

progress you can't see is still progress

I believe we have all found ourselves getting discouraged when, despite all the hard work we may be putting in, the progress we crave continues to elude us and makes us question our actions. This is often the stage that distinguishes effective leaders who determine that they will trust the process even when the progress is invisible. Encountering this situation frequently reminds me of the Chinese bamboo tree, which exemplifies one of nature's most compelling lessons regarding development. After a Chinese bamboo tree is planted, despite all the care it is given on a consistent basis, it does not show any visible growth until the fifth year when it suddenly shoots up to ninety feet in six weeks. One is tempted to conclude that this is when growth occurred, but the truth is that all the hard work in the past years contributes to the results we see in the fifth year.

It may be argued that just

must avoid measuring our progress using metrics that are only visible. We need to embrace the various stages of the leadership game the main one being the foundation stage where we build systems and develop capabilities. Instead of questioning our actions, we need to embrace the roots we are developing which will eventually be the structure that holds our leadership.

Trusting the process when progress is invisible reminds me of the Law of Process which John Maxwell espouses. This law states that leadership develops daily and not in a day. John states that "the secret of our success is found in our daily agendas. When we continually invest in our leadership development, we allow our assets to compound, and the inevitable result is growth". It follows therefore that the key is for us to continue to build on our set systems and habits even when we perceive that nothing is happening because this is how leadership excellence is built. We never become great leaders in a moment, instead we grow through various moments most of which may tend to feel unremarkable at times.

There are certain things we can do to ensure that we maintain our trust in the process even when progress is invisible. For example, focus on behaviours and inputs that predict the results you will get in the future. This could mean allowing yourself to remember that the conversations you have with your team may not produce immediate results but are an investment in their emotional banks and will result in better engagements and will positively affect performance. Another thing is to allow yourself to see setbacks as data that you can use to refine the process and get better results. In addition, use of checkpoints allows one to refine the strategy based on what the data is revealing.

Finally, for us to trust the process when progress is inevitable, we need to maintain a positive attitude and remind ourselves that the foundations we are building will provide a solid base for the leaders we eventually become.

The daily question to ponder is am I executing with consistency even when the progress is invisible?

The secret of our success is found in our daily agendas..



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like the Chinese bamboo tree, our growth is progressive. Whether it is the culture you are building or the team you are developing or the habits you are embracing to make you the leader you desire to become. Leadership is an infinite game and like Simon Sinek observes in his book *The Infinite Game*, "infinite games have no practical end to the game."

There is no such thing like winning an infinite game because the primary objective is to keep playing to perpetuate the game". It follows therefore that as we play this leadership game, we

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