

12 Phrases People With Low Emotional Intelligence Commonly Use Without Realizing

If you have ever unloaded your problems after a long day on someone whom you perceived to be a trusted friend, only to leave the conversation feeling dismissed and unheard, you may have been dealing with someone who did not have high emotional intelligence. Although your friends and family may have good intentions, people with low emotional intelligence often say twelve key phrases.

1. "Calm down."

This phrase is used in an attempt to soothe you, but in times of stress it often comes across as dismissive or patronizing. People who use this phrase are failing to acknowledge your feelings and the incident that led to your unhappiness. "Calm down" instead suggests that you are overreacting to the situation. People with higher emotional intelligence would likely validate the emotion first by saying something like, "I can see why you would be upset about this."

2. "You're overreacting."

Similar to the phrase "calm down," labeling your emotional response as an overreaction implies that your feelings are not valid or justified. This phrase instead trivializes your experience and suggests that you are feeling emotions that are too big for the situation at hand.

3. "It could be worse."

Worse is a relative term. While this phrase may be intended to provide perspective, it can actually diminish your feelings by comparing your situation to a hypothetical one. The truth is we will never fully know what it's like to live someone else's life, so it is impossible to compare our problems with theirs. What may seem like the end of the world to us could be a trivial event to someone else, and vice versa.

4. "That's not my problem."

We all go through ups and downs in life, but an unwillingness to see or acknowledge that others are struggling when you are not shows a lack of emotional intelligence. Hearing this statement from a friend can make them come off as cold and uncaring, signaling that they do not want to share in or understand your emotional burden. Sharing experiences and emotions is crucial in forming strong bonds, and an objection to listening or empathizing on the part of someone we consider to be a trusted confidante can leave us feeling distanced and alone.

5. "Just get over it."

Emotions come and go, and we all hit ups and downs at different times. Saying the phrase "just get over it" suggests that you should move on quickly from your feelings without processing or understanding them. These words also trivialize emotional experiences, implying that your circumstance and feelings are unimportant or should be easily resolved. Someone who expects you to "just get over it" does not have a high emotional intelligence.

6. "You're too sensitive."

When we hear this phrase, it often feels like a personal attack on our emotional makeup. It implies there is something inherently wrong with us for feeling so deeply. This phrase suggests that our emotions are a flaw, rather than acknowledging that we all experience emotions differently and in various cycles.

7. "I don't care."

This phrase directly communicates indifference or a lack of interest in the feelings, thoughts, or experiences of others. Hearing these words, especially from someone we perceive as a friend or loved one, can be deeply hurtful. It implies that the other person is unwilling to connect emotionally or show compassion when we need it most. On the flip side, when someone says they don't care about an event that is occurring in their own life, it usually signals that the person has put up a wall and is refusing to let us in. This is also a sign of not being emotionally intelligent.

8. "Don't take it personally."

Sometimes we can't help but take things personally. An unanswered invite, a rude comment, or a glare across the room may not be a direct reflection of how someone views us, but when these types of things happen to us it is only natural to have some hurt feelings. While your friend may be saying this phrase to soften the blow and make light of the situation, this phrase can feel dismissive of our feelings. Being told to not take something personally suggests that we should not be affected by whatever has clearly had an emotional impact on us, thereby minimizing our feelings.

9. "That's not what I meant, so you're wrong."

We have all misconstrued our words from time to time and inadvertently twisted a message we were trying to convey to someone else. Instead of simply trying to rephrase what was said, the person with low emotional intelligence will cover their tracks by trying to place the blame for the misunderstanding on the other person. Using this phrase belittles us and makes us second-guess what we heard and how we felt. It also prevents the speaker from admitting that they were wrong.

10. "Why can't you just be happy?"

This question oversimplifies complex emotions and shows impatience and an unwillingness to let us unpack our feelings. Hearing a friend or loved one say this phrase can be upsetting because it fails to acknowledge that emotions like sadness or frustration can be valid and necessary. This phrase also ignores the fact that we all process our emotions differently.

11. "I'm just being honest."

Honesty is important, but this phrase is often used as a shield for saying things bluntly or hurtfully. This phrase can sometimes be prefaced by the words, "No offense, but..." This line shows a lack of emotional intelligence for several reasons. Frequently, the person saying the phrase doesn't know how to tell us something tactfully. Additionally, the person who says this phrase to us usually can not handle their own type of honesty when it's thrown back at them.

12. "You shouldn't feel that way."

We are entitled to feel any way we want. It's how we act on those feelings that shows our own emotional intelligence. This phrase attempts to dictate our emotional reactions, implying that the speaker is superior and would not feel or react the same way we did. It also invalidates our emotions and can make us feel misunderstood and judged, instead of supported and heard.