



CMMI Survival: Principles to Adhere to on Your CMMI Journey

An excerpt from *CMMI Survival Guide: Just Enough Process Improvement*, Addison-Wesley, Oct 2006.

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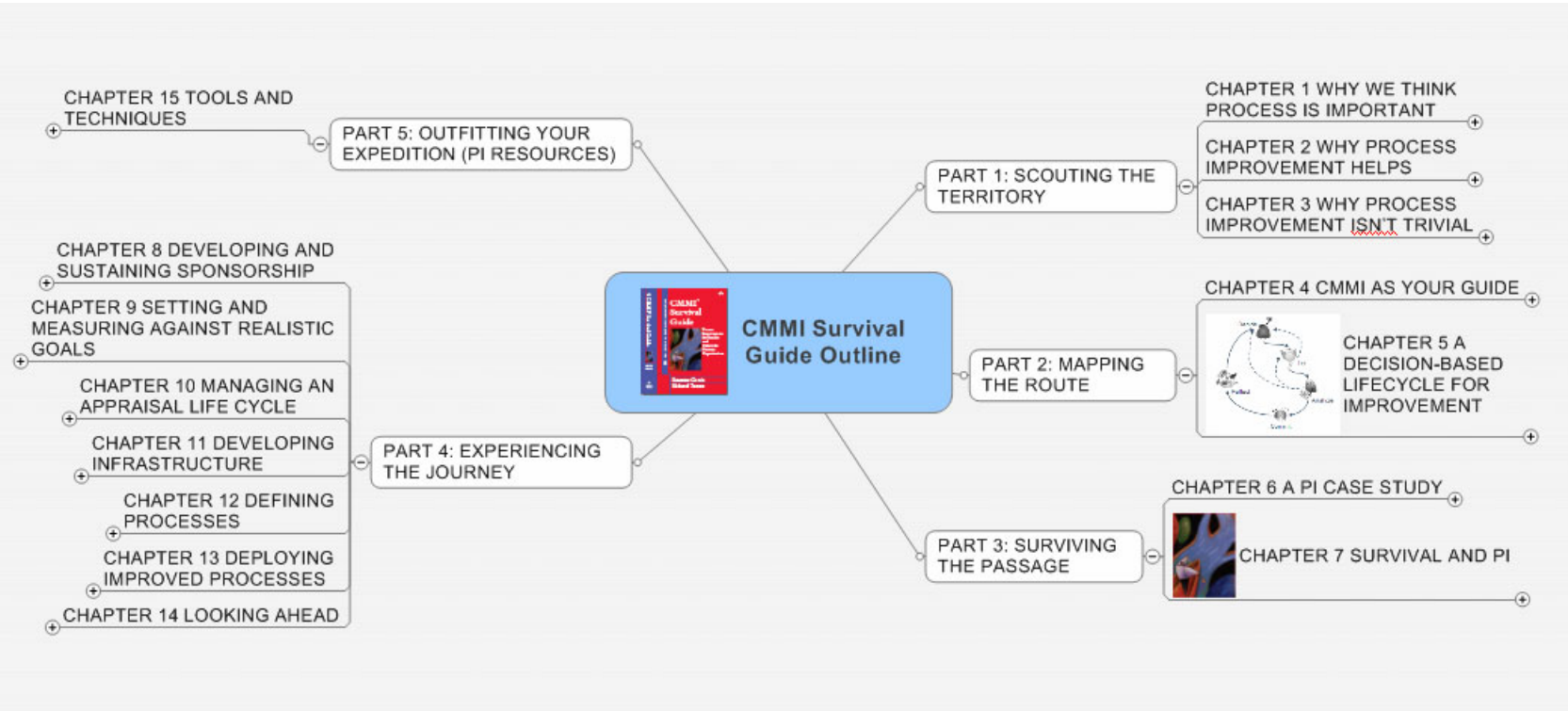
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Our Context of SURVIVAL



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Success Begins with SURVIVAL

