

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

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- 1) Learning is a natural process. It is purposeful testing. It is something you were born knowing how to do.



- 2) Think about how infants learn to crawl. They are determined to change the way they are presently getting around – being carried by an adult. They want to do it for themselves.



- 3) They experiment with their bodies until they finally achieve movement. They will master the skill only after they have made several attempts.



- 4) Now that they can crawl, they are no longer satisfied. They want to go faster. They want to get around in the same way as everyone else. They want to walk.



- 5) So the toddler is motivated to experiment with walking. No one had to tell them that they needed to learn to walk. They just wanted to do it because they determined that it would make their life easier.



- 6) The toddler makes several attempts at standing, and several attempts at achieving balance. All the time falling down and maybe even hurting themselves. But the goal is clear. They want to walk.



7) And all of a sudden, they take their first step. Everyone around is so proud. The joy of accomplishing their goals is so rewarding. All the bruises and sore muscles are forgotten and only the pride remains.



8) What's next? What can I learn now? Running? Jumping? Riding a bike?



9) Learning for a child is play. The more they learn, the more their life seems to improve. Their parents take on the role of coach, teacher, and supporter. It would be unusual and perhaps cruel if the parents continued to carry the child everywhere and never taught them to walk.



10) The process of learning to speak, walk, and ride a bicycle are three of the most difficult activities a human being will learn to do. And yet, most children accomplish these activities before turning five years old.



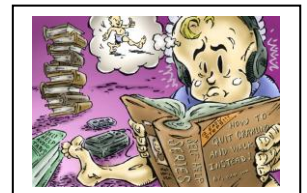
11) So, if learning is child's play and we have accomplished some of the most difficult learning before we are five years old, why is learning so difficult for some of us – especially now that we're adults?



12) Most of the time, as an adult learner, we must unlearn those behaviors, tasks, or methods of doing things that have served us well so far in life. Our current ways are familiar and comfortable. We don't want to change!



13) But change we must if we are going to grow. Old habits sometimes prevent us from learning new skills. What would happen if a child refused to give up crawling while wanting to learn to walk? Obviously this is not possible. Something needs to change. The toddler must give up crawling.



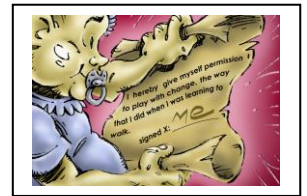
14) This is true with all learning. Change and learning can make us uncomfortable. We are afraid of doing things differently. Even if it makes our lives easier, we sometimes do not want to learn because we have to leave our “comfort zone.”



15) The main thing to remember is that learning requires the willingness to change. Your seeking a new job is an indication of your willingness to change and hopefully improve your current life situation.



16) You are the one that has to want to learn. No one else can give you this goal. Your supervisor, co-workers, friends, and teachers are all resources available to you to help you explore and learn. But only you can give yourself permission to play with change, the way you did when you were learning to walk.



17) Learning is a life-long process. It should never stop. You should always set your goals to learn, whether it is a technical skill or a behavioral change. Change is about experimenting and learning from the results.



18) Learning might require us to slow up more than to just speed up. You can only achieve limited success by doing something the same way but only faster.



19) To make quantum leaps in your successes, you probably will need to search out different ways of doing something. And this means stopping what you now do in order to free yourself up for learning something new – a change!



20) And as in learning to ride a bicycle, you can't learn before you try. You must learn by doing. And this means you will make mistakes – or in other words, tip over and/or fall from the bicycle.



21) We aren't saying we are encouraging you to make mistakes. We, however, recognize that mistakes are a part of learning. If learning is taking place, mistakes will be tolerated. However, if mistakes are made from you being careless or not thinking, they are not acceptable. Be sure you know the difference.



22) So, give yourself permission to become an adventurer and explorer. Find the new potential for change within yourself. The process of learning new things should never stop. Learning and willingness to change must be a daily goal!

