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OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Welcome, Law Students

# *IN SIGHT* for Oregon Lawyers

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

## HOW PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE IMPACTS YOUR PROFESSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

“Do not ask how smart you are. Ask how you are smart.”

– Howard Gardner

*Author and professor in the Harvard Graduate School of Education*

Every lawyer I have ever met was smart. Most are very smart. However, they are not all smart in the same way. Most lawyers who complete law school and pass the bar exam are smart in the classical sense (articulate, good writers, and analytical). However, the lawyers who are the most successful and satisfied are often “smart” in another way – they have personal intelligence.

Personal intelligence is the capacity to recognize, understand, value, and apply emotions effectively. It includes intrapersonal (emotional) intelligence – the personal talents and skills we use to help ourselves. It also includes interpersonal (social) intelligence – those social abilities we use to help others and our interactions with them.

How does this play out in the lives of attorneys? How do personally intelligent lawyers think and act? What difference does it make in their practices?

### Components of Personal Intelligence

Six major characteristics define a personally intelligent attorney and impact personal and professional effectiveness. Keep in mind that the following profile represents a challenging ideal we can all aspire to. Don't be discouraged if you struggle in some of these areas or find you lack some of these skill sets.

Even a small improvement in one of these components can impact your professional effectiveness.

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## Smart Isn't Enough: Improving Your Personal and Professional Effectiveness

Are you interested in increasing your personal and professional effectiveness? The OAAP is sponsoring a day-long workshop that will give you tools to help you live and work more effectively. Presented by Kenton R. Hill, EdD, CNC, work performance coach, and Alisa Blum, MSW, workplace trainer/consultant, the workshop will be held October 3, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the World Trade Center in Portland.

The fee for the workshop is \$30 and includes materials and a copy of Dr. Hill's book, *Smart Isn't Enough: Lessons from a Work Performance Coach*. A registration form is available at [www.oaap.org](http://www.oaap.org). For more information, call Shari R. Gregory or Mike Long at 503-226-1057.

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**Self-Awareness:** Personally intelligent attorneys are confident and optimistic, born of a clear, realistic understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. They seek and welcome feedback, criticism, and assistance when needed. As a result, they are continuously improving and are of increasing value to their clients and colleagues.

**Self-Regulation:** They pay attention to and control their emotions. They take responsibility for managing their positive and negative thoughts, feelings, and actions. In doing so, they are seen as reliable and easily gain the trust of clients and others.

**Self-Motivation:** Being proactive self-starters, they use their thoughts, feelings, and senses to help them achieve exceptional levels of performance. They often go above and beyond the call of duty – delivering to clients efficiently and timely, thus maximizing their billable hours.

**Social Awareness:** Personally intelligent lawyers practice being good “readers” of other individuals and groups. Their awareness of other people’s feelings, needs, and concerns (as well as their own) makes them less polarized, more collaborative, and therefore more effective in arriving at mutually satisfying dispute resolutions.

**Relationship Building:** They are excellent at building meaningful relationships, largely by asking good questions and being active listeners. They genuinely seek to understand others before asserting their own views. As rapport is established, clients become more comfortable and confident about referring other business.

**Interpersonal Influence:** They are persuasive, while at the same time being open to persuasion. This facilitates their own learning, reduces the risk of making mistakes, and makes collaboration and creativity more likely. It also generates credibility in being able to inspire and guide others to a common goal.

The good news is that it is never too late to improve your personal intelligence. Even at a mature age, individuals can increase their personal intelligence (which is not true of one’s IQ). Start by raising your awareness and then commit to studying, practicing, receiving feedback, and engaging in more practice.

## Tools to Improve Your Personal Intelligence

Several tools and strategies can help you develop your personal intelligence. The first step in developing the ability to monitor your emotions is to become aware of them. One way to do this is to use the Self-Awareness Check-In.

People are always in an emotional state. They can either be unconscious of their emotions and be managed by them, or they can develop an ability to monitor their emotions and use them to help guide their behavior and thinking in ways that enhance results. The next time you experience a situation that generates an intense feeling or strong emotional reaction, ask yourself these five Self-Awareness Check-In questions:

1. **FEELINGS** – What am I feeling right now?
2. **SENSES** – What do my senses tell me?
3. **APPRAISALS** – What judgments am I making?
4. **ACTIONS** – How am I acting?
5. **INTENTIONS** – What do I want?

Your answers to these five questions may or may not come easily, but over time they will help you better understand your emotions. Self-awareness is a key component in personal intelligence.

Keeping an Emotional Awareness Journal will further help you develop your personal intelligence. Once each day take time for a Self-Awareness Check-In and record what you are feeling. Also record what caused those feelings. In 28 days (the time usually required to develop a new habit), review your journal to discover patterns:

1. What emotions are you experiencing?
2. What is causing your emotions?
3. Are there changes you can make to promote more positive feelings?
4. Are there changes you can make to diminish the impact of your negative feelings?

Practicing the combined use of these two tools will serve you well as you seek to strengthen your

personal intelligence. It is possible to increase your professional success and personal satisfaction through strengthening your emotional and social intelligence. The rewards far exceed the effort.

On October 3, 2008, the OAAP will offer a workshop with additional tools and strategies that have proven helpful in developing personal and professional effectiveness. See the box on the front page of this issue of *In Sight* for more information.

Kenton R. Hill, EdD, CMC  
*KRH Consulting*

*Dr. Hill is the principal consultant of KRH Consulting. He is also the author of Smart Isn't Enough: Lessons from a Work Performance Coach.*