

表达层面

- cut-and-dried (想到了 carved-in--stone)
 - already decided and unlikely to be changed 已成定局的
 - make a cut-and-dried decision 把事情彻底定下来
 - sth prove not to be cut-and-dried 某事还没有盖棺定论
- XX loather 讨厌XX的人
- give sth short shrift 轻视
- a side hustle/do sth on the side 兼职
- eclectic
 - be wide-ranging and come from many different sources
 - have an eclectic/catholic interest in sth 兴趣广泛
 - an eclectic approach 博采众长的方法
- there you have it 就是这样啦
 - We use the phrase 'there you have it' to indicate the conclusion or completion of a statement, explanation, or demonstration.
- something clicked 我恍然大悟
- Pretty much thing that wasn't music-related was given short shrift. 倒装, 强调

内容层面

- Motivating teachers matter. They not only make you feel good about the material--they make you feel good about yourself
- Often, it was seemingly useless information from a previous career that became a powerful foundation for the next.
- Such mindshifts don't just involve learning new skills or changing careers, but also changing attitudes, personal lives and personal relationships... A positive attitude about our ability to change can help produce the change.

Design



1.

What's the purpose?
framework? why and why not?
any tools/strategies I can use?
How can I make it more effective?



2.

template as a reference?
How would Eric do it? why?

Principle



3.

what?

- predicting
- generation
- understanding

declarative learning

How to learn-it-link-it a read

procedural learning

How?

- interleaving
- practicing
- elaboration

framework



4.

Z

C

my takeaways

- prior knowledge+new perspective
- questions: e.g. What does it take to...
- analysis: e.g. What are my strengths?
- ...



how would you rephrase this piece: Thanks a bunch for the amazing tips! Recently, I've been stuck in an English learning rut, clueless about how to improve through reading more effectively. Today, in class, I entertained the idea that I might stumble upon a solution to break free from this bottleneck. And guess what? Out of the blue, something clicked when I saw your feedback on my notes. For me, it's all about hitting the reset button, stepping out of the comfort zone, and then escaping the dungeon through connection, inspiration and creation. In a word, being active instead of passive matters. Big thanks once again, Eric!



It's better to be active than passive



is entertain used here fitting



In your original sentence, "Today, in class, I entertained the idea that I might stumble upon a solution to break free from this bottleneck," the use of "entertained" is grammatically correct. The verb "entertain" in this context means to consider or give attention to a thought or idea.



However, "entertain" might sound a bit formal or academic in an everyday conversation. A more casual way to express the same idea could be "I started thinking about," "I considered," or "I wondered if."

So the sentence could be revised to: "Today, in class, I started thinking that I might find a solution to break free from this bottleneck."



Here's a possible rephrasing of your piece:



Thank you immensely for your invaluable advice! I've been in a state of stagnation recently with my English learning and found myself at a loss for how to enhance my reading skills. However, while in class today, I began to contemplate the possibility of finding a solution to this impasse. Lo and behold, it was your feedback on my notes that served as a lightbulb moment for me. For me, it's about pressing the restart button, venturing beyond my safe zone, and journeying out of my confinement through building relationships, seeking inspiration, and indulging in creativity. In essence, taking an active stance rather than a passive one is crucial. My deepest gratitude to you once again, Eric!



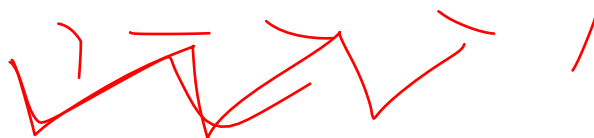
tone it down a bit, make it natural / fitting for everyday converse



Absolutely, here's a more casual version of your piece:



Thanks a lot for the great tips, Eric! I've been in a bit of a rut with my English learning lately, not really sure how to get better, especially with my reading. But today, something kind of cool happened in class. I thought I might find a way to get past this obstacle—and then it happened! Your feedback on my notes suddenly made everything click. It's like I just needed to shake things up, step out of my usual routine, and look for ways to connect, get inspired, and be creative. In short, I've realized I need to be more proactive in my learning. So thanks again, really appreciate it!



