

Peace of mind

Once Buddha was walking from one town to another town with a few of his followers. This was in the initial days. While they were travelling, they happened to pass a lake. They stopped there and Buddha told one of his disciples, “I am thirsty. Do get me some water from that lake there.”

The disciple walked up to the lake. When he reached it, he noticed that some people were washing clothes in the water and, right at that moment, a bullock cart started crossing through the lake. As a result, the water became very muddy, very turbid. The disciple thought, “How can I give this muddy water to Buddha to drink!” So he came back and told Buddha, “The water in there is very muddy. I don’t think it is fit to drink.”

After about half an hour, again Buddha asked the same disciple to go back to the lake and get him some water to drink. The disciple obediently went back to the lake. This time he found that the lake had absolutely clear water in it. The mud had settled down and the water above it looked fit to be had. So he collected some water in a pot and brought it to Buddha.

Buddha looked at the water, and then he looked up at the disciple and said, “See what you did to make the water clean. You let it be ... and the mud settled down on its own – and you got clear water... Your mind is also like that. When it is disturbed, just let it be. Give it a little time. It will settle down on its own. You don’t have to put in any effort to calm it down. It will happen. It is effortless.”

What did Buddha emphasize here? He said, “It is effortless.” Having 'peace of mind' is not a strenuous job; it is an effortless process. When there is peace inside you, that peace permeates to the outside. It spreads around you and in the environment, such that people around start feeling that peace and grace.



Working under incompetent boss?

At times due to many reasons we are headed by a person who is not so competent technically and otherwise. The person may have reached that position due to:

1. Lack of another competent person available, so was chosen as best option out of only option
2. Job rotation policy of the organization
3. The person is good technically but incompetent in people skills which gets discovered later after talent drain.

I have seen these people and generally I would like to divide them in three categories:

1. Who knows they lack competence and therefore make an extra effort to get along very well with the team so that incompetence does not hinder the achievement of department goals
2. Who knows it and doesn't want others to know and create terror in the team by using authority and surrounding self with chamchas - talented people are subverted
3. Those who are blissfully unaware – they normally come to know only when the organisation informs them in a subtle way

The organisations having the second category of people (who use authority to put people in their place) are able to retain only such sycophants and ultimately the organization goes down the drain. We all probably like admiration and dislike criticism but who is doing it with us is very important....

In such cases where due to any reason talented person is not able to jump the ship and adapts to sycophancy and stop contributing with his/her full potential. And that to my mind is the biggest loss. So, What should be done? Is it down the hill after this? Fortunately, NO

Subordinates who are working under such bosses should take the following steps (not in any order), in order to successfully tide over this difficult scenario –

1. Chances are your boss may lack in some critical technical competency – so here's your chance to ensure your boss doesn't take you for granted – become an expert in that critical skillset and “Make yourself indispensable”
2. Make them aware of this habit at an opportune time & place and let them know how you feel
3. They would not be terrorizing all the times. So, praise them appropriately when they do something right
4. If things become unbearable and you feel like quitting yesterday, then go to your boss's boss or HR and inform them.
5. But, if your boss is the ultimate boss – then quit



Finished drawing

Drawn by Mr. Suresh Mohan Semwal

Do we ever get to finish our drawings or it always remains incomplete? Or whatever we drew, however we drew, till whatever point we drew that was supposed to be our drawing? Is there any The End or whenever it Ends that is The End? Is there any perfect drawing or whatever we drew was perfect for us? Intriguing questions... Isn't it? By the way, my first abstract drawing.....

We all have heard the advice that live to your fullest, do your best, unleash your potential etc. Isn't it? It's like creating your perfect drawing or piece of work.. It's about completing everything the way you wanted to complete, in short, bidding goodbye with satisfaction.

Let's recall the names of some people who are hugely respected and are considered to be role models be most of us I believe...

Martin Luther King, died without fulfilling his dream. Mahatma Gandhi, saw two nations being created on the basis of religion and almost no one practices what he preached.

This list can be endless, isn't it so?

Therefore, the question, does anyone ever gets to complete his drawing as per his satisfaction? Not many I guess.

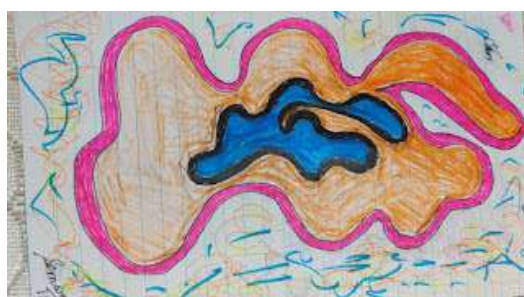
On a second thought, maybe the ending that we plan were not achieved but they're complete in its own way.

Just because a child is at a certain age doesn't mean that it's unfinished or incomplete painting. Ageing and dying, is it the completion, achieving what one wants to achieve, is that the completion?

Our list of wishes never end, therefore we keep adding more after what we have already achieved. Should we just focus on underachieved or also look at what we have achieved as milestones. Is milestone not an achievement? Dying with unfinished goal, is it incomplete? Or it just shows that the person aspired for more than the available time?

Is there any completion at all? is it complete the moment we decide it to be? Should we label completion as per success parameters of the world?

I guess, everything and every moment is complete in its true nature. If we are living with wakefulness every step is complete in its order. Nothing is ever incomplete. Everything is perfect. It is how it is meant to be. To realise it we just need to be awake, alert and aware...



Routine defines us not ad hoc activity

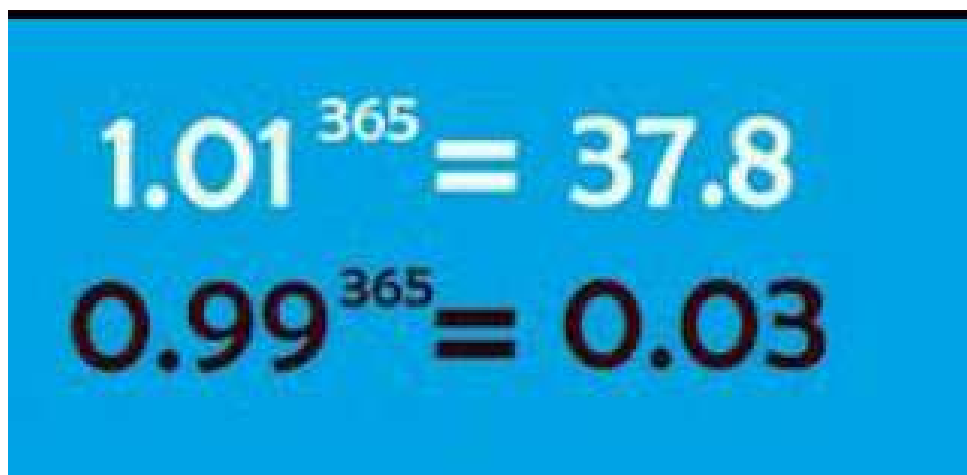
We are what we do in our routine. Our routine is a reflection on quality of goals we are pursuing. We should not be judging anyone on the basis of deviations rather with routine.

Our ad hoc behaviours (good bad both) may occur due to various controllable or uncontrollable circumstances but our routine behavior is surely a reflection of who we truly are.

For example, some people might drive rash once in a while due to specific emergency, but they can't be called rash drivers. Some may drink alcohol once in a while but can't be labeled as alcoholic.

Similarly some may work sincerely once in a while, we must not label them as sincere. Isn't it?

Doing right things on a routine basis, however, tiny they are may take us to superior heights one day and cutting corners in a tiny way will also become a big reason for unsatisfactory results. So, what do you do in routine? Think!


$$1.01^{365} = 37.8$$
$$0.99^{365} = 0.03$$

Trust

Did anyone break your trust? Did you feel broken at anytime? Did you feel betrayed or shattered? Is there any way to come out of it?

Suresh Mohan Semwal

You may have heard that, 'You can't fix what has been broken. Even if you try to glue it back, it will never be the same'. I humbly would want to submit that nobody stops us from making it better, why bother about keeping it same? Why not more valuable than before?

Someone rejects you, you become shattered. How about working on yourself and becoming more valuable and let the person who rejected you regret his/her decision. In Japan, they have an art form called Kintsugi in which breaks and repairs are treated as part of the object's history. Kintsugi means "golden joinery" in Japanese. Broken ceramics are carefully mended by artisans with a lacquer resin mixed with powdered gold, silver or platinum. The repairs are visible, yet somehow beautiful. These mended objects look magnificent and their value gets enhanced.

Think about it. Every painful experience has provided us golden deeper insights, wisdom and strength. We all have a choice, whether we wish to become wounded or wiser. Do we learn our lessons after such incidents and become stronger or ignore the lessons and become victims? "What doesn't kill me, just makes me stronger." Think.



Business Suicide

How do businesses commit suicide?

1. Ignorance:

Customers are looking for you and you are not even aware. You are not accessible, approachable in this hugely connected world.

2. Incompetence:

Customers are approaching you but you are not responding on time. Not providing right solutions to customer needs and problems. Responding to calls, mails and orders is slow and incorrect.

3. Indifference:

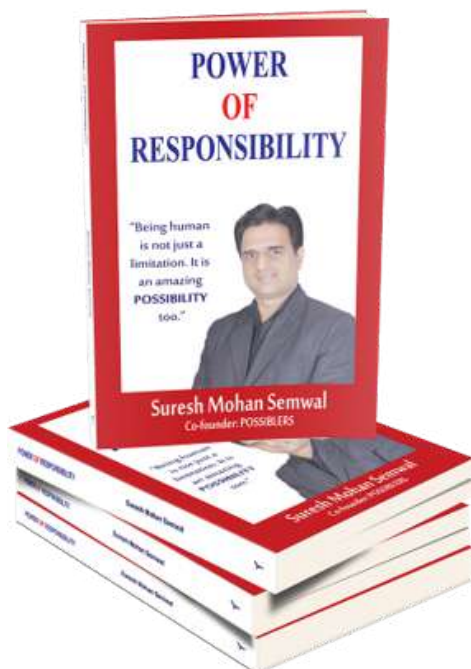
Existing customers are exiting and you are not inquiring the reason.

4. Insensitive:

Customers have been giving feedback and requests but you are rigid with your product, price, people or process.

5. Inappropriate:

Inappropriate selection of people in organisation or inappropriate allocation of job. Using inappropriate modes of communication.



Vasde raho, Ujad Jao

Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj along with Bhai Mardana ji visited a village where the people were very mean and did not pay any attention to spiritual values or honesty in their lives. Upon leaving the village after some days he rose his hand up and blessed the villagers and said – “Vasde raho”(May you remain here and prosper). Next day they reached another village.

