



5 Minds for the Future: Cultivating Thinking Skills

Professor Howard Gardner's book *Five Minds for the Future* concerns itself with the kinds of minds, or actions, thoughts, feelings and behaviours that people will need to thrive in our future world.

Three are related to intellect: the disciplines, synthesizing and creative minds. Two emphasize character: the respectful and ethical minds.

To prepare students for the future, educators need to cultivate both academic skills and character.

"We must immediately expand our vision beyond standard educational institutions. In our cultures of today – and of tomorrow – parents, peers, and media play roles at least as significant as do authorized teachers and formal schools...if any cliché of recent years ring true, it is the acknowledgment that learning must be lifelong."
Howard Gardner

Cultivating your mind is more important than anything else you can do to prepare for personal and professional success. Why? Because the modern world is unpredictable. The whirlwind of technology changes our lives so quickly that there's no way to anticipate how the future will look. Your industry, your job, and even your day-to-day life may be very different 10, 20, or 30 years from now. The only way to get ready for what comes next is to create the mental infrastructure to thrive in any environment.

In past times, people could "finish" their education and move on to professional life. Today, learning is ongoing.

Five Minds for the Future focuses on the most important ways to cultivate your mind for future success:

The Disciplined Mind

The disciplined mind will master at least one way of thinking – a distinctive mode of cognition that characterizes a specific discipline, craft or profession.

The Synthesizing Mind

The synthesizing mind will take information from disparate sources; understand and objectively evaluate that information; and put it together in ways that make sense to the self and to others.

The Creating Mind

The creating mind will break new ground. It will generate new ideas, pose unfamiliar questions, conjure up fresh ways of thinking and arrive at unexpected answers.

The Respectful Mind

The respectful mind will note and welcome differences between individuals and between groups, try to understand the other and seek to work positively with them.

The Ethical Mind

The ethical mind will ponder the nature of work, and the needs and desires of society. This mind will consider how workers can serve purposes beyond self-interest and how citizens can work unselfishly to improve the lot of all.

The survival and thriving of the human species will depend on the nurturing of these five potentials that are distinctly human.

