

# LESSON GUIDE

## About this course

This six-part video course is a hands-on training experience to help you learn the language of emotional intelligence. The video lessons cover the five key tools for building skills to improve and preserve your emotional intelligence—at your pace and convenience.

### Ways to use this course:

- use the program to raise your emotional intelligence
- use the program to teach others
- use the program to support coaching or therapy

## Suggestions for maximizing your learning experience:

- **Get Ready.** Print this 15-page guide and have it in hand as you view the video lessons. This lesson guide contains information that will make each video easier to understand and more meaningful.
- **Read the Article.** Read the companion articles before you watch the video lessons. If you have already read the EQ Central articles, you can either review them quickly or go directly to the video lessons.
- **Watch the Video.** This course consists of six sequential parts with each part having an article and a video lesson. Each lesson builds on skills learned in the preceding lesson.

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## *Introduction to the Videos*

Let's start with a quiz to see how well acquainted you are with the tools of emotional intelligence right now. As you answer the questions that follow, pretend you're an impartial observer with an infant's curiosity, a sense of humor and no judgments.

### QUIZ

#### **Test Your Familiarity with the Tools of Emotional Intelligence**

1. Do you stay engaged when talking to most people? Are you able to focus on the person you are talking to and ignore distractions, including your cell phone?
2. Are you comfortable with pauses and silence in a conversation? Can you carry on with a conversation even if something said strikes an emotional nerve?
3. Do you sense when someone feels troubled before there is an exchange of words? Can you walk into a meeting and immediately tell who may be upset?
4. Do you generally feel comfortable letting others know what you're experiencing emotionally? Can you allow your feelings to surface without judging them?
5. Do you pay attention to your gut feelings when making important decisions? Would you do or not do something that seemed logical because you have a contradictory feeling?
6. Do you immediately notice when you become stressed? Are you able to take care of yourself so that stress doesn't incapacitate you or make you sick?
7. Do you know how to quickly and dependably relieve stress? Do you routinely take relaxing breaths or walk around a bit when you feel overwhelmed?
8. Do you easily laugh, play or kid around with others? Do you use humor to negotiate differences or get over rough spots?
9. Can you easily face up to differences? Are you able to have disagreements with colleagues, friends or loved ones without feeling threatened?

Answering "usually," to most of the questions indicates that you have a good start in your relationships and on the skills of emotional intelligence. But even if you rarely do these things, it's not too late to learn.

## Lesson 1: The Elastic

### THE ELASTIC HELPS YOU REDUCE STRESS AND AVOID EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD.

*Imagine your nervous system stretched like a piece of elastic to the point of breaking. Now imagine that you have learned how to relieve the pressure so that the nervous system eases back into a relaxed shape. The first tool, The Elastic, helps you perform this critical function of stress relief.*



Out-of-control stress triggers knee-jerk fight or flight responses that make us feel like running or fighting but limit our capacity to behave in ways that reflect emotional intelligence. When this happens, our emotions and the emotions of others can seem threatening and overwhelming. In order to raise your emotional intelligence, you first need to learn how to rapidly and dependably calm yourself.

### QUIZ

#### Test Your Stress Recognition and Management Skills

When you come home, do you walk in the door feeling alert and relaxed? Or do feel exhausted and head for the couch, the liquor cabinet, the TV, or computer?

1. Throughout the day, do you feel irritated, tense, confused, anxious, spacey or moody? Are you often or easily irritated?
2. When you feel out of sorts, can you immediately restore your composure? Do you know what to do to get that "just right" feeling back?
3. Can you turn to others at work or at home to help you feel better? Can you ask for help?
4. Do you recognize emotional conflict in your coworkers, colleagues, friends or family? Can you walk into a room and spot someone's upset?
5. When things get emotionally heavy, do you feel like running away? Do you run?

This quiz has no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to collect information about your response to stress. After you have spent some time practicing how to calm yourself, take the quiz again. Do you notice any changes in your responses?

### Reducing stress in the moment

The first step in preparing for emotionally intelligent communication is recognizing when your own stress level or those of your partners or colleagues are out of control.