Here, contrary to the people of the previous village the residents were very kind, honest and spiritual minded. They respected and paid utmost respect to Guru Nanak Dev ji. Guru ji spent some days there very comfortably and then bid farewell to village. While leaving, on outskirts of village Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj rose his hand up again said, “Ujad Jao” (May you get displaced and spread).On hearing this Bhai Mardana ji was taken by surprise.

He asked the Guru why he did so. The Guru’s response was simple : These people are good people with great values, and if they leave the village and go to different parts of the world wherever they go they will spread these values among the local population. More people will get influenced and become good and ethical (by doing their sangat). The world will change for the better. Whereas people from the first village had no values and thus must live there only because these are not the values that need to be spread.”



DEFEND THE DEFENDER

In Shreemad Bhagwad Gita Chapter 1, shloka 10-11, Duryodhana while boasting about himself and his strong army, mentions that "An army is as strong as it's defender (in this case it was Bhishma Pitamah) and therefore, we must protect Bhisham Pitamah at all costs."

While reading the Bhagwad Gita recently, I could relate this to our current situation of COVID 19, where our doctors, police, municipal workers and other essential services people are working as our defenders. Aren't they?

It's therefore our responsibility as citizens to protect our defenders and respect them. This disheartening news of some stupid landlords asking doctors to vacate the accommodation is suicidal for society. Don't they understand what if, God forbids, any member of their family gets infected and there are no doctors, then what? It will be a total chaos. These defenders are not only saving lives but risking their lives too. The least that we can do is to not make their jobs any harder.

My request to all our defenders would be that there are very few professionals other than our armed forces, who get this kind of a lifetime opportunity to serve the country in this way.

It is time to create history and come out of it with our heads held high that we fought from the front at this time of crisis. Whole country is supporting you barring few idiots, so don't pay attention. These scared idiots don't even know what they are thinking. This is an opportunity to become heroes in the eyes of our loved ones and become role models for society. It is really the time to take our professional glory to higher levels by fulfilling our responsibilities with utmost sincerity.

A salute to all our defenders. Keep it up guys.

Be safe, be sharp and keep us all alive!

Jai Hind!!!

Suresh M. Semwal



Customer Relationship Management

We all have heard Customer is the king, customer is the boss, but do we all understand who is a customer?

People generally believe that someone who uses or consumes our product or services is a customer.

Though, I agree partially with this definition but we must acknowledge that anyone who brings profit to the business is a customer. If someone uses my services and never pays is not my customer. Keeping this in mind I need to understand that my team members are also my internal customers. Their behavior and attitude also impacts on my business profitability. Similarly, there can be a situation where some companies have competitors on payroll. Competitor is someone who takes away your business expansion and profitability.

Relationship is an emotional connect else it's a contract. Treating other as equal, important and with empathy is a sign of relationship.

Management as we all know is about optimum utilization of resources. Therefore CRM is all about doing our best to create profitable customer experience which leads to business expansion and customer delight.

How to do it?

We need to focus on many areas:

1. Product/Service quality
2. People quality
3. Process Orientation
4. Marketing Strategy
5. Use of Social Media



Customer Retention can be done by building:

- Brand
- Service
- Communication

Hope is never a strategy and companies need to come out of their comfort zone and ask themselves

tough questions related to customer delight.

I would like to recommend the following questions that we must ask ourselves to remain ahead of

competition:

1. What problem do my product/service solve?
2. How do we solve better than others?
3. What guarantee can we provide?
4. How easy is for customers to continue doing business with us?
5. How soon the queries are answered?
6. What is our customer complaints resolution strategy and mechanism?
7. How frequently do we appear in our prospects or customers mind?
8. What extra can I provide?
9. Do we know the need, want, expectation and requirement of our customers??

If we ask the above sensible questions we can definitely find intelligent answers to retain our

customers and keep our business profitable. You may also contact

possiblers@possiblers.com for

more information or ask any questions related to CRM directly with Mr Suresh Mohan Semwal.



Save The Planet?

COVID 19 has been playing havoc for the last three months. The recent lockdown has brought our busy routine (so called) to a screeching halt. Till about four months back humans were making big plans to save the planet, save Tigers (In India), save forests etc. Greta, the youngest crusader of saving the planet had jolted the world leaders with her fiercely talk and we all took a vow to do something about it & at least some of us did do something like cleaning the beaches and planting couple of trees etc...

However, within few weeks of the human activity lockdown, Delhi's pollution levels have improved drastically, we can hear birds chirping, wild animals are seen on highways, rivers have become cleaner, air has become breathable, noise pollution is zero, ozone layer is recovering, deaths from road accidents are zero etc.

Come to think of it, our mother earth has given us so much that we can't even think about how much we need to repay. How many ventilators we had been using and for years together? Can you think of repaying the planet for that free supply of oxygen?

It is we humans, who are damaging the planet. Our activity is causing environmental degradation and seriously depleting its vital resources. Our biggest contribution is ever increasing population and the resultant pollution. Does it need our active help to be saved? Our absence is sufficient for the planet to flourish. Mother nature is an unrelenting, unforgiving force, so it is probably best if we treat her well, and maybe, just maybe we can make up for the damage that has already been dealt. If that happens, all other creatures will enjoy our planet better.

Let's wake up before mother nature takes it into her own hands. Let's respect, replenish and rediscover our life styles.

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Think before Judging

How would you react if I were to tell you that a person committed suicide within 4 months of winning the highest prize in his profession? Sounds Unbelievable, I know. Let me share with you the tragic end of Pulitzer Price Winner Kevin Carter, a photo journalist. Carter won this prize in April 1994 and committed suicide on 27-07-94. Carter was awarded this prize for the famous picture “The Vulture and The Dying Girl also known as The Struggling girl” which was clicked during coverage of Sudan Famine in March 1993.

When this picture got published in New York Times on 26/03/93, the whole world got riled up to see the critical situation where people were dying of hunger and diseases. This picture helped the UN to gather more support for helping Sudan people. However, lot of people started criticising Carter for clicking the picture and leaving that child to die. The news paper office was flooded with queries to know the plight of that little girl, who was crawling on ground and vulture in the foreground. People started questioning the ethics and values of Carter who gave preference to clicking the picture rather than taking the girl to nearest UN food station, which was only 2 miles away.

Apparently, these accusations and criticism became the reason of guilt and when it became unbearable, Carter decided to end his life at the tender age of 33. He was haunted by the image of dying children and developed a guilt conscience.

I know, you might have also formed some opinion about Carter and people like him. But I would like to give you some more facts about him so that you form an informed opinion rather than jumping to conclusion.

Kevin Carter was born in 1960 in South Africa. It was the time when South Africa was suffering heavily due to racial discrimination and infighting.

Constant rioting was a normal affair. Kevan never liked it and always wanted to do something about it.

Kevin joined South Africa Defence Force to serve his country but had to quit the force as he was seen as Pro Black people by his fellow white people. He even attempted suicide at the age of 23 after being sacked from a job. Later, while working at a camera shop he developed the interest in photography. He became a photojournalist because he felt he needed to document the sickening treatment not only of blacks by whites but between black ethnic groups as well, like those between Xhosas and Zulus.

Joining ranks with only a few other photojournalists, Carter would step right into the action to get the best shot. A South African newspaper nicknamed the group the Bang-Bang Club. At that time, photographers used the term “bang-bang” to refer to the act of going out to the South African townships to cover the extreme violence happening there.

Emotional detachment allowed Carter and other photojournalists to witness countless tragedies and continue the job. The world’s intense reactions to the vulture photo appeared to be punishment for this necessary trait. Later, it became painfully clear that he hadn’t been detached at all. He had been deeply and fatally affected by the horrors he had witnessed.

By the way, in 2011, the parents of that “Struggling girl” in picture informed the world that the child in picture was actually their boy, Kon Nyong, who had survived by reaching the UN food station and succumbed to fever in 2007.

So, what is your opinion now? I would like to leave you with following questions?

1. Was Carter an irresponsible and selfish photographer?
2. Who or what is responsible for his untimely death?
3. Are we justified in passing judgments about anyone and everyone? What business or credentials do we have to judge someone?
4. Did Carter’s picture help in saving more lives and brought more help from worldwide?
5. Should we be more careful in passing comments, especially in criticising other?

Think! I hope this article will help you to realise the importance of thinking before judging. Thanks....



Contentment

We all get shocked when we hear about the depression and suicide cases of affluent and successful people. Isn't it ironical that on one hand so called 'poor & ordinary' people sell their jewelry, house, land and even their organs to continue living and on the other there are some so called "Celebrities" who have loads of money & fame live in depression and at times even take this extreme decision to commit suicide? Why is it that such talented, committed, physically fit and rich people go through these feelings of loneliness (despite having millions of fans, family, friends), anxieties & depression? The feeling of 'discontentment' can be one of the major reasons among many other, I guess.

I watched one YouTube video in which the speaker was emphasizing on importance of commitment and not to get trapped in contentment zone. And I think the explanations were although quite motivating but were incomplete and can be misunderstood which may lead to ugly consequences. Is that so? Does contentment stop you from making efforts & progress? Or lack of contentment can drive you so crazy that you live miserably despite of all possessions and positions? I think we really need to look at this discontentment more deeply rather than just dismissing it. Let me try.

I am sure we all have those moments where we feel totally restless and upset with life. Sometimes these thoughts & feelings go away quickly, but other times it gets to the point where you have been feeling unfulfilled with your life for weeks, months, and maybe even years. If it becomes a chronic feeling, then we need to look at it carefully. Answer the following questions:

- Do you get hurt easily?
- Do you get angry quite often and easily?
- Do you judge others constantly?
- Do you also feel being judged?
- Do you judge yourself frequently?
- Are you suspicious of other's motives all the time?
- Do you become restless and irritated easily?
- Will you consider yourself to be a selfish or self-obsessed person?
- Do you constantly find something lacking in your life?



If the answer to above is 'Yes', I am afraid you are suffering from discontentment and you must read the complete chapter now.

Most of us are in pursuit of happiness, isn't it? Anything and everything we do or don't do, purpose seems to be to attain 'happiness'. Still, happiness seems to be an ever-elusive target. We hardly see people in constant happy states, isn't it? Life keeps throwing different challenges at us and we get off balance.

Many see "contentedness" and "happiness" as one and the same. In many ways, they are. It influences happiness. CONTENTMENT IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF HAPPINESS.

What is really contentment?

Contentment is a state of being peaceful and thankful for what you have and where you are in life. It involves acknowledging & appreciating small pleasures of life and living with faith. It is a non-complaining or non-cribbing state. Living with faith does not mean living idle. I shall explain it later. Of course, I am not saying you should simply settle for a life that doesn't bring you joy.

