

## Reflective Essay on Personal Growth

This essay will examine my personal self development in relation to self-awareness and listening skills. Personal development refers to a set of activities that one can engage in for the purpose of enhancing self knowledge and identity. It involves talent and potential development, building of human capital as well as employability, improving the quality of life, and last but not least, playing a role towards the realization of aspirations and dreams. The idea of personal development is not only limited to self development, but also entails formal and informal activities meant to develop others, as well. For instance, counseling, teaching, guiding, mentoring, coaching and managing, for instance, just as required of a mental healthcare practitioner.

Before, while working as a mental healthcare practitioner, I came to realize that, I had the desire to attend to others, but was really poor at listening. I felt like most people I was attending to were not really sure of what they actually wanted and that, I knew better what they were in need of. Because I had trouble being patient enough to listen, I often never got to understand what they were talking about. The problem with this experience was that I never really got to provide sufficient solutions to most problems that were relayed to me. After realizing this challenge and making an effort to start listening better, I have realized how easy it can be to communicate and understand others much better. Consequently, I have been able to be of much help in my endeavors anywhere and at anytime. Given a chance again probably as a healthcare practitioner, I know I can be able to build rapport with my fellow colleagues, bosses and even the clients.

Self awareness is a fundamental factor at the core of this broad and significant pursuit. Widening one's self awareness involves discovering new truths about an individual. Self awareness can be described as a circle whereby everything within and without the circle is the self. Those things that exist within the circle are the things that one's current level of self awareness allows one to consciously comprehend (Johns, 2005). As a person's circle of self awareness expands, not only is he or she consciously aware of a greater portion of him or herself, but also the borders of his or her awareness have enlarged in such a way that, his or her self awareness borders upon a widened area of future discovery and development. The more doors an individual opens, the more he or she realizes there are to be opened. Personal development starts at a point of self awareness. In fact, it may as well be the ultimate end (Johns, 2005).

As I have come to learn, self awareness is quite important. The views we hold concerning the daily happenings of the world and even of our personal lives hugely determines for an individual the state of the world he or she is living in as well as his/her being. Therefore, one important lesson which can be learnt in life is the significance of the things we focus on. When a person thinks about failure, he or she will definitely find reasons to certainly succumb to it. When you think about health and well-being, you will essentially make the important decision of doing everything within your reach that will lead to better health and well-being (Johns, 2005).

At a personal level, the idea of personal development involves activities such as improving self knowledge and awareness, building identity, developing strengths, spiritual development, enhancing potential, improving health, fulfilling aspirations, enhancing lifestyles, improving wealth, improving social abilities, and building human capital (Johns, 2005). In my pursuit of personal development, I have come to notice that, any kind of development whether personal, economic, geological, political or organizational, demands a framework to be able to know whether change has in reality occurred. For the case of personal development, a person

frequently operates as the principal judge of improvement. Corroboration of objective improvement requires an assessment which has to be carried out using a standard criterion (Johns, 2005). These frameworks comprise of benchmarks or goals that define the strategies, end-points or plans for achieving goals, appraisals and evaluation of progress, levels that describe milestones, and finally a feedback mechanism that provides information on developments.

Poor communication is an inexorable cause of stress (Moss, 2008). One area of communication where most people are worst at is listening. It is through the significant impact of personal development that an individual can grow and improve his or her relationships, wealth, happiness, health, and careers. According to Burnand (1997), listening and attending are by far the most vital aspects of being an effective healthcare professional. Most times, I feel I am obliged to talk and do only a little listening. Over-talking on the part of healthcare professionals is normally considered to be less productive (Burnand, 1997). I will develop in my listening skills so that I can be of help to other people. It is important to understand the difference between attending and listening to a person. Attending generally involves a true direction of focus on the other person you are communicating with. It requires one to consciously pay attention of what the person is actually saying and what he or she is trying to communicate. Listening, on the other hand, is the process of hearing the other person you are communicating with. It requires an individual to not only note what the other person is saying, but also the other many, aspects of communication (Burnand, 1997).

Before, I never used to have the capacity to consciously choose the perspectives I took. Most of my thoughts, which I may consider as being stealthy behavior, had been rolling with life, becoming influenced by events around me, the media, as well as my peers. This made me feel like I gave up my power as a human being to come up with my world the way I possibly see it. In other words, it felt like I was using my own power against myself to make myself feel absolutely powerless. It was impossible to develop and grow myself with a lack of self awareness Johns, (2005).

After, making enough efforts to get myself into a point of self awareness with improved listening skills, I have been able to maintain a high level of self awareness by keeping my attention focused on everything going on around me. It is true to say that human beings are complex and diverse Elearn Limited, (2005). To develop my self awareness, I have been able to develop an understanding of myself based on a number of self awareness areas for example personality, habits, emotions, values, and needs. Through, a personal study of myself it has been evident to me that, personal needs, and values can not be changed based on what I have been able to learn about myself. However, an understanding of my personality has enabled me to discover those areas where I can flourish, and avoid situations that are likely to cause unwarranted stress to my life. For instance, I have come to acknowledge the fact that I am an introvert.

