

# Here & Now

Quarterly Newsletter

[Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science](#)

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## 1. Winter Event 2007

Winter Event was held from December 8 to 20, 2007 at Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur, a very regular venue for ISABS events in the 1980s and '90s that gave way to Mughal Sheraton in Agra in later years! Like the booming (yet elegant) city of Jaipur, ISABS events too have grown in the

intervening years, and this event was no exception. Fortunately, the hotel too had expanded to be able to accommodate the large communities of the first (Dec. 8 to 13) and second (Dec. 15 to 20) weeks. Taking both weeks into account, 209 participants were there in 20 BLHP Labs, 26 participants in 3 ALHP Labs, 14 participants in PDP Phase A, and 6 participants in Phase B. There were 25 professional members working as facilitators in the first week, and 24 professional members in the second, and 1 PDP intern in the first week, and 3 in the second.

The Event saw the last Board meeting and AGM of Sankar's presidentship and the initiation of Manas' new term from January 1. Sentiment, appreciation, gift-giving, nostalgia and goodwill were there in abundance! The Professional Members' Profile book was released ceremonially. Newer, younger professional members were conspicuous by their presence! And the newly-elected President Manas announced his new team to lead ISABS over the next three years.

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## 2. Message From the New President, Manas Shukla

Dear Friends and Cotravellers,

I would like to begin by thanking the editorial team Arati, D. P. Dash, Neena, Sanjib, and Sridhar who have created this opportunity for me to communicate with all of you.

The very fact that you are reading the 'new look' Here & Now tells me that you must have, at one time or the other, or several times, experienced the learning methodology offered by ISABS. It is indeed the thousands of readers like you whose physical and spiritual energy has added to this unique institution in India.

I have taken over the legacy of ISABS from leaders, role holders, professional members and participants who have selflessly added their might to institution building. We have all travelled together and learnt so much from each other.

ISABS, to me, becomes unique in its form, purpose, activities and methodology. I have never seen or heard of a society where the premium is on being what we choose to be. Hundreds of people self-select to participate in the national and regional events and create this freedom to exercise choices for themselves. In the absence of any formal teaching or guiding, the adult learner tastes the freedom of trusting her own experience, validating it through experimenting and getting immensely enriched with authentic feedback.

Our mission, therefore, is not to convert this uniqueness into an utopian island within this country. Our aim includes facilitating the growth process of individuals who will also develop the

competencies to impact their spheres of influence and will extrapolate the culture and values of ISABS into their lives and surroundings.

ISABS cannot continue to revel in its isolated and protoplasmic enclosures of programme events. It is time, and our predecessors have built a clear roadway for us to travel and to reach out to larger sections of the country.

I think that we, as professionals, need to believe more in our capacity to influence both ends of the society: the powerful holders of the keys at one end and the people at the other end who are struggling with issues of survival. Our contact so far has been with the population in the middle, which has a propensity to become content with simple symbols of success and feelings of well-being, even if these are temporary.

Another area of thrust that I wish to share with you is our commitment to professional excellence. This means that the certification programme for professional members will continue to focus on facilitator competencies and holistic development with enhanced rigour, feedback and renewal.

We are fortunate that we have a world class repertoire of trainers and facilitators comprising our professional member community. More and more certified members are joining us every year. We intend to capture this vast pool of knowledge for posterity.

Our linkages with academia are increasing. We have launched our own two-year OD certification programme led by Vasudevan, the first year of which has been immensely successful. Even as we nurture this further, I am certain that the ISABS OD certification programmes will continue to be the best in this part of the world. The Organizational Change Facilitation Programme (OCFP) launched earlier, in which we are partnering, is going ahead on full steam.

There are lots of things to do and equally important are your thoughts, wishes and dreams for ISABS. I am sure that our Here & Now will soon become an interactive space and we will learn more from you. In the meanwhile please write in to us.

Hoping to meet you again and again,

Manas

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### 3. Editorial

Dear Reader,

Greetings from the new Editorial Team Arati Mohanram, D. P. Dash, Neena Verma, Sanjib Basu and Sridhar Venugopal! We are spread over Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Chandigarh, and are gradually learning our way into our new role. In the ISABS spirit of experimentation and change, we have brought photographs into the world of Here & Now from this issue. We hope you like this change. We are also keeping a section of the newsletter devoted to clearly conceptual or theoretical articles in applied behavioural science. We would like more such articles and hope to get contributions from you for this section. Perhaps this section one day could become a separate academic journal for ISABS!

Manas as the new President and his team are in place. We invite Here & Now to be the forum for open explorations regarding the expectations to and from role-holders. We also invite PDP participants to share their experience, besides other contributions they would like to make through Here & Now.

This Here & Now issue is a combined issue for January and April 2008.

Please let us have your news, views, reviews, poems, articles and reports! 'Here & Now' is our collective self-expression, and we hope that the newsletter reflects all the vibrancy and joy of ISABS as a growing organisation.

Happy Reading!

Arati, DP, Neena, Sanjib, and Sridhar

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## 4. The Mechanics of Learning (Udai Pareek)

### Part II

Learning technology plays an important role in stabilizing learning so that what has been learned is properly assimilated and becomes a part of the individual's normal behaviour. Some of its main aspects are discussed below.

**Feedback:** Feedback is a necessary condition for stabilizing learning. If a learner does not know how much he or she has learned, the learning will be slow. However, if the learner knows how much he or she has learned, what he or she could not learn, and why, learning will be more effective.

The principle of feedback is very effectively used in programmed instruction. After the learner goes through some new information, he or she reads a question on the material learned and chooses one of the responses given there. Then the learner turns a page to find out whether the response chosen was correct. This is feedback. Suppose the learner has chosen the wrong answer. He or she is then asked to find out why that answer is wrong. This is another kind of feedback. In this system, a very effective use of feedback is found. Feedback can be built-in in various other ways. Review exercises, review sessions, short tests, etc. provide similar feedback.

It is important that feedback is given as close to the learning event as possible. It should also help the learner to understand the cause of his or her success and/or failure, so that the learner can plan more systematically for future effectiveness. Feedback is important not only for cognitive learning and the learning of technical skills, but also for the learning of behavioural skills and for behavioural change. In the latter case, feedback is much more complex.

**Practice:** For effective learning, it is necessary that the learner is able to practice what he or she has learnt. This helps in stabilizing learning. Practice may give the learner an opportunity to test whether learning has been effective, to take steps to improve, and to gain enough confidence to use this learning in future. Enough opportunities should therefore be provided for practice. This is particularly important in the case of skills—both technical and behavioural. Practice should be accompanied by feedback, so that each period of practice is followed by reinforcement of success. This helps in stabilization of learning. For example, if a participant decides to develop the skill of listening, he or she may be helped to practice the skill several times, and some detailed data (feedback) may be provided as to whether he or she listened or failed to listen to different group members each time. Specific time periods, clearly outlined and effective methods of assessment, feedback group support, and a non-threatening climate are necessary for effective practice. Programmes of mass practice or mutual feedback on the practice of common skills can help in the practice of the skills and their use in behaviour.

**Application:** Learning is of no use unless it leads to action. Knowledge or skills are meant for certain purposes. Unless these are properly used, they are as good as absent. The application of learning implies the development of insight in the learner and an ability to respond to a situation effectively. Training technology can offer various ways of organizing the application of learning. It may range from applying the acquired knowledge to problems as defined in classroom situations or cases, to its application in real-life situations. Application can also be aided if a demonstration can be organized. Films are a good medium for this. In a film, the use of a particular principle or a set of principles can be effectively shown. The use of a system like MbO (management by objectives) can be shown quite effectively in a film. Demonstration through an actual situation may be equally, and sometimes more, effective. After learning about MbO, if a learner is taken to a unit where MbO is practiced, his or her ability to apply this knowledge in

real-life situations increases.

After having seen the application, the learner may be encouraged to try it himself or herself. A simple exercise of describing situations and asking the learner to apply some part of this knowledge may be useful. A detailed case may be even better. Another step can be taken in preparing a detailed simulation, with the learner being required to work out the details. Such simulation can be either in the form of written material only or an actual organizational situation. The most lifelike way of learning application is to take up an exercise in a company or in the field. For example, after a learner has learned how to diagnose organizational culture and seen its application in a film, he or she may be sent to an organization to apply his or her knowledge and prepare a report. This report may then be critiqued.

The various mechanics of application need to be planned in a proper sequence. It may, for example, be useful to have several graduated exercises on demonstration followed by several graduated exercises in actual application, testing the ability to apply knowledge and learn from the review of such exercises. For training in applied fields, enough emphasis should be given to application and new ways should be devised to ensure effective application and practice. Even the methodology of teaching contributes to this. The use of cases in teaching increase the probability of application of what is learned. But this alone may not be enough for effective application. In some areas, the use of simulation of entire systems may be effective not only at the application stage but even at the early stage of acquiring learning. Different systems of learning sequences can of course be worked out but the focus on application should never be lost.

**Self-learning:** The teaching/training technology should emphasize self-learning. The learner should develop both the motivation as well as the skills and capability for self-learning. Learners may select some areas in which they are comparatively weak or about which they want to know more, and may proceed at their own pace.

Programmed instruction is one device to encourage self-learning. An effective use of programmed instruction can result both in economy of learning and in faster learning of some kinds of material. Material that requires acquisition of information or knowledge can be better learned through programmed instruction, which can save the valuable time usually spent in such learning in the classroom. More effective use of the teacher/trainer and the learning group can be made after the individual learner has acquired some knowledge and when most learners in the group are at the same level. In many organizations, training can be improved enormously if the concept of training is widened to include the use of self-instructional material. For example, a company with a large marketing operation may like to design a course on new sales tax laws. It can do this best by designing self-instructional material on the new laws. After most managers have gone through their individual 'courses', short programmes for batches can be organized to discuss doubts, implications, changes needed in marketing strategy, and so on.

Face-to-face group time in a classroom is very valuable and should be effectively used in other ways. Instead, self-learning should be included as a necessary component in all learning situations. Enough time should be given to participants to read, consult the library, and select their own material for learning. Assignments requiring self-study and search for relevant material can themselves promote self-learning. Such work can be satisfying and also help in stabilizing what has been learned.

