



# LIVE LIKE A WINNER

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PHIL DASS

# *Foreword*

The best way to live life is to take it one day at a time. Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans. Life is this and life is that... There are so many quotes on life and so many motivational books, and you are not to be blamed when you dismiss another one—like this one—with a “Oh no, not another one!”

Trust me, reading opens up the mind, and reading similar things again and again is a kind of evangelization, that will make you a more complete person. I have seen umpteen movies. Most of them are forgettable. But the most inane movie sometimes has a quote or a scene which teaches you something. From here I have learnt that you have to dig deep, dig harder, and tirelessly to find some learnings lessons. Sometimes learning lessons come easily and in an entertaining manner. Like this book. Hopefully.

Most of the things in the book are something you might already know. But when you hear it again, when you contemplate on a familiar thought, chances are that you will see a different dimension. That's all I wish you to do: Make you think. Get a growth mindset. Get a value-added persona.

What is this living wave? How do you live like a winner? Simple, as it is when explained, the ramifications are profound. Live above the living line. Assume for a moment that we can relive this life. You can, no matter how old or how young. You can change your life. In an instant. Or at the speed your thoughts are able to metamorphose into actions. So, read, contemplate, and apply.

The book is to be read and used as described in the first book, so I will not reiterate it here. It is short—to be read in one go. Or you can take your time.

Phil Dass  
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Dedicated To Good Friends  
Shiv Shankar Devaraj, Mohan Kumar C L  
Nirmal Kumar M, Arbind Gupta, Roy Devaiah,  
Manjunath Shetty, Prashant S G, Manoharan P,  
Naveen Rajashekhar, Shyamsundar,  
Girender Nath Singh, Kiran Budaniya,  
Satish Reddy, Yoganand S, Late Gopal Krishna S,  
Lawrence Ficker, Ravichandran J, Nagaraj  
Hebbandi, M R Savant, Swarup S. ....  
And all my OA - Bhadravathi, friends,  
all my classmates/friends from School (St  
Charles High, Bhadravati),  
College (Sir M Visveshwaraiah, Bhadravati &  
DVS, Shimoga)  
and Manasa Gangotri, Mysuru.

# *Chapter One*

## The Living Wave

There was a din, a cacophony of noises from the neighbourhood. A new building was coming up some 700 yards away. There was a huge trench dug up for the foundation, which was already showing up. The noise was the workers busy with their hammer and tongs, working on the concrete and metal necessitated by the groundwork. From elsewhere came some music that played at some venue. There were sounds of traffic and a humdrum that persisted all through, but that slowly faded into the background. And his office, with its large open windows, allowed the din to persist. When I told him later about the noise, Svaha had laughed out aloud. "I prefer to call it the sound of life." I wondered at the thought. But I digress.

"What is the living line?" I asked Svaha, "—or is it the wave?" I was a little apprehensive that he might think I was stupid. I was. But only I knew it. So why tell the world?

He looked at me in an amused manner. Not rewarding at all. He looked away and I kept looking at him, waiting for an answer. Did he smile condescendingly at me?

He spoke, looking back at me, "It's a wave, but you can also depict it as a line from afar."

"It is an imaginary line—?" I asked him seriously. Then I immediately regretted it. It seemed like *déjà vu*, when you state the obvious, knowing fully well that the question was unwarranted.

"In reality it is abstract, in the abstract it is real." He replied, laughing out loud.

Confounding. I found the statement an oxymoron. It was that kind of a feeling that required a thesaurus or a dictionary. I looked at him inquiringly.

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"Yes," he said, "it is an imaginary line or a wave. But it is as real as our feelings, or emotions. It is real, and we strive all our lives to live above it. Picture this: if everything above the line is a good feeling—happiness, etc.—then below the line would be sadness and all things negative. We are constantly trying to stay above the line. Most people live on the line, and there are many who are doomed to live below the line. Something like accounts: in black or in the red. In our case, we can use red for below and blue for the above... and the line itself can be grey or black..."

