

Relationship Help

BUILDING GREAT RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



The best things in life depend on our ability to create and maintain great relationships. Success, happiness, and the ability to give and receive love all hinge on our relationships. Most of us do a good job with relationships at the start. But why do we so often stumble down the road? Why do relationships develop such challenging problems?

Learn the key five emotional intelligence skills we need needed to build great relationships and heal relationship problems.

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How does emotional intelligence help our relationships?

Emotions are the building blocks of each relationship in our lives, and the power of those emotions cannot be overlooked. Emotions override our thoughts and profoundly influence our behavior.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, control, and effectively communicate our own emotions, and to recognize the emotions of other people. Emotional intelligence skills allow us to use our emotional building blocks to construct a solid foundation for communication. Well-developed emotional intelligence skills are a better predictor of success in all areas of life (and particularly in relationships) than the traditional measurement of high cognitive intelligence, or IQ.

As the foundation for all verbal and nonverbal communication, emotional intelligence:

- Empowers you to build healthy new relationships
- Helps you strengthen existing relationships
- Helps you to better understand other people
- Helps you to better understand yourself
- Enhances your abilities to communicate effectively

Test Your Emotional Intelligence

What is your current emotional intelligence skill level? Most of us have relationship problems at times with coworkers, acquaintances, friends, relatives, or other people we care about. Your emotional intelligence is your set of key relationship skills that help you establish strong relationships and deal with relationship problems. Find your emotional intelligence skill level by answering “true” or “false” to the questions in this quick relationship quiz.

1. I hold eye contact with the person to whom I'm speaking.
2. I am comfortable with pauses when others are experiencing emotion.
3. I sense when someone feels troubled before being told.
4. I am comfortable with my feelings of sadness, joy, anger, and fear.
5. I pay attention to my emotions when making decisions.
6. I have no problem expressing my emotions to others.
7. I can reduce my stress to a comfortable level.
8. I enjoy laughing, playing, or kidding around.
9. I don't feel threatened by disagreements
10. When others are speaking, I listen to them rather than formulating my reply.

Answering “true” to most of these questions indicates that you already have a good grasp on the skills that will strengthen your relationships and help you avoid relationship problems. But don't worry if most of your answers were “false.” By learning about emotional intelligence, you can start to raise your emotional intelligence abilities. You will learn the key skills you can use to improve your current relationships, and to forge strong new ones—both in your personal life and the workplace.

The problem with seeking relationship advice

Why do most people seek help with relationships? Most people seek relationship advice to find answers to problems they believe are responsible for their conflicts—without realizing there are *more fundamental issues* at the core of those problems. They are attempting to heal the surface *symptoms* of their dysfunctional relationships, without examining the real issues that are simmering beneath. Until those fundamental issues are addressed, the problems and conflicts will continue.

Most of us have been involved in volatile, uncomfortable, or awkward situations. Consider the relationship problems of these individuals:



Fred experienced emotional and physical pain early in life, and is determined to keep his family together. His wife is threatening divorce. In a bestseller, Fred found steps for changing his behavior and opening a relationship discussion with his wife. Sadly, most of what Fred relays about his good intentions is lost, since his nonverbal communication—the true language of love—speaks only of *his* needs and ignores *hers*.

Joseph's temper is putting his job at risk. Management at his small company has told him to “get help for your anger, or you are through.” In an anger management program he learns to recognize warning signs of an emotional flare-up, and some techniques to cool off. But after a few successful “cool downs,” Joseph and his management team are frightened when, during a minor disagreement, he suddenly explodes in rage.



Allison gets attention for her good looks and sense of humor, but she never feels comfortable with herself. She has read many books on what men want, she dates a lot, but each time she finds someone she really likes, he stops calling within a short time. She blames those who disappoint her, but it doesn't realize that her poor communication skills are the cause of her relationship problems.

Alexis' childhood was colored by her mother's chronic depression. Now, as an adult, she is unable to deal with conflict. Armed with a law degree, she acts and looks like someone in charge of herself. But her inability to confront conflict has sidetracked her work. Despite therapy and coaching, she finds herself unable to advance in her career.



Bonnie's parents died when she was an infant. She is determined to put aside her depression, along with her expectations for emotional communication in her marriage. A bestseller she's read has convinced her that men are incapable of being emotionally receptive. Bonnie's husband is relieved to be off the hook. Bonnie, however, finds herself slipping further into depression, and she has begun to suffer from irritable bowel syndrome.

