

“4 Ways to Expand Your Capacity for Growth.”

When is the last time you contemplated or thought about what your capacity is for growth and change? Growth is unlimited. On the other hand, your ability to learn or your capacity for growth is limited to what you understand at this very point in your life.

For just a moment close your eyes and get a vision of an ocean. See the vast movement of the water as far as your sight can go. (Seriously, close your eyes and vision it.) Now, imagine how big of a container you would need to hold all the water that fills the ocean. If your first thought is there is no such thing as a container that could possibly hold all the water in the ocean, you would be correct! It is impossible. Wisdom is like the ocean, you can not possibly ever hold it all, but day by day, you can increase the size of your container and add more. Capacity is the container. As a child, your container is a teacup, but as you learn and mature, it becomes a mug, then a pint, then a quart, then a liter, then a gallon, and so on. Your ability to receive and contain expands, and you learn and grow. This happens at rapid rate when we're younger because our brains are naturally growing. As we age, this expansion starts to slow. Eventually for most humans, we reach a certain level of comfort, and our capacity to continue to add more wisdom diminishes. There is still plenty of knowledge we could capture, but our ability to receive or contain it has reached its maximum capacity. In other words, we get to the gallon, and we lose sight there are still larger containers to continue to fill. After all, a gallon is plenty. It's comfortable and it seems like an awful lot of work to expand the size to a 5-gallon drum. Hopefully, you get the point.

It takes work to increase your capacity to continue to learn,

grow, and handle more knowledge. Again, wisdom is as vast as the ocean. You can never contain all that is out there, but how big you're willing to go in the size of your container will determine just how much you gain.

This leaves us with the simple question, "How can we expand our capacity to receive and gain more knowledge for greater understanding?"

Of course, there is no limit to what you can do to expand your capacity, we wanted to share our top four ways with you.

"4 Ways to Expand Your Capacity for Growth"

1.Challenge yourself –

Your brain wants you to be comfortable. In fact, it works to make sure you stay safe and that you don't work too hard. Your brains primary job is to keep you alive. Albeit being alive is very important, because of this primary function, your brain can work against growth. It sounds kind of crazy, but it is true. Therefore starting anything that is difficult or outside of what you are acclimated to is extremely hard. Your brain, based on its capacity, can actually talk you out of doing something that is good for you because it foresees pain of some sort. Exercise is a perfect example of this. Addictions are another example. Even though smoking cigarettes, eating too much sugar, drinking alcohol in access, gambling, spending too much money, among many other addictions are bad for you, your brain becomes addicted and then believes you need whatever it is to live. Again, your brain can and will work against you based on what it understands at this point in your life. This is why you must always challenge yourself to do hard things, things that don't feel comfortable, or that you don't believe you can do, to give your brain more information to work with. Running is another great example of how

challenging yourself will improve your brain capacity. I remember the first time I ever ran a mile. Up until that point, I had been using markers like street signs or landmarks to go further each time. Finally, one day after many attempts, I hit the one-mile mark for the very first time. Now, I knew I could do a mile. From that point and going forward, every time I went out to run and wanted to stop, my brain said to me, "you can run a mile, don't stop." See how that works! Your ability to receive and contain more information will be impacted by how often and to what level you challenge yourself.

2.Make room –

In the spring you prune back the dead branches to make room for new growth. You may also clean out your closets to make room for some new items. In the same way, there is plenty of information filling up your mental space that can be released because it no longer serves you a purpose. One of the most important things you can do to expand your capacity is to take an inventory on a regular basis of what you're holding on to that needs to go. These could be tasks, habits, or beliefs just to name a few. You've heard, "Out with the old, in with the new." To a certain extent, this is true. You must make room for greater knowledge and understanding by clearing out any bad information that has found its way into your mind. Remember, data in, data out. Your brain has been programmed from the time you were brought home from the hospital as a wee baby. There is data taking up space that may not be true based on what was put in by other people, your social environment, and your experiences. Take time often to clean it up and make room for new ideas and knowledge.

3.Seek advice –

How often are you asking for help or suggestions from others? It's likely not very often because it goes against the human nature. You're raised to be independent and strong, and

seeking help or information from others can feel like you are being weak or needy. This is absolutely a false belief. The truth is that asking for help or seeking wisdom from someone who has experienced what you may be going through is a sign of wisdom and courage. There is nothing weak or needy about seeking help and advice from another person. In fact, it may be the best thing you can do to expand your capacity for growth. The good news is more and more people are recognizing the need for a coach to help them succeed in everyday goals. Most people miss out on great opportunities for success and achievement without someone in their corner helping them gain clarity and providing accountability and support. Always be willing to seek advice and invest in personal coaching.

4. Refuel –

Working harder isn't always the solution for growth. Most humans are running on empty and on the verge of being completely out of gas. We know what happens to our cars when they run out of fuel, the same thing happens to us. Are you feeling empty? Perhaps taking down time to regroup, refresh, and recharge is just what you need. When you take time to refuel, you give your mind, body, and spirit much needed rest. You can "think straight" when you're not exhausted, and you have the energy to be creative and to contribute. There is nothing more important than your self-care. If you aren't working to full capacity, how can you help anyone else. This is especially true for caretakers, parents of young children, coaches, leaders, business owners, or anyone who is having to pour out to people. This just about covers everyone! You can't grow if you're withering and being exhausted decreases your ability to receive and contain. So, take time to refuel in whatever that looks like for you. Maybe it's taking a day completely off from everything, going for a walk, planting in your garden, reading a good book, or taking a much-needed vacation. Whatever it is, be willing to take care of you first. When you put yourself first, you greatly increase your

capacity for growth. This is not selfish; it is the least selfish thing you can do. If you are running on empty, you can't be of any help to yourself or anyone else.

Remember, wisdom is as vast as the ocean. There is always more to learn, but you must seek. Not only seek but expand your capacity so that you have room to contain more.

Written by:

Kim Martin, Founder of I've Decided, INC.

www.ivedecided.org