

LIFE LONG LEARNING

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Why do some grow and some don't?

Why do some keep leading higher and others find themselves in a holding pattern?

Any organization's growth is dependent on many variable circumstances, but there is one factor that is true for all organizations—no church or corporation will grow beyond the leader.

The leader's growth determines the organization's growth.

Grow yourself—then you can grow others.

You will be the same person five years from now as you are today except for the books you read and the people with whom you associate.—Charles "Tremendous" Jones

WHY DON'T LEADERS GROW?

- They don't understand the importance of life long learning.
- They want others to grow, but pretty soon others outgrow them.
- They think they know it all.

It's what you learn after you know it all that counts. —Walt Disney

- They get lazy and recycle material rather than work at fresh material.
- Experience is overrated. Just because someone says they have 30 years of experience doesn't mean they have grown. It could be they have experienced the 1st year 30 times with no new experiences.
- They don't have a "Personal Growth Plan."

FOUR BIGGEST DETERMINING FACTORS FOR SUCCESS AS A LEADER

- **Character**—*QUESTION: Can I trust you?* This is a perpetual growth area. Charisma will get you into a room, but Character will keep you there. If you'll take care of your character, God will take care of your calendar. This calls for life long learning.
- **Chemistry**—*QUESTION: Can you get along?* This is all about people skills. Don't we know someone who is highly gifted but just can't get along with people? In my book, *Who's Holding Your Ladder?* I remind the reader that we hire people for "what" they know and fire them for "who" they are. It's all about attitude. You have total control of your attitude. This calls for life long learning.

- **Competency**—*QUESTION: Can you do the job?* We all know people who are so busy learning the tricks of the trade that they never learn the trade. If I graduated with a graduate degree in computers in 2003 and have not grown my competency in the field by staying current, am I of any value? No! The degree is good—I am worthless. It’s not about *being* competent, it’s about *staying* competent. This calls for lifelong learning.
- **Capacity**—*QUESTION: Can you grow with us?* We all have built in limits—but we all can also expand those limits by commitment to continuous growth. Growth is a choice. Make that choice today. I often say to people—“*If you don’t grow—you gotta go!*”

Studying a particular subject one hour a day for five years will make you one of the foremost experts in that subject. –Earl Nightingale

IDEAS FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING

- Create a written personal growth plan.
- Allocate resources—finances and time for life long learning.
- Set definite growth goals.
- Read voraciously and widely.
- Read materials outside your current area of interest and expertise.
- Listen to and watch leaders in your field.
- Enroll in college courses—some offer excellent weekend and evening programs.
- Take on-line courses.
- Attend conferences, seminars and workshops.
- Subscribe to journals of interest that will feed the mind.
- Start writing your book—did Matthew know his book would be the opening act of the New Testament? No! He just wrote and God did the publishing.
- Hang around people who are going somewhere in life—positive and progressive people—we call them eagles.
- Cut out the negative, pessimistic, going-nowhere-in-life people—we call them turkeys.
- Create personal disciplines such as being on time, responding to calls/emails, reading regularly, getting out of bed not hustling out of bed—you know, things that will keep you on the growing edge.
- Be known for being dependable and highly responsive.

Take out a pen and complete the following:

I (your name _____) am committing the rest of my life to be a life long learner on (today’s date _____). My personal growth plan to make me a life long learner is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I will review and reassess this plan again on (date 3 months from now _____).

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