

The 3rd Alternative

Life's Most Difficult Problems

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The 3rd Alternative SURVEY

BACKGROUND

Ever since the 1930s when George Gallup developed the “most important problem” (MIP) poll, scores of polling agencies, research centers, media outlets, and other organizations have asked “MIP” questions of literally hundreds of thousands if not millions of respondents. The surveys are most often conducted by such reputable organizations as the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, and by private organizations such as Roper, Harris, and the Gallup organization. Today, “Most Important Problem” or “MIP” polls are a staple of the polling industry. The results of such polls provide good fodder for television news broadcasters, for would-be politicians on the stump, and for humanitarian and other non-profit organizations seeking funding or justification for their programs. Here is an example of a recent CBS MIP poll soliciting opinions from residents in the USA:

CBS News Poll. Feb. 11-14, 2011. N=1,031 adults nationwide. Margin of error \pm 3.	
“What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?”	
	%
Economy and jobs	48
Budget deficit/National debt	7
Health care	6
War/Iraq/Afghanistan	4
Education	3
Big government/Bureaucracy	3
Crime	2
Misc. social issues	2
Other	21
Unsure	4

This particular poll was open-ended; that is, it allowed respondents to say whatever they wanted, and their answers were subsequently categorized. Another approach to MIP surveys is to provide a number of likely options and then ask respondents to select from among them. The following Bloomberg poll (also of the USA) illustrates this type:

¹ <http://www.pollingreport.com/prioriti.htm>

² Ibid.

Bloomberg National Poll conducted by Selzer & Company. March 4-7, 2011. N=1,001 adults nationwide. Margin of error \pm 3.1.

“Which of the following do you see as the most important issue facing the country right now? Immigration. Health care. The federal deficit and government spending. The war in Afghanistan. Unemployment and jobs.” Options rotated

	3/11	12/10
	%	%
Unemployment and jobs	43	50
Federal deficit and spending	29	25
Health care	12	9
War/Iraq/Afghanistan	7	7
Immigration	3	5
Other (vol.)	4	1
Unsure	2	3
Unsure	4	

Like the CBS and Bloomberg polls, most “MIP” surveys are administered at a national level. In the United States, this means that a typical representative sample of the population (usually determined by percentage of men/women; percentage old/young; percentage conservative/liberal, etc.) would require from 1000 to 1300 or so respondents. Gathering responses from a global population has historically been more difficult, but online and telephone sampling has made the global population more accessible. For example, GlobeScan administers a global poll annually for the BBC World Service. In the 2010 poll, the nearly 25,000 respondents, contacted by telephone, came from 23 countries. Poverty was rated as the most serious issue by ten of the countries in the study, while respondents in five countries said the rising cost of food and energy was the most serious problem.

Notice that the wording of the MIP questions varies somewhat; sometimes it is simply, “the most serious problem,” other times it is phrased as “most important (or serious) issue,” and so on. We know that wording changes can and does affect how respondents answer, but in these instances, we think the differences are minor, and we have modified the traditional MIP question somewhat in our survey below.

THE MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGE **SURVEY DETAILS**

FranklinCovey, with consulting and training activities in 123 countries, utilized its Center for Advanced Research to conduct a global MIP survey in early 2011. The survey was administered online in English during the months of February and March, 2011 to all email addresses in FranklinCovey's database of Facebook, Twitter, and stphen.r.covey.com community participants, as well as to those people worldwide who had participated in any of FranklinCovey's public workshops on the 7 Habits, time management, or other training courses. These databases consisted, literally, of hundreds of thousands of people. No attempt was made to weight answers or use other techniques to create a representative sample of respondents from any particular country or the world overall. Rather, the survey was sent only to those people who already had some kind of connection with FranklinCovey, most often through attending an open-to-the public training workshop. The thousands of employees who have participated in FranklinCovey workshops as part of their company's leadership or employee development plans were not included in the survey.

The survey panel consisted of six demographic questions (place of residence, type of organization in which the respondent worked, number of years in the workforce, position in the organization, type of industry, and educational level), and five "most serious challenge" questions, along with open-ended opportunities for respondents to explain why they had picked the choices they did. The survey asked respondents to select and rank, from a list of problems, the most serious challenges facing the world, their countries, their cities, the organizations they worked for, and their personal lives. The ultimate goal was not just to find out what people thought, but rather to link their opinions to FranklinCovey training programs that emphasize creative problem-solving deriving from synergistic thinking.

Respondents were allowed to skip questions they did not want to answer, but most respondents (5113 or about 65%) completed the entire survey. There appeared to be a logic behind those questions that were skipped; that is, many of the skipped questions were likely from people not in the workforce and therefore having no opinion about the organizational challenge question. The survey was sent out over a message from Dr. Stephen R. Covey encouraging respondents to participate. The survey took about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The data were captured and analyzed by two staff members of the Center for Advanced Research using SPSS and other statistical software. Cross tabulations were created when necessary to parse some of the objective data, and content analysis was performed on the written, open-ended responses.

WHO RESPONDED?

The 7834 respondents came from every region of the world and from a variety of organizations / industries. We asked respondents only to tell us the general region of the world in which they lived (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and other), but some people, in their personal comments, indicated which country they lived in. Thus, we know that among many others, respondents came from Canada, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and the United States. Notice that because some respondents skipped questions, the totals are not the same in every table. Because we were not attempting to create a representative sample, it did not matter that some questions were skipped.

7834 People
Responded

It is important to note again that the respondents were people who had already, in some way, made contact with FranklinCovey over the years. Responses were, of course, entirely voluntary; anyone receiving our survey request could have chosen to respond or not. Thus, again, this is not a representative sample even of FranklinCovey contacts but is best seen as random “feedback from the field.” Here then is the breakdown of the demographics of those who chose to respond:

TABLE 1 WHERE DO YOU RESIDE?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	North America	4,701	66%
4	Europe	1,125	16%
3	Asia	586	8%
2	Latin America	240	3%
5	Africa	216	3%
6	Other	229	3%
	Total	7,097	100%

TABLE 2 WHAT TYPE OF ORGANIZATION DO YOU WORK FOR?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Not-for-profit organization	1,124	15%
2	For-profit company	4,130	57%
3	Government	1,254	17%
4	Other	764	11%
	Total	7,272	100%

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TABLE 3 HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED FULL-TIME IN THE WORKFORCE?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	1-5 years	1,041	14%
4	6-10 years	800	11%
3	over 10 years	5,431	75%
	Total	7,272	100%

Thus, the modal respondent resided in North America (66% of respondents), worked for a for-profit company (57% of respondents), and had been in the workforce for over 10 years (75%). Here are the results for the other demographic questions we asked:

TABLE 4 WHAT IS YOUR POSITION AT WORK?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Executive (top management)	1,533	21%
2	Middle management	2,711	38%
3	Employee	2,268	32%
4	Other	619	9%
	Total	7,131	100%

TABLE 5 TYPE OF INDUSTRY IN WHICH YOU WORK?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Financial Services/Insurance	709	10%
2	Health/Education Services	1,744	24%
3	Manufacturing	685	10%
4	Transportation/Utilities	314	4%
5	Retail	272	4%
6	Information Services	528	7%
7	Public Administration	279	4%
8	Hopitality Industry	195	3%
9	Professional Services	1,055	15%
10	Other	1,350	19%
	Total	7,132	100%

TABLE 6 EDUCATION LEVEL

#	Answer	Response	%
1	High School	394	6%
2	Some university	1,371	19%
3	University graduate	2,925	41%
4	Advanced degree(s)	2,407	34%
	Total	7,097	100%

Thus, the modal respondent occupied a position in middle management (38%); worked for a healthcare/educational organization (24%); and was a university graduate (41%). However, the mode does not tell the whole story.

A surprisingly large percentage (21%) of top management had not graduated from college, nor had 22 percent of middle management. Also, only 43 percent of top management had received an advanced (post college) degree. Thus, nearly 60 percent of people who are running businesses at the top management level do not possess advanced degrees, and 65 percent of those running companies at the middle management level do not possess advanced degrees. We may speculate that this is one reason they made a connection with FranklinCovey, that is, because they may have felt the need for the additional support and knowledge they might have received in graduate school had they attended.

As might be expected, the fields of healthcare/education had the largest percentage of top management with advanced degrees (35%) followed by professional services (16%). On the opposite end, the hospitality industry had less than 2 percent of top management with advanced degrees, followed by retail with 2 percent and transportation with 3 percent.

As for differences in geographic regions, we found that 88 percent of respondents from Latin America were university graduates or above; 85 percent of Asian respondents were university graduates or above; and 78 percent of African respondents were university graduates or above. By contrast, only 74 percent of North American respondents and just 70 percent of European respondents were university graduates or above. These last two figures may reflect the broader penetration of the market by FranklinCovey in those regions, compared with the other regions where FranklinCovey and its relatively high sticker price may still be reaching only the upper levels of society.

These, then, are the kind of people who responded to this survey. What did they have to say about the most important problems in the world, their countries, their cities, their workplaces, and their personal lives?

21% of top managers and 22% of middle managers are not college graduates

60% of top managers do not have advanced degrees

RESULTS FOR **WORLD CHALLENGES**

We asked respondents to select and rank the **three most serious challenges facing the world**. Respondents could select from seven options. The options were: stopping war and terrorism, reducing unemployment, providing good education, eliminating poverty, maintaining law and order, managing the environment—land, water, and air, and “other.”

