

Growth Isn't Linear:

Understanding Setbacks and Expansion

Learn how to reframe relapse, build emotional resilience, and turn temporary contractions into long-term growth.

Quick recap

This coaching session focused on helping Ali address recent relapse behaviors and understanding them as temporary setbacks rather than permanent returns to old patterns. Annie explained that growth happens in non-linear ways and that brief regressions following expansions are normal, using the metaphor of tree growth to help Ali see his current situation. The discussion included practical coping strategies for smoking cravings, with Annie suggesting conscious engagement with desired behaviors rather than shaming oneself for relapses. The session concluded with a guided ancestral healing meditation, where participants were asked to connect with both maternal and paternal lineages to release unhelpful patterns and honor their ancestors' contributions while taking on new personal growth.

Summary

Technical and Behavioral Patterns Discussion

Annie and Ali discussed recent technical issues, including water supply problems and Ali's sleep schedule. Ali shared that they had been experiencing old patterns over the past 4-5 days, including relapsing in smoking and seeking stimulation while isolating themselves. The conversation appeared to be cut off mid-sentence as Ali was explaining these behavioral patterns.

Coping with Smoking Behavior

Annie and Ali discussed Ali's recent return to smoking as a coping mechanism. Annie explained that this behavior likely stems from stress or anxiety rather than a regression to old patterns, and suggested viewing it as a temporary response to low resources. They explored the idea that

Ali might be experiencing "upper limits" - a concept from Gay Hendrix's book *The Big Leap* - where new achievements and identity changes can feel overwhelming and lead to reverting to familiar behaviors. Annie recommended noticing the underlying feelings before reaching for cigarettes and considering alternative coping strategies.

Personal Growth Contractions Discussion

Annie and Ali discussed the concept of personal growth "contractions" following expansions, with Annie explaining that these contractions are natural and often smaller than the expansions themselves. Ali shared their experience of a recent 2-3 day relapse and their shift toward a more conscious approach to decision-making without shame or guilt. Annie suggested reframing the situation using an Etch-A-Sketch metaphor to clear the past and approach each day anew, while also encouraging Ali to consider how their actions might benefit their future self and to fully enjoy any celebrations or rewards rather than doing so shamefully.

Conscious Behavior and Growth Patterns

Annie and Hristo discussed the concept of conscious versus unconscious behavior, using examples like smoking and eating donuts to illustrate how bringing awareness to these actions can change their impact. Annie introduced the therapeutic technique of "prescribing the symptom," which involves intentionally performing a behavior with full awareness to regain control over it. The conversation then shifted to a discussion about human growth being non-linear, similar to how trees grow, with Annie emphasizing the importance of accepting natural fluctuations in progress rather than forcing linear growth.

Emotional Resilience and Coping Strategies

Annie and Natalie discussed emotional resilience and coping strategies. Natalie shared her progress in maintaining positive mental health, while Annie provided insights on managing difficult emotions and the concept of "suffering obligations of love" (SOBs) from family systems therapy. Annie suggested using ancestral prayers as a way to address unconscious family obligations that may be affecting personal growth and suggested finding healthier ways to maintain family connections.

Family Systems Therapy Principles

Annie introduced principles from family systems therapy, particularly focusing on Bert Hellinger's work, emphasizing that family members owe each other nothing and that parents and children choose to be together for mutual growth. She outlined four key principles: recognizing no mutual obligations, viewing the relationship as a chosen "dance," expressing gratitude without obligation, and directing energy forward rather than backward. Annie concluded by describing an upcoming meditation that would guide participants to become the cutting edge of their

lineage and fully represent the system, emphasizing the importance of living fully to honor ancestors' efforts.

Mindful Eating and Ancestral Connections

Annie and Hristo discussed mindful eating practices, with Annie recommending a gradual approach of adding just 10% more consciousness to eating rather than overwhelming changes. Annie shared insights from a book called "How to Eat" about connecting with ancestors through eating, describing herself as an ambassador for her lineage. Sarah-Jane contributed to the discussion by sharing her own ancestral work experiences and connecting the concept to the idea of sharing pleasures with ancestors, particularly around food and experiences they would never have had.

Ancestral Gratitude Meditation Session

Annie led a discussion on gratitude and delight, explaining how she prefers to focus on maximizing aliveness rather than traditional gratitude practices. She then guided the group through a meditation exercise involving connecting with both maternal and paternal ancestors to release burdens and honor their contributions. Participants shared their experiences, with Hristo noting powerful shifts and feeling inspired to pass on learnings to future generations, while Ali described feeling a subtle but significant energetic opening.