



THE  
JUBILEE CENTRE  
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES



# LESSON 14

## OUR DESIRE TO KNOW

14



# SESSION 1

## WHAT'S THE POINT OF LEARNING?

14

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# CURIOSITY



Why do you think  
the human brain  
evolved to be  
curious?

What is the  
relationship  
between curiosity  
and learning?

# LEARNING IS...



Learning is the act of acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing, existing knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals and some machines.

# I AM AT MY BEST AS A LEARNER WHEN...



Think about all the times when you are involved in learning.

Think about the times when you enjoy learning the most.

- What are you doing?
- Where are you?
- Who are you with?
- How much freedom do you have?
- How much noise is there?
- How challenged are you?
- How long do you stay engaged?
- How do you feel?

## IN PAIRS...



Talk to each other about when you are at your best as a learner.

What similarities are there between your stories?

● **COMPLETE THE  
FOLLOWING SENTENCE AS  
MANY TIMES AS YOU CAN.**



● **I LOVE LEARNING BECAUSE...**

# ICONS OF LEARNING



Call to mind a person you respect, who has mastered a skill, discipline or body of knowledge.

What do you think it feels like to have mastered something by continuously learning about it?





# SESSION 2

## THE VIRTUES OF LEARNING

14

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# BARRIERS TO LEARNING



**INTERNAL**  
(e.g. not getting enough sleep, thinking “I can’t”)

**EXTERNAL**  
(e.g. a disruptive class)

# VIRTUES ARE...



A disposition  
to act in a  
particular way

Virtues enable us  
to successfully  
pursue good ends

# LEARNING SCENARIOS



Think of a response to each that will keep learning going and a response that will stifle learning.

When it gets too difficult I...

When I have too many things to do I...

When I can't concentrate I...

When I can't see the point I...

When I get critical feedback I...

When others are preventing my learning I...

When the teacher makes a mistake I...

When I'm afraid I will fail I...

When I hear an idea or opinion I disagree with I...

14

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# ● **OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO LEARNING**



**Let's assume all human minds are curious and want to learn.**

**What happens when learning stops or gets stifled? Why is it sometimes easier not to learn?**

● **Discuss your own examples of how you have overcome barriers to learning.**

**Which virtues did you use to keep the learning happening in the face of challenges to it?**

# MAKING MYSELF A BETTER LEARNER



What are the benefits of learning?

How will lifelong learning benefit you?

Identify 2 or 3 areas where your learning slows down or is blocked.

What can you do to unblock your learning?  
Which virtues can you call upon to help you?

What will make it easier for you to do this?  
Think about the resources you have inside yourself and resources others have that could help you.

14

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility



# **SESSION 3**

## **THE BRAIN AND LEARNING**

**14**

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# NEUROPLASTICITY



The brain changes its shape according to the experiences we provide it with.

What does this mean for you?  
What does this mean for your habits of learning?



# THE CONDITIONS FOR GOOD LEARNING



**STAY POSITIVE.** The chemical most needed for learning is dopamine. It works best when you are in a positive emotional state. If you are angry, stressed, anxious or afraid you will not learn effectively.

**CHILL OUT.** Stress causes the release of excess dopamine, adrenaline which drives our memories into unconscious parts of the memory where they can't be accessed and steroids which damage working memory. Learning does not happen under stress.

**TREAT YOURSELF.** Dopamine is released through reward and through the anticipation of reward. To learn properly you either need to learn things you enjoy for their own sake, or promise yourself rewards at the end of the learning process.

**IT IS NEVER TOO LATE.** The brain is PLASTIC and always changing. So long as dopamine is around, the brain can form new synaptic links and it can learn.

**REPETITION.** The more you think or do something, the stronger those neural networks become. Eventually you'll not be able to forget because it's hardwired (e.g. riding a bike).

**USE IT OR LOSE IT.** The brain only holds information for as long as you need it, then uses those neurons for other things. If you don't use a skill or a piece of information, you'll forget.

