

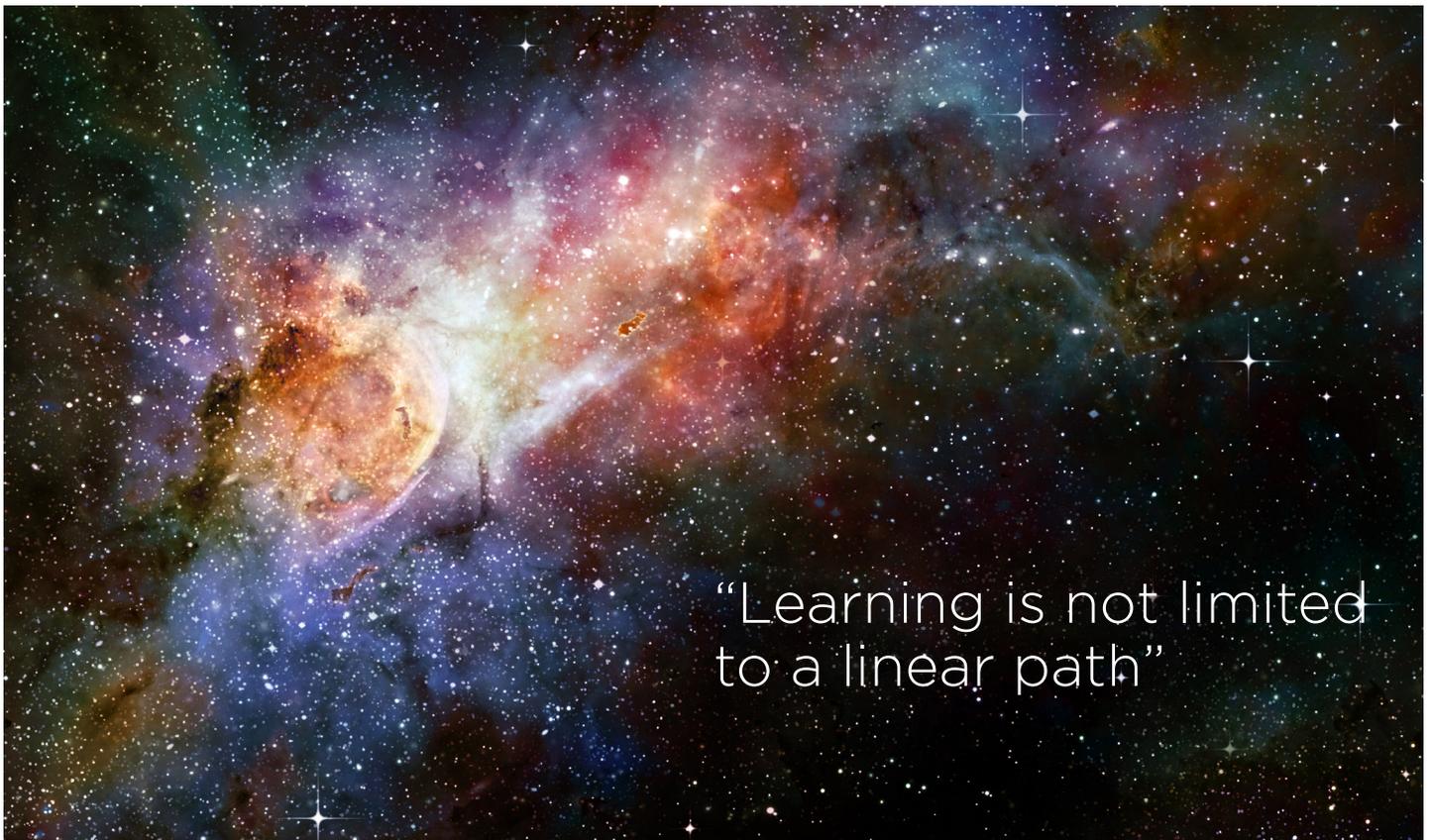
IDEAS WE CARE ABOUT

The Learning Galaxy[©]

