

CHAPTER 2

THE PURSUIT OF GROWTH PLAN

THE STORY ABOUT A PLAN

A young man asked a wise man, “Sir, how can I accomplish my dreams?”

The wise man replied, “You’ve got to ask yourself, what am I going to do to get the things that I want. You’re going to need a plan. Your challenge is to bridge the gap which exists between where you are right now and the goals that you want to reach. With a definite, step-by-step plan, you cannot fail, because each step will carry you along to the next step, like a track. All you need is the plan, the road map, and the courage to press on to your destination. Knowing where you’re going is all you need to get there. You can’t get lost on a straight road.”

- Author Unknown

THE PURSUIT OF GROWTH PLAN

New Year’s resolutions are well-intended and usually start with a high level of enthusiasm. However, the overwhelming majority of people give up on their New Year’s resolutions within weeks of the new year. I’m a little embarrassed when I think about the many resolutions I’ve boasted about wanting to achieve in the past but gave up on very quickly.

The Pursuit of Growth

I've also observed the many times I've heard friends or family make comments about changes they wish to make in their own lives, only to hear the same story told again months and years later with no results.

We all want to change, but change is hard. While you might desire growth and improvement, life often offers distractions, throws out obstacles, and puts up barriers that can prevent us from growing in a positive direction. These challenges can appear in the form of self-doubt, negative peer pressure, excuses, procrastination, fear, or distracting or incessant entertainment. The lists goes on and on. My own past failures have taught me that there is a major difference between wanting to change, planning to change, and actually changing. When I want to change, I often keep wanting it. When I plan to change, I've already begun the work of actually changing. Desire is the starting point of the process, but desire needs structure to turn plans into action.

For me (and for many), the 11 Focus Areas — Character, Attitude, Confidence, Relationships, Health, Love and Service, Lifelong Learning, Professional Work, Financial Literacy, Hobbies and Experiences, and Faith in God — together represent the full measure of a man. When I think of the man I strive to become, the man I am pursuing, I think of excelling in different aspects of these areas. For example, if I am a man who constantly strives to display good character, to face the world with confidence, to engage in meaningful relationships, I know that I am working to achieve the best version of myself. While we will discuss the 11 Focus Areas in depth in the chapters that follow, in this chapter, I want to explain how I've learned to facilitate growth in each focus area.

My Pursuit of Growth Plan is simple. For each of the 11 Focus Areas, I develop goals I must pursue to grow my abilities in each area. Some of these goals are quite small and can be accomplished relatively quickly; others are large in scale and may take extended periods of time to accomplish. I work and grow toward continuously accomplishing my goals and I consistently add new targets to pursue. To track my progress, I use an Excel spreadsheet, and I create a tab for each focus area. I then list my goals for each focus area inside the appropriate spreadsheet tab. This system works great for me, but there a variety of tools and options you can use to create your own plan. No matter the system, make sure you write them down!

I've achieved growth through accomplishing my goals, and I've accomplished my goals by following the 11-step process. For each focus area, it's critical to develop the goals you want to pursue and to then create your plan to achieve them. To accomplish this feat, brainstorm answers to the following questions for each focus area:

- What do I desire?
- Do I have self-belief?
- What are my SMART Goals?
- How can I motivate action?
- How will I structure repeated action?
- How will I practice self-discipline?
- How will I organize myself to grow in this area?
- What am I willing to sacrifice?
- How will I hold myself accountable?
- How will I practice humility and gratitude?
- How will I celebrate my achievements?

The Pursuit of Growth

Think of these 11 steps as a worksheet that asks you very basic questions. The answers to these questions, for each focus area, constitutes the foundation of the Pursuit of Growth Plan. Each chapter that discusses a focus area includes this 11-step worksheet at the end. Any goal you wish to obtain can be accomplished by following it. Let's take a closer look at why.

11 STEPS TO THE PURSUIT OF GROWTH PLAN

The following 11 steps help you determine the relative importance of the goals you want to achieve and will help you determine your commitment to achieving them. While it is not necessary to execute every single one of the 11 steps, it is important to understand how they are used to refine and inform each of the 11 Focus Areas. Therefore, in the material that follows, I will explain the relevance of each step to the Pursuit of Growth Plan for accomplishing goals in each focus area.

Using an exercise goal as a simple example, I'll show you how the 11 steps build off one another. In this example, I'll show you how to use each step to create basic questions which will form a plan to achieve the goal of adding exercise into your life.

