**Social Intelligence: The New Science of Success; Beyond IQ, Beyond EI, Applying Multiple Intelligence Theory to Human Interaction**,

by Karl Albrecht [http://www.karlalbrecht.com](http://www.karlalbrecht.com/) .  Format: Hardcover, 280pp.  ISBN: 0787979384.  October 2005.  Jossey-Bass.  When I developed the Draft Canadian Culture of Peace Program Marketing Strategy (ref. <http://www.cultureofpeace.ca/CCOPPmarketingstrategy.htm> ) , I suggested we use the concept of Social Intelligence (i.e. raising Social Intelligence/Social Development) as a path to Peace Education and a Culture of Peace – that it is more readily acceptable/ understandable by the general population.  This book explains it much better than I, including the “How To”, hence I strongly recommend it. Karl Albrecht defines social intelligence (SI) as the ability to get along well with others while winning their cooperation. SI is a combination of sensitivity to the needs and interests of others, sometimes called your “ social radar, ” an attitude of generosity and consideration, and a set of practical skills for interacting successfully with people in any setting. "Social Intelligence provides a highly accessible and comprehensive model for describing, assessing, and developing social intelligence at a personal level. This book is filled with intriguing concepts, enlightening examples, stories, cases, situational strategies, and a self-assessment tool – all designed to help you learn to navigate social situations more successfully. The author takes you on a guided tour of the five dimensions of social intelligence (“S.P.A.C.E.”): 1. Situational Awareness – the ability to read situations and to interpret the behaviors of people in those situations; 2. Presence – Often called ‘bearing’, it’s a whole range of verbal and nonverbal behaviors that define you in the minds of others; 3. Authenticity – the behaviors that cause others to judge you as honest, open, and ‘real’; 4. Clarity – the ability to explain your ideas and articulate your views; 5. Empathy – the ability to ‘connect’ with others. You can get it (and read a descriptive summary) at Chapters book store online at <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/item.asp?Item=978078797938&Catalog=Books&Ntt=social+intelligence&N=35&Lang=en&Section=books&zxac=1> for $21.43 (which is 33% off the list price right now).  **5 star must reading.** **[**The following is what I highlighted during my read of this excellent book -- I recommend it on my Top-ten List of Peace resources.  My purpose in providing them is to interest you, the reader, and hope that you will obtain and read the complete work.  To properly understand the highlights, you need to read the book to put them in the proper context.]

Preface

… apparently blind to the larger context for the conversation …

… well supplied with ‘abstract intelligence’ – the “IQ” kind – but short on ‘social intelligence’.

… ability to get along with people …

… this particular set of competencies … a coherent framework for describing it, observing it and – most importantly – developing it if possible.

… capacity for connecting with and influencing people … human development.

The concept of social intelligence, or “SI”, as one of a set of key life competencies is surely an idea whose time has arrived. It crystallizes much of what we know about an important dimension of human effectiveness.

It’s time for us to bring professor Gardner ’s multiple-intelligence, or “MI” concept, into our everyday consciousness.

… I identify **six primary intelligences (“ASPEAK”):**

1. **Abstract Intelligence** (symbolic reasoning, of the “IQ” type);
2. **Social Intelligence** (the topic of this book);
3. **Practical Intelligence** (getting things done);
4. **Emotional Intelligence** (self-awareness and the management of inner experience);
5. **Aesthetic Intelligence** (a sense of form, design, literature, the arts, music, and other holistic experiences); and
6. **Kinesthetic Intelligence** (whole-body competence such as sport, dance, music, or flying a jet fighter).

Surely the “Renaissance human”, the success model most of us admire, would have a strong and well-integrated combination of all intelligences.

We can characterize SI as a combination of a basic understanding of people – a kind of strategic social awareness – and a set of component skills for interacting successfully with them. A simple description of **SI is: … the ability to get along well with others and to get them to cooperate with you**.

We can think of the extremes of SI – very low and very high – in metaphorical terms as either “toxic” or “nourishing”, respectively. Toxic behaviors, by this definition, are those that cause others to feel devalued, inadequate, intimidated, angry, frustrated, or guilty. Nourishing behaviors cause others to feel valued, capable, loved, respected, and appreciated.

People with high social intelligence … are magnetic to others.

We seem well overdue to make SI a developmental priority in our early education, public schooling, adult learning processes, and in business. Children and teenagers need to learn to win the fellowship and respect they crave. College students need to learn to collaborate and influence others effectively. Managers need to understand and connect with the people they’re appointed to lead. High-tech professionals … need to understand the social context and achieve their objectives by working from empathy. All adults, in their careers and personal lives, need to be able to present themselves effectively and earn the respect of those they deal with. Social intelligence can reduce conflict, create collaboration, replace bigotry and polarization with understanding, and mobilize people toward common goals.

… social intelligence may be, in the long run, one of the most important ingredients in our survival as a species.

1. A Different Kind of “SMART”

“There is one thing more powerful than all the armies of the world, and that is an idea whose time has come.” Victor Hugo

… special – people with whom we feel comfortable, respected, affirmed, and cared about.

… more positive, supportive way … knows more about people …

The positive ones seem to ‘get it’ – they understand people and their interactions reflect that understanding, more than simply consisting of some set of ‘nice’ behaviors.

… social intelligence … consists of both insight and behavior. We seek to understand human social effectiveness at a level beyond simple formulas … beyond the so-called ‘people skills’ supposedly valued in the workplace. We seek to understand how highly effective people navigate social situations so skillfully, and how they know – at least most of the time – how to engage others in ways appropriate to the context.

… SI as a more deeply layered, more comprehensive view of human affairs.

“The biggest obstacle to learning something new is the belief that you already know it.” Zen philosophy

… understanding of social intelligence as a broader concept … seeking a more robust operational model … sought a more comprehensive view.

… such a model can serve a person as a mental platform for understanding social situations, or contexts in which interactions take place, and it can also enable a person to design a response to a unique situation …

It implies a depth and breadth of life knowledge, a deep knowledge of one’s culture – and possibly other cultures – the accumulated wisdom that comes from constantly observing and learning what works and what doesn’t in human situations.

Going beyond IQ

… Howard Gardner’s 1983 book “Frames of Mind” …

Gardner came to the inevitable conclusion: the concept of “intelligence” as a singular measure of competence has to go. He posited that human beings have a range of key competencies – intelligences – and they exist in various proportions in various persons.

… “MI” concept has reached the tipping point of acceptance in certain sectors, particularly education and business, at least in the United States .

EI, SI or both?

… inspirational leadership (guiding and motivating with a compelling vision), developing others (bolstering others’ abilities through feedback and guidance), and change catalyst (initiating, managing, and leading in a new direction).

