

# MoCo Monday Minute

**Monday, April 30, 2018**

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*MCATC students recently competed in the Skills USA State Conference. Congratulations to the following who placed 1<sup>st</sup> in their respective program and will advance to the National Conference: Jesse Curtis-Automotive Service Technology, Keaton McCarty-Cabinetmaking, Joshua Centers, Raiden Faulkner, and Jonathan Havens-Welding Fabrication and Taylor Hay, Tyler Helton, Garrett Verdin and Dalton Scott-Carpentry Team Works. Advisors accompanying students were Jeff McCarty and Michael Montgomery.*

***Quote of the Week*** – “Time flies. It’s up to you to be the navigator.” – Robert Orben

***Create an Ad for School Breakfast Art Contest*** – The School Nutrition Office announced the school winners for the Create an Ad for School Breakfast Art Contest. First-grader, Karter Sparks was chosen as Camargo’s school winner. Fourth-grader, Jennilee Barnett was the school winner for Mapleton. Fourth-grader, Brooklyn Brockman was the school winner for MSE and chosen as the overall elementary winner of the local contest. Eighth-grader, Timothy Willis was chosen as McNabb’s school winner and overall middle school winner of the local contest. Both Brooklyn and Timothy will have their favorite breakfast item named in their honor on the 2018-19 breakfast menu. Congratulations to all!

***Some Cool Things That Happened Last Week*** – (1) Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle Parent Night was held last Monday at MCIS; (2) Seventh-graders participated in a Reality Store; (3) MCHS seniors Payton Redmon signed with Lindsey Wilson College to continue his education and bowling career, and Drew Mathis signed with Union College to play football; (4) Band members in grades 6-12 performed at Band-O-Rama on the McNabb lawn; (5) The annual MCHS Foreign Language Festival was held on Wednesday. French and Spanish students displayed their projects in the arena; (6) Coach Varney was recognized prior to the start of Thursday night’s game against West Carter for his 300<sup>th</sup> career win.



***Choirs with Outstanding Performances*** – The MCHS Freshman Singers received proficient ratings and Honor Choir received a distinguished and two proficient ratings from a panel of three collegiate choir directors from Notre Dame and University of North Carolina. This was after their outstanding distinguished plus rating at MSU earlier this month.



***Dates:***

- May 1 – MCHS Spring Orchestra Concert, 7:00 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- May 1 – Whitaker Bank Top 25 Banquet, 7:00 p.m., Clay Community Center
- May 2 – Beta Club Blood Drive, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., MCHS JROTC Room
- May 7 – Treblemakers Concert, 6:00 p.m., MSE
- May 8 – KPREP Testing Begins
- May 8 – National Honors Society Induction Ceremony, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- May 9 – Camargo SBDM, 3:00 p.m.
- May 11 – Stringapalooza, 5:00-7:00 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria

- May 12 - Aliveat25 Driving Course, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., MCHS Room 153
- May 15 – Mapleton Family Reading Night, 5:30 p.m.
- May 15 – K-2 Student Led Conferences and KIDS Read Now book pick-up, 5:30-7:00 p.m., MSE
- May 17 – Operation Preparation
- May 17 – School House Rock, 1:15 p.m. & 5:30 p.m., Mapleton
- May 17 – Kids Read Now Family Night, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Camargo
- May 21 – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Visit McNabb
- May 22 – ELC Preschool Graduation
- May 22 – Board of Education Meeting, 5:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- May 22 – Senior Honors Night, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- May 23 – ELC Preschool Graduation
- May 23 – “Run for the Wall”, Clay Community Center
- May 23 – Baccalaureate, 6:30 p.m., Mt. Sterling First Church of God
- May 24 – Sterling School Graduation, 1:30 p.m., MCHS Arena
- May 24 – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion Ceremony, 7:00 p.m., MCHS Arena
- May 25 – Last Day for Students
- May 25 – Kindergarten Graduation, 8:00 a.m., MSE
- May 25 – Kindergarten Completion Ceremony, 8:30 a.m., Mapleton
- May 25 – Kindergarten Graduation, 9:00 a.m., Camargo
- May 25 – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Awards Ceremony, 9:00 a.m., McNabb
- May 25 – Perfect Attendance Dash for Cash, Mapleton
- May 25 – Class of 2018 Graduation, 7:00 p.m., MCHS Arena
- **May 28 – Memorial Day**
- May 30 – Closing Day for Staff

