



# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

***“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.  
Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.”***

Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher

## 1. Personal Development Discussion

1. How important is it to continuously develop yourself? Why?
2. Do you think the culture of continuous self-improvement is a good thing or a bad thing? Why? Are there any negative consequences?
3. Who can you speak to at work for advice on how to grow professionally? How can you use your network to grow? Who could be your mentor?
4. Do your performance reviews help you to grow? Why or why not?
5. Would you be happy to take on more responsibilities to help yourself grow? How would this help?
6. Does professional growth in a career simply mean getting a promotion? Why or why not?
7. Does anyone have the time to continuously develop themselves? What is the solution to this?
8. Svend Brinkmann said that the culture of continuous self-improvement can make us feel miserable. Why do you think he said that, and do you agree with him?

## 2. Personal Development Vocabulary

- **to broaden one's horizons** (idiom) – *to expand your knowledge or experience.*
- **to blow the cobwebs away** (idiom) – *to refresh yourself or make yourself more mentally alert, especially after a state of sluggishness (inactive, lacking energy).*
- **to turn over a new leaf** (idiom) – *to make a new start; to begin to act in a more responsible way.*
- **to go back to square one / the drawing board** (idioms) – *start something again/from the beginning.*
- **nothing ventured, nothing gained** (saying) – *people who do not take risks gain nothing.*
- **(personal/lifestyle/business) coach** (noun) – *somebody who helps another person achieve something with training or guidance.*

**Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)**

1. I feel like I've not made any progress at all this year. I need to \_\_\_\_\_ and start to do something useful.
2. I spent my life savings on going back to university when I was 43 to study a completely new subject, but you know what they say, \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If you need help with planning your career, let me know because I know a great \_\_\_\_\_. He helped me decide which direction I wanted to take my career and how to plan all the steps to get there.
4. Mark promised to \_\_\_\_\_ when he left prison, but three days later he was caught stealing a TV from his neighbour's house.
5. Spending a year meditating in India really \_\_\_\_\_. I learned so much with this experience.
6. We were supposed to launch the product in Macy's department store, but they pulled out at the last minute, so we had to \_\_\_\_\_ while we looked for a new location.

### **Personal Development vocabulary comprehension questions**

1. How could you broaden your horizons?
2. When did you need to blow the cobwebs away?
3. When might people need to turn over a new leaf?
4. When have you had to go back to square one?
5. Can you think of any examples of 'nothing ventured, nothing gained'?
6. What is your opinion about lifestyle/business coaches? Have you ever used one? If so, did they help? If not, would you like to use one? Should everyone use the services of a coach?

### 3. Video: How to Get Better

You are going to watch a TEDx Talk by Eduardo Briceño called "How to get better at the things you care about."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/business-english-conversation-lesson-plan-personal-development/>

#### Watch the video and after, discuss the following questions

1. What would you like to be better at? How could you achieve this?
2. How much time do you dedicate to the performance zone and learning zone?
3. How could you find more time to spend in the learning zone at work?
4. Do you have enough opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them? If not, how could this change?
5. Why do we settle on an adequate skill level, instead of continuing to improve it?
6. How can you create a low-stake island in a high-stake sea at work, either for yourself or for your team?

### 4. Personal Development Conversation Questions

1. What are you passionate about? What are your dreams for life? What is really important to you?
2. What are your long-term goals for your career? How do you intend to achieve these goals?
3. What kind of new challenges could you set yourself to grow either professionally or personally?
4. What new skills do you need to grow professionally?
5. What kind of training opportunities do you have at work to grow professionally? Which other opportunities would you like?
6. How can you become an expert in your industry/profession?
7. Have you considered going back to university to develop yourself professionally? If so, what would you like to study?
8. Will the things that you are doing at work right now be important next year? How about in five or 10 years?

### 5. Personal Development Writing Task

Using [this website](#), write your own self-improvement plan. Note down a few ideas; categorise them into intellectual, physical, professional, and social goals; then choose one of them to focus on. With this goal, write down some notes on how you could achieve it.

## 6. Personal Development Answers

### 2. Vocabulary

1. blow the cobwebs away
2. nothing ventured, nothing gained
3. coach
4. turn over a new leaf
5. broadened my horizons
6. go back to square one / go back to the drawing board