It is essential for each person to acknowledge and focus on personal values. My current priority has been to build my relationship with God. It has been very hard personally for me to keep sight of this priority on a day-to-day basis. During a normal busy day, I face so many challenges and arising opportunities that my list of "things to be done" often exceeds the time available for me to do them. Because of this reason, before, a lot of times I used to find myself spending much time on activities of lower priority since only few of these things are related to what I value most. Currently, I can get myself to focus enough attention on my values, and as a result, I am always much more likely to realize those things I consider most important.

Habits can be described as those behaviors that one routinely and frequently automatically repeats (Elearn Limited, 2005). I have realized that, I always have the urge to develop habits that would enable me to interact effectively with other people, especially while executing my duties as a mental health practitioner. Before, in while attending to my patients, I never used to often consult enough before making important decisions. This habit interfered with my ability to build the commitment of the people around me towards the decisions I make. I have since come to learn that, there are a number of psychological needs that fuels a person's behaviors, Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Personally, I have been able to understand how certain needs in my life affect my interpersonal relationships. After making this realization, today, I am able to know which needs actually influences my behaviors most.

Looking at my life, I am always in a high need for status. I am very much attracted to high-status occupations, and desperately in need for high-status positions in high status organizations. This is one of the reasons why I found myself joining the( medical )industry. I always have the desire to be shown respect, and get privileges that most people of a lower status are not able to acquire. For this reason, many times, I find myself fighting for things that other groups of people consider inconsequential, for example spacious rooms and fancy things. It is evident to me that needs cause motivations. When they are not fulfilled they cause lot of frustrations, unease, stress and conflict.

Emotional self awareness is a topic that causes much excitement to me because of its impacts (Pavlina, 2008). It also happens to be one of the components of emotional intelligence. Being in a state whereby you are able to understand your own feelings, the things that trigger them, as well as how they impact on your thoughts together with your actions on a daily basis can be considered to be emotional self awareness. Before, while starting my career as a mental healthcare worker, I realized that, at first I was very much enthusiastic. Slowly I started losing the motivation and the excitement faded.

Before, the question that lingered on my mind most was whether I could be able to get the excitement once again. To answer this question I managed to seek the services of a counselor who informed me that, before I can be able to answer that question I needed to understand the internal processes that are concerned with getting excited. For sure this sounds quite easier than it actually is. She gave me another perspective of looking at the matter i.e. associating the internal processes that are concerned with getting excited in my work place.

Most patients are aggressive, restless and irritable on admission, this makes me feel like nursing stable patients only, however I become excited when patients are mentally stable and on their way home.

Similarly, an individual with high standards of emotional self awareness is better informed about the internal processes involved with emotional experiences and, therefore, has a better control over them (Pavlina, 2008). People can develop interests towards their jobs by probably doing things differently. This way, I have been able to sustain my subsequent jobs that I have been taking. I have evaluated my performance and identified areas of which I would like to develop in order to improve my standard of achievements in my skills. Kolb's learning cycle(currently have a better control over my feelings and emotional experiences thus, I am able to tackle things differently in different environments, in different occasions and in different ways. Concerning my personal awareness, I will have become aware of my good qualities and weaknesses.

Therefore I will arrange clinical supervision with my mentor to plan future development. Butterworth (1996) suggested minimum clinical supervision of 45minutes every four weeks.

Personal development refers to a set of activities that one can engage in for the purpose of enhancing self knowledge and identity. It involves talent and potential development, building of human capital as well as employability, improving the quality of life, and last but not least playing a role towards the realization of aspirations and dreams. The idea of personal development is not only limited to self development, but also entails formal and informal activities meant to develop others, as well. As a person's circle of self awareness expands, not only is he or she consciously aware of a greater portion of him or herself, but also the borders of his or her awareness have enlarged in such a way that, his or her self awareness borders upon a widened area of future discovery and development. The more doors an individual opens, the more he or she realizes there are to be opened.

Listening and attending are by far the most vital aspects of being an effective healthcare professional. Over-talking on the part of healthcare professional is normally considered to be less productive. If people can train themselves to learn on how to really listen to others, then they can be of really much help to the society. Personal development starts at a point of self awareness. In fact, it may as well be the ultimate end. It through the significant impact of personal development that an individual can grow and improve his or her relationships, wealth, happiness, health, and careers. Self awareness is a fundamental factor at the core of this broad and significant pursuit. Widening ones self awareness involves discovering new truths about an individual. Any kind of development whether personal, economic, geological, political or organizational, demands a framework for one to be able to know whether change has in reality occurred. For the case of personal development, a person frequently operates as the principal judge of improvement. Corroboration of objective improvement requires an assessment which has to be carried out using a standard criterion.

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