

What is Self-Growth?

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Abstract

The concept of self-growth for personal development and growth, whether achieved as formal or informal processes at an individual level or throughout an institution's culture, forms the basic foundation of one's way of being. Since each individual is different with divergent life goals, the concept of self-growth can be liberating yet challenging. This article discusses basic concepts, techniques, and behaviors to help achieve a strong desire and increase the capacity for self-growth by individualizing one's concerted efforts and practices.

Introduction

Grounded in human developmental psychology involving self-determination and self-actualization, self-growth draws upon humans' innate curiosity. Initially, Kurt Goldstein (1939) in his theory of "self-actualization," suggested it as the motive to realize one's full potential in life. As an individualistic concept and process, Abraham Maslow (1943) placed an individual's fulfillment of growth needs, or self-actualization, at the top of his five-level "hierarchy of needs" pyramid. Psychologist Carl Rogers' (1961) theory of growth potential further suggests consistent incorporation of the "real self" to cultivate a fully functioning person. Rogers noted that every person can achieve his/her goals, wishes, and desires in life through self-actualization in becoming all that one can be. His discussion *On Becoming a Person* (1961), describes four criteria through which one becomes a person: (1) being open to one's own experiences as well as those of others, (2) trust in one's organism, (3) having an internal locus of evaluation, and (4) willingness to be a process.

Simply stated, self-growth is a desire to become a better version of oneself every day. A timeless pursuit, self-growth refers to a life-long process to improve one's own performance through formal and informal approaches. These approaches include various tools, techniques, processes, and practices involving self-reflection, assessment, and establishment of a life-vision plan with personal and professional growth goals. Together, these will lead to an improved performance in self-growth. As a sustained commitment to a life-long mindset focused toward self-improvement, self-growth necessitates the incorporation of specific and decisive actions and processes toward desired growth outcomes. Although self-growth is an individualistic concept and process, it requires sensitive

listening and collaboration skills in order for self-change to be successful.

At times, self-growth can be a context-driven phenomenon. For example, sometimes a person will set self-growth goals as a "preferred" activity, such as the accomplishment of an academic degree, rather than as a "needed" achievement, such as emotional self-regulation or change in a particular behavior. In general, self-growth is a process that requires an enduring practice compelling numerous steadfast behaviors, actions, and activities. The overall performance of self-growth can be enhanced with the integration of the following ten key components (see Table 4):

1. Having a growth mindset: "I believe I can grow"
2. Planning: thinking before doing
3. Developing and updating a life vision
4. Setting performance criteria and using performance measures
5. Self-assessing each significant performance
6. Reflecting to increase self-awareness and metacognition
7. Self-challenging by taking significant risks: pushing oneself outside of one's own comfort zone
8. Mentoring for self-improvement and the improvement of others
9. Grit: perseverance, determination, and commitment in spite of personal factors
10. Creating a culture of self-growth through passion and self-motivation: walking the walk of one's own values

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Key Components

1. A Growth Mindset: “I believe I can grow”

A mindset is one's image of one's current and future self, and the need to fulfill the expectations that are set by one's self and by others to fulfill this image. Even without one's conscious realization, such assumptions play a critical role in our daily behavior and actions. Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck (2006) suggests that neither the innate intellect (“fixed”) talents nor a growth mindset alone determines an individual's success. Instead, success depends upon the degree of our capacity to cultivate and *grow* our intelligence and abilities. Dweck argues that typically, a fixed mindset is rooted in various psychological complexities that may include a false sense of superiority conflicted with self-doubt, refusal to take risks, fear of failure, blaming others for one's failures, and a continual need for the validation of self-worth.

In contrast, a growth mindset begins with one's belief in self-growth. While most people believe that intelligence is what one is born with (the nature vs. nurture argument), latest research on cognition (Kuszewski, 2011; Sternberg, 2008) shows that everyone has the potential to grow their intelligence. The choice between a fixed vs. growth mindset thus depends upon one's conscious decision and emotional belief that comes about by having realized personal growth. The process starts when one accepts being in charge of one's own self-growth capacity to elevate one's status as an empowered individual. Accordingly, a growth mindset begins with the following essential behaviors:

