



Increasing Emotional Intelligence

© 2014 Susan Fee, M.Ed., PCC
Professional Clinical Counselor

Instructions

Please download and read the text and complete the prepared test questions at the end. Reading the text and taking the test must take 1 hour in order to receive 1 clock hour credit. Please print out the finished test and payment method (the last two pages) and mail to Lakeshore Educational & Counseling Services. Once received, Lakeshore will grade the test and if passed, Lakeshore will e-mail you a certificate. The cost for one CEU is \$15.00. Tests will not be graded until payment is received.

Mail to:

Lakeshore Educational & Counseling Services
Att: Distance Learning Workshop
5475 Liberty Avenue
Vermilion, Ohio 44089

Please complete all the information requested. This information serves as the sign-in form. Questions may be directed to Lakeshore Educational & Counseling Services at 440-963-0402.

Thank you for your participation.

Introduction

You've probably heard of IQ, but what about EQ? It stands for "emotional quotient." While IQ measures your intelligence, EQ is a measurement of emotions that help identify how well we relate to others, make decisions, and regulate levels of self-motivation. Clients with under-developed emotional intelligence report feeling distant or out of sync with others. This negatively affects relationships, team interactions, and the ability to handle challenging situations. Current research supports that emotional intelligence is something that can be improved through building awareness and coaching clients in specific skills.

Educational Objectives

After taking this course, participants will learn how to:

1. Compare differences between intelligence and emotional quotients.
2. Define five components of emotional intelligence.
3. Provide practical exercises to increase emotional intelligence.

Let's Get Started!

What is Emotional Intelligence?

You may be familiar with the term IQ, which stands for intelligence quotient and is a measurement of logical reasoning ability and technical intelligence, but what about EQ? This stands for *emotional* quotient and is a far better indicator of success in life than having a high IQ. In simpler terms, IQ is about being book smart while EQ is about being people smart. Ideally, clients score well in both types of intelligences. However, deficits in emotional quotient skills can lead to unhealthy relationships, poor impulse control, low motivation, and ineffective communication. Therefore, helping clients build awareness of their emotions and how to use them appropriately can have a profound, positive impact on their life.

Your intelligence quotient is determined by taking a standardized test that measures cognitive ability in areas of math, language, spatial relationships, reasoning and memory. Test scores are relatively stable over time because they measure how you think, not what you know. Therefore, acquiring new knowledge doesn't increase a score. As far as academic success, a high IQ is certainly desirable, but not a guaranteed predictor.

Emotional intelligence is measured differently. The emphasis is on "soft skills," meaning how well one recognizes emotions and uses them appropriately in relationships. Five major categories are considered: self-awareness, motivation, emotional regulation, empathy, and relationships. Unlike testing for IQ, the assessment for EQ is subjective because it relies on self-

report and feedback from others. There's also no set point. When it comes to increasing emotional intelligence, your potential is unlimited.

All Feelings are Good

Some people have learned that expressing emotions is a weakness and demonstrates a lack of self-control. In particular, they perceive certain feelings to be better than others, blocking them from fully engaging. For example, you might believe feeling happy is "good," but feeling angry is "bad."

Actually, emotions are just a barometer of what you're experiencing in any given moment and there's no one feeling that's better than another. There are definitely feelings that are more comfortable to experience than others and more acceptable ways of expressing them. But, how well feelings are managed shouldn't be confused with feeling them in the first place. You can't selectively numb emotions, so if a client decides he doesn't ever want to feel uncomfortable, he shuts down feeling in general, not just certain emotions. The result is an emotional brick wall that keeps you separated from the world.

Uncomfortable emotions are valuable in that they usually signal some sort of problem that needs to be resolved, or serve as a warning before making an unwise decision. They can help protect you from trusting the wrong people or prompt you into gaining more skills in order to feel confident in a task. Ignoring uncomfortable feelings because you think it's wrong to feel them leads to a whole new set of problems. Acknowledging emotions and choosing healthy ways to express them shows a great deal more self-control than not expressing them at all.

