

Can Personal Growth Get Ugly?

- [00:00](#) Hi, I'm CiCi Bellis, WTA tour player. And you're listening to compete like a champion.
- [00:09](#) J: Welcome to the compete like a champion podcast. You're here with Dr. Larry Lauer, mental skill specialist and coach Johnny Parks with USDA player development. Today we're going to dive into personal growth. What it means, differences, and does it get ugly?
- [00:25](#) L: Whooh, does it get ugly? We're getting ugly today, Johnny?
- [00:27](#) J: Does it get ugly?
- [00:29](#) L: It started ugly today. Trying to get ready for this.
- [00:32](#) J: Well, you know, we're all getting over Mich's stories about Vegas and all the different buffets he was hitting up. He's doing this right before lunch as well, so he's just kind of ruining us all right now.
- [00:43](#) L: I'm so focused on being hungry right now, but.
- [00:46](#) J: What was the best buffet, Mich?
- [00:48](#) M: Actually at the Superbook bar, they had a great buffet over there.
- [00:51](#) J: The Superbook bar?
- [00:52](#) M: It's a, it's a sports betting place. I just went for the food though.
- [00:55](#) L: Just for the food. He looked a little lighter in the wallet when he got back here.
- [00:58](#) J: I was going to say you didn't come home in the doghouse with the misses that you just ruined.
- [01:02](#) M: Yeah, I tried to stay an extra week but she wouldn't go for that.
- [01:05](#) L: So today's episode will be on gambling addiction.
- [01:09](#) J: With the Mich, with the mic. All right, so great. So this episode is called can personal growth get ugly? So one area we really wanted to address was, and this is geared towards whether you're a coach, parent, player, doesn't really matter. Personal growth is personal growth. And we wanted to dive into some of that. And I think before we got going is first understanding personal growth as a, as a way of, you know, as some people we, we have growth mindsets and there were some people out there that they have fixed mindsets and there

might be some people that are in between all that. One of the most popular books that came out on mindset was from Carol Dweck that specifically dived into this growth mindset versus fixed mindset. So you know, Larry for, I kind of wanted to start off first with understanding both sides of it. What are characteristics of, of people that have growth mindsets versus fixed mindsets and how can that either be helpful, harmful, or, and is it, and maybe important to have a bit of both in your life.

[02:02](#)

L: Sure. So this started when, when Dweck was trying to understand why students, uh, how they approach challenging problems in school and finding these different responses that she would see some would really take on the problem and try to find a way, try to find solutions and others would essentially shut down. And she wanted to understand where that came from and why this was happening. And from that she determined that some people have this growth mindset where effort leads to results and to show effort as a good thing. And so if you presented with a problem, you believe you can figure that out through putting time into by putting work into it right. And that's, that's a good process. There's nothing wrong with that in a fixed mindset being presented a problem that you may not understand at first glance is actually a negative thing. It's a, an expression of your intelligence or your talent and everything is, is an evaluation of that. So if you can't do something that's of a blow to the ego. And so for people who are fixed in a fixed mindset, it's not about hard work necessarily. It's about whether you can do it or not because of who you are, what talents that you have. And so what she found is when young people were more kind of based on innate qualities, they tended to not take on these challenges very well. They didn't want to try and problem solve or persevere they gave in quickly. Whereas the ones who had this growth mindset, who wanted to work at it and had no problem with that, that wasn't a negative implication of their intelligence or who they were. People work at things, they figure it out and they, they move on. Right? And so she saw these differences of young people and labeled it has been labeled different things, you know, growth and in fixed mindset. So you hear about innate as well, and people being malleable. But essentially when it comes down to it, when you're faced with something, do you believe that your hard work can lead to improvement and success and is that valued or is that actually a negative thing? Having to work at something and we see that in sport all the time where athletes, you know, if they have to try something new that's challenging and difficult, do they engage with that and they give the effort or they're like, try to shy away from that because to not be able to do that is equating to, I'm not a good athlete, I'm not talented enough. And so far, you know, I want to try to avoid showing others that I can't do this because that, that's a real blow to the ego.

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J: And correct me if I'm wrong, it's been a while since I've read the book, but the whole book was, was used with the premise, the growth or the fixed mindset is nurtured and it's not something that you're necessarily born with and she wanted to tackle that. Whereas a lot of people out there think, Oh, there's a certain mindset that you're born with. And it's very hard to then maybe do the

rewiring. What would you say to those people that, that maybe think down those roads?