1. Practice + Feedback = Purposeful practice
2. Create a workflow, carve out a habit, cultivate self-awareness (Ask metacognitive questions).
3. Diffuse mode + Focus mode = Effective practice.
4. Show your work.
5. The only thing that matters is next shot.



张海露 Eric 🎺

如今学习资源如此丰富，学习者最需要不是教，而是反馈。学很容易变得被动，教还是以老师对学生需求的主观判断。把侧重点从「教」改成「反馈」，这就意味着学习者需要先去做，这样老师更清楚他的问题在哪，这样教就变成了「我们一起把这件事做得更好」。这样的反馈对学习至关重要，本质上是最传统的学徒制教学。

缺点是这样的反馈需要老师水平高，无法批量解决问题。这就需要学习者反过来想如何获得反馈，没有反馈的练习是低效的。ChatGPT 是一个基本的反馈工具，但对学生提问能力有要求。水平已经不错的学习者要把 ChatGPT 这样的工具用起来，然后也找机会去寻求专业的帮助，这个阶段很容易 burn out，如果感觉自己好久没进步了，要重视起来。有解决方案的，不是自己的智力和勤奋问题，是每个人都有盲点，如果自己觉察不到元认知能力不足以解决问题，那就要主动寻求更多帮助。

Mindshift
 +  +  = 

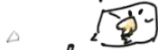
Expressions

△ xx wasn't given short shift.

△ flounder x2

△ xx is outside my playbook 

△ eclectic



click →



nemesis
archenemy



boon bane
blessing curse



cut & dried

Content



launching pad

⇒ Takeaways

① core skillsets

② beginner mindset

③

S	W
o	T



S, W, U, T

Starting today, we'll be reading three chapters per day, 40-ish pages, to serve as our daily learning dose. Please note that one of the chapters  gets short shift  on purpose, meaning it has intentionally been left annotations and highlights-free, encouraging you to proactively 'toy' with it by applying various learning principles on your own 



Chapter 2

Learning Isn't Just Studying

IT ALL BEGAN to change when Claudia couldn't pee.

Life before that pee-based turning point hadn't been pleasant. In fact, it had been really tough. There she was, in her sixties, and she could rarely remember ever feeling good for more than a few weeks at a time.

The problem was depression. All of her life, she'd suffered from a major depressive disorder. Despite that, she prided herself on acting “normally” in front of others. This meant she would sometimes think, *I've got to get up . . . got to get up off this couch*. But this wasn't enough. It took saying it out loud—“I can move my legs”—to do the job.

But fighting that voice was another: *What does it matter? It's just not worth it.*

Her depression wasn't triggered by anything in particular. And although the signs were there early on, she was first diagnosed when she went off to college at age eighteen. This didn't come as a surprise. Depression spread its tentacles through her family—her father had also been severely depressed, as were some of her siblings.

It was in the genes. What could she do? 

Claudia could usually get herself to her part-time job—she worked as a rush-hour bus driver for Metro King County in Seattle. She could also cook dinner and care for her family, whom she loved very much. From time to time, her doctors would prescribe a new drug. The drug might work for a while, but the result was always the same. Within a matter of months—a year at most—its effects would peter out and leave her as before: vacant.

She felt the urge to get out of the rat race—but then remembered that she was such a loser, she wasn't even *in* the rat race. What she was in was a kind of pervasive, ever-present pain. Still, she knew she couldn't kill herself. Her family meant too much to her. She would not—could not—hurt them. As her therapist, Paul, said, it would be “devastating” to them. In any case, raised with ironic guilt in the Catholic tradition, she realized that her death would just make a mess that other people would have to clean up.



Claudia has lived in Seattle for more than fifty years—she considers herself a native of the lush, green “Emerald City.”

On the job, Claudia drove either a forty-foot or a sixty-five-foot accordion-in-the-middle bus. Bus driving worked well for her because it paid decently and she could do it even when depressed. Her job was protected by the U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993; substitute drivers were built into the system. She mostly drove either morning or evening commuters. These working people formed a very different clientele from those who rode midday or late at night. The reading, dozing, functional, working-day crowds did not trigger her depression, and in any case, she avoided routes that were known for trouble and troubled people.

