


THE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT TEAM

Understanding and
Developing the Behaviors
of Success

Marcia Hughes

James Bradford Terrell

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Introduction](#)

[KEY CONCEPTS](#)

[THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT TEAM](#)

[WHAT MOTIVATES BEHAVIOR?](#)

[PERFECTION NOT REQUIRED](#)

[PART ONE - THE VALUE OF EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR YOUR TEAM](#)

[CHAPTER ONE - WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS SO VALUABLE FOR TEAMS](#)

[SIGNIFICANT PERKS FOR TEAMS AND THEIR MEMBERS](#)

[WHAT IS A TEAM?](#)

[WHAT IS EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE?](#)

[SHOULD WE MEASURE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?](#)

[WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?](#)

[DEVELOPING YOUR TEAM'S ESI](#)

[CHAPTER TWO - THE BUSINESS CASE FOR TEAM EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE](#)

[ANGER OR POSITIVE ATTITUDE—IT MATTERS](#)

[FOLLOW THE LEADER](#)

EI AND TEAM PERFORMANCE
FROM RESEARCH TO REALITY

PART TWO - THE SEVEN SKILLS OF A TEAM'S
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

CHAPTER THREE - THE FIRST SKILL: TEAM IDENTITY

WHAT IDENTITY IS FOR TEAMS
THE SEVEN INGREDIENTS OF TEAM IDENTITY
WHY TEAMS NEED AN IDENTITY
HOW THE TEAM APPLIED THE SEVEN INGREDIENTS
BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES TO CREATING TEAM
IDENTITY
IDENTITY AND UNDERSTANDING
TEAM STAGES AND ESI
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR TEAM'S IDENTITY

CHAPTER FOUR - THE SECOND SKILL: MOTIVATION

WHAT MOTIVATION IS FOR TEAMS
THE SEVEN INGREDIENTS OF TEAM MOTIVATION
WHY TEAMS NEED MOTIVATION
BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES OF MOTIVATION
THE MOTIVATION OF SOCIAL PAIN
THE PAIN OF CHANGE
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR TEAM'S MOTIVATIONAL SKILLS

CHAPTER FIVE - THE THIRD SKILL: EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

WHAT EMOTIONAL AWARENESS IS FOR TEAMS
THE SIX INGREDIENTS OF EMOTIONAL AWARENESS FOR
TEAMS
WHY TEAMS NEED EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

HOW THE TEAM APPLIED THE SIX INGREDIENTS
EXPOSING THE PROCESS OF EMOTIONAL AWARENESS
EMOTIONAL CONTAGION
SOCIAL AWARENESS
USING YOUR REFLECTIVE SKILLS
STRATEGIES FOR TEAM AWARENESS
WHOLE-MIND PERCEIVING
INTROVERTS AND EXTROVERTS: ENGAGING AND
AVOIDING THE TEAM DANCE
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR TEAM'S EMOTIONAL
AWARENESS

CHAPTER SIX - THE FOURTH SKILL: COMMUNICATION

THE SIX INGREDIENTS OF TEAM COMMUNICATION
WHY TEAMS NEED GOOD COMMUNICATION
HOW THE TEAM APPLIED THE SIX INGREDIENTS
FOUR CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER?
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR TEAM'S COMMUNICATION
SKILLS

CHAPTER SEVEN - THE FIFTH SKILL: STRESS TOLERANCE

WHAT STRESS TOLERANCE IS FOR TEAMS
THE SEVEN INGREDIENTS OF STRESS TOLERANCE FOR
TEAMS
WHY TEAMS NEED STRESS TOLERANCE
HOW THE TEAM APPLIED THE SEVEN INGREDIENTS
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS
THE DOWNSIDES
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR TEAM'S STRESS TOLERANCE

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE SIXTH SKILL: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WHAT CONFLICT RESOLUTION IS FOR TEAMS
THE NINE INGREDIENTS OF TEAM CONFLICT
RESOLUTION
WHY TEAMS NEED CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS
HOW THE TEAM APPLIED THE NINE INGREDIENTS
BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES OF TEAM CONFLICT
RESOLUTION SKILLS
DECISION MAKING AND THE HUMAN BRAIN
ANGER AND OTHER NEGATIVE EMOTIONS
EVOLUTIONARY CONFLICT: DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
SKILLS