We can look at EI (emotional intelligence) as a dimension of internal competence – self-awareness and skillful deployment of one’s emotional responses. Then we can clearly delineate our model of social intelligence in terms of externally oriented competencies. In other works, we need both of these intelligences for personal success.

From toxic to nourishing (toxic behaviors – nourishing behaviors)

… the biggest single cause of low social intelligence comes from simple lack of insight. Toxic people often become so preoccupied with their own personal struggles that they simply do not understand the impact they have on others. They need help in seeing themselves as others see them.

Blind spots, lenses and filters

Social halitosis, flatulence, and dandruff

… some people are completely capable … of treating another person like a thing, a piece of furniture, a non-being who exists only for the fulfillment of their own selfish purposes.

… I have no obligation to listen politely while they’re treating me like a thing. (eg. … religious proselytizers … military recruiters …)

Social flatulence originates in ignorance, lack of situational awareness, or – possibly worse – a lack of respect for the accepted norms for behavior.

… social dandruff, a pattern of behavior that selfishly imposes one’s interests on others.

… includes the person who feels free to spray everybody in sight or hearing with his or her political views or religious convictions.

… arise from the same social pathology: lack of insight or lack of concern for one’s impact on others. They all represent various versions of self-centered, selfish, and self-serving behavior, lacking in altruism or consideration for others.

The “Dilbert” factor

… flawed outputs of our educational system …

Seldom does their educational experience alert them to the fact that they will one day have to explain their ideas to others, persuade others of the value of their opinions, and sell their ideas and themselves. Like innocent sheep, they enter the political environments of large organizations assuming that their great ideas will sell themselves, that only a stupid person would fail to grasp the value of their contributions.

Too often, they rationalize their failures and frustrations by retreating into the dilbert syndrome: “These people are too stupid, incompetent, or misguided to understand or appreciate me.”

Can we become a socially smarter species?

… should credit human beings with great acts of collaboration and common effort, as well as condemn them for their colossal atrocities.

… we as a species need three things to improve our chances of surviving and living in a reasonably peaceful state:

First, we need leaders who model high social intelligence.

Second, we need an educational system that honors the principles and behaviors associated with high social intelligence, and that teaches our young people to understand the cultures and subcultures through which they must navigate in this modern world, and that emphasizes the value of collaboration over conflict.

Third, we need a media environment that serves the higher values of the culture and not simply the commercial interests of corporations whose executives feel entitled to sell anything they choose, to anybody they can influence, by any means possible.

S.P.A.C.E.: The skills of interaction –

1. Situational Awareness – We think of this dimension as a kind of “social radar”, or the ability to read situations and to interpret the behaviors of people in those situations, in terms of their possible intentions, emotional states, and proclivity to interact;
2. Presence – Often called ‘bearing’, it’s a whole range of verbal and nonverbal patterns, one’s appearance, posture, voice quality, subtle movements – a whole collection of signals other process into an evaluative impression of a person;
3. Authenticity – the social radars of other people pick up various signals from our behavior that lead them to judge us as honest, open, ethical, trustworthy and well-intentioned – or inauthentic;
4. Clarity – the ability to explain ourselves, illuminate ideas, pass data clearly and accurately, and articulate our views and proposed course of action, enables us to get others to cooperate with us;
5. Empathy – going somewhat beyond the conventional connotation of empathy as having a feeling for someone else, or “sympathizing” with them, we define empathy as a shared feeling between two people. In this connotation we will consider empathy a state of ‘connectedness’ with another person, which creates the basis for positive interaction and cooperation.

Exploring SPACE

2. “S” Stands for Situational Awareness

… Situational Awareness, a.k.a. your situational “radar”. Are you able to understand and empathize with people in different situations? Can you sense their feelings and possible intentions? How well do you “read” situations based on a practical knowledge of human nature? Situational Awareness includes a knowledge of the cultural “holograms” – the unspoken background patterns, paradigms, and social rules that govern various situations. It means having an appreciation for the various points of view others might hold, and a practical sense of the ways people react to stress, conflict, and uncertainty.

Having a good situational radar means having a respectful interest in other people. If you are self-centred, preoccupied with your own feelings, needs, and interests, and not open to the feelings, needs, and interests of others, it will probably be more difficult for you to get them to accept you, share themselves with you, like you, and cooperate with you.

- Situational Dumbness and Numbness

… how can we as a society raise a new generation of people who can get along effectively with one another?

Ballistic Podiatry: Making the Worst of a Situation

The antidote for bullet holes in your penny loafers is to respect and develop the art of Situational Awareness. Know when to speak and when to hold your tongue. Be able to size up the situation you find yourself in, rather quickly, and make the best response based on both your intuitive radar and real-time intelligence.

Much of social dumbness comes from missing all the clues, both what is said and what is “non-verbalized” by others in the situation.

Reading the Social Context

… context creates meaning, and how the meaning supplied by the context shapes the behavior of those who are engaged in it.

… quite a few people are so self-preoccupied that they don’t accurately perceive various important contexts, and consequently may not know how to behave appropriately.

What to Look For

1. The Proxemic Context – the dynamics of the physical space within which people are interacting, the ways they structure that space, and the effects of space on their behavior;
2. The Behavioral Context – the patterns of action, emotion, motivation, and intention that show up in the interactions among the people who are engaged within the situation;
3. The Semantic Context – the patterns of language used in the discourse, which signal – overtly and covertly – the nature of the relationships, differences in status and social class, the governing social codes, and the degree of understanding created – or prevented – by language habits.

Proxemic: the study of differences in distance, contact, posture, and the like in communication with people.

Every human-designed space has its apparent meaning …

Proxemic politics

… something as simple as changing the seating arrangement can signal a less polarized, antagonistic relationship.

… public space … social space … personal space … intimate space … subconscious space …

To the extent that they share the same behavioral codes, they typically get along successfully. If one or more of the people in a particular situation does not share – or chooses to violate – certain of those codes, conflict can arise.

Words … are the very structure of thought. Many famous leaders have understood and capitalized on the psychology of language, and have used this knowledge to arouse and mobilize people, for both good and evil.

The study of rhetoric deals with the primal patterns of language, and how a skillful turn of phrase conveys meaning beyond the mere symbolic level of words.

… “theory of relativity” of knowledge … coined the term ‘general semantics’ to describe his theory of how the structure of language shapes human thought, and particularly how certain language habits contribute to conflict, misunderstandings, and even psychological maladjustment.

… we live in a semantic environment … a variety of semantic environments …

… the structure and psychology of language made it impossible for any two people to ever share exactly the same “reality”.

Many Meanings

To state the theory of general semantics in its simplest terms: No two brains contain exactly the same “meaning” for any word expression, or concept; the meanings are embedded in the people, not in the words.

… arguments over the meanings of abstract terms like (“peace”), “democracy”, “capitalism”, and “justice” are ultimately futile, because they have differing personal meanings for different people. Wars and ethnic conflicts often start as a result of, or in connection with, reckless use of highly charged language.

