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Quotable Quotes

Some disciples once complained to their Guru, "You tell us stories, but you never reveal their meaning to us." The Guru replied: "How would you like it if someone offered you a fruit and chewed it before giving it to you?" ~ Ancient Parable

"I think that even though we need to have some outline, I am sure that we make the road by walking." ~ Paulo Friere

"I think, therefore I am....But what then am I? A thing which thinks." ~ Descartes, Mediations

Dear Jean,

Our featured writer this month is Patricia E. Boverie, Ph.D., a Professor in the Organizational Information and Learning Sciences Program at the University of New Mexico. After graduating from the University of Texas in Austin, Patricia taught in the Psychology Department at Central Washington University where she directed a Masters program in Organizational Development. She has completed post-doctoral work at University of British Columbia and Harvard University. Patricia's areas of expertise are in the fields of individual, team, and organizational learning; work motivation; and applications of positive psychology at work. Patricia's research interests include the development of passion in the workplace, adult learning, transformational learning, and leadership development through mentoring. In 2001 she co-authored the book, *Transforming Work: The Five Keys to Achieving Trust, Commitment, and Passion in the Workplace*, with Michael Kroth. This book has been translated into various other languages. She has over 30 publications, and has made over 50 international and national presentations. She can be reached at pboverie@unm.edu.

Dr. Boverie, (Patsy, as I have known her for the last 20 years) was my professor as I returned to school in the mid-90s to pursue an EdS. That class, *Team Development*, reengaged and refocused an understanding of myself as a learning organism. I didn't know it at the time - however, I quickly

came to learn the power of and how teaming with others enhances my learning. While I never completed the pursuit of the EdS, my learning activities have never wavered. The quest to learn for me is much like breathing - it is an unconscious reflex and one that is necessary to live, thrive and survive. Patsy, unknowingly, gave me permission to feel and relish a personal passion for learning - she continues to be a model learner. You only have to look at the radiance of her smile to understand and believe that we are happiest when we learn. Thank you, Patsy!

*In the spirit of sharing our gifts,
Jean*

Understanding Ourselves - Learning Organisms That Continually Learn in Order to Thrive *by Patricia Boverie*

We are learning organisms - from the cellular level to our complex thinking and feeling processes. And, more importantly, we are happiest when we learn. We need to understand that learning is a constant in our lives, and to recognize that learning is like *breathing* to humans. You take a class - you learn. You eat a new food - you learn. Every activity we engage in - thinking, talking, watching - is essential, is part of, and is an act of learning.

Understanding that we are learning organisms can have a profound and beneficial impact on how we work, play, love, spend time, and live our lives. A trip to Italy is full of learning, just as a trip to a new store, meeting someone new, listening to the radio, or having a conversation with another person - every moment is a learning moment. Learning is happening constantly, but for most of us, we are *unconscious* of that fact.

I have been teaching learning theory for over 30 years. Learning how to learn is critically important, but I contend that before we start instructing, training, and advising how folks should learn, we must help ourselves and others realize that learning is central to our being human. And more importantly, that we already know how to learn, that we can always learn new ways to learn, and that without learning in our personal, as well as our professional lives, we become stagnant and unhappy.

Tools and Resources FROM THE BOOKSHELF

The following books are very interesting in terms of showing how the way we were taught to learn impacts us, and what it takes to be a good teacher and learner. Also included is a book I co-authored. This book is based on research we conducted looking at what makes us live passionate lives - lives full of learning.

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck (2007).

How you were 'conditioned' to learn has a great impact on how you approach new learning situations.

Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom (1997)

This wonderful book exemplifies the process of learning through on-going conversations.



Any book by Parker J. Palmer, i.e., *The Courage to Teach, A Hidden Wholeness*. Palmer's writing reminds us that as teachers to family, friends, or students, we have responsibilities, as well as gifts, to share with others.

Transforming Work: The Five Keys to Achieving Trust, Commitment, and Passion in the Workplace by P. Boverie & M. Kroth (2001)

Our work discusses the importance and need to understand that we are always learning and its role to being passionate human beings.

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

The following online resources are links to inventories that help you understand how you learn best or your learning style.

[What is Your Learning Style?](#)

[The Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire](#)

[What's Your Learning Style?](#)

[The VARK Questionnaire](#)

Reflection

Learning Organisms - What Makes Us Happy!

I have spent most of my adult life dealing with learning - either my own, teaching others, as a parent, pet owner, as a member of society. More centrally, I teach learning theory, do research on learning, and everyday I work with college students who are thirsty to learn more.

Just as we are not perfect humans, we are all not perfect learners. That thought brings me joy - it means we can only get better at learning, at helping others learn, and that we will never run out of things to learn. The hardest part is deciding where to spend your energy. If you run with my assumption that we are learning organisms, then every minute in our lives is a learning moment. So where do we put our energy when so much is pulling us in different directions?

I think that life is too short to feel guilty about what we 'should' be doing. If we must have 'shoulds,' then I believe that we should cherish the moments of learning around the people and things that are most important to us - our families, our physical well being, and how we make our living. There are many distractions, albeit learning situations, so we must be aware of where we put our *awareness*.

I like to think of life as a River of Learning, and I love being part of it. I learn, I teach, I live, I love - a continual cycle. But more importantly, no matter your role - parent, engineer, social worker - you learn, you help others learn, and you *are* a learning organism. There is much evidence that learning begins in the womb. Some try to convince us that we continue to learn after we die...I suppose with my definition, if you aren't alive, then you perhaps aren't learning. But I'm open to discussion about that!

Choose To

Enjoy the learning ... begin to recognize the learning happening around you, in you, in others ... have gratitude for all the sources of learning in your life - family, friends, work, books, nature, media ... experience living in a 360 degree world of learning.



Know that whatever bad or unpleasant learning you have experienced ... you have unlimited opportunity to re-learn ... learn more ... and teach others.

Appreciate all your teachers - family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, media, and most importantly, your *Inner Genius*.

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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