

Transcending Dominance Hierarchies, Success Predictors

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1) Preamble:

A question as old as time is why some people end up rich while others end up poor; why do some people rise to the top of society, while others end up at the bottom?

Luck is part of it; in any macro dominance hierarchy randomness is a factor.

That aside there are certain factors that dramatically increase the probability of a person making it towards the top of a macro dominance hierarchy, rather than ending up at the bottom.

2) TLDR

TLDR For This Essay:

There are 7 key factors driving a person's ability to transcend a macro hierarchy: Energy/Industriousness, Intelligence/IQ, Cunning, Stress Tolerance/Neuroticism, Ruthlessness/Agreeableness, Physical Attractiveness/Halo Effect, and Family Wealth.

The best case scenario is that you are high energy, high IQ, high cunning, high stress tolerance, high ruthlessness, good looking, and born into a rich family.

The worst case scenario is that you are low energy, low IQ, low cunning, low stress tolerance, low ruthlessness, ugly, and born into a poor family.

3) Energy:

In every society, it is the case that people with high energy levels stand a better chance of making it to the top than people with low energy levels. This is most obvious in capitalist societies, where many high paying positions explicitly require one to have the energy to work 60+ hours a week.

Having above average energy levels is necessary (but not sufficient) for having any chance of going from the bottom of a macro hierarchy to the top. You have competitors who will work long hours; if they do, and you don't, the probability you will be able to keep up with them is zero.

In modern capitalist societies (see America), the use of drugs for the sake of maximizing energy levels is common in many professions.

Many working in Finance/Law/Sales use stimulants such as Adderall, Ritalin, and Modafinil. Nobody is working 70 hours a week on water alone.

4) Intelligence (IQ):

In every society intelligence is an advantage for rising to the top of the hierarchy. As technology becomes more advanced and decision-making becomes more complex, the advantage high IQ people have over low IQ people intensifies.

In a hunter gatherer tribe a smart man has only a slight advantage over a dumb man; he may be slightly better at hunting. However, in a technologically advanced society with computers and the Internet a smart man is going to be light years ahead of a dumb man; he can become a software engineer, while the dumb man is stuck as a janitor.

Part of the reason high IQ people end up at the top of hierarchies is because they are faster than everyone else. IQ to a large extent measures *speed*, and almost every domain of performance in life, certainly every domain where money can be made, is a race, either against time or against competitors.

As such it's no surprise that high IQ people (who are faster than most people) tend to be the one's who win.

5) Cunning (Machiavellian Intelligence):

Cunning, sometimes euphemistically called 'People Skills', is an advantage if not basic requirement for transcending dominance hierarchies. Nobody in the history

of the world has ever gone from the bottom of a society to the top without an above average level of cunning.

If you are capable of charming, persuading, deceiving, and reading people's personalities accurately, the probability of you transcending any hierarchy is far better than if you are incapable of doing these things.

If a lack of cunning is dragging you down, reading The 48 Laws of Power will wake you up to the game you've been playing your entire life but were never consciously aware of.

6) Stress Tolerance:

Note: 'Stress Tolerance' and 'Neuroticism' (Big 5 Personality Trait) are inverses of one another; they correlate negatively.

Those with high stress tolerances are more likely to rise up any hierarchy than those with low stress tolerances.

Fear affects performance *negatively* and as such a high stress tolerance is an advantage in any domain of performance, including the domains one must succeed in for the sake of rising up any given hierarchy.

In capitalist societies, you will find there are many high paying professions where an above average stress tolerance is a basic job requirement. Finance, Law, Sales, and Medicine are all examples.

7) Ruthlessness:

Note: 'Ruthlessness' and 'Agreeableness' (Big 5 Personality Trait) are inverses of one another; they correlate negatively.

It is both sad and true that ruthless people are far more likely to transcend any macro hierarchy than compassionate people.

In any society, there will inevitably be opportunities for a person to advance their own position at the expense of someone else; a ruthless person is likely to jump on any such opportunity whereas a compassionate person is likely to refuse any such opportunity. In the long run, this leads to ruthless people transcending macro hierarchies more often than compassionate people.

In capitalist societies, it is the case that the Big 5 Trait 'Agreeableness' and income correlate negatively. The reason for this is rather straightforward; business involves endless zero sum competition and negotiation.

Ruthless (disagreeable) people are far more comfortable with this than compassionate (agreeable) people. In the long run this leads to ruthless people making more money, if for no other reason than because they negotiate more aggressively when it comes to the matter of their own salary.

There is a paradox. For the sake of maximizing the probability of making it to the top of the hierarchy, you must be willing to use any strategy or tactic available that will be effective, even if it is immoral or harms others. At the same time, you must conceal any evil you do; you must always maintain the pretense of being a morally good person, or at least avoid the appearance of being a morally reprehensible person.

If you appear to be a monster everyone will become hostile towards you, and this will be your undoing.

Use evil for the sake of advancing your interests, while at the same time maintaining the outward appearance of virtue.

