



## **Leadership Letter**

### **How intelligent are you?**

When I grew up, eons ago, there seemed to be only one form of intelligence that was important and that was getting good marks on my reading, writing and arithmetic! Since then of course our understanding of intelligence has grown. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences was shared in the first edition of his book "Frames of Mind" (1983), where he described seven distinct types of intelligence – logico-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. In a second edition of this book, he added two more types of intelligence – naturalist and existential intelligences. **For the purpose of this letter, I am sharing my own, 5 types of intelligence, that seem important to me in practical, day to day, relational life.**

#### **1. Academic Intelligence:** IQ – the knowledge we know about!

Paul challenges us in 1 Corinthians 8:1 "We know that 'We all possess knowledge.' But knowledge puffs up while love builds up." Knowledge alone can be inspiring, fascinating and interesting but doesn't necessarily change our lives. I often have conversations with people who are very intelligent. I can ask them about a certain topic and they can expound with clarity and authority on the subject. We live in a communication age where there is so much more knowledge accessible than ever before. The question is, "Are we better off with all this knowledge? In our retreat centre in Malaga we have just completed a couples retreat, that turned out to be a wonderful experience for all. The interesting thing was that the couples probably didn't learn much! Academic knowledge that is! If you look at the statistics for divorce in the western world, they are just about the same in the church as in society at large. We live in a time when there are more books, DVD's, seminars and resources than ever before and yet knowledge alone isn't helping. We have far more knowledge than our parents and their parents before them and yet our relationships generally are in a worse condition. Why is that? I believe it's because it takes more than knowledge to see lives change. Those couples who joined us for the retreat left encouraged, refreshed and with new hope to go deeper in their relationships. However it wasn't to do with academic knowledge but putting the knowledge they already had into practice.

#### **2. Experiential Intelligence:** Academics + application

I have grown up in the church and listened to literally thousands of sermons. Add to those sermons, personal reading, study and interactions with others in courses and seminars and it all adds up to a whole lot of knowledge. The challenging questions to me are, "How much of that knowledge have I applied into my life personally? How have I changed and developed in my character, skills and behaviour through that knowledge?" The Greeks understood this difference of knowledge in our heads and knowledge lived out and used two very

distinct words. The first is 'gnosis' meaning mental understanding and the second is 'epignosis' meaning experiential understanding.

Philippians 4:9 encourages us, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice." If I had applied everything that I'd learned in my head over the years, I would be a spiritual giant by now. My friends will assure you that I haven't arrived at that esteemed level yet. The truth is that I've only been able to apply a very small percentage of what I have heard. Why haven't I applied more?

- because it takes time to think and reflect on what I have heard and understood
- because my life is full already and its easier to just continue to live in the way that I've been accustomed
- because I just can't be bothered - it's going to take too much energy and I only have a limited amount
- because the easy stuff to change has been changed already and it's only the hard stuff left!
- because....

Give me long enough and I will come up with a whole lot more reasons. So perhaps our equation isn't right yet.

### **3. Psychological intelligence: Academics + Application + Attitude**

These last few weeks I have been running every morning with my daughter. It's amazing how in such a short period of time, aerobically I feel fitter and healthier and have even lost a few pounds. You may ask the question, "Why start running now in June when the temperatures are getting up to 30 degrees?" I have known for years that regular exercise is important not just for the body but for my spirit and soul too. I have sought to apply this truth in various ways over the years. However I have found that the extra ingredient needed is attitude. I have the knowledge of how healthy exercise is, that the application of 20 minutes run a day burns up 300 calories and that it brings aerobic health and muscle toning. However it's all useless if I don't have the right feelings, thoughts and desires about it. There's 1001 things that are good for us but somehow we don't do them because we lack the commitment or perhaps a better word is "motivation." What has motivated me to run? Well my daughter wants to be fit and so do I. We both find it difficult to go it alone but running together is a whole different ball game. We now have peer accountability - we don't want to disappoint one another. In fact we spur one another on. Every day we extend the time we run without stopping - our attitude has changed. For some things, perhaps many things, we need to think community rather than individual. Ephesians 4:23, "Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes."

