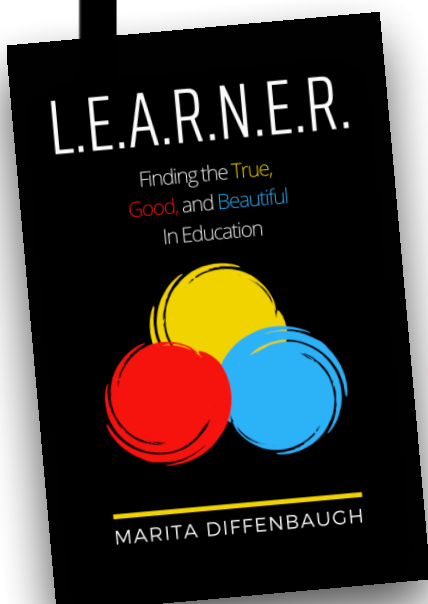


# L.E.A.R.N.E.R.

Finding the **True**,  
**Good**, and **Beautiful**  
In Education

## STUDY GUIDE

Marita Diffenbaugh



## Listen, Empower, Analyze, Resources, Needs, Experiences, Relationships

The **L.E.A.R.N.E.R. Finding the True, Good, and Beautiful** action guide has been designed to support a team and/or an individual in reflecting on practice and taking ideas into action for the students that they serve.

*Let's start by looking at the big picture and reviewing the parts of L.E.A.R.N.E.R. Highlight what you're doing really well from the Oath for Learners, and circle one area that you'd like to study and/or improve.*

The **L.E.A.R.N.E.R.** acronym can be turned into an *Oath for Learners*, that we, as educators, can pledge to our students:

As a teacher, I pledge to **listen** to and **empower** my students to develop their full potential. I will **analyze** and study my students. I'll help provide hope to my students by matching **resources** to their **needs** and providing **experiences** that support each student's growth. I will model the power of a team and help my students build lasting **relationships**. Ultimately, I realize that to help a learner, I need to be a learner myself.

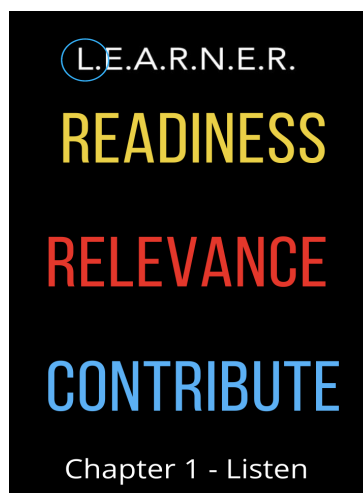
This *Oath for Learners* is versatile and can be personalized for any role or relationship that seeks to support learning and can be customized for a specific learner. Fill in the blanks, as you'd like for administrators, parents, friends, grandparents, community members, students, etc.

As a \_\_\_\_\_, I pledge to **listen** to and **empower** \_\_\_\_\_ to develop his/her full potential. I will **analyze** and study \_\_\_\_\_. I'll help provide hope to \_\_\_\_\_ by matching **resources** to his/her **needs** and provide **experiences** that support his/her growth. I will model the power of a team and help \_\_\_\_\_ build lasting **relationships**. Ultimately, I realize that to help a learner, I need to be a learner myself.

I'd love to learn from reflections and ideas that come as you are doing a deep dive into L.E.A.R.N.E.R.! Please feel free to email me at [maritadiffenbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:maritadiffenbaugh@gmail.com).

Thank you for being a difference maker!

*Marita Diffenbaugh*



## Listen: Where is Your Attention?

“Listening is the important first step in helping learners make true learning connections (relevance), share the good (contribution), and take beautiful risks (readiness) that will help them reach their goals, help them to grow, and make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others.”

**Choose a Team or Teacher Challenge and share your learning on social media using hashtag #LearnerTGB**

### **Readiness** (Taking **Beautiful** Risks)

*Team Challenge:* How is your district or school modeling learning? Educators can create and display their own learning plans for students to see. Learning is cultivated in others when they see people they admire putting themselves out there as learners and sharing their successes and failures. Celebrate the learning process and let students see you encourage your colleagues in their learning, as well. Invite learners to share their learning plans and goals with others. Offering opportunities for learners to create, share, and take action helps build a culture that listens for, expects, and honors learning.

