



# Business Book Review™

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## Social Intelligence

*The New Science of Success*

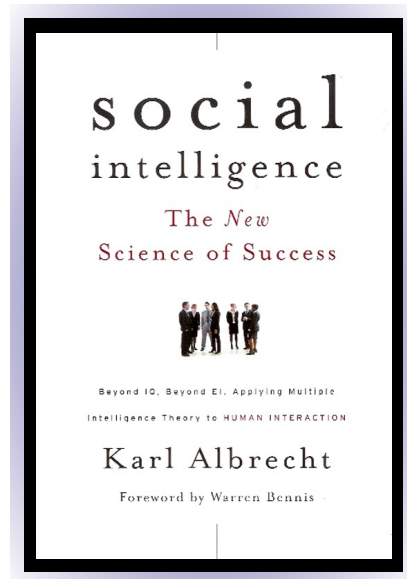
**Karl Albrecht**

**Foreword by Warren Bennis**

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*Reviewed by Lydia Morris Brown*

## Introduction

Having pondered why some people with very high IQ scores fail miserably in their personal lives, Harvard professor Howard Gardner, concluded that the concept of “intelligence,” as a singular measure of competence, could no longer be supported. Thus, he posited the notion (in *Frames of Mind*, 1983) of multiple intelligence (MI)—a range of key competencies, which exist in various proportions in various individuals. Daniel Goleman’s landmark, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995), popularized this notion and launched widespread interest in the developmental possibilities for the MI model.

Now, in **Social Intelligence**, Albrecht explores social intelligence (SI), a dimension of MI, which he defines as the ability to get along well with others *and* a set of practical skills (situational awareness, presence, authenticity, clarity, and empathy) for interacting successfully in any setting. His integration of these key dimensions creates a comprehensive model—S.P.A.C.E.—for describing, assessing, and developing SI at a personal level, as well as a set of practical guidelines

for using this formula as an effective diagnostic and developmental tool for professional and personal success.

#### **PART I: S.P.A.C.E.—A DIFFERENT KIND OF SMART**

Albrecht notes that though some individuals may possess an ample supply of *abstract intelligence* (the IQ that academics, psychologists, and educators have studied so diligently), they may not have much *social intelligence* (SI)—the ability to get along with others and to get them to cooperate. This competency can be characterized as a basic understanding of people (i.e., a kind of strategic social awareness) and a set of component skills for interacting successfully with others. Thus, SI consists of both insight and behavior.

The extremes of SI can be thought of as either “toxic” or “nourishing.” Whereas, toxic behaviors are those that cause others to feel devalued, inadequate, intimidated, angry, frustrated, or guilty, nourishing behaviors cause others to feel valued, capable, loved, respected, and appreciated. People with high SI (those who are socially aware and basically nourishing) are magnetic—thus the expression “magnetic personality.”

### **About the Author**

**Karl Albrecht** is a management consultant, executive advisor, futurist, researcher, and speaker, who works with many kinds of businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations in a wide range of industries world-wide. Devoting much of his effort to finding and developing promising new concepts for organizational and individual effectiveness, his R&D activities span a wide range of issues, from individual creativity to corporate strategic vision.

Albrecht is author of more than 20 books, including *Brain Power*, *The Northbound Train*, and *The Power of Minds at Work*. And, his *Service America!* (coauthored with Ron Zemke) is widely credited with launching the “customer revolution” in the U.S. and abroad.

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Albrecht believes that the biggest single cause of low SI is simply a lack of insight. Toxic people are often so preoccupied with their own personal struggles that they do not understand their impact on others; thus, they need help in seeing themselves as others see them. S.P.A.C.E., a simple but relatively comprehensive model for describing, assessing, and developing SI, is offered as a means of

*“Some people are completely capable—either through ignorance and lack of insight, or through willful disregard for the social rights of others—of treating another person like a thing ... a non-being who exists only for the fulfillment of their own selfish purposes.”*

helping individuals gain this critical insight.

