

# A Perspective on Emotional Intelligence and the Origins of Social and Emotional Learning

By David Levine

In the mid 1990s I was introduced to the term *emotional intelligence* (EI) through the work of psychologist, journalist, and author [Dr. Daniel Goleman](#). In his writing, Dr. Goleman describes EI as a “new kind of intelligence” that, if cultivated, could alter the emotional lives of people in profound and positive ways. He also theorizes that children in contemporary culture have lower EI because they have more opportunities for less social interaction. In his book [Working With Emotional Intelligence](#) (1998), Dr. Goleman writes that “emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.” (p. 317). When we think of the students in our classrooms, schools and homes, and our hope of impacting their social and emotional skills development in meaningful and positive ways, our initial step is to help them look inside at how they respond and act toward others; for example, how do they react in times of stress—when they feel jealous about a friend or are meeting new people—and then reflect on how they develop and manage all of their relationships.



“EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE REFERS TO THE CAPACITY FOR RECOGNIZING OUR OWN FEELINGS AND THOSE OF OTHERS, FOR MOTIVATING OURSELVES, AND MANAGING EMOTIONS WELL IN OURSELVES AND IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS.”  
- DANIEL GOLEMAN

In *Emotional Intelligence*, Dr. Goleman (1998) makes the point that schools and homes need to place as much emphasis on emotional intelligence as they do on academic achievement; that they are, in fact, directly related. Dr. Goleman highlights how specific schools integrate the research on emotional intelligence for a variety of *emotional literacy* programs and initiatives, ranging from creating a caring classroom community that is emotionally safe, to training students in conflict resolution and conflict management skills. On the heels of Dr. Goleman’s work, more researchers, educators, and curriculum designers began to embrace emotional intelligence as a critical component of the educational experience. This gave rise to the educational framework social and emotional learning (SEL), which was seen as an entry point toward the inclusion of emotional literacy as a critical component of life skills development.

In 1996, Dr. Goleman, along with six colleagues—[Linda Lantieri](#), [Mark Greenberg](#), [Eileen Rockfeller Growald](#), [David Sluyter](#), and [Tim Shriver](#)—co-founded a non-profit organization: [The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) and recruited Yale University Professor Roger Weissberg as its director. Since its inception, CASEL has been a leader in policy development, research implementation, and assessment, citing the impact that school-wide SEL programs have on student achievement, emotional well-being, and social-skills development.

## Our School of Belonging at Home Curriculum

As a response to the sudden need for quality home schooling experiences, we have been developing our SEL School of Belonging process to meet the needs of teachers, children and parents at this disorienting time.

The social and emotional learning experiences that we are providing, are presented as weekly learning bundles for grades K-8 (five bundles for each grade level over five weeks). Each week is presented as a series of micro-learning experiences that take approximately 10-25 minutes to complete (depending on the grade level).

These lessons have been created as a result of thousands of student workshops, programs, training initiatives and classroom experiences that I have provided over the course of my career dating back to 1984. My intention always, is to provide students with the opportunity for increased awareness of self and others through real-life reflective experiences. Many of the lessons utilize stories that have been told by students and teachers through the years during our social skills and friendship lessons.

Additionally, I have included recordings of songs which serve to support many of the lessons. Lyrics are provided for students to read along with as they listen.

*Following is an outline of the program*

### **1. Grades k-2 <https://schoolofbelonging.org/k-2/>**

- a. Friendship is coming
- b. Friendship train
- c. I feel happy
- d. Can you hear me?
- e. A quiet place

### **2. Grades 3-4 <https://schoolofbelonging.org/3-4/>**

- a. Let me in
- b. A quiet place
- c. Can you hear me?
- d. I feel happy
- e. A typical day

**3. Grades 5-6** <https://schoolofbelonging.org/5-6/>

- a. I lost a friend
- b. Let me in
- c. High road/low road
- d. Focusing: A quiet place
- e. Focused listening

**4. Grades 7-8** <https://schoolofbelonging.org/7-8/>

- a. Through the eyes of Howard Gray
- b. What do you see?
- c. Courage
- d. Emotional intelligence
- e. A quiet place

\*we are also working on designing additional weeks for each grade level in SEL instruction beyond the initial 5-week period