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Leadership Inspiration: The Book That Changed My Life

By Juan Arroyo

Editor's Note: In the Leadership & Development Section's Leadership Inspiration Contest, entrants were asked to tell us what inspired them to be a better actuarial leader. Here is an entry from the "Book/Song" category.

This book is meaningful to me because of its simplicity and the depth of its content. The most impactful book I have read and applied to date is *The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth* by John C. Maxwell.

I read this at a time in which I was going through a rough patch in my career. I was getting bored and burned out in my current role. Hence, I started wondering what else I could do, what I wanted to do long term, and how I could become significant rather than successful.

As I started reading, I realized I spent most of my career going through the motions and letting others dictate what to do in life.

I share three of the many insights I learned from this book: intentionality, reflection and stretching.

INTENTIONALITY: GROWTH DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN
Experience ≠ Learning

While I had seven years working as an actuary, I discovered that I hadn't really learned much after the first three years. I just repeated the same actions, thoughts and knowledge for four years.

I realized that if I wanted to learn I needed to be mindful about what I was doing and purposeful about where I should invest my energy.

This is where the second insight, reflection, comes into play.

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Intention ≠ Intentional

Having the intention to do something doesn't mean I did it.

REFLECTION: LEARNING TO PAUSE ALLOWS GROWTH TO CATCH UP

Reflection is what allowed me to realize I was repeating the same year of learning over and over. Without taking a break to think about my current situation and recent events, I would have not been able to become intentional about where I want to go and who I am meant to become.

Reflection is what makes a life event become a life-changing experience.

STRETCHING: GROWTH STOPS WHEN WE LOSE THE TENSION BETWEEN WHERE WE ARE AND WHO WE COULD BE

I had to learn to be comfortable with change and new surroundings. One of the reasons why I spent the four years repeating the first three years of knowledge was not trying something new. I had to learn the comfortable is the enemy of progress.

In summary, this book helped me realize that in order to succeed I had to become intentional about where I was going, who I was going with, and to accept change as a creative agent for a better future. ■



Juan Arroyo, ASA, MAAA, wakes up every day looking for the question that allows an individual to break through a self-limiting belief and become a better version of oneself. He can be reached at juanri31@gmail.com.