## What is emotional intelligence or EQ?

Emotional intelligence (otherwise known as emotional quotient or EQ) is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict. Emotional intelligence helps you build stronger relationships, succeed at school and work, and achieve your career and personal goals. It can also help you to connect with your feelings, turn intention into action, and make informed decisions about what matters most to you.

## Benefits of Higher Emotional Intelligence

* People with higher emotional intelligence find it easier to form and maintain interpersonal relationships and to ‘fit in’ to group situations.
* People with higher emotional intelligence are also better at understanding their own psychological state, which can include [managing stress effectively](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/stress.html) and being less likely to suffer from [**depression**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/depression.html).

Elements of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman divided Emotional Intelligence into ‘Personal’ and ‘Social’ competences, which broadly split between personal and interpersonal skills on Skills You Need. Within each of these sections are a range of skills which are the elements of emotional intelligence.

Personal Skills or Competences

There are three areas of personal skills or competences in emotional intelligence.

1. Self-awareness

Self-awareness encompasses:

* Emotional awareness
* Accurate self-assessment
* Self-confidence

Self-awareness is the skill of being aware of and understanding your emotions as they occur and as they evolve. It is wrong to think of emotions as either positive or negative. Instead, you should think of them as appropriate or inappropriate.

For example, [anger](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/anger.html) is usually associated with being a negative emotion.  However, it can be a completely reasonable and appropriate emotion in certain circumstances – emotional intelligence allows us to recognise our anger and understand why this emotion has occurred.

Effective self-assessment of feelings and emotions will help to improve your confidence and self-esteem.

2. Self-regulation or Self-management

Self-regulation includes:

* Self-control
* Trustworthiness
* Conscientiousness
* Adaptability
* Innovation

Having learned to be aware of your emotions, the skill of self-regulation relates to managing them appropriately and proportionately.

Self-management skills relate to the emotions you are feeling at any given time or in any given circumstance and how well you manage them. Self-control is a fundamental part of this, but other aspects relate to what you then do: whether you behave in a way which is recognised as ‘good’ or ‘virtuous’ or not.

See our page on [Self-Regulation](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/self-management.html) for more.

Motivation

The final personal skills aspect of emotional intelligence is Motivation.

Self-motivation includes our personal drive to improve and achieve, commitment to our goals, initiative, or readiness to act on opportunities, and optimism and resilience.

Self-motivation and personal time management are key skills in this area.  Do not make unreasonable demands on yourself, learn to be assertive rather than just saying, ‘Yes’ to the demands of others.

Social or Interpersonal Skills or Competences

Interpersonal skills are the skills we use to interact with other people. They enable us to communicate appropriately and build stronger, more meaningful relationships. Emotional intelligence includes how we understand others and their emotions, and our actions and behaviours towards them.

There are two key aspects.

1. Empathy

Empathy is an awareness of the needs and feelings of others both individually and in groups, and being able to see things from the point of view of others.

Empathy helps us to develop a stronger understanding of other people’s situations.

It includes understanding others, developing others, having a service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness.

Empathy can often be difficult to achieve. Learn to listen effectively to both the verbal and non-verbal messages of others, including body movements, gestures and physical signs of emotion.  Use questions to find out more about other people and what they are feeling, and feedback to clarify that you have correctly understood their feelings. Acknowledge and respect the feelings of others even if you disagree, and avoid making comments or statements that are judgemental, belittling, rejecting or undermining.

2. Social Skills

Social skills encompasses a wide range of relationship and interpersonal skills. These range from leadership through to influencing and persuading, and managing conflict, as well as working in a team.

The term ‘*social skills*’ covers a wide variety of skills and competencies, many of which are rooted in self-esteem and personal confidence.  By developing your social skills, being easy to talk to, being a good listener, being sharing and trustworthy, you also become more charismatic and attractive to others.

This in turn improves self-esteem and confidence which makes it easier for positive personal dialogue and a greater understanding and acceptance of your own emotions.