

CONNECTING WITHIN AS MEANS OF TRANSFORMING SCHOOL CULTURE

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership

By

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April, 16, 2017

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## **A NEED FOR SCHOOL REFORM**

Although it was over three decades ago, Kozol (2012) visited schools throughout the U.S. between 1988 and 1990, describing at that time, the inequalities that existed in the public education system between affluent districts and poor districts. Kozol (2012), sums up the central voice of the book, by quoting James Squires from the Chicago Tribune, “it took an extraordinary combination of greed, racism, political cowardice, and public apathy....to let...public schools....get so bad” (p.72). Unfortunately, the inequalities that were outlined in Kozol’s (2012) book, *Savage Inequalities*, continue to persist today (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, Kewal Ramani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016).

In a recent analysis of current educational data, according to the National Education Association (NEA) (2015), “achievement gaps are an all-too-present reality in today’s educational landscape...disparities in educational outcomes related to poverty, English language proficiency, disability, and racial and ethnic background [continue to] persist” (p. 1). In addition, the NEA (2015) reported that “the 2013 NAEP test scores indicated that Black, Hispanic, and Alaskan Indian/Alaskan Native students in the fourth and eighth grades scored significantly lower than their white peers in reading and math” (p. 4). Finally, according to Musu-Gillette et. al. (2016) dating from 1992-2013 the average reading scale scores for Black and Hispanic students in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade has steadily declined, while the gap between Black and Hispanic students in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade for mathematics, while increasing, continues to be significantly lower than their white peers. Consequently, because of these factors, Kozol (2012) would have explained that children in affluent areas seem to be getting educated to become governors, while children in areas of poverty are being trained to be governed.

Principal leadership is key for school improvement, and to meet the challenges of closing the achievement gap (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Murphy, 1990). In fact, Leithwood (1992) referred to principals as ‘change agents’ and suggested that they impact school reform efforts through the transformation of school culture. Consequently, in the mid-1990’s, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) created the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to “take up the challenging task of designing the first set of national standards for educational leaders” (Canole & Young, 2013, p. 6). This step ultimately led to the March 2010 Blueprint for Reform, as communicated through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which requires the “skills and talents of many, but especially our nation’s...principals” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). In conclusion, the NPBEA (2015) further explained that the “goal must be to have a...great principal in every school” (p. 9). Thus, the 2015 National Standards for Educational Administration has been “recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on...foundational principles of leadership” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 2) to ensure that all students are being better prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This emphasis on building foundational principles of leadership is directly addressed through Standard 2, which states that effective leaders must “act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, [and] decision-making” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). In addition, Standard 2 calls for educational leaders to lead their schools with, “integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9).

Furthermore, in an ongoing attempt to bridge the achievement gaps and to develop higher quality training programs to better prepare emerging educational leaders for the new millennium, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) added a second level to the administrative

credential structure because the “expectations for California school administrators [has] evolved due to changes in school practices and priorities” (CTC, 2011, p. 5). As a result, Standard 14 was created, which calls for the development of “personal ethics and leadership capacity: [where] each candidate promotes the success of all students by modeling a personal code of ethics and developing professional leadership capacity” (CTC, 2011, p. 39). This personal code of ethics and leadership capacity includes such qualities as: “integrity, justice, and fairness [demonstrating] skills in decision-making, [and] problem solving” (CTC, 2011, p. 39) among other leadership competencies. Consequently, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2008) has called for educational leaders to: “model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, ethical behavior [and to] consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 3-4).

Therefore, because there has been a national and state level emphasis given towards strong moral and ethical educational leadership, Dantley (2005a) argued that there needs to be a shift for educational leaders from a managerial to a moral leadership approach to decision-making, where moral choices are arrived at through “critical self-reflection” (p. 42), and where leaders embrace their “true spiritual selves” (p. 43) to find answers to the questions centered around equity, so as to liberate the educational system from the status quo, thereby bringing about school reform, particularly in low income urban schools, where students’ opportunities to learn at high levels continues to be less than students in more affluent areas (Noguera, 2003). Finally, Sorvaag (2007) suggested, “because of the complex and chaotic nature of the K-12 public schools in contemporary American society, our schools need principals with a strong sense of spirituality” (p. 53).

## **The Intersection of Spirituality, Spiritual Intelligence, and Religion**

At the heart of this study lies the relationship between educational leadership and spirituality (Dantley, 2005a; Houston, 2002). Because there is a call for greater ethical and moral leadership in education (Enomoto & Kramer, 2014; Shafer-Landau, 2010; Starratt, 2004; Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004). There is a need to explore spirituality (Dantley, 2005a; Houston, 2002). Astin (2004) proposed, “spirituality [is not] easy to define or talk about, such things as intuition, inspiration, the mysterious, and the mystical. Within this very broad umbrella, virtually everyone qualifies as a spiritual being” (p. 34). In fact, according to White and MacDougal (2001), “studies have shown that about 95% of humans have a spiritual belief system” (p. 41). Furthermore, Vaughan (2002) declared, “spirituality exists in the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere” (p. 16). Consequently, Vaughan (2002), explained that from the beginning, “since ancient times, spirituality has been an integral part of human life” (p. 21). Therefore, an exploration into the spiritual side of educational leaders is a logical next step in understanding how reform efforts might best be approached (Dantley, 2005a; Houston, 2002).

Hyson (2013) defined spirituality, “as our innate drive to connect to something external and greater than ourselves, that lifts us beyond narrow self-interest and helps us see our deeper interconnectivity to one another and to the world beyond - something divine or sacred” (p. 3). In addition, Crichton (2008), debated that in various literature, “the term ‘spirituality’ is used synonymously with the term ‘spiritual’” (Crichton, 2008, p. 104). Sharma, and Kumar Sharma (2014) asserted that,

spirituality involves the highest levels of any of the developmental lines, like cognitive, moral, emotional, and interpersonal; (b) spirituality is itself a separate developmental

line; (c) spirituality is an attitude (such as openness to love) at any stage: and (d) spirituality involves peak experiences not stages. (p. 3)

Often when the term spirituality is used, what comes to mind is the concept of religion; however, the concept of spirituality and religion are not necessarily synonymous (Klenke, 2006). Klenke (2006) has explained that there is a clear distinction between spirituality and religion:

Spirituality is often defined by what it is not. Spirituality . . . is not religion.

Organized religion looks outward; depends on rites and scripture; and tends to be dogmatic, exclusive, and narrowly based on a formalized set of beliefs and practices. Spirituality, on the other hand, looks inward, tends to be inclusive and more universally applicable, and embraces diverse expressions of interconnectedness. (p. 59)

Furthermore, Kheswa (2016) explained the differences between spirituality and religion in this way,

spirituality is a special connection with God, and religion is an organized social system of belief of man; spirituality is sacred, and religion is a belief system of man; spirituality is the reason for believing, and religion is the way of believing. (p.174)

According to Hildebrant (2011), “religion is characterized by a class system that delineates the spiritual leaders and followers and a doctrine...spirituality, in contrast to religion, is the sense of connection that individuals seek the Divine Source as a personal experience” (p. 29). In addition, Houston, Blankstein, and Cole (2007) determined, “religions are specific to particular faiths and ways of believing, whereas spirituality is generic and transcends religion” (p. 7). Houston, et. al. (2007) further explained, “religion gives us a rubric for working with the deity – and spirituality is the energy that connects us to the deity” (p. 7).

However, the intersection of spirituality and religion happens as a result of humans seeking and expressing unconditional love for others (Fry, 2003). In fact, according to Fry (2003), “the common bridge between spirituality and religion is altruistic love—regard or devotion to the interests of others” (p. 706). However, Fry (2003), on the other hand argued, “spirituality is necessary for religion, but religion is not necessary for spirituality” (p. 706), because spirituality is an individual’s sole connection to the Divine without the boundaries and limitations of organized guidelines and rules set forth by a system of structures. Subsequently, Koltko-Rivera (2006) debated that, with the addition of Maslow’s new hierarchy of needs component – self-transcendence, individuals seeking to attain to a greater level of self-actualization through intellectual stimulation and motivation, “seek a benefit beyond the purely personal and seek communion with the transcendent, perhaps through mystical or transpersonal experiences” (p. 306). Finally, Sisk (2015) explained,

The ancient wisdom and eastern mystical traditions examined had many differences in specific details, but one important common strand emerged for a concept of spiritual intelligence: the concern for unity and the interrelation or connectedness of all things and events, with all things being interdependent and inseparable from the cosmic whole, the Creator, and the Creative Force. (p. 3)

Therefore, to understand how religion, spirituality, and spiritual intelligence are intertwined (Fry, 2003, Hildebrant, 2011), one must examine the precepts of how spirituality, through knowing, can be attained in the five major world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. In fact, there is a common thread that links all of these religious beliefs towards the attainment of knowledge (Ali, 2011; Bible, 1996; Diskul, 1970; Schnittjer, 2010; Sri, 2000) and the application of that knowledge - to do the right thing.

First, through the teachings of the Torah, Schnittjer (2010), stated, “I have filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God and have given him... knowledge to do all kinds of work” (p. 278). Secondly, in Buddhism, through the teachings of the Sutras, Diskul (1970) explained that through the understanding of the Eightfold Path one can attain, “right understanding, learning the nature of reality and the truth about life” (p. 50). Third, Hinduism, through the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, Sri (2000) pointed out “that which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation—that [is] intellect” (p. 129). Fourth, Islam, through the teachings of the Quran, Ali (2011) wrote, “He who taught (the use of) the Pen, taught the human that which he knew not” (p. 741). Finally, in Christianity, through the teachings of the Bible (1996) knowledge can be gained through the, “Fear of the Lord, [which] is the foundation of true knowledge” (Bible, Proverbs 1:7; p. 175).

