
TOP TEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MOMENTS OF 2011 (Highs *and* Lows)

This year, which is our third year running the Top 10 EQ Moments list, was a year that had no shortage of moments that exemplified emotional intelligence (in some cases, a lack of it). The bright minds behind TalentSmart®—the world’s leading provider of EQ tests and training and creator of the award-winning, #1 bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*—have narrowed down this year’s events into the 10 most memorable displays of EQ. Some are shining examples of EQ in action, and others illustrate how quickly trouble can find those who lack EQ. (Click on the title to watch a video clip for each moment.)

EQ Moment #10:

Anderson Cooper’s Laughing Fit

The Anderson Cooper fans that we know, and there are a *lot* of them, say that he can do no wrong. He’s polished, informed, and arguably *the* face of CNN news, but Anderson’s laughing fit on the show this year made him the butt of his own joke.

There is a time for everything—except perhaps an uncontrollable laughing fit on national television. His outburst during *The Ridiculist*—which aims to poke fun at celebrities who’ve made recent headlines—made headlines of its own. Cooper wasn’t able to sidestep this emotional hijacking before it took hold, and once it did, it lived up to its name—the laughter took hold of him for a full minute. Cooper was so embarrassed by the giggle bug that he apologized for it on and off the air.

EQ Moment #9:

Waitress Attempts to Shame Insulting Patron On Facebook -- But Posts Picture Of Wrong Guy

Victoria Liss, a popular bartender at Bimbo’s in the Capitol Hill section of Seattle, caught a lot of heat in October for her response to a nasty non-tipper. Early in the month, Liss was carrying on her daily duties tending bar on a Friday night, when a rather cheap customer decided not

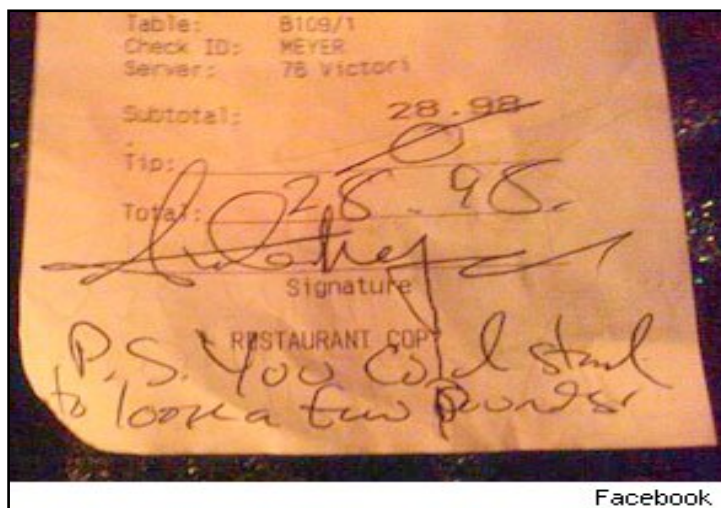
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only to stiff her for a tip, but also left a postscript at the bottom of the receipt that read, “You could stand to loose (sic) a few pounds.”

Offended by the customer’s lack of gratuity and spiteful comment, Liss took matters into her own hands and sought revenge in the form of shaming the “Yuppie Scum.” She posted a picture of the receipt and what she assumed was the offending customer’s picture and contact details on Facebook for all to see. Shortly after making her encounter public, thousands of people rallied together and reposted the image on Facebook, Twitterverse, and the blogosphere in the hunt for Andrew Myer, the nasty non-tipper. The big problem was Liss had vilified the wrong guy. Andrew Myers across the country were getting hate mail, especially the one whose image and information she had posted in error.

In Liss’s own words, she was “blinded by rage” and this emotional hijacking led to the emotional disinhibition that carelessly threw the wrong guy(s) under the bus. In addition to being bad for her personally, her actions were unprofessional and bad for business.

When given free reign in an online environment, people generally behave with less restraint and fail to spend the necessary time reflecting on the impact of their actions. This lack of self-management is toxic. Before deciding to make her encounter with Andrew Myer public, Liss should have first taken time to consider the potential ripple effect of her emotions. This is the only way to avoid making a bad situation worse.



