



The Professional

Pramod Kumar Srivastava

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E-book design by Pramod Kumar Srivastava

For any feedback /suggestions, please write to us:

Email: pksri93@gmail.com

Twitter: [@P_K_Srivastava](https://twitter.com/P_K_Srivastava)

*With heartfelt gratitude
humbly dedicated to:*

**Shri Mohammad Shafeer Pasha – A real caretaker
Shri Prabhu Charan Devarapalli – A real friend
Shri Rakesh Kumar Srivastava – A real brother**

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PREFACE

We have been writing articles on various subjects related to working professionals for last 8 years and created a large pool of the articles. This e-book contains mainly career, work-life balance and leadership related articles. Few social media and entrepreneurship related articles are also included from the pool. Articles are mainly in the context of India.

Articles may be of interests to graduate students and corporate executives.

Please share your feedback and suggestions to us.

Pramod Kumar Srivastava

Bangalore

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A) Tipping The Toes



i) Does A College Degree Matter For Success?

We all know that Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg and Michel Dell share at least two common things, they all figure in billionaire list and yes they all are college drop outs.

Recently there has been a lot of hue and cry in India about educational qualification of a Union Human Resources Development Cabinet Minister who is allegedly not even a graduate. Reportedly there is another minister who is mere 5 standard pass.

A huge debate is going-on the issue. And as happens in debate, there are clear cut two groups. One which is supporting elitist approach and other which supports conventional wisdom over glossy papers called degrees.

Let us analyze.

We are awed by the college dropout billionaires, dropout statesmen and even dropout noble prize winners. But let us pause and think clearly. This class is extremely miniscule. We are awed by the exceptions.

I will divide the whole discussion in two major parts:

1. **Working for yourself:** If you are working for yourself, say in business, literature, politics, sports, music, painting, etc. No degrees are required. Whole world is open for you. You are your own master. You are not taking any test, any interviews to get a job. You hone your talent on daily basis and accordingly you get rewarded by the consumers of your talent. No appraisals by any formal boss. In such areas, degrees do not matter.

2. **Working for others:** The moment you go and apply for a job, your credentials will be tested. Even for a peon job also you need to have a 5 standard pass certificate. When you are in a “Job” market where there is too much competition, without proper educational qualification you won’t even be considered in the fray. In normal circumstances, non-graduate will not be even considered for a mere entry level HR executive job in a decent organization. Please see in LinkedIn Job portal, what percentage of jobs are posted for non-graduates for entry level executives.

So it is very clear, that if you are going to work for others, in a proper job market, decent and commensurate educational qualification is a must. You will have to face the competition and so-called elitism at every stage. Majority of the population falls in this category.

But if you are on your own, even if you cannot write your name, but if you have become a billionaire or a national leader, PhDs, M. Techs, MBAs and Civil Servants will work for you with folded hands. But please beware; this forms the very-very minuscule part of the population.



ii) GPA Does Matter

We human beings normally hate to be compared. We get excited when we see articles titled, "GPA does not matter". We believe and cherish the ideal of "we all are equal".

This article is about busting this make-believe philosophy. Let me be clear: **World is Relative**. GPAs do matter, Colleges do matter, Titles do matter, and we are Not equal.

If you get low marks, you cannot get admission in prestigious college. If you get less GPA, you even cannot apply for a lot of job positions. If you do your schooling and graduation from prestigious colleges, you get a good start in career. Even after 20 years of work experience, people who graduated from some specific institutes, they will show off their institute name and try to get leverage, and yes they do get leverage at every corner.

Why to go any further. See in LinkedIn, posts are valued based upon the Likes. More Likes, and chances of getting featured in Pulse increases.

World works on a "pyramid" model. This is extremely bitter, but realistic truth. You are always compared with others, **accordingly rated and accordingly treated**.

Philosophically, you can argue that I do not believe in comparing, I am what I am. I agree. But this is for you only, absolute you. The moment you are with other, you will be compared. Be ready for that.

There is a solution for this problem. You live as per your own standards, be happy with what you have and what you have achieved.

But also accept the fact that world will always compare you against others.

You will have to go beyond, what the world thinks. But you cannot change the thinking of the world.

In other words, Worldly Success is relative. Whether you are successful or not, world rates it, and it rates you on relative parameters. Absolute success is what you think about yourself, without any comparison, just being you!



iii) 10 Tips To Ace Campus Interview

It is campus placement season. Are you feeling anxious? We say... relax. Follow the following 10 tips and ace your campus interview.

1. Visualize the success:

Sit quietly. Imagine that you are giving wonderful interview. Interview board is offering you a great job offer. Your professors are patting you on your back. Congratulatory calls are pouring in. Your friends are cheering you up and all around there is chorus of... give us party, give us party! See yourself holding that big trophy of job offer in your hand and happiness and joy all around. If you can visualize it, you can create it.

2. Decide the functionality and industry:

Decide what you are going to do and for whom. For example, if you are doing MBA in Marketing and your passion is towards advertising, go and opt for advertising company. If you are doing MBA in Finance and you are fascinated by the share market, opt for the companies which are dealing in stock market.

This decision should be based on your passion, personality, prior experience, projects during internship, job market and your future career aspiration.

Decide whether you want to work for a start-up or for an established company. Both has its pros and cons.

Do not opt only on the basis of CTC being offered by the companies. Do not feel pressure to prove yourself among your classmates. Some classmates will get offer early, some late,

some will get very high CTC, some will get average, some will get overseas postings too. Yes, it will be tempting to compete and feel stressed due to peer pressure, but please resist these negative feelings. Be You. Decide what is best for you and your career and move on.

3. Prepare for interview:

Normally there will be initial CV screening, aptitude test, group discussion and personal interview in the selection process. Prepare for aptitude test.

In interview usually interviewer asks you about your favorite subjects and asks the questions from the same. So prepare thoroughly two subjects of your liking.

For MBAs, case studies are also given, be ready to crack the cases.

Have up-to-date information about what is happening in the market and any current big news. Your general knowledge will be tested.

Prepare flawless and crisp CV. Your CV is nothing but your snap. It should give a clear picture about your strengths to the interviewer. Finest CV creation is an iterative process. Prepare it; revise it, till you are fully satisfied with your CV.

Please do mention your meaningful extra-curricular activities where you excelled. If you were Chief Prefect of your hostel, won awards in debates, volunteered your time for social cause etc.... please do mention.

Please have at least 3-4 copies of your resume with you. Carry the original testimonials. Do not forget to carry a pen.

4. Know the company:

Google about the company, know what it is doing, about its vision and mission and its top management. What do you know about us? is a very common question during personal interview. Further, you will also be able to make your mind up about working for this company or not.

5. Dress to kill:

First impression is the last impression. Dress professionally. Preferably in business suit. If two candidates have performed at same level, job will go to the person who was dressed well.

6. Have positive body language:

Eye contact, firm shake hand, relaxed and confident posture are very important during your interview. You can google about body language and learn.

7. Show your thought leadership and leadership in group discussion:

During group discussion, candidate who opens the discussion, creates a consensus, helps in bringing more ideas to the table, leads the discussion towards conclusion and summarizes it, always gets the attention of interview board.

8. Show enthusiasm and explain properly:

During your personal interview, show interest for the job. Your attitude will be judged. Usually there will be more than one interviewer, have eye contact with all the members. Listen attentively, process the answer and give coherent replies. In case you could not understand the question, request the interviewer to repeat the question.

If your CV has gaps or you could not get very good marks in some examination, do not feel defensive and do not try to rationalize it. See yourself as a holistic human being and project your overall personality during the interview.

9. Ask good questions:

Please note that interview is a two-way process. If the company is evaluating you, so do you too. At the end of interview, board will ask you "Do you have any questions?" Please ask some relevant, positive and insightful questions.

10. Be ready to negotiate:

Prepare a strategy for negotiating your salary, job title and place of posting. Be flexible during negotiations.

Don't forget to say thank you to all the members.

You are done with your interview. You have put your best foot forward. Just wait for few hours or a day. Job offer is on your way, for sure.

Now it is party time!



iv) Got NO, Don't Worry

Anybody who has tried to sell anything or waiting for some result or approval has heard the most unpleasant word in the world – NO. Let us see few examples:

1. You are a salesman, you approached your customer for sale – Answer you got is NO.
2. You are running a consulting firm, you approached a prospective client for project – Answer you got is NO.
3. You just wanted to fix one meeting with a client – Answer you got is NO.
4. You have given one interview, you called the HR Managers for feedback – Answer you got is NO.
5. In personal life, you expected some help from somebody, you approached him/her – Answer you got is NO.
6. You are a writer, you sent your articles to publisher – Answer you got is NO.
7. On a lighter vein, you proposed to somebody - Answer you got is NO.
8. Your marriage proposal is pending, you called the party – Answer you got is NO.

Now what?

Definitely hearing No is disappointing. Depending upon the stake in the proposal, it can have severe blow.

But hold on!

NO has been said by the other party. Now what you hear is totally up to you. For me, **NO means – Next better Opportunity**. It is not only Next Opportunity; it is even better also.

So next time, whenever the other party says NO, just smile, thank him and tell to yourself, Thank You for pushing me towards the **Next better Opportunity!**

If you are in the profession, where hearing NO is a daily routine, this should be your mantra. It will change your worldview and you will be moving higher and higher on every No, because, for you, NO means – **Next better Opportunity!**



v) Career Curveball: 10 Tips To Control Your Destiny

I did my engineering in computer science from a government engineering college. After that I joined in a public sector company. Although there was an EDP center, I was posted in commercial division; this much is enough for understanding the functioning of Indian Public Sector Organizations. My career aspiration was to do full-time MBA. While working, I prepared for MBA entrance and got admitted in a government run university MBA program.

After completing my MBA, I did not join in management functions. I started working for software services companies into pure technical areas. Meanwhile I had a personal issue; I was trapped in a messy divorce. I was asked to leave the organization.

I left the job and solved my personal issue. I searched another job and again started working for protocol development areas. Somewhere I was having a feeling that I do not love doing coding and testing. I wanted to be in management side.

Once I had around 8 years of experience I consciously took decision to move towards management side. Within the organization, I opted for management activities. It was going fine. But over a period of time, my manager started questioning my decision to move from technical side to management side; our relations became sour, and I have to leave the organization. And this was the last time I took any assignment with any organization as a full-time permanent employee.

Later I worked with a few organizations as Consultant. Finally, I got my calling, I became a solopreneur and working as a business management consultant for my own small management consulting company. I am happy. I am not working, now I am living my passion.

When I look back my 20+ years of professional roller-coaster experience I can summarize it in the following 10 points:

1. **Identify your passion early.**
2. **Have a balance between what market demands and what you wish to do.**
3. **Never ever expect your boss or your employer to help you in your personal troubles.**
4. **Always remember; it is your career and you have to take charge of it.**
5. **Think long-term.**
6. **Manage your personal life properly.**
7. **Even when employed, never work for any organization or any boss; work for yourself.**
8. **Your job was secured till yesterday only.**
9. **Have confidence in yourself.**
10. **Life is one, live it on your own terms. After attaining 60, when you look back, you should not feel you played all the wrong games; that too on the terms set by others.**



vi) Oh, That Scheduled Meeting!

You were cold calling some prospective client for almost one month. After one month, you got your first meeting scheduled. On the appointment day, you wake up, dress up nicely and rush to meet your client, expecting a wonderful meeting. **But hold on...** Are you really sure the scheduled meeting was really scheduled to take place? **You will answer, yes! I will say No!**

Let us see two real life examples:

1. You were calling one prospective client for weeks. In your last call on Monday, Mr. Client agreed to meet you on Friday. You asked the exact meeting time, and he even fixed the time at 10 AM. So meeting was scheduled at last – Friday, 10 AM, to be precise.

You got busy preparing for a great meeting. Since Mr. Client works almost opposite end of your city, you plan your logistics very carefully. You know it is almost going to take your whole day in commuting. Meanwhile you got busy in other work. Slowly Thursday comes. You plan everything for your meeting. But somewhere you get a hunch, that today evening you should call Mr. Client and give him a gentle reminder about tomorrow's scheduled meeting.

You pick up the phone, call Mr. Client and remind him about the impending meeting. And here you get the shock. Mr. Client coldly informs you that meeting cannot happen, because he has to go and meet Industry Minister in his office. You are left speechless. When you politely remind him that he could have at least send you message about the postponement, Mr. Client has no answer.

2. Now another example. You called Mr. Prospective Client. He says, he is out of station; meeting will be possible when he returns to the town next week. Comes the next week, and you SMS him about the meeting. He replies, he is boarding plane for another city. He can meet you once he is back after a week. Week gone. You call him on Monday. He

agrees to meet you on Friday. You specifically ask the time. He himself says 12 noon. So the meeting is scheduled properly.

Friday morning comes, you start preparing for the meeting. Meanwhile at around 10 AM you send Mr. Prospective Client a gentle reminder SMS about the meeting. At 10.20 AM you receive SMS from him saying, it is not possible today, will meet up sometime. You simply reply him, It's fine

Only this much about the so-called scheduled meetings.

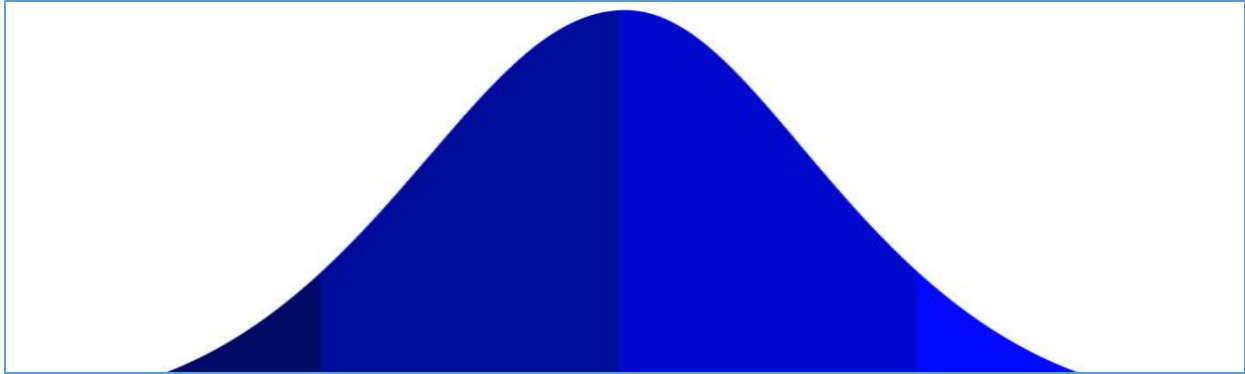
Lessons:

- 1.** If other party is taking too much time in fixing up the meeting, it is tell-tale sign that meeting is fixed just for name sake, nothing fruitful will come out of the meeting.
- 2.** Be upfront about the agenda of your meeting. During discussions only you can gauge whether he is really interested in meeting you or not. The moment he gives mixed signals, just back off. Do not schedule meeting. Let him come to you on his own.
- 3.** Even if meeting is scheduled mutually, do, send the gentle reminder before you start preparing for the meeting.
- 4.** You can opt for skyping for such so-called scheduled face-to-face meeting.
- 5.** Respect your time and yourself. Never let anybody take you for granted.
- 6.** Do not forget to put such prospective clients in your black list.
- 7.** Analyze yourself that even unknowingly you do not indulge in such behavior.
- 8.** Do not expect professional behavior from the other side; at least in few cultures, which are notorious for unprofessional behavior. You force them to behave professionally.

9. Do not forget to express your displeasure in mellowed tone to such unprofessional people.

10. If the reason for postponement is genuine, just ask the other party to schedule the meeting again.

So next time you, before you step outside your house for that scheduled meeting, just pause and confirm it.



vii) 5 Mantras To Beat The Bell Curve

It is layoffs season in IT Industry in India. So many companies are firing its employees in hordes, citing "Performance Issue". Most of the companies grade their employees relatively and the lowest band employees are shown the door. **Is there a way to beat this relative ranking?** So that your job is not only intact, you flourish also in the organization. **Yes, there are ways.** Let us discuss:

1. Be aware of relative ratings:

Always keep in the back of your mind that your performance will be rated relatively, in your team and in your department. Understand the concept of relative rating. Talk to senior employees and understand what type of employees get best ratings, and work accordingly. Most of the time, freshers are not even aware of this relative concept and when they are tagged to lower ratings they feel dejected. Senior employees who join new organization **should know explicitly the rules of the game**, and prepare themselves accordingly.

If you talk to a few people in the organization, you can very well judge what are the **REAL performance parameters** upon which employees are judged. There will be a lot of stories, and you can take lessons from those stories.

2. Always eye the finest rating:

People who fear the bad rating, get bad rating. It is so simple. Therefore, always think of the best rating in your organization and **strive towards being in the top slot of star performers**. Your mindset should be fixed on the finest rating only. This mindset will unconsciously change your habit and you will always work towards the finest rating. I can say, if you are really high achiever and wish to achieve too much in your career then, if you are not getting top ratings in your current organization, analyze the reasons, work on

it, and even though if you are not achieving best rating, you can even hop the organization. Moral is simple: **Be the Best, Where Ever You Are!!**

3. Have good relationship with the Bosses:

All said and done, let us face the reality – appraisals are highly subjective and almost dependent upon the whims of your immediate boss - at least in large part of the world. So always be in the good books of your immediate boss and senior bosses. If your boss has given you bad rating, nothing can be done, your fate is sealed at least in the current organization. So always **keep flattering your immediate boss** and senior bosses.

4. Do your work perfectly:

You need to know your work and execute it perfectly. If your **work is excellent**, you are always impressing your boss to rate you excellently.

5. Do not create unnecessary fuss:

Do you argue too much with your boss or bosses? Do you crib about the organizational policies, irrespective whether they are good or bad? Do you create trouble in your team? Do you go against the HR and senior bosses to prove your point? Let me tell you, even if you are 100 percent right, you are creating trouble for yourself. When organization runs, it runs to achieve some purpose, so to get the best for yourself, you will have to align your goals with the larger goals of the organization. There is no room for activism in the organization. **Just Play Safe!**

So be vigilant, aim for the best, give your best - bell curve will always bow before you!



viii) Forget Loyalty, Be A Professional

Loyalty is a highly misunderstood word in the corporate world. Employee thinks, loyalty from the employer means that he (she) will not be fired from the job ever. Employer uses (misuses) this word to extract as much as possible from the employees.

Let me tell you, both are wrong.

First I will deal with Employees:

Employees should be loyal to their skill, their competence and their KRAs. Never ever be loyal to employer, or worst to your boss. Let your work speak for yourself. Be dedicated for your KRAs, not for the big brand you are working for.

Never ever try to become loyal to your boss, you are a professional, not working for a mafia, where whatever the boss says, has to be executed.