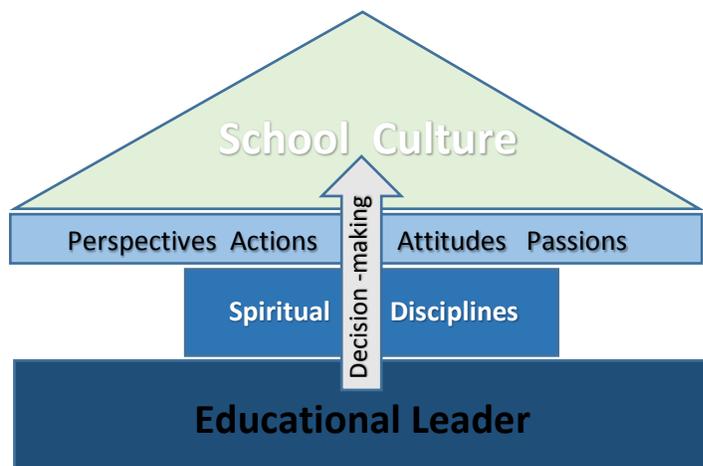
In conclusion, where religion, spiritual intelligence, and spirituality intersect is through the attainment of knowledge, not as an exercise or consequence of the mind’s activity, but rather as awareness, through a connection to a transcendence, ultimately resulting in love for oneself and others (Fry, 2003, Hildebrant, 2011). In the area of religion, transcendence is attained through connecting to a higher being (Ali, 2011; Bible, 1996; Diskul, 1970; Schnittjer, 2010; Sri, 2000), whereas in the area of spiritual intelligence and spirituality, knowledge is attained through either an external or an internal connection to a higher being or the inner-self (Amram, 2007; Emmons, 2000a; Fry, 2003; Hildebrant, 2011; King & DeCicco, 2009; Mayer, 2000; Sisk, 2015).

For the purpose of this paper, although spirituality is a “complex and controversial human phenomenon” (Gibson, 2014, p. 520), spirituality as it pertains to educational leadership will be defined as a leader’s “beliefs, moral-values, attitudes, and actions [as demonstrated] through

their professional character, competence, and conduct” (Gibson, 2014, p. 520). Finally, according to Kramer and Enomoto (2014), educational administrators have a moral responsibility to be proactive about creating an ethical environment for the conduct of education.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study has to do with understanding what spiritual disciplines (i.e. meditation, prayer, reading, etc.) (Walton, 2015; Wigglesworth, 2015) help shape the ethical decisions of spiritually intelligent (Amram, 2007; Emmons 2000a; King, 2008; Vaughn, 2002; Wigglesworth & Change, 2002; Zohar, 1997) educational leaders, and how this decision-making process affects the shaping of school culture (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Duffy, 2003; Fullan, 2010; Hoy & Miskel, 2013). The four arenas affected by the decision-making of spiritually intelligent leaders include: (1) Perspectives – how they understand and interpret issues and events, (2) Attitudes – what they believe and think about themselves and others, (3) Passions – how they feel about the people and problems they encounter, and (4) Actions – what ethical choices they consistently make which were influenced by their attitudes, perspectives, and passions (Brown, 2014; Dantley, 2010; Greenleaf, 1977; Magnussen, 2003; Zohar, 1997) (see figure 1 below).



*Figure 1.* The decision-making process of educational leaders who tap into their spirituality to shape school culture.

Finally, this study will explore the growing gaps of inequity found in our urban public schools (Kozol, 2012; NEA, 2015), and attempt to provide the possible implications of a new approach to using spirituality as a way educational leaders can bring about school reform (Magnusen 2001; Dantley, 2010) by making “good judgements when addressing organizational problems” (Kheswa, 2016, p. 194). An exploration of the evolution of human intelligence and how the recent emergence of spiritual intelligence to make decisions will guide this research from here and henceforth, because what we know is what Kakuk (2015) stressed, “almost all great figures in human intellectual history (Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Humboldt, Dilthey, Durkheim, Dewey, Tolstoy) wrote about education” (p. 1089).

### **The History of Intelligence**

It is important at this point in the paper to discuss the history of the various theories of intelligence: intellectual quotient (Charcot, 1868; Ebbinghaus, 1913; Locke, 1700; Stern, 1914; Stenberg, 1969; Wechsler, 1958), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1993; Petrides & Furnham 2001; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and how recently, spiritual intelligence has emerged as a viable and useful tool for the process of making sound ethical and moral decisions (Amram, 2007; Emmons, 2000; King, 2008; Sisk, 2002; Sisk, 2015; Vaughan, 2002; Zohar, 1997).

According to Dewey (1997), what defines us as humans is our ability to think. Therefore, Wechsler (1958) defined intelligence as, “the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment” (p. 17). In fact, most recently, Šilingienė and Škėrienė (2015), defined intelligence by explaining, “problem solving is one of the basic abilities of intelligence” (p. 759). In fact, Dewey (1997) suggested, “a being without the capacity for thought is moved only by instincts and appetites” (p. 14).

The history of human intelligence theory dates back as far as the Greek philosophers: Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, and Aristotle, *On the Soul* (Guthrie & Warren, 2012). The foundation of intelligence theory was originally constructed by Plato and Aristotle eventually giving form to the theories that have currently given structure to the modern foundations of the study of human intelligence (Guthrie & Warren, 2012). Subsequently, the theory of intelligence began to emerge through the work of the English philosopher Locke (1700) in, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Charcot (1868) in, *Histologie de la Sclerose en Plaques*, and Darwin (1897) in, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. These theories of intelligence influenced the study of human intelligence through such authors as: Pascal and Maynard (1851), in their work, *Les Provinciales* (Vol. 2), Firmin Didot Frères, and Ebbinghaus (1913), in his classic work, *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology* (No. 3). These works vivified the modern classic on human intelligence, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (Piaget, 1952). Other famous modern authors on the theory of intelligence also include: Binet, Stern, and Simon (Boake, 2002).

Stern (1914), in his groundbreaking book, *The Psychological Methods of Testing Intelligence*, coined the term “intelligence quotient” (p. 105). From that point until the late 1900’s intelligence quotient was the standard for understanding intelligence and decision-making. However, in the most recent three and half decades, the theory of intelligence has exponentially evolved, first, with the introduction of the theory of emotional intelligence in a book titled, *Emotional Intelligence: Imagination, Cognition and Personality* (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Henceforth, Gardner (1993) then introduced the concept of multiple intelligences, in his book, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. Eventually, and finally, Zohar (1997) would coin the term “spiritual intelligence” (p. 27) in her book, *Rewiring the Corporate Brain:*

*Using the New Science to Rethink how we Structure and Lead Organizations*. In fact, with the introduction of these new and exciting theories of intelligence, Gardner (2000a) declared, “during the last 2 decades, the quiet consensus among psychologists has been rudely disrupted. New lines of investigation within neuroscience, cognitive science, anthropology, and psychology itself, combined with societal pressures, have challenged nearly every tenet about intelligence” (p. 28).

### **Intellectual Quotient (IQ)**

According to the, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2015), IQ is defined as, “a number used to express the apparent relative intelligence of a person” (p. 1). Binet and Beaunis (1895) in their book titled, *L'année Psychologique*, studied children with intellectual delays. In this book, they attempted to use scientific measures to classify the intelligence of these children for ensuring the benefits of instruction for the children they studied (Binet & Beaunis, 1895).

Inspired by Binet and Simon’s (1895) research with children with intellectual delays, Stern (1914) suggested that human intelligence could be ranked. As a result, Stern (1914) explained that there could be an estimate or an intelligence quotient that could be quantitatively tested. Eventually, Stern (1914) studied children possessing intellectual delays to gain a better understanding of intelligence. Through his research, Stern (1914) defined intelligence quotient as, “a general capacity of an individual consciously to adjust his thinking to new requirements: it is a general mental adaptability to solve new problems and conditions of life” (p. 3).

Several decades later, Stenberg (1969) would measure the reaction times of individuals for solving problems to determine information processing. Most recently, Wechsler (2008) developed an assessment tool to measure the cognitive ability in adults to examine the relationship between intellectual functioning and memory. Wechsler’s assessment tool has

become the most commonly used IQ test, which is referred to as, the: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) (Boundless, 2015). The WAIS measures such intelligent components as: verbal comprehension, working memory, perceptual organization, and processing speed (Boundless, 2015).

### **Emotional Quotient (EQ)**

According to Assanova and McGuire (2009), the concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced as early as 1899 with Darwin. Furthermore, Assanova and McGuire (2009) explain that it was Edward Thorndike who would reignite the concept of emotional intelligence in 1937 and then Abraham Maslow would reintroduce the theory of emotional intelligence in 1954. Eventually, as the theory of emotional intelligence evolved, Salovey and Mayer (1990) would come to define EQ as, “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions” (p. 189). Another definition of emotional intelligence, according to, *Psychology Today* (2016), defined emotional intelligence as, “the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others” (p. 1).

As the theory of EQ has evolved in modern times, there have been several seminal authors that have emerged to unpack this theory of intelligence: the modern fathers of emotional intelligence theory include: Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1993) and Petrides and Furnham (2001). Each of these authors: Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1993), and Petrides and Furnham (2001) would each add a component to describe EQ as having three main model components: (1) The ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), (2) The mixed model (Goleman, 1993), and (3) The trait model (Petrides & Furnham, 2001).

The ability model includes four aspects of emotions: (1) Perceiving, (2) Reasoning, (3) Understanding, and (4) Managing emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Later, Goleman (1993) introduced the idea of the mixed model, which focuses on emotional intelligence as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. The mixed model theory of EQ, includes such characteristics as: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy, and motivation (Goleman, 1993). Finally, the concept of the trait model as a construct for understanding emotional intelligence has emerged (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). The traits are as follows: adaptability, assertiveness, and emotion appraisal (self and others, emotion expression and emotion management of others) (Petrides & Furnham, 2001).

