



It's around 2am and I'm on fire-watch duty. I dutifully alternate between adding wood to the fire and patrolling the perimeter of our "camp" which, in essence, is defined by the reach of the branches of the *mdoni* [waterberry] tree. My patrol consists of scanning the darkness with a powerful torch for any signs of life, and lo and behold, I suddenly see two pairs of eyes glinting back at me. These eyes don't come any closer during my watch, nor do they retreat; they're just watching this cluster of humans sleeping under the stars.

It's at moments like these – when you realise you're no longer at the top of the food chain – that a deep-rooted primal instinct resurfaces and kicks into action.

## PRIMAL RECALIBRATION

Disruption and chaos – political, economic, social and technological – seem to have grown exponentially in 2017. **Dion Chang** goes wild in order to find focus

It's both humbling and exhilarating.

This soul-stirring experience took place on a wilderness trail conducted by the Wilderness Leadership School in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park – South Africa's first World Heritage Site. The trail is classified as "primitive", which means there are no tents, showers or toilets and visitors come and go without leaving a trace. Oh, and you're not allowed to take watches, phones or any other digital devices on the trail.

It's literally a cold-turkey digital detox and, while most people instinctively think: "That's not for me", I can thoroughly recommend it – and I'm not even a happy camper.

The line between work and play has long been blurred. We're all digitally addicted (yes, you are) and that addiction negatively impacts you on a personal and professional level. The global mindfulness movement is seen as a means of recalibrating the schism between our online and offline lives, but it seems too touchy-feely for most.

Throwing yourself (willingly) into a primitive bush environment is touchy-feely in a different way, because moving that far out of your comfort zone is a visceral experience. It's like an injection of adrenaline administered to the heart – a

crash course in re-learning who you really are, how you fit in, what you're capable of and what your priorities should be in the grand scheme of things.

It's an extreme experience – which is the whole point. We're living in an increasingly volatile world, made more complex by the speed of change, which

in turn ensures that we're forced to make quick decisions, often with clouded vision and misguided egos.

Earlier this year, a video showing Uber CEO Travis Kalanick arguing with an Uber driver went viral. Later, Kalanick apologised for disrespecting the driver and added: "It's clear this video is a reflection of me – and the criticism we've received is a stark

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reminder that I must fundamentally change as a leader and grow up. This is the first time I've been willing to admit that I need leadership help and I intend to get it."

I would strongly recommend the Wilderness Leadership

School trail to him. It sharpens your intuition and instincts, but more importantly, it humbles you and strengthens your ability to empathise. And the impact on one's leadership style is profound.

As a fellow participant said of the experience: "You come off a trail like this and feel all the flotsam and jetsam of your soul stitched back together again." 🌈

Dion Chang is the founder of Flux Trends. For more game-changing business trends, visit: [www.fluxtrends.com](http://www.fluxtrends.com) Learn more about the Wilderness Leadership School at: [www.wildernesstrails.org](http://www.wildernesstrails.org)