… any symbol – a word, or collection of words – has no innate meaning. Its meaning is embedded in the nervous system of the person saying it or hearing it.

Finding agreement ultimately comes down to sorting out the verbal maps being used by the various parties and arriving at a few key verbal maps they can agree to.

If you’re a skilled navigator of these linguistic frames, you know how to speak one language to a small child, another language to a teenager, another language to the construction foreman who repairs your roof, another language to the clerk in the supermarket, and another language to your doctor.

Beyond Logic

Meta-verbal signals are the “between the lines” cues that can indicate an unconscious mental state, an emotion, or an apprehension the speaker would like to conceal. One can observe the interplay between subconscious mental process and social behavior, in the shift of language.

… reading the semantic context, and picking up the linguistic cues that signal deeper levels of meaning, can be a very useful skill.

We can exercise Situational Awareness and establish empathy with those involved by matching the language they use – within reason. In a sense, we may need to be multi-lingual within a single language.

Navigating Cultures and Subcultures

The more you know about an in-group, the easier it is to understand why its members react the way they do in certain situations.

Every subculture is really just a part of our larger full culture. But even though they belong to our meta-world, they see their miniature worlds as more important.

… aren’t all of these subcultures rather like street gangs? There are many commonalities that make very different groups more similar than one might first imagine.

Subcultures tend to flourish and thrive when the barriers to entry are stringent.

To say these belief systems help to create an “us versus them” mentality understates it.

… to get along, in any subculture, … is to go along.

Codes of Conduct: Violate the Rules at Your Peril

… codes have the effect of making humans highly predictable to one another.

Women in many cultures have suffered for centuries under oppressive, male-dominated behavior codes.

Part of growing up in a world run by adults … means learning how to behave. And learning how to behave means following the rules created by those in charge.

Breaking the rules of the subculture is the fastest way to fall from favor; breaking the “code” gets you put out of the tribe.

Keeping your situational radar well focused can help to reduce the conflict and stress, whether you’re working on the shop floor or in the executive suite.

Building the Skills of Situational Awareness

3. “P” Stands for Presence

Presence: It’s the way you affect individuals or groups of people through your physical appearance, your mood and demeanor, your body language, and how you occupy space in a room. Are you approachable? Do you convey a sense of confidence, professionalism, kindness, and friendliness or do you communicate shyness, insecurity, animosity, or indifference? We all need to pay special attention to the sense of presence we communicate, especially if we want to be accepted and taken seriously.

Being There

… to connect with people on an individual basis. … to connect with a large number of people – a one-to-many state of empathy.

… a bearing, a physicality that gives and gets respect and attention. It lives in the moment, involves listening with skill, and creates and provides a quality of self-assurance and effectiveness that allows you to connect with a person or a group. It can be as simple as the expression one habitually carries around on one’s face. [SMILE]

… the first key element of a positive Presence … is an inviting demeanor.

Is Charisma Over-rated?

… emotional energy.

There is “official” charisma, “artificial” charisma, and “earned” charisma.

Official charisma is that which is attached to a world leader etc…

Artificial charisma is that which is “created” for the media darlings of the moment.

Earned charisma is the special province of a rare few, who know they have it, yet who don’t often exploit it. … It is deeply rooted … in achievement, greatness, and a sense of self that says, “I will do this, not for what it gets me, but for what it allows me to give.” Mohandas Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama … Paradoxically, their brand of charisma arose from humilty.

… its about the sum total of their lives.

… rare combination of grace under pressure, energy, passion for your purpose, and a kind of a life essence that seems to attract energy and attention wherever you go.

… larger-than-life blowhards will never get it, no matter how much they puff.

Maybe the essence of real charisma – the earned kind – is what goes on inside.

One gets the sense that great spiritual leaders … would go where they go and do what they do regardless of whether others chose to follow them. Paradoxically, maybe others follow them not because they lead, but because they know who they are and where they’re going.

Do Looks Matter?

Reading (and Shaping) The “Rules of Engagement”

When all parties know and abide by the generally accepted rules, the interaction may unfold amicably and successfully. When one or more parties violates the social compact by behaving in unapproved ways, serious conflicts can arise.

… the capacity to influence, shape, or define the rules of engagement puts a person in a leadership position. At a minimum, we need to be able to anticipate situational rules, or to detect them as they arise or take shape.

… a hard truth: some … choose the wrong words and then the wrong approach for the situations they face.

Police officers in particular face a very difficult psychological challenge. Many times in a single day, they must adjust their “presence pattern” to rapidly changing situations.

… the psychological challenge and the stress associated with this sudden change of context.

The Ugly American Syndrome

“If Americans traveled more, we’d better understand our place on this complex planet and fit in more comfortably. And eventually, perhaps, we wouldn’t need to spend as much as the rest of the world combined on our military to feel safe.” Rick Steves, USA Today, Oct. 18, 2004

Having Presence includes being respectful of the people around you and showing real rather than manufactured interest in them.

Presence in SI is more about “giving to people” versus “getting from people”.

More of You, Less of Me

… bring in good people, make sure they understand what the (job) needs, and let them do it.

A Case of Attitude

While we tend to think of Presence from the external point of view – as others perceive us – it also has an important inward dimension. One’s own state of mind, or “emotional demeanor”, also influences the presentation of self.

Presence is partly about living in the moment, being available, not just physically, but emotionally as well … for people who need you at that moment, to be aware of their issues or needs. It’s also a question of balance … not overreacting or losing perspective. This requires being emotionally self-aware and centered.

… to live fully and completely in the moment.

… internal dialogue…:

1. Can you change the situation by ranging about it? No.
2. Does it help get the keys back when you criticize yourself? No.
3. Does pounding/kicking the car get your keys out? No.
4. …

10. Does a Zen-like approach invite you to think about solutions and alternatives rather than staying stuck in the past, with the problem? Yes.

This concept of living in the present, being in the moment, and staying focused on the world of possibilities will take some people a lot of time to adapt to.

… “human beings suffer” and “the cause of suffering is desire”. The way to put an end to suffering is to stop wanting everything, all the time.

Would that we all could live in the moment and enjoy what we can out of what we have; then we would really know what it is to be Present. And being Present, both emotionally and behaviorally, enables us to reach out to others and build the connections that can contribute not only to our success, but also to theirs.

Building the Skills of Presence

4. “A” Stands for Authenticity

Authenticity: This dimension reveals how honest and sincere you are with people and with yourself, in any given situation. … Are you true to yourself?

To the extent that you feel – consciously or unconsciously – that others will not accept you, respect you, love you, or cooperate with you if you act according to your own needs and priorities, you are likely to behave in ways that others perceive as inauthentic.

