



a compilation of disjointed thoughts on

The TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT of TRUE LEARNING

by Kambeze B Etemad, MD

Effective learning about self and situation is an engine that can drive positive change and meaningful progress.

The following excerpt – spoken by Merlyn from T.H. White’s *The Once and Future King* – speaks to a truth I’ve both personally discovered and professionally witnessed – a truth that is Universal far beyond just being a “thing for being sad” – which is that true learning is the remedy and change-engine for everything.

"The best thing for being sad is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then—to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you."

Decades of professional, social and personal experience have shaped a core commitment that self-knowledge, understanding and true learning are the most powerful sources and the most thorough course of change and progress. Knowledge can be vitalizing and empowering; but sometimes it has the opposite effect. General knowledge (especially about the surrounding world) can have a positive effect especially when it is connected to a more specific knowledge – true self-knowledge, which is discovering and knowing the reality within yourself, and understanding how your true nature is related to the surrounding world. True learning is not just about acquiring general knowledge, and it also goes beyond exploring self-knowledge. True learning involves the process of applying both kinds of knowledge to life and work – figuring out how to fulfill what is within your true self among the realities of the world around you, with the opportunities and limitations of your situation, and in the face of inner or outer problems. So true learning draws upon your strengths, addresses realities, solves problems, and leads to lasting change and sustainable progress.

TDS facilitates true learning through its educational and consulting services. These programs and processes are positive and proactive with an educational process at their heart. A tailored, multimodal learning experience enables a client’s acquisition of integrative knowledge and thinking, and their application towards their situation. Consultation can help people develop insight and understanding, define capacity-driven goals, and pursue practical and meaningful outcomes. This can also be accompanied as needed by auxiliary activities that help a client problem-solve and address other issues that naturally emerge along the way.

TDS's growth process for clients is development- and learning-centered, not disease- or problem-centered. It can readily and openly attend to problems when growth and learning inevitably unearth them, but its main objective isn't to fix problems. This may sound like hairsplitting, but there's a universe of difference in this attitude about human empowerment. TDS has at its disposal the skill, experience and savvy to address problems in the context of progress, so it is not avoidant of problems; but its focus is on the progress.

There is no simple "answer" for anybody – and no single, ready-made formula that easily suits everyone. There are no gimmicks or shortcuts along the path of lasting change. So TDS does not claim to offer any. But there are fundamental facts, principles and practices that underlie and assure all realization of human capacity. So TDS engages clients in an ongoing dialogue and learning process that strengthen mindfulness and thinking about these basic ideas, then helps clients tailor and apply the tenets and tactics of capacity-development to their unique circumstances. This process may entail any or all of TDS's services and products as they pertain to its repertoire of topics. They are all designed to engage clients in multiple modes of learning and experience, and are meant to foster new facets of insight, understanding and wholeness. The aim is to draw upon innate qualities and strengths, develop helpful attitudes and strategies, achieve new skills and habits, raise motivation, adjust practices and activities, and revise group patterns and culture.

It is also my conviction from loads of experience that *learning and dialogue, art and beauty, humor and storytelling, creativity and service* – when they are regularly experienced, expressed and exchanged in *grassroots and amateur settings* – non-academically, through social experience and exchange – are vitally important currencies and catalysts of personal and collective transformation.

When appropriate, TDS will use and encourage such grassroots activities of amateur expression and exchange to bring to life the growth and change it teaches.

For all the benefits of today's technology and science, for all the modern systems and artistry, there is also a reductionism and a disconnection between life-pieces that characterize our era – which can leave people feeling fractured, empty and arid. Which is why there is a parallel hunger in the human spirit for wholeness and soulfulness to give meaning to all the modern changes.

There is a hunger for unity which could underly a sense of purpose, wholeness and coherence for all spheres of life and work. There is also a thirst for spirituality that is generic, non-denominational, non-dogmatic, rational and psychologically accessible because of the growing evidence of its role in wellness, creativity, quality and progress.

This is also just another way of saying “maximizing human capacity/quality.”

By fostering this, TDS aims to contribute to such primal qualities in clients' work and life situations.