

PART ONE

THE VALUE OF  
EMOTIONAL AND  
SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE  
FOR YOUR TEAM



## CHAPTER ONE

# WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS SO VALUABLE FOR TEAMS

*All the forces in the world are not as powerful as an  
idea whose time has come.*

VICTOR HUGO

In a compelling *Grey's Anatomy* vignette, Dr. Addison Shepherd, a renowned obstetrician, led multiple teams of doctors as she performed a C-section to deliver premature quintuplets. High-risk pregnancy was putting it mildly, so teams of surgeons were lined up before the births. When it was time, pagers went off all over the hospital, in doctors' homes, on the freeway, wherever the surgical teams were. Many complications were identified before the births. One baby had heart trouble, so Dr. Preston Burke, the heart specialist, was present with his team, whose members were ready to receive the baby immediately and begin what they hoped would be lifesaving work. One had a brain injury, so Dr. Derek Shepherd, the brain surgeon, and his team were ready to roll the minute the tiny infant was handed over. They all worked as a powerfully synchronous team. The whole Surgery Department worked on keeping those babies alive. It looked like most might make it; one didn't.

As intern Meredith Grey was seeking to comfort the new mother, she had a revelation. She hurried to the babies, with the

mother trailing her. Meredith picked up an infant who was failing to thrive and put her in the incubator with a sibling, snuggling them right up tight. She told the mother that twins were often put together in an incubator to promote survival: after all, they'd been close together for nine months, and they still needed each other.

Teams abound in this story—the parents, ready to take on and raise these blessed beings, and their siblings ready to welcome them home. The surgery department as a whole was a team at its best, and each specialist team in the Surgery Department was its own impressive team. The most profound team of all was the quintuplets, helping keep one another alive.

When someone you love is having surgery, you want the highest-performing team you can find. Nothing else matters to you but getting the best outcome. Though you may not realize it, you want more than state-of-the-art equipment, evidenced-based best practices, and the most highly trained and clinically competent surgical team you can access. You want a team that hums along like a well-oiled machine. You want a team that can handle pressure. You want a team that can adapt to a rapidly changing environment. You want a team that is abundantly resourceful and resilient. You want a team that is emotionally and socially intelligent.

It's not just surgical teams that need to possess emotional and social intelligence (ESI); all the teams you're on need it if they want to make it anywhere beyond mediocre performance in this global economy, where information travels at the speed of light. In fact, the entire world could use more of it! Almost every part of our daily experience is related to how well teams function. Whether a product is available online or on a shelf is contingent on a host of teams operating well. That backlog in the checkout line at the grocery store is related to team functionality. Getting projects completed on time and on budget, leading innovation in your industry, being perceived as an organizational thought leader, and offering top-notch products and services that meet the demands of your particular marketplace all come down to team functionality.

Fortunately, ESI is based on skills that any team can develop and refine. This creates an enormous opportunity to improve team functioning. No matter how well or poorly your team is

operating, there's more potential. There is no glass ceiling on team performance—the sky's the limit!

## SIGNIFICANT PERKS FOR TEAMS AND THEIR MEMBERS

A team that functions with healthy emotional and social intelligence experiences a multitude of benefits. Decades of work with organizations and teams repeatedly demonstrate that the relationships between team members affect everyone's productivity and happiness. There's an old saying that you may have heard: "If Mama ain't happy, nobody's happy." Well, the same is true for team members: if one team member isn't happy, everyone is negatively affected. A team with high ESI is happier all around. We make these observations based on our decades of work with teams and the organizational environments they live in. Furthermore, a growing body of research has demonstrated the value of ESI teams. These are some of the benefits:

- Individuals on the team are happier, more satisfied, more creative, and more productive.
- They enjoy working with their team, which reduces defensiveness, opens their thinking capacity, and facilitates creativity. In short, the creative grow even more creative. That's powerful—more solutions drive more innovation!
- They persevere when tackling challenging tasks and complete them when other teams fail. Nothing breeds success like success.
- All of this yields better productivity. That's money in the bank. Return on investment. Bang for the buck.
- For the individuals on such teams, these benefits result in improved emotional well-being and better odds that they'll maintain a good work-life balance.
- The coworkers, friends, and families of people working on ESI teams get an added perk: they have more relaxed, playful, productive, and enjoyable relationships with that team member.
- Organizations also clearly benefit when individuals and teams are happier and more creative. Retention, engagement, and productivity all rise.

