

Who Is The
Captain
Of Your
Ship?



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Topics

1. Spiritual Moorings in Leadership
2. IQ – Intelligence Quotient
3. Self Esteem
4. EQ – Emotional Quotient
5. Goal Setting
6. Time Management
7. Decision Making
8. Communication
9. Stress Management
10. Ethical Values & Conflicts
11. SQ – Spiritual Quotient



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Chapter 1

Spiritual Moorings in Leadership

Anchoring

Faith Popcorn in her book on modern trends in Western Society – CLICKING, has this to say, “The bad news is that our society is adrift, but the good news is that it’s still afloat. Even though we have been getting tossed about like flotsam and jetsam on the sea of life, we are managing to renew our spirits by grabbing on to a line of hope. After a decade or two of materialism and meanness, we’re looking for simpler answers. This new Trend about inner spirit is called Anchoring. The most important part, the core of Anchoring, is taking comfort in what was safe and secure from the past in order to get ready for the future. Spirituality is at the very heart and soul of the Anchoring Trend.”

Today even business and management have jumped on to the human resources development bandwagon with a rich dose of meditation, yoga, trans-personal psychology, nature retreats, etc. apart from their regular personality development and business skills schedules. When the outer worlds fail to deliver the promised utopia, we turn to ourselves, moving inward to our spiritual core. It is there we have to seek for answers, and it is there we have to discover ourselves as we really are, as we really want to be. Ultimately we have to find a balance between our inner and outer worlds. Spirituality and Individuality complement each other as a matter of fact. The more we extend ourselves in our capacity as an individual, we are growing and learning. And the more we look into our inner core, we get the wisdom to deal with our external world.

The anchoring trend is especially true in the modern Indian who seems to have lost touch with his culture and apes everything western, from movies, dress, lifestyle as well as management paradigms. It would do the present day Indian manager proud to go through ancient manuscripts and look for insights from history and spiritual traditions; to discover the abundance of insights into leadership and fundamental principles of management as set down in books like Artha Shastra, Mahabharata etc. A systematic study will reveal that there are no old principles or newly discovered principles – Principles are something timeless and are there to be assimilated by one and all – whether they were passed down through tradition from olden days, or rediscovered by enterprising thinking young persons of today.

Effective Leaders

Leaders of men are made, not born. Who is a leader? Obviously the one whom people follow. If there were no followers, there would be no leaders. And what make people follow a leader? His charisma? His charm? His persuasive powers? His personal power?

Gandhi was a leader. And so were Subhash and Shivaji. What did they have in common? They all had a cause. They were motivated. They had a vision and were prepared to go out on a limb to realise it. they were willing to give their all to make their dream come true. “Great things are done by people who think great thoughts and then go out into the world to make their dreams come true.” – Ernest Holmes.

An effective leader is the one who makes proper use of his human endowments in full. *The primary human endowments are: 1) self-awareness or self-knowledge, 2) imagination and conscience; and 3) volition or will power. The secondary endowments are 4) an abundance mentality, 5) courage and consideration, 6) creativity, and 7) self-renewal. All are unique human endowments; animals don't possess any of them. But they are all on a continuum of low and high levels.* – Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Our scriptures and historical works give us great insight into the nature of leadership. They teach by example, presenting role models like Rama, Krishna and the like. Rama, like Gandhi, personified strength along with extraordinary moral fibre. In choosing to live in the forest for 14 years, Rama chose to put his sense of duty ahead of the pleasures of kingship. With the might of his arms and trustworthiness of character, he turned around the misfortune of losing Sita into an opportunity of winning new friends and of extending his influence beyond the seas.

Krishna the diplomat and negotiator established an empire of dharma by effecting practical solutions for insurmountable problems, neutralising the machinations of the crooked Shakuni and others, through his thorough understanding of human nature and holistic perspective of life. He was a management guru of epic proportions, who with his presentation of Upanishadic insights and practical no-nonsense approach, influenced the mindset of Arjuna, Yudhishthira and others and changed the course of the Mahabharata war.

Bhishma, the grandsire of the Kuru family, whose military skills were unmatched, took charge of the kingdom and managed the affairs of state through the ups and downs of the royal family and sacrificed his own personal interests for the larger good of the kingdom. Hastinapur enjoyed total security and peace under his guidance. At the same time, he valued good counsel and kept at his side advisors like Vidura the wise for guidance in spiritual and ethical issues.

Vishwamitra for his perseverance, and Vyasa for his vision of a cultural and moral renaissance, have become heroes for all times to come. Vishwamitra is an example of the person who, unfazed by his long bouts of interrupted and uncompleted Tapas, believed in himself and his capacity to overcome all odds. Working constantly to overcome his personal limitations like anger, lust, etc. he passed the ultimate test when the greatest of sages, Vasishtha himself, acknowledge him as “Brahma-rishi”.

Vyasa took on to himself the role of uniting the divers peoples of the Indian subcontinent through integrating the different scattered vedic traditions into four Vedas that are an encyclopaedia of spiritual and religious thought. Not satisfied, he involved the common masses through the the eighteen Puranas that contain stories of gods like Vishnu, Shiva and others, highly inspiring and devotional in nature. And who can forget the epic Mahabharata that he gave to posterity which, while entertaining the readers, is a complete education in itself in the art and science of life management.

Leadership Qualities

The Artha Shastra of Chanakya, like the Mahabharata is a mine of information regarding Leadership, Management, Statesmanship, Economy, Administration, etc. it describes an ideal king and management of a large kingdom, through the help of ministers, treasury, army and allies. Chanakya highlights the qualities that make an excellent ruler. These are grouped as

- *Abhigamikah gunah – qualities that inspire confidence in others and make the ruler easily approachable, such as nobility of birth, piety, and truthfulness;*
- *Prajnagunah – qualities of the intellect, such as ability to understand, to think independently etc.; &*
- *Utsahagunah, qualities like bravery, quickness of decision, strength of mind and so on.*

Apart from the above, personal qualities like eloquence, boldness, memory, etc. are also recommended. These qualities make for proactive nature essential for any leader. With these, a person is equipped to undertake any enterprise and make it a success. A subhashita in sanskrit sums it up very well.

***Udyamam Saahasam Dhairyam Buddhis Shaktih Paraakramah,
Shadete Yatra Vartante Tatra Devaah Sahaayakrit***

Endeavour, daring, fortitude, wisdom, strength and valour– where these six reside, the gods too lend a helping hand.

To sum up the above qualities in modern terminology, an effective leader possesses the following:

1. Over-all Perspective - clear thinking, fact-orientation, ability to analyze cost/benefit
2. Purpose – desire and will to make the necessary changes
3. Self Esteem – belief in one's own worthiness and power to initiate change
4. Self Discipline – personal comforts secondary to long-term results
5. Acceptance – confronting fear of failure and loss
6. Personal Integrity – openness and trustworthiness,
7. Learning – ability to take stock and profit from others' experiences/feedback
8. People skills – ability to communicate and cooperate with others
9. Adaptability – creative approach in handling situations
10. Perseverance – sustained effort and the will to win

Chapter 2:

Intelligence Quotient

Intelligence

Intelligence is the innate ability of living beings to respond to their environment for survival, growth, and fulfilment. *In the vegetable kingdom, intelligence makes it possible for the plants to grow towards sunlight, respond to changing weather conditions, prepare its own nutrition, and to defend itself from predators. In animals, intelligence helps to care for offspring, to fight or fly from danger, explore food and shelter, and to live in a community.*

For humans, intelligence is developed further to make language, logical reasoning, creativity, conceptual thinking and philosophy possible. *Our human life is dependent on the intelligence which we are capable of applying to solve problems that we face on a day to day basis. Science and technology, economics, mathematics, history, sociology, and other studies are all a measure of the intelligence we have as human beings.*

Definition

A very general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings—"catching on", "making sense" of things, or "figuring out" what to do. – "Mainstream Science on Intelligence", signed by 52 intelligence researchers in 1994.

Individuals differ from one another in their ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, to overcome obstacles by taking thought. Although these individual differences can be substantial, they are never entirely consistent: a given person's intellectual performance will vary on different occasions, in different domains, as judged by different criteria. Concepts of "intelligence" are attempts to clarify and organize this complex set of phenomena. – "Intelligence: Knowns and Unknowns", a report of a task force convened by the American Psychological Association in 1995:

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

Intelligence has been measured by tests known as IQ (intelligence quotient) tests. Such intelligence tests take many forms, but the common tests (*Stanford-Binet*, *Raven's Progressive Matrices*, *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale*, *Wechsler-Bellevue I*, and others) all measure the same dominant form of intelligence, *g* or "general intelligence factor".

These IQ tests measure human intelligence in a very narrow sense, intelligence being defined as the ability to solve specific types of problems that need mathematics, logical reasoning, language skills etc. Critics such as Robert Sternberg point out that people in general have a somewhat different conception of intelligence than most experts. Other critics point out that the current methods testing are inadequate to measure intelligence correctly.

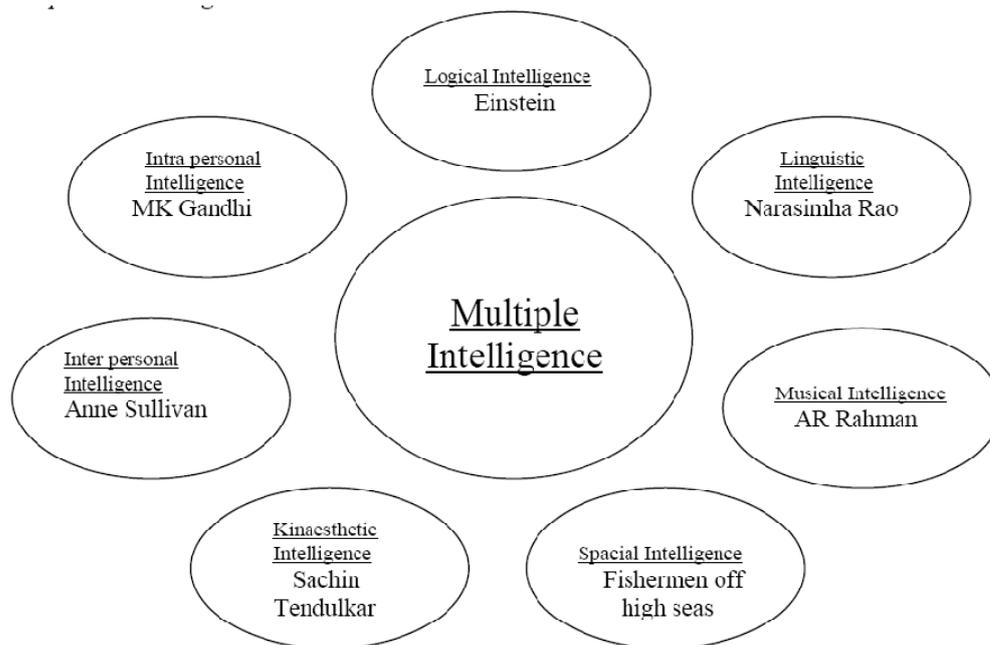
Whatever may be the case, standardised IQ testing is useful for predicting important outcomes such as job performance etc. *IQ is described as a "quotient" because, originally, it represented the ratio between a person's "mental age" and actual chronological age.* IQ tests can be used to assess learning disabilities in comparison to the relatively abilities of the average intelligent person.

IQ tests can also be taken on popular online websites but most of these tests are accurate only to an approximate degree and are not expert certified. It is recommended that these tests be taken under supervision of a qualified and experienced clinical psychologist.

Multiple Intelligence

Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences divides intelligence into at least seven different components: *logical, linguistic, spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, intra-personal and inter-personal intelligences.*

The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by Daniel Goleman and other researchers. Most of these intelligences are associated with particular parts of the human brain, and injury to the particular part can affect one or more of these multiple intelligences.



Self Sustaining Growth

Win Wenger and Richard Poe, in their book, “*The Einstein Factor*” surmise that intelligence is not absolutely given but can be developed and cultivated. They refer to Einstein as a young student who went on sailing excursions. Every time the wind died and the boat was still, Einstein would immediately pull out a notebook and start writing, oblivious to his companions. What was Einstein writing in his notebook? We do not know. The book is more concerned about the question of why Einstein wrote. Researchers have long regarded the habit of compulsive scribbling as one of the hallmarks of genius. The question asked is does genius lead to scribbling, or does scribbling lead to genius? Was their writing simply a product of a highly expressive mind, or was the scribbling in itself a mechanism by which people unconsciously nurtured and activated a superior intellect?

Modern research shows that the dendrites, axons, and glial cells in the brain multiply in response to mental challenges. Like our muscles, the more we use it, the more it develops. Likewise, the more we disuse it, the more we lose the ability to think. Marian Diamond has experimented on rats in a super-stimulating environment. While one group of rats was allowed to play with the toys, swings, ladders, treadmills, trapezes, and other delights, the control group were only allowed to watch the play but not to participate. The rats which touched and played with the toys gained brainpower and enjoyed significant brain growth. The more the rats physically interacted with their

environment, the more stimulation that environment fed back to them in the form of brain growth.

A sizable portion of our brains' physical development depends not on genetic inheritance, or even on outside stimulus, but rather on the feedback from our own spontaneous and expressive activity. Win Wenger and Richard Poe call this the *Expression Circuit*. By harnessing the power of self-expression and sensory feedback, we can actually change the physical form of our brains. We can harness this sensory feedback cycle by doing what Einstein did – maintaining a pocket diary where we can write down all our significant thoughts as and when they strike us. *The thoughts that we write down in turn creates further thoughts in us when we see the writings in the diary.* One thought inspires another. This gives a new meaning to the old proverb – ‘one good turn deserves another!’ Writing allows us to explore our own thinking as if we were an outside observer.

Exercising Your Thinking Muscles

In ‘The Complete Mental Fitness Book’, Tom Wujek speaks of four important mental muscles to be exercised are: *Mental Strength, Mental Flexibility, Mental Endurance, and Mental Coordination*. The physical equivalents of these exercises can be thought of as weight lifting, gymnastics, cross country racing, and fencing.

You apply your *mental strength* to concentrate on a task that need to be done. You use it to prepare for an exam or for completing the article you are writing for a magazine. You pay attention by focusing on a subject and staying with it over a period of time.

To be creative and innovative, your thinking needs to be plastic and flowing. With *mental flexibility*, you change from one mode of thought to another. You play with concepts, ideas, bend and twist them, view them from different ways to come up with something new. You challenge conventional ideas and ask questions like ‘why not’ and ‘what if’.

Mental endurance is the ability to motivate yourself to persist with the task and take it to completion. It is your staying power by which you put your ideas into action, optimise your energies, and avoid distraction and self doubt.

Mental coordination is timing, balance, and agility. You are able to balance several activities at the same time and put things in proper perspective by seeing the larger picture. You are able to take timely action and compensate for missed opportunities.

Engaging in mental games like puzzles, riddles, quizzes, memory tests, etc. sharpen our mental skills. Reading, writing, conversing, questioning, are all ways to deepen our mental abilities. Outdoor activities including sports and adventure help in developing flexibility and instant reflexes. Relaxation and meditation help in easing our stress and seeing things in their proper perspectives.

Concentration

Concentration is a key aspect of your IQ. Wujec speaks of improving your concentration by paying attention to it. You can practice concentrating with all of your energy, thus encouraging it to be stronger and flexible. Relax physically and adopt a physical posture to make it easy to concentrate. Avoid wasted moments.

Invoke an emotional frame of mind that is curious and interested in the task at hand. Involve your mind through encouragement, not through force. Find out what is interesting about the task and relate it to other similar interests that you like.

Get into a conducive mental mode to help you concentrate. Clarify the tasks and define your expectations. State to yourself what purpose you are reaching through the tasks. Set up steps that set you into a work flow.

Even if you are not in the mood to concentrate, try to create an artificial mood. You fake it until you make it. Imagine how your posture and feelings would look like if you were concentrating. Imitate them until you invoke the right mood.

Visualization Exercises

The Vedic scriptures give us the techniques like mantra chanting and mental visualizations as part of spiritual exercises. These techniques can also be used to strengthen the mental muscles. Mantra chanting on a repetitive basis is used for relaxing and quietening the mind – a powerful way to manage stress! Chanting is also a way to focus the mind and to concentrate on the subject matter. *Upasanas* or prayerful visualizations involve associating the universal spirit or higher power with a physical manifestation of nature like the sun, air, water, fire, etc. Contemplation on these forces of nature as a metaphor for the universal spirit helps tap into our imaginative thinking and creativity.

The Vedas as scripture was preserved in the past through the oral rather than the written tradition. Memory played a large part in this oral tradition, with whole sections of the scripture being memorized verbatim and passed on from teacher to student in an unbroken chain that still continues to the present day.

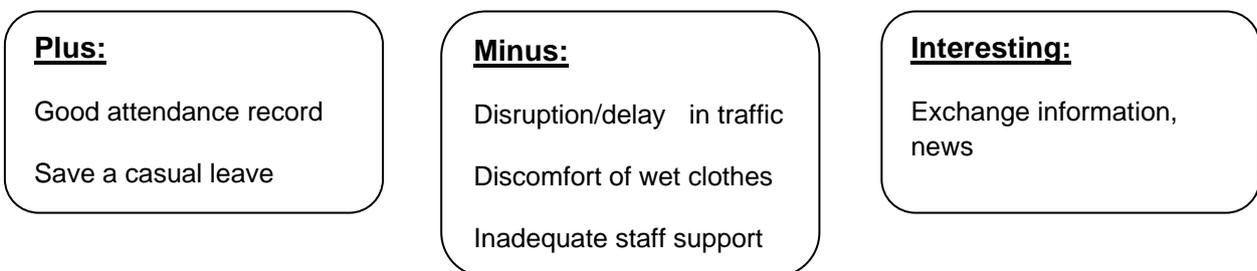
Mental Exercises

To ensure that mistakes did not creep into the chanting, a technique of chanting sentences in normal order as well as reversed order was followed. *Thus a sentence*

with five words could either be chanted normally as 1 2 3 4 5, or in smaller combinations such as 1 2 1, 2 3 2, 3 4 3, 4 5 4; or 1 2 3 2 1, 2 3 4 3 2, 3 4 5 4 3, etc. These combinations themselves became an independent chanting tradition to be memorized just like the original Vedic chants. Using these techniques, we can split complicated ideas into small fragments and recombine them in different ways to create new ideas. The music remix industry is an example of such creativity.

Edward de Bono, researcher of *Lateral Thinking*, speaks of the *PMI (plus, minus, interesting) technique* to analyse issues of common interest in a creative way. The pros and cons of each point of view is studied and put under the 'plus' or 'minus' column. Any other miscellaneous observations are put under 'interesting'.

For instance, we can do a PMI analysis to decide whether to go to work on a heavy rainy day.

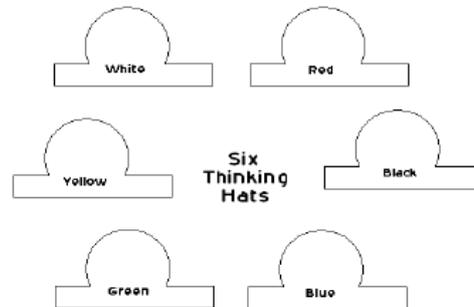


A more creative way to analyse situations is the *Six Hat Thinking technique*, where each coloured hat represents a different type of thinking. The White Hat represents factual data and verifiable statements. Red represents emotional thinking, Yellow represents positive sunny thinking, and Black reveals negative thinking. Green Hat is creative while the Blue Hat shows the holistic and overall perspective.

