

Everyone is a genius
Jen Frazier

Genius is as genius does. It's what you do, not what others measure, that counts

This is an inspirational book. It is a two hour read, 130 very loose pages. The purpose is to inspire the reader to do what it takes to be successful.

Jen Fraser cites research by people such as Howard Gardner, famous for his "Multiple Intelligences," to say that genius is a hard thing to measure and is not essential. Anybody can succeed.

She has a lot of good advice for how to succeed. First and most important, make up your mind that that's what you want. Secondly, avoid all of the distractors, like Facebook and video games and drugs that divert your attention away from success. It does not take a genius to recognize the wisdom in these observations.

What does take genius, on Mrs. Fraser's part, is to pull absolutely perfect quotations from a great number of historical figures. Her genius is also on display in her graphic art. She is a gifted artist. And I would have to agree with her, not just gifted but also accomplished. It is clear that she recognized she had some talent and did what it took to take maximum advantage of the talent she had.

Mrs. Fraser shares a very revealing quote towards the end of the book. "I wish I had a dollar for every time I heard someone say "I know, we could get Jen to Photoshop..." She is the person who can make things happen. You don't have to be a genius to do most things, you just have to set your mind to the task and see it through. In our age being able to use software, like she does, is a wonderful measure of a person's willingness to do what it takes to get the job done.

If you do it well enough, you can transition from being "a person who can do XYZ" to "the person to see for XYZ." That transition invariably requires all of the virtues that Ms. Fraser recommends. Intelligence doesn't hurt, but the other attributes are more within an individual's control. That is a central message of this book – take control.

Fraser disparages Mensa, the high IQ society, as mostly a bunch of self-absorbed naval gazers. I'd like to quibble with

her on a couple of counts, neither of which detracts whatsoever from her argument.

First of all, they aren't that smart. The cut off is an IQ of 130, which is two percent of the population. If you discount the people who don't graduate, that's three percent of high school graduates. Take into account the fact that smart people usually go to the same schools, and I would bet that 15 percent of the people you readers graduated from high school with were Mensa candidates. It is simply not that selective.

Second, she would like to say that Einstein wasn't that smart, citing 160 as his estimated IQ. That would be one in 30,000, meaning that perhaps 10,000 living Americans are as smart as Einstein was. That can't be true. The top intellects of our time – Pinker, Dawkins, Hawking, Craig Venter, James Watson, Richard Feynman, John von Neumann and perhaps Larry Ellison, Steve Jobs and Steve Gates in business – are not nearly that numerous, and their achievements are nowhere comparable to Einstein's. Give true genius its due. Also note that they were all extremely curious.

Here I will turn one of Einstein's beautiful quotes back on her. "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." Very few people I know are intelligent enough to explain even simple theories. More important, most people are not curious enough to try. I would ask readers of this review to ponder whether you have ever wondered about, then explain in your minds, the following:

- Why is there dew in the morning?
- How many degrees above the horizon is the midsummer sun where you are?
- How did Columbus decide the world was round?
- How do bicycles balance on only two wheels?
- What is the theory of evolution?
- How did language develop?
- Why do we have both particle and wave theories to explain light?

Call it intelligence, curiosity or simply the ability to explain, they seem to run together. Curiosity is something born into every child. Fraser's challenge is for a person not to let go of it.

This is a wonderful book of inspiration. It is a great source of quotes. It is also something that might stand a prayer of getting read if given as a present to a high school child.

Going back to Einstein, Jen Fraser has the gift of explaining it simply.