

**A Practical Guide to**

# **SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE**

**Learn about your own spiritual capacities  
and what you can do to develop them today!**



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This information is based on a model of spiritual intelligence that was developed by David B. King as part of his Master's thesis work at Trent University. It was subsequently published in a refereed, academic journal which was reviewed by other psychologists and researchers. The references for these documents are as follows:

- King, D. B. (2008). *Rethinking claims of spiritual intelligence: A definition, model, & measure*. Unpublished master's thesis, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada.
- King, D. B., & DeCicco, T. L. (2009). A viable model and self-report measure of spiritual intelligence. *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 28, 68–85.
- King, D. B. (2010). Personal meaning production as a component of spiritual intelligence. *International Journal of Existential Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 3(1), 1–5.
- King, D. B., Mara, C., & DeCicco, T. L. (2012). Connecting the spiritual and emotional intelligences: Confirming an intelligence criterion and assessing the role of empathy. *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 31, 11–20.

#### **DISCLAIMER:**

**The information in this eBook is meant for educational purposes only,  
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evaluation of spiritual intelligence.**

For more information, including contact information, please visit  
<http://www.dbking.net/spiritualintelligence/>

# A Brief Introduction to Intelligence

In the fourth century B.C.E., the Greek philosopher Plato compared human intelligence to blocks of wax, in so much that people differed in the size, hardness, moistness, and purity of their intelligence.

It was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the construct of intelligence would experience a massive boom in scientific theory and research. In his 1871 book *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin contended that human intelligence developed from the instincts of our earlier nonhuman ancestors. According to Darwin, only intelligent genes would have remained in the gene pool, increasing the degree of human intelligence over time.

Valid methods of testing intelligence were first developed by Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon in 1916. They defined intelligence as a set of judgement skills which could only be tested by examining higher-level cognitive abilities, such as verbal skills and social comprehension. **IQ** was a concept previously developed by William Stern in 1912. To this day, it remains a controversial issue among educators, researchers, and psychologists alike.

Jean Piaget also made a lasting contribution to intelligence theory, focusing on how knowledge is acquired **throughout the lifespan**. Based on his experience with intelligence testing in children, Piaget came to the conclusion that the intellectual abilities of children are not simply at a lower level than those of adults, but that they differ entirely in quality.

Today, the nature of human intelligence is considered one of the most **controversial** and highly debated areas of psychological theory and research. Although the IQ test continues to be used, it is heavily criticized for its cross-cultural limitations and erroneous assumptions. The past two decades have also witnessed an expansion of research on the biological foundations of human intelligence.

Although a century has passed since the IQ test was first proposed, a clear consensus does not exist on the definition of human intelligence. Howard Gardner, author of the theory of multiple intelligences, defines an intelligence as “a computational capacity – a capacity to process a certain kind of information – that originates in human biology and human psychology” (1993, p. 6). From a more basic perspective, each of the following **definitions of intelligence** illustrates an important aspect of human intelligence:

- (1) The **ability** to think, reason, and solve problems.
- (2) The **ability** to take in, process, and apply new information.
- (3) The **ability** to learn from experience.

The common word here is **ability**. In its most basic form, human intelligence involves mental abilities or capacities which, when applied, allow us to successfully process, integrate, and use information in an adaptive way.

# Multiple Intelligence

## Theory

In his 1983 book *Frames of Mind*, **Howard Gardner** proposed the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (abbreviated as MI theory). Gardner described intelligence not as one single entity (like IQ), but as seven independent primary intelligences:

- 1. Linguistic Intelligence** – This intelligence involves a sensitivity to the meaning of words, the order and arrangement of letters and words (phonology, spelling, grammar, and syntax), the sounds of words (rhythms and inflections), and the many functions of language (pragmatics).
- 2. Logical–Mathematical Intelligence** – This intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. It includes the ability to detect patterns, reason, and think logically.
- 3. Spatial Intelligence** – The core abilities of this intelligence include the capacity to perceive the world accurately, the capacity to perform transformations and modifications upon one's perceptions, and the ability to recreate aspects of one's visual experience in the mind (even in the absence of the stimuli).
- 4. Musical Intelligence** – The core operations which comprise this intelligence include the capacities for musical composition, performance, and appreciation, accompanied by skills in the recognition of musical pitch, tone, and rhythm.
- 5. Bodily–Kinesthetic Intelligence** – This intelligence includes the capacity to control one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skilfully. Included in these capacities are the abilities to judge timing, force, extent of movements, and to subsequently make the appropriate physical adjustments.
- 6. Intrapersonal Intelligence** – The core capacity of this intelligence is the ability to access one's own feelings. This is accompanied by the capacity to discriminate among these emotions, to label them, and to draw upon them in order to guide behaviour.
- 7. Interpersonal Intelligence** – This intelligence is essentially the external application of intrapersonal abilities. Included is the capacity to notice and make distinctions among other individuals, particularly their emotions and mood states, temperaments, motivations, and intentions.

Gardner's interpersonal intelligence is similar to the idea of **social intelligence**, which was proposed by Edward Thorndike in 1920. Today, the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences are more frequently combined and referred to as a single construct called **emotional intelligence**. The idea of emotional intelligence has been widely studied by psychologists Daniel Goleman and Peter Salovey (among others).

Are there

# Other Intelligences ?

Since Gardner first offered his theory of multiple intelligences, additional intelligences have been proposed. Some of these have been considered more seriously by the academic community, including:

**8. Naturalist Intelligence** – In 1993, Gardner accepted an eighth intelligence on his list of multiple intelligences. Naturalist intelligence enables human beings to recognize, categorize, and draw upon features of the environment, whether these features be plants, animals, mountains, or cloud formations. Gardner suggested that in developed countries, our consumer culture is based on the naturalist intelligence, being used each time we shop for groceries or buy one car rather than another.

**Moral Intelligence** – Gardner has also considered a moral intelligence as a potential candidate in his model. According to Gardner (1999), the moral domain “is a concern with those rules, behaviours and attitudes that govern the sanctity of life – in particular, the sanctity of human life and, in many cases, the sanctity of any other living creature and the world they inhabit” (p. 70). He further contends that morality is more an issue of personality and character than it is an issue of intelligence, therefore doubting its place in multiple intelligence theory.