#### There are three distinct reactions to stress:

1. Fight (angry or agitated)
2. Flight (depressed or spaced-out)

3. Freeze (paralyzed or traumatized (a less common and more severe response that may require professional intervention)

**There are only two appropriate ways of reducing stress and calming yourself:**

- You can reach out to a person you trust and immediately feel soothed yourself.
- You can learn to calm yourself and quickly reduce stress through sensory means such as visualization and deep breathing.

**Lesson 1 learning exercise: Visualization**

You may already be familiar with stress reduction techniques like yoga or meditation, but in relationships, you need to defuse stress immediately. The Lesson 1 video guides you through a visualization exercise that will help you find ways to bring yourself into balance.

Soothing images can come from all types of activities and memories – playing with a baby or beloved pet, thrilling to a game of tennis or basketball, or even a day at the beach swimming in clear blue water.

*\* During the exercise, did you experience colors, sights, scents or movements that were immediately calming to you? If so, practice recalling these sensations until they come to you quickly, whenever you choose. Also, continue to explore sensory possibilities, both real and imaginary, until you're confident in having some kind of sensory stimulation at your fingertips to use whenever you need to be more relaxed and alert.*

## To deepen learning

**Tips and exercises for integrating the Elastic into your life**

Learning the emotional intelligence skill, the Elastic, is a little like learning to drive or to play golf. You don't master the skill in one lesson – you have to practice until it becomes second nature.

**When you are in a conflict, consider these questions to determine your reactions to stress:**

- Fight response: Is my foot on the gas? Do I feel angrier than the situation warrants?
- Flight response: Is my foot on the brake? Am I spacing out? Do I feel in a daze?
- Freeze response: Is my foot on both the gas and the brake? Do I feel frozen, paralyzed, and agitated?
- Do I feel threatened? Do I expect to be punished, hurt, or humiliated in some way?
- Do I feel out of control? Do I feel unable to effectively state my case or defend myself?

When you answer yes to any of these questions, take a time-out until you feel less stressed. Something as simple as taking several slow deep breaths or recalling your "stress relief" images can help restore balance and allow you to approach the situation with more calm and composure.

## Lesson 2: The Glue

### THE GLUE HELPS YOU STAY EMOTIONALLY CONNECTED TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

*We use glue to bring things together and to keep them together. Imagine The Glue, the second tool of emotional intelligence, as a warm, flowing means of connection to ourselves and others.*



The glue of emotional awareness holds everything together and enables you to stay emotionally connected to yourself and others. But in order to understand your feelings and the feelings of others, you first have to recognize and manage your own strong emotions – including those you may dislike or fear.

### QUIZ

#### Test Your Awareness of Your Core Emotions

1. Do you routinely experience visceral sensations of anger, sadness, fear or joy? If you are sad or mad, where in your body do you feel it?
2. Do physical feelings alert you to changes in your emotions? Have you ever felt the tone and energy in a room shift?
3. Are you comfortable with all of your emotions? Do you allow yourself to feel anger, sadness or fear without being judgmental or trying to suppress your emotions?
4. Do you use your emotions in your decision-making processes? For example, if you don't feel comfortable with a doctor, dentist or attorney, will you look for someone else? Or if something doesn't feel right about a work plan, will you voice your concern?
5. Do you pay attention to your emotional experience? Do you notice a variety of emotions throughout the day?
6. Do others know what you feel? Are you comfortable with others knowing your emotions?

If you didn't answer "usually" or even "sometimes" to most of these questions, you're not alone. Most people are not emotionally aware, but you can be, even if you have avoided some of your feelings for a long time.

## Lesson 2 learning exercise: Riding the waves

*This exercise will help you develop emotional awareness and improve emotional expression. The exercise is adapted from chapter six of "The Language of Emotional Intelligence."*

**Learn how to defuse stress first.** The process of learning to ride the waves of your emotions can touch on some feelings that may be painful. Before you start, first practice and learn the stress relief techniques in Lesson 1. Be familiar with your typical response to stress and the sensory techniques that you find calming and balancing. These techniques are the safety net that make riding the waves feel comfortable.