#1: DESIRE

Napoleon Hill argues that *"The starting point of all achievement is desire. Keep this constantly in mind. Weak desire brings weak results, just as a small amount of fire makes a small amount of heat."*

Personal growth begins with desire; therefore you must determine the intensity of your desires in each focus area. You are unlikely to achieve

any of your goals without a desire to succeed and a clear understanding of why you have the desire. Ask yourself how much you desire your goal. This is a subjective measurement, but as Hill points out, it's an important one. You must be honest and confirm that you have a true and strong desire to accomplish each goal. Ask yourself, "Would I like to achieve this goal, or, must I achieve this goal?" Must equals passion. If you don't have a passionate desire to accomplish a goal, it's possible you may have chosen the wrong goal. You will learn that you have many desires in each of the 11 Focus Areas, and because they're not all of equal strength, it is critical to prioritize your desires by using wisdom and common sense.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: If you **desire** to grow in your health by incorporating exercise into your daily life, ask yourself to define the reasons why you must achieve this goal. Is it because you need to lose weight to feel better and live longer? Is it because you want to look better? Is it because you wish to accomplish a new athletic endeavor? Is it because your friends tell you to work out? What is your why? Determine if your "why" is strong enough to succeed.

#2: SELF-BELIEF

Confucius once said, *"He who says he can, and he who says he can't are usually both right."*

Self-belief generally means complete trust in your abilities. While you may not yet believe that you can achieve your goals, your work in the 11 Focus Areas and your success in the Pursuit of Growth Plan depends on your ability to believe that you can follow the process and achieve your goals. In fact, by trusting in your ability to plan, learn, and persist in the Pursuit of Growth lifestyle, you allow the Pursuit of Growth Plan

The Pursuit of Growth

to operate as a major source of self-belief. The more you achieve by following its instructions, the more you will believe you can achieve.

Belief in your own abilities is itself a process, and one that depends on faith. The Pursuit of Growth Plan asks you to choose to believe in yourself, to have faith that you can accomplish what you set out to accomplish, not through luck or through abstract focus but through planning and execution. Your belief that the Pursuit of Growth Plan will help you prioritize your desires and live a more joy-filled, peaceful life will enable you to work the plan effectively. Think about Confucius' quote. When has it proved true in your life?

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, now, define why you have the **self-belief** necessary that will make you capable of accomplishing this goal. What are the reasons you can list that prove to yourself that you have the ability to make this change? What other changes have you successfully made? Why can you be successful?

#3: SMART Goals

French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said it best, *“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”*

SMART Goals have long been considered the bar for measurable returns. This is true in business, but it's also true in the business of growth.

SMART Goals are an acronym.

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).

- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

SMART Goals provide clarity, direction, and include deadlines. They allow you to form habits and track your progress toward your destination. SMART Goals can be simple in nature for short-term accomplishments, or may contain multiple levels for more complex and long-term goals. Measurements are critical for obtaining results. You know people who are extremely busy at working toward goals, and although hard-working and aggressive, they never quite reach their mark. More likely than not, they are going through the motions of being busy due to a lack of measurement on their work. The best SMART Goals are the result of researching and studying the subject at hand and learning what actual criteria is needed to succeed. Consider the following example to illustrate the difference between a weak goal and a SMART goal:

- Weak Goal: I want to start exercising this year.
- SMART Goal: I will work out 4 times per week for a minimum of 45 minutes by exercising at the gym immediately after work. I will join a gym. I will consult a trainer to help develop my exercise program. I will create workout goals and track my progress and results. I will create a weekly calendar each Sunday to outline the upcoming week's workouts. I will have my gym membership confirmed and my workout plan in place by _____ date. I will train consistently for 3 months, and celebrate making exercise a habit of my life on _____ date.

The Pursuit of Growth

Specific (simple, sensible, significant): I will work out 4 times per week for a minimum of 45 minutes by exercising at the gym immediately after work.

Measurable (meaningful, motivating): I will join a gym. I will consult a trainer to help develop my exercise program. I will create workout goals and track my progress and results.

Achievable (agreed, attainable): I will create a weekly calendar each Sunday to outline the upcoming week's workouts.

Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based): I will have my gym membership confirmed and my workout plan in place by _____ date.

Time-bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive): I will train consistently for 3 months, and celebrate making exercise a habit of my life on _____ date.

For a SMART goal, multiple smaller targets lead to achieving the goal. You could easily add several additional layers to the goal above if you wished to do so. If, for example, you were interested in losing weight, adding muscle, or running a marathon, the goals would reflect the necessary steps to achieve the result.

