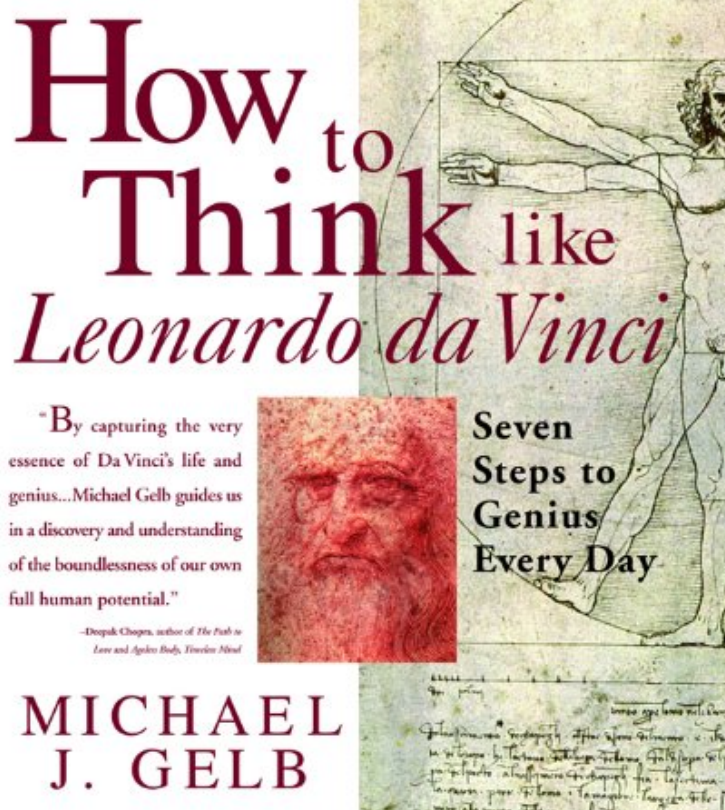


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How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven Steps to Genius Every Day

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With a New Preface by the Author



Par Michael J. Gelb
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurGenius is made, not born. And human beings are gifted with an almost unlimited potential for learning and creativity. Now you can uncover your own hidden abilities, sharpen your senses, and liberate your unique intelligenceby following the example of the greatest genius of all time, Leonardo da Vinci.Acclaimed author Michael J. Gelb, who has helped thousands of people expand their minds to accomplish more than they ever thought possible, shows you how. Drawing on Da Vinci's notebooks, inventions, and legendary works of art, Gelb introduces Seven Da Vincian Principlesthe essential elements of geniusfrom curiosit, the insatiably curious approach to life to connessione, the appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things. With Da Vinci as your inspiration, you will discover an exhilarating new way of thinking. And step-by-step, through exercises and provocative lessons, you will harness the powerand awesome wonderof your own genius, mastering such life-changing abilities as: Problem solving Creative thinking Self-expression Enjoying the world around you Goal setting and life balance Harmonizing body and mindDrawing on Da Vinci's notebooks, inventions, and legendary works of art, acclaimed author

Michael J. Gelb, introduces seven Da Vincian principles, the essential elements of genius, from *curiosita*, the insatiably curious approach to life, to *connessione*, the appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things. With Da Vinci as their inspiration, readers will discover an exhilarating new way of thinking. Step-by-step, through exercises and provocative lessons, anyone can harness the power and awesome wonder of their own genius, mastering such life-changing skills as problem solving, creative thinking, self-expression, goal setting and life balance, and harmonizing body and mind. From the Trade Paperback

