Eccentric Genius

Paul Erdős—Hungarian number theorist—is among the most prolific mathematicians and producers of mathematical conjectures of the 20th century. He was so devoted to his work that he chose not to marry and lived out of a suitcase. He is said to have often showed up at his colleagues’ doorsteps without notice, saying “My brain is open”, after which he would work on problems for a day or two before moving on. In his later years he worked on math 19 to 20 hours a day and published about 1,500 important papers!

His friends, as a tribute to his enormous output, created the Erdős number that describes the ‘collaborative distance’ between Paul Erdős and another person.