

# YOUR WORKBOOK

(CHANGE)

Survive first and then thrive



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## **DISCLAIMER**

"Your Workbook" (Change) is based on my life journey and experiences and is not provided as a scientific text but as a storybook with lessons that can be very useful in anyone else's journey. It is intended to present ideas that excite and incite your imagination as a work of art that would allow anyone to develop their life skills.

My goal is to provide mentorship and this book is not a substitute for medical, psychological or psychiatric treatment or counselling.

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## FOREWORD

If I had to fill a swimming pool with a bucket I could debate the fairness of it or realize my options:

- 1) Whine about it
- 2) Shut up and fill the swimming pool with a bucket
- 3) Fill the swimming pool with a bucket while I whine about it

My adaptation to Canadian life involved choosing option 3. Although it is important to fight unfair situations, it is more important for me to do so in a manner that allows me to survive and then thrive.

Many times, I found myself unable to fully grasp or understand what was going on in my new environment, I remember sometimes feeling completely overwhelmed, angry, frustrated or just giving up. What I discuss in "My Handbook" influenced my life. Looking back I can see that I did not lack desire, drive or ability but the right tactics.

I adapted because I had to and not always because I wanted to. It was necessary to do this if I wanted to **survive first and then thrive**. I learned that what I had to do always took precedence over what I wanted to do and I became skilled at understanding what was relevant and what was important.

I grew up in an African culture that exposed me to the art of story telling as a form of therapy and the use of proverbs and analogies to illustrate and stimulate the imagination. I have used this as an effective tactic in my medical practice. I was often surprised by how unfamiliar my "North American" patients were with this method, but very gratified by how quickly they responded to it. The feedback from these many patients, friends and strangers whom I have shared these experiences with convinced me that a book like this is worth writing.

## PROLOGUE

### WINNERS & LOSERS

I am told that there are about forty million to one billion sperm cells in every ejaculation, each one of those guys hoping to be the one that wins the favour of a little egg, sitting at the end of what can only be described as a precarious journey, through a very hostile birth canal, designed to separate the strong sperm from the weak. Only less than a hundred make it to the end and then the timing had to be just perfect because fertilization is never guaranteed.

You have been taking care of yourself since you were a 2 celled organism, something told you to leave the fallopian tube and start to implant in the uterus, the same mechanism had you start to replicate cells and create the complex structure you now inhabit. Your very ability to survive and make survival decisions definitely pre-dated your brain.

Possibly 50% of pregnancies are lost with the mother never knowing she was pregnant. The trimesters (every 3 months of pregnancy) all present their unique challenges, each of which you manage to scale some before you even had a brain. With every breath, with every metabolism cycle, you fought to be here realizing that the only thing guaranteed without much effort is death.

Everywhere you turned there was always something trying to kill, you even your mother's immune system could turn against you if you made the mistake of getting close and yet like a cellular ninja you negotiated your way through this battle of survival.

You spent nine months in an aquatic environment, instinctively drawing food from your maternal source before you even had awareness of self. You accomplished one of many critical events by successfully transitioning from an aquatic environment and taking

your first breath at birth. All these amazing things, accomplished without your awareness of any thoughts or conscious sense of your existence.

You negotiate your way through the early hours, mostly blind and deaf and yet you instinctively know to reach for the nourishment of your mother's milk. While in the womb, you have developed unique systems designed to help you survive the rocky road on the outside.

There are so many things out of your control, like what environment you end up in, whether you are surrounded by factors that will enhance your survival and yet you do not focus on this, but simply focus on surviving the next sixty seconds to the next minute, the next sixty minutes to the next hour, the next twenty four hours to the next day, the next seven days to the next week and the next fifty two weeks to the next year and as you maintain your focus you continue to grow, you continue to adapt and you continue to learn. You continue to live and to survive.

You had survived some of the biggest threats to your very existence long before you even knew you were here, all around you, at every stage, countless perils on your way. The lottery of life is the biggest lottery you ever played, with the odds constantly stacked against you and your unique abilities constantly making lemonade out of lemons and finding a way to hang around.

You stand before me now, you have a brain and conscious awareness of what you have always been unconsciously aware of, that nothing was ever guaranteed but death, you call yourself a loser and tell me that you are helpless. Look around you my friend for in this moment and every moment that exists for you, does so because you won.

So my winning loser who continues to win even though you perceive you lose, continue to enjoy the gifts you are giving to yourself, because your sense of losing, is your fruit of winning, but remember all the eggs and sperm cells that didn't make it here.

## DAILY EXERCISE

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EVERYDAY

IN EVERY WAY

GETTING BETTER

AND BETTER

MORE CAPABLE

MORE ABLE

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Repeat the above phrase aloud (quietly) 10 (ten) times (one after the other) = 1 (one) set

Do 1 (one) set every hour for 10 (ten) hours - 10 (ten) sets a day

Record the time whenever you do a set

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Keep a daily journal of anything you consider important that happened on that day.