edition. **Extrait Introduction: Your Brain Is Much Better Than You Think** Although it is hard to overstate Leonardo da Vinci's brilliance, recent scientific research reveals that you probably underestimate your own capabilities. You are gifted with virtually unlimited potential for learning and creativity. Ninety-five percent of what we know about the capabilities of the human brain has been learned in the last twenty years. Our schools, universities, and corporations are only beginning to apply this emerging understanding of human potential. Let's set the stage for learning how to think like Leonardo by considering the contemporary view of intelligence and some results of the investigation into the nature and extent of your brain's potential. Most of us grew up with a concept of intelligence based on the traditional IQ test. The IQ test was originated by Alfred Binet (1857-1911) to measure, objectively, comprehension, reasoning, and judgment. Binet was motivated by a powerful enthusiasm for the emerging discipline of psychology and a desire to overcome the cultural and class prejudices of late nineteenth-century France in the assessment of children's academic potential. Although the traditional concept of IQ was a breakthrough at the time of its formulation, contemporary research shows that it suffers from two significant flaws. The first flaw is the idea that intelligence is fixed at birth and immutable. Although individuals are endowed genetically with more or less talent in a given area, researchers such as Buzan, Machado, Wenger, and many others have shown that IQ scores can be raised significantly through appropriate training. In a recent statistical review of more than two hundred studies of IQ published in the journal *Nature*, Bernard Devlin concluded that genes account for no more than 48 percent of IQ. Fifty-two percent is a function of prenatal care, environment, and education. The second weakness in the commonly held concept of intelligence is the idea that the verbal and mathematical reasoning skills measured by IQ tests (and SATs) are the *sine qua non*s of intelligence. This narrow view of intelligence has been thoroughly debunked by contemporary psychological research. In his modern classic, *Frames of Mind* (1983), psychologist Howard Gardner introduced the theory of multiple intelligences, which posits that each of us possesses at least seven measurable intelligences (in later work Gardner and his colleagues catalogued twenty-five different subintelligences). The seven intelligences, and some genius exemplars (other than Leonardo da Vinci, who was a genius in all of these areas) of each one, are: Logical-Mathematical Stephen Hawking, Isaac Newton, Marie Curie Verbal-Linguistic William Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Jorge Luis Borges Spatial-Mechanical Michelangelo, Georgia O'Keeffe, Buckminster Fuller Musical Mozart, George Gershwin, Ella Fitzgerald Bodily-Kinesthetic Morihei Ueshiba, Muhammad Ali, F. M. Alexander Interpersonal-Social Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Queen Elizabeth I Intrapersonal (Self-knowledge) Viktor Frankl, Thich Nhat Hanh, Mother Teresa The theory of multiple intelligences is now accepted widely and when combined with the realization that intelligence can be developed throughout life, offers a powerful inspiration for aspiring Renaissance men and women. In addition to expanding the understanding of the nature and scope of intelligence, contemporary psychological research has revealed startling truths about the extent of your potential. We can summarize the results with the phrase: Your brain is much better than you think. Appreciating your phenomenal cortical endowment is a marvelous point of departure for a practical study of Da Vincian thinking. Contemplate the following: your brain is more flexible and multidimensional than any supercomputer. can learn seven facts per second, every second, for the rest of your life and still have plenty of room left to learn more. will improve with age if you use it properly. is not just in your head. According to renowned neuroscientist Dr. Candace Pert, ". . . intelligence is located not only in the brain but in cells that are distributed throughout the body.... The traditional separation of mental processes, including emotions, from the body is no longer valid." is unique. Of the six billion people currently living and the more than ninety billion people who have ever lived, there has never, unless you are an identical twin, been anyone quite like you. Your creative gifts, your fingerprints, your expressions, your DNA, your dreams, are unprecedented and unique. is capable of making a virtually unlimited number of synaptic connections or potential patterns of thought. This last point was established first by Pyotr Anokhin of Moscow University, a student of the legendary psychological pioneer Ivan Pavlov. Anokhin staggered the entire scientific community when he published his research in 1968 demonstrating that the minimum number of potential thought patterns the average brain can make is the number 1 followed

by 10.5 million kilometers of typewritten zeros. Anokhin compared the human brain to "a multidimensional musical instrument that could play an infinite number of musical pieces simultaneously." He emphasized that each of us is gifted with a birthright of virtually unlimited potential. And he proclaimed that no man or woman, past or present, has fully explored the capacities of the brain. Anokhin would probably agree, however, that Leonardo da Vinci could serve as a most inspiring example for those of us wishing to explore our full capacities.

LEARNING FROM LEONARDO Baby ducks learn to survive by imitating their mothers. Learning through imitation is fundamental to many species, including humans. As we become adults, we have a unique advantage: we can choose whom and what to imitate. We can also consciously choose new models to replace the ones we outgrow. It makes sense, therefore, to choose the best "role models" to guide and inspire us toward the realization of our potential. So, if you want to become a better golfer, study Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, and Tiger Woods. If you want to become a leader, study Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, and Queen Elizabeth I. And if you want to be a Renaissance man or woman, study Leon Battista Alberti, Thomas Jefferson, Hildegard von Bingen, and best of all, Leonardo da Vinci.

In *The Book of Genius* Tony Buzan and Raymond Keene make the world's first objective attempt to rank the greatest geniuses of history. Rating their subjects in categories including "Originality," "Versatility," "Dominance-in-Field," "Universality-of-Vision," and "Strength and Energy," they offer the following as their "top ten."

10. Albert Einstein
9. Phidias (architect of Athens)
8. Alexander the Great
7. Thomas Jefferson
6. Sir Isaac Newton
5. Michelangelo
4. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
3. The Great Pyramid Builders
2. William Shakespeare
1. Leonardo da Vinci

And the greatest genius of all time, according to Buzan and Keene's exhaustive research? Leonardo da Vinci. As Giorgio Vasari wrote of Leonardo in the original version of his *The Lives of the Artists*, "Heaven sometimes sends us beings who represent not humanity alone but divinity itself, so that taking them as our models and imitating them, our minds and the best of our intelligence may approach the highest celestial spheres.

Experience shows that those who are led to study and follow the traces of these marvelous geniuses, even if nature gives them little or no help, may at least approach the supernatural works that participate in his divinity. Our evolving understanding of the multiplicity of intelligence and the capacities of the brain suggests that nature gives us more help than we might have imagined.

In *How to Think like Leonardo da Vinci* we will "study and follow the traces" of this most marvelous of all geniuses, bringing his wisdom and inspiration to your life, every day.