In the ability model, Salovey and Mayer (1990) constructed a way to think of EQ in terms of three components: (1) Appraisal and expression of emotion (verbal and non-verbal), (2) Regulation of emotion (in self and others), and (3) Utilization of emotion (flexible planning, creative thinking, mood redirected attention, and motivating emotions).

Secondly, in the mixed ability model, Goleman (1993) explained where in the brain the emotions are seated, how people respond to trauma, how the mind and the heart communicate, and how to train the mind to master emotions. There are five areas that are critical in the development of emotional intelligence according to Goleman: (1) Knowing thyself, (2) Refraining from becoming a slave to passion, (3) Mastering aptitude, (4) Building empathy, and (4) Growing in the social arts (Goleman, 1993).

In the trait model theory, Petrides and Furnham (2001) explored the idea that emotional intelligence is not just related to ability, but in fact, is connected to traits. There are five basic traits of EQ according to Petrides and Furnham (2001), which include: (1) Intrapersonal composite - in touch with one's own emotions, (2) Interpersonal composite - in touch with how

other's feel, (3) Adaptability - able to handle problems that arise, (4) Stress management - able to handle stress without getting too nervous, and (5) General mood - attitude of hope and joy.

Finally, according to Salovey and Mayer (1990), they postulated that there are four essential skills necessary for improving emotional intelligence: (1) Self-awareness - "knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and limitations" (Goleman, 1998, p. 26) through practices such as: emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence (Goleman, 1998); (2) Self-regulation – the ability to "manage one's internal states, impulses, and resources" (Goleman, 1998, p. 26) through: self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovation (Goleman, 1998); (3) Empathy - "awareness of other's feelings, needs, and concerns" (Goleman, 1998, p. 27) by: understanding others, developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness (Goleman, 1998); and (4) Social skills - "adeptness of inducing desirable responses in others" (Goleman, 1998, p. 27) through: communication, influence, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, collaboration, building bonds, and team capabilities (Goleman, 1998).

### **Multiple Intelligences**

With the emergence of emotional intelligence, it only made sense for a theory of multiple intelligences to emerge (Gardner, 2000a). Intelligence has been defined as, "the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings" (Gardner, 2011, p. xxxvii). Ultimately, Gardner (2000a) defined and explained human intelligence as, "the capacity to carry out certain kinds of computations" (p. 29).

According to Gardner (2011), there are seven types of human intelligences: (1) Linguistic intelligence – reading, writing, speaking and conversing, (2) Musical intelligence – understanding and expressing oneself through music, (3) Logical-Mathematical intelligence –

involves numbers and computing skills, (4) Spatial intelligence – visual perception of the environment, (5) Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence – physical coordination and dexterity, (6) Interpersonal intelligence – communication and collaboration with other people, and (7) Intrapersonal intelligence – understanding one’s inner thoughts and emotions. In due time, Gardner (1999) expanded his theory and added two more types of human intelligence: (8) Naturalistic intelligence – ability to understand and explain nature, and (9) Existential intelligence – the ability to tackle deep questions about human existence. Finally, Gardner (2000a) stated, “that intellectual progress is likely to follow if the right distinctions are proposed” (p. 32).

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

As Gardner (2000a) began to explore the possibility of an existential intelligence as another valid intelligence, the theory of an intelligence as connected to one’s spirituality began to emerge. This theory of spiritual intelligence, according to Shannon (2011) is not an easy concept to define and explain, because,

as much as philosophers and religious authorities have wrestled over the notion of all things ‘spiritual’, scientists have bickered about the definition and measurement of ‘intelligence’...therefore, uniting the two concepts into a single entity that is both measurable and teachable is an effort that is rife with controversy and disagreement. (p. 1)

However, despite the challenges, in the past several decades there has been a growing interest in the concept of spiritual intelligence as demonstrated through a word search of the “Google Books Ngram Viewer” (2016) of the phrase and concept of spiritual intelligence (see below):

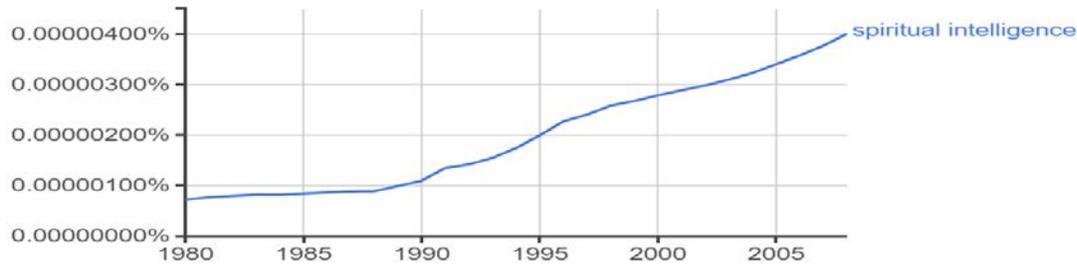


Figure 2. The increase number of books written on spiritual intelligence from the years dating from 1980-2016.

As a result, therefore, intelligence theory continues to evolve. It was in 1997, that psychologist, Zohar, in her groundbreaking book, *Rewiring the Corporate Brain*, introduced a new theory of intelligence, which has become known as spiritual intelligence (Zohar, 1997). In fact, Zohar (2000) would boldly declare that she believed, “spiritual intelligence is...our ultimate intelligence” (p. 4).

In an attempt to explain the difference between emotional and spiritual intelligence, Vaughan (2002) explained, “spiritual intelligence is related to emotional intelligence insofar as spiritual practice includes developing intrapersonal and interpersonal sensitivity” (p. 20). Furthermore, in distinguishing spiritual intelligence from emotional intelligence, Vaughan (2002) expressed, “spiritual intelligence, then, is more than individual mental ability. It appears to connect the personal to the transpersonal and the self to spirit” (p. 19). Therefore, Vaughn (2002) added, “spiritual intelligence goes beyond conventional psychological development. In addition to self-awareness, it implies awareness of our relationship to the transcendent, to each other, to the earth and all beings” (p.19). Emmons (2000) further defined spiritual intelligence, “as the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment” (p. 59).

As this very controversial theory of spiritual intelligence has developed, Green and Noble (2010), even proposed that spiritual intelligence is, “an innate human ability, but like any talent

or gift it is expressed in various ways and to varying degrees throughout the human population” (p. 27). Furthermore, King (2008) argued that spiritual intelligence might even be considered as, “a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence” (p. 54). Furthermore, Sisk (2002), even suggested that spiritual intelligence, “can be described as a deep self-awareness in which one becomes more and more aware of the dimensions of self, not simply as a body, but as a mind, body, and spirit” (p. 209). Furthermore, Delaney (2002) asserted, “spiritual intelligence is a holistic intelligence that uses a mode of perception which views reality as interconnected” (p. 76). As a result, Delaney (2002) further explained that there are three global categories in understanding spiritual intelligence, which include: (1) A psycho-spiritual construct, (2) An interconnection of words, where body, mind, and spirit are seen as unified, and (3) A language, which builds a bridge between spirituality, religion, and science to create a science of life, or as Santovec (2013) suggested, “spiritual intelligence is defined by a connection to self, to others, and to the transcendent” (p. 2).

There are four key elements of spiritual intelligence explained and agreed upon by several seminal authors: (1) Transcendence – awareness of ultimate values and their meaning; (2) Spiritual states of consciousness – developed and refined state of awareness and self-knowledge; (3) Meaning - attending to the sacred in everyday activities, events, and relationships; and (4) Problem solving - ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in daily living (Amram, 2007; Emmons, 2000; King & DeCicco, 2009; Mayer, 2000). Finally, there are several additional key elements explained: (5) Virtue – seeking truth, showing forgiveness, expressing gratitude, staying humble, and displaying compassion to others (Mayer, 2000; Amram, 2007; Sisk, 2015); (6) Truth – which refers to the ability to live in open acceptance,

curiosity, and love for all creation (Amram, 2007); (7) Serenity – which means peaceful surrender to self (Amram, 2007); and (7) Symbolic system - poetry, music, dance, metaphor, and stories (Sisk, 2015).

**A Case Against Spiritual Intelligence.** Edwards (2003) asked several critical questions in regards to spiritual intelligence: (1) Is spiritual intelligence truly autonomous from other forms of intelligence? (2) Does using spirituality to solve problems imply that a certain set of problems can be specifically designated as spiritual ones? and (3) Can we distinguish spiritual knowing from knowing about spirituality?

The originator of the theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner (2000b), did not include spiritual intelligence among his intelligences due to the challenge of codifying quantifiable scientific criteria. Gardner (2000b) argued that he “considered evidence in favor of a ninth, or spiritual intelligence, only to conclude that this putative form of intelligence is problematic” (p. 28). Gardner (2000b) further explained his hesitations “about proclaiming a ninth or existential intelligence...chiefly from the lack of convincing evidence about brain structures and processes dedicated to this form of computation” (p. 30), a point that others have disputed (Emmons, 2000a; Mayer, 2000). In addition, Gardner (2000b) argued that he did not want to, “include within the definition of an intelligence a certain ‘felt experience’, such feelings...are not intrinsic to the actual intelligence” (p. 29). On the other hand, Gardner (2000b), conceded however, by suggesting that there could “be an existential intelligence, that captures at least part of what individuals mean when they speak of spiritual concerns” (p. 28) In addition, Mayer (2000) added to this argument by explaining: “the term intelligence refers to a capacity or ability that primarily concerns performing valid abstract reasoning with coherent symbol systems” (p. 48). Mayer (2000) further proposed that spirituality is only a heightened consciousness rather than an

intelligence, and that the paradigm of intelligence is too limiting because spirituality is more than abstract reasoning, a core feature of intelligence.

