At birth, each one of us was given magnificent “birth-gifts”—talents, capacities, privileges, intelligences, opportunities—that would remain largely unopened except through our own decision and effort. Because of these gifts, the potential within an individual is tremendous, even infinite. The more we use and magnify our present talents, the more talents we are given and the greater our capacity becomes. These three most important gifts include:

1. Our freedom and power to choose.
2. Natural laws or principles, which are universal and never change.
3. Our four intelligences/capacities—physical/economic, emotional/social, mental, and spiritual.

Our First Birth-Gift: The Freedom to Choose
In all my teaching spanning half a century, if you were to ask me what one subject—one point—seemed to have the greatest impact upon people, regardless of circumstances, I would answer with the deepest conviction: that we are free to choose. Next to life itself, the power to choose is your greatest gift. This power and freedom stands in stark contrast to the mind-set of victimism and culture of blame so prevalent in society today.

Fundamentally, we are a product of choice, not nature (genes) or nurture (upbringing, environment). Certainly, genes and culture can influence very powerfully, but they do not determine.

The essence of being human is being able to direct your own life. Humans act; animals and human “robots” react. Humans can make choices based on their values. Your power to choose
the direction of your life allows you to reinvent yourself, to change your future, and to powerfully influence the rest of creation. It is the one gift that enables all the gifts to be used; it is the one gift that enables us to elevate our life to higher and higher levels.

**Our Second Birth-Gift: Natural Laws or Principles**
The wise use of our freedom to choose basically means to live by principles or natural laws rather than going along with today’s culture of “quick fix.”

Once Einstein saw the needle of a compass at the age of four, he always understood that there had to be “something behind things, something deeply hidden.” This also pertains to every other realm of life. Principles are universal—that is, they transcend culture and geography. They’re also timeless; they never change—principles such as fairness, kindness, respect, honesty, integrity, service, contribution. Different cultures may translate these principles into different practices; and over time, may even totally obscure these principles through the wrongful use of freedom. Nevertheless, they are present. Like the law of gravity, they operate constantly.

Another thing I’ve discovered is that these principles are inarguable. That is, they are self-evident. For example, you can never have enduring trust without trustworthiness. Think about it; that is a natural law.

**Our Third Birth-Gift: The Four Intelligences/Capacities of Our Nature**
The four magnificent parts of our nature consist of body, heart, mind, and spirit. Corresponding to these four parts are four capacities or intelligences that all of us possess: our physical or body intelligence (PQ), our emotional intelligence (EQ), our mental intelligence (IQ), and our spiritual intelligence (SQ). These four intelligences represent our third birth-gift.

**Physical Intelligence (PQ)**
The physical intelligence (PQ) of the body is another kind of intelligence we are all implicitly aware of, but often discount.
Just think about what your body does without any conscious effort. It runs your respiratory, circulatory, nervous, and other vital systems. It is constantly scanning its environment, destroying diseased cells, and fighting for survival.

Doctors are the first to acknowledge that the body heals itself. Medicine simply facilitates healing and may remove obstacles, but it can also create obstacles if it works contrary to physical intelligence.

Our body is a brilliant piece of machinery that outperforms even the most advanced computer. Our capacity to act on our thoughts and feelings and to make things happen is unmatched by any other species in the world.

**Emotional Intelligence (EQ)**

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is one’s self-knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy, and ability to communicate successfully with others. It is a sense of timing and social appropriateness, and having the courage to acknowledge weaknesses and express and respect differences. Combining thinking and feeling creates better balance, judgment, and wisdom.

There has been a great deal of research suggesting that in the long run, emotional intelligence is a more accurate determinant of successful communication, relationships, and leadership than is mental intelligence.

**Mental Intelligence (IQ)**

When we speak of intelligence, we usually think in terms of mental intelligence (IQ); that is, our ability to analyze, reason, think abstractly, use language, visualize, and comprehend. But this is far too narrow an interpretation of intelligence.

**Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)**

The fourth intelligence is spiritual intelligence (SQ). Like EQ, SQ is becoming more mainstream in scientific inquiry and philosophical/psychological discussion. Spiritual intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences because it becomes the source of guidance for the other three.
Spiritual intelligence represents our drive for meaning and to be connected with the infinite.

Spiritual intelligence also helps us discern true principles that are part of our conscience, and are symbolized by the compass. The compass is an excellent physical metaphor for principles, because it always points north. The key to maintaining high moral authority is to continually follow “true north” principles.

