

Episode 1: The Myth of the Natural Learner

All six kinds · Growth mindset · desirable difficulty

By the end, you will stop reading difficulty as proof that you are bad at learning, and you will have one simple move to use the next time something feels hard.

THE MOVE • The Six Kinds of Hard

When learning feels hard, it is almost always one of six things. Name which one, and the fog becomes a problem on the table. This is the spine of the whole series, so it comes back again and again.

Kind of hard	The question it answers	The fix it points to
1 · Vocabulary	Do I know what the words mean?	Learn the terms first
2 · Memory	Did I understand it but it hasn't stuck?	Retrieval + spacing
3 · Focus	Can I actually attend to this right now?	Fix the conditions, not the method
4 · Confidence	Can I do it but a voice says I can't?	Lower the stakes, start smaller
5 · Practice	Do I get it but my output is still clumsy?	Reps on the weak part
6 · Background	Is there an earlier step I never learned?	Go back one floor

USE AI AS A THINKING PARTNER • copy this prompt

I'm learning [TOPIC]. Here is the exact point where I get stuck:
[DESCRIBE THE STUCK IN ONE OR TWO SENTENCES].

Do not solve it for me. Instead, ask me 3 questions, one at a time, to help us figure out which kind of difficulty this is:

- a vocabulary gap (I don't know what the words mean)
- a memory gap (I understood it before but it hasn't stuck)
- a focus problem (I can't attend to it right now)
- a confidence problem (I can probably do it but I keep stopping)
- a practice gap (I get the idea but my output is clumsy)
- a background gap (there's an earlier step I never learned)

After my answers, tell me which kind it most likely is, and the smallest next step. Still don't give me the full answer.

YOUR CHECKLIST THIS WEEK

- Notice the drop. The moment learning feels too hard, stop instead of pushing or quitting.
- Ask which of the six kinds of hard this really is.
- Follow the fix that kind points to, not a generic study hack.
- Take the smallest next step, not the whole mountain.
- Note which kind showed up. Patterns tell you where your learning actually needs work.

ONE SMALL BEHAVIOUR

The next time you feel that this is too hard drop, do not push through and do not walk away. Stop, and name which of the six it is. You do not have to fix it in that moment. Naming it is the move.

