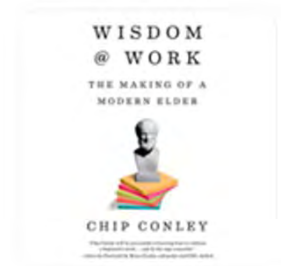
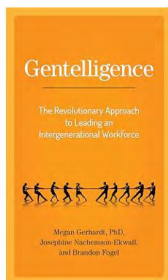


# **Stronger Together: The Power of Organized Veterinary Medicine**

## ***Why Association Membership Matters More Than Ever***

**Michelle Harcha, DVM, MA, BCC, ACC**  
**LeadYourShip, LLC**  
**Veterinary Medical Association Executives  
Summer Conference**  
**July 19, 2025**



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# ***Why Your Association Membership Matters More Than Ever!***

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White Coat Ceremony - 2025



Oath and Hooding 2025

# Learning Objectives

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## 1. Adopt a Growth Mindset

- *Describe how a **Learner mindset** enhances leadership in association management.*

## 2. Harness the Power of Questions

- *Apply Q-Storming to drive innovation and generate solutions.*

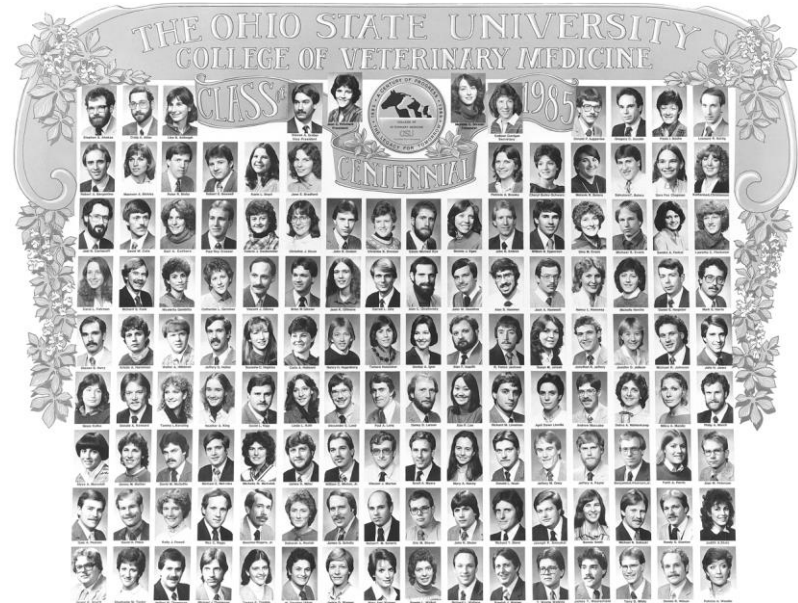
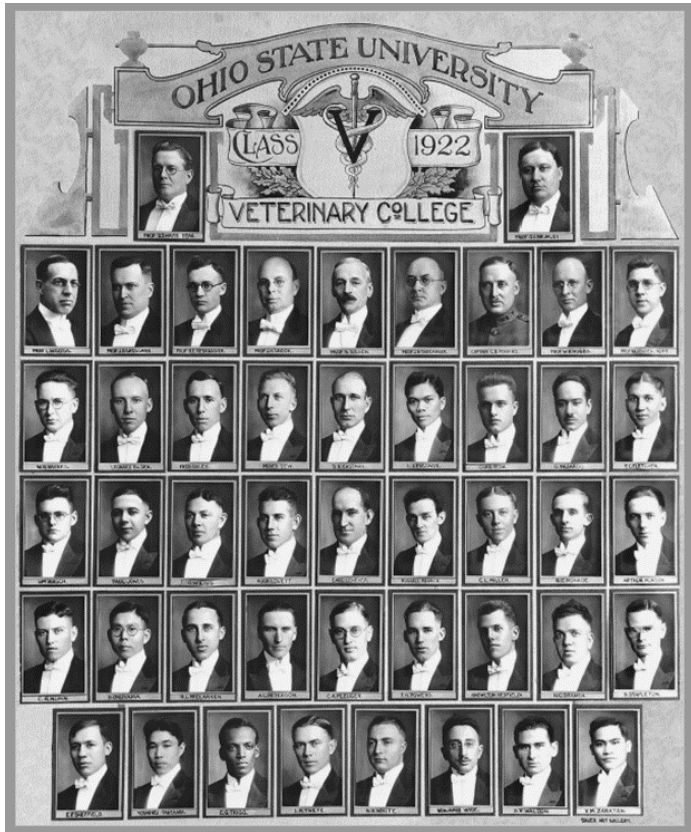
## 3. Leverage Generational Diversity

- *Apply Gentelligence principles to engage and empower a multigenerational veterinary medical association.*

