

Are You
**WILLING TO
SUCCEED?**

YES OR YES!

**Powerful insights to Succeed
in any Endeavour of your Life**



MANISH DWIVEDI

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About the Author

An engineer by profession, Manish Dwivedi is an accomplished orator and Life Skill trainer (more specifically life transformation catalyst). He is a certified Advanced Leadership Bronze and an Advanced Communicator Bronze from Toastmasters, California. He is an ardent cycling enthusiast. He loves to travel and his wanderlust has taken him to practically every part of the country. Through his regular one to one sessions, he has helped numerous people achieve emotional maturity and set them on the way to achieving their goals. A spiritually inclined person, Manish Dwivedi is a keen observer of the mystical strings of life.

After a tumultuous journey through his teens and early adulthood, he turned to Yoga and subsequently to “Vipassana”. He has been deeply influenced by the great teachings of Gautam Budha. He believes in the power and nobility of ‘giving’ and has efficaciously positioned himself as the focal point energizing the destiny of people around him.

He is from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. He currently lives in Pune, Maharashtra.

Dedicated to:

To my **Parents** who gave me existence. If you would not have brought me into this world, I would have missed this wonderful journey called life.

To **Gautama Buddha**, who unveiled “**Vipassana**” for this world because of which I understood the inner purpose of life.

To **Jim Rohn**, one of the best business philosophers from whom I learned the outer purpose of my life.

Acknowledgement

To all those people and things who have knowingly and unknowingly helped me and inspired me in the creation of this book. No matter what you do, no matter how things go, the door of my heart will always be open for you. If things would not have happened the way they did, this book would not have come into existence.

Preface

This book is a guide for all the people who want to have change in their life but are not able to do it and keep wondering why they are not able to do it. Most people commit the folly of working hard on their job and then working on themselves. You must learn to manage yourself first. After reading the powerful insights in the book, the readers will have gained the knowledge to manage themselves, which in turn will help them succeed in any endeavour. There are times when you are confused between the easy way and the right way. This book will guide you to choose the right way easily. You often fight the opponent that you cannot see but can feel upon your heels, and you know what that is? That is you, with your fears, insecurities and doubts that are always ready to shoot you out of the game. Your mind will always remind you that you are not good enough, it is just a waste of time, you must quit and go back to the dream land and the enemies are invincible. However, this book will make you ready for any endeavour by giving you a new mind. By 'new mind' I mean a new perspective about things. Often we try different tasks but we do not change our perspective. We want new results with the old mind-set and things do not change for you because you do not change, ending up in the abyss of despair. After reading the book you'll be able to help yourself to get out of your pitfalls; low self-esteem, unnecessary worries, anxieties, distress, and grief. And then, you will be able to manage yourself in a better way. That does not mean the obstacles will disappear from your way, but as you can mind your mind and manage yourself, the obstacles will be the opportunities for you to shine and come out victorious. You'll jettison the unnecessary burden that you have encumbered yourself with and come out head first in any endeavour you are willing to succeed in.

Before starting the book please put on your mental track shoes and be ready to run along with me in this short marathon on a track laid with pearls of wisdom, which will equip you to come out as a winner in the endeavours you are willing to succeed.



“The seeds of ideas discussed in this book have been sown in me during various phases of my life through books, speeches and lectures of many great ideators. I have sought to give credit to the original sources wherever it has been possible. I offer my sincere apologies to the originators of the ideas for which I may have inadvertently failed to accord an acknowledgment.”

—Manish Dwivedi

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The Beginning.....

Youdhishtir raised his eyes and looked at the massive arched entrance. The gilded gates looked impenetrable. This was the moment of reckoning, the moment of challenge, the moment that mattered the most. With one hand on the hilt of his sword, he waited impatiently. Then the massive door swung open with a grating sound. An old man stood there with a smile that Youdhishtir thought was the most welcoming smile he had ever seen. The gentle breeze played with his long silvery beard. “Welcome to this world”, the man at the gate said. His voice was soft and soothing.

Youdhishtir took a step forward. The old man came forward and gestured to stop. He was still smiling. He seemed to look beyond Youdhishtir. Then in his gentle voice he said, “You can enter this world only alone. That is the rule. You will have to leave your friends behind.”

Youdhishtir turned around to look at his friends. Angersingh, battle-ready with his heavy armour on, was standing ahead of the others. He had always stood by Youdhishtir in all his battles and ruthlessly decimated the enemy. Behind him stood the trusted warrior Jealorita with her scornful look. To her left was Bhaybhole, who had always been meticulous in warning of impending dangers. Chintalal was brooding over something very seriously. He had always been faithful by reminding of the past strategic failures and getting favourable public opinion.

“Let them stay behind and you can step in to Vijaysthal”, the old man drew Youdhishtir’s attention to the situation at hand. Youdhishtir looked at his trusted lieutenants. Their faces showed pain and angst.

“You have to let them go. Or, you can go back to your endless futile battles”, the old man’s voice contained urgency.

Youdhishtir looked at his aides helplessly. They had their swords drawn. “Hurry up! Your time is running out”, the old man was shouting. “Finish them off”.

In a moment, his trusted friends charged ahead and stood blocking the entrance. The old man moved back. “We won’t let you go alone”, the aides

said in a chorus.

Youdhishtir drew his sword. Metals clashed. There were voices of swearing and groaning. He fought bravely. He now knew that his friends had never wanted his success. They had always held him back from being what he had wanted to be. He had to wage this final war. This was his personal war.

It was over sooner than he had hoped. They were not as difficult as he had imagined. It was only **he** who had made them look invincible. The old man smiled at Youdhishtir with outstretched arms. Youdhishtir walked into the arms of Happiness. He entered through the gates into a world of utmost beauty. Stars lit the place. Soon he knew that he too had become a star. Light emanated from him. People bowed before him. He walked on the flower-laden path and entered a beautiful room of comfort and peace. There was an open window at the back. He walked toward it and looked through. The window overlooked a valley enveloped in mist. His friends were standing down there and staring at him menacingly. He quickly withdrew from the window. He saw the old man smiling comfortingly. “They can’t enter this place unless you invite. You must forget them and get ready for your journey ahead”, he said.

Youdhishtir wondered where that journey would take him.



Chapter 1

Decisions

After coming back from work one day, I sat pondering, trying to decide what I would be writing about when I'll ultimately do write my book. I tried to identify the X-factor that makes the difference between success and failure. And I finally took the decision to write about decisions. At every point in our life, we constantly have to take decisions. When you take one decision, you are immediately forced to take another one then another, then another and so on. You are bombarded with situations until you die. This is a never ending process and ends only when the Sun would not touch your face anymore.

What are decisions actually, how do we take them, and how do they make us?

Are we controlled by our decisions or are we in control of them?

Stimulating question it was, wasn't it? Ask it to yourself again, "ARE YOU BEING CONTROLLED BY YOUR DECISIONS OR ARE YOU IN CONTROL OF THEM?"

All of us at some point or other have agonized to make a decision. You might have had the experience of waking up in the middle of the winter night with beads of sweat dripping down your forehead wondering, "**What shall I do?**" Most of us, I am sure, have experienced the inner civil war to take a decision.

There are things that just happened to us while in the process of decision making; experiences or occurrences that prevented us from doing the things that we ought to have done. Then you start procrastinating, you start blaming others, you start pretending but for some reason or other, you are not doing what needs to be done even though you know about it. Can you identify with what I'm saying? If you can, then it means I'm not talking to myself here, I've got company.

Decision making is a daunting task. It takes the hell of an effort to decide.

For instance, it's always easier to fast than to be on a diet, isn't it? When

you are fasting, if someone offers you something, you don't even think about it. But when you are on a diet, you have enough excuses like it's just a little piece of a chocolate, it's just a little piece of a sweet, it's not that many calories, come on, just one samosa is not going to matter much etc. Wrong! It does matter. It will matter as it'll bring you back to where you started.

Secondly, when we are faced with decision making dilemma, we are concerned about the outcomes insofar as fear paralyzes us of into not making good decisions. What about my suave? What if I lose my pride? What if I make a fool of myself in front of everybody? And we ramify the situation and we become overwrought worrying about the outcomes, but it's all about how you decide under pressure. Leaders have a propensity to make decisions under tough situations without worrying much about the outcomes. That makes them leaders. You can ask N. R. Narayana Murthy, N. S. Raghavan , Nandan Nilekani, Kris Gopalakrishnan, S. D. Shibulal , K. Dinesh , or Ashok Arora. They are the founding members of INFOSYS (Infosys Limited is an Indian multinational corporation that provides business consulting, information technology and outsourcing services). You can ask anyone of them if they were concerned too much about the outcomes when they chartered the company on 07 July 1981. Did they know that the company was going to reach a myriad of milestones over the time? Or did Jamshedji Tata, Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, Dhirubhai Ambani, Sachin Tendulkar, Michael Schumacher, or David Beckham know that they were going to achieve what they've achieved?

The answer would be obviously NO! The message is simple. Don't worry too much about the outcomes.

And by the way, there is nothing like a good decision or a bad decision, a right decision or a wrong decision. It's just that you make a decision and the outcome is right there in front of you.

For instance, if you're driving down to the cinema to watch the movie starring your favourite actor and you reach a signal which is red at the moment. From there you have two options. One is to go straight which is the normal route and you can expect traffic over this route which might cause you to miss the beginning of the movie. You certainly do not want that. Alternately, you can turn left (a shortcut about which many people are not aware of). And then begins the state of quandary as to whether you should go straight or left, straight or left, straight or left. The signal turns green and confoundedly you decide to turn left.

Now you're in exultation that what a good decision you've made and you're going to reach bang on time for the movie. However, while moving forward on the chosen route you find the traffic to be horrendous! Then the old friend, 'frustration', hops in and it is "Oh no, I'm so bad....What have I done? What a bad decision I have made! I should have gone straight.....How imbecile I'm"

Let me ask you this. Were you aware that the traffic was going to be like this here? I reckon you would say 'No'. Hence, learn to turn your frustration into fascination as no matter how static the traffic seems to be, it is going to clear up.

To overcome your frustration born out of taking a wrong decision, I would suggest you always take it as an adventure. Say unto you, "Let's see what is going to happen!" When you don't give it too much importance, then you don't have to feel much guilt and decision making would be much easier rather than being a daunting task.

Believe me, you will be amazed by the ease it is going to create for you and it's wonderful when you make your decisions without bothering what others might think.

You can say that if making decisions was as easy as you are suggesting, we would have already done it, Mr. Manish. And I will say, "Yes!" It's that easy, but you're not putting yourself in a state to decide.

Someone once said that most people are afraid of making tough decisions because they always want to make right decisions and hence they decide not to make any decisions, which is a decision by itself.

"Deciding not to decide". No matter how amazing it sounds, that's actually insane. A tree can be anything but a tree, a swine can be anything but a swine, a fish can be anything but a fish, but as human beings we have an unparalleled quality of having choices. However, we always decide to settle for less than we can. You must realize that your life at this very moment or the circumstances that you have is the sum total of the choices that you've made previously. **James Allen aptly said, "Circumstances do not make a man, they reveal him to himself".**

Let me again ask you a simple question, "How tall can a tree grow?"

As tall as it can! Have you seen a tree giving excuses, and not growing? Even if it doesn't get proper sunlight or appropriate amount of water, it will grow as long as it can and then it dies. If a tree can do that, why can't you?

At present there may be many things about you that bother you, but you can decide and change them.

If you do not like the way your physique is, change it!
If you do not like the way your career is, change it!

If you do not like the relationship that you are in, then change yourself first. Only after that you're going to bring it to the next one.

If you do not like your current address, change it. You are not a tree!

Everything in your life is going to change as soon as you make a decision and by that I mean a **true Decision or a real Decision** which is not like a preference that I'll try and see. No!! But that is when you cut off yourself from any other possibility except for the one you have committed to with everything you got and you've to push yourselves through.

Committing a murder can change the entire course of the person's life, forever. Yes or Yes? It just happens to be a negative action. However, just as you make a decision whose consequences are negative, you can commit a positive one too!

I've experienced that the world has a strange way of stepping aside when a human being that has made a firm decision walks in this arena called life because then you are showing the trait of resoluteness, evidences of a character or a purpose.

But if you don't decide to step into your fears, to work upon your dreams, to say 'yes' to your life, nothing will ever work for you.