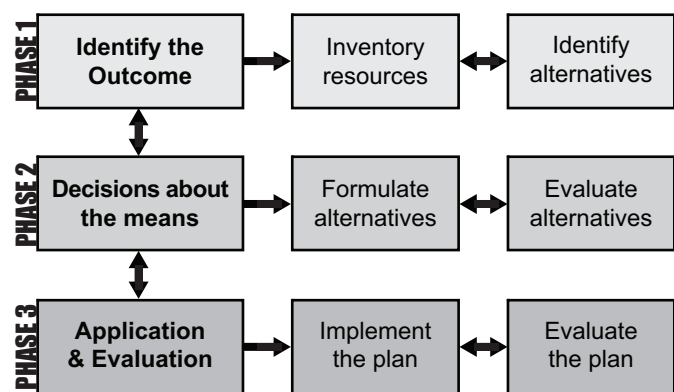
1. Recognizing that one does have a choice between a “fixed” vs. a “growth” mindset
2. Having a desire for continual improvement in one's performance in spite of failures or setbacks
3. Having a desire to continually seek challenges and being open to opportunities for growth
4. Having a life vision with a plan, and recognizing that it can be initiated or updated at any stage in life
5. Having an open mind and a positive “can do” attitude in achieving that life vision
6. Achieving one's life vision through continual reflective practice and self-assessment

2. Planning: Thinking Before Doing

In general, planning is a systematic determination and arrangement of activities to achieve the desired objectives and outcomes. While most people recognize that a plan helps in the achievement of any goal, a majority never fully plan, thus they don't carry out the actions due to a multitude of reasons. These include a fear of failure, lack of commitment, procrastination, lack of motivation (lack of drive and passion), having too many goals, over-analysis (“analysis paralysis”), and a simple lack of planning. A real or perceived lack of personal resources also plays a significant role due to the fear of one's “wasted efforts.” However, we have all spent time, energy, and careful thought productively planning even the routine life events such as parties, weddings, or dinner, to ensure success. Therefore, having a clear understanding of how this component interfaces with the existing contextual constraints and other constituents can help establish incremental steps which then could be created as weekly, monthly, and annual goals and plans in support of one's life vision.

High achievers stop, think, and plan before they undertake an activity. As a basic planning process, Montana and Charnov (2008) suggest a three-step procedure (Figure 1) that begins with first choosing the desired outcome followed by an evaluation of alternative sets of activities (means) and then deciding on a specific course of action. Depending upon evaluation of implementation, one can modify the future course of action, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The Basic Planning Process



Planning also helps one to step back to assess and recognize self-biases in establishing a sound foundation and to avoid any action that would be inconsistent with identified self-growth goals. The key to a successful planning process is to remain flexible in optimizing one's resources during the full implementation of the plan.

3. Developing and Updating a Life Vision

A life vision is a realization of who and what one wants to become in life. It requires an awareness of one's own values and goals, and knowing how to achieve the desired goals according to one's personal definition of success in life. Developing a life vision requires a much deeper understanding of one's implicit belief system. Although some personal values can be universal, most are typically grounded in one's family and socio-cultural environment, and thus tend to be subjective and varied across cultures. Additionally, as a tradeoff, competing values can also guide one's attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz, 2012). Since personal values are implicitly related to choice, any prospect of change can result in uncertainty and instability, which can be much more challenging to expand than achievement goals.

A life-vision process begins with methodical planning and three essential elements: creativity, determination, and action. Achievement of a life vision can be enhanced using two key steps:

1. Metacognition, or an analysis and knowledge of who you are, where you come from, what you want to become, and what you would like to accomplish, and
2. The continual laying out of those action plans for your personal profile and life accomplishments that will guide you in the way that you will live your life.

Motivational and leadership expert Michael Hyatt (2014) and clinical psychologist Dr. Carmen Harra (2014) suggest a methodical approach similar to the one discussed above. Their advice on implementing a life-vision includes the following considerations:

1. First determining what one wishes to be in life, then creating a bigger version of self (Growth Mindset)
2. Making a list of the most important aspirations, and achieving at least one growth goal and accomplishment goal within a year or other short-term basis (Life Vision)
3. Planning an overall strategy with a reasonable timeline for achieving each of the aspirations (Planning)
4. Staying positive in spite of setbacks by controlling one's emotions, thus preventing rash actions and ensuring a rational approach and never giving up (Grit)

5. Continually assessing and envisioning outcomes along the way (Self-Assessment)
6. Learning from failures (Self-Challenge)
7. Asking for help as needed (Mentoring)
8. Celebrating achievements (Performance Criteria)
9. Never repeating mistakes (Meta-cognition)

