

9 LADDER OF TECHNOLOGY

In our modern culture we are born high up on a technological ladder. Brightly flashing before us like a neon sign is the vision of the fabled “good life” that we are to strive for. We can achieve the “good life” if we surround ourselves with enough labor saving, comfort providing, or entertainment devices. Even without trying to we are completely buffered from life on planet Earth with scores of modern conveniences. We have no idea of the cost of these comforts.

A child learns that if you want food, all you have to do is go to the cupboard, the refrigerator or the freezer and open up boxes, cans, plastic bags, or cartons and there is instant food in abundance. If the food starts to get low at home, you go to the local supermarket and there is food in such quantity and variety as to shame any king, all ready for the taking. Load up your basket and haul it home to eat. That is where food comes from.

If you need money, for example, to buy the food, you just give the people a little plastic card and type in a code number or write your name and the food is instantly paid for. If you want cash, use the same card and go to a cash machine or a bank teller. The money comes pouring out by the handfuls.

You want water? Turn a knob. Hot, cold, or luxuriously warm water flood out endlessly from sink, shower or bath.

You want light? Flick a wall switch and lights come on whenever and wherever you want.

Too cold? Adjust the thermostat by turning a knob and the room gets snugly warm.

Need clothes or shoes? Just go to a department store and give them that plastic card again. Any size, shape, color or style is available and waiting for you.

Have to urinate or move your bowels? A convenient toilet awaits you everywhere you go with plenty of soft paper to clean up after. One flick of the wrist and your wastes are washed away. You never even have to look at it or smell it.

Need to go somewhere? Hop into some machine: car, bus, train, boat or plane and it takes you rapidly and comfortably anywhere you want to go.

Too hot? Flip on the air conditioning.

Bored? Unlimited diversions tantalize and divert your attention. Television, videos, movies, radio stations, portable stereo CD players, newspapers, hundreds of magazines, books, internet websites of every taste and style. Las Vegas shows. Shop ‘til you drop.

Something breaks? Throw it out and get another one. Or call a repairman.

In pain? Take pills to eliminate physical, emotional or psychological discomfort.

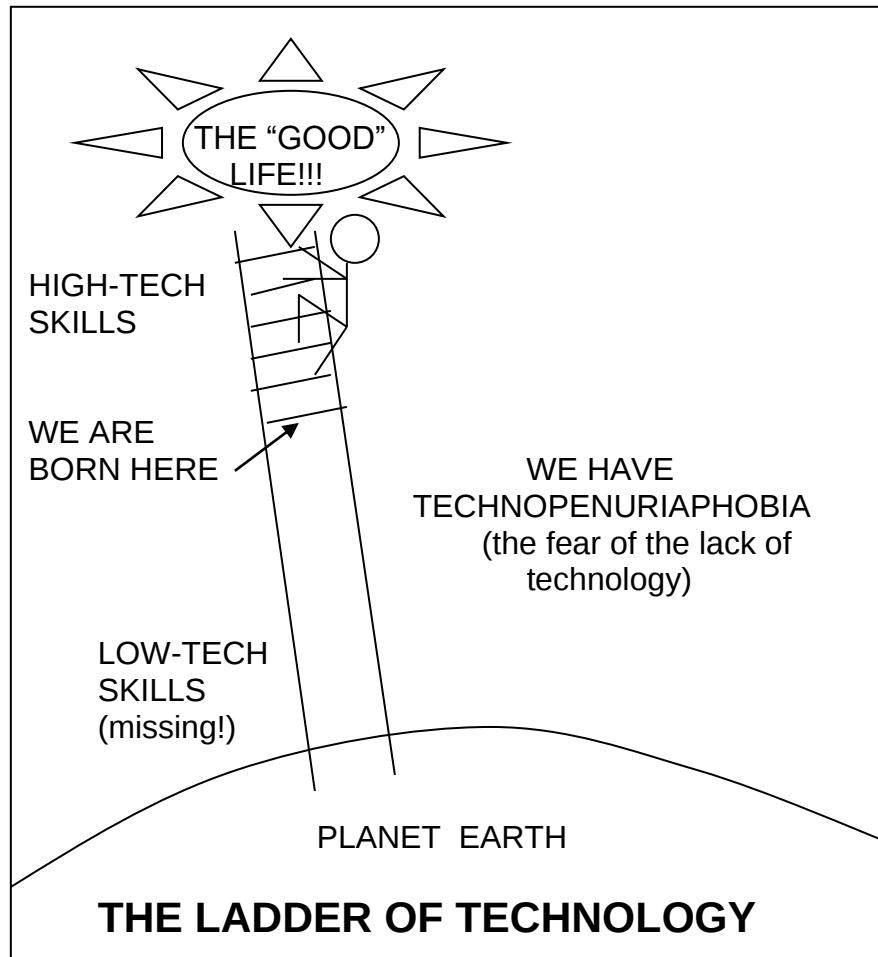
You have garbage? Just put it on the street. Big garbage trucks mysteriously come in the night and take away anything that you discard.

