

# Interpersonal Intelligence



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# Defining Intelligence

All intelligences are important! When an individual has access to and uses the appropriate intelligence in accordance to the situation, he/she is a flexible person who can adapt easily and successfully to different circumstances.

Maria Montessori already described in 1952 in her book *From Childhood to Adolescence*, "Society has developed to a state of utmost complication and extreme contrasts...it is necessary that the human personality should be prepared for the unforeseen, not only for the conditions that can be anticipated by prudence and foresight. Nor should it be strictly conditioned by one specialisation, but should develop at the same time the power of adapting itself quickly and easily."

We are assisting young people to be able to function in the world of 2030. Since 'progress' is so fast, what parents and educators can provide is a wide and thorough education that stimulates the development of different characteristics. The International Baccalaureate Organisation calls

this the Learner Profile. The programme aims for learners to become:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Risk-takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

In order to achieve this, the development of the total personality of the child is important. At any age, opportunities should be given to the development of all eight intelligences, and this with age-appropriate activities, freedoms and boundaries. Through an integrated approach, the above characteristics have the possibility to develop.



# Interpersonal Intelligence



The focus within this publication is on interpersonal intelligence, or in other words developing the characteristics necessary for constructive communication, interaction, positive relationships, genuine empathy to other people's feelings and emotions, and knowing oneself.

Daniel Goleman, with his books on emotional intelligence (EQ), has put a lot of emphasis on what intelligence actually is. He compares it to an iceberg and says that approximately 10% of our intellect is what educational bodies and psychologists traditionally test when wanting to know the IQ. The rest of the intellect cannot be

tested in these abstract and paper related situations as they become only apparent in real life situations.

90% of the intellect deals with:

- Self Awareness: Knowing oneself, what I stand for, what drives me, what my passions are, what my emotions are and what effect I have on others
- Self regulation: Being aware of the mood I am in, being able to direct my feelings according to the circumstances and the people I deal with, being able to assess how I function, and if this is appropriate for the situation I am in
- Motivation: A passion for what I do, intrinsic motivation that goes far beyond extrinsic factors such as wages, appraisal and status
- Empathy: Feeling for and with people, being able to set my own mode and purpose aside whilst being in tune with the ones around me. Being able to adapt to their situation and function from the appropriate intelligence that will contribute to the situation
- Social skills: Proficiency in working with others, building constructive relationships, feeling what role is needed at this point in time, building networks.

When employers are looking for additional staff in both leadership roles and as team members, they prefer people with this 90% of the intellect functioning well. Higher performance at all fronts will be a consequence.

Interpersonal intelligence is very much part of the emotional intellect.





## Strengths:

Those who have strong interpersonal intelligence are good at understanding other people and gauging their emotions, motivations and intentions. This makes them very flexible in their approach and can therefore interact well with others. They are respected by others because they listen, which is followed up by acting upon the information that is to the advantage of both 'parties'.

Specific characteristics are:

- Good verbal communicators
- Skilled nonverbal communicators; they are aware of the nonverbal message they give
- Good listeners to both verbal and non-verbal messages
- Have the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people
- Empathetic
- React appropriately to other people's needs
- Confident
- Extroverted
- Enjoy social events
- Enjoy teaching and helping others
- Learn best by working with others
- Have the capacity to understand oneself
- Can appreciate another person's feelings, fears and motivations
- Are good at discussions and debate
- Create positive relationships with others
- See situations from different points of view
- Good at resolving conflict in groups

These characteristics have a great effect on the relationships both social and professional:

- The interpersonally strong intellect has a good self-image, knows what he/she is good at and feels confident. This state of mind allows for a state of peace

- Has the ability to establish rapport with others quickly and easily
- The ability to read other people's reactions and feel empathy. This allows the other party to feel understood, to relax and to move onto a more constructive level.
- This process allows people to work effectively with others.
- Due to a strong social sensitivity, the person is liked by others and has a healthy social surrounding.
- He/she is socially influential and can persuade others.
- They usually choose a profession that requires a high interpersonal skill.

Daniel Goleman refers to EQ as being able "to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions". Howard Gardner says that having developed aspects of all intelligences, "involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives."

