

YOUR WORKBOOK

(VALIDATION / BEST FRIEND)

Survive first and then thrive



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DISCLAIMER

"Your Workbook" (Validation - Best Friend) 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.

VALIDATION - BEST FRIEND

The most important relationship is the one that you have with yourself.

Love is an expression of value and the more you value yourself the more you love yourself and the more opportunity you have to value others. You are worth what you perceive your worth to be and not what it actually is and this ultimately determines how you value yourself.

You have no control over what others do to you but you always have control over what you do to yourself and so choose to validate yourself even when others do not.

"Remember that what belongs to the heart can never be taken from you, can never be stolen or bought but is given freely by those you love and who love you and this love is a precious substance from which we all derive our existence. Find time to enjoy the beauty of your existence, to revel in and maximize the opportunities you have, to love and be loved in return. Let your eyes be open so that you can capture forever the images that are dear to you that they may forever remain with you even after they may have left you and like distant stars continue to glimmer in the night of your existence light years after they have gone".

We are hardwired for validation (information that makes us feel valid) and this need is there whether we like it or not.

We need to be reminded that our existence matters and that we are worthwhile. This validation can only be generated by you (internal validation) and whatever is provided to you by others (external validation) works because it reminds you to provide it to yourself. When the internal validation is weak the individual is dependent on external validation to feel good about themselves.

You can validate yourself even when others do not. So every time you feel put down or less valid just remind yourself of two or three things that make you feel valid (say it out loud so that your brain can hear it) and over a period of time you will feel much better about yourself.

It is worthwhile to get ahead of the game and not wait until you feel bad but remind yourself of things that make you feel valid as often as possible. It is like putting a deposit in a bank for when you need to make a withdrawal.

Stop thinking of things as positive or negative but simply as results you want and results that you do not want. It is not the "bad" thoughts and expressions that are causing your problems but the lack of "good" thoughts and expressions.

Use a "ratio" approach to counteract the bad thoughts and expressions. You can start with two good things or thoughts for any bad thing or thought and gradually increase that ratio as you see necessary. The worse things are the higher the ratio that you apply.

Self worth is determined by your internal validation which is a form of self-talk consistent with the results you want (feeling good about yourself). Self-affirmation statements are very effective in increasing internal validation when you repeat them often and aloud so that you can hear what you are saying.

The most important relationship is the one that you have with yourself. I am not talking about being narcissistic and self absorbed but I am referring to being self reflective and "being your own best friend", doing unto yourself as you would like others to do unto you and through this process really discover how to do unto others.

You should always be truly responsible for your own choices. Although the need to be liked and valued by others is strong what is more important is if you like and value yourself.

Self-awareness means that you would always know everything about yourself, that you will have conversations with yourself acknowledging the things you like and those you don't, the things you are proud of and those that you are not. In other words your "Assets and liabilities portfolio". Nobody would be able to tell you anything that you do not already know about yourself.

Self-acceptance means that this is who you are and it is okay. It does not absolve you of responsibility, in fact it encourages you to take responsibility but without judgment.

Self Awareness + Self Acceptance = Self Love

THE BANK, THE BANKER and THE VALUE OF BALANCE

I use this analogy to explain the concept of value and to emphasize how easy it is to increase your chances of getting the results that you want. When you have deposits in the bank you can cash the emotional and psychological cheques that we have to write.

The currency is validation, the bank is where your sense of value resides, You are the banker and the only one who can make deposits but you are also the client and the only one who can make withdrawals.

You have the most to gain if your bank is prosperous and the most to loose if it does not succeed. The balance of value within the bank indicates the state of your account or how you feel about yourself. You are also the only one who has access to the bank and external validation works by reminding you to make deposits.

Self-affirmation (internal validation) = Deposit

External-affirmation (external validation) = reminder note to deposit

Anything else = Withdrawal

Every time you appreciate yourself and acknowledge your ability and effort to get the results that you want you affirm yourself and put a deposit in the bank, although it is effective just to think of it, you have a greater deposit when you say it out loud, in a convincing manner, so that your brain can hear it (in the same manner a chant is more effective when said aloud). Any process that you are involved with that is not making a deposit is making a withdrawal and as far as the bank is concerned there are no neutral processes.