- Being happier is related to being healthier, which translates into tangential savings because fewer people call in sick and health insurance costs are mitigated.
- Humanity as a whole benefits when people work well together. Collaborative efforts achieve more efficient resource use and enhance communication, which reduces conflict and supports peace and well-being right here, where you and those you love live.

## WHAT IS A TEAM?

On the news and in conversation, people are always referring to teams: teams of scientists, search and rescue teams, teams of engineers, sports teams, surgical teams, implementation teams, and the ever-popular “teams of experts.” Who knows if anyone is really talking about the same thing! The dictionary defines a team as “a number of persons associated together in work or activity,” such as a number of persons competing in sports or a group of workers completing a set of operations or “a group of specialists or scientists functioning as a collaborative unit.” That broad definition can be better understood when the concept of a team is broken down into key aspects. If your team can clearly define the functions listed here, you have a team. If not, you probably have a group or at best a partly dysfunctional team.

- *Purpose.* A team needs a purpose to exist. It can be stated as the problem to be solved or the result to be achieved. Reportedly, one of the best-selling personal books in recent years is *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren (2002). People crave purpose, and that’s true whether we’re looking at our personal or our professional lives. Teams have the same core need; they want to know that they are making a difference, that what they do matters in some way. That’s not possible without having a specific mission, a reason to be. The lack of a defined purpose is one of the most likely sources of team dysfunction.
- *Productivity.* A team needs feedback that is clear and useful and needs to know that the work it is doing contributes to the goals of the organization in a meaningful way. Pride comes from a sense of productivity, which is essential fuel for the next

output. A team that feels that it never gets anything done or that the work it does is irrelevant will operate from a discouraged and disempowered space. That's the start of a downward spiral. The discouragement spins the team downward, which eventually leads to poorer results, less creativity, increased disengagement, and higher turnover. There's enough of that already. One of the highest costs organizations pay on health insurance claims is for depression.

- *Numbers.* Two or more people make up a team. Some people argue that a duo is simply a pair and not a team. However, it takes only two to tango, which is a passionate display of teamwork when danced well. In any situation in which individuals are called on to work together and solve problems, the skills and disciplines of collaboration are required, and you have the makings of a team.
- *Longevity.* There is no standard length of time for a team to exist; high-functioning teams last as long as they are needed and not a moment longer. Some teams come together for a very brief moment in time to perform a discrete task that is time-sensitive, and when the task is done, the team is disbanded. Such teams are referred to as just-in-time teams.

One of the ultimate just-in-time teams was born on April 13, 1970, when the number two oxygen tank exploded on Apollo 13, crippling the service module as it lost oxygen and electrical power. Over 200,000 nautical miles from Earth, the crew had to use the lunar module as a lifeboat for most of the flight. It was equipped to sustain two people for two days, yet there were three crew members who faced a four-day trip back to Earth, if they made it all.

The situation was dire. They had only ten hours' worth of power available from the command module. The fuel had to be reserved for the approach and reentry to Earth's atmosphere, and the module had the heat shield essential to keeping the astronauts safe during reentry.

It was an epic fight for survival in an extremely hostile environment. The spacecraft's successful return to Earth was made possible by extraordinary teamwork and ingenuity, led by NASA's chief flight director, Gene Kranz, whose motto was "Failure is not an option." He assembled every available bit of talent he

could find. Manufacturers of the main Apollo systems sent their top specialists immediately. Simulators, computer models, and experts were linked into a network and worked furiously to figure out a way to keep the astronauts alive and to get them home. It was an unprecedented display of tenacity, ingenuity, and perseverance, with rigorous attention to every tiny detail, that allowed them to prevail against all odds, just in time. Every single maneuver was tested in the simulators; every calculation was verified with computers.

