

Ask A Genius (or Two) 64 - Conversation on Genius (1)
Scott Douglas Jacobsen, Rick Rosner, and Marco Ripà
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Scott: What is genius, Marco?

Marco: First of all, I think Rick is a genius, obviously. The general definition is not so easy to understand. I think we can give two different answers. An extraordinary intellectual or analytic power, or IQ. If we set IQ as a standard, we can say that we can improve IQ through training. For example, we have developed a dynamic test. You can try it over and over and increase your skills in that field. That's my personal opinion, just my two cents.

Rick: I agree with Marco, also a genius, except I think there's more than two definitions. The first one being extreme skills at mental tasks. Also, IQ is tricky because a lot of things go into IQ, but a lot of things go into other forms of genius too. But there's the way genius is used to describe people who changed or helped out human progress by coming up with things that other people may not have been able to come up with, or by coming up with those things before anyone else.

People have said, "If Albert Einstein had been hit by a bus, somebody else would've come up with General Relativity. He was the first one to it. He found both forms of relativity. He didn't even get the Nobel Prize for Relativity." He got the Nobel, for among other things, the atomic theory of matter. He had this one year, where he wrote 4 or 5 papers. Each of which changed the world of physics in a different fairly profound way. So, when you use genius in that way, it refers to a very limited number of people who changed humanity's path.

Marco: Somebody who gives a contribution to mankind and develops a given field. You can use your IQ to do something in real life, but this is so strict as a definition. You can do something good with or without a very high IQ. I know that Feynman said he didn't have a high IQ.

Rick: There's a thing on Twitter called a "humblebrag," where you're bragging without bragging. I think Feynman loved to say he didn't have a high IQ, but at the same time was fantastically smart. He might have messed up one IQ test in 4th grade or something.

Marco: I agree with Rick's opinion. Genius's have to give some kind of contribution to mankind. Something important. If you have the potential, if you care to develop it in a concrete way, you have to be lucky, have to have a good team, have to be in the right place in the right moment, or time.

(Laugh)

The most important thing is to do something good with your applications and objectives.

Rick: I agree with Marco. Not only do you have to be lucky in terms of your era or your personal situation, you also have to be lucky in terms of having other aspects of your personality that reinforce genius rather than waste it. I have both. I go off on crazy tangents.

(Laugh)

That waste a lot of time. For a while, I was a genius of catching fake IDs presented by people trying to break into bars, which doesn't save mankind. But it probably helped some people from getting into drunk driving accidents.

Marco: Perseverance and stamina, it is very important.

(Laugh)

Scott: That leads to a question. What traits does genius on the negative side exacerbate and on the virtue side enhance?

Rick: There are stereotypes associated with genius. All you have to do is turn on CBS. Currently, every show on CBS has a genius character. They are often presented as socially dysfunctional, quirky. If they are part of a forensic team on a CBS murder solving show, then they might be goth.

(Laugh)

Though I know plenty of smart people who have super good social skills. Although, possibly with them, the genius doesn't stand out because they function smoothly in society. The framework is Asperger's. High-functioning autism meshes with the stereotypic genius, but I live in LA where the entertainment industry has a huge number of people with the opposite of Asperger's.

Their social skills are too good, and makes them horrible in the opposite way of Asperger's.

Marco: I have Asperger's.

(Laugh)

I don't know if you know this. I am an Asperger.

Rick: I didn't know that.

Scott: I did.

Rick: I am too old. I am 56 years old. I grew up before the term was in widespread use. If I was 20 years younger, people would have looked at me as a kid and said, "Yea, Asperger's."

Scott: You've done jokes about Sheldon (Cooper) in some of your videos, Marco.

Marco: Yes, my YouTube channel. Asperger's, also, is a continuum. There isn't a given number to say, "You are Asperger. You are not Asperger. You are normal."

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

It is important to find one of you. So, you can become a negative genius. People can start to point out everything you do, and your strange way of thinking. That's my point of view.

Rick: I agree. In junior high, it is terrible for everybody, but the flavor of how it was bad for me. I got a certain amount of crap from people for being a little brainy, nerdy-like. The kind of crap somebody 20 years younger would get for being Aspergery. One of the things I thought was "Dang, I wish I lived in Europe." In American schools, athletic skills are highly prized. In Europe, it seemed there was a little less emphasis on being a jock. I thought if I lived in Europe I could be the way I am and maybe still get a girlfriend. But I don't know.

Scott: Is that reflective of your experience in Europe, Marco?

Marco: My best answer to this problem was when I started to practice karate about 15 years ago. In that period, I was really sad, and upset, and so on.

(Laugh)

But it helped me to find a reason to fight in real life, not only during matches and so on. But this is my experience.

Rick: I did the same thing, not with karate, but with lifting weights. When I got big enough, I started working in bars, as I said, checking IDs, where I got to meet people, and occasionally somebody would punch me.

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

But I didn't know karate. So, I would just get punched.

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

Authors



Scott Douglas Jacobsen
Editor-in-Chief, In-Sight Publishing
Scott.D.Jacobsen@Gmail.Com
In-Sight Publishing



Rick Rosner
American Television Writer
RickRosner@Hotmail.Com
Rick Rosner



Mr. Marco Ripà
marcokrt1984@yahoo.it
[*sPIqr Society*](#)
[*DynamIQ - Dynamic IQ Tests Online*](#)
[*Marco Ripà*](#)

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