bell curve is a "quantitative" weighting of IQ that through its structure inherently declares higher IQs better ... regardless of what is accomplished with that "intelligence."

But IQ obviously doesn't explain everything. Otherwise, Einstein's performance should have mirrored his intelligence at a much earlier age.

IQ can't explain National Merit Scholars who fail out of school or billionaires who never finish high school.

So what is the explanation? What is that "something" that allowed Einstein to overcome his stilted beginnings?

How about the theory of emotional intelligence — EQ if you will?

It's a relatively new theory attempting to explain the unquantifiable, the immeasurable.

Daniel Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence" says that "at best, IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves about 80 percent to other forces." Those other forces range from geographic location to upbringing to luck.

Emotional intelligence, IQ's subjective partner, addresses difficult



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to measure characteristics that make up who we are.

Goleman's examples of these characteristics: self-motivation and persistence, especially in times of frustration; controlling moods; staying focused when faced with overwhelming demands; putting gratification on hold; and hope.

Basing success or even a person's value only on his "hardware" is insane. It's what a person can and will do with that hardware that matters.

I know brilliant people who have dropped out of school and are working jobs that are "below" their abilities. Or people with near-perfect GPA's and little ambition. And more often than not, people who — without the possession of a high GPA or IQ — do great things for society.

It's so frustrating that so much importance is placed on quantitative measures like IQ or GPA. In actuality, neither tells us very much about who we are or quite frankly, what we're capable of.

Sure, IQ hints or alludes to a person's capabilities, but for the most part ... it's limiting. A child told early that they're of average

intelligence, may never strive to accomplish more.

In a similar vein, GPA is used as a measure of intelligence (rightly so or not). But it does not and cannot factor in the "other characteristics" of which Goleman writes.

For example, if you followed the IQ and GPA "logic," I should be a near (if not an actual) 4.0 student studying at a top university on full scholarship. Good God I wish! I'm not even close! My academic record defies those lauded "academic" standards and expectations.

So how has my life been derailed from sure success (if you buy the whole IQ thing), and why would I let it? Because there are many other things that influence me more than the desire for a 4.0 (though the scholarship money would've been nice...).

Things like the fact that I hate studying from books. Or my extreme ability to daydream or even my desire to participate frequently in the age-old endeavor of discourse, i.e., I like to talk.

In response to stuffy academics who proclaim the ultimate veracity of IQ and GPA, I stick out my tongue. In the end, their scales leave too much unanswered and unexplained.

EQ, though by no means perfect nor isolated from IQ, is a contemporary starting point for determining a person's life potential. I like the idea that there's more to a person's makeup than intellect.

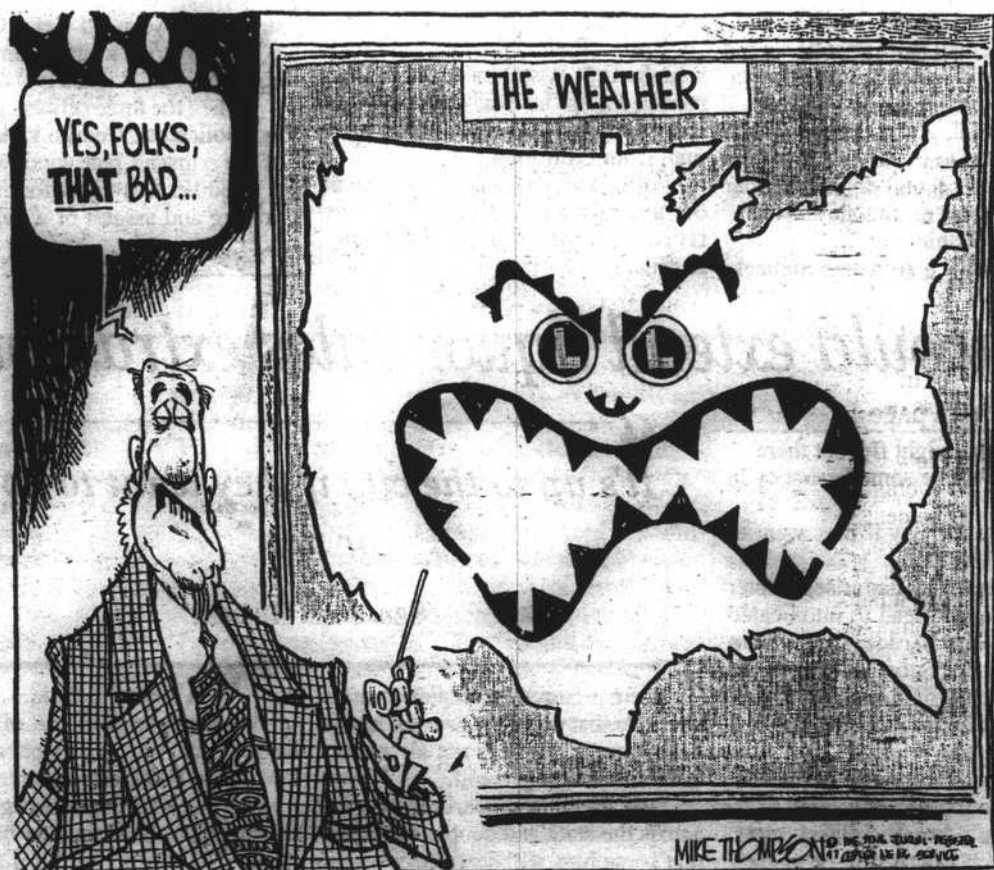
Think of the things you value about the people around you. More likely than not, intelligence is not the first thing you name. Or the fifth. Or the 10th.

Instead of judging someone by his or her intelligence, stop and look to see if he or she is a good person.

After all, when the shit hits the fan, it's EQ that's gonna keep you out of the spray — not IQ.

Kennedy is a senior advertising and broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Cartoonist's VIEW



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