From the day one, your action should speak louder than your words. Message should be clear that you are loyal to your KRAs, your own career growth. Nothing else is accepted, at any cost. You are ready to be fired, than to be loyal to your employer or to your boss.

Now I will deal with employers:

No employer of the world is loyal to its employees. But all the policies are created in such a way which brainwash the poor employees and they start waving the flags of the employer. The day business goes down, little recession somewhere in the remotest part of the world and pink slips are handed over to hundreds, even thousands of employees. All type of excuses is given for layoff. There is no loyalty from the employer towards its employees. Loyalty is expected only from the employees. It is one-way street for employers.

No manager would like my article, because they want employees to sing in the praise of the organization, think that organization is giving them the career, prestige and money so employees should cringe before the organization. Only then they (managers) can pull your strings, and "manage" you.

The day you will open your eyes, they cannot handle you. Every truth is bared hence nothing to be respected in the organization, nothing to be feared. You are on equal footing with the biggest organization the world.

Case Studies: (all real stories)

An Assistant Vice President is working in the organization for last 10 years. One fine morning he is called in the cabin of the HR Head and asked to leave.

One software engineer, working in the organization for last two years, got trapped in a divorce mess, on some lame excuses he is asked to leave.

Whole floor, full of employees are working on various projects. It is all fun. But hold on... One fine morning, a simple mail comes from the HR Head and the whole floor is fired. Employees are crying, somebody joined just last week, somebody's marriage was fixed, somebody had taken loan for house... all dreams were shattered. Long live the Loyalty!

One Director (Engineering) had an argument with his boss. He was given bad rating in appraisal and had to leave.

Solution:

Forget this word, loyalty. Neither be loyal, nor expect loyalty. **Be Professional. Do your Duty.** Just concentrate on your work. Remember your job was secured till yesterday only. Live within means. Do not poke your nose unnecessary in the affairs of bosses. Take care of your KRAs.

Just complete your work and come to home as if there was no organization at all.

Organization is trying to achieve its goals; you are trying to achieve your goals. That's it. If you won't work properly you will be fired, and the day organization is not helping you in achieving your goals, you will resign from the organization. This is The reality. Rest all is for fooling ourselves.

Be a professional, leave the loyalty to dogs.



ix) Alarm Bells For Middle Managers In Indian IT Industry – Solutions!

As if TCS layoffs stories were not enough, there are another bombshell news appearing in the media about the uncertain future for the thousands of middle managers in Indian IT Industry. Various IT organizations are seriously contemplating to cut their middle flab from the pyramid. Worst affected will be the managers having 5 to 15 years of work experience, who are not doing any real work – coding and testing and hence are not earning for the organization.

Let us analyze.

It is the fact of the matter that in Indian IT industry, after gaining experience of around say 5 years, employees were moved into the so-called management work. Management work, where senior employee is mostly working on Excel based management systems or in-house developed management tools and managing the team of coders.

Employee was happy that he is promoted to management role and employers were able to retain the employees under the guise of promotions.

Of late, this middle flab increased too much. Managers are just working on excel sheets, giving pep-talks to their teams and anyhow keeping their bosses in good humor. Now when organizations are analyzing the real business value of these managers, they are proved to be just a white elephant. Managers are not billable to the client at one hand, on the other they are taking home too much salary. So double whammy for the employers.

Result – Let us trim the extra flab. We do not want pure managerial talent, we want employees who will take less salaries and will be billable too. Net result – thousands of jobs of middle managers are on the block.

Employees too thought that they have progressed in their career, now no need to do coding and testing. Let us just manage the team. Now Damocles sword is hanging on their heads. For years together they have not opened the debugger, have not compiled a 10 line of code, forgot all the basics, and whatever they have been doing for all these years, is treated as non-value addition. Now where to go? Double whammy for employees too.

Worst for employees is, for years, sometimes even decades, they have been pampered by their employers as Leaders, Managers and what not, now all of sudden they are being asked to go back to debugger and start writing C code.

Now at this age group, managers have family, kids, EMIs, own medical troubles etc. and now even the livelihood is at stake. Just horrible.

In nutshell a huge problem staring our beloved IT Managers in Indian IT industry. Is there a way out for managers? Yes, every problem has solution. Let us see:

Solutions:

1. Be ready to go back to basics. Brush up your skills and start asking for coding and testing work.
2. Go for external training on your own expenses. Learn the latest technologies and become hands on.
3. Remove the artificial garb of manager. Deal with your ego. In western countries even 50-year-old sits and code. You too be ready for that and work.
4. Try getting job in other companies where you can work as Member Technical Staff, and take hardcore testing and coding assignment.
5. If you are not ready to go back to coding and testing, opt for jobs in public sectors, where managerial skills are required.
6. If you have entrepreneurial spirit within you, you can start your own company. But remember, here too you will have to work on the basics.
7. Do not analyze or criticize the decisions of the organization. It won't help in anyway, rather will be harmful for your future employment and above all for your own physical and mental health.
8. Discuss with your spouse, your kids, your friends. There is no shame in doing this. It will help you in thinking better and your support system will widen.

9. Tell yourself clearly that if you have to be in IT industry, you will have to do coding and testing else you will be out of the industry. It will take some time, but you can adjust. It is a mind game. You have to play with your mind.
10. Last but not the least, take lesson from the industry and be on your toes. Audit your financial position, restrict your unnecessary expenses and live far within your earning limits.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Pull your own strings, take complete charge of your professional life... everything will be all right!



x) Biggest Lie – Employees Are Our Biggest Asset

You open any company web-site, read any so-called influencer of corporate world, go to any HR meetings, even into your internal town hall meetings your top management comes and declare continuously “employees are our biggest asset”. **Nothing can be farther from the truth.** This is the blatant lie, propagated day in day out by all the vested interests. Let us face the bitter truth: **Employees are NOT the biggest asset.**

This is very troubling proposition and normally any employee would not accept it, what to talk of corporate world.

Let us analyze few scenarios:

1. Company is working fine. Hundreds of employees are coming daily and working. It is all fun all around. But hold on. There is some problem at the client site, and hundreds of employees are called in town hall and asked to pack off.
2. One AVP is working for the company for so many years. His performance is ok. He is posted into one support function, Resource Management Group. One fine morning he is called in, and told to resign.
3. Thousands of employees are working in the organization for years together. They have become senior and getting big salaries. Slowly management decides to get rid of thousands of these mid-level executives.
4. Company is performing ok. Projects are running. There are some fluctuations in the market. Company simply calls the managers and ask them to fire at least 50 percent of employees.

5. Company managers always threaten the employees to give them bad ratings. Do you remember the veiled threat you got from your bosses?
6. In factories, management always threatens for lock-out.
7. Hundreds of employees are on bench. They do not have proper billable assignments. HR simply sends them a mail, asking them to find the work for themselves within the company else ...
8. There is a big M&A of two companies. A lot of positions are overlapping. Hundreds of employees are made redundant and asked to leave.

What all these scenarios point to?

It simply proves that employees are just another resource for the production. They are NOT the biggest asset.

Biggest asset is the thing which you won't separate. For human body heart is the biggest asset, will anybody be willing to separate the heart from his body. No.

If companies are separating the employees, for whatever the reasons maybe, it simply proves that the company is bigger than the employee, and for the sake of running company, employees can be fired.

Employees will be there till they are earning the good margins for the organization, else they will be fired. Very simple.

Organization will bear the costs of the employee till a point only. Once they become costly for the company compared to whatever they are giving back to the organization, they will become Liability.

So we can safely come to the conclusion that, "Employees are Not the biggest asset".

So what is the whole truth?

Whenever company management is blabbering "Employees are our biggest assets" they are telling half-truth. **One caveat they are deliberately missing, and the caveat is "Till your earning margins are good enough for us".** Worst is; the margins will be decided by the organization not by you.

Please understand that it is the duty of management to proclaim such tall sublime sentiments, they are paid for this. No organization will say that employees are not their biggest asset, because they have to attract the best talent. This is called management.

Poor employees get trapped into this make-believe smoke screens created cleverly by the management, get deluded and start waving the flags of the organization, and one fine morning management gives them the pink slip on some pretext or other. Then the world of the employee crumbles and he cribs.

So dear employees, whenever you read and hear "employees are our biggest asset", just smile and add one simple caveat "**till we add good margins**".



xi) 10 Tips To Stop Fearing The Axe

You are fired! The most dreaded sentence any employee wishes to hear in his career.

But it is the reality of corporate world. Hiring and firing was there and will be there. You cannot wish it away. It comes in many flavors; downsizing, market conditions, recession, poor performance etc. etc. But the bitter fact is: you become jobless.

Any employee who is going to job in the morning can never be sure, what awaits him in the day. By evening his job may be gone.

Always remember, **your job was secured till yesterday evening only**. I mean that if till yesterday evening you were not fired; your job was secured till yesterday evening only. Today anything can happen.

Getting fired is the worst nightmare any employee can face. It hangs on the head of employee like a proverbial Damocles sword with a horse hair.

You need to face this brute head on. If you follow the following 10 tips you can reduce your anxiety of being fired:

- 1. Give your best in the current job.**
- 2. Have positive relationship with your bosses.**
- 3. Have positive relationship with your peers and colleagues.**
- 4. Keep updating your skill set continuously.**

- 5. Always keep an eye on the job market, keep your CV updated.**
- 6. Have a mind-set of doing business with your employer.**
- 7. Always remember, that today may be the last day in your job.**
- 8. Have a strong networking within the organization. It will help you in sniffing the bad news early.**
- 9. Never blindly believe your employer. Have control of your destiny in your own hands.**
- 10. Live within means. Preferably one level below at what you can afford.**

If you follow the above-cited tips, you can avoid being pink slipped and in worst case, at least you will be prepared for the calamity and can come out almost unscathed.



xii) Lessons To Learn, When You Get Fired

Never Ever Love The Organization, Because No Organization Loves You.

Never ever brood too much about "who was responsible", just take a day or two and analyze mainly Your faults, take lesson and just move on. Most of the time people are fired, when they "Do not fall in line" with the top management. And here comes the fine balance. Almost all will be fired, the day they do not "fall in line" so simply they go to office, slog and come back, gets promotions and one fine morning becomes "Leadership Team" of the organization. That is the way of the corporate world.

Ideas to take control of your professional life:

There are 10 steps:

- 1. Live within means.**
- 2. Always update your knowledge.**
- 3. Always remember your job was secure till yesterday only.**
- 4. Always look for better jobs and hop.**
- 5. Have an earning spouse.**
- 6. Just concentrate on your job and come back to home, without ever arguing with your boss.**

7. If possible, have parallel business in the name of spouse or grown up children.

8. If possible run your own small business full time.

9. Have a mind-set of doing business with your employer.

10. Do not be friend to your boss or bad colleagues.

So ultimately, you have to become master of your own destiny. Nothing can harm you.

Most of the corporate are pure and simple hypocrite. They preach something and do something else. Everybody knows, but everybody become part of this false drama, because everybody has his and her vested interests. Everybody is fooling others. That is the reason, why person having his own mind, do not find place in corporate jungle. There is no child in this ongoing story of "emperor's clothes".

B) Excelling In Career



i) The First Step For Super Success is Thinking BIG... Really BIG

You are striving to become successful; to become a high achiever; a super rock star in your chosen field. You are achieving some success, but still something is missing. Everybody is successful in some ways. But getting extra-ordinary success or happiness is always elusive. What is the reason?

Reason is very simple. **You are not thinking BIG... very-very BIG.**

First step of attaining any success is thinking big. Your final success will depend upon your initial thinking. You have achieved what you dreamt of in the past. You will achieve what you can dream now.

But you will retort, I am thinking big. Good! Now please go and declare your dream to your friend. Has he started laughing on your audacious dream? If not, it is time to go to a cave or under a banyan tree and contemplate higher and higher. Following four tips can help you in thinking big:

1. Break the barriers:

When you start thinking high, all obstacles come into your path, and they determine the height of your thoughts. So take a new approach. Instead of thinking high directly; first try to demolish all these obstacles one by one systematically. What are the barriers? Thoughts like: I am not having this or that; are the barriers. My society is like this; my country is like that; are the barriers. Just go above all these barriers. Dismiss them at once. Break all these chains one by one. Free yourself. Own your mind space. Become

absolute master of your mind space. All flights of imagination will take off on this mind space.

2. Role models as stepping stone:

Have before you the finest role models. Here also stop for a moment. Ponder; are there better role models available? Go for the better ones. Realize; that they all were and are human mortals just like you. If they could achieve, you too can. Use your role models as stepping stones. You have to surpass them. You are not competing with them. You are competing with yourself. You are going to create a higher goal post for posterity.

3. Detach and witness:

One approach may be to detach you from the world; be a witness to what is happening around and see the meaninglessness in all what has been done. You will realize the vanities of this world and laugh on it. Now once this reality has been processed properly and assimilated within; you are ready to think higher and higher, rather all your thoughts by default will be of higher order.

4. It is a continuous process:

In physics, we proved long ago; the speed of driving a car safely in the darkness depends upon the range of the headlight. Here in our context, range of headlight is the height of your thoughts. Continuously improve the strength of your headlight and move faster. By not continuously thinking high, very high, you are doing gravest injustice to yourself. You are suppressing your own infinite potential, which is longing to come out and flourish; let it flow; and give a new direction to this world.

Now when you have set your highest goal; throw yourself in the act. Whole universe will conspire to make your sublime thought a beautiful reality.



ii) How To Be Extraordinary

We all feel we are ordinary and spend our whole life living like a mediocre. This is the biggest drawback of humanity.

Is there a way to be extraordinary?

Let us examine few examples:

- Vincent Von Gogh died penniless. After his death his pieces of work were auctioned in millions of dollars.
- Michelangelo took around 4 years in completing the famed Sistine chapel.
- Thomas Edison failed 1000 times, before he could finally invent electric bulb.
- Abraham Lincoln used to have nervous breakdowns.
- Alexander The Great wept when he came to know that no more physical territories were left to conquer on earth.
- King Solomon The Wisest, did not ask money or fame, he asked wisdom from God in his dream.
- Marie Curie received 2 Noble prize and she died from the radiation of radioactive elements, she was researching on.

- Prophet Abraham had argued with his own father before he could set up three religions of this world - Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
- Masterpiece "Mathnavi" was created by Rumi. When people tried to find out the reason, it was revealed that Rumi will be engrossed in understanding the Holy Qur'an whole night.
- Goswami Tulsidas of North India wrote an epic, Ramcharitmanas. Every Hindu household in North India has at least one copy of this epic, and Tulsidas wrote it for "Swantha Sukhai", means, "for his own inner enjoyment", no aspirations for any outer recognitions.

Do you see some pattern in all these above cited examples?

Yes, pattern is there. Pattern of:

1. Passion
2. Self-satisfaction
3. Pure heart

- Extraordinary people are extremely passionate. They set very high targets and strive to achieve them.

- Extraordinary people are self-satisfied. Means, there is no craving for rewards. Self-satisfied people live in present, they flow. They are their own competitors.

Once King Akbar heard one singer and remarked, how he is able to sing sweeter than my court singers? His minister replied, court singers sing for you, he is singing for God.

Extraordinary people have a higher calling.

- Yes, without pure heart, no one can become extraordinary. This is must. Extraordinary people have pure heart. Remember pastor Gregor Mendel?

When anyone imbibes these three qualities, passion, self-satisfaction and pure heart, he is on the path to become an extraordinary.

We all are made from stardust. We are extraordinary since birth. We have spark of divinity within. It is just that we have to recognize it, harness it and live our every moment in that extraordinary state.

It is said, Alexander had divinity within. In our contemporary world, we feel Paris Hilton, the multifaceted personality carries a spark of divinity within and radiates the whole world around her.

Why be ordinary, when we can be extraordinary.



iii) How To Become A Top Performer

Every employee aspires to get the “Top Performer” rating in the annual performance appraisal. But in the heat of our daily routine activities, we miss this target, and at the time of appraisal we become anxious about our rating.

We have devised a simple **DART** model. If you follow this simple model throughout the year, getting the “Top Performer” honor will be an easy task. Model is as follows:

Decide:

Identify what is the top rating score of annual appraisal in your organization. In most of the organization it will be 5 on the scale of 1 to 5. No. 1 will be for the poorest and 5 will be for the best. Forget all other ratings; just remember the no. 5, as if there are no other ratings in the organization. Take a vow to get this top rating only. Fix your target very clearly in your mind.

Act:

Know the priorities and mental makeup of your boss and work accordingly. Know the values of the organization; surpass them. Normally you will be rated relatively; hence know what your other colleagues are producing become better than them. Give your 100 percent in your job, and a little bit extra. Know the KRAs (Key Result Areas) of your next level designation and try to stretch to reach those levels.

Review:

Keep a performance journal. Every evening please review your own performance. Every day you should be surpassing your overall KRAs. See, where you are missing your KRAs.

Tweak:

During the year you will be facing a lot of challenges, tweak your actions accordingly.

In the first attempt you may miss achieving the coveted honor, no problem. Just review the causes and take remedial actions. Once you start getting the top honor, it will become a part of your habit. Aristotle said long ago, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Hope our **DART** is hitting the target. What do you say?

C) Nuggets



i) Why Software Project Fails

Software projects failing are very common in any software company. We will take a real example as a case and analyze:

It was a rich Indian software start-up. Company got order from another new-start-up based in USA. Company was developing a very complex product, a kind of router box for the client.

A greenhorn senior manager was hired for the project. Team was poached from various other companies. Salary was not a constraint; everybody in the team was paid above industry average. Even handsome joining bonus was offered.

There were roughly 15 team members. Modules were assigned to team members and all team members were working on their assigned task. There were a lot of fun activities. TGIF parties, beer, outings, a lot of perks; life was really wonderful.

But slowly, there was confusion. As team started moving into deep water, they were lost. Everybody could see only his piece, not the whole picture. Conceptual integrity was missing. When there were questions raised about the overall functioning of the box, no concrete answers were coming from team members and managers.

In-between, client managers visited India office, a lot of pep-talk happened. ESOP letters were given to individual members to "motivate" the team. Client team was clearly told that there is lack of conceptual integrity in the project, but concerns were dismissed.

There was nobody responsible for process management. Senior-most manager was hard-core technical who could not appreciate the process related issues. Software engineering principles were missing from the project. No proper software tools were provided. Turf

war was being played between managers. People managers were given the task of coding and testing, they started leaving.

A few half-backed modules were developed. Heroic efforts of a few individuals were rewarded too. But the overall elephant (router box) was not able to stand-up.

Top management was not serious from the beginning itself. Review meetings will happen; issues will be raised, but no action will be taken. Nobody took charge of the situation. Leadership was an unknown word in the project as well as in the organization.

And one day, came the much anticipated dreaded news: project is scrapped. During final review meeting, fingers were raised on each other, verbal duel ensued and the finally the last meeting too had to be ended in-between.

