



Here & Now

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<https://www.isabs.org/>



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From Dean Publication and Digital Transformation



Greetings.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the release of the latest edition of the Here & Now.

Earlier this year, I took the role of Dean Publication and Digital Transformation and I am quite excited about it.

I feel so blessed to be supported by such a large and diverse team of – Atul Chugh, Gauri Nigudkar, Hema Shekhar, Jimmy Dabhi, Khirod Pattnaik, Lalitha Iyer, Linda Baptista, Meenakshi Vijayasimha, Renuka Singh, Sanjay Dutt, Satyakki Bhattacharjee, Surya Mani Singh and Sushma Sharma.

The role has been exciting as well as challenging so far...

From the Digital Transformation perspective, while we did start with a lot of expectations and hopes, we faced lot of challenges this year, primarily in terms of technology solution and managing the vendors to deliver the solutions to us.

I still feel hopeful that by mid 2019, we would have implemented the software, which manages most of ISABS database, participant life-cycle as well as functional flow of our Labs, PDP and ODCP.

We do seem to be generating some buzz on Social Media and we should soon have a new avatar of our website.

The new editorial team of Here & Now team did a wonderful job of putting together this new edition. Thanks to Jimmy Dabhi, Tejinder Bhogal, Hema Shekhar and Linda Baptista – the Leader and Anchor of the team, which made this happen so smoothly.

Having been part of the 'Here and Now' team since last 5 years now, (earlier under the leadership of Rajeshwari Lakshmanan and Ullhas Supatkar) I know it takes a lot of effort, energy and most importantly persistence to make these releases come, edition after edition.

My Gratitude to all the authors. Your willing contributions is what makes the Here and Now come alive, again and again.

We should soon come out with a special edition around recently concluded ABS Summit. For now, Harish has been kind enough to put together a quick summary.... Read on

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A glimpse of India **Applied Behavioral Sciences Summit 2018** by Harish Raichandani



ISABS took the lead to host the first ever ABS summit with enthusiastic support from multiple generations of ABS professionals. Held at India International Centre in New Delhi on 16 and 17 November 2018 the conference brought together the who-is-who of human process professionals from across the spectrum of ISABS, Sumedhas, Aastha, and erstwhile ISISD. These organizations and participants lent their support to this move were there to present insights and share their wisdom.

Attended by over 100 professionals from academia, government, industry and social sector, the two days presented a rich tapestry of

experience, impact, and heart-warming stories and narratives of transformative journeys impacting lives of individuals, communities, institutions and governance. The networking, bonhomie and professional reconnecting after a gap of decades only added to the energy, fun and gaiety.

The unreadable infographic printed here is a testimony to the packed two days with parallel sessions putting audience in quandary over which 'right' to choose.

With 50+ speakers who brought their life time experience writing a quick report for H&N sounds like ...

“लगता है वो हमसे लम्हों में सदियों का हिसाब मांगते हैं” (it’s as if in a few seconds they wish to hear saga of centuries).

To do justice to this rare celebration of ABS Practice in India, we will be sharing in more detail, the contributions, impact created and lives of luminaries who graced the occasion through a special issue of 'Here & Now'



A glimpse of India Applied Behavioral Sciences Summit 2018

Capturing their contributions, transformations and impact of their initiatives will help us understand the significance of ABS. The sharing spanned across many themes from individual evolution, shaping children, empowering women, changing communities, rejuvenating environment and building the nation.

The young 20 somethings and the wise 90 somethings being under the same roof was not the only indicator of diversity in conference. The policy makers, social activists, school teachers, film and theatre personalities, corporate honchos, students, passionate parents and management educators were tied in one sutra of Applied Behavioral Science practice. Each one was present to learn and to share, seeking to *enhance individual and human well-being in familial, organizational and societal contexts through the application of the existing and emerging knowledge from humanities and science.*



Many of the speakers submitted their papers. Until you get to see the detailed report on conference in our special issue,, you could browse these papers at <https://www.abssummit2018.com/papers.html>

On behalf of H & N readers we celebrate each of the speakers, organizers and participants

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Pushing Back or Pushing Forward? By Gauri Nigudkar



One of the annual rituals in our household, during the “pitrupaksha” (the 15 days period before Navratri) is to cleanse it all ... i.e. not just mind, body and spirit but also the house. Here I was cleaning up the cabinets and drawers when I chanced upon old photographs. Memories rushed in and typically as it happens in cleaning up, the task itself was forgotten. I travelled down the memory lane to a time when I was in Egypt, seventeen years ago.

I still remember that day when my boss called me saying we were needed in the Vice-President’s office. She marched me and my colleague to his office immediately. The two of them – VP and my boss, broke the news to us that there was an opportunity of getting posted in Egypt for a 6 month project. Both, me and my colleague were thrilled at the prospect. Then came the news that only one person can be posted there and the meeting was about deciding which one of us can be posted.

So I asked them, what the job was like and what was expected of whoever got posted there etc. My colleague too had some questions. The VP answered them all patiently and finally we ran out of questions. Then came the decision making time and to my horror, my boss suggested that the decision should be made on a toss of a coin.

The VP must have seen the horror on my face and asked me what happened? I pushed back saying it is ridiculous that a decision is being made on toss of a coin. Everything that unfolded after that is history! But this incident remains with me as a first, when I pushed back the system in no uncertain terms.

While I call it ‘push back’, in retrospect, I think it was actually pushing the system forward. I still remember the respect that I saw in my VP’s eyes when he heard me ask them, “Why can’t you make the decision based on merit?” In that moment, I had demanded that the organization also lives by the espoused values of performance excellence!



Pushing Back or Pushing Forward?

Everyone everywhere seems to be pushing back to push forward. Leaders and HR professionals of organizations are pushing back to amplify the organizational achievements. Social activists are pushing back to improve loads of things ranging from the livelihood of less privileged to governance and policies. Fitness gurus are pushing back to improve the overall fitness around the world. Spiritual gurus are pushing back to influence the mindset of people and enhance positivity. Theatre and Film makers are pushing back to bring forward new thinking. Writers and artisans are pushing old norms of art and craft to reclaim freedom to create.

Common men, women and other genders are pushing back for their identity, their rights and their freedom. The list is endless. In short, everyone is pushing back to push forward in life!



However, not every push back meets with a forward success. Sometimes it just fails, sometimes it's squashed by powers that are mightier and sometimes it just fizzles out. What goes into making a success out of a push back? In my opinion, some of the success factors are;

Courage to take the risk

The risk of losing it all, risk of failing is possibly the biggest deterrent to people taking initiative to push back a system. In my own example stated above, pushing back the system meant losing an opportunity to get international work experience.

For a young rookie it was a big thing! It could have meant that my career was finished. But, being sent on a toss of a coin, made no sense to me. I wanted to be seen for my calibre and not to be labelled as the lucky one who got to go to Egypt. This gave me the courage to risk it.

Persistence

The most common examples of persistence are possibly the ones from Social activism. The verdict on Section 377 of Indian penal Code with ref to consensual homosexual sex is the most recent example of persistence by the ones demanding a change. I was in school when I first went on an educative school trip to look at Narmada Dam under construction. That was when I saw a handful of people sitting there on the dam site with banners and flags.

Pushing Back or Pushing Forward?

They were quietly protesting and demanding the rights of the ones who were going to be displaced and affected due to the Narmada dam project. The fight continues more than 3 decades later, with hundreds of people taking up the cause along with Medha Patkar. The activists of Narmada Bachao Andolan, continue to push the system to push forward for the livelihood of the tribal and rural community.

They have met with small and big successes. They have also seen enough failure to despair them. But they persist and the system moves bit by bit to take us forward as an inclusive and equal society that is espoused by the Constitution of India.

Managing multiple realities

When bringing about change in any system, awareness and knowledge of the system, is crucial.



Push backs work when it's done effectively and at the right place. Pushing for the sake of pushing often gets labelled as counter-dependence or is seen as a wayward rebellious process that has no meaning or focus.

It is important to leverage and hold multiple realities within a system to be able to push it in a desired direction. This holds true across a diverse diaspora -- from a very personal space of knowing your own body as a system to knowing the world affairs and its challenges while bringing about large system changes.

Creativity and Innovation

Indian cinema's contribution to pushing back the society to look at itself is undeniable. From very early days of cinema till today, film makers have pushed us to think differently and presented a mirror to the society.

Whether it was the bold 1937 film '*Duniya Na Mane*' (by prolific filmmaker, V Shantaram), about a young girl's rebellion on being married to a man her father's age or the most discussed film of 2016, '*Pink*' (by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury).

Both films sparked loads of conversations across various forums and led to people taking concrete action to push for better ways of being. One can never arrive at a conclusive answer as to whether art imitates fiction or vice-versa.

Pushing Back or Pushing Forward?

When pushing back to stand for something, the more creative and innovative one is, that much likely one is to get attention and be able to influence the system. This does not mean one has to be making films! As kids, haven't we all been highly creative in getting things done our way?

Belief in self

History is rich with examples of people who have pushed their physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual limits to achieve extraordinary results. For instance, one could be talking of one of the greatest theoretical physicist of our times, Stephen Hawking who pushed back his rare disease to do phenomenal work in multiple areas. Or one could be referring to the great Indian reformer of 19th century Mahatma Jyotiba Phule who pushed back the society taking up a battle against the caste system and actively supported women's education.

Or one could be discussing a modern day Everester like Aparana Prabhudesai who pushed her emotional and physical limits to summit Mt. Everest after being told that she can never walk without support, again! What binds these people through history is their belief in self and their passion to pursue what they believed in. They truly seemed to hold a dictionary that did not have words like Impossible, Fear and Failure.

Words create Worlds

Communication is the key to successful push back. It's not enough to push a system back. It's important to announce it to the world. Stories must be told. Word must be spread. Stating your thoughts, feelings and ideas authentically may sound daunting, but that is what creates a new world. If you don't express what you think and feel, you are going to remain in a status quo!



There is a lot of research in positive psychology that tells us about how language impacts the end result. Let me share with you my experience from the time when I was in a job. My boss used to say, "You didn't do so and so things!" and I used to feel accused and unacknowledged. My energy used to be downright low after such an encounter. In contrast, my super-boss used to say, "I like what you have done. Also, I think you could add to it so and so thing. What do you think?" I used to feel uplifted and energized. Both of them were pushing me for improving what I was doing. It's just the way in which they spoke that made the difference.

Pushing Back or Pushing Forward?

As I write about pushing back to push forward, the question that comes to my mind is how do you see the process of push back? Often, push back pre-supposes aggression and activism. It seems to underwrite a rebellion of sorts. My experience says, it doesn't have to be only aggression or activism. It can simply be about standing up for one's own values and beliefs. It could be done assertively and peacefully. Few lines by Tanveer Ghazi come to my mind ...

तू खुद की खोज में निकल
तू किस लिए हताश है
तू चल, तेरे वजूद की
समय को भी तलाश है
समय को भी तलाश है

Pushing back to Push Forward! It's all about believing in self, trusting self and standing up for one's values. Like Tanveer Ghazi says, keep walking! Time awaits your glorious self! So PUSH FORWARD now!

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Art by
Bhawana Maheshwari



Vibrant Rajasthan

Simplicity is the keynote of all true elegance.