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## **The Learning Process**

In learning, the process is the most important factor, which emphasizes creativity. In general, the process is concerned with how learning develops, how the learner and the teacher/trainer interact, and how the learner is involved in the process. Such concerns are crucial for managing the effectiveness of learning. Some important dimensions of process are discussed below:

**Discovery:** Learning can be more effective in the individual's personal development if he or she 'discovers' knowledge rather than 'getting' it from the teacher/trainer. Learning by discovery emphasizes the importance of the learner and expresses trust in the learner's ability to be active and creative. This has implications for technology as well as other systems—the endosystem and the influence system (the teacher/trainer). If a teacher/trainer provides the minimum necessary guidance and encourages the learner to explore the environment, the field of knowledge, situations, and organizations and to discover various aspects by himself or herself, then learning contributes to creativity. This is, of course, a challenge for training managers and trainers.

Discovery also emphasizes the use of the learner's experience in learning. This is particularly true in the case of behavioural skills. Such skills cannot be learned unless the learner, through taking active part and incurring some risk, discovers for himself or herself the 'principles' of behaviour. For example, learning empathy is not possible if a person learns about it in books. The learner has to 'discover' what empathy is in a situation he or she is involved in, and where the learner takes necessary risks to get feedback and help. Laboratory training, for instance, proceeds on this assumption. This is true of all other learning as well. One may have learned about designing a control system, but the real learning comes about only when one 'discovers' it through sudden insight, which makes the cognitive learning meaningful. It is then that various ideas, techniques, and facts fall into a meaningful pattern like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

**Experimentation:** Related to discovery is experimentation—taking an active role in trying out a new thing or taking some risk. All skills involve experimentation. If learning is to be creative and lead to creativity, experimentation is necessary. It is through experimenting that the learner understands that there are various ways of doing things and discovers alternatives that make him

more effective in being able to choose from a variety of alternatives. In fact, he or she learns to create new alternatives.

Without experimentation, learning cannot help in the development of a field. If a learner merely learns how to apply some techniques as taught, he or she becomes only a technician. The learner should, instead, become an engineer, able to innovate according to the challenge.

Experimentation is very important in the learning of behavioural skills. Laboratory training and other types of behavioural training use experimentation to a great extent. When a learner is dissatisfied with his or her present level of a particular skill or behaviour, he or she will be able to develop the particular skill or learn a new skill only by experimenting with his or her behaviour in a group which provides encouragement and psychological safety. Feedback on the experimentation will reinforce the lesson and encourage the learner to practice the skill or behaviour. In all learning situations, enough opportunities should be provided to learners to experiment, to try out new ways, and learn from such efforts.

**Auto systems design:** Learning should also help the learner to learn ‘how to learn further’. For this purpose, the learner should be helped to develop his or her own system of self-learning. Each learner uses a particular system. While one person learns by organizing his or her thoughts using a systematic outline, another may learn through application and then conceptualization. Similarly, people develop their own ways of remembering things, preparing notes, preparing records, reference cards, and other material, referencing, etc. Learners should be encouraged to review the effectiveness of their systems and find out about other available methods so that they can finally choose their own system and develop it further.

**Collaborative learning:** So far learning has been discussed only from the point of view of individual learners. But learning is also a function of the entire group. Also, the group is an important resource for the individual. All learners, and certainly the trainers as well, constitute the group. Learners learn not only from the teacher/trainer but also from one another. The process of collaborative learning—mutually helping one another in learning and facilitating this process—is very significant. In real-life situations, people work most of the time in groups and influence one another to achieve results. Such situations involve learning. Collaborative learning, therefore, is a very important dimension of growth and of building the skills to help and receive help. All formal learning programmes should stress and strengthen collaborative learning. Such learning should also include the teacher/trainer. Then learning does not debase the learner as an object.

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## **Influence: The Trainer**

The teacher/trainer influences the learning situation a great deal. The trainer’s values, general

style of interaction, competence, and individual needs matter a great deal. His or her contribution to the learning process is most vital. The main dimensions of his influence are discussed below:

**Values:** The trainer's main contribution is through his or her values. Some trainers/teachers may not be at all aware of their values; others are. Whether one is aware of them or not, everyone has a set of values and behaves according to these. Therefore, it may be useful for teachers/trainers to examine what values they are operating with. Since the main role of the trainer/teacher is to influence the learners and their learning process, the question they should ask themselves is what their model of an ideal human being is.

Probably, two factors are important in determining one's model of an ideal human being. One is social awareness, and the other one's concept of human nature. Regarding social awareness, Karl Marx and Max Weber held two extreme positions. While Marx emphatically asserted the primacy of social reality of power held by the different classes, and Weber emphasized the primacy of ideas and institutions. With regard to human nature, contrasting positions are represented by, on the one hand, the classical Western proselytizing stance (human beings are basically ignorant and need to be 'converted' to awareness, or human beings' basic animal nature is motivated by the fulfilment of physical needs) and, on the other, the Eastern faith in the goodness and godliness of humanity, with an emphasis on self-awareness (symbolized so dramatically by Mahatma Gandhi). The former position culminated in Taylorism and work systematization and the latter in humanism, more recently represented by Freire, Maslow, Rogers, and others. Not that these people directly borrowed from Gandhi or other Eastern thinkers, but their impact did percolate. That however is a separate discussion.

In the teaching/learning context, Carl Rogers represents a strong trend regarding values and the model human being. His non-directive teaching emphasized 'nurturing self-direction and fulfilment' of the learners. His faith in the learner as a resource is immense. Although Bruner comes from a different tradition, his emphasis on exploration and enquiry has made a significant contribution to the theory of instruction. He emphasizes that cognitive learning takes place best through enquiry, through the learner's own motivations. He emphasizes also the 'autonomy of self-reward' as against outside rewards. Paulo Freire, mixing a Marxian understanding of society with humanism, has contributed the concept of 'conscientization'—arousal of a positive self-concept in human beings, in relation to their environment and society through a liberating education that treats learners as subjects (active agents) and not objects (passive recipients).

Skinner, the best-known person in the field of learning, held a peculiar position. He emphasized the role of external conditions of the environment in human behaviour, and accordingly proposed a theory of shaping behaviour through manipulation of external conditions. He made a tremendous contribution to the technology of learning (he is considered the father of programmed instruction technology) as well. However, the Skinnerian model of humanity is a passive one,

even though it is the human being who manipulates the environment in it.

It may be useful for teachers/trainers to become aware of some of these thinkers—and others in their own countries and traditions—and consciously develop their own model of humanity. If they do not exercise their conscious choice, the choice gets determined without their awareness. There is no escape.

**Style:** The trainer's style is very important in the learning process. However, the trainer's style will be determined to a great extent by his or her values and concept of humanity. One dimension of the trainer's style is the type of influence he or she uses. Teachers/trainers can be classified as having a 'direct influence style' or an 'indirect influence style'. Various other ways of looking at style can also be considered—how much use the trainer makes of the different training methods; what reviewing devices he or she uses; whether the trainer deals with his or her subject in isolation or builds linkages with other subjects; the trainer's degree of emphasis on theory and application respectively, etc.

The interaction process between the trainer/teacher and the learner is very important. In the words of Paulo Freire, 'it is important whether the trainer/teacher treats learners as subjects (active agents) or as objects (passive recipients) in the process of learning'. This is reflected in their process of interaction. One simple and useful system of classification for the interaction process is that based on the influence of the trainer.

The trainer influences learners in various ways. The main question is how does he or she influence them? Is the trainer's influence 'liberating' or 'prescriptive'? Is his or her influence indirect or direct? Does the trainer's influence result in expressive behaviour or coping behaviour? Several thinkers have dealt with this important aspect and have raised similar questions.

Using Bales's interaction process categories, Flanders developed the categories of 'direct' and 'indirect' influence behaviour for teachers in a classroom situation. Direct influence restricts the freedom of the learner, is prescriptive, and develops coping behaviour. Indirect influence increases the learner's freedom, is liberating, and develops expressive behaviour. Several studies show this to be true. The interaction analysis method gives valid, observable, and highly reliable data about these two categories of behaviour (and some other relevant data).

Direct influence behaviour by the trainer includes negative reinforcement (criticizing, reprimanding, punishing), ordering and giving directions, asking specific testing questions, lecturing, defensive behaviour (justifying), expressing anger, and so on. Indirect influence behaviour includes accepting feelings, expressing feelings, accepting ideas, building on the learner's ideas, positive reinforcement (praising, encouraging), asking exploring questions,

sensitivity (encouraging silent members to participate), and so on. Studies show that if indirect influence behaviour by the teacher/trainer is rewarded (feedback and satisfaction are also rewards), his or her style will change.

Teachers/trainers must therefore examine how they can use more indirect influence behaviour and encourage creativity and development of potential in learners. This would in fact mean providing minimal guidance and recognizing the learners are important resources in learning. Learning then becomes a process of mutual influence and the teacher/trainer is as much in the learning role as the learner. The whole approach to teaching and training then changes. Much more emphasis is given to helping learners to discover, innovate, develop their own systems, and develop their capability for self-learning.

**Needs:** The trainer's own motivation and needs are equally important in the learning process. If the trainer has a high need recognition and acceptance, he or she may become charismatic and try to create dependence. The trainer should therefore examine what his or her motivational pattern is, and what needs this is creating and arousing in the learners.

The trainer is in a very influential role—his or her expectations will also influence the behaviour of the learners to a great extent. If the trainer's expectations are high, the learners are likely to fulfil these expectations. As has been shown by Rosenthal and Jacobson, expectations influence the style and general behaviour of teachers and they help the learners to fulfil their expectations. The experiment reported by them is too well known to require detailed reference. Briefly, some primary school children were 'selected' as potential geniuses and this was made known to their teachers, parents, and peers. In fact, they were picked out at random. But the effect of raising expectations was dramatic and the children did show marked improvement in all dimensions, including their IQ. It was the miracle of expectations at work. The high expectations of teachers changed the teachers' behaviour, which became more supportive and helped the children fulfil the psychological prophecy.

**Competence:** Of course, the competence of the teacher/trainer in his or her own field is very important in the learning process. A teacher/trainer commands the students' respect to a great extent through his or her competence. The trainer can be of great help to the learners in discussing creative ways of applying knowledge if he or she knows the field well--the importance of this factor cannot be overemphasized.