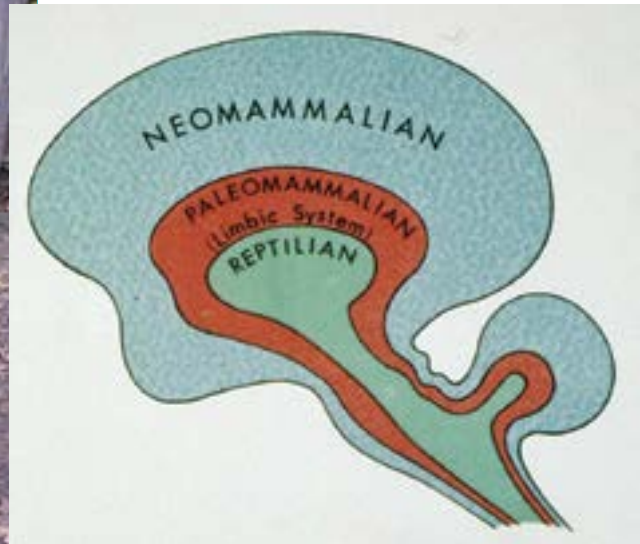
Analysing the different intelligences as such, gives a clear impression on the importance of the different characteristics needed in a life of change with lots of interrelations, problem solving and decision making situations.

## Potential Career Choices

Interpersonal intelligence is needed for nearly all career paths. To name a few:

Health Industry	Clergy
Counselor	Receptionist
Social Worker	Tradespeople
Coach	Sales Representative
Diplomat	Education
Politician	Child Care
Manager	Law

# The Triune Brain



People with a strong interpersonal intellect know themselves well and can adjust their behaviour and communication strategies to influence the world around them. This is a natural quality for them. Since they are in tune with other people, listen well, feel emotions and motivations and can consequently adapt to that.

## What happens in the brain at that point in time?

The neuroscientist, Paul D. MacLean (1913-2007), has developed an interesting model on the functioning of the brain. He says that our modern brain has three levels. There is the neocortex which consists of left and right hemisphere. MacLean points out the importance of two, deeper lying, layers to this. The three layers, and how, if and when we use them and switch between them, influence our total functioning.

This theory can help us understand why and how we react to certain situations, how we can recognize this and how we can influence our own thinking.

The brain has three layers that were formed over time:

1) **Reptilian brain** including basal ganglia, mid-brain, and brainstem. This is the first layer of

the brain developed evolutionary during the Carboniferous period, being the time when the reptiles arose. In this part of the brain our basic instincts are situated and its related primitive survival issues such as:

- Survival: feeding, avoidance of pain, repetition of what works
- Exploration: knowing and protecting ones territory, fight and flight
- Aggression: anger, verbal and physical aggression
- Dominance: suppression, power, strict male/female roles, discrimination, preconceived ideas, entitlement, pride
- Sexuality: roles male/female, reproduction.

Apart from the above, this brain also controls muscles, balance and involuntary functions, such as breathing and heartbeat. This is intertwined with the basic instincts.

## 2) **Paleomammalian Brain/Limbic system**

including the middle part of the brain being the amygdala, hippocampus, hypothalamus and other structures in the limbic system: this second layer evolved with the mammals. This is the time when animals started to look after their young, maternal feelings and nurturing evolved.

Attention, affection, love, friendship, emotionally charged long term memories, desires and values are all seated in this section of the brain.

This paleomammalian brain is not a separate system. It is strongly connected to the third layer being the neocortex as it decides whether our higher brain has a "good" idea or not, whether it feels true and right. It also communicates to our basic instincts seated in the reptilian brain.

- 3) **Neocortex** comprises of the right and the left hemisphere. It is the third and latest addition to our modern brain and very present in the human species. It allows for higher cognitive functioning and deals with knowledge derived from the senses especially from sight, sound and touch. It enables abstract thought, communication by means of language, creative thinking and much more. The left half of the cortex controls the right side of the body and the right side of the brain controls the left side of the body. The right brain is more spatial, musical and artistic, while the left-brain more abstract, linear, rational, and verbal.

People strong in interpersonal intelligence recognise from which layer of the brain they function and can switch according to what the situation requires.

When one is angry or irritated, one functions from the reptilian brain. Then the mode of 'protection of territory' through fight (e.g. verbal outrage, anger related behaviour, running off) or flight (shoulder shuddering, disinterest, passiveness) is

predominant. Consequently no solutions can be found.