How did you learn to ride a bike? You probably used training wheels that helped you overcome your fear of falling, develop trust in your natural sense of balance, and experience the joy of a new way of moving in the world. "Riding the waves" is a learning experience to help you master a bigger challenge than riding a bike: learning to ride the waves of your emotions.

### Part 1: Establishing a safe harbor

Pick a time well before bedtime, so you won't fall asleep. After completing the time you allotted for the exercise, stop and resume your normal activities.

- First, establish an environment of sensory support:
- Find a private spot that meets your sensory needs, one where your surroundings feel completely safe and comfortable.
- Take off your shoes and loosen your belt or any tight clothing.
- Take the phone off the hook, and close the door.
- Find a comfortable chair that supports your back, or lie down (but only if you're sure you won't drift off to sleep).
- Don't smoke, drink alcohol, or eat during this process.

### Part 2: Riding the waves

If this is your first time, try allocating 15 minutes to this part of the process.

#### Step 1: Progressive relaxation

Tense, tighten, and then release each part of your body. You can work from your feet up to the top of your head, or you can do it in whatever order feels right for you. Squeeze each body part for a count of five seconds before releasing, and then allow each part to feel completely limp and relaxed.

#### Step 2: Clear your mind of extraneous thoughts

Close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths, releasing your thoughts each time you exhale. Make sure to exhale as much air as you inhaled.

Put one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Are both of your hands moving? If not, breathe in a little more fully and exhale a little more completely. As you continue, allow your body to sink comfortably into the chair or floor.

Try repeating the phrases "soft belly" and "soft chest" as you breathe in and out, for a deeper sensation. It's not easy to clear your mind of thoughts, but when unwanted thoughts intermittently pop back into your consciousness, focus on your breathing. Try to let go of those thoughts while exhaling.

### **Step 3: Choose an emotional trigger**

Choose a "trigger", something that had a moderate emotional effect on you (e.g., maybe someone was rude or cut in front of you). What you choose can be either an emotional memory or a feeling you are still experiencing.

Slowly scan your entire body to find the spot where a feeling is most intense. Is it in your stomach, chest, shoulders, or somewhere else? Focus all of your attention on this one area and direct your breath to its core. Experience the physical sensations that occur while you continue to breathe deeply.

Again, allow the feelings to take root by continuing to breathe deeply into the area where you experience the greatest intensity. You are trying to bring a fuzzy feeling into focus. Some people experience only physical sensations and emotions. At other times, these sensations are accompanied by visual memories. Everyone's experience is unique.

If you become too uncomfortable, redirect your focus to sensory input that is calming and balancing – the *elastic* in your tool kit. Indulge these pleasant feelings until you feel safe and comfortable. When you're ready, go back into the uncomfortable feelings you were exploring.

Pivot back and forth as often as necessary until your allotted time is up, then move on to Part 3.

Every time you correctly practice the exercise, you should feel a little more in control of your feelings.

## **Wait until you are comfortable with Step 3 before doing Step 4**

### **Step 4: Going deeper and reconnecting to intense emotions**

As you become comfortable experiencing moderately intense emotions, you can move in to focus on increasingly intense feelings. Remember, if you become sufficiently uncomfortable, toggle back and forth between the feelings and the sensory input.

You may begin with one feeling, but find that soon it shifts into another feeling or that the source of the feeling moves from one location in your body to a different place. Follow the new feeling as long as it proves to be more intense than the last.

If you're not experiencing much feeling of any sort, focus on just that – what it feels like to feel nothing. Intensify your experience by repeating, "I allow the feeling," with each breath, as long as it doesn't become a mental demand.

Hang in there. Try to stay with the most intense feeling for as long as you can. Remember the goal is not emotional release; it's emotional integration.

Don't force the issue and push for a release; a bit at a time is just as effective and less taxing. The point here is to allow rather than force the feelings to emerge. This process is about trusting your body to indicate how much it wants you to feel in this moment. You'll get better at it over time.