In sum, the effectiveness of learning can be defined in terms of learning being quick and sustained, effectively used, leading to creativity, and the development of a capacity for self-learning. The following conditions are conducive to such learning:

Authentic and open system at the training institution

Non-threatening climate  
 Challenging learning tasks  
 Collaborative arrangements for mutual support of learners  
 Organization of graduated experiences of challenging successes  
 Mechanisms for supportive and quick feedback  
 Opportunities to practice skills learned  
 Opportunities to apply learning  
 Opportunities for and encouragement of self-learning  
 Opportunities and support for experimentation  
 Emphasis on learning through discovery  
 Trainer's indirect and liberating influence through minimum guidance  
 Trainer's human values and faith in humanity  
 Trainer's high expectations from learners  
 Trainer's openness to examine own needs  
 Trainer's competence  
 The better such conditions are, the more effective the learning can become

*Note.* Taken with adaptation from Chapter 6 of the author's book *Understanding Organizational Behaviour* (2nd edition). Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007.

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## 5. Generative Questions (Harish Raichandani)

### Part I

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew.” -- Albert Einstein

Over last few years my fascination with Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has grown. This practical philosophy propels individuals, couples, families, teams and organizations onto a plane where, one discovers flourishing relationships and generative growth. During these years – the AI programs I attended, the large number of stories that I heard and read and the work I did with AI impacted me significantly. This strength-based philosophy is so addictive that today I cannot think of my personal and professional being without the frame of AI.

Whether it is parenting issues in dealing with my teenage sons, or interactions with the large extended Raichandani family, or the nascent organization which we run, or the clients we work with I experience the profound impact of this Cooperrider and Srivastava invented approach.

The core of this approach includes inquiry (the act of exploration and discovery) the discovery carried out through questions. Today there's enough research to prove that the consequences are embedded in those very questions. This very simple technique has made AI, perhaps the most sought after OD & Individual development tool.

In this short paper I have attempted to give examples of situations where the very act of inquiry carried out from the AI perspective resulted in desired consequences; the affect and emotions brought about by these questions become generative i.e. these questions produce positive emotions, bring about hope, prompt pro-activeness, stimulate initiative broaden the horizon of possibilities and so on.

Let us consider the following four situations,

1. My phone company has, yet again sent me the faulty bill. Over half a dozen attempts made in past several weeks appear to be falling on deaf ears. I pick up phone dial the famous '121' to lodge yet another complaint after punching several clicks and subjected to unwanted barrage of taped-message-torture, finally a Customer Service Representative appears on line only to ask more questions the so called 'confirmations of identity' and after seeking permission using the 'polite parliamentary language', I am put on 'hold' to listen to the telecom service provider's jingle, in which I am least interested.

Just imagine what I would be experiencing. Before we proceed further to read this article, I invite the reader to take stock of herself/ himself what emotions run through your body (as you read this in here and now). Perhaps, your emotions are same / closer to what I experienced viz. despair, frustration, anger, sadness, disgust etc.

Getting back to the incident, I shout my frustration loudly to this phone company representative, lodge a complaint and angrily disconnect my mobile; engulfed with these emotions I reach home and my son approaches me to share an exciting experience from school. It takes quite a bit of effort for him to reach out to me. My listening skills in those moments are poorer, energy levels lower, and I am unduly tired.

On another occasion, I go through the same cycle – faulty bill, call centre interaction, draining emotions. Even as the driver is crawling by the side of the flyover under construction, thanks to the peak-hour Hyderabad traffic, I have time to reflect sitting in my car. I check my emotions and ask myself a few questions and wow! the questions lead me to answers which lift up my energy level, generate compassion for the guy who was recipient of my anger (a while ago), I am amused at the ‘call centre tape-recorded message delay hold’ cycle, I’m eagerly awaiting the meeting with a client (due in next half hour). I am charged up.

What was the nature of questions I asked myself to bring about that emotional shift?

2. A junior colleague’s performance has been the cause of disturbance for a Consultant. Nth time he has failed to keep his promise of completing a simple documentation. A very intelligent person, he understands the required work to be done; he is quite competent and the Consultant ensured that his work-load does not hinder completion of required documentation. The past few interactions have rather ended on a bitter note. Typically the sequence has been the consultant questions junior’s priorities and commitment; junior gets defensive, offers new-timeline. The consultant reminds him of earlier missed timelines leading rather to an unpleasant conclusion of dialogue. Another occasion the Consultant asks a set of questions which result in their discussion rising to a higher plane. This time their discussion leads them to

look afresh at importance of documentation for their business  
the wow-experience it may generate for their client  
possibility of next similar assignment being richer even while optimizing the effort

No prizes for guessing, which of the two scenarios may lead to the quality documentation being completed. Again, point for reflection is what was the nature of questions that lead to this transformation?

3. I am facilitating a group of Automation Engineers articulate the competencies they require for the ambitious four-fold growth envisaged by a power generating company. The group is involved in deeply engaging, animated discussions. The objective of brain-storming is to arrive at a 'Competency Frame-work' which will be helpful in scaling up capability of Automation department. Mid-way through the discussion there's impasse. The group appears to be stuck with multiple, seemingly contrarian views held dearly by different members. During the intervening coffee-break members of the group in dyads and triads are animatedly discussing with each other; part concern, part anxiety, I eavesdrop those conversations

X doesn't support your idea of including 'Protection Systems' in the list of competencies 'coz he is worried about his own competence on that dimension

Y didn't want 'Quality Systems' being in the list 'coz that would put Z in an advantageous position vis-à-vis Y

Essentially these discussions of zero-sum thought-process were quite a drain; frustration written all over participant faces.

Once we assembled back to continue the workshop, few questions raised by an engineer led to a collaborative dialogue, big-picture view embraced by all and the net result was high interest level of participants, contentment and pride in the output they generated.

One may like to examine the type of questions raised by that young engineer.

4. One of my current assignments includes facilitation of setting up a community school. The ongoing building construction, approaching academic year timelines, budgetary consideration, the small size of group (including volunteers who are otherwise busy professionals) and ambition to create a benchmark institution have all lead to many exciting and frustrating moments. The core group selected to run the school bring rich academic/instructional experience; they possess no prior experience of laying foundation of an institution or of executing a project; often their efforts result in shortfall in required / anticipated accomplishment leading to frustrating situations.

A closer observation of highs and lows of this group reveals that certain type of discussions / dialogue and specific range of questions lift up their energy levels while others drain.

In all the above situations described above and in my day-to-day encounters in personal and professional life, I have experienced certain type of dialoguing and questioning leads to generative energy; consequently leading to behaviors such as collaboration, belonging & togetherness, patience, understanding, playfulness, etc.

The questions one asks often lead to the consequences (we explore this further in next part). As one begins to practice AI one tends to contribute more of such questions; one tends to trigger more such conversations. These are examples of “generative questions.” In the next part of this article we will explore examples of generative questions. In the meanwhile, may I invite you consciously take note of your moments of positive emotions which may be characterized by joy, interest, contentment, love, pride, awe, hope, amusement, compassion, gratitude, sexual desire etc.

Do reflect and write to us about the questions and dialogues which lead to positive emotions for you. Look forward to you sharing . . .

“Some doors open only from the inside.” -- A Sufi saying

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## 6. Poems

### **Murmurs in the Casurinas**

Santhosh Kumar K.

It is different when we remember many things about mamalla . . .  
Because from somewhere deep inside, it feels like a nebula . . .  
A world among worlds beyond the sea . . .

Yet many things here we could not foresee . . .  
Pleasing men and pretty women came together . . .  
Some special skill each one needed to gather . . .  
To remind ourselves, we closed our eyes . . .  
In a moment KK began by throwing the dice . . .  
Stepping into the sands to let go of our past . . .  
We looked to dissolve ourselves in the waters so vast . . .  
Our past and its past seemed suspended in space . . .  
Looking around we had all slowed down our pace . . .  
Small groups were formed to get to know more . . .  
But then it felt like we knew it all before . . .  
To announce matters we huddled again . . .  
Words of norms and forms to regain . . .  
Names were called and faces recalled . . .  
Thus were formed three groups to be walled . . .  
It was a relief to see that the walls were all white . . .  
But before long the A/C features in our fight . . .  
Nobody knew what each ones nature might . . .  
Yet the presence of KK and K urged us to be bright . . .  
The spaces from where our brightness we fetched . . .  
Was dependent on how far the silences were stretched . . .  
Many of us came seeking “That” long discourse . . .  
Only to realise that we are indeed “The” recourse . . .  
Then, not knowing what to do . . .  
We began with what we could undo . . .  
Five days we shut ourselves to know . . .  
Our becoming self shouting “NO NO” . . .  
For the blocks and icy walls within to hack . . .  
The being screamed inside to find our way back . . .  
With our thoughts and words we were tried . . .  
In moments of despair we stopped and cried . . .  
When at last one can say that all good things comes to an end . . .  
We began to free ourselves and there was nothing to defend . . .  
For restricting oneself is “being” in captivity . . .  
Sensing more is experiencing sensitivity . . .  
So much more beauty this life will be seeing . . .  
If only we could surrender to our being . . .  
Although we are blessed with this learning so sacred . . .  
To let go of our models makes us feel so naked . . .  
I wonder why and I wonder how . . .

It is to be, always here and now.

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## **Celebrating Just Being**

Sanjay Dutt

The meaning and futility of life played out in sweaty medley of a communal dance  
The gay abandon of rising ambers of a bonfire seem in sync  
Oh why the agony over lost hours of what could have been  
Dash the future onto waltzing rocks of nowness  
If this be my last breath and my last move let there be the surprise of sun in my face  
As I pierce through the clouds of tomorrow and yesterday.  
Rejoice!