Still, she was living at the edge. Most people don't realize how hard it is to be a bus driver in a major metropolitan area. Buses are big, wide, and heavy. Other drivers—not to mention cyclists and pedestrians—often don't understand that it takes a lot longer for a bus to stop than a car, so they dart blithely into harm's way. There are bus-related fatalities every year in every major city. The bus drivers are almost always held responsible and usually lose their job after a serious accident.

On the morning of her accident, Claudia turned off the alarm, put on her uniform, had a quick breakfast with yesterday's coffee, and headed into the sunshine.

She signed in at work, was approved for duty, got on her assigned bus, and did a safety inspection. Drivers drove the same route, but a different bus every day. This morning, Claudia was to drive Route 308 in a forty-footer.

Once on the route, it was easy to move into the cadence of the job. Stop; open the door; wait for riders to clamber on; collect fares. . . . The bus shudders forward. Scan for passengers while watching the road. Brake, pull into a zone. Repeat.

Soon the bus was filled to capacity, with passengers standing in the aisle. Claudia steered with practiced hands onto the express lanes of the I-5 freeway. Traffic was heavy—her bus kept pace with the flow.

She was approaching the Stewart Street exit to downtown Seattle when it happened—so fast that Claudia could barely understand the sequence afterward.

Abruptly, the car in front of Claudia's bus skidded to a stop. The driver pulled toward the edge of the freeway shoulder—a narrow strip of pavement. Claudia could have swerved and barely avoided the car—except for one thing.

For no reason that Claudia was ever able to discover, the driver of the stopped vehicle opened his car door directly into Claudia's lane of traffic and began stepping out. Right in front of the bus.

Claudia glanced in her driver's-side mirror, signaled, veered left, and braked hard. It was like trying to turn and stop a twenty-ton whale balanced on a shopping cart. She found herself in the next lane—in which another car had just stopped.

She plowed into that car.



Claudia's swift reaction in slowing the momentum of her bus meant that, remarkably, none of her passengers were hurt. But after climbing down from the bus to check the car she'd hit, she realized there would be fallout to come.

Hundreds of drivers and passengers were seething in stopped cars behind Claudia's bus. After the police came, Claudia mechanically went through the procedures required after an accident. Bus drivers are supposed to drive defensively, ready to face any contingency—even bizarre contingencies like people jamming on their brakes and getting out of their car in the middle of traffic—so she was ticketed for “unsafe following distance.”

< a y d

It felt like a gut punch.

Claudia had been managing her depression, but she realized that this incident would knock her off the narrow ledge she'd fashioned for herself,

dropping her to even darker depths. The thought was excruciating.

Meanwhile, she was hauled off by one of the bus company supervisors for drug testing. Despite the fact that she was “clean” (so clean she could have squeaked), Claudia was so stressed by the accident that she simply couldn’t urinate into the little plastic cup that the lab tech from the drug-testing company had put into her hand.

After the third try, the lab tech noted in the record that Claudia “refused to produce a urine sample.” Terrified, she begged for another chance. The lab tech grudgingly agreed and Claudia crept back into the stall. Desperate, she urged her body to let go. *u n d e r*

This is it, she realized. I am through with bus driving. I will deal with the ticket in traffic court. It’s over.

With those two realizations, Claudia’s urine came, filling the plastic cup.

So Claudia avoided the legal imbroglio of a failed drug test. She followed through on her vow and quit her job. But there was a flip side to quitting her job: *It meant she didn’t have a job.*

As predictable as the tides, severe depression rolled in. Claudia was experienced—she knew herself, and she knew exactly what lay in the months to come. The thought of so much pain, without even a job to distract her, was agonizing.

This was it. Claudia’s Waterloo. 

It was at this point she realized that if she wanted to escape the pain, *she* was going to have to change. Not simply vary her medicines or jobs or the little world she lived in. *She* was going to have to transform her brain, her body, her habits, and her beliefs.

Claudia was desperate, and she meant business. She told herself that she had no choice but to take her life into her own hands, since medicine and therapy weren’t making life bearable. She was going to experiment with whatever she could—self-help books, teachers, coaches, cognitive neuroscience, and sheer common sense. She realized she was being melodramatic, but she was going to *learn* to get healthy unless it killed her—in one last big desperate effort at life. She was going to go through a process of discovery, experimenting on herself and keeping at it until she could see faint glimmers of light where the end of the tunnel was supposed to be.

