Episode 25 – Emotion at Work in Emotional Intelligence
Chatting with Cliff Lansley (@clifflansley) from EIA Group (https://www.eiagroup.com)

Phil: Hello! Welcome to the Emotion at Work podcast where we take a deep dive into the human condition and this week I sit here interviewing my guest live and being a bit nervous. I'll explain why in a minute. I was challenged a little while ago by Fiona McBride who goes by @fionamcbride on Twitter about the extent in which this podcast addresses some fundamental questions, for example things like: What are emotions? What is emotional intelligence? Is it even a thing? And I know that today's episode will address this and a lot more. The reason I'm nervous is because today's guest I've known for over a decade since our first meeting in a hotel next to East Midlands airport where I was interrogated, sorry, interviewed by our guest, because he's been a mentor, a coach, an advisor, a client and a peer and now we collaborate in areas that we love to work in and it's just a great honour to have him on the podcast today. I think that's enough pressure management for you for now. Let's get onto our podcast and let's welcome this week's guest who is Cliff Lansley. Hi Cliff!

Cliff: Hi! Nice to see you again, Phil.

Phil: Thank you. How are you?

Cliff: I'm very well, yeah. I'm looking forward to this.

Phil: Good. As per usual with the podcast, I'll open with an unexpected but innocuous question to help us and help the listeners get to know our guest a little bit more. My innocuous yet unexpected question for you is: what surprised you most in the last week?

Cliff: I've just had the luxury of spending a week in Romania with the intelligence services doing some behaviour analysis training. Whenever we go over there we always do a little adventure, so we did some off-road motorcycling.

Phil: Ok. I liked the way you framed it as a little adventure and then into off-road motorcycling but anyway, carry on.

Cliff: I'm going to be 60 next year and so I was lucky enough to be part of the team there but two of my youngest sons who work in the business came along too, and I thought they were going to give me a run for the money, but they didn't and that's a surprise.

Phil: Ok, so they didn't give you a run for your money.

Cliff: No.

Phil: So you're still top dog.

Cliff: Still top dog, yeah.

Phil: Still top dog. So, what surprised me most in the last week? I think it's my hatred of chasing. I'm in the process of buying a house and I feel like I'm having to chase all the time – I'm chasing solicitors, I'm chasing mortgage brokers, I'm chasing agents, I'm chasing everyone, and I just wish people would do their [insert expletive] job and help me buy the house. It feels like I'm just on everyone's back all the time and I haven't realised quite how much that annoys me. I guess because I don't have to do it all the time… I think this is a particular context where actually repeatedly chasing is important but God that annoys me!

Cliff: It's better than waiting.

Phil: Well, absolutely. Yeah.

Cliff: At least it makes you feel a little bit in control if you are doing some poking at work in progress.

Phil: Yeah but it's just the number of obstacles that are put in the way that don't need to be obstacles. That's the bit that frustrates me and I know why. It's because that links into the universal trigger for anger but for me the goal is just getting in the house whereas solicitors have boxes to tick and mortgage brokers have boxes to tick and people have boxes to tick and I'm just, "GET ME IN THE HOUSE!".

Cliff: Got you. So, were you surprised at the amount of stuff or your ability to cope with it?

Phil: Both. I'm surprised at the number of boxes that are to be ticked and the extent to which that annoys me when I have to just chase again and again and again and again and again and that frustrates me.

Cliff: Well, one of the top three stressors is moving house.

Phil: Indeed. What are the other two?

Cliff: Death of a close one and divorce, I think.

Phil: Ah, ok.

Cliff: None of them going on right now.

Phil: No, none of them going on right now.

Cliff: Is Angela listening to this?

Phil: Yes (laughs) All right. I guess we talked about a lot of stuff in there then. Partly about you being top dog still…

Cliff: On a motorcycle.

Phil: On a motorcycle, yes. And then for me the challenges or the stress that comes with moving house. Tangled up in all of that is a lot of emotional based stuff: what is making me feel frustrated and what is making you feel top dog and all the things that go into that. I wonder if we might want to take a step back from all of that then and ask ourselves what is or what are emotions? I think that might be a good place for us to start.

Cliff: Great starting point. A little question with many answers depending on who you speak to. I don't think there is a widely accepted single definition of emotion. But what I think features in most definitions that gets accepted and support from most is the fact that it is a process. So, an emotion is a process. It happens to us. It's not something we choose, and it helps us to deal with matters of importance to our welfare without thinking and that little cluster is important. It's what matters to us because part of emotion and the way we react and respond to stimulus/triggers, is the desire to either save our lives and enrich our lives, develop relationships, or to motivate action and some of that has evolved. Primates shared the same emotions and if we didn't have those and we just relied on conscious thought we probably wouldn't survive to be the 59 plus years I managed to make, riding difficult motorbikes. When riding motorcycles we had a couple of incidents where vehicles and animals came onto the tracks. Thinking and training doesn't come into this. It's just an object coming into sight which triggers a response of threat and then the fear of harm from that makes you move away from the objects. Working out the vectors of the speed, the size of the animal or the vehicle coming from your periphery vision and working out whether you are going fast enough or slow enough to make that, all that happens in a flash and the swerve of the handlebars, the avoidance of the object seems to be happening much of the time without thought. And sometimes that can get us into trouble. So, emotions are designed to help us, but they can also get us into trouble because sometimes they don't serve pro-social behaviour.

Phil: Yes. And I know later we'll come onto that kind of distinction between pro-social and anti-social as I think that is a really useful distinction to make. One of the things you mentioned in there was the fact that emotions happen to us and they are kind of unbidden in that way. I was tagged in a tweet by a lady called Jane Harrison last week where she was sharing a piece of research that had been published by some author saying that they shattered the narrative that emotion, especially the facial expression of emotion, isn't something that is innate. It's something that people would use to manipulate situations; they would perform emotion as well as it happening in an unbidden way. Way back you said that this is not something that everybody can agree on, but does everybody agree that emotions are unbidden or can they be performed as well?