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EQ Moment #8:

Anderson Cooper Talks about His Brother's Suicide with Mother Gloria Vanderbilt

We all have highs and lows when it comes to emotional intelligence, and Anderson Cooper is no exception. During the second week of his new show, “Anderson,” the CNN host hosted an emotional interview with his mother about the suicide of his brother, Carter, in 1988. Carter jumped from his family’s New York penthouse to his death when he was just 23 years old. Upon hearing his mother’s heartfelt revelation that she thought better of jumping after Carter because of Anderson, you can see him visibly struggle against an onslaught of emotion. Anderson sizes up his emotions quickly and takes the reins to keep himself from breaking down during the interview. It’s an exceptional moment as Anderson is flooded with emotion, yet maintains the composure required in his work.

EQ Moment #7:

Weinergate: A Career-ending Tale

Anthony Weiner, former U.S. Congressman in New York State's Ninth Ward, made two terrible errors in judgment—both of which could have been easily avoided with some emotional intelligence. His first bad judgment call happened when he thought that sending sexually suggestive pictures of himself to several women (some posted to his Twitter account) was an OK thing to do that wouldn’t get back to him. Bad call number two happened when he spent weeks denying that he ever sent or posted the images, claiming his account was hacked. This tactic ensured his days in office were over if anyone could prove that he did it. In the end, Weiner admitted to sending the photos and stepped down.

How could Weiner have used emotional intelligence to thwart this unsightly rise to infamy? He could have used self-awareness and self-management to understand his strong emotions in the moment and buy some time to carefully consider whether it was a good move to send the photos. Had he taken a few critical moments to, errr, calm down and think, chances are he'd

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have realized that he was being fooled by his strong emotions, and that these pictures could end up in the public eye.

Next, and equally as important, once these images came to light, instead of denying he sent them, he should have quickly told the truth and admitted the error in judgment so he and the public could move on. Creating a list that shows what both his emotions and reasons were swaying him to do would have helped him see on paper that saving his job through denial probably would not work. He also should have used social awareness skills to observe the needs of his constituency, colleagues, and family to make a good decision about what to do to manage these relationships. Instead, after many poor, untruthful attempts to recover, he had no choice but to tell the truth.

EQ Moment #6:

Bystanders Lift A Burning Car to Save a Man

Imagine yourself passing by an accident and you see a burning car with a motorcycle in flames right underneath the front bumper. The flaring heat is intense; the flame is intimidating. You glance at the driver's seat inside the car. You realize the driver is not there. Good. You take a quick look at the motorcycle. The motorcyclist is nowhere to be seen. Then, a flash of panic rushes over you when you see that the motorcyclist is trapped underneath the burning car.

As more smoke and flames develop, other people take notice and rush to the scene. In the midst of the thick smoke, burning fire, and intense heat, you figure there's no possible way the motorcyclist is alive. The thought of the motorcyclist burning makes you uneasy. If the car can be tipped to its side, the motorcyclist can be pulled away from the fire. Your mind races, but you stay calm. You and five other bystanders decide to approach the car with caution. There are only six of you. The gas tanks may blow up at any second. You try to lift the car anyway, but it's too heavy. You stay focused. You lie down on your stomach to catch a last glimpse of the motorcyclist. He moves. Then, you let everyone know that he's alive.

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In an instant, you witness something extraordinary and miraculous. Five more bystanders join in. An emotional energy rushes through you like never before. With one collective swoop, all eleven of you tip the car to its side. A construction worker gets down on his knees, reaches under the car, and pulls the motorcyclist out by his leg. Then, the police and firefighters rush in to extinguish the fire.

When it's all said and done, you take a moment to contemplate what happened. Where did that energy come from? How did you manage to stay calm and determined? How, without verbal cues, did you and your fellow Samaritans manage to stay in sync? You were all scared for your own safety, yet still willing to help. It was a collective emotional connection that kept you calm and focused. And it was emotional intelligence that guided you through a successful and life-saving effort.