## ***Continuous Learning through Professional Literature***

### **Hans Rosling on Ten Human Instincts That Distort Our Thinking**

In *Factfulness*, a book currently on *The New York Times* best-seller list, Hans Rosling, the late Swedish physician and statistician, describes ten ways we tend to misinterpret the world around us, and offers advice on how to do better:

- *The gap instinct* – This is what Rosling calls “that irresistible temptation we have to divide all kinds of things into two distinct and often conflicting groups, with an imagined gap – a huge chasm of injustice – in between.” For example, it’s common for people to see the world dramatically split between rich and poor countries. In fact, the 2017 world population is at four levels: Level 1, very poor, getting around on foot (about 1 billion people); Level 2, improving conditions, traveling by bicycle (3 billion); Level 3, more resources, traveling by motorcycle (2 billion); and Level 4, first-world countries, traveling by car (1 billion).

In short, says Rosling, there's a range, and significantly, most people are in the middle, not the extremes. To control for the gap instinct, he advises:

- Beware of comparing averages. They have a way of disguising important in-between information.
- Beware of comparing extremes – for example, the extreme poverty in Sudan versus the comfortable existence of Western countries.
- Beware of seeing the world “from up here.” Looking at others through the lens of one's own lived experience distorts what lies in the middle.

- *The negativity instinct* – This is the widespread tendency to notice the bad more than the good. Pollsters found that in 30 countries, more than half of the people surveyed believed things were getting worse. And indeed, there are many bad things happening: terrorism, overfishing, the crisis in Syria, rising seas, financial instability. But the big picture shows overall progress: the percent of humans living in extreme poverty fell from 85 percent in 1800 to 9 percent today; average life expectancy has risen from 31 in 1800 to 72 today. There have been dramatic improvements in a number of other areas: deaths from disasters, hunger, child labor, plane crash deaths, HIV infections, legal slavery, nuclear weapons, smallpox, ozone depletion, women's right to vote, girls in school, literacy, democracy, child cancer survival, mobile phones, drinkable water, Internet access, and immunizations. To control for the negativity instinct, Rosling advises:

- Beware of the myth of a rosy past.
- Realize that things can be bad and better at the same time.
- Know that more news does not equal more suffering.
- Recognize that good news and gradual improvement are almost never reported.

- *The straight line instinct* – This is the tendency to believe that a trend line (for example, the population of the planet) will continue in linear fashion. But trends change; for example, the average number of babies per woman was almost 6 in 1800. Now it's 2.5. A number of important indicators change dramatically as people move from extreme poverty to Level 4, bending the curves: schooling, age of marriage, literacy, vaccinations. Rosling's takeaway: don't assume straight-line trends.

- *The fear instinct* – “None of us has enough mental capacity to consume all the information out there,” says Rosling. “The question is, what part are we processing and how did it get selected? And what part are we neglecting?” We focus on information that triggers fear: violence, sharp objects, forces of nature, loss of control, entrapment, contamination. But deaths from natural disasters, plane crashes, murders, nuclear leaks, and terrorism *combined* account for only 1 percent of people who die each year. *Frightening* and *dangerous* are two different things, says Rosling. “Paying too much attention to what is frightening rather than what is dangerous – that is, paying too much attention to fear – creates a tragic drainage of energy in the wrong direction... I would like

my fear to be focused on the mega dangers of today, and not the dangers from our evolutionary past.” One more thing: When you’re afraid, make as few decisions as possible until the panic has subsided.

- *The size instinct* – There’s a strong tendency for people to get things out of proportion, misjudge size, and exaggerate the importance of one data point. “The media is this instinct’s friend,” says Rosling. “It is pretty much a journalist’s professional duty to make any given event, fact, or number sound more important than it is. And journalists know that it feels almost inhuman to look away from an individual in pain.” But individual numbers can be profoundly misleading. For example, in 2017, 4.2 million babies died worldwide. This sounds like a terrible number, and each death is tragic for the parents and families involved. But that number compares to 14.4 million babies dying in 1950. Given that perspective, 4.2 million is “beautifully small,” says Rosling. Tremendous progress has been made with infant mortality, and the trend continues. To control for the size instinct, it’s important to:

- Put statistics in perspective.
- Apply the 80/20 rule: look at the few largest items on a list and deal with them first; usually, dealing with 20 percent takes care of 80 percent of the problem.
- Amounts and rates can tell very different stories, and rates are more meaningful, especially when comparing different-sized groups.

