



## Lesson 7: How to Learn

### *Discovering Your Learning Style and Needs*

For many of you, living your legacy may mean a switch in career as well as lifestyle. In the previous lessons of this program we've been assembling a toolkit of different techniques and methods to use as you transition to your new life. This lesson adds to that toolkit with a system for learning that I have made use of throughout my own career. Many of us went to schools grounded in learning methods that simply weren't right for our psychology. This lesson is focused on discovering the learning technique that is right for you and making the most of it.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Get clear on why you should learn something.
2. Develop *your own* system of efficient learning that produces results!
3. Explore my practical system of learning, retaining, and utilizing information and skills as a means of developing *knowledge*.

It is my dream that by studying the system I will describe here that you may be able to enhance your own system of learning and takes bit of pieces of how I do things and incorporate them into your own way of doing things to create a system that is unique to you.

### **Why Should I Learn?**

When you begin to work towards your legacy, in all likelihood there is going to be a lot that you need to learn in order to reach that dream. In fact, there may seem to be an overwhelmingly large number of skills and abilities that you will need to pick up. Appearances can be deceiving though and there may be quite a number of things that seem to be important for you to learn on the face of it, but really aren't necessary. Moreover, many people simply don't value their time, so they spend way too much time looking around for material to learn. As much fun as it may be to pick up new ideas and



skills, this just isn't the most efficient way to reach your goals. So the first step is to get clear on *why* you should learn something.

Any time you run into a case where it appears that you need to learn something new in order to reach your goal, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Will learning the material or skills you are about to acquire significantly contribute to the overarching objective?
2. Can you justify the time investment? Are the benefits of your increased knowledge going to be worth the time invested to obtain the knowledge given the value of your time? Not uncommon for people to spend hours researching for some information when they could have found someone to do the research for them in as little as an hour of their own time.
3. Are you the person to acquire this knowledge? Can it be delegated, freeing you to acquire more critical skills or knowledge?

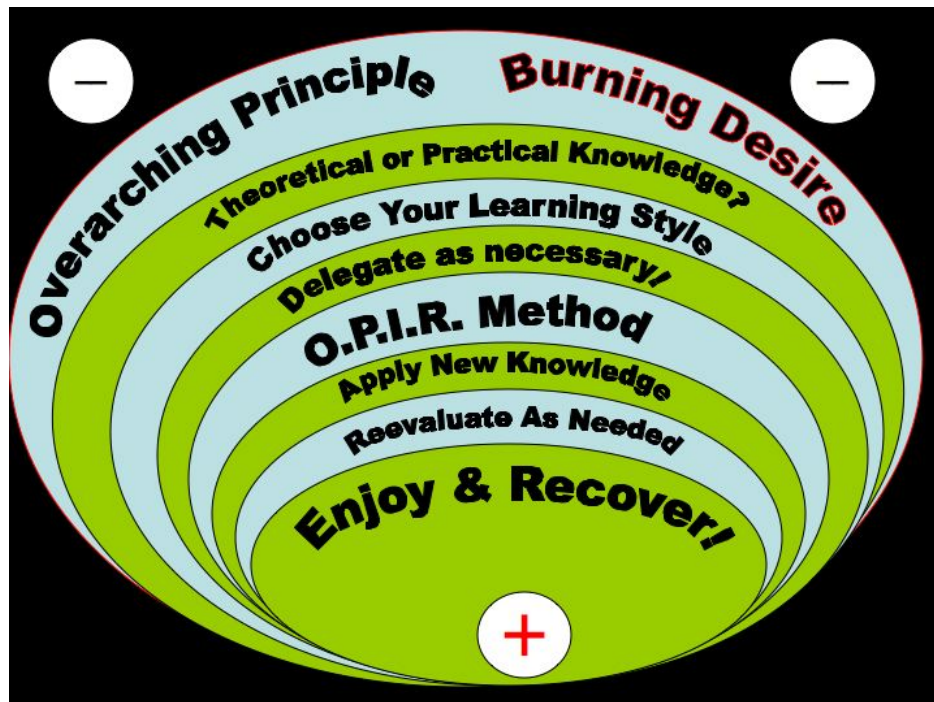
It's easy to go overboard when it comes to learning. Often times we get in the habit of acquiring knowledge as an addiction or we have a lack of our own sense of security or we have an ego deficit and we think we need to know everything. If any of these happen to describe you, you may find yourself caught in a perpetual cycle of research and learning without ever moving on to apply what you've gained. Not only will you delay your goals if you do this, but trying to learn everything and know everything is one of the fastest ways to develop chronic fatigue. So be sure to think very carefully about what it is that you *really* need to learn in order to achieve your goals.

