

Wolfgang Fries

# Learning How to Learn, Learning How to Understand



## **Acknowledgements**

I want to thank

My sister,  
Dr. Diana Pengitore, ND, freelance translator, and American  
Translator Association (ATA) member, for her expert  
translation from German to English, which was long  
overdue.

My brother-in-law,  
Dr. Frank Pengitore, Ed. D., for his editorial expertise in  
bringing this publication forth.

## **Important Note to the Reader**

*Learning How to Learn, Learning How to Understand* is the **second book in a fivepart series** from the book *Philosophy of Life*. This complete series is available in German. The remaining three books (*A Happy Relationship; To Endure Life - The Bible of the 21st Century*; and, *Past Life Regression - Introduction and Brief Guide*) will be published in English in the future. The book, *Human Rights and Obligations - Revised*, is another excellent publication recommended for inclusion in the series. *My Philosophy*, English version, is the first book in the series and was released in September 2018.

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to those who read it in the hope that more reason and understanding is brought to humanity.

## **How to Read the Book**

I tried to keep the wording of the book as simple as possible, except for a couple of difficult words, only because they are not commonly used, or because they are specific terms and must be used to have a proper understanding.

A word about the level of education and reading the book. Education has become completely artificial. Today, it is sufficient if one articulates in a well-sounding manner. In the educational institutions, understanding is not really emphasized. It only seems to matter that the learner can parrot the teacher's words that later on are presented in a quiz show called class work - complete automatism, without true reason!

Reading means to perceive with the eyes and the mind\*. Because the human being does not know much about the mind and its capabilities, he fails to perceive to a large extent with the mind. Take note: The mind is not the brain; there is a difference. Unfortunately, books are not written on the basis of understanding and for this reason cannot be understood.

A word is just a substitute for the thing. Wanting to understand the thing that is described in words, one needs to know the definition of the word or it becomes necessary to take a closer look at the thing itself, e.g. if you don't understand plectrum, go and get one for inspection. It is a significant undertaking to represent reality in words, as it is always the interpretation of the writer, as well as the interpretation of the reader that remains.

Because the thing itself is often not available for direct observation, one uses words or pictures to get an impression of the thing, meaning an immediate impression in the form of a picture that one imagines in one's head.

Starting on page → in the glossary\*, an overview of the definitions of the words listed in the book marked by an asterisk\* can be found. These definitions deviate in part or entirely from conventional definitions. In order to have a complete understanding of a word, it should be looked up in a good dictionary, including its origin.

The bracketed alphanumeric designations list the books used (B01) = Book or (S01) = source. Sources are listed starting on page →.

Please note: This book cannot be fully understood if the words are not looked up and researched, be it words of common use or the specific definition mentioned here in the book.

Note: First read the glossary, then the book from the very beginning!

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## Foreword

Understanding is one of life's inherent abilities, especially for the human being as a living entity that tries to get along with his environment through understanding - thus, understanding can become an extensive matter.

The manufacturer of cars must know not only about the engine, the body and the wheel suspension, but also about human anatomy\* and human preference. These may include such things as: the size of the seats, the distance to the steering wheel and the height of the windshield, as they are located in a particular area of the car. They also should be esthetically pleasing, otherwise it will not be purchased.

The same concept applies to understanding and learning as specialty areas. It includes the basics of the mind, dictionaries, proper observation, personal attitude, and knowledge about maintaining the body's health in order to be efficient when working mentally.

In this book, a bit of extensive work will be done not only to obtain a concept\* about learning and understanding but also to develop a specific attitude. Therefore, there is a section on specialized fields and philosophy. The text of the philosophical section was taken from my book, *Philosophy of Life - The Book of Basics*. This book encompasses life itself with a variety of aspects and insights. It is a philosophy\* for life.

*In Learning How to Learn, Learning How to Understand*, I try to convey a thought pattern to provide the reader with the tools needed for learning and understanding. It is of no use to know about the complexities of the brain, such as the storage capacity of brain cells and synapses\*, for this is mere knowledge and must be learned. Rather, it is about introducing a technology\* to humankind, meaning knowledge that can be applied.

