

# THE FUTURE OF LEARNING MANIFESTO

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## SHORT VERSION

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5. My Memory Is Only As Big As My Heart. Otherwise, I'll Stick with Google.
6. Look It Up or Die.
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9. It Ain't About the Technology. It's About Being Inside the Story.
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## LONG VERSION

### 1. "Playing Small Does Not Serve the World." Your Brain is Your Brand.

Marianne Williamson wasn't being cheap with words. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. Or that we're simply being measured by small dreams.

You've got one choice. Play big or stay home. Serve the world or be forgotten.

Ultimately, you've got your heart and your brain. Both can serve. One will do so when nobody is watching. The other is your brain. It needs attention. Give it fuel. Make it stand out. Be the brand that makes a difference.

### 2. What Would Socrates Do?

If Socrates could Google, what questions would he have asked?

Am I being rhetorical?

Does it matter?

Ask Jeeves.

### 3. Nobody Cares if You Walked Up Hill Both Ways Barefoot in the Snow and Could Diagram a Sentence.

I get it. You were a noble student of the highest caliber 'back in the day' before text messaging and cell phones and this wacky Internet business. You were a fine speller, you kept your notebook neatly on your desk, and you always answered something "above average" with your hand politely raised in the air. You memorized the multiplication tables all the way to 12, you studied Latin (and its *sus scrofa domesticus*-Latin brother), and you believed Sputnik was the cat's meow. You had neat penmanship, you knew all the dates of all the battles and all the dead people, and you kept a glorious stash of index cards with obscure library resources neatly bound by a rubber band.

And if you're dead set on helping me master 'your past', please realize I'm going to need a nap. And something to fidget with. And a bus token to get to my job down at the buggy whip factory where I'll be standing at the front of the line.

Or, you can help me prepare for my future. Your choice.

### 4. Got Passion? If Not, I'll Tell You What To Care About.

I have a right to bitch about this class only if I have a dream I can articulate and am willing to put my life on the line for it. Otherwise, I might as well color between the lines, sit up straight, and take great notes.

And get out to recess on time.

Keep in mind, I may be young so I may have a hard time with that "r-tickle-a-shun" thing. That's your job. Give me the words. Give me the tools. Give me the examples. And then get out of my way.

But the second you see my passion start to go from curious lit match to smoke-jumper forest fire, stop giving me handouts and worksheets and become my Jerry McGuire.

### 5. My Memory Is Only As Big As My Heart. Otherwise, I'll Stick with Google.

I could memorize your facts, but I got Google for that.

Yeah, completely outsourced my entire "traditional fact memorization" protocol to this upstart search engine. Yeah, like a library, 'cept that there ain't no dust and much, much bigger. Yeah, it's not perfect, but I'm not going on Jeopardy, either. Yeah, there isn't a librarian holding my hand, but then again I need answers now. Not after a lecture on the Dewey Decimal thinga-ma-bob.

Sure, I'll do that memorize thing for you. Just one catch. Tell me a story.

Seriously. Put away the chalk. Get out from behind the podium. Look me in the eyes. Reach deep into my gut. Massage my heart. Get the hairs on the back of my neck to stand up. Get me to tell the flavor of clouds. Tell me to close my eyes and go somewhere bold.

I'll remember anything you tell me. Swear it.

### 6. Look It Up or Die.

It's old skool but sometimes remind me to look it up. Or die.

But don't stop there. Don't pat yourself on the back quite yet. I may be pretty quick on the Google or the Wikipedia, but I have no idea how to make sense of what I'm finding. That's your job.

Back in the day, if it was in a book, you taught me how to write down some copyright details on a note card. But things got funny on the way to the Internet forum. Facts don't just come in books anymore, and I need more than copyright details to help me make sense.

Are you teaching me to think? Or just to take notes?

And one day when you're nowhere to be found and I got a kid with a fever and he's vomiting and its 3am and I got 15 minutes to figure this crazy thing out, I got Google. And I need to know NOW what will keep my kid alive and what will instead send us over the edge.

