

Your Emotional Intelligence Toolbox



Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions as well as the emotions of others. EI can help you improve your relationships, cope with stress, and achieve your goals. The good news: EI is not a fixed trait that you are born with; it is a skill that can be learned and developed through practice.

Here are **some activities** that can help you further develop your emotional intelligence:

Keep a Journal of Your Feelings

Writing down what you feel and why can help you become more aware of your emotions and their triggers. You can also reflect on how your emotions affect your thoughts and actions, and how you succeeded to regulate them.

Check In With Yourself

You can do this every morning, and/or set several alarms throughout the day to check in with yourself and reflect: How are you feeling on an emotional level, on a mental level, and on a physical level? This allows you pause, understand, and act consciously rather than on autopilot.

Expand Your Emotional Vocabulary

Having a rich and varied emotional vocabulary can help you express your feelings more accurately and clearly, and understand the feelings of others more deeply. Psychologist Susan David has created [downloadable emotional granularity umbrellas](#) for this purpose, or [this list](#) inspired by nonviolent communication might help you.

Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the state of being fully present and attentive to the present moment, without judging or reacting to what is happening. Mindfulness can help you calm your mind, reduce stress, and enhance your emotional awareness and control. You can practice mindfulness for example by meditating, breathing deeply, or focusing on your senses.

Seek Feedback

Asking for feedback from others can help you gain insight into how you communicate and interact with them, and how they perceive you. You can also learn from their perspectives and experiences, and improve your empathy and social skills. Seek feedback from people you trust and respect, and be open and receptive to their suggestions.

The RULER Framework

The RULER framework is an evidence-based approach to teaching emotional intelligence, developed by Marc Brackett and his colleagues at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER is an acronym that stands for the five key skills of emotional intelligence: Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions.

The RULER framework is designed to help individuals of all ages develop their emotional intelligence, improve their emotional well-being, and achieve greater success in their personal and professional lives.

Marc Brackett, the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, has written extensively about the RULER framework and its benefits.

The infographic is titled "The skills of Emotional Intelligence" and features the BetterCoach logo in the top right corner. It lists five skills, each with a red letter in a box and a corresponding description in a light blue box:

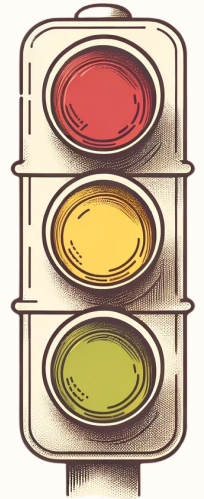
- R** Recognizing emotions in oneself and others
- U** Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L** Labeling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary
- E** Expressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context
- R** Regulating emotions with helpful strategies

The Traffic Light Technique

One technique to develop emotional intelligence is the Traffic Light (Stop Light) Technique, which is based on the metaphor of a traffic light. The idea is to use different colors to represent different moments of awareness, and to practice shifting from one color to another in order to develop even more constructive responses.

Here's How It Works:

- **Red:** This is when you notice that an emotion is hijacking you. You are not able to think clearly or constructively, and you may say or do things that you regret later. When you are in red, you need to stop, breathe, calm yourself down and ask yourself this question: What am I feeling now?
- **Yellow:** You are now aware of your emotion, but you are not yet ready to take the next step in the situation. When you are in yellow, you continue in the pause, and reflect deeper by asking yourself this question: And how do I normally respond to (emotion that you have identified)?
- **Green:** Now that you are feeling probably a bit calmer and more confident, curious, or creative, you have created a space between stimulus and response, and can now explore options for more constructive actions and decisions. Here, you finally ask yourself: And now, how can I respond to this (emotion that you have identified) in a more helpful, and more constructive way?



Take a Meta Moment

Another way to improve your emotional intelligence is to take a meta moment. A meta moment is a brief pause before you react to an emotion-triggering event. It allows you to step out of the situation and think about how you want to respond, rather than acting impulsively or defensively.

