

Spiritual Intelligence

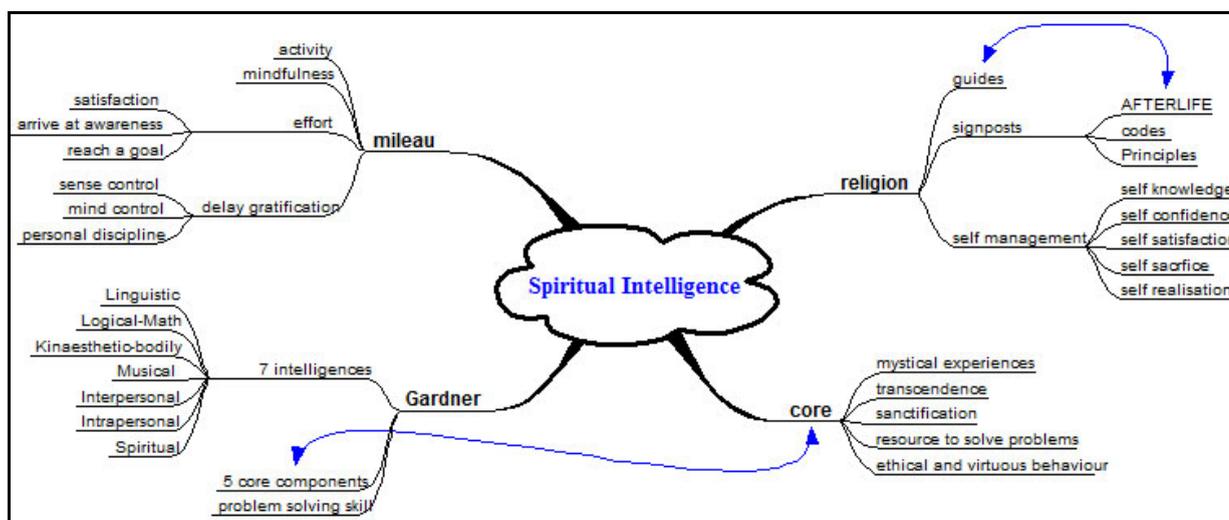
This page is an overview of and introduction to Spiritual Intelligence. The spiritual focus here is not on any one particular religion or belief system, rather, on practical elements which are common to spiritual activity by humans.

All intelligence is problem solving skill. Intelligence(s) in all its forms, are used to solve problems we encounter.

Spiritual intelligence is one of the multiple intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner. The basic intelligences of the learning child are

- Linguistic - the acquisition of language skills
- Logical - the acquisition of formal logic, viz., math, geometry, algebra
- Kinaesthetic - the acquisition of knowledge via the body and the senses
- musical - the acquisition of knowing and intelligence via musical skills
- Interpersonal - the acquisition of skills and knowledge and problem solving via interpersonal relations
- Intrapersonal - the acquisition of self knowledge and self management via knowledge and integration of aspects of one's own personality
- Spiritual (or now called existential) - the acquisition of spiritual intelligence and problem solving skill via spiritual practices

Overview Mindmap



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Religion is an institution with organised beliefs. **Spirituality** is an experience.

Spirituality does not require you to believe anything. Rather, it continually invites you to notice your experience. Your personal experience becomes your authority, rather than something someone else has told you.

Religion principally consists of guides and signposts to the AFTERLIFE - a place we are all going to. As such, religions offer codes and principles to practice and live by which (ought to) get you to the Afterlife; *this* path, up *this* mountain.

It is up to you to look at your own experience - that is, everyday experience and **evaluate what works for you**. Knowledge and spiritual teachings only have value if it enriches you and opens your heart to turn towards God. It is not enough to **know**. It is necessary to practice and draw conclusions from daily life.

All religions give tools for self management. The mileau of religion is activity, mindfulness, and effort in spiritual

