

STRETCHING YOUR LEARNING EDGES: GROWING (UP) AT WORK



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How Is This Book Organized?

This book is straightforward. After exploring the framework’s foundation and how the five facets came to be, readers will delve into each facet’s chapter. There is no order to the facets, nor are they distinct from each other in real life. There is much overlap, and as you begin to develop and find your learning edges in each one, you might notice that growth in one area generates growth in others. The facet chapters have common features, such as continuums, self-assessments, and reflection questions.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GROW (UP) AND STRETCH YOUR LEARNING EDGES?

What do I mean by “growing up” and stretching one’s self at one’s learning edges? This section introduces Robert Kegan’s adult developmental theory and asks how adults continue to develop throughout their lives. The chapter explains the idea of stretching on a learning edge and leveling up (growing (up)) within the five facets in the book.

CHAPTER 1: FACET #1—KNOW YOUR IDENTITY

How can we know ourselves deeply as an individual, a colleague, and a teammate? What should we know about ourselves as we work with others? By acknowledging and knowing our history, upbringing, strengths, biases, limitations, motivations, and values, we can become better and more aware colleagues and teammates.

CHAPTER 2: FACET #2—SUSPEND CERTAINTY

How do we stretch beyond ourselves and build our intellectual humility and perspective taking? Being able to suspend certainty that we are “right” enables us to see outside ourselves and reflect on and critique our own decisions and value systems. These qualities are essential to work effectively as a team member and a more inclusive and equity-minded colleague. This facet looks at being open minded to others’ ideas, realizing we don’t see a whole picture, and maintaining a balance between advocating and inquiring.

CHAPTER 3: FACET #3—TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

How can we take responsibility for our own work product, our language, our actions, and our development? This chapter considers how to face challenges directly and humanely with an intent to work out solutions, and apologize when we have been incorrect or hurtful. This facet includes taking responsibility for our own personal and professional development and that of the profession as a whole.

CHAPTER 4: FACET #4—ENGAGE IN RECIPROCITY

This chapter reminds us of our responsibility to work together respectfully while recognizing that we cannot accomplish major feats in siloes. It asks what skills it takes to see the big picture and to work with collaborative expertise, and what skills are needed in order to live with a sense of equality and mutual respect in our team and supervisory relationships. What do we need to do show our belief in the worth and dignity of those with whom we work and the communities we serve?

CHAPTER 5: FACET #5—BUILD RESILIENCY

The work we do is challenging and demands resiliency. Chapter 6 focuses on several questions: What emotional and psychological hygiene must we practice to be healthy for ourselves and for others? How do we sustain commitment, energy, and health for ourselves and our work? How do we build the bandwidth to feel more comfortable with life's ambiguities and disappointments?

CHAPTER 6: WHAT NEXT?

Here the book deepens the understanding of how the five facets are interrelated and how we can continue to develop throughout our adult lives. Where do we go from here to continue the journey? We can't take a detour, we have to move forward and continue inner conversations with ourselves for greater outward impact. Stretching on one's edges and growing (up) is a never-ending journey. The discomfort will continue!

What are the Key Pieces of This Book? How Do I Use Them in My Development?

There are common pieces in each chapter:

- Guiding questions to frame the reading;
- A continuum to assess your learning edges. It outlines foundational characteristics (not an exhaustive set) and identifies likely behaviors at different stages of development. The idea isn't to journey through the continuum as quickly as you can. You can live a productive and happy life never having placed left a specific spot on the continuum; the question is to ask yourself if your work asks something different from you that is found at a different stage on the continuum.
- Self-assessments to help find your learning edges and determine your degree of awareness regarding any specific facet;
- A self-talk graphic that illustrates what you might say about yourself or others at each stage of development. These questions may give you a sense of where you are in your growth within any facet and raise questions to ask at another time on your journey;
- Exercises to support your development in a facet. Use exercises in each chapter for self-reflection, group reflection, or in a book study. They are not busy work. Each supports development as a professional and human being. You will build awareness, stamina for reflection, and the ability to move forward in your growth;
- Reflection questions to use for book studies or self-reflection.
- There are also quotes to inspire, text boxes of research for further study, and links for videos, books, and additional resources interspersed throughout each chapter.

Here are some ways to work with specific parts of the book:



EXERCISE 1: Agreements and Belief Statements— A Reflective Conversation

Communications consultant Stewart Levine created a team generativity assessment for the American Society for Training in which he asked teams to reflect and consider where they were in terms of skill level in a variety of important attributes. The adapted team agreement below describes a set of aptitudes related to the five facets in this text and asks team members to agree to a way of working and developing together specifically around the five facets in this book.

Directions: Use the following belief statements and ask yourself individually: To what degree do I take these actions? On a scale from one to five with five being “always” and one being “never,” where do I fall? Then redo the activity asking yourself as a team member or asking the team as a group: To what degree do I think we as a team take these actions? On a scale from one to five with five being “always” and one being “never,” where do we fall?

From the assessment, you can individually determine where you might want to stretch next, or after a calibrating discussion with your team, you can determine in which areas the team might move from its current state to a more highly effective and healthy state.

| Agreement for Increasing Development Around the Five Facets | INDIVIDUAL How do I rank? | TEAM How do WE rank as a team? |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | NEVER —————▶ ALWAYS | NEVER —————▶ ALWAYS |
| Know Your Identity | | |
| I/We believe in the importance of self-awareness and provide time and opportunities to study ourselves. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We build our skill set to become more other-aware, striving to see the bigger picture from the balcony. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We know that we each have different ways of looking at the world, and we pose questions to learn different perspectives. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We commit to being compassionately curious about others. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | NEVER —————▶ ALWAYS | NEVER —————▶ ALWAYS |
| Suspend Certainty | | |
| I/We value humility, recognizing that we don't know everything. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We work to see not just "either/or" but "both/and," not just black and white, but shades of gray. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We work on the quality of our inquiry, making sure that we are compassionately curious, thoughtful, and respectful. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We step into conversations with an open mind, willing to be educated. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We believe that when members see things differently, our first question should be, "What can we learn and teach each other about our different perspectives?" | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Take Responsibility | | |
| I/We take collective responsibility to build our skills in collaboration. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We take collective responsibility to contribute to resolving conflict in humane and growth-producing ways. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We understand how critical it is to have clarifying and difficult conversations quickly. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We take responsibility for having difficult conversations with ourselves, our supervisors, our teammates, and others. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We spend time making sure we all understand the task at hand when we begin a new initiative or project, and we align ourselves not just to the letter of the work but to the spirit of it. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Engage in Reciprocity | | |
| I/We are committed to a high level of respect and caring for all members. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We hold a mindset of appreciation and concern for others' well-being. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Build Resiliency | | |
| I/We are proactive in our work to become less compromised and less fragmented. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We work on our collective resiliency in order to support one another with more graciousness. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We work on sitting with discomfort, disappointment, and dissonance so we are less swept along with the status quo. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We look at our work more intentionally and healthfully. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I/We take care of ourselves and each other during challenging times so we can live up to our remarkable potential. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |