



Dave Mitchell

the Leadership Difference

Laugh and Learn

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Welcome to the Leadership Difference

Greetings!

In this issue, Dave educates us on different theories about intelligence and how we learn. And, for those of you who were wondering how the Rosé wine party went ...the results are in!

Are You Smart?

From an early age, we feel pressure to be smart. When I was in elementary school, my classmates and I were actually separated based on perceived intelligence. The 1 group was the smartest, followed by 2, then 3 and finally 4. There was absolutely no subtlety; if you were in the 3 group you simply were not as smart as the kids in the 1 group; or even the 2 group. Even though schools have long since stopped such overt labeling, it doesn't take much effort to see how we continue to make obvious distinctions about the relative intelligence of our children. Even the common practice of assigning grades to measure academic achievement is often confused with some measure of intelligence. The impact of these educational experiences often linger into adulthood and for many impact our self esteem our entire lives.

But what is intelligence? We have generally used very specific assessments like the intelligence quotient (IQ) test to measure an individual's smarts. But intelligence isn't really so much about what you know, but rather your ability to learn. And it is the ability to learn that is controversial. As a culture, we put a premium on learning in a classroom setting. But what if you struggle to learn that way? And what if your teachers are not particularly talented? How easy would it be for a child to fail in the classroom, for either of these reasons, and be labeled as stupid (by others and by the child, too).

If intelligence is defined as the capacity to learn information, then the way we learn becomes critical to the notion of intelligence. Dr. Howard Gardner offers an intriguing, and controversial, theory on intelligence. Dr. Gardner is a developmental psychologist and a professor of cognition at Harvard University. His work bears evaluation. Dr. Gardner believes that; rather than intelligence being a general human process, there are several unique processes being employed. Further, each individual may utilize their own process. In other words, according to Dr. Gardner, intelligence falls into nine categories: Spatial, Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Bodily-kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Naturalistic, Existential. In Gardner's multiple intelligence model, a natural athlete may struggle in the classroom while able to learn a complicated playbook on the football field, for example. This is because the athlete has a high degree of Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

David Kolb used the interactive style theories of Carl Jung as the foundation for his work in identifying four types of learners: Converger, Diverger, Assimilator, Accommodator. Kolb's model links the sensitivities people have to their environment with the way they learn. Some students may be more comfortable working with concepts while others learn better when the subject is tangible. Neil Fleming used the controversial theories related to Neuro-linguistic Programming to create a VARK model for learning. This theory posits that some people learn more from visual information (by seeing), others using auditory information (by listening) and some kinesthetically (by doing). Essentially, this theory suggests that educators must integrate all three elements into

their instruction in order to ensure that their students learn effectively. Under this theory, a kinesthetic student who has a teacher who uses only visual and/or auditory instructional tools would have a difficult time learning and; therefore, appear less intelligent.

All of these theories have been challenged by other educational researchers. As a parent, a lifelong learner and an educator; it seems clear to me that learning is NOT a general process. I learn better in some situations, and from some educators, than I do in others. If intelligence is indeed the ability to learn, then being placed in situations that enhance your capacity to do so has a dramatic impact on your smarts. Imagine how devastating it is for any individual to be labeled as "stupid" simply because they were not fortunate enough to have an educator who taught in a manner consistent with their learning process. That is something to keep in mind before we decide that any child, or adult, is "a little dim." As for the concept of intelligence, I believe there is only one generality. A little humor makes the learning process a lot easier! Laugh and Learn!

To learn more about the theories of multiple intelligence, Kolb and VARK, you can follow the links below.

<http://edr.sagepub.com/content/18/8/4.short>

<http://ie.sdsmt.edu/FirstYear/Kolb/Irn2.pdf>

<http://centeach.uiowa.edu/documents/VARKhandout.pdf>

A Whole Lotta Rosé (Revisited)

Last month I mentioned that we were having a wine tasting party featuring four Rosé wines. We actually added a fifth, the Triebaumer from Austria. Eighteen friends took on the important role of wine judge. Each wine was tasted. Several times. My friends are committed to...um...being thorough. Interestingly, every wine received at least one vote as the favorite. The only thing we determined definitively is that the Leadership Difference wine motto is the best strategy for tasting wine, "If you like it, drink it. If you don't like it, drink it fast!"

Here's what we tasted:

- Bodegas Muga Rosado Rioja 2010 (Spain)
- Les Vignerons de Fontés Priuré Saint Hippolyte Languedoc Rosé 2010 (France)
- Hey Mambo Kinky Pink Rosé 2009 (California)
- Barnard Griffin Reserve Rosé of Sangiovese 2010 (Washington)
- Gunter Triebaumer Blaufrankisch Rose 2009

The unofficial winner was the Barnard Griffin wine; however all were excellent and highly recommended. This was especially true the longer the party continued!



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Win - Win - Wine

Each year we offer our two wine programs at a discounted rate for corporate holiday parties. What is Your Wine Personality? combines a classic wine tasting event with a hilarious discussion about interactive styles. Are You America's Next Top Winemaker? is an excellent team building program during which participants work together to make their own signature wine blend. And just as we have done in the past, 20% of our fee is donated to charity. You can choose the charity, or this year, we are supporting Afterhours in Denver, CO. They provide meals and other provisions to the homeless. For more information, contact Dave (dave@theleadershipdifference.com) or Lisa (lisa@theleadershipdifference.com). Offer applies to events scheduled in November or December.