Hence, reach down inside of you today, introspect and rather than letting your life to deteriorate making a living, decide that you are going to design your life!



Chapter 2

It's all in the Attitude

“Human beings can alter their lives by altering the attitudes of their mind” – William James

The only thing about a man which you can call a man is his mind. Rest all you can find in a pig or a horse. Harsh words aren't they, but as long as you live you'll never hear a truer statement.

Now, what is an Attitude?

When someone ignores you or hurts you or disobeys you, then you might say that “Oh, this guy or girl has too much attitude”. I am not talking about that. What does attitude really mean?

You can have so many definitions of attitude on the internet, like, “It is our best friend or our worst enemy”, “It is the thing that attracts people towards us or repels them away from us.” etc. Or you may be having your own definition of it.

But the best definition that I've found for attitude is, **“The habit of doing something over and over again or the act of doing something over and over again till it becomes your habit”**. Our attitude towards life will determine life's attitude towards us. An attitude of failure and we're whipped even before we start, be it any endeavour. What we accomplish in life and what we fail to accomplish are largely governed by our attitude.

I've seen people who can find issues with anything, problems in anything and then there are those who have the attitude of finding a solution for everything.

Confucius once said, **“Those who say that I can and those who say I can't are both absolutely correct”**.

Your Attitude is a reflection which reflects more than the mirror. You must understand that your environment is the replica of your attitude. If you change your attitude, the environment will change.

Take my example for instance. I used to dread going on the stage.

However, standing on the stage and speaking in front of the audience for the first time was extremely easy for me. However, the most difficult part was to make up my mind that I could deliver it.

Likewise, you might have always wanted to achieve many things like writing a book, talking to friends with whom you had an altercation, proposing to the lady of your dreams, chasing your dreams, earning billions of rupees and so on and so forth. Trust me friends, it is easy, very easy. The most difficult part is to make up your mind that you can be the one, that you can do it.

It is aptly said, “You will be that you will to be”. Hence, Attitude is a result of your will and it can be trained.

How?

Simple! Just expect better things out of life rather than the bad ones. Expect to succeed rather than to fail.

Mahatria Ra said, **“Attitude don’t care where you shape them. Once shaped however, they are going to follow you everywhere”**. It’ll become your behaviour. You can find it true in any kind of endeavour.

Every smallest thing that you do affects all the other things around you.

Don’t think that excellence will follow if you’ll keep a compromising attitude in everything you do and in the infrastructure you develop.

For instance, there are people who come to office regularly late, not occasionally. They can never meet deadlines. You assign them a task and if they say it’ll be given on Monday, they are only telling you that ‘on Monday I’ll tell you when I’ll give, I’ll tell you the next date’. If they are telling you that on the 25th day of this month it’ll be done, you can be assured that on the 25th day they are going to tell you they need some extra time for which they will have all the excuses. On top of that they themselves are not going to tell you anything. It’s you who have to follow them up, and chase them around to know the progress of the task assigned to them.

This attitude of getting late daily has not developed over night. Where does it come from? It comes from the small things which you don’t even pay attention to.

It has taken years of practice. Let me explain it to you in this way. I once gave a gift to my nephew, and after trying for not more than 2 to 3 minutes, he looked at me and said it was not opening up. I told him to either tear the gift paper down or open it nicely but not to give it back to me saying he was

not able to do it.

Though it seemed to be a small situation, but soon he would be practising this behaviour again and again in different endeavours and it would become his habit, his attitude. Now you may understand why people who come regularly late come late. They have been practising this attitude for quite some time now. Understand that if you do not use good raw materials in the beginning and you want the infrastructure you develop to be par excellence, then it will not happen.

I assume you are a follower of the game of cricket. Out of all the players who played the game of cricket, Kapil Dev, Imran Khan, Denis Lillie of Australia and Ian Botham of England hold a unique record of not bowling a single 'no ball' during their international career. I must tell you these bowlers must have bowled the least number of no balls or even zero no balls during the net practice as well.

Friends, your subconscious mind, the driving force where the habit patterns are formed, does not know the difference between net practice and the actual match. If the above bowlers would have been callous about the crease while bowling during net practice, they would have callous about the crease during international matches also.

Whenever a batsman misses a ball, you see him immediately shadowing the entire shot. Whenever a badminton player misses a shot he immediately shadows the entire shot again. Why? Because, as said by Mahatria Ra, **“Attitude doesn't care where you shape them. Once shaped however, they are going to be a part of you, they're going to follow you everywhere.”**

People setup alarms to wake up in the morning, and they push the snooze button so that they can have 5 more minutes of sleep. They are unconsciously developing the attitude of giving up easily, not willing to take the responsibility. When you press the snooze button, you inform your subconscious mind that you have given a promise to yourself but you have no reverence for your own decision. And then when you wake up 10 minutes, 20 minutes or even an hour of sleep later, you feel like 'oh no.. I'm so bad, I didn't wake up today also, I will wake up at 4 in the morning tomorrow for sure' and so on and so forth, and you're done for the day there only. Yes or Yes?

Don't do that. Either wake up or do not set the alarm clock at all. Unless

you develop the attitude of respecting your own decision, how will other people do it?

I work for an MNC and I've seen people to whom when any responsibility is given, they work for a certain time and then give up saying "I'm not able to do it, give it to someone else." All these people have developed this attitude not here, but from seemingly ordinary things. A few of them I have mentioned above. Only a personal victory will lead you to public victory. Hence, try pursuing excellence in the small things that you do and you will then automatically pursue excellence in the big things that you're going to do.

Friends, like a camera does not lie, your attitude cannot lie. Your attitude is more honest and more consistent than your words. It determines your actions. **"You are not what you think you are, but WHAT YOU REALLY THINK, YOU ARE!!"**

"Pain is inescapable but suffering is optional." This is my attitude towards life. It makes my life beautiful and makes me feel alive all the time. And by the way, attitudes are contagious. Which attitude are you going to embrace today?

I would say, whatever the endeavour is let your attitude to be a good one and let someone else catch yours today!!



Chapter 3

Why Giving Is Necessary?

“Our success in life is directly proportionate to the quantity and quality of services that we offer.” - Earl Nightingale

True! Isn't it?

All of us have heard the saying, “As you sow, so shall you reap”. This is one of the ways of quoting this law. You can also say it as, “You reap whatever you have sown”, which means “Giving is receiving”. Friends, whatever you give is going to come back, it may not come back in the same form or through the same channel, but you must have experienced yourself that it comes back eventually.

When you give or plan to give something, you do it more for yourself than anybody else. Giving fills the vacuum with an unseen vigour in us and others too.

For instance, when you help a blind man to cross the road, how do you feel?

Or, when you hold the door of the elevator for someone and then they rush inside, catching their breath say ‘Thank you’, how do you feel?

Or, when the knowledge transfer session you are taking in your project is over, people come to you and say that ‘Sir, you were amazing, the command you have over that particular topic is simply great’, don't you feel like you've done something amazing? Yes or Yes?

I'll share a real life example to show how powerful giving is. One of my uncles lives in Raipur. He is not financially very stable, mind you. He used to ride on his bicycle to travel to different places. While going to work he used to see an old lady with hearing difficulty roaming on the streets. Seeing her, something, which cannot be exactly defined, happened to my uncle.

He went to the bank, took out some money from the small savings that he was having, went to a shop, bought a hearing aid and handed it over to that old lady (without expecting anything in return). The old lady was so much

overwhelmed by the magnanimity of my uncle that she gave him a piece of land that she owned in Raipur city. It did not come back in the same form but it came back in abundance. Isn't it?

After reading this chapter, do not rush to buy a hearing aid and then start searching on the streets for a lady so that you can have a piece of land or anything big in return. Don't do that because you give up a little when you give away your possessions but it is when you give up yourself that you truly give. That is the reason why meekness is divine. The meek man overcomes everything not by refraining but by allowing him to be defeated and then achieves the ultimate conquest. There are people who give very little out of the wealth they have. Their hidden desire for recognition makes their gifts or donations insalubrious. However, there are also people like my uncle who have a little, but share it all.

Giving is **FORGIVING** too! I bet all of you must have lost your sleep over an incident caused by an individual or a situation like a heart break or a death of a near or dear one. You keep thinking and replaying and thinking and replaying the same thoughts insistently inside your mind, the end result being you getting rattled and restless.

How do I know that? I know it simply because I have been there too. However, I do not remember the last time when I lost my sleep over a situation or an individual, as I have realized that people have a job to do. Negative, toxic people will go out of their way to make sure that they are reflecting their negativity, their animosity, their anger, their rage upon you. I have disowned them. I keep them at an arm's length now and I want all of you who can relate to this to join me today. Stop carrying the chip on your shoulder. Forgive them, forget about it and move on and walk unencumbered. Someone put it very nicely, "The world is full of givers and takers. Takers may eat better but givers sleep better."

Learn to give **thanks** as "**gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions**". I would like to quote Gautama Buddha here, "**Let us rise today and be thankful for whatever we have learnt today. Even if we didn't learn much, we learnt a little. Even if we didn't learn anything, be thankful that we didn't fall sick and even if we have fallen sick, be thankful that we didn't die. We are still here**". Hence friends, be contented with what you have at present and then aspire for more. If you dislike and are not able to embrace completely what you have today you are surely going to be in an agitated state for achieving more and more. And as

they say, “If you don’t know what to be thankful for, be thankful for the troubles that you don’t have.” Hence, focus on what you have rather than what you don’t have and it will expand.

All of you reading this book must be having some friends or family members in your life who have helped you at some point in your life that has changed you as an individual all together and you are not the same as you were once. I have a friend whom I can call at any time for help. When I’ve got a flat tyre, I can call him and he’ll come. Once some of his roommates landed themselves in a mess and they called him at 2 in the morning to get them out of the police lockup, and without second thoughts he was on his toes to help them out.

It is quite surprising how long you remember a good deed if you have done it. However, we tend to forget the good things others did to us. Wouldn’t it be a marvellous idea to write a letter of appreciation to all those people? You might even call them or E mail them and say thanks. You don’t have to be ostentatious while writing, just a simple letter of thanks would do. Express your gratitude towards them and tell them how the help that you received from them changed your life.

What do you think how they will feel getting that letter, that email, that phone call out of nowhere? How would you feel if you were to receive the same suddenly? It will surely make your day! Yes or yes?

Let’s consider the overplayed cheesy example of the caterpillar. When he gives up his obsession to be a Caterpillar, only then he becomes a butterfly. When you donate blood, new blood is created. You’ve to give more, to get more. When you spend more time in gym then you’ll get a perfect body. You wish to have and talk about having a great body and you go and have lots of samosas and other stuffs and then sleep. You are not giving what it requires to get what you want. Don’t die just being the onlooker. Whatever you do, try to give it a 120 percent of your effort and let me tell you that be it any field, **“you will reap more than what you’ve sown”**.

Give that extra effort, go that extra mile. Do not quit your job, your marriage or whatever it may be. However, most of us don’t give because we don’t see ourselves as having the capacity to offer anything and we restrain ourselves. We hold back. But don’t you ever think like that because you can always giggle because the smile of yours has the power to rewrite history. Whenever you face a tough situation in life, just smile at it and tell yourself

that you are going to give it your hundred percent and you'll handle it.

Jim Carry once said that **the effect that you have on others is the most valuable currency there is and will ever remain.** How amazingly said and I'm telling you this from my personal experience that no matter how many expensive gifts you buy for people, by the end of the day it is all going to fade away. However, the only thing that is going to remain with them is how you treated them. Hence, try to give love, and you'll create some for your own. Someone rightly said, **"When you have more than you need, build a bigger table and not a higher fence."**

Let me warn you friends that you'll always be surrounded by people telling you that it's not worth it and rather than giving it a shot, do something else. There will be voices telling you not to waste your time and energy and effort while you are giving something but listen to that miniature voice that is in your head. Be it any endeavour, follow your heart and give it all that you have got! You're bound to be successful.



Chapter 4

Goals

“The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for.” - Fyodor Dostoyevsky

The “something” mentioned in the above sentence is what I term as Goals. There are various kinds of goals like for the next minute, next hour, day, week or month which are short term goals and there are the long term goals which define where do you want to see yourself in life after ten, twenty, thirty or fifty years from now. You need to have goals, be it short or long term and be it any endeavour if you are willing to succeed. The Sun’s light will not burn anything until you are focussing it to a particular point.