Thus, the following is neither written a professorial\* style, nor does it meet a classical writing technique. It happens to be written by me, open and frank, straight to the point, to see what there is to see and not to think what others think of what to think!

The essays\* in the book serve as a metaphor\* and should give the reader the possibility to apply the herein described experiences to one's own life.

## **OF WHAT USE IS THE LANGUAGE IF ONE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE WORD!**

### **The Theory\* of the Superior Datum**

Definition, datum; plural data: Something known or assumed; information from which conclusions can be inferred. [lat. *dare* = to give]

The professional part actually begins with some philosophy\*. If one wishes to understand something, it requires an assignment, meaning an explanation of what is to be achieved with something. A superior datum is a datum to which all subordinate data are aligned. The name of a specialized field usually is the datum to which data of the specialized field is aligned.

Example: Frank wants to build a house. First, he goes to the bank to find out about his financial status. Then he goes to city hall to inquire about a lot. He already has a rough idea of what his future home should look like and, thus, goes to the architect. This now continues step by step from the contractor to the furniture to the finished house.

The superior datum as mentioned in the example above is building a house. All other data will be assigned to the superior datum to fulfill the purpose of the superior datum. The sequence would be the idea, the planning, the action and the product. The building of a house is divided into several phases, and each area consists of an idea, the planning, the action and the product. For example, what plasterer do we hire, how much are the costs associated with his work, how much does he charge, is he reliable, and is his work of good quality?

Learning as a superior datum is defined as follows: **“The recording of data resulting in a valid final behavior.”**

It is about that information is recorded, stored and understood to be retrieved in a certain behavior. Consider the elementary school student who is supposed to learn the multiplication table that he can use after elementary school. Thus, he has taken up data, stored and understood them and is able to recall them for calculation – as a result, he has learned.

The content in this book is structured in such a way that learning is geared toward the superior datum. This requires a certain sequence to get a functional whole, starting with the most important foundation, which is developed and again advanced. Imagine a specialized field as a pyramid. The tip represents the goal, which was designated by a word and represented by its definition. There are different levels in this pyramid, each having equal importance. However, before ascending to the next level, the current level must be completed, otherwise the structure will no longer work.

The same applies to the procedure in this book: First the most important things are addressed so that the mind is oriented towards understanding. In regard to pyramid and pyramid levels: At the beginning of his life, the human being starts at the bottom of the pyramid and works his way up to find the superior datum at the next level. When he has found the superior datum at that level, he advances to the next level, the exception being the one who remains on one level. Interestingly enough, he truly then starts to understand when he has found the superior datum. Thus, the human being understands more and more, from level to level, from one superior datum to the next.

Remember, a pyramid is three-dimensional\* and at its tip becomes one dimensional to its origin itself. In fact, at the tip of the pyramid is only one word: **SURVIVAL!**

Thus, the most important part of learning is communication. The human being perceives his

environment through the senses. It is a very specific process which is described below.

**First one has to perceive things in order to learn them!**

## **Communication**

Definitions:

**Duplicate:** To have the same concept in the head as the sender. The recipient duplicates the statement of the sender. A duplicate is an exact copy of the original.

**Duplication:** The creation of a picture in the mind (image) that corresponds exactly to what has been heard or read or that has been perceived with the five senses\*. (B03)

**Concept:** (lat. *concipere* = "to take in") A concept is an idea about what is going to happen to something. A complete concept describes a situation with its components and the intentions of what is going to happen to the components, e.g. the building of a house: It requires building materials and individuals where each has its function. A concept, therefore, regulates everyone's responsibility. One also can have a concept (an idea) about a person or thing with regard to the estimation of value, such as whether the individual or thing is good or bad for oneself or a project. Everyone assesses things when he perceives them. The direct assessment may be dangerous or not dangerous, sympathetic or unsympathetic, helpful or useless, depending on one's current situation and what is to be achieved.

**Communication is achieved when the recipient has the same concept as the sender.** (lat. *communis* = mutual) (Everybody is familiar with the usual communication model: sender - distance - recipient, or cause - distance - effect). Communication requires a medium, such as a language or symbols, unless one has sufficient mental power where he can directly put a thought

into someone's head! Pedagogy's\* (education's) main goal is only based upon one thing: How can I successfully install a thought into the head of someone!

