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Book/Journal Title Handbook of Emotion Regulation

Chapter/Article Title Chapter 19: Intelligent  
Emotion Regulation

Author Liza Feldman Barrett

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CHAPTER 19
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# Intelligent Emotion Regulation

IS KNOWLEDGE POWER?

**TANJA WRANIK**  
**LISA FELDMAN BARRETT**  
**PETER SALOVEY**

John worked overtime on the advertising proposal for his firm's latest client and finally went home at 11:30 P.M., tired but satisfied. The next day, Nick, the senior consultant, started the meeting by presenting John's ideas as his own. John felt the blood rush to his face, trembled, and had a strong urge to shout. But his boss was sitting at the end of the table, and an important client was in the room as well. John did not yell. He sat quietly, and waited for the presentation to finish. He decided to talk with Nick about the situation later.

Most people would probably agree that several skills are necessary for managing and regulating emotional life, and that individuals differ markedly in their proficiency with this skill set. In our opening example, John's decision not to yell was rooted in skills that allowed him to understand his reaction quickly and efficiently and to know how his expressive behavior would be judged by others. Within the blink of an eye, John had to perceive his reaction as an emotional state (perhaps he perceived it as anger, or fear), anticipate how others might judge his reaction, know what to do to adjust his expressive behavior, and execute the chosen course of action (in our example, to inhibit the impulse to yell in favor of meeting some other goal). Because John appeared to master the situation consistently with his goal, we would say that he regulated his emotional episode in an "emotionally intelligent" manner (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In this chapter, we use the emotional intelligence (EI) framework originally proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990; modified by Mayer & Salovey, 1997) to stimulate a discussion of the processes that allowed John to regulate his emotional response effectively. In doing so, we demonstrate that EI provides fertile scientific grounds for understanding how people shape their emotional episodes to a specific situation, for a desired purpose, within a particular context.

