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"You cannot change your life until you change something you do every day." John Maxwell

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THE BIGGER FASTER TRAP

By: Michael J. Stabile



I recently heard a story about S. Truett Cathy, founder of Chick-fil-A. In the 1990s *Chick-fil-A* started to feel the pressure of competition from,

Boston Chicken, which became *Boston Market*. *Boston Market* was "getting big very fast." It seemed like they were opening restaurants on every corner. (As a side note, *Boston Chicken* went into bankruptcy in 2009.) They had some big investment money in development. This caused the senior leadership of *Chick-fil-A* scrambling to find out how they, too, could become "bigger faster, too."

Chick-fil-A had always run on a "debt-free" operational principle, but now they were looking into investment capital to build more restaurants quickly. As the senior leadership was brainstorming and coming up with ideas to move quickly, it was said that during one of these high level meetings at their HQ, Truett Cathy did something totally out of character for him.

As he listened for several hours without a word about the plans to getting bigger faster, Cathy got up from his chair and pounded the table. This caught everybody by surprise. Cathy, visibly upset, said, "We are asking the wrong question? We should be asking, how we can get better? If we get better, then we naturally create a need and the resource to



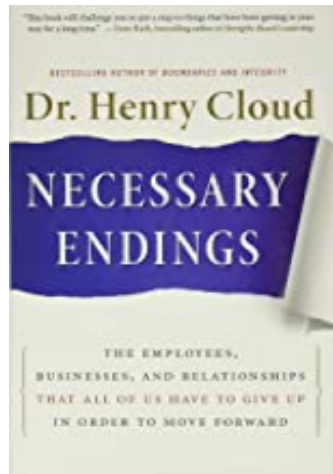
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get bigger.” The meeting took a whole new turn and the senior leadership took Cathy’s challenge to ask the right question: How do we get better?

Servant leaders ask the right questions. It is not about getting bigger faster, but how can we continuously improve and get better. Quality before quantity and quality always starts with me.

Pruning

By: Dr. Henry Cloud



“Removing whatever it is in our business or life whose reach is unwanted or superfluous.” Dr. Henry Cloud

Nature is such a good teacher. We all know that a beautiful rose bush with large billowing flowers doesn’t get that way without a caring gardener trimming off many buds and branches.

The same is true in our lives. Dr. Cloud clearly demonstrates how important removing the superfluous is to our fulfillment. Items to be removed fall into three categories:

- Healthy buds or branches that are not the best ones (a good initiative, but one that is siphoning off resources that could go to something with more promise.)**
- Sick branches (or endeavors) that are not going to get well, and**
- Dead branches that are taking up space needed for the healthy ones to thrive (something that is clearly already dead.)**

Your resources are limited, whether it’s time, energy, or money, and applying them in the most effective direction is



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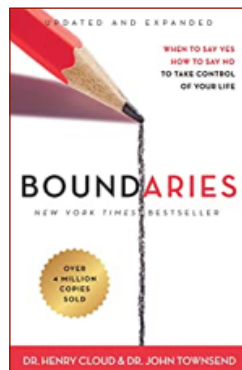
the only way to reach your full potential. You can't have everything (where would you put it?) and, by the same token, you can't do everything, or else you won't be exceptional at anything. Overindulgence, even in good things, breeds mediocrity. **But how do you decide which good things you need to drop?**

The first question to ask is: **What does a good rose bush look like?** We must know what we are pruning toward. A clear vision of the outcome of what you want your life, or business, to be like is vital to knowing what is unnecessary. Then, no matter how painful it might be, or worthwhile the effort is, you must prune. *Use the three categories as guidelines, but also, just as you shape a tree or rose bush by cutting off good branches that are going in the wrong direction, you will need to end some activities or habits that are not getting you to where you want to go.*

This concept can apply at all levels in your life, from trimming unnecessary agenda items of a meeting, to helping a spouse overcome an addiction. **Understanding how and what to prune will allow new growth to flourish.**

The Lifesaving Virtue of Hopelessness

By: Dr. Henry Cloud



“If you are looking for the formula that can get you motivated and fearless, here it is: you must finally see reality for what it is – in other words, that what is not working is not going to magically begin working. If something isn’t working, you must admit that what you are doing to get it to work is hopeless.”
Dr. Henry Cloud

Yep, I believe in it – hopelessness. And I’m one of the most optimistic, hopeful people I know. Hopelessness is a virtue? How is that possible? The irony intrigued me, but once I understood, it made perfect sense.



