

Timely Information for Personal Success

Even Smart People do Dumb Things

By Travis Bradberry

People of all levels of intelligence succumb to what's called the "bias blind spot." That is, we're great at spotting other people's mistakes and terrible at recognizing our own. The sillier the mistake, the harder it is for an intelligent person to accept that they've made it. Consider some of the most common ways in which smart people manage to shoot themselves in the foot.

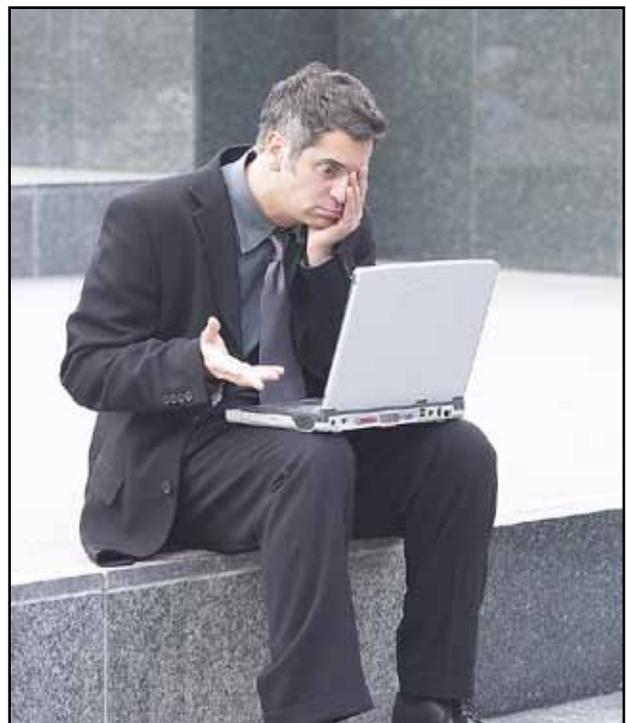
❖ **Smart people are overconfident.** A lifetime of praise and pats on the back leads smart people to develop an unflappable faith in their intelligence and abilities. When you rack up accomplishments while people stroke your ego, it's easy to expect that things will always go your way. But this is a dangerous expectation. Smart people often fail to recognize when they need help, and when they do recognize it, they tend to believe that no one else is capable of providing it.

❖ **They push people too hard.** Smart people develop overachieving personalities because things come so easily to them. They simply don't understand how hard some people have to work to accomplish the same things, and because of that, they push people too hard. Smart people set the bar too high, and when people take too long or don't get things quite right, they assume it's due to a lack of effort. So they push even harder and miss the opportunity

to help others achieve the goals they're so anxious for them to reach.

❖ **They give up when they fail.** Have you ever watched a sporting event and seen the stunned look on the face of an athlete whom everyone expected to win, but didn't? Smart people can easily fall into the trap of seeing failure as the end of the world because frequent success creates expectations that make failure hard to tolerate.

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Healthy Recipe: Turkey Panini

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 slices Italian bread
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 4 thin slices, peeled and cored apple
- 4 springs watercress, large stems removed
- 1 slice Asiago cheese
- 2 slices (about 2 ounces) cooked turkey
- 1 tablespoon cranberry sauce

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 388
- Carbohydrates: 39 g.
- Protein: 27 g.
- Fiber: 2 g.
- Fat: 14 g.
- Saturated fat: 5 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Brush one side of each piece of bread with olive oil and lay the bread oil-side down on work surface.
- 2 Place turkey, cheese, apple slices, and cranberry sauce on top of one of the slices of bread. Place second slice of bread on top, oil-side up.
- 3 Heat grill pan over medium heat. Grill sandwich on each side until golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes per side.
- 4 Transfer sandwich to work surface, lift one piece of bread and arrange watercress inside, then replace the bread.
- 5 Slice sandwich in half and serve.

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Questions and Answers

'Dream' Jobs can be Nightmares

Q: *Some people would wonder why I'm complaining, but I have a job with too LITTLE to do! My boss is an incredible micromanager who takes on so much that there isn't enough work left for me. I'm growing bored and stagnant. Ideas?*

A: This is a rare situation in today's workplaces but it does happen. You haven't mentioned your co-workers. What are their workloads like? Do they also have too little to do? If not, your boss is singling you out for some reason. Have you ever left the impression you're not capable because a particular project did not work to your boss's satisfaction? Either way, you need to study your colleagues – how they go about their workday, interact with your employer, because something is clearly amiss.

Is it possible your boss doesn't know you're bored? Have you talked to him/her? What about a trusted co-worker? Give this awkward situation a very definite timeline, and if things aren't improving, move on! Most employers would appreciate an ambitious employee. Good luck. ■

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People who have to work hard for what they achieve have plenty of practice learning how to deal with failure. They learn to embrace it because they know that failure is just a stepping stone to success.

❖ **They fail to develop grit.** When things come really easy to you, it's easy to see hard work as a negative (a sign that you don't have what it takes). When smart people can't complete something without a tremendous amount of effort, they tend to feel frustrated and embarrassed. This leads them to make the false assumption that if they can't do something easily, there's something wrong with them. As a result, smart people tend to move on to something else that affirms their sense of worth before they've put in the time to develop the grit they need to succeed at the highest possible level.

Summary

To some readers, this post will read like I'm trashing smart people, but I'm not. Some of life's greatest gifts, including high intelligence, can also come with challenges. If you aren't willing to take an honest look at the whole picture, you're selling yourself short. And that isn't smart. ■

Dr. Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of the #1 bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and the co-founder of TalentSmart, the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training.