



# Train Yourself

## *The Seven Steps to Higher Learning*

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### **Step One: Treat Yourself Like a Dog**

When a dog does a good thing you give it a treat, something to eat, stroke it, make it feel good and really get that positive reinforcement going. So after you finish watching that 30 minute tutorial on how to edit in Final Cut Pro via YouTube, or any number of tutorials from Lynda.com, treat yourself to that Krispy Kreme or go buy that new Moleskin notebook you've been eyeing.

### **Step Two: Start Yesterday**

Seriously, no one is going to train you. Nobody cares about you (well, maybe your mommy, but that's about it). You have to invest the time and energy into yourself, by yourself, for yourself. Hurry up because the person next to you started yesterday.

### **Step Three: Be Ready**

When you're searching for creative ways to learn something, keep that Moleskin you treated yourself to handy at all times. You never know when an opportunity to learn something new will strike. For example, I love to watch documentary films and I often learn new camera or editing techniques while viewing, so I'm known to grab my pen and paper and make notes for my next project.

### **Step Four: Overwhelm Yourself**

There's no better way to learn anything than by total and utter immersion. First, start at the beginning, find the Dummies for Dummies version of whatever you want to learn. When I really wanted to teach myself Flash, I went off the deep end. I found every Flash tutorial Web site known to man. I also discovered the best training books and local classes. For example, I'm kinda strapped for cash (who isn't these days, right), so the classes and books were out, but I did find the books at the library. And when my newspaper wanted to treat me to a class for all the hard work I'd been doing lately, I immediately knew which one and signed up before they could change their mind. Now when I need help with some actionscript or want to download a free file, I know where to find it quickly to meet my deadline.

### **Step Five: Roll Your Own**

When you are going through any tutorial — book, online, DVD — never use their examples. Use your own assets. If you are learning how to build a dynamic slide show in Flash, use your own images or those from the photo staff; that way when you are done you have a project to send to your friends or use for work. It's always more motivating and satisfying when your finished product has your assets, not just some random bouncing ball on the screen, but your newspaper's logo, for example.

### **Step Six: Be Your Own Coach**

You know that voice in your head, use it to motivate yourself. For example, the discussion in my head goes something like this, "You Suck!" "No I don't, I'm Awesome!" Harness that inner critic or ego-maniac and use it to your advantage.

### **Step Seven: Find a mentor, because being your own coach kinda sucks**

Remember, there's always someone smarter than you and usually they're nice enough to teach you a thing or two. Remember, the more you know, the more you can create.

