

Emotional & Social Well-Being Supports Employee Engagement

- Marcia Hughes and James Terrell



The good news about our 2.0 world is organizations are finally getting it – that is they are recognizing that if they place their top value on building emotional and social well-being for their employees and teams, they will gain the business and financial values of increased and sustainable productivity, better decisions, loyalty and best of all trust among their workforce. Ok, they get it, but how do they DO it? It isn't hard, yet it does require intentional commitment and follow through. Fortunately there is a road map, the powerful tools of the [EQi 2.0®](#) for individuals and the [TESI®2.0](#) for teams are well researched assessments designed to measure and provide the path to building emotional and social well-being. These provide the data to implement a specific plan of action for individuals and teams.

Let's take the case of Teresa (not her real name) who recently joined a mid-size successful law firm as a paralegal in the Environmental Division (ED). The ED has a managing partner, administrative partner, 10 attorneys and 5 paralegals. Teresa is excited, hopeful, apprehensive, and cautious. She is experiencing a normal set of mixed emotions as she starts this new position that could become a rewarding long-term career or a really difficult chapter in her life. It is very much in her best interest and that of the firm for this to work. Recognizing the investment they are making, the law firm has established a process to welcome and support Teresa's success.

First, they used the EQi as a part of the hiring process to hire a person who would have high potential for success in this position. Once Teresa joined the firm she was given her EQi results with a coaching session by Abigail, an external consultant to their OD team. Teresa was guided to explore all skills of the EQi and to focus on a few that would be most helpful for her. Teresa's **happiness** (scored at 90) is lower than she would prefer and she recognizes that her happiness has a global effect on her life, it affects the energy she has to do her job, her ability to connect with others, and how she feels about herself. Teresa and Abigail dug in to explore the well-being indicator in her report and seek useful strategies that Teresa could put into action. Happiness was originally described by Dr. Reuven Bar-On, the creator of the original EQi, as a barometer of emotional health and well-being and as an indicator of one's entire emotional and social intelligence. The EQi well-being indicator emphasizes that four of the sixteen EQi skills are particularly interconnected to the dimension of happiness. Teresa's found:



- [Her **self-regard** (95) was ok, but she would benefit by strengthening her sense of self-confidence. Teresa feels scared in her first position as a paralegal, but upon discussion she recognizes she has strengths to build on including her previous work experience.
- [Her **optimism** (110) was likely to be a healthy point of leverage in building her goals. However, she and her coach checked her reality testing (102) to make sure maintained good perspective and didn't just look at the world with rose colored glasses.
- [Her **interpersonal relationships** (95) indicated that she longed to take time to develop more friendships. She'd focused on career and family and was truly feeling lonely for personal friends. Teresa recognized that a few close friends would make a big difference for her whole life, but she was worried that she just couldn't invest the time. She was surprised that her coach would even suggest this was important, after all didn't the law firm just want billable hours? It seemed like investing in friends would diminish her contribution at the firm. Teresa's curiosity was definitely engaged.
- [Her **self-actualization** (104) was fairly strong and Teresa talked about how important it is to her to contribute to making the world a better place. This is why she chose to be a paralegal and work in environmental law. She would be supporting cases focused on water quality and hazardous waste management. She talked about her passion and excitement and demonstrated why this skill and her optimism are key components of her happiness.

Teresa and Abigail discussed a strategy, with Teresa taking the lead, on changes she was going to work on. First she knew it had to be small focused steps because she was already busy. She decided to build her self-regard by: 1) giving herself positive messages at least 5 times a day, 2) noticing what was going right, and 3) taking at least 15 minutes each evening to reflect and write down how she felt with the positive messages and what she did right during the day. She committed to doing this for 28 days straight, as Abigail emphasized that she's building new habits supported by new neuronal pathways. She also decided to have a least one personal lunch or coffee



break a week that was just meeting with friends, not about business. Teresa will also do this for four weeks and then decide on next steps. She was intrigued with Abigail's confirmation that the firm recognizes that people need connections and that folks who feel that they have a full whole life are better long term contributors to the firm and support their clients and co-workers more effectively.

Teresa was beginning to get the message that her new employer believed in her emotional and social well-being and was really pleased to learn that the investment wouldn't stop with just her individual needs as she and her teammates in the Environmental Division were also supported in being a strong and viable team. The team would be taking the TESI® (Team Emotional and Social Intelligence Survey) in a few months and she'd be a part of taking the Survey, evaluating the team's performance in skills such as motivation, emotional awareness, conflict resolution and stress tolerance. Days were marked out on everyone's calendars for once a month team building sessions where they would use the data from the TESI, connect it with their reflections on projects that were successful or challenged and intentionally keep building their skills to work together.

After the coaching session, Teresa felt hopeful and committed to being a productive member of the firm for a very long time.