



Let's Hack Learning

How to become better at anything, faster.

Kenny Toh

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Read Me (First)

This is a very concise guide to learning how to learn fast. It's packed with theories of learning, practical suggestions, and personal experiences. You could easily finish reading it under an hour. But don't rush through it.

For optimum result, it's best to approach it with three things in mind:

1. A subject or skill which you wish to learn or get better at
2. A willingness to slow down, pause, and reflect on what you're reading
3. A readiness to jump into action, put your learning into practice, and complete some of the suggested exercises

If you find it useful, feel free to share it with others and spread the joy of learning.

Enjoy the journey!

***“Whatever you can do, or dream you can,
begin it. Boldness has genius, power,
and magic in it.”***

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Welcome to the Journey!

Is there anything that you wish you could do better at? Taking Instagram-worthy photos with your mobile phone? Writing a blog? Brewing your own beer? Speaking a foreign language? Connecting with your teenager? Becoming a better leader? Speaking in public?

When you come across people who could do things that you wish you could be good at with effortless ease, did you ever say to yourself: *“I wish I could do that too?”*

I did. Somewhere along the journey of life, I quit wishing and decided to do something about it. And with this book, *Let's Hack Learning*, I'm inviting you to join me on a life-changing journey to crack the code for 'accelerated learning.' You will have access to the *Universal Source Code for Learning (USCL)*¹ which I hope, will enable you to become better at anything, faster.

Does that sound like an outrageous promise? There's only one way to find out – put it to a test.

Let's get started!

1. *The Universal Source Code for Learning (USCL) is simply a fancy term I have coined to represent a set of principles for accelerated learning. They are derived from several years of personal experiments and have neither been scientifically tested nor statistically validated. So far, no adverse side effect linked to its application has been found. Simply, immense joy and satisfaction from learning and becoming better at something, faster.*

Swim like Shinji

My fascination with the art of learning began in May of 2013, right after we moved into a new home next to a public swimming pool. The pool is visible from the living room. At times, I felt as if it was calling out to me. I'm not new to swimming. It just wasn't something that I found appealing back then. I would rather put on my sneakers and go for a run. Running offers a much wider range of scenery than what I could see through the blurry goggles.

Eventually, I gave in to the persistent call and took my maiden dip. And unknowingly, with that plunge, I was thrust into an exciting journey of learning how to learn.

I had taught myself to swim breaststroke during my teenage years and had once won a bronze medal in an under-20 50-metre race. Guess I got lucky. At that time, there was only one public pool and weren't many good swimmers in Batu Pahat, my childhood hometown in Malaysia.

However, for me, freestyle (or front crawl) has always been a challenge. I could barely complete a 50-metre lap without feeling like I had just ran a 100-metre sprint. I had to rest for a few minutes to catch my breath before attempting another. So, after struggling through a few hectic sprints, I decided to give myself a challenge. I set out to learn to swim freestyle well. How well is good enough? I had no idea.

I combed the internet for inspiration. Naturally, Michael Phelps came to mind, even though Olympic standard performance is beyond my wildest dreams. But hey, why not learn from the best?

Then, something interesting popped up in my Google search. That's when I discovered Shinji Takeuji, a self-coached swimmer based in Japan. His YouTube video titled *'The most graceful freestyle swimming by Shinji Takeuchi'* had garnered almost 9.5 million views since February 2008. His strokes were mesmerising. I watched it repeatedly in absolute awe until the accompanying background music got etched permanently into my memory. This guy swims like a fish – graceful and with effortless ease. He slices through water like a slick canoe without a single splash.

I said to myself: *"I want to swim like Shinji!"*

I might never swim as fast as Phelps, but Shinji's grace seemed highly attainable. That's how I became a huge fan of *Total Immersion (TI)*, a ground-breaking approach to swimming developed by the late Terry Laughlin. I listened to Laughlin's lectures and watched countless videos by various TI coaches. With a steady diet of YouTube

Let's Hack Learning

clips and a daily dose of pool practice, I successfully taught myself freestyle swimming in record time.