More people chose “stopping war and terrorism” as their most serious global challenge than they did any other option. By that we mean that more people favored that choice than any other single choice, i.e., it garnered the largest number of respondents as the modal response. We followed this modal-selection pattern for all the subsequent questions.

For their second most serious challenge, more people chose “eliminating poverty” than any other option. For their third most serious challenge, more people chose “managing the environment” than any other option. Thus, in ranked order, respondents’ most serious challenges at the global level were:

1. Stopping war and terrorism
2. Eliminating poverty
3. Managing the environment—land, water, and air

We then asked respondents to explain the reason behind their choice of the first most serious challenge in the world. Here is sample of their reasons. Note that although more people selected “stopping war and terrorism” than any other choice, many people selected other options. So, the sample comments below are related to several of the selected options:

Top world issue:
Stopping war and
terrorism

A European top manager with over 10 years’ experience in professional services said, “As long as resources are unequally divided among humans, we will have to face challenges like war, terrorism, and unemployment. Just take a look at the world today, Egypt et al. started with people no longer accepting an unequal division of resources.”

A Latin American middle manager with over 10 years’ experience in financial services wrote, “It’s very important to eliminate poverty in the world. Sometimes hunger makes you to do ugly things in order to survive.”

A European middle manager with 6-10 years’ experience in information services said, “Poverty has no place in a world with such riches. Fairer means of trade are required to lift up the poorest parts of the world. Leadership is required to recognise and act upon this.”

Analysis of the “Other” category

The “other” category was very large, with over 500 “other” responses, including such challenges as “nuclear threat,” “consumption-driven mindset,” “stopping hunger in the world,” “HIV Aids,” “non-equitable distribution of wealth,” and “stopping erosion of families.”

Because the number of responses in the open-ended “other” category was so large and diverse, we decided to perform a content analysis of the answers using SPSS content analysis software. We were able to categorize the top three responses as follows:

1. Need for more stable economies (balancing budgets, controlling costs)
2. Need for human rights and democracy
3. Stop the decline of moral values in societies worldwide

These responses do not represent the modal response of all people answering the “most serious challenge in the world” question; rather, they are a summary of the views of those respondents (only 6% of the total) who preferred to select “other” rather than use our pre-determined options.

RESULTS FOR COUNTRY CHALLENGES

We asked respondents to select and rank the **three most serious challenges in their respective countries**. Respondents had the following seven options from which to choose: stopping war and terrorism, reducing unemployment, providing good education, eliminating poverty, maintaining law and order, managing the environment—land, water, and air, and “other.”

More people chose “reducing unemployment” as their most serious country challenge than they did any other option. For their second most serious challenge, more people chose “providing good education” than any other option (although “reducing unemployment” was a close second in this category). For their third most serious country challenge, more people chose “managing the environment” than any other option (although “providing good education” was a close second in this category). Thus, in ranked order, respondents’ most serious perceived challenges at the country level were:

1. Reducing unemployment
2. Providing good education
3. Managing the environment

We then asked respondents to explain the reason behind their choice of the first most serious challenge in their respective countries. Here is sample of their reasons. Note that although more people selected “reducing unemployment” than any other choice, many people selected other options. So, the sample comments below are related to several of the selected options:

Top country issue: Reducing unemployment

An Asian middle manager with over 10 years’ experience in a for-profit professional services company said: Our country belongs to one of the poorest in Asia. This is the battle cry among [us] where the majority of our population lives in poverty classes. There is a lack of employment, poor education, infrastructure facilities are hardly available, huge debt, poor governance, and corruption is rampant.

A North American employee with over 10 years’ experience in the workforce explained: We have traded what is best for our children for the interest of what is best for adults. When children are failing in schools they are just left behind rather than being given tutoring or other alternatives. When the teachers have worked their 7 or 8 hours they feel their day is over. It shouldn’t work that way.

A European middle manager with over 10 years experience in a for-profit manufacturing company says, “Because of the economic crisis, unemployment has increased and keeps increasing every month. Our country’s loans have to be paid back in a few years, but with people losing their jobs, then both the taxes and the country’s income will be reduced, and we will not be able to repay the loans.”

A Latin American middle manager with over 10 years’ experience in financial services wrote: This is a very important problem because we need to provide safety for locals and tourism. We live from tourism here.

Analysis of the “Other” category

Once again, the “other” category was very large, with over 1200 respondents choosing such varied “most serious challenges” for their countries as, “maintaining freedom of speech, especially on the Internet,” “decreasing if not eradicating corruption in the government,” “rogue government officials,” “aging of the population,” and “tackling social exclusion.”

Because the number of responses in the open-ended “other” category was so large and diverse, we decided to perform a content analysis of the answers using SPSS content analysis software. We were able to categorize the top three responses as follows:

1. Reduction in government debt / controlling costs
2. Need for better, affordable healthcare
3. Corruption in government

These responses do not represent the modal response of all people answering the “most serious challenge in your country” question; rather, they are a summary of the views of those respondents (just 15% of the total) who preferred to select “other” rather than use our pre-determined options.

RESULTS FOR CITY CHALLENGES

We asked respondents to select and rank the **three most serious challenges in their cities**. The seven options were: There is not a good, clean water supply for the whole city; rents and house prices are too high; my city is not safe because there is so much crime; there are too many people out of work; people of different cultures and races do not mix well in this city; my city is heavily polluted; and “other.”

More people chose “too many people out of work” as their most serious city challenge than they did any other single option. For their second most serious challenge, more people chose “too many people out of work” than any other single option (followed closely by “rents and housing prices are too high”).

For their third most serious city challenge, more people chose “rents and house prices are too high” (followed closely by “my city is not safe because there is so much crime”) than any other single option. Thus, in ranked order, respondents’ most serious perceived challenges at the city level were:

1. Too many people out of work
2. Rents and house prices are too high
3. City is heavily polluted

We then asked respondents to explain the reason behind their choice of the first most serious challenge in their respective cities. Here is sample of their reasons. Note that although more people selected “too many people out of work” than any other single choice, many people selected other options. So, the sample comments below are related to several of the selected options:

A European middle manager with over 10 years’ experience in a for-profit professional services company said, “There are limited opportunities for people to work. This is partly due to the general economic situation and the fact that organizations have been gathered in the capital of the country.”

A European in top management with over 10 years experience in healthcare/education said, “There is a large, totally uncontrollable flow immigrants [into the city], whereas, as the same time, the state cannot provide them any kind of caring or help.”

An Asian employee with 1 to 5 years’ experience in information services said, “My city is on the frontline of terrorism. Nobody can understand how much we are suffering with bomb blasts every day indiscriminately killing people of all ages.”

Top city issue:
Too many people
out of work

Analysis of the “Other” category

The “other” category was very large, with over 1200 respondents choosing such varied “most serious challenges” for their cities as, “we are not free to openly talk about certain subjects,” “inefficient government service providers,” “alcohol,” “the making and enforcing of laws is unpredictable,” and “building a good school building for our children.”

Because the number of responses in the open-ended “other” category was so large and diverse, we decided to perform a content analysis of the answers using SPSS content analysis software. We were able to categorize the top three responses as follows:

1. Need for better education
2. Improved infrastructure, including transportation
3. Need for reduction in traffic congestion

These responses do not represent the modal response of all people answering the “most serious challenge in your city” question; rather, they are a summary of the views of those respondents (about 15% of the total) who preferred to select “other” rather than use our pre-determined options.

RESULTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

We asked respondents to select and rank the **three most serious challenges in the organization they worked for**. The eight options were: Difficulty in attracting customers; lack of innovation and creativity; conflicts between management and employees; controlling costs; intense competition; lack of sufficient capital resources; achieving profitable growth; and “other.”

The most frequently selected option was “other,” but we shall first list the responses to the pre-determined options. First was “lack of sufficient capital resources,” followed by “controlling costs,” and then “achieving profitable growth.”

1. Lack of sufficient capital resources
2. Controlling costs
3. Achieving profitable growth

We then asked respondents to explain the reason behind their choice of the first most serious challenge in their respective companies. Here is sample of their reasons. Note that although more people selected “lack of sufficient capital resources” than any other choice after “other,” many people selected other options. So, the sample comments below are related to several of the selected options:

Top organizational issue: Lack of sufficient capital resources

A North American employee with over 10 years experience in healthcare/education said, “We are very much stuck in our 100-year tradition. People seem to think that since that’s what’s made us successful, we should continue to do what we’ve always done. We’re becoming more irrelevant every day.”

A European middle manager with over 10 years’ experience in information services explained his choice, “Our organization is too much top-down organized. Too little use is made of the creativity and entrepreneurship of our highly educated professionals.”

An Asian middle manager with 6-10 years’ experience in manufacturing commented, “They are producing the same stuff irrespective of the dynamic nature of the market.”

A Latin American top manager with over 10 years’ experience in information services said, “The customers don’t have enough money to afford our services, and credit is really expensive and hard to acquire.”

Analysis of the “Other” category

The “other” category gained the single largest number of respondents for this question, implying of course that there were many more challenges facing our respondents at work than the seven pre-defined options we gave them. Some of the specific “other” items were: “government regulation,” “cost of doing business—government regulation and taxes,” “high employee turnover,” “lack of people with ambition,” and “no strategy or vision.” Because the “other” category was so broad, once again, we conducted a content analysis using SPSS analytical tools. We found that the top three “other” responses could be grouped under the following headings:

1. Leadership and Management
2. Lack of mission, vision, defined goals, focus
3. Bureaucracy and regulations

While these responses are interesting, they represent the views of only about 1500 respondents. (19% of the total). By contrast, the list of the three top challenges discussed above represents the views of over 6000 respondents. Moreover, many of the “other” responses were actually covered in the pre-defined options, but the respondents preferred to use their own language rather than ours to state the problem.