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The Fool
by Jayesh Sampat



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'Anaam' by Gaurav Gupta



इस मासूम अनाम बच्चे के चेहरे पर आयी मुस्कुराहट का राज तो मुझे नहीं पता, लेकिन उसकी ये मुस्कुराहट हर पल यूँ ही नहीं बनी रहेगी क्योंकि ये कोई आम बच्चा नहीं।

इस बच्चे की तस्वीर मैंने गोरखपुर रेलवे प्लेटफार्म के पास ली है। ये ऐसे बच्चे हैं जो रेलवे प्लेटफार्म पर पैदा होते और शायद यही मर भी जाते हैं, न कोई जन्मदिन पर हँसने वाला होता है और न मरने पर रोने वाला।

बड़ी विचित्र सी होती है इनकी दुनिया, गगन ही इनका छत है और रेलवे का जाल ही इनका घर। फिर भी ये कभी रोते या परेशान नहीं होते, लेकिन इनका बचपन इनसे कब छिन जाता, इन्हें कानों कान खबर नहीं होती।

मरने तक एक चीज इनका कभी पीछा नहीं छोड़ती "भूख"। इस भूख के खातिर कूड़े कचरे से ये कुछ उम्मीदों को उठाते हैं जो शायद उनकी सटी हुई पेट और पीठ की जगह को कुछ वक्त के लिए भर देता है। यही इनकी जीवन शैली है और शायद आने वाला कल पर ये बदल सकता है – मेरे, आपके, हमारे "प्रयास" से, इसके लिए अंत में सिर्फ इतना ही कहना चाहूंगा कि

सुन्दर वन है बहुत घनेलें, छाव यहा की छलना है,

अरे पथिक विश्राम कहा है, बहुत दूर तक चलना है।



Photography by Gaurav Gupta
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How many lives do we have? - By Ameet Mattoo

Confucius said, “We all have two lives and the second one starts when we realise we have only one”.



It has been over 2500 years since he said this, still most of us seem to struggle with this question – to live our dreams or not? Even though we all have a desire to live a meaningful life by pursuing our passions and fulfilling our potential, there is something that holds us back.

When I speak to many of my friends and colleagues, I see a common thread in most narratives.

While most of them have done well for themselves in their lives – they are earning well, are doing well professionally or have a well settled family life, there is something that still seems amiss.

There seems to be a yearning for something more, something meaningful that would fulfil them, satisfy them and make them live their full potential.

Internalised Role Identities

In my experience, there are many reasons which impact people not being able to live the life they desire, which include a limiting mind-set (fear of failure, risk avoidance, avoiding ambiguity etc) as well as traps that come with social success.

There however seems to be one more reason, which is that of internalized role identities people live. These role identities manifest differently for both men and women.

The role identities men internalise

For most men, the common internalized role identity is that of a provider; that they need to make sure they earn enough - so as to afford all that is expected from them, by their families and as defined by society around them. During a conversation with a friend, he shared, “I cannot afford, not to maintain the life style we are used to”, even though he had a deep yearning to do something else, something different. My instant response to him was “So you are willing to sacrifice your life for the life style!”.

“We seem willing to sacrifice our Life for our Life-Style”

IF YOU DON'T SACRIFICE FOR WHAT YOU WANT, WHAT YOU WANT WILL BE THE SACRIFICE.

How many lives do we have?

For some others, it is also a **prestige/self-esteem issue**. They have a social standing in the pecking order which, their jobs and titles provide; and, to let go of that is extremely difficult. As a consequence, most men are gripped with a fear of losing what they have. This fear then manifests as fear of failure, risk aversion and allergy to ambiguity. However, the path of living one's potential is filled with taking risks, going into unknown, uncharted territories, which then looks threatening.

And the one women assume

For many women, the common internalized role identity is that of a care giver. That they need to make sure that everyone around them, especially their children, parents, parents-in-law and spouses are taken care of; and, in a manner as expected from them by their families and as defined by society around them.

The most common thought is – “if I take care of myself, my passion, my desires, who will take care of the kids and family?” And this thought then introduces a guilt, which they try to avoid.



As a consequence, most women then fabricate more and more reasons, to tell themselves and people others around them, why they can't go out and do what they would have loved to.

Spending long years with these thoughts then develops a lack of self-belief and self-confidence; to the extent that, they start believing that even if they go out, they won't succeed.

Thus, both men and women commit themselves to a life, which gives them the comfort of safety and predictability and some amount of joy; but leave out a whole lot more that could have given a lot more satisfaction.

The Inner calling, that keeps us awake ...

While they continue to go about their lives, the desire however persists and shows up in niggling ways. There are flashes of what seems like a larger *self-beckoning*; A self, that despite apparent satisfaction, comforts and fulfilment, surprisingly asks for more.

How many lives do we have?

There are sleepless nights and dreamy days, when there is a deep knowing that something different is meant for ME. "I want to do something else, something different", is the common quote I often hear from people - though not always sure what that "different" could be.

Many a times, people find ways to subvert these thoughts by creating a temporary diversion - Running a marathon; Road trip to Leh; All boys or all girls trip to Goa / Barcelona / ... etc. which do provide a short term exhilaration - not long lasting though.

Often the question returns to haunt. If one is willing to give attention to the thought, it's turbulent and scary at times; and exhilarating at other times.

Since the path ahead is full of unprecedented choices to be made, with no map, no compass, few believers, even fewer co-travellers and shoestring resources! The journey ahead, seems hazy. It seems fraught with dilemmas that comes with personal sacrifices – of family, finances, stability, status and many others. It takes courage to get onto such a path, alone. Since not many people we know, have been seen willing to get onto this path.

The starting point and the way ahead to create a new life for ourselves include:

- Coax our passion and dormant potential;
- Understand the mind-set needed to be enterprising;
- Arouse our deeper achievement motives and integrate them with our other needs and motives

- Discover ways of work-life integration
- Learn to channel angst and guilt to pride, creativity and joy
- Understand our relationship with Risk, Failures, Ambiguity and Self-doubt
- Mine the hidden treasures of our environment to be even more resourceful
- Commit solidly to a tangible design for the future to fulfil the potential.



My own journey through this turbulent path had been a roller-coaster and lonely one too. However, believing deeply in the dream and keeping faith in the universe, that it would aid this journey as long as I am authentic and truthful to it, has helped.

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Anchors of Life by Rakhee Samsi



Have you ever wondered
When everything around you is in
chaos
What is it that gives you the
strength to face the world with all
your might?
Well, there is a secret recipe we all
have
It's only a matter of time before you
discover this strength.

I call it, 'the anchor'
Which hold our feet firmly on
ground.
Anchor helps us clear the clutter
and think clear.

Anchor helps us come back on track
and focus on the larger goal.
Anchor helps us get centered to
counter the negative thoughts that
enter our mind.

Anchor walks in our life in many
shapes and forms.
It could be a friend who reminds you
to believe in yourself
Shows you the mirrors and tells you,
you are much beyond the current
situation
This is not the end but just a bend.
He restores your hope and faith,
Giving you the strength to move on.
He is the pillar which you can always
fall back upon.

Anchor could be an memory or an
experience
Which has had a deep impact on you.
It presents itself to you when you are
about to give up
It's flashes in front of your eye

Reminding you, if you conquered it
then...you can do it once again.
It energizes you to take the challenge
head on.



Anchor could be your role model -
your parents, coach, or even a
celebrity who your admire.
Someone who has been a source of
inspiration for you.

When you are tired and feel helpless
These stories re-ignite the hope.
They give you the courage to brave
the storm.

Anchors of Life

Anchors are all around you.
All it needs is a careful observation.
Every time when the thoughts of
giving up enters your mind
Hold on, turn and look around.
Who is it that you have admired all
along?

Recount their strengths.
Visualize your past successes.
Measure the enormity of the current
situation.
You will realize, it's not as big as it
seems.

Discuss the situation with your
anchor in real or in imagination.
You will emerge more centered after
this conversation.
Ready for the next leap....full of zest
to be yourself.

Anchors are precious in our life...
cherish them always.

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Jung by Kumud Kalia



माज़ी में धंसे पाओं खेंच तो लूँ,
रखने को उन्हें ज़मीं कहाँ से लाऊँ,
इसी कश्म-ऐ-कश में थी ज़िंदगी मेरी,
एक उलझन में थी उलझी ज़िन्दगी मेरी ।
फ़िर उठी दिल से आवाज़,
खोल पंख, भर ले परवाज़,
सारा आसमाँ है तेरे पास,
रख अपने मन में विश्वास ।
बढ़ा कदम हौसले के संग,
देख परिंदे, रंग उनके रंग,
खुद से लड़नी है यह जंग,
तो कौंधी हौसले की तरंग ।
दहलीज़ पे आ ठिठके कदम,
खौफ़ ने आ दबोचा मेरा दम,
इतनी महफूज़ हो पाऊंगी कँहा,
मेरी जन्नत औ कायनात हैं यंहा ।

ना, मैं ना कर पाऊँगी यह मरते दम,
न, मैं न उठा पाऊँगी ऐसा कदम,
इस दुनिया में खो न जाऊँ कहीं,
यह खुला आसमाँ मेरे लिए नहीं ।
कब तक रहोगी इस दुनिया से डरी,
बढ़ा कदम, यह ज़िन्दगी है सिर्फ़ तेरी,
कोई और नहीं, तूँ खुद को डराती है,
कूवत-ऐ-परवाज़ को जंग लगाती है ।
कभी हौसला भारी,
तो कभी खौफ़ तारी,
इस जंग में तूँ क्यों हारी,
खुल के खेल यह पारी ।
दिल-ओ-दिमाग़ ने लिया फैसला तभी,
इस खौफ़ से पानी होगी राहत अभी,
लेना होगा कदम खौफ़ज़दा होते हुए भी,
पाऊँगी अपना वजूद और ज़िंदगी तभी ।
फिर किया खुद ही से यह अहद मैंने,
खौफ़ज़दा हो कर उठाया कदम मैंने,
दिल धड़का मेरा, दमका मेरा ज़मीर,
आसमाँ खुद उतर आया बनने ज़मीं ।



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कुमुद " तन्हाई "

Continuing OD Education (CODE) – By R Sankarasubramanyan

on behalf of the APC team of ODCP

The advanced OD studies offering from ISABS



Introduction:

ISABS started the Organization Development Certificate Program (ODCP) in 2005 as a part of its endeavor to develop professionals with process based competencies to undertake organizational development activities either as internal change agents or as external consultants.

Organizational development is based on applied behavioral science and this was a logical extension to ISABS work in developing process facilitators for groups, organizations and communities.

ISABS also collaborated with an NGO in creating a similar program for the social sector called OCFP (organization change facilitators program) and later conceived and executed a new program for the community level social workers called CFPF (Community Process Facilitators Program). For more details on all these programs, please visit www.isabs.org.

After 10 batches of ODCP, we had over a hundred ODCP alumni, the Academic and Planning Committee (APC) decided to offer a platform for continuing OD education.

There were also many Alumni who shared the need to get deeper experience into OD and also opportunities for practice for those who had difficulty finding OD assignments in their own organizations.

This was also a logical step considering that OD graduates are also coming from other sources like TISS and there will be a wider pool of participants who will be available to deepen their OD knowledge and experience. ISABS is ready to cater to the emerging need.

The Process:

The first question for the APC was the process of constructing this course in an OD way by engaging the potential client system in designing the course.

Continuing OD Education (CODE)

A core team of ODCP Alumni was set up under the leadership of Priya Vasudevan, member of the APC. This core team brainstormed on 'what we would like to learn and how?' - thus creating a scaffolding for CODE.

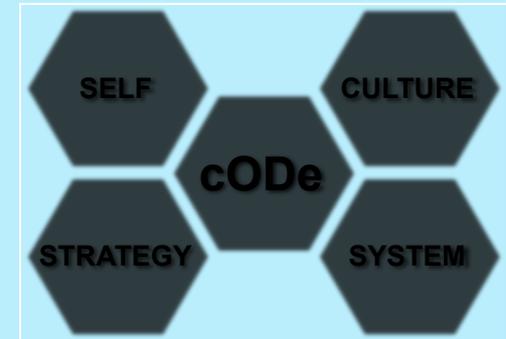
The core team collected data from the alumni, HR leaders in the Industry, few academicians and also researched OD courses offered by many universities around the world. The research findings were collated and a document outlining the areas of focus, course contents, theories and model that need further exploration and even teachers from whom they would like to learn was created by the Core group of Alumni. They presented the report to the APC. The APC conceptualized the diagnosis through many dialogues and the model for CODE emerged from the same.