## **At a Friend's Party . . .**

Sanjay Dutt

Alone Serene in a crowd.  
The world floats in tumblers of clinking droplets.  
I smile at islets of love that tug and pulsate  
World heaped on a platter aromas, wafts and goose bumps of experiencing and yet not ingesting  
The world on the other side of this glass  
Is this refraction world's doing,  
Or the beautiful distortion of prism of my drunken heart?  
Who cares!  
Let me be asleep if that's what it takes to  
Bend the lights to this space of ecstasy

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## **7. Book Review (by D. P. Dash)**

*The Secret of Successful Failing*

By: Gina Mollicone-Long (Pathfinders, Toronto, 2007)

In the midst of a 2-week human process laboratory, being in a state of fluid openness, I was in a mood to read something that would give me some meaningful emotional anchors. I was happy that this book came to me at an appropriate time. It was highly readable and its message was

crisp. To me, the message was the following:

Often, our unhappiness is the result of not getting what we want. When we do not get what we want, we view it as a failure. If we learn to accept failure as a type of “feedback” from the environment then we can choose to use that feedback for some constructive purpose, such as initiating a process of inquiry to understand what we are doing “on the inside” that is not working on the outside. The book says, “The only person you can be is yourself” (p. 8) – implying that it is worth examining if one is ever trying to be someone else. Of course, one may be trying to be someone else unwittingly, being guided by the “stories in our minds” (p. 11). Here the book suggests that one would free oneself from such stories by being more attentive to what is happening in the present.

Some sentences in the book I really liked – these resonated with my own insights from life:

[p. 3] “The path to happiness lies in seeing each failure as a signpost along the journey of life.”

[p. 7] “While the mind’s purpose is to be safe, the heart’s purpose is to be free.”

[p. 8] “The only person you can be is yourself.”

[p. 11] “You can learn to acknowledge your fear instead of having it control you.”

[p. 13] “Circumstances don’t make you happy or unhappy, but your choices do.”

[p. 20] “It is your birthright to live a joyful existence! It is your birthright to fully express yourself. It is your birthright to give your gifts to the world in all of their glory. Anything less is wrong.”

I did not like certain things about the book. In some parts, it discounts my own life experiences and my own insights. For example, it says, “Everything you have ever believed about failure is false” (p. 192). In some parts, I felt irritated with what I sensed as the book’s attempt to manipulate me. A prime example is the boxed item titled “Do the twist” (p. 127). It suggests a physical exercise to convey the power of the mind. However, I think the exercise works because of muscle-stretch – nothing to do with the mind.

The book says, “Your life is one great big mirror.” I know that I have the option of acknowledging the mirror-like facet of life. But, I would not essentialise (or oversimplify) life as one great mirror.

In chap. 9 (pp. 181-190), the book gives some advice in the form of “42 things that will positively change your life.” It was a little difficult for me to digest. It had things like, “keep a journal,” “celebrate one success every single day,” “make a list of 100 things you want to do before you die,” “read inspiring quotes,” and so forth. Clearly, the author is aware of the practices which have made a difference to her. But, I thought it was merely wistful to assume that the same practices would work for all. For a moment, this chapter, made the book appear to me like a self-

help book that nobody would follow seriously but everybody would like to gift away to others. Perhaps, I am not a typical user of self-help books that make such promises.

Finally, the schematic model of the feedback process presented in the book (for example, as depicted on p. 41 and p. 45), speaks of three kinds of reality, namely energetic, temporary, and physical. There are several related notions in different branches of scholarship dealing with human thought and action. The book does not make any explicit connection with such preexisting notions. In prioritising the author's own self-expression, the book does overlook the need to compare our ideas with those of others in order to facilitate mutual understanding and an orderly growth of knowledge. Then again, I realise that I maybe looking at the book through the lens of research, which is perhaps not what the author has in mind.

Reviewer: D. P. Dash, PDP Participant

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Note: DP thanks Paul Siromoni for suggesting and lending the book.

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## 8. Book Review by Amitabh Jha

*The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure and Bounce Back from Setbacks*

By: Al Siebert (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 2005)

Resiliency, the ability to adapt to life's changes and crises, is key to a healthy, happy, happening life! This book is not just another book on 'personal development' but goes much beyond that – looks at the issue of resilience from a personal, professional, practical and research perspective. It's more like an owner's manual than a self-help book. Dr. Siebert explains how and why some people are more resilient than others and how it can be learned at any age. For this application and implementation dimension of resilience, author offers five-level programme. An important aspect of this book is its approach and its target audience. Most books by psychologists and psychiatrists with "resiliency" titles are recovery books written for emotionally traumatized people wanting to live normal lives. In contrast, this book shows basically healthy people how to become better and better at handling turbulent change, nonstop pressure, and life-disrupting setbacks.

In his preface, which he titles "A Head Start on Resiliency", Dr. Siebert mentions about two legendary figures. Dr. Viktor Frankl & Abraham Maslow. He writes, "I remembered being fascinated with Dr. Viktor Frankl, when he came to my college to speak about his experiences in

the Nazi death camps during the holocaust. He was not bitter or angry; he was a happy man.” In the same sequence, author talks about Maslow’s famous “continental divide” principle. What’s this continental divide principle? Maslow says, “I use this principle to describe the fact that stress will break people altogether if they are in the beginning too weak to stand distress, or else, if they are already strong enough to take the stress in the first place, that same stress, if they come through it, will strengthen them, temper them, and make them stronger”.

The book is an attempt to research, discover & present why do some people emerge from extreme difficulties stronger and better than before and how do they do that. A journey of self-discovery. You find different kinds of resiliency-quiz, which may be used by individuals and trainers. I found Dr. Siebert’s work quite absorbing, refreshing and motivating. It also encouraged me to read about various aspects, sources, research cited in the book in detail on the subject of resilience.

In fact, the very first line in their celebrated article in Harvard Business Review, September 2003, “The Quest for Resilience”, strategists Gary Hamel & Liisa Valikangas say, “Call it the Resilience Gap. The world is becoming turbulent faster than organizations are becoming resilient. The evidence is all around us. Big companies are failing more frequently. Of the 20 largest US bankruptcies in the past two decades, ten occurred in the last two years. Corporate earnings are more erratic. . . .Even perennially successful companies are finding it more difficult to deliver consistently superior returns. In their 1994 best-seller ‘Built to Last’, Jim Collins & Jerry Porras singled out 18 “visionary” companies that had consistently outperformed their peers between 1950 & 1990. But over the last 10 years, just six of these companies managed to outperform the Dow Jones Industrial Average. The other twelve a group that includes companies like Disney, Motorola, Ford, Nordstrom, Sony, and Hewlett-Packard have apparently gone from Great to merely OK. Any way you cut it, success has never been so fragile.”

In their article, these two Professors further write: for all these companies, and for yours, continued success no longer hinges on momentum. Rather, it rides on resilience – on the ability to dynamically reinvent business models and strategies as circumstances change. Strategic Resilience is not about responding to a one-time crisis. It’s not about rebounding from a setback. It’s about continuously anticipating and adjusting to deep, secular trends that can permanently impair the earning power of a core business. It’s about having the capacity to change before the case for change becomes desperately obvious.

At the organizational level, one can understand resilience as:

The ability to dynamically reinvent business models & strategies as circumstances change  
 Having the capacity to change before the case for change becomes a survival response  
 Alleviating the need for periodical major organization overhaul

This dimension of ‘resilient organization’ is basically driven, guided & linked with individual resilience in the people of the concerned organization. Sven Hansen & Stuart Taylor of ‘The Resilience Institute say “The research shows that, more than education & experience, it is resilience that determines who succeeds and who fails”’.

The root of the word resilience is *resile*, which in its origin means to “jump back or recoil”. The dictionary meaning of the word resilience is

the capacity of a strained body to recover its size and shape; to bounce back after being subjected to adversity or stress

the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

We need to appreciate the fact that Resilience, the capacity of a body to “spring back” to its original shape in the face of adversity or stress, is key factor contributing to an individual’s effectiveness in life and work. Jeffrey Russel & Linda Russel of Russel Consulting mention, “Our practice, grounded in more than twelve years of work with diverse organizations, suggests that people who are resilient tend to face change more proactively, making it work for them, while those who lack resilience tend to, at best, endure the change and, at worst, actively avoid or resist it”.

There are two important views worth mentioning here. The first one is of Fred Luthans, Department of Management, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, USA. Second one comes from Russel Consulting.

In a famous article/essay on “The need for and meaning of Positive Organization Behavior (POB)” published in *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* [2002], renowned thinker and management Guru Fred Luthans writes, “Although resiliency has been recognized in the positive psychology movement [citation removed], it has not yet been included in POB. I would argue that it is very relevant to the extra organizational and internal environment currently facing organizational leaders and employees and makes a nice fit with the criteria laid out for POB. Like the other positive psychological capacities, resiliency has deep roots in clinical work, especially child psychopathology.” Early on, resiliency was thought to be an extraordinary, special gift that only a few people possessed. Now resiliency is recognized to come ‘from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources’ and ‘has profound implications for promoting competence and human capital in individuals & society’ [citation removed]. *This ‘ordinariness’ of resiliency has tremendous implications for applications to today’s workplace*” (emphasis mine).

Secondly, Jeffrey Russell & Linda Russell, in their paper in The 2006 Pfeiffer Annual point out, “Contemporary applications of this concept to the human experience date from landmark research

conducted by two developmental psychologists, Emmy Werner & Ruth Smith (2001). Werner & Smith tracked the progress of 698 children from birth to beyond their 30th birthdays, seeking to identify why some children thrived, while others withered when faced with significant familial & social hurdles. Their findings on resilience are echoed in comparable studies on youth under stress done by Bernard (1991), Rutter (1977), and Garmezy (1991). Fortunately, the resilience of adults in work & non-work settings has also been the focus of research.” It is worth mentioning here that Benard (1991, 1993) has identified attributes of resilient individuals such as Social Competence, Problem Solving Skills, Autonomy, and a Sense of Purpose & Future, all of which could be learned & developed in leadership & HR programmes.

The author tells us quite convincingly that it has close connection with ‘mental models’. In other words, it is less about who we are than how we think. Our mindsets/mental models directly influence and shape how we view the world and how we view ourselves in the world. This view of self, in turn, influences how we respond/ behave in different (and difficult) times. William Shakespeare made the same observation over 500 years ago when he wrote “there is nothing, either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”, suggesting it is our interpretation of circumstances rather than the circumstances themselves that dictate how we fare in our lives. Thus our ability to contextualize our lives against a backdrop of greater meaning, be that a goal, belief or value system, is likely to be an integral component of the quality of resilience.