RESULTS FOR **PERSONAL LIFE CHALLENGES**

We asked respondents to select and rank the **three most serious challenges in their personal lives**. The eight options were: Conflict or communication problems with a spouse/partner other family member; physical health problems (self or family members); feeling pressured and overworked; lack of meaning or purpose in what I do; not being able to pay for personal or family expenses; not having enough education; lack of job satisfaction, and “other.”

Interestingly, more people chose “feeling pressured and overworked” than any other single option, and they did so for the most serious personal challenge, the next most serious, and third most serious personal challenge. For the third option, however, feeling overworked was tied with lack of job satisfaction. If we had given respondents only three options and asked them to rank the three, then there would be no possibility of an option appearing more than once, that is, as both a first and a second or third choice. Once an option had been chosen, it would disappear as an option in the second and third rounds. But because respondents were able to select from among seven or eight options, it was possible that the top choice for rank one could also end up being the top choice for ranks two or three. Again, recall that we have determined the rankings by selecting the most frequently selected option (the mode) for each question and each level. Thus, it is possible for the same option to appear more than once, and thus it has in this case:

1. Feeling pressured and overworked
2. Feeling pressured and overworked
3. Feeling pressured and overworked / lack of job satisfaction

We then asked respondents to explain the reason behind their choice of the first most serious challenge in their respective companies. Here is sample of their reasons. Note that although more people selected “feeling pressured and overworked” than any other choice, many people selected other options. So, the sample comments below are related to several of the selected options:

A North American working in healthcare/education explained, “My income has been cut significantly. There’s enough to survive, but living on the edge is stressful and unsustainable.”

A person residing in Africa with 1-5 years’ experience in top management wrote, “I was working for an international company, but I resigned last year. I left because I could no longer find meaning in what I was doing.”

A European middle manager with over 10 years’ experience in a professional services firm said: “I get stressed, feeling burned out, and don’t have time and energy to do things for me.”

The “other” category, selected by over 700 respondents, included such comments as “I want to make a difference in the lives of others” I worked hard to get into college but didn’t. Such things happen frequently in my life,” “My future is obscure,” and “ADHD is not easy to cope with, especially with a late diagnosis.”

Top personal issue:
Feeling pressured
and overworked

Analysis of the “Other” category

The “other” category was selected by 1399 respondents, implying of course that there were many more challenges facing our respondents in their personal lives than the seven pre-defined options we gave them. Some of the specific “other” items were: “lack of personal quality time,” “I don’t achieve what I aim for,” “jack of all trades; master of none,” and “balancing work and private time.” We found, however, that the top three “other” responses could be grouped under the following headings:

1. Managing time (feeling there is not enough time)
2. Balance in one’s life
3. Problems with relationships / absence of relationship

These responses represent the views of about 18% of the total responses. Many of the “other” responses were actually covered in the pre-defined options, but the respondents preferred to use their own language rather than ours to state the problem.

SUMMARY

Who responded? The 7811 respondents came from all over the world and represented different industries and different educational and experience levels. But the modal respondent to this survey was a North American college graduate working as a middle manager for a for-profit healthcare or educational institution and with over 10 years workforce experience.

What were their most serious challenges?

World Level:

1. Stopping war and terrorism
2. Eliminating poverty
3. Managing the environment—land, water, and air

Country Level:

1. Reducing unemployment
2. Providing good education
3. Managing the environment

City Level:

1. Too many people out of work
2. Rents and house prices are too high
3. City is heavily polluted

Organizational Level:

1. Lack of sufficient capital resources
2. Controlling costs
3. Achieving profitable growth

Personal Life Level:

1. Feeling pressured and overworked
2. Feeling pressured and overworked
3. Feeling pressured and overworked / lack of job satisfaction

APPENDIX: Open-ended responses with the reasons behind respondents' choices for the most serious challenges in the world, their countries, their cities, their organizations, and their personal lives.

WORLD CHALLENGES

Text Responses

More than a billion people face significant survival problems

If we do not effectively manage the scarce resources that we still have, we will face tremendous problems threatening even our survival in the planet. This pressure will raise the cost of managing this kind of problems year over year.

If we do not act, earth will not be in the near future

Poverty is unfortunately a continuous issue and always growing...

Because we poison the environment there will not be tomorrow for the planet.

It is unfair, inhuman and the most difficult to cope the same

This is a problem faced by all not just the 3rd world but the world powers as well. No one is exempted from this problem. I really believe in the message of a very movie made by Disney --- Wall-E.

Climate change will seriously influence our everyday life in the future

Again, with education, we can eliminate the other problems in the list.

Poverty is the source of many of the other problems listed.

As long as resources are unequally divided among humans, we have to face challenges like war, terrorism, unemployment. Just take a look at the world today, Egypt et al started with people no longer accepting unequal division of resources

Lack of employment and government funding

Too many people are going without the basic necessities because this is a real reason for other problems

The 3rd Alternative

SURVEY

The world has gotten smaller and jobs affect every one

Too many resources are being consumed and awareness of eco-friendly products is low while their price is high.

People need to be busy, and achieving so that they are not looking for “solutions”. Solving unemployment should resolve poverty (at a very general level)

We tend to think that the only wars going on in the world are the Iraq and the Afghanistan war, but in reality there is dozens of wars going on at the same time.

There are still so many people that haven't got the basics that so many of us take for granted. I find it's a sin that most governments will sit back & do NOTHING

The world was never out of war and it is a very difficult task to exterminate war. Everyone is fighting for their ideals. I think this will never be different.

A better world, in my opinion, means a world without poverty.

War and terrorism do nothing more than damage a country's economic structure. Where there are times that political upheaval may be necessary in a country, the toll war and terrorism take on its citizens is brutal. Buildings destroyed, lives lost, and countless amounts of money spent to support the destruction, for what, just so someone can have their “say” about a political view?

The key to competitiveness throughout the world is education. many underdeveloped nations do not have the resources to compete globally.

War and Terrorism should not be combined into the same category when speaking about a World Stage. War should encompass economic inequality and imposed hardship on one group by another. There are plenty of countries with government-imposed racial, ethnic, and economic persecution. I believe we all have a right to live and make the most of our lives.

Because Terrorists and Extremists want to rule the world.

The world as a whole is ravaged by war. with ever expanding arsenals of weapons of mass destruction eliminating the threat of war is the surest way to ensure the continued enjoyment of freedom

Poverty

When we live in peace (not just our country), there will be space in our heads and hand to develop worldwide. If we can't stop worldwide terrorism and wars, it will also affect our national economy/health/future.

There are still too much people poor

See my answer in the previous question

No economic growth for any country without jobs.

See answer to previous question. No differential needs.

Again, safety first

As we know, the WW3 is coming. For the education, this is the most important.

Without the health of people, nothing else matters. If we die early because of poor health, there will be no one to entrust the world to.

Many people across the globe are unemployed. Something must be done to create more jobs.

Many people across the globe are unemployed. Something must be done to create more jobs.

If every nation improved the education levels of their people, we would be improving everyone's lives and being better educated would help us as a world community make better choices

Poverty has no place in a world with such riches. Fairer means of trade are required to lift the poorest parts of the world. Leadership is required to recognise and act upon this.

If there are no wars to fight and terrorism to deal with, we would be more focused on improving our economies and reducing poverty. Look at Sudan.

If there are no wars to fight and terrorism to deal with, we would be more focused on improving our economies and reducing poverty. Look at Sudan.

Lots of people are dying unnecessarily

Solving this problem will help to solve many others

Education breeds productivity, independence, and adaptability.

No one should be hurt by other people

Poverty is so often the catalyst that leads to the anger, hate, greed and jealousy behind wars, terror and unemployment - solving the poverty problem has got to be the point of greatest leverage

The world has been divided by haves and have nots. Rich or the poor. There are billions of people below the poverty line and struggling to meet both ends. The rich & developed world need to do something to bridge this gap.

Well, terror, still is the most important challenge facing the world. It threatens to take away the liberty and progress established democracies want to serve to the global citizens.

Again, education eliminates the rest of the list.

One part of the world lives in great poverty while on the other hand a lot of people (individuals and companies) have more than they need to have in order to live an exorbitant good life. The challenge is to convince the rich to use their means in order to empower poor people to be able to provide an income.

I consider that the global food and water shortage to be the number one world problem given the immediacy of its influence in poverty, starvation, the global economy and politics.

terrorism is a global current problem.

We need to recover a reasonable trust and confidence in our neighbors but there is no peace without justice, without a rather fair distribution of resources

World's political chaos and war

This stops the positive growth of the world directly affecting all the challenges on the list.

Good education will reduce poverty eventually, it will make sure we manage the environment and all the other disasters

Stopping war and terrorism

This is a growing concern and should be treated with utmost priority and urgency.

The 3rd Alternative

SURVEY

A good strong work force will help to stimulate the economy and give hope for the future. It also gives youth hope for their future if they feel there is the potential for employment. Talk of high unemployment and the downturn of the economy creates a negative attitude, we need the feel good factor back amongst us.

