

Learning

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In the summer of 2021, when I left the Surrey School District and stepped into the role of Director of Professional Learning and Development for the BCPVPA, I brought with me more than two decades as a Principal. I knew how to run staff meetings, engage a gym full of families, and speak to a whole school community. I would have told you I was a good teacher before that, a good coach, and a Principal who could present confidently in front of staff, students, and parents.

But I would not have called myself a *professional* coach, presenter, or facilitator, even though I had previously worked with FranklinCovey for four-and-a-half years as a casual facilitator, and later as Director and full-time Director of North American Markets (Marketing).

With those aspects of the role, I was more like a new teacher, Vice-Principal or Principal in their first few years. You are doing the work, learning as you go, and doing a good job, but you are still finding your way. Most of us only start to feel we really understand the depth of the role and all its elements in year four or five.

It has been the same with my current role of Director of Professional Learning & Development.

Over the past four years here, I have been on my own intentional learning journey. Alongside developing programs for our 2,700 members, I have been quietly doing my homework: studying, practicing, and investing in my own growth so that I can serve educational leaders in British Columbia at a different level.

Recently, that journey took a leap forward through the number-one global executive leadership training organization, **Maxwell Leadership**. Experiencing this training has fundamentally shifted how I see myself as a leader, and how I design and deliver professional learning for you.

GROW Yourself TO GROW Others

By the time you read this in May, I will be a Certified John Maxwell, Coach, Presenter, and Facilitator, and able to bring Maxwell's executive leadership content directly to you through BCPVPA programs. Beginning as early as August 2026, and throughout the 2026–2027 school year, we will offer a range of John Maxwell executive leadership workshops — including *The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth* — tailored for BC's Principals and Vice-Principals.

Today, I'm comfortable saying I am a professional learning architect and facilitator for BC's educational leaders, and I am still very much a work in progress.

"Growth Doesn't Just Happen"

One of the central concepts in Maxwell's work is the Law of Intentionality: growth doesn't just happen.

As Principals and Vice-Principals, you know what it feels like to live in the whirlwind. You are managing complex human systems, responding to crises, supporting staff, communicating with families, and trying to keep everything moving forward for students. In taking care of everything else, it is easy for your own growth to slip to the bottom of the list.

*Already Good,
Still Growing:
The Power of
Intentional Practice*



You might think, as I did for years, “*I’m learning as I go; I’m growing just by doing the work.*” That is what Maxwell calls a growth gap trap — in my case, the **Assumption Gap**: the belief that you will automatically grow just because time is passing and experiences are piling up.

The truth is, growth doesn’t just happen.

If we want to get fit, we know we can’t simply “think” ourselves into better health. We have to be disciplined. We schedule the workouts. We show up on the days we don’t feel like it. We follow a plan. We revise that plan. We rest and recover. Over time, we get physically stronger. It would be the same process for a musician, or a chess master: practice, practice, practice.

Professional learning is no different.

To grow as a leader — especially in a role as demanding as Principal or Vice-Principal — you need intentional, structured, and ongoing development. And that means carving out time, choosing your learning opportunities wisely, and committing to doing the work between sessions.

“Know Yourself To Grow Yourself”

Two other Maxwell principles have become foundational for me:

- **The Law of Awareness** – You must know yourself to grow yourself
- **The Law of the Mirror** – You must see value in yourself to add value to others

These resonate deeply with my own story. I often share that back in grade school I was diagnosed with a moderate to severe level of dyslexia and spent much of my K–12 school career in the Learning Resource Room. That experience shaped my leadership in powerful ways. I never assumed I was the smartest person in the room. I learned early to seek out the perspectives of others, to listen carefully, to ask for help, and to create space for different voices.

It also gave me a deep empathy and compassion for students who have neurodivergences and learn differently, and for the families and staff who support them.

Maxwell’s language helped me put words to something many school leaders quietly feel: **you can’t sustainably pour into others if you’re not also investing in yourself.** If we want to add value to staff, students, and families in increasingly diverse and complex school communities, we have to see our own growth as non-negotiable.

That is what I mean when I say, “Grow yourself to grow others.” If we want to cultivate healthy learning environments for staff and students, we need to be healthy learning leaders. If we want our teams to be reflective, compassionate, and strategic, we need to model reflection, compassion, and strategic thinking ourselves.

Honing The Craft: Learning What Professionals Do Consistently

Last fall I facilitated a two-and-a-half-day Destination Learning experience focused on *Multipliers*, which is about building the capacity of others. It wasn’t that I suddenly experienced a shift for this one session. I have always cared deeply about doing high-quality work for members, and have always prepared thoughtfully for workshops, conferences, and webcasts.

