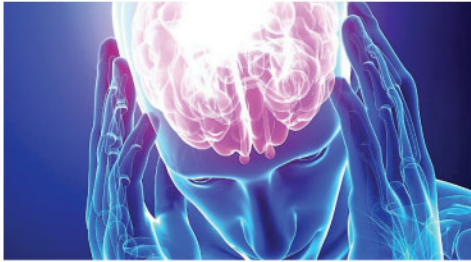


Learning: A Survival Skill

During this pandemic, along with resilience, learning, adapting and evolving is what has helped people survive.

June, 2021 by Sapnesh Lalla



COVID19 global pandemic has changed lives forever. Its footprint on family trees will remain etched in the memories of millions of families that lost their loved ones. COVID19 is one of the greatest human tragedies. It will be remiss to reflect on any aspect of COVID19 without a moment of thought for all who lost their friends, family members, neighbours, co-workers, and people they knew.

As is with every tragedy, we resilient humans find ways to cope and ride through. One of the ways in which many coped with lockdowns, cabin fever, job losses, personal grief, uncertainty, and isolation is through

learning.

Remember the shortage of yeast and flour as many took to learning how to make their sourdough starters? Or the many videos on myriad exercise formats where people learned how to most creatively use limited space and equipment to get a high-intensity workout? It was therapeutic to watch people learning many DIY skills as they fixed their basements, landscaped their gardens, and repainted their houses.

Learning has been associated with happiness.

Neuroscientists and psychologists who have studied happiness have found three aspects of happiness: pleasure, a life well lived and participation in life. Spending time learning to bake bread, fix things around the house, and learn new fitness regimes is perhaps a form of participation in life.

Not through a big research paper, but somewhat instinctively, corporates figured out this relationship between learning and happiness and between happiness and intrinsic motivation. Through the pandemic, almost all our corporate clients have proactively supported their employees with learning programs on topics such as mental health, leading with empathy, and remote working tools and practices. Interestingly, uptake of these learning offerings has been encouraging. Many of our clients have reported an overall increase in the number of learning hours across the globe. An accelerated path to the digital transformation of learning has ensured that employees have access to a highly immersive and engaging learning experience from home.

One of the many things that COVID19 has taught us/reminded us of is that ability to continuously learn and adapt is a survival skill. This applies to both individuals and corporates.

Individuals who learned quickly to adapt to this new way of living have been less scathed than individuals who resisted the need for change. Similarly, corporates who adapted to the new ways of engaging with their customers and employees and transformed their products and services to meet the new needs are emerging more resilient.

Towards the end of last year, we published a comprehensive research "Adaptive Learning Organizations." We met with learning leaders of 100+ high performing, global, complex organizations to determine the L&D best practices of what enables these organizations to adapt quickly to the changes in their environment. We found three broad characteristics. We found that Adaptive Learning Organizations can 'Sense', 'Decide' and 'Evolve'.

Sense is the ability to harvest, measure, analyze, and draw actionable insights from multiple information and data sources to create forward-looking internal and external views.

Decide is the ability to make accurate short-term and transformational decisions based on known information, collaboration, and built-in pivot points that allow for quick and efficient course correction.

Evolve is the ability to implement changes and transform both for the immediate and sustainable future. In other words, Adaptive Learning Organizations can learn!