# Spiritual Intelligence: Going Beyond IQ and EQ to Develop Resilient Leaders

STEPHEN K. HACKER
AND MARVIN WASHINGTON

*University-based leadership development programs have long included a focus on human intelligence and emotional intelligence to foster subject and relationship competence, respectively. In response to the need to develop leaders with a strong sense of individual purpose, vision, and values who can meet the challenges of a volatile business environment, spiritual intelligence, a measure of inner resilience, is being added to executive training curricula. All three elements were addressed in a four-year leadership development program conducted through the University of Alberta for the Alberta Heath Services and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The results of post-program self-assessments and 360-degree evaluations of the 160 program participants highlight the value of this three-tier training method in molding a new generation of resilient leaders. © 2017 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.*

Dramatic developments in population and life expectancy, technology and global interconnectivity, and the creation and failure of businesses have contributed to the acceleration of change and complexity in the business environment. Effective leadership has become more essential than ever.

In these volatile times, recognition of the need for collective visioning, dynamic strategic planning, and developing passion among a fully engaged and empowered workforce is causing organizational leaders to re-examine their leadership development efforts and results. Where attention to systems management at the top was once sufficient to ensure high-quality leadership, there is now a demand for creative leadership throughout an organization. To help foster the development of their leaders, many organizations have turned to executive leadership programs to augment the training they offer internally. But how have university-based, non-degree forums adapted to the new organizational realities?

Working from various university platforms (such as Oregon State University, Virginia Tech, Portland State University, the University of Alberta, the University of Botswana, and Texas Tech University) to develop leaders for scores of commercial, not-for-profit, and governmental organizations, Transformation Systems International has broadened its leadership development curriculum and course focus to include deeper relational awareness and, more recently, self-awareness and the ability to thrive in times of transformational change.

## Current Employer Requirements for Leadership Development

A market trend survey sponsored by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the Executive MBA Council, and the Executive Education Consortium pointed to evolving requirements in leadership development through executive education (Lubeck, Cheng, Myszkowski, Doedijns, Drew, & Snow, 2015). Among the recommendations made in this study:

- Provide more customization to growing markets.
- Measure the transfer and impact of new learning.

- Enable and incentivize faculty to design and facilitate effective experiential learning.
- Focus training on solving business issues.
- Make training practical, personalized, and easy to integrate into the organization.

One of the most pressing talent management issues facing today's organizations is how to narrow the gap between the senior experienced leaders who are retiring and the junior less experienced leaders who are emerging. Although employers want leadership training included in management development programs, the survey report recognized that the educational industry has been slow to meet this need.

Noting that the business environment has become more complex, volatile, and unpredictable, Nick Petrie (2014) acknowledged the challenges to modern day leadership with two points:

- This is no longer just a leadership challenge (what good leadership looks like); it is a development challenge (the process of how to grow "bigger" minds).
- Managers have become experts on the "what" of leadership, but novices in the "how" of their own development.

Clearly, deeper, more comprehensive development is required. Employers are seeking individuals who are not only intellectually astute, but also have the self-knowledge and maturity to create with others. And the drive for development needs to be generated within the individual taking on more responsibility, as opposed to being mandated by the organization. Such a desire for self-transformation in order to grow as a leader within a rapidly changing environment reflects a high level of self-mastery. This means that any formal leadership development opportunity provided by a university partner should be just that—an opportunity for the individual to develop and refine high-level skills.

Presently university-based executive education programs employ a variety of teaching methods to increase enrollees' skill sets: business simulations, coaching, 360-degree feedback processes, webinars, assessments, classroom teaching, consulting, and action learning projects. To measure the transfer and impact of learning, businesses that employ executive education typically:

- maintain impact diaries during the course,
- conduct reflection and action planning sessions, and
- invite previous participants to make presentations on how they have used what they learned in daily work.

But what about the curriculum? How are employers' requirements for self-guided transformation and holistic thinking to be met?

### The Shift from Human Intelligence (IQ) to Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

The teaching of leadership has long revolved around knowledge competencies, such as planning, finance, labor deployment, investment, and project management. Well into the 1980s, the focus was on optimization of resources as the primary competitive and service delivery element. Thus, the development of leaders as better managers was largely a process of promoting smarter, more data-driven individuals. To optimize existing business systems, recruiters sought leaders with a high IQ, or intelligence quotient, a score derived from standardized tests created to assess human intelligence (see **Exhibit 1**). Freshly minted MBAs were welcomed into the workforce in droves.

