

Five Ways to Grow Your EQ



Think about the best manager you've ever had. What made them so good? How did it feel to work for them? My best boss believed in me, but challenged me. Now take a moment and consider the worst one you've ever had. What kind of feelings come up around that person? The difference most likely is in the area of emotional intelligence. They may have been technically competent, but not effective relationally with their direct reports. You probably weren't very motivated and maybe didn't do your best work with them.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is one of those buzzwords that we hear a lot about. What is EQ really and why does it matter?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to be aware of and regulate our own emotions, and understand the impact our emotions can have on others. It matters because it is highly connected to success in life. In a groundbreaking [study by Daniel Goleman](#), he discovered that 67% of what makes leaders successful are emotional qualities, not technical ones.

Leaders with higher EQ are able to navigate sticky relational issues, diffuse conflict, motivate their team, increase retention as they create a more positive and productive work environment. Perhaps most importantly, [studies show that they are happier](#). Who wouldn't want a little more happy in their life?

We spend so much time in school and at work studying and learning the technical sides of what we need to do. What can get neglected is understanding our own emotions and how they impact both ourselves and others. The good news is that EQ skills can be learned.

What are the key elements of EQ?

One popular EQ assessment, the [EQi 2.0 model](#), looks at five areas:

- 1) **Self-awareness** – this is where it all starts – recognizing and understanding your own emotions as well as the impact they have on others.
 - a. Self-Regard – How do I feel about myself? What are my strengths? What are my opportunities for growth?
 - b. Emotional Self-Awareness - How does the argument with my partner last night affect my mood at work today?
 - c. Self-Actualization - How committed am I to personal growth?
- 2) **Self-expression** – awareness of how we express our emotions
 - a. Emotional Expression – How do I express my feelings verbally and non-verbally?
 - b. Assertiveness – How do I stand up for myself in an appropriate way that respects others and their values?
 - c. Independence – How important are others’ emotions in my decision-making?
- 3) **Interpersonal** – now we look at our emotions and how they impact others
 - a. Interpersonal Relationships – How do I feel about my ability to make and keep meaningful relationships?
 - b. Empathy – How do I understand and express my sense of others’ perspectives and feelings?
 - c. Social Responsibility – How much concern to I have for the world outside of my own interests?
- 4) **Decision-Making** – this looks at how we make decisions when emotions are involved
 - a. Problem Solving – How able am I to find solutions to problems when emotions are involved?
 - b. Reality Testing – How objective am I across situations?
 - c. Impulse Control – How am I at resisting or delaying an impulse or temptation?
- 5) **Stress Management** – how do we manage our emotions under stress
 - a. Flexibility – How able am I to adapt my emotions, thoughts and behaviors in changing circumstances?
 - b. Stress Tolerance – How do I cope under pressure?
 - c. Optimism – How hopeful and resilient do I feel, even in the midst of setbacks?

5 Keys to Growing Your EQ

- 1) **Know Yourself** – Identifying what you are feeling is the first step toward growing your EQ. Most of us are running so fast that we don’t take time to even know what we are feeling. As we identify what we are feeling, “I’m feeling disappointment” or “This feels like “surprise”, we can experience the emotion and then decide what we want to do with it. The [Feelings Wheel](#) can help with this.



- 2) **Slow Down Your Response and Pause** – [Mindful breathing](#) can help slow down your response so you aren't replying in the heat of the moment or a burst of emotion, but out of a sense of who you are and what really matters to you.
- 3) **Listen to Perspective** – Take an [EQ assessment](#). Ask some people close to you to share your 2-3 strengths and an area for growth. You'll likely see a theme across these responses. Listen with an ear to learn and not defend. As you listen actively and openly with curiosity, you will grow your EQ.
- 4) **Pick an Area and take a Step** – EQ shifts happen slowly over time. Pick one area of focus and break it into smaller steps. Ask yourself "What's one thing I could experiment with this week around this?" If I were to follow you around (I promise I won't!), what would I see you doing differently?
- 5) **Practice and be in Process** – EQ can be grown. You are on a life-long journey to grow and develop as a leader. Keep practicing. You're not out for perfection, but growth.

You have the ability to learn new things throughout your life. For more support on growing your EQ, contact me at coachwende.com and let's get started coaching!

To Your Success!

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