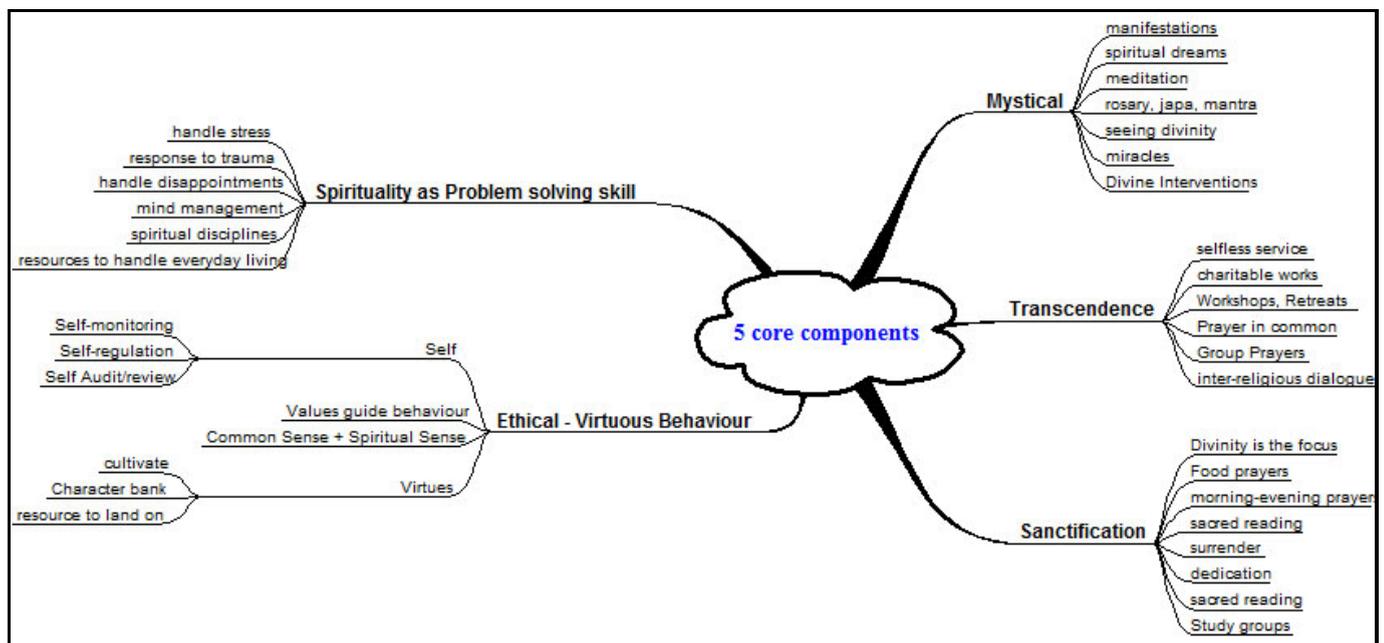
pursuits. Humans, however, achieve their goals more quickly if they delay immediate gratification of wants and desires.

Spiritual effort along a chosen discipline (what works) brings satisfaction, arrives at self awareness and reaches the goal. This scopes to include all parts of the human person and all compartments of activity in life. When religious dictates fail (what doesn't work), then spirituality must be developed with courage in order to find what works so that self-satisfaction is achieved in all parts of the human person and in all compartments of activity in life.

Elements of Spiritual Intelligence

Gardner and Evans investigated spiritual intelligence and arrived at five core components:

- Mystical experiences
- Transcendence
- Sanctification
- As a resource to solve problems
- Ethical and virtuous behaviour



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Five Core Components of Spiritual Intelligence

MYSTICAL

Mystical experiences and mysticism are everyday experiences of human beings. Mysticism is not limited to monastics, nor to peoples enclosed in an ashram, a cave in the desert or some monastery atop a mountain. Divinity is always **divinity in ordinary**, for all life is imbued with divinity. Humankind, in their multifoliate and variegated quests for divinity, have not the right to limit divinity and where divine encounters occur; humankind is limited, however, by their own perception and understanding. This aside, **nothing** controls, prohibits, decides nor limits when and where Divinity elects to make itself manifest or encountered.

Mystical experiences occur when one leaves behind the sense of bodily awareness and encounters divinity as it reveals itself within and without. One may see divinity all around. One may perceive divine manifestations, spiritual dreams, miracles and divine interventions in your life or the life of another are evidence of mystical experiences. These can also be encountered via - but not limited to - meditation, chanting of prayers, mantras, use of rosary beads, japamala or other kinds of prayer wheels or sacred 'counters'.

Mystical experiences are not open to debate, nor argument. They are perceived by the individual. Those who revel in

debate and disputation ought be asked,

Have you seen God? Have you become aware of the Divine within? Or else, what authority have you to decry or deny this name of God? Are you, struggling in the darkness, attempting to draw me too into that darkness? Can a blind man lead another blind man along the road? That is an impossible task. Therefore, understand your truth before you defame or deny mine.

Transcendence means going beyond, moving past the inward focus of the self to encounter other selves, and the Self in the Other. It does not imply refuting nor rejecting any foundation, or being "other than"; rather, it means being larger than any container of belief. Hence, transcendence as a part of Spiritual Intelligence means encounter and experience beyond the normal religious container.

Transcendence is selfless service of the other; feeding and clothing the poor, visiting the elderly in nursing homes, visiting the sick in hospital and day care or after care, visiting the imprisoned. It is engagement in charitable works for the benefit of society at large. It is participation in workshops on spiritual topics and going on spiritual retreats. It is prayer and meditation in common, and participating in group prayers and prayers in the public domain.