**Developing the Four Intelligences/Capacities: A Practical Guide to Action**

Developing and using these intelligences will instill within you quiet confidence, internal strength and security, the ability to be simultaneously courageous and considerate, and personal moral authority. In many ways, your efforts to develop these intelligences will profoundly impact your ability to positively influence others.

Though you may find some of the recommendations to be simple common sense, remember: common sense is not common practice. I guarantee that if you will focus your efforts in these areas, you will find that great peace and power will come into your life.

**Developing Physical Intelligence—PQ**

Let’s start with the body—with physical intelligence (PQ), because the body is the instrument of the mind, heart, and spirit. If we can subordinate the body to the spirit—that is, our appetites and passions to our conscience—we become masters of ourselves. People whose lives are a function of their appetites and passions rather than their conscience cannot give of themselves. They lose personal freedom, thinking all the while that they are exercising it. The body is a good servant, but a bad master.

I suggest there are three fundamental ways to develop our physical intelligence. First, wise nutrition; second, consistent, balanced exercise; and third, proper rest, relaxation, stress management, and prevention thinking.

These three fundamental ways are widely understood and accepted by most people in the civilized world. They’re really common sense. But very few people practice all three.
Wise Nutrition

Most of us know what we should and shouldn’t eat. The key is balance. I readily admit I am not an expert nutritionist, but I, like most of us, have been educated to know that our bodies and systems, including immune, are strengthened most when we eat more whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and lower-fat protein. Meats, when eaten (better sparingly), should be lean. Research also increasingly shows the benefits of eating fish regularly. Foods (including many fast-foods, processed foods, and sweets) high in saturated fat and high in sugar should be eaten very sparingly or avoided. But remember again, the key is balance and moderation. Learn not to indulge yourself and pig out. In other words, learn when to stop eating—when you are satisfied and short of being uncomfortably full. Finally, drink a lot of water—6–10 glasses a day. It optimizes the body’s functions and significantly contributes to one’s efforts to maintain physical fitness and a healthy weight through diet and regular exercise.

I have also come to believe in the efficacy and wisdom of occasional fasting, wherein you miss a meal or two for the purposes of providing rest to the whole digestive process and also for cleansing. From my own experience, the main benefit, however, has not been physical—it has been more mental and spiritual. The principle of fasting is taught in almost all major world religions as a means of developing a higher level of self-mastery and self-control, and also a deeper awareness of how really dependent we are.

I strongly believe that when you properly control your appetites, your ability to control your passions and purify your desires increases. It gives you a real feeling of humility and enables you to gain greater perspective about what is really important in life.
Consistent, Balanced Exercise

Regular exercise—cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility—significantly increases both the quality of life and life expectancy. Again, the key is balance. Our society has adopted increasingly sedentary, inactive lifestyles. But there are so many ways to get regular exercise. Start small, in ways you can sustain. Do something daily, or at least three to five times a week. Choose something you enjoy and that fits your specific needs and conditions. Consult your physician. Vary the kinds of exercises you do so that you strengthen different parts of your body and avoid becoming bored or burned out on one thing. Many people love to walk—vigorously, if possible. Others run, swim, garden, or bike. Many take advantage of equipment in gyms designed to give an aerobic/cardiovascular workout such as treadmills, stationary bicycles, stair-climbers, elliptical machines, rowing machines, etc.

Weight lifting and other strength training have many significant benefits to people of all ages, including strength, posture, energy, slowing and stopping the deterioration of the bones, and increasing the body’s ability to burn calories.

I cannot say enough personally about the inevitable fruits that I experience from consistent, balanced exercise. For me, the greatest benefit is mental and spiritual, rather than physical, even though I’m impressed by the overwhelming research that shows the physical benefits that come from regular exercise. Aerobic exercise, wherein you use the big muscles of the legs to strengthen the heart and the circulatory systems so that you can process oxygen in the most efficient
way, has always been the basic foundation of my exercise program.

I have also come to believe strongly in the importance of muscle toning and flexibility exercises. I remember once, a trainer spotting me in a bench-press exercise. He basically told me to go as far as I could go and then to do one more. I asked him why, and he said that most of the benefit comes at the very end of the exercise when the muscle fiber is exhausted and breaks (pain), and within about 48 hours is renewed and strengthened. This was a fascinating learning for me, because I wanted to quit when I was tired and hurting. But he stood above me and said, “I’ll take the bar as soon as you cannot go any further.” This is a great metaphor for the other three dimensions of life as well. As we go to the end of our tether, our capacity to do increases.