When we think about our goals, we think about something that does not exist yet. It is a dream that you want to turn into reality. I suggest you have grand and elevated dreams because only when you aspire you accomplish. Your dreams signify the ideal that you want TO BECOME ONE DAY. Writing a book was once a dream for me. Without dreams we will perish.

Buddha had a dream of the spiritual world with immaculate bliss and perfect serenity and he entered into it. When Columbus fostered the vision of reaching India and set out on his mission he could see only the deep blue sea ahead of him. Eventually he discovered the continent of America.

You’ll never achieve your dreams unless they become “Goals”. Remember, aimlessness is unethical.

Setting goals is the major step in turning the invisible which is your dream into reality. As soon as you assign a timeframe to your dream, whatever it may be, it turns into a goal and if you do not have a proper goal, **your life will become similar to that of a hunter with a gun in his hand who is looking to hit the targets, looking to hit everything he sees but ultimately ends up wounded by his own gunshots.**

Parkinson’s principle verifies the previous sentence as it says, **“Work expands so as to fill time available for its completion”.**

The first step in setting goals is writing it down.

“Reduce your plan to writing... The moment you complete this, you will have definitely given concrete form to the intangible desire.”- Napoleon Hill

Always set a goal high enough not only for the result, but for what it is going to take you to stretch that far, for what it is going to make of you to reach it. See, it's all in the process.

More than 90 percent of the people in our society do not have clear written down goals as they do not know its importance. They do not have time to write down and set goals. However, in reality they do not have time because they do not have set their goals. If it sounds irrational to you just create a 'to do list' for the next day before going to bed a day before and you'll see the remarkable difference in the experience you will be having the next day.

People do not set goals because it takes a lot of effort to stimulate your mind and focus it on a single point but it's all about practice and with repetition it will become a habit as I mentioned in a previous chapter.

For instance, if I ask a three-year-old kid what is nine multiplied by twelve, it would be difficult for him but an adult can do the calculation easily. As time goes by and as the kid grows into an adult, he'll be able to do the arduous calculations easily because by that time he would have learned the formula for it.

If you want to clean your room, you've to start from one point and soon the entire room will be clean as you have learned to clean one portion. The same goes with setting goals. Once you learn how to set one goal, soon you'll be applying it in all your tasks and you will end up with all the time in the world to do what you want to do.

I am sure you know who Abhinav Bindra is. For those who don't know him, let me tell you that he is the first Olympic gold medallist for India in shooting. He too had a goal of winning the gold medal in shooting. And he did win the first Olympic gold medal for India as he hit the bull's eye. Now I've never shot a bullet in my life but I can teach you how to be a shooting champion. If you are healthy and have a healthy eyesight, I am ready to give you my time and once that session is over you will be hitting the bull's eye every time you aim for it even more consistently than Abhinav Bindra himself. However, there will be a condition. You need to first blind fold Abhinav and turn him around a couple of times so that he can have no idea of which direction he is facing and where the target is. Now you'll say that's

goofy. How on this planet can anybody possibly hit a target they could not even see? That sounds logical, but here is a question for you then.

How can you hit a target, you don't even have!!

A ship that has no direction is going to sink.

I hope you've comprehended by now why we need to have goals. Now let's see how to set goals. Please study the flow chart below:



The flowchart above shows the types of goals which we all set. We might not be aware of it but we do it. For instance, those of you who are reading this book had set a goal somewhere in your mind to read it and you are doing it finally. Some of you might have wanted to do it for quite some time now.

You have to follow two things:

1. Set short range goals; targets that you can accomplish within a day like reading a book, or going for a walk or having no sugar diet etc. You need to choose it as per your desire.

Give yourself small rewards in the form of some leisure time after accomplishing these goals and these will help you when you're going to aim for long term goals.

2. How to decide the long term goals?

Take a sheet of paper or cue card and write down the following questions:

1. What do you want to be in life?
2. What do you want to see in life?
3. What would you like to have in your life?
4. What places do you want to visit in your life?
5. With whom do you want to share your things in life?

To answer these questions, write several possible long term goals that

come in your mind. Don't stress too much as we are just having the ballpark here. However, you must make sure that you write the goals in a positive sense instead of a negative sense. For instance, you want to lose weight. If your weight is eighty-five kg and you want to lose 10 kg, then write down your goal as "I want to weigh 75 KG" (in the stipulated time) rather than writing "I want to shred 10 KG". It may sound insignificant, but it makes a lot of difference.

Once the brainstorming is done and you have a list of the long term goals, write down how much time in years you plan to tenaciously devote to achieve each goal.

If the list is too crowded, don't be overwhelmed. Stay calm and then start to add or subtract from the list based on your priority and then reduce each category to 3 goals.

Now, since you have 15 goals, assign reasons as to why you want do it.

Once you assign the reasons, start working on your goals and be ready and open for the accomplishments that you're going to have in your life. You might get disappointed at times and want to change some goals. That can happen but how to deal with that, I'll talk about in the next chapter.

Let me remind you friends that setting a goal should not result in a morbid obsession. You must design your goals in such a way that you have to work for them and soon they will start working for you. Don't sell the peace of your mind for anything because once it is gone, no accomplishment is going to appease you. I would like to quote what Brian Tracy has said: **"Set peace of mind as your highest goal and then organize your life around it"**. Hence remember it, and say this to yourself every day, **"I'll not just go through this process but I'll will grow through this goal setting process without losing my peace of mind"**. You are bound to be successful.



Chapter 5

Is That What You Really Want?

The whole idea behind writing this book is to help you to achieve the change that you have always wanted to achieve. If you feel that despite all your efforts the change that you wanted is just not happening, then possibly you need to change the way you think. I am attempting to do precisely that; help you understand the need to change the way you think.

I had to fight the temptation to ask you if you wanted to change something in your life or to do something big in your life. I decided not to ask the question because, to me, it is the most impertinent question to ask. I've learned from my own personal experience and through talking to so many people that most of us go through life like a spy behaving in an undercover manner, as though we do not have any special dreams or desires or ambitions. However, deep down inside all of us do really want more.

Never Give Up! All of us have heard this phrase, and we generally follow it. We don't give up that easily. We persevere and get up each time we fail and move on with renewed will. So, we do possess the most important quality to succeed. We put everything at stake to climb that ladder to reach the pinnacle. Then we pat ourselves on the back, grin from ear to ear and take a deep breath as if to allow the success to sink in. We look around. Lo behold! **We've climbed the wrong ladder! We have reached the wrong summit!** Then we ask the question we should have asked before we started our adventure; **"Is it that I really wanted?"** Here lies the real problem. Most of us do not know where we want to go.

Let me put it to you like this:

You're at Pune airport and your friends are waiting for you at MG road. Almost every city in India has an MG road. You are having a map (not the google map but the old atlas). Due to a printing mistake, you have the map of Bhopal with Pune printed on it. Now, no matter how tenaciously you try, you are not going to reach the correct MG road and meet your friends unless you change the map itself and have the destination right.

This is what happens when we set our goals and start working towards them without reevaluating them from time to time. Your persistence, your diligence and your unyieldingness are all necessary, but they will bear fruit only if you have set your eyes at the right goal.

If you want to cross a river, what is the most important thing that you need to have?

Some of you will say you must have a boat, or you must know how to swim. Some will say you must have the preparation, the mind-set to cross the river, the strength and courage to cross the river and so on. Okay! So, you think you can cross the river because you know how to swim, you have a boat, you have prepared yourself for any eventuality, you have the right attitude and you have the strength and courage to do it. Then you turn around like a scarecrow and ask, “Where is the river yaar?” There is no river for you to cross. To cross a river you need to have a **river** first.

The river is your goal. We can’t equip ourselves to achieve a goal without first having clearly identified our goal. We have discussed about goal setting already in the previous chapter. Before running around for a swimsuit or a speed boat, won’t you first identify the river you want to cross?

A common mistake that we all make is to confuse activity with accomplishment. You have decided to cross the river or to reach MG road or to climb the ladder but that alone is not enough. Then we vigorously work towards our goals and feel satisfied with our efforts and begin to feel tremendous satisfaction because we think we are doing everything right. Is it an accomplishment? Not yet. The saddest thing at this point can be that we had never asked ourselves why we had wanted to achieve this goal at the first place. We are satisfied with our activity, but we may be moving towards disappointment when we have finally crossed the river. We get to the other side of the river and look back and ask if all the effort was worth it.

A French Naturalist named John Fabray once conducted a series of experiments with some caterpillars. He lined them around a flower pot and soon they formed a perpetual circle. He then put some food at the centre of the pot for the caterpillars but instead of approaching the food, they were going round and round. This went on for seven days without even a single caterpillar making an attempt towards the food. They continued this parade until they died out of starvation and exhaustion.

The food was just six inches away from them, but they starved to death as

they were confused between “Activity and accomplishment”.

This happens with people also as they start a goal and are then confused whether this was what they really wanted or whether it was an impulsive goal.

How do you choose the river you want to cross? How do you get to the correct destination? How will you get the correct map to reach the correct MG road? How will you make sure you are climbing the right ladder? I thank Dr Stephen R. Covey for the tip in his book, **“Begin with the end in your mind”**.

Often in my talks I ask my audience to close their eyes to be ready to proceed on a trip. I ask them not to open their eyes until they are told to do so. Then I ask them to imagine the following. You are travelling down to a destination you stop by at a flower shop.....you buy some flowers and get back into your car.....you reach a beautiful housing complex.....you park your vehicle.....you climb the stairs and enter an apartment.....there are scores of people in the apartment.....it is a funeral.....you go near the coffin and look in.....you are stupefied to see yourself in the coffin.....it is your own funeral.

You can see and hear four people speaking about you. They are speaking the truth. One is your friend, second is your colleague, third is your family member and the last is from the community you used to visit often or serve. Are you shocked at what they are saying about you or are you happy and grateful?

Now, what do you want them to say about you when you die? Take a break now and pick up a pen and a piece of paper. Write down what the four people said about you. Be specific. Ask yourself, **“Is this what I really want?”** Now write down what you really want people to say at your funeral. Let me warn you that it can be a time consuming process to define the constitution for your life and to set the map of your life. You may change at times what people will say about you at your funeral but that is all right because you may not be quite sure what others will say. Soon it will get clear to you, the fog, the cloud, the dew and the haziness will disappear and you’ll find a clear picture of the river which you want to cross, the top of the right ladder and the correct route to MG road. “If you are going do tomorrow what you should have done today, you’ll get tomorrow, what you should have got

today.” (A more pathetic possibility is that you may be getting the leftover)

If you are going to perform the exercise seriously, I’m telling you, you’ll figure it all out. If you are going to procrastinate, it won’t work for you. Hence, find out what you really want, find out your ‘why’ for living; a reason that is greater than you, and once you find out, spend the rest of your life going after it as though your life depends on it (because it really does)!

To be sure that your goal is the right one, you may take the help of these questions. “Will I be really happy after achieving my goal? Will I have made my loved ones happy with my achievement? Have I made sure I do not have to make anyone unhappy in the process of achieving my goal? Will my achievement benefit me as well as others? Have I made sure that my achieving the goal will not be at the cost of others’ happiness?

If you can honestly answer “YES” to these questions, I am sure your goal is worth pursuing. You are most likely to be happy at the top of the ladder.

I hope you will not take offence if I further tell you a secret. If your achievement makes even your perceived enemy happy, then you are worth all the adulation in the world. That is something worth achieving. Isn’t it?



Chapter 6

What Takes The Most Effort?

I was once giving a web based training over business communications in my workplace and I came across the phrase “**Well begun is half done**”! That’s right. As we know from our discussions in chapter one, deciding takes a lot of effort. However, if you go through the phrase again, you will find another truth. Well begun is **ONLY HALF DONE!**

It means there is still another half remaining. Something that demands the remaining vigour. It does not take any effort to quit. You just quit. Then what is it that takes you through the remaining half?

It’s “**MAINTENANCE**” or you can say “**PERSISTANCE**”.

I just love the way “Gaura Gopal Prabhu” summed such a valuable message in a sentence when he said, “**Creation needs some effort, destruction needs practically no effort but what requires the maximum amount of effort is “maintenance”.**

You will find it in every corner of your life.

