



# Top Ten Emotional Intelligence Moments Of 2009

Emotional intelligence (or the lack of it) is splashed across the headlines every year. TalentSmart®, a think tank and consultancy that is the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training, has narrowed down a year's headlines into the 10 most memorable, most significant emotional intelligence moments. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is our ability to understand our emotions and those of others, and to use this understanding to manage emotions, and respond to them effectively.

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## EQ Moment #10:

### ***Even a 72-Year-Old Grandma Can Get Herself Tasered***

*Click here to view clip.*

We get it. Getting pulled over can be frustrating, especially when the officer isn't the nicest guy you've ever met, but the officer who pulled over 72-year-old Kathryn Winkfein for speeding was just doing his job.

After refusing to sign her speeding ticket and yelling "Take me to jail!", Constable Christopher Beize ordered Winkfein out of her car. Winkfein continued to resist and, according to the officer, walked dangerously close to the busy road. In response, Beize shoved her back toward the safety of the shoulder, at which point things continued to escalate even further. Winkfein remained uncooperative, risking the safety of Beize and herself, so he followed standard procedures and threatened her with a taser. Beize warned her not once but five times before he went through with his promise.

Later, Winkfein admitted in an interview, "I just lost my temper; I do that maybe twice a year, but that day I just lost it." Winkfein failed to recognize and respond to her emotions effectively, and instead let them get in her way and control what she said to the officer.

When you don't stop and notice your feelings – including how they are influencing your words and behavior – you set yourself up to be a victim while your emotions lead you off the path. Unfortunately for Kathryn Winkfein, she had to learn this lesson the hard way.

## EQ Moment #9:

### ***Hillary Clinton Snaps at Congolese Student's Question***

*Click here to view clip.*

It's one thing to be an experienced stateswoman when you're well rested, but when the wear and tear of traveling is added to the mix, even a seasoned politician can slip and pay the price. When the interpreter of a student from the Democratic Republic of Congo made a mistake and asked Secretary of State Hillary Clinton what her husband thought, instead of what President Obama thought, Clinton's body language and tone got defensive, and she said that she was the Secretary of State, and not her husband. Her eye contact, hand gestures and finger pointing clearly revealed that the question had pushed a button, and triggered an emotional reaction from a defensive wife, and not the Secretary of State of the United States.

Though no one faults a stateswoman for standing up for herself, it's her emotional reaction that made the news that day, rather than the work she was doing. A more effective response would have been for Clinton to respond with the



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question, “Wait, you want me to tell you what my husband thinks?” and then pause for the answer. She had the right instinct to clarify her understanding of the question, but she jumped too quickly to the answer, assuming that the question had been correctly interpreted. Even if the question was correct, the highly emotionally intelligent answer would have been to respectfully change the question to one she wanted to answer, such as, “I think you mean to ask me what I think, and I will tell you what I think as Secretary of State.”

### EQ Moment #8:

#### ***Heidi & Spencer Quitting ‘I’m A Celebrity’***

*[Click here to view clip.](#)*

We all love to hate Speidi, the celebrity super villains. But what makes them so detestable? Their complete lack of self-awareness and disregard for others is a start, but this year they may have taken it way too far. Newlyweds Heidi Montague and Spencer Pratt decided to join the cast of “I’m a Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here”, a reality show in which celebrities test their survival skills and compete against each other to win donations for their favorite charities.

After only three days of ‘roughing it’ in Costa Rica, Speidi told NBC that they quit because, as Spencer put it, “I’m too rich and I’m too famous to be sitting with these people and cleaning up their sh-- in the jungle... this cast is devaluing our fame right now... I thought it was all about celebrities.... Stars of shows get treated like stars, dude.” Apparently, they forgot that they were playing for charity.

Though Heidi and Spencer tried to ramp up their personalities for publicity purposes, they failed to

recognize the full impact of their behavior. They were hounded for their behavior on several talk shows, and their fans were deeply disappointed that they didn’t recognize their mistakes, and failed to take responsibility for their actions. Taking the time to confront who you are, and to notice and understand why you do the things you do, can be unsettling at times. Getting in touch with your emotions and tendencies takes honesty and courage. It’s about time for Speidi to go back and revisit their values.