What has changed over these four years — especially through my Maxwell Leadership training — is that my preparation has become **more focused, more consistent, and more intentional.**

In the past, much of what I did as a facilitator was based on instinct and experience: I knew how to read a room, tell a story, build in discussion, and adjust on the fly. Maxwell has helped me *name* what I was already doing and given me a clearer sense of what professional facilitators do *every time*, not just when they have the extra bandwidth.

Now, when I prepare for a session, I still do all the things I have always done, but I also lean on multiple, complex physical checklists and layers of editing to keep the experience as tight and engaging as possible. At the heart of that work, I run a detailed checklist that guides everything that I design for your learning. Whether we are in person or online I ask myself:

- *Have I designed time to learn, time to talk, time to reflect, and time to connect?*
- *Am I, in what and how I am facilitating, adding value to you?*

While previous sessions never lacked preparation, my preparation is now more **deliberate** and **repeatable**. I am still honing these developing skills, and I expect to keep refining them. But I feel more confident that, each time we are together, I am drawing on a professional process that helps me make the very best use of your time.

The participant feedback from that Destination Learning session confirmed that this intentionality was felt:

- One colleague shared that the workshop, *“felt like a meaningful pause in time to reflect and regain purpose... Working with PVP colleagues is fulfilling and important.”*
- Another said, *“I did really like pulling in some from John Maxwell. Having time to talk with someone was great — mix of table partner, groups in the session and the walk and talks.”*
- A third arrived as a self-described “wallflower” who would rather observe than engage, but went on to say that the intimate conference format and numerous conversations, *“pushed me out of my comfort zone a bit to interact,”* and that they *“loved the format and numerous great conversations that were had.”*

Those comments told me that the preparation was working. The intentionality we were exploring together in the content was also embedded in the way the learning was designed and facilitated.

What Makes BCPVPA Learning Different?

Over the past four years, we have listened carefully to what members say they need from professional learning. You have told us clearly that you want:

- **Critical learning** you can immediately apply in your context
- **Time to connect** with other school leaders who understand your reality

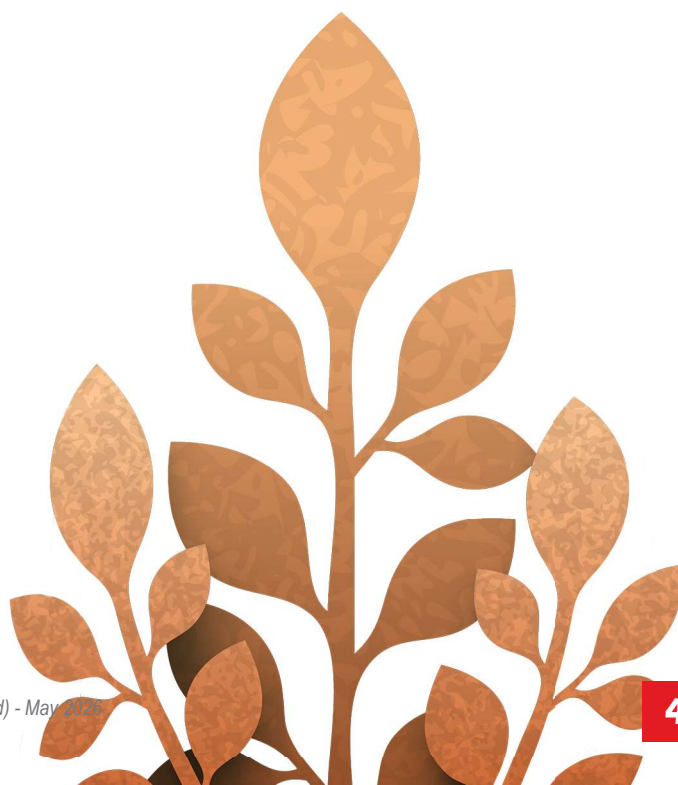
- **Space to reflect** on your own leadership and well-being

We have built that into every program.

Our Destination Learning experiences, in particular, are designed as a blend of wellness, rejuvenation, critical learning, and deep reflection. The resort settings are not an indulgence — they are part of creating an environment where school leaders can step away from their daily whirlwind, breathe, and think more clearly about who they are and who they are becoming as leaders.

Other offerings focus on time management, leadership competencies, and emerging practices. In the months ahead, we will be introducing *The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth* and other John Maxwell executive leadership programs in formats that work for BC school leaders — both in-person and online, and, starting as early as August, as part of our 2026–2027 PLD year.

“To grow as a leader — especially in a role as demanding as Principal or Vice-Principal — you need intentional, structured, and ongoing development.”



