



MASTERPEACE  
*presents*

LANCE GIROUX

*The* ART *of*  
PRACTICE

WITH JEANNA GABELLINI

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In gratitude-  
Jeanna*

*Dear Jeanna,  
From my heart you are welcome -- and thank you. This has been, and will always be, a gift to me and you, and all who take it on for the journey of their lifetime. I also wish to express deep gratitude to my friend, George Leonard, a great source of inspiration who, like you, saw much more in me than I did. That's what great "coaches" do -- as you well know. They find the strength to which another is blind and then ... they shed light on it.*

*With respect and love,  
Lance*

*Jeanna:* Lance is a leader of an organization called Allied Ronan Leadership and Training. He has been conducting training and workshops throughout the US and abroad since the mid-1970's and has worked with tens of thousands of people. As of this interview, Allied Ronan provides two main public offerings: "Power and Balance," which is an experiential workshop, and "Kids Are From Earth," a communication workshop for parents and teachers. Both are designed to teach people to be more effective in their lives. Allied Ronan also designs and conducts leadership, communication, teamwork, and service for organizations and companies. Lance has authored Rising Above Conflict and Leadership: Our Most Pressing Need. He is currently working on a new book called Following the Path of a Leader.

This E-book program is entitled "The Art of Practice" and its purpose is to support you in taking immediate action to achieve your goals. It is designed for use, which means — use it. I'm very excited about the subject because I believe it is key to producing lasting change, and when you create change, possibilities open up. Webster's definition of practice is "to do or engage in frequently; make a habit of; to do so as to become proficient; and to work at."

*Lance:* "To work at" sounds like it's got a lot of effort to it.

*Jeanna:* Yes, it sounds hard.

*Lance:* That's probably one of the reasons people avoid getting starting on anything. So if you took at that definition and split it into different components, like "practice is to do," one viewpoint is that practice is what you do on a repeated basis again, again, and again. That is essentially what practice is.

*Jeanna:* Whether it is good or bad.

*Lance:* I think that anything we do repeatedly is our practice, to begin with.

*Jeanna:* Give me an example.

*Lance:* Let's take the general routine that a person goes through at home. The routine of waking up, showering, shaving, putting make-up on. When it gets routine and we don't think about it, we don't think of it as practice. We think of it in terms of a routine, but we are reinforcing the doingness — the routine — and it is a practice. Because we are reinforcing it, it becomes a practice. Every time we take an action, we are, in fact, practicing that action and it builds. Like mortar and brick on a building, it actually builds the building stronger. Do you see what I am saying?

*Jeanna:* Yes. Anything that you do over and over again is your practice. How does that apply when you want to learn something new or you want to stop doing something that is destructive?

*Lance:* You literally have got to interrupt the old way. That is what you've got to do. Give me an example of someone that wants to start doing something new.

*Jeanna:* OK. I have a client that is working on creating new eating habits. She constantly overeats and wants to be in a healthier body and eating in a healthy way.

*Lance:* OK, she is already practicing overeating. She has to interrupt that practice. She has to interfere with that practice. That practice has a momentum of its own, it's already ongoing, it's

going in a direction, and it's routine that her body actually moves through to eat that way. Physical reinforcement of any kind of doingness is a powerful thing. So the way she goes through eating, her body moves a certain way. She probably has certain feelings associated with eating. She may even be unconscious of those feelings. Emotional feelings, not physical feelings. She practices those emotions – she reinforces those emotions -- in her current routine. What she needs to do is recognize those feelings — what they are. Slow herself down long enough to actually see and feel and understand herself doing those things, and then interrupt them. When she interrupts, she is going to want to put in a behavior and it is going to generate new feelings. Do you see what I am saying?

*Jeanna:* The hard part of what I am hearing is the interrupt part. How do you interrupt? How do you start that process?

*Lance:* First of all you stop. You just slow down.

### Exercise #1

What do you practice that doesn't feel good or gets in the way of something you want?

*Example:* I criticize my body and beat myself up when I overeat.

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What is the new practice?

*Example:* I appreciate and listen to my body.

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Small steps that support my new practice:

*Examples:*

When my body says it's content, I stop eating.

I set an intention to be present with myself before each meal.

Everyday I acknowledge 5 things I love about my body.

I expect and visualize perfect health and vitality.

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How will you remember to interrupt the old practice and replace with the new practice?

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*Jeanna:* So what reminds you in that moment? You are used to practicing one way? What reminds you to stop and interrupt?

*Lance:* If we take the example of overeating, a reminder could simply be writing a note on a 3x5 card and putting it in front of you, by your plate. If you are serious about changing something, then you do something like that. I wouldn't put it front of me at a restaurant — but some people might — certainly at home. Something that would say “slow down,” “chew your bite five times,” “savor what you are eating,” “put your fork down before you chew” ... anything like that. You have to go back to basics. Let me give you an example of what I am saying. As an analogy, I'm a private pilot. I don't have a lot of hours, just a few hundred. When I was learning to fly I did an extended process of flight instruction. It took me years to get my pilot's license because I was traveling on the road doing work. Wherever I could hook up with an instructor, it would almost be like starting all over again. Every instructor would tell me, “There are two kinds of pilots that use a check list. The rookie and the professional pilot.” They use an actual written checklist that they sit down and read to themselves, step by step. Check this switch, check this gauge, check the flaps, check the elevators, kick the tires, whatever the case may be. You've got to go through the checklist. Do you see how the analogy applies here?

*Jeanna:* It's brilliant. Because so many times when people are starting something basic they think, “Oh, I should be past this. I shouldn't have to go back to basics.”

