



FARM WELL NEWSLETTER

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FARMING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Stress comes in all shapes and forms on a farm: ornery & difficult livestock, broken down equipment, untimely poor weather and difficult issues in the household. These stressors and situations can often times be magnified when poor emotional communication skills are used when discussing a problem or conflict.

Scenario: It's fall and mother nature thinks its spring. Soy beans and corn are ready to be taken off of the field, but the wet and overcast weather makes this impossible. Nice weather finally arrives and it happens to land on a beautiful Badger Saturday weekend. The morning of the start of harvest the help that has been lined up for weeks in advance says that they want to get together with friends for Badger Saturday instead of working and won't be able to haul loads to the staging area. You yell at the "help," threaten them, confront them in-person and start a physical altercation and they tell you they're done working for you as a sub milker too. The situation just went from awful to worse.

What can be said and done differently by the farmer who flew off the handle on the hired hand? Is there a way to enhance communication skills when under that type of stress? Yes.

Let me introduce you to Emotional Intelligence or E.I. for short. E.I. is a type of intelligence that involves the ability to process emotional information and use it in reasoning and other cognitive activities. (1)

According to Mayer and Salovey's 1997 integrative model, E.I. is comprised of four interconnected emotional abilities:

- Perception and expression of emotion - Noticing your own emotions and picking up on the emotions of others as well as the ability to distinguish between discrete emotions.
- Using emotion to facilitate thought - How you incorporate emotions into your thinking process and an understanding of when and how emotions can be helpful for reasoning processes.
- Understanding and analyzing emotions - the capacity to decode emotions, make sense of their meaning, and understand how they relate to each other and change over time.
- Reflective regulation of emotion - an openness to all emotions and the ability to regulate your own emotions and the emotions of others to facilitate growth and insight. (2)



Tips for building E.I.

- **Work on your self-awareness:** Mindfulness is key with this exercise, which is surprisingly easy. Start by simply taking more time to think about your reactions to daily events.
- **Reframe your perceptions of self-management:** Conflicts with others can often be problems that relate to our frame of reference. As an example, in your mind, someone is criticizing an idea you have come up with. Reframe the situation mentally as "How useful these suggestions are, I can use them to improve my idea. (4)

For Upcoming Community Workshops Go to
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To register for upcoming COMET and safeTALK workshops

Go to [ModernLearners.com](https://www.modernlearners.com), you will have to create an account to register for the first event you attend.



How to respond to the same scenario with better E.I. skills? Take a breath and assess the situation. You're desperate to get your crops done, your help wants to enjoy the nice weather at Badger Saturday, and sadly, you can't both have it your way. In a calm voice you might start by telling your help that you understand that they want to go to Badger Saturday with their friends. You then say that you wish the weather had cooperated sooner and that the timing is crummy, but you only have so much good weather and have to take full advantage of it when it's here. You could offer to buy takeout for lunch from their favorite place and have another family member pick it up. Anything within reason to help ease the situation and guarantee that they will follow-thru. After you're done with harvest that evening and for the year, thank them for helping you and let them know how much you appreciate it.

Now, you might be thinking, "How the heck do I get to that!?" OR There's no way I could respond that way." Please check out the tips and resources noted below to learn more and help yourself, your relationships and your farm by working on some E.I. growth.

Tony Robbins has outlined his six tips for growing emotional intelligence:

1. Identify what you're feeling. Use mindfulness to routinely check in on your perspective.
2. Acknowledge and appreciate your emotions for what they are. Robbins emphasizes that "Emotions are never wrong. They are there to support you."
3. Be curious about what an emotion is trying to tell you.
4. Tap into your inner confidence to deal with emotions by remembering when you've done this effectively in the past.
5. Mentally think through how you would deal with difficult feelings in the future to feel more equipped when the time comes.
6. With a renewed confidence in your E.I., Robbins suggests getting excited to use these skills to achieve your goals and enhance your relationships with others. (3)

Books to read on E.I.:

- [Dare to Lead](#) by Brene Brown
- [How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain](#) by Lisa Feldman Barrett
- [Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive](#) by Marc Brackett

A podcast to listen to:

Last 8% Morning - this podcast is led by Dr. JP Pawliw Fry, Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Expert. He has worked with Olympic, NBA and NFL athletes, Navy Seals, NASA, etc. The Last 8% are the tough conversations, difficult decisions, and opportunities to meaningfully connect that people avoid because emotions get in the way.

Use this link to access the, Last 8% Morning podcasts - <https://www.ihhp.com/last-8-morning-podcast/>

Sources:

1. <https://dictionary.apa.org/emotional-intelligence>
2. <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-eq/>
3. <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/personal-growth/how-to-improve-emotional-intelligence/>
4. <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-skills/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

COMET:

- **In-person Tues, 11/2 6-8PM @ Southwest Health (East Conference Room), Platteville**



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