

ANTONIA MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ  
JUAN CARLOS CENICEROS-ESTÉVEZ  
CRISTINA SAIZ-RUIZ

## ELEMENTS FOR A PROPOSAL FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: HOPE AND TRUST

### INTRODUCTION

Martin-Sánchez (2018) defined the concept and core competencies of spiritual intelligence (SI) through systematic review of existing literature and a qualitative analysis of 22 semi-structured interviews with leading informants of different religions and spiritual currents. Therefore, SI is defined as a capacity or a set of capacities that develop identity through creative *integration*, favors ethical actions with understanding and compassion, *transcend* events and realities and have an *adaptive* function manifested in how one person (1) faces and solves problems of meaning and value, (2) achieves goals, (3) finds meaning in life, (4) accepts reality, (5) frees from conditioners, and (6) generates peace, joy, gratitude, forgiveness and trust.

Likewise, from the qualitative analysis of the answers of the informants in this research and the bibliographic review, Martín-Sánchez extracts the following competencies from SI:

- consciousness – expanding consciousness;
- transcendence – unfolding transcendence;
- forgiveness – desiring forgiveness;
- compassion-love – growing in love and compassion;

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ANTONIA MARTÍN-SÁNCHEZ, PhD, Escuni University School of Education; e-mail: [amartin@escuni.es](mailto:amartin@escuni.es); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1090-310X>.

JUAN CARLOS CENICEROS-ESTÉVEZ, MA, Escuni University School of Education; e-mail: [jcceniceros@escuni.es](mailto:jcceniceros@escuni.es); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9348-8997>.

CRISTINA SAIZ-RUIZ, PhD, Escuni University School of Education; e-mail: [csaiz@escuni.es](mailto:csaiz@escuni.es); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1712-3950>.

- meaning – finding meaning in life;
- freedom – enlarging freedom;
- pain – avoiding useless suffering and transcend pain;
- effects – cultivating gratitude, trust, serenity, joy and contemplate beauty.

This article sets out to define the concept of spiritual intelligence and its competences, to frame confidence and hope as competences of this intelligence and as transcendental emotions, to develop guidelines for the development of theoretical and practical training programs in confidence and hope in various fields of education, health or business.

#### PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURES

Confidence, called a competence by 19 of the 22 interviewees with 43 quotes, is therefore considered the consequence of this intelligence. Experiences of serenity, joy, confidence and hope correlate positively with the recognition of a high spiritual intelligence.

The cultivation of SI breeds calm, which allays fears that emerge from the past, or fears that concern the future; it generates hope along with trust, and the basic sense of security, manifested in various aspects of life, as reported by our informants. These pleasant feelings and emotions are narrated as results of the cultivation of spirituality. Statements of some participants professing different religions or spiritual backgrounds are transcribed below.

##### A Catholic participant:

When you are able to see beyond appearances, when you internalize, when you have a specific sensitivity and when you open the heart, there is something that appears – it is trust. I do not know if it is a skill, a capacity or a gift, I do not have it very clear, but it is to situate you in life with confidence, with gratitude, with an open heart, seeing beyond, looking for the meaning of things. I see gratitude, I see trust in life, as an effect of spiritual intelligence.

##### An Evangelical participant:

If you have not cultivated that spiritual area, if you do not have confidence or security that there is something more after all this, for you death..., for some it is a final point, for others it is terror.... Not for me, for me it is a conviction that I know there is something else and that I know that I am going to be with God... It is trust, it is faith, it is knowing that God is there, truly God, real, not imagined.

A Jewish participant:

It's acceptance, not confrontation.

A Buddhist participant:

At the moment we are living in the now, if you only have what you see and touch, sometimes it is very difficult to have hope or have conviction that things can improve. So, in that sense (SI) it is very useful to have hope, to be able to trust; but not to trust blindly or foolishly like a little child's illusion, but to have a deep conviction that it is possible to transform things".