Cliff: There are some researchers who try and challenge the widely accepted approach that emotions happen to us. Most of those who studied emotions for most of their career and including not just the psychologists, but the neuroscientists as well agree that there is an automatic appraisal process that is going on below our consciousness even when we are asleep and then if something is triggered, there is an affect programme activation which sends us impulses. Those impulses are the first point at which we can sense something is going on. However, that recent research suggests that the emotion is used to manipulate their environment or others and that is true too. Because first of all is the raw felt emotion which is very hard to manage and interrupt because it happens in less than 500 milliseconds. Those are impulses and most people agree, including the neuroscientists, you will never remove the effect of a strong trigger. You can weaken the effect but most of the research

is on rats and it transfers to humans that you can't remove a trigger especially a powerful one once we have it, whether evolved or learnt. However, when you get to after 500 milliseconds you then move into the "it's the way I'm going to behave right now appropriate for the context and the goals and the person I'm with or just for my thinking? Do I need to interrupt my thinking because this is disruptive and negative for me or can I see this manifesting itself into behaviour which is probably destructive for a relationship?" And at that point you may choose to interrupt it. So, an interrupt is needed in some sort of situations where the natural play of emotions could be destructive. Like my grandmother giving me a piece of cake that is disgusting. She loves me, I love her, for me to show disgust and my true feelings as soon as that cake touches my tongue would be offensive and cruel, so you have to try and mask that as much as you can and sometimes you can't. So, you can portray maybe a false emotion for good reasons to the other person. Using it as a transmission tool to manipulate an environment is often done for good reasons. A poker player might want to do it for competitive reasons about the card they picked up and so it faces a signalling tool that's part of why the face, we believe, is wired up to what happens in that half a second. It's this long-distance signalling tool that doesn't need words that can help species or a group to stay together and perpetuate their species and keep each other alert and aware. It can be used to communicate and sometimes that might be used to manipulate or to guide someone else's behaviour for a wrong end whatever the purpose or the goal is for the individual. But for emotions to be something that are chosen, that suggests condition and we know things are happening before conscious awareness happens that motivate triggered behaviour and physiological responses so that the current research is perhaps right but what they are discussing is something that is way down the emotional timeline - three quarters of a second down that timeline. The raw real emotions, the basic emotional theory is not countered by many and that happens at 300-400 milliseconds.

Phil: Yeah. We know that emotions can be performed because actors do it on stage all the time so there is plenty of evidence that says yes, people can "perform" an emotion. They can make the visual or auditory cues that would suggest an emotion is being experienced. Whether that emotion is being experienced or not, that may or not may be the case depending on the individual. Actors would get tools or strategies to make their voice sound like they are sad or would get tools and recall strategies to recreate an emotional state. You might argue that actually you are feeling the emotion again as opposed to just making the voice change, so that it sounds like you are feeling something.

Cliff: Yes. This is the Stanislavsky technique which is taught to many actors and it works on those two sides including the memory recall. You don't need an event to trigger an emotion, it could be your memory, it could be imagination and by going back in time to a sad moment it can help you to create the sensations of sadness which can make you perform a sad role effectively. I worry about the neurosis and psychosis issues. My younger son is an actor and that is the way that he was being coached early on in his career and that worried me a little bit in terms of replaying sad episodes in his life as a technique for bringing on an emotion as well as remembering the script and performing. It's too complicated. You can just do it with your physiology so that is a technique he now uses and the phrase "fake it till you feel it" is what I use with him. If you can fake and manipulate the right muscles and body and voice as you mentioned earlier, the emotion and the physiology is a two-way street. The physiology creates the emotion, the emotion creates the physiology so if you can control your muscles and replicate the expression especially the reliable muscles on your face (those are powerful), then you can engage that emotion within seconds in order to perform an emotional role.

And it is real emotion if it's done correctly. You might start by faking it initially but fake it till you feel it and it would be very hard for anyone to distinguish my son when he is in a sad state performing from him being sad in actual life.

Phil: Yeah. Ok. Earlier on when you were talking about emotions and how there is the radar or the automatic appraisal that is always going to find something that is important to our welfare and then there is an affect programme which is linked to a particular emotion and then the awareness can kick in a bit further down the line, one of the things you briefly touched on which I just want to go back to is the self-limiting effects that emotions can have. For example, I was chatting to someone recently on the podcast about anxiety and one of the conversations that we had pre and off air was how sometimes they can be prone to seeing things as anxiety provoking that are not actually anxiety provoking. A message or something would be said, or a message would be sent, and they see it or they hear it and they would interpret that as "that is about me" or "that is challenging me" or "do you not believe me?" or "are you doubting me?" or "do you not believe my credibility?". That interrupt can be about self-talk as well as not wanting to offend your grandmother.