[04:43](#)

L: Well, and Dweck did a great job of, of demonstrating how it is socialized in many ways and how we communicate and reward and reinforce young people, goes a long ways to determining whether or not they have a growth or fixed mindset from an early age. So if you think about it, a child comes home, they get an A in a test. And what do you say? Do you say you know what? You studied really hard. You work for this, say, great job, I'm proud of you keep working. Or do you say, Oh, you're so smart, you're so intelligent. You're special, right? Innate qualities. Now on the surface, both are seen as very nice comments, right? And it's nice to say these things to your children, but children are very smart. They're quick to pick things up. And I begin to realize, wait a second, what about the time I don't get the A? Does that mean I'm dumb that I'm not intelligent, that I'm not that smart, I'm not special. Right? And so not that that's what the parent meant, but they start picking up on, you know, is the parent looking at this as an innate quality of something that can be changed? Or is it just an expression of who you are? And if it's just an expression of your innate qualities that then tends to change that and drive that mindset more to that, what we'd say, that innate or that fixed. The other thing that we see at work here, Johnny, is that as young kids get a little bit older, nine, 10 11 they start changing their reference to the peers, right? They start looking their peers, comparing themselves more. What you start to see is that this more of this, again, this fixed approach and comparing myself against others and expressions of my talent make me feel really good about myself because I'm better than you and and that kind of thing. And so you see also at that time period where they equate this closely with an ego mindset as well, but you start to see young people take on this fixed or this innate approach because it makes them feel good about who they are in comparison to others. At around 10, 11, 12 then all of this comparison begins with children.

[06:41](#)

J: And I guess when you're always rewarding the smart side, right? You're so smart, you're good, and then if they do something that didn't quite fit up to those expectations of being incredibly smart than how much does that play into that, I guess the self-worth of, of that child up person.

[06:54](#)

L: Well, you know, I think those that have the growth mindset, what we find is that they don't have a problem taking on challenges and they actually deal with failure better because they understand most likely that's part of the process to getting better. And there's nothing wrong with that. That's not saying I'm not good, I'm not special for the fixed mindset and become much more ego minded. It's about again, showing them that I'm better than others, expressions of my talent, and if I can't do that, then that does affect, in many cases my self-worth and how I feel about myself. And what we found in research is that people who have more of this fixed ego approach to learning tend to cheat more often because it's not about the work to get to the end product. It's about the end product. And so getting there and actually having to work for it is not a good thing to actually have to go out and practice my serve has gotten not a good

thing because that's an expression of I'm not good versus a growth mindset person. Well yeah, let's go work, let's go hit those serves, see if I can spot them up eight or nine out of 10 times. Right, no problem. For the, for the innate person who's focused on talent, that's not a good thing. They do not want to fail. They don't want to fail in front of others because that's to say that they equate that with their self worth, that they're not good enough and it's not a part of the journey to becoming better. That's just who you are. Right? And so there's a lot of challenges that fixed mindset that are innate don't enjoy practice as much usually when you make sense, right? Because well, practice is all about putting in the work to get better, but I already have it or I don't, the work's not going to necessarily take me there. So things like problem solving, they're not necessarily going to be very good at that. Again, these are generalizations, but that's what the research is telling us and what Dweck has in her book mindset that you really need to start rewiring that when you can because it has major implications for our children. You know, the way they approach challenges, the way they approach success and failure and how they look at things, how they're going to be motivated and how they're going to feel about themselves.

[08:57](#)

J: So give me like a parenting example.

[08:58](#)

L: Or I'll give you a personal one.

[09:00](#)

J: Get deep, Larry.

[09:02](#)

L: Yeah. Allright. So people can evaluate my parenting style from this. But I remember a few years ago, uh, my oldest daughter Elena came home and she had gotten a, a very good grade on a test and my wife and I had talked about mindset and we talked about how we were gonna approach this. And so we're both like, yeah, you know, that's, that's awesome. And you did well and did you study for it? Yes, I studied for it. And we then, you know, you put in the hard work and that, that's why you got that A. You got to keep doing that, but great job. We're proud of you. And so what I, what I found with my children is that they still don't like it when they get a poor grade, but they understand that they have to work at things. It's not just, Oh, you're better than everybody else. You're special. No, you've got to work at things. That's how you do it. And so I find with them, they do, you know, I'm very proud of them. And now maybe I'm spouting off as a father, but they will work at things and they'll put the effort in in most cases. You know, I, I've seen where one of the kids will come home with, with not such a great grade sometimes. And fortunately I'm very fortunate that's not very often with my kids, probably because of my wife.

[10:03](#)

J: They got your wife's smarts?

[10:04](#)

L: They have my wife smarts. Yes. And looks so they, they did much better.

[10:08](#)

J: Oh, that's is good. So they've got a face for radio?

