

Your Activity = $\int A_x \times B_x \times C_x \dots$

For any activity you undertake in life, from selling a horse, to arriving at work on time, to planning a vacation, certain variables interact with each other to determine the outcome.

Change the value of any one variable, and you affect the value of your outcome. But change the value of any variable, and you may also change the value of other variables as well, which then affects the outcome even more.

If you know what you want to achieve (your desired outcome on the left side of the equation), then you must figure out how to make the values of the variables on the right work together to equal what you want to achieve on the left. Merely finding all the causal variables is difficult. Putting them together in a sufficient combination with the right values is the hard part.

But be careful. After some point, finding more variables that have little or no causal power to your desired outcome is a waste of your time. So you have to balance finding the main causal or impacting variables, which is worth all the time it takes, against finding every last variable.

Some variables are necessary. Others are sufficient. You need to know the difference and how it impacts the outcome. For example, there may be 10 variables which causally influence your desired outcome. You may find 2 that are necessary when paired with any two others, which would then be sufficient for your level of desired outcome.

If you are doing any kind of planning, do not assume away any of your variables. It is critical to list all your known variables, then aggressively challenge how you know their values and validate them all. This forces truth into your daily life. There is no such thing as magic pixie dust. Thinking and work go together to achieve any desired end.