VP left the organization on some lame excuse; managers slowly started leaving the organization. CEO got another job. Senior Manager of the project joined some other start-up as a "Technical Member". Finally, the company was sold-off. Story ends here.

After few months, one fine day, when the web-site of the client organization was browsed, a banner on their web-site appeared saying "We are closed...".

RIP Project, RIP Organizations.



ii) Office Party: Don't Cook Your Career in Bonfire

It is party time. Everybody loves party. But hang on. It is Office Party. Many executives have destroyed their career in the office party bonfire. Do not be one of them.

1. Please remember it is party but it is a “office” party. You have to understand, very clearly office party is not thrown for fun. It is a properly planned official event, having some outcome in mind.

2. Please try to decipher the reason of office party. Parties are thrown for various reasons. May be there is too much attrition, may be management wants to take you out to reduce your stress levels of the work etc.

3. Please avoid going to any office party. If you can avoid please never go to office party ever. This is the golden rule.

4. If you have to attend the office party, just be extremely reserved. Never assume that since it is a party you can simply let down your hair and indulge. Just go to party for 10 minutes, shake hands with bosses and colleagues, sip cold drink and simply find an excuse and come back. DJ, stripper, wine, lights, camera etc. All are there to trap you. Just run away from all these vices.

5. If you have to spend more time, just watch others, don't become a showpiece for others. Please remember whatever you do in office party will be noticed very minutely and next day in office you will be labelled accordingly. Just dance in the party, and next day in office you will be greeted with comment “You enjoyed very well, Mr. Dancer”. You

drink too much and vomit. Rest assured, when corporate communication sends a mail about party your name will be mentioned in that mail, in **Bold Black** letters.

6. Avoid taking your spouse and kids in the party. Office is for you and office party is for you. Do not invite all your kith and kin in the office party. It will become a gossip topic next day in the office.

7. Never ever invite anybody to dance with you. DJ, wine, loud music, smoke, good food and all around smart, young people. It is tempting to down your guards. In excitement, you approach somebody for dance floor, and she makes a fuss of it. You are simply writing your own pink slip.

8. Office parties are sometimes thrown to understand the underlying currents. Management wants to know, what is cooking; hence sumptuous meal is cooked in party; it is not for your taste buds.

9. Do not discuss office party next day in the office. Do not waste your time in seeing the party photographs, discussing the food, discussing who did what. It is all useless, and you are giving impression that you were very much interested in the office party. Just forget it.

10. Analyze what happened in the party. Analyze your behavior and others behavior, and take lessons.

In summary office party is not a party; it is an extension of office, just with a different approach and ambiance. You have to take care of yourself extremely well in the atmosphere; else you will slip and sip your career with it.



iii) Moonlighting

A new word is in circulation - Moonlighting.

Let us analyze.

A) What is moonlighting?

In simple words, it means taking up parallel business / job activities while you are on pay roll of any employer as a permanent and full time employee.

B) How it happens?

Many employees will run small business, like restaurant, franchise business etc. mostly in the name of their relatives or sometimes directly in their names.

A few audacious will run almost parallel shop, that too in the same industry.

Sometimes, employees will get part time assignment with other companies and work as freelancer.

This is all moonlighting.

BTW, when senior management will login into their Demat account and do trading for hours in office hours, from office... that too is a kind of mini moonlighting.

C) Why employees do moonlighting?

Employees do it knowingly. They want to prove themselves smart and want to have parallel stream of revenue. Just in case...

Many a times, employees take up moonlighting in the area of business to get a feel of market and if it clicks, goodbye to employer.

D) What employers are saying?

Employers normally don't like moonlighting. They expect you to be on their roll 24/7, 365 years a day.

It is a fact that moonlighting employees, misuse office assets, including office time.

E) Where is the problem?

Employees say, you cannot treat us as slave. We are giving output, that's it. In our free time, after office hours, we are free to do anything.

Employers are not amused.

Per media reports, one Indian IT company Wipro even termed moonlighting as cheating, another company, Infosys termed it "double lives" in internal memo to employees.

So both sides are in a face-off mode.

F) Solutions:

In a changing world scenario, no employee can be at the mercy and whims of any employer. Employees want to have other source of income. What will happen, if one day, company says - we are restructuring, due to market conditions... we are letting you go. Thank you.

It is simple. Good companies should allow moonlighting, while making sure that employees don't use office assets and don't work in the same field, or worst for competitors.

Employers must ask employees to disclose moonlighting assignments and let them continue with parallel business or job opportunities.

Employees must voluntarily disclose moonlighting and should not use company assets.

G) Side effects:

During your appraisal, your manager will taunt you in a subtle way about your moonlighting and you will burn inside.

Your colleague will ask, Hey John, how is your restaurant doing? (And will make sure the whole hall is listening.)

Even if you are giving 100%, managers will be wary of giving you important projects.

And all these will be so subtle, it will be visible to naked eyes, but can't be proved.

Business world is not yet mature in developing economies.



iv) Comparing The Incomparable: Coders and MBAs

There is an eternal debate about the Coders and MBAs. Most of the time, people take sides and punch other without proper analysis.

To my mind, both are simply incomparable. Both work in almost totally different space.

Let us analyze. There is no comparison between Coders and MBAs.

Coders:

- Work in defined space
- There are set rules, he/she has to follow
- So-called innovation is there but very limited
- Work with machine, which cannot respond/ react
- Even you are an extreme introvert having zero leadership qualities, you can work on machine and move on

MBAs:

- Work in almost undefined space
- No set rules to get the work done
- Every major decision demands innovation
- Work with people, who can respond/ react in real time
- You have to be a REAL Leader to get the work done.

Anybody who is Engg. (Comp. Sc.) + MBA (2 years, full time), and have worked in both areas can simply say, they are incomparable.

MBAs are MBAs, whatever people may say. **MBA is the degree of degrees!**

Want your company to become Great, hire just 2 finest MBAs and assign them 100 finest coders. That's it.



v) Employee Is THE Organization

Think organization, and you see it in the form of a pyramid. Chairman at the top; janitors at the lowest rung. All others finding place in between these two rungs. You are always told; organization is above you. First is organization, then department and only then you; the employee.

I have a different take. I am demolishing this myth, and reversing this age old pyramid concept. To my mind, employee is the organization.

Let us analyze. Take an example of Software Company. By evening, when all the employees leave the organization, what remains in the organization; mere fancy walls; beautiful tables, chairs, cabinets, ACs... and you can add on the list. All are useless things.

It is the software engineer, which makes a software giant, a giant. It is the civil engineer and architect which make a world class civil engineering company. It is the best mechanical designer which makes the finest engineering company.

Organization just provides the platform to all these intellectuals to conceive, create and implement their finest ideas. Ideas, which are generated in their minds.

All the organizations of this world will be nothing if their employees do not report to work in the morning.

Now why this concept, that organization is bigger than employee is propagated? Answer is simple; organization has their own agendas, and they wish that you are always subservient to the agendas of the organization and continuously work for the attainment of the agendas of your organization.

Before I part with this piece, let me remind you that even nation is below you. As a citizen of any nation, you can renounce the citizenship of that nation. So if all the citizens of any nation renounce their citizenship, technically that nation will cease to exist. This is your power... You the Single Employee, the Single Citizen... **Just realize it.**



vi) Forget TGIF, Say TGIM

A lot has been written about celebrating Friday in corporate world. All employees look forward to Friday eagerly. **Forget TGIF.** Now it is time to say **TGIM. Thank God it is Monday!** Yes, Monday. Let us see why:

1. On Monday morning you prepare for your corporate world. You go to work, and indulge in creative and intellectual activities.
2. You get a chance to meet all your colleagues.
3. You get a chance to face your boss.
4. You add one more day into your wonderful professional career.
5. Monday gives you an opportunity, when you can impress your colleagues and bosses through your wonderful presentation.
6. Monday is the day, when you start earning your livelihood.
7. Oh, yes, if someone special is there in office you can meet her/him.
8. If Monday is not there, then there is no week. If no week, then there is no month. If there is no month, there is no year. Logically... no life. Life will come to standstill.
9. If there is no Monday, there won't be any creation in the world.
10. Last but not the least; it is Monday only which brings Friday.

So just jump from your bed, and say... Hurray... TGIM!



vii) Unions For IT Professionals In India

In the aftermath of various media reports of layoffs of “nonperforming” employees by an India based IT Services company, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) various forums are advocating the creation of unions for IT sector employees under the existing Labor Laws and related laws.

It is a fact that India has become a IT superpower especially in the IT services. Millions of employees are working in the IT and ITES sector and earning foreign revenue for the nation and contributing substantially towards the growth of GDP. Till now there are no proper forum for the redressal of issues related to employment of IT sector employees, and now clamor for the creation of unions for IT employees is gaining ground.

Before I venture further, we need to understand that there is a huge difference between the traditional labor intensive industries and IT sector:

- Labor of IT sector is knowledge worker.
- IT sector is dominated by private sector.
- In IT sector MNC organizations are highly involved.
- IT sector dynamics are very-very different than the conventional sectors.
- IT Sector is highly strategic, high wealth creator and image builder of the nation at the international level

Applying the existing statutory laws for knowledge worker is not appropriate. Application of traditional concept of “unions” in the IT sector is also undesirable and may prove counterproductive. We need to work on the labor laws for knowledge worker from scratch and create a more positive, participating and self-regulatory concept of Representative Groups for IT Sector.

Our draft framework guidelines:

1. **Knowledge worker should be defined in the context of the industry. It can include IT, BT and ITES employees.**
2. **Creation of separate labor law and related statutory laws for the Knowledge Worker.**
3. Labor department should be sanitized as per the new laws.
4. **Instead of Unions, Representative Groups can be created.**
5. **We need to have separate Knowledge Worker Forums, on the line of Labor Courts.**
6. Presiding officer of these forums should be preferably from the IT sector.
7. There should be mandatory internal dispute redressal system in big companies. For small companies there can be a common dispute redress system.
8. **All the disputes should be first taken to the internal dispute redressal system.**
9. When the dispute is not sorted out internally; only then the aggrieved party can approach the Knowledge Worker Forum.
10. Scope of matters to be taken up at the forum should be very limited.
11. Knowledge Worker Forum will mandatorily seek the reports of the case from the internal team.
12. **Knowledge Worker Forum will act as arbitrator.**
13. All the cases which are reaching to superior courts should be solved primarily through arbitration.
14. **Speed, conciliation and up-to-date understanding of the IT sector are very important for the forum.**
15. **Whole system should be created on self-regulatory basis.**
16. Initially forums can be set up in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

For everything there is a time, and I think time for creating a proper forum for IT sector has arrived. As the industry is maturing, it will be for the overall good of the industry that it should come forward and frame the regulations under the aegis of the government.



viii) Swearing At Work Place

Worst thing any employee can experience in the work place is – swearing by the bosses. In many companies it becomes the part of the culture. From Manager to CEO to Owner, all indulge in swearing. Needless to say, it destroys the company from within.

Let us analyze.

Why bosses swear:

There are many reasons. Bosses feel they are the lord of the place, their power goes into their mind and they start using filthy language. Since the senior bosses are using profane language, junior bosses assume it is alright to use the same kind of language and they indulge in profanity.

For few, it is fashionable to use profane language. Cultural disconnect also plays a role. Many times bosses feel if they use filthy language it will fire up the employees and they will start falling in line. For few bosses since their upbringing was not refined, it became their habit and they carry the same bad habit to work place. A few bosses, might be going through the rough patches in their personal lives and out of frustration they yell at the employees and use abusive language.

Worst happens when the owner of the company himself starts using abusive language. In this situation, all just bear helplessly.

Impact on employees:

Whatever may be the reason, it is simply disastrous for the employees and in turn for the organization. Employees get disengaged. They start searching new jobs. Their productivity

level goes down. They do not take initiatives. They do not raise even the valid concern. Few sensitive employees may fall sick or even commit suicide.

Highest impact is on the person, against whom the abuse is directed. But others too feel humiliated. They fear that if today it was the other person, in next meeting he can be the target.

If the employee who is the target of the abusive language retorts in the same coin, situation can go out of control. Employee may initiate legal action against the individual boss as well the organization.

How to control:

It all starts with the culture and ends with the culture of the company. HR Managers and CEO should take lead in creating a no-swearing culture in the company. If CEO or the owner himself indulges in this bad practice, external help may be taken.

Individual employee should never accept the swearing at work place. He or she should raise the objection. Since in meetings, all keep quiet, such tendencies increase. Once a few employees will start objecting, the abuser will get the message and will mend his ways.

Individual bosses who slip into this trench easily should reflect and take actions to stop it over a period of time.

Swearing at work place is a big no-no. All efforts should be taken to ensure that a clear message is going to all the bosses that swearing is not acceptable and will be dealt severally.



ix) Do Not Be In Awe

Hardly any day goes, when I do not read stories written in total awe of big corporates and their high flying executives. Apple, Google, Yahoo, Microsoft etc. (just to name a few) dominate the conversations. When it comes to corporate celebrities, Steve Jobs, Merissa Mayer (just a few names) are almost top of the mind.

Locally also, this practice is common. Every nation will have some big corporates and their cult figures, and then whole nation will cringe before them. We have a few in India. There is Infosys, Wipro, Tata etc., and celebrities like Narayan Murthy, Azim Premji, Ratan Tata etc. (Just a few examples)

It is accepted fact that these companies are doing wonderfully well and their executives/founders too have slogged long and created a niche for themselves. No doubt these organizations and their executives set a benchmark for others to emulate. No dispute.

But what worries me most is not the respect; it is the awe with which these companies and their executives are considered, even at the cost of degrading ourselves.

Let us be clear, **there is nothing more important than YOU**. All the finest organizations of the world are conceived, run and developed by the people like YOU. Remove the people from any organization and what will remain in the organization; mere fancy walls, some fancy equipment and fancy carpet; all completely useless things.

A few organizations would make so big noise about their hiring process and number of applications they get, that a common mortal will even dread sending his/her CV to such

companies. Some proclaim we are getting millions of applications, hiring only a few thousand. Peers, colleagues, bosses and even global CEO will take the Interview. It is all right. Relax. After all, in all the organizations only humans work, not aliens.

Most funny thing; we have very high standards in hiring. We set our bar very high. Fine. But ultimately only humans are working with you not aliens again.

Please do not be in awe of any company or any executive. **Let your standards be higher than any organization of the world.** Go with the attitude, you are going to make that organization. If they are hiring you, they are lucky.

Please do not misunderstand me. Do respect the best organizations, but above all respect YOURSELF. **You the center of the universe. You are the conceiver, creator and executioner of whatever was created in this world, whatever is being created and whatever will be created. Nothing is above YOU.**

On Monday morning, when you put your feet on floor, do you know? One whole planet is below your feet; and you live in awe of few organizations and their executives. **Never.**



x) Employees And Automation

As per media reports, a leading Indian IT Services Company, Wipro is giving thrust to automation and by this, they expect to reduce their headcount by whooping 47,000 in three years. It is almost 30 percent of their total current headcount.

So many other Indian IT services companies are also on the same path and wish to control their headcount and improve their overall efficiency through this route. It is a welcome move. But such news throws a lot of questions too:

1. At one had companies say, employees are our biggest asset, on the other they try to reduce the workforce as much as possible. It is like; CEO of company goes in town hall meeting and declares, "You employees, you are our biggest assets.", and immediately after this meeting he rushes to a presentation by some automation company, which are selling the concept, through which the company can reduce its workforce by 20 percent, and the CEO asks, can't be it 40 percent.

It simply proves, that organizations are misleading the employees. Employees are not the biggest assets. Fact is: **Employees are the biggest assets, till their jobs are automated.**

2. This also proves that so many softer aspects of the organization like; leadership, motivation, culture etc. are a burden on the organization. Organization does not need employees, and hence all such people centric concepts are useless liabilities.

3. Companies are not able to automate completely, else they will automate 100 percent and there would not be a single soul within the organization.

4. This concept if extrapolated can prove that in future there will be only founder of the company in flesh and blood, rest all be automation tools, and robots.

What employees can do:

1. Accept the fact, that you are not the biggest asset. You are in the job till your functionality is not automated.

2. Do not get threatened by your organization that they will automate your job. You, yourself suggest to your manager that how your job can be automated. Manager and organization can not threaten and blackmail you any longer.

3. Have varied skill set, so that once your brother robot takes over from you, you can move to some other job happily.

So next time, you hear your CEO proclaiming, that you are the biggest asset of the organization, just smile and add, till my job is automated!



xi) Corporate Gifts

In festive seasons, a lot of corporate gifts are exchanged between business entities. Have you ever paused and reflected on the issue? If without reflection you are accepting or giving gift, please pause and reflect.

Any gift which is given as a quid-pro-quo is not a gift. It is pure and simple bribe.

If an outsourcing company gifts a mobile handset, car, television or holiday package etc. to its clients, it is simply a bribe. Period.

Even simple and harmless gifts are also given subtly to influence you.

In one of a company, its outsourcing partner will come with a few packets of cookies. He will distribute the cookies to all the managers and employees. Shamelessly managers and employees will enjoy the cookies. I could clearly see the mischief in the eyes of the outsourcing company manager. His eyes were simply saying, see, how I am fooling these men just by throwing a few packets of cookies.

One outsourcing company was doing extremely lousy job. During festival season their manager brought sweet packets for all the managers of client company. That poor fellow, instead of improving his level of services, was banking on sweet packets for his business to flourish.

Unfortunate situation is that even companies and their managers and executives accept such "bribes" openly, without any remorse. They even expect such gifts on such occasions.

Ideally company should have a clear cut policy about giving and accepting the gifts. Simple greeting cards, flower bouquet and non-expensive mementos should be the best ones to be in gift list.

Best gift for your client is: Good Work. There cannot be any substitute for good work. If your company thinks that by giving expensive gifts to your clients you can earn more business or continue in the business, no doubt you may do so, but you are not doing business, you are running a mafia.

For individual, it will be best policy, never to accept any gift at all. Even a kilogram sweet box is a bribe. Nothing less nothing more.

Never give any gift, thinking of its return value. That is not a gift; that is a bribe.

For a person like me, even your sweetest sweet box will be bitterest one and will boomerang on your business.

D) Be A Leader



i) Where Are The Wise Leaders?

Corporate world is always looking for Leaders. Reams after reams are written on Leadership qualities. Go to any bookshop you will get hundreds of titles on Leadership. Millions are spent on Leadership training and workshops.

Yes, we do have Leaders among us. Biggest MNCs and biggest countries are run by Leaders.

But hold on. There are lot of Leaders, but rarely **Wise Leaders**.

