

Relational Intelligence Self-Assessment

After taking the RI self-assessment, here are 7 descriptions of each of the categories that will help continue this conversation and help you grow. Pay attention to the areas where you are strong and *relationally intelligent* already. But also, identify the 1 or 2 arenas where you are weakest and begin to take active steps toward growth in these arenas. Below is a starting point for these conversations, and there are more elaborate explanations and ideas for action inside each chapter of the book, *Relational Intelligence*.

Self-Awareness (Also called, *The Michael Scott Syndrome*, refer to chapter 2)

Self-awareness is not difficult to define, but is incredibly difficult to admit when we have a lack of it; and, it is even more difficult to identify in ourselves. We tend to recognize weakness and dysfunction in others way easier than we notice it in ourselves. As a result, we often fail to see what needs to be fixed when looking in the mirror. Increasing our self-awareness is such an underestimated and overlooked component in this critical quest for relational intelligence. Our pursuit of relational intelligence must begin with self-awareness because it frames the entire conversation around being honest with ourselves first. It reminds us that we all have blind spots, and that we need other people to give input along the way if we want to maximize our highest levels of relational intelligence. If you are familiar with the main character from the TV show, *The Office* (i.e. Michael Scott), you know how much he lacks self-awareness. Of course this contributes to the comedy, but the truth is, we all have a little bit of Michael Scott in us. In other words, we don't always see how we contradict ourselves with our words, or what our deficits or dysfunctions really are, or how unaware we remain about how insensitive we can be to others. That's just the beginning of why this journey is important for every one of us. Let's face it. We're often not aware as we think we are.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

1. Practice the art of reflection and review. As you seek to improve in self-awareness, pay closer attention to the interactions of your life, taking time to reflect on the positive and negative outcomes. The reasons to do this are similar to why pro athletes watch post-game films in effort to improve their performance. When they watch their performance after the fact, they're able to see what they didn't see before, thus increasing their chances to improve their game in the future.
2. Intentionally ask for input from a few people whom you trust. It's practically impossible to identify your blind spots without the perspectives and perceptions of others. But you must ask for this input to get it in healthy doses.
3. Be relentless and clear in identifying your blind spots. Self-aware people are able to see clearly what their blind spots are (or were), and they know how those blind spots can affect the people around them, for good or bad.

For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 2 of *Relational Intelligence*.

The Story Collector

Every human being has a story to tell. *Story Collectors* are genuinely interested in the story that other people's lives are telling. They understand how to discover the most distinct dimensions of another human being through uncovering the various components of their story. When it comes to being interested in someone's story, the goal is not to be interested in every detail of their life, rather to discover what's most interesting about them and draw it out in a *smart* and meaningful way. In essence, that's what a *Story Collector* does. In addition, they've developed a listening skill set that drives how they go about "collecting stories" from the lives of others.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

1. Become genuinely interested in people. This sounds simple, but is a very rare interpersonal characteristic.
2. Intentionally ask personal and thoughtful questions about other people's lives. Then, actively listen with anticipation and sincerity.
3. Pay attention to the various dimensions of what makes a person unique. Then, seek to "see them" and "know them" in their uniqueness. Every human being longs to be "seen" and "known" at a human level.

For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 3 of *Relational Intelligence*.

The Energy Carrier

There are people who can *read the tone*, people who can *set the tone*, and then people who are *tone-deaf*. The people who are *tone-setters* in the relational environments they step into know how to change the energy in the room. They are what I call *Energy Carriers*. If we want to be a force of influence who affects the "outer energy" that exists in our relational contexts (i.e. the tone or vibe of any given setting), it begins with how we manage the energy of our internal world (i.e. being fully present, living in the moment, and knowing how to harness what's on the inside to change what happens on the outside). Energy Carriers know that if they want to be a force in their outer world, it begins by being more fully present in their inner world. From that centered place, an energy carrier navigates through the tone, vibe, and/or emotion of the environments around them. They shape and form the relational ethos of their life, and the lives of others, in a positive way.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

1. Learn to live more consistently in the present moments of life. In other words, be centered and engaged rather than distracted and disengaged.
2. Monitor the engagement levels of your heart, soul, mind, and body when interacting with others. Often we appear alert on the outside, but are asleep on the inside. This contributes to our depleting of the relational energy in the environments we find ourselves.
3. Capitalize on the external emotion of the environments you step into and practice changing those environments in a positive way. Don't let significant moments pass you by, rather, seize those moments and make good deposits in other people's lives. This is an art that must be practiced, a quest to be pursued.

For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 4 of *Relational Intelligence*.