Let’s take some of the examples from our daily life. How about deciding to join a GYM? In the beginning when you see your role models, like Hritik Roshan, Arnold Schwarzenegger or Amir Khan with a fantastic physique, having a six-pack or eight-pack ab, and then there you are having a family pack, a pot belly. You want to emulate them and you decide that you’ll also get a physique like them and with full fervour you enter the gym. Mostly people take annual membership of gyms as part of their New Year resolution. By the way, this is how gyms make money as they know people who take the annual membership of the gym are not going to appear inside gym after 3 months. Although there are always exceptions, generally people quit after one month. In fact, if everyone who takes the annual membership of the gym start going to gym regularly, soon gyms will have to close down. It is because of our low commitment levels that adidas, nike, gold gym, lotto, puma and many other brands have grown rich and the only thing that has grown about us is our belly.

Talking about myself, I also had once taken the membership of a gym and I entered the gym with full zeal and I started exercising. The trainer came and made me follow the rigorous cardio schedule. He asked me to do a little of weight training also. That was not all. As I was about to leave he shouted, “Lad! Did I ask you to leave?”

“No sir”, I said sheepishly.

“Come back here, I need you to do 10 push-ups.”

“What? Ten! But it has already started to hurt”, I tried to protest.

As he was a fan of a humungous boxer, he said, “When it starts to hurt, only then it counts. Now come on, get down!”

I went down promptly, and he started counting... “Yes.. one... two... ... three.....”

I did not trouble him beyond 5. I was not able to get back up. And let me admit that instead of doing push ups, I thought I was attempting a performance of the famous “MAAR DALA” step performed by Madhuri Dixit in the song ‘Humpe ye kisne hara rang daala’ in the movie Devdas!

It suited everyone case because the trainer had almost wiped me out on my very first day at the gym. I came back home and slept for around 12 hours that day.

The next day, my friend asked, “Hey, how was your first day?”

I said that it wasn’t bad.

“What time are you going today?”

“It is weekend. It is a two-day rest as I have to recover from the muscle pain”, I said although the gym was open.

On Monday, I did not appear inside the gym. I quit and, like any honourable quitter, I started giving excuses.

I wanted to have a magnetic physique but I was not willing to pay the required price. I was not able to persist and let me tell you, it takes the most effort.

I reckon this is not only my story. You might have done the same many times.

Let’s talk about relationships. It is all wonderful in the beginning. It takes guts and efforts to start a relationship. When you want to impress a girl, you work day in and day out toward it. You spend a lot of time buying expensive clothes, expensive shoes, or an expensive watch. That’s good actually, as

your comportment has to be proper because only **“God is going to judge you from inside but people are going to judge you from outside”**. Anyway, you are ready and then you’ll walk around your lady with suave, with magnetism and that’s it. You’ve crossed the first hurdle, you’re noticed.

What next? From somewhere you find out that your lady loves to listen to Bryan Adams. You’ll buy one guitar, learn to play some notes and sing the song to impress her that **“Everything I do, I do it for you....”** And now you’ve moved one step closer.

Finally, it’s the judgement day, it’s time to confess. You may use some poetic lines like “Lady! You set my soul on fire”. “I love you simply for being you, and more importantly for who I am whenever you are around”. It may take some more effort but if you persist long enough you will have the lady of your dreams.

Now, how about ending the relationship?

Stop reverting to her texts, stop picking her calls up, start to ignore her and sooner than later it is going to end for sure. By the by ignorance is not bliss, ignorance is break up in this case.

Does it take any effort to break a relationship? Within a wink of an eye relationships break these days, be it friendship, be it an intimate relationship or be it a marriage.

You see, in the beginning it has taken a lot of efforts to convince the other half and it has taken practically no effort at all to end your relationship, but what will take the most effort is to maintain that relationship. What will take the most effort is to persist with the unconditional love.

Those who are in a relationship can relate to this. It really takes the most effort to be together in the peaks and valleys of life.

The lady might say, “He has changed, he does not bring me flowers anymore and it all collapsed”. What I suggest is **“Always treat the other half like you have tread him/her in the beginning and trust me you will never see the end”**.

I can give you numerous examples like studying, your house maintenance, your vehicle maintenance, maintaining the rapport and many more but the nitty-gritty will remain the same. **“What takes the most effort is to persist, and to maintain”**.

By now, you must have comprehended that in any case in life, persistence takes the most effort but what if we don’t persist? It will end, perish, and

deteriorate. You can use the above words in different contexts but the end result will be the same.

Let me warn you that it may get harder and harder and harder as you'll move forward to achieve your goal by persisting, but once you get on track, you'll never look back. You'll never be the same again. It may happen at times that you may not land exactly where you expected to do, but what you will become in the process, the character that you'll develop, the mettle that you are going to manifest would be simply amazing.

Hence persevere! It shows your class, that you will never quit and the rewards are usually at the end of the journey. Always keep in mind, no matter what you do, you may fail even at the hundredth try, but it might require one more effort to succeed. Every subsequent attempt will bring you closer to your goal. Thomas Alva Edison had ten thousand failed attempts before he could invent the electric bulb. He persisted and we all enjoy his invention today. He kept on looking for new ways. He maintained and he succeeded.

Whatever your goal is, whenever you feel helpless, whenever you find it difficult to persevere, whenever you are perplexed as if there is no way, tell yourself **“There is always a way and the way is always on the way and in case you find the way is not on the way, be patient as the way is on its way of being on the way”**.

Don't count the days and do not overwhelm yourself by pondering over the 21-day habit challenge that if you do something for 21 days continuously a new habit will be formed. If it is formed, then good for you but if you think about it then you'll not be putting conscious effort that is required for making you successful in accomplishing the task. Hence, once you have decided, “Don't think too much, don't try too much, just do”. Day after day, play after play, minute after minute, second after second, **‘Keep on keeping on’** and whatever the endeavour is, if you persist, and live long enough, you will get what you want. And just what you will to be, you'll be in the end.



Chapter 7

If You Can Take It, You Can Make It!

“Man is not a machine. All work and no play makes him dull.”

During leisure hours man engages himself in some work, which you call as his hobby. “A hobby is something that you go nuts about to keep from going nuts about what you are doing”.

I bought a bicycle in the year 2013 with a million plans in my head. Some of these were, “I will commute to office daily, I’ll lose weight, I’ll save fuel, I’ll reduce the carbon footprint and help mother earth, I’ll regain my fitness”, and many more. However, as it happens in most cases, it became a show piece. I used to ride it only for leisure as I liked cycling and it prevented me from going nuts over work and it became my hobby. I never rode it for more than 25 kilometres at a stretch. Whenever I rode it, I made sure that myriads of photos were clicked and then posted over social media so that people would know I’m cycling.

Two years had been like that only and it was around February 2016, when I received a mail from the cycling club of the company where I work saying “Ride For purpose”, which was about a ride to a school of under privileged children. The total distance was around 150 KMS to and fro.

I thought I must use my bicycle at least once to ride that long. It had nearly begun to rust due to its sedentary status. I said “Yes”, albeit a little apprehensive about the distance. But I eventually registered for the event.

The big day duly arrived, and the ride began. We started at 0700 hours and I started paddling fast as if it was a race that I had to win. The enthusiasm was gone barely after 2 kilometres. I was drained of my vigour. I was debilitated, and there I was, “from rabbit to tortoise”. But as they say, “slow and steady wins the race”, I slowed down (ostensibly like a well thought out strategy), and somehow managed to pedal on. We reached our destination finally at around 1100 hours. I cannot explain where exactly it was hurting

most, because it was hurting at so many places. A Pandora's Box had opened for me there.

I lay on the ground, caught my breath and then finally met the students over there. Some of us played cricket with them, some played football and after having lunch, we had a chit-chat with the students. As most of them used to start working after completing their high school degree, we gave a vision for their future that there are other options available. As good times are most ephemeral, so was the case. At the end of a memorable day (and painful most of the time), we retired to our tents and slept.

Next morning, we had our breakfast and it was time to depart. We gave the keepsakes that we had brought for the students. While my fellow cyclists were taking their own sweet time in saying good bye, I caught up with a veteran cyclist of the club.

"Isn't my bike impressive?" I asked.

He took a closer look and said, "It is a complete waste. Look at you, and look at the frame. It does not suit you at all. How can you run in full speed with your legs bent from the knees?"

Although it made a lot of sense, I was not willing to accept it.

How could he call my bike **a complete waste**?

During the entire journey from the school till my little abode his words kept on replaying in my mind....**"It's a complete waste"**.

I was tired and slept through the day and when I woke up, I went to the living area. I saw my bicycle and it reminded me, "It's a complete waste". "It's a complete waste".

I said, "Enough!" I know it's a complete waste". I sold my bike immediately.

After doing some research, and pouring over some bicycle shops, I bought myself a new bike. The cost of the bicycle was exorbitant and it left me Stoney- broke.

Since I had invested a huge amount, my interest began to develop even more and I started to take cycling as a sport and not just a hobby.

I participated in Pune-Lonavala 100K challenge and to my sweet surprise, I finished ninth in my category in that race.

There was a race the very next day also. I took part in that, and I finished 60 kms in almost two hours.

My fellow club members started to motivate me to take cycling seriously and go further, and I then participated in my first BRM. A BRM is a form of endurance cycling where you need to complete certain distance within the allotted time.

There I was, participating in my first BRM, which was of 200 kms which was to be completed in thirteen and a half hours.

I completed my first 200-km BRM in almost ten and a half hours. I was elated.

What do you do when you achieve a goal? You aspire for something higher.

I did the same. I went to Mumbai for attempting a 400-km BRM. Mind you, the route was circuitous and the riders were opposed by head winds and side winds as well. We had to complete 400 KMS in 27 hours.

I was left with twenty more kms with two hours to spare and then, I met with an accident. A truck came by and hit me.

I was bleeding, the break levers were broken. I got on to the bike again and pedalled on for a few more kms with a determination bigger than the truck that had hit me, but soon the pain was unbearable and I had to give up. I met one of the organizers there. I hugged her and I started sobbing like a bride leaving her parents' house after her marriage. I was sobbing not because of the pain, but because of the agony that I was not able to complete the event albeit for no fault of mine. I came back from Mumbai and decided to quit as I was scared to get back on road again. I didn't go on a ride for almost 2 months after that. I cannot explain the agony I was going through. I used to get up in the morning and while leaving for office I used to see my bicycle staring at me as if she (of course *she*) was saying "I do not belong here, take me on the road".

And I used to disappoint her every day as I was afraid of going on the road again. However, one fine day the distress had exceeded all the levels and I was sitting with a friend. He appealed to me and suggested, **"You have got a penalty shootout and you are afraid that if I take the shot I might miss it and hence you're not taking the shot. But you are forgetting that the chances are still fifty-fifty.** There is a fifty percent chance that you might hit the goal but if you do not try, there is hundred percent surety that you are going to miss the goal. Hence, enough of your excuses. Either accept the situation or leave it. Stop Running Away! Face what you must face."

I somehow mustered the courage and as the new BRM season was there, I enrolled for the 200-km Brevet. It took a lot of me, seriously, as I had not been cycling for long, but I completed it.

Two weeks later, I attempted the 300-km brevet but due to some 'tyre' issues I had to quit after 130 kms which was the first checkpoint. I had to come back with my bike on top of a bus. Meanwhile, I came to know that in the same event, one of my club mates had met with an accident and had a fracture. He was also left with around 15 to 20 kms to complete.

I was nostalgic. I was disheartened and despondent again. However, I realized that there are things that are beyond my control and I should not let the outer circumstances make any excuses and I must reinvent myself.

Two weeks later, I participated and completed the 400-km brevet. However, during the ride I suffered from Iliotibial band syndrome, which is a common injury to the knee, generally associated with running, cycling, hiking or weight-lifting.

In spite of the injury, one week later, I cycled to Divegar (a beautiful coastal area with a serene sea beach) from Pune.

There I discussed my plans of attempting the six-hundred km brevet which was scheduled for the very next week. Listening to this, one guy from the team with whom I had gone there, ridiculed me, and started comparing me with one of the senior cyclists of the club that I was not capable enough to attempt the six hundred-km brevet. He even called me a flake. (Thank you brother, for you helped me have determination bigger than a train)

Since I had already come out from that abyss of despair, I ignored him completely.