## 4. Learn from Experience

- *Gain insights and ideas from seasoned association executives.*

# A Legacy of Organized Veterinary Medicine



# My Experience with Professional Associations

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1. Think of a professional association where you had a great member experience.
2. *What made it meaningful or successful?*
3. *How did they make you feel?*
4. Think of a professional association where you had a negative or disappointing experience.
5. *What made it challenging/ negative?*
6. *How did they make you feel?*

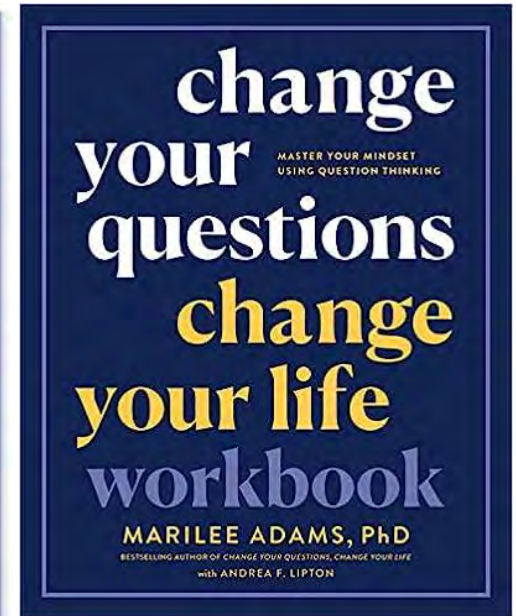
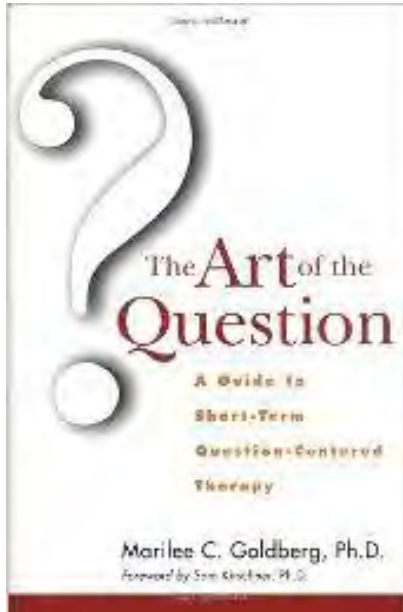




# Organized Veterinary Medicine



# Based on the Work of Marilee Adams, Ph.D. and the Inquiry Institute



# Mindset - Growth vs Fixed

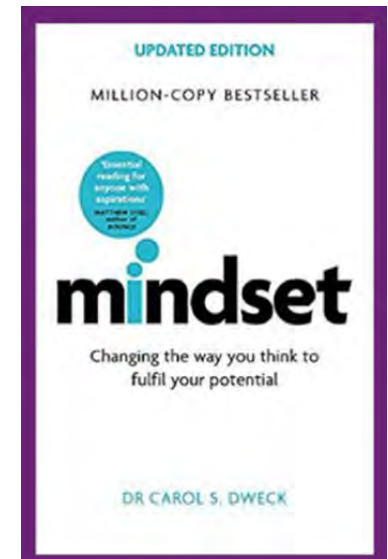
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**Fixed mindset** – intelligence, talent, and abilities are fixed

