

Dogs Don't Chase Parked Cars

BY JAY MCDONALD, IM 68

8 rules to keep your career moving forward through lifelong learning

COMPUTER SPEEDS DOUBLE every 18 months, according to Moore's Law. Although it's hard to imagine smaller microchips, researchers indicate new developments will allow more powerful computers at even smaller sizes. In fact, during this 21st century, many futurists say our progress will advance 20,000 years in 100 years, comparatively speaking.

Technology developments in artificial intelligence, robotics, cognitive sciences, nanotechnology, neuroscience, energy and medical advancements will change our lives in ways we can barely imagine. Repetitive (human) tasks will continue to be automated, simplified and replaced by machines and software. An ever-increasing amount of information will be available and sorted almost instantly. A premium will be placed on key skills best done by humans—especially critical thinking.

Here are eight things we all need to do to survive and thrive during this time:

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

ALUMNI CAREER SERVICES is collaborating with the Scheller College of Business to offer a week-long leadership certificate program scheduled for Sept. 19-22. This four-day intensive program led by Georgia Tech faculty will help participants develop new skills in areas such as critical thinking, decision-making, financial acumen, strategic effectiveness and personal brand development. For more information and to register, visit the website at www.gtalumni.org/LDP17 or contact Charlotte Anders by email at charlotte.anders@alumni.gatech.edu or phone at (404) 385-5421.

1. DON'T CHASE PARKED CARS. Dogs don't do it, and neither should you. You need to keep moving and learning throughout your career. It's in your best interest to build your personal intellectual property and use curiosity to leverage your value. We all need to become lifelong learners, never satisfied with the status quo. You don't need all the answers—no one has all of them. Instead, keep asking great questions and read everything you can with a voracious appetite.



Take advantage of learning opportunities online, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), seminars, webinars, workshops and videos—many of them are completely free.

2. BE OPEN TO CHANGE. Change is one of the few constants in life, and to be your best, you must be able to adapt to change and its certainty. The reality is that most of tomorrow's jobs don't exist today. Skillsets needed a few years ago are far less relevant now. While graduation is a great accomplishment, it's merely the beginning of our education, path to success and positive influence on others. Resting on your laurels is not an option.

3. MAKE YOURSELF UNIQUE. As humans, we have untapped reservoirs of thinking power, and yet most of us use our brain potential sparingly. Our mindsets and belief systems can inhibit our potential growth. You must open your mind to new thinking, while embracing growth mindsets with a willingness to value new information and see the opportunities change permits.

4. SEEK THE TRUTH. In an age of instant information and social media, we are often driven by sound bites and data, unsupported by fact or reliable research. It is up to us to seek the truth, to question rigorously and to reach for

deeper understanding. Never in history have we had the resources we now have to learn and think for ourselves. As influencers and role models, we are responsible for ferreting out the facts and furthering conversations in thoughtful ways. Brains, used properly, have vast memory power and can update their operating systems instantly with new knowledge.



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5. DEVELOP HUMAN CONNECTIONS. In a world of advancing technology, smartphones, social media and non-human connections, it is important to develop and grow your human connections. Developing emotional intelligence and balancing empathy with logic will be at a premium in the future. Being able to master the things humans can do best will serve us well. Interpersonal relationships, understanding behavior, and being adept at making decisions based on human understanding and thinking will be huge assets.

6. BRIDGE GENERATIONAL DIVIDES. Generationally, we have many different value systems and attitudes in the workplace today, from Boomers to Millennials to Generation Z. Like it or not, we filter much of what we observe and hear through our generational experiences and have a tendency to shape our observations to reinforce our beliefs and biases. We must work collaboratively to understand one

another and to improve, while reshaping our belief systems in congruence with reality.

7. TRUST AND LEARN FROM YOUR PEERS. By working openly with peers, both inside and outside your industry, you can create a trusting, confidential environment to make each other better. By approaching issues without agendas and each bringing their own unique experiences to bear, you add to the benefit of everyone. An effective collaboration is far greater than individual thought.

8. FIND A ROLE MODEL OR MENTOR. Success is dependent on learning from others. All should have role models and mentors. If you don't, get one! That said, it's also your responsibility to be a mentor and role model to someone else. Pay it forward. Help them receive what you've been fortunate to have.

If you're not getting better, you're going backward. Invest every day in improvement of yourself and of those around you. Your return will be a lifetime of energetic contribution and personal growth, rewarding you with the sense of making a difference and always striving to be your best! ▲

Jay McDonald is a serial entrepreneur, CEO, business owner, author, keynote speaker and leadership adviser. He has spent his career taking businesses and the people who run them to the next level by inspiring a commitment to finding solutions, optimizing value and getting results. He is a past chair of the Alumni Association.



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