SMART Goals are critical for the Pursuit of Growth Plan.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, now, what **SMART Goals** will you create to

pursue? Are these goals specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound?

#4: ORGANIZATION

“For every minute spent organizing, an hour is earned.”

-Benjamin Franklin

Organization means to arrange or order things so that they can be found or used easily and quickly: to put things into a particular arrangement or order. Your life is filled with responsibilities, activities, opportunities, tasks, errands, and more distractions than you can probably list. If you are to live efficiently, you have to organize and prioritize your life. A well-organized format for the Pursuit of Growth Plan is a key to success. In fact, I recommend that you write down or type your plan! I suggest you personally create a trackable dashboard document of your goals, deadlines, and include notes for your progress and accomplishments along the way. For example, you can use an Excel spreadsheet for your plan that includes a tab for each of the 11 Focus Areas, and you can update your progress consistently. It's a living document, and it adjusts, changes, and expands throughout the year.

You can implement the process I use based on my 11 Focus Areas: I dedicate 20 minutes each Sunday to writing down on a legal pad my daily and weekly goals for the upcoming week. This typically includes the smaller tasks that will eventually lead to accomplishing the larger goals that I am currently pursuing. I prioritize the list based on the importance of the goal, the time commitment required, and the distance I am from my deadline. I also include general tasks, errands, and special occasions of the week to ensure my time is allocated responsibly each day. Then, I schedule my goals and tasks for each specific day during the week. This

The Pursuit of Growth

process can help you, too, create a realistic plan without over-committing or under-committing your workload.

On the surface, this seems like a large and tedious amount of work. It's not. You will often complete your weekly plans within 15 minutes. Once finished, you'll feel focused and excited about the accomplishments ahead. If you can't allocate 15 to 20 minutes to plan out your week efficiently, go back to Step #1 — Desire. I think Ben Franklin would agree.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, now, define how will you create and **organize** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress? What tools or processes will you use to stay organized? How will you incorporate this plan seamlessly into your daily life?

#5: ACTION

Nike says it best: *“Just do it.”*

Desire, self-belief, SMART Goals, and organization are worthless unless they are followed by action, defined as an act of will. It's probably easy for you to procrastinate and find excuses to put off starting the actual work required to accomplish a goal. It's also easy to find yourself trapped in the process of waiting for the perfect time to start, or waiting for your preparations to be perfect. While timing and preparation are very important, at some point you have to start the race if you ever hope to finish. You must take the risk. You must take action.

Taking action is so hard that it requires direction for execution. Below are 10 ways to take action and increase productivity:

1. Writing down tasks and goals and creating “to-do” lists
2. Simplifying and prioritizing “to-do” lists
3. Stopping multitasking
4. Minimizing distractions
5. Organizing and keeping a clean working space
6. Understanding how much time is required for tasks and goals
7. Utilizing technology to increase efficiency
8. Saying no responsibly
9. Acting pro-actively, not reactively
10. Focusing on results

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress, now, what proactive steps are necessary to take **action** and pursue your exercise goals? When will you start? What’s stopping you from starting now? What can you do to overcome the challenges in your path? How can you take action now?

#6: REPETITION

“People often say that motivation doesn’t last. Well, neither does bathing — that’s why we recommend it daily.”

- Author and Motivational Speaker, Zig Ziglar

Repetition is the act of saying or doing something again. I believe repetition is the most frequently ignored step, and arguably the biggest reason why most people fail in accomplishing their personal goals, growth, and aspirations. Creating a strong routine through repetition is critical for growth.

To create repetition for your Pursuit of Growth goals and plan, spend 20 minutes each morning reviewing your entire action plan for the 11 Focus Areas, and reflect on your prior successes, failures, and upcoming opportunities for the future. As you reflect on your goals, the daily reading of the material implants in your subconscious. This helps you think about your goals throughout the day, and prompts you to begin behaving according to your aspirations. The repetition of daily study creates motivation and reinforces the knowledge that you are growing closer to your achievements. Again, you may ask yourself where you’ll find the time to follow this process. Perhaps make a decision to wake up an hour earlier each morning to create a new morning routine.

Repetition will provide you with motivation for each day, and a clear understanding of your day’s intentions. Repetition enhances planning, action, and growth. After you create SMART Goals, you can help yourself accomplish them through repetition.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan,

you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress, you have identified what is necessary to take **action**, now, what **repetition** must you follow to obtain your goals? How will you incorporate this routine into your life?

