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VIEWPOINT

Craft your learning journey

Is it unusual to follow your own passions and combine different fields into new creations?

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A young man was sent to school to learn to be a doctor, like his doctor-finance father. Unfortunately, he didn't like it and pursued natural history, geology, biology, and taxidermy. So his father sent him to another school to become a parson. So, the young man read about the role of God in Nature and took part in natural history, geology, and biology field studies – again following his own interests. In time, the young man integrated the time span of geology into the workings of biology and created the theory of evolution. He was Charles Darwin.

Future-proof careers

Is it unusual to follow your own passions, craft your own learning journey, and combine different fields or industries into new creations? It is more common

than you might think. Research shows a correlation between the number interests/competencies a person has and their creative impact. Indeed, fields and industries are merging and growing faster than their predecessor fields (e.g. biotech).

The old model of learning and working was to specialise and become the best at one small thing. However, new research shows it's just as effective to be in the top 25% of two or more things. Indeed, polymaths "future-proof" their careers because they can draw on a variety of skills when marketplaces change. Luckily, it's easier than ever to become competent in a new skill or field with online learning, long-distance collaboration, and AI-based tools.

The old way was to look outward into the marketplace and ask what fields are expanding and how to

acquire training to join them. Schools were built on industrial-age models to reshape students to fit in as pre-defined cogs in the corporate machine. However, today, many of those jobs and tasks are being taken over by AI and robotics, leaving open work for which humans are more naturally suited. These new jobs require more emotional intelligence, creativity, and the workings of the human mind that have not been replicated into machines.

Look inward

So, instead of looking outward for tomorrow's jobs and reshaping a round human into a square office cubicle, we need to look inward and discover the individual's unique talents, skills, and attributes. Jobs are being redefined as tasks for "gig" workers, and the gig economy is growing faster than the economy over-

all – about 17% globally. To succeed in the new economy, you'll need to understand and use your own design, as Peter Drucker wrote in his classic Harvard Business Review article, *Managing Oneself*, and Richard Bolles in his book, *What Color Is Your Parachute*.

But how? Psychometrics is a good first step to "discover your strengths".

"Strengthsfinder" as a trend began when research uncovered it is more productive to leverage your strengths for excellence rather than "shoring up" your weaknesses (which many corporate training programmes had been doing).

Herrmann Brain Dominance Indicator (HBDD) is another powerful tool.

Based on Nobel Prize-winning neuroscience, it maps your thinking style not only as "left-brained" (logical) or "right-brained" (creative) but also "top-brained" (intellectual) and "bottom-brained" (active/practical and emotional). Other tests are MBTI (Myers-Briggs) and DISC (dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness). These



can not only help you understand your own design (and potential career choices) but have powerful implications for how to communicate with others (based on their design); work inside a team; and construct leadership (or other) groups for "whole-brained" performance and innovation.

Companies are increasingly managing tasks, not jobs, and profiling people to understand the dynamics of the organisation as a social system. Educators are offering micro-learning and certifications, not just degrees. Executive coaching is on the rise, both within companies and externally, to help you make wise choices as an individual.

Tomorrow's organisations will leverage the strengths of individuals as well as technology and integrate them more effectively for synergistic performance.

So, succeed by becoming more unique and extremely yourself; not a corporate cog in a dying industrial machine. Draw on your unique design to find what you're meant (designed) to do excellently and what you should create with your work.

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