

2018 – What I have learnt

[PEOPLE](#) [PEOPLE FIRST](#) [TALENT](#)

JACK LATCHFORD, HR ANALYST 04 JAN 2019

2018 has been a mixed year for me. I've had some difficult periods, but am very happy to be finishing the year on a high. It's been a year where I have learnt a lot and have had the pleasure of spending time with some great people.

1. It's ok when things do not go to plan

Expectation vs reality is one of my biggest struggles. I always set out in my mind how I want something to pan out, and the majority of the time, this never happens. This year has taught me that when things do not go perfectly to plan, that is not a bad thing. In fact, it's a good thing as it means to survive, you've got to be agile and react in different ways.

At the start of the year, I was working with on a particularly challenging piece of business, with a fast turnaround. As a fairly junior member of the team, I felt it difficult to keep up the pace, and this resulted in me feeling that I was making too many mistakes, leading me to questioning if I was good enough at my job. The reality most likely was, that I was no worse than any other planner with my level of experience.

I'm out the other side of that spell now, and with some **perspective** I'm able to step back from situations and look at things in a different way, which has helped me to improve my constant challenge of expectation vs reality. I'm still far from an expert on it, and try every day to work on it and be better.

I always used to believe that it was a failure when my expectation wasn't the outcome, but I realise now that this is so far from the truth.

2. Surround yourself with people you trust, people who motivate you, people who inspire you and people who challenge you

This is probably the biggest thing that I have learnt this year. One of my best friends ASD said this to me at the start of the year, and it's something that I tried to embrace and change in areas where I felt I lacked this. In my personal life I was surrounding myself with people who were not the best influences, and didn't really care about what was going on in my life. It was more of an ego measuring, muscle clenching, I am doing better than you environment. It's tough to stop speaking and seeing friends that I've known since I was a kid, but sometimes the toughest changes are the most beneficial. My close circle of friends that I do have mean the world to me.

I changed roles in May and am the happiest I have been in a long time at work. Elaine, Nancy and Amy took a gamble on bringing me in to their team (something which I will be eternally grateful for) and it has proved to be the best career decision that I have ever made. It's not been an easy transition, especially early on as everything was brand new to me and I faced that old demon of expectation vs reality, but 7 months on I'm so so pleased that I was brave and made the change I felt I needed.

3. Be content with what you have

Ambition is a great trait to have. I am always striving to be better and get to the next level, but I think it's extremely important to be content and happy with what you have and what you have achieved in your life and career so far. The end of the year is always a time for reflection and being happy with what you have in your life. Yes I could earn more money, yes I could have a flashier job title, yes I could have a nicer car, but I'm happy with what I have.

I've always been someone who is looking at the next step in life and my career. How can I be better? How can I improve? What else can I learn? I'm a very competitive person and I've always thought that if I am not the best at something, then I am losing. I have always struggled with being content with what I have because it has always been my aim to be top of the pack, anything less is failure. I still have this mentality, but I'm able to accept now that you can't be the best at everything, and that is ok.

4. Be nice to people, you never really know what is going on in people's lives

One snappy comment really can have a big impact on someone's life. Lots of people put up barriers, put on a brave face, and hide their real feelings, to the point that most of the time you haven't really got much of an idea about what is going on in people's lives, it's only what they choose to share with you. We all do it let's be honest. When I was struggling at the start of the year I was posting more on social media, and trying to show everyone else (and myself I guess) that I was happy and going in the right direction. In reality this wasn't the case and I was at a real crossroads in my life, not knowing what direction I wanted to go in.

So when it seems easier to snap, or react in a negative way, keep in your mind that a small comment can actually have a big impact on someone. Be nice to people. It makes life easier for everyone.