White Hat
Facts, figures
Objective data
Reasoning and deduction
Left Brain thinking

Red Hat
Emotions and feelings
Intuition
Likes and dislikes
Right brain thinking

Yellow Hat
Bright and sunny
Positive thinking
Possibilities
Dreams



Black Hat
Critical thinking
Anticipating problems
Planning for rainy day

Green Hat
Creative thinking
Generating new ideas
New perspectives
Asking 'what if?' and 'why not?'

Blue Hat
Overall perspective
Evaluating and decision making
Cost benefit analysis
Consensual thinking

Loosening up

If six hat thinking helps us to see a problem from different stand points, it is also useful to help us break up our chain of thinking. Loosening up the mind is a conscious relaxation process that helps you to let go of your thoughts. You do not need to stop your chain of thoughts in order to relax. You only need to let go of the urge to follow each and every thought that arises. You allow thoughts to arise but let go your need to act on them.

Many religious and spiritual traditions use meditation, breathing, and visualization techniques to reach a point of deep relaxation. Transcendental meditation is based on repeating a specific selected sound for a period of 20 minutes to calm the mind. Traditional Mantra-Japa also gives a similar effect.

The Complete Mental Fitness Book by Tom Wujek recommends counting numbers. With each outward breath, you silently sound a number in your mind. Slowly count from one to ten, then down from ten to one. In between the numbers, allow your regular thoughts to pass, but then return your attention to the numbers. Like the rhythm of breaking surf, the rhythm of your words has the power to soothe and relax, to keep you afloat above mental tides and currents.

In another of his techniques, you visualize your mind as the open blue sky and thoughts as birds flying overhead and disappearing into the distance. When a thought appears, you allow it to express at its own pace without rushing it. You merely allow it to pass overhead.

He also recommends becoming aware of all the demands it perceives. This you do by writing down everything that's on your mind – goals, desires, worries, whatever. Write these down as they begin appearing in your mind, using only one or two words to summarise them in point form. Writing them down removes mental clutter that prevents you from relaxing. Writing them down also focus your mind on all the issues you have been subconsciously caught up in. It allows you to confront them directly. Once you identify the issues, you can make decisions, set priorities, and free your mind to what you are doing. You can also tell yourself that you will return to them later.

Mind Mapping

In “The Mind Map Book,” Tony Buzan speaks of intelligence as a skill to be learnt. “Saying ‘I am bad at or do not possess mental skill X’ is both an untruth and a misunderstanding. If one is weak in any skill area, the correct statement must be ‘I have yet to develop mental skill X’ the only barrier to the expression and application of all our mental skills is our knowledge of how to access them.”

He suggests using a mind map to explore and capture complex ideas and concepts. We start with a central image that expresses the concept of, say, Happiness. We perhaps represent it with a boat sailing in the sea with a man fishing. We then add more words/ images all arranged on the circumference of a circle with Happiness as its centre. Each word on the circumference can be connected to new words until we have the page full of ideas radiating from the centre outwards. The structure is like a central tree with branches and smaller branches ending up with leaves, flowers, and fruits. Such a mind map is rich with possibilities and can be exploited for new ideas in a creative way.

Intelligence is thus not just a gift inherited genetically from our parents but is also a measure of the learning that we gather from different sources as well as a measure of our will to exercise these abilities that are inherent within us. As indeed we see with slow learners – slow and steady progress makes them catch up with the more gifted quick learners over the long term. Genius is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. In the long run, talent without hard work is a waste of resources. To quote from the poet,

“Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the man who wins is the one who thinks he can.”

Chapter 3:

Self Esteem

LIKING AND LOVING MYSELF

"If you make friends with yourself, you will never be alone" - Maxwell Maltz

Self Esteem is based on two important foundations: our self efficacy and our self respect. When we evaluate ourselves based on what we possess or on what we have achieved, our self esteem becomes externally directed and dependent on market forces.. Past success mean little if the future seems bleak. But when we focus on the tools of our success - our self trust and our ability to learn and respond appropriately, our self esteem becomes internally directed and more stable.

Self esteem is also based on whether we see ourselves as deserving of happiness and fulfillment. If we do not have a sense of worth, everything concerned with us seems to matter little. We may destroy our own success by discounting ourselves, so that success seems hollow and pointless. If we have grown up to believe that acknowledgement and appreciation of our achievement by others are the criteria of success, we may still feel like failures in the absence of such acknowledgement. We need to trust ourselves and to encourage ourselves to value our successes. We also need to get in touch with our authentic needs and wants so that we can set about fulfilling them without a sense of guilt.

In my journey of life, I have with me only one steady and constant companion - myself! I am the only one I have to myself. How well do I know that self? Have I made friends with it? Do I like and love myself? Or do I hate myself, wishing I could avoid myself?

SELF JUDGMENT

What is it that makes me feel lovable or hateful, worthy or unworthy, self-confident or self-doubting? It is the way I judge myself. When I judge myself lovable, then life is worth living. I pay attention, I take care of myself, I participate in life. But when I judge myself as unlovable, life becomes a burden. I neglect and hurt myself as well as others, or I demean myself

"Lift yourself up by yourself. Never look down on yourself. You alone are your own best friend; and you are your own worst enemy" - Bhagavad Gita

in order to buy love from others.

"Our self-concept tends to be our destiny. Self-esteem is a function of our deepest feelings about ourselves; it is not a matter of particular skills or particular knowledge we have. It is certainly not a matter of how well liked we are. It is a matter of the extent to which we experience ourselves as appropriate to life and to the requirements of life. We may think of Self-esteem as the experience that we are competent to live and worthy of happiness" - Nathaniel Branden in THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SELF-ESTEEM.

According to Branden, "*Self Esteem is – 1) confidence in our ability to think, confidence in our ability to cope with the basic challenges of life, and – 2) confidence in our right to be successful and happy, the feeling of being worth, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieve our values, and enjoy the fruits of our efforts.*"

Self Esteem is based on two important foundations: self efficacy and self respect.

When we evaluate ourselves based on our possessions or achievements, we are externally directed and dependent on circumstances. Past success mean little if the future seems bleak. But when we focus on the tools of our success - our self trust and our ability to learn and respond appropriately, we become internally directed and more stable. We cannot control a lot of situations in the world. We can however control our response to these situations. We convert problems into opportunities, and failures into stepping stones. Self esteem is the measure of how well we response to situations.

"I think (at least in the West) so much of self-esteem is outer directed, that the word self ceases to have meaning. I had a parent say to me they bought their child everything they wanted so they would have self-esteem, so other kids would like them and appreciate them. I was so amazed by this, but this is so much the thinking these days. The greatest self-esteem I have ever achieved has come from either getting myself out of some sticky situation by my own ingenuity or talents or from giving to others. "Self esteem is the measure of how well we respond to situations." What never ceases to amaze me is how often I forget this." – Tracey Jackson, US based Cine Director

Self esteem is also based on our self worth. When we do not value our personal feelings and needs, we tend to bypass them thinking them unimportant. We may see our goals as not worth the efforts required to be put in, and cheat ourselves from reaching those goals. We may make light all our achievements by discounting them, so that they seem hollow and worthless. If acknowledgement and appreciation by others are the criteria of success, we may still feel like failures in the absence of such acknowledgement.

Self esteem is never an isolated phenomenon. The self has to be seen in context of society. Self esteem is a healthy balance wherein we respect ourselves as well as we

respect others. It is a harmony between doing for yourself and doing for others. The golden rule works both ways - "*do unto yourself as you would have yourself do unto others*" is as important as "*do unto others as you would have others do unto you.*" Being fair to others does not mean we need to be unfair to ourselves, and vice versa.

Self esteem means to trust ourselves and to encourage ourselves. We get in touch with our authentic needs and feelings and manage them in a way that is satisfying and healthy. The Karma Yoga of Bhagavad Gita includes proactive attitudes towards action (Ishwara-arpana or trusteeship) and towards results (prasada or graceful acceptance) which help us respond with harmony to the realities of the situations. We can control our actions because that is in our hands, whereas we cannot control the results since that depends on many other factors that are not in our hands. Rather than becoming victims of circumstances, we can choose our responses well, doing what we can and letting go of what we can't.

“You have control over your actions, but never over the results thereof.” ~ Bhagavad Gita

HEALTHY SELF ESTEEM

When I feel good about myself, I am enabled to live a purposeful and full life.

I am in touch with my feelings and acknowledge them. I recognize my physical, emotional and spiritual needs and go about fulfilling them legitimately. I see myself and others as human beings worthy of respect. I can trust myself to deal with various situations appropriately by using my human faculty of thinking. I am realistic in my judgement of situations, myself and others; and can accept both my abilities as well as my limitations.

When I like myself, I tend to take care of myself. I learn from and welcome experiences, taking both success and failure in my stride. I do not fear making mistakes or failing, because I believe in myself and do not depend on others for approval. I can set goals for myself and work for them, seeing myself able enough to achieve them in the long run, in spite of obstacles and difficulties. I do not fear setbacks but keep moving along making things right for myself. I don't indulge in wishful thinking, denial, blame or self-pity, but look for alternatives and practical solutions. I do not stand on prestige, and take initiative to do whatever is necessary.

When I love myself, I take an interest in the happenings around me. I become interesting to others because I am interested in them. I am sensitive to their feelings as well as my own, and am able to deal with them appropriately. I welcome difference of opinion and am able to see things from both sides of the picture. I participate in life, taking initiative for making things happen. I can be playful and laugh at myself and my limitations. I am able to make the best out of every situation and cut my losses even in a hopeless situation.

SELF ESTEEM AND EGO

Is Self Esteem the same as Ego? The answer is yes and no depending on whether the ego is healthy or unhealthy. High self esteem signifies a 'healthy balanced ego.' The person with a healthy ego is aware of his strengths and weaknesses and is able to manage himself accordingly. He does not give excuses for his weaknesses and mistakes, and make amends.

The healthy ego is stable and balanced unlike the 'bloated' ego that needs to put others down in order to feel good about itself. An unhealthy ego is like a balloon that is easily punctured and is definitely not to be equated with self esteem.

The difference between healthy and unhealthy Self Esteem is clearer when we compare three types of behaviours – aggressive, assertive, and submissive.

A person with counterfeit self esteem is generally aggressive. For him, attack is the best form of defence, even when there is no cause for fight. He compares himself with others and is intolerant of competition.

The person with high self esteem is an assertive person without being aggressive. He respects himself and others, and is comfortable with competition. He takes responsibility to earn his rightful dues without waiting for someone to hand it over. He is not defensive when dealing with others and is relaxed and comfortable.

The person with low self esteem is mostly submissive and avoids confrontation. He is not able to openly express his feelings and thoughts and is generally withdrawn or trying to please others in order to feel good.

LOW SELF ESTEEM

If I do not feel I am worthy of happiness, I will not endeavour to work for it; I may even sabotage the possibility of happiness. And when I fail to fulfil my needs, I start doubting my own abilities, and feel more unworthy. I feel unloved, incapable, hopeless, bitter, jealous, reactive, and vengeful. I withdraw into my shell and let life pass me by.

My judgment of myself sets me up for life. It lays down my destiny.

I am only a spectator, and I have no stomach to participate, for I have lost confidence in myself. I do not see myself deserving of success, and I cannot stand failure. I only hold on to the security of the familiar and the known, and desperately avoid any new

situation. I depend on others to take care of myself, or I look to their approval by doing things for them or by pleasing them.

If I have no self worth, I may even try to escape from myself, or cease to be true to myself by hiding behind a social mask. I create a new personality to deal with the world, all the time knowing that the person inside is different, isolated, lonely unwanted, unloved. I take recourse to external achievements, possessions, relationships, activities etc. to compensate for the emptiness within. I may even take to aggression and belittling others to escape from my bitterness within. All this because I make a critical judgment of myself not necessarily based on facts. Selfishness, aggressiveness, scorn, cynicism, and the need to control others, are basically cover-ups for low self esteem.

PARENTAL MESSAGES

What is the basis for my judgments about myself? Much of it is learnt at home where I was brought up.

I came into this world as a new born baby - a bundle of joy and a world of promise. I saw the world as a vast playground, waiting to be explored. I was cradled, fed, loved, cherished. I was a baby then. As I grew, I picked up new beliefs through my parents. Directly or indirectly, they let me know whether I was strong or weak, capable or helpless, good or bad, active or lazy, an asset or a burden.

At times, my parents nourished me and guided me with encouraging words and practical advice. They made me see that I was important just being myself in spite of limitations and mistakes. They cherished me and accepted me, and at the same time gave me tips on developing my skills and abilities. They became my friends and well wishers and made me feel good about myself.

At other times my parents smothered me with their concern for me, or criticized me for my faults and mistakes. They were afraid that I would not make it on my own, that I had to be constantly watched over, protected, corrected or punished - so that I wouldn't get into trouble or embarrass them. They doubted my abilities and disapproved my methods. They labelled me 'lazy', 'stupid', 'incompetent', or 'poor darling', 'mama's boy', 'delicate precious one', etc. At such times I accepted their statements as facts and behaved accordingly - making it a self fulfilling prophesy.

CHILDHOOD PARADIGMS

Depending on my background, I learnt either to ignore my feelings and perceptions, discount my abilities and strengths, feel sorry for and critical about myself, or positively, I learnt to trust my feelings, acknowledge my needs, assess my abilities and work on my

I learned to deal with the world in the ways my parents had trained me. My judgment about myself became my destiny.

limitations, taking difficulties in my stride. I learnt either to be ashamed of myself or to honour myself.

"We are told by our parents, and other adults, what we can and cannot do. We are told what we are good at and what we are not. We are told how we look. We are told what to expect, what to believe in, how to act, and what to do or not to do. Because, starting out as children, completely dependent on others, it is important to our survival to listen and to believe what others say, we learn to accept what others tell us - and we learn to believe it." - Shad Helmstetter in WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU TALK TO YOURSELF.

CONDITIONED THINKING

Is there anyway I can break free from the conditionings of my past programming and be my own person? It is obviously a tall order. Habits and beliefs die hard. Awareness is the first step. Am I happy with the way I am right now? Is my life lived to my satisfaction or is life just passing me by? Do I respect myself and take care of myself, or am I used and abused by everyone including myself? Does meaning in my life come from pleasing others and gaining their approval, or do I have my own approval? Does my worth come from my achievements or am I intrinsically worthy just by being a human being? Do I try to meet my needs by honestly working for them, or do I just sit back hopelessly or manipulate others to fulfil my needs? Am I my own enemy or am I a friend to myself

At every moment, I am surrounded by voices from my past - messages I chose to hear from my younger days. All of them are not inimical - many of them are friendly, helpful, cheerful and encouraging. I may have chosen to listen selectively to certain messages in the past. Perhaps many of them were depressing and critical, some others pitying and scornful. I stand at crossroads now, with a power of choice. Which are the messages I choose to listen to, pay attention to, or invoke? And what are the messages I choose to let go, tune out, and ignore? Am I clear about who my friends are and who are not my friends? Every time I label myself as angry, bad, lonely, incapable etc., am I stating a fact, or is that an inimical message I chose to identify with? Do I care to listen to the feedback from my friends who keep harping on the fact that I am really not that bad?

FRIENDLY AND ENEMY VOICES

In the book THE INNER ENEMY, - Dr. George R Bach & Laura Torbet list the various friendly and enemy voices that we have internalized from our past. Among the allies are the *adventurer*, *comforter*, *voice of reason* (commonsense), the *confidant* (who listens and accepts you), the *optimist*, the *fan* (who admires you), the *go-getter*, and the *dreamer* (who draws up possibilities and designs creative solutions). All of them are positive voices and encourage you to achieve and offer hope and comfort whenever in need.

Among the enemies are the *spoiler* (distracts you from enjoying yourself), *goofer*, *doubter*, *pessimist*, *overindulger*, *bumbler* (makes you blunder at important moments), *knife twister* (rubs salt into your wounds), the *nurse* (keeps you invalid), *belittler* (discounts your achievements), *scaredy cat*, *love crusher* (doubts the love of friends and loved ones) and *procrastinator*. Though some of these appear friendly, they derail you from your purpose, keep you helpless, hurt, and lost.

To listen to the friendly voices requires commitment, patience, courage, and faith.

Unless I choose to believe that I am OK, capable, and worthy of love and happiness, I cannot change. Even when dark clouds of doubt and disaster loom on the horizon, I need to choose to believe in myself, to commit myself to raise myself by myself. I need to be my own friend, not my own enemy.

BREAKING FREE FROM SELF DOUBT

"All of us have self-doubts at the beginning of some undertakings whether we are doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, students, poets or salesmen. Where does faith and belief come from? From within ourselves! We are faith. We are belief. We are also doubt and unbelief. We as individuals must make the decision where we want to go in life, to be the big self or the little self. We must think of our faith and our belief as wings that can make us soar to our destination, to achieve our goals and reach self-fulfilment no matter how critical our times may be. With doubt and unbelief our creative wings are clipped for the moment and we can't get off the ground to rise above our self-imposed dungeon. It is our moral responsibility to rise above them to make something of ourselves through faith and belief. These characteristics are eternally within us waiting to be recognized waiting for action." – Maxwell Maltz, 'Thoughts to Live By'.

High self esteem is not automatic – it has to be earned. Our childhood experiences leave their mark on us in terms of doubting our self worth and abilities. On the other hand, it is our adult awareness that helps us deal with our childhood beliefs and work to update them in accordance with present day realities.

We are capable of choosing positive outcomes based on our adult awareness

The present day reality is that we have choice over our responses to situations and that we are capable of choosing positive outcomes based on our adult awareness.

In other words, rather than being prisoners of our past beliefs, we put trust in a better future and visualize fulfilling results. We are able to motivate ourselves to reach positive results rather than losing heart to the fear of negative results. The fact that we can deal with our problem of low self esteem in a positive way is in itself a mark of high self esteem.

I am OK, You are OK

Self Esteem cannot be genuine if it can be punctured. When we live on artificially bloated self image, it is bound to collapse sometime. If our Self esteem depends on our dramatically fluctuating moods, we do not own healthy self esteem. Healthy Self esteem involves choice.... the choice of taking responsibility to manage our moods. We can be kind to ourselves when we feel low, but we need not lose ourselves to the feeling.

Self esteem involves the basic belief that people are OK. Despite the not-OK behaviours that a person is associated with, there is a basic goodness to the person who stands behind those behaviours. Even with not-OK behaviours, the fundamental person is OK. Thus I am OK You are OK. Behaviours may or may not be OK, but people are basically OK.

How do we handle people whose behaviours, in our opinion, may not be OK? Rather than reacting to these behaviours, The person with genuine Self esteem is able to rise above the problem behavior and reach out to the person behind the behavior. Rather than blaming the person for the behavior, we state exactly how the same affects us, and ask for help. Instead of addressing the person identified with the problem behavior, we address the person who is in a position to help us solve the problem behavior. We invoke the problem solving person rather than the problem person. Although there is no guarantee of an agreeable solution, we are enhancing the probability of arriving at an agreeable solution.

Stephen Covey speaks about proactive behaviour as the ability to explore and the space that falls in between situation and response, and tap the powers associated with it. Along with awareness, will, creative imagination, we are able to enroll the power of conscience that guides us in our response. Conscience tells us that trust begets trust, respect begets respect, kindness begets friendliness, and frankness begets honesty. The more we expect to see beneficial results, the more we behave in such a way as to deserve such results.

The 90-10 rule tells us that 10 percent of our problem belongs to the situation outside our control, while 90% belongs to the way we respond to it. This rule applies to both events and people. We can give away our power to the situation and make it stronger than us, or we can reclaim our power of response and use it wisely to deal with the situation. We can feel victimized by the situation or we can come to terms with it and find a better response. When life throws you a lemon, make lemonade. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

In martial arts philosophy, the best warrior is one who wins without a fight. To win over your enemy is to make him your friend. No martial artist, however proficient, can win every battle without a fight. It is ultimately up to us to decide where to fight, where to negotiate, where to retreat, or where to let go. Self esteem helps us to choose our

battles wisely instead of spreading ourselves thin and fighting on all fronts mindlessly. Even in a lost battle, we can retain our sanity and dignity.