We are born into a culture and a time where we live high up on a technological ladder. We are skilled at living a modern life with technology. The technology is not the problem. The problem is the gap between us and planet Earth.

We subconsciously know that the rungs below us on the ladder are missing. If we dare to look down we realize deep in our guts that those rungs are not in place – and that if we were to step down or somehow slip and fall there would be nothing to grab onto and we would be in perilous danger. Ceaseless fear rumbles in our belly.

The rungs disappear when we forget that we and the planet are one. In our headlong rush towards the tantalizing modern comforts of tomorrow land we have forgotten how to live without technology. 100,000 years of hard earned life-knowledge is fading from our common inheritance as we become city dwellers. We have high-tech but we are missing low-tech. We no longer have the confidence that we can sleep without a bed, eat without a supermarket, see without a streetlight, move without a car, or be with ourselves without telephone, television and the full assortment of distractive media.

We unconsciously know that we are not prepared. We unconsciously know that we have lost the original technology that created civilization: starting fires by rubbing sticks together, finding food, making clothes, shelter and tools. The loss of low-tech knowledge creates a lethal gap between us and our planet, and that gap is filled with unconscious fear.



In order to start where we are we bring the unconscious fear into consciousness by giving it a name. Already we are doing research that proves that the harm done to motor skills and hand-eye coordination by placing children in front of two-dimensional computer and television screens in the years when they need to be developing three-dimensional perceptions and physical dexterity may be irreversible. (For more information research Indigo Children on the web.) Here we are talking about psycho-emotional damage caused by long-term exposure to a fear we are not aware of and have no culturally embraced cure for.

I hereby name the fear of the lack of technology “technopenuriaphobia” or “TPP.” The word penuria comes from the Latin and means scarcity, or deficiency. It is interesting to note that the word “technophobia,” which refers to the fear of technology and its effects, was created around 1964. Here it is 2004 and we now have “technopenuriaphobia,” the fear of the *lack* of technology and its effects. We have just discovered one of the causes of technophobia: if we become dependent on technology then if the technology fails or is not available the lack of technology may be lethal. We may die if we do not have our technology.

TPP is presently a particularly western affliction because you must first have lived with advanced technologies for a generation before the next generation forgets that you ever did not have them. Considering the virulent westernization of the rest of the world, technopenuriaphobia will quite likely affect many millions more in the near future.

Getting dropped into the technological gap can happen in an instant: the elevator stops between floors, the electricity goes out, the car breaks down late at night on some back road, the plane crashes, the boat sinks, the store is closed, the batteries go dead, a million different little accidents could instantly puncture the illusion our comfortable little techno-world.

We bodily know that if we were to somehow be separated from our modern conveniences – even just a few of them – we would feel terribly lost. Without our technologies we have little reason to believe that we could even survive on our own planet!

