

# On Managing Emotions

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*Managing one's emotions and ensuring that one's responses are balanced is vital in today's organizational context. Today, more and more companies are focused on the emotional quotient of a prospective employee. In today's fast paced life, an individual is so caught up in running and rushing about living their lives that they do not find time to pause, sit, take in the present picture, and be in the moment properly. However, everyone is constantly looking for peace of mind and a semblance of happiness. Most books and papers talk about how this emotional intelligence has become so important and why it plays such a pivotal role today and how one has to balance emotions for decision making. This paper is more on what all one can do to balance the positive emotions in one's life. It can help a person feel positive. This paper also takes us through the little things that we can do to manage ourselves in the moment and emphasizes also on the importance of choosing to learn and grow over time to become a better and peaceful co-worker, employee, and human being.*

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*Running a marathon with a backpack is tough and may hinder you from winning the race. Don't let the baggage from your past—heavy with fear, guilt, and anger—slow you down.*

**– Maddy Malhotra**

## **Introduction: Managing Emotions**

Daniel Goleman is known as the foremost authority in emotional intelligence (Figure 1). He once said, “If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”

However, while living in the moment and experiencing the awesomeness the Universe provides for us or constantly engaging ourselves with tasks that energize us are definitely ways of managing one's emotions. We should never underestimate the impact of voicing them out. Bottling up one's emotions not only creates stress within

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**Figure 3: Warm Smile**



Source: <http://www.brainyquote.com/photos/williamarthurward190443.jpg>

- **Synergize:** When two or more people work together, bringing in their respective strengths to achieve a common goal, they are said to work in synergy. When individuals try to overwork themselves and take on much more than they can take up, they tend to worry about the results. It helps to remember once in a while that one does not need to do everything oneself, that one can ask for and take help from others. To learn to synergize is one way to live life worry-free.

- **Motivate:** Lack of confidence is one of the prominent causes of worry. As one loses sight of one's strengths and capabilities, one tends to start to worry more about possibly not being able to achieve one's goals. To avoid falling into this trap, one needs to constantly appreciate oneself for one's past accomplishments in life. Do not wait for someone else to come and appreciate you in life. Keep a log of all the accomplishments, goals achieved and keep congratulating and appreciating yourself so as to build confidence and keep yourself motivated to work positively and worry-free towards goals in life.

- **Intuition:** Listen to the heart. Never ignore the power of intuition. Experts in art or sculpting or music just know a great masterpiece when they see/hear them. They do not analyze it, their years of experience just gives them the right intuition. They learn to trust that intuition and grow successful in their career. We are known to be emotional human beings who tend to make more emotional decisions than rational ones. In such a case, listening to one's intuition or gut feeling is essential to avoid confusion and contradictions during the action phase of any decision. Does this mean that in the debate of heart vs. mind, one should make the heart win always? No, not always. Worry-free life is all about creating a balance between the two, as the next point below shows.

- **Logic:** As important as it is to listen to your heart (Figure 4), it is also important to pay attention to what the mind is saying. As Henri Poincarè (1899) once said, "it is by logic we prove, but by intuition we discover". The logical and analytical process of the human brain is never to be discounted. Always evaluate the pros

**Figure 4: Intuition-Logic**



Source: [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-i3Zo\\_eymJdM/TNZZdV8EVI/AAAAAAAAABB4/NnUqCY6YUjU/s1600/lvi.png](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-i3Zo_eymJdM/TNZZdV8EVI/AAAAAAAAABB4/NnUqCY6YUjU/s1600/lvi.png)

and cons of every alternative properly before making a decision or a choice. To be able to live worry-free is to think of the advantages and disadvantages of any situation, and make a wise choice, prepared and ready to face all consequences that the choice brings forth.


- **Enjoy:** Today! Live in the moment. There is only one time when there are no worries or troubles or problems in life, and that moment is right now. A minute in the past and a minute in the future, and there are problems to worry about in one's life. It is only in the present moment that one can be worry-free. So, one has to learn to enjoy and cherish every moment the best way one can.

Live worry free. Remember to SMILE!