Originating with psychologist William Stern in the early twentieth century, IQ level has become widely accepted as an indicator of strong, rational, logical, learned, and cogent thinking. In the case of organizational leaders, it is seen to reflect their ability to understand organizational systems and
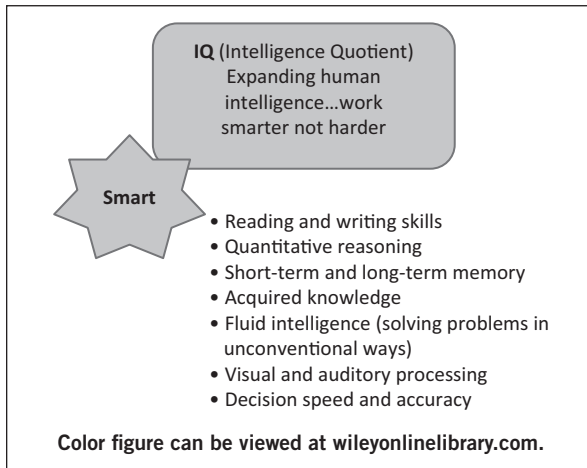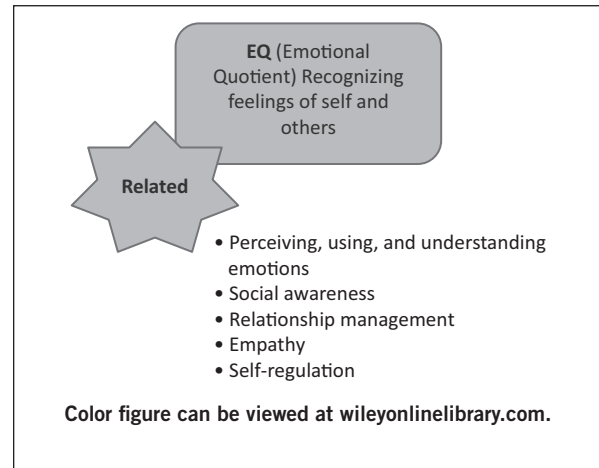
**Exhibit 1. The Aspects of IQ Measurement**

**IQ** (Intelligence Quotient) Expanding human intelligence...work smarter not harder

**Smart**

- Reading and writing skills
- Quantitative reasoning
- Short-term and long-term memory
- Acquired knowledge
- Fluid intelligence (solving problems in unconventional ways)
- Visual and auditory processing
- Decision speed and accuracy

**Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com.**

**Exhibit 2. The Aspects of EQ Measurement**

**EQ** (Emotional Quotient) Recognizing feelings of self and others

**Related**

- Perceiving, using, and understanding emotions
- Social awareness
- Relationship management
- Empathy
- Self-regulation

**Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com.**

their complexities. Of course, managerial success requires application and relationship management skills, not just book smarts, so many workers who aspire to leadership roles eventually are weeded out despite their high IQ—but at no small cost to their organization.

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Over the years, increased understanding of the need for effective teaming—brought about by the forces of accelerated change and increased complexity—led those charged with leadership development to address EQ, the ability to work productively with others, as a key value. When Daniel Goleman coined the term EQ in his 1995 book of the same name, this course was further legitimized (Goleman, 1995). At the time that Goleman was making his case for the parallel between emotional and cognitive intelligence, high-performance work systems had become the rage, highlighting the importance of relationship expertise. In keeping with this trend,

organizational leaders implemented continual learning models, and often relied on the same universities they had previously worked with for short courses on such subjects as relationship management, work systems development, and teaming. Today, EQ entails a broad array of skills and characteristics used in relational leadership (see **Exhibit 2**).

Leaders who underwent EQ-focused training were taught to develop connections beyond transactional relationships. Getting to know people at a more meaningful level—understanding what was important to them and their mindsets, what spurred their energies and gave them a sense of purpose—resulted in such relationships. When people became more conscious of and willing to examine big-picture questions, the new organizational culture fostered organizational effectiveness.