The Compelling Relator

Many of us have an extraordinarily important mission to accomplish, but our failure to become more *compelling* in the way we relate to others robs us of our greatest impact. Compelling Relators have mastered the art of becoming more interesting people in the way they interact with others. They understand that in order to be more compelling (or interesting) in their dialogue with others, they must embody certain characteristics. They know when and how to be controversial in the right kind of way, in a way that honors but can also challenge others. They understand the importance of relevance, passion, and intentionality in conversation. And, they know when and how to change the way they communicate in order to connect with others at a deeper, more human level.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

1. Talk in terms of other people's interests.
2. Engage conversations with passion and proactivity, rather than with passivity and a monotone tone.
3. Engage in dialogues rather than monologues. This involves becoming increasingly aware of how much you talk versus how much you listen.

For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 5 of *Relational Intelligence*.

The Conversational Futurist

Conversational Futurists are able to discern the invisible dynamics in a conversation, and then steer their dialogues forward with intentionality, clarity, and wisdom. In contrast, some people stall the dialogue, or short circuit it, by stifling its movement and progress—I call them *conversational backtrackers*. These are people who don't recognize the subtle nuances of everyday interactions and travel through life missing out on life's most meaningful moments because they lack the capacity to discern what is not always obvious. In essence, Conversational Futurists see where a conversation needs to go by discerning what's really going on in a moment, or underneath the words being spoken. Then, they're able to guide someone toward making progress in their life, or simply in the conversation they are at the time. Conversational Futurists know that every conversation has a life to it, and they've learned how to evolve their conversations toward growth and progress. In essence, they move people and relationships forward through the kind of dialogue they engage in.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

1. Pay attention to the undertones of the conversation. What do the hidden emotions of the conversation tell you? Then, use these undertones to inform where you guide or steer the conversation.
2. Don't force your way into someone's personal and conversational space, but be tactful and wise in moving someone forward through dialogue, even if it's one small step in the right direction.
3. Communicate timeless truths in fresh and meaningful ways. Think creatively how to communicate to others in a way that connects to their humanity.

For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 6 of *Relational Intelligence*

The Likeable Hero

People tend to underestimate the affect of likeability on their relationships. Contrary to what some people think, likeability is not about trying to become a professional people-pleaser, or trying to be all things to all people. What makes likeable people relationally intelligent is revealed in a person's ability to evoke favorable feelings in their "audience" (i.e. the person they're in a relationship with), in order to produce a positive outcome that serves others well. Whether people are leading a team at work, at a party with friends, or living their ordinary day-to-day lives, what likeable people do best is establish authentic connections with people that make others feel valued and cared about, as well as evoking a desire in others to want to be around them. Likeable people are enjoyable to be around. They seek to find common ground where there is division, create laughter and levity where there is tension, and emulate a sense of wellbeing where there is discontentment. Truly likeable people are relational geniuses because they embody certain characteristics that evoke favorable feelings in others, and they realize the critical nature of likeability to life, relationships, and leadership. The real challenge to becoming more likeable is realizing what facets of who we are might be unlikable characteristics in which we are unaware of their negative affect.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

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1. Practice the art of WOO (winning others over). In other words, be hospitable and friendly wherever you go. This characteristic of relational intelligence is more rare than we realize.
 2. Live with authentic, honest levels of optimism, remembering that naïve optimism can become just as unlikeable as perpetual pessimism.
 3. Be intentional in making yourself approachable and available to those around you
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For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 7 of *Relational Intelligence*.

The Disproportionate Investor

The Disproportionate Investor understands how to steward their relational energy, remembering that all of us have limits in our relational capacity. They know how to wisely invest in the right kind of people, so that they can expand their influence. Disproportionate Investors minimize potentially wasted relational investments and maximize their potentially greatest investments without devaluing anyone in the process. They embody the conviction that it's better to invest in a few people who will reinvest in others than to invest in many who may never reinvest in anyone.

If you want to improve in this arena of relational intelligence, focus on these 3 things:

1. Know your relational limits and capacity, and embrace them.
2. Be clear about what characteristics constitute an “investor” versus a “consumer.” These include people who are generous, grateful, missional, strategic, resilient, and servant-hearted. This will help guide you toward where to spend the majority of your relational energy.
3. Identify 3 people you will spend more time investing in. Make sure they are people whom you think will reinvest in others whatever you invest in them. Then, make a plan in how you will invest in them, how long, what that will look like, etc. And remember, no matter who you choose to spend time with and who you don't, it's NEVER ok to devalue people along the way.

For more detailed explanations, refer to chapter 8 of *Relational Intelligence*.