

# EQ CONNECTIONS

An Emotional Intelligence Newsletter by E.I. Assessments



**“ IF YOU WANT TO LIFT YOURSELF UP,  
LIFT UP SOMEONE ELSE.”**

– Booker T Washington

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

### **High Performance Teams**

**Written by  
John J. Hughes**

Do you work on a team or for a company where the goals and objectives are clear for everyone to see and discuss? Do you work on a team or in a department where the roles and responsibilities of your leader and peers are clearly understood? Do you understand how decisions that affect your work are made? Is conflict effectively acknowledged and managed on your team? If you answered YES to these questions then you most likely work on a high-performance team.

There are two very strong characteristics of professionals who score very high in *Social Responsibility* on the EQ-i. In the context of business, these people truly appreciate the energy and focus that is created when decisions are made with real consensus. High performance teams know how to

build and execute decisions with consensus. In a humanitarian context, I have met hundreds of professionals who score very high in *Social Responsibility* and measure the success of each day by how many people they have helped. These people were often raised or exposed to a real sense of community at a young age and it carries through into their work today.

## WHAT IS THE SKILL OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

*Social Responsibility* reflects your ability to effectively work with other people through collaboration and consensus for the mutual benefit of others.

## WHAT DOES SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LOOK LIKE?

People who score high in *Social Responsibility* on the EQ-i 2.0:

- Understand how to build consensus with others when making collaborative decisions
- Are willing to sacrifice personal time or convenience for the benefit of the team or group
- Know how to identify, accept and develop the abilities and skills of others for the betterment of the team, group or community

## GENDER & DECISION MAKING

In the previous newsletter, I mentioned that the two emotional intelligence skills on the EQ-I related to two styles of decision making which are *Social Responsibility*, for consensus, and *Independence*, by an individual. The gender questions are; Do men or women prefer one style of decision making over another? Are women more collaborative than men? Do men prefer to make more individual decisions than women? The answers to these questions are, NO.

There may be studies that show a dramatic difference between how men and women make decisions.

However, based on a review of **1,356** EQ-i reports, I uncovered no differences in decision making styles. In reviewing their scores, **34%** of this group have a balance between their *Social Responsibility* and *Independence* scores which indicates they can make either individual or group decisions. There were **243** women and **204** men in this category.



While I always thought that women would have higher *Social Responsibility* scores than men, I did not find a difference. In fact, of the **1,356** EQ-i reports, **43%** (**313** women and **264** men) indicated a high preference for collaboration and consensus when making decisions. These are the professionals who have a very strong connection with other people.

The remaining **24%** of the group (**164** women and **156** men) had a strong preference for making individual decisions and, in some cases, even working alone.

This data seems to indicate that most professionals have a strong leaning towards working with others in an open collaborative environment. However, all jobs and tasks are not built for or require consensus. I believe professionals should be strong in both *Social Responsibility* and *Independence*.

## A VISION OF HELPING OTHERS



In 1975 as a college freshman, I applied for a position as a camp counselor at the Human Resources Center in Albertson, NY. Part of the job interview process was to have a discussion with the founder of the facility, Dr. Hank Viscardi. I will never forget walking into his office and seeing his walls covered from ceiling to floor with photos of Hank shaking hands with presidents, kings,

politicians and CEOs. The second thing I noticed was that his desk was a picnic table.

The interview felt more like a conversation. The only question he asked me was which photograph I would like to hear him talk about. When I asked him to tell about the photo he had with Eleanor Roosevelt, he laughed and said he could talk for hours about her. Who was this man?

Hank was born in 1912 with withered stumps as legs which made getting around extremely difficult. Until age 6, he spent his life as a charity patient living at the Hospital for Deformities and Joint Diseases for crippled children in Manhattan. His legs were encased in padded boots so that he would be able to get around but that made his height 3 feet 8 inches. Short legs and long arms earned him the name “ape man” among children who taunted him.

Hank's life would take him on a journey through Fordham University and St. John's Law School by paying his own tuition. Just before WWII, he had a life-changing event thanks to an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Robert R. Yanover, who helped build him his first set of artificial legs in about 3 weeks. At age 26, Hank was able to wear his first pair of pants and shoes while standing 5 feet 8 inches. It took a lot of work at balancing and walking but Hank was able to conquer his new prosthetics and uncover his new abilities. Dr. Yanover never accepted any payment for the artificial legs but instead challenged Hank to find a way to help other people with disabilities.



After the attack on Pearl Harbor, each branch of the armed services rejected Hank's application except the Red Cross. His assignment to Walter Reed Hospital to work with war amputees expanded his vision and philosophy of finding ways to give the physically disabled an opportunity to work. It was during his time spent working at Walter Reed that Eleanor Roosevelt heard about the work that Hank was doing and invited him to the White House. This was the beginning of a long relationship with the Roosevelts. His hard work always paid off and Hank found a string of successful jobs after the war.

While Hank was soon in a position to go off and have a very comfortable life with his wife, Lucile, he would instead pursue his vision of helping the disabled find meaningful work.



Hank credited Eleanor with giving him the encouragement to open Abilities, Inc, in 1952. It was the first manufacturing facility of its kind designed for disabled workers, who were mostly vets from WWII. In the 1960's, the Human Resources Center (HRC), was founded to study the social barriers facing the disabled community and to understand how those perceptions could be changed. HRC expanded to provide medical rehabilitation services including physical, occupational and speech therapies, neuropsychological

evaluations, counseling services, a training institute and a tuition-free school for disabled children in pre-K through the 12th grade. The summer camp where I would be working for the next four years was part of his vision.

As we toured the Abilities factory and the school, I felt like I was walking around a small town with a popular mayor. When they saw him, little children were attracted to him like a movie star. These were kids with spina bifida, arthrogryposis, and muscular dystrophy. They struggled on crutches or in their wheelchairs just to get close to him for a hug. Hank was always accommodating because he felt responsible for them. He said that he believed they needed a safe place to learn and to build their confidence in order to compete, work and live in a mainstream world. Hank never sold the future as easy. In fact, he was preparing them for the disappointments that life has to offer. Hank lived by the belief and values that "there really are no disabled people, only people with varying degrees of ability".

At the end of our interview, Hank said that he promised that the summer camp counselor position would be one of the hardest and most rewarding experiences I would ever have. He was right. Before parting, he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Take good care of my kids." I suddenly felt an awesome, deep responsibility to help Hank pursue his vision.

When he passed away in April, 2004, at 91, Hank had created a legacy of nurturing and supporting children with disabilities that continues today at the renamed Henry Viscardi School at Abilities, Inc.

## DEVELOPING YOUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

What kind of team member are you? People who score high in *Social Responsibility* tend to be outstanding team members who are loyal, authentic and willing to take a support role within the group.

Part of developing this skill is being willing to ask yourself some tough questions and, if you don't know the answers, get input from people who will be honest with you.

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very low and 10 being very strong, ask yourself:

- *What is my reputation for being honest and direct with other team members?*
- *What is my reputation for being open-minded and approachable?*

Once you give yourself a rating, the third question to ask is, *what will it take to get to a 10?*





## BACK TO BASICS

If you are serious about developing your *Social Responsibility*, consider getting involved in a community organization that is involved in issues that concern you. I am often fascinated by the number of high-level executives and professionals I meet who can still find time for their families in addition to volunteering time or sitting on nonprofit boards. Becoming more involved in charitable activities through your church, temple or mosque is another way to extend your social conscience.

## NEXT ISSUE:

**Issue # 11 Problem Solving: Mind of an Engineer**