

Surviving YOUR SERENGETI

7 Skills to Master Business and Life



A FABLE OF SELF-DISCOVERY

STEFAN SWANEPOEL

Praise for *Surviving Your Serengeti*

“A rare book in management literature. Enjoyable, informative read, with clear applications to be successful.”

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Quarterback

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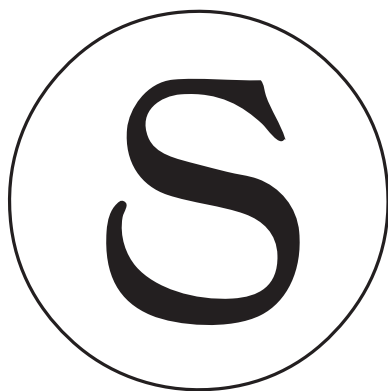
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*To everyone who lives with focus, enthusiasm,
and purpose.
Specifically to my Zachariah, my mentor
and Dad.*

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INTRODUCTION



During my formative years in Africa, I developed deep feelings for the surrounding nature and wildlife; they became a part of me, and I of them. But as I became an adult and turned my attention to the world of business, I left Africa and the Serengeti behind to immigrate to America.

It was not until a recent visit to the Serengeti Plains of East Africa that I reconnected with this unique refuge. Simply put, it is the last sanctuary for the greatest concentration of wildlife remaining on earth.

Nearly two million wildebeest, zebras, and gazelles annually run a 1,000-mile journey filled with hunger, thirst, predators, and exhaustion. The journey is so incomparably dangerous and massive that it is often rated the number one natural wonder of the world.

For me, this journey is a parable for success. It's a window into the very meaning of life that provides a simple way to understand, appreciate, and remember the basic skills that all living beings need to survive and thrive.

For most of us, the world we live in today is, of course, a far cry from the Serengeti. Television, the Internet, mobile media, fast food, and many more innovations comprise a society dominated by a demand for speed, comfort, and

Introduction

instant gratification. We continue to advance technology, only to find ourselves spinning through one “solution” after the other. We face global financial and economic challenges that stretch our resources and shape our professional and personal lives as never before.

The obstacles that those who live and die on the Serengeti face are, in many ways, no different than the challenges we face at the office or at home every day. While our trials certainly take place in a different realm, the seven skills that the animals use to overcome their harsh conditions can also help us rise above our own adversities.

It is my hope that this fable will reaffirm that:

- Everyone can survive his or her own personal Serengeti, no matter the challenges.
- No journey is ever too long.
- Nothing is impossible.

—STEFAN SWANEPOEL

Chapter I

ARRIVAL IN AFRICA



W here am I?" Sean Spencer thought as he peered out of the dirty Plexiglas window at the vast open expanse below.

The droning of the airplane's engine lulled him deeper into his thoughts. Though he knew how much this trip meant to his wife Ashley, he couldn't just forget about everything. The recent loss of her teaching job and his struggle to keep his company afloat placed their whole livelihood on the line. This trip—which she'd won as a rookie salesperson of the year—couldn't have come at a worse time.

The pilot nudged the throttle as the wheels of the small six-seat Cessna grazed the top of a large acacia tree and came to rest on a narrow dirt strip. As the propeller carved its last arc against the late afternoon sun and yellow dust settled around them, Sean wondered again where exactly they'd landed. Surely this wasn't an airport. The landing strip was hard to distinguish from the surrounding veldt. It didn't even have a building—just one old weather-beaten wind sock.

He sat back and took in the scenery around them as the heat rose inside the plane. There wasn't much to see except a single Land Rover parked a short distance away at the edge of the clearing. He smiled to himself as he looked at Ashley sitting in the seat next to the pilot.

Like a little kid on a new adventure, she absorbed every detail with wonder on her face—and she wasn't going to waste a minute of it.

As he climbed out of the side door and rubbed his stiff back, he instinctively took out his BlackBerry and squinted at the screen in the glaring afternoon sun. He sighed and shrugged his shoulders—no bars. This was going to be a long three days without communication. His company's recent proposal for a large solar generating system in California's central valley was under review, and he was concerned they would be underbid again. Without this business, he was worried that he'd have to make further cutbacks.

“Sean!” Ashley shouted. She was already standing next to the driver of the Land Rover, waving him over.

As he approached the vehicle, a young man dressed in green khaki shorts extended his hand. “Greetings Mr. Spencer; welcome to the Serengeti. I'm Raymond. I'll be your guide for the next couple of days. Help yourself to a cold drink from the icebox while I take care of your luggage,” he yelled over his shoulder, already on his way to the plane.

Ashley noted the distant look on Sean's face. “Isn't this awesome? We're in Africa! Can you believe it? Have you