CHAPTER NINE - THE SEVENTH SKILL: POSITIVE MOOD

WHAT POSITIVE MOOD IS FOR TEAMS
THE SEVEN INGREDIENTS OF A POSITIVE TEAM MOOD
WHY TEAMS NEED A POSITIVE MOOD
BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES OF A POSITIVE MOOD
BUILDING ON YOUR STRENGTHS
FRIENDS AT WORK
FINDING YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE
TRANSCENDENT VALUES
TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR TEAM'S POSITIVE MOOD

PART THREE - RESULTS GAINED BY EMOTIONALLY AND SOCIALLY INTELLIGENT TEAMS

CHAPTER TEN - THE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT TEAM PLAYER

REQUESTING EMPATHY
TAKING YOUR EMOTIONAL PULSE
TELLING IT TO 'EM STRAIGHT

GAINING FLEXIBILITY
TESTING REALITY
DEVELOPING TEAM RELATIONSHIPS
GO FORTH AND COLLABORATE

CHAPTER ELEVEN - LEADING THE EMOTIONALLY
INTELLIGENT TEAM

TRANSPARENCY
THE SEVEN SKILLS OF ESI LEADERSHIP
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER TWELVE - VALUES AND ETHICS

THE FOUNDATION OF WORKPLACE VALUES

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - RESULTS

INTEGRATING ESI BEHAVIORS FOR SUCCESS
BUILDING YOUR TEAM'S COLLABORATIVE INTELLIGENCE
CELEBRATING SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

CONCLUSION
REFERENCES
Acknowledgments
ABOUT THE AUTHORS
INDEX

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We dedicate this book to the teams and individual team members throughout the world whose commitment to their work and the work of their organizations help to create sustainable ways to live together on this planet, ways that reduce human suffering and expand our care for the precious diversity of life. We fervently advocate for the application of all tools and methods that can advance humanity's development of emotional and social intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!

ANNE FRANK

Forget about the “flavor of the month” management strategy fraught with consultants and catchy programs: this isn't that book. This is about how to thrive in this nutty world and nuttier business environment by intentionally evolving, albeit quickly, because you can't even afford to wait a year, let alone a couple of hundred millennia. Your organization is on the edge of obsolescence if it's not evolving its emotional and social intelligence (ESI). You've heard the bottom line before: IQ is important, but emotional intelligence is the true brain trust of the organization. Using emotional intelligence effectively is the next evolution of human enterprise.

The world has changed. Once we thought it was flat. It wasn't. Once we thought it was run by monolithic factories and assembly lines built to last. It's not. Once we thought that an M.B.A. and wireless technology would secure the future. They won't. Reams of research all point to a single golden ticket. The passport to sustained viability is emotional intelligence.

There is great news for teams. The fields of neurology and organizational development are advancing so quickly that a

body of evidence has emerged that demonstrates which emotionally and socially intelligent behaviors have a direct correlation with organizational success. We're talking about measurable success, not simply an improvement on the "feel-good meter." There are practical steps to take as an individual, a team member, and a leader that yield tangible results such as improved productivity, higher profits, lower turnover, fewer errors, greater innovation, and better efficiency—the Holy Grail of successful organizations. Our focus on team emotional and social intelligence is truly a practical opportunity to evolve and prosper.

The purpose of this book is to clarify the systematic process that will enable you to reduce the unproductive conflict, uncertainty, and delays all teams encounter. It will help teams of all shapes and sizes respond more resiliently to the continuous onslaught of change they must tame and transform into successful projects and productive results.

Every team—whether it's a permanent work team, a committee, a project team, or a family—needs better ESI. If you are involved in a team, that team has deep and significant emotional interactions, guaranteed. Furthermore, by virtue of being on a team, you are in a social environment. Because these emotional and social implications for your team are enormous, it is imperative that you care, if you care to succeed. *The Emotionally Intelligent Team* applies to all kinds of teams—at work, at play, at church, on the diamond, on the gridiron, or anywhere else. Because so much research and attention is focused on teams in the workplace, we drew most of our examples from there. Our research and examples span a wide spectrum of team types, from industry to government to nonprofits. You'll encounter a rich diversity of executive teams, departmental teams, IT teams, construction teams, nonprofit boards, and many more. The list is long and colorful. The principles that affect team dynamics are true,

regardless of whether it is an interdisciplinary medical team, a group of high school cheerleaders, or contenders for the Super Bowl. Sports teams epitomize the profound role that emotions have in the workplace—it's the same as on the field. Nervous energy, jubilation, panic, anxiety as the momentum shifts, utter despair, supreme joy. How teams manage the extreme range of emotions that are packed into a game often determines the outcome.