**Growth mindset** – intelligence, talent, and abilities can be developed via hard work

Our **mindset** influences how we think, feel, and behave

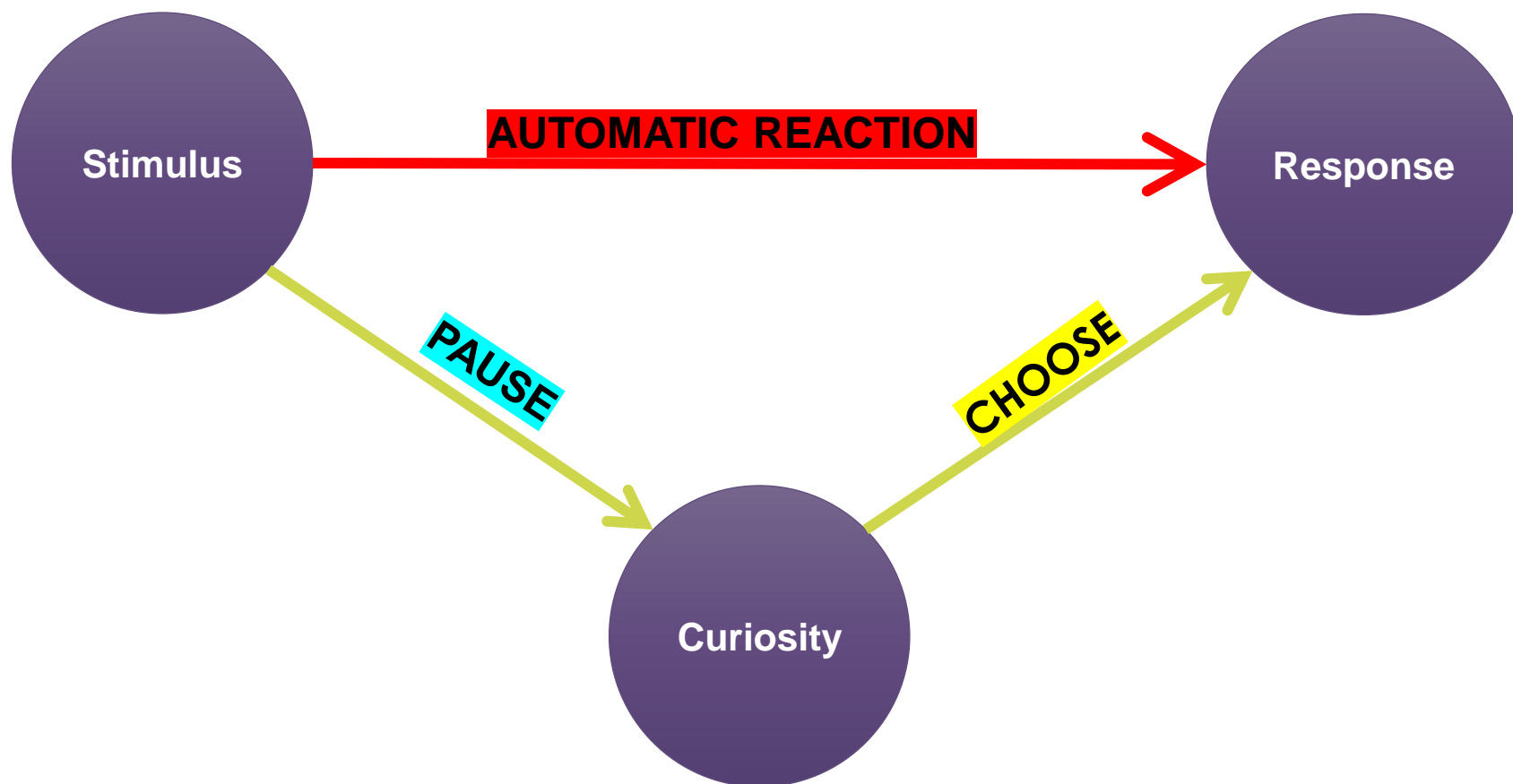
**Mindset** is a choice



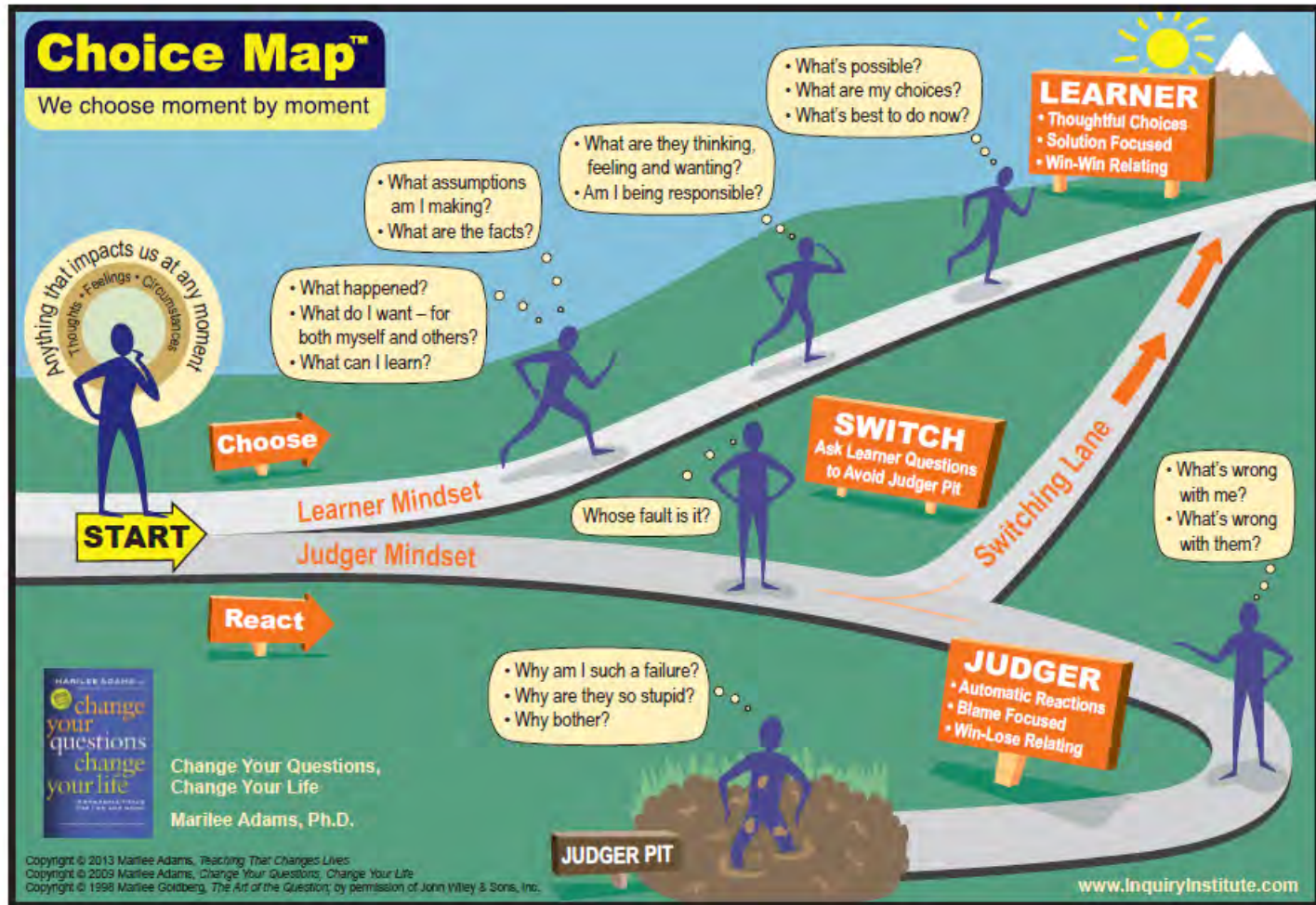




# To Change Our Thinking, We Must Interrupt Our Automatic Reaction



# The Choice Map





# Judger Mindset Is Part of Being Human

JUDGER IS NORMAL—EVERYONE HAS ONE!

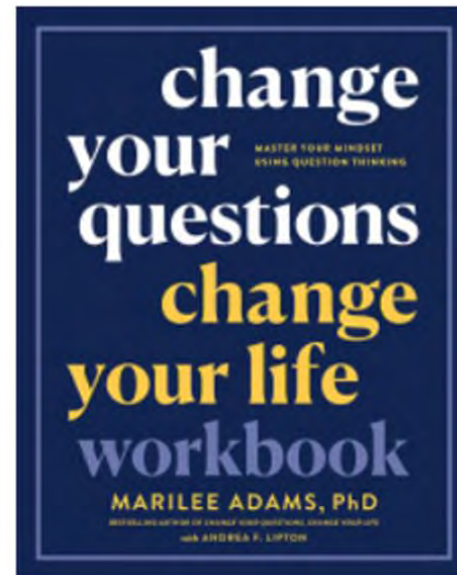
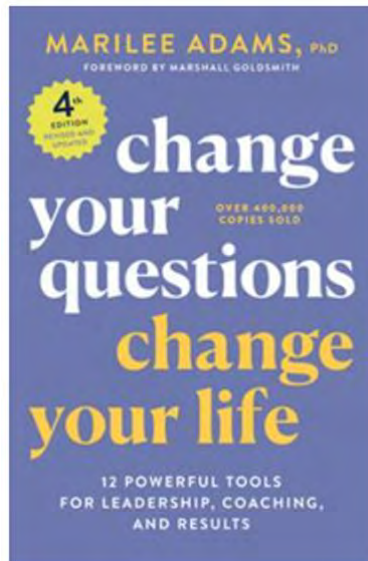
- Judger is neurologically hardwired, automatic.
- Judger is fear-based; exists for our survival  
Judger gets stronger with stress (**HALT**)
- There are costs when Judger takes over
- Accepting Judger and practicing Learner is a moment-by-moment opportunity



# The Power of Questions

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1. Why do we ask questions?
2. Einstein's Quote
3. Q-Storming®

