

# \* Are Your Mental Models of a Library Holding You Back?

A PLA webinar  
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Cheryl Gould  
[fullyengagedlibraries.com](http://fullyengagedlibraries.com)  
[cheryl.gould@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.gould@gmail.com)

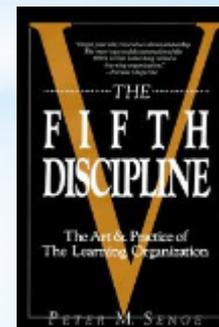
1. What's a Mental Model
2. Why do we care about mental models
3. What happens when mental models are challenged
4. Surfacing mental models that might hold us back
5. What to do about it



**\* Road map for today**

“Mental models are deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting.”

- Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*



\* Assumption

\* Belief

\* Mindset

\* How you think about something

**Analogies**



\* Protect or Use?

Please answer in the chat window.

*What might be different if you  
have the mental model that  
material is meant to be used?*



\* Need to find the models that limit our choices

\* If you don't know what they are, you can't change them



\* **Why care?**

1. Whatever
2. Like it
3. Like it, AND it makes me nervous
4. First reaction = I don't want this to happen



**\*Check your response**



**WE DON'T HAVE  
ENOUGH MONEY!**



- \* Customers don't use self check
- \* Customers don't read signs
- \* Staff don't read emails from admin
- \* Staff feels unappreciated

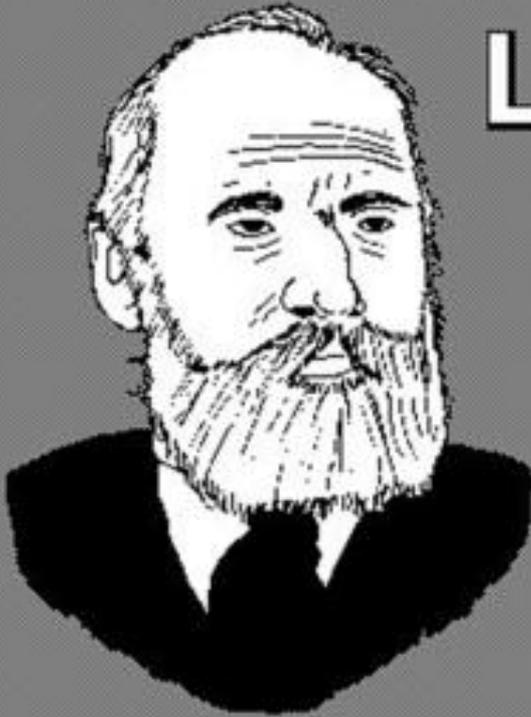


\* **Problem or useful  
information?**

Please answer in the chat window. What mental models might be behind this statement?

*“It’s not the books fault if nobody takes it out”*





# Lord Kelvin

(1824-1907)

"When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it, and when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind."

\* Physics done in 1900

**"That's right sweetheart;  
dreams and goals are  
Satan's way of distracting  
you from making dinner."**

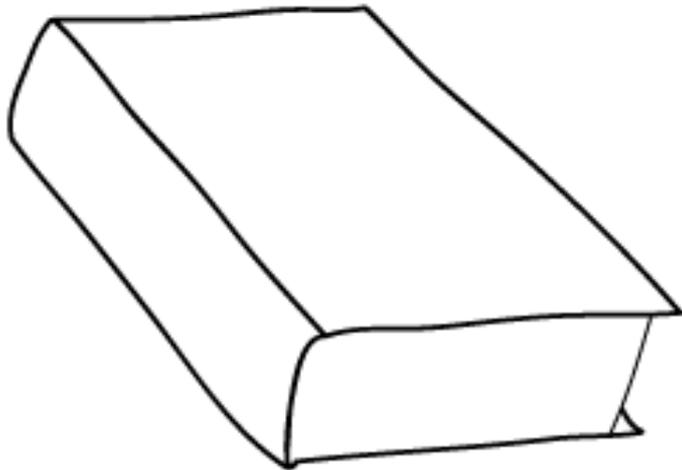


“Books, will soon be obsolete in the public schools. ... It is possible to teach every branch of human knowledge with the motion picture. Our school system will be completely changed inside of ten years.”



\*<http://thedoghousediaries.com/3362>

## Why not try a book?



- Infinite battery life.
- Page always loads.
- DRM free.
- Never loses your data.
- Immune to viruses.
- Compatible with all hands/eyes.
- Vibration and drop resistant --Go ahead; throw that sucker against the wall.

\* If you don't find them,  
they'll just get in the  
way.

