

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: THE TENTH INTELLIGENCE THAT INTEGRATES ALL OTHER INTELLIGENCES

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A Chinese proverb says, “When the pupil is ready, the teacher will come.”

More and more people everywhere are becoming ready and concerned with the untapped potential of the mind and consciousness. Previously, particularly in education circles, if you talked about inner voices, outer signs, or a guiding presence, you would be discounted or put away; today being committed is fine. The materialism and individualism of Western culture have created an empty space in the lives of a lot of people and there is a growing need for spirituality; a search for community as a result of urbanization; and a search for identity in an increasingly depersonalized society. People have become more and more disenchanted with experts in every field; and they are beginning to trust their own inner authority to seek a purposeful path, to create their own vision, and to realize a sense of empowerment.

In the recent book *Spiritual Intelligence: Developing Higher Consciousness*, (Sisk and Torrance, 2001) explore the concept of spiritual intelligence from the foundations of Psychology; from Ancient Wisdom and Eastern Mysticism; from Science, represented by the new Physics, Neurobiology and brain research, Geology, Cymatics; from Sacred Geometry and the living stories and pathfinding accounts of selected individuals who have demonstrated spiritual intelligence in their lives.

In *Frames of Mind*, Howard Gardner (1983) pulled many of the measurable human capacities together under the umbrella of multiple intelligence, which included linguistic, logical mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal and naturalist; and Daniel Goleman (1995) proposed the existence of emotional intelligence. In *Intelligence Reframed*, Gardner (1999) considered the evidence for spiritual intelligence and he said, “Any discussion of the spirit—whether cast as spiritual life, spiritual capacity, spiritual feeling, or a gift for religion, mysticism or the transcended—is controversial within the sciences, if not throughout the academic world.” He further stated, “Regrettably, the majority of scholars in the cognitive and biological sciences turn away from questions of a spiritual nature, consigning this realm chiefly to the true believers and quacks.”

This last statement is unfortunate when you consider the work of Stephen Hawking (1988) who candidly states that in his research he is exploring why it is that we and the universe exist. Hawkins says, “If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason, for then we would know the mind of God.” When Gardner (1999) examined the content of spiritual intelligence and “content” represents one of the criteria he used to identify an intelligence, he describes the content of spiritual intelligence as a concern for the cosmos, the mystery of our existence, addressing the ultimate questions, mysteries and meanings of life: Who are we? Where do we come from? Gardner’s concern with the content was that it is problematic and controversial. He says, “Having read numerous accounts of the spiritual realm I am tempted to conclude that it refers to everything: mind, body, self, nature, the supernatural and sometimes even to nothing. He calls this a “conceptual sprawl” contrasting sharply with the domains of science and math, which are relatively delimited and uncontroversial. In this statement Gardner discounts the work of neuroscientist Candace Pert (1997) who uses the term body-mind and suggests that consciousness is throughout the body; and Willis Harman’s (1998)

concept of the supraconsciousness, as well as the concept of “nothingness” or “being still to become aware” in the tradition of Confucius and Buddha.

Gardner (1999) examines two classical senses of knowing: “knowing how” and “knowing that” to decide if there is a spiritual intelligence. He recognizes skills manifested in spiritual intelligence as meditating, achieving trance states, envisioning the transcendental, or being in touch with psychic, spiritual or noetic phenomena. E. Paul Torrance and I agree with these skills and add the skills of intuition and visioning. Gardner said that he did not want to risk premature closure by eliminating a set of human capabilities worthy of consideration with his theory of intelligence, so he considered the term existential intelligence instead of spiritual intelligence. Much of what Gardner (1999) identified as existential intelligence represents the core of ability that Sisk and Torrance (2001) suggest for spiritual intelligence, including the capacity to locate oneself with respect to the furthest reaches of the cosmos—the infinite and infinitesimal—and the related capacity to locate oneself with respect to such existential features of the human condition as the significance of life, the meaning of death, the ultimate fact of the physical and psychological worlds, and such profound experiences as love of another; but, Gardner concludes: “I do not find the term moral intelligence acceptable as long as it connotes the adoption of any specific moral code”.