An Eastern Orthodox participant:

Then we can live in life with God, but how and in what way, and we have to have a guide, a guide who knows how to guide us. If not, we fall. But it's the same when we have faith, we have hope that, even if we fall, we can get up because God wants to help us and always puts someone in our path.

A Muslim participant:

If you have a lot of trust in God, things will continue, they will be harmonized.

In line with the results obtained from the informants in the qualitative research, the contributions of some of the authors who have studied SI are summarized below. Virtually all researchers write about aspects related to trust and hope (Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Amram, 2007; Maxim, 2008; King & DeCicco, 2009; Rubia, 2009; Torralba, 2010; Jahani, 2010; Chaktoura, 2015; Villafranca, 2016).

Zohar and Marshall (2000) state: "The profound spontaneity of spiritual intelligence allows us to relate to ongoing experiences with a deeply calm and balanced confidence" (p. 178).

Amram (2007) arrives at seven aspects common to all participants and all spiritual traditions. Among them, the following stand out as the most relevant:

- grace as the ability to live in alignment with the sacred, manifesting trust and a love for life based on beauty and joy;
- peaceful surrender to a higher being (God, truth, the absolute, nature), including self-acceptance, integrity, equanimity and humility;
- hope based on faith and trust.

King and DeCicco (2009) cite effects such as trust and hope. Jahani (2010), among the 15 competences of spiritual intelligence in his doctoral thesis, includes spiritual wisdom, attention to spiritual values and the experience of positive feelings such as well-being, peace, joy and confidence. For Chaktoura (2015),

SI is related to the hope of a positive or optimistic future in the short, medium and long term, even in difficult times.

In his book *The Divine Connection*, Francisco J. Rubia (2009) maintains, after reviewing extensively descriptions provided by renowned mystics of the East and the West, that mystical experience and neurology include trust, peace and joy, as characteristics of the mystical experience.

For Villafranca (2016), SI makes it possible to name the pain and suffering that a situation of change generates in all the people affected and create relationships of trust between them. Its development allows one to understand different points of view and compassion towards the people involved. And obviously, this allows collaboration and cooperation in work teams.

#### OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DIFFERENT PSYCHOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

Also Seligman (2004), after a tour of different societies and cultures throughout the history of humanity, and within the framework of positive psychology, proposes six fundamental virtues that he considers universal values: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. Transcendence establishes a connection with others, nature, and the universe. The observable manifestations, the strengths that define it, along with the belief in the divine, sacred, ideal or universal, and the commitment to the transcendental aspects of life:

- appreciation of the *beauty* and excellence of any aspect or facet of life;
- *gratitude*, or awareness of all the good that is received or experienced and the expression of this recognition;
- *hope*, understood as the expectation of a future full of positivity and the work necessary to make it so with confidence;
- *humor*, or the tendency to laugh and smile in the face of life's problems and contradictions, making possible an alternative way of facing painful situations.

In addition, these authors collect research that corroborates the personal and social benefits of these strengths on health and physical and mental well-being. They facilitate the development of coping strategies and emotional self-regulation, prevent depressive symptoms and increase self-esteem (Shabani et al., 2010; Bagheri et al., 2011; Karimi et al., 2011). Likewise, they allow for deeper relationships and increase social responsibility and commitment.

Abraham Maslow, the pioneer of humanist and transpersonal psychology, presented the hierarchy of human needs in his book *A Theory of Human Motivation* in 1943. This pyramid of needs synthesizes the basic and self-actualization motivations of all human beings. For him, security, trust and hope are basic human needs just like food or oxygen. Without a certain level of security, it is not possible to trust yourself or other people. And without hope, life loses its meaning and purpose. Trust and hope are the basis of all human growth and any achievement or success in life. Both are closely related and allow one to reach the top of the hierarchy of needs.