**Existential Intelligence** – Howard Gardner describes existential intelligence as “the intelligence of big questions” (Gardner, 1993, p. 20), based on the human tendency to contemplate the most fundamental questions of life. Gardner contends that an existential intelligence scores reasonably well on his criteria for intelligence, noting that such issues arise in every culture and that children often raise these questions at an early age. Individuals with exceptional existential abilities can be noted throughout history, such as religious leaders and philosophers.

Nevertheless, Gardner hesitates to officially add existential intelligence to his list, maintaining that evidence is still lacking. He is often quoted as stating that until such evidence is found, he will continue speaking of “eight and a half intelligences” (Gardner, 1993, p. 21).

**Spiritual Intelligence** – Although Gardner does not support a spiritual intelligence in his model, an overwhelming number of authors, researchers, and clinicians have recently proposed spiritual intelligence as a valid psychological phenomenon. Unfortunately, they have failed to satisfy the majority of psychologists and researchers. Many have also failed to describe spiritual intelligence in a way that makes it universally applicable. In many cases, these theories are based on single religious perspectives and use religious language, making them non-inclusive and therefore, invalid.

Intelligence researchers agree that an intelligence must be observed across cultures and geographical boundaries. In order to develop a valid model of spiritual intelligence, we must escape language that favours one spiritual perspective over another.

# What is Spiritual Intelligence?

In simplest terms, spiritual intelligence is the **adaptive application** of spirituality in everyday life. That is to say, it involves “using” our spirituality in order to solve problems, make plans, and adapt to life’s challenges.

From a psychological perspective, spiritual intelligence can be described as a **set of mental abilities** which contribute to the **awareness, integration,** and **adaptive application** of the **nonmaterial** and **transcendent** aspects of one’s existence.

*Let’s look more closely at the components of this definition...*

**A Set of Mental Abilities** – Intelligence experts all agree that an intelligence must include a set of mental abilities. This means that spiritual intelligence should only include mental facilities, skills, or capacities. For example, the ability to add and subtract is a key component of mathematical intelligence; however, whether or not one enjoys math or performs mathematical computations on a daily basis is not part of this intelligence. Similarly, one’s ability to enter spiritual states of consciousness at will is part of spiritual intelligence; however, the frequency at which a person meditates is not (this is a behaviour, not an ability).

**Nonmaterial / Transcendent** – It is well established that there are many aspects of existence that human beings do not perceive using the five basic senses. Transcendent is defined as “going beyond normal or physical human experience,” and describes those aspects of life that are nonmaterial and nonphysical in nature. In the case of spiritual intelligence, we are referring to transcendent things such as a sense of meaning or purpose, a deeper sense of self, a holistic view of reality, and/or spiritual states of consciousness (such as oneness). One specific example is noticing connections between objects or events which are not supported by traditional logic.

**Awareness** – This refers quite simply to the perception of the nonmaterial and transcendent. In the case of spiritual intelligence, spiritual abilities all involve or lead to a heightened awareness of the transcendent and nonmaterial aspects of existence.

**Integration** – In addition to the perception of these aspects of existence, spiritual capacities also contribute to their integration. Integration refers to the processing of nonmaterial and transcendent “information” and its subsequent assimilation. This means combining or reconciling the information, incorporating it into previously developed perspectives and attitudes, and relating it to other aspects of life.

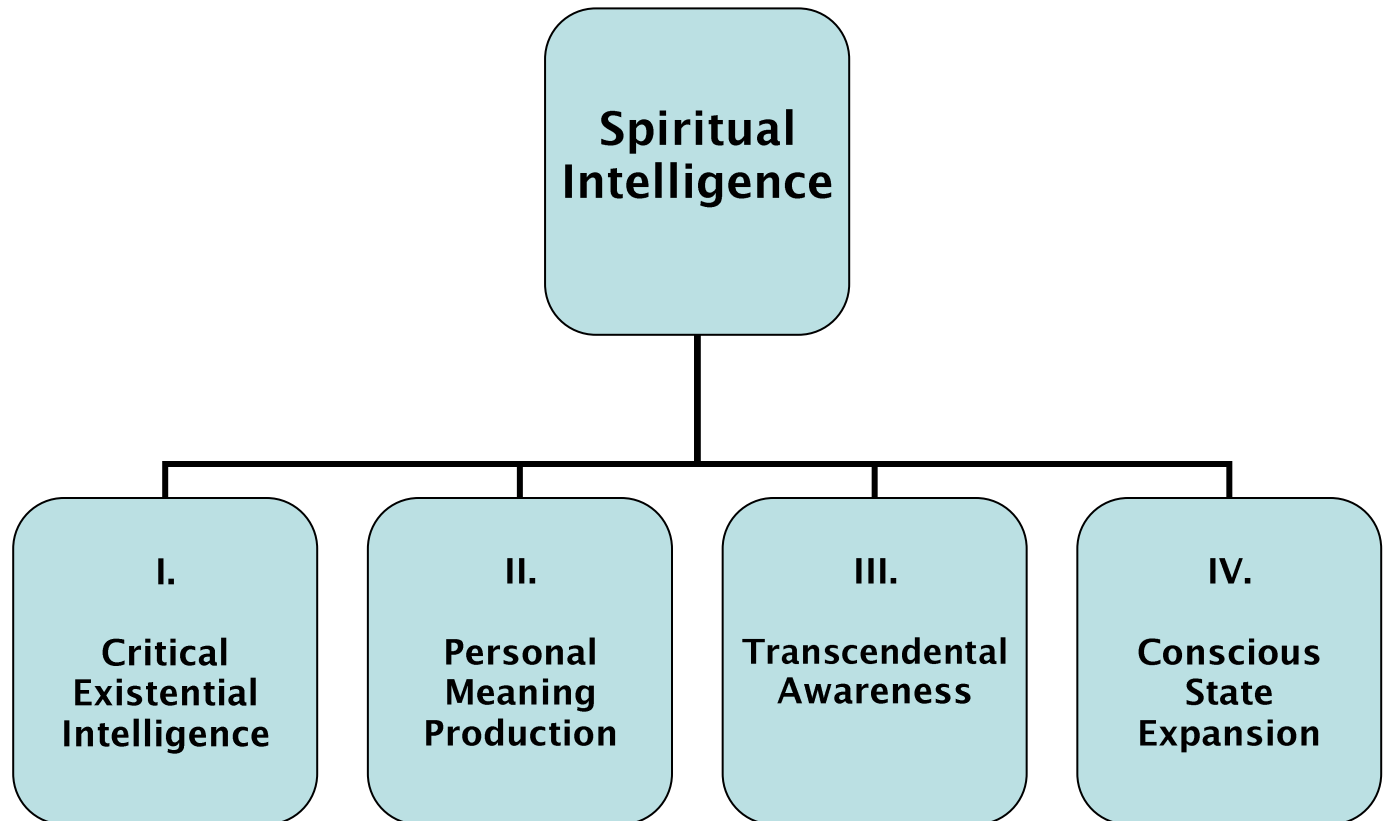
**Adaptive Application** – This is a key aspect of this definition, as experts insist that an intelligence must lead to successful adaptation. In the case of spiritual intelligence, when applied intelligently, spiritual capacities should lead to adaptive outcomes that are effective in their intended application (for example, successfully solving a problem).

