

## Social Intelligence Theory

<https://www.karlalbrecht.com/siprofile/siprofiletheory.htm>

### What is Social Intelligence (SI)?

Social Intelligence (SI) is the ability to get along well with others, and to get them to cooperate with you. Sometimes referred to simplistically as "people skills," SI includes an awareness of situations and the social dynamics that govern them, and a knowledge of interaction styles and strategies that can help a person achieve his or her objectives in dealing with others. It also involves a certain amount of self-insight and a consciousness of one's own perceptions and reaction patterns.

From the standpoint of interpersonal skills, Karl Albrecht classifies behavior toward others as falling somewhere on a spectrum between "toxic" effect and "nourishing" effect. Toxic behavior makes people feel devalued, angry, frustrated, guilty or otherwise inadequate. Nourishing behavior makes people feel valued, respected, affirmed, encouraged or competent. A continued pattern of toxic behavior indicates a low level of social intelligence - the inability to connect with people and influence them effectively. A continued pattern of nourishing behavior tends to make a person much more effective in dealing with others; nourishing behaviors are the indicators of high social intelligence.

### Is SI a part of personality?

No. SI is one of a cluster of "intelligences," according to the theory of multiple intelligences advanced by Professor Howard Gardner of Harvard University. Gardner's "MI" theory has become widely accepted in recent years, particularly in the area of public education.

The old idea that a person's potential in life can be measured and predicted by a single number - his or her "IQ" score - has lost a great deal of credibility during the last decade or so. Many researchers now accept Gardner's proposition that intelligence is multidimensional, and many believe that each of the key dimensions of intelligence can continue to increase throughout one's life, given the appropriate experiences, challenges and growth opportunities.

Professor Gardner has proposed various categories of intelligence over the years of his research, typically suggesting seven of them. Inasmuch as he and others have recently been rearranging the categories and in some cases debating about how many intelligences

we have, Karl Albrecht has taken the liberty of recasting them into a simpler model which is useful in business and professional settings. According to Karl Albrecht's simplified interpretation, we can think of human beings as having six primary dimensions of intelligence (**A.S.P.E.A.K.**):

	Dimension:	Involves:
A	Abstract	<i>Conceptual reasoning, manipulating verbal, mathematical &amp; symbolic information.</i>
S	Social	<i>Interacting successfully with others in various contexts.</i>
P	Practical	<i>"Common sense" capabilities; the ability to solve problems &amp; get things done.</i>
E	Emotional	<i>Self-insight &amp; the ability to regulate or manage one's reactions to experience.</i>
A	Aesthetic	<i>Appreciation of form, design and relationships.</i>
K	Kinesthetic	<i>Whole-body competence, e.g. singing, dancing, flying an airplane.</i>

Can SI be measured?

Yes. Measuring SI involves identifying key interaction skills and then assessing them behaviorally. All human interaction takes place with some context or other, and effectiveness involves mastering the contexts within which one is called upon to interact. So, according to this reasoning, SI means understanding contexts, knowing how to navigate within and between various contexts, and knowing how to behave in various contexts so as to achieve one's objectives. In other words, SI is inferred from behavior, so we use various observable behaviors as indicators of SI.

Can SI be learned, or developed?

Yes. By first understanding SI, as a combination of skills expressed through learned behavior, and then assessing the impact of one's behavior on others - the degree to which one is successful in dealing with others - one can experiment with new behaviors and new interaction strategies. In the simplest terms, this is the ability to "get

along with people," which - it is assumed - people learn as they grow up, mature, and gain experience in dealing with others. Unfortunately, many people do not continue to learn and grow as they age, and many people never acquire the awareness and skills they need to succeed in social, business or professional situations. It is quite clear that adults who lack insight and competence in dealing with others can make significant improvements in their SI status as a result of understanding the basic concepts and assessing themselves against a comprehensive model of interpersonal effectiveness.

Is SI different from emotional intelligence (EI)?

Yes. The recent popularity of the emotional intelligence concept - one of Prof. Gardner's key intelligences - paves the way for a practical approach to developing the other intelligences. While some practitioners have tried to stretch the EI theory to include "people skills," in practical terms it makes more sense to think of EI and SI as two distinct dimensions of competence. Social intelligence (Gardner's "*interpersonal intelligence*") is separate from, but complimentary to emotional intelligence (Gardner's "*intrapersonal intelligence*"); we need both models in order to understand ourselves and the way we interact with others. Some deficits in SI arise from inadequate development of EI; conversely, some deficits in SI may lead to unsuccessful social experiences which may undermine a person's sense of self-worth which is part of EI.

