

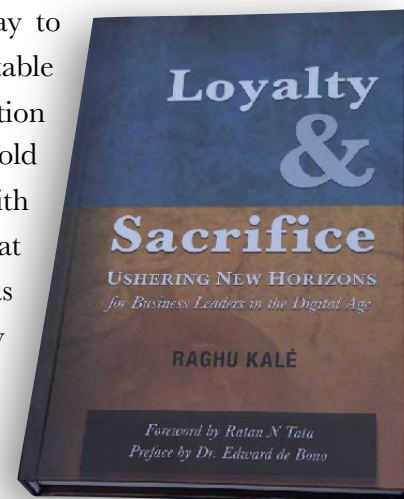
Q & A – CONVERSATION WITH RAGHU KALÉ

1. WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT?

My book provides a context to the factors of loyalty in this digital age that we live in where artificial intelligence dictates buying power. Inside I discuss unravelling the mysteries of the loyalty factor where sacrifice is elusively hidden in plain sight. This book will elevate the conversation about loyalty towards ushering a new horizon for human progress that business leaders can effect with the plethora of digital tools at their disposal.

2. WHAT PROVOKED YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

When a striking idea presents itself, one must find a way to share these nuggets. When awareness dawns, it is unacceptable to ignore new learning. There was a two-pronged provocation for me. It started with mindful exertion of a 100-year-old corporate brand that we were the custodians of, tasked with finding a way to enhance its value. It dawned on me that numerous generations had endured many tribulations as they toiled away to enhance the brand. I witnessed closely the sacrifices of colleagues and the silent compromises that they endured. Secondly, it became clear to me that consumers too were willing to accommodate for their beloved brand. There was a profound realization that besides employees, consumer behavior offered elusive insights regarding loyalty and sacrifice. I gained a new perspective. These thoughts lingered in my mind over the years and finally pushed me to write this book.



3. WHY IS THIS BOOK RELEVANT?

Digital progress is no longer a trend but the new norm. Artificial Intelligence and advanced algorithms can today help anticipate customer needs and create hyper-personalized experiences with the intent of building customer loyalty. In order to take advantage of these new digital advancements, it is imperative to fix broken definitions. This book will

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help leaders in the corporate world and proponents of new-age businesses to benefit from the hidden facets of loyalty and stay relevant in an ever-changing digital age. Everything today is getting measured in ways that my grandma could never fathom. With a population of just 8 billion on planet Earth, over 3.5 billion searches per day were said to have been tracked by Google alone last year.

Digital is the new oxygen.

Big data holds the promise for significant advancement in understanding the human mind. It is reasonable to provoke folks tasked with customer relationship management to embrace a new vantage point about *Customer Loyalty* and recognize that ‘sacrifice’ is its nucleus.

4. WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

I think everyone interested and curious about the human dimensions of Loyalty should read this book. Corporate leaders, marketing professionals, and open minds engaged in academia must read this book to evolve this conversation. I also believe that millennials and Gen-Z may find the concepts outlined in this book refreshing.

5. WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IDEAS IN THIS BOOK?

The most significant concepts in the book are embodied in four pillars.

The first conceptual pillar in the book illuminates the meaning of ‘Loyalty’ as it rests on 4 fundamental axioms: (i) Loyalty Axiom of Silence (ii) Loyalty Axiom of Latitude (iii) Loyalty Axiom of Shared Values and Vision and finally (iv) Loyalty Axiom of Futility.

The second conceptual pillar crafts a holistic definition of the term ‘Customer Loyalty’ that takes cognizance of the four fundamental axioms and helps shine a new light on the very essence of the word ‘Loyalty’.

The third conceptual pillar in the book uniformly applies the new ‘Customer Loyalty’ definition — in regard to customers and employees — with the help of four L&S principles. *The L&S Elusive Principle, The L&S Wallet Principle, The L&S Passion Principle, and The L&S Silence Principle.*

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The fourth conceptual idea in the book explains the blind spots. Unfathomable for some as to why the definition of ‘loyalty’ is skewed for customers and gathers a different meaning in other walks of life. This has to do with strong patterns of adherence to usage. The stronger the usage the more distorted the meaning tends to become. The more firmly a pattern is established, the harder it becomes to break away from established notions. The book proposes a new principle of the Latency Factors and breaks it down to hindsight and foresight latency as occurrences.

6. HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT WRITING THE BOOK?

My ideas, formed over the years, found expression in an article for the leadership team on brand equity titled: *‘Promises to Keep’*. Though the concepts were potent, everyone went about running their business as usual. A few years passed by and after the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, the bravery and sacrifice of colleagues displayed astounding loyalty that stared us in our faces. It attracted Harvard school to prepare a case for advance management program and ever since they have been grappling to understand — why?

For over a decade I was starkly aware of the skewed definition of loyalty as applied to customers which was in dissonance with the way in which it was applied to war heroes and employees. Numerous factors of loyalty were required to be considered for a holistic definition.

