

What is Learning for Learning's Sake?

By Bruce Goslovich

Many of us aspire to contribute to the betterment of humankind before we are gone. After our career years, some will have the means and motivation to learn for learning's sake, i.e., to pursue knowledge as valuable in its own right without tests or deadlines or the need to turn learning into income. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute programs offer ample opportunity to learn for learning's sake. Possessing the intrinsic motivation for how, when, and what to learn with no pressure to produce gives us mature, older learners the chance to experience knowledge and understanding in its purest form. Learning for learning's sake often leads to deeply satisfying and rewarding understandings. However, while satisfying an internal need, intrinsically motivated learning often does not readily add to the betterment of humankind. We post-career learners have fewer opportunities to test our knowledge and debate its soundness, as we no longer interact with colleagues as often. But the desire to contribute is still strong in those who distribute the knowledge and are cherished by those receiving it. If you still crave to use your learning-for-learning's-sake knowledge for the betterment of all, I encourage you to share your post-career ideas and knowledge any way you can. Write, lecture, discuss, debate, and, with others, delve deep into those concepts about which you are passionate. Your audience may be smaller and tougher to identify, but pushing the ball (of knowledge) forward for all is still a worthy goal.