

Thinker's 50: Howard Gardner

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His work in multiple intelligence drew attention to the existence of other forms of intelligence beyond conventional IQ. These include linguistic, interpersonal, spatial, bodily kinaesthetic, and musical abilities.

In his book, *Five Minds for the Future*, he offers an insight into the qualities of thinking that will allow people to prosper in the 21st century.

What has changed that makes these five ways of thinking more important than previously?

The first factor is the importance of technology, particularly computers. Computers can do almost everything that human beings can do, so the things we are going to value human beings for will be very different.

The second factor is globalisation. It is about understanding the interconnectivity of the planet and the kind of things that you need to be able to function in a world that was not nearly so interconnected 50 years ago.

The third factor has to do with diversity. We evolved as a species having contact with about 150 people, most of whom looked like us, and were probably related to us. Today, diversity stares you in the face in a way that was inconceivable when I was growing up.

So there is a sense that we can be in contact with, and have influence on, everybody around the world, and vice-versa.

What are the five minds?

The first three are the kind of things that I have been talking about for a very long time: the disciplined mind, the synthesising mind and the creating mind. The last two, though, have more to do with the human sphere: the respectful mind and the ethical mind. Over the past decade a lot of my research has focused on these two.

Could you explain a little about each mind?

The disciplined mind is knowing something very well, being an expert in an art, or craft, or profession. The synthesising mind stems from the fact that we all are deluged with information. How

do you decide what to pay attention to, what to ignore, how to put it together in a way that makes sense to you and others? The creating mind is coming up with something new that eventually affects how other people are and think.

The respectful mind is very simple, and certainly goes back to pre-biblical times. It means giving other people the benefit of the doubt, trying to know them, trying to understand them, not being too judgmental and being capable of forgiveness. Finally, the ethical mind is a mind that is capable of abstraction. So I'm not just Howard Gardner — I'm Howard Gardner who is a psychologist, an author, whatever. I have a role occupationally and I'm also a citizen of my community, my city, my state, my nation, the world.

The ethical mind asks, what are my responsibilities as a psychologist, as a citizen of Boston, of the US, of the planet?