

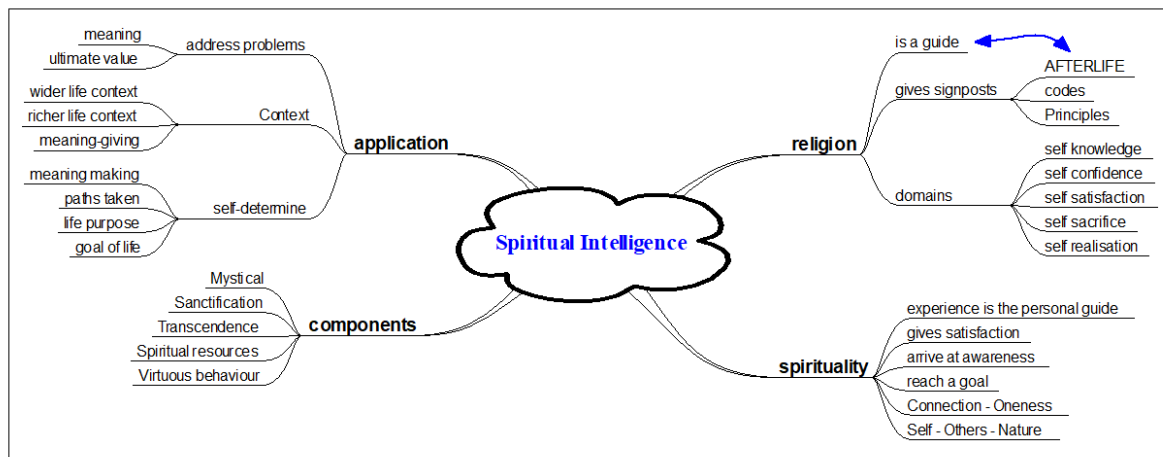
Spiritual Intelligence

This page is an overview of and introduction to Spiritual Intelligence. The spiritual focus given is not any one particular religion, faith 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 (now called existential) – the acquisition of spiritual intelligence and self-determination or meaning making via spiritual practices

Overview Mindmap



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, this way*.

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.*

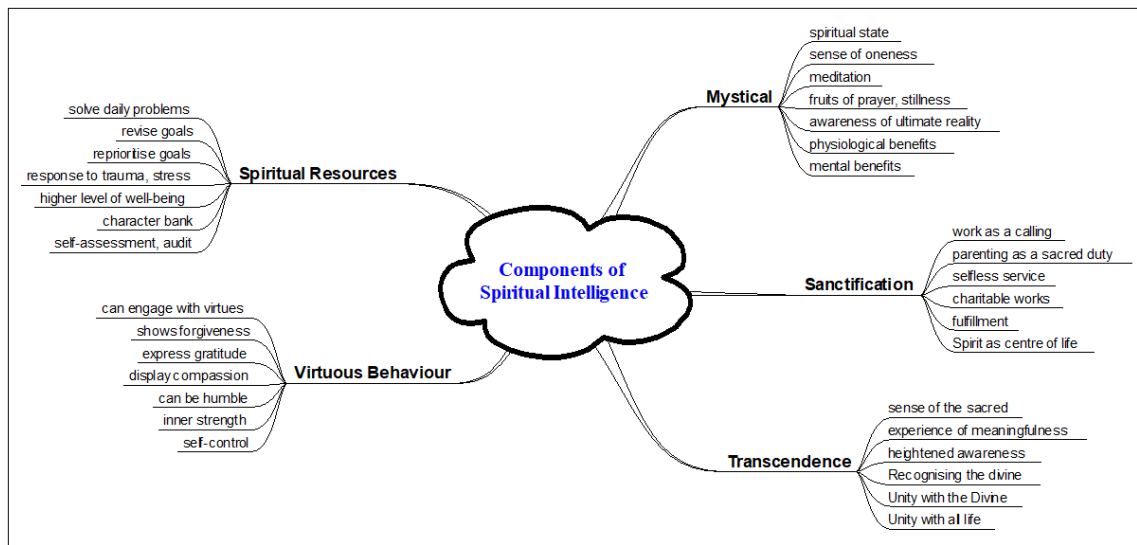
All religions give tools for self management. The arena of religion is activity, mindfulness, and effort in spiritual pursuits. Most people generally achieve their goals more quickly if they delay immediate gratification of wants and desires.