Don Jones

The Learning Galaxy[©] represents the dynamic relationship between the primary drivers or forces of learning. At experience it inc. our Immersive Learning Platform and leadership simulation experiences are built on these learning principles.

experience it
Learning to change the world.™



The Learning Galaxy© represents the dynamic relationship between the primary drivers or forces of learning. All learning is experiential; even cognitive reflection still occurs within someone's unique experience. Learning is not limited to a linear path; rather, it occurs through an organic, ever-changing relationship between four primary drivers or forces. These forces interact with and influence each other in combinations and permutations, depending on the context of the experience. It is called a Galaxy because the elements are locked in a gravitational orbit to one another, always influencing the other, but waning and strengthening their influence depending on their proximity. Any distinct constellation of these elements, set within a specific context, will result in a particular learning within a unique individual.

There is no linear progression to the variables, and their dynamic relationship is as important as the variables themselves. Humans are simply too complex for any of the variables to progress in linear fashion, or for any to exist or act in isolation. They need to be considered as a system, each influencing the other. The influence of any one element is constantly changing, depending on the weight and proximity of the variables to one another.

The application of The Learning Galaxy© is to move learning design and delivery past the conversations around particular learning styles--which still have a place--and past the artificial demarcation between 'adult' and 'other' educational principles, and move toward a more holistic view of the human learning experience. It is hoped that this more inclusive perspective can lead to deeper design, more engaging and meaningful experiences, and stronger, more beneficial and sustainable learning.

The key drivers of learning within The Learning Galaxy© are Ownership, Authorship, Relationship and Mentorship.



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Ownership

The learner owns her learning goals and the processes to achieve them.

- Understands ‘What is in it for me?’ (WIIFM)
- Understands ‘why’ this needs to be experienced and learned (which may include, but is broader than WIIFM)

Learning is accelerated and the individual’s inner resources are marshaled when she owns her own learning; when she believes that the goals of that learning will benefit her and/or the world around her; and when she takes and/or shares responsibility for the processes of that learning. On some level, she has to have the belief or hope that this lesson is worth the investment of her limited time and energy, and will result in a better

future. Hope is not too grandiose a word, although she may not articulate it like that. When she loses hope that her efforts can make a difference, she consciously and unconsciously will not, and cannot, expend the effort required to learn, grow and change. Without a sense of hope, learning cannot happen except at the most basic level and only for a short time. With hope, learning can happen at the most profound level over long periods of time.

The ‘gravitational’ pull of Ownership within The Learning Galaxy© is as a catalytic agent. Strong Ownership brings life to the other forces and provides lift and power to their direction. Conversely, weak Ownership creates drag and diffuses power away from their direction.



“Humans are creative beings. We have the capacity to create and shape our surroundings in large and small ways through our actions and decisions.”

Authorship

The learner acts and is a creative force.

- Predicts ‘What will happen if?’
- Takes actions and makes decisions
- Reflects on the experience and creates insights
- Creates options

Humans are creative beings. We have the capacity to create and shape our surroundings in large and small ways through our actions and decisions. These are the essential motor skills that drive learning forward. Our movements, combined with others’ movements, change our environment. Creating insight and options comes from an ability to perceive the change and link it to decisions or actions, or broader changes in the environment.

