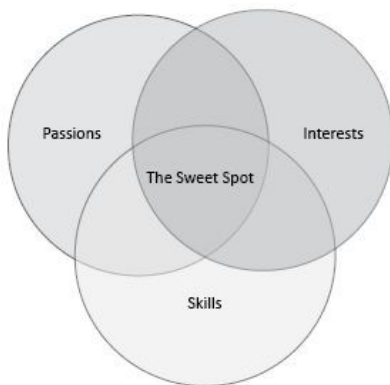


Life long learning and broadening your passion

Passion is something you can't live without.

You constantly wish that you were doing, living, being, or having it. When it is missing from your life, you feel a hole and it nags away at you.

An interest arouses your curiosity. An interest is a more intellectual thing; something that you want to discover more about.

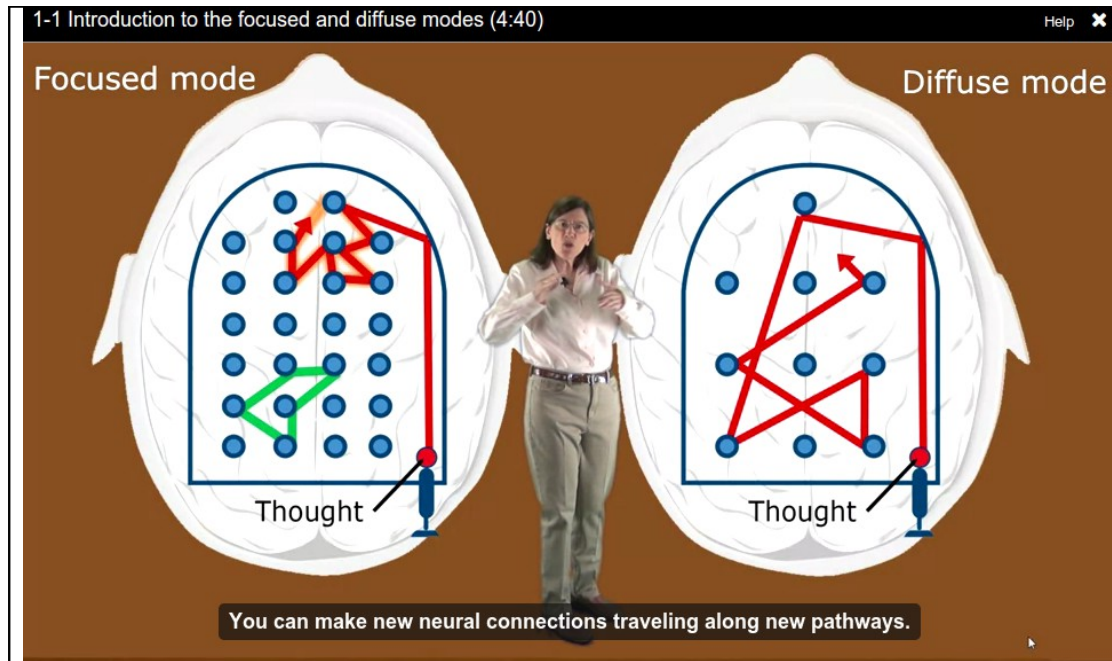


An extreme interest in a hobby or any activity becomes intense desire and passion. Whenever you're faced with a choice, a decision or an opportunity, you should always choose in favour of your passions. Then, let your interests become an integral part of that choice. And remember, your interests may change, but you can never live without your passion. So, passion is important when you're trying to move into doing something that makes you want to get out of bed in the morning.

I liked playing harmonica when I was in college but during my working life it was all forgotten. After my retirement from work, I picked up Harmonica and started learning again. I started learning from watching videos on internet, bought some books on Harmonica, started practicing, recorded my playing, learnt how to create YouTube video and posted on my YouTube channel. Through the YouTube channel I made many harmonica players and exchanged views on each others playing and learning.

This interest gradually became my passion and it got me into learning music theory and music reading.

Focused and diffused modes of thinking.