One week later, I was on the road attempting the six hundred-km brevet. After the first 50 kms I felt an acute pain and it was the Iliotibial band again. Suddenly it had become quite difficult to pedal but the words of **DR. Eric Thomas** started resonating in my mind, **"Pain is temporary. It may last for a minute, an hour, a day, a week or even for a year but eventually it is going to subside and something else will take its place and that is success"**.

I said unto to me, **"If I can take it, I can make it", "If I can take it, I can make it," "If I can take it, I can make it"**.

I kept on telling this to myself and I realized I had to do 550 kms more. I told myself that if I quit today I will have to do 600 kms again and it would

be strenuous and inconvenient since I would be encumbered by the agony and torment of quitting this BRM.

Fortunately, I got company of two fellow cyclists who were taking part in the event.

After the first 200 kms, we three almost rode together. One of them taught me the peacock posture, which was quite helpful in relieving the excruciating IT band pain. I did the peacock posture after every 30 kms and it would give me the strength to stretch for the next 30 kms.

I didn't sleep at night because if I did, there would be swelling on my knee and I would have to quit then.

I took a nap on the side of the highway the next day, around 28 hours after starting the event. That nap helped me to recoup my shattered self a bit. I had my lunch, had a pain killer, used some sprays and moved on. There was a moment when tears were rolling down my eyes, but I kept reassuring myself, **"If I can take it, I can make it"**, and finally in 38 hours I complete my maiden 600-km Brevet. After a month I participated in the 300-km Brevet that I had to quit the last time because of the tyre issues, and I completed it in 17 hours and received my maiden Super Randonneur title.

I received accolades and praises from many for this achievement.

This is my story, but there is something in it for you as well.

All this happened just because I said yes to that mail which I received in the beginning from the company's cycling club. Just because I said yes, I developed a new hobby, a new fitness level, a lot many friends and much more. I could have missed all this If had said 'no' again, and this is what happens with most of us.

As **Les Brown Says**, **"Most of us say 'no' to the things when we don't even know what we are saying 'no' to"**. I did not know that I could do all this but I did it because I said 'yes'.

Secondly, people were pulling me down in between but I did not pay any attention to them. I neglected them and it did not affect me. It was their opinion and I didn't allow it to become my reality.

The nitty-gritty of the entire story is that no matter what you are doing, however big or small the task may be, however afraid you may be, however scared you may be of the unknown, SAY 'YES'! Because, that is where the growth begins.

Someone rightly said that the comfort zone is a lovely place to live in but

nothing grows there. Hence, be it anything that you're trying to do, try to get out of your comfort zone as quickly as possible and strive towards accomplishing the task.

Secondly, there are enough people around you to pull you down. Derision and mockery will be there. Do not take it personally and do not allow it to become your reality. Do not let it overpower you. Remember, we all are supposed to behave differently and when others look down up on you, just believe in yourself.

Keep in mind the above two points, and you are bound to be successful in whatever endeavour you undertake



Chapter 8

Are You Willing To Fail?

In the month of February in 2016, I thought I would test my oratory skills. I participated in a speech contest that had two rounds of competition. The first was the prepared speech round where in you had to speak for a minimum of five minutes and a maximum of seven and a half minutes, and the second was the extempore round which is the impromptu speech on a topic given on the spot and one had to speak for a minimum of one minute and a maximum of three and a half minutes.

In the prepared speech round, I delivered a speech on decision making. After a few more speeches post mine, it was recess. I was moving around in a nonchalant manner with a cup of tea in one hand and some biscuits in the other, obviously because I had performed well in the first round. Meanwhile, some of the guests who were there to witness the contest approached me.

One of them said, “Manish, you are a voluble speaker!”

I said, “I do not know what it means exactly but it sounds good, thank you!”

Then another said, “I was sitting back there listening to you and wondering how you made such a serious topic so humorous.”

I was beaming and gleaming with the appreciation being poured upon me. I expressed my gratitude towards them. Soon the recess was over and it was time for the extempore round.

There were twelve participants, and I was the twelfth one. In the extempore round, all the contestants are herded into a separate room from where they leave for the venue of the contest one by one.

The ambiance inside the room was convivial, but suddenly, out of nowhere, self-doubt descended on me. I started feeling that I would not be able to make it. I thought I would better quit the contest. I started discussing this with the remaining contestants present in the room. Those good souls told me that I had delivered a god speech in the first round, and not to be nervous. They assured me that I would do well.

Although I did agree with them, somewhere inside my mind a voice was insistent that I would not be able to speak and hence I should not compete.

The contestants kept on leaving the room one after the other, and finally it was my turn. I entered the contest room chin up!

I went on the stage. The master of the ceremony was ready with the topic and she announced that my topic was **“Rome was not built in a day”!**

For a moment I thought it was easy. I had once before delivered a speech on goals previously at a venue, and the present topic was perfectly analogical to that. I had enough content to speak over this topic and with this thought I started, “Rome was not built in a day which reminds me of goals! And.....”

What followed was a long pause as though my vocal cords had suffered a paralytic attack. There was pin-drop silence inside the room, and I was experiencing a lot of fidgety.

There was enough content running inside my mind, but all that simply refused to come out through my mouth.

Audience sitting in the room started to clap, and tried cheering me up shouting, **“Come on! You can speak”!** I was disheartened and thought to myself, “Yes, I know I can speak, but somehow I am not able to”.

Then the vocal cords came alive. **“I am Sorry!”** I said, and I stormed out.

That was quite disconcerting for me.

Over the past few years, I have developed a habit of not brooding over whatever goes wrong and hence I regain my shattered self pretty quickly, and that day also, soon I was back in the present moment, taking part in the remaining ceremonies of the contest that day. The day ended finally for me with some good and some not so good memories.

I was home, I had my dinner and then I was contemplating on what had happened that day. Why I was not able to speak?

Bangggggggggg..... It hit me like a brick out of nowhere. I realised that back inside the other room, I had developed an attitude of failure and the result was right there in front of me.

“I FAILED”!

By the way, had I really wanted to fail?

Of course not! However, inside the other room, I somehow contracted fear of failure and the result was right there in front of me.

The law which states, **“Everything happens twice, first in your mind and then in reality”** manifested it itself right there on the stage for me.

I realized that **“planning to fail is bad, but failing to plan is horrendous!”**

“I will never do that again”, I said unto myself. “Even though I may not plan at all, I’ll never plan to fail again.”

I learned a lot from that experience. I went on to deliver a few talks after that. I got a chance to deliver a speech in another multinational company and I was flawless for the first time in my speeches ever.

Now when I look back, I realize that failing that day was not that bad after all.

Had I not failed that day, I would not have probably delivered that immaculate speech in the other company.

Had I not failed that day, I would not have been able to write this important chapter of the book.

Most importantly, had I not failed that day, I would not have learnt the lesson that **“failing at one thing does not make me a failure.”**

No matter what your goal is or whatever endeavour you are about to undertake, the bitter truth is that at some point in life **you are bound to fail**. You, I, and everyone in this world are going to fail at something as we all have to receive our share of setbacks. Accept the fact that failure is inevitable. The sooner it happens, the better it is. The sooner you realise this truth all the more beneficial it is, for you.

That should give you the courage to face the inevitability of failure whenever you embark on something. However, more important is how you take your failure when it finally happens.

You can say that just because something has gone wrong, you will not walk inside the arena again. What if it happens again? What if something bad happens?

Or you can say I will walk inside the arena again with a whole new style, a whole new language, and an entirely different attitude.

I would suggest you follow the latter voice inside you. What if something good happens? What if something new happens? Isn’t that possible? Yes, very much.

You see, that day, in that prelaunch room, I had meticulously planned my

failure. It is another matter that I was able to turn that humiliating failure into a lesson and bounce back. However, my initial reaction was one of despondency. Today I am willing to fail at things, so that I can learn more, I can grow more.

No matter what you are doing, don't be overwhelmed by the fear of failure. Don't ever be disheartened when the failure will eventually happen. Be always "Willing to fail" because a man, made wiser with experience, is writing this.

"You tried and you failed. It doesn't matter. You try again, you might fail again. But this time, I am sure, you will have failed better!!"

You have started to fail. So, you are bound to be successful!



Chapter 9

Have You Reached Emotional Adulthood?

“**M**aturity comes with age”.

I do not buy this quote as I've seen enough old men who nod wisely and speak stupidly.

I have met people who are in their mid-thirties or forties but behave childishly and then I've met teenagers and people who are in their mid-twenties behave like learned wise men.

By the way, there is a difference between behaving **childish** and **being childlike**.

It is desirable to have childlike characteristics. Have the curiosity of a child. They can drive you nuts. They ask you a question, you give an answer and they would throw hundred more questions at you.

It is equally desirable to have a childlike attitude. They are not bothered too much about their future because they are too busy in the present.

They play in gay abandon when they play, and they work when they work.

Acquire a childlike imagination and you will be able to achieve extraordinary things.

However, never behave in a childish manner. Childish behaviour is immature behaviour.

Now how do you know if you are mature enough?

When you stop seeking answers outside of you, and develop **emotional adulthood**, I would say you have matured. When you realize that no one else can influence the way you think and the way you react to different situations, that is when you have attained emotional adulthood. In other words, when you are able to brush aside any external provocation and calmly react to a situation after making sure that this is exactly the way you want to react and this is the best way to react, you have attained emotional maturity. That is

when you're the master of your emotions (and by the way man is always the master of his emotions even in the weaker and most abandoned state). In most cases he just happens to be a foolish master, but he remains the master all the same.

For instance, there are days when, waking up in the morning, you feel lethargic. You are about to leave for work and you are having mood swings. You are at the workplace and one of your colleagues wishes you a good morning and since you are in a so called bad mood, you start yelling at him, "What is so good in the morning? It's already 10, and I have not started working and I'm not feeling good at all. I am feeling like I must go back to bed and you are wishing me good morning".

Now that is one situation, but there are times when your boss, or your family members scold you and you are in a jovial mood and you simply ignore them.

You do not allow your peace to be hampered by them and you say, **"Why are you shouting? I'll do the task, don't you worry!"** and simply keep on doing your work.

Now, if you would have noticed, in the first of the two scenarios that we have been talking about above, your colleague is at peace but you are not and you react in an agitated manner.

However, in the second scenario, you are at peace with yourself and the world around you is in chaos but it does not affect you as you are not allowing it to.

Simply put, it signifies that you are in control of your emotions. No matter how bad the world reacts, the power to decide how to react is in your hands only.

"In between the stimulus (the cause) and the response (the reaction that you give), you have the total command over choosing the reaction that you offer". Instead of offering a reflex reaction, reflect over the range of choices available to you and choose the best from them. ***Resist the reflex, and decide to reflect.*** Even in the darkest of the circumstances or even when people wish you did not exist, trust me you can condition yourself and choose to be happy.

I believe all the emotional responses, like being angry or feeling anxious or getting distressed about something are all related. They are all **close cousins** (and sometimes conjoined twins).

For instance, you have a fight with someone. You are indignant and you scream at him, and feel happy that you won the argument. But after some time (it can be a few minutes, or hours or even months) you feel sad and guilty about your behaviour, and you are rattled again.

You ponder over the incident, and then try to make up your mind whether to call up that person for a reconciliation. Finally, you somehow muster the courage and call the other person. Even before giving the call, you create a notion in your mind that you will say “sorry” and he’ll accept the apology and everything is going to be as it was before.

However, if the person does not answer your call or picks up your call, but does not answer the way you had expected, what happens then?

You are buffeted with all the negative thoughts again. You will try to argue that he should have answered properly or I should have never called him or what does he think of himself to talk to me like that and so on and so forth. You end up in a more furious and bitter state again. This vicious cycle continues. You must understand that this does not hurt anybody but you, and it in turn affects only your own productivity, not the other person’s.

In order to attain optimum productivity, it is imperative to have absolute control over emotions like self-doubt, approval seeking, feeling guilty, feeling anxious, obsession with the past, fear of the unknown, anger, disgust, or being meticulous or fussy about perfection

After reading the above examples, you might have understood that all these emotions are related. I have dared to run the risk of sounding repetitive, but this is how we learn. When you were in the first grade, you had to learn the multiplication tables. Your adorable maths teacher made you repeat the same innumerable times, and probably you must have felt agitated at the logic of such monotonous repetitions (I did). However, one thing I am sure about. In your later years, you surely felt gratitude towards her because she had drilled those things in to you (I did).

