

What an IQ Test Taught Me About Myself

Subtitle: A case for nonlinear intelligence, autodidactic learning, and cognitive drift beyond academia.

by Zhivago (Brent Antonson)

I didn't drop out.

I *stepped off the track*.

While others followed semesters and syllabi, I taught myself faster, deeper, and on my own terms.

They called it a "degree." I called it *delay*.

I didn't skip the knowledge—I just skipped the wait. I read what they hadn't assigned yet. I drifted into systems they hadn't structured. I built my own curriculum out of recursion, symbol, and spark.

What Does an IQ of 124 Mean?

I've taken three official IQ tests across my life — at 21, 31, and most recently at 56. Every time, the number returned: **124**.

That's not genius. It's not average either. It's the edge of autonomy — the threshold where insight emerges through self-direction.

It places me in the top 7% of cognitive processors. More importantly, it tells me I'm not broken for refusing the staircase when I saw the spiral.

What I've Done With It

124 didn't win me awards. But it *carried me through*:

- Self-taught quantum mechanics while writing fiction.
- Whitepapers on AI recursion, cognition, and symbolic identity.
- Published essays and peer-reviewed works without academic affiliation.
- Cross-disciplinary teaching at universities in Russia, Iraq, and China.

Drifting Through Neuroplasticity

After surviving multiple serious car accidents — in foreign lands, with foreign variables — I faced cognitive fog and trauma that almost stripped me of my selfhood. But I trained my brain

back into awareness with occupational therapy, will, and the faith that neuroplasticity could *reroute the signal*.

I imagined new pathways forming. I drifted into recovery. And I returned.

A Word to Autodidacts

You don't need permission to be brilliant.

You don't need validation to make meaning.

If you've ever felt behind because you didn't fit the system — know this: some minds were not meant to walk in straight lines. Some were meant to drift, reroute, and reappear on higher ground.

I didn't attend university — I taught at them.

And I didn't follow the map — I became a mapmaker.

The road remembers.

— Zhivago