Cliff: Yes. Absolutely. And I tend to use the words "theory one, theory two" so if there is a trigger that resembles something in your emotional database or something from your past that is powerful, it could be a very early script that was damaging and traumatic, and if something resembles or reminds you of that episode it can very quickly bring on the same emotion that you'd felt at that time. That brings you into self-management techniques which once you got the awareness of self, it's then managing that emotion if it's destructive or inappropriate. It could be inappropriate because of intensity, because of emotional type, because of the duration or because you are conducting it or playing it out in a harmful way. If any of those are at play, then it could be wise to interrupt and one of the interrupt techniques that can be used is to develop a theory two. If there is something provoking anxiety it may be scratching and picking at some rawness from history. Let's say I was attacked in a dark street near an ATM machine by a guy in a black coat with black hair and he took my money and pushed me around a little bit. It may be that I associate the trigger of men with black hair and coats with that association and it can start my heart beating. So that needs a theory two. Theory one is that this guy is the same guy and I'm going to experience the same thing. Theory two is there's a lot of black coats and this is another guy. If there is a positive mindset that you can pre-programme yourself before you even go into dark streets, that can then help weaken the effect. Joe LeDoux says once it's in, you never remove it. It's a neuroscientist's view whether you accept that or not, but by using self-management techniques you should be able to reduce the impact and effect and the speed at which you can recover so that would be about understanding why I am so "abnormally" overreacting in situations like this when most of my peers don't. Usually you can track that back to a value like someone not trusting so it could be to do with trust or faith or it could be to do with integrity, care, love, all sorts of value-based stuff. It is a powerful value-based world which is brought into the frame when that trigger happens and that would be wrapped around perhaps a script that was maybe created in childhood or a powerful one in adulthood.

Phil: Ok. There are a couple of terms that you used and I wasn't going to go into this one first but you've just used it again so I'll go to it which is script. We talked about script once already when we were talking about acting script when you were talking about your son. So in an emotional context what does script mean?

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Cliff: It's a psychological term which is almost like an autopilot. A script or a story or a series of episodes are rammed and immersed together in a powerful way so that whenever that is triggered, this script or scenario plays out in your mind and that can contaminate the way you perceive and deal with a different episode which is happening now. It's the mistaken transfer of historical episodes to a current episode. No episode can be identical but there is something in there which is sometimes enough to wake up the script and here we go again. That can cause an amplification almost like when you are looking through filtered glasses and you perceive the world differently then it actually is. That could save your life if it is almost exactly the same situation, but it can also interrupt constructive relationships if you let that perpetuate the way you live your life.

Phil: I remember there was a guy who I used to work with who was at my first kind of big meeting when I was new in the role. I think I'd been there for a couple of months. And at this first big meeting where I was meant to put forward what the strategy for my department would be, there was this person who was an important stakeholder that I hadn't engaged effectively looking back on it now. What happened in that meeting was that he openly critiqued my strategy and I felt massively undermined and massively threatened by that and then I found for a good six months after I was angry with him. Even if he was just walking towards me on the corridor, it would just bring back those memories of that initial meeting and whenever I would go to talk to him about something we had to do together, if he ever challenged or critiqued or disagreed with anything I said, I remember disproportionately getting annoyed at him. Reflecting later on what I was doing, I was pulling back that first experience because I felt massively undermined, massively challenged and that I lost my credibility within a short period of time and actually all he was doing he was trying to help me be successful because what he was saying was here are some key issues I see with your strategy. But the mistake I made was that I hadn't engaged him early enough and he was very matter of fact. His characteristics were very matter of fact, very direct, very open. As far as he was concerned, he was helping me, but I interpreted it as a huge threat to my credibility.

Cliff: Yes. There you go – theory one is he is here to harm me and theory two is perhaps he is trying to help me by saying this guy has got some issues and his communication skills aren't great, but none of us are perfect and so with warts and all I'm sure he's got a good heart and he wants to help me. And some people are bad guys/ladies but 98% of the world are good people and they do want to help and so I guess you adopted theory two.

Phil: Yes, I got there in the end. And the other term that you used was an emotional database. So I guess one of the discussion points I often have around emotion is – is it nature or nurture? And I say it's a bit of both but is that what emotional database is about?

Cliff: That is what most people accept and support, and this is from a lot of work done based on Darwin's work. Paul Ekman and Silvan Tomkins who was Paul Ekman's mentor have used this language we are using now in terms of affect programme and emotional database. So, yes. Many of the signals in the database we believe have evolved but some of them we've learnt. For example, some adults are scared of the clowns from the circus. You can understand most people probably being scared of a drop in gravity; so if the floor was to drop 6 inches, most people would experience fear. Many people experience fear when they have a poisonous snake in their proximity and it's

attacking them. Fear is normal for chimpanzees, babies and humans so those have probably evolved. But the clowns in the circus could be a script – they saw something bad happen in the circus and it's the fear of the unknown. We like things that are comfortable and known and this is an unknown thing with a big red nose making loud noises. He/she was only trying to entertain us but that could have gone into some child's emotional database as "be careful, this is a dangerous thing" and that can then almost become a phobia no matter how much reassurance from parents or even therapy. The sign of a clown that is made up can trigger that database. And it's like a fish trap – this is Joe LeDoux again who says it's like a lobster pot once that's in, it's very very very difficult even with all the support and therapy and psychiatric help to pull that out. So that would be a learnt trigger rather than an evolved trigger or association. And it doesn't have to be exact. It can just be something that resembles a clown that can be enough to trigger that emotion again.

Phil: OK. We've talked about self-awareness and we've also got in the classic Goleman 2x2 grid awareness, self-awareness and self-management and then awareness of others and "other-management" for want of a better phrase. I guess that is probably one of the most common model or framework around emotional intelligence but one of the challenges I guess I have with that 2x2 and emotional intelligence in general is that those two words make up (my listeners cannot see how wide my arms are going) this massive variety and breadth and depth of stuff that has all been kind of pulled together in this 2x2. So what is your working definition of emotional intelligence if you have one?