Therefore, after communicating, the recipient has a duplicate in his mind of what was expressed by the sender. The end result: the recipient is duplicated. Here it is again in all clarity: The imprint of the rubber stamp on the sheet of paper is the recipient, and the rubber stamp *is* the sender.

Naturally, one must know the words of the language, as well as the meaning of the symbols. I mean, of what use is a word or symbol if one cannot understand it and does not have a precise definition for it? One must be able to define the symbols and words precisely, regarding what is being expressed about the situation, the thing and the purpose.

For this purpose, an unabridged dictionary, e.g., *Merriam Webster's*, is very helpful, but keep in mind, the lexicographers\* are human beings, and they see things from their own point of view. When the definition of a word from a dictionary is inadequate for one's purpose, then it is helpful to define it differently or to invent a new word to bypass associations with common words.

As Voltaire\* said: "Define your language." ... THAT IS IMPORTANT!!!

In order to avoid being misunderstood in a conversation, it is very helpful to clarify the topic; therefore, one should portray the topic figuratively or define it. Usually words are not looked up in a dictionary (important where they look it up!), and the individual does not have an exact idea of its meaning. This is why one should make it clear to others what the topic is about, or ask someone what he understands about "thingamabob." JJJ

Trying to put into someone's head to 100% the exact, same idea by means of words or symbols? Here is a quotation from the movie *Robin Hood* with Kevin Costner and Morgan Freeman: "*There are only perfect\* intentions!*" The material world around you has been created with very



specific intentions; however, it is difficult to find something perfect, as there are almost always deviations from the result and the intention.

Words have limited ability that is subject to a scale of 0% - 100%. If someone says red to you, what does he mean, light red, dark red? Being pregnant? One is always 100% pregnant. However, there are different stages of pregnancy. Also with a disease: Does being 100% ill mean being 100% limited? Being pregnant is not an illness, but one is rather limited during the end stages of pregnancy.

One can bypass explanations through words by showing pictures. Pictures give no room for error to interpret something differently. They are unequivocal. As far as the human being is concerned, regarding the essential more important part of the thing, a picture does not show the motive why one does what he does. Is he friend or foe? When two individuals fight each other, is it a dispute or a competition? When the other says, "I love you," is it for purely selfish, sexual interest, or does he want to be there for the other?

Communication and understanding? True communication results in assured understanding. The human being tends to demand traceability from the communication; he wants to understand things, and he wants an explanation. See for yourself. When someone tells you something, a reason is given, or the listener will ask for a reason if he does not understand the context.

Communication and agreement? To understand something is the basis for a decision: Agreed or not agreed. Even if one understood and does not agree, one can still negotiate to reach an agreement that both parties can accept (compromise)- even if both sides are not truly satisfied. Maybe the circumstances do not allow it. Not willing to give in? What have wars\* brought forth up to now?

Communication simply means just that: communis = mutual. No matter how one wishes to describe the way to

get there, it is about the recipient having exactly the same concept or idea in his head as the sender, period!

Let us make communication to mean a precise matter. There are still other terms like conversation or talk methods of intellectual exchange where accuracy is not that important.

Communication not precise? Now, what is usually the cause of most misunderstandings and mistakes?

## **Communication Formular**

*“Communication is the consideration and action of impelling a particle or impulse from source point across a distance to receipt point, with the intention of bringing into being at the receipt point a duplication and understanding of that which emanated from the source point.” (B01)*

## **The Complete Communication Cycle**

The complete communication cycle takes place between two individuals. It starts, changes, stops and turns around: The communicator perceives, understands and acts, and then the other perceives, understands and acts.

If there is no answer in this cycle, the communicator will become hungry for an answer, and he will be dissatisfied and displeased after a while.

Here are some examples of a complete communication cycle:

Mother: “Do you want milk?”

Child: “Yes.”

Mother: “Ok.”

Also in baseball: The pitcher throws the ball, and the batter tries to hit the ball with his bat.

Thus, there is intention and attention - cause, distance and effect.