… the real deal – a straight-up guy, an archetype of playing fair, doing the right thing, and standing up for what he believes in … exemplifies something we all admire …

It’s a person of character, one who stands behind his or her worked and who comes through, whatever the obstacles or hardships involved.

… the SI dimension of Authenticity supports a policy of inclusion – the ability and willingness to account for the interests and feelings of all parties.

It’s a Beautiful Day in the SI Neighborhood

The appeal of Mr. Rogers was simple: he always talked to children at their level, and he was neither sickly sweet nor condescending.

Think about the most nourishing people you know:

* Who is the most positive person in your life?
* Who is the most generous person in your life?
* …

If you are truly blessed, all of these adjectives may describe just one person …

The Snap-on Smile: Can You Fake Sincerity?

… demands a fair amount of empathy and compassion.

Left-handed Compliments

… it’s better to deal with low Authenticity by responding with high Authenticity.

The Puppy Dog Syndrome

Narcissism: It’s Really All About Me

Narcissism and altruism stand at opposite poles of human motivation.

The Value of Humility

Head Games, Power Struggles, and Manipulation

The essence of inauthentic behavior is a pattern of trying to meet one’s needs covertly rather than honestly and cooperatively.

… game players are unable to meet their emotional needs by direct and honest interaction with others, so they opt for the negative emotional experience of revenge. Inveterate game players are typically people who did not succeed in building a strong sense of self-worth coming out of childhood …

… the only way to win in dealing with a career game-player is simply not to play.

Authenticity Made Very Simple

"ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN" by Robert Fulghum. <http://www.peace.ca/kindergarten.htm>

Build the Skills of Authenticity

Write a personal mission statement that explains to yourself why you think you’re on the planet, what your priorities are, and what you want to do to make your life meaningful. … Ask yourself: Am I living the mission I want to live?

5. “C” Stands for Clarity

Clarity: measures your ability to express your thoughts, opinions, ideas, and intentions clearly. Do you say what you mean and mean what you say? Do you speak to fast, too much, or not much at all? Does your voice production – pitch, rate, volume, and inflection – inspire confidence or lack of respect? Do you use language skillfully? Can you frame concepts and issues for others in an articulate, compelling way? Do you listen attentively and skillfully, so you can understand others’ points of views?

Using metaphors can help you get your ideas across to other people.

A Way With Words

… surprisingly few of us seem to understand the power of language as a medium of thought and expression.

It is a relatively rare – and usually highly effective – person who has learned how to use language as a strategic asset.

Hoof-In-Mouth Disease: Sometimes Silence Works Best

Sometimes saying less accomplishes more. … know when to stop talking …

Sometimes you can get into trouble no matter what you say. You just have to sense the right response, based on your overall understanding of both the context and the content of the encounter.

Role-Speak and Real-Speak

Helicopter Language and Elevator Speeches

… levels of abstraction.

Using helicopter language to communicate ideas means choosing terms, figures of speech, expressions, analogies, and, of course, metaphors that position the listener’s thinking process at the level where you want it to be.

The movement from “sky-high” – what we could call the abstract level – to the ground-level – or what we could call the concrete level – is a skill that hose with high SI Clarity have mastered. Because they’re in charge of the helicopter – they’re the pilots, so to speak – they can guide the flow of ideas in the listener’s mind by moving to the right level at the right time.

… the Reader’s Digest version …

Good “pilots” signal their moves, telling you where they’re taking you.

The litmus test of the clarity … explain it in three sentences.

Getting your point across … depends on packaging ideas skillfully and compactly.

“Clean” Language and “Dirty” Language

… meta-messages – messages about messages. The speaker’s tone of voice, facial expression, and general demeanor can amplify or weaken the affective content that is conveyed by the particular choice of words.

… induce a subconscious feeling of anxiety in the listener … Some people – perhaps most – tend to feel somewhat “pushed” or pressured by the aggressive and dogmatic use of language.

This subtle sense of a threat to one’s personal autonomy tends to create a certain amount of resistance, even resentment, in the listener, which may well work against the purposes of the speaker.

One of the foundation skills of Clarity is awareness of these deeper-lying psychological phenomena of language, which involves the ability to monitor one’s own use of language patterns and the language patterns of others, and to avoid certain verbal pathologies that can cause misunderstanding, conflict, and even psychological maladjustment, both individual and collective.

… a key aspect … the speaker speaks for him- or herself, without presuming that what he or she says is true for everybody. The self-reference makes the sentence irrefutably true and not subject to argument or combat …

Verbal Bludgeons

… alienate people rather than invite them to consider the speaker’s point of view.

If you’d like to make a moral commitment to eliminating verbal bludgeons from your conversation, you can start by becoming more aware of them, particularly by spotting them as others use them.

When you become keenly aware of the value and impact of a semantically flexible way of expressing ideas, it’s possible to see how even the smallest and simplest of words can influence communication and understanding. Consider, for example, replacing “but” with “and” …

Examples of Semantic Malfunctions

Antidotes to Semantic Malfunctions

Train yourself to say the following three things freely, appropriately, and without guilt:

         “I don’t know”

         “I made a mistake”

         “I changed my mind”

Taking A Brain For A Walk

… a carefully chosen conversational strategy.

If we want to influence other people with our ideas and get them to cooperate with us, it helps to present information in a way that makes it easy for their brains to process it. Think of it as getting inside your listener’s mind and mentally “escorting” him or her to your truth – your conclusion, your belief, your point of view, or acceptance of the course of action you propose. Metaphorically speaking, you’re taking the listener’s brain for a walk. First you have to find out where it is – capture the full attention – and then you have to plan out a trip from where it is to where you want it to go.

Route 350

If you want to keep their full attention, you need to capture that unused processing capacity … One way to do it is to pose a provocative question, which gets them thinking about the importance of the topic while you’re presenting the key points.

Dropping One Shoe: … start with a provocative statement that captures attention, and then capitalize on the dramatic effect. …

Telegraphing: A foreshadowing method …

Pyramid: A quick snapshot of what you will say, followed by more and more information. …

Marching Plan: “Here’s what we’re going to do, in three steps (ways, parts, phases, etc.).”… with people who have a high need for structure …

Zooming In or Out

Diagramming

Metaphors

The Power of Metaphor

E-Prime: The Language of Sanity … learn to speak and write without using any form of the verb “to be” … forces the person using it to shift his or her conceptual process and to conceive of all reality as dynamic and evolving … remarkable effect of quickly increasing the clarity and dynamism of the trainee’s written products. … E-Prime can also serve as a tool for conflict resolution … a process of reframing their views and accusations.