By the end of the second week, I managed to swim 20 laps continuously. That's one kilometre - the longest distance I have ever swum in my life at that time. It busted a limiting belief that I had carried for almost four decades – "I'm not a swimmer." As a young child, whereas my friends floated effortlessly, I would sink like a rock. When I crossed the one-kilometre mark that day, it felt like Roger Bannister breaking the 4-minute mile barrier. Who says I'm not a swimmer?

A few years later, a fellow guest at a hotel pool in Gabon approached me and commented, "*You swim like a knife slicing smoothly through butter.*" For a brief moment, I felt as if I had embodied the grace of Shinji.

That's my story. And we're going to decode my journey of learning to swim like Shinji and examine five fundamental principles of accelerated learning that could possibly help you learn and get better at what's important to you, faster.

Are you ready for a deep dive into the *Universal Source Code for Learning*?

Principle #1

Start with a Compelling WHY

“He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.”

Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche's wisdom was brought to life by Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychologist who survived the holocaust. In his seminal book, *Men in Search for Meaning*, Frankl wrote about how the vision of him sharing with others how he managed to survive the atrocities at the concentration camp had enabled him to endure all the torture and pain, when many had given up the will to live.

Such is the power of WHY. By WHY, I meant not just your *reason* for learning, but also your *purpose*. There is a subtle difference between the two.

Your reason is what drives you to do something, often in response to either your hunger or frustration. It is usually grounded on the past or the present. For example, my reasons for learning to swim freestyle are many.

- I've been wanting to take up a low-impact exercise as frequent running was beginning to take a toll on my knees.
- Swimming is convenient. I live right next to a swimming pool.
- I'm getting bored of doing breaststroke all the time.
- I once took part in a sprint triathlon and felt embarrassed to be one of the few participants inching through the water in breaststroke whilst other swimmers crawled swiftly over me like a school of fish.
- My son had learnt to play the guitar successfully from watching Youtube clips, and I wanted to find out if I could learn something that way too.

Conversely, purpose is more enduring and future-oriented. It is the answer to *“What difference will this learning make?”* In this case, my purpose is to learn, practice, and master the ‘Art the Learning’ so as to become a better lifelong learner. Swimming freestyle was simply a context for learning at that time which yielded some powerful insights. I have since applied these principles onto several other

Let's Hack Learning

domains including leadership, business management, blogging, writing, and Zen practices.

Purpose is no more important than reason. They are equally important, and are two sides of the same coin of WHY you want to learn and get better at something that matters. Once you get clear about your WHY, you can choose to amplify it. Make it bigger or audacious enough to be worthy of your effort. Otherwise, why bother? Life's too short to be consumed by learning things that don't matter.

The more compelling your WHY for learning, the more motivated you will be. As you might have learnt from Nietzsche and Frankl, a clear and compelling WHY will get you through any HOW, especially when the going gets tough or when learning becomes less fun. Let's revisit the output of *Exercise #1: What and Why*, and dive deeper into your reasons and purpose.

Exercise #3: Start with a Compelling WHY – Reasons and Purpose

The reasons that I want to learn or get better at this are

.....
.....
.....

My purpose for learning or getting better at this is

.....
.....
.....

Now that you are clear about WHAT you want to learn, and WHY you want to get better at it, let's explore the HOW.

Principle #2

Learn the Fundamentals

“He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass, and never knows where he may cast.”

Leonardo da Vinci

There is no shortcut to building deep expertise, but there is a faster path to learning. Every accomplished performer starts out as a *beginner*, and gradually progresses towards attaining *mastery*. Somewhere in between these two extremes, lies what I call *‘good enough’* - an intermediate stage where a reasonably good level of performance is possible. What we're trying to do here is to shorten the time to get from being a *beginner* to becoming *good enough* at what you wish to learn. Undoubtedly, mastery will require further commitment, sustainable practice, and time.