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What Dr. Cloud is talking about is that sometimes for a person to change ineffective behaviors they are stuck on, they have to reach a point of hopelessness. They have to finally realize that doing the same thing again (or still) is not going to get any different results. We've all heard the Einstein quote about insanity – trying to get different results by doing the same thing. Well, Dr. Cloud backs it up with some studies, research, and great stories.

Iconic CEO of General Electric, Jack Welch, maintained his first rule of business as **'face reality'**. It helped him to make tough decisions, because moving forward required an abandonment of what was in the way – and that was usually current beliefs and standards.

Julie Shimer, Welch Allyn CEO, moved a 95-year-old market leading company in medical devices through the process of undoing the technical side of the last 100 years of medical device design, and into a new era of devices based on a single operating platform – a direction that had previously never been explored in that industry. She lost hope in the old way, even when it was succeeding. The very nature of innovation requires that kind of hopelessness in the current, and faith in the future.

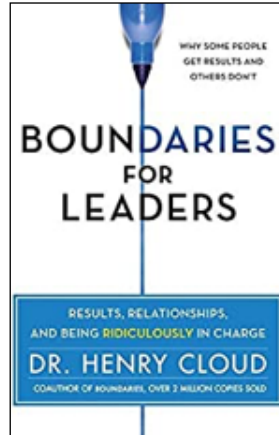
When people are mired in destructive behaviors, we sometimes refer to them as hitting 'rock bottom'. Well, that's usually the point when they turn around, because it is a state of complete hopelessness.

But if we understand this concept, we don't have to wait until things get so bad, we can **apply a little hopelessness sooner in order to create a necessary ending** and get to the place we want to be.



The 3 Kinds of People: Wise, Foolish, and Evil

BY: Dr. Henry Cloud



“You have more influence to bring about change than you might think, but the key is knowing what to do with different kinds of people.”

Dr. Henry Cloud

Dr. Cloud contends that these three categories are backed by a lot of clinical data and research, and described by virtually every group that has ever studied human behavior. Knowing the character traits of people in these categories will

help you deal with them more effectively.

Wise

“When the truth presents itself, the wise person sees the light, takes it in, and makes adjustments,” says Dr. Cloud.

Because they can handle feedback and will truly use it to make changes, **the way to deal with people in this category is to keep talking.** Discussing the issues and exploring ways to change is effective because no one is discounting behaviors or making excuses. The truth is laid out on the table so that real solutions can emerge and meaningful change can occur. A wise person gives you a real reason to have hope that things will be different.

People:

Foolish People:

“The fool tries to adjust the truth so he does not have to adjust to it.” Conversations with foolish people are the most frustrating because it feels like you are talking to a wall. They never seem to hear the feedback.

So, the way to deal with a foolish person is simple: stop talking. At the very least about the problem. There’s a word for continuing to remind someone of a behavior that they don’t see the need to change: it’s called nagging. And it doesn’t work until someone gets hopeless enough to change. Instead, have a different conversation about



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a new problem: the fact that talking doesn't help.

In other words, you need to have a necessary ending of the pattern by no longer talking about the problem but by using **a new strategy of setting limits and establishing consequences for the problem.** Limits protect you from the fool's collateral damage, and doing something that causes them to feel the consequences of their behavior may help them feel hopeless enough to turn around. In this way, you transfer the need for them to perform from your shoulders and onto theirs.

Evil People:

“Do not hope for the evil persons to change. It could happen, and it does, but does not happen by giving in to them, reasoning with them, or giving them another chance to hurt you. It happens when they finally are subject to limits that force them to change. Jail does some people good.”

The best way Dr. Cloud could explain how to deal with evil people is to quote a Warren Zevon song, “Lawyers, Guns and Money.” When Dr. Cloud quotes the words from that song, he may do it for effect, but he's absolutely serious. **You can't reason with evil people, so you need to protect yourself with lawyers, guns (police), and money.** This may be the case for some women in abusive relationships where they need to get restraining orders, or in businesses where people try to sabotage your company or reputation.

It's all about hope:

Making necessary endings that involve people can be some of the most difficult decisions that we have to make, and should never be taken lightly. It is imperative that we have the right criteria for when to have hope and when to reach 'good hopelessness' – the moment you see reality clearly and know you have to bring something to an end. **Understanding the differences between wise, foolish, and evil people will be invaluable in making those difficult decisions.**

Now that you've ended reading these summary articles, what else are you willing to end in order to make room for new growth? Are we asking the right questions? Do you know when is time to make a transformational change?