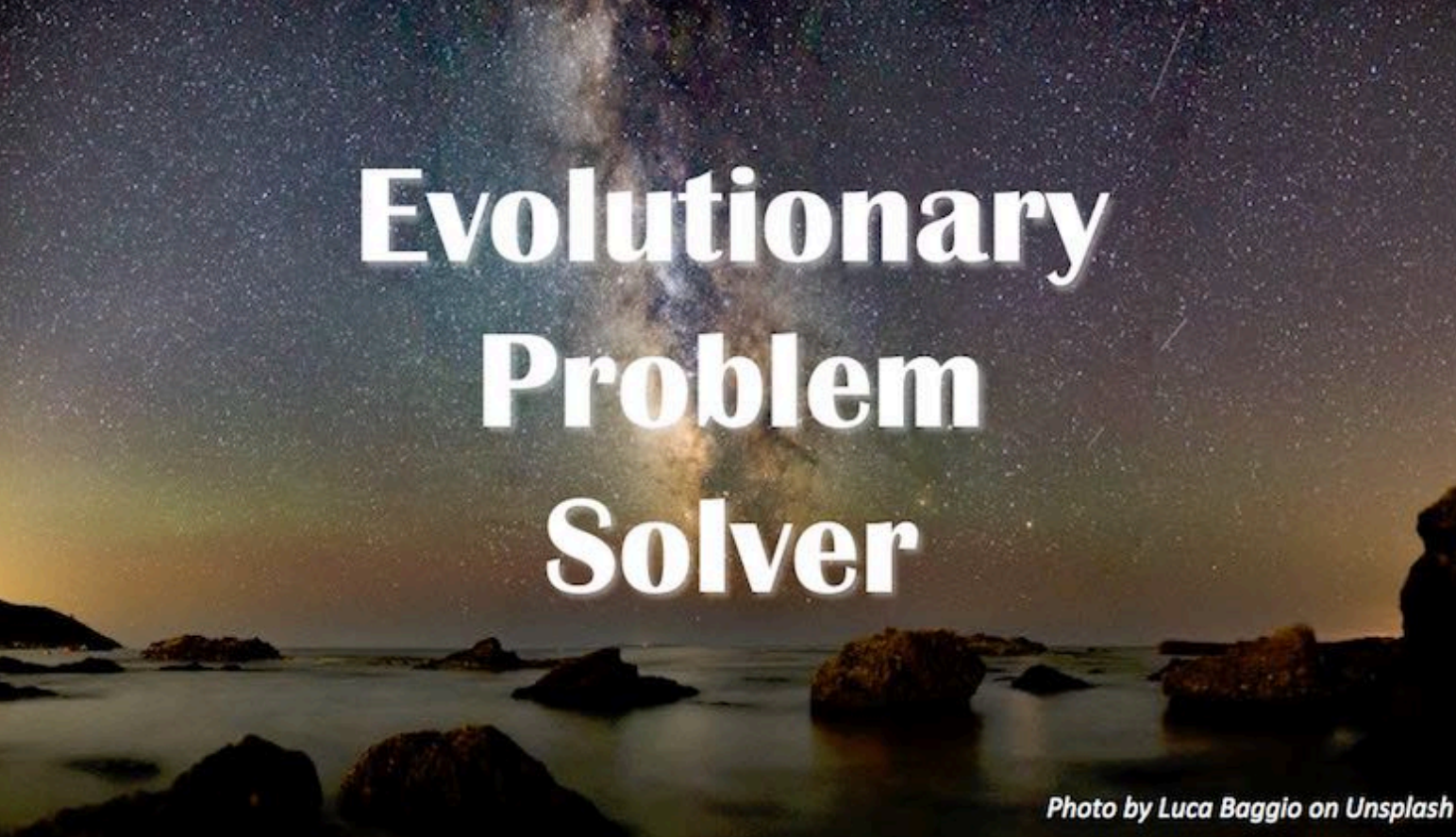


michael h hallett

HOW TO **THRIVE** DURING
CLIMATE CHANGE



**Evolutionary
Problem
Solver**

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Evolution has been solving
problems for billions of
years. Here's how.

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Evolutionary Problem Solver



“Problems cannot be solved with the same level of thinking that created them.”

— Albert Einstein



Introduction

We all have problems.

Our problems seem unique, never-ending, insurmountable—as if Life had deliberately singled us out for special treatment.

In a way, it has.

Because that’s all Life is—problem-solving.

Life is either moving forwards—evolving—or falling into stagnancy and decay.