The ABC of Everything

I believe that in every field of study or practice, there exists a set of fundamental principles that we need to learn first. I call it the *Absolutely Basic Concepts (ABC) of Everything*. While these principles aren't always sophisticated or appealing, they form the essential foundation for further development and improvisation that make more advanced performance possible. If you wish to do anything well, it's worth investing some time and effort upfront to build a strong foundation on the basic concepts. It would be wise to heed da Vinci's advice and not rush into practice without equipping yourself with some essential theory.

In *Total Immersion*, there are three core concepts that when applied, can totally transform swimming:

1. **Balance.** Laughlin described 'balance' as being "in harmony with water," the foundation without which smooth movement is impossible. Attaining a good balance allows us to achieve optimum buoyancy and avoid the usual struggle to stay afloat as most beginners would face.

Let's Hack Learning

2. **Streamlining.** Moving forward in water is a function of the difference between propulsion and drag, and reducing drag is much easier than increasing propulsion. Streamlining is about keeping the body long, slick, and hydrodynamic so that one could move through water with minimum drag.
3. **Propulsion.** Using gravity and body mass rather than brute muscular force to propel the body forward in a more energy-efficient manner.

In learning to swim the TI way, the order of the above matters. The execution of every stroke begins with addressing balance, followed by streamlining, and then propulsion. I practiced the recommended drills in that order and made tremendous progress. Learning the fundamentals had certainly paid-off well.

Let's get practical: Learn the Fundamentals

1. **Start with a simple research.** Before diving into doing, invest some time upfront to do a simple research. Scan for articles, books, videos, webpages, and blogs that are relevant to the subject of your study. Shortlist some resources for further immersion.
2. **Immerse yourself fully.** Read, think, reflect, discuss, live, and breathe the subject for a couple of days. When learning to swim freestyle, I watched almost all the videos on Total Immersion available on YouTube.
3. **Learn from others.** Consult experts, coaches, mentors, colleagues, and even friends who are knowledgeable about the subject. Ask them about their "secrets to success" or "the top 3 things" every beginner ought to know. Most people enjoy sharing what they are passionate about or excel at. They might not even be conscious of what you are asking and will probably be delighted with the opportunity to reflect on them. I had benefited much from useful tips from friends who are competitive swimmers, swimming instructors, and triathletes.

Exercise #4: Learn the Fundamentals

What are the fundamental principles in the subject that I'm learning?

Who will I consult?

Principle #3

Deliberate Practice

“Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.”

Immanuel Kant

It's obvious that one cannot learn to swim by reading a how-to guide. Theory alone is insufficient. Confucius once said, *“Knowledge without practice is useless. Practice without knowledge is dangerous.”* Once you have gained enough knowledge through research and immersion, it's time to put all the wonderful theories and principles you have acquired into practice. This is often known as “closing the knowing-doing gap.”

Like a new fitness club member who works out zealously in the gym every day to lose the excess pounds following a new year resolution, I found myself practicing in the pool religiously over two weeks. But I wasn't just swimming daily - not quite yet.

I maintained a simple routine for each practice. Firstly, a few laps of breaststroke (my comfort zone) to warm up and get used to the water. Then, I would practice a specific set of drills. Finally, I would attempt to integrate everything that I've learnt up to that point to complete my desired goal for the day (more about goal setting later).

Doing the drills can be dull and boring, but it's a vital practice. According to Laughlin, one becomes a better swimmer not by getting to the other side of the pool, but by building essential muscles and imprinting certain movements. And the most important muscles are not the large muscles, but the 'spinal stabilisers' that need to be trained by practicing different exercises in the water.

Let's unpack the simple routine to reveal a few important distinctions.

Learning Mode vs. Doing Mode

While we typically learn best through doing, it is important to distinguish *learning* from *doing*. Imagine there is a binary switch in your mind that alternates between the two modes. When in the 'learning mode,' you are conscious about what you are

Let's Hack Learning

practicing, the new actions you are experimenting, the feedback that you receive from the surrounding, the adjustments you are making, and the effect of these adjustments. Psychologists call this '*deliberate practice*' – in which you deliberately choose to practice one aspect of your learning at a time.

