

# CHANGE YOUR LIFE WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Learn to manage your emotions  
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BALANCED  
LIFE

# Change Your Life with Emotional Intelligence

Christine Wilding

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# Meet the author

Hello there, and thank you for choosing to read this book, which I have thoroughly enjoyed writing. The idea of being emotionally intelligent has always fascinated me, and I use its principles a great deal in my work as a cognitive behavioural psychotherapist as well as when writing self-help books. My early career took me into HR, and I am a Chartered HR professional (Chartered MCIPD). The extent of the psychology studies necessary to gain this professional status as well as an innate interest in the human mind were what led me to eventually undertake further studies and training as a cognitive behavioural psychotherapist. I was always fascinated by the idea that it is not events themselves that determine how we feel, but rather, our idiosyncratic perceptions of those events. I work with clients to discover why their problems do not get resolved, and what kind of thinking and behavioural errors might be maintaining them. The development of this shared understanding, and a mutual curiosity to find a collaborative solution by using a variety of techniques that become basic life skills for the client, is always fascinating and rewarding. Learning to identify and manage emotions forms a major part of this process.

I have also undertaken work within the NHS, working alongside GPs and being a member of the Steering Committee set up to develop guidelines for the treatment of depression within the NHS, researched by East Surrey Health Authority. I have also worked at the private Cygnet Hospital in Sevenoaks, Kent for several years as a cognitive behavioural therapist, as well as for the Crown Prosecution Service, working with staff including barristers and solicitors. I now run a busy private practice at Epsom in Surrey, working with GP and psychiatric referrals and specializing in issues such as low self-esteem,

emotional management, stress management, depression and anxiety disorders including OCD, panic, phobias and health and social anxiety.

Christine Wilding  
Chartered MCIPD, MBACP (Accred), UKRCreg





# *Only got a minute?*

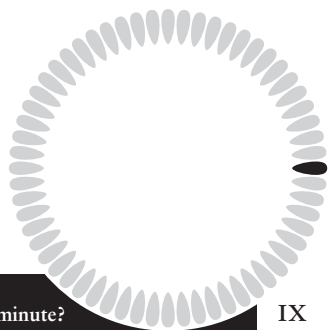
The phrase, ‘emotional intelligence’ (EI) offers a general ring of understanding, but what does it mean exactly?

Is it just a vague term that people use to describe the quality of calmness in the face of provocation? Or is it more than that?

EI does embrace this quality fully, but also, more specifically, it enables you to identify your feelings and to know why you are feeling them. EI also enables you to manage your emotions and to accurately express them to others, and to be better able to identify and ‘tune in’ to the emotions of other people: this in turn helps you to get along with them better through appreciating and understanding their own thoughts and feelings.

Emotional intelligence consists of a variety of characteristics that we either already have (if we are lucky) or need to develop. These characteristics include self-awareness – being able to identify what

you are feeling and why you are feeling it; self-regulation – being able to control your emotions even when you find yourself in difficult situations; motivation – being able to move forward even when you feel discouraged; empathy – being able to understand how others might feel, even if quite different from you; and social skills – being able to get along well with others through showing that you are both listening and understanding how they feel about things.





# 5

## Only got five minutes?

Why is emotional intelligence a valuable skill for you to learn? You are no doubt busy with life, have enough on your plate, are doing the best that you can. What is the value to you of devoting more time you may feel you don't have to learning another new skill that may or may not make a really positive difference?

The value is this... Life will still continue to throw up problems and traumas, but you will be able to handle these problems in a much better way, with more positive outcomes. By identifying and managing your emotions, you will be able to use them appropriately, rather than inappropriately (which may leave you with regret later) and feel pleased with the outcomes.

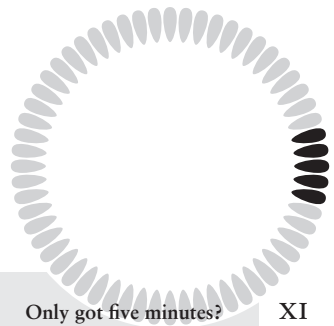
Strong emotion has the power to override rational thinking, so using your emotional intellect in such a way that it works best for yourself and for others is vital. Rather than dealing with a plethora of upsets, EI will actually assist you in reducing both the number and level of upsets that you have to spend time dealing with. This, in turn, is going to give you a great deal more self-confidence. You will trust yourself to deal with situations to the best of your abilities and, no matter what the outcome, to cope well with them. You will become aware that others respect you more for your thoughtfulness and your integrity, rather than feel frustrated by your inappropriate responses. You will gain a great deal that is positive within personal relationships that are either on-going or at an early stage of development. You will also be able to retrieve relationships that may be sinking fast.