However, Mayer (2000) later conceded that, “there certainly is abstract reasoning involved in mental representations of spiritual learning” (p. 53). In addition, Mayer (2000) concluded that possibly one or two of Gardner’s (1993, pp. 62–68) eight criteria, his “core mental operations” (p. 48) and perhaps his “symbol system requirement, approximate abstract reasoning” (p. 48). Thus, Mayer (2000) ultimately agreed with Emmons (2000), who argued in defense of a spiritual intelligence as a viable human intelligence by declaring, “spirituality meets the criteria of an intelligence” (p. 63). Emmons (2000) asserted that the reason that spiritual intelligence is in fact an intelligence is due to the fact that included in his four components of spiritual intelligence is, “the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in living” (p. 64), which Emmons (2000a) ascertained is a core element in intelligence, that of problem solving. In fact, Emmons (2000a) argued that there are, “many conceptions [that] equate [spiritual] intelligence with adaptive problem-solving behavior” (p. 5). Strengthening this argument, Amirkhani and Yosefi (2015) suggested, “spiritual intelligence is measured by two components (critical thought and consciousness mode expansion)” (p. 285). It is the “critical thought” component of spiritual intelligence that justifies it as a valid human intelligence according to Amirkhani and Yosefi (2015). Furthermore, Bansal (2016) explained, “problem-solving and application to decision-making and life situations is an indicator of spiritual intelligence” (p. 3). Finally, Singh, Swarup, and Singh (2015) described spiritual intelligence as, “the highest ability of any individual to get smooth linkages from within the spirit (i.e. to get smooth answers to all the questions)” (p. 1). In conclusion, Kulkarni and Amale (2015)

suggested that, “spiritual intelligence is the foundation on which should lie our IQ and EQ” (p. 66).

Thus, although Gardner (2000) raised objections to spiritual intelligence as being an intelligence, he later resigned himself to the idea that there could be an “existential intelligence” (p. 28). In addition, there is mounting evidence, from a philosophical, and psychological standpoint, that spiritual intelligence is an intelligence based on the theory that one is able to solve problems because of the functions of spiritual intelligence (Amirkhani & Yosefi, 2015; Bansal, 2016; Emmons, 2000; Mayer, 2000; Singh, Swarup, & Singh, 2015).

**Spiritual Intelligence Supported by Brain and Genetic Research.** Gardner (2000) disputed the concept of spiritual intelligence, in part, because he felt that it could not be supported by experimental psychological investigations or psychometric findings, two of his criteria for distinguishing an independent intelligence. However, it was Zohar (1997) who declared that there was, “a great deal of scientific evidence for spiritual intelligence [being an intelligence]” (p. 11). In fact, years later, Sisk (2015) would point out that there are numerous scientists who have done extensive research in brain science as it applies to spiritual intelligence; these researchers include:

Candace Pert (1997); geologist Greg Braden (1997); physicists Fritjof Capra (1991) and Neils Bohr (1999); and brain researchers Rodolfo Llinas and Ribary Urst (1993), Michael Persinger (1996), and Vilayanur Ramachandran and Sandra Blakeslee (1998); all engaged in asking the important questions of why nature is the way it is, and where the cosmos comes from. Their work represents the classical role of science, the search for truth in biology, geology, physics, and brain research; and their research helped to build a scientific foundation for

spiritual intelligence. (p. 2)

Consequently, Zohar (1997) in explaining the viability of spiritual intelligence as supported by brain research, explained that there are three such psychological processes based on: (1) Serial neural wiring in the brain, (2) Emotional quotient which is based on associative neural wiring in the brain, and (3) Spiritual quotient which is based on the third neural system in the brain. These three psychological processes are, “synchronous neural oscillations that unify and integrate the data across the brain. The process facilitates interactions between emotions and logic” (p. 66).

Furthermore, Zohar (1997) asserted that there is overwhelming evidence that spiritual intelligence, “operates out of the brain’s centre – from the brain’s neurological unifying functions – it integrates all our intelligences” (p. 5-6). Consequently, Zohar (1997) added, “among neural connections in the temporal lobes of the brain. On scans taken with positron emission topography these neural areas light up whenever research subjects are exposed to discussion of spiritual or religious topics” (p. 11). In other words, when an individual is asked about spiritual matters and has to contemplate these ideas, the brain demonstrates intellectual activity (Zohar, 1997). In addition, Garland and Howard (2009), discovered that there was one area of research that “found significant evidence of mental training leading to neuroplastic modifications in brain activity [which] focuses on the study of meditation...such intentional mental training has been shown to induce functional neurobiological changes” (p. 193).

In addition, there is more physiological evidence in support of spiritual intelligence, in what Hamer (2005) suggested, that human beings are wired genetically to be spiritual. Hamer (2005) explained this concept by stating: “hardwired into our genes...spirituality...is, in fact, an instinct” (p. 4). Furthermore, Hamer (2005) concluded that humans have approximately 35,000

genes, and of these thousands of genes that each human contains, there has been the discovery of a “specific gene [that is] associated with the self-transcendence scale of spirituality” (p. 11). Finally, according to Seitz, Nickel, and Azari (2006) the meta-analysis testing that was performed on human brain functions, revealed that there are six spatially distinct activation clusters in the medial part of the frontal lobe dorsal to the inter commissural plane that are activated in connection to spiritual intelligence.

Therefore, the concept of spirituality as an innate instinct, can be likened to the idea, that just like mothers are hardwired to care for their children, not all do (Parker-Pope, 2008). In addition, Kramer and Enomoto (2014) explained that there seems to be evidence that human beings, whether ancient peoples or modern mankind, seek some sort of higher power through stories, myths, rituals or customs to understand our place and purpose in the universe. Whatever the analogy, there seems to be scientific evidence that links spirituality to innate human functioning (Hamer, 2005; Garland & Howard, 2009; Seitz et al, 2006; Sisk, 2015; Zohar, 1997). Finally, Vaughan (2002) explained, “spirituality may also be described in terms of ultimate belonging or connection to the transcendental ground of being” (p. 17).

**Spiritual Intelligence and Empirical Research in the Field of Business.** Recently, there has been a shift in business thinking from a, “capital-centered to a human-centered workplace [that] has spawned a new pedigree of leadership...the shift to a spiritual focus” (Riaz & Normore, 2008, p.2). Alumona (2016) explained that with the accelerating rate of change in today’s business world, people “feel as though they are unable to achieve a sense of balance and stability” (p. 182) and because of this, business leaders have found that by applying spirituality to decision-making in the workplace, they are able to create that sense of stability and balance for themselves and their employees which results in workplace “productivity and efficiency” (p.

183). As a result, Alumona (2016) explained, for this reason, “spirituality influencing organizational decisions has come to stay” (p. 183). Furthermore, Sisk (2015) declared that spiritual intelligence, “is starting to be considered a viable intelligence, and this recognition is being vigorously manifested in the world of business” (p. 1).

In a recent conceptual research paper on human resource development, Mahmood, Arshad, Ahmed, Akhtar, and Rafique (2015) postulated, in their research, “that [spiritual intelligence] is more significant than IQ and EQ in influencing employees’ performance” (p. 559). In another study, “data...was gathered through a structured questionnaire [and] 26 successful entrepreneurs were retained for the pilot study” (Kumar & Muruganatham, 2015, p. 103). In this study, Kumar and Muruganatham (2015) discovered, “there [was] a significant relationship between spirituality and entrepreneurial success” (p. 103). Furthermore, Awais, Malik, and Qaisar (2015) conducted a research study drawn on the basis of literature, and what they found in their research was, “a significant positive relationship among spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction” (p. 207), and that, “people who are spiritually intelligent are more responsible, loyal, healthier, and productive for their organization” (p. 203).

As a result of the numerous emerging research studies validating the viability of the importance of spiritual intelligence, Singh, Swarup, and Singh (2015) in their study of two Fortune 500 Companies, Bharat Petroleum and NTPC, suggested that the, “corporate world is fast waking up to the phenomenon of connecting within as the best means to achieve not only the organization’s goals, but also to meet the fast-emerging external challenges” (p. 1). In addition, Singh, Swarup, and Singh (2015), added that although it is, “very difficult to measure the immeasurable, but by recognizing the spiritual side of the employee, organizations can have [a] competitive edge over...others” (p. 8). In fact, they explained that the reason for this competitive

edge was because, “employees, who have spiritual orientations in their life, will always excel in every area of their concern, be it their relationships, their work or their output” (Singh, Swarup, & Singh, 2015, p. 8).

In addition to the aforementioned studies, in the third district of Tehran Municipality, among 203 business employees, what Amirkhani and Yosefi (2015) found were, “results show[ing] that the spiritual intelligence of employees [increased] happiness [and] improvement of the company's performance [which] ultimately lead to better service to customers” (p. 289). Furthermore, Wulantika, and Buhari (2015) found after conducting a survey of a random sampling of 130 people, where 57 people participated from an organization referred to as Pt. Centra Multi Karya, that the results of their study, “showed that spiritual intelligence has [a] positive and significant effect on employee empowerment” (p. 155). Mehrinejad, Tarsafi, and Rajabimoghadam (2015) found a positive assertion in another study that was conducted with “undergraduates and graduates who were studying in three universities of Tehran, Iran (2010-2011), there were 200 subjects: 100 males and 100 females (aged 18-27) studying at Al-Zahra University” (p. 397). What they discovered was that the data obtained demonstrated that “there [was] a positive association between the components of spirituality and resiliency” (Mehrinejad, Tarsafi, & Rajabimoghadam, 2015, p. 399). Finally, from a random sampling of 90 MS patients from the Iranian MS Association, using a questionnaire with 29 questions, Khalatbari and Zand (2015) found that there was, “a significance between life expectancy [and] spiritual intelligence...in other words...with the reduction of positive meta-cognition beliefs about worry...life expectancy will be increased” (p. 588).