4. Self-Assessment: Shifting From Self-Evaluation to Self-Assessment

Self-assessment may as well be the single most critical element for self-growth. Even though we may not be conscious of the process, most of us frequently evaluate our own performance while carrying out our life actions. However, since evaluation is based on *judgment* of actions and leads to self-criticism, the focus is on how others view us. When the energy is focused on judgment of self, it produces little or no focus on improving the *next* performance (Beyerlein, Holmes & Apple, 2007). In contrast, self-assessment focuses on improvement, a positive value in improving the quality of the next performance. Therefore the effort should be to switch from evaluation of self to self-assessment with the purpose of improving the quality of performance.

Self-assessment is a growth-oriented action with clear criteria and a constant focus on improving performance based on those criteria. It incorporates a three-step "Strengths, Improvements, and Insights" (SII) model (Beyerlein, Holmes, & Apple, 2007) of self-development. Donald Schön (1983) suggests the use of a "critical lens" approach which involves raising doubts about self-actions, which eventually leads one to initiate solutions to resolve self-created problems, and to thus gain insights during the process. Another useful aspect of self-assessment is that it compels continual maintenance of one's knowledge and skills. Thus, becoming a self-assessor requires the incorporation of the following key characteristics (Pacific Crest, 2013):

1. Growth-Oriented: with a desire to become a better version of one's self every day
2. Criteria User: setting criteria that are important and relevant
3. Contextually Aware: seeing the challenges to performance in each context
4. Observant: noticing the most meaningful details without bias

5. Honest: being open and seeing one's self objectively and completely
6. Analytical: producing meaning and understanding from observations and data
7. Developer of Action Plans: producing short and long-term plans that are feasible, effective, and motivating
8. Reflective: stepping back from the pressures of evaluation to take everything in
9. Self-esteemed: having a strong belief in who one wants to be and can be.

Since the focus of self-assessment is to improve the next performance, the following five steps help achieve that objective:

1. Set performance expectations with criteria
2. Collect relevant data on performance
3. Critically self-examine and analyze the data to understand strengths of the performance and how those strengths were realized
4. Develop transformational action plans
5. Articulate new discoveries and insights by stepping back to critically reflect on current progress, and to update future goals to become a stronger self-grower

The underlying principle of self-growth is that it must be correlated with increases in self-awareness and accuracy of assessment of contexts.

5. Setting Performance Criteria and Using Performance Measures

A performance is an act or process of carrying out actions and activities to accomplish an intended outcome. We live in a performance-based culture whether in our personal or professional lives. To achieve improvement in any given performance however, one must first know what defines a quality performance. It is therefore important to understand the factors that play a pivotal role in any performance. The Pacific Crest (2013) model of performance incorporates six factors that help explain, define, and analyze a performance. These are: identity, skills, knowledge, context, personal factors, and fixed factors. An individual has control over all except the fixed factors. Control of the first five areas increases one's confidence and serves as an impetus for one's continual self-growth. Each of these factors involves further consideration of specific elements. For example,

an individual may have multiple identities such as athlete, parent, and student with each necessitating a different expectation of performance within a given identity (role). Accordingly, each role may require the employment of corresponding, relevant skills (or learned ability) to carry out tasks involving different domains including cognitive, social, affective, and psychomotor.

Psychologist Daniel Goleman's emotional competencies model identifies four proficiencies and skills that drive leadership performance and eventually lead to self-growth (1998). These are:

1. Self-awareness: the ability to recognize and understand personal emotions and energies, as well as their effect on others. Self-awareness requires realistic self-assessment.
2. Self-regulation: the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and the tendency to suspend judgment or to think before acting. This behavior pattern includes trustworthiness and integrity, comfort with uncertainty, and openness to change.
3. Internal motivation: the passion to work for reasons that go beyond money and status. It involves one's personal sense of what is important in life, enjoying one's passion, and a natural curiosity for learning. Such individuals are committed and remain enthusiastic even when facing failure.
4. Empathy: the ability to understand the emotional makeup of others. However, it does not necessarily imply compassion, although it can lead to compassion.

Two critical components of any performance are performance criteria and performance measurement. For self-growers, performance criteria represent specific levels of quality for a given performance. It can be simplified to two key steps: (1) determination of one's current level of performance with respect to self-growth; and (2) a defined action plan for self-improvement toward the desired outcome.