*Lance:* Yes, but that is a self-defeating thought process. When people are doing that, they are laying a guilt trip on themselves and the odds are they are making themselves feel guilty and

aren't even conscious of it. Practice involves a level of commitment, and when people begin practicing they are going to go through all kinds of feelings. Guilt could be one of them. You sit down, write it down, and remind yourself to not feel guilty about it. Or write a note “I don't have to feel guilty about this.”

*Note from Jeanna:* *There is no such thing as failing at a new practice. So what if you forget or don't listen to your intuition? Just choose to begin the new practice every time you remember. The reason so many folks bail out on their New Year's resolution is they think they have to do it perfect, or it's all or nothing. How about adopting the attitude of lightness?! Just keep saying “YES!” to your new practice.*

*Jeanna:* What I'm hearing is there are structures that you can put in place that help you interrupt, whether it is a note or somebody telling you, “Hey, remember you said you were going to practice this new thing.” Is there another way to interrupt?

*Lance:* Yes, make a psychological trigger device. I have a very good friend that I do business with often. His name is Brian Klemmer. One of Brian's all famous reminders is to put a dot of fingernail polish on your wristwatch, then decide what that dot is going to mean. When you look at your wristwatch, that dot is speaking to you. It reminds you to think of a goal. Take that same idea and put any kind of psychological trigger — anything that causes you to think when you look at it. The person that wants to handle her overeating habits can put anything that is a reminder and put it by her plate as a reminder of “Stop, slow down.” And keep it simple. Keep it really simple. Handwritten notes, little knick-knacks, little reminders. Keep it simple.

*Jeanna:* I want to hear about how practice applies to learning and to mastery of a skill.

*Lance:* When you encounter somebody that is starting off on a new adventure and is in what we call a student mode, what do you think they think mastery is?

*Jeanna:* Mastery is when you do it perfect.

## Exercise #2

Where in your life would you like to let go of having to be perfect?

Now sometimes you have put the pressure of being perfect on yourself, and sometimes it's from outside influences. It doesn't matter. If you let yourself follow your inner guidance, you can do things at your best and it will all be perfect. But this is much different than striving for perfection, which creates a block to being in the flow. There is nothing fun about judging yourself. But to challenge yourself to be at your best is wonderful. Then you can objectively look at yourself and decide how you want to be better next time with no judgement. Ahhhhhhh ...

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
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8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Lance:** Mastery is such the opposite of that. I want to plug a book, and I want everybody that listens to this to go buy the book. It is called Mastery by George Leonard. He attacks the notion of perfectionism, which happens to be a nasty habit of mind. Perfectionism just doesn't work on the path of mastery. A lot of people think that mastery is something that you attain, that once you get to that level you've obtained a position or a place and then you stop growing.

**Jeanna:** You're learning is done.

**Lance:** Right. That is the opposite of mastery. Mastery is a road, like life is a journey, not a destination. Mastery is actually a journey. If you can understand that notion, one could say that you and I have mastered being and acting the way we are today through the years and years of practice that we put in up to this point. Do you see what I am saying?

**Jeanna:** Yes, I'm a master.

**Lance:** Yes, already. You are a master of the good news and bad news about yourself.

**Jeanna:** How does practice apply to mastery?

**Lance:** Well, it is the foundation of mastery.

**Jeanna:** Say more about that.

**Lance:** Mastery is the result of repetition. We get masterful at anything through repetition, through the investment of our energy and our time into what we are doing. That is what mastery is.

In Leonard's book, he points out a number of different ways that people approach mastery. He points out what is called the "Path of a Dabbler." Somebody who starts and then stops, starts and stops, starts and stops. So imagine somebody that wants to interrupt his or her eating habits. They might say, "Go on a diet." You can imagine somebody that goes on the Skillman diet and then goes off of it. Then they go on an all carbohydrate diet. That doesn't work either and they stop it. They start an all protein diet and that doesn't work. They are stop/start, stop/start, stop/start. I say that for somebody like that, the odds are that person starts and stops a lot of things in their life. They have become a master at being a dabbler.

**Jeanna:** Wherever you are practicing in one area of your life, you are practicing in others?

**Lance:** I wouldn't go that far with it. I don't know that. The odds are that if I am a starter/stopper, it is going to show in other places in my life quite profoundly.

**Jeanna:** OK.

**Lance:** So one approach to life is that of the dabbler. Another approach that Leonard talks about is someone who gets obsessive. They start something and then they struggle with it and get so into the struggle that they put all of their energy into resisting, or into struggling, or massive study. They fight with what they are trying to learn so much that they don't take time to relax. They don't take time to step back from the study. They don't take time to release. They struggle themselves to the pits and they have a crash and burn syndrome.

**Jeanna:** How do you stay balanced? When you are practicing something that is really important to you, how do you let it not consume you?



**Lance:** Practice something else, too. You've got to take a break. Part of anything is the process of relaxation. Let's take the physical body; for example, lifting weights. If you're going to strengthen a muscle, you can't pick up a weight and just keep lifting it. The muscle is just going to give out.

**Jeanna:** Yes, you need to let it recover.

**Lance:** Yes recovery, and part of the notion of mastering anything is relaxing from it. Stopping it for a while. Let the system — the mind-body system, the human being that you are — let who you are relax with it. Let it seep into your body, seep into your emotions, and seep into your subjective and your subconscious so that it can go to work. Get your mind onto something else. An example of obsessing is worry. If you worry and worry and then start to worry that you are worrying, you can worry yourself into an ulcer. You've got to stop. How does somebody not worry? Not worrying means you stop thinking what you are worried about and put your mind on something else. You've got to give your mind some thing else to think about. Take a walk, take time out, listen to some music, bike ...

