

LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success.

Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more satisfying life.



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Your Intelligence Is Above Average.

When I was in elementary school children were given a series of standardized intelligence tests the results of which dictated the category to which they would be assigned. In the early grades this label would determine what expectations would be set for the child and later to which classes they would be assigned. As a child I was a bit of a dreamer (especially in the classroom) and as a second and third grader I doubt I much focused on those tests. The further I went through high school, college, and graduate school I came to realize that I was only a middling test taker. Thus, as an adult, I am led to believe that my early assignment to the "A" group was probably less a function of my burgeoning intellectual capacity than it was to being a cousin of the school superintendant and my ability to talk my way out of the frequent mischievous hijinks for which I was inevitably apprehended.

There has been much research identifying the multiple inherent biases of such tests. Studies have also shown that when one teacher is told "This year you have the smart kids" and another is told "You have all the others" that the former group of students perform better than does the latter group." Surely a matter of expectations - not intelligence quotient.

National Public Radio used to broadcast an entertaining show with comedy, music, and news from a fictional Minnesota town "where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average" - a sly dig at both cultural hubris and self-delusion.

An entire industry (and a monopolistic and lucrative one at that) has held our high school,

college, and graduate school students hostage to the notion that one's academic and professional success can be estimated on the basis of scores in some proportion of math skills and verbal skills. A few progressive schools are starting to completely discard this "one size fits all" assessment process that most teachers were themselves weaned on. Others want to tinker with it adding an "adversity score" reflecting a student's social and economic background which, itself, is a blatant admission that standardized testing is inherently unfair to all students. Of course, since we hear it so loudly trumpeted that the U.S. is a strict meritocracy we need not address issues of class privilege or corrupt educators or what unethical and illegal lengths the wealthy have long employed to unfairly promote their own entitled children.

What if there was a way of thinking about intelligence that could overpower accumulated advantage, that did not limit students to one style of learning, did not see intelligence measured on opposite poles of verbal or mathematical skills, and that explained why an Einstein might not be able to tell North from South or a sharp note from a flat. Perhaps you have heard of Dr. Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist who has posited and explored his theory of multiple intelligences in hundreds of research articles and thirty books starting with *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* in 1983. Dr. Gardner has a list of accolades as long as your arm that includes a MacArthur Prize Fellowship (the so-called genius grant), fellowships from the John S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in 1981 and 2000, the Brock International Prize in Education, honorary degrees from thirty-one colleges and universities in the U.S., South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. I could go on and on but I'd rather relate a comment shared with me by a custodian who then worked in Dr. Gardner's building at Harvard's School of Ed where I was giving a presentation. When I mentioned that Gardner was one of my professional heroes he said with a soft Irish brogue "Ah, you couldn't meet a finer fellow in a day's walk." Why was I not surprised.

Gardner envisions a way of assessing and appreciating levels of competence in skills that range far more widely than those measured by traditional intelligence tests. He has defined seven main "intelligences" each having its own pattern of development and its own distinct neurological pattern. In recent years he has begun to explore an eighth and possibly a ninth domain. To get you thinking I'll add them to the very brief descriptions below.

Paths Forward

- Linguistic: A facility with words and languages.
 - Musical: A sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, meter, melody.
 - Logical - mathematical: A capacity for reasoning, abstractions, numbers and critical thinking.
 - Spatial - visual: Spatial judgement and facility to "see" with the mind's eye.
 - Bodily - kinesthetic: Characterized by strong motor skills, coordination, a sense of timing, awareness of and control of bodily motions.
 - Interpersonal: Awareness and ability to empathize with others' emotions, moods, motivations. (Not just extroversion or "liking people".)
 - Intrapersonal: Characterized by introspection, self-reflection, understanding of elements of emotional life, strengths, weaknesses, uniqueness, loss, growth.
- #8. A new addition.
- Naturalistic: A personal receptiveness to natural surroundings, ability to recognize flora and fauna, and understanding of complex interplay between humanity and greater ecosphere.
- #9 A possible addition.
- Existential: A capacity for fearlessly addressing the larger questions of human existence such as life and death, consciousness and my place in the universe. Closer to spiritual thinking than religious.

Its easy to see what careers might be appropriate for people strong in these various domains. But consider that they are strong or weak in relation to each other. Just because you have an

But consider that they are strong or weak in relation to each other. Just because you have an innate bent for one area of life does not necessarily imply you should or must spend your life carrying out its dictates. Many with natural talent for math land happily in management careers. Gifted writers often find themselves in medicine or information technology. Some folks happily hybridize a career from two of their strengths and others may fully engage a strength through a hobby, volunteer activity or second career in retirement.

On the Web there are a variety of multiple intelligences assessment tools that can be fun, illuminating and thought provoking. None are perfect. Take a couple and see how they compare. And be open to what you might learn about yourself. Because in one intelligence or more you are way above average.

Suggested Resources:

Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences Paperback by Dr Howard Gardner (Publisher: Basic Books, 3rd edition)

Please explore Dr. Gardner's extensive 30 + book bibliography to find the text that most intrigues you as a student, parent, educator or curious human being.

Ellie Rae Discovers Eight Ways to be SMART: A book about Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences by Mary R. Massey (Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform)

A rhyming children's book that introduces young children and adults to Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

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TO YOUR
Interview

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Sincerely,
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