

# POSITIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY AS A MEANS OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE COURSE OF INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE FULFILLMENT



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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present a psychological hermeneutic triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment. In this context, the methodological framework and psychotechnical tools of positive psychotherapy contribute to the explication of the axiological potential of the emotional intelligence in three modes of realization: internal, external and integrative through the bodily sensation and emotional competence and understanding, interpretation and hermeneutic circle mechanisms.

Application of positive psychotherapy at the empirical stage of the study has resulted in a training program for the development of emotional intelligence in the areas of individual's life fulfillment relevant for the participants, as well as through individual consultations. The article presents evidence of the effectiveness of a prolonged formative experiment on the development of emotional intelligence by means of positive psychotherapy, which helped verify the author's theoretical model.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, positive psychotherapy, training, bodily sensation, emotional competence, mode of individual's life fulfillment

## Introduction

The study of the role of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment goes beyond the traditional idea of this phenomenon, which is mostly studied in the abilities model (D. Caruso, P. Salovey, M. Brackett, J. Mayer, 2015), the dispositional model (the model of personal traits) of K. Petrides and A. Furnham (2000) and the mixed model of R. Bar-On (2006) and D. Goleman (2006). The first model emphasizes the emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive abilities to identify, understand and manage emotions; the second one emphasizes the idea that the emotional functioning

of an individual depends on appropriate settings and characteristics; and the third model considers emotional intelligence as a combination of cognitive abilities and personal traits. Belarusian scholar I. Andreeva (2011) introduced an integrative model of emotional intelligence, which combines the abilities model and the mixed model. Her proposed model covers four components: 1) identification of one's own emotions; 2) control of one's own emotions; 3) understanding the emotions of other people; 4) self-motivation.

However, the theoretical approaches outlined here are not very sensitive to the ideas of postmodernism (and therefore metamodernism) and social constructivism – the main methodological foundations of narrative psychotherapy. They also ignore the axiological potential of emotional intelligence, which is realized in the process of constructing a person's own life path. Modern neuropsychological research supports the constructivist paradigm of the nature and functions of emotional intelligence and is consistent with the conceptual and methodological arsenal of positive psychotherapy.

Theoretical principles of the triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment. Studying the functions of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment, I came to the conclusion that it consists of two main components: the bodily sensation and emotional competence. The first component is the ability of a person to be attentive and open to their own corporeal markers of spiritual intentions, which are manifested in basic emotional attitudes and indicate the correctness or incorrectness of the choice made by the individual. The second component means a person's ability to regulate the emotional state on the basis of acquired knowledge, skills and abilities and is embodied in the sphere of interpersonal interaction. In turn, the bodily sensation that provide understanding of emotions and the emotional competence responsible for their interpretation develop from innate abilities for love and cognition. Imbalance in their development leads to formation of naive (primary) or reactive (secondary) personality types, which are characterized, respectively, by internal or external modes of life fulfillment. A proper balance of both abilities forms the optimal, integrative mode of life. In turn, the basic emotional attitudes represented by the spheres of I and Ancestor-We are the sources of the development of the bodily sensation, while the spheres of We and You are the sources of emotional competence. The improvement of the bodily sensation occurs mainly in the spheres of the Body and the Senses, and the emotional competence – in the Activity and Contacts (I).

The psychological and hermeneutic view of the structure of emotional intelligence as a unity of the bodily sensation and emotional competence determines its functions: identification and understanding of one's own sensual experiences and

interpretation of meanings represented in the sphere of interpersonal interaction.

Thus, the psychological and hermeneutic mechanisms of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment involve understanding, through which the sense is comprehended at the situational, characterological and basic levels of identity, according to V. Karikash (2008), and interpretation, through which a subject finds meaning in life and implements it in the sphere of interpersonal interaction.

A superposition of the constructs outlined above makes it possible to present a triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment, which combines three modes: 1) internal, with the dominance of the bodily sensation and the hermeneutic mechanism of understanding; 2) external, with the dominance of emotional competence and the hermeneutic mechanism of interpretation; 3) integrative, with a balanced manifestation of the bodily sensation and emotional competence and the mechanism of the hermeneutic circle as a prerequisite for an authentic life construction (Fig. 1).