In each of these examples, supposedly helpful relationship advice proves not to be effective. Why? Because the *source* of that individual's relationship problems was never addressed.

Which emotional intelligence skills help build and maintain great relationships?

Today's technology allows researchers to look at communication from a moment-to-moment perspective. This research has shown that what really keeps people connected with one another is *nonverbal* communication. This form of communication may be without words, but it's not necessarily silent; tone of voice or a well-placed sigh can say a great deal. And, it is a *vis* language. If a conversationalist is standing stiffly, the message he sends may be quite different than if he is visibly relaxed. An obvious eye-roll or a subtle shrug can speak volumes—even without the person's conscious intention. So, nonverbal communication is vital to keeping our relationships strong and healthy. While every relationship is unique, there are five areas of emotional intelligence that are of vital importance to building and maintaining healthy relationships:

The ability to manage stress in relationships.

Stress shuts down your ability to feel, to think rationally, and to be emotionally available to another person, essentially blocking good communication until both you and your partner feel safe enough to focus on one another. This damages the relationship. Being able to regulate stress allows you to remain emotionally available. The first step in communicating with emotional intelligence is recognizing when stress levels are out of control and returning yourself and others, whenever possible, to a relaxed and energized state of awareness.

Read: [Managing Stress in Relationships](#)



The ability to recognize and manage your emotions.

Emotional exchanges hold the communication process together. These exchanges are triggered by basic emotions, including anger, sadness, fear, joy, and disgust. To communicate in a way that *grabs* or engages others, you have to be able to access your emotions. However, your emotions may be distorted, or unavailable to you, due to the influence of your earliest childhood relationships. But they *can and must* be restored.

Read: [Emotion Communicates](#)



The ability to communicate nonverbally.

The most powerful forms of communication *contain no words*, and take place at a much faster rate than speech. Using nonverbal communication is the way to attract others' attention and keep relationships on track. Eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice, posture, gesture, touch, intensity, timing, pace, and sounds that convey understanding engage the brain and influence others much more than your words alone.

Read: [Nonverbal Communication](#)



The ability to use humor and play in your relationships.

Playfulness and humor help you navigate and rise above difficult and embarrassing issues. Mutually shared positive experiences also lift you up, help you find inner resources needed to cope with disappointment and heartbreak, and give you the will to maintain a positive connection to your work and your loved ones.

Read: [Playful Communication Skills](#)



The ability to resolve conflicts in your relationships.

The way you respond to differences and disagreements in personal and professional relationships can create hostility and irreparable rifts, or it can initiate the building of safety and trust. Your capacity to take conflict in stride and to forgive easily is supported by your ability to manage stress, to be emotionally available, to communicate nonverbally, and to laugh easily.

Read: [Conflict Resolution](#)



These 5 relationship skills will:

- Help you see yourself and others in a new light
- Help you recognize the difference between damaging communication and helpful communication
- Help you discover resources for remaining calm and focused, regardless of the circumstances
- Help you discover and improve your emotional awareness
- Help you find more playfulness and joy in your relationships, at work or at home
- Enable you to transform conflict, using it as an opportunity for building trust and avoiding resentment

Emotional intelligence skills will have a dramatic effect on your relationships at home and at work. Each article in this series guide you through exercises, quizzes, and examples that will help you learn a specific emotional intelligence ability. As you acquire each ability, you will increase your emotional intelligence and your ability to master the next skill. In the end, you will get to know a newly empowered individual—yourself—and become very comfortable with your ability to attract the respect & affection of others.

Now, let's take an in-depth look at our first skill - [Managing Stress in Relationships](#)

Related Links: Relationship Help Series

Part 1: Learning the Key Skills of Emotional Intelligence

[Relationship Help](#): Building Great Relationships with Emotional Intelligence

[Managing Stress](#): Recognize and Manage Relationship Stress

[Emotion Communicates](#): Emotional Intelligence in Successful Relationships

[Nonverbal Communication](#): The Hidden Language of Emotional Intelligence

[Playful Communication](#): Strengthening and Repairing Relationships with Humor

[Conflict Resolution](#): Communication Skills for Keeping Relationships Healthy

Part 2: Quick Course in Raising Emotional Intelligence

[Defusing Stress](#): Find Quick Stress Relief that Works Best for You

[Raising Emotional Intelligence](#): Learning to Experience Intense Emotions

Part 3: Research Linking Attachment to Brain Development and Relationships

[Attachment and Relationships](#): How the Attachment

[Brain Evolution](#): How Relationships Influence Brain

Bond Shapes Adult Relationships

Development

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