



Heart and Mind

# Emotional Intelligence



## INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

*A Christian Adult Basic Education Resource*



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*“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” — Colossians 3:12*

# Lesson 1: Self-Awareness

**Clear Lesson Focus:** This lesson is the foundation. Participants learn to notice their emotions, triggers, strengths, weaknesses, and spiritual needs before trying to change behavior or solve problems.

*A Biblical Perspective on Knowing My Heart, Triggers, Strengths, and Growth Areas*

| Category               | Lesson Details                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target Audience        | Adult learners in Christian basic adult education, compassion ministry, life skills, job readiness, GED®/HiSET®, ESL, recovery, reentry, mentoring, or discipleship settings.                    |
| Suggested Class Length | 90 to 120 minutes. For shorter classes, teach the opening, biblical foundation, one activity, and the handout.                                                                                   |
| Lesson Purpose         | To help participants recognize what is happening inside their own hearts and minds so they can respond to life, relationships, and responsibilities with greater wisdom and Christlike maturity. |
| Main Scripture         | Psalm 139:23–24 — “Search me, God, and know my heart...”                                                                                                                                         |
| Supporting Scriptures  | Proverbs 4:23; Psalm 51:10; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 12:9–10; Galatians 5:22–23.                                                                                                               |
| Materials Needed       | Bible, pens, participant handouts, whiteboard or chart paper, scenario cards, and optional sticky notes or highlighters.                                                                         |

## Learning Objectives

- Define self-awareness in simple language.
- Identify common triggers and emotional patterns.
- Recognize personal strengths as gifts that can serve others.
- Name one growth area without self-condemnation.
- Practice journaling and prayer as tools for self-awareness.

## Key Vocabulary for Adult Learners

| Key Word       | Simple Meaning                                                     |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| self-awareness | noticing what is happening inside me and how it affects my choices |
| trigger        | something that causes a strong emotional reaction                  |
| strength       | a gift, ability, or quality God can use                            |
| growth area    | a place where I need practice, wisdom, or change                   |
| next wise step | one action I can take that honors God and helps me move forward    |

## Opening Welcome

### Instructor Script

Self-awareness means learning to notice what is happening inside us and how it affects the people around us. It is not the same as criticizing ourselves. It is inviting God to show us the truth with love. When we understand our triggers, strengths, and growth areas, we can make wiser choices.

## Opening Prayer

Search our hearts, Lord. Show us what needs healing, strengthening, and surrender. Help us receive Your correction with hope, not shame. Amen.

## Instructor Teaching Script

### Complete Instructor Lesson Script

Begin by saying: Today we are starting with self-awareness because growth usually begins when we can honestly notice what is happening inside us. Self-awareness does not mean being hard on ourselves. It means asking God to help us see our hearts clearly so we can respond with wisdom instead of reacting out of fear, anger, shame, or exhaustion.

Invite participants to look at the main Scripture, Psalm 139:23-24. Say: David did not ask God to shame him; he asked God to search him and lead him. That is the spirit of this lesson. We are going to notice our emotions, triggers, strengths, and growth areas with hope. God already knows us fully, and He is gentle enough to help us grow.

Teach the key idea: A trigger is something that causes a strong reaction inside us. It may be a tone of voice, a facial expression, being ignored, being corrected, feeling rushed, or remembering a painful experience. A trigger does not excuse wrong behavior, but it helps explain why we may react quickly. Once we notice a trigger, we can pause, pray, and choose a better response.

Move to strengths. Say: Self-awareness is not only about weaknesses. God has placed strengths in each person here. Some of you are encouragers. Some are organized. Some are protective. Some are persistent. Some are good listeners. When we know our strengths, we can use them to serve our families, our workplaces, our churches, and our classmates.

Guide the HEART Self-Awareness Check. Say: Write the word HEART down the side of your page. H stands for Happened: What happened? E stands for Emotion: What emotion did I feel? A stands for Assumption: What did I assume? R stands for Response: What response did I choose? T stands for Truth: What truth does God want me to remember? Give learners several quiet minutes to write.