**Jeanna:** Interrupting again.

**Lance:** Yes, that is straight up interrupting.

### Exercise #3

If you find you are pushing too hard, choose 5 things that you can do, at any time, when you need to relax or interrupt yourself.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Jeanna:** What is the third thing in mastery?

**Lance:** The third one is what Leonard calls a hacker. A hacker is somebody who starts off on a plateau. They discover. They move to a new plateau. They discover again and move again to a new plateau. Imagine someone that is into golf. They get good at swinging a certain way, and then they get good at swinging with a new club. They rise to a level of OK-ness and then they decide they are not going to learn anymore. They just decide to stay and exist at this level and not put any more effort into it. They accept everything as it is without the desire to progress anymore, and so they stay on that plateau and just forever exist there. They don't see themselves as improving on anything.

**Jeanna:** How do you know when it is time to go to the next level?

**Lance:** If I approach it like I've mastered something — even the way you ask it implies that I'm thinking that mastery is a place that I've arrived to. Mastery is an ongoing process. Mastery

in and of itself is an ongoing practice. It's a practice of growth, forward movement, encountering resistance, stepping back, relaxing, followed by forward movement. On and on. It's just a continual, never quit, keep moving, forward, forward, forward. I know that when I move forward, I'm going to encounter some things that are going to push me backwards. That is just the way it is.

*Jeanna:* A lot of people are not going to want to hear that.

*Lance:* Well, too bad! That is just a way of life. If you've decided to only accept the sweet things of life, the beautiful things of life, you might as well give it up. It isn't going to happen. It's non-reality. One of things that we have to look at is what we are conditioned to in our society. We are conditioned to 30-minute sound bites, one-hour TV shows, and movies that last, at their longest, two and one-half hours to three hours. Things go from rags to riches and at the end of the movie, everybody lives their life "happily ever after." That isn't life. It's bunk and fun entertainment. To think that life is going to turn like that is bunk. It just doesn't happen. Have you read Peck's book The Road Less Traveled?

*Jeanna:* Yes.

*Lance:* The opening line to this book is "life is difficult." It's the whole opening paragraph. Then he goes on in subsequent paragraphs, first chapter, to tell the reader that once we discover this, life is no longer difficult. He doesn't mean that we won't have difficulties, he just goes on to say that once we understand this, the difficulties keep happening but they just don't mean that much anymore because we get it. This is the way life is! It's

challenging, it's difficult, it's rough sometimes, it isn't pleasant. I was listening to a talk show on the radio the other day and there was a well-known psychologist out of Los Angeles on the show. A caller wanted this "happily ever after" marriage. The host put it on the line with her and told her, "This is fairy land. This isn't what marriages are. Marriages are enjoyable sometimes and rough sometimes. That's just the way relationships are." We've been conditioned to believe that it's Cinderella and Prince Charming. And when we reach that state, we believe that (like my Mom used to say) it will be all hunky dory. It isn't though and once you get that, you can say, "Ahhh ... now I know that I am in the rough moments of life."

*Note from Jeanna:* Out of the "rough" times in life come the desires for something new to happen. Something more fulfilling. If there were no contrast in life, new ideas would never be born. So, part of a new practice for yourself is to remember GREAT things are born from contrast. You can create a new relationship with contrast. Use contrast to propel you forward. When you resist something that is happening in your life, it keeps you focused on what you DON'T want. It also creates more of what you don't want. If you find yourself negatively focused, ask yourself, "What is it that I DO want?"

*Jeanna:* A lot of times when you have a training, people have these wonderful learnings and ah-ha's about "Ohhhh, now I see what I have been doing. Things are going to be different tomorrow."

*Lance:* Right. They think that is learning, but it is not.

*Jeanna:* What's learning?

**Lance:** Learning is the practice of embodying the ah-ha that you got. Learning happens when the system takes on that notion. This is one of the things about the profession that I'm in. One of challenges that faces me. I do trainings and a small amount of coaching. You do a lot of coaching. People will come to one of my trainings or a workshop or a seminar, especially when I started in the 70's, and have a huge emotional experience. They would think that because they had that experience that they had learned something or grown through something. This is one of the fallacies that this industry left people with in the mid-70's and 80's. "You come, do this seminar, have this experience, and now you've changed." No, you haven't changed; you've had an emotional experience. You've catharted maybe, and catharsis can happen in crying and in laughing. You've had what some people refer to as a breakthrough. But that doesn't mean that you've learned. Because the emotional hit was so big, they felt like they are now at a new level.

**Jeanna:** So what's the next step? Because this is what happens for clients as well. They come to the coaching call and have a big ah-ha and then they come to the coaching call the next week and claim to have done the very thing that they didn't want to do.

**Lance:** Sure! You've invested 30, 40, 50 years of time into being that way and you think that one emotional pop is going to switch all that momentum that you've built up over the years. No, the first thing that you do is sit down and write it on a piece of paper. Every great 20th Century teacher in the element of personal success ... think of Napoleon Hill and his book, Think and Grow Rich. It is a book that came out in the early 20's and Hill says over and over to "write it down, write it down, write it down." Zig Zeigler tells people to "write it down." All these people tell

you to write it down. Get a pen and piece of paper and keep a record of it. Then you revisit it and make it a moment-to-moment, step-to-step thing. Hopefully every day, but at least periodically revisit what you think you learned and actually move your body in new ways. Stop and think in new ways, visualize, meditate. You've really got to act.

