

Self-Knowledge, the Key to Preparing for Competition *by Denis Waitley*

Self-knowledge has always been the key to preparing for competition. Knowledge of your attributes, abilities, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and traits is essential to riding the front end of the wave of change into the new century. To fully assess your own talents, realize that studies confirm that what we love and do well as children continues as our latent or manifest talent as adults.

Examination of your weekend or evening interests might reveal a gem of potential you can apply to your vocation. I strongly suggest you don't unthinkingly relegate what you love to do for yourself solely to hobbies. You might make it, or at least integrate it into your life's work.

The acquisition of knowledge, which is the new global power, is a life-long experience, not a collection of facts or skills. Not long ago, what you learned in school was largely all you needed to learn to secure a career. With knowledge expanding exponentially, this is no longer true. Hundreds of scientific papers are published daily.

Every thirty seconds, some new technological company produces yet another innovation. Your formal education has a very short shelf life. Life-long learning, once a luxury for the few, has become absolutely vital to continued success. Continue gaining expertise and avoid thinking like an expert.

Action Idea: An excellent benchmarking exercise is to spend a weekend with key associates or family members and dust off your childhood memories. Remember what you really enjoyed and wanted to do most as a child. The next activity in assessing your interests is considering your current ones. What do you most enjoy after work? What do you most want to do on weekends and vacations? What are your hobbies? Can you bring more of what you enjoy into your business life?