The “S” factor in the S.P.A.C.E. model represents one’s Situational Awareness (or situational “radar”). It is the ability to understand and empathize with people in different situations, sense their feelings and possible intentions, and “read” situations based on a practical knowledge of human nature. It includes a knowledge of the cultural “holograms”—the unspoken background patterns, paradigms, and social rules that govern various situations. It means having an appreciation for the various view points of others and a practical sense of the ways people react to stress, conflict, and uncertainty. Individuals who are self-centered, preoccupied with their own feelings, needs, and interests, will probably have difficulty in getting acceptance and cooperation from others. Having good situation radar means having a respectful interest in other people, which they tend to return.

Albrecht notes that much of social dumbness comes from missing all the clues, both verbalized and unspoken. Thus, Situational Awareness involves knowing when to speak and when to hold one’s tongue. It is the ability to size up a situation, rather quickly, and make the best response, based on one’s intuitive radar and real-time intelligence. A key aspect of the Situational Awareness competency is being aware of, attentive to, and wise about contexts, the meanings they create, and the behavior that arises from these meanings.

In simple terms, there are three dimensions (subcontexts) to consider—proxemic, behavioral, and semantic. Proxemic refers to the dynamics of the physical space, or even the *imaginary* public, social, personal, or intimate space, within which people interact; the ways they structure that space; and the effects of space on their

behavior. Thus, a Japanese garden may say, “serenity,” while a shopping mall says “spend.” Albrecht notes that human beings structure space *and* interpret the meaning of space, behaving according to the signals transmitted by the space around them—expressing, both consciously and unconsciously, their intentions toward one another.

In any situation, much of the behavioral context is encoded nonverbally via posture, movements, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice. For example, people signal authority and deference by where and how they sit or stand, who sits and who stands, who has the right to touch whom, who enters and leaves a room first, and countless other details that skilled observers can perceive. (People often communicate their attitudes and intentions about power, status, and social distance by the way they arrange their offices.)

In addition, clothing, combinations of clothing, and/or other adornments can indicate affiliation with a well-defined subculture. Part of any behavioral context, then, is

*“When we understand that there can be no human interaction without a context in which it takes place, we begin to understand how context creates meaning, and how the meaning supplied by the context shapes the behavior of those who are engaged in it.”*

the set of shared rules, customs, expectations, and norms that participants bring with them. To the extent that they share the same behavioral codes, they usually get along successfully.

As for semantic context, Albrecht notes that “No two brains contain exactly the same ‘meaning’ for any word ... or concept; the meanings are embedded in the people, not in the words.” Thus, picking up the linguistic cues that signal deeper levels of meaning, and quickly learning to identify the different linguistic frames that come into play in various situations, can be very useful skills. In a sense, it is about being multilingual within a single language.

The “P” factor represents Presence—the way a person affects individuals or groups through physical appearance, mood and demeanor, and body language, and how he or she occupies space in a room. It is a bearing—a physicality that gives and gets respect and attention. It involves listening with skill, and it creates and provides a quality of self-assurance and effectiveness that allows one to connect with others. And, though looks count, the primary element of a positive Presence is an inviting demeanor. Thus, all

people need to pay attention to whether they are conveying confidence, professionalism, kindness, and friendliness, or whether they are communicating shyness, insecurity, animosity, or indifference.

In the S.P.A.C.E. model, the “A” factor represents Authenticity—a dimension that reveals how honest and sincere individuals are with self and others. Albrecht believes that when people respect themselves, have faith in their personal values and beliefs, and are “straight” with others, they are likely to behave in ways that others perceive as authentic.

When people feel—consciously or unconsciously—that others will not accept, respect, love or cooperate with them, if they act according to their own needs and priorities, they are likely to behave in ways that others perceive as inauthentic. However, in the context of SI, Authenticity involves more than simply being oneself and includes the ability to connect genuinely with other people—which demands empathy and compassion. What some

psychotherapists call narcissism (i.e., malignant self-love), Albrecht sees as another variant of inauthentic behavior, which can become pathological when it renders the individual incapable of

engaging in two-way relationships of mutuality, sharing, and support. It is, therefore, possible to have well-developed “people skills” and yet lack the emotional depth to be considered truly socially intelligent.

