

Learning is The Cure-All

Written by T.K. Coleman.

The ability to learn is the basis of hope.

Without the possibilities of education, we would all be condemned to remain the same people today that we were yesterday.

Every mistake would be consistently repeated. Every failure would be doomed to happen over and over again. Every time we were stumped by a tough question or baffled by a complex problem, we would have to live with the anxiety of knowing that those things would never get any easier.

Our capacity to glean insights from our struggles gives us power and promise. Each time we're exposed to a new challenge, we gain the power of resilience. Each time we engage a new concept, we experience the promise of greater possibilities.

Learning is the art of familiarizing ourselves with the unfamiliar. To learn is to become a bit more familiar with what doesn't work, what's worked for others, what might work for us, and what's worth trying. When we combine this familiarity with deliberate practice, we acquire mastery over ourselves, over our gifts, and over various aspects of the world around us.

The pursuit of mastery through self-directed learning is the key to staying fueled with inspiration.

The people who feel hopeless are the ones who see problems as fixed, enduring, and definite ("this bad thing just happened, it feels bad, and it's going to feel exactly like this forever") while the people who are invigorated by hope are the ones who see problems as transitory ("this is a terrible situation, it feels terrible right now, but everything changes").

For the hopeless, problems are permanent. For the hopeful, personal growth is permanent.

When you allow yourself to become static and complacent, you'll end up being a sitting duck for every bit of discouraging news that comes your way.

If you want to overcome hopelessness, fill your heart with as many ideas, stories, and experiences as you can. Build a vast vocabulary of metaphors, distinctions, questions, and examples that will help you outgrow mundane and limiting perspectives.

In T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*, Merlyn offers this sage advice:

“The best thing for being sad,” replied Merlin, beginning to puff and blow, “is to learn something. That’s the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honor trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then — to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the only thing for you. Look what a lot of things there are to learn.”

There is no end to the challenges we face in life. Fortunately, the same can be said about our opportunities to learn, grow, and evolve.

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