Let us see some real life scenarios:

1. You are doing research on some company. You see statement given by the MD of the company that through VRS (Voluntary Retirement Scheme) he was able to get rid of around 300 employees and through this means, he is making his company profitable... This statement is given with pride.
2. You try calling on the board line of the company, nobody picks up the phone ever. One day you visit the office personally and meet a GM. During the discussion you tell him that for almost one year their board numbers are not working. GM replies that the receptionist took VRS and they did not depute anybody in her place...No remorse for not doing the simplest thing in the organization.
3. You are traveling in train. Two village Headmen are also travelling in the same coupe. One headman picks up his mobile and calls the local political leader, and tells him that he has submitted a tender for some construction work, and he wants that work should be

awarded to him. Another headman picks up his mobile and talks to some other local politician and pleads that the strict officer who is posted in his area should be side-lined... No remorse.

In all these three scenarios, the subjects are Leaders. **But are they wise Leaders? Answer is: NO.** Whether corporate world, or society, we are getting mere leaders.

What we want is: Wise Leaders.

Wise Leaders work as lighting house for the corporate world and for the society. They give proper direction to the world and humanity. Alas we have a lot of MDs, GMs and Village Headmen but rarely Wise Leaders.



ii) Time for New Year Resolution

A brand New Year is approaching. As usual we all make resolutions for New Year. We will do this; we won't do that. We will achieve this and that. As many individuals, so many resolutions. It is all good. But do you know, what can be the finest resolution for your new year? It is very simple – **Become a Leader.**

All over the world, we have millions of Managers, title holders like VP, Executive Vice-President, President, CEO, COO, MD and Chairman. In our family life we have roles of father, mother, brother and sister etc. In society we have Priests. All are abundant. What is missing and is highly required is Leader.

Do not settle for anything less than a Leader. Have a resolution that you will hone your Leadership qualities, every day, every moment and in every interaction.

Becoming a Leader is simple. Just start practicing the following:

1. **Reduce your wants:** Do not run too much for materialistic wealth and pleasures. Live a simple life.
2. **Stop comparing yourself with anybody:** You are unique. Just be happy with yourself.
3. **Ponder on the higher thoughts:** Who are you, what is your place in this cosmos, what you are achieving, what will you take with you etc. All such questions will always keep you grounded.
4. **Think beyond your own cocoon:** There is world beyond your wife and your two kids. Think and do whatever you can do for the society, your nation and ultimately for your mother earth. Go beyond all man made virtual boundaries.
5. **Find your value system, refine it continuously and live it.** Find your rudder and live by that.

Becoming a Leader, can be the finest and most important resolution for New Year. So what are you waiting for? Have a resolution and start rehearsing from now only. All the best to you, in your journey towards becoming a Wonderful Leader!



iii) Becoming A Great Leader

Everyone is a Leader. But you can become a **Great** Leader.

To my mind every leader shows the following five characteristics:

1. Character
2. Competence
3. Discipline
4. Vision
5. They create future.

But how can you become a Great Leader?

Answer is simple, you need to transform. People say, leadership is created daily. I beg to differ. Leadership is created moment by moment. Leadership is created thought by thought. Every moment you have to be aware. Every thought should be positive.

Following 10 steps will help you in transformation:

1. Take care of your character: Your character is The foundation of your leadership. Every moment you have to take care of it. Character is the inner light which shines through from a Great Leader.

2. Break All the barriers: Be above any shackles. Shackles of caste, creed, religion, region etc. The more shackles you are able to break, higher will be your leadership influence.

Think like a global citizen, think like a spiritual person. Nearer you are to your real, unalloyed, pure self, higher will be your leadership, and to reach your inner self, you will have to start breaking the barriers.

3. No bad thinking: All bad thoughts are like poison to your mind. Let no bad thought enter your pure mind. Be aware of your negative thoughts, immediately stop them. Do not process any negative thought in your mind. Just flow.

4. Be the best in whatever you do: Whether you are an entry level executive or a top manager, try to be the best in your field. Learn continuously, keep updating yourself.

5. No Procrastination: Have a disciplined life. Identify your own weaknesses and improve step by step.

6. Think for All: This is the core of Leadership. A common man thinks for himself. A Leader thinks for the masses. Break away from your cocoon, be concerned about the outer world too. Leadership is all about others.

7. Take Initiative: Leaders question the status-quo. They take initiative to change for the better. Leaders identify the problem, accept the problem and then take action to create solutions.

8. Have a refined head: Leaders have superior thought process. They think differently. Be in the company of the greatest leaders, read their works, imbibe their qualities. It will help you.

9. Have a BIG heart: Leaders have very-very big heart. Many a times they will think from the heart.

10. Feel for the people: Leadership is all about people. Put yourself in their place, see the things from their angle. When you are able to relate to your people, you will be in a better position to lead them.

Anyone can become a Great Leader. Why wait. Explode your hidden potential. Through continuous efforts you can **become a GREAT Leader.**

Yes, You Can!



iv) Become a Level 5 Leader

Everybody is a Leader. We all are continuously striving to become a better Leader. But I feel we take too much time in improving ourselves and become complacent in-between. We need to leap forward early and fast.

I was browsing through a book of John C. Maxwell in which he has described the Five Levels of Leadership.

In brief:

Level 1 Leadership is related to **Title**. We are most familiar with.

Level 2 Leadership is related to making **Relations** with the team.

Level 3 Leadership is related to getting **Results** from the team.

Level 4 Leadership is related to **Developing** the team members.

The highest **Level 5** Leaders show the following characteristics:

- 1. Your followers are loyal and sacrificial.**
- 2. You have spent years mentoring and molding leaders.**
- 3. You have become a statesman/consultant and sought out by others.**
- 4. Your greatest joy comes from watching others grow and develop.**
- 5. You transcend the organization.**

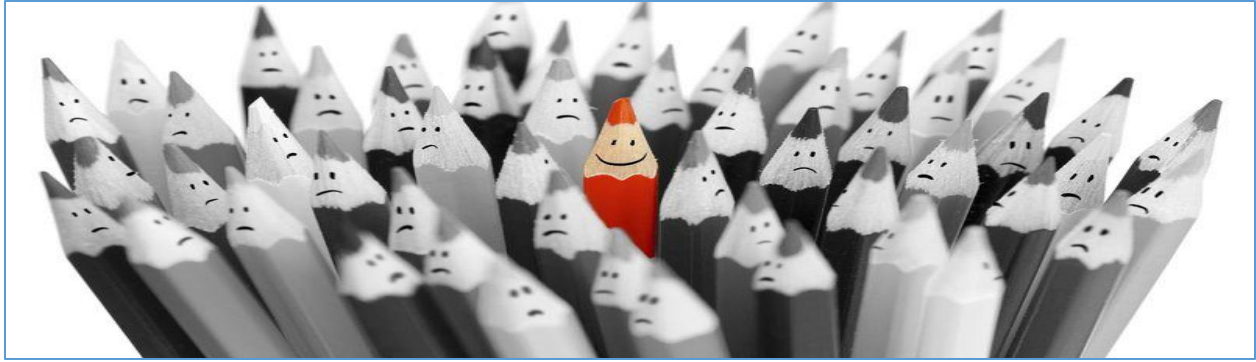
You have to go step by step to reach level 5. When at higher level, you have to show the qualities of the lower levels too.

This time instead of going through step by step, from Level 1 to Level 5, I simply tested myself on the Level 5 of Leadership. I need to work on 2 characteristics.

I believe that we have to stretch ourselves early and at full speed. We cannot wait for a day to come to reach to Level 5 Leadership. Normally what happens, in corporate hierarchy, executive does not stretch himself, he simply surrenders to the typical hierarchy of the organization and says, when the time will come, he will think higher and unfortunately in the process he losses too much time.

There is no auspicious time to try to be at Level 5 Leadership. If the time is, that time is: Now. Test yourself on Level 5 and stretch yourself daily on a continuous basis till you are perfectly aligned to the characteristics of Level 5 Leadership.

Good Luck in your journey from being a Good Leader to **A GREAT Leader!**



v) Leadership Is Not Influence

We are being taught day in and day out that Leadership is nothing but influencing. I have a different take. To my mind; **Leadership is Authenticity.**

Influence is the outcome. Authenticity is the source.

Will you ever be influenced by anybody who is not authentic? Never.

All finest of the fine Leaders of humanity were authentic to the core. Gandhi, Lincoln, Martin Luther, Buddha etc. all were authentic. Their authenticity influenced us and we followed them.

If anybody is authentic, you cannot escape being influenced by him. His presence, his words, his memory itself will be highly magnetic.

Authentic means: not false or copied; genuine; real.

Just you please feel the meaning. It is uplifting. It is sublime. It is pure. It is blissful.

Anybody who is authentic, he is with himself. He is true to himself. His thoughts, words and actions; all three are congruent. **He is.**

And when anybody merges all the artificial into one, he becomes completely pure. And from this pureness radiates the pure leadership. Leadership which will radiate the whole humanity for centuries.

Being authentic is THE virtue for being on the path of leadership. Vision, action, oratory etc. all will follow.

People having all virtues, but authenticity; can be politicians and CXOs but can never be A Leader.

Leadership which is only for quarter to quarter results will go for influence as the core of leadership.

Leadership which is for centuries and beyond any borders will go for authenticity as the core of leadership.

Choice is yours!



vi) How To Become A Thought Leader

I had sent a mail to LinkedIn requesting them to allow me publish my blog. Today I got mail from them allowing my request. Thank You LinkedIn!!

Needless to say, I am very excited and could not hold myself from writing my first post.

Where should I begin? After some thinking I decided, let me write on the topic of becoming a Thought Leader.

In my words, Thought Leader is 'A person who thinks deeply, differently and brings out new insights for the goodness of the world around.' Thought Leaders are the influencers, who have shaped all spheres of our life.

We all should aspire to become a Thought Leader and influence our surrounding. Below are some tips on how to become a Thought Leader:

- **Define the purpose** - Thought Leadership is not for intellectual gymnastic, or gaining some worldly recognition. It should be for the welfare of the mankind.
- **Have confidence that you are a Thought Leader** - Becoming a Thought Leader is a lifelong and continuous process. The day you start on this journey, you have become a thought-leader-in-making.
- **Deep thoughts generate from heart**- Purify it. Tune yourself with yourself.
- **Have wider knowledge base** - Read and imbibe the works of finest authors, philosophers and scientists.

- **Reflect** - Have some spare time every day and reflect about what you have read and experienced.
- **Disseminate your thoughts** - Collect your thoughts and write. Speak in various forums.

World has always been bereft of super Thought Leaders. Become a Thought Leader, spread your light in this wilderness of deep darkness and become a beacon for this world.



vii) Watch Your Mind

Our mind is a continuous churning machine. Even when we are silent physically, a lot of talk is happening inside our mind. A lot of random ideas and visuals are simply being splashed on our mind screen, whether we want them or not.

As an exercise, before you read further, just watch your mind. A lot of noise is constantly happening. Right?

This is unwanted noise. It affects our overall efficiency.

In morning you are brushing your teeth but thinking something, taking lunch but thinking something else, travelling in a car or train thinking something. Mind is always churning, irrespective of what actions we are doing. Worst thing is; it is without our control. This in turn reduces our overall efficiency and concentration power.

We can control this. Just Be Watchful. Concentrate on the activity you are indulging in. If you are brushing teeth, just feel it, engross yourself into it. Drinking water, feel it. Eating food, enjoy it fully, by being present in the moment.

Even when you are passing through highs and lows of emotions, just go inside you and see what is happening. You will be able to be with you, and emotions will be in control.

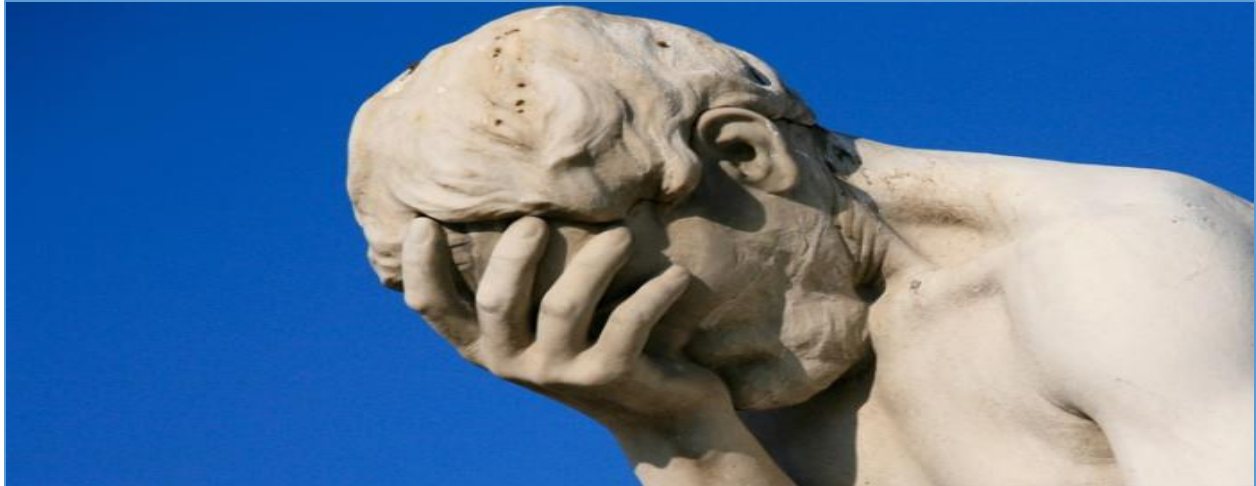
Simply being mindful will be an easy way to make it our habit. For every small action whatever you are taking, be mindful. Combing your hair; be mindful. Opening the door of your car; be mindful. Picking jars from kitchen; be mindful.

Do whatever you are doing, leaving all aside. Be fully engrossed in it.

Initially it may be little difficult, trick is: immediately go inside your mind and ask yourself what you are doing right now. Say you are taking lunch, but your mind is thinking of the next meeting; immediately go inside your mind and ask what you are doing right now. Do not put any force on the thought of the meeting to go away. Just ask and stand there. Thought of meeting will be subdued.

Make it a habit, at random go inside your mind and watch it, what it is doing. Just go and watch. No efforts required. Do not force the unwanted thoughts to go away. Automatically thoughts will be subdued and you will be having calm mind.

This is a very simple exercise; you can do it anywhere anytime, without any effort. Make it a habit of watching your mind.



viii) Technologies Could Not Save Greece. Why?

We all know that Greece is passing through worst financial crisis. As I write this article, news is trickling that a new bailout proposal has been submitted by Greece to save it from further troubles. This deep crisis throws a relevant question to all of us. Why various technologies/ technologists / MBAs could not save the country from going into this deep trouble?

Big Data, Analytics, IoT, IoE, Cloud, you name any technology, and wonderful mathematical financial models could not save the country.

All great technical minds could not help the country from going into deep recession.

Top grade MBAs from prestigious institutes could not help either.

Finest civil servants could not do anything worthwhile to save the country from this big trouble.

In summary, various latest technologies, technocrats, finest degrees and super titles, all failed. Miserably.

What was missing? Leadership. Yes, everything was there but real Leadership was missing and the results are before everybody to see.

I am not saying technologies and degrees are not useful. What I am emphasizing here that all will fail in absence of leadership. Leadership is the linchpin upon which everything else hinges.

All those individuals and corporates who drum the beats of technologies, as if various technologies are going to save this world from crisis are proved wrong. Very wrong.

Without leadership everything else will fail. Technology is a tool. Technology is a means, not an end in itself.

Wise organizations and nations understand this concept and nurture leadership.

What do you say? You will vote for Technology or Leadership?



ix) Ten Awesome Quotes On Character

Here is a list of ten awesome quotes on Character:

1. ***"Character is that which reveals moral purpose, exposing the class of things a man chooses or avoids."*** - ARISTOTLE
2. ***"In men of the highest character and noblest genius there is to be found an insatiable desire for honor, command, power, and glory."*** - CICERO
3. ***"Faced with crisis, the man of character falls back on himself."*** - CHARLES DE GAULLE
4. ***"A talent can be cultivated in tranquility; a character only in the rushing stream of life."*** - GOETHE
5. ***"Character is destiny."*** - HERACLITUS
6. ***"Character is power; it makes friends, draws patronage and support, and opens a sure way to wealth, honor and happiness."*** - JOHN HOWE
7. ***"Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open."*** - ELMER G LETERMAN
8. ***"The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out."*** - THOMAS B. MACAULAY
9. ***"If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself."*** - DWIGHT MOODY

10. "Not education, but character is man's greatest need - and man's greatest safeguard." - HERBERT SPENCER

One bonus:

1. " The most important thing for a young man is to establish a credit - a reputation and character." - JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER



x) 20 Finest Quotes on Leadership

1. ***"Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than material force, that thoughts rule the world."***

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

2. ***"There are three marks of a superior man: being virtuous, he is free from anxiety; being wise, he is free from perplexity; being brave, he is free from fear."***

CONFUCIOUS

3. ***"Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities."***

ALBERT EINSTEIN

4. ***"The truly great man is he who would master no one, and who would be mastered by none."***

KAHLIL GIBRAN

5. ***"Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people."***

HUGH C. CAMERON

6. "A man's true greatness lies in the consciousness of an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on frequent self-examinations, and a steady obedience to the rule which he knows to be right, without troubling himself about what others may think or say, or whether they do or do not that which he thinks and says and does."

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

7. "A leader is a dealer in hope."

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

8. "Real leaders are ordinary people with extraordinary determinations."

JOHN SEAMAN GARNES

9. "There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things."

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

10. "If a man be endowed with a generous mind, this is the best kind of nobility."

PLATO

11. "They are able because they think they are able."

VIRGIL

12. "Character is destiny."

HERACLITUS

13. "The most important thing for a young man is to establish a credit – a reputation, character."

JOHN D. ROCKFELLER

14. "Behavior is a mirror; in which everyone shows his image."

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

15. *"A quiet conscience sleeps in thunder."*

THOMAS FULLER

16. *"Not failure, but low aim is crime."*

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

17. *"I consider the most enviable of titles the character of an honest man."*

GEORGE WASHINGTON

18. *"Mine honor is my life; both grow in one; take honor from me and my life is done."*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

19. *"Neither man nor nation can exist without a sublime idea."*

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

20. *"The man who follows the crowd will never be followed by a crowd."*

RICHARD S. DONNELL

One bonus:

"The proof of a well-trained mind is that it rejoices in which is good and grieves at the opposite."

CICERO

E) Ups And Downs



i) How To Find The Purpose Of Life

We all are working for somebody or are self-employed. We have our personal lives and we fulfill our personal obligations daily. So we juggle daily between these two worlds - professional world and personal world. Many a times these two worlds overlap and collide and we are bewildered. Anyhow we manage and life moves on. Again after few weeks or months we fall in the same trap... Seems familiar?

Where is the problem?

