

GROWTH ENGINES

Chapter One

“Crash Course”

Who remembers their first car? I had a white Mitsubishi Mighty Max, which was a hand-me-down pick-up truck from my Dad. He drove it back and forth to work for years, and when I turned 16, it became all mine. It was a stick shift with no power steering. It had a 275 AC unit. What's a 275 AC unit? Oh, that's two windows rolled down going 75mph. (That means I didn't have any AC.) I quickly became acquainted with the various engine parts of this chick magnet because shortly after it was given to me, stuff began to break.

The weekly routine while owning this truck was discovering another issue with the engine; the battery was shot, the alternator was dead, the spark plugs needed to be changed, a fuse was blown, and whatever else could go wrong under the hood went wrong. This is before YouTube. Nowadays, there are 15,000 tutorials on how to fix the problem with your car's make and model. All I had back then was my Dad. I'd find him around the house doing something. Dads are always doing something. I'd say, Dad... before I could get the words out of my mouth, he'd say, what's wrong with your truck now? I'd ask him a question about the latest symptom of the problem. Well, is it supposed to smoke? Is it supposed to sound like a wild animal is dying when I crank it? Why is the engine stalling when I turn on the lights?

He would put down his current task to come help me. This is when the education would begin. He taught me how to pop the hood, check the oil, and add water to the radiator. I had to add water to the radiator a lot. He showed me different engine parts explaining what each part did. God forbid if something went wrong with my truck at night. That meant I became the flashlight holder. If you've ever held the flashlight for your Dad while he's trying to fix something, you know what I'm talking about. You may be suffering from PTSD. I may have just triggered some anxiety. My apologies.

I knew that if something broke, I was going to get a crash course on what broke, but more importantly, how to fix it. As a result, I know enough to be dangerous about engines, all thanks to my Dad.

This chapter is going to be vital to help you understand what I'm going to call “Growth Engines”. What is a growth engine? The best way to answer this question is to start with what they are not. Growth Engines are not:

- ...a brand new methodology for you to deploy.
- ...a shortcut to success. (There are no shortcuts.)
- ...a new philosophy or model.
- ...a hack to get you from where you are to where you want to be.
- ...a bunch of boxes to check off or consecutive steps to take in order to experience rapid growth.

There's nothing new about what you'll hear. The words I'll use will be common and familiar. However, as you read, I'm hopeful that you'll discover a fresh way to look at the strategic and tactical steps to move every area, of your life and organization, to its desired outcome.

So, what are Growth Engines?

Where can I go pick up these Growth Engines?

Here's the good news. There's nothing to bring alongside or into your church, nonprofit, or small business. A lot of consultants will point to something that is missing. You have to bring in this elaborate, complex system. You have to make an 18-month commitment to learn this very expensive process. I'm not knocking those consultants or their products. They can serve you in vital ways. Sometimes, a gap needs to be filled with what that consultant offers. This process is a bit different.

The definition of a 'Growth Engines' would be a powerful component that drives a person and/or organization towards its desired outcome. I've narrowed those components down to the "Top 5." Really, I believe there are only 5. Everything else would simply be a part of these engines.

We are going to pop the hood and point it all out. This is your crash course. I'll let you hold the flashlight for me. I'll do my best not to go all Dad mode on you. Are you ready?

Every person and organization has the following engines:

1. Mission = The **WHY** Engine

This engine defines the WHY behind what you are doing! It gives us meaning and purpose.

2. Vision = The **WHERE** Engine

This engine serves the mission by answering the critical question of: "Where are we going?" This is paramount because everyone inevitably wants to know where we going. It points us in a direction.

3. Operations = The **RESOURCE** Engine

The mission and the vision can't operate with this engine. It's the fueling agent in the church. For something to move forward, it has to crank. The mission and vision will not crank to move without the resource engine. Additionally, operations contains everything needed for preventive maintenance. It protects the mission and vision and keeps them from blowing up. It equips us with tools.

4. Systems = The **HOW** Engine

The mission and the vision answer why, plus where it doesn't tell you how. Systems tell you how you're going to do it. It lays out all of the instructions.

5. Culture = The **HEALTH** Engine

This engine governs what is allowed and, most importantly, what is not allowed as we move forward. It governs the way we should interact and behave.

If you've ever wondered what I'm supposed to be doing. What's my job description? It's tending to all 5 of these engines. This is really, in a macro sense, the job description for every person and organization.

Really, I believe there are only 5. Think about it like this. Mission, Vision, Operations, Systems, and Culture are the engines. Everything else would simply be a part of these engines. The way you make decisions, the decisions you ultimately make, the speed it took to make that decision, the meeting structure, hiring policy, marketing, stewardship strategy, leader development, team values, performance reviews, capital initiatives, office layout, office hours, building programs, and so much more make up the engine.

All five engines are deeply important to an individual and every institution, and as I said before, you already have them by default or design, and they need to be honestly assessed. How are they doing? Are they making any funny sounds? Are they in desperate need of repair? When was the last time you checked them for routine maintenance? Are there any check engine lights on?

By the end of this book, you'll be able to describe everything that is right and wrong with all five. That way, you can optimize what is right and fix what is wrong. Now, before we dig in deeper. I'm curious as to how you'd describe the 5 engines as they relate to you personally or professionally.

The Adjective is More Important than the Noun.

It's been a minute since I took English. I do believe I still know what a noun is without googling it. It's a person, place, or thing. All 5 of these engines are nouns. The Adjective used to describe the noun is always more important. I don't use the word always lightly, but I find it to be the most appropriate.

We've established that you already have all of them, but what adjective would you use to describe it?

You, for sure, have a mission. Is it a **RADICAL** mission?

All of us have a vision. Is it a **COMPELLING** vision?

We all have operations. Do you have **COORDINATED** operations?

You certainly have systems. Do you have **STRATEGIC** systems?

Everyone has a culture. Do you have a **HEALTHY** culture?

I think it's crucial for us to face the brutal facts and just give them a word. Words are powerful. They force us to define what is really going on. Most everything that evokes transformation starts with hearing a word from various sources. I want this word to be straight from you. We'll involve other people's thoughts later.

What is the adjective you would use to describe the 5 engines?

Take your time. Think and pray about it. What is the word? Put the book down if you must. We will all be here when you get back.

Now...

As we continue the journey through this book, you'll be given an opportunity, after reading the dedicated chapters for each engine, to write down the word you're thinking about now. So keep those 5 adjectives handy. That word could possibly change as we sink our hands into each engine to learn what each of the five needs to move forward.

I'm excited to continue. How about you? Let's go!