

Lifelong Learning



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The importance of lifelong learning

- Biographies of people who have changed the world indicate that they never stopped learning:
 - They learned partly because they enjoyed learning
 - Often, things they learned provided inspiration for their work
 - Sometimes, they got cross-fertilization of ideas from different fields
- Relevant quote (and article):
 - “Not all learners are leaders, but the research clearly shows that the strongest leaders are continuous learners.”
— Jim Clemmer, <http://www.jimclemmer.com/leadership-and-learning-are-indispensable.php>
- If you want to change the world then increase your chances by continually learning throughout your life

1. Practical issues for lifelong learning

Techniques for lifelong learning

- Lifelong learning can take different forms:
 - Some people read books in their spare time
 - Some seek out new experiences
 - Recall from the *Flow* chapter:
 - A flow experience provides a challenge so it promotes learning
- For many successful people, continual learning rarely involves formal education:
 - Biographies indicate many successful people actually dislike formal education

Learning paralysis

- Be aware of “learning paralysis”
 - Spending years to learn something “properly” before you start doing it
- In reality, there are two ways to learn:
 - Just do it. The practice will make you better
 - Just do it, and complement this with reading about the subject

Reading about a subject is rarely sufficient by itself

- The origin of learning paralysis might be in the school system:
 - Schools use book reading and lectures as the primary learning tool
 - Learning through practice is much less common in schools
- If you want to change the world then:
 - Just do it. The practice will make you better
 - Complement the “doing” with learning, but don’t postpone the “doing”

2. Home schooling

What is home schooling?

- *Home schooling* = learning at home instead of in a school
- A family might choose home schooling because:
 - The family travels constantly (perhaps in a circus) so children cannot be enrolled in a school
 - Their children struggle academically in school or are bullied
 - Their children learn best in their own time and at their own pace
- Many people think:
 - Regular school is best or is the only way
 - Home schooling is an inferior substitute, to be used only if attending a regular school is impossible
- However, a growing number of people think:
 - Regular school is actively harmful to children
 - Home schooling is preferable

Relevance of home schooling

Home schooling is relevant to this course in several ways...

- If you lack the confidence to try to change the world then:
 - Perhaps attending regular schools destroyed your confidence
 - Some books about home schooling offer good critiques of what problems exist in regular schools
 - You may gain a “It’s not just me” or “It’s not my fault” insight that can restore your confidence

- Perhaps you suffer from learning paralysis:
 - Books about home schooling explain why *doing* something can be a better way to learn than just *reading about* it
 - You may gain the confidence to do things imperfectly now rather than wait until you are an expert before you start to do things

Relevance of home schooling (cont')

- Some critics of the regular school system:
 - Do not believe schools teach a lot that is *useless*
 - Instead they believe schools teach a lot that is *harmful*
(part of this harm involves destroying entrepreneurial spirit)
- Newspaper articles about a business tycoon might say:
 - “He achieved his great success *despite* leaving school at the age of 12”
- Perhaps the newspaper article should say:
 - “He achieved his great success *because* he left school at the age of 12”
- Do not think “I’m not educated enough to change the world”
 - You don’t need a Ph.D. or MBA, or even a high school diploma

Bibliography for home schooling

- A detailed discussion of home schooling is outside the scope of this training course:
- If you are interested in this topic then:
 - Start by reading personal accounts of home-schooling families.
Examples:
 - *Free Range Education*, edited by Terri Dowty
 - *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, by Grace Llewellyn
 - *Real Lives*, edited by Grace Llewellyn
 - For the theory and history of home schooling, read books by John Holt and John Taylor Gatto

3. Summary

Summary

- Lifelong learning is common to many successful people:
 - Many biographies explicitly mention lifelong learning
 - “Not all learners are leaders, but the research clearly shows that the strongest leaders are continuous learners.”
— Jim Clemmer
- Lifelong learning does *not* have to involve formal education:
 - Often it is done by reading a wide range of books
 - Or by trying new things
 - A state of flow helps learning
- Home-schooling books are interesting *even if* you disagree with much of what they say:
 - Their critiques of regular schooling can be insightful
 - They suggest effective ways to learn without the expense of schooling
 - They can help you to increase your confidence