[10:13](#)

L: Well my wife listens to every episode of this, you know, this is very important moment here that she's listening to this. So if they have come home with not the best grade instead of panicking or freaking out, but saying, okay, what do you think happened? Have them explain it to you and talk about, okay, so why do you think you got that grade? And if they start making excuses then you need to correct that, but they say, well yeah, maybe, you know, I didn't spend enough time thinking about each question or you know, I forgot some things or I guess maybe I didn't study enough. I didn't really know it. Like, all right, well then learn from that. Like you can recover from this, but you're going to have to learn a lesson. It doesn't feel good right now. And what I've found is just the whole thing is less, less anxiety provoking and getting them to work at things while their kids. And it's still challenging sometimes it hasn't been as hard as what I've seen for other folks going through it.

[11:03](#)

J: And that, and that's a great example that segways then maybe into the tennis side with coaches. So a player might've gone on court, done everything that they've been working on and played pretty well, you know, given decent effort but come off and lost and then it's a case of do I save face or am I able to identify that I actually did a really great job. I just lost today and I think probably you see a lot of cases where they've done the right things, they've given good work ethic, come off and lost, and then it goes straight to maybe some of those excuse makings and often, and this is one area that you know you see a lot of in tournaments. The excuses will start coming from the parent first. That sort of then is planted that seed into the the child or the player's mind and then that their feedback from the match starts to be forged or maybe it's different than maybe what it could have been had they had a bit of space to reflect and think about why it is that maybe they lost even though they did the right things. Put the work ethic in.

[12:00](#)

L: Yes, and this really is, is a very important concept for everyone within the performance team, the parents, the coaches, the players to understand that these situations or the way we look at these things, they end up becoming our habits for the way we attribute success and failure. Champions have certain ways of doing things, you know, they, they believe that they have a control over a lot of things that they can control. And they take responsibility for it and a clear understanding of what they don't control. And so, you know, the Rafa after the match with Thiem, they asked him about his changing his racket after he lost the first set or it was his tension or his racket. He's like, it wasn't the racket. It was me. It's like it had nothing to do with a racket. Yeah. Changed the tension or whatever, but I needed to be better. Right. So champions are looking to take responsibility, but they also at the same time, understanding of what they don't control and they accept it and they move on from that. What you're getting at is sort of a societal trend that we're trying to protect kids confidence in the belief that if they don't experience failure, that's better. And that's completely false. Our kids need to experience some failures, some setback in micro doses and little doses so that they're more resilient to the big stuff, right. So that they're able to learn how to come back from failure. They learn how to do things in a good way. We learn more from losing than we do winning, let's be honest. And

so these moments need to be looked at as teachable moments, opportunities to learn and get better versus these expression of our talent and us not being good enough. It's very easy to fall into that trap. I think we all as parents feel that pressure like, Oh, why is my daughter not doing well? Just just check it because right now you're worried much about yourself and what it means for you as it is for your daughter, right? You want them to do, to do well for you. You want them to do well for themselves. And for that to be the case, they need to experience those setbacks. It's not going to kill their confidence, not gonna kill her confidence to lose or to fail or take responsibility. You know what? You had the wrong game plan. Uh, you know what? You pulled the shoe too early in that match. You start believing in yourself. That's okay. That's data. That's information for the next time we practiced for next time we play. This protection of children's self-esteem comes from this trend of worrying about kids self confidence and self esteem. But little kids are very self confident. They all think they're Superman, Batman, wonder woman from the star, right? They think they're superheroes. And so when they start to experience failure and they start to see kids who are better that at stuff than they are right now at the moment, how are you going to respond to that as a parent or as a coach? Are you going to say, you know what act, you know they're not that good. You're better than they are, you're special. Are you going to say, okay, yeah, they're absolutely very good at something. You're very good at some other things as well. If you want to be very good that and then you got to put the work in and there's nothing wrong with that and that's where it begins, right? So when your son looks at somebody else and they're playing tennis and saying, wow, that kid has a really good serve. Okay, well how can you work then to get to serve that you want, that you want to have? These comparisons are happening all the time in tennis and so the more that we direct that back towards the things that the kids control, the process and the things that they can improve and that hard work gets us there, I think you're going to find kids who are far more motivated, who are going to be resilient and take on challenges well be willing to problem solve and the actually having to problem solve is not a bad thing. It's actually something they look forward to to figure out this puzzle of how do you win a match.

[15:32](#)

J: And it's necessary.

[15:34](#)

L: Oh absolutely. Right? Because you got the other person on their side of the court trying to make you lose. They're trying to frustrate you. So if your confidence is based on everything going right, you have no chance. As you move up the ranks in tennis, you have no chance. And so if that's how we reinforce kids only when they do things the way that they should be, instead of reinforcing the process, we're setting the kids up to fail.