EQ Moment #5:

Bhutan Measures Gross National Happiness



The country of Bhutan captured our attention this year when 31-year-old King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk married 21-year-old Jetsun Pema in a traditional Bhutanese ceremony. But it wasn't the wedding for which they make our top 10 list. It is for the country's emphasis

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on GNH, or “Gross National Happiness,” dating back to 1972 when Kin Jigme Singye Wangchuck coined the term. And they back it with a Gross National Happiness Commission set up in 2008 to guide public policy.

Here are a few examples of how the commission reviews public policy proposals. Do proposals:

1. Increase or decrease levels of stress in the population?
2. Discourage or encourage physical exercise?
3. Increase or decrease "economic security within the population"?
4. Increase or decrease "material well-being within the population"?

Their prime minister explained to a reporter from *The Guardian*:

"In the end, the development must be about furthering human civilization ... to increase and improve the level of human well-being and happiness. We are talking of happiness, not of a sensory kind. The human being has material as well as emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs."

For Bhutan to raise awareness about emotional health by considering such influences as stress and well-being at a national level is commendable. There are still so many places in the world, such as the workplace, where understanding and managing emotions is devalued. Bhutan's policies are a step in the right direction.

EQ Moment #4:

Hearing Sound for the First Time

After healing from surgery to install a hearing implant, 29-year-old Sarah Churman sits down with a nurse who activates the device. The video above shows the first time she's ever heard a sound in her life. Here is what she wrote in her blog when she got home:

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"I've been nervous for days. Couldn't sleep last night. The closer we got to Houston, the more my blood pressure rose and heart pounded. Got to Envoy Medical and was honestly scared I'd pass out before they could do anything. They did a few tests first to make sure the device worked. I had to sit in 'the box' while they did all sorts of beeps and whistles to make sure the device responded accordingly. Then came time to turn it on..... I'm supposed to hold the remote up to the device implanted in my skull to activate it and I kept moving it, which delayed it being turned on. Just about fainted, then 'voila!' It was on. I just started crying, then crying more because I could hear myself crying. Then laughing, then freaking out over my laugh. That led to the shakes and partial hyperventilating. Sloan's boisterous laugh and the grins from the docs was the icing on the cake. Then the tapping of the keys as the nurse lady did something on the computer, followed by the remote being set down on the counter..... I could HEAR it!!!

Most people watching Sarah's flood of emotion are moved as well. The more she cries, the more empathy and happiness well up in the viewer. This is the power of emotions in action—mirror neurons in your brain process her feelings and trigger similar feelings in you.

There are two distinct lessons Sarah teaches us about the role emotions play in our daily lives. Lesson number one: emotions can and do sometimes escalate. In Sarah's case, her feelings escalated into joyful tears, releasing her fear and nervousness building over months of anticipation. Lesson number two: emotions are contagious, so be aware of how other people affect your mood. When witnessing someone else's intense feelings (positive or negative), you will experience some of the same feelings. Feeling empathy for another person is an important part of being emotionally intelligent.

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EQ Moment #3:

Minister Wong's Reaction to Sexism

We all know politics can get ugly, but what happened in a committee hearing between Australian Senator David Bushby and Finance Minister Penny Wong was downright appalling. Minister Wong was addressing the committee during a robust debate when she was interrupted by Senator Bushby. Rather than acquiescing to the interruption, she assertively demanded that she have the opportunity to finish her statement. In a moment of truly low self-management, Senator Bushby meowed at Wong.

Senator Bushby's "meow" was both inappropriate and unprofessional, and Senator Wong had every reason to be angry. Rather than letting her anger take over, Senator Wong funneled this emotion into the motivation she needed to assertively communicate her disdain for sexist remarks and immature behavior. It took courage and skilled self-management for Wong to address Senator Bushby directly without getting sucked into tit for tat. Not only did she later receive a public apology from Senator Bushby, but her composed response also opened the doors to address the unacceptable use of sexist language in Parliament.

When it comes to anger, emotional intelligence isn't about suppressing it—it's about acknowledging the anger and using it in the right way to create a positive outcome. As Aristotle said, "Anyone can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person at the right time, and for the right purpose and in the right way - that is not easy."

