

Just Keep Going

Embracing the Direct Path - by Sgt. Steve

I once worked with an Officer who had his sights set on becoming a K9 handler. He is a great guy, a super solid officer, the kind you'd be relieved to see show up on a hot call. Every time a K9 spot opened, he was there, trying out for it. But the land navigation part of the selection process was like a brick wall for him.

The Obstacle: *A wild nasty stretch of Florida woods, point A on one side, point B on the other, a mile apart. The challenge was to cross through the woods in a straight line. Sounds straightforward (pun intended), but when you have to deal with dense foliage and swampy terrain, it's a different ball game.*

My buddy tried multiple times but just couldn't get through to point B without getting lost. The frustration and disappointment were weighing him down.

After another failed attempt, he asked if I could help him out. Knowing I had Marine training, he thought I might be able to help. We geared up for a trial run. I tagged along, watching him. He was doing good until a thicket of palmetto bushes got in the way. He veered off course, trying to find a way around, but he just got lost in the process.

He gave it another shot, but this time, when he reached the bushes, I stopped him and asked him to point towards point B. He did, right through the dense bushes.

I asked him, **"Why don't we go straight through?"**

He rattled off a bunch of reasons: the thickness of the bushes and vines, the swamp, the likelihood of scratches, and the potential to find snakes. I nodded and said, *"Yeah, but it's the most direct path."*

He decided to face it head-on. It wasn't pleasant; the underbrush was thick, and we got scratched up, bloody, and muddy. But we forged ahead. When we made it out of the thicket, and could finally see more than a few feet in front of us, a large truck rumbled by on the road that we had been trying to find.

We were at point B.

The realization hit him hard. He realized that he'd been so close all this time! That experience changed something in him...he got the point. The next time he went for the K9 selection, he owned it.

This story is a reminder that sometimes the most direct route is right through the challenges we're trying to avoid. Embrace the struggle and keep moving forward.

"Do the shit that you don't want to do. Just on the other side of it is your goal."