If 1 is achieved we can look at more homogenous effort from all countries to combat the other problems

since a lot of countries lack basic knowledge of THE bigger picture, education is most important. All others Will be more successfull after that.

Poverty is in my opion the basic for many problems world wide

Poverty is in my opion the basic for many problems world wide

If there is going to be more imbalance between developed and underdeveloped countries because of poverty. It is going to cause more problems for the whole world

In much of the world, poverty is the root of many other serious problems, including terrorism, sex trafficking and lack of education.

So people can achieve what they want, not taken back by doing things they don't (really) want to do, but which they need to do to earn money. You have to work for what you want, but if you have enough money to eat and live in a house, than you can use your abilities for what you want.

If you look at the middle east, they have near 20% unemployment. That clearly helps add a great deal of instability and anger in the region.

Because once every child has the opportunity to learn- it eliminates many of the other problems in the world.

Education is basic building block towards finding the answer to other difficulties that we face.

War and terrorism inhibit lot of solutions to the other problems like poverty, education and global health. I feel it is the biggest challenge in reaching an equitable world.

Again, most world problems stem from people not living sustainably

When people are empowered, there is synergy to take care of the rest. Its important to say that I'm not referring to the current US educational model but to one that truly empowers and provides opportunities for it's students.

There has been a population explosion since the beginning of the industrial revolution. We are now sending food products across country borders because they can not grow enough food to feed their own people. The farming practices that they do have do not properly care for the soil in order to continue the land's productivity. There is not enough drinkable water in all places where there are people. We are building huge dams to harness water for the population. Eventually, the water will move itself back to its original path, creating destruction.

Because no man should have to spend his life in poverty. Poverty is at the root of other global problems like poor education, environmental issues.

If law and order are maintained through out the world, then war and terrorism would subside and more resources could be spent on protecting the planet and improving the environment.

War and terrorism destroy the ability for people to have safe lives, provide for themselves and their children, and obtain a solid education.

People are dying and too little care about it.

more than 50% of the people are too poor...

1 & 2 are linked; it seems to me that some countries do not like the way other countries are being run and so they decide to enforce their way on the other. Sure, if there is a dictator in charge who does not have the people of that country at heart then I would agree that they should be stopped. However, it also seems that the force, group or organisation that are being fought may not be part of one country but found in many different countries. There is then the idea that actually what certain countries are fighting to control may not be dictators but commodities that may be valuable to them and their economy. But this whole scenario has little impact on me and my life save the cost of fuel to run my car or house (and I'm not just talking about oil), which others seem to merely make millions in profit from and for what? Because those millions do not seem to help any of these key issues.

believe that people who have their basic needs met (food and health), who have the tools to envision and build a future (education) are far less likely to partake in acts of terrorism and violence.

It is important, not that there is that much terrorism, but the mindset of people has changed. War and terrorism relate directly to economy, thus are a serious threat for governments.

A well-educated society will have a naturally lower rate of unemployment, poverty, and be more aware of ecological problems, directly affecting the choices I cited as the 2nd and 3rd most important challenges.

There are countries like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan etc. which are living in such an environment where they don't know what is going to happen with them during the course of the day and are they going to come back home safely.

Similar to my response in what my country faces. When I think of the "world", I am not only thinking about countries that are poverty stricken, having wars, etc. My family and I visited Korea a few years ago. We were able to stay with friends who introduced us to many different ages and backgrounds of people (very young children, working class citizens, military personnel, elderly). One thing that struck us as odd was that the younger generations did not understand the perspective of the older generation, why decisions were made to bring the US to Korea, how important it is to keep a base in Seoul to protect the border from North, etc. The younger folks were making decisions based on information that have in front of them here and now without looking at the bigger picture of the past and the future.

We have too many people letting ego get in the way. It is hard to adjust anyone's attitude when no one sees things for the greater good...and leaders think that they all have a solution. Unfortunately the solution is hampered by everyone's selfishness and greed.

No minds working, no World's working, or feel controlling to what they want. Many minds working, better environment to everybody grow!

Good education is the base for everything. Educated people have their own mindset and don't fall for wrong messiahs or promises. If we get education right, everything else will follow – automatically.

People often try to overcome a conflict by confrontation, unknowingly exacerbating the problem(s). Denying unity between all of life, all of love, seems to be the cause of many (all?) problems.

The root cause of world problems such as poverty, disease, unemployment, corruption and lack of education is the lack of moral, transparent law and order. Citizens around the world need to be protected by a law enforcement system that protects and defends their basic human rights. Once that is established, economies and health/educational systems can flourish, reducing all of the other problems the world faces.

Again, it is at the root of many of the others

We need to take care of our environment. We have abused it in ways beyond imaginations. If we will not mind reverting our treatment of the environment, then we are denying our children the right to have a better future.

The world are full of resources, oportunities and wellness, but just few people have the most part of it. We most reach the poorest people and help them with good opotunities.

Because no corporation and no country wants to cede or even wealthness with anyone, leaving the rich richer and the poor, poorer. In a few words, greed got the world unbalance.

poverty is prevalent across the globe which is the major reason because of which serious problem of terrorism comes into play because poor uneducated people are very prone to brain wash that leads them to be a unwanted social entity.

The world is getting increasingly polarised as a result of terrorism. It is going to exert huge economic, political and social costs in the next few decades.

I hear the most form it and it is also a source for other problems like child soldiers, oppresion of minoritiesetcetera

Many children in poor and emerging countries have very little education, especially girls. Education can solve many of the other problems of the world.

war and terrorism is the biggest threat to world peace and coexistence.

severy poverty is inhumane

With all the money recently spent on everything - it has become obvious that the war on poverty, drugs, unemployment, world peace - was no war at all. We have and continue to be lied to and continue to pay, some with their lives - for the good of a few.

If people have jobs, good educations and believe in law and order, the war and terrorism will be I believe be reduced, poverty diminished and we will more than likely take better care of the environment

Because it involves a serious and lasting transfer and sharing of cultural, economic and technological suport.

Its very important to eliminate poverty in the world some times hunger takes you to do ugly things in order to survive



The 3rd Alternative SURVEY

COUNTRY CHALLENGES

Text Responses

Significant public deficit, drop in GDP

The country is no longer able to finance its deficits and public debt due to the interests required from the markets. Therefore, a series of structural changes should take place, in combination with severe interventions to public consumption and public investments to decrease deficits.

extremely high deficit

Due the crisis, hundreds of SME companies are closing.

Because due to economical crisis the unemployment has increased and keep increasing every month, when our country loan has to be paid in some years. If people loosing their jobs, then the taxes and the country income will be reduced and the country loan will not be able to be repaid.

It affects the entire social, economic and political environment of the country

globally no health environment not life at all

Over the years, through different presidents, there has always been a case against the outgoing president, outgoing military heads and other high gov't officials related to corruption.

the unemployment rate gets larger and larger. it is important for people to feel that they have a purpose and they receive some money to cover basic needs

We need to educate future generations.

Without good education we won't be able to solve the other problems.

Everything starts with good education

Lack of employment and government funding

Without employed people the gov't cannot address poverty-taxbase is messed up and schools suffer-thus educational standards drop in the most needed areas. It is all connected.

general economic situation is quite good, political situation is stable, so this is crucial today

The outlook of other country on USA

historic reasons including closed markets

Unemployment affects the whole economy, both physical and psychological

It seems that the United States is more worried about the mental health of the children rather than their education. Educations systems in America do not reflect real life. In real life sometimes you win and sometimes you loose. In school sports children are learning that everyone is a winner and that if you don't pass the 3rd grade, it is ok to move on to the 4th grade because we prefer to have undereducated children than crying children.

Our country's unemployment rate has rocketed out of control over the past two years & there is little or no prospect for so many of the unemployed at the moment.

It looks people don't care for eachother anymore, the society is getting harder. It's all about me me me and the rest will be forgotten. It is difficult to change because it is a mental issue, there are people who want to change this but i think they stay in the back.

Poverty is the most serious challenge because the other two challenges have their bases in it. Not the mention its damage to whole social structure.

In the recent years in the US, there has been an upseing of unemployment caused by many factors with the country's economy. We have seen companies fold under and others reduce their man-power just to stay alive. The mount of people that remain unemployed has not seen a significant decrease for almost three years, with the unemployment benefits they receive soon running out. How are the American (unemployed) people supposed to survive in an economy thwarted with poor benefits, few jobs, and an even bleaker outlook on the job market?

The United States is faced with the outsourcing of employment due to the rising cost of good and services. Putting Americans back to work will need strategic planning from the public and private sector.

unemployment is causing a growing rift in the quality of education and financial stability of middle-class America. As this rift widens we will lose a generation of potential thought-leaders (ie- educators, advanced degree seekers) to the necessity of guaranteed short-term income. This, in turn, will affect the viability of future world leaders coming from the USA.

Because we are in serious debt, and we need leaders that will work to reduce the national debt and boost the economy.

We're 4 years removed from the beginning of a recession that purportedly ended almost 2 years ago. Millions are unemployed and several more are desperate to find a better job but can't given the lack of better options. It affects our GDP, our stock market indexes and therefore the confidence employers have in expanding their labor needs

economic growth

Good education is the basis for prosperity / employment / economic growth

Beucase of the economic crisis, also in the Netherlands unemployment is high

It is the number one thing we need to survive. Basic elements of life! And this is not only for my country.. It starts with each country taking responsibiity for it.

We need jobs for our people.....no jobs, no economic growth for our country.

