

# Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

"We must rediscover and promote the vast range of capabilities that have a value in life and then set about valuing people for who they are, what they can be, and helping them to grow and fulfill their potential" - Alan Chapman

## Howard Gardner Bio

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory was first published in Howard Gardner's book, *Frames Of Mind* (1983), and quickly became established as a classical model by which to understand and teach many aspects of human intelligence, learning style, personality and behavior - in education and industry. Howard Gardner initially developed his ideas and theory on multiple intelligences as a contribution to psychology, however Gardner's theory was soon embraced by education, teaching and training communities, for whom the appeal was immediate and irresistible - a sure sign that Gardner had created a classic reference work and learning model.

Howard Gardner was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1943 to German Jewish immigrant parents, and entered Harvard in 1961, where, after Gardner's shift from history into social relations (which included psychology, sociology, and anthropology) he met his early mentor Erik Erikson. Later Gardner was also influenced by psychologists Jeane Piaget, Jerome Bruner, and philosopher Nelson Goodman, with whom Gardner co-founded 'Project Zero' in 1967 (focusing on studies of artistic thought and creativity). Project Zero's 1970's 'Project on Human Potential', whose aim was to address "the state of scientific knowledge concerning human potential and its realization," seems to have been the platform from which Gardner's multiple intelligences ideas grew, and were subsequently published in Gardner's *Frames Of Mind* 1983 book.

Howard Gardner is the John H and Elisabeth A Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; he serves as adjunct Professor at Harvard University, Boston University School of Medicine, and remains senior director of Harvard Project Zero. Gardner has received honorary degrees from at least twenty foreign institutions and has written over twenty highly regarded books on the human mind, learning and behavior.

## Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Model

This simple grid diagram illustrates Howard Gardner's model of the seven Multiple Intelligences at a glance.

Intelligence type	Capability and Perception
Linguistic	words and language
Logical-Mathematical	logic and numbers
Musical	music, sound, rhythm
Bodily-Kinesthetic	body, movement, control
Spatial-Visual	images and space
Interpersonal	other people's feelings
Intrapersonal	self-awareness

Gardner said that multiple intelligences were not limited to the original seven, and he has since considered the existence and definitions of other possible intelligences in his later work. Despite this, Gardner seems to have stopped short of adding to the seven (with the exception of Naturalist Intelligence) with any clearly and fully detailed additional intelligence definitions. This is not because there are no more intelligences - it is because of the difficulty of adequately and satisfactorily defining them, since the additional intelligences are rather more complex than those already evidenced and defined.

Not surprisingly, commentators and theorists continually debate and interpret potential additions to the model, and this is why you might see more than seven intelligences listed in recent interpretations of Gardner's model. As mentioned above, Naturalist Intelligence seems most popularly considered worthy of inclusion of the potential additional 'Gardner' intelligences.

## Gardner's Multiple Intelligences - detail

The more detailed diagram below expands the detail for the original seven intelligences shown above, and also suggests ideas for applying the model and underpinning theories, so as to optimize learning and training, design accelerated learning methods, and to assess training and learning suitability and effectiveness.

<b>Intelligence Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Typical Roles</b>	<b>Related Tasks, Activities or Tests</b>	<b>Preferred Learning Style Clues</b>
1 <b>Linguistic</b>	<b>words and language</b> , written and spoken; retention, interpretation and explanation of ideas and information via language, understands relationship between communication and meaning	writers, lawyers, journalists, speakers, trainers, copy-writers, english teachers, poets, editors, linguists, translators, PR consultants, media consultants, TV and radio presenters, voice-over artists	write a set of instructions; speak on a subject; edit a written piece or work; write a speech; commentate on an event; apply positive or negative 'spin' to a story	words and language
2 <b>Logical-Mathematical</b>	<b>logical thinking</b> , detecting patterns, scientific reasoning and deduction; analyze problems, perform mathematical calculations, understands relationship between cause and effect towards a tangible outcome or result	scientists, engineers, computer experts, accountants, statisticians, researchers, analysts, traders, bankers, bookmakers, insurance brokers, negotiators, deal-makers, trouble-shooters, directors	perform a mental arithmetic calculation; create a process to measure something difficult; analyze how a machine works; create a process; devise a strategy to achieve an aim; assess the value of a business or a proposition	numbers and logic
3 <b>Musical</b>	<b>musical ability</b> , awareness, appreciation and use of sound; recognition of tonal and rhythmic patterns, understands relationship between sound and feeling	musicians, singers, composers, DJ's, music producers, piano tuners, acoustic engineers, entertainers, party-planners, environment and noise advisors, voice coaches	perform a musical piece; sing a song; review a musical work; coach someone to play a musical instrument; specify mood music for telephone systems and receptions	music, sounds, rhythm
4 <b>Bodily-Kinesthetic</b>	<b>body movement control</b> , manual dexterity, physical agility and balance; eye and body coordination	dancers, demonstrators, actors, athletes, divers, sports-people, soldiers, fire-fighters, PTI's, performance artistes; ergonomists, osteopaths, fishermen, drivers, crafts-people; gardeners, chefs, acupuncturists, healers, adventurers	juggle; demonstrate a sports technique; flip a beer-mat; create a mime to explain something; toss a pancake; fly a kite; coach workplace posture, assess workstation ergonomics	physical experience and movement, touch and feel
5 <b>Spatial-Visual</b>	<b>visual and spatial perception</b> ; interpretation and creation of visual images; pictorial imagination and expression; understands relationship between images and meanings, and between space and effect	artists, designers, cartoonists, story-boarders, architects, photographers, sculptors, town-planners, visionaries, inventors, engineers, cosmetics and beauty consultants	design a costume; interpret a painting; create a room layout; create a corporate logo; design a building; pack a suitcase or the boot of a car	pictures, shapes, images, 3D space
6 <b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>perception of other people's feelings</b> ; ability to relate to others; interpretation of behavior and	therapists, HR professionals, mediators, leaders, counselors, politicians, educators, sales-people, clergy, psychologists,	interpret moods from facial expressions; demonstrate feelings through body language; affect the feelings of	human contact, communications, cooperation, teamwork

