



The Generalist Advantage

YOUR SUPERPOWER

The Generalist Advantage

PART 0: Introduction

PART 1: Idea synthesis

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PART 3: Rapid learning

PART 4: Adaptability

PART 5: Leonardo syndrome

PART 6: Impostor syndrome

PART 7: Pareto principle

PART 8: Mastery

PART 9: Open source communities



**GENERALIST
SPEAKER**

**VISUALISATION ENTHUSIAST
OPEN ORGANIZATION
AMBASSADOR**

Jimmy Sjölund

Organisational transformation
expert with extensive experience
sparking change at large,
multinational companies

Principal agile practitioner
@ Red Hat





CABLE & WIRELESS



SKANSKA

 Telia Company

 Red Hat

 Open Org

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Remember this guy?





Photo: Fin Costello/Redferns





Ellinor Algin - <https://digitaltmuseum.se/021026360742/persondator>

44255



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallingwater>



Remember this guy?



What is a generalist?

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- Polymath
- Multipotentialite

Definition

A **polymath** (Greek: romanized : *polymathēs*, lit. 'having learned much'; Latin: *homo universalis*, lit. 'universal human')[1] or **polyhistor** (Greek: romanized: *polyīstor*, lit. 'well-learned')[2] is an individual whose knowledge spans many different subjects, known to draw on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems.

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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polymath>

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Polymaths are characterised by a great curiosity that leads them to continuous learning and involvement in different areas, especially in some with different expressions as it is not only about accumulating knowledge but also about applying and expressing it.

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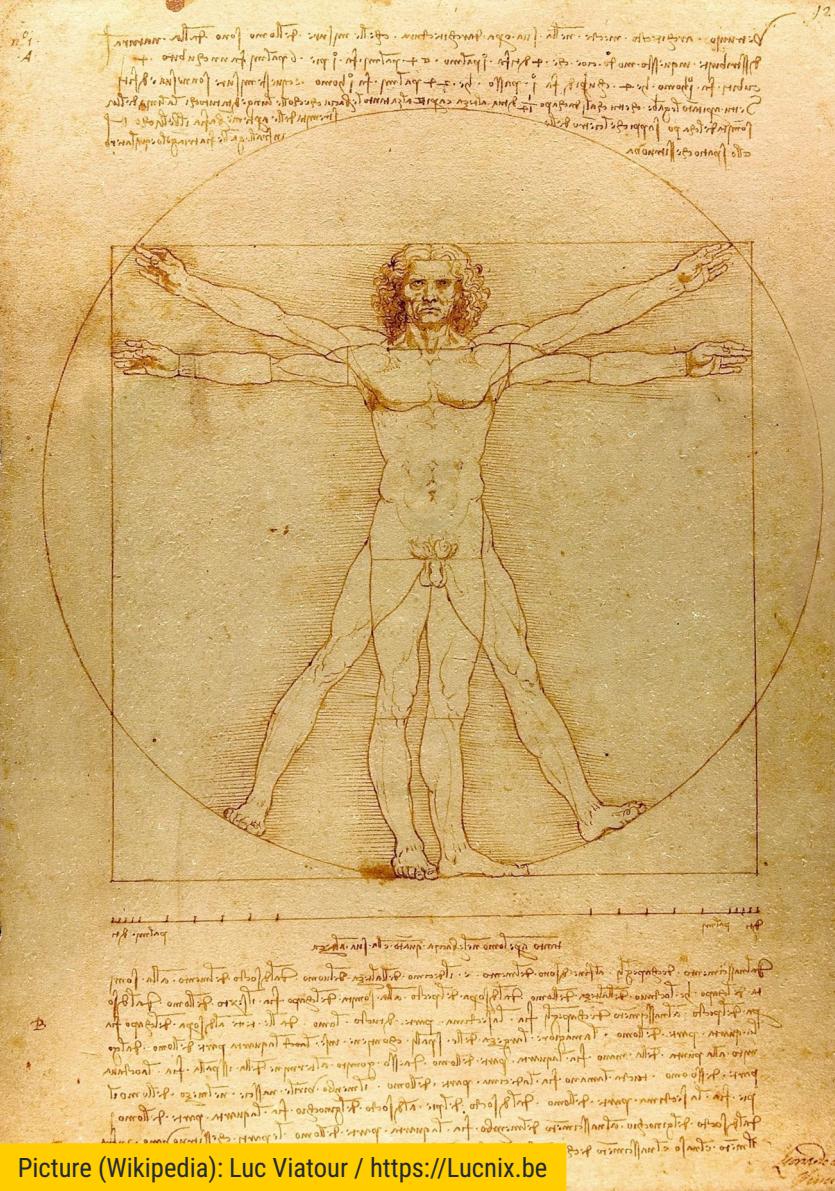
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Leonardo da Vinci