In addition, Dodman and Branch (2015) explained, “spiritual intelligence as a foundation of individual beliefs, plays [the] main role in various fields, particularly promotion and provision

of mental health and resilience” (p. 3914). Mashili and Heydari (2015) conducted research using a social acceptance questionnaire, the Religious Attitude Scale (with 370 students attending the Islamic Azad University in 2014), and what was discovered through their research was, “the higher the spiritual intelligence, the lower the job stress” (p. 5). Finally, 120 individuals were selected through a cluster sampling method, using data collected from: Ospiw’s Job Stress Questionnaire, Bowen’s Self-Differentiation Questionnaire, and King’s Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire, by teachers who taught exceptional children in the town of Shahriar in 2014-2015, what was ascertained was, a “relationship between religious attitude and happiness, showed that by increasing religious attitude, happiness increase[d]” (Salmabadi, Farshad, Bajestani, & Alikhani, 2015, p. 1216).

There is an overwhelming amount of research and empirical evidence that supports spiritual intelligence as a key component in health, happiness, resilience, empowerment, and work productivity (Amram, 2009; Christ-Larkin, 2010; Dodman & Branch, 2105; Riaz & Normore, 2008; Sisk, 2015). In addition, Amram (2009) further explained that his study, “demonstrated that the CEO’s self-reported measures of spiritual intelligence significantly correlated with leadership effectiveness as assessed by her or his staff” (p. 109). Furthermore, Christ-Larkin (2010) observed, that in her study on transformational leadership and spiritual intelligence, “the findings indicated a positive correlation between transformational leadership success and spiritual intelligence” (p. 126), and “a significantly positive or high correlation between transformational leadership and spiritual intelligence can be interpreted or predicted as a necessary element for organizational leadership success” (p. 135). Therefore, Crichton (2008) concluded that leaders incorporate spiritual intelligence in business activities to lead successfully, improve manufacturing, and change corporate culture. Finally, Green and Noble

(2010) found through their research, that after studying consciousness for 10 weeks, their participants, “became more open to a wider range of ideas, more tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty” (p. 42).

Therefore, it might be suggested that spirituality allows people to understand their world, making meaning of their lives, and understand their part in the universe (Greenleaf, 1977). In addition, Smith (2007) added to this line of reasoning by suggesting, “spiritual leaders are distinguished by their humility” (p. 38). Hildebrant (2011) explained it in this way, “leaders with high moral character will also be leaders who possess a high level of spiritual intelligence” (p. 94). Finally, according to Amram (2009) “spirituality is based on abilities that produce valuable outcomes” (p. 44).

**Spirituality and Empirical Research in the Field of Education.** Dantley (2003) declared, “the educational leadership discourse is being challenged to include a spiritual voice in its conversation” (p. 273). According to Houston, Blankstein, and Cole (2007), they believed that because educational leaders have such a tremendous responsibility in touching the lives of children, especially in our urban centers, these “leaders must be attuned to the third dimension beyond thinking and doing—to what it is to ‘be’ a human in touch with the divine” (p. 2). Houston and Sokolow (2006) further hypothesized, that there is an “unseen force that is both a part of humankind and at the same time greater than humankind” (p.xxiv). Houston (2006) referred to this connection as “spirituality” (p. xxiv). Therefore, Dantley (2005b) suggested that spirituality has a phenomenal impact on educational leaders personal and professional behavior, “spirituality is the grounding for the values and principles we espouse that inform our personal and professional behavior” (Dantley, 2003, p. 274). Finally, Dantley (2005a) declared,

“spirituality serves as the very energy we must have to keep marginalized people from falling into paralysis and cynicism” (p. 659).

In fact, Dantley (2003) argued, “leaders who work in schools populated by urban youth must embrace the fact that very often, communities of color are deeply grounded in religious or spiritual contexts” (p. 281). Dantley (2003) therefore, further debated that an educational leader, grounded by spirituality, is not satisfied only with academic achievement on standardized tests, but also feels an ethical obligation on behalf of students to help them develop into “contributing members of society” (p. 282) who take advantage of their educational experience to “become organic intellectuals [who] bring about radical changes in society” (p. 282). Dantley (2005a), therefore, added to his previous discourse by explaining, “the preservation of the sacred self then becomes the focus of those who would be educational leaders in urban schools” (Dantley, 2005a, p. 658), thereby making it imperative that educational leaders rely on spirituality to help inform their decision-making (Dantley, 2005a).

In the past decade, a number of studies have begun to emerge demonstrating the relationship between educational administrators and their use of spirituality to better inform their leadership practices (Beard, 2015; Blanton, 2007; Gieseke, 2014; Kheswa, 2016; Macon, 2014; Reyes, 2015; Robertson, 2008; Sorvaag, 2007). Most recently, Kheswa (2016) conducted a qualitative study of 10 educational leaders in South Africa and what was discovered was, “this study confirmed that internal, [and] personal development is at the core of effective leadership [and] there is an association between leadership and spirituality” (p. 281). Furthermore, what Kheswa (2016) found in this study was, “a spiritually intelligent leader [has a] commitment at three levels: commitment to God; commitment to personal growth; and commitment to the development of others” (p. 179). In another study, Reyes (2015), examined the role of spirituality

in the leadership of three Latino principals in an inner-city school district of Southland Independent School District. What this study revealed was, “spirituality helps to affirm the principal’s identity, [and] incorporates personal values or beliefs with professional decisions and actions” (187). Finally, Reyes (2015) explained, “based on the analysis of the data...spirituality is expressed and exercised in these principals’ roles” (p. 161).

Beard (2015) identified a very successful reform effort taking place under the leadership direction of a superintendent; the district won the Broad Prize and had been a finalist for two consecutive years (the Broad prize rewards district leadership that demonstrates exceptional performance and improvement in closing student achievement gaps among minority and low-income students). After conducting a qualitative study on the leadership practices of the superintendent of this district, what was revealed was that the superintendent attributed her success as being rooted in her ability to tap into her spirituality to make decisions in the best interest of students (Beard, 2015). Furthermore, in a qualitative research study of 10 secondary school principals, working in urban school districts, Moreno (2015) discovered, “spirituality [was] a vital component to [their] successful educational leadership” (p. 97). In fact, “the study found leaders’ spirituality had a substantial influence on how they led their educational organizations [and that] this higher power gave [these] leaders a sense of inner peace and fulfillment through their actions and facilitated their own decision processes as educational leaders” (p. 96).

In yet another study, Macon (2014) surveyed 81 principals from six southeastern Louisiana schools (10 were interviewed), and what was unveiled was, “principals who participated in this study acknowledged that their spirituality affect[ed] their decision-making [in fact] they identified that because of their relationship with God or a higher being, they

experience[d] inner peace when having to make decisions” (p. 100-103). In addition, Gieseke (2014) surveyed 235 leaders from the University of Maine and found that there was, “a moderate to strong statistically significant positive relationship [that] exist[ed] between spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership” (p. 116). Finally, Robertson (2008) surveyed 80 principals from the Southeast part of the U.S. and what was revealed was, “the findings of this study provided empirical data for spirituality’s impact in the lives of public school principals” (p. 94).

### **The Separation of Church and State**

As the evidence begins to mount in the field of psychology, philosophy, neurology, physiology, and business (Amram, 2009; Bansal, 2016; Christ-Larkin, 2010; Hamer, 2005; Sisk, 2015; Zohar, 1997) and recently in the field of education (Dantley, 2010; Gieseke, 2014; Houston, 2002; Kheswa, 2016; Macon, 2014; Sorvaag, 2007) that a leader, relying on their spirituality, as a viable way to solve problems and make solid ethical and moral decisions, the natural question that surfaces at this point is: what about separation of church and state? Goldman and Boylan (2010) explained that this provision requiring separation of church and state is known as, “the Establishment Clause...a program impermissibly advances religion if it engages in religious indoctrination, or religious discrimination” (Goldman & Boylan, 2010, p. 3). In fact, Lofaso (2009) argued, “the Establishment Clause prohibits public schools and their officials from acting in ways inconsistent with the now-famous, three-part Lemon test, named after the Supreme Court case that first articulated that standard” (p. 12). Lofaso (2009) suggested that under the Lemon test, the actions of educators, “(1) Must have a primary secular purpose; (2) Must have primary effects that neither advance nor inhibit religion; and (3) Must not result in excessive entanglement with religion” (p. 12). In addition, the First Amendment states:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (Haynes, 2000, p. i). Consequently, Haynes (2000) further explained, “public schools may not inculcate nor inhibit religion” (p. 1). Therefore, it important to understand “spirituality and religion are two distinct constructs so that although spirituality in the workplace is a completely justified and appropriate issue of discussion, religion in the workplace is a divisive factor and ultimately out of bounds” (Haynes, 2000, p. 74).

As discussed earlier, spirituality is understood in the context of one’s own moral-values, beliefs, and actions (Fry, 2003; Hildebrant, 2011) with no intention of infringing upon another’s beliefs, while, religion is a set of beliefs and convictions (Ali, 2011; Bible, 1996; Diskul, 1970; Schnittjer, 2010; Sri, 2000) where the primary objective is often to proselytize others. Therefore, because of this, although proselyting a specific religion has no place in the educational workplace, Bertrand (2003) explained there should be an “exploration of spiritual concerns [and] the role of spirituality in education” (p. 67), to help educational leaders’ mature in their moral professionalism, character, competence, and conduct (Gibson, 2014). Despite the controversial nature of the concept of blending spirituality and education, there has recently been a growing interest in how these two concepts merge as demonstrated through a search of “Google Books Ngram Viewer” (2016):



*Figure 3.* The increase in the number of books written from 1930-2016 on connecting spirituality and education.

While the discussion about the first amendment and the separation of church and state will continue to be debated as it applies to students and education (Goldman & Boylan, 2010; Lester & Roberts, 2006), there is a call for educational leaders to be moral leaders who develop nurturing learning environments by promoting a strong code of ethics for students through personal modeling of the expected behaviors (Brown, 2014). In addition, educational leaders are to, “demonstrate skills in decision-making, problem solving, change management, planning, conflict management, and evaluation and foster and develop those skills in others” (CTC, 2011, p. 39). In fact, Houston (2001) stated that it is, “ironic that education has become embroiled in battles of separation of church and state [while in fact] what we do is akin to the work of the church...the substance of what it means to be human [and] the spirits we nurture” (p. 433), although, as stated earlier, proselyting has no place in school. Therefore, as spirituality starts to be included in the public-school setting, it must not “promote, advance or inhibit” a specific religion (Lofaso, 2009).