### **Efficient Learning**

Once you've decided that you do in fact have to learn a particular skill or body of information, you will need to know how to best go about gaining this new knowledge. The diagram on the next page offers a summary of my approach to learning. Let me begin by way of summarizing the information in the diagram.



1. At the top of the diagram you will see two negative signs. Think of the negative signs as your thoughts or ideas. You should also see a positive sign at the bottom of the diagram. The positive pole in this diagram is attractive force. You can also think of the positive pole as the manifestation of idea in reality. If you follow the system I've laid out here, you should be able to take any idea from belief to reality.
2. The first step in my system of learning is to set up an overarching principle to drive your learning goals. This overarching principle must be significant enough to give you a burning desire to learn the information. In general, most people don't do well as students because they aren't interested in the information they're studying. The most effective way to drive your learning is to make your legacy your overarching principle. You should always focus your learning to help you acquire the knowledge to accomplish any one or more of your goals that are leading you toward your legacy. If your learning isn't leading you towards your legacy, you're either wasting your time or you're engaged purely in recreation. If you have the time to do recreational learning, that should be written into your schedule. If you're trying to accomplish a specific objective or if you're somebody that seems to know a lot but can't convert that knowledge into a





- positive return then you need to be much more careful about how you spend your learning energy. Even if you're an effective learner but you can't seem to remember things then there's an overarching principle that you need to know and that is that retaining knowledge is most effective when you couple a burning desire with your learning efforts. If there's no emotion attached to the learning, the information is bound to be lost quickly. It'll enter your brain through your eyes and pass out of your skin into hyperspace. It's just gone as quickly as it comes in.
3. Once you've established that you need to gain some new knowledge dictated by your overarching principle, the next step in my learning system is to get a clear understanding of whether you need practical or theoretical knowledge to accomplish the goal at hand. Often times our strengths lie in one or the other type of knowledge and so it's easy to get sucked into one and not the other. However, you want to avoid an imbalance. For example, if you don't understand the theory behind the practice, then you won't know why you're doing what you're doing. If you have nothing but theoretical knowledge and no practical knowledge, then you may sound great in a coffee shop, but you'll be useless on the job.
  4. Choose your learning style. Unless you know your learning style and use that to shape how you will absorb the new information, you'll be much less efficient at picking up the skills or knowledge that you need to reach your goal.
  5. Delegate as necessary. If you have a number of people working with you to reach your goal, some of those people may be better suited to learn the skills needed to reach your goal. Think carefully about those around you and how they can contribute to your goal before you go out and learn how to do something.
  6. Use O.P.I.R. Method. I'll talk about this method shortly, but for now just know that it stands for Over-view, Pre-view, In-view, Re-view.
  7. Apply new knowledge before you use it. This will help you to cement any new skills. If you don't apply what you've learned quickly, you may find that you've lost the skill before you really need to use it.
  8. Review as needed.
  9. When you've achieved your goal, it's important to enjoy and recover. Celebrate in some way and recover so that in your next adventure you are refreshed and ready.



## The Overarching Principle

As I said, one of the biggest roadblocks to learning is the fact that you simply may not be interested in or emotionally connected to what it is that you're trying to learn. If you really want to be motivated to learn, there needs to be a reason that drives you to learn and this reason is the overarching principle. It is the main goal that you will achieve through the learning process. The best overarching principle that you can have to work towards is your legacy. So before you set out to gain some new skill, write down how that skill will fit into achieving your legacy and you'll find that you have a greater drive to gain that skill or knowledge.



For example, if someone just set a book about laying a foundation in front of you, you may not be too motivated to absorb the information there. But, if you were building a house soon and you had the goal of building a house as your overarching principle, you'd be much more likely to read through the book and hold on to what you'd gained.