Cliff: You've probably captured it with what you've just said there by describing the 2x2 grid and so whether it's Jack Mayer or Peter Salovey who did a lot of work with Caruso on the MSCEIT model which your listeners may have heard of (they worked hard on an ability model and they had the four branch model) and then you described Daniel Goleman who did a lot of work publishing and bringing this into the public arena around the 2x2 metrics of self-awareness and self-management, being aware of others and managing the interaction with them. If you incorporate those four corners of that 2x2 grid into a sentence, you're not far off a definition that most people would accept. However many of the definitions are not comprehensive enough because, and I know this is dear to your heart as well, to judge competence whether you take the ability framework or the trait descriptive when it comes out later, if you are judging the emotional intelligence of an individual, then I would suggest that is impossible unless you can get to a decision on the appropriateness of their behaviour or thinking in context and with a goal. So unless you know that goal if you don't have any information about the context, what is going on around them, where they come from, their culture, their background and the other persons, unless you know the intricacies of the micro context of the interactions that they are exchanging (having a discussion or a disagreement) and if you don't know the macro context about their values and beliefs and their culture and what they might be bringing to the table in their invisible rucksack, then if you've not got any way of ascertaining and bringing that onto the table, to judge whether someone is behaving appropriately you'd be guessing. So that is what the challenge for assessing emotional intelligence is. First of all, you need a framework that respects culture, that brings culture into play and all the wider issues which we just call context. Nothing happens in a vacuum and context must feature. Unfortunately, there are about six or seven popular models now with assessment tools around emotional intelligence and many of them neglect the context and many of them also don't respect goals. What is the goal of the interaction? My goal with you isn't always pro-social. If I'm a poker player, I want to beat you. I don't care if you're

hurting and you lose money. That phrase could cause concern to someone and therefore that brings another thing to light which is a problem for the models: they are contaminated with value laden or role laden aspects. Daniel Goleman's was designed for leadership. If I wanted emotional intelligence for me and my wife then there is no leadership there, we are equals. Well, I would say that. My wife Helen might say she is the boss. But the leadership is a contaminant. If we want a pure generic model, if we are thriving for the equivalent of an IQ model which is generic and widely applicable then we need an EQ model which has got the same clarity and even (this is not going to be popular) if the intent of the model is not pro-social and to do with wellbeing. So many of the models have criteria in them that are driven towards everyone feeling happy and good and working together and constructive and cooperative and in poker and big business sometimes it's not. If I'm Pepsi and you're Coke, my job is to beat you and that is the mission statement of Pepsi: to beat Coke. So, if I want to beat you not physically but competitively in a fair way on the market to protect the employees who have given their life to our company because that is my duty and responsibility - to serve our customers hopefully without being destructive and damaging to any of our competitors. In a competitive business everyone wants 60% market share. Three companies can't have that.

Phil: Ok. Earlier on you talked about Salovey, Mayer and Caruso and then you talked about Goleman and then you looked at both of those in terms of ways of potentially trying to assess somebody's emotional quotient or to assess someone's emotional intelligence. For the listener that might not be familiar with each of those approaches do you want to give us a bit more of a synopsis of Salovey, Mayer and Caruso's work and then you did a little bit about Goleman but if there is anything else you would like to add around that just to give us a bit of a synopsis before we unpick them.

Cliff: Yes. This probably would help those new to this field to visualise three models or three types of models or two and a hybrid. You've got one which is ability. That is based heavily on the word intelligence. Intelligence is defined in the dictionary as the ability to acquire and apply knowledge. So if you need to acquire and apply knowledge then when you think of IQ tests they test your ability to reason with numbers, your numerical and verbal reasoning, spatial ability. You are given tests and there are right and wrong answers decided by either the science, the theory or the experts. There is a series of right or wrong answers and therefore you accept that these qualities of these 13 or 8 assessment tools cover the factors (this is the word the researchers use) which together make up the construct of IQ. It might be separate tests, it might be an integrated test, but they are tests in the sense that we would understand them.

Phil: That have right and wrong answers and so on.

Cliff: Yes. More like maths and physics rather than doing an essay for English. So there are right and wrong answers and they can be marked by computer almost if you take IQ. So those are ability based. Some people use the word competence and competence is nothing than knowledge, understanding and skill/ability to do something so you need the underpinning knowledge and understanding to transfer that ability to different contexts. A good competence model would have a solid knowledge base, understanding base to allow transfer of knowledge and that skill of being able to apply that in a specific context and then transfer that performance to a range of contexts when you are under pressure. An aircraft pilot may learn in the classroom first about the theory of the clocks and the altitude and the weather then they will go in a flight simulator to develop the skill but

