

WEBINAR

# How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci

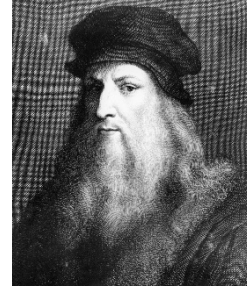
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with  
Lisa Olsen

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## Who was Leonardo da Vinci?



- Not just a painter and sculptor
  - The Last Supper, Mona Lisa, The Adoration of the Magi, The Annunciation
- He had a curious approach to life
- His objective on his resume sums up his genius: *"I wish to work miracles."*
- Da Vinci the inventor had plans for:
  - Helicopter, parachute, extendable ladder (still in use today!), bicycle, snorkel, the world's first revolving stage, locks for canal systems, folding furniture
  - Leonardo deserves credit for pioneering the concept of automation
- Da Vinci the anatomical scientist:
  - Pioneered the discipline of modern comparative anatomy
  - First to draw parts of the body in cross section
  - He conducted unprecedented scientific studies of the child in the womb
- Breakthroughs before Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and Darwin
- 18 sheets of Leonardo's notebooks were purchased by Bill Gates for 30.8 million dollars in November of 1994.

*More valuable than any of his specific scientific achievements, Leonardo's approach to knowledge set the stage for modern scientific thinking.*

**Da Vinci Principles:**

**Curiosity:** *An insatiably curious approach to life and an unrelenting quest for continuous learning.*

Consider the role of Curiosity in your life today. Ask yourself how curious you are.

**Curiosity self-assessment:**

- I keep a journal or notebook to record my insights and questions
- I take adequate time for contemplation and reflection
- I am always learning something new
- When I am faced with an important decision, I actively seek out different perspectives
- I learn from little children
- I am skilled at identifying and solving problems
- My friends would describe me as open minded and curious
- When I read or hear a new word or phrase, I look it up and make a note of it
- I solicit feedback from my friends, relations and colleagues
- I love learning

**Exercise:** Make a list of 100 questions that are important to you. Your list can include any kind of question as long as it's something you deem significant. Do the entire list at the same time. Write quickly; don't worry about spelling, grammar or repeating the same question in different words (reoccurring questions will alert you to emerging themes).

When you have finished, read through the list and highlight themes that emerge. Consider the themes without judging them. Are most of your questions about relationships? Business? Fun? Money? The meaning of life?

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**Top Ten Questions:** Choose the ten that seem the most significant to you. Here is a sample of some I've collected from workshops:

- When am I most naturally myself?
- What is one thing I could start doing, stop doing or do differently, starting today that would most improve the quality of my life?
- What is my greatest talent?
- Who are my most inspiring role models?
- How can I be better at my current job?
- What is my heart's deepest desire?
- How am I perceived by: my closest friend, my worst enemy, my boss, my children, my co-workers?
- What are the blessings of my life?
- How can I get paid for doing what I love?
- How can I best be of service to others?
- What legacy would I like to leave?

**Da Vinci Principle:**

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

The ability to thrive with ambiguity must become part of our everyday lives. Poise in the face of paradox is a key not only to effectiveness, but to sanity in a rapidly changing world. Be willing to "observe" anxiety and stress. Make friends with ambiguity!

**Describe the feeling of anxiety:**

Shape: \_\_\_\_\_

Taste: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Smell: \_\_\_\_\_

Sound: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultivate Confusion Endurance:** The ability to get curious and roll up your sleeves when presented with a problem to which the solution is not readily apparent – embracing "creative tension."

**Contemplation exercise:**

- List at least 3 of your strengths as a person. List 3 or more of your weaknesses. How are the qualities in your lists related?

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**Incubation and Intuition:** When Leonardo was working on The Last Supper, he spent many days on the scaffold, painting from dawn until dusk, then, without warning, he would take a break.

***"Sometimes the greatest geniuses sometimes accomplish more when they work less." Vasari***

Although your boss may not accept this idea, the art of incubation is, nevertheless, essential to accessing our creative potential. Have you ever slept on a problem, only to wake in the morning with a solution?

Incubation is most effective when alternated with periods of intense, focused work and rest.

Without periods of intense, focused work, there is nothing to be incubated.

Take time for solitude and relaxation. *"Intuition is the art of listening, with an inner ear, to the rhythms and melodies of your own "body music." Dr. Candace Pert*

### **Da Vinci Principle:**

**Connessione:** *A recognition of and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things: **Systems Thinking***

The movement towards creating "learning organizations" and "total quality" is an attempt to apply Connessione thinking to organizations.

**Exercise:** You can develop your da Vancian powers of connection by looking at things that at first glance seem unrelated, and finding different ways to link them.

- What connections can you make between an oak leaf and a human hand?
- What connections can you make between a bowl of minestrone soup and the United States?
- What connections can you make between juggling and your career?

In the workplace you can apply this same type of thinking to improve processes, understand corporate initiatives and connect the dots between department goals and strategies.

**Backward Goal Setting:** The process of goal setting has been consistently evaluated and written about. Using the da Vinci principles, here is a unique way to approach goal setting.

**Define your goals and vision by contemplating the question:** What do I want?

**Clarify values and purpose by contemplating the question:** Why do I want it?

**You craft a strategy by answering the question:** How will I get it?

Working backward from the answers (goals) to those questions, consider the resources and investments you will need for realizing each one.

- Mind map a one-year plan of each goal and categorize them into life areas.
- Think about and document the steps you will take this week to realize those goals.
- At the beginning of each week, invest 20-30 minutes and mind map your weekly goals, priorities and plans in each of your life areas (Bullet Journals are great for this!). Color code them for more visual (and da Vinci like methods!). This gives you instant visual feedback on your success in balancing your priorities. Do this exercise every week.
- Is your week a balanced rainbow or a monochromatic blur? Have you planned enough time for nurturing your relationships, your health, and your personal and spiritual development?
- Finally, before you end the day or in the morning, spend 10 minutes and take a Connessione approach to your daily plan for the upcoming day. Look for connections within the challenges so you can be ready for the obstacles (embrace the creative tension!). SEE a good day ahead!

***"The five senses are the ministers of the soul" Leonardo da Vinci***

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