Personal Development

As you think about your personal development the key ideas are how will you deepen your understanding and application of the elements of reasoning and intellectual standards? How will you develop your intellectual disposition and behaviors using the concepts of intellectual virtues? How will you recognize and overcome egocentric and sociocentric tendencies?

1. What do I want to accomplish during the next 30 days? 90 days? 180 days?

As I’ve already started catching myself when thinking “Ok, what’s the purpose here?”, I will now try to become more critical of the questions I raise over the next 30 days. I will first begin by specifying the question and asking whether it’s the right question that follows from the purpose.

Furthermore, one of my main goals before 2024 is to consolidate and think about where I’m really at at the moment in life.

I don’t know what I want to have achieved in 90 days regarding my intellectual development, but in 180 days, I want to have read through a compendium of Positive Psychology and some self-help books that I know are going to answer a lot of crucial questions of “Ho-To?” in many endeavors of life.

As Positive Psychology more or less deals with the different areas of life, I think Critical Thinking will come in handy when trying to reason about how I can engage in these buckets in real life in a sustainable way.

During the course, I’ve already read through Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations to see how someone has applied Stoicism to everyday life to connect this with the concept of intellectual virtues.

One of my main goals is to become a functional human being. This means that I don’t want to pursue intellectual pursuits if this means that my functionality begins to lack – especially in personal relationships.

I rely on the world to engage in Critical Thinking. It’s just not going to happen.

Therefore, I need to find ways of making compromises between the things I know intellectually and those others do and try to find a way that’s both constructive for me and the collective.

One way for me to ensure this is to learn how to be a good, charming, and gentle listener. I will have to respect the fact that others sometimes just want to be heard without seeking a solution – even if that being listened to doesn’t solve any problem for them or me.

This is what I am constantly going to remind myself of over the coming days and years.

I know that it can be frustrating, but being the one who knows stuff but can’t communicate it / function well doesn’t do anything good at the end of the day.

Emotions, Marketing, Selling, and proper communication are a fact of everyday human nature and I would have it backward if I’d neglect that – even if what I’m saying was of higher significance.

If one can’t play by the rules, s/he is going to be marginalized. And by association: the message.

When it comes to Intellectual Standards, I’m still a little bit at sea. I don’t actively ask for accuracy, precision, etc. I do this unconsciously and I’m happy to have checked the sources I’m consuming information from for a lot of time now. Therefore, I’m assuming accuracy.

However, what I’ll try to do more and more is to ask for relevance. I used to consume a lot of information without any filter being applied to the goals I had in life. I want to become much more concrete about the goals that I want to achieve in life and therefore ask for relevance of information according to these goals.

I will start by asking “Does this get me ahead in X?”.

When it comes to egocentricity and sociocentricity, I think I’m already doing a good job. I do many hard things, I sacrifice a lot, and I am aware of biases in action and some of my inner driving forces and irrationalities.

Until I have found a constructive way of incorporating my egocentric and sociocentric tendencies in the pursuit of my goals, I won’t deal with them substantially.

I think that one can stunt growth when giving up too much ego at once. It should be a gradual process. Otherwise, one risks becoming weak. And as long as I’m striving to seek the answers to how I can incorporate my egocentric / sociocentric tendencies constructively, I am ok with that.

I am much more afraid of those who neglect their egocentric / sociocentric tendencies, and who are unaware, disgusted, or even shy of them. Just because they don’t want to see them for what they are, it doesn’t mean that they don’t exist. And according to Carl Gustav Jung, what we dismiss will haunt us (shadow). Therefore, I will make an effort to explore some of my egocentricity a little bit more and see how I can integrate the best parts of it. Familiarizing myself with sophist philosophy should be a good start.

I have bought the book Critical Thinking – Taking charge of your learning and your life and my goal is to go through that over the next year.

I’ve realized the pattern that knowledge of knowledge itself can change my decision-making a lot. Whenever I am aware of something which is “good”, I try to get after that. This goes for health, finance, relationships, etc. Reading for me is quite an energy-demanding task which almost feels like an investment. Whenever I decide to buy a book, sit down, read that, and take notes, I am much more likely to apply that knowledge compared to just hearing something on the fly.

Therefore, I will make sure to go through that book, take it seriously, make sure to understand its content and see how that will shape my unconscious behaviors.

2. What are specific actions I am going to take on a daily or weekly basis to accomplish my goals?

As written, I will try to strengthen both the questions of purpose and the question at issue.

Furthermore, I will keep on journaling at least every week to see whether I’m still on the trajectory I laid out for myself.

Moreover, I will intensify my reading habit and make it my default action instead of scrolling the phone or whatever to get through the books I need to read.

3. What are the main obstacles I face that I need to avoid or overcome to put in the work necessary to develop sufficiently?

One of the main obstacles I will face is to constantly remind myself of the significance of Critical Thinking and to keep in mind that I want to become an ethical person.

Therefore, I need to be comfortable with other people not understanding why I read so much before taking any significant action.

In general, I want to consolidate my learnings from the course to gain a new perspective on my values which should equip me with much more confidence going about my studies and day-to-day interactions.

Also, I need to be aware that I should not put too much on my plate simultaneously. The course has demanded a lot from me, but I was content with putting in the hours as I knew that this stuff is going to fundamentally change my life for the better.

However, this has cost some mental capacity.

In the future, I will have to be much more focused on the stuff that I’m learning. Going into this course, I didn’t realize how fundamental the knowledge was going to be. It indeed takes some time before the brain adjusts to this mode of thinking.

4. How will I assess my progress?

I will assess my progress by the feedback I receive from others and the actual time I’ve spent working through the necessary content I need to read and learn.

Feedback from others helps me check whether I’m a functional human being. I aim to do everything (including relationships) intentionally.

The time and energy spent learning something gives me some confidence and I would lose that confidence if I didn’t put in the work.

Therefore, these two things somewhat go hand in hand.