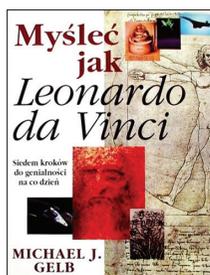


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Is Everyone a Genius? A Review  
of the Book by Michael J. Gelb,  
*How to think like Leonardo da Vinci.  
Seven Steps to Genius Every Day,*  
Wydawnictwo Rebis, Poznań 2017,  
338 pages

Czy każdy jest geniuszem?  
Recenzja książki Michaela Gelba,  
*Myśleć jak Leonardo da Vinci,  
Siedem kroków do genialności  
na co dzień,* Wydawnictwo Rebis,  
Poznań 2017, ss. 338

Michael J. Gelb, the author of this inspirational book, is generally regarded as a modern day Renaissance man. He is fascinated by attempts to explain the essence of creativity, balancing the body and mind and exploring the tremendous potential of human beings. He was born 1952 and is an author and public speaker specializing in creativity and innovation. He is the founder and president of The High Performance Learning Center, a firm specializing in consulting and training for organizations interested in developing more innovative cultures

of work. He also co-directs, with Professor James Clawson, the *Leading Innovation: Thinking Creatively for Positive Change* Seminar at the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business. His latest book (published in September 2017) is *The Art of Connection: 7 Relationship-Building Skills Every Leader Needs Now*. Gelb has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Philosophy from Clark University, and an MA in Mind and Body Education from Goddard College. Gelb's work has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *Training Magazine* and he has also appeared on *Good Morning America*, CNN's *Business Unusual* and on radio programs including live interviews with NPR and the BBC World Service<sup>1</sup>.

The author was inspired by Leonardo de Vinci, recognized as the genius of his age, who has always been very modest, calling himself “*a man without education*”, “*a student without experience*”, – always open for new knowledge and checking the truth.

At the beginning of the book, the author suggests that people do not appreciate their true potential. He claims that, according to research, 99% of the knowledge about the brain has been discovered in the last twenty years. He proposes some other methods for measuring talent than the intelligence test of Alfred Binet (1857-1911). He suggests that intelligence can be developed by means of certain exercises, thus rejecting determinism and agreeing with Howard Gardner and the multivariate explanation of intelligence. The author says “your brain works much more efficiently than you think. Noticing the extraordinary abilities of our own cortex is a great starting point for practical learning thinking in the Leonardo da Vinci style. (...) In addition, it will work more efficiently if a person uses it properly”<sup>2</sup>. Then, he points how to learn in the Leonardo style of thinking in a practical way.

The most interesting part of the book is when the author shows the seven principles of Leonard da Vinci that the scientist used with success. They are: *curiosit , dimostrazione, sensazione, sfumato, arte/scienza, corporalita and conessione* – and the author chooses not to translate them into English.

The first, *curiosit *, is the natural impulse of getting as much knowledge about the world around us as possible. Young children are the most curious in terms of everything they see, feel, hear and experience. According to the author, the senses of a child are adopted to collect the impressions from outside from early childhood. Children always ask about something because they want to know. The author, after Leonardo, proposes that we be open to all of the information from the world, constantly asking questions and searching for extraordinary answers. Some practical tips include: keeping a diary to write down some daily conclusions and reflection; devoting a suitable

<sup>1</sup> M.J. Gelb, *Mysleć jak Leonardo da Vinci, Siedem kroków do genialności na co dzień*, Rebis, Poznań 2017, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> M.J. Gelb, *Mysleć jak Leonardo da Vinci, Siedem kroków do genialności na co dzień*, Rebis, Poznań 2017, p. 4-5.

amount of time for reflection and contemplation; always learning something new; reading a lot; learning from children how to be curious and spontaneous; solving problems skillfully and so on (p. 56). Some of the best methods of practicing *curiosit * are learning foreign languages, practicing hobbies and using emotional intelligence.

The second principle is *dimostrazione* which means the consistent checking of knowledge through experience, perseverance and a readiness to learn from our mistakes. According to Leonardo da Vinci, the best, most durable and most effective source of knowledge is independent exploration and experience. He urged science to direct observation. He questioned most dogmas and theories that are connected to courage, critical thinking, independent thinking and originality.

Moreover, for the author of this review, the most interesting and important rule is *artescienza* – looking for the balance between science and art, logic and imagination that Leonardo called “thinking with the whole mind”. This principle proposes using both hemispheres of the brain (the left and right) to be happier, creative and effective both in daily life and in some bigger discoveries.

These rules are familiar to modern pedagogues and psychologists, and especially some teachers of younger learners. They are quite popular. However, the author shows them in an a very interesting way, also with some exercises, so the reader can use the book as a handbook.

In terms of language, it is easy to read but also very vivid. The book has many theoretical and practical dimensions and, whilst not a very academic book, it is still worth reading. I would particularly recommend using it as a handbook – returning to some content, doing some exercises and thinking about the issues it raises in order to become more innovative in our lives. The ideas of the book and some of its exercises can also be used with learners during the learning and upbringing process.

#### ADRES DO KORESPONDECJI

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