Problem is we do not have clear purpose of our life. When purpose of life is not clear, life becomes ad-hoc and we face continuous turmoil in our external as well as internal world.

Have not you read many stories about high flying corporate executives committing suicide or getting involved in murky personal or professional deals? Yes, they all were successful in the eyes of world but internally they were empty, very empty, because they lacked the purpose.

What is purpose?

Put simply, if you are given six months of time to pack up from this world, what will you be willing to accomplish? It will come from deep within you.

Why purpose is important?

Living without purpose is like a blindfolded man in a forest. That man can go in rounds and rounds only. When purpose is clear, you know your final destination and you

continuously move towards that destination. Your eyes are open; above all your inner eyes are open.

How to identify your purpose?

Go within. Identify your strengths. Identify the gaps in your surroundings. Now leverage your strengths to fill-in those gaps. In first iteration you may not see your purpose clearly, but as you iterate this process continuously, that haziness will go away and clarity will start coming and finally after many iterations you will come to the clear picture of your purpose.

Gandhi found his purpose in freeing India from foreign rule. Mother Teresa found her purpose in helping the most neglected lot of society. Martin Luther found his purpose in bringing the equality.

When to find your purpose?

Whenever I talk to people about their purpose, they laugh and reply, let us live our life, for such philosophical things, we will find time after our retirement. Really? It is as good as saying, let us play first and then we will decide the rules.

Simple answer is – now.

Un-examined life is not worth living. Start examining your life on the touchstone of your purpose now.

How to test your purpose?

A lot of people say, becoming Vice President of a MNC company, earning a lot of money, having a big house and giving decent education to their kids etc. are among their purposes. For sure these are the purposes. But these are hollow purposes. Even if you achieve these purposes, in the end emptiness will be there in your life.

We are talking of sublime purpose. There is very simple test of sublime purpose, and it is:
1. The higher it is tilted towards giving to others, higher it is in its sublime factor or 2. You are creating something bigger than you.

When Lincoln abolished slavery, he was fitting the test no. 1. When Michelangelo painted the chapel, he was fitting the test no. 2. Both had higher and sublime purpose.

How to live your purpose?

You cannot live your purpose for few weeks or months. It is a calling for whole life. You have to live your purpose daily and continuously till you surpass your purpose.

A famous sculpture sculpted a wonderful piece. One admirer commented; to sculpt such wonderful piece, I would have given my life. Sculpture nodded his head and said, "yes I gave".

How to face the challenges?

When you live as per your purpose, life will be tough initially. You will face many challenges and you will have to fight. Biggest challenges will come from within. If you are able to fight the challenges from within, facing the challenges of outer world will be very easy. If you are convinced in your heart of hearts, about your purpose, over a period of time, everything will fall in place.

Gandhi can be the best example.

Ultimate benefit is so sweet.

When you live as per your purpose, life becomes a celebration. Every moment is filled with bliss. An inner light glows within you and you become one with that inner light.

We wish that for this section people should give your example.

Have you found your purpose of life?



ii) 5 Tips To The People - Who Compare!

Few days back, in my apartment it was cascading effect of shifting of flats. I shifted from 1 BHK flat to two separate room setting. Somebody occupied my flat; in turn his flat was occupied by someone else. Naturally when we moved, our all household items, furniture items and office gadgets were moved. What shocked me; people were comparing each other's household items. He has too much items. He has this item, he has that item etc.

Worst was; people who have just started their career or family life, were comparing and envious of the household items of people who spent their 20 years in corporate life and having full-fledged family. It is but natural that such families will have large number of household items and may be a lot of items will be costly also. I was aghast to say the least.

Comparison is the emperor of maladies in humankind. It is not just household items; people are living their whole life on comparisons. His salary is more, his car is bigger, his house is bigger, and his kids are more intelligent ... endless list.

People compare throughout their life. During student life they will compare grades, during campus recruitment they will compare CTC (Cost-To-Company), during their corporate life they will compare their job-titles, during their fifties they will compare the success of their kids, and later on they will compare their achievements of whole life. Alas, whole life gone in comparisons.

Here are few tips to get cured from this dreaded malady:

1. Never compare: You are unique; your abilities are unique. Respect yourself, what you are and what you have achieved. Live an absolute life; without any comparisons. You will lead a divine life if you are able to lead a life without comparisons.

2. Wish to compare, compare with who are below than you: If you wish to compare your materialistic achievements, make a habit of comparing yourself with the people who are less fortunate. You will be always happy.

3. Comparison is an endless process: Comparison is endless. If you have a big car, somebody will be having a bigger car. If you have got bigger car, somebody will be having a fleet of bigger car. If you get fleet of bigger cars, in your city somebody will be roaming in helicopter. You get the picture. There will always be somebody who will be having more than you, in one way or other. There is not end of comparison. You will never be happy, because in chasing others, at every goal, you will see somebody else ahead of you. You will be just playing the comparison game and end your life miserably. You will be never at peace with yourself.

4. Stop others comparing yourself: Either you compare yourself, or others compare yourself with others. Stop comparing yourself and do not allow others to compare yourself with others. The moment somebody starts comparing yourself with others, just interrupt and say, sorry, no comparisons please.

5. For this competitive world, compare yourself with yourself: Many a times people say that if they do not compare than, how can they grow in life. It is a false belief. Wish to be competitive, compare yourself with yourself. Every day you should be better than what you were yesterday. You are your own competitor; not your siblings, relatives, friends, colleagues or some handful of other people.

Wish to live a godly life; live an absolute life. Contented with what you have around, and above all, what you are!



iii) Fighting War Against Corruption In India

In a surprise move 10 days ago the government of India demonetized currency notes of 500 and 1000 denominations. The main argument submitted by the government was that this move will curb black money floating in the market and help it in fighting the scourge of corruption as well as reduce black money being used against the interests of our nation by terrorist organizations.

There was immense euphoria on the day of announcement, but as days passed and reality started settling in, that euphoria converted into frustration, chaos and even warrants of death. From pavement to parliament there was anger. There was immense suffering of common man and above all nobody was sure of any real benefit that this huge sudden announcement would yield except some initial days of false feel-good factor.

We had taken our stand at the outset and had questioned the wisdom behind such an ill-conceived move, which has too much noise but little substance. A common argument given by masses as well as the so-called intellectuals is that it is a fight against corruption. It is just about inconvenience for a few days, after which everything will be fine. Sorry. This is not the way to eradicate deep entrenched malady of corruption from the society. It is a long haul process.

Let us analyze.

A common perception among people is that corruption is related to financial crimes and strict actions by the law enforcing agencies will cleanse the society of its corruption. Yes,

it is true, but partially true. Corruption does not only relate to economic and related criminal activities, it has larger connotations and affects every aspect of our life. Corruption is like Delhi smog which engulfs everything at once and hampers the growth of society. Corruption acts like a lid that obstructs the development of our society. It chains down and limits the potential for growth.

Corruption is a disease of the soul. People indulge in corruption because of their low frequency of thought process. Rampant corruption decays the soul of a nation. The medicine for this disease is higher consciousness of citizens in a country. So if we have to remove the corruption, then we have to raise the collective consciousness of the nation in a systematic way.

We have designed a simple framework/prototype to eradicate corruption from the society. It has the following 5 phases:

1. Set a well-defined goal:

We cannot reach anywhere, until we know our destination. So as the first step, government should set a measurable goal. As per the latest Transparency International report, India stands at 76th position in the corruption perception index among the list of 168 countries, scoring only 38 points. While the least corrupt country Denmark scored 91 points. Set yearly goal of improving in this rating. Within a fixed time frame we need to set a goal aiming to become the least corrupt country by scoring more than 91 points. We need to set an audacious goal and work to achieve it.

This goal should be devised in the form of law. It should continue with successive governments without any politics or manipulation by any specific party. Having a corruption free nation is related to the fundamental rights of its citizens. Amend the constitution and get this vision incorporated into the constitution. Have a clear cut blue print at federal level and extend it to state level according to their strengths and weaknesses. So now we know our destination and direction and people can see our report card.

2. Development is the key:

Normally people feel that fighting corruption is related to taking coercive actions against rogues. We have a different approach. Holistic development of our citizens is a very strong tool in fighting against corruption. It is more potent than the dire coercive actions. It acts as a solid preventive measure against corrupt activities.

Providing better education, giving thrust to entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity, creating avenues of employment, poverty alleviation programs, taking affirmative actions for gender equality, giving space to LGBT community, improving communal harmony, respecting diversity, no appeasement policy, holistic development of citizens, improvement in the self-esteem of its citizens, inculcations of strong values and principles of honesty, integrity, fairness, openness and transparency in its citizens, strong and independent media and vocal civil society, strong environmental laws and strict implementation of rule of law etc. are far more powerful weapons in the hands of government against fighting corruption.

This development engine hits at the root cause of corruption and nips the problem in bud. It creates the real wealth for our nation. Overall development happens in the spheres of music, poetry, literature, innovation and reason based original thinking. There is harmony in society. People are transparent and tolerant of opposite views. The collective consciousness of the masses is at a higher level.

For example, let us assume one fictional character Divya in our story. Divya's father is a Lower Divisional Clerk in Bangalore. Now see, what has happened. Since the government has spread awareness and strengthened strict rules against sex determination, Divya was not killed before taking birth. Her parents were not keen to send her to school, but on nudging from her younger uncle since local girl's schools are available she could get proper education. There are strict rules against eve teasing, hence she could roam with her head held high and carry on her activities, without losing the productivity of few days in being in-doors due to fear of road side Romeos. After completing her schooling, with the support of government assistance programs she got through in an engineering college. Divya preferred non veg food and no questions were asked. Divya was free to dress up the way she wanted to and spend time with her friends and nobody cribbed. In engineering college, she did very well in academics as well in her extra-curricular activities. Since several employment opportunities are available, she got a decent job. Since government had made strict rule against dowry demand, she got married to a gentleman without dowry and she is living happily.

Divya is earning a handsome salary and paying taxes to the government. There is no discrimination against lady executives in corporate world and with her hard work Divya can rise up to higher echelons in her organization.

After working for two years, since several entrepreneurship opportunities are available, Divya obtained seed funding from government assistance programs and commenced her own small business of garments for kids. Over a period of time Divya's brand gained popularity and performing well in the market. She is employing 100 workers. Various government agencies are offering Divya assistance and support in running her business.

She continues to pay her taxes on time, which are going into the coffers of the government and government in turn is ploughing back the money for the creation of a new Divya and the cycle repeats.

Could you see a beautiful picture? Yes, this is the real work of a good government - to enable its citizens to realize their dreams as per their capabilities. This is THE most potent weapon in the fight against any form of corruption.

Now over a period of time if due to some reasons, Divya starts deviating from the righteous path and does not pay her taxes well, what to do? For that government will have to prepare a robust system to deal with the new rouge avatar of Divya, which is described in next phase.

3. Have proper control systems in place:

Various path-breaking reforms are required for an efficient control system. Political reform is the most important reform for a nation like India. You ask anybody who are most corrupt; invariably politicians will be at the first position. Fish rots from the head, and corrupt politicians are the head of this fish, irrespective of any political party. Majority are corrupt, minority honest are side-lined. Transparency, openness, intention of selfless service, opening the books of accounts of parties, discouraging entry of criminals into politics, discouraging entry of unscrupulous businessman in the politics are few very important steps to curb the fish from rotting.

Next is the judicial reform. To keep rouge politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen in check, very strong judiciary is needed. Inordinate delay in getting justice should come under purview of corruption. Number of courts should be increased and extremely efficient judges should be appointed especially in the higher judiciary. Independence of higher judiciary should be maintained at any cost. Concept of having "committed judiciary" should be crushed with iron hands by the judiciary itself. Speedy justice should be the norm. Prosecution branch should be separated and it should be very strong. It should be professional, well equipped and men and women of high integrity should be appointed at the prosecution branch who will pursue to conclude the case without any fear or favor.

Executive limb of the constitution should be made accountable. This is the limb which interacts with the common citizenry on a daily basis. Corruption of everyday life is created by the executive limb. Zero tolerance policy should be adopted for removing the corruption from this limb. Executive limb should not work merely as post office and for extracting bribe from common people.

Having proper checks and balances between these three limbs of the constitution is very important. The moment it tilts; it creates havoc with the overall system losing balance. It should be self-imposed. Strong media and strong civil society should work as a watchdog and raise issues whenever the system seems to tilt and should force the system to be in sync.

For our corporate world, simplification of procedures, crushing the monopoly, breaking the politician-bureaucrat-businessman nexus, tackling systemic corruption and creating very strong corporate watchdogs with deep teeth will act as a deterrent against corrupt practices. Encouraging entrepreneurship at grass root level will help in long term as it will help in creating employment and wealth and reduce the economic disparity and monopoly of a few business houses. High corruption prone areas like real estate, mining, infrastructure, telecom, etc. should be cleaned up on priority basis.

Honest individuals and honest business entities should be promoted and encouraged. They should be showcased as role models in the society.

Digitization will help in curbing the corruption to a very large extent as well as it will improve the efficiency of overall system. In a time bound method, digitization projects should be undertaken and almost everything should be brought under digitization.

Now you will say, it is alright but to do all these things government needs money. From where will it come? Answer is very simple. Our development engine and control engine are related to each. They feed each other. The more government feeds the development engine, the more people will create wealth and pay taxes to the government. More money will flow into the control engine. To increase the speed of our development engine, government should thrust and encourage high value creation activities. As the control engine is able to get higher inputs, government will be able to increase the size of these two engines in a gradual process. We will have higher literacy levels and more people will get jobs. These people will become wealth creators and they will feed the control engine through various taxes and the cycle will continue.

Now let us continue with our Divya's story. If Divya purchases expensive items, the authorities will come to know since the tracking processes are in place and the executive wing is working properly, therefore that transaction will be flagged. If Divya tries to get help from her political connections, they will refuse. So Divya has no other option but to fall in place and pay whatever is due to the government. Now if Divya wants to drag the case and approaches the court, since courts are very efficient and are dispensing speedy justice, her matter will be settled either way in a time bound manner.

4. Learn from others:

Nations do not work in vacuum. Every nation has its peculiarities. There should be a process to continuously learn from the best practices prevalent in other countries and adapt them domestically. Further, what is happening in other parts of the world can give a clue about the minds of unscrupulous people. Local government can take preventive measures to insulate the nation from falling prey to those unscrupulous people and their nefarious activities. Social security net for the entire population will be a radical step in fighting against the corruption.

Tax evasion should be a serious offence. It is a mind-set issue. In India, tax evasion is not taken seriously; rather it is seen as a creative art. Unscrupulous CAs, and lawyers who help in such creative art should be hauled up for helping in the promotion of this mind-set and their licenses should be revoked.

Spouse who has been married for more than 3 years should be automatically made an accomplice in the case of economic corruption being done. In educational curriculum stories about tax evasion and its serious consequences should be taught to the students. Law should apply equally to all. Big crocodiles should not roam free while aquarium fishes are put into trouble. Tax net should be widened, at the same time taxes should be reduced. Less cash economy should be encouraged.

Continuing with our fictional character Divya. She has learnt a new trick of fraud involving high technology which is happening in another part of the world. If government agencies are continuously learning from the environment, they should have already known the trick and closed the loopholes. So Divya cannot try her luck and if she dares, she will be caught.

5. Continuous improvement of the system:

Every year have external audit by three international independent agencies. Listen to the civil society. Obtain their inputs and plug loopholes in the system. Publish findings of external auditors. Development engine is growth engine. This engine feeds the control engine. Government should continuously endeavor to improve the development engine, so that it can reach more and more people to make it more effective.

As government earns more money in the form of taxes, it will be in a position to extend the enabling facilities to a larger section of the society. And as a larger section of people get benefits, they will ultimately develop, earn more wealth and in return pay taxes to the government. And the cycle will continue. Divya's story will replicate in medium size cities and then in smaller towns. In steps whole India will be covered.

Whatever has been discussed so far has a common thread and that thread is the integrity of individuals who will be eventually responsible to implement this framework. If people who engage in implementing this framework do not have integrity, then it will never take off. It will be the responsibility of civil society and media to make sure that people of impeccable integrity take up this framework and work towards its implementation. Whenever deviations are there, civil society and media corrects them by continuously keeping a check on their activities.

Petty corruption like giving "hafta" to local policeman create mafia. People should regulate their life and should have zero tolerance against petty corruption. Once the common citizen starts having zero tolerance for corruption all other limbs of constitution and business world will have to follow the zero tolerance policy. So removing corruption won't be a top down approach, it will be top down as well as bottom up approach. Bottom up approach will have greater influence and impact.

Summary:

There cannot be shortcuts in fighting against corruption. It is a long process. It cannot be done overnight. Rome was not built in a day. Corruption is related to the behavior and changing behavior takes time. Positive interventions are far more effective than the negative coercive actions. Everything will depend upon the integrity of the people who are responsible for control of corruption in their jurisdiction. Hence integrity of an individual is the most potent weapon in fighting against corruption. When the consciousness of an individual citizen is uplifted, the collective consciousness of the nation will be uplifted and automatically the overall level of corruption will come down and people will become a part of a society that is peaceful, corruption free and potential filled. People say removing corruption is complex. We say it is very simple. Have the will power, rise above individual interests, take a bold decision and implement this framework. If more and more citizens start humming ***"Sare jahan se accha hindostan hamara, Hum bulbulain hai iss ki yeh gulsitan hamara"***, you are on the right track!



iv) Something Shines Better Than Gold

Participating in Olympics is a life time opportunity. After years of hard work, discipline, commitment and cut-throat competition athlete reaches to that ultimate sport's theater, with a single minded objective of winning a medal. Winning is everything. Gold medal is the shiniest medal to be won.

Hold on!! Just two wonderful ladies proved in recently concluded Rio De Janeiro Olympics that winning is not everything. There is something more golden than the gold medal and it is real sportsmanship, humanity and sisterhood which is above winning.

What happened is that in the heat of race of 5000 meters, Abbey D'Agostino of USA and Nikki Hamblin of New Zealand tripped on the track. Instead of running further both helped each other and both finished the race.

For their real sportsmanship they were awarded the International Fair Play Committee Award. Till now this award has been bagged by only 17 individuals. These wonderful ladies became the 18th and 19th to win this most honorable award.

Such wonderful, heart-warming story needs to be retold time and again. Such stories are like a cool breeze in a desert.

- Every individual should take lesson from it. This simple but profound gesture tells us that there is more in life than the rat race.
- Every parent should narrate this story to their kid, that there is more joy in helping others than mere winning at any cost.
- Every MBA college should teach this episode as a case study to their students and prepare them as a real leader who believes in collaboration.

- Every organization should show case this as an example of collaboration.
- Above all every religious preacher of all religions of the world should give this as the finest example of the religious duty. There cannot be any better religious activity than to help the other human being in distress.