## E – Express

Whatever be the role of individuals in an organization, the freedom to communicate what they think and feel is a vital ingredient of how they feel in the organization. Communication is best judged by the ease with which one can speak and the effect it has on others—the impact it generates and the results it achieves. Failure to communicate effectively can create stress, conflict, strained relationships, misunderstandings and problems between any two or more individuals, at home, or at work. On the other hand, effective and successful communication can result in understanding, successful business agreement, and harmonious family life, solutions to problems, increased productivity and team work. Communication is the life blood of any meaningful relationship, personal as well as professional. Every individual in an organization must be empowered with the freedom to speak their ideas, thoughts and opinions. Communication is the life blood of any meaningful relationship, personal as well as professional. Organizations keep facilitating workshops in many ways with many techniques to help their employees enhance their communication. In fact, there are ways too many. Here, we would simplify things by looking at one simple technique to remember.

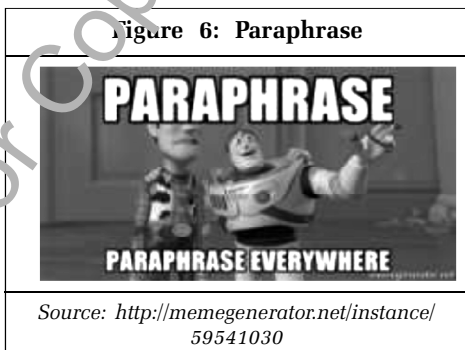
Communication is about how one uses words to express (Figure 5) oneself. Let us see what words mean.

<p><b>Figure 5: Communicate with Words</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>W – Wait:</b> The concept of 'wait' is very simple. It means to 'pause'. Many times in life, we just say something instantly and the moment we say it we regret doing so. When we react towards another person, this creates a sense of negativity between the two people that can carry forward to further conversations and interactions. One profound concept to remember whilst communicating is</li> </ul>
	
<p>Source: <a href="http://autismsparks.com/social-communication/">http://autismsparks.com/social-communication/</a></p>	

that when one feels the urge to immediately say something, all one needs to do is to pause for a while and in that pause, think—whether to go ahead and say the same or not. In anger management, people say—count 1 to 10. If not enough, count to 20. If not, count on to 30 and beyond. The count is a start to the pause. This simple technique of waiting and thinking before saying anything helps proactively in avoiding stress for self and conflicts between people.

- **O – Organize:** It is said that the more organized one is within oneself, the easier it is to speak with a seamless flow. This is the concept of ‘organize’ which asks one to focus on a bit of intrapersonal communication before stepping out and doing interpersonal communication. What does this mean? Intrapersonal communication is about an individual practicing a particular conversation or rehearsing a presentation or planning a particular talk to oneself. It can be by visualizing the other person in front and practicing to say the right words so that having the actual conversation later gets easy. This ability to ‘organize’ thoughts over a period of time also helps in decreasing the time of the ‘wait’.

- **R – Repeat:** When one is a listener in a conversation, it is a good idea for the listener to paraphrase once in a while. To paraphrase is to reproduce the other person’s statements in one’s own words so that one can clarify that the meaning understood is the same as the meaning conveyed. Before attempting to respond or reply to what the other person is saying, it is a good idea to paraphrase (Figure



6) the other’s statements and clarify that what one has understood and is about to reply to, is actually what the other person has said. Even when someone asks us a question that appears a bit complex, before we go ahead and answer, it is a good idea to paraphrase it to confirm our understanding of the same. Between ‘wait’ and ‘repeat’, we can work towards exponentially decreasing the chances of having to say—that was not what I meant!

- **D – Doubt-Free:** Assumptions often determine how many conversations proceed. In order for communication to be effective, one must ensure that one is free from all assumptions and doubts. As Henri Poincarè also said, “To doubt everything or to believe everything, are two equally convenient solutions.” This can be done in two possible ways—one is to get people to clarify your understanding of what they said, i.e., clarify your assumptions; and the second is to give feedback to others so that they can realize what has

been understood and not understood by you. While attempting to clarify your assumptions, follow this process. Listen to the conversation. Think of what you understand from it. Separate the part that has been told and the part that has been assumed. Get yourself to doubt that assumption for a minute. Mention the assumption to the speaker and clarify whether the assumption is valid. Then proceed to respond. While being the listener, it is a good idea to give feedback to tell the speaker what you have understood so that both can be on the same platform.