SELF ESTEEM PILLARS

Nathaniel Branden, in his book “The Six Pillars of Self Esteem” speaks of the six practices that enhance self esteem. These are the *practices of self-awareness, of self acceptance, of responsibility, of assertiveness, of living consciously, and of integrity*. Each of these practices, in addition to building self esteem, become natural traits of the person of high self esteem. Thus the means of self esteem are also an end in themselves.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness helps us see the realities about ourselves and the world. We need a map to help us navigate in life. It involves identifying our strengths and weaknesses, assets and needs, opportunities and threats, in a realistic way. Keeping our eyes and ears open, learning and identifying where we go wrong and where we need help or feedback is a starting point for making decisions about our lives. We ask questions, look for answers, test our beliefs against the rocks of realities, explore possibilities and verify so-called impossibilities.

Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance is our coming to terms emotionally with our past experiences, with what could have been and should have been. It brings us to squarely face the pleasant and unpleasant aspects of ourselves, our gains and losses, our joys and sorrows, our hurts, anger, and guilt. Self-acceptance is the decision to love ourselves even when we do not feel loveable. It is the refusal to hate or condemn ourselves for being less than perfect. Self-acceptance is the acceptance of our feelings, and of our human nature with all the vulnerabilities that it entails.

Responsibility

The practice of Responsibility makes us take charge of life without blaming the situation, others, or ourselves for our unpleasant experiences. Being responsible entails evaluating our past choices and their consequences objectively and learning from them. It involves exploring our alternatives and making better choices. Being responsible entails commitment on our part to improve our lives, to convert obstacles into challenges, failures into steps towards success. Responsibility involves cultivating and harnessing our energies, and redirecting them into helpful channels, rather than draining our energies with negative thinking. The right question to ask ourselves is “Am I here looking for the solution, or am I part of the problem?”

Assertiveness

Assertiveness helps us reach our goals through action. Action speaks louder than words. We are making a commitment to make decisions and take action. When we mean what we say, say what we think, and think what we intend, we are communicating assertively. The practice of assertiveness helps us to express the reality of our feelings, thoughts, expectations, needs, and intentions. We are able to express our fears, hopes, joys and sorrows, hurts and anger, all of which are an integral part of ourselves. We are able to choose the appropriate words, expressions, and behaviours to suit the reality of the situation. We may not speak everything that we think, but what we say is consistent with what we think.

Purpose

Living purposeful is to see meaning in our lives. Living is much more than mere survival or pleasure. The need to survive and make our lives pleasant is part of life, but they are not the purpose of life. Our significance as individuals is chiefly because of the rich network of relationships that we are connected to. Without it, we feel isolated, helpless, and useless. The ability to contribute to the network and enhance it is what makes us fulfilled. To identify with a purpose that is larger than ourselves, to live as part of a community and make a contribution, is what gives life a meaning. Our connection to the universe is what makes us truly spiritual beings. According to Viktor Frankl (Man in Search of Meaning), the right question to ask is 'what purpose does life have for me?', rather than 'what is my purpose in life?' Purpose is what motivates us to sustain action, even when our energies are low and the obstacles seem insurmountable.

Integrity

Integrity is the result of understanding that unless I speak what I think, and do what I say, I cannot have respect for myself. The practice of integrity helps build strength of character that helps me survive difficult moments of self doubt and temptation. It is tempting to cheat in order to get ahead in life, but it is not a helpful policy in the long run. A flaw in my character is difficult to recover from, because it makes for a broken foundation. Abraham Lincoln speaks of the value of one dollar earned being worth five that comes unearned. He also speaks of selling brawn and brain to the highest bidder, but never putting a price tag on heart and soul. (Letter to his son's teacher)

Each of these practices are essential components of self esteem, and any problem of low self esteem has its roots in ignoring some of these components. A good way to deal with our low self esteem is to identify where we are lacking and take responsibility to repair the damage. As long as we have a good relationship with ourselves, we can accept our shortcomings sportingly and learn from the feedback. As long as we are committed to improving our lives and are acting on our commitment, we will enjoy healthy self esteem.

SEARCHING FOR A DREAM

I need to know what I really need in life - they have to be my chosen goals, not something imposed on me by society. Unless I know my priorities, I am just drifting in life. I need to have a dream which I can realise.

To believe in myself, I require to face myself squarely and honestly.

I also need to wake up in order to make my dream come true. To reach that, I have to pay a price, - in terms of dedication, discipline, perseverance, and hard work. I assess realistically my abilities that will help me get there. At every stage in my life, I can keep developing and enhancing my skills through learning and training. I need not choose to remain a victim when I can train and prepare myself to meet challenges in life.

FULLFILLING MY DREAM

There is much to be done and there is little time. I make the best use of this day to achieve, learn, share, relate, grow, and stretch my limits. I also appreciate the blessings this day brings to me - health, wealth, well being, friends, joys, experiences, insights, maturity.

Every day as I get up from my bed, I can remind myself - "I have a dream, and it is up to me to fulfil it."

I take difficulties in my stride and make things right when it feels wrong. I welcome pain as a learning experience, and endeavour to become a master instead of a victim. I do not allow this day to go in vain."

*In my journey of life,
I have with me only one steady and constant companion - myself!
I am the only one I have for myself.
How well do I know that self? Have I made friends with it?
Do I like and love myself? The answer lies with me.
Am I for myself or against myself?
Am I here with a solution or am I part of the problem?*

Chapter 4:

Emotional Intelligence

Emotions

Our emotions are broadly categorised into five groups:

Feeling Happy – includes joy, excitement, well being, love

Feeling Sad – includes hurt, grief, boredom, depression

Feeling Afraid – includes indecision, shyness, avoidance, healthy fear

Feeling Angry – includes irritation, withdrawal, sarcasm, blaming, rage

Miscellaneous Feelings – includes confusion, guilt, jealousy

These emotions can be easily identified by asking what you feel : glad, sad, scared, or mad? Identifying emotions is the first step to managing difficult emotions. The ability to identify and access the intensity of anger, for instance, helps you to limit the anger and reduce its intensity. The ability to ride out the difficult emotions through patience and trust in positive outcomes makes the emotions manageable rather than impossible. Expressing these emotions in appropriate and healthy ways helps to ease the emotions further.

What is Emotional Quotient - EQ

Emotional Quotient is a term of recent origin, and was popularized by Dan Goleman in his book “Emotional Intelligence.” Emotional Quotient measures our ability to manage and employ our emotions to gain a better relationship with ourselves and with others.

Why is it important?

We deal with our world with our minds. When we are able to perceive situations accurately and respond to them appropriately, we have a better experience of life. Our intellectual abilities of language, mathematics, reasoning, special orientation, etc. are the main skills that we bring to dealing with the problems of life. Our emotional skills on the other hand, make it possible for us to decide what we want in life, and how important these are to us. Emotional skills also help us in managing our failures and disappointments in life, and to encourage and motivate us when things get difficult in life.

It is emotional quotient that determines whether a room full of people with high IQ are able to work together as a team, or work at cross purposes and sabotage mutual goals. The group IQ in a well knit team will be greater than the IQs of the individual members. The group IQ however, plunges and becomes significantly smaller when emotional quotient goes missing.

Building one's Emotional Intelligence has a lifelong impact. Many parents and educators, alarmed by increasing levels of conflict in young schoolchildren--from low self-esteem to early drug and alcohol use to depression, are rushing to teach students the skills necessary for Emotional Intelligence. And in corporations, the inclusion of Emotional Intelligence in training programs has helped employees cooperate better and motivate more, thereby increasing productivity and profits.

What are the elements of EQ?

Emotional Intelligence: The term encompasses the following five characteristics and abilities:

1. **Self-awareness**--knowing your emotions, recognizing feelings as they occur, and discriminating between them
2. **Mood management**--handling feelings so they're relevant to the current situation and you react appropriately
3. **Self-motivation**--"gathering up" your feelings and directing yourself towards a goal, despite self-doubt, inertia, and impulsiveness
4. **Empathy**--recognizing feelings in others and tuning into their verbal and nonverbal cues
5. **Managing relationships**--handling interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution, and negotiations

The Marshmallow Experiment

The ability to postpone gratification and to confront unpleasant issues are important aspects of emotional intelligence. A study was done in Stanford University during the 1960s at a preschool that shows how fundamental is the ability to restrain the emotions and so delay impulse.

Just imagine you're four years old, and someone tells you that if you could wait for half an hour until he has finished an errand, you could get two marshmallows (a sweet). However, if you could not wait until then, you could have only one. How you would respond represents a trajectory that the child will probably take through life.

Over a period of years, those who had resisted temptation at four were now, as adolescents, more socially competent: personally effective, self assertive, and better able to cope with the frustrations of life. They were self-reliant and confident; trustworthy and dependable; and they took initiative and plunged into projects.

Even more surprising, according to their parents' evaluations, they were more academically competent, better able to put their ideas into words, to use and respond to reason, to concentrate, to make plans and follow through on them and more eager to learn. They also had dramatically higher scores on their SAT tests than the other students of their class.

At age four, how children do on this test of delay of gratification is twice as powerful a predictor of what their SAT scores will be as is IQ at age four. IQ becomes a stronger predictor of SAT only after children learn to read. This suggests that the ability to delay gratification contributes powerfully to intellectual potential quite apart from IQ itself. – Dan Goleman, Emotional Intelligence

Unpleasant Work First

Emotional Intelligence involves facing difficult but important issues squarely in a timely way. The urge to postpone unpleasantness, putting it off indefinitely, is a human tendency. Unless it becomes an emergency, we generally avoid addressing unpleasant issues. But in the long run, as procrastinators, we risk greater unpleasantness and significant losses.

The story of the missing horse shoe highlights this danger. For the want of the shoe nail, the horse shoe was lost; for the want of the horse shoe, the horse was lost; for the want of the horse, the king was lost; and for the want of the king, the kingdom was lost.

My teacher gives an example about dealing with unpleasant issues. He observed a principle – 'tackle the unpleasant first'. While eating, he used to eat the bitter gourd before other items on his plate. It gave him satisfaction of having 'finished' with the bitterness. Through out the meal thereafter, he gave full attention to other items without being disturbed by apprehensions of 'bitterness'. The taste of desert lingering in his tongue was his bonus when he completed the meal.

The real benefit of observing this principle came through when the bitter gourd lost its 'bitterness' and actually started tasting good. Over a period of time, my teacher ended up loving Karela. Unpleasant things lose their sting when we learn to deal with them as matters of routine and confront them squarely. They become opportunities for growth rather than problems to be feared. We become good problem solvers and an asset to our family, organisation and community.

The ABC of Emotions

Stephen Covey speaks of an inner space wherein lies our ability to respond wisely to situations rather than react without thought. *“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our happiness.”*

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to explore that space and look for better, lasting, and fulfilling solutions.

Stimulus > > > > Response

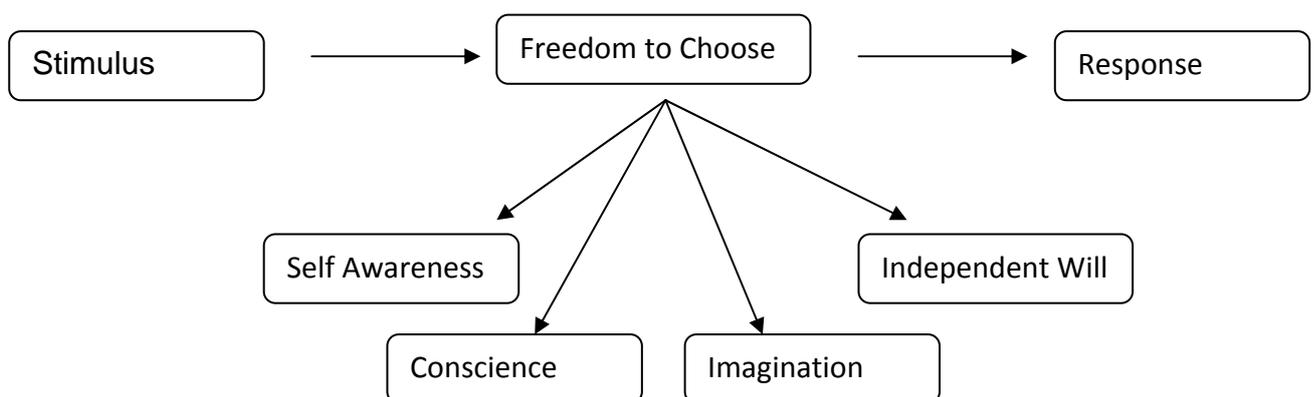
It is our perception of the situation rather than the situation itself that determines our response. According to the Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) of Albert Ellis, if ‘A’ is the activating event, and ‘C’ is the consequent emotion we experience, then,

$$A + B = C$$

where B is the set of beliefs we have regarding the event.

To the extent our beliefs agree with facts, we live in the real world. However, if the beliefs are unrealistic or irrational, we live in a false world of our own. We jump in fright on seeing a snake which exists only in our imagination, while in reality there is only a rope.

Stephen Covey speaks of inner space as the source of four powers we all possess as human beings. Our freedom to choose our responses arise from these four endowments: Self Awareness, Independent Will, Creative Imagination, and Inner Conscience.



To the extent we neglect these four powers, we become reactive and bitter. We blame others, we criticize ourselves, we look for problems in every solution, and become blind to the options available with us to solve the problem. We are caught up in our internal dialogue that consists mainly of irrational thinking.

To the extent we use these powers well, we are able to take charge of our lives and become proactive. We are able to review the consequences of our actions, learn from our experiences, and use our good sense to create a better future for ourselves. We are able to let go or minimise our losses, to lessen our mood swings, to stop blaming ourselves and others, and to take responsibility for fulfilling our needs appropriately. We are able to flow with reality rather than crash ourselves against it.

Irrational Thinking

“It is not the actual events but your perceptions that result in changes in mood. When you are sad, your thoughts will represent a realistic interrelation of negative events. When you are depressed or anxious, your thoughts will always be illogical, distorted, unrealistic, or just plain wrong.”

“The ability as an illusionist is no greater than that of the average depressed patient. This includes you. When you are depressed, you possess the remarkable ability to believe, and to get the people around you to believe, things which have no basis in reality. As a therapist, it is my job to penetrate your illusion, to teach you how to look behind the mirrors so you can see how you have been fooling yourself. You might even say that I’m planning to dis-illusion you! But I don’t think you’re going to mind at all. – David Burns in “Feeling Good”.

Unrealistic Thinking can be broadly classified under:

1. **All-Or-Nothing Thinking:**

“Because I lost the race for governor, I’m a zero.”

“Because I received a B in an exam, I’m a total failure.”

2. **Overgeneralization:**

“That’s just my luck. The birds are always crapping on my window!”

“I’m never going to get a date. I’ll be lonely and miserable all my life.”

3. **Mental Filter:**

“That’s what the human race is basically like – cruel and insensitive!”

“I am going to fail. I got seventeen wrong answers out of a hundred.”

4. **Disqualifying The Positive:**

If someone praises my appearances or your work, they’re just being nice.”

If I have a negative experience, it proves what I’ve known about myself all along.”

5. **Jumping To Conclusions:**

“That man in the audience is looking bored. The audience must think I’m a bore.”

“My friend didn’t notice me. He is probably ignoring me and he does not like me

anymore.”

6. Magnification Or Minimization:

“My God – I made a mistake. How terrible! How awful! My reputation is ruined!”
“I will never be good enough to pass this exam.”

7. Emotional Reasoning:

“I feel like a dud, therefore I am a dud.”
“I feel guilty. Therefore, I must have done something bad”;
“I feel overwhelmed and hopeless. Therefore my problems must be impossible to solve”

8. Should Statements:

“I should do this. Else, it is terrible.”
“He shouldn’t be so self-centred and thoughtless. He ought to be prompt.”

9. Labelling And Mislabelling:

“I lost that last point in the match. I’m a born loser”
“The stock I invested in went down instead of up. I’m a failure.”
I defaulted on my diet and ate ice cream. How disgusting and repulsive of me. I’m a pig.”

10. Personalization:

“My child’s report card says the child is not working well. I must be a bad mother. This shows how I’ve failed.”

These unrealistic thoughts enslave us and account for the emotional moods that we get into frequently for seemingly no reason. The more we subscribe to such thinking, the more we become emotionally vulnerable and helpless. The solution is to become conscious of these thoughts until we are in a position to challenge and replace them with more realistic thinking.

Logic of Emotions

- Emotions are temporary and fleeting
- Emotions are messengers bringing feedback
- Disturbing emotions need to be acknowledged and acted upon
- Comfortable emotions signal a state of well being
- Emotions are motivators that inspire us to act and to achieve

For some of us, emotions tend to get us confused and frightened. We get emotionally upset. We would rather handle things and machines than deal with people and relationships. For the emotionally intelligent person, emotions are not to be feared. Emotions are friendly and tell us about the state we are in and the situation around us.

Emotions have been our companions since we were born. As children, we felt each emotion as absolute and permanent. Joy was total, sadness was complete, and fear

felt like the end of the world. As grownups, we know that emotions have their phases, they are temporary, and are relative, not absolute. As adults, we can process emotions to understand ourselves, our motives, our fears, our likes and dislikes, our strengths and weaknesses. We can also use emotions to understand our surroundings better in terms of opportunities and threats, pleasant and unpleasant, healthy and unhealthy.

Emotions are messengers that bring us news – good or bad. Anger tells us that there is an unpleasantness that has to be confronted. Fear tells us that we need to be cautious and manage danger. Sorrow tells us that we need to make things right again when they seem all wrong. Sadness also tells us that we need to accept realities that cannot be changed. Joy tells us that we are in a state of well being and feeling comfortable.

Uncomfortable emotions need to be experienced and acknowledged. That is the only way we can come to terms with the realities of the situation. We can then, with awareness, take the necessary steps to come back to our state of comfort and enjoy the pleasant emotions. When however, our emotions are habitually recurring, it means that we need to deal with some unpleasantness from the past that we have avoided so far. When we avoid acting on the unpleasant issues, disturbing emotions keep coming back and create emotional upset. When we act, the emotion loses its steam and fades away quietly.

When we are in touch with our emotions, they make us move. They are e-motions, motivators that make us work heart and soul. We participate in life and make the best out of it. We are able to inspire others and have deeper and sustaining long term relationships. We make this world a pleasant place to live in.

A Whole Life

An emotionally balanced person does not feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities and pinpricks of the work place or family life. He has a place for everything and puts everything in its rightful place. He neither magnifies or minimizes situations, and gives everyone their due respect. He is stable and balanced in his roles and takes the ups and downs as part of life, taking them with a pinch of humour and grace. He is able to sideline his moods and focus on the relevant issues. He is not afraid of making mistakes and accepts them as part of the learning process. He is able to manage his fear and to act in spite of fear.

He is also able to take time off to understand his moods and take necessary action. He is able to stay with facts and identify strengths and weaknesses. Where he has power, he takes charge. Where he is powerless, he chooses to relax and accept the situation. His prayer is “Lord, give me serenity to face the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

With emotional intelligence, we are able to look into priorities in different areas of our life. We work to enhance each of our relationships and our roles. We are able to communicate better with people and sort out our differences with them. We are able to deal with our stresses and take adequate measures. We are willing to take unpleasant steps if they are going to be beneficial in the long run. We are able to plan for long and short term goals and work according to plan. We are able to look into feedback and use them for our continued growth and satisfaction. We become better parents, spouses, siblings, friends, colleagues, employers, employees, citizens. We also become fulfilled individuals, leading a rich social, emotional, and spiritual life.