For example, some people cannot seem to bring themselves to praise others freely and generously and, instead, offer such left-handed compliments as: “That’s a great tie ... it’s bound to come back in style one of these days.” or “You’ve lost a lot of weight—you were really getting heavy there for a while.” Viewing compliments as a kind of “zero-sum economy,” they display an emotional “stinginess” that leads them to believe that complimenting others somehow lowers their own value.

Some individuals have such low self-esteem they figure out ways to use compliments to make others feel bad by engaging in the “two-legged Puppy Dog” syndrome. They seem to enjoy getting others to put them down and then they make them feel guilty for doing it: “How could you do this to me after all I’ve been through?” Or, they create guilt trips by twisting another person’s words to support their own need to stay in the puppy dog role: “That’s fine. You

go on without me. If I fall and break my hip, I'll manage somehow."

However, the essence of inauthentic behavior is the "head game"—a battle of wits engaged in by inauthentic "game players," who attempt to meet their needs covertly rather than honestly and cooperatively. According to Eric Berne (*The Games People Play*) these are typically people who may have been neglected, "Do you say what you mean and mean what you say? Mark Twain said, 'The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is like the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.'" sense of self-worth. Unable to meet their emotional needs by direct and honest interaction with others, they opt for the negative emotional experience of revenge, and attempt to trick or manipulate others into behaving in ways that meet their needs.

The "C" factor in the S.P.A.C.E. model represents Clarity—the ability to express one's thoughts, opinions, ideas, and intentions clearly; to understand the power of language as a medium of thought and expression; and to use language as a strategic asset.

Albrecht notes, for example, that those with high SI Clarity have mastered the ability to move from a "sky-high" level of abstract communication to a ground- or concrete-level. In other words, they can pilot a "verbal helicopter," choosing terms, figures of speech, expression, analogies, and metaphors that position the listener's thinking process at the desired altitude. Thus, they are capable of taking their listeners down to the lowest level of detail or up to the highest level of generality. People who lack this skill cannot seem to control the throttle or the stick, moving too fast from the concrete to the abstract or spending too much time at one level or the other.

Individuals with high SI Clarity have also mastered the "elevator speech"—a brief, compelling distillation of an important idea or a proposed course of action, issue, or point of view that can be conveyed in the time it takes to ride an elevator with someone. As more and more situations challenge people to zero in on the essential elements of a message, and to express them in a compact and effective way, composing elevator speeches will become an increasingly useful skill—especially for business and professional people.

Another critical Clarity skill is the ability to monitor one's own language patterns, and the language patterns of

others, so as to avoid certain verbal pathologies that can cause both individual and collective misunderstandings, conflicts, and even psychological maladjustments. Albrecht refers to these corrupted linguistic forms as *dirty language* that can intimidate, offend, anger, alienate or confuse others and, thus, muddy communication. By contrast, "clean" language uses more neutral verbal patterns

and word choices that invite empathy, open-mindedness, and the free exchange of ideas.

For example, instead of aggressive value judgments, Albrecht suggests using self-referencing "I" messages. Here, individuals speak for themselves, without presuming that what they say is true for everybody. Thus, the self-reference makes the sentence irrefutably true and not subject to argument. Whereas, "I don't think that approach will work," is a statement about the speaker rather than the approach, "That approach won't work" seems to signal an assault on the listener's autonomy. It is about using self-referencing "I" messages, limiters and qualifiers, "gray-scale" language, options and possibilities, "de-generalizers," neutral language, and other clean devices to signal one's respect for the listener and a willingness to acknowledge other possibilities or points of view.

Albrecht believes that when people become aware of the value and impact of a semantically flexible way of expressing ideas, they see how the smallest word can influence communication and understanding. For example, because the subtle effect of the "but" word ("I hate to say you're wrong, but ..."), can make it more difficult to establish an effective connection with another, he suggests substituting "and" in typical yes-but situations. He also notes that saying "I don't know," "I made a mistake," and "I changed my mind," freely, appropriately, and without guilt, increases semantic sanity and cleans up one's language.