### EQ Moment #7:

#### ***Tareq and Michaele Salahi Crash White House Party***

It’s not often that regular citizens get the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet the President of the United States at a White House event. But it’s even less often that regular citizens go to the White House uninvited, successfully get past security, have the wherewithal to hob-nob with other guests, and even meet the President as if they really belong at the event. That’s exactly what happened on November 24 with Tareq and Michaele Salahi, a socialite couple from Washington DC, who headed for the Holy Grail of party crashing, the White House. Instead of trying to blend in with the crowd, they took pictures with famous people, calmly took their time as they were being announced, and acted as if they really had invitations in their pockets.

Whether you regard this one of the best or worst EQ moments in 2009, it certainly required EQ skills to pull off what they did. This couple practiced their self-awareness and self-management skills to ensure that any nervousness about getting caught was kept in check, so that they went undetected. They also practiced



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effective social awareness skills in reading the room, in understanding how to operate as an insider, and in doing whatever was needed to get next to Joe Biden, and be in the receiving line to shake hands with President Obama. Though we don't recommend it, this is a great example of how people can practice EQ at a sophisticated level to manipulate other people and situations in order to get what they want.

### EQ Moment #6:

#### ***US Army Commits to Training Emotional Resiliency Skills***

It's been known for centuries that one of the many serious fallouts of war is the difficulty that soldiers face in dealing with emotional trauma. The soldiers of World War I soldiers never, or very rarely, spoke about their experiences, creating impenetrable walls between their memories and the efforts of their families to understand. Many soldiers experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, where noises similar to those heard on the battlefield could trigger a strong emotional reaction, and insight troubled behavior.

For the first time in history, the US Army is now working (with the University of Pennsylvania) to proactively develop soldiers' emotional coping skills. Resiliency expert Professor Martin Seligman explains, "In response to combat and high adversity, generally there is an extreme end which we call post-traumatic stress disorder, and the great middle is resilience, and the high end is post-traumatic growth."

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 marked the beginning of an Army-wide effort to bring emotional resiliency to 1.1 million soldiers.

After soldiers answer 170 questions on a resiliency test, they then select a resilience training course that is tailored to the specific results of their test. The training focuses on using positive self-talk to cope with uncertainty and negative emotions. Though it's just the beginning and a small step, acknowledging the issue and getting started is half the battle.

### EQ Moment #5:

#### ***Serena Williams' Meltdown at the US Open***

*[Click here to view clip.](#)*

Emotions were already running high for Serena Williams during her match with Kim Clijsters at the US Open. After losing the first set, she was faced with the real possibility of being beaten in the semifinals by someone who had not competed in the US Open since 2005. After she faulted on her first serve in the second set, she tried to serve again when the line judge called a double fault because her foot crossed the line.

The line judge's call triggered an emotional hijack for Serena, and her ability to mentally focus flew right off the court. Serena aggressively charged at the line judge, pointing and shaking a tennis ball in front of her while yelling, swearing, and even threatening to shove the ball down the judge's throat. Her emotional outburst cost her a point penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct, which, incidentally, was match point. Serena's failure to control her emotions cost her much more than just a final at the US Open championship; she was fined over \$80,000, was put on a two-year probationary period during Grand Slam events, and she disappointed thousands of her fans.



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“I don’t remember anymore [what I said], to be honest. I was in the moment... It was a really crucial point,” Serena later said. We agree, Serena, and we watched you apologize with little effect.

## EQ Moment #4:

### ***US Representative Joe Wilson Blurts “You Lie!”***

[Click here to view clip](#)

When President Obama addressed Congress in a speech on health care, Representative Wilson blurted out “You lie!”. Afterward, Wilson called the White House to apologize, and said, “This evening, I let my emotions get the best of me when listening to the President’s remarks... While I disagree with the President’s statement, my comments were inappropriate and regrettable. I extend sincere apologies to the President for this lack of civility.”

History shows that many Senator and Congressman have shouted out disrespectful comments during Presidential speeches. However, with televised speeches, over the last 50 years politicians have established new norms during U.S. Presidential addresses to the nation. They have had to learn decorum on the floor, and before the camera. With the camera rolling, Representative Wilson broke the norms in calling the President a liar.