1. Average Sentence Length = 20 Words or Less … one idea per sentence, with about two to six sentences per paragraph.
2. Avoid Jargon
3. Active Voice (E-Prime, If Possible)

Speech by Chief Seattle, 1854

Building the Skills of Clarity

6. “E” Stands for Empathy

Empathy … invites you to look at how truly aware and considerate you are of others’ feelings. Are you able to tune in to other people as unique individuals? Do you show that you’re willing and able to accept them as they are, for what they are? The usual connotation of being empathetic means to identify with another person and appreciate or share his or her feelings. However, in the context of social intelligence, there is an additional level of depth – the sense of connectedness – which inspires people to cooperate. In this discussion, empathy is defined as a state of positive feelings between two people, commonly referred to as a condition of rapport.

Common sense tells us that people are more likely to cooperate with, agree with, support, and help you if they like you and share a sense of mutual respect and affection with you. To achieve empathy with another person means to get him or her to share a feeling of connectedness with you, which leads the person to move with and toward you rather than away and against you.

The opposite state, of course, is antipathy, a feeling that causes a person to move away and against you. Toxic behavior, obviously, destroys empathy. Nourishing behavior restores and builds empathy. … “abrasive personality” …

If we want to gain the personal and practical benefits that come with building empathy with others and maintaining quality relationships, we have to do two things:

1. avoid or abandon toxic behaviors; and
2. adopt or increase the use of nourishing behaviors

It’s not realistic to think that we can abuse people, insult them, make them feel insignificant or unloved or unworthy, or praise them when we need something and ignore them when we don’t, and then expect them to feel a sense of connectedness with us. Empathy requires a long-term investment, not an episodic application of “charm”.

What Destroys Empathy?

Getting to empathy calls for a proactive commitment. You need to “add value” as other people perceive you.

One particularly toxic form of verbal behavior … is killing other people’s ideas.

Exhibit 6.1: Toxic vs. Nourishing Behaviors

The antidote, or defense, against idea killing, which seems to be so prevalent, is the practice of “idea selling”. This technique involves using certain key statements to put the other person into a mental state of greater receptiveness to your thoughts or ideas. Eg. “I’d like to get your help on an idea I’m trying to work out.”

What Builds Empathy?

… two opportunities to build empathy:

1. the moment-to-moment experience of connecting with people; and
2. the “maintenance” process, by which you keep a relationship healthy over time.

… “three A’s” – Attentiveness, Appreciation, and Affirmation.

Attentiveness: First we need to make a practice of getting outside of our own mental bubbles and tuning in to other people as unique individuals. … alignment

Appreciation: Do you show other people that you’re willing and able to accept them as they are, for what they are? … If you tell yourself that you can probably co-exist peacefully with them even if you disagree on some things, you’ll probably signal acceptance and appreciation naturally. … When they truly believe that you respect them and their ideas, they are more likely to listen to yours.

Affirmation: … it’s possible to affirm that person, as a person, in the ways you interact with him or her. … As human beings, we typically need, want – and often seek – affirmation of ourselves on at least three levels: (1) lovability, (2) capability, and (3) worthiness. … The principle is deceptively simple: if you help people feel good about themselves, they’ll feel good toward you.

… the learned ability to connect to a group with stories, humor, and a humanistic approach to their subject.

… could “outsource” my networking …

The Platinum Rule

“Do unto others as others prefer to be done unto.”

Once we move outside the bounds of our selfish preoccupation with our own needs and priorities, we can better understand how to get what we want by ensuring that others get what they want.

This is one of the key principles of empathy, in the SI context: making an effective connection with another person, based on where he is, what he needs, how he views the situation, and how he set priorities.

The Irony of Empathic Professions

… over-represented as suicide cases.

The irony of empathic professions is that the wrong people can end up practicing them. Eg. Mental health clinicians who have a bushel basket of their own problems, and who should turn their laser beam acumen onto themselves first, before they start helping others.

The Stone-Face Syndrome

One of the clues that a person is having difficulty finding the energy to build and sustain empathy is the “stone-face syndrome.”

… they are starting to lose their sense of humanity and their work is taking its toll on their idealism and emotional connections with others.

In the best cases, professionals who find themselves stuck at these career crossroads make changes.

Laughter is the Best Medicine

The treatment for this disorder is simpler than you might expect: laugh more and smile more. Remind yourself, several times a day, that life is either a tragegy or a comedy depending on how you choose to view it.

L.E.A.P.S.: Empathy by Design

L.E.A.P.S. – references the need to listen on many levels, provide support for the person on the other side, and solve whatever problem exists to his or her satisfaction, not necessarily yours.

Listen, Empathize, Ask, Paraphrase, and Summarize.

Listen – demonstrate active listening skills by nodding, leaning forward, making appropriate eye contact, and really listening. … make a human connection with the other person. The biggest obstacle to this is the human need for multitasking.

Empathize – this happens when you can see the problem from the other person’s side, and feel it too.

Ask – start with opened-ended questions, get more information, and allow the other person to vent if he or she needs to. … allow them to burn some energy while talking to you. It also creates some control for you, by modeling what it is you want them to do, which is stay in control and use the back-and-forth method of communication to hear and be heard.

Paraphrase – re-state the other person’s ideas, using his or her words as much as practically possible. … Paraphrasing gives you some time, demonstrates empathy on your part, and – more importantly – tests to make sure you really understand their concerns, and that they believe you understand.

Summarize – find the answer together, create solutions that are good for all parties, and help the person discover what will solve the presenting problem. If either or both of you have promised to take certain actions – or to stop acting in certain ways – it’s advisable to itemize the terms of agreement.

Empathy in Four Minutes

… the “creative contact” strategy.

… most people who meet a stranger in a social setting will decide within approximately four minutes whether they would like to continue to engage that person …

… people in close friendships or intimate relationships recapitulate the event of their first meeting every single time they come into contact with each other after any period of separation.

… deserves some creative thought.

… focus on the other person, and consider the basic principles of establishing rapport and connectedness – the macro-skill of Empathy.

… relationship maintenance … talk only about each other, or about their relationship … In this four-minute episode, they have figuratively restarted their relationship. They have recapitulated the basis for their affection, mutual respect, and shared experience. And they have created a positive state of mind between them that will carry over into any later discussion of life’s logistical problems. And if they make this four-minute method an everyday habit – an unbreakable rule and policy – they create a permanent emotional bias for both of them, which can serve to relieve the stresses imposed by the mundane problems of life.

Building the Skills of Empathy

7. Assessing and Developing SI

As research continues within the academic community … those of us who labor in the vineyards of professional development and organizational culture continue to need practical models and tools we can use on an everyday basis. We must rely on the science of common sense, hoping that our subjective attempts to define and measure these important competencies can serve adequately under the circumstances.

… Social Intelligence Profile

Assessing Your Interaction Skills

Exhibit 7.1 Examining Toxic People You Have Known

Exhibit 7.2 Examining Nourishing People You Have Known

… engage in a candid, non-defensive, self-evaluation. You have the right to delude yourself; if you do, you also have the responsibility to live with the consequences of your self-deception.

