

Ernie Janzen



The Route to Success

My daily route to work takes me past an elementary school. The “School Zone “ forces me to slow right down. I get to observe the enthusiasm of the grades 1, 2, and 3 children. Six-year-olds are totally enthusiastic about learning. Each morning, I see parents pulled along the sidewalk by their little ones, anxious to get to school. The playground is one huge mass of kids; there are no small groups or cliques.

Shortly before I arrive at my office, I pass a senior high school. What a difference! The students tend to form in small groups, each appearing to practise their own form of “COOL.” If you catch them off guard, you can frequently get a smile before they catch themselves doing it. I always appreciate an opportunity to interact with these young people.

I recall thinking to myself years ago that I thought I would be glad to graduate from high school and then have *no more school!* It took me several years to realize I would be on a dead-end road if I didn’t smarten up. Even then, attending university and doing Articles for my Certification as a CA was my practical approach to obtaining a degree of security and income with which to pursue “life.”

I’m not sure exactly when learning turned from a chore into the realization

that learning in itself was a most satisfying experience. Suddenly I couldn’t read enough books: technical, philosophical, religious; I attended comprehension and speed-reading programs at UBC. To this day, I can’t sit down without having something to read at hand. I find that digging into the material and suddenly having the lights come on, as I comprehend the author’s intended concept, is one of life’s most exhilarating experiences!

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Education does not consist just of study and courses. Only when you work with that knowledge, and use it over and over, does it become a part of you, and really become useful—not only to yourself, but to your clients, in the services you provide.

Certainly, you can maintain your practice by mechanically completing one conveyance after another. You’ll probably

have very happy clients. How much better, though, if your continuing education and experience give you the opportunity to make helpful suggestions to your clients, such as assisting them to make a prepayment on their mortgage to reduce penalty payments or suggesting that their changed circumstances warrant a review of their estate planning. Now you will have a client who is an enthusiastic supporter. Your practice will grow—and you will find your work much more rewarding.

I know from personal experience that given the right circumstances, over the next few years, many of the “cool” kids in the schoolyard who are not taking their studies seriously will mature, and realize that their education has been sorely neglected. Many will make the supreme effort to catch up.

In general, when I see the calibre of academic and social skills of the kids graduating from our high schools, I am hugely optimistic about our next generation. For us and for them, all of life is a continuum of learning.

To remain a successful professional practitioner, you need to continue to study. To continue your life, you must feed your soul. Balanced reading is the route to both. ▲