**The Emergence of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)**

Teaching leaders how to build better relationships was key to the dissemination of high-performance work systems. And the recognition of the need for high-performance individuals on teams spurred organizations to invest further in skill building and leadership development to equip a broader array of team leaders. Fostering passion, creativity, and drive

in a fast-paced, ever-changing business environment requires more, however. It takes internal strength. Resilient leaders succeed where others fail.

Beyond intellect and relationship acumen, the ability to bounce back from setbacks came to be seen as an enormous advantage, and self-knowledge *apart* from the organization was identified as a key to developing resiliency. Thus, developing a personal mission, vision, and values began to be incorporated into leadership development curricula. This work of self-reflection and inquiry to become more conscious and self-directed is fundamental to spiritual intelligence, or SQ, a term introduced by Danah Zohar in her book, *ReWiring the Corporate Brain* (1997).

Spiritual intelligence speaks not to the practice of a spiritual or religious belief, but to spiritual aptitude. It requires the development of a keen self-awareness, the alignment of vocation with purpose, the ability to view life challenges and adversity within the context of spiritual growth, and an alertness to wider patterns and connections (see **Exhibit 3**).

When SQ is taken into consideration, the measures of workforce strength broaden beyond employee

**Exhibit 3. The Aspects of SQ Measurement**

SQ (Spiritual Quotient)
Intelligence beyond our five senses: purpose and awareness

Grounded

• Mindfulness
• Contemplation and self-reflection
• "Life of meaning" sense and articulation
• Happiness
• Connection to the whole
• Access to collective consciousness

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satisfaction, morale, and retention to include employee engagement. Today firms such as Gallup conduct organizational assessments of employee engagement and report their findings on a global basis. Understanding work as the orchestration of a collective vision, born of the strength of individual visions, has proved vital in organizational transformation and meeting the challenge of adapting to rapid change.

A focus on SQ calls for recasting many of the simple tools and approaches from past leadership curriculums. Alignment is no longer seen as an indoctrination process in which organizational leaders command the rank-and-file to follow upper management's vision and directions. Rather, it is a process of discovery in which followers learn how their leader's vision aligns with their own. Realizing the importance of self-awareness in every individual (both followers and leaders) and organizational assertions in terms of stated mission, vision, and values changes the approach to alignment.

Thus, the traditional reliance on Bruce Tuckman's (1965) forming-storming-norming-performing model of team development needed to be reconsidered. A shift to community models, such as M. Scott Peck's (1993) pseudo community-chaos-emptiness-community model, better reflects the high-performance team process. Peck's emptiness stage, for instance, requires a high level of self-awareness as a condition for success in revealing individual mindsets and motivations. In short, attention to SQ not only entails adding a third ingredient into the leadership development mix, but also alters approaches to both IQ and EQ. Often IQ and EQ approaches are "head" based, with facilitators and trainers approaching the material through classwork, small group conversations, and case studies. SQ approaches require the use of individual reflections, introspection, and self-awareness so that participants examine why they think they exist, what their purpose is, and what guides their decisions.
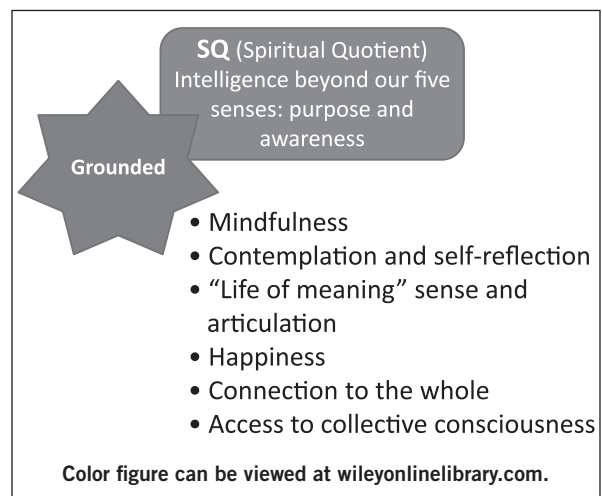
### The Evolution of University-Based Leadership Development Programs

Recent executive education programs designed for the Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and presented through the University of Alberta's School of Business Executive Education highlight the way leadership development is currently being designed to address SQ along with IQ and EQ.