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. We are meant to be people of peace, and this peace includes the inner person. This peace also includes every activity in life.

Elements of Spiritual Intelligence

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

- Mystical
- Sanctification
- Transcendence
- Spiritual Resources
- Virtuous behaviour



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 multifaceted and variegated quests for divinity, do not have the right to limit divinity and give out norms where divine encounters might be experienced; instead, humankind is limited 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 spiritual states of being (in your own self – or in another person); there may be a sense of Oneness with all reality. These states are not limited to – meditation, chanting of prayers, mantras, use of rosary beads, japamala or other kinds of prayer wheels or sacred ‘counters’. There may arise an awareness of ultimate reality, and the benefits of the different forms of yoga may also be encountered as manifesting the mystical dimension of life. There may also be mental benefits: a sense of calm, a sense of satisfaction, and a new-found mental peace.

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.

Sanctification

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 devotional activities. Sanctification scopes to include work as a calling, a *vocation*. Selfless service to others, charitable works, seeing the Divine in the other, are all acts that lead toward making one's day, one's life sacred. Parenting may be offered as both a sacred responsibility and sacred duty. Caring for others can be taken up as making one's day – and the day of the other – as holy, sacred. Sanctification brings fulfilment and places the Spirit, the Divine, at the centre of life.

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.

Transcendence

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.

The experience of Transcendence is one's personal sense of the sacred. Flowing from transcendence is the experience of meaning-making. One has a wider life context, richer and fuller. There is a heightened awareness in the everyday: from work, interaction, rest, play, re-creation. It is recognition of the divine in the mundane, everyday activity. One glimpses – or encounters – unity with the Divine, and unity with all life.

Transcendence may also be experienced in interfaith and multifaith activities. The Divine is a diamond, a many-sided, many-faceted, many-revealing, never-ending emanations of self-effulgent brilliance shining in the heart of the other. Where interfaith and multifaith activity encounters boundaries and difference, when experience of the Divine is shared across religions, – recognition of the sacred path – recognition of divine presence in the other person’s spiritual discipline and activity as shared – is a form of transcendence. The Divine is not limited to the personal self.

Spiritual Resources

Earlier, it was said that *Spirituality is an experience*. 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 the Divine. *It is not enough to know . It is necessary to practice and draw conclusions from daily life*. This is how spiritual resources are created; this is how one builds a bank of spiritual common sense. Drawing conclusions from daily life and putting same into practice is your personal spiritual credit, your spirit bank.

The elements of mystical experiences, transcendence and sanctification build what you may 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 resilience. 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. We may revise our goals in life, we can re-prioritise other goals. The foundation of mind-management is present when such a spiritual credit is established within: we experience a higher well-being. There is a clear distinction between the mind and the higher consciousness which is established by this “spiritual credit”. We may also periodically check our “balance” by taking up self-assessment, self-audit, and evaluating our progress. Life is a journey to the goal; we don’t mistake the path for the goal.

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.

Virtuous Behaviour

When we forge a spiritual discipline, a life-purpose and path toward the goal of life, we also embody integrity. There are many definitions of integrity: here we will say that integrity is the unity of thoughts, words and actions. When these are in alignment, we have virtue, we have righteousness, and we have human flourishing. We can engage with the virtues, the values that guide our actions and choices. We can show forgiveness, and express gratitude. We are humble, and can be compassionate towards the needy and those less fortunate than ourselves. We possess an inner strength and self control, all of which exhibit 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.

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