Some people cry during this part of the process, but not necessarily due to sadness. If they've been repressing feelings for a long time, the release can be intense. But tears are not necessary for a release. Some people moan or make other sounds, sometimes stretching or spontaneously moving their bodies during the process.

Trembling is common and a natural part of releasing and rebalancing after a traumatic experience – your mind may be saying an intense feeling is not okay. Just remind yourself that it is okay. So if you begin to tremble, continue to breathe deeply and hold your focus.

### Part 3: Seamlessly switch back to the world around you

The purpose of this part is to integrate the process and empower you with a greater sense of mastery and control of your emotions.

- When the time you've set aside for the exercise is over, rise and shine. Get up, open your eyes wide, and stretch. Stamp your feet, move your body, and walk around.
- Congratulate yourself for completing such an intense exercise.
- Stop focusing exclusively on your feelings, and redirect your thoughts toward your normal daily activities. Although your focus has now shifted from your inner world back to your outer life, you will retain some of the emotional awareness you just experienced.
- Take stock of your energy and focus. Notice whether colors seem brighter and sounds seem clearer.

To deepen learning:

### Tips and exercises for integrating the Glue into your life

- **Find someone to share your experience.** Within 36 hours of performing this exercise, find someone who is a good listener and share your experience of this process with him or her. Talking about your emotional experience helps reinforce and integrate the new learning.
- **Practice the exercise often.** Practice until you feel comfortably in control of your emotional experiences. Like building muscles in a gym, the more you flex emotions, the more "emotional muscle" you build.

## Lesson 3: The Pulley

**THE PULLEY HELPS YOU ATTRACT AND HOLD THE ATTENTION OF OTHERS.**

*A pulley is always moving in two directions at once, receiving and giving, giving and receiving. Imagine the third tool, nonverbal communication, sending and receiving a variety of sensory cues that further connect us to one another.*



Nonverbal communication is emotionally-driven communication that answers the questions: "Are you listening?" and "Do you understand and care?" Answers to these questions are expressed in the way we talk, listen, look, move and react. These elements will produce a sense of interest, trust, excitement and desire for connection – or they will generate fear, confusion, distrust and disinterest.

Nonverbal signals communicate your interest and investment in others. Critically important is the fact that these elements are experienced much more intensely in the pauses between words. Interruptions in the flow of language offer us the best opportunities for emotional communication. How well you are able to navigate pauses and send these signals will depend on your ability to manage stress and experience your own emotions as well as the other person's.

### Things to observe as you watch the skits in the video

- Watch the expressions on each of the faces – do they mirror or oppose the spoken words?
- Do the gestures, timing, and movements seem fluid or forced? Do they mirror or oppose what is being said?
- Is there a sense of real connection in what you see? Or, do you notice a lack of connection? Is it sometimes on and sometimes off?

*\*You may need to watch the clips several times to see all the nonverbal cues that are here.*

### To deepen learning:

#### Tips and exercises for integrating the Pulley into your life

As a way of learning more about nonverbal communication, for a few weeks jot down or record your observations of yourself and others. Include both people who are important to you and casual acquaintances.

Try to pay attention to:

- **Eye contact:** Does it seem missing, too intense, or just right?
- **Facial expression:** Is it mask-like and unexpressive, or emotionally present and filled with interest?

- **Tone of voice:** Does the voice project warmth, confidence, and delight, or is it strained and blocked?
- **Posture and gesture:** Does your body feel still and immobile, or relaxed? Can you sense the degree of tension in your shoulders and jaw? What do you observe about the tension in the body of the person you are speaking to?
- **Touch:** How do you like to be touched? Do you prefer a light or firm hand?
- **Intensity:** Do you or the person you are communicating with seem flat, cool, and disinterested, or over-the-top and melodramatic?
- **Timing and pace:** When you or someone you care about makes an important statement, does the response come too quickly or too slowly? Is there an easy flow of information back and forth?
- **Sounds that convey understanding:** Do you use or pick up on sounds from others that indicate caring or concern?