Whether or not needs are satisfied is related to the emotions felt. Thus, the need for security generates, on the one hand, confidence, serenity, hope or, on the contrary, it generates fear, desperation, and hopelessness. Needs are deeply related to emotions. Needs determine what is felt.

Relational psychoanalysis, the most humanistic version of psychoanalysis, takes up the importance of emotions in the creation of bonds and, specifically, with so-called transcendental emotions. This current emphasizes the role of real relationships established here and now, the result of spontaneity and the story of each person, as a source of all healing process and personal and social growth. The relationship of trust that is established in a protected context between the therapist and the patient allows the patient to develop a greater confidence in himself and in the rest of relationships with other people, which, in turn, improves their emotional and psychological well-being.

Joan Coderch de Sans, a Spanish psychoanalyst who contributed significantly to relational psychoanalytic theory and technique, postulates trust in the psychotherapeutic relationship as a determinant for the success of the process along with the hope of healing. He goes a step further and defines both emotions as transcendental. According to Coderch (2010) transcendental emotions are fundamental:

And yet, emotions and behaviors frequently jump before our eyes that “seem” to have no value for survival, nor for the well-being of the body or mind. These are the emotions that produce, at first glance, the impression of being superfluous and unnecessary, pure cultural luxuries, for some, but that others consider truly essential for the balance of the mind and its impact on the rest of the organism. (p. 30; own translation)

Transcendence is a specific property of the human mind that allowed us to establish bonds, express emotions and unite purposes. Evolutionary mechanisms went from being biological to being cultural. Nogués (2011) says in this regard:

Transcendence, born together with the evolution of the human brain, becomes a guarantee of psychological integrity. It is an experience that unfolds in a great variety of expressions and manifestations, which, especially, takes shape in its great ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and religious dimensions, in which the human mind is poured out in its most delicate manifestations of luxury, abundance and filigree. (p. 114; own translation)

Emotions can be translated into human values, into ethical expression manifested in the recognition and help of other people, even beyond obligations and own interests. The existence of brain functions and neural connections underlying these altruistic manifestations is already known.

Damasio states regarding emotions (2001):

Emotions are complex sets of chemical and neural responses that form a pattern; all emotions have a certain regulatory role, leading in one way or another to the creation of advantageous circumstances for the organism that displays the phenomenon; emotions refer to the life of an organism, to its body to be more precise, and its role is to help the organism to preserve life (p. 60; own translation).

And yet, reality presents emotions and behaviors that are considered of no value for survival but truly essential for balance and physical and mental health. These emotions, trust and hope, allow the deployment of the spiritual dimension and the most specific aspects of human beings.

#### DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUST

The experience of trust is gradually formed from childhood. It can be strengthened or weakened by each of the significant relationships you have. When trust is developed for a specific person or something, it can be defined as firm hope. If this trust is directed towards the person themselves, it is confidence in oneself. In any case, it generates courage, encouragement, strength, resolution to act in all areas of human activity: academic, professional, artistic, social... Therefore, it implies the certainty of achieving one's goals thanks to strengths, capacities, efforts and values.

You can find the following in trust:

- physiology – trust activates the parasympathetic nervous system, releases the production of hormones such as oxytocin in the brain, which promotes feelings of security, emotional connection and empathy towards others. Oxytocin is also linked to reducing stress and anxiety levels.

- conduct – trust calms and gives security that favor the relationship with oneself, with others, and with God.
- information – trust is a mental and emotional state in which a person feels safe and calm in relation to a situation, event or person.
- necessity – trust is the foundation of personal, industrial and social relations. It enables strong and satisfactory bonds with other people.

It is also possible to recognize a number of components of trust.

1. Awareness and knowledge of own and other people's wounds, needs, feelings, thoughts, and one's and others' values.

2. Acceptance. When this knowledge is accompanied by sufficient reception, respect and acceptance, it is possible to assume the risks of showing one's own vulnerability and exposing oneself to the judgment or acceptance of other people. Understanding and accepting one's own wounds and limitations allows one to understand and embrace those other people. Acceptance promotes the achievement of basic needs such as belonging, love and appreciation.