Those who have not acquired Clarity skills tend to say whatever comes to them, in whatever order it comes—they seem not to understand the difference between an unformatted "brain dump," and a carefully chosen conversational strategy. However, influencing others and getting them to cooperate requires presenting information in a way that makes it easy for their brains to process it.



Although the human brain processes speech at a rate of about 500 words per minute, most people can only speak at a rate of about 150 words per minute; thus, 350 words-per-minute dead time exists. Keeping an individual's full attention requires capturing that unused capacity so as not to give the listener an opportunity to process other possibly competing or distracting input. Albrecht suggests several conversational devices for getting inside a person's mind,

*“Over time, a greater respect for the power of language can help you understand, be understood, persuade others, and win them to your points of view.”*

keeping the individual off of “Route 350,” and mentally escorting him or her to one's conclusion, belief, perspective, and/or course of action:

*Dropping one shoe* is a method for setting up a bold expectation of what will follow. It involves posing a provocative question, which gets people thinking about the importance of the topic while the key points are being presented. Or, the speaker can start with a provocative statement that captures attention, allowing him or her to capitalize on the dramatic effect.

“This is what happened yesterday ...” or “I'm going to tell you three things ...” is called *telegraphing*—a foreshadowing method that helps frame the conversation. It allows the listener to begin to think about the topic and to form expectations for the conversation.

The *pyramid* is a clarifying technique that has been used successfully in print journalism and also works very well in conversation. It is a quick snapshot of what one will say, followed by more and more information that build facts as one progresses.

The *marching plan* (which uses outlines or bulleted lists in its written form) states, “Here's what we're going to do, in three steps, ways, parts, or phases.” It is a method that works especially well with people who need a lot of structure and order in their thought processes. Knowing where the speaker plans to take them, they feel comfortable following the sequence of topics.

*Zooming in or out* is like using a camera's lens, or employing helicopter language. One can either start with the big picture and then make adjustments to zero in on more details, or vice versa, according to what the speaker wants listeners to “see” in their mind's eye.

*Diagramming* or sketching out an idea is an excellent device for visual learners who need to “see” something before they can understand it. It is what consultants often refer to as “the power of the pen,” in that the person who writes down the group's ideas takes on a temporary leadership role.

*Metaphors* substitute concrete images or familiar experiences for abstract concepts. They are economical, capturing the richness of a complete concept in a simple, shorthand phrase. And, they stimulate a host of associations in the listener's mind and, thus, enrich the conversation.

Finally, Albrecht notes the work of Dr. David Bourland, an expert in the psychology of language, who suggested that people in English-speaking cultures learn to speak and write without using any form of the verb “to be.” Calling this imaginary language *E-Prime* (English – to be = E-Prime), he believed that the habitual use of words like “is,” “am,” “are,” “was,” “were,” etc., can set up an unconscious tendency toward dogmatism, mental rigidity, and stereotyping. Rather than say, “She *is* an attorney,” which assigns a person to a category, one might declare, “She *practices* law.” It is an active verb choice that transfers the emphasis from an abstract *category* to a *behavior* and forces people to shift their conceptual process so as to conceive of all reality as dynamic and evolving.

He also believed that eliminating to-be forms makes it more difficult to criticize people and hit them with value judgments. If one cannot say, “That is a stupid idea,” one must find an alternative method of expressing one's opposition. Thus, because the process of rephrasing one's statements becomes a process of reframing one's views and accusations, E-Prime can also serve as conflict resolution tool.

The “E” factor in the S.P.A.C.E. model represents Empathy—a dimension that invites individuals to look at how truly aware and considerate they are of the feelings of others and how capable they are of tuning in to other people as unique individuals. In its usual connotation, being empathetic means identifying with another person and appreciating and/or sharing his or her feelings. However, in the context of SI, there is also a sense of connectedness, which inspires people to cooperate. Thus, Albrecht defines

empathy as “a state of positive feeling *between* two people, commonly referred to as a condition of rapport.”

