

Women: Today, Tomorrow, and Always

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TODAY, in the rise of the XXI century, one woman is executed while another is an executive; one woman cleans the bathroom floor at the airport while another flies to an international conference; one woman cannot read a story to her child while another writes books for children; one woman cries for not being able to feed her child while another throws away the leftovers of her child's birthday party; one woman carries a gun as a drug dealer while another joins in the Army; one woman surrenders her son to the police while another enthusiastically applauds her heroic son; one woman laments her failure while another rejoices for her victory; one woman is humiliated while another is congratulated!

In the foregoing paradoxical paragraph one can read the tragic and amazing contrasts seen all over the world from East to West. Where should this perplexity lead us? What can be done about this reality? Can one fix the broken image? Can one recover the abandoned women? Can one find the lost woman? This monumental effort can only make sense if society embraces simultaneously the woman who was once a girl and the girl who will become a woman, discovering in the woman, hidden capacities that were never noticed and fostering in the girl, the capacities that will emerge in her history as a woman.

The theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983)¹ is a promising road for the immense job of developing human potentialities which originate from the integration of psychological, genetic, and cultural factors and above all from the miraculous Divine Providence. To educate the girl and reeducate the woman in this direction means exercising justice and benefiting humanity. In this sense, each one of the eight intelligences identified by Gardner is independent from the others and this challenges the educator to give individual attention to the students, allowing each person to fully develop his or her own intellectual profile and consequently the profession and the vocation that will follow. This is even more crucial when the author suggests that each individual may possess one or several types of intelligences that present themselves with specific characteristics in terms of expression, perception, memory,

problem solving, and product creation. The great capacity hidden in each person is a treasure to be discovered, developed, and shared among human beings.

It seems appropriate to analyze these intelligences, even if briefly, hoping that this challenging knowledge will foster more respect not only in relation to women's development which is the focus of this paper but also in relation to the development of a whole generation.

Thus, among the multiple capacities, emerges the one that refers to the analysis of relations, categories, and patterns in the manipulation of objects and symbols, in order to experiment in a controlled way with strong sensibility to patterns, order and systematization. Mathematicians, physicists, scientists and other researchers who work in the field of logic, use this capacity. It is the **logical-mathematical intelligence**. As important as this intelligence is the capacity to use language to convince, to please, to stimulate or transmit ideas with a sensibility for sounds, rhythms and meanings of words with special perception to the various purposes of language. Poets, speakers, lawyers, journalists and writers have predominance of the **linguistic-verbal intelligence**. Another intelligence characterizes itself as the capacity to perceive the spatial and visual world in a precise way dealing mentally with objects and shapes, and from this perception creating tension, balance, and composition in a visual or spatial representation which includes tridimensional visualization. This is the main intelligence of sculptors, painters, architects, graphic designers, surgeons, navigators and pilots. It is the **visual-spatial intelligence**.

The following intelligence, also related to the world of Arts, with the capacity to compose or reproduce a musical piece, discriminating sounds and perceiving musical themes with special sensibility to rhythm, textures and tones is the **musical intelligence**. This is the main intelligence of the musical artists that is, composers, interpreters, music lovers and critics. The following intelligence is also related to Arts. It is the capacity to solve problems or create products using one's own body through gross or fine motor coordination in sports, performing, and visual arts. This is the **bodily-kinesthetic intelligence**, typical of dancers, actors, athletes as well as craftsmen and other technical professionals.

The next intelligences relate to personal understanding. The first one is the capacity to understand and to respond appropriately to humors, moods, motivations and wishes of other people with special sensitivity to their needs. This is the **interpersonal intelligence**, characteristic of teachers, psychologists, sales people, religious and political leaders, and

actors. The second one relates to the capacity to understand oneself and to have access to one's own feelings, dreams and ideas using this knowledge to solve personal problems. It means a special sensitivity to recognize one's own needs, wishes, and abilities in order to create a personal image that will facilitate effective acting. This is the main intelligence of philosophers, thinkers, religious people, and those who practice meditation and introspection: it is the **intrapersonal intelligence**.