The Model:

Generally in any organization, OD work begins with the visible work domain of an organization i.e. the “doing” of an organization. These could be at the level of teamwork, changing a process, improving productivity, engagement and so on.

The inputs received from the research conducted by the Alumni core group indicated that the deeper application of OD is to move from the “doing” to the “being” of an organization.

These applications of OD are more at the level of organizational strategies, intervening at a systems level and also changing the culture. The model emerged from this understanding.



CODE has four elements, Culture, System, Strategy and Self. The first three are the lenses to view an organization and the Self is the one who is wearing those lenses. Hence there will be three modules of CODE with Self as a running theme across modules.

Given below are the perspectives through which we are defining and viewing these three dimensions of Culture, System and Strategy:

Culture is the organizational backdrop, the tapestry based on which the organizational life evolves.

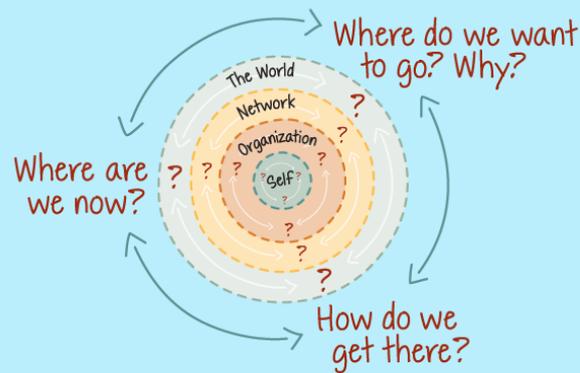
Continuing OD Education (CODE)

We learn about culture only when we try to change it. Culture is the context in which the organization is situated. This is informed by the nature of the organization (type of business), the ownership, geographical location, the age of the organization and so on. Studying the culture helps us to understand why things happen in a particular way in the organization.

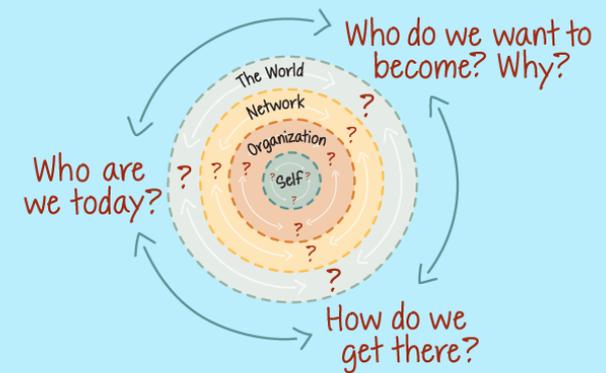
Organizations are open systems impacted from within and outside. Understanding the interdependencies helps in bringing real change. Organizations are systems with a purpose. They form the contours of the organization. Systems are informed by the way of organizing, the various components and their interaction, the inputs, throughputs and outputs of the organization. The System is also contextualized by the shared culture.

While Culture is the backdrop and System is the foreground, Strategy drives the organization to live its purpose and vision. OD needs to be strategic to impact the whole. While Shared Culture and System define the “being”, Strategy is the “doing” of the organization. Strategy indicates the choices that are made, the direction of growth and development and the presence in the environment. Strategy is contextualized by the shared culture and the system.

Organization Development happens in the processes of interaction between the Self and the organization. Awareness of one’s values and competencies is the touchstone for facilitating change. The purpose, direction and change in organizations impact individuals and the reverse is also true. Self is the creator and facilitator of the organizational eco-system. The Self is also impacted by the eco system it helped to create!



STRATEGY



CULTURE

Continuing OD Education (CODE)

The lens for understanding organizations and intervening in them are based on awareness of self and the shared culture, system and strategies of the organization.

The Design:

CODE will have three modules with the Self as a running theme across the modules. The first module will be Culture OD, followed by Systemic OD and Strategic OD. Participants can self pace themselves and learn these modules across years. A CODE certificate will be given on completion of each module.

The course is blended learning with three contact modules of three days each, virtual learning sessions to augment the learning from the contact modules and a Capstone project.

There is also a unique immersive experience created as part of the design, intended to help participants soak in, learn about and experiment with the organizational dimension studied. The course will be spread over 9 months. The detailing of the design, assigning trainers and working out the logistics are being undertaken by a sub-group of the APC, headed by Mukul with Priya and Payal. The first batch has 8 people signed up and starts from November 23rd, 2018.



Initially this program will be open only for ODCP alumni and maybe later extended to our professional members as well as alumni of other OD programs like TISS.



I hope CODE will enhance ISABS contribution to the field of OD and ABS in the years to come.



Exiled Emotions...making a comeback! – By Priya Vasudevan



In a session on Emotional Intelligence I asked my students – all mid-career executives, ‘what feelings do you express at work?’ The word ‘feelings’ led to a pause and then a cringe. Tentative answers ‘excitement’, ‘fun’, ‘happiness.’ After some prodding, ‘aggression’, ‘anger’ and then they tapered off. ‘What about sadness, envy and frustration?’ The students looked blank and some of them contemplative.

Having worked at few world class organizations, my findings are similar.

Organisations by design permit supposedly task ‘promoting’ emotions while suppressing or ignoring task ‘inhibitors’ like anger and sadness.

Many of us have been witness to or at the receiving end of ‘firing’ by the boss – and in the aftermath the affected employee puts on a brave face only to go seething and sad to peers, feeding the grapevine. Aggressive bosses are lauded as task masters and while the nurturing ones are dismissed as ‘nice human beings!’

Thus the masculine trumps over the feminine - the exiled emotions build up as Organizational shadow or baggage – deciding to erupt violently at a most opportune and least appropriate time.

Rare that they may be, there are organizations who are waking up to this disturbing reality.

They take up cudgels on behalf of the exiled emotions and through the D & I focus – encourage employees to bring their ‘whole selves to work’. Tentativeness and ambiguity is accepted, flow is a norm than the exception, winning is welcome yet not ‘worshipped’...shaping a refreshing Corporate narrative.



When the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Into that heaven of freedom, let my ‘corporate’ awake!

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Influence of Values and Needs on the Roles we take up in the Group

by Rahul Thapar



In the lab, I could explore how my needs and values were impacting my behaviour and actions. My developed understanding is that, I have many needs and values but at the same time I need to be aware of how it is impacting my behaviour and presence in the group. How it defines the role I am playing within the group in here and now?

Few values and needs are alive within me. To fulfil these I will take some actions or behave in certain way - unconsciously or consciously.

It may hinder or pace up other members growth and learning process in the group.



I would like to share a couple of my experiential examples from the lab. In my own need for **peace**, I tend to play 'the role of peacemaker' which leads me to overburden myself, unnecessarily. I found myself avoiding conflict which may be required to resolve some of the existing issues in the lab. I experienced that taking up the role of 'peacemaker' was not helping resolve issues between two women in the group. I found my 'peace-making' role to be more of an interruption than of help. At personal level, while this is one of my key values, my actions were not helpful for all situations.

While exploring this process, there was an insight that my need for peace may stop me from taking risks and taking side of the 'right aspects' in the moment. In a conflicting situation between two sub groups, I was playing the 'peace-maker' instead of taking either side or allowing them to resolve it between themselves.

When I see **injustice and inequality** it definitely impacts me. It evokes irritation and anger within me. My behaviour pattern was either withdrawn or I exhibit verbal confrontation. Probably the hierarchy of values changes its positions based on the situation. In group, I would see these values of equality and justice in various ways like equal opportunity given to people or not, involvement of everyone is there or not, etc.

Influence of Values and Needs on the Roles we take up in the Group

Through these examples, I want to share my experiences of my presence in the lab which originated from certain needs or value system. The point here, is to be aware of the values and needs we are operating from and the way we behave in the group. In the process, we take up various types of roles in the group which are actually to satisfy one's own need/s or they are also satisfying some need of the group.

In Non Violent Communication (NVC) Marshal Rosenberg calls 'actions' as our strategies to meet our needs or values. In a given moment there can be one or more 'needs' alive. Becoming aware of those 'needs' raises our consciousness of self or group. Using this light of awareness, one can look at the action or role one is playing out in the group. Thus, we can say that we adopt a pattern with some action strategies to satisfy our values / needs.

Belief is another element which lies between the needs, values and behaviour. For example, in 'peace-making' role, one may have belief that 'I can best help to resolve conflict between them'. Once being aware of the behaviour, belief and need or value behind it, one can consciously examine the belief system and choose different behaviour or action either to satisfy the same need or some other need.

In this exploration, there could be possibilities of new beliefs like, two people arguing are mature enough to reach a resolution. Am I really required to intervene? 'Confrontation' is a process. Until I confront myself how can I confront others?

The resulting new behaviours could be to confront self to take more risks and be ok with conflict.

In human process, it becomes critical to look at the roles which

we take up in the group to satisfy self-need or group's need. The impact of taking up these roles can be larger in terms of impacting group's functioning and its development. Deeper examination of the type of role one is playing in the group can help to understand self and the underlying feelings, beliefs and value system. This will also provide opportunity to examine the unconscious patterns – whether one takes up the same role in various back home situations (in various groups of day to day life: in family setting, work place, friend circle, in new groups etc.). Certainly, as a conscious individual with awareness of behaviours, feelings, beliefs and needs / values one can experiment by taking up various type of roles in the group beyond the fixed patterns and can experience the excellence within and in the group functioning.

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When Silence Speaks By Sunita Raut

During difficult times Censorship increases in our workplaces.

Creativity decreases and consequently the joy of working and thereby, results.

Sometimes this is obvious. Other times it speaks through silences and can be difficult to discover.

A big organisational change is expected, or the market share is rapidly dwindling, or a new authoritarian manager has just taken over. In any of these cases the workplace can suddenly be characterised by silence. Once cannot criticise the organisation, not even internally. Loyalty becomes a watchword and it isn't unusual to have employees sign a non-disclosure contract. So, even if there are good reasons to criticise, people choose to lie instead.

Many of us in the OD field have worked with what can be called "hidden disciplining". The exposure to the stock markets for many companies makes this disciplining even harder and there can be a risk of moving towards obedience.

This is where the Four Rooms of Change Theory comes handy where one of the Rooms is Self-Censorship. It is in fact, possible to measure the level of Self-Censorship in an organisation. It is logical to conclude that silence, censorship, fear and an abuse of the "democratic contract" is one of the most serious problems of our times.

One can believe that such a measurement can lead to a good atmosphere eventually, since censorship is not easy to discover. It is amazing that even development-oriented managers can be blind to how people are feeling.



Sunita Raut is Chief Inspiration Officer of Shunya Spaces and believer and evangelist of Four Rooms of Change. She has worked globally with OD and Leadership for more than 20 years. She lives and works between India and Sweden.

When Silence Speaks

It is easy to conclude that if a workplace has to transform it must be on a base of open, fearless co-workers. If there is an atmosphere of fear, no change will be possible, however smart the plans and interventions are.



Claes Janssen, a Swedish psychologist, researcher and author published his doctoral work in the middle of the 70s by the name "Personal Dialectic" which describes the 'Censored' human being against the 'Outsider'. The 'Censored' human being is a person who essentially protects his opinions permanently, who is afraid of changes, while the 'Outsider' is constantly questioning the status-quo. Claes Janssen developed an Outsider Scale where an individual through different questions can figure out how Censored he or she is. The Model was appreciated by organisations.

Using the same basic view as the individual- focused Outsider Scale, an Organisation Barometer was developed. Through some questions around life at the workplace, one can assess how the coworkers judge the mood of the organisation.

The result is that one gets a measure of the 'Silence' and therefore the Inspiration, as well as, Contentment in the organisation. In the Four Rooms of Change Theory and Model, they are the other two Rooms.

