## Lessons on Innovation from Leonardo da Vinci

Walter Isaacson recently wrote a biography on the life of Leonardo da Vinci. Our 14th century Leonardo was a great artist with credits that include the Mona Lisa among other very notable works. He was a major inventor who envisioned various flying machines, bridges, fluid hydraulics, and so much more. Leonardo was a great observer of the natural world and his ideas are legendary.

And so why did this marketing professor read a biography of Leonardo da Vinci? Because his approach to innovation is worthy of note. In this brief summary, I wish to present the ideas and approaches of Leonardo as presented in the biography by Isaacson.

Here are the lessons of Leonardo.

* Seek knowledge for its own sake
* Retain a childlike sense of wonder
* Observe
* Start with the details
* See things unseen
* Go down rabbit holes
* Get distracted
* Keep extensive notes; keep notebooks of your observations; take notes
* Respect facts
* Procrastinate; put things down and come back to them
* Let the perfect be the enemy of the good
* Think Visually
* Avoid silos; paintings, technology, business, science, art should all intersect
* Let your reach exceed your grasp
* Indulge fantasy; blur the lines of reality vs fantasy
* Collaborate
* Make lists; especially of odd things
* Be open to mystery and the shadows

And so, from the painter of Mona Lisa and the developer of the first thoughts on helicopters in the late 1400’s, before America was discovered, we have the mind of Leonardo and the lessons learned.

If you are challenged by these notes, consider reading the book.

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