Contentment does not mean not being Goal Driven:

To be a goal-driven person does not mean that you are discontent with life. You can be extremely content with life, with what you have, and with who you are. You accept yourself fully and still you can strive for goals and enjoy a challenge, and at the same time enjoy each moment of the journey with contentment. So, you should continue to dream, set targets and work sincerely – but just remember to be thankful and enjoy the journey of making it happen.

The strange thing about contentment is that it's possible to feel fulfilled inside yet have outer struggle at the same time. That's because contentment celebrates the good in your life while simultaneously working through the goals. Whereas happiness may come and go, being content is something you can continually maintain. In the contented state you become more productive and hence chances of you achieving better results are higher. However, in a contented state achievement or failure may not have huge impact on our happiness.

·How to attain contentment state?

Well, this is the biggest question. Although it comes with lot of effort and grace but let me suggest few steps which might help you to get there.

Clarify your Values and Live by Them:

Values are our principles which we believe in. Values are our lighthouse which help in our decision making. Violation of our values makes us discontented. Therefore, one must check his/her actual values. We get to know our real values when they are respected or violated. Values are essentially what we care about most in life. They provide us with motivation, they give us energy and/or calm us down, and they give us a sense of fulfillment.

When your actions and thoughts are in congruence with your values, you can live authentically. Being your authentic self is ultimately going to provide you with a greater sense of contentment.

Accept yourself and your past:

Have you not seen people discontented with their height, complexion, education, parents and past events? What is the use of all this? It's good to work on things to make better but being soar and resentful about past doesn't serve any better future. Isn't it? Being dis-satisfied with current results is okay but we must not become discontented with ourselves and our past. Learn to accept and appreciate the past. Let's not crib or complain about something which either can't be changed or can be worked upon. You and I definitely can't change the past but maybe we can do something for the future in the present. Let's do that with contented state.

Accept yourself totally with your gifts, talents, abilities and limitations too. A contented person pursues goals with patience, peace and acceptance.

Remember to also focus on what you 'have':

There is no individual on this planet who 'has' everything. Something we all feel lacking in lives, isn't it? But similarly, there is no one who does not 'have' anything. The problem with discontented people is they focus too much on what they 'lack' and forget what they 'have'. Always remember your starting point in life, then look at the milestones you have achieved. My suggestion would be maintaining a "Thank You" journal and every day write down the "thank you" moments. Write name of people and events which made your day.

Focus on polishing your strength:

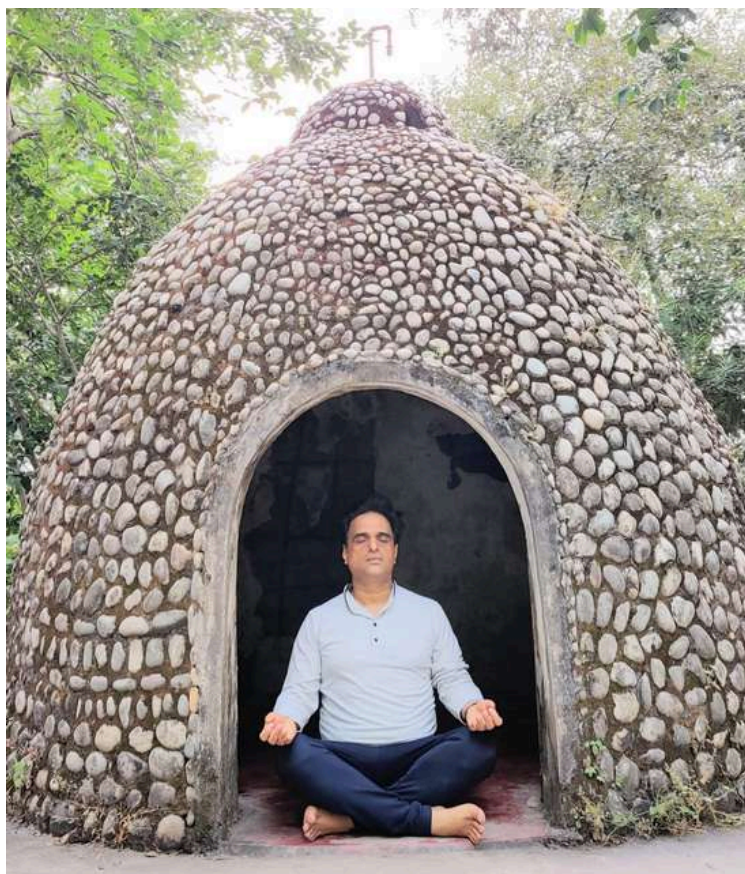
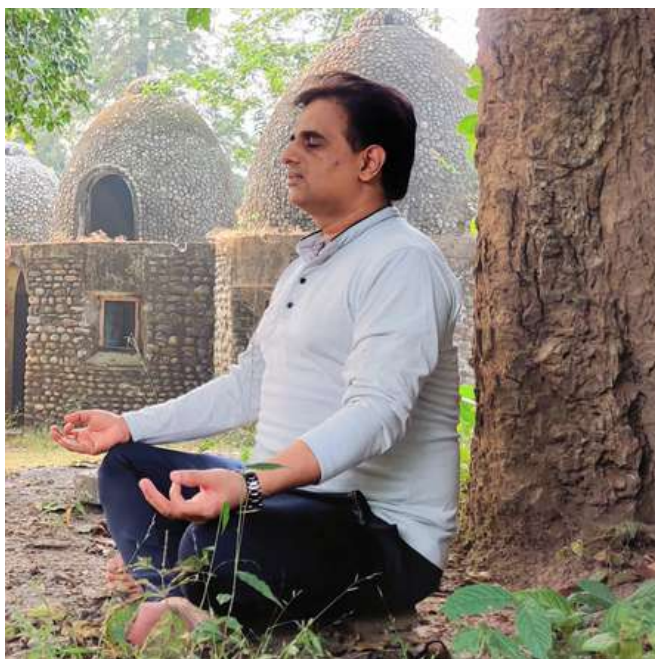
We spend a lot of our lives trying to change what we don't like about ourselves. If we aren't changing them, we're complaining about them. We all have strengths and weaknesses too. I am all for working on our weaknesses, but one must not forget the strengths and must polish them regularly. We can improve our weak areas for sure, but we can excel in our strength area. It's difficult to change the mentality that we have to be good at everything, but the reality is that everyone will have their weaknesses. Therefore, one must focus on what I'm not good at? It can be so much more beneficial and productive to continue developing your current strengths. Remember, there will never be a day when you will have no weakness but your strengths when utilized properly can compensate for the weaknesses too. Be contented with certain deficiencies in some skills, knowledge or some part of life. It is never absolute for anyone. Accept it and move on.



Being intensely involved with detachment:

As per Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta (Hindu Scripture) a contented person remains 100% involved in activities but is detached from the results. In a contented state you don't bother much about the results as your actions originate out of choice not compulsions. I am sure most of us must have experienced it that when you are feeling great you will do something great. Isn't it? But that activity was not the purpose but a mere consequence of that positive & productive state. Similarly, a contented state propels a person to focus on efforts without getting bothered or bogged down by results. What a blissful state that is, isn't it? People with faith will generally attain this contented state easily as they do not operate out of their Egos (identities). You do your part (role) with 100% dedication & sincerity but once scene is over, you don't remain in the role, you come back to your natural self. That is the reason these people can live peacefully and are productive too. They don't get identified with their position and possessions. Contentment means stability of mind.

A contented person can easily be recognized by non-judgmental attitude, soft spoken abilities, gentle smile on face, forgiving nature and humility. However, like any state, it also needs to be checked and maintained daily until it becomes your nature



It's 'Physical Distancing' not 'Social distancing'.

“Words create world inside us. Choose them wisely.”

Almost all of us unconsciously have been using, and repeating, the phrase “social distancing” as a new normal for survival in the current COVID19 era. However, this word is inappropriate and has the potential to cause more harm than good. It was intended to be “Physical Distancing” of 6 feet, but we ended up living, or making others live, in isolation. This un-intentional mistake is playing havoc with mental health and emotional well being. Loneliness is setting in, leading to depression, panic attacks and anxiety disorders. Appropriate use of words can help us to choose our behavior wisely.

We don't need to socially separate from our family, friends and society. We just need to maintain 'physical distancing' and take certain precautions so that we don't get sick.

Thanks to technology and social media, we are living in times where it is possible to stay connected despite physical distance and geographical boundaries. During this period of quarantine and isolation, it's become even more important to stay emotionally connected with our loved ones. Staying in touch without physically touching people is important for slowing down the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Remember to keep your physical distance, but there is no reason to go into hibernation. Step out, reach out, make the effort, be the first to call.

Now we have more time than ever before to stay connected. Isn't it? There are many things we can do to:

1. Phone calls
2. Whatsapp Calls
3. Video Chats
4. Virtual Group Games
5. Virtual Group Discussions (Book, Movie, People, Situation)
6. Video Games

At the same time, we need to ensure that we practice physical distancing properly so that we remain Virus free and safe.

- Don't go out unnecessarily:
- Don't invite people in your house unnecessarily:
- Keep a physical distance of up to 6 feet.
- Keep a hand sanitizer.
- Wash your hands whenever possible.
- Cover your mouth.

From now onwards, stop using the words “social distancing”, instead use “physical distancing”. We need to remain connected by maintaining physical distance. Think about it.



Relationship

“A relationship where you can be weird together is your best choice.”

- Paulo Coelho

A mother was preparing little Ramesh to go to a party. When she finished combing his hair, she straightened his shirt collar and said, “Go now son, have a good time and behave yourself”.

“Come on mother please decide, what exactly do you want me to do. To have fun or to behave myself. Because both are not possible.” Ramesh said.

The child’s response is really of tremendous value. He has clarity that, if you allow me to have a good time then I cannot behave if you want me to behave then I cannot have a good time. The child can see the contradiction so clearly it may not have been apparent to the mother.

Are we any different? If we behave ourselves, we can’t have good time in relationships and if we want to have good time, we are no more ourselves. Isn’t it funny? We need to constantly adapt, adjust, align and accept many things to sustain the pleasantness in relationships.

One of the few things which is common to all human beings is ‘relationships’. Isn’t it? And, as you know, there are different kinds of relationships. Some are personal and some professional. Some intimate and some superficial or complicated.

Our relationships are a funny thing. The irony is we can’t live without relationships and we can’t even live happily within relationships. Some relationships bring more pain than joy. So, the real question is, ‘how to make our relationships more pleasant, less painful’?

Why relationships?

But the purpose of most relationships happens to be ‘Need fulfillment or Desire fulfillment’. We get something from each other, and that need binds us in a relationship.

