

Learner

You love to learn. The subject matter that interests you most will be determined by your other themes and experiences, but whatever the subject, you will always be drawn to the process of learning. The process, more than the content or the result, is especially exciting for you. You are energized by the steady and deliberate journey from ignorance to competence. The thrill of the first few facts, the early efforts to recite or practice what you have learned, the growing confidence of a skill mastered -- this is the process that entices you. Your excitement leads you to engage in adult learning experiences -- yoga or piano lessons or graduate classes. It enables you to thrive in dynamic work environments where you are asked to take on short project assignments and are expected to learn a lot about the new subject matter in a short period of time and then move on to the next one. This Learner theme does not necessarily mean that you seek to become the subject matter expert, or that you are striving for the respect that accompanies a professional or academic credential. The outcome of the learning is less significant than the "getting there."

Action Items for This Theme

Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this competence.

As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.

Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external), in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages very quickly.

Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, carve out this quiet time.

Find ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within the discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject, or making three presentations on the subject).

Be ready to:

Honor your desire to learn. If you can't fulfill this need at work, take advantage of the adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.

Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this "newness" can calm their fears and spur them to engage. Take this responsibility seriously.