A good portfolio is one where you make more deposits than withdrawals at any given time on any given day. Any forms of validation no matter how trivial are deposits and any other interactions (including problem solving i.e. rectifying a potential or actual adverse outcomes) are withdrawals.

When you initiate the reason for a withdrawal you are writing a cheque, when something else other than yourself initiates the reason for a withdrawal they are cashing a cheque. The more money in the bank the better you are able to cope with withdrawals and the more cheques you can write or cash. The importance of continuous self-affirmation is that:

- 1) it is free,
- 2) it is within my control,
- 3) it is easy to administer,
- 4) it is always in line with the results that I want,
- 5) it ensures a continuous deposit in my bank

It is important that you maintain balance in everything that you do.

Remember self love = self awareness + self acceptance

Self awareness = I will know everything about myself, the assets and liabilities so that no one will be able to tell me anything that I do not already know. I will have conversations with myself no matter how difficult they may be. I will know everything even though there may

be things I would never discuss with anybody else I will discuss it with myself and I will not hide.

Self acceptance = I will fully accept my liabilities and assets as a confirmation of who I am and so I will learn to market my assets and manage my liabilities depending on the circumstances I encounter. I will take responsibility for and ownership of these assets and liabilities and continue to be the best me that I can be. I will not entertain shame nor will I apologize for who I am but simply continue to understand and be aware of how to be functional in any circumstance that I find myself in. I will not judge myself but simply understand how to manage myself better so that I can survive and then thrive.

Being my own best friend does not mean that I love myself or that I am satisfied with how things are, it simply means that no matter how I feel about myself (and there may be a million feelings), there is only one action option open and that is the action of being a best friend. How to use this tactic would be better understood by reviewing the sections on "feelings and actions" and "validation".

The method of "being your own best friend" allows you the option of unlimited feelings and this singular action. In other words it is okay to feel sad, angry, disillusioned, ashamed or any "positive" or "negative" feelings but the only action available is that of being your own best friend. Being your own best friend is a process of self-acceptance without judgment, understanding your assets and liabilities, taking responsibility for your actions and shortcomings but never throwing yourself under the bus. Anything we would do for our best friend we should do for ourselves first, before taking any action always ask the question, "am I being my own best friend by this action?"

The most important relationship is the one that you have with yourself. The "Fundamental Triad of Relationships" :

- 1) Effective communication leading to
- 2) Trust and trust leading to
- 3) Intimacy

SELF LOVE

I need to know myself
Know how I define me
The good and the bad
The ugly and the lovely
When every bone is counted
Behind every cupboard door
Nothing that is recanted
Would make me hit the floor

Nothing there to hide
No more fear to harness
I can now enjoy the ride
For I have self-awareness
When all the parts of me
My body and my soul
Have found a home to be
I have achieved my goal

For all the things I am
The assets and the "Asses"
Make me who I am
So I give no excuses
My mind is the only place
To find full repentance
I can now keep the pace
Because of self-acceptance

The self that is now aware
The self that is accepted
No more harbours fear
Self-love is now created

MY OWN BEST FRIEND

I will be my own best friend

When I do not feel like hearing myself
I will find a way to listen

When I do not feel like seeing myself
I will find a way to look

When I do not feel I love myself
I will find a way to care

When I do not feel I deserve anything
I will find a way to give

When I feel that no one is there
I will be my own best friend

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Points to remember:

Self Awareness + Self Acceptance = Self Love

The bank, the banker and the value of balance

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Being your own best friend does not mean that you love yourself or that you are satisfied with how things are it simply means that no matter how you feel about yourself (and there may be a million feelings) there is only one action option open to you and that is the action of being a best friend.

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

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP?

WHAT ARE WE HARDWIRED FOR?

WHAT IS VALIDATION?

WHAT IS "SELF AWARENESS?"

WHAT IS "SELF ACCEPTANCE?"

WHAT IS "SELF LOVE?"

WHAT DOES BEING YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND MEAN?

WHAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL TRIAD OF
RELATIONSHIPS?

ANSWERS