

The 6 Types of Working Genius: A Better Way to Understand Your Gifts, Your Frustrations, and Your Team

Victor O. Kolade, MD

AUTHOR AFFILIATION:

The Guthrie Clinic, Sayre, PA

HOW TO CITE: Kolade VO. The 6 Types of Working Genius: A Better Way to Understand Your Gifts, Your Frustrations, and Your Team. *Fam Med*.

2024;56(8):521–522.

doi: [10.22454/FamMed.2024.633688](https://doi.org/10.22454/FamMed.2024.633688)

PUBLISHED: 17 June 2024.

© Society of Teachers of Family Medicine

Title: The 6 Types of Working Genius: A Better Way to Understand Your Gifts, Your Frustrations, and Your Team

Author: Patrick Lencioni

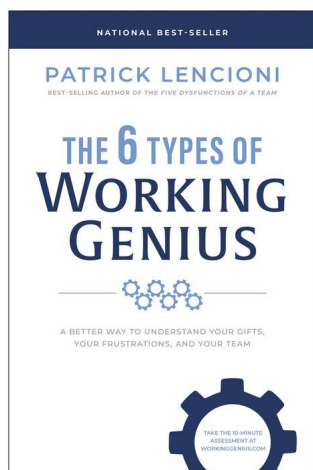
Publication Details: Matt Holt, 2022, 240 pp., \$15.89 hardcover

Patrick Lencioni is an organizational health guru and author of 13 books. In the first part of *The 6 Types of Working Genius*, he uses a realistic fable to illustrate how the Working Genius model was birthed: A staff member came up with the concept while contemplating why the director of her advertising agency became grumpy in seasons of growth. Subsequently, the model was polished in two staff meetings at the agency and fine-tuned based on a meeting with leaders of a new hospital client. The fable paints such a vivid picture of the development of this heuristic that it could easily represent a true occurrence that allows for anonymity of some of the players in the story. Lencioni identifies the six types of Working Genius as

- ▶ **Wonder:** The natural gift of pondering the possibility of greater potential and opportunity in a given situation;
- ▶ **Invention:** The natural gift of creating original and novel ideas and solutions;
- ▶ **Discernment:** The natural gift of intuitively and instinctively evaluating ideas and situations;
- ▶ **Galvanizing:** The natural gift of rallying, inspiring, and organizing others to take action;
- ▶ **Enablement:** The natural gift of providing encouragement and assistance for an idea or project; and
- ▶ **Tenacity:** The natural gift of pushing projects or tasks to completion to achieve results.

More detail is provided in the second part of the book. Knowing one's Working Genius may help you identify which meetings to attend. Based on the agenda, you can predict whether brainstorming—applicable to Wonder, Invention, and Discernment—or decision-making (centered on Discernment, with room for Invention and Galvanizing) can be anticipated. In addition, sometimes using one Working Genius to fulfill the role of another is possible; for example, Galvanizing a team may be achieved through the Invention of a unique huddle strategy.

How can this concept play out in clinical practice? Imagine that you want to increase the rate of completion of colorectal cancer screening among your patients. When you discover what your baseline rate is, you may Wonder how much higher it can get given your patient population. Invention may give you a strategy, such as reaching out to patients via the electronic medical records portal as part of your response to unrelated queries. Discernment quickly determines which of the ideas Invention offers is feasible. Galvanizing invites teammates—staff and/or trainees—to join the effort. Enablement identifies resources for tracking the progress of your work, which may include informatics support. And Tenacity makes sure you achieve your goal as you navigate any barriers you



encounter.

Does Working Genius have a role in hiring or making new clinicians feel at home in a new practice environment? Apparently, birds of the same feather (Working Genius) tend to flock together; a person of like Genius may prove to be an anchor or valuable ally for the new staff member.

Do patients have Working Geniuses? Yes. You may identify them in conversation, or they may volunteer them. As one gentleman said (without prompting) about his surgeon at a preoperative appointment, “He is like me—he’s inventive.” Our trainees have Working Genius too; helping them unlock this quality may make them more efficient in melding into the clinical environment they learn in. Working Geniuses may or may not be inherited—inheritance is not addressed in this book; if your trainee is the progeny of a colleague, don’t assume that the trainee will approach problems the same way as your colleague does.

Do other books like this exist? *The Anticipatory Organization*^{1,2} discusses Everyday Innovations, but these do not appear to be as widely applicable to personal strengths and weaknesses, or to the dynamics of teams of various sizes. Compared to the Enneagram,³ I found *The 6 Types of Working Genius* more intuitive and more amenable to identification in myself and others, even though I did not take the online assessment; Michel Fortin, an experienced marketing adviser, posted his assessment on his website.⁴ The use of word labels distinguishes Working Geniuses from the Enneagram, which uses numbers, and the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory,⁵ which uses four-letter codes. And Working Genius has six types, providing fewer subconcepts to explore than the nine Enneagram types or the 16 Myers-Briggs types.

What can you do with the concepts in this book? You can identify staff members that are most likely to see a task to completion (apply Tenacity) for critical assignments. If staffing changes have brought your office into a season for reassignment of duties, consider individual staff strengths in those decisions. And as you and your trainees or mentees explore opportunities for research, community service, or additional training, recognition of their Working Geniuses may help you predict the outcomes of your mentoring or advising.

REFERENCES

1. Burrus D. *The Anticipatory Organization: Turn Disruption and Change Into Opportunity and Advantage*. Greenleaf Book Group Press; 2017. .
2. Kolade VO. Can you predict the future? The anticipatory organization model. *Alliance of Independent Medical Centers*. 2022. <https://aiamc.org/blog/can-you-predict-the-future-the-anticipatory-organization-model>.
3. Singer D, Diez C. What’s your number? Using the Enneagram to build culture and understand your multigenerational team, Breakout workshop at the Alliance of Independent Medical Centers Annual Meeting . 2023.
4. Fortin N. The 6 types of working genius assessment report. 2024. <https://michelfortin.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/The-Six-Types-of-Working-Genius-Assessment-Report.pdf>.
5. Pittenger TDJ. Cautionary comments regarding the Myers-Briggs type indicator. *Consult Psychol J*. 2005;57(3):210–221.