

ARE YOU LIKE A CEMENT TRUCK OR CONCRETE? —THE VALUE OF PERSONAL GROWTH

By Doug Kelley, CSL • May 2001
www.EmpowerTheSpirit.com

**"We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden."
—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)**

WHILE driving behind a cement truck one day, it struck me that when it comes to personal growth, some people are like a cement truck; others are like concrete. What's the difference? Take a cement truck for example. Its barrel keeps turning so the "gray matter" (cement) doesn't set up and harden. But more is necessary. Every now and then, some fresh and new material (water) is added to keep the cement soft and usable.

People who are like a cement truck view personal growth as imperative. They continually take in new material and add it to the "gray matter" (their mind) to keep it rejuvenated. Similar to a cement mixer, by cogitating on new and fresh ideas, the mind is kept fresh, rejuvenated, and usable.

Conversely, other people are like concrete. Zig Ziglar aptly described the concrete-type person as somebody "who is all mixed up and permanently set." They rarely take in and meditate on new and fresh concepts that would allow them to grow as human beings.

Have you ever noticed how the very people who need to read self-growth books, are the very ones who never do? I have especially noticed this since I wrote *The Game Rules for Life*, last year. Often, I see someone who could really benefit from some advice it contains, but many times when I ask if they ever read personal growth books, they say no. So I take them at their word, and usually leave it at that because I know they are not ready to look inside themselves for answers and solutions to a better life.

Without regularly pondering new ideas, our gray matter—or minds—can harden. But this is not the only danger. A person who does not view life and its difficulties in the light of new ideas and concepts might also find that who they are within—their spirit and their heart—can set up and harden. Over time, cracks form, and just as a weed grows up through a crack in concrete, so too the weeds of bitterness and hard-heartedness can grow. The result can be one taking more out of life than one gives.

But all is not lost, flowers can also grow through cracks in concrete. By regularly taking in fresh ideas through personal growth, a person's gray matter will start to soften and become more usable, allowing even more flowers to grow. With use, the mind is a powerful tool; without use, a great hindrance.

Another advantage to reading personal growth material is that it opens the mind to yet other new ideas and concepts. This in turn allows the mind to be receptive to new ways of doing things that can potentially make life easier and better. An open mind allows higher values to take root and grow, such as empathy and tolerance for the human condition. Zig Ziglar also has a comment regarding an open mind. He said, "A mind is like a parachute—it is only useful when it is open."

At times, I have also observed people who seem to be interested in personal growth, but are very narrow in the subject matter that they allow in. Strict belief systems—including strict religious beliefs—can actually stymie a person's growth because the world is viewed through a very narrow lens. Those with an attitude of, "Everybody is entitled to my opinion," cheat themselves, as well as humanity, because they don't become all that they can, and in turn, give back to humanity.

On the other hand, those who are serious and open-minded about personal growth are like a beautiful and budding flower. Not only do they see and know of their own inner beauty, but they are also a beautiful sight for the world to behold!

I realize that by writing this commentary, I am "preaching to the choir," as it were. I realize that you, who are reading this, don't need it *the most* (but you still do need it). Those that need it the most are the ones who, unfortunately, will never read it. But we can only hope that, one-by-one, more people will begin to see the value of growing within.

For those of you who do see the value of self-discovery and personal growth, I warmly commend you! I urge you to keep up the good work of growing within—even if, at times, you think it doesn't make much difference. Keep working on and refining yourself, and then little by little, you will become better and better until one day, you will blossom into a beautiful flower with Greatness to Deliver.

=====

Copyright © 2001 By Doug Kelley, CSL. All Rights Reserved. Permission is granted to reprint this article provided it is done so in its entirety (including this copyright box) and notice is given to the author at doug@dougkelley.com.

Doug Kelley is a Professional Speaker and author of *The Game Rules for Life* (www.GameRulesForLife.com). He focuses on helping others overcome self-limiting mindsets in the areas of business, sales, and life. To schedule an in-house seminar on this material, or to consider Doug as a speaker for your next event, please contact him at 941-613-3744, or doug@dougkelley.com. For more information, please visit www.dougkelley.com.

For more empowering articles, visit www.EmpowerTheSpirit.com.