



What It Means To Earn Life Experience

Just thinking the other day about why some people have poor judgment. I mean, we all make mistakes - at times, even stupid ones, but why do some people grow and others wallow? Well, it occurs to me the "normal" path that leads to growing as a person includes the following:

Burned - We either watch someone else get burned or we ourselves get burned - suffering the natural consequences of a bad choice. This experience is not a bad thing. It gets our attention. It gives us motivation to NOT repeat that mistake. If a mistake doesn't hurt, then we are sick, and in dire need of professional help. As I like to say: "The truth only hurts when it has to." If the truth hurts, then DO something about it. Change so that the honest truth feels GOOD.

Learned - After having a bad experience, healthy people (when they are paying attention) actually learn something. They connect the dots between the cause and the effect. They start to see the possible ramifications of certain actions (or certain LACK of action). Once you know, you cannot UNknow. Again, this is good. This is growth.

Turned - Learning does not change anything other than knowledge. That is only internal. To actually "bring that insight to life", we must implement. Knowing and Doing are two very different things. We all KNOW we should eat better and exercise, but how many actually DO it? Unless there is sufficient motivation for taking appropriate action, it is as bad (possibly worse?) than not knowing at all.

Earned - If a person takes appropriate action on a new (valid) insight, in the right way, then they will receive the natural consequences of that action - benefits and rewards. Of course, the act of implementing puts us all back in the cycle again - exposing ourselves to the possible pain of getting burned with a future misstep.

[Sidebar: Yeah, yeah, yeah...I know you can learn from pleasant experiences also - not just being burned. I just couldn't find a rhyme that matched the concept - so we all just have to deal with the disappointment of it not fitting in a tidy little package.]

For the best results, we can all focus on:

1. Taking appropriate risks - be willing to fail in order to optimize potential.
2. Stay aware of what is happening around us so we can connect the dots for improvement ideas.
3. Exercise the discipline to change behaviors. Consistent behaviors = consistent results.
4. Reap the benefits of the improvement - reinvest in future growth. Enjoy some too!