#7: SELF-DISCIPLINE

“In reading the lives of great men, I found the first victory they won was over themselves ... self-discipline with all of them came first.”

- President Harry S. Truman

Self-discipline is the ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon it. It's a correction or regulation of oneself for the sake of improvement.

As you pursue your goals, it's inevitable that you will face challenges, obstacles, and hardships. You will make mistakes and you will fail. If viewed properly, mistakes and failures are necessary to learn and grow, and without the two, success is unlikely to occur. Self-discipline is an acquired skill, which you can learn if you set your mind to the task. The entire Pursuit of Growth lifestyle, including each of the 11 Focus Areas and the Pursuit of Growth Plan, enhance your self-discipline and, over time, strengthen your mental toughness, which then bleeds over into all aspects of your life. To give yourself a hand in navigating hardship and developing discipline, it's necessary to identify the common obstacles and challenges that you will face in obtaining your goals, and create a response to how you'll handle each form of adversity when it appears.

The Pursuit of Growth

Often, adversity appears in the form of laziness, tiredness, procrastination, or the pursuit of comforts. The response to these examples is self-discipline. You must identify the obstacles, and define how to overcome them. When you create your plan to overcome obstacles in advance, you are able to handle the adversity when it appears. If you are tired after a long day at work, you might be tempted to skip your workout and head home instead of driving to the gym. By focusing on your self-discipline to achieve your goal, you can push past the feeling of tiredness and focus instead on the truth that you will gain energy and motivations as soon as you begin exercising. You might also focus on the feeling of accomplishment you will obtain from continuing to progress towards your goal by completing a workout that you were originally hesitant to perform. Self-discipline must come from within, and it takes a tough and focused mindset to excel.

Self-discipline keeps you focused on the repetition of your routine. Self-discipline overcomes excuses like “I’m too tired, or I’ll do it tomorrow, or it’s too hard and I don’t want to do it anymore.” Self-discipline gives you the ability to recreate your plan if you fail, and begin moving forward again. Your desire helps you start the race, but your discipline toward your commitment to accomplishing each goal will persevere when the road gets rough. Over time an interesting feeling appears. If you are like me, you’ll take such pride in your self-discipline, that you’ll absolutely believe with the right plan and approach you can accomplish anything you truly desire.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your

progress, you have identified what is necessary to take **action**, you have created **repetition** to follow to obtain your goals, now, how will you utilize **self-discipline** to stay the course? What obstacles and challenges are you likely to face? How will you plan in advance to overcome these tests when they appear?

#8: SACRIFICE

“I think the good and the great are only separated by their willingness to sacrifice.”

- NBA Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul Jabar

Sacrifice is the act of giving up something that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone. There are 24 hours in a day. How you choose to spend your time is of utmost importance to the Pursuit of Growth lifestyle. Think about how often you hear people complaining about their lack of time for accomplishing their goals or people simply making excuses that they never have enough time to do the things they love. Accomplishing goals and developing personal growth is time consuming, and you must balance these items with family, friends, career, entertainment, and the various tasks and errands that accompany your life. A typical life is full of activity and responsibilities, and managing these tasks takes planning. But I'll share a secret. You're not as busy as you think you are, and you have more time at your disposal than you realize. You must take an honest inventory of how you're spending your time, and identify areas that you can sacrifice. Try not to use the word “busy,” when describing your life. “Busy” implies you don't have control over your time. Instead, state, “I'm working on great opportunities.”

Sacrifice may include missing out on events and activities with friends. Sacrifice may mean giving up certain things you really enjoy. Sacrifice

The Pursuit of Growth

may include giving up the additional 30 minutes that you lay in bed each morning prior to starting your day by hitting the snooze button over and over.

I'll use one example to prove my point. According to a 2016 report by Nielson, the following breakdown shows the amount of time the average American spends watching television per week per age group.

- 18 – 34: 20 hours, 24 minutes
- 24 – 49: 32 hours, 07 minutes
- 50+: 47 hours, 18 minutes

These numbers will rapidly increase if you add the amount of time the average American spends on social media and the Internet. Imagine the amount of growth you can accomplish by working 10, 20, or 30 hours per week on your goals. Think about how much television you watch, and ask yourself these two questions. Do I want to spend my life watching other people live make-believe lives, or, do I want to take ownership of my future and pursue a life truly worth living?

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress, you have identified what is necessary to take **action**, you have created **repetition** to follow to obtain your goals, you are prepared to face challenges through **self-discipline**, now, what are you willing to **sacrifice** to achieve your goals? What can you give up to gain time to work on your goal? How can you best utilize your 24 hours each day?

