



We are all Unique **We are all in our own Phase, in our own Cycle** **and on our own Curve**

The most common phrase right now is:

"We are all in the same boat"
...No, we are not! We are all on the same sea, but in VERY different boats!

Everyone is unique and on their own very unique career, life and health journey.

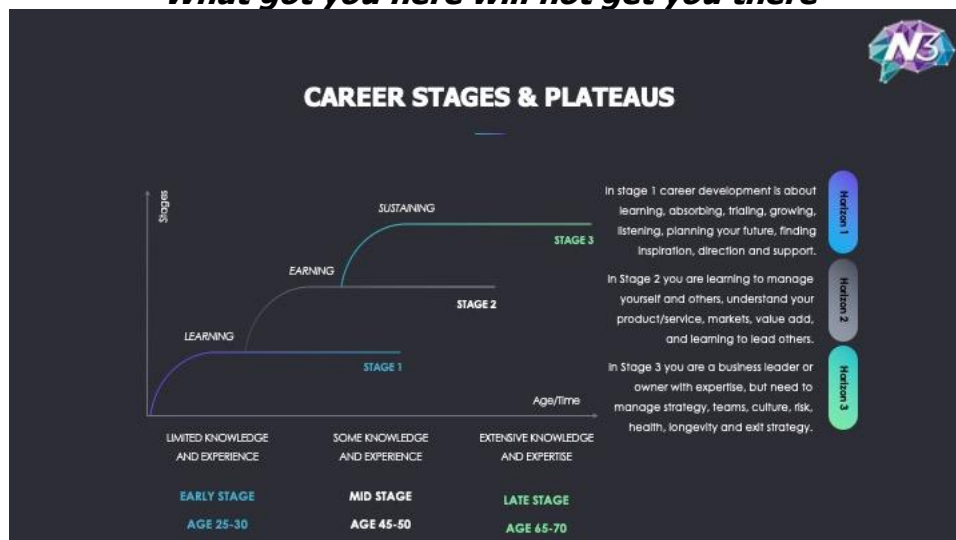
Individually, at any single point in time, you may be navigating your way up a curve, be in some form of cycle, or preparing to pivot in/out of a phase. Therefore, it is not uncommon to feel completely lost at times. On top of this, you have the covid and economic crisis to consider which will be creating more confusion, stress and anxiety than ever before.

***If you are able to identify where you are,
it is possible to plot where to go next.
If you do not know where you are...guess what...you are lost!***

So, why are so many people feeling this way right now? Well, the economic and employment market has shifted from under them to the point that the World has tilted on its axis. In these seismic times, what worked for you prior to 2020 may not work for you going forward.

Or, in the title of Marshall Goldsmith's book:

"What got you here will not get you there"





Phases – Learning to 'Leap'

3 Life Phases - Learn, Earn, (burnout) Return

Phase 1: EDUCATION - Learning

There are normally 3 distinct phases in your life. The education phase, which is around the age of 5 to 25, is all dependant on where you were born, grew up, went to school, parenting, religion, high school and university. It is where you were largely spoon fed information on what to do, how to think and was based on relatively limited choices and viewed through a limited lens. It is the nurture added to the nature elements of what you were born with...or maybe it is the nurture versus the nature...

Phase 2: GROWTH - Earning

This is when you leave education and embark on a job and career largely based on education and what you experienced and were taught in Phase 1 - as mentioned above, a relatively narrow field and perspective. Phase 2 lasts about 20 years from 25 to around 45. In phase 2 you start climbing that career ladder or curve to get to the next level. Whether it be income, promotions, prospects or opportunities, you get given more and are ideally rewarded with more, the more responsibility you take on. It is during this phase that you tend to forget about education and may well also marry, have children and settle down.

NB: The end of this phase often results in burnout, a health event, (mid-life crisis!)

Phase 3: SUSTAIN: - Returning

Towards the end of phase 2, age 45 to 50, your career may stall or stagnate, or you feel that things are just not going as quickly as they were. You may not be progressing anymore, growing intellectually, or have any energy or prospects left. More often than not, this phase also means that you have normally produced children, therefore your primary reason and role for existing (i.e. the extension of the species) is complete. You start to have minor or major health issues and you suddenly become very aware of your own mortality for the first time. Phase 3 is followed by a final 20 year period of stagnation, failing health and performance towards retirement.



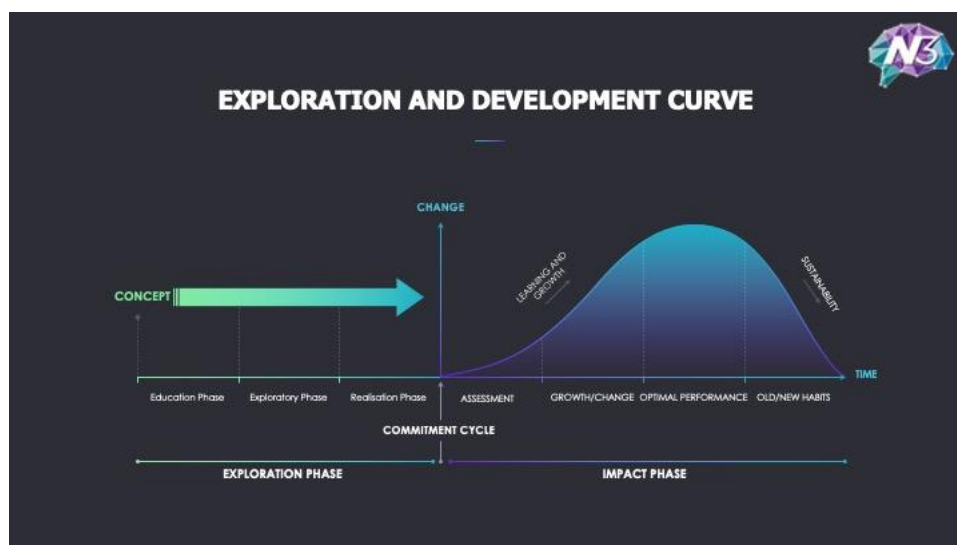
Why does this matter?