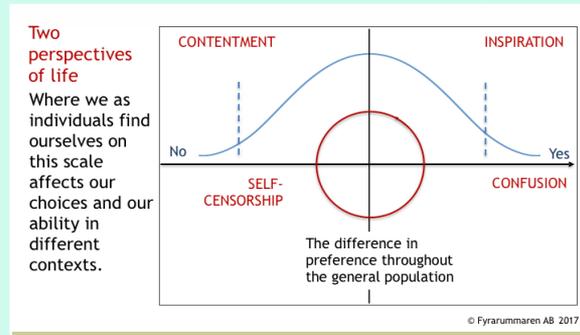
The Outsider Scale as well as the Organisation Barometer can be used separately or together, since it is true the organisation censors us but then we ourselves also have a tendency to do that, irrespective of the organisation.

The Four Rooms of Change Theory is based on the understanding that we fundamentally have two perspectives of life, i.e. being a 'Censor' or a No sayer and being an 'Outsider' or a Yes sayer. Depending on this we will look at ourselves, others and life differently. In an environment that is working well, the No Sayers drive Contentment by being happy with how things are. They bring stability. However, when things are not OK the same people will actively work at silencing the voice of dissent thereby driving Self-Censorship or Denial.

When Silence Speaks

The Yes Sayers, on the other hand, are constantly challenging how things are. They drive creativity and innovation and offer different perspectives, providing the necessary Inspiration. When things are not OK these are the same people who will speak the unspeakable, thereby driving Confusion.

While in each one of us there is a tendency to lean towards one or the other side, it is also true that both perspectives exist within each one and there is a constant dialogue within to resolve the YES/NO dialectic before taking any action. So, personally we will move from one room to the other depending on our perspective and situation. At the same time, the organisation will be in one or the other room in relation to specific issues.



It is interesting to note that we can be in different rooms in relation to different topics at the exact same time. This is what makes change complex and dynamic.

Today there are many reasons for Censorship to increase at the workplace. During unstable times there is a tendency for it to increase and we all know that the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) - world we live in, creates its own pressures. Organisations that live with a strong outside pressure.

Many publicly traded companies, as well as Venture Capital financed companies, have a bigger risk to censor themselves. One ends up against a hostile environment and starts describing their workplace as the best, most effective, safe place in the world.

The result is that today many organisations have an atmosphere of having a “lid on”. Beneath that, there can be bullying, scapegoating, insecurity about losing a job, dissatisfaction with one’s leaders, and everything else which is rumoured in corridors but not allowed to come up through the ordinary information channels. People feel lonely, coworkers as well as leaders.

When Silence Speaks

Many signals do not come up to the leaders, increasing the risk that their knowledge about the workplace is steadily reducing. Creativity reduces, people become depressive, people “wear the mask and play the game”. Organisations with a strong censorship are also characterised by strong territorial culture and silo formations. As the disturbances in the relationships increase, the censorship increases, as well. Transformations become impossible. Try to implement a brilliant strategy in an organisation with strong censorship and we can predict what the result will be.

So, now we want to start a development that leads to an open atmosphere at work. The idea is to give the organisation, as well as the people working there, an understanding of how the organisation actually is, a language to discuss that, and an instrument for change.

A precondition for this working is that everyone in the organisation or team participates. The method used is built upon generating dialogue. The basic idea is that everything holds its opposite. In the dialogue between these opposites, a change can come about.

Often, organisations approach consultants when they are stuck in a situation where no change is working. It can be difficult to accept that they have to find out more about censorship and its impact in the organisation. However, when we see that all of us have this tendency and that we can, depending on the situation, end up being stuck for shorter or longer periods in Self-Censorship Room of Four Rooms, it becomes easy to speak about it. It takes a courageous and mature leader to work with censorship in their organisation or team.

However, a leader by themselves cannot take an organisation out of Self-Censorship. The result of the Organisation Barometer is connected to all the coworkers of the organisation. What can we do about this? The purpose is not to find someone to blame. Instead, the focus is to arrive at a diagnosis together which can become a basis for organisational transformation.

An Organisation Barometer leads to many discussions. The dissatisfaction that has been, till now, swept under the carpet and lives in the ‘corridor talks,’ comes up.

Despite this, it is not unusual for coworkers to report a sense of relief. It is like opening the lid of a pressure cooker with such finesse that the *dal* doesn’t stick to the roof.

When Silence Speaks

The discussions that follow, lead to three specific positive effects in the organisation. Firstly, it shows that Confusion and Conflict are in fact, positive.

Second, it also shows that any change process must go through Confusion and it won't feel great even if you know the theory.

Last but not the least, this allows each one of us to become familiar with our own inner Censors and how we can use them judiciously. It feels important to present this way of thinking to professionals who work with people and organisations.

As OD and Process Professionals we have a possibility to influence Censorship and its opposite forces.

Sunita Raut

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Nostalgia *by Dr. Mukta Kamplikar*



Sometimes I wonder why
To ourselves we lie
And say that we are moving ahead
When what we leave unsaid
Is that we keep living each day to repeat
To bathe, to comb, to eat
For want of a reference point
Just to feel the journey, to feel alive
We paint nostalgia to survive...
We paint nostalgia to survive...

Solitary Spaces

Art by Mukta
on this page and the next



I am solitary, but I am not alone. Just aloof. So much so, that it allows me a strange recklessness that one could envy.

Solitary in the sense of a retreat, a resting place for a natural healing influence; for feeling free to speak back to my silence.

Solitary to meet beautiful strangers on new roads, to feel unbound, limitless... abundant.

Solitary Spaces

Paintings by Dr. Mukta Kamplikar



Inception – Movie Review By Dr. Mukta Kamplikar

Leonardo DiCaprio plays the character of a very special agent. He steals something that no one else can: dreams and ideas. They call him the idea extractor, which makes him one of the 'most wanted' men in the world of industrial espionage.

This time round, he has a different assignment: 'inception', not extraction. Now he is hired by a powerful billionaire to *introduce* an idea into a rival's mind and do it so well that he believes it is his own. This has never been done before; our minds are as alert to foreign ideas, as our immune system is to pathogens.

The rich man, named Saito (Ken Watanabe), makes him an offer he can't refuse, an offer that would end Cobb's forced exile from home and family. Will our beleaguered sci-fi conjurer deliver?

He must, especially if he wants to return home to his two kids and set the demons of his troubled past at rest.

Christopher Nolan might just end up as the most alluring and enigmatic film maker of contemporary cinema. *Inception* leaves you tortured, tormented, ticklish and tantalized by its mind play. Too many levels of reality, too many things happening and too innovative an idea.

If you knew how the movie ended, that would tell you nothing, unless you knew how it got there. And telling you how it got there would produce so much bafflement.

The movie is all about process, about fighting our way through enveloping sheets of reality and dream, reality within dreams and dreams without reality.

Like the hero of that film, the viewer of 'Inception' is adrift in time and experience. We can never be sure what the relationship between dream time and real time is. The hero explains that you can never remember the beginning of a dream. Dreams that seem to cover hours, may only last a short time. Yes, but you don't know that when you're dreaming. What if you're inside another person's dream? How does your dream time synch with theirs? What do you really know?



Inception – Movie Review

Cobb needs Ariadne (Ellen Page), a brilliant young architect to create a deceptive maze-space in Fischer's dreams so that new thoughts can slip in unperceived. Cobb tutors Ariadne on the world of dream infiltration, the art of controlling dreams and navigating them.

So skilled is Nolan that he actually got me involved in one of his chases. The film's architecture has a way of disregarding gravity. Buildings tilt. Streets coil. Characters float. The movie is a perplexing labyrinth without a simple through-line and is sure to inspire truly endless analysis on the web.



And yet there is an emotional thread to the film. The reason Cobb is motivated to risk the dangers of inception is because of grief and guilt involving his wife Mal (Marion Cotillard) and their two children. Cotillard beautifully embodies the wife in an idealized way. Whether we are seeing Cobb's memories, or his dreams is difficult to say--even, literally, in the last shot. But she makes Mal function as an emotional magnet, and the love between the two provides an emotional constant in Cobb's world, which is otherwise ceaselessly shifting.

'Inception' works for the viewer, we are always in the Now. Yet matters of life, death and the heart are involved--oh, and those multi-national corporations, of course.

Dreams to me have been deeply connected to my real life experiences.

Either they are a replay, or they have been triggering intuition. They are the interplay between the subconscious and the conscious to me. I have been journaling, researching and interpreting my dreams more and more.

What I love about inception is that it is challenging and creative, at the same time. I can relate to the relatedness between dreams and reality. Yes, the film plays with your brain (often messes with it) but the puzzle; the labyrinth is what keeps one going.

Philosophically speaking, is that not what life is all about too? It surprises you when you least expect it. It plays with your brain and nerves and you emote. You create your own stories and interpretations and tell those to yourself and others.

Inception – Movie Review

'Inception' is for most of the time a strange confusion between dreams and reality and the complexity of it all. It is mysterious, challenging, attractive and original, like life itself. The film also focuses on demons within and the effort one makes to put them to rest in order to move forward.

'Inception' evokes the seeker in me each time I think of it. While there is an earthy, motive-based feel to the film, it also triggers movement and travel while seeking – the whole idea of – past, present and future, the seemingly seamless travel between dreams and reality – and the whole idea of meaning making and choice taking.



Mukta Kampllikar

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The Ship of Theseus – By Neha Gupta Lehl

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I fall down
I battle
I go into pieces
And put them back together again
Each time i rearrange the pieces
Theres a new facet of me that
emerges
Ofcourse not all pieces fit
Quite perfectly, each time
These are the scars

I refuse to let the scars make me
any less beautiful anymore
They are my trophies
Of being alive
Not just living
But alive

The tough path chosen
Is exactly that - tough
I refuse to make easy choices
And remain in a false spring
The autumn lives in me too
I want to feel the autumn bloom.

I walk on
But Ship of Theseus no more
All the pieces belong to me
Only i rearrange them differently
Each time..
And each time - i grow.



Art work by Bhavisha Lakhiani

Seeking without, Not within and the Opposite of it – By Neha Gupta Lehl



How often do we hold others responsible for our wellbeing, for example parents, siblings, partners, children, friends, loved ones, even systems and organisations, religion, the country, and the world? As if, they 'owe' you something, or as if because you behaved with them in a certain way, you have a 'right' to be treated in a particular way. The stories are in our own heads.

Apologies if I sound cynical or too idealistic.

Somewhere deep down, I suspect we all know it, only its hazy, fuzzed out by many layers of beliefs and handed down patterns, popular prototypes and snug conformity.

Fact is, many of us have a hole within ourselves, the shape, size, color and placement of it varies. We go on trying to fill this hole externally, from others. With others, it begins as a feel good factor and then moves to become a demand. Slowly we need more and more of it to feel the same. We blame, demand, play the victim card when someone from outside doesn't fill that hole (as a temporary balm).

It can also be temporary filled with other stuff, like pursuit of material possessions, obsessions, and of course substance abuse. But it just doesn't go away, it keeps coming back.

I don't mean to criticize our ways of seeking temporary relief from this hole. We do what we must; we are wired for survival and taking care of ourselves in order to do that. It may not be the healthiest but it has a sound reason, which we must recognize and be compassionate towards it.



The idea of writing this piece is recognizing the pattern and in fact taking care of ourselves in a more wholesome way, or at least, realistically, beginning to slowly move towards doing that.

Seeking without, Not within and the Opposite of it

The first step is to acknowledge the possibility that there may be a hole, the fact is, if unacknowledged, its shadow looms far bigger and darker than its real size and colour.



Second, to know that it's only human, very very human to have it, that it's not something we chose or created. It just is.

Third, we just begin to be with it in compassion, it doesn't need 'fixing'. This is the part I struggle with too, the need and urge to 'fix'. It cannot be fixed, it can only heal to an extent, and that takes time. It's best to try and become friends with it, and build a relationship of tenderness and understanding it. That is what we owe to ourselves. That is what we can demand, not from anyone else, but ourselves. The investment of time, space and emotional bandwidth to sit with our hole.