The skill is to stand still, make eye contact and learn to listen. By becoming in tune with the other party, empathy can develop. Then the other will feel respected and heard. This state of mind makes it possible to move to the third layer.

Once both parties function from the neocortex, appropriate language is possible and the mode of thinking changes, now both parties are looking at issues from different points of view. Only here creativity takes place, solutions are found, processes and strategies are made. It is the only layer that takes the other two layers in consideration and incorporates feelings and emotions into the decision making process in a balanced manner.

## A recognisable example

An interpersonally strong adult (A) needs to communicate with an unhappy client (B): Anger and irritation (Reptilian Brain) is produced on both sides. A recognizes this and knows that if the response will include these emotions, no positive result will come from that. So A switches to the Paleomammalian level, tries to understand, utters words of empathy that soften the other person. B knows someone is actively listening. By doing so A pulls the other person to the neocortex by focusing on solutions. "What can we do about it?" This then pulls B also to the neocortex and subsequently constructive communication takes place.

Now this is a professional example, where many of us use it. But now take this scenario to private life





and think about how to interact with growing and forever evolving children.

It helps the parent enormously to recognise from what 'brain' he/she and the child are functioning at a particular moment. During a conflict, one helps children and teenagers by pulling them (and ourselves) to the neocortex. Squabbling and debating belongs to the reptilian brain. It is a mechanism of defense. By listening actively the parent can get the gist of the conflict and show empathy "I am sorry you feel that way, what can **we** do about it?" Thus moving through the paleomammalian level towards the neocortex.

This is of course easier said than done in some situations. However, due to its ability to abstract thought and interrelating knowledge, solutions to conflicts can only be found in the neocortex. Every time a person slips back to the reptilian brain or functions predominantly from the paleomammalian brain (feelings only) no constructive and all-inclusive solution can be found.

It takes time to become aware of one's thoughts and origins of these thoughts. However, practicing this move between layers makes a person more interpersonally intelligent. This is also why one should not avoid conflict. Nor should one always distract young children when a conflict is about to appear. As they say 'small children – small

problems'. This is where they need to learn and practice. The adults are the guides to help them every time again. One does not want them to move to the 'big children – big problems' phase! Also to become responsible for one's own actions is totally related to this ability. Only those who can move to the neocortex can see things from different points of view, also from other people's point of view and become responsible for their own actions. That is why the parent needs to say, "What can **we** do about it"; this includes the child.

## Developing Interpersonal Intelligence

Children go through a series of developmental planes and at each stage they need age appropriate opportunities to practice this awareness and switch between layers of the brain. This is also true for those children who are born as an extrovert. In their case, when appropriate limits are not set, they might become overconfident. Overconfidence can relate back to the reptilian brain and can develop into power related behaviour, feelings of entitlement and lack of empathy.

In the following sections we will have a look at how to assist children of different ages.



# The protection of 'Innocence' in Infants and Toddlers



**The human being takes time to develop. Since the brain has the potential to become a very complex organ that can perform many abstract functions, the personality opens up slowly like a blossom.**

It is as if the development of the human being simulates evolution. The child goes through the different stages and has full brain capacities only by the age of 24. Taking that line of thought and applying it to the triune brain, we see that infants and toddlers predominantly function from the reptilian state of mind.

This is logical since they still are so close to their process of birth, which was a process of survival. The baby acts on instincts and the basics such as sleep, food and love are of primal importance. They grow, slowly start to slither on the floor, then crawl

and practice coming upright and walk. They are egocentric out of necessity, since the main mode is self-development. They will scream when someone takes their toys away and are not able to be socially engaged yet, except when it meets their needs. It is all on their terms!

Isn't this very recognizable? Unfortunately, in our culture, once they are becoming verbal this is named the 'terrible twos'. However, this negative connotation is not right, it is a period that needs protection. When the infant is allowed to develop him/herself unhindered, then TRUST develops; trust in the world and trust in the self. Both being the base for all intelligences, especially for interpersonal intelligence

What kind of protection is needed here? The child should be able to move freely in accordance to



his/her physical abilities. Once they slither, they need a large mattress on the floor. Once they walk, they need the whole living room, garden and playground. Containers of various sizes in the shape of preformed mattresses, high chairs, strapped in seats (Maxicosi), and swings should be used on a very limited basis. Trust in the world and trust in the self stems from being able to move, explore, touch and interact with the environment and the people. An active baby environment with adults that engage with the child stimulates the development of the whole personality.

