



Lifelong Learning: *the Path to Professional and Personal Fulfillment*

From the time I was in elementary school, I delighted in opening my textbooks at the beginning of each school term and leafing through them to see what I was going to learn during the ensuing term.

Even today, when taking a college course or attending a day-long seminar, I experience that little thrill of anticipation about learning something new.

I hope I never lose this feeling, because I strongly believe life is meant to be a platform for continuous learning, such as improving skills and increasing knowledge. A person needs to make a personal commitment to continue to learn throughout his or her lifetime because lifelong learning helps contribute to personal as well as professional fulfillment and to positive social change.

Learning should not end when you are handed your diploma at the end of your formal education; that is when it should be starting! Once the formal education is finished, a whole new world

of opportunities is available to the adult learner in community colleges, universities, and even on the Internet.

In today's society, higher education facilities recognize that the adult learner is a great market; the courses offered to us are unlimited. If an adult doesn't want to physically attend a college or university, she can continue her learning through myriad distance education courses offered via the Internet by accredited institutions.

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Countless community centres, adult centres, and recreation centres also offer classes on everything from sports to cooking to photography. The possibilities are endless!

A friend who recently reached the magic "senior citizen" mark has enrolled in a series of classes for the computer novice at his local Silver Threads centre, because he doesn't want to be left behind.

The world is constantly moving forward at an ever-increasing speed. The amount of information processed by a person today is exponentially greater than what our grandparents were required to process. The need to continually take steps to expand our knowledge base is imperative.

For example, technology has made it virtually impossible to carry on in the business world without the aid of computers. I remember the not-too-distant past, when electric typewriters were a commonplace luxury in a business office and then, when fax was introduced, the business world changed radically! Consumers started to expect services to be delivered more quickly and efficiently and professionals were forced to step up to the plate. That meant learning how to make the necessary changes in a way that reflected positively on your business.

Particularly for professionals, our very existence relies on our desire and ability to learn. As we carry on through our busy lives, we are constantly encountering changes, new ideas, and the latest in technology. Some of the reasons that continuing professional education has become such an important

part of our lives include the information explosion, the need to remain competitive, public demand for better service and accountability, advancement of technologies, and changes in legislation and regulations.

Just when you think you have mastered the latest changes required by your business or practice, something new comes along or another way of doing things is introduced; to stay competitive, it is essential to learn the ropes. For today's Notary, as well as for other professionals, continuing professional education has become a requirement rather than an extravagance.

Part of the mandate of the Education Committee of The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia is to ensure that the public receives the very best professional service from Notaries Public, by developing and conducting continuing education programs for Notaries on a regular basis. Our Society strives to deliver education on topics that are current and

relevant to our members through our Spring Seminars and Fall Conferences, as well as by publication of *The Scrivener*.

As well, our Society has developed a members-only Website that keeps our membership up-to-date on the latest issues affecting our profession. Our members are also encouraged to keep themselves current by taking courses and seminars offered by the Justice Institute of BC, the Continuing Legal Education Society of BC, Dye & Durham, and other institutions that provide relevant professional courses.

As a Society, we are very proud that our membership recognizes that continuing their professional education is important to them and to the public they serve. This is proven time and again by our membership's strong attendance at the Spring Educational Seminars and our Fall Conferences.

Just as continuing professional education is paramount to success in today's business world, it is also important to our personal lives that we are current in

whatever topic or skill set we are interested in developing.

I wish to share two quotes I feel summarize the importance of continuing education throughout our lifetime. ▲

If you're not learning while you're earning, you're cheating yourself out of the better portion of your compensation.

NAPOLEON HILL

Author of *Think and Grow Rich*

Iron rusts from disuse; stagnant water loses its purity and in cold weather, becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigour of the mind.

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