Yet, E. Paul Torrance and I theorized that there was still an important human capacity that remained unaddressed, namely what we refer to as spiritual intelligence, or the tenth intelligence.

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IS DEEP SELF-AWARENESS

Spiritual intelligence can be described as a deep self-awareness in which one becomes more and more aware of the dimensions of self, not simply as a body, but as a mind-body and spirit. When we employ our spiritual intelligence, we reach the extraordinary place in which our mind no longer produces data of the type wanted or needed and the need for intuition becomes accelerated. As conscious beings, we are aware of our thought images and feelings as they arise in our consciousness; yet our complex and not so complex processing of information in the brain leads to an inner experience. This inner experience represents the essence of spiritual intelligence. As we find our inner voices, the “whisperings” of supraconsciousness, and go within, we find our spiritual connection. By accessing these inner processes, we can learn to nurture and develop our spiritual intelligence.

WHAT SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IS AND WHAT SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IS NOT

Inner Knowing

Spiritual intelligence enables us to develop an inner knowing. In the language of Indian philosophy, inner knowing is to know the essence of consciousness and to realize that this inner essence is the essence of all creation. Spiritual intelligence provides us access to higher consciousness in which there is an awareness of rapport, an awareness of being one with the universe, and all its creatures, of a knowing, a “gnosis.”

Deep Intuition

Spiritual intelligence connects us with the Universal mind or Big Mind and problem solutions that come from deep intuition are to the benefit of all, not one solution at the expense of others. Through the use of spiritual intelligence, we can become integrated, if we are willing to turn over choice to the authentic conscience or to deep intuition. (Jung, 1969)

Oneness with Nature and the Universe

Spiritual intelligence enables us to become one with nature and to be in harmony with life processes. Spiritual intelligence urges us to search for wholeness, a sense of community and a sense of relationship, to create an identity and to search for meaning; and out of this search for meaning will come a sense of empowerment.

Problem Solving

Spiritual intelligence enables us to see the big picture, to synthesize our actions in relation to a greater context, which then in turn becomes “life meaning.” (Frankl, 1985). With spiritual intelligence we can identify and solve problems of meaning and value; to offer solutions directed toward the benefit of all. Spiritual intelligence is not amoral, it engages us in questions of good and evil and affords us opportunities to dream, to reconfigure, and to look beyond the boundaries of a situation to what it could be.

CORE EXPERIENCES OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

An awareness of ultimate values and their meaning, peak experiences, a feeling of transcendence and heightened awareness are all part of spiritual intelligence core experiences in action. These core experiences may by their nature seem fleeting; however, if they are intrinsic to human nature as psychologists Abraham Maslow (1971) suggested more than three decades ago in *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, the question becomes one of how to study, nurture and develop spiritual intelligence.

NURTURING AND DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

One of the primary aspects of nurturing spiritual intelligence is to bring one’s life into perspective. What does this mean for the individual? You can bring your life into perspective by reflecting upon your values, perhaps by asking the big question that Carl Jung loved to pose to his friends and colleagues: “What myth are you living?” To develop spiritual intelligence, we need to take time to see a vision of our lives, identify the goals and desires that we have and to create a balance in our lives. You can ask yourself questions in a meditative quiet state, and remember that it is important to believe that you will receive the answers.

Educating for spiritual development and higher consciousness has within it the hope and goal of developing the students ability to use their spiritual intelligence to discover what is essential in life, particularly in their own lives, and to recognize what they can do to nourish the world. Defining spiritual intelligence as the ability to access one’s inner knowledge, likely traits of spiritual intelligence are listed below, as well as suggestions on how to strengthen these traits for learning.

