

# Extra reading could further your education

Courses alone cannot teach you everything you need to know

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**E**VEN though courses and qualifications are important when developing your career or securing a new job, you cannot assume that these qualifications represent the sum total of your education or your skills.

Taking personal control of your education is central to your self-development and your career.

Even though courses can cost a fortune and you have every right to be proud of your accomplishments, a well-rounded education cannot be bought, only acquired.

So what does it mean to “acquire” an education?

The first step is to recognise that there will never be an end to your



**BE A READER:** If you really want to further your education, turn off the TV and get stuck into a good book.

learning, as you will always need to keep abreast of ideas and trends, not only in your field, but also with regard to developments in your community and perhaps even internationally.

The second step is to understand that courses alone cannot provide you with all the knowledge you need to live a full and productive working life.

At some point you need to take

charge of your own development, forge ahead and start directing your own learning.

Why is this important? In work, as in life, you will meet many unexpected obstacles that cannot be solved by just following the outcomes provided in a course.

To solve problems and respond to situations, you will have to develop and rely on your complex knowledge systems, something we

all have to a greater or lesser degree.

Developing your complex knowledge is not something you can do intentionally; rather it emerges as you move through life, working, socialising, learning and responding to different experiences.

It can be developed, though, by taking the time to read, by being curious, by asking questions.

Here are some tips to take control of your learning:

**1. Read.** You cannot depend on your own experience to inform your decisions. Sooner or later you will have to read in order to understand how other people think, what experts recommend, how lives are lived in other places.

To develop yourself, you have to turn off the television every now and again, and start reading.

**2. Find local sources for cheap books.** Most churches, hospices and charities have book sales, where you can find books from as little as R5.

There are also a number of second-hand book shops and exchanges in Joburg and in most major cities in South Africa. Use your local Yellow Pages to find these shops. Don't just buy books that relate to your work, buy novels, travel books, essentially anything that looks interesting to you.

**3. Start a reading group.** Invite a few like-minded friends to join a “reading group”. The idea behind this kind of group is that all the members agree on a weekly or monthly theme, and then select and read the same materials which you discuss when you meet.

As you read, imbibe information and use what you know at work and in life, you will realise that you will never, ever know enough. But that's fine, because once you have more questions than answers you will know you are on the right path to acquiring a solid education.

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