Across all of these programs, I am now deliberately applying Maxwell's coaching and speaking principles:

- using **variety** to keep sessions engaging
- balancing **pacing** so we have both energy and space to think
- building in frequent **interaction** rather than long stretches of "sit and get"
- using **stories** from real schools to connect concepts to your daily leadership

My goal is simple: that you experience learning that is professional-grade, engaging, and practical, and that you leave feeling both supported and challenged to keep growing.

"If we want to cultivate healthy learning environments for staff and students, we need to be healthy learning leaders. If we want our teams to be reflective, compassionate, and strategic, we need to model reflection, compassion, and strategic thinking ourselves."

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Learning It So It Fits Your World

Behind every workshop or retreat you attend, there is a lot of learning happening on my side of the desk.

When new content arrives — whether it's a Maxwell resource, a leadership framework, or a new idea about systems thinking or time management — I don't just ask, *"Is this interesting?"*, I ask, *"How will this land in a busy elementary school on a Thursday afternoon?"* or *"What would this look like for a secondary VP who just came out of a complex student incident?"*

As I am working through books, workbooks, videos, and facilitator guides, I am constantly scribbling questions in the margins:

- *How does this honour the diversity of our BC schools?*
- *What does this mean for a rural Principal with a small staff?*
- *How will this support leaders who are tired, but still deeply committed to kids and communities?*

The content we bring forward is never "off the shelf." It is shaped by what we hear from you in your districts, what you share in circles and feedback forms, and what you tell us you need to keep growing as educational leaders.

I feel genuinely blessed and honoured to serve you in this way. I do not take your trust — or your time away from your schools and families — lightly. It is a privilege to listen to your stories, to learn alongside you, and to share the leadership knowledge and tools that others have poured into me over the years.

Professional-Grade Learning At A Fraction Of The Cost

Let me be very direct about value.

If you or your district were to purchase equivalent executive leadership training from a private provider — including John Maxwell-branded content — you would likely be paying a minimum of \$3,600 per person, plus travel and accommodation for facilitator costs.

At the BCPVPA, our mission is to support BC's school leaders, not to maximize profit.

When we offer Maxwell-based programs, you receive the same leadership models, the same high-quality workbooks and participant guides, and the same core content at a fraction of that cost. Your fees cover our speaker costs and participant guides, and help with our travel and accommodations. BCPVPA PLD aligns with the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan goal “Principals and Vice-Principals have access to the learning opportunities and programs needed to build their leadership capacity”, but we are not charging corporate executive-training prices to do that.

In other words, when you invest your hard-earned PLD funds with us, you are getting executive-level training that is:

- specifically tailored to **BC public education**
- facilitated by someone who has **lived the role** for more than 20 years
- intentionally designed using **professional coaching, presenting, and training standards and certification**

For districts and Chapters, we can also come to you, bringing your whole Chapter together to learn and connect in a safe, supportive space. That is happening in more and more districts, and the feedback we receive is that it strengthens both practice and community among leaders.

Always A “Glorious, Infinite Work In Progress”

One of the Maxwell concepts I appreciate is the notion that we are all works in progress — never finished, always learning. That language feels right to me.

I spend a lot of my time:

- listening to leadership podcasts
- reading and listening to books on leadership
- talking with school leaders across the province about what they are grappling with
- looking at my own practice through a leadership lens

I am constantly asking questions like:

- *What tools do Principals and Vice-Principals actually need right now?*
- *Where are they feeling stuck, exhausted, or alone?*
- *How can professional learning be both rigorous and humane — something that renews our members rather than drains them further?*

I don't see myself as “having arrived”. I see myself as someone who is deeply **committed to growing** so that I can better **support your growth** — and I am very grateful that you allow me to walk alongside you in that journey.

An Invitation To Intentional Growth

If there are three things I hope you take from this article, they are:

1. **Your Growth Matters.**

In the rush of daily school life, it is easy to postpone your own learning. But if you want to grow your staff, your students, and your community, you must also keep growing yourself — intentionally, not accidentally.

2. **Your PLD Dollars Deserve Maximum Value.**

If your professional learning funds are limited, know that BCPVPA programs are designed to give you professional-grade, executive-level learning at a fraction of the private-sector cost, grounded in the reality of BC schools.

3. **You Don't Have To Do This Alone.**

Whether you join a Destination Learning retreat, a time management or leadership development series, an upcoming John Maxwell executive leadership workshop, or invite us to work with your whole Chapter, we will meet you where you are in your career and help you take your next step.

My encouragement is simple:

Keep looking for your next professional learning opportunity — one that stretches you, supports you, and reminds you that you, too, are worth investing in.

Because when you **grow yourself**, you really do **grow others**.