



## **THE ADAPTABLE MIND**

### **DISCUSSION GUIDE AGES 19-99+**

You've just seen *The Adaptable Mind*. Here are some questions to get you thinking and talking.

\*Please feel free to tailor the language as appropriate for each age group.

1. In the human economy, the skills we need to thrive boil down to qualities that machines do not have; they are distinctly human qualities: curiosity, creativity, taking initiative, multi-disciplinary thinking, and empathy. Pick a human who embodies one of these qualities. Who is it? How is this quality helping them thrive?
2. Technology might not possess emotional intelligence -- but it can certainly influence ours. How have the technological changes of the past twenty years affected what we value, think, want, believe?
3. Creativity is not limited to the world of art. What is an invention that you consider creative? Why?
4. Taking initiative turns an idea into reality. What is an idea that you've had, a dream or a big goal? How could you take initiative, even a small step, to turn that idea into something tangible?
5. Argentine car mechanic Jorge Ordón once watched a YouTube video about a plastic bag used to extract a cork stuck in a wine bottle. That night, he had a dream about a similar tool working to deliver a baby stuck in a birth canal. He took initiative and built a prototype of the tool in his dream using items in his home. Three years and many prototypes later, the World Health Organization endorsed his invention and a medical technology company licensed the tool

(called the Ordón Device) for real-life use. How is Jorge's story an example of multi-disciplinary thinking?

6. An uncomfortable exercise in empathy: Imagine you're someone whose political views are the polar opposite of yours. What feelings do you think are behind these views?
7. Either individually or in a group, think of a challenge we're currently facing. Considering the five skills covered in *The Adaptable Mind*, brainstorm a way to address that challenge.
8. If you have watched both *The Adaptable Mind* and *The Science of Character* short films, how does strengthening your own character relate to thriving in the 21st century?

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## FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION GUIDE AGES 19-99+: CHECK-IN

A little while ago, you watched *The Adaptable Mind*. Let's check back in and see what's changed for you since then.

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1. *The Adaptable Mind* discusses five important qualities: curiosity, creativity, initiative, multi-disciplinary thinking, and empathy. In the past month, which quality has been most important in your day-to-day life? How?
2. The film shows how we get some of our most creative ideas while we're not actually working – while we're doing something else, like taking a shower, or running, or daydreaming. Today, see what happens when you let your mind wander. Where does it take you?
3. Initiative is an important quality but it can also be one of the hardest to practice. In the past month, have you taken initiative on anything? Do you plan to this month?
4. Multi-disciplinary thinking can be a great tool when you're stuck on something. Think of something that's been challenging you this past month. How might someone else – an engineer, an artist, an athlete, a clergyperson – approach the problem?
5. If you've been working on empathy, how has it changed how you think of or communicate with others?
6. What do you plan to do next month to keep your brain learning and adapting?

## FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION GUIDE AGES 19-99+: CHECK-OUT

The journey continues, but let's stop to assess the progress you've made so far. These questions will help you think about how your own mind has adapted this past year.

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1. Do you think you've become more adaptable? Have you been more open to new ideas and new paths?
2. What have you decided to invest your thought and energy in?
3. What have you decided to set aside?
4. Going forward, what skills do you plan to work on?
5. Where do you want to be a year from now?