I am OK You are OK

The foundation of emotional intelligence is self-esteem which in psychological terms means I am OK and You are OK. It means that we, as human beings, are fundamentally worthy and capable of setting and achieving our goals. Some of our behaviours and beliefs may be problematic but we are OK to deal with them. We accept our limitations with grace, and take the responsibility to overcome them if necessary. We trust ourselves to manage our fears and take appropriate risks when necessary. We trust ourselves to sort out our emotions and wait out our overwhelming feelings. We also trust ourselves to heal our hurts, recover from setbacks and learn from our mistakes.

In dealing with others, we show a willingness to trust and cooperate. We work with each other and help each other reach goals. We mutually scale new heights by working as a team. We express our views, needs, and expectations to each other. We set standards for interpersonal behaviours, and resolve disagreements through assertive communication and negotiation.

Trust and cooperation from others does not happen automatically. They are to be earned. This is where the laws of relationships come into play. Trust begets trust and cooperation begets cooperation.

How do we know whether we can trust someone we do not know? What if they do not reciprocate our trust? This is where we need to distinguish between 'trust' and 'willingness to trust'. We need not trust someone blindly, but we give them the initial benefit of doubt. We are willing to take the risk of trusting them. We choose to trust in small ways until we can afford to trust further.

Self Fulfilling Beliefs

Emotional intelligence tells us that what we expect becomes a self fulfilling belief. The more we expect trust from others, the more we experience trust. Likewise, the more we distrust people, the more loss of trust we experience. Theory 'X' and Theory 'Y' are based on opposite management philosophies.

The 'X' theory holds that people have to be closely supervised and monitored in their jobs to get best results from them. According to these theorists, people tend to escape responsibility and avoid working hard; they are externally motivated and are influenced only by incentives and punishments; they need to be kept in line through fear and favour.

The 'Y' theory holds that people are essentially motivated from within and can be trusted to be responsible and hard working. According to them, what people need is respect, recognition, acceptance, affection, and a chance to prove their own capabilities. When these are given to them, they respond with responsibility, co-operation, loyalty, and hard work. They can be entrusted with responsibility and to do a good job without the need for too much supervision.

Both these theories are based on self fulfilling beliefs. People tend to respond to us in the way we relate to them. When we believe in people and treat them with respect, we earn their respect. When we value them, we are valued in turn. When we trust them, we are trusted by them. Likewise, when we believe the worst in them, that is how they respond to our expectations. We make our own expectations come true.

EQ in the workplace

Emotional Intelligence is what makes a person get along well with his colleagues and manage stress in the workplace. It requires great patience and firmness for a leader to manage his or her team, resolve conflicts, keep motivation levels high, and get consistently high results. All business runs on goodwill, and the person with higher EQ is able to communicate better, understand client needs and give customer satisfaction, negotiate for a better deal in business contracts, and get the loyalty and cooperation from his employees. A person with high EQ is usually looked for where managing people are concerned – a person who is seen as fair and straight forward is trusted by all.

Will Schultz talks about three principles which are important in dealing with ourselves and others. These are:

- **Self-regard.** The ultimate basis for my personal and professional success is for me to understand, respect, and like myself.
- **Truth.** Truth is the great simplifier of personal and interpersonal difficulties.

- **Choice.** I empower myself when I take responsibility for myself.

Where there are self regard, honesty, and choosing to take responsibility for myself, we are able to accept feedback, process it with full awareness, and take responsibility for making changes in our lives.

Leadership

Stephen Covey (Principle Centered Leadership) talks about three types of power that leaders exert on others.

- Coercive power – The leaders invoke fear in the followers make them to oblige.
- Utility power – The leaders provide some compensation in terms of money, status and influence to the followers.
- Principle-centered power – The leaders inspire trust and loyalty by their integrity, dreams, commitment, and involvement. The followers are not blindly following, but are aware, wholehearted, and fully committed.

Coercive power puts fear into the followers to perform, but the control is temporary and reactive. Utility power is based on give and take but the followers may not have whole hearted commitment to the leader. Principle centered power honors the followers and has a sustaining proactive influence on the others. Principle centered leadership inspires others to become leaders in their own right by sharing their vision and motivation with them.

A leader cannot lead without followers. A leader of high EQ commands, rather than demands, trust and loyalty. He is able to feel their pulse and knows what motivates them. Empathising with them, he is able to help them meet their needs, and motivates them to reaching chosen goals. He works with them, not above them. He has his people working with him, not below him. He is open and honest with them and does not maintain an emotional barrier.

Developing EQ

Emotional Intelligence is a set of skills that can be developed by the practice of certain traits like self awareness, integrity, ability to postpone gratification, and willingness to handle unpleasant issues in life. It also involves the ability to take charge of our powers and to accept things that are beyond our hands.

In Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey speaks about the habit of pro-activity. We have within us an inner space that lies between what happens to us

and how we react to it. In this space lies our choice regarding how to respond to the situation. How well we use this choice has a bearing on the quality of our lives. We can choose to use this space to tap our inner powers of self awareness, sustained will, creative imagination, and conscience. The more we stay in this space, our power relevant to the situation grows until it becomes easy to respond in better and more fulfilling ways. Rather than reacting impulsively and burning our fingers, we can respond with integrity and compassion to enhance and enjoy our work and our relationships.

If the first habit of effective people is pro-activity, the other habits are equally beneficial. The second habit is about discovering what is important in our lives, and setting our goals based on our mission statement. The third habit concerns attending to the important issues first, and making a time bound plan to fulfill our most important goals. These three habits are concerned with managing ourselves. The next three habits concern relationships, and involve the ability to understand others, negotiating win-win outcomes, and working with others to reach greater goals. The last habit involves keeping ourselves fit and refreshed and keeping our tools sharp and ready for use. Each of these habits require a great deal of thought and positive attitude, and help to bring about a sense of well being and comfort that are the hall marks of emotional intelligence. A person with high EQ is able to motivate himself, has self esteem, able to manage stress, and has a rich fulfilling life.

Chapter 5:

Goal Setting

Good Goal Setting

assures you:

- Clarity about your career growth and a roadmap of how you can reach there;
- A clear view about the obstacles on the way and the means to overcome them;
- A personal balance based on setting goals in different important areas in your life;
- A strong sense of self-confidence and self-respect;
- A way to use your time and resources optimally;
- Better ability to communicate your intentions and purpose;
- Better decision making and problem solving skills;

People who use goal-setting effectively suffer less from stress and anxiety; concentrate better; show more self-confidence; perform better; are happier and more satisfied.

Three Fundamental Questions



My most fundamental goals have to do with my life as a whole. These are the three important questions about my goals I need to ask myself. What do I want to be? What do I want to have? What do I want to do? Why do I want it? Why is it important? How will it help me? How will I get there?

Setting my goals gives me a direction to move. If I do not know what my destination is, how can I reach there?

Goal setting starts with identifying my starting point. If I do not know where I am, how can I know in which direction to move?

The process of setting my goals identifies the route which I need follow. If I do not know the path to the destination, how do I reach there?

Goals are motivators

The world football title! The world's teams participated in spectacular show watched by billions of people all over the world. Hearts throbbed with hope, cheering for their favourite teams. While Italy won the finals, the others went home disappointed. But the battle was worth it. All were inspired by the magnificence of the game. For the moment, everyone was fully alive. The power of a goal!

Goal! To keep living itself is a goal. To live well, happy and fulfilled are also goals. To fulfil these essential goals, we need intermediary goals. Money, house, vehicle, education, etc. are all intermediary goals. As we keep setting and achieving these intermediary goals, we feel encouraged to move towards more fulfilling goals. Success in reaching goals motivates us towards further success. Success feeds on itself.

A person without goals has nothing to live for, no purpose for living. Our goals are what keep us hopeful; hopeful of a better life for ourselves and for our loved ones. A life lacking in goals is monotonous, boring.

Goals reveal your values

Goal setting is a deliberate activity that makes you think about things that are important in your life. Without this deliberation, we drift around in life and stagnate, or we follow goals set for us by others. Rather than being self motivated, we depend on carrot and stick shown by others. The carrot and stick is short sighted for they do not inspire us beyond a point.

The goals that we choose reveal our values. The value for professional excellence makes one seek challenging goals, not mere comfortable or easy goals. The value for integrity makes one choose self respecting goals and avoid dishonest gain. The value for aesthetics drives a person to pursue design and beauty, while the value for truth makes a person motivated towards science or spirituality.

While happiness, fulfilment, and love are universally essential goals, what makes us happy and fulfilled depend on our values. While one seeks pleasure to achieve happiness, another might choose self control and mastery as a means. A third might choose to help others, while a fourth might choose a challenging adventure.

Measure of Self Esteem

Goals that are realistic and possible alone can be termed as goals. Unrealistic or impossible goals are nothing but wishful thinking. However, what is impossible to one might be realistic for another. The more we trust ourselves and believe in our own worth, the more we can dream of worthwhile goals.

It is said that you cannot reach your goals if you merely keep dreaming. That is true. You need to wake up from the dream and act if you want it to come true. However, if you need to achieve anything worthwhile, you need to dream about it until it is embedded in your subconscious. The world is full of people who dared to dream big and worked for it successfully, risking failure and putting all they had at stake.

Your ability to choose worthwhile goals depends on self trust and self worth, both of which are elements of self esteem. Reaching goals becomes a matter of planning and learning, rather than a matter of luck or physical force.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Our goals are realistic only when they are matched to our strengths and capabilities. As students desirous of choosing a career, we go through a counseling process where our interests and skills are clarified. Careers connected to our identified interests and abilities are suggested and discussed. Goal setting is relevant not only to career, but also to relationships, community and social activities, and to personal and spiritual growth.

The goal setting process makes us focus on our SWAN - strengths, weaknesses, assets, and needs. We can then choose to work on ourselves to gather the required strengths and assets, and to minimise or sideline our weaknesses. This is a process of personal management and is a very important aspect of self growth.

Purpose and Direction

When we set goals for ourselves, we are empowering ourselves with sense of purpose. Goals are connected with our values and the goal setting process help us actualise those values. Our lives are purposeful when our deepest values are honored and lived.

Goal setting helps us get in touch with our deepest part of us. The more we are in touch with our essential values and fundamental needs, the more we find purpose and direction in life. Rather than being influenced by peer pressure and by what society values, we are able to honestly choose what is important to us.

By involving the deepest part of us in the process of goal setting, we reduce the chance

of reactive behaviour. We are able to sort out the important issues from the superficial issues, and it is easier for us to take instant decisions on the spur of the moment. We are able to consistently say 'yes' to the important and 'no' to pleasurable distractions and unnecessary activities.

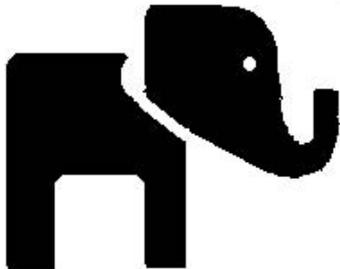
A lot of things that happen to us daily may seem urgent, but not all of them are really important. Some issues are important and urgent, and we need to prioritise them. But we deal with it as a priority because it is important. The urgent but unimportant issues demand our attention distracting us, and only by connecting to the deepest part of us can we say no to such distractions.

Short term goals

Goals can be essential long term goals that cover our entire life span, like marriage or career, or shorter term goals like passing an exam, selecting a college, a vacation, or a new hobby.

However, all these goal are reached in stages, and through a series of smaller steps. There are preparatory steps that include collecting the relevant facts, analysing data, preparing an action plan, evaluating the costs and benefits, getting help and advice if required, practicing and rehearsing our performance, working out alternatives in case of unexpected obstacles or failures, actually executing the action plan, and waiting for the results.

My little nephew came home from school and asked me: "Uncle, how do you eat up a whole elephant?" I said I had no clue. His cheeky answer: "Uncle, it is easy. Try one mouthful at a time." Here's how you do it...

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p><i>Divide the elephant into "bite-size" pieces.</i></p> <p><i>Schedule regular "bites" of the elephant as "task of the day", "task of the week", etc.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure you "eat" a bite every day in addition to completing your other routine tasks.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure you finish the elephant. Concentrate on no more than 1 or 2 elephant tasks at a time.</i></p> |
|---|---|

Goals appear to be big initially, but as we work out the steps, we discover that they are nothing but a series of small steps, each of which are achievable without too much difficulty. The smaller steps also can serve as practice for the bigger steps that may follow.

Realistic Goals.

Daily, weekly, and monthly goals should be integrated with your longer-term goals. Planning activity should be on a schedule. The steps that add up to longer term goals can serve as markers that tell us whether we are moving in the right direction and whether we are in good time. Any deviation or delay can be used as feedback for corrective action. Also, as we reach each marker, we feel encouraged at the progress we make. Each marker reached is a success story and we create a habit of success even before we reach our long term goals.

Goals involve a sense of achievement and self-worth

When we reach realistically high goals, there is a sense of healthy pride in our achievements. We reaffirm our capabilities and confidence in ourselves. We esteem ourselves through our activities and achievements.

The process is cyclic. As our self esteem grows, we are able to set realistically higher goals for ourselves. And in working and reaching these goals, we grow in our own esteem. Thus the cyclic process becomes very fulfilling and life enriching.

Reaching our goals empowers us to contribute to society. Our success is part of the community's success since we are participant in the economic and social health of the nation. We constantly interact with people in the community and their cooperation goes a long way in our success. We share our success with them by paying our dues as and when the opportunity arises. Reaching our goals, we become resources to the community that can be tapped when necessary.

Tips for goal setting

- *Use Positive Statements: Rather than saying "I knew I would forget it. How silly of me", encourage yourself with "Relax and take your time. You will remember it."*
- *Be Precise: Say "I need to get 80 percent in Economics" rather than "I need to improve on my studies." Also, "I will tackle this between 2 and 3" rather than "I will try to finish it soon."*
- *Set Priorities: Identify the goals which are of high importance and set them as top priority.*
- *Write goals down: The goals that you put down on paper reinforce your intention to reach them.*
- *Set performance goals: Don't let situations beyond your control make you feel let down if you miss your goal. You have greater control over your performance than the outcome of your performance. Say "I ran a good race and reached my target*

time. I deserved to win.”

- *Have measurable goals: “I will lose 2 kilos in 2 months.” If you fail to reach a measurable goal, you can make up for it, or analyse and reevaluate the goal.*
- *Set Realistic Goals: Take your strengths and weaknesses into account while setting goals. Measure the requirements of the goal with the skills and knowledge at your command. Goals based on other people’s expectations may not always be appropriate for you. Listen carefully to your emotions so that you can know what you really want.*
- *Distinguish between Ideal v/s real performance: Don’t expect to reach your ideal potential every time. Plan to enhance your average performance and make the improvement more consistent.*
- *Respect your needs: There is a time for rest, relax, and enjoyment. Don’t neglect your needs because of overwork and exhaustion.*
- *Avoid setting goals that are too low: Fear can prevent you from taking the risks necessary for reaching your goals. Rather than avoiding fear and settling for low targets, learn to welcome the fear as a help for preparing better. If failure is accepted as a stepping stone to success, the fear becomes easier to manage.*
- *Set Goals at the Right Level: Goals should be close enough to make you tempted to reach it, and far enough so that you need to put in effort in order to obtain it. It should be away from your grasp, but not out of your sight.*
- *Ask the right questions: These questions can help you focus on the steps that will take you to your goals:*
 - *What skills do I need to achieve this?*
 - *What information and knowledge do I need?*
 - *What help, assistance, or collaboration do I need?*
 - *What resources do I need?*
 - *What can block progress?*
 - *Am I making any assumptions?*
 - *Is there a better way of doing things?*
- *Associate with encouraging people: Do not freely share your goals with others unless you are sure they will encourage and support you. Don’t get discouraged by people’s negative attitudes.*
- *Review your goals daily as part of your routine. Visualise the completed goal in your mind each morning and repeat the process at bed time. Involve both your conscious mind as well as your subconscious for your goal setting.*
- *Evaluate your decisions: Every time you make a decision during the day, ask yourself this question, “Does it take me closer to, or further from my goal.” If the answer is “closer to,” then you’ve made the right decision. If the answer is “further*

from," well, you know what to do.

Measure of Consistency and Persistence

Setting and reaching realistically high goals is a measure of our commitment and persistence. Goals inspire us to make the extra effort and walk the extra mile. The most important step in reaching the goal is the next step – be it the first step or the last. A lot of things can happen to dishearten and discourage us from continuing. It is only the desire to reach the goal that rejuvenates us during testing times.

When we see the target as tantalisingly close and almost at hand, we are able to push ourselves beyond our capacities and to test our limits. We discover a source of new energy within ourselves and find new strengths that we were unaware of before. Working for a goal is like exercising – we become stronger as we continue the process.

Goals are modifiable

Setting our goals is something that is within our hands. Reaching our goals, is not. There is no guarantee that we will reach our goals. Many a slip between the cup and the lip. There is wisdom in the old proverb – ‘if at first you don’t succeed, try and try again.’ If we miss the goal due to some reason, we increase the probability of reaching the goal when we try again next time. We learn from our mistakes and change our strategy.

We also look into feedback to see how realistic we were in setting the goal. If the probability of reaching the goal in spite of repeated attempts is low, we may decide to modify the targets. Goals are only worth it if the cost is worth it. When we do a cost benefit analysis, we get a better picture of what the goal is worth and how practical it is. We need to decide whether we stretch our resources and stay invested, or recover our investment by cutting our losses. We can look at alternative goals that may be within our reach even though less fascinating. A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.

Means, not Ends.

What you want is a goal. Why you want it is purpose. How you get it is the method. Goals are not ends in themselves. They are means to the end. Goals are related to purpose. The purpose may be health, emotional fulfilment, intellectual stimulation, or spiritual harmony. The goals that meet these purposes are more specific – like going on a diet, maintaining a diary, enrolling for a study course, practicing meditation, etc.

It is purpose that makes the goal worth striving for. If the purpose is no longer met, the goal is no longer motivating. In such a case, even when we reach the goal, we feel empty because the purpose is missing. Stephen Covey compares such mindless striving for goals to climbing the rungs of the ladder. We are too busy climbing to the top and realise too late that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall!

However, if there is some difficulty reaching the specific goal, we can meet the purpose by an alternative goal. If our goal is to become a doctor, we feel defeated if we miss out on the medical seat. However, if our purpose is to help people and care for them, there are many other professions that we can select as an alternative.

Multi-dimensional and Interdependent

Goals are related to purpose, and an honest look at what is important to us tells us that our needs are multi dimensional. Our goals keep changing from time to time, and from person to person. However, as human beings, our common essential needs can be put into four broad areas – physical needs, emotional needs, intellectual needs, and spiritual needs.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Physical Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Fitness • Security and Finances • Food, Clothing, Shelter | <p>Emotional Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love, Family and Relationships • Job Satisfaction • Recreation, Hobbies |
| <p>Mental Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and Learning • Mental Fitness and Abilities • Mental Stimulation • Self Awareness | <p>Spiritual Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Growth • Reaching out to Community • Environmental Activities • Harmony with Universe |

As long as we are aware of these needs and choose our goals in harmony with them, we have a better experience of life. When we narrow our focus only to one dimension, we feel starved in the other dimensions. A helpful way of choosing goals would be to have goals that fulfill more than one purpose. For instance, the study of yoga, or a family vacation spent on trekking to the hills can fulfill each of our four needs to some degree.