My particular commitment is to exercise five to six days a week aerobically, three days a week in muscle toning, and six days a week in some kind of stretching and/or yoga for flexibility. I have also benefited from Pilates in strengthening the inner core. Everyone has to study his or her own situation and determine that which is most wise. But again, I am convinced that exercise increases our own sense of self-control and self-mastery, which enhances the totality of our life.

There are 168 hours in every person’s week. If you will physically Sharpen the Saw through regular and balanced exercise for, let’s say, only 2 or 3 of those 168 hours, you will experience such a positive effect of those 2 or 3 on the other 166, including the depth and quality of your sleep, you will begin to see the tremendous leverage and power that comes in your life from this kind of self-mastery. Mind over mattress.

Proper Rest, Relaxation, Stress Management, and Prevention Thinking

The work of the great pioneer and leader in the field of stress, Dr. Hans Selye, suggests that there are two kinds of stress: distress and eustress. Distress comes from hating your work, resenting the multiplied pressures of life, and feeling that you
are a victim. Eustress comes from the positive tension between where you are now and where you want to go—some meaningful goal or project or cause that really turns you on and taps into your talents and passion—in short, your voice. Through good empirical research, Dr. Selye taught how eustress braces the immune system and increases longevity and enjoyment of life. In short, we shouldn’t avoid stress if it’s the right kind of stress—eustress. It will strengthen us and enlarge our capacity. Of course, it must all be balanced and tempered by the proper rest and relaxation, or what is called “stress management,” or more properly, “eustress management.” Selye explained that women live roughly seven years longer than men for psychological/spiritual reasons, not physiological reasons. “A woman’s work is never done.”

In professional circles, it is widely accepted that at least two-thirds of all diseases are caused by lifestyle choices that people make. These choices relate to nutrition, to smoking, to driving without seatbelts, to insufficient rest and relaxation, to attempting to burn the candle at both ends, and many other stressful abuses of the body and mind. Many attribute various diseases to genetic factors, but as I have mentioned before, there is always a space between stimulus and response, and when people are aware of this space and aware of their own capacity to make choices based on principles, they don’t necessarily get the diseases of their genetic predisposition. Even most cancers can be cured if they are detected in the first or second stage before they become aggressive.

Modern western medicine is primarily focused on treatment rather than prevention, and the treatment usually comes under the two categories of chemistry or surgery. I would like to see the medical paradigm be broader and deeper and more complementary with empirically validated alternative therapies.

I think it’s very important to have frequent checkups, at least annually, so that various disease tendencies or symptoms can yield to wise choices. I myself have a treatment doctor and a prevention doctor and respect both of them enormously. I have learned that the most fundamental principle is that we must take responsibility for our own health. We must ask questions, get very involved, study, check second opinions, and
look at alternative forms of therapy, rather than just throw the responsibility for our health and wellness to an outside person or profession.

Our conscience, if we will listen to it, will direct us in all three of these areas. And the more we follow it, the stronger it becomes so that we can move more and more toward giving of ourselves. By eating wisely, exercising, resting, and relaxing, we deepen our capacities and strengthen the body’s immune system and its ability to rebuild itself. Most importantly, we release the other three intelligences contained in the heart, the mind, and the spirit.

Developing Emotional Intelligence—EQ

Interestingly, if you carefully study the emotional-intelligence literature, it suggests first the transcending importance of EQ in long-term effectiveness; and second, that EQ can be developed. But interestingly, there is relatively little out there on how it can be developed.

The five commonly accepted primary components of emotional intelligence are first, self-awareness, the ability to reflect on our own life, grow in self-knowledge, and use that knowledge to improve ourselves and either overcome or compensate for our weaknesses; second, personal motivation which deals with what really excites people—the vision, values, goals, hopes, desires, and passions that make up their priorities; third, self-regulation, in other words, the ability to manage oneself toward achieving one’s vision and values; fourth, empathy, the ability to see how other people see and feel about things; and fifth, social and communication skills which deal with how people resolve differences, solve problems, produce creative solutions, and interact optimally to further their joint purposes.
I have become deeply convinced that the best systematic way to develop these five components of EQ is through *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The 7 Habits cannot be adequately covered here in a way that truly impacts—that is best experienced in the book. But below you’ll find a chart indicating the underlying principle or essence of each of the 7 Habits.