Thank You Nikki Hamblin and Abbey D'Agostino. Your act proved that there is a common, pure, sacred golden thread which binds the humanity together. There might be millions of black clouds around us in various forms, but time and again this golden thread will shine and give us inspiration to think beyond mere winning!!

Are you inspired by this story?



v) Think Beyond Winning!

Prodigious Praggnanandhaa of India is in World Cup Chess Final of 2023 and it is neck to neck fight. Whole India is waiting with bated breath to see him winning. Good luck... May the best win!

Now, let us analyze.

In India, too much emphasis is given on competition and winning. Life is considered as a race in which, everyone has to win a trophy. Without winning a trophy, person is considered a loser.

There will be Chess Academies mushrooming in every corner. Parents will force their kids to learn chess and be the winner.

Chess is considered as a game of intelligence, and in India, people are willing to die to get the tag of "Intelligent".

Ethics, integrity, empathy, co-operation, curiosity, vision, leadership... all such higher virtues are never considered to be inculcated in the young minds. Only competition and winning.

Yet to find a parent who says, am nurturing my kid - To be a good human being. Haven't met any single soul.

Game should be played for the sake of game, not for defeating the opponent.

Life is to be lived fully, in flow... Being the competitor with himself alone... Alas!



vi) Where Are Wise Men?

We daily meet engineers / MBAs / doctors / architects / CAs... I mean big degree holders.

We meet small and medium size business owners.

We meet government officers.

We observe judicial officers / judges.

We meet youngsters searching for job.

We meet students who always get A+ grades.

We meet old people.

We meet common people...

What amazes us, we just meet degree holders, high position holders, filthy rich and even old ones...

Rarely we meet a person, whom we can say is a wise man.

Who is a wise man? A wise man is a person who understands issues very quickly, does

analysis from various angles and gives you a wonderful solution, which is truthful, ethical and pragmatic.

Most of the people don't have even capacity to understand any complex issue.

Next problem, they can't analyze.

Next problem, they can't come to any solid conclusion.

Truth, ethics, pragmatism...these all are rare virtues. Just forget.

Alas!

Masses are roaming like bipeds. Pure animalistic existence, having fear, sleep, food and sex. That's it.

No clear thought process. No truthfulness. No pragmatism.

And yes, all these bipeds will be earning handsome amount per month, either as salary or as income from business.

It all begs a question? Where are the wise men? Or wise women?

Where are people of caliber of Socrates, Plato & Aristotle...?

No, rarely wise men are around. No wonder, whole world is a stinking place. People are just living and dying in dirt and darkness of ignorance.

Further, does this world need wise men? I doubt. People just want rich, famous and glamorous people.

Wise men are considered as fools in 2022. Maybe that's why, nature doesn't give wise men to this dirty world.

Before parting, let me appreciate the artist who painted the above image. For sure he knows about the features and overall aura of a wise man.



vii) Nudge Theory - A Beautiful Story

A) Story:

In our apartment one caretaker was there. His name was Shri Santosh. He was from Odisha.

Brother of Santosh was also working in Bangalore and he had brought his little daughter to Bangalore for studies. He wanted to bring son of Santosh also to Bangalore, but Santosh was not willing, saying, Bangalore is very costly, how he will afford and so many excuses. Fine.

News reached to our ears and we were requested to nudge Sri Santosh to change his mind and bring his little son also to Bangalore for studies.

Almighty put that assignment on our little shoulder. With the name of almighty on our lips, we took up the assignment.

We requested, mildly scolded, told so many stories to Sri Santosh to change his mind. Even we told him in friendly way, if he is not bringing his son to Bangalore, we will go to Odisha and bring his son to Bangalore. Sri Santosh was a very good person and by grace of almighty, he used to listen our words.

Whoa!

Finally, Sri Santosh agreed to bring his son to Bangalore.

Since son used to study in typical government school of Odisha, he was weak. We put him into one bridge school. After that bridge school, he got admitted to one good school in Bangalore in primary class. Son is very bright. He started blooming. Did very well in his studies. He got scholarship.

Finally, he moved to another better school, while studying on scholarship.

Today is the great day. We got call from son (Master Dhananjay) that his class 10th result is out and he has scored around 87% marks. What a melody to our ears...

Unfortunately, due to serious heart problem, we had lost Sri Santosh in October 2022.

Definitely, Sri Santosh will be watching from clouds, smiling and blessing his prodigious son.

On our part, we feel satisfied. The seed we sown, has become a tree and started giving beautiful flowers...

This is all due to yeoman efforts of Bridge School, NGO, Companies which gave scholarship, his uncle, relatives and all other well-wishers. Sincere thanks to all.

Well done Master Dhananjay!
We all are proud of you!
You have very bright future!

B) Nudge Theory:

Just imagine, if we had not spoken to Sri Santosh, not nudged him to bring Dhananjay to Bangalore...

C) Lessons:

Please always try to uplift others. And yes, in uplifting others, time and energy is needed, sometimes little money also. But the most beautiful thing is, if your intentions are pure, whole universe will conspire for your success. And that is all what happened today.

Fruit of 10 years, continuous prodding, nurturing and motivation - all due to guidance

from almighty. All glory to God!

D) Finally:

***"Jindgi me maja tab hai, jub sab badhe,
Apno ko toh sabhi badha lete hai..."***



viii) Money Not A Problem, Bad Character Is

First thing first. Yes, money is needed to run our lives. We need to pay school fees, rent, electricity bill, buy food coupons... No arguments.

And second thing, many a times we struggle due to lack of money. Students have to leave studies in-between because school fees could not be deposited. Post graduate students have to leave studies in-between because they could not afford hostel fees. Sometimes students could not take admission in private MBA colleges because of exorbitant fee and have to get admission in government funded state universities.

To pay rent or buy food, people have to struggle a lot.

Houses are run on month-to-month cheque basis...

All in all, money the glue, the wheel of life is extremely important and is hard to come by. Agreed.

But, this post is beyond the problems of money.

Problems of money are far simpler to face and resolve.

Biggest problem, mankind faces is the problem of being characterless.

As saying goes, when money is lost, nothing is lost, when health is lost, something is lost but when character is lost, everything is lost.

And by the way, loss of character is not related to only adulterous relationship or fornication. It is far wider.

Character of a person is the sum total of his personality and value system.

If a person has got habit of lying and plotting, he is characterless.

If a person is dishonest, greedy and eyes the wealth of others, he is characterless.

If a person is not hardworking and tries to get his daily bread by becoming parasite on others, he is characterless.

If a person is happy on seeing the misfortune of others and plots for the fall of others, he is characterless.

If a person is not minding his steps, his thoughts and his heart, he is on the path of characterlessness.

If a person, being in a responsible position, doesn't guide others for their welfare and secretly wish their fall, he is characterless.

Adulterous behavior, fornication and live-in relationship in a nation like India, etc. are extreme form of characterlessness. No question about these. Such behavior destroys the soul of person, they are like broken cup and can never have peace of mind. They have fallen in their own eyes. They have sacrificed their purity of body and soul in the bargain, now only shame and guilt is in their store... Alas!

Hence, always guard your character, even at the expense of your life. Prefer death than being characterless.

A pure life is divine life. Character above all.

Problems of money will come and go. A man of character will easily find out solutions for money problems, it is his left hand work, but a characterless will always flounder.



ix) Facing Storms Of Life

Last week, I experienced (witnessed) a huge storm of life. Now when the storm is settled down, I reflect and try to find out how people can face any storm of life. **Here are the findings:**

1. Always be on straight path.
2. During storm, keep your cool as much as possible.
3. During storm also, don't deviate from straight path, howsoever big the storm may be.
4. Have confidence in you and in your creator and go directly to the eye of storm.
5. Show extraordinary leadership and control the storm.
6. For sure there will be mental bruises, it ought to. For sure there will be emotional upheavals, it ought to. Just keep flowing. Be natural. Bruises will heal in due course of time.
7. Learn lessons from the storm.
8. Resolve to follow straight path with more vigor.

Let me tell you, Point No. 1 is the most important point in facing the worst storms of life. If Point No. 1 is perfect, rest of the 7 points will fall in place naturally.



x) Too Much Stress

Your job is hanging by a thin thread.

Your business is down.

Huge issues in personal life.

Overall economy is down.

All around negative eco-system...

You feel completely exhausted due to stress and frustration and don't know what to do.

We will say - Relax!

If you are feeling too much stress and frustration, it simply proves, you are alive. Cheers!

And for a living person, there will be ups and downs in life. For sure.

And, a living person can solve any problem.

Hence, relax and celebrate!

Take it easy. After 24 hours, your thought process will change. You will start seeing light at the end of the tunnel. Some solutions will pop up in your heart and mind.

Have faith on the cosmic energy and some invisible hand. Keep doing your duty, problems will be solved.

Even this will pass.

Hence, if you are facing too much stress, celebrate!! you are alive. 🌸🌸

Rest will fall in place!



xi) Life Is Love

Nature is created out of love.

We are created out of love.

Every morning sun rises out of love for us.

Every night moon rises out of love for us.

Cool breeze flows out of love for us.

Every morning birds sing for us out of love.

Dates, fruits, cereals, water are created for us out of love.

Seasons are created out of love for us.

Lovers long to see each other out of love.

Mother cares her child out of love.

Our heart beats out of love.

Every atom of our body is dancing out of love.

That meow of cat is out of love.

That lovely licking of dog is out of love.

Finest creations of mankind are out of love.

That spark in eyes is out of love.

Those tears of separation are out of love.

Those tears of embrace are out of love.

Love is The Essence of this universe.

Love is life!

Life is love!

We are love!

F) Work-Life Balance



i) Work But Don't Give Your Life to Your Employer

There are hundreds of articles written on Work-Life Balance. Most of the articles miss one important point. Work is part of Life, not Life.

Let us analyze few scenarios:

1. You go to office on time, work properly and come back on time. One day your VP says, you are working in software industry, where you are paid more, so you have to stay late.
2. One night you get a call from your boss and he tries to persuade you to log on in the system and work from home too. (In addition to day time work)
3. One day your Team Leader says, you have to fix the bugs today night only, because he will have to send the code to client tomorrow morning. You know he is telling a complete lie.
4. In your office, people come late and just to show to management that they are working hard, they start working at 4.00 PM and stay late.

You can add so many other scenarios, and please try to find out what would have been your response.

Normally, employees are brainwashed, coerced and threatened to fall in line of the demands of the bosses.

Many a times employees themselves give up and accept the situation.

Management dangles a few carrots of B1 Visa, H1 Visa, a little more hike in CTC, a promotion and employee is more than willing to do anything for the employer. And at the end of the day he cribs about the work-life balance.

Work-life balance is totally in the hands of the employee. A few ideas:

- 1. Be punctual**
- 2. Work with full concentration**
- 3. Do not waste your time in office**
- 4. Do not go for herd mentality**
- 5. Do not be tempted for short term gains**
- 6. When situation demands take a bold stand**
- 7. Never allow bad expectations to set in**
- 8. Live well within your means**

Always remember, you have to give the output to your employer not your life.

On the day of retirement, you should not feel that you have given your life to your employer for a few extra bucks. Alas... Worst is, you cannot rewind it. A human life is scarified on the altar of corporate profit, which will be shared by a handful of owners.



ii) No, Jack Ma, You Are Dead Wrong

Background:

Media is agog with the purported statement of Jack Ma, wherein he is allegedly quoted to propagate the concept of 996 work culture. 9 AM to 9 PM from Monday to Saturday, 6 days a week work. We don't subscribe to this work culture. Let us analyze.

Problem:

In fact, it is not mere 996. It is 24/7/365/Repeat. 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, Repeatedly, year after year. This type of work culture is highly problematic. Companies will write a line in their offer letter; You have to work extra in case of urgency. Company will provide you electronic gadgets and expects you to log in even after office hours. Your manager will expect you to reply the emails which are coming into your inbox at 11 PM. And those conference calls... just at the whims of the clients or the senior management and you have to be there listening all the blah... blah for hours together.

In the name of urgency and client's work, you are pushed to work more and more. And it becomes a norm. The day you log out at 6.00 PM, all eyebrows will be raised. Your VP will call you in cabin and tell you; since you are earning higher salary, you have to slog and don't "spoil" the company culture. We want hard worker.

For you, that software bug or that important presentation or that extremely important report becomes the end of your life.

Managers and companies know it very well that it is all wrong. Daily long hours destroy the productivity and creativity of the employees. Knowledge worker can't work like a machine. Even manual workers need rest. But managers don't have guts to bell the cat. Organizations are chasing the quarterly numbers; hence they enjoy seeing their employees slogging day and night. Organization thinks this is commitment. Far from truth.

Solutions:

You cannot change your manager or your organization. You can change yourself. Make it a habit to reach office 15 minutes early. Don't waste your time in too many tea / smoke breaks. Even if your girlfriend calls you during office hours, simply say; darling, will call you back after 6.00 PM. Don't just go to the staircase and spend 45 minutes talking to her. Work systematically. Work 15 minutes extra and simply log off at 6.15 PM. You need not to see the expressions of your colleagues or bosses. Let them slog.

If you work systematically, you can accomplish any task, between 9-6 working hours, 5 days a week. Guaranteed!! Exceptionally great companies understand this and they do try to bring this work culture. But majority of the organizations follow the mindset of Jack Ma.

Now you will say, but it is not easy. It is easy!! It is a mind game which your colleagues, managers and organization are playing with you. You have to take your life in your own hands and pull your own strings. Just say no, for rat race. All work is important and urgent. Accepted. But for every work there is tomorrow also.

Sitting late in office, taking that urgent call at odd hours should be an exception, not a norm.

Cultivate good habits outside the work. Read books. Write blogs. Pen a poem. Do yoga. Do gardening. Volunteer for noble cause. Enroll in new technical or management programs. Enhance your employ-ability continuously. Develop your multiple intelligence. Spend quality time with your girlfriend, spouse, kids, family and friends. Chisel yourself continuously. Develop a holistic personality.

Summary:

Work is just a part of your life. Not life. Do not just give away your precious life to any billionaire or any organization. As Aristotle famously advocated, "The end of labor is to gain leisure." A well spent leisure adds life in your laborious daily drudge. Don't just complete that MS-word report or fix that bug slogging mindlessly. Live your life!



iii) Work Culture Of India

India Inc. needs to change its work culture.

Other day, we were discussing with a lady who works for a Home Appliances Showroom in Bangalore. She told us, her working hours are 10 AM to 10 PM, six days per week. Means $11 \times 6 = 66$ man hours per week, assuming 30 minutes for lunch break and two tea breaks of 15 minutes each.

Just imagine, she does not have any time for her own personal space and her professional growth. Only Sunday for her, that will fly like anything.

Now coming to software industry. Most of the companies expect you to be online 24/7. Excuses are many - foreign client, urgent work, we are paying too much... Underline message is, you are working for us, do our bidding, else...

In nutshell, horrible work culture in India.

Our take:

In any case, employees must not be expected to work more than 40 hours per week and it must be 5 working days per week. Two days of complete rest for employees and every day they should have some hours at their disposal.

Youngsters must give time for their personal and professional growth. Read general books, novels, technical and management books, blog, volunteer, go to gym and inculcate healthy habits. Spend quality time with your best friends.

For seniors, spend time with your kids, take care of your old parents, keep updating your technical knowledge, volunteer, blog, take care of your health...

Please note, your job is just a part of your life, not life. The very company for which you are slogging 12 hours per day, won't even blink while giving you pink slip. Hence, have a clear cut demarcation for your work and life.

At the same time, don't waste time in office, gossiping around the coffee machine, don't be late, don't take unnecessary leave... Give your honest 100% to your employer. But not above that.

Hope we are fair!

Take away:

a) For employees: If you are slogging more than 40 hours per hour, please prepare your cv and join other professional organization.

b) For employers: Finest organizations of the world, work 5 days a week, with maximum 40 hours of log-in time. If you are forcing your employees to work more than 40 hours per week, please shutdown your shop. Please.

G) Settling Down



i) Menace Of Dowry System In India

Demanding and giving dowry is a criminal offence in India. But still we get news of harassment of ladies for dowry & about false dowry case on men.

Some tips to abolish dowry:

1. Boys & girls should say NO to dowry from the proposal stage only, that too in writing.
2. Families of boy & girl should say NO to dowry.
3. Boys & girls must disown their families for demanding or giving dowry.
4. Opt for extremely simple marriage.
5. Do not accept even customary gifts.
6. There must be ceiling on overall valuation of customary gifts.
7. Mandatory list of customary gifts be created.
8. Encourage love marriages.
9. Choose your life partner on your own.
10. On first instance of dowry demand, wife must file divorce petition & get quick divorce. File criminal case on husband & his accomplices.
11. In case of false dowry case, husband must file divorce case immediately & take quick divorce. File criminal case against wife & her accomplices.
12. No spouse must tolerate toxic marriage.
13. Do not listen any stories from anyone, be it your family, relatives, society or even courts.
14. Always remember, marriage is part of life, not life.



ii) Save Yourself From Fraud Marriage

You are working as a software engineer in a MNC company. You have given your matrimonial advertisement in a leading newspaper of the town and you are getting a lot of wonderful responses. All glamorous pictures and wonderful bio-data of the girls / boys are on your way. You are into that sweet, sweet dream world of blissful happy married life, which you have been imagining from your teenager days! Right?

Very good. It is but natural.

But wait a minute, before you say, YES to that glamorous picture. You may be under the trap by the other party. You will be a prey for #fraud #marriage. That pretty faced girl may be suffering from some serious mental illness. That honk, who claimed to be a B. Tech. graduate and working as an engineer in company will be only a diploma pass and is working as a foreman.

The first day you will come to know, the girl whom you married is already pregnant. Within a week, you will come to know the man whom you married is already a married man, and worst, he has not even got divorce from his first wife.

All your sweet, sweet dream world will start crashing. Your life and career will be ruined. If you are a boy, in addition to fraud marriage, you will get a gift package of all false cases of dowry harassment, domestic violence and maintenance etc. You and your family members may have to spend time in jail, will have to fight case after case and you will have to pay the girl huge "extortion" money.

If you are a girl, backward Indian society will shun you like plague. Very few gentlemen will agree to marry you again. Your life and career will be ruined. For getting maintenance you will have to fight cases for years.

Whether you are a boy or a girl, rest assured all your friends, colleagues and even relatives will start avoiding you. You will see the ugliest face of society. You will become "second hand". Your lawyer will fleece you. Police will harass you. Courts will give you only date after date. In every government office and court, you will have to pay bribe for getting your basic and legal work done.

All will fool you and preach you to accept the fraud marriage. All Gods and Goddesses will be invoked to force you to live with that fraudster. Just revolt. Renounce the fake society. Renounce the fake religion. Renounce the nation too. Become YOU!! Take control of your destiny in your hands. Even God is created from your own mind, what to talk of this ephemeral fake world.