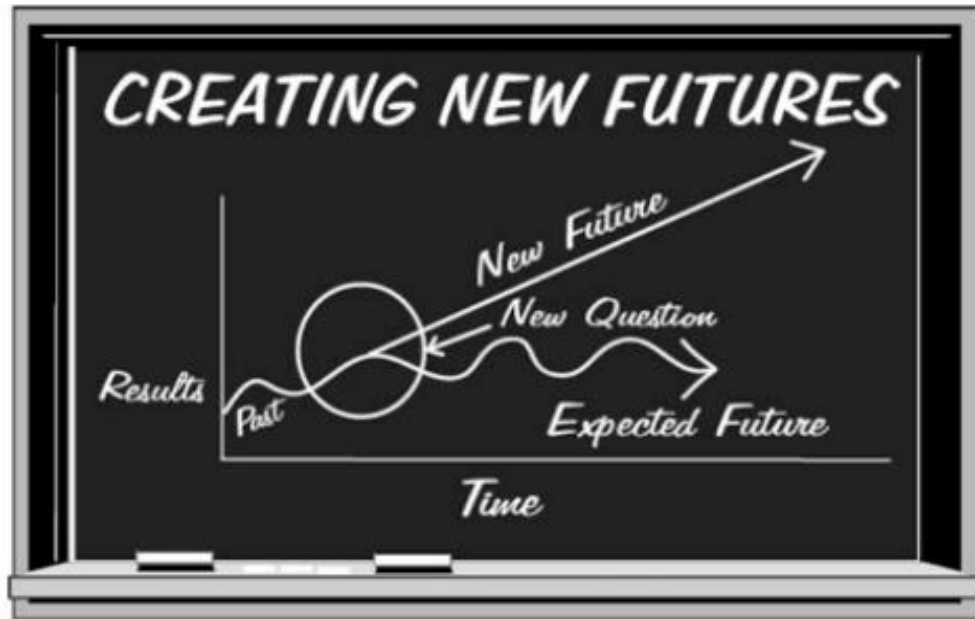




# Q-Storming

## Asking the Right Question

CREATE NEW POSSIBILITIES BY ASKING NEW QUESTIONS





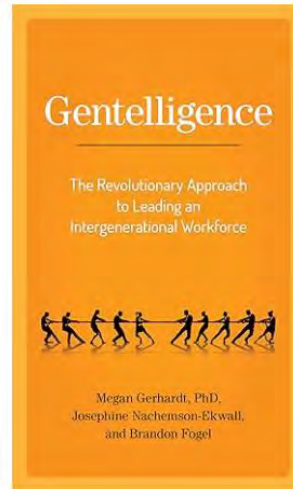
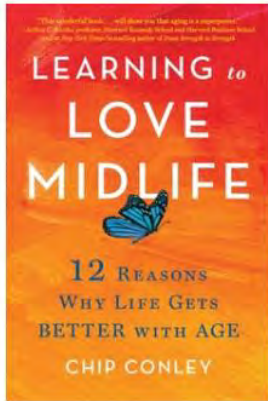
# Q-Storming

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## **Goal – to generate questions**

1. Great results begin with great questions
2. Most problems can be solved with the right questions
3. Questions often lead to insights, innovation, and discovery
4. **The problem is decreasing enrollment in Power of Ten programs**

# Intergenerational Collaboration



## JOURNEY FOR TEAMS



Collaborating Partners

**AVMA/AAVMC**  
Commission for a  
Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive  
Veterinary Profession



Educational Partners Trailblazers



Educational Partners Adventurers



Megan W. Gerhardt, Ph.D.  
Founder & Director of Thought  
Leadership, [Gentelligence.org](http://Gentelligence.org)  
Professor of Leadership, Miami  
University