in the end they will then be tested in that flight simulator and then as a co-pilot with 246 real breathing humans at the back of them because you can't rely on people performing in a simulator and then being let loose to captain a plane because we've changed the context. We now have breathing bodies in the back of the plane and the individual pilot could lose it and not be able to cope with that pressure, so we need to test them in pressurised situations. That is one of the big weaknesses in current assessment tools to do with ability. The stakes are low. They are simplistic, theoretical, context is often ignored and the reliability then of using the score in that simulator whatever assessment each session involves, the reliability of that being a predictive score that this person can perform in high stake individual situations is maybe questioned. So that is the ability stream. You then have trait believers and advocates. Another word for trait is maybe personality. So some words that are used to describe people: optimistic, pessimistic, introvert. There are many psychometric instruments on the market that cover trait/personality constructs and those are largely assessed by self-report. You will have a questionnaire which will give you four words or give you a couple of scenarios and then you describe if this was me and I was there then I would likely do this. You are self-reporting against a framework of traits or personality descriptors. Then you have the middle which is where Daniel Goleman's is and in fact most of the models apart from MSCEIT are in the middle. There are very few pure trait models. Most of them are mixed. What mixed means is that there is a mix of competences, traits, personality and qualities. Some of those models in the middle would have statements like "customer orientation". Now that is an attitude. Others would have "empathy" and now empathy is a skill. You need knowledge and understanding and a skill to do empathy. Empathic falls under a trait but the word used in many models is empathy, so they will mix it with a skill. So you've got equality which is an attitude and then optimistic which is a trait. So you've got a trait, an attitude and a skill and others have knowledge – your ability to label your emotions. That's knowledge, that's theory. So to put a word against a group of sensations in your body that is a skill but you need a knowledge first of the word. That's why EI (emotional intelligence) is hard to assess in a one year old because of the emotional labels. The emotions themselves, the sensations and the feelings we give labels to them; when we feel joyous we call that happy and joyous is not even a word a baby would manage. It's the elatedness, the warmth, the pleasant sensations and then we attach these labels and we call those words emotions, but they are just words. And right now, we are using English words, but some languages don't have exact replicas, so we've got to be careful because of other languages. You've got your trait, your ability and mixed to complicate matters further. I feel so sorry for the human resources manager who has been tasked to bring an emotional intelligence tool into the company or the organisation because first of all you have this array of models and all of them have their problems. Even the authors and the scientists who developed them criticised their own models. Nobody is happy that we have an emotional intelligence competence framework and assessment diagnostic tool that goes with it that is good enough yet and those from the right/trait camp would criticise the ability, and those from the ability camp would criticise the trait. There are many other challenges for those who try to buy or select a model as you've got to work out the commercial interests because many of the model designers would then work with a company to construct an instrument to measure it and then they get assigned into non-disclosures and you must protect and defend and never criticise your own work. Now scientists must criticise their own work but if you start to criticise a tool you have a stake in then that can get interesting so it's a fabulous and fascinating arena where you've got about maybe a hundred really good researchers focusing just on this with many many scientific papers being

produced picking holes and challenges and trying to find this panacea, trying to find the wholly grail of what is the model.

Phil: And I guess this is a bit of a loaded question. It's not a bit of a loaded question; it is a loaded question: is there a need for a panacea, is there a need for an agreed model or a model of assessment at least?

Cliff: If you're looking at some form of benchmark that can survive cultural global differences and be used as a fair instrument for selection, team building, recruitment and so on, then you're looking at something like IQ. We probably have something there for IQ that most people accept is OK for screening children into private schools or for screening people into employment, so the IQ is seen to be the differentiator. If we want to try and recruit someone that has got a reliable chance of succeeding in this pathway whether it be in an educational career, then is there a way? We don't want to make mistakes after two years. It's expensive to recruit a CEO and then release them after six months or two years because they can't do the job, they're not competent. If we want a predictive instrument that can guarantee success in whatever arena – marriage, volunteer work, politics, teaching, leadership, negotiation, police, security; if we want to try and predict apart from just the knowledge based and the academic ability, their ability to deal with emotions of themselves and others, then we've got to try and help provide a tool to do that and currently we don't have one. I retired from my day job ten years ago when I was 49 to try and find a tool and I spent six years without success. Now I've had to try and contribute a little bit towards that myself because I'm frustrated at the lack of a model which is scientifically validated. Most of these are theories and they are adapted and changed. One day they say teen competences then we didn't like them, and they say 16 and 21 so they change on the fly without empirical research. If people are going to use those to train in high stake situations like soldiers fighting in high stake environments, if those are used to train and support and development, they've got to be able to be trusted and so I worry about the reliability of the current frameworks.

Phil: I'm going to go a little bit philosophical for a moment. When you talked about the ability to predict or maybe a desire or a want to predict, comparing IQ and EQ we are looking for an assessment approach that is similar across those two. Is that an ecologically valid way to go? I did say I am going philosophical. Is intelligence fixed; whether that would be emotional intelligence or cognitive ability, are those things fixed? And in which case then what do those assessments give you? Does it give you a moment in time interpretation of where somebody is in terms of their cognitive ability or emotional ability wise? Can either of those or both of those be developed over time? So I'm not really sure what my question is if I'm honest.

Cliff: I think where you're going it's a nice track because the IQ test for a 7-year old is different from an IQ test for an 18-year old because the IQ measure is a ratio of their ability against their age. If you take the IQ measure, if 100 means I am the average intelligence for my age, I am either over or under that. You've got either right or wrong answer in the system. If you are taking the claim that your IQ is fixed, a straight line graph between your intelligence and ability to answer these tests will stay the same, it won't somehow increase or decrease, is based on the thinking that your ability is not fixed. It's not that your knowledge and understanding sticks as a 6-year old it just progresses on a straight-line graph. You're born with it. You're born with that ability and no matter what people

do to you, you can't be changed on the line. It's what many people accept. I challenge that. I'm not convinced because the IQ is based on academic, scholastic intelligence. Howard Gardner has multiple intelligences and the academic elements of that is only 2-3 parts. To predict whether someone can succeed in life, work, social relationships or whatever is being used for from testing a small percentage of their ability across the range, if we take Howard Gardner, worries me and so IQ has been hijacked by the school and university system and it worries me that we are creating swollen heads at the cost of big hearts.

Phil: Nice. I like that one.

Cliff: You like that one.

Phil: That is good.