According to psychologist and scientific researcher K. Anders Ericsson, deliberate practice entails considerable, specific, and sustained efforts to do something we can't do well, or even at all. Research across different domains show that it is only by working at what we can do that we turn into the expert we want to become.

My deliberate practice when learning to swim the TI way began with one of the first drills that helped me find my balance. I practiced the "the Superman glide" by simply pushing off the floor and gliding gently through the water, whilst keeping the body relaxed. Sometimes, I would just focus on my breathing. At other times, I would pay my attention on how my arms, legs, and hip move in unison to propel my body forward.

When in the '*doing mode*,' it is best to simply perform what you've learnt so far, without worrying about whether you're getting it right or not. In contrast to the deliberate practice in learning mode, here, you are no longer practicing. You are actually *doing*. Enjoy the process. Allow yourself to get into the zone of optimal performance or the state of 'flow' as coined by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly.

When in the state flow, we experience an absence of self-consciousness – our actions and awareness become one. Time slows down. There is complete concentration on the task, which we perform with effortless ease whilst feeling in control. This is the reward for all the hours of learning and practice. Afterall, isn't the ultimate goal of learning is to become better at something? Enjoy the playtime and be in the flow.

Reflection vs. Feedback

There are two techniques that are crucial for speeding up your journey to becoming 'good enough' – *reflection* and *feedback*.

According to David A. Kolb, creator of the '*Kolb Experiential Learning Theory*,' effective learning occurs when we progress through four stages in what is commonly known as '*Kolb's Learning Cycle*.' The first stage is *concrete learning*, where we encounter a new experience or reinterpret an existing experience. This is followed by *reflective observation*, where we reflect on the experience on a personal basis. After this, comes *abstract conceptualization*, where we form new ideas, or modify existing abstract ideas based on our reflections. Lastly, in *active experimentation*, we apply the new

Let's Hack Learning

ideas to examine the effect of any modification on our next concrete experience, which becomes the beginning of the next cycle.

The deliberate practice only provides you with the concrete practice. It is vital that you develop the discipline of reflecting on that experience. I find it helpful to capture the reflections, either on a learning journal or a mobile phone app.

Ken Blanchard, author of *One Minute Manager*, once wrote: "*Feedback is the breakfast of champions.*" I couldn't agree more. I believe all serious or peak performance athletes have coaches or mentors. What do coaches do that brings out the best in the athlete? Apart from teaching them useful principles and techniques, great coaches do something else which is profoundly important. They observe the athletes in action and give them feedback. And the use of feedback to improve performance applies not only to athletes, but also to managers at the workplace.

Self-reflection is useful but has its limitations, as we don't always see ourselves in action. It is best complemented with feedback. And feedback need not be sought only from experts or professional coaches. It could come from anyone who knows what to observe. For example, I often asked my wife to watch me swim and pay attention specifically on the position where my hands entered the water. She was able to point out how I was swimming across the pool in a zig-zag manner and an obvious discrepancy in the way my hands enter on the right and the left side. Her 'amateur' feedback enabled me to make some minor corrections which led to a major improvement in my strokes.

10,000 hours vs. First 20 hours.

In *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell wrote that it takes roughly 10,000 hours of practice to achieve mastery in a field (based on the study by K. Anders Ericsson). That subsequently gave rise to the popular '10,000 hours rule' which drew both followers and critics. But hey, we're not talking about becoming a world class athlete. That's clearly beyond the scope of this book and I'm certainly not qualified to write one. I'm interested in how you could get maximum results for the first 20 hours you invest in your learning.

Why 20 hours? I was partly influenced by Josh Kaufman's guide to rapid skill acquisition titled *The First 20 Hours*. Coincidentally, that's roughly the amount of time I had invested in learning to swim freestyle proficiently, as well as the number of hours I had clocked with my flight instructor before my first solo. 20 hours seems about 'just right.' It's long enough to learn something to a decent level of proficiency, and short enough to sustain interest and momentum with some intensity. It's a guide, not a rule, and may vary according to the complexity of what you are learning.

