

# BECOMING EMOTIONALLY

## *Smart*



*Optimizing Your EQ to Create  
Better Relationships and a More  
Fulfilling LIFE*

Special Report

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## ***Becoming Emotionally Smart - Optimizing Your EQ to Create Better Relationships and a More Fulfilling LIFE***

Seven-year-old Ryan stood at the window, watching the rain destroy his chance to go swimming. His shoulders drooped, his face was sad. Noticing his disappointment, his grandmother stood behind him and gave him a comforting hug. Together, they gazed out the window, snuggling in the embrace. Suddenly, Ryan turned his face upward, smiled at his grandmother and asked, “Granny, did you know that when people hug you, it fills up your heart a certain number of spaces?”

Later that evening, as Ryan’s grandmother was saying goodnight to him, she asked, “So, Ryan, how many spaces are in your heart?” Without missing a beat he replied, “Ten!” And, without hesitation, he added, “But seven have to be full for you to feel good.” And in his childish curiosity, he stretched his arms around her neck and asked, “Granny, are you a ten?”

Ryan demonstrates a metaphorically powerful, definition of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize our own emotional state and be tuned into the emotional state of those around us. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage ourselves and relate to others in an appropriate way. It is the awareness of our own feelings and the feelings of others.

The term emotional intelligence was first used by Jack Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990.. Salovey was Yale University’s president and Mayer was a professor at the University of New Hampshire. They created the term *and* the EI theory itself. What their work demonstrated was how emotions could impact the behavior and thought process of an individual.

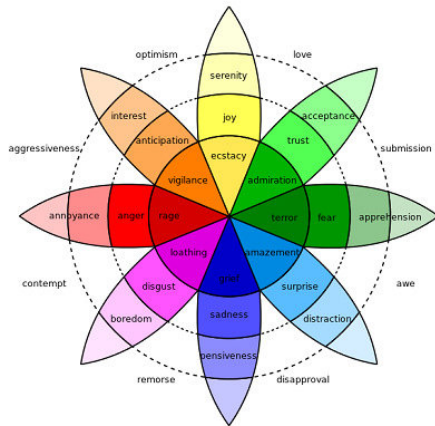


The topic gained popularity when Daniel Goleman wrote his ground-breaking book by the same name. The book generated a whole new awareness of the role emotions play in our lives and the impact they have on business leadership. Today there are more than 25 million references to the term “emotional intelligence” on the internet.

This report is intended to increase your awareness about the role emotions play in your life. It will help you increase your ability to read and respond appropriately to the emotional state of others and make your relationships more meaningful. Emotional intelligence can bring peace to your life when you learn to express yourself with greater clarity, and learn to read, respond to, and accept other people’s feelings.

### **Defining Emotions**

The language around emotions can be confusing. Simply put, emotions are feelings. Our vocabulary contains many words that to describe our feelings, ranging from sad to glad; miserable to happy; hurt to enthused; and so on.



One of the most popular theories, proposed by psychologist Robert Plutchik, is there are 8 primary emotions, much like a wheel. They are joy, sadness, trust, disgust, fear, anger, surprise, and anticipation. The wheel of emotion is likened to the color wheel in which the primary colors combine to form the secondary and complementary colors. These basic emotions then mix and combine to form a variety of feelings. For example, anticipation plus joy might combine to form optimism.

Other researchers suggest that there are just four basic emotions, and everything that we feel is a subset or combination of these basic four: happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. And a more recent study puts the number of emotions at 27.

To make a long story short, there are a lot of words that describe how we feel.

Sometime we are aware of what we are feeling, and at other times we are not. For example, we often know when we feel grief if we are coping with the loss of a loved one. But we may not be aware that we are experiencing grief when something we hoped for and longed for did not come to fruition, or when we are going through change in our personal or professional lives. Additionally, there are times when we experience more than one emotion. The term “bitter-sweet” is an example of mixed emotions.