The book talks in detail about developing our resiliency skills in five steps and each one builds on the one before. These are to accomplish the following:

- Optimize your health & well-being
- Develop good problem solving skills
- Develop strong inner gatekeepers
- Develop high-level resiliency skills
- Discover your talent for serendipity

For each level, the author comes with a detailed personal action plan. There are examples from our day-to-day life. At the end of each chapter, there’s a separate section titled “Resiliency Development Activities”. I find this section quite relevant & significant. Three elements lead to our personal effectiveness. Our knowledge about

- what has to be done
- how to do it, and
- being motivated to do it.

In fact, I loved reading *The Resiliency Advantage* and certainly it had a lot to offer me as individual, as well as a trainer. It gave me insight into my own level of resiliency and the areas

where I have advantage and where I need to work upon. I would like to end my review from the last segment of the last chapter by quoting Dr. Siebert, “Highly complex, resilient, synergistic individuals are always curious, exploring, trying new ways of doing things, and learning. They maintain mental and emotional stability by keeping themselves in a state of mild disequilibrium. They are open to take in, examine, and process new inputs, ignore or let go what is not of value or interest, and move on to the next experience. Thus it is that they become accustomed to quickly taking in and processing new things that are happening. They can react to an unexpected, life-disrupting change by welcoming it and converting it into desirable life event . . .we are most resilient when we scan new circumstances with curiosity, not knowing in advance what we will do, but confident that we will interact in ways that lead to things working well.”

Dr. Siebert, thanks for the lovely book! Just want to tell you that this is what we do, live, discuss, breathe at ISABS!! Come and meet our fraternity sometime in India!!

Reviewer: Amitabh Jha, PDP Participant

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## 9. ISABS Venture Into OD Corporate Education

A. S. Vasudevan

Most of us in ISABS and our supporting Organisations know that the first batch of eight interns in OD and change facilitation will go in for final assessment in the Goa event this summer. It is very likely that the second batch of another ten interns will start their journey seeking accreditations from ISABS to practice as internal or external OD consultants.

The process of evolution of the programme has been very organic though not very inclusive of all those who we would have liked to involve. Being a maiden venture we wanted to have those of us who can freely commit time and effort to discover the way with us, translating experience and tacit knowledge into explicit inputs to design a comprehensive curriculum.

The curriculum committee consists of Prof. Abad Ahmed, Prof. Somnath Chattopadhyaya, Prof. Rajen Gupta, Prof. Madhukar Shukla and Prof. Udai Pareek, besides me as Project Director of the programme. The core group who advised the programme management on the practical marketing strategies, design of brochures, developing modules for specific inputs, economics of operation, budgeting etc was a small membership comprising of Sushma, Aroon, Sankar and Rajen and the executive committee of the Board where Ram and Radha gave me warning signals of statutory norms and taxes involved.

We were lucky to have two international experts in the emerging fields of ‘Corporate life cycles’ and ‘Systemic OD’, m/s Willie Marais from Cape town and Dr. Marion Keil from Germany to come in at our terms of comfort and run three day workshops to add new ways of looking at diagnosing the context and building hypothesis as precursors to diagnosis.

I should thank the host of other ISABians who came in to support this programme, to the amazement of all of us including the interns. The extent of application knowledge on OD facilitation, case writing skills and advanced concepts like Complex adaptive self organizing systems etc hidden amongst ISABS professionals like Tony, Kantha, VKJain, Manas, Ram, Aroon, Sankar, Wasundhara, Sushma, Radha, Sunita and Panikar - not to forget Udai ,Abad and Madhukar is very encouraging. They all came by inspite of work pressures and personal holiday time; specially to be with the programme modules in Goa, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

We wish all the regions would have chipped in their might to market the programme last year. Hopefully they can help for the second batch. We also wish we have a roster of the best practices in OD registered by many of our professional members to access from in future.

Franics Fernandez from Malaysia and Dr. Mohankrishnan from Mysore have been my sounding board though their sound was not heard wide and clear. I had visited Singapore and Malaysia in my capacity of Dean external linkages, when Franky and Aditee put their best foot forward to play their PR skills about ISABS and the OD certification. Surprisingly T group methodology was not well known as an OD facilitation tool by many in the Facilitators Network groups. Like wise I learnt many new approaches to OD and change facilitation from their work with groups, on diversity, conflicts and large system transformation. ‘World café’ and ‘U process’ are two of the emerging areas. With a concerted strategy and entrepreneurial risk in forward budgeting we can step into these neighbors to build a knowledge bridge that can provide new opportunities and challenges to educate the Corporate about OD and T groups. ISABS need to peep into the world with an at outward looking lens.

Coming to the interns of the first batch of ODCP; without whom the story will not be complete, we have Ashish Gulati from Gurgaon, Kumar Balaji from Chennai, and Hari Iyer from Bangalore representing three regions. The rest five are from Mumbai region Vinita Saxena, Sujatha Parthasarathy, Manish Srivastava, Mangesh Kirtene and Mayur Satyavart. They were able to spare more than the required 50 days commitment to be on the learning track, taking pains to consolidate all they learnt and make sense out of it all. They seem to be confident and also open enough to admit where they are and how they have just got on to the tip of the OD iceberg. I am sure the global warming will heat them up also to float past all the oceans of the globe much faster than we can comprehend. I am also in conversation with Charlie Seashore and Anne Litwin to work out a collaborative curriculum and joint certification between ISABS and Fielding

Institute in US for an advanced diploma - programme in Change management and facilitation. The field is expanding and opens new opportunity for younger professional members of ISABS to qualify in such frontier skill sets of consulting practice.

Going forward, we need greater participation from regions, greater publicity into the Banking, Hospitality and Health Care Sectors, Public Utility Undertakings and University Systems and Educational Institutions. Unless we take a multi-pronged approach with greater participation of all the CEOs we know of in these sectors, this programme may be known and nurtured by a small set of Corporate Organisations and Free lance consultants. ISABS needs to decide which way they want to turn their sails. The new Board can take a call.

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## 10. Roads More Less Travelled: OD Praxis for Social Development

Lalitha Iyer

I would like to share a summary of my recent experiences in reviewing OD processes in the social development sector. I look forward to some debate, arguments and counter arguments through these pages!

### **Factors Influencing OD Process Design**

The following factors are usually the key questions debated when designing the OD projects:

#### **Readiness for Change**

Organizations are at different stages of readiness for change such as:

Visualizing change

Preparing for change

Transition

Transformation

The design will have to be different at each of these stages. The core shifts expected should be clarified and be kept in focus.

#### **The Time Available**

An important parameter which determines the shape of the process is the time available.

An organization which has undergone a process of visioning and has formally acknowledged its readiness for change may need time and specific interventions to deal with resistance and bring in new ideas. Even when there is no dramatic change agenda, organizations require a sustained effort for their organic growth and transition.

## **The OD Menu**

There are clearly some preferences about what to include in an OD project. Some items are most preferred while there are others less popular.

### **The Preferred Activities**

The 'popular' items in OD projects/ processes are as follows

Vision, mission, strategy workshops usually involving all staff

Standardizing programme design and stabilizing the general approach

Performance planning and monitoring system strengthening-MIS/computers etc

Building dedicated teams for generic processes like HR, Finance, audit, administration etc.

Building leadership and managerial capacities of staff

Standardizing the approach and details of recruitment, induction, skill building, performance appraisal etc.

Reviewing salary structures, introducing rewards and recognitions, performance pay etc.

### **Activities Less Frequently Included**

Items of great importance less frequently included are

An assessment of where the organization is in relation to the change it seeks (base-line for assessing progress in strategic change)

Governance related work to clarify role of boards and delegate adequate power to the executive layer

Delegation in financial and administrative decision making between CEO and others

Clarity about organizational roles and role boundaries

Systems for ongoing dialogue with client systems to refine the services offered Design or development of service processes

Support to partners or institutions to build their capacities

Investing in internal change facilitators , second line leadership and process leadership

Measuring impact of OD and ongoing process monitoring during the change process itself

These items seem to be in the change facilitation spectrum and organizations require external as

well as internal process facilitation to carry them through.

## **The Staples**

Some items included but not necessarily arising from the strategic change initiatives are

Skill training to do the job differently

Recruitment and early training

Value clarification and culture building

Building capacity of long term employees to prepare them for managerial and leadership roles

Developing capabilities of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to handle their own financial and legal requirements

These could be with or without the strategy changing significantly.

## **Concerns for OD Practitioners**

What pops up for me from this listing is that some 'tough' items have to be pushed harder, particularly the following:

- a) The governance and leadership issues are examined and addressed in the change process
- b) There is a cadre of internal change agents created within the grantee organization
- c) Experience is documented through extensive third party studies, etc.
- d) Networking spaces are created among organizations

OD practitioners are the best positioned to grab these thorny questions.

I would be keen to hear from colleagues about how they thrive on such chaos.

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## 11. Run for it

Sameer Nagrajan

I ran the 21 km Mumbai half marathon on Sunday January 20, 2008. I completed it.

Mere words cannot, frankly, express the pride and joy I feel at having done it. This has been one of the tallest moments in my life in a long, long time. And as in all such cases, there is a story

around it.

Sometime in June 06, I became conscious (after a lot of gentle and not-so-gentle ribbing by family and friends) that I was developing a significant tummy, brought on by generous helpings of food, alcohol and aided by a very sedentary lifestyle. Having had knock knees for a significant portion of my childhood, I had never really gotten into physical exercise of any sort. As I grew older, the knees sorted themselves out through physiotherapy but the excuse remained and I never knew what really I was capable of in terms of physical exercise.

Having discovered a treadmill in our colony in Bangalore, I started getting onto it. Every day I would run 1 km and feel good.

Life has a way of disguising opportunities as problems and my problem arose when I moved to Mumbai. The office has a gym but to stay back and use it would mean reaching home late, not a good idea when the distance anyway takes 75 minutes to cover. The building did not have a gym and I was wondering whether to buy a treadmill. Cost considerations prevailed and I pondered the second alternative, to run on the road. That did not seem very nice so I hit on the third best alternative, to run in a park nearby.

Almeida Park is a mere 2 minutes' walk from my place and is essentially a haunt of senior citizens before 6 am every morning. An entire round of the park is 300 metres. The first time I went there, I forced myself to run ten rounds, i.e. 3 km.

