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In Peripheral Visions, Mary Catherine Bateson explores learning through analogies that show that learning is not a static process. As her subtitle, "Learning Along the Way" suggests, humans acquire knowledge throughout their lives and learning should not be seen as occurring at only one specified time or place in life. She is clear in the separation of the ideas of schooling and learning. Although an educator herself, she is critical of the constructs that formal education bring to the learning process. In the chapter "Learning As Coming Home" she states, "Teaching children that there is a correct time and place for learning, we also teach them to *stop* learning when they manage to escape school, or to keep what has been learned specialized to one context and quite inaccessible for use in others, like tourists who become tongue-tied in Paris after years of high school French." This is the opposite of the understanding of learning that she proposes.

In Peripheral Visions, she uses a number of metaphors to help explain her philosophy of "learning along the way." In the chapter "Double Helix," Bateson uses the familiar image of a DNA strand to describe the spiraling aspect of true learning. Whereas learning inside the classroom is often presented as a linear model with topics having a set beginning and ending, true learning in life brings us back to topics again and again. As she states, "Lessons too complex to grasp in a single occurrence spiral past again and again, small examples gradually revealing greater and greater implications." When new experiences present themselves, our first understandings may be literal and basic. The metaphor of the double helix is an apt description of how with each successive interaction, our knowledge becomes firmer, deeper, and more accessible. "You'll understand when you are older," is a quip most parents have made to their children which echoes this idea. The layering of experience over knowledge enriches the learning process and enables us to arrive at deeper levels of meanings that were not possible in earlier interactions. The spiraling metaphor allows for a continuity of thought. She states, "If I recognize my situation today as comparable to but not the same as my situation yesterday, I can translate yesterday's skills and benefit from yesterday's learning."

Another aspect of the idea of "learning along the way" involves participation. In her chapter "Joining In," Bateson states, "Day after day, we are forced to play without knowing the rules in situations where small mistakes cannot be laughed off or used for further learning. One effect is to discourage participation. Another is to undermine integrity, which cannot easily flow from interaction to performance." Indeed, as adults we often hesitate to join in the type of participatory learning that Bateson proposes. The fear of appearing foolish or unknowledgeable is often too strong. Bateson herself describes an instance where she told her daughter that she didn't know how to dance a particular way. Her daughter responded, "Sure you do. Come on, let's try it together." What is powerful about this model is the freedom it allows of the learner. Where expertise is valued, the willingness to be an amateur and novice at some point should also be valued. Children naturally gravitate to this form of learning. Often on the playground, children will invite others to join a game with calls of, "Don't worry, we'll teach you the rules," or "It'll make sense once we start playing." Adults are more hesitant to take that leap. Learning by joining in often involves seeing others' points of view. In the chapter, Bateson describes several incidents from her time in the Philippines that juxtapose how culture affects individuals' responses. In describing a fire that took place in the business district, she observed her own reactions, those of the American business people, and those of the Filipinos in the crowd. What was interesting to her was how one Filipino businessman talked with those in the crowd and tried

to arrange space for his business to resume work the next day. Bateson states, "He had two cultural styles available and the skill to combine them into a third pattern." Through the process of joining in and learning new styles and ways of thinking, we open ourselves up to creating new patterns of thought. Being willing to participate in experiences and activities that are new, gives us additional layers of knowledge that we can draw upon in other situations.

Mary Catherine Bateson provides excellent models of learning in Peripheral Visions. The key is looking at learning as a lifelong process that is ever-changing and developing. What we learn influences how we think, and how we think changes as we learn more. The cycle is spiraling like the double helix and neverending like the mobius strip she mentions. She summarizes the idea of "learning along the way" most succinctly by stating, "They need to know how to observe, how to draw on other people's expertise. How to improvise and cope with only partial knowledge and how to imagine alternatives."