SECOND IN COMMAND CLUB · LESSON 5 TOOL

The Growth Alignment *Check*

A checkup that is independent from the success of the business.

Once a year, or at any major business inflection point, both the Dreamer and Driver should step back from the work and evaluate the health of the partnership itself.

This is a checkup that is independent from the success of the business. It's a deliberate conversation about whether both people are still growing toward the same mountain, or whether the distance between them has quietly widened. Remember that the health of the relationship running the business will always determine the health of the business in the long run.

PART ONE

Individual Reflection *(Complete Separately First)*

DREAMER: ASK YOURSELF	DRIVER: ASK YOURSELF
• Am I still clearly articulating the vision, or has it blurred as the business grew? • Have I honored the commitments I made to my Driver when they joined? • Is my Driver growing into greater responsibility, or am I unconsciously keeping them smaller than their capacity? • Am I bringing my Driver into conversations earlier, or am I reverting to solo decision-making under pressure? • When was the last time I asked my Driver what mountain they are trying to move?	• Am I still energized by the work, or am I executing without the connection to purpose that brought me here? • Have I been honest with my Dreamer about where my growth is taking me and what I need to keep growing? • Is there a gap between the responsibility I am ready for and the responsibility I have been given? • Am I growing toward a bigger Driver role in this business, or am I growing toward a different mountain entirely? • If this partnership ended tomorrow, would I leave with integrity intact?
Rusty stopped growing at $100 million. He did not realize it until Tom had already outgrown him. The question is not whether your Driver will eventually grow beyond the role you first hired them for. They will. The question is whether you will grow with them.	*Sara's departure was not a failure of loyalty. It was a failure of alignment. She had stayed faithful to a set of shared commitments that Jake had quietly abandoned. When you feel that kind of drift, communicate it early, before it becomes unsalvageable.*

PART TWO

The Shared Conversation

After completing Part One individually, schedule 90 minutes together, not in the office, not in a regular meeting slot, but somewhere that signals: this conversation matters. Bring your individual reflections. Work through the following questions together.

1 What mountain are we trying to move right now?

Not the 90-day operational priorities. The actual mountain, the thing that, if you moved it, would permanently change the landscape of the business and your lives.

2 Are we both growing toward that mountain?

Is the Dreamer's vision still expanding in a direction that gives the Driver room to grow? Is the Driver's development creating capacity that the Dreamer needs?

3 Where has the partnership drifted from what we agreed to?

Reference your Partnership Operating Manual. What has changed since you last reviewed it? What commitments have quietly eroded?

4 What does the next 12 months ask of each of us?

Not tasks and projects, growth edges. What does each person need to become in the next year for the partnership to work at the next level of the business?

5 Is there anything we have not said out loud that needs to be said?

This is the most important question. The things that go unsaid in strong partnerships are not usually small. Communicate them while the relationship is strong enough to hold the weight.

Both Perspectives

DREAMER PERSPECTIVE	DRIVER PERSPECTIVE
This conversation is harder to have when things are going well than when they are falling apart. That is the paradox of success, the better the business performs, the less urgency there seems to be for honest reflection. Do not wait for a breach. The Growth Alignment Check is most valuable when nothing is visibly wrong, because it is in those moments that the small drifts are detectable and correctable. By the time the drift is obvious, it has usually already cost you something irreplaceable. Jake and Sara rebuilt. Rusty and Tom did not, not in the way it could have been. The difference was time. Jake caught it before it was too late.	The hardest version of this conversation is the one where you have to tell your Dreamer that you are growing toward a different mountain. Most Drivers avoid that conversation out of loyalty, and then leave anyway, only later, with more damage and less grace. Rusty's last good lesson to Jake was not about systems or strategy. It was about honesty. He said, 'You either grow together or you fall apart.' He did not say which one you choose. He left that up to you. If your mountain and your Dreamer's mountain are the same, or close enough, then pour yourself into this partnership completely. If they are diverging, say so now. A Dreamer who finds out early can find a new path. A Dreamer who finds out too late loses everything.