The way we express our emotions informs others how we feel. And, to add to the confusion, the way others express their emotions informs us how they feel. This is often two different forms of expression. That is what has made the study and practice of emotional intelligence so popular and necessary!

In further understanding emotional intelligence, the three most common words used to describe emotions are discrete emotions, moods, and disposition.

Emotions that change rapidly are called **discrete emotions** and are tied to a particular cause. For example, if someone surprises you with a gift – something you really wanted – you suddenly feel good. And, if the phone rings and you’re told that someone you love has just suffered an injury, you immediately feel anxious and worried.

**Moods** are longer-lasting feelings and are not particularly tied to a cause. They can last for a few hours, to several days, to even a few weeks. They can be high or low, and we can’t always explain why. Moods can be influenced by circumstances, such as the loss of

a loved one, anticipating a marriage or a family vacation, poor predictions about the economy, or job uncertainty.

**Disposition**, also referenced as personality, is used to describe how we predictably respond to situations through the course of our life. For example, we might say that someone is a *positive* person – having a tendency to look on the good side all the time. Or we might describe someone as being *negative* or down all the time – always seeing the bad in the situation. We all know a person with a sunny personality, and we all probably also know someone who seems to suck the energy out of the room just by walking through the door.

Most people recognize the need to be able to identify and express emotions in a healthy way. But many lack the skills to do so. Understanding how emotions benefit us is helpful for all aspects of our life, including relationships, career, our health (yes, our health!), and our own personal development.

### **What’s Good About Emotions?**

Emotions are our best friends. They inform and inspire us in four distinct, but often interrelated ways.

- 1) Emotions tell us what we feel about an experience. They let us know if an experience is happy, joyful, threatening, sad, etc. And they let others know what we are experiencing.
- 2) Emotions motivate our actions. Strong emotions can help us overcome obstacles—real and perceived—to achieve what we want.
- 3) Emotions serve as a built in “smoke alarm” which helps us respond to other people and situations that might be threatening for us. When you feel uncomfortable or threatened by a situation, your emotions send a signal to the brain to be more aware, conscious and cautious.
- 4) Emotions also help us regulate our decisions. e.g., “If I lie about this, I’ll feel guilty. Therefore, I will tell the truth.” Or, “If I say these words, it will damage my relationship with my friend. I’ll take a different approach.”

Understanding the language and functions of emotions provides a foundation for developing more emotional intelligence. Just as reading, taking classes, studying and applying knowledge can boost intelligence quotient (IQ); learning about feelings can boost emotional intelligence (EQ). And there are even more ways you can further develop you own emotional intelligence.

## The Five Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

According to Daniel Goleman, there are five dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- 1) Self-awareness – Getting in touch with your emotions.
- 2) Self-regulation – Managing your emotions so you are not sabotaged by your emotions.
- 3) Motivation – Using emotional triggers to keep moving forward to meet your goals, even when you want to give up.
- 4) Empathy – Developing an acute awareness about what others are feeling and regulating your behavior to enhance the relationship.
- 5) Social Skills – Engaging in healthy emotional management skills so you understand how your feelings and the emotions of others interact. Another term used for this is emotional interactivity.

As you review this list, notice that the first three are about understanding yourself better. The fourth dimension teaches you how to read the emotions of others, and the fifth dimension helps you understand the relationship and interactions between your own emotions and those of others.

First and foremost, the skill that must be developed on the road to emotional intelligence is self-awareness. Let's start there.

### Self-Awareness – Developing a More Emotional Awareness

It can be difficult for many people to describe their emotions or trust their feelings. Many people have been told to ignore or discount their emotions at a very early age. Here's a classic example:

A child falls down and immediately responds to a scrape on their knee with wails and tears. The responding adult typically does one of three things:

- Affirms: *“I know you're hurt. Let me comfort you. It's okay to cry. You will feel better.”*
- Discounts: *“It's not that bad. Quit crying. It can't hurt that much.”*
- Disciplines: *“Stop crying. Boys don't cry. If you don't stop crying, I'm going to give you something to cry about.”*



In the last two scenarios, the child is taught that feelings don't matter or not to trust their feelings about an experience. These statements also teach the lesson that showing emotions is a bad thing.