1. **Sense:** Notice that something has happened that made you feel a strong emotion. Recognize the physical and mental signs of your emotional state.
2. **Stop:** Pause and take a deep breath. This helps you calm down and create some distance from the event.
3. **See:** Imagine how your best self would handle this situation. Your best self is the person you are when you are at your best, who acts in line with your core values and leadership aspirations. Think about what qualities and strengths your best self has, and how they would influence your behaviour.
4. **Strategize:** Come up with a plan of action that aligns with your best self. Consider different ways to respond to the situation, and evaluate their pros and cons. Choose the option that is most likely to achieve your desired outcome and minimize negative consequences.
5. **Succeed:** Execute your plan and observe the results. Notice how you feel after taking a meta moment, and how others react to your behavior. Learn from the experience and celebrate your success.

Taking a meta moment can help you manage your emotions more effectively, and improve your relationships and well-being. The meta moment technique is also based on the research of Marc Brackett, a professor of psychology and the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Taking a meta moment can increase empathy, creativity, and resilience, as well as reduce stress, aggression, and anxiety.

The Perceptual Positions Technique

One of the techniques that can help you develop your empathy is called Perceptual Positions. This technique is based on the concept of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), which is a method of understanding how our mind, language, and behavior influence each other and affect our outcomes.

Perceptual positions allow you to change your perspective and view a situation from different angles. By doing so, you can gain new insights, empathy, and clarity, as well as reduce conflict and stress.

Perceptual positions involve three main steps:

1. **First position:** This is your own perspective, where you focus on your own thoughts, feelings, and actions.
2. **Second position:** This is the perspective of another person, where you try to understand their thoughts, feelings, and actions, and see the situation through their eyes.
3. **Third position:** This is the perspective of an observer, where you take a step back and look at the situation objectively, without any emotional attachment or bias.

The perceptual positions technique can help you improve your empathy by allowing you to:

Gain a deeper understanding of yourself and others, and how you affect each other.

Generate new ideas and solutions, by expanding your creativity and flexibility.

Communicate more effectively and respectfully, by considering the needs and preferences of others.

Identify and resolve conflicts and misunderstandings, by seeing the situation from multiple angles.

To practice the perceptual positions technique, you can follow these steps:

1. Choose a situation that involves you and another person, and that you want to explore or improve.
2. Find a physical space where you can move around and mark three spots on the floor, each representing a different perceptual position.
3. Stand on the first spot and adopt the first position. Recall the situation and notice how you experience it from your own perspective. What do you see, hear, and feel? What are you thinking and doing?
4. Move to the second spot and adopt the second position. Imagine that you are the other person and see the situation from their perspective. What do they see, hear, and feel? What are they thinking and doing?

5. Move to the third spot and adopt the third position. Imagine that you are a neutral observer and look at the situation from a distance. What do you see, hear, and feel? What are the facts and outcomes of the situation?
6. Compare and contrast the three perspectives and reflect on what you learned. How are they similar and different? What insights did you gain? What changes can you make to improve the situation?
7. Return to the first spot and re-experience the situation from your own perspective, with the new knowledge and understanding that you gained. Notice how you feel and what you want to do next.

The Blueprint

The Blueprint is a tool developed by Marc Brackett, the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the author of Permission to Feel. The Blueprint helps you to manage your emotions and improve your relationships by guiding you through

Identifying the situation that triggered your emotions

Tuning in to your body and notice the physical sensations of your emotions

Labelling your emotions with specific and accurate words

Expressing your emotions in healthy and appropriate ways

Taking the perspectives of others involved in the situation and empathize with their feelings and needs

Solve problems with the Blueprint



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Describe	What happened?	
RULER Skill	Me	Other Person
Recognize & Label	How did I feel?	How did _____ feel?
Understand	What caused my feelings?	What caused _____'s feelings?
Express & Regulate	How did I express and regulate my feelings?	How did _____ express and regulate his/her feelings?
Reflect & Plan	What could I have done to handle the situation better? What can I do now?	

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