

WHY YOUR LIFE SUCKS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

THE SIX E'S OF SUCCESS



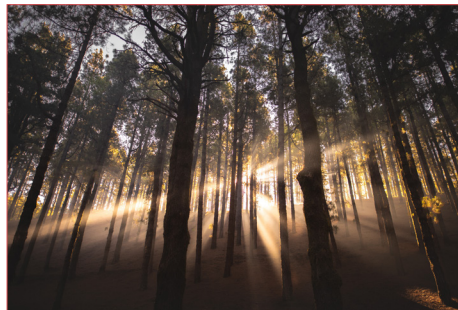
Sometimes life just sucks doesn't it? At this point in history, a lot of people who are suffering from the results of COVID-19 might describe their situation in those terms. Lost jobs, lost relationships, lost homes and cars, lost vacations, lost activities, lost healthcare, lost school opportunities. The result of all these "lost" opportunities results in some really difficult life situations. A lot of people would say, "Right now, my life sucks!"

So, what is to be done? Well, whether your life is stuck because of a virus, or because of the myriad of other problems we all encounter in life, there is a solution, a set of principles through which life can be improved. I've used these principles hundreds of times to get myself, my family and my career moving forward. The "Six E's of Success have always worked for me. Perhaps they will work for you too.

EXAMINE

I remember it well. My parents purchased me a new train set for

Christmas, which of course, stated clearly on the box, "Some assembly required." Parents, whenever you read this statement on a gift for your children, please remember it is a gross understatement! The word "some" is a relative term. In any case, the



directions, something many men consider a waste of time, started by listing all of the parts that are supposed to be contained in the package. It is recommended that one remove each of the parts from the package and then check them against the list in the directions. If a part is missing, return it for a replacement gift. Dad thought such instructions were a waste of time. After all, he was an engineer who had designed the airfoils for the P-38

Lightning Aircraft. So, he immediately started building. Unfortunately, you guessed it, after about two hours of attempted assembly, dad recognized that some parts were missing. This sent me into a crying fit and my parents back to the store on Christmas Eve to find a replacement.

If you're going to move forward, you've got to identify as many parts of your situation as possible. You must resist the temptation to arrive at exaggerated, sometimes false conclusions about your situation. Instead, ask yourself lots of questions, lay out all the parts that will allow you to begin the second step of this process. Bad news can send us into a tailspin of misinformation and inaccurate evaluation of our present status. Sometimes we get stuck there. We are emotional and afraid which causes us to jump to conclusions. Take the necessary time and effort to lay out the actual, factual parts of your situation. When you're done, it should look like you're standing in front of the legend of a large shopping mall, which states, "You are here."

EVALUATE

So, how bad is it . . . really, how bad is it? It might be worse or better than you thought, but at least you will have more accurately identified your situation. Now it is helpful to rate your problems and opportunities. For instance: Your temporary loss of income means you will have to adjust your budget. What are your top priorities such as food, gasoline, utilities, etc.? Maybe the house payment or rent comes next, and then the car payment and schooling needs for the kids. Finally, there are luxuries. For most of us in the first world, we have trouble discerning between necessity and luxury. It's hard to believe, but we can actually live without Starbucks, Chik-Fil-A, and cable television for a while. The fact is that this kind of evaluation can be helpful no matter what your situation. Living in a culture like ours, most of us drift towards excess. Marriages drift towards the mundane. Goals get lost in the milieu of daily life. Examination and evaluation can put your life into a new perspective. Now you have an even better picture. "You are here."

ENVISION

A vision is a mental picture of a preferred future reality. By the time you have invested yourself into a calm examination and accurate evaluation of your status, you will begin to see a picture of where you want to go. At this point, it is important to resist the temptation to say, "I just want to go back to the way things were." That is not going to happen. Life always moves on and those who handle this fact well are the ones that move forward. They do not allow circumstances to dictate their future.

And here's the great part of this

process. Your job loss may have opened your eyes to a new goal or opportunity that you would have never otherwise considered. Maybe it's finally time to go back to college. Divorce, which you certainly never wanted to happen when you got married, may have opened the door to a future life-change that really works for you. Thinking through where you really are, and how and why you got there, can open the door to a whole new future.

So, what is that picture? Where do you want to go and what will it look like when you get there? It is good to write a paragraph describing this picture and break it down into attainable goals.



EQUIP

A vision that is not equipped is just a pipe dream. It goes away when you wake up. What are the steps you need to take to paint your picture of a future reality? It's time to develop a strategy to get where you want to go. There are some helpful steps to equip your vision. First, show trusted friends, coaches, and mentors your vision. Explain it to people who will help you refine the vision. Nearly every time you share your goals, they will help make them smarter. Your friends will have ideas about how to accomplish your dream. Keep a log of what will be needed to move forward. Organize the log into attainable small steps. For instance, if you want to start college,

you'll need to equip yourself with information. Where do you begin? What do you want to study? Where do you want to attend college? Do you want online or in-person teaching? How much will it cost? Who can help you with this process? In order to obtain a degree, you must first equip yourself with the information and tools to actually start college. This is called strategic planning. Once you are attending college, professors will equip you towards your goal of a new future, but you must first equip yourself to actually attend college. Every vision must be equipped in order to become reality.

ENCOURAGE

No matter how bright your vision shines in your mind and how well you are equipping yourself to get there, you will experience hard times and opposition. Nothing worth doing is ever easy. You will get tired and discouraged and you should plan for it. For most people, this means planning time away from the pursuit of your goals. This should happen in two ways. One: Plan regular "sabbatical" time into your schedule. You are not the Energizer Bunny! You were not designed to run at full throttle 24/7/365. If you try, you will become so fatigued that you will lose sight of your vision and become discouraged. Two: You will meet opposition. Opposition comes in a myriad of forms, but it always arrives. Expect it. Plan for it. So how does one plan to be encouraged? There are at least three major ways to plan for encouragement. Ask yourself these three questions and make your encouragement plans accordingly. What fills your bucket? What and who recharges your batteries? What gives you genuine rest? Take action on these

questions and you will find enough encouragement to stay in the game.

ENJOY!

One of the complaints of my staff through the years, was that I didn't take time to celebrate wins. I was a hard-driving person who always had a new vision in mind which meant that before one vision was fully accomplished and celebrated, I was on to the next vision. Human beings were designed to celebrate! What does celebration look like for you and for the folks who have come alongside you to help you pursue your dream? For me, it's a good meal, a drink and a cigar with friends. On a larger scale, it's a weekend away or a full vacation. It's a party with a few of my close friends. What does that look like for you? Whatever it is, plan to celebrate and enjoy large milestones and small wins. Celebration helps us to enjoy the process and ultimately the outcome of our pursuits. Without it, life loses its joy.



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