Assessing EQ

Formal emotional quotient assessments involve rating yourself in the five major categories of emotional management and then seeking the same feedback of others with whom you interact. In comparing the answers, opportunities for growth show up in the gaps between self-perception and how others experience you. While the survey below *is not* a formal, standardized assessment, it can still be used with clients to help build their awareness. Their responses will give them a general idea of how well they're emotionally connecting.

Client Self-assessment

Answer the following statements true or false:

- When conversations get emotionally intense, I find myself daydreaming.
- I constantly rehearse and replay conversations in my head.
- I often feel emotionally out of sync with other people.
- I prefer discussing difficult topics by texting rather than talking in person.

- I suffer from chronic physical discomfort.
- I rarely laugh out loud.
- I have a hard time acknowledging how others feel.
- I often feel unmotivated.
- Sometimes I overreact to little things.
- It's easier to see the cup as half-empty to avoid feeling disappointed.
- I ignore uncomfortable feelings by staying busy.

Each statement reflects a way of avoiding emotions so the more “true” responses a person has, the lower the EQ score. Remember, your EQ has unlimited potential! Any “true” statements can be addressed by learning the skills of emotional management. In the same way you build physical muscle, emotional muscle takes work and may feel uncomfortable. But, the more you work at it, the easier it becomes to recognize and express emotions. The payoff comes in higher life satisfaction, improved relationships, and better communication.

Gathering Outside Feedback

If your client is willing to informally find out how others perceive him, he can ask at least ten people he knows well (personally or professionally) to answer the following statements true or false. Pay attention anytime the majority of answers are “true.”

- When conversations get emotionally intense, (client name) tunes me out.
- (Client name) is in his head a lot.
- (Client name) doesn't seem to easily click with other people.
- (Client name) prefers texting rather than talking in person with me, especially on emotional topics.
- (Client name) frequently complains about physical discomfort.
- (Client name) rarely laughs out loud.
- (Client name) rarely acknowledges my feelings.
- (Client name) appears unmotivated.
- (Client name) overreacts to little things.
- (Client name) sees the cup as half-empty instead of half-full.
- (Client name) avoids uncomfortable feelings by staying busy.

If the suggestion of asking ten people to answer these statements causes anxiety, it's a good topic to explore further. When you're emotionally in tune with yourself and others, receiving feedback isn't nearly as scary. This is not an exercise about subjecting people to judgment. But, the only way to find out how others perceive you is to ask.

Myths About Emotions

“Don’t be so emotional.” Have you ever been told this or said it to someone else? Rarely are people told, “Don’t be so rational.” The disparity in advice can make one believe that emotions are frivolous and cloud judgment. On the contrary, emotions serve as a valuable tool in decision-making. Have you ever had a gut feeling about something, but then went against it, only to regret your decision later? That “gut feeling” was the result of thousands of emotional sensors reacting to past experiences, subtle clues, and minute details that you consciously or unconsciously registered. For example, imagine someone told you to trust him, but your gut feelings warned you to remain cautious. If you only listened to the facts stated, you might be making a bad decision.

Gut feelings can appear to show up out of nowhere and therefore seem to be insignificant. But, if cultivated, your gut feelings are a source of wisdom. That’s why it’s a myth that emotions cloud judgment. If your feelings don’t match the facts, it’s a signal to slow down and gather more evidence. By doing so, you’ll make more informed choices.

Strength in Vulnerability

Another common myth about emotions is that it shows personal weakness to reveal them. In some professions (like police or military), you’re expected to hold emotions at bay. That’s understandable if showing emotions in particular situations would lead to a safety risk. But, it doesn’t mean that every life circumstance requires a lack of feelings. In some families, kids are teased for being a “cry baby” and learn to stifle feelings so as not to appear like a wimp. In this type of climate, it actually takes a lot of *courage* to show the appropriate emotion at the right time.

While attempting to “control” feelings like a “strong” person, the opposite occurs. Unexpressed emotions show up in angry outbursts, depression, high blood pressure, headaches, stomachaches, and stress. Don’t buy into the myth that it’s weak to show your emotions. Hiding them is the cowardly way out! Expressing feelings in a timely and appropriate way requires strength, courage, and self-discipline.

