

**DAN SULLIVAN  
CATHERINE NOMURA**

**The Laws of  
LIFETIME  
GROWTH**

**ALWAYS MAKE YOUR FUTURE  
BIGGER THAN YOUR PAST**

*“This little book  
can change your life, as its  
principles have changed mine.”*

**—DAVID BACH**

Author of the #1 *New York Times* bestsellers  
*The Automatic Millionaire* and *Start Late, Finish Rich*

## Praise for *The Laws of Lifetime Growth*

“A brilliant resource.”

—John Maxwell, *New York Times* bestselling author

“A ‘user-friendly’ guide to growing in and experiencing the love and appreciation of life which enables us to truly live... highly recommended to all readers searching for a better understanding of their own mind, in pursuit of personal success and contentment.”

—*Midwest Book Review, Wisconsin Bookwatch*

“A small, insightful book. In many ways, the philosophy behind *The Laws of Lifetime Growth* reflects the wisdom of the ages.”

—Janis Foord Kirk, *The Toronto Star*

“This is an excellent little book. It’s ‘little’ in terms of being pocket sized for easy transport but very ‘large’ in the actionable insight and wisdom the authors present. Keep this one with you, and you will welcome opportunities just to sit quietly and take in the engaging stories and timeless wisdom for personal success. Your next flight delay may transform into a very mindful adventure.”

—*The CEO Refresher*

“If I were to list the teachers and coaches who have most influenced my life, Dan Sullivan would be at the top of that list. His Strategic Coach Program<sup>®</sup>, books, and CDs have profoundly impacted how I run my business and my life. Now, with Catherine Nomura, he has clearly and powerfully presented ten universal laws which, if applied, will set you on a course for unlimited growth, fulfillment, and success. I highly recommend this book.”

—Jack Canfield, coauthor of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling book series *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and author of *The Success Principles*

“A literal field guide to growing and transforming your life, relationships, career and finances, and one book that should be kept close at hand.”

—Marie D. Jones, *Curled Up with a Good Book*

“A quick, interesting read.”

—Harvey Schachter, *The Globe & Mail*

“Packs a punch that will allow you to design your future while focusing on your present.”

—Mike Sansone, *ConverStations.com*

“If you’re stuck in a dead-end position, whether it be in business, in a relationship, or in life, then Dan Sullivan and Catherine Nomura’s *The Laws of Lifetime Growth* is the book for you.”

—*Midwest Book Review, California Bookwatch*

“There’s nothing in here about incremental revenue growth or upselling existing customers, but this wonderfully broad and flexible approach will help entrepreneurs of all stripes grow, including in ways they may never have considered.”

—Mark Henricks, *Entrepreneur* magazine

“I loved this book! *The Laws of Lifetime Growth* is more than a book: it’s a road map to a new powerful way of thinking that is instantly usable.”

—David Bach, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Automatic Millionaire*

*This page intentionally left blank*

**DAN SULLIVAN  
CATHERINE NOMURA**

**The Laws of  
LIFETIME  
GROWTH**

**ALWAYS MAKE YOUR FUTURE  
BIGGER THAN YOUR PAST**



**BK**

BERRETT-KOEHLER PUBLISHERS, INC.  
San Francisco  
*a BK Life book*

# The Laws of Lifetime Growth

Copyright © 2006, 2007 by The Strategic Coach, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.



**BK**

**Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.**

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 650

San Francisco, California 94104-2916

Tel: (415) 288-0260, Fax: (415) 362-2512

[www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

## Ordering information for print editions

*Quantity sales.* Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations, and others. For details, contact the "Special Sales Department" at the Berrett-Koehler address above.

*Individual sales.* Berrett-Koehler publications are available through most bookstores. They can also be ordered directly from Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626; [www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

*Orders for college textbook/course adoption use.* Please contact Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626.

*Orders by U.S. trade bookstores and wholesalers.* Please contact Ingram Publisher Services, Tel: (800) 509-4887; Fax: (800) 838-1149; E-mail: [customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com](mailto:customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com); or visit [www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering](http://www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering) for details about electronic ordering.

Berrett-Koehler and the BK logo are registered trademarks of Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Cataloging-in-Publication Data are available from the Library of Congress.