Interfaith activity, multifaith events and inter-religious dialogue are vital elements of transcendence. In dialogue and encounter with people of other faith or spiritual traditions, the experience of the participant is enlarged to witness the experience of the person or faith group being encountered; it is also, almost always, an encounter with one's own self as the task of describing personal spirituality to others is always self-enlarging, and always, an experience of transcendence. One recognises the Divine in the encounter and dialogue with those of other spiritualities.

Sanctification: sanctify, Latin: *sanctificare* to make holy or treat as holy, to sanctify, consecrate, dedicate. The Latin *sanctus* means: to sanctify, to make holy, hallow, or keep holy. So we understand that sanctification means *To render holy, impart sanctity to (a thing, quality, action or condition)*; To impart real or apparent sacredness to; to entitle to reverence or respect; to give a colour of morality or innocence to; to justify, sanction.

Acts of sanctification include morning and evening devotions, prayers, meditations, chanting, counting of rosary beads or japa or use of prayer wheels; prayers before meals; daily prayers for peace in the world; daily affirmations of love and light towards one, or many, in one's world, or indeed, one's worldwide home, *Mother Earth*. Sanctification is evoked by daily sacred reading, self-dedication to the Divine, and participation in sacred study groups. Sanctification sees all as acts of the Divine; there are no actions or accidents which are unplanned; all is planned by the Divine.

Sanctification has an element of surrender to the Divine. One need not surrender one's intellect nor uncritically follow the guidelines of religious leaders. There is no chance of being misled or mistaken. At every step, one has to rely on one's own intellect and experience, as tested by oneself. Spirituality is **experience**, one's own, *personal* experience.

Spirituality as problem solving skill:

The elements of mystical experiences, transcendence and sanctification build what you might call your spiritual credit. When you make withdrawals at a bank the teller (or the automatic transaction machine - ATM) makes reference to your credit and processes the transaction thereby. When problems and challenges confront a person with spiritual resources, then one may draw on these resources (spiritual credits) for the solution, for strength, for energy, for perseverance and endurance. Personal experience generates *spiritual credit* against which one may make withdrawals.

Thus, spirituality becomes a resource for handling the everyday problems of living, for handling challenges, stress, trauma, accidents, disappointments, and the foundation to choose how one may act when encountering these or any other situations. The foundation of mind-management is present when such a spiritual credit is established within. There is a clear distinction between the mind and the consciousness which is established by this "spiritual credit" as we call it.

The brain is the physical locale of the mind. (The spiritual locale of the mind is in the heart.) The brain has a consciousness, but it acts little more than a computer does. Input equals output. If the mind is allowed to roam free, then it will act to preserve itself rather than to preserve others in any transcendent or outgoing manner (i.e., being unselfish and acting for the betterment of others.) The mind functions on "Look after Number One!", whereas the spirit identifies with a much larger reality which includes the reality of others, Mother Earth, the Universe, et.al.

A *spiritual credit within* moves awareness beyond the conscious mind to conscience and then, consciousness. Consciousness within is linked with your Higher Self which calls upon an entirely different set of resources to deal with confrontations and challenges and everyday living.

Spirituality as Ethical and Virtuous Behaviour:

Spirituality is acting with common sense and spiritual sense. All action reveals a person's choices and their values.

Choices are always based on what is good for the person, what they *value*. Hasty action and thoughtless action produces hasty results and thoughtless results, that which may fail to satisfy the Higher Self within. Cultivation of Self-directed behaviour produces ethical and virtuous behaviour.

Morality does not merely mean the observance of certain rules in the work-a-day world. Morality means adherence to the straight and sacred path of spiritual effort. Morality is the blossoming of good conduct. There are no universal and absolute norms of morality. Ethical relativity is an inescapable social phenomenon. Morality depends on the time, the place, and the spirit of the age.

Where energy goes, energy grows.

Energy expands with effort. Energy can be directed, channelled, steered with effort, concentration and attention. So where your energy goes, energy grows. Human muscles get stronger with constant use. Those who are right handed can learn to use their left hand. Capacity can be developed. The mind follows energy and goes where it is directed. Neural pathways in the brain connect and make stronger connections when we use them repeatedly. This is the power of directing the mind and the inner energy towards a specific goal.

The habit of spirituality developing ethical and virtuous behaviour produces integrity. Integrity is unity of thoughts, words and actions, what is called good character or **human excellence**.

These character traits are elicited by self-monitoring, self-regulation and self-review or self-audit. The cultivation of these skills and habits forms the strings of connections between conscious, conscience and consciousness, wherein one will always be acting in accord with the Higher Self. This is spirituality in action.

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