

# Elijah and the Black Swans of Life

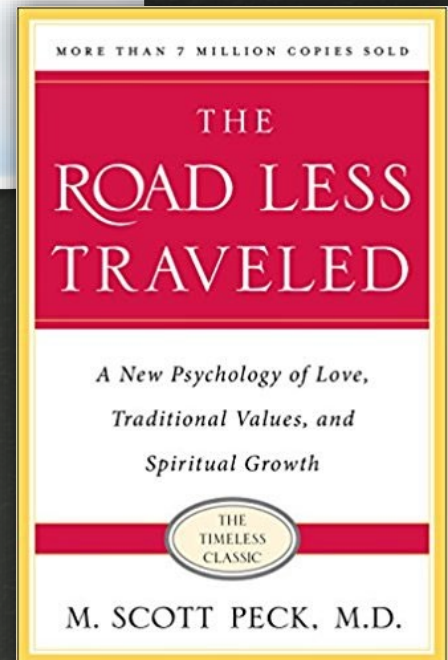


PhD OT Specialty Cohort, 19 Sept. 2019  
Delbert W Baker, PhD, Vice Chancellor  
Adventist University of Africa

# LIFE IS DIFFICULT.

This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see this truth, we transcend it. Once we truly know that life is difficult — once we truly understand and accept it — then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters.

— M. SCOTT PECK





**Life is full of problems  
and solutions. The challenges  
that we face either  
destroy us or make  
us stronger**

~ Rick Warren ~



**LET HIM WHO  
THINKS HE  
STANDS**

**TAKE HEED  
LEST HE  
FALL.**



**1 CORINTHIANS 10:12**



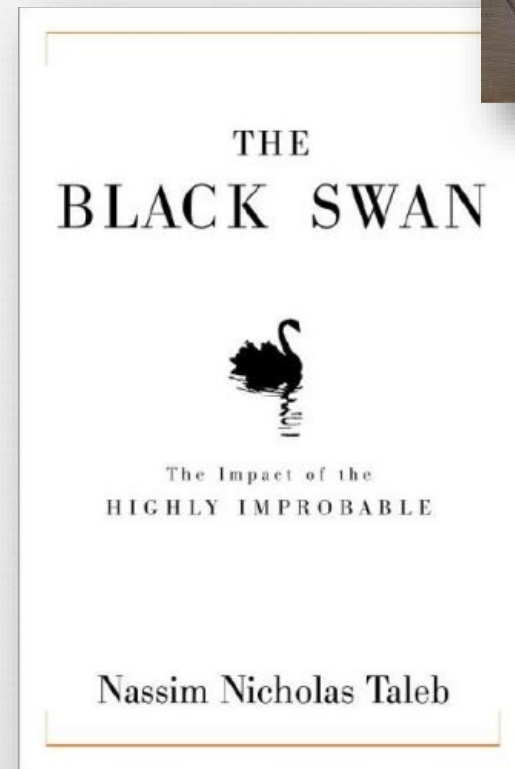
# A Helpful Concept



# Black Swan Concept



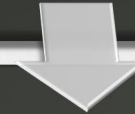
- ❧ Nicholas Taleb, 2007
- ❧ It works in all areas of life
- ❧ Understand, be forewarned



# Concept in Brief



*“All swans are white.”*



*Discovery of black swan*



*Occurrence of the impossible*





# Personal Black Swan Experience



## Black Swan Events in your life...

- ❧ You may suddenly face the loss of your health.
- ❧ You may suddenly face the loss of a job.
- ❧ You may discover your marriage is in trouble.
- ❧ You may suddenly lose a loved one.
- ❧ You may be confronted with a sin or weakness.