I blubbered, "I cannot follow your thought..."

"Okay," he said, "let me lay it down in a clearer way."

I waited patiently.

"You've heard of the web of lies?"

I nodded my head.

"Yes, it is easy to understand because the premise and the fact is that once you tell a lie, you have to tell more lies to hide the truth. Most of us do. Many escape unhurt or with minimal damage; many others suffer. The web turns into realistic threads or ropes of your own doing that entangle you."

I nodded my head again. It was easy to visualise it. I had been through the experience. I shuddered thinking of it.

"So, you understand that what was done to evade a situation made a difference to that part of life, but it involved you to burrow deeper into a chasm of lies?"

"Indeed, I do," I replied with confidence.

"So, is it difficult to assume there must be a wave, a line that controls our life without us being aware of it?"

"I presume it is a possibility," I replied with as much truth I could muster.

"The imaginary web is to be focused on. What if this web was stretched to form a linear line, a wave, and that is what we are forced to navigate or ride... instead of lies, we have a whole lot of other innumerable factors —"

"—Such as?" I ventured.

"—Such as our genealogy—our genetics—our childhood, education, our family and friends, our emotions, truth, and lies..."

I wondered.

"Of course, the lies entangle us, and we flow on, yet because of other threads... other waves..."



"Yet some do well..."

"Some do well despite their lies, because they are supported by other factors, other elements..."

I was sceptical. "But people already know it—"

"Yes, many know it but refuse to acknowledge it. The line is a living line. Or a wave. It is something that ties down to living as we know it. It is powerful as other elements of life."

"—All the elements are real and have a form!" I exclaimed out of exasperation.

"—This is as real as magnetism, black holes, black matter... not as real as the elements of earth—fire, air..."

I was beginning to comprehend him ever so slightly. "Ah!" was my response.

He continued, "Though it is imaginary, we have to assume it is real. Like a Lakshman Rekha. (This in reference to a line drawn by mythological Lakshman, Lord Ram's brother, forbidding Sita not to step over the line. In general, it refers to any commandment that draws a line between what you can and can't do. Rekha can be a line or a boundary.) But in this case, it does not forbid you to cross it. It, in fact, encourages you to rise above it. In fact, I have termed the line as Ram Rekha."



"Okay," I mumbled while I tried to follow his train of thought. It seemed like it was in a tunnel.

"By the way, there is a place called Ramlekhapur or something similar in the northern part of India. A lot of temples and a river... it is supposed to be the place where Lord Ram is said to have drawn a line on the ground—with his bow or an arrow—to show till where his kingdom extended."

"Interesting, there is actually a place like that?" I asked.

"Indeed." He replied. "But let us talk about this wave..."

I nodded my head.

He was into the topic. "The living wave, as I like to call it, is an omnipresent wave, and this world is filled with billions of them. Just as the planets move about due to gravitation, we too—this wave, our life—is controlled by gravitation that cannot be explained. I am not a physics guy or a scientist, but I dare say that if studies are conducted, we might be able to prove it. But I know one thing for sure—we live a linear life. We count our life in years, and we go from 0 to 100, sometimes less and sometimes more."

He stopped and looked at me questioningly. I understood him slightly—what he was trying to say, but it was confusing. I swayed my head unknowingly.