Goals that are reached in one dimension can also inspire us to reach goals in another dimension too. Our physical fitness can impact our career goals, and our work can affect our family relationships. When we are able to see the interconnections between our essential needs, we can use our success in one area to inspire success in another. We can also reduce the impact of failure in one area by connecting to other relatively successful areas.

Chapter 6:

Time Management

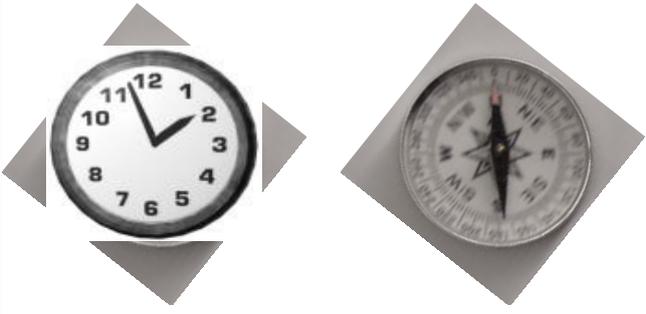
Time is like money, the less we have of it to spare the further we make it go. - Josh Billings

The Bank Account of Life

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with Rs. 86,400.

It carries over no balance from day to day. Every “evening” deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!!!! Each of us has such a “bank”. Its name is TIME.

- From the internet

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|---|--|
|  <p>The Clock and the Compass</p> | <p>TIME MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Time and tide wait for no one.</i>● <i>You can't manage time. Time flows.</i>● <i>You can only manage yourself in the time available to you.</i>● <i>So, time management is really:</i> SELF MANAGEMENT |
|---|--|

To catch up with priorities, we need to watch the clock. But to find our way in life, we need to watch the compass. What are we ruled by? The clock? Or the compass? Trying to catch up with time, we generally end up doing urgent things right away. What is not urgent, we tend to postpone or ignore.

A lot of things that happen to us daily may seem urgent, but not all of them are really important. Some issues are important and urgent, and we need to prioritise them. But

many other urgent but unimportant issues demand our attention distracting us. Only by connecting to the deepest part of us can we say no to such distractions.

| | Urgent | Not Urgent |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Important | I Crisis Fire Fighting Emergencies Critical Deadlines | II Growth Planning Health, Relationships Personal Growth Rest and Renewal |
| Not Important | III Distractions Some Phone Calls Some commitments Obliging others | IV Waste Unhealthy habits Time pass activities |

Look into the table above and see the consequences of ignoring any one of the four squares. Ignoring 1, you court disaster. Ignoring 2, you risk your health, relationships, and long term growth. Ignoring 3, you lose nothing significant. Ignore 4 and you actually gain time, leisure, and health. Box 1 is the area of crisis, 2 is that of growth, 3 of distraction, and 4 the area of waste. How much time do you spend in each of the four squares?

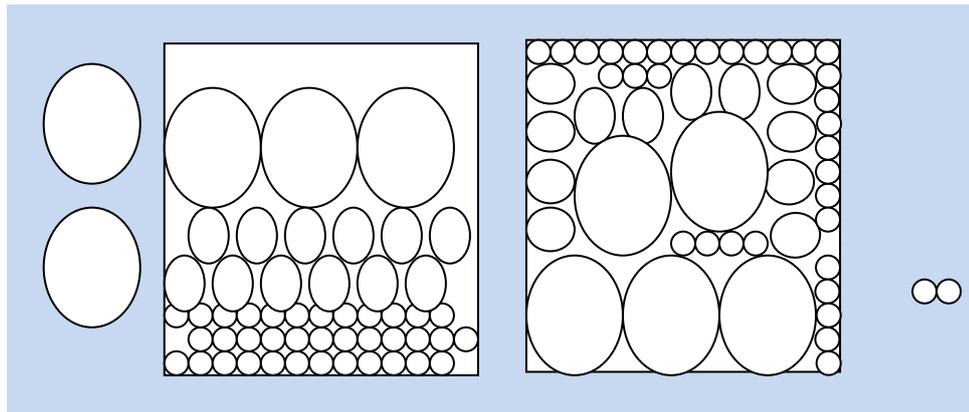
If you spend most of the time in box 1 and 3, you may be suffering from ‘urgency addiction’. If you are addicted to urgency, being busy makes you feel important. Not having anything to do may make you end up feeling useless.

When you spend more time in the 3rd box and less in the 2nd, chances are that you are creating crises in life. Ignoring health in the 2nd box creates health problems that fall into the 1st box. Ignoring relationships can create domestic crisis. Lack of financial planning can lead to a situation where you ending up borrowing more just to pay off your debts. The 1st box grows bigger and bigger by the day.

In box 1 and 2, you are doing important things. You attend to issues not because they make you feel busy, but because they are meaningful and purposeful. Dealing with important issues when they are not urgent, helps you to prevent them from developing into a crisis. When you study regularly, you do not need to burn the midnight oil before the exams. By starting your journey early, you give yourself enough time for dealing

with any unexpected interruptions or changes of plan. The 1st box shrinks in size day by day. A stitch in time saves nine! Your quota of stress reduces by the day!

Stephen Covey (First Things First) speaks of important 1st and 2nd quadrant activities as 'big rocks' as opposed to the unimportant 3rd and 4th quadrant activities that are 'gravel or sand'. When you start filling up a container with gravel and sand first, there may not be enough room to fit in the big rocks. But when you put in the big rocks in first, you can fit in most of the gravel and sand. Also if there is not enough place for everything, it is better to fit in the big rocks and say no to the sand,



To say 'yes' to the big rocks of your life, you need to say 'no' to some of the less important things. It is easy to say 'no' when you have a bigger thing to say 'yes' to. The choice is not between 'good' and 'bad'. The real choice is between 'good' and the 'best'.

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| | <p>Poor Time Management Symptoms</p> |
| <p><i>“One thing at a time, and that done well, Is a very good rule, as many can tell.”</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Never having time for really important work</i> • <i>Too much time/priority to the urgent rather than the important</i> • <i>Frequently staying late at office</i> • <i>Frequently feeling stressed, anxious and time pressure</i> • <i>Doing the work of others</i> • <i>Feeling indispensable</i> • <i>Having difficulty in saying no</i> • <i>Taking work home</i> • <i>Letting others dictate how you use time</i> • <i>Rarely completing work on time</i> • <i>Attending too many meetings</i> |
| <p><i>“So if you want, to gain your way, Work while you work, and play while you play. That is the way to be happy and gay!”</i></p> | |

Planning important activities on a regular basis is the heart of proactive time management. This is easier said than done, because of our experience with New Year

resolutions. Urgent things happen on a daily basis, and override the planning that we have made for the year.

A year is too long a period to monitor, and we end up putting off things or ignoring the big rocks all together. On the other hand, 24 hours are too short a time to put in all the big rocks of your life. A good unit of time for planning important activities is the week. A week has 7 days and allows you to accommodate most of your big rocks. At the same time it does not give you too much elbow room to postpone. Also the week gives you an opportunity for evaluating the past week and for necessary course correction.

In weekly scheduling, you need to see at a glance your mission statement, your roles, your goals, and your daily routines, all at one place. Putting them all in the same page gives you flexibility to manage the important as well as the urgent over the entire week. You can put in the big rocks first, scheduling them into your daily routine. You keep some free time open for relaxation, doing other optional activities, or for accommodating change of plans if necessary. Reviews can be done weekly, and also monthly, quarterly, and yearly, to see the progress over the short and long term.

Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week.- Spanish Proverb

The main thing is keeping the main thing the main thing.- German Proverb

Chapter 7:

Decision Making

Decision Making is a process involving choices about my goals, about the means, about evaluating risk and about problem solving. It involves exploring my purpose, understanding my priorities, identifying my strengths and weaknesses, analyzing my opportunities and threats, committing myself to a chosen alternative, and evaluating my results. Decision Making is a skill that enables me to look for and choose an alternative and act on it in order to resolve a problem or improve my situation.

What is a "real" decision?

In the simplest, most basic terms, a real decision is a free, unconditional, total and personal commitment to a choice or option, or a group of them. In real decision-making, nothing is held back. This means our feelings as well as our logic, so that we are committed to the choice we have made. Psychoanalysts use the term "emotional investment." Emotional investment means feeling strongly and caring enough to invest time, energy, thought, talent and assets in the issue and its outcome.
- Dr Theodore Rubin

According to Rubin,

- The decision constitutes our full **commitment** to a selected choice. Decision constitutes full commitment to one road only - the road that leads to the selected choice.
- The decision we make is **personal**; it is ours alone. That means the centre of our life is not in other people's hands. For that reason, real decisions bring about a healthy, positive sense of self.
- The decision is **free**, for we make it without threat or coercion, and without fear of any self-criticism or punishment.
- It is **total**, because our whole self is involved - not just a portion, thus enabling us to give it our unconditional commitment.
- **You make it work!** It is the decision-maker and not the particular choice that makes the decision work. If it doesn't work, the problem lies with the decision-maker, and the decision will not succeed regardless of which choice is made.
- Loyalty to a decision is directly proportional to **loyalty** for ourselves. Thus we should not turn on ourselves when the going gets rough or difficulties present themselves.

The important thing to note about decisions is there is no absolutely best decision. Any decision can be good enough if the basic procedures are honoured.

Why is Decision Making Important?

Decision Making is necessary to resolve a problem I am faced with. I need to decide whether to put up with the problem, avoid it, fight it, negotiate, get outside help, or defer the decision, etc. Decision Making can be a useful tool to decide future goals based on what is important to me. Decision Making is necessary to ensure that I act purposefully and reach my chosen goals. It makes me focus on my inner abilities and external possibilities, and employ what I have to get what I need.

Since many factors are involved, the decision making process explores various alternatives and select one that is viable and satisfactory. Decision Making becomes a process of gathering and organizing knowledge and gaining wisdom from experience. It brings in a sense of self-esteem because I actively choose my response rather than reacting unthinkingly to situations. It helps me know myself better and helps me gain a sense of confidence and self-respect as I keep reaching goals or solving problems. It also makes me evaluate my past and present mistakes and learn from my failures.

Real decisions integrate and unify various aspects of ourselves, translating theory into action. They increase self-esteem. Decision power increases geometrically, because the very act of decision-making breaks through inhibition and paralysis. Conversely, prolonged apathy, indecision, paralysis and inhibition can result not just in mistakes but in disaster. - Dr Theodore Rubin

When is Decision Making Necessary?

1. **Choosing between alternatives**

Decision Making is necessary when we come to a fork where the road divides into two. Decision Making is necessary when we see an opportunity which involves an amount of uncertainty. Decision Making is necessary when we see a threat and need to choose a way out. Decision Making is necessary to evaluate our decisions and choose to stand by them or to change them.

2. **Choosing the future we deserve**

Decision Making is necessary when we wish to see a better future for ourselves and our society. Decision Making is necessary for making our lives meaningful and fulfilling. Decision Making is necessary when we need to choose the time frame for taking action and for reaching our chosen goal.

3. **Overcoming roadblocks**

Decision Making is necessary when we do not know what we want or why. Decision Making is necessary when we do not know where we need to go. Decision Making is necessary when we do not get what we want. Decision Making is

necessary when we are stuck with the past and do not know what to do. Decision Making is necessary when the road ahead is difficult to traverse.

4. **Choosing the type of person we want to be**

Decision Making is necessary when our action meant to serve our interest causes hurt someone's interest. Decision Making is necessary when our short term interest clashes with our own long term interest. Decision Making is necessary to determine what system of values I need to adopt in order to value myself as a person.

Hard Decisions

Only we can change our life. No one can make decisions for us when it comes to serious questions, such as, What ought I to do?, What should I believe?, What can I know?, How should I live?

Major decisions require courage. We must have courage to bet on our decisions, to take the calculated risk, and to act.

Finally, in personal decision-making there is no one better to talk to than yourself if you really want to get things worked out. No other person has as much information about your problems, and no one knows your skills and capabilities better.

Decision Making begins with understanding the circumstance that requires a decision. It may be goal setting, problem solving, an opportunity, a threat, etc. We evaluate and choose a response.

We choose based on our priorities, our options, possible outcomes, and our own internal feelings. We may have our preferred style of decision making. We may be very deliberate in the decision making process; we may take a command decision that is instantaneous; we may choose to go by our intuition; or we may choose to surrender to the moment and consciously go with the flow. The entire process is validated by our whole hearted support to the chosen decision.

Aids to Decision Making

1. T-Chart.

A T-Chart is an orderly, graphic representation of alternative features or points involved in a decision. In one form, it can be a list of positive and negative attributes surrounding a particular choice. Drawing up such a chart insures that both the positive and negative aspects of each direction or decision will be taken into account. For instance, should I accept new job offer?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| PRO | CON |
|-----|-----|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |

In another form, two possible choices are listed, with the good points or arguments or effects listed for each. Suppose your company is trying to decide whether to create its own advertising or hire an agency.

| Option A – advantages | Option B – advantages |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

To fill out this latter form, more than two choices can be included, and a list of negatives for each choice can be added as well.

2. PMI.

Edward de Bono refines the T-Chart idea into a three part structure, which he calls PMI for plus, minus, and interesting. Here you first list all the plus or good points of the idea, then all the minus or bad points, and finally all the interesting points--consequences, areas of curiosity or uncertainty, or attributes that you simply don't care to view as either good or bad at this point

Considering the evidence on both (or all) sides before you commit yourself emotionally and psychologically to a position will have a major impact on the quality of your decision making. Should I buy a house or should I take a rented premises?

| | | |
|-------------|----------|----------|
| | Option A | Option B |
| Plus | | |
| Minus | | |
| Interesting | | |

3. Buriden's Ass.

This method of decision making is used when two or more equally attractive alternatives are faced. (From an old fable of an ass placed between two equally nice bales of hay. The ass couldn't decide which bale to turn to because they were both so attractive, and so it starved to death from indecision.) The method is simply to list all the negative points or drawbacks about each decision. That is, when two or more alternatives seem very desirable, we become blinded to any drawbacks. This method simply focuses on the drawbacks. Eg. What shall we serve for the party -- icecream or chocolate cake?

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Option A – disadvantages | Option B – disadvantages |
| | |
| | |
| | |

4. Measured Criteria.

This tabular form can be used for multiple choices. What are the relative advantages of travelling by train, plane, and car?

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-----|
| <i>Example:</i> | Possible Points | Train | Plane | Car |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|--|
| Comfort | | | | |
| Speed | | | | |
| Safety | | | | |
| Food | | | | |
| Total | | | | |

5. Decision Matrix or Weighted Decision Table.

This is a slightly more sophisticated version of the measured criteria technique. Here a table is set up with each criterion given a weight depending on its importance in the decision and with each alternative given a ranking for that criterion.

| <i>Example:</i> | Priority/ Weightage | Train | Plane | Car | Points |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------|-------|-----|--------|
| Comfort | | | | | |
| Speed | | | | | |
| Safety | | | | | |
| Food | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | |

The elements of Decision Making

Identify the purpose of your decision. What is exactly the problem to be solved? Why

it should be solved?

Gather information. What factors does the problem involve?

Identify the principles to judge the alternatives. What standards and judgement criteria should the solution meet?

Brainstorm and list different possible choices. Generate ideas for possible solutions.

Evaluate each choice in terms of its consequences. Use your standards and judgement criteria to determine the cons and pros of each alternative.

Determine the best alternative. This is much easier after you go through the above preparation steps.

Put the decision into action. Transform your decision into specific plan of action steps. Execute your plan.

Evaluate the outcome of your decision and action steps. What lessons can be learnt? This is an important step for further development of your decision making skills and judgement.

In short,

- Stop and Think
- Clarify Goals
- Determine Facts
- Develop Options
- Consider Consequences
- Choose
- Act
- Monitor and Modify

In everyday life we often have to make decisions fast, without enough time to systematically go through the above action and thinking steps. In such situations the most effective decision making strategy is to keep an eye on your goals and then let your intuition suggest you the right choice.

Some Decision Making Strategies

1. **Optimizing.** This is the strategy of choosing the best possible solution to the problem, discovering as many alternatives as possible and choosing the very best. How thoroughly optimizing can be done is dependent on the importance of the problem, time available for solving it, cost involved with alternative solutions, availability of resources, knowledge, etc., and finally personal values

2. **Satisficing.** The word *satisficing* was coined by combining *satisfactory* and *sufficient*. In this strategy, the first satisfactory alternative is chosen rather than the best alternative. If you are very hungry, you might choose to stop at the first decent looking restaurant in the next town rather than attempting to choose the best restaurant from among all (the optimizing strategy).

3. **Maximax.** This stands for "maximize the maximums." This strategy focuses on evaluating and then choosing the alternatives based on their maximum possible payoff. It is a good strategy for use when risk taking is most acceptable, when the go-for-broke philosophy is reigning freely.

4. **Maximin.** This stands for "maximize the minimums." In this strategy, the worst possible outcome of each decision is considered and the decision with the highest minimum is chosen. The Maximin orientation is good when the consequences of a failed decision are particularly harmful or undesirable.

When should decisions not be made?

- *When depressed and emotionally upset*
- *When Conditioning is applied and used for controlling the mind of the victim, e.g., inducing manipulative guilt, covert fear, intimidation, mental and moral confusion, eliciting confessions to uncommitted crimes, and propaganda.*
- *When Persuasion is used to cause an inability to think independently, e.g., implanting suggestible impulses into the victim's mind.*
- *When solving a problem by creating a new one:*
- *When in a vulnerable state as in sickness, intoxication, etc.*

How is Decision Making connected to ethics?

Effective Decisions. A decision is effective if it accomplishes something we want to happen, if it advances our purposes. A simple test is: are you satisfied with the results? A choice that produces unintended and undesirable results is ineffective.

For example, if we make a casual remark to make someone feel good but it makes him feel bad instead, we were ineffective. If we decide to do something we really don't want to do just to please a friend and the decision ends up getting us in serious trouble, it's ineffective.

The key to making effective decisions is to think about choices in terms of their ability to accomplish our most important goals. This means we have to understand the difference between immediate and short-term goals and longer-range goals.

Ethical Decisions. A decision is ethical when it is consistent with the six pillars of Character: Trust, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Ethical decisions generate and sustain trust; demonstrate respect, responsibility, fairness and caring; and are consistent with good citizenship. If we lie to get something we want and we get it, the decision might well be called effective, but it is also unethical.

There are two critical aspects to ethically sound decisions: knowing what to do and doing it.

- **Discernment.** The first requirement of good decisions is discernment. It is not obvious to everyone, for example, that it is just as dishonest to deliberately deceive someone by half-truths and omissions as to tell an outright lie. It's also not always clear how to respond most effectively. Discernment requires knowledge and judgment.
- **Discipline.** Good decisions also require discipline, the strength of character to do what should be done even when it is costly or uncomfortable. It's not enough that we discern the ethical and effective course; we must follow it. This often takes will power or moral courage: the willingness to do the right thing even when it is inconvenient, scary, difficult or costly

To ensure that our decisions are ethical, we could ask the following four questions.

1. Could I or someone else suffer physical harm?
2. Could I or someone else suffer serious emotional pain?
3. Could the decision hurt my reputation, undermine my credibility, or damage important relationships?
4. Could the decision impede the achievement of any important goal?

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Good decisions

Whatever be our decision making style, its success depends on how completely we accept the decision and commit ourselves to it. A decision is a good one if we trust ourselves and the process. A decision may work out successfully according to expectations, or it may not. We accept there are no guarantees regarding the outcome. That is why subsequent evaluation is necessary to help us make more informed decisions in future.

Decision making cannot afford the luxury of hindsight. Hence the need to rely on a process that can prevent us from making bad decisions. The decision making process ensures that we weed out poor decisions and choose from the remaining alternatives that promise positive outcomes. Notwithstanding the consequences of the decision made, our whole hearted acceptance makes our decision a good one.