I know it might sound uncomfortable, blunt, brutal or unjustified to some of us, but that's just what it is, my friends. Our desire or need can even be to help, support or give, but there has to be some need or desire that you wish to fulfill. Think about it!

We all have heard the quote, if not used already, “I am a self-made person.” And we also must have heard this advice that we should be self-sufficient and should not be dependent on other(s), else we sound clingy. With all due respect to all those who have used these phrases I would like to say that “dependence on other(s) is inevitable for every human being”. All these phrases are nothing but arrogance or ignorance.

To be born, we need parents and doctor's support. Human child is the most helpless creature, whose very survival is totally dependent on parents or other humans. Whatever we know today or whatever we have ever achieved was always supported by someone else. "One is not a sufficient number to achieve significant success". Well, we may have paid for certain services that we availed but it does not take away our dependence on other(s). It only shows that we are thankless ignorant. That's it. Even to go back from this world, we need people support. Isn't it? The dead hardware needs to be disposed by others.

During our lifetime we all experience survival dependence, financial dependence and emotional dependence. Parents, teachers, doctors, brother, sisters, friends, colleagues, customers and even foes are all human beings on whom we depend for many things. What is the fun of achieving success, if there is no one to show off? So, even competition helps us to become better. Think about it. So, we can't live without relationships and obviously our intention is to have pleasant and productive relationships. However, in reality no relationship gives anything permanently. Therefore, one must need to learn how to cultivate and handle a relationship. Managing relationship is an infinite game, where we need to constantly remain aware and adjust as per the demand of situation. There will never be a time where you can take your eye away from the ball. It needs constant juggling. Whether it's tiring or entertaining depends on our outlook and expectations.

As per my little understanding, minimum four components are required to have a reasonably pleasant relationship.

The first component is, Trust.

If we trust the other person, then the other things can be worked out. You cannot have a healthy relationship without it. And yet, virtually all of us can recall a scenario where our trust has been broken. We need to work hard on ourselves to become trustworthy. Honouring your informal commitments with 100% commitment, refraining from backbiting, consistency of positive behaviour, avoid boasting about yourself and avoid criticizing unnecessarily are some of the steps that can help people to trust you.

The second component is, Respect.

There are many people that we trust but may not necessarily respect them. Respect here will not be determined by age, relation, or position. But by the fact that in its absence, a genuine relationship cannot last very long. Listening well without judgment, focus on the strength/potential not only weakness, careful use of language are some of the signs whether or not we respect the other.

The third component is Communication. For any relationship to thrive, clear communication is a must. There should be a safe space to express your feelings, both positive and negative. Communication gap leads to misunderstanding, miscommunication and ultimately end of relation, though in some cases the contract may still carry on.

The fourth but most critical component is Patience. Expecting the other person to match your speed, skill, style and attitude will lead to disappointment. Every person is unique and so is their pace. Do not be in a hurry to throw in the towel. As per Vedanta, only gradual changes can be sustained. All good things take time. Forgiving the mistakes gracefully is a must trait for maintaining relationships.

We must understand and accept the fact that relationships, like tender plants, need to be watered and nourished every day. That is how they grow and evolve. Do not expect them to remain the same. As I sometimes share in my programs that “Expecting a static relationship status with dynamic beings is bound to lead towards disappointment and frustrations”. Think about it!

Therefore, one must learn to accept the dynamism of relationships. We must focus on maintaining Trust, Respect, Communication and Patience. For any relationship to grow both the partners must grow. Always remember, “All relationships grow, some grow together other grow apart.” I would like to conclude by saying that relationship is all about two things: First, appreciating the similarities and second, respecting the differences.

“Expecting a static relationship with a dynamic being is an unreasonable expectation.”

– Suresh Mohan Semwal



Compassion: From Passion to Compassion

In this current competitive world, passion seems to be a necessity to thrive. So much has been spoken and written about the importance of it and rightly so. However, the sign of maturity is when one attains compassion. In passion one may hurt others, but in compassion we help others. In passion, the focus is on self, in compassion the focus is on upliftment of the other. Passion is good and compassion is the best human virtue.

What kind of a person would you want in your neighborhood, passionate or compassionate? The answer is simple, compassionate. Are you a compassionate neighbor? Don't you think that the world today needs more compassion than ever before? Most of the world problem can be solved if people, especially world leaders, start practicing compassion passionately.

What exactly is compassion? As per dictionary, 'sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others' is called compassion. Compassion motivates people to go out of their way to help the physical, mental, or emotional pains of another and themselves.

Compassion is a heart quality. We all have it, yes, you read it right, we all are compassionate people and we practice it perfectly. Intrigued? Unbelievable? I understand. We all practice compassion daily towards our own selves, isn't it? Have you not observed that how quickly we forgive our own mistakes? How easy it is to justify anything and everything that we do or don't do? The sign of evolution however, is, when we start practicing it towards others too.

So, what is true compassion?

"True compassion is not just a passive emotional feeling, but a firm commitment founded on action.

Compassion is a step ahead to the feeling the pain and the need. If you are moved to take some action, you demonstrate true compassion. Compassion without action is just observation. Compassion is not just feeling for someone who is in pain or need. Therefore, a truly compassionate attitude towards others does not change even if they behave negatively. Through universal altruism, you develop a feeling of responsibility for others: the wish to help them actively to overcome their problems."

It is about healing others. Completing your task without hurting others – emotionally, mentally, or physically. It's a hard work! A warm smile, respectful greeting, gesture of care, help, any act of well-being for others same as to yourself is a sign of true compassion. Compassion is a sincere action driven approach to change the situation. If you are going to practice compassion, be prepared to take action.

I had the great fortune and privilege of meeting His Holiness, Dalai Lama, who in my view is the Himalaya of Compassion, an ocean of humility and a brand ambassador of humanity. He lost his freedom at the age of 16, lost his country at the age of 24 and for the last 56 years, has been living in India. He has been in exile and very seldom gets any good news about his country's independence movement. Yet, you must have never noticed any fiery, aggressive, or hateful speech from him ever. His ever-smiling face, calm and humble demeanor has never changed. He is the living example of compassion. I sincerely admire his simplicity and compassionate attitude even towards his so called enemies. He puts it beautifully in his sayings too.

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.

Without them, humanity cannot survive.”

~Dalai Lama

Qualities of a compassionate person:

Sensitivity

Empathy

Sympathy

Giving/helping/contributing

Forgiveness

Humility & Gratitude

Sensitivity: We are very sensitive beings, isn't it? I get very easily offended by sarcastic tone, choice of wrong words, inappropriate gestures of others, but do I take care of these while interacting with others? I want others to focus on my intent/emotion (when I am angry) and neglect my words/behavior but do I provide the same privilege to others? We are excellent lawyers in case of own mistake and punishing judge in case of others. Funny, isn't it?



Empathy: Has it happened with you sometimes that you found it amusing how someone was shaking head in a very rhythmic way and you were confused about the mental state of that person until you saw a Bluetooth headphone plugged in that person's ear? You were making judgments on the basis of head movement without being aware of the music being played in head. Similarly, we don't know what stories or experiences the other may be going through but we are quick to judge on the basis of behavior. We are often unaware of the pain another person carries inside. So, when someone does something that rubs you the wrong way, take a moment and think of this story

Sympathy: A true story reported in a Reader's Digest column explains this well. A father and his three children got on a bus in central London. The father was lost in his own thoughts, and the kids, being unsupervised, were loud and disruptive to the other passengers.

Finally, a lady in a nearby seat leaned over to the father and said, "You really need to parent your children better. They are so unruly." The father, shaken from his reverie, says, "I'm so sorry. Their mother, my wife, just died and we are returning from her funeral. I think we are all a little overwhelmed. I apologize."

Giving or helping or contributing: In receiving there is pleasure but in giving there is bliss, satisfaction, peace. However, is doing something for others a selfless act?

The answer is 'Yes and no'.

Yes, because most of the times one must go through some inconvenience and sacrifices to help/heal others. One may not even get any reciprocation from the person who is helped. In that regard, it seems to be selfless. You got nothing in return, except perhaps inconvenience.

No, because whenever we are feeling compassionate, we act out of our own volition to help or heal. In the process we may feel inconvenience, but at the end we get satisfaction, which is much more valuable than instant pleasures. In a way, we trade temporary pleasure with lifetime satisfaction. Isn't that more profitable? Think about it. Wiser decision for self. Moreover, when we operate out of our own volition to help, we do not expect anything else in reciprocation, not even a thank you and therefore we save ourselves from the vicious cycle of expectations from others. If we think from this perspective it is hugely beneficial act for satisfaction, peace, and tranquility. Not a bad deal at all.

“Have we ever done anything exclusively for the other?” It cannot be. We always get some psychological, emotional, or spiritual return which are way beyond more valuable than material returns.

Forgiveness: Do you make mistakes? Of course, unintentionally. Do you punish yourself on each mistake or forgive yourself with a warning? How do you deal with other's mistakes? Forgiveness is a human virtue which helps us to cleanse our system from unnecessary grudges and other negativities.

“Every unpleasant behaviour at a deeper level is a cry for help.” Think about it.

Whenever anyone (you and I included) fears any kind of loss or helplessness that triggers unpleasant behaviour. Isn't it? We can clearly understand and appreciate that in our own case, but the real test of compassion is, when we start practicing it with others too. Learn to forgive, retain the lesson, but let go of grudges.

Humility & Gratitude:

A compassionate person feels self as a conduit not as a doer and therefore is always thankful for all experiences. He/she does not label any experience as good or bad rather accept it as divine will. A heart full of gratitude can never boast or complain. Humility becomes a natural trait not pretention (people like me pretend to be humble). Humility is an absence of arrogance. Humility is the ability to see our nothingness and appreciate our minuscule personality in this vast universe.

My take:

Compassion towards self is natural and compassion towards others is a consciously nurtured behavior. However, with evolution and maturity, when a person is able to see everything as part of self or connected with everything, then compassion becomes our natural behavior. Your destiny is bound with the destinies of others. In the case of family, we do practice it to some extent. Therefore, we need to constantly work on ourselves to go deeper and tap the connection where we feel one with this universe. Then we become compassionate not just towards human beings but plants and animals too. When we feel connected to everything, we also feel responsible for everything. We can't turn away.

Showing compassion to needy and weak is still easy, but the real challenge is practicing compassion with powerful and arrogant people. “It is the enemy who can truly teach us to practice the virtues of tolerance and compassion” – Dalai Lama.

This Romanian quote aptly provides some basic steps to start practicing compassion:

“Live without pretending, love without depending,
Listen without defending and speak without offending.”

Compassion is an action word with no boundaries.