- *The generalization instinct* – “Categories are absolutely necessary for us to function,” says Rosling. “They give structure to our thoughts... Everyone automatically categorizes and generalizes all the time.” But generalizing can also distort our worldview. It can lead us to group people or things together – stereotyping – and jump to the conclusion that the people or things in that group are all alike. The gap instinct divides the world into “us” and “them” and the generalization instinct makes us think that “they” are all the same. To combat this instinct, Rosling suggests:

- Look for differences within groups.
- Look for similarities across groups.
- Look for differences across groups – don’t assume that what applies to one group applies to another.
- Beware of “the majority.” It just means more than half, which could be 51 percent.
- Beware of vivid examples.
- Assume that people are not idiots.

- *The destiny instinct* – This is the idea that innate characteristics determine the destinies of people, countries, religions, and cultures – for example, that African nations will never catch up to Western levels of civilization. Rosling says we need to recognize that many things appear to be constant just because change is happening slowly, and that even slow change is still change. Some pointers:

- Keep track of gradual improvements.
- Update your knowledge.
- Talk to Grandpa – he will remind you of how values have changed.
- Collect examples of cultural change. “Challenge the idea that today’s culture must also have been yesterday’s, and will also be tomorrow’s,” he says.

• *The single perspective instinct* – “We find simple ideas attractive,” says Rosling. “We enjoy that moment of insight, we enjoy feeling we really understand or know something. And it is easy to take off down a slippery slope...” Some examples: an ideologue who believes passionately in the free market, another who is committed to equality. The key, says Rosling, is to recognize that a single perspective can limit our imagination. Some advice:

- Test your ideas.
- Don’t claim expertise beyond your field.
- Remember that no tool is good for every job.
- Use numbers, but not *only* numbers.
- Beware of simple ideas and simple solutions.

• *The blame instinct* – This is the human tendency “to find a clear, simple reason why something bad has happened,” says Rosling. “It seems that it comes very naturally for us to decide that when things go wrong, it must be because of some bad individual with bad intentions. We like to believe that things happen because someone wanted them to, that individuals have power and agency; otherwise, the world feels unpredictable, confusing, frightening.” The key, he says, is recognizing when a scapegoat is being used “and remembering that blaming an individual often steals the focus from other possible explanations and blocks our ability to prevent similar problems in the future.”

Workarounds:

- Look for causes, not villains.
- Look for systems, not heroes.

• *The urgency instinct* – This is the tendency to believe it’s now or never, you have to decide now, you won’t have another chance. “Relax,” says Rosling. “It’s almost never true. It’s almost never that urgent, and it’s almost never an either/or.” His advice:

- When your urgency instinct is triggered, take a breath.
- Insist on the data.
- Beware of fortune-tellers. Any predictions about the future are uncertain.
- Be wary of drastic action. Look at possible side effects. Ask how the idea has been tested. “Step-by-step practical improvements, and evaluation of their impact, are less dramatic but usually more effective.”

But Rosling says there are some global risks we *should* worry about: global pandemics, financial collapse, World War III, climate change, and extreme poverty.

Rosling closes with some thoughts on what we should be teaching young people to protect the next generation from a lot of ignorance:

- That there are countries at all different levels of health and income, and most are in the middle.
- Their own country's socioeconomic position in relation to the rest of the world, and how that is changing.
- How their own country progressed through the income levels to get to where it is now, and how to use that knowledge to understand what life is like in other countries today.
- That people in less-developed countries are moving up the income levels and their lives generally are improving.
- What life was really like in the past so they do not mistakenly think that no progress has been made.
- How to hold these two ideas at the same time: that bad things are going on in the world, but that many things are getting better.
- That cultural and religious stereotypes are useless for understanding the world.
- How to consume the news and spot the drama without becoming stressed and hopeless.
- Common ways that people will try to trick them with numbers.
- That the world will keep changing and they will have to update their knowledge and worldview throughout their lives.

Most of all, Rosling concludes, we should be teaching our children humility and curiosity.

*Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – and Why Things Are Better Than You Think* by Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Rönnlung, Flatiron Books, 2018

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Be sure to notify the designated person at your school if you have calendar information that should be added to your website calendar.

***Thank you so much for your effort and commitment to children. If you have questions about any of the information contained in this issue of The MoCo Monday Minute, please contact me at [matthew.thompson@montgomery.kyschools.us](mailto:matthew.thompson@montgomery.kyschools.us).***