

Emotional Intelligence Training Course

LESSON GUIDE

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 second tool of emotional intelligence, the Glue, as a warm, flowing means of connection to ourselves and others.



1. Begin by taking the quiz below
2. Watch *Section A: Building Emotional Awareness* (5:07 minutes)
3. Watch *Section B: Reconnecting to Core Feelings* (7:20 minutes)
4. Review the Riding the Waves Exercise FAQ
5. Practice the Riding the Waves Exercise until you are comfortable with all your emotions

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 makes riding the waves feel comfortable.

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

The first few times you do this exercise, it is best to finish here and skip over Step 4 below. Once you are comfortable with Step 3, add five or ten more minutes to the exercise and include Step 4.

Step 4: Going deeper and reconnecting to intense emotions

As you become comfortable experiencing moderately intense emotions in Step 3, you can move in to focus on increasingly intense feelings. Remember, if you become sufficiently uncomfortable, toggle back and forth between the feelings and calming 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 is 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.

Tips 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.

Riding the Waves Exercise FAQ

Q: How soon after I complete the process, should I talk with someone who is a good listener about my experiences?

A: Share within 36 hours. If more than a day and a half passes, your memory is apt to be dulled.

Q: Would writing in a journal be similar to talking to someone?

A: No! Writing engages different parts of the brain than speaking face to face.

Q: What should I do if I initially feel something in one part of my body, and a stronger sensation occurs somewhere else?

A: Always follow the intensity. Focus on the strongest sensation you feel.

Q: What if I don't feel anything or I just feel empty?

A: That's fine. Pay attention to the feeling of no feeling—of being numb or empty.

Q: How much is too much time to devote to the process?

A: Start with 10 minutes and work up to 20 or 30 minutes. More than 40 minutes is unnecessary and may even be counter-productive.

Q: What if even 10 minutes continues to feel like too much time?

A: Practice in very short segments of from three to five minutes a couple of times a day. If after numerous attempts, you still feel uncomfortable, you'd probably benefit from the support of a trauma specialist.

Q: Do people have to learn to experience joy?

A: Some do. There are those for whom any kind of emotional intensity feels intimidating because they fear a loss of control.

Q: How long does it take to integrate the exercise and make it part of my life?

A: How long it takes is a question of degree. If you do the process correctly, you'll experience daily benefits. How much growth is enough for you? How much do you want?