Where do you go when you want to learn something? School? A friend? A tutor? These are all traditional places of learning. But it may well be that the learning you really want lies somewhere else instead. I had the chance of seeing this first hand on a weekend.

My daughter plays on a recreational soccer team. They did well this season and so entered a tournament, which normally was only for more skilled club teams. This led to some painful experiences on Saturday as they played against teams better trained. Through the first two games, her team did not get one serious shot on goal. As a parent, I hated seeing my daughter playing her best, but still defeated.

It seemed that something clicked with the girls between Saturday and Sunday. When they showed up for their Sunday game, they were completely different. They had begun to integrate (融合) the kinds of play and teamwork they had seen the day before into their game. They played aggressively and even scored a goal.

It struck me that playing against the other team was a great learning moment for all the girls on the team. I think it is a general principle. Experience is the best teacher. The lessons they learned may not be different from what they would have gotten in school, but are certainly more personal and meaningful, because they had to work them out on their own.