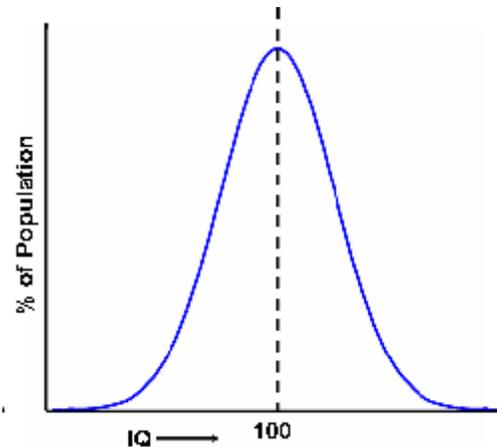


Inside the Bell

Why “Inside the Bell?”

A number of years ago my then teenage daughter exclaimed, “There are so many stupid people in the world.” My somewhat glib answer at the time was to draw a normal distribution curve based on my belief that human IQ scores would fit such a pattern. “If,” I told her, “people with low IQ’s were on the left and people with high IQ’s on the right, then most people would group around the center IQ score which is assumed to be 100. If you are exactly average,” I drew a vertical line down the middle of the curve, “then half of the people in the world will seem stupid relative to you.”

Implied was that half of the people of the world might have similar issues with her and she should learn to handle her frustrations, assume people were providing their best efforts and teamwork would compensate for each member’s strengths and weaknesses.

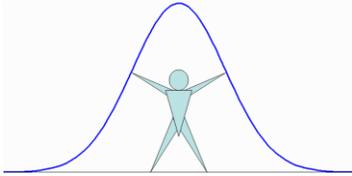


In the years since I’ve concluded that each skill and talent in the pantheon of human endeavors fits within a bell shaped curve. Each of us occupies a different position in each bell. Some of us are pro’s at dribbling a basketball while others excel at dribbling paint on canvas. None of us are excellent, or even good, at everything. All of us verge on incompetence in something. The trick is to find our sweet spots and develop them. If each of us maximized our innate talents then, as a population, we could achieve anything.

Unfortunately, our best skills may not coincide with what we like to do. I love to play golf but I’ll never be really good at it. However, I’m reasonably good at using the various remotes to control my television. The ultimate satisfaction for each of us is working with our strengths. I believe most of us can find this combination and people unhappy with their work have stopped seeking their “truth” prematurely.

As children we innately know our truth. If we successfully navigate the family, social, school, political and economic pressures we’ll actually end up doing what we do best. We are all aware of actors who should not act, children of entrepreneurs who destroy the family business and professionals who just seem to be going through the motions.

In my experience many of the problems we encounter are caused by people who do not understand where they actually fit inside the bell and cannot deliver on their commitments. Studies have shown that incompetent people often believe they are actually highly skilled. (Kruger-Dunning effect) We deal daily with the products of these incapable and untrainable workers.



Inside the Bell

Worse yet, are those folks who believe they are outside the bell completely. This is, by definition, impossible. Those ego driven people seem insensitive to anyone who sees any issue differently than they do. They are unable to digest information outside their narrow focus and act unilaterally without regard to overwhelming evidence their actions are not in the best interests of anyone, even themselves. It seems these highly motivated, attention seeking, destructive individuals frequently lead the national dialogue.

It seems, therefore, reasonable to provide a platform to examine issues of daily life, whether personal or social, from inside the bell, where we all live and reason resides.

Russ

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