

# Leadership Intelligence: The Four Intelligences of a Leader

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by Joel Garcia

Intelligence is the ability of the mind to comprehend, use thought and reasoning for problem solving— the ability to acquire knowledge and use it practically. Intelligence is important, but as a stand-alone tool for leadership, it lacks penetrating substance. For instance, someone can be intelligent, but awkward with relationships, thus, lacking social intelligence. Someone can be intelligent, but lack self-mastery or character intelligence, and someone can possess superior intellectual capacity, but from Divinity’s point of view this is meaningless (1 Corinthians 1:19-29). You can have a high I.Q., yet be inept in practical matters. Don’t get me wrong, intelligence is important; we should all strive to sharpen our minds and acquire more acumen, but not at the expense of the other four intelligences. There is more to intelligence than getting a high score in an aptitude test or solving enigmas others are unable to solve. Intelligence comes in many forms; it’s just not limited to mental capacity. There are other ‘intellectual’ factors perhaps more important at work in a leader’s life. I call them *The 4 Intelligences of a Leader*; they are wisdom, character, social and spiritual intelligence.

## #1: Wisdom Intelligence

Wisdom, as a form of intelligence, is so needed in today’s world. Wisdom intelligence is having a deep understanding of the reality of people, things, events or situations, resulting in the ability to choose or act accordingly to produce optimum results. Isn’t everyone looking for optimum outcomes from their personal choices? I would think so! You can have these results, but first, you must understand the two roads of wisdom. Wisdom has two roads; a long and short road. What I mean is, wisdom can be gained by experience (the long road) or it can be imparted instantly from above (the

short road). In terms of “long road” wisdom, young people have a limitation in this area due to their age, which limits their ability to think critically unless they learn how to tap into the wisdom given instantly from above. This makes sense since the Greeks viewed wisdom as being *horizontal*, an asset to be gained by experience, as well as a *vertical* asset, something acquired instantly by a higher source. Athena, for instance, was considered the god of wisdom for the Greeks. They believed Athena and other gods could hand down wisdom if humans merely asked for it. Christians also believe this is possible. According to James 1:2, “*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*” Wisdom is crucial to help people discern what’s emerging in front of them, to uncover options and suspend them for a moment before making the crucial decision so they can navigate through life and social situations to gain personal advantages.

## #2: Character Intelligence

Character is pursuing and developing moral excellence, which leads to self-mastery. Character is a word, which conveys the process of engraving or chiseling to give form to raw material. For instance, skilled workers using the hammer and chisel crafted ancient statues very methodically and patiently, shaping some of the most renowned pieces of art we admire today. Within time, an onlooker could see a face or an image emerge from the granite rock. This process also happens with people. During our childhood, we are similar to a marble slab, which, over time, through choice, action and self-correction, you and I create the right actions and new outcomes, which form a new character.

A great example of character comes from one of our beloved Founding Fathers, George Washington. At the young age of sixteen, Washington (1989) wrote a list of life principles to govern his personal conduct. It is known today as *Washington’s Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*, and it consists of 110 principles of conduct by which he determined to live his life. These principles ultimately shaped his character. Here are three samples along with my interpretation in brackets:

- a. Rule #50 – Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any.  
[Don’t believe dirty gossip about someone without first finding the facts yourself before making a judgment.]
- b. Rule #82 – Undertake not what you cannot perform, but be careful to keep your promise. [The first part is don’t commit to something you know your abilities cannot handle.]

- c. Rule #101 – Rinse not your mouth in the presence of others. (p. 18)

[Don't spit in front of people.]

So, how is character formed? Virtue and character are fashioned into one's constitution by adopting the highest principles of conduct, and through determination to change and self-correct, a person begins to distinguish his or herself apart from others. Do you see sixteen-year-old young men and women today who think and act like this? I haven't found one yet. We must ask this question: Why did George Washington become the most prominent figure in American history? Was it because he took the time to mold his character into one of preeminence, which brought him to a place of prominence?

