

# Survival of the most adaptable



Most of us understand Darwinism in simplistic terms - survival of the fittest. However our interpretation of “fittest” may lead us to focus our energies in the wrong...or right direction, says TAMMY HAMAWI

**W**ith one of my four siblings being a genetic scientist, you can imagine the rich discussions that take place around the family table.

Most recently the topic of Darwin’s theory came up and a hot debate raged. At the core of that debate was how we are misinterpreting the meaning of ‘fittest’.

Most would say: “the strongest species survives”. In fact what we really need to know is: “the most adaptable species survive”.

It occurred to me at that point how valuable it is in bringing this insight regarding our own survival: physically, emotionally and socially. Mother

nature tends to be a great teacher.

The point I would like you to consider in this article maybe complex and abstract, however it is also crucial when we are faced with today’s challenges. If you look at the financial system and therefore all the subsystems that exist for it - like organizational structures and business structures - we clearly see that this phase is not simply an economic hiccup. This is a paradigm shift.

Albert Einstein said, “The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking”. Add to that our insight “the most adaptable species survive” and there lies our treasure. Solutions to most

of the problems we face today in our immediate circumstance!

Historically, when humanity was at its most inventive phase, we had a culture that celebrated the thinkers, the philosophers, the poets and artists. An example is the Renaissance period.

We are becoming more and more lazy around making space in our hectic lives for quality thinking (pondering) time.

In fact I sometimes feel the feature film *The Matrix* (1999) has the most insights for us now. Who is controlling our thoughts and actions?

Then I meet individuals and organisations that are trending against the majority. They are thriving while many others are nearly extinct.



When I work with such leaders and systems, I always find similarity between nature's process and the processes that exist in such successful individuals and organisations.

Here are two powerful insights to consider when looking at where you can gain benefit. For organizational adaptability:

### Size matters

Medium size entities adapt best in hard times. If you are too large make your changes by modeling around how Google was at the beginning of its world domination. If you are too small, think about Fonterra's roots and how it was the negotiation voice for a collective.

### Culture matters

How are you harnessing the genius-ism in the people you employ! Innovation and creativity are not simply current buzzwords. I see it time and time again; over 57 per cent of the working force is disengaged.

Change that for your own organisation by creating a culture that safely and efficiently captures the ideas and solutions that are sitting dormant in your people's mind. Make it fun and exciting. The amazing results in real financial terms will be your reward.

### For individual adaptability: Mindset matter

The more we experience life and remain open in our interpretation, the more we seek knowledge from adventure, be it travel or reading, from pushing ourselves beyond our comfort zone, from failing and allowing ourselves to learn without destructive judgment and the greater our inner resources will be to carry us through the hard times and allow us to adapt.

A healthy mind is not potluck; it is a conscious act, in the same way as cleaning our teeth is.

### Body matter

It's become obvious that knowing something does not mean it's done. Looking at how much healthier physically we are becoming, is a real "light bulb" moment. Bulimia, anorexia and obesity has touched many amongst us

including our children, their future. Our body is our temple. We have to know what makes it thrive at that optimum level for strength and adaptability. Optimum does not necessarily mean endurance and elitist.

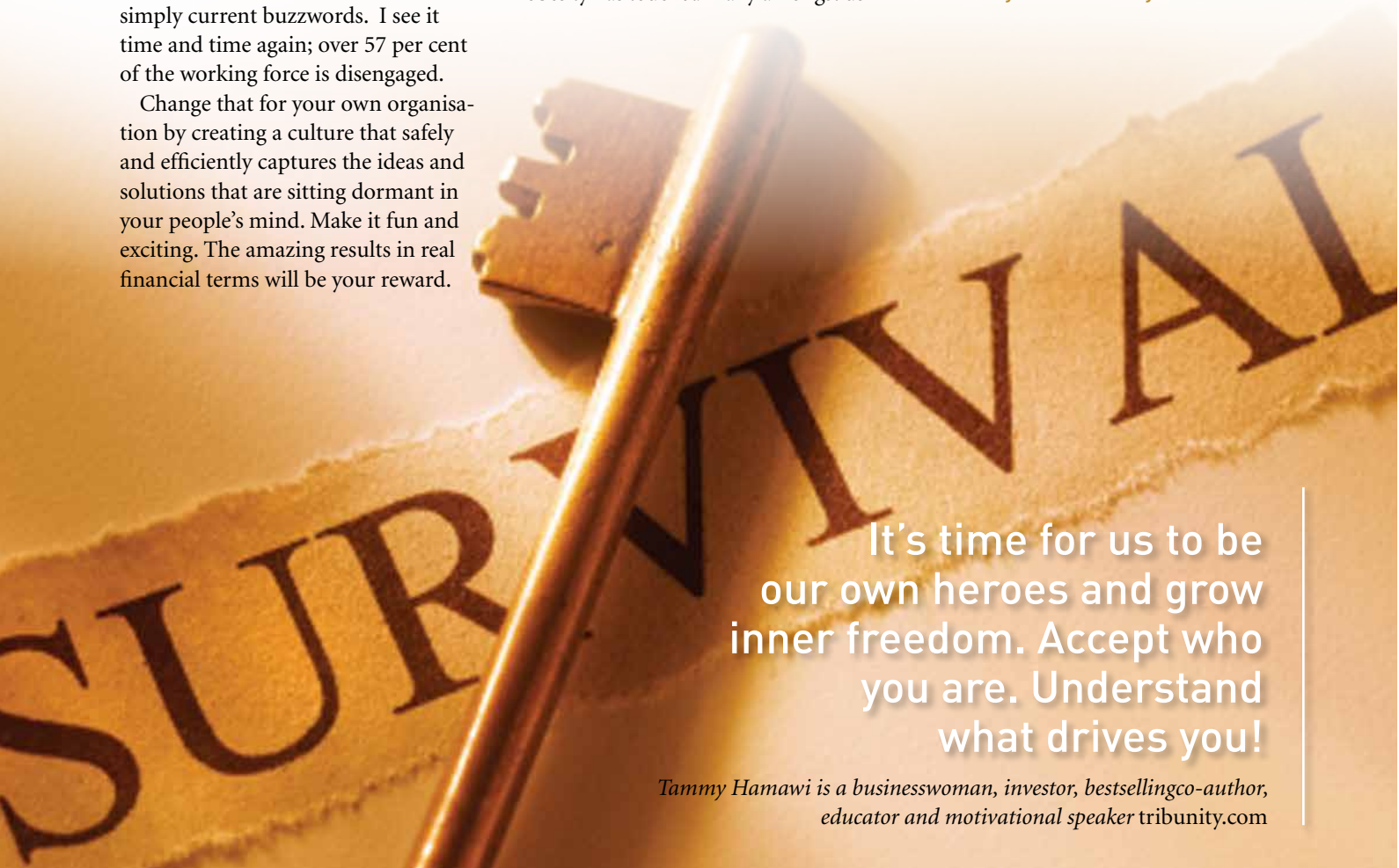
It really is an exciting time in our history. We, the hairless apes, have reached population density that has pushed us into this new shift. How we organise ourselves, or even whether further growth is sustainable, is a big question.

So break it down to the smallest of bites – let's look at ourselves as individuals and at the small tribe we exist in. Develop the right character to fit today's needs. Stay adaptable and thrive!

This is a lot to consider and how it can be applicable to you and your business.

I would love to hear your views or if you have any questions please email me at

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It's time for us to be our own heroes and grow inner freedom. Accept who you are. Understand what drives you!

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