



**LACE for Life**  
Coaching & Consulting

# “Realizing Your Full Potential”

## Part 3: Develop Your Emotional Intelligence

You’ve likely heard the term “emotional intelligence,” which was first used in 1990. Emotional intelligence is commonly described as ***the ability to perceive, evaluate, and manage emotions in others and one’s self.*** Many experts consider it to be a better indicator of success potential than someone’s IQ. Your ability to influence yourself and others is dependent on your emotional intelligence.

### Try these techniques to develop and increase your “EQ”:

1. **Accept responsibility for your emotions and actions.** Realize that outside influences don’t determine your emotions and behavior. View things from a different perspective, and choose how you’ll respond.
2. **Work on your listening skills.** If you force yourself to focus 100% on whoever you’re interacting with, you’ll be in a better position to notice and evaluate what they’re thinking and feeling.
  - It isn’t always easy to hide one’s emotions, but you still have to pay attention. The more information you have, the better you can respond.
3. **Develop greater self-awareness.** We’re constantly monitoring our bank accounts and the number on our bathroom scale. Yet, few of us monitor our thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Throughout the day, ask yourself, “What am I feeling right now?” Is the way you’re feeling negatively affecting your choices?
  - Are you choosing your behaviors in an intelligent manner or allowing others to “push your buttons”?

4. **Learn to effectively deal with your impulses.** Impulsiveness is a common cause of personal turmoil. We feel bad, so we order a pizza even after we've already had dinner. Or we grab a credit card and purchase something unnecessary. This type of behavior moves us further away from our objectives.
  - Notice when you're behaving in a counterproductive manner and strive to make a more effective choice. Being successful and happy can be challenging enough on its own. Avoid sabotaging yourself.
5. **Volunteer with those less fortunate.** Spending time with those in need will increase your sensitivity for others.
  - After witnessing very obvious emotions, you'll become more skilled at picking up on more subtle cues. You're also likely to develop greater sensitivity for others.
6. **Keep your focus on responding, rather than reacting.** Responding requires thought and consideration. When you respond, you're making a decision. Reacting is more like a reflex. There's no thought involved, just the emotional response.
  - Have you ever regretted saying or doing something because you didn't think it through? How would you have handled the situation differently? What can you do to give yourself the mental space to respond more effectively in the future?
  - Avoid lashing out when someone hurts your feelings. Your reaction can actually make the situation worse.
7. **Work at increasing your empathy.** Those with high levels of emotional intelligence are skilled at recognizing and relating to the emotions of others. Recognizing the emotion an individual brings to a situation will allow you to have a more effective response.
  - Consider how you would like to be treated if you were feeling the same emotions.

You probably know someone highly-skilled at managing their emotions. Their emphasis is on finding solutions. They refrain from getting angry or defensive. These individuals make intelligent decisions and can view themselves objectively. Emotional intelligence is an important part of healthy relationships, both at home and work. Your life will be more successful if you can effectively learn how to manage the emotions of yourself and others. The ability to understand your emotions and the emotions of others is a valuable skill and a major key to reaching your full potential.