

TRY IT

## Be Bad First

Using the ANEW Model

### Aspiration

1. Think of something that you want to learn, and where you've already begun to make progress in learning (this can be an avocation skill like golf, knitting or cooking; or a professional skill, like understanding financial reports, delegating, making presentations, etc.).

Note the area of learning, and what you've already done to acquire and use the skill or knowledge.

2. Now, note something you say you want to learn, but haven't, or something you need to learn, but don't want to (especially something job-related).

*[You'll use these two areas above—one where you're already learning and one where you're not yet learning—to understand the ANEW model and make it work for you]*

Think about, and note, the benefits you're getting—or believe you will get—by learning skill or capability #1 above.

Now, note how you might get those same benefits, or others that are personally important to you, by learning skill or capability #2 above.

Now, imagine a future in which you are experiencing those benefits:

- Decide how long it will take you to learn to do skill #2 reasonably well.
- Put yourself in a mental time machine and travel to that point in time.
- Get out of the time machine into that future where you're capable in skill #2.

Describe below what it would look and feel like in that future where you're reaping the benefits of learning this new skill:

## Neutral Self-Awareness

Describe your current level of capability in this area where you're not yet learning (area #2 under "Aspiration"). Note both your present strengths and weaknesses and how you feel about learning in this area.

Review what you've written above as a "fair witness", as though you were a neutral and objective third-party who knows you, reading how you're talking to yourself about this area of learning.

Now, note (as the "fair witness") one sentence of self-talk from what's written above that seems both inaccurate and unhelpful. (For example, you might be saying things to yourself like, *"I'm terrible at this – a real loser"*).

How would you change this inaccurate and unsupportive self-talk in order to become more "neutrally self-aware"? Remember, good self-talk for neutral self-awareness is both believable and accurate. (For example, you might change the unhelpful self-talk above to *"I don't have any experience in this particular aspect of this skill."*)

NOTE: one important way to make your self-talk supportive of neutral self-awareness is to focus on reporting, e.g., *"I'm worried about whether I'll be able to learn this"* vs. predicting, e.g., *"I'll never be able to learn this."*)

Finally, select two people in your life who you think see you clearly, want the best for you, and would be willing and able to share their perspective in order to improve your neutral self-awareness in this area. Write their names to the right.

## Endless Curiosity

Think of curiosity as “the need to understand and master.” What are you curious about in regard to the skill you’re already learning (#1 under Aspiration)? Note below some of your curious thoughts.

[If you’re like most people, your “curiosity” self-talk, above, will include some phrases like “I wonder if...?” and “Why...?” and “How...?”]

Now, note 1-2 statements of “non-curious self-talk” you may have regarding skill #2 under “Aspiration”—self-talk that kills or dampens your “need to understand and master.” (For example: *“I know I won’t enjoy this,”* or *“I’ll never get good enough to be satisfied.”*)

Using your curious self-talk in skill area #1 as a starting point, shift your non-curious self-talk in area #2 to curious self-talk. (NOTE: one easy way to do this is to change your self-talk assertions into questions. For example, *shifting “I know I won’t enjoy this,” into “How I could enjoy learning this more?”* Shifting *“I’ll never get good enough to be satisfied,”* into *“I wonder how good I’d need to be at this in order to feel satisfied?”*.)

Finally, create a “curiosity mantra”—one curious question you can ask on a daily basis about new things you encounter, in order to re-engage your childhood curiosity as an ongoing habit.

## Willingness to Be Bad First

We impede our learning in new areas by resisting being “not-good” at the beginning of our learning curve. Note 1-2 pieces of “non-acceptance” self-talk you have in the area (#2) where you haven’t yet begun your learning (For example: *“I hate not knowing how to do this — it’s embarrassing and demoralizing.”*)

Now, shift that unhelpful self-talk into “acceptance” self-talk. (For instance, *“I kind of suck at this, but it’s early days”* or *“It’s frustrating to keep making mistakes, but that’s what happens at first.”*)

Now, add a piece of self-belief self-talk to balance your acceptance (e.g., *“I think I can get good at this if I keep working at it,”* or *“I’ve built my capability in other areas—I can do it here, too.”*), and write both, to the right.

[NOTE: acceptance self-talk + self-belief self-talk sounds like this: *“It’s frustrating to keep making mistakes, but that’s what happens at first. I think I can get good at this if I keep working at it.”*]

Finally, note a “bridging” possibility—something you’re already good at that could leverage your learning in this area. How can you apply what you know from another skill or capability to your learning in area #2 under “Aspiration”. (For example, if you want to learn to give presentations, and you sing in a church choir, many of the sub-skills you’ve learned about preparation, managing your nerves, and how to use your voice well could be transferable.)

**Putting it all together:** Review your notes above, and call out in color or italics the things you especially want to remember. Now, note to the right 1 or 2 things you will do within the next week that you believe will catalyze your learning in skill area #2.

Good luck!