Be with it; in its fear, its disgust, its pain, its sorrow and its possibilities, without expectation, without a time limit. It's very hard. But oh, it's definitely worth it.

The moment we begin to do this, a profound and positive shift happens.

And this needn't be absolute, in fact it cannot be, it can only happen in degrees and small movements, it can regress back to original or more and then take a leap forward, it moves in a zig zag and all over, not in a linear forward direction.

Talking of the shift, it's almost like a restless seeking energy, which was outside, begins to come back within and settle inside, which can give us the impetus and energy for the process described above.

The more we are with it, surprisingly the more joy this time, not pseudo, not quick fix but deeper, begins to find its way to us. Our ability to connect with others, ability to bond, exchange energy, begins to change, because it goes towards building a positive reserve of joy, not towards filling a hole.

Neha Lehl

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Inner World – By Neha Gupta Lehl

My world is rich.
With an inner theatre
I am the story
The actors
The Creator
and the mystery too.

What exists outside
Exists first within me
I didn't choose this
But neither am I against it
This is the way of life
This is how it is.

Performances are staged
new scenes created
characters weave their way in
and slip away surreptitiously
I may see many faces
But they're all me

The physical existence may be
outside
but the shapes are within me
The dance may happen in the
outer world
But the strings live inside of me

Its fecund
This inner world of mine
A ready stage without boundaries
No constraints
No limits called 'reality'

Multi dimensional
Filled with monologues
Dialogues
Conversations
Intense emotions
Nothing too hard to be staged
There really are no constraints
It's an open field
These things I could only dream of

It took me time to realize
The inner world is as real
As any reality
It's as real as I am
It's as tangible as life is.

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Happiness and Self by Shyleswari M. Rao



Waiting tired and drained at 9.15 in the night near Nungambakkam signals, I listlessly watched people clustered around a tea stall eating hot bread and eggs. The smell wafted and my tummy growled in response. I saw some talking endlessly on their mobiles as they crossed the crowded junction.

A radio FM blaring – “taxi nee taxi” from an Indica. Horns blared as the other lane swept into action and I cooled my heels. When suddenly a Kawasaki bike snugly fits between me and the Indica.

Happiness and Self

I overhear him talk above the din. He was yelling, appealing, almost imploring, "I'll do anything to keep you happy, Raji. Believe me! Raji listen!" And then after a few moments I see him tuck his cell phone into his pocket

The green light flashed as I ponder about him and his relationship. How often have we been taught this myth? The myth that we can make others happy and we ought to keep our loved ones happy.

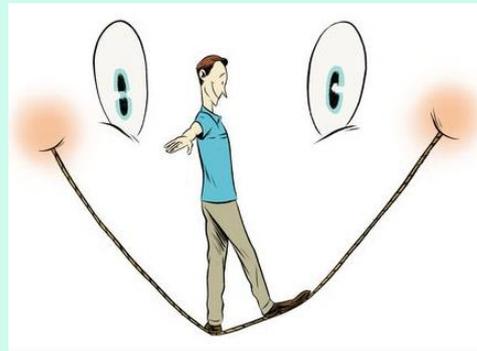
As kids, we kept our parents happy, our siblings, our teachers, friends, our dates, spouse, kids, in laws, children and their in laws.

Adding to the list, our customers, suppliers, clients, bosses and superiors. Phew! Who else? The question that strikes me is, did we really make these people happy? Is it really possible? What makes a person happy?

Perhaps we learned it by first giving little gifts, then stuff which would please someone, then material goods, and more and more along these lines. Anyway, stuff that did not 'make' you happy, though I daresay, it certainly made us satisfied.

If we were to look at 'happiness' closely, we often imagine it to be a state of being that we need to achieve some day – it's a kind of destination which we will arrive at one day.

Bad Luck! Such a thing does not exist. I mean, the 'destination.' Happiness does exist. Truly, our very nature of 'being' is happy.



When I say "I am happy!" it's a mood, a feeling which I can savor or experience for a span of time, then when I move, my mood and feelings are something else.

However, the major difficulty would crop up if I did not give the keys of my happiness to anyone else. I become the author of my happiness and not someone else. Thus, I become the source of my happiness and therefore I could say, "I am happiness."

I would glide, witness this happiness and other emotions with dispassion and the stillness would anchor me.

My fuel for this inextinguishable happiness would emerge when I believe that this universe is a safe place to be in. The love I share, can multiply and come home to roost. My happiness gets multiplied as I share and it doubles when others share theirs as well.

Happiness and Self

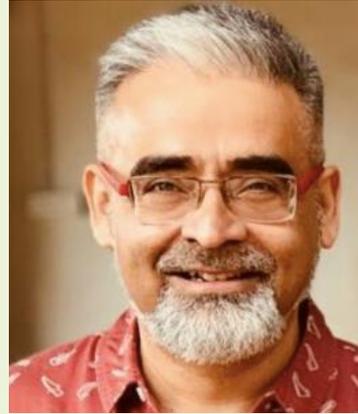
As I learn to 'let go' of pain, grudges, darts and hurt, loss and grief, I am restored to my original 'Self.' I slowly learn to accept emotions and feelings, not as wounds and scars but as life's signatures which are needed to learn. Having learnt those lessons, I move on.

Remember, the Sun shines regardless of whether I keep my windows open or closed.



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What's the meaning of life? Other people – By Sanjay Dutt



The above quote by author John Green captures the essence of what stands in front of me and is looking me squarely in the eye.

A year-end holiday at a friend's home in Kodaikanal has been a source of some unprecedented insights. The holiday gradually turned into visiting holiday homes of others who had also retreated to Kodai for a wind-down from their busy lives. My friend received invites spontaneously and we were graciously included in the plans.

Over these 4 days we were invited to families who are largely from Tamil Nadu and have Kodai homes as get-aways. We met such diverse people - a M&A head, a teacher at a global school, a retired global leader who runs grassroots NGOs in the area now, an art collector, a cartoonist, an art gallery owner...I am grateful for their hospitality and grace. What I am graced by them is "visibilizing" something that they possibly take as normal for them but stands out in stark contrast for me.

The one thing common that kept coming across in all these visits was how intricately inter-weaved all the people were in pursuing their passions and interests. Almost all of them have roots within the rich milieu of Tamil traditions and families that have nurtured them for generations.

What's the meaning of life? Other people

They live a life that extends to so many and makes a difference to so many more. Stories seamlessly flowed of traditions at temples, 200-year old legends, diverse family rituals, personal stories of making a difference to communities and people and of recent Chennai arts and culture scene. It was a breathtaking medley across generations and firm rootedness as much in the history and geography of the state as the personal family histories. The richness across time and space was so enabling and empowering for them! A virtual and virtuous web that makes their search and expression of meaning so vigorous.

It made me sad, angry and envious, to start with. It brought home the fact that as a grand child of a refugee family from Pakistan, our family's pre occupation with survival deprived us of stable roots, resources and such relationships.

Meaningfulness of life went so far as to gain skills, apply them to eke a living, make a family and basically accept that this is all that life's cards dealt to us, are about. A zealous protection of own "tribe" and its enrichment has been the pre-occupation. Revering modernity and its material benefits have been the tools for enrichment. There is little sense of wisdom or guidance from the past.

Any sense of culture, traditions or ancestry has been largely present as rituals to bargain with a higher power for further protection and enrichment. This at best has been a coping mechanism for those in the family who have had nothing else to hang on to. At its worst, it has been for many in the family (like me) a way to express my independence by rejecting the rituals. The first created a debilitating trap of angry dependence and victimhood.

The latter created an illusion of personal progress and agency, while feeling deep insecurities about a place and people to belong to. In both, the 'my-ness' has been central. Any quest to make a difference to lives beyond the immediate/ extended family has been a secondary and incidental process - if present at all. Last decade has been a struggle personally for me to make that primary, through my professional choices...mostly a failing one.

I have, since all this reflection, been compelled to question, "Is the meaning of life to be made from peeling layers of 'my-ness' or is there another way to see life?"



What's the meaning of life? Other people

Perhaps there is a way where the separateness I feel from my own self and from the larger world, is not based on the lingering shame, disappointment, inadequacy I feel of and for the system/circumstances I was born in.

A way where life becomes less of me living my dreams (perhaps proxy for holes in my own soul) and more of understanding how my life is not my own - but one that comes from generations of deeply embedded cultural and social threads. I am but a little node in their weave - meant to further perpetuate plans of this larger web of life. In that perpetuation, I need to understand others, go beyond my own circle of needs and obligations to nurture networks for the larger world. Networks that are not based on my understanding of my layers only but also how my-ness is bequeathed by unseen and continuous threads of my ancestors.

Networks that I have to trust myself with as they form a larger web of life. In all of this, my dreams will then be not mine. I become custodian of the larger dreams of the the web. That web then also takes care of me and my needs.



Of course all of this requires huge amounts of trust in life and people. I am in touch with my obsession with MY injuries and inadequacies, so far in life. Now I am trying to see if I can approach myself from 'outside-in' where I am but a product of a larger web of life. Then it becomes about having the trust, humility and courage to accept my place in the web and play an active part in this largeness.

Somehow when I zoom out like that to the vastness of my history and the future of communities I must inhabit, all the separateness/my-ness starts looking ridiculously small. My desires and dreams also start looking like my addictions. The real purpose of my existence is really then in hands, hearts and heads of so many in my past, present and future.

Our sufferings are not ours alone. In that recognition lies the possibility of letting go of burdens we carry for those injured before us, so that those after us don't have to carry them unconsciously as we have done. In it also lies the responsibility to do our part in lessening the burdens of so many who are in and beyond our immediate circles. There is no personal redemption, only collective healing. As the new year unfolds ...this troubling gift is mine to unwrap and own up in 2018.

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Challenges in the Consulting Career by Amol Pawar



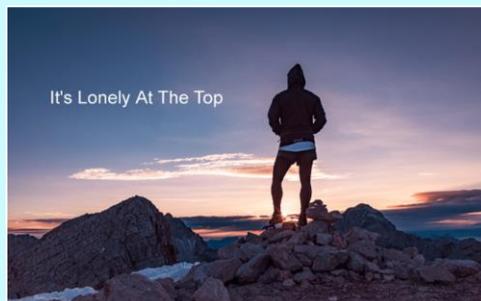
I have been on my “own” for a while now. In fact, this is the second time. The first time was about ten years ago. Just like you learn more about yourself and the world as you grow, this time around it’s different in some sense and same in others.

The Loneliness

Most corporate senior executives are lonely as there is immense competition for their job and at the same time, they have to compete for the next level. The independent consultant is no different.

The key difference however is if you are the middle or senior level corporate executive you have a team and sense of belongingness to the cause or the organization or both. When you are engaging with the client system, both you and the client system struggle to find this ‘sense of belongingness’ leaving as neither a complete outsider, nor a complete insider.

The truth is, when you are an independent consultant you are lonelier than you were in your corporate job and trust me nothing, like nothing prepares you for this. In most cases this aspect does not even figure in your consideration when you were deciding to be on your own.



Being Your Own Boss

The first time around I had this romantic idea about being on my own and unrealistic expectations from both, self and others. I had this imaginary confidence in my ability to do anything and everything while reposing the trust in the “universe” to just magically produce stuff that I would love to engage with and also at the price I want.

This time around I had set some realistic expectations about what I can and cannot do. However, just like last time, I ventured into some uncharted territories like writing and blogging. So far, it has brought me immense joy and some commercial benefit. I guess it’s difficult for me and maybe, for many of us to take the ‘romance’ out of this idea of being on your own. I connect this to the ‘liberation’ of self. Since birth I was told what and how I should do it.

Challenges in the Consulting Career

I was rewarded and punished accordingly, until it became second nature and forgot my true self. Something happened in my personal and professional life and I woke up from this self imposed slumber.

Let me clarify here that I am not stating that everyone who works for themselves does that out of pure love for the craft neither am I stating that everyone who works for someone else is sleep walking. I guess you are smart enough to make this distinction of who is in which box.