3. Honest and consistent communication. It is not possible to create an experience of trust through manipulation, deception, betrayal or a forced act of will. Only if people are deeply hurt and needy, can they ignore the signs of distrust that warn them. The capacity for authenticity is conditioned by the degree of consciousness and personal growth along with the management of hidden motivations, diffuse feelings or defensive mechanisms. The intimacy of a deep and meaningful relationship is created when people dare to show themselves honestly.

4. Respectful listening. Active listening is essential for communication. Building trust in relationships means putting aside the desire for control, being right or indoctrinating to respect opinions, values or beliefs other than their own. Maintaining respect for the autonomy and freedom of others who responsibly choose to be themselves demonstrates humility; genuine humility is extremely reliable.

5. A seeing look. To feel confident, it is essential that people feel seen, recognized, understood in their vulnerable and violated humanity. Entering and being in contact with empathy brings security and awakens a serene and tender trust.

Trust unfolds in three fundamental dimensions of experience: the relationship with oneself, with other people, with the process of life and with God for believers of different religions and spiritual currents. Learning to trust allows us to grow in the capacity to love and integrate all the dimensions of the person. On the contrary, the tendency to defensively close oneself to the pain of old or new wounds separates and paralyzes in suffering and loneliness.

To grow in confidence, in addition to the work and development of the components indicated above, we recommend:

- recognizing one’s skills, strengths and resilient resources;
- taking care of a social support network that allows the support of family members, friends and people to count on in difficult times;
- setting realistic, achievable goals; achieving them will allow one to grow confidence;
- taking care of one’s own needs and emotions to generate basic trust;
- acting with integrity in accordance with recognized principles and values;
- keeping one’s promises and commitments;
- communicating consistently, honestly and authentically, without power games or manipulation, and listening actively;
- accepting responsibility for one’s own decisions and actions;
- showing empathy, compassion and understanding.

These objectives can be adapted to training processes across various health, social, or business sectors, as well as to curriculum designs in different countries, tailored to the ages of schoolchildren, children, or young people.

#### DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOPE

Hope is the main emotion in relation to the future and the best cure against mental illness. It is a complex emotion related to joy and enthusiasm. It forms the belief that something good will happen. When people feel hope, they can be more constant, resilient in achieving goals and changes. Hope gives strength to recover from losses and dejection, as a psychic component of life and growth and an internal disposition to act, with the certainty of a solution or alternative. It is the temper of spirit and true wisdom. To wait means “recognizing time for oneself, as a place of maturation, as a recovered opportunity; understanding time not only as a framework of meaning, but as a meaningful formulation in itself” (Tolentino, 2017, p. 25; our translation). In short, it allows the deployment of what is most specific about human beings, safeguards the balance of the brain and even helps the survival of the species. In hope you can find these characteristics:

- physiology – hope activates the parasympathetic nervous system, releases neurotransmitters that promote a feeling of well-being and strengthens the immune system;



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– conduct – hope calms one down and brings satisfaction, promoting co-existence and improving resilience along with the ability to recover in the face of difficulties;

– information – hope makes it possible to trust and have a positive attitude in the face of challenges;

– need – hope allows one to endure and be certain of one's ability to overcome pain or difficulty along with a deeper understanding and meaning of life.

On the contrary, the consequences of loss of hope or hopelessness can lead to a lack of empathy and vitality, irrational aggression or destructiveness, despair, anguish... Passive waiting, contempt for reality and violence is a disguised form of hopelessness and helplessness, "How is it that so many people lose hope, faith and strength and love their servitude and dependence, if the three are concomitants of life?" (Fromm, 1980; own translation). For recovery, it is essential to hope for healing supported by safe and reliable environments, in a deeply respectful and authentic relationship, being capable of maintaining and transmitting hope, which allows transcending the pain of the present to a fuller future.

