

A WEEK IN *Learning*

REFLECT, LEARN, REPEAT

Jessica Rhoades, Manager of HR Business Partners

At a recent staff meeting, the HR Business Partner team decided to read chapter 17 of John C. Maxwell's book, "The Leadership Handbook". The goal was not just to read the chapter, but also to come back the following week, ready to reflect on what we had learned. As I prepared for the meeting, and opened the book, I noticed the title of chapter 17 was, "Experience Is Not the Best Teacher". For a moment, I pondered this title and thought to myself, *what do you mean experience is not the best teacher?* I wondered what, if anything, I was going to take away from this chapter.

I couldn't help but think how experience is necessary for both personal and professional reasons. I would like to think that as an infant, I just started walking one day without any practice. However, I knew that was not the reality of it. It took time, learning, and experience. What about driving a car? Although some people would say I need more of it, I had a lot of practice learning to drive a car before getting my license. Again, it took time, learning, and experience. What about getting a job? Even with my first job, I had to use the knowledge I gained from school, sports, home, etc., to relate back to the position. Needless to say, I was eager to read Maxwell's take on why experience was not the best teacher.

As I started to read, I came across a couple of sentences that stood out to me. *"Some people learn and grow as a result of their experience; some people don't. Everybody has some kind of experience. It's what you do with that experience that matters."* Strong words, Mr. Maxwell. The chapter continues with Maxwell comparing life and experience to a notebook. Many go through life leaving their notebook nearly empty, with little to no notations. Some take many notes, but do not take the time to **reflect and learn**.

Sometimes, experience itself is not enough. I began to realize just how important it is to take time to reflect and learn from what I discover, even if that discovery comes from a mistake. Let's face it, we all make mistakes. For example, when I was 19 years old, I was having a lot of trouble with my car. I quickly took it to a mechanic, who asked, *"When was the last time you changed the oil in your car?"*



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Noticing it was taking a while for me to answer, he followed up with, “Do you know **how** to change the oil in your car?” Let’s just say I pay *very* close attention to oil changes now. Had I not reflected on the experience, and made changes, the issue would have only continued.

Take a minute to reflect, right now. What experiences have you had today, this week, or this month? As you ponder, think about the following:

- What did you learn?
- What went well, and/or what didn’t go well?
- How can you share your learning and reflections with others (e.g., team, peers, etc.)?

No matter your role here at Goodwill, every day presents an opportunity to learn from your experiences, and grow from each of them. Don’t leave the pages of your notebook empty - take the time to reflect as often as you can.

To contact Goodwill’s Learning and Development team, please email learninganddevelopment@goodwillaz.org