LIKELY TRAITS

HOW TO STRENGTHEN FOR LEARNING

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| * Uses inner knowing | * Provide time for reflective thinking |
| * Seeks to understand self | * Use journal writing and processing |
| * Uses metaphor and parables to communicate | * Read lives / works of Spiritual Pathfinders |
| * Uses intuition | * Use problem solving (predicting) |
| * Sensitive to social problems | * Conduct service learning projects |
| * Sensitive to their purpose in life | * Use personal growth activities |
| * Concerned about inequity and injustice | * Use problem-based learning. |
| * Enjoys big questions | * Provide time for open-ended discussion |
| * Sense of Gestalt (the big picture) | * Use mapping and thematic studies |
| * Wants to make a difference | * Develop personal growth activities |
| * Capacity to care | * Study lives of Spiritual Pathfinders |
| * Curiosity about how the world works/functions | * Integrate science / social sciences |
| * Values love, compassion, concern for others | * Use affirmations /think-about-thinking |
| * Close to nature | * Employ eco-environmental research |
| * Uses visualization and mental imagery | * Read stories and myths |
| * Reflective, self-observing and self-aware | * Use role playing / sociodrama |
| * Seeks balance in life | *Discussion/goal setting activities |
| * Concerned about right conduct | * Employ process discussions |
| * Seeks to understand self | * Trust intuition and inner voice |
| * Connected with others, the earth,
and the universe | * Stress unity in studies |
| * Peacemaker | * Use what, so what, now what model |
| * Concerned with human suffering | * Study lives of eminent people |

SEVEN WAYS TO DEVELOP OR RAISE SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

To develop or raise spiritual intelligence, there are a number of methods that can be employed; these include an emphasis on the core values of community, connectedness and oneness of all, compassion, a sense of balance, responsibility and service. These core values call for the use of a multisensory approach to problem solving and life; relying not only on the five senses, but including visualization, meditation and deep intuition. Given this premise, there are essentially seven ways to raise or develop spiritual intelligence.

They include:

1. Think about your goals, desires and wants to bring your life into perspective and balance, and identify your values.
2. Access your inner processes and use visualization to see your goals, desires and wants fulfilled; and experience the emotion connected with this fulfillment.
3. Integrate your personal and universal vision and recognize your connectedness to others, to nature, to the world and to the universe.
4. Take responsibility for your goals, desires and wants.
5. Develop a sense of community by letting more people into your life.
6. Focus on love and compassion.
7. When chance knocks at your door, let it in and take advantage of coincidences.

Inherent in these seven ways to develop your spiritual intelligence is engaging in finding a sense of purpose and creating a vision. Once your vision is created, then there must be a commitment to it, followed by the intention or will to carry through toward your identified goal, desire or want. Essential to the development of your spiritual intelligence is sensing the connectedness of everything to everything, and shifting one's focus of authority and perception in life from external to internal. Equally essential to the development of spiritual intelligence is the recognition of your relationship to the earth. The importance of earth-centered reverence and connectedness was drawn from Ancient Wisdom and Eastern Mysticism. Among many Native American traditions, and in the Hermetic, Sufi, Zen, Tao and Confucianism traditions, there is a clear emphasis on caring for the earth and being in harmony with nature.

When E. Paul Torrance and I researched psychology theorists for a foundation for spiritual intelligence, we identified the need to search for meaning (Frankl, 1985) and the need to search for identity as key elements for individual achievement and fulfillment. (Rogers, 1980; Maslow, 1971; Dabrowski, 1967). From Science we noted that quantum physics emerged from a thought experiment that verified that if two particles have been intimately associated and are then separated in space, they are still connected nonetheless. If one particle is perturbed in certain ways, the other one is affected simultaneously, and the connectedness does not depend on a signal traveling at the speed of light or slower. (Green, 1999). This premise in science of connectedness led us to the idea that we are all connected to one another, to the earth, and to the cosmos.

In the seven ways to nurture and develop spiritual intelligence, we suggest infusing your goals, wants and desires with emotion; and this premise is based on the finding that access to

unconscious processes is facilitated by attention to feelings, emotion, and inner imagery as suggested by Ancient Wisdom and Eastern Mysticism. Spiritual intelligence is not limited in the ordinary ways that we might expect the mind to be limited, since access to one's spiritual intelligence through the use of inner knowing can be facilitated to an extent that is ultimately unlimited. In the words of Arnold Toynbee:

The ultimate work of civilization is the unfolding of ever-deeper spiritual understanding.

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