Ultimately, Apollo 13 had the most accurate landing in the history of manned flight. The mission operations team and the astronauts were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their heroic actions.

Far less dramatic than the team that came together to prevent the Apollo 13 disaster, yet quite important in an organization's daily life, are the typical senior teams found in most companies. These are composed of the top leaders in the organization and will likely exist as long as the organization exists, although the members of the team will change. As your teams develop more of their ESI skills, they are more likely to function with some of the same focus and commitment to success as the Apollo team or the daily success of an effective executive team.

- *Accountability.* This essential characteristic is closely linked with purpose and productivity. The team must be routinely held accountable. Although accountability is usually managed by a leader on the team or a manager at a higher organizational level, it can be done by the team itself, though that takes considerable commitment to the team's purpose. Accountability functions to keep the team on target, committed to quality, and meeting its objectives. A team with no accountability is an amorphous group, acting more like a bunch of cells swimming around in a petri dish than a single organism. With accountability, you have the opportunity for a high-performing, productive, well-integrated team.
- *Power.* Power in a team is found in two primary forms—authority and influence. Authority is the direct ability to mandate action: it allows the leader to require deadlines, adjust project priorities, and hire and fire employees. Influence is much



more subtle and when used with elegance is almost certain to be more effective. The dictionary defines influence as “producing an effect without apparent exertion of tangible force or direct exercise of command and often without deliberate effort or intent.” This is the most potent way to teach, guide, and coach people. It’s often the most effective way to move someone from no to yes. Effective use of authority and influence are primary tools in developing the seven skills of emotional and social intelligence in teams.

In assessing your team’s power, the questions to ask are who uses authority and influence and how well are those forms of power wielded. Ideally, the leader has direct power and uses it well. However, our experience has shown that there are many situations where an individual is appointed to lead a team but is given no direct power or authority. A team leader who doesn’t perform the personnel evaluations for the team members and has no ability to provide meaningful, concrete rewards or consequences for team behavior must be adept at using influence to propel the team to success.

## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Simply put, emotional and social intelligence reflects the ability to recognize and manage your own emotions and to recognize and respond effectively to the emotions of others. It includes understanding your social community from the “big picture” point of view and the ability to direct change and to adapt to that change.

*Emotional intelligence* (EI) or *emotional quotient* (EQ) are terms used interchangeably, so you can interpret them as referring to the same concept. ESI adds the vital dimension of *social intelligence*, which the psychologist Edward Thorndike (1920) referred to as the ability to function successfully in interpersonal or social situations. Thorndike’s work in the 1920s has been built on by many in the EI world, especially Reuven Bar-On and Daniel Goleman.

Bar-On (2005) outlined the history of the development of ESI and helped define social intelligence when he wrote that “the early definitions of social intelligence influenced the way *emotional*

*intelligence* was later conceptualized. Contemporary theorists like Peter Salovey and John Mayer originally viewed emotional intelligence as part of social intelligence (1990, p. 189), which suggests that both concepts are related and may, in all likelihood, represent interrelated components of the same construct” (p. 1).

While there are many definitions of emotional intelligence in circulation, we have found only one research-based approach that incorporates both emotional and social intelligence in a family of EQ measures. Reuven Bar-On, creator of the Emotional Quotient Inventory® (EQ-i) (1997), emphasizes that one must consider both emotional and social intelligence together. In a 2005 paper describing his model, Bar-On states that “emotional-social intelligence is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands” (p. 3).