8) Looks, Halo Effect:

As Cialdini detailed in his book 'Influence' being physically attractive gives a person a 'halo effect'.

Good looking people are assumed to be more competent, more trustworthy, and more likeable than ugly people, even though in reality the correlation between physical attractiveness and competence or trustworthiness is zero.

Good looking men are more likely to be hired for jobs than ugly men, and are more likely to be promoted up corporate hierarchies than ugly men, all else equal.

In most hierarchies most of the time, being good looking is an advantage for transcending the hierarchy.

Sadly the human race is indeed this superficial.

9) Family Wealth:

In every society that has ever existed, upward mobility has been rare; rags to riches stories are sensational precisely because they are rare.

If you were born into a rich family, you have an immense advantage when it comes to making it towards the top of the macro hierarchy; you don't have to 'make it' there since you've already been born up there. All you have to do is maintain the position that has been handed to you.

In a capitalist society, there will be high paying jobs you can get for no reason other than because your parents are well connected with potential employers.

10) The Ideal:

If you had a son and wanted to maximize the probability of him being able to make it to the top of society, what traits would you give him?

- High Energy
- High IQ
- High Cunning
- High Stress Tolerance (Low Neuroticism)
- High Ruthlessness (Low Agreeableness)
- Good Looking (Halo Effect)
- Born into a Rich Family

What would be the worst possible traits to give him?

- Low Energy
- Low IQ
- Low Cunning
- Low Stress Tolerance
- Low Ruthlessness
- Ugly (Horns Effect)
- Born into a Poor Family

11) Minimum Requirements:

In modern capitalist societies the bare minimum requirements for maintaining a position high in the hierarchy are **high IQ and high energy**.

To have any hope of competing and winning, you will need an IQ of 120+ and the energy to work 60+ hours a week.

If you lack either of these, the probability of you being able to maintain a position towards the top of the hierarchy is practically zero.

12) Psychopathy, Evil's Advantage:

Many have noticed a disturbing trend; psychopathic men making it to the top of macro hierarchies. Many political and economic hierarchies are headed by psychopaths.

Why might this be?

Psychopaths experience zero compassion, zero fear, and tend to be very cunning; they are good at manipulating people.

As is consistent with the traits detailed in previous sections (Cunning, Stress Tolerance, Ruthlessness), psychopaths have 3 advantages that help them with climbing macro hierarchies; far above average cunning, far above average stress tolerance, and far above average ruthlessness.

Notably, low IQ psychopaths don't make it to the top of society; they tend to end up in prison for starting random fist fights.

High IQ psychopaths are the one's who excel at transcending hierarchies; they make excellent financiers, lawyers, and politicians.

"Dark triad behaviour is more common at the extreme poles of society, be it at the top amongst the elite monied class, or amongst gangs at the very bottom of society. They differ in resources & intellect, but share similar predatory traits. The middle class is the least dangerous." -Illimitable Man

Psychopathy is most common among the extremely rich, and the extremely poor. It is rare if ever that you will encounter a middle class psychopath.

Why is this the case?

As part of their exceptionally high stress tolerances, psychopaths tend to be *risk aggressive*. They are far more willing to use high risk high reward strategies than most people, and as a result they tend to end up being extremely rich, or poor. Using high risk high reward strategies makes the probability of ending up 'middle' class almost zero.

13) Additional Factors, Extroversion and Openness:

Extroversion is *kind of* a factor in transcending macro hierarchies, in the following sense; in some domains of performance high extroversion is an advantage, and in others low extroversion is an advantage.

In domains where charming people is critical, the enthusiasm typical of extroversion is beneficial; high extroversion is an advantage for the work in finance, law, and sales.

In domains where the ability to work for long periods of time alone in silence is critical, low extroversion is an advantage; introverts tend to be better at working in solitude. Engineering would be an example.

Creativity (measured by the Big 5 Trait 'Openness') is a high risk high reward strategy; some creative ventures are spectacularly successful, but most fail catastrophically.

A person being creative (high openness) dramatically increases the probability of them ending up rich (at the top of the macro hierarchy), and also the probability of them ending up poor (at the bottom of the macro hierarchy).

'Creative Ventures' would include becoming an artist or musician, becoming a novelist, or creating a new business model (entrepreneurship); a small chance of spectacular success, an overwhelming probability of complete failure.

14) Relevant Reading:

[Personality, IQ, and Lifetime Earnings](#) (Miriam Gensowski)

[Agreeableness and Wages](#) (Jordan Peterson)

15) IM's Reflections:

What follows are some reflections from Illimitable Man on traits that predict the ability to transcend macro hierarchies. They have been taken from his Twitter feed at random; forgive the disorganization.

"I've drilled down the capacity to make \$ to the following:

- High discipline
- Optimal hormones
- High stress tolerance
- High IQ
- High Cunning

- Be hot (Somewhat improvable)
- Be smart (Barely improvable)
- Capacity for cunning (Improvable)
- Work hard (Improvable)
- Capacity for ruthlessness (Somewhat improvable)

If you had all 5 of those it'd be practically impossible for you to not be a millionaire.

