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Meaningless Internet opportunities... Why I do not care... Finally, I had enough... About Mensa... How do we know we are Actually on a planet?...

All, the Internet offers many opportunities for us to test ourselves. There are quizzes about what we should be eating, how much exercise we should be getting, what vitamins are going to do the most good, there is guidance on just about anything that you feel you need guidance for. There is one particular type of challenge the Internet offers us. It is an IQ test. I ignore them, not because I'm worried about what the score would be. Instead, I really don't care.

Why I do not care...

A very long time ago I was pursuing a career as a real estate appraiser. I looked for a position with a top-notch group. I lucked out and landed a job with a very good appraisal firm in Phoenix, AZ.

I started work with a great deal of enthusiasm, plus curiosity about the Arizona real estate market mixed with the intrigue of appraisal. Settling in was no problem. I found a comfortable place in Scottsdale and was generally enjoying myself. But there was a fly in the ointment.

I was working with one of the partners in the firm. He was less interested in teaching anyone than he was in criticizing them. Looking back on the experience I think his problem was one of insecurity; he did not want to be surpassed by an underling. I had no trouble in following his guidance. Had a lot of trouble tolerating his barbed remarks that suggest that I wasn't very bright.

Finally, I had enough...

After enough cracks about my seemingly inferior intellect I decided it was time to tell him to shut up. This guy was very big on credentials; so I decided to obtain a credential that he could likely not achieve. I decided that I wanted to become a member of MENSA. I had heard it was an organization of smart people.

With little research I discovered that Mensa is an international high-IQ society for people who score in the top 2% on a supervised, standardized intelligence test, focusing on intellectual stimulation, research, and a social environment for gifted individuals. [Note: I was a sluggish student. Since I had assiduously avoided drugs during my student days I had never once thought of myself in those terms. Had I been drugging it up, I might have had a distorted opinion of myself.] Nevertheless, I figured that taking the IQ test to see if I qualified was certainly worth a shot. Just to shut-up that jackass.

I took the test and Mensa decided my IQ was high enough for me to be admitted. I kept this information to myself until the next time the partner decided to belittle my intellect. I stopped him mid-sentence and said something along the lines of, “Listen, smart guy, I hate to shatter your opinion of me but I am a member of Mensa.” He said nothing but his smirk spoke volumes. Noting the smirk, I added, “By the way, you can take this job and stick it where the sun doesn’t shine.” And I walked out, returning to Wisconsin where I made a living doing feasibility studies for real estate developers. I liked working with developers because they have imagination and they pay their bills. (I did not work for Trump.)

About Mensa...

Mensa has regular meetings wherever there is a chapter. For no special reason beyond curiosity I attended one. It was quite clear that everyone in the room was intelligent. Completely unafraid or unembarrassed to tell me that they were.

There were other non-boastful conversations taking place. What I recall about the conversations is that they were essentially a lament. An irritating tone. I wound up spending an evening listening to a group of people who could not understand why, if they were so smart, they weren’t rich. (Like there’s even a connection.) That was my first and last Mensa meeting.

How do we know we are actually on a planet?

Honestly I never really gave the question much thought. To the best of my memory the first time that I recall thinking about what the Earth is, i.e., a planet was when I was in Atlantic City.

Haddon Township, where we lived was only about 60 miles from Atlantic City so it was a snap to get there. One summer day we decided to go to the beach. My parents and my sisters and I packed ourselves into the car. And off we went.



I was probably eight years old, sitting on the beach, enjoying one of those rocket popsicles, the kind you push the ice cream up through a tube.

I remember thinking about the fact that the water that I was looking at, the Atlantic Ocean, stretched from the Jersey shore to Europe and Africa. That, to me, was really big.

My dad and I were talking about the ocean and he pointed out something interesting to me. He asked me a look at the horizon and tell me why was not a straight line. I pondered that but I do really didn't figure it out. Then he told me why it was curved. He said, "Kenny, it's because the Earth is curved and you get a chance to see that when you're on or near the ocean, looking across it." Like this:



I had the chance to enjoy the curve the Earth the first time that I went to Milwaukee and looked out over Lake Michigan. That is one big lake and you can't miss the curve the Earth when you look across it.

One last point about the oceans. What we don't know about them surpasses what we know about them.

First yawn...

Until tomorrow...

Ken

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