

DIRECTION

We aspire through desire, but succeed through action, our desires are the catalysts for action, but our actions create success.

It is more likely that I will get to where I want to go if I am constantly going in that direction."

"I take a set of complex variables that has been called the problem and replace it with another set of complex variables that has now been called the solution. As a result, I am always resolving complex variables throughout my life, and sometimes we just ask the wrong questions and already have the right answers."

It is important to know where you are coming from, but it is not as important as where you are going. No matter how good or bad things may be, I always ask myself "where do I go from here? ".

It is crucial that I take the actions consistent with the result I want if I am to achieve it. The lack of success in reaching my destination would be expected and anticipated if I tried to go up north but kept taking steps that led me down south. I have always been surprised at how many people I have mentored were doing the same thing.

As soon as I arrived in Canada, I realized that I had to survive first before I could thrive, and that is why I chose this path. Anything that desires to exist must make every effort to survive and then flourish. Once it does, it must ensure that it doesn't forget how to survive when it begins to thrive.

Having grown up in a third-world country, I was always vigilant about my survival and never took anything for granted. Despite this, I am constantly aware of my surroundings and options to the point that the first thing I notice at a social function is how many exits it has before I even notice the guests in the room.

In most dictionaries, survival is defined as surviving despite difficult circumstances. For me to survive, I must be able to identify my needs and develop an appropriate time interval between decisions and actions. It is important that I can identify the essential things or actions required, make a decision quickly, and take action accordingly. Survival is about the opportunity to continue existing and to thrive.

According to the same dictionaries, thrive means to grow and prosper, flourish, and achieve your goals, namely "self-actualization" i.e. realizing and achieving your potential.

It is possible to survive without thriving, but I cannot thrive without surviving. My optimal function can be achieved by developing a balance between my surviving and thriving mindsets. Thriving is the reward of surviving and can only occur after my survival goals have been achieved. It is more common for successful and affluent societies to focus on thriving rather than surviving.

In a "secure" society, the individual is concerned about the best thing that could happen to them and how they can enhance this. A person who does not achieve this goal feels disappointed and sad. A person who achieves this goal feels anxiety or concern about maintaining it. Those living in a less "secure" society worry about the worst thing that could happen to them and what they can do to prevent it. Once this goal is achieved, a person feels elated and hopeful.

While both surviving and thriving require tactics, the person trying to survive is constantly aware of the need for these tactics, while the person thriving often forgets them.

Survival mode: Plan for the unexpected

Thrive mode: Plan for the most success.

Survive & Thrive mode: Plan for the unexpected and hope for the right outcome.

Survival mode: What are my needs?

Thrive mode: What are my wants?

Survive & Thrive mode: What is the balance between my needs & wants?

When my direction is unclear despite my best efforts, I simplify it by remembering to survive first and then thrive. As North America is all about thriving, I despair that a future generation will invariably fail to thrive because they will have no idea how to survive. However, I am not an expert in sociology, so I may be wrong.

It takes a lot of energy to understand what has happened to us, how we feel about it, and how it affects our behavior and decisions. While all these factors

are relevant, they are also energy-consuming and do not always answer the most important survival question "where do we go from here?"

It is the actions we take based on our feelings and desires that produce the results. The importance of feelings and desires lies in how they lead us to act.

When I arrived in Canada it became evident quickly that I may have underestimated the obstacles because I came at a time when medical school positions were being cut and some Canadian graduates were forced to do their internships in the United States. It was before the internet (information highway), so I had little access to information on getting back into the medical system, and even fewer people who would consider me.

Upon arriving in Toronto, I started working as a security guard just a few days later. It was October, and winter was approaching. To make matters worse, I was relatively socially isolated, and I knew only one family in Toronto. I caught four different buses to get to work, and I had never been so cold. I worked every shift I could. Sometimes on weekends when I couldn't get an extra shift, I would find the longest route the bus and train could take and stay on it just to pass the time and be around other people. Standing with thousands of people and nobody knowing you are there and if you die, nobody knows you are gone is lonely.

Because I refused to fold personal flyers for my boss, I lost my job as a security guard, and I searched for work for three weeks and was unable to find anything suitable. Despite traveling 2 hours by train and bus from Scarborough to downtown Toronto, I couldn't find a dishwasher job. I came home and cried. The only thing I had on my plate was food once a day and some dollars from being on the streets.

I realized that I was alone and would have to figure things out for myself. Because I had no one to speak to, and since I was forgetting my own voice, I started talking to myself out loud out of necessity. Talking out loud to myself was so comforting and reassuring that I realized that my most important relationship was the one I had with myself. I thought crazy people talked out loud to themselves, but I was surprised at how comforting and reassuring it was.

My goal was to learn from every experience, so I tried to look for the lesson in each one. I was naturally changing my direction and aligning it with what I wanted, talking to myself out loud (mainly in third person) and encouraging myself, and choosing to see the positive side of every situation. When everything

around me indicated otherwise, I allowed myself to believe that where I wanted to be was certain.

When I encountered situations that I had no idea what the solutions might be, I adopted the attitude that every complex situation is made up of multiple simple blocks and so I would find a way to uncover the simplest notion while maintaining a keen sense of the complexity. My understanding of these systems grew as I realized each system governed by a set of rules, no matter how small, large, simple, or complex it was.