# Components of Spiritual Intelligence

Four primary abilities have been identified as comprising spiritual intelligence.

These abilities represent common aspects of human spirituality (as distinct from religiousness) that have been identified by psychologists and researchers. Although they reflect many of the ideas and theories on spiritual intelligence proposed to date, they are organized here in a way that provides a more inclusive and universal perspective on spiritual intelligence.

The following model of spiritual intelligence was proposed by David B. King in 2008, as part of his Master's Thesis at Trent University in Canada. It was subsequently published in the *international Journal of Transpersonal Studies* (see King & DeCicco, 2009).



## Ability #1

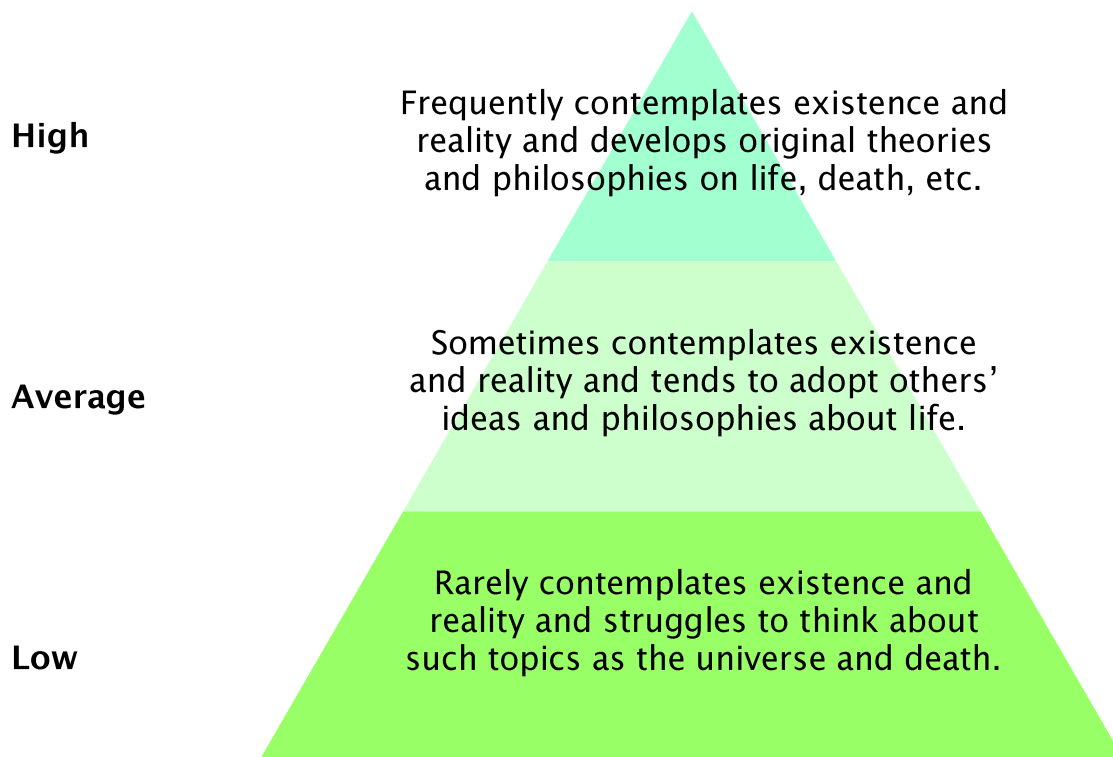
# Critical Existential Thinking

The first component of spiritual intelligence is referred to as critical existential thinking. It is formally defined as the capacity to critically contemplate the nature of existence.

The word existential is most simply defined as “having to do with existence.” Therefore, from a basic perspective, existential thinking refers to thinking about one’s existence. Based on the complex and diverse facets of existence, it can then be inferred that thinking about one’s existence involves thinking about such matters as life and death, reality, consciousness, the universe, time, truth, justice, evil, and other metaphysical issues.

Simply asking questions does not demonstrate complete mastery of this ability. One must be able to contemplate such existential issues using critical thinking, and in some cases come to original conclusions or personal philosophies regarding existence and reality, perhaps integrating scientific knowledge and personal experience. This more accurately reflects a form of mental ability.

The following diagram illustrates the different levels of critical existential thinking that might be observed in different people.





# Measure

## Your Critical Existential Thinking

The following questions can be used to estimate your level of critical existential thinking. For each question, choose the response that most accurately describes you.

Note that these questions have only been developed to get a rough idea of your critical existential thinking; they do not represent any kind of clinical assessment and are not meant to be used to compare your abilities to those of anyone else.

	Not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true true of me
1. I have frequently questioned the nature of reality.	1	2	3
2. I have often contemplated the relationship between human beings and the rest of the universe.	1	2	3
3. I have developed my own theories about such things as life, death, reality, and/or a higher power or force (such as God).	1	2	3

CET Total:

Now, add up your scores for each question, and either remember your total or write it here:

On the subsequent page, find the range that fits your total, and interpret your results accordingly.

# Measure

## Your Critical Existential Thinking

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Below, find the range that fits your total score on critical existential thinking, and interpret your score. These descriptions are only meant to give you a general idea of your current level of critical existential thinking. Remember, there is always room for growth!