A legal framework needs to be adequately maintained in order for people to be able to make decisions freely. Proper legislation and enforcement would lead to the accomplishment of all the above goals, since they could have predictability for the outcomes of actions they take to achieve them.

Most everything takes a backseat to safety

My country is Vietnam. It's easy to think that we need to be a better country. Education, Finance, economi is the most serious challenge.

If we do not have our health, nothing else matters.

Dr.Covey, I have worked for large corporations such as IBM and Motorola. I have over 10 years experience in Project Management and was recently resourced on 9/2/10. I have been unem-ployed 4 times to date and do not see the outlook on jobs getting any better. I recently part-nered with a Health & Wellness company to start creating a residual income, however this type of business takes time and I need a way to start making money. I believe something must be done to help create more jobs soon, otherwise our nation is in a lot of trouble.

this is the most serious because it has ramifications across all industries, regions of the country and economic groups and ethnic groups

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Everything stems from a healthy and productive economy. The spiraling effects of high unemployment could cripple many generations to come.

We are dealing with years of thousands of unresolved murders and presently, we are dealing with kidnapping, terrorism and insecurity.

if everyone earns an income we have less poverty and children can get better education

Solving it will help to solve a number of other issues.

I believe that if we were an educated society we would not have so many social issues that need addressing. We would be a independent and self reliant society.

to reduce the government deficit

Poverty is so often the catalyst that leads to the anger, hate greed and jealousy behind wars, terror and unemployment - solving the poverty problem has got to be the point of greatest leverage

India is my home country & Corruption is way of life here. It has been the most serious bottle-neck for the country to unleash its full potential.

Faced with disintegrating polities all around, India is severely challenged to stop terrorism. It has already hit India hard - as and when it wants.

Poor education has gotten us where we are today I taught in our public schools for 10 years. We need to change our structure before it's too late. Better education takes care of the rest of the list above. High schools need to teach collaboration, not "be out for oneself". Where, in your career, have you been told to work entirely by yourself with the exception of testing for a certain certificate? Americans work as a team - so why aren't our high schools? High schools need to look more like our colleges with apprenticeships for those who are not college bound.

I live in Holland. In 5 years a great deal of workers reached the age of retirement while on the other our labor force increases. There won't be enough people to maintain the same level of well-ness/welbeing we're accustomed to.

Though I currently live in Europe my home country is Australia - a country suffering from weather extremes like flood, drought, fire and cyclones. Though considered 'natural disasters' the man-made influence on these disasters cannot be outruled.

Lapse in maintaining law and order increases corruption, inflation and quality of life is suffred.

We need to increase productivity in order to be competitive again, create jobs and wealth, recover trust in the economic and political enviroment

Poverty

The daily threat and worry of a uncertain world plays on everyones mind at some level. It may not seem like the most important but it can keep people from really risking in areas that can make big change.

Unemployment leads to all kinds of disasters for a country: poverty, unhappiness, stress, agressive-ness, and so on

Huge debt after recession, government cuts in public sector, and increased unemployment

The economy, it underpins everything else

Close to 70% of the population live near or below poverty line. It is essential to have an equitable distribution of wealth amongst all classes of the society

In THE long run these are THE most important conditions for development And getting THE least attention.

The Netherlands is trying to retain its economical position. Education is the main resource to add value, but there is not enough money to provide the governmental subsidies to maintain a high level

If america needs to compete with the world, we need to reform education. Make children think and make better decisions

Education is the basis for success in life. It will not only help secure our children's--and our country's--future, but will also help to address the other two serious problems I marked: reducing unemployment and managing the environment.

Because education is not important to everyone, but it should be. It is the back bone of the country.

For the USA competitive in the 21st century, we need a strong workforce.

Because we have been exploiting our land for so long to gain profit- that we cannot seriously go on this way unless we make dramatic changes to the way we live. Our natural resources are finite. There is a limit to them, and we are being overly greedy. There won't be anything left for future generations, and for a country that rests on the identity of being a beautiful landscape- it won't continue that way for long.

Our country has been decimated by years of governmental negligence and corruption allied to banking irregularities and an economy which was created by non sustainable building development. Due to the fact that we cannot compete in manufacturing industry we need to be able to compete in knowledge industries. We as a country need to educate ourselves to compete in non traditional areas like research and development. Otherwise we will never trade our way out of the financial mess that we find ourselves in.

I live in Alberta, and the oil industry has lot of environmental issues. Alberta has a very high per capita energy consumption as well.

It encompasses all the other problems. Until we utilize a systematic approach to our problems, we will flounder

If our people are truly empowered, the rest will take care of itself

The current unemployment rate is high. With lower unemployment, people spend less money, which has a ripple effect on the goods and services provided in the country. It also decreases the income for the municipalities, states and federal government. This reduces basic services. High unemployment compounds already existing issues at all levels.

Government expenses are drastically lowered in the area of education making it almost impossible to maintain the required level of education.

A good education is the foundation upon which we can build for a better, more innovative future. The world is advancing faster than we are and the amount of money put toward education is severely lacking compared to other formidable nations

The 3rd Alternative

SURVEY

I believe that we have traded what is best for our children for the interest of what is best for adults. When children are failing in schools they are just left behind rather than being given tutoring or other alternatives. When the teachers have worked their 7 or 8 hours they feel their day is over. It shouldn't work that way.

Too many people abuse power and seek to only advance themselves. Our children aren't safe and are learning the wrong things in life, based on bad examples. There are no good heroes anymore.

Bad economy at the moment.. so more and more people get unemployed.

Due to the current state of the economy. We are in the depths of this recession, lots of people are out of work (I understand that the figures are at a relatively high level), university is more difficult to gain entry to and the prospect of interest rates increasing means more people want or need more money and businesses struggle to make enough sales - catch 22.

I see unemployment as a symptom of a larger economic issue in the US.

The education system was changed various times in the last past decades, and the quality did not improve as believed.

Without education you are a lump walking around cradle to grave dependant on the government or someone to take care of you. Education does not mean in school longer..it means learning how to take care of yourself and others with smart skills. In Kindergarten learning proper grooming and dietary habits and exercise.. then add how money is used and how to save..and on from there. We did not learn about that until high school and that is way too late. If there is education the government will not have to spend money providing and will be able to use those funds to create better job's. They will be able to focus more on solving issues with other countries.

Politicians focused on personal gain and empty gestures for the sake of the media instead of doing anything for their country.

Terrorism is the most serious problem in my Country (India). We have been facing international terrorism since 1992. The people in India are always be in state of insecurity due to this problem.

(NOTE: Wasn't sure this perspective was supposed to be my country's or my own of where I feel my country should focus. I am going with the latter) Good education includes teaching youth how to make high quality, well informed decisions and understand their alternatives, consequences, impacts, etc. regardless of outcome. Once a person has this ability to make decisions (from very simple to complex, for person or business), this is the baseline for succeeding in other areas such as how to focus on their future, how to run a company or political positions to help reduce unemployment, etc.

With no education ther's no future for the children's consequence, no future for nexts generations. Problens to take seriously to prepare and recognize teachers and provide sustentable resources.

Recent act of the European Union and also Germany's government to 'prevent child pornography on the internet' where pleaded to try to install a mighty censoring filter for the internet. This is actually the most serious problem Europe is facing.

It's not a national problem, but the low countries may suffer severely from our destabilizing influences on the environment.

The Constitution is the founding document that makes our government, our society and our economy work, but our Constitutional framework has been increasingly abused and ignored by the federal government, at the expense of state and individual rights and liberties.

Because it is at the root of many others on the list

Our country belongs to one of the poorest in Asia. This is the battlecry among Filipinos where the majority of our population lives in poverty classes. There is lack of employment, poor education, infrastructure facilities are hardly available, huge debt, poor governance and corruptions are rampant.

Because through education the other problems could be solved. Our education system is not working, the teachers are lazy, corrupts and not prepared.

Lifting educational levels

good education is the only tool to fight with all other problem whether it's law n order and employment , with the help of educated people we can create the awareness about environmental issue among educated pool.

My country has more people living below the poverty line than any other country. The gap between the haves and have nots is increasing steadily.

It just worries me, especially with or sole right wing government.

Schools in this country are not preparing our children for the future. We are falling behind other industrialized countries. Good education can lead to the solution to many of our other problems such as eliminating poverty, reduced unemployment, etc.

Creating jobs will eradicate poverty and unemployment. The country is in desperate need of more taxpayers (currently just over 10% of our population pay income tax.

In our country (the Netherlands) we have a serious issue on integration of different ethnic people. With e.g. a muslim background and poor education. We need more caring for each other.

In general our level of education has fallen. Lifeskills are not taught Better focus on what is perceived are service-level careers need to be enhanced.

Listening across the country, it seems excessive overtime is becoming a problem for the workforce since employers do not wish to hire until the true picture of health care benefit costs become clearer ... and/or should the industry be moved to locations (including other countries) of cheaper labor and/or should we continue to compete with foreign industry or shut the doors would seem the economy could go either way based on continued government interference or unfriendly programsand foreign competition! Industry must see a window of opportunity to begin hiring and increasing production ...if this condition continues much longer the cycle will be so low, there will be no savings or monies to buy and/or invest in America scary I think! The streets will then fill with protectors against our Government too!

The only way to take advantage of our economic growth and natural resources, in the long way, is to provide good education, with clear focus on values, and capabilities required to develop innovation.

