

HEALTH + WEALTH

POSTED ONLINE | APRIL 2018

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Learning Something New

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) produced some research for the Government a few years ago - to specifically investigate mental health and wellbeing. They discovered the concept of wellbeing comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well - and there are 5 key ways to improve this:

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Keep learning
- Give.

We'll explore all 5 elements at various points over the coming year, but for this month, as it's the start of the new financial year, I thought we would focus on 'keep learning'!

Some of us might not have thought about learning anything new since we left school, whereas others actively still choose to take part in courses, lessons and even further education. I'd like to suggest that we can all learn something new every day. This could be in the form of a new skill. We could learn something new about others, or if we are really intentional, we can learn something new about ourselves.

Learning requires intentionality, along with a bit of humility and courage! We have to open our minds to accepting that we might not know everything after all and expose ourselves to the opinions of others or possibilities of new experiences.

This could be something simple like learning to cook or something seemingly crazy like jumping out of an airplane! However, think what that would be like if you had spent your entire life jumping out of airplanes but had never set foot in a kitchen!

Learning something new is relative to your previous experiences, so it's often not healthy to compare

against what others are learning and instead may be better to think about what you've learned today that you didn't know yesterday.

Arguably, learning something about ourselves is often harder, as we often don't see in the mirror what others see in us. You'll appreciate this when you think about habits - and will probably be able to think of other people's habits, especially those that can irritate you - before you can think of your own?

The thing to remember about learning something new is that fear of the unknown is common and normal, as is fear of failure - 'What if I can't do it and everyone laughs at me?' Fear is a self-preservation mechanism or survival skill with which our brains come ready-equipped. We are safer when we are accepted by community! And whilst it is perfectly normal to be fearful of these things in a primitive setting (which will prevent us from being harmed or left behind by the rest of the group), in our modern world, these are only perceived dangers. Pushing through that fear leads to freedom and joy - and improved wellbeing!

If you are keen on learning something new, here are a few questions to think about before you start and will give you the best chance of success:

1. What would I like to learn?
2. Why is this important to me?
3. What do I need to do before I begin?
4. When could I learn it?
5. How long will it take me to learn?
6. Who could I ask to help me - or learn with me?

If you want to retain good health + wealth, why not think intentionally about something new you could start learning today?

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