Below we suggest some specific ways to properly work on this emotion:

– realize the feeling of hopelessness to manage it properly and stop desperation from resonating;

– check the real possibility of guiding one's cultural, economic and social life along a new path;

– examine new options and concerted actions to make them a reality;

– grow one's capacity for love;

– review achievements, progress, difficulties and failures already overcome and recognize what has been learned in each painful situation;

– see opportunities for growth in each reality and focus on possible solutions;

– learn to better manage fear, anger, greed, helplessness, envy, etc.;

– let the past be past;

– seek the presence of hopeful people;

– transmit encouragement and hope to other people;

– take care of other people and of oneself while going through the hardest stages with the certainty that they will pass;

– practice gratitude, patience and trust.

These goals can be adapted in the training processes of different health, social or business areas and in the curriculum designs of different countries according to the ages of school or university students.

Hope is also a theological virtue for Christianity that trusts in the achievement of the promises received by God. Faith strengthens trust and hope. Pope Francis (2013) writes thus in his encyclical letter *Lumen Fidei*:

The Christian knows that there will always be suffering, but that he can give it meaning, he can turn it into an act of love, of trusting surrender in the hands of God, who does not abandon us and, in this way, it can constitute a stage of growth in faith and in love.... Suffering reminds us that the service of faith for the common good is always a service of hope, which looks forward, knowing that only in God, in the future that comes from the risen Jesus, can our society find solid and lasting foundations. In this sense, faith goes hand in hand with hope.... Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope, let us not allow it to be trivialized with immediate solutions and proposals that obstruct the path. (n. 56–57; own translation)

In summary, it is possible to work together to nourish hope and trust in different educational, work, social, business areas at a personal and community level, by

- sharing knowledge and good practices of collaborative, motivating leadership with a consistent vision and purpose;
- building authentic networks and relationships that protect against isolation and unwanted loneliness;
- inspiring action by fostering trust and hope in one's own life and community;
- celebrating achievements, accepting and learning from mistakes or failures;
- practicing gratitude and good treatment;
- being an attentive listener, showing an empathetic attitude and giving emotional support;
- taking care of other people and oneself while going through the hardest stages with the certainty that they will pass.

On the other hand, it is recognized the intersection between psychology, theology, and philosophical anthropology, and how these disciplines can come together to offer a more complete view of essential concepts such as trust and hope. In this way, these perspectives are integrated to reveal the complex dimension of the human being in the search for meaning and transcendence.

In this framework, philosophical anthropology acts as a bridge that unites the empirical understanding of psychology with the answers of ultimate meaning provided by theology. It underlines the importance of considering the human being as a complete unit that lives and experiences reality through the integration of its different dimensions. And it allows trust and hope to be approached from a perspective that not only explains how they function psychologically, but also why they are intrinsic in humans who search for the divine and the

essential. This approach opens the door to a deep and holistic interdisciplinary dialogue about human experience.

## CONCLUSIONS

First we proposed to frame trust and hope as competences of spiritual intelligence and as transcendental emotions. We believe this purpose has been achieved. The concept of SI and its competences have been defined along with trust and hope. Martín-Sánchez, Rodríguez-Zafra and Ceniceros-Estévez (2020a) show the significant coincidences in the definitions and competencies provided by the systematic review of the existing literature with those revealed by the qualitative analysis of different interviews carried out with prominent people of different spiritual currents or religions. Likewise, trust and hope have been determined as basic needs and, in turn, as transcendental emotions (Maslow, 1943; Damasio, 2001; Coderch, 2010). The recognition of the competencies of these emotions allows for theoretical-practical training and the evaluation of their performance. Both are considered consequences and effects of high spiritual intelligence. The results confirm that experiences of serenity, joy, trust and hope correlate positively with the recognition of high spiritual intelligence. The characteristics of these transcendental emotions allow us to specify guidelines for the development of theoretical-practical training programs of trust and hope in education.