## What Type of Knowledge do You Need?

Depending upon what skills you already have and what goal you're trying to accomplish, you will need to gain different kinds of knowledge to achieve your goal. For example, are you a physicist working on a theory about the origins of the universe? If you are, chances are that you may not need as much practical knowledge. Knowing how to wield a hammer isn't going to help you. On the other hand, if you're trying to build a house, there may be a great deal of practical skills that you'll need to learn – framing, roofing, finishing and so forth.

You might find it useful to actually write out what skills you have and what skills you need. So let's suppose you're building a house. You might write out something like the following:

### **PRACTICAL SKILLS**

#### **I have:**

Basic carpentry skills

**I need:**

A course on:

- Framing
- Roofing
- Finishing
- Landscaping

**THEORETICAL SKILLS****I have:**

Basic theoretical knowledge of construction and carpentry.

**I Need To Study:**

Cutting

Gluing

Surface types and Apps.

Tool applications

Weather considerations

Blueprint reading

Execution strategy

City regulations and permits

Laws and requirements for general contracting

**Choose Your Learning Style**

Most people find themselves attending classes that are run in what is called the *Mathematical/Logical* format, which uses written text without a lot of visual aid as its primary medium of information. Very few people are able to learn well in this way, yet 95% of the classes taught are run in this format. Because most people aren't exposed to learning styles that work for them, they often have difficulty translating what they do learn into practice. What this means is that there are plenty of people out there that have all sorts of certificates but can't effectively apply the knowledge to their working environment. Thus, one of the best things you can do to ensure that you learn what you



need to achieve your goal and that you can put that knowledge to use it to determine what kind of learner you are.

The following is a list of the classic learning types. It is possible for you to have characteristics of more than one type, however it is usually the case that one of the types will be more dominant.

*Visual Learner* – This is the most common learning style. A visual learner needs to be *shown* how to do something first before they can assimilate some information. For example, if a visual learner were building a house and needed to learn how to make a special type of cut to construct a specific type of joint, they would learn best by having someone show them how to make that cut first. Video recordings can come in quite handy for this type of learner, since they can see whatever they need demonstrated and repeat or pause the demonstration as often as they like. Mentor learning is usually, though, the most effective mode of presentation for visual learners. Visual learners operate on something like the ‘monkey see, monkey do’ principle, so the mentor demonstrates some process and then the student repeats it.

*Auditory Learner* – This is the second most common learning group. Auditory learners need to be talked through some process and then they will try it for themselves. They need to create a set of instructions in their head. Audio/Visual or mentor learning works very well for these people because a skilled mentor is usually very good at creating a list of procedures or instructions for this kind of learner.

*Kinesthetic Learner* –The third most common learning group. Kinesthetic learners need to be told about how to do something *as they do it*. A teacher for a kinesthetic learner may have to *physically* show their student how to perform the act they’re trying to teach. An instructor of martial arts, for example, might put his student in a position and then physically guide them through a particular move, slowly moving the student’s limbs. In short, kinesthetic learners need to physically go through each process linked to learning any skill that will be involved in their environment. Because of the nature of their learning style, these types of learners also do best with a mentor.





## Delegating Learning Tasks

As you work towards your legacy, you may find that you have a number of people working with you to achieve that dream. If this is the case, you may find that you don't need to shoulder the task of learning all of the skills necessary to reach your goal. In this case, it may make more sense to catalog the list of skills and talents that those working with you already possess and to delegate learning tasks to others based upon their current skill set and task. You should clearly define which components of the learning process are ideally suited to *you* and to the tasks that are important for *you* to accomplish. The learning style of the person in question may also be relevant to choosing who learns particular skills. Certain learning styles may make learning particular skills difficult. For example, a kinesthetic learner may have real difficulties learning certain abstract skills or knowledge. Financial concerns may also be worth considering when delegating a learning task. In short, to be most efficient, anything that is not ideally suited to you and to your parameters should be delegated to those who are ideally suited to the task.

## Using the O.P.I.R. Method

Now that you know what exactly you need to learn and you've discovered your learning style, it's time to look at how to get the most out of your learning resources. The method that I use is Bryan Tracy's *O.P.I.R. Method* and it stands for *Overview, Preview, In-view* and *Review*. I frequently use this method when I read, but you can use it with any informational medium.

