

REGENERATIVE MEN

...

the field guide

A guide to consult. A growing plan to keep.

Stand by what grows.

regenerativemen.com

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This guide is yours. Write in it. Cross things out. Carry it to the meetings and open it in front of the men there.

It will not tell you what kind of man to be. It gives you a few ways to look at the ground you are standing on, some room to think on paper, and a shape for the seasons of the work. The rest is yours and theirs.

Start anywhere that is honest. Start small if small is what is real. Just start.

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O N E

The Thoroughline

A regenerative man increases life around him. In his home, his work, his community, and the living systems that sustain us.

That is the whole thing. Everything in this guide serves that one sentence.

This is not a book you read and finish. It is a guide you carry, mark up, and come back to. Keep it the way a farmer keeps a growing plan: a record of what you planted, what actually grew, and what the season taught you for the next one.

Stand by what grows.

How to Use This Guide

Two things are happening in these pages, and it helps to know which is which.

The front is a field guide. It names the ground you are working: the tenets you grow under, the fields you grow in, the kinds of seed you can plant. Read it once to get oriented. Come back to it when you lose the thread. It is short on purpose. You already had the conversation that brought you here. You do not need the whole argument again, just enough to operate from.

The rest is your growing plan. Blank on arrival. You fill it. You bring it to the room.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

A few things this guide is not. It is not a journal you keep to yourself. The whole method depends on other men, so these pages are made to be opened in front of them.

It is not a checklist you complete. There is no finish line and no score. A farmer does not win at farming; he closes one season and opens the next.

And it is not a data log. The notes you take here are field notes, the kind a naturalist writes: what you saw, who you were while you did the work, what surprised you. Not numbers. The deepest thing a man learns about himself does not fit in a number.

Write honestly or do not bother.

THREE

The Tenets

The conditions you grow under

Four conditions hold this work together. They are not rules to follow or boxes to clear. They are more like soil, water, sun, and season: forces that have to be in balance for anything to grow, each one correcting the others when it runs too far.

Increase Life. The test that sits under all of it. A regenerative man increases the quality and quantity of life within himself and in others. Apply it to anything. Did that conversation leave the other man more alive or less. Does that decision feed the thing it touches or strip it. The test is not a feeling of niceness. A hard truth can increase life. A boundary can. The question is what flourishes, over time, because you were there.

Start Here. Wherever you are right now is a legitimate place to begin. Tired, unsure, stretched thin, behind on your own life: that is the starting condition, not a reason to wait. Most men put this work off until they feel more ready, and the readiness never comes, because the readiness is what the work produces. So you begin from what is real, including what is broken. And you begin on the inside, because everything in the outer fields is built on it.

Deep Time. Take the long view. Build with decisions that hold up across decades, not quarters. Almost everything the modern world rewards runs on a short clock: the next result, the next cycle, the next window. Regeneration runs on a longer one. This is the condition that pulls against the others and keeps them honest. Increase Life without Deep Time gets greedy for what grows fast today. Deep Time asks whether it can still be growing for the people who come after you.

THE TENETS

Be Connected. Stay in relationship with the people, the place, and the consequences of what you do. This is the line between regeneration and extraction. An extractive man makes his move and walks away before the results land. A regenerative man stays close enough to be changed by what he learns. Do not optimize a thing from the outside. Get inside it and stay long enough to be responsible for what it becomes.

No tenet stands alone.

The practice is staying inside the pull of all four at once.

FOUR

The Fields

The ground you work

The tenets are how you do anything. The fields are where it shows up. Every man's life touches all five, but in any given season one or two are where your energy is actually alive. Be honest about which.

The fields nest outward. The inner ones hold up the outer ones. A man who pours himself into the widest field while neglecting the first one eventually breaks, and a man who only ever tends himself leaves the world untouched. The work is to know which field is asking for you now.

THE FIELDS

Self. Your inner life. Body, mind, spirit, nervous system. The condition everything else runs on, and the field most men have spent the least time in.

Close Relationships. Your spouse, your children, your parents, the men you call when something is wrong. Where the inner work either holds under pressure or comes apart.

Community. The wider circle you count on where you live, work, and play. Neighbors, colleagues, the people at the school and the gym and the civic body. Where your relational capacity becomes something other people can rely on.

Place. The actual landscape you live in. The watershed, the soil, the seasons, the local food and economy, the ground under your feet. The field modern life has erased most completely.

Wider Systems. The large structures you move in. Your industry, your capital, your professional standing, the institutions above any single community. Where a man with leverage does his largest good or harm, usually without noticing the scale of it.

FIVE

The Seeds

What you can plant

Everything you bring to this work is a seed. A seed is one thing you choose to plant and tend: an act, a habit, a practice, a piece of work. It can be small or large, a single moment or something that runs for a whole season. What makes it a seed is that you plant it on purpose, you tend it over time, and you let the men around you watch it grow. Here are five kinds. Any of them can be planted in any field, including the inner ones.

Firsts. A new thing. The smallest clean way in. Something you have wanted, been curious about, or believe would be good for you to do. It can be tiny or large, a one-off or the start of something that lasts. The only requirement is that it is real and that someone other than you could see it happened.

There is a fuller way to work a First, a short reflection adapted from Julie Donnell. See Dive Deeper at the back.

Lasts. Something you are done with. A habit, a pattern, a way of operating that no longer serves the man you are becoming. This is not punishment and it is not white-knuckle willpower. You are making room. You clear out what has stopped giving you anything so something better can take its place. A Last works best with a First planted in the space it opens.

Disciplines. A practice you return to. A body practice, a contemplative one, a skill you are working to deepen. The perennial in your plan, the thing that comes back season after season. Watch this one. The question is not only whether you are getting better at it. It is whether the man practicing it is becoming more himself.

THE SEEDS

Projects. The larger build. Something with moving parts that takes a season or more to do well, sustained and coordinated over time. The big planting, for the man who is lit up by making something real and complicated.

Passages. Marking a real threshold. A transition, a milestone, the close of one season of life and the open of another. These usually take research, preparation, and the help of the men around you. You design your own. No one hands you a passage; you name the one that is actually yours, and the group helps you cross it.

Any of these can be done at full size. A First can be the boldest thing you have done in a decade. A Passage can be quiet. When you want to break new ground or mark a season that matters, plant something big enough to feel it.

Just remember what makes any of these regenerative. It is not the doing. What turns the act into something that grows you is the reflection that follows it and the men who witness it. *The seed is only the start. The room is where it becomes more than a task.*

PLANNING

The Season

Sensing before you plant

The work moves in seasons, the way growing does. Before you plant anything, you sense the ground. Which field is alive for you right now. What you want to grow there, and what kind of seed it is.

And what season of your own life you are actually in, because a season of high capacity asks for different things than a season when you are depleted or carrying more than you can hold.

PLANNING

You open a Season page rarely, at the start of a stretch of work, and return to it only when something shifts.

Take your time with it. A season planned well runs itself; a season planned in a hurry tends to stall. The page that follows is yours to fill.

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SEASON

This Season

Opened on

What season of my own life am I actually in?

High capacity or depleted, building or making room. Be honest.

The field I am tending this season, and why this one.

Self · Close Relationships · Community · Place · Wider Systems

SEASON

What I want to grow. The seed, and what kind it is.

First · Last · Discipline · Project · Passage

Why this matters to me right now.

THE WORK

Tending

The work between seasons

This is where most of the work lives. You bring a Tending page to each meeting. On it you read what grew since last time, look honestly at what came up and what was true, name what is in the way now, and name your next move.

Most pages carry forward, the same thing tended again across many meetings. When a thing finishes, you mark it harvested and plant the next.

THE WORK

The last line of each page is the point of the whole thing. It is not a note to yourself. It is the commitment you put in front of the room, in writing, so the next meeting can open by asking how it went.

On the right of each page is open grid. Use it for a map, a diagram, a sketch, or whatever helps you think on paper. Leave it blank if you would rather.

...

Date

Field

The men holding me to this

☐ still growing

☐ harvested

1. What grew since last time.

2. What I expected or feared going in. What was actually true.

3. What is in the way now.

4. My next move, and what I am asking these men to hold me to.

MAP · DRAW · THINK ON PAPER



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THE CLOSE

Harvest

Closing the season

When a season comes to its end, you close it on purpose rather than letting it trail off. You look back across everything you tended and read the whole arc at once: what grew, what did not, who you became in the doing of it, and the seed you are carrying into what comes next.

This is not a formality. The looking back is where the season turns into something you keep.

THE CLOSE

Then you open the next Season page and begin again, sharper for having looked. You will not be the same man opening the second season that you were opening the first. That is the entire idea.

A growing plan is not a thing you finish. It is a thing you keep.

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H A R V E S T

Harvest

Closed on

*Look back across the whole season before you read these prompts.
Read your Tending pages in order. Then answer slowly.*

What actually grew this season.

What did not, and what I learned from that.

H A R V E S T

Who I became in the doing of it.

The seed I am carrying into the next season.

Stand by what grows.

DIVE DEEPER

Going Further

Some seeds have a fuller practice behind them. When you want to go past what fits on a Tending page, this is where to look.

Firsts. A short reflection practice for working a First, adapted with permission from Julie Donnell's 5 Firsts work. It walks you through what you did, what came up before, what was true after, and how it changed you. Find it in the Guidebooks at regenerativemen.com/guidebooks.

Other seed forms will get their own companion pieces over time. As the practice deepens in real groups, the Guidebooks are where the fuller guides will live.

regenerativemen.com/guidebooks

DIVE DEEPER

Naming the Inside

Sometimes the hardest part is saying what is happening inside you. If you cannot find the word, here are some that might fit. This is not a list to complete, and not a set of feelings you are supposed to have. It is a handful of names for ground you might be crossing.

resistance · avoidance · fear · doubt · pride · shame · grief ·
relief · anger · restlessness · impatience · numbness ·
longing · gratitude · resolve · the urge to quit · the pull to
perform · the need to be right · the fear of being seen

You do not work these on the page. You notice one, carry it into the room, and let the other men help you see it.

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