# Recent Phenomena

## Black Swan Events

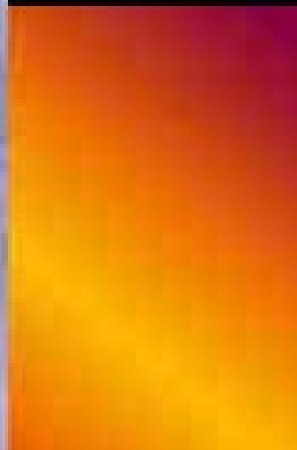
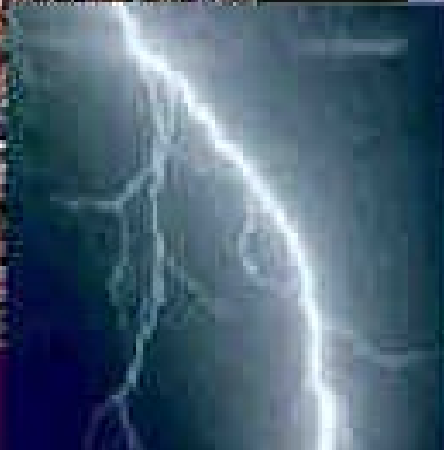
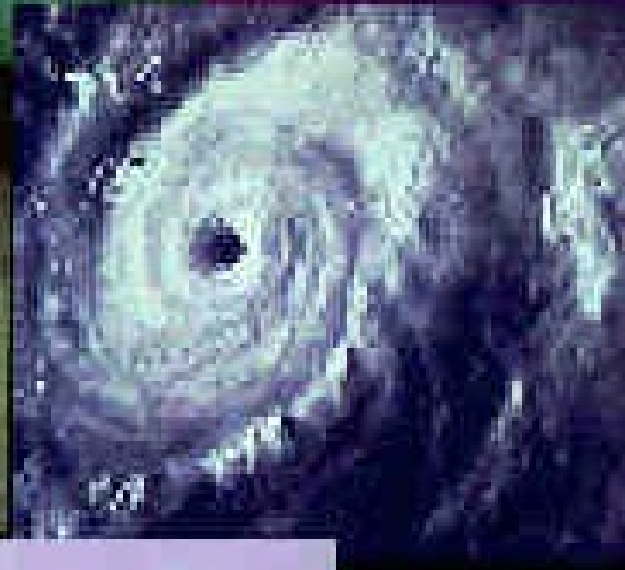


# Black Swan Events



∞ Three Characteristics:

1. Low probability (unlikely chance)
2. High impact (life changing)
3. Believed unlikely or impossible





When a Disaster occurs we can either float (if we are prepared)...



...or sink (if we failed to prepare)!

# The Elijah/ Black Swan OT Case Study



## Illustration

1 Kings 19







# Elijah Running, 1 Kings 19:1-9

<sup>1</sup> Ahab told his wife Jezebel what Elijah had done and that he had killed the prophets. <sup>2</sup> She sent a message to Elijah: “You killed my prophets. Now I’m going to kill you! I pray that the gods will punish me even more severely if I don’t do it by this time tomorrow.”

<sup>3</sup> Elijah was afraid when he got her message, and he ran to the town of Beersheba in Judah. He left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> then walked another whole day into the desert. Finally, he came to a large bush and sat down in its shade. He begged the LORD, “I’ve had enough. Just let me die! I’m no better off than my ancestors.” <sup>5</sup> Then he lay down in the shade and fell asleep.

