Overview

Gelb presents the principles of how to think like Leonardo Da Vinci in a very clear and structured way, which I suspect was quite difficult. Leonardo was such a prolific creative, constraining his process in a structured manner would have been challenging. Exploiting Leonardo’s own language, Italian, for each chapter heading, Gelb forces the reader into a new ways of thinking as they move through the book. A great read that demands that we see the world in new and inspiring ways.

The underlying principal is to explore life more fully and contemplate what you learn and how you can apply it.

I have focused here on the 7 Key principles rather than summarise the entire book.

Introduction

There are 7 Key areas that define how to think like Leonardo Da Vinci.

Here are the 7 key areas that shaped Leonardo’s genius and which you can use as a framework for your own self-improvement:

1 - Curiosità: An insatiably curious approach to life and an unrelenting quest for continuous learning.
   
   Key Ideas:

   Keep your notes in your journal and always have it with you (personally I use Evernote)
   
   Capture everything even written notes that you can photograph.
   
   Expand your knowledge in diverse areas.
   
   Order and logical flow matter less than capture...your brain will do the filing.
   
   Choose a theme for the day and make accurate simple observations on that theme. For example, ‘movement’ and become consciously aware of how your body is moving and write it up in your journal
   
   Engage in ‘stream of consciousness' writing. Capture notes and thoughts without editing. Look for quantity rather than quality to override your structured and limited thinking.
An interesting observation is that School rewards the person that finds the right answer or the answer the teacher wants.

This is more functional that valuable and can be done by just about anyone.

The new renaissance will be driven by the person who finds their own answers to the questions of life and that requires we learn curiosity As a natural way of thinking

We do this by asking:
- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- How
- Why

Learn to explore other avenues of life by getting involved in hobbies.

Pursue passionately a new area of life and you will gain a new perspective.

Enlarge your vocabulary and apply a wider verbal and linguistic lexicon to grow your mental strength.

2 - Dimostrazione: A commitment to test knowledge through experience, persistence, and a willingness to learn from mistakes.

Key Ideas:

Look inside to develop your self-knowledge to identify strengths and weaknesses. Gain feedback on those strengths and weaknesses from others and contemplate the results.

The finest teachers know that experience is the greatest way to learn and so apply what you learn and learn more from observing what works and what doesn't.

By challenging the common world-view you can find great insights. This begins with challenging our own view. What assumptions and beliefs do you have and how valid are they?

What are the most influential experiences in your life and summarize these in a single sentence?

Now pick the most influential and consider what you have drawn from it.

Can you rethink some of my conclusions from this experience?

Ask yourself where you draw your evidence and justifications for your beliefs from and the validity of the sources you are using?

What criteria do you use to confirm the validity of the information you are using?

Can you test your belief?
What would make it change?
What would change my view.

Critical component of success is resilience in the face of adversity include:

• Sense of awareness
• Sense of humour
• Contemplation

3 - Sensazione: The continual refinement of the senses, especially sight, as the means to enliven experience.

Key Ideas:

Support yourself with robust affirmations.

Your senses are your keys to opening the world of experience, especially sight.

Hone your senses by frequent use and a constant drive to find more subtlety.

The typical person:
• Looks without seeing
• Listens without hearing
• Eats without tasting
• Moves without awareness

Surround yourself with sensory stimulating things to develop your senses.

Place art in your home and workspace.

Layer your listening to strip out the big noises So that you can be focused in your thinking

Pick a favourite music artist and spend some listening to it. What themes exist? Can you separate the individual instruments from the whole?

Smell is very powerful but we have a limited vocabulary to describe smell. Use your nose and develop smell noting how it affects your mood and memories

Savour both food and drink to see what subtly you can find. Use comparative experience to develop both smell and taste.

Surround yourself with thinks that are sensually pleasing and develop your senses constantly.

4 - Sfumato: A willingness to embrace ambiguity, paradox, and uncertainty.

