

Episode 27: GROW SMART to Lead
How Leaders Help People Turn Potential into Progress
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Welcome to Victory Leadership where good leadership leads to victory.
Here we help emerging and established leaders win through clarity,
confidence and growth. Let's get started. Welcome.

Welcome to the Leadership Pit Stop where we help emerging established
leaders win through clarity, confidence and growth. My name is Earl Leary
with Victory Leadership and today we are continuing our Victory
Leadership to Lead this series.

Over the past few episodes we have been building a practical leadership
pathway. First we look at Room to Lead helps leaders recover the capacity
to lead well.

Then serve to lead to help leaders use that capacity to build up others.
Then care to lead. Help leaders speak truth with candor and kindness.
Today we're going to take a look at the next step.

Because after leaders make the rule, serve others and communicate with
care, there's still another important responsibility. This is no by means
you know, it's exhaustive, but a consideration that they must help people
grow.

And this is not something that is vague or accidental. And it's not only
when performance reviews come around, but this is intentionally,
practically, inconsistently.

And so today's episode is called Grow Smart to Lead How Leaders Help
People Turn Potential into Progress. People do not do their best simply
because their leaders believe in their potential.

Because potential it needs direction, support, clarity, action and follow
through. And that is why growth centered leadership matters. The leader
can see talent in someone instead of still fail to help that person grow.

A leader can care about their development and still leave people unclear
about the next step. A leader can also offer encouragement and still
never help someone turn aspiration into progress. Now don't get me wrong,
good intentions matter.

However, good intentions need structure and that is where GrowSmart lead
can help. Grow Smart to Lead is a Victory leadership integration of two
recognized models, the Grow Coaching model and Smart Goals.

I can't take credit for either model. However, my intention is to show
how these two useful frameworks can work together in a practical
leadership conversation.

Grow creates movement, helping people to explore what they want, where they are, what they can do, and what will they do next. Smart creates detraction, helping people to develop commitment by turning into something specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.

Together they can help leaders move others and themselves from static potential into actionable progress.

In a recent episode we've been building through the Victory Leadership to Lead series with the Room to Lead, as I mentioned earlier, to help recover that lost capacity to serve to lead in helping those to use that capacity to build up others. The Care to lead that helps leaders speak the truth with candor and kindness.

Now the girl Smart to Lead seeks and asks Another important question how do leaders help people grow after they have created the room, served the purpose, and communicated with care? That question matters because people often experience leadership in one of three ways. And this list is by no means exhaustive.

But the three ways listed here are that many experience leadership as an inspection. Are you doing what I asked? What are you doing now? What will you do tomorrow? Some see or experienced leaders as punitive as correction.

Here's what you did wrong. And then the third option is that people feel the pressure of leadership. Here's what still needs to be done. So inspection, correction and pressure.

They all have their place in the workplace place. Especially when you're looking at how do we utilize all these ways to help all interested parties stay accountable? And I say all interested parties.

It's just not the people, the team, but also the leaders that are responsible to those people. Accountability is a two way street.

However, if people experience whatever that they feel, if all people experience is that more from the perspective of leadership, command and control. A lot of leadership today still has a lot of command and control on it. And it's a natural evolution that may not be evolving as fast as needed.

Because if people in the environment are feeling that inspection, correction and pressure, and if that's all they feel, then they may not feel supported. They only feel like they're being monitored, exposed, chastised, or viewed as a metric without meaning. Beyond the work.

The growth centered leadership offers something better. It says that I'm not checking only on your performance. I'm invested in your progress.

And that distinction matters because support becomes more believable when it helps people become more capable. Most employees want to grow. They

want to become more competent, skilled, trusted, prepared, and more useful to the people that they serve.

However, growth can feel vague, especially if a person says, I just want to be a better communicator or I want to be a stronger leader. Somebody say, I want to be more confident or I would like to contribute more. And those are meaningful desires. How? However, there are not clear paths.

A leader can respond with encouragement and say, hey, that's great. Keep working at it. However, encouragement alone may not be enough. A growth centered leader helps a person define the path.

They may ask, what do you want to achieve? Where are you at now? What are the options that you have? Or what will you do next? And that's where grow smart can become useful.

The grow coaching model uses four elements that contributes to developing a path. The goal, reality, options and will. So G, R O W. We look at the first letter goal. What would you like to achieve?