I realized that frustration consumed a lot of my energy and only arose when I was trying to control things beyond my control, so to combat this, I would focus my attention on aspects that I could control (even if it was just my breathing) and then build things up from there. The way things were defined changed for me as I defined obstacles as challenges and failures as opportunities.

The new theories I had formed were put to the test when I started working in a chemical factory in Toronto. Initially, I simply performed mundane tasks such as putting caps on bottles on the production line. I had been working there for approximately 2 months when the compounder (the person who did all the mixing) quit one afternoon, leaving the company in trouble. Although I did not have a clue what I was doing initially, I was a quick learner and soon was mixing soaps, lotions, oven cleaners, etc.

Having passed my initial medical examination, I then needed to find a residency or internship program. I wrote to every program I could find, but most did not even reply. In 1988, using my new method of problem solving, I wondered if the Canadian Armed Forces might be training physicians. I went to their recruiting office on Sheppard and Yonge to inquire.

I discovered that they had a medical officer training program (MOTP) that trained military officers in civilian schools and that I would have to give three years active service before I could apply for residency. Even though the military would pay for my residency, I had to find it myself. I wrote all the programs I knew again, and now I had a few polite replies, but nobody offered me a residency position this year.

Upon returning home from my factory job shortly after being turned down by medical internship programs, I noticed the blinking light on my answering machine and realized someone had left a message for me. The program in

Saskatoon was looking for a replacement immediately because it started in a month.

Looking back, I realize I set the direction with my imagination, refused to accept no as an answer, and had an unbreakable will, but luck played a crucial role as well. To thrive, I had to survive first. When I use the term survival, I mean the ability to perceive threats and dangers and respond accordingly. Focusing on the areas where I was in control increased my chance of being lucky.

Setting direction involves aligning:

- 1) Thoughts - Imagine the desired results and use my imagination to develop it until it is tangible, and I can feel it, I know precisely what it is every time I think about it.
- 2) Words - express what you want to happen, rather than saying I don't want to fail, say I want to succeed. Rather than saying I'm afraid, say I'm confident.
- 3) Deeds - Perform actions intentionally and consciously consistent with the results I desire. If I talk the talk, I must walk the walk.

Although these things are relevant, they are only important if they help me to understand how to get where I want to go, even though they are easy for me to focus on. The way I do it is to put most or all my energy into the direction I want to go despite all the things that have made it almost impossible for me to accomplish that goal. As a result, I focus on getting the results I want rather than reviewing the results I don't want.

Identifying my needs (what I must have and cannot do or survive without) and my wants (what I desire to thrive) and knowing the difference between them is important for me. I should always do what I need to do to survive and then thrive, even if it is not always what I want to do as I strive to achieve my goals. The fact that I don't get it right away doesn't mean I should give up, and sometimes the same process must be repeated many times in many ways before I succeed.

The idea that I have a right to what I want and am entitled to it is promoted in some self-help books, but despite the attractiveness of this ideology, reality is that change happens without my permission or consideration, and I have a responsibility to make sure I get the results I want rather than simply assuming they will happen.

The concepts that are explained within this book illustrate what I think direction is about and how to align vision, words, and deeds effectively. At some point, all of us must decide what we want to achieve and take action to make it happen. Direction is about setting goals and taking the necessary steps to reach them, while alignment is about making sure our words are in line with our goals and our actions are taking us to the right place. This book provides a great framework for understanding how to do just that.

In my difficult years, I realized that I had to survive to thrive. I would often say to myself “if I wake up in a burning building does it matter how I got there?” Although how I got there is relevant but to my survival it is only important if it will show me the way out otherwise what was most important to my survival was “where do I go from there?” This became my mantra and my compass and no matter the roadblocks I seemed able to find my way back to the path I wanted.

All the things that have happened to me especially the things that have impacted me with “unwanted results” are the "burning building", how this makes me feel is, me wondering how I got there and although this is relevant, in order for me to survive, the most important that assists me in getting out of the building is “where do I go from there” (desired direction). This approach is survival based and allows us to focus on the intended outcomes and to be proactive in working towards them. It also helps to filter out noise and distractions that are often unhelpful and can lead us away from the desired outcome. Finally, it allows us to focus on what is most critical and act towards achieving it.

The effectiveness of this method was demonstrated when I mentored someone under a lot of stress from an ongoing investigation caused by a misunderstanding. There was a lot of crying and this person felt very powerless and distraught. By using the analogy of the "burning building," we helped the person identify that even though feelings were important, where to go from here was the most important decision.

As we reviewed the guidelines for functional adaptation, it became evident that the person lacked information about the system's rules. A lack of information hindered the ability to fully understand and identify the options available.

By the end of the fifteen-minute visit, this person felt empowered and confident about adapting to the changes around her. Follow up on the initial meeting one week later confirmed the results were sustained. People often spend a lot of time

focusing on all the things that aren't working their way without thinking about the things that are.

Feelings are always relevant, but what we do (our actions) with or without these feelings will provide the results that we desire. Although “being stuck” helps us survive, it does not allow us to thrive because it keeps us from thriving. However, letting go is a functional adaptation because it allows us to develop a new relationship with change and increases our chances of achieving our goals.

Points to remember:

To thrive, you must first survive.

Make sure your thoughts, words, and actions are always geared towards achieving the results you want.