Let's Hack Learning

Let's get practical: Deliberate Practice

1. **Plan your first 20 hours.** Fail to plan, and plan to fail. Planning upfront, no matter how little, will drastically improve your chance of success in any endeavour. Craft a rough plan and follow it through to the best of their ability. It need not be perfect. You can always revise it along the way.

Exercise #5: Plan Your First 20 Hours

Looking at the fundamentals I have learnt, how will I put them into deliberate practice? (List the specific practices you will focus on over the next few weeks).

2. **Schedule your practices in your calendar.** That way, it's more likely to happen. What gets scheduled typically gets done. Otherwise, your days will be easily hijacked by other competing commitments. Don't let the urgent get in the way of the important (I presume what you are learning is important).
3. **Ask for feedback.** Identify the people that you would learn and get feedback from. They could be coaches, mentors, teachers, or even friends and family members who are invested to support your learning. Enlist their help to observe you in action. To help them make useful observations and provide meaningful feedback, be specific about what you want feedback on. That way, they know where to pay attention.

Exercise #6: Ask for Feedback

Who will I learn and seek feedback from?

Specifically, what do I want them to observe and feedback on?

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4. ***Reflect and keep track of your progress.*** *Reflect on what's working well, and what needs improving. Nothing motivates more powerfully than success. I find it incredibly satisfying to check off each practice session and to experience the gradual improvement along the way. Don't beat yourself up when you fail to practice as planned or when you are not progressing as expected. Have faith that if you stay on the course and continue to practice without being attached to the immediate results, your learning goals will eventually be met in the long term.*

Exercise #7: Some helpful questions for self-reflection

- *What have I learnt today?*
- *What's working well?*
- *What needs improving?*
- *What will I do differently in the next practice?*
- *What new insights have I gained from this reflection?*
- *How am I doing against my plan?*
- *What adjustments do I need to make on my plan (if needed)?*

Principle #4

Continuous Improvement

“Small actions are at the heart of Kaizen. By taking steps so tiny that they seem trivial or even laughable, you will sail calmly past obstacles that have defeated you before. Slowly – but painlessly, you will cultivate an appetite for continued success and lay down a permanent new route to change.”

Robert D. Maurer

Author of One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way

Continuous improvement is the key to becoming better at what we do. A major reward of learning lies in its impact on personal development and growth. And growth involves progress. Hence, in the process of learning, it is vital that we continue to make progress.

Continuous Improvement vs. Quantum Leap

Deliberate practice will lead to progress. But progress seldom happens in a quantum leap. Instead, most of the time, it occurs through a series of small increments. Aim for making small, continuous improvements.

My transition from being able to swim merely one lap to 20 laps didn't happen overnight. In learning and practicing new techniques, I approached each new day with a bold aspiration. I set out to double the distance I did in the day before.

The trajectory in the first three days was highly encouraging. I went from one lap to two laps, two to four, and then four to eight. Starting at ground zero, every attempt became a record-breaking feat. However, by the fourth day, it became evident that the exponential growth rate was unsustainable. Otherwise, I would have become world champion in endurance swimming in a week!

Let's Hack Learning

A sense of realism set in. I lowered my expectation and recalibrated my goal. Instead of doubling each day, I aimed to add just two additional laps. Eventually, by the end of the second week, I was swimming 20 laps (1 km) without stopping. I did it! That's the longest distance I had ever swum non-stop in my life – a breakthrough that surpassed my previous record at 750 meter of breaststroke in a sprint triathlon in 2005.

I was out-of-this-worldly ecstatic. Like Archimedes who supposedly leapt out of the bathtub and shouted "Eureka! Eureka!" as he ran around the streets of Syracuse naked to share his profound discovery, I raced home semi-nakedly in my swim trunks and cried aloud to my wife and children: "I did it! I did it!" They were extremely happy for me for my achievement. I couldn't have been any happier.

It may sound silly or trivial to you. But for a guy who never had any formal swimming instructions as a child and had been believing for decades that "I'm not cut out for swimming," that meant a world to me.