This question helps the person name the desired outcome, not just a frustration problem or what someone else wants from them. To identify the goal, a leader must ask, what do you want to be able to do better? What growth areas matter right now? What does progress look like?

What do you want to be different 30, 60, 90 days from now? The goal stage helps people look forward by giving the conversation direction.

When we look at the reality for the next letter in the in the grill model, the reality is what is the current situation? What is really happening? What is the current reality?

This question helps a person to look honestly at where they are, and reality is not about shaming them. It's about awareness. So a leader may ask, what is happening right now and what is working and what is not working?

What feedback have you received and what are some of the barriers that are getting in the way? Or have you noticed any patterns emerging? You know, through all of this, reality gives the goal context.

Without a reality, the growth can become just wishful thinking. With reality, growth becomes grounded. We move on to options. The question could be simply put, what else could you do?

This question helps a person explore possibilities before rushing to any particular answer. The options create agency because a leader may ask, what are some of the possible ways forward? What have you already tried?

What support do you need to be successful at what we're asking you to do? And are there any small experiments that we can test out before we move it to something larger?

Is there a test that we can do so you feel a little bit more comfortable about rolling out a plan later? The oxygen stage helps people to see that growth is not always one path. Sometimes the first answer is not the best answer.

Sometimes it's the third or fourth option where the wisdom begins to emerge. Mistakes can be great growth motivators. And then will, as in what will you do next? This question moves from possibility to commitment.

So the leader may ask, what will you do? When will you do it? What type of support do you need? What could potentially get in the way? How should we follow up?

Will is where the conversation becomes action. Be careful here, as this is also where many coaching conversations have the potential to lose traction.

Someone leaves with a good idea, but the action may still be too vague. And that's where smart matters. Smart helps the leader and the employee turn the next step into something clear. Clearer. So smart goals.

The first one we'll look at is specific. What exactly will be done?

Instead of something vague like I will communicate better, a specific step might be I will send weekly project Updates every Friday by noon.

Another could be I'll be more prepared, but a specific step will look more like I will prepare three discussion points before each one on one for the next month. Specificity reduces confusion and measurable how are we going to track this if there's no way to notice progress?

I'm to going Goal may remain abstract. So a leader may ask how will you know if you're improving? What are some of the evidence that will show progress? What will others notice?

Or when will this be completed? Measurable does not always mean a number. Sometimes it means a visible behavior, a completed action, or a repeated practice. Achievable.

How will you go about accomplishing this? A goal should stretch the person without breaking them or setting them up for failure.

I don't believe that any leader wants a set their people up for failure. However, it may not feel like that to the team member if you rush them too far too fast.

So to get a better idea around what this may look like, a leader may ask what makes this realistic and what support do you need? How much time will this require? Are there obstacles we should plan for and what's a reasonable first step?

Now, by now you probably noticed there is some overlap. This is like a Venn diagram.

So if you look at it as like five overlapping circles, there are some elements that are repetitive, but they do have core connections to that portion of the model. So well, we may look at something from a time perspective.

Even though we have an area that looks specifically at setting up a time bound reality, is that achievable? So there is going to be some overlap and some interconnectivity.

But how does the achievability of this objective, what are the elements that contributes to this? And relevant, you know, is this relevant right now or in the very near future? And define what near means, is that five months, five years.

We don't want to be vague.

So when that is defined, you want to look at how a goal, it could be a good goal, it could be great, it might be poorly timed, it might be something necessary. Not right now.

So when the relevancy is investigated and we look at why does this matter right now and how does this connect to your role, how would this support the team and how does this connect to long term growth and what makes this worth your focus?

We don't want to sacrifice long term gains for short term victories, but we need to take a look at the relevancy of how this impacts the greater good for the direction and the goals that we want to achieve because the relevancy helps to create meaning and people are more likely to act when they understand why that action matters. And then time bound, when will this happen? And this gives commitment shape. So a leader may ask, when will you start?

How will we check in what work will be done next week and then the week after that? And what should this look like by the end of the month? Whatever metrics are appropriate.

The time bound goals help to create visible growth within a defined time frame. And without that metric, a time becomes anytime.

So the idea is that grow can create the movement and then SMART can create the traction that is the heart of the model. Growth without SMART may create insight, but the follow through may not be as strong as it could be.

The smart element without the grow can create action, but it may lack ownership. Together they can help leaders to coach people from aspiration to accountable progress.

