

G is for Growth

Remember as a kid having your height marked on a wall or doorframe? Do you measure and mark the growth of your own children now? Maybe you have a giraffe poster in your hallway—the one with the printed ruler reaching for the sky.

Growth is a natural part of life. More than that, it is the requirement for a fulfilling life. Even when we cease to grow taller, **growth is a critical part of our well-being**. Whether it's learning new things, accomplishing daily tasks more effectively, or even getting rid of bad habits, we all need to grow on a regular basis! Continuous improvement isn't just a concept exclusive to the Total Quality Management arena.

Although it is innate, **the desire to grow must be fostered by recognition**, either by ourselves or by others, for us to maintain the good feelings we need to keep at it—especially at work.

Remember your first day on the job? How eager you were to learn and contribute? Nearly everyone starts out that way. Isn't that what you saw in your employees when you hired them? A positive attitude and a strong work ethic?

Joyce was hired as a data entry clerk. It was a routine and repetitive job. Sitting on top of her keyboard was a 3x5 card with some numbers on it. Most were crossed out. When asked about those numbers, since they seemed to have nothing to do with the library records she was entering, she explained that she kept a daily log of how many titles she entered into the system. When prompted, she also shared that she expected that each day she would be able to enter more than she had the day before!

Joyce was self-motivated, but most of us expect someone to notice as we grow and add value to our employer's business. When we don't get that simple recognition, it's easy to ask ourselves, "Why bother?" **It doesn't have to be much—just a simple thank you will do**. We just need to know that our efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Knowing that helps us expend equal or even greater effort the next day, and the next....

How have you helped someone grow today? Have you acknowledged a job well done? Noticed a neater workspace? Thanked a teen or an employee for what many might consider to be expected anyway, and not significant enough for praise?

Or are you more like Joyce, expecting more of yourself every day, and not necessarily expecting someone else to notice? If that's the case, have you acknowledged your own efforts today? Have you fostered your own growth? Or are you only remembering what you didn't get done? If that's the case, give yourself the acknowledgment you need to accomplish even more tomorrow! And then **be sure to let someone who works for you know that you've noticed their effort on your behalf**, as well!