**Jeanna:** So learning is a process, it's not just this quick "ah-ha."

**Lance:** Let me give you an example. You're a basketball player. You're playing State Championship or in the NBA. The clock is ticking. It's the last two seconds of the ball game. You stand at half court, you flip the ball and it goes right through the hoop. Swish. That means your going to shoot swish shots from half court every single time now. Are you?

**Jeanna:** Probably not.

**Lance:** Probably? No, you're not. The odds are so against that. You're a golfer. You get out on the golf course. You hit a hole-in-one on a Par 3. You're now going to hit holes in one all the time now?

**Jeanna:** Probably not.

**Lance:** No, you're not. It just isn't going to happen.

**Jeanna:** What can we learn from that experience though? When I'm shooting the ball and it's that swish through the hoop?

**Lance:** You can learn that you are capable. You can learn that you have what it takes because you've demonstrated a result. You have what it takes! The greatest of all baseball players, as far as percentage hits, was around 400. That was Ted Williams' lifetime average. That means he struck out 60% of

the time. He failed 60% of the time to get a hit. Now, what was Williams' secret? He said that every time he walked to home base, he imagined that it was his very first time at bat in a major league baseball park. If you can imagine coming up from the minor leagues and being in Yankee Stadium or Candlestick Park or someplace like that and you are used to maybe 8 or 9 or 10,000 people being in the park. Suddenly you are surrounded by 100,000 people and the cheers are going crazy and you've finally made it! You've been waiting years to get here. Williams would imagine that this was his first time. Even after many years of coming to bat. Step up there and boom! The juice that is going through your body is amazing. He would also imagine that he would never ever again get to hit in a major league park after that time at bat. It sharpened his focus to such a fine edge and made him such a competitor — such a warrior at home base — that he would take on any pitcher. It's what we call a first day/last day approach to life. This is my first moment and I've never going to get to live it again, so go ahead! I'm going to put every thing I got into it.

*Jeanna:* I'm hearing the rookie mentality of what is possible — “I don't know anything and so it's unlimited what I can do.”

*Lance:* Right. Always be a rookie. That's the key to the whole game. One of the programs I put on is a workshop that I created a couple of years ago. It's called “Power with Balance.” In this workshop, we have the participants play out an incredible simulation called The Samurai Game. It involves a lot of movement. It literally brings people to the point of making metaphorical life and death decisions. They really get to have the experience that life is new in every moment but that it could end in any moment. That translates into life for me when I'm picking up new habits. I

want to make new changes, I've got goals, and yet I could deal with loss. If you can imagine that my life could end in a moment equates to the small little lives in the moments that we lose things. This morning I took my son to school and he couldn't find his homework that he was supposed to turn in today. In fact, he was supposed to turn it in yesterday. This was upsetting to him. He knows that he is now going to have to face the teacher and tell her that he couldn't find the homework. Do you see what I am saying?

*Jeanna:* Yeah ...

*Lance:* He is going through this mini-emotional death, if you will. He has to face the teacher and admit that he lost his homework. In the last few years of conducting this workshop, I've had the opportunity to meet people quite skilled in various martial arts, various disciplines. One of them is a fellow by the name of Phil Sudo, who has written a book, which I highly recommend, called Zen Guitar. I think it will be on shelves for decades because it is a timeless thing. Phil brought it to my attention that when somebody achieves black belt in a martial art practice, it is a metaphor. The metaphor is how the black got black. Do you know what the belt is for a beginner?

*Jeanna:* Yes, white.

*Lance:* Yes. How does a white belt turn black?

*Jeanna:* Through practice?

*Lance:* Yes! By getting dirty, getting your hands on it, getting it soiled. Being the new student over and over and over. A true black belt is always a white belt in his or her mind. They see themselves as always starting anew. There is something else

to learn. Leonard says it in his book, *Mastery*. You wake up every day and look at the road to life and it is longer today than it was yesterday.

*Jeanna:* I'm starting to hear this theme throughout everything you say about really giving yourself permission to always go back to the starting point, to make mistakes, to fail.

*Lance:* Yes, I am pointing out that if you are going to be a professional, if you are going to be good at something, you've got to approach it every single moment. Every single day like a rookie would approach it. I mentioned earlier that professional pilots use checklists. Why? Because rookie's use a checklist. The plane's going to fly or it isn't — whether you are a professional or a rookie.

*Jeanna:* Can we talk a little bit about failure and really giving yourself permission to fail since that is a component of this? I think a lot of the time we want to start a new practice, we want to be a new way, achieve incredible results, and yet we are so scared to step out there for fear of not doing it right, or failing or stumbling right on our face.

*Lance:* Right. People my age, I think for the most part, have been conditioned through the way we've been educated in our school systems to avoid failure.

*Jeanna:* I know that we avoid failure. A different perspective would be to welcome failure. I attended a coaching workshop and the first thing they said was "OK, there is only one ground rule here: you cannot be wrong. We want you to step out and fail and when you fail, we want you to say "Ta-Da!" and celebrate

it."

*Lance:* Yeah. Failure is part of the learning experience. I had this sheet with some brilliant one-liners on it. They were just on failure, like "Failure is really our judgment of an experience." That's what failure is. We have an experience and then we decide. I succeeded or I failed. We draw the line. Another one-liner off that sheet was "Just as every year has a summer and a winter, so are we going to have varied experiences of life and some of those experiences we will judge as failures." Another one compared failure to driving a car and we go off the pavement onto a side road. Failure nudges us back onto the main road that leads to success. Unless we fail, we won't get nudged back onto the main road.

*Jeanna:* Hmm ... so we actually need to include it in the process.