## CHANGE

Nothing ever stays the same and everything is different all the time, change is constant and ongoing, sometimes almost imperceptible and at other times completely inescapable.

Change is an abstract concept. Do we create change or are we simply adapting to it? My experiences have convinced me that change can only bring two outcomes:

- 1) The results that you want
- 2) The results that you don't want

Either way you are an integral part of the process and define the relationship that you have with change. You become aware of change through the wanted or unwanted results that occur from it.

Change can be scary when it challenges our sense of control, and yet this sense of control is an illusionary framework that allows us to act in a manner that increases our chances of success.

If you think about it for a moment, we live on a planet with a precarious ecosystem, hurtling through space at an amazing speed with a chance of being hit by a meteorite and all life obliterated, the middle of it is molten lava and yet we talk about control? Once you realize that our sense of control was an illusionary framework, you will find ways to recreate that sense of control anytime you want.

When you feel frustrated, it is because you are trying to control a potentially uncontrollable situation. To counteract this feeling, focus on areas where you have control.

You can influence change by focusing on your choices, realizing that the results of change that you want are a natural consequence of the choices you make.

No matter how terrible your previous choices may have turned out, or how uncertain you may feel about your ability to choose in the future, the truth is, you are still the one in the best position to invariably understand which choices are the best for you.

It is important to own your choices and take responsibility for them, be willing to reinforce your chosen direction through repetition of the appropriate action, until you finally get the results that you want.

The ability to define anything is an integral part of the ability to perceive it, in turn, the ability to perceive something is an integral part of the ability to adapt to it. Defining something allows it to be remembered, giving it a name increases the ability to recognize it when it is encountered again.

Even when you have defined things wrongly and your perception of them is wrong, this erroneous definition still impacts your reality and affects the way you perceive whatever is going on. Your perception of things creates your reality. What you are perceiving is what you think is going on and so it is what you then consciously experience,

For example if you are afraid of snakes because you perceive them to be dangerous, when you encounter a non-poisonous snake, you would treat it as dangerous until you gather more information that alters that perception.

When change is implemented properly there is a good chance of getting the results that are wanted. The need for change often arises because there is dissatisfaction with the situation or status quo (you do not have the results that you want), things may happen that force a change of view or present a need to do things differently.

When you are required to change, it is easy to become resistant because of your fear of the unknown and tendency to be more comfortable with what is familiar (even when it is not working well).

When trying to create change in others it is important to remember that it is hard to influence another person's behaviour but it is much easier to influence yours.

The only thing you can change is yourself, by doing this, everything around you changes. Your reluctance to change will often impede the change in others. The motivation to change is often low when you are being compelled to change but the motivation is stronger when change is something you want or have initiated.

Generally when the motivation for change is low it is often because a need to do this is not well appreciated by the person in whom the change is requested. When a person is compelled to change this change may only occur if the unwanted results outweigh the benefits of not complying. This can sometimes be used as a motivator when change is necessary and the individual is reluctant to do so.

## Points to remember:

Change is constant and ongoing producing results that you want and results that you don't want

To be functional adapt to change in a manner that allows you to get more of the results you want and less of the results that you don't want.

- 1) All things change all the time
- 2) Change is ongoing and constant
- 3) Be comfortable with the idea of change
- 4) Change involves wanted and unwanted results
- 5) We adapt to change in order to survive
- 6) Adaptation to change can be functional or dysfunctional
- 7) Functional adaptation provides us with the opportunity to get the results that we want
- 8) Functional adaptation is a process that requires the proper tactics
- 9) We become skillful through repetition of appropriate tactics
- 10) No method can solve every problem
- 11) Our energy and resources are limited so use efficiently
- 12) Feelings and emotions are closely connected to the matter at hand (relevant) but not always of great significance and value or likely to have a profound effect on success, survival, or well being (important).

## QUESTIONS

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WHAT ARE THE TWO OUTCOMES THAT CHANGE BRINGS?  
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HOW DO YOU BECOME AWARE OF CHANGE?  
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HOW CAN YOU INFLUENCE CHANGE?  
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WHO IS IN THE BEST POSITION TO UNDERSTAND WHICH CHOICES ARE BEST FOR YOU?  
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WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF FRUSTRATION?  
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HOW CAN FRUSTRATION BE COUNTERACTED?  
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WHAT IS THE RESULT OF BEING ABLE TO DEFINE SOMETHING?  
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WHAT IS THE RESULT OF BEING ABLE TO PERCEIVE SOMETHING?  
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HOW CAN YOU INFLUENCE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHANGE?  
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HOW MOTIVATED ARE YOU TO ADAPT TO CHANGE?  
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# ANSWERS