#9: ACCOUNTABILITY

“Two are better than one, because they have good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

- Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Accountability is defined simply as being required to be responsible for something, and being required to explain actions or decisions to someone. Personal growth relies on a great deal of personal effort, but it also requires an equal amount of support from others. Some people are born into circumstances that yield incredible support networks, and many others are far less fortunate. I believe those who are able to help others have a moral responsibility to do so and that we should share our resources for the greater good of our society. It is impossible to achieve any goal strictly on our own. We all need help along the way. Seeking the right people to ask for help is essential to the journey of The Pursuit of Growth lifestyle. You must understand that the most important accountability partner in your life is yourself — it all has to start with you! But the addition of helpful support from others is a powerful tool for growth.

Identifying accountability partners is one of the best decisions you can make in terms of achieving your goals and growth. It's important to select people with an understanding of your goal, that you trust will share honest feedback, and that will hold you to a high standard. You must set specific expectations and clearly state your goals and objectives to those holding you accountable, so they can understand how best

The Pursuit of Growth

to serve you. You must schedule specific times to review the progress you've made on your goals, and use these meetings as an opportunity to share successes and struggles. A good accountability partner will offer motivation and suggestions when you're facing obstacles, and they will honestly speak up if you begin making excuses on overcoming barriers. In most cases, it's simply helpful to just have another person with whom you can share your experiences, and who offers an ear to listen to your progress. Accountability partners validate your ideas and decisions, and the knowledge of giving someone a required update of your work is a great tool for self-motivation.

To build accountability, identify your accountability partners and schedule a 30-minute phone call with them at least once a month, where you share updates on your progress surrounding your priority goals. This is a very simple step to take with your Pursuit of Growth plan, and the incredible positive impact accountability adds to your growth is impossible to ignore.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress, you have identified what is necessary to take **action**, you have created **repetition** to obtain your goals, you are prepared to face challenges through **self-discipline**, you have identified what you're willing to **sacrifice** to achieve your goals, now, how will you be held **accountable**? Who can you trust to play the role of an accountability partner? How will this person hold you accountable? How will you hold yourself accountable?

#10: HUMILITY & GRATITUDE

If anyone tells you that a certain person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you but answer, "He was ignorant of my other faults, else he would not have mentioned these alone."

- Epictetus, Greek Philosopher

Humility is freedom from pride or arrogance. Gratitude is the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. Humility is a virtue that allows you to become receptive to improvement and opportunities for growth. When you have a strong control over your ego, you position yourself to learn and improve upon your failures and mistakes. Similarly, if you struggle with humility, you are much less likely to possess the desire to improve, and much less likely to view your failures as the necessary stepping stones on your path to growth. Humility also allows you to accept the assistance of others, and in turn, it gives you the ability to see that your successes, accomplishments, and growth is never the result of only your individual effort, but a combination of various outside factors and influences, in addition to your personal hard work and dedication.

Humility brings forth gratitude, and vice versa. I challenge you to think deeply, and to then spend five minutes writing a list of everything for which you are grateful. Start with the obvious top-of-mind subjects like family, friends, and your health. However, as you continue to write, ask yourself if you are surprised by the items that appear on your list. I believe you could write for hours accounting for all the small and great blessings in your life. A daily focus on humility and gratitude will enhance your positive attitude and will provide you with additional strength throughout your personal pursuit of growth. Each night before you sleep, take a handful of minutes and review your gratitude for the

The Pursuit of Growth

past 24 hours. Perhaps it's the people you encountered, the small goals you accomplished, the food you enjoyed, or perhaps even something in nature you experienced. I hope this becomes one of your favorite moments of each day. I believe you'll be amazed by how many things for which you're truly grateful.

Pride is a word that has many different meanings. On one hand, it is defined as a feeling of happiness that you get when you or someone you know does something good, or challenging. Or, pride is a feeling that signals that you respect yourself and deserve to be respected by other people. These are good forms of pride. Another definition of pride is a feeling that you are more important or better than other people. This type of pride, which is really arrogance, is a powerful ingredient of anxiety. In fact, this mindset causes the false belief that you are ultimately in control of every aspect of your life, when, in fact, ultimately, you are not. Humility and gratitude force your mind to take its primary focus off you, and they help you realize that you need other people, and a higher power, to move forward in life. There is power in needing people. Accept this truth through humility, and use gratitude to fuel your motivation to press forward.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress, you have identified what is necessary to take **action**, you have created **repetition** to follow to review and obtain your goals, you are prepared to face challenges through **self-discipline**, you have identified what you're willing to **sacrifice** to achieve your goals, you have selected an **accountability** partner, now, how will you use **humility**

and gratitude to strengthen this process? Who can you turn to for additional help? Are you open to learn from failures along the way? Do you appreciate the many tools and opportunities that you can take advantage of to accomplish your goals?