Slowly logical boundaries are being indicated:

- "No, baby can not bite mum when feeding",
- Baby sits in the high chair, and dad will pick up toys as long as it is a game for both. But as soon as it becomes 'manipulation', dad indicates that he has had enough, says "now we stop" and will stop picking up the toy.
- A self-feeding baby is stopped when hands smear food on the table.
- Objects in the environment can be touched except a few that is special to mum/dad.

## Logical messages give eventual rise to logical thinking.

Toddlers slowly move to the concept that mum and self are not one being and that actually mum is a separate person. For awhile parents cannot do

anything right. The toddler goes from a state of oneness (mum hold me and do it for me) to a state of separateness (I do not want to be carried, but run around in the supermarket). Parents, do not despair, this is a stage and will end when mum and dad give consistent messages! A beautiful book named Oneness and Separateness, written by Louise Kaplan is a 'must-have'.

Within the right physical and psychological environment, toddlers integrate their personality. Language, movement and will integrate to such a degree that they start saying "I" and realize they are a separate human being. On that base social awareness and development can start.

At Montessori, the Parent Infant Group is an environment with appropriate toys and furniture that stimulate infants and help towards developing trust. This is important at such a young age. Future characteristics such as the ability to concentrate, motivation, urge to learn and many more relate back to the level of trust in self and in world.

The Toddler Community offers an ideal environment to children from walking age to three. Activities that mum and dad do, such as preparing food, setting the table, doing the dishes, working in the garden are so important because the parents are so important! So being able to do these with adapted tools and furniture stimulate the development of trust enormously. Interaction with caring adults, slow movements, speech adjusted to the age, simple ground 'rules' help towards the development of a confident young child.



# In the Children's House: Learning that others have needs too



From approximately 2 ½ to 3 years old onwards the child becomes interested in others around him. Now that they start to integrate mind, body and will, the very strong period of self-construction has been completed and social development starts. Interpersonally strong children will join in immediately with songs, music and games. They love talking and trying things out. Without hesitation, they will use newly learned vocabulary in their mother tongue and in the second language(s) they are exposed to.

At this age, they are of course only just leaving the 'reptilian brain period'. So this mode of action is still very close at hand. Therefore appropriate boundaries are necessary. At this stage, one must be careful not to refer to the word 'no' too often.

The 'no' message can be hidden in the required way of doing things and in the activities itself.

To give some examples on how this is done in the Montessori classroom:

- There is, in most cases, only one of each piece of material in the classroom. This material 'belongs' temporarily to the one who took it off the shelf. Should another child want to do it as well, he/she cannot grab it (reptilian mind) but will need to ask the other child, "Can I do the activity with you?" (neocortex)
- A child who chooses to do their activity on the floor will roll out a mat to establish their work space. This indicates the 'territory' and therefore does not need to establish this with reptilian mind behaviour.



- Another child can come and say, "I like your work"! This limbic state of mind ensures that the child practices empathy.

Children perform many activities that are for the good of the group. These built in activities help children develop respect for others and say "thank you" to those who did something for the group.

Some examples are:

- Children are encouraged to donate their piece of fruit to the classroom basket. They do not eat their own fruit, but cut it and put it on the snack table for everyone to eat.
- Children chop vegetables for the soup
- Set the table for all
- Clean the easel after use

These built-in limits ensure that the teacher does not need to intervene every time. The teaching is actually done by the environment and gives therefore a logical message. This creates logical thinking, so in other words, it helps the development of the neocortex. Should the teacher have said, "no, do not do that" in all above examples, the child would have happily worked away on refining his/her reptilian brain.

Of course interaction is also important. There are the observing eyes of the adult and the intervention when needed, thus ensuring that children learn something from every interaction.

In order to develop the potential of the brain, it is obvious that children need to live in a real life environment, this opposed to a virtual environment. There is a big push to give even young children iPads, computers and so on. But what they really need are life experiences. As mentioned earlier,

the neocortex develops by means of using all senses and the hands. Without enough logical experiences, a logical mind cannot develop.