- **S – Simple:** Many a time we use big words and words with lots of jargon that make statements difficult to comprehend. We may think that this shows superiority in language, however, what it also does is that it makes communication difficult. Imagine children attempting to learn “Scintillate Scintillate Minim Asteroid”! How ridiculous that sounds! Yet it is a complex vocabulary. Instead let us look at the simple nursery rhyme “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”! So popularly known and so easy to learn. Remember that the intent is not to impress someone, rather to communicate effectively which only requires one to use simple words to just express your thoughts.

Use WORDS to express...

## E – Energy Boosters

Most times, the danger with energy drain is not the exhaustion itself, but the possibility of not identifying it until it suddenly looms down upon you. There are times in the day when we are so exhausted that no matter how interesting and exciting we find something, we just cannot get down to work on it. With the aching muscle and the mental tiredness, one experiences an increasing lack of ability to get up and get going. In times of low energy, it also becomes difficult to

concentrate on tasks and slowly, eventually patience grows short and the level of frustration increases even when confronting seemingly simple challenges and tasks. While working, energy zappers are always constantly around us, some obvious and some hidden. The good news is that there is a way to overcome and work around almost all of them. How does one do that? One uses ‘energy boosters’ (Figure 7).

According to psychologist Baard, anything that is relaxing for you will reduce tension and that will help increase energy. For example, a walk around the block or a power nap can both be energy boosters.

- **Walk around the block** – In experiments conducted by Robert Thayer from California State University, a brisk 10-minute walk not only increases energy,

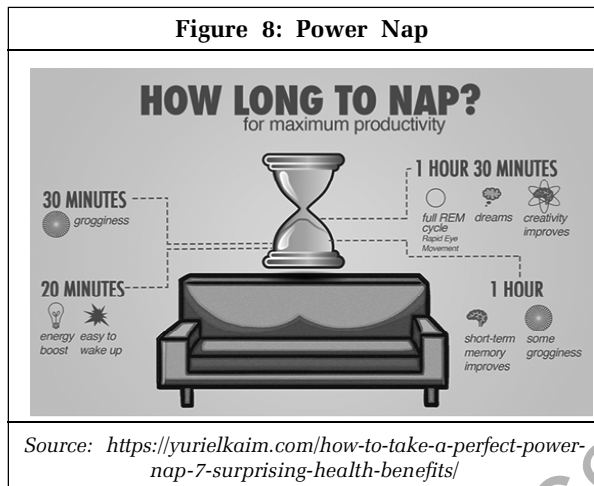
**Figure 7: Energy Boosters**



Source: <https://au.lifestyle.yahoo.com/health/wellbeing>

but the effects last up to two hours. When this daily 10-minute walks were continued on for weeks, overall energy levels and mood were lifted.

- **Power nap** – Research shows that both information overload and pushing our brains too hard can zap energy. A power nap (Figure 8) gives the gap between tasks and helps the brain relax.



Research finds that a 60-minute “power nap” cannot only sometimes reverse the mind-numbing effects of information overload, it may also help us to better retain what we have learned.

There can be two kinds of energy boosters—those in one’s complete control and those that are not in one’s control, i.e., internal and external. Internal energy boosters are tasks/activities that one can implement and put into action by oneself—example music, books, coffee, etc. External

energy boosters, on the other hand, are those that require another person or individual to be present—example family, friends, etc. Energy boosters can also be both positive and negative: positive such as exercise, laughing, etc. and negative such as giving in to smoking, etc. It serves wise to remember that the supposed negative energy boosters give a positive surge of energy only for a short term and in the long run, are more of a disadvantage than an advantage. It is always better to inculcate the habits of positive internal energy boosters. Here are a few simple tips for positive internal energy boosters:

- **Smile** – Always attempt to find one good thing in the day to make you smile.
- **Breathe** – With your body relaxed while seated, take deep breaths in and out evenly.
- **Affirmations** – Make self-affirmations and practice repeating them every day to keep a positive perspective in life. Here are a few examples of affirmations:
  - I can achieve anything.
  - I am strong, capable, and in control.
  - I am at peace.
  - I do not worry, no matter what comes my way.
  - I am smart and talented.
  - I am a go-getter.
  - I am calm and relaxed in all circumstances.
  - I believe in myself.

