



Here & Now

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From Editor's Laptop

While it may sound cliched, we indeed are in the middle of a lot of change happening. Change at political level and social level seem to be at its peak in our country along with the constant changes at corporate levels.

We in ISABS are also going through changes. The term of this board gets over in Dec and the **new President, Joy Srinivasan**, along with her Board has been elected and we will soon see a change of guard.

Our new sleek look **Website** is already garnering a lot of attention. (<https://www.isabs.org>)

Our new **Learning Management System** (LMS) software has also started to be successfully deployed in the events. This would further bring changes in the way, affairs of ISABS are conducted and we would be finally be in sync with the Digital world. (*Have you explored our LMS yet, if not please do so at <https://lms.isabs.org/>*)

Applied Behavioral Science Summit – a platform which ISABS holds to bring in all the significant voices in the field of Behavioral Sciences to speak and share – will hold its 2nd edition this November. Two back to back events in two years is a new for ISABS too. (<https://www.abssummit2019.com>)

***Ameet** is a Professional Member of ISABS and also an Alumni of ISABS ODCP.*

*Ameet runs a boutique consulting company called **THINK CHANGE CONSULTING**, specializing in Organisation **Change Management & Systemic Consulting***

From a personal side, this would be the **last edition** I will be editing, at least for a while. It has been six years since I have been associated with Here & Now and while I did bring in changes to the newsletter's look and feel, making the e-book version, making it digitally available, with this edition aimed at being Mobile phone friendly, I think there is a need for much greater innovation and change and I hope we will have some fresh new ideas coming up in the next board.

My intense appreciation and thanks to **Linda Baptista** for her phenomenal work in bringing in this edition with a **new look**.

My sincere gratitude to our Editors **Jimmy Dabhi, Tejinder Bhogal, Hema Sekhar, Linda** herself and one more Professional Member who prefers to do his work **incognito** and prefers not to be named. (*I want to respect his desire*). These people have put in so many hours to review each article, discuss with authors, before we have the final version. Hope you enjoy it. And do share your feedback.

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What is in this Edition ...

We Indeed have a lot and a myriad range of expression in this edition, ranging from Articles, Research papers, Poems and Paintings contributed by different PMs, PDP, ODCP, CFPF and ALHP participants

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The first batch of CODE graduates

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Sankar is a past President of Indian Society for Applied Behavioral Science (ISABS), founder President of TAPIN- The Appreciative Inquirer's Network and Board member of NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, USA. Sankar runs a boutique consulting company called Changeworks.

CODE (Continuing OD Education) is an initiative from ODCP (OD Certificate Program) to help alumni learn to diagnose and intervene in specific areas of organizations like culture, systems and strategy.

The first batch was focused on organizational culture. The participants studied different theories and models of organization culture, diagnosed culture through various lenses based on experiences of their own learning group and applied these models and theories through a project.



The batch started with 10 participants and 6 of them completed the entire program including the project. They had three contact modules of 2-3 days each, virtual learning sessions and also an immersive experience to study culture in a non-corporate environment.

The finale was to apply their learning in a project of their choice. These projects were presented to a group of Faculty, other participants and also some ODCP alumni. All the 6 of them were certified by ISABS.

The uniqueness of this program was the fact that it was conceptualized and outlined by the Alumni themselves! We only converted these into a design flow and modularized them for effective learning. Even the design was co-created with the participants who had signed up for the program. In that way, it was a very unique experiment in adult learning where the learners are co-holders of the subject and process of learning.

Mukul Joshi and Payal anchored the program for most parts with some help from me. Marissa D'Mello anchored one of the modules with Mukul and was also present for the project presentations.

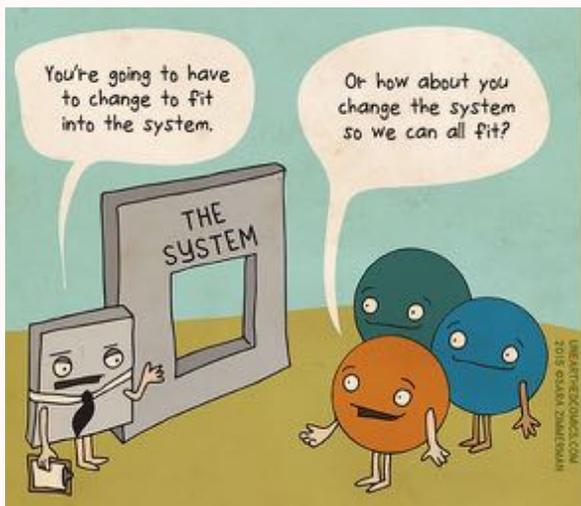
The participants had a great learning experience as summed up Shijin Sreeraman *"Thank you ISABS for this wonderful experience and this Innovative program called Code-Culture.*



The first batch of CODE graduates

This was a perfect OD experience for me. All we participants were involved in creating the framework of the course and also we as the participants underwent the learning experience”

For me, this was an answer to a question that some of the ODCP participants asked me “what after ODCP?” This was also very heartening for me to see how Mukul and Payal volunteered and stepped up to see the program through end to end. I’m proud of them.



CODE – Culture is the beginning of our endeavor to equip OD Practitioners with deeper conceptual and application experiences and contribute to the field. CODE- Systems and CODE-Strategy will be launched soon along with a new batch for CODE- Culture. Please watch this space!

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The cat and the old chest



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The old chest loves its secret compartment. The secret loves the associated anxiety.

The anxiety loves a vodka with tonic. The tipsy body loves an old wooden chair to lean on (lest it loses its balance and accidentally steps on a domesticated purring black rug). The cat loves to jump and stretch against the window. The window loves the sunshine it filters in. The sunshine loves to bathe me in it and I love you. (And I will...until I find the other end of this fairy tale).



Art work by Dr. Mukta Kamplikar

Meaning

The moon that presides over the
silence of the night
turns cold and hardens like ice
Cold, so much so that time passing by it
would freeze
And minutes would cease
to become hours.
Wordlessly I share with you
My world view.
I strain to give it a form
And hope that you will know me then.
Eyes construct meaning
Meaning that is a bit deformed, yet is
beautiful
like a new born.
Time is a haze on the wall
And here I lay
Like a deeply meaningful bench in the
park
That waits, even after dark.
In my effort to help you find me, I
choke
The self dissolves like a puff of smoke
And what remains is quiet breathing
Breathing - that bobs like an empty
boat
tossing on silent waves...



Art work and poems by
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