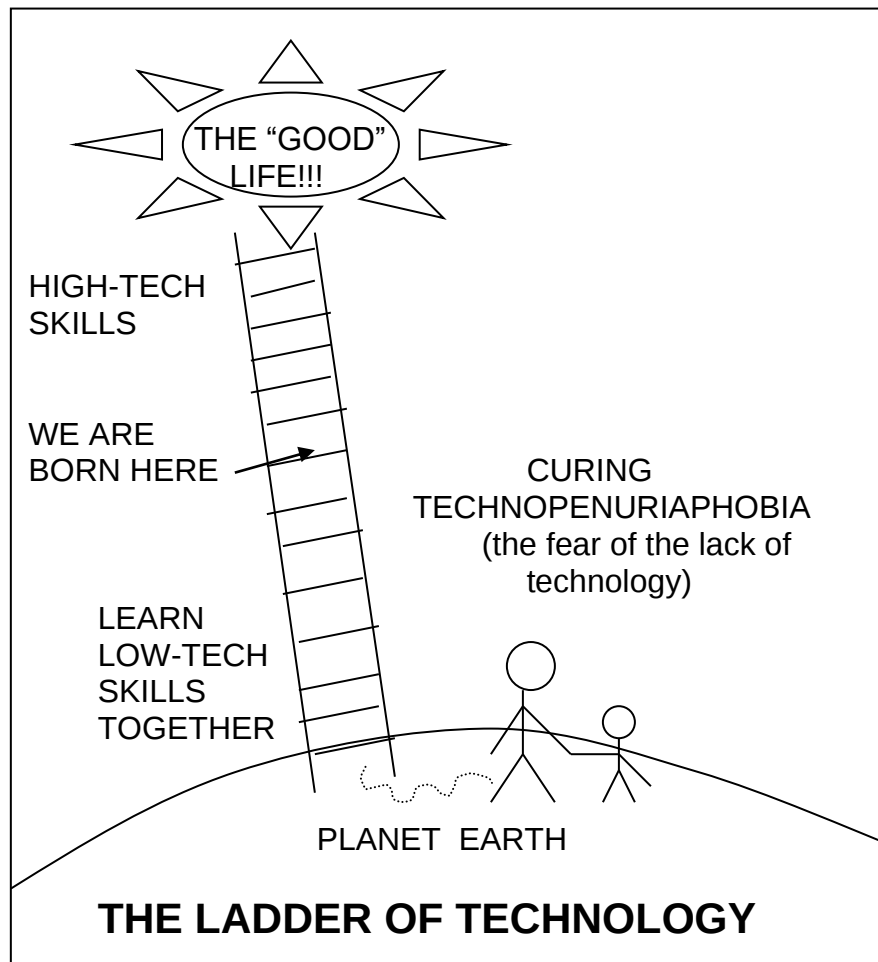
Unless we have trained ourselves in outdoor survival skills, we all have technopenuriaphobia bothering us deep in our soul. TPP limits the options from which we can choose and thereby forces certain decisions upon us that we think are free of coercion.

A Possibility Manager cannot function well without the low-tech rungs in the ladder of technology. Too many options are eliminated if a high level of technology must be supported in every choice that he makes. The option to be without technology in each moment must be retained, or the mind of the Possibility Manager is trapped in an invisible prison.

So what can we do? How can we heal ourselves from TPP? How can we get free of this insidious fear?

Consciousness creates freedom. We can learn low-tech skills and fill in the rungs. Assuredly it takes work to heal oneself of TPP. Work and time. You can make the work fun work, but nonetheless you will need to make intentional efforts. Listed below are some ideas for ways to heal yourself of this modern day affliction.

By the way, all of these processes are excellent activities to share with children. Engaging anti technopenuriaphobia measures is a powerful preventative that safeguards the basic sanity and self-esteem of your children for their whole lives. Your efforts may last for generations because your children could well pass the benefit on to their own children, and their children's children after that.



Please remember that we are not proposing a back-to-nature anti-technology movement. We are not promoting medieval or tribal lifestyles. What we are trying to do is fill a gap that makes us noncommittal, hollow, and inauthentic due to a deep terror. We are reclaiming freedom in our every day life and thinking. Possibility Managers need access to all worlds. By filling in the gap between you and your planet you are giving yourself access to additional dimensions and building a strong foundation into which you can relax and from which you can create more freely.

The next time you have a break, a weekend or a holiday, consider including some of the following actions, either alone, with friends or family. Engaging anti TPP measures is like taking vitamins to provide nutrients that are not supplied in our regular diet. It is just a smart idea.

GO CAMPING: Just get off the pavement for an hour, a day, a week, a month. Step away from civilization and live on a sandy beach, in the middle of a forest, on the top of a mountain, beside a freshwater lake. As you get better at camping, practice taking less and

less civilization with you. Start with leaving behind the camera, the radio, the CD player. You will know that most of the gap is filled when you head into the woods with only a knife – a round pointed butter knife.