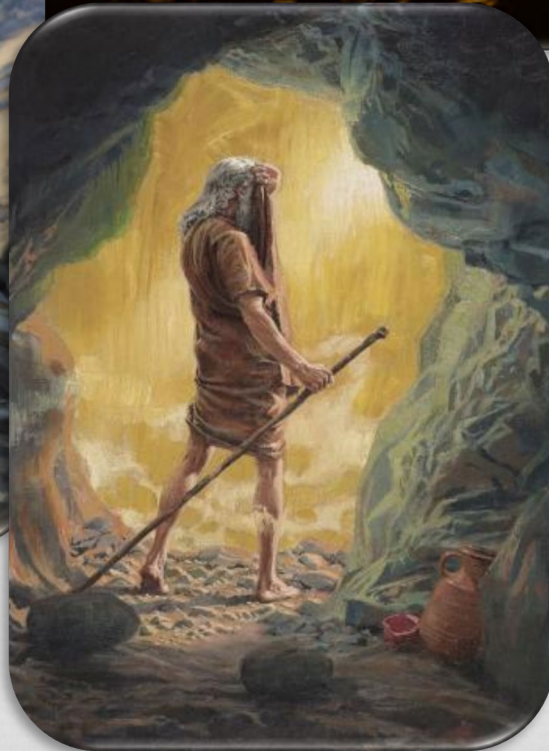
<sup>7</sup> Soon the LORD’s angel woke him again and said, “Get up and eat, or else you’ll get too tired to travel.” <sup>8</sup> So Elijah sat up and ate and drank. The food and water made him strong enough to walk forty more days. At last, he reached Mount Sinai, the mountain of God, <sup>9</sup> and he spent the night there in a cave.











# How to Cope with the Black Swans of Life



## Three Principles



# How to Deal with Black Swans?



- ❧ 1. Do the next right thing
- ❧ 2. Repeat a core truth
- ❧ 3. Surrender but don't give up



# #1 Do the Next Right Thing



- ❧ Prof John Leach, Lancaster Univ., “Debriefings of survivors show repeatedly that they possess the capacity to break down the event they are faced with into small, manageable tasks,” writes John Leach, a psychology professor at Lancaster University.
- ❧ “Each step, each chunk must be as simple as possible. ... Simple, directed action is the key to regaining normal psychological functioning.”
- ❧ Rather than “fear”, fast-forwarding our thoughts out to all the potential negative outcomes, we need to be able to break the problem down into manageable parts.
- ❧ What is the next right thing; what would wisdom say not fear?

You don't have to do

**EVERYTHING**

at once to make

---

**meaningful  
progress.**

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You just need to do  
**"the next right thing."**

