Leave it to 7-year-olds to reinvent a game that's been around since the Chinese Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD): Rock Paper Scissors.

I was at a youth soccer practice when the coach initiated a game of Rock Paper Scissors to see who was going to be up next to practice kicking the ball to the goalie.

Suddenly, the boys were shouting, "Dynamite beats rock!" "Sword beats dynamite!" "Handgun beats sword" and "Lava beats handgun!"

Dynamite? Sword? Handgun? Lava? This isn't the game I grew up playing! What happened to the rock, the paper, and the scissors?

I asked the boys, who quickly informed me that the game had been expanded. They delighted in teaching me about the weapons available.

I was being mentored by 7-year-olds.

And more than just introduce me to the reinvented game, they reminded me:

- to be more innovative with simple, everyday tasks, routines, and processes
- to be open to the adventure of change
- to experiment with fresh ideas and new games
- to play outside the 3-weapon box
- to pay attention to the new kids on the block
It never occurred to us that we could change the game... but it occurred to them.

It struck me: what other viewpoints, new approaches, or original concepts am I overlooking?

The older we get, the more wisdom we gather. But the more we gather, the more we get entrenched in referencing our own wisdom and ignoring the wisdom of others.

With fresh perspectives come fresh solutions to old, tired problems. We just need to remember to extend the invitation and give people permission to think differently and share their distinct experiences.

Pay attention to young people and young employees - they never need permission to think differently. And as they twist our kaleidoscope, get ready for our wisdom and our world to expand!

*Ann Tardy*

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I will be speaking on "**Mentoring Reinvented**" to the [SHRM Talent Management Conference](#) in Chicago on April 24. In the area? Let's connect!

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