

## Differences Between Role Analysis and Emotional Intelligence Training

Role analysis applies psychological insights to how the client understands his/her experiences, behaviors, habits, mind sets, and so forth within the context of work life. More than simply intellectual career development, role analysis is deeply process-oriented and establishes a space where the client develops his/her abilities to produce and reflect on multiple interpretations of significant situations/events of the work environment. A wide range of information is covered in a role analysis session, including awkward circumstances, frustrating events/situations, emerging patterns, as well as enjoyable aspects of work.

Although the role analysis process is based on a therapeutic model of personal and interpersonal development within the immediate context of a safe 'holding environment' of each consultation, it should be made explicit that this is NOT psychotherapy. Psychotherapy may emerge as a possible solution to some problems or dilemmas that arise as a result of role analysis, but psychotherapy is not the purpose of the role analysis consultations.

Emotional intelligence (EI) consulting and training has many of the same objectives in mind. It focuses on the qualitative, socio-emotional capacities of the individual to maximize his or her performance in the interpersonal work matrix. EI proponents make an explicit distinction between EI and cognitive intelligence, such as measured in achievement and IQ tests. One's effectiveness in work, according to EI researchers and supporters, is determined by both one's cognitive intelligence and one's emotional intelligence.

### **What are the Differences?**

Role analysis maintains its underpinnings in psychodynamic psychological theory, a framework informed by developmental psychology research and practice. In role analysis, the coach and client engage in conversations about the qualitative and possibly even quantitative aspects of the client's work experiences and performance. In parallel, the coach and client explore the client's personal history – particular some “family of origin” issues that may have emerged as patterns into adulthood. The term, role analysis, touches upon the two conceptual frameworks that are typically not integrated in professional lingo: work roles/structure and psycho-analysis of the individual and the work environment. Role analysis is a method for finding integration between these two conceptually disparate – yet operationally inherently intertwined – aspects of the client's life.

As a result, role analysis is by definition an ethnographic, hermeneutic, and humanistic endeavor. Put more simply: role analysis is an endeavor that centers around the discovery and creation of meaning in one's work life. The act of creating meaning is catalyzed by the links between work performance or experiences and personal history. Meaning creation within the role analysis context is the peppering of the coach-client process with “aha” moments – the integration of inner subconscious and unconscious life (e.g., thought/feeling patterns that are manifestations of early experiences) with the stream of work experiences establishes a more

personally genuine anchor for decision-making and increasingly fulfilling experience of achievement and connection in the client's work.

A successful role analysis provides the client with conceptual and behavioral tools to make sense of performance or experiential disappointments that, for example, would not typically be predicted purely by the client's intellectual or technical capabilities. Through greater understanding and coaching for personal and professional growth through role analysis, the client can then deploy him or herself in a more holistic and personally-connected manner, significantly increasing his or her ability to be effective (and fulfilled) at work.

Emotional intelligence training, in contrast, is much more concerned about the dimension of emotional intelligence as the underpinning of socio-emotional connectedness in work situations. The historical meaning of current events is less pertinent than the ability of the client to utilize emotionally intelligent processes to work through ambiguous and complex situations. The hypothesis posed by EI proponents is that a greater level of EI will increase one's effectiveness at work. EI training is less about 'working through' psychodynamically-framed issues (as is the case with role analysis) and more about developing skills and strategies for working through events at work and in one's life. The EI trainer will, therefore, be less focused on the personal meanings that a client's thought process has for the client than on the utilitarian ability of the thought process to achieve a solution within the context of a posed challenge.

It is therefore possible for someone to achieve high EI scores yet not feel particularly fulfilled or not have the feeling that they grasp the connection between one's subconscious motivations and certain types of behaviors. They may have the skills and EI to work through issues without necessarily understanding, for example, how or why the inner dynamics are experienced in repetitive patterns (e.g., fear of failure) or why the sense of unease exists in the face of authority figures. Role analysis would likely address these gaps in EI training.

### **Choosing Role Analysis or Emotional Intelligence training:**

Only the client can determine which form of personal development to pursue. Both require hard work and active participation and learning by the client. The coach-client process must be negotiated and must be based on mutual trust and respect. In both formats, the client is placed in a vulnerable and potentially life-transforming state. With the potential for significant change comes the potential for significant hazards. The client, with the guidance of the coach, must strike a balance between dependence on the coach's ability to facilitate a deeply personal learning experience and an independent monitoring of one's capacity for inner discovery and transformation.

By definition, role analysis carries a greater responsibility to create a safe harbor for the coach-client process where the 'holding environment' is sufficiently contained for security yet also properly malleable and porous to allow personal and objective reality to define appropriate and optimal perspective. The power of "meaning creation" that role analysis provides can trigger a rich and deep activation of personal resources for the client. The personal and professional dividends can pay off for a lifetime.