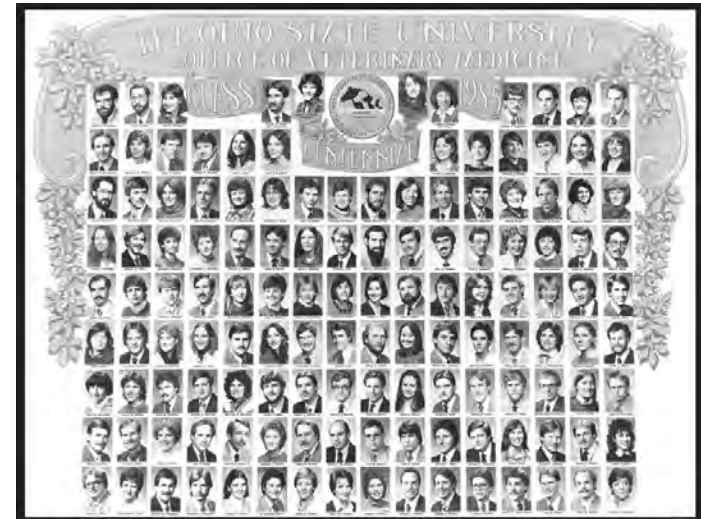
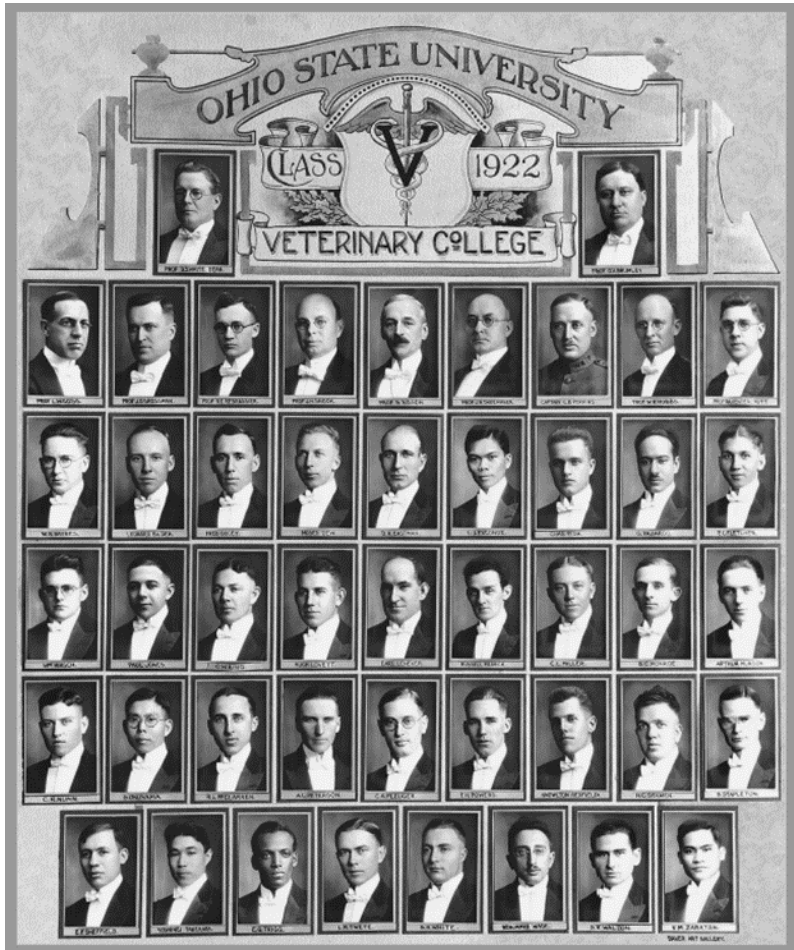
# Who said this Quote?

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*The young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no respect for their parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint. They talk as if they alone know everything and what passes for wisdom in us is foolishness in them.*

- A. Adrian Hochstadt
- B. Chris Henney
- C. My grandfather
- D. Michelle Harcha
- E. **11 BC writer, Peter the Hermit**

# What did they say about my generation?

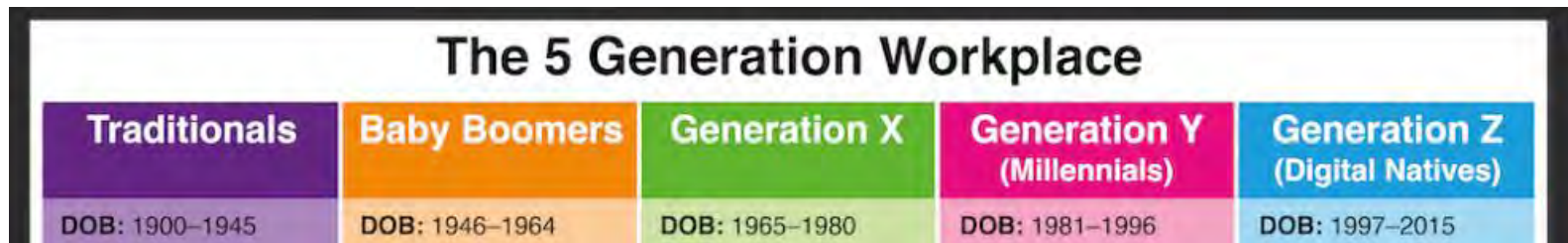


# Leading with Gentelligence

*Leading an intergenerational association membership and workforce*

## Generational Identity - one layer

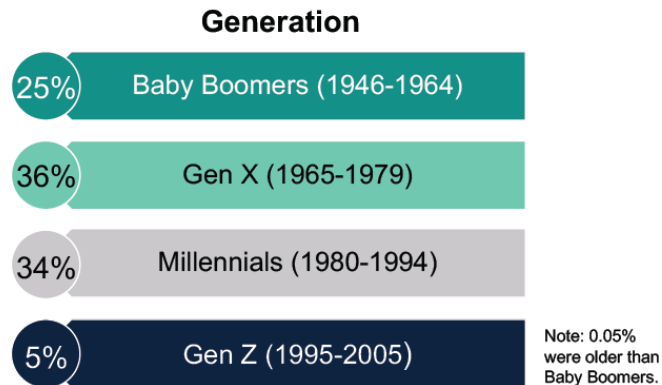
- shared experiences
- internalized values and norms
- resulting behaviors and norms





