

What learning has meant to me and why, as an older person, I continue to learn

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Learning has always meant a lot to me throughout my life, and there are several reasons why, as an older person, I continue to learn. Some are unique, because they are motivated by unique incidents which occurred in my life. Naturally therefore, some are quite different to those of other people, as very few will have had my experiences, or share my reasons, desires and enthusiasm, to investigate and learn about these incidents, which is one of the things that motivate me to learn. Some of the things which motivate me to learn are (1) the need to be literate, (2) search for wisdom, (3) love and fascination with certain subjects, (4) pride, (5) dignity, (6) the need and desire to investigate certain subjects, for example the history of my ancestors' enslavement, in order to find truth and reconciliation, (7) Spiritual and moral convictions.

Spiritual and moral convictions motivate me to learn, because they instill in me the firm belief, that there are spiritual and moral responsibilities, which I am destined to carry out; that because I am blessed with life the most precious gift of creation, as a human being, whether or not life originated through the Scientific or Religious theories, though I am only a little insignificant part of the Grand Design Plan of Creation, similar to a minute cog in a clock, my function is quite relevant to the overall performance of the clock as a whole and that in order to perform efficiently it is necessary to avoid false philosophies and negative ideas, and try to embrace noble ideals in the search for truth, because only truth can set mankind free. Throughout history, there will only be a few Jesus Christ, Markus Garvey, Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela, but by imagining what the world would have been without the sacrifices that these men made to uphold noble ideals, as nothing in life is free, I believe that as payback, it is my moral duty to support the principles for which they stood in the interest of my descendants, fellowmen, and humanity.

Another thing which motivates me to learn, is the realization that things only happen when people think, as is proven by Newton, Edison, Bell, Marconi, Einstein etc. But most people are not motivated by this, as it has always been more convenient and less stressful to conform to the norm of societies. That norm is that people are assessed totally, on their capacities to obey instructions without questioning them, as if there is an unwritten law, which states "Do as you are told, and not as you think, or else suffer the consequences". The psychological effect of that on people however, is that it conditions them to totally rely on others to supply them with instructions, which subsequently diminish their confidence and courage to think for themselves independently.

Many people are critical of my attitude towards life, but there are no maliciousness or ulterior motives in my attitude of daring to think for myself, it is simply that, since childhood my life has always been governed by a series of considerations, such as consciousness about certain facts, early moral and ethical teachings, lessons of experiences, and observation of things, which I have used as a personal philosophy called L.O.T., to conduct my life. L.O.T. means practicing three principles, "patient Listening", "keen Observing", and "deep Thinking". Consciousness, about facts, for example, that the power of man is in his mind, because everything that man knows including all sciences, comes from his mind; that whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe it can achieve, which is proven by man's invention of the airplane, his sending of rockets and satellites to space and his visit to the moon and that this power is in everyone, and not confined to specific individuals, races, schools or institutions, as Jesus Christ the greatest author in the history of mankind has proven. Furthermore, that this power is limitless as is proven, by the wisdom of men such as Aesop, Solomon etc. As the Dalai Lama said "all that we are, is what we believe".

In a nutshell "my search for knowledge and wisdom is the driving force which motivates me to continue learning as an older person. By humbly accepting my insignificance in the great scheme

of things, that keeps me solidly grounded and prevent delusions of grandeur. I always try to remember that people without a plan are doomed to fail, therefore a flawed plan is better than none at all and that success is more a matter of consistent common sense, rather than it is of genius; that arrogance and hallow self-esteem always give people the false belief that they have a divine right to patronize, pontificate, prognosticate, dictate and rule the lives of others, which has so often led to violence and destruction throughout the history of mankind.

Nevertheless, I believe that the majority of my thoughts about most things, are similar to those of other older people and indeed, similar to those of many younger people also, because the majority of what older people continue to learn is usually an addition to what they started to learn when they were younger. One important fact which seems clear, is that people are always more enthusiastic to learn about subjects which relates to them and they are always more obedient and respectful to rules and laws which represent their interests, or to which they can relate personally. Therefore, as most of the rules and principles which man adopts to govern his life come from the lessons of experience and history, I can see the big part which my early acquaintance with history, especially British Colonial History, has played in my comprehension of the forces which controls human life on this planet and how much that knowledge has helped and inspired me to continue learning. .

For that reason, I believe it is very important that everyone should be conversant with history, as well as these facts, but more so, learning providers and teachers; furthermore, that as a back-up, conscious elders should also regard it as their duties to pass on facts of history to the younger generation, just in case teachers fail to do so for some reason. It is very encouraging to note that Prince Charles seem to support the view that children should have knowledge of history. Lack of knowledge about history and certain important things is extremely frustrating for adults and elders, because it prevents them giving adequate support and guidance to children, while it often confuse and mislead children, which they detest. Whenever children are forced to learn things which they do not like, it easily alienate them against society, later on in life.

Because education is changing all the time, it is absolutely essential that older people should continue to learn, so that they can at least keep up with the basics of the sophisticated changes in society, as they occur. For example, basic use of computer is almost a necessity in today's society and this necessity will only increase, because technology will not slow down, it is like a ball rolling down a slope, which is continually gaining momentum. The key to older people's future in society lies in how effectively they can be taught to use Computers, and Mobile Phones properly, but getting them to do these things will be extremely difficult, because they are slow to learn and will need patient tuition. As the norm of today's world is speed, plus the disappearance of extended family from which support could have come, the scarcity of time to teach them, will be a big problem.

Pride and dignity drives me to keep on learning, because wisdom comes from knowledge which is a never ending process. A proud man knows that he cannot earn respect, honour, or dignity from others, if he behaves like a fool among them and basic common sense tells him that it doesn't take long for people who close their minds to new knowledge, to become fools, because new knowledge and wisdom is unfolding all the time. Knowledge to a wise man is like a drug to which he is addicted. The more he learns, the more he wants to learn, the clearer he sees how much more there is to learn and therefore how little he knows. It teaches him that he can learn from a fool and to be humble, because knowledge can be found in the simplest of place. As Shakespeare said, "there are sermons in stones, books in the running brooks and good in everything".

Because I adore wisdom, and know that it can be found anywhere, my passion to acquire it is like an obsession, which sometimes drives me to search for it in secluded, remote, shady and even dangerous places because, "if the mountain will not come to Mohammad, then Muhammad has got to go to the mountain". Trying to obtain information about some things can sometimes feel like

trying to break into "Fort Knox", because facts about them are kept under lock and key, while some happen behind tightly closed doors. On the other hand, the satisfaction of finding information about some tabooed subjects can be so intriguing and satisfying, that it often makes the difficult efforts to obtain them feel like entertainment, canceling out the stresses.

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