Disclaimer:

I would just like to clarify that I have not personally reached a stage where I can forgive my enemies and pray for their well-being too. Therefore, I cannot recommend this practice to you too. However, we are not dealing with enemies all the time. In fact, enemies are less, and others are more. We should at least practice compassion towards our family, friends, colleagues, and strangers. Can we do that much? We can certainly try. I have worked on myself and it works. It gives peace and happiness. Of course, do not stop practicing compassion towards self too. We are not perfect, and we shall never be. We shall continue to make mistakes, hopefully new ones. So, learn to forgive yourself too.

Now that you have read my little understanding on compassion, please show a little compassion in assessing this information. Think about it.



The Buck Stops with Leader

If you are at a significant leadership position tell me how familiar you are with the thoughts like:

Why some people do not do their work diligently?

Why some people need to be told 'what to do'?

Why some people do not take initiative and ownership?

How can some people be so incompetent and not even realise it?

How can some people be so casual about even their own future?

How can some people be so shameless about being mediocre?

Not familiar with these thoughts, please don't read any further. You are a great leader with a great team and rest of my assertions are no good for you. Thanks.

Since you have decided to read further I am sure the above mentioned thoughts do cross your mind or you still are curious to know my thoughts. In that case, I want you to please ponder upon the following questions:

Who is responsible for hiring right people for job?

Who is responsible for grooming or training people for job?

Who is responsible for tolerating the incompetence?

Who is responsible to create a productive work environment?

Who is responsible for listening to whispers?

Who is responsible for clearing the doubts or insecurities?

Who is responsible for status quo or deterioration?

Who is responsible to get rid of excess baggage or dead wood?

Well, as a reasonable leader I assume you pretty well know the painful answers to all above. Where does the buck stops? Stop sulking, whining, complaining and start creating the organisation you always dreamt about. Nobody else can be held responsible for your failure as a leader. Take charge, this is what leaders do. Take responsibility for action (specially to make hard decisions and remember hard means difficult for you, not necessarily for others). An organisation is a large shadow of its leader and if you do not like the shadow, you know what you need to work upon. Go, own the game! If you need any assistance in it, contact POSSIBLERS.



Happy New Year

Bye Bye 2020 (Finally you are going...)

Welcome 2021 !!

This 20-20 was quite a disruptive year in many aspects for most of us unless you happen to be manufacturing sanitizers, PPE Kit, Masks, pharmaceuticals or immunity enhancing products or working with Republic TV, Netflix, Amazon, Reliance, Whitehat Jr like companies.

For most of us ending of this year itself is a happy news. I guess, this year was unique in many ways:

‘Alcohol’ word has been able to shed its negative image and has become a life saver. There was more alcohol in hands than guts this year.

Unsmiling and poker face people were benefitted because smiling & joyful people also had their faces covered.

We got so much time with our loved ones that they will not miss us anymore in whole life.

School going children have started missing the class room, teachers and punishments.

Teachers and parents are encouraging kids to use internet and phone.

All students are passing the exams with flying grades (suddenly every student has Become intelligent)

Now you can mute the teacher by choice and disappear from class by choice.

In Delhi (unless you are agitating on something or you are a part of election rally) you have to pay 2000 for mooh Dikhai...(not wearing mask)

First time we were paid to be at home (salaried class)

However, nothing in this world is Good or bad, everything is Good & Bad (quantity may vary). This 20-20 was no exception and has brought the following +ve in our lives:

We have realized the importance of Health.

There was lot of savings in terms of cosmetics, shoes and clothes purchase.

We have realized the importance of Saving.

Now we know, who cares for us and how much.

Seeing -23% GDP, every year will feel good now economically.

Every year other than 2020 now hopefully will be a happy year.

We shall be enjoying our work life more than ever.

We don't have the excuses of no time to pursue our hobbies or clear our pending tasks.

May this 2020 become a strong base for us to bounce back with more strength, wisdom and strategies to make 2021 a fabulously successful year. I wish you all a very rocking new year 2021. Let us make it POSSIBLE.

Rejections:

Anyone with a little bit of success in life will tell you that rejections are unpleasant part of the process of achieving anything significant in life. Not just for achievement but after being successful too one has to handle rejections continuously. Does anyone like being rejected? I seriously doubt that. But, can we bypass this process? Yes, if we kill our dreams and are willing to live with unfulfilling life.

Admission in great schools/colleges, job in great companies, getting in relationship with a person of your dreams, more social media appreciation, promotion, more customers, whatever you need you will have to take the chances with rejection. Isn't it? So, what do we do? Learn, how to handle it. I have following suggestions, which may work for you:

Understand and accept it as part of process. Don't take it as a judgment of your character or a person. Most of the times vacancies are limited and they can't accommodate all deserving people. So, don't take it personally.

Understand the reason of rejection. Is it lack of knowledge, skill or something else? Have you done enough to work on these? If no, work hard on yourself so that you don't get rejected again for same reason. Look at the credentials of person who rejected you. Sometimes people with no credibility or substance may also pass comments. Don't take them seriously. If the person has substance, take it as feedback, learning and work on it.

Think of all those who love you unconditionally. Talk to them.

Remember, nothing is permanent, try again after preparation.

Suppose you will not get any other chances at the same position now, realise that something better may come up due to this rejection. History is full of such blessings in disguise.

In the nutshell, rejections are part of life. Take it on chin and move on but don't live with guilt that you did not even try. Guilt is more painful than rejection. Think about it.

How to Control Ego & Anger?

One day I shared with my mentor the inability to control anger, arrogance or ego especially when I feel I am right and the other person is at fault. (This is almost all the times. Though, it is my convenient assumption with my fabricated logics.)

I said, "I am unable to resist using harsh words or wrong language with others. I do feel bad sometimes after the behavior but still find some justifications to it."

My mentor looked at me surprisingly and said, "But I have never seen you abusing or using bad or harsh words. Maybe you are too critical on yourself unnecessarily. Don't be so hard on yourself." I answered, "No sir, in front of you or to you, I think many times before I speak and take lot of care of my tone, words / language so that I don't offend you or anyone in your presence"

He smiled and said, "Then it is very simple. Whenever you are talking to people, assume you are talking with me." What a profound suggestion. Isn't it?

I realized 'Isn't it true that we take lot of precautions in communication when we are with someone whom we respect or is at a powerful position than us?

We only become casual & callous when we don't treat others as equal or don't respect them. Think about it. ?

If the basic premise of our dealing with people is; I am superior, what does he know etc., then rude language and arrogant behavior is an obvious consequence.

If we put this belief in our mind that everyone irrespective of age, status deserves to be treated with respect, until they prove otherwise, we will communicate with them as equals, with respect and courtesy.

I decided to follow this and told him of my commitment. And then came the bomb. He further suggested that, "Controlling anger and staying humble needs very sincere efforts, you will fail many times. Next time when you behave arrogantly or lose your cool unjustifiably and realize your mistake, within 24 hours go back and touch the feet of the person who you have wronged or hurt. Say sorry, with folded hands, clearly stating about what but, without giving your reasons or justification, plain admission and apology. If you follow this, the chances of you repeating this luxurious mistake will drastically reduce." He further added, "I can assure you, if done seriously & sincerely your EGO, the very reason of anger will stop you to get angry. BUT your sincerity is a prerequisite."

These two profound suggestions have really helped me a lot. Lot has improved, yet at times old patterns do take over.

Yesterday in the Covid stress I yelled at my wife, for nothing really.

Now, I need to honor the apology drill with my wife today. I am thinking of doing it after finishing this article. Test time. Will I do it finally or not? I leave it to your guessing.

See if you would like to practice the above and see its impact on you.

Sustenance is Underrated Yet More Important

I am sure you know that Facebook has more members than total population of USA.

There are some corporations which look like greater than anything and everything around them. However, success can indeed be fleeting as they say, so one must wonder if today's successful companies will become not so successful in distant future and lose their charisma. I don't need to give examples of how giants have fallen in the past. So, is current profitability, employee strength, culture or turnover is the right or only criteria to measure the success of a good company? Is longevity also a criterion? Well, to my mind, it does. For me, becoming successful can also be a fluke, but to remain successful in long run requires lot more than just one good business idea. Sustenance requires more effort than creation.

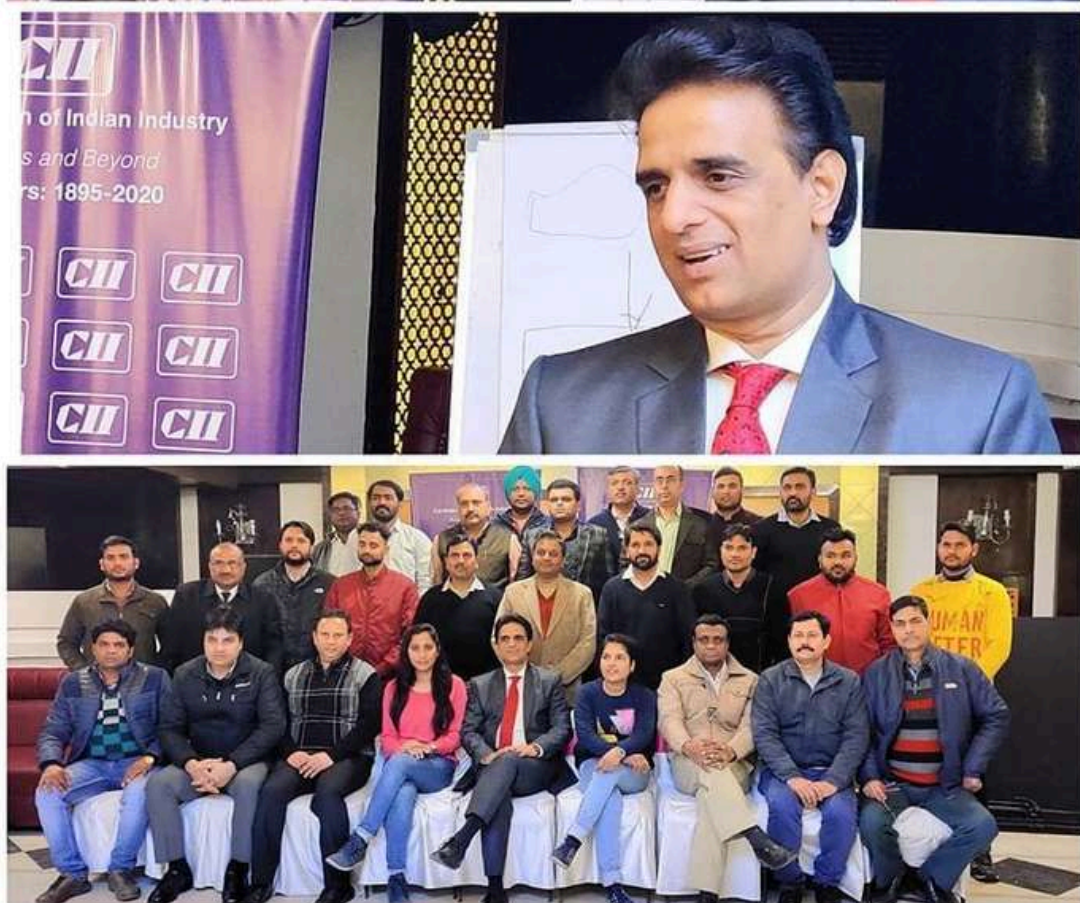
I have seen many bubbles getting created and getting busted too. We see it all around us in almost all fields. Whether, it is in sports, movies, politics, business or spirituality; many enter but few stay. Even in relationships, forming is the easiest part but maintaining cordial relationships is the hardest job to do. Isn't it? Speaking of time and staying in power, there is a company that has been around for quite some time. It has been in existence for over 1,400 years. Surprised? Well, google it. Kongo Gumi Construction is a Japanese Buddhist temple construction company that was founded in 578. Its founder was a Korean who came over to Japan and started his own company.