Yes! I could now confidently say, "I'm a swimmer."

Learning vs. Development

Learning and development are both essential to personal transformation and growth. But one doesn't necessarily lead to another.

Learning involves cognition and physiology, theory and practice, knowing and doing. When we succeed at learning something, cognitively or knowledge-wise we progress from 'not knowing' to 'knowing.' Physiologically or skill-wise, we progress from 'unable to do' to 'able to do.' As a result, we progress from being 'incompetent' to being 'competent.' And that's mostly in the realm of knowledge and skills.

By *development*, I'm referring to the shift in the whole of our being and who we are. With development, we become *more* than what we were before, and are transformed into a new being. In my case, not only have I learnt to swim freestyle, I became *more confident* in the water as well as a *more competent* learner. I even began to consider the possibility of completing a full triathlon and becoming an Ironman.

Goal Attainment vs. Ongoing Progress

Learning the fundamentals, deliberate practice, and continuous improvement will undoubtedly lead to progress and close the gap between our current reality and our desired future. The smaller the gap, the lesser the 'creative tension' remains to keep us motivated on the journey. It is normal to lose momentum once we achieve our

Let's Hack Learning

learning goals. Hence, when that happens, it will be helpful to aim higher, set bigger goals to continue to stretch ourselves.

My progress didn't just stop after the euphoric end of the second week. That which began as an experiment on learning soon turned into a healthy obsession. Instead of having an apple a day, I tried to keep the doctors away by swimming 20 laps a day, at least five days a week. Apart from getting a daily dopamine fix, I became fitter and developed 'V'-shaped torso that I never had.

To continue to challenge myself, I took part in an aquathlon and survived my first attempt at completing a 750-metre swim in the open sea followed by a 5-kilometre run. Back in the pool, I continued to swim longer distances, increasing gradually from 20 to 30 laps, and then 40. On new year's eve of 2016, I decided to end the year by swimming off the excess calories from festive feasting. The plan was to keep swimming till the lifeguard yanked me out of the water to close the pool.

I ended the year with a new record of 50 laps. By then, my dream of completing a full triathlon began to look possible, but I never did as I doubt my knees would survive the run. Instead, I developed a passion for open water swimming. In September 2018, I completed a 3-km open water swim in a sunset race at Singapore's East Coast. My next goal? Perhaps a 10-km open water swim that will enable me to confidently say, "I'm an endurance swimmer."

Let's get practical: Continuous Improvement

Think big, start small, and keep on making continuous improvements. Remember, I started with an exponential growth and subsequently switched to a linear growth. Track your progress and celebrate every success you make along the way.

Exercise #8: Continuous Improvement

What small, continuous improvements will I aim to make in each practice?

How will I measure them?

How will I celebrate my success?

What 'stretch goals' will I set to stay motivated and on track?

Principle #5

Turn Practice into Habit

***“We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”***

Will Durant

Some skills like riding a bicycle or touch-typing will probably stay with us for life. Others like project management and solving the Rubik's cube may fade into distant memory when not put into practice regularly. Use it or lose it. Why not find a way to keep it for life? Wouldn't it be great to turn what you have painstakingly learnt into an integral part of who you are?

20 hours, when used well, could most possibly get you to a decent point of becoming 'good enough' at what you set out to learn. But it is unlikely sufficient to make your learning and practice sustainable.

From Conscious Competence to Unconscious Competence

Human beings are creatures of habit, and habits are developed through repetition. Habit is what we do automatically, without much conscious thinking or effort. The key to making learning stick is to turn it into a habit. That's when we perform something competently with effortless ease – a sign of mastery. From the perspective of the psychology of learning, we move through four stages of learning.

1. ***Unconscious Incompetence*** – we don't know what we don't know
2. ***Conscious Incompetence*** – we know what we don't know
3. ***Conscious Competence*** – we know what we know
4. ***Unconscious Competence*** – we simply know without thinking about it

Learning the fundamentals and deliberate practice in your first 20 hours will get you from 'conscious incompetence' to 'conscious competence.' Getting to 'unconscious competence' will require sustained practice. And the best way to sustain a practice is probably to create a habit out of it.