The eighth intelligence is responsible for the capacity to distinguish, classify and use the elements of the environment especially those related to flora and fauna. This is the **naturalistic intelligence**, typical of ecologists, biologists, environmentalists, and naturalists. Although Gardner has only identified, so far, these intelligences, he points out to the fact that there may be new candidate intelligences.

The greatest challenge that faces society today is to discover in each person his or her individual intellectual profile. There is not much time left to compensate for the many injustices done especially to women. **Today** we need to build and rebuild them filling the social and moral gaps left.

Now, looking towards the future, in order to think of the woman of tomorrow in a continuous path of development and transformation, Gardner (2007)² suggests, with eloquence and wisdom, a fascinating and hopeful program: the importance of developing five minds that humanity will need to survive in the days to come. The author points out that regardless of their main intelligences, each person must develop all five minds for the future, to ensure his or her own balance. In this context each mind has its own characteristics composing an integrated self in such a way that all individuals can live and grow together in perfect harmony.

Therefore, the **disciplined mind** is the one that masters at least one profession regardless of the time needed to attain competence. On the other hand, the **synthesizing mind** is the capacity to gather information from various sources and to evaluate them creating a meaningful whole. In this process such capacity is crucial in a world where information grows in frightening speed. The **creative mind** emerges from the integration of the disciplined and synthesizing mind. It is the capacity to go beyond obstacles, presenting new ideas, proposing original questions, and producing new ways of thinking that will lead to unexpected responses. This mind goes way beyond the most sophisticated technological aids. The **respectful mind**, together with the previous one, responds to the capacity to reach out observing and welcoming other people's individual differences, understanding them and building with

them a fruitful and efficient work.

Last but not least, the **ethical mind** is as important as all the others. It is the most abstract of the minds in as much as it is concerned with the nature of work and the needs and wishes of society itself. It is the capacity to face the attainment of purposes beyond individual interests and to search, in a generous way, the wellbeing of all the individuals. It is ultimately to be faithful to the highest ideals of men and women that is, those involved in the relationship between human beings and God.

Tomorrow's woman will be conscious of her physical, intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual capacities in search of her own dignity, as well as that of society and why not of humanity.

At this point of convergence of **today's** woman and **tomorrow's** woman emerges a concern with finding a synthesis and this will be the woman **always**. The following words come from an exceptional Chilean Bishop, Don Ramon Angel Lara who, a hundred years ago, knew how to immortalize women's image.

"There is a woman who shows a bit of God in her because of the immensity of her love and a lot of angel because of her restlessness in sharing care: when young, she thinks like an old woman; when old, she works with the strength of a young woman; if ignorant, she uncovers life's mystery with more wisdom than the wise man; if knowledgeable, she becomes as innocent as children; if poor, she is content with the happiness of those she loves; if rich, she would gladly give her richness to avoid suffering in her heart, injuries of ingratitude; if vigorous, she trembles with the whining of a child; if fragile, she sometimes, becomes as strong as a lion.... We do not love her enough while she lives because next to her all the pains disappear; however, after she dies, we would give up all that we are and all that we have to see her but for one moment, to receive from her but one embrace, and to hear from her lips but one syllable.... Do not demand the name of this woman if you do not want me to wet this page with my tears because I have seen her crossing my way. When your children grow older, read this page to them, and kissing your face they will say that a humble pilgrim, in retribution for a splendid welcome, left to you and them a sketch of his **Mother's** picture."

Now, finally, the woman **today**, **tomorrow** and **always** will have the deep marks of a mother whether she is married, single or widowed, accompanied or alone, she will always be a **mother** in her essence which generates, transforms and blesses. Amen.

Notes

¹ Gardner, Howard (1983) *Frames of Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

² Gardner, Howard (2007) *Five Minds for the Future*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.