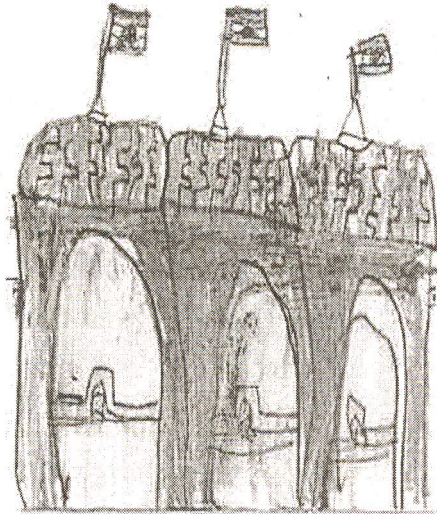


# The Winning Intelligence

S R Nair



The ideas, perspectives, and theories the real entrepreneurs take note of and consider as critical are often unique. Despite their busy schedules of activities and engagements, they find time to read, and even venture to write.

Several years of working with people gives me a perception that there could be yet another form of intelligence, that can be named 'Winning Intelligence'. It is based on some simple observations as well as review of scientific research in human behaviour.

- During my days of employment, I had come across Ms. Ragini Gupta, a smart, conscientious, industrious and caring girl in the marcom department of the company that I worked. In spite of these qualities, she never got invited to parties and get-togethers conducted by her friends and colleagues. When checked, I was told that Ragini had a 'fiery temper' and she was an 'angry woman'. Nobody wanted to interact with her and be with her. Such a caring and industrious girl but she was alienated by her colleagues because of her occasional 'fiery temper'
- The other day my wife told me the story of her neighbor Anand Menon, a gifted kid, creative and intelligent. He was such a dream child and every mother wanted him to be her son. But late in life, she found Anand making a living out of repairing electrical appliances in his apartments. What happened, she enquired. She was told that Anand snapped when his father walked out of his house before he could complete his school.
- In another company there was this brilliant accountant, Ajit Kumar who had an IQ Of 160+. But whenever promotion came, he was passed over. Because, he was perceived to be a selfish fellow by his colleagues.

These few, out of the easily observable several other instances, denote that inability to manage the 'emotional side of relationships' can cause the downfall of people - regardless of learning, knowledge, or intelligence. Most of the times, what we notice in such events around can be verified or crosschecked whether correct or not, if we review books or other periodicals - the thinkers and researchers too live in the very world where we too exist.



- A study by the US Navy had revealed that most effective leaders are warmer, outgoing, emotionally expressive, dramatic, and sociable.
- Studies in retail segment had found that a store manager's ability to manage feelings and stress of his subordinates is directly related to net profit, sales per sq ft., sales per employee etc.
- A survey on buyers found that apparel sales reps. were valued primarily for their empathy. The buyers reported that they wanted reps who could listen and understand what they wanted.
- In a research at an insurance major, it was observed that new salesman who were optimists sold 37% more insurance in their first 2 years than did pessimists. When the company hired a special group of individuals who scored high on optimism but failed the normal screening, they outsold the pessimists by 21% in the first year and 57% in the second year.
- At least one out of three from any organization would narrate incidents of 'organizational politics' - certain special networks of relationships that create and maintain the 'environment' of an organization, mostly inducing negative consequences.

Organizations usually give high priority to 'intelligence' in selection process. Intelligence in the format of academic brilliance and *relayed* cognitive or intellectual abilities. These kind of attributes are not connected to any social relationship aspects and therefore do not help individuals in 'relating with people', or genuine inter-personal relationship - a critical requirement of career progress in organizations as well as for optimum quality social existence.

### **What is Intelligence?**

Out of the several definitions of intelligence, I consider the one by David Wechsler, the American psychologist, the most appropriate one - 'the aggregate capacity of an individual to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with the environment'. In effect, Wechsler attributed critical importance to 'cognitive abilities'.

Perhaps, Ragini Gupta, Anand Menon, and Ajit Kumar acted purposefully and thought rationally. Yet, they might have missed the component of 'dealing effectively with the environment'.