After quiet work, say: You do not have to share anything private. Share only what feels safe. Ask: Which part of HEART was easiest? Which part was hardest? Listen without correcting every answer. Affirm honest reflection and remind the class that noticing is progress.

Close the teaching portion by saying: This week, do not try to fix everything at once. Simply notice one trigger, one strength, and one next step. God often changes us through small, honest moments of surrender.

#### Teach

This lesson is practical and spiritual. Participants need to hear that growth is possible, that God cares about ordinary daily life, and that the skill being taught can be practiced in small steps. Use a calm, encouraging tone. Remind the class that no one is expected to share private details. The goal is to learn a biblical life skill and choose one next wise step.

## Key Teaching Points

| Teaching Point                   | Explanation                                                                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Self-awareness is a growth tool. | It helps us see patterns so we can respond instead of react.                               |
| Triggers are not excuses.        | They explain why something feels strong, but we are still responsible for our next choice. |
| Strengths matter.                | God gives gifts that can bless family, work, church, and community.                        |
| Growth is not shame.             | God corrects His children because He loves them and is forming Christ in them.             |

**Key Teaching Point**

The goal of this lesson is not perfection. The goal is growth: one biblical truth, one practical tool, and one next wise step.

**Biblical Foundation**

Read the main Scripture aloud: Psalm 139:23–24 — “Search me, God, and know my heart...”

**Instructor Script**

Ask participants to listen for one word or phrase that stands out. After reading, pause for a few seconds. Then ask, “What word or phrase did you notice?” This allows every participant to engage Scripture without feeling put on the spot.

| Bible Example                  | What Happened                                            | Lesson for Today                                              |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| David — Psalm 139 and Psalm 51 | David invited God to search and cleanse his heart.       | Spiritual maturity includes honest reflection and repentance. |
| Peter — Luke 22 and John 21    | Peter failed, wept, and was restored by Jesus.           | Failure can become a place of growth when brought to Christ.  |
| Moses — Exodus 4               | Moses named his weakness and fear.                       | God can work through weakness when we trust Him.              |
| Paul — 2 Corinthians 12        | Paul learned that weakness could display God’s strength. | Self-awareness includes seeing God’s grace in our limits.     |

**Bible Discussion Questions**

- What does this Scripture show us about God’s wisdom for everyday life?
- Which Bible example feels most connected to real life today?
- What does this passage teach us about the heart, the mouth, relationships, or responsibility?
- What is one way this truth could change a home, workplace, friendship, or classroom?
- What might make this truth difficult to practice?

**The HEART Self-Awareness Check**

| Step                                         | Practice                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| H — What happened?                           | Describe the situation simply without blame.                                        |
| E — What emotion did I feel?                 | Name the emotion: anger, fear, sadness, shame, embarrassment, loneliness, or worry. |
| A — What assumption did I make?              | Ask whether your first interpretation is the only possible one.                     |
| R — What response did I choose?              | Notice whether your response helped or hurt.                                        |
| T — What truth does God want me to remember? | Use Scripture, prayer, and wise counsel to guide your next step.                    |

**Instructor Script**

Walk through each step slowly. After each step, give a simple example from home, work, class, or digital communication. Then ask participants to choose the step that would be most helpful for them this week.

## Real-Life Examples for Discussion

| Setting                  | Example                                                                                                                               | Discussion Prompt                               |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Home                     | A family member responds with frustration during a busy evening. The learner can practice one part of The HEART Self-Awareness Check. | What would be a wise first sentence?            |
| Work                     | A supervisor or co-worker gives feedback in a way that feels discouraging.                                                            | How can the learner stay respectful and clear?  |
| Class or Ministry        | A group member has a different opinion or communication style.                                                                        | How can the group stay patient and productive?  |
| Digital Life             | A text, post, or message sounds harsh or confusing.                                                                                   | Why is it wise to pause before answering?       |
| Parenting or Family Care | A child, parent, sibling, or relative needs correction, help, or a boundary.                                                          | How can the learner combine love with firmness? |

## Class Activity: Trigger, Strength, and Growth Inventory

Purpose: Practice the lesson skill in a safe, structured way before participants try it in real life.