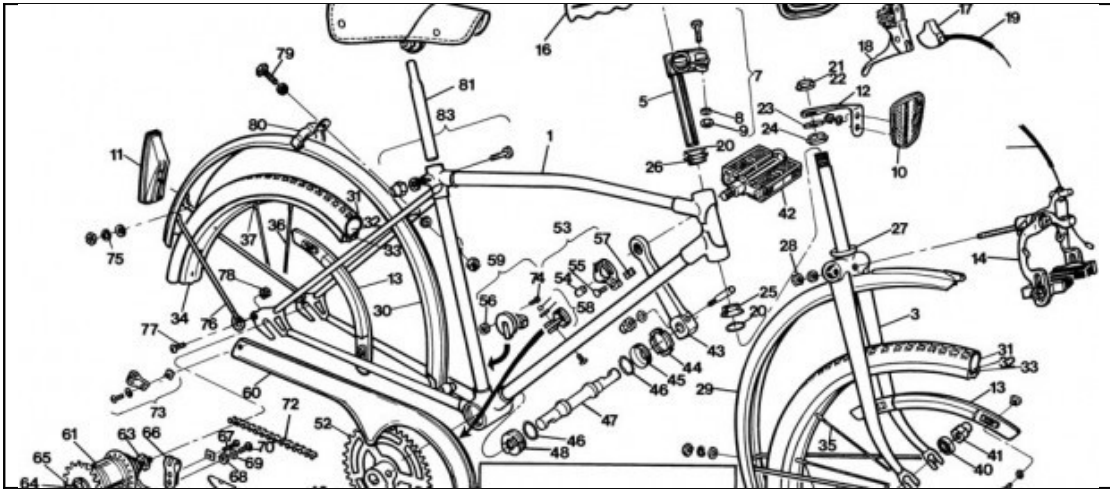


Science has shown that the brain has two fundamental modes of learning. Focused and diffused. One is an active state of concentration, and the second involves a more relaxed state of mind. When you are trying to learn new ideas and concepts, you need the wide-ranging perspectives of the diffuse mode. So the best thing you can do when learning something new is to first focus on the problem, and then stop for a while and do something else.

I had difficulty in learning music theory. When I learnt about the focused mode of learning it made sense to me. Now I set the countdown timer on my computer to 25 minutes when I need to learn something new of difficult and learn in focused mode. After the 25 min time out I take a mini break and start again. Learning this way gradually the idea/learning sets in the mind and get connected to other related subjects I learn in diffused mode. In a way this process becomes not a multitasking but a serial tasking.

I have made the Focused thinking/learning a daily practise for any learning and thinking.

Chunking



The phenomenon of chunking as a memory mechanism can be observed in the way we group numbers and information in our day-to-day life. For example, when recalling a number such as 07111945, if we group the numbers as 07, 11 and 1945 which is a date 7th November 1945. Studies have shown that people have better memories when they are trying to remember items with which they are familiar. Similarly, people tend to create chunks, with which they are familiar. This familiarity allows them to remember more individual pieces of content, and also more chunks as a whole.

The amount of information increases when placed in chunks, which allows short term memory to store about four "chunks." The short term memory processes and stores information for about twenty to thirty seconds. After this, information is either committed to long term memory, or lost all together. Chunking is a way to increase the capacity of short term memory which in turn will improve the long term memory.

When I try to learn a difficult tune to play on harmonica, I pick a phrase and break it down to bars and practise a difficult bar making it a small chunk to memorise and practise. I go to the next phrase only when I am happy with the practised phrase. Repetition brings the melody to mind.

