

Any day I learn something new is a good day!

The older I get the more I realise there is so much more to learn.

We all arrived in this world not knowing that we knew virtually nothing. The exciting thing about this situation is that it generates a huge amount of curiosity because everything is new to us. We learn so much so quickly in our early years but the pace of learning slows as we age. Sadly some people seem to almost stop learning because they choose not to allow their curiosity to stimulate them.

As a young child you probably become aware that there was a new toy for you to play with. It had two big wheels and a chain, levers, a strange looking seat and something to hang on to. (Yes you guessed it a bike). Maybe you didn't even know the names of all those parts but once you are confronted with them you know you don't know anything about them.

When you got on the bike you discovered that by pedalling it became stable. How to turn or stop or change gears while thinking about pedalling may have been more than you could cope with. A crash or two helped you learn about handling the bike. Did you let these "failures" stop you? Probably not! As a child you were pretty resilient and the excitement pushed you on. You learnt what didn't work from the crashes and improved your skills.

It doesn't take very long before you can ride the bike although you are very aware of each action you take while riding. You are building confidence as your knowledge and skills develop and you can even handle different surfaces and weather conditions. Maybe you even tried the bike track with the other kids.

Soon you are riding with little conscious thought at all, becoming rather blasé about the whole process, as you ride along chatting and joking with your friends.

Let's review the above story to which most of us can relate. You could substitute the bike with a car or a stove or a computer or anything else in life and the principles will be evident.

We must accept that there are things that we don't realise that we don't know. We become aware of some knowledge or skill through

observation or mentoring by a generous person be it your parents, brothers or sisters, friends, teachers or through other associations in your walk through life.

Knowing that you don't know has put you in the situation of being consciously incompetent. You now know that you have some learning to do and hopefully set about that task with excitement.

You begin to learn the terminology and some of the skills to use the new item or information that you have been confronted with.

You begin to use the new item or knowledge and despite early failures probably begin to gain some competence in its use.

Soon you are using the knowledge or are sufficiently skilled in the use of an item that you subconsciously carry out most of the tasks or operations. Thinking consciously about a task usually only occurs when you are met with something that is a little out of the ordinary or requires exactness.

What's so different about being in business?

Entering business requires you to become familiar and adept with a complete new range of skills.

You must learn to be a manager and entrepreneur rather than a technician. Management enables you to run an effective business. Entrepreneurship enables you to identify and take advantage of opportunities. Your technical skills enable you to operate efficiently.

Business should be kept simple but there are many areas you need to learn about. The question is, how do you obtain that knowledge and skills and how do you apply them.

Whenever you seek to improve your position you will be confronted with an amount of uncertainty and will no doubt have to acquire new skills and knowledge.

I have heard it said that successful people are chronically curious and have a thirst for knowledge and a need to understand how and why things happen. They are lifelong learners.

Imagine you were picked up and transported to a foreign country. You would have to learn the language of the local people, the laws of the land, the local customs and many other skills to enable you to survive let alone succeed.

The new world that you are entering from your past as an apprentice or employee or graduate to become a new business person is probably as different from life as you know it today, to being transported to live in a foreign country tomorrow.

There are many sources of knowledge and skilling available to you.

- Courses – Formal, informal and Self-study
- Books
- Seminars and Workshops
- Media outlets –
 - Television
 - Magazines
 - Radio programs
 - Newspapers
- The World Wide Web (the internet)
- Tapes, CD's and DVD's
- Work and life experience
- Mentors
- Professional advisers.

Consider the information presented to you carefully. Take up only the information and methods that will work for you. Also it is worth noting here that what works for you may not work for your best mate – we are all individuals.

Knowledge and development of skills can be seen as charging your batteries. It is what you do with your accumulated knowledge and skills that will determine your success or otherwise. (Remember success means different things to each of us.)

If you want a fit body you exercise your muscles and eat healthy foods. If you want a fit brain you must exercise it, feed it with quality information and nourish it with a healthy lifestyle.

The Four Great Steps

On our arrival at any new aspect of our life we can be described as not knowing we don't know – we are unconsciously incompetent. We become aware that there is knowledge or skill we don't yet have and now know that we don't know something – we are consciously incompetent. We learn the basics and are able to use the knowledge or display skills but have to constantly think about what we are doing and now know how to do it – we are now consciously competent. Finally after gaining and applying the knowledge or skills or both and gaining complementary knowledge and skills we are able to apply it or carry out the task with little awareness of what we are doing – we have achieved unconscious competence.

Contact us for information how to apply this knowledge

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