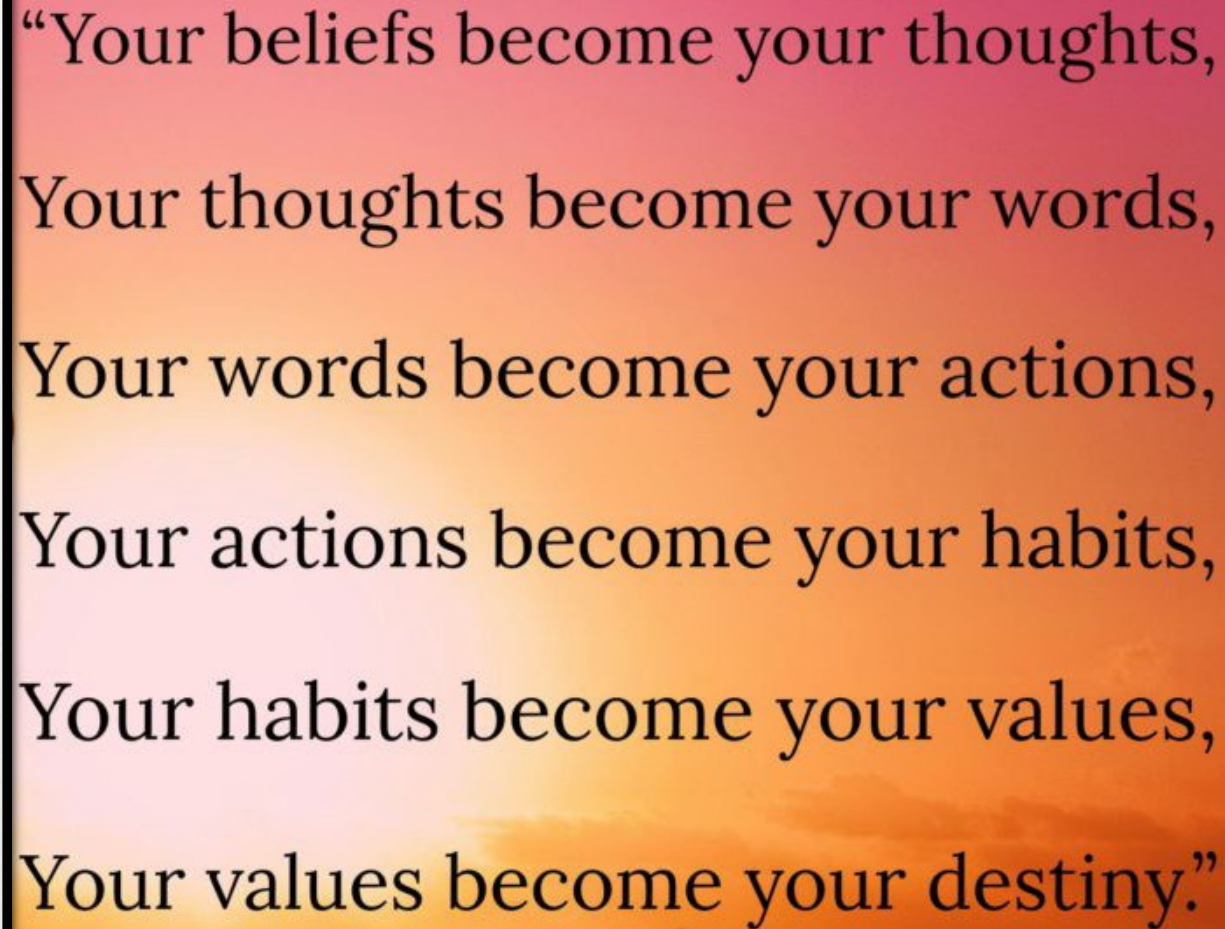
-Rachel DeMille

# #2 Repeat a Core Truth



- ❧ Steve Callahan, adrift in a raft for 76 days, just kept repeating the word survival. Over and over during the ordeal, he'd say things such as "Concentrate on now, on survival." Yossi Ghinsberg, a hiker who was lost in the Bolivian jungle for three weeks, repeatedly used the phrase man of action to motivate himself.
- ❧ A positive message can keep your spirits up and your mind focused on doing the next right thing. By contrast, a negative perspective can lead you down the road of despair and death.
  - ❧ Elijah's mantra is focused on death. (1 Kings 19:4 "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life for I am no better than my ancestors"; "I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away (vv. 10, 14).
- ❧ He is burned out, spent out and wants out. What kind of self-talk emerges naturally from you? What kind of positive mantra can you begin to develop now that will help you in the midst of crisis? (FYI, Scripture is full of them!)



The image features a sunset over the ocean, with a black border. The sky transitions from a deep orange at the horizon to a lighter pink at the top. The ocean is dark with white-capped waves. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