First Edition

Hardcover print edition ISBN 978-1-57675-335-4

Paperback print edition ISBN 978-1-57675-467-2

PDF e-book ISBN 978-1-57675-505-1

2007-1

Design and production: Detta Penna. Copyediting: Elissa Rabellino

*To Babs and Hilda*



*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

---

Preface	vii
Introduction	1
<b>Law One</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Future Bigger Than Your Past</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Law Two</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Learning Greater Than Your Experience</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Law Three</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Contribution Bigger Than Your Reward</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Law Four</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Performance Greater Than Your Applause</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Law Five</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Gratitude Greater Than Your Success</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Law Six</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Enjoyment Greater Than Your Effort</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Law Seven</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Cooperation Greater Than Your Status</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Law Eight</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Confidence Greater Than Your Comfort</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Law Nine</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Purpose Greater Than Your Money</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Law Ten</b>	
<b>Always Make Your Questions Bigger Than Your Answers</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>The Decision to Grow</b>	<b>105</b>
lifetimegrowth.com	111
About the Authors	113
About The Strategic Coach	117
Acknowledgments	119
Index	121

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Preface

---

Dan Sullivan has spent the better part of his life observing how people grow, identifying what gets in their way, and coming up with tools, structures, and processes that help them to overcome these obstacles to reach the next level of personal or professional growth. It started at the kitchen table of a neighbor, Mrs. Wetzel, when he was six years old, and has grown into the basis for The Strategic Coach<sup>®</sup>, a \$25 million coaching company that has helped more than 10,000 entrepreneurs from around the world.

Mrs. Wetzel used to say, “Danny’s been here, and I feel much better now,” after Dan’s questions helped her to think through what was weighing on her mind and gain new perspectives. More than 50 years later, it’s people like best-selling authors David Bach and Jack Canfield, along with thousands of other successful entrepreneurs in more than 60 different industries, who credit Dan with having helped them to see things in new ways that have contributed to their growth and success.

One of Dan’s unique talents is to be able to take broad swaths of universal wisdom and reduce them to simple, practical tools that allow people to apply these principles in their everyday lives. The laws of lifetime growth are the result of Dan’s taking his observations about the growth experiences of thousands of entrepreneurs and others, seeing what worked and didn’t work in all those situations, and distilling them into a set of ten simple laws that can be followed by anyone.

When I met Dan and his business and life partner, Babs Smith, seven years ago, it was our combined passion for growth and the desire to free people to make their best contributions in the world that brought us together. I had spent many years focused on how the poorest of the poor could take more control over the forces and direction of their own growth and had arrived at the belief that entrepreneurial thinking and activity offered the best opportunities. Dan's ideas stunned me with their simplicity and effectiveness.

As I've worked with Babs and Dan to capture and shape growth opportunities for The Strategic Coach, they have always allowed me to conduct my own "rogue experiments," testing certain tools and concepts Dan has created to see if they prove to be as powerful and applicable for audiences outside our program. In writing this book with him, I found it a pleasure to be able to extend his ideas beyond the realm of successful entrepreneurs and to show how they apply equally well to people from many different backgrounds and circumstances.

In fact, anyone can use the wisdom in this book at any stage in life. Look anywhere, in any culture, in any situation, at people of any age, and you'll see that where there is growth, these laws are in action.

We're very happy to be able to present them to you in this brief, accessible format. And we wish you continued courage and imagination as you pursue your own lifetime growth adventure.

Catherine Nomura  
August 2005

# Introduction

---

## The Desire to Grow

---

Growth is a fundamental desire of all human beings. No matter what kinds of goals you have or what you strive for, whatever you want to see in your life that's not there now is about growth. Growth is at the root of everything that gives us a feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction, meaning, and progress.

Yet sometimes people do stop growing. We all have images we can call to mind. The movies and literature are full of them, as is real life. Take, for example, the character of Uncle Rico in the film *Napoleon Dynamite*, who constantly replays a moment of lost opportunity from his high school days; or Norma Desmond, the reclusive and mostly forgotten former movie star in *Sunset Boulevard*. More commonly, you may be familiar with the retiree who's driving his wife crazy because he suddenly doesn't know what to do with himself; the addict whose life has become solely focused on whatever it takes to find the next fix; the man who is still treating women the same way he did 40 years ago and doesn't understand why they don't respond the same way; the person whose life consists of clocking in and out day after day at a dead-end job, going home, sleeping, and then doing it all over again.