[15:56](#)

J: Absolutely. And that, that sort of sets up the premise here, this growth mindset, what, what, what that means, what, what is needed. And we, uh, we talk about personal growth, right? We're, we're trying to get maybe from A to B or we're trying to, maybe we'll just, this journey looks like a personal growth

and you send me this really, it was a great article. Extremely interesting. And it's, and we'll put it on the, uh, the notes in the show notes to the podcast.

[16:19](#)

L: This was one of those us open mornings where I was up at like 5:00 AM after getting back at 11. My mind was just rolling.

[16:26](#)

J: So yeah. So there was this, that the author of this article is called Marta Brzosko.

[16:31](#)

L: Roscoe maybe.

[16:32](#)

J: Brusko sorry, hopefully I pronounced that right. Sorry if I butchered that Marta.

[16:36](#)

L: Probably not listening to our podcast.

[16:38](#)

J: Definitely. Probably not.

[16:39](#)

L: We'll send it to her anyway.

[16:40](#)

J: Yeah, we'll send it to her. And the, the title of it is the four ugly lies of personal growth. So when you sent us this, it's like, huh, okay. Well, you know, usually associate personal growth, some positive, you know, you're, you're making yourself better, but then it's kind of a somewhat kind of negative turn on, you know, negative phrase, ugly lies certainly.

[16:56](#)

L: It certainly caught my attention.

[16:58](#)

J: Absolutely, I mean it's one of those things that would definitely catch and we'll go through some of the points she made in it, but it reminded me once reading through it, it's essentially like the light at the end of the tunnel. You're constantly always trying to get to that light at the end of the tunnel and your personal growth and know that you're getting better. But when you're in that tunnel, it's dark. It can be lonely, there's maybe a lot of struggles. There's a lot of stop and starting. There's maybe a little bit of going backwards, but ultimately you go through all that because you know that there's that light at the end of the tunnel that you're always striving for. And so one of, four for of points here that she made was that the personal growth is not linear. So as a suggestion, as a great great graphic that she put in the article that was essentially on the left hand side, personal growth experience points, right? 0-10 right? And then on the bottom it was time. And the first graph she showed was this complete linear delineation between time and personal growth. And then she said actually it's just a straight line going up. But on the second side she drew another one and it was, you know, instead of how you imagine it, it's actually how it feels. And, and this personal growth curve was up. It's down, it's round, it's backwards, it's sideways, it's all over the show. And which is the

truth, which is pretty good reality to it. But go through what she meant by, you know, a little bit more detail. That sort of sure. Personal growth is not linear.

[18:17](#)

L: Well if you, let's, let's take an example. So I'm going to take something I know as a football player, the bench press, and if you charted it every time that you lifted weights, right, and you put in how much weight, how many reps, what you would see is more like the right or the latter when you mentioned where there's going to be plateaus, there's going to be times where you don't do as much. Maybe you're tired, maybe you're sick, maybe you haven't recovered well, but if you did this same thing but you charted it once every couple months, you would probably see much more of that linear line going up to the right, right? Because you would see improvement over time. So it all depends on your perception, right? And so if you're paying attention to the journey every day, then you are going to experience those setbacks, those plateaus where you don't get better. And that's normal. And really trying to normalize that, that our experience is not linear. There's ups and downs. Things go in and out. And so helping young players understand that, they get it intuitively because some days they show up and they can hit a great backhand. Other days it's not there, like, what the heck happened? Where's my backhand? I thought I had it. Well, this is how things flow, right? Until you master that backhand and you have more consistency, which might take 10 years, you're going to have these ups and downs. And I think if you, even you, even if you look at the pros who obviously have mastered much of their game, they still have ups and downs. They have days where they don't serve as well, right? So this idea of personal growth in that every step should be in a positive direction is, is if you, if you believe that way is not the truth, we'd like to talk to the players about that because we like to focus more on things that they can control, which should be more of a, a straight ahead process. But, uh, we know it's still not the case. So, yeah, if you think that every day is going to be a step, a positive step forward, I think you're probably tricking yourself. And there's going to be days where they just, it doesn't go as well and that's normal and that's okay. But take that as a way to learn and to motivate yourself, not to put yourself down or to believe you can't make it. So I think that's the message of that. And you know, so when you're talking about personal growth, you don't have to be perfect. You're not perfect, even if you're constantly working at it.

[20:33](#)

J: I mean, we're essentially the ones building the road, but sometimes the road gets halted and has little bumps in it that we have to put the brakes on and have to reevaluate, reanalyze, and then how we go forward. Right. So I got a thumbs up over here. Oh yeah. Okay. Great. Well, I said my good nugget for the day. I'm done. Alright.

