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**Why I Always Assume That I'm Below Average**

[Derek Sivers](http://www.businessinsider.com/author/derek-sivers), [Sivers.org](http://sivers.org/)Dec. 10, 2012, 1:47 PM3,346[1](http://www.businessinsider.com/why-i-assume-im-below-average-2012-12#comments)

[Some will always say you're wrong](http://sivers.org/wrong)

96% of cancer patients in a hospital claim to be in better health than the average cancer patient.

93% of motorists consider themselves to be safer-than-average drivers.

90% students see themselves as more intelligent than the average student.

94% of college professors said they are better-than-average teachers.

Ironically, 92% said they are less biased than average, too.

The psychology term for this is illusory superiority.

To me, this was like finding out I'm a cylon, or this is the [Matrix](http://www.businessinsider.com/blackboard/matrix). Hard to accept facts. At first, like almost everybody, I thought, “Yes, but I really am above average!” Then I realized I was doing it again. So I decided to gamble on the opposite:

I now just assume I'm below average.

It serves me well.

I listen more. I ask a lot of questions. I've stopped thinking others are stupid. I assume most people are smarter than me.

To assume you're below average is to admit you're a beginner. It puts you in student mode. It keeps your focus on present practice and future possibilities, and away from any past accomplishments. Most people are so worried about looking good that they never do anything great.

Most people are so worried about doing something great that they never do anything at all.

You destroy that paralysis when you think of yourself as such a beginner that just doing anything is an accomplishment.

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