## **When Does the Child Know That the Sky is Blue?**

There it is now, the new life. It sees the light of the world for the first time in the United States of America. But when does the child know that the sky is blue? For instance, in France it is completely different, there they say: Le ciel est bleu. It is strange, in the USA: The sky is blue; in France: Le ciel est bleu. Same statement different language!

When the child opens his eyes, it sees what it sees. The adult in the USA points up and says: "Blue sky." The child, without any knowledge of the language, must now figure out what blue and sky mean. A car passes by, and the adult says, "Blue car." Aha! a difference: blue sky and blue car. An airplane flies by, and the adult says, "An airplane in the sky."

In this way, the child learns the language when the adult points to something and gives it a name. Over time, the child will start to note differences and similarities and start to develop his language. The language is something that we all have agreed to, and it only works because we say that it is so. A language does not only consist of words that refer to something that can be experienced through the five senses: hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. Things perceived through the senses are referred to as concrete, for they are easily recognized in the actual event one speaks of defining.

In the human world, there are things which cannot be perceived through the senses, such as loyalty, virtue, strength, spirit, thinking, etc. These are referred to as abstract. It is something that does not exist as matter, but is available in the human world. One could say: "It exists only in the mind."

The human being uses words to express all of this, but few have ever looked up words in order to have certainty about whether they have the exact meaning that is generally agreed upon. The general agreement often determines what is right and wrong, in some cases ignoring the truth.

So when the adult points to a house and says, “house,” the child duplicates this process, creating a duplicate in his mind. A duplicate is an image in the mind of the individual, a likeness of the experienced, a mental impression or image of the physical universe, called facsimile.

Often it takes a while until something is duplicated. As the saying goes: **“The number of repetitions corresponds to certainty and results.”** (B01) This reminds me of my schoolmate Jörg. The French teacher was upset at him because he did not know the French word for “now.” He “punished” him by making him write “maintenant” (now) 100 times. Jörg’s schooldays have long passed and, never having used French, forgot it, except for “maintenant!” One duplicates faster and another slower. This has to do with the ability to create energy because a picture in the mind is a picture composed of energy that can be measured with sensitive instruments.

During the training it is often misunderstood that a house has a foundation and consists of separate parts. The same applies to learning. The foundation is the ability to create energy, what the human being does compulsively. However, the individual parts of the building are often presented in such a way that the human being finds it difficult to build a house.

The basic part of a word is the letter. Thus, one must first know the ABCs. The basic part of the language is also the letter, in this case the pronunciation of it, which, for learning purposes, is presented in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

When the learner has an accurate idea of what the individual letter looks like and how it sounds, he would be perfect in orthography\*, except for the capitalization, the punctuation, etc. This statement counts for German because all letters in a word are pronounced and do not change their pronunciation with a few exceptions. English is a mess! There are three different ways to pronounce an a, like in

care, car, name. U is pronounced differently in understand and uniform. Then there is is and ice, and lead-free gasoline and leader. The foreigner learning English does not know when to use the appropriate pronunciation. By reading a word often enough, one will eventually have all the letters duplicated to be able to write the word correctly in accordance with the grammar rules. Words are misspelled when:

1. They are not looked up, read or written often enough;
2. Unknown words are encountered in dictation, when the one dictating has an unclear pronunciation, or when the transcriber cannot reconcile the sound of the word with the sound of the individual letter, syllable, etc., meaning that one still does not know the phonetic\* alphabet.
3. The student rhymes together his own spelling instead of listening closely. Herewith dyslexia\* is now cured, except for psychological or anatomical disorders. One really does not need a speech therapist or speech pathologist.

A further remark regarding the various rural dialects: In rural areas it is frowned upon to speaking properly among local individuals. Even the adult the adult cannot speak a proper language! The learning child, therefore, has some problems with the written and the spoken language. Generally, one just does not belong, if he does not speak the language that the others speak.

There is "Chinese School:" The teacher stands in front of the class, says something, and the pupils repeat it. At the beginning, the teacher writes the matter in question on the blackboard, for example, the letter "A" and says: "Give me an A!" The students respond in chorus: "An A!" They now write a small and a large A on their small writing boards with

white chalk and hold them up. This is continued with syllables and followed by words.