Performance measurement is the process of collecting, analyzing, and/or reporting information on the performance of an individual, group, organization, system, or component (Upadhya, Munir, & Blount, 2014). It can involve a review of processes, strategies, approaches, and parameters to track performance against intended targets. Neely, Gregory, and Platts (1995) define performance measurement as the process of quantifying the efficiency and effectiveness of action.

Describing performance as a “journey not a destination,” the philosophy of Process Education specifies a five-level performance rubric (Apple, Morgan, & Hintze, 2007). Each of the performance levels involves continually escalating levels regarding knowledge, social interactions, attitudes, and abilities (see *Learning to Learn: Becoming a Self-Grower*, page 8), which help one to determine the level of performance in self-growth.

6. Reflective Practice and Metacognition

It is critical to one’s life journey and self-growth to take time to step back from “doing” to understand why and how we are doing what we are doing, and what we want to do for the rest of our lives. John Dewey (1933) differentiates reflective action as something that is given careful consideration and justification as opposed to routine action, which is action driven by habit and routine. Thus, the creation of an authentic life vision requires reflection that fully incorporates the world around us. A reflective practice involves first taking the time to increase awareness of one’s environment and to understand one’s own decisions, actions, behaviors, motivations and values. It is critical to understand that reflective practice does not simply mean a review of past actions, but also a conscious awareness of involved emotions, experiences, actions, and responses to gain new knowledge and eventually a higher level of understanding. Reflecting without fully incorporating one’s world can limit the authenticity of a life vision. For educators, reflective practice enables a study of one’s own teaching methods to determine why what works best for the students works the way it does; it also includes a study of the ethical implications of classroom procedures on students (Larrivee, 2000).

Metacognition, a key component of reflective thinking, is the ability to understand, control, and manipulate one’s cognitive processes. It is often described as “thinking about thinking.” It involves a heavy reliance on individual cognitive perceptions and advanced-level learning skills. Flavell (1979) distinguishes two aspects of metacognition:

1. Metacognitive knowledge: refers to acquired knowledge that can be used to control cognitive processes. Analyzing and understanding a methodology like the Learning Process Methodology (LPM) helps people control and own their learning process so that it can be improved.
2. Metacognitive experiences: involve the ability of learners to monitor their own actions, decisions, and performances as they engage in those

behaviors. An example would be using the LPM to review the process of learning while learning is happening. This makes learning a conscious and reviewable experience that can be revisited once again at its completion.

Together, reflective thinking and metacognition can assist self-growth by helping an individual to understand, analyze, and contextualize current behaviors and constraints—to observe how things really work within one’s own mind. They also help determine the alignment between one’s personal and professional values by making a person conscious of where they are in their life journey, and how they might increase the quality of that journey.

7. Self-Challenge: Taking Risks Outside of One’s Comfort Zone

Stepping outside of one’s comfort zone is another critical aspect of self-growth because it requires one to perform at a higher-than-current level. Breaking out of one’s comfort zone can provide personal and professional growth that makes the challenge worthwhile (Youn, Taylor, Ferreri, Léonard, & Fingerle, 2014). One can also expand and break through intellectual boundaries by pursuing new opportunities, engaging in experiential and creative activities, and surrounding oneself with other self-growers. Stepping out of one’s comfort zone also requires a continual review of strengths, improvements, and insights to avoid repetition of mistakes and to ensure improved performance in taking on the next challenge.

One way to step outside of one’s comfort zone is by taking risks. For example, a student may find that the simple exercise of asking a question involves the risk of appearing to be “lost or confused.” A faculty member can encourage an environment that supports risk-taking by making learning more challenging for all students and by reinforcing the fact that failure is accepted and valued in this empowerment environment.

Cylon George (2014) suggests ten simple steps for pushing oneself out of one’s comfort zone:

1. Know the parameters of your comfort zone
2. Be clear about what you are trying to overcome
3. Get comfortable with discomfort
4. Accept and learn from failures
5. Take reasonable steps
6. Associate with other risk-takers

7. Catch yourself when you make excuses for yourself (don't self-accommodate)
8. Know the potential outcomes of risk-taking
9. Learn to roll with the punches during failures
10. Enjoy the journey and have fun

The steps shared previously necessitate a three-pronged approach in managing the risk-taking process: preparation, commitment, and completion. Table 1 specifies respective considerations for each step in channeling the overall self-challenge process and trans-forming risk-taking as a means to achieving success.

