

CHAPTER 27:

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# WADING THROUGH TURDS

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*“When you are going through hell, keep going.”*

*– Winston Churchill*

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*In a decision that was a classic case of letting my brain cash cheques my resilience couldn't cash, I booked a guided caving trip down to Somerset. It was a full day 'sporting route' for which I had no experience, but I convinced myself it would be fine.*

*Four of us clad in wetsuits, helmets, and head torches watched as the instructor lifted the manhole cover and descended a ladder into Swildon's hole.*

*It started well enough. It was dark, there were a few tight squeezes, one of which left me gasping for shallow breaths, but I coped. I was enjoying myself. Then we reached a chamber with no discernible way out. The only exit was the one we had come from, but there was a large pool of water and a bucket.*

*The guide picked the bucket up and began bailing water from the pool. Slowly a tiny tunnel began to emerge. He kept bailing until six inches at the top of the hole was exposed.*

*He turned to us and explained what we needed to do before disappearing into that tiny tunnel. Finally, after about 30 seconds, we heard his shout, and I waded into the pool.<sup>48</sup>*

*I had to remove my helmet and float on my back through the hole. There was solid rock a few inches above my head and water lapping over my face. I began to feel uneasy.*

*After about twenty feet (that felt like a mile), the cave roof gradually got closer to my face until a gap of an inch was left.*

*I did what I was told. I took a breath, pulled an arm out in front of me and submerged under the water. Propelling myself through the water with my arm, I felt the Guides*

48 Cavers refer to these as sump holes.

*hand after a short while. He gripped my arm and pulled me through the rest of the tunnel back to the air.*

*My cheery disposition was gone, replaced by a suffocating sense of panic.*

*Once everyone was through, we got ready to move on. I told the guide I didn't feel like I could continue.*

*He looked at me and said, "Well, Dave, there are only two options from this point. We can either go back the way we came or continue to the end."*

*There were more sumps and brutal squeezes until déjà vu struck again.*

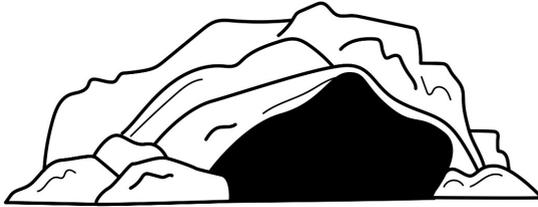
*We came to another cavern with no visible exit and a pool of water. But, this time, there was a rope disappearing into the water, like a muddy snake sliding back into its watery lair.*

*The guide, sensing my anxiety, explained that this was the last obstacle. The guide briefed us and told me to go first before disappearing underwater.*

*Trembling, I clutched the rope, took a breath and plunged under the water. After just a few seconds, I emerged to see the guide's smiling face, saying, "That's it, Dave, no more water."*

*As we walked across the field back to the van, it was beginning to get dark. I was experiencing a heady cocktail of fear and achievement.*

*Halfway across the field, the guide paused, turned to us, and said, "Right below you here, about 150 metres down is sump three."*



*“Procrastination is like a credit card. Lots of fun until the bill arrives.” – Christopher Parker*

When we pursue any meaningful outcome, we will need to make decisions and take actions that we find difficult or unpleasant to get done. But, unfortunately, the tendency at this point can be to delay or defer; to procrastinate.

Procrastination is when we allow thought to interrupt a clean action.

This is always a wrong choice when it comes to critical activities on the path of least resistance. It does not make the action any easier or palatable.

*In the book ‘Eat that Frog’, Brian Tracy poses a question... Imagine we are handed a live frog that we must eat by the end of the day. When is the best time to eat the frog?*

*The answer is straight away. Once it is done, we don’t have to spend all day staring at it, thinking about what we have to do.*

*Not only that, but we also get an energy boost, knowing we’ve finished the most challenging task.*

We choose procrastination when we think activity has the potential for failure, social rejection or reduced status

We enter a procrastination loop when we decide to wait for a better moment (or mind state) to complete difficult

tasks. So the frog continues to occupy space in our heads while we dither and try to find ways to make the activity more palatable.

Discomfort will always attend some activities.

Sometimes we can overcome procrastination by thinking about how we will feel AFTER the task is complete, instead of trying to feel good before we start.

Difficult actions, conversations and decisions that remain unresolved go into our mental bag. Over time this bag gets heavy, and life begins to feel like we are wading through treacle.

Our timescales start to slip, challenges go unresolved, and we miss out on opportunities.

Ultimately, the bag can get so heavy it affects our sense of wellbeing and our health.

When we deal with whatever needs doing straight away, we can travel light. It's faster and more fun with an empty bag.

To be **responsABLE** is to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done without hesitation, deviation or repetition.

So, when we are wading through turds, all we need to do is hold our noses and move fast.

Ultimately, we cannot escape that which we have not confronted or dealt with. We cannot outrun what is in our own mind.