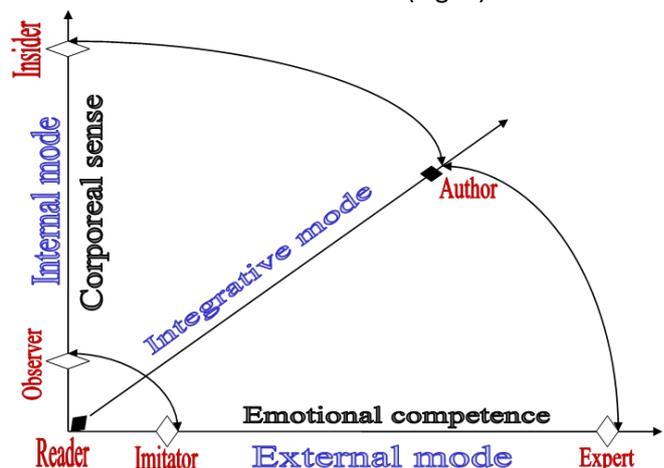


Fig. 1. Psychological hermeneutic triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of personal life (I)

The development of the value target potential of emotional intelligence in its internal direction occurs in the way of mental transformation (values of attitude to critical life situations), represented by the movement from the discursive position of the Observer (individualization function) to the Insider (self-actualization function) using the psychological mechanisms of intuition and anticipation as well as such discursive actions or ways of cognition / realization of meanings, as their comprehension and mastery.

The development of activity realization potential of emotional intelligence in its external direction (creation of values) takes place in the way of narration, represented by the movement from the Imitator's discursive position (socialization function) to Expert (adaptation function) using the psychological mechanisms of decentralization and reflection, as well as such discursive actions (ways of cognition / realization of meanings), as their detection and assimilation.

The synergic coordination of both potentials of emotional intelligence in the integrative mode of individual's life fulfillment is represented by the

convergence of the discursive positions of the Insider through the mechanism of facilitation and that of the Expert through the mechanism of empathy in the "convergence point" of the Author as the absolute (integral) subject of authentic life realization. The discursive position of the Reader, as opposed to that of the Author, is a starting point for the formation of the emotional-cognitive thesaurus as a result of closing the hermeneutic circle and an attribute of the course of integral individual's life fulfillment, synthesized on the basis of the receptive ability of the Observer and Imitator (Table 1).

Table 1

Ways of representing emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment (I)

		Modes of life realization		
		<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>	<i>Integrative</i>
1	El structure	Bodily sensation	Emotional competence	Balance of bodily sensation and emotional competence
2	El hermeneutic mechanisms	Comprehension	Interpretation	Hermeneutic circle
3	El psychological mechanisms	Intuition, anticipation	Decentration, reflection	Facilitation, empathy
4	El axiological potential	Values of attitude	Values of creation	Values of experience
5	El functions	Individuation, self-actualization	Socialization, adaptation	Value self-determination and life creativity
6	Discursive positions of an individual as a subject of life fulfillment	Observer - Insider	Imitator - Expert	Reader - Author
7	Discursive forms of individual's life fulfillment	Mentative	Narrative	Thesaurus
8	Discursive actions of an individual	Comprehension and mastery of meanings	Detection and assimilation of meanings	Synthesis and implementation of meanings

## Methodology

**An empirical study of emotional intelligence.** One of the stages of confirming the efficacy and demonstrating the practical significance of the outlined theoretical positions was the implementation of a formative empirical research, in which the independent variable was psychological training, and the dependent one was the development of emotional intelligence in relevant areas of life. The training program has been developed by the author, consistent with the above theoretical constructions. At the same time, I realize

that through a one-day training it is hardly possible to change the trajectory of individual's life fulfillment or to develop the necessary components of emotional intelligence for its implementation. However, it can serve as a sufficient impetus for work on oneself and further personal transformation.

The one-day training program "I want and must: three life strategies" was based on the conceptual provisions of N. Peseschkian's (1996) positive psychotherapy, E. Bern's transactional analysis and C.G. Jung's (1994) analytical psychology. Its duration is 8 hours (with lunch and coffee breaks) and provides a

balance between: the disclosure of theoretical information, reflective tasks and practical exercises; focus on the training program and the current desires and condition of the participants. D. Kolb's training cycle model was also used for its development, which consists of four components-stages: experience, reflection, (re-) conceptualization and action (manual) (Kolb, 1984).

