

MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



The Genius Zone

Recently I told a colleague of mine about a project I am working on. She responded *“That’s your genius zone, for sure.”* I don’t know if my very creative colleague coined the term “genius zone” or if it is term floating around in the self-improvement/self-help universe. I can easily imagine a self-help book called “Finding Your Genius Zone.” In any case, the observation that I am in any way “a genius” made a big impression on me, and I can’t get it out of my mind. After all, my colleague said “genius”... not “good at” nor “have a knack for.” Genius, she said! I have spent the last few days asking myself how to incorporate this genius element into my very ordinary life. Here is what I’ve decided so far...

1. **BE HUMBLE:** As my wife pointed out, my colleague didn’t say I was “a genius”. She said that I had a genius zone... that I was a genius in one narrow slice of my life. My wife went on to point out that in many “zones” I am nowhere near a genius (home repair, for example.)
2. **ACCEPT IT:** It’s so easy for me to see my flaws. Why is it so hard to accept that I have a spark of genius? I don’t know, but I do know if I can’t accept my own genius zone, I won’t see and acknowledge the genius zones of others.
3. **SPEND AS MUCH TIME IN MY GENIUS ZONE AS POSSIBLE:** I spend too much time in my “incompetent zone” and my “just OK zone.” I’ll be happier and more likely to contribute to others if I stay as much as possible in my “genius zone.”
4. **RECOGNIZE THAT EVERYONE IN MY LIFE HAS A GENIUS ZONE:** It didn’t take me long, as I thought of the main people in my life, to identify their genius zones. I’m surrounded by geniuses: the pastry genius... the friendship genius... the money genius... the speaking genius... the writing genius... the nurturing genius...
5. **TELL THEM:** I will follow my colleagues’ example and when I recognize genius. I will point it out and tell the genius *“You are a genius at_____.”* And I will use the word GENIUS and not “you’re good at” or “nice job.” I can tell you from my recent experience that the word genius will get the genius’s attention, give them a big boost and will be something they remember and maybe even come to believe. Maybe I’ll organize a National Genius Day... a day when each of us spends all day telling the geniuses in our lives that we appreciate their unique kind of genius.
6. **AS A TIP LEADER:** I will continue to appreciate volunteers who come to TIP thinking they are ordinary people and discover their genius zones. For many volunteers, their genius zone is out in the field where they practice their magic helping clients in difficult situations. For others their genius zones are as trainers, as leaders, as debriefers... Going forward I will make a concerted effort to acknowledge TIP geniuses when I see them. I’m afraid that for too long I have taken their genius for granted.

I’ve tried to bring my genius status into my personal life by practicing staying as much in my genius zone as possible. So, when my wife asked me recently to wash the dishes, I blurted *“It’s out of my genius zone.”* She rolled her eyes, threw me the wash cloth and said “you’ll need this, genius!”