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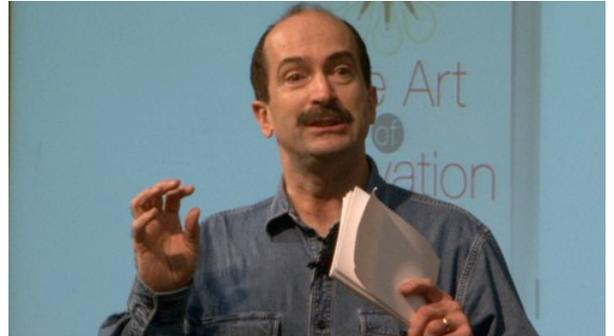
Cultivating an Attitude of Wisdom

Tom Kelley, *IDEO*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2102/Cultivating-an-Attitude-of-Wisdom>

Be confident in what you know well, but be distrusting enough of what you don't know to keep yourself learning more at all times. This axiom will keep life-long learners of innovation thirsting to know more, broaden their skill set, and continuously second-guessing themselves in a way that will promote growth and knowledge, says Tom Kelley, General Manager of IDEO. Resting on your laurels, says Kelley, is never a good idea, and it's not served anyone - including Caesar - very well.



Transcript

So that brings us to number three which I also stole from Bob Sutton, with his permission. I was over in Bob's office at the d.school earlier today. And Bob's got this idea that I love, that I fully adopted called having an "attitude of wisdom". By the way, those of you who don't know Bob, he's the one on the right with the clothes on. Anyhow, Bob's got this idea of an attitude of wisdom which is a healthy balance between confidence in what you know and distrusting what you know just enough that keeps you thirsty for more knowledge. Because we've all met people in our lives who they get to be an expert, they develop this deep expertise and they want to rest on their laurels. "I know a lot about that. I don't need to know more." I bet you've encountered some people like that. And this resting on your laurels, especially with respect to learning - never a good idea. In fact, if you think about it, resting on our laurels, it wasn't even a good idea back when they had the laurel wreaths.

We get that from Julius Caesar's time when something good happens you get to wear the wreath of laurels. But think about it. So Julius Caesar, case in point. Julius Caesar, 44 B.C., he's made emperor for life. Imagine, that's a happy day. Emperor for life, doesn't it have a nice ring to it? You're not just emperor for life of Lithuania, you're EMPEROR FOR LIFE of the most powerful empire in the world. Being President of the US is nothing like that, eight years you've got to give it up. So he's emperor for life, he is the happiest, proudest guy in the world on that day and you know what? He remained emperor for life, but his friends killed him a month later. And so, resting on our laurels even back then, bad idea. Certainly can't do it now.