*Lance:* Failure is part of the process. Right now, in this studio, it is the fall of the year. The leaves are falling off the trees. The trees don't sit around and think "Oh, I'm a failure. I've lost all of my leaves." It's part of the process of life. We have to turn loose. Life teaches through failure. Like if you were to take the space shuttle and shoot it up into the atmosphere. The way that automated pilot keeps an aircraft on track by nudging it back on course. The wind will move it off and different factors have a way of pulling that machine off-course. But through the guidance system, it nudges that vehicle back on track. You could say the darn thing is off track most of the time. It's failing most of the time. So failure nudges us back to the direction we want to go. That's what failure does.

I knew a fellow quite a few years ago and I asked him to lecture about failure. He was a successful businessman in his

mind. We were doing this very intensive leadership training. People paid a lot of money and they spent the better part of 15 or 16 hours a day in this thing. This guy wouldn't talk about failure because he said it wasn't part of his vocabulary. I told him that he'd better get it back into his vocabulary! Then it happened to him and he went through a huge failure. His ego had gotten so big that he thought he'd never fail again. That's nuts! Failure's a part of life. It's part of the process.

*Jeanna:* I like that. What do you want readers to most know about the art of practicing?

*Lance:* That any enterprise — any enterprise — requires constant dedication to simple, repeated motions and efforts. That practice is what we do repeatedly over time. That is what practice is. I would want someone who is really invested in going somewhere in their life to be patient. Now that doesn't mean lose the spirit or the drive or the desire. I would want them to accept patience as a way of having what they want to have. Long term purposeful movement forward. Be patient. It's OK that you haven't achieved the result that you wanted to in the next moment. Sometimes we want to put ourselves up against the clock. We have to create certain things and we set deadlines. I'm not asking people to throw that away. What I'm saying is that long-term sustained growth is very fundamental to achievement in any endeavor.

*Jeanna:* I hear commitment.

*Lance:* Well, that's a very interesting concept commitment. What do you think is on your client's mind when they hear the word commitment?

*Jeanna:* Fear, of not living up to the commitment or not reaching it. It sounds heavy. Like it is a lot of responsibility to be committed. It's the be-all, end-all and if you don't make it, there is severe judgment on yourself. Or other people will judge you if you don't make it.

*Lance:* OK. Do you think people avoid commitments? Avoid making them?

*Jeanna:* Yes.

*Lance:* I would say people are committed all the time, everyday, in something in their life.

*Jeanna:* Give me an example. What do you mean?

*Lance:* Let's take someone who is a parent. One of the programs that I run is for parents and teachers called "Kids Are From Earth." It's designed to assist them in enhancing their communication skills with kids. Let's take a parent whose child has a messy room. The parent doesn't like the fact that the room is messy. The way that they communicate to the child to clean up the room is not very clear, not very direct. There are no consequences to having a messy room. They are vague about cleaning up the room. I'm going to be very specific. Every time they go by the child's room they say, "I see something in your room I don't like. It's very messy today. I sure would like it if it were cleaner." Stuff like that. It's vague. Instead, they should say something like, "Your room is messy. Come in here right now." Then take the child by the hand, sit down and begin the act of putting away toys with the child. Give them a time limit. Those are direct communication signals to this kid to clean up the room. There is a difference in saying, "I don't like your room," and "Clean it up right now." I think in this example of

the parent who looks at the dirty room and is vague, that they are committed to having a dirty room also. In other words, their behavior continues to support the ongoing situation. They keep supporting it. Commitment is when we surrender to the way things are. Commitment has such a connotation to most people about this real “frown my brow,” “grit my teeth,” “dig in my feet” aspect. Commitment is what we are doing right now on a repeated basis. That’s what we are committed to.

*Jeanna:* I see what you are saying. I think there is going to be somebody out there reading this who says, in relation to his or her marriage, “I am committed to having a happy, fulfilled marriage.”

*Lance:* Right. And I would ask what is the marriage like right now?

*Jeanna:* “I’m struggling with it. My husband’s not really listening to me ...”

*Lance:* I would say that is what you are committed to. Now, I do not mean to invalidate where you want this marriage to go, but in order to get where we want to go — which we could say is point B — in life, we have to acknowledge where we are right now — which is point A. We have to acknowledge the possibility that where we are right now is what we have been committed to.

*Jeanna:* This is going to shock a lot of people.

*Lance:* Well, do they want what they’ve got or do they want where they are going? It’s like we were talking about before with Scott Peck’s book. Life is difficult. If you don’t like it. Too bad.

If this is where you are. Too bad. Get over all the stuff you’ve got about being there. Recognize “Here I am, I got myself here. I am responsible in the matter. Now I am going to take action to move forward.” But to say that you are not committed to this and be living in it is bunk. That is taking a real hard cut about it.

*Jeanna:* So, I need to be really honest with myself about where I am, how I generated this, and now what.

*Lance:* One of the first things that somebody is going to run up against is this feeling that, “Oh my gosh, I’m guilty for being here.” Well, I’m not about having people feel guilty, but sometimes people will not look at what’s going on in a responsible way because they want to avoid the feelings of guilt. I think guilt is a poor way of getting where you want to go. It is better if we can just be gentle with ourselves, be patient with ourselves because acknowledgement of where I am is the starting point of everything.

*Jeanna:* We’ve talked a lot about doingness, about how to start a new habit. How would you start to practice being different in your marriage?

*Lance:* I would start the practice by admitting the way I’ve been being. I would start with what I am feeling about it. What are the feelings I take with me about it? What do I say to myself in the quiet times when no one is listening, including my mate. What are the internal decisions, dialogues, all that I have going on for me inside. Start at the beginning.

