

## ***Mentoring: A tool for Peace and Prosperity***

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Assam was a land of peace and beauty till two decades ago. Assamese people were peace loving and now also majority of people living in Assam is peace loving. Today's environment of mistrust, killing of innocent people and gang warfare was unimaginable till two decades ago when the movement for deportation of foreigners was started. But today killing and extortion is the order of the day. Though initially everybody considered that the problem of insurgency in Assam was a problem due to economic exploitation and under development, but now it has become a complex problem with multi dimensional aspect. The insurgency problem in Assam now cannot be resolved only through some economic package declared by Prime Minister of India or through pumping of money for developmental works. The problem must be tackled in three fronts: (1) At political level for political settlement between government and leaders of insurgent groups, (2) At economic level for over all economic development of Assam and North East by the economic decision makers and (3) At social level by people with the involvement of various NGO and the people. The first two points were to be taken care of by politician, economist and policy makers. But all the people living in Assam must take care of the last one. Our discussion is limited to this only.

The insurgent groups were recruiting young people for their cause by motivating them through various means-in the name of patriotism, ideology of a better New World, pecuniary gain, dream of a comfortable life etc. So to fight the insurgency, the first and foremost point to be tackled by all intellectuals, parents, teachers and citizens are to cutoff the supply of new entrance to insurgent groups. As the insurgent groups motivate the young people to join them, we have to de motivated them from joining insurgent groups and instead work hard for nation building. This is possible only through counseling, guidance and mentoring of the young people. Though all of us are aware of counseling and guidance yet very few people are accustomed with mentoring and its utility, though mentoring is a very old process.

Mentoring is a process continuing in our society since beginning of the human civilization in one form or the other. However with development of modern society and breakdown of old order, the system of mentoring also came under pressure and became defunct. The earliest well-described case of mentoring was the case of Arjuna, described in 'Mahabharata'. Before the start of the war of Mahabharata, Arjuna and Duryodhana both went to the house of Lord Krishna seeking his help in the war. Duryodhana got all the warriors of Yadav dynasty and Arjuna got only one man, Lord Krishna as his spirituals counselor and mentor. And the result of the war is known to all of us. Then we have 'Chanayka' the mentor of Chandragupta Murya. During earlier days in a joint family system, the head of the family functioned as mentor of the family. Some times the village headman or priest also functioned as

a mentor of the village or locality. But this no longer exists. Due to breakdown of old social order, joint family system and increase in social complexity, fast life, pressure of work, increased anxiety and tension due to changed value system, people are still in need of mentors. This is more pronounced for young people in transition and looking for a path, direction. Parents alone cannot guide the young and restless who want to conquer the world. This where the insurgent groups strike and mentoring in appropriate time can change the whole scenario.

The word mentor means experienced and trusted adviser of an inexperienced person. Mentoring may be defined as “a process where by a young and inexperienced individual (protégé) receives guidance from a mature and experienced person through a one-to-one relationship with the aim to foster human talent and promote a particular culture”. In our present case it should be ‘to promote peace and work culture’ for our mother land and future generation. The mentor’s responsibilities include monitoring and advising on developments for their proteges, coaching on specific skills and behavior. Counseling on personal issues, neither problems nor taken care of by parents due to various reasons. A mentor need not necessarily be a well-qualified or intellectual person, he should only be experienced enough who has seen the world through his own experience and have a rational and realistic view about life. Mentoring is not a religious process and it is only a social process to make the society happy, peaceful and better place to live where every body in the society is concerned for human values.

Due to commercialization of education and degradation of social, moral and ethical values it is high time that our schools and colleges should introduce mentoring services for the students in their institutions. Voluntary organization or NGO in particular locality or village can also introduce mentoring services. For this purpose NGO can select respected and experienced citizens of the locality as mentors. Trust is a vital essence of mentoring, without which mentoring can’t succeed. So mentor must build a mutual trust and confidence of the protégé. Once a mutual trust and confidence is build up, many misguided youth can be brought back to the main stream of society and new young people can be stopped from going in the wrong direction. Thus mentoring can play a vital role in bringing back peace and counter the insurgency problem in Assam.

### ***Mission, Goal and Careers.***

There is a misconception among most of students and young people regarding the meaning of the words “aim in life”. Becoming a Doctor or Engineer may be a milestone in the long journey of life but it cannot be the sole aim of life. It is because of this false notion that many of the young people became frustrated at the age of 23 or 25. Their aim of achieving something ends on becoming a doctor or engineer and they did not have the vision beyond becoming a doctor or engineer or they never thought it is required at all in the long journey of life.

So it is very important the terms ***AIM, GOAL, AND MISSION.***

***Aim:*** Aim means to direct a course. To direct an utterance with personal or special application. To direct one’s intention and endeavours with a view to attainment.

***Goal:*** The finishing point of a race. A pillar marking the turning point in a roman chariot race. An end.

**MISSION:** A fight with a specific purpose. The errand or purpose for which one is sent—that for which one has been or seems to have been sent into the world.