Adaptability

Imagine if the first single-celled organisms, like bacteria, hadn’t evolved. What if they had just fed and reproduced endlessly? Evolution would’ve stopped right there.

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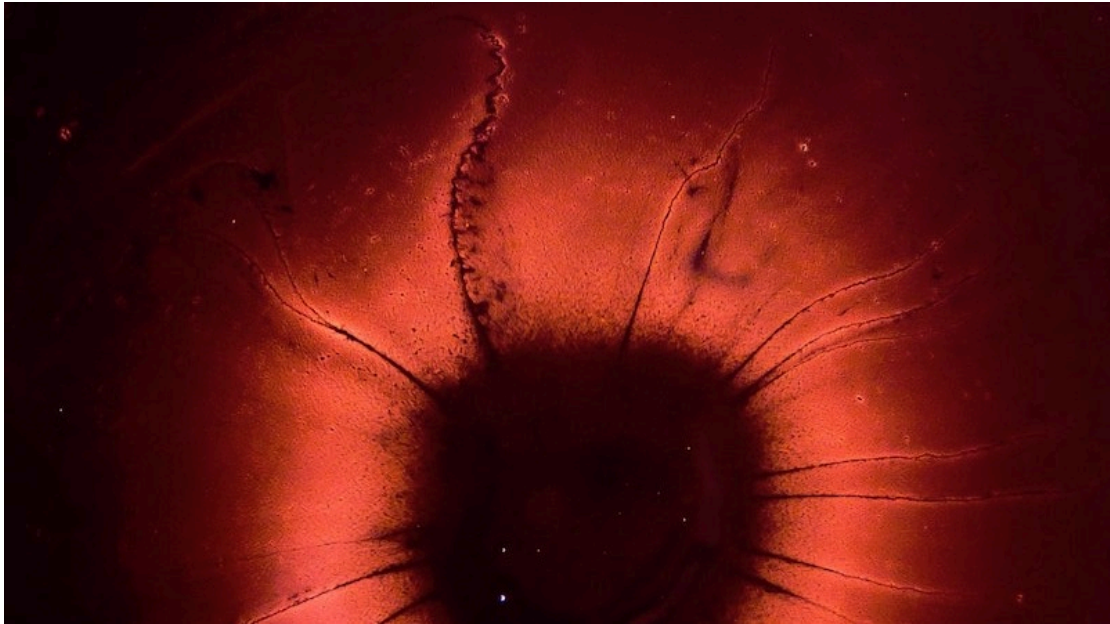


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Instead, oxygen-generating organisms appeared, leading to photosynthesis and the development of multi-celled beings—like us.

The history of evolution suggests that all life possesses this same urge for development, for increased adaptability.

In the same way, the problems in our lives pressure us into developing and adapting. That same urge to evolve that has taken us from bacteria to human beings is alive and kicking inside each and every one of us.

You can consciously harness its power.

Evolution has been solving problems for billions of years—and here's how.

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The way

There's a saying that "What is in the way *is* the way." In other words, the obstacle in your path is the route to your greatest progress.

"The Way is really rather exasperating."

— R H Blyth



Another way of phrasing this, which seems equally true, is that "What you most desire lies beyond what you most fear."

Either way, these truisms reveal that our lives continually crash us headlong into our fears.

Therefore we must stop thinking that if we could only fix the one problem in front of us life will be problem-free. It won't—because a life that's problem-free is a life falling into stagnation and decline.

We need to reorient our thinking.

Your purpose as a living being is to evolve. You've been given Life to see if you can solve problems. You've not been given Life to seek a life without challenges.

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Like the unfurling mathematical precision of the Fibonacci sequence, the difficulties you face are your evolutionary stair-steps. They are the reason you're alive.



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Evolution is literally challenging you to see whether your DNA is worth persevering with.

That's why every problem you resolve seems to lead to an even deeper, more intractable, more challenging problem.

That's how Evolution rewards us.

Inspired by Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, philosopher Herbert Spencer coined the phrase "The survival of the fittest" in 1864.

That describes the *outcome*, not the process.

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Principles

To harness the power of this process you only need to understand a few basic principles.

1. Our lives are constant feedback loops

Everything in your life is communication. You are constantly receiving messages about how your life is working—and how it isn't.

We like positive feedback. When things are working, we feel good.

When things aren't working, not so much. We live in a society that has conditioned us to believe problems are pesky things to be side-stepped by any possible means.

When we don't feel good we often resort to disempowered behaviour. We blame others. We become workaholics or turn to shopping, alcohol, food, social media—anything that distracts us from solving the problem.

