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Gardner, Howard. (2008). *5 Minds for the Future* (2nd ed.).
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Howard Gardner, a psychologist and professor of Cognition and Education at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, has written twenty-four books and more than seven hundred articles. He is best known for his theory of Multiple Intelligences (*Frames of Mind*, 1983). Gardner's latest book, *5 Minds for the Future* (2008) focuses on tools for success in the future. The book is relevant and appropriate for many audiences, including teachers, parents, human resources professionals, scientists, business professionals, and also those wanting to further their personal growth.

5 Minds for the Future is written in an informal manner. However, examples and humor make the book more informal and relevant. Concepts are clearly defined and

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explained throughout the book. One chapter is devoted to each of the minds. Gardner summarizes his assertions with additional examples for the five minds (i.e., disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful, and ethical). Applications are included for both an educational context as well as a workplace environment. He reports “for much of this book, I am speaking about policy rather than psychology” (p. 4). Gardner’s ideas appear to be clearly developed with an emphasis on forethought. This book is relevant to not only today’s society, but also future generations, hence the title.

Gardner’s apparent purpose is to persuade the reader to cultivate these five minds and show the best methods to do this (p. 4-5). He perceives the process of globalization, the increasing connectivity and interdependence of the world’s markets and businesses, to be the primary reason for developing the five minds. As the world transforms to a more global nature, this will call for a more modernized way of learning and thinking. In this book, Gardner identifies and describes the cognitive abilities that will be in demand in the future. He states that although he does not know what the future will be, he feels these are “the kinds of minds that people will need if we are to thrive in the world during the eras to come” (p. 1).

The five minds Gardner proposes in his book are 1) disciplined, 2) synthesizing, 3) creating, 4) respectful, and 5) ethical. The first three are the most cognitive of the five minds; the last two minds are more personal and relational in their nature. Gardner addresses the five minds which are vital to develop for the future.

The first aspect of the cognitive mind is a *disciplined mind* is concerned with mastery of a discipline, subject matter, or focus area. A few of the disciplines identified are economics, history, law, medicine, and so forth. Gardner acknowledges that mastery should be regularly honed through lifelong learning and application; however, it should also be balanced. He believes balance involves cultivating outside interests to avoid complete fixation on the discipline. Next, the *synthesizing mind* is the “ability to knit together information from disparate sources into a coherent whole is vital today” (p. 46). Gardner states synthesis gains power when it provides one with a sense of connectedness or significance that many people seek. He

also notes since information is infinite, people desire for it to be integrated and logical. Third, the *creative mind* assists with solutions, poses new questions, and clarifies problems. This mind may develop innovative products, new practices, or novel projects that transform a particular field.

The final two minds (i.e., respectful and ethical minds) tend to be more interpersonal rather than cognitive. The *respectful mind* is not only aware of others and their surroundings, but also appreciates differences among people and groups, seeking to work effectively with all. The *ethical mind* is honorable and responsible in one's thoughts and actions. This mind views the entire community not just oneself. The goal is to strive toward the conceptualization of the roles as a good worker and citizen (p. 158). While Gardner insists these five minds should immerse in one's chosen discipline or focus area in order to completely develop, he also maintains these five minds must be developed in children. Nurture and support for all ages toward these five minds will encourage the development for future success.

Gardner describes his perception of the implications for the lack of these types of minds in the future. Without one or more discipline(s) a worker will be restricted to menial tasks and not succeed in the workplace. Likewise, without synthesis, one will be weighed down and overwhelmed with information and be unable to make decisions. One without creative capacity will be replaced by computers. Additionally, without respect, one will poison the workplace with disregard and disrespect; therefore, such individuals will not be worthy of respect by their co-workers. Last, those without ethics will bring a world devoid of civilized workers and dependable citizens; thus, a world will be created in which none of us will want to live (p. 18-19).

While Gardner's points make logical sense, they appear quite sharp. Gardner admits to the sharpness of his statements. It appears, however, his harshness is justified. Such pointedness is understandable in order to get his point across for a theory which he developed and feels passionate about. Additionally, implications for ignoring the cultivation of the five minds seem to be the absolute worst case scenarios.

Gardner addresses the order in which to proceed. In regard to the timing of learning or mastering the minds, he compares himself to his former teacher Erik Erikson in respect to the term *epigenesis* in psychological development. Gardner feels respect should come first in formal education. Discipline should be second, then third synthesis, and last ethics. Creativity is not in the timing; Gardner feels it differs with each society. However, if creativity had to be placed somewhere, it would go along with disciplinary thinking.

Gardner concludes the book with several interesting claims. He states that society has been relatively blind with regard to one or more types of mind until recently (p. 163). It is the responsibility of the education system as a whole (i.e., parents included) to make certain an ensemble of minds is developed. In the workplace, it is the employer who needs to sharpen them, offer them as role models, and maintain them as employees (p. 165). Gardner summarizes these ideas in the last sentence of the book: "In any event the survival and thriving of our species will depend on our nurturing of potentials that are distinctly human" (p. 167).

Regardless of whether or not one buys into all of Gardner's concepts, this book is thought provoking. Readers who are familiar with both of his theories cannot help but consider how the concepts of the five minds (i.e., disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful, and ethical) relate to the eight types of multiple intelligences (i.e., intrapersonal, interpersonal, spatial, logical-mathematical, musical, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, and naturalist) illustrated in *Frames of Mind* (Gardner, 1983). Gardner acknowledges this issue. He asserts a full answer to relate the concepts of his two theories would involve an entire book.

Gardner briefly addresses the question of the relationship between his two philosophies in the preface to the 2nd edition of *5 Minds for the Future*. He declares, "The disciplined and creating minds can draw on any and all intelligences, depending on the area of work. Thus, whether disciplined or creative, a poet depends on linguistic intelligence, an architect on spatial intelligence" (p. 15) ... and so forth. Those who want to connect both

of Gardner's theories may find this point helpful. Gardner furthers a connection between his two theories by also stating, "Respect and ethics clearly draw on the personal intelligences. Ethics, reflecting a more abstract way of thinking, draws as well on logical intelligence" (p. 16). In reference to Multiple Intelligences theory versus the *5 Minds for the Future*, it can be confusing to the reader as to their connection or disconnection. Gardner states, "rather than being distinct computational capabilities, they [5 Minds] are better thought of as broad uses of the mind that we can cultivate at school, in professions, or at the workplace" (p. 4).

The synthesizing mind is problematic for connection to his Multiple Intelligences theory. Disengagement of Gardner's *5 Minds for the Future* lies in the synthesizing mind. This type of mind is difficult to connect to any of the five minds. The underlying issue is that "synthesis often involves the operation of one, two, or even several intelligences" (p. 16). Multiple Intelligences theory attempts to validate the strengths and build on the assets one already possesses. However, the synthesizing mind is said by Gardner to be "selecting crucial information from the copious amounts available: arraying the information in that that make sense to self and to others" (p.155).

5 Minds for the Future was an insightful book. It allowed for critical thinking and examination of self. The globalists' view added for additional insight. This book achieved the goal of informing its audience and making a case for the five minds and why they are, and will be, important for the future. This book does a thorough job of clearly making the arguments for why our minds should evolve, how they can evolve, and the difference it will make in our lives as well as that of society.

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