The work with experience involved the identification of desires and aspirations relevant to participants through their meaningful understanding (ranging from intuitive comprehension of authentic intentions to their holistic development).

The transition to reflection in D. Kolb's model was based on the primary ability to decentralize and a careful study (interpretation) of one's own capabilities and chances in the socio-cultural context of life (ranging from finding to mastering normative, socio-cultural meanings) (Kolb, 1984). Thus, the first two stages of training involved the explication of first the value target, and then the activity realization potentials of the emotional intelligence.

(Re-)conceptualization, in turn, was based on mental correction / transformation of scenarios for realization of one's own intentions (needs, interests, desires, dreams, etc.) taking into account the reflexive interpretation experience of a person's social activity gained at the previous stage of training. There is a transition from the intuitive grasp of authentic intentions to their final anticipation in the chosen trajectory of life realization.

The action was expressed in the embodiment of the prospects of self-development and self-realization by developing one's current abilities with the view of their further implementation. Thus, the next two (out of four) stages were a correction of the mental, emotional and behavioural attitudes of the participants, which were reflected in their attitude to themselves and the world (axiological vector of emotional intelligence) and manifested in the space of interpersonal interaction (social vector).

It follows from this description that the work at the stages of experience and re-conceptualization was carried out mainly through the actualization of the sense of the organism. subjectivity in the internal mode of life.

The work at the stages of reflection and action involves the actualization of emotional competence in the first place. Here, the Imitator's position is most

clearly observed in the participants' verbalization of the experience of interpersonal interaction, while the Expert's position, based on pre-filtered, critically assimilated meanings, is clearly traced at the stage of action in the external mode of life.

Thus, D. Kolb's educational model makes it possible both to develop these components of emotional intelligence of training participants, and to provide favourable conditions for their personal growth through the transformation vectors of these psychological and hermeneutic positions (Kolb, 1984).

Our superimposition of the vertices of D. Kolb's model on the psychological hermeneutic triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment allows us to conclude that the components (stages) of experience and (re-) conceptualization (vertical axis) are the manifestation of the bodily sensation, comprehension and axiological potential of the emotional intelligence, while reflection and action (horizontal axis) denote the scope of the manifestation of emotional competence, interpretation and social (activity realization) potential of the emotional intelligence.

A harmonious, balanced development of the internal and external vectors of emotional intelligence forms their superposition in the form of an integrative mode of individual's life fulfillment using the mechanisms of facilitation and empathy, a progressive movement from the position of the Reader/recipient to the position of the Author as a subject of life fulfillment.

Interesting is also the similarity of D. Kolb's training cycle model with the stages of group development, according to L. Mitina. Thus, the author identifies the stages of preparation, awareness, reassessment and action. They represent the stages that each participant goes through to solve their problems (Karpenko, 2015). This confirms the feasibility of using D. Kolb's training cycle model to develop a training program, as well as the multifunctional nature of our proposed model of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment.

In this context, it is appropriate to analyze the contribution of the above areas of psychology and psychotherapy. Thus, N. Peseschian's (1996) positive psychotherapy was used, first of all, for the formation of the program according to the logic of the 5-step model of counselling and self-help, as well as in the use of conflict processing and inventory of current abilities.

At the stage of abstraction, the first two stages of the training program were covered, while the participants were able to take the most convenient position for self-examination. Most of the time was devoted to inventory. It involved the study of one's own desires and introjected requirements through work with the conflict processing areas (Body, Activity, Contacts, Senses) and metaphorical associative maps. The main methodological tools here were mini-lectures, briefings, reflective exercises and discussions in written or oral form, which were conducted with individuals, in subgroups and in a general group. The third stage of the 5-step model – situational encouragement – was implemented not so much in individual exercises as in a situational use of humour, timely breaks and providing support to each other through feedback in subgroups and in the general group. Verbalization was characterized by making decision on the nature of balancing one's own needs and the requirements of society, based on the congruence of one's own Self (axis of individuation – self-actualization) and consistent with the requirements of the social environment (axis of socialization – adaptation). It began with meditation and continued with a reflection on the ways and means of self-development through the study of their current abilities. The expansion of the goals system took place during the communication with other participants and the final discussion, which involved not only the verbalization of the current state, feelings, desires, conclusions, but also their own life plans in the context of the topic.

