



**92Y “7 DAYS OF GENIUS FESTIVAL” COMMISSIONS SURVEY  
TO DELVE INTO AMERICAN OPINIONS ON ‘GENIUS’**

***Edelman Berland Study Reveals Great Divide between Men and Women’s Perceptions of Genius;  
Generation Gap Widens between Boomers and Millennials on How They Value Intellect***

**NEW YORK, NY: February 25** – ‘Genius’ is used so often in today’s vernacular that one might wonder if the word has lost its meaning – or if that meaning has taken on a new shape.

92Y’s ***7 Days of Genius Festival: Venture into the Extraordinary***, a week-long festival with events in several cities and online, is designed to delve into the topic of genius; as part of the Festival, 92Y commissioned Edelman Berland to survey over 2,000 Americans to understand the physical, emotional and intellectual qualities that make someone considered a genius in today’s society. Results revealed that more than half of Americans (53%) surveyed believe the word ‘genius’ is over-used. There is also a divide between generations and genders on what really constitutes a mastermind. A whopping 90% of Americans – regardless of gender – report that geniuses tend to be male.

Thirty-six percent of Americans wouldn’t even want to be a genius, and over half (53%) confessed they believe geniuses are deeply flawed, with 84% of respondents saying geniuses are ‘strange’ and 82% imagining geniuses would be less fun to party with than non-geniuses.

As to whether genius is a matter of “nature” or “nurture,” 79% of those surveyed feel geniuses are born, not made.

The results do seem to paint a complex and divided picture of perceptions about today’s smartest citizens. Older respondents admit they would not want to be geniuses – with only 37% of Americans 55+ saying that they would like to be a genius. Fifty-seven percent of their more optimistic millennial counterparts say they would like to be a genius. In fact, the study found that as Americans age, they become less likely to think we even need more geniuses in the world. That said, nine out of ten (91%) believe there are geniuses among us.

When describing the attributes of a genius, Americans believe most geniuses impact the world in a positive way. According to 70% of respondents, geniuses impact society at large and not just themselves. Seventy-five percent say that one does not have to achieve recognition to be considered a genius.

The second annual ***7 Days of Genius Festival: Venture into the Extraordinary*** runs March 1 – 8, live from the nonprofit’s storied stage in New York City, from satellite venues around the country and with original online content. The Festival, a nation-wide conversation on and off-line, features luminaries from the worlds of science, technology, religion, art, music, film, literature and business. The ***7 Days of***

*Genius Festival* website is also hosting interactive online content with partner organizations and online social dialogue at #7DaysofGenius and [www.92Y.org/genius](http://www.92Y.org/genius).

“92Y hosts conversations with some of the best minds of our generation, and we are increasingly able to share those discussions with a much broader population through digital technology and festivals like *7 Days of Genius*,” said Henry Timms, executive director of 92Y. “The Edelman Berland survey provides a fascinating ‘people’s perspective’ on the topic and is sure to spark conversations about how we understand genius and its role in society, science and the future.”

“I think this puts the life of genius in America into focus,” said Edelman Berland CEO and Genius Pollster, Mike Berland. “We’re torn on whether they’re strange or social, nearly perfect or deeply flawed – but we agree: geniuses find solutions to unsolved problems, and we as a society need more of them.”

**The Genius in US: 7 Days of Genius Poll Powered by Edelman Berland** was conducted over February 6–9, 2015 among a nationally representative sample of 2,043 general population Americans. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.17\%$ . Full results are available at [92Y.org/genius](http://92Y.org/genius).

*7 Days of Genius* receives generous support from individuals and organizations, including the John Templeton Foundation. MSNBC is the *7 Days of Genius* Marquee Media Partner. Content partners include Big Think, Medium, *National Geographic Live*, mental\_floss, and NYU Skirball Center. The initial line-up of organizations participating in education programming planned in conjunction with *7 Days of Genius* are Discovery Education, Flatiron School, Girls Who Code, The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, Liberty Science Center, MadaTech - The Israel National Museum of Science, Technology & Space, Maker State, Museum of Math, New York Hall of Science, NYC FIRST, and The Pixel Academy. **For a full list of *7 Days of Genius* at 92Y Programming visit [92Y.org/genius](http://92Y.org/genius)**

## ABOUT 92Y

92nd Street Y is a world-class, nonprofit cultural and community center that fosters the mental, physical and spiritual health of people throughout their lives, offering: wide-ranging conversations with the world’s best minds; an outstanding range of programming in the performing, visual and literary arts; fitness and sports programs; and activities for children and families. 92Y is reimagining what it means to be a community center in the digital age with initiatives like the award-winning #GivingTuesday, launched by 92Y in 2012 and now recognized across the US and in a growing number of regions worldwide as a day to celebrate and promote giving. These kinds of initiatives are transforming the way people share ideas and translate them into action both locally and around the world. More than 300,000 people visit 92Y annually; millions more participate in 92Y’s digital and online initiatives. A proudly Jewish institution, 92Y embraces its Jewish heritage and welcomes people of all backgrounds and perspectives. For more information, visit [www.92Y.org](http://www.92Y.org).

**About Edelman Berland:** Edelman Berland is a global insights and analytics firm that provides corporate, non-profit and government clients with strategic intelligence to make their communications and engagements with stakeholders the smartest they can be. The firm specializes in qualitative and quantitative research, measurement, tracking and analysis in reputation, branding and communications. Edelman Berland is part of Edelman, the world’s largest public relations company. Edelman Berland has more than 150 employees in offices around the world. For more information, please visit [www.edelmanberland.com](http://www.edelmanberland.com).

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