You need to tame these negative emotions, one by one.

1. Self-Doubt

It starts from disliking yourself. Most people I’ve met dislike at least some thing about themselves, such as their nose, their ears, their eyes or their hands. Some people rue the short stature they have, while some others lament about the inconveniences of being too tall.

It is like the only syllabus you have, but you do not like it. It will not help.

It seems people fight over the things that they do not have control over. For instance, your favourite season is winter and you hate summer. But you cannot argue that I do not like summer hence, give me only one month of summer and eight months of winter and three months of rains.

Likewise, by disliking yourself, having self-doubt, and putting yourself down, you are encumbering yourself with an unnecessary burden. It slows down your progress.

Let me ask you this. When you have to climb a mountain for camping, will it not be easier for you to climb with only the necessary stuff required for camping over the top? If I put some stones weighing around fifteen kilos into your backpack, it would be extremely difficult for you to climb with the additional burden of the stones. That is an unnecessary burden you are carrying and it will slow you down.

How will you get rid of the stones then? By simply opening the backpack and throwing the stones away. (Some of us carry huge boulders!)

Likewise, for getting yourself out of the self-doubting behaviour, simply ask yourself these very practical questions.

What do you get by disliking yourself? What is the benefit of doing that?

If it helps you in anyway, then keep on doing it, otherwise don't do it.

Start loving yourself first. Be assured, it is not selfish to love yourself. In fact, you need to love yourself first to learn to love others.

Let me put it to you like this. You are carrying a heavy rucksack containing potatoes and I ask you to give me a dozen of apples, would you be able to give them to me?

Someone will say, "These are potatoes, not apples", and another one may say a little annoyed, "Can't you see these are potatoes?" Yet another may say, "I have never seen apples".

Well said! How can you make others happy or love others unless you don't love yourself?

And it is not selfish, because being **selfish results in being a burden to the other individual.**

When you want someone to work as you want them to, putting conditions around them is selfish. A person who loves himself/herself enjoys tremendous self-esteem and it is a joy to be around them.

Do you order less than the amount of food you want although you have enough money to spare? If yes, then you are burdened by self-doubt or self-rejection.

Some people refrain from ordering food during a flight. Some people refuse to order food or popcorn while watching movies in a multiplex. They feel that they are not important enough to have these 'luxuries' or that it's too expensive. If at all they buy it then they regret it for a long time. This is not because they do not have money but they feel that they are not worth of such special treatment.

Another example is not being able to take compliments. I once told a friend of mine that she looked ravishing.

Immediately she replied, "Oh it's not me. It's just that I went to the parlour recently."

In another case, I complimented a dear friend of mine for the nice shirt that he had worn that day. He immediately rejected the compliment saying, "Oh I got it from the sale."

Did I ask him from where he had got his shirt? I just said the shirt was nice, but he was not able to take it.

Once, one of my friends uploaded a picture on Facebook and I wrote on his wall, "You are looking dapper!" Immediately, he responded, "Oh, the background is nice."

I do not need to say anything more. These people think that by not accepting the compliment they are being modest or humble. Well, that's not the case really.

They have low self-esteem. They lack confidence in any work they do and find it difficult to work fearlessly because this self-negating, self-rejecting, self-derogatory belief prevents them from giving their hundred percent.

If you can also identify yourself with any of the people mentioned above, it is time you realised that you are depriving yourself of self-esteem. The next time you are in a situation like those mentioned above, happily accept the compliments and say an elaborate "thank you". Compliments are given because you deserve them. They are meant to be acknowledged, lest they will one day stop coming your way. Begin to feel that if someone else feels that you are good, you really ought to be good.

Start giving yourself rewards when you achieve your goals, as they help build your self-esteem. Occasionally order good food without looking at the

price tag. Buy some expensive clothes, give yourself credit for your efforts and accomplishments. Have fun as your body and mind deserve it.

If you have now realised that you are low on self-esteem, there is another clever way of starting the repair. “Fake it until you make it”. Start pretending that you are proud of what you are and who you are. You are not being dishonest, mind you. You are only helping your ‘self’ to recognize the real ‘you’ through a suggestive method. You will be amazed to find that you have slowly begun to have respect for yourself.

2. Approval Seeking

Shall I begin this topic with a quote or shall I make do without one? Do I need to include humour in the content that I’m writing? Will my reader like the way I am putting things across? Will my reader send me a positive comment?

Any guesses what I am doing?

You are right, I was seeking approval.

Why do we seek approval? What does it mean?

It means that we go around in our life meeting a lot of people and then make our decisions in a manner that will be pleasing to them so that they will respond to me favourably, they will like me and love me and they will reflect back to me all the good things as I’m a good person. In every action of ours there is the hidden appeal, “Do not hate me please. Involve me in the conversation please. Tell me that I did a marvellous job please. Give me a look of appreciation please. Give me a pat on the back please.....”

This is one of the major problems that we encounter daily in our life, often ending up disliking ourselves and not performing the way we want to, since a portion of our mind is thinking about the approval we may or may not get. This means that our actions and work depend entirely on getting or not getting approval. We desperately wish to be praised, because we have no faith in our own assessment of the self. We doubt our own ability to judge if we have done job well or not. We crave for others’ praise because we do not find ourselves really worthy of it.

Remember one thing. Complimenting others or praising others does not come naturally to everyone. Most people are stingy when it comes to appreciating others’ good work. So, it is not possible to get accolades for every good effort of yours. People will disappoint you if you expect them to be lavish with praise for you. The most reliable person you can turn to for

appreciation is **‘you’**. So, bother only about what you feel about your effort.

If you’re feeling any kind of discontent because of what another person has said, what you really admit at that moment is, **“WHAT HE THINKS OF ME IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT I THINK OF MYSELF”**.

Here is a big change that we have to make.

The strange thing about approval seeking is that we seek approval without being aware of it.

For instance, I once went to a restaurant with four of my friends. We had a table, and after going through the menu, one of my male friends exclaimed, **“Wow! makke di roti, sarso da saag”**.

Listening to this, the female friend asked, “Say what! Do you really love **makke di roti and sarso da saag**? Who eats those things these days?”

To which the male friend immediately retorted, “Who said that I love it. I just did not have it for quite some time now and hence I just thought of having it, that’s it!”

Then he said in a suggestive tone, “Chinese?”

The girl replied, “Who eats Chinese these days? What all has happened to your taste buds?”

The man again withdrew his suggestion saying, “Hey, who said that I am going to eat Chinese? It was written on the menu, hence I read it out. It does not mean that we are going to have Chinese here. What do you prefer lady? What would you like to have?”

The magnanimous lady said, “We’ll let’s have some continental food.”

The chivalrous knight leaped from his seat and declared, “I simply love continental, let us have some sizzlers today!”

Oh, come on. , I must tell you that it was quite evident on the boy’s face at the first place that he did want to have the “makke di roti and sarso da saag”, but just because of his excessive enthusiasm to please the lady he kept on seeking her approval, renouncing his own desires and self-esteem in the process.

From where does this approval seeking start?

It is observed that parents who take decisions on their children’s behalf are often responsible for this approval seeking behaviour.

Parents who guide the children in everything like, what to eat and what not to eat, where to go and where not to go, whom to talk with and whom not to

talk with, what to wear and what not to wear etc. are unknowingly promoting the approval seeking behaviour in their children.

Once, during a family get-together at a relative's place, a 10-year-old nephew of mine was heard asking his parents whether the dress he was wearing looked good or not. The parents were quick to disapprove and said, "What are you wearing! Polka dots do not look good on boys. Please go and change." They then went on to give clear instructions about what to wear. I took note of the incident, and learned that his parents always decided what he wore and what he did. Some years went by, and the inevitable happened one day. The father was probably in a tense mood one day, and the boy approached him for his advice on a trivial matter and the father screamed at the top of his voice, "Why can't you make a choice yourself? Do you expect me to take decisions for you always?"

The boy stood there perplexed. He had always believed that he was not supposed to make a choice of his own. His parents had never allowed him to decide for himself. He couldn't understand why his father was upset. He had only tried to do what he was taught to do by his parents.

I feel sorry for my nephew. This young lad has been programmed by his parents to forego his decision making ability. It will require a lot of effort on his part to let go the programmed approval seeking tendency in him. He will find himself looking around for help whenever he is faced with a situation where he will be required to make a choice. He will be scared about the consequences of a wrong decision that he might take. His parents have deprived him of the precious opportunity to experience failure and then being accountable for his failures. Now when he is 'abandoned' to make his decisions he will fail in major situations and the consequences can shatter his confidence and further dent his decision making ability.

Talking about me, I also feel happy when I receive approval. I like it when people come to me and say, "That was a nice speech". I love it when people give me a standing ovation after some of my talks. However, I am not perturbed if they don't do it to me. I appreciate the approvals I get, but I don't crave for that approval as if my future depends on it. I do not need approval.

Dr Wayne Dyer said that a need is something that you cannot go without. I **need** oxygen for living but I certainly **do not need** approval.

You must understand that you cannot satisfy all the people at the same time. No matter what you do, some people are going to disapprove of you as

their way of thinking and expectations are different from those of yours.

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections revealed a very relevant and interesting aspect of public opinion. The party which formed the government secured just 31% of the votes polled, but was able to muster a clear majority of 282 seats out of the total 543. Although 69 % did not vote in favour of the party, it still succeeded in winning the elections.

This is the case in real life too. To be successful, to be a winner, we don't need the approval of all the people. You will never get that even if you would want it. Then, why should you be bothered about a few people disapproving your endeavours? You shouldn't be bothered even a majority of the people disapprove. So, stop seeking approval.

A word of caution, though. If you are planning a ten-day vacation in Goa or Bali, but your manager has other plans for you, then do not just abscond saying I do not need approval. It would not work that way. You will end up being in trouble as these are two different situations altogether. Please do not confuse approval seeking with adhering to rules and regulations.

Remember, it is not human nature to be an approval seeker. Being a member of the most intellectually developed species, you've the power and choice to process the situation and choose your response when someone says something you dislike.

People are entitled to form their own opinion, but that does not necessarily mean I am what they perceive me to be. My existence does not depend on what they think of me.

Every day, as you greet the golden rays of the morning sun, declare your commitment to your own 'self', **"I'm the processor of my life. I must not and I will not hand over the control over my life to somebody else by the self-destructive habit of approval seeking."**

3. Guilt

I went on a pilgrimage to Amarnath back in the year 2012. The place is simply breath-taking. You cannot assess the beauty of the place just by seeing the picture on the internet. You must visit the place in order feel it.

There you have to sleep in tents on the glacier. My father, one of his friends and I were walking past the tents when a guy called out, **"Come inside, come inside, it is a cosy tent, feel the warmth in this chilling cold"**. We noticed that people were passing by without taking note of his entreaties.

The guy looked so shabby that anyone would be inclined to ignore him.

After a while, he started lamenting, “Nobody comes to my tent, nobody likes me, my wife doesn’t like me, my children don’t talk to me, and nobody likes me”.

His cacophonous plaint had my uncle’s heart to melt, and he said to me, “Manish let us go back and choose his tent. He is getting no one.” He was feeling guilty for not choosing the tent owned by this desperate man.

I must tell you, guilt is a powerful emotion that makes people do things that they actually do not want to. Many unscrupulous people touch on this sensitive cord of others to get what they want. It is a superb way to earn people’s sympathy.

Guilt comes into picture when you are perturbed because of something that has happened in the past. Can you feel guilty about something that has not happened yet? No, you cannot.

Again, if you are guilty, a part of your mind is involved there and you will not work with full efficiency of yours in any endeavour that you have at hand.

Next time you find yourself feeling guilty over something, hold yourself for a while and ask yourself this question. **“Where does exist the thing or event that I am guilty about?”**

Isn’t the situation over in the physical reality and the only place where it still exists is in your mind? Who can change it then?

I reckon you have the answer. **You, and only you can!**

To overcome guilt, begin treating things as they are; not worse than what they are, but as they truly are. Instead of worrying about how things are not favourable to you, and how they cannot change, be focussed on how you can change the things and truly decide on how you can make them happen in future. Thus, you will free yourself from being enslaved by the past and will not allow your past to spoil your present.