- **Sing** – Other than the natural feelings of relaxation, singing always draws more oxygen into one’s body and enhances mental clarity by eliminating fatigue.
- **Sunlight** – Natural sunlight is a healthy source of energy. Open the curtains, lift the shades and let the sun shine in to enhance energy levels.
- **Cold water** – A large glass of cold water or iced tea helps in shocking one’s body system to alertness.
- **Change of environment** – Sometimes just moving to another place, sitting in another position, can do wonders to transform energy positively.
- **Colors** – The range of colors have always been known to help humans through a wide range of spectrum of emotions and feelings. The right blend of colors of oranges, yellows, pinks, and reds can create positivity of emotions.
- **Move around** – Often just getting up and doing some minor household chore such as cooking or washing the dishes, or walking around the house helps boost energy levels.
- **Listen to energetic music** – Different types of music have different effects on us, but you can do this one by trial and error. Once you find the ones that work for you, keep them ready to boost energies whenever you need them to do so.
- **Sleep** – Get at least five hours of sleep every day; the quality seems to be more important than the quantity.
- **Drink a cup of coffee** – Used to a limited extent, caffeine is considered to be a powerful energy booster for many and in the short term, can work wonders.

**Figure 9: Exercise**



Source: <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/fitness/the-energy-booster-workout>

- **Exercise** – More of a short-term energizer (Figure 9) along with being a long-term solution, many people notice an increase in their energy levels when they get regular aerobic exercise.

According to various psychologists, one of the biggest energy zappers is stress. Stress stems from anxiety, and anxiety, just like worry and fear, uses up a whole lot of energy. Stress can leave one mentally and physically exhausted even if you have spent the day

doing nothing and simply lying in bed. Energy boosters help alleviate stress. Energy boosters can be defined as those which help an individual renew energy to take on new tasks. As this paper depicts, they can be as simple as one’s family and friends or can be as complex as a challenging task that stimulates the brain cells.

Create positive energy boosters for self!



## L – Learn

Learning has been an important ingredient of anyone's life with one's ability to learn growing every year right from one's childhood. In fact, education, it is said, may stop at some time but learning is always known to be a continuous process in one's life. Yet it is researched and said that as one progresses in age and in life, one tends to learn less and less, even though the ability stays high all through one's middle adult life. There are thus so many activities available in today's world to enable learning for individuals. Books are full of the new-found techniques as well as traits and characteristics required for one to learn better and better every day. One needs to constantly learn every day to keep staying consistently positive towards one's approach at work.

Many people feel stressed out and are under constant pressure to perform well even while they are still in the process of learning. The most important part of learning is to know that not only is it okay to make a few mistakes, but that also mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Let us look at the various phases one goes through while learning a new concept, starting with not knowing anything about it.

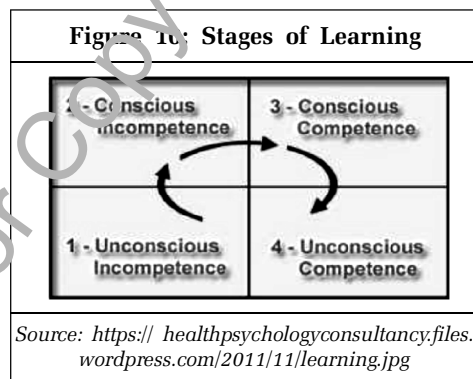
Research specifies a four-phase process of learning which serves even to this day as one of the basic and fundamental theories on how an individual learns. It is stipulated that an individual goes through these phases:

1. Unconscious Incompetence
2. Conscious Incompetence
3. Conscious Competence
4. Unconscious Competence

Let us attempt to understand each of these phases (Figure 10) through a simple and common example of learning to ride a bicycle.