Key Ideas:

Your world is full of paradox and ambiguity and this continues to develop. By becoming more open to this ambiguity, we open ourselves up to innovation and possible insights into new options, alternative solutions and new ways of thinking.

Things are rarely certain anymore, just more likely. But we have a natural tendency to
chase certainty. Think of how we use language...how often do we say certainly, of course, clearly, indeed, naturally, definitely?

If we become more open to ambiguity, then that tolerance will allow us to explore options without fear of us losing a grip on reality. After all, reality is changing daily!

5 - Arte/Scienza: The development of the balance between science and art, logic and imagination. "Whole-brain" thinking.

Key Ideas:

Art and science have always grown together. The renaissance that grew our knowledge also developed some of our greatest art.

Our explosion of technology recently has been accompanied by some of the erases test innovations in literature, cinema, poetry and art.

Insight is enhanced by looking for the art in the science and the science in art. Looking for patterns in chaos can expand our knowledge of how the world works.

Balance your synergy and cultivate whole brain thinking by using mind mapping. To mindmap effectively:

- Use a symbol to represent the topic as pictures are easier to remember than words and tap into your creativity.
- Identify key words.
- Print key words as it easier to read and remember.
- Use colours pictures dimension and codes a well as interrelationships.
- Practise!

6 - Corporalità: The cultivation of grace, ambidexterity, fitness, and poise.

Key Ideas:

The stereotype of a ‘brainiac’ is often of someone with less than great physique. This is far from the truth as often the greatest thinkers are often quite physically adept.

(Stephen Hawking is merely afflicted with a disease rather than being physically weak indeed a lesser physically strong person would have succumbed to his illness long before now)

Aim for a healthy mind in a healthy body. Have a good aerobic, strength and flexibly physical training programme.

Cross training will also stimulate the mind as well as strengthened the body.

Flexibility will be enhanced by a stretching regime to develop endurance, as well as improved balance and posture.

Become aware of your body and develop a sense of physical awareness as to where you are relaxed, balanced, poised and graceful as well as not.

Build your posture with Pilates or the Alexander technique. Refine your posture and your body will love you.
7 - **Connessione**: A recognition of and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things and phenomena. Use systems thinking.

*Key Ideas:*

Look for the connectedness of things and you will begin to see insist into the world that you previously haven't seen.

Look for connections. Think about the ecological aspects for what you see.

Think about your world and your life in terms of wholeness.

Thinking about the origin of things helps you consider the interconnectedness of things.

For example: Buckminster Fuller once spoke for 2 hours on a styrofoam cup, describing the origin of the cup, it's social significance, the chemical engineering that developed to create the material, the development of mass production and the economics involved as it related to a more disposable society.

What is connected in your world?

Remember that it can also be very easy to focus on only one area of our life.

Create a Master Mindmap of your life can help you clarify what is important, the conflicts, the blindspots and your passions.

**Summary:**

To help you capture the ideas of how Da Vinci Thinks, here is a Da Vinci ‘make over’ for you to complete for yourself:

1. **Curiosità**
   
   Am I asking the right questions

2. **Dimostrazione**
   
   How can I improve my ability to improve from intakes and experiences.
   How can I develop my independence of thought?

3. **Sensazione**
   
   What is my plan for sharpening my senses as I age?

4. **Sfumato**
   
   How can I improve my ability to expand
   Out and become comfortable with creative tension and explore the paradoxes of life?

5. **Arte/Scienza**
Am I balancing art and science at home and at work?

6. Corporalità

How can I nurture the balance of body and mind?

7. Connessione

How does everything connect to everything else?

Comment

In a time where production is merely a function of business and can be outsourced at a whim, the true leaders and entrepreneurs of the future will be those that can think like a renaissance man such as Leonardo Da Vinci. Information is a commodity, which is relatively accessible globally, production is an commodity process that can be bought at the cheapest price. Ideas, Innovation and Creative thinking will be the high value assets of tomorrow and that begins with creative thinking. This book is an excellent insight to how one of the greatest creative thinkers applied his mind to the problems of the world and holds lessons for us all.

Rating: 4/5