AHS is the provincial health-care provider for the province of Alberta, Canada. With more than 100,000 employees, 106 hospitals, and a budget of CAD$14 billion, AHS is also the biggest line item expense within the Alberta provincial budget. Since changes in the health-care field demanded transformative, resilient leaders, AHS sought to create a leadership program and culture based on the Canadian College of Health Leaders' LEADS framework: Lead self, Engage others, Achieve results, Develop coalition, and Systems transformation (www.leadscanada.net). In addition to classroom discussions, the AHS leadership development program included coaching and action learning project components in which participants worked in groups to address a challenge within the organization, such as deciding whether they could expand the schedule for discharging patients and empowering front-line nurses to make more decisions. The participants were AHS senior leaders who had the potential to become part of the organization's C-suite within the next five to 10 years.

The RCMP has 4,000 employees in Alberta, serving 1.5 million citizens over a vast area of 661,848 square kilometers (255,500 square miles). Most of the participants were inspectors or superintendents hoping to next be promoted to commissioner. The urban and remote rural settings in the region require multiple policing competencies, while changes in workload demands and organizational complexity call for strong leadership skills. The challenge for the RCMP was to develop a new cadre of senior personnel who would think not only as police officers but also as leaders. This meant thinking not only in terms of crisis management and crime reduction, but also strategically regarding personnel and equipment needs and how to address new types of crimes, such as cyberbullying. Besides developing administrative and analytical skills, they would also need to focus on nurturing their creativity, innovation, community building, and vision skills.

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Once the needs were identified, programs were designed through conversations with each customer organization and the University of Alberta Executive Education's academic director. Insights on IQ, EQ, and SQ gathered by Transformation Systems International were instrumental in creating the programs. Key texts addressed coaching, teamwork, performance improvement, and organizational transformation (Hacker, 2013; Hacker & Washington, 2007; Washington, Hacker, & Hacker, 2011). The programs were delivered at the University of Alberta School of Business Executive Education campuses in Edmonton and Calgary by various instructors from the University of Albert and Transformation Systems International. Several cohorts encompassing 160 senior leaders underwent the training over four years.

In addition to addressing such leadership fundamentals as project management, transformation, and systems theory, the program exposed participants to social development subjects such as life planning. During the program, participants worked on personal purpose, vision, and value statements. They also examined specific mindsets that produce superior performance, such as intention (a connection between their actions and results) versus

blaming others, and power within (realizing they have the power to make changes) versus power without (waiting for their bosses to act). Advanced teaming concepts were also covered, and EQ sessions explored such topics as the current research on trust building. Depending on specific needs and budgets, each cohort took park in 13 to 16 days of classroom instruction and considerable off-campus work over nine months. Teaching methods included business simulations, executive coaching, lectures, 360-degree feedback, webinars, assessments, consulting, and action learning projects in which participants were asked to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts that had been presented. Although specific branding and communications needs necessitated some minor differences in the curricula for each organization, both addressed IQ, EQ, and SQ (see **Exhibit 4**). The training centered on three key inquiries:
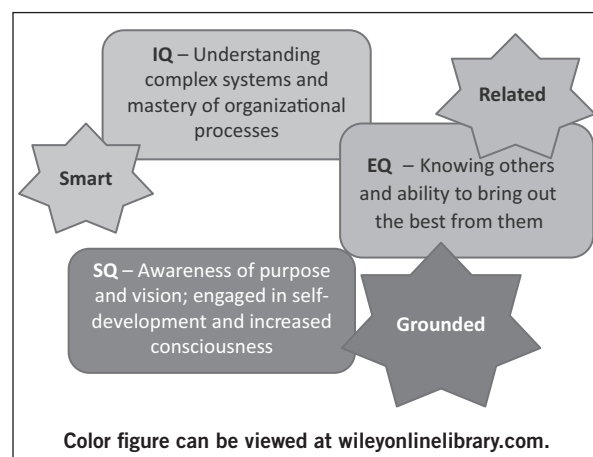
- How do you lead (IQ)?
- Whom are you leading (EQ)?
- Why are you leading (SQ)?