There are examples all around us of people who for some reason have stopped growing, either tem-

porarily or indefinitely. If you've picked up this book, chances are you don't want to be one of them. Maybe you're feeling a bit stuck. Maybe you're in the midst of a particularly challenging growth period and you're looking for insight, encouragement, or direction; or maybe you just want all the resources you can get on your side as you pursue your own growth path. Most of us struggle with issues related to growth at various points in our lives. The entrepreneurs with whom we work at The Strategic Coach are some of the most successful and internally motivated people on the planet, and yet they face just as many challenges in their growth as anyone else does.

The ten laws in this book are like mirrors you can use to reflect your behavior, to see if it's supporting or undermining your continued growth. Use them as you would a hallway mirror on your way out the door—do a quick check to make sure everything looks good, adjust if necessary, and then carry on. Or take a longer, more studied look to reveal areas that might take more work to transform. The laws are useful for this purpose because it's often hard to tell whether you're on the right path just by how you feel.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter has wisely observed that “everything looks like a failure in the middle.” Sometimes growing pains can feel like failure—and sometimes failure is a part of growth. Successful entrepreneurs know this well. Most of them fail before they succeed. Dan likes to refer to his first two bank-

---

ruptcies as “market research.” That doesn’t mean they felt any less like failures at the time, but only that the lessons he took out of them were essential to building the growing multimillion-dollar company he and his life partner, Babs Smith, run today.

Checking in with the laws can help you to stay the course when growth is difficult. In many of the examples in this book, challenging or seemingly less-than-ideal situations offered people rich opportunities to grow. The laws can help you to extract the maximum value from experiences you might otherwise try to avoid or forget.

It also pays to check your behavior against the laws when things are going well. Getting what you want or achieving your goals can make you feel good, but it won’t necessarily keep you on the path to further growth. In fact, it can often lead to growth traps. Things like money, applause, rewards, comfort, and even a brilliant past can be quite seductive. If these *means* to growth begin to overshadow purpose, performance, contribution, confidence, and the sense of a bigger future—things that *drive* growth—they can quickly undermine your ability to keep growing in the future.

These laws come from our observations about what makes growth happen. If the word *law* makes you uncomfortable, it might help to think about the message on a tongue-in-cheek T-shirt we saw recently in the neighborhood. It had a picture of a policeman



holding up his hand, accompanied by the caption, “Obey gravity! It’s the law.” Of course, natural laws operate whether you obey them or not. If you disregard gravity and jump off a rooftop, it won’t be the “gravity police” that get you. Likewise, no “growth police” are going to come after you if you don’t follow these laws. You’ll just find that you probably won’t grow as much.

You might want to think of each law as being prefaced by, “You will continue to grow if . . .” For example, you will continue to grow if you always make your future bigger than your past. That’s the way life works. You can rely on it. By understanding the laws, you can more consciously and predictably keep yourself growing, just as scientific laws help us to predict the outcomes of actions in the physical world.

Aligning your behavior with these laws gives you more control over your own future, which allows you to increase your freedom and self-determination. It also places the responsibility for your growth squarely on your own shoulders. You can choose to engage with life in this way, or not. Growth is not always easy, but the rewards are great. Life presents us with opportunities to grow almost constantly, so when you make growth a central goal, life will always appear to be full of opportunity.

As you become more growth oriented in your behavior and thinking, and you begin to experience how this impacts your life and the lives of others, it becomes

increasingly clear that the rewards of this approach greatly outweigh its challenges. The desire to grow is nothing less than the love of existence—a passion for being here and a deep desire to fully explore life. When you commit to aligning your actions with the principles embedded in these ten laws, you also commit to making the most of the life you've been given—all of it. And, after all, what greater gift could you possibly give to yourself, or to the world, than that?

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Law One

---

## Always Make Your Future Bigger Than Your Past

---

A bigger future is essential for lifetime growth. The past is useful because it is rich with experiences that are worth thinking about in new ways—and all of these valuable experiences can become raw material for creating an even bigger future. Approach your past with this attitude, and you will have an insatiable desire for even better, more enjoyable experiences. Use your past to continually create a bigger future, and you will separate yourself from situations, relationships, and activities that can trap you there.

Your future is your property. Because, by definition, it hasn't happened yet, it exists only in your mind. This means that you can choose to make it whatever you want. The act of making your future bigger than your past is the very act of growth itself: the bigger future is the vision, and growth is what makes it real. A bigger future includes anything you want to see that's somehow an improvement on what's true now: greater learning, contribution, opportunities, capabilities, understanding, confidence, quality of life, compassion, connectedness. The list goes on and on, limited only