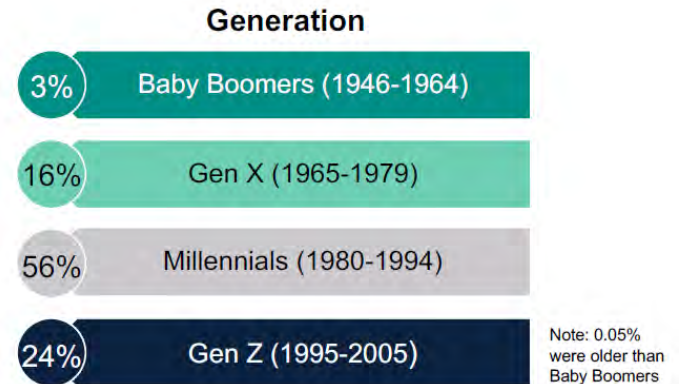
# Generational Diversity

## Merck Animal Health 2023 Veterinary Wellbeing Study



Base: All Respondents (n=4622)

## Merck Animal Health 2023 Veterinary Team Wellbeing Study



Base: All Respondents (n=2263)

## Generational conflict

*What are the costs?*

# What is the Solution?

The Gentelligence Solution

Megan W. Gerhardt, Ph.D.

<https://profgerhardt.com/>

<https://gentelligenceacademy.com/>



In 2020, what percent of companies included age or generation in their DEI effort? **8%**

Going from generational conflict to **intergenerational collaboration.**

Gerhardt, M., Nachemson-Ekwall, J., & Fogel, B. (2021). Gentelligence: The revolutionary approach to leading an intergenerational workforce. Rowman & Littlefield.

# Gentelligence

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The collective intelligence that comes from intergenerational learning and collaboration; seeing generational diversity an opportunity rather than a threat.

What are the generational diversity opportunities in my veterinary medical association?

# Roadblocks to Gentelligence:

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## 1. Generational Shaming

- *Mindset – us versus them*

## 2. Age Bias & Stereotypes

- *Ageism*

## 3. Value and Need Myths

- *Respect, competence, connection, and autonomy*

## 4. Knowledge Relevance

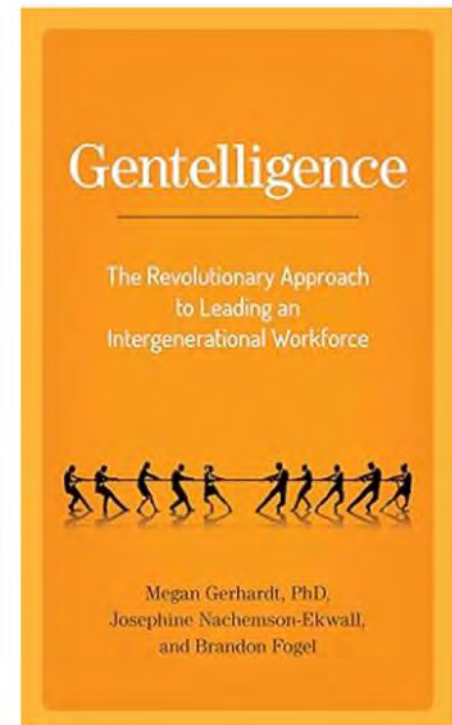
- *Know **what** – know **how** – know **when** – know **why** – know **whom***



# Four Gentelligence Practices

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1. Resist Assumptions
2. Adjust the Lens
3. Build Trust
4. Expand the pie





# 1. Resist Assumptions

1. Conduct an assumptions audit.
2. Question your assumptions
3. Establish personal connections



THE WORK OF IRON KATE

# One-Belief-at-a-Time Worksheet

## The Work—A Written Meditation

On the "Belief" line below, write down a stressful belief. It could be a statement from a Judge Your Neighbors Worksheet, a stressful belief about someone (alive or dead) whom you haven't forgiven 100 percent, or any stressful thought at all. Allow yourself to mentally revisit the specific situation. Then question the concept in writing, using the following questions and handprints. When answering the questions, circle your yes, no, affirm, and witness what appears to you.

Belief

1. Is it true? (Yes or no, this, new to question 3.)


2. Can you absolutely know that it's true? (Yes or no)

3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?

What evidence do you have when you believe that thought?

What images of past and future do you see when you believe the thought?

How do you treat yourself and others when you believe the thought?