*Teacher Challenge:* Try the Perseverance Red Folder Strategy. You might add an inspirational quote to encourage your students or yourself, when things don’t go as planned. One that I’ve used is from Victor Hugo, “Perseverance, a secret of all triumphs.” The red folder stores a ready-to-go list of questions/activities that can be activated by students, a parent volunteer, a substitute, or yourself. This can be used to fill the gap, when a lesson doesn’t go as needed and you need a quick way to pivot, or it can also be pulled out when technology lets you down.

### **Relevance** (Finding **True** Learning Connections)

*Team Challenge:* Work together to “Clean the Garage.” Begin some action research that involves students/families/business owners/community members to answer the following questions - What is essential for K-12 students to learn? What is relevant and working well? How is the workload for students? Are we asking too much? Not enough?

*Teacher Challenge:* What strategies are you using to help students understand the connections between what they are learning and what is needed to support them or their community? How

does the new information learned connect to what they already know, or what they are going to be learning about next?

### **Contribute (Sharing the Good)**

*Team Challenge:* Plan a Community Listening Post Event. This will provide an opportunity for parents, community members, students, staff and other interested parties to listen to learning stories and learning needs. This is a great place to celebrate learning! Have the listening go both ways by inviting community members to share their ideas for education. This valuable exchange will help to align educational goals with the needs in the workforce and in your community.

*Teacher Challenge:* Research and follow current events with your students to discover needs in your community and look for ways to activate service learning. Are there needs in your school or classroom that could be cared for by your students?

### **Finding the True, Good, and Beautiful**

Take a look at the table at the end of Chapter 1 to find some True, Good, and Beautiful connections. As you've completed team or teacher challenges, the following table can be a tool to help you reflect on how you are listening for the true, good, and beautiful in your work.

<b>True</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Beautiful</b>



## Empower: Who is Learning?

“Knowing your students, helping them see their value, and guiding them to be lifelong learners who contribute are active ingredients for difference making.”

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### Our Vibe (Welcome, This Is A Good Place For You)

*Team Challenge:* Give a group of students the opportunity to interview students and staff members asking about what they enjoy at school and what they wish could be different. Ask the students to collect this information through short video recordings. Watch the recordings together and pull out themes, needs, and questions. Make any necessary changes based on these interviews, thank the participants, and those who interviewed for the information. This process of asking and responding will provide a sense of empowerment for all who are involved.

*Teacher Challenge:* Do you know what makes each student smile? Collect this information by making a 3 X 5 card for each of your students. Write on the cards things that are important to them or that bring them joy. Store these in a box to pull from daily and find a way to connect with that student to make a special memory by acknowledging something that they love. It would be a bonus to do this with your colleagues, as well.

Walk through your school as if you are a student entering for the first time. What do you notice on the walls of the school entrance? Is there a welcome that you can expect each day? What are the smiles, sights, sounds, and smells that you hope to share with your students while they are at school?

### Two Way Communication (100% Human)

*Team Challenge:* List all of the ways that people are invited to communicate about their learning and needs, while at school. Do learners have the ability and choice to opt-out and co-create an alternative, if the learning experience is not working for them?

*Teacher Challenge:* Observe your students to make sure that they are communicating during the learning process. Review pages 38-40 and ask students #LearnerTGB guiding questions to help

them sort what they know (true), what their challenges are and what help is needed (good), and what they hope for in their next steps (beautiful).” To check on how your classroom, school, or district is doing to empower the learners you serve, review the questions listed in the table on page 48.

### **You Belong (Just Be You)**

*Team Challenge:* How is your learning space a reflection of what your values and beliefs are? In what ways does your school help to develop confidence in learners? How do you inspire interest? Review the following statements from #LearnerTGB to check on the confidence and motivation of learners, then discuss and connect these to your practice.

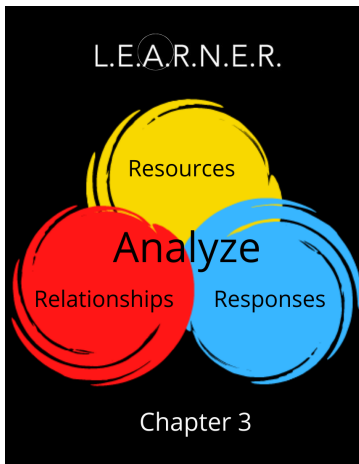
Learners gain confidence when the following three statements are true:

I have a need  
I know where the resources are for this need  
I'll take care of this myself.

Learners can be motivated through situational interest. If these statements are true, then learners might be discovering a new interest:

I can see someone enjoying something that looks interesting to me.  
I have decided that I have this need, too.  
I'll request the needed resources, so that I can have enjoyment, too.