As you develop more empathy towards those you are close to i.e. to better understand their emotions and thoughts, your relationships will develop positively. You will learn to show the tolerance and understanding and the ability to 'let things go' that you appreciate

in others. These qualities enhance all relationships, and have an especially positive impact on those that are important to you.

In your workplace, dealing with difficult colleagues becomes easier: getting others on your side with projects and ideas, with help and assistance, is more likely to succeed. Stressful situations become easier to deal with, and – most importantly to many – your superiors will notice your improved communication skills, proactive approach, ability to work well as part of a team, and to negotiate well for what you want (and what is best for the organization) while being balanced and open-minded as to what is the best result.

So is emotional intelligence worth learning or developing? You have the understanding to decide for yourself now...





# 10 Only got ten minutes?

The first step towards achieving EI is to develop your own emotional self-awareness. This means paying attention to how you are feeling, what you are feeling, and why you are feeling it. Instead of simply noticing that you are ‘getting emotional’, think about what emotions are coming into play – for example, anger, fear, joy, worry, excitement, to name a few. Labelling your emotions accurately in this way is extremely important in helping you to decide whether they are appropriate to your situation or not.

Knowing exactly what you are feeling will make it much easier for you to develop appropriate reactions to these emotions. For example, you might say to yourself, ‘I felt really strange’, but this isn’t specific enough to help you to manage how you felt. Saying, ‘I felt really anxious and worried’ helps you to deal with what made you anxious. Recognizing your emotions encourages self-awareness.

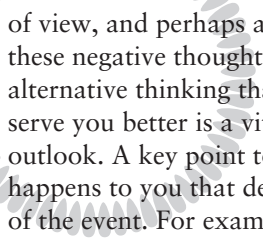
Good self-awareness involves being aware of how you are acting and reacting, the extent of the appropriateness of your responses to others, how you manage yourself and whether your behaviour is in keeping with your values. Self-awareness is a great asset and leads to self-confidence. It allows you to monitor and adjust your reactions, to have a good understanding of situations and the best way to respond to them, and, simply, how to present yourself to others in a way that they will find helpful and responsible.

Self-awareness leads to ‘other-awareness’. You will know people who have no idea of other-awareness: they drone on incessantly, unaware that everyone else is bored and tired; they push ahead in queues, without appreciating how long others have been waiting; they walk slowly in front of you, preventing you from getting by; they have no idea that you are really upset by something; and they don’t know how to handle it when this is finally pointed out to them. Etc. etc! Good other-awareness means being always

‘one step ahead’ of others: being aware of what is going on for them, helping if you can, or understanding at least, if you cannot help. It is standing back to let them go first; it is asking about them, rather than telling them about you; and it is sorting out potential difficulties before the other person has even encountered them. We love people with a good sense of other-awareness, and it is a cornerstone of EI.

To develop a close relationship with someone else, we need to learn to be open about our emotions. In other words, we need to learn ‘self-disclosure’. Ideally, this is a two-way thing: a sort of ‘give-and-take’ process between you and those around you. Usually, the more we share our feelings with others, the more they respond to us in a similar way. On the other hand, where your interaction with others is not genuine – for example, you always put a smile on your face and say that everything is fine, even when it’s not – those you are with will react in a similar way, and withhold their thoughts and feelings from you as well. Thus, your communication style may seem bland or distant. However, don’t make the mistake of giving too much information to people. You will almost certainly already know what is appropriate and inappropriate regarding information-giving, but it is just worth bearing in mind.

For our emotions to be positive, we need our thinking to be positive. What we think decides how we feel. Many of us, unfortunately, lean towards a naturally pessimistic explanatory style of thinking. When we think in this way, we focus on negative evidence to support our views, and discount positive evidence to dispute our views. Take simple steps such as learning relaxation skills, improving your breathing (try yoga or meditation to help this) or learning to incorporate humour into your life – telling or listening to good jokes, recalling anecdotal memories of funny moments in your life, ‘seeing the funny side’ when things go wrong. These simple skills all help to relax you and calm negative emotions. Learning to challenge our thinking is a cognitive response to developing positive emotions. Usually, until it is pointed out to us, we fail to realize that much of our thinking which we believe to be factual and truthful is actually just a point