As you can see from this example, we begin to receive messages, at an early age, that either support expressing our emotions or teach us that emotions are not important and are not to be shared. As a result, people develop confusion about showing and sharing emotions, especially negative emotions. However, our emotional brain is like a muscle. If we don't exercise it when emotions are negative, we limit our ability to feel and share positive feelings as well. Here's a way to start developing more self-awareness around emotions:

- Ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?"
- Where does the feeling show up in my body?
- Write down words that describe your feeling(s).
- Don't judge your feeling(s). Feelings are neither good nor bad.
- Explore the feeling(s). How intense is it? Does it linger?

This exercise is helpful to do anytime -- when you experience your heart quicken or your face redden -- when you experience discomfort; excitement; anticipation; or dread. Check in with yourself and determine what caused the feeling. Simply acknowledge to yourself what you are feeling. And don't judge. Appreciate your ability to connect with your feelings. It is a gift.

### **Self-Regulation - Managing Your Emotions So They Don't Manage You**

We have all had moments when our emotions have run amok -- when the intensity of our emotions becomes so strong that we behave in ways that don't serve us well. Some common behaviors are:

- inappropriate language
- shutting down
- overeating
- consuming too much alcohol
- striking out in anger
- and more...

Learning to manage or regulate our emotions in a healthy way is often considered a requisite skill of maturity and can help us move forward in life. Not learning this skill can hold us back from earning respect, achieving success, and developing healthy relationships.

Emotional regulation is the ability to experience the emotion AND respond in a healthy way. When we think about emotional intensity, we most often think of experiences that

portray negative emotions. However, positive emotions can also cause us to act in inappropriate ways. Think of the quarterback who breaks the rules after a touchdown by spiking the ball. Or a sales person who lands a big account and then becomes insensitive to those around them, seemingly taunting their other co-workers. The more intense the emotion, the greater need to regulate the ensuing behavior.

Below are five basic skills to help you experience your emotions, yet dial down the intensity to appropriately fit a given circumstance:

- 1) Focus on the moment; breathe and center yourself (become more mindful).
- 2) Observe and describe the emotions you are feeling.
- 3) Describe the intensity of the emotion on a scale of 1-10.
- 4) Ask yourself: Do I need to sit with this emotion, feel it and let it wash over me?
- 5) Ask yourself: What actions can I take, or not, that will serve me best?

Learning to master these skills when you experience intense emotions can help you manage yourself in a much more appropriate way.

### **Motivation - Keeping Going Even When the Going Gets Tough**

As you develop your understanding of the role that emotions and feelings play in your life, you can use these emotions to motivate you to reach your goals. For example, if you want to run a marathon, you can overcome a tendency to give up when things get tough by thinking about how you will feel when you cross the finish line. The promise of positive outcomes helps motivate us even when obstacles are in the way. We like that feeling of success and will often go to great lengths to achieve it.

Here's another way to think about emotions and motivation. When you list your intentions for the day on a 'to-do' list, you have a greater chance of getting those tasks done. That's because we naturally seek opportunities to feel good about ourselves. And putting a check mark next to a completed item, or crossing it off, makes most of us feel good. In fact, the feeling is so compelling that people often write down something on their list after they finish the task – just to be able to check it off! We are fueling positive emotions when we do that.

An additional way that emotions serve to motivate us is evidenced through research around positivity and optimism. The more positive and optimistic a person is, the more effort they will put into accomplishing goals. Emotional intelligence helps us tap into positivity, optimism and hope.

Here are two ways to use emotions for motivation by developing a more optimistic mindset:



- 1) Make a list of things you can do that bring more joy to your life, and a more positive mindset. The next time you need motivation to accomplish your goals, choose one thing off the list and do it.
- 2) Do something that allows you to exercise a signature strength or a natural talent you have (e.g., great with seniors, teaching, giving advice, baking goodies, creating music, decorating, organizing, entertaining playing with children, etc.)

