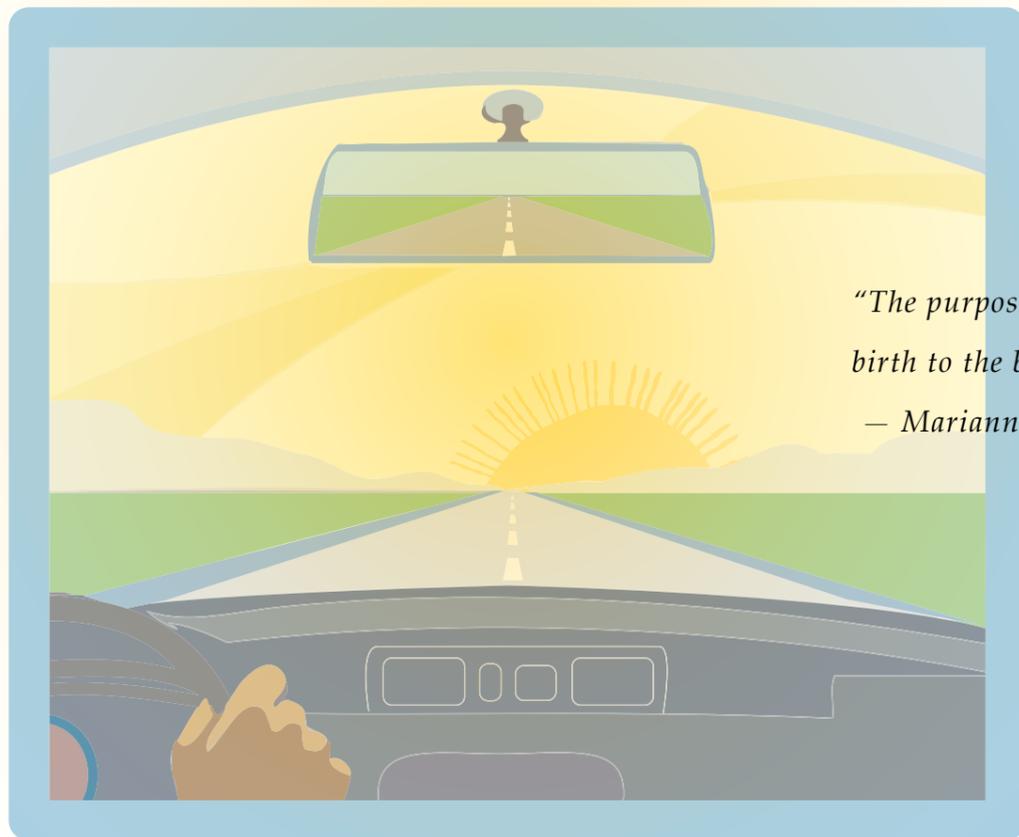


Chapter One

Understanding Your Vehicle



“The purpose of our lives is to give birth to the best within us.”
— Marianne Williamson

Understanding Your Vehicle

“Life begins when you do.”
— Hugh Downs

Imagine that you went on a game show and won a new car. After the elation and the excitement and confetti dropping, you’re handed a set of keys. You can now drive off into the sunset, the wind in your hair, to live happily ever after.

Once settled in your new car, the first thing you’ll probably want to do is to check out all the bells and whistles—those features that make this car special, and yours. You’ll adjust the mirrors and make certain the seat is at a safe distance from the steering wheel. You’ll adjust the heating and cooling systems; program the radio stations; figure out how to turn on the directionals, the headlights and how to operate the locks. You’ll find out where the fuel goes and how to pop the trunk.

You’ll set all the controls and features to your liking. You’ll be operating a vehicle that is totally yours—customized to your needs, and no one else’s.

That’s what we’ll be doing in this chapter. Except when we talk about your vehicle, we’re talking about your life. And when we talk about the Driver, we’re talking about you. So, if the vehicle is your life, then you’ll have to get to know the various parts, features and settings.

Imagining the future through my Windshield

For me, the Windshield is one of the most important Car Parts in my life. Whenever I get bogged down in the minutia of life, I close my eyes and imagine my goal in the Windshield. It helps me see the big picture and leave all the petty stuff on the roadside where it belongs. When I picture my Windshield, it forces me to look forward, and that keeps me on track.

— Emily, Richmond, VA.

The Rearview Mirror: Keeping the past where it belongs

I was living the same negative experiences over and over again without understanding why. I always questioned why these things happened to me, and made myself out to be a victim.

Working through the eMerge program, I realized my past held some valuable lessons for me. My HGS told me to stop playing the victim. I looked at the situation from outside myself and began to understand the “whys.”

From then on, I decided to sit in my Driver’s Seat, take control of my Speedometer (emotions), my reactions and situations.

Now, I look forward. My past is no longer filled with regrets, only lessons learned.

— Shanel, L’Anse, MI

eMerge Car Parts & Definitions

The eMerge Car Parts are listed in order of importance—so pay close attention! Read each part carefully. You'll find that some may hold more importance in your life, and some will require constant maintenance. Take notes in your Personal Maintenance Log (PML) and let the information sink into your spirit, mind, and body.

Your PML has additional tools and exercises that will help you more deeply explore the Car Parts and their place in your life, and the Owner's Manual is a quick reference guide to Car Parts. Refer to these tools for further exploration.

"A vision is a clearly articulated, results-oriented picture of a future you tend to create. It is a dream with a destination."
— Jesse Souter Zemel

Windshield™: Your goals, dreams, and visions. Where you want to go, what you want to do, or how you want to feel. The Windshield is large, limitless, and expansive and forces you to look forward—the most important direction.

