

Leading the Way to Emotionally Intelligent Teams

- Marcia Hughes & James Terrell

The world has changed. Once we thought that an MBA and wireless technology would secure the future. It won't. Reams of data and our work at Collaborative Growth all point to the need to work together in teams and that the strategy for sustained team success is emotional and social intelligence, or ESI, at the team level. The most influential individual in this dynamic is the team leader – and it can be a daunting job at times. That challenge is enhanced by good data, such as from the Team Emotional Social Intelligence® Survey (TESI®) for a 360 report by team members on the team functioning, an individual report on emotional intelligence skills from the EQ-i® or EQ 360® and on leadership performance from the LPI®. These 3 assessments bring a powerful level of data together to support strategic leadership by the team leader. Pre – post measurement of success also will support good data and focused leadership.

Leaders need to learn strategies for building their effectiveness in expanding the emotional and social intelligence of their teams. Discovering how to measure and strategically develop a team's skills enhances success and sustainability. A leader's biggest challenges in building ESI are to:

1. Develop him or herself personally and as a leader – be honest, hold oneself accountable
2. Learn to coach team members individually
3. Vision the team as a whole unit and lead / coach the whole team

Let's consider each of these.

First, individual coaching supported by EQ 360 and LPI reports will give the leader and his or her coach the opportunity to be sure strengths are recognized and used and that weaknesses are addressed. Emotional and social intelligence is built on recognition of core skills that lead to success in meeting the environmental challenges that face a leader in every part of life. The key term is skills as these can be developed. If an area is important and the leader isn't good at the skill, he or she can enhance that skill if they truly want to. Making sustainable behavioral change takes time, attention and commitment. The pay-off is rich and a coach and good assessment data will be valuable support along the way.

Second, coaching individual team members can be a real stretch. By taking on the responsibility to be a team leader, the leader's challenge grew significantly from just working personally to coaching members of the team individually to support their best engagement and development opportunities. Many leaders come from fields such as engineering or sales that haven't included training in human development. If a leader is challenged with self-regard or optimism or empathy, for example, how can he or she effectively coach the team members in developing their own skills? The answer is that the leader must engage in building his or her own capacities and also seek training and coaching or mentoring on how to support the staff development. Their well-being and the organization's productivity are directly linked to the leader's guidance. The leader should keep focusing on learning to pass on skills he or she develops. Expanding communication skills will help the leader listen effectively and notice what is truly being requested. Consciously building his or her own skills will help the leader understand specific strategies to pass on. This is a continuous learning opportunity. If treated as a central way to enrich life for the leader and the staff, it can be fun and one of the best motivational strategies possible.

Third, vision the team as a whole unit and lead / coach the whole team to a unified sense of purposeful engagement. This means the leader needs to view the team in two ways – paying attention to the individual and to the team as a whole. By working with TESI® information, everyone gains a sense of what’s working and what needs to be strengthened. When the team as a whole experiences that the leader is seeing the team as a discrete operating system – and one that he or she can be proud of - the team will rise to the occasion. This visioning is a powerful invitation to develop a cohesive unit that operates with what we call Collaborative Intelligence™.

Building Skills with the TESI, EQ-i or EQ 360 and LPI

The scales of the three instruments we’ve discussed, the TESI, EQi and LPI, all complement one another. We see them fitting together as demonstrated by this table:

TESI®	EQ-i® or EQ 360®	LPI®
Identity	Self-regard Independence Interpersonal relationships	Model the way
Motivation	Optimism Assertiveness Self-actualization	Inspire a shared vision
Emotional Awareness	Emotional self-awareness Empathy Assertiveness	Enable others to act
Communication	Empathy Self-regard Emotional self-awareness	Model the way
Stress Tolerance	Stress tolerance Impulse control Self-actualization	Challenge the process
Conflict Resolution	Empathy Impulse control Self-actualization	Challenge the process
Positive Mood	Happiness Optimism	Encourage the heart