

Momentum Swing: 7 Questions to Ask

Chances are you would like what every leader would like—**momentum**.

All of us hit both personal and organizational plateaus. As much as we think momentum should be a permanent state, it never is. No one lives in a state of momentum all the time.

So if you hit a plateau or fall in a rut, how do you get out of it—both personally and organizationally?

How do you find momentum when you don't have it?

Sometimes the answers on how to get momentum can prove elusive until you've discovered the right *questions*.

Here are 7 questions I've collected over the years that I ask myself on a semi-regular basis to push through to the next level and find momentum.

While I can't guarantee they will help you, I promise they have helped me get unstuck over and over again.

1. Are You Spending Most Of Your Time In Your Sweet Spot?

You may be good at many things, but you're actually only great at a few things.

And you're only truly passionate about a few things.

This is true for individuals and organizations.

Jim Collins asked the question this way: What can you be best in the world at?

I know that's an audacious question, but the more you can align your gifting and passion with how you spend your time, the more effective you will be.

Sure, in start-up mode, you need to do a little of everything, but over time, the more you spend doing what you're best at, the more you will love what you do and the greater value you'll bring to your team and cause.

Often churches and leaders who plateau get stuck because they're not operating in their area of peak giftedness or effectiveness.

2. In Your Weekly Routine, What Are You Having To Manufacture Energy To Do? Why Are You Doing It?

You don't approach everything you do with the same enthusiasm.

Neither does your organization.

Sometimes you have to manufacture energy to do things, personally and organizationally. That's okay every once in a while, but if you're consistently having to manufacture energy, it can be a sign it's either time to stop doing what you're doing or hand it off to someone else.

Maybe a program that was once effective has stopped being effective. No matter how much you promote it, you know it's accomplishing nothing.

As the famed marketing genius, David Ogilvy, once said, great marketing just makes a bad product fail faster.

As hard as it is to admit, maybe you've plateaued because you simply have a bad product. So either make it great or kill it.

On a personal level, maybe you're spending a lot of your time doing something you're not great at. Change that.

3. Who Are You Spending Time With That You Don't Need To Be Spending Time With?

This is a huge question. Don't overlook it.

It's tempting to think you have to spend your time with whoever asks to meet with you. And if you do that, you'll always lead a small organization. That kind of time management doesn't scale. As I [shared here](#), that's almost always a mistake.

Second, you'll ignore your best leaders (because they're low maintenance) and spend all your time trying to prop up your weakest leaders or with people who simply *always* have problems (you know who I'm talking about).

The people you spend the most time with don't have to be the smartest people or the richest people by any stretch (that can be sinful), but you should spend most of your time with the key people you've trusted most deeply to carry the mission forward.

Chances are they won't ask for more of your time because they manage and lead themselves well. But they should get it anyway.

Great leaders spend most of their time with the leaders who generate most of their results.

Do that, and you'll almost always either find momentum or discover why you don't have it.

4. Who Are You *Not* Listening To That You Should Listen To?

Leadership is isolating. You tend to hear from the same people again and again, and it generates a confirmation bias: the people around you say the same thing and it confirms the theory you have about why you're stuck.

One of the best things you can do when you've hit a plateau is to get out of your office and even break from your usual circle to do some selective listening.

Create a focus group and ask them what they're seeing or feeling.

Design a survey to solicit feedback. If I find myself in a preaching rut (it happens), I'll often convene a focus group or survey the congregation on a topic I'm going to address. I learn so much about how people actually think through and talk about an issue that it reframes how I'm going to preach a subject. (Here's [an example](#) of a current survey I'm running. And yes, you can [take it](#).)

Bottom line? No matter how you do it, get out of your normal circle and listen.

5. How Can I Put More Fuel In The Areas That Are Seeing The Most Traction?

Just like you need to spend most of your time with your best leaders, you and your organization should spend most of your time focusing your efforts on what's producing the majority of your results.

If you can apply the [Pareto Principle](#) to all areas of your organization, you'll go further.

For example, let's say your kids' ministry is seeing huge growth right now. Do you give resources to other areas that are weaker, or do you give more money and resources to kids ministry to further their growth?

I would vote for giving more money and resources to kids ministry. And then jump to question 6, below.

6. What Areas Of Your Ministry Are Seeing The Least Traction?

Kill what's not working. As my friend [Reggie Joiner](#) says, "It doesn't take a leader to kill what's dead. It does take a leader to kill what's living."

You need to prune and cut your organization as much as possible to fuel momentum. In the same way that a pruned apple tree grows more apples, a pruned ministry bears more fruit.

7. If You Were An Outside Consultant, What Would You Tell You And Your Team To Do?

I love this question.

It might seem a little strange, but it will give you distance.

If you were an outsider, what would you tell yourself to do? Most of the time you already know the answer to this... you're just afraid to say it.

So say it.

And then once you figure that out, just go do it. Often answering that question can lead to a breakthrough.

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