Your employer will either fire you or will never give you a promotion.

In short, you will experience, hell, here on this very earth.

So, before you say YES, do proper due-diligence.

There are different types of frauds in marriage. Fraud may be related to educational qualification, job, physical and mental status, character, previous marriage, love-affair, family and material prosperity etc.

To save yourself from fraud marriage, you can follow some basic rules.

Never believe anyone. Always do proper and thorough due-diligence from 3-4 independent sources. You must physically verify everything. Never marry in haste. Take all the documents with their signature. Verify their every word and every claim. Ask them to bring some third party mediator. Do not believe even this mediator. Never ask any dowry. Never give any dowry. Insist on meeting the girl / boy. You both must be allowed to talk and meet freely. Spend some time with the boy / girl. Take her / him out. Just keep an eye on smallest detail. Do not listen to their excuses of, what society will say. Allow your family and friends to interact with the boy / girl. If the boy / girl is not mingling, just drop the proposal.

During the due-diligence process, even if there are slightest doubts coming to your mind or heart, just say no to that proposal. Believe your intuition.

Do not care for this fake society. It is your life. Take your own decision. Do not even depend upon your parents for final decision. Final decision must be yours and yours only.

You must insist for pre-nuptial agreement. Though that is not valid in India, as of now, but that will work as filter and will be handy in case of any eventuality.

At least give 3-6 months for marriage. Keep testing them. Even after betrothal, you must find out the truth continuously and if anything seems amiss, just drop the proposal. Do not think of nonsense of society. This society won't do anything if you are trapped in a fraud marriage.

Please note that legal system in India is extremely corrupt and slow. Do not give the strings of your life to any police station or to any court.

Opt for simple marriage. Make list of all presents and get the signatures of both parties.

After marriage, make sure that the girl is not conceiving within 6 months of the marriage. Take precautions. In fraud marriage, other party always try to make family very fast. Resist and take precautions. If there is big fraud, within 6 months of your marriage you will start getting signals.

In worst case, if you have been trapped in a fraud marriage, collect all the evidence, meet some good lawyer, take precautions from harassment by police and immediately file case for voidable of marriage in Family Court. Once the fraud has come to your notice, you must stop cohabiting immediately and file case on urgent basis in Family Court. Fraud marriage is liable to be declared as void. Divorce is given in normal marriages. Insist for void.

Never, never accept fraud marriage. Whatever may come, just leave that fraudster.

Face it. Fire will purify you. My dear friend, you are blessed. Almighty has chosen you to be something great. Feeling crying, cry. Feeling dancing, dance. Take refuge in god literature / scriptures and spirituality. Break the shackles of this hypocrite world. Purify yourself. This is your finest time. Otherwise you also would have lived like millions others... marriage, kids and death... Now before your death, you can realize yourself. Realize!

Take heart. Get rid of that fraudster by all means.

Take some time, learn the lessons and then settle again with your new and honest partner.

Either way, we say, All the best! Life is beautiful!



iii) 10 Tips To Save Yourself From Fraud Marriage

A) Marriage is an institution and its base should be solid. Unfortunately, crooked people make marriage as business and indulge in cheating, ruining the life and career of innocent spouse. For years the innocent spouse will have to make rounds of courts and all will fleece him / her. All in all, life becomes hell.

Prevention is better than cure. Please save yourself and your loved ones from falling prey to fraudsters.

B) Types of frauds:

For both boys and girls normally in these areas frauds are perpetuated:

- Education
- Job
- Salary
- Physical ailment
- Mental illness
- Physical deformity
- Impotency
- Transgender
- Property
- Previous marital status

- Kids from previous marriage
- Family history of mental illness
- Family history of criminality
- Visa status
- Foreign domicile status
- Impersonation
- Bad character
- Alcoholic
- Gambler...

This list is endless.

C) Tips to avoid fraud:

1. Never believe anyone blindly.
2. Prefer marrying a known person.
3. Avoid long distance marriage proposal.
4. Do proper due diligence, at least through two independent sources.
5. Always be alert towards tell-tale signs of frauds during discussions.
6. Insist on many meetings before marriage.
7. Never be in hurry to say, I Do. Don't allow yourself to be emotionally blackmailed. Come what may.
8. Make the other party understand that no fraud will be acceptable and ask them to bring mediators. Take properly signed bio data, if they refuse, just show them door.
9. Always give at least 6 months' time between bequeath and marriage.
10. During first year of marriage, use family planning methods.

All in all, if you are opting for so-called traditional "arranged marriage" concept of society, be ready to face frauds of unimaginable nature.

D) In case you are trapped in a fraud marriage?

Immediately stop cohabitation and apply for declaring fraud marriage as null and void. Never accept fraud marriage. Never.

E) Summary:

Avoid, "marry in haste, repent in leisure" being applied to yourself.

Fraud marriage will ruin your whole life and career. Don't become a prey in the hands of fraudsters and farce systems. Save your life.



iv) Love Above All

This post is written after realization from real life stories. And let me tell you, realization has put all my previous understanding upside down.

These are the learnings post realization:

Love is above religion.

Love is above rituals.

Love is above customs.

Love is above law.

Love is above filial relationship.

Love is above money.

Love is above God.

In fact - Love above all.

Having doubts?

Analyze deeply about any inter-faith young couple whose union was resisted by their relatives and society. You will be amazed about their courage. Both souls revolted against all man-made artifacts, rituals and customs. They listened to only one voice - Sweet throbbing of each other's heart beats. That voice was enough for them and they plunged.

Now keep all your religion, rituals and customs with you, they went on their way, leaving behind everything, everything, just wearing their daily clothes, but wrapped in pure love. Aha...

Blessed are such true lovers. Through their wonderful love stories, time and again they tell us, everything is meaningless, meaningless.

What matters on this earth is - true love. Rest all is pure business, wrapped in glossy papers of religion, rituals and customs.

Innovative, out-of-box-thinking, breaking the barriers, leadership, courage... All buzzwords of corporate world can be found in a single inter-faith true love story which is resisted by relatives of both sides.

May their tribe increase...



v) How To Make Your Inter-Faith Marriage Work

☞ Background:

It is but natural that two adults may fall in love. Love, the most sublime feelings between two individuals and then the adults want to marry each other and live together happily thereafter.

☞ Problems:

It is all fine. But when two inter-caste and inter-faith couple wants to marry in India, there are huge resistance. Then elopement, police case, court case, verbal fights between families, loss of job and in worst case serious crimes follows. All in all, ruining of lives and careers. Highly avoidable repercussions.

Now how to avoid such serious conditions. Let us analyze.

☞ Triangle:

In love affair there are three legs:

- i) Love of lovers
- ii) Filial love

iii) Love for religion and customs

For a successful inter-caste and Inter-faith marriage, all three must align. But what happens, lovers being blinded by love, consider only their love and are ready to revolt against other two legs and here comes the problem.

☞ **What law says:**

In India, law is very clear, two consenting adults can marry on their own volition and no family can interfere in their decisions.

Unfortunately, a huge section of society doesn't know the basic laws and assume, their son or daughter will have to follow the diktat of their parents in the matter of marriage.

☞ **Tips for parents:**

- i) Raise your children properly. Culture of home is very important.
- ii) Talk to your children.
- iii) If it is a joint family, understand very clearly, what is acceptable and what is not, and guide your children accordingly.

☞ **Tips for lovers:**

- i) During friendship only, tell the other person what are the boundaries for marriage for you and your family.
- ii) It will be highly advisable that all three legs of triangle are in synch.
- iii) In worst case, try to sacrifice your love for the greater good of all involved - family, religion and customs.
- iv) Purest form of love demands deep respect and sacrifices. Let there be understanding between the two lovers, that they will go apart mutually, but for their own love, won't bring disrepute to anyone.

v) Do what is better, not what your heart desires.

vi) By hurting all, revolting against everything, such unions are created on very shaky and selfish grounds and must be avoided.

Conclusion:

Life is a very big canvas. Sometimes we try to create a beautiful picture on one corner of that canvas but that picture doesn't fit in the overall scheme. Move on gently. Despair not. Nature is watching hearts of you both, if not now, nature will bring bounties in future life and overall final picture will be much better, beautiful and fulfilling.

And when you will look back after 20 years, old flame will be still in your heart, you will smile, mentally wish that person well and be busy with your life... **And that is pure love...**



vi) Same Sex Marriage In India

Hold your breath. Yes, there is a case being heard in Supreme Court of India about legalization of same sex marriages in India.

Till today, concept of same sex marriage is foreign to Indian law books. Now the case has come up before SC and the same has been referred to a 5-member constitution bench for adjudication.

Let us analyze.

1. What is marriage?

Marriage is a contract in which two consenting adults take vows to share their lives together.

2. What is the view of Government?

Government is opposing same sex marriage.

3. Why?

You guessed it right. In the name of those abstract entities called society and culture.

4. What are our views?

- i) Marriage is about love between two consenting adults.
- ii) Sex is part of marriage, but not everything. By the way homosexuality has been legalized in India. In India, marriage is equated to sex, which is very narrow and despicable view of marriage. Marriage is beyond sex.
- iii) Procreation is considered as the result of marriage. But that is an old concept. If some couples are not able to procreate for any reason, are they not considered, married? Very much. Hence procreation is not must for a valid marriage.
- iv) Same sex couple can adopt kids and raise them like any other family.
- v) Since such concepts are against common understanding of majority views, they are considered taboos. But laws are tested, on the touchstone of voices of minority, howsoever miniscule it may be.
- vi) Choosing life partner is considered as a part of right to life. How can anyone say, no, you can't choose same sex partner?
- vii) In some religions, gay sex is prohibited. But religions are also created by men only. Per time, religions should evolve.
- viii) Some developed and civilized nations have understood the logic behind same sex marriage and are legalizing it.
- ix) Sati pratha, untouchability, caste system, superstitions... all are being outlawed. That is sign of civilization and progress. Any nation which lives in her past, will stagnate.
- x) Legalization of same sex marriage does not mean; all should opt for same sex marriage. It is a kind of legal remedy for those who want to opt for same sex marriage. Like Special Marriage Act, which allows marriage between adults of different religions.

5. Hence, going by the aforementioned views, in our opinion, same sex marriage must be given legal approval and nothing should come between love of two consenting adults.

Hope after few months, you may get wedding cards... Leela Weds Sheela, Ramesh Weds Suresh...



vii) A Case Against Live-In In India

🔑 Background:

Many people start living together without any commitment of marriage, they term this relationship as live-in. This trend started in metropolitan cities amongst working executives initially, but now it is spreading to even tier 2 cities and amongst all sections of society.

In metropolitan cities hardly any apartment will be there wherein you can't find at least 2-3 couples in live-in. All fine.

🔑 Why people opt live-in:

- i) To share the burden of expenses.
- ii) To know the person better, before marrying.
- iii) For togetherness with opposite sex.
- iv) Smugness of smartness and extremely independent nature. My life, my choice.
- v) Scoffing at societal norms.

All fine. No arguments.

☞ **Where problems come in?**

- i) Cheating.
- ii) No commitment for marriage.
- iii) Expectations mismatch.
- iv) Resistance from either one or both families.

And then starts drama of police / court cases, family quarrels and what not.

Problem is multi-fold in case of inter-caste and explosive in case of inter-faith relationship.

☞ **Test of live-in:**

People who say, they are smart and hence opting for live-in, should answer:

- i) Have they told their live-in status to their family and relatives? Not only to Mummy or that distant Cousin.
- ii) Are they introducing their partner in apartment / society as their live-in partner?
- iii) In case, if their live-in fails, will they declare it in their matrimonial bio-data? This is the litmus test.
- iv) In future will they suggest their own kids to opt for live-in?

☞ **What law says:**

Though in India, live-in has been accepted legally but still there are huge holes and courts are not seeing such relationships in positive ways.

☞ **Solutions:**

Nothing wrong in love. Nothing wrong in loving someone. But everything has some way. Just Do It, but in a proper way.

Love without grace is lust.

Love without blessings is curse.

Love demands sacrifices, not unbridled passions.

Love demands balance.

Live alone and manage your expenses. To know a person better, meet them in evening. No need to move-in together. Have chastity.

Papa don't preach:

Do whatever is better, not what your heart desires. Follow straight path. Character is above all. Fornication is Haram (unlawful).

Blunt truth is - no girl or boy of impeccable character, having sound wisdom and from cultured family will ever opt for live-in. Period.

Couple opting for live-in have very serious upbringing issues, character flaws and mindset issues. They are not living a holistic pure life. It is unfortunately broken.

Conclusion:

A pure life and purer character is next to godliness. You are in image of God. Lead a pure life and have purest character... after 20 years, you will thank your stars!

10. You feel good when your relatives get success.

Higher the number of affirmations of the 10 scenarios, higher is your Leadership.

Home should be the first experimental lab for testing your leadership qualities. If you are on back foot on this most important turf, let me tell you, your corporate Leadership title is mere a title.



ix) 10 Tips For Caring For Aging Parents

As we move up in career ladder, our professional responsibilities increase many folds. As we grow in our professional life, our parents also age. Most of the working professionals find it difficult to manage their aging parents.

We can follow some basic steps to take care of our aging parents:

1. Plan:

If you are working overseas or in other far off city, do proper planning of your vacations. Keep your parents and other sibling in loop and plan in such a way that if other siblings are also taking care of them, there is proper balancing.

2. Do not compare:

Just do whatever best you can do, never compare yourself with other siblings. The moment you start comparing with other siblings, you won't be able to do your duty properly.

3. You know them, now care them gently:

You know the mind set of your parents. You have to follow their mind set in caring them. But you have to consider the fact that as parents age, due to various reasons they develop some eccentricities, you will have to manage these eccentricities.

4. They just need you:

Normally old parents just need You. Period. They do not need your money. They just need your time. A man who can hear their old stories and just nod his head, appreciating what they have achieved in their life and showing gratitude for what they have done all these decades.

5. Always remember some little eyes are seeing you:

There was one man. He used to treat his aging father shabbily. He used to give him food in a broken bowl. One day the old father passed away. After few days his passing away, his son took the bowl and wanted to dispose of. At that moment his son (grandson of old man) came and told his father, Daddy, do not throw it. His father asked, why? It is use less broken bowl, what will you do with it? **His son replied, when you will grow old, I will serve you food in this same bowl.**

6. In taking care of your parents, you take care of yourself:

When you take care of your parents, with pure intentions, without thinking of any returns, you will feel an immense sense of satisfaction within yourself.

7. Set the expectations within your family:

Taking care of your own family is important, but taking care of your aging parents is also equally important. You have to set the expectations clear with your spouse and kids. Many a times there will be resistance, but you will have to take a firm decision. Ideal situation will be when there is no virtual line between your own family and your parents.

8. Always motivate them to be confident and happy:

Never ever lose your confidence. Always motivate your parents to be confident and happy. Depending upon the situation let them handle their daily chores as per their abilities.

9. Prepare yourself for the inevitable:

Parents are parents. Nobody wants to lose his parents. But it is the law of nature. So once some signs start appearing of inevitable, you need to make yourself emotionally strong for the unfortunate inevitable.

10. Always remember that chair will be empty, one day...

Never postpone taking care of your parents. **Old people have less time at their disposal**, and nobody knows when they may say good bye to you. **So just rush** and show your affection and respect.

Ultimately it comes to intentions. **Keep your intentions pure; even if you are with them for one day, you will increase their life by at least one year!**



x) Come Soon. Daddy Serious.

You are working in a metro city, far away from your hometown. Your parents are old. You always feared about the bad news. And unfortunately that day came. You got a call from your elder brother; Daddy is hospitalized. Come to home. Soon.

Now what? In this short article we would give some tips to handle this situation.

Do not panic. Control yourself. Think positive.

Do not procrastinate. You can talk to some of your best friends and narrate. Talk to your Manager and apply leave. Can take the help of your friends and colleagues in whatever way it is possible. Rush to home. Old people don't wait for anyone.

While on the way to home, take care of your food and water intake. Control your emotions.

Upon reaching hospital, meet the caretaker first and get to know the condition of the patient.

Meet your Daddy. Control your emotions. He will for sure, ask about your well-being. That is love of father. Cheer him up. Stay positive.

Offer to become a caretaker. Be in hospital. Interact with doctors and para-medico staff. Be there during the round of the doctors. Follow the instructions of doctors and staff.

Contribute financially for the medical treatment as per your own financial position. Do not compare; how much others are contributing or how much care others are taking care of.

Your intentions are most important. Do not listen to your spouse, if he \ she stops you from taking care of your Daddy, just ignore him / her and do your duty.

There will be some, who will be commenting that " It will be good for Daddy, if he leaves now", He is too old, He is the oldest in locality... Just control yourself. You need not argue with them at any cost. Just change your physical position. Move away from them.

Try to keep such negative people away from the patient. Send to the patient, people whom your Daddy used to love and praise. Such people will give positive energy to your Daddy.

There will be ups and downs in the health conditions of the patient, and with each positive medial bulletin, there will be hope, and with each negative medical bulletin there will be despondency. It will be roller coaster. Emotions will run high.

Keep your Manager in loop if it is going beyond your applied leave. Do not expect any sympathy from your organization.

And one day, doctor will give the worst news; it is just matter of time. End is imminent.

Be bold. Life and death is in the hands of almighty. Just keep on doing your duty. Be with Daddy. Do your best. Keep him in good spirit. As per his medical situation, talk to him. Show him religious scriptures, Images of God(s) etc.

In no way, you should hint him that end is coming. Volunteer as an additional para medico staff to Daddy. Do not just stare at the stretcher or at the staff taking him for MRI. Help the staff, help your Daddy.

Weep alone, away from Daddy. Take care of yourself. Take lot of liquid.

Start informing your relatives and friends that Daddy is very serious. People will start visiting the hospital. You have to manage all these. Manage the medical bills and other expenses as a professional.

Raw emotions of people will come on surface. You can judge who is even happy that Daddy is going. Some will be simply distraught. Just observe. This is real world. There are people of different make up. Do not argue with anyone.

Start preparing yourself for the eventuality. Counsel younger ones. You can ask them to pray for grandfather. Can ask them to light a candle for his well-being. But do not force anything on anyone. All will be taking care of himself or herself first.

Promise to your Daddy, mentally, that you will be a good human being and will do good deeds in your life and keep your Daddy alive in the memories of world.

And the final moment comes. Take the hand of Daddy in your hands. Mentally pray to God, that HE should take care of him. Let him go peacefully to His creator.

This is the law of nature. Only one truth, which will never deviate. All born men and women have to die one day. This is His will.

Pay bills of the hospital. Bring your Daddy to home with all due respect.

Inform your Manager and extend the leaves as per the plan.

Prepare for the final journey of Daddy in the best possible ways. As per your religious beliefs, do the last rites.