Gaining the personal and practical benefits that come with building empathy and maintaining quality relationships requires that individuals avoid or abandon such toxic behaviors as: withholding positive strokes, throwing verbal barbs, being patronizing, seeking approval excessively, insincere flattery, game playing, speaking dogmatically, violating confidences and breaking promises, complaining excessively, criticizing, ridiculing, inducing guilt, and giving unwanted advice.

Killing other people’s ideas by saying such things as, “It won’t work here.” “We tried it before.” “It costs too much.” is particularly toxic, especially in business situations. However, using certain key “idea-selling” statements (e.g., “May I ask a question?” “Before we make our final decision, let’s review our options.” “Maybe you’d like to reconsider your opinion, since ...”) can often get people to listen and to respond with greater receptiveness.

The next step in building empathy involves adopting or increasing the use of nourishing behaviors, and this requires more than just avoiding toxicity. Empathy requires a long-term investment, not an episodic application of charm. Without a proactive commitment to add value as other people perceive it, eliminating toxic behavior only produces apathy.

Albrecht believes there are two opportunities to build empathy. With the first—the moment-to-moment experience of connecting with people, one can usually establish a strong empathetic connection by being attentive, being appreciative, and offering affirmation. With the second—the “maintenance” process, which keeps a relationship healthy over time—the author recommends what he calls *the Platinum Rule*: “Do unto others as others prefer to be done unto.”

He believes that once people move outside the bounds of their selfish preoccupations with their own needs and priorities, they can better understand how to get what they want by ensuring that other people have their needs fulfilled. Thus, doing unto others as you would have them do unto you—the Golden Rule—may be a fatally flawed piece of advice. Trying to treat people the way one *thinks* they want to be treated may not be effective, for as

George Bernard Shaw said, “... their tastes may not be the same.” Making an effective connection with others, based on where *they* are, what *they* need, how *they* view the situation, and how *they* set priorities, is one of the key principles of empathy within the context of SI.

## PART II: SI—SOME REFLECTIONS

Where does the concept of social intelligence fit into the world of business? How does it apply on the job? How does it apply to the way people work together? Does it apply to the way teams accomplish their missions, to the way employees serve customers, and/or to the ways in

*“To achieve empathy with another person means to get him or her share a feeling of connectedness with you, which leads the person to move with and toward you rather than away and against you.”*

which bosses and employees interact? Does it apply more broadly across the “society” that exists in every established organization?

Albrecht believes that the answers to some of these questions are still evolving and that it will be quite some time before convincing conclusions are reached. He suggests, however, that the role of SI in the workplace can be better understood by studying its absence in organizations and organizational cultures mired in social incompetence. To that end, he has identified 17 primary patterns of organizational dysfunction that impose significant entropic costs on the resources of the enterprise and contribute to its ineffectiveness.

1. *Attention Deficit Disorder*. Senior management cannot seem to focus on any one key goal, strategy, or problem long enough to gain any momentum toward resolution.

2. *Anarchy*. Weak divided, or distracted executive teams fail to provide the clear sense of direction, momentum and focus management teams need. Thus, without a clear focus, a set of meaningful priorities, and/or a sense of higher purpose, people put their own priorities and political agendas above the success of the enterprise.

3. *Anemia*. Due to a series of economic downturns, downsizings, layoffs, and purges, the talented people leave for better pastures and only the losers and misfits remain. So, when conditions begin to improve, the organization

typically lacks the talent, energy, and dynamism needed to capitalize on new opportunities.

4. *Caste Systems*. Some organizations have informal, “shadow” structures based on certain aspects of social or professional status—castes that never appear on the organizational chart. However, they dominate collective behavior, create de facto boundaries, promote factionalism, and tempt the “in group” to serve its own social and political needs at the expense of the organization and to the detriment of the lower castes.

5. *Civil Wars*. Organizations disintegrate into two or more camps, each promoting a particular proposition, value

*“While collective sanity tends to involve relatively simple and consistent patterns, craziness is entertainingly diverse. The range of primary organizational disorders is both broad and varied.”*

system, business ideology, or camp hero.

