



When Professional Development Gets Personal

In the workplace, professional development is often viewed as a means to an end. In this view, when you attend a training or class or get an additional certification or degree, you're setting yourself up for future success on the job, however you define "success." But professional development isn't just a tool to be more effective at your job or set yourself up for a more senior position (although it can certainly have that effect). This month, we're focusing on the positive and personal impact of professional development on who you are, your relationships, and your community.

Confidence doesn't stay at work.

When you've developed new or better skills, your improved professional confidence often translates to other aspects of life. "Your career is an intrinsic part of your identity," Jocelyn Bos-Fisher, C&FS EAP Counselor, emphasizes. "When you are feeling more confident at work, that confidence can effect how you relate with others or present yourself outside of work." People who are confident in themselves also tend to be more relaxed in social settings and less afraid of rejection.

Learning new skills can help you learn about yourself.

Whether you've been at your job 2 months or 20 years, it can be tempting to feel like you know everything there is to know. The problem: if you know everything, you're probably feeling bored and potentially dissatisfied. The solution? Become a learner again. "No matter what kind of

professional development you take on, you'll find small nuggets of ideas that can potentially change how you view yourself or your world," Bos-Fisher suggests.

Another great benefit of learning? Once you start questioning your assumptions and learning new or improved ways of doing your job, you're opening yourself up to questioning other aspects of yourself, as well. For Bos-Fisher, this is key to increased self-awareness. "Suddenly you're asking questions about yourself: what do you have left to learn? What is your purpose? Your motivation? Exploring the answers to these questions helps lead to a feeling of peace with where you are in your life and the decisions you need to make in the future."

Your goals? Closer than you think.

What are your larger goals, professionally and personally? If they seem too far away or unattainable, then now is the time for you to think about articulating some new goals—and using professional development strategically to make those goals happen. Create a Professional Development plan that helps you to focus on those larger goals, and you'll have attainable and measurable steps to get where you want to go. "Think of everything you do as a piece of the puzzle—the more pieces are in place, the closer you are to your end goal," Bos-Fisher says.

Your Development Toolkit

So you're ready to start thinking about your personal and professional development? Here are some excellent resources that are just a click away:

1. [How to Develop a Personal / Professional Development Plan](https://careerdirectionsllc.com/development-management-development-plan/): a free tutorial that assess your personal and professional life and aims to help you develop "a roadmap to career and life happiness." Find it at <https://careerdirectionsllc.com/development-management-development-plan/>
2. [Steps to Developing an Individual Professional Development Plan](https://www.ithaca.edu/hr/docs/hrforms/development/goals/idpsteps.docx): another free guide to planning that assists in clarifying "S.M.A.R.T." goals. Find it at <https://www.ithaca.edu/hr/docs/hrforms/development/goals/idpsteps.docx>