### *Overview*

When you are starting your learning process and considering whether to use a particular source of information as a learning resource you should first begin by evaluating whether that source is credible. When acquiring new information, regardless of the form of media that the information comes in, the first thing to ask is whether the authors are credible. Are they successful in the application of their materials (practical) or are they the originator of a sound working theory that is relevant to my work?





This is a very important question to ask, because there are lots of people out there that write books filled with seemingly wonderful theories who do not practice the theory that they are pushing. Many of these people are not getting results that make them credible.

When you look into author credibility, make sure that certificates and degrees alone don't sway you. Just because someone has a PhD, this does not mean that they are qualified to be your teacher. The degrees that a person possesses are not necessarily an accurate indicator of whether the person is qualified to teach you. Many university professors are not terribly effective at the application of the theories that they generate or support. A credible author is someone that has a sound theory that is workable and logical. Your job is to find someone who is credible, *open loop mentor*. An open loop mentor may be very knowledgeable, but they themselves are always willing to learn.

Now that you've found a resource created by a credible, open loop author, begin by reviewing the table of contents. *Does that source contain any information relevant to the project at hand?* The title may be good and make the book sound as though it contains information that you need to know, but when you look inside, the book may prove not to have what you need. A good way to gauge the amount of useful information in addition to searching through the table of contents is to review the index for key words relevant to your subject/search. The more listings under any relevant key word, the more concentrated and useful the information source is likely to be. With this kind of view you can get an overview of the learning resource and whether it is going to be useful for your time.

Audio and video courses will often have the same structure as books and therefore contain a table of contents as well as an abbreviated index. Depending upon how you're purchasing them then, you can check them out for relevance in the same way you would a book. These courses may also include companion manuals that can be searched in the same way. So if you find learning from those forms of media more suitable to your learning style, don't hesitate to check them out first to get an overview for the relevance to your goal.

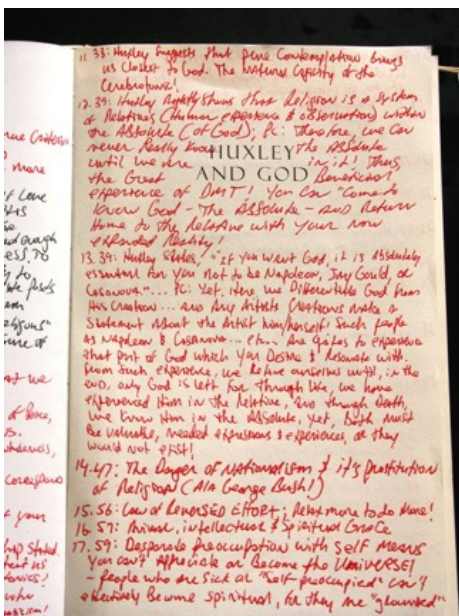


**Preview**

Once you've scanned the initial table of contents and index, review the learning resource by looking at diagrams and captions. There's a good deal of truth to the saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. Diagrams and pictures are an author's way of capturing and displaying important information. So look for diagrams and the captions that go with those diagrams. They will key you in what the author thinks of as essential information and this will allow you to make a better judgment about the relevancy of the resource and how efficiently you will make use of that resource. If the resource does in fact look as though it's got important information for you, then use it. If not, then put it aside and keep searching.

**In-View**

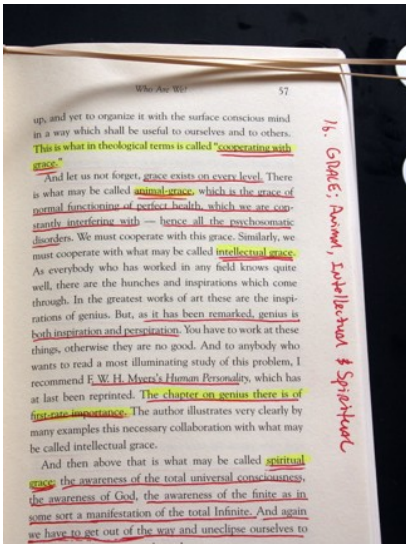
Now that you've found the book, CD or DVD that's got the information you need, it's time to work through it. To begin with, you'll need a system for identifying the most relevant information since much of the resource may not be relevant to your goal and therefore not yet worth putting the time in to working through the resource from beginning to end. Once you've identified the relevant sections, read through them, noting the most relevant images and diagrams for easy future location.