I stopped ten times during that run and realised for the first time, how completely unfit I was. Gasping for breath at the end of each round, I swore that I would beat the run (rather than have it beat me). I had also started an aggressive diet program then, eating only salads for 3 days and then cutting out the sugar, ghee and butter completely from all my food.

Realising that I was lazy enough to stop if I gave myself an excuse to do so, the next resolve was to run every day. This presented unique challenges, for example, the day I had to leave home at 5 am to catch a train from CST at 6 am. I woke up at 3:30 am to run for 45 minutes . . . the watchman in our building looked at me as if I was an apparition, when he saw me stepping out of the building at 3:45 am in a tracksuit. But was fortunately polite enough not to say anything.

After a month, I was doing 5 km, stopping a few times, but doing it every day. Initially everyone had put down the idea to a fad, something that I would not doubt outgrow in a few weeks. Doing it for a month, I had begun to enjoy it and had also lost a kilo or two of weight in the process. My wife started pushing me to see a doctor. I met the Company doctor, who confirmed that I could go ahead as long as I did not experience pain.

The first 2 months were chaotic, in the sense that right through the day, I used to keep taking very deep breaths (the running used to, for some strange reason, make me want to breathe very deeply). I also used to get very thirsty, easily drinking something like four litres of water every day. On the positive side, I used to sleep better and earlier and as a result, reduced socialising sharply (difficult to party if you are used to sleeping at 10 pm every day!!).

I also used to have sharp spells of demotivation, when I used to wonder why I was doing all this. At that point in time, in a discussion with a younger colleague, I learnt about the Mumbai Marathon and that it was held every year in January in Mumbai. We chatted up on it and I decided as a motivator, to set myself a goal to complete the Mumbai Half-Marathon in January 2008. Some of my friends thought I was a bit strange, since the Half Marathon is 21 km and I was at that time doing barely 5 km at a stretch in a run. No doubt they thought I was getting a bit soft in the head. I was actually a bit easy on myself, initially telling my friend that my goal was to “participate” in the half marathon. He looked at me straight in the eye and said, “you could do that by running for five minutes and completing one km. Participation doesn’t mean much”. Suitably chastened, I adjusted it to “completing” the half Marathon.

The first sign I got that things were actually getting better were that by September, I was able to run 10 km a day with a lot of rest intervals. By then, I had also lost enough weight (10 kg, in fact!!) to need a brand new wardrobe, something I really enjoyed doing. Some of the reactions then were really cute some of my older friends who were seeing me after a long time used to assume I was sick and ask me in hushed tones “are you all right?” while some of the more polite ones would make curious enquiries. In the office, people were just plain confused. One of my younger colleagues realised that I was serious about running when he saw the weight loss (incredibly good athlete himself) and served as a broadcast system, letting a whole lot of people know that “Sameer really runs a lot now”. Another one, pretty scared of physical exercise and never having done it all his 35 years, commented that I would wear out my knees and need knee replacement surgery in the next 5 years. I took that sage bit of advice with the humorous response it deserved, that since I was going to die someday as well, it made sense not to live today . . .

I then got a coach. Rather, my employers (Hindustan Unilever) gave me one. Savio D’Souza is a national level marathoner who now trains people in running and trains a huge contingent from Unilever every year in long-distance running. He’s a very interesting trainer, who fits the classical mould of an irresistible force. He is warm, friendly and consistent and used to run with me. It only struck me later how frustrating it would have been for him when I run with someone very much slower than me now, I have to remind myself that someone spent time on me as well. Aside from the physical fitness lessons, I also learnt some of the things that make long-distance running a ruggedly individualistic sport with some subtle rules:

1. stop to help someone who needs it

2. you must be able to speak while running. If you can't speak, you are doing something wrong. Slow down.
3. never stop running once in the race. Running slowly is acceptable, stopping is not. Even walking is preferable to stopping.
4. you will never do the full distance in training. The idea is to come close to it but to keep the actual "full" run for the big day.

As the distances I covered increased, I stopped running every day. It was really too much anyway to try and run over ten km every day. Ironically, by running every alternate day, I actually increased speed. Give the body time to recover and it responds much better. Every Sunday, I would run with Savio and slowly, the speeds improved. By mid-November, I was doing 13 km at a stretch, and by end-November it had touched 15 km.

Some interesting things were also happening at home. My children started developing a sudden interest in running, to the point where my wife and I had to regulate their running a bit (overdoing it can do nasty things to a delicate system). Fortunately for them it was a fad that passed.

Recovering from the run was another slow process. I would typically run for about 75 minutes and it would then take another 90 minutes for the breathing and pulse rate to return to normal, with the result that I would be inactive for a while.

December was possibly the very worst month as far as my training went in the sense that I was not in Mumbai—travelling a lot. I spent two weeks in Jaipur on the Phase A and that put paid to a significant bit of training. By then, the marathon had been announced for Jan 20. Applications were filled and routed through X, which coordinates over 2000 entries directly with the sponsors (Chartered Bank). The Bank threw a shock in the past five years, every year the event has been attracting increasing numbers of entries and it was now curtailing entries, apparently upon request by the Police. Unilever also requested all participants to undergo a medical exam as a precautionary measure.

Turned out to be more good news, another opportunity disguised as a problem . . . I used to have a triglycerides problem it is now normal. As for the stress test, I just got on to the treadmill and kept walking, 10 minutes into the test, when I had just about started breathing deeply, the doctor looked at me and said "are you into fitness?". I grinned and said I run 15 km every Sunday. I had to repeat that before he understood, and then increased the speed of the treadmill sharply . . .

And so, despite the Bank trying its best to curtail entries and Unilever insisting on medicals for everyone, I found my application accepted . . .

And the one Sunday before the marathon, I touched 17 km. Now I was pretty sure I would do it,

though not very sure how and in what shape. Chartered bank had very kindly put up a recreation centre at Azad Maidan and Unilever managers were invited there. My wife and kids decided that they would cheer me off to a start and wait for me to finish.

We reached at around 6:20 am for a 6:45 am start. The whole of Azad Maidan was buzzing and there was an air of anticipation. The start of the race in fact was a bit anti-climactic in that there were 8000 participants for the 21 km run and as a result, the first two km were just a fast walk (the real running starts from the second km on).

There are stages to a Marathon (or any intensive long duration physical exercise, for that matter) in terms of emotions. These have been mapped and generally found to be applicable, though not universally true. They serve as a rough guide to inform that feelings can arise that you do not anticipate or understand fully. In the first stage, is excitement and exhilaration at the fact that I am commencing a challenging task. That is what happened at this stage.

The route also had a carnival air about it- music, announcements, and crowds cheering you on. Interestingly, Jan 20 was a very cold day by Mumbai standards. It was really good because it is easier to run in the cold than in heat!! And every km or so, there was a drinks counter that served water and Electral . . . good fun. I had by then also learnt the useful art of grabbing a small bottle from an outstretched hand, drinking and then throwing the bottle by the side, without reducing speed . . . it is possibly the one time in the year when you can litter without guilt and in fact are expected to litter. The run was initially a blur. I just kept moving, recognising faces from Unilever and elsewhere, but just concentrating on getting the next step. At 2 km, I smile at the stranger next to me and say “10% of the run is over”. He laughs as well and confirms, “10% is over”.

At this stage, I become aware that there is a great deal of work yet to be done. I am not frustrated or in awe, just conscious that I have just started out. There is a sense of challenge building up and I begin to activate the cerebral part of my being. I am trying to figure out how I am going to do this one. Humour and an acknowledgement of realities plays a role at this point.

One of my training partners kept pace with me for a while, then slowed down. Crossed Babulnath with ease and Mumbaikars on this list would know that that is the point at which the upward incline leading upto Peddar Road starts. As I ran up Peddar Road, I found myself slipping into a steady pace, enjoying the pace and the sights . . .

For some time initially, thoughts and feelings align. I get into the rhythm of the run. Legs move repetitively, you remember the rules about where to hold your hands and the slight swing of the body that propels it forward. This is an important stage, however, it is deceptively shallow and short.

Sights, did I say? Yes. There was one guy dressed in a Spiderman costume (I am still not too sure why, but he was not in the race only for fun. He seemed to be running seriously). By the time we hit the 8th km, the potential winners of the race were doing the 15th (and were hence coming back and passing me in the opposite direction). For the record, Milind Soman is a great runner. I do remember thinking as I passed Haji Ali, that I never knew Worli Sea Face was such a long stretch. It just seemed to go on and on, not a pleasant feeling when you are running. I challenged myself and said that I would not stop till I had done half the distance and turned around. At Mela restaurant, we turned around.

Do you get what happened at this stage? You might have read between the lines. In order to make a stressful task bearable, I separate thought and feelings. I may not always be able to explain why and how this happened, or even what I felt just then (except for the physical sense of tiredness). So I report intelligently and intellectually, on what I “saw”. The mind is going into hyperdrive, measuring, calculating, recognising. It takes attention off the physical tiredness that is beginning to creep in. It challenges itself temporarily by setting artificial targets (“I will rest after the halfway mark is done”). It blocks off feelings, because to acknowledge tiredness and exhaustion at this stage will mean that I might slow down or stop, overwhelmed by the size of the task before me. The disconnect between thought and feeling is complete.

Strange thing there. On the way back, I actually reduced speed more often and was not so consistent in the speed. As a result, I thought it would have taken longer to come back than it did to go. Turned out to be the opposite, I took longer to cover the first half distance. I met up with Savio at some point on the way back and we chatted while running. That kind of kept my motivation high enough to cross 17 km. At that point, I became conscious that I had now crossed my earlier personal best.

Feelings and thoughts begin to re-integrate in the next stage. How long will you ignore my tiredness, my body shouts at me. You are going to complete this, my mind argues. The training for long-distance running is not only about physical training. It also focuses on aligning body and mind to send consistent messages. So my mind gets kind on my body and says “yeah . . . at the next water pit, you may slow down for a minute. 60 seconds. Not one more. But till then, work with me”. And my body is grateful for the concession and does as it is told.