11: CELEBRATION

“There are exactly as many special moments in life as we choose to celebrate.”

- American Operatic Tenor Robert Brault

Celebration means to praise someone or something, or to say that someone or something is great or important. Celebrating the accomplishment of a major goal is obviously easy. Days, weeks, months, and sometimes years of dedicated work explode into feelings of immense happiness, pride, and excitement. Friends, family, and coworkers might join you in this jubilant affair. While this type of celebration is important, it can fade quickly. This is not the type of celebration that completes the Pursuit of Growth Plan. I’m referring instead to the daily celebration of accomplishing the small steps and the dedication that lead toward your goal. This celebration typically takes place in your mind, but it provides a feeling of joy and positive self-esteem each and every day due to the fact that you’re growing in the important areas of your life. It’s a celebration of the journey, not the destination.

Similar to humility and gratitude, you need to dedicate time each day to celebrate the small tasks you’re accomplishing. Choose to feel good about yourself and your growth. Your celebration will be seen by others through the outward demonstration of each of the 11 steps. Therefore, choose to celebrate your commitment to desire, self-belief,

The Pursuit of Growth

SMART Goals, repetition, self-discipline, organization, sacrifice, accountability, and humility and gratitude! As a result, you'll inspire yourself and you'll inspire others.

Perhaps more importantly, celebrate other people. Place effort in noticing and recognizing both the small and large accomplishments of others while you're pursuing growth. The power of truthful praise and encouragement is one of greatest gifts you can give another person. Make a commitment each day to celebrate the people in your life, and in return experience the inward joy it provides by doing so.

Finally, it can be a great motivator to select a prize to reward yourself for accomplishing a goal. I do this. You might decide to buy yourself a gift for accomplishing an ultimate goal, like a new phone, a new watch, or a trip to a new destination. However, I believe over time you'll agree that the small daily and weekly accomplishments along your journey will be the celebrations that have the most meaning and impact on your life.

The Pursuit of Growth Plan Example: You have defined why you **desire** to grow in your health through a dedicated exercise plan, you have defined why you have **self-belief** that you are capable of accomplishing this goal, you have created **SMART Goals**, you have created and **organized** a plan to monitor, update, and track your progress, you have identified what is necessary to take **action**, you have created **repetition** to obtain your goals, you are prepared to face challenges through **self-discipline**, you have identified what you're willing to **sacrifice** to achieve your goals, you have selected an **accountability** partner, you strengthened the process through **humility and gratitude**, finally, how will you **celebrate** the small successes of your journey, and how will you celebrate milestones in your pursuit of growth?

CONCLUSION TO THE PURSUIT OF GROWTH PLAN

You will not need to always apply all 11 steps to every goal you wish to obtain in your Pursuit of Growth Plan. In many cases, simply identifying and mentally focusing on a goal can lead to its accomplishment, and this is especially true after you've implemented your plan consistently. Many positive habits can be incorporated into your life by simply writing the habit down and reading it every day. Sometimes, simply using one or two of the 11 steps described above can provide the support needed to achieve incredible results.

As we move into the focus areas in the following chapters, I cannot stress enough that your growth and accomplishments in each area is increased by incorporating the 11 steps of the Pursuit of Growth Plan. Although even utilizing one of the steps above can drastically increase the results of accomplishing goals and developing good habits, imagine what can happen when all 11 steps are incorporated.

If it appears overwhelming to apply goals and growth targets for all 11 Focus Areas, I encourage you to start small. Identify simple habits or tasks you can accomplish, and begin building momentum for positive growth. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised when you experience the tremendous impact small accomplishments of growth have on your life. Or, perhaps select a major goal in just one of the 11 Focus Areas that stands out above the others, and commit to obtaining it. As time passes, develop a plan that balances and manages which additional goals you want to pursue, and which of the 11 Focus Areas you want to target. At minimum, pick one goal and work to achieve it. Rinse, repeat, and push yourself to add more. All 11 Focus Areas are important, and the plan will work if executed with common sense, a harmonious approach, and patience.