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A LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE ZONE

The 'performance zone' is that moment when you're doing something as best as you can. You're executing. If you are a tennis player, then you're in the performance zone when you're playing a game. You want to win, so you apply all your techniques and strategies in the best way possible to win the game. But, if you're having trouble with your backhand topspin, you will avoid that move because you want to avoid mistakes and lost points.

The 'learning zone' is the moment when you focus on becoming better. You concentrate on the things that you haven't mastered yet (in this case, the backhand topspin). You will practice this move (with a coach) during training sessions to grow your tennis skills. At that moment, it's expected to make mistakes and observe them. You reflect on how you can adjust your technique to become better.

In most organisations, people try to be in the performance zone the entire time. Making mistakes is undesirable all of the time, and you're always in the execution phase. As a consequence, we're doing the best we can, but we're never getting better. We're stagnating. This can be very dangerous for an organisation (and an individual) because the world is changing, and continuous learning is becoming crucial. Successful organisations understand that their employees need time and opportunities to learn. There are many ways to support a learning environment, like clarifying how you want people to learn, having leaders role model learning visibly, and rewarding people who learn & share. It also helps to have a stimulating physical learning environment. once.

FOUR TYPES OF MISTAKES

Not every mistake is the same. Eduardo defines 4 different types of mistakes:

The Stretch Mistakes

'Stretch mistakes' happen when we're working to expand our current abilities. We're trying to do something that is beyond what we already can do without help, so we're bound to make some errors. When a mistake happens, reflect, identify what we can learn and adjust your approach to a more proactive stance, until you master the new level.

The 'Aha' Moment Mistakes

So, you do something as intended, but then realize that it was the wrong thing to do. There's a moment of surprise that makes you realize you need to do things in a different way. For example- you want to help a friend (assuming that help is always welcome), but we find out that the person didn't want help at that moment. Asking for feedback is a good way to learn from these mistakes.

The Sloppy Mistakes

These kinds of errors happen when you do something that you are already familiar with, in an incorrect way, due to lack of concentration. It's a signal to enhance our focus, attention or processes.

The High-Stakes Mistakes

You want to minimize these high-stakes mistakes because there's a lot to lose-sometimes it can be catastrophic or dangerous to make mistakes in these situations. You don't want to experiment with driving blindfolded, or setting out to try out new techniques during a sport championship. It's the moment to perform.

LEARNING IN A HIGH-STAKES ENVIRONMENT

1. Create your own low-stakes island. Even in an environment where you always have to be in performance mode, you can start with defining some domains in which you want to improve. Then you can improve in small ways. You could find a mentor or a colleague to share some learnings, or plan some time for learning activities like reading some books or watching a TED talk.

2. Keep executing and observe, reflect and adjust your behaviour afterwards. How did a certain meeting with a high-stake client go? What went well? What could be improved? What are the next steps needed to grow?

3. Become a role model in the high-stakes environment. Start with sharing your learnings and mistakes; create a safe zone where your colleagues can do the same, and give feedback to each other.