Procrastination

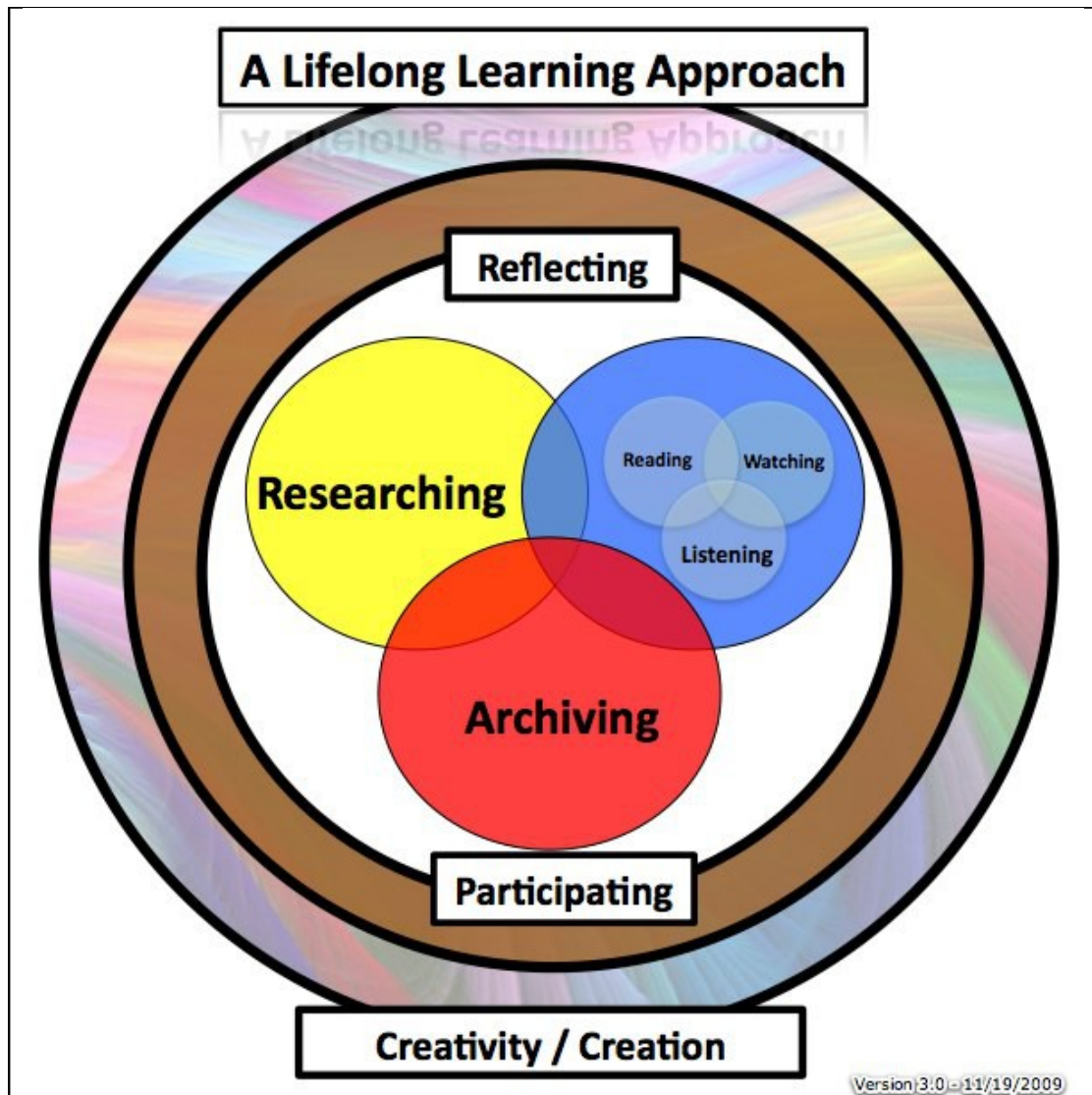


Putting off or delaying,
Especially something requiring immediate attention, usually in
favour of doing something that is more enjoyable or that
you're more comfortable doing, is called an act or habit of
procrastinating.

How to overcome procrastination?

1. Recognize That You're Procrastinating.
I have a habit of checking emails and Face Book notifications all the time and reply or comment.
2. Work Out WHY you're Procrastinating.
Usually I am overwhelmed by the list of the tasks I have on my "to do list".
3. Adopt Anti-Procrastination Strategies.
I break the task into smaller manageable task, and then start with small quick task to get a feeling of achievement. This way the whole task will not feel so overwhelming.

Life long learning and broadening your passion



Taking the time to continue learning can improve your mental acuity, put you in control of your career path, and boost your self-esteem. Learning new things can also help keep your mind sharp and promote a feeling of well-being. Employees need to be both forward thinking and accepting of the evolving challenges in their fields to protect or advance their careers. Pursuing lifelong learning not only can help you stay mentally sharp but is also critical to your emotional health as you get older. You can master old hobbies, renew old passions, hone your skills, and improve the richness of your life.

After my retirement from work I decided to get into life long learning of “Music and playing harmonica”

Playing harmonica

- Started with self-study and learning from various websites, books and CDs.
- Joined Harmonica groups on Face Book
- Became member of “NHL - National Harmonica League” and actively volunteered in activities.
- Made a list of 200 songs I can play by memory.
- Selected 10 favourite songs. Out of 10 selected 3 songs for which I have backing track.
- Listed to those songs memorised and practiced on regular bases.
- Played one song at a time recorded and uploaded on the You Tube.
- I keep on updating the list of 10 and 3 as I record and upload the song.

Online courses

I came across “Courser” website that offers many free online courses on variety of subjects. I signed up for some courses.

- 1) “Fundamentals of music theory” completed and passed.
- 2) “Crafting an effective writer” waiting for the result.
- 3) “Learning how to learn” This is the last assignment.
- 4) “Introduction to Music Production” The third week started yesterday (Monday 27 Oct 2014)

From so much material I have collected on Music and harmonica, if I can learn even 5% in this life I will be happy.

This is my life long learning.

Shirish Swami