# Q-Prep™


**Planning for Effective Conversations, Meeting, and Projects**

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**Meeting/Conversation/Project**

**Date**



**What are my goals for this conversation, meeting, or project?**

**What questions am I asking myself about the situation, the other person/people, my concerns, and/or goals? (Include any Judge and Learner questions)**

**What assumptions am I making about myself, the situation, the other person/people, and my goals?**

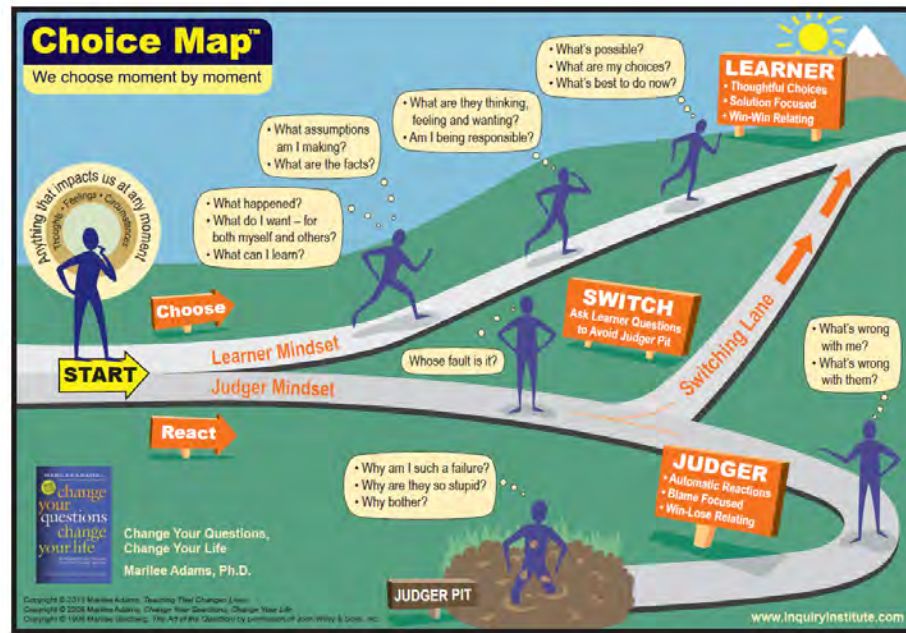
  

**Use Learner questions for great results everywhere. It matters.**

Contact Information:  
[sales@qprep.com](mailto:sales@qprep.com)  
[www.qprep.com/qc](http://www.qprep.com/qc)  
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# 2. Adjust the Lens

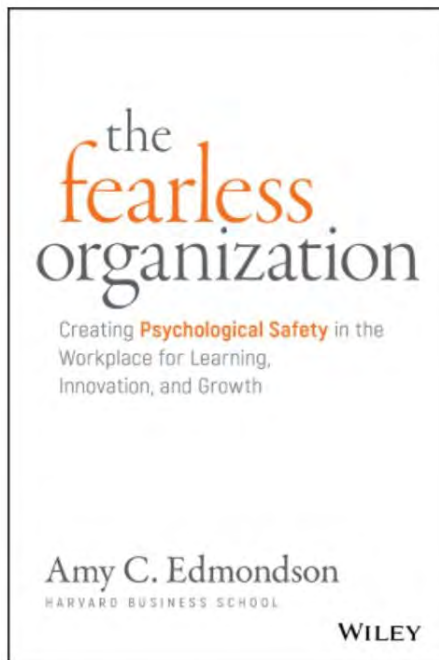
1. **DIE** – describe, interpret, evaluate exercise
2. Curiosity, not judgement – develop a Learner mindset



Gerhardt, M., Nachemson-Ekwall, J., & Fogel, B. (2021). Gentelligence: The revolutionary approach to leading an intergenerational workforce. Rowman & Littlefield.

# 3. Build Trust

1. Create a psychological safety zone.
2. Focus on a shared mission and vision

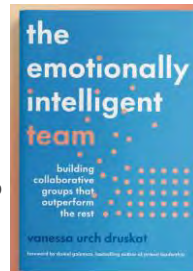


The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team™ Model

# 4. Expand the pie

1. Look for **win-win** solutions through the “Learner Mindset.”
2. Be willing to teach, be willing to learn
3. *Ask me about exercise*
4. *The neuroscience of inclusion*

Gerhardt, M., Nachemson-Ekwall, J., & Fogel, B. (2021). *Gentelligence: The revolutionary approach to leading an intergenerational workforce*. Rowman & Littlefield.



# What questions are you thinking with?

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1. How can I lead with a Learner (growth) mindset?
2. What questions do I need to ask the staff, board, members, sponsors, veterinary students, and other stakeholders?
3. How can I use Gentelligence to lead a multigenerational veterinary medical association?



# Learn from Experience



**American Association  
of Equine Practitioners**

**David Foley, CAE**  
Executive Director



**Debra Hamelback**  
Executive Director



**Heather O'Steen, CAE**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Stronger Together: The Power of Organized Veterinary Medicine



**Thank you!**  
**What are you taking away?**

**LEADYOURSHIP<sup>®</sup>**

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