

## **LEADERS DEVELOP DAILY, NOT IN A DAY**

A group of American tourists walked through a quaint English village in wonderment. They were enamored by the town's winding cobblestone streets, the beauty of its courtyards and plazas, and the sense of history emanating from its ancient churches. While strolling through the local park, the tourists struck up conversation with an elderly gentleman and found out that he had lived in the town for his entire life. One of the Americans, eager to hear more about the town's history, asked, "Sir, have any great men been born in this village?" "Nope," said the old man, "only babies."

### **Personal Growth Is a Process**

In our twenties, we think ahead to when we'll be ideally situated in our career, positioned to do exactly what we enjoy, and enjoying immense influence in our occupation. Like children on the way to Disneyland, we impatiently await arrival at our destination instead of appreciating the journey there. However, as we age we encounter an uncomfortable truth: growth doesn't happen automatically. We cannot coast through life hoping one day to stumble across our dreams. Unless we set aside time to grow into the person we desire to be, we'll not reach our potential.

Leaders develop daily, not in a day. They commit themselves to the process of growth, and over time they reap the rewards of daily investments in their development. In this lesson, I'd like to share five principles to encourage you to adopt a lifestyle of personal growth.

#### **#1 Growth is the great separator of those who succeed and those who do not.**

When I went to college, there was no gap between my peers and me—none at all. We started on the same level. However, at the age of 17, I made a commitment to spend an hour a day on my personal growth. I studied and read, filing the lessons I learned along the way. Now, in most cases, the gap between my former classmates and me is pretty wide. Am I smarter than they are? Absolutely not. Many of them got better grades than I did in college. It's the growth factor—my commitment to the process of personal growth—that has made the difference.

#### **#2 Growth takes time, and only time can teach us some things.**

When it comes to personal growth, you cannot substitute for time. Yet, the mere passage of time doesn't make you wise. Experience is not the best teacher; evaluated experience is the best teacher. To gain insights from your experience, you have to engage in reflective thinking. I have a habit of taking ten minutes every evening to look back on the day. As I reflect on what happened, lessons emerge, and I capture them in my notebook so that I can learn from them.

### **#3 Growth inside fuels growth outside.**

The highest reward of our toil is not what we get for it, but who we become by it. At the age of 17, I decided that I would read, file, and begin to prepare lessons. From that simple discipline I accumulated a wealth of content that fueled my speaking and writing. I never set out to be a leadership specialist; I was simply diligent about reading, filing, and studying. With respect to personal growth, take the long view on results. The most important question to ask is not “What am I getting?” from the discipline of personal growth, the most important question is, “Who am I becoming?”

### **#4 Take responsibility for your own growth.**

For 15 to 20 years, the school system holds us responsible for growth. Educational curriculum clearly spells out, “here’s what you do next,” and “here’s the next step.” Then we graduate with diplomas and certificates, and we no one longer have anyone to map out the next step for us. If we want to continuing growing, we have to do it ourselves. We have to put together a game plan so that we become students of life who are always expanding our minds and drawing upon our experiences.

### **#5 Determine the areas of your life in which you need to grow.**

You’ve probably heard someone say, “You can do anything as long as you put your mind to it.” Sadly, as nice as that sounds, it simply isn’t true. In watching people grow, I have discovered that, on a scale of 1-10, people can only improve about two notches. For instance, I love to sing; that’s the good news. The bad news is that I can’t carry a tune. Now, let’s be generous and say that, as a singer, I’m a “two.” If I put lots of money, effort, and energy into developing my voice, perhaps I can grow into a “four.” News flash: on a ten-point scale, four is still below average. With regards to my career, it would be foolish for me to focus my personal growth on my voice. At best, I’d only become an average singer, and no one pays for average.

Don’t work on your weaknesses. Devote yourself to fine-tuning your strengths. I work exceptionally hard on personal growth in four areas of my life. Why only four? Because I’m only good at four things. I lead, communicate, create, and network. That’s it. Outside of those areas, I’m not very valuable. However, within those areas of strength I have incredible potential to make a difference.



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