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO GENIUS In the pages that follow you will learn a practical approach, tested in experience, for applying the essential elements of Leonardo's genius to enrich your life. You will discover an exhilarating, original way of seeing and enjoying your world as you develop powerful strategies for creative thinking and new approaches to self-expression. You'll learn proven techniques for sharpening your senses, liberating your unique intelligence, and harmonizing body and mind.

With Leonardo as your inspiration, you will make your life a work of art. Although you may already be familiar with Da Vinci's life and work, you'll finish this book with a fresh perspective and a deeper appreciation for this most enigmatic figure. Looking at the world from his point of view, you may also get a taste of the loneliness genius brings. But I guarantee that you'll be uplifted by his spirit, inspired by his quest, and exalted by your association with him.

The book begins with a capsule review of the Renaissance and its parallels with our time, followed by a biographical sketch of Leonardo and a summary of his major accomplishments. The heart of the book is the discussion of the Seven Da Vincian Principles. These principles are drawn from an intensive study of the man and his methods. I've named them in Leonardo's native Italian. The good news is that Leonardo's principles will probably be intuitively obvious to you. You do not have to try to invent them in your life. Rather, like much of common sense, they need to be remembered, developed, and applied.

The Seven Da Vincian Principles are:

- Curiosita** An insatiably curious approach to life and an unrelenting quest for continuous learning.
- Dimostrazione** A commitment to test knowledge through experience, persistence, and a willingness to learn from mistakes.
- Sensazione** The continual refinement of the senses, especially sight, as the means to enliven experience.
- Sfumato** (literally "Going up in Smoke") A willingness to embrace ambiguity, paradox, and uncertainty.
- Arte/Scienza** The development of the balance between science and art, logic and imagination. "Whole-brain" thinking.
- Corporalita** The cultivation of grace, ambidexterity, fitness, and poise.
- Conessione** A recognition of and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things and phenomena.

Systems thinking. Having read this far, you are already applying the first Da Vincian principle. Curiosity the quest for continuous learning comes first because the desire to know, to learn, and to grow is the powerhouse of knowledge, wisdom, and discovery. If you are interested in thinking for yourself and freeing your mind from limiting habits and preconceptions, then you are on track for the second principle: *Dimostrazione*. In his search for truth, Da

Vinci insisted on questioning conventional wisdom. He used the word *dimostrazione* to express the importance of learning for oneself, through practical experience. Pause for a few moments, and recall the times in the past year when you felt most vividly alive. Chances are, your senses were heightened. Our third principle *Sensazione* focuses on sharpening the senses, consciously. Leonardo believed that refining sensory awareness was the key to enriching experience. As you sharpen your senses, probe the depths of experience, and awaken your childlike powers of questioning, you will encounter increasing uncertainty and ambiguity.

"Confusion endurance" is the most distinctive trait of highly creative people, and Leonardo probably possessed more of that trait than anyone who has ever lived. Principle number four *Sfumato* guides you to be more at home with the unknown, to make friends with paradox. For balance and creativity to emerge from uncertainty requires principle number five *Arte/Scienza* or what we now call whole-brain thinking. But Da

Vinci believed that balance was more than just mental. He exemplified and affirmed the importance of principle number six *Corporalita* the balance of body and mind. And if you appreciate patterns, relationships, connections, and systems if you seek to understand how your dreams, goals, values, and highest aspirations can be integrated into your daily life then you are already applying principle number seven: *Connessione*.

Connessione ties everything together. Each principle is highlighted by excerpts from the maestro's notebooks and illustrated with his sketches or paintings. This illumination is followed by some questions for reflection and self-assessment. These questions are designed to stimulate your thinking and inspire your application of the principles. The questions are followed by a program of practical exercises for cultivating a personal and

professional Renaissance. To get the most benefit from *How to Think like Leonardo da Vinci*, read the whole book first, without doing the exercises. Just contemplate the questions for reflection and self-assessment. After this preview, review the explanation of each principle and then do the exercises. Some of the exercises are easy and fun, while others require challenging inner work. All are designed to bring the spirit of the maestro to your daily life. In addition to the exercises, you will find an annotated reading and

resource list to guide you in exploring and applying each principle. The reading list includes recommendations on the Renaissance, the history of ideas, the nature of genius, and, of course, the life and work of Leonardo. In the final section of the book you will discover "The Beginner's Da Vinci Drawing Course," and you'll also learn how you can participate in a history-making project that embodies the essence

of the Da Vincian spirit. *Revue de presse* "By capturing the very essence of Da Vinci's life and genius... Michael Gelb guides us in a discovery and understanding of the boundlessness of our own full human potential." Deepak Chopra, author of *The Path to Love and Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* "A brilliant,

practical guide to awakening and training our vast, unused resources of intelligence and ability." Ted Hughes, author of *Birthday Letters* "Buy it. Read it! Live it!" Tony Buzan, author of *The Book of Genius and The Mind Map Book* From the Trade Paperback edition.