### TOTAL:

### WHAT IT MEANS:

3 – 4

You rarely contemplate issues of an existential nature. You may think about these issues, such as God or death, from time to time, but you likely find it difficult to reflect on them with great depth. You may become frustrated when trying to “figure out” how you feel about such issues, or when trying to engage in conversations about existential topics with others.

5 – 7

You are able to contemplate existential issues without great difficulty, and engage in such reflection from time to time. You may find certain topics, such as justice or death, easier to contemplate than others. More complex issues, such as the origins of the universe, may be slightly more difficult topics to consider. You’ve likely adopted some of your own philosophies on life, but some of these ideas may be borrowed from other sources.

8 – 9

You have a strong tendency to contemplate issues of an existential and/or metaphysical nature on a regular basis. It is probably normal for you to think about such issues in your daily life, and you do so with relative ease. When you can, you may spend longer periods of time reflecting on the nature of existence. In fact, during quiet moments, you may find your mind wandering to such thoughts automatically. Although you enjoy considering the ideas of others, you have come up with at least some of your own philosophies regarding life, existence, and related matters.

# Improve

## Your Critical Existential Thinking

A number of things can be done on a daily basis that will help you improve your critical existential thinking over time. No matter what level you are at, there is always room for improvement and growth. These are just a few tips to help get you started...

### **Discuss Existential Issues**

One of the most basic ways to exercise your capacity for existential thinking is to discuss existential issues with other people. Choose a partner, a close friend, or a family member with whom you get along. Try discussing and expressing your ideas about a higher power or deity, the origins of the universe, or your beliefs about what happens after death. Simply expressing your thoughts and trying to articulate them will help to expand your capacity for existential thinking.

### **Write about Existential Topics**

In addition to talking about your thoughts and ideas, writing about them can also be extremely helpful. Try keeping a journal of your thoughts and ideas about life, death, reality, the universe, and so on. If you don't know what to write, start by writing out the questions that come to mind. If you still find yourself struggling, try writing down all of the possible answers to these questions that come to mind. Once you do so, consider which answers you agree with the most, and write down your reasons. Brainstorming about existential topics can further aid in exploring your thoughts.

### **Analyze an Existential Debate or Argument**

In order to get thinking more critically about existential issues, try analyzing a debate or argument about a particular existential topic. Do a simple search online. You should have no problem finding others' opinions about death, God, justice, or the origins of life and the universe. Once you've found a particular statement or debate, read it over carefully and look for weak arguments, erroneous assumptions, and false information. Also consider your own opinion on the matter and why you feel that way. Although there are not necessarily "right" or "wrong" opinions on issues like life and death, there is still plenty of room for incorrect assumptions and inconsistent arguments. When you are finished, write your own response to the statement or debate.

### **Existential Topics to Contemplate**

- a higher power, energy, or deity
- the origins of life and the universe
- the future of the human race
- what happens after death / before birth
- the definition of truth and justice
- does "evil" exist? / good vs. evil
- whether reality exists only in our minds (i.e., do we create reality?)
- the definition of reality
- the nature of human consciousness
- the nature of time and the relationships among past, present, and future

## Ability #2

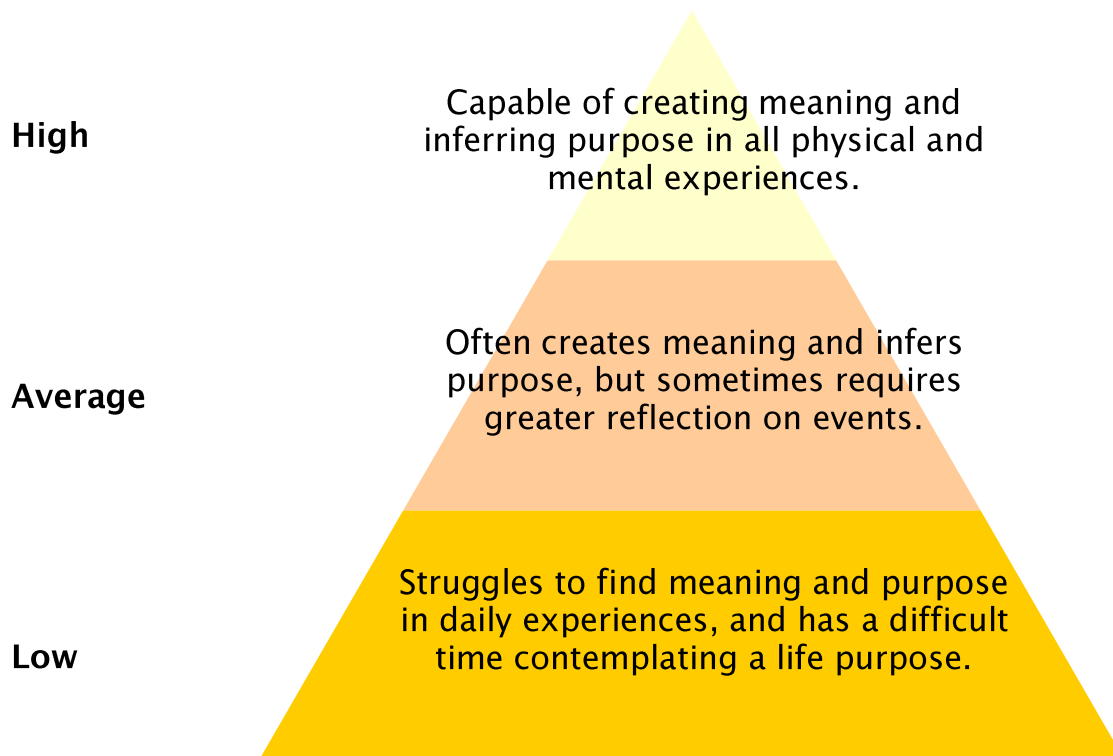
# Personal Meaning Production

The second component of spiritual intelligence is personal meaning production, which is defined as the ability to construct personal meaning and purpose in all physical and mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master a life purpose.