S ize up the situation

U ndue haste makes waste

R emember where you are

V anquish fear and panic

I mprovise

V alue living

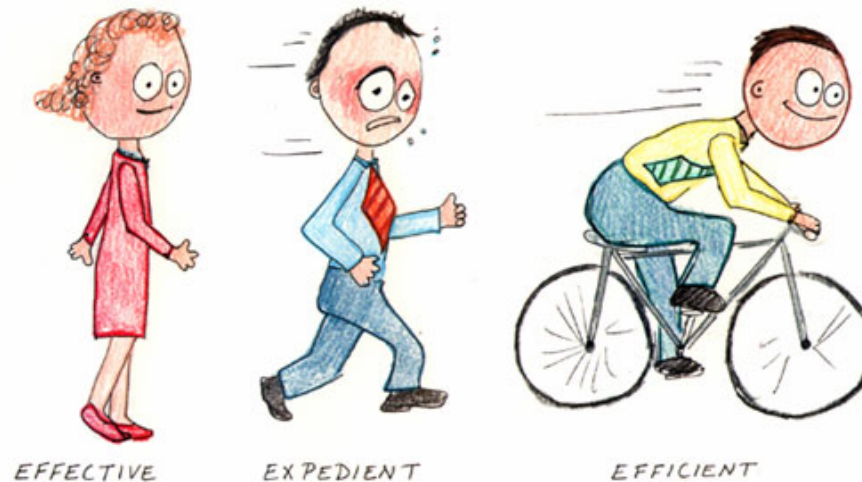
A ct like the natives

L ive by your wits, learn basic skills

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SURVIVAL: A Word of Caution



SURVIVAL = Expediency

SURVIVAL <> Effectiveness

SURVIVAL <> Efficiency

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Size up the Situation

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“Size up your environment, physical condition, and equipment

- environment -- learn the rhythms of the area you are in
- personal condition--take stock of any injuries from battle
- equipment--take stock of the condition of your weapons”

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Applying “Size Up ...”

How might this apply to process improvement?

- expand notion of environment:
 - the environment you need to analyze is political and social, not just physical
- expand notion of personal condition:
 - your personal condition isn’t just physical--your level of affect from change stress is an important part of your personal condition
- expand notion of equipment:
 - your equipment--your weapons -- in this case include your knowledge, skills, network of support, sponsorship

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Undue Haste Makes Waste

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“You may make a wrong move when you react quickly without thinking or planning, and that move may result in your capture or death. Don’t move just for the sake of taking action. Consider all aspects of your situation (size up your situation) before you make a decision and a move. If you act in haste, you may forget or lose some of your equipment, and you may become disoriented so that you don’t know which way to go. Plan your moves so that you are prepared to move out quickly without endangering yourself if the enemy is near you.”

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Applying “Undue Haste ...”

One of the most common pitfalls for change efforts is charging ahead with change teams before an overall commitment for the effort has been made by the relevant management team

Treating organizational change as a “project” with the relevant product development standards being applied is a way to “slow down” moving into unknown territory and start understanding the risks that are likely to occur

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Remember Where You Are

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“Pay close attention to where you are and to where you are going. Do not rely on others present to keep track of the route. Constantly orient yourself. You should always try to determine, as a minimum, how your location relates to:

- The location of enemy units and controlled areas.
- The location of friendly units and controlled areas.
- The location of local water sources (this is especially important in the desert).
- Areas that will provide good cover and concealment.”

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Applying “Remember ...”

This particular passage is almost immediately applicable verbatim:

- “Pay close attention to where you are and to where you are going. *(understand your plan and your status)*
- Do not rely on others present to keep track of the route *(take responsibility for tracking the things you’re responsible for)*
- Constantly orient yourself. You should always try to determine, as a minimum, how your location relates to:
 - The location of enemy units and controlled areas *(groups, people, organizations who may be trying to sabotage the change efforts).*
 - The location of friendly units and controlled areas *(supports, champions of the change effort, especially at the sponsor level).*

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Vanquish Fear & Panic

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“The greatest enemies in a combat survival/evasion situation are fear and panic. If uncontrolled, they can destroy your ability to make an intelligent decision. They may cause you to react to your feelings and imagination rather than to your situation. They can drain your energy and thereby cause other negative emotions. Previous survival/evasion training and self-confidence will enable you to vanquish fear and panic.”

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Applying “Vanquish Fear ...”

Fear and panic...

- “may cause you to react to your feelings and imagination rather than to your situation. They can drain your energy and thereby cause other negative emotions.

Often we react to imagined viewpoints on the change rather than gathering the data to understand the real situation

“Previous survival/evasion training and self-confidence will enable you to vanquish fear and panic”

- Training that allows you to role play various situations you’re likely to run into as you try to implement change is extremely valuable in helping vanquish fear and panic!