6. *Despotism*. Tyrannical CEOs cause people to keep their heads down so as not to draw attention to themselves, resulting in the destruction of goal-seeking behavior.

7. *If It Ain't Broke*. Even in the face of an imminent threat to the basic business model, “fat, dumb, and happy” executives cannot muster a sense of concern and reach any consensus on the need to reinvent the business.

8. *General Depression*. Sometimes when things get really bad for an enterprise, senior management utterly fails to create and maintain any kind of empathetic contact with the rank and file. Feeling abandoned and vulnerable, these front-line people sink into a state of discouragement, low morale, and diminished commitment.

9. *Geriatric Leadership*. Sometimes, CEOs are at the helm too long, refusing to bring in new talent and ideas. It is a syndrome that can extend to the entire executive team, whose members may have grown old together, remaining committed to an obsolete ideology that once made the enterprise successful, but that now threatens to destroy it.

10. *The Looney CEO*. When the CEO's behavior becomes dysfunctional, those in the inner circle react to the lack of an integrated personality at the top, and start behaving in their own dysfunctional ways. As a result, those down through the ranks find themselves perpetually baffled, bemused, and frustrated with the increasing lack of coherent executive decisions and actions.

11. *Structural Arthritis*. When a defective organizational architecture exists, collaboration is inhibited, internal competition arises, and the organization's mission cannot be achieved.

12. *The Monopoly Mentality*. When an organization has long enjoyed a dominant position in its environment, its leaders tend to behave like monopolists. Unable or unwilling to think in competitive terms, and unable to innovate or even reinvent the business model, they fall prey to invading competitors.

13. *Clint Eastwood Rules*. The “cowboy” CEO, who feels no need or responsibility to share his or her master plan with subordinates, keeps everybody in the organization guessing about the next move. This creates dependency and learned incapacity on the part of virtually all leaders throughout the organization and renders them reactive.

14. *The Rat Race*. The prevailing notion that one must sacrifice his or her personal well-being in order to get ahead, definitely creates focus, but at the expense of the cooperation, esprit de corps, and individual humanity.

15. *Cultural and Structural Silos*. When organizations disintegrate into groups of isolated camps, each defined by the desire of its leaders to achieve favor with senior management, there is little incentive for these groups to cooperate, collaborate, share information, or team up to pursue mission-critical outcomes.

16. *Testosterone Poisoning*. In male-dominated industries or organizational cultures, the rewards for aggressive, competitive, and domineering behaviors far outweigh the rewards for collaboration, creativity, and sensitivity to abstract social values. In organizations where fewer than 40 percent of the key roles are held by females (i.e., non-“coed” organization), women tend to be assigned to culturally stereotyped roles, with little power, influence, or access to opportunity. It is a gender-caste system that wastes talent and often stifles creativity and innovation.

17. *The Welfare State*. Organizations that have no natural threats to their existence (e.g., government agencies, universities, and publicly funded operations) tend to evolve into cultures of complacency in which it is more important not to be wrong than it is to be right. Many people have the power to veto or passively oppose innovation, but few have the power or capacity to originate and champion new initiatives. Blame and accountability are syndicated in the

same manner as authority; thus, risk-taking is disallowed, but if anything goes wrong, people get to blame the system.

Can a manager combine authority and empathy, or must a manager “kick butt” in order to succeed? Does making people hate or fear the manager come with the job? Does the performance of a work team, department, division, or entire enterprise depend on a policy of “law and order?” Albrecht maintains that in each instance, every manager has to work out his or her own attitudes and beliefs about the use of authority and personal influence.

He believes that if SI is the capacity to get along with others and to get them to cooperate, then power and influence must be part of the equation. However, power is not acquired by accident, but must be accumulated methodically and strategically through four key phases: (1) networking, (2) coalition building, (3) taking over, and (4) unrelenting consolidation. People who understand this process clearly have some degree of social intelligence—at least in certain dimensions. Although some of the worst despots have had this special know-how, most of them have been severely deficient in emotional intelligence.