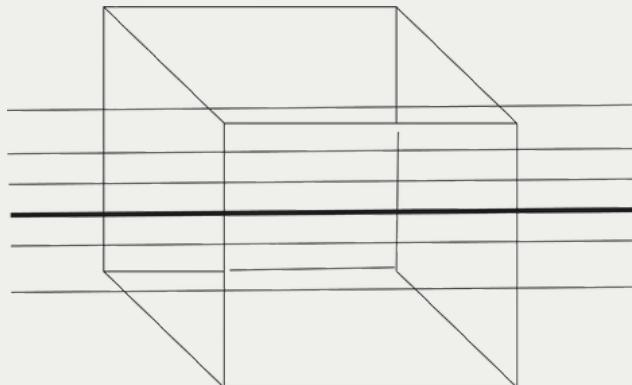


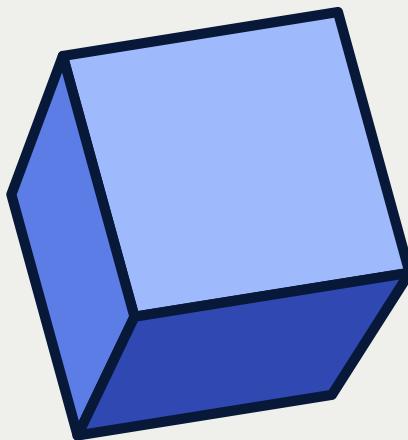
He took it as a confirmation that I was in agreement. "I mean gravitation in the spirit of its actions. Gravitation in the real world is controlled by the polar regions. On the earth itself, we are pulled to the core by about 9.8 meters per second squared. This living wave has a different gravitational force. For want of a simpler word, I am using gravitational—in the loosest sense of the word—but what it attracts is our life, our living."

I was lost again.

He looked at me patiently and then continued. "It has a greater pull on the good things in life and has little swing over those that are beneath the line. So, when you succeed, it is harder for you to maintain it. And when you despair, you go down, and it is easy to stay down. The force helps you by not interfering with this segment of you, your life. Let me show you a diagram."

He showed me a graph. It looked like this.





"The cube is just to give you an idea that the linear life we lead is only because of time. There are a whole lot of other variables at play that mould our lives. Like laziness, procrastination, indiscipline, anger, rudeness, etc., can take us down. The same way, hard work, discipline, planning can make us rise above the line. The thick line is our living line... I refuse to call it the life line, because it can mean something else. Many argue that life is no longer linear. It is not: That is why the living line is enclosed in a three-dimensional box, which allows us to see that there are numerous things at play here. Other than that, it is semantics. Easier to understand."

"So, you mean that we live presumably in a life governed by the routine, the positive and the negative aspects of life playing like a kind of a pendulum?" I asked, wondering whether I was right.

"—Indeed, you are right. On the top side of the line are the positive aspects, and the bottom has the negative. And the force is like gravity, but it is different for different people. And there might be similarities too, but in general, if we assume life by this standard, we can evaluate life and map every life. The good part is, we can help ourselves stay above the living line—"

"How do we do it?" I asked, suddenly very intent on knowing more about this new direction. "Is it possible for us to chart our lives, to be successful... to be happy... always?"

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The wise old man looked at me, amused, and smiled. "Possible, yes. It is simple, and yet, complicated."

Damn, I said to myself. There's always a catch somewhere. But I was eager to know more.

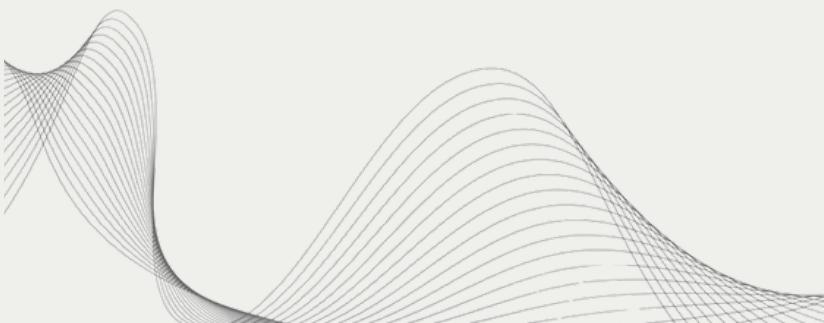
"—Let me be clear. The line is not actually a line... it is more like a wave. Don't think of it just as a single line wave, but as a wave with multidimensional properties. If you were to see a wave with a lot of interconnected lines... from a distance... theoretically... it looks like a line, but get closer, and you will see a million lines acting together, just like the human body is made of atoms, electrons, and protons—"

"That's chaos!"