This is a very important problem because we need to provide safety for locals and tourism we live from tourism here in Cancun Mexico

The 3rd Alternative SURVEY

CITY CHALLENGES

Text Responses

Heavy traffic, lack of infrastructure

There is a large, totally uncontrollable flow of immigrants, whereas at the same time the state cannot provide them any kind of caring or help.

the negative growth of the country has highly impacted the city were i leave. no job openings - instead lots of businesses close

Again, due to the crisis...

Big unemployment holds back its growth.

Hazardous healthwise

many people,many traffic,few work,few clean air

Firemen not doing preventive work like in 7H v2..q2 fire fighters. Policemen with sub-standard equipment etc. Gov't agencies in general who are not able to service the public effectively because of either lack of competence and also flawed character / values.

there are limited opportunities for people to work, this is partly due to the general economic situation and the fact that organizations have been gathered in the capital of the country.

None of the above apply to my City.

We've been homogeneous for so long, we're not comfortable with all the new faces.

Everybody should be able to have suited housing. Due to the economic climate not everybody can afford it anymore

Taxes are to high and city is not using it appropriately

this seems to be the greatest issue-relative to all the others

roads, communication, traffic

Too many unemployed person does not drive an economy

the overcrowding in the city strains its resources. also accommodating more people in the same space leads to illegal constructions and pollution.

There is a high immigrant population, and they are out of work, turning to crime to get some income.

Violence and crime related to drug dealing and drug usage.

In my town most of the larger employers in the area have had to downscale or close down, therefore leaving a very large number of residents unemployed

At the time there are a lot of people unemployed. People with a higher education will move to the bigger cities to live and work there. This means that braindrain is going to be a serious issue. With as a consequence important companies will not start here.

My city is the frontline of war on terrorism. Nobody can understand how much we are suffering with bomb blasts everyday kill people of all ages, without discrimination.

See my comments about the country's unemployment troubles. These problems are emanated in my city as well.

Living in the suburb, housing does not equate to the true cost of living index within the city. To find good jobs, people have to travel in excess of 60 minutes.

I am lucky enough to live in a city without many of the infrastructure challenges felt by others. My city also reflects the unemployment challenges mirrored by cities across the USA.

People in my city are unchurched and unsaved, thus they lack moral integrity.

We're in a very educated part of America and while we are blessed with the prospect of incoming companies to the area, that promised time is too distant to assuage the pains of the unemployed

low investment

Actually, we live in a very nice little town with not many problems. When too many houses are empty in such a small town, it affects the community

good house prices for starters on the market

it brings up a lot of racism :(

taxes are so high ...my county is 2 in the nation....people cannot afford to stay here and make a living. It's a very blue collar town....not fancy at all. My house is 1500 sq feet on a property of 50 x 100 and I pay \$11,000 per year.

See previous answers.

The city is aging rapidly

There are many industry zone in my city.

Unemployment has skyrocketed and we need to get folks working so they can afford housing, food, etc.

The unemployment rate in Colorado is approx 9%. More jobs need to be created to drop the unemployment rate.

Improving race relations would benefit the city as a while in terms of improved tourism, more civil workings within government

Society is being dragged down by a larger and larger section of people who now 'refuse' to work and claim a modest benefit allowance. Entire schemes are funded by the taxpayer.

People live in fear of being kidnapped or killed. A lot of people are leaving...

lots of Zimbabwe immigrants taking others jobs

I live in a fairly nice place. Not many of these problems. Some are out of work and fixing that would lift the city and enable us to work on other issues

I think that the economy has played a big role in loss of jobs.

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because well educated people from other cultures are not integrated and there potentials are not used.

Unemployment tends to lead to poverty and poverty leads to social degeneration

Population is growing. Forget about clean water. There is no enough water to do the basic things like bath & washing etc..

Limited water resources in Chennai, India. No good rain water harvesting, storage. Dependent on neighboring states for continued water supply. On the other hand, migration in to the urban-metropolitan city increases demand every passing minute.

It's turned into a police state - we have cameras at lights and vans ticketing people to create revenue. The speeding tickets do not go on your record - purely revenue based. The government refuses to look at a city wide public transportation system because "it would only help 5000 people". Quote from city council woman. I could go on and on

Too much anglo saxon influence in topmanagement leads to neglect of responsibility towards the community. Big companies have to be aware that besides profit they have responsibility towards employment, environment and education. Companies choose to easy to downsize, to leave to other countries etc. A company is also stakeholder in society/community

Looking at my 'current' city of Brussels, for sure the employment rates in Eastern Europe are leading to migration and homelessness in the West. This follows onto crime and cultural integration as secondary and tertiary issues. I feel that employment is the most significant issue right now because it is incredibly present and 'in your face'.

housing prices are 4 times than wht they were 2-3 yrs back.

In small towns people are not free to vote the party they dislike less. Politicians have created the present crisis in Spain because Saving Banks and Banks were giving esay access to credit to support their friends (real state, etc). Now the tight credit is closing companies that were doing reasonably well, creating more unemployment. Bank profits are soaring as in the past

Expensive house rentals

Unemployment keeps growth from happening in many areas. It directly effects education budgets.

People should be able to find a decent home

Florida is in BIG trouble

Government cuts results in people being made redundant.

there is no getting away from the underpiining problem - i.e. the economy, be it local or national. We also need to be aware of the health and well being needs of the local population, which is not helped by high unemployment

Many middle class people cannot afford houses, to rent or to buy, in the city.

local government is highly opportunistic And lacks longterm view ON society.

Due to high house prises people providing elementary sevices lile health care and fire prevention can not effort to life in the city

Since most of the aging population are dependent on manufacturing jobs, there are out of work and not equipped to undertake new jobs

My city is an absolute paradise: great schools, great parks and trails, environmental awareness, plenty of culture, huge percentage of people who volunteer, not-too-high crime rate and very accepting culture. The price to live here is high, however, and many people I know make sacrifices to live in this community. If only such wonderful communities were more affordable.

The children can go to school, but the current building is not very good. Although, compared to a lot of schools in the world quite ok. I am happy to live in a city where this is the biggest problem (besides taking better care of the education of high intelligent children).

Cost of living is out of control. Leads to debt and unhappiness.

For many years employees at city hall just did what they did. One dept never knew what the others were doing. City council never got anything done because they spent hours upon hours of meetings bickering about nonsense rather than working together as a team to get things done as a city. Such a shame. This city could be great.

Our town has been heavily affected by the recent economic depression that our country finds itself in. Not having work is effecting the health and wellbeing of the unemployed which has knock on effect for the rest of the population

Rent is relatively high in the city.

It is a college town and the locals resent the asian students.

I live in a pretty awesome city: Ashland Oregon

The city taxes both businesses and individuals. This does not create an environment that attracts new business to the area. This, in turn increases property taxes to fill in the gap, thus raising housing prices. It also stops the creation of jobs, so the unemployment is increasing.

Because of the number of people who just can not afford their own home. Ranging from students to starters on the jobmarket.

Our working budget is lacking funds so essential services like emergency responders, public works, and education funding are severely cut. We cannot get ahead if we keep falling behind.

There is a lot of racism and hate mongering. People here are in denial that racism, bigotry and discrimination exist and so the problem never gets addressed.

Unemployment affects all of the other problems and feeds into everything.

Houses cannot be sold or with huge losses

This issue is facing my city, country and even the planet I live in/on. This recession began with money lenders over lending and getting caught out followed by the governments trying to 'bail them out'. They are a business, just like my small business, and they have had government help for being, well, stupid and greedy. Why should my business suffer because some people are greedy about how much profit they make?

There is a growing disparity between what people can sell their homes for in today's market and the assessment of home values made for taxation purposes, increasing the burden of those already struggling to make ends meet.

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SURVEY

There is a big plan to change the highway through the city. Not everyone wants that, and especially environmental parties are protesting so that the actual work is delayed.

We have too many people that cannot pay bills...that leads to crime increase...and that leads to racial tension. We need to focus on getting the illegals out of the city and offer those jobs to welfare recipients. We need to spend less money on government dependant people and get them out doing city clean up for a wage. When people work they feel better about themselves and provide an example to others

Because prices are absolutely inadequate for 98% of the society, so houses are bought by the most privileged people, who rent them at cutthroat prices.

Population is one of the biggest problem that India is facing today. I live in Mumbai which is geographically very small city. But it is the commercial Capital of India. So people come from all parts of country for earning bread and butter for them. Due to this the population of the city is very high. This has caused the increase in Rents and house prices.

I live in a city where the local public high school is the largest high school in California. My son attends this school. There are gang members attending this school, fights break out daily, etc. My son does not participate in these activities but we all know they exist from news reports, stories from other people, etc. It is a huge problem in our city and the police have special task forces to deal with the gangs.

Without a good growth plan, and with no political aims to change things to better, nothing will happen.

First and foremost, my city is great and hardly has problems. We still have some integration issues to solve, but to be honest, that's not that big a deal.

Our village does not seriously have these other problems, so the main thing here is the environment.

Every issue in this city has a racial component, and our government and society is very divisively split over these issues. Increasingly, no shared space can be occupied because of racial grievances, past and present.

Because my city is in really good shape, except for this area (and even that isn't that high)

We need to do something. Clean.

It's really difficult to find a good job, so there are a lot of self employment, some of them are illegal, but the people need to make some money anyway.

Politicians look for own benefits and not commonwealth

even after paying so much taxes we still not able to have clean water to drink and fresh air to breathe

It's one of the big cities in my country. Poverty remains endemic.