### #3: Social Intelligence

*Social intelligence* is a term coined by Daniel Coleman in his best seller bearing the same name. According to Coleman (2006), social intelligence possesses two components. The first component is what he calls *social awareness*, that is what we sense about others. The second is *social faculty*, which is what we do with that awareness. In other words, social intelligence is how we read others and approach them to gain the best possible connection. Speaking of best possible connections, Tim Sanders (2006), author of the book *The Likeability Factor* writes, "Likeability is an ability to create positive attitudes in other people through the delivery of emotional and physical benefits." He goes on to say, "By being likeable, by generating positive feelings in others, you gain as well. The quality of your life and the strength of your relationships are the product of a choice-but not necessarily your choice" (p.33) Allow me a personal story. One of my daughters has an uncanny ability to make connections easily. She once took a strengths test from the Gallup organization that revealed her top five strengths. Her gifts are strongly oriented toward people, and she uses these innate gifts quite effectively. Her sample includes:

- a. Positivity – This person has an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.
- b. Activator – They can make things happen by turning thoughts into action.
- c. WOO (Winning Others Over) – They love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction by "breaking the ice" and making a connection.
- d. Communication – This person finds it easy to put their thoughts into words; good conversationalists and presenters.
- e. Empathy – They can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in their lives or situation.

My daughter is gifted with natural leadership and people skills. I have often told her that her calling is to the “people environment” in the capacity of ministry or politics. Social intelligence is about how people feel when they are around you... an influence having its origin within the heart and soul that oozes out, appealing and drawing others toward you. Some call this the Law of Attraction, while the most common usage is simply *influence*.

#### **#4: Spiritual Intelligence**

A friend of mine was telling me about the “favor” he had received from corporate executives of a large grocery store chain on the west coast. Previously, he was unemployed looking for any type of work, so he took a part-time job at a grocery store selling brand food portions to customers from a food cart. Within a few weeks, the store manager noticed his product sales go through the roof. This also caught the attention of top brass in the company who eventually offered him a full-time job with a good salary and bonuses. Additionally, he was asked to train local sales managers. He was so good at the initial training sessions that regional and corporate leaders came to his sessions. During one of these meetings my friend was asked about his secret sales magic. He simply responded, “It’s a gift from God.” A quick reply came from one of the executives, “Our company policy dictates you can’t bring up your religious beliefs in these sessions.” However, since he had so much favor from top brass and the store manager, they simply allowed him to get by with his antics about God and religion. It seemed they didn’t want to disrupt the “sales magic” he possessed. When you have favor, people will relax their policy guidelines and protocol to accommodate you. My friend finished his conversation with me and, with a grin on his face stated, “Next week they are flying me to California to train more corporate leaders. The favor is simply amazing.” As he talked, I couldn’t help but feel favor oozing out of him. It was simply contagious! My friend acquired an irresistible likeability; gained access to people and places he did not have before; and was given unlimited boundaries to speak and to act. How does one acquire such favor?

Spiritual intelligence is the ability to build and sustain a relationship with God where you attract His unrelenting favor, to the point it begins to overflow into your life. Favor can be defined in many ways. Cicero coined its original meaning; “to show kindness to someone” or a “gift given as a mark of favor.” Dr. Lance Wallnau defines favor as “the affection of God towards you that releases an influence through you so that other people are inclined to like, trust and cooperate with you.” For me, favor is a measure of grace (God’s nature) bestowed on someone, imparting genuine, endearing

qualities, which enable you to attract and influence others. As a leader, you need the edge that God's favor can produce for you. If God is for you, then who can be against you, right?

Real intelligence is using a combination of these four intelligences at any given time in conjunction with your mental capacity known as intelligence, or I.Q., to gain strategic advantages. Leadership encompasses varied options available to a leader at any given time. These four intelligences are not hard to find; I discovered them in an obscure passage - Luke 2:52, "*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and favor with God and favor with men.*" So what does your leadership quotient look like now?

### **About the Author**

Joel Garcia is founder and president of Latino Townhall, a private post-secondary leadership school in Las Vegas, Nevada. Our objective is to empower Latinos as transformational leaders to permeate, influence and transform culture.

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