\* **Surfacing Mental  
Models**

Please answer in the chat box

*Why should a library have a separate circulation and reference desk instead of moving to a one-desk model?*

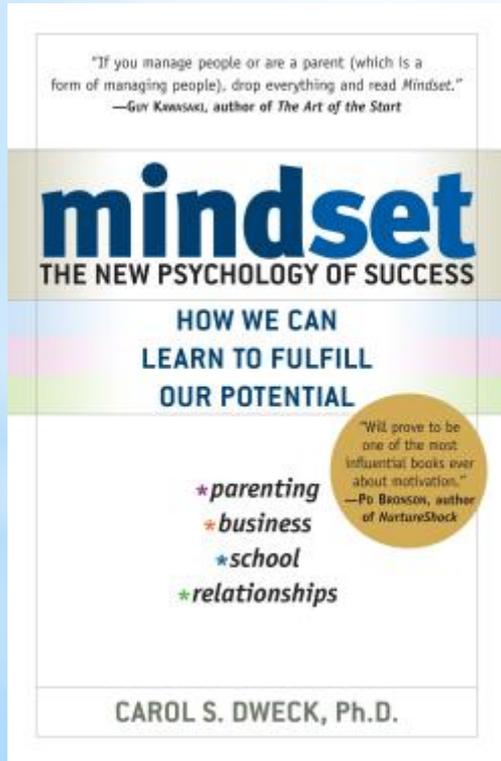




\*Wouldn't it be nice



\* **Are you an artist?**



# \* Personal Limits



\* We've always done it this way

How can you help people explore their fears?



- \* Is your job to get things done or to help keep the library relevant?
- \* Is a successful day completing your list or helping people?
- \* Instead of I can't, ask "what can I do?"

**\* Help them see the  
bigger picture**

Please answer in the chat window.

*What do libraries mean when we say we want community engagement?*



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Partnerships
  - City Council, Chamber of Commerce
  - Let them see you're human
- Identify "community"
- Public decides <sup>library's</sup> plan's priorities
  - include community in planning
- Dialogue. We set the playing field
- Find gatekeepers/advocates to bring people in
  - 1) need to train them
  - 2) we need to understand ~~the~~ community first!
- Library is outside the walls
- Let entire community see our value.
- Messy ☹
- Contentious
  - "SQUEAKY WHEEL"
- On-the-fly. Represent libs. wherever you are.
- Get involved in the target community

\*What mental models are holding your library back?

\*What mental models would you get the most benefit from exploring?



30 - Library = dead inst.

35

28 - Limited definition of lib

- Must follow rules + policies

27 Building = books

23 - Library is about books

- Library = place

20 - Look at staffing + scheduling

19 - Send staff into community

- Must preserve. Library as archive

18 - Do it all, don't stop doing anything

- Don't charge for anything

- What if no ref. desk?

- Shouldn't use social media to promote lib

- \* Ask them what mental models are holding the library back
- \* Prioritize that list
- \* Discuss what might be different if...
- \* Have a dialogue with the whole staff (or at least a representation of levels)



\* **With your staff**

1. Disagreement is bad
2. Logic is what changes people's minds
3. Getting buy in means you ask for feedback but you aren't required to do anything with the feedback or let people know how it was used!

**\* Damaging mental models**

1. Ask

2. Listen

3. No judgment, value all opinions

4. Share with all staff

5. Use what is learned

**\*To be successful**

\*Then what?

## WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT?

- What will be going on at the library?
- What services will need to be offered?
- What skills + behaviors do we need to develop in staff?
- Where should the library spend the bulk of its resources?
  - Time?
  - Money?
  - Effort?



\* Resourcefulness vs.  
resources

- \*What is the purpose of a library?
- \*What do we mean by “customer service”?
- \*What is community engagement?
- \*What if the building or the librarians aren’t the most important part of the library?

**\*Try these**



”What the caterpillar calls the end,  
the rest of the world calls a butterfly”  
(Lao Tzu)



Cheryl Gould

Learning Facilitator,  
Training Consultant, Coach

[cheryl.gould@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.gould@gmail.com)

[fullyengagedlibraries.com](http://fullyengagedlibraries.com)

**\*Thanks for Joining In**

**Any Questions?**



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- \* Corrections are micromanaging
- \* If you're the supervisor, you need to know the answers
- \* Because you've done something longer, that means you know how to do it better
- \* Collaboration means you don't have rules and structure and you can't delegate tasks
- \* People can only do what they were hired for
- \* You only reward success, not effort

## \* Management assumptions

- \* What if when you think there isn't a solution to the problem, you ask yourself, what are some of the assumptions I'm making about this problem.
- \* I agree that this is impossible. What needs to happen to make it possible?
- \* There are more people in the community than who we see everyday AT the library
- \* If we've always done it, let's review it
- \* People come before policies
- \* Facilitation and conversation are more important than having answers

## \* Cheryl's New Mental Models to put in place



To The World  
You May Be One Person  
But To One Person You  
May Be The World