Finding Your Feet

The first few weeks, months or may be even years are spent in recognizing, acknowledging, accepting and growing with this new self. It's an excruciating process for you and people around you too.

I guess the notion that people who are extremely good in their craft, be it sport, art or science are reclusive and unreasonable of self and others probably comes from this unwavering focus this individual would have about his or her craft.

This process has its beginning in the romance of the craft and for those of us who are used to be on the regular 'fix' of 'salary' it's an extremely painful process to detox from it.



Well, some of us don't really recover while in the self-imposed rehab and chose to go back to the safe heaven.

The Glamour Vs the Reality

This is where the glamour of the external, independent consultant meets with reality. Only when you are in the shoe of an independent consultant is when you realize the pain. The fact that you would have to do business development every waking hour and minute, the fact that you would have to read more than you read ever earlier, the fact that you would have to negotiate your pay every month and not every year, the list goes on.

I have some friends who are artists and actors, and when I realized the pattern of how they earn money I realized how lucky all of us are who receive a monthly pay check. Imagine being an artist or an actor, you would be competing for work – fierce competition and once you are lucky to land some assignment, you 'may' get paid – if at all and on time.

Challenges in the Consulting Career

So when you receive any payment you would have to figure out how to make best use of this money till the next one hits the bank because you don't know when that's going to happen. And mind you, I am not talking about people who have just entered the industry, I am talking about people who have been in the "business" for a minimum of 10 years.

I honestly think no 'independent' consultant loves their craft as much as these artists do.

Down the Trodden Path

In the current context, to stay relevant and 'employable' in any 'art form' you have to continue to reinvent yourself. Thanks to the explosion of information, most of us have ready access to information and can pose fundamental questions – at least at surface level, on most things.

This means that if you are an independent consultant you have this pressure to be the 'smartest' person in the room or someone who knows more than the collective. This expectation from the client system is either explicitly mentioned or many times just expected. This one stems from the fundamental belief that the teacher would know more than the students.



The notion of the teacher and the student co discovering certain knowledge is not very popular as of now, neither in education nor in business. Your "value proposition" has to be crystal clear as you would get repeatedly questioned. "What exactly would you deliver for this money that I will pay you?"

If your answer is, 'whatever you ask, my Lord' or "We will figure that out as we go along," be prepared for skepticism and rejection and hardnosed negotiation.

Just imagine you are giving one job interview every day and your probability of success is in single digit. You need some routine to kick-start yourself everyday and have the discipline to be in the routine to ensure that you stay the course. For the record, I haven't quite figured my routine out as yet and so I experiment with different routines at different times.

Light at the End of the Tunnel

So am I persuading you to stay in your job and not pursue independent consulting?

Challenges in the Consulting Career

Well, if I succeed at least there will be less competition – but the fact is I am sharing my experience, dilemmas and struggles with you. Not necessarily, you experience all of them with the same intensity or sequence.

If I am painting this scary picture then why am I still in the game? It's partly because I love the game and partly because I am learning to replace fear with hope. It's like starting a business. You have to be prepared to give it time – typically up to 3 years for it settle down.

I grew impatient by the end of 2 years last time. Armed with that experience, I am hopefully better prepared. For those of you who are interested, I will let you know if I survive this time beyond 3 years. There is also a notion that if you start younger then, it's easier.

Well, I was younger when I did it first time around and I can tell you it's equally difficult for a 20 year old vs. a 30 year old and even a 40 year old. Each one, at that stage, is fighting a different battle.

So if you have read it this far and are wondering, 'what's the point you are trying to make, dude?' Then let me put it simply – if you are considering being on your own – give it a good thought – consider doing a side gig before jumping straight in – make friends or mentors with some senior folks in the business. And yes, do call me for a free 30 minute chat on this topic.

After all, if one goes by predictions of some world famous 'consultants' the 'Gig' economy is already upon us and so we better be prepared.

Amol Pawar

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Moments

By Dr. Mukta Kamplikar

As I remembered an old vague dream
A dusky dawn it would seem
From a place, that was a faraway land
Faraway from anywhere
from between the river and sand
From that place I drifted for a while
When I saw you smile
And I wished I could hold that
ungraspable moment
on my palm; didn't know how
The truth, the sensation, the present
The present that is memory by now
And gather in my arms
The limitless accumulation of
moments
Those bright and those beautifully
dim
Sometimes you fill me to the brim
With immeasurable emptiness



मेरे फोन में

मेरे फोन में कुछ लोग रहते हैं
मुझसे वो हर रोज बातें करते हैं

हम एक दूसरे को जानते हैं
रोज बदलते status को update करते हैं

हम like, share, और comment भी करते हैं
Internet के शोरगुल में अपनी आवाज ढूँढते हैं
मेरे फोन में कुछ लोग रहते हैं

हम एक दूसरे को रोज देखते हैं
लेकिन सामने मिलने से कतराते हैं
गर जरूरत पड़े तो message से
हिम्मत बढ़ाते हैं
मेरे फोन में कुछ लोग रहते हैं

अब फोन नहीं ये दुनिया है मेरी
इस के बिना जिंदगी अधूरी है मेरी
बच्चा गर खो जाए इस कदर घबराता हूँ
फोन गर कुछ हो जाए तो सेहम सा जाता हूँ
अपने अब पीछे छूट चुके लेकिन
अपने फोन से ही अब बतियाता हूँ

मेरे फोन में कुछ लोग रहते हैं
मुझसे वो हर रोज बातें करते हैं

खुश रहो

खुश रहो
आज भी तुम जिंदा हो
खुश रहो
तुम्हारे अपने आज भी तुम्हारे अपने हैं
खुश रहो
तुम्हारे सर पे एक छत है
खुश रहो
आज तुम्हारे घर पे 2 बार रोटी बनार्यीं थी
खुश रहो
आज तुम्हारी बेटी न रोई थी
खुश रहो
आज भी तुम्हारे हाथों को काम हैं
खुश रहो
आज भी तुम्हारा हुनर कमाल है
खुश रहो
तुम्हारी आँखों में आज भी नींद बरकरार है
खुश रहो
तुम्हारे मेहबूब की मोहब्बत आज भी तुम्हारे
लिए जवां है
खुश रहो
आज तुम कुछ भूले नहीं और ये भी तुम्हे
याद हैं
खुश रहो
खुश रहो



बादल

बादलों मे भी एक शहर बसा है शायद
उनमें भी कोई बवाल मचा है शायद

क्यों बिजलियां बरसा रहे होंगे वह लोग
क्यों धरती को अपने आँसुओंसे सींच रहे
हैं वो

क्या उनमें भी कोई मजहब बना है

उनमें भी कोई बवाल मचा है शायद
बादलों मे भी एक शहर बसा है शायद

क्या उनमे भी हैं बनी दीवारें
क्या उनमे भी खींच दी किसीने लकीरे
क्या उनमे भी आज बटवारे का काफिला
चला है

क्या बादलों मे भी एक शहर बसा हैं

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Building a New EQ : Exploration Quotient by Tarsh Williams and Mukul Joshi



“What is our schedule tomorrow?”
– one of the participants ask.

I usually have a smile on my face when I hear this question. I know what is behind that question. It is evening, around 7.45 pm, close to end of 2nd day. Participants have gone through a rigorous, emotionally as well as intellectually draining experience. They are deep into realizing, what got them here is not good enough to take them further. They usually have exhausted, by the 2nd day, all their resources and are reaching the deep end of resourcefulness.

And few start realizing that the way to win through the VUCA is to surrender to the flow of the events and let go of the need to hold control. Others are grappling with what this leadership program is offering them.

They have already gone through a powerful activity - Trust Walk where participants are put in an emergent situation while on a hike by gagging or blindfolding them. They continue the hike. Observed functional behaviours range from being protecting team mates, making small groups to lead blindfolded members, using the faculties of touch and sound as medium of communication. Dysfunctional behaviours are abandoning members, playing mischief on the blindfolded members, stalling the team unresponsively.

While processing the behaviours during the activity, participants are in acceptance of the undeniable data they generated. Participants become reflective, owning behaviours and connecting it back home with an ‘Aha’ moment. Reflective learning is also vicarious. As the mulling is vulnerable, participants tend to stay with their emotional vulnerability.



The truth is, Exploration is the need. Survival is the want. We humans are holding onto our animalistic tendencies to merely survive, making it our need.

Building a New EQ : Exploration Quotient

We explore the evolved animal in us. That is the purpose. Holding on and not letting go our survival processes is indicated through our feelings. Feelings left unattended become manifestations that require surgical interventions.



I look at my colleague and partner-in-crime, Tarsh Williams with an expectation that he will take over from here. He says, we will meet at 5.45 am in the morning, here. We carry our water bottles and speak nothing on our trek. This is a short trek with a focus to deepen our focus and reflection.

We disperse for the night ..
..therefore, exploration is higher living, relatively speaking.

The following topics are addressed in the out-of-comfort zone with process facilitation. This helps participants internalize the learning.

- *Think it --> Do it.*
- *Listening to myself.*
- *Trust myself.*
- *Passion is the new pragmatism. Fail Fast.*
- *Risk.*
- *Letting go.*
- *Awareness.*
- *Mindfulness.*
- *Peak Learning v/s Misadventure.*
- *Process Improvement.*
- *What got you here will not get you further.*
- *Self as an instrument of change. Leadership is not a one-time affair, but continued, deliberate investment.*
- *Role vis-à-vis person.*
- *Adaptive Leadership.*
- *Systems thinking.*

Such experiential learning activities in the wilderness provide the relevant out-of-comfort zone. When done with fun, the recall lasts for a lot longer (which is why we are sure you are able to recall the nursery rhyme a lot easily than the Pythagoras Theorem).

With optimum challenge comes equivalent learning. And challenge a.k.a. learning is by choice. To exercise choice is to explore.

More than often, all participants make it for the 5.45 AM barefoot, silent sunrise hike and meditation. Each participant chooses a spot to sit all alone in the jungle or atop rocks and spends 30 minutes away from the sight and sounds of each other.

They come back with bountiful expressions of calmness, peace and tranquillity.

Building a New EQ : Exploration Quotient



The energy generated is used to set their intentions for the day. Activities for the day now have moved from Self -> Self in a Role -> Role in the Organisation. Business leads and organizations have found this model effective to impart the desired behavioural soft-skills they mandate. ROI is recovered. We have been helping organizations and leaders find insights while exploring potential and possibilities. Participants have moved to finding. Exploration has paid off.

Mukul Joshi

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We have gotten to think beyond just themselves with an incandescent new light and kaleidoscopic lens. Same is the case with this group of leaders as well.

*Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing
and right doing*

There is a field. I'll meet you there.

- Rumi

Exploration is the new survival.
We are natural born explorers.
Else we wouldn't have been born
at all, let alone reading this article.

Tarsh Williams

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A Tryst With Nature by Rashi Agarwal



I was never born a lover of Nature or as an ardent admirer of flora and fauna around me. Though, I did appreciate the trees and animals. Until I attended a Nature Camp right after my tenth grade. We spent a month living in the core area of a forest. My experience at this camp moved something within me. From being a passive observer of nature, I became a crazy lover of forests, wildlife and everything around me. The experience of living amidst trees with the jungle around, has shaped my personality for the better.

A Tryst With Nature

Though there have been several breath-taking experiences from this camp and even after it, there is one in particular, I love to reminisce.