Meaning is most simply defined as “a sense of purpose.” Personal meaning has also been defined as “having a purpose in life, having a sense of direction, a sense of order and a reason for existence” (Reker, 1997, p. 710). In effect, personal meaning production can be interpreted as the ability to live a meaningful and purposeful life. While one may be able to derive purpose from daily events and experiences, one may also be able to define a purpose for his/her life. This likely involves more coherent and creative forms of meaning production. The mastering of a purpose refers to one’s ability to infer his/her purpose in all events and experiences.

It is reasonable to conclude that there is no limit to the number of sources available from which one can construct or extract meaning and purpose. For this reason, the ability to create meaning in all mental and physical experiences occupies the highest level of this particular ability.

The following diagram illustrates the different levels of personal meaning production that might be observed in different people.



# Measure

## Your Personal Meaning Production

The following questions can be used to estimate your level of personal meaning production. For each question, choose the response that most accurately describes you.

Note that these questions have only been developed to get a rough idea of your personal meaning production; they do not represent any kind of clinical assessment and are not meant to be used to compare your abilities to those of anyone else.

	Not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true true of me
1. I am able to find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences.	1	2	3
2. I have spent time contemplating the purpose or reason for my existence.	1	2	3
3. When I experience a failure, I am still able to find meaning in it.	1	2	3

PMP Total:

Now, add up your scores for each question, and either remember your total or write it here:

On the subsequent page, find the range that fits your total, and interpret your results accordingly.

# Measure

## Your Personal Meaning Production

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Below, find the range that fits your total score on personal meaning production, and interpret your score. These descriptions are only meant to give you a general idea of your current level of personal meaning production. Remember, there is always room for growth!

### TOTAL:

### WHAT IT MEANS:

3 – 4

You rarely find meaning or purpose in your daily experiences, and may struggle to find any meaning at all. You especially find it difficult to find meaning and purpose in stressful or negative experiences, such as loss or death. When you observe others finding positive meaning in such negative experiences, you may become frustrated that you can't do the same. You may have thought about your purpose in life, but you likely haven't defined your purpose yet.

5 – 7

You are able to find meaning and purpose in some or many of your daily experiences, and you do so without great difficulty. You may find that certain situations, such as loss, death, or injury, are more difficult to derive meaning and purpose from than others. You have likely spent a fair amount of time reflecting on your purpose in life, and may have begun to gain clarity on this issue.

8 – 9

You have a tendency to derive meaning and purpose from nearly all of your daily experiences, and you do so with relative ease. Even when you do not actively produce meaning, you are confident that you could do so if needed. You are probably fairly skilled at finding positive meaning in negative experiences, such as loss or death (that is, you frequently reappraise negative events as positive). You have defined a purpose for your life (even if this purpose changes and evolves), and you are able to make decisions on a regular basis which satisfy this purpose.

# Improve

## Your Personal Meaning Production

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A number of things can be done on a daily basis that will help you improve your personal meaning production over time. No matter what level you are at, there is always room for improvement and growth. These are just a few tips to help get you started...

### **Make a List**

Firstly, make a list of all the things that give your life a sense of meaning and purpose. Include daily activities, work, hobbies, relationships, people, pets, and even special events or occasions. Include on this list all the things that give you happiness, enrich your life, and give you a sense of purpose when you wake up in the morning. Add to this list as you need, and reflect on it. This list should help you better recognize the experiences in your life that give you meaning and purpose, therefore enhancing your ability to find meaning on a daily basis.

### **Write about Your Meaningful Experiences**

When you have a meaningful experience, write about it. Describe the aspects of the experience that you think gave you a sense of meaning and purpose. Further discuss the emotions you experienced and any physical reactions to these emotions. You can use a journal of these events to later reflect on that which gives your life meaning and purpose. By doing so, you are exercising your meaning making abilities.

### **Find the Good in the Bad**

An important aspect of personal meaning production is the capacity to find positive meaning in negative or traumatic experiences. This can be in the moment or upon later reflection. In order to practice this, you can start by choosing a negative experience that someone close to you (or even a stranger) recently had. Think about this person's experience, and try to find any positive outcomes of the event that have occurred or might occur in the future. In some cases, these positive outcomes may not occur for months or even years following the event. Once you are comfortable with this, consider some negative experiences in your own life in the same way, trying to find meaning or purpose in the negativity. Start with a smaller event, such as a criticism, and work your way towards more significant experiences. It may be helpful to write down these thoughts, or make a list of "good outcomes" and "bad outcomes." After enough practice, you may find yourself doing this while negative experiences are unfolding.

### **Define a Purpose for Your Life**

Spend some time contemplating your life purpose. You may want to write down your thoughts about this, or simply spend some time reflecting on it. Try to narrow the ideas and possibilities you come up with, and attempt to apply some of them in your daily life to see if they make any sense. This may help you gain clarity about your life's purpose.

