

## ***Leadership and Learning***

As business leaders, one of the greatest tools for continuous improvement is being tuned in to the learning opportunities that surround you. John F. Kennedy summed it up well when he stated, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

Leaders must operate with a permanent 'Learners license'. They have to be committed to being open to learning from even the most mundane things in life.

There are three broad ways in which leaders keep learning and growing.

**Learn Constantly** – Leaders learn at every moment. They constantly and actively strive to learn. Constant striving means that you even sleep in order to be more productive, so sleep itself becomes part of the growth process. Taking a break is viewed as a chance to chew on the information taken in and to create an optimum state for comprehending new information. One of the most famous stories of constant learning is the story of Friedrich A. Kekule. He had been struggling to understand the structure of the benzene molecule. One night as he slept, he dreamed of atoms dancing like a snake forming a ring. Inspired by this, Kekule hypothesized that the benzene molecule was a ring. He was correct and this discovery was a huge leap for organic chemistry.

**Learn Continuously** – Leaders learn without interruption. Whenever they pursue a specific goal, they do it without any disruptions. Research has proven that it is actually better to study for one hour straight, than for two hours with interruptions. Interruptions break our train of thought, limit our ability to retain information and take the power out of learning. Sherlock Holmes, the legendary detective, attributed a major part of his success to his remarkable ability to detach his mind at will to focus on the problem at hand. Though just a fictional character, potential leaders can surely learn a lesson from this famous detective.

**Learn Cyclically** – Leaders understand that life is not one-dimensional. It must be studied from every side and turned upside down. Thus, they learn with repetition and review. Whatever subject you choose, there is always more to learn. Even as you move to other areas of knowledge, be alert to pick up information pertinent to previous topics. This allows for cross-referencing, and ultimately, a deeper understanding. Leaders never let their mind shut down. When you are learning all the time, every experience becomes a lesson in life.

Whatever you are doing at any given moment - working on a business deal, talking with customers, conferencing with your team, or reading this article - give it your full attention and keep learning.