

---

## Being among the Brightest: A Perspective on Intelligence

by Kishore Asthana, MSPE



Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most knowledgeable.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most presentable.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the wisest.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most creative.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most gifted in any performing art.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most motivated.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the best at communicating.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most healthy or energetic.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the strongest.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most tactful or sensitive.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most self-aware.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most confident.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most emotionally stable.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most generous.

Being among the brightest doesn't mean being the most spiritually advanced.

In short, being among the brightest doesn't mean being among the best.

---

What, then, does being among the brightest mean?

It means having the ability to connect the dots, to understand complex issues, and to work out solutions. It means having the intelligence to tap the underlying creativity. It means being curious about learning new things. It means having a heightened awareness of one's milieu. Combined with whatever wisdom one has, intelligence also means recognizing at least some of the above as achievable goals and striving to actualize them in one's own life.

Intelligence is a potential resource, like a goldmine underground. The fortunate use this resource to fashion their lives—hopefully, for the better. I say this because, like any resource, intelligence can also be used for evil purposes.

The unfortunate ones who do not mine their intelligence and use it with motivation and energy are like goldmine owners who may sense that they have gold somewhere and deserve better in life, but their treasure is of no practical benefit for them. This often leads to a life of frustration.

I have observed a curious phenomenon. Often, very bright people are not aware of their potential. Once it is pointed out to them, there appears to be a transformation in their mindset. Most such people become more self-confident and work with greater motivation. Their

worldview expands, and they tend to do much better in life.

Being in Mensa and in the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry, I have come across all these kinds of very intelligent people. I have also come across many more such individuals outside of these societies.

There are brilliant ones and some who are not the brightest (but are intelligent enough) who do wonderful things. Then there are very bright people leading humdrum lives, using their *éclat*, if at all, only for pointless arguments and other inane social media interactions. There are also a few using their intelligence for truly unworthy purposes.

Then there are others who, through sheer laziness, let their intelligence lie fallow, and a few whose intelligence fades away because of their socio-economic circumstances. All over the globe, there are some who have even had their intelligence suppressed by religion.

Now, please imagine that I am holding up the above perspective as a mirror for you. Regardless of whether you belong to Mensa or ISPE or do not belong to either, do you recognize which of the above categories you belong to? And, if you are not happy with the image you see, what do you intend to do to improve it? [Ω](#)

---

“I know that I am intelligent,  
because I know that I know nothing.”

—Socrates