Before you decide for a career you must fix your aim, goal and mission of life. Once you are clear about your aim and goal it is easy to achieve it. As mission of life will give a purpose of better living as life is not career alone.

### **WHY GOAL IS IMPORTANT?**

All human behavior is goal directed. People behave the way they do because of their need to achieve certain things. These goals may deal with physiological needs, psychological needs or high order social needs.

Man is the most idle animal. Man will not work unless it is forced to work to meet some of its need. Research has shown that human beings want things in a certain order of priority. First of all, human beings must satisfy their physiological needs like food, clothing, shelter etc. Until they have enough of these, all their activities will be directed towards obtaining them.

Once they have their physiological needs satisfied to an optimal level, a second order of needs comes to the surface and directs their behaviors. These are safety and security needs. Human beings want to make sure that they will continue to have their physiological needs satisfied. They require job security and protection from any physical dangers.

Once they have an optimal level of security a third order needs come into operation and direct behavior of human being. These are needs for love and belongingness. Human beings want affection from fellow-beings, often a selected few, and those in their immediate environment. Community organizations, student's organizations etc satisfy this need for belongingness.

Once the need for love and belongingness are also satisfied, another set of needs which may be called "higher order social needs" comes to the surface and directs the behavior of people. These needs include the needs for achievement, recognition, status, power and influence over others. These are also called "ego needs" or "esteem needs". When these social needs are also satisfied, then come the needs for understanding one's own abilities and potentials and using them to the maximum. This need is called the "self-actualizing need".

This need hierarchy theory was first developed by Abraham Maslow and hence it is called Maslow's Need Hierarchy. Most of the people are struggling with one or more of these needs and the productivity or output of his work depends upon how much he want to achieve or fulfill these needs. If one has higher order needs, he will work more, work hard and those with lower order needs will work less.

Self actualization  
Power, prestige etc  
(Esteem needs)  
Love and belongingness  
Safety and security needs  
Physiological needs and other basic needs

### ***Maslow's Hierarchy of Human needs***

### ***Career by choice, not by chance:***

Though I have told that man is the most idle animal, at the same time man is the most intelligent animal. Man is also a social animal. Man can't live by bread alone as we have seen in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. All human beings strive for a healthy body and a happy, peaceful life. It is the human mind, which can guarantee a healthy body and a happy life. The choice of vocation or occupation or *career* as we popularly call it can make or mar this happiness. The mind, body and environment are in a state of dynamic interaction and the maintenance of this interaction in optimum state of efficiency is what health and happiness means. We should not forget the age-old saying "***health is wealth***". The choice of a vocation should be based on whether it allows for a healthy physique and active mind. Greed for money has killed many a promising individual, who refuses to see the truth of this: "***You may win in one way and lose in another. You may buy gold too dear; if you give health for it, you make a poor bargain. If you sell freedom for it, you give pearls for a bubble. If you give soul for it, your self respect, your peace, your manhood, your character, you pay too much for it***".

Choose a vocation, which is clean, useful and honourable. Choose a vocation which is refining and elevating; a vocation you will be proud of; a vocation that will enlarge and expand your manhood/femininity and make you a better human.

Many a man "... has dwarfed his manhood, cramped his intellect, crushed his aspiration, blunted his finer sensibilities, in some mean, narrow occupation just because there was money". Prestige and honour are another two reasons why people make a wrong choice in choosing their vocation or career. Many a young man has chosen the respectable, honourable and high prestige vocation of engineering, medicine or the administrative services, for which they have no aptitude, only to become ridiculous, later on for life.

Remember that starting life in the right direction where even a small step will count far more than the greatest effort in the wrong direction. Let me complete with the story from Shiv Khera's book:

Some animals in a forest decided to start a school. The students included a bird, a squirrel, a fish, a dog, a rabbit and a mentally retarded eel. A board was formed and it was decided that flying, tree climbing, swimming, and burrowing would be part of the curriculum in order to give a broad based education. All animals were required to take all subjects.

The bird was excellent at flying and was getting *As* but when it came to burrowing, it kept breaking its beak and wings and started falling. Very soon, it started making *Cs* in flying and of course in tree climbing and swimming it was getting *Fs*. The squirrel was great at tree climbing and was getting *As*, but was failing in swimming. The fish was the best swimmer but could not get out of the water and got *Fs* in everything else. The dog didn't join the school, stopped paying taxes and kept fighting with the administration to include barking as part of the curriculum. The rabbit got *As* in burrowing but tree climbing was a real problem. It kept falling and landing on its head, suffered brain damage, and soon couldn't even burrow properly and got *Cs* in that too. The mentally retarded eel, who did everything half as well became the valedictorian of the class.

We should also not forget the story of the cat, fox and the dog, where the fox even after knowing hundred tricks was killed by the dog and the cat saved its life by simply mastering one thing, climbing of tree.

*We are all gifted with some strengths* and of course with some weaknesses. We should concentrate more on encasing and strengthening our strength. We should do our SWOT (Strengths' Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analysis before we decide for a career.

**This life is a great chance. Seek for the highest, aim at that highest, and you shall reach the highest.**