[20:49](#)

L: In Michigan, you get a lot of potholes. So, you know, the bumpy road and actually in talent development, you, you funny you bring that up, but they've talked about the bumpy road. Uh, like Collins and others. So I mean I think that that metaphor is truly what we're talking about here. Development is not linear. It's a bumpy road. There's gonna be times where you plateau and fall back and

helping kids and players understand that it's normal. Not to be complacent, but you got to accept what is and inspire yourself to keep working.

[21:20](#)

J: Yeah, absolutely. The second point she brought up was the personal growth is not up to you and this was very, this is very enlightening. One of the questions she asks is, okay, what we often neglect to take into consideration of the cards we're actually dealt to play in this world. Walk us through what she was, what she talks about.

[21:35](#)

L: Wooh this, this is a tough one for me because my philosophy is for the most part, we create our own destiny. And so I wrestle with this when often how much does the environment determine what we do? But I also know that we tend to, we tend to take on the norms and the environment that we're in. We are highly influenced by our environment. If you think about much of your personality is developed by age two, age three. Well, you didn't really have any say in that, right? You weren't telling your parents what to say. So you're a lot of who you are is molded without you having a say in that. Uh, and then, then you talk about genetics and things of that and then the environment you grow up in. You know, I remember working in Detroit with think Detroit police athletic league and these kids, the things that they were going through, many of them not having two parents at home, not having, you know, a grocery store close by not having some of the things that we take for granted in many cases, you know in Detroit and, and yet being so resilient and so tough and having such a good attitude, you know, even though they didn't, you know, if you went into East Lansing or, or, you know, Ann Arbor, and you see what those kids have and they have everything that they need, you know, at their fingertips. So I think your environment does and, and you know, if you look at again in like talent development science, there's some work that's been done where they say that everybody has their predispositions. And so, you know, in terms of certain skills or abilities and we don't know these things, but your bucket could be small, it could be medium, it could be large. We don't know that when we get a kid and we try to figure that out by observing what they do and how they respond to stuff. But so we have these latent abilities and if we kind of connect and intersect with the things they get interested in and it comes out, then you get something pretty special. You know, a kid picks up a baseball bat, they start playing and, and they have some latent abilities, eye hand coordination, you know, maybe other members of the family, et cetera. But people have buckets and some are more shallow and some are more or are deeper. And so it's not like people can't develop certain things, but you're always also constrained by the environment that you grew up in or the environment that you're in. Right. If that, if that makes sense. What do you, what are your thoughts on that journey?

[23:50](#)

J: No, I think it, I think you're right there, it's, you know, if you grew up and you have a law and you didn't have to work for a lot, it's very easy to sit back and go, yeah, personal growth, you, you can take control your own destiny and it's easier to say that for you if you have had so much access to so many different things. Right. I actually think it's worse for those kids or those people that had access to all that, but then didn't take advantage of all that was in front of their

face and what they, all the learning and the exposure that they could have got. But then you look on the other side is if you, you know, if you grow up in a harsh environment, you didn't have access to a lot of things, then yeah, it's a lot more difficult to find those things that might help you with I guess personal growth in that sense. But I do believe in the, in, in what you said though, that regardless we can make decisions and choices about our growth and our personal growth and it's just that level of access I guess in, in finding how it's going, what's going to help us and how we're going to get, get those things that we need to help us through that journey.

[24:47](#)

L: Yeah. A great point. And I think when you think about this, instead of thinking about the constraints change the level of access, right? So if a young person, you know, if young people are struggling with the, their ability to read, you know, how much time are we actually spending with adults reading, right? Are there books readily available to them? Are they taking trips to a library? Can you bring a lot of books in that they can read? Like are we making time for it? So changing the access, right, and getting the interest. If, you know, we'll get back to tennis here, but if you want kids who haven't been exposed to tennis to be tennis players, then you have to give them access. There's no other way. They're not going to play it if they don't have access. And people realize that. So if you want personal growth, you have to create an access to it. If your environment doesn't allow it, then you obviously are going to be stuck where you are. But when, I think the point of this though is not to say that it's all about personal control and you create your own destiny. Or to say that we're slaves to our environment is to realize that these things interact. Um, that there's the environment and there's, you know, my personal motives and what I, what I desire to do and these things kind of interact to one another. And that's where you find, you find growth.

