CourseMints

GUIDE

Emotional Intelligence

Master Yourself and Influence Others

SELF-PACED PDF COURSE

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Emotional Intelligence

Master Yourself and Influence Others

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How to Use This Guide

Everyone has emotions. Not everyone knows what to do with them. Some people go quiet when they are hurt and explode three weeks later. Some can calm a crying child but fall apart when a manager raises an eyebrow. Some read a room in seconds yet have no idea why they snapped at their partner over a dishwasher. Emotional intelligence is the set of skills that closes these gaps: noticing what you feel, understanding why, steering it, and doing the same with care for the people around you.

The good news is that these are skills, not a fixed personality type. You can practice them at any age, in any job and in any relationship. This guide shows you how, using research where it is solid and saying plainly where it is not.

What you will learn

The guide follows its title. The first half is about **mastering yourself**; the second half is about **influencing others**, which here means understanding people and responding to them well, not steering them for your own ends.

- What emotional intelligence is, the main ways researchers define it, and the honest debates about how to measure it.
- How emotions work: why they arrive, what they are for, and what makes them louder.
- Self-awareness, emotional granularity (naming feelings precisely) and mapping your personal triggers.
- Regulating emotions without bottling them up, and using emotions to motivate yourself.
- Empathy that is accurate, reading the room without pretending to read minds, and handling other people's strong emotions.
- Building relationships that last, at work and at home, and a 30-day plan to practice it all.

Who it is for

Anyone who wants to handle feelings better: their own and other people's. Parents, partners, friends, colleagues, managers, people in customer-facing jobs, students, and anyone who has ever replayed a conversation at 2 am wishing they had said it differently. You do not need a leadership role. If you do lead people, the companion skills of trust, persuasion and team leadership are covered in the CourseMints guide *The Art of Influence*; this guide stays focused on the emotional skills underneath them.

How to get the most from it

1. **Read Chapters 1 to 6 in order.** They build the "master yourself" foundation. You cannot read other people well while your own emotions are running the show.
2. **Start the emotion log on day one.** The companion workbook has a two-week emotion log. It takes three minutes a day and turns this guide from ideas into data about you.
3. **Do the exercises in writing.** Emotional patterns are easy to see on paper and almost invisible in your head.
4. **Practice on small moments.** A slow checkout line or a curt email is a better training ground than a crisis. Skills practiced on small things are there when the big things come.
5. **Follow the 30-day plan in Chapter 13.** One skill per week, with a short daily practice.

> TIP
>
> ### About the examples
>
> The people in the example boxes are fictional composites, written to show the skills in real situations. They are not real clients or case studies. Change any script until it sounds like you, and adapt it to your culture, your family and the person in front of you. Emotional norms differ across cultures and households, and none of them is the "correct" one.

CHAPTER 1

01

What Emotional Intelligence Is (and Is Not)

"Emotional intelligence" is one of the most popular ideas in psychology and one of the most argued about. Before you invest a month of practice in it, you deserve an honest picture: where the idea came from, what researchers agree on and what they still dispute.

Where the idea came from

Psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced emotional intelligence as a scientific concept in a 1990 paper. They described it as the ability to monitor your own and other people's feelings, to tell them apart, and to use that information to guide thinking and action. Mayer and Salovey later refined this into a **four-branch model**:

1. **Perceiving emotions:** noticing emotions in yourself, in faces, in voices and in situations.
2. **Using emotions to think:** letting emotions direct your attention and choosing moods that suit the task.
3. **Understanding emotions:** knowing what causes emotions, how they blend and how they change over time.
4. **Managing emotions:** staying open to feelings and regulating them in yourself and in relationships.

The idea reached the public in 1995 with science journalist Daniel Goleman's bestseller *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Goleman described a broader set of competencies, often summarized as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill. This guide follows that useful split: the first three are about you, the last two are about other people.

Three ways of defining it

Researchers now usually distinguish three approaches:

Approach	What it says EI is	How it is usually measured
Ability model (Mayer and Salovey)	A set of mental abilities for processing emotional information	Tests with better and worse answers, such as identifying the emotion in a face or choosing the most effective response to a scenario
Trait model (associated with K. V. Petrides)	How you typically perceive and handle emotions, as part of your personality	Self-report questionnaires
Mixed models (Goleman and others)	A broad blend of emotional skills, motivation and social competencies	Self-report and ratings from colleagues

These approaches measure different things, and scores on ability tests and self-report questionnaires often correlate only weakly with each other.

THE SCIENCE

The honest debates

Several criticisms are worth knowing. Self-report EI questionnaires overlap heavily with well-established personality traits such as emotional stability, conscientiousness and agreeableness, so critics argue they add little that personality tests do not already capture. Ability tests avoid self-flattery, but scoring "correct" emotional answers is difficult, and scores relate modestly to general intelligence. The famous claim that EI "can matter more than IQ" has not held up as a general rule: across most jobs, general cognitive ability remains a stronger predictor of performance. A 2010 meta-analysis by Dana Joseph and Daniel Newman found that emotional intelligence predicted job performance more strongly in emotionally demanding jobs, such as customer service, than in jobs with few emotional demands. Finally, a 2019 meta-analysis by Victoria Mattingly and Kurt Kraiger found that emotional intelligence training produced moderate improvements on average, with the usual caveat that many training studies are small and short-term. The fair summary: EI is not a magic number that predicts success, but the specific skills it describes are real, useful and trainable.

What this means for you

You do not need a score. Online “EQ tests” vary widely in quality, and a number tells you little about what to do on Monday morning. What helps is treating EI as a set of concrete skills you can observe in your own behavior: Did I notice I was getting irritated before I snapped? Did I check how my friend felt or assume? Did I calm down before replying?

It also helps to know what EI is **not**:

- **Not being nice all the time.** Emotionally intelligent people get angry, say no and deliver bad news. They do it on purpose rather than by accident.
- **Not suppressing feelings.** Hiding emotions is one strategy, and often a costly one (Chapter 6).
- **Not mind reading.** Good empathy relies on asking and checking, not on decoding faces (Chapters 8 and 9).
- **Not automatically good.** Emotional skills can be used to help or to manipulate. Research led by Stéphane Côté in 2011 suggested that people skilled at regulating emotions used that skill for more helpful behavior when they cared strongly about being moral, and for more harmful behavior when they did not. This guide teaches the skills for honest use only.

EXAMPLE

Two kinds of “high EQ”

Marisol and Dev both describe themselves as emotionally intelligent. Marisol, a school receptionist, says it because she never shows when she is upset. She smiles through rude parents, then goes home and cries in the car. Dev, a warehouse supervisor, says it because he “tells it like it is.” He is honest, but his team flinches when he walks in. Each has one real strength (Marisol’s composure, Dev’s directness) and one blind spot. Marisol is suppressing, not regulating, and it is wearing her down. Dev expresses his emotions without reading their effect on others. Neither needs a higher score; each needs one specific skill.

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WORKBOOK

Emotional Intelligence Workbook

Emotion Log, Trigger Profile, Empathy Practice and 30-Day Plan

COMPANION TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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EXERCISE

Read Your Starting Point

1. My two lowest statements, and a recent moment that shows each:

2. Ask someone who knows you well which statement they would rate lowest for you. Who I asked and what they said:

3. What would be different in my life if my lowest score rose by one point?