"It could be. It is for many. There are so many forces working for us to live by the line... the wave. Life is chaotic when it is not controlled. That is why we have to work on ourselves... our words, our actions, our nature, our principles... in general, our lives are chaotic."

I pondered what he said as he got up and went to his table and picked up an A4 paper and handed it to me.

I looked at it. It had a figure of a wave in lines.



"Is this what our lives look like?" I asked him.

"Yes," He replied and continued, "No life is alike, and that is why no wave is alike. But in their reactivity, their reaction to stimuli... they are similar."

I could only ruminate on this rationale.

Then I had to ask him. "How does one live like a winner?"

He contemplated for a while and then said, "Live like a winner. It is there in the statement itself. Like. That is the key word. It does not mean that you have to be a winner to feel like a winner. We don't always win everything. Most of our life is lived on the line. Routine. Ordinary. We are not always competing. We are not winning elections or a football or cricket match all the time. It happens only a few times in life. Some are winners all the time. But they live far above the line... such that... that line becomes the new normal. Like famous film stars like Shah Rukh Khan or an affable prime minister like Narendra Modi. We have an option to live like winners. We can't all be famous or keep winning. The nice part is that we have a commonality with the famous... the rich... we are participants in this life. We live too. Ordinary to some. Always something special to yourself, to someone close to you. Why live it in an ordinary way or like a loser? In life, we are all winners, in one way or the other. So, we have to live like winners. In doing so, we will also be living above the line, we will be riding the wave... Let that become a new normal for us ordinary folks..."



He drifted off with a sigh.

I wondered whether he lived like a winner.

"Do you live like a winner?"

"Of course!" His reply was instantaneous and confident. "Do I appear any other way to you?"

I said no.

"I am lucky I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. No hassles anywhere. Some heartaches during youth and disillusionment in the middle age. But looking back, I have no regrets. I am getting old, but thankfully I have my senses intact. I live life like that. Every morning, I get up feeling like a winner." He smiled widely and continued, "If you wake up alive in the morning, you are already a winner!!"

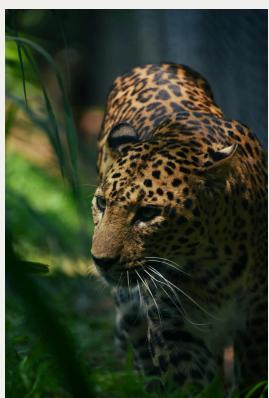
I nodded in agreement. Perhaps it was an oft-repeated phrase. I had read it somewhere. Perhaps a WhatsApp forward... But now I could see some sense in it. How lightly we take life in our childhood and youth! It's only the old who treasure their lives, their health, their words... A pity that by then they have passed their prime and make no impact on society... except politicians and film stars...

I waited for him to continue.



"Accepting yourself, understanding yourself... is the primary route to being a winner. You should be able to understand the basics of what is required of you if you want to achieve your goals. If you know what you are capable of. Of course, some have insane desires but are not capable of achieving them. Some want things that are beyond them and yet will pursue it diligently, with effort, and they get there... That is the first rule, as Socrates or some other philosopher, has said: Know yourself. I can add to it. Know the world. Know your limitations. Know the path to your goal... if you don't know, don't want to know... then you are doomed. The first element for every winner is knowledge. Of life and its unpredictability. I can go on about this factor, but let me talk of virtues that will help one become a winner.

"Gratitude. That's a number one virtue. And it is rightly said that it is the mother of all virtues. To me, it makes sense. Because gratitude makes you kinder, more compassionate, more cheerful, more hopeful, cut some slack for mistakes—in yourself and others—it definitely makes you a better person. It makes you a winner—" He paused for a moment, getting into the topic and slightly animated. "Gratitude helps you break from the shackles of entitlement. From ego. It makes us humble. And recent studies—scientific studies—have shown that humility helps us gain confidence and an ability to tackle our problems with a calmer mind. When you are thankful, you are being humble and grateful.



