

Motivation in the Midst of Today's Challenges

- Marcia Hughes & James Terrell

What moves the world? Oil? Money? Technology? These are certainly some of the levers that sometimes cause conditions in our world to change very significantly, but in fact they are only tools. What engages these tools to affect our life conditions -- for better or for worse -- are the decisions of individual human beings. More and more people are finding that: Some of the most critical steps in making good decisions are emotional!

How many times have you ever heard: "This is a critical decision everyone, let's make sure it's emotional!" More likely than not, you've actually heard the reverse. But in a world that only grows more complex daily we need to be accessing the full range of our decision-making skills more consciously, and that takes emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence, or better yet, emotional and social *effectiveness*, is based on the set of behavioral skills that enables us to consistently engage, influence and motivate ourselves and one another. Leaders and teams with high emotional and social effectiveness (ESE) are more successful and more resilient than those who are only technically qualified. ESE is based on such competencies as respecting yourself, persistently working to achieve your full potential, valuing and motivating others, and engaging creatively when conflict happens. Best of all, because emotional behavior is learned, we can learn new, more effective skills, eliminate ones that just aren't working, and learn to do the things we already do well even better!

Emotional Intelligence is responsible for 27% to 45% of workplace success. One of the strengths of working with emotional intelligence is that the return on investment can be measured. The Center for Creative Leadership found the primary causes of derailment in executives involve deficits in emotional competence. Especially:

1. Difficulty in handling change
2. Not being able to work well in a team
3. Poor interpersonal relations

And every one of these can be improved with ESE coaching and team building.

We have only begun to hear about emotional intelligence because it took time to clearly identify all the components that make up this aspect of human communication and accurately measure it. Now organizations and their leaders have become increasingly open to this information, *and* there are several reliable and scientifically validated assessments of these skills. In developing the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory® (EQ-i), Dr. Reuven Bar-On drew back the curtains of mumbo-jumbo and warm fuzzies to reveal a precisely calibrated human emotional control panel. There are fifteen dials and people can learn how to adjust them for the balance that is optimal for that individual. For example, assertiveness is just one expression of human emotion -- what makes it a skill is being able to consistently use the right amount in the right situation and in the right combination with other skills such as empathy.



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The TESI® (Team Emotional and Social Intelligence® Survey) measures how effectively the members of a team are coordinating their emotional skills in such critical areas as conflict resolution, motivation, and managing stress. For teams where competition is misaligned and trust is low, profits will be haphazard and minimal at best. For teams where members have learned to communicate about how projects, outcomes and work styles feel and motivate them, performance and productivity soar!

It was these kinds of evidence that prompted this ringing endorsement from the Harvard Business Review in 2003:

In hard times, the soft stuff often goes away. But emotional intelligence, it turns out, isn't so soft. If emotional obliviousness jeopardizes your ability to perform, fend off aggressors, or be compassionate in a crisis, no amount of attention to the bottom line will protect your career. Emotional intelligence isn't a luxury you can dispense with in tough times. It's a basic tool that, deployed with finesse, is the key to professional success.

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