

## Openness to Learning and Learning Styles

Just imagine a buffet, a veritable smorgasbord of the most amazing cuisines and dishes. Some spicy, some sweet, some bland, some tart, while some with a tinge of bitterness. Now imagine walking away hungry from such a feast. What a waste, isn't it?

This is what many of us do often. Life presents an unending stream of learning opportunities – but we seldom want to go beyond dipping our toes. So, learning, especially adult learning – has two broad aspects to it. The first one being how open we are to learning - to upsetting the “I know what I need to know” applecart; to do away with “I am too old to learn” beliefs; to getting out of our interest comfort zones and experiencing something new.

To do well at learning, we need to accept its importance for our growth and evolution. Constant and continual learning helps us make sense of this rapidly changing, chaotic world, and helps us grow and evolve. For this, we need to be very aware about what is going around us. All lessons need not be self-experienced. Second-hand learning works just as well in many areas. Also remember, that we learn what to do from some people, and from a lot of people we learn what not to do. So, keep learning, teasing your brain into stretching into newer areas – and continue to move ahead.

The second aspect of adult learning has to do with how we actually learn best. Here, there are three broad categories: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. It has to do with the format of the information. Some of us learn best by looking at things, reading – basically, imbibing information and knowledge through our eyes. These people form images and videos in their heads of what they are learning. Auditory learners are those who listen their way into learning. These people find it easiest to absorb and retain information when they are listening to audiobooks, podcasts, lectures and more. The last category, kinesthetic are those people who learn best hands-on. They like experimenting, doing things to get it right.

Why is it important to figure out our personal learning style? Well, if you know how you learn best, you can choose to input the information in that way – thereby speeding up the learning process, and enhancing retention. God knows its tough to get things moving after a break from learning, so give yourself every possible advantage to make it as effortless as possible.

How will you know your inherent, primary learning style? Just observe yourself over the next few days and become more aware of your language. Visual learners are prone to say things like, “I see!”, while auditory learners would say something like, “I hear you!”. Kinesthetic learners are more likely to say, “There are too many moving parts – I need to do this myself.” If you like, there are several free tests online – you could check those out too.

So, from this day forth, always go back satiated from the buffet of learning opportunities...

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