

A Call to Action

By Jim Clemmer

"A parrot talks much but flies little." — Wilbur Wright, American aviation pioneer

On the one hand, some people who fail to grow the distance do but don't think. They are like the hyperactive entrepreneur who burst into a travel agent's office and urgently demanded a ticket. "Where do you want to go?" the agent asked him. "I don't care," he breathlessly retorted. "Just give me a ticket! I've got business everywhere!"

On the other hand, many unsuccessful people think but don't do. These people know all the theories. They can quote chapter, verse, phrase, and story from leadership and personal effectiveness books, magazines, and speakers. They are walking professors. But their experiences are all conceptual. They know, but don't act on their knowledge. They are like an "expert" in love and marriage who has never had a date. What Seeds are We Planting?

A farmer prayed fervently every night during harvest season for a fine crop. He pleaded for crops as fine as his neighbors. After one night of particularly strong lamenting and pleading, the Lord finally replied; "Ben," He exclaimed, "How can I give you a harvest? You didn't plant any seeds last spring."

Now is the time to prepare for our next harvest. We can't wait until harvest time to plant the seeds. We can't strike a bargain to plant seeds once we see whether the harvest is worth the effort. Harvest time will arrive whether we're ready or not. Now is the time to plant the seeds for the coming harvests.

Now is the time for action. Now is the time to move from where we are to where we want to be. Now is the time to grow toward our distant dreams. That takes courage and discipline. It's far easier to be a victim and use excuses like we're too old, it's too late, we've missed our big chances in life, or today's opportunities aren't as good as they used to be.

Such "Victimitis" leads straight to Pity City. If we're not careful, we'll grow ever more bitter and resistant to change as we regret what might have been. If we've going to live to the fullest, we need to be thoroughly used up before we leave this earth. Countless people through the ages who awoke late in life have shown that it's never too late. There's still time. If not now, when?

Kerry was in her forties and slowly working her way toward a degree on a part-time basis. Many of her friends and family tried to discourage her from "wasting her time." "You will be fifty by the time you finally get your degree," they told her. Kerry responded, "I wish I would have completed my degree years ago. But since I am going to be fifty anyway, I want to have a degree when I get there."

Perseverance, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"We must not hope to be mowers,
And to gather the ripe gold ears,

Unless we have first been sowers,
And watered the furrows with tears.
It is not just as we take it,
This mystical world of ours,
Life's field will yield as we make it,
A harvest of thorns or of flowers."

About the Author

Excerpted from Jim's fourth bestseller, Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success. View the book's unique format and content, Introduction and Chapter One, and feedback showing why nearly 100,000 copies are now in print at GrowingTheDistance.com. Jim's new companion book to Growing the Distance is The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success. Jim Clemmer is an internationally acclaimed keynote speaker, workshop/retreat leader, and management team developer on leadership, change, customer focus, culture, teams, and personal growth. His web site is Clemmer.net/articles.