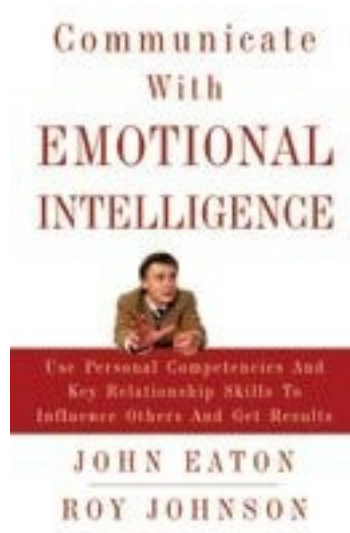


# Communicate with Emotional Intelligence



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## ■ The Big Idea

Emotionally intelligent people communicate better and more successfully than their emotionally unaware counterparts. The good news is that emotional intelligence, or EI, can be learned. This book explains how.

Authors Eaton & Johnson reveal how to manage yourself better and how to improve your listening skills so that you respond more constructively to others. Find out how to develop empathy, manage conflicts and create win/win situations. Improve your EI and you will significantly improve your professional and personal life.

## ■ Why You Need This Book

This book will assist you in understanding emotional intelligence and then harnessing its vast power to significantly improve the way you speak to and relate to others. This will undoubtedly raise your powers of persuasion and self-belief.

## ■ What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence refers to our ability to inform our decisions with an understanding of our own and others' emotions in order to act productively. It is one type of intelligence amongst many others. It means the ability to manage our own emotions (intrapersonal intelligence) and the ability to interact well with others (interpersonal intelligence).

Emotions act as warning signals when there is trouble ahead, motivate us to overcome adversity, and enable us to make good decisions.

The key skills that go with emotional intelligence include:

**Self-awareness.** With this, you understand your own emotions and recognize them as they occur. Your emotional responses guide you in different situations. You recognize your limitations and make the most of your strengths.

**Self-confidence.** Based in a realistic awareness of their limitations, confident people know when to trust in their own decisions and when to defer to others. Making the most of their strengths, confident people continually engage in new challenges that expand personal potential.

**Self-regulation.** This ability enables you to stay focused on your goals and delay gratification until they are accomplished. You recover from setbacks quickly and see goals through to the end. Destructive emotional responses are put aside in favor of ones more likely to achieve the goal. You motivate yourself by staying in touch with your most important aspirations.

**Motivation.** This ability enables you to inspire others by focusing on their needs, preferences, values, goals, and personal strengths.

**Empathy.** With empathy, you attune to the needs, values, wishes and perspectives of others. You sense others' feelings and thoughts by actively placing yourself in their position.

**Social acumen.** Reading situations quickly and well, both verbally and non-verbally, enables you to adapt to the intentions of those with whom you have a relationship. Your sensitivity to group dynamics enables you to identify who in the group is most influential and to align with the cultural style of others.

**Persuasiveness.** Emotionally intelligent people are adept at reading the intentions and wishes of others and creating mutually satisfactory outcomes. They develop the habit of win/win thinking and look for ways in which personal goals can be aligned with those of others.

**Conflict management.** With this ability you anticipate conflict before it occurs and divert attention to more productive courses of action. If conflict develops, you resolve it by focusing the attention of the parties involved on actions that are in their best interests.

## ■ Self-Management

The old song tells us that it is not what you do but the way that you do it that gets results. Presenters fail to inspire us, even though they are familiar with their subject, if they don't engage our interest. Much of a presenter's appeal is bound up with non-verbal communication rather than content. Non-verbal communication – body language and voice quality – is a vital component of credibility in face-to-face interaction. But the journey starts on the inside.

Credible communicators are self-confident; they know what they want and think positively. They use their gut feelings as a guide to decisions. They know when to commit to something and what to avoid. An ounce of commitment is worth more to them than a ton of vague wishes. Setbacks, of course, can and do rear their ugly heads. Emotionally intelligent communicators, however, retain credibility by bouncing back quickly. Their self-belief shows in their commitment over the long term. They get results because they say what they have to say convincingly.

### **SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

- Treat your failures and successes as learning opportunities.
- Listen to your gut reactions when making important decisions.
- Practice developing states of poise, control and humor until they become automatic.
- Stay in touch with your most important personal goals and values. This will keep you on track for success.
- Improve your credibility by using voice, gesture and movement to emphasize the points you make.