Component #1: Increase Self-Awareness

Becoming aware of your feelings is two-fold. The first step is to be able to accurately recognize your feelings and understand why you feel that way. Lacking this insight causes delayed reactions to triggering events for hours, days, or even months. This starts a chain reaction of taking out pent up feelings on the wrong person who is unrelated to the real source, eventually damaging relationships. The second layer of self-awareness is noticing how you emotionally affect other people. When you walk into a room what kind of emotional energy do you bring with you?

Thoughts Trigger Feelings

Where do your feelings come from in the first place? If you answered your brain, you're correct. But, more specifically, feelings are a result of your thoughts. Calm thoughts generate calm feelings; agitated thoughts lead to feeling agitated, and so on. So the key to understanding your feelings is to first become aware of your internal dialogue. Other people or circumstances don't cause you to feel a certain way. Rather, it's how you explain the situation to yourself. Therefore, you choose how to feel and have complete control over your reactions. (It's easier to blame other people for making you feel bad, but then you'd have to give them total control over making you feel better.)

Becoming aware of what you're *thinking* and linking it to your feelings takes practice. Internal thoughts occur with lightning speed. Once you notice strong feelings, slow down, take a deep breath, and ask yourself what you're thinking that's making you feel this way? Journaling is a helpful tool. Writing about a situation and how it affected you can lead to insights about the way you think. If you want to change how you're feeling, you need to change how you're thinking.

Feelings Determine Behavior

The second level of self-awareness is your effect on others. Before you ever speak, people can pick up your emotional vibe based on body language. The more relaxed and comfortable you feel, the more others will feel at ease around you. For example, calm thoughts lead to feeling calm, which leads to a calm demeanor demonstrated by slower breathing, relaxed facial expressions, warm smile, and loose gestures. Based on body language alone, how do clients think they currently affect people emotionally? What effect do they want to have?

Unexpressed emotions don't evaporate. They show up in a number of ways, especially in your body. Take note of any physical discomfort such as headaches, stomach upset, lingering colds, heart palpitations, or tense muscles. These could be signs of an emotional disconnect. Examine what you're feeling at the time you feel physical discomfort, and in turn, what you're thinking. The more you can recognize the thought-feeling-behavior cycle, the sooner you'll build emotional self-awareness.

Component #2: Regulate Emotions

Expressing your emotions to the right person, at the right time, with the appropriate intensity is called emotional regulation. Once you have self-awareness and can accurately identify feelings and their root cause, choosing how to respond is the next step. First, examine your thoughts to understand what truly triggered your feelings.

Speak to the Right Person

Once you've figured out the incident that caused you to react with strong thoughts and feelings, determine if it involved other people. Sometimes people are present, but they have nothing to do with your reaction. You could be sensitive to something, but it's more about you than them, in which case you wouldn't share your feelings out loud because the right person to speak to would be *you*.

If you realize that your feelings involve another person and expressing them would improve the relationship or circumstances, then it's important to share them. The stronger the feelings, the more tempting it is to go around the right person and complain to others instead. Or, rather than speak directly to the person, you text or post comments online. But, healthy emotional regulation means that you communicate in person only to the individual related to the situation.

Choose the Right Time

Just because you feel something doesn't mean you should talk about it immediately. Timing is everything when you want people to pay attention to important conversations. Personal feelings should be shared privately, not publicly. In addition, you'll need to schedule an appropriate amount of time for discussion. The most meaningful conversations are dialogues, not monologues. So, you'll want enough time for sharing reactions.

Choosing the right time is also about sensing when the other person will be the most willing and open to hearing what you have to say. If he's particularly stressed, for instance, it's probably not the best time to start a conversation about your feelings since his mind may be too frazzled to focus. When in doubt, ask to schedule time to meet. Let him know that you'd like his full attention and ask when it would be best to talk.