8. Mentoring: For Self-Improvement and Improvement of Others

The term *mentoring* refers to a broad range of developmental relationships including those between teachers with teachers, students with students, teachers with students, and students with outside professionals. Evidence of the correlation between mentorship and student success has been documented in several contemporary studies (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Erkut & Mokros, 1984; Jolly, Campbell, & Perlman 2004; McHenry, 1997) including a study showing that the amount of time and effort which a student allocates for educational activities, combined with positive mentoring engagement, correlates to an increased desire to master and understand an area of study.

Anderson and Shannon (1988) emphasize that mentoring programs need to be grounded in a clear and strong conceptual foundation. They suggest: (1) a carefully defined approach to mentoring with well-defined definitions of the mentoring relationship, (2) essential functions of the mentor role, (3) activities through which selected mentoring functions will be expressed, and (4) dispositions that mentors must exhibit if they are to carry out mentoring functions and activities.

Explaining effective principles of mentoring, Leise (2007, pg. 483) suggests that a mentor and mentee must establish the purpose of the mentoring by forming mutually agreed-upon goals and outcomes. Next, they need to establish a trusting, confidential relationship based on mutual respect. Leise advises mentors to follow a servant leadership model by providing value to the mentee without expecting anything in return. Mentoring also involves a clearly bounded relationship with a specific time commitment which ends once the mentee reaches his or her goals. Differentiating self-mentoring from mentoring others, Leise further suggests a personal development process, summarized as a ten-step methodology in Table 2.

Mentoring does not involve befriending, managing, or parenting, but is a planned activity to enhance the growth goals of a mentee. The relationship is voluntary for both parties. It is also important for mentors to model performances for mentees to observe in order to enhance motivation and clarity of expected performance. Quality performance assessments, especially of a mentee's self-assessments, are a critical facet of mentoring. Self-growth can be expedited by seeking mentoring from all possible sources and also by serving as a mentor to others. Mentees must show progress by "raising the bar" for themselves as their insights and skills increase (Leise, 2007, pg. 483). Mentors have strong affective and social skills so they can engage with a positive attitude, be active listeners, and take a personal interest in the mentoring relationship by having their mentees learn to do for themselves every dimension that a mentor offers. Collectively, the previously-stated mentoring experiences lead to the ability to self-mentor a set of growth goals.

9. Grit: Perseverance, Determination, and Commitment

A non-cognitive skill, "grit" is the capacity to strive for and succeed at long-term and higher-order goals, and to persist in the face of challenges and

Table 1 The Self-Challenge Process

Preparation	Visualizing the desired results, considering the level of risk, determining the motivating factors, understanding the worst outcomes, visualizing the return of investment, timing, considering the steps involved, and assessing one's personal support system
Commitment	Requires taking action with full awareness of the risk(s)
Completion	Requires awareness of the outcome, the learning, and an assessment of what needs to be done differently the next time

Table 2 Personal Development Methodology

Steps	Actions
Recognize the need for change and growth	Current limitations or constraints require some action or decision
Explore contextual issues	Assess the current situation, resources, priorities, and barriers
Prioritize based on values	Decide what is important for you
State clear outcomes	Set goals with outcome criteria
Develop a plan	Create an operational plan that includes defined activities and allocation of time
Perform to the plan as set	Execute the planned steps or actions by seeking and reinforcing a personal and structural support system
Assess performance	Monitor progress towards the objectives
Adjust the plan	Assess during activities on the basis of criteria, measuring progress, and making adjustments accordingly
Appreciate gains	Acknowledge growth and progress
Reward achievement	Motivate yourself for future successes; celebrate the successes

obstacles encountered throughout life (Shechtman, DeBarger, Dornsife, Rosier, & Yarnall, 2013, pg. vii). A multifaceted concept, it involves tenacity, determination, and perseverance, encompassing goals and challenges, and ways to manage those. Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) define grit as perseverance and passion for long-term goals and active work toward meeting challenges and sustaining efforts and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress (pp. 1087-1088). People with a fixed mindset may believe that heredity, luck, or destiny play a more significant role in creating their future than does effort; however, people with a growth mindset believe in creating their own future. In fact, the majority of individuals with a growth mindset use grit to a varying degree in overcoming adversity and challenging life situations.