[26:00](#)

J: Exactly. I think a good example when we're talking about this as if you're, that if you're a tennis player and you want to go play tennis and you don't have anyone to play with, can you go down to the local park or find a wall, find your garage wall, take, grab a few balls and go, go serve by yourself. You know, there are many times like, you know, I'm sure as many of our listeners in here, there were probably many times where you grew up playing and you didn't have anyone to play with, but you probably just went and hit tennis balls somewhere against the wall. You know, and I think that's what we're also talking about here is, is how can you find ways to open up something that could still help you, right? Hitting against the wall can still help you going out and serving by yourself can still help you along your journey of getting better and learning and growing, you know? So where can you also just kind of take it upon yourself to go find those things too?

[26:46](#)

L: Yeah. When I was younger I, I did not like to do public speaking and some people might find that curious when I was, when I was a teen. So I knew when I wanted to go into sports psychology that had to change. So just exposing yourself to, to those opportunities, you know, working with and Dan Gould and as many times as he would let me present or work with him, I would do it and

just be like, okay, we're doing it. And it didn't always go well. I got better and better as time went on but in more comfortable. But I think, you know, if you want to, if you want to be able to grow in some way, you have to change the access and not just think that, okay I, I was dealt these cards. It is what it is. Well there are some constraints based on the cards you were dealt, but at the same time, if you can change your environment in some way, you might actually get closer to what it is you want.

[27:36](#)

J: Yeah. Good points. So the third one, personal growth is not subject to comparison.

[27:41](#)

L: Okay. What are your thoughts on that?

[27:44](#)

J: Well I think it's very hard. I think it's almost, you know, I think that we live in a world of judgments or easy to do. Judgments are real. We are always comparing ourselves with versus someone you know, what we're doing versus someone else as a way of measuring if what we're doing is right or not or whether you know we're better than someone else. And I think there's somewhat of a natural tendency to want to do that. And so I think it was good that she dived into this because it isn't subjects comparison cause we all are on our own path and our own journey.

[28:13](#)

L: Yeah. I think, you know, comparisons can, they are natural. You know, when, when the NFL season starts, don't we all look at the schedule and say okay win-loss, win-loss. If it's a dolphins it's loss. Loss, loss, loss.

[28:27](#)

J: Or the Browns, you're only saying this because now Browns have actually won a couple of games.

[28:31](#)

L: No, I've used this joke before.

[28:31](#)

J: Last year, the other Fall it was loss. Loss loss loss.

[28:36](#)

L: Thank you. Bring that up. Bring up the past, Johnny. Just get over it. It's a new, it's a new future. The Browns are winning Superbowl soon, so let's put it out there.

[28:45](#)

J: Bold statement.

[28:46](#)

L: It is bold. In the next three years, doing this. Anyways.

[28:49](#)

J: Mich, you want to go back to the casino in Vegas? Put some money on that?

[28:52](#)

M: No, I saw the odds. No.

[28:56](#)

L: Hey, those odds are only based on past history. Don't trust them. You ever hear the black Swan, look that up? All right, so getting at this idea that now you

see, you got me off track, Johnny. He got me thinking about the Browns. Okay. Thrown off.

[29:09](#)

J: Personal growth is not subject comparison. Evolutionary social, cognitive.

[29:14](#)

L: Geez. Throwing in some big terms now just.

[29:17](#)

J: Just get me a kickstart.

[29:19](#)

L: Thanks man. Well, you know we, we naturally make these comparisons, right? And it's normal to do so. However, a lot of times these comparisons lead us either to feeling superior and I think that's one of the messages of the article is as you grow and you feel like you're, you're getting better, you start looking at others and saying, well why don't they do that? Why don't they as healthy as I do or why don't they train the way I do? Right? And you start to feel superior and you start to realize how you make these judgements that I'm better than someone else. And that can be a lonely place to be. And on the flip side, when you're making these judgements that you're inferior, that I'm not as good as someone. When you're comparing yourself that that's a, that's tough. That's very judgemental. And that can be a road to anxiety and depression, right? If you stay there a lot where you're doing a lot of comparisons where I'm not as good, I'm not good enough, they're better than me. So to your point, Johnny, if you can take on a perspective that each person has their own path and being good with that path and really pushing yourself against yourself, this is nothing new. You know, this idea of task focus and the gold, she meant literature or controlling what you can control, which is how you do things. You can't really focus on what others are doing. But this is rampant in tennis because we have the ratings. And the rankings and it's so easy. We compare people all the time, right? There's seeds and you know, if you're not a seed, then you've been told that you're not as good as these other people.

[30:44](#)

J: Absolutely. And want to get into the last one here, the time is running short.

[30:48](#)

L: Time is of the essence. While we can go a little bit longer, Mich's got abundance of time.

[30:52](#)

J: Personal growth is not a means to be happy, Larry.

[30:57](#)

L: It's not?

[30:58](#)

J: Didn't you know that?

[30:58](#)

L: No, I didn't know that.

