

The Unhidden Potential

Here is a page from the dairy of two guys who shared the same last name—Mr. Percentile. One of them was very intelligent; his name was Mr. Ninety Percentile. The second was just an ordinary man; his name was Mr. Ten Percentile. Now, Ninety wanted to make some quick bucks and lured Ten into a bet. The bet proposition was that each of them would ask the other one a question. If Ten failed to answer the question, he would have to pay Ninety mere 5 bucks. However, if Ninety failed to answer the question, he would have to pay a whopping 500 bucks to Ten!

Ninety went first... “What is the square root of PI”? Ten had no clue; therefore, he had to hand over 5 bucks to Ninety, following which Ninety arrogantly gave the accurate answer to the question. Now it was Ten’s turn to pop the question. “What is it that climbs up the hill on four legs, but climbs down on three legs?” Ten asked. Ninety racked his super-intelligent brain till he couldn’t rattle it any more, threw up his hands in exasperation, and reluctantly handed over 500 bucks to Ten. As Ten started pocketing his winnings, Ninety rudely interrupted “wait a minute, what is the correct answer?” Ten pulled out a 5-buck note from the bundle, flipped it over to Ninety, and smilingly added “I don’t know the answer either”.

The competitive world we live in has a rich density of people like Ninety, both inside as well as outside your organization. So much so that sometimes we all get scared of being overshadowed by stalwarts of this planet. In this high-percentile world, set aside excellence, often mere survival itself becomes a question mark! And it is in this context, the true flavor of the above story glosses out... You see what good was Mr. Ninety’s towering percentile if he chose to use only 5% of his capabilities? Mr. Ten, on the other hand, even though had limited capabilities, chose to leverage his entire 10% potential thereby beating Ninety at his own game!

No doubt, intelligence is a very powerful asset—after all it’s a special gift that some of us thankfully owe to our ‘biological’ genes. However, people who have worked hard to evolve the applicability of their potential are clearly the more honored ones! For they understand that by unleashing the full power of their limited potential, they have more than a fair chance of offsetting the advantage

that their more-privileged, genetically-blessed competitors have.