*Teacher Challenge:* Take another look at pages 35-36 and ask your students to draw, write, or talk about one of their favorite places to be. This could be a place that they have visited in the past, one that they continue to visit, or a place that they dream about. As you review what your students have shared, make a list of ways to incorporate this into your learning space. Watch for their eyes to light up, when they notice that you've created an experience just for them.



## Chapter 3

### Analyze: What is Learning?

“While it is important to have expertise in the content that you teach, it is also important to have expertise in studying the students, as they, in turn, study the content.”

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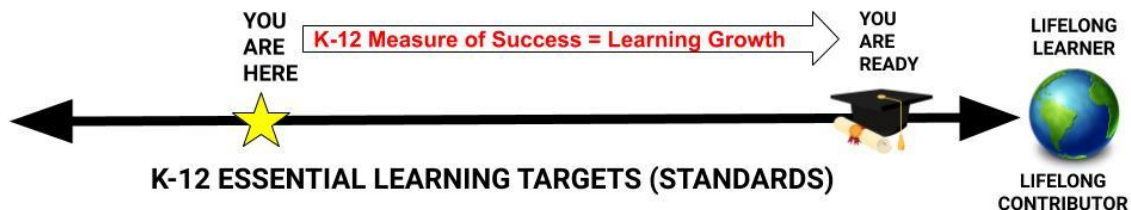
### A Remix for Measuring and Reporting Learning

*Team Challenge:* Do learners know that they have a job to do? Watch learners move from passive to active learning as they get the big picture and understand how school is designed for them. As you introduce the *Job of the Learner* with students, show them what they can expect from you through the *Oath for Learners*. Study the following visual and discuss.

## Education as a Service to Inspire and Support Learning

### An Oath to Our Learners (*What Learners Can Expect From Us*)

We will create an education service that **L**istens, **E**mpowers, **A**nalyzes, provides **R**esources, understands your **N**eeds, designs **E**xperiences, and offers caring **R**elationships.



### Your Job as a Learner (*What We Expect From Learners*)

**Listen:** I want to learn because of my own curiosity or because I think it is valuable to me.

**Empower:** I believe in my own abilities to learn.

**Analyze:** I reflect on what I know, what I hope to learn, or what I've learned.

**Resources:** I ask for help or know where to find help.

**Needs:** I understand how I best learn and ask for help when needed.

**Experiences:** I learn by asking questions, collaborating, investigating, experimenting, creating

**Relationships:** I work with others to share my learning or learn from them.

*Teacher Challenge:* Help students discover the “Why?” in their learning by making a connection between resources, relationships, and responses within the learning experience. Next, support students by reviewing the “How” of the learning process by showing their part (Job of the Learner) and your part (Oath for Learners).

### **Leading and Learning**

*Team Challenge:* What does professional learning look like in your district or school? The changes that you hope to see in the classroom to support students’ ownership in their learning should be visible in professional development offerings. EdCamp is a fantastic model to discover ways to provide purpose, encouragement, celebration, and community voice, see the end of Chapter 3 for a link and QR Code to get started.

*Teacher Challenge:* Start by studying yourself as a learner and ask yourself the following questions: What are my strengths and limitations? How do I share my interests and strengths with my students, my work team, my community? What interrupts my learning? Share some of your learning stories with your students and connect them to your answers to above questions. Invite students to participate in a similar challenge.

### **Learning As the Return on Investment**

*Team and Teacher Challenge:* Activate Frequent Learning Check-ups  
Learning check-ups are coaching or mentoring sessions that should incorporate all three ways of knowing (true, good, and beautiful) in order to provide complete support for learners. These learning check-ups should include time for students to reflect and capture the purpose of their learning goal(s) with a TGB fill-in-the-blank sentence like the following:

I know \_\_\_\_\_ so that I can \_\_\_\_\_, which helps me \_\_\_\_\_.





## Chapter 4 Resources: How Will Learning Continue?

“When wonder results in play, it is especially memorable.”

**Choose a Team or Teacher Challenge and share your learning on social media using hashtag #LearnerTGB**

### Wonder and Play

*Team Challenge:* Brainstorm with your students and/or colleagues about what the following statements currently look like in your learning space. Choose a couple of these statements to activate in a different way this school year. For fun, you might use a GIF, video, song, or image to further explain your thoughts.

*Learners as researchers*

*Learners as co-designers in lesson planning*

*Learners as partners in grading and feedback*

*Learners as participants in classroom design and function*

*Learners using critical thinking and communication*

*Learners using collaboration*

*Learners develop character and participate in a culture that is learning together*

*Learners having fun through creativity and play*

*Teacher Challenge:* Choose one of the following to co-design and activate with your students.

