

## Wellbeing and Interpersonal Skills

- Marcia Hughes and James Terrell

The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen. —**Elisabeth Kübler-Ross**

Note: This is the third in a series of articles that explores the connections between the EQi 2.0 and wellbeing. Each article focuses on one of the 5 EQi composite areas or the Wellbeing Indicator, which includes the vital skill of happiness.

Interpersonal skills include three core skills according to the EQi 2.0: Interpersonal Relationships, Empathy and Social Responsibility. These three powerful skills are a part of the 16 skills resulting from rigorous research begun in the 1980's by Dr. Reuven Bar-On when he asked the question: "What differentiates people who are successful in responding to environmental demands from those who are not successful?". Emotional Intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that collectively establish how we respond to the many environmental demands placed on us. "Environmental" is a broad concept drawing on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual components of our lives.

The three

we create  
our  
the 5  
talk to

whole  
well we  
that of others  
imperative

be rooted in this domain. Humans are social beings; we need one another. And we create that value through connecting, caring and contributing.



interpersonal skills are foundational for our engagement in the world, they establish the way relationships, show others we care and invest in world. Remember the EQi 2.0 module presents composites and 16 skills in a circle, thus how we others is influenced by all of our EI (emotional intelligence) skills including impulse control and optimism. Social Intelligence is a vital part of our emotional intelligence spectrum. This reflects how connect with others to share our wisdom, listen to and nurture our souls with what matters. Whatever sense of purpose drives your engagement is going to be rooted in this domain. Humans are social beings; we need one another. And we create that value through connecting, caring and contributing.

Interpersonal Relationships is the skill through which we develop and maintain mutually satisfying relationships. We show up as effective team members, take time to remember what's important to one another and open up sufficiently so people think we're approachable. Today's social media opportunities can open and further our relationships or render them nearly trite. Pay attention to taking the time to connect in a way that support mutual depth in knowing and caring about one another. This is truly a key demonstration of quality over quantity.



Empathy carries so much power that you should expect to keep learning about it throughout your life. Teddy Roosevelt captured this power well saying: “No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care”. Empathy entails showing others you care. It impacts our wellbeing from every direction in part because reciprocity is a core to our human nature. If you’re kind to someone, it’s quite likely to be reciprocated. Plus, and often more importantly, you’re likely feel better about yourself. It feels good to be kind and to acknowledge others!

Social Responsibility shows up in so many ways. It can be contributing to your group at work, being active in your community, church or the non-profit you passionately care about. Social responsibility is demonstrated through your daily life in many ways – think about how your work impacts others and give yourself credit! Think of how you positively impact children – through parenting, being a great aunt or uncle, helping your community functions so it works for our children. We most often find that people don’t give themselves credit for all they contribute. Give yourself credit and your wellbeing will contribute!

*Emotional Intelligence skill development is a primary platform for developing our wellbeing.*

Wellbeing connects with emotional intelligence in indispensable ways. Our wellbeing is impacted daily by our engagements, our treatment of others, by how we talk with others and therefore, the response we elicit.

In their book [Wellbeing](#), Tom Rath and Jim Harter, discuss the five elements Gallup identified. They state:

When striving to improve our lives, we're quick to buy into programs that promise to help us make money, lose weight, or strengthen our relationships. While it might be easier to treat these critical areas in our lives as if they are independent, they're not. Gallup's comprehensive study of people in more than 150 countries revealed five universal, interconnected elements that shape our lives: Career Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing, Financial Wellbeing, Physical Wellbeing, and Community Wellbeing.

Their book is a great resource and is supported by excellent research. We recommend it. We also experience that they’re missing an important dimension of wellbeing and that can be stated as Faith or Belief in Something Bigger Than Ourselves. It can be expressed through religious practices, spirituality or numerous other ways such as building literacy, environmental activism and so on.

## **Empathy Skill Development**

Any skill can be too high or too low. If your empathy challenge is that you need to connect with others more and build your capacity to show you care, then you’ll want to



practice acknowledging and giving yourself permission to be vulnerable. If your empathy is so high you're burning out, you need to dial back how much time your care for others so self-care can expand.

Improve your ability to manage your empathy by:

1. To increase your empathy, use the formula "You feel \_\_\_ because \_\_\_." When you want to acknowledge what someone is communicating to you. Be welcoming if they change your statement – "It's not so much that I'm impatient, it's that I'm frustrated because they are missing an opportunity." To you impatient and frustrated may seem quite similar, but it matters to the other person and that's what matters. Meanwhile you're in a conversation that demonstrates you are actively listening and care.
2. If you find yourself taking care of others so much during the day so that your staff has all gone home and you're still trying to get your own work done, you're going to need to combine Empathy with Assertiveness and to learn to set boundaries. Experiment with blocking time for yourself on your calendar.

This series of articles connects the 5 composites and the wellbeing indicator of the EQi 2.0 with wellbeing. Your comments are always welcome! Check out our books, [Emotional Intelligence in Action, 2d Ed](#), which provides 4 or more exercises for growing each of the 16 EQi 2.0 skills and [The Emotionally Intelligent Team](#), which covers the 7 EI competencies teams need to be successful.