What makes this company unique is it is family owned and run. Keeping family harmony and the desire to move forward must have been some feat. The company has experienced great events in the history of Japan. Buddhism was introduced less than 50 years before the company started, many ruling dynasties came and went, the ninjas, the samurais, two world wars, and Japan reign of being a global economic power. This company saw it all. Among the company's traits is its flexibility, the company head need not be the eldest son, it can even be a daughter or a son-in-law. It's just not about blood but also about leadership capability. The company stayed focused on temple construction though it made coffins during World War II and has gone into apartment and other building constructions.

Seeing an opportunity in the booming Japanese real estate sector in the 80s, it borrowed heavily and got caught when the bubble burst in the 90s. Saddled with heavy debt and with less demand in temple building, the company was forced to become a subsidiary of Takamatsu Construction Group in 2006. Takamatsu was founded in 1917. Will this company have its own 1,400 year run? I don't know. I have a very special regard for TATA Group of my country India, who has been doing ethical business successfully for the last 150 years and getting stronger day by day. The promoters may not be featuring in Top 10-20 richest men in world or flaunting their wealth but they definitely hold a high regard in the hearts of billion Indians at least. One of most trusted and respected brand in India and worldwide.

Would you rather build a company that looms large then disappears or a relatively obscure one that lasts for a long time? I'd go for the latter, as sustenance require more efforts than creativity. How about you?

"Sustenance requires more effort than creating." Suresh Mohan Semwal
Sustenance is Underrated Yet More Important.



Learning from Pencil

Would you agree that those who wish to learn can learn without someone teaching them? As famous Socrates used to say, “I cannot teach anything to anyone. I can only make them think.” So, if we are capable of thinking, we can learn from anyone or anything. Can we learn something from pencil?

Yes. Though, pencil is just an ordinary object but if we observe closely it provides profound learning for life. It just depends on how you look at things. There are at least seven qualities which come to my mind. You are free to add or delete as per your thinking. If adopted, these qualities can certainly help us get more clarity and peace.

First: What really matters is inside you.

Exteriors have utility but most important matter is inside you. Pay attention to this inner dimension in you too. Is it your mind? What is that which is not changing with age, marital status and positions you hold in life? What is awake, when body is sleeping? Is it energy? Is it spirit? Is it subconscious? Is it nothing? I don't want to answer this for you. Look within. As far as pencil is concerned, what really matters in a pencil is not its wooden exterior, but the graphite inside.

Second: It leaves an impression.

One day, we all will become memory in others life. The real question is what kind? Everything we say or do leaves an impression. Not just on us but also on our surroundings. The higher position you hold, the greater mark you create. So, one should be careful and grateful. So be conscious of what you say or do.

Third: No one is perfect. Don't be arrogant, use eraser.

In this journey of life one thing is sure that we all make mistakes. Don't justify them; rather let the eraser do its job. These erasers are the help we get to rectify or compensate the damage we created. Always be humble enough to accept your mistakes gracefully and seek help. Are you willing to let an eraser help you? This means that correcting something we did is not necessarily a bad thing; it helps to keep us on the right path.



Fourth: Now and then we need sharpening.

One thing sure about success is that it will fail. Our today's strength may become tomorrow's bottleneck. Therefore, one must keep sharpening his/her knowledge, skills and attitude. Sometimes, circumstances thrust upon us some changes which seem to be painful but actually they help us to become stronger and sharper. At times, some critics or competitors also act like sharpeners. They are our unpaid consultants who help us to challenge our limitations. So we must learn to bear certain pains and sorrows, because they will make us a sharper person.

Fifth: Time is slipping away every second.

Pencil gets shorter with usage, so is life. We must realise that we are paying through our life currency for all the experiences we are having. Be careful with what you do with your time as once it is gone it is gone. It does not matter whether you write poetry or just keep scribbling; pencil/time is getting consumed. So, are you creating something significant or just consuming is your choice.

Sixth: Be useful till the end.

Pencil writes till the very end and remains useful. So, we must also strive to remain useful and productive till the dying day. Do your best and keep learning.

Seventh: Don't be arrogant. It is the hand that makes you write.

Always remember that we are just the instruments in the hands of God. I know some of us may not like this idea but even if it is an idea, it helps. All our achievements, if you look closely are not our individual achievements. There is always someone else who contributes in our success. So, don't be naive to think that you have achieved anything without any support. Whether God or someone else but it is not because of you alone. For my atheist friends, coincidences or chances also contribute in our success. Think.

Be humble and remain a learner. Be grateful. So, a humble pencil can contribute so much in our learning if we pay attention and are willing to learn. Now, look around and share what else we can learn from other objects.



Pearls of Wisdom

Today dated 29th June 2021 I had a distinguished visitor at my office Dr. A.K Gupta (MD, Medicine & Physiology, Fellow- Cardiology Society of India). I discovered that he is my regular YouTube viewer and therefore, wanted to see me personally. I was pleasantly surprised to see his recalling of my almost all concepts, stories and jokes that he has heard over the period of time. It seems as if he had seen all of my videos completely. I was obviously flattered to see such great, accomplished man appreciating my work.

He is 71 years of age and his memory, articulation, spontaneity and keen desire for learning & sharing is really remarkable. I sat with him for almost an hour and he poured some of his pearls of wisdom, which quite frankly were really amazing. Let me share these with all of you:

1. Anything we don't use, we loose: He explained this concept in his medical lingo by sharing about Disuse atrophy. He shared about this medical terminology for a disease where any unused limb stops functioning, if not used for a long period of time. Of course when you hear the physical scientific evidence and that too from an accomplished professional, your conviction on the idea and excitement becomes greater. He further expanded this idea to communicate that similarly if the brain is not used properly, it's efficiency goes down. His advice for reading & writing and explaining it with Disuse Atrophy made it look more appealing. I may use it in my next seminars and impress others with this borrowed knowledge.

2. Blessing in disguise: We all have heard this sentence so often. Dr Gupta gave a wonderful example, again from his own field. He shared that Dementia in North America and Europe has drastically come down in last two decades which was earlier rapidly growing at scary pace. Surprisingly, it is coming down due to increase in cardio vascular diseases. Due to cardio issues people have changed their sedentary habits and started living an active life and eating healthy. These changes have helped decrease dementia drastically. So, brain without active life also starts getting rusted. So, if alone, rather than watching phone all the time, play physical games, solve puzzles so that you have convenient old age too.


3. Every Instrument Needs Tuning: He gave a wonderful example of musicians. Before starting the show, all musicians tune their instruments for occasion and all instruments like tabla, guitar, sitar need tuning before actual show starts. Not just that they also change tuning as per music song. He connected this tuning with morning ritual. One must tune himself/herself every morning for the show of the day. So, that you are in sync with the occasion. SAVERS morning ritual is a fine example of tuning. Those of you are new to SAVERS morning routine, might look for a video on my Youtube Channel.

4. No Pain, No Gain: Learn to bear pain of “Injury & Insult”. He shared that no man of substance has ever achieved success without bearing the pain of injury & insult. One who is fearful of these two pains will generally live a mediocre life. No pain, no gain. Every worthwhile journey has these two factors that need to be handled else we will never reach to the destinations of choice.

5. Look for positive in everyone: Even a dead watch is right twice a day. Isn't it true? Similarly, every person has some positive quality and one must not ignore that. To emphasize on this point he shared an incident of Maitheli Sharan Gupta. This famous hindi poet was writing something in which he had to write only positive qualities of all the characters in Ramayan. He got stuck to write something positive for Kaikeyi, as in India nobody thinks anything positive about Kaikeyi and I have heard no one keeping this name anywhere in India. After lot of thinking, he wrote next day,” Sau Baar Dhanya Hai Who Laal Ki Mata, Jisne Bharat Jaise Laal Ko Janam Diya”. Hail, that mother who gave birth to a son like Bharat. So, if you are hell bent on finding positive, you can always find. So, such a short courtesy visit became an enlightening visit for me. In this brief meeting he bestowed me with his wisdom and blessings as well. Thank you Dr. Gupta for your kind visit and sharing your wisdom in such an interesting way. Look forward to see him in near future too.



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Krishna: A Beyond Boundary Bonding

Krishna, one of the many Gods we Hindus worship is also our most famous God internationally. Krishna also has huge international fan following or devotees. What makes him so special? Well, as per my opinion, following can be some of the reasons:

1. Krishna's whole life, since birth till the very end has many fascinating, interesting stories and achievements. He is loved equally by all age group, genders and intellectual capacity people. My children have always celebrated Janmashtmi with more excitement than any other festival.
2. Krishna's life is full of challenges and he kept challenging the orthodox wisdom of those times emphatically and above all conquered over them successfully.
3. Krishna's methods and approaches are yet debatable by some but results were guaranteed. One may not truly understand or comprehend his methodology but his intentions are beyond any doubts. Krishna also attracts people because of his unpredictability yet predictability of results. A rule bender or breaker may be, but never a deal breaker.
4. The only smiling, playful and dancing God, which looks so friendly and amenable.
5. A God with flute and Sudarshan Chakra (deadliest weapon of his times).
6. Krishna's Detached Karma philosophy is till today the basis of many renowned philosophers or psychologist, who are of course yet to experience the depths of it.
7. Krishna's teachings in Shrimad Bhagwad Gita is till today a subject of intellectual and spiritual discourses. These learning despite of so many years of scrutiny, debate, interpretations, court cases and documentaries are still relevant and as fresh as ever.
8. I of course, can't claim to know or have experienced the depths yet I know the immensity and profoundness of it. There is so much more to learn but whatever little I could understand has transformed my life for better.