Through 20 years of research applied expertise we know that medical, neurological and physiological changes impact how we feel, think and perform. For example, falling testosterone levels in men and the menopause in women, means our bodies and brains start to function differently and slow down. Men lose their ego, sense of direction and confidence, whilst women often feel empty and may have a new sense of freedom having brought up children. Mental and physical health concerns are heightened.

Depending on which Phase you are in right now, this period will feel very different

Aged 45-50 is when men and women are meant to be at the height of both their personal and professional accomplishments, but they often feel that they have been a little 'cheated' and life and work does not have the same rewarding feeling as they anticipated. They feel they are running out of time.

You have worked so hard to navigate this far and through all of the challenges of life, work, career and family; you have neglected the three things that will matter going forward: yourself, your development and your health





Cycles - Learning to 'Ride' and 'Swim'

We also all work in cycles. So how does this impact your life, career, health and journey? Do you have a cycle? Do you know how long it lasts?

Think of it in the case of Phase 1. As a child you pick up a new toy, you are excited, curious, challenged, even apprehensive. You want to learn all about it, see what it can do, play with it and it is your NBF! You become attached to it and then, one day, it breaks and lets you down, so you discard it, get bored of it and move onto the next toy. If it is lego, a computer game or sport, you practise, you fail, you fall. You get up, you try again, you get better, you get good.

None of us are born with the ability to ride or swim. We are taught it, we practise harder and harder, we crack it and then we master it. Eventually, you do not have to think about how to swim or ride a bike, it becomes second nature. Your education is the same - you know nothing, you pick up the basics, you find you are good at some subjects or sports and not others. You discard the ones you do not like (i.e. not good at) and focus all your energy on what you like, you grown and learn, practise and then master it.

In Phase 2 it is the same pattern in work. You get a job, you are excited, nervous, curious, and challenged. You have a plan. You learn all about it, immersing yourself in the job, it becomes you life, your friendships and relationships, you compare yourself, you compete, you learn and grow. Then one day it breaks, or you stall, you do not get the pay rise or the promotion even though you worked hard, you get hurt, let down. So you discard it, you get another job and start again in a new role.

***Vision + Strategy + Mindset + Skillset + Energy + Sustainability
= Mastery***

What is happening in these cycles is essentially human nature. We call it 6 steps to Mastery. When you acquire anything new it is full of novelty, intrigue, challenge and opportunity.

You want to get good at it **(Vision)**
You have a plan and a focus **(Strategy + Mindset)**
You acquire the skills you need **(Skillset)**
You give it your energy, passion and drive **(Energy)**
And you are motivated to keep going **(Sustainability)**

As you go from low competence to high competence you get a dopamine reward from your brain, you get addicted to growing, learning and winning as you eventually master each toy, game, role or sport.



It is a natural cycle of human endeavour to climb the curve and conquer until there is no challenge left. We all have cycles of challenge, learning, growth, mastery and then boredom.

In your life, career and health, you have to learn how and when to ride the cycle and when to swim with or against the current

Curves – Learning to ‘Climb’

These phases and cycles make up your curve. A curve, by definition, is not linear. It is not a straight line of success and growth. There are ups and downs and therefore it is a curve. You cannot and should not compare your curve with anyone else's.

Consider your own curve. Where are you on that curve? What shape is it? Normally, a curve flattens out and becomes horizontal before heading downwards. When is it time to get off, get out of your cycle into a new one and head up the curve again?

What is critical is to know what phase you are in, where you are in your cycle and when and how to pivot from phase to phase and cycle to cycle to keep your curve on an upwards trajectory which will keep you on track.





Summary

We all have unique phases in life, career and health. Navigating from cycle to cycle, phase to phase and staying on the path of our curve should be simple, but it is not that easy. Navigating this is often the time where we all need more help and guidance. In Phase 1 that help would normally have come from parents and teachers. Later in life in Phase 2, it comes in the form of partners, colleagues and bosses, however they are not always objective or know what is best for you. You are unique and therefore you have to be accountable to yourself for your own life, career and health. No-one else will benefit as much as you do.

What worked for you 20 years ago in career, life and health, will not work for you now

We all know what we should do. We all know what we could do. We all know what to eat and why we should exercise, but we do not do it, so we end up at the doctor! We are 'hard-wired' to move away from pain, which is why we avoid doing the difficult things as creatures of habit, plus the brain is lazy! Without a parent or teacher, who is going to be your guide in Phase 2 and 3 to get you to where you want and deserve to be? That is why, if you want to be the best version of yourself, for yourself, your family and your career, people turn to mentors and coaches.

There is no shame and a lot to gain in getting help and support when you need it most

So, when someone who could benefit from coaching says:

"That is simple, I know that stuff and I can do it myself!"

Coaches often respond:

"It may be simple, but it is not easy. If it were easy, you could and would have done it yourself!"

Matthew Lewis

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N3 Executive

For more information about 'Navigating the New Normal' in your Career, Leadership or Health, visit N3 Executive at:

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