During the final rites, don't be a spectator. It is the final rites of your Daddy. If something is not working per the plan, go ahead and make it happen.

Be in home for few days for other related final rites for the dead. Contribute financially for the rites. Do not discuss anything with anyone. Do not argue with anyone. Who did what, or who did not do what, just ignore.

You did your best. That is most important.

Do not discuss the matter of will or property. Leave these for future.

Get your tickets booked. Come back to your working place.

If there is a provision for "bereavement leave" in your organization, please do avail.

No need to tell about the demise of your Daddy to all and sundry. Just inform some best friends and some in office. Do not expect any sympathy from anyone. World is moving very fast. People do not have time to even grieve.

For around 15-30 days, do not take any big decisions. Your mental frame will not be normal. There will be moments of weeping and despondency. It is but natural. Let the motions flow.

Keep all the good memories of your Daddy; letters, notes, pictures etc. in a safe place for the posterity. Pray for his soul to rest in peace.

Oh... that chair of Daddy, has become vacant now... Now Daddy is resting in your heart...

H) Social Media



i) 8 Types Of LinkedIn Connections!

Any social media can be a very good tool to understand the psychology of people around. I have been using LinkedIn quite extensively for last 4 years, and am amused by the various types of characters I interact on this site. I have tried to categorized few below. One caveat, I love all of them!! This post is written in lighter vein.

1. **Unofficial corporate communications officer:** These characters will be working in engineering functionality as Vice President, but if you see their posts, you will be confused, whether they are technical guys or working as corporate communications officer for the organizations. Invariably, they will share all posts related to their organization, whether important or silly one. Keep on wearing two hats... alas with one salary only.
2. **I, me, mine:** These characters are the finest narcissist. Read their posts, if there are 100 pics, for sure in all 100 pictures they will be prominently positioned. Oh... and the main picture will be mostly about them only. Who says, people do not love mirrors, these characters can spend hours before mirrors. Enjoy!!
3. **Closed loop:** These characters will like, share, comment on posts only which are related to their organization directly or indirectly. Good one. Hope once they are fired by their organizations, organizations will put their pics in their hall of fame and prominently display to everybody. Sorry... it is never going to happen.
4. **I am here, please hire me... please:** These characters will jump to comment on the posts of people whom they wish can be their future boss. Just to impress, they will write something on the comment. Proximity pays. Hmmm...

5. **Political animals:** These characters have taken upon themselves to be lighting guide to all the Presidents and Prime Ministers of this planet. What any President or Prime Minister should do, not do, these characters are the best person to comment upon. Head of States... please find your mentors here in LinkedIn.
6. **Aspiring directors of soft porn:** Oops!! If these characters are in your network, rest assured all your LinkedIn sessions will be colorful. After all, there is too much stress in the corporate world; these characters will elevate or distract, whichever way you like, your mood by their colorful postings. Oh... I forgot to see that pic of deep cleavage.
7. **Jingoists:** All clashes of civilizations will be religiously reported with or without all types of spices sprinkled all over. You take it or leave it; they will have it splashed all over. No need to go to battlefield, enjoy all actions and commentaries here on LinkedIn...
8. **Morality with flesh:** A new trend is emerging. A lot of moral messages are posted on LinkedIn. It is fine. But what amuses me, a lot of messages are clubbed together with scantily covered lady or ladies. Seems eye candy with moral message... goes well.



ii) 5 Tips To Avoid Social Media Addiction

A bad news, (imaginary) LinkedIn decides to shut its site. Now what will happen to LinkedIn addicted?

Background:

Now let us see some examples of social media addiction:

- A New York woman has been sentenced 20 years of jail term for killing her son to get attention in social media.
- There was news in India that a girl student committed suicide because she could not get the expected number of Likes on her post in Facebook.

From all across the world we are getting such heart rending news almost on weekly basis.

Coming back to LinkedIn. Assume the site is down forever.

What will happen to:

1. All the connections. People boast of the numbers, 'I have 30399+ connections'.
2. What will happen to those recommendations? People cite "among highly recommended on LinkedIn".
3. What will happen to influencers, and aspiring influencers? People will write in their profile, "among only 5 in the whole nation to an influencer".

4. What will happen to all Likes and Comments?
5. What will happen to "Top LinkedIn viewed profile"? Remember that tag" top 1% viewed".
6. What will happen to LinkedIn Queens? Oh my god, there won't be any queens.

In few moments everything will come to naught. Correct.

Take heart. There is a solution.

What is the solution?

1. Always remember that social media companies are for business. The day business model will change, sites will change the way they work.
2. Do not attach yourself too much with any social media.
3. Just use and enjoy the social media and move on.
4. Social media creates a false sense of belonging and false prestige. Live above it.
5. Have fixed time to spend on social networking sites. Less is more.

Relax! LinkedIn is not going to shut down. Keep on logging on LinkedIn but have the five points at the back of your mind.



iii) We Are Unpaid Employees of Social Media

This will be a paradoxical article. Do you know whenever you are on social media; you are working as an unpaid employee of that specific social media. Now, I am crafting an article to be posted on LinkedIn, am working as an unpaid employee of LinkedIn.

The moment you open your Facebook page; you start working for Facebook, totally free of cost. The moment you tweet; you start working as unpaid employee of twitter.

Just pause and think who is moving the vehicle of social media? We the people, unpaid employees from across the globe are keeping the wheels of social media moving.

And what is alarming being that in this game of social media a huge percentage of whole humanity is involved.

It is definitely a very-very clever move by social media organizations to harness the psychology of humanity for their major benefits.

Now in 21st century, worth of man or woman is being measured in Number of LinkedIn Connections, No. of Facebook Friends, No. of Twitter Followers etc.

Our egos are massaged by the number of Likes, Shares, Comments, Re-tweets etc. We feel elated by these metrics, forgetting what we have given to the social media in the bargain.

We all miss, the big points, who are the biggest beneficiaries of our indulgence on social media, and what is the real ROI for us, the common mortal on the sea of social media.

No doubt, there is some benefit to individual user, but in the big pie, his piece is so minuscule, it cannot even be cut.

Yes, social media is becoming a part of humanity, but we need to be very careful in the ROI we are able to derive from this new found addiction.

There can be many suggestions, but I will summarize it:

1. Please remember who the actual beneficiary of the social media is. Real beneficiaries are billionaires who are enjoying the wealth of big social media organizations.

2. Have a clear cut strategy about your social media indulgence. You have to be very clear about, why are you logging-in on social media, what will be the take away from social media for you etc.

3. Work efficiently and effectively on social media to get the higher ROI for yourself. Manage your time effectively on social media.

4. Please be ready to live without social media. Please do not get addicted to any social media. The day, share prices of social media companies will start falling, slowly all social media will be wiped out from the corporate world. Please remember social media is a pure business.

5. Please be conscious about being trapped into becoming unpaid employee of the social media. By its very core, business of social media wants you to become its unpaid employee. Please never be one. And this is possible only when you are able to get the ROI of your time, energy and effort on social media.

I) Entrepreneurship



i) Entrepreneurship Challenge No. 1: War Within

So you have decided to set up a start-up organization of your own or running a start-up already. Congratulations!!

Things are taking shape. In the process you will be having a lot of mixed experiences. There will be positive signals and there will be negative red signals. At every corner you will be facing these mixed signals. It will be a roller-coaster ride all along. **A few examples:**

- One day you are asked by prospective client to send him a proposal, and you are ecstatic. You burn mid-night oil and prepare a wonderful proposal, you submit it, and wait for one month and after one month you are told, project is on hold.
- You have nay-sayers all around; you cannot do it, why don't you go back to your job, etc. A few motivators will be around you.
- A few prospective clients will encourage you; a lot of prospective client will simply test your patience.
- Your financial position is in dark red, a few Samaritans are pitching-in to keep your shop running.
- You are in a country, where entrepreneurship is only for a few chosen few, and you struggle to change the mind-set of people around you.

Looks familiar? Almost all start-up entrepreneurs who are starting from clean slate, without having a silver spoon in mouth and no contacts will be facing the similar situations.

Now what is the solution? Solution lies with you:

- 1. Accept negatives will be there.**
- 2. You will have to manage your thought process.**
- 3. Continuously improve your thought process.**
- 4. Even in positive situations, manage your emotions.**
- 5. Tweak your tactics continuously, but never dilute your core strategy.**
- 6. At every corner, your character and value system will be tested. Make your character and value system like a mountain.**
- 7. Always see the long term.**
- 8. Remember buck stops with you.**

It all boils down to managing the war within you; in your mind and in your heart. Now who will win? The side you feed more!



ii) 3 Tips For Entrepreneurs: How To Manage Stress

There is a very unfortunate and sad news coming in from Bangalore, India. The founder of largest Cafe Chain, Cafe Coffee Day #CCD, Shri VG Siddhartha has committed suicide. May his soul rest in peace.

Conjectures are there in social media that the gentleman took this extreme step due to #business #stress and alleged harassment by Income Tax authorities of India.

We cannot comment anything on the allegations and conjectures. But it is true that entrepreneurs face huge stress while managing their business. In this short article we would discuss some ways to manage stress while managing your business. Let us discuss some tips:

Define the purpose and values of your business and live them daily. If you are plunging into business just for making huge money, please do not opt for entrepreneurship.

Define your own personal purpose and values and align them with business. Your personal values and purpose of life must be one shade higher than the purpose and values of your business.

You must work as a trustee of your business. Must have unattached-attachment with your business.

Have strong family and friend support. You must never sacrifice your personal life for the sake of business.

Lead a balanced, disciplined and simple life. Always find the ways to de-clutter your mind.

Develop out of work interests. Contribute for society in a balanced and enjoyable ways.

Never let the fortune and fame go into your head. It will simply ruin you.

Choose your advisers wisely. Advisers must tell you the blunt truth and not lead you into trouble.

Never be tempted for rat race of cut-throat competition and making money at any cost. Business is not a zero-sum game. It is beyond.

You Finance Team, Marketing Team and CAs must be of highest integrity. They must lead you towards right path. Never accept even a single penny from any unscrupulous investor. Judge the integrity and purpose of your investors. If they are lacking integrity, just drop them like hot potato.

Surpass the corporate governance standards of the developed nations. No government agency can ever harass you. Sometimes there might be misunderstanding, but since you are on right path, you can solve those misunderstanding.

Keep away from politicians, corrupt officers and dishonest people. Period. They all will drag you down.

Don't put all your eggs in single basket. Have diversified business and in multiple countries.

If you are in mining, real estate, transport, jewelry business, I mean, businesses which are prone to corruption, you must be doubly honest. If your startup is attracting big money through funding, you must take extra precautions that everything is 110% clean and adhering to the letter and spirit of regulations. Spirit of law is more important than the letters of the law. If the state or country you are doing business is corrupt, you must be doubly honest and careful.

In business, always give preference to be an honest man, rather than being a smart man. Smart men are prone to corruption. For honest man, clear conscience is his softest pillow.

Every week, set aside some time to unwind and review your personal purpose and values.

Ups and downs in business are reality. No need to worry. If business is not doing well, put all your efforts to make it better, at the same time, no need to feel ashamed. Just tell the world, what you are doing. People will understand and even appreciate.

Yes, entrepreneurship is difficult journey. But it is highly rewarding for you and for the society, if undertaken with a sublime mindset.

You must develop the mindset of King Janak of Mithila state, who said, "*I have unlimited wealth within myself. Even if whole Mithila is burnt, nothing is lost for me.*"



iii) Thinking Beyond Unicorn!

Any entrepreneur who is scouting for investors (Venture Capital) is facing a big hurdle in India, and that hurdle comes in the form of a Unicorn. (A mythological horse, having one horn). In investors circle, unicorn means a company that can reach the valuation of at least one billion dollars.

Before I write further, let it be clear that investors have their own calculations and we need to accept their wisdom, may be with a pinch of salt. It is their money and how and where they invest it is their outlook.

But... here are few points to be pondered:

1. Can all ideas be unicorns? Simple answer is No. So logically it says, the idea which is not unicorn worthy is not worthy enough to be considered by investors.
2. Do founders start with the idea of unicorns? Simple answer is No. Real founders start with a passion, they think of money later, and making billions – almost never. Real founders are there to solve some real problems of the world, to create something new and to give a new direction to the world. So in reality all such real founders will never be able to see the color of the investor's money.
3. Do we need only unicorns for society? Again the answer is No. We need a lot of enterprises amongst ourselves. To my mind, 25 enterprises worth 4 million dollars each are more beneficial than a single 1-billion-dollar unicorn.
4. Ultimately, if the idea and founder are not unicorn ready then where will they go? This leaves a huge chunk of ideas and entrepreneurs out of fray. A huge loss for humanity.
5. Why to pretend for purpose and values? Simply say, we are looking for returns, pure and simple loads of money. Every day we read reams after reams preaching on purpose, values etc. But reality is, there is no purpose and no values, it is pure

and simple color of the money. Unicorn is the purpose and unicorn is the value. Unicorn eclipses all else.

6. Is the return on investment the only criterion for entrepreneurship? If so, is this not a hollow entrepreneurship? To my mind, this is.

In summary there is seriously something wrong with this mythological horse. This unicorn race is becoming a rat race. Herd mentality is reigning supreme over innovative thinking. Noble profession of entrepreneurship is reduced to money minting business. On the altar of unicorn, thousands of sublime ideas and passionate real entrepreneurs are sacrificed daily. Have doubts? Please send your proposal to any investor and see for yourself.

But I see a silver line somewhere in the dark, very dark clouds. Maybe sooner or later investor community will realize that chasing that mythological horse was wrong and will start investing in real ideas and in real founders.



iv) Waiting Indefinitely...

Recently I visited one of my prospective client. I was escorted to the waiting room of HR Department. In the room 4 candidates were waiting for interview / discussions with the HR department. We all waited for around one hour. Nothing moved. But hold on... $5 \times 6 = 30$ man hours moved, without a simple meaningful thing being done in the universe. This is just a very simple example.

In other instance, I was working at a client place. Candidates will come in horde and wait almost for whole day, waiting their turn for interview to come. It was frustrating seeing the candidate sitting in the same place, bored to hell, for hours together.

In one instance, one candidate was told to wait for hours together. When I enquired, I was told that the candidate has given the second level interview and they (HR) are waiting for the response from the interviewer.

Seems familiar? See how many man hours are simply wasted, people get frustrated and up to a level of mental torture prospective employees are made to wait, either to meet the interview board or just hear the verdict about their fate.

And worst, it happens, in almost all types of companies, whether small or big.

Here are few simple solutions:

1. Please do not think that it looks good for your company if candidates are seen waiting in your lounge in hordes for interview. It simply projects mismanagement on your part.

2. Please slot the time to each candidate and make sure that he/she is received at the promised time.
3. Manage your interviewer's team and make it clear to them that candidates should not wait unnecessarily.
4. In worst case, if candidates are made to wait too longer, please inform them about the reasons.
5. Please make sure that you have proper sitting place for the candidates. Many a times for 20 candidates, only 4 chairs will be lying in the lounge. You can use alternate arrangements also.
6. You can have some facilities for the candidates to kill their time while waiting. You can provide them newspapers, newsletter and magazines etc.
7. Please do arrange at least a glass of fresh water for candidates, if not, tea, coffee or cookies.
8. If due to mismanagement on your part, candidate has wasted his time, there is no harm in a saying sorry.

There is no second chance to create first impression. Whenever any candidate comes for interview he judges your organization subtly. The way you handle your prospective employee is a cue to the culture of your company. So be considerate to your guests and may be to your own future brand ambassadors!



v) Company Culture: Trivial Is Important

Company culture is the linchpin which glues the whole organization together. It is very difficult to define the culture. In simple words I can try to summaries culture as “the way company functions on day-to-day basis”.

If you want to know the culture of the organization you have to feel, observe and to be the part of the eco-system of the organization.

Have you ever got the following experiences when dealing with any organization?

- You call the reception and call is not picked up.
- You call the company executive, and he says he is busy, cannot give you the time, day before he scheduled the meeting with you.
- Out of 15 e-ids shown on website, 7 are bouncing.
- Within the organization, calls are picked up depending upon who you are. Calls of bosses are picked up, calls of peers are ignored.
- In open house meeting when your center head is asked, what he got, when the new company has taken over? He simply moves towards the new CEO and says: I have got him. (The new CEO)
- You call one of your colleague. Discuss something over phone. That colleague goes and complains to his boss that you were bad mouthing one third person, and you are asked to explain. All in the name of “culture”.

- Your mails are almost never replied upon.
- You send some queries on the company web-site and it all goes into black hole.
- You discuss something with the executives and they say on Wednesday they will get back to you, and that Wednesday never comes.
- You call one mobile number of MD shown on the web-site. That person picks up your phone, but says, he left that organization one year back.

All such scenarios are tell-tale signs of the culture of the organization. All the above cited instances are real. For many it may seem trivial but it does give you a peek into the culture of the organization.

Whenever you come across such scenarios; please pause and ponder about the culture of the organization and accordingly deal with the organization.



vi) Pramod's Prosperity Principle

We all aspire to be prosperous. Organizations aspire to be prosperous. Societies aspire to be prosperous. Countries aspire to be prosperous. We all struggle to become prosperous.

Is there a formula to be prosperous? Yes, there is a very simple formula which I have devised.

Pramod's Prosperity Formula:

Prosperity = Leadership – Corruption

Or

$$P = L - C$$

(P, L, C are used in abstract sense)

The formula is based on the following principle:

"Prosperity is directly proportional to Leadership and inversely proportional to Corruption."

Higher prosperity can be gained by increasing leadership and reducing corruption.

Description

Prosperity has been used in larger sense. It connotes:

- Progress
- Peace
- Profit

Leadership has been used in larger sense. It connotes:

- All positive thoughts
- All positive actions

Corruption has been used in larger sense. It connotes:

- All negative thoughts
- All bad actions

Application:

This principle is applicable at:

- Global level
- Country level
- Society level
- Organizational level
- Individual level

Call for action:

Difference between your positive actions and negative actions is your net prosperity. Try to improve all your positive actions and thoughts and reduce your negative feelings and actions.

Please apply this formula in your daily life, and you will become more and more prosperous. **Materially and more importantly holistically!**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Pramod Kumar Srivastava has completed B.E. in Computer Sc. & Engineering from BIET, Jhansi, a government engineering college and MBA (Business Economics) with specialization in Marketing from DAVV, Indore, MP, India. Pramod has got varied 20 plus years of industry experience in technical, management and management consulting areas. Pramod has worked for WAPCOS, Microland, Hughes, Stratandops and SAP. Currently he runs his own generalist business management consulting company, PKS Management Consultants, based at Bangalore, India as CEO. Pramod blogs extensively and is a sought after speaker on various management and economics topics.

All views are personal.