At 18 km, I become aware that I have now done better than my earlier best. I feel good for barely a few seconds. Despondency kicks in. What am I doing this for, I asked myself. I could quit and stop now. I am 41 years old, not as young as I used to be and not as young as some of the people I see around me now.

As body and mind are aligned, thoughts and feelings have also aligned. The challenge is, I am

now aware that I have pushed myself beyond accustomed limits. Also, I am now exploring territory that I never did before and there is already a sense of achievement that is being created. Paradoxically, the sense becomes that since I am already achieving, I do not need to achieve in full. 18 km is as much of an achievement as 21 km, for me who has only done 17 before. Now the challenge is different. Earlier, I was using mind to negotiate with body and body to prove a point to mind. Now I need an integrated response, failing which I will succumb and fail.

And very quietly and peacefully, an image formed in my mind of my children. Their Dad is not a loser, I thought. He's a winner who started out doing something for the first time in his life when he was 40. And then I started moving again.

The final stage is of resolve. The differences have been reconciled, the limits explored, the hesitation encountered, the anxiety confronted. I explore deep within myself and ask, what is it that I really want to do? And where does the energy come from? Steel comes into my eyes, I set my mouth in a line and mouth to myself, "I will make this happen in full. I will complete the half marathon". Frankly I have not understood the imagery of my children, though I very much own the image. I always thought this was something I was doing for myself, with myself. I thought it was about doing something that I had never done before. Obviously the approval of my children means a lot to me.

Last three kms. I turn round the corner at Not Just Jazz By The Bay.

The crowd is now bigger, and the sense of euphoria in me builds. "You'll do it!!" shouts a teenage boy. "I will", I smile back at him.

With resolve comes confidence.

One of the most touching and in one way intriguing moments in the run happens a few seconds after that. Every so often along the route, there are water stalls. A small family operates one such stall. They are very obviously poor. Their clothes and demeanour show it. The father has a collection of small mineral water bottles before him and his son clutches two, waiting for a runner to signal thirst.

I catch his eye. He would be all of ten years old, if at all. I jerk my fist to my mouth.

His eyes widen and he runs to his father. Runs back. Holds out a bottle. I grab it. In some way I can't fully fathom, I have impacted him. He has been watching me since 50 metres away, when I first signalled. Now, barely 5 metres away from him, I notice him looking up (and it is virtually up, at his height and our mutual proximity). He is not blinking. He is just looking at me.

“Thanks” I say and smile and he scampers back, to tell his father . . . what?

I observe more reflectively, contemplatively. I have outgrown the obsession about distance, speed, tiredness and all the rest of the noise.

At 2.5 km. to close, a trainer appears out of nowhere. I don't know him, he is an appointed route guide. He is trying to motivate a man before me, who has apparently given up and is walking along leisurely. “Come on, man. Only half a kilometre more. You've almost done it. You cant' give up now.” It seems to work. The man starts running.

Liar, I think. It's not anything less than 2 km. I wonder how that guy will react when he realises that it's actually not half a km. But I am doing this in a very matter of fact way, I'm not excited or worked up about the plainly manipulative style. It's just something I have observed, en route to my goal.

Incidentally, the man who was walking before me does realise that the distance is significantly more than 500 metres, and resumes the leisurely pace. I overtake him soon after. He notices a friend along the boundary lines and stops for a conversation.

I can hear the noise at the podium long before I see it. The mayor of Mumbai and John Abraham are welcoming all the participants back. I can see the crowd gathering. There's a band playing. Water, food. I am 500 meters away.

I notice a digital clock above the welcome arch, announcing the time in hours, minutes and seconds.

At exactly 2 hours and 29 minutes, I pass under the arch. I have done it. Adjusting for the fact that the clock started before I passed the start line, my time chip has recorded that I took 2 hours and 26 minutes to cover 21.067 km.

My wife and children are waiting for me. It's an incredibly heady moment. “You did it!!!” is what all of them have to say. We head off the to the pavilion for snacks, drinks, entertainment . . .

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## 12. A Little Story About Love

R. Sankarasubramanyan

A new baby is born. Mom and Dad are beaming with pride. Granny is laughing showing her toothless gums. Children are saying “how cute the baby is”.

As days went by, people came to visit the baby. All of them said “what a bundle of joy the baby is”. Mom beamed with joy. Dad is not sure how to express his new found love for the baby.

One year has passed. The baby is a boy named Sridhar. Today is his first birthday. Children are playing everywhere, there is laughter, fun and the air is filled with joy. People ask Mom “how is Sridhar?” “He is such a cute kid, he doesn’t trouble anyone”. Granny added “he is the most intelligent kid in the family”. Someone said “he has got the best features from his Mom and Dad”.

One day Sridhar fell ill and his Mom refused to leave his bedside. She sang lullabies to get him to sleep. Sridhar heard her telling his Dad “I love Sridhar so much and I can’t bear to see him in pain”. Sridhar felt embraced in the warmth of love.

All this left Sridhar to wonder “My family and friends are so loving and appreciative about me despite the fact that I make a mess of my dress every few hours, I cry when I feel hungry, I demand more milk from my Mom’s breast when she pulls me away, I keep my Mom and Dad awake in the middle of the night and so on . . . Why? “

A certain flash of awareness came to this little brain “My parents love me for who I’m and it doesn’t matter what I do”

A few months passed. The mood in the family changed. Mom and Dad are troubled. Sridhar has not managed to walk on his own while kids of his age (15 months) have done so much earlier. The Doctor says it is OK. When Mom took Sridhar to the garden, someone asked her “How is Sridhar doing?” Mom replied “He is OK but he needs to start walking by now”.

For the first time in his life Sridhar felt disappointed with himself. He has not satisfied his Parents expectation. Also for the first time he heard something said about him that was not very appreciative.

Another day Sridhar liked the bright colors of one Auntie’s shoes and started liking it. His Dad shouted at him, gave him a spank and snatched the shoe away. He turned around towards Mom and said “Dirty Boy, look what he is doing”. Sridhar realized for the first time that it doesn’t take much time from being a cute kid to a dirty boy!

Let us fast forward to the time when Sridhar is five years old. The world seems to have changed completely. Sridhar doesn’t experience unconditional love anymore. The statements from his Mom and Dad seem to be “if you do this well, we will love you”. Appreciation is also very hard

to come by. One day Sridhar was very happy when he came back from school. His teacher has written “Very Good” in his Note Book. He showed it to Mom with pride. His Mom responded “what about Excellent. Who got that?” Sridhar’s face fell.

Why has the world changed? Sridhar is the same lovable baby who is now five years old. His Mom and Dad are the same people who used to love him a lot. What happened now?

The change that has happened is in the mindset of the parents and which will influence Sridhar also when he grows up. The mindset has changed from focusing on Sridhar’s being and on his doing. Sridhar’s persona and the feelings that he invokes in his parents are less important to them as compared to his meeting their expectations from him.

Love and appreciation in the real sense is about the person, his being. You love someone for who he/ she is and not for what the person does. Then why this happens?

Interestingly, Sridhar also started loving himself when he came first in the running race and hated himself when he made a “silly” mistake and did not get 100 in Mathematics. His focus on loving himself has also shifted from his being to his doing.

I have lived the life of Sridhar like many others. This constant love-hate relationship with myself based on what I did, left me drained and empty of love. Though this process helped me to stretch myself and achieve many things in life, I was always dissatisfied with myself and I was always restless and seeking something or someone.

It has taken me a good 40+years of my life to shift my attitude towards myself. How did I do that?

I really can’t say. I believe my awareness changed me.

But this is such a relief . . . Life is so much easier now!!

How about you?

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## 13. Regional Round-Up

### **Kolkata Region**

Spring Event was jointly organised by ISABS Kolkata Region and XIMB from 18th-22nd Feb. at Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar. We had 3 BLHP and 1 ALHP with 36 participants and 5 facilitators and 1 intern. Vignesh from Mumbai and Somali from Bhilai joined us.

Paul Siromoni

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*Vignettes from Bhubaneswar . . .*

## **Discovery of the Self**

A Training Programme notice on the XIM Bhubaneswar notice board seemed the best ploy to avoid exam duty . . .

This is how it unfolded . . .

We were welcomed to the Spring Event 2008 at a community meet, where all the candidates and facilitators sat on the floor (Except for me, enthroned in a chair – and feeling out of place!). There we were given broad guidelines of what to expect from the programme and guided through simple exercises to relax us, followed by divisions into teams, with a facilitator and on to a tea break and the programme.

A long silence greeted us, when we gathered together. Awkwardly we began by talking of our childhood. And the experiences we had from it. I took off on what I viewed to be the starting point of my giving up my childhood (Childhood interrupted!) and the subsequent ‘rebel’ I turned into.

I was interrupted by Paul, our facilitator, who asked me to talk about my ‘here and now’ experience and not dwell on the past. I tried to argue, that my past had a bearing on the present. He however emphasized strongly on the ‘here and now’ experience. I continued regardless.

At one point Paul walked out on the gathering, when we insisted on dwelling on the past. This led to much embarrassment in the whole group. Each of us looked at the other, trying to find more guilt from him or her, than we felt for Paul walking out.

One of us then walked out, to go and convince Paul to come in. We felt our voyage of self discovery was fated for failure without Paul. Each one of us felt helpless at the next course of

action. Until Paul walked in nonchalantly.

Midway through the programme, we had another community session.

We formed new groups, depending on the feelings we had, akin to the statements we saw lettered on differing placards.

Then our group did a short play of how the programme had affected us till then.

On the day before the last, we all let our hair down, by song and dance, followed by sumptuous dinner, as if to have memories of a pleasant time.

On the last day, we had another community session, which brought out the artist in us. We all drew something on a blank white sheet, with a box of pastel crayons. We went around all the drawings, asking questions of the symbolism of various things and colours in the drawings.

Finally, we said farewell over the evening cup of tea. And headed for our daily lives.

It was a short and yet revealing journey through 5 days - of confidence, uncertainty, earth shaking revelations and reaffirmation of beliefs.

What I gained from the workshop was the ability to accept a person, despite major differences in attitudes and beliefs.

Certain observations about myself helped confirm self-belief about attitudes and beliefs. There is a certain learning which comes from this workshop, a certain acceptance about the reality of the self and an attempt to shed the protective camouflage one has built around himself as a protective shield.

