

Spiritual Intelligence

“My spiritual intelligence is available when I am able to operate and relate free of self, ego, habit, patterns, programming and conditioning. Then I am enabled to see and appreciate all things just as they are.”

Mike O’Sullivan, 2022

This article is based on the book Spiritual Intelligence by Danah Zohar, with added text by Mike O’Sullivan.

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What is Spirit?

A sense of community when humans work together, free of personal interest or reward for the good of others and the world.

- It is something that does not necessarily rely on or need the physical presence of someone
- It is something that operates above and beyond human emotional and psychological upbringing and aspirations
- It is something that is transferable and inspirational
- It is something that acknowledges and proclaims profound, deeper, and richer meaning to human existence
- It gives meaning to life, it creates and defines the unknowable
- It gives purpose, a raison d'être to life
- It enables life goals and leadership and something to aspire to
- It continues to live beyond the death of our physical body.

What is SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE (SQ)?

- The ability to think and behave free of bodily, cultural and environmental obligations.
- The ability to perceive life from a different and more unified perspective.
- To have high SQ is to be able to use one's spiritual intelligence to bring greater context and meaning to living a richer and more meaningful life, to achieve a sense of personal wholeness, purpose and direction.
- To be 'spiritual' is to be in touch with wholeness, literally to have a sense of one's own integrity.
- When we are using our spiritual intelligence we are putting feelings and events in a wider context, relating things that had seemed separate, seeing and creating relationships and patterns.

- Reference: Zohar, Danah. Spiritual Intelligence (p. 191). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

What does it mean to be a SPIRITUAL PERSON?

A spiritual person is someone who is capable of thinking and behaving above and beyond bodily, emotional, cultural and environmental obligations.

- A spiritual person is someone who is able to free themselves of bodily, emotional, cultural and environmental obligations
- The more we free ourselves of our chronic patterns the more spiritual we become.
- Spiritual person has the freedom of no-self, no-mind, no-idea, no chronic patterns, and completely unconditioned. They find all things just as they are; and appreciate everyday things and interactions as sacred.

What is SPIRITUAL BEHAVIOUR?

Is exploring what exists beyond the boundaries of human nature and understanding that brings a deeper richer meaning to being human and creates harmony in a world populated by difference.

- Breaking the boundaries of our emotional, cultural and environmental beliefs
- Behaving without influence from one's chronic patterns or worldly matters.
- Imagining, visualising and conceptualising above and beyond individual and cultural experiences
- Seeking meaning outside of one's physical, emotional and cultural needs
- Exploring existence outside of one's own constructs?
- Having faith that collective love and peace are available to all humans and as such are part of the human condition
- Understanding our motives is crucial to exercising our SQ.

Reference: Zohar, Danah. Spiritual Intelligence (p. 137). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

When do we experience SQ

Any time that we step outside our assumptions or habitual way of seeing things, any time that we break through into some new insight that places our behaviour in a larger, meaning-giving context, any time that we transcend ego and act from our centre, any time that we experience the thrill of beauty or truth larger than ourselves, hear the sublimity in a piece of music, see the majesty in a mountain sunrise, feel the profound simplicity of a new idea, feel the depths of meditation or the wonder of prayer, we are experiencing our SQ and to some small extent, at least, using it to heal ourselves.

Danah Zohar - Spiritual Intelligence, Bloomsbury Publishing

Psychologists discriminate motives from drives

Again, psychologists discriminate motives from drives – forces that move us mainly through instinct. Reproduction is an instinct shared with all lower animals, but intimacy is a motive that requires higher evolutionary faculties. Defence of one's territory is another instinct found in most animals, but self-assertion is a motive found chiefly among humans and the higher apes. Motives are more psychological, more global, they imply some sort of exercise of free will, have more to do with real choice because they can be satisfied in a variety of ways. I can defend my territory only by pushing others off, but I can satisfy my motive for self-assertion by speaking up, by elbowing others out of the way, by issuing commands to subordinates and so on. In human beings, motives probably replace our lost instincts.

Zohar, Danah. Spiritual Intelligence (p. 138). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

A mere sense of the spiritual

To have high SQ is to be able to use the spiritual to bring greater context and meaning to living a richer and more meaningful life, to achieve a sense of personal wholeness, purpose and direction.

