

An excerpt¹ from “*The Choice*” by Eli Goldratt:

Chapter 18 Emotion, Intuition and Logic

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“Father, I do understand that whatever we talked about is just the beginning. I’m aware that there are specific techniques to think faster and more clearly; techniques that are tailored to specific situations. Some of them I’ve been using for years, many more I just heard about. I am also aware that what we have discussed has ramifications on many topics that we haven’t touched. But there is still one thing that bothers me. Bothers me to the extent that I suspect there is a fundamental flaw in the approach you are exposing to me.”

“Excellent,” he says. “I didn’t waste our time. At a minimum you’ve learned not to accept anything just because someone, anyone, says it with authority. Always be on guard, always think, and continuously check if reality confirms your assumptions and conclusions.”

“That is exactly what bothers me. As a psychologist I’m trained to focus on people’s emotions and inhibitions, but for you everything is just cold, factual logic.”

“Mmm... If that is your impression maybe there was a fundamental flaw; a flaw in my explanation.”

He immerses himself in the ceremony of cleaning and refilling his pipe. I just wait patiently. Finally he starts. “Efrat, logic doesn’t exist in a vacuum. To perform any logical step we need to jump-start and constantly feed the logic with connections that are raised by our intuition. Haven’t you noticed that the only way we can come up with a hypothesis or with a predicted effect is by intuition? And how do you expose an assumption? Again by intuition.”

I still haven’t gotten an answer so I wait for him to continue.

“And intuition stems from emotion. For things we don’t care about, we have zero intuition. In short, we as human beings are standing on a three-legged stool: emotion, intuition and logic. To really see how everything that we’ve talked about ties together let’s start with emotion. Every human being has emotions.”

“Yes,” I agree, “but that doesn’t mean that we’re all the same. Different people have their emotions geared toward different things. People have different areas of interest. That’s why the opportunities and achievements that are important to one person may be very different from the ones that are important to another.”

“Exactly. And that observation highlights something very important. You, like every other person, have your strongest intuition in the areas that are the most important to you. Isn’t it comforting?”

“Yes, it is. But Father, that doesn’t yet mean that I have enough intuition to achieve

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what I want.”

“So you just have to develop it,” he answers.

Before I have the chance to drag him into the debate of the extent to which intuition and brainpower can be developed, he asks me a question. “Have you noticed that when you used logic in an area, and as a result you gained a deeper understanding in that area, or even better, as a result you succeeded in removing a root conflict and substantially improving the situation, something else was also happening? Your emotions in that area intensified.”

“Of course I’ve noticed it. More than once.” I eagerly wait for him to continue.

“Look at the unavoidable result of constantly practicing thinking clearly. Naturally, when we practice thinking clearly we don’t devote the same attention to every subject; we tend to concentrate on our areas of interest. Now suppose that we use the intuition that we have in these areas to fuel logic. The more we succeed in thinking clearly the deeper our emotions in those areas become. The deeper the emotions, the stronger is the resulting intuition. The stronger the intuition, the higher the chances to successfully apply logic; the higher the chances to achieve good results. And since these results were achieved in our areas of interest, they are meaningful in our eyes. The more meaningful the results, the deeper are the emotions, and so on and on.” [...]

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