

DEVELOP

PURSUING THE AUTHENTIC

YOUR

LIVING WITH PURPOSE

LIFE

WRITTEN BY

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Real Growth is Possible

It's in your hands



All of us have far more potential than we realize. In the field of leadership coaching and development, the goal is to help people and organizations realize and achieve their God given potential in order to have positive and significant impact in the world. Those who actually achieve their potential understand the continual need for personal growth and change.

The first step toward change is to realize that your own growth is in your hands. Yes, you will need help from others to develop and change. But, fundamentally your growth is up to you. When you realize this, you stop excusing yourself or blaming others for the limitations in your life.

Believing you have a true purpose means you have to steward your life to fulfill that purpose.

Several years ago I came to realize I had hindered my own personal growth. As a veteran pastor of 29 years with extensive ministry experience, I had a resume many in my field would relish. I thought my life was full as a husband, pastor, father and granddad.

But honestly, I was haunted by a question in my heart, "At age 55, is this it? Will I coast with the success I've enjoyed so far? Are there no more challenges or risk taking?" A conviction from deep within my heart said, "No! I won't settle. There is more for me, and I need to run after it."

Growth requires risk and stepping out of your comfort zone.

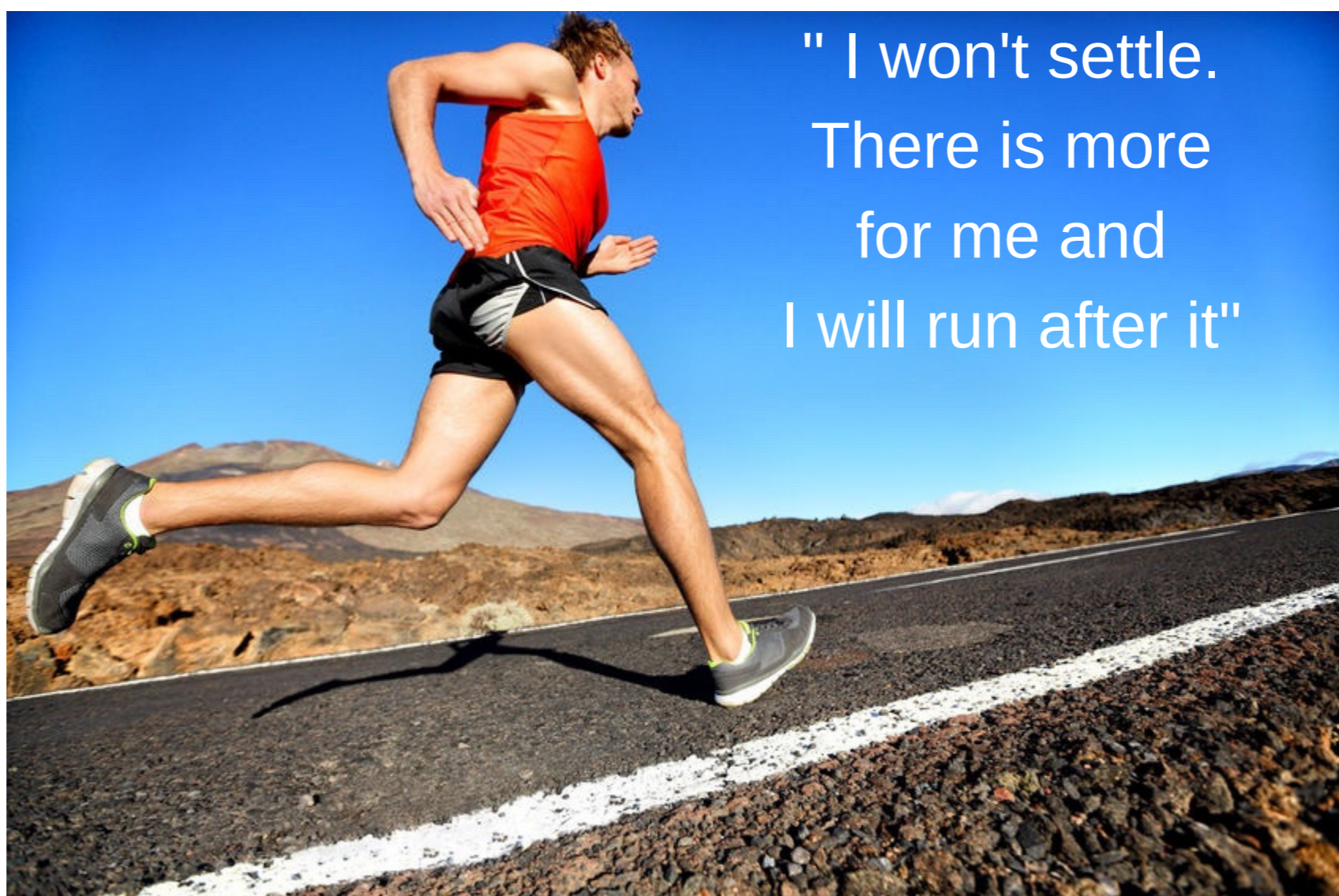
It was a transformational moment. I entered a one-year Masters of Leadership program while still working as a full time pastor. During this year I was introduced to coaching. My final paper was “Developing A Personal Growth Plan.”

