

## Wellbeing and Decision Making Skills

- Marcia Hughes and James Terrell

*Emotions play a role in decision making in many ways, both subtle and more apparent, practical and not so practical, all of which make emotions not merely a player in the process of reasoning, but an indispensable player.*

Antonio Damasio, Leading Neuroscientist

Note: This is the fourth 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.

Decision Making skills include three core skills according to the EQi 2.0: Problem Solving, Reality Testing and Impulse Control. 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. How well we respond to those pressures deeply impacts our wellbeing.

The three lives, solve how we in our have much that's module circle, thus (emotional optimism. Spectrum.



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decision making skills impact the way we guide our challenges at work, home and in our community, decide whether we need more of so many things lives. These skills guide us to know when we worked enough, spent enough money and so more. This is the heart of self-regulation and the heart of wellbeing. Remember the EQi 2.0 presents the 5 composites and 16 skills in a how we make decisions is influenced by all our EI intelligence) skills including impulse control and Social intelligence is a fundamental part of the EI

Our social engagements are influenced by how we make decisions. How much time we spend connecting to others, if we provide servant leadership, and how we manage our health are all rooted in decision making and impact our success in connecting with others. It impacts how we allocate time and resources in our lives to nurture our souls with what truly matters. Whatever imperative sense of purpose drives your engagement is going facilitated towards success by how you use the skills of this domain.

Problem Solving is the skill that checks out how we integrate emotional and other types of data. Emotional data naturally surfaces from the memories in the limbic system in our brain when it's time to make a decision. Effective problem solving takes that information into account together with all other types of information as we then make a choice. If we are often overwhelmed by this information when we need to make a decision, we aren't using this skill as well as would serve us. If we have learned strategies to block our awareness of our emotions, we may look like efficient decision



makers, however it'll be at the cost of ignoring often significant components of all relevant information.

Reality Testing is a way of checking out how good we are at keeping things in perspective. It's fundamental to setting boundaries so that we can enjoy work-life balance. Reality Testing helps us honestly answer questions such as do I really need to respond to work emails when I'm not at work or do I really need to stay late tonight and get that project done now? It helps us be objective and congruently set boundaries, so we protect other parts of our lives from work encroachment.

Impulse Control measures if we can resist or delay impulses to act when now isn't the right time to take a particular action. Impulse control is relevant as we make health decisions, such as what to eat or when to exercise. We also tap into impulse control to govern how we speak to someone, so we can respond to a challenge with empathy and start resolving whatever concern arises. Thus, it impacts the wellbeing aspects of health and relationships.

*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 decisions on what's worth our time, by our perspective on how much things matter and by our ability to choose wisely – self-regulate.

## **Impulse Control Skill Development**

Any skill can be too high or too low. If your impulse control challenge is that you need to dial your energy back, perhaps not talk over others so much or not drive as fast, you can check in with your value system. First, begin to notice when you are or are about to exceed your preferred level of action. Awareness is vital, without it you can't make new choices. With that awareness, now decide what do I really want today. Be careful of thinking you'll make better choices tomorrow as it may never come. If your impulse control is so high that you never take any risks, then choose one or two relatively easy areas where you can take a small risk. Take these types of risks at least once a day for several days of the week. Observe and write a few notes in the evening. How did it go? Where the risks scary or ok? This process can help you loosen up on your decisions so you have more flexibility to take on new actions.

Neuroscientists are continuing to find powerful results from meditation, or sitting in silence, for 5 minutes a day. This is a time of no activity – not even twitching. As Dr. McGonigal has pointed out, with this power, the brain gets better, not just at meditating, but also with attention, focus, stress management and self-awareness.



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.