 Do you have a goal in mind? What is it?

Rearview Mirror™: Your past. Includes every memory, childhood experience, adolescent angst and all of your personal relationships. The Rearview Mirror is small and reflective for a reason—it shows you where

you've been. Use your Rearview Mirror wisely. Don't spend your time focusing on the past. Instead, use your past experiences to learn your lessons to move forward safely and confidently.

 Is there something in your past that you keep reliving? Is this situation defining who you are today?

Steering Wheel (Wheel of Life): Represents the balance in your life. To be successful, you'll need to dedicate your energies to the most important aspects in your life. Go too far in any one direction and you'll run off the road. (See page 17 for more about the Wheel of Life.)

 Is your life balanced? Do you work too much? Spend too much time caring for others and too little time caring for yourself?

Driver (You): You are in control of everything in your life. By gripping the Steering Wheel (Wheel of Life), you are in control of all of your actions and reactions.

 Are you the Driver? Do you turn your hopes and dreams over to another and hope that you get to your destination?

Human Guidance System (HGS)™: Your spirituality or Higher Self—some people call it a gut feeling, a natural instinct or an inspiration. It serves as your personal map or compass. It's that voice deep inside your soul that guides you, and tells you where you need to go. Your HGS reveals information to you at exactly the right moment, not before or after.

 What is your Human Guidance System telling you? Do you recognize your HGS when it tells you what direction to go? Why?

Engine: Your body—every organ, muscle, nerve and system. Your body works in conjunction with your mind and spirit. When all three—body, mind and spirit—are aligned, you are healthy, energized and have the fuel to move forward. When they are misaligned, it manifests itself in your body—migraines, aches and pains, illness, etc.

 Think about the last time something in your life affected your body. What happened? What hurt?

Battery: Your energy, the vital life force. When you are overwhelmed or overworked, you feel drained and in need of a jump-start. When you are taking care of yourself, you feel energized and up to whatever tasks you face.

 Do you feel energized? Or are you overwhelmed?

Brake System: Slows you down, or brings you to a stop. Keep your foot on the brakes when it's time to pause (reflect), slow down and/or change direction. When used correctly, your braking system keeps you moving in the right direction. Don't ride the brakes. When you "idle," you're standing still. And that's not good—for you or your vehicle.

 Are you idling? How often do you use your brake system? Do you "ride the brakes?" Why?

Realizing a dream

Recognizing my "Windows of Opportunity" was an important step for me. I'm a goal-oriented person, so I focused my energy on the task that was right in front of me. When I started looking through my Side Windows, I noticed the "coincidences" that really weren't coincidences. They were my "lucky breaks."

One of those lucky breaks was a new job. One of my goals was to make more money so that I could buy a house. I've always wanted a small house of my own. I was tired of apartment living and wanted to establish some roots.

Two days after I put this goal in my Windshield, I got a call from a headhunter who told me about a job in another industry. I sent in my resume and got the job! I was so happy because I was going to make more money and I would be able to make a down payment on a new house sooner than anticipated. During my new employee orientation, I learned that my company offered a no-interest loan for employees who needed money for a down payment.

About six months later, I closed on my first home. I'm so happy to have a place of my own.

Now I know that the Universe is sending me these lucky breaks so that I can learn and grow and reach my ultimate goal. I look for them all the time.

— Melanie, St. Louis, MO

Horn: How you express yourself. You can express your feelings, want, needs and desires at any given moment for any reason. It's your personal right to use your horn.

 Do you communicate your thoughts, feelings, wants and needs? Does your Horn need to be louder? Do you need to use it more? Or less?

Emergency Brake: Stops you completely. Use in case of emergencies and only when your normal braking system isn't enough. Can be used to give yourself a "time out"—a safe and secure moment to reflect and take a breath. Can also be used destructively—addictions, binge eating or drinking—when you feel out of control, tired or lifeless.

 Do you create chaos or avoid difficult situations or decisions? How often do you pull your Emergency Brake? Is self-sabotaging behavior masking a real issue that needs to be addressed?

Side Windows™: Windows of Opportunities. The people and circumstances the Universe gives you to help move you forward. Often perceived as coincidences—like meeting the right person at the right time, or being in the right place at the right time.

 Do you often wonder if all the coincidences in your life are part of a larger plan and facilitated by the Universe? Do you take advantage of your Windows of Opportunities?

Gas Pedal: The power to control your own life. You can accelerate forward—making choices, decisions and dealing with the resulting emotions. You can slow down. And if you don't use the Gas Pedal, you "idle" and no decisions are made.

 Do you avoid certain situations in your life? Do you find yourself letting off the Gas Pedal when you should be accelerating? Why?

Fuel: The stuff that gives you energy—the who, what and where that inspires, supports and comforts you. You decide on the type of fuel and where it comes from. A walk, yoga, playing sports, reading, or good company can fuel you. Spiritual directors, doctors, health organizations and mental health experts can also recommend what's best. You can follow their recommendations—or you can do what feels right to you.

 What fuels you? Who or what inspires, supports and comforts you? Do you follow the recommendations of your spiritual guides, doctors and other experts?

Ignition: Your morning routine. A time for renewal and new beginnings. Later in this chapter, you'll learn about the Driver's Daily Oath and the Three-Minute Advancement Routine as a way to start your day. You'll learn how to look forward toward your goals (your Windshield) while minimizing what happened in the past (your Rearview Mirror).

 How do you start your day? Do you put any thought into your day? Why?