Others in the audience that night may have experienced emotions similar to Wilson’s, but the difference was their self-management and control. Self-management would have helped Wilson to choose an appropriate response (in this case, silence), and would have taken the drama out of the moment. We can’t turn our emotions off—because they are a part of our biology—but we can choose how we react to them.

## EQ Moment #3:

### ***Jon and Kate Gosselin’s Divorce On Display***

Year-round TLC’s reality show parents Jon and Kate Gosselin have oversaturated the media, and have tested the patience levels of our pop culture in the US, but there’s a lesson to be learned in how they handled their family life in 2009. Though this reality TV couple chose the spotlight for their livelihoods, we sadly watched and heard the details of their failing marriage. It was a year of “he said, she said,” and though their differences may be great, they share an overall lack of awareness of the impact of talking publicly, and an inability to manage what they said and did publicly about their ever-changing relationship problems.

Emotions run strong during divorce, and lower-than-normal EQ skills are the norm. Going through the process of divorce with the cameras off would have been a good first step in effectively managing the situation, and in preventing things from getting worse, even at the expense of financial gain.

## EQ Moment #2:

### ***Captain Sullenberger and Crew Safely Land Flight 1549 into the Hudson River***

[Click here to view clip.](#)

When US Airways Flight 1549 crash-landed safely in New York’s Hudson River, Captain Chesley B. Sullenberger saved every soul onboard by making sure the plane hit the water at the exact angle and speed required to avoid breaking up upon impact. When asked how he pulled off

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this remarkable escape from death, he said he silenced the alarm bells going off in his head, and the fear that he was feeling. He kept his composure by directing his attention away from the fear, and onto the many small tasks it takes to crash land a plane on water.

Sullenberger successfully prevented his emotions from taking control, even though he was in an extremely emotionally-charged, life-threatening situation. The incident was coined the *Miracle on the Hudson*, but it was no miracle. Sullenberger and the rest of the flight crew's many years of training prepared them with outstanding self-management skills and the ability to remain calm under extreme stress. These were the tools that prevented a dangerous situation from becoming a terrible tragedy, and for that they are EQ heroes.

## 2009's #1 EQ Moment:

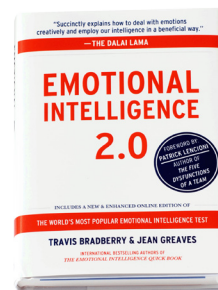
### ***Kanye West Grabs Taylor Swift's Moment***


You may have heard that American pop star Taylor Swift won the Best Female Video at the 2009 Video Music Awards, only to watch, stunned, as singer Kanye West walked onto the stage, grabbed her microphone, and shouted out that a different performer, Beyonce, should have won. Imagine the number of other nominees, fans, family members, or friends who must have felt the same way as Kanye did when their favorite singer didn't win. Yet, no other pop star, musician, actress, or singer has ever acted in such a way at their award shows. This is why, even for Kanye, this EQ moment stands out as a great example of zero impulse control fueled by poor awareness.

Kanye's lack of self-awareness and his poor social awareness skills created the right conditions for his outburst. Prior to that night, Kanye already had a reputation for saying whatever was on his mind, and for invoking laughter or getting pats on the back for being outrageously honest. He knew that he sometimes rubbed people the wrong way. However, fueled by a strong belief that it was all right for him to do things that other people do not, he was obviously unaware that the crowd was not with him on this one, neither the viewers, nor the fans, the media, nor his peers. After Beyonce won Video of the Year, and invited Taylor back onstage to finish her speech, Kanye sent out an apology on his blog, but cloaked in the middle of it stands his belief that he was still right:

"...I gave my awards to Outkast when they deserved it over me... that's what it is!! i'm not crazy yall, i'm just real. Sorry for that!!"

According to Kanye, since he gave his award to the group that he thought most deserved it, Taylor should have done so too. Kanye's belief that his own opinions mattered more than anyone else's created the perfect storm for the lowest EQ Moment of 2009. 🌐 December 2009



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