As stated in the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2014) Standard 5 stated: “Education[al] leaders [must] make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard” (p. 9). These educational leaders will live by and model a code of ethics for students and staff through: (1) Reflective practice, (2) Ethical decision-making, and (3) Ethical actions (Brown, 2014). It is to this point, that at the very heart of spiritual leadership, a leader who taps into their spiritual side may be more adequately equipped to solve problems and act in ways that promote ethics and morality (Dantley, 2005a; Houston, 2001).

Consequently, Brown (2014) debated that educational leaders need to have a variety of practices, competencies, and moral convictions to successfully lead our public schools into a

successful reform. Brown (2014) explained that these leaders need to have: “reflective practice, ethical decision-making, and ethical actions” (p. 9). First, Brown (2014) suggested that leaders need to act upon a “personal code of ethics that requires continuous reflection and learning” (p. 10). In addition, leaders need to continuously “examine [their] personal assumptions, values, and beliefs to address students’ various academic, linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, physical, and economic assets and needs and promote equitable practices and access appropriate resources” (p.10). Furthermore, Brown (2014) pointed out that educational leaders need to “reflect on areas for improvement and take responsibility for change and growth” (p.10).

Secondly, Brown (2014) argued that educational leaders must also, “sustain personal motivation, commitment, energy, and health by balancing professional and personal responsibilities” (p. 10). In addition, Brown (2014) pointed out that these leaders need to “guide and support personal and collective actions that use relevant evidence and available research to make fair and ethical decisions” (p. 10). These leaders must also “consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of [their] decisions” (Brown, 2014, p. 10).

Finally, Brown (2014) suggested that these leaders must “recognize and use their professional influence with staff and the community to develop a climate of trust, mutual respect, and honest communication necessary to consistently make fair and equitable decisions on behalf of all students” (p. 10). Finally, these educational leaders that will lead us into the future must, “use a variety of strategies to lead others in safely examining personal assumptions and respectfully challenge beliefs that negatively affect improving teaching and learning for all students” (p. 10).

## **The Growing Inequities in Education**

It has been recently reported by the National Education Association (2015) that there are an “estimated 46 million children affected by violence, crime, abuse, or psychological trauma in a given year—almost two out of every three children in the U.S.—represent a large presence in America’s public schools” (p. 5). If those statistics aren’t staggering enough, the Center for Disease Control (2015) reported, “in 2012, 4,787 young people aged 10 to 24 years were victims of homicide—an average of 13 each day...over 599,000 young people aged 10 to 24 years had physical assault injuries treated in U.S. emergency departments—an average of 1,642 each day” (p. 1). Furthermore, the National Education to End Homelessness (2015) reported, “it is commonly estimated that 100,000 children are victims of commercial sexual exploitation each year” (p. 1). This daily physical, emotional, and psychological trauma that many of our children face in our public schools has had a devastating effect on their equitable access to education, in fact the NEA (2015) noted, “chronic stress caused by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have permanent effects on the chemical and physical structures of a child’s brain” (p. 5). As a result, Musu-Gillette et. al. (2016) pointed out that drop-out rates, suspension rates, expulsion rates, and children being retained in elementary classes, continue to be much higher for children of color attending our public schools in the United States than their white counterparts because of the trauma many of these children face on a daily basis. It is therefore imperative, now more than ever, that the adults that work in our public schools develop empathy through listening and responding to the needs of our urban’s youth and create safe environments for them to learn (Noddings, 2015). In fact, Jones and Shindler (2016), after examining the connection between school climate and student achievement in 21 urban schools confirmed a that there is a “strong relationship between the quality of school climate and academic achievement levels” (p. 5).

According to Kena, Hussar, McFarland, Brey, Musu-Gillette, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, and Diliberti (2016) there is a greater number of students of color who attend high-poverty public schools while the total school revenues continue to decrease. To compound the already dire situation, in many of our urban public schools, Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2011) disclosed, “when given the opportunity, many teachers choose to leave schools serving large concentrations of poor, low-performing, and non-white students” (p. 303). In fact, Boyd et. al. (2011) declared that, “across the United States, approximately half a million teachers leave their schools each year” (p. 304). As a result, the teacher to student ratios continue to increase (Kena et. al., 2016) making it even more challenging to provide the support these children need to be successful. Therefore, according to Noddings (2015), creating a culture of “responsiveness” (p. 13) where adults and students are deeply cared for is important in creating a culture of care that positively shapes school culture, thus retaining teachers and providing a safe environment for learning and thereby positively affecting student achievement.

According to Dantley (2003), “the classical model of education has dismissed most students in the urban core...their everyday lives are marked by dissonance and syncopation, and therefore the traditional strategy of schools...leaves many voiceless and left behind in the educational process” (p. 278). Consequently, “the present conditions in education demand a new type of leadership that offers a diverse learning community — not only an academic agenda, but also a way to transcend and modify current societal conditions” (Dantley, 2003, p. 289). Therefore, “spirituality allows and indeed encourages the imagining of an alternative society and serves as an antipodal position to a sense of inevitable nihilism that often characterizes the communal attitude, especially in learning communities in America’s urban core” (Dantley, 2003, p. 282-283). Therefore, a leader who understands and accesses their spirituality to gain

understanding to solve complex problems and who can find the resiliency to serve students in the urban core, may be the best option for closing the achievement gaps (Dantley, 2005a).

### **Sense-making**

To better understand the problem of inequity and how to bring about reform necessary to produce the needed changes in our public schools, and how an educational leader's use of spirituality may be important in solving and addressing these complex issues of inequity, one must first make sense (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) of the issues and events that have and are occurring within the organization and institution of education (NEA, 2015) and how educational leaders, who tap into their spirituality can lead those reform efforts (Dantley, 2011).

Maitlis & Christianson (2014), explained, "sense making is the process through which people work to understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or in some other way violate expectations" (p. 57). Sensemaking is activated: "when people experience a violation of their expectations" (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 77). Therefore, sensemaking contributes to the understanding of the role of spirituality as it applies to educational leaders and school reform, in the sense of how educational leaders practice their own spirituality in the context of a public-school system where there is a separation of church and state. In addition, sensemaking can be applied to the specific spiritual practices and disciplines that educational leaders use as they explore their own spirituality to make critical decisions that affect the lives of the students and staff they serve, where these leaders "enact order into chaos" (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 86).

Enacting order into chaos, according to Kaser and Halbert (2009), may best be achieved through building and maintaining trust with parents, teachers, staff and students by demonstrating competence, vulnerability, integrity, humility, patience, and empathy, all of which

are characteristics of spiritual leaders (Amram, 2000; Emmons, 2000a, Dantley, 2005a; Houston, 2001). In conclusion, Kaser and Halbert (2009) suggested, “mindsets of intense moral purpose and trust are key to establishing a clear sense of purpose and to building relationships” (p. 59) which paves the way to creating new and innovative learning communities.

As a result, for the need to have administrative leaders who will live by and make ethical decisions, Walton (2015) asserted that there should be, “teacher training programs [that] would need to recognize and include spirituality” (p. 120). In fact, Walton (2015) further declared that the “purpose of [his] research was to open the door for the examination of the spiritual dimension of educational administration” (p. 384). Walton (2015) went on to explain that educational leaders need to first make “time for reflection and personal growth relative to spirituality and leadership” (p. 282). Second, Walton pointed out, “the notion of administrative retreats specific to spirituality and leadership [would be] a powerful possibility for administrative practice” (p. 283) Third, Walton (2015) suggested, “study groups comprised of educational administrators or a combination of administrators and other educators would provide organized time for participants to come together to discuss issues of spirituality in leadership” (p. 384). Fourth, Walton explained that the “organized meeting time [could] be utilized to integrate issues of spirituality and leadership into the regular work of the organization” (p. 383). Lastly, “educational administrators need to be attuned to the variety of perspectives and world views held by those they serve” (Walton, 2015, p. 383). In this way, Walton (2015) explains that educational leaders can grow in their spiritual capacity whereby they can be better prepared to make breakthrough solutions to today’s complex educational challenges.

## Theories of School Culture and Reform

Thus far, there has been a discourse centering around how a leader, accessing one's own spirituality, can be a key aid in helping educational leaders make better sound ethical decisions to promote equity and improve student achievement and outcomes (Dantley, 2005a; Houston, 2001; Walton, 2015). Therefore, it is important at this point to discuss the role that decision-making has in catalyzing reform. With the growing achievement gaps (NEA, 2015) and the well documented school-to-prison pipeline (Browne-Dianis, 2011; Choi, Green, & Gilbert, 2011; Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010; Zweifler & Beers, 2002), there is a growing need for educational leaders committed to school reform.

Kozol (2012) pointed out that all students should be provided with “an opportunity to compete fairly for a place in our society.... pole vaulters using bamboo poles...cannot compete with pole vaulters using aluminum poles” (Kozol, 2012, p. 168). As a result of the growing inequalities that exist in American public schools among the urban poor (NEA, 2015), there must be new approaches to school reform (Dantley, 2010). In fact, Dantley (2010) argued that what is required in this effort to bridge the equity gap through school reform are leaders who rely on spirituality or as Duffy (2003) declared, “leading whole-system change is not for the timid...It requires personal courage, passion, and vision” (p. xxi).

There are many proponents for bringing about change (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Dantley, 2010; Dewey, 1997; Donaldson, 2001; Duffy, 2003; Friere 1998; Fullan 2010; Muhammad, 2009; Starratt, 2005a). However, for the purposes of this paper, there will be a brief exploration of three conceptual models for educational leadership for school reform (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Donaldson, 2011; Duffy, 2003) as they relate to spirituality and decision-making.