… start moving from a self-assessment focus to self-development.

Do you actually want to make any changes? Do you see a need, or an opportunity for change? Do you believe that shifting your habitual patterns further toward the nourishing end of the spectrum would bring positive benefits for your life, your relationships, or your career?

… changing habitual behaviors requires, time, attention, and diligence, so before you launch yourself on a total “social makeover”, you might want to select a few key areas to start with … identify priorities

… Personal feedback can serve a very valuable purpose – if you can get it, and if you can take it.

The Adjective Pairs exercise (Exhibit 7.4) gives you an opportunity to guess how others see you.

Assessing Your Interaction Style: Drivers, Energizers, Diplomats, and Loners

Are you Drawn Toward People?

Social energy refers to the impulse or tendency to engage, interact with, or influence people.

… introversion versus extraversion …

How Do You Get Things Done?

Results focus refers to whether you see yourself as more task focused or more people focused when you try to achieve a goal or get something done.

People-focused people tend to place a much higher priority on interacting with others, recruiting them to the common cause, getting them to collaborate, and keeping them involved and motivated.

How Do You Prefer to Interact?

The Driver pattern combines high social energy with a strong task focus.

The Energizer pattern also displays high social energy, but tends to influence people through personal relationships … inclusive, team-based approach …

The Diplomat pattern displays somewhat less social energy, but nevertheless prefers a people focus in getting things done … they may serve as “go-betweens” in situations involving conflict or controversy … use the strength of their relationships to help them do business.

The Loner pattern combines both low social energy and a primary task orientation.

No Judgments, Please

Please note that your interaction style, as defined here, has no connotation of good or bad, right or wrong … your interaction style represents your individual preference … The style assessment contributes to self-insight; the skill assessment invites self-development.

Social Scenarios and Scores for Social Scenarios

The Strength-Weakness Irony: Any strength, when taken to an unreasonable extreme, can become a weakness.

… determination can become stubbornness; cooperativeness can become wishy-washiness; cautious analysis can become paralysis; spontaneity and risk taking can become recklessness … extremism …

The important skill, it seems, involves deploying one’s strengths with a sense of strategy and an understanding of the tradeoffs involved. The macro-skill of situational awareness comes into play, and one must ultimately acknowledge the potential consequences of any particular behavioral choice.

How To Connect With People:

1. Train yourself to “read social situations”. What’s going on here? What are the interests, needs, feelings, and possible intentions of those involved?
2. Respect, affirm, and appreciate people and you’ll find that most of them will reply in kind. Putting people down seldom gains you anything.
3. Listen – attentively, respectfully, and with the intention of learning.
4. Pause for one heartbeat before you respond to what someone says; it gives your brain extra time to choose your words well.
5. Remember that arguing is one of the least effective ways of changing one’s mind; you don’t always have to fight to win.
6. When you disagree with others, first acknowledge their right to think the way they do – then offer your views respectfully.
7. Try using questions rather than confrontations, to invite others to change their minds.
8. Stay our of conflicts with toxic people; work around them.
9. Get the “cats and dogs” out of your conversation – minimize categorical and dogmatic declarations.
10. Accentuate the positive – and that’s what you’ll mostly get in return.

Priorities for Improvement

… choose three skills you definitely want to keep – and possibly increase. Then identify three things you want to stop doing, and three things you want to start doing. (Exhibit 7.7)

8. SI In The World of Work – Some Reflections [ed. including the World of Peace Work, Toxic School Environments, etc.]

… there is plenty of food for thought for those of us whose heads and hearts long for more socially intelligent workplaces.

… studying the absence of it – organizations and organizational cultures mired in social incompetence.

The Real and Legal Consequences of Social Incompetence

… gun, shot and killed …

… a toxic workplace environment. Draconian work rules, oppressive supervisory practices, and intense pressures to meet production requirements certainly seemed to have increased his stress level, and possibly aggravated his disturbed emotional state.

Every organization has its own distinctive work culture – the psychological environment within which people work and interact.

Toxic Management

Every toxic manager in an organization represents a preventable cost, measurable in employee morale and effectiveness, work productivity, and retention of valuable employees.

“… fire all the supervisors who bully and oppress their employees … That’s what we capitalize on – an alienated workforce of people who feel they’re not being treated like human beings … I have no hesitation about telling you this, because I know they won’t do it. The blockheads that run the companies we go after just don’t get it.” A union organizer.

… we need to ask the simple question: Do our managers know how to treat people as human beings?

… for every organization that is consciously evolving a multiple-intelligent culture, there are dozens that are mired in conflict and craziness.

Cultures of Conflict and Craziness

… a wide range of social pathologies that can defeat an enterprise from within.

We recognize the same kind of organizational disorders recurring across all industries, all types of organizations, and indeed all national cultures.

… I’ve identified some seventeen primary patterns, or syndromes, of organizational dysfunction (see <http://karlalbrecht.com/articles/17syndromes.htm> ; [backup copy](http://www.peace.ca/organizationdysfunction.htm))

Hierarchies, Testosterone, and Gender Politics

… question whether the hierarchy is always the appropriate structure for getting things done.

Some sociologists and anthropologists believe that any society, if it is ever to achieve a degree of stability that might lead to economic development, must first solve the problem of controlling and channelling male aggression.

… violence = the evidence of failed socialization …

One of the most important functions of a hierarchical power structure is to keep males form attacking one another …

“The most dangerous animal on the planet is an unmated human male between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four.”

… army … its greatest value lies in getting most or all of the aggressive young males into a single, controllable group, under the power of military leaders who can keep them in line. … + implied threat …

… males in general tend to lean toward hierarchical structures … females tend toward more multi-dimensional network-like arrangements …

… women tend to view personal relationships as more important … males, in contrast, seem to view structure and function … as taking precedence over personal relationships.

… different vocabularies, different figures of speech, and different metaphors …

One can also see changes in behavior – and language – when males and females interact, based on the relative number of each involved in a particular situation.

… males tend to act in a more “civilized” way, paying more attention to social courtesy …

… the ability to observe and account for the dynamics of gender interaction will remain an important skill of social intelligence, and will possibly become more important over time.

Getting It Right At Work and Wrong At Home

… the “master sergeant syndrome” – the inability of a person accustomed to authority to set aside the rank and rules and to relate to people on a direct, personal level.

The Diversity Puzzle

Diversity is about helping people in organizations better understand each other at a multitude of levels. It’s about either teaching or reminding employees to treat each other with dignity and respect. It’s about getting departments, teams and groups to work toward common goals, by asking employees to refocus on each others’ outputs and not on differing personalities.

Respecting diversity is a key aspect of social intelligence in the workplace. … relies on people understanding and supporting each other.

… the root of the problem: the need to communicate, honestly and openly and yet tactfully, in the workplace.