4. Anxiety

Anxiety begins to rule us when we are worried too much about the outcome of what we have done or even what we are yet to do.

People worry and feel anxious about almost everything. **“At times, not having anything to worry about makes them worried.”** They cannot believe the fact that things can go well for them. They are going to worry no matter what happens because when one possible threat is eradicated, they’ll immediately discover another. For them worry is the **“infinitely skinned**

onion”.

I’ve seen people who are perpetually agonizing because they cannot accept that things can go right. Well, that is totally insane.

When I used to go on a vacation to my home after months, I used to get extremely anxious. Though I was happy about going home, simultaneously it was running in my mind that the vacations are going to end soon. I was terrified by this thought and the end result was that I was restless.

I was not able to enjoy my stay at home as I was thinking insistently that the vacation will end soon. Was that right? I hope you would say no!

For some it becomes a morbid obsession to worry. We worry about the finances, the health and education of our children, our household items, our image and lot more.

I remember a quote that read, **“If you cannot do anything about it, then why to worry and if you can do something about it then do what is required and you need not to worry for sure”.**

It was a clichéd quote but it does make sense.

Next time when you find yourself worrying over unnecessary things, ask yourself, **“What’s the worst outcome of the task that I have at hand?”**

I must tell you, firstly, you would not be able to think of the worst case and secondly even if you can, most of the times the worst case is not going to come at all.

As worrying is an emotion that takes away your peace of mind, it will reduce your productivity.

Keep a check on when you find yourself worried over unnecessary things and then ask yourself what you would get out of worrying? Is your problem going to solve itself if you worry?

If not, then try to calmly find an answer to the problem, and then work on it. You’re bound to be successful.

5. Fear

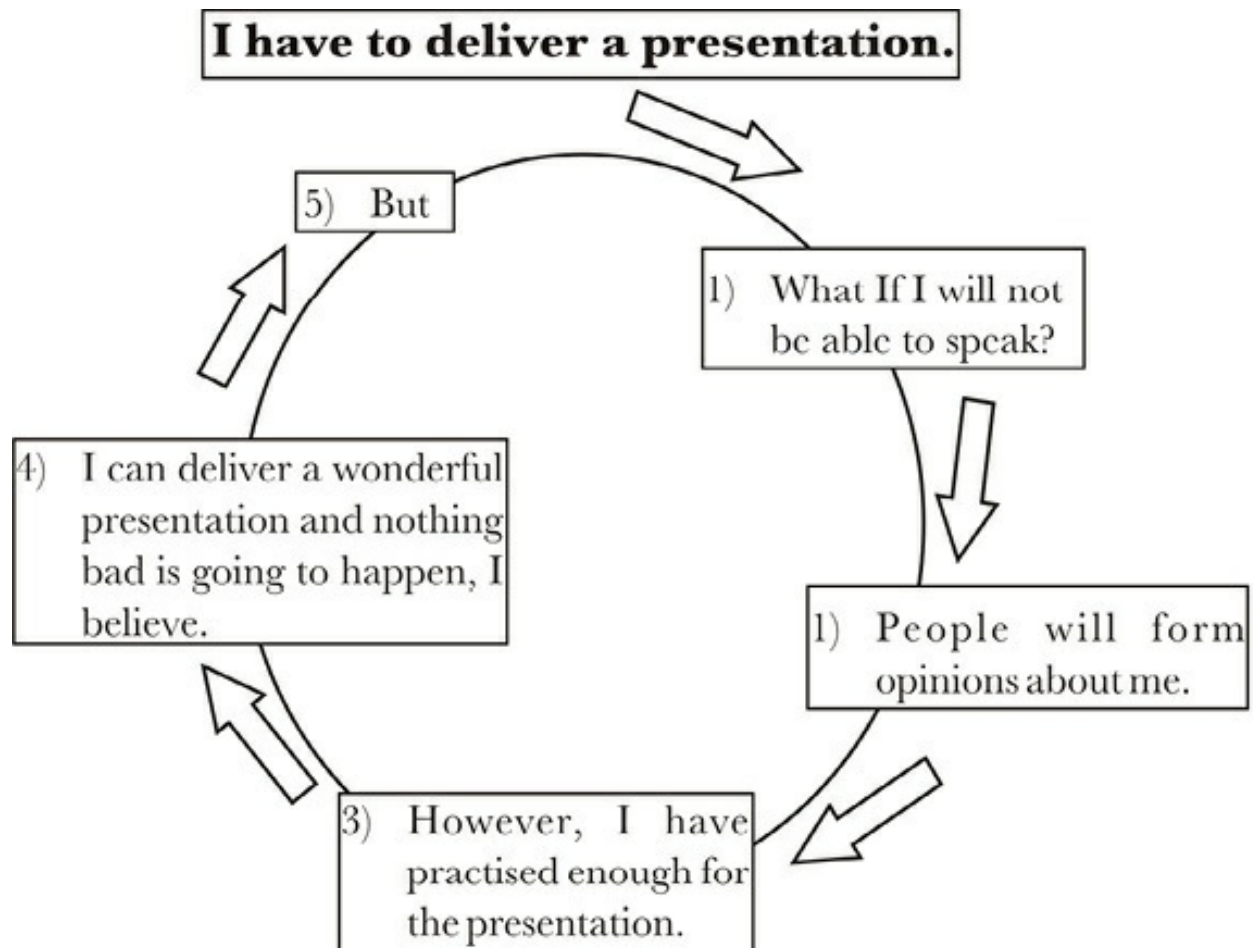
Zig Ziglar Termed fear as **“False Evidence Appearing Real”.**

It is the unreasoning, nameless, unjustified terror which petrifies most of us.

Most of us are afraid of taking action because of the phrase **“What If?”** Whenever you find yourself using the phrase, remember that you are in some kind of fear and your productivity will be much less as compared to the times

when you are working without any fear, be it any situation.

There is a vicious cycle that starts with “What if?” and you will end up in fear not performing as you want to perform.



Given above is the vicious cycle showing how the fear “What if” is going to hamper your growth. The example given was of the case when you have to deliver a presentation to your team. You can substitute any situation in the fear cycle and you will find yourself not doing well because of the “What If”, you have encumbered yourself with.

Fear of failure is real, I agree. However, failure is sometimes someone else’s opinion about how a particular act had to be performed and what the desired outcome was. There may, however, be occasions when you will fail in a task according to your own standards. That is what a failure is all about. “Not accomplishing the task that you have set as a target for yourself.”

If you fail at a task, do not associate it with your self-esteem or your self-

worth as **“failing at a task does not make you a failure.”** It only signifies that you are not successful at the endeavour at this particular attempt. However, things will change in future because they always have changed.

People never try new activities because of the fear of the unknown. Many a couple goes through a nightmarish time in their lives because of difficult relationship and they cling on to those regressive relationships due to lack of courage to let go. They are terrified that if they let go and choose to end the relationship, that will be nothing less than a catastrophe. They fear the unknown. The result of this fear is that they continue to put up with hellish atmosphere they are in and ruin theirs and their children's lives.

There can be so many examples of fear, but let me tell you, you've got only one life and this is not the rehearsal. Hence, instead of living in fear, venture out and liberate yourself by doing the things that you fear most. The more daring you become and the more frequent your encounter with your 'feared' situations, the braver you will become and to your pleasant surprise, you will realise how foolish your fears had been.

Fear is also a faith, but it is just inverted faith. As you can have faith in the negative side, flip to the other side and you'll see the difference.

How to overcome fear?

Under The Sword Raised High, there is hell making you tremble. But go ahead, and you have the land of bliss. “Miyamoto Musashi”

There is always some fear that will shake you up but no amount of clenching your muscles can get rid of the shakes when you are scared. But the secret to all this is not to be afraid of fear.

When you can really allow yourself to be afraid, don't resist the experience of fear and you are truly beginning to master fear. When you refuse to be afraid, you are resisting fear and that simply sets up a vicious cycle of being afraid and being afraid and being afraid of fear and so on (remember the “What if” cycle mentioned earlier).

Hence, when you are faced with fear (be it of anything), don't be blocked or nonplussed by the illusion and don't resist it. Just accept it and walk through it and the fear will dissolve.

Be it any endeavour, venture into it, and you're bound to be successful!

6. Anger

Do you get angry over almost everything that is not working the way you

want it to be? Then, **you** are suffering a lot more than the guy or girl who has to face your anger.

Anger is one emotion that makes you feel relieved at first, but later, you have to suffer the anguish.

Let me explain it to you this way.

You have a son studying in Grade Three. Today was his result day and you had expected him to perform well and get good marks. However, when the results are declared, you find that he has failed in mathematics and English. You are infuriated seeing the result as it is against your expectation.

You call your wife and then shout, “What do you do sitting the entire day at home? Can’t you even take care of his studies?” And so you go on and on and on.

Your wife is now all agitated and she gets hold of your son and slaps him hard saying, “You don’t take responsibility for your studies and because of your fault I’ve to hear a lot of nonsense from your father”.

Your son is now distressed. He tells himself, “I try, but still I cannot perform well”. Since he is a child, he cannot find a solution of it.

The day passes by and now your anger is appeased. You call your wife and your son. You apologise for your behaviour in the morning and then you discuss with your wife the reasons for your son not performing well.

You both together come to the conclusion that he needs extra attention in mathematics and English, and hence he should be provided with coaching.

Now, if you had the emotional maturity to not get angry at all in the first place, and to control your anger once you had allowed it to overpower you, you would have reasoned out and amicably found a solution in the beginning and all the emotional outburst could have been avoided.. This is just one instance. You will come across many such instances in your life where your prudence and love will get washed away by the flood of anger. **When you’re angry you will find a decrement in your efficiency.**

An interesting thing about us is that when we are angry we find all the right reasons to justify our anger, but when others show their anger, we condemn them saying they are not emotionally mature and that they are short tempered. This reveals that we get angry although we know that the anger is unwarranted in such a situation. Often we get angry for the sake of getting angry and because we think that it is our right to vent our anger on others. In fact, it is not our anger that we are venting, but our own frustration

about ourselves. When I shouted at my wife for not attending to my son's studies, I was actually expressing my frustration over my own inability to help him with his studies. I am dishonest with myself, and so instead of rectifying my incompetency, I try to escape by putting the blame squarely on my wife. You are not ready to improve your productivity and efficiency.

Get rid of the **double bind logic** and soon you'll find the anger diminishing and your efficacy increasing, leading you to succeed in any endeavour in life.

We have discussed the emotions which hamper our growth to success. There are many more debilitating emotions such as these, but if you can rein in the ones discussed so far, you are bound to be successful.

How To Deal With The Emotional Train

All the emotional responses that we have are simply learned responses and so we can also unlearn them.

First of all, you have to **develop acceptance for the things** in your life.

You must accept the things as the way they are, not worse than they are but as they are. Then frame a proper question and you will get a solution for the problem.

Let me put it to you in this way:

When you go for rock climbing or bungee jumping or river rafting, you are well aware that you could die doing these sports. However, you have signed the disclaimer form and you have accepted the fact that you could probably die. Since you have accepted the fact, it has now become **Adventure** for you.

You will not be immobilized by the fear of death, as you have accepted the situation. If you had not accepted it, you would remain surrounded by the fear and you would not attempt any of the sports.

You have to develop this emotional state of acceptance while you are embarking on any endeavour. Once developed, you will be like the lion roaring in the field, and eventually you'll hunt the prey down.

Let us take one more example:

You and I are both of same age, say 22. I started working early in my life and I started working part time. This part time income helped me to buy a new car.

Since you have not started working and you do not have money, every time you see me, you are infuriated and jealous.

In your mind you always generate thoughts like, **“There he is again. Showing off his new car. If I would have started working, I could have bought a bigger car.”** You are restless.

What if you have accepted the situation?

If you would have accepted it, your thoughts train would surely have been like this: **“Look at him, there he is again, coming in his new car. He has done a lot of hard work while still studying. He is of my age only. If he can work and earn, so can I. I will not waste my time, standing here gossiping and I’ll also work and buy a car in future.”**

If you have noticed, in both the cases, the situation was the same. However, you have not accepted the situation in the first case and the emotion that you have developed was of **jealousy or heartburn (your heart, mind you).**

In the second case, you have accepted the situation and the same scenario has generated **“Inspiration” to achieve.**

Whenever dealing with any situation or when you are in any endeavour, remember: **“Either accept the situation as it is or change the situation and be ready to face the consequences.”**

By the way, every problem comes with a solution. If there is no solution to a problem, then it is an irritation.