As a backdrop to understanding the need for reform in our education system, to bridge the growing gaps of inequity between the poor and the affluent, Donaldson (2001) explained that there are two contexts of organization and three models for bringing about organizational change. The two contexts are: (1) The Structural Context, and (2) The Social Context (Donaldson, 2001). According to Donaldson (2001), within the construct of the two contexts, Donaldson (2011) pointed out that there are three models for bringing about the organizational reform within these two contexts. Donaldson (2011) used a streams metaphor in describing how to bring about change in the structural and social contexts: (1) The first stream – there needs to be open, trusting, and affirmative relationships; (2) The second stream – there needs to be a commitment to mutual purposes with a moral benefit; and (3) The third stream – there must be a shared belief in action-in-common within the organization.

The first stream has to do with relationship building, according to Donaldson (2011) “strong working relationships grow when leaders themselves demonstrate trustworthiness, openness, and affirmation” (p. 69). The second stream, accordingly deals with the stewardship of the commitment to the purpose, stating, “strong relationships lie at the core of effective leadership” (Donaldson, 2011, p. 87). The leader, according to Donaldson (2011) “gives voice to the moral benefit of the mission...bridges the practical...tests the purposes and questions the appropriateness of current commitments and practices” (p. 88-89). Finally, Donaldson (2011) explained the third stream as, “the group’s belief that together we can do more than any of us can do alone.” (p. 60). This process according to Donaldson (2011) is, “nurturing a belief in action-in-common” (p. 105). The spiritual leader, according to Dantley (2010) may be best suited to solve problems and act in ways that can create reform within these two contexts and three streams.

Secondly, Bolman and Deal's (2011) conceptual framework describes four important frames that shape organizations: (1) The Structural Frame, (2) The Human Resource Frame, (3) The Political Frame, and (4) The Symbolic Frame. The first frame, the structural frame, according to Bolman and Deal (2011) is composed of six assumptions:

(1) Organizations exist to achieve goals, (2) Organizations work best when rationality prevails, (3) Structures...must fit an organization's circumstances, (4) Organizations...enhance performance through specialization, (5) Appropriate forms of coordination and control are essential, (6) Problems...can be remedied through restructuring. (p. 40)

Bolman and Deal (2011) stated, "restructuring is a powerful but high-risk tool for organizational change" (p. 80). Bolman and Deal (2011) further explained, "the structural frame emphasizes goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships" (p. 13). Finally, Bolman and Deal (2011) stated, "though sometimes equated with red tape [structure] encompasses the freewheeling, loosely structured entrepreneurial task force as well as the more tightly controlled railway company" (p. 57). The central idea of the political frame, according to Bolman and Deal (2011) is, "the question is not whether organizations have politics but rather what kind of politics will they have" (p. 193). Lastly, in the symbolic frame, the leader "treats organizations as tribes, theaters, or carnivals...sees organizations as cultures." (Bolman & Deal, p. 14). Finally, Bolman and Deal (2011) concluded with this thought on the symbolic frame, "the symbolic frame introduces and elaborates concepts rarely applied to organizations in the past. These concepts sharply redefine organizational dynamics and have significant implications for managing and changing organizations" (p. 248). It is interesting to note that Amram (2000) suggested that the

leader who utilizes spiritual intelligence experiences valuable outcomes within organizations, possibly as they navigate these four frames.

Thirdly, Duffy's (2003) conceptual framework consists of three elements: courage, passion, and vision. According to Duffy (2003) to lead a whole-system change in a school district requires courage. Duffy (2003) further debated, "being courageous means facing fear and doing what has to be done in spite of it" (p. 5). In addition, an educational leader must have a burning passion to educate all children (Duffy, 2003). This passion that is needed must be "an absolutely burning desire to do what's right for children, teachers, and school systems" (Duffy, 2003, p. 7). Finally, a leader must possess, "a powerful and motivating vision" (Duffy, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, leading a school district in whole-system change not only requires courage, passion, and vision, but "leadership for creating and sustaining systemic school improvement requires...a foundation of power, politics, and ethics" (Duffy, 2003, p. 1). According to Duffy (2003), this courage, passion, and vision must be rooted and given life from the fertile soil of trust, commitment, and collaboration as cultivated through power, politics and ethics.

First, Duffy (2003) pointed out, "trust is the foundation for high-performing organizations" (p. 25). Secondly, Duffy (2003) stated, "commitment is a consequence of leadership...commitment comes as a result of...trust building" (Duffy, 2003, p. 26). Thirdly, "collaboration is the great multiplier" (Duffy, 2003, p. 31). Also, Duffy (2003) explained that collaboration is the fuel for stimulating creativity and innovation which "present opportunities for breathtaking district-wide improvement" (p. 33). In fact, Duffy (2003) goes on to say that to attempt to bring about systemic change without these three characteristics of: trust, commitment, and collaboration that the efforts, "will probably fail" (Duffy, 2003, p. 35). Duffy (2003) further disclosed that as an educational leader leads through courage, passion, and vision s/he must

navigate his/her journey through the paradoxical blend of power, politics, and ethics. Duffy (2003) pointed out, “power is derived from interpersonal, structural, and situational sources” (p. 12). Furthermore, politics “is all about influencing others to join with you to achieve worthy goals and dreams” (Duffy, 2003, p. 13), and ethics is composed of two major components: “truth and justice” (Duffy, 2003, p. 13). It was Zohar (1997), the mother of spiritual intelligence, that first expressed the idea that a leader who utilizes their spiritual intelligence can overcome their fears, become awakened to new possibilities, and find the resiliency to forge ahead.

Finally, it is interesting to note that each of these reform strategies (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Donaldson, 2011; Duffy, 2003) include such elements as: trust, relationship building, courage, and problem solving; all of which are critical elements in the use of spiritual intelligence (Amram, 2007; Emmons 2000b; King, 2008; Vaughn, 2002; Wigglesworth, 2002; Zohar, 2000).

### **The Introduction of Spiritual Leadership to Successful Reform**

As explained in the aforementioned section, reform requires leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Donaldson, 2011; Duffy, 2003). Over 25 years ago, Schwahn and Spady (1998), explained that leaders are individuals who embody all of the performance abilities and attributes needed to erect the pillars of productive change and carry out the essential processes that make successful systemic change happen. Recently, Northouse (2015) described leadership as a, “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 5).

In the last century, a leading author on leadership, Greenleaf (1977) believed that the central tasks of leadership go beyond just the natural order of things, but in fact the connection to the spiritual, or what he refers to as “awareness or perception” (p. 29). Greenleaf (1977),

suggested, “the forces of good and evil in the world are propelled by the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of individual beings” (p. 28).

More recently, Sergiovanni (1999) spoke of leadership as a “moral craft” and that it is the “inner characteristics of leadership [that] brings about successful schooling” (p. 3). Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (1992) claimed, “leadership is more than the affair of the head” (p. 479), but suggested that it is, “love that constitutes the soul of ethical leadership” (p. 480). Finally, within the past couple of years, Santovec (2013), provided this commentary on leadership by explaining, “exemplary leaders excel in managing themselves, their relationships, and their organizations. All three must be in place for success to occur” (p. 1).

According to Smith (2007) there are four major characteristics of powerful leaders: (1) Servant leadership, (2) Transformational leadership, (3) Moral leadership, and (4) Principle-centered leadership. Smith (2007) further expounded, “leaders who are identified to possess the characteristics identified in each of these [aforementioned] leadership styles have also been found to possess a strong inner sense of spirituality in their personal lives” (p. 4). In fact, Magnusen (2001) suggested “faith was the single, most highly rated characteristic of all [leadership] items” (p. 109) in her study of educational leaders. Consequently, it is therefore imperative that educational leaders with deep moral and ethical convictions (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Dantley, 2010; Dewey, 1997; Donaldson, 2001; Duffy, 2003; Friere 1998; Fullan 2010; Muhammad 2009; Starratt, 2005b) emerge to bring reform to our current equity crisis (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010; Kozol, 2012; NEA, 2015).

It is for this reason, Abowitz (2007) declared, “moral perception and imagination are central components of moral decision-making” (p. 288). Furthermore, Karimi-Moonaghi et. al. (2015), explained, “spiritual intelligence...covers...domains such as forgiveness, patience,

meaning and goals in life, spiritual experience, self-cognition, and internal peace” (p. 267), all of which are critical characteristics of leaders who must bring about school reform. Finally, Gieseke (2014) suggested that there needs to be new discussions about the importance of, “spiritual intelligence, mindfulness, and transformational leadership” (p. 141), as it pertains “to the level of implementation and practice, potentially changing the way higher education leaders: recruit and hire future leaders, [and] select employees for promotion into leadership positions” (p. 142).

In addition, according to Roenpapel (2015), “the last decade in particular [there] has generated a growing engagement with spirituality in both popular culture and different academic discourses, including education” (p. 40). Furthermore, Magnusen (2001) conducted research among a random sampling of 350 certificated school personnel in 1999-2000 using a questionnaire with 83 questions. The research findings revealed that spiritual leaders are individuals with unique beliefs, actions/styles and characteristics whose, “faith was the single, most highly rated characteristic of all items” (Magnusen, 2001, p. 109). In fact, Magnusen declared, “this landmark study became a catalyst for changing the standards of effective schools” (Magnusen, 2001, p. 1).

Finally, Santovec (2013), speaking of Delaney’s (2003) research found that some principals of Blue Ribbon Schools were faith based individuals. In fact, the characteristics that were discovered in the study were: spiritual leadership, truth, integrity, wisdom, meaning, serenity, self-knowledge, and transcendence (Santovec, 2013). Finally, according to Santovec (2013), on “the tip of Maslow’s and Covey’s leadership pyramids [there is a] focus on the spiritual” (p. 1).

