



How to boost your  
**Emotional  
Intelligence**

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## About the author



Nina Sunday is an Australian-born speaker, educator and author.

A Queensland University graduate (Bachelor of Arts, Diploma in Education), Nina is one of approximately 750 professional speakers worldwide to earn Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) accreditation, the highest international speaking designation awarded to members of the Professional Speakers Association.

Nina has been engaged over 2000 times as a keynote speaker and workshop leader in Australia, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand and the South Pacific by more than 500 organisations. She has published two books, produced five training videos, been invited on radio as a guest expert on many occasions and written dozens of published articles.

Nina founded Australian training company, Brainpower Training, specialising in training in Leadership and Engagement, Service and Sales, Productivity and Emotional Intelligence.

From 2012 to 2013 Nina served two terms as NSW State President and board member of Professional Speakers Australia. The Australian Institute of Training and Development awarded her an *Innovation in Learning* award.

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# Introduction

High emotional intelligence is responsible for productive harmony at work, successful relationships with loved ones and friends, and an inner sense of calm and emotional balance.

For an organisation to evolve from good to great, it requires the people in the business to work well together. Lack of trust, unresolved conflicts or resentment, or individuals not understanding how their actions impact others can be roadblocks to productivity and delivering great results in the workplace.

Unlike IQ (intelligence quotient), there are few measurements of emotional quotient or intelligence (EQ or EI).

Academics, Salovey and Mayer, first coined the term emotional intelligence in 1990. They defined it as the ability to:

1. perceive emotions
2. use emotions
3. understand emotions
4. manage emotions.

With the publication of Daniel Goleman's bestseller, 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1995, the term became popularised.

Research shows

- EQ skills separate high-achievers from average performers
- managers high in EQ outperform their targets by 20%
- salespeople selected on EQ outperform others by 40%
- leaders who display constructive behaviours have high EQ and the business grows.

So what attributes indicate high emotional intelligence?

## People Reading

The ability to read the emotions and non-verbal cues of others is one attribute of emotional intelligence.

The Harvard '*Reading the Eyes in the Mind*' test assesses how well you can accurately read which emotion someone is experiencing by what you see in their eyes. The test presents 37 photos of pairs of eyes with a choice of four emotions, e.g. ashamed, nervous, suspicious, indecisive.

To try this test out for yourself, go to <http://socialintelligence.labinthewild.org/mite/>

Accurately reading emotions of people around you means you are sensitive and responsive to people's feelings. That's EQ.

## Stimulus-Response Gap

When something bad happens to us, we can either experience a knee-jerk reaction or we can pause a moment to stabilise our feelings and consider our response.

The time taken to think between the event and the response is called the **Stimulus-Response Gap**. An emotionally intelligent person has mastery over their emotions and emotional responses. If you can reflect and consider before reacting, you are demonstrating EQ.

## Attitude

Our emotions influence both what we think about and how we think. If you are in a positive mood you will see things differently than if you are in a negative mood.

## Optimism-Pessimism

When something bad happens to an optimist, they view it as temporary and a one-off event. But when a negative experience happens to a pessimist, they regard it as permanent and universal. A pessimist might respond to such an event with, 'That always happens to me!'

**Here's an optimism / pessimism indicator question.**

You gain weight over the holidays and you can't lose it. What is your response, A or B?

- A. Diets don't work.
- B. The diet I tried didn't work.

If you answered B, '*The diet I tried didn't work*', you've taken an optimistic approach; failure is temporary. If your response is A, '*Diets don't work*', then that's how a pessimist views events; failure is permanent.

**Are optimists happier in life?**

Pessimists may view the world (according to them) 'realistically'. Optimists may be under an illusion, but it can be argued they experience more joy in the moment.

## Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is another attribute of EQ; knowing what you are feeling and why you are feeling it.

## Stress Tolerance

Ability to tolerate stress and being slow to express frustration is also an indicator of high EQ.

Here are questions to ask yourself:

1. When treated in an unfair manner or not shown due respect or consideration, can I avoid becoming too angry or lashing out?
2. Can I maintain emotional equilibrium and stop myself from getting too down when I experience negative events?
3. Can I prevent prevent myself becoming overly worried about things?
4. When I do get upset, can I calm myself down and bounce back emotionally?

Being resilient means staying emotionally buoyant, bouncing back after an upset and not catastrophising i.e. viewing an inconvenience or disruption as, on the scale of things, worse than it really is.

## Resilience

12-step recovery programs use this saying . . .

‘Grant me the power to accept the things I can’t change,  
To change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.’

It requires emotional intelligence to achieve this clarity.

## Two Marshmallow Test

This is the scenario. You are given a marshmallow, but here's the deal. You can choose to eat it now; or if you can wait 15 minutes, and not eat that marshmallow, you'll be given a second one.

## Delayed Gratification

Research at Stanford University showed the ability to wait for a second marshmallow was an indicator of future success in life and career. Dunedin University research focused on the relationship between childhood self-control and social measures such as health, wealth and crime.

Could you wait for the second marshmallow?

## Flexibility

In summary, an emotionally intelligent person is able to adjust their feelings, thoughts and behaviours to changing situations and conditions. They are open to different ideas and ways of doing things. They are able to look at the brighter side of life and maintain a positive attitude even when times are tough. They are good at problem-solving and able to identify problems as well as generate and implement solutions.

## References

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