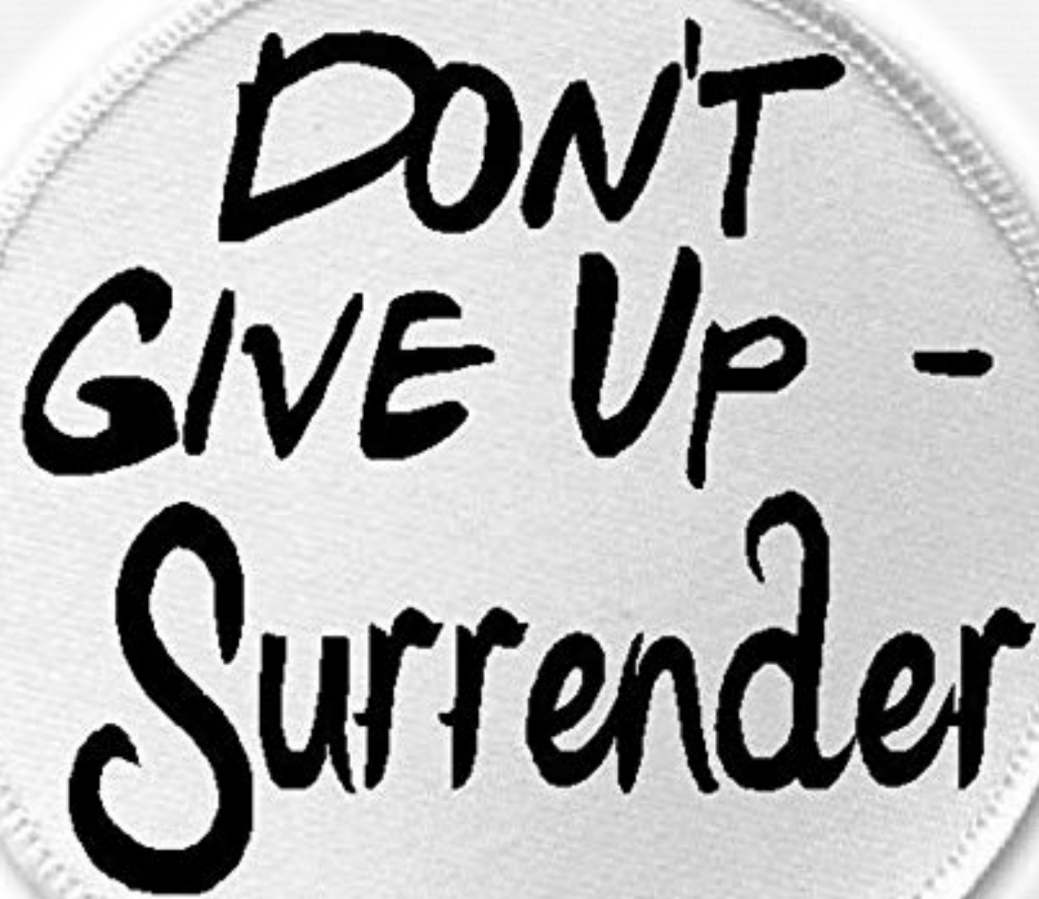
“Your beliefs become your thoughts,  
Your thoughts become your words,  
Your words become your actions,  
Your actions become your habits,  
Your habits become your values,  
Your values become your destiny.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

# #3 Surrender But Don't Give Up



- ❧ It may sound like a paradox, the concept of surrender is at the heart of survival. Fear, especially fear of death, can be a paralyzing force that can keep you from doing what's necessary to survive.
- ❧ Iraqi journalist Ahmed Abdullah speaks about the concept of surrender in the midst of years of combat experience. "If you are afraid, then you have to lock yourself inside your house." "But if you want to keep on living, then you must forget about your fears and deal with death as something that is a must, something that's going to happen anyway. Even if you don't die this way, you can die normally, naturally. ... Whatever [you] do, [you're] not going to change this."
- ❧ Once you come to terms with the possible outcomes, even the ultimate outcome of death, you are more able to keep moving toward survival. Good survivors realize that they may die, but they're going to keep going anyway.
- ❧ Braveheart: "Every man dies; not every man really lives."

A circular patch with a decorative, slightly irregular border. The text is embroidered in a bold, black, hand-drawn style. The words are arranged in three lines: 'DON'T' at the top, 'GIVE UP -' in the middle, and 'Surrender' at the bottom in a larger, more flowing script.

DON'T  
GIVE UP -  
Surrender





# Climbing Mt Kilimanjaro

## Uhuru Point, 19,340ft























Delbert W. Baker, PhD  
Vice Chancellor  
Adventist University of Africa  
Nairobi, Kenya  
BakerD@aua.ac.ke