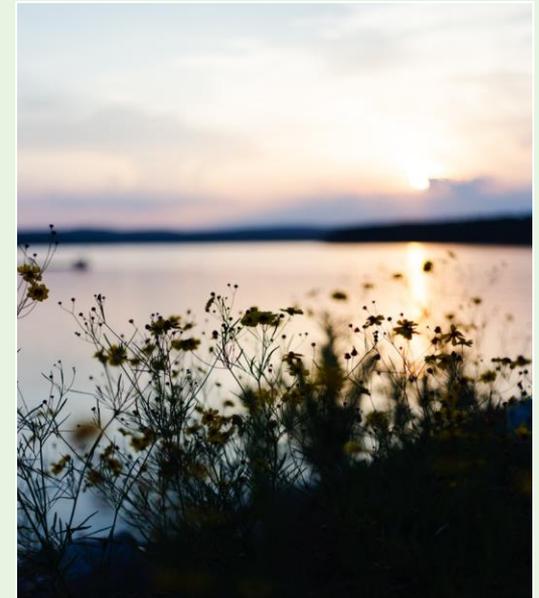
It was afternoon when I, along with a friend and our teacher, had gone for our usual treks. We decided to sit next to a small pond in the forest, for a break. As we were sitting quietly, we suddenly heard the thundering clouds in the distant. The next thing I remember is the rain clouds moving towards us while we sat there waiting for them to bless us.

The mere sight of the rains actually coming towards us, still leaves me at a loss for words. Never before had I actually seen the rains move from one direction to the other. But here, in this moment, I realized the power and beauty of nature. The way the sky changed its hues and gave life to every dry leaf around me, was surreal.

It was nothing like how I experience the monsoons in Mumbai. Here one could hear the raindrops hitting the leaves and the music being produced by the winds in the rains. This followed by the simultaneous singing of birds and animals that seemed to be welcoming the rains.

This experience along with others made me realize *how small we were in this entire world and nothing human-made could be as beautiful as Nature.*

It has taught me to take a pause every now and then from the daily chores to appreciate the wilderness around me, be it in natural or created beauty. Never before had I thought that a trek or a camp would mold me into a better person. However, now I am always looking forward to exploring places, especially in the wild, to learn more about myself and the world around me. Try it sometime!



Honestly? I ask myself - By Jahnavi Gurjer



Hey gorgeous!

The day isn't cold, not too warm
either
a gentle breeze, I heard - attempted
to mangle your tresses
the coffee's brewed - just perfect
no lipsticks stains either on the rim
of the ivory cup, thankfully
perfect, just the way you like it
then why aren't you savoring the
moment right here?

Is this me?
you oft wondered...
curious, whether it was normal
anxious to find resonance
did you then find your answers?

'well' he said, 'we couldn't have
made it through without you'
you know he meant it, yet you posed
nonchalant
not acknowledging it, maybe - this is
your safety net
he repeated himself, patiently
seeking your response
you chose to ignore, yet again, you
wanted more
then why did you hold back?

I saw you cry, I asked you why?
you said 'nothing' and brusquely
walked away
I saw you cry, I asked you why?
you said 'nothing' but waited for a
moment, then you walked away
did walking away stop you cry?

that day, rather yesterday, you heard
the accolades
you sensed them - genuine and
deserving
specifically, when that nasty critic
stood up and clapped - thunderous
and loud

you felt it - the praises were real,
your toil was finally recognized
standing amidst those naysayers,
you found comfort
the acceptance, being one amidst
them – finally!!

then why the regret - did it come a
tad bit too late?

the letters you wrote - seeking
resumption of ties
chances you craved, moments you
relived - they were special, the
siblings, the friends
some stayed, some departed
like water, they all had found their
own ways
at times the fondness tugged, a
few even hurt
when some came back, you
seemed awkward, you felt dirty

did you then outgrow some?

Honestly? I ask myself

you nagged tirelessly - of
insufficiencies
partially affirming a few
abundancies
you swayed frequently - from
happy to sad, from glad to mad
wishing you wouldn't, but helpless
you couldn't
you crucified him and several
others
finding momentary solace - in old
wives' tales, and self-help forwards
you agreed to come to terms, you
committed to being Zen
knowing that you had no choice,
but to live
you swore by wellbeing - you
publicly eulogized its benefits
often compelling yourself to
believe
you raised the decibel, you altered
the tone
justifying perceptions between
being moralistic and otherwise

then why now, are you still
restless?

the dichotomies, never ending,
between right and wrong, between
should and shouldn't
you have become, your own slave -
like words voluntarily suffocating
themselves between the covers of
a hard bind
strengthening the stereotype, you
claim to be different - how?
you yearn to belong and yet riot to
be liberated
the anchors you desperately want
to lose while you run even closer
to them
you hold on tight, you like being
secure, yet you relish the distance -
why?
between self and others, choosing
to ignore, you prioritize them even
more

did you ever realize, woman - you
aren't getting anywhere near
paradise?

life can be rough - but you ain't
less, only sexier

I hear you laugh, I hear you whine
claiming to be oppressed, staying
comfortable in that hell
choices done, can be undone, I
know you know this
whimsical as you are, I have
witnessed you otherwise
arguments that violate you, stories
that deceit you
vacillating between optimism and
pessimism
'crazy' should have been your
middle name - woman
I spot you enjoying this ride -
folded at the creases, and rough on
the edges



then why now, are you insanely
hunting down that illusion -
perfection?

Honestly? I ask myself



you ask the mirror, 'is this me'? or
'who is she'?
straining to hear, the words you
already know
you think, you feel, you lose the
moment, the skeletons - they
speak
'is now the right time'? I hear you
introspect
but who the hell cares - you want
to know
'have I been good'? 'am I virtuous',
'have I done my duties well?'
the chaos of your responses - I'm
deafened by their cacophony
not quite the musical opera you
had longed to hear - noisy to the
core
suddenly I spot the baton, t'was -
'hell'! all along in your own hand

did you not feel it, I curiously ask,
or was it too limp to take charge of
the mask?

you have been irresponsible off
late, even I fail to understand you
peals of laughter suddenly burst
into tears - 'oh good lord! let's
blame the hormones', they say
harnessing them in your
benevolence, you say 'expectations
I have nay'

however, the slightest inflection in
their tones moves you into total
disarray

you scream like a woman
possessed, at the slightest chance
of being distressed

'come to me' you say, while subtly
holding them at ransom

you trip over your own feet, in
your haste to defeat - why, who?

I have seen you fall and fail, but I
also have seen rise

you have mysteries, secrets untold
- keep them safe I say

for treasures like those are not
meant to banish away

'what next'? you ask with tepid
doubt

knowing neither joy nor tears will
forever stay

you fear for them, you cover for
them, you live for them

I see you sparkle in the night sky, I
see you shine through its darkness

I believe you know you can,

then why now are you living this
life of refrain?

hey there gorgeous, it's time for
that coffee again

I heard its freshly brewed (the cups
come with an anti-lipstick stain
finish)

once more, the breeze I believe
will mangle your tresses

you, I know can stay insane, you, I
vouch will get confused, but

you, I know that you have a choice
to remain not unhappy and yet not

happy, unless....

Jahnvi Gurjer

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Reflections by Sanah - A philosophical voyage through the suncharted seas of reflections.

Sanah is a 7th grade student at Tridha, a Steiner school in Mumbai. She is enthusiastic about most subjects at school because of the way it is taught by her teachers. Apart from school, Sanah has been learning Hindustani Classical music and Odissi dance. She enjoys reading, traveling and doing what a thirteen year loves doing - endlessly chatting with friends and being contrarian with her parents.



The idea of reflections first caught my attention in one of our science classes. We were learning about light and that's when I really noticed the process of reflections. The idea of seeing the same thing twice, brought wonder into my being. I didn't pay much attention to these thoughts then, but focused more on its scientific perspective.

A reflection is formed when a light ray reflects off any surface.

I learnt the laws of reflection and then left the idea, like a line of thread being cut mid-ways. But now that I have come back to reflections, I have realised that there are different ways of looking at reflections.

I remember once when I was really little, I was standing in front of a mirror, amazed. "What lies behind that frame?" I wondered. "Another me?" My young mind was shocked. The world was new and my vision was hazy but that memory has stayed with me until today, leaving me amazed even now. Was that another world altogether? Or just an inverted image of the world we know? Lewis Carroll's books 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Alice through the looking-glass,' explore the same ideas. Are they different worlds that he has created?

Or just imagined an upside-down image of the world we know to be ours? These books commenced my fascination for reflections from the tender age of six. But as I paused and thought about these questions, I realised that in the past, questions like there were answered differently. Superstitions and myths helped people make sense of the world around them. Just one of those everyday beliefs was that seeing your own reflection was a bad omen. This gave rise to the story of 'Narcissus,' a Greek God who fell in love with his own reflection. This was considered bad-luck. But the plot of this story made me wonder whether the reflection is actually you.

Also, the idea of good and evil stark opposites brought me to think about the world.

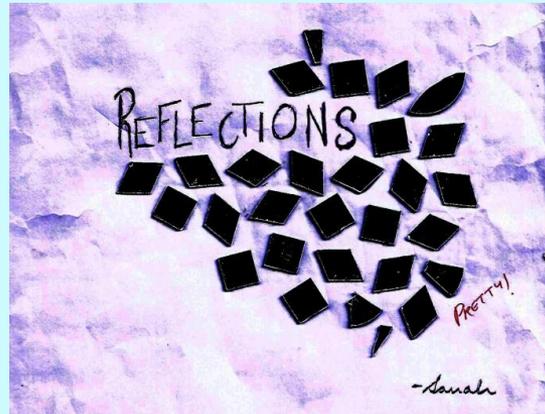
Reflections

If you think about reflections, you realise that a few of the qualities of reflections are that they are the same on both sides, equal, balanced, and yet inverted, either laterally or vertically.

Just like that, good and evil are needed for the world to be balanced. Man and woman are needed for the world to be equal. That means that good and evil are reflections of each other; men and women are reflections of each other. So, that brought me to the conclusion that good and evil are not opposites of each other.

They are essentially the same, just inverted. Just like an object and its reflection make a complete idea, good and evil make a complete person, nations, world and universe. In a world where balance is missing and equality is missing, reflection is needed.

“Who am I?” a question that hovers over me from time to time, can be explored through the idea of reflections. The quote, “The beauty you see in me is a reflection of you,” by Rumi, gave wings to my thoughts.



Until now, I had always imagined my beauty to belong to me, my individual being, only being perceived by others in different ways. But if you look at it from another perspective, you realise that from another’s point of view, how they perceive you is a reflection of themselves.

As I am growing older, the complexities of life are unravelling themselves before my eyes. I am beginning to find myself amidst a web of reflections all around me; everything coming back to me being a reflections of my surroundings, of the people around me, of the places around me, and my surroundings being a reflection of me.

This thought is like the sun, around which all the others move.

My life is a reflection of my inner most being and my soul is a reflection of the outside world. And to see the light in times of darkness, you have to pause, and reflect. Self-reflection is a journey inwards, into your very being. You are gazing into the depths of your individual body and learning to know yourself better.

Reflections

You are understanding how to respect yourself as an independent individual and I think the quality to be able to reflect on yourself is very vital to be able to embrace your body openly.



Art work by Sanah

Presently, I am going through change within my body as well as externally which is bringing about a period of unrest and transition to my mind. But being aware of the changes taking place in my body, gives me time to reflect on myself.

I have learnt, in the past few years, that change is inevitable. But that doesn't mean that you give up on life. And this learning dawned on me through self-reflection.

The moment you are able to step out of yourself and look at situations from a different perspective, realisation dawns on you like the first showers of monsoon. This is possible only by reflecting on yourself. After all, what you see is a reflection of what you think.

In a book I once read, the importance of the 'Golden Rule' or the reciprocity principle was mentioned. After a brief flip of the page, I thought about it. Do to others what you would like them to do to you. "Isn't that a form of reflection as well?" I thought. Thinking about the circumstances we are in today, this rule doesn't just apply across space, but across time as well. Give to the next generation what you would have like them to give to you, had they lived on the planet before us.

Again, we're coming back to the point where the idea of reflection is needed for life on earth to go on. And bring all the thoughts together, I realised that unconsciously, the idea of reflection is in every unimportant thing, whether it is clear or distorted. All you have to do is notice the world around you.

Sanah

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3 Ts in T-Group - By Cdr. Mukund R Joglekar (Retd.)