- Create a Wonder Wall in your classroom for students to add to while their wonders are fresh in their minds.
- Travel together, even if field trips consist of a neighborhood walk, virtual experiences, or time traveling from your classroom using your imagination. Check out the QR Code to visit *Expeditions in Education* for free and fun virtual field trips.
- Share your interests. Create your own TED Talk platform and use it; then share it with your students and other community members, too.
- Go outside and play something that connects to a learning goal.



## Learning Spaces

*Teacher Challenge:* Involve students, families, and your community in creating interactive learning spaces. See pages 93-96 for ideas.

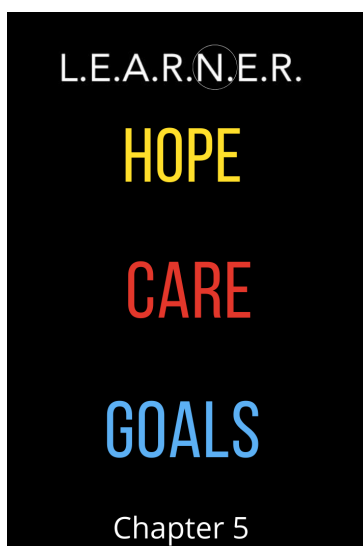
<i>Cave</i>	<i>Campfire</i>	<i>Watering Holes</i>	<i>Mountain Top</i>

*Team and Teacher Challenge:* Review chapter 4 to look for how bundling skill sets (True), learning plans (Good), and Portfolios (Beautiful) can serve as tools to help an individual measure their learning success.

Bundling Skill Sets:

Learning Plans:

Portfolios:



## Chapter 5

### Needs: What Will Support Learners?

“Help students see a way to learn, and you will notice that their will follows.”

**Choose a Team or Teacher Challenge and share your learning on social media using hashtag #LearnerTGB**

### Hope is a Prerequisite for Learning

*Team and Teacher Challenge:* Help students see a **way** to learn, and you will notice that their **will** follows. Review the following statements and discuss what is already being incorporated at your school/classroom, and decide what you would like to work on.

- Help students see why the learning target is a priority and how it is valuable to them.
- Break up each learning goal/standard into small parts. Provide support for each part.
- Celebrate small wins along the way. Once they have something mastered, give them an opportunity to teach and share their new skill(s).
- Listen, empower, analyze, and connect students to resources that will help them with next steps. Give responsive and actionable feedback with scaffolding, as needed.
- Let goal setting and goal achievement be an enjoyable process. Be aware of making comparisons between learners or putting students into unfair competitions, as these can stifle the enjoyment of learning.
- When none of your strategies work, seek additional help. The student’s lack of hope could be a symptom of a need that requires immediate support.

### Care (What's for Breakfast?)

*Team Challenge:* How are students letting you know when they need support? Consider the protocols and resources that you already have in place. Review Chapter 5 for additional resources to incorporate, as needed.

*Teacher Challenge:* Time is a gift that we can use to care for ourselves and others.

Spend some time thinking about how you are doing. The resources and strategies that you share with your students can work for you, too. How are you caring for yourself? Make time to rest and recharge. Start your day with a good breakfast, add some exercise, and ask yourself how you are doing throughout the day. You matter.

Spend some time thinking about how you care for your students. What are their strengths and their struggles? Is there a student or two that you don't know well? Take time to have a conversation on a weekly basis until you do.

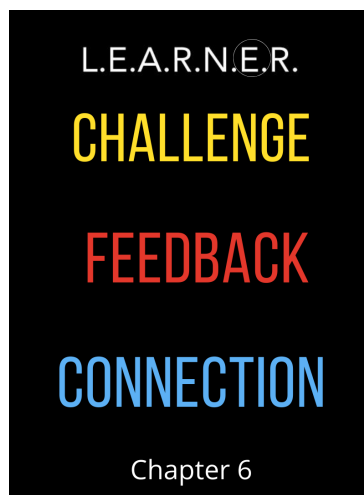
### Goals (Learning To Learn)

*Team Challenge:* Review the Chapter 5 section, "Learning to Learn" and then choose a question to explore with your colleagues.

- What is the achievable challenge level for each student on the specific expected learning target?
- How can students be supported through flexible grouping?
- How is learning the reward?
- Are extrinsic rewards numbing the "Aha!" moments, the natural intrinsic motivation that gets the dopamine level up?
- What timely and corrective feedback is available to students while they are learning?
- In what ways is personal responsibility encouraged?
- Do your students know why they are learning and how they learn best?