The fundamental tenets of ESI that influence the efficacy of teams are the following:

1. The ability to understand your own emotions—knowing what you feel and why you feel that way
2. The ability to use your emotions wisely, knowing how to manage and express them intentionally
3. The ability to understand and respect the emotions of others
4. The ability to respond to, influence, and interact with the emotions of others

These four components are always exercised in a social environment, which means that while they have a significant impact on individuals, the impact is even greater for teams. Hence these two additional tenets apply:

5. The ability to recognize that your emotions are applied in a social context, a complex system of relationships that requires sensitivity and tempered responses
6. The awareness that all ESI components come together to influence your ability to respond to and work with change, which is a constant dynamic in the environment

## SHOULD WE MEASURE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

One of the first choices when working with EI or ESI and your team is whether to use an assessment to measure emotional intelligence. Of course, teams are made up of individuals. There is value in assessing both individual ESI and team ESI. The three most popular assessments used with individuals are the Bar-On EQ-i®, Daniel Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)®. Our own Team Emotional and Social Intelligence Survey (TESI™) works in a complementary manner with each of them.

Whether a team uses a measure or not, the concepts that are central to the most respected instruments are similar and generally accepted in the field. Cherniss (2004) discusses the three most thoroughly researched and popular models and finds many similarities as well as important differences among them. We use primarily the Bar-On EQ-i when working with individuals, although we respect all three. The EQ-i includes five scales and fifteen competencies, and information on these skills can be found in Bar-On's *Technical Manual* (1997). Each of these measures is described in our book *Emotional Intelligence in Action* (Hughes, Patterson, and Terrell, 2005).

The Bar-On EQ-i offers reports to clients that are clear, practical, and excellent as a resource for achieving the sustainable change they are seeking. Also available with the EQ-i is a report that presents a group picture based on a calculation combining the reports of the individual team members. The group report can be combined with our Collaborative Growth Team ESI Survey, which is expressly designed to assess the ESI skills of teams. Based on our decades of research and consulting, we developed this instrument to facilitate team interaction by considering team members' assessments of how the team uses the seven ESI skills. This creates a team 360-degree survey and establishes a well-focused beginning for in-depth team development. We've discovered that when using a combination of instruments, teams tend to generate their own informed and well-targeted strategic discussions. Resistance disappears as team members

recognize the validity of each topic and how the skills fit together to affect the experience of being a team.

We find that we can help teams successfully develop their ESI whether we use an assessment or not, although an assessment allows us to more specifically, more quickly, and more thoroughly identify the needs of our clients and choose the focus of team interventions with more precision. For example, we often work with teams in conflict. A typical profile of such a team might show that it is challenged in using communication skills and appropriate conflict resolution tactics on our Team ESI Survey. Although we aren't surprised, this information is often an eye opener for the team. Presenting this feedback, based on the participants' own observations, brings immediate credibility and facilitates commitment, leaving the team more willing to dig in and explore team members' current interactions and skills. This awareness opens possibilities of team improvement, which liberates productivity, inspires team members, and empowers them to become a high-performing, high-flying team that meets its objectives.

## WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?

*Some managers are uncomfortable with  
expressing emotion about their dreams,  
but it's the passion and emotion that will attract  
and motivate others.*

JIM COLLINS AND JERRY PORRAS

Emotion is what guides human choices and inspires behavior, because emotion is the meter that indicates how good you feel about something. It motivates you to act—either so you can stay feeling good or so you can stop feeling bad and start feeling better. It originates from physical sensations that result from the body's innate ability to register and distinguish between pain and pleasure. In this sense, emotion is a direct response that tells you which way to move, and for humans, there are only three or four possibilities. The two fundamental moves are *toward* and *away from*. It's pretty simple: we move toward that which we associate

with pleasure, and we move away from that which we associate with pain. This explains why chocolate often prevails over peas! It may also explain why you try to keep your boss happy, why you respond warmly when your life partner brings you flowers or puts the dishes away without being asked, why you use a potholder, why kids disappear when their parents argue, and why you screen your phone calls!

The third move we can make is *against*. When we, as humans, feel that our efforts to move *toward* have been blocked or when we have been threatened (forced to move *away*), we can move *against* the threat or obstacle. This assertion of force is intended to eliminate the obstacle that stops our progress or to eradicate a threat so we can feel safe again.

