Non-Linear Growth

More and more I feel like it is necessary to keep the concept of non linear growth in you mind as you navigate the world, and particularly as you interact with others.

# Your Life is not a Timeline

You are the some of you total life experience, but the life *could* have taken many different paths. That is to say; a human life is non-linear. There is no prescription order that a person must grow in. This is the main reason our educational system is so hard to reform; we want there to be an ideal order that fits everyone, which doesn’t exist.

# Child Development

I really first began to appreciate this fact after becoming a father, while going back to school. I noticed that in the same way my daughter and her peers all seemed to be learn different skills from each other. You could take any two children and compare then along a single metric and one would seem to be more advanced than the other. But simply change the metric and the order could easily swap. And age doesn’t seem to be the only factor, but the fact is the skills you learn are not a checklist that you work your way down on, its an open field that you wonder though, learning with each step something new.

And while you can take the somme total of your life a lay it out in chronological order, that doesn’t mean you had to proceed in that order.

# Learning is “Bushy”

Think of your life like a tree. You might at first say that Trees grow up. But that would be to dismiss nearly half of the anatomy of a tree. While the branches are growing upward, the roots are growing down, and the trunk is growing out. And each is vital for the health of the tree. Not enough roots and the branches growth will be stunted, not enough leaves and the roots growth will be stunted.

You, like the tree, must grow in many directions to lead a health life.

# There are No Bad Directions

I was raised in a christian home; we went to church every Sunday, prayed before meals, I joined the youth group and my whole social network were members of my church. As I *grew* more independent of my parents social circle and started making my own friends at school, and then work, I *grew* more atheist. Now, I know of several cases where people have *grown* in the opposite direction. Being raised in a secular home, and *growing* more religious. You can not grow in a good or bad direction, as long as you are growing, you are living a proper life.

# You Are Allowed to Disagree

My whole life I have been a very critical and argumentative person. If I disagree with a point of view you have voiced, you will know. But, disagreeing with your ideals or opinions, doesn’t mean I hate you or even dislike you. In fact as a result of this fairly strong personality trait, only the people willing to argue with me remain my friends. I argue with every single loved on in my life. We agree on many things as well, but I often can’t help but take the opposing view, even when I sometimes agree with them on a basic level.

# Your Life is an Evolution

When you start to get into the mechanics of the theory of evolution you learn that the evolution of a species is not a linear track, going from less complex to more complex. If that were the case there would be no, microbes, no fish, no rodents, no monkeys, we would all just bee humans. Every species still alive today is on the stay evolutionary rung as us. Most of them never developed speach or tool-making but that doesn’t make them more primitive, they just specialized in a different niche.

In the same way, there will be many people you meet that don’t have as much education as you, and many that will have more. But that doesn’t make them superior or inferior, you’ve just specialized in different skills. Now, there are Species that go extinct, or become endangered. But once again this is not a sign of inferiority, but incompatibility. Sometimes their environment has changed so that their skills are no longer useful, or sometimes they are hunted out of, or the the brink of existence. Whatever the case, their ability to survive, will depend on their ability to adapt, to *grow.*

# Atrophy is the Enemy

The only thing that can be considered objectively bad is atrophy. This happens when you stop caring. When you give in to anxiety, depression and/or apathy. As long as you are willing to examine yourself and put your beliefs to the test I think that you will live a good life. If you decide, you’ve got all the answers and have solved all your problems, and it the rest of the world that needs to change, then you’ve set yourself of a path toward extinction. Learn from your mistakes, make yourself better, by whatever metric you value. Make your metrics better by examining the results. Make your tests better by comparing them to those you admire, or even those you disagree with.

# Examine Your Life

If you aren’t looking at and thinking about your decisions and their consequences, you’re sure to fall short of your goals. Luck can carry you for a time, but that's the trouble with luck, it’s only a matter of time before you roll snake eyes. You have to be trying to learn more about yourself and the world around you if you are ever going to succeed in becoming that better person. If you are learning you are growing, and if you are growing, than you can help other grow, and if we can all grow *out* instead of in a specific direction, then we’ll all be the better for it.