



Tips for Personal Growth

Personal growth is like planting seeds in a garden—to reap the benefits of what you’ve sown, you must first put in time and energy. Whether you are looking to self-reflect, pursue personal interests, or develop a career path, consider the following:

What you can do

Make a list. No matter how insignificant or lofty they may seem, write a list of goals you would like to accomplish in your lifetime. Ponder the possibilities without worrying about being realistic or practical, and in no particular order, write down each one that you feel strongly about. Keep the list handy as a friendly reminder for what you really want to get out of your life. Try to read over the list every few months and see if there is anything you can add to or cross off the list.

Find a Mentor. Mentors can help you explore the possibilities and pitfalls of a particular interest, and provide invaluable advice and feedback. Identify someone who has experience with the path that you want to take, and also someone who you get along with, respect, and feel you can learn from. Share your goals with them and see if they would be willing to share their experiences and advice with you.

Volunteer. Identify an area that you are interested in volunteering with and consider the skills you have to offer. For example, if you love animals and have some writing or web design skills, look for an opportunity to write a newsletter or build a website for a local animal shelter. Also, consider volunteer opportunities that could help you gain experience in a new field or practice a new skill. Have you always wanted to make your own documentary? Find out about volunteer opportunities with a local film festival.

Learn the art of networking. The key to effective networking is to build relationships when you don’t need them, so that they’re available when you do. Here are some helpful hints when it comes to networking in business and social situations:

- Get out of your comfort zone and introduce yourself to as many new people as possible. Avoid talking to just friends or coworkers.
- Brush up on current events and the latest industry news so you can talk about more than just the weather.
- Prepare and practice a 30-second introduction about yourself that briefly explains who you are and what you do.
- Avoid talking nonstop about yourself and what you want. Show interest in other people.
- Introduce people you’ve met to others who you think might have mutual interests, and ask to be introduced to someone you’d like to meet.