There is also a fourth option: simply to *stop*, to be still and not move at all. Animals employ this tactic as a survival skill. For example, a rabbit will freeze in its tracks instinctively to avoid being detected by a predator. Humans can learn a thing or two from all creatures, great and small. The option to stop isn't limited to a biological response. It can be used intentionally by individuals who have developed a high degree of emotional intelligence, enabling them to control automatic physiological responses and knee-jerk reactions that come with an emotional experience. One of the best practices to gain competency in this skill has proved to be meditation. Meditation teaches you to direct the focus of your attention away from impulses that are fearful (move away), acquisitive (move toward), or angry (move against) and center it in a neutral, calming rhythm like breathing.

In addition to functioning as directives to act, emotions can function as evaluative responses. Responding requires energy, and while some humans seem to have nearly limitless energy, most of us do not. If we desire something strongly that will not be easy to obtain, it is helpful to experience the emotions of hope, longing, and determination, because those emotions can sustain the efforts necessary to persevere and achieve the desired outcome. However, if we had been hopeful and determined and worked doggedly for a long time without garnering success, those emotions might transform into hopelessness and discouragement. These emotions can be a signal to quit wasting energy on an effort to change something that we simply cannot change.

The truth is that *emotions* are what *motivate* us to action; in fact, both words share the same Latin root, *emovare*, which means “move.”

Another term closely associated with the term *emotions* is *affect*. In humans, there is a constant interplay among three inter-related experiences: our basic temperament or disposition, our emotions, and our mood. Reber (1985) presents an interesting picture as he seeks to define emotions in *The Dictionary of Psychology*. Emotions, he says, are “normally acute in that they are relatively short-lived levels of arousal and desires to act,” such as fear, joy, and disgust, and they “are regarded as intensely experienced states” (p. 235). It turns out that much of this definition is supported by a consensus understanding based on its use in a particular context. To achieve the full potential of working with a team, it helps to have the members clarify what they mean when they talk about emotions. Moods are somewhat different; they are more persistent emotional states and generally come and go, depending on how an individual has learned to interpret specific circumstances and changes in the environment.

Physiologically, emotions appear to accompany specific chemicals that circulate throughout the body conveying the critical information about which way to move, how hard, and how fast. Did you know that a biochemist’s analysis can reveal whether tears were cried out of joy or out of sorrow? It’s truly remarkable to think how complex the human heart, mind, and body are; that tears of joy are chemically different from tears of sorrow gives new meaning to the notion that the eyes are the window to the soul.

Candace Pert, an internationally recognized pharmacologist, has made fascinating discoveries and observations about emotions. She was the neuroscientist at the National Institute for Mental Health whose work led to the discovery of the opiate receptor and our understanding of how chemicals enter our body at the cellular level and achieve their effect. Her book *The Molecules of Emotion* (1997) is a delightfully educational story about the discovery and function of neuropeptides. These are the long-chain amino acids that circulate throughout our bodies, serving as “communicator molecules” delivering critical information about how we feel to and from such centers as the heart, brain, and gut. Pert asserts that emotions are the “glue” that holds our cells together and that they are the magical point of interface and transformation where

energy becomes information. But our understanding of emotion has not always been so magical and unifying.

The dictionary defines emotion in several ways, including as (1) a physical or social agitation, disturbance, or tumultuous movement and (2) turmoil or agitation in feeling or sensibility. With those kinds of definitions, it is no wonder that organizations used to treat emotions like muddy shoes, expecting employees to “leave them at the door.” It’s been a slow evolution as organizations have realized that not only is that impossible but it’s also detrimental. Dismiss the sorrow and the angst, and out go the joy and passion that play such a critical role in employee engagement and innovation.

