



My thoughts on Relational Intelligence

I went through an RI class a few years ago. Based on the results, I am equal parts of pattern-2 and pattern-4 (my pastor at the time was convinced I was a 4). Both patterns describe how I approach relationships, projects, and form habits. My dominant strengths are ambition, creativity, self-sufficiency, and introspection. In weakness, I've had to overcome struggles with perfectionism and excessive critical thinking.

When I'm in an environment that requires me to "flex", I am a pattern-7. This pattern takes calculated risks, tends to be practical, action-oriented and resourceful. This isn't too far of a stretch from my core pattern as 4s and 7s are both theoretical and independent. The main difference is that it's natural for me to lead by *thinking* (4) rather than *risking* (7). I'm naturally individualistic (4) but I can flex into a resourceful team leader (7). I'm also naturally relaxed (4) but I can flex to be energetic (7). Several people have incorrectly supposed me to be a full-time pattern-7 because those characteristics are their only perception of me. But a true pattern-7 will discern I'm flexing because situations requires it!

Final thoughts: I believe **self-awareness** is the gateway to relational intelligence. Dictionary.com defines self-awareness as *the realization of oneself as an individual entity or personality*. In adulthood this means recognizing what is/isn't working and determining what's required of *you* to change. We all have a past and we've all experienced hardships. Blaming our present actions on authority figures or unfortunate circumstances is not a personality trait. When someone says, "That's just the way it is", they really mean, "I don't want to take responsibility for this right now."

We can correct wrong behaviors and set appropriate boundaries by practicing self-awareness, but we must recognize four things about ourselves and others. We all:

- have **natural** and **learned** tendencies
- have **strengths** and **weaknesses**
- lead by **thinking** or **risking**
- have a choice to be **real** or **pretentious** in every situation

God can help us get rid of unhealthy perceptions and ideas about ourselves and others. The more in tune we are vertically, the more in tune we are horizontally. Life and relationships are better when you're self-aware and relationally intelligent!