

## **Emotional Intelligence: A Leader's Prime Asset**

- Marcia Hughes and James Terrell

Isn't it wonderful that one of our most important assets as a leader is something which we can improve? Emotional Intelligence (EI) predicts between 27% and 45% of job success, while IQ predicts only 1% to 20%, with the average being 6%. With a healthy combination of awareness and positive intention, we can improve our emotional smarts in the workplace - and in our personal lives. Research shows that one of the most valued assets sought in employees is common sense - and that's the stuff EI provides. The five key categories of emotional intelligence are: self-perception, self-expression, interpersonal, decision-making, and stress management. Each of these five areas includes three skills for fifteen skills at the heart of the model with an additional skill of happiness is added as an overall barometric indicator of EI. Thus 16 skills are measured to find the details of one's current emotional intelligence. An action plan can be developed once an individual has this information, supporting growth in any desired area. Performance in these skills drives effective performance and predicts job and life satisfaction.

Of the prominent EI measures available, the EQi (Emotional Quotient Inventory) has the greatest body of scientific data supporting that it is an accurate and reliable means of assessing emotional intelligence. Thus, it was the measure used by the Center for Creative Leadership in its research that documents the importance of emotional intelligence in leaders. They also found the reverse - that low EI is related to career derailment and difficulty in making changes. EI predicts 40% of the variance in effectiveness in teams. Clearly, this is an asset worth growing! Application of the EQi by the U.S. Air Force demonstrates the financial power of this information. The exceptionally high turnover rate of recruits was changed by finding that recruits who scored well in 5 skills on the EQi - assertiveness, empathy, happiness, self-awareness and problem solving, were 2.7 times more likely to succeed. By using this instrument to find those who are right for this position, the Air Force retention rate has been increased by 92%, saving an estimated \$2.7 million in 1998 dollars. Needless to say, when Congress got wind of this success they said "Do more!"