There is no serious problem

High unemployment leads to less tax dollars which leads to reduced services; leads to higher crime rates, etc.

unemployment leads to social problems, poverty and crime

Little is done on integration of different ethnic groups of people

Toronto's public transportation system is 2 generations old. This poor infrastructure is fallen apart and leading to other issues/concerns.

Toronto's public transportation system is 2 generations old. This poor infrastructure is fallen apart and leading to other issues/concerns.

I am fortunate, we have clean water, rent is reasonable, crime is minimal and the races get along ... industry is environmentally sensitive and people talk with each other

Police enforcement out of budget and resources to faith against crime

Its very expensive to live in here and the salaries are not as high in other cities

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

Text Responses

Profitable growth is difficult in an environment where governments control HC costs

The cost of money is so high that the bank cannot increase its lending portfolio, and therefore profitability is very low.

negative growth in the country / cut of salaries / high taxation => high impact on retail business

Despite heavy investment, customers' perception is difficult to change.

Achieving profitable growth is the most serious challenge because by succeeding it you can invest on new innovative ideas, projects and attract more customers.

It is more difficult to achieve profitable growth during economic crisis

financial crisis

With the current inflation rate of our country, spiking of gasoline prices, budgets or funds become smaller compared to when it was budgeted a year ago. Our prices are premium compared to other vendors and therefore it is becoming more and more difficult to get big and new accounts which in turn would translate to profit. Our leaders are also getting old and in my opinion tired....so maybe it also affects the overall energy of the organization as well as giving a certain degree of uncertainty as to what will happen when the leaders retire...

manager deals with unimportant things, getting in the way in someone else's job. we need to have a clear direction and help in order not to lose track - nothing else.

If we keep tight control of costs, the business will make money.

We are very much stuck in our 100-year tradition. People seem to think that since that's what's made us successful, we should continue to do what we've always done. We're becoming more ir-relevant every day.

the market has changed

I work for a public library system and there is just not enough funding to keep the employees happy as well as fund various programs

we rely on many gov't subsidies-as well as other agency involvement

big, aggressive competition and many doubts about future

The overall economy is just not supporting the industry

new projects are being bagged at unrealistic prices just to keep the company going...long term profitability is affected. Moreover repeat orders too are becoming less profitable.

Management seems to be unable to manage the growth in a sustainable fashion.

In a very specific market, one has to go above and beyond to find the right type of leads.

There is a very bad sense of dispondancy in the Health Service, there has been many scandals & problems with budgets that have had a very detrimental effect on staff moral & public image

Because of the financial crisis people are more careful with spending their money.

The management does want to move on from the traditional systems.

In an economy that has struggled for the past few years, it has become ever increasingly difficult to manage and control the costs of the organization. It has become required that our costs to our customers be reduced in order to maintain the business, which places an extraordinary burden on controlling our internal costs to maintain profitability.

Working for an Internet firm requires me (us) to set ourselves apart. With the vast amount of information available, how do they choose our firm?

The healthcare industry has been turned upside down due to health care reform laws. The status of said laws due to legal battles on the state level is a cause of much concern for many providers.

Conflicts abound because of my different ideas.

We have several competitors who have cropped up who offer the same or similar services for a fraction of our costs. our management chooses to turn a blind eye to this problem and when faced to confront it use the old axiom "we have better VALUE". We have other services which are so faulty that we're losing the PR battle but again management turns a blind eye

lack of management skills

I'm running my own business, without personnel. The economic crisis makes it very hard to find customers. This affects directly on my income.

health care costs are increasing

The company is trying to change for years now... minor changes don't really change the mission and vision. Although we do realize the necessary. Numbers 2 and 3 are a result of that

The health field is facing huge problems. I feel sorry for the patients and I feel sorry for the health care providers. The gov't is telling us how to treat people.....they are clueless.....politicians acting like Doctors. I have been a nurse for 30 + years....its a disgrace what the gov't and insurance has done to this field. People are suffering terribly because of it.

The unpredictable punitive/compensatory reactions to our actions hinders organizational growth. This stems from the global inefficiencies of making and enforcing rules.

We rarely, if ever, look for unique solutions

I think my employees is not high-educated.

I work in schools and students seem inhibited to step outside of their comfort zones so they can learn and create.

I am currently unemployed.

My organization lacks creativity with causes us to be unable to attract customers and retain top talent

Competition is extremely high and is strangling the companies ability to invest in innovation, forcing them to drastically cut costs to compete with 'cheap' alternatives.

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This is a start up company and we have a lot of ground work to do and that is capital intensive.

new ownership trying different things but one is working

We are a startup. Capital needed to go to next stage

The social media market has become THE means for advertising and to market one has to know this market well and be able to compete with anyone and everyone.

because it its very hard in our city to get more costumers

In a market that sees the expert services that my company delivers as more and more of a commodity product the pressure only increases to find new and creative ways to do more with less - innovation and creativity are two commodities that seem free but require investment to develop and flourish

The raw material costs are increasing.

There is significant racism and partiality that erodes trust.

I own it so I guess it's all on me huh? :) We have a lot of competition but we had our best year so we must be doing something right! :)

I am owner of a company (in business for 2 yrs) so my biggest challenge is finding and holding on to customers.

Wastage of resources which could be better invested into other departments, organisations or initiatives.

organisational conflict increases drop-outs and fails to maintain consistency

Tight credit is choking small and medium size companies like ours.

Getting customers buy the products and solutions being offered

The past management practices at the agency I am working at has destroyed morale. I have been working for two years to build it and it is a slow process due to some of the old managemnet still in place awaiting retiremnet.

The organization is shrinking, while we should be growing. Profits are going down, but they should be going up, it leads to negative thinking instead of fighting spirit

We are reorganizing and brining in top management with experience to help our company with continuous growth. This is a GREAT thing that is happening to us...

People are less willing to buy training services when they have more serious concerns re: redundancies

Working in the Public sector we are faced with massive public service cuts. This leads to a lowering of morale, insecurity, lack of motivation/hope and ineviatable workplace conflict and the associated productivity costs caused by a stressed workplace. The world of work is stupid if it thinks public sector cuts do not harm the economy.

Advertising and word of mouth referral only two ways to attract customers. Sometimes too much is promised and problems arise at the time of fulfilling them which leads to the 2nd and 3rd problems.

more And more focus is ON efficiency, less employees etc. We lack focus ON “why are we here”.
A serious omission for government

The health care industry is becoming more commercial. The organization has a difficulty making
cost based decisions instead of health care optimization

Achieving profitable growth because there are so many fads out there, people don't want to invest
in long term thinking like Dr. Deming's philosophy

n/a--I am self-employed

I work for my own company and a company together with someone else. My own company is
running fine. But with the company I am running with someone else we need to learn more
about marketing etc, so we can attract more customers.

Sometimes we forget what we are a team.

I went to school for years and years in order to become a highschool teacher. But there are no
jobs. I have to do supply work which is not constant, and have to work on the side in order to
make enough income to live.

The professional services industry is a difficult business at the moment and requires large capital
investment to build profile and grow the business. that kind of capital is just not available

I work at a university and controlling costs is a major issue, as the government funding is reducing
due to economic downturns.

The University is extremely heavy with respect to administration.

The economy has been tough on our numbers.

The owners micro-manage every aspect of the business. This does not take advantage of any of
the talents that the employees have. It also distracts them from long-range planning.

Employees have little or no awareness of what's right and wrong.

Maintaining the most valuable resource- employees- is vital to keep a competitive edge when
quality of knowledge is crucial to success in your industry. Building company loyalty can ensure
good employees stay with a company longer.

Our senior leadership believes in micromanaging and does not trust the staff. They are secretive
about decisions and don't communicate decisions openly with the organization. There is a lot of
mistrust. It's costing the organization by losing good people, presenteeism, and employees feeling
they don't have direction so they don't do anything.

Some management workers refuse to accept blame and always take credit for what's not theirs.
Passing along more work to others instead of doing it themselves.

As a starting company it's hard to achieve both growth and improving profits

No one is spending any money in this recession and so my business suffers. we have changed a lot;
made cut backs, improved performance and so on to try to stay alive. So far it is working, just, but
if people are not able to buy mine and other businesses may fail.

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With no new clients coming in, we rely on “organic” growth, which we are fairly successful in generating. However, that increases our risk / exposure with each client that attrits.

Employees do not see the need for some investments during a period of controlling costs. In this big organization (5.000+) the employees have other thoughts than the management.

There are people out there with wonderful ideas and if management has their eyes and ears closed they can miss out on a solution. It goes back to ego. The mind only works when it's open.

There is a single challenge: competition, but this is all natural in my field of work, so no sweat.

I don't know

The organization I work for is a management consulting firm. We have lived the Covey principles since the 1980s. The economy is tough right now and, unfortunately, when budgets are cut they normally cut all outside contract work. We are a small firm but continue to win projects against the largest competition in many areas. The most difficult part is retaining employees who often decide to leave because of better/faster growth opportunities at the larger firms and fear of a small company folding. Our workforce alumni is still strong, however, and many eventually return in some capacity for contract work. Hard to leave a company that is more “family” than “employer.

lead people to do things with they are no usualy do. Iniciative a discipline to work consistencially

We're growing very well. The only issue is to attract qualified, great workers for all the jobs to be done.

Problems 2 and 3 kill innovation and creativity.

My organization's customers are state and local governments, and the process of winning social services contracts from these entities is very complex and difficult.