In this way, in 10 minutes a day of Chinese School, one can practice the alphabet, the words, the language, the basic terminology, etc., until the end of the training, using a small writing board and chalk!

Learning means to have the basics that require the application of mechanical practice! As mentioned earlier: "The number of repetitions corresponds to certainty and results." (B01) (Dedicated to Jörg S.).

PS: The human being still is at a level of mental health where no mental processes are necessary to get a good education. It only lacks good methods and the knowledge about the functioning of the mind.

On a personal note, the theoretical driving test was so easy simply because I "only" worked through all questionnaires three times. 😊

## **Word**

Nowadays, it is easy to chat with someone by using words to communicate unless they speak a different languages or are deaf. The basic vocabulary of a language is usually sufficient to get along with each other and is about 1,000 words in English and in German. Lists of basic vocabulary exist, which one can learn ... and should in order to learn the language!

At the beginning of human language development, it was different. You saw something and wished to tell Uckh\* about it – you want to communicate an idea that is in your head. You saw a stone, the largest that you have ever laid eyes upon. How are you going to share this with someone? Language has not yet been developed; therefore, you take Uckh by the hand and drag him to the large stone. "Aah," Uckh nods.

Now you must name the object so that one knows what you want to express. I mean there are Peter, Diana, Frank, Harry, Catherine, Angela, etc. These are all different individuals who should be recognized as such, as well as the other things of this universe. A big stone is called a monolith (lat. *mono* = single, alone + *lith* = stone). One then differentiates sand, gravel, boulders, etc. As you can see, every word expresses a particular thing; one can imagine things individually.

The ancient language is called Indo-European. It got its name because the Germans settled in the Northwest and the Indians in the Southeast. In this context, the Germans and the Indians interacted long ago; they were a common nation. Nevertheless, they separated, and with increasing distance, other languages evolved.

Therefore, from the Indo-Germanic language origin, Germanic, English, High German, Dutch, Swedish, etc. evolved; (B12). Furthermore, a group of people migrated to the Mediterranean region; they were called Italic peoples). From Italic, Latin developed and served as the foundation for the Romance languages, such as Italian, Spanish, French, etc. To the east, Indo-European developed into other languages, such as the Slavic, Baltic, Iranian, etc. Imagine all languages like your family tree where somehow something evolved out of something else. Thus, from one tribe a world of many countries with their own languages came to be.

Language itself can be confusing\*. Many words are the same in some languages, but pronounced somewhat differently. From time to time one hears one or the other talk about foreign words. I do not know how this practice began. Take a look: Words developed from Indo-Germanic via Germanic to High German. Only because one word was adopted into German from another "language branch" one speaks of a foreign word, although the origin is the same, namely Indo-Germanic. For example: auto, the correct name being

automobile (*auto* = self + *mobile* = to move). When the simple-minded hears auto, he immediately thinks of a motor vehicle; however, auto means “self.” This also is used as a prefix, e.g., autogen (*gen* = to create or produce); autodidact (*didaskhein* = to teach) someone who teaches himself; autonomous (*nom* = name) independent, self-sufficient, etc.

Word could be defined as a sequence of letters that make sense, interjections\* included. Fortunately, there are dictionaries, where one can verify words. However, problems arise with dialect or colloquial expressions (similar to slang but more localized), which are not found in the dictionary until someone makes an effort to add the words to the dictionary.

Colloquial expressions can have their origin when humans do not know their own language exactly and have to invent words to express what they think. The process is: to experience something, to memorize it and to converse with someone. When one thinks about anything, one must have some knowledge of it.

New developments can be challenging, for they require their own terms - consider the computer and the Internet. One needs to familiarize oneself with new words to understand what is being discussed. But it is not enough to merely know the word, one must also know what the word means. Caution should be observed, especially when a word has various definitions: One can be at a ball in society or play soccer with a ball. Or, if one is sent to fetch a bat, then he better make sure that he does not catch the small flying animal J - as bat also means a baseball bat. There are significant differences. Often the origin gives a distinct clarity about the meaning of a word and what function it describes. For example: atom = inseparable particle, from Latin *a* = not + *temnein* = to cut.

You can determine if you understand a word by recognizing its function. Every word has a specific function,