## Ability #3

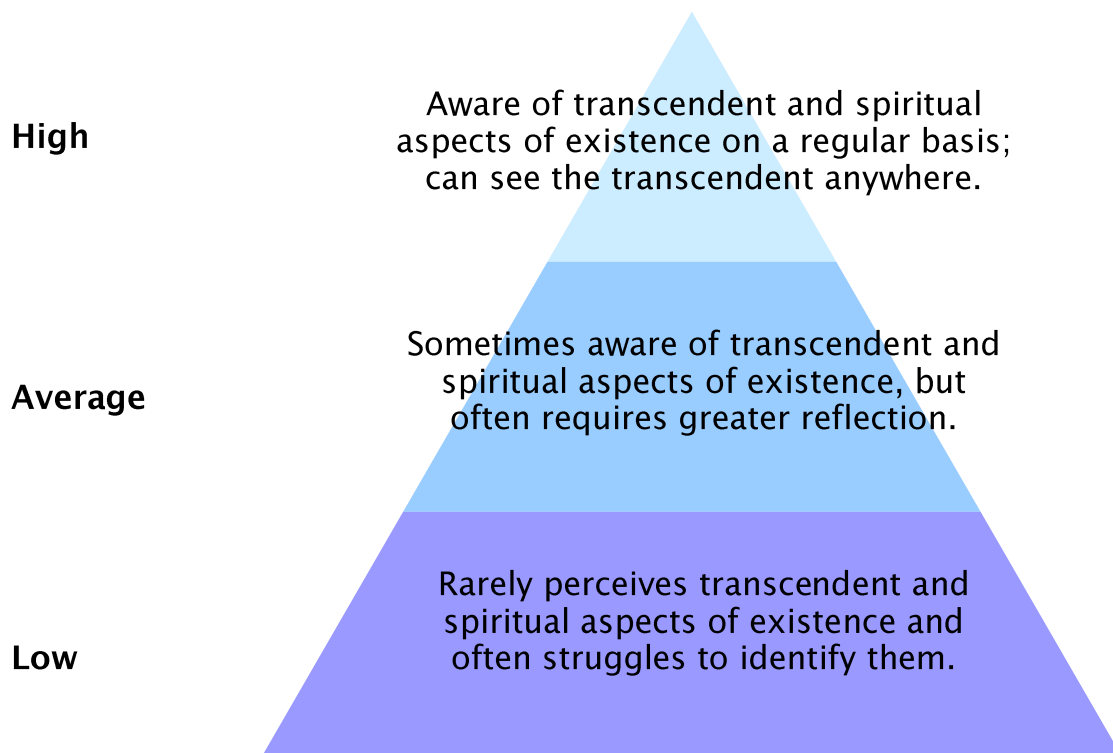
# Transcendental Awareness

The third component, transcendental awareness, is defined as the capacity to identify transcendent dimensions of the self (a transpersonal or transcendent self), of others, and of the physical world (non-materialism, holism) during the normal, waking state of consciousness, accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to one's self and to the physical.

Transcendent is defined as "going beyond normal or physical human experience" or "existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe." In simpler terms, transcendental awareness can be defined as the awareness of the nonmaterial and spiritual aspects of daily existence. These might include a transpersonal or transcendent self (what some refer to as a "spiritual center"), a holistic dimension of reality, or interconnectedness (relationships which transcend the physical, such as one's relationship to the universe).

Although this may be the least understood of all the capacities, the robust presence of the transcendent in spirituality literature requires its consideration in a model of spiritual intelligence. In terms of actual mental ability (rather than experiences or attitudes), only one candidate arises: *awareness*.

The following diagram illustrates the different levels of transcendental awareness that might be observed in different people.





# Measure

## Your Transcendental Awareness

The following questions can be used to estimate your level of transcendental awareness. For each question, choose the response that most accurately describes you.

Note that these questions have only been developed to get a rough idea of your transcendental awareness; they do not represent any kind of clinical assessment and are not meant to be used to compare your abilities to those of anyone else.

	Not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true true of me
1. I recognize aspects of myself that are deeper and more meaningful than my physical body.	1	2	3
2. I am aware of a deeper connection between myself and other people.	1	2	3
3. I am highly aware of the nonmaterial aspects of life.	1	2	3

TA Total:

Now, add up your scores for each question, and either remember your total or write it here:

On the subsequent page, find the range that fits your total, and interpret your results accordingly.

# Measure

## Your Transcendental Awareness

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Below, find the range that fits your total score on transcendental awareness, and interpret your score. These descriptions are only meant to give you a general idea of your current level of transcendental awareness. Remember, there is always room for growth!

### TOTAL:

### WHAT IT MEANS:

3 – 4

You are rarely aware of the spiritual or transcendent aspects of life. You may think about such things from time to time, but you likely struggle to identify them or perceive them in your daily life. You may be unable to see “the bigger picture” in situations, and probably have difficulty identifying connections between objects or events that are not based on logic (e.g., how human beings relate to the universe). In your daily routine, your mind tends to be focused on material aspects of life, which extends to your self and others.

5 – 7

You are able to identify spiritual and transcendent aspects of life without great difficulty. You may still struggle from time to time, depending on the situation and/or your level of physical/mental stimulation. You often see “the bigger picture” in situations, and recognize aspects of your self and others which are deeper than the physical and material. You tend to think about life with a nonmaterial focus.

8 – 9

You have a strong tendency to perceive spiritual and transcendent dimensions of life in many or all of your daily experiences. You very often see “the bigger picture” in situations and frequently perceive meaningful connections between objects and events that others do not seem to notice. You are very focused on the nonmaterial aspects of life, and have a difficult time seeing things from a material or strictly physical perspective. You define your self by your deeper, spiritual self, and recognize these deeper qualities in those around you.

# Improve Your Transcendental Awareness

A number of things can be done on a daily basis that will help you improve your transcendental awareness over time. No matter what level you are at, there is always room for improvement and growth. These are just a few tips to help get you started...

## **Pay Attention**

Being mindful of both your inner and outer worlds is the first step to developing your capacity for transcendental awareness. It is important to start paying attention to the details of your daily experiences. When doing so, pay special attention to the nonmaterial and nonphysical aspects of life. When you have an experience, or when you're "paying attention," stop and ask yourself some of the following questions: Is there more here than meets the eye? Can this situation be perceived from any perspective other than the physical and material? How would I describe this situation without mentioning its physical components? Was this experience spiritual or related to something greater than myself? Pay attention to things like your emotions, instincts, and gut reactions, and try to keep your mind open to less obvious possibilities.

## **See the Bigger Picture**

Holistic perception is an important aspect of transcendental awareness. When involved in a situation, try to see the bigger picture. Many of us look at situations with a bottom-up perspective; that is, we look at all of the individual pieces of a situation before developing conclusions. Try a top-down approach, by taking a step back and viewing the situation from a broader, more general perspective, before analyzing its components. In doing so, you may find yourself noticing things that you normally would have overlooked.

## **Watch for Connections**

When looking at the bigger picture, also watch for connections that you may have otherwise missed. Ask yourself how the situation connects to you, to the world, and perhaps to the universe or some deeper energy or force (depending on your own unique perspective). It is also good practice to watch for meaningful connections throughout your daily experiences, even where logical or physical connections are not apparent. Noticing such connections is an important aspect of transcendental awareness.

## **Meditate**

Although meditation is involved in conscious state expansion, the mere exercise of meditating can increase your awareness of the transcendent in your daily life. Experiencing spiritual states of consciousness, such as oneness, unity, or cosmic consciousness, can lead to increased perception of similar transcendent qualities during normal consciousness. Practicing meditations in which you are more mindful of your inner and outer environments can also improve your transcendental awareness.