of view, and perhaps a negative one at that. So learning to identify these negative thoughts, and become more open to the idea of alternative thinking that may be more factually accurate and serve you better is a vital skill in developing a positive emotional outlook. A key point to remember here is that it is not what happens to you that decides how you feel, but your interpretation of the event. For example, to person A, losing their job might make them feel sad and depressed, as their interpretation is that they must be a very poor employee. Person B feels angry, as they think that they are very good at their job and this is totally unjust treatment. Person C may feel relaxed, as they have known for quite a while that the job wasn't right for them, and this will give them the push they needed to make a change. When you use the skill of challenging your thinking and replacing negative thoughts with more balanced, re-evaluated alternatives, your emotions will also become more positive.

True emotional intelligence requires embracing and working to improve certain core values. Core values define your thinking, your emotions and your behaviours. These core values encompass integrity, responsibility, openness, humility, courage, motivation and many others. These principles have been researched by psychologists who have taken a global view (gathering information from all parts of the world), have gone back through history (so that this is not just a modern phenomenon), and have included all mainstream religions as well as the views of the broadest population sample, and they have come to a similar set of values as being the most important for emotional intelligence and happiness wherever they looked. This means that working on these values, and incorporating them into your life is not in any way a risk or a waste of time. It is a proven way of achieving emotionally intelligent personal happiness. Doesn't this sound worth having?

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# Introduction

By reading this book, you are starting out on a journey which, if you follow it through, will change your life comprehensively. You will become happier, more confident, get along better with others, and you may well become more successful at work. If you are a parent (or work with children), you will have the chance to pass the skills of emotional intelligence (EI) on to your children, enabling them to form better friendships, gain greater self-esteem, learn more – and simply improve their enjoyment of life.

EI may be a subject you have heard about, or read about in the press, and you perhaps purchased a copy of this book to appease a vague curiosity you have about it. Possibly you already have an understanding of EI – you may have read Daniel Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, which became a seminal bestseller in the mid-1990s. His book was an elegant explanation and exploration of the ideals of EI, but it was by no means a self-help book.

This book is exactly that.

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## The skills you will learn

You will first gain a thorough understanding of the meaning and impact of EI, and you will then learn the skills and techniques to develop its characteristics in all areas of your life.

You will find this book user-friendly. I will do my best to avoid jargon (or, if I do need to use some, I will clearly explain what it means in day-to-day terms). At the start of each chapter there will be an outline of what you will learn, and at the end the most important points will be summarized to ensure that you don’t miss



anything before you move forward. During the course of each chapter there will be a variety of activities for you to consider or test out. These will build on each other, so that your expertise increases as the book goes on.

You will use your own intelligence to decide which and how many of the activities you will find helpful – but ideally, do them all. You have nothing to lose, and may find that you gain more than you had anticipated. However, I am not a fan of too many DIY exercises – for the simple reason that experience and enquiry have told me that most people don't do them! I have therefore tried to create a balance. Much of your learning in this book will come from reading, absorbing and understanding the principles of EI.

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## EI for your own particular lifestyle

You are a unique individual with your own competences and weaknesses. I have therefore attempted to make the book broad-based enough to cover most of the life areas – such as work, personal relationships and self-development – that you may especially wish to work on. If a chapter doesn't seem to cover what is important to you, while you can leave it out, I suggest you stick with it. The skills you will learn will be reinforced in each chapter of the book – sometimes you simply need to apply the same skills to different situations. Even if you think 'This doesn't apply to me', it is still worth reading through the section.

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## A model for change

There are various ways in which we can make changes in our minds and our lives.

In order to identify and manage our emotions, we have a variety of positive options to work with. We can develop our thinking

skills (cognitive restructuring), we can adjust what we do and how we react, and we can learn new life skills and values. This book will cover all of these aspects of developing your EI to the point where it will positively change your life. Some of you will already be familiar with the cognitive model – which supports the link between what we think and how we feel – and for those of you who are not, you will nonetheless find it very straightforward to work with.

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## Reaching your goal

By the end of the book you will possess an excellent understanding of EI, and of how it can help you to lead a happier life. Moreover, you will have all the skills you need to keep developing further as an emotionally intelligent person.

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## Keeping it going

Don't simply read the book and put it on a shelf – keep it by you. Keep it in the kitchen, on your desk, or on your bedside table. Dip in and out of it on an ongoing basis and you will find your life changing consistently for the better.

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# Part one

Understanding  
emotional  
intelligence