

Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better

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Practice Perfect makes a strong case for achieving success through “getting better at getting better.”

Originally geared toward teachers, *Practice Perfect* is an excellent handbook for any coach or leader who wants to foster incremental improvement.

“Practice makes perfect,” as the saying goes, and this handy volume by three teachers imparts critical lessons in the form of “42 rules to shape and improve how you use practice to get better.” Lemov, Woolway, and Yezzi draw from their own experiences, research, and work with fellow teachers for this practice manual which is widely applicable to teachers, parents, mentors, coaches, and organizational leaders.

Forty-two rules are divided into logical sections concerning broad areas: assumptions, design principles, modeling, feedback, social activity implementation, and application. Each rule is then clearly explained and accompanied by relevant examples and specific suggestions for implementation. Occasionally, authors supplement a rule with “Learnings,” highlighting a key point or case study that reinforces the premise of the rule.

The rules themselves are compelling and actionable. For example, Rule 8, “Correct Instead of Critique,” demonstrates why repeating something correctly is more effective than “merely telling someone that she did it wrong.” The rule concludes with helpful counsel:

Seek opportunities to correct privately. When you correct publicly, make it clear that it's a common error, then make sure to correct, not critique, by asking all participants to repeat the action.

Rule 29, “Describe the Solution (Not the Problem),” is a mini-lesson on giving effective feedback by illustrating that “vaguely constructive” advice is too general to be useful. Rule 33, “Make It Fun to Practice,” offers several creative ideas for bringing joy to practice sessions.

The work is consistently positive and encouraging. Its examples, many from the authors’ workshops, bring the rules to life. The conclusion shows how to personally apply a number of the rules, practice within a team, and practice within an organization, all in an exercise deemed the “Monday Morning Test”—because rules must be specific enough to be immediately implemented first thing on Monday morning.

In stressing the importance of practice, *Practice Perfect* makes a strong case for striving for excellence and achieving success through “getting better at getting better.” It is the kind of book that should help individuals, teams, and entire organizations do just that.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (January/February 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed

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