Because emotions occur in response to sensations, we like to say that emotions are about what we touch—and not just what we touch with our fingers or our skin but what we touch with our eyes and ears and with our taste buds and with the olfactory nerves in our nose. Emotions are how we feel about what we touch with our imagination, from the dread of a loud, scary noise in the dark to those fifteen minutes of fame when you’re at the top of your game and everyone else gets to see.

A highly colorful and interesting presentation of the relationship between emotions is known as the Plutchik model. Robert Plutchik (2001), a psychologist who served at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and developed a psychoevolutionary theory of emotion, presents a color wheel that demonstrates that emotions flow from a moderate feeling that can progress to extremes—for example, one can move from pensiveness to sadness to grief. On the positive side, the gradation flows from serenity to joy to ecstasy. Science has made tremendous strides in understanding emotions and in expanding the concept of intelligence to include emotional intelligence.

Because the idea of emotional intelligence rose against the backdrop of cognitive intelligence, it’s important to clarify some of the distinctions between the two. Cognitive intelligence manages the objective facts of life: who, what, when, and where. In the realm of human behavior, emotional intelligence is concerned with why and in certain cases how. “*Why* did you start diving off the ten-meter platform?” “I wanted to see what it felt like to fly.” “*Why* did you come in to work over the weekend?” “I knew how much it would mean to the team if we had an analysis of that data

and could get started first thing Monday morning.” *“How do you hold a premature baby that tiny?”* “I hold it very gently, but with all of my strength, as if I were caring for the miracle of life itself.”

There may never be a final definitive answer to the question “What is emotion?” However, we are certain that it is powerful and personal and present in everything humans cherish and hold most dear.

## DEVELOPING YOUR TEAM’S ESI

A desire to develop ESI competencies, such as skills in conflict resolution and motivation, is primarily what motivates team members and practitioners to explore the emerging field of emotional and social intelligence for teams. Our purpose in founding and operating the Collaborative Growth survey is to support teams and individuals in developing sustainable behavior change. For decades now, we’ve been guiding and observing the development of sustainable change. It’s remarkable, powerful, and essential as an investment, but it is seldom easy. This level of change requires strategically focused work, commitment, and sustained effort.

To understand the possibility for your team’s improving its skills, we need to distinguish ESI from personality measures and emphasize the benefit of neuroplasticity—the fact that your brain can change. The most widely recognized personality instruments we’re aware of that are used with teams are the Myers-Briggs Temperament Inventory®, Emergenetics®, and DISC®. These present a picture of someone’s preferences for being extroverted or introverted, preferring social or analytical thinking, and so on, and can be a great help to teams. However, they are focused on presenting a picture of your preferences, and those are not expected to change. They are different from emotional and social intelligence skills.

Both Bar-On’s EQ-i and Goleman’s ECI measures focus on the expression of abilities, skills, and traits. Traits are individual characteristics that include a genetic component and create some overlap with personality measures. That’s the key subtlety—there are overlaps, but these EQ measures are not measuring personality. Emmerling and Goleman (2003) point to some of the scientific work supporting the plausibility that people can



improve their ESI skills. They wrote that “findings from affective neuroscience also provide evidence for the potential to develop emotional intelligence competencies. The findings of LeDoux (1996) seem to indicate that although there are stable individual differences in activation patterns in the central circuitry of emotion, there is also pronounced plasticity” (p. 23). The notion of neuroplasticity is exciting, as it indicates that our brain can and does change even after its initial process of growth and development is completed somewhere in our early twenties. The centers of the brain found to have plasticity are the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus, and all these are involved in the perception, use, and management of emotions. Bryan (2006) further referenced LeDoux to demonstrate that this work of behavioral change requires “rewiring” of our brain. Accomplishing that rewiring entails understanding the goal, commitment, and lots of practice! We can change, but we have to really want to if we’re going to make it happen.

No doubt, we’re at an exciting point in this developing research, but much remains to be learned. It is stimulating to get the proof and technical explanation of what we see regularly—you *can* teach an old dog, er, team new tricks. What’s more, there is a tremendous body of research demonstrating that cultivating emotionally and socially intelligent teams makes good business sense.