The use of transactional analysis was also reflected in the title and idea of the training, which consisted in balancing the moral instances of “want” and “must” by updating the third (volitional) disposition – “choose”. The three instances were the functions of the ego-states of the Child, Parent, and Adult, respectively. This idea is consonant with the classical psychoanalytic theory with its structural division of the psyche into Id, Ego and Super-Ego. Thus, our work was focused on accepting one's own desires and needs, allowing us to be ourselves, bypassing artificial prohibitions and barriers, as well as making responsible adult decisions about further scenarios of life fulfillment.

In this context, the application of the conceptual provisions of C.G. Jung's (1994) analytical psychology complemented the outlined approach. This was due to the study of the archetypes of the Shadow, the Person and the Self, which was carried out through

metaphorical associative cards (the “Person” deck). Thus, the archetype of Shadow concurs with the ego-state of the Child and the disposition “I am for myself”, the Person concurs with the ego-state of the Parent and the disposition “I am for others”, and the Self, in turn, becomes an integrative unit endowed with freedom and responsibility inherent with the Adult state and the internal disposition “I am integral”.

Imposing these reflections on the logic of the psychological-hermeneutic triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of personal life, it is easy to see that its value-target vector and internal mode of life is devoted to work with the Shadow, ego-state of the Child and disposition “I for myself” (affective intentional instance “want”); activity-realization (social) vector, functioning within the external mode of life, is most fully actualized in the archetype of the Person, the ego-state of the Parent and the disposition “I am for others” (cognitive normative instance “necessary”); synergistic combination of both vectors, projected on the axis Reader-Author and presented in an integrative mode of life, involves the development of the Self, the ego-state of the Adult and the disposition “I am whole” (-a) (creative-voluntary instance “choose”).

The group was recruited on the basis of personal interest and willingness, shared responsibility for the result and payment for coaching services. Material and technical means such as flip charts, metaphorical associative cards (MAC “Person”), music recordings, colored markers, notebooks, pens, as well as handouts were used, which facilitated the understanding of theoretical positions and contact with oneself. The training was attended by 6 people, including 5 women and 1 man aged 19 to 25 years. All of them were students of various higher education institutions in Lviv. Their motivation to participate in training and fill out a significant number of psychodiagnostic techniques was manifested not only in the desire for self-development in the context of the topic and measured in monetary terms, but also consisted in obtaining the results of the statement and control sections. Thus, the author sent a report to each of the participants with the results of the completed forms of answers to the questions of diagnostic methods, on the basis of which it was possible to trace the dynamics of changes and outline potential areas of self-development. Therefore, it can be argued that all participants were highly motivated

and interested in providing frank answers to the questions according to respective methodologies.

The study used 13 psychodiagnostic techniques, including: Existence scale (Kryvtsova, Langle & Orgler, 2009); I. Brunova-Kalisetska's Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Karpenko, 2020); Tetiana Larina's questionnaire "Self-Assessment of Psychological Hardiness" – a modification of M. Vorweg's contact questionnaire (Tytarenko, 2012); "EmIn" questionnaire (Lusin, 2006); the method of emotional intelligence assessment - N. Hall's EQ questionnaire (Fetiskin, Kozlov & Manuilov, 2002); S. Schwartz's PVQ method "Portrait of Values" adapted by Iryna Semkiv (2009); diagnostics of empathic abilities level by V. Boyko (Raigorodsky, 1998); E. Shostrom's POI personal questionnaire adapted by Aleksei Lazukin and Nadia Kalina (Fetiskin, Kozlov & Manuilov, 2002); K. Ryff's scale of psychological well-being in Nikolay Lepeshinsky's (2007) adaptation; questionnaire "Life tasks of the individual" (developed by Tetiana Tytarenko's (2012) team of the laboratory of social psychology of the individual with ISPP NAPS of Ukraine); D. Leontiev's (2000) test of life sense orientations; E. Volkova and I. Seryogina's subjectivity questionnaire (I) (Karpenko, 2020).