GO BAREFOOT: Taking your shoes off and exposing the sensitive soles of your feet to the textures and temperatures of the surface of planet earth adds dimensions to your experience. Walk to the barefoot, even in the rain. (Leaving bare footprints in the snow really makes your neighbors wonder about you.) Take your shoes and socks off at the office. Whose office is it anyway? Make your house a shoes-off house.

DO WITHOUT: Try fasting for a day or three. Just drink water, tea or juice. Walk instead of using any machines to get you places all week. Walk through stores and do not buy anything. Put away the TV. Have radio free days. Clean out your garage and attic. Enter your weekend without a plan. Be silent for three days. Do without speaking. Do without sugar or meat or coffee for three days.

VISIT THIRD WORLD CULTURES: Spend time in Mexico, Asia, India, Africa, or your local ghetto. Not as a vacation, not as a tourist, but as a traveler – as if you were a native of the area. Travel on a shoestring budget and bring almost nothing with you. Spend a lot of time just sitting and being there. Learn to be with the local people even if you do not speak their language.

SIT IN THE MUD: Mud has strong cleansing and healing properties. Mud is the earth. You are made of mud. You do not have to sit in it, but stop considering mud as dirt. Our mothers trained us to be so clean, keep your clothes clean, keep your face clean. Heal yourself and get dirty! Hold mud. Get in contact with mud. Paint yourself with mud.

GO NATIVE. Dress native. Dress from a different culture or a different time. Dress yourself with leaves, sticks, dried grass, banana peels. Paint your face. Speak native. Practice saying out loud: “Nitduwallaninu dulluwalla.” This does not mean anything (I think...) but it sounds native.

GROW A GARDEN: Even if it is only potted tomatoes on your balcony, those tomatoes will taste different from store-bought. Vegetables grow in the dirt. There are bugs. There are gophers. The sun matters. The rain matters. Vegetables eat cow manure and rotting dead stuff. This is educational.

MILK A COW: Ice cream, yogurt, caramels, butter, and cheese all come from cows. Cows are another species of mammal. Get your hands wrapped around those warm teats and squeeze. The marvelous sweet white fluid that squirts out is milk. Milking cows has been a common human activity for ten thousand years. Do you know how to do it?

EAT WHOLE RAW FOODS: Just do not cook today. Eat only raw. Besides being extremely healthy and full of energy, you will spend no time cooking and have almost no dishes to wash. Eat raw vegetables, seeds, dried fruit and nuts.

FORAGE GATHER AND GRUB: Many parts of a pine tree are edible. Uncollected fruit and nuts fill many a neighborhood at certain times of the year. Just ask if you can pick some up. Add dandelions, watercress, wild mustard, plantain or miner’s lettuce to your salads.

EXPLORE THE GROCERY STORE: For no reason buy food that you do not normally eat. Figure out how to cook it. When I first learned to drive, my mother sent me to the grocery store alone to shop. I came home with a big purple vegetable that I had never seen before and asked, "What's this?" She said, "Drat! I don't like those!" But after learning how to cook eggplant from the cookbook I learned that I like them just fine!

SHOP FROM ASIAN, MIDDLE EASTERN OR AFRICAN STORES: Just buy things you do not know about and try them. The world is an unimaginable cornucopia overflowing with much more than oranges, apples and bananas. Try canned jack fruit, mountain apples, mangosteens (purple pool-balls with juicy white sections), rambutans (hairy lychee fruits), fried plantain (those giant "macho" bananas), boiled manioc root (usually covered in wax, better than potatoes), durian (looks like a deflated soccer ball with green spikes, tastes like onions and toffee), all kinds of beans, spices, sweets, herbs, drinks, and those things wrapped in fresh banana leaves. You (almost) never get sick, and it keeps blowing your mind.

MAKE CLOTHES: Sewing by hand rather than machine gives such a deep satisfaction. You do not have to wear what you make in public, although Halloween or Mardi Gras provides good excuses. Use leather, canvas, woven mats (men wear woven mats as a wrap skirt on formal occasions in Tonga) yarns or cloth. Try using no patterns. Try making shoes out of bark, leather, woven grass, or used car tires. Wearing clothes that you have made yourself is very rewarding.

START FIRES FIVE WAYS WITHOUT MATCHES: Can you even think of five ways? Let's see... Magnifying lens, steel wool and a battery, flint and steel, parabolic mirror (solar cigarette lighter), hot volcanic lava, lightening, rubbing two sticks together... That is seven. How else?

