

Note: The following article was written for *Concise 5*, a professional development platform developed by Skillsets Online. While the app is currently in beta and not publicly available, this article reflects content created as part of a 20+ article series designed for the platform.

The Joy of Learning Something New

By Calie Wrona

A few months ago, in a fit of what I can only describe as a Pinterest-fueled delusion, I decided to learn how to crochet. I pictured something out of a Nancy Meyers movie—me, in an oversized sweater, effortlessly looping yarn into a perfect scarf, possibly sipping tea, becoming a more serene and capable version of myself. What actually happened was several nights of swearing at a tangled mess, producing something that looked less like a scarf and more like a textile-based cry for help.

I almost quit. My fingers didn't work the way they were supposed to, and my stitches were a disaster. But then, one night, it clicked. My hands figured it out before my brain did, and suddenly, the stitches started lining up. I had learned something. Which, when you think about it, is kind of insane. One day I couldn't, and then—somewhere between failure and frustration—I could.

And that's where it got existential. Because learning something new is weirdly, quietly miraculous. It means you're still changing. It means your brain—despite everything, despite adulthood, despite the gravitational pull toward stagnation—is still open to new information, still rewiring itself. And yet, most of us stop learning new things the second we get the option. Because, at some point, being bad at something starts feeling worse than never trying at all.

The Art of Looking Stupid

Nobody talks about how deeply humiliating it is to learn something from scratch. You don't just get to be a beginner—you get to be visibly, painfully bad at things. The first time you attempt eyeliner, you look like an exhausted raccoon. The first time you try to parallel park, you momentarily forget how cars work.

It's not fun. But what's worse—what's actually heartbreaking—is never trying at all. Sticking to what you know. Living in a safe, competency-filled bubble where you never

risk looking dumb. Most people do that. And most people, at some point, realize they feel kind of stuck.

The Case for Learning Random Things

Now, I know what you're thinking: *Okay, cool, you learned to crochet. How does this help me in literally any aspect of my life?*

Learning anything—even something as objectively unimportant as turning a pile of yarn into a functional object—rewires your brain in ways that make you better at everything else. And if you want to get technical about it, it's also how you stay employable.

Here's how:

1. **You get better at learning itself.** When you actively learn small things, you train your brain to pick up big things faster. Suddenly, learning new software at work isn't the intellectual equivalent of scaling Everest in flip-flops.
2. **You get better at failing.** The first time you try something new, you will probably be terrible at it. And yet, you keep going. This is the same mindset you need in a job when you're thrown into a new project and have absolutely no idea what you're doing.
3. **You get better at being creative.** When you learn weird, wonderful things, you build connections in your brain that weren't there before. You start seeing patterns where others don't. You make connections that make people say, *Wow, I never thought of it that way.*
4. **You become a more interesting human.** And being an interesting human is, shockingly, very helpful in your career. People remember you. They want to work with you. You become the person who has fascinating things to say in meetings and casual lunch conversations, which makes you stand out in ways no LinkedIn post ever could.

The Point of All This

The world moves fast. Yesterday's cutting-edge tool is tomorrow's outdated relic. If you are not constantly learning, you are standing still while everything around you speeds forward. And the people who embrace learning—who chase it like a kid chasing an ice cream truck—are the ones who stay ahead.

The joy of learning something new is not just in the skill itself. It's in proving to yourself, over and over again, that you are capable of change. It's knowing that at any moment,

you could decide to be someone who knows how to juggle, write poetry, or crochet a scarf. And when you embrace this—when you make learning a way of life—everything else follows. The confidence. The creativity. The opportunities. The fun.