

CHECK ENGINE LIGHT

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We have all had it happen. Minding our own business, driving along, and out of the blue the “check engine” light comes on, bright as scarlet, right there on our dash board. A quick glance of other gauges leaves us confused. The car seems to be running fine. It is moving right along.....no noises, no smoke, nothing very apparent, and yet, the light says to check the engine. My first thought, after seeing no obvious problem, is that this is a factory installed scam. This light comes on so that the dealership can find something wrong and bill me for fixing nothing of true consequence. I quickly conclude that my skepticism is warranted and proceed to ignore the “check engine” light.

If I had taken the time to read the owners manual I would have been informed that this light is designed to come on well ahead of a serious problem. The light is an indication.....a wake up call as it were, to take action now before it is too late. This light is an opportunity to look at the systems of the engine and adjust in a reasonable, convenient, and scheduled manor, rather than all systems failing somewhere out in the middle of nowhere with no shop in sight. This light is a tap on the shoulder versus a brick to the head. The light says simply.....”it has been a while since you looked things over carefully.....take some time to do so....adjust if necessary.... and then lets drive on from here.”

In life, we all have a factory installed “check engine” light. We know when it comes on, and yet, just like the warning light in our car, most of us tend to ignore it. Our life engine is made up of at least eight critical cylinders. If even one cylinder is out of adjustment, the entire engine does not run as it is designed to.

When terrain and climate get challenging, our light comes on more often, begging us to look at the cylinders and make adjustments now before a major explosion. As with your car, we are best advised to take the time to pull over and check the cylinders. This article is designed to help you look at the eight cylinders and the diagnostic tests that each need to pass. Take a minute and pull over. Lets look at the major cylinders of our engine. Are you ready to drive on, or are adjustments necessary?

First Cylinder: Our Relationships

- Are the family relationships you have taking priority in your life?
- Do you feel filled from a mutual exchange, or used and spent and taken advantage of?
- Are you pulling on the same oars with your spouse or are you out of sync?
- Is there passion, connection, and joy, or frustration, tension and distance?
- Is there laughter, depth, and trust?
- Do you retain friends or seem to burn through them?
- Have you made a conscious decision to eliminate takers from your relationship pool?
- Do people look forward to seeing you and hearing from you?

Second Cylinder: Our Health

- Are you eating healthy foods or is it fast food, soda, and crap?
- Are you physically active?
- Are you height / weight proportional?
- Are you getting enough sleep, and do you feel rested after sleep?
- Are you drinking a ton of water?
- Is your alcohol intake reasonable?

Third Cylinder: Our Mind

- Are you challenged and growing, or bored and stagnant?
- Do you have an optimistic or pessimistic outlook?
- Does the voice in your head make you smile or beat you down?
- Are you able to stay focused or does your mind wander out of control?

Fourth Cylinder: Our Surroundings

- Is the space we most frequent uplifting and inspiring?
- Is the light, the sound, the texture of your space adding to or taking away from your energy?
- Are your life spaces organized and clean, or disheveled and dirty?
- Is your vehicle clean, operational, and fitting your life and needs?
- Can you welcome your world into your spaces freely with pride?
- Does the normal weather where you live work well with you?

Fifth Cylinder: Our Spirit

- Are we taking the time to connect with the spiritual side of our being?
- Are we peaceful and centered or anxious and aimless?
- Do you feel the hand of providence in your life, or do you feel completely on your own?

Sixth Cylinder: Our True Self

- Are you authentic with people, or do you feel you are acting to fill expectation?
- Does your world embrace your true self, or a picture of what they want you to be?
- Are your actions and decisions consistent with your true values?
- Are you in conflict or at peace with knowing who you truly are?

Seventh Cylinder: Our Philanthropy

- Do you have a cause that gives you a philanthropic outlet?
- Do you feel your heart and gifts are suited well there?
- Are you finding ways to anonymously give?
- Is a regular portion of your time, effort, energy, and money going to a giving cause?

Eighth Cylinder: Our Work

- Does your work energize you?
- Does the day fly by or do you count the hours?
- Do you feel fairly compensated for your effort and expertise?
- Do you respect the people you work with?
- Do you see a better tomorrow? Is there upward mobility?
- Are you challenged in a positive way?
- Is the commute reasonable?
- Are you offered enough vacation time?
- Do you worry and stress over the security of your employment?
- Does your work bring out your best effort, or do you have a “good enough” attitude?
- Does your work schedule mesh well with other life priorities?

Pulling over and attending to the “check engine” light of our lives takes guts and effort. Asking and answering the hard diagnostic questions is difficult, but ignoring the check engine light will only lead to an expensive repair. It is my hope, as always, that this article helps you achieve an extraordinary level of success and satisfaction in life. As a fellow driver on the road of life, you will surely see me pulled over from time to time checking the cylinders. When you see me alongside the road with my hood up, pull over and say “hi”. I will do the same for you. Together we will help each other ward off any impending explosions.