"Good" decision makers:

- Have a high tolerance for ambiguity.
- Have a well-ordered sense of priorities.
- Are good listeners.
- Always build the consensus around a decision.
- Avoiding stereotypes.
- Remain resilient with feedbacks.
- Are comfortable with both soft and hard input.
- Are realistic about cost and difficulty.
- Avoid a decision minefield.

There are many factors that contribute to being a good decision-maker, the cardinal ones are:

- Self-esteem
- Courage:
- Honesty:
- Love:
- Just as people are different, so are their styles of decision making. Each person is a result of all of the decisions made in their life to date. Here are some tips to enhance your decision making:

- Do not make decisions that are not yours to make.
- When making a decision you are simply choosing from among alternatives. You are not making a choice between right and wrong.
- Avoid snap decisions. Move fast on the reversible ones and slowly on the non-reversible.

Command decisions

In most cases, there is adequate time for us to analyse the situation and choose an appropriate response. However, in some situations, we have to respond instantly, especially in times of danger. We rely on our past experiences and wisdom and trust our instincts.

Command decisions are born of practicing decision making until they become our second nature. It is said that success is the art of making right decisions, and we learn to make right decisions by making many wrong ones. Command decisions are very important in the armed forces where one mistake can cost many lives. It is the military training that helps us survive in war and put our lives in the hands of our colleagues.

Emotions and decision making

Practical matters seem to be handled better when one is not swayed by emotions. Being emotional can interfere in the process of decision making where one has to be objective. However, emotions come from a deep part of ourselves and reveal our values and priorities. Much of decision making is centred on fulfilling our emotional needs in a practical way.

The problem comes when conflicting emotions are involved. At times, we think one way and feel in another way. There is a conflict between our head and our heart. Decision Making as a process helps in resolving this conflict and realign both head and heart.

There is a story of the blind person and the lame person who were living near a rich man's farm. They were accused of stealing mangoes from the trees but released because neither could a blind person nor a lame one were capable of stealing because of their handicaps. When the mangoes continued to disappear, the owner hid in the farm to investigate. What transpired there amazed him. The lame person was sitting on top of the blind one and directing him to the mango trees. Their combined height was quite adequate to pick up mangoes from the trees!

The head and heart independently are like the lame person and the blind one. One person may see all the pros and cons of a situation but doesn't move because he does not know what he wants. The other person may know what he wants, but does not see the pros and cons and moves blindly. When our head sees what our heart wants, and when our heart trusts the head to give directions, we are able to simultaneously see

and move in the right direction. Decision Making is a process by which we consult both head and heart and resolve any possible conflicts amicably.

Intuition and Decision Making

Some people are intuitive by nature, being in close touch with their feelings. Being aware of when and why they are emotionally stable or emotionally upset helps them to make better decisions. They are in touch with their priorities, strengths and limitations, and they are able to see events in the larger perspective. Hence they are able to decide without apparently going through the steps of decision making.

To know how intuitive we are, we need to test by our experiences of decision making. If our “intuitive” decisions give consistently successful results, we are highly gifted. But no matter how intuitive we are, it pays to double check our decisions by the decision making process in order to get better results. Rational decisions are not necessarily opposed to intuitive decisions, but they can make our eyes open to why we choose what we choose. Rational decisions include using intuition as one of the factors of the decision making process.

People may not go through this process of decision making in the same way. For some, the head leads and heart follows, while for others, it is the reverse. Some experience better results when they think and deliberate, while other experience comfort following their feelings. Some people may also experience conflicting emotions which they resolve by meditation, prayer, and quiet time.

Intuition happens when our head and heart are totally aligned. When we go by our intuition, we experience no conflicts, and instinctively we seem to know what to do even when we do not know why. Here our thinking and emotions are working together at a deeper level, and we find answers at an unconscious level even when we have no time to consciously take a decision.

However, it is difficult to distinguish between intuitive thinking and our own wishful thinking. We need to go by our experience to determine our decision making style. What works for one may not work that well for another. Also our decision making style may not be consistently giving us good results. We need to evaluate the results to find out what is right for us. What is important is that there is no conflict arising out of such decisions.

Even when we go by intuition, it is safer to go through the decision making process consciously, whenever we can, to double check our intuitive decision. Intuition may be right most of the times, but we still can be wrong some of the time. Thus the decision making process helps us to make better decisions in things that matter most in our lives.

Life’s most fundamental decision... !

The decision maker’s prayer is echoed in the serenity prayer:

*“Lord, Grant me
Serenity to Face the things that I Cannot Change,
Courage to Change the things that I Can, and
Wisdom to Know the Difference.”*

It is said that god helps one who helps himself. A Sanskrit verse goes thus:

***Udyamam Saahasam Dhairyam Buddhis Shaktih Paraakramah,
Shadete Yatra Vartante Tatra Devaah Sahaayakrit.***

*Endeavour, daring, fortitude, wisdom, strength and valour
– where these six reside, the gods too lend a helping hand.*

Another verse highlights the initiative required for achievement:

***Na Daivam Iti Sanchintya Tyajet Udyogam Aatmanah,
Anudyamena Kastailam Tilebhyah Praaptum Arhati.***

*May one not, relying on mere destiny, abandon self-effort.
How can one extract oil from sesame seeds without effort?*

It is our life, and we have to make the best of what life provides for us. While we cannot control external situations all the time, we can take charge of our response and make the best of the joys and sorrows that come to us. The decision making process ensures that we give ourselves a fair chance to lessen the impact of sorrow and enhance the joys in our life. It makes us a participant in life rather than be a mere spectator. It also adds to our experiences, and makes us wise.

“That decision-making itself is the most important aspect of decision-making is part and parcel of my belief that living is the most important part of living. Each decision affirms the statement "I exist here and now!" Every time we commit ourselves to our own choice, we affirm the biggest decision of all, the decision to live.” - Dr Theodore Isaac Rubin - OVERCOMING INDECISIVENESS

Chapter 8

Effective Communication

Most stress arises from misunderstandings. A hiccup in communication at any level is most likely to give you stress. When your ideas and attitudes are effectively communicated to people around, it can save you from unnecessary misunderstandings and consequent tensions.

Remember the game of Chinese whispers we played in school? A message – the length of a sentence or two – is passed from person to person. The last person receives a message that has undergone a series of changes. It is anything but the original message.

Whose responsibility is it to ensure clear communication? Of the Speaker? Or of the Listener? Actually both. Communication is a two way process. The speaker and the listener both need to check the accuracy of what was said or heard. Using simple words, short sentences, and repeating the main points help. Non verbal gestures, postures, and voice tone can also aid good communication.

Both the speaker and the listener carry certain assumptions in the communication process. If the assumptions match, there is good communication. But if the assumptions are different, the message can get mixed up. Many movies including Romeo & Juliet are based on such misunderstanding. Communication gets confused when there is a mismatch between what we say and what we show. Telling your kids that you are angry is meaningless unless you also show angry. Similarly saying that you understand the speaker does not mean much unless you show it on your face. When words, tone, gestures, posture and behaviour match each other, you have effective communication.

Nonverbal Communication

Eyes *Do you look away, stare, or show attention?*

Face *Do you hide your emotions or show interest?*

Tone *Do you show warmth and gladness, or lack of it?*

Posture *Are you tense and immobile or comfortably relaxed?*

Touch *Finger pressure, grip, hugs - do you know what you like and others like?*

Nonverbal Communication

Intensity *Do you seem cool and disinterested, or do you show excitement?*

Timing *Do you converse fast or slow? Does information flow back and forth easily?*

Sounds *Do you use expressions like 'Aah' and 'Oh' to signify interest, understanding and compassion?*

Assertive training can help you learn to express your needs without offending others or feeling ignored. Communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.

Learn to say no. Develop interpersonal communication skills such as listening to other's views. Provide effective and timely feedback. Break down your messages into smaller parts. Sort out the facts, emotions, beliefs, needs, and actions. Distinguish between them clearly. Facts are objectively verifiable. Facts are independent of opinions and beliefs that may vary from person to person.

"We met yesterday at 6.30pm at the Bombay Central station" is a statement of fact. Facts are impersonal and less liable to cause misunderstandings and stress.

Emotions are subjective feelings that arise in us. "I felt angry for being made to wait for over 15 minutes". This is a statement conveying an emotion of anger. It expresses my state of mind, not a blaming sentence.

"You made me angry" is a belief that is not 100% true. It is more correct to say "I felt angry because you did not keep your promise." Beliefs are the glasses with which I see the world, and they may or may not correspond to the truth. Many of our beliefs diverge from the truth to different degrees.

"I expect to be treated with respect, and want you to apologise." This statement expresses what I expect. "I was kept waiting on an earlier occasion too. I will not deal with you again unless you show me that you are serious". This is a statement of action that I took or propose to take in the future.

Breaking down the message gives me greater control. I first verify the facts and express feelings before moving to the next step. It gives you a chance to respond with your facts and feelings if required. Also If I have clarified the elements to myself, it is easier for me to put it across in a way that I am comfortable.

I can also receive an incoming message in the same fashion. I can verify what your facts, feelings, thinking, needs, and actions. Tell me your reality - what do you perceive, what you feel, think, need, or plan to do?

Levels of Communication

In his book – ‘The Truth Option’, Will Schultz mentions 5 Levels of truth. These levels range from silence to authentic expression. The different levels include:

Silence

When I am silent, my thoughts are not communicated, leaving it to the other person to draw his or her own conclusions about the truth. If I do not express to you what I want from you, I leave it to you to understand what I want. "Please call me before you come to meet me" - if I do not specifically mention this to you, I leave the result to chance - a hope that you will respond positively to my unspoken words!

Silence is taken as agreement in some circles, while it is construed as disagreement in other situations. At my home where food is served informally, I need to specifically say ‘no’ in both words and action, else, the serving lands on my plate unasked. Heavens help me if it happened when I was absent minded and had had one serving too many! In society meetings too, where informal voting is by a voice vote, silence is counted as agreement!

In many other situations, silence conceals the truth and equivalent to untruth! Usually, however, silence is a way to avoid unpleasantness arising from expressing your thoughts. We can rationalize – “What we say may not be appreciated.” “It might backfire on me.” “The other person may get upset.” “I will never get the desired response, why bother to speak?”

Silence can be beautiful when you are sharing a common experience with your beloved – a silent walk, a silent holding of hands, a silent expression of shared pain. In most other cases, silence maintains discomfort or unhappiness. It can even lead to misunderstandings for want of honest communication.

“You are...”

Level One involves expressing my feelings verbally and non-verbally, but coloured by my personal beliefs - “This is the limit, you walk in without notice. You are irritating me!” What you feel may not be necessary objective – it involves your reaction to events and people that you have judged.

Feelings may involve self judgments too. Self talk is often associated with self blame. “I am angry with myself. I can never do anything right!”. “I can’t stick to my diet. This really frustrates me.”

Some of our beliefs may be true, but much of the time, we judge through unverified beliefs, cut off from the reality that is out there. No wonder we have problems with the truth – we are stuck with two options – speak the unpleasant truth or keep silent for fear of unpleasantness.

“About you I feel ...”

Level Two is all about taking responsibility for my feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. Personal growth happens when we examine our beliefs against the touchstone of facts. Beliefs can change and are subject to correction. Facts are facts and are not subject to change. The more we take the trouble to examine our beliefs and verify the facts, the more we are able to move to higher levels of honesty.

For instance, “I am angry with you” is a more true expression than “You make me angry,” – since the former statement is an expression of my feeling whereas the latter one involves labelling. ‘You’re hateful’ is still worse – it is a ‘you statement’ labelling you unconditionally. It implies that everyone in this world hates you in the same way as I do.

Level two involves greater awareness about me and my feelings. Expressing my hurt feelings objectively enables me to search or ask for solutions, rather than dump my anger onto someone else. You are more likely to cooperate with me if I asked your help in solving my problem, rather than if I blamed you for the problem.

“Because ...”

Level Three connects feelings to the specific event that are setting off the feelings. My feeling is connected to what you ‘did’ or how you ‘behaved’, rather than what you ‘are’. The problem is not with what you ‘are’ but with what you ‘do’ or ‘did’.

“I feel angry in your presence” is a global statement about you that is not fully true. I am not always angry with you. However, “I feel angry because I thought your behaviour to be insulting” is a reasonable statement, which allows me room for negotiation or correction. I can only see your behaviour, and not your intention, so I need to verify your intention behind the behaviour. Else, I am jumping to conclusions.

I can however, present you with my feelings and conclusions and tell you why I feel or think the way I do. I use an ‘I’ statement that expresses my point of view, without in any way dismissing your reality. Instead of saying you are “always unfair”, I can perhaps point out instances where your judgment was proved to be wrong. “I feel upset because I had to pay for your mistake. Please let me know if I am wrong. It is best that we understand each other well and avoid misunderstandings.”

“Which means ...”

Level Four takes me to the real reasons behind my feelings and responses. I become aware that these responses constitute unconscious coping behaviours – a way to avoid feeling bad. I have interpreted your behaviours as a reference to my incompetence. “Your behaviour seems to imply that I am not significant and important, and that makes me feel hurt.” My anger response is an attempt to cover up this deeper feeling of hurt.

The anger is an unconscious way of retaliation that helps me get over the hurt feeling. I am unconsciously trying to pass on my hurt to you. This was the option that I chose and practiced through my childhood years until I became an adept. This applies to most reactive habits that I find myself repeating routinely without thinking.

These unconscious coping behaviours differ from person to person and range from sulking to tears to rage and guilt and so on. At level four I am conscious about my habitual coping behaviours. As a result I am able to choose between an automatic response and other deliberate thoughtful alternatives.

“About me, I fear ...”

Level Five takes me to the beliefs I have about myself that are responsible for my feeling bad. Your words hurt me because I feel you are right in your judgment about me. I believe that your implied suggestion about my unimportance and insignificance is true. That is what I believe about myself, no matter how much I try to escape from it.

I feel bad about your words because they ring true....! I feel the same way about myself as you probably do about me. It is a painful reminder that I do not like, because it is unpleasant and disturbing. Easier to say that you treat me as if I do not matter, rather than examine my belief that I do not matter!

Level 5 honesty is more concerned with me rather than with you. Our interaction has helped me to a level where I can work on myself and my judgments about myself. If I do not like these reminders, I can rise to the occasion and take a reality check. I am not a child and do not have to be stuck with my unconscious childhood beliefs. As an adult, I can take charge and manage them consciously. The serenity prayer helps a great deal here in managing overwhelming feelings of anger, fear, and sadness. “Lord, grant me serenity to face the things I cannot change, courage to face the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

Level 5 honesty also helps me communicate authentically and assertively. I need not react to your behaviours, but choose to act according to the merits of the situation. “I do

not like to be disturbed when I am at work. I want you to check with me about my availability. Would 4.30 pm be convenient for you?"

Awareness of my feelings and my thoughts help me to present my truth to others in a non threatening way. Apart from clearing the air of misunderstandings, it helps to bring in a greater level of trust into the relationship. And trust is the bedrock of all relationships, including work and business relationships.

Chapter 9:

Stress Management

Stress!

Stress is the resulting tension associated with the individual's internal response to an external challenging situation.

On a dark night trekking in a jungle, I come across a snake across my path. I experience fear and alarm. The tension expresses as perspiration, dryness of mouth, rapid heartbeats and running pulse, tightening of the stomach and limbs, etc. I am experiencing stress..

Stress! Today's enemy no. 1.

We face stress in every walk of life. It is present in our work, in our personal relationships, in our social sphere, and in the global international arena.

Stress claims its victims in many ways – in terms of ill health, mental disturbance, productivity loss, etc. Relationship problems, addictions, and social violence are all by-products of stress.

Stress is defined as a feeling of emotional or physical tension. Emotional stress usually occurs when situations are considered difficult or unmanageable. Therefore, different people consider different situations as stressful.

Physical stress refers to a physiological reaction of the body to various triggers. The pain experienced after surgery is an example of physical stress. Physical stress often leads to emotional stress, and emotional stress is frequently experienced as physical discomfort (e.g., stomach cramps).

Stress Response

The stress response manifests in our body through physiological and psychological changes. According to Dr. (Prof) Manilal Gada, biological changes occurring under stress include the following:

- ✓ Breathing becomes faster so that body has access to more oxygen.

- ✓ Liver releases sugar and fat into the blood stream quick burst of energy.
- ✓ Heart begins to beat faster to pump blood into muscle and brain bringing extra oxygen to these organs.
- ✓ Muscles tense up for action.
- ✓ Blood flow decreases to certain organs in chest and abdomen and change occurs that will cause blood to clot faster in case of injury and bleeding.
- ✓ Mouth feels dry as saliva production is reduced temporarily.
- ✓ Sweating is more to cool the body faster.
- ✓ Pupils get wider allowing one to see better.

These changes come about when a stressor registers on the brain and stress hormones are released in the body.

Stressful Living

Normal day to day stressful situations are well within our capacity to manage. As the situation becomes more and more challenging, we are able to invoke our inner resources and prime ourselves to face the situation. Our performance improves proportionate to the challenge.

Without the threat of exams looming over us, we are hardly motivated to open our books. However, as the exam dates come nearer, we begin studying better. Just a few days before the exam, we burn the midnight lamp. The tougher the exam, the more we exert. We are now better prepared to cope. The situation is still within our grasp. When the going gets tough, then the tough get going.

The situation changes drastically when the challenge becomes tougher. Our ability to manage successfully breaks down and our performance declines. We reach the point of deterioration and breakdown. We may get paralyzed and go through the exam without knowing what we write. Alternately we may refuse to take the exam and avoid it altogether. We are like scapegoats in the forest that are used by hunters to lure tigers into a trap. We cannot fight nor can we run away.

Most of our stressful moments are short-lived by nature. After the danger has been averted or removed, we recover from the stress and come back to normal. However, we also experience low-grade stress repeatedly, over an extended period of time. Such stress keeps on accumulating in our system, and we get stuck with the symptoms of stress. Rather than returning to normal, we identify with stress as part of us. Often, diseases like hypertension, ulcers, allergies, etc. are the result.

Symptoms of High Stress

Dr. Gada identifies high stress levels with the following symptoms:

PHYSICAL:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sleeplessness
- Bodyache
- Palpitations
- Chest Pain
- Trembling
- Nausea
- Cold Extremities
- Flushing or Sweating
- Abdominal Pain
- Acidity

EMOTIONAL:

- Anxiety
- Nervousness
- Depression
- Frustration
- Anger
- Impatience
- Crying
- Negative Thinking
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness

PSYCHOLOGICAL:

- Decrease in Concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Indecisiveness
- Confusion
- Irritability or Short Temper
- Loss of Interest in Hobbies

BEHAVIOURAL:

- Pacing
- Restlessness
- Nervous Habits (nail-biting, foot-tapping)
- Increased Eating
- Yelling or Bursts of Anger
- Increased Smoking
- Increased Alcohol Consumption

Eustress – Good News about Stress

Our ancestors in the stone age era lived in caves. They needed to come out of their caves for food and relaxation. However danger loomed large in the forest outside their caves. They needed to be on full alert to hunt for food, fight other predators, and to run away from danger. The stress response was their way of being prepared for fight or for flight. It was nature's way of creating excess energy in the body to meet the challenge and survive.

Is stress good or bad? All stress is not necessarily unpleasant. Our stress response can range from excitement and elation to fear and paralysis. The same stressor that frightens one can exhilarate another. Isn't that true while taking joyrides in Essel World?

An impending wedding, a new job, promotion, taking a vacation, etc. create positively enjoyable stress. These are the situations that we look forward to and are excited about. This stress primes us for positive action, and is known as Eustress. Eustress is opposite of distress or disabling stress. Eustress is enabling stress.