- Painter and sculptor
- Engineer
- Scientist, anatomical studies
- Architect
- Theorist
- Astronomy
- Botany
- ...

Learning is the only thing the mind never exhausts, never fears, and never regrets.





Bruce Dickinson

- Singer, Iron Maiden
- Olympic fencer
- Commercial pilot
- Professor in ancient history
- Honorary PhD in Music
- DJ
- Screenwriter

*Life is about learning,
it's about growing*



Natalie Portman

- Actress
- Bachelor's degree in psychology from Harvard University
- Fluent in English, Hebrew, French, and Spanish.
- Director and producer

*I don't love studying. I hate studying.
I like learning. Learning is beautiful.*



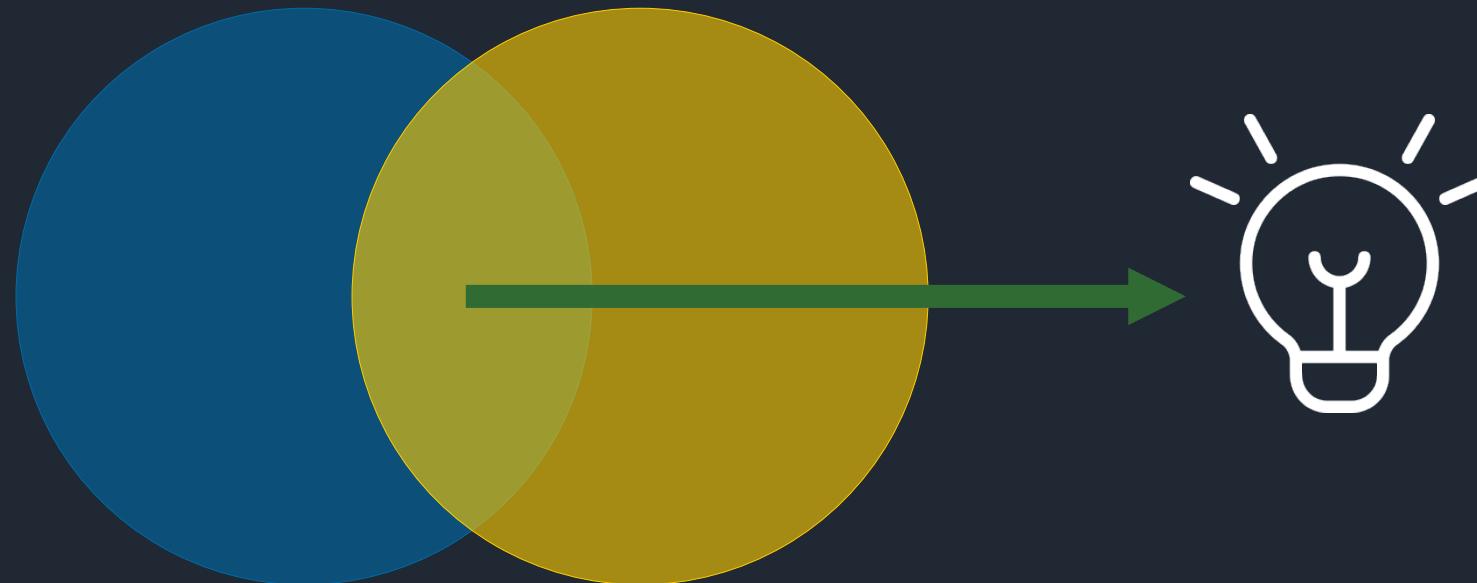
Idea synthesis

- Connecting the dots
- Adaptability
- Cross-disciplinary innovation
- Effective communication
- Problem-solving versatility

