



How Empty is Your Fuel Tank?

On a busy school morning, it is not uncommon to get everyone loaded up in the car to then discover that my fuel tank is in the RED on empty! Taking 10 extra minutes in my morning to stop at the gas station seems like such an inconvenience when we are already hustling to get to school. And every time this happens, I promise myself, "I will not let this happen again."

Fast forward a few weeks and I'm back in the same spot with my car on empty for a busy morning!

Recently I attended a conference where the theme was, "Re-fueling Your Leadership." The speaker presented the concept with such simplicity and clarity. Her first question to us was, "How full is your fuel tank?" Of course, there were several puzzled looks. Then we were presented with the image of a fuel gauge without the needle. We had to put the needle into the image.

We were challenged to take account for how full our fuel tanks are in specific areas of our lives: professionally, spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, relationally, etc. It was humbling to be honest with myself as to where my "needle" was in each of these areas. While life is not compartmentalized, there are times where we need to compartmentalize in order to get a handle on things.

You see, if my fuel tank is feeling full socially, but emotionally I am in the red danger zone...there is a need in my life to re-evaluate what is fueling my tanks and what is draining my tanks. The needs could be very interrelated.

If my professional tank is 3/4 full and yet my relationships tank is struggling, why might that be? The goal is NOT to achieve balance in all my fuel tanks, but rather strive to distinguish between what fuels me rather than drains me. When there is something essential to participate in that may be draining, I must learn how to counter that activity with something that fuels me. The exercise is about promoting health in all aspects of my life.

For example, it is not uncommon for me to hear, "Difficult conversations drain me." Absolutely! Rarely do I find a friend who loves to have the difficult conversations with family, co-workers, employees or friends. However, aren't difficult conversations sometimes necessary in life? ABSOLUTELY! Consider a tough situation where you had to handle a difficult conversation head on. Haven't you been glad you did?

As a leader, it is important to know and understand what drains you and what fuels you. Learning how to re-fuel after a difficult conversation is essential for your well-being so that you don't take your empty fuel tank into your next interaction.

Do not feel bad about empty tanks. Rather it is important to recognize where we are in our tank(s) and what we need to do to re-fuel. Taking the time to practice regular self-care and "re-fueling" will help your overall well being.

If you want to be an effective business owner, leader, and family member, it is essential to regularly evaluate. Where are your gauges? Are you full or are you empty? Take a few

minutes to at least look at your fuel levels in a few areas: professionally, physically, relationally, emotionally, and spiritually.

My hunch is that you will find a few areas of need in your life that need some "re-fueling." Take the time to re-fuel this summer.