

CHAPTER 11

GROWTH

"The best way to predict the future is to create it." ~ Peter Drucker

With the first pillar, awareness, you should have identified a better picture of who you are, where you are, where you want to go and why. From the second pillar, environment, you should have increased your understanding of how big of an impact your environment has on you and how to navigate through some of the challenges you encounter. The third pillar is growth.

In this pillar, now that we know where we are headed and some of the challenges we will encounter along the way, we can put together a plan to get through those challenges and become a better person along the way. Your personal growth journey is how you strengthen you as a person. That strength is what you will use to take your experience and your skill set to a new level and start becoming a more influential leader and agent of change to those around you.

Are you busy? You probably had the answer to that question in less time than it took you to read it. One of my co-workers once told me that the day I wasn't busy would be the day to get very concerned about the longevity of the business. I guess he had a point. I never had a problem staying busy during my career in construction. In fact,

I think I was addicted to it. I couldn't get enough.

Sixty hours a week. Then seventy and then eighty. I remember working over a hundred hours a few times and thought that it was some type of major accomplishment that everyone should be impressed by. It used to make me feel good when I was commended for being the first one in and the last one out. Does this sound familiar to anyone? Boy was I wrong. ***My growth plan included things like a faster hard drive with more memory and a smarter phone.*** I was always the first to get the upgrades because I would put them to use right away. More, faster, better. More, faster, better. It was like a sickness. In hindsight, I think it was really more like a death plan than a growth plan because I truly believe that was where I was headed.

The paycheck, the recognition, the desire to be the best, the label of the go-to guy, fill in the blank. I used them all. If it had to be done, I would figure out a way to do it. It didn't matter what, or who, got left behind as long as the mission was accomplished. Man, did I have some growing up to do! One thing I do want to be very clear on is that I own all of it. My condition and circumstance was a product of the choices I made. There is nothing to be learned when we blame others. The only one responsible for my actions was me.

Even to this day, I still struggle with some of those old habits, but now I am more in tune with how to use that desire and determination to take care of the things that matter. Things like my family and my health. It hasn't been easy by any stretch, but through my increased awareness and a serious evaluation of the environment I was living in, I began a growth journey to change all of that.

My mentor Ed DeCosta uses these three words as his "must have" in achieving anything: **AWARENESS**, and we have already covered that; **INTENTIONALITY**, and **ACCOUNTABILITY**. To start anything new, you need to set the intention to do it. As I described during our chat on awareness, you first need to identify

what it is that you want to start. Even after realizing that things needed to change, I struggled to set the intention to change them. Why? For starters, it would require I leave the comfort zone that I've worked so hard to build for the past thirty years. Second, I was still trying to figure out exactly where I wanted to go. As I said early on, I knew that I wanted to do something related to leadership development to keep others from the same traps I had fallen into.

Somewhere along the way, I figured out that the best way to do anything was watch someone who was doing what I wanted to do and doing it successfully, then mirror what they were doing. The best way to do that was to choose to spend more time with them and learn how they do it. When I joined the John Maxwell Team in July, 2011, I instantly had a whole tribe of these type of people. In reflection, I think that is originally why I sought to plug in wherever I could. I wanted to do what they were doing and I wanted to do it as well as they did it.

I fully admit that the bar has been set high on the team and I have a long way to go, but this book is one of the boxes that I can check off. It's not a competition, but a challenge. And that challenge is not to become as good as they are but as good as I can be. One thing I was clear on from the beginning – be unique – and I have not veered from my original plan to create my own content. That being said, if you are familiar with the John Maxwell philosophy, you will see many similarities in my values, beliefs and my content. The difference will be seen through the authenticity and transparency of my story. A big part of my growth journey has been to recognize and own my mistakes, not look at them as failures, rather as lessons learned.

My old way of thinking led me to believe that growth was about doing more. Now I understand that it is only about becoming more. Earlier in the book I spoke about how, although I have always worked hard, it was out of determination and not from necessity. I

now understand that my determination was not necessarily guided in the right direction. The point is, as I faced this new growth plan I was going to have to work hard and in a way different from what I was used to doing. Now I was going to have to work out of necessity, the necessity to create a new identity to become someone who not only no one had known before, but also into someone I had never know before.

Watching other people grow and go through their own struggles made me feel a little better about the challenges ahead, but I was still looking for that difference maker that would empower me to be committed and consistent with the things I needed to do, the changes I had to make, to turn my dream into reality.

If I had to point to one event that really made the difference in my personal growth it was a dinner I shared with three of my mentors in Santa Clara, California in September, 2012. I had made the decision I was going to leave my Day Job for my Dream Job and yet was still struggling to put all the pieces together. All three of these guys were successful in the world's eyes and in their own. I made the comment I felt a little out of place having dinner with them because I had not accomplished nearly what they had. They were doing exactly what I wanted to do and I guess to be entirely honest, I felt a little inferior and not worthy to be sharing the dinner table with them. Boy was that the wrong thing to say to those guys. Good thing we were in a restaurant or they probably would have beat some sense into me.

We shared a few more meals over the next few days and what I realized from these three men, who all continue to be instrumental in my journey, was that they believed in me. And they believed in me when I really didn't believe in myself. Looking back, I truly believe that was the biggest thing holding me back. Who was I, a guy who had spent the last thirty years in civil construction, to think I could be a coach, speaker and trainer who people would buy into?

It didn't happen overnight but now with this new confidence, I was able to take some key concepts and actually believe that by focusing on these four points, I could become that person I had previously feared becoming because I wasn't good enough.