## Ability #4

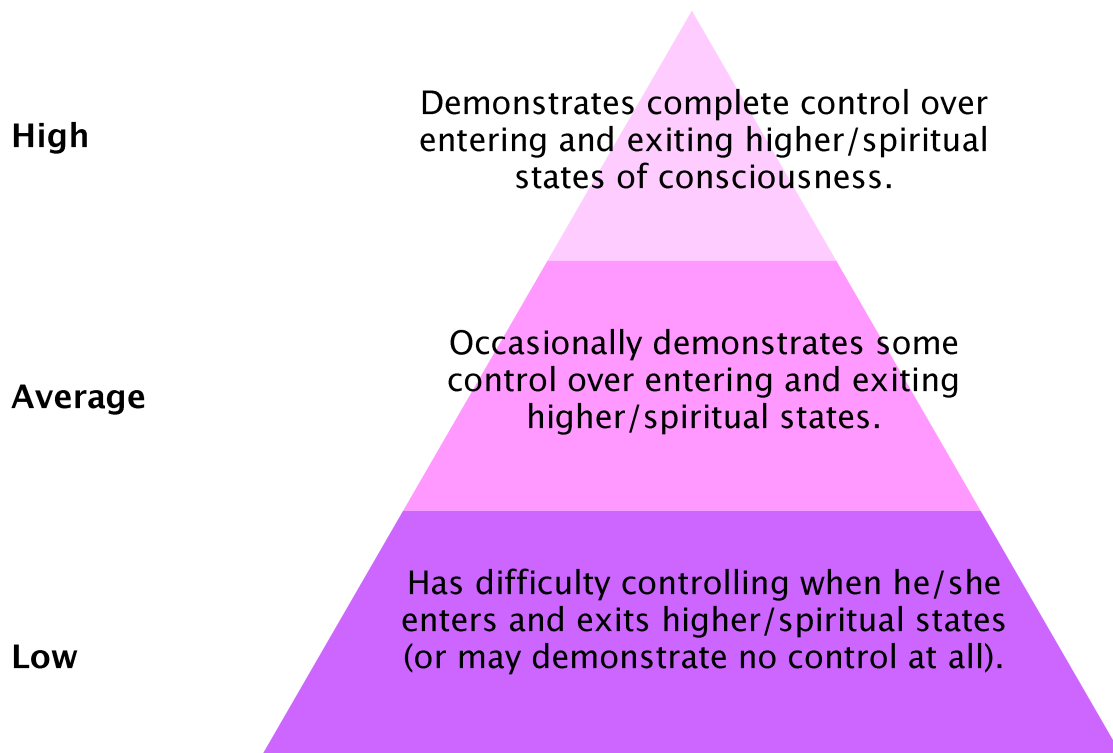
# Conscious State Expansion

The final component of spiritual intelligence is conscious state expansion, defined as the ability to enter and exit higher or “spiritual” states of consciousness (such as pure consciousness, cosmic consciousness, unity, oneness) at one’s own discretion (as in deep contemplation, meditation, prayer, etc.).

The term “state of consciousness” essentially serves to describe the various organizations of human consciousness, some of which are well documented and seen as part of the normal human experience. These states are often described as “levels” of consciousness, in order to compare the amount of awareness and arousal involved. Many higher or spiritual states of consciousness have been reported. The term cosmic consciousness describes the awareness of the order of the entire universe. Unity, unitive consciousness, and oneness involve the perception that all aspects of life are components of the same integrated and unified whole. Pure consciousness, on the other hand, refers to a silent state without any object of thought.

More recent research has documented individuals who are highly skilled at entering higher states of consciousness at their own discretion. Simply experiencing such states does not constitute an ability; one must demonstrate a degree of control.

The following diagram illustrates the different levels of conscious state expansion that might be observed in different people.



# Measure

## Your Conscious State Expansion

The following questions can be used to estimate your level of conscious state expansion. For each question, choose the response that most accurately describes you.

Note that these questions have only been developed to get a rough idea of your conscious state expansion; they do not represent any kind of clinical assessment and are not meant to be used to compare your abilities to those of anyone else.

	Not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true true of me
1. I am able to enter higher states of consciousness or awareness.	1	2	3
2. I can control when I enter higher states of consciousness or awareness.	1	2	3
3. I have developed my own techniques for entering higher states of consciousness or awareness.	1	2	3

CSE Total:

Now, add up your scores for each question, and either remember your total or write it here:

On the subsequent page, find the range that fits your total, and interpret your results accordingly.

# Measure

## Your Conscious State Expansion

Below, find the range that fits your total score on conscious state expansion, and interpret your score. These descriptions are only meant to give you a general idea of your current level of conscious state expansion. Remember, there is always room for growth!

### TOTAL:

### WHAT IT MEANS:

3 – 4

You may meditate or spend time in quiet reflection, but you have a difficult time controlling when your mind enters more peaceful or spiritual states of being. Higher states, such as oneness or cosmic consciousness, may be possible, but they are unpredictable and/or rare. Due to such difficulties in controlling inner spiritual states, you may feel that you have a difficult time meditating in general.

5 – 7

You probably spend some time meditating or sitting in quiet contemplation/reflection. You may find it easy to enter more peaceful or spiritual states of being, but you may not always be able to control when you do so. If/when you do meditate, you've likely noticed certain conditions that must be met in your environment, your body, and your mind in order to enter some of these higher states. You probably have an easier time exiting these states than entering them in the first place.

8 – 9

You likely meditate frequently (perhaps on a regular basis). When you do meditate, you find it easy to enter higher states of being, such as oneness or cosmic consciousness. You have developed techniques that allow you to enter such states with relative ease, and you have gained at least some control over entering and exiting spiritual states. You may have developed these techniques on your own or in accordance with recommended practices, but in either case, you have likely reached a point where you can move freely between states of consciousness with ease and control.

# Improve

## Your Conscious State Expansion

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A number of things can be done on a daily basis that will help you improve your conscious state expansion over time. No matter what level you are at, there is always room for improvement and growth. These are just a few tips to help get you started...

