



# Emotional Intelligence

## *a key to Peace and Prosperity*

*Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage your emotions in positive and constructive ways. It's about recognizing your own emotional state and the emotional states of others. Emotional intelligence is also about engaging with others in ways that draw people to you.*

Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an in-born characteristic. It is the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

*Emotional intelligence consists of four core abilities:*

1. **Self-awareness** – The ability to recognize your own emotions and how they affect your thoughts and behavior, know your strengths and weaknesses, and has self-confidence.
2. **Self-management** – The ability to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage your emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.
3. **Social awareness** – The ability to understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially, and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization.
4. **Relationship management** – The ability to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict.

### HOW TO RAISE OUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is not learned in the standard intellectual way; it must be learned and understood on an emotional level. We can't simply read about emotional intelligence or master it through memorization. In order to learn about emotional intelligence in a way that produces change, we need to engage the emotional parts of the brain in ways that connect us to others. This kind of learning is based on what we see, hear, and feel. Intellectual understanding is an important first step, but the development of emotional intelligence depends on sensory, nonverbal learning and real-life practices. Raising your emotional intelligence by engaging your emotions. When you become overwhelmed by stress, the emotional parts of your brain override the rational parts—hijacking your best-laid plans, intentions, and strategies. In order to permanently change behavior in ways that stand up under pressure, you need to learn how to take advantage of the powerful emotional parts of the brain that remain active and accessible even in times of stress. This means that you can't simply read about emotional intelligence in order to master it. You have to learn the skills on a deeper, emotional level—experiencing and practicing them in your everyday life.

### FIVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS

#### 1) *Learn to handle your stress*

When, we are under high levels of stress, rational thinking and decision making go out the window. Runaway stress overwhelms the mind and body, getting in the way of our ability to accurately "read" a situation, hear what someone else is saying, be aware of our own feelings and needs, and communicate clearly. The first key skill of emotional intelligence is

the ability to quickly calm yourself down when you're feeling overwhelmed. Being able to manage stress in the moment is the key to resilience. This emotional intelligence skill helps you stay balanced, focused, and in control—no matter what challenges you face.

*Develop your stress busting skills by working through the following three steps:*

1. Realize when you're stressed – The first step to reducing stress is recognizing what stress feels like. Many of us spend so much time in an unbalanced state that we've forgotten what it feels like to be calm and relaxed.
2. Identify your stress response – Everyone reacts differently to stress. Do you tend to space out and get depressed? Become angry and agitated? Freeze with anxiety? The best way to quickly calm yourself depends on your specific stress response.
3. Discover the stress busting techniques that work for you – The best way to reduce stress quickly is through the senses: through sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. But each person responds differently to sensory input, so you need to find things that are soothing to you.

### **2) Face and control your emotions**

The second key skill of emotional intelligence is having a moment-to-moment awareness of your emotions and how they influence your thoughts and actions. Emotional awareness is the key to understanding yourself and others. Many people are disconnected from their emotions—especially strong core emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and joy. But although we can distort, deny, or numb our feelings, we can't eliminate them. They're still there, whether we're aware of them or not. Unfortunately, without emotional awareness, we are unable to fully understand our own motivations and needs, or to communicate effectively with others.

*What kind of a relationship do you have with your emotions?*

- Do you experience feelings that flow, encountering one emotion after another as your experiences change from moment to moment?
- Are your emotions accompanied by physical sensations that you experience in places like your stomach or chest?
- Do you experience discrete feelings and emotions, such as anger, sadness, fear, joy, each of which is evident in subtle facial expressions?
- Can you experience intense feelings that are strong enough to capture both your attention and that of others?
- Do you pay attention to your emotions? Do they factor into your decision making?
- If any of these experiences are unfamiliar, your emotions may be turned down or turned off. In order to be emotionally healthy and emotionally intelligent, you must

reconnect to your core emotions, accept them, and become comfortable with them.

### **3) Learn Nonverbal Empathic communication**

Being a good communicator requires more than just verbal skills. Oftentimes, what we say is less important than how we say it or the other nonverbal signals we send out. In order to hold the attention of others and build connection and trust, we need to be aware of and in control of our nonverbal gestures and develop the ability of empathic listening. We also need to be able to accurately read and respond to the nonverbal cues that other people send us. This wordless form of communication is emotionally driven. It asks the questions: "Are you listening?" and "Do you understand and care?" Answers to these questions are expressed in the way we listen, look, move, and react. Our nonverbal messages will produce a sense of interest, trust, excitement, and desire for connection—or they will generate fear, confusion, distrust, and disinterest. One has to pay attention to eye contact during communication, our facial expressions, tone of voice, posture and gestures, touch and timing and pace of communication.



### **4) Use humor and Light heartedness to deal with challenges of life**

Humor, laughter, and play are natural antidotes to life's difficulties. They lighten our burdens and help us keep things in perspective. A good hearty laugh reduces stress, elevates mood, and brings our nervous system back into balance. The ability to deal with challenges using humor and play is the important skill of emotional intelligence. Playful communication broadens our emotional intelligence and helps us to:

- Take hardships in stride. By allowing us to view our frustrations and disappointments from new perspectives, laughter and play enable us to survive annoyances, hard times, and setbacks.
- Smooth over differences. Using gentle humor often helps us say things that might be otherwise difficult to express without creating a flap.