I am absolutely OK if some people don't wish to treat Krishna as a God because then that makes him more respectable and loved across religions. Till the time we are implementing his learning and making ourselves better it does not matter, how we perceive him.

I am personally fascinated by his practice of intense involvement in life, detached Karma, equanimity and pleasant & playful way of fulfilling responsibilities. I wish I could practice 1% of it. Well, I am working on it.

Happy Janmashtmi to all my dear Krishna Lovers or Devotees.

Which files do you maintain?

I watched a movie *The Last Castle*, which is based on a true story of a special prison for soldiers. Yes, the movie was fascinating and I liked it.

One dialogue of the warden triggered an idea, which I would like to share with you. He said, “Whenever I start becoming a little emotional or lenient towards any inmate, I immediately take out his file in which his history & description of crime is written. That reading helps me to maintain my balance and ruthlessness.” Well, as a warden to a prison where prisoners, who have committed heinous crimes, you are supposed to maintain a certain protocol to ensure discipline. That warden character in the movie commits extreme brutalities in order to punish the inmates for their crimes. I would like to leave it to experts to comment on it, whether this thinking or style of a prison warden is justified or not. I am not capable enough to comment on such complicated issues.

There was a marine who had served 10 years as a fantastic soldier but in one 10 second lapse in judgment he committed a murder and was treated as a criminal for next 20 years in the prison. He is kept with same hardened criminals who have always broken law of the land. Is it justified? You decide. Should we be judged by our deviations or consistent behavior? I am sure in legal system there must be some provisions to differentiate it. I am certainly not talking about extreme criminal mistakes. My point of view in this article is restricted to ordinary people with ordinary day to day mistakes of anger, jealousy, envy, arrogance, insecurity, superiority, procrastination, laziness etc.

The question that popped in my mind was, “Do I also keep such files in my mind for people around me?” I am not dealing with criminals; I am surrounded by ordinary people like me, who are neither white nor black. We are all black & white. We are all work-in-progress. Do I also behave like that warden in my conduct? Do I also maintain a mistakes file of some people, who I have decided to hate, punish or isolate? Do I conveniently discard the achievement file of same people? Which file do I maintain more? Do I ever forget to make a new entry in mistakes file? Do I maintain the achievement file of the same person with same precision? Well, I know my answers and am not disclosing here for obvious reasons.

People around me are not perfect, so am I. I am sure if somebody wants, can maintain a similar file on me too. I have also committed hundreds of mistakes in behavior (will be making more for sure) and can easily be remembered for them too. At the same time I also have done few fantastic things in life. Which number is more? Well, you can guess.

Do I prefer to be treated by my mistake file or achievement file? How will I behave with a person who always treats me on the basis of my mistakes file? Will I be more productive around such person? Would I like to be around that person at all?

What do you do with these files? Are you keeping any such files in your mind about people around you? How does it impact your life? Should we be judged by our deviations or consistent behavior? Should we be judged by our mistakes (ad-hoc/unintentional)? What about others?

I have been thinking a lot on these questions and have gotten a bit clarity about what I should be doing and have already started working on it. What about you? I would not like to suggest anything more here, you decide. I would love to hear your reflections on this article. How does it resonate with you?



Money invariably finds its way back to same pockets

Out of total 2755 total billionaires worldwide 86% are richer than they were a year ago with \$5 trillion increase in wealth in 2020.

One person's loss is another person's gain. You have heard, I know. Would you be surprised if I tell you that the 'one' person who loses and the 'other' person who gains are generally the same? People who were poor before pandemic are still poor and people who were wealthy have become wealthier. Wealth might shift from one wealthy person to another but it remains in the same pool. Funny, isn't it?

Jeff Bezos lost his No.1 richest man's title recently to Bernard Arnault. In the most recent article (2/8/21) Katherine Wiles has stated that the French Tycoon Bernard Arnault has claimed the No.1 spot of the ultra-wealthy from Jeff Bezos whose net worth tumbled by \$13.9 billion in one day due to less-than-anticipated second quarter growth.

We assumed that a global pandemic and economic recession would set the luxury goods market back a bit, but Arnault remarkably grew his wealth by nearly \$100 billion during first year of pandemic. Arnault's net worth sat at \$195.8 Billion as of Monday, while Bezos' hovered at \$192.6 billion. Bezos is the first person ever to be worth \$200 billion, as Amazon enjoyed big gains from pandemic lockdowns.

Out of total 2755 total billionaires worldwide 86% are richer than they were a year ago with \$5 trillion increase in wealth in 2020.

"Whatever the circumstances, one is losing and other is gaining." The real question is where do we belong?

If we divided all the money in the world equally, in a short time the rich would be rich again, and the poor would be poor. Many people think that if they could just get their hands on a large sum of money, they would be set for the rest of their lives. Money invariably finds its way back to same pockets.

Do you have more time to live than you have already lived?

I know it is an awkward question for some of us who have experienced 45+ Diwali/Christmas/Eid etc. Still it is worth asking. If the answer is “No” please keep reading further else please stop and keep doing what you were doing before.

Now that you are still reading I assume either your answer is “No” or you have become curious. In either case you are welcome to read (as if I had a choice). Why have I asked this question? Well, frankly I have been thinking about it for three years now and it has helped me to get clarity. Especially after experience of Covid19 pandemic my perspective towards life and its priorities has transformed a lot.

When I know I have less and limited time on this planet, I cannot waste any of it rather I want to make the best use of it. Now, I don't go to every movie unless I am sure it suits my taste. Earlier I used to watch movies for time pass and then later waste time in criticizing/appreciating the cast and crew. I have made my peace with the fact that I am incapable or incompetent for many things and stopped worrying or justifying them.

I don't waste time in judging people anymore. I have stopped claiming and believing that I understand people and their psychology. I have accepted the fact that people are different, with different needs, different temperament, and different talent and of course different goals. This has helped me to save an amazing amount of headache. I don't have time to pursue certain types of people or ego pleasures.

I don't have time for selecting or critiquing or appreciating cricket team or its results. I don't have time to argue with people on their political affiliations and least bothered about them changing sides. I don't have time to expect people to change their habits, behaviour, attitude, style or nature. I don't have time to worry about international or domestic politics or climate condition. I don't have time to solve world's problems. I do not have time for worrying, arguing, convincing, pleasing, pleading or waiting.

Since I have realised all this, now I have hell lot of energy, time and happiness. Yes, I feel younger, lighter, happier, peaceful and liberated. How?

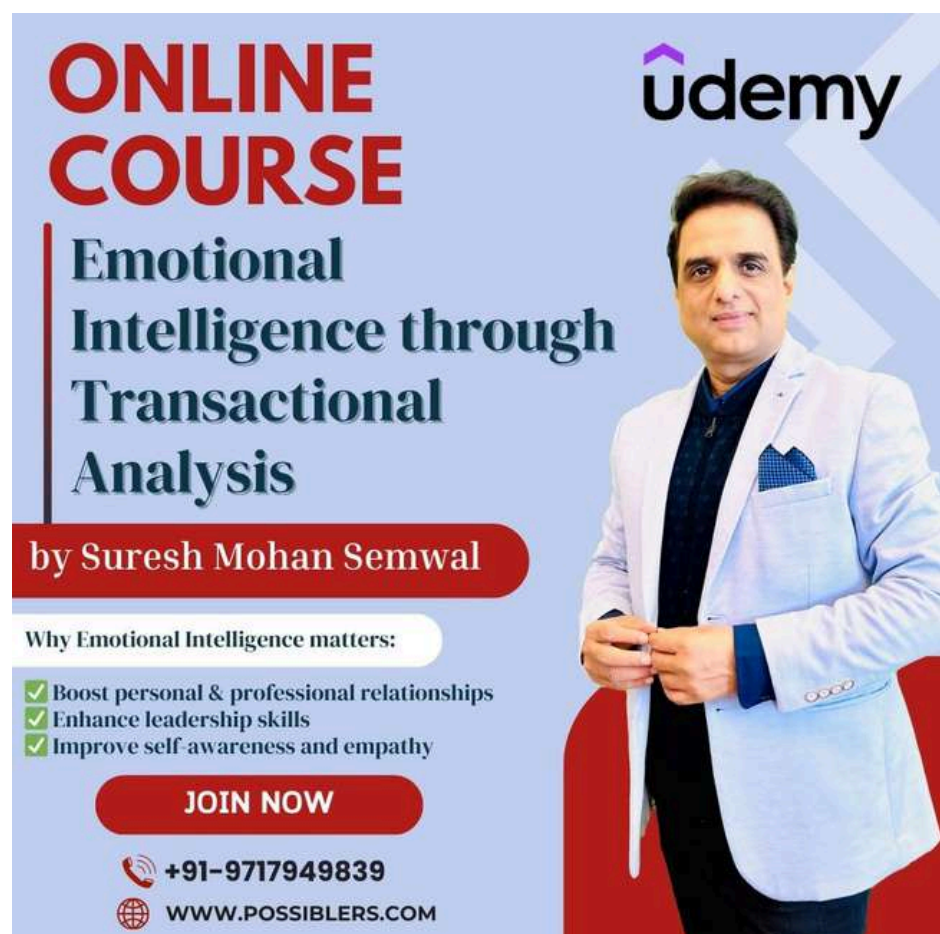
I have all the time to focus on myself, my knowledge, my skills, my health, my people (whom I like and who reciprocate) and above all pursuing what I want not what I have to. I don't fear to be judged or misunderstood anymore. Who has time for caring that much now? I have time to "DO NOTHING". Yes, doing nothing is highly productive state of being. You produce better results in this state. Are you feeling confused or disagree? It's alright and understandable. Ask me for details, I may share (not guaranteed).

Now I don't pursue my dreams, I pursue my feelings. Now I have one unique advantage. I have time to LISTEN. Yes, first time in my life I have actually and really started listening. Once we listen, we learn and whenever we learn we become wiser. Every wise person lives peacefully.

"Speak Less; Communicate More, Hoard Less; Share More, Judge Less, Understand More."

Once we accept and adapt with reality, every day is a birthday, every activity becomes fulfilling and every interaction becomes learning. Once we realise we start living a FULFILLING life. Thanks for reading. You are awesome!

Yours blissfully,



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HR Warriors Are Also Humans

HR Department and HR Professionals like any other professionals have undergone unprecedented challenges and continue to suffer the after effects of pandemic. HR has the responsibility to again Hire, Train and Retain employees with high morale and productivity so that organizational goals are met.

During the pandemic many organizations had to take some unpleasant, unpopular and ruthless measures to ensure survival of organization. HR being the face of such initiatives faced lot of brunt and lost some sheen.

