

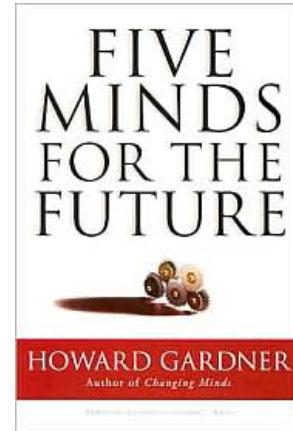
Five Minds Better Than One?

Monday, August 25, 2008

There is more than enough psychobabble in this world, and not enough genuine insight. I picked up *Five Minds for the Future* by Howard Gardner unsure if I would find anything worthwhile but intrigued by his previous writings. A professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Gardner is a leading theorist behind the notion of “multiple intelligences” - the idea that intelligence is a diverse capacity, rather than a simple score on an IQ test.

The concept of multiple intelligences is both helpful and transformative, broadening the concept of intelligence to cover, for example, emotional intelligence as well as the knowledge of facts and concepts. It takes little reflection to recognize that a failure to develop emotional intelligence can doom an individual to ineffectiveness — no matter how much knowledge the person possesses.

In *Five Minds for the Future*, Gardner points to five different modes of thinking, described as *minds*, that will be vital for effectiveness and success in the future. It is no accident that the book is published by Harvard Business School Press.



Gardner describes the disciplinary mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind, and the ethical mind as five essentials for the future. Christian readers will gain a great deal from reading Gardner’s book. Much of what he has to say is immediately applicable to life, to ministry, to education, and to parenthood. Christians will want to say *more* than Gardner says in many respects, but his analysis of these five minds should be very helpful to the reader.

As a matter of fact, I found the book immediately relevant to my responsibility as an academic president — and to the work of the Christian ministry. His secular analysis should lead to good biblical reflection. As I read his layout of these five minds, I thought of Paul’s instruction to ministers in 1 and 2 Timothy.

Five Minds for the Future will help parents to think about their children in a new light. The Christian parent must aim for more than is found in Gardner’s secular analysis, but certainly not for less. The same is true for the Christian educator.

An excerpt:

When one speaks of cultivating certain kinds of minds, the most immediate frame of reference is that of education. In many ways, this is appropriate: after all, designated educators and licensed educational institutions bear the most evident burden in the identification and training of young minds. But we must immediately expand our vision beyond standard educational institutions. In our cultures of today—and of tomorrow—parents, peers, and media play roles at least as significant as do authorized teachers and formal schools. More and more parents “homeschool” or rely on various extra-scholastic mentors or tutors. Moreover, if any cliché of recent years rings true, it is the acknowledgment that education must be lifelong. Those at the workplace are charged with selecting individuals who appear to possess the right kinds of knowledge, skills, minds—in my terms, they should be searching for individuals who possess disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful, and ethical minds. But, equally, managers and leaders, directors and deans and presidents, must continue to perennially develop all five kinds of minds in themselves and—equally—in those for whom they bear responsibility.

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