As might be expected, IQ enhancement revolved around subjects such as transformational leadership, the distinction between management and leadership, systems theory, and project leadership,

**Exhibit 4. Leadership Development**



Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com.

while the sessions on EQ development addressed high-performance work teams, communication science, trust development, and vision alignment. What set these programs apart was the inclusion of SQ components—focused on life planning, leadership declaration, and life story reflections—that were woven together with IQ and EQ components throughout the program. The programs also featured experiential teaching methods to help participants recognize the interplay among IQ, EQ, and SQ, as opposed to seeing their development merely as separate aspects of leadership.

For instance, a key component of the program called for the participants to consider the "jail theory of leadership." After discussing leaders like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, and even Adolph Hitler, who each used some of the time they spent alone in prison to analyze and write about their life experiences (*Long Walk to Freedom*, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and *Mein Kampf*, respectively), participants are asked questions concerning their own purpose in life, their three- to five-year vision, and how their values and purpose play out in their work. By addressing deeply personal issues, this exercise leads to valuable revelations about each individual's leadership potential.

**Results Point to the Value of Cultivating SQ**

The programs for both AHS and the RCMP achieved their intended outcomes of effectively transmitting information on leadership development that could be readily applied in the workplace. AHS also produced a report, based on 360-degree surveys of more than 100 program participants, their peers, direct reports, and superiors that documented the success of the program. Among the findings:

- 86 percent of program participants said that class time supported their learnings.
- 77 percent said they would be able to apply the learning back at work.

- Participants noted an overwhelming increase in their leadership ability. Before attending the program, most of the participants gave themselves a leadership rating of beginner or intermediate. At the end of the program, more than one-third rated themselves as advanced, and less than 4 percent rated themselves as beginner.
- Peers, subordinates, and superiors noted a positive difference in the behaviors that were linked to the training that the participants had received.

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As the work environment continues to increase in complexity, so do the demands made of organizational leaders. To meet the challenges they face, employers are recognizing the need to develop effective and grounded leaders who are as adept at dealing with personalities as they are with policies, practices, and processes, and who possess the resilience that is essential in times of transformational change. While university-based leadership development programs need to continue to address the intellectual components of the science of leadership (IQ) and relational expertise (EQ), spiritual intelligence must also be nurtured.

SQ focuses on grounding leaders by enhancing their self-awareness of personal mission, vision, and values apart from the organization. Even in a world of rapid change, this enables them to make decisions that are rooted in a keen sense of enthusiasm for the enterprise and their own essential values, increasing their resiliency and making them less susceptible to irrelevant struggles and the corruption of core beliefs. Derived from the conscious examination of self, this inner strength makes the leader better able to determine where true alignment with an organization's mission, vision, and values exists. By leading others to undergo a similar process of self-inquiry, leaders trained in this fashion ultimately will engender the engagement and creativity essential to their organization's continued growth and success.

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*Stephen K. Hacker is CEO and a founding partner of Trans-formation Systems International, LLC, in Bend, Oregon. An author and consultant focusing on leadership and organizational performance, he has engaged with organizations throughout the world to achieve breakthrough performance in an environment of accelerated change, and has written or co-written nine books, including* The Trust Memory Jogger: Building Workplace Trust *(Goal/QPC, 2014). Previously a senior leader with Procter & Gamble, Mr. Hacker served as the executive director of The Performance Center, a multi-university organization conducting action research. He is also a fellow and past chair of the American Society for Quality. His website is www.stephenhacker.com, and he can be reached at hackers@tsi4results.com.*

*Marvin Washington, PhD, is an associate professor in the Alberta School of Business and a senior master transformation engineer with Transformation Systems International. Dr. Washington's research, consulting, and teaching focuses on the processes of organizational and institutional change. The author of several academic and practitioner-oriented articles, he co-wrote* Leading Peak Performance: Lessons from the Wild Dogs of Africa *(Quality Press, 2007) and* Successful Organizational Transformation: The Five Critical Elements *(Business Expert Press, 2011). His primary teaching responsibilities are with the capstone MBA course in business policy, the Executive Education Programs, the Executive MBA program, and the Master of Finance program at the University of Alberta. Previously, he was an operations manager for Procter & Gamble. His website is www.marvinwashington.ca and he can be reached at washingt@ualberta.ca.*