As they become older, they collect more life experience and simultaneously develop appropriate language skills. With these factors they are moving towards using the neocortex to its full capacity.

It is now clear why the neocortex is needed for social development. Effective relationships, logical thinking, problem solving are all intertwined and only possible when the individual can switch quickly between the layers of the brain and relate to others predominantly through the neocortex.





# The concept of Right and Wrong in Primary



The reptilian mind only has two modes being defense or attack. It is a black and white state of mind that cannot lead to conflict resolution. Empathy is the characteristic needed to help oneself and one's communication partner to move from the reptilian brain to the neocortex.

Empathy stems from the middle layer and has a strong developmental stage during the Primary ages. The ability to be empathetic is related to one's concept of right and wrong. This moral development is a main developmental area between the ages 6 to 12.

Earlier they could not be interested in this, because they did not have enough life experiences to ponder upon yet. Due to the era of self-construction, they had a limited exposure to others and a limited awareness beyond family life. Now the human being can have developed a level of trust and continue to build upon that by becoming

interested in group settings outside the family. This is the pre-teen stage, which, after the Primary years, leads to practicing in becoming part of society.

Primary children become more able at a verbal level and in order to develop their moral sense and related empathy, actually need little conflicts to practice upon. By means of experiencing and then talking, discussing, highlighting the different points of view, the child can adapt and learn.

Now the child can expand his/her experience base. It is nice for children to visit other families, have sleepovers and see how other people relate to each other. They become deeply interested in moral issues. One regularly hears a six-year-old (boy) say: "He did this and this to me and it is not fair!" (So consequently I gave him a kick = reptilian brain behaviour). Or girls that say, "She said that and therefore can not come to my birthday party!" (This is again an example of reptilian behaviour). The



adults can assist by talking matters through without blaming anyone. When the adult takes sides, he/she role models the reptilian brain with a defense mechanism.

We are talking here about small children with small problems. These problems have a purpose: the children can practice switching between the reptilian brain via the paleomammalian level to the neocortex. The adults are there to guide the discussion: "What happened to you? Why, How, When, What could **you** have done about it?" Thus helping the child to formulate his/her thought.

Children need to practice seeing events from different points of view. Since they come from the self-construction stage, they initially see everything from their point of view. This was necessary in the early years to develop and integrate the personality. Now these children need a different psychological environment. Appropriate boundaries, vocabulary, and protectiveness versus letting go needs to be examined and adjusted to the new developmental needs. What was right when the child was preschool age is not necessarily right anymore.

At school, besides all the interaction that is going on, the Primary children develop interpersonal intelligence by means of many small details. Some examples:

- The didactic materials now enthruse children to work together. For example, they will perform a physical addition with beads, but need at least three people that add the quantity up.
- In groups, they listen to the Great Stories and can ask questions, thereby learning how to respect others by taking turns, waiting when others speak

- They work with children of different ages and therefore different level of abilities. They learn to 'walk in someone else's shoes'. They develop their ability to help, explain, show empathy, and differentiate their interaction
- They take part in a variety of group activities and contribute to the outcome. Therefore responsibility for the process develops.
- Children are asked to become producers instead of consumers. They do not sit in rows, but can move and need to look for the tools required for an activity, gather them, perform and pack away so that others can use them in the future
- Self-thinking is required in many activities. Interest and motivation have a place in the classroom. Instead of doing exactly the same to all other students, different children do different work. Through this higher level of thinking, the neocortex develops and comes into a more efficient mode!

The emotional quotient receives a lot of attention in a multi-aged, individualised education programme. Children cannot develop EQ when sitting in rows all doing the same thing. Preconceived ideas and prejudice develops when children are compared to each other and when given the idea they should be 'the same'. These are reptilian brain characteristics. Montessori took the concept still much further. She said, "Peace is much more than absence of war". It can only be achieved when human beings have developed themselves completely. When they can realise what they feel, where it stems from and what they can do about it. This is achieved when one can switch between the three layers quickly and appropriately.

# Becoming a Productive Member of Society

Teenagers enter the third plane of development. This lasts to about 18 years of age. At Primary level, children increased their life experiences by being exposed to groups outside the family structure, developing a sense of right and wrong and consequently feelings of empathy. Development builds upon what was achieved earlier and the child becomes ready for the next level of separation. The next main guiding question is "how will I fit into society?"

