

light posts and take the time to look for them **even in the dark, difficult places where they actually are,** then we have a much better chance of finding them.

## Chapter 4

# Knowledge and Learning and Innovation... Oh My

*Innovation is just like manure. It's no good unless you spread it around encouraging new things to grow.*

*Paraphrase of Dolly Levi*

Innovation is all around you. We are, by our nature, innovators. We tend to tinker with whatever is in front of us, trying to make it easier, better, faster, more to our liking.

We are also natural learners. From birth, we soak up inputs like sponges and make it our own. **Definition time!**

## Learning:

When you understand a new piece of information - whether it is be a word, a dance step, how to set the idle on a car, or what color mauve really is, you have learned.

A *group* can also learn - how to work together, how to design the perfect bread machine (Nonaka wrote about that), how to win an election.

**Learning is an activity.** It is an event, or a series of events. It is

also usually **rooted in an activity**, and that activity keeps feeding information to the learning to keep it growing. If the activity is work - in other words, if the person who is learning is doing what they *usually* are doing when they are working, then the supporting information that is feeding the learning event is probably familiar and authentic, richer, more plentiful and more full of energy.

### It's more real because it's more real.

If the activity for the learner is sitting in a classroom or looking for keys under a street light or doing something else that is either dull or divorced from the *real context* where whatever is being learned would be used, then the supporting information probably will not provide much fuel for the fire.

**Remember:** Learning is an interaction between information and a person or people **in time**. It is a temporal event.

## It is action, not object.

**A training course is NOT learning.**

## Knowledge:

Knowledge is **possessed learning**. It is the *result* of a learning event. It is **possessed within the person**

who learned that knowledge.

**Knowledge requires a person who has had a learning event.**

The stuff referred to as knowledge in knowledge management systems is **information**.

## Information is NOT knowledge!

Information is just the leavings of the learning event - the stuff left behind. It has the potential for another learning event. But to be activated, it must again have a person an activity and a moment of learning.

## Innovation:

**Innovation is a first learning event**. It is the first time a learning has occurred **within some group** (you define the size of the group).

**Every new piece of knowledge learned for a person is actually a personal innovation**. However, innovation is usually viewed more globally the first time within a group or within an organization. **Since innovation is a learning event, it is rooted in activity and requires a person AND It is**

a *process* not an object.

So, the big challenge for you and your company is actually **not innovation**.

**It is not the single, first learning event.**

The challenge is *spreading innovation*

••• trying to recapture and re create many times over that **one moment**...that process...that learning event where a person, or people and information interact while doing some kind of activity. Drawing information and energy from all around - **POW** - an AHHH happens!!!

Learning happens.

So, the process of implementing innovation is **trying to make that learning event more likely to happen.**

That means getting the **right information** to the **right person/people** at the **right time** in the **right place**, when the **energy is highest.**

