

Life is Upstream

By Doug Anderson. Copyright 2008

This is an attempt to put on paper all the lessons I have learnt in my life to date. The concept is simple, like the salmon, life is indeed upstream. All the other fish swim downstream, because this route is easier and it isn't so easy to get lost however only the strongest, healthiest, most persistent salmon make it upstream. Strangely enough, it is this select few that ensure survival of the species. Have you ever seen documentaries on brown bears fishing for salmon? They only catch the fish that swim upstream and they only eat the eggs the fish are carrying, the new life, new beginnings. It just goes to show that even nature can explain that if you are to survive this world it is going to be a battle.

Of course, you could choose to go downstream. It might be easier, but it comes with its own set of complications... for one, it is way too crowded!

So you might have started out as the salmon on a mission to get upstream and bam! Right in front of you is the big brown bear that wants to catch you and kill your new life and new beginnings. So what do you do?

You are faced with that thing called CHOICE. Do you try break through the big brown bear or do you do an about-turn and head downstream? The worst choice you can make is to choose no to choose. You can choose to and you can choose not to, however they do both carry consequences. Choices are based on knowledge or lack thereof, which incidentally either way is as a result of an earlier choice...

What we know is what we have been taught or what we have learnt, what we have heard, what we have read and what we have interpreted for ourselves. So, knowledge is king then, right?... to an extent. It isn't what you know; it is whom you know, right? ...WRONG!

It isn't what you know that counts; it is WHAT YOU DO with what you know that counts! So knowledge is what you know, what then is wisdom? Wisdom is what you do with what you know.

Having knowledge doesn't Make A Difference. Using the knowledge to benefit others for the duration of your life Makes A Difference! The important thing is to CHOOSE TO DO. Nike has it right in Just Do It. Just do something. If you are stuck in a rut, just do something, if a problem seems too big, just do something... Try starting with a smile.

A man was walking on a beach where hundreds of crayfish had beached themselves. He chose to throw them back into the sea, one by one. Someone walking passed the man commented "You can't possibly think what you are doing will make any difference", to which the man replied, it has made a difference to this one, and this one, and this one, as he threw the crayfish one by one back into the sea.

Yes, you might not be able to solve world hunger, but you can feed a child. That requires a choice though, and you might not have been able to feed the child yesterday, and you can't be sure if you will be able to feed the child tomorrow. What you do know, is you can feed the

child... NOW! The only thing that we have that is certain is this moment, and even that is gone. Click your fingers. Its gone. That exact moment is gone, forever.

3 birds are sitting on a wire, 2 decide to fly away, how many remain?....the answer is 3. Just because they decided to fly away, doesn't mean they did it. Once you have chosen to choose, you must follow through with the DO.

The reason why we choose not to choose is FEAR OF FAILURE. The fear of failure is a result of lack of belief in you. The lack of belief is as a result of you not choosing to control your thoughts.

If you continue to speak in the way you do, you will continue to think in the way you do. If you continue to think in the way you do, you will continue to act and react in the way you do. If you continue to act and react in the way you do, you will always get the same result. So what do you have to do? You have to change the way you think otherwise you will always have the same things happening in your life.

Failure is not you not succeeding in something. Failure is not trying again. Fail often but fail quickly! Interestingly some of the best things discovered occurred after failed attempts.

What lies behind and what lies ahead, is nothing compared to what lies within. It is what lies inside you that count. What lies in your heart and in your head?

A teacher gave a boy an assignment. She wanted him to give a realistic detailed account of where he would be and what he would be doing 20 years down the line. He went home and wrote a 10 page essay and drew pictures of a horse ranch.

The teacher knew the family of the boy well and after reading his essay gave him an F. "Why an F?" the boy asked his teacher. "You will never be able to afford such a ranch, you are not being realistic about your future," the teacher replied. "Rewrite your essay and be more realistic this time, if you want a better mark," the teacher commented.

The boy, despondent, went to his father and asked what he should do. His father replied that the mark was his and he should do what he felt was right for him.

The boy rewrote the essay word for word and redrew the pictures exactly as he originally did. At the bottom of the essay, the boy wrote: KEEP YOUR F, I'LL KEEP MY DREAM!

20 years down the line, the boy now a man, went back to the school to invite his old teacher and the whole class to his horse ranch - true story!