Perky Is as Perky Does

About a month before she quit her job, Claudia was on a therapist-induced excursion to a coffee shop when she ran into an old friend who was sharing a table with another woman. The coffee shop was busy so she asked if she could join, and they readily agreed. Her tablemates had just attended their daily Jazzercise class nearby and were on an exercise high. To Claudia, exercise sounded about as fun as hammering a nail into her foot, but the women's demeanor planted a seed.

The day after the accident, instead of going to work, Claudia went to an exercise class. For the Catholic perpetrator of a bus accident, it seemed like an appropriate guilt-induced punishment.

To take part in that class, Claudia had to pay \$38 for the whole month. She vowed to get her money's worth—by attending classes on every single day that she would have been working. So, as her first session unfolded, she stood in the back of the room, bopping and ~~dipping~~ limply along, watching as the others danced with perspiration-packed enthusiasm. Afterward, the perky instructor asked Claudia how she liked it. “I don’t really move that fast,” Claudia explained—to which the instructor replied, “Just try to keep up with the class,” and bounced away.

But the instructor was watching.

At the next class, they shimmied. Claudia didn’t know how to shimmy—after all, Catholic girls do not shimmy.

Or . . . did they?

Claudia had stepped into a new world. The class not only shimmied—they thrust out their chests and swiveled their hips while a loud, lusty male sang “Give it to me, baby.” They pumped their fists in the air to the beat of “Ain’t gonna let nobody get me down,” and sashayed to “It’s a bright, bright sunshiny day.”

It wasn’t long before Claudia decided she liked it.

Exercise: A Powerful (But Not All-Powerful) Tool

Claudia had tried exercise before to ward off depression, and it hadn't worked. What made her think it would work before—and why should this time be any different?

Neuroscientists used to think that you were born with all the neurons you'd ever have, and then, as you aged, neurons gradually died off. Now, of course, we realize that this is just plain wrong. New neurons are born every day, particularly in the brain's hippocampus, a vital area for learning and memory.

Kinesiology researcher Charles Hillman notes, “We’ve found exercise has broad benefits on cognition, particularly executive functioning, including improvements in attention, working memory and the ability to multitask.”¹

“Exercise is stronger than any medicine I could ever prescribe,” Claudia’s psychiatrist had told her. Indeed, exercise seems to serve as an all-purpose restart button for the brain. It does this in part by stimulating production of a protein, BDNF, which nurtures the growth of both preexisting and newly born brain cells. This effect is so powerful that it can *reverse* the decline of brain function in the elderly. Neuroscientist Carl Cotman, who did the initial breakthrough work in the area at the University of California, Irvine, has likened BDNF to a brain fertilizer that “protects neurons from injury and facilitates learning and synaptic plasticity.”² Exercise also spurs the production of neurotransmitters—chemical messengers that transmit signals from one cell to another and one part of the brain to another. (Remember when Claudia found it so hard to get herself to move from the couch?) The simple improvement in blood flow that results from exercise may also have an effect on cognitive abilities as well as physical functioning.

As humans age, we naturally lose synapses—connecting points between neurons. It’s a bit like corroding pipes that spring leaks and eventually can’t bring water to where it’s needed. BDNF seems to slow and reverse that “corrosive” effect. More than that, exercise seems to improve our ability to form long-term memories, although we’re not sure precisely how it takes place. This, as it turns out, is a key aspect of the ability to learn. Thus, for aging brains in particular, exercise can perform the magic of a fairy godmother waving her wand.³

But it's important to balance the reporting here. If exercise were the only thing you needed to learn better and think more optimistically, then Olympic-level athletes should all be cheerful geniuses. Also, many people who can't exercise as a consequence of physical ailments can still learn and reason quite nicely. (Stephen Hawking seems to have done pretty well for himself.) For older individuals, walking briskly for 75 minutes a week seems to have the same positive influence on cognition as walking for 225 minutes a week.⁴ (Actual fitness improves more with higher levels of exercise.) So what are we to make of this? *likely*

It seems that exercise can kick-start a cascade of neurotransmitters, along with a host of other neural changes that can shift your mind when you're trying to learn something new or think in different ways. What exercise does is set the scene to *potentiate* other changes in how your mind works. You can learn more effectively, in other words, if you've got an exercise program going on. This means, if you're serious about making a mental shift in your life, it can be invaluable to incorporate exercise into the picture.

