

Thoughts On Growth

- **Allow events to change you.**

You have to be willing to grow. Growth is different from something that happens to you. You produce it. You live it. The prerequisites for growth: the openness to experience events and the willingness to be changed by them.

- **Forget about good.**

Good is a known quantity. Good is what we all agree on. Growth is not necessarily good. Growth is an exploration of unlit recesses that may or may not yield to our research. As long as you stick to good you'll never have real growth.

- **Process is more important than outcome.**

When the outcome drives the process we will only ever go to where we've already been. If process drives outcome we may not know where we're going, but we will know we want to be there.

- **Love your experiments (as you would an ugly child).**

Joy is the engine of growth. Exploit the liberty in casting your client work as beautiful experiments, iterations, attempts, trials, and errors. Take the long view and allow yourself the fun of failure every day.

- **Capture accidents.**

The wrong answer is the right answer in search of a different question. Collect wrong answers as part of the process. Ask different questions.

- **Drift.**

Allow yourself to wander aimlessly. Explore adjacencies. Lack judgment. Postpone criticism.

- **Begin anywhere.**

Not knowing where to begin is a common form of paralysis. Therefore: begin anywhere.

- **Harvest ideas. Edit applications.**

Ideas need a dynamic, fluid, generous environment to sustain life. Applications, on the other hand, benefit from critical rigor. Produce a high ratio of ideas to applications.

- **Keep moving.**

The market and its operations have a tendency to reinforce success. Success has a tendency to reward those who keep moving.

- **Don't be cool.**

Cool is conservative fear dressed in black. Free yourself from limits of this sort.

- **Ask stupid questions.**

Growth is fueled by desire and innocence. Assess the answer, not the question.

Imagine learning throughout your life at the rate of an infant.

- **Collaborate.**

The space between people working together is filled with conflict, friction, strife, exhilaration, delight, and vast creative potential.

- **Stay up late.**

Strange things happen when you've gone too far, been up too long, worked too hard, and you're separated from the rest of the world.

- **Take risks.**

Time is genetic. Today is the child of yesterday and the parent of tomorrow. The work you produce today will create your future.

- **Stand on someone's shoulders.**

You can travel farther carried on the accomplishments of those who came before you. And the view is so much better.

- **Make new words. Expand the lexicon.**

The new conditions demand a new way of thinking. The thinking demands new forms of expression. The expression generates new conditions.

- **Listen carefully.**

Every client who enters our orbit brings with him or her a world more strange and complex than any we could ever hope to imagine. By listening to the details and the subtlety of their needs, desires, or ambitions, we fold their world onto our own. Neither party will ever be the same.

- **Imitate.**

Don't be shy about it. Try to get as close as you can. You'll never get all the way, and the separation might be truly remarkable.

- **Scat.**

When you forget the words, do what Ella did: make up something else ... but not words.

- **Explore the other edge.**

Great liberty exists when we avoid trying to run with the pack. We can't find the leading edge because it's trampled underfoot.

- **Remember . . .**

Growth is only possible as a product of history. Without memory, innovation is merely novelty. History gives growth a direction. But a memory is never perfect. Every memory is a degraded or composite image of a previous moment or event. That's what makes us aware of its quality as a past and not a present. It means that every memory is new, a partial construct different from its source, and, as such, a potential for growth itself.