Nonetheless, even in situations where an individual has no P.O.W.E.R. (i.e., no formal authority), he or she can still influence others. The secret lies in understanding the difference between *formal authority* and *earned authority*. Formal authority comes with position power. In other words, the individual has been formally anointed and granted a certain range of authority. Earned authority, on the other hand, is not granted by others in power positions, but is merited. The individual must behave in ways that cause others to consider him or her worthy of the right to influence them.

This person’s ideas, practical skills, situational know-how, concern for the well-being of others, and willingness to give direction in leaderless situations all add up on an unconscious scorecard in the mind of each person involved. In fact, an individual can emerge as the de facto leader in an unstructured situation, or can earn a significant amount of informal authority, even when a formally appointed leader is in place, by providing S.P.I.C.E.: skills, procedures, information, consensus, and empathy. These five distinct forms of assistance to the group must, however, be used selectively, sparingly, and helpfully.

History has demonstrated that conflict tends to create more conflict. Once it begins, it tends to escalate. And, once it reaches a critical level of intensity, it tends to feed on itself. Moreover, the escalation of conflict is also likely to follow a very well-defined downward spiral that begins with distrust and moves through provocation, escalation, and finally arrives at deadlock.

Albrecht notes that, conversely, parties who manage to maintain cordial relationships display an upward spiral of cooperation that is the mirror image of conflict’s downward trajectory. This upward progression must begin with some degree or trust (empathy, in SI terminology), which when sufficient, can move the relationship to reciprocity. As each party sees more of its interests being served, each

*“There’s a sort of algebra of influence at work here. In any situation involving power or influence, your total usable authority consists of a combination of your formal authority, if any, and your earned authority, if any.”*

may become increasingly proactive in finding ways to collaborate.

Over time, with luck and skill, the relationship will promise long-term benefit for all parties involved and will, thus, shift from a transactional proposition to a proposition of mutuality. At this stage participants begin to think in terms of an enduring relationship.

Finally, in some fortunate circumstances, all parties believe that the relationship serves their needs and interests so well that it takes on a life and an identity of its own. This continuity stage is the exact mirror image of conflict’s deadlock stage, where none of the participants feels any motivation to advance the interests of the other.

Most people find conflict with others so unpleasant that they allow misunderstandings to continue unabated, they let others take advantage or treat them inconsiderately, and they hold themselves back from asserting their moral and civil rights. Eventually, they fall into dishonest patterns of deception, false harmony, and covert warfare.

As a means of combating this pattern, Albrecht suggests Dr. Steve Albrecht’s approach: “lower the bar on emotional censorship” by telling others what you think and feel more often. “People can benefit enormously ... by making effective use of ‘crucial conversations ...’ ”—a basic formula that includes: gaining clarity about the situation; defining one’s interests clearly; choosing an approach



that has the most chance of starting the conversation on a positive, cooperative tone; conducting the conversation in a positive spirit; and trying for a specific outcome.

With this process, opening the lines of communication and keeping the conversation going are more important than achieving one's goals. Thus, in the context of SI, holding a crucial conversation means bringing all S.P.A.C.E. skills to bear on defusing a potential conflict and perhaps finding ways to eventually meet the interests of all parties.

In Albrecht's explorations of how conflict can affect the business world and, in particular, how business people attempt to settle differences and come to agreement, he discovered certain prevailing assumptions (in the Western world, at least) that seem to limit the negotiation process and impose a severe handicap on finding a solution. These include:

1. The negotiation begins when one side presents an offer or demand.
2. The negotiation consists of a tug-of-war contest around the first offer/demand. Here, each side seeks to move the other away from the starting point.
3. In the belief that transparency weakens one's position, while knowing of the needs of the other side creates an advantage, each party conceals its needs, interests, and intentions.
4. All potential deals must be evaluated from a perspective of relative advantage.