*Jeanna:* That’s always a good place to start.

*Lance:* It is. It’s a simple answer and yet a profound one.

*Jeanna:* I'm hearing that it is simple, and knowing that emotionally, it could be a very hard place to step into to. But if we want something different, it is something we must do.

*Lance:* I think so. If you are going to change a direction, it takes effort. Look at anything that changes direction in life. Changing the direction of a car, a boat, an ocean liner, an airplane takes effort. If you look at these things and visualize them changing direction, you will see that something has to interrupt the direction they are already going. As this vehicle moves in a new direction, it encounters resistance. And so it is with us in our relationships, in our eating habits, in how we take care of our bodies, in how we deal with our employees. There is resistance. It takes an interruption of how we are being and it takes dedication to staying on track: long-term purposeful practice of going where we say we want to go. That's what it takes.

*Jeanna:* I think that one of the most important things that I'm hearing is that it is a process and for people to be really patient and accept the truth and know that is going to take time.

*Lance:* You may get results quicker than you had thought, but if you dedicate yourself to long term growth and set yourself up with some goals and extend those goals to the future, you are in for the long haul.

*Jeanna:* Are there any other guidelines or rules? I hear it is necessary to interrupt, to be committed that this is a long-term process, and to stay committed. What else would you say?

*Lance:* Put action behind what you say. If I say I am going to be about something and I put physical action behind it, this is very

empowering. When a person takes action that matches what comes out of their mouth, they have a sense of personal satisfaction, personal pride, personal fulfillment — that kind of thing. And their environment — the people that surround them — begin to see this person whose word matters. The opposite of that, by the way, is one of the bigger breakdowns that we face in our society. A person's word doesn't seem to mean much anymore. We live in a society that is very litigious, everybody suing each other for the smallest little thing. A handshake and a look in the eye don't seem to matter that much. Meet somebody where they say this is what you can count on me for, you can count on them. They may fail at it, but they keep picking themselves up and keep coming back. So match action with the word. Another one is to be consistent. Develop a way of being consistent in the practice so that the reinforcement is present, so that you develop a practice. The third thing is to create a way of following up. A feedback system that lets you know you're on track or not on track. Look for feedback.

*Jeanna:* From others?

*Lance:* From others and from yourself. Your environment will feed back the information. In business, the feedback is "Am I making money or losing money?"

*Jeanna:* So your results are going to tell you whether you are on or off track.

*Lance:* Yes. Look at the results and let them talk to you and show you where to correct.

*Jeanna:* So, let's say I set a goal to make \$100,000 this year and part of what will get me there is more clients. I see that it is November and I'm at \$60,000. Then I can see that whatever



I'm doing ,I need to do differently?

**Lance:** Yes, you can make some alterations. There are some things you are doing that brought you to the \$60,000 level. Not every thing you're doing is off target.

**Jeanna:** So, some of it is working.

**Lance:** Yes. You might want to add some things. Look at what is missing, what is not present. You might want to look at what you are doing, and how what you are being distracts you and depletes the amount of energy or pushes clients away. You may have some self-defeating practices and attitudes that you may want to stop.

**Jeanna:** We have good practices that absolutely serve us and some practices that just don't work for us.

**Lance:** What do you think your clients think of when they hear the word habit?

**Jeanna:** Bad.

**Lance:** OK. I think the way you tie your shoes is a habit. The way you comb your hair, put your makeup on, the way you dress. Those are all habits. You become masterful at them. It takes an enormous amount of time and complex communication for a human being to do these things that we just take for granted. Imagine a chimpanzee doing all of that. See, a human being is so far advanced above all other life forms that we start to take ourselves for granted. We don't see that this brain of ours is the most precious, advanced, incredible thing that we know of in the

known universe. I know we don't give ourselves credit that we carry something around in this skull that is more powerful than all the known computers on this planet. You've got one, I've got one, every human being has one. We don't realize that it is communicating moment to moment. It's fantastic! We do the things that we are used to doing because we've been practicing and reinforcing until they become habits. So a habit is good. And it could be bad, depending on whether or not is constructive or deconstructive.

**Jeanna:** Does it get me where I want to go or does it hold me back?

**Lance:** I like to think in terms of constructive and deconstructive rather than positive and negative. It just helps me out, especially when I start beating myself or worrying or feeling guilty about something. It helps me get off of those ways of being and the feelings that hold me down or that are deconstructive to where I want to go. Is what I'm doing, thinking, or feeling constructive or deconstructive?

**Jeanna:** What about someone who thinks they've got it all under control? They-know-that-they-know-that-they-know that they don't need to practice because they are past that.

**Lance:** Really? You mean like Michael Jordan is done practicing free throws or Jerry Rice is done practicing stick out patterns? You must be kidding me. Somebody that thinks that because they have arrived at "the point" is past practice is about to run into the biggest defeats of their life. Professionals practice the basics. They say that Ben Hogan used to be out on the golf links every-day. His wife would stand 15 yards away and he would have thousands of balls flying practicing different shots. One of the most renowned world golfers! If somebody's attitude is

“I’m beyond practicing,” they need to seriously take something to heart.

*Jeanna:* It’s a dangerous place to be.

*Lance:* A very dangerous place to be. Dangerous for them as well as those that are following them around thinking that this is someone that want to emulate. Don’t go there. It’s destructive.

*Jeanna:* Why practice? What are the benefits? I want to be sold on practicing.

*Lance:* The benefits are that it is the way of getting good in something. If we take the deconstructive side and go back to what we are talking about earlier, we have literally made it a habit to be and do like that. We’ve gotten good at it. We’ve gotten so good at attracting the people in our lives that we don’t want. So good at not making the kind of money that we want. So good at being overweight and having high blood pressure. At talking ourselves into a rage.

