Multiple Intelligences: Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses
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Howard Gardner, the researcher behind the multiple intelligences model, has written that he'll never allow a test to be created to use for determining multiple intelligence strengths and weaknesses. Any test would violate the model because you'd have to use word and logic smarts to take the test. Even the many checklists on the market require the use of logic and word smarts. In addition, people without self-smart strengths may not be able to judge themselves honestly when taking such a test.

An option to an actual paper test is to look for strengths and weaknesses and try to decide which intelligences are in the top four and which are in the bottom four. I don't think the exact order is critical or even possible to determine because intelligences never work alone. For example, an ability to persuade is a combination of word-, logic-, and people-smart. Debating well requires the use of both word- and logic-smarts. Strengths in biology are probably due to logic- and nature-smarts while strengths in chemistry may be due to logic- and picture-smarts.

All systems may be flawed. Yet, I do recommend the following to help you determine the different smarts in people:

1. For each smart, look for interest in associated activities and ability in associated skills. Based on observed interests and abilities, then decide which intelligences are emerging, which are developing, and which are proficient.

2. Here's a list of what people with each intelligence strength think with. Observe (listen and look) to see how often these occur. (Just a few examples.)
   - Words - words
   - Logic - questions
   - Picture - pictures
   - Music - rhythms and melodies
   - Body - movement and touch
   - Nature - patterns
   - People - other people
   - Self - reflecting inside of themselves

3. When people are excited, either for good reasons (e.g., joy) or negative reasons (e.g., nervousness), what do they do? How is each intelligence expressed? (Just a few examples.)
   - Word - talking
   - Logic - asking more questions
   - Picture - doodling
   - Music - making music
   - Body - moving and touching with more intensity
   - Nature - going outside
   - People - talking to people
   - Self - going somewhere by themselves
4. What regularly gets them into trouble and/or what drives other people nuts? (Just a few examples.)
   - Word – teasing
   - Logic – debating everything
   - Picture – day dreaming
   - Music – making music by drumming pens on desks
   - Body – pushing and shoving
   - Nature – getting dirty
   - People – can’t be alone for long stretches
   - Self – uninvolved

5. You can look to see what people do in their spare time, what they do for fun, and what they spend their money on. Often these will relate to intelligences that are developing as strengths.

6. Ask others what they appreciate most about you. Why do they enjoy spending time with you? Often these affirmations will point to intelligence strengths.

7. Regularly examine everything listed here so you notice changes that occur.

Once you’ve identified strengths, be a good steward of them and use them. Don’t necessarily worry about your weaknesses unless you need skills from one of them to be successful at what you’ve been called to do.

For free charts and graphs you can use for recording intelligence levels, click here: http://www.celebratekids.com/documents/HowAmISmartDocuments.pdf

For a more detailed paper on this topic, with examples and checklists, click here: http://www.celebratekids.com/xcart/product.php?productid=16247&cat=266&page=1