



Learning on the Run

Ten Ways to Design a Lifetime of Learning

Better is a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who can no longer receive instruction.
Ecclesiastes 4:13

How would you rate yourself as a lifelong learner? Beside the following statements, place a 1, 2, or 3.
1 = this is seldom true of me. 2 = this is sometimes true of me. 3 = this is often true of me.

- I often engage in self-reflection and analysis.
- I plan learning events (classes, training, etc.) into my schedule.
- I ask a lot of questions in conversations.
- I take time to think through how new ideas or principles can impact my current behavior.
- I often question the assumptions behind what I read or hear.
- I feel confident about my learning style and try to maximize it in learning settings.
- I love trying new things and taking risks to learn.
- I like good debates and discussion with people of different points of view.
- I deliberately break routines to try something new.
- I regularly turn to mentors or experts for learning.
- I invest time in protégés who want to learn.
- I often ask God to give me wisdom in new settings.
- I enjoy exploring the Scriptures and allowing them to reshape my thinking.
- I go to the Bible to seek answers and insights to specific questions or problems.
- I seek out others who have new ideas and practices.
- I take time to sift through the wisdom of new practices and knowledge to assess and make appropriate applications.
- I take time to read books outside of the usual channels or current best sellers.

Total ___ 1-25 = growing learner 26-40 = committed learner 40-51 = lifelong learner

Identify your learning strengths and areas of growth:

1. Start with attitude. The heart is mentioned over seven hundred times in the Bible. A desire for change, wisdom, and application sets the stage for successful learning. The aptitude is in the attitude.

Proverbs 2:3-4

- Describe some attitudes that promote learning.

- Identify some attitudes that hinder learning.

2. Stop and ask questions. Jesus modeled question-asking. There are over three hundred questions recorded in the gospels. Questions reveal an insatiable curiosity about knowing, discovering, and inquiring. Matthew 16:13

- What can you do to grow your skill of asking questions?
- What makes for a good question?
- What are some of your favorite questions to ask?

3. Join with others. Learning is enriched when it becomes a team sport rather than an individual tournament. Collaborative learning opens us up to the riches found in the diverse experiences and contributions of others. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

- What makes collaborative learning so powerful?
- What can hold us back in joining others to learn?

4. Stand in the critic's corner. Critical thinking asks questions that get below the surface. These questions help us examine our governing assumptions and beliefs. They should challenge us to place assumptions under the scrutiny and authority of the Scriptures. Acts 17:11

- What types of questions can be a threat to you and that you prefer people not to ask?
- How can you be a healthy skeptic without falling into cynicism?

5. Check out the other side. It's easy to travel in the same learning rut. Take time to examine and understand a different point of view, even if it radically differs or contradicts yours. New understandings and convictions are formed as we're challenged by opposing views. Acts 17:19

- Picture a celebrity, politician, artist, musician, or author. Put yourself in their shoes and consider how they would view a subject. How can this help you to move from defensive learning to offensive learning?
- What fears need to be overcome to learn from those different from us?

6. Read to scan, sample, or study to teach. Good reading habits mark the lifestyle of a learner. Books should represent a diverse spectrum of authors and genres. Learn how to scan books for key ideas, sample them to get a taste of the theme, and study them for mastery to teach. 2 Timothy 4:13

- What was the last good book you read and why?
- What books would you like to include on a must read list?

7. Keep a one-sentence journal. Recording what we learn captures our growth in wisdom. Great leaders are found in great journals. Journals are not diaries recording events but narratives about what we're learning. A one-sentence journal is a simple discipline to get started. Proverbs 2:1-2

- If you had to record one lesson learned this past week in a sentence, what would you write?
- When would be a good time each day to record a sentence in your one-sentence learning journal?

8. Initiate conversations. Strategic learning conversations should mark a lifelong learner. People are a gold mine for learning that is tapped through intentional conversations. Good conversations begin with curiosity. We are curious to know something about the person we are in conversation with. John 1:38-39

- What helps you to initiate quality conversations that can turn into learning experiences?
- Why is curiosity so important in good conversations?

9. Take everyday risks. It's easy to travel the same paths of learning, following well-worn travels of routine. Lifelong learners know how to take risks and try new ventures. 2 Corinthians 5:7

- What is one small routine you can change in your life today? This could include what you do first thing in the morning, the route you travel to work, or what you eat.
- What can you do to encourage risk taking in your life?

10. Apply what you learn. Jesus raised the bar for learning: "Why do you call me Lord and do not do what I tell you?" Our depth of obedience is directly related to our ability to apply. Application should show up in our daily schedules and routines. Application should be bite-size and practical not overwhelming. Luke 6:46

- Brainstorm and list four-five possible applications you can make to be learner within the next twenty-four hours.
- Choose one possible application and create a practical action plan. Remember to put it on the calendar. If its not on your schedule, it's only a nice sentiment and not an application.