That matters because people need to know what is expected of them. Also, they need help. Help in becoming capable of meeting those expectations. So a potential workplace scenario.

Imagine a direct report says, I want to be seen as more of a leader on the team. This may emerge through a one on one conversation, casual discussion in the work environment, and that is a meaningful desire.

However, at this stage it may not yet be planned. A leader using GrowSmart might begin with the goal, what would being seen as more of a leader look like to you?

The employee says, I want people to trust me to lead small projects and to facilitate team discussions. And then the reality is, what is happening now? The employees may respond, I contribute when asked, but I usually wait for others to speak first.

I also hesitate to volunteer because I am afraid that I might not handle the project well. And then the options. What could you do to start building that leadership presence? An employee may consider several possibilities.

I could lead a short section of next week's team meeting. I could volunteer to coordinate on the next small project. I could ask for feedback after facilitating a discussion.

Or I could shadow someone who leads meeting as well. Then the will as in what will you do next?

And the employee chooses, I will lead the first 10 minutes of next Tuesday's meeting and facilitate the project status discussion. Now SMART can create contraction. Specific is leading the first 10 minutes of next Tuesday's meeting.

The measure is facilitating the progress status discussion and ask two prepared questions to invite participation. It can be achievable because the leader will review the agenda with the employee the day before.

The relevancy is that this supports the employee's goal of building a leadership presence. And it's time bound because the action Happens next Tuesday with a follow up conversation the next day. That is growth becoming practical.

The leader did not simply say you have leadership potential. The leader helped the person turn that potential into progress. Growth builds the ground for trust. It's one of the elements that contributes to it.

Now this episode is not fully about trust. That conversation is coming in another episode. However, growth centered leadership helps prepare the ground for trust.

When people experience a leader as someone who helps them grow, not merely as someone who checks their work, something can begin to shift. They may feel less vulnerable and more supported. They may become more willing to ask questions, become more open to feedback.

They may become more confident in bringing concerns forward and start to believe that my leader is invested in my success and that belief matters.

Trust does not usually appear because a leader announces you can trust me.

Trust grows as people experience consistent actions that make trust reasonable. Helping people grow is one of those actions. So my ask is this the GrowSmart check in over the next week.

Choose one person you lead, support, coach or influence. Hold one GrowSmart conversation with the following or similar questions. If you're just curious on how to get started, this is just a consideration.

So when you're asking the goal, what's the goal? What would you like to achieve? What growth areas matters most right now or what would progress look like? Then the reality of it.

What is the current situation, what is working, what's getting in the way and what strengths can help you? Then the options ask what could you do? What else could you try? What support would help or what small experiment could help move this forward?

And then the will what will you do next? What commitment are you willing to make and what support do you need from me? Then make it smart. Specifically what exactly will you do?

And then measure it. How will we know progress is happening? Make it achievable. What will make this realistic, relevant?

Why does this matter now in the time bound, when will it this happen and when and how will we follow up? That is a practice not complicated, not mechanical. It's human, clear, supportive and actionable.

Now ask yourself what potential do you see in this person that needs to be clearer path to progress? Don't stop when encouraging, you know, don't stop encouraging to do better. Please continue to do that. That is, that is very important.

But have the conversation, ask about the goal, explore the reality and consider the options and to clarify what will be done next. Then make it smart. Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound. And people need more than just leaders who believe in them from a distance.

They need leaders who will help them grow up close. When you make the Bridge to Trust, the Lead series will continue from the Room to Lead, the Serve to Lead, Care to Lead.

And now you just heard Grow Smart to Lead. The next episode we'll be exploring Trust to Lead.

Because when leaders make room to serve well, care deeply and invest in the growth, they begin to create the conditions where trust can take root. Trust is not built on words alone. It's built through repeated, consistent, supportive action.

Grow Smart to Lead is just one way leaders can make that action visible.

So thank you so much for spending your time with me today and I appreciate you spending the time to just not only invest in yourself as a leader, emerging leader, or established leader, but how you can continue to affect those around you in a positive, strength based way that helps people become the best version of themselves. So as I always say that good leadership leads to victory and I will see you in the Winter Circle. Thank you. Take care everyone.

Thank you for joining me today on the Victory Leadership Podcast. If you found value in this episode, be sure to subscribe and share it with someone who has committed to growing as a leader.

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As always, good leadership leads to victory. I'll see you in the winner's circle.