**EQ-i® Case Study**

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The Client:

Brian Carey is a successful 41-year-old executive newly hired to a consulting firm that works exclusively with the United States Defense Department. Most of the people now reporting to Brian are Ph.D. researchers ten to twenty-five years older than he. Given Brian’s age, his lack of advanced degree (he has a Bachelor of Arts in History), and his inexperience with advanced research projects, he feels at times stressed by his senior level position and its demands. Will today be the day that everyone learns how far in over his head he is? This internal query is one that plays on continuous loop within Brian’s head. Seeing the EQ-i as an opportunity to sharpen his self-awareness and relationship building skills, Brian eagerly engages in the EQ process.

Brian’s EQ-i Coaching Session:

To make the EQ-i feel less like a report card and more like the spur to a deep, data-driven discussion about self-awareness and self-management, the first step in the feedback process is to define the various elements of the EQ model, having Brian do a self-assessment as to how often, easily and consistently he engages with each element in his daily life. Low engagement could reflect low skills, but it could also reflect adequate skills in an area seen as unimportant and not often ignored. High engagement could reflect enhanced development and high skills, but it could also indicate over-engagement and a quality or behavior that is over-done or often too intense. Average engagement means the element is used or paid attention to about as much as it is with most people. Average engagement with an EQ element means that there is certainly room for improvement and growth in that area, but there is nothing in average engagement that means that development is required or that this is in any way a liability. The first step of the EQ-i feedback process with Brian was to introduce him to the EQ elements and to have him do a self-assessment of his level of engagement with each.

Brian predicted high levels of engagement with Interpersonal Relationship, Reality Testing, Problem Solving and Emotional Self-Awareness and low engagement with Self-Actualization. All other elements he felt well connected to, but not in a way that would distinguish him from anyone else—so about average. With this self-assessment done, Brian was now ready to receive and fully understand his EQ-i report form. Brian’s highest scores—Reality Testing and Interpersonal Relationship and Problem Solving were not a surprise, but his connection to the EQ process got a boost from his being able to predict his attachment to these elements.

After noticing these high scores, Brian’s attention was then pulled to some of the lower scores on his report, which did surprise him. Self-Regard and Self-Actualization were among the lowest scores on his report, and while they were (at 99) just under the average, he was surprised by seeing these important elements at the bottom of his line-up. In the discussion that followed, Brian came to realize that in his new environment in which he was leading so many people a good bit older than he with technical expertise and degrees he did not have, that he was relying on his ability to connect personally and relationship build as a means of management and decision making. And while Brian did this with great frequency and ease (not to mention success), he had a low boiling fear that he had not pursued enough formal education (in the form of a graduate degree) and/or amassed more research expertise. These fears were making him question both his Self- Regard and his Self-Actualization more than he realized he had been.

These realities were adding a new kind of stress to Brian’s professional life, which brought on the biggest surprise of all—a Happiness score that would put him around the bottom third of respondents in Happiness. Long self-described as a happy and funny man, Brian was feeling increasingly disconnected from this personae, and he decided to take steps to correct this.

The Action Plan:

Brian decides to use his EQ strengths (Interpersonal Relationships and Decision Making) to help him reframe and better engage with the EQ elements with which he more often struggles—Happiness and Self-Actualization. He decides to reach out and create a close professional relationship with senior researcher who works for him who will serve as a mentor of sorts, helping to build the specific content knowledge he may lack. The action steps Brian derived utilized his relative strengths while buttressing his lesser engaged elements and moved him effectively and quickly from insight to action.