I call these 'anaesthetics'. What we're trying to do is dumb down the negative messages from our feedback loop in the hope that eventually they'll go away.

They won't. In fact, they will get louder.

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Evolution will increase the volume as much as it takes until we pay attention. It pays to lay off the anaesthetics, tune in to your feelings, and notice where life is out of alignment.

So you can tell what ‘assignments’ Evolution has given you by the subtle (or not-so-subtle) feedback you’re receiving.

This feedback loop allows you to recognize problems *and* to know when they’re fixed.

2. Problems cannot be solved at the level they were created

We have Einstein to thank for this insight.

What it means is, if the ‘current you’ could fix this problem, you would’ve by now. You are stuck—and the only solution is to evolve.

This is Evolution’s great sleight-of-hand to keep us all moving forwards. Because...

3. The solution exists at the next level

It’s like trying to solve a 6th grade maths puzzle when you’re in 5th grade. It seems impossible. It’s not. It’s invisible—until you undergo the necessary growth.

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Or it's like a wiring circuit with positive and negative current. You're feeling the negative current—negative feedback, i.e. pain—but not the positive current. When you evolve to the next level the circuit comes into balance.

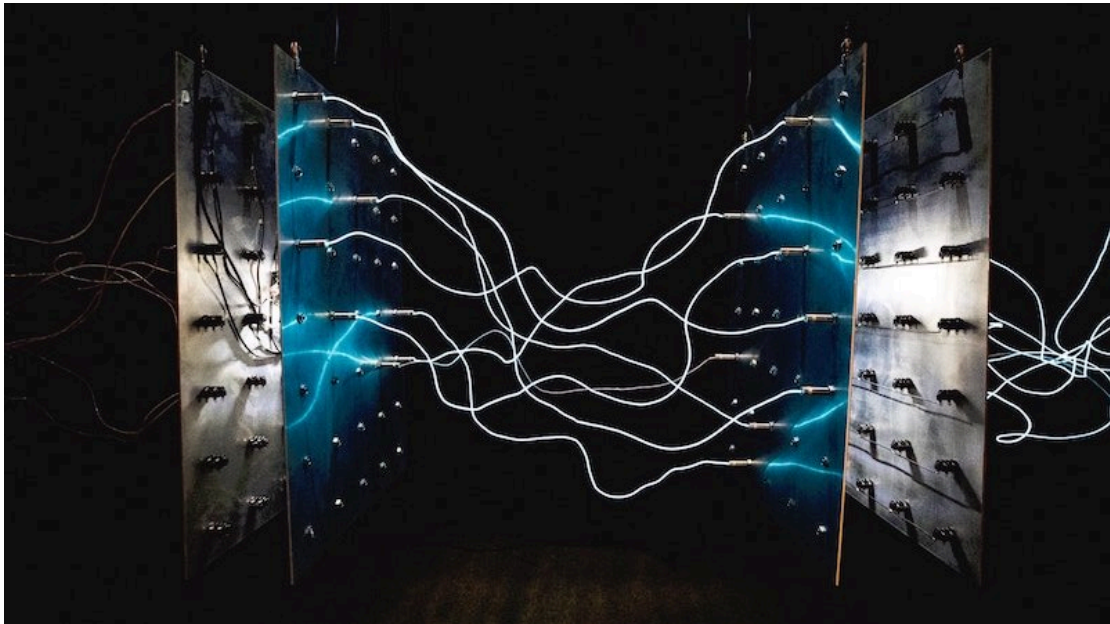


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4. The next level is outside your comfort zone

What's the dividing line between your current level and the next? It's your comfort zone.

You're comfortable solving the problem of $2 + 2 = 4$. So comfortable you don't even see it as a problem. Problems are those things that you're not currently able to solve.

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You can't solve them because they're outside the scope of what you've mastered in life so far. The very term 'comfort zone' implies that getting to the next level involves discomfort.



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This is where people get stuck. They need to do something new, something different—but the dread of going outside their comfort zone is paralyzing.

5. Your comfort zone is defined by fear

More specifically, the fear of unpredictability.

We have been conditioned to believe in linear planning, where predictable outcomes occur as a result of step-by-step processes.

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We go to school, get a degree, build a career, find a partner—a paint-by-numbers template that's supposed to result in a 'good life'.

We settle into comfortable little zones where we unconsciously restrict ourselves to actions whose outcomes are predictable.

Problems bring unpredictability. Because of Einstein's dictum that problems cannot be solved at the level they were created, there is no predictable solution to them.