Teenagers need independence at a different level: going to school by public transport, joining a sport that takes them to different places for competitions, having a Saturday job, going on a holiday with a group rather than with your family and so on. It is the time when parents need to set different boundaries and allow the child to become an independent and self-managing member of a larger group.

At the older Primary level, one normally sees less reptilian behaviour, while at the teenage-level it re-surfaces. We all expect this, but why is this? At this age there is a physical re-birth which goes together with renewed insecurities and hesitation. Please have a look again on page 5 describing the characteristics of the reptilian brain, as the same five points are applicable to this stage of development. However, it should now all develop to a more advanced level:

- a) Survival is related to the individual finding a place in society at large.
- b) Exploration is related to getting to know how society functions but, whilst feeling insecure, they protect their own perceived territory
- c) The above can go hand in hand with aggression; verbal abuse, swearwords, actions against 'society' such as damage to public property, graffiti,





- d) Dominance might happen within peer structures. This can be aimed at the same or the other sex. When allowed, deviations such as discrimination, preconceived judgments can be the consequence.
- e) Sexuality develops properly with the right information, role models and boundaries into a healthy mature self-image and sound relationships.

Looking at this list, one can see why reptilian brain behaviour is rather easy to refer to when one is a teenager. What they need is an emotionally safe environment. This does not mean with all the freedom in the world, but with people they can count on.

They also need a protected learning environment. In traditional education this is the age where suddenly everything changes and the expectations are plentiful. They often find themselves in large and anonymous groups, in which reptilian related behaviour could be rampant.

Better is to have them surrounded by caring adults, who grow with them and change the boundaries as their development progresses. Limits can never be stagnant, nor can they be the same for

everybody as this creates resentment amongst those who do not need them. Appropriate limits are necessary so that the young adolescent learns to **own the problem and become responsible for the consequences**. In the book Tickets to Success, written by Jim Fay, it is said very clearly, "solutions need to be found that do not create a problem for someone else". When this is the base line, neocortex thinking will evolve!

Adolescent students need a learning environment where expectations increase proportionately and parents help by creating an attractive homework environment and peaceful surrounding that stimulates concentration and interest. Also a next level of separation is required. When students are given a new level of independence and appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms are practiced, teenagers become responsible for their own actions. This will happen when the adults allow for appropriate opportunities and provide a parenting style that matches the age and personality.

To allow related characteristics to evolve, the Montessori secondary section is not separated into small classrooms separated by walls and subject content. How can one develop empathy for others



you rarely see? How can one develop conflict resolution when you all face the same blackboard? How can one learn to see items from different points of view, when all is divided into strict subject matter? An open-space learning environment allows for all the intelligences to evolve. It is especially important for Interpersonal Intelligence, since it offers real-life opportunities to practice awareness of one's own functioning in different circumstances, switching between brain layers as the situation requires, learning to see items from different points of view and eventually function more and more from the neocortex.

The open-space classroom setting has many ingredients that allow students to practice Interpersonal Intelligence:

- Real life situations are interwoven with the curricula:
  - Cooking for the class
  - Preparation of lunch settings
  - Eating lunch together
  - Hosting students from other schools
  - Giving tours to new students
  - Organising events for the retirement home population

- Renting out Christmas trees, organizing transport, payments, making related colouring books for their young customers
- Car washes
- Expositions
- Catering at concerts, windows into the class, dinners for parents
- Catering at Christmas markets
- Making small theatre productions
- Entertaining others by means of music performances,
- Collaborating in theatre – designing props, costumes, work in team to organise music, light, dances
- Giving presentations
- Groups discussions
- Experiments
- Conflict resolution
- Debating
- And many more opportunities

Edward de Bono in his book Intelligence is Not Enough compares IQ with a high-speed computer. He states things simply: "If you do not have adequate software, then the processing speed is not going to get you anywhere. The tools and





framework of thinking are the software needed for performance. IQ is not enough".

The world these students grow into is complex. Education is not a means in itself, it is to actually prepare them for when they get out of school.

Having the interpersonal intellect developed means a lot. It helps students to feel free in a group, instigate effective collaboration, see things from different points of view, become adaptable and consequently come to successful products and/or processes.