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Improvise

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“This easy-to-come easy-to-replace culture of ours makes it unnecessary for us to improvise. This inexperience in improvisation can be one of the greatest enemies in a survival situation. Learn to improvise. Take a tool designed for a specific purpose and see how many other uses you can make of it.

“Learn to use natural things around you for different needs. An example is using a rock for a hammer. No matter how complete a survival kit you have with you, it will run out or wear out after awhile. But your imagination will not. Use it.”

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Applying “Improvise”

“Learn to improvise. Take a tool designed for a specific purpose and see how many other uses you can make of it.”

- the tools for change management you may wish to improvise include planning tools (adapting them for use in planning/managing your change project), TQM tools (how would you use a force field diagram to help a sponsor understand different approaches to the change initiative?), assessment tools (how about adapting your company’s “metrics dashboard” for looking at the change initiative?)
- Building this skill is EXTREMELY important to being successful in a hostile environment!

“Learn to use natural things around you for different needs. An example is using a rock for a hammer. No matter how complete a survival kit you have with you, it will run out or wear out after awhile. But your imagination will not. Use it”

- the “natural” things in an organization are the existing structures, procedures, etc that are already in place

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Value Living

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“All of us were born kicking and fighting to live. But we have become used to the soft life. We have become creatures of comfort. We dislike inconveniences and discomforts. So, what happens when we are faced with a survival situation with its stresses, inconveniences, and discomforts? This is when the will to live—placing a high value on living—is vital. The experience and knowledge you have gained through life and through your Army training have bearing on your will to live. Stubbornness, a refusal to give in to problems and obstacles that face you, will give you the mental and physical strength to endure.”

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Applying “Value Living”

This is one that’s a bit tough to interpret at first, since we don’t think of our organizational interactions as “life or death” -- but the change effort might mean the difference between retaining in-house software development capability vs outsourcing that part of a product....

“Stubbornness, a refusal to give in to problems and obstacles that face you, will give you the mental and physical strength to endure.”

- you may not need much physical strength to endure the organizational environment, but most change agents would agree you need significant mental AND emotional strength to endure!

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Act Like the Natives

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“The natives and animals of a region have adapted to their environment. To get a feel of the area, watch how the people go about their daily routine. When and what do they eat? When, where, and how do they get their food? When and where do they go for water? What time do they usually go to bed and get up? These things are important to you as an evader.”

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Applying “Act Like the Natives”

“The natives and animals of a region have adapted to their environment.

- we all adapt to the cultural environment of our organization to some extent or another....learning to identify what adaptations people need to make can often indicate areas where improvements would be welcomed!

To get a feel of the area, watch how the people go about their daily routine.”

- understand the “as is” system and how work is done in the current environment -- doesn’t need to be a lot of detail in that understanding, but enough to realize how products get from “here to there” and into their next important transformation....

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Live by Your Wits, Learn Basic Skills

The U.S. Army Survival Manual says:

“Without training in basic skills for surviving and evading on the battlefield, your chances of living through a combat survival/evasion situation are slight.

“The time to learn these basic skills is NOW—not when you are headed for or are in the battle. How you decide to equip yourself prior to deployment will impact on whether or not you survive. You need to know about the environment to which you are going, and you must practice basic skills geared to that environment. For instance, if you are going to a desert, you need to know how to get water in the desert.”

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Applying “Live by your wits, Learn basic skills”

The time to learn these basic skills is NOW—not when you are headed for or are in the battle.

- it takes time to adapt your behaviors to a hostile situation...thinking about and practicing now will make the transition easier

How you decide to equip yourself prior to deployment will impact on whether or not you survive.

- understanding the tools you know you need to be successful and being comfortable using them

You need to know about the environment to which you are going, and you must practice basic skills geared to that environment.

- the skills you need to manage change in different organizational contexts are quite different in some areas -- make sure you have the right skillset for the context!

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Summary

Devices like “SURVIVAL” provide metaphors that help you think about your process improvement effort from a different (and hopefully fun!) point of view

The US Army did it, so can you...

- A fun exercise for an EPG is to show them the Army’s SURVIVAL acronym, then work together to build your own version of what SURVIVAL means in your organization!

We hope that you enjoy, not just survive, your improvement journey!

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For more information....

The book:

CMMI Survival Guide: Just Enough Process Improvement

- Available from Amazon, Addison-Wesley, all the usual suspects....

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