Now that the businesses are coming back to normalcy it has become very difficult to establish that connect and camaraderie due to unpleasant experiences in the times of need. People have become skeptic and reluctant. Asking people to join offices full time has become hell of a task.

People are willing to work at lesser amount but unwilling to work in office. Lot of people have moved on to pursue different streams of income rather than doing a job. This has put lot of pressure on HR to reestablish that trust and enthusiasm towards organizational goals. As a result HR Resignations is the next big challenge industry experts are worried about.

As per a recent survey published in Economic Times (1/8/22); 53% of HR people are feeling burnt out and 14% don't feel supported at all.

HR position today is similar to a housewife. She is most important yet neglected and abused at times. A housewife takes pleasure in helping every family member to achieve their goals and feels satisfaction in their happiness and success. A housewife is especially present in downtime and provides unconditional support. Yet, seldom they are thanked or appreciated. She still continues her work with smile and sincerity.

Similarly, KRA of HR is to help all departments and individuals to achieve their respective goals. A HR person is generally behind the camera and is busy making others look presentable. They pose a calm, confident and helpful demeanor but it does not mean that they don't need support. If current industry trend is any indication HR Resignations can be a lethal blow to companies.

Let us together provide acknowledgement, appreciation and assistance to our HR Warriors in these challenging times. Send them "Thank You" notes, go to their desks (not with problems and complaints all the time) with a question, "How are you doing today? How can I help you today? Do let me know if I can be of any assistance." I can assure you that our little appreciation and acknowledgment will give lot of energy and encouragement to our HR Warriors to handle current challenging times. Support the Wall Which Has Been Protecting You. Thank You!

Entrepreneurship

I was recently going through a news item quoting the Economic Survey of 2022 that the number of recognized startups has increased to 14000 in 2021-22 from a meagre 733 in 2016-17. India has become the third largest startup eco-system in the world after US and China, it said. A record 44 Indian startups achieved unicorn status in 2021 alone, taking the overall tally of startup unicorns to 83.

This is no mean feat by any standards given that out of 6 years that the data showed, at-least 2 have been marred by Covid19 pandemic where the normal life was affected adversely.

This led my mind to thinking the mindset of the entrepreneurs who are behind these startups and other successful businesses and what exactly is entrepreneurship? Is it about doing your own business and making money? Is it only for those who perhaps were not good in studies or not good enough for a job or something else?

I know most of you are familiar with above questions and are pretty clear about the answers as well. Let me share my perspective; hope it might resonate with your thoughts. But before that, let us spend some time to understand the origin of “entrepreneurship”.

Joseph Schumpeter was an Austrian born political economist, who even served as Finance Minister of German-Austria and later migrated to USA to become a Professor in Harvard University. He introduced the concept of entrepreneurship in 1930. As per him “an entrepreneur is a person who is willing and able to convert a new idea or invention into a successful innovation”.

I entirely agree to this great economist’s definition and feel it is still valid after almost a century. However, based on my own experience of last 25 years of working closely with a large pool of highly successful entrepreneurs, allow me to describe my thoughts...



Who is an entrepreneur?

To me, an entrepreneur is a problem solver and opportunity provider. He/she is a person with curious mind and intense desire to create some opportunity for larger good. Sounds familiar? Well, this is what I think of!

What is entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is a journey which starts with restlessness, confusion, pain followed by ideation, collaboration, creation and culminates in an organized way of fulfilling needs/wants/expectations/requirements of the society. Profit is the reward an entrepreneur gets to take risk and keeping his/her neck out.

Why entrepreneurship?

Wherever you are sitting/lying/standing right now, you are surrounded by solutions to the problems or fulfillment of our needs/wants. Isn't it? Starting from this magazine, paper, printing, chair, bed, lights, fan, AC, coolers, cupboards etc., everything around us is because of some entrepreneur somewhere, who thought of all these. Like farmer, there can't be any life without entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is not just about making money, it is also about fulfilling needs/wants and solving problems. Entrepreneurship was, is and will remain the driving wheel of any country.

What are the traits of an entrepreneur?

Dreamer: Thinks about the problems and their solutions. How can I solve it? How can I create that need? How can I provide it better than others? Who can help me? How do I sustain the productivity and profitability? All these questions require the ability to think deeper, think ahead and think solutions. Dreamers always have an intense burning desire to travel the untraveled path. "Yes, it is possible" is the mantra of entrepreneurs which helps them to crack tough problems. Every problem feels like an opportunity to an entrepreneur.

Believer: Thinking is easy but believing in idea, persisting with it, working hard to convert a dream into reality is something only a believer can do. That is the reason they are willing to put all their resources and even borrow resources to make it happen. They walk that extra mile because they believe. Handling ambiguity is something which can only be done if you have that feeling of belief in your idea, product or services. It is this belief that makes others believe in entrepreneur's idea. They borrow the entrepreneurs' belief initially.

Executor: Thinking big is easy if someone else has to execute. Isn't it? In some cases the idea may not be thought of by the entrepreneur but it is he/she who will execute it in a way that leads to business. Boeing didn't invent planes, Wright Brothers did. But the devil is in execution and making it happen on ground. Making it work is more crucial than thinking on paper. An entrepreneur is someone who will not rest till it is done. They persist until it is done. Unlike others who are interested only if it is convenient. Follow up and follow through is something which differentiates an entrepreneur from others.

I don't need to remind you that most of the employment generation is done by entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are wealth generators, employment generators, contributors in economy, tax givers and above all problem solvers. They not just earn their own bread, they help others too.

We must salute these entrepreneurs who are bracing all kinds of hardships in terms of uncertainty, ambiguity, social unrest, unreasonable taxes, restrictions, unreasonable rules, inflation and above all negative publicity. Still they are contributing in nation building consistently.

In a nutshell entrepreneurship is the need of the hour, which can create better solutions, handle competitions, generate employment and improve quality of our lives as well as prosperity of country. Jai Jawan, Jai Vyapar.



Symbolic leadership

"The quote by Napoleon Bonaparte, 'A leader is the dealer in hope,' succinctly captures the essence of organizational dynamics.

An organization significantly reflects the character of its leader. To ensure continuous expansion, leaders within an organization must undergo continual growth. Each leader, through their distinctive style of leadership, shapes a culture that establishes the standards for individuals, processes, products, and practices including permissions and injunctions.

Leadership can be succinctly or can be encapsulated in a single word – 'Influence'. As such, leadership represents a profound responsibility to exert a positive influence on both individuals and outcomes.

Symbolic Leadership The Concept

Symbolic leadership is a compelling concept that underscores the positive impact leaders have on an organization or team through their own actions, consistent behaviours, and expressions, sculpting its culture and values.

Contrary to its name, symbolic leadership is not about mere symbolism; rather, it involves becoming a symbol of certain principles.

This is achieved in reality through consistent adherence to specific values and effective communication. Leaders, by consistently embodying certain behaviours, establish unwritten yet widely understood codes of conduct relentlessly, within their teams – a phenomenon simply known as "Symbolic Leadership."

Understanding Symbolic Leadership

General Sam Manekshaw, also known as Sam Bahadur, was a renowned military leader whose career exemplified symbolic leadership. General Sam Manekshaw, stands as a paragon of symbolic leadership in Indian history. His strategic brilliance during the Indo-Pakistani War 1971 displayed not only military prowess but also his ability to influence.

A pivotal moment occurred on meeting Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, he confidently declared, "I assure you, I am not going to be defeated." This unwavering determination became a symbol of his leadership, imparting confidence in his troops. His legacy continues to inspire future generations of military leaders and soldiers across nations.



R. Thyagarajan, the Founder of the Shriram Group is another great example of a leader demonstrating effectiveness through their actions, their words, and the environment they cultivate around themselves. Shriram Group. R. Thyagarajan's decision to distribute a significant sum of 6,000 crores to his employees while not allocating shares to his sons is a clear demonstration of his commitment to meritocracy, recognition of outstanding contributions, and his philosophy of inclusive leadership along with succession planning.

His strong belief in rewarding talent, dedication, and high performance, regardless of familial connections underscores his ability to foster a culture of fairness, meritocracy and equal opportunities. A combination of remarkable factors that define his leadership style such as action, words and environment Subhash Chandra Bose stands out as an iconic leader, symbolizing remarkable qualities such as bravery, unwavering determination, and profound patriotism. His legacy serves as a source of inspiration, resonating across generations and leaving an indelible mark on the ideals of courage, resilience, and love for one's country.

Bose's leadership during pivotal moments in history, coupled with his commitment to freedom and justice, establishes him as a symbol of valor and national pride, influencing and motivating people for years to come.

T N Seshan personifies unyielding integrity, professionalism, and audacity in his leadership approach, leaving an enduring legacy of electoral reforms and upholding the highest standards of ethics.

Similarly E Sreedharan, often referred to as the "Metro Man," symbolizes professionalism, meritocracy, and effective execution, setting a standard for excellence in infrastructure development. Their leadership exemplifies steadfast commitment, influencing and guiding others to emulate principles of integrity, professionalism, and excellence in their respective domains.

N. R. Narayana Murthy is widely recognized for his unwavering commitment to work ethics. He exemplifies diligence, dedication, and a strong sense of responsibility in his approach to work. His leadership underscores the importance of maintaining high standards of professionalism, dignity and integrity in all his business endeavours.

Humility, determination, and integrity collectively contribute to Ratan Tata's leadership legacy, making him a revered symbol not only within the business world but also as a philanthropic figure committed to making a positive impact on society.

Each of these leaders, known to you and me, embody a unique perception in the eyes of the people, shaping the narrative of true symbolic leadership

Influence through Authenticity: Symbolic Leadership

Symbolic leadership reaches its pinnacle when a leader's actions align authentically with their words. Followers keenly observe and respond positively to leaders whose behaviours consistently mirror their communicated values, establishing an environment built on mutual trust and alignment.

In leadership, good communication isn't just about words; it includes the powerful language of actions. Symbolic leaders, who are smart and perceptive, understand the strong messages in their choices, how they interact with others, and how they handle challenges. These leaders skilfully shape the understanding and commitment of their followers toward the organization's goals.

Conclusion

As a leader, consider the symbolism you embody. Recognize as you shape a culture of shared purpose and commitment within your team. Contemplate the behaviours you actively and consciously encourage.

Ask yourself:

What values do you hold that are most significant for you and are they evident in your daily conduct?

How do you choose to acknowledge and reward your team members for their positive actions?

Additionally, are there specific behaviours that you find unacceptable, and do you hold yourself to the same standards that you expect from others, regardless of the circumstances?

What do you symbolise?

What symbol defines you?

Think about it!