This is how I complete the in-view step of the O.P.I.R. method. To the left, you can see one of the books that I've pulled from my library and it's typical of all of the books in my library. The book is *Huxley and God* and you can see that I've taken advantage of any of the white space in the beginning or end of the book to take notes specific to issues that I've felt were relevant to either what I'm working on, what I'm developing or what I think might be useful in the future and that I want to have quick access to. In essence, I'm writing a very concentrated summary of the most important pieces of a given document so that any time I'm



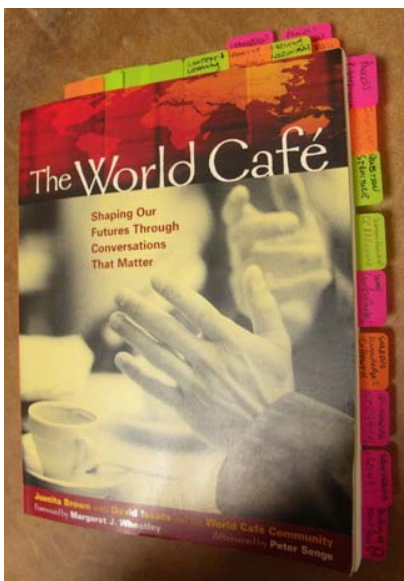
writing an article, producing a slide show or whatever and I need to refer to some source, I can open that book and see what I thought was most.



In this next photo you can see that I've written #16 in the margins. If I'm flipping through the pages I can see that the note #16 where I've left myself a note in the front of the book has a heading 'Grace, Animal, Intellectual and Spiritual.' It's very easy for me to find that information by looking at my notes in the front of the book or by flipping through the pages.

I also use different types of highlighting. I've developed a system highlighting and underlining based on importance. For example, in the text to the left you'll see yellow highlighting and red underlining. Yellow on its

own is information that is least important. Red underlining is the next most important and yellow highlighting and red underlining together indicate a higher importance. The highest level of importance is a double underlining with red, sometimes combined with yellow. I use this system because if I am pressed for time and I need to review the book, I can start with anything that is double underlined and highlighted and underlined and I know that I'll hit the most important pieces of the book. With more time, I can move



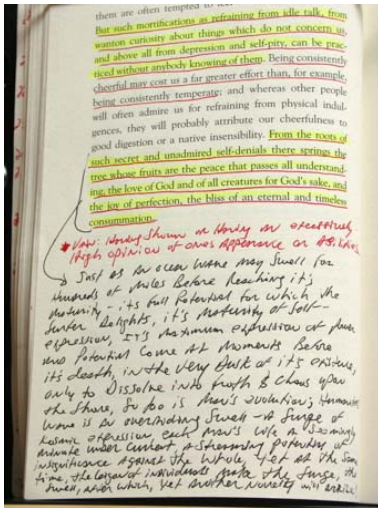
down the hierarchy to hit the lesser points. This system will allow you to make use of the book in the future in a much more efficient fashion. It also allows you to make the best use of the book in the first place by drawing out the relevant points in the book.

Beyond this system of highlighting I also use a tabbing system for quick reference. Most stationary stores will carry customized, sticky tabs that have a space for you to write on them. In this way you can label your tabs and then insert them into your book and create an easy reference system, moving much more quickly to the



pages you need to read. Setting up tabs like this is generally a good idea since the book's index may turn out not to contain references that you need. So this is a way for you to create your own, personalized index system. I set all of my books up with tabs so that it is easy to acquire the information I need in a way that works for my thinking processes.

### Developmental Dialoguing



The author of this book, Aldous Huxley, is dead. I obviously can't correspond with him personally about his ideas. However, as I'm reading his book, I *can* identify key points that make me think of a way of expanding on a point or I may find that the author is overlooking an important point or I might not agree with that author at all. I use these key points as opportunities as to create a dialogue or a debate with the author and this helps me to formulate and develop my own theories, opinions and practices. It's also very common for me to write down how I'm going to use that information. The idea is that

you can create an imagined dialogue with the author in order to develop your own ideas about the information in the book. This is my way of taking a thought, activating and working on it. So I use a book as a tool. Books, at least to me, aren't things to be kept clean and collected. A book is a tool and there's no point in having a shovel if it never finds its way to the dirt.

