



## **Episode 1 - What does 'smart' even mean?**

Welcome to the managing your smart mind podcast with me, Else Kramer, a.k.a. Coach Kramer.

I'm a speaker, Coach and Trainer based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

I work with smart humans, and I'm on a mission to change the way we perceive high intelligence, and neurodiversity in general.

Since this is the first episode, here's a little bit about me.

I have a background in philosophy and maths, I have a black belt in Aikido, I have done lots of things in my life, like many smart people.

I love Lego, and yes, I am smart, and not afraid to say it out loud. And believe me, that was very different 20 years ago.

And sadly, many smart people are afraid to say that out loud.

**Saying that you're smart, or even showing that you're smart, is often perceived as an attack.**

This tends to start in school where many smart people are bullied, and sometimes continues in the workplace.

And this is why many smart people have smartly decided to hide their smarts, which hurts not just them, but actually all of us.

And even speaking about the fact that some people are smarter can sometimes be viewed as not being inclusive, I have had people attacked me about this on LinkedIn, which is kind of like arguing that we shouldn't say some people are taller than others, because then we're making everyone under five foot six feel bad, for example. It's a bit silly.

So enough about that, because we first need to get a bit clearer on what it means to be smart.

Now, there's a massive lack of clarity around terms like smart intelligence, and intellectual giftedness.

**And the problem, this is a massive problem, is that we do not have a clear and simple definition of what it means to be smart.**

We of course, have IQ as a measure with its top 2% cutoff point. But as you may know, this is actually very problematic because IQ tests tend to be rather one dimensional, and also exclude a lot of minorities because of biases.

They also only measure part of what I think we all agree about what it means to be smart.

Now, I'm not saying throw the IQ test out of the window, there can actually be great leverage if for example, you need to get a school to accommodate your gifted child. And they can also provide access to societies where you can find like brained people like Menza, for example.

But as a general way to characterize smartness or intelligence, it just is very insufficient.

So if not IQ, then what?

Over the past decade, scientists have tried to create different models of smartness.

And they've come up with more encompassing models like the rainforest mind, the high potential octopus, the zebra (Hello, France), Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and the Dutch Delphi model.

And I have to say these models are very interesting. But they're also incredibly broad, which makes them both hard to prove and very impractical.

**Now, I have met and coached hundreds of very smart people, and this is what I think they have in common.**

You ready? Here we go.

**Number one, they are incredibly curious and learn and grow very fast in their arenas of choice.**

So this is kind of the curiosity learning axis, if you like,

**Number two, they see and connect things that many other people don't notice.**

And this is about perception, creativity, all that stuff.

**Number three, they need to be constantly evolving and growing.**

**And number four, they are driven by meaning and have a deep need to do something that is purposeful to them.**

So to summarize these four: ***they have fast brains, strong values, and they get bored very quickly.***

And looking outside in, here are some things you could notice about these smart people (and HR managers, talent managers, this is where you want to start paying attention).

They get bored very quickly attending a training or course that isn't specifically geared towards their learning speed.

They tend to have lots of ideas on how a business or project can be run better and aren't afraid to share them.

They love starting new projects, side hustles, businesses; switching countries or careers.

They will refuse to do something they can't get on board with, sometimes resulting in massive conflicts with their employers.

They hate company politics, and are not easily bought by cash, slick company cars, all the things.

**So again, to summarize: they have fast brains, strong values and get bored very easily.**

Now that we have a working definition of what it means to be smart, we can look at what smart humans are not.

And contrary to common belief, they are not superhuman.

They are not better than other people.

**And they don't necessarily have it easier or harder than other humans.**

Like all of us, they sometimes need help to thrive in a world that wasn't designed with their particular needs in mind.

Now, why is this so important?

**Well, first of all, to stop all the hate that people with fast brains have to deal with being rigid, ridiculed, bullied being asked to dumb down.**

Being smart-shamed.

Yes, they have a fast brain.

What if we would actually start allowing them to show up as their full selves, they could actually start using those brains at full capacity instead of as many are now getting stuck in burnout, or burnout?

And the second reason it matters how we talk about this is because people, including very smart people, themselves tend to think that smart humans can solve any problems including their own, that they can, quote unquote, think their way out of anything.

That needing help, if you're smart is a sign of failure of maybe even your brain malfunctioning.

**We need to normalize smart people needing help, instead of saying, You're so smart, you should be able to figure this out.**

So here is what I would love for you to do.

**First off, if you are in HR or any leadership position,** start figuring out who your smart employees are and how you can help them instead of making them hide who they are.

**Second, if you're smart, and beating yourself up because things aren't working out the way you thought they would stop it.**

You're human. You don't need to figure everything out on your own. Just being smart is zero guarantee for success.

So get help, whether it's therapy, a coach, a mentor, a friend: get that extra pair of eyes and ears and a heart that can help you. You do not need to solve this on your own.

**And third, if you happen to be gifted with a smart brain, also allow yourself to luxuriate in it.**

It's an amazing gift, even though it can also be a burden.

**And never, ever allow other people to shame you for the way you're wired.**

*If you would love to learn how to do any of the above, I can help. Reach out to me via my website, [coachkramer.org](http://coachkramer.org), or on send me a message on LinkedIn.*

***If there is a specific topic you'd love to see covered on this podcast, or someone you'd love to see interviewed, please let me know on: [podcast@elsekramer.com](mailto:podcast@elsekramer.com).***

*And if you liked it I'd love a review so more people can find it and learn to manage their smart mind.*