### **4. Emotional intelligence: A + A + A + Awareness Emotionally**

Emotional intelligence or EQ (emotional quotient) has become a buzz word over the last few years with the classic book written on the subject by Goleman. Without going into details there's a whole language of emotions to be learned. Women generally speak the language a lot more fluently than men. So to help

the men especially, here are the basics of emotional intelligence. There are four aspects to master:

1. Awareness of our own emotions
2. How to handle or manage them once you are aware of them
3. Awareness of others emotions
4. How to handle or manage others emotions once you are aware of them

So for example, you may be aware that you have anger issues but have trouble handling or dealing with the anger. Some allow their emotions to control them as if their emotions have a mind of their own! Or you are leading a meeting and can be totally unaware of how people are feeling and manage the meeting without taking anyone's emotions into account. This will have the consequence of losing connection relationally with the team. Some are very intelligent in this area, others are very emotionally challenged. Romans 12:15 encourages us to, "Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep." Jesus responded to the death of Lazarus with tears and to Peter's slicing of the soldier's ear off with calmness and healing. He was angry in the temple with the Pharisees and forgiving of his disciples in the garden when they fell asleep instead of praying. Jesus had lots of emotional intelligence!

For instance, when I knock on my daughter's room in the morning to wake her up for a run and hear a grunt and groan, am I to assume she isn't feeling great and doesn't want to run? We've talked enough about running for me to know she wants me to motivate her to get up and once we have run she'll thank me. In fact I need these endorphins as much as anyone (those feel good enzymes help me feel like a human being again in the morning)

I found myself being irritable with my wife the other morning and immediately asked myself the question, "What's going on with my emotions?" Emotionally intelligent people can identify the names of their emotions. So let me give it a try! I was feeling *deflated* after a fulfilling LDC and giving out so much energy. I was *drained* through a conflict issue I was involved in, and still *tender* from the death of Rite's mum and a trip back to Canada. That all added up to feeling slightly *depressed*. When you understand your own situation and the emotions that you are experiencing, it enables you to extend grace to yourself or to others and you can then apply the appropriate strategy to rise up out of it. For me a number of things can help: a run, a worship time, a good talk and nice meal with Rite and time to journal. These are all good strategies to set me on the right road to recovery. Of course tomorrow a similar strategy is needed. Emotions don't just bounce back immediately.

#### **5. Spiritual intelligence:** A + A + A + A + anointing spiritually

We all know that things aren't always as they seem to appear. Sometimes we have to 'read between the lines' or 'look below the surface', in order to discern the truth. In 1 Samuel 16, the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't look at the outward appearance but at the heart" and Paul shared in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that "the man without the spirit cannot spiritually discern." Spiritual intelligence includes understanding our own spirit, evil spirits and the Spirit of God. We all hear or perceive in different ways but there's an intuitive knowing that we learn. This

spiritual understanding is often referred to as an anointing – someone who hears clearly and able to move with the power and presence of God in their lives.

You don't have to be in Spain for too long before you discern the oppressive spirit here. It's a secular nation with hundreds of years of inquisition, dictatorship and oppression of the people with a strong religious spiritual overtone. There has been little reformation here unlike many other European nations, the church is small, few missionaries are sent out and a negative spiritual atmosphere is the result. I led many worship times during the last leadership course here and recognised a new openness in the spirit. People were very responsive spiritually and ready to step out in obedience on hearing from the Lord. It made for a wonderful sense of God's presence and an ease of relating spiritually to one another. It's not always like that and spiritual intelligence enables us to discern what is going on and to act as a thermometer in raising the spiritual temperature.

Leadership of any kind requires a number of intelligences – we can't be masters of them all but can develop in them all and as we relate closely with others, we can enjoy the presence of these multiple intelligences and be encouraged by them.

As you are functioning in team ask:

- What academic understanding do we have on this topic?
- What are we putting into practice and how?
- What's our attitude and motivation like – is morale high?
- What's happening in people's hearts and feelings and how do we manage ourselves and the group?
- What's the spiritual atmosphere, what's God saying, what spiritual hindrances are at work?

A question in closing: In my friendships, marriage and family, how can I use these various intelligences to minister the life of God in the best possible way?

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