We owe it to ourselves to set some communication ground rules that will make it easier for us all to talk and work together. … It’s about meeting each other in the middle.

Ritual, Ceremony, and Celebration

… leaders who succeed in building healthy, high-performing cultures capitalize on the sense of community to advance the aims of the enterprise.

Positive Politics: Getting Ahead With Your Value System Intact

The person who scorns organizational politics usually does not understand that he or she continually participates in a political context, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously.

The first step on the road to becoming an “honest politician”, organizationally speaking, is to give up on the fiction that you can avoid the political process – it goes on all around you constantly, every day. You might as well engage the opportunities for acquiring influence with others, rather than passively accept the fate others decide for you.

The second step in your salvation is to rid yourself of the negative associations you may have had with the very concept of politics. If we define politics simply as a set of interactions by which human beings seek to influence one another, we open up a whole range of behavioral strategies for getting ahead honestly and honorably. One can get used to the idea of “positive politics” – the strategies for getting ahead with your value system intact.

… the most successful political strategies, over the long term, involve creating real value, helping others, and contributing to the achievement of the organization’s mission.

… people who engage in self-serving, destructive political behavior that works against the interests of the enterprise, or behavior intended solely to disadvantage others without creating value, tend to do less well in the long run than those who compete through contribution and achievement.

Our tour of social intelligence issues for organizations is incomplete, and barely scratches the surface …

Ten Skills of Positive Politics:

1. Do something well; get recognized as an achiever.
2. Form alliances and service them regularly.
3. Get visibility.
4. Get credit for your achievements.
5. Relieve pain when possible.
6. Contribute to the big picture.
7. Keep developing yourself.
8. Have a plan for your progress in the organization.
9. Have options to your current job – especially in good times.
10. Know when to leave.

… start to raise the intelligence of our workplaces and other organizations.

9. SI In Charge: Thoughts on Developing Socially Intelligent Leaders

The S.O.B. Factor

Trying to function in an authority role challenges a person’s emotional intelligence and social intelligence at the same time.

The fearful or insecure manager may suppress dissent … primarily out of a fear of loss of control.

Ben & Jerry’s Double Dip: How to Run a Values Led Business and Make Money Too. <http://www.amazon.ca/exec/obidos/ASIN/0684838559/ref=si_1_1/701-6271025-0105956>

... peace through understanding.

“The last remaining superpower on Earth needs to learn to measure its strength by how many people it can feed and clothe, not how many people it can kill.” Ben Cohen

Executive Hubris: Its Costs and Consequences

… six men … deserve most of the credit for destroying the confidence of the American public in corporate leadership and executive ethics.

Best Boss, Worst Boss

On the best boss list:

* Supportive
* Teacher
* Good delegator
* Communicates frequently
* Gives rewards and praise
* Takes care of us
* Good sense of humor
* Goes to bat for us with senior management
* Criticizes in private, not in front of others
* Smart
* Helps you get ahead
* Knows his or her job very well

… people who make the Good Boss list have high SI scores in the areas covered by the S.P.A.C.E. Model …

Do your employees rate you in this same way?

So if you’re a boss, or play a leadership role in any type of organization, think about how you want to be perceived.

P.O.W.E.R.: Where It Comes From, How To Get It

… power and influence have to be part of the equation.

… one has to know how to accumulate power and when to use it to get more of it.

Power – the entitlement to influence others:

P = Position

O = Opportunity

W = Wealth

E = Expertise

R = Relationship

Position power rests on formal authority.

Opportunity involves a special set of circumstances – at the right place at the right time.

Wealth confers power by dint of the entitlement to deploy resources in some way needed by others.

Expertise, in the form of special skills, unique knowledge, necessary know-how, or access to critical information can confer a unique form of influence. [ed. Information secrets]

Relationship power can accrue to a person who, by diligence or good fortune, enjoys access and acceptance with people who possess any of the other kinds of power. [ed. People power]

How The Worst Bastards On The Planet Get And Keep Power

They had to find ways to leverage the violence of others … power accumulators … operate in approximately the same ways:

Phase 1: Networking

Phase 2: Coalition Building . Using various social skills, subtle forms of influence, political persuasion, an appealing political ideology, and the proposition of bettering their circumstances through collective action, the organizer gets into the center of a developing subculture.

Phase 3: Taking Over

Phase 4: Unrelenting Consolidation

A person who seeks to achieve a position of influence, especially in a fluid or unstructured political situation, could readily use these four stages as his or her road map to that goal.

… those who consciously value and seek positions of power will tend to get them more often than those who do not.

The Algebra of Influence [ed. Servant Leadership]

… understanding the difference between formal authority and earned authority.

Earned authority … you get it from other people, one at a time.

You can earn authority by behaving in ways that cause others to consider you worthy of the right to influence them.

… a person with little or no formal authority might have earned a high level of personal authority with others, and might enjoy a higher score or net authority than the one with the formal position.

S.P.I.C.E.: Leading When You’re Not In Charge

A person can emerge as the de facto leader in an unstructured situation, or can earn a significant measure of informal authority, even in a group that has a formally appointed leader, by providing any or all of five distinct forms of assistance to the group, when – and only when – needed.

S.P.I.C.E.:

1. Skills
2. Procedures … invoke the “power of the pen”
3. Information
4. Consensus
5. Empathy … helping people relate to one another humanely while working out their differences.

A Final Thought

Can we – and if so, how – educate and develop a generation of socially intelligent and socially responsible leaders? How can a business enterprise, a government, or other institution – indeed a whole society – safeguard the seats of power from those who would exploit them for personal gain? How do we encourage those with the necessary combination of ability and ethics to give their services as leaders?

… a process of raising expectations through discussion and dialog. As the concept of social intelligence finds its way into the public consciousness, and into the public discourse about our leaders and the leadership they offer, we may increasingly hold our leaders in all sectors of society to a higher standard.

10. SI and Conflict: Thoughts About Getting Along

“We should go to the Arabs with sticks in hand and beat them, and beat them, and beat them – until they stop hating us.” Tel Aviv cab driver

Perceived arrogance, lack of concern for human suffering, coldness, condescension, and an air of infallibility can set the conditions.

The Double Spiral of Conflict

… conflict tends to create more conflict.

… the escalation of animosity tends to follow a very well-defined pattern …

Positive relationships can grow and strengthen over time, moving upward in a positive self-reinforcing spiral, just as continuing negative relationships move downward in an ever more destructive spiral.

… distrust … bias toward conflict …

During this descent into irreversible conflict, the brain chemistry changes on both sides.

… turns into a lose-lose proposition.

Figure 10.1 The Double Spiral of Conflict:

* Empathy -> Reciprocity -> Mutuality -> Continuity
* Distrust -> Provocation -> Escalation -> Deadlock

The upward progression of a relationship must begin with some adequate degree of trust – or empathy … engineer a state of affairs that invites others to communicate, share their interests and intentions, and seek common ground.

