How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci was the ultimate multi-tasker: an accomplished scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, painter, sculptor, architect, botanist, musician, and writer. If you want to be a Renaissance Man or Woman, you can learn a lot from how da Vinci lived and thought. Based on studying the life and work of this famous polymath anyone can emulate da Vinci with the following steps.

Curiosità. an "insatiably curious approach to life and unrelenting quest for continuous learning". Great minds have one characteristic in common: they continuously ask questions throughout their lives. Leonardo’s endless quest for truth and beauty clearly demonstrates this. What makes great minds different is the quality of their questions. You can increase your ability to solve problems by increasing your ability to ask good questions. Like da Vinci, you should cultivate an open mind that allows you to broaden your universe and increase your ability to explore it. Here are ways:

- **Keep a journal.** Bring a journal wherever you go and use it often. Write your ideas and thoughts there. Try to write several statements a day that start with "I wonder why/how.."
- **Observe according to a theme.** Choose a theme and observe things according to the theme for a day. For ex, let's say you choose "communication". For the entire day, observe every type and instance of communication you come across, then record them in your journal.
- **Stream of consciousness exercise.** Pick a question and write the thoughts and associations that occur to you as they are. Don't edit them. The important thing is to keep writing. This is also referred to as freewriting.

Dimostrazione. "a commitment to test knowledge through experience, persistence, and a willingness to learn from mistake". Wisdom comes from experience and the principle of Dimostrazione helps you get the most out of your experience. Here are some ways to apply it:

- **Check your beliefs.** Do you hold any beliefs that you haven't verified through experience?
- **Three points of view.** First, make a strong argument against your belief. Next, take a distant view of your belief (for example, as if you live in a different culture) and review it. Finally, find friends who can give you different perspectives.
Analyze the advertisements that affect you. Look at the advertisements in your favorite magazine and analyze the strategy and tactics they use. Find the advertisements that affect you most and find out why.

Find “anti-role models” to learn from. List the names of some people whose mistakes you want to avoid. Learn from them so that you won't encounter the same pitfalls.

Sensazione. "the continual refinement of the senses, especially sight, as the means to enliven experience". According to da Vinci, we can best practice Dimostrazione through our senses, particularly sight. That's why one of Leonardo's mottoes is saper vedere (knowing how to see) upon which he built his work in arts and science. Here are some ways to apply Sensazione:

- Write detailed description of an experience. For instance, describe your experience of watching a sunrise in your journal.
- Learn how to describe a smell.
- Learn to draw.
- Listen to different sounds around you. Learn to listen to different intensity of sounds from the softest (e.g. your breathing) to the loudest (e.g. traffic).
- Live in the moment. Practice mindfulness.

Sfumato. "a willingness to embrace ambiguity, paradox, uncertainty". An essential characteristic of da Vinci's genius is his ability to handle a sense of mystery. Here are ways to apply Sfumato:

- Befriend ambiguity. Find some situations in your past where you faced ambiguity (e.g. waiting to hear if your application for a job you wanted was successful). Describe how you felt.
- Ask yourself questions that relate two opposites. For example, ask yourself how your happiest and saddest moments are related.
- Practice the Socratic method. The goal with this method is to examine possibilities, and that is done by asking questions, not giving answers. Socrates was known (and criticized) for asking questions to which he didn't have answers. The key to using the Socratic method is be humble. Don't assume that you or anyone knows anything for sure. Question every premise.
Arte/scienza. "the development of the balance between science and art, logic and imagination". This is thinking with the “whole brain”. Mind mapping is a powerful method that can help you combine logic and imagination in your work and life. The end result of mapping should be a web-like structure of words and ideas that are somehow related in the writer’s mind.

Corporalità. "the cultivation of grace, ambidexterity, fitness, and poise". Leonardo had amazing physical ability that complemented his genius in science and arts. Here are ways to apply it:

- **Develop a program for physical fitness.** Your program should include three things: flexibility exercises, strength training, and aerobic conditioning.
- **Develop body awareness.** Study anatomy. Try yoga. Dance. Do some contact juggling. Whatever strengthens the connection between body and mind, go for it.
- **Cultivate ambidexterity.** Leonardo could work with both his right and left hand and regularly switched between them. You can cultivate ambidexterity by using your nondominant hand for relatively simple tasks like brushing your teeth or eating your breakfast. Later you can use your nondominant hand for writing.

Connessione. "a recognition of and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things and phenomena". This is systems thinking. One main source of Leonardo’s creativity is his ability to form new patterns through connections and combinations of different elements. Here are ways:

- **Find ways to link things that seem unrelated.** For ex, try to find connections between a bear and the World Wide Web, or geology and the Mona Lisa (real name "La Giaconda").
- **Imagine dialogues.** Imagine talking with a role model to gain new perspective and insight. Or you can imagine how some role models would discuss your problem.
- **Think about how things originate.** Take an object and think about what elements are involved in its creation and how.

**Tips**
- Some other characteristics of da Vinci that might be worth emulating are:
  - charisma
  - generosity
  - love of nature
  - love of animals
  - the curiosity of a child

**Warnings**
- Because of his wide variety of interests, da Vinci struggled with procrastination. On his deathbed, he apologized to “God and Man for leaving so much undone.”

Source: [http://www.wikihow.com/Think-Like-Leonardo-Da-Vinci](http://www.wikihow.com/Think-Like-Leonardo-Da-Vinci)
How to Multitask

Does it seem like doing only one thing at a time isn't enough anymore? For multitasking to save you time, it has to be done with a little care and attention.

Steps

Establish your goals. The old saying, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there" is just as true even if you are following multiple tasks.

Schedule a time to give intense or complex tasks your full focus. Let it be known that you prefer to have time to yourself for an hour or two each day, and use that time for intense tasks that require your full concentration.

Work on one thing at a time, but alternate. A juggler may have many objects in the air, but she usually manipulates only one at a time.

Eliminate unnecessary tasks. If you're multitasking to be more efficient, don't spend time doing extra things. The exception is a background activity to help pass the time. For instance, if listening to the radio or a book on tape helps with the tedium of painting a wall, go for it.

Choose compatible tasks. For instance, you may find that reading and listening to speech both use the same type of focus. Instead, try pairing a physical task, such as ironing clothes, with a mental task, such as listening to the radio.

Choose interruptible tasks. Especially if the multitasking consists of dealing with frequent interruptions (such as a ringing telephone), choose tasks that can be easily paused to do concurrently.

Keep a selection of smaller projects or simpler tasks around to fill gaps in a larger project. That is, do the larger project as a priority, but do basic, filler tasks any time you find yourself waiting for information or inspiration on a larger project.

Use wait time efficiently. Have something with you to do, especially in places you anticipate waiting (the airport, post office, or dentist's office). Reading is an easy, portable task. Carrying note cards or a notebook to jot ideas is also a good idea.

Tips

• Take the time to plan a bit. Even though planning is not doing, a good plan can make the doing more complete.
• Take along something else to do in a meeting, especially if you expect it to include topics that don't involve you. If a meeting will include enough topics that don't involve you, arrange to attend only the relevant parts, or don't attend at all.
• Notice what works and what doesn't. If homework in front of the TV takes twice as long as doing homework and watching a show separately would, don't pair those tasks in the future.
• Make your exercise and walking time your 'you' time. Do this on lunch hour to save more time.

Warnings

• Don't overdo it. Don't do so many things at once that none gets done. And don't take on so much that you burn out.
• Always give your full concentration to tasks that might have safety consequences.