One of the beauties of sports is the unabashed role and importance accorded to emotional intelligence. Its presence is considered a huge competitive advantage, while its absence is often criticized as the hallmark of an undisciplined team. Corporations and nonprofits would do well to recognize the same.

KEY CONCEPTS

*The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands
but in seeing with new eyes.*

MARCEL PROUST

Emotional and social intelligence is all about seeing with new eyes, hearing with new ears, and acting with new awareness and sensitivity. The key concepts that frame this book are the following:

- **Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI).** Because it is impossible for a group of people to interact and not have social implications, we use the concept of emotional and social intelligence to help teams understand and master the behaviors of success. We have developed one of the first tools designed for determining team ESI, not just individual ESI. The

Collaborative Growth Team Emotional and Social Intelligence Survey (TESI™) is a self-assessment tool used to help team members recognize and develop specific skills for success. (The survey will be published in 2008; you can contact us if you'd like more information.)

- **Collaborative Intelligence.** Collaboration is a composite skill that emerges from the masterful use of your ESI skills. The members of a football team collaborate when they huddle and agree that they will each do their part to execute a particular play. In the middle of the play, except in the face of an unexpected opportunity, the fullback won't decide to change the play because he'd prefer to run the ball rather than block! Team loyalty is unquestioned. When your team collaborates, you take time to explore alternative answers and find a solution that integrates the wisdom of the team. It takes more time up front, because you invest in listening to one another, to thinking things through, and to coordinating the execution of your response with genuine respect for one another. Collaboration pays off big time as you and your team progress. Your self-discipline and collective intuition will make the future much easier to navigate because teams that coordinate their ESI skills naturally act with collaborative intelligence.

This set of coordinated competencies is the birthplace of synergy. Teams tap into their shared memory and individual capacities to maximize their knowledge, problem-solving capabilities, and resilience. They respond with agility to the fluctuating emotional and social contexts of the team and the organizational dynamics. The correct blend of ESI skills is the rocket fuel that propels your team to achieve its full collaborative capacity.

- **Emotional Literacy for Your Team.** Team smarts are the powerful result of learning to read. Read between the lines, read the writing on the wall, read people’s lips! Team smarts call for:

Reading one another to understand how you feel and why, to determine the most effective response given the situation.

Reading the group as a whole to determine what is needed to keep your team highly energized and effective.

Reading the environment and accurately discerning and responding to the organization and leadership dynamics, politics, and shifting winds.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT TEAM

Jeremy Irons won the 2007 Golden Globe award for best supporting actor for his role in *Elizabeth I*. In his acceptance speech, he said, “Why is it that the jobs that are the most fun are the ones for which you get the rewards?” His big smile indicated the honesty of this powerful reflection. The three parts of this book, and the explanations, wisdom, and tips packed inside, are designed to help your team gain rewards—both intrinsic and extrinsic—while you have fun with your work and with one another.

Part One explains what constitutes an ESI team, why it is valuable, and how to understand emotional intelligence.

Part Two is the heart of the book. It covers the seven skills that make up ESI. It explores the intricacies of each skill and provides examples of the skill in action and ways to

incorporate the skill into your repertoire. It's not rocket science; it's brain chemistry. Much of ESI is rooted in how the brain works and responds to stimuli. Seven skills are essential to an emotionally intelligent team: identity, motivation, emotional awareness, communication, stress tolerance, conflict resolution, and positive mood. These competencies are like the Seven Wonders of the World. They are powerful abilities that can redefine the landscape in which your team operates. Undoubtedly, as you apply them to your team, you'll discover unique ways to incorporate these behaviors to maximize your team's success.

Part Three completes your discovery by identifying what the individual team player needs to bring to the table, what the ESI leader needs to add, and values and ethics central to the integrity required of an ESI team. All of this leads to the extraordinary results you are seeking. Believe it or not, teams seek trust, loyalty, and effectiveness above all, and those drive performance.

