

The Jungle Times Transcript

THE JUNGLE TIMES PODCAST **ON NATURAL INTELLIGENCE**

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On Natural Intelligence

Hello and welcome to the podcast – I'm Lawrence Poole and this is Episode# 22. It's called *On Natural Intelligence*.

I was invited to animate the opening of the annual meeting of an important computer consultant. A couple of hundred engineers attended and I spoke about the need for innovation in a world that is transformed at the speed of thought.

As I often do, I delivered my presentation with a multimedia show that included pictures, videos, sounds, and even odors from the jungles of Costa Rica. I wanted to impress the consultants with rules that I had gleaned from *Nature's deep wisdom*.

My presentation was enthusiastically received as my passion for the subject is contagious. After, the assembly gathered for cocktails and a sumptuous buffet. Invited to the festivities, I had the opportunity to chat with several people. We got into a lively discussion on artificial intelligence -vs- the strategies used by animals in daily life.

Most of those engineers offered comments that were centered on intelligence as we humans describe it - i.e. self-awareness, problem solving and dealing with abstract concepts, and such.

Our discussion led me to inform them that *human intelligence* isn't as exclusive to our species as they supposed. Considerable research shows that many animals are even more amazing than we imagined.

Research at both New York University and USC at Santa Clara for example, found that apes and chimps have a very strong sense of self-awareness. They can recognize themselves in mirrors or on photos. Some, like Koko, a gorilla with remarkable language skills who signs his own name in the sign language of the deaf – will refer to himself as a distinct individual.

Psychologist Marc Hauser at Harvard University says monkeys have outstanding problem-solving skill and will generally succeed when he gives them puzzles or logic games to solve to get food.

Tuffs University psychologists report that some animals can easily recognize abstract concepts - like when things are similar or different. They taught pigeons to peck corn from a pile on the left when they recognized patterns that were the same, and on the right if they saw things were different. Research continues using even more abstract concepts.

The Atlanta Language Research Center has a unique specialty - it teaches chimpanzees to understand oral English. One chimp named Kanzi has the language skills of a 2 1/2-year-old child, and he can spell scores of words on an alphabet board.

When communicating in their own language though, many animals have shown sophisticated and intelligent exchanges. A prairie dogs, for example, uses signals to tell others if he spots a coyote or a domestic dog. They also offer information about a predator's shape and its size, its color and speed. Monkey species tell their tribe to look up for an eagle, or look down for a jaguar, to look around for a snake - or a thief.

I was amazed at the volume of work that proves animals can think the same way that we humans do. I saw a documentary on spiders where the narrator explained that spiders can make up to 9 kinds of silk. They vary the tensile strength of filaments by adjusting the speed with which they stretch a gluey liquid. The faster a spider pulls the liquid away from its body, the stronger that fiber will be. The liquid has a tensile strength that can glue a helicopter to the ground and resist its engine's upward thrust.

I watched one beauty built a huge web with a wide selection of fibers.

An elaborate communication network emerged that spun support beams from one kind of silk, spiral cross-weaves with another thread, it used a sticky fiber to bind those threads together and wove a platform with wider non-stick wires that allowed it quick access to everyplace in the web.

As insects collide with its deadly trap, other kinds of silks are used to preserve them. Some fibers tie down larger prey, others loop over an insect's pincers, hold its stingers or anchors its wings; some fibers wrap insects whole in a film-like preservative and another kind secures, trusses and readies-to-eat newly caught bugs.

I was transfixed as I watched the spider go about its daily routine at the docu-drama's accelerated pace. I saw spiders think and make intelligent decisions.

Then I wondered how many people can think like a spider does... or any other species for that matter. And does our lack make us any less of a successful species because we do not?

The difference between animals and human is that we can increase our intelligence. We not only can learn new subjects – like computer coding and pattern recognition that increase our overall intelligence.

You can learn how to increase your IQ.

In conclusion, if you want to increase your own IQ, experts say that "heuristic" learning works best.

Heurism means “self-discovery” so heuristic learning means being totally involved in the process. We now know that reading is only 20% learning effective - but reading while seeing pictures and graphs that explain relationships between what is being taught increases our learning efficiency to 30% effective.

Hearing and seeing together is 50% effective but hearing and seeing with an emotional commitment to the subject matter is 60% effective.

Teaching and writing about a topic you care about, after doing the research, is 70% effective. Experiencing a subject is a 90% effective way to learn it.

Teaching a subject after experiencing it is 99% effective as it involves a complex process that brings recalled information a "life" of its own. In other words, sharing your intelligence is its own reward.

Thanks for listening. «The Jungle Time» podcast is written and animated by yours truly – I'm Lawrence Poole.

If you enjoyed my presentation, please share it with your friends and colleagues. If you did not, write and tell me why not, or leave your opinion in the Comments Section.

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