## Record yourself

To learn even more about your own nonverbal communication, you can use a camera or audio recorder to record yourself. Without seeing yourself, how can you really know what signals you are sending nonverbally?

- **Video camera** – Record a conversation between yourself and your partner or a friend. Take turns focusing the camera on your facial expressions and body language and then on the other person. Later, you can watch your nonverbal communication skills in action. Evaluate whether or not you were sending the nonverbal cues that you thought. Did your body language, facial expressions and tone of voice reflect the nature of the conversation and the way you felt?
- **Digital camera** – Ask someone to take a series of photos of you while you are engaged in conversation. You won't hear the words, but the images can be very revealing. Again, do your posture and facial expressions match the content and tone of the conversation?
- **Audio recorder** – Capture the tone and resonance of your voice, as well as the timing and pace of the conversation. Listen for sounds that aren't words – are you conveying your interest and attention in the pauses of the conversation?

The point of this activity is to develop your awareness of your own nonverbal communication skills. As you continue to pay attention to these skills your emotional intelligence will improve as well.

## Lesson 4: The Ladder

### THE LADDER HELPS YOU RISE ABOVE LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES.

*Imagine the fourth tool, the Ladder, as giving you many more options for overcoming frustrations and differences through mutual humor and playfulness.*



Mutual playfulness is more than fun; it's an opportunity for you to relax and overcome life's challenges – whether at home or at work. Play is our most joyous form of nonverbal communication in personal and work relationships. Using playful communication broadens your emotional intelligence and allows you to:

- **Take hardships in stride.** By allowing you to view frustrations and disappointments from new perspectives, laughter and play enable you to survive annoyances, hard times, and setbacks.
- **Smooth over differences and build trust.** Using gentle humor often helps you say things that might be difficult to say without creating a flap. Playfulness in the context of good will can diminish defensiveness and encourage camaraderie.
- **Simultaneously relax and energize ourselves.** Play delights the nervous system, relieves fatigue and relaxes your body, which allows you to accomplish more.
- **Become more creative.** When you loosen your control, it releases rigid ways of being and encourages you to get creative.

### Things to observe as you watch the skit in the video:

- Are both brothers having fun?
- What facial expressions, body language and tone of voice tell you that Mike does not enjoy being teased about his baldness?
- Do you think Mike's brother really understood Mike's upset and made sufficient amends?

### Learning exercise: how much laughter and play is in your life?

This exercise asks you to record positive experiences. Each day during the next week, give yourself the following points every time you:

- Smile – 1 point
- Laugh out loud – 2 points
- Tell a joke – 3 points
- Play a game with someone – 5 points
- Watch or listen to a funny show or movie – 10 points

After you have completed this exercise and have a total score each day and the entire week, consider these questions:

- Are you satisfied with your score or would you like to have collected more points?
- Did your score change significantly from day to day? Do you know why?
- Do you have more fun at home or away from home?
- Was your score higher or lower on the weekend? Do you know why?
- Do you know people who make you laugh? Do you make it a point to be with these people?
- Are there humorless parts of your life? If so, why?

## QUIZ

### Does it pass the laugh test?

If you have a hard time putting things in perspective, ask yourself the following questions about a problem that you can't seem to let go.

- Is it worth getting upset over?
- Is it worth upsetting others?
- Is it that important?
- Is it that bad?
- Is it that irreparable?
- Is it really your problem?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, why aren't you taking action? Is your energy being exhausted by judgment, criticism, and blame?

Now, ask yourself, "If I knew that I only had one year to live, how would I answer those questions?" Have any or all of your answers changed? If the problem really is serious, do you now feel more motivated to do something about it?

Finally, use your imagination to answer the questions from the viewpoint of an impartial third party? Are those answers different from yours? Can you adjust your expectations and lessen your tendency towards criticism and negativity? Can you lighten your load by trying to approach problems with a bit more humor, playfulness and perspective?

