



# Dave Mitchell

## the Leadership Difference

### Laugh and Learn

December 2011

## Happy Holidays from the Leadership Difference

### Greetings!

Are our brains changing? What does college basketball have in common with Cabernet Sauvignon? Dave examines both those questions in this month's edition of the Leadership Difference newsletter.

### This Isn't Your Father's Brain

I remember a few years back when Cadillac tried to appeal to a younger market with the slogan, "This is NOT your father's Cadillac." The implication was that the old car was big and clunky, while the new version was sleek and speedy. Recently, as I moved through my normal travel process, I was reminded of this campaign. The world has made the same conversion.

Consider one small component of life...air travel. In 1995, I would contact a travel agent to obtain my tickets, arrive at the airport quite early to wait in line for a boarding pass, move quickly through a security line, wait at the gate while reading or talking with a travel companion, board the plane and wait to take off, experience cordial service with food AND beverage, de-board the plane, wait in line at the car rental company and depart the destination airport. The whole process was lengthy; filled with lots of "unproductive" time spent in conversation, contemplation or educational/entertainment reading. It was big and clunky.

Today, I book my own flights online, print my boarding pass at home, provide nude x-rays to TSA, check emails and work on my laptop at the gate, check my smart phone after boarding, experience safety officers rather than service in flight, check my smart phone the moment we touchdown, by pass the car rental desk and go directly to my car. The whole process is efficient (with the TSA exception), productive and devoid of contemplation. Sleek and speedy.

It strikes me that our entire lives have made this shift. We no longer spend much time in quiet reflection or in forced suspension. We now cram productivity and stimulation into every moment of our day. We watch television to "relax" and feel anxious when we are without our technology. And it is more pronounced for our kids, new humans that have grown up with this growing technological influence. While technology cannot (yet?) be blamed on the increase in ADHD - there are several other compelling reasons - it seems reasonable that the constant stimulation of our evolving world would exacerbate the condition.

Are we losing the ability to experience boredom? Will quiet reflection and meditation soon join the likes of storytelling as endearing and archaic skills of an earlier time. Are our brains actually changing? It is an interesting notion. This holiday season, how about we spend a few minutes engaged in some old fashioned celebration: sitting quietly and reflecting on our blessings.

To learn more, here is an interview with renowned neuroscientist Susan Greenfield.  
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21128236.400-susan-greenfield-living-online-is-changing-our-brains.html>

## **Cabernet Sauvignon: The Starting Five**

In addition to the holiday seasonal traditions, I love this time of year because of college basketball and hearty red wines. The cold weather is perfect for watching my beloved Illini and cozying up to a big, bold Cabernet Sauvignon. Cabs are the most popular red wines (I get more requests for recommendations for this varietal than any other) and there are a wide range of styles. So, combining my two winter passions, here is my Cabernet Sauvignon starting five:

### **Point Guard: Charles Smith Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley Chateau Smith 2009**

The Washington Cabs are silky smooth with less big tannic structure than their California cousins. The Charles Smith is affordable (\$20), available (10,000 cases produced) and highly rated (91 by Wine Spectator).

### **Shooting Guard: Concha Y Toro Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor 2007**

This is your scorer, consistently rated among the finest in the world for a lot less than the trophy wines of other regions (\$80). Chilean wines are still relatively unknown, but this bottle "has nice drive...poise and balance..."-Wine Spectator. Sounds like the prototypical two guard!

### **Small Forward: Thorn-Clarke Shotfire Quartage Barossa 2008**

Just like the versatile small forward, this wine is called "polished, velvety and spicy." The Scottie Pippen of Cabs! A Bordeaux style blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Merlot and a touch of Shiraz to give it a little Aussie twist, mate.

### **Power Forward: Chateau Maison Blanche Medoc 2009**

Finding affordable Bordeaux is like defending the Princeton offense; it takes patience, flexibility and smarts. This \$15 wine is an amazing value and is big enough to stand up to any red meat while rebounding for the next five years in your cellar!

### **Center: Hall Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2008**

When you are looking for a "banger" you head immediately to Napa Valley. Caymus, Silver Oak, Cakebread, Duckhorn, Robert Mondavi all are headliners. For my money, go with Hall. It is just as good as any of the more recognizable names and at about \$44 it will save you at least 20 bucks. You can assemble this entire championship team for about \$200.00. If you are a lover of world class Cabernet Sauvignon, I think we just found the perfect holiday gift for you!



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## **Thank You!**

**We had a remarkable 2011 at the Leadership Difference.**

**We presented at more than 100 events all over the United States and Europe involving nearly 10,000 people sharing thoughts on leadership, selling, customer service and personal performance enhancement.**

**Thank you to all our wonderful clients who made our year so special and we look forward to seeing all of you (and some new friends) in 2012.**