### **What is 'Environment'?**

The environment, the critical and major part of it, is nothing but other human beings - as far as human 'dealing' is concerned. If environment is taken as the 'ecological' or physical environment, even all kinds of animals adapt with environment. Perhaps, animals are better equipped and more capable to adapt with the physical environment. So, obviously, this 'dealing effectively with environment' is to be considered as 'people'. And, dealing effectively with people is the critical requirement of life and work - especially, in the contemporary world of privatized, globalized, open market economy. Therefore, the decisive aspect of intelligence is 'dealing inter-personal relationships and people effectively'.

The very phenomenon of relationship is designed by an underlying aspect of 'emotions'. In other words, emotions design the nature and quality of relationships. Therefore, individual's competency to manage emotions has a critical role in dealing effectively with people.

### **How to 'deal with the People Environment effectively'?**

Taking clue from Wechsler's definition, it seems that we need to act purposefully, think rationally in order to deal effectively with 'people environment'.

### **Act Purposefully**

Act, in this context means: to express, behave, talk, and work - with people. The properties of negative emotions are so powerful that they permeate every expression, behaviour, dialogues, and work activity - especially working for or with people. It over-shadows even academic brilliance and job performance competencies. Fear, anger, rage, jealousy, frustration, sadness, anxiety, depression etc are some of them. These emotions can generate spontaneous, irrational decisions, and actions that mess up one's inter-personal relationships, and thereby, life and work.

If an individual has a strong 'purpose' - goal, aim mission, to succeed in life and work, to contribute something worthy and meaningful to the world or to one's own family, or even to evolve personally - almost any negative emotion is likely to become insignificant. Most of the detrimental emotions are actually reserved for manifestation before other people. If nobody is



around, to whom one would demonstrate any emotions? It is likely that the very basis of emotions is created out of certain probabilities of expectations and behaviours vis-à-vis the 'others'.

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It is not about direct 'suppression' of emotions. Suppressed emotions manifest later in life in the form of health challenges such as migraine, asthma, palpitations, BP, ulcer, arthritis, depression, mental aberrations etc. And these are extremely dangerous for one's health.

Instead, it is about having a clear or inspiring 'purpose' in life and work, a clarity about one's role and responsibility in existence. It is reported that a snake and rat would hold on to the same piece of wood floating in flooded water. That is, when a common enemy appears, rivals become friends. Similarly, a higher purpose would mitigate the seriousness of self-defeating or 'other-defeating' emotions.

### **Think Rationally about Relations**

'Thinking rationally' involves thinking about the existence of others too, to see things and phenomena from the others' perspective. For instance, nobody gets wild with a drunkard or a mentally challenged individual, even if he injures or intimidates you. Because, you 'understand' his condition. Within a few moments of 'thought' one must be able to recognize other's un-stated needs and concerns and read undercurrents of the emotional realities of people [and of one's own mind].

The choice and decision to act purposefully would naturally inspire us to 'think rationally', to become 'adaptive', to develop initiative, to attend to responsibilities, to improve oneself, and in becoming trustworthy to others. In fact, most other definitions of intelligence incorporate the ability to 'adapt' with the environment [people environment].

Adapting with the 'people environment', as mentioned earlier, is adapting with relationships. Without proper relationships, life and work is near-impossible in today's world than ever before. Adapting with others involves the ability to help the development of others, open communication, resolving conflicts, practicing team work, and by developing leadership abilities.

### **Defining 'Winning Intelligence'**

Thus, we may tentatively re-conceptualize Wechsler's definition of intelligence: 'the aggregate capacity of an individual to act purposefully, think rationally, "in order to deal effectively with the environment of people".'

The very purpose of intelligence itself is to facilitate survival and sustenance. Unfortunately, the very activities of survival and sustenance have assumed the nature and dynamics of a high-competition 'game'. The nature of 'games' has evolved to great magnitudes - currently stationed at the level of terrorism and several variants of manipulative practices. Perhaps, an inevitable consequence of the intelligence of human beings.

The process of learning and knowledge development is a matter of conventional intelligence. But in order to take advantage or to reap the benefits of that learning and knowledge, to enable 'peaceful' ways of existence - survival and sustenance we need yet another 'orientation' to intelligence. An intelligence to evolve a genuine purpose and to win that purpose in existence. Of course, it is not about defeating others. But to 'win over the emotions' that tend to defeat our own purposes - great or simple.

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#### About the Author:

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