

Which Intelligence Is Being Asked to Work?

Read the article first. This self-reflection accompanies *The Architecture of Human Systems: Twelve Intelligences Behind Mental Health* at ThoughtsFromATherapist.com, which defines each intelligence and describes what it looks like in coherence, in rigidity, and in chaos. Search “architecture of human systems” on the site to find it.

The twelve intelligences are not traits we have or lack. Each is a capacity that is always running at some level, in some register, and the question is never whether we have it but how it is configured right now, in this context, in relation to the others. Nothing on this sheet is a score. More is not better, and the center is not a target to hit on every line. The question is which intelligence this situation is asking to work, and which register it is running in.

Directions

One situation, two marks on each line. A few seconds per line is enough.

Choose one situation we are in right now, or one that keeps returning. Each line gets two marks: **X** for where this intelligence generally runs, **O** for where it is in this situation. The center is coherence, the capacity available and calibrated to what the moment needs. To the left is chaos, where the capacity scatters. To the right is rigidity, where it grips. Both ends are the capacity protecting the system under load, and neither is a verdict. The phrases at each end are short versions of the article's descriptions, and the full entry is there for any line that is hard to place.

Reading it: nothing adds up. The **O** marks furthest from the center say where the situation is pulling. The lines where **O** sits far from **X** say which capacities the situation is recruiting that do not usually carry the load. The intelligence we prefer to work with, or the one our therapist prefers, is not always the one being asked. The last page holds the reading.

Self, contact, body, and feeling

X for how this intelligence generally runs, O for this situation.

		CHAOS	COHERENCE	RIGIDITY
Identity	I become whoever the room needs	☐	☐	☐
Relational	I absorb the other person's state as my own	☐	☐	☐
Somatic	My body feels like enemy territory	☐	☐	☐
Emotional	Feeling floods and each one triggers the next	☐	☐	☐

Filling this in on a screen: click a dot and type the letter for the mark.

Thinking, moving, choosing, and sequencing

X for how this intelligence generally runs, O for this situation. The center is coherence; chaos scatters, rigidity grips.

		CHAOS	COHERENCE	RIGIDITY
Cognitive	I cannot sequence or synthesize; attention scatters	☐	☐	☐
Kinetic	Too much, too fast, badly timed, or absent	☐	☐	☐
Volitional	I cannot bind myself to anything	☐	☐	☐
Strategic	The future disappears; I react and repeat	☐	☐	☐

Context, meaning, field, and play

The same two marks. Where a line is hard to place, the article's entry for that intelligence has the longer description.

		CHAOS				COHERENCE				RIGIDITY	
Ecological	I cannot locate my own position in the field	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	One frame explains every dynamic
Existential	Meaning collapses and the will erodes with it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	Meaning is fixed in a story nothing can revise
Spiritual	I am alone with the immediate, or I leave the body through it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	Experience has hardened into doctrine
Creative and Playful	Play is abandoned, or turns manic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	Play is performance; humor is defense

FIRST LOOK

Before reading the whole sheet: the three lines where O sits furthest from the center, and the three lines where O sits furthest from X.

FURTHEST FROM THE CENTER:

FURTHEST FROM MY GENERAL TENDENCY:

THE SITUATION I AM READING

Where, with whom, and what it asks of me. One or two sentences.

ASKED TO WORK

The intelligence this situation is asking to work

Not the one I prefer to work with, and not the one that is loudest. The capacity the situation itself needs, and why I think so.

The reading

Directions: no total and no type. The register the asked-for intelligence is in, the others carrying it, and the conditions the whole configuration was built for.

THE REGISTER

Which register it is in, and what that looks like here

Coherence, rigidity, or chaos, as it shows up in this situation. If it grips or scatters, what is it protecting?

CARRYING IT

Which others are carrying it

The lines where O sits far from the center or far from X. Movement in one intelligence reorganizes the whole, so the load usually shows up somewhere other than where it started.

DOING MORE THAN ITS SHARE

DOING LESS THAN USUAL

WHAT THIS CONFIGURATION WAS BUILT FOR

The configuration is what we are adapting with, and it was built for the conditions we were in. What conditions? And what does this context ask for instead?

THE CONDITIONS IT WAS BUILT FOR:

WHAT THIS CONTEXT ASKS FOR INSTEAD:

The question is which intelligence is being asked to do the work right now, not which one we prefer to work with.