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Idea synthesis



DAISY

Minoritetsspråk



DAISY
Minoritetsspråk
Jiddisch
Meänkieli
Romani
Samiska

Talbok, DAISY
Fakta
Norska långserier



Lindqvist, Herman
Historien om Sverige. Från islossning till kungarike
Inläsare: Bertil Ödlund, 1993

Speltid
14 tim., 42 min
cd-rom 1(1)
IRIS-inläsning
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www.btj.se

OBSERVERA
Denna talbok är framställd för personer med funktionshinder enligt
17 § upphovsrättslagen. Olägga spridning eller överföring bevisas.

HOW STANDARDS PROLIFERATE:

(SEE: A/C CHARGERS, CHARACTER ENCODINGS, INSTANT MESSAGING, ETC.)

SITUATION:
THERE ARE
14 COMPETING
STANDARDS.

14?! RIDICULOUS!
WE NEED TO DEVELOP
ONE UNIVERSAL STANDARD
THAT COVERS EVERYONE'S
USE CASES.



YEAH!

SOON:

SITUATION:
THERE ARE
15 COMPETING
STANDARDS.

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HEATHER LESON

Voting Member

Chairperson - Governance Working Group

- **Background:** Digital humanitarian and community organiser
- **Cross-disciplinary blend:** Emergency response, mapping, data, and global coordination.
- **Contribution:** Coordinated responses during natural disasters using OpenStreetMap, training volunteers to contribute maps critical for rescue and recovery.
- **Why it matters:** Heather connects the dots between **mapping tools and real-world crisis response**, uniting technologists, NGOs, and affected communities.

Idea synthesis

- Connecting the dots
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- Cross-disciplinary innovation
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I already told you: I deal with the god damn customers so the engineers don't have to. I have people skills; I am good at dealing with people. Can't you understand that? What the hell is wrong with you people?!

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Letter shaped skills

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|

Letter shaped skills

| T

Letter shaped skills

I T E

Letter shaped skills

I T E M

Letter shaped skills

I T E M m

Letter shaped skills

I T E M m

π

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I T E M m

π

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Rapid Learning



Rapid Learning

- Adaptability



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- Learning Techniques

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- Advantage in agile environments





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- Continuous improvement



Rapid Learning

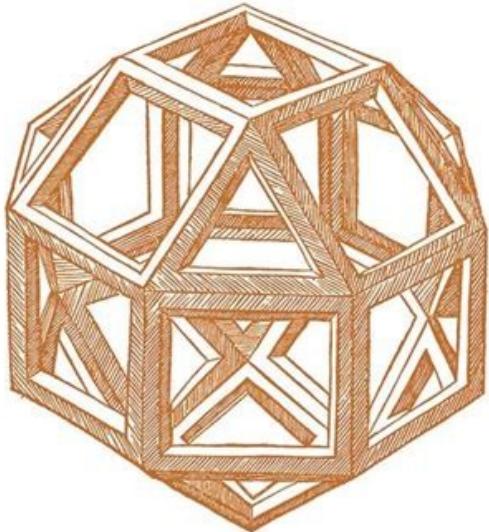
- Adaptability
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- Advantage in agile environments
- Continuous improvement