Cliff: I value academic intelligence. Even though the word academic itself means "of no practical use" (laughs), I still value academic intelligence because the discipline and the framework and the processes that it encourages you to go through with your thinking can give you great results. You've got the academic and the emotional, then emotional is the one. If I'm the best footballer in the world, I may not be very good at school in numerical and verbal reasoning but I'm really good at my sport. Or an artist. So I'm successful in my chosen pathway. If I'm a volunteer, if I choose to help others all my life in a volunteer business, then I don't need an IQ test to tell me that I can do that. I think we need to move over IQ. There's room for some more and we need to challenge that pole position that perpetuates the scholastic system from academia and learning into becoming teachers because I think it's a pathway which is becoming isolating and I would rather see a range of qualities assessed and taught in schools. One of my passions and goals is to at least do my bit with emotional intelligence. Other people value sports, money and dexterity but I'd like to bring the emotional intelligence into 4-year olds and 9-year olds. Reading, writing, arithmetic is fine but emotional skill and competence deserves a place with a 4-year old and until we get a model that is robust enough and tested with adults we daren't bring anything into schools. It's been tested and piloted. There's a programme called social emotional aspects of learning across America and the UK but that is just an adaptation of competency frameworks that was devised for leaders. It's a false fit. We need a generic core model that can fit for a 4-year old but first we need the adult model then we need to see how that needs to be changed. If that's accepted as a benchmark for adults, then the sub-set of that needs to be how can we now devise a framework that can help us track and benchmark individuals so that we can design interventions which can help them deal with their own emotions and the emotions of others in their early stages. Because that is a life skill and if we can get that life skill early on we need to make sure that the framework and the tools we are using are reliable and I daren't move into it. I've been a governor for 25 years with a primary school and they are begging me to get this in and I daren't move in until we've got the validation of the models we are currently working on. To take them into 4-year olds it would be irresponsible. But right now they are getting very little.

Phil: Yeah, yeah. My children are in school. My son is in reception now and as much as I don't like it, they are currently working on what they call red thoughts and green thoughts. Red thoughts being put in the negative camp and green thoughts being put in the positive camp. And I don't like the

framing of that as red and green thoughts but anyway I won't digress into that, but I agree with you. There is so much more that can be done. If that is the best we can do right now, come on! We've got to be able to do better than that. Surely.

Cliff: Yeah. It's so basic. It's a step forward I guess. It's better than nothing maybe but I have the same reservation as you. There is a book out now "Seeing Red". It's been out a while and it's dealing predominantly with anger. It's not framing it too much as negative but it's how to handle it and so there are some good pieces in that. It's like if you see someone that had a car accident some people are worried to intervene. Sometimes to intervene is something that is partly going the right way is maybe better than doing nothing. You can't steer a stationery car so let's get the car rolling, I guess. But I still can't bring myself to take anything into the school system right now. In two years I think we'll be ready but right now I'm not ready to take anything into a school environment. We've got 20 schools that expect something with funding already in place, but we are just not there yet.

Phil: OK. So where have you got to? You're saying you're not far off but tell us where you've got to.

Cliff: I think I'm one of the oldest students in Manchester now because I re-enrolled for a PhD and so I am now in the middle of a PhD doing a critical analysis of the emotional intelligence models leading to a generic model and an assessment methodology. That is the focus because I thought if no one else is going to create that then maybe I need to get my sleeves rolled up. I chose to do that under a PhD for the rigour and again I do value the academia and the research methodology so by going back to wrap this under a PhD gives me the chance to produce something that is going to work in as much as it can do, but also open it up to critique. I've got the luxury of some of the people we were talking about being on an advisory board to critique the pathway of the journey and I've got 99 subject matter experts who are standing ready to look at the right/wrong answers in terms of emotional intelligence once that's been validated. The model that is resulting is the result of a critical analysis of all those in place.

Phil: Ok. So, identifying what the gaps are but what the strengths are as well.

Cliff: Yes. And any model that comes out the other end won't be perfect, but it needs to survive the strong critiques that are coming from both camps – the ability and the trait side - and the mixed model side. My aim is to try and handle the flaws in the existing tools as judged by the scientific community and create a framework which is then going to describe something that could maybe become an emotional intelligence, an EQ score or an EI score that people might see as having value.

Phil: Ok. Yeah. And how are you feeling about that?

Cliff: It's a little bit scary because it's not easy and there's a lot of interest in the field but the early signs and the feedback I'm getting from the people who are advising is good. I have a good supervision team. You need that critique and challenge, but I also have some subject matter experts and gurus. I'm lucky to have Paul Ekman giving me feedback. There are people like Don Saklofske who has pulled together a lot of work on assessing emotional intelligence, so he is mentoring the work too and he's taken us forward. Jack Mayer has offered to help. Not on any tool as that would conflict with his own work but to support the PhD. So supporting the thinking and methodology are

some of the prime movers and shakers. Mike Brackett, Peter Solevey and Jack Meyer's protégé and one of their prime students, who is now heading up emotional intelligence and doing a lot of good work and I'm interested in his support because he is also working with children so that's my long-term goal. I'm very fortunate to have a few people on tap to help with the development in the other stages and then there is a fabulous team of 99 people from the Emotional Intelligence Consortium which I've recently joined and so I can access their talent because the criteria for them as subject matter experts is something that I wanted to clarify because that is something that is criticised with the scheme. We had 19 experts who were up for a conference that some people say were they really experts? They were PhD students but what have they done? What have they published? Whilst our consortium has five criteria that must be passed to become a member, so the challenge is clinging out to that jury and if 75% of them agree that this is appropriate response in that context for that goal for this person in this situational judgement test that seems to be the way that this is going; video based scenarios where people can see what has gone before, what is coming next, how these inter-relate. You and I have seen how this is being done for leadership so it's the same kind of framework we use for emotional intelligence competences. And that seems to be handling most of the critique.

Phil: And that is covering off the contextual stuff then because, I guess, within the test you get told this is the wider/broader context and then here is a video or here is something to read or watch and then is there a case of "you've just seen that" or "here is a ten minute video, we are two minutes in, and you have a choice now – would you do this or would you do that or would you do that?"