I created a personal growth plan for the next five years of my life as my thesis for the paper. That final paper is the framework for this article and has become the core process of my coaching and consulting business.

I discovered a three step process for growth and change. I have used these personally and in my coaching process to produce sustainable transformation in life, work, and leadership.

Growth is not automatic. Healthy growth happens over time as we consistently sow seeds, till the ground of our souls, and take ownership of our actions. You can start now as you read and apply this process.

**Have you settled for something less?
Have you stopped living with purpose
fueled by a dream?**



Assessing your life with honesty and clarity allows for the greatest growth.

Where do you start when developing a personal growth plan? There is no single way, but wise people state that you cannot move into the future without a clear understanding of the present.

Begin with an honest assessment of where your life is right now. I recommend you focus on your whole life, not just the areas that are currently on your mind. Life is a web of many areas that have significant interaction.



The more honest and clear you are the more real change and development can happen. You need to confront the brutal facts, yet not lose hope. You may find one area is worse than you thought. But, it can improve. Here are some assessment questions:

What is working well in this area?

What am I not happy with in this area and why?

How are my relationships?
Thriving, coasting, or undernourished?

How are my energy levels spiritually, physically, emotionally, and intellectually?

Be honest. Do you see things better than they really are or worse? I tend to be optimistic and always see things better. So I have to “get real”. I have found that brutal honesty actually helps me grow.

Be specific. The less vague you are and the more specific you can be in each area, the greater potential for growth. For example, “I’m \$8,000 in credit card debt and have no savings”, will serve you much better than “my finances are a mess”.

Go Deeper. How do I take care of my own soul, mind and body?

Think about what books you read, relationships you intentionally build for friendship or mentoring, and your physical and spiritual health and fitness.

Go to the Assessment worksheet. You will be able to clarify your current condition when you put your thoughts on paper.

Vision comes from your deeply held values, beliefs, and passions.

If assessment asks the question, “Where am I?” alignment asks, “Where am I going and what do I want my future to look like?”

Alignment is about vision; a preferred future in the areas you assessed. Alignment relies on your deeply held **values, beliefs, and passions**. Another way to think of alignment is as a compass pointing you in the true direction for your future.

More than just wishful thinking, alignment brings purpose for your life into focus and asks, “where will I grow this year and what will it look like?”



Take each area you assessed and write down the preferred future.

Let's use our prior example.

The assessment:

You have \$8000 in credit card debt because you overspend what you earn every month. You don't seem to be able to say no to your wants. As a result you have no savings, live paycheck to paycheck, and can't plan for much of anything living this way.

The alignment (a preferred future for this area):

You want to live within your earnings in such a way that you pay off your debt and have significant savings for short term needs and long term plans. You envision a day where you are debt free, saving 20% of your income, giving to others generously, and putting 10% into a retirement plan. You see yourself enjoying a simple lifestyle with enough to enjoy some travel and fun.

Just as in the assessment phase being specific and clear is an essential component to developing a good growth plan. General and vague descriptions will not help you. Be creative and descriptive in this area, not just practical. Picture it, then describe it in words using the Alignment worksheet.

ACTION answers the question, “How will I get there?”

You may have noticed that a gap was created between your assessment and alignment, where you are now and where you hope to be. **The third and critical step is creating an action plan to bridge this gap.** Think of it as a road map to get you from your current location to your desired destination. Nothing changes without action and forward movement.

Developing a personal growth plan is when you clearly articulate a dream or vision with a deadline, including markers that keep you on track. There are two components to this action phase: creating goals and then action steps to reach those goals.

Goals:

Goals are most easily created from your alignment statements. Let's use our financial example. Your 2016 financial goals are to:

- 1) live within your income.
- 2) pay off \$2000 of debt
- 3) save \$1000
- 4) give 10% of my income

Action Steps:

Actions steps are how you will accomplish these goals. Here is an example of what your action steps could be:

- 1) find an online budget course or take Financial Peace class
- 2) find an accountability partner to walk with me through this process.
- 3) create a budget no later than January 30th
- 4) do weekly financial check ups to stay on track.
- 5) open a savings account and deposit at least \$50

I recommend breaking your goals into more manageable time frames of 3 months or if needed monthly. There is something very energizing about accomplishing goals to motivate you to keep going.

Write It Down! Be sure you write this action plan down! Then review it weekly or at least monthly. For accountability and execution ask someone to work with you or hire a leadership coach. Every plan has to be worked on. Growth is not automatic. You may take two steps forward and then one step back, but you make progress.

Assessment Worksheet

Choose the areas you want to assess. Use the questions in the assessment chapter and write your answers.

1.

2.

3.

Alignment Worksheet

Choose each area you assessed and create a vision that aligns with your values, beliefs, and passions. Paint the picture in words of your preferred future. Be specific

1.

2.

3.

Action Plan Worksheet

Part I- Strategy -Create goals from your alignment work.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Part 2 - Action Steps- Create an action step towards meeting each goal. After each action step is completed you will design your next step towards completing your goal. Remember, goals are not accomplished overnight, but through incremental steps.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



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