# Be aware of the 'Tragedy of Entitlement'

The human brain is wonderful; it has so much potential! It is the most complex organ we have and to get to its full ability, it needs nurturing from birth onwards. We are all 'children of our times', and the times change constantly.

Will they name this the Electronic Era or the Virtual Era in future history books? What about the Era of Entitlement?

Why could it become the Era of Entitlement? As the western societies have so many material goods readily available to them, our children receive the message that they 'need' these many goods and services. The economic model dictates that growth is essential, stagnation is negative, and production (driven by consumption) is what counts.

Within family life, over the past 40 years, childhood has changed enormously. We came from Dr. Spock and have moved from autocratic fathers to multifunctional couples that cater to all the needs of their children. Punishment has become encouragement, orders have become choice and rules have become propositions. Children have a lot of freedom that is given to them in the hope that this will not restrain them and that it will allow them to make successful decisions in the future.

Together with the above, the economy has prospered elaborately and children can have what they want! There do not need to be any inconveniences, disappointments and unhappy situations. No need to save patiently to get that fabulous toy and no need for a Saturday job to buy that piece of electronic equipment. Is it a recipe for success?

The book From Innocence to Entitlement, by Jim Fay and Dawn Billings is a very interesting read. It confirms doubts on the eventual outcome of giving children what they want, avoiding conflict situations and keeping children happy at all times. It seems that individuals who receive all, want more. Those who cannot have all are happy with less.



One needs to be careful in not giving everything to children even though one can afford it money wise. This is where a feeling of entitlement is born. Those children think that they are entitled to everything and nothing makes them happy anymore. Worst-case scenario is a chronic state of unhappiness whilst having everything.

Why is this so? With the knowledge of the triune brain we have a way to explain it. When a child receives everything automatically, without effort and on demand, it fulfills basic needs situated in the reptilian brain. It is about defending one's

territory and feeling this is mine! Not needing to say thank you or needing to do something for it prevents the child from switching to the paleomammalian level. Not needing to research, plan, work and then choose and buy prevents again from switching to the neocortex level. Children who get things on demand stay at the reptilian level and therefore will forever be busy with fight (or flight into passivity).

Happiness does not depend on what we have. Happiness depends on what we do. It is the hands that need to be active as they form the patterns in the brain. And this is where the cure to entitlement lies. We as adults need to demand and expect children to participate, according to their age appropriate abilities. Effort ensures satisfaction. Action ensures empowerment. Result out of action provides happiness:

- A toddler can set the table, eat with a fork
- A preschooler can get dressed and put the dirty washing in a basket, can clear the table and sweep the garden path
- A Primary child can solve conflicts he/she was part of, can learn to cook, mow the lawn, cycle to music lessons by him/herself
- A Secondary student can help clear the snow, cook the dinner, clean the room, complete their homework, earn some money

Family homes are not hotels. As Jim Fay says, "Parents are not 'Service Providers!'" Homes are



living communities where everybody has an aim and a purpose. Parents are in charge as they have most life experiences and wisdom. With the appropriate level of decision-making, choice and responsibilities children can become wise as well. Wisdom, in the context of the triune brain, means one is aware of the origin of one's thought, can feel empathy towards others and function predominantly from the neocortex, thus making wise decisions and interactions.



## Good Googles:

- [infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm](http://infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm)
- [mybrainnotes.com/evolution-brain-maclean.html](http://mybrainnotes.com/evolution-brain-maclean.html)
- [psychology.about.com/od/educationalpsychology](http://psychology.about.com/od/educationalpsychology)
- [inspiring-breakthrough.co.uk/learning-styles/interpersonal-learning.htm](http://inspiring-breakthrough.co.uk/learning-styles/interpersonal-learning.htm)

## Good books available in the schools' Parent Library:

- From Childhood to Adolescence – by Maria Montessori
- Emotional Intelligence – why it can matter more than IQ – By Howard Goleman
- Working with Emotional Intelligence – By Howard Goleman
- Your Child's Growing Mind by Jane M. Healy
- From Innocence to Entitlement – By Jim Fay and Dawn Billings
- Helicopters, Drill sergeants and Consultants – Parenting styles and the messages they send – By Jim Fay
- Tickets to Success – By Jim Fay
- Intelligence is not enough – By Edward De Bono
- Oneness and Separateness – By Louise Kaplan