The concept needed a sharper exposition. And so, I wrote it as a concept paper and bounced it off with some bright minds. They readily saw that it had some new vantage points. *"Hey Rags, you've really got something here ..."* was one of the exhilarating reactions that the paper evoked. And so, I finally set myself to express all my concepts in an easy to read book — for ushering new horizons for business leaders in this digital age.

7. WHY ARE THE CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO THE PRESENT DIGITAL AGE?

Digital progress is impacting lives in many ways. Massive investments are pouring into big data powered AI to accelerate understanding of customer needs and create hyper-personalized experiences with the intent of building customer loyalty. The new concepts

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provided in this book can elevate the conversation and help practitioners usher worthwhile progress in this digital age.

I find it intriguing as to how many recognize that the present day is turbulent — in terms of the digital landscape. It is the most invisible space of our existence. Without precise definitions and context and by continuing to use old definitions and norms, elevated levels of progress will not be achieved.

The digital realm is the upheaval that turned elections upside-down in some countries. It caused the Arab spring. It has set the stage for cyber wars. It has allowed porous firewalls and cybersecurity threats. The Internet has been labeled as a modern day Wild West and the Internet of Things (IoT) is facetiously called the internet of threats.

Digital is driving humanity nuts.

Artificial intelligence is here to stay. It is going to impact the way humans will be nudged to behave. Algorithms will provide an impetus for rewarding and inadvertently provoking human behavior.

Today, AI remains rooted in a shallow definition of loyalty. If the basic definitions that pertain to fundamental human behavior such as loyalty and sacrifice are not calibrated and fully understood and addressed, it is a cause for concern. It can and will hinder progress. And therefore, the concepts, I believe, are incredibly relevant.

8. HOW WILL THIS BOOK ELEVATE THE CONVERSATION?

It certainly can elevate the conversation if the naysayers open their minds to new vantage points and bright minds decide to experiment with these concepts in the realms of implementation.

9. HOW ARE THE IDEAS ABOUT “LOYALTY” AND “SACRIFICE” DIFFERENT FROM OTHER BOOKS ON THE MARKET?

For over 200 years loyalty programs have hovered around enticing customers to come back for more. Historically, retailers are known to have used copper coins in the hope of inviting customers back to redeem the tokens for products on future purchases. Copper coins gave

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way to stamps as a cost-effective means for customer retention. This entire exercise, dare I say, was never about *loyalty* but about extracting more from the customer. All the books in the marketplace today are variants of what started 200 years ago.

This book, *Loyalty and Sacrifice — Ushering New Horizons for Business Leaders in the Digital Age*, is a departure from what we have known and adhered to for the past 200 years. It is unlike anything that exists in the market today. This is a book that redefines the term ‘Loyalty’ by embracing significant facets that are appropriate for the digital age. It is relevant because we have crossed the threshold of AI nudging human behavior, and hence, critical to usher elevated human progress.

10. HOW SHOULD COMPANIES IMPLEMENT THESE IDEAS AND WHAT WILL THEY GAIN IN THE PROCESS?

It is my hope that the first step would be for leaders leading the destiny of their corporations, to answer the question — do they understand the concepts in the book? Do they have an appetite for understanding possibilities that the new age is ushering? Can they relate to the blind spots, as explained in the book?

The second question to ask — is it relevant to their business priorities? Dimensions of loyalty and sacrifice exist whenever human behavior permeates transactions. The question is if that behavior is relevant to relationship building. Is that relevant to brand building? Is that relevant for higher employee engagement?

Appropriateness of its relevance will unfold once the first question is rendered answered. Does the leadership have an appetite for understanding possibilities this new age is ushering? The second question of assessing its relevance will allow the third question: Do marketing and sales teams and numerous consultants engaged in designing the loyalty programs have a way to find creative solutions to enhance their platforms towards deeper engagement for relationship building? Can they relate to the blind spots, as explained in the book?

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11. WHAT ARE YOU WRITING NEXT?

My next book for the year 2020 is THE LATENCY FACTOR — *decoding perception and reality*.

THE LATENCY FACTOR — *decoding perception and reality* is a book about human thinking. It unravels how reality lurks between myth and perception.

Human thinking is, on the one hand, about perception, and on the other, having perceived a stimulus, hoping to do something about it by acting on the perception. This results in the process of doing things, and this act of doing reinforces the idea that you have acted upon. This makes it a spiral — a pattern.

While there is a plethora of knowledge and research in the area of human perception and cognitive thinking, heuristics, and mental patterns, as a communications professional, I have grappled and sharpened my understanding of all that evokes the audiences into believing a proposition. What douses their suspicions and doubts. The mental makeup of the human mind is an enigma.

The book is full of anecdotes and short stories that illustrate a point. One that shines a light and casts a shadow in a void between perception and reality. A cogent and persuasive treatise about how blind spots get created and how folks are blindsided. It brings out a relevant conversation in wide-ranging situations from the electorate to the boardroom — across the spectrum.

My book THE LATENCY FACTOR — *decoding perception and reality* is an attempt to provide a new perspective to dissect the elements of reasoning that span across a multitude of facets. By observing real-life situations, I hope to outline the Latency Factors and decipher it to understand reality as it lurks between perception and myth.