

YOUR WORKBOOK

(MIND ENCLOSURE)

Survive first and then thrive



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DISCLAIMER

"Your Workbook" (Mind Enclosure) 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.

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MIND ENCLOSURE

Thoughts are the conversations that we are having with ourselves. The "mind enclosure" is the centre of your reality where everything makes sense or nonsense.

There are many sides of me and I constantly have conversations with myself that are often intriguing and enlightening. These personalities within me make up who I am and there appears to be an aspect that I was born with (nature) and an aspect that I acquired over a period of time (nurture). The dominant traits show up on a regular basis defining who I am and while the others reside in background.

I have spent a lot of time wondering about who I am, I have come to realize that I am like a group of individuals (or residents as I call them) residing within this dwelling I refer to as myself. These residents have developed rules or patterns of communication that are either functional (when it helps me get the results that I want) or dysfunctional (when it does the opposite).

I found that I was able to clearly identify these individual (about 7 of them) residents of my mind enclosure (ME) that I now refer to as my house. What I observe as my thoughts or me talking to myself, could now be more accurately described as me observing these residents (that are me) discussing their different points of view, from the perspective of the personalities that they are.

It is fascinating how I can describe each one of them by the feelings that they generate and convey. I am not describing a multiple personality scenario where the dominant personality could constantly change and the individual describes a dissociative state. Within my house the individual personalities are always present and interacting, each one offering opinions but there is a dominant personality that takes all these points of view into consideration and then speaks for

everyone and so speaks for the house.

I liked the idea of the house because it fit comfortably with my Yoruba cultural background. I was always told that a house divided could not stand and I realized the importance of peace and harmony. In the Yoruba culture peace and harmony meant people getting along well even if they did not really like each other.

There are individuals that reside in my house that I don't care very much for but it is important to realize that they are in fact me and have a right to be there even though it is best that they do not speak for the house, their opinions are still important and need to be heard. In that manner when I find myself confronted with a somewhat "shady" situation I depend heavily on the opinions of "conniving Toye" (who can be very destructive if let loose and allowed to speak for the house) and luckily these opinions are then expressed by "responsible Toye" who speaks for the house.

It is important to point out that there is nothing scientific about this it is simply a process I created to understand myself better and learn how to resolve conflicts within myself. There are times when these parts of these residents would merge to form a new resident who is a combination of the personalities that merged in the same manner that red, yellow and blue are primary colours and mixing yellow and blue produce green.

My house has developed over time and the hierarchy of the residents has occurred through my reinforced experiences over the years. "Little Toye (the child in me)" does not talk very much but his presence can always be felt at every meeting. I have spent many hours speculating on why I am who I am and if I was born with all these traits? Do I develop new traits or simply reinforce the ones I have? In other words can I adopt new residents and evict the ones that I don't like? I now believe that that once a resident exists within the house it is impossible to evict them and the focus should be on how best to manage the house so there is peace and harmony.

There are residents within my house that I am not particularly proud of and some that are downright embarrassing in the same manner there a residents that I think are okay but people around me seem unable to stand. There is always a dominant personality that speaks for my house and this is the one that people around me recognize as myself. This dominant resident or leader happens through reinforcement of the attributes associated with this particular individual within me.

I do have a say on who speaks for the house (the dominant personality or leader). This leader is determined through reinforcement of that trait so for example when I suffered from panic attacks and generalized anxiety disorder "fearful Toye" spoke for the house and although he still resides within me, through reinforcing the traits that I wanted, he no longer speaks for the house and "confident Toye" is the dominant leader.

What I realized was focusing on a trait I did not want was a form of reinforcement even though my intent was to make it less dominant the focus actually reinforced it and so I was inadvertently voting for it, so now I simply focus on the trait I want to reinforce and ignore the one that I don't.

Through careful observation I have gained a better understanding of my house rules.

1) Every resident has a place and has a right to be respected. It is important to accept them as they are (self-acceptance) while still choosing appropriate action that is likely to provide the results that I want.

2) Every resident will be heard (self-awareness). This means that I will be aware of all the residents in the house irrespective of how I feel about them. Denial and avoidance of self may provide short-term relief but do not give me the long-term stability of self-love that I crave. I believe that self-awareness and self-acceptance equals self-love.

3) I recognize the residents by the feelings they generate and these feelings in turn influence my actions.

4) The dominant resident/residents in the house is/are the one/ones whose attributes I have most often repeated through expressions or attempts at suppression i.e. the one in whom most of my time and efforts are invested becomes the leader.

5) The dominant resident/residents speaks for the house and therefore interacts with my external environment and are most recognizable as who I am.

Points to remember:

Thoughts are the conversations that you are having with yourself.

How you have these conversations is important.

Recognizing and being accepting of the different parts of you (the residents in your mind enclosure) is important.

DAILY EXERCISE

EVERYDAY

IN EVERY WAY

GETTING BETTER

AND BETTER

MORE CAPABLE

MORE ABLE

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

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

QUESTIONS

WRITE DOWN IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT YOU THINK
THIS MODULE IS TRYING TO EXPLAIN

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANY OF YOUR RESIDENTS?

CAN YOU NAME AND DESCRIBE THEM?

WHAT ARE THE RULES OF THE HOUSE?

HOW DO YOU VOTE FOR THE SPEAKER?

ANSWERS