As you learn more about your own emotions, it becomes easier to notice, identify and respond to the emotions of others. Knowing how you feel helps you understand how others feel.

### Empathy – The Art of Understanding Others



Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. You are sensitive to their feelings by reading non-verbal and verbal cues. Some people are naturally more empathetic than others. Like expressing our emotions, our ability to express empathy can be influenced by our DNA and our environment. The good news is that everyone can improve their ability to empathize.

Some people define empathy as practicing the Golden Rule – *do unto others as you would want them to do unto you*. This concept can be taken a step further with this statement -- *Do unto others as they want to be done unto*. The highly empathic person seems to have a knack for treating or responding to others in a way that affirms their feelings and supports their needs.

As much as we want others to understand and respect our feelings, it can often be hard to return the favor or initiate the behavior. Some reasons are:

- Growing up in a home where empathy was not exhibited.
- Letting our own emotions escalate to the point where we say or do hurtful things to other people, often regretting those words later.
- An obsessive need to be right. For these people, every opinion that differs from theirs provokes an attack, even if the other person is simply expressing a different point of view in a calm and logical manner.
- Feeling unheard by others, thereby not wanting to show empathy in return.
- Insecurities that if we show empathy or compassion toward another it will make us look weak.



This is why getting in touch with and managing our own emotions is a necessary first step to showing empathy toward others.

In order to have more fulfilling relationships, it is important that we develop the skill of empathy. When we are empathetic (aka empathic), we anticipate responses from others. We are not suggesting that you project your feelings onto others, but instead are able to read the verbal and non-verbal cues that tell you what others are feeling and respond appropriately. When all parties in a relationship are practicing empathy, this makes it safe to communicate our fear, failures and vulnerabilities, and as a result it strengthens the bonds of the relationship.

### **Social Skills – Practicing EQ in the Real World**

Being aware of how others are feeling is critical to mastering the final stage of emotional development: **social interactivity**. When you exercise social interactivity, you can adjust your behavior based on intuition and observations about others.

Being emotionally social allows you to read and interpret your own emotion and be sensitive to the emotions of other. For example:

*If you want to introduce your new partner to your family, but you sense they won't warm up to them immediately, then you might meet for coffee instead of showing up at a major family gathering.*

*If you know your boss has just had a stressful meeting with the CEO about budget cuts, you will choose another time to discuss salary increases for the team.*

*If your child is disappointed about not being invited to a birthday party, it's not the time to mention that they could use the time to prepare for a big test that will determine if they are accepted into the accelerated class at school.*

If you want to develop more social interactivity, try these:

- Pay close attention to the responses other people have in specific situations
- Make a mental note when you see someone expressing their feelings
- Ask people what they are feeling—and then listen
- Reach out to shy or quieter people in a way that is appropriate to them
- Engage people in meaningful conversations
- And, as your mama taught you, “be nice.”

Life is filled with less stress, easier relationships, and more joy for people who understand and practice strong emotional interactivity—or social skills.

### **Concluding Thoughts:**

Emotional intelligence (EQ) - like athletic accomplishments, artistic expression, or academic achievements - comes more naturally for some people than others. The rest of us have to work on it a bit more. But the good news is that we all can increase our EQ.

As research evolves, it is shown that emotional intelligence is crucial for better health, more success, and a more fulfilling life. It begins by gaining more awareness about your own emotions, and developing appropriate skills to manage them. It grows and deepens as you learn to take those skills and notice, identify and respond appropriately to the emotions of others.

Emotional Intelligence is the key ingredient for more fulfilling relationships. Whether used for motivating yourself and others, for leading teams, or for enhancing family dynamics, it is worth the effort to continue to examine your current EQ and how you can grow it to become more emotionally smart.

Because life is all about having deep, meaningful, healthy relationships with yourself and others. As Ryan says, “to fill up the squares in your heart, and in the hearts of those you love.”

*If you would like to explore your emotional intelligence more deeply, please contact us regarding our self-coaching programs!*

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