In stressful situations, do you tend to be:

(A) active or (B) passive?

(A) flexible or (B) rigid?

(A) realistically optimistic or (B) pessimistic?

(A) thoughtful or (B) impulsive and emotionally upset?

(A) approach the problem bit by bit, or do you try to (B) solve everything at once?

(A) see things clearly and accurately, or do you (B) blow things way out of proportion?

(A) ask for additional information if necessary, or (B) are you afraid to ask questions or obtain additional information?

The (A)s indicate your positive coping attitudes as opposed to the (B)s which indicate ineffectiveness in coping with difficult situations. The more (A)s you have in your list, the greater is your ability to experience eustress.

Stressors and Stress Response

A stressor is something that sets off stress. Loss of a close relative, uncertain job situation, misunderstandings in a relationship, difficult kids, change of residence, impending deadlines, excessive workload demands, threat of physical violence, are all stressors – they are sources of stress.

But, are these factors the real causes of stress? If so, how is it that some people are more stressed out than others in similar situations? How is it that what stresses me leaves another person completely untouched? One person breaks down on losing his job, while another eagerly looks forward to a new job or business prospect.

The stress response varies with the degree to which we are aware of the situation and its consequences. If I were to recognize the snake as non-poisonous, involving no fatal consequence, my response would be relief.

Most important of all, the stress response varies according to the beliefs I hold regarding myself and the situation.

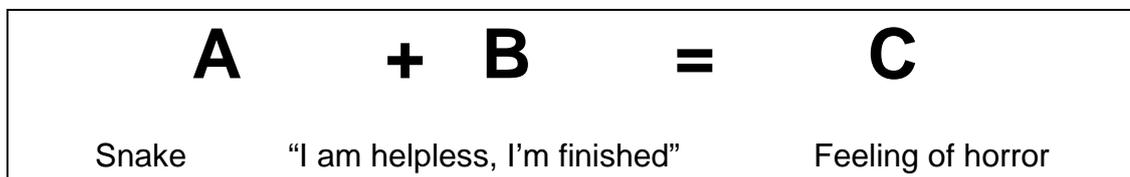
The attitude of an individual can influence whether a situation or emotion is stressful or not. Having a negative attitude can predict stress in a person, because this type of person will often report more stress than would someone with a positive attitude.

ABC of Stress

According to the Rational Emotive Therapy propounded by Ellis, it is our Beliefs (B) set off by the Activating stressor (A) that leads to the Consequent response (C).



Thus, in our snake example,



- If my belief was that there was no snake, but only a rope, I would have no stress at all!
- If my belief was that this was a rare snake and would fetch a lot of money, I might look for creative ways to catch the snake without getting bitten.
- If I had killed a snake in the past the sight of the snake might evoke guilt, or fatalistic even resignation to impending death.

In fact, it is not necessary for there to be a snake to create fear. My beliefs themselves might lead me to seeing snakes in every shadow. For all I know, the snake across my path is just my imagination taking wings, leading to inappropriate stress.

Situations are stressful to the extent we believe them as stressful. High stress occurs when we see ourselves as helplessly trapped in a situation over which we have no control. Our inability to cope is the belief that determines distress. Distress can change into eustress or vice versa as our ability to cope changes. I can enjoy watching a captive snake in the zoo, but if it were to escape, I would probably panic. On the other hand, if I were a snake catcher, my fear would be replaced by the excitement of trapping the snake.

Circle of Concern, Circle of Influence

Saint Francis wrote this well-known “Serenity Prayer”: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Certain situations overwhelm us and there is nothing we can do about them but to accept with serenity. In Indian tradition, this attitude is demonstrated in the temple when ‘prasad’ is distributed. The ‘prasad’ may be a

sweetmeat, food items, plain water, or even a flower or leaf. Even the diabetic person does not refuse a sweetmeat as 'prasad'. He generally tastes it even if he does not eat it whole. 'Prasad' is grace, and there can be graceful dignified acceptance of situations that are beyond our control.

Most situations however are in our control. It is in our power to change them or to avert them in the first place. According to Stephen Covey, this capacity is in our circle of influence. The larger circle of the two concentric circles is the circle of Concern. The smaller circle is where we have power to change things. Outside of this, we have no power. We can recognise the truth of this and learn to let go the stress of changing things over which we have no power over.

The more we focus on the circle of influence, the more we take charge of our stress and make it a better experience. We are able to let go of what is not in our hands, and do what is within our power. But when we focus on the outer circle and worry about what we cannot change, we create stress for ourselves, and we overlook the smaller circle where we indeed have power take some positive action to improve the our condition. The way we see the situation and ourselves makes a difference in whether we experience eustress or distress.

Stress can be managed

Stress management has to be handled on four different fronts.

- *The first is reducing the stress response by practicing stress relief techniques. Participating in sports, performing physical exercises, reducing alcohol, smoking, caffeine etc., result in physical and mental fitness necessary to withstand stress. Moderate eating and sleeping habits add to good health. A healthy diet consisting of balanced meals that are nourishing and pleasing is recommended. Relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, yoga, creative visualization, music and fine arts, are helpful when practiced on a regular basis. A variety of hobbies and interests, a supportive family, involvement in community and social activities are other ways towards a stress free living. Humour too is a wonderful stress reducer. As the saying goes: "Laugh and the whole world will laugh with you. Cry and you cry alone."*
- *The second is developing coping skills to manage the stressful situation. The skills necessary for problem solving include time management, decision making, listening and communication, negotiation, etc. Assertiveness, the ability to delegate work, working within one's limitations, asking for help or feedback, etc. are all aids for crisis management.*
- *The third is challenging and modifying our belief systems, so that we experience eustress instead of distress. We can choose to listen to either of the two voices in our heads – the friendly voice or the enemy voice. The enemy voice victimises us and degrades our abilities and self worth. The friendly voice sees us as deserving and capable. It encourages us to trust ourselves and to face up to the challenge*

with confidence. The enemy voice consists of our childhood beliefs that were based on irrational thinking and half truths. The more we listen to it, the more we feel cheated. When we choose to listen to the friendly voice, we are encouraged to think realistically. Instead of seeing situations and people as victimising us, we convert them into a learning and growing experience. Instead of feeling stuck in situations, we think of options to emerge out of the situation successfully.

- *The fourth is a way to becoming insulated from stressors through a process called progressive desensitisation. We choose to face the thing we fear through a series of steps until we successfully overcome the fear. For example, we choose to face up to our fear of heights by acclimatising ourselves first with manageable heights. If we are comfortable looking down from the third floor, we can try the fourth floor and get used to it before progressing to the fifth floor. We overcome the fear by actually facing it and surviving the fear. In time, we can probably manage the tenth floor or more. Breaking down the situation into steps is a good way of coping with the situation that we find too stressful to manage.*

In the event that despite our best efforts, we are not able to cope with the stress in our work and relationships, it is advisable to take help of teachers, guides, or even a professional counsellor. Asking for help may seem to be an act of helplessness. The truth is that it takes a lot of courage to admit our inability to deal with situations, and reaching out for help is a sign that we are ready to move beyond our helplessness and seek remedial measures.

Chapter 10:

Ethical Values & Conflicts

Ethical Values - Universal in nature

A value system represents the personal values that we live by. This is seen very evidently by the choices we make in terms of our preferences and priorities that include food, clothing, and shelter, relationships, professional, aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual values. A miser's value system is different from that of a philanthropist!

While many of the values are a matter of personal choice or social structuring, ethical values are universal and apply uniformly to all human beings. No person wants to be hurt, robbed, lied to, or abused by others. Everyone expects affection, assistance in need, and inclusion within the group. Ethics becomes the cement to bind relationships and society. Spirituality and Religion adds an element of after-life to ethics and makes it apply over many lifetimes.

Interpretation of Values

Value systems can range from the fanatical to the cynical. In fanatical ethics there are no exceptions to rules, while in cynical ethics, there are no rules! A Fanatic value system makes life impossible to live and brings down people to breaking point. The breakdown is either in terms of sacrificing ethics or in terms of sacrificing health, relationships, and life.

A cynical value system encourages creative breaking of rules whereby the person who successfully gets away with the maximum breaks is treated like a hero. When an entire society becomes cynical, the law breakers become role models. People who follow rules are treated with scorn or pity. Cynical value system also brings in double standards; our faults are rationalised, others' faults are penalised.

An Enlightened Value System

An enlightened value system involves testing which are the relevant values to be applied in a situation, and to what degree they apply. Examples extend to a spy lying for his country, a person saying an untruth to save an innocent person's life, euthanasia in extreme cases, and the like. There are no absolute rules here, and there

can be no one rule for all situations. Life is unpredictable and there can be no rigid way to deal with the ever changing nature of life.

The Taittiriya Upanishad gives guidelines regarding values thus : whenever there is a confusion regarding the right response and the wrong one in situations, consult a person who is well versed in interpreting ethical values and who is impartial in the situation. In the absence of such a guide, one needs to consult one's own conscience and act accordingly. This is where surrender to god and prayer for guidance helps.

The Relative Nature of Values

Ethical values may become mixed up with cultural and social values. Care should be taken to distinguish between values, failing which unnecessary conflict may be the result. There are no western ethics and Indian ethics separate, but there can be western social values as distinct from Indian social values. An arranged marriage is the traditional cultural value in India but it does not make a different form of marriage unethical.

Traditional values need to be respected and followed, but with eyes open. The problem is in our blind observance of the rules, even when they are not relevant. When we follow the letter instead of the spirit of the laws, we do injustice to them. There is a line that lies between blind acceptance and blind rejection of rules. We need to open our eyes to it. That is what I meant by enlightened value system.

Ethical values can also differ in times of war. War time ethics may be different from peacetime. Killing the enemy in war is considered honourable, spreading rumours and disinformation to the enemy camp is part of strategy in every military text book. To what extent these are necessary is another question. Thus even in war, it is honourable to strike an enemy while fighting, but not when he is unarmed and dying.

Ethical values similarly differ in life and death situations. Stealing is wrong, but if a person dying of hunger steals a piece of bread, it is not considered a crime. Similarly, bribing the executioner to spare ones life could similarly be condoned.

In general, ethics are based on long term good of self and society. Ethics keep the fabric of society healthy and alive. Spirituality connects ethics to ones own personal long term good by emphasizing that good action comes around to you as good results, and wrong action comes back as painful results. As long as the long term good is kept in mind, it is easy to sacrifice short term convenience to long term good. It is short sightedness that makes most of us get into wrong company!

Values and Compromise

That said and done, we as humans are not perfect and may not be able to act with integrity at all times. The spirit may be willing but the flesh may be weak. People make mistakes and most mistakes are forgivable. Most mistakes can be amended or compensated for. As long as a person genuinely regrets the mistake and pays for it and makes amends, the person can be forgiven. The vedic prayer speaks of our weaknesses being the cause of sin and asks for forgiveness (kaamokaarsheet manyurakaarsheet namo namah).

The problem of compromising with values is that the floodgates of compromise are opened up. Every successful compromise makes a person more tempted to compromise further, and the original weakness remains. The value of integrity is that it helps strengthen weaknesses or to manage them with courage and determination. The practice of integrity builds strength, and for the person of strength, it is easier to practice integrity.

Practicing Integrity

The advantage of practicing integrity is that others recognise it and do not put pressure on us to compromise. They may try for some time, but when they recognise that it does not work, they take the pressure elsewhere. They would rather pressurise someone else than waste time on us! On the other hand, the more we give in to the pressure, we become the weak link which will be pressurised repeatedly on every possible occasion. It makes sense to test and build up our strengths in advance rather than be caught unprepared.

It is important to practice integrity in small things where we have the strength to forego the temptation. The more we do this, the more we build up the strength to resist larger temptations. It is tempting to compromise and enjoy short term pleasure, but it pays to pay attention to the longer term good.

Possessing and practicing an enlightened value system helps us value and respect ourselves. It helps us to manage our weaknesses and gather strength in new areas. When there is no easy path, we explore alternative paths to reach our goals. Ethical values become invaluable to us to reclaim our self respect and confidence, and to enhance our skills and wisdom. In Pujya Swami Dayananda's words: "A value is a value when the value of the value is valuable to me" The enlightened value system is of greatest value in today's world of cynicism and strife

The Value of Values - Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Arsha Vidya Pitham

- In Sanskrit an ethical value is called dharma. *Dharma is a standard or code of ethics derived from the way in which I wish others to view or treat me.* I want others to speak truth to me. I do not want others to lie to me. Truth-speaking is dharma for me. Non-truth-speaking is adharma for me.
- Ethical norms are not arbitrary, man-made rules – *they arise from an inherent, universal regard for personal interest and comfort.* There may be some cultural variations in degree or emphasis but the basic standards are universal.
- Can I freely disregard values? No. I cannot, because *no one living in this world can escape relationships; and, in the wake of relationships, come values.* Even a seasoned criminal has a code of ethics stemming from his relationships based upon his concern that he not be hurt or disturbed.
- Ethical Values: Universal In Content - Relative In Application:
The universality of codes of acceptable conduct and general ethical standards, do not mean that these standards are absolute. Dharma and adharma are relative in their application. *There are situations where what is considered ethical becomes unethical, depending upon context.*
- That a standard may be relative does not mean that it is purely subjective. *Although relative in applicability, basic ethical standards have a universal content.* Even such a pronounced, clear value as non-injury to myself is situational and does not affect my basic value for non-injury to myself.
- A value is a value when the value of the value is valuable to me
A value is a value for me only when I see the value of the value as valuable to me. Me - the comfortable me - is the source of my values. I fail to follow a universal value only when I do not clearly see its value to me.
- The value for money illustrates the development and assimilation of a powerful, personal situational value. When I came to know how well and how much money buys, I have a fully assimilated personal value for money.
- *A personal value is spontaneously observed for its own sake; an obligatory value is subject to compromise* when it obstructs a highly desired individual end.
- If I do not see what I get out of being truthful, truthfulness to others becomes merely obligatory. My truthfulness obliges a moral or religious code. Result: I have a split value: one-half personal and other-half obligatory.
- *Failure to meet a value puts me in conflict with myself.* When I perform an action that go against values, I suffer guilt, which is all that is needed to produce sleeplessness, fear and conflict. Self-condemnation, regret, guilt, a sense of failure are the results.

- When a general ethical half-value loses the battle to an expedient assimilated value, the half-value does not fold up and go away. It stays there as an irritant.
- What if a situation arises whereby telling a lie I can make an extra buck? I know the how much the money will benefit me. Should I tell the truth or should I bluff? Which value will win? Very likely the assimilated value for money will be the victor. I may get away with bluff but I cannot feel comfortable. There is inner conflict; there is guilt. I may ignore the guilt but I cannot totally avoid it because I cannot escape my own half-value for truth.
- Does anything else happens when I ignore general ethical standards? Yes. *I create a "knower-doer" split in myself.* I am aware that what I am saying is something contradictory to truth. By my lie, I create a split, a division, between the knower and the doer. I create a Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde conflict within myself.
- Even in small things, the knower-doer split does harm. The knower decides to get up early and do morning exercises. The doer turns off the alarm and goes back to sleep. The knower goes on a diet. The doer has a second helping. *The knower condemns me. I tell myself that I am useless, that I cannot do what I want to do, that I am not the person I want to be.* The quality of my life always suffers whenever I become 'split'. To appreciate the beauty of life, to really be available to enjoy its comforts, *I need to be 'together.'*
- Why are the things valuable? The things are valuable for me - for my pleasure, security, comfort. I value things for my comfort. What defines 'my comfort'? *What I really value is not mere comforts outside but to be comfortable inside.* It is always my hope that the extra comforts which more money can buy for me will make me more comfortable with myself. I buy comforts only for my sake, not for the sake of the comforts.
- So when I ignore my value for truth and tell a lie, it is because I think money will add to my comfort. I do not see, in the given instance, truthfulness doing anything for my comfort. But when I clearly see that a particular choice destroys my integrity, I cannot afford that choice. My action becomes choice-less. *Do I want happiness or unhappiness?* If I am completely convinced that non-truth brings suffering, speaking truth becomes natural, spontaneous, my personal, assimilated value.
- The value of hygiene is good example of personal assimilated values. Even though I may be quite hungry, I do not stoop to pick up and eat food from a garbage heap; nor, do I have a daily debate with myself over whether to brush my teeth or take a bath.
- *For comforts to be enjoyed, I must be there to enjoy them.* When I am split, I am rarely anywhere but with my anxieties, regrets and guilts. Not recognizing the problem for what it is, I seek more comforts to ease my conscience; or, I try to find some method for turning off this conflicting mind.
- Comfort cannot be enjoyed due to guilt and split arising from the conflict. When I clearly see this fact, then *I see the importance of applying universal ethical standards to myself.* My half-value for universal values will become full value. My

life is just the expression of my well-assimilated value structure. My actions are but an expression of what is valuable to me. Other people's values I may follow from time to time when it is convenient; but, *if these values have not been assimilated by me, they are simply obligatory values* and do not reflect my value structure.

For the expression of a value to become spontaneous for me, I must see its value in my personal life. I must also exercise deliberation in following them until they become spontaneous. Paying lip service to obligatory values is no more useful than the chorus of parrots caught in the net and singing "Be careful of the hunter's net!"

Chapter 11:

Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual Intelligence helps us see the world around us in its true colours rather than see it with the coloured glasses. It helps us look beyond our ego, our insecurities and our fears. We are able to see events objectively with a larger perspective and greater acceptance. Rather than feeling isolated and defensive, we learn to belong and participate freely in life.

Acceptance of a spiritual higher power helps us come to terms with our anger, fear and sadness. There is order in the spiritual universe, and the world is seen to operate through the laws that are orderly in nature. Rather than hurting ourselves through non-acceptance of our difficult experiences, we are able to get a better experience by seeing the events in the light of universal laws.

The law of gravity is part of the universal physical laws that are infallible. We cannot change these laws for our convenience. Ignorance of these laws is not excused – the laws operate whether we like them or not. The same is true of the physiological laws, the psychological laws, and the spiritual laws. Rather than blaming the world for our misfortunes, we use our spiritual intelligence to understand the laws better.

The spiritual higher power is an embodiment of omniscience, omnipotence, and justice. Spiritual intelligence helps us recognise that pain is not punishment met out by an unfeeling God. Pain is part of the duality of creation as much as pleasure is, and both are the outcome of the universal physical, psychological and spiritual laws of creation. The laws of creation are not separate from the creator – in fact the laws are one with the Lord. The knowledge that the laws are infallible helps us learn from our experiences and grow in wisdom. Rather than looking for a God who is infallible, we learn to view the infallible as God. Aligning ourselves to this harmony of the universe, we flow with it spontaneously.

We trust the universe and let go of our fears, anger, and sadness. These reactions are natural responses to situations. Rather than avoiding these feelings, we learn to accept them as resulting from universal psychological and spiritual laws. We process these feelings and use them as feedback for problem-solving. When we actively work with these feelings to resolve our life-issues, we move on to more comfortable feelings. We are able to let go of our pain and to enjoy inner peace, joy and harmony.

March of the New Age

As a Vedanta teacher I encourage the students of my class to listen to a variety of teachers. I tell them - "Listen to them all. When you are exposed to their differing points of view, come back to me to sort it out for you." Today, these students keep me on my toes with their pointed questions about the new age. They are not content with standard replies - they want me to discuss articles, books, and concepts and how they all fit into the larger picture.

