



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Discuss some parallels between Buddhism and modern ideas on emotional intelligence. (150 words)

29 Dec, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

### Approach

- Start your by briefly describing emotional intelligence
- Discuss the similarities between Buddhism and the concept of emotional intelligence
- Conclude accordingly

### Introduction

- Emotional intelligence or EI is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, and those of the people around you. People with a high degree of emotional intelligence know what they're feeling, what their emotions mean, and how these emotions can affect other people.

### Body

- What is known today as EI, is what Siddhartha Gautam (the Buddha), urged his disciples to develop in them, and the doctrine he preached was in essence a well-defined path to developing EI to its practical extreme.
- **Components of Emotional Intelligence:**
  - **Self-Awareness:** It is the skill of being aware of and understanding one's emotions as they occur and as they evolve.
  - **Self-Regulation:** It is about controlling one's emotions i.e., instead of reacting quickly; one can reign in one's emotions and thus will think before responding.
  - **Internal Motivation:** It includes one's personal drive to improve and achieve commitment to one's goals, initiative, or readiness to act on opportunities, and optimism and resilience.
  - **Empathy:** It is an awareness of the needs and feelings of others both individually and in groups, and being able to see things from the point of view of others.
  - **Social Skills:** It is applying empathy and balancing the wants and requirements of others with one's. It includes building good rapport with others.
- **Similarities between Buddhism and Emotional Intelligence:**
  - **Right Mindfulness:** One of the key principles of Buddhism is the concept of mindfulness, which involves being aware of and present in the current moment without judgment.
    - This is similar to the modern concept of emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others.
  - **Self-Awareness:** Another parallel between Buddhism and emotional intelligence is the importance placed on self-regulation and control of one's emotions.
    - In Buddhism, this is often referred to as "equanimity," which refers to the ability to remain balanced and undisturbed in the face of difficult emotions or circumstances.
    - This is similar to the modern concept of emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to regulate and control one's emotions in a healthy and constructive way.
  - **Compassion:** Both Buddhism and emotional intelligence also emphasize the importance of empathy and understanding the emotions of others. In Buddhism, this is often referred to

- as "compassion," which involves understanding and caring for the suffering of others.
- In emotional intelligence, the ability to understand and respond appropriately to the emotions of others is an important aspect of effective communication and relationship building.
  - **Right View:** It is the intellectual aspect of wisdom. It implies penetrating the outward aspect of things, understanding the transient and imperfect nature.
  - **Right Speech:** It is a route to moral discipline which sustains other virtues. Right speech consists of the following:
    - To abstain from telling lies and speaking deceitfully.
    - To avoid malicious or slanderous speech.
    - To refrain from using harsh words which hurt others.
    - To abstain from idle chatter that lacks purpose or depth.
  - **Right Action:** It includes the acts that are kind and compassionate like to be honest, to respect the belongings of others; and to avoid sexual misconduct.
  - **Right Efforts:** It refers to psychic energy which produces either wholesome or unwholesome mental states. It can lead, for example, to aggression, envy, desire and violence. But the same energy can lead to self-discipline, honesty, altruism and compassion. One has to control mind through right efforts.

## Conclusion

Overall, Buddhism and modern ideas on emotional intelligence both recognize the importance of being aware of and managing one's own emotions, as well as understanding and responding to the emotions of others, in order to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.