Using mountain climbing as a metaphor, Paul Stoltz (1997) in his book *The Adversity Quotient: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities* illustrates three types of approaches that people take in life: Quitters, Campers, and Climbers. The *Quitters* give up easily at the first encounter of adversity. The *Campers* try taking a bit more risk but give up midway, while the *Climbers* continue in the face of adversity until they arrive at their destination. In the context of self-growth, grit is what separates quitters from climbers; they acknowledge failure but continue on in spite of it toward the goal.

Whereas Duckworth et al. (2007) describe the essence of grit as an elusive quality, Margaret Perlis (2013), a contributor to *Forbes* magazine, identifies five characteristics of grit (Table 3).

Table 3 Characteristics of Grit

1. Courage	The ability to control the fear of failure
2. Conscientiousness	When you do it, mean it! <i>“Go for the gold rather than just show up for practice.”</i>
3. Long-term goals and endurance	Follow through to find meaning and value of efforts.
4. Resilience	Optimism, confidence, and creativity <i>“Everything will be okay in the end, and if it is not, it is not the end.”</i>
5. Excellence vs. perfection	Recognizing that excellence is an attitude, not an endgame

Shechtman et al. (2013) recognize grit as an essential aspect of education. As their top recommendation to the U.S. Department of Education, the authors emphasize, "Educators, administrators, policymakers, technology designers, parents and researchers should

consider how to give priority to grit, tenacity, and perseverance in curriculum, teaching practices, teacher professional development, programs, technology adoption, and out-of-school support" (pg. xii). Further, grit, tenacity, and perseverance can be teachable and transferable competencies.

Contemporary empirical researchers (Bloom, 1985; Duckworth et al., 2007; Goleman, 1995; Winner, 1996) suggest that grit is more closely associated with the learning skills in the affective domain rather than cognitive domain skills. As a non-cognitive learning skill, grit can be cultivated or elevated considerably in achieving personal growth and success. Some of these behaviors and skills include having self-discipline, accepting temporary failure as a necessary condition to self-growth, being open, being positive, being courageous, believing in one's self, being patient and persistent, not being afraid of hard work, committing to the future, responding to failure, asking for help, and being able to cope.

Being over-committed to growth goals that do not match a situation or problem can lead to a type of "fixedness," and must be differentiated from grit. Analyzing grit, perseverance, and tenacity as critical factors for student success in the 21st century, Shechtman, et al. (2013) caution that these can potentially induce stress, anxiety, and distraction, and can have a detrimental impact on a student's long-term retention, conceptual learning, or psychological well-being. As a strategy, these researchers suggest establishment of a core mindset that supports perseverance, which they refer to as the "growth mindset" or the knowledge that "my ability and competence grow with my effort" (pg. viii). A critical aspect of self-growth is ensuring a supportive environment which includes seeking out personal and structural support through mentoring and continual reinforcement at all levels of growth (see Tables 2 and 4).

10. Passion and Self-Motivation: Walking the Walk of One's Own Values

Passion is defined as a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that people like (or even love), find important, and in which they invest time and energy on a regular basis (Vallerand, 2012). Harmonious passion and self-motivation begin with a goal that inspires a person to invest energies of his/her own free will. At times, it may be necessary to have intermediate goal(s) to help maintain progress and focus on the target. Michael Hite (2008), in his motivational presentation titled, *Develop a Passion*

for Growth, offers three key recommendations: (1) develop a passion for learning (2) never be satisfied with what you know now, and (3) recognize that there are no short cuts except for working hard. He suggests doing the extra work even when there is no extra credit.

In the context of self-growth, "passion" is more than just enthusiasm or excitement. It requires having one's total commitment to a belief, conviction, or goal. For a passionate person, the requisite labor is no longer regarded as work, but becomes almost play, therefore affecting achievement and satisfaction rather than conflict (Vallerand, 2012). Harmonious passion tends to allow a person to focus on the task at hand and experience positive outcomes both during and after engagement in a task, which further leads to an overall positive attitude. Passion is also considered a desirable trait for leaders. It is often said that the difference between a manager and a leader is that managers do things right while leaders do the right thing because they are passionate about something in which they believe.

Self-motivation involves physical, emotional, cognitive and social energies that force the desire for and commitment toward reaching a particular goal even when facing a challenge (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Human psychology experts recognize two types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, or a natural curiosity for knowledge; and extrinsic motivation, which is based on reward or punishment. While the carrot-or-stick theory is a matter of scholarly debate, extrinsic rewards are effective for those who are not intrinsically motivated but still strive for success, as is the case with some students. Also, although one is rarely without motivation, passion requires an escalated and sustained degree of intrinsic self-motivation as a necessary condition for self-growth.

