

Do you live 'Life by Default?'

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ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE is not a one-time event. It is a continuous lifelong effort with periodic moves to the next level for those who keep focused.

What about those who don't focus and don't even try to move to a better level? Well, life will move them, but normally to places they don't want to be. I call this the "life-by-default" plan. Sadly, far too many people let this happen to them and they wonder why they are so bored or unhappy.

Now at times life will reach out and destabilize you when you are not expecting it. A major oil company laid me off, just like many people, early in my career. I had worked at this company for 5 years. I knew it was a great company and believed that I would spend my entire career working for this company. But the price of oil fell too low and they had to make some hard decisions. Many of us engineers lost our jobs. I was suddenly destabilized with no plan for moving to the next level. So I started planning quickly. I was learning and readjusting on the fly. It took me two experimental jobs and almost two years to finally get to the next level. I landed in another state working for a major chemical company where my skills were really put to use. When you have the rug jerked out from under you, you learn some tough lessons. It taught me to always have at least a rough draft of a plan in place. Now, I keep a backup plan in place. You never know when you might need it.

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Sadly, I watched one of my neighbors lose his job. So he started looking for a job in the same field (*highly specialized*) while spending all the family savings. He had no back-up plan to reinvent himself and he never found another job in his narrow field. Ultimately, they had to sell their dream house and move to another neighborhood. Always have a backup plan.

WARNING: When you live at any level in life for a while it is somewhat stable. Changing levels is destabilizing and chaotic – the very reason so many people will not seek the next level.

As you probably already know, people resist changes. Especially, when a company announces some major change initiative. I could write an entire book about why, but basically, it's our survival instinct. There is a lot of comfort in the old level of living and working. You know you can do the old. The new level is new and unproven to you. It's

only natural to have built in doubts about really being able to function at the new level. The resistance to change is the same for businesses as it is for the individual. Even though we feel it can lead us at a better level, we resist.

Think about this. Steel is a very useful product. But to get it, you must take the stable iron ore and destabilize it with lots of energy, then let it cool and re-stabilize at a whole new refined level. Remember, you can't get to second base with one foot still on first. You have to let go and focus on arriving at the next level - **Adventure is risky; security is boring.**