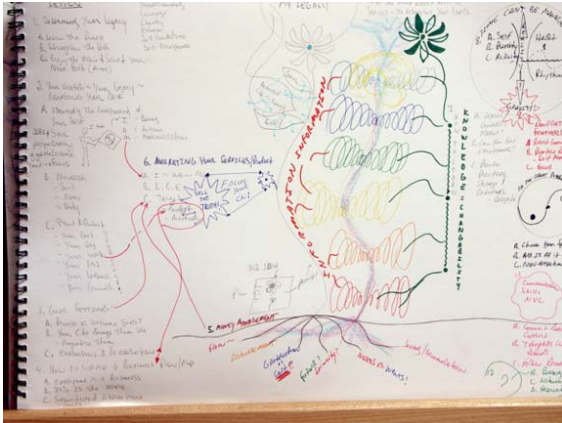
### Active Thinking – Mind Mapping

You're familiar with mind mapping by now from the exercises we've been doing throughout the program and hopefully you can see the role that they can play in learning. They are important to the general learning process I'm developing here as well. Once you've worked through a number of documents or books relevant to your specific chosen goal it's important to find a way to synthesize all of that information and make it practical. Mind maps can help you to do this. Mind maps allow you to represent all of the concepts pictorially and to connect those concepts visually. This in turn helps you to connect them in your own mind. Put another way, mind-mapping is a way of condensing





and connecting relevant information and by using color and art I am not only passing the information through my body, I'm connecting it to a creative process.



### Active Thinking – Blackboard Use

You can use a blackboard or penboard for many of the same purposes as creating a mind map. The point is to activate both your left and right brain when you are working on developing an idea. In the picture to the left, you can see an image that I was inspired to draw after a meditation. It is the basis for an article that I am going to write.



Typically, people rely on their left brain to learn and it's not nearly the most creative or receptive part of your learning system. Your right brain is much more the receiver or the yin aspect of your brain and your left brain linearizes things so that you can put them into a working context. So I

right-brain my ideas with mind maps and blackboards etc. I then left-brain my ideas by putting them into a context that I can use for practical application.

### Review

Once you've completed the process that I've described so far, you'll want to be able to access the information in your books, articles and other resources as quickly and efficiently as possible. You'll also want to review your learning resources occasionally to refresh the skills that you picked up while working through them the first time. In general, you'll need to review your key resources as often as necessary to assure the outcome you need. When you're reviewing, you'll want to select those resources that offer the information that you find most applicable at the time, that you understand most



clearly and that is most likely to produce measurable results when applied to your unique situation or challenge. If you are effective in your overview, preview and in-view, then your reviews will be very rich and helpful and they will go very quickly.

### **Apply New Knowledge**

Now that you've absorbed all of the relevant information, you need to apply it as you can. This does two things. First, it takes advantage of the information when it is still fresh in your mind. And second, it cements the new knowledge in your mind and in your skill set, making it more effective and easier to draw on in the future. The fact of the matter is, the longer you wait between acquiring and applying the knowledge, the less likely you are to retain knowledge that you need.

I've noticed that one of the things that prevents people from really getting the most out of their learning is that they try to learn too much at any given time without *practicing*. You not only forget information, you confuse or mix-up your procedures and things don't turn out the way that they should or in a way that is most ideal. For optimal, positive expression of knowledge, you need to learn in chunks and those chunks need to be determined by you. If you learn in too large a chunk, your application will be diminished. If you learn in too small a chunk, your application won't be as effective. So you need to know when to stop trying to learn and enter into the creation process with the knowledge that you now have. You will have your own specific rhythm. Through practice, you will be in tune with your rhythm and know when to work with what you have, rather than trying to absorb more.

### **Reevaluate as Needed**

As you begin to use the knowledge you've gained to work towards your goal, you may find that what you've learned isn't sufficient to reach that goal or that the skills just aren't doing the trick. Just as you review your business plan periodically to see how well it is helping you to achieve your business goals, you should periodically evaluate your skill set to see whether it is up to the tasks that you've set out for yourself. Moreover there may be new research in your field that you need to keep up to date on and some of this new research may make old information obsolete or prove it false. So it is very important



to evaluate what you've learned and whether it is leading you effectively towards your legacy.