Certainly the voyage of self-discovery was worth the experience. If only it had occurred earlier. Perhaps the voyage needs more trips, before one can say

“I think I have understood what makes me tick. Perhaps I can improve. With a little help from my friends.”

Siddhartha Raut

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**Life is a journey . . . With breaks**

‘Life’ -- such a ‘living’ & ‘real’ word. The mere word generates feelings of every dimension. But, alas! We lose touch of these feelings and our real emotions, as we grow up. A child is full of emotions-a real feeling filled creature, and the journey continues. But, at some point of time, we stop living life-a break appears and we start pretending that we are “living”. We become so habituated to acting and living for others, that we forget our real selves. But, for some lucky persons, life starts again. When they can again touch their emotions, listen to their heart and feel their ‘feelings.’ I am one such lucky person for whom life started again. I am afraid-yes still ‘afraid’ that my life should not break again.

Thank you ISABS.

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## **Feelings! Catch them Young . . .**

What to catch, where to catch, how to catch and why to catch.?????? . . .

These are the questions that are within me since I attended the ALHP. There is so much within me as I feel, that I cried for a long time at home, after I left the XIM campus. I feel that I have forgotten myself in the journey of life. I have only met other people’s expectations and have lost myself somewhere on the way that I don’t even know how to express myself I have helped the people around me, all the time, and in a way I have kept their expectations high on me. Folks remark “hey, you can do this” . . . I am busy listening to them and acting as they want.

The “me” always craved for love, nurturance. The “me” is still a child who is always in a revengeful mood. And this child keeps confronting the self inside

This has developed negativity in me and it expresses itself, all the time, thorough asking, questioning, confronting, and demanding. The flow of thoughts, the feelings suppressed, the actions unseen. But still I am exploring. And this state presently is not disturbing me. I love it.

As I put myself on the chart in the community session, the different forms of “me “sometimes inner and outer the same, sometimes different, and sometimes I want to still explore”. This gives me immense strength as I am in touch with myself.

I feel that the revengeful child is there within and it will take time for me to rear the child, elevate

the child, and make it an adult.

The “me” has always used this child as a weapon and as a protector against not showing myself. I am irritated with this child now. Others are with ok with me, but some how I am bothered about everything, I am not able to deal with myself in the same way that I can deal with others.

I am not able to deal with myself because of the standards that I have set for myself. If I look back I feel very depressed with what I have done to myself all these years. I have punished myself so much. All the time justifying, unable to accept what others say, I always want them to behave, as I want. If anyone does not fit into my framework of standards I quit. I am unable to accept what others say, I doubt their feelings and often question it. Rather I am unable to catch my feelings. I feel like laughing at my self. The realization that I have to catch and report how I feel is a very important discovery of my journey. The journey that I am going through is to make myself more beautiful and also to make others, who are around me, beautiful. And for me every “here and now” has become a lab to catch feelings.

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## **Delhi Region**

Pradeep Prakash took over as regional coordinator for Delhi region from 1st of January, 07.

The start to activities in the new year happened with a small get-together with Rolf and Roni Lynton at IIC, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi on 25th Jan,07. It was well attended by the professional fraternity and PDP members of the region. Rolf shared about his concerns regarding focus on group level work in ISABS. I quote, “That the small-group focus has somehow gone missing from the applied behavioral science that ISABS stands for is doubly bizarre in current India where new technologies, surging economic expansion and diversity, high mobility in-country and veritable floods of influences from abroad are tearing at the social fabric. Greatly heightened and widespread abilities to do things together are a crying strategic need and that demands flourishing small groups and people to lead them, and aggregates of small groups in institutions, organizations and large systems of all kinds”.

Our first monthly meeting took place in Lodhi garden in open air in March, 07. It was well attended by about 18 persons including some of those who wanted to attend ISABS programmes.

This was followed by a regional event in March-April which was held at Badkhal, Faridabad.

The response was lukewarm and we could have only one Basic lab.

In June, an ACT lab was organized. It was facilitated by Dr Somnath Chatopadhaya.

Somnath came back to training in ISABS after a long break and Delhi region is proud to have had his workshop. It was mainly cognitive inputs based, focused on clarifying basics of process work. Fifteen persons attended this very low cost subsidized workshop held at India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi in non-residential format. Delhi region is grateful to Somnath for doing it gratis, not even conveyance was taken by him.

During this Lab, we also had remembrance of Kurt Lewin on the occasion of his 60th death anniversary. Som Nath reminded us of pioneering contribution to the T group movement by Kurt Lewin, who is known as its creator.

Delhi region had another regional event from 23rd July till 27th July, 07 at Hotel Rajhans, Faridabad. We had two basic labs.

Another low cost event was organized at Lucknow which benefited many self sponsored and NGO sector persons. Rashmi Saxena, a PDP participant from Delhi region organized the event deserves our thanks for the same.

Delhi region has started a new tradition of hosting an annual dinner for professional and PDP members from the region. Dinner was well attended on 30th December, 07 and during the dinner many options were explored for strengthening the region.

One winter event in Feb, 08 was again held at Badkhal and more events are being organized in the coming months.

Our region professionals have also done couple of Labs for BHEL Engineer Trainees(ET) benefiting over 200 participants so far. All over India labs are being held covering close to 1100 ETs of BHEL. Credit for this must go to our professional member Partha Sarathi who made it mandatory for ET's to attend these labs facilitated by ISABS professionals. Many heart felt thanks to him for promoting ISABS lab work in BHEL.

Our Library is also being built and will be available for members of the region.

Pradeep Prakash

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## **Chennai Region**

First of all congratulations to all of you who are part of Editorial team led by Sanjib. This is a report on the Regional event recently concluded at Chennai.

We had a Regional Event at Chennai from 29th of Feb to 4th March at the beautiful Beach Resort on the east coast Road close to Mamallapuram. The event comprised of 34 in the community. We had 3 Basic labs. The Professional Members who supported the event were Vara, KK, Uday I was there too. Also part of the faculty community were two interns Arati and Khirod, we also had Shyla doing her observation as part of her PDP journey. I take this opportunity to thank all of them for coming together and making this event a meaningful one.

The participant community comprised of people from the region, also from other places in south and to bring in diversity were people who came all the way from North east and northern part of our country.

We experienced a great sense of warmth and bonding together contributing to each other's learning and growth, by bringing in innovativeness, richness and freshness to the process.

There is a sense of well-being as I feel quite contented after the conclusion of the event.

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## **Mumbai Region**

The Mumbai region is blessed with an active set of professional members who continue to contribute enhancing the vibrancy of the different events and activities of the Mumbai region.

Interns and PDP participants actively involved and participating in managing the chapter activities. The responsibility for running the monthly meetings is held jointly by Altaf and the PDP participants. Vidyut has created a blog for the Mumbai region. You could visit the same at [www.isabsmumbai.org](http://www.isabsmumbai.org)

Three events are scheduled in the Mumbai region in 2008.

Tarang To be held annually during Spring.

Umang To be held annually in July and planned as a low-cost event

Barkha To be held annually during late Monsoon

Further to this, Wasundhara and Sushma are organizing special events and planning for special weekend labs/theme labs in the near future.

Professional members within the Mumbai region have been fairly active on the email-forum. Over the last two months, some intense discussions and dialogue has occurred about the scholarship policy to be implemented within the region. This scholarship policy is intended to support and include participation from diverse communities and extend the reach of ISABS events. What's been very encouraging to note is that a few of the professional members are ready to facilitate labs in interior parts of Maharashtra and elsewhere in India.

We at Mumbai region look forward to your views, feedback and voluntary time for different initiatives.

Mumbai Region Co-ordination Team

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## **Ahmedabad Region**

Spring event was held in Infocity Club Resort, Gandhinagar between 6th to 10th March 2008. K K Mehta and Prerna Rane facilitated two labs of BLHP. The highlight is that a PDP member (Rajendra Jani) and his colleagues supported in organizing logistics of this event since regional coordinator (myself) was physically away and was coordinating only on phone. I sincerely thank Rajendra Jani and Hemalee Leua for all their support for organizing of this event.

The region also had a dinner meeting on 13th of January which was a different setting to meet with the associates of ISABS in this region.

I, as regional coordinator and board member of ISABS participated in the inauguration session of OCFP program held in Ahmedabad on 25th February 2008.

Archana Shrivastava

[archanayuva@yahoo.com](mailto:archanayuva@yahoo.com)

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## 14. New Executive Board & Regional Coordinators

### *New Executive Board*

Manas Shukla, President

T. T. Srinath, Secretary

Harish Raichandani, Treasurer

Lalitha Iyer & Archana Shrivastava, Deans [Programmes]

Jimmy C. Dabhi & Ganesh Anantharaman, Deans [Professional Development Programme]

Uma Jain, Dean [Professional Excellence]

Zeb O. Waturuocha, Dean [Social Development]

Snigdha Pattnaik, Dean [Research]

Sushma Sharma, Dean [Consultancy]

Sanjib Basu, Dean [Publications]

R. Sankarasubramanyan, Past President

### *Regional Coordinators*

Pradeep Prakash, Delhi

Joy Srinivasan, Bangalore

Harish Raichandani, Hyderabad

Vikram Bhatt, Mumbai

Paul Siromoni, Kolkata

Rajeshwari L., Chennai

Archana Shrivastava, Ahmedabad

Virendra Sisodia, Jaipur

Somali Gupta, MP & Chattisgarh

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## 15. Professional Members' Profile

Professional Members' Profile, a labour of love by Jasmeet, was released during the Winter Event. Sankar shared the details about the background of the project, including Jasmeet's painstaking efforts in contacting all the professional members to get them on board. This book of profiles was intended not as a conventional directory (addresses and telephone numbers are absent), but more as an introduction to the professional member-as-person. Members are grouped according to the decade in which they earned their membership. Colour photograph, age, educational credentials, specialisation, a personal message, a quotation and email address are provided, making each profile a quite unique presentation! The Profiles were handed over

ceremonially with all the assembled professional members standing in order of their year of membership! Thanks, Jasmeet and Sankar, for this beautiful publication that will bring us all nearer.

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Please send your feedback and contribution to future issues to Sanjib Basu, [isabs.  
publications@gmail.com](mailto:isabs.publications@gmail.com)

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