**Unconscious Incompetence:** This initial phase of the learning curve is when an individual does not have any idea of the concepts/skills that one can learn. This stage is that of ignorance. How can someone learn something when they have still no idea at all that it exists for them to learn. Let us take the bicycle example. Would a boy who is one year old know how to ride a bicycle? Of course, "No". Would the same boy who is about a year old know that there is something called a bicycle that he does not know how to ride yet? Of course once again, the answer is "No". This means that not only does the one year old boy not have the competence of riding a bicycle, he is also not aware of this fact. This phase of unconscious incompetence is also called "I don't know that I don't know"!

**Conscious Incompetence:** This next phase of learning curve is when an individual starts to develop awareness about the object/concept/skill about which she/he does



not know. This is when they start to realize that there is something which they do not know yet, and that they can learn if they want to do so. In the bicycle example, this starts to happen as the boy slowly reaches the age of five to six years and starts to see other older kids riding a bicycle. Then, the answer to the first question still stays a “No” and that of the second question is a “Yes”. The child is aware that there is something called a bicycle which can be learned and that he still has not learned how to use it. The phase of conscious incompetence is also called “I know that I don’t know”!

**Conscious Competence:** This third phase of the learning curve starts when one starts to attain knowledge of the skill/concept that one wants to learn and can start to be able to understand and apply the same. This phase continues all the way till one starts to become very good at the concept/skill and even tends to overlap with the fourth phase. Looking at the example of the boy and the bicycle, when, at an age of approximately eight or so, the child starts to learn the various parts of the bicycle, how to sit, pedal, ring the bell, pull the brake, etc. and continues as he starts to attempt to get on it, ride it around with the help of others around him till he starts to become very good at the same. At this point in time, the answer to the first question as well as that of the second question becomes a “Yes”. The boy not only is aware of the existence of the bicycle, he also knows how to ride one. This phase of conscious competence is also called “I know that I know”!

**Unconscious Competence:** This final phase in the learning curve is one in which an individual suddenly finds himself/herself after a lot of practice of the skills/concepts learned. This is when one starts to become so good at something that it automatically tends to become a habit and most times the person does not even realize any effort to do the task. As the boy keeps riding the bicycle, one day he may suddenly leave both arms free and breeze through a difficult path just like that. When asked how he did it, many times, the response is an astonished “I’m not sure.” In this phase, the answer to the first question is a “Yes” and for the second question, awareness needs to be brought in for the person to realize what they can do. This phase of unconscious competence is also called “I don’t know that I know”!

Today many researchers and philosophers talk about an awareness level of one’s unconscious competencies, i.e., that the person stays constantly aware of what he/she can do as a habit and with ease. The above four phases in the same way tend to apply even when one is learning any new skill such as how to listen or how to make a presentation, or a new concept like the Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats™, etc.

Many times, once an individual reaches the final phase in something, she/he immediately usually finds an advanced learning method for the same. Also, an individual is always in all the four phases about some skill/concept or the other. Learning thus stays as a continuous process. Keep learning...

## Conclusion

Impatience! Frustration! Anxiety! Tired? Cranky? Irritated? Flustered? Hassled? Signs of one worrying about something. Signs of lack of the skill to manage emotions (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Freedom from Emotions**



Source: <http://seedoffreedom.com/?p=1576>

It is said that worry is like a rocking chair—it keeps you moving to and fro but does not take you anywhere. It can be negative energy, limiting one’s capabilities. Learning to live worry-free while also choosing to use energy boosters to constantly keep one’s mood up, helps one live peacefully. Also, whatever be the role of an individual in an organization, the ability to communicate appropriately is considered a vital ingredient. Constant communication

about one’s feelings makes our interactions more genuine and open-minded, thus leading to lesser conflicts, easier conversations, and better relationships.

Being emotionally intelligent and being able to feel all emotions helps an individual to identify the feelings based on verbal and non-verbal cues, process the same and use them effectively to make appropriate decisions in life. So, feel positive emotions... ☉

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