Exercise was part of what Claudia knew she needed to do to get her out of her depressed mind-set. But she knew she needed more.

→ Key Mindshift

Exercise

Exercise is a powerful enhancement for any mental shift you want to make in your life. Commitment followed through with exercise has great benefits for learning and mood.

An Active Role in Changing Her Brain

Claudia had been through the drill of depressive episodes so many times. This time, she realized that if she really wanted to get herself out of the pattern, she would have to dig much more deeply than she'd ever dug before. What she'd read of how her brain worked, what she'd heard from her therapists—bits and pieces of it all resonated. She needed a mindshift to

truly rewire her brain. Paradoxically, she had to be herself—but also to change in a fundamental way. To do that, she needed to make her mindshift all-important in her life.

A dear friend of Claudia's once told her, "I've had lots of things happen that I could have gotten depressed about. I just chose to not get depressed about them. End of story." *Yeah, right*, was Claudia's reaction. *I wish*.

The notion that medicine alone would do the trick in freeing us from depression is prevalent in both doctors and the depressed—giving a pill, after all, is just so darned easy. Claudia had fallen into that trap herself—she'd once been featured in an article about the positive effects of medication on depression after pills had buoyed her for nearly a year. But soon after the article appeared, her mind shifted itself back to its well-rooted, pessimist take on life.

So Claudia's approach toward levering herself out of her bleak pit became multifaceted and determined. Just like making muscular change, making neural change would demand hard work. And lots of it.

She did some experiments, making herself go out and do things that she knew other people did for fun. *You're not so different*, she told herself. Her mind would try to do its old number on her, forecasting a glum outcome for anything she'd planned. However, she knew she couldn't always trust her mind—sometimes it told her to do stupid things. She began keeping records of her experimentation in a way that allowed for self-monitoring. Before doing something that was supposed to be fun, she would ask herself, *On a scale of 1 to 10, how much fun do I think it will be?* Afterward, she would rate herself again—and she was often surprised to see how frequently the outcome exceeded her initial expectations. In time, she began to figure out what worked for her—and she repeated what worked, whether she felt like it or not.



Claudia Meadows seemed fated for a life in the shade of depression. But her active role in reshaping her thinking changed her destiny.



Claudia's Insights: Fun as a Spiritual Path

→ Life is full of paradoxes. For example, be authentically yourself, but change. And you don't know as much as you think you do. Read self-help books. You need all the help you can get.

- Don't always trust your mind. Sometimes it tells you to do stupid things. Find trusted advisers and run any drastic decisions by them.
- Consciously choose and acquire healthy habits. Flossing your teeth doesn't take willpower if it is a habit.
- It is much easier to imitate than initiate action. So seek advice and follow directions. Adapt it to your own circumstances. Until you can lead, follow the person in front of you. Do what they do.
- Pack your bag, purse, or gym bag the night before. You're likely to feel better about exercise the evening before than you do the morning of.
- Spend as much time outside in nature as possible. The light will do you good, and you will encounter beautiful things like plants that breathe and rocks that are proud to be rocks.
- Bring as much light to where you live as possible. Open the curtains. Use mirrors opposite windows. Use reflectors and colored glass. Be like a crow. Collect shiny objects.
- Keep going to exercise class. Eventually you will look and feel better.
- Surround yourself with lovely little things that you can afford and that make your environment beautiful. Environment counts.
- Make lists. You'll feel better if you do. And you're likely to feel even better if you do the things on the list.
- Make and hang inspirational posters, sticky notes, and pictures of people you love on your wall, and cartoons and magnets on the fridge that remind you of good times.
- You never know who is going to be your friend, so act friendly to everyone unless there is a good reason not to. Learn people's names.
- Stop complaining.

Claudia continued taking medicine, but she realized deep down that if she didn't start taking steps to rewire her thinking, her mind would slowly find its way back to the old patterns. Rewiring her brain had to be a continual daily process.