Adaptability



'Significant and timely.' A. C. Grayling

PETER BURKE



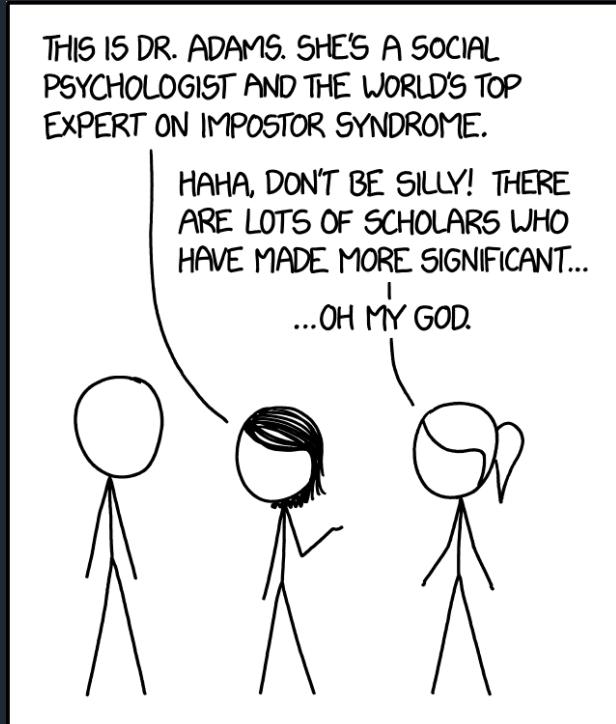
The Polymath

*A Cultural History from
Leonardo da Vinci to Susan Sontag*

Leonardo syndrome

- Curiosity
- Impatience
- Stop starting, start finishing

Impostor syndrome



Pareto Principle

The Pareto principle (also known as the 80/20 rule, the law of the vital few and the principle of factor sparsity) states