



## Social Intelligence Strengths

*Marcia Hughes & James Terrell*

**Social Intelligence (SI)** is gaining considerable play in today's conversations but what is it? Does it matter to you, your team, your organization? Yes! Social Intelligence is measured by your ability to persuade, influence, connect – in short to lead a meaningful life connecting with others and applying your skills to match your values. Social Intelligence matters from a soft skill, hard skill and every kind of skill perspective! Prove it you say? Here goes ....

Defining Social Intelligence is tricky as it encompasses so much of what we express, of our world view, and our interpersonal values. Yet we need a definition so that we (Marcia and James as the authors and you the reader) can operate from a similar perspective as we consider the concept of Social Intelligence. SI is definitely about people skills. And it's much bigger as it encompasses our capacity to understand and exude our values in all dimensions of living.

Our definition is inclusive:

*Social Intelligence is the capacity to understand and respond effectively to the emotions, social cues and needs of others in a way that furthers our own values and demonstrates respect for others at the individual, team, organizational and global levels.*

Thorndike originally coined the term Social Intelligence in 1920 and was referring to a person's ability to understand and manage other people and to engage in adaptive social interactions.

Kihlstrom and Cantor recently clarified the SI discussion by stating; "Social behavior is intelligent – mediated by cognitive processes of perception, memory, reasoning and problem solving, rather than being mediated by innate reflexes, conditioned responses evolved genetic programs, and the like." ([Kihlstrom/Cantor: Social Intelligence](#) p 14). They argue that differences in social knowledge causes differences in social behavior; thus they state the question is not how much SI one has but what SI an individual possesses. We are impressed with their clarifications, yet believe there are dimensions of both *how much and what* that are relevant as individuals build their capacities.

Goleman and Boyatzis add a powerful new dimension to the understanding of SI with their article, "Social Intelligence and the Biology of Leadership," HBR, Spring 2011. They say that Social Intelligence is a relationship based construct for assessing leadership and define SI as "a set of interpersonal competencies built on specific neural circuits (and related endocrine systems) that inspire others to be effective." We highly recommend this informative article. The authors discuss three critical aspects of brain future article we'll discuss social intelligence as supported by individual assessments such as the EQi 2.0 and the ESCI.



## Team Emotional and Social Intelligence (TESI)

The TESI Survey was developed specifically to measure social, as well as emotional, intelligence. There's no way to have effective team action without consistently tapping into social intelligence skills. Social intelligence is demonstrated through behaviors such as:

1. Paying attention to and responding to the needs of others
2. Building positive mood
3. Managing one's own impulsive behavior in order to engage with others
4. Making decisions that integrate objective facts with social needs and consequences
5. And much more

The seven core team skills are based on demonstrable application of emotional intelligence as the following scale review demonstrates:

**Team Identity** is a reflection of team members bonding with one another. Loyalty is strengthened with this skill as team members feel pride in the team. Team identity is furthered when members understand roles and responsibilities and are committed to the purpose for which the team exists.

**Motivation** calls on team members having a common reason to move forward in tandem and results in the team getting their work done, exhibiting creativity, and acting with energy because they feel and act in consort with one another.

**Emotional Awareness** must always begin with personal awareness at the individual level. To be effective in a team the members then add awareness of others to their individual knowledge. This knowledge includes awareness and responsiveness to verbal and non-verbal communications. Goleman and Boyatzis make a powerful statement that should guide all consultants who are seeking to build ESI skills. They emphasize that being good leaders, and we'll add effective teammates, is less about mastering situations or developing specific skill sets and more about leveraging the interconnectedness between one's individual brain and the brains of the others they are engaging with. This is accomplished in large part through emotional awareness.

**Communication** is where the "rubber meets the road" for the team. Application of this skill demonstrates how well teammates use their emotional awareness, their motivation for success and other skills to engage effectively. The social intelligence aspects of integrating empathy, listening, and responding to the whole message communicated by teammates will directly influence the quality and sustainability of their productivity. Communication skills are demonstrated with SI when teammates practice their knowledge that the way in which a message is delivered is often more important and influential than the specific message itself.

**Stress Tolerance** is demonstrated through using Social Intelligence by teammates when they support one another in practicing work life balance. It's shown when team members ask one another about how their families or community projects or other personal parts of their lives are going. Stress tolerance is demonstrated when team members delay a project delivery due date because they notice that meeting a particular deadline could cost too much for certain members of the team. Social Intelligence is a combination of noticing how others are feeling and why and then responding.



**Conflict Resolution** is the most complex of all the seven skills as it requires the application of divergent thinking by individual teammates as they exercise patience and willingness to perceive the points of view of others and then participate as a whole group to develop an answer all will embrace. When team members resolve problems collaboratively they are applying complex processes of systemic social intelligence. They are concurrently paying attention to how they feel, how others feel, what objective data demonstrates and many other factors as they work together to find an answer that goes beyond their individual needs.

**Positive Mood** can be a point of early power for a team. Positive moods are contagious so when a team leader and team members have the skill to foster positive feelings in one another and toward the team mission, they will be building success by using their social intelligence.

From Emotional Intelligence to Collaborative Intelligence™  
A Team Model



Copyright © 2007, Collaborative Growth® LLC All Rights Reserved.

A team that uses these seven skills well is using many social intelligence skills and demonstrates the Collaborative Growth Team Model, of these seven skills resulting in the benefits of better decisions, increased loyalty, integrated empathy and the much sought after trust result. As the target in the inner circle demonstrates, high functioning teams ultimately have the core power of operating with emotional and social well-being for the team, which results in sustainable productivity for the team and the organization.