Because she was very sensitive, one of her triggers was seeing other people's suffering depicted on newscasts. So, though it was difficult, she made herself stop watching the nightly news and stop listening to the radio if a talk program or music was interrupted by news. News, after all, is

primarily bad news. She began getting any necessary news and politics through a trusted friend who understood her problem.

She knew that her feelings of pain, whether she stubbed her toe or heard of another's hurt, arose only because of her own brain's perceptions. Surprisingly often, her pain came from a scary story she was telling herself about events she was viewing. Rather than being consumed by others' pain, she learned that she needed to work toward seeing the other person's problem in a rational way and asking herself if and how she could help.

Three years post-bus accident, a vibrant Claudia, age sixty-six, noted:

A number of fortunate things came together for me after I quit my job: less stress without the bus driving; more time for sleep and taking care of myself; an opportunity for deep friendships, intellectual stimulation, and—probably most important and most difficult for me—vigorous exercise four days a week through Jazzercise, which includes upbeat music with positive lyrics.

Three years after the bus accident, I'm pretty proud of myself. I could not have imagined how well I have become. I haven't gotten rich, climbed any mountains, earned any degrees, or made any momentous discoveries. But now I can get out of bed on a regular basis. I no longer feel disabling depression; I have not had a serious episode of major depression for three years and counting. I can safely say that I have learned to live my life without serious chronic, recurrent depression.

I do believe that I have learned to change my way of perceiving the world to a less painful way, and that perspective has and does take continued learning and effort. I know it is not in vogue right now to emphasize the effort required to achieve what we want. Unfortunately for many of us, effort and focus is required.

Living a healthy lifestyle has become my hobby and my job. I live a healthy lifestyle, not because I want to live longer, but to feel better during the time I am alive. I do not want to hurt. How do I know that my deliberate actions have led to increased health? I don't. As I've learned from my reading, it is not easy to rewire one's brain in the face of entrenched neural loops. How much my conscious effort is affecting my perception is not knowable to me. I choose to believe my actions do make a difference to my experience. Fun has become my spiritual path.

I think that what depression has taught me is that I need to listen to myself and take care of my own needs first. Today I choose me. Then out of my abundance I can care for other people, other living beings, and then things. The learning was long and painful, but it's really quite simple. It's all about the priorities of loving.

It would have been hard for the old me to believe this, but recently, a close friend told me that I am the most positive person she knows.

Indeed, I first met Claudia at a meetup in Seattle for students of “Learning How to Learn.” Among the score of learners who congregated in the coffee shop, Claudia's vibrant, can-do cheerful attitude stood out. We hit it off immediately.

B

Claudia's Lifelong Learning

Claudia has made enormous changes in the way her mind works—changes that many people would think were impossible for someone with her biological underpinnings and her clear, lifelong patterns. Claudia notes that learning is key: “Teach yourself. Learn that getting beyond your current state is possible. Learn to change your brain and your experience of life.” Exercise underpinned Claudia's ability to learn and change.

There was one big change that Claudia made, however, that we haven't really brought out. It was a vital key to her mindshift.

We'll get to that.

★ Now You Try!

Taking Active Steps

Part of Claudia's challenge was that the depression she wanted to escape made it difficult for her to want to do what she needed to escape the depression. She was in a cycle of negatively forecasting how pleasant or worthwhile events would be when she was depressed. But she moved toward health by taking active steps. These included monitoring herself and trying out new behaviors, like exercise, to keep herself on a positive self-reinforcing cycle. This allowed her to achieve and maintain a healthier mental outlook.

What mindshift are you trying to accomplish? How could you use self-monitoring in your mindshift? What thoughts are keeping you stuck? Are you trapping yourself by thinking that you are “genetically predisposed” to being unable to learn languages or math? Do you tell yourself that you are too old to make a career change? Are you inadvertently in a self-reinforcing cycle where it feels more comfortable to just continue as you are—though it leaves you dissatisfied? What positive steps could you take and what self-testing could you do to move to a new self-reinforcing cycle that begins pushing your mind to where you want it to be? What new behaviors could you immediately start to accomplish your mindshift? What do you need to do to “get off the couch and stand up”?

Jot your answers to these questions on a piece of paper, or in your notebook, under the title “Taking Active Steps.”