Martín-Sánchez, Rodríguez-Zafra and Ceniceros-Estévez (2020b) pose as the most arduous challenge the inclusion of SI in the educational systems as it exists in English-speaking countries such as Great Britain and Canada (González, 2009). This would recognize the importance of these basic competencies for the development of all intelligences and the full growth of every person. A particularly interesting field of study is the design of the most effective programs for their work in a truly more comprehensive and inclusive training (Sisk, 2008; Sisk & Torrance, 2002). Therefore, the conclusions are particularly important at a training level because they allow the competences of these emotions to be identified and programs to be developed to promote their development in different educational, social or business areas as in organizations, sustainable economies, leadership and politics (Wigglesworth, 2013; Villafranca, 2016; Sagasti, 2022; D'Addio, 2023).

The lack of research and bibliographical references on the inclusion of spiritual intelligence, and in particular the development of confidence and hope in the educational systems of European countries other than Britain, is perceived as a limitation.

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IN SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: HOPE AND TRUST

SUMMARY

This article offers guidelines for the promotion of spiritual intelligence in theoretical-practical training programs in the educational field. After Howard Gardner recognized spiritual intelligence as one of the dimensions of his theory of multiple intelligences, it constitutes a necessary reference

within the educational field, as it invites us to transcend challenges and facilitates coping with hopelessness and suffering, making our life meaningful. In our article, this proposal is made based on the definition of spiritual intelligence and the description of its competencies offered by Antonia Martín-Sánchez, based on our research with informants from different beliefs and using the framework of Abraham Maslow's humanistic psychology and in the more confident and hopeful humanism of relational psychoanalysis. In this context, we analyze trust and hope, having examined components identified by authors such as Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, Yosi Amram or M. Maxim as two competencies that allow the use of spiritual intelligence in these training programs. These competencies are classified as transcendental emotions and their conceptualization and relevance are analyzed not only in educational environments, but also in social, economic and political milieus.

**Keywords:** spiritual intelligence; hope; trust and multiple intelligences

PROPONOWANA TEMATYKA SZKOLEŃ  
W ZAKRESIE INTELIGENCJI DUCHOWEJ – NADZIEJA I ZAUFANIE

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł ten zawiera wytyczne dotyczące promowania inteligencji duchowej w teoretyczno-praktycznych programach szkoleniowych w zakresie edukacji. Po tym, jak Howard Gardner uznał w roku 2012 inteligencję duchową za jeden z wymiarów swojej teorii inteligencji wielorakich, stanowi ona niezbędny punkt odniesienia w edukacji, gdyż zachęca do podejmowania wyzwań oraz ułatwia radzenie sobie z beznadzieją i cierpieniem, nadając życiu sens. W tym artykule propozycja ta opiera się na definicji inteligencji duchowej i opisie jej kompetencji zaproponowanym przez Antonię Martín-Sánchez, w oparciu o badania przeprowadzone z informatorami o różnych przekonaniach i jest ujęta przez Abrahama Masłowa w ramach psychologii humanistycznej oraz w bardziej pewnym i pełnym nadziei humanizmie psychoanalizy relacyjnej. W tym kontekście, autorzy omawiają wymiary zaufania i nadziei, po analizie elementów wyróżnionych przez takich autorów, jak Danah Zohar i Ian Marshall, Yosi Amram czy M. Maxim, jako dwie kompetencje, które pozwalają na wykorzystanie inteligencji duchowej w tych programach szkoleniowych. Kompetencje te są klasyfikowane jako emocje transcendentalne, a ich conceptualizacja i znaczenie są badane nie tylko w środowiskach edukacyjnych, ale także w środowiskach społecznych, ekonomicznych i politycznych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** inteligencja duchowa; nadzieja; zaufanie i inteligencje wielorakie