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By Rick Boxx

THE SECRET TO TRUE GENIUS

One of my favorite television shows is “Scorpion.” In this series, a group of socially inept geniuses contract with the Department of Defense to solve potentially catastrophic problems. They are highly intelligent, even though their people skills often leave something to be desired. The fascinating aspect of every episode in the series is that all the geniuses have their own unique fields of expertise, but when they combine those skills, their synergy and the sum of their collective genius solves incredibly complex and challenging problems.

Unlike many TV shows, in which the concepts presented defy comprehension and require the viewers to “suspend their disbelief,” the underlying concept for “Scorpion,” in addition to being very entertaining, has much practical value for real life – especially the workplace.

We see this demonstrated every day in our business and professional settings. Our organizations may have “star players,” highly talented individuals who stand out in terms of performance and productivity. But even these people could not accomplish what they do without the skills and contributions of many other individuals. Speaker and author Tim Sanders summarized this truth nicely at a conference that I attended when he said, “Genius is a team sport.”

There is an adage you might have heard, “You win with people.” It fits this idea of “genius,” whether in the workplace, on an athletic team, or even in a family. If you put the right people in the right places doing the right things, chances of success are much greater. You hardly ever see or hear someone espousing an individual working in total isolation, without assistance from anyone.

This concept is embraced in the Bible in a number of passages, including 1 Corinthians 12, which uses the metaphor of the human body to teach why collaboration as a team is important. The apostle Paul wrote, **“If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be”** (1 Corinthians 12:17-18).

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It can be a trap to give full attention to top performers and neglect the indispensable contributions of people who work behind the scenes or do “grunt work” so that top executives, salespeople and other leaders can excel at what they do best.

One of the great principles from the Scriptures is found in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**, which reminds us, **“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”**

So the point is simple: If you want to maximize innovation in your organization, if you desire to create an environment where “true genius” is encouraged and has a chance to flourish, embrace and leverage the talents of others. As someone has wisely observed, “Not one of us is as smart as all of us combined.”

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe “true genius,” when the term is considered within the context of a workplace environment?
2. What has been your experience in observing how the accomplishments and contributions of very talented individuals are enhanced, even multiplied, by the efforts of others?

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3. Can you give an experience when you were able to achieve success in a project or endeavor that exceeded your expectations, in part because of what other people were able to contribute to the effort?
4. Do you think the biblical comparison used, showing how different parts of the human body contribute to the healthy functioning of the body overall, applied to how a company or organization functions? Why or why not?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 11:14, 15:22, 22:29, 27:17; Romans 12:3-8

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