*Jeanna:* Yuck!

*Lance:* We get masterful at it because we practice it! The benefits of practice are we get good at what we are practicing. Some people don’t realize that we literally attract into our lives the kinds of people, the situations, the scenarios, the stories, the stuff of life that happen around us. That’s a pretty radical point of view for somebody that is committed to being a victim. But if there is anything philosophical for people to consider, it’s the notion that as human beings, we are attraction machines. We attract things into our lives. Take any of the self-help books that

are on the market and they all point to that: we are like magnets, attracting into our lives certain things. You can call it the Pygmalion principle or a self-fulfilling prophecy.

*Jeanna:* It happens for me all the time. I attract clients who have the same issues that I am working on.

*Lance:* James Allen wrote a poem that went like this:

“Mind is the master power that molds and makes  
Man is mind and ever more he takes  
Shapes the tool of thought  
Shaping what he wills  
Brings forth a thousand joys  
And a thousand ills  
We think in secret and it comes to pass  
Environment is our looking glass.”

We attract it! I interrupted you, what were you saying?

*Jeanna:* That attraction is: wherever we are focusing on is what we are going to attract.

*Lance:* The biggest benefit of all of practice is that it produces the results of that which we want.

*Jeanna:* When I was thinking of practice on my way to do this today, I was thinking that if people really walked away with what practice is and started incorporating it into their life, the possibilities for them to have the most fulfilling dreams happen right now instead of way out there ... anything becomes possible when you practice.

*Lance:* Right. For people to realize that what we are

practicing right now is a big stage for them to move to. It's a new awareness. Purposeful practice is what I want people to understand.

*Jeanna:* We've been talking a lot about the functionality of practice. How can we make practice fun? Or different so that it doesn't sound like hard work?

*Lance:* I don't know if I'm the right person to ask that question! I'm a hard work kind of guy. I would get inventive. I would put music with my practice. I'd involve fun people into my practice. I would invoke humor along the line. Set myself up with people that are humorous.

*Jeanna:* I think that people look through certain glasses and will view from a perspective that practice means something that I've got to be very committed to. It's very serious.

*Lance:* Yes, there is that word again. That C word. Commitment. Meaning dedication, willpower, struggle, force myself to. What if commitment meant a choice that I make and surrender to.

*Jeanna's note:* A great way of looking at a new commitment is to take it on for 30 days. If you practice something for a month, with a joyful focus on it, you will attract amazing things into your life as a result. Look at it as an experiment.

*Jeanna:* There is some peace in that.

*Lance:* I make the choice and I surrender to the choice. "Ahhh, this is the choice that I made." And know that life is difficult.

*Jeanna:* It sounds like there is also power and joy that comes along with it. When you take the steps to move towards what you want and you are practicing this new thing, there is a sense of hope and joy.

*Lance:* You know you are talking about feeling good. I hope that those people that are engaged with what we are talking about would consider mental techniques. Visualization, guided relaxation, meditation. That they allot a period of time on a daily basis to close their eyes, relax, and to see themselves where they are in all their magnificence. And to calm down. If they were to start doing that a 10 or 15 minutes everyday, they might find some joy.

*Jeanna:* So they can practice being still.

*Lance:* Yes. Slow down. Take a look inside. Take a deep breath. Touch that most beautiful part of you and you just might find some joy there.

*Jeanna:* That is brilliant. Being in it moment to moment.

*Lance:* Every moment of every day isn't going to be joyful. Some of it is going to be hard work.

*Jeanna:* How would you practice being in the moment?

*Lance:* Come back. When I get distracted I come back to the moment.

*Jeanna:* I think that is a tough one for a lot of people.

*Lance:* I don't mean to be insulting. I literally do mean to come back. When I get distracted, I come back. When I get

off purpose, I come back. When I get sidetracked, I come back. That's how one practices living in the moment. That's all.

*Jeanna:* So it's just like the plane you talked about earlier — always getting back on track no matter where your practice is.

*Lance:* If I'm out of balance, I come back to a state of balance. If I'm off-center, I come back to a state of centeredness. In some of the workshop work that I do, we actually go through physical movement exercises that involve noticing how you are feeling. They are emotional experiences that allow people to see how easily we do get off track and get out of balance. I suggest that even though we are alive every moment of our life, we get off track and off balance most of the time. Being on track is about coming back, coming back, coming back. It's a journey, not a destination.

*Jeanna:* When we talked before about guidelines, one of the things we can add to the list is noticing. So you can notice when you are off track to bring yourself back.

*Lance:* Yes. That's called being aware. Staying alert. Being conscious instead of being numbed out.

*Jeanna:* Yeah, constantly being checked in. So we talked about the guidelines. Will you hit on the bullet points of practicing? What are the steps? We talked about being honest about where you are right now. And then noticing when you are on or off track. Setting up structures to remind yourself — whether it is notes, other people, reminders, or triggers.

*Lance:* One of the things about starting a new practice is to surround yourself with a supportive mechanism, environment, and people. The odds are if you are in a practice that is deconstructive, or you are getting results you don't want, you've surrounded yourself in an environment that will support that practice. So if you want a new practice, you need to change the environment around you so that your new environment — through tone, through what you see, through who you engage with — needs to support your new practice. If I wanted to stop the practice of overeating, I would not surround myself with a lot of yummy smells. All that is asking me to do is trigger all those mechanisms that want me to eat more.