Cliff: That's it. Is what person A did to person B appropriate in that context or could they have handled it differently? And the judgement of the person being assessed we know correlates very highly with their ability to transfer this into the work environment or into the world environment, so the research is stacking up that transfer. The ecological validity of assessing the instrument needs to be good so that we can predict that they will succeed in a generic sense. But you need to put pressure on them so there will be a time element. This is something we've been experiencing in the leadership one, but we don't get the chance in negotiations or with a child who comes in at 2 o'clock in the morning to say "hang on a minute, can we just freeze frame for ten minutes so that I can think about how I respond here?" There needs to be some contextual elements which in real life is a time frame because we are all emotionally intelligent when the stakes are low and we have three hours to think about it. We've got to get the green, the amber and the red simulated in any instrument for ecological validity. How do we simulate the pressure of a military soldier under fire? Or someone in a really violent discussion with their wife or husband or partner? And this could lead into divorce and separation. The stakes are high. We've got young children here. I need to handle this appropriately. What is the best thing for me to do right now if both our goals are to stay together? If the goals are to stay together and we've just had something that's caused an eruption, then there are things you can do which can support or work against in a constructive or destructive way for the perpetuation of that relationship.

Phil: OK. So that covers off some of the contextual aspects. One of the other challenges you mentioned are cultural variations. Is that something that you are planning on trying to address as well?

Cliff: Yes, because the purists on the ability side say traits have no place in emotional intelligence models and I believe they are wrong because traits, a person's personality are part of the context - me knowing your personality and me knowing my preferences or traits. You can treat it as an ingrained, a genetic feature of me that I'm let's say an extrovert and you are an introvert. Let's say that's ingrained from birth and we believe that is the case. By me knowing you're an introvert and you knowing I'm an extrovert, if I want to have a constructive relationship with you, then what's the benefits of me working on that. They are threefold: firstly I need to know how I come across and that's self-awareness, secondly is me and you a good team or do we need a better mix of personalities for this team, and the third thing is if I know empathically that I want to communicate with you, I need to flex my style instead of being gregarious and loud and on the table while sometimes you may need some thinking time and you process things internally, so I need to give you some space for that and I need to tune my channel to your channel and engage with you with your preferences. It's like going fishing. I like cream cakes and fishlike worms but for me to go fishing with a cream cake would be non-productive. I need to work out what the other person likes if I want to achieve my goal. Culture fits in that and I've put all this under the banner of individual differences. Psychologists agree everyone is different. Now you're unique. There's nobody in the world like you. You've got your own skill set, your own history, your own personal experiences, your own little ticks and idiosyncratic behaviours, your own stories, your own sexual preferences, your culture, your own language, all that is unique to you and the more I can read that in you about how that is affecting your beliefs and values and how your history affects you, the better able I am to work with you. I've put culture in the same bag as trait, personality, preferences, life experiences, gender, age, whether you're from the city or a farm, but I'd be careful not to pigeonhole you into any of those boxes. I hate boxes. I would be aware that may be biasing your habits, your behaviour, emotion and thought. You may have some behaviour shortcuts you're taking, and I need to be aware of those to best interact with you. But whether we should bring a Carl Jung model in or should we bring a Myers Briggs model in or the Big Five, I don't think so. I think it's just being aware of differences and some knowledge and understanding of current tools and models might be valuable but when we are face to face with an individual all our thoughts should be on that person. Being aware of those differences in advance needs handling to make sure we are not biased and take shortcuts ourselves.

Phil: Ok. We covered a lot of ground in that then. We defined what emotions are or what the broadly accepted terms around emotions are and then we got into what is emotional intelligence, how has it been defined by other people, what are the gaps and the issues with that and where might that go into the future then. Are there any misconceptions or misunderstandings of emotional intelligence that you think need to be addressed?

Cliff: Yes. We've touched on some of them. I think there are probably about five myths and misconceptions. One is that there is one model already and there isn't. Some people think we just look for the emotional intelligence book and it will be based on the model and that is not the case.

Phil: There isn't one of those.

Cliff: No. There isn't one of those. And the second myth is that competences can be measured successfully by self-report. And there's good stats on this with IQ. If you ask an individual and think how ridiculous that is…

Phil: Yeah. Tell me how intelligent you think you are.

Cliff: Yes. What is your numerical reasoning like? Can you give yourself a score on a scale of 0 to 10? And the correlation between self-report and IQ testing is weak. It's 0.21 and so there is some correlation but is very low, very weak so the idea that it can be assessed reliably is probably myth number two. Myth number three is that the IQ model seems to be held in high esteem so that any EQ model/emotional intelligence model can only be of value if it corelates with an IQ score. Some people assess their own model against that as a factor.

Phil: Really?

Cliff: Yes. So, if my model correlates with an IQ score, it's a good one.

Phil: Ok. So, hang on. If somebody scores well on my model and they score well in an IQ test, then my model is good?

Cliff: Yes, my model is good. I would challenge that.

Phil: I think that's a load of rubbish. I nearly swore then. I think that's a lot of shit.

Cliff: Well, there could be no correlation. I suspect, and I have seen no good research on this, but I suspect there would be a good hypothesis for a PhD here to look at an inverse correlation. In other words, the more intelligent you get, the more you know the right answers, the less interested you are in the contributions from others maybe. Some people are very good. But there is something about the arrogance that a high IQ or strong knowledge can create. If not handled properly, it can become a liability. If there is an inverse correlation because the smarter you get with the swollen head, the smaller your heart gets, then everyone who's tested their model against IQ has been wasting their time. So, we don't yet know. If you took manual dexterity, your ability to screw the top of a bottle or kick a ball or do complicated sports or assembling, your ability with manual dexterity, does that correlate with IQ? I don't know. I guess it wouldn't to a significant level so why we have to force that criteria on an IQ model and use it to throw it out or throw it in. The problem is, if you are developing EQ and this is under the third myth here, what do you compare it against to say it's good? You can't compare it against IQ. We've just broken that. You can't compare it against existing models because they're all flawed and even the authors accept that there is no perfect model out there yet. So, what do you compare it against to say it's valid and reliable. It can't be happiness because that brings in a value so the only word I can find right now is success however you define it. It's success in social, family, work, leadership, education, whatever. We've got about nine roles that people perform in life in terms of negotiation, teaching, development and so on. I've got those framed to test it against all those nine roles as a parent and a career or as an educator and a trainer. If we can predict the people who score well on these would be successful in those roles, then we need to test every one of them. It's going to take five years plus to test all of them. Once this model is in place we need to test 5000 people across all areas just to get started and to see what the correlations are like and we'll find out after the fact what the correlation is. So, that's number three.

