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org2o AGENTS OF CHANGE

IS REALITY CRIPPLING YOU?

by Christopher Black

It's screaming hot, pitch-black and I'm stuck in a cavity so tight that movement forward comes inches at a time. I cannot see past the glass of my mask. My ears are flooded with the sounds of panic, women screaming, children crying out.

It is hotter than I thought it would be. In the sticky, slow molasses of the moment, the suffocating and searing grasp of this experience is paralyzing me. My oxygen tank is getting low and starts to bleed out a whining warning that my time is getting short. Suddenly, my mind gives in. I'm done.

I pull off my mask and announce to the instructors that I am coming out. The sounds of panic, dutifully piped through the sound system cease, and I begin to extract myself; crawling backwards out of the fear and into humiliation.

This was the first time I ever felt true, paralyzing fear. Even though I knew that it was a training experience, my senses were flooded with a tsunami of warning signals that I did not have the strength to ignore. The way I perceived the reality of my situation was flawed. Of course, this is by design. The intent is to test the probationary firefighters; to help them understand how to deal with these stresses.

As humans, our ability to offer innovative thought and agile solutions when we are challenged by significant change events is tied to the realities we create for ourselves. [Isaac Lidsky's TED Talk](#) illustrates this beautifully. I invite you to take a few minutes to watch and reflect on his story.



Isaac Lidsky | TEDSummit

What reality are you creating for yourself?

