

GETTING ON THE PATHWAY OF INTENTIONAL GROWTH

I. Introduction

A. We want to share something that goes to the heart of why we do Elevate, which is to get people on the path of intentional growth. Something happened when I was 16 years old that put me on the path to what I became and where I am today (Kenn Gulliksen). Before this, I would've assumed leadership and making a difference was just sort of automatic. Then I learned what it was to intentionally grow; it was why I was able to get a head start in my life.

B. Intentional growth is the pathway to God's potential (Florence Littauer book *Silver Boxes*). My Dad died with the music still inside of him. This really is at the heart of my passion to develop leaders.

C. Some facts about growth and leadership

1. Leadership is the direct byproduct of growth. Leaders are learners.
"The moment we stop learning we stop leading." -Rick Warren

We grow ourselves to grow others.

2 Tim. 2:2 (paraphrased): *The things you've heard and seen in me, teach others who can teach others.*

"We teach what we know; we reproduce what we are." Howard Hendricks

When people listen to you, are they drinking from a moving stream or a stagnant pool?

"Leadership is not something discovered; it is something that is developed."

"Stir up the gift that is in you that was given through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:6).

2. Growth affects all our lives.

"People are anxious to improve their circumstances; they don't understand that the way you improve your circumstances is to improve yourself."
-James Allan

“The only guarantee that tomorrow is going to be better than today is if we get better.” -Maxwell

Whether it’s a better marriage, happier home, more successful business- this is the key.

3. It is so important to realize that every day our lives we are growing, slowing, or plateauing.

“You know you’re on the road to success because it’s uphill all the way.”
-Zig Ziglar

4. Our growth is the key to other people’s blessing.
(The boy that harnessed the wind... Malawi)

II. To intentionally grow we need to start by a change of mindset.

Carol Dweck’s groundbreaking work published in her book on mindsets, helps us understand the difference between a fixed and a growth mindset.

- A. A fixed mindset sees things, like intelligence and potential, as a ceiling you are born with. You’ve got it or you don’t. Whereas, a growth mindset sees it not as a gift we have but a seed we can grow. In Jesus’ language- it is a talent we invest or bury. (*My experience telling the Lord I was no good at administration!)

- B. Some mindset changes we must make

1. Growth is not automatic. It isn’t absorption; it is development. It’s not my gift; it is my stewardship. Your potential is God’s gift to you; what you do with it is your gift to God.
2. Success is not a goal; it is a journey. People who grow don’t look for finish lines, never claim to be experts; they are explorers. They don’t have time to think about how far they’ve come. They think about how far they might go (*Pablo Casals, Frederick Douglas).
3. Growing people don’t have a victim mindset; they have a victory- “winner’s mindset.”

If you live in the past, you will accept what has happened as something that defines you. A victory mindset sees the future (Hebrews 11:1). I have unlimited possibilities and potential because I can claim God’s best (Mount Everest-Sir Edmund Hillary).

I am not what I was or what happened to me; I am who God says I am and what God says I can be.

Phil. 3:13, *Forgetting what is behind...*

(Clara Barton)

4. Growth mindset is one that sees problems as opportunities not closed doors. Beliefs about problems and failures determine whether we grow from them or give up or die because of them.

In a growth mindset, every problem is solvable. Every problem has more than one solution; every problem has opportunities. “What can I learn from this that makes me a better person?”

Same with failure: A growth mindset is: Sometimes you win; sometimes you learn. Edison: “I learned 2000 ways not to make a lightbulb.”

As long as you’re down there, you might as well pick something up (Paul... chief of sinners. So that others could receive grace).

5. Growth mindset says experience is not the best teacher but evaluated experience is.

Warren Buffett: The difference between successful and super successful is how much time they reflect.

6. A growth mindset is one in which I can learn from anyone. It is knowing that I don’t know. It is listening and loving feedback. No day is wasted, no mistake is lost if I can learn something.

“It’s what you learn after you know it all that matters most.”

–John Wooden

It’s not the smarts to learn.

