

Never Stop Growing

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Sir Edmund Hillary was the first man to climb Mount Everest. On May 29, 1953, he scaled the highest mountain known to man, 29,000 feet straight up. He was knighted for his efforts. He even made American Express card commercials because of it! However, until you read his book, *High Adventure*, you don't understand that Hillary had to grow into this success. You see, in 1952 he attempted to climb Mount Everest, but failed. A few weeks later, a group in England asked him to address its members. Hillary walked on stage to a thunderous applause. He then moved away from the microphone and walked to the edge of the platform. He made a fist and pointed at a picture of the mountain. He said in a loud voice, "Mount Everest, you beat me the first time, but I'll beat you the next time because you've grown all you are going to grow... but I'm still growing!"

I first read this quote several years ago and it stuck with me. I am not sure who recorded it, or why, but the importance of this quote to my life, the lives of my employees, and to you, cannot be overemphasized.

I grew up in a small city outside Detroit to which I do not return often. A few years ago, I had to go back, and in my few days in the town, I visited gas stations, hardware stores, and other such places. Inside many of these businesses, I saw people I grew up with working at cash registers and doing other, similar tasks. Many of these people are the nicest people you will ever meet, and they are also extremely happy. What struck me about the people working these jobs was that many of them had been far more intelligent, far better socially, and far more talented in many respects than I ever was. These were people I knew could have become [doctors](#), [lawyers](#), or anything else they wanted to be-and they still could. However, what happened to many of these people is they stopped growing and stopped trying to be the best they could be in all respects.

Don't you ever stop growing.

One of the most shocking things I saw when I visited home was a girl I had a serious crush on growing up. She used to be an athlete and someone who was very concerned about her appearance. She was someone who I remember as being so attractive and in demand that, from the time she was 14 years old, she was always dating men a couple of years older. What struck me when I returned home and saw her was that she had probably doubled her weight and looked like a completely different person. There is nothing wrong with being overweight; nevertheless, she was someone who at some point simply gave up on trying to look the best she could.

There is a positive side to this: she has the potential to be who she was before. There is nothing more exciting than having an opportunity to improve yourself.

You should never stop trying to be the best you can be. Each day is a new opportunity for learning. Your career and your life need to follow the path of constant growth. You want to get better and better at each thing you do.

One of the men I respect the most in the world is Al Gore. After he won/lost the election to George Bush, I (and many others) believed that he would simply fade into obscurity like most politicians do after leaving office. Al Gore was different, though. Several years later, it almost brought tears to my eyes when I saw him campaigning for his movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. To me, this was a huge comment on his character because it showed he kept growing, even after losing. I imagine if George Bush had lost the election, he would have simply returned to Texas. Gore was different. He kept growing and did everything within his power to continue growing. And he is still growing.

This is the sort of person we need to be in our careers. We need to always looking for room to grow and get better at what we do. The more we grow, the more exciting our lives and careers continue to be. There's nothing more exciting than always growing in your career.

Some of the hardest things for [attorneys](#) to do are get a job in a major law firm when they graduate from law school and make partner at a major law firm. It's interesting to watch the race between attorneys trying to make partner. What generally happens is there are some attorneys who grow and others who do not. Attorneys who do not continue growing typically don't get better at their jobs and eventually leave the [practice of law](#). The ones who end up with the best firms and with the best jobs are almost always the attorneys who kept growing. This is how it's with everything: the ones who never give up and never stop trying keep growing.

When you drive down the street, you will see tons of businesses that are products of continual growth and reinvention, whether they are restaurants or department stores. Many people and businesses are content with staying small and never learning what it takes to grow and improve. Other companies keep growing.

All around you are businesses and people who will refuse to grow. Some of these businesses and people may be better than you are right now. If, however, you are always seeking to improve, grow, and move forward, you will eventually wind up on top. Don't settle for mediocrity. As businesses, we seek to grow and improve every day while many of our competitors rest on their laurels. Remember that past achievements are never enough because you can always do better.

A few years ago, I drove by an open house in a very expensive neighborhood. It was the most expensive house in that neighborhood. I didn't go into the open house, but the house was so remarkable asked my realtor about it because I was selling a house at the time. My realtor told me it belonged to a couple who purchased this incredible mansion in their 90s. They had only lived in the mansion for one year before dying. Living in a house like that had always been their dream and, through years of saving, stock trading, and so forth, they had finally made enough money to afford the house.

That is an example of two people who refused to stop growing. Think about it: while many people in their early 70s were checking out and going to nursing homes--or dying--this couple kept growing and pursuing their dream. It's an incredible story to me.

You, too, should never stop growing. You can learn ways to get better and better at your job. If you have certain

weaknesses, you can learn how to strengthen yourself in these areas. You can also work to improve on your greatest strengths. This is one of the smartest things anyone can do. Just keep getting better and better at everything.

A couple of years ago, I went to see Anthony Robbins speak for five days. Prior to attending this conference, I was always kind of secretive regarding my profound interest in self improvement. I must admit, I love self improvement and have been pushing myself for as long as I can remember with one [self improvement](#) product or another. In school, if I became aware of a vitamin that would help me think better to get better grades I would take it! Today, if I hear about a good business book, I will generally do my best to read it. I have thousands of books on different subjects.

What I realized at the Anthony Robbins event was the majority of people there were among the most successful in society. There were surgeons, [investment bankers](#), and numerous others who I didn't expect to see there. I realized most of these people were like me and also interested in continually becoming better and better. They never stopped improving.

When I look around at the people I've known in the past who have been the best at anything, what I notice is that they, too, never stop improving. All they care about is ensuring they make their next performance much greater and more effective than the last one. This is not confined to Anthony Robbins' conferences. It's seen everywhere you find the most talented people.

The past is over. What you need to do now is focus on growing in the future and getting better and better. Do this and you will always come out on top.

THE LESSON

Never stop growing and trying to be the best person you can be. Realize every day is a new learning opportunity, and place your career on a path of constant growth. Progress and improve at everything you do. You can learn how to address your weaknesses, and build upon your strengths. Just keep improving at everything you do and you will inevitably find yourself on top.

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- [Never Stop Improving: The Secret to Career and Life Success](#)
- [Making Others Aware of Your Weaknesses Can Make You More Trusted](#)
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