In his motivational video talk *The Puzzle of Motivation*, Dan Pink (2009) perceives a mismatch between science and the proponents of extrinsic motivation theorists. Arguing against the theory of reward and punishment, he upholds intrinsic motivation as the key to growth; economic or otherwise. Pink suggests that intrinsic motivation is driven by three forces: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Autonomy, or self-direction, refers to the urge to direct our own lives. He cites numerous examples (the Australian high performers, Google, and the Results Only Work Environments/ROWE) where creative thinking is triggered through complete autonomy of thought and action. Mastery refers to the desire to continually get

better at something that matters; purpose is the desire to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

Summary

The growing demands of the contemporary “global theatre” society are creating an ever-growing and continually evolving range of competencies prompting educators and students to explore the potential of the “non-cognitive” factors independent of intellectual ability. Process Education's philosophy of self-growth helps transform that challenge into an opportunity because it is based upon the premise that any person can seek to improve any performance, create their own challenges, serve as a leader and mentor to others, take control of their own destiny, and self-assess and self-mentor to facilitate their own growth.

This article set out to describe a model for improving self-growth in ten areas. While the research supports the value of each area, the authors strived to provide each individual with a tool set for themselves and their students so they can use these tools to achieve a higher level of self-growth using a customized process. As discussed throughout the article, understanding the connectivity among the ten growth areas is vital. When a person is unaware of one’s social and personal “self,” such influences can bias self-growth on what is important. Reflection is the ultimate key and it requires external aids as well as personal consistency and "grit." An individual can use the self-growth measure to determine their current level of self-growth performance so they can progressively reach higher levels of performance on their way to becoming a high-level performer.

Table 4 Components to the Self-Growth Process

Key Components	Explanation	Steps, Actions, and Activities
1 Having a growth mindset	Starting with an unconditional and unwavering belief in self: <i>“I believe I can grow! I can be a star!”</i>	All aspects of the Theory of Performance can be improved: identity, learning skills, knowledge, context, and personal factors, and the rate of this growth are in their own hands.
2 Planning	Thinking before doing	Detailing an overall strategy with reasonable timelines for each of the desired aspirations. A concept map can help organize links between identity, skills, knowledge, context, personal factors, and fixed factors.
3 Developing a life vision	Initiating or updating a life vision of what one wants to achieve or become in life	Knowing and analyzing who you are, where you come from, what you want to become, and what you would like to accomplish; or determining what one wishes to be or achieve in life. Making a list of the most important aspirations, and electing to achieve at least one growth goal and/or accomplishment within the next year, or on a short-term basis, and laying out action plans for your personal profile and life accomplishments that will guide you in the way you wish to live your life.
4 Setting the performance criteria	Measuring the performance	Determining one’s current level of performance with respect to self-growth. The key is to continually increase the level of performance from the current level with clear understanding of the elevated levels and the corresponding pre-established measurement criteria.
5 Self-assessment	Assessing each significant performance with purpose to improve the <i>next</i> performance	Continually assessing and envisioning outcomes for strengths, improvements, and insights.

Table 4 Components to the Self-Growth Process (continued)

Key Components	Explanation	Steps, Actions, and Activities
6 Reflection	Increasing self-awareness and metacognition	Taking time to step back from doing to understanding why you are doing what you are doing. This updating of your intrinsically driven inner compass helps you to align your actions and decisions with your values to keep you moving towards your life vision.
7 Self-challenge	Taking significant risks and continually pushing oneself outside of the comfort zone	Learning to eliminate self-doubt and boosting self-image through preparation, commitment, and timely completion of established as well as impromptu actions, activities, and challenges.
8 Mentoring	Improving self and improving others	Establishing a clearly-bounded, trusting, and confidential relationship based on mutual respect to achieve clearly-defined goals using the SII principles.
9 Grit	Perseverance and commitment in spite of personal factors	Having self-control, accepting failure as a necessary condition to self-growth, being open-minded, optimistic, courageous, patient, persistent, and hardworking, and having willpower, mental toughness, tenacity, perseverance and resilience.
10 Passion	Self-motivation to walk the walk to own values	Taking the first step and continuing the commitment with the same conviction, energy, and enthusiasm throughout.

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