A mere sense or experience of the spiritual may give rise to no more than confusion, disorientation or some indefinable longing. In other words a

merely ephemeral experience of the spiritual can lead to an actual loss of perspective. Its sudden richness can make our ordinary lives feel so dull by comparison that we withdraw rather than evolve.

Spiritual intelligence, by contrast, rests on the whole-brain phenomena of our 40 Hz oscillations that integrate all the centres of our brain.

Those who score highly on SQ would be expected to score highly on 'God spot' activity, or on schizotypy, but it doesn't follow that high 'God spot' activity guarantees high SQ. For that to be achieved, as we shall see in the following chapters, the whole brain, the whole self, the whole life must be integrated.

The special insights and abilities conferred by the 'God spot' must be woven into the general fabric of our emotions, motivations and potential, and brought into dialogue with the centre of the self and its special way of knowing.

Zohar, Danah. *Spiritual Intelligence* (pp. 111-112). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

The infinite freedom of no-self, no-mind, no-idea

If we go beyond the collective unconscious, thereby breaking through the final barrier of the self's unconscious layers, we experience true birth completely anew in the ocean of emptiness. This is infinite freedom of no-self, no-mind, no-idea; this is life itself, completely unconditioned. Here in the infinite no-mind we find flowers, the moon, our friends and families, and all things just as they are; we appreciate our everyday lives as miracles.

Zohar, Danah. *Spiritual Intelligence* (p. 155). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Doing God's work or our own, what is it?

I believe I am doing the same as people who believe in God, without reference to a superior being. It seems to me I must give up my autonomy to God if I were to become a believer, which maybe makes life decisions easier to make. Believing in God gives us the reason for doing what we do, whereas without a belief in God, one has to take responsibility for one's own decisions and work.

Spirit as a vehicle for inspiration

When the Queen of England died, the impact of her death was felt world wide. People from all over the world came to see her lie in state and attend the funeral. Her life as a human being had inspired and inspirited people to take action and pay homage to one person who's service to her people has one won the hearts of people around the world. This event has shown the power of someone's spirit can continue to inspire long after the person has gone.

Levels of thinking

The following table is my attempt to make sense of spiritual thinking in context of the different levels of thinking we humans are capable of. My list is not meant to be exhaustive, but sufficient to illustrate the differences in our thinking processes.

I have set out the table with level of thinking across the rows and the columns describing characteristics as per the following

Column 2: What elements of your brain are in control at each level?

Column 3: What is the context, circumstance or environment at each level?

Column 4: What are you conscious of or paying attention to at each level?

In each of the levels of thinking, I have used a nomenclature

S = Stimulus, E = Emotion, I = Intelligence, U = Unified (E+I+CC),

R = Response, CC = Context+Consciousness of the whole

Level of thinking	What elements of your brain are in control?	What is the context, circumstance or environment?	What are you conscious of or paying attention to?
Spiritual thinking (Unified thinking) (S-U-R)	All brain centres - emotional, instinct/rational, intelligence, the wider context, consciousness of self and other - working together to create a unique, benign and harmonious perception and response.	Creating a more harmonious whole for humans and nature to live together.	Others +the bigger worldly-environment plus the goal of working together in harmony
Emotional Intelligence thinking (S-E-I-R)	Emotions and Intelligence and associated behaviour - using one's intelligence to manage and control one's emotive power to achieve more appropriate and successful outcomes - emotional intelligence	Making meaningful decisions in the context of our personal consciousness and environment	Self+ personal environmental and other influences
Emotional thinking (S-E-R)	Emotion-connected behaviour - using one's emotive power and monitoring the feedback - often referred to as the 'terrible twos' or more accurately described as the 'power game'.	Learning to survive in a more complex world. In particular, how to protect oneself by developing strategies for adult relationships that avoid repeating the childhood pain.	Self-consciousness - in the area of ones's emotions and response to threat within your personal environment.
Reptilian thinking (S-R)	Rote learned or hardwired behaviour - instinct/rational	Basic Survival	Threat

S = Stimulus, E = Emotion, I = Intelligence, U = Unified (E+I+CC),

R = Response, CC = Context+Consciousness of the whole

This is the best definition I can give so far

Spirit is that part of being human that exists and persists above and beyond the individual or collection of individuals; and has the power to motivate human beings to achieve greater aspirations for the benefit of others.

In the religious context, people are inspired by the life of someone who in the past sacrificed their life for others and in their belief in God.

In the non-religious context, people are inspired by people who dedicated their lives to the causes of others and in their belief in human goodness to others.