A boy was born with a spinal defect, doctors said that he had a 98% chance of dying at birth, they said he wouldn't be educated, they said he wouldn't speak, they said he wouldn't have a quality of life. That boy has represented his country in the World Wheelchair Games, played provincial sports for 9 years, has 39 gold medals, 16 silver medals and 5 bronze medals and numerous records behind his name. This boy was Head Boy, Hostel Head Boy. This boy was chosen as Sportsman of the Year, studied in the Allied Health Professions and this boy has his own Radio Talk Show. This boy is ME.

I see it that I had a 2% of living. A 1% chance is all I needed.

- There is no such thing as a high energy or low energy person, only a high or low passionate person. Vision, high passion, excitement and dreams are all linked. What you put into your head, you will get out. GIGO - garbage in, garbage out. You are what you think. If you think you can or you can't, you are absolutely 100% correct. Becoming who you have become is NOTHING in comparison to who you can become.

- No tree has borne fruit that hasn't had well-nourished roots. The size of your dream will determine the size of the group of people you will attract to it. The size of your dream is determined by your passion and your passion is influenced by your ability, your motivation and your attitude.

- Be so passionate about what you do that you will do it for free, but get so good at it that others will want to pay you to do it.

- Your ability is influenced by what you believe you are able to do. Your belief comes from what lies inside. Belief interconnected with faith. Faith being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see.

- Nothing motivates like an empty wallet and an empty stomach. When you have two pennies buy a loaf of bread with one and a flower with the other. Motivation is a result of what we choose to do. Life is the thing that is happening around you... with or without you! Get Motivated!

- Attitude determines how you do what you do. The sincerity of your intentions will determine the success of your actions. Attitude becomes a measurable thing when you are motivated to use your ability completely.

- We have nearly 100 000 thoughts per day and we think at nearly 200 000 miles per second!

When you change your thoughts, you change your emotion
when you change your emotion, you change your attitude
when you change your attitude, you change your behaviour
when you change your behaviour...YOU CHANGE YOUR LIFE

- If you don't like the output in your life, try changing the input.

- Your life is a direct result of your thoughts which you have allowed to affect your actions. Thoughts are what got the Bum and the Billionaire to the place that they are.

- By letting your thoughts affect your actions, you have given up self-control. The trick is to determine who controls whom? Who controls what? What controls what?

- True power is not about what you can control in other people, it is about what you can unleash in other people.

You will find yourself in one of the following categories of THINKING. The 5 S's

1. Survival

Living from pay cheque to pay cheque. Too much month left at the end of your money

2. Success

Success is achieving right? So how many of you have set goals? If goals are not set how can you achieve them? Luck is being at the right place at the right time. Success is being the right person all of the time. Success is directly linked to the way we think and act.

3. Satisfaction

You have success, vision, direction and you achieve what you set out to do. Beware of thinking you have arrived though. The only time you have arrived is when you breathe your last breath. You constantly need to renew yourself

4. Significance

This thinking involves others. Thinking that Makes A Difference. Vision and passion is very important as the end result of significance is hugely affected by the power of the vision of the person who has it. The sincerity of your intentions will determine the success of your actions.

5. Synergetic Significance

This way of thinking is doing what you love to do and what you are passionate about, Making A Difference with others that love what they do and are passionate about what they do. $1 + 1 = 3...$ I have a vision, you have a vision and together we have a 3rd vision.

FACT - you will interact and communicate with many people on your journey through life. You will impact on them positively or negatively, the impact of the communication being gauged by the response you get. That communication input from you will come about as a result of choice.

Your choice will result from your passion and vision. Your passion and vision in turn will be influenced by your ability, motivation and attitude which are influenced by your thoughts that are channeled by self control.

Control will give you power and authority that will help you unleash your potential and potential in others. This in turn will give you a success type of thinking and move you out of survival thinking. The success will spark more passion, which in turn will result in you Making A Difference for others and will attract like-minded people towards you, moving you into having synergetic significance type thinking.

I have had 37 major operations, I have been clinically dead 3 times, I have endured body temperatures of 110 degrees F, I have overcome illnesses such as bacterial meningitis and have overcome my so called disability.

I was expelled from my first school because I was disabled and I have been discriminated against on many occasions. However, if it wasn't for all of this, I wouldn't be writing and sharing this

with you.

Through synergetic significance I have been fortunate enough to Make A Difference in the lives of many able and disabled individuals.

All "bad" situations are relative.