Imagine waking up alive in the morning and you are thankful. Religion strives because it has a large measure of gratitude sprinkled in people, towards their god or gods. And it works wonders! Gratitude fills you with grace... To many in English, this word says a lot. Anugraha in Kannada is somewhat acceptable. But in Hindi, you have a whole lot of words used... like sundar, which actually is beautiful in English. Then there is krupa and daya, which again translated into English means kindness, which is close. It also means divine favour or kindness. Or Eeshwar Ki Daya in Hindi."

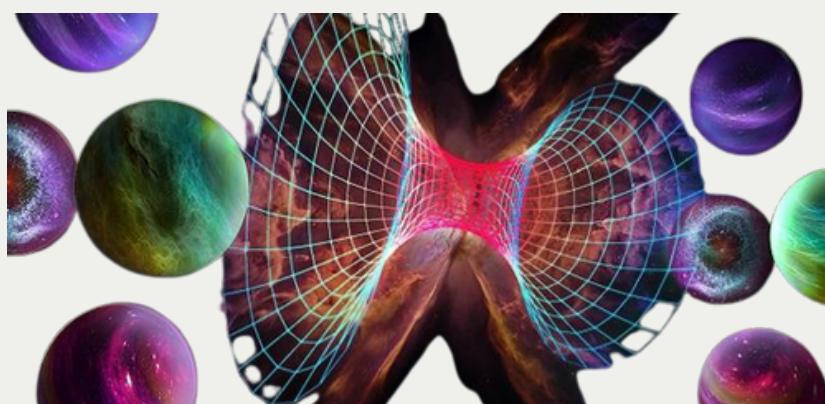
I heard him in fascination. Indeed, grace was a difficult word to translate into other Indian languages. But it embraces and encompasses many feelings... was I right? ... or perhaps it should be...

And while I pondered on grace, he continued. "Yes, gratitude fills us with grace... compassion... I dare say that the most graceful persons in the world are those with gratitude in their hearts. And when you are filled with grace, it gives birth to other virtues—like humility, compassion, kindness, patience, loving... you name it, it covers all—"

"You mean to say, to be a winner, you need only one ingredient? Gratitude—"

"You are right!" he said, "Just like you—"

We were interrupted by a knock on the door. It was one of the managers, and he had come to clear the week's menu. He had to go to the market to buy groceries and other material.



After the help had left, Svaha was busy with his accounts book, and he suddenly looked up and said, "There is another way to prove the existence of the line."

I looked up at him quizzically, as I was perusing a coffee table book on architecture across the globe.

"Huh?" I mumbled, trying to get my bearing. I got him after a while. He was talking about the living wave.

"What is that?" I asked him.

"Have you heard of the Fibonacci Number?"

"Something about the preceding numbers making up the next..."

"Yes, it is a unique number, or pattern, that is visible to the eye. There is a pattern in which lives are formed, the petals of a flower, leaves, rabbits, etc... The Fibonacci number holds true for most of them. The Fibonacci Number itself is simple... They can be calculated mathematically. It is a set of numbers that starts with a zero or one—followed by a one, then by another one (if we are starting from zero), and then by a series of steadily increasing numbers. The sequence follows the rule that each number is equal to the sum of the preceding two numbers. The Fibonacci sequence usually begins with the following 14 integers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233 ... (He wrote this in his notebook and showed me). Each number, starting with the third, is as in the prescribed formula. Let's say, the seventh number, 8, and it is preceded by 3 and 5, which add up to 8. This goes up to infinity..."



I stared at him. I had heard of this sequence earlier. It was supposed to be spiral and...

“—It is also known as the golden ratio or the divine proportion. So, our lives are bound to proceed in the same manner as dictated by the ratio...”

I wondered at the way the universe worked.

“The earth formed though a scientific process... or God did, if you want to believe it, but the basic fact is that math was the crucial aspect of all creation. Mathematics, or physics, played a plum role in the make-up of the universe—”

“—So, the various chemicals, gases, the laws of gravitation, etc.—all existed prior to man’s discovery of them?” I asked, and then realised it was very dumb of me.