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Within the boundaries of a lab experience, there is a by and large struggle to locate oneself either in the 'here and now' or get dragged into the past.

While the lab insists that we as participants remain in the present: at that Place, 'P' and at that very time, 'T' something that happens in the discussion which suggests that this is not only now in the lab, but has been happening with me repeatedly in the past, which I didn't see it in that perspective.

One by one, examples are prompted on the screen of one's mind. This is how, even if I have told myself to remain in the here and now, I have taken a flight into past. So the very next moment, I have a different struggle. To write down now itself in the small note pad (which lab admin themselves provided me) else I will forget the gift I got in terms of a pattern of my behaviour or I catch up in the discussion which I became blanked to for few seconds.

Alright, I have decided to be present in the 'here and now' and decided to note down during the break. I look a little more attentive and whenever confident in the situation, I engage. Then comes a lull. No one talks and all want the killing silence to be broken, but who would do that? I rest my head on the wall behind me and start scanning from left to right.

In parallel, I'm thinking of a topic to broach. The silence continues, no one talks. Fatigue takes over, people change their position around the pillows. Eye contacts become limited. Inattention takes over. Facilitators also evaluate the situation as considerable time has passed in silence, wondering what is appropriate in the 'here and now,' to bring out significance to the moment. Tacit smiles are indicative then.



3 Ts in T-Group

One of the facilitator brings in analogy of the current situation to few symbols, e.g. "I see a lion in the cage moving from left to right while the door is open." Now my mind is moving to and fro around these words 'Lion', 'Movement', 'Cage' and 'Door'. One of them has caught my thinking. I am back to struggle between 'here and now' and my past association with some of these words.

Well, I have almost decided to express this time. My conscious, subconscious and unconscious, (I thank God that there are only three) all minds have told me to talk, with a warning that your lungs might burst.

With great difficulty I say "Can I say something?" Yes, I have actually said something. Cheers! Next comes the CBI inquiry, "Why are you asking?" I didn't even know that I was actually asking!

Have we not seen this happening to ourselves and others?

There is no solution to be prescribed, even if there is one. As this is more of a reality show. However, contemplation, evaluation, searching for correct options, wait and watch policy, beyond a point of reasonable ponder, cannot help one to experience the feelings. Especially when those receptors are put through thinking channel; called *intellectualization* of the feelings and emotions.

There are 3 Ts which when adequately examined with respect to participant's context, may help in this struggle. Here they are -

Timing

Was that the right time? if I have broached the topic which I was holding on like an agenda. Or how long have I been contemplating? Am I missing the here and now in the bargain. Am I getting dragged into past? If yes, then how long? Ticking nature of time does not allow anyone to hold on to time. Why didn't I express when it was the right time?

Mukund Joglekar

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Text

Do I worry too much about the formation of text? Am I changing the text for someone? Is my text influenced by the presence of someone? Am I being real or pompous or artificial while forming the text? If yes, then ask oneself why am I doing it? Who is doing it? Do I express that as well?

Target

To whom am I directing the text? Whom do I want to truly speak to? I may express anything to anyone. Who do I want, to listen to me? The aspects above, have more value in reflective mode.

Therefore, one need not validate what one want to express in the lab with respect to above 3 T's as it needs to be a natural process, else the very basic purpose of T group is defeated.

Whenever there is a feeling of repentance, missing out on something, feeling of being left out or even feeling of injustice and even happiness, the 3T aspects will help in building up self-awareness while reflecting. That's the essence of labour in the laboratory while staying in the 'Here and Now.' 57

Poems by Uttam Kumar



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Yug Nirmaan

युगुग निर्माण

उठो द्रौपदी खरग संभ्रालो अब
कान्हा ना आएंगे,
हर युग में कौरव द्वारा सम्मान
तेरे कुचले जाएंगे।
कब तक आस लगाओगी तुम
बेसुध दरबारों से
कैसी रक्षा मांग रही हो दुःश्सान
दरबारों से,
कल जो लज्जाहीन पड़े थे वो
क्या आज बचाएंगे।
उठो द्रौपदी खरग संभ्रालो अब
कान्हा ना आएंगे
कल का केवल अंधा समाज अब
गूंगा बहरा भी है,
होठ सिल दिए हैं लोगों के कानों
पर पहरा भी है।
तुम्ही कहो किन-किन को अश्रु
क्या क्या समझाएंगे।
उठो द्रौपदी खरग संभ्रालो अब
कान्हा ना आएंगे।

Ban Jaa Tu Bhi Insaan

बन जा तू भी इंसान

लोग सारे क्यों खुद को पहचान नहीं पाते,
दिन के सारे उजाले क्यों अन्धेरे में बदल
जाते।
ना जाने क्यों तू जिद पर अढ़ा है,
सुन लें ओ मेरे खुदा तू ही सबसे बड़ा है।
मेरा घर-बार भी तू, मेरा संसार भी तू,
आकाश भी तू, पाताल भी तू।
तू गीता भी, कुराण भी तू,
सब हैं तेरा, सब में तू।
फिर बता क्यों बंट गये इंसान,
कोई बोले अल्लाह, कोई बोले भगवान।
लाखों निकलें जुलूस तेरे नाम,
हर दिन हर पल क्यों बदल रहा इंसान।
चाहें हमसब आएँ ऐसा मुकाम
न रहें कोई धर्म, न तेरी अलग पहचान
आ तू भी बन जा इंसान।

Masculine and Feminine in context of T-group

By Nikita Yogi Ganatra



There are various ways in which human character and traits are defined. Often masculinity is defined as having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men and femininity is defined as having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with women. 'Gender stereotype' theory suggests that men are generally perceived as more masculine than women, whereas women are generally perceived as more feminine than men.

Bem's original Sex Role Inventory included the items 'masculine' and 'feminine' in addition to more specific gender-stereotypical attributes (Kachel, Steffens, & Niedich, 2016).

In a review of 'Masculinity-femininity: an exception to a famous dictum?', Constantinople explains, "We define 'traditional masculinity' and 'traditional femininity' as relatively enduring characteristics encompassing traits, appearances, interests, and behaviors that have traditionally been considered relatively more typical of men and women, respectively" (Constantinople, 1973).

Basis the general perspective of what is considered as masculine and feminine, let's how these terms are understood and more so in a T-Group learning laboratory context.

Masculine or feminine is used to describe the characteristic, qualities or traits of a person, be it a man or a woman. Male and Female form is a basic physical diversity in humans. Because men live or display more masculine qualities and females live or display more feminine qualities, Masculine and Feminine are mistakenly understood and defined as male and female.

Masculine refers to psychological traits or qualities like thinking, active, external, directive dominant, logical, structured, confident, competitive, analysis etc. present in both man and woman.

Feminine refers to psychological traits or qualities like feeling, passive, internal, receptive, inclusive, creative, formless or unstructured, soft and humble collaborative, synthesis etc. 59

Masculine and Feminine in context of T-group and group development

Both, men and women have all the above listed and many more masculine and feminine traits. However they display/use it in differing proportions.

In T-Group context masculine and feminine bifurcation can be done as in the table below –

Masculine	Feminine
Container/group as an entity	Contained/participants
Process (intra, inter, group)-in group context	Content/ Behavior
Task (learning through exploration)	Person (here and now experience)
Abstract Conceptualization, Active Experimentation	Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation
Structure	Unstructured/ Free Flow
Role/ Boundaries/ Norms/ Authority (designated or personal)	Power to Be (Autonomy)
Analysis Reasoning and Understanding	Emotions and Feelings
Ego/ Super-Ego (parts of personality)	ID / Super-Ego (parts of personality)
Action Energy (doing)	Life Energy (authentic being)

The integration of masculine and feminine facilitates the awareness of wholistic self and provides room for expanding and deepening our understanding of Self.

T-Group is not merely learning about Self but it is learning about “Self in a Group context.”

Once an individual gets into a group space, s/he represents something in the group all the time, and this representation keeps changing.

To be able to see what’s below this representation of self in context of a particular group and to see what it is for the group and where it takes the group, is the Primary task in T-Group work.

When a T-group begins, in my perception, usually the designated facilitators in order to lead the group with the t-group task, holds the Masculine or I would say they use more of their masculine traits in terms of –

- Basic Roles- Participant/ Learner, Facilitator/ Observer/ Intern
- Boundary- Time, Task, Ethical, Physical.
- Norms- Here and now, Experiencing and expressing more feelings less thoughts
- Task focus- Encouraging exploration by giving value to Sensitivity, Authenticity, Spontaneity
- Looking at process- Intra, inter, group (what’s below the behavior in group context)
- **Contains the idea of group as an entity.**

Masculine and Feminine in context of T-group and group development

Because the task clarity is with the facilitator and not with the participants it makes the participants dependent on the designated facilitators. So their masculine gets projected outside.

As the group members start experiencing self and others or in other words get in touch with the feminine aspect, it is very important for the facilitators to keep bringing in the masculine {looking at processes (intra, inter) in context of the present group}.

The words “context of present group” is of prime importance here. When an individual or an interpersonal experience comes alive in a group it is always a part of the Group’s (including facilitators) conscious or unconscious process and not just belong to that individual or pair which needs any fixing or sorting out.

An exploration of what a particular behavior and/or experience means in context of the group automatically leads to awareness of known/unknown understanding of self and others.



It is important that the facilitator in their interventions at every stage consciously keep giving power and authority to the group as an entity and this is when masculine shifts from the facilitator to the group entity. Gradually members claim their personal authority/ personal power and move on with the task themselves. The group decides its own Norms, Boundaries, Roles of Individuals etc. Members learn to look at behavior patterns, build hypothesis, test hypothesis, experiment with new behavior themselves.

A group will have difficulty to develop or move ahead on its own with the T-group task till the masculine is strongly consciously/ unconsciously held by the Facilitators and the dependency issue is unresolved. The t-group task and facilitation both involve the masculine and feminine moving in continuum.

If the group as an entity is forgotten or not given primary importance, and individuals become the primary focus, the groups masculine power will continue to remain with the facilitator and group members will continue to engage in intra processes taking the role of victim/ prosecutor/ rescuer or a child (all powerless) and inter processes by being extra loving or competitive or fighting (again all powerless) with no common group focus or goal and operate as any of the Basic Assumption groups and not the task group.

Masculine and Feminine in context of T-group and group development

Power struggle will continue to be the theme of such a group as ultimate power is placed there with the designated authority.

This can turn the group into what I call a 'false performing group' where manufacturing of feelings happens, or it may turn into a classroom lab or a therapy lab where no real learning takes place.

In many T-groups I have seen and experienced myself that in process of evoking the feminine, the masculine gets rejected strongly and also wounded badly at times.

Such people when they move out of the lab having only claimed and carried their feminine power (ability to experience and express here and now feelings) with them may become hugely inappropriate and dysfunctional in the groups they then become a part of.

Also such an individual not knowing what to do of all that he feels carries a risk of finding himself an unfit for the structure he/she belongs to or society at large and may get into isolation and/or extreme self-indulgence.

T-Group work (for individual as well as group) begins with primarily claiming/ acknowledging becoming aware of the feminine and then integrating the masculine **in the group itself (not after lab)**. I have many a times seen and experienced in T-Groups that the masculine held by any other member other than the facilitator themselves is marginalized or completely sabotaged as a group's unconscious process (and this is because the methodology is largely and mistakenly understood and practiced as feminine dominant/unstructured, in which the facilitator is seen as a master who can lead and none other).

A facilitator who is unaware of his own power needs in the group will unconsciously collude in this group process.



I see this as relevant even in our larger society and how groups/organizations develop and function. Power is the key everywhere. The question is which power is given more value in a particular context, is it the masculine power or the feminine power or the integration and which one does the leader hold more dominantly? And what is the leader's intention, wish, and strategy in taking the group forward? Does s/he believe in Overpowering, Patronizing or Empowering? As that is how the group will develop and move.

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