

Growth

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A problem we often face is progress. Normally, progress isn't much of a problem for most people. At least it's not a problem if they're experiencing some progress toward their Aim. With a Work Aim, progress is measured differently than it is measured with a Life aim.

If you have a Life aim to earn a specific amount of money in a stated period of time you know if you are making progress, because you can count the money you've collected. Then, you are able to adjust your aim accordingly. What then, you may fairly ask, is the difference with a Work Aim? The Work teaches we cannot do. The Work further says that what we think we know, we actually only imagine. Where does all this theory leave us?

All these words, sayings, and teachings are only theory, until we apply the ideas in our own selves and see for our own selves that they are true. Until that happens we will remain in imagination, not realizing that what we know to be true is not what the Work says is true.

To determine progress with a Work Aim we must be able to define progress from a Work point of view rather than a Life point of view. Let's take, as an example, the basic Work Aim of awakening. To further this Aim, we wish to remember ourselves several times a day. At the end of the day, we find we have completely forgotten our Work Aim, not remembering it, or ourselves! We've failed from the perspective of Life. From the Work perspective, however, we have succeeded. We have begun to realize we can't remember ourselves several times a day. How is this success? It's a success because we have verified what the work teaches – that we can't remember ourselves. This verification is absolutely essential.

When the Work says we can't do it isn't talking about doing in an ordinary, Life sense. It's talking about doing in a Work sense. From a Life point of view I am able to do the task of brushing my teeth – if I remember to brush my teeth. The more often I aim at brushing my teeth, the more I increase my chance at both success and failure. If you aim at brushing your teeth after every meal, you may remember. If you've worked, put forth right effort about brushing your teeth, you have a better chance of remembering. If nothing else gets in the way after your meal, you may be able to brush your teeth after you eat. If the house doesn't catch fire after you eat you might remember to brush your teeth. In an ordinary sense we can do this, if doing is defined as brushing our teeth. If it's defined as remembering to brush our teeth after every meal, we begin to see we can't do every time. Why? According to the Work, we can't do unless we can do every time. If we can't do every time, it's because we sleep instead.

Determining if we are growing or not by counting how many times we have been able to remember ourselves is not the Aim of the Work. The Aim of the Work is to help us see something important: we are not what we think we are. From a Life perspective this doesn't make us feel good about ourselves. Viewing Work progress from a Life standpoint can make us feel quite bad about ourselves, our progress, and our growth toward becoming a New Man.

It's important to refrain from identifying with little I's that mechanically react to not being able to remember ourselves. This Fourth Way is the Way in life. That means our practice of the Work, our Work exercises, are done in daily life, not in a lab somewhere apart from daily life. It also means we could apply Work ideas in a lab somewhere, if life has taken us to such a lab. The growth experienced is not found in the result. It's found in the process – the process of applying Work ideas to our own selves in ordinary life, every day. If we only Work in a lab somewhere, we are not practicing the Fourth Way. We may be practicing the second Way, the Way of the Monk, where the lab is a monastery.

In the Fourth Way it is said, I can work, not, I can grow. You can't do, so you can't grow yourself. The Work can do, and it can grow you.