



The Importance of Continuous Learning

January 2017



As children, we are constantly learning—new words, new behaviors, how to read, how to properly interact with others, how to safely cross a street. We expect learning to be a part of our daily lives (and it usually is). That constant learning continues all the way into our teens and through college. We may not necessarily use all the tidbits we learn (when was the last time you used the quadratic equation? Or needed to know when the Magna Carta was signed?), but the act of learning makes our minds nimble and adaptable. In other words, we learn how to learn and that knowlby the wayside. We become comfortable in our routines and stop challenging ourselves to stretch beyond our comfort zones. When, for instance, was the last time you read a book for pleasure? Statistics show that 42% of people never pick up another book after graduating from college. That is unfortunate, yes, but why should you care? What does continuous learning have to do with your career or your well-being? Probably more than you think...edge helps us to quickly adjust to new situations and face unfamiliar problems. But what happens after we complete school? What happens when we are no longer held accountable for our daily



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5 Ways to Make Your Learning Fun

- Do it with a friend
- Share what you're learning with others
- Build in a reward for yourself
- Find a way to use what you've learned
- Celebrate the completion

learning? Sadly, many of us let our minds languish and our education fall.



The Importance of Continuous Learning

In our fast-paced and constantly evolving world, none of us can afford to remain stagnant in our knowledge. Technology, business systems, and global markets are changing from year-to-year and it is up to us to either adapt and keep up with the times or merely coast by and hope that we don't get washed away by the intensity of change. As Joyce E.A. Russell from the Washington Post writes, "With today's more complex business environment, learning is not just a nice thing to do — it is essential for staying on top of things. Especially during times of recession, it is important for people to learn new skills and enhance their marketability."

Learning is an ongoing process.

It is never "complete" or "finished." Even if you think you know all there is to know about your particular career, there is always something you can learn or improve upon. Sometimes, we need to stretch ourselves beyond our current job duties in order to find opportunities to learn. If that's the case, then do so! If your company has a branch in Tokyo, why not attempt to learn Japanese? If you work with a particular computer software program, why not take the time to learn about a competitor's software? By taking initiative and delving into new territory, you are making yourself a more desirable employee and you're keeping your mind dexterous and quick.

As I mentioned before, it is important to continue learning to keep up with current industry trends and to weather changes in the market. Those may seem like broad, impersonal reasons for expanding your knowledge, but there are also several personal,



**The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.**
-Dr. Seuss

The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice.
--- Brian Herbert

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are a valuable tool that can be used in a variety of ways — one of which is to learn from someone who has an expertise or experience from which you can benefit. Do you want to start a new career? Grow in your current career? Be promoted?

Whatever you're looking for, there are plenty of people who have knowledge and experience that can help you.

And most people are flattered when they are asked to be interviewed for that knowledge and expertise. Ask to meet with

more intimate reasons you should keep your mind active. For one, active learning helps to build self-confidence and enhance job performance. When you take the time to learn, you're building your knowledge base (whether directly related to your career or not) and you're actively engaging your mind. An active mind is better able to solve problems and generate solutions, thus leading to greater self confidence and personal belief. As an added bonus, when you're confident in yourself and your abilities, others will be more likely to have confidence in you as well.



Learning Every Day (How-To)

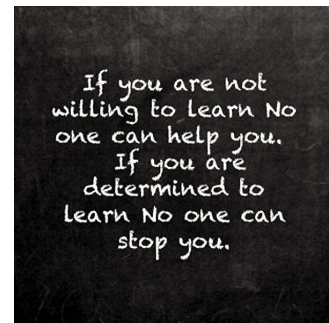
Taking the time to learn every day may seem like a daunting task, but it really doesn't have to be. The best thing to do is approach your continuing education with a plan. What is it you would most like to learn about? How can you do that? What are the steps you need to take to increase your knowledge in a specific subject area?

If, for instance, you would like to learn more about marketing through social media, set some goals for yourself and then figure out how to accomplish those goals. Maybe you decide to listen to one social media related podcast every day. Or maybe you decide to devote an hour every day to researching a specific social media platform (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr...). Maybe you really delve in and take a class or workshop. By being consistent and mindful of your learning, it will eventually become habitual to make an effort to learn every day.

If you're still wary of taking up the "learning challenge," keep in mind that learning does not necessarily involve reading a book or manual, taking a class, or spending the afternoon in a webinar (although all of these options are wonderful and valid learning tools). Rather, learning can be as simple as having coffee with a

them and then plan your questions. Don't just jump to asking them how they can help you. That can come across as self-serving. Instead, ask them questions about how they got started, what helped them along the way, what did they wish they had known earlier in their journey, what have been some of their most important lessons, what skills have been most valuable to them and the list goes on.

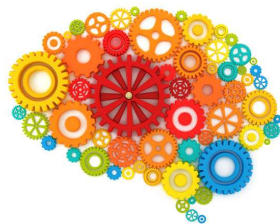
Then actively listen and learn.



Knowing stuff gives us confidence.

You should be proud of what you've learned, the experience you have and what it has taught you, what

co-worker. If there is someone in the office you've always looked up to, or if there is someone who is knowledgeable in an area you'd like to learn more about, ask them for a few minutes of their time. Sit down with them and learn more about the work they do and how they developed their expertise in a particular area. At the very least, you'll find out a little more about that person and that is knowledge in itself.



Remember to keep your eyes open and your mind engaged.

You never know when a learning opportunity might present itself. Whether you observe someone using Excel in a new, innovative way or you notice a coworker's effective writing style, don't be afraid to talk to people about their skills and talents. Ask questions. Find out what others are doing in the office that might help grow your own skill set. An office should be like a school in some ways: A nurturing, creative environment where people are not afraid to learn from each other and strive for growth.



In Sum

Whether you choose to pick up a new hobby or sport, learn a new skill, take a class, or find a mentor or guide who can pass along his/her knowledge, you are doing yourself a favor. You're taking the time to invest in your mind and your well-being. You're also making yourself into a more well-rounded, adaptable employee (an employee that anyone would love to hire or promote!). By continuously learning, you demonstrate that you are not adverse to change and not satisfied with simply doing your job. Instead, you

you know that you're able to teach others. It's all good.

When our confidence however turns to feeding our ego, it's time to give yourself a reality check. Maybe it's time to ask, what don't I know?

One thing I've learned about learning – sometimes the learning that has been the hardest were experiences that forced me out of my comfort zone.

You know what I mean – those experiences you were either pushed into or that you had no choice but to tackle and boy did they made you nervous or scared. Maybe you felt like you could hardly breath or your knees were knocking together, but you did it.

And how did you feel afterwards? Proud I'll bet and so excited at realizing what you were capable of. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone to learn new things.

**The scarier at the
beginning, the bigger
the high when you've
done it!**

*What we learn with
pleasure
we never forget.*

- ALFRED MERCIER

ROBAMY

are someone who is willing to take on challenges, explore new territory, and continue to grow. Doesn't that sound like someone you'd like to employ?

Happy Learning,



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