Express with Appropriate Intensity

People will always pay more attention to how you say something rather than what you say. So, if you're talking with great urgency about something insignificant or delivering important news with underwhelming conviction, your message won't be believable. Regulating emotional intensity means matching your words with the appropriate level of emotion. Letting feelings build up often leads to people exploding and saying things they later regret due to unregulated intensity.

As you build emotional awareness, monitor the intensity of your feelings. Rate them on a scale of 1-10, with ten being the strongest. The best time to address your feelings is before they reach a six. Past that level, your emotions increasingly override rational thought and it's difficult to listen to feedback. It's better to wait until you feel calm enough to say exactly what you mean.

By training yourself to recognize and address feelings early, they won't build to be so overwhelming and you'll have far more success speaking so people listen.

Component #3: Motivation

There are two ways to be motivated: internal and external. People with a high EQ are internally motivated meaning that they don't rely on other people or conditions to encourage them to do something. They're so in tune with their emotions, they know what gives them purpose and satisfaction. People who are externally motivated require threats or rewards to get them to do something. Typically, they can't identify anything that they're passionate about and won't do much unless forced. This is directly tied to a lack of emotional awareness. How can you pursue a purpose if you don't know what it feels like to be passionate?

Identify Strengths

People report feeling their happiest and most motivated when utilizing their unique strengths. On the flipside, they report feeling more depressed and unmotivated the farther away they get from expressing their personal strengths. Everyone has unique strengths. If clients are unaware of their strengths, the questions below will help.

According to Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton, authors of *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, a strength is any activity (something that takes effort) that you can perform with near perfect consistency every time. Personal strengths are enduring, meaning that you've always had a knack for a certain behavior, even as a kid. Engaging in your strengths is instinctual and leaves you feeling energized to the point that you could imagine doing it long-term. Ask clients the following questions to help them clarify their strengths:

- What activities absorb your attention to the point of losing track of time?
- What activities have you taught yourself how to do out of curiosity?
- What kind of things can you learn to do after being shown just a few times?
- What activities do you find energizing?
- What seems to come easily to you and not to others?

It's easy to minimize your strengths because certain tasks come easily to you, so you don't think it's anything special. But, that's the point. What's easy for you is difficult for others because each person is unique. It feels good to utilize your strengths! Start taking notice of what activities either energize or drain you. Pay attention to the process in order to pinpoint exactly what excites you about any given activity so that you can repeat it. As you do this, you will be increasing your emotional awareness.

Component #4: Show Empathy

Empathy is a key factor in developing healthy emotional connections with others. Without empathy, your communication will come across as distant and somewhat mechanical. Empathy often gets confused with sympathy, but they're very different. Empathy is the accurate reflection of another person's emotions, separate from your own. You don't have to like the other person or agree with what he's feeling to offer empathy. You also don't need to have had the same experiences as the other person to imagine how he might be feeling. (Even with similar circumstances, it's impossible to have the same experience since everyone's perception of events is uniquely personal.)

Sympathy is agreeing with someone's feelings to the point that you feel what he feels. If he's sad, you're sad, and therefore you want to fix his problem so that you can feel relief. Your efforts become more about helping yourself than listening to him. With sympathy, you're sharing his feelings, versus empathy where you can imagine how someone is feeling, but you don't join in solidarity.

You can increase your empathic response by simply paying attention to others in the moment and listening without fixing, judging, or minimizing. Offering unsolicited advice or engaging in immediate problem-solving means you've stopped listening. Practice allowing people to tell their stories while you listen with the sole purpose of understanding. Reflect back your perception of not only the content of what the other person shared, but emotional meaning as well. The more you practice listening in this way, the better you'll be at conveying empathy.

Component #5: Monitor Relationships

More than any other area, a high EQ is revealed in the health of your personal and professional relationships. How well you cooperate, communicate, and resolve conflicts is dependent on healthy bonds. This is where the opinions of others count! If everyone around you says you're hard to get along with, it doesn't matter if you disagree. From their perspective, they're right. It's possible to have healthy relationships in one area of your life and struggle elsewhere. If you find yourself favoring certain groups of people and avoiding others (like spending all your time at work to avoid going home), it's a sign that something's out of balance. When measuring EQ, all relationships must be taken into account.