Let’s consider the five components of emotional intelligence in relation to these 7 Habits:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN THE 7 HABITS</th>
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<td>Habit</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Be Proactive</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Begin With the End in Mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Put First Things First</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Think Win-Win</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Synergize</td>
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<td>7 Sharpen the Saw</td>
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**Self-Awareness**

An awareness of self, of our freedom and power to choose, is the heart of Habit 1: Be Proactive. In other words, you are aware of the space between stimulus and response, you’re aware of your genetic, biologic inheritance—your upbringing—and
you’re aware of the environmental forces around you. Unlike animals, you can make wise choices regarding these things. You sense you are or can become the creative force of your own life. This is your most fundamental decision.

**Personal Motivation**

Personal motivation is the basis of those choices; that is, you decide what your highest priorities, goals, and values are. That’s essentially what Habit 2 is about—Begin With the End in Mind. This decision to direct your own life is your primary decision.

**Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation is another way of expressing Habit 3: Put First Things First, and Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw. In other words, once you decide what your priorities are, then you live by them. Habit 3 is the habit of integrity, of self-mastery, of doing what you intend to do, of living by your values. Then constantly renew yourself. Execution strategies and tactical decisions are your secondary decisions.

**Empathy**

Empathy is the first half of Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood. It’s learning to transcend your own autobiography and get into the heads and hearts of other people. It’s becoming socially very sensitive and aware of the situation before attempting to be understood, influence others, or make decisions or judgments.

**Social and Communication Skills**

The combination of Habits 4, 5, and 6 represents social and communication skills. You think in terms of mutual benefit and mutual respect (Habit 4: Think Win-Win) and you strive for mutual understanding (Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood) in order to have creative cooperation (Habit 6: Synergize).

I acknowledge again that I have made connections between the 7 Habits and the development of these five components of emotional intelligence in a summary fashion only. If you have
a serious interest in developing greater EQ, I recommend to you a sincere study and effort to apply the principles contained in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. I do so without any desire to promote my own work, but rather with a conviction of the power of the universal, timeless, self-evident principles it contains—principles I cannot take credit for—for they belong to all humanity and are present in every nation, society, religion or community that has endured and prospered.

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<tr>
<th>EQ</th>
<th>DEVELOPING THE FIVE MAIN COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ) THROUGH THE 7 HABITS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>1. Be Proactive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Motivation</td>
<td>2. Begin With the End in Mind</td>
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</table>
| Self-Regulation | 3. Put First Things First  
7. Sharpen the Saw |
| Empathy | 5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood |
| Social and Communication Skills | 4. Think Win-Win  
5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood  
6. Synergize |

**Developing Mental Intelligence—IQ**

I suggest three ways to develop IQ, our mental capacities. First, *continuous, systematic, disciplined study and education*, including study outside your own field; second, the *cultivation of self-awareness* so that you can make assumptions explicit and think “outside the box” and outside your comfort zone; third, *learning by teaching and doing*. 

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Continuous, Systematic, Disciplined Study and Education

People who have made a commitment to continual learning, growth, and improvement, are those who have the ability to change, adapt, flex with the changing realities of life, and become fundamentally equipped to produce in any area of life. Our only real economic security lies in our power to meet human needs. So the worse conditions become, the more evident human needs become. Our security does not lie in our organizations or our jobs; disruptive technologies may simply make them irrelevant. But if we have strong, active, alert, growing, learning minds, we will be able to “land on all fours.” The concept that mental IQ is a fixed commodity has long since been disproved. The more the mind is used, the stronger it becomes; the more responsive the mind is to the conscience, the wiser it becomes.

I strongly believe that we should turn the TV way down in our lives and get back to reading—reading broadly, deeply, outside our comfort zones and outside our professional fields. For instance, among other magazines, I like to read Scientific American, The Economist, Psychology Today, Harvard Business Review, Fortune, and Business Week. My wife constantly encourages me to read more fiction, biographies, and autobiographies, which are where her main interests lie. I think she counsels wisely. I am also sent many books for endorsement purposes, and I have learned to read conceptually by studying the table of contents and learning the style of the writer in order to discover where the main ideas are expressed or summarized. In this way, I can capture the essence of many books in a day or so.
Fundamentally, everyone has to decide for himself or herself the best way to maintain his or her continued education. In a Knowledge Worker Age world, it is so vital. People have to look carefully at where they are spending their time—how much time is being wasted—and become very mentally disciplined. The effort pays huge dividends. Most people say that because they are so busy, they don’t have much time for reading or even for their children. The evidence is overwhelming, however, that people spend about half their time doing things that are not important, even though they are urgent. But the more disciplined a person becomes about focusing on the vitally important things and has a strong feeling of “yes” burning inside his or her heart, it’s very easy to smilingly, happily, and cheerfully say no to all the many distractions that inevitably come.