Phil: Can I stay with that for a second? How do you define success in that example then? What is success as a teacher – being a headteacher or pupil attainment scores or…?

Cliff: Exactly. So, if you take what is a successful teacher, you need to make sure that it is defined responsibly and ethically not just by a teacher. Some people judge as a good teacher someone who can get my kid through grades. Another one says I just want my child to be happy going to school. Another one says I want them to be an all rounded human being. So you got the customer in terms of the child, the end user of the educational system, you've got the carer or the parent who is the one who has got the power to take the child to a different school based on what their values are, and then you've got the consumer and the customer of the school, i.e. the high school would be the customer of the primary school. The job of the primary school is to make our children high school ready, life ready and social ready (however wide you want to take that). The job of the high school in the UK system is to make the children either college or university ready or workplace ready or both and let the children decide. So create enough opportunities so that they can find a gift and follow a gift and they are not herded down. In my day, probably before your time, it was "get a trade" and the schools and parents drove you to get some form of trade and craft or apprenticeship. Now it's "get to university" and now you can't find a plumber in the UK who will come in less than three weeks. Their salaries and their value in society now is huge. They earn much more than university professors if they are a good plumber. We need a spectrum. We're not social engineers but we've got to create a spectrum of opportunities so that people can find their own craft after analysis a footballer, a motor mechanic, a teacher, a leader. That again is a heck of responsibility on those in charge of creating the pathway for children. Ken Robinson has got some great thoughts on this in terms of the creativity and the other elements that get knocked out of children from being 4 to 8. The fourth myth is about right answers without context. You cannot have right answers without context so if there is a model which doesn't look at goals and context then I would be suspicious. The fifth myth is that you can ignore traits in an ability model and I challenge that because how can you not consider a person's preferences and habits in terms of their thinking, behaviour and emotions if you want to have a very successful interaction with them?

Phil: Ok. All right. So, is there anything else then that you're thinking, feeling, want to say to bring us together and bring us to a close?

Cliff: I think you've managed to plough around the main contentious issues and I guess the key thing is to try and elevate this in thinking to psychology students, to HR, to companies and the work you are doing I applaud in terms of taking emotional aspects into work with Emotion At Work and I applaud anything that attempts to do that. I suppose I would love to see emotion at work/education/schools in the future.

Phil: I picked up my first governor role this week. I was appointed as a governor at my local primary school this week.

Cliff: (Clapping) Bravo! It's about time you put something back.

Phil: I know. Isn't it just?! (laughs) Ok. All right. There was something else that came to mind then and it got superseded by me talking about becoming a governor. What was that? I can't remember.

Cliff: Anyway, one of the other things you were asking was around if any of your listeners wanted to pick up any text.

Phil: Yes. Thank you.

Cliff: My library is huge as you can imagine. I'm in the middle of a PhD and I've been doing this now for 27 years. I've isolated five books and I can give you these afterwards but there is one by Annie Murphy Paul called "The Cult of Personality Testing" that sounds a little bit negative and cheeky but it's quite a healthy critique of personality testing but done in a constructive way. This is not to try and put people off traits and personality because they are valuable, but I would recommend Annie Murphy Paul on "The Cult of Personality Testing". She is quite controversial. She opens up with the line "Hi, nice to meet you, let me tell you who you are. Fill in this questionnaire, give it to me and I'll tell you who you are". And that is a flavour that is strong through the text. Number two is, and I'm hoping to probably update this as I can see a book coming out of the PhD, called the "Critique of Emotional Intelligence" by Kevin Murphy. This is twelve years old and it's underrated but I applaud the work he's done. It's not so far out of date because there has been very little development in the last twelve years. For anyone that is looking at the various models, what the problems are and how they can be fixed in EQ/emotional intelligence, I recommend Kevin Murphy's book. "The Development of Emotional Competence" is about the educational process. Carolyn Saami examines eight emotional skills. I love her work and what she left us as a legacy here in the development of emotional competence, so I would highly recommend her. That is not the type of thing that would come up in Google. You have to hunt for it but out of all the books I found I would say this is the jewel if anyone wants to look at developing emotional competence. Don Saklofske has edited and pulled together "Assessing Emotional Intelligence" theory, research and applications and that's with Springer and that is a fabulous compilation. For anyone who wants to look at assessment that is the book. And then finally for those who want to go back to Edmond, Darwin and not be biased just by their work, I would say look at Dacher Keltner et al. He got a group he's pulled together in a book called "Understanding Emotions". They're not cheap some of these but I would recommend if you had to buy five books to take on a desert island and you were interested in emotional intelligence and assessment, those are the five.

Phil: Ok. Wonderful. Thank you. We'll make sure we put links to all of those in the show notes as well. Wonderful. Thank you. Anything else?

Cliff: No. Thank you for your time.

Phil: In which case thank you very much, Cliff. Thank you for being on the Emotion at Work podcast and it's been wonderful to chat to you. Thank you very much.

Cliff: Cheers, Phil.