

# YOUR WORKBOOK

(THE RULES)

Survive first and then thrive



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## **DISCLAIMER**

"Your Workbook" (The Rules) 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.

## THE RULES

**Rules are one of a set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct within a particular activity or sphere.**

Often times when people are confused it is not because they lack the ability to know but it is virtually impossible to figure things out properly if you are not truly aware of what game is being played.

Life is a game made up of many games within it and each one of these games have their own set of rules, it is important to know what game is being played so you can find out what the rules are.

These rules are designed to help you become functional in any situation that you find yourself. They are provided in logical sequence, hence it is impossible for you to gather information and know the rules of a system without at least trying to identify what system it is in the same manner that you can not really know what all your choices are if you do not have enough critical information and you cannot make a choice if you don't know what your list of choices are.

### RULE ONE

Identify What Is Going On.

Rule One starts **awareness and challenges thoughts and reflection on what is going on.** In Rule one you determine what you think is going on (what you think that the system is). It is possible to be wrong when determining the system but the more you do this step, the more accurate you get at recognizing what system you are in.

To play the "game" you need a starting point and that starting point is naming the game. Do not be afraid to define it wrongly as more information becomes available you can always come back to this step and through your re-evaluation you would be able to correct yourself.

Identifying the game could be difficult or easy but it should never be an extensive process, once you recognize what is going on you should be able to describe it with a word or sentence nothing more. It is important to first of all make some assumption about what game is being played. It is also important to realize that sometimes the game changes shortly after you have identified it and so this step needs to be reviewed often to determine if you are still in the game that you think you are.

## RULE TWO

Know The Rules Of The System (whether or not you agree with them).

Rule Two challenges you to **seek information** and become well informed on what is going on, irrespective of what your opinion may be, it asks you to suspend judgement and realize that although your opinion is relevant, ultimately what is more important and would help with adaptation to the system is your knowledge of the rules of the system, how they apply to you and your situation.

Every game has its own set of rules most of us understand this concept and would not show up at a poker game complaining that no one is playing by Monopoly rules. We would not expect to be accommodated under those circumstances and yet I often see people become frustrated and don't recognize that they are not following the rules of that system.

Educating yourself on the rules is your responsibility, the system does not owe you anything and is seldom concerned with your individual needs. Within any system, how well you do is determined by many factors, some you have control over and some that you don't. The goal is to focus more on the areas where you do have control and be aware of the important areas where you don't have control but not spend

time dwelling on them.

Gather as much information as you can in an unbiased manner, review information objectively withholding your opinions about it (judgement) until you have gathered all the information you need. If you do not do this, your opinions would often affect the way that you gather and review information. Obtain your information from as many sources as possible within a reasonable period of time and verify the information making sure that it is valid and factual.

How you feel about the information though relevant is not important to your success within the system. The more informed you are about the system, the intricacies, the traditions, the regulations and how it operates, the more empowered you are to choose a direction that will help you succeed.

### **RULE THREE**

Know Your Choices Under The Rules (whether or not you agree with them) Make a detailed list of all the choices that exist under the rules.

Rule Three **empowers you and challenges you to take control by clarifying your choices under the rules.** It provides you with an understanding that in order to adapt to the system, you need to spend your energy on the choice or choices that you have under the rules and pick the one that is most in line with your goals. Although your opinion of your choices is relevant, understanding these choices and making a list of them is more important if you want to succeed.

Construct a detailed list of all your choices that exist under the rules and do this without any attempt to determine whether these choices are desirable, acceptable or not. The goal is to be as objective as possible when listing your choices so as to not overlook anything. It is important that you only consider the choices that exist under the rules.



## **RULE FOUR**

### **Choose And Move On**

Procrastinating is a waste of time. You have to make a decision and choose. No matter how bad your options are you should choose the one that is most aligned with the direction you want to go. Even a bad choice is still better than no choice at all. When you refuse to choose all you are doing is asking the system to choose for you and you lose control of your direction.

Choosing puts you in charge and makes you responsible for your own destiny, it does not guarantee success but it makes it more likely to occur. Pick a choice from "Rule Three" that gives you the best chance of getting the results that you want.

## Points to remember:

Rule One: Identify what is going on. What is the game being played? Be aware of the system, think and reflect.

Rule Two: Know the rules of what is going on (whether or not you agree). Gather information, do some work, research, find out how to be involved.

Rule Three: Know your choices under these rules (Whether or not you agree) Make a detailed list of choices consistent with the rules, take control, be empowered

Rule Four: Choose and move on. Pick a choice from rule three that is in the direction you want, take responsibility for your own destiny.

## 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.

## QUESTIONS

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WHAT IS RULE ONE?  
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WHAT DOES RULE ONE HELP YOU ACHIEVE?  
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DO YOU HAVE TO AGREE WITH THE RULES OF A  
SYSTEM TO BE FUNCTIONAL IN THAT SYSTEM?  
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WHAT IS RULE TWO?  
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WHAT DOES RULE TWO HELP YOU ACHIEVE?  
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WHAT IS RULE THREE?  
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WHAT DOES RULE THREE HELP YOU ACHIEVE?  
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WHAT IS RULE FOUR?  
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WHAT DOES RULE FOUR HELP YOU ACHIEVE?  
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DO YOU HAVE TO AGREE WITH YOUR CHOICES BEFORE  
YOU CAN MAKE A CHOICE?  
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# ANSWERS