Can you do that? 'Cause that's one part of my future and I won't have time for index cards.

## **7. Collaboration Ain't About Holding Hands. It's About Going Cool Places Fast.**

How big is my classroom? 4 walls or the horizon line?

I need friends. And fast.

Don't get sucka-punched by all the 'flat' earth hype. You're excited because someone in a foreign country leaves a comment on your blog. Really? Really? Seriously? Sure, it's sexy to suddenly be in cahoots with someone in Bangladesh and Minneapolis at one time, but I was born in that world 2.0 so I'm kinda used to it. Yeah, I get that you were born before things got interesting, but your digital immigrant accent is making it hard for me to understand you, and harder for me to remain relevant.

And I'm kind of selfish when it comes to my future vs. your past.

So, please stop making this so Friedman-esque and suggesting I need more math so my job isn't outsourced to Calcutta one day. And I ain't got time for your geek blog-penpal moment, either.

What I need is a network. And yesterday-fast.

Are you helping me get networked? Are you helping me become one talented hombre when it comes to partnerships and brainstorming with a team and finding talent when I need it and learning how to step up big as a leader and then slide seamlessly into the role of teammate and be the go-to guy on 20 projects at one time? Are you helping me build and position my brand? Are you helping me be relevant? At all?

Are you making sure I'm going cool places? And fast?

## **8. This Will Go Down on Your Permanent Record.**

You used to worry about the manila folder. Then things really got interesting.

Today you worry about filters and predators and firewalls and the MySpace boogeymen. Okay, I want to be safe. And I appreciate you wanting me to be safe. I just don't want to live in a locked box in the process.

So, maybe it's time we had a sit-down and talked about the 'how-to' strategy for social networking. What? Oh, I mean blogging. What? Yeah, like a diary. Sort of.

Instead of shutting off every virtual connection I have with the world once I step onto campus, why don't you teach me how to 'blog smart'? Why don't you bring in some CEO's into the classroom to talk about the really 'great' kid they almost hired, until they Googled her and found those clever spring break shots from Padre Island? Why don't you get a MySpace account and come see what I'm writing, even if it p\*\*\*es me off at the moment? Why don't you make me agile, rather than weak?

Oh, and why are you asking my teachers to deliver a world class education for the 21st century knowledge economy but you've censored every virtual tool they have at their disposal? Frankly, I'm not sure why they give a damn. I wouldn't if I were them.

But then I'd be blogging my brains out at home after I punched out at the end of the school day. And then become a consultant and get 10x the pay from the same superintendent who hired me to come in and do a professional development day when "blogging" was trendy for 5 minutes.

## 9. It Ain't About the Technology. It's About the Story.

Laptops? (Yawn)

Blogging? (Yawn)

PowerPoint? (Snore)

Multi-Media Center with a Starbucks 'coffee house' espresso shot in the backside? (Daring? 21st century school? Yawn.)

How about we stop talking all giddy-like about the technology. For us, it's not about the box. Not even about the iPod in pink or black. And it's definitely not about the email (psst: we don't email 'cept when old people need help).

It's about the conversation. The ricochet of words. The energy. The fact that it's happening right here right now and it ain't coming back.

You tell me to turn off the game. Because you're staring at the box. I can't turn off the game. Because the game ain't in the box.

So, stop making technology such a big deal. You want laptops. I got a cell phone. And you still don't get it.

'cause no matter what you spend your money and professional development time on, for us it's about being *inside* the game, inside the story, in *real-time*.

Everything else is over-priced and ready for recycling.

## 10. Nobody Knows the Answer. Get Comfy with the Questions.

If you're so smart, why are you asking me to give you the answers?

More importantly, are you teaching me how to ask great questions?

How to be Socrates? And the guys who actually code Google by asking the questions nobody else dreamed of?

I can tell you an answer. But my future isn't going to care for what I memorized. It's only going to care if I can adapt.

Are you ready to help me?

And can I trust you to help me get there?