Our fear of unpredictability blinds us to the solutions. And so we get stuck in pain.

“Change happens when the pain of holding on becomes greater than the fear of letting go.”

— Spencer Johnson

6. Evolution is unpredictable

Evolution doesn't work with linear planning.

Some of the greatest leaps in Evolution—like sexual reproduction—seem to have come out of nowhere.

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By limiting ourselves to our comfort zones, we shut out Evolution's ability to use chaos and unpredictability to bring sudden shifts into our lives.

Evolution will accept a 99% casualty rate—as long as some DNA, somewhere, is resilient enough to adapt and evolve.

Let go. Make the leap to the next level.



Process

Applying this process is simple.

Remember—it's non-linear, which means it's non-logical. You have to override the impulse to know the outcome ahead of time.

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1. Disconnect from the negative current

Right now, you're experiencing the negative side of your 'problem circuit'. How do you feel? Negative: stuck, stressed, in pain.

Recognize that you're stuck in a negative loop—and that the positive loop exists. Take some time to disconnect from your negative perception of the problem.

Stop lamenting that you have this problem or that others seem to lead blessed lives. Even if others have caused your problem, blame serves no evolutionary purpose.

Breathe and let go.

2. Connect to the positive current

You don't have a problem. You have a gilt-edged invitation to evolve. To accept it, you must show up at the cutting edge of life where all evolution happens.

"Sometimes the bravest and most important thing you can do is just show up."

— Brené Brown



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Showing up means body, mind and soul. Ground yourself in your physicality—your body is where your life happens.

Connect to the positive current by being positive. Take responsibility for solving the problem. Commit to solving it. Believe in your capacity to solve it.

3. Intend to take the next step

You don't need to know what it is. You can't know what it is—for the simple reason that it doesn't exist yet.

But, if you intend strongly enough, it will.

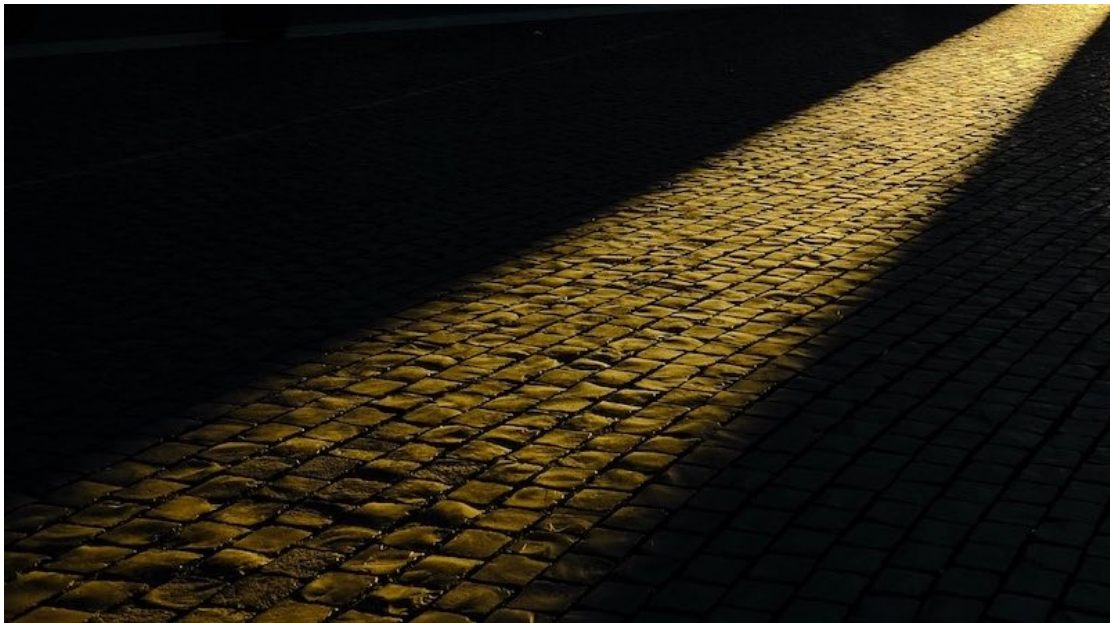


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When it appears, take it.

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It may not look like anything you expect, and if doesn't scare you, then it isn't a step to the next level.

“When you are between a rock and a hard place, the only way out is up.”

— Laura Knight-Jadczyk



With every problem you solve, your capacity to solve problems increases—and Evolution continues on its merry way through you.

So bless your obstacles, rather than cursing them, for—remember—they are the reason that you're alive.

See you at the next level,

Michael