### **Meditate**

The first step in developing your conscious state expansion is to simply meditate. Even if you are not good at meditating, you must practice meditation if you are interested in improving your control over meditative states. Here are some basic steps to efficient meditation:

1. Find a quiet place, away from distractions. Wear comfortable clothing and sit somewhere that is comfortable. It is crucial that you find a place that allows you to relax and attain a state of calmness. Even the décor of the room is important.
2. Start by closing your eyes and focusing on your breathing. Breathe in slowly, yet deeply, and let the air out as slowly as you can. Do this repeatedly, but without making effort. It can also be helpful to imagine that your breath is clean and pure, originating from deep within you and/or from a deeper, spiritual source.
3. Once you have developed a steady rhythm of breathing, visualize something that makes you feel relaxed and peaceful. You can visualize a moment from a joyous experience, a loved one, or a particularly favourable emotion. The goal is to focus on something that makes you feel relaxed and at ease. Continue focusing on your visualization and/or breathing for at least 10 minutes. Practice this on a regular basis, gradually increasing the length of each meditation.

### **Be Mindful**

This is a very simple method of meditation, but it is a good place to start. Once you have developed good relaxation techniques, be mindful of your perceptions and emotions while meditating, particularly those which make you feel connected to something greater, or those which you would describe as spiritual in nature. Also be mindful of the specific behaviours and cognitions that you adopt in order to enter such meditative and spiritual states. Once recognized, it is important that you practice these readily, in order to gain control over when you enter and exit such states.

### **Explore**

Explore new methods of meditation. Many methods exist, some of which involve different objects of focus, while others involve being more mindful of your thoughts and emotions. Practicing new methods of meditation will further contribute to the development of your conscious state expansion.

# Measure Your Total Spiritual Intelligence

In order to get a better idea of your overall level of spiritual intelligence, you can sum the scores on each of the four components. Write your scores in the following boxes, so that you may also compare them:

**Total Critical Existential Thinking:**

**Total Personal Meaning Production:**

**Total Transcendental Awareness:**

**Total Conscious State Expansion:**

Now, simply add these numbers to calculate your total spiritual intelligence score, which describes your overall level of spiritual intelligence.

**Total Spiritual Intelligence:**

On the subsequent page, find the range that fits your total spiritual intelligence score, and interpret your results accordingly.

Note that it is difficult to offer detailed interpretations of each level of spiritual intelligence, as this may vary from person to person depending on the development of individual capacities. It is best to examine your individual scores on each of the four abilities in order to determine your stage of development. Nevertheless, very general interpretations of each level are offered on the following page.



# Measure Your Total Spiritual Intelligence

Below, find the range that fits your total spiritual intelligence score, and interpret it accordingly. These descriptions are only meant to give you a general idea of your current level of spiritual intelligence. Remember, there is always room for growth!

## TOTAL:

## WHAT IT MEANS:

9 – 18

### *Underdeveloped Spiritual Intelligence*

Your spiritual capacities are generally underdeveloped and underutilized. You may attempt to apply the spiritual facets of your existence to solve daily problems, but are often met with frustration when doing so. Lower-order abilities, such as existential thinking and meaning production, may be better developed than transcendental awareness and state expansion. Nevertheless, you are curious and inclined to develop your spiritual abilities.

19 – 29

### *Average Spiritual Intelligence*

Although most of your spiritual abilities are fairly well developed, you have plenty of room to grow. You should work on applying your spiritual capacities to a greater variety of daily problems and experiences. More abstract applications of spiritual intelligence, such as deriving meaning from highly negative experiences and controlling spiritual states, are likely more difficult and should be the focus of your ongoing development.

30 – 36

### *Highly Developed Spiritual Intelligence*

You demonstrate a highly developed spiritual intelligence, with a gift for applying the spiritual aspects of your existence to many or all of your daily experiences. Although you still have room to grow (no matter your level), you are likely equipped to teach others how to improve their own spiritual capacities. You would be described by many as embodying in a *lived spirituality*.

# Integrating

## Your Spiritual Abilities

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It is important to understand that the four components of spiritual intelligence – existential thinking, meaning production, transcendental awareness, and state expansion – all interact in various ways to produce adaptive outcomes. A number of potential outcomes of a high spiritual intelligence have been suggested by researchers and theorists, including:

- wisdom and altruism
- enjoyment of and wonder for the natural environment
- creativity
- adaptability and resilience
- high self-esteem
- improved quality of life and life satisfaction
- death acceptance
- goal attainment
- decreased depressive symptoms
- successful aging

Take the example of **death acceptance**...

Critical existential thinking allows an individual to deeply contemplate death, while personal meaning production aids in the deriving of meaning and purpose from the impending event, which transforms its emotional components. Transcendental awareness allows an individual to take comfort in the perception of “more” to his/her life than just biological and physical processes. Finally, conscious state expansion contributes to transcendental awareness while also providing adaptive means of reflection and relaxation, overcoming the distress associated with the current circumstances.

### Integrate

It is further necessary to integrate your spiritual capacities into your daily life. As you may have noticed, there were recommendations for daily practice in nearly all of the tips for improving your spiritual abilities.

If you wish to develop your spiritual capacities, it is important that they become a typical part of your everyday existence. Practicing their application in normal, daily experiences will help you to better understand their adaptive potential, both on their own and in combination.

# Further Readings & Links

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A number of resources and links are available which provide additional information on the topic of spiritual intelligence.

For references mentioned in this book, as well as a detailed review of the psychological literature on spiritual intelligence, please see my website:

<http://www.dbking.net/spiritualintelligence/>

From here, you may download articles that have been published on the topic of spiritual intelligence, including my thesis work, and find a longer list of links and resources that are currently available.

For more information on the author, David King, please visit:

<http://www.dbking.net>

Cindy Wigglesworth, of *Conscious Pursuits*, is dedicated to integrating spirituality and spiritual intelligence in the workplace. Visit her website here:

<http://www.consciouspursuits.com/>

A handful of books have also been written on the topic.  
I would recommend the following:

Khalil, Khavari. (2000). *Spiritual Intelligence: A Practical Guide to Personal Happiness*. White Mountain Publications.

Noble, Kathleen D. (2001). *Riding the windhorse: Spiritual intelligence and the growth of the self*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Rossiter, Altazar. (2006). *Developing Spiritual Intelligence: The Power of You*. O Books.

Wolman, Richard N. (2001). *Thinking with your soul: Spiritual intelligence and why it matters*. New York: Harmony Books.

Zohar, Danah, & Marshall, Ian. (2000). *SQ: Connecting with our spiritual intelligence*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.