EAT BUGS: Yes. There are 1,462 recorded species of edible insects. Get fried grasshoppers with chili, salt and lemon in Mexico, fried cicadas and silk moth pupae in Japan, roast termites and crickets in Nigeria, canned baby bees, chocolate covered ants, and stir fried meal worms in the USA, snails are expensive delicacies in France, suck the back ends of water bugs at vegetable markets in Thailand, witchetty grubs and Bogong moths in Australia, the menu is wide and varied, and rich in protein and vitamins. For recipes check out [The Eat-A-Bug Cookbook](#) by David George Gordon.

READ BOOKS ABOUT OUTDOOR AND SURVIVAL SKILLS: I flaked my first obsidian arrowheads following instructions from a book. I started by first bow and drill friction fire from a book. When my pile of tinder burst into flames in my hands I did not know what to do because the instructions were incomplete. Luckily I was not in the house! Larry Dean Olsen produces my favorite well-illustrated clearly written outdoor skills books.

BUILD STUFF WITH WOOD, METAL AND STONE: Get your hands dirty. Use saws, hammers, chisels, wrenches, glue, bolts, screw drivers and build stuff. Design and construct shelving, cabinets, trashcans, desks, tables, stands, plant holders, walls, fences and gates. Wood, metal and stone are your basic building materials on this planet. Learn to shape them into your visualized forms. Make friends with them so that your caress finds their secrets without coercion and the materials become an extension of you.

TAKE STUFF APART AND FIX STUFF: We are so accustomed to giving things to repair men or throwing things away that we do not have a relationship to fixing things anymore. Instead, try to fix things. Simple little things, big complex things, simply give it a try. Even if

you have absolutely no idea how, grab your screwdriver, take it apart and follow your intuitive wisdom. Fiddle around. Just make sure it is unplugged first and then you will not blow yourself up. Even when professional repairmen say it cannot be done or cannot be fixed, try your best guess yourself. Why even yesterday the glass shop told me they could not cut my piece of tempered glass the way I wanted it. They should know. But I got out my electric hand grinder tool and started to buzz through the glass in a curve with a thin blade, and it is working. Be bold and trust yourself. You will need such experiences to refer back to when you start Creating Possibility. Doing the impossible is a Possibility Manager's bread and butter.

PRACTICE USING SLING, BOW AND ARROW, SPEAR, BLOW GUN, SWORD, BOOMERANG, CROSSBOW AND THROWING KNIFE: Knowing how to make and use simple archaic weapons will not necessarily save your life, but it will give you an active connection to indigenous hunters and warriors from a thousand generations behind you. Having a boomerang come back and land at your feet nourishes an easy confidence in your heart. Knowing that you can peg a grapefruit with a blowgun dart from fifteen meters puts an energetic bounce in your step. And you never know. You might need these skills if they hire you to play a part in an Indiana Jones movie!

LEARN FIRST AID: You can die quicker from bleeding than you can from lack of oxygen. But if it is not a gushing artery, just apply pressure on the wound and get them breathing again first. Unless they are still connected to a live electric wire, then knock it away before you touch them or you yourself could be the next victim. Thinking fast in an emergency depends on the habit of figuring things out in advance. Taking responsibility for learning standard first aid practices makes living and dieing not such a mystery, and provides you with more options.

MAKE CLAY POTTERY, SOAP, CANDLES, AND REED BASKETS: Ancient homemaking skills are all low-tech. But manual dexterity is a perfect model for energetic dexterity. I still have an old basket that I wove out of dried yucca leaves thirty-five years ago. It is ugly, but it works. And if I ever made another one it would be more beautiful and more practical. Trying your hand at these crafts gives you more appreciation for the artisans who still produce these items. You can always give away your hand-made household goods as wonderfully personalized Christmas presents.

WALK THIRTY KILOMETERS: We know how to pilot a half-ton internal combustion ground machine at speeds over one hundred kilometers per hour, but can we walk thirty kilometers when it breaks down? Thirty klicks is not so far. The old California missions were built about thirty kilometers apart because the monks could easily walk from one mission to the next in about a day. Knowing that you can walk thirty kilometers whenever you want to makes the whole planet your home again.