III. Keys to intentional growing

- A. Ask questions.
 - What do I believe God wants me to become?
 - What would it look like to be used to my full potential?
 - What could my marriage look like?
 - A strategic question is... Where do I have the potential to grow the most (Gifts/strengths...)?

“Almost every man wastes part of his life in attempts to display qualities he does not possess.” -Samuel Johnson

- B. Make an appointment for personal growth with yourself every day. Growth doesn't happen one day; it happens in daily choices. If you want to see real permanent growth, choose a couple of areas (Example: something that is a skill and something that is a choice or habit).

Learn to pray prayers of faith. I want to develop a positive mindset and attitude.

1. Every day invest a certain amount of time (an hour).
2. Preview, Do, Review
Think about what you're going to learn, practice it, reflect on what you learned through journaling of some kind.

- C. Ask and make time for mentoring (Someone who is coming down a mountain you are about to climb). Prepare questions. Reflect on how to apply the knowledge. Apply the knowledge. Tell your mentor what you learned. By being ready to learn you will encourage others to want to invest in you. Earnestly, draw out their feedback. People will naturally tell you only the degree of truth they can sense you want to know. Mentors also can and should be growth partners you travel with and share encouragement and growth together.

- D. Create a personal rhythm of growth (Daily Office).
Below is an example of predetermining life habits that will produce long-term growth:

- Being in church, taking notes, reviewing and applying what you learn with others
- Establishing quiet time with the Lord: Scripture, silence, prayer, and mediation
- Spiritual disciplines... fasting, tithing, listening to podcasts, Scripture memory
- Calendar disciplines
- Weekly preview, review
- Quarterly retreats
- Leader luncheon's
- Book list for the year
- Scripture memorization processes
- Elevate

- E. Ground your growth in knowing your identity (*Sit, Walk, Stand*).
Make the “who” come before the “do” (Daily declarations!).

- F. Define your growth in terms of action, choices, and risk.
You don't grow in your skill by watching from the stands but by getting in the game. Growth looks like: try, fail, learn, try something else, fail, learn.

We are not shaped by our intentions only by our choices and actions. The greatest hindrance to real growth is settling for intentions that never become actions.
“Later can be the deadliest word for growth.”

A wrong decision or action made by faith always produces more fruit than no decision made because of fear or procrastination. Fear of failure and justified excuses are two of the biggest enemies of growth.

- “Hope is not a strategy!”
- Mistakes are a sign that you are moving in the right direction.
- Don't be discouraged; growth and change come gradually.
- Don't rush to celebrate a day you are thin; celebrate a day you lived with skinnier choices!

QUESTIONS FOR CONTEMPLATION

1. Ask yourself questions about personal growth.
 - What is an area of skill or being used by God that I dream of becoming better at?
 - If I knew I couldn't fail, what would I seek to learn and attempt to do for God?
 - What are some of my strength zones that I have great potential for greater growth?
 - If I were to choose a skill, a habit, and an attitude that I would most like to grow in, what would they be?
2. Which of the following really gets in my way to growing?
 - Fear of failure
 - Feeling shame or inadequacy
 - Victim mindset and the tendency to live in my past more than I dream of my future
 - Procrastinating, blaming, or making excuses
3. What area of my life do I especially want to work at a new growth mindset?
 - How I see problems
 - How I handle failure
 - Being intentional in planning a lifestyle of growth
 - Finding mentors whom I can strategically get help from in my growth
 - Developing my hunger to grow by reading, listening, spending time daily learning things that I can apply
 - Reflecting more effectively through journaling or discussing my growth with others
 - Maximizing my opportunities to grow from church, friends, and good materials
 - Taking more risks for God-jumping in the water to learn how to swim.

4. Reflect on the following and put a G, S, or P by

- ____ Personal quiet time with the Lord
- ____ Understanding and applying God's Word regularly
- ____ Hearing God's voice
- ____ Fellowship and closeness with my Spouse and Family
- ____ Fellowship and closeness with my kingdom family
- ____ Addressing issues of freedom in areas I have been stuck in my walk
- ____ In the use and development of my spiritual gifts
- ____ In my impact on people who don't know Jesus yet
- ____ My heart for the World