

Emotional Intelligence Training Course

LESSON GUIDE

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.

1. Watch *Lesson Four: The Ladder* (2:27 minutes)
2. Read "A tool for developing resiliency"
3. Start the learning exercise "Bringing more laughter and play into your life"
4. Review "Tips for having more fun"



A tool for developing resiliency

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.

Learning exercise: Bringing more laughter and play into 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?

Tips for having more fun

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.