



The Only Challenge That Matters

By Dan Rockwell

The only challenge that matters is the one you give yourself. Others might try to challenge you, but the only challenge you win is the one you want to win.

The only way to advance is to challenge yourself.

Taking on a new challenge means:

1. Doing something you haven't done before.
2. Applying current skills on a larger scale.
3. Developing and testing new attitudes, behaviors, skills, and practices.

New challenges are like adding weight to the bar. It's wise to feel concerned. Don't jump from 100 pounds to 200. Learn from someone who lifts heavy weights. Get a spotter.

Taking on new challenges means stumbling forward instead of sprinting forward. How you set expectations and deal with failure determine how far you go.

Bad habits become more dangerous when you take on new challenges. The habit of speaking first and listening later, for example, hurts more when stakes are high. Good habits protect you.

7 ways to challenge yourself today:

Avoid doing things that matter less.

Build new relationships.

Strengthen current relationships.

Practice a relevant skill. (Listening, planning, or coaching, for example.)

Participate more in meetings.

Bring up an issue you've been avoiding.

Say no.

4 ways to win when you challenge yourself:

Go public. Let others know what you're doing.

Get partners. We go further with mentors, coaches, and friends.

Define the big win. What will be true if you win?

Set short-term wins. Long-term goals can paralyze. Short-term wins lend themselves to taking action today.

Challenging yourself means facing fear, exposing limiting beliefs, and stepping into the unknown.

Advancement begins at the point of discomfort, when you try something you haven't done.

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