[31:00](#)

J: Aren't we all on this journey to personal growth so that we can all be happier?

[31:03](#)

L: So we're enlightened and self-actualized. Our greatest self, our best self. What's wrong with that?

[31:10](#)

J: You tell me. I mean, I can relate to a lot of this because you go on this.

[31:14](#)

L: Because you're so great?

[31:15](#)

J: No, absolutely not. I'm certainly not happy for now, but a premise here is that the end goal is to be happier or happiness through growing yourself, right? Through, through learning more through being able to apply more in what you do and all that and all that leads to I am a much happier person. But the actual reality is is that doesn't really make us happier, especially not in the short term because we go through a lot of struggle and we may find out things actually that change our thoughts or opinions on, on what we on what we thought about, whether it was the way I'm supposed to teach, where I'm supposed to coach, where I'm supposed to play, things I'm supposed to do. We ended up going down these rabbit holes of discovering what it is it means to get better. And we actually find that the way we have been doing things is maybe not the way we should maybe should, could be or should be, to actually get better. And so you start going through those struggles and yeah, kind of maybe isn't comfortable to begin with, but I think you can get to a point where you know, if it's in the back of your mind, okay, I'm going to go through all this struggle. I know I'm getting better and, and that's, that's what I've got to come back to at the end of the day is understanding that perspective and that bigger picture that I'm doing all this for the, for the longterm benefit of, of where I would like to be with my playing career or where I'd like to be with my professional career. What do you think?

[32:26](#)

L: Well, I mean that sounds great and isn't that what all the self help gurus are telling you to do?

[32:31](#)

J: Yeah, I mean the, the toughest part about all this is as well as like it's constantly challenging our emotions. And I think she brings this up in the article is constant challenging emotions. And I think the tough part of it is, is that when you find things out and I think you know that it can help not only yourself, but maybe the team you're involved with or the organization you're involved with. I think you know, when you can try and apply things that will make us and everyone better because it's a, might be a better solution to some things you might get met with some pushback right? Maybe you get met with the daunting thought of a, somebody with a fixed mindset that doesn't want to be compliant or be helpful or be able to open their minds to some of these new ideas come to the table. And so you start suffering through all kinds of compromises, right? And knowing that that suffering is happening because of that newly discovered information and do you stay true to yourself and keep pushing and pushing, you know, or inevitably like an environment that we're in. Sometimes you have to, you know, you have to adjust, you have to compromise in order to get from A to B. So it then becomes that battle between staying true to yourself and what you know through the research and through the knowledge and through the learning that you've gone through is, is the right direction to go down or you're

struggling on this other side, which is you're met with some of these compromises and barriers that really make you feel uncomfortable then doing what you're then doing. So your, what you do is impacted by others and when you are impacted by others. And it goes against your values or some of the things that you've learned. That's when the emotions and the frustrations kick in.

[34:02](#)

L: Yeah, no, that, that's, that's well put Johnny. It makes me think of that. You know that the Amazon original show Jack Ryan, exactly what he's going through with being in the CIA.

[34:12](#)

J: Is that Jim from the office?

[34:15](#)

L: That is Jim from the office.

[34:17](#)

J: That's a good show. Jack Ryan.

[34:18](#)

L: That's a very good show. But what he goes through with Greer who's his boss and that show. But anyway, that's an aside. But you know, as you engage as personal growth and you come up with these new ideas that is going to run upstream against other people's ideas and you're going to struggle with that sometimes and that's normal and you're going to get frustrated. And I think that's okay. And I think if you can have civil discourse where you're working with others and figure things out, then there are times where you end up compromising and you have to accept that and then you would just need to know what you're not willing to compromise on, you know, and what's that line for you. And, and that can be a tough line to find, but I think it's hard for a person who does his personal growth and then the line is so, so close to where they're at. It's like you can't, everything has to be the way that I, I feel it needs to be. That's a very tough person to work with, right? Or they always have the idea that's innovative and better. That's a tough person to work with. So you had to see the flip side at the same time. Some people aren't necessarily constantly looking for a new or better way to do things. And so they're going to be a bit put off for certainly feel challenged by someone who's constantly looking at how, how to grow and get better and innovate and, uh, that can make things challenging in the workplace, can make things challenging at home. So these, I think these are natural experiences that you go through as you're trying to develop and make things better. You really need to think about, you know, as you do this, how do you integrate this within the team? How can this become a team effort more so than just this individual, you know, effort to become the best I can be over everyone else.

[35:51](#)

J: Larry, do you know what phrase really grinds my gears. You hear it a lot.

[35:54](#)

L: Oh, I can't wait for this. I Probably have said it to you.

