

The 8th Intelligence



In his famous “Marshmallow Experiment” Stanford University's Walter Mischel conducted a study in which a teacher gave 4-year-olds a marshmallow and told them that, if they refrained from eating it while she left the room, they would receive a second marshmallow when she returned in a few moments. The 10 percent of children who were able to resist the temptation to eat the marshmallow right away were later found to score an average of 210 points higher on their SAT scores than the 90 percent who could not wait. This ability to discipline oneself came to be called Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Mischel's study strongly suggests that well-developed EI at an early age has a much more significant effect on future success than does a high IQ.

Emotional Intelligence is a combination of Intrapersonal and Interpersonal intelligence, identified among the traditional seven intelligences by Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University:

1. Verbal: the ability to use words
2. Visual: the ability to see things in your mind
3. Physical: the ability to use your body well
4. Musical: the ability to understand and use music
5. Mathematical / Logical: the ability to apply logic
6. Intrapersonal: the ability to understand thoughts and feelings
7. Interpersonal: the ability to relate well to others, or “people smarts”

Most traditional educational methods, along with standardized intelligence and scholastic aptitude tests, however, emphasize the development of only three of these intelligences, namely Verbal, Visual and Mathematical / Logical.

In today's demanding business environment, however, this limited focus is inadequate, and those seeking to excel in their work will benefit greatly not only from capability in the traditional seven intelligences, combined with the self-discipline of Emotional Intelligence, but from the “Eighth Intelligence”, namely Inter-Cultural Intelligence (ICI).

In today's increasingly internationalized global village, the need for effective cross-cultural communication and partnership is increasing exponentially. And those with insufficient Inter-Cultural Intelligence could find themselves seriously handicapped. Many people are otherwise intelligent, have good social skills and demonstrate emotional maturity, but still fail at cross-cultural interactions.

They are often unaware of the biases of their own culture. They frequently become threatened or uneasy when interacting with people who are culturally different. Or they find themselves unable to understand or explain behaviour of culturally different others. It is often difficult for them to use knowledge gained in their own culture within the context of other cultures. Many times they don't recognize when their own cultural orientation is adversely influencing their behavior. In short, they find themselves unable to adjust successfully to living and working in another culture.

This need not be. With properly developed Inter-Cultural Intelligence, one can successfully read, anticipate and adapt to the cultural values of others from differing cultural backgrounds. It becomes easier to make friends in a new culture, and to increase business and organizational effectiveness.

Inter-Cultural Intelligence is a unique kind of ability and can be readily developed in those who are motivated to succeed in their work in a new cultural setting. Those who develop ICI increase their ability to:

- **Improve communication.** One cannot succeed in any enterprise without being understood, nor without understanding the context.
- **Build effective relationships across cultures.** Loyal friends and reliable business contacts are essential to success in any endeavour.
- **Adapt quickly to new cultural dynamics.** The world is changing rapidly. Cultures are in flux. One must develop the ability to accurately read and skillfully respond to these realities.
- **Create long-term, sustainable success.** Learn to efficiently harness the attributes of people's varying cultural backgrounds to create synergistic inter-cultural partnerships capable of delivering far more than would be possible in a mono-cultural setting.

To be successful in any cross-cultural setting, one must obviously have a sufficient IQ, sufficient self-discipline, or EI, and sufficient experience. But these are not enough in themselves. The capstone of cross-cultural effectiveness is attaining sufficient Inter-Cultural Intelligence. And those who develop and possess it become invaluable to their companies and organizations.

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