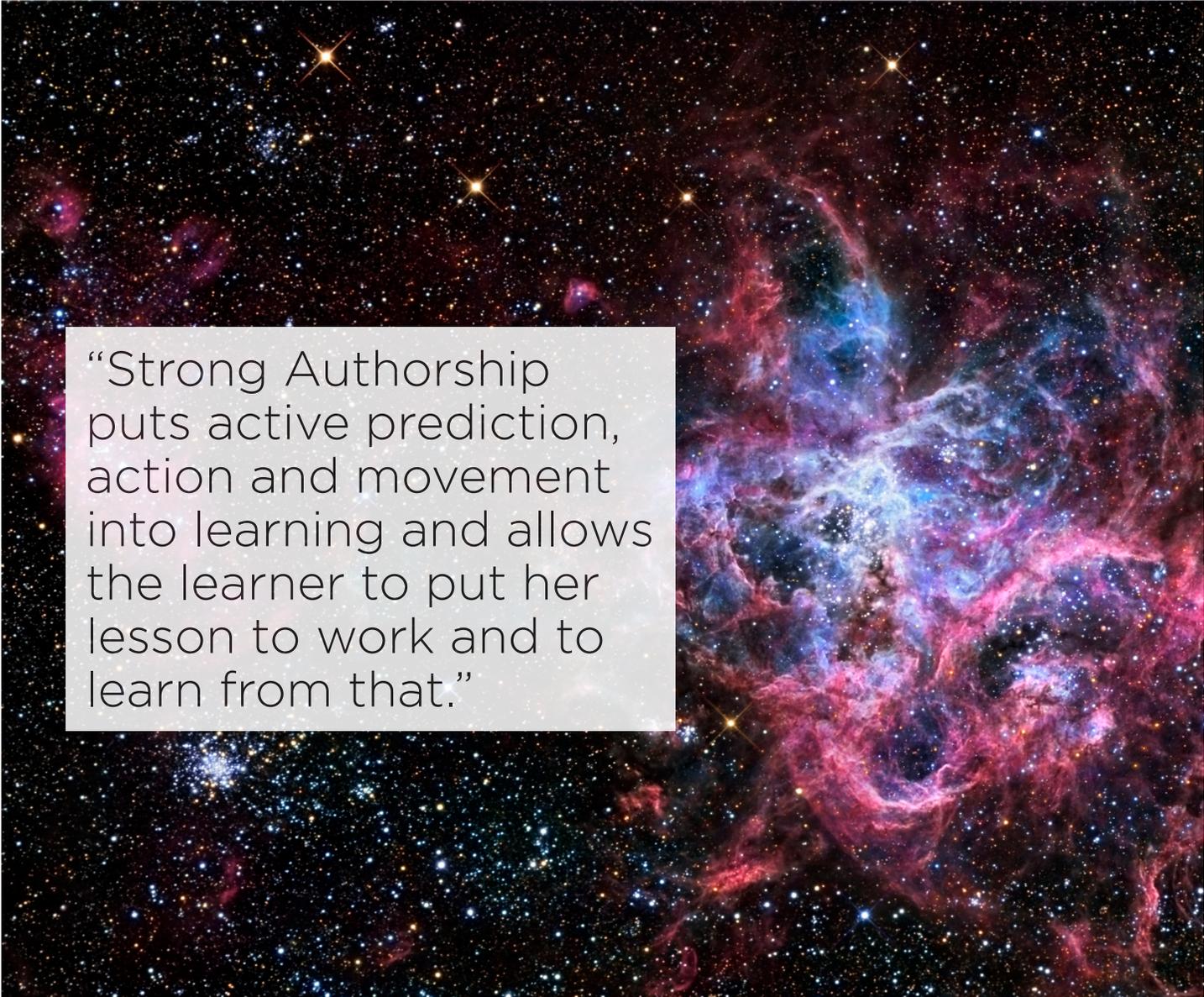
Humans also have the capacity to create insight and options through their observations, actions, decisions, and powerfully through the results of their predictions.

The predictive capacity is one of our most powerful learning tools. We have the capability to make predictions about our environment, to test or observe those predictions and to learn from the results. For example: I believe that I can make it across the street prior to that car hitting me. I then run across the street and I realize that in this particular situation, this prediction is correct. If I do this enough, in similar situations, I will have learned something about my environment. I can then just execute on what I have learned without thinking too much about it and put my attention to other more complex tasks.

