



## Emotional Intelligence for Team Success

*By Tammé Quinn Grzebyk*

Working in teams isn't always easy. Whether we are part of a softball team, a work project team or a team of two significant others, teamwork takes commitment to the greater good in order to find long-term success. And, while there are numerous elements to building great teams, one facet we can all begin improving is our emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence, also called Emotional Quotient (EQ) has been studied for many years. In fact, it was recognized in medical journals in 1848. However, not until the past decade or so has it gained much notoriety. So what is emotional intelligence? A helpful description is provided by Drs. Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves who define it as "your ability to recognize and understand emotions, and your skill at using this awareness to manage yourself and your relationships with others."

Emotional Intelligence can be divided into two competencies - personal and social. Personal competence is our ability to recognize and understand our own emotional state. When it changes from happy to angry, for example, we must recognize the change, determine what triggered the change, and manage it appropriately. Having high personal competence helps us to navigate problems more effectively and rationally. You might remember your parents telling you to count to 10 before saying something you might regret. Maybe they didn't know it, but your parents were helping you build your emotional intelligence, so that instead of speaking out of emotion, you gave yourself time to speak out rationally.

Social competence starts with a bit of empathy. It's the ability to recognize the emotional states of others and then use that information to better manage the relationship. Some of the best ways to begin the process of social competence is to understand personality styles, non-verbal behavior, and the individual needs of others. When people respond emotionally negative, it's often because a need they have is not being met. The more we understand their drivers, the better we can guide them to rational instead of emotional behavior.

So how does EQ apply to teams? Well, in order to be effective members of a team, we must understand what we are capable of offering as individuals. We should also recognize our current limitations and our emotional triggers. If Joe knows he becomes frustrated when forced to work under extreme pressure, he can begin finding ways to avoid an outbreak of emotions that could undermine the team's success.

From a social competence standpoint, in order to work effectively with others on the team, it's important we know what *they* are capable of offering, what triggers their negative emotions, and how to help guide them down the most rational path. If the rest of the team knows that Joe doesn't work well under pressure, they will be more capable of dealing with the problem should it arise. Furthermore, if this emotional trigger is addressed as a team, there becomes an opportunity for the other members to help Joe find ways to avoid the trigger. Open communication helps to set a proverbial bar that the team can help Joe to raise over time.

Identifying the emotional intelligence of team members and the overall team establishes a baseline for health that can be improved with effort. Some of the most collaborative environments in business, synagogues, associations and families, are those filled with people who recognize the important role EQ plays. They identify their group's current EQ state, implement practices that improve it over time, and measure it regularly to make sure it is heading in the right direction. This results in a powerful team with self-motivated individuals who achieve amazing results again and again.

[Click here to view more VerbalWise articles.](#)

Copyright © 2007 VerbalWise, LLC. All rights reserved. You may reproduce this article by including this copyright and, if reproduced electronically, including a link to <http://www.verbalwise.com>.