

Introduction

The endless depth, emptiness, and darkness of existence are just as powerful as the fulfillment and light that come, ceaselessly, in the tides of an ocean of emotions. Each wave is familiar but entirely new, always with something to discover just beyond. *They* are as much *me* as *I* am *it*. Emotions are a unique way of knowing or experiencing the phenomenon of existence, which is based in relationships with the universe.

The emotions of the past resonate deep within, where at times it is hard to distinguish memory from the present. Perhaps this process creates a contrapuntal tone of emotions in the here and now – for past and present have no demarcations. The challenge is to sift through what is memory and concept and what is the reality of emotion. When discovered, the person realizes that emotions and the social phenomenon of relationships contain the essences for creating meanings in life. The dark and scary no longer need to be feared but encountered with compassion and empathy in order to learn about the unity they share with the light and fulfilling. Even at the end of life, emotions are strongly present to reflect the impermanence of life as one comes to know the meaning of transition. Nothing has ever grown old, just grown and transitioned. Beauty remains; only perspectives change. In the last moments of existence in this world, when the organism goes to sleep, never to wake again, they realize the ultimate meaning of emotions because their relationships with the world are transformed irreversibly.

Death and dying were at the forefront of existential concerns during the years of the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic, as people quickly left behind pre-pandemic concerns as they were introduced to a constant state of emergency. The new focus unveiled the existential realities that were often disregarded before the disaster – death, meaning, freedom of choice, and isolation – which became the center for determining how to live, cope, and adapt to future challenges and changes (Yalom, 1980). Even though the pandemic contained stories of incredible resilience, solidarity, triumph of

human ingenuity, and empathy, the history of humanity victorious cannot extinguish the social and emotional cost of the pandemic, and which generations will have to endure.

The physical, psychological, and, particularly, emotional suffering and distress caused by the COVID-19 virus were not exclusive to any age, population, or country. The world changed irreparably and cannot fully return to pre-pandemic life. The pandemic's social and emotional toll continues as people suffer from emotional disturbances, loneliness, and physical ailments. Although professionals, such as psychologists, counselors, and educators, continue to help clients heal and find personal growth through social and emotional development, there is a need to explore the phenomena within social and emotional intelligences (SEI) from a multicultural humanistic psychology lens.

How do we teach students and cultivate in clients something that is indefinable? *Essentials of Social and Emotional Intelligences* explores SEI as a continuum of holistic, emotional, social, behavioral, and cognitive phenomena that promote growth in abilities for self- and social awareness, emotion regulation, spirituality, empathy, decision-making, and the capacities for developing growth-promoting relationships. Within SEI are the most important skills necessary to achieve wellbeing and success in the twenty-first century – especially for navigating global uncertainties and social and economic challenges, coping with extreme stress or trauma, and adapting to technological changes.

A global revolution will take place when people choose to develop their SEI. The motivation to develop their own SEI fosters acceptance of the constant flow of change and impermanence of existence. No longer clinging to images or concepts, they develop the courage to face *what is* instead of how they wish things to be. The development of empathy, solitude, emotion regulation, self-awareness, spirituality, relationship building, and decision-making abilities results in a deep and lasting sense of inner peace or equanimity that will bring about a human community that offers caring, empathic compassion toward all forms of life. The inner diligence of developing SEI has lasting global effects.

Essentials of Social and Emotional Intelligences approaches SEI from a multicultural humanistic psychological perspective, which provides an inclusive method for widening perspectives to understand the meanings of social and emotional experiences for both human beings and animals. This book does not limit its exploration of social and emotional phenomena to solely humans, but includes nonhuman primates and other social mammals. There is no singular culture or paradigm which can provide

a complete understanding of psychological phenomena because it is an endeavor that can never be completed. There is an infinity of sides always to be revealed (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the exploration must involve animal communities and human relationships with the natural world. Ultimately, *Essentials of Social and Emotional Intelligences* serves as a guide for navigating complex encounters in a world that is healing from existential trauma, facing great uncertainties, and reawakened to the wonder of existence as a human being.