The empirical study called for measurements to be made shortly before the start of the training (statement section) and six months after it (control section). Such a long interval between the two measurements was due

to the desire to track the dynamics of all indicators, as well as the stability and depth of the changes. Unfortunately, we were able to collect the results from only five out of six participants. They were later taken into account in the process of mathematical data processing and interpretation.

In addition, all participants were offered ten sessions of individual psychotherapy at a reduced price with the possibility of prolongation on a general basis. There were three applicants. These individuals were sent feedback on the results of qualitative and quantitative analysis of their work after completion of the psychotherapy.

## Results

The subsequent diagnosis, based on the results of group training for five people, three of whom underwent additional individual psychotherapy, showed a positive dynamics of three quarters of all indicators obtained on 108 scales, which totalled 13 methodologies. Statistically significant were the data by 8 indicators (table 2), other changes did not reach statistically significant thresholds of distinction, which is the expected result due to the small number of the experimental group. Statistical processing of empirical data was performed using the computer program IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

Table 2.

Indicator dynamics of the forming experiment

		Obtained result		Reference result		
		M	$\sigma$	M	$\sigma$	
1	<i>Autonomy</i>	4.8	1.64	6.4	1.82	0.035
2	<i>Conformity</i>	3.4	0.96	2.7	1.08	0.009
3	<i>Permeability in empathy</i>	4	1.22	5	0.71	0.034
4	<i>Strategy for overcoming failures</i>	7	1.87	8	1.22	0.034
5	<i>Freedom</i>	41.8	3.56	47.8	4.09	0.033
6	<i>Existence</i>	87.6	2.61	95.8	4.44	0.043
7	<i>Understanding and toleration</i>	7.1	1.95	8.8	1.3	0.043
8	<i>Motivation for creativity</i>	5.6	0.89	4	2	0.035

The data obtained testify to the significant progress of the participants of the studied group in the direction of strengthening their subjective positions. This is indicated by the dynamics of indicators obtained on four scales: existence, autonomy, conformity (lowering the level), the sense of freedom. The improvement of

the other two indicators – understanding and toleration and the insightful ability of empathy reflects the development of the psychological mechanism of empathy as a subjective ability of the Author of life fulfillment. The growth of the "strategy for overcoming failures" indicates the priority of choosing active

coping, focused on solving problems, which is the result of self-motivation and the use of a psychological mechanism of facilitation derived from emotional intelligence.

The decrease in the motivation of creativity according to T. Titarenko's (2012) non-standardized methodology of personal life tasks is dissonant with the growth of creativity according to the method of self-actualization (E. Shostrom, adapted by A. Lazukin, N. Kalina), the latter, however, is not statistically significant. Given the inconsistencies in these data, we take note of this fact and will check them in further research.

## Conclusion

The psychological hermeneutic triangulation model of emotional intelligence in the course of individual's life fulfillment contains three modes: 1) internal with the dominance of the bodily sensation and the hermeneutic mechanism of understanding; 2) external with the dominance of emotional competence and the hermeneutic mechanism of interpretation; 3) integrative with a balanced manifestation of the bodily sensation and emotional competence and the mechanism of the hermeneutic circle as a prerequisite for authentic life realization.

The positive effect of the formative experiment in the form of group training "I want and need: three life strategies" was achieved through a synthesis of conceptual and methodological principles of positive psychotherapy, transactional analysis, psychoanalysis, and analytical psychology, and was consistent with the author's model of emotional intelligence. The group training provided a balanced attention to the actualization of value target and activity realization vectors of personal life, which was manifested in the work on the affective intentional instance of "want" (Child ego-state, Shadow archetype, disposition "I for myself" and Id function) and cognitive normative instance "must" (Parent ego-state, Person archetype, disposition "I for others", and Super-Ego function). The integration of both instances through the actualization of the mechanisms of facilitation and empathy ensured the development of an integrative mode of individual's life fulfillment course, represented in the creative voluntary instance "choose" (Adult ego-state, Self-archetype of, disposition "I am integral", and Ego-function).

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