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## LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS or 'Reciprocity'

**The social aspect** of a supple learning-powered mind concerns learners' relationships with other people. To be proficient at balancing 'social' learning with private endeavor involves the exercising of a number of skills and inclinations are. Sometimes there is no choice and learning has, necessarily, to be a collaborative activity. Teamwork is the norm in many organizations and the lone innovator is, today, the exception rather than the rule.

*The ability to listen, take your turn, and understand the viewpoint of someone with whom you do not immediately agree, are all useful for the learner.*

Even when collaboration is not required, it often makes good sense to try ideas out on someone else, or know whose brains to pick, and when. Reciprocity can be broken down into four components: **interdependence, collaboration, empathy and listening, and imitation.**

### Good social learners

- balance interactive and solitary learning;

- share and communicate alternative skills and ideas;
- listen to improve their understanding;
- are independent in their judgement;
- cultivate the habit of listening even when they have something to contribute;
- listen to generate empathy with the speaker;
- go out of their way to pick up others' ways of thinking and working;
- join the give and take of collaborative learning;
- enjoy learning from other people.

*Empathy ... Carl Rogers, Founder, Client-Centred Psychotherapy*

**'Empathy means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgements . . . To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another's world without prejudice.'**

*The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky ... pointed out just how much of our mentality, the ways in which we interpret the world, and think and learn about it, we have internalized from the significant others with whom we have worked, played or solved problems.*

*We absorb the mental strategies and habits of those we admire and trust.*

**Scientists have suggested that this semi-conscious mode of cultural transmission may play a more important role in human development than any amount of deliberate instruction.**

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