SACRIFICE

The first thing I had to do was figure out what I was going to give up in order to do the additional things I would need to create this new identity. Sacrifice may be too strong of a word for some of the things I had to give up because most of them were simply time wasters and distractions. Things like watching television and listening to sports radio instead of self-improvement DVD's or other audio options while commuting. For all of my life, I have been a huge sports fan and this is still probably the one thing I struggle to let go. Giving up things, a little at a time, has definitely removed a lot of distractions and help me focus on the things that really matter.

The more difficult thing to give up, and I would consider this a sacrifice, was my career. I had invested thirty years into building a name for myself within the industry and even though that identity was built around what I did, who I was accounted for much of my success. I had built numerous relationships with many great people and to consider giving that up, let alone the paycheck, pickup, 401k, insurance and everything else, was difficult to say the least. But I knew what was important, I knew what I wanted and the decision was made. No turning back now!

SELF-CONFIDENCE

I touched on this already, that no effort will come to fruition without the belief it will and that belief can only come from within. I often say that the greatest gift we can give anyone on this earth is to believe in them. Remember, I'm not a stats guy, but I do know that success and self-confidence go hand-in-hand. Without it we lack the ability to take control of our life and settle for allowing someone else

to control it for us. That's the safe way out. ***Self-confidence allows us to try what we have never tried in order to do what we've never done so that we can become who we've never been.***

I think the biggest challenge in developing self-confidence is in how we deal with failure. This is another huge lesson I discovered along the way. When you learn how to embrace failure and learn from it, you become empowered to take the next step. Fear of failure will stop you in your tracks at the first sign of it and force you in another direction. This does nothing more than create an endless circle of going nowhere until we settle back for allowing someone else to call the shots for us again. If that's where you are, start with how you deal with failure. ***Failure won't ruin you, it will reveal you.*** Growth is about stretching and stretching, in its purest form, will produce failure. John Maxwell committed an entire book to this issue. As John says, ***"Sometimes You Win, Sometimes You Learn."*** What you do with those lessons learned is what will make the difference in your growth journey.

COMMITMENT

No surprise that we rarely see any sustainable results without being committed to making the desired changes. I often turn to one of my closest friends and inner circle guy, Bob Kittridge to tell me the truth. You know this kind of friend, the one who tells you what you need to hear, not necessarily what you want to hear. On his kittridgeconnection blog, he posted this on commitment: ***"A commitment should be treated as a binding contract with yourself."*** I love that! Just think about why we create and use contracts – to clearly define what is to be done and who is going to do it.

I don't expect any of you will actually write out a contract with yourself (although that might not be a bad idea), but think about the implications if you were contractually bound to complete the action items as specified. Are you scared? If you have ever read a contract,

you know how much they contain and the detail by which they are written. Consider the power it might have if you put that much detail into your growth plan and did it in such a way that the only way to succeed was through total commitment.

We will discuss this a little more in the next chapter, but part of commitment is accountability. I don't think you fully commit to anything without having a solid plan to achieve it. Personal growth is no different. If you are totally committed, you will have all the necessary pieces in place to achieve what you have set out to do. ***Commitment is not about doing something, it's about achieving something and that means you actually have to get it done.***

GOALS

This may be familiar to many of you, but I know how much the framework of SMART goals has helped me actually achieve goals and I share it with you here. Speaking from my own experience, there is not a better system to follow when setting goals:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time Constrained

The first thing to do when setting goals is to make them specific. Wanting your sales people to know more about the product is non-specific. For them to know weights, lead time and shipping options is specific. The more clarity you bring to your goal, the more likely you will be in achieving it.

Second, make it measurable. How do you measure words like more, less, longer or shorter? To say that you want to start reading more could be achieved by subscribing to a quote of the day blog. To make it measurable, choose to read a book a month or an hour a day. Making your goals measurable allows you to track your progress as you move through the process

Third, make it achievable. If it is a big goal, break it down into smaller pieces that can be achieved. Setting achievable goals means you have clearly defined the path to get there. This step can quickly identify if you are setting an unachievable goal.

Fourth, make it realistic. Is this goal really within your limits? If what you have chosen as a goal will require a ten hour commitment every week and you only have five available, you have not chosen a realistic goal. Set yourself up for success and eliminate as many reasons for failure as you can before you even start.

Finally, put a time limit on anything you do. Without it, you can potentially take a lifetime to accomplish it and I'm guessing that's not your intent. What do you have to get done every day? Every week? Every month? How much time will you commit? Again, this is another way to keep track of your progress along the way and make necessary adjustments as needed.

William Keiper in *"The Power Of Urgency"* says this; ***"The Real difference between people who are already in motion and those who are stuck is in the understanding that the only perfect moment for action ... is this one."*** This has always been my biggest mistake when it comes to setting goals. I had somehow convinced myself that the best time to start goal achievement was when the timing was right or the conditions were ideal for my success. If those ever existed, I probably wouldn't even have needed to achieve the goal in the first place.

Once you get going, have someone hold you accountable during

the entire process. I like to think of it this way: if I could have done it on my own, it would already be done.

BONUS EXERCISE:

The first thing I suggest you do is identify one or more of these four steps – **sacrifice, self-confidence, commitment and goals**. Work through the following exercise and act on it immediately.

How would I rate myself in the area of _____?
(Choose one of the four)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(1 being poorly or not at all, 10 being excellent)

Why did I give myself that score?

Who do I know who:

- has sacrificed something valuable for something even more valuable? or
- is extremely self-confident in themselves? or
- is completely committed to a specific cause or relationship?
or
- consistently achieves the goals they set out to achieve?

Why do I admire that person or what they have accomplished?

What would be the benefit to me or those around me if I improved my personal growth in the area of_____?

What can I do to accomplish this?

Who will hold me accountable to achieve it?

**-See the Leadership by Invitation Companion Guide for
an expanded format for these exercises**