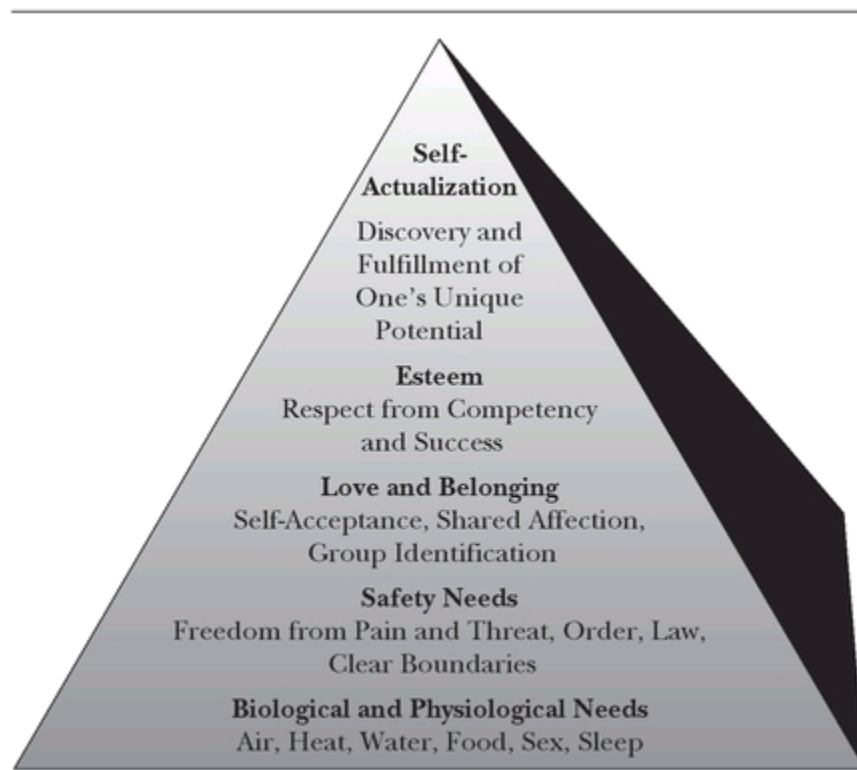
WHAT MOTIVATES BEHAVIOR?

To be an ESI team, you need to understand what makes teams work together well and how they can become even more productive and rewarding to their members. Building that understanding is a core purpose of this book.

We assert that human behavior is motivated by the desire to improve the quality of life and that teams exist because the tasks that improve the quality of life are often too complex for one individual to accomplish alone. Improving the quality of life means achieving the progressive satisfaction of the needs identified in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy (1943), as depicted in [Figure I.1](#).

Whether you realize it or not, teams strive to satisfy this inherent sequence of needs, just as individuals do. Human beings, and the teams they constitute, naturally move toward satisfying these successive needs and attempt to overcome whatever blocks their satisfaction. So our brief definition of a team is a group of two or more people who interdependently seek to solve problems in order to improve the quality of life. We'll go into much more depth in Chapter One.

[FIGURE I.1](#). MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS.



Adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

PERFECTION NOT REQUIRED

These most brisk and giddy-paced times.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hanging out on Planet Earth as a human invites the opportunity to learn and grow. every day is chock-full of chances. We invite you to approach each day with the willingness to notice and take advantage of those moments when you can practice the seven ESI skills. practice does make perfect; no individual and no team does it flawlessly the first time or all the time. Practice will create new habits that will gradually begin to change your team's entire experience of itself and the work it performs. As you continue building your skills, your team will begin to reach a critical mass of competency, at which point there will be a powerful convergence. You will suddenly notice that you move together more gracefully, effortlessly, powerfully.

Along the way, you and your teammates will discover what it takes to be successful at each particular juncture. You may be better at communication than you are at positive mood. Or you may be quite good at aspects of a skill and yet find more room for improvement. Discovery is what it's all about—enjoy the journey.

You and your team have the opportunity to create together a rich and colorful tapestry. This book provides weaving lessons. Get the loom out and get to it!

Note: In order to protect the privacy of the many organizations and individuals we work with, all names are changed in the book.

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. Highrisk 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 highestperforming 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