According to Karl Albrecht "I think of the six primary dimensions of intelligence - Abstract, Social, Practical, Emotional, Aesthetic and Kinesthetic - as analogous to the six faces of a cube. Each presents a distinct facet, or face, of one's total competence. We can think of them as separate for purposes of discussion and analysis, but actually they are intimately interwoven."

What does the SI Profile (SIP) measure?

The [Social Intelligence Profile](#) (SIP) analyzes SI through three different and compatible "lenses." Each lens shows you a picture of your social interaction from a particular point of view. Two of these lenses, or dimensions, involve evaluations or judgments you yourself make about your effectiveness in dealing with others. The third is your self-description of your interaction style, which is your preferred pattern of behavior for a large number of situations. Your interaction style is not subject to judgment or evaluation - it is merely your acquired preference.

**I. Social Skills - the "S.P.A.C.E." formula:** Part I of the SIP presents you with a list of various behaviors, divided into five basic skill categories - 1) Situational Awareness, 2) Presence, 3) Authenticity, 4) Clarity and 5) Empathy. **Situational Awareness** (or social awareness) is your ability to observe and understand the context of a situation you may find yourself in, and to understand the ways in which the situation dominates or shapes the behavior of the people in it. **Presence**, also known simplistically as "bearing," is the impression, or total message you send to others with your behavior. People tend to make inferences about your character, your competence and your sense of yourself based on the behaviors they observe as part of your total presence dimension. **Authenticity** is the extent to which others perceive you as acting from honest, ethical motives, and the extent to which they sense that your behavior is congruent with your personal values - i.e. "playing straight." **Clarity** is the ability to express ideas clearly, effectively and with impact. It involves a range of "communicating" skills such as listening, feedback, paraphrasing, semantic flexibility, skillful use of language, skill in using metaphors and figures of speech, and the ability to explain things clearly and concisely. **Empathy** is the skill of building connections with people - the capacity to get people to meet you on a personal level of respect and willingness to cooperate. Empathy, in this case, goes beyond the conventional definition of having a feeling toward another person; here, it means creating a mutual feeling between yourself and another person.

The person taking the SIP for self-assessment answers a series of self-rating questions dealing with various behaviors classified as either *toxic or nourishing*. He or she adds up the scores for each **S.P.A.C.E.** category and plots the five scores as dots on the five axes of a radar chart, illustrated in Figure 1.

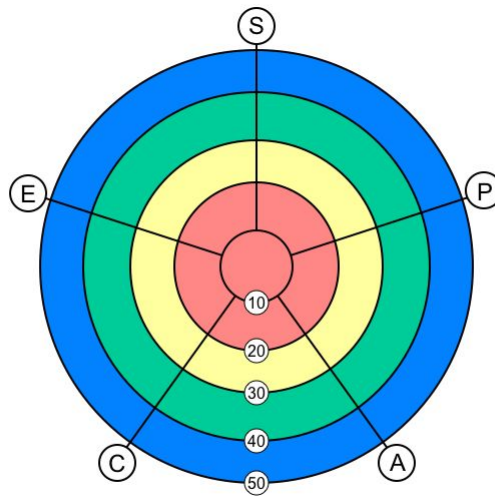


Figure 1. Social Skills - "S.P.A.C.E." Formula.  
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**II. Self-Insight:** Part II of the SIP presents a series of adjective pairs, representing contrasting descriptions others might give of the person who is answering the questions. Contrasts like "Cold - Warm," "Inarticulate - Articulate" and "Long-winded - Concise" challenge the user to reflect carefully on how others might see him or her, to try to guess accurately how they might use these various contrasting adjectives. The user circles a number on a five-point scale between the two opposing adjectives, to show the score he or she thinks others would give. The highest- and lowest-rated adjectives provide a starting point for thinking about how one is influencing others.

**III. Interaction Style:** Part III of the SIP invites the user to read a series of scenarios, or situations in which he or she might encounter others. Each scenario provides four options for behaving, corresponding to four primary interaction styles one might use as his or her preferred "home base." The underlying model of social interaction styles involves two primary dimensions: social energy and results focus. Social energy is the impulse to engage other people, to interact with them, to influence them and be influenced by them. Results focus is the preference for getting things done either through people or by one's own effort. The two extremes of these two variables - high and low social energy and task focus vs. people focus - provide four basic combinations which we can think of behavioral preferences across a range of situations. Each pattern has a shorthand name that

suggests its primary orientation. Some people mix these four patterns almost equally, while others may tend to prefer one pattern as the favorite. Again, the purpose of the social styles dimension is insight rather than judgment or self-criticism.

Figure 2 shows these four styles in the convenient form of a two-by-two matrix diagram.