*Teacher Challenge:* Complete statements in the True, Good, and Beautiful table below for yourself, and then invite your students to do the same.

True	Good	Beautiful
Learning is enjoyable to me when...	I enjoy sharing my learning with others by...	I am happiest in my learning when I can...



## Chapter 6

### Experiences: What is Valuable to Learners?

“...teachers can be matchmakers between needs that arise with resources that are available.”

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#### Challenge (Oops!)

*Team and Teacher Challenge:* What strategies, processes, and resources do you use to show that failure is part of the learning process? Review the “Oops! Challenges” from Chapter 6 and pick a few or create your own to use with your colleagues and/or students.

#### Responsive and Actionable Feedback

*Team Challenge:* Using the #LearnerTGB Responsive and Actionable Feedback visual and table on pages 138-139 to support you in the following activities.

- Unpack one of your most recent learning experiences. Did you receive responsive and actionable feedback that encouraged you to try again or grow? If yes, what was most helpful to your progress: the corrective, preventive, or reflective action?
- Collaborate and reflect about feedback that is provided to students. Is there a process in place that allows for teachers to provide more than one response and action during a learning experience? How does feedback affect the option for students to revise and edit? When reporting on the learning, such as with grades, what would be more valuable to the students' continued growth?
- Reflect on a week of teaching and calculate how much time you are offering feedback. Do you offer more time to one of the following: corrective, preventive, or reflective action? What is most helpful to your students and why?

*Teacher Challenge:* Try activating #LearnerTGB Responsive and Actionable Feedback for a student that is struggling with a learning experience that you have provided. Use the following table and ideas from Chapter 6 for your planning and reflection.

### #LearnerTGB Responsive and Actionable Feedback

<b>1st Response - LISTEN &amp; EMPOWER</b>	<b>2nd Response - ANALYZE &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<b>3rd Response - EXPERIENCES &amp; RELATIONSHIPS</b>
<u>Urgent Need</u>	<u>Cause of Need</u>	<u>Future Need</u>
<u>Immediate Response</u>	<u>Eliminate Root Cause</u>	<u>Research and Plan</u>
<u>Corrective Action</u>	<u>Preventive Action</u>	<u>Reflective Action</u>

### Connections (and Innovation)

*Team Challenge:* Invite students and their families to join you in solving problems that matter to them and that will meet a need in your community. Together, look at content, processes, and tools that would be helpful when solving the selected problems or getting the needed jobs done.

*Teacher Challenge:* Find ways to lighten your load in the creation of learning experiences by involving your students. Review Finding True, Good, and Beautiful section at the end of Chapter 6 to help you in thinking about ways to co-design learning experiences with your students.



## Chapter 7

### Relationships: How Will I Connect with Learners?

“Humans thrive when connected to a community that values them and provides them a space to receive and give support.”

#### Reflecting on Relationships and #LearnerTGB Takeaways

Throughout the book there are ideas for action and for Finding the True, Good, and Beautiful. This space is provided for you to reflect, add your own ideas, and plan what you will try next.

How will I connect with learners by helping them discover the relationship between...

*A learner's resilience and support that is available to them*

*The learner's will and way for learning*

*Learners and their school community*

*School and home*

*Instruction and learning goals*

*Use of technology and connecting with others*

*Background knowledge and learning goal*

*Relationship between content, processes, and tools*

If you are helping the students that you serve to love learning then you are a powerful difference maker! The Oath for Learners is designed to help educators realize the impact that they are making in the lives of the people that they serve. When reviewing the visual below, is there an area that you are especially proud of?

**L.E.A.R.N.E.R.**  
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Good, and Beautiful  
in Education  
MARITA DIFFENBAUGH

## A Teacher is Successful when they...

**Listen** to and **Empower** each student to develop their full potential.

**Analyze** and study each student to find out how they best learn.

**I realize that to help a learner, I need to be a learner myself.**

Encourage hope by matching **Resources** with student's **Needs** and provide **Experiences** that support each student's growth.

Model the power of a team and help students build lasting **Relationships**.

...and that is True, Good, and Beautiful!

Thank you for reading and studying L.E.A.R.N.E.R. Finding the True, Good, and Beautiful in Education. Please share your ideas and stories on social media using the hashtag #LearnerTGB. Together we can shine light on the amazing and awesome that happens each day in education. I'd love to hear from you! Please feel free to email me at [maritadiffenbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:maritadiffenbaugh@gmail.com).

Thank you for being a difference maker!

*Marita Diffenbaugh*