It is at the root of all the others

Scarcity mentality.

The customers doesn't have enough money to afford our services, and credits are really expensive and hard to reach.

Need more innovative ideas to challenge intensive competition.

they are producing the same stuff irrespective of dynamic nature of market.

Senior management holds all kinds of strategic meets and global meets and town halls. But having interacted with a number of them personally, the lack of clarity and ability to co-create and communicate an inspiring vision is prevalent throughout the organisation and its business units and functions.

With the economic downturn, it is more difficult to attract new customers. Without new customers, revenues drop.

Local and international competition can affect customer loyalty and put you out of business.

Our organization is too much top-down organized, too little use is made of the creativity and entrepreneurship of our highly educated professionals

Taking on any risk is not viewed well.

I am retired ... the company I worked for is healthy, a commodity company, mining and manufacturing phosphate related products, employees represent a creative workforce with few conflicts within the workforce, other than excessive overtime, profits are 2nd highest quarter ever, and stock is rising and will split 3 for 1 this month.

More than conflicts, its a necessity to ground a solid corporate culture and alignment (link) with the employees

we are now in a moment where we have a lot of offers and so little demand

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SURVEY

PERSONAL CHALLENGES

Text Responses

Work too much

I really work too much...

future is obscure

My mother-in-law had a cerebrus problem but is recovering.

I would like to work more.

It takes time from the family

no healthy not happiness

Sometimes I wonder --- if being effective could actually be the cause of my being overworked. Because I deliver results, management has, over the years, trusted me with more responsibilities. Instead of hiring new managers to replace the ones who resigned, I find myself getting assigned new responsibilities. While I like the challenge, I am finding it more and more difficult to execute on my most important goals (I am responsible for 3 very different areas each with 2 to 3 wildly important goals each). This means I have at least 7 goals.

i get stressed, feeling burned out and don't have time and energy to do things for me

Always working.

Because my income has been cut significantly. There's enough to survive, but living on the edge is stressful and unsustainable.

I am 41!

Just bring enough to the table to provide

I want to make a difference in the lives of others

discipline and consequence

Not being able to pay my expenses and keep up with my investments

I still haven't found what i am looking for.

Trying to close out my divorce negotiations with my ex-wife.

Difficulty trying to finish univeristy.

Our income has dropped dramatically of late after government budgets and that combined with a serious bout of naivety surrounding credit a number of years ago, we have a large amount of debt with less money coming in to pay it off. We are living hand to mouth

At the moment i don't have a job. I lost two jobs because of the financial crisis. I'm changing business from finance to marketing but this is more difficult then i thought.

I worked so hard to get admission in a college, but didnt get enough marks. Such things happen frequently in my life.

Being a member of the hundreds of thousands of Americans that are unemployed, it is a difficult challenge to pay for necessary expenses, especially those that the family had been accustomed to in the past.

As technology changes, the requirements for my position change. Taking time to increase my education skills may lead me to being behind the curve by the time I reenter the workforce.

I often wish I was able to work for a non-profit and still make enough money to pay my student loans back.

I desire to have a job that promotes faith discussions and interactions.

I have worked hard to get an education in business. I have worked hard to develop myself as an asset by studying several business books, articles, publications, etc. and lend a hand in many ways but because I started at my current job while still in school since graduating I am seen as a newbie graduate who doesn't understand the "real world" and so I am often ignored

valuing skills and knowledge in work

I have to work twice as hard to prove that I can do the job (even better)

things are going well, but I have no idea why doing it all.

This issue is growing on me rapidly. I need purpose and meaning in order to have passion in my life.

I've been married for 31 years and have 2 children in college. I am going through horrible empty nest syndrome....its affecting my marriage and home life. I miss being a Mom....and being needed....end of story.

Meaning and purpose is the only item I really cared to answer about affirmatively. I think this is a common desire of all people.

I feel like I strive for excellence while those around me strive for mediocrity and the paths of least resistance

I think health is all.

Having deeper spiritual roots is my focal point of meaning. Deepening my relationship with God keeps me in position to further my cause of completing meaningful tasks in my life.

Not having enough money to pay for personal expenses for my family. Being a single mom without medical coverage is painful.

Feeling a lack of purpose makes me feel like I am not making a difference in the world.

Struggle to find people with similar interests and pass times that can add an extra dimension to my life and plug that hole.

I was working for an international company but I resigned last year for the above reasons. But I left especially because I could no longer find meaning in what I was doing.

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i have been doing the same thing for 8 years and I am very good at it. But I need new challenges

Not in control of life

I am a single Mom and it has always been a struggle to provide a well-balanced and satisfying lifestyle for my family.

I would work in the higher management

Family is very important to me - when that goes wrong it tips everything else out of balance

I feel the job I do is not challenging & below my potential. I am not sure how do I progress in my organization in this role

Work is a very big part of my life and is currently very taxing. So, it eclipses life right now - all the more so as i am single.

I need to remember my 7 habits. :) Missing some balance. Love my life though and feeling pretty satisfied on the whole

Like most people I find it important to feel secure. My choice to have a business of my own makes that I have security in income.

Not a serious issue, in contrast to the other world issues. At this stage all these challenges are manageable.

Jobs in education field dont pay much in this country.

ADHD is not easy to cope with, specially with a late diagnosis

Medical problems

It is hard to be satisfied every day is a new challenge with poor attitude. I have had some success but to slow.

It's important to have meaning or purpose in what you do, to see the results, to know it leads to something

Trying to balance being a wife, working mom, and providing my kids the best opportunities to be successful in this world

I could only choose 1 out of the list...however, this is a challenge as prices go up to maintain current standard of living

I have a wonderful family life, however I lost my beautiful mother in the Summer and my wife has had breast cancer so health and well being is a major concern. I am also concerned for the safety of my daughter growing up in the inner city, especially crime and transport safety

The minds of different people in the family think differently and expectations from both sides are usually unfulfilled, which leads to many problems.

So much quality is lost as result of mismanagement

I want to do a lott with little time and money. But I get by

I am not able to persuade people to engage in my line of thought

I have primary financial responsibility for my family and have for the last 15 years. I also am the primary manager of the house of the kids' schedule. I feel pressured much of the time.

I live a very happy life, so I do not have many challenges. The education never stops, there is always so much to learn. Especially because I work with people (I am a professional organizer) and want to help them the best I can.

Marriage is a challenging.

Because there are no teaching jobs and I am reduced to substituting- I feel really under valued and question why I want to continue in this field at all. I started my own business on the side to help with income which provides me so much more pleasure. Teachers are under appreciated for what they do- what they sacrifice. Parents see them as glorified babysitters which is tiring to me.

Not being able to look forward with any sense of security for my family.

I feel I haven't found my purpose in life, or something that makes me truly happy.

Keeps me from doing the things I love to do

As much as I love my kids, I don't actually enjoy the cooking, cleaning, negotiating and effort involved in parenting.

My job is not fulfilling. I am currently looking for something that will bring me satisfaction and give me purpose. I want to enjoy my job.

Because of the mismatch between my values and the values of the financial sector I work in.

Taking care of a NICU baby takes a toll on a family routine and an emotional toll on everyone.

I'm the mother of a 15 year old who is going through the struggle of asserting independence while not having to accept the responsibility that brings. It's a hard balance for kids that age, because you want to be an adult, but you just can't be 100% independent.

It affects everything else and consumes my mind.

Takes up most of my energy

Follows from the previous: reduced income means personal finances are stretched

I enjoy my job, but I don't love it, it doesn't "feed" my soul. At this point in my professional career, I have spent so many years working towards ??? that I don't even know what I would do if I were not doing exactly what I'm doing today.

Because I am getting bored of education quite quickly, I try to search for new experiences and challenges each semester. Sometimes that is too much work, or I do not get enough back for my efforts.

Not being able to lift the way I used to and lacking physical stamina after surgeries. It prevents me from competing with young people for certain jobs

I am diabetic.

I don't know

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SURVEY

I have been diagnosed with a medical condition that has recently changed my outlook on my future in a non-positive focus. I have two children (16 and 13) and a husband (married 20 years). I am currently making decisions to make sure my family is going to be able to live our current lifestyle (comfortable, not by any means wealthy) and help finance the kids for future education opportunities. I also have to balance my health in order to stay alive and continue to enjoy and offer a full life from me, for me and for them.

Put me on action, growing over my problems and fears. Fear to fail, with consequence of no work, no gain, then all the problems that come from lack of money...lol

Need more freedom in doing what I love to do.

It's too fresh for me to explain this now... I am sorry!

Everything in life flows from having "the end in mind," but I cannot figure out which ends I should be shooting for, and I am having trouble discerning God's will for my life.

Because it is the most pressing and without it, nothing else can get better

I need exercise.

Sometimes I can't find where I go, and what is the purpose of my work.

My wife thinks I dedicate too much time to my work and less to family (I don't think so); she doesn't share the happiness I get with every step ahead I walk.

competition competition competition

It's a lack of commitment on my part to meet these head on and deal with them.

Because my work and life is quite isolated at the moment. I am working on that though:)

I am searching for more meaning in the work I do. Without meaning, doing a job is difficult and quickly leads to burnout and depression.

Struggling to fall pregnant.

open communication never is easy with the ones most close to oneself

A lack of energy prevents living fully.

We are growing apart different opinions as to what is important in life material vs. acceptance

lack of focus is a great challenge, trying to avoid doing many things

Every day I feel I give the job more effort but I get so little money in return