*Jeanna:* So you are setting yourself up to win in this new practice. That's one of the reasons people hire a coach. That's a structure that keeps you on track.

*Lance:* Yes. I think that what you are doing, even in setting up this interview is very important. This needs to be part of the coaching process. People should not read this book just one time. Listening to an audiotape or a videotape one time is bunk! You listen to it over and over and over. What we are talking about here comes fast and furious. You need watch for the subtleties. The odds of even scratching the surface are low unless you listen to or read something 30 or 40 times.

*Jeanna:* My request is that when people read this, they see it with a new set of eyes each time. Like what we were talking about before — being a rookie.

*Lance:* I was working with a guy last week, Alan Nagao. He has a company that just seven months ago had sixteen employees. Now it has 60. That's an enormous amount of growth and it will probably double and triple in size. He was talking

about an audiocassette by Tony Robbins that he has listened to repeatedly. Allen talked about listening to this tape until he literally wore the tape out. Hundreds and hundreds of times. If we go back to Think and Grow Rich, there is a principle that Hill talks about called autosuggestion. It's also known as self-talk. Some people use the term called creating an affirmation, saying an affirmation until I believe it and until I begin to act it out. We are constantly using affirmations, they are just usually things like "I'm no good," "I'm still unhappy," "I'm still single," and on and on. They are just reaffirming it. It's all autosuggestion at work. It's a habit, a mental habit. You must interrupt that stream of thought and set up a new habit.

*Jeanna:* In coaching, we call that the Gremlin. And one of the weapons to use against the Gremlin is to simply notice what it is saying.

*Lance:* Step aside and notice it! See how well you can get at noticing things without all of the emotionality around it. The self-beating. The guilt we were talking about earlier. Can you notice without guilt? I think you can.

*Jeanna:* How do you do that? How do you detach yourself from that?

*Lance:* It's tough. The how-to is to realize that what I am doing is not me. I'm doing it, yes, but I'm doing the best that I can.

*Jeanna:* I like that you said it's not me.

*Lance:* I am not my actions. I am me, and I take action.

*Jeanna:* So it's not who you are, it just happens to be a behavior that you are doing.

*Lance:* Yes, but it is a fine line. I want to make sure that we reinforce the idea that you don't go out and do bad things because "it's not me." There was a period of time, especially in the 70's, where people would go to seminars and say "I'm doing this and it is your interpretation. If I cut you, if I hurt you and you feel hurt and pain, that is your problem not mine." Wait a minute. If I inflict pain on you, I have to accept the responsibility that I took action here.

*Jeanna:* It's like putting on an observer's hat when you are looking at yourself and being objective.

*Lance:* Yes, observe yourself. Step outside of yourself and take a look back at yourself. Be independent of your own self.

*Jeanna:* I imagine taking the attitude of curiosity, like "Hmmm ... isn't that interesting that I just did that!" You are like the detective, looking for clues.

*Lance:* That's a good way to do it. Be interested in yourself.

*Jeanna:* You're going to be detective and that way you can look at it as just information.

*Lance:* Yes, what's your purpose? Is your purpose discovery or is your purpose going to be laying a guilt trip on yourself?

*Jeanna:* Going back to summarize, we talked about some of the guidelines to practicing. It is clear that the theme throughout was that it is a process. It is not a quick fix. Practice, learning, and mastery are lifetime journeys.

*Lance:* If a person is going to engage in being coached, in using the kinds of things that are available today through workshops, seminars, and trainings, I suggest they engage in the perspective that this is for the long haul. That’s what it is about. This is for life-long learning. To say, “I am engaged in this because it supports me in the rest of my life.” Don’t engage from a point of view of “I’m going to fix something.” A momentary fix-it just doesn’t work.

*Jeanna:* Would you leave the readers with an inquiry? A question for them to ponder so that they can start looking at self-discovery about their practice.

*Lance:* OK, I would say after engaging with us today, what practices have you been engaged in that have not been constructive and do not support the direction you want to go in your life? What practices would you be willing to take on to support you that would be constructive in furthering your life? What are you willing to do to make those practices work for you?

*Jeanna:* What would be the structures to set them up to win?

*Lance:* Right. Who are you willing to engage with? What would you be willing to pay? There is no such thing as a free lunch. We pay for the practices that we have already. We are all the time paying for them. There are prices and there are benefits. They cost us and we get something out of them. We may or may not like what we are getting -- we may or may not like the price.

Exercise #4

Who will support you in your new practices? It may be different people for different practices. What are the requests you need to make of them to get the best possible support? Remember, most people will support you in the way that they would like to be supported. You may have to teach them the way that works best for you.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Who will support me?</b>	<b>Requests</b>

*Jeanna:* Thank you, Lance, for taking time out today and bringing us all your passion and knowledge.

*Lance:* You're welcome. I truly hope that our discussion today assists the people reading this program in achieving and attaining the goals and dreams that they want in their life.

*Jeanna:* Yes, thanks!

*Jeanna:* Today's topic has been on the Art of Practice. Again, the way to use this is to read this E-book multiple times, say for the next 30 days. I want you to think about the goals you've currently decided to achieve and use this program to reinforce the actions and the attitudes that will make them a reality. I really want to acknowledge you for taking this simple step of reading this book so that you can move forward in your life.

I hope you've enjoyed *The Art of Practice* and will immediately put new practices in place to support your ideal life.

Here are more powerful tools to align your thoughts and actions with your goals and desires.

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A daily practice journal! All you have to do is take about ten minutes a day to fill in this powerful journal. The time you spend in your *Speed Dial the Universe* will literally be the most productive time of your day. It will set you up to create your desires with ease and flawless results.

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