As a teacher and observer of society, I have been seeing over the years a growing awareness and enthusiasm among people about the new age. The advancing new age has broken through quite a number of barriers and helped people to become more open to the inner world of mind and spirit even if they may not be overtly spiritual. I have many new age enthusiasts including reiki practitioners and pranic healers attending my Vedanta talks. I myself was sceptical of phenomena like ESP, etc. until I met persons, friends as well as strangers, who seem to read my mind like an open book. Recently I had my aura read - a phenomenon that I would have scorned just a few years ago.

Sometime back, I wouldn't have known what a tarot card is. Today Rohini, a friend of mine, arranges exhibitions in which Tarot cards among other products are sold over the counter. Practices like Reiki etc. were looked upon with scepticism a few years ago by the average person and considered as placebo treatment. What possible connection could be there between one person's energy and another person's health? Today I have reiki and pranic healing enthusiasts in my Vedanta talks, and they get positive responses from the people treated by them who say they are healed to a significant degree.

The new age has always been with us through the centuries in one form or the other. The Aztecs, the Mayas, the Red Indians, the Aborigines, the Indians, and Africans share much in common in terms of life after death, worship of deities and ancestors, seeking divine guidance through charms, chants, and rituals, etc. Some form of magical thinking has always been part of our lives. We cross our fingers, touch wood, chant Hanuman Chalisa. We wish good luck and say prayers for each other.

The Old and The New

How does the new age differ from the old? To trace this, we need to make a distinction between the ancient pre-classical ages and the recently past classical age. The pre classical age viewed the universe holistically - the earth was an organic whole in intimate contact with all its subsystems, living and non-living. Every thing in nature was seen as parts of a larger entity linked with one another to form a living organism. Modern ecological studies seem to validate this concept through the Gaia hypothesis - the earth is a living sentient being. This wholeness included the body-mind unity.

This wholeness included the body-mind unity. It was Descartes who introduced the Cartesian division and created the split between matter and mind. Soon, science took over the charge of researching matter - and mind was left behind as it could not stand up to the rigorous requirement of science - observation, experimentation,

generalisation, and exactness. Science kept objectivity on a pedestal - any experimental finding should be shown to be consistently verifiable under laboratory conditions. Newton's laws supposed time and space to be absolute and consciousness had no place of its own in a 4 dimensional physical universe.

The success of Newtonian classical physics was evident in new discoveries - both in the outer universe and in the inner world of the atom. The world was deterministic and the human being was only incidental to it. Darwin showed that humans evolved from physical matter, and mind too became subsumed under matter. Psychology, in its attempt to be scientific, adopted the objectivity model of science, and developed the behaviouristic model. Pavlov showed that mental activity is determined through conditioning - under proper conditions, the mind can be taught to respond in a desired way by carrot and stick policy. Thus we had the full blown classical age in which the universe worked like clockwork and nature was nothing but a giant machine which went on its job diligently regardless of sentiments.

Classical Science and Modern Physics

The New Age is so called to cover the ongoing convergence of different ancient and modern mystical traditions and practices that stand out in relief amidst the drudgery and routine of our day to day life. Contributing to this new age are the paradigms of modern science characterised by Theory of Relativity and Quantum Physics that highlight the central position of the observer in every observation. Schrodinger's Cat in the box is neither dead nor alive...it is probably both, until I open the box and collapse the probabilities one way or the other.

Time and space crumble in the light of experiments that reveal non-local signals - a phenomenon known as action-at-a-distance. Paired electrons have been shown to respond to each other even when separated from each other by infinite distances. The implications are significant - action at a distance allows all psychic phenomenon through the back door!

Psychology now goes beyond behavioural model with Trans Personal psychology speaking of invoking the Higher Power within ourselves to guide us through our fears and complexes. Extra sensory perception is a topic that finds mention in a standard textbook of psychology today.

Hawking's black holes and search to understand "God's Mind" appears to lead science into the realm of mysticism and metaphysics. Physical phenomenon can be subsumed under a few basic forces of nature - electromagnetism, gravitation, and the strong and weak forces within the atom. There is a new holistic approach to science in which an attempt is being made to unify the four forces of nature. Till recently gravity defied this unity. However, now equations seem to allow gravity to enter into the alliance - a grand unification. Today, the theory of everything seems to be a tantalising prospect!

In the celebrated principle of uncertainty, Heisenberg states that it is impossible to determine the exact position of a particle and its exact momentum simultaneously. The newest branch of science is the chaos theory of mathematics which states that in non-linear system, it is impossible to predict the course the system will take even when

all the initial conditions are known. Every measuring instrument is inherently subject to some marginal error, and in a non-linear system like the real world around us, the least error can lead to a major change in consequent outcomes.

Non-linear systems involve multiple factors, and a small change in any one factor can throw all our predictions awry. A butterfly fluttering its wings in the Atlantic can possibly create a cyclone in the Pacific. Small wonder we cannot predict even the weather over the long term!

The New Age

What do all these have to do with the new age? Simple! In our non-linear universe, even a small effort can go a long way! Humans are not non-entities entrapped in a mechanistic world. The mind is not entrapped in the physical body. Our minds seem to be part and parcel of the universal mind not subject to time-space limitations. Guided by the Higher Power, we may be able to create the best of worlds for ourselves. We can invoke the powers of the universe and align ourselves to the basic oneness of the universe. Simply put, we are waiting to create our own miracles! We can move from cynical thinking to magical thinking!

The current new age movement seems to have its roots in the peace protest movement of the 60s. The Vietnam war was at its height and the youth of America rebelled at their government's involvement with the war that seemed to have no justification. Many conscientious objectors conscripted for war preferred to face arrest rather than fight in Vietnam. The young people protested against the establishment and its symbols. Long hair, flowing dresses, and drugs became their new symbols. Eastern religions, yoga, and gurus became the order of the day. Transcendental Meditation became popular through its association with the Beatles group.

The movement grew beyond mere protests however. Many secret societies like the Rosicrucians and Freemasons who believed in mystical practices came out into the open. In the east, Tantra and Tibetan Buddhism caught people's imagination. The Theosophical society of Annie Besant popularised ideas of astral travel and pointed out close similarities between the mystical traditions of the major world religions. The Gnostics, Sufis, and yogis represented the common spiritual aspects as opposed to the superficial differences between religions. Books like Shakti Gawain's "Creative Visualization" and James Redfield's "The Celestine Prophecy" heightened the tendency in people to look for creating their own magic. Unexplained coincidences in day-to-day life became proof of a divine plan in and through the working of the universe. Fritjof Capra's "The Tao of Physics" revealed many parallels between scientific and mystic thinking.

The internet today has opened up a whole new unknown world of the spirit and information and resources are exchanged at the speed of light. Old superstitious practices gained a new lease of life with spiritual healers coming into the scene in a major way. Today Reiki and spiritual healing are household words. Astrologers and tarot readers advertise in newspapers. Crystals, beads, pyramids, and yantras are the new lucky charms used by the well-heeled. Auras and past life regression are spoken of without the batting of the eyelid. Books on intergalactic travel and spirit guides are

listed under non-fiction category in bookstalls. There is a magic mantra easily available now for every desirable outcome. Consultants practicing Vaastu Shastra and Feng Shui have made it to big time. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is secular anymore!

Materialistic Orientation

The rush for new age solutions is rooted in our reaction to the materialistic orientation of society. A few years ago, we were sadly declaring - "nothing is sacred anymore!" We have become generally cynical of everything representing the old world. We are cynical of political institutions, of economic and social practices, of love and human decencies, of art and culture and even religion. Everything including national awards and honours can be got for a price. Nothing buys like money. People are used, rather than being loved. We have learnt to use people and love things. With families breaking up, the nuclear family unit today is shrinking towards "I, me, myself."

Nothing comes guaranteed today - our jobs, our savings, our traditions. Our minds, our health, our security, all are being invaded by multimedia and multinationals. We have been deeply wounded and have no one help us heal. In a fast changing world, we are like the people struggling in a sinking ship. The buzzword is - "look after yourself, each one for himself."

The old world represents insecurity, rigidity, and stress. A CEO in a multinational company, knowing that I do workshops on Handling Stress, told me that stress management was passé today. What people really needed was to tide over loss and pain in times of job insecurity and company takeovers - the need of the day was healing and recovery. My friend should know, since he was poised to lose his job a second time within few months.

Does it mean that the New Age is a mere knee-jerk reaction to the stress of modern living? Not really. The New Age presents an alternative to the old way, - something which is more humanistic and spiritual in approach. The avid enthusiasm with which it is being welcomed may be perhaps a bit overdone. And where there are seekers, there are always middlemen to make a quick buck by promising us the world. In the long run however, when the dust is settled, the real picture will emerge.

Anchoring

"The bad news is that our society is adrift, but the good news is that it's still afloat. Even though we have been getting tossed about like flotsam and jetsam on the sea of life, we are managing to renew our spirits by grabbing on to a line of hope. After a decade or two of materialism and meanness, we're looking for simpler answers. This new Trend about inner spirit is called Anchoring. The most important part, the core of Anchoring, is taking comfort in what was safe and secure from the past in order to get ready for the future. Spirituality is at the very heart and soul of the Anchoring Trend." – Faith Popcorn, in Clicking.

The success of programs like Transcendental Meditation, Art of Living, Yoga, and Tai Chi, for stress management and improved productivity in the corporate world is well

documented. These programs are part of the growing trend of the movement towards spirituality. Spirituality focuses on the person and gives him or her a deeper reason to exist. In today's world where nothing is certain and everything is in constant flux, spirituality gives us a sense of purpose and stability. When the outer worlds fail to deliver the promised utopia, we turn to ourselves, moving inward to our spiritual core.

It is within ourselves that we have to seek for answers; to discover ourselves as we really are; to see what we really want to be. Ultimately we have to find a balance between our inner and outer worlds. Spirituality and Personality complement each other. The more we extend ourselves in our capacity as an individual, we are growing and learning. And the more we look into our inner core, we get the wisdom to deal with our external world.

A Quantum Change

There is a quantum change quietly taking place in and through the din and bustle. The movement is towards wholeness and wellness and balance. Self Esteem, trusting relationships, social contribution, and inner harmony and growth, are the keywords of this movement.

What we see superficially is conflict in terms of thesis and anti-thesis. The balance will come in terms of convergence and synthesis. We need both practical as well as magical thinking. Rather than find fault with thesis or anti-thesis, we will do better by coming to a closer understanding of both, through respect, accommodation, and reason. The outcome looks promising - a saner, kinder, more responsive, and healthier quality of life. What results will be a healthy menu of alternatives that we all can partake and enjoy.

Healing is one of the areas where the new age has specialised. The spiritual element associated with healing is very evident in the programme for recovering alcoholics and their families. The Higher Power is invoked for healing, even though the concept of God may differ from person to person. Some of my psycho-therapist friends are researching into spiritual roots of religion in order to arrive at meaning, harmony and healing. It is practically impossible to pinpoint the line where psychology stops and spirituality begins. Meditation, visualisation, prayer and energy channelling are among the various tools that people ask to deal with and recover from their pain and their diseases.

Serendipity – The Gift of Fortune

The new age speaks of patterns in our lives that are meaningful even when they seem accidental and random events. My friends tell me of the pattern of events, each leading to another, that have directed their lives towards new meaning in their lives. In my own case, an idea that I expressed to my friend Lata led to publishing a monthly journal edited by her. The project was enthusiastically sponsored by my friend Harish as he shared a similar vision. This journal lasted only three months, as if its purpose was only to introduce me to Kavi at Chetana Bookshop.

Kavi was about to start the website, chetana.com, for marketing books on Indology online and wanted me to respond to queries on Hinduism and Spirituality through the website. Answering a variety of questions on chetana.com gave me great insight into the minds of people from different continents and helped me reach out to them and their needs. The website in turn led to meditation workshops and public talks at Chetana, and to interviews with Times of India, Life Positive, etc. Evidently the hand of destiny was leading me from one event to another, to experience the lessons that I needed to learn and to grow.

Openness to Learning

I find a new openness among people who are genuinely interested in knowing more about spirituality. Self help books and spiritual literature have proliferated and people are willing to try out the unfamiliar, rather than be apprehensive about it. Practices like meditation, yoga, mantras, mysticism etc. cut through religious beliefs and are serving to unite people of different religious traditions with one another. There has been an awareness that we are all fellow seekers looking for the same things, no matter how different we look, dress, or pray. A new religion for the spirit is emerging that is inclusive of differences rather than exclusive.

Personal accounts and allegorical stories are serving to popularise spirituality. Articles in the journal "Mustard Seed" and in the column "Speaking Tree", give testimony to the efficacy of the new age. The Chicken Soup series of books have done as much for spirituality as the Zen stories popularised by Rajneesh or the "One Minute Wisdom" anecdotes of Father Anthony D'mello. The tendency of the movement is upwards, towards a birds eye view of spirituality.

The higher we rise in our wisdom, the more we see ourselves as connected to each other. There is enough wisdom in our world today which together to resolve most of the persistent problems that plague the world today. Fragmented till now, the wisdom is now converging and is being made available to all sections of society.

Acceptance of Diversity

The new age is all set to connect people of different religious traditions with one another. The recent world religious conference represents an attempt to distil the best principles from all religious traditions. into a framework for a world religion without borders. My own teacher who participated in the world meet noted that all the

delegates appeared to be talking some sort of Vedanta. Mutual respect and non-interference in each others' religious practices and beliefs seemed to be on the agenda of all the non-proselytising religions represented there. As our differences are marginalised and common principles identified, the world will come to a oneness of the spirit which is ultimately the spirit of Vedanta.

A survey of world religions shows that there are different forms of prayer. The world is a manifestation of God, the Spirit. All forms of prayer are valid, since the Lord is immanent in and through all forms. God is one, not many - many gods are merely representations of a universal God who is both immanent and transcendent. This is the vision of God in Vedanta.

God in heaven is representative of the universal spirit who is pervades in and through all creation. The animist form of worship and the image worship are both as valid as worship in the church or mosque, as far as prayer goes. The universal spirit is not someone remote; he is constantly with us, present in and through our every thought. This seems to be the hidden message of the new age.

PAYING MY DUES

*“Service is the rent we pay for our room on earth and I'd like to be a good tenant” -
Eddie Cantor*

I often wonder - what have I done to deserve all the things I am fortunate enough to enjoy in comfort and freedom ? I tend to consider all that I possess as resources given to me in trust. They are given to me with the implicit understanding that I employ them wisely and return it, duly multiplied, back to the universe from which I came.

I do not see life and its comforts as end products to be consumed and done with. I prefer to think of them as credit extended to me - something similar to the perks enjoyed by a manager, who in turn is expected to create wealth for his company or to fulfil a mission for his organization. The good things of life that I enjoy is payment for my efforts in rebuilding the universe in the way it was designed to function - as infrastructure for the growth of individuals within the sphere of harmony and oneness. I am not unlike a soldier employed in the service of the universal government - there is no external enemy - I have to discover the enemies within.

The scriptures talk about the debts we owe to the gods, to the manes, to all living creatures, etc. In the Bhagavad Geeta, Krishna calls that person a 'Stena' (Thief) who enjoys the gifts of the gods without giving back anything in return.

Is there anything I as a single individual can do make the world a better place to live? Why should I bother when no one even cares? What would happen if all my efforts go in vain? And would I not be neglecting my personal goals in the long run?

The truth is that I live in a small world, where everyone's co-operation and contribution makes the earth go round. As Gandhi would have it - the world is large enough to provide for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed. I need not change the whole world. If I care about the smaller world round me, my every little action can make a difference.

What is expected of me as a member of the human race? To be part of a community is to:

- Be available to my community in times of need
- Enrich it with my knowledge and resources (without necessarily impoverishing myself)
- Maintain the sensitive ecological balance of my environment
- Use and recycle the community resources optimally
- Set standards of excellence in my field and become a positive role model in my community
- Set priorities in my life that does not exclude the world around me
- Encourage and sponsor local talent and develop human resources for the community
- Find inexpensive and convenient ways of contributing to the community like donating blood, eyes, time, talent, expertise etc.
- Subsidise services for special categories of people like senior citizens, etc.
- Participate in action-cells for handling internal disputes, ensuring appropriate discipline, redressing grievances and counselling activities
- To keep surroundings clean, and highlight public messages regarding hygiene, safety, etc.
- To make available information about help facilities in the neighbourhood
- To create public opinion and educate the community against social evils and injustice through public awareness programmes
- To highlight organizations and persons of excellence, and give public and private demonstration of appreciation for individual initiative and good work
- Take courses or sponsor persons to take courses that enhance community skills
- Create a sense of history, meaning and oneness among the community through cultural activities, sports, exhibitions, workshops etc.
- Create accountability in the community members in all dealings and transactions affecting the community,
- Inspire the community to interact with other communities for cultural exchanges, sharing of ideas and thoughts and information.

It is interesting to note that the same activities that contribute to the good of the community also double up as self-developmental activities. These help me to get in touch with my own power and internal resources. It is a paradox of life that - I realize and actualise my potential when I have a worthwhile cause to live for , when I invest in a vision that is larger than life.

Setting targets are important in order to motivate myself to achievement. Targets however can be more satisfying when the goals are dear both to self as well as to community. Often the smile on another's face that I contribute in bringing about, makes me glow from within.

"To value oneself and, at the same time, subordinate oneself to higher purposes and principles is the paradoxical essence of highest humanity and the foundation of effective leadership." - Anonymous

The human spirit always rises to the occasion, - it is at its best facing challenges or adversities. But this is true only when I am mentally and spiritually prepared to face challenges in life. If I do not consciously search and discover challenges to be faced, I will never be ready to take on the challenges when they eventually and inevitably discover me. There is no necessity to wait for a problem to occur, if I can anticipate it and prevent it from happening in the first place.

Major accidents happen everyday, but it requires an event close home to really strike home the magnitude of such tragedy. When it happens to others, I say - 'too bad'. When it happens to me,? I am shocked at the insensitivity of the society to my plight when I am in trouble. Yet I am the same person who generally goes about unconcerned when others are in the same situation.

A friend of mine recently died in a road accident on the Bombay-Pune highway. I found it terrible to console his widow. I was angry at the unnecessary and avoidable loss of life - and the fact that hundreds of lives are lost every year on the same highway. Couldn't something be done about it?

Couldn't we do something to enforce the traffic rules, make the roads more safe for driving, and inspect vehicles for safety measures? What is it that prevents us from taking action? How many more lives are required to be lost before we sit up and take notice?

I talked to my friend about this. He sympathised with me, saying my anger was an emotional reaction. Perhaps he was right. I was very much upset. My friend came to me a few days back visibly agitated, and told me - "My phones have been dead for over a month. I wish that all the telephone users could come together and take up the matter with the consumers' court. That is the only language MTNL understands." I smiled.

The world today has become too big and is changing too swiftly for any single

individual, organization, or government to manage. I cannot expect that problems will be solved by the people out there. I am part of the show, and I cannot shrug off my responsibility. The minimum I can do is to see how I fit into the picture, and see how I can help. I cannot just stand watching when things go wrong or when injustice is being done. Today it is them, tomorrow it may be me.

We all breathe the same air, share the same resources, susceptible to the same diseases, and troubled by the same events. We are all in the same boat, and we cannot afford to rock the boat. And we cannot afford to allow others to rock the boat either. We are one people, one world, one universe. Either we sail together or sink together. There is no other way. The choice lies with me.

"If you think you cannot do very much, and that the little you can do is of no value, think of these things: A tea kettle singing on a stove was the beginning of the steam engine. A shirt waving on the clothesline was the beginning of a balloon, the forerunner of the Graf Zeppelin. A spider web strung across a garden path suggested the suspension bridge. A lantern swinging in a tower was the beginning of a pendulum. An apple falling from a tree led to the discovery of the law of gravity." - Anonymous

Who Is The
Captain
Of Your
Ship?

- End -



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