

From Phycology Today

## Test Your Practical Emotional Intelligence

Assess your knowledge of how emotions work with this quiz.

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Peter Salovey and David Caruso, who wrote the seminal article on [Emotional Intelligence](#) (EQ) in 1990, define EQ as “An ability to recognize the meanings of emotion and their relationships and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them.”

One would assume that being knowledgeable about how common psychological experiences such as rejection, failure, [loneliness](#), or [guilt](#) impact our own and others’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviors would comprise an integral part of EQ assessments. However, this is not the case. Few tests of emotional [intelligence](#) assess our actual knowledge of how emotions work.

The majority of quizzes that test emotional intelligence merely ask the responder to evaluate how aware they are of their own and others’ emotions in various situations or how comfortable they feel in emotionally charged circumstances. As such, they do not assess actual knowledge: Is the person aware of how specific experiences typically affect our emotions, thoughts, and reactions? Do they understand how best to manage these situations? Can they distinguish between adaptive and maladaptive responses to such occurrences?

The following test will give you an idea of how well you understand common emotional experiences and people's reactions to them.

Please note that although the items in this test are based on studies appearing in peer-reviewed journals, this test has not been scientifically validated and as such should be used for entertainment purposes only.

### A Test of Emotional Intelligence

Choose only one answer for each question. The answer key is at the bottom of the page.

**1. Compared to those with high [self-esteem](#), people with low self-esteem experience rejection as:**

- A. Less painful.
- B. More painful.
- C. Just as painful.

**2. Failure typically makes people:**

- A. Devalue their basic abilities.
- B. Compensate by over-valuing their basic abilities.
- C. Experience no change in their perception of their basic abilities.

**3. Guilt trips tend to make many of their recipients feel:**

- A. Guilty but resentful toward the person.
- B. Guilty but closer to the person.
- C. Guilt trips rarely make people feel guilty.

**4. Positive affirmations are effective in boosting self-esteem for:**

- A. People with low self-esteem but not people with high self-esteem.
- B. People with high self-esteem but not people with low self-esteem.
- C. No one.

**5. Compared to people with high self-esteem, anxiety impacts people with low self-esteem:**

- A. Just as much.
- B. Less, because they expect bad things to happen.
- C. More.

**6. Fear of failure is usually expressed by:**

- A. Unconscious behaviors that increase our likelihood of success.
- B. Conscious behaviors that increase our likelihood of success.
- C. Unconscious behaviors that increase our likelihood of failure.

**7. When we experience a loss or trauma, the best thing to do is:**

- A. Talk about it and get our feelings out.
- B. Talk about it if we want to and avoid discussing it if we don't.
- C. Avoid discussing it and get on with life.

**8. Loneliness usually makes us:**

- A. Have a realistic appreciation of our existing friendships.
- B. Overvalue our existing friendships.
- C. Undervalue our existing friendships.

**9. People with low self-esteem:**

- A. Enjoy compliments more than people with high self-esteem.
- B. Enjoy compliments less than people with high self-esteem.
- C. Enjoy compliments just as much as people with high self-esteem.

**10. Rejections activate similar areas in our brain as those activated by:**

- A. Disappointment.
- B. Physical pain.
- C. Shame.

**11. Over time, brooding and ruminating over a distressing event:**

- A. Impairs our problem-solving abilities.
- B. Sharpens our problem-solving abilities.
- C. Has no impact on our problem-solving abilities.

**12. Which of the following has been found to shave years off our life expectancy?**

- A. Chronic low self-esteem.
- B. Chronic guilt.
- C. Chronic loneliness.

**13. Parents who suffer from fear of failure often act unconsciously in ways that:**

- A. Avoid putting any pressure whatsoever on their kids.
- B. Transmit their fear of failure to their kids.
- C. Convey unconditional acceptance of their kids' achievements.

**14. For an apology to be effective in eliciting authentic forgiveness, it must include:**

- A. A strong empathy statement.
- B. Face-to-face contact with the person we harmed.
- C. A realistic and valid excuse.

**15. The best way to reduce angry feelings when we're brooding about them is to:**

- A. Talk about the incident with as many supportive people as possible.
- B. Punch a pillow while thinking of the person who angered us.
- C. Think about the person who angered us as needing professional or spiritual help.

### **Answer Key**

Here are the correct answers to the questions. Because the test has not been validated scientifically, the best way to interpret your score is to note the topics in the questions you answered incorrectly and to consider becoming more knowledgeable about them.

**1-B, 2-A, 3-A, 4-B, 5-C, 6-C, 7-B, 8-C, 9-B, 10-B, 11-A, 12-C, 13-B, 14-A, 15-C**

For detailed explanations of the answers, descriptions of the studies they are based on, and much more, check out, [\*Emotional First Aid: Healing Rejection, Guilt, Failure, and Other Everyday Hurts\*](#).  
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### References

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211.

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2000). Models of emotional intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.). *Handbook of Intelligence* (pp. 396-420). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.