## **The Call to Develop Educational Leaders' Spirituality**

Because inequities still exist today, and as a result new and bold reform efforts need to emerge to solve the very complex challenges that face our urban public schools, this researcher has been exploring the theory that educational leaders who rely on their own spirituality may be best positioned to lead this much-needed reform effort. Consequently, Bansal (2016) declared, “spiritual intelligence...must be part of...education curriculum...this calls for the need to cultivate...spiritual intelligence” (p. 8).

Weichel and Neal (2014) asked the question: How could someone cultivate their spiritual intelligence? Weichel and Neal (2014) answered their own question by stating that it would begin with the development of spiritual awareness. Furthermore, Weichel and Neal (2014), believed that the development of spiritual awareness often happens with a life crisis: a divorce, death in the family, major illness, or sudden loss of a job, or maybe for the purposes of this paper, a crisis in the inequities in public education. Weichel and Neal (2014) proclaimed that these tragic events can often jar us out of a routine or comfortable existence to explore the deeper questions of life, which would lead a leader to possibly explore their spirituality to find answers. However, spiritual intelligence according to Vaughan (2002) does not have to come only as a result of tragedy, but that spiritual intelligence “can be developed with practice” (p. 19).

Amram (2009) asserted that, “increases in abilities related to spiritual intelligence (e.g., empathy, attention, and creativity) from spiritual practice such as meditation, suggest that spiritual intelligence can be developed” (p. 125). It was Levin (2000) who proposed the idea that the development of spiritual intelligence would require a change in perception and perspective (involving one's intuition), which would provide a new basis for motives and intention that in turn would shape new behavior. Furthermore, Levin (2000) suggested that spiritual maturity,

characterized by concern for the common good and involvement in the well-being of others, could only result from a well-developed spiritual intelligence. In a study conducted by, Hosseini, Elias, Krauss, and Aishah (2010) they found that the way individuals strengthened their spiritual intelligence, was through the practice of gratitude.

In fact, Oster (2004) found in the field of business, that the results of his study showed, “eighty-seven percent of the 270 responding CEOs believed that they accessed the power of the Holy Spirit ‘at least sometimes’ in their decision-making.” (p. 57). In other words, these CEO’s believe that they were practicing what Sisk (2015) referred to as, “core capacities” or what Amram (2007) referred to as “transcendence”. In addition, Oster (2004) discovered that spiritually intelligent leaders, “would engage in their job motivated by rewards that go beyond financial and status considerations but rather view their work through a sense of purpose and a call for service” (p. 52). Furthermore, Oster (2004) explained that leaders’ abilities relating to spiritual intelligence: “truth domain, such as acceptance, openness, and egolessness, could also be expected to contribute to leader performance” (p. 57).

Buzan (2002) introduced 10 ways to enhance spiritual intelligence: (1) Getting the ‘Big Picture’, (2) Exploring your values - your values and principles determine your behavior, (3) Re-examining your life vision and purpose - with a clear and defined purpose, your life will gain meaning and direction, and you will become healthier, stronger and more confident, (4) Compassion - understanding yourself and others, (5) Give and receive - charity and gratitude, (6) The power of laughter - laughter is a vital quality of spiritual intelligence; it helps in reducing stress levels and generally leading to a more cheerful and happier life, (7) Onward to the child's playground - investigations have shown that the more spiritually intelligent you become, the more the childlike qualities of innocence you will have; and also cheerfulness, joyfulness,

spontaneity, enthusiasm and adventure feeling increases in your life, (8) The power of ritual - which provides stability and opportunity for regeneration, and strengthens a sense of connection with oneself and others, (9) Peace - cultivate your inner peace through the practice of techniques such as contemplation and meditation, and (10) Practice love.

In addition, Whitney (2014) suggested there are two significant ways to build spiritual intelligence: (1) The spiritual discipline of abstinence, and (2) The spiritual discipline of engagement. First, Whitney (2014) further explained that the spiritual discipline of abstinence includes such things as the practices of: (1) Solitude - refraining from interacting with other people in order to be alone with the Divine, (2) Silence - not speaking, in order to quiet our minds and whole self and attend to the Divine's presence. Also, not speaking so that we can listen to others and bless them, (3) Fasting - going without food (or something else) for a period of intense prayer — the fast may be complete or partial, (4) Sabbath - doing no work to rest in presence of the Divine, (5) Secrecy - doing acts of kindness without anyone knowing, (6) Submission – choosing not to assert oneself to be more fully connected to the Divine. Secondly, Whitney (2014) pointed out that the spiritual discipline of engagement includes: (1) Reading the bible to find guidance, wisdom, and strength for life, (2) Worship – singing and thanking the Divine for life, (3) Prayer - conversing with the Divine, (4) Friendship - engaging others with their spiritual practices, (5) Personal reflection - paying attention to our inner self in order to grow in love for the Divine, others, and self, (6) Service to others – expressing love and compassion to others, especially those in need.

Furthermore, Zohar and Marshall (2000) proposed seven practical steps to increase a person's spiritual intelligence: (1) Become aware of where you are right now, (2) Feel strongly about wanting to change, (3) Reflect on what your own center is, and what your deepest

motivations are, (4) Discover and dissolve obstacles that prevent you from moving forward, (5) Continue to explore the many possibilities to go forward, (6) Commit to a path, and (7) Remain aware that there are many paths.

In addition, Sisk (2015) postulated that there are seven ways to raise or develop spiritual intelligence: (1) Thinking about one's goals, desires, and wants in order to bring your life into perspective and balance, and identify your values, (2) Accessing one's own inner processes and using one's vision to see their goals, desires and wants fulfilled, and experience the emotion connected with this fulfillment, (3) Integrating one's personal and universal vision, and recognizing their connectedness, (4) Taking responsibility for one's goals, desires, and wants, (5) Developing a sense of community by inviting more people into one's life, (6) Focusing on love and compassion, and finally, (7) When chance knocks at one's door, invite it in and take advantage of coincidences.

Sisk (2002) further explained, "one of the primary aspects of nurturing spiritual intelligence is to bring one's life into perspective." (p. 210), and that, spiritual intelligence enables us to develop an inner knowing, connects us with the Universal Mind or Big Mind and solutions to problems that come from deep intuition, enables us to become one with nature, and enables us to see the big picture. In fact, Nasel (2004) suggested that the best way to develop spiritual intelligence is through such practices as: prayer, journaling, contemplation, self-reflection, yoga, meditation, psychotherapy, charitable service to others, and entering periods of silence or solitude. In addition, Bansal (2016) suggested that there are several ways an individual could develop their spiritual intelligence: self-reflection, open dialogue, open-mindedness, creativity, service to others, celebration, fairness, and reliance on others.

In conclusion, Amram and Dryer (2008) suggested that when leaders increase their

spiritual intelligence they can apply that intelligence, “to solve specific problems by tapping specific abilities such as using intuition, transcending rationality through synthesis of paradoxes, or in taking a holistic systems perspective to solve problems more globally.” (p. 35). Therefore, if a leader’s spirituality can be cultivated through contemplation, and thereby awakened through personal reflection “the inner quality of awareness [to] inform one's personal and community life - physically, psychologically, intellectually, and interpersonally” (Vaughan, 2002, p. 10-11) to solve problems, it only makes sense for there to be new considerations in how to provide opportunities for educational leaders to develop their spirituality through professional development and training (Walton, 2014).

### **Summary**

The purpose of this paper was to examine the current crisis in public education that exists among the urban poor (Kozol, 2013; NEA, 2015) and what reform theories and practices exist to bridge the gap of inequity (Bolman & Deal, 2011; Donaldson, 2011; Duffy, 2003; Fullan, 2010). As a result of the positive outcomes for spiritually intelligent leaders in the business world (Amirkhani & Yosefi, 2015; Delaney, 2003; Gieseke, 2014; Kumar & Muruganatham, 2015; Magnusen, 2001; Salmabadi, Farshad, Bajestani, & Alikhani, 2015; Singh, Swarup, & Singh, 2015; Sisk, 2015), this paper attempted to build a case for introducing spiritual intelligence (Amram, 2007; Emmons 2000a King, 2008; Vaughn, 2002; Wigglesworth, 2002; Zohar, 2000;) as a viable option to develop spiritually intelligent educational leaders capable of solving the complex problems surrounding the issues of inequity that exist in our public schools today (Amram, 2009; Crichton, 2008; Dantley, 2010; Magnusen, 2001; Santovec, 2013; Smith, 2007; Walton, 2015). Finally, this paper gave practical suggestions on how to develop educational

leaders' capacity for building spiritual intelligence (Amram, 2009; Buzan, 2002; Nasel, 2004; Sisk, 2015; Whitney, 2014; Zohar & Marshal, 2001).

In the past several decades, new brain and empirical research has emerged validating the existence of spiritual intelligence (Amram, 2007; Emmons 2000a; Emmons 2002; Zohar, 2000). The growing research on spiritual intelligence (Sisk, 2015; Vaughn, 2002) suggests that those leaders who have high levels of spiritual intelligence may be better equipped to bring about transformational change in our public schools (Magnusen 2001; Dantley, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative that this new generation of educational leaders be trained and developed in ways to increase in their personal spiritual intelligence (Levin, 2000; Weichel & Neal, 2014; Whitney, 2014) to gain the insights and wisdom necessary to produce transformational change in our public schools.

Finally, the current inequities that are found in our public schools begs the question: If those who are spiritually intelligent could have more courage, compassion, wisdom, and love to lead the way for our public schools out of the current issues of inequity and into a new era of hope and equality for all, wouldn't it make sense to educate this new wave of educational leaders to learn how to tap into their spirituality (Dantley, 2012) and to grow in their spiritual intelligence, echoing what Wigglesworth and Change (2002) explained as, "the ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace...regardless of the circumstances" (p. 4)? In conclusion, Stienberg (2003) suggested, school districts should consider planning, "staff development programs for administrators" (p. 49) with the purpose in mind to develop their spirituality.