### **Enjoy and Recover**

The final stage of my system is to *enjoy and recover*. Many people have avoid the enjoy and recover stage. If you take a day, two days, or whatever you need to enjoy and recover, when you go to accomplish your next task or your next goal on the way to accomplishing your legacy, you will be much more successful and much more receptive to information the next time you have to learn. If you are tired, you won't be as efficient a learner.

As an analogy, skipping the enjoyment and recover stage would be like going into the gym, doing a set of squats and then immediately trying to do your next set. You'll have bad form and probably hurt yourself. If you really want to be an effective learner you have to make sure you have enough enjoy and recover. If you are working on a number of projects or tasks at any given time then you can enjoy and recover from a particular project while working on another because concept shifting can be a form of relaxation. So you may have just finished a beautiful art piece and now you're going to write an article, and you can enjoy and recover from the art and appreciate it well while you're writing the article. In many instances you'll find that one task accomplished or one goal achieved actually serves as soul nutrition to help fuel you through the next task.

### **Avoid Distraction**

Probably the most important part of learning is to understand how to avoid unwanted distractions. The nature of the universe is such that whenever you start putting your mind to something, distractions inevitably pop up. There is a rule called the *Two Times, Three Times rule*. The rule says that it takes twice as long to complete a project as planned and it costs three times as much to complete the project. In order to break this rule, you're going to have to avoid distractions. The Two Times, Three Times rule exists because people don't have a will to find learning system and system of application like I've described. The more people you have involved in any project, the more likely the Two Times, Three Times rule will apply because it's rare that you'll get a handful of people together that are as efficient at learning and applying as I'm describing for you here.





The overarching principle of success is to have a clearly defined learning objective. Because many of us are so attracted to so many things in life be it spiritual development, education, social activities, hobbies, addictions, side businesses and creative pursuits, it's easy to get pulled off the topic at hand. This is why the first principle of learning is having an overarching principle that generates a burning desire. That burning desire is your compass. It's what keeps you from getting sucked into all the little side-shows in life. You have to use your daily goals planner that we discussed in Lesson 3 to in order to avoid distractions. And it is natural for people that are not focused to try to pull you off track. It's not that they're doing it maliciously, it's just part of their makeup. So you're going to find that you have to learn not only how to channel your own energy, but you have to be disciplined in segregating yourself from people, places or events that you know are going to distract you or you're always going to be a mediocre learner.

### **In Sum**

In this lesson, we learned about one method for learning the skills and information that you need to reach your legacy. We discovered that:

- ❖ The best way to motivate learning is to have some overarching goal that you want to reach.
- ❖ It's important to determine what kinds of knowledge you will need in order to reach your goal before setting out your learning tasks.
- ❖ The best way to learn is to find a number of learning resources that are credible.
- ❖ Credibility isn't a matter of degree, rather it is a matter of having a sound, logical, working theory that the authors themselves have put to practice where possible.
- ❖ If you are working with a group of people, determine whether you can delegate the learning tasks to others to make more efficient use of your time.



- ❖ Use the O.P.I.R. Method to get the most out of the learning resources that you've chosen. The O.P.I.R. Method stands for:
  - *Overview* – look through the learning resource to see if it is relevant to your task. You can do this by checking the index and table of contents for the resource you've chosen.
  - *Preview* – this is another stage of review. At this stage you should look through the resource for diagrams and pictures. These will convey some of the essential points from the work and allow you to evaluate it for relevancy.
  - *In-view* – at this stage you work through the resource beginning with the most relevant sections first. You should try to develop some system of notation to highlight essential points so that you can find them quickly in the future.
  - *Review* – at this final stage, you are reviewing the materials you've learned to keep the cemented in your skill set.
  
- ❖ Applying the new knowledge that you've gained as quickly as possible is essential to cement that knowledge in your skill set.
  
- ❖ Reevaluate the skills you've acquired regularly to see if they are really helping you to reach your goals and to see if the information you've absorbed is outdated.
  
- ❖ Make sure to take time to enjoy yourself and recover from your learning process. This gives your mind the time to relax before you tax it again with a new learning task and therefore you will be better prepared to tackle that new task.

Thank you and I hope you've enjoyed this lesson. The system that I've shared with you here is the system that I've used in my life and it has been very effective. I look forward to seeing you in our next mastery lesson.