

Title: "How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci"

Author: Michael J. Gelb

Publisher: Dell Publishing, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036

Length: 321 pages

Price: \$16.00

Reading time: 8-10 hours

Reading rating: 10 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

Limits exist only in mind. The author, using this book, argues that genius is made, not born. To drive this point, the author uses Leonardo Da Vinci's seven principles and advocates their use so that you can be successful in everything you do. Why Leonardo Da Vinci's principles? You may ask. Leonardo was considered the greatest genius.

Perhaps, the world knows about Leonard Da Vinci more for his paintings such as Mona Lisa and the Last Supper. In fact, he was anatomist, engineer, botanist, architect, chef, city planner, inventor, musician, military scientist, mathematician, painter, and many more. As an inventor, to name a few, he made plans for parachute, helicopter; and as a military engineer, he developed plans for guided missile and submarine. This book reveals multi-faceted personality of this genius to inspire readers. The seven Da Vinci principles discussed in this book are briefly presented here.

Curiosita: We should engage our minds to improve the quality of our life and these thoughts should reflect the purpose of life. Curiosity leads to continuous learning and keeps the intellect active. Most business inventions are inspired by questioning or challenging a given situation or object.

Dimonstrazione: Learning through experience is desirable and experience is an excellent source of wisdom. A commitment to test knowledge through experience and independent thinking are critical for learning. We should treat mistakes as opportunities for learning and learn from others' mistakes too. We should not let our experience-based judgment be overruled by people in authority or by so-called experts.

Sensazione: We experience the world through our sensory organs – sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. While experiencing the world through these senses, you should be active. Be sensitive to color harmonies, be an active listener and enjoy silence, understand that smell affects your emotions, discern the flavor contributions of various food ingredients, and develop sensitivity to touch and get a feel of every surface you touch.

Sfumato: Ability to maintain an open mind in the face of uncertainty is considered the most powerful secret of unleashing your creativity. The key is openness and willingness to embrace ambiguity, and uncertainty. After all, change is integral part of life and your success depends on how you can manage the change.

Arte/Scienza: It is important to develop a balance between science and art, logic and imagination – what is known as whole-brain thinking. You should give importance to details and rely on logic, and organization; at the same time, you should also be imaginative and look at the big picture.

Corporalita: Leonardo Da Vinci was known for his poise, grace, athleticism, and extraordinary physique. These attributes add to remarkable energy. However, not everyone is bestowed with such physical qualities and we can remain healthy and active. You must exercise lightly, and eat simple vegetarian food to maintain good physical energy, fitness, and poise. Learning to juggle, it seems, is an excellent way to develop ambidexterity, balance, and mind-body coordination. Remember that body influences mind.

Connessione: We must recognize and appreciate the interconnectedness of all things. In corporate world, we practice it as systems thinking. According to the author, concepts such as learning organizations and total quality are the outcomes of *Connessione*.

The author, Michael J. Gelb (www.michaelgelb.com), has used his extensive consulting experience to write this great book. The author is a renowned writer, trainer, and management consultant. His clients, to name a few, include General Electric, General Motors, IBM, Microsoft, KPMG, National Public Radio, United States Army, and Xerox. Gelb provides great insights about Leonard Da Vinci and encourages readers to follow Da Vinci's thinking style by supporting it with examples from business world. Several self-assessment exercises are also included in the book. The author concludes that the essence of Leonardo's legacy is inspiration for wisdom to win over fear. This book is a source of great insights and philosophy about life for all ages.

Vittal S. Anantatmula, D.Sc PMP CCE (<http://paws.wcu.edu/vittal>) is an assistant professor of management in the College of Business, Western Carolina University. Dr. Anantatmula has worked in the petroleum and power industries for several years. As a consultant, he worked with the World Bank, Arthur Andersen, and other international consulting firms. Dr. Anantatmula is a certified Project Management Professional and Certified Cost Engineer. He is a member of PMI and AACE. His academic qualifications include B.E. (Electrical Engineering), MBA, MS, and D.Sc. in Engineering Management. Before joining Western Carolina University, he worked as the Program Director of the Project Management degree program, School of Business, The George Washington University, Washington, DC. He has several journal and conference publications to his credit. He is a co-author of the book, *Project Planning Techniques*. For previously reviewed books, visit our Web site at www.wcu.edu/cob/.