	communications; understands the relationships between people and their situations, including other people	teachers, doctors, healers, organizers, careers, advertising professionals, coaches and mentors; (there is clear association between this type of intelligence and what is now termed 'Emotional Intelligence' or EQ)	others in a planned way; coach or counsel another person	
7	<b>Intrapersonal</b> <b>self-awareness,</b> personal cognizance, personal objectivity, the capability to understand oneself, one's relationship to others and the world, and one's own need for, and reaction to change	arguably anyone (see note below) who is self-aware and involved in the process of changing personal thoughts, beliefs and behavior in relation to their situation, other people, their purpose and aims - in this respect there is a similarity to Maslow's Self-Actualization level, and again there is clear association between this type of intelligence and what is now termed 'Emotional Intelligence' or EQ	consider and decide one's own aims and personal changes required to achieve them (not necessarily reveal this to others); consider one's own 'Johor Window', and decide options for development; consider and decide one's own position in relation to the Emotional Intelligence model	self-reflection, self-discovery

**Roles and intrapersonal intelligence:** Given that a 'role' tends to imply external style/skills, engagement, etc., the intrapersonal ability is less liable to define or suggest a certain role or range of roles than any of the other characteristics. That said there is a clear correlation between intrapersonal ability/potential and introverted non-judgmental roles/working styles. Intrapersonal capability might also be seen as the opposite of ego and self-projection. Self-awareness is a prerequisite for self-discipline and self-improvement. Intrapersonal capacity enables an emotionally mature ('grown-up') response to external and internal stimuli. The intrapersonal characteristic might therefore be found among (but most definitely not extending to all) counselors, helpers, translators, teachers, actors, poets, writers, musicians, artists, and also any other role to which people can bring emotional maturity, which commonly manifests as adaptability, flexibility, facilitation, reflection, and other 'grown-up' behaviors.

## Gardner's Multiple Intelligences - Principles and Interpretation

Howard Gardner asserts certain principles relating to his multiple intelligence theory, which are explained and interpreted here, along with implications and examples:

The multiple intelligences theory represents a definition of human nature from a cognitive perspective. (ie. how we perceive; how we are aware of things).

This provides absolutely pivotal and inescapable indication as to people's **preferred learning styles**, as well as their **behavioral and working styles**, and their **natural strengths**. The types of intelligence that a person possesses (Gardner suggests most of us are strong in three types) indicates not only a persons capabilities, but also the manner or method in which they prefer to learn and develop their strengths - and also to develop their weaknesses.

So for example:

- A person who is strong musically and weak numerically will be more likely to develop numerical and logical skills through music, and not by being bombarded by numbers alone.
- A person who is weak spatially and strong numerically, will be more likely to develop spatial ability if it is explained and developed by using numbers and logic, and not by asking them to pack a suitcase in front of an audience.
- A person who is weak bodily and physically and strong numerically might best be encouraged to increase their physical activity by encouraging them to learn about the mathematical and scientific relationships between exercise, diet and health, rather than forcing them to box or play rugby.

The pressure of possible failure and being forced to act and think unnaturally, have a significant negative influence on learning effectiveness. Happy relaxed people learn more readily than unhappy stressful people.

A person's strength is also a learning channel. A person's weakness is not a great learning channel.

When you factor in what we know about personal belief and confidence it all begins to make even more sense.

Develop people through their strengths and we not only stimulate their development - we also make them happy

(because everyone enjoys working in their strength areas) - and we also grow their confidence and lift their belief (because they see they are doing well, and they get told they are doing well too).  
Developing a person's strengths will increase their response to the learning experience, which helps them to develop their weaknesses as well as their strengths.  
Having illustrated that sensible use of a person's natural strengths and types of intelligence is a good thing, it's important to point out that intelligence in itself is not a measure of good or bad, nor of happy or sad.  
The different intelligences - in Gardner's context are not a measure or reflection of emotion type. Intelligences are emotionally neutral. No type of intelligence is in itself an expression of happiness or sadness; or an expression of feeling good or bad.  
In the same way, the multiple intelligences are morally neutral too. No type of intelligence is intrinsically right or wrong. In other words intelligences are amoral, that is, neither moral nor immoral - irrespective of a person's blend of intelligences.  
Intelligences are separate to the good or bad purposes to which people apply whatever intelligences they possess and use. Intelligences are not in themselves good or bad.  
The types of intelligences that a person possesses are in themselves no indication or reflection - whatsoever - of whether the person is good or bad, happy or sad, right or wrong.  
People possess a set of intelligences - not just one type and level of intelligence. This was a primary driver of Gardner's thinking; the fact, or assertion, that intelligence is not a single scalable aspect of a person's style and capability.  
Intelligence is a mixture of several abilities that are all of great value in life.  
The fact is that we are all intelligent in different ways.  
We must rediscover and promote the vast range of capabilities that have a value in life and then set about valuing people for who they are, what they can be, and helping them to grow and fulfill their potential.

**Relevant publications and references:**

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