that for many outcomes, roughly 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes (the "vital few").

Many natural phenomena are distributed according to power law statistics.

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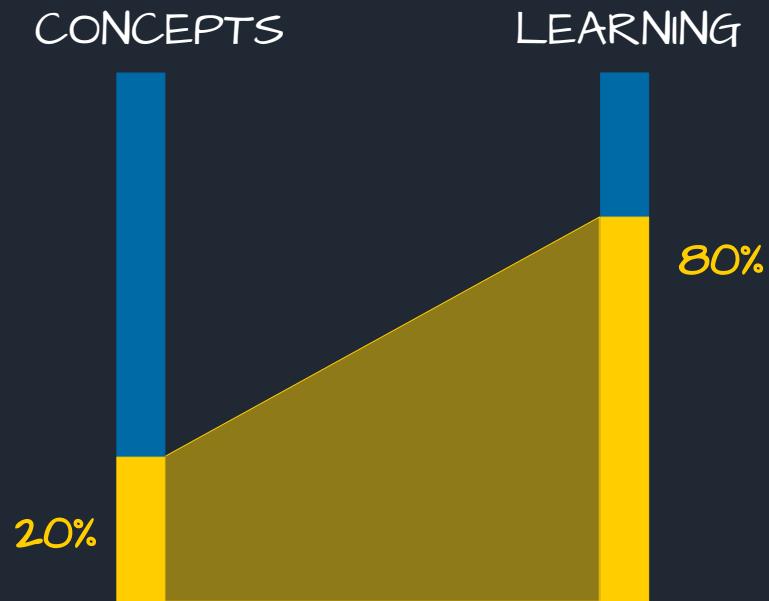
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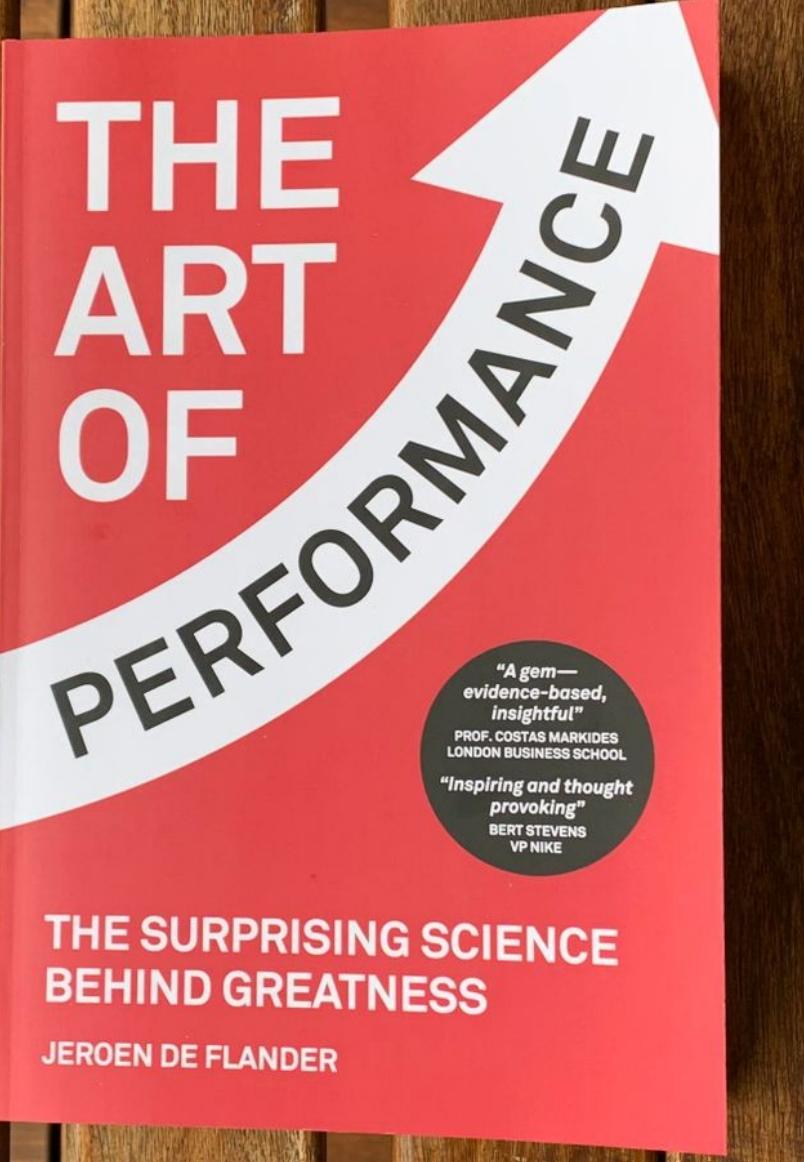
*80% of sales come from
20% of your clients/products*

