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## Michael J. Gelb

Discover Your Genius  
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### 1. How did you formulate the idea of inspiring readers to draw upon historical geniuses as role models as described in DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS?

Baby ducks learn to survive by imitating their mothers. Learning through "role-models" is fundamental to many species, including humans. As we grow into adulthood we can access a unique advantage: we can choose whom to imitate! So, why not incorporate the best from history's brightest? **2. What is the "genius dream team" and how did you compile your list of geniuses? What role does the dream team play in your book? And, should every reader use the same list?** The "dream team" analogy developed after a reporter asked me: "I like basketball, but whatever I do I'll never be like Michael Jordan," he said. "So how can anyone even think of being like Leonardo, Einstein or Elizabeth I?" Well, Michael Jordan is to basketball what Leonardo da Vinci is to creativity: the greatest of all time. Leonardo had Plato and Filippo Brunelleschi as his role models, Michael had Elgin Baylor and Dr J. A manual for aspiring basketball-players starts with Michael, but then it might move on to explore the special qualities of a "dream team" of other legendary players. DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS is a manual for accessing your creative gifts to live a fulfilling life in the face of change and chaos; and, the ten geniuses featured in the book represent my choices for an all-time/all-star revolutionary genius "dream team" to help you achieve this seemingly elusive goal. My "team" was chosen with the help of a "genius board" of scholars, although the selections are all ultimately mine. I used the following criteria: universality of influence, attributability, contribution to creating a 'paradigm-shift' and most important — utility for my readers in improving the quality of life. I hope to inspire readers to learn from the geniuses introduced in DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS, and to incorporate these strategies for learning from role-models so they can apply them to their own choices of great men and women. **3. Who are some of the contemporary figures that you consider to be a genius?** The conclusion of the book includes a discussion of my nominations for contemporary exemplars of the genius qualities. Lucille Ball, Buckminster Fuller, Dr. Mae Jemison, Jane Goodall, Gene Rodenberry, Julie Taymor and Bill Gates are among the nominees. **4. Was there a genius who you took off your list, but now feel should have been included?** No, I stand by my list. It was hard to leave out Freud, but I felt that Shakespeare said it all first! I love Edison, Machiavelli and Dante, too...perhaps I'll put them all in a sequel! **5. How To Think Like Leonardo DaVinci is a best-selling book. Why is Leonardo such an inspiration to you? And why isn't Leonardo included in DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS?** Leonardo's integration of art and science makes him the supreme example of balance, and the quest for balance is the through-line of my work. Although Leonardo isn't specifically profiled in DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS, (he got a whole book all to himself!) careful readers will discover that he hovers behind the scenes. **6. You've compiled a companion cd also entitled DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS, made up of classical music that the reader can use to enhance his/her experience with this book. How important is music to your technique? How did you choose these musical compositions?** Genius thinking involves activating the senses and breaking out of habitual perceptions. I commissioned original portraits of the geniuses as illustrations for this book and created this music cd to guide my readers to a memorable, multi-sensory, inspiring experience of the genius qualities and, of course, of their own potential. The music was chosen with the help of some extraordinary "cognoscenti" including Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. **7. What is the single most important idea you want the reader to learn from your book?** You were born with the potential for genius. And, you can learn how to access that potential by studying those who've done it, with world-changing results! **8. Do you consider yourself a genius? Why or why not?** My genius is in helping others discover theirs. **9. Do you have a favorite genius? Which one and why?** They're all amazing. My favorites are Shakespeare, Elizabeth 1 and Thomas Jefferson. If I have to choose just one, I'll take Jefferson because freedom makes everything else possible.