Cultivation of Self-Awareness (Making Assumptions Explicit)

Self-awareness involves all four intelligences and is a unique human endowment. It’s essentially another word for the space between stimulus and response—the space where you can pause and then make a choice or decision.

Cultivating self-awareness by trying to understand and make explicit our underlying assumptions, theories, and paradigms is without any question one of the highest-leverage activities we can be involved in. Because we are always making assumptions and because they are very implicit (we are unaware that we are making them), by making them explicit, we can make huge quantum leaps. We can learn to think outside the box.

Let me suggest several other approaches to nurture self-awareness. My daughter, Colleen, probably has 70 different journals filled with her thoughts written for her eyes only. Journal writing has enabled her to be an observer of her own involvements in life and also to make choices based on those observations. She has developed the capacity to reinvent herself almost on a moment’s notice, simply because her self-awareness is so deep and strong. I’ve seen her make important decisions based on the direction of conscience, or spiritual
intelligence, subordinating both IQ and EQ, and then later finding all three to be in harmony.

The discipline of putting thoughts into writing is grueling, but powerful and clarifying. A failure learned from becomes a success. So in this sense, there need be no real failures, only learning experiences put to good use in life.

Another powerful way to develop awareness of self and others and to make assumptions explicit is seeking feedback from other people. We all have blind spots. Some of them are literally crippling to our effectiveness. But if we will cultivate the habit, either informally or formally, of seeking feedback from other people—people we care about and around whom we work and live—we will fast-track our growth and development. It’s analogous to people doing market research and benchmarking against world-class excellence in one’s particularly function or activity, rather than just against local or regional competitors. This often gives us information on blind spots that are also blind to other people.

Many people, myself included, see sincere prayer—pondering prayer, listening prayer—as a way to sense the direction of conscience, and to see life as a mission, stewardship, and contribution opportunity. It also can give strength and courage to step back, admit mistakes to others, apologize, recommit, and then get back on track.

**Learning by Teaching and Doing**

Almost everyone acknowledges that you learn best when you teach someone else and that your learning is internalized when you live it. To know and not to do is really not to know. To learn and not to do is not to learn. In other words, to understand something but not apply it is really not to understand it. It is only in the doing, the applying, that knowledge and understanding are internalized.
Developing Spiritual Intelligence—SQ

I suggest three ways to develop spiritual intelligence: first, integrity—being true to your highest values, convictions, and conscience, and having a connection with the Infinite; second, meaning—having a sense of contribution to people and to causes; and third, voice—aligning your work with your unique talents or gifts and your sense of calling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Making and Keeping Promises</th>
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<td>(Being true to one’s highest values and Conscience)</td>
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Meaning—Educating and Obeying Your Conscience

Perhaps the most compelling way to develop spiritual intelligence is to educate and obey your conscience. Madame de Stael put it this way: “The voice of Conscience is so delicate that it is easy to stifle it: but it is also so clear that it
is impossible to mistake it.” As you begin to study the wisdom literature of your own tradition, or as you study the lives of people who have inspired and lifted yours, you’ll sense the voice of conscience guiding and directing you; it’s a still, small voice. And what C.S. Lewis says will literally come to pass: “The more you obey your conscience, the more your conscience demands of you.” It not only makes demands upon you, but it enlarges your capacities, your intelligences, and your contributions. Your talents double when you wisely use those given you.

Finding Your Voice

One simple way to find one’s voice is to simply ask the question, “What does my life situation ask of me now; what should I do in my present responsibilities, duties, stewardships; what would be the wise action to take?” When we live true to the answers our conscience gives, the space becomes larger and the conscience louder.

Another very significant way of finding your sense of voice or calling is when you are selecting a career, job, or cause to give yourself to. Learn to ask fundamental questions representing the four intelligences—body, heart, mind, and spirit: What do I really like doing that I do well? Should I do it? Can I make a living at it? Can I learn to get better at it? Do I want to pay the price of learning?

The Personal Development Challenge

In closing, I affirm your unlimited potential as an individual and as a leader. If you will work each day at developing these four intelligences and capacities, you will find yourself on an upward spiral of leadership service and contribution to the benefit of your family, your friends, your work colleagues, your community, and countless other throughout the world. May you find great satisfaction in the journey.