### Activity Instructions

Provide three columns: Triggers, Strengths, and Growth Areas. Ask participants to write privately. Then invite optional sharing of one strength and one growth step. Keep the focus hopeful and practical.

### Instructor Note

Allow participants to pass if an activity feels too personal. Offer options: write privately, talk with a partner, or discuss a fictional example.

## Scenario Practice

Use these scenarios for pairs, small groups, or whole-class discussion. Encourage participants to practice calm, respectful, specific words. Do not require acting if participants are uncomfortable; they may write a response instead.

- You feel angry when someone interrupts you.
- You shut down when corrected by a supervisor.
- You over-apologize even when you did nothing wrong.
- You become anxious when plans change suddenly.
- You avoid asking for help because you fear looking weak.

## Debrief Questions

- What made this situation difficult?
- What was the first wise step?
- What words could help keep the conversation calm?
- What boundary, apology, clarification, or request might be needed?
- When would this situation require outside help or a safer setting?

## Participant Handout: My Self-Awareness Journal Page

Directions: Complete this page privately. Share only what you feel comfortable sharing. The goal is to leave class with one practical step you can use this week.

**My Self-Awareness Journal Page**

- Today I noticed I felt: \_\_\_\_\_
- The situation was: \_\_\_\_\_
- My first reaction was: \_\_\_\_\_
- A wiser next step would be: \_\_\_\_\_
- A Scripture or truth I need to remember: \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Practice Sentences**

| Situation                     | Practice Sentence                                                                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| When I need time to think     | "I want to respond wisely. I need a moment before I answer."                       |
| When I need clarification     | "Can you help me understand what you meant by that?"                               |
| When I need to own my part    | "I can see that my words came across harshly. I am sorry."                         |
| When I need to make a request | "I would like us to talk about one change that would help."                        |
| When I need a boundary        | "I want to talk, but I cannot continue if we are yelling or insulting each other." |

**Quiz or Review Questions**

1. What does self-awareness mean?
2. Why is self-awareness not the same as self-condemnation?
3. Name one trigger and one healthy response.
4. How can prayer help us become more self-aware?
5. What is one strength God has given you?

**Weekly Challenge****This Week**

Keep a simple three-day self-awareness journal: situation, feeling, response, next wise step.

**Instructor Resource Bank for This Lesson**

- Emotion words list
- HEART journal sheet
- Strengths inventory
- Prayer reflection card

**Real-World Adult Education Practice****Emotion Journal and Reading for Meaning**

Learners read a short journal example, underline feeling words, and write one private reflection sentence.

| Part             | Directions / Notes                                                                                                                          |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Step 1           | Give learners an example: "I felt embarrassed when I was corrected. I wanted to quit, but I took a breath and asked what I should do next." |
| Step 2           | Ask learners to underline the feeling, circle the action, and write one wise next step.                                                     |
| Step 3           | Invite optional sharing of the wise next step only.                                                                                         |
| Skills Practiced | Reading emotion words, writing complete sentences, speaking safely, self-awareness.                                                         |

## Exit Ticket

| # | Learner Response                         |
|---|------------------------------------------|
| 1 | One word or idea I learned today: _____  |
| 2 | One skill I practiced today: _____       |
| 3 | One wise step I can try this week: _____ |

## Closing Encouragement

Growth happens one faithful step at a time. The Lord is patient with His children. Do not measure success by whether every problem is solved immediately. Measure growth by whether you are learning to pause, pray, tell the truth, receive wisdom, and take the next right step.

## Closing Prayer

Lord, help us practice what we learned. Give us courage to grow, humility to receive correction, and wisdom to live in a way that honors You. Amen.