Let's Hack Learning

How did I turn swimming into a habit? I made it part of my daily life. Where possible, I would swim at least 20 laps today, five days a week. My work involves a lot of travel. At times, I'm away from home two to three weeks in a month. You could probably guess what is indispensable in my packing list - swim trunk, goggles, and swim cap. When travelling, I make it a point to either start or end the day in the hotel pool. It's a commitment that I don't always honour 100% of the time, but frequent enough to make it stick. Funny enough, it got to a point where I felt something is missing on days I didn't swim.

From Swimming for Pleasure to Insights for Work

Besides being a form of healthy exercise, swimming is also a means to access my Zen moments. Being alone in the water, free from external distractions, makes a perfect condition for reflection and contemplation that has yielded some incredible insights into my work in the domains of leadership development and business management.

One day, while doing my usual laps in the pool, I noticed some similarity between endurance swimming and sustaining business performance. One of the breakthroughs that enabled me to swim longer distances came from breathing at the right rhythm. I learnt about the importance of recovery in the cycle of my strokes. Similarly, every business has its own cycle of growth and decline, highs and lows, peak and off-peak season. Recognising the cyclical nature of business allows business leaders to respond appropriately.

In times of growth, rather than focusing on managing cost, businesses need to pay attention to the customers, innovation, moving swiftly to capitalise the momentum to build a strong revenue base. In slower times, rather than fretting over the decline in revenue, businesses ought to harness the opportunity to strengthen their internal capabilities, keep employees' engagement and morale high, establish a strong foundation and get ready for the next growth spurt. Good times and bad times don't last forever. Paying attention at the right thing and at the right time remains a key factor of success.

It's all connected. It turns out that turning our practice into a habit in one domain of life could potentially have some positive unintended consequences in another.

From Competence to Being

Swimming 3 km in the open water had given me a new level of confidence. I believe I am a reasonably competent swimmer. Now, I have no fear of tackling the sea. In fact, this newfound competence had also given rise to an irresistible urge to jump

Let's Hack Learning

into the open sea whenever I am near one. I had risked the occasionally shark-infested waters of Sydney's Manly Beach and tried skinny dipping in the hypothermia-inducing water of Stockholm archipelago. Strangely, whenever I fell sick, one of the things that I missed the most is the daily swim. Each time I hit the pool after recovery, I felt like a fish back in water.

Swimming had become not just a physical exercise, but an integral part of who I am.

I am a swimmer. And I love swimming in the open sea.

Let's get practical: Turn Practice into Habit

Strike while the iron is hot - while you're still beaming with joy and excitement from your newfound knowledge or skills. Make a commitment to turn it into a habit. Pretty soon, with repetition, it will become part of who you are!

Exercise #9: How to integrate learning into daily life?

How will I apply this learning in my daily life?

What are the specific opportunities for putting this learning into regular practice?

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Now what?

Let's recap the fundamental principles of accelerated learning we've just covered:

1. Start with a Compelling WHY
2. Learn the Fundamentals
3. Deliberate Practice
4. Continuous Improvement
5. Turn Practice into Habit

So, you now have access to the *Universal Source Code for Learning* and some practical tips on how to learn and become better at possibly anything, faster.

Remember what Confucius had said a few thousand years ago? Knowledge without action is useless. What will you do about your newfound knowledge? It's time to take bold action, turn your knowing into doing, and reap the benefits of being 'good enough' at whatever that you wish to get better at, more rapidly.

Let's hack learning, together. I'd love to hear about the ideas, insights, and experience from your journey of personal transformation and growth. You may reach me at kennytoh1970@gmail.com

I wish you well in your new adventure ahead.

Yours truly,

Kenny Toh

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P/S: A special thanks to Mei Chin and Zhi Ying, whose reviews and thoughtful feedback helped make this book possible. I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions too.



***“Live as if you were
to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were
to live forever.”
Mahatma Gandhi***

For more inspiration, visit www.kennytoh.com