Funnily enough "work hard" is the only thing it's politically correct to say, and almost everyone attributes that solely to their success.

Just a piece in a puzzle.

Mainstream won't tell you that, as will ruin their brand. Have to keep it tame.

I missed one thing out, but it's an implicit part of "work hard" anyway. Have high energy (Improvable).

A quick thread on *THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SUCCESS* that is actually *ORIGINAL* and not rehashed unoriginal insights plagiarised from another and reworded by a random self-improvement internet guru trying to stack cash (1/x)

The 3 core pillars of success as I see them are:

- Energy/Health
- Intelligence/IQ
- Cunning/Persuasion

Energy & health is your base. You can't do much without it. You could have a 150 IQ and be a strategic mastermind who can mingle with the best of them.

Low energy = low success

Energy is not a talent, but it is necessary to leverage your talents----

Step 0 in any quest for self-improvement is energy maximisation.

This is why "eat clean and exercise" is fundamental

This is also why I emphatically emphasise hormonal optimisation as a necessity for greatness-----

Most people bitch on the internet about the risks of messing with hormones

But if your hormones are not at optimised, you will never be at the top

Health is king

The risks are blown to fuck and pure FUD anyway

If you're not willing to take risks stay at the little boy's table

You can binge on all the self-improvement wisdom in the world and live it as some weird kind of vicarious lifestyle where you *ABSORB WHAT TO DO*--

But never actually *DO WHAT MUST BE DONE*

If you are low energy, will you be able to execute and manifest what you've learned?

No.

Drug use is common at the elite level

Finance guys like their stims, eg: modafinil, adderall - this allows them to get more done

Creative and artistic types like their psychedelics, eg: LSD/shrooms this helps them connect with beauty and tackle problems in a divergent manner

Summarising health section:

There are drugs that can be used in a save and sparing manner to boost performance

High energy is necessary for execution

If you're not high energy, becoming high energy is your main focus before anything else

Strive for elite hormone levels

Once you're high energy & can actually apply what you learn, what's next?

I will start with cunning & persuasion as anybody can learn this
Cunning or "street smarts" is not a shady evil to avoid

It is necessary to do well in life, or you will undersell yourself & be exploited

The people with the cleanest images are often some of the most cunning.

Being cunning is not tantamount to being unethical.

It is more a case of concealing your intent and methods whilst being able to understand other's intentions and methods and planning your moves accordingly

A common pairing I see is high IQ-low cunning and low IQ-high cunning

I would say the average low IQ is more cunning than the average high IQ.

Nerds are basically high IQ people who are low in cunning.

"Normies" are essentially low to average IQ people who are high in cunning.

Not all high IQ people are nerds. High IQ people who are cunning are in the most elite positions in the world - think of "people who excel in finance & law"

They are all high IQ and cunning. Many psychopath types as well within this demographic, but that's for another discussion

High IQ people who are low cunning can become high cunning

And low IQ people who are low cunning can become high cunning

But a high cunning low IQ person cannot become high IQ.

Until we master genetic engineering, your IQ is genetically fixed within a couple of points.

So how to become more cunning?

Read books on the topic, eg: Greene & Cialdini.

Use the corporate environment as your battlefield to hone this skill--

Dissect the personal qualities and components of the strategies employed by cunning people you meet.

You will suffer to improve.

Low cunning is the reason many people do not excel in office environments and lose out on favour, promotions

If you can't play the game, you will get fucked over

If you think being able to strategise is unethical or beneath you, realise you sacrifice success to hold this belief

Energy is your fuel for conquering

Cunning is how you optimise social outcomes

So what does that leave?

Intelligence

You cannot improve this, but u can make the best of what you've got by leveraging ***WHAT YOU DO HAVE*** to improve your reasoning and learn from your betters.-

If you're low IQ, you're in for a rough life, but if you're cunning you can at least lean on that to have a measure of success. You can probably become middle class-

As I said earlier, not all high IQs are fragile nerds.

High IQ people who are cunning will wreck you. Avoid them.

Intelligence is your ability to tackle complexity

Irrespective of your IQ level, ***BEING DRIVEN*** goes a long way to improving your mind's quality

You should read philosophy & master logic if your IQ is high enough to support these functions

Otherwise, read non-fiction regularly

Intelligence is not only your ability to tackle complexity, but likewise the speed with which you can absorb, understand & retain new information

A low IQ can never be a doctor or a lawyer even if they study for 10, 20, 30 yrs

Don't go into academia if you're not actually smart

Work ethic & discipline is ***ESSENTIAL*** to success

BUT

It's entirely dependent on energy

You can't be a hard working and disciplined person when your mind is foggy and all your body wants to do is shut down

Beating fatigue might make you hard working

Which means more \$\$\$

To summarise this entire thread with bulletpoints and a plan of action

Your plan should look like this:

Step 0: Master/optimize energy levels

Step 1: Train self with good habits to cultivate discipline

Step 2: Leverage your IQ by practicing cunning

Step 3: Constantly learn