[35:57](#)

J: So when you come forwards and offer, maybe offer suggestions for maybe adapting things, change things because of maybe new innovative ways or how he can be a little bit better. It's, that's the way we've always done it. So that's the way we got to do it.

[36:09](#)

L: Ooh, yeah, that one, that ones, that's a tough one.

[36:11](#)

J: And I'll give you an example. So, so in tennis we have this four hour on court model, two hours in the morning, maybe it's an hour fitness, two hours in the afternoon also. So sometimes it might be good to come to the table based off each individual player's needs and go, well actually we'll play three hours today, hour and a half in the morning, hour and a half in the afternoon. Maybe we'll do a little bit more on the physical development side, athletic development side, or maybe when you spend a little bit more time going in some mental skills, maybe discussing through some things that we're struggling with and that in on the back end of that, that might actually help us more than just going through that for our model. Now I know that model exists. I'm not saying that the everyone shouldn't be doing that, you know, I think some people can handle that. Some people can't, but it's just talking about how we can, how we can be a little bit more A individualized, but B, it might be, you know, to, to make the importance of athletic development and mental skills, you know, high, which it is. I mean you need both sides and you need to do those things pretty well to succeed. Right. And so it's, it's, it's how do you divide your time up to place emphasis on all areas of development.

[37:16](#)

L: And sure, I mean to the point of, of what we've been talking about here is when you make those kinds of suggestions, are they actually being processed and thought about as, and maybe that is a better way to do things or is it just shot down? Right. That would be the frustrating thing is it just kind of shot down now that's not how we do things. And I think great organizations are willing to innovate. They're willing to do things in a different way that maybe isn't the way that others have done it. I think if you look at the Patriots or the Seahawks for example, in the NFL, why are they been very successful? They might do some things differently than some of the other teams.

[37:50](#)

J: And coaches, coaches coming to the table with their players saying, okay, I think we're going to work on this today and this is how we're going to do it. And it might be not something the player is used to. Right. And for that player, are they open to that or are they not open to that? And I think being able to come to the table and go, okay, we are going to struggle through this. But by going through the process, I think we can find happiness on the end of it. Right. But I think as well, if we break it down to that player coach relationship, I think that's another way that we can look at how, how we can get a little bit better. You know, it doesn't mean we have to do this area of focus the exact same way every time. We can make it more challenging. We can make it more thought provoking. We can, you know, we can do all those areas.

[38:32](#)

L: And if it doesn't go exactly the way you want, doesn't mean it's an absolute failure. This is a data point on the process of figuring out what works best. Right? And I think sometimes we're so scared to make a mistake that we forget that that's actually part of the journey is making those mistakes, figuring it out. Well obviously we avoid the mistakes we can, but sometimes she's got to try stuff and see how it, how it works with, with, with good science, with a good idea that it will work, you know, so, but inevitably when we talk about personal growth and the frustrations that come with that, what makes people happy? Connection, right? Connection makes you all happy being with others and having those relationships. And that is very important in happiness. So as you go through this drive for personal self development, for personal growth, depending on how you look at things, you might actually be cutting off those connections with others, right? If you're, if you're getting really frustrated and just cutting people out because they don't agree with you, with your, your ideas and your great ideas. Right. And so how do you balance sort of knowing what you know and you're, you're constantly reading and picking up ideas and talking to people and finding better ways to do things and yet maintain that good relationship with others where you're not constantly judging them for, for not thinking how you do. Yeah, I mean I think that's the crux of it. And, and if you can focus more on, you know, not that you're better than others, that you always know more, but we're in this together as a team and how can we work together and you might have some ideas that are good for me and I might have some ideas and maybe doing it the way we've done it is the best way to do it and maybe we should try a different way. I think a lot of times people who get on this personal growth curve and the reading all the self help books and they're going to seminars and whatnot, get very frustrated with the world because things don't always go the way that people are telling them they should go like, Hey, you get these ideas that people will listen. You're going to do great. Then you're going to change the world and guess what? Maybe the world doesn't want to be changed and now you run up against that. So I think can you focus on your growth as compared to yourself and less in comparison to others as we talked about and really as our good friend Amy Barnhart said, make it about the journey and make it, you know, you want to get to that destination. But really truthfully, what is most fulfilling is a journey and doing it with others, being in the journey with other people.

[40:55](#)

J: Awesome. Those are some great nuggets to leave you with. We hope you've enjoyed this week's episode of compete, like a champion. This has been 'Can Personal Growth Get Ugly?' I think it can, but I think we know the bigger picture. And, uh, absolutely. So tune in next time. We'll have another great episode for you. And, uh, until next week, it's Dr. Larry Lauer and I checking out