*80% of the wealth is owned by
20% of the population*

*80% of software problems
are caused by 20% of bugs*

Pareto Principle





THE ART OF PERFORMANCE

"A gem—
evidence-based,
insightful"

PROF. COSTAS MARKIDES
LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

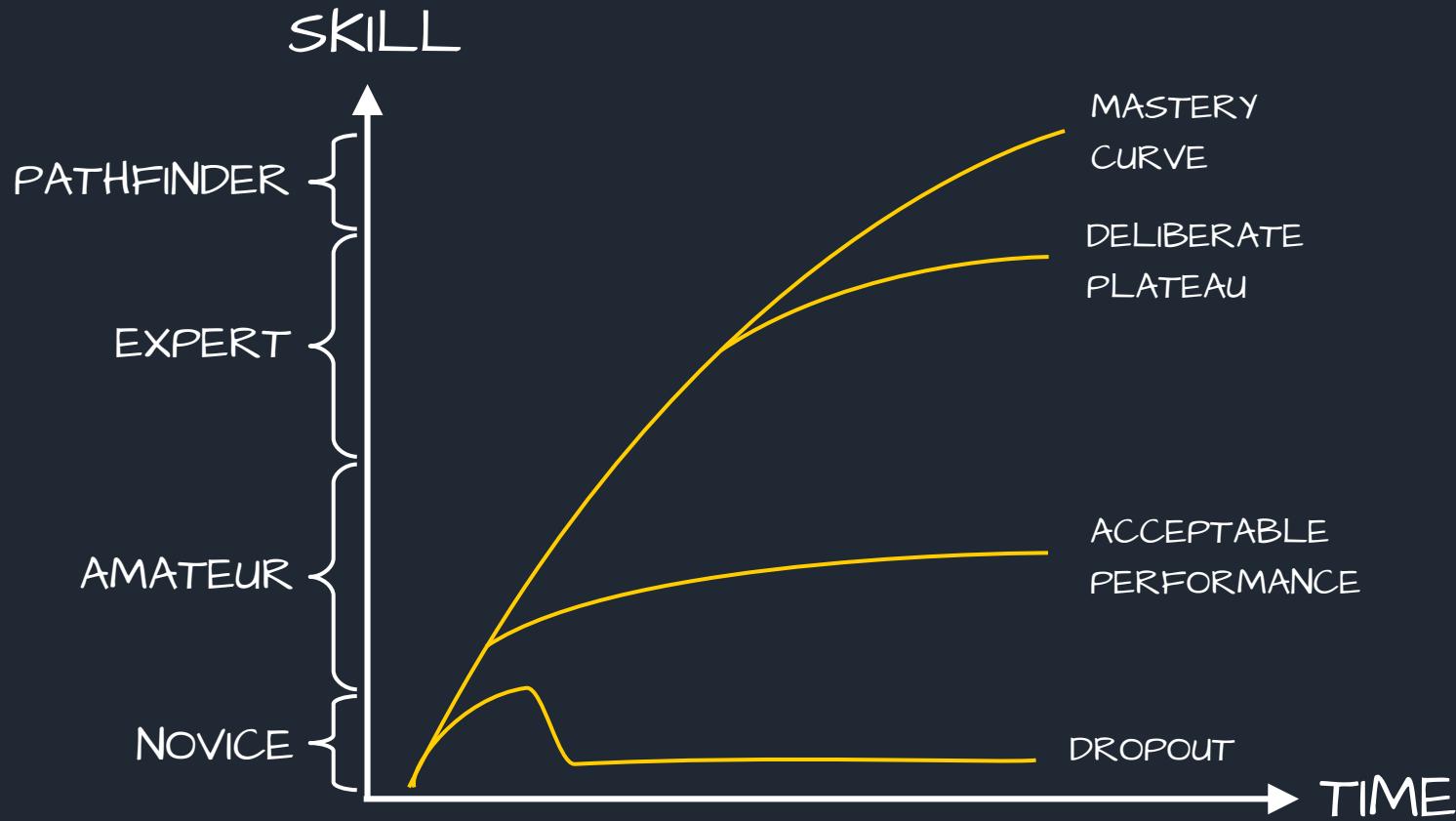
"Inspiring and thought
provoking"
BERT STEVENS
VP NIKE

THE SURPRISING SCIENCE BEHIND GREATNESS

JEROEN DE FLANDER

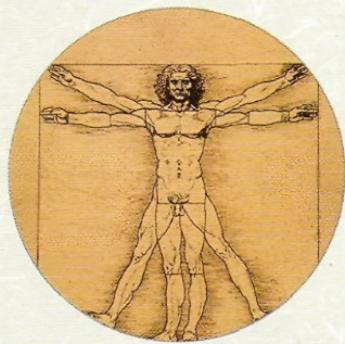
Mastery Curve

- Passion and purpose
- Deep practice
- Persistence



MASTERY

THE KEYS TO SUCCESS
AND LONG-TERM
FULFILLMENT



GEORGE LEONARD

AUTHOR OF *THE WAY OF AIKIDO*

"The practical wisdom in George Leonard's book will have a great influence for many years to come." —Michael Murphy, author of *Golf in the Kingdom* and *The Future of the Body*

Mastery

- What is Mastery?
- Loving the plateau
- The Dabbler
- The Hacker
- The Obsessive
- Mastery vs Pareto

Loving the Plateau



The Dabbler



The Obsessive



The Hacker



Mastery vs Pareto



Open source communities

- Collaborative
- Transparency
- Diverse skills
- Community support
- Continuous learning
- Volunteer-driven

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- Collaborative
- Transparency
- Diverse skills
- Community support
- Continuous learning
- Volunteer-driven
- Bridging gaps
- Versatility
- Adaptability
- Holistic perspective
- Onboarding/mentoring
- Innovation
- Coordination

The Generalist Advantage

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They function as **generators** of innovations.

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-  They **enrich** working groups.
-  They have a greater capacity to **adapt** to change.
-  They are intellectual crosstalks, **bridges** between specialised working groups.

Thank you!

@jimmysjolund@mastodon.social

<https://sjolund.se>

