

Do You Need to Have a High IQ to Be a Success?

You have probably heard the term "IQ" many times, and you probably know it has something to do with measuring intelligence.

The letters "IQ" stand for "intelligence quotient", and an IQ test is widely used as a way to measure intelligence.

The test most frequently used today to measure intelligence is called the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. The earliest version of it was developed in France in 1905. The original test has been revised several times over the years, with a major revision completed at Stanford University in 1960. The Stanford-Binet test is not the only intelligence test, but it is probably the best known.

IQ tests are often used by educational institutions to segregate students into categories such as "normal", "gifted", and "challenged". Children and young people are scored relative to each other on a variety of factors, including verbal and logical understanding, vocabulary, arithmetic and spatial orientation.

A person with an IQ score of 100 is deemed to be of average intelligence, while a person with an IQ above 130 is deemed to be intellectually gifted.

Do you know your own IQ? Do you know what it means?

Although the IQ test is very widely used, and the results are almost synonymous with our idea of intelligence, there has also been a lot of criticism of the test, and of the way the results are used.

Does having a high IQ score guarantee success in later life? No, it doesn't! It doesn't even guarantee success in school.

A Canadian television program recently tracked down some of the people with the highest IQ scores in North America. One man who has an extremely high genius IQ works as a motorcycle mechanic, hangs out with biker gangs, and is frequently in and out of jail. Another man interviewed on the program has the highest IQ recorded in North America. He has worked as a bouncer in a bar for ten years, earns minimum wage, and lives in a tiny garage. Clearly, a high IQ is not enough to guarantee success in life.

What IQ tests measure is a certain type of potential. That potential still needs to be developed and nurtured by the person who has it. That person may not have the inclination or desire to do so. Not everyone who has a potential talent also possesses the desire to do something with it. One person may have a wonderful God-given singing voice, but may have no interest in music, and no desire to perform. Another person may have the perfect physique to be a high jumper, but may hate sports. You can probably think of other examples. Having potential is just a beginning.

The IQ tests we have now may predict which people have a certain type of intellectual potential, but they don't necessarily predict who will become a good teacher, a good manager, a good president, or a good parent. Some critics say that the only thing IQ tests can really predict is who will do well on IQ tests.

Qualities such as determination and vision can be more important to your ultimate success in life than the IQ number you started out with. Being creative, optimistic, and flexible are important hallmarks of many successful people. Common sense, the ability to get along with other people, and knowing a good idea when you see one, may be more useful qualities than having a genius IQ.

Although IQ tests measure a certain aspect of intelligence potential, there isn't complete agreement that what is being measured is actually intelligence. Standard intelligence tests focus a lot on exploring and measuring linguistic/logical/mathematical ability. But is that really the same quality as intelligence? Or is intelligence something broader than that?

We have all met people who have a lot of "book smarts" but seem to have no "life smarts." Should we really be saying that they are intelligent? Some people who did poorly in school often turn out to be very successful in later

life. Why do our current IQ tests seem unable to predict or explain these outcomes?

A person may have failed dismally in school, and yet turn out to be a genius in marketing. Is this person stupid, or brilliant? If a man is a great scientist, but can't ever pick a suitable mate, is he really very smart? Was Picasso inept because he wasn't also a brilliant mathematician? Was Einstein inadequate because he wasn't also a great artist?

Which of these two men had more intelligence? Is there more than one kind of intelligence? How should we define intelligence? Can we really measure it? What is intelligence, really?

Several experts in the field of intelligence have proposed that we need to broaden our understanding of what intelligence really is, and the role it plays in successful living.

Psychologist Howard Gardner of Harvard University has suggested that we should consider a wide range of talents and abilities as valid forms of intelligence. In his intriguing book, *Frames of Mind: Theories of Multiple Intelligences*, Gardner has proposed the existence of at least seven types of intelligence: verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, social-interpersonal and intra-personal.

Another psychologist, Robert Sternberg, has suggested we consider three distinct forms of intelligence. One type is the ability to think logically and rationally, doing well in an academic type of environment. A second kind of intelligence identified by Sternberg is the ability to come up with creative solutions to real life situations. And the third type, according to Sternberg, is the ability to psychologically understand people and interact effectively with them.

A very different perspective on the IQ issue is presented by Daniel Goldman in his best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*. Goldman offers an explanation for why a high IQ does not always lead to success in career or in life. He says that EQ, or emotional intelligence, has been an overlooked factor that is an extremely important ingredient for success in life. An ability to get along with others, to be optimistic, to be determined, are among the many factors that contribute to success, perhaps even more than intellectual ability.

Are you starting to realize that intelligence is not just a question of one test score number that forever limits your possibilities? If we define intelligence primarily as an aptitude for mathematical and linguistic/logical thinking, we may be missing other forms of intelligence that are also important.

If you happen to know your own IQ score, don't think of it as something that limits or defines your potential. If your IQ is in the average range it does not in any way mean you are limited to a life of average success and average accomplishment. If your IQ is in the above average range, it does not guarantee you a life of ease. You can't use either a high IQ score or a low one as an excuse not to try very hard.

Your IQ score is only a number. It does not define you. It does not really limit you. It's just a starting point. Remember that many other qualities you already possess or can develop are also important for success in life.

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Royane Real is a science educator and writer and the author of several self improvement books. This article is from the new book "How to Be Smarter - Use Your Brain to Learn Faster, Remember Better, and Be More Creative" Check it out at www.royanereal.com.

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