

Live and Work by Your Intelligences

By Joyce Martin

Until the advent of emotional intelligence, the term *intelligence* was synonymous with IQ. But Harvard professor Howard Gardner suggests that success is the result of using not a single intelligence but several different ones. Gardner has defined these intelligences having to do with how we process information:

- verbal intelligence—skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing
- mathematical/logical—the ability to understand numbers and think logically
- visual—sensitivity, awareness, and appreciation or use of color, line, form
- auditory—rhythm, beat, pitch as well as sensitivity to those elements as they relate to recognition, interpretation, or response to sounds from the natural or physical environment
- interpersonal—the ability to perceive accurately and respond appropriately to other people’s feelings
- intrapersonal—the ability to perceive and satisfy appropriately our own needs and desires
- kinesthetic/motor—use of the body to gain information or solve problems
- naturalistic—can observe, relate to, and respond to nature in a complex way
- philosophical/ethical—examines the meaning of life and forms a rationale for what one does.

Intelligences, life, jobs

In our personal lives, we tend to gravitate toward experiences that match our strongest intelligences. At work, we may be using intelligences that aren’t our preferred or strongest. Take the self-assessment to determine yours.

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Part 1: Life Preferences

For each set, check the item that you most prefer. If you can’t decide between two, check both.

You suddenly have two hours free. Which would you prefer?

- listening to news or commentary on the radio
- playing a game such as chess
- engaging in an art or craft
- listening to music, singing, or playing an instrument
- playing a sport or exercising
- visiting a friend or family member
- reflecting on your life
- enjoying nature or a pet
- engaging in a philosophic discussion, reading, or meditating.

You have \$50 to spend on any book you want. Which kind?

- novel, poetry, or other fiction
- how to make or build something
- arts or crafts
- audiotape or a book on music
- sports, exercise, or physiology
- how to improve your relationships
- self-help
- nature or environment
- philosophy, values, or justice.

You’re asked to give a short talk. Which topic would you select?

- something you read or heard about
- steps of a process or skill
- something that impressed you
- a musical experience or interest
- sport, exercise, or health
- an emotional experience or relationship
- self-discovery or growth
- something you experienced in nature
- a rationale for your beliefs.

You attend a training session. Which help you remember the content?

- verbal descriptions or written materials
- outlines or logical sequencing
- graphical representations
- an expressive speaker
- hands-on experience
- dialogue with others on the materials
- relating the materials to your own experience
- a pleasant, appropriate setting
- a value system consistent with your beliefs.

You’re asked to teach someone a task.

Which comes to mind first?

- how to describe the task
- how to sequence the steps
- how to use supportive drawings
- how to get the person in tune with the experience
- how to get the person’s body to respond to the task
- how to motivate the person
- how to maintain respect as instructor
- how to relate the task to something in the natural world
- how to relate the task to larger goals.

Who would you prefer to be stuck with in an elevator?

- a talker to distract you
- a cool, logical person
- someone who wants to talk about art, photography, design
- someone who can sing or talk about music
- someone who talks sports or dance
- someone who talks about celebrities
- someone interested in your life story
- someone who talks about philosophy or justice.

Which would’ve your primary school teacher most likely praised you for?

- reading or writing
- math
- art
- music
- sports or dance
- getting along with others
- being your own person
- understanding or responding to nature
- having integrity and morality.

Which subjects did you prefer?

- English or foreign language
- math or physical science
- art
- music
- sports, physical education, or dance
- history or “people” subjects
- psychology
- natural sciences such as biology, geology, earth science
- subjects related to ethics.

Part 2: Workplace Use of Intelligences

Write the percent that most closely approximates your use of each intelligence at work.

80% or more 70% or more 60% or more 50% or more
 40% or more 30% or more 20% or more 10% or more
 0 = less than 10%

Use	Intelligence	Examples of Workplace Use
_____	Verbal	Talking face-to-face or at a distance Writing down information for others Reading to get information Listening to others to get information
_____	Mathematical/ Technological/ Logical	Applying math skills Understanding technology Planning or thinking systematically to solve problems
_____	Visual	Being sensitive to visual information such as texture, color, shape, design Using such materials as graphs, blueprints, diagrams
_____	Auditory	Using a second language Attending to changes in volume, pitch, or rhythm
_____	Kinesthetic/ Motor	Relying on agility, strength, endurance Being well coordinated
_____	Interpersonal	Recognizing other people's needs Responding effectively to others' needs
_____	Intrapersonal	Selling and meeting your own agenda Using your initiative
_____	Naturalistic	Conserving the natural world Promoting good environmental practices
_____	Philosophical/ Ethical	Creating a more just society Working toward a better world

Quick Revivers

When you can't work in your preferred intelligence, try these refreshers:

- Verbal Refreshers
- Talk with someone with whom you can just ramble.
 - Open a joke book or send a friend a funny email.
- Math/Tech/Logic Refreshers
- Play a computer game or keep a chess game going.
 - Organize your office.
- Visual Refreshers
- Redecorate your office.
 - Flip through a magazine or doodle.
- Auditory Refreshers
- Listen to music, or hum or whistle.
 - Find a place where it's quiet.
- Kinesthetic/Motor Refreshers
- S-t-r-e-t-c-h.
 - Practice deep breathing.
- Interpersonal Refreshers
- Take out the family photo and think about your contribution.
 - Visualize who you'll contact after work and what you'll do.
- Intrapersonal Refreshers
- Recall the last compliment you received and savor it.
 - Replace your to-do list with a have-done list.
- Naturalistic Refreshers
- Water your plant.
 - Imagine a trip.
- Philosophical/Ethical Refreshers
- Discuss something in the news.
 - Poll people's opinions about an issue you care about.

Scoring

Part 1: Life Preferences. Count the checkmarks for each box. Multiply each by 10 and place the score in the left-hand column, Preference Score.

Part 2: Workplace Use of Intelligences. Copy the percent you assigned to each intelligence in the right-hand column, % Use at Work.

Preference Score	Intelligences	% Use at Work
_____	Verbal—using words in English or other language to listen, speak, or read to gain or give information	_____
_____	Mathematical—solving problems using math, technology, or logic	_____
_____	Visual—using information from color, form, size to interpret graphs, charts, and so forth or to think of solutions	_____
_____	Auditory—using listening skills to gain information from people and machines	_____
_____	Kinesthetic/Motor—relying on agility, strength, or endurance to carry out tasks	_____
_____	Interpersonal—recognizing and responding appropriately to others' needs	_____
_____	Intrapersonal—using self-understanding as a launching pad to serve own needs and those of others	_____
_____	Naturalistic—working to conserve and respect nature and its products	_____
_____	Philosophical/Ethical—expressing care and concern for what's just and fair	_____

Interpreting results

70% If you spend 70 percent or more of your time working in your preferred intelligences, you're one of the lucky people. You probably find that each day whizzes by and that even when you get tired, you revive quickly. You are also creative at work and show initiative.

50-60% If you spend this amount of time using your preferred intelligences, you probably find that time flies at times and drags at others. When you work in your least-preferred modes, you tend to be tired, less enthusiastic, and even depressed and feel you don't accomplish much. Try this: Cushion the drudgery with positive experiences before, during, or after. For example, if you're a people-preference type, listen to music while you balance the accounts and chat with colleagues afterwards.

less than 50% If you spend less than half of your work time in your preferred modes, you might try to trade activities with someone else, restructure tasks, or talk to your boss about how to spend more time doing what you're good at.

less than 40% If you're in this category, you need to examine your long-term career plans. That needn't mean abandoning your current skills, just changing how they're applied.