… in the continuity stage of cooperation, all parties understand the pragmatic value of helping the others meet their needs and satisfy their interests.

… prevention offers a much greater promise than cure.

Why Argue?

… stop arguing with people … I had really never won an argument with another person.

“A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.” William Blake

… costs usually involved animosity, resentment, and desire for revenge.

Arguing seemed to become a self-reinforcing habit pattern.

“What do I actually want from this situation?”

… I could attract others to my points of view, induce them to listen more respectfully to my ideas, and maintain a positive empathy with them by passing up the opportunity to attack their ideas.

… asking questions rather than making declarative statements often worked better in influencing them to change their minds.

“The greatest victor wins without the battle …” Lao Tzu

Crucial Conversations (ref. <http://www.peace.ca/crucialconversations.pdf> ; see also Difficult Conversations <http://www.peace.ca/difficultconversations.pdf> and Crucial Confrontations <http://www.peace.ca/crucial_confrontations.htm> - all highly recommended reading)

1. Get Clear About the situation
2. Define your own interests clearly
3. Choose an approach strategy … starting the conversation on a positive, cooperative tone.
4. Conduct the conversation in a positive spirit. Make it a shared search for a mutually acceptable solution.
5. Try for a clear outcome.

Notice that the process has less to do with achieving your goals and more to do with opening the lines of communication and keeping the conversation going … defuse a potential conflict and perhaps find ways to eventually meet the interests of both parties.

Trying to avoid bad feelings causes more bad feelings than anything else.

People can benefit enormously in their lives by making effective use of ‘crucial conversations’ basically clearing the air sooner rather than later.

Added Value Negotiating

A fairly comprehensive review of business articles, books, seminars, and conference programs shows a lingering bias toward an adversarial concept of negotiating.

The fundamental irony of power-based negotiating lies in the simple principle of negative reciprocity … both will succeed in depriving the other side of value … a reductive process rather than an additive process.

Five Steps to “Yes”

… began with a dialog.

… a very simple definition of a “deal”, namely an exchange of value that serves the respective interests of all parties involved. To negotiate, then, means to search cooperatively for a workable deal.

1. identify interests
2. define the elements of value
3. design multiple (at least three) “deal packages”
4. cooperatively select the best deal
5. refine and perfect the selected deal

Epilogue – SI and the Next Generation: Who’s Teaching Our Kids?

… we need to be looking around us to see what’s going on, and to decide – individually and collectively – if that’s what we want to have going on.

Our Children Are Not Our Children

At present, the concept of social intelligence is neither widely accepted nor authentically modeled in the current … popular culture.

… the current social and cultural climate in America is not exactly the envy of the rest of the so-called modern world.

… a sense of social and cultural awareness; a sense of community; a sense of connection to the extended community of humans around the world; and a sense of altruism and service, we have a lot to overcome in the way they’re currently being programmed for adulthood.

“… whoever controls the images – the media – controls the culture …” Allen Ginsberg

… parental influence competes constantly with other sources of guidance …

If we hope to provide children with positive influences and socially intelligent life strategies, we need to begin early, to diligently counteract and contradict the influence of the narcissistic messages that bombard them every day.

The (Only) Ten Basic News Stories:

1. Shock and horror
2. Tragedy
3. Hot sex
4. Scandal
5. The fall of the mighty
6. Conflict
7. Worry
8. Voyeurism
9. Dilemmas
10. Gee-Whiz stories

Anxiety Drives Attention

Breaking the Addiction to Television

Brain wave studies prove conclusively that the experience of watching television for more than three to five minutes induces a brain state that is virtually indistinguishable from hypnosis …

Television programming is specifically designed for the trance state.

The Buying of Our Babies

… kids who were firmly attached to consumerism, … showing more symptoms of depression, anxiety, and similar problems.

“You gotta buy this if you wanna be cool, stylish, or not be seen as totally lame and out of it.”

… the commercialized popular culture never stops …

Ads Are Everywhere

Video Games: The New Sandlot

… the U.S. Armed Forces use some of the more sophisticated games to teach combat soldiers to fight in ultra-modern simulators.

… violent “brainwashing” …

Col. Grossman’s website [www.killology.com](http://www.killology.com/) provides research and information on how societies teach soldiers, police officers, and even children, to kill … “murder simulators” because he believes they very effectively desensitize children to violence and bloodshed.

… exposure to violent media may affect the brains of children with aggressive tendencies differently than the brains of non-aggressive children.

The choice to discuss this issue is age-appropriate.

Teachers, Parents, or Neither?

… parenting skills have very little long-term impact on the development of their children.

… subcultures … create their own rules, borders, and behaviors, and if you want to stay in that group, you adapt to those mores and values.

… your best contribution to their healthy growth and development is to help them pick appropriate friends.

You want this social environment to pass your intuitive test: Is this a safe place to leave my child alone for any length of time?

Belonging Or Be Longing?

… “in the box” or “outside the box” … for boys … for girls …

… parents must allow their children to fight their own social battles, by supporting them …

Two issues appear at work here: teenage overly emotional responses to social standings … and teenage intuition …

… the strategy is to be a good and patient listener, an empathic source of information (only when it’s asked for), and finally, supportive of your child’s thought processes, even if they diverge from your own. With this approach, the key is to allow the child’s intuitive sense of the issue to come to the surface, with a bit of prompting by the parent.

Talking to kids rarely gets better results than listening to them or talking with them.

The S.P.A.C.E. Solution for Schools:

* Provide more instruction in communication skills, especially at the middle school/junior high school level … Because budgets and staff are always a problem, perhaps community volunteers, older student interns, and student-teachers could fill these instructional roles.
* Provide and teach more anti-bullying programs (ref. [www.PTA.org](http://www.pta.org/) , [www.drspock.com](http://www.drspock.com/) )
* Provide more empowerment programs to help build self-esteem for all students at all levels of schooling … Like the communication programs listed above, empowerment programs are often best taught by younger instructors, who can connect to the respective ages or genders in the classroom.
* Teach more programs related to safe dating (similar to Rosalind Wiseman’s “Empower” program <http://www.empowered.org/> ) to help teenagers understand the boundaries of their relationships.
* Provide “safe Internet use” training for K – 12 (ref. [www.ISAFE.org](http://www.isafe.org/) , [www.NCMEC.org](http://www.ncmec.org/) )

A Prescription For Social Intelligence At Every Age

… the need for people to take chances in their lives, to break old habits, to see things in new ways instead of always relying on what’s certain and comfortable …

In the next twenty years, we’re going to get the society we’re creating now. What are you doing now, and what will you do in the near future, to make it a saner and more socially intelligent place to live for all of us?