For instance, you are at your desk doing your job and suddenly you hear a car honking on the highway that passes right next to your office. You are getting irritated and you want the honking to stop. In this case it is an irritation and there will be no solution to it.

If you consider it as a problem then there is a solution. You can use ear plugs or you can move your seat to another place.

Secondly, whenever you find yourself in any kind of imbalanced state due to these emotions, try asking yourself the following questions:

- 1.What else could I possibly do if I was not feeling anxious at this moment (when you are worrying or anxious).
- 2.What am I getting out of putting myself in this imbalanced state? What is the benefit for me in it? (when you find yourself in approval seeking mode or jealous)

These are some examples.

As I said, all reactions are learned responses, hence the next time when

you find yourself in a state where you are repeating the learned response again, say unto yourself,

“I have been choosing this reaction or behaviour for this situation until now, but from this moment I choose to behave in a ”Fill in the blanks with the behaviour that you want to see yourself adopting in future.

Lastly, I would strongly recommend you read the book titled **“The Seven-day Mental Diet” by Emmet Fox.**

I must tell you, this is a response that you can learn with practice. Be the master of your mind and its emotions. Develop the emotional adulthood and you are bound to be successful in any endeavour.



Chapter 10

The Omnipotent Reality

Do you often look back and wish you had done things differently? Do you wish that you could have cultivated an exercising habit while you were a child so that you could have been a fitter person today? Do you wish that you should have confessed your love to someone who is the sun in someone else's sky now, just because you did not muster up the courage to do so?

Or, are you the kind of person who is looking for change continuously in the future? Do you say, "I'll quit my job and start my own restaurant but only after having the particular amount in my bank account"? You'll do something only if the other something happens first. You often say that things are not perfect for you yet to do your best and in waiting for doing your best, you don't do things at all?

Stimulating questions they were, weren't they?

Often, our excuse to not live in the present is that the best time has either passed or is yet to arrive, as giving excuses like these justifies our tendency for perceived lethargy and procrastination and we keep on doing it without knowing the omnipotent reality that is **"the present moment"**.

Now is the reality in which **time** itself is contained. It is even greater than time and is ever present and is ever potent as it is concerned about neither past, nor future.

We have all the power now, in this very moment, but not knowing this, most of us say that we will be better tomorrow, or the next month or even the next year. However, **"NOT TO ACT NOW IS NOT TO ACCOMPLISH AT ALL"**.

What is done now remains, and what remains to be done seldom gets done. Hence, it is wisdom to ignore what has not arrived and attend to what has, that is **Now**.

You might have heard this query before: "Am I me or my mind is me?"

Let me tell you, you are not your mind. Your mind is the most powerful instrument that you have. However, due to the accumulation of a lot of things it goes haywire in some cases and then it cannot remain in function without time.

What I mean here is that it cannot stay in the present moment and it will keep you busy thinking about the past or future.

Simply put, it will make you feel guilty about the past or anxious about the future. Time and mind then become inseparable and start treating the timeless now as a menacing reality. Imagine the earth devoid of any human life. Only plants and animals are living here and somehow you arrive here and you ask this question; “Hello, anybody out there? What time is it now, by the way?”

The lion or the trees will be perplexed by the question “What time is it”.

“What time?” They will ask. , The time is now. Is there anything more to time than now, sir?

You might have comprehended by now that the clock is for the humans only, and we have complicated our lives by entangling our life with the ticking of the clock.

Let us consider a situation here: You are attending a lecture and once the lecture is over, it is time for the question-answer round. No one is willing to break the ice and the speaker says that he will now pick anyone from the audience randomly to speak up or even come on the stage and share his experience or ask a question.

As soon as you hear that, your mind immediately triggers the fearful response of how bad things can go for you and immediately you are bombarded with questions inside your mind like, What if I’m not able to speak?”, “What would people think of me if I will not speak over there?” The ‘What if?’ cycle will start for you again and soon you will be on the stage, feeling restlessness and without feeling legs below your knees.

I am sure this is a situation with which most of us can relate. I mean, there is surely a reason why the fear of public speaking is rated next to the fear of death.

This is an example for a situation when your mind is not in your control and it has taken you to wander in the future.

Now let’s take an example of your mind taking you in the past.

There is probably nobody among us who has not shuddered at the thought of the terrible persecution the Jews suffered at the hands of the Nazis during

the World War II. The mere mention of the concentration camps and gas chambers that the Jews were thrown into sends shivers up our spine. If we start to have a discussion over this topic, soon the people who have a higher empathetic quotient will turn dark and gloomy. They will feel disgusted and argue that it was an act of foolishness just to demonstrate that one human race is superior to another and that it should not have happened. Brooding over it, you will soon spoil your mood and your day as well feeling dejected over it.

But let me ask you this:

Please do not assume that I am not outraged by the cruelty meted out to the Jews by the Nazis. I empathize with them and I condemn the injustice done to them in the strongest of words. I have brought in this example only to trigger your response in a lasting manner. If you will exonerate me of any suspected insensitivity, here is my question: **“Is thinking and getting mad over the outcome of the World War 2 going to change the outcome of the World War 2?”**

The World War 2 is over like the moment when I started writing this book is over, or like the year 2016 is over. The time when you started reading book is over. The time when you started this chapter is over. You can't bring back the years 1940 or 1941, and change the events that happened then. You can't change your date of birth say to 29th February so that you become one year older only after every 4 years (Wasn't Morarji Desai lucky?). You have absolutely no control over the past. Then why do you drain your precious energy fretting about the bygone? Let bygone be bygone.

What you can change is only NOW.
Now.....and.....Now.

The now that I mentioned previously is over now and the now that I am about to mention is yet to arrive.

It has arrived NOW..... and it is gone NOW.

Realize that the present moment is all that you ever have. Make **now** the primary focus of your life. You used to dwell into time and made brief visits to the now. Change the pattern and, have your dwelling place in the now and pay brief visits to past and future only when required to deal with the practical aspects of a life situation. Don't use your past like a pub (ye dil mange more). Just as an alcoholic keeps asking for more and more in his inebriated state, some people become so attached to the past and develop an

unhealthy attachment to the burdens of the past. Instead, use it like a school (ye dil mange no more). Just as a child yearns to return home from school, if you need to visit the past, go ahead, make a quick visit, learn from it and grow from it, but return to the present (home), and live there.

What could be more foolish than to create inner resistance to something that already is there? What could be more insane than to oppose life itself which is **now** and which will always be in some of the 'future' **now**?

If for a moment we delve into the spiritual domain, all the major religions emphasize on the importance of NOW!

In Zen there is a saying: **"If not now, then when?"** The whole essence of Zen is based on walking along the razor's edge of **now**.

In the **now**, in the absence of the boundaries of time, all your problems dissolve.

The Bible says, **"Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow shall take care of itself."**

Again at another place it says, **"Nobody who puts his hands to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God."**

Now is also central to the mystical branch of Islam as well as Sufism. Sufis have a saying: **"THE SUFI IS THE SON OF THE TIME PRESENT."**

Rumi said, **"PAST AND FUTURE VEIL GOD FROM OUR SIGHT."**

Master Eckhart, a 13th century spiritual teacher, said, **"Time is what keeps the light from reaching us. There's no greater obstacle to god, than time."**

You must die to the past every moment. Likewise, don't be concerned too much about the future success, as success comes to those who live in the present moment and who seizes the moment. What has gone is gone and about the future, as they say.... tomorrow never comes.

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, **"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."** Remember, it is never too late to become what you might have been. Use the second best time.

As someone said, **"LET TODAY BE THE TOMORROW THAT YOU HAD THOUGHT OF YESTERDAY"**. It was not a mere play of words, I am talking in rational terms here. **LET TODAY BE THE TOMORROW THAT YOU HAD THOUGHT OF YESTERDAY**. Plant the seed now and I bet, 20 years from now you'll be glad that you planted that tree today.

Friends, whatever you have read in this book in the previous chapters, will all be in vain if you don't appreciate the importance of NOW.

The decisions that you will make, you will have to make them in the present moment.

Whatever goal you set, after setting the aim you have to come back and act now.

The attitude you carry in the present moment matters the most.

The services you need to offer you will offer only in the now.

Once you have decided and set the goal, you have to persist in order to achieve the goal. To maintain the tempo you have to keep on using the present moment.

If you fail, you have to learn from it and then start working on it again in the now.

All the emotions that you have, those that prevent you from remaining equanimous, overpower you only when you leave the present moment. You become vulnerable to all the emotional attacks only when you leave the **now**.

Hence, you must understand the omnipotent reality and always say **yes** to the present moment.

Act now, and know that all things are done.

Live now, and behold you are in the midst of plenty.

Be now, and know that you're perfect.

Now, there is a caveat that you may feel at times that you are putting in the hours that are required to succeed in the task at hand but you are somehow not achieving success. It's not about the hours you put in, it is about what you do in those hours you put in.

For instance, if I ask you to read a seventy-page book in the next 3 hours, if you are completely present in those three hours, if you remain there in the book only for the next three hours, then you will complete it.

As Buddha said, **“Be where you are, otherwise you are going to miss your life”**.

By this, he did not mean not to progress, or not to set goals. What he meant was set your goals, devise a plan, have the right mental attitude and then forget about the goal and start working towards the goal by indulging in the **now**.

Be patient in case there are certain delays. Being patient does not mean

you have to sit idly and wait for things to happen, No! It means you keep on working towards the aim and you will accomplish it this year. If it does not happen this year then you are ready for the next year, and it will happen next year for sure. Hence, be not impatient in delays because “**When the human spirit rises, the Gods have to obey and obey they will!**”

Whatever the endeavor may be, give your total attention to **now** and you are bound to be successful!



The New Beginning.....

The story at the beginning was not about the Yudhishtir of the Mahabharat. The real name of the hero of the story has only the first three letters of 'Yudhishtir'. It is **YOU**. The story was about **you**. You were standing at the threshold of success. Your constant companions, namely anger, jealousy, anxiety, fear and all those negative emotions I have discussed in this book were preventing you from succeeding. You had to fight them, defeat them and then leave them behind to enter the world of Happiness. Be cautious. They lurk in the dark to renew the companionship. Never let them come near you. The return of these emotions can cause your downfall. What was the journey ahead that the benevolent old man had mentioned?

"Nothing succeeds like success". There has to be successive successes. Duplicate and multiply your success. To be successful is not that difficult, after all. There is a greater success that you can achieve now. It is easier and sweeter. Help other people succeed. With every success story that you inspire, it is actually you who are becoming more successful. Once you are successful, you should become the catalyst for others' success. Ready yourself for this journey....



Ten Steps To Succeed In Any Endeavour

1. Dare to make a decision. Believe in yourself.
2. Develop a positive mental attitude towards your choice/decision.
3. As giving opens you to receiving, be ready to give the efforts required.
4. Devise a plan, give it concrete physical existence by writing it down and set your goals.
5. Validate your goals! Ask yourself **“Is this what I really want?”** If not, then you can make alterations at this point (start from step 1 again if necessary) and once the goals are fixed, then start working without being concerned about the outcome at this point.
6. Persist in your efforts and ‘keep on keeping on’.
7. If you can take the pain (be it any endeavour), you can make it. Be ready to bear a little pain as eventually it is going to be under control.
8. Always be prepared to accept failure in the process as some failures are inescapable. However, even if you fail, never think of yourself as failure as it’s only this one endeavour at which you failed.
9. Be the master of your emotions. Don’t let yourself to be immobilized and don’t encumber yourself with clouded thinking because of any unnecessary emotions.
10. As “Act is the blossom of the thought”, realize the omnipotent reality that is “NOW”. Be so much absorbed in your now that you’ll do nothing except the work at hand.

You can apply these ten steps in any endeavour of your life and if followed meticulously and if you are really willing to succeed, you’re bound to be Successful!



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Jim Cathacart

Les Brown

Eric Thomas

Brian Tracy

Alan Watts

‘Thank You’ for sharing with us your gift of wisdom, a part of which I have used in this book so that people can have their share of it.