



Genius File #2 - The Genius Project

By

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The Genius Project was designed to compare the abilities of those who suffered from a lack of job success and satisfaction against those who did not.

The Study spanned seven years, involved hundreds of thousands of individuals across twenty-three countries, and was designed to identify any causes that might explain the difference between these two groups.

In our effort to understand the differences between the most successful people and the rest, each individual in the study was given a scientifically validated instrument called the Attribute Index to measure their natural talents in a wide variety of attributes relevant to individual performance. These attributes are naturally occurring talents that people possess based on how they think and make decisions. The science behind this profile has been rigorously validated and proven through its use in business for more than fifty years.

We also chose these attributes because we, as a company, had lots of experience with them. This is important when you are trying to understand what these data are telling you. We already had over 75 PhDs and 900 certified professional consultants and coaches around the world with the experience and understanding required to accurately administer and interpret the results.

What's a Genius?

To compare the most and least successful people, we separated them into categories of performance:

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- 1st Level – Below average
- 2nd Level – Average
- 3rd Level – Above average
- 4th Level – Excellent
- 5th Level - Genius

The term "Genius" has nothing to do with how intelligent a person is and everything to do with how well they perform. *Genius* in this study means a person's ability to perform, not their ability to acquire facts or information. The formal definition of Genius for our purposes is, "a natural and joyful ability for delivering the highest levels of performance."

Someone once asked me, "Not everyone can be a genius right?" My answer to this question is a definitive "yes, everyone can be a genius – they just need to figure out how and at what." I truly believe that anyone can indeed be a genius at something. That might be a genius surgeon or genius sales person or architect, but that might also mean a genius auto mechanic or genius server in a restaurant or even a genius janitor. The descriptor "Genius" doesn't have to be used only for high profile or high paid roles. It isn't reserved for celebrities, artists or scientists alone. Somewhere out there is someone doing a job that no one would normally associate with a genius, but any role that exists can be fulfilled at a genius level.

The Findings

What we found surprised us. While we started out thinking we might identify some concrete list of attributes, or talents, or skills that would only correlate with the most successful people – we didn't. What we did find was that regardless of the natural talents, motivations, behaviors or skills that you possess, it was a person's level of awareness of them and authenticity to them that made the real difference. These two traits (self-awareness and authenticity) are the single most significant differentiator between those who achieve significant success consistently, and those who don't.

The good news about this is that being hyper-successful at anything doesn't depend on your being lucky enough to have been born with specific natural talents. It doesn't mean that you have to go out and spend years developing a specific list of talents either.

What it means is that regardless of the talents you possess if you are sufficiently aware of them and use that knowledge to find situations and roles that depend on those factors more than others – your success goes up significantly.

Trait #1: Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness looks at how aware you are of your own natural talents and non-talents. For example, is your greatest natural talent for strategic thinking, seeing the big-picture or making accurate long range plans? Or is it for empathizing and understanding others? Self-awareness also looks at how well a

person understands their non-talents, so while you may know you have a natural talent for strategic thinking, are you also aware of a lack of natural talent for paying attention to details, or being empathetic?

Many people make a very common mistake in assuming that self-awareness is automatic. They think, “surely if you possess some natural talent, you must be aware of it right?” Unfortunately this is simply not the case. Just because someone has a natural ability for something doesn’t ensure that they fully appreciate it. Being self-aware requires a much deeper understanding for the way you think and make decisions and the natural talents you possess as a result.

Being self-aware is being aware of your own true potential and this is a beautiful thing. When a person has high levels of self-awareness, they seem to hold a heightened sensitivity to all the promise they contain. They know very well what they are and are not good at, and what potential lies within them.

If self-awareness deals with the knowledge you have for your natural talents, then the second trait deals with how you apply those talents.

Trait #2. Authenticity

Authenticity, at its simplest level, is “being true to you.” Being self-aware is only half the picture. Properly applying that knowledge to your life is the other half. Setting goals that capitalize on your natural talents is being authentic. Finding a job that depends primarily on your natural talents is being authentic. Working from your strengths is being authentic. The formal definition of authenticity is: using the right talents, for the right reasons, in the right way.

The opposite of being authentic is being inauthentic. When you are aware of your natural talents, but fail to incorporate them into what you do and how you achieve success, you are being inauthentic. When you allow yourself to fill a role that requires natural talents that you don’t possess (but hope to develop), you are being inauthentic.

So, of all the people we studied and all the various aspects of those people we looked at, the only two real differences were their level self-awareness and authenticity. The message in this study then becomes, the more completely you know your own natural talents, and the more you incorporate these talents into the roles you fill, the greater your satisfaction and performance will be.

Philosopher G.E. Moore puts it as simply as anyone could when he said, “Everything is what it is, and not another thing.” In other words, we are what we are, and not what we are not. When we are true to our natural selves, we are more successful. Only when we are what we are, and our roles and objectives are true to that - only then can we reach the 5th level of performance.

It is these two acquired skills that drive the biggest differences between the best we studied and everyone else. This would argue that before you spend any more time trying to develop those new talents you're thinking you need to be

more successful, consider taking a lesson from those who are already performing well above the norm.

Take time to assess those natural talents, skills, and aptitudes that you already possess and see if you can't align your environment better with those. In other words, instead of trying to fix yourself, take some time to see if you can't fix your environment first. It might be a whole lot faster and much more productive in the end.

To quote Dr. Robert Hartman, the trick is to, "Stop trying to put in what God left out – and instead just work with what he put in." That's hard enough says Dr. Hartman.

To help you with your own self-awareness simply email questions@innermetrix.com and ask for a free Genius Profile.

The Genius Files is a series of educational articles crafted from lessons learned in the recently concluded Genius Project (a seven-year, 197,000, twenty-three country study of what drives individual excellence in the new knowledge worker economy).

The Genius Project is the foundational research behind the latest book from Innermetrix Inc Founder and CEO Jay Niblick titled, *What's Your Genius – How the Best Think for Success*.

To view the entire Genius series, or to learn more about how you can unleash your own genius, please visit <http://www.whatsyourgenius.com>.