



Spend more time planning your vacation than planning your development?

What do you think? Science tells us that the best way to ensure to a lucid, clear mind as we age is to use it. Additionally, just by virtue of being alive in the 21st century, we are bombarded with new images, concepts, technologies, and ways of doing things. It can be overwhelming or, perhaps it can provide us with new opportunities to expand what we know about our world or ourselves.

So, is it true that, despite the health and social benefits of continuous learning and exposure to new ideas, that we just let opportunities slide on by, without thought to what would be enjoyable or beneficial to add in our lives? And, if we can't see beyond the office to 'our personal lives' enhancement, can you sense the need for continual learning to stay afloat and competitive in your business?

Many of us equate learning with a school room environment and, perhaps, don't remember those experiences as the most enjoyable of life. Well, the 'schoolroom' of today is vastly different and can be created to suit our preference for group or individual learning, available time, cost consideration, desire to travel – or not.

Most traditional and familiar is the availability of continued or adult education programs at your local high schools or college, with offerings from acupuncture to zoology. Discussion groups, travel classes, hands-on skills, new sports, tours of varied locales or venues can add a richness of social contacts, shared interests and exploration of our worlds – the personal, the neighborhood, our cultural and religious realms or our planet's place in the universe.

Don't have the time to get there? Consider audio tapes. A tremendous variety of subjects can be found through this medium and enjoyed at your own pace: at home, in the car, via headphones during plane or train travel. The low cost makes it easy to explore a variety of topics and the permanent source of the taped information allows you to refresh your knowledge or pass the materials on to another willing explorer.

Perhaps you enjoy on-line communications? E-learning is a growing phenomena and can be delivered as individual classes or university degrees! Or, check out www.teleclass.com. You'll find dozens of tele-class offerings, which require a zero to nominal investment and can be taken while you're sitting at home in your pajamas. (As a shameless promotion, I offer a tele-class on how to actually offer tele-seminars.)

And, as you increase your skills, techniques or general knowledge keep this in mind: You learn what you actually practice, and what you teach others. In medical schools, learning happens by first observing, secondly by doing, thirdly, by teaching someone else. (Teaching someone else to do something can be a great way to learn - especially when you've already been practicing.) When you allow nothing to hinder your learning, your use of new skills, and passing it onto others, you can greatly reduce the normal amount of learning time.

Here is a method you can use to get a lot of practice, without delay, anytime you learn about a new principle or technique:

First: Rehearse, mentally, using your own past. Mentally rehearse, in instances where it would have been good to have that skill, in your own past. See and feel how it may have turned out. While this isn't as effective as practicing with someone else, it's a good way to get off to a fast start for getting a real feel for how to proceed. You can in many cases actually perceive how it would have turned out, better.

Second: Rehearse, in your own life, applying in the present. Practice applying the technique or principle in your own life, where you can benefit from it, now. Observe what it is like to do so, and do not delay.

Promise yourself that you'll learn one new thing in whatever is a reasonable time period for you, and, as Agatha Christie's Belgium detective liked to say: the gray cells will keep on working!

And then, please, give me a call: I'd love to learn what you know!

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