Personal Relationships

The first question to consider is whether or not you have close, personal relationships or are you're more of a loner? Shyness is no excuse. Everyone needs people close enough to trust. When's the last time you made a new friend? The reason personal relationships give a fairly accurate picture of emotional intelligence is that you must be vulnerable in order to grow close. It shows a

willingness to listen, respond, and share. Whether it's romantic, family, or friendship bonds, every relationship is teaching you about personal strengths and weaknesses.

It's impossible to learn certain things about yourself outside of a relationship. Operating alone, you never have to be challenged, receive feedback, compromise or recognize others. If you have a difficult time tolerating people, it could very well mean that you're fearful of their opinions. High EQ in relationships can be measured by loving, respectful, and satisfying connections. You should be able to be yourself and express your feelings openly and honestly. People close to you would describe you as approachable and supportive.

Professional Relationships

Workplace relationships are equally important. How well do you get along with your bosses, peers, subordinates, and customers? Are you able to communicate easily, perform team-related tasks, and address conflicts? If any of these situations cause you to feel anxious or upset, use the emotional feedback to grow and be careful about blaming others for, "not getting it." Sure, there are difficult people in the world, but they still offer an opportunity for you to learn to manage your emotions while interacting with them. Stay alert to any feedback you receive that suggests you're defensive, as it will surely stall career advancement.

You're scoring high EQ marks at work if you: feel respected and respect others, seek feedback and make necessary changes instead of waiting for an annual performance review, and your contributions are recognized. If there's ever a dispute, you clear up misunderstandings immediately, in person. High EQ means you're a self-starter and handle what needs to be done without having to be asked. You have no problem admitting mistakes or asking for help.

In Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is important to a person's overall life satisfaction, motivation, and relationships. It's comprised of five factors: self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationships. While a person's IQ has a set point, their EQ has limitless potential. By building awareness, gathering feedback, and practicing skills, anyone can increase his or her emotional intelligence.

TEST

Increasing Emotional Intelligence

Complete the test below and follow the instructions provided on page 1 to receive your certificate. Remember to include the Payment Method form when you mail the test in. Please complete the information below to serve as the sign in form. Please PRINT clearly.

Name: _____

Phone: () _____

E-mail Address: _____

Circle the correct answer:

1. One way to increase emotional intelligence is to:
 - a) Ignore your emotions.
 - b) Recognize your strengths.
 - c) Tell everyone you know exactly how you feel.

2. Emotional intelligence is measured by:
 - a) A combination of self-assessments and feedback from others.
 - b) Taking an IQ test.
 - c) Getting a physical.

3. A common *myth* regarding emotions is:
 - a) It's weak to express your feelings.
 - b) Feelings assist in decision-making.
 - c) There are no good or bad feelings.

4. The five components of emotional intelligence are:
 - a) Self-awareness, computer skills, motivation, communication, happiness.
 - b) Self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, relationships.
 - c) Self-awareness, friendliness, relationships, career satisfaction, hobbies.

5. A person's IQ score is more important to life satisfaction than his EQ.
 - a) T
 - b) F

I read and completed the test questions for 1 hour of credit.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment Method

Payments
<p>1 CEU is \$15.00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If paying by check, please make checks payable to Lakeshore. Mail in check with this test. • If paying by credit card, please check the box that applies. If you are calling the office with credit card information, please call the office <i>AFTER</i> you have mailed in the test. <p>Please mail this form with the test. Tests will not be graded and approval will not be granted until after the payment is received.</p>

Method of Payment: (Please check) <input type="checkbox"/> Check (enclosed) or <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card
Credit Card: (Please check) <input type="checkbox"/> Calling the Lakeshore office to give credit card information. <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving the credit card information below.
Credit Card Number:
Exp. date:
CVC code:
Name on credit card:
Billing Address: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>
City/ State/Zip code