## ■ Reading Others Well

African trackers, it is said, rest every now and then, not so much due to the physical effort involved in keeping up with the quarry, but more from mental tiredness. Not only are they following on foot but they are also reading clues, anticipating the target's next move, and mapping out the eventual destination. To do so they have to become the

game, in a sense, deciding what they would do if they were the animal. This can be taxing in terms of mental and emotional effort.

This analogy tells something about human communication. To interact effectively not only do we have to make sure we ourselves communicate clearly, we also need to develop the art of reading others. This requires us to put ourselves in the shoes of others, read social cues, and adapt to the culture in which we find ourselves.

Expanding our social radar in this way, we become more attuned to the needs and dispositions of others. We can then use this information to gauge our most effective response.

It helps if you have a fund of experiences to draw on. Just as travel broadens the mind, so does having experience in relationships, organizations, social, and cultural settings, and working practices. If you do not, then you can at least remain open to diversity, using your curiosity as a tool to explore what makes others tick.

## ■ Persuasive Communication

In order to deal with interruptions, tangential responses, misunderstandings and unforeseen objections, effective communicators are ready to develop a dialogue with their listeners. The skill of active listening is important here.

A useful mnemonic for active listening is EARS – Empathize, Acknowledge, Reflect, and Summarize.

**Empathize** – mentally stepping into the other person's shoes to gather information about their emotions, thoughts, and assumptions.

**Acknowledge** – letting the other person know that their concerns and needs are heard and understood.

**Reflect** – mirroring back key phrases (particularly those linked to values) in what is said. Also matching some aspects of body language.

**Summarize** – summarizing frequently to check understanding and then asking a question or making a proposal that leads to positive action.

Emotionally intelligent interaction means keeping your cool while searching for the values, needs and purposes that lie behind communication.

## ■ Managing Conflict

If no solution can be found, after careful, creative, mutual effort – acknowledge the differences that exist and move on to matters on which you can agree.

The key to managing conflicts with emotional intelligence is to disengage from negative emotion and replace this with cool reason.

Disengage from fear and anger by taking constructive action and learning how to handle frustration.

Cool down conflicts by exploring the perspectives through which other people are framing the situation. You can also use creative frames, goal frames and big picture frames to generate new solutions.

Build dialogues with others through emotional honesty, openness and freedom from fear.

Watch out for your emotional bananas – areas in which you feel threatened – and learn to let them go.

Resolve differences by respecting other people's emotional bananas and finding out what lies behind their position.

## **HOW MANY BANANAS DO YOU HAVE?**

Consider the answers to these questions:

- What must others never say about you?
- What triggers off anger in you? Why?
- What triggers off fear in you? Why?
- What triggers off despondency in you? Why?
- How do you most need others to treat you?

Answers to these questions may indicate those areas of your life where you feel threatened. They are what we call 'emotional bananas'. The idea for this comes from a common method used to catch monkeys in some remote areas in Asia.

To catch a monkey the hunter will attach a small wicker basket to the floor of the jungle. The basket is constructed so that it is easy to put in a paw and take it out again provided the monkey is not holding anything. Then a banana or two is placed in the cage. The monkey sees this and grasps the banana. But, having seized the fruit, it won't let go. It is then easy prey for the hunter.

Human beings are no different – we hold on to our emotional bananas for grim death because we feel threatened without them.

Examples of emotional bananas include:

- Craving for status
- Demanding love or respect from others
- The need for control
- The cry for recognition
- Avoidance of discomfort

The fewer bananas we carry around with us, the less likely we are to succumb to emotional hijacks. To reduce the power some of these bananas may have over us it is useful to substitute the word 'prefer' for 'must'. When we tell ourselves we must have something, we give away our power to say yes or no to it.

When we tell ourselves 'Well, I would prefer it if others could give me X but I don't have to have it', we regain control over the banana.

## ■ Widening Your Influence

Here are some important points to remember that will enable you to influence people in your network, create a good impression and enter conversations with them easily:

- Always act with integrity and stand up for what you believe in. People will eventually see through phoniness and opportunism.
- Successful people nearly always have a large network of contacts, allies and supporters.
- Build up your contacts through your current network of friends and colleagues, taking opportunities that come your way, and setting up informal groups.
- Be sure to exercise tact when timing your entrance into a new group.
- Create emotional bank balances in your favor with as many people as you can. They will become your allies when you need them.
- Use constructive politics to get acceptance for your ideas by calling on your allies and canvassing the support of seniors.
- You can influence seniors through poise and confidence, being clear about your goals, and adapting your proposals to the needs of the organization.
- When talking with people senior to you in an organization, pitch your ideas so that they take into account the responsibilities they have at heart.

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