“You hit the nail on the head. Did you know that based on their atomic weight, some elements of the periodic table—with the knowledge of their name and properties—were understood to exist prior to their discovery... and the last one was found only in...”

He stopped and fiddled around with his mobile phone and then his eyes lit up.

“There... it is the element called Oganesson, discovered in 2002. It is a gas. Oganesson is the heaviest element known to date. Quite a few surprises in its uniqueness. That is the thing. We are given the answers with the question of finding out the how and why. So, it is predictive, but not easy, and sometimes the answers are perplexing...”

It was hard following his line of thought. But there was a spark of light ahead in the tunnel.

It seemed that mathematics played an important role in life. Or numbers. I said so to him.



He nodded his head, "That's why we have a commandeering line that governs us. For example, we have 23 pairs of chromosomes on our DNA. For a few, it can vary, usually by an extra pair, and they might be taller with some gene deficiency... some are born with Down's syndrome... So yes, numbers play an all-pervasive role in our life... and thereby life is nothing but a controlled element that follows the diktat of evolution. We have pairs of most things... like legs, arms, eyes, ears, kidneys... that's numbers too. (but why one heart, liver, pancreas??) We are similar. Evolution over millions of years has created us, perhaps with some trials and errors, a Darwinian methodology perhaps, but here we are—human beings, supreme beings on this earth, and we continue to progress despite so many obstacles—"

He stopped, perhaps to ponder on his words.

"Perhaps," He continued, his voice doubtful, "religion is right in its philosophy that a supreme being is the reason for creation. But that sounds so complicated. It seems like a complicated process... Reminds me of the junkyard tornado fallacy, which was, interestingly, coined by an atheist... Fred Hoyle. He said the probability of life on earth is based on false assumptions—he compared it to a tornado sweeping through a junkyard and creating a Boeing 747. The improbability of that happening is the many theories that abound on the creation and life, and the truth may never be known in our lifetime... or forever. We can very well call it the Jugaad Fallacy... You will see a lot of these contraptions which seem like they have been formed when a tornado swept the garage!!"

(The word Jugaad is a Hindi word for contraption. It can be used as a metaphor too.)

"In other words, we are the jugaad." He went silent after he said it, and I wanted to push his thoughts towards another direction.

I wondered aloud, "So religion... has an upper hand in this regard...?"

"Yes, very much so. Perhaps it does give them the boasting rights, but the truth is we don't know." He replied, as he went on to answer his cell phone, which was buzzing away softly.



# *Interlude One*

## The Scorpion and the Frog



This tale features a scorpion and a frog. Some versions feature a scorpion and a turtle. Either way, the story does not change, and the moral remains the same.

A scorpion wants to cross a delta but, as you know, a scorpion cannot swim. It requests a frog by the shore to carry it across. The frog laughs. (And the frog was far away from the scorpion.) "Are you kidding me?" it asks the scorpion, "Everybody knows you sting and kill frogs like me! Why would I carry you?"

The scorpion folds its hands—okay, its pincer or claws—and promises not to sting. "I won't, I won't. I promise I won't."

The frog ponders. The scorpion wrings its fingers. Okay, its pincers.

The scorpion then makes a decisive point. "I won't sting you because if I sting you, you will die, and I will also drown and die! So, why will I sting you???"

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This sounded quite logical to the frog, and he agreed to carry the scorpion on his back while he swam across the calm waters.

But the scorpion is a creature of habit. Halfway through, he has an irresistible urge and with his poisonous stinger he stings the frog. The poison works fast, and the nearly dead frog cries out to the scorpion, "Why, why, why?"

The scorpion replies with a wry smile, "What can I do? It's in my nature."

End of the story.

The living wave is very much like nature, encompassing our nature. We do things because we are forced to. Something that keeps us from reaching our goals. Or, alternatively, making it that much easier. Like young hearts fall in love so easily and the old become too cynical. Hormones or life?

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