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Intelligence blogging

[T]here is one way in which individuals can make their own luck. He or she can internalize the goal of seeking challenging cognitive environments -- seeking intellectual challenges all the way from choosing the right leisure activities to wanting to marry someone who is intellectually stimulating. The best chance of enjoying enhanced cognitive skills is to fall in love with ideas, or intelligent conversation, or intelligent books, or some intellectual pursuit. If I do that, I create within my own mind a stimulating mental environment that accompanies me wherever I go. Then I am relatively free of needing good luck to enjoy a rich cognitive environment. I have constant and instant access to a portable gymnasium that exercises the mind. Books and ideas and analyzing things are easier to transport than a basketball court. No one can keep me from using mental arithmetic so habitually that my arithmetical skills survive.

James R. Flynn, *What is Intelligence?*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007, p. 87.

So marry the smartest person you can find, read books like Flynn's, and take challenging classes in high school and college. The nice thing about the practical wisdom resulting from the Dickens/Flynn model (that is, the model of intelligence that results in the above characterization of individuals making their own luck) is that it can't hurt. Even if you don't actually gain intelligence, IQ, from taking harder classes, what do you have to lose? (Grade grubbers who only care about an impressive GPA to show the law schools need not comment.)

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Books at 07:51