## To deepen learning:

### Tips and exercises for integrating these skills into your life

The more often you laugh and play, the easier it becomes to instinctively use the skill to diminish stress and improve your relationships. If you find yourself in need of practice, here are some suggestions for adding more laughter and play to your life.

- Spend time with babies, children and animals. Young children and animals instinctively know what it means to play and have fun. Fun is contagious and a young child's laughter or an animal's playfulness will rub off on you.
- Watch funny movies or TV shows.
- Volunteer to help with a party or dress up as the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus. Costumes are a great way to encourage fun and playfulness.
- Seek out people who make you laugh and spend more time with them. Try to engage others (family members, friends, coworkers, service people) in laughter and fun throughout your day.

As humor and play become an integral part of your life, new opportunities for connecting with others through laughter and fun will occur to you daily.

## Lesson 5: The Velvet Hammer

**THE VELVET HAMMER HELPS YOU HANDLE CONFLICT IN A POSITIVE WAY.**

*The head of a hammer is hard and resolving conflict is never easy, but a hammer in the hands of a craftsman creates opportunities for new beginnings. Imagine the fifth tool, the velvet hammer, as a source of opportunity rather than destruction when it is softened and empowered by all the skills that reflect emotional intelligence.*



Ironically, conflict offers us one of the best opportunities for improving relationships. By learning to tolerate the Velvet Hammer and avoid overreacting or under-reacting in emotionally charged situations, we take control of our emotions, as well as our ability to be true to ourselves and to the relationships we care about most.

This is not to say that conflict can't pose special challenges because:

- Perception can carry a greater emotional charge than reality.
- Conflict carries more emotional charge than other differences.

### QUIZ

#### Evaluate Your Ability to Handle Conflict Effectively

1. When you experience conflict, do you have the ability to remain somewhat relaxed and focused? Are you able to listen to what the other person is saying?
2. During times of difficulty, are you able to experience intense emotions and put them in perspective without becoming overwhelmed?
3. Do you find yourself able to read the nonverbal cues of others, even in the midst of disagreement?
4. Are you able to be playful even in tense and awkward situations?
5. Do you view conflict as an opportunity to build trust and improve a relationship?

These questions build on the tools of emotional intelligence. If you don't answer "usually" to most of these questions yet, don't worry — practice will improve your ability to negotiate conflict without becoming overwhelmed.

#### Things to observe as you watch the skits in the video

- Are the people in the skits able to listen to one another even though they each have different needs?
- Do participants seem to be managing their intense emotions appropriately? Are you comfortable with the level of emotion expressed in each of the skits?

- How does maintaining eye contact and listening intently affect the interaction?

## To deepen learning:

### Tips and exercises for integrating these skills into your life

Learning how to navigate conflict harmoniously and even learn from it takes plenty of practice. It is within your capacity though, and along with the other four skills, an important aspect of conflict resolution is the art of listening. When you experience conflict, try to consider the following:

- Can you name the reasons given by the other person about why he or she is upset?
- Can you understand the other person's point of view?
- Can you repeat some of the words used by the other person? Did you ask the person if you understood correctly?
- Did you ask if the person said everything he or she wanted to? Did you give some time to think?
- Can you resist interjecting your own point of view until the other person has said everything he or she wants to say?

### The fifth tool is a sum of the first four tools:

After you have learned how to quickly reduce your stress level, experience and manage strong emotions, recognize and practice nonverbal communication and meet challenges with a sense of humor, you can move on to handling conflict in stride and resolving differences in ways that build trust and confidence. Your new skills should give you confidence to:

- Stay focused on the present
- Choose your arguments
- Forgive and move on
- End conflicts that can't be resolved

### Mastering the tools of emotional intelligence take practice

One more important point needs to be made before you end: in order to really change your life for the better, you will need to invest time and energy into practicing your new skills. Under stress, emotions override the ability to think clearly. That's why this material really won't belong to you until you can call on it at any time.

To be most useful this learning needs to be habitual. The best way to do this is to create a plan that carves out time in your daily routine for practicing and using the tools described in this training *until you find yourself doing them automatically.*