

Creating & Consuming Are Two Sides of the Same Coin

Should I create or should I consume?

Should I focus on theory or should I emphasize practice?

Should I initiate my own projects or should I observe what the top performers in my field are doing?

Is there any reason why we should do one to the exclusion of the other?

In your quest for knowledge, I suggest being a student of the game and a player of the game.

As a player of the game, you constantly challenge yourself to make things happen. As a student of the game, you constantly challenge yourself to be inspired by what others are making happen.

Here are the two mindsets to avoid:

1. If I study enough, one day I'll be able to create.
2. Now that I've created enough, I no longer need to study.

The first mindset treats studying as if it's a prerequisite for doing. It sets you up for a vicious cycle where you always end up feeling like you need to read one more book, listen to one more podcast, or take one more class before you're ready. But the truth is you'll never be ready until you're in the middle of doing something you're not ready to do.

The second mindset treats studying as if it's some kind of punishment that only losers or mediocre performers have to do. Rather than seeing learning as a fun opportunity to expand your horizons and add new things to your tool box, this mindset makes you see it a sign that you're regressing back to amateur status. But the truth is that your work is an evolving reflection of how much you're pushing yourself to acknowledge all the people who have experiences and strategies that you have yet to master.

Here's an excerpt I love from Anthony Iannarino's post on How to Become a Student of the Game:

The reading, the studying, and the practicing are what allow high performers to make distinctions. They start to notice things. They notice things about themselves, and they notice things about others.

They start to see how tiny changes produce outsized results.

If you aren't on the plateau practicing, you never make the distinctions. They're invisible to you unless you spend time looking. But they are the key to performing at the highest level.

You can't help the poor performer see the distinctions. Because they aren't reading, studying, and practicing, the distinction is useless to them. They don't understand it because they lack the context and because they can't feel it themselves.

Some distinctions can only be seen if you're trying to wrap your mind around someone else's approach and others can only be observed if you're out there on the field trying to work out the messy details of your own project.

Studying enhances your ability to ship and shipping enhances your ability to study because each vantage point contributes its own unique kinds of insights to the creative process.

If you want better output, you have to seek better input. If you want to get the most out of what you're learning from experts, you have to put those things into practice before you're an expert.

If you don't do the work, your learning will be stifled. And if you don't take the time to study, your work will suffer.

Working and studying are part of the same process. If you're not doing both of these things, you probably won't do either of them very well or for very long.