Although these four assumptions may seem fundamental and sacred, because of the simple principle of negative reciprocity, they do not actually offer a very effective basis for achieving success. This principle tells each party that if it approaches the process with the intention of maximizing the value it receives, and minimizing the value received by the other side, both parties will fail at the first objective and both will succeed at the second. Presuming that each side has the same level of "tough negotiator" skills, each will succeed in depriving the other of value. Thus, traditional power-based negotiation is a *reductive* process rather than an *additive* one.

Albrecht believes that by overturning the four basic assumptions, negotiators can come away with more than they might have hoped for. Instead of beginning with a demand/offer/proposal, he advocates an "added value negotiating process" that follows five general phases: (1) identify interests, (2) define the elements of value, (3) design

multiple "deal packages," (4) cooperatively select the best deal, and (5) refine and perfect the selection.

From Albrecht's perspective, these simple strategies for holding crucial conversations, and conducting value-added negotiations, apply SI concepts to age-old questions of human conflict. They are not the entire answer, or even a large part of the answer, to how human beings might get along better. However, when combined with a conscious effort to develop each S.P.A.C.E. skill, they can surely move individuals a step or two forward toward full social intelligence.

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*Bibliographic endnotes and a subject index  
are provided.*

## Remarks

It can be reasonably assumed that most of us know someone, who is well-supplied with *abstract* intelligence (i.e., someone with a high I.Q.), but abysmally short on social intelligence—"a basic understanding of people—a kind of strategic social awareness—a set of component skills for interacting successfully with them." Thus, because most of us can attest to the problems this lack can cause in families, the workplace, the community, and society as a whole, perhaps most would agree that "a descriptive model of social competence could be a useful resource in various aspects of human development."

The descriptive model offered in **Social Intelligence** is one such resource, for it crystallizes much of what is currently known about this important dimension of human effectiveness. However, it goes beyond the simple formulas of "please" and "thank you," beyond traditional social courtesies, and beyond the "people skills" that have generally been valued in the workplace. This removal of social intelligence from its simplistic and familiar categories transforms our perception and understanding of the competence so that it is seen as a more complex and more comprehensive facet of human affairs.

Albrecht makes no claims about the statistical validity or psychometric rigor of his S.P.A.C.E. model. His only assertion is that it seems to pass the test of common sense and that, in the long term, it will stand or fall on its own merits. Moreover, he acknowledges that the concept of SI is neither widely accepted, nor authentically modeled, in current American culture. Thus, the work is not offered as the last word on the subject. Albrecht's stories, examples ("Case-in-point" vignettes), suggestions, and self-assessment and development exercises are presented in hopes of stimulating the kind of deep reflection that fosters an interest in, and acceptance of, SI principles so they can be effectively applied in business, education and the wider culture.

## Reading Suggestions

### Reading Time: 20-22 Hours, 303 Pages in Book

Albrecht's primary purpose is to provide a working definition and a diagnostic tool for SI; to define, explore, and interrelate each of its key dimensions, and propose ways in which you can use the S.P.A.C.E. framework as a diagnostic and developmental model. If this is also where your interests lie, we recommend that, before you actually begin *reading* the book, you glance through the section "Exploring S.P.A.C.E." (pp. 30-31). Then, turn to "Priorities for Improvement" (p. 180) and note the instructions there. We believe this approach will prepare you for the level of analytical reading that will be required and perhaps suggest what tools (paper, pen, highlighter, etc.) you might want to collect before you begin.

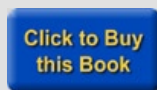
At this juncture, go back to the beginning and begin reading in the order presented. In addition to the exercises scattered throughout the text, you will also find a series of drills at the conclusion of many of the chapters. Although you may choose not to do every one, we suggest that you examine each carefully, choose those you prefer, and determine not to go forward until you have completed them to your satisfaction. This approach will, of course, add considerably to our reading estimate, which is based on a quick, but thorough, *inspectional* perusal.

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Chapter 8: SI in the World of Work
Chapter 9: Developing Socially Intelligent Leaders
Chapter 10: SI and Conflict
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### **A Note to Our Readers**

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