Senator Wong achieved what was not easy and we applaud her for that.

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EQ Moment #2:

Justin Timberlake Attends Marine Corps Ball



When Marine Corporal Kelsey De Santis sent out a YouTube invite asking Justin Timberlake to attend the Marine Corps ball with her, he surprised her and accepted. Timberlake could have used this night as a mere publicity stunt by fulfilling his “duty”—smiling for pictures and making small talk. Instead, he took advantage of the night as an opportunity to understand the Marine Corps and the sacrifices the soldiers make for their country.

Timberlake went a step further and wrote a long blog post to reflect on his experience. His evening at the ball is a great example of relationship management at its best. Not only did he form a connection with De Santis and her Battalion by keeping the night all about them, but he connected with his fans by taking the time to share this powerful experience.

Here are some of the highlights of the blog post:

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“I’m writing this out to all of you after attending an event that turned out to be one of the most moving evenings I’ve ever had...

To all of you that serve every day for us... Ensuring our freedom, I say: My deepest gratitude to you. I’ve met so many of my heroes ... From Michael Jordan to Michael Jackson. And, nothing makes me feel more honor and pride than when I get to meet one of you. Last night changed my life and I will never forget it.

To people like me who get to benefit from this type of person ... One with character and courage. With strength and bravery. With humility and honor ... I say: Send your thanks. Do it however you can... They won’t take it for granted and they won’t forget it.

Thank you Corporal Kelsey DeSantis. Thank you for inviting me. And, thank you for being my hero.”

People tend to overcomplicate what it takes to manage a relationship effectively. Often times, it’s the simplest gestures that make the biggest impact. When you care—show it. That’s all that Justin Timberlake did.

EQ Moment #1:

Gabrielle Giffords Returns to Congress

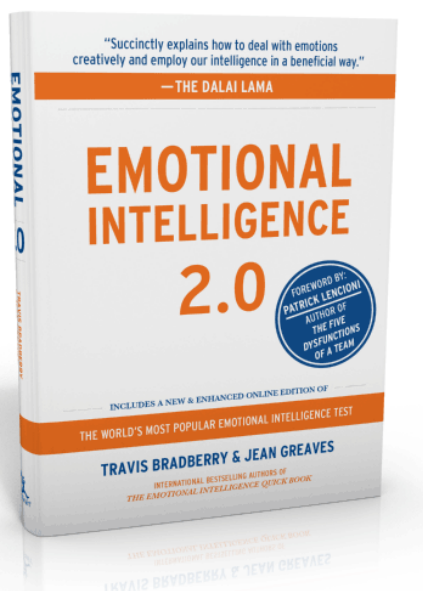
When Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head outside a grocery store in her home state on January 8th of this year, it shocked and saddened the country. Giffords was attending a “Congress on Your Corner” event, and the gunman wounded 19 people (killing six of them) in his attempt to assassinate her. The media reported that any potential for Giffords’s recovery was unknown and unlikely, as the bullet passed all the way through her brain from front to back.

Giffords’s odds-defying recovery tops our list for what it teaches us about brain plasticity and emotional intelligence. The brain is truly an amazing and flexible organ. Whereas the amount

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of tissue damage the bullet created would cause most organs to fail, Giffords's brain routed new connections that enabled her recovery. By mid-January, just a week after the accident, she began physical therapy where she was able to sit up and move her legs on command. By April, her condition had improved considerably. She could walk with supervision and write, read, and speak in short phrases. As time passed, at first with considerable effort, she began to communicate in complex phrases.

As August approached, the country was in crisis over a failure to raise the debt limit ceiling. Recognizing the potential economic catastrophe that would likely result from a failure to raise the ceiling, and the importance of her vote as a congresswoman, Giffords returned to Congress to cast her vote. This move, and the public appearances that followed, demonstrated immense courage. Anyone who has experienced a life-threatening episode like Giffords knows how traumatic such incidents are and how difficult it can be to return to a similar setting. Paralyzing fear, panic attacks, and other emotional hijackings are common. Giffords placed the good of the country ahead of her own fears and returned to the public eye. For this, she earns the top position on our list.



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