However, if a new situation arises or new variables appear in a similar situation, I will go back to prediction again and then base a judgment on that prediction. For example: This time it's a young driver, she is going very quickly and talking on her mobile phone. I think I will wait before I cross. We have used a similar, mostly unconscious prediction routine literally millions of times in our lives to learn many, if not most of our complex tasks. We do it without thinking and the gap or lack of gap between our predictions and our results provides powerful lessons. Prediction is often left out of structured learning environments as the participants become passive and don't feel the need to predict. Ensuring that learners use

prediction engages them prior to the lesson being experienced, and provides a baseline against which they can judge the lesson. Active participatory prediction brings personal learning to life.

The 'gravitational' pull of Authorship within The Learning Galaxy© is the essential motor skill that drives learning forward. Strong Authorship puts active prediction, action and movement into learning and allows the learner to put her lesson to work and to learn from that. Conversely, weak Authorship eliminates predictions, slows or stops actions and decisions, and lessens the learner's ability to put the lessons to work or to learn from this.



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“Learning exists, as we do, within this broader and evolving community and context.”

Relationship

The learner exists within a broader, evolving community and changing context.

- Explores the environment
- Discovers new things
- Connects with others and the world

Humans are social creatures, not by individual choice, but through our DNA. We exist within community, social and societal structures. Learning exists, as we do, within this broader and evolving community and context. Even individual, cognitive, deep introspection and reflection cannot be separated from the physical mind and body in which it exists, nor from the world that supports its life. We are intellectual and physical, emotional and logical, individual and collective. We exist in relationship with the world, not apart from it. Learning happens inside this relationship.

Learning is accelerated when the learner actively explores her world, makes discoveries for herself and connects with others. The important role of

feedback, from the environment and from others, requires exploration, discovery and connection. While some feedback--such as hitting your head on a branch--happens immediately through your connection to the world, most potential sources of feedback are not like the convenient branch. They are hidden, unknown and often left untouched, dormant and undiscovered. Most feedback requires the active mining of the learner's relationship to the world. When the learner is most effective at learning, she is finding rich sources of relatively safe feedback, while minimizing the time between her actions and that feedback.

The 'gravitational' pull of Relationship within The Learning Galaxy© is one of direction and momentum. Strong Relationship provides laser-like focus to actions going forward and quantum acceleration to the learner's journey, compounding foresight, insight and feedback. Weak Relationship ensures a lack of focus for actions and decelerates the learner's journey.



“Mentorship is not a status to be granted, it is a present opportunity assumed by each individual by degree.”

Mentorship

The learner is also a teacher.

- Contributes to the conversation
- Mentors others

Learners need to find, develop and use their own unique voice as much as they need to hone their ability listen. Learners are never truly in a completely subordinate position to a ‘teacher.’ A newborn baby begins teaching her parents immediately, and keeps teaching the world in many ways throughout her life. We are always both learners and mentors; we both gain from others and contribute to them. When we see ourselves as only gaining from others and not contributing to them, we are cutting ourselves off from one of the most powerful sources of our own learning: our active contributions to the learning of others.

For example, she walks me through a detailed spreadsheet showing all the steps in a project

planning process. She has put this together herself and knows all of the details; but in ‘teaching’ me she states that she is learning the details at a deeper level. We cannot cut off learners from the opportunity to teach and mentor others. It is where they will deepen their lessons learned, create opportunities for other lessons, and augment and accelerate the other elements of The Learning Galaxy®. Mentorship is not a status to be granted, it is a present opportunity assumed by each individual by degree.

The ‘gravitational’ pull of Mentorship within The Learning Galaxy® acts to temper and deepen the lessons learned through all of the other forces. Strong Mentorship exposes nuances and contextual conditions, and drives learning deeper and broader in an individual. Weak Mentorship masks nuances and contextual conditions and leaves learning more superficially at the surface.

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