

Experience

Experience is the greatest teacher.

A number of people told me how great it was to be a grandparent. Actually, I was tired of listening to how great it is.

Tired, until until I became a grandfather. Only after I had personally lived the experience did I fully understand and appreciate it. Now I have a great appreciation of what they told me. Sure, we can listen and we hear, or hear to some extent, what someone says.

The reality is that we learn best by personal experience. Hearing from another is not nearly as meaningful as living the situation ourselves. When we do it ourselves, we then fully understand and appreciate it.

As I grew, my parents told me many things and tried to teach me, verbally, many lessons. Well, after I experienced it myself, and the consequences, I did finally appreciate what they were saying. So, why did I have to make the mistake myself?

We have to experience some things to learn them. Even if we are told, it is not always enough. At times, we just have to have the experience ourselves. The lesson is not learned until we feel it and know it by doing it. While it can be dangerous and harmful, we just have to do it to learn.

When we look back over our lives we can understand and pick out our own personal situations, when telling us made little impact, and experiencing it first hand ourselves made a dramatic impact. Well, if we did it, why should we not expect others to.

Sure, we can tell others. However, some of them will have to experience it for themselves. This is particularly true of children. Having the experience themselves is one of the best ways for

them to learn. We can only hope they do not hurt themselves or hurt themselves too badly. We cannot fully protect them. We can only be there for them as they personally experience the lesson.

So, if we had to do it, we should be able to understand when others have to do it. If we can understand that, perhaps, we can have more compassion for and understanding of others.

Experience being the greatest teacher, we have to let others experience. People have to engage, do, and learn. Reading is great but does not match the doing. A photograph may be great but doesn't replace being where the photographer was taking the picture, experiencing with all the senses.

To help another we should embrace and support them in obtaining the experience for themselves. Sure, we need to make it as safe as possible and there are some things no one should try to experience.

Yes, we need to continue experiencing things ourselves. If there are things on your 'list' that you want to experience, then start to do those items. Choose the most important, or those you can do now, and do them. Add to the list as appropriate. There is no better time than now to start.

If you want an experience, take the first step today. That might be saving a few dollars each week towards the cost of the experience. It might be scheduling the time off to do it or researching it in preparation. Do something. Take the first step. Taking the first step is part of the experience and empowering in itself.