

# Eight Learning Skills: What it Takes to be a Skilled Learner

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## Summary of Podcast content with timings

- 0.35 Learning is a skilled process – it's something that everyone does as well as everyone else.
- 1.05 For me there are eight distinct learning skills that help us get better faster and more efficiently.
- 1.35 Number one is 'Anticipate learning opportunities', most of which are real-world, not training courses.
- 2.10 The problem is, learning opportunities is they don't come neatly packaged and obvious.
- 2.30 Learning is like an onion skin, our capability is built on continuous, apparently insignificant events.
- 2.55 Development and growth in capabilities results largely from unconscious reflection and application.
- 3.05 Most of what we learn is unanticipated, awareness of these events in advance enhances value.
- 3.30 The workplace is massively overloaded with development opportunities – spotting these takes skill.
- 3.45 Number two learning skill is 'The ability to recognise and exploit developmental situations'.
- 4.05 Identifying and consciously using learning 'as it is happening', or 'in the moment' is often very hard.
- 4.20 When feeling anxious, annoyed, frustrated or whatever, aren't always focused on the learning value.
- 4.50 A lot of experiences with huge development value come out of the blue – exploiting these takes skill.
- 5.00 The third learning skill is 'To seek new learning', again with emphasis on *development* not training.
- 5.40 This could mean reading, watching videos, or using your network to find people from whom to learn.
- 6.15 The fourth learning skill is 'Take risks and innovate' to improve our range and breadth of capabilities.
- 6.45 'If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got'.
- 7.35 Mistakes and errors are a natural consequence of trying to do something differently and better.
- 7.50 Don't be reckless, in a managed, planned way, try new things to develop and improve performance.
- 8.00 Number five learning skill is 'Seeking and taking advice and feedback', appropriately, not all!
- 8.10 Feedback isn't advice, criticism or praise, it's perception of how others see you or what you do.
- 8.25 Not all feedback is skilfully given, it may be superficial and have low value, so persist and push.
- 8.50 Are we comfortable with receiving feedback later in careers, does this have most value earlier?
- 9.20 Even if you feel the feedback is wrong, at least you find out others' perceptions.
- 9.40 I have seen very few people who are brave to ask 'Tell me what you feel I need to get better at'.
- 10.10 Meaningful feedback helps make us more aware of our true strengths and issues to work upon.
- 10.20 The next learning skill is 'Filtering, and making connections'.

- 10.40 The ability to connect apparently unconnected experiences or events is a very valuable skill.
- 10.50 If for instance we watch a video with unfamiliar context, don't reject the learning, find something.
- 11.15 I have found useful learning from people I don't like or respect by looking beyond superficial issues.
- 11.30 The value of learning can be hard to see, so we need to work at connecting with our specific context.
- 11.45 Much of what is published in American Journals may seem irrelevant, look harder for the value.
- 12.00 The limitless opportunities for learning must be filtered to find those with most merit, this takes skill.
- 12.00 Learning, from the workplace is like standing under a waterfall with a colander, we only catch drips.
- 12.30 The more clearly we understand our development needs, the more we can filter and focus options.
- 12.45 The next learning skill is 'To become constructively self-critical' – not harmfully, and only negatives.
- 13.05 The greatest value in self-review comes from accurately and honestly identifying imperfections.
- 13.55 Many of these learning skills inter-connect, for instance sourcing development after a self- review.
- 14.10 The last of my eight learning skills is 'Overcoming barriers to learning' – the unique set of variables.
- 14.30 There are many genuine barriers to developing capability, skilled learners find a way through many.
- 14.45 The first stage in developing the learning skill to overcome barriers is to accurately identify them.
- 14.55 The most significant barrier to learning is often insufficient desire to tackle really tough obstacles.
- 15.15 We will need to drive our own development more as employers focus only on training not learning.
- 16.00 No one or more of the learning skills that are more important than the other – they inter-connect.
- 16.20 If we get better at each one of these we will learn more, quicker, and become more effective faster.
- 16.50 Learning that is applied means we improve performance, there is much more learning than training.