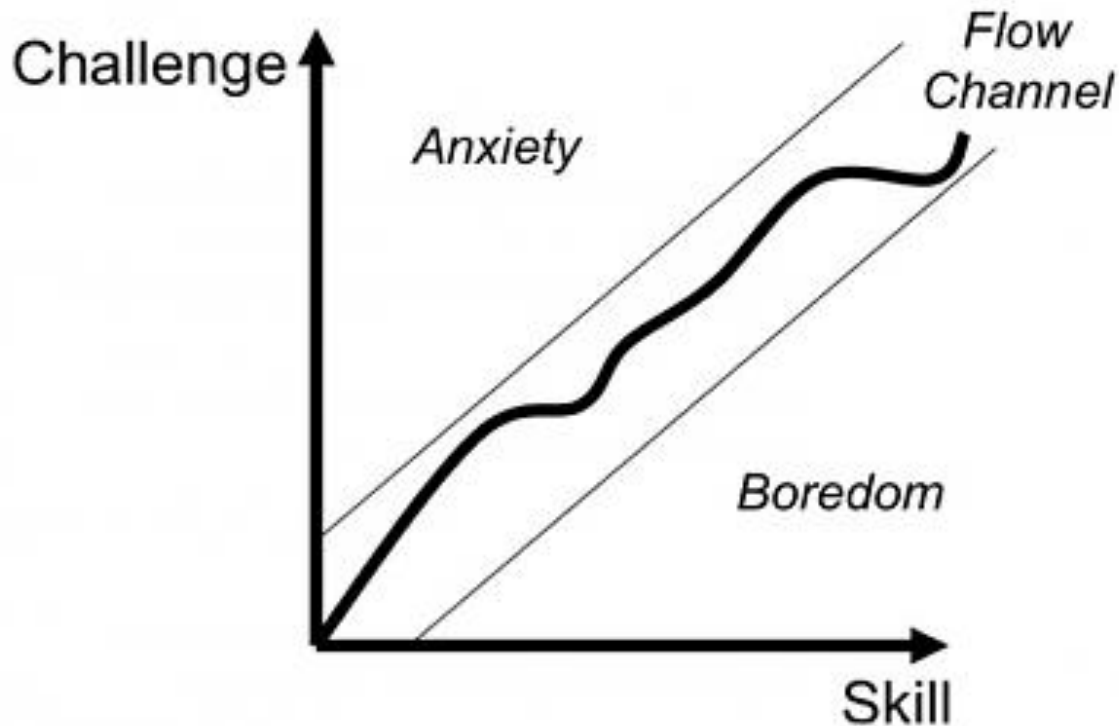
**MOVE. EXERCISE. PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. DO NEW THINGS. HANG AROUND INTELLIGENT PEOPLE.** All of these things have been shown to encourage the growth of new neural networks, which increases brain power.

# WHAT WOULD IT TAKE...



...to make as many brains  
in one school ready for  
learning as possible?

# FLOW



"Flow" concept by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Drawn by Senia Maymin.

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# NEW HABITS OF LEARNING



Identify two or three things you are going to do differently to make yourself a better learner.

How can you turn this decision into habits?



# SESSION 4

## MINDSETS

14

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE



Remind yourselves of the fable of the tortoise and the hare.

Do a character analysis of the tortoise and the hare. What are they like?

Who are the tortoises and the hares in school?

When it comes to learning, who are the tortoises and who are the hares? Why?

# REVISITING THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE



You have just found out about the theory of mindsets. How does it help us to understand the hare's willingness to take on an easy challenge and his complacency? What about the tortoise's lack of fear of failure?

# YOUR GROWTH MINDSET



What can you do to get yourself into a growth mindset?

What effect do you predict it might have on your learning?





# SESSION 5

## REFLECTIONS

14

Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion,  
Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility

# LEARNING AND THE VIRTUES



What does each virtue look like in action when learning to be a better learner?

- e.g. self-discipline to exercise regularly.

Who are icons of caring for the body?

Which virtues do these icons use?

- e.g. Nelson Mandela was humble in prison when learning from others and even from his guards.

# LEARNING AND ME



Look again at the goals you set yourself on becoming a better learner.

- How well have you achieved these goals?

Which virtues do you need to keep making changes and keep caring for the body?

How can the icons you identified inspire you?