

GROWTH IN STREAMING

Observations by Caigan

Let me preface this with a little information on myself. I've been streaming 6ish years at this point, and I've watched friends and associates grow with me. Some who started at the same time still don't break 10 average. Others who started years after me have hit Partner. I watch and note the trends and differences, how the streaming landscape shifts and changes. So these are my observations and thoughts.

The big thing in the back of many streamers' minds, especially those starting out or early on in their streaming journey, are the questions *"How do I grow?"* and *"Why am I not growing as fast as others?"*

I'm going to nip the second one there to start with. The artist's common quote of "Comparison is the theft of joy" applies here as well, as it's very important to understand that we all grow at different rates, at different times, and in different ways. It's very easy to see people you know shoot up high and fast compared to yourself, and both be happy for them, and also question your own situation. I'm guilty of it sometimes, still.

So, how do you grow as a streamer?

My belief from my observations is two things : **Luck** and **Work**.

At the baseline, starting to grow as a small streamer relies on a ton of **Luck**. The right place, the right people, and the right time. Getting new viewers relies on someone opening your stream, and that's difficult when you don't have many(if any) regular viewers, unfortunately. This is a big reason why I say growing early on is a lot of luck.

"But if it relies so much on Luck, what can I do?!" you may be asking, and that's where the second thing comes in : **Work**. You can augment your Luck by putting in Work, giving you a better chance of catching new viewers, and thus a better chance of gaining regulars, and thus... growth.

It is not guaranteed, but it can definitely help you grow.

What kind of things can you do here? Here's an incomplete list of things you can start with, none of these are required, but they can help :

1. Setup and Presentation.

- a. **Your Stream** : How it looks, how it sounds, how it functions. These don't have to be perfect, all streamers know the "it's not a stream without scuff" mantra, but if something like your audio is bad enough, it can drive viewers away.
 - b. **Interaction** : How you interact with both the game and any viewers that come in. Not interacting with chatters in some way is not a good look, in my opinion, but berating and complaining vocally that chat isn't talking or participating is a really good way to chase off lurkers and chatters!
2. Consistency
- a. **Schedule** : Do you have a set streaming schedule, or is it 'when you can'? A set schedule can help, but even having something like "I stream a couple times a week" is enough consistency for many.
 - b. **Game** : Do you stream the same game or genre, or do you do a variety of games? Both are valid, but streaming only one game could make it harder to keep viewers if you need to shift to variety or a new game you want to try outside your usuals.
3. Networking
- a. **Friends**: Above all else, friendships are very important. Everything below this can lead to friendships, which are more solid and should exist outside the 'streaming space' as well. Friends uplift each other and can help each other grow, both as a streamer, and as a person.
 - b. **Raids and Interaction**: The easiest thing to start with. Even with only 1 or 2 viewers, raiding out to others is the easiest way to start networking. And hanging out and chatting for a bit afterwards can definitely help. And if you are raided, likewise greet and interact with the raiders.
 - c. **Community**: Hanging out and becoming part of other streamer's communities can lead to the two sharing community members. And also meeting OTHER streamers through them that you can network with. There are also some 'streamer spaces', like discord servers as a combined community, that you can find.
 - d. **Collabs**: Playing multiplayer games or even working on art or other things while streaming together can not only help mingle communities, it can also attract new viewers to everyone participating in the collab.
 - e. **Teams**: Joining a team can be very helpful for networking, as a solid place to set up collabs, find folks to raid, share information, etc. It's also a good way to coordinate folks for charity events, meetups, etc. But like everything else in this section, it relies you putting in time and effort as well.
 - f. **Social Media** : Posting when you go live is normal, but a lot of streamers don't do much outside of that on their social media accounts. Chatting outside of these go live posts, posting up thoughts, photos, screenshots, participating in discussions, etc also can help you be seen.
4. Content and the Algorithm
- a. **Shorts** : Right now, shorts are a big way to attract new viewers. Twitch clips, youtube shorts, tiktok, etc. Finding good clips and editing them into shorts can be time consuming, but can be a good way to get more attention to your streams.

- b. **Presentation** : The algorithm is a very fickle, ever changing thing, and you can try changing up your content to match up. But, it's never outright said what the system approves and disapproves of, only what the community can figure out. Sometimes it's not cursing at all, or only cursing after X amount of time. Sometimes its just the games being played. Or whether your thumbnail includes pointing, weird faces, etc. This may be one of the hardest things to keep up with, and whether it works for smaller streamers is debatable.
- c. **Current Big Game** : This could be a just released game everyone is paying attention to (AAA or indie smash hit, doesn't matter), or one that just had a giant update. It could be a semi popular game that has Viewer drops for watching someone play it. Whichever the case, this one is both easy and difficult to keep up with, and can also have the most varied of 'returns' of retaining viewers. Keeping up with the latest big game is expensive! And having viewers lurking for drops doesn't mean they'll stay afterwards.

There are many more things you can do aside from this list to help your stream grow.

Though I want to reiterate and make clear that all of **these are not guaranteed to make you grow**. It's still a lot of luck to get off the ground as a small streamer.

If you don't have a lot of time or energy outside of streams, even small things like raids and simple shorts can help. Networking and chatting with other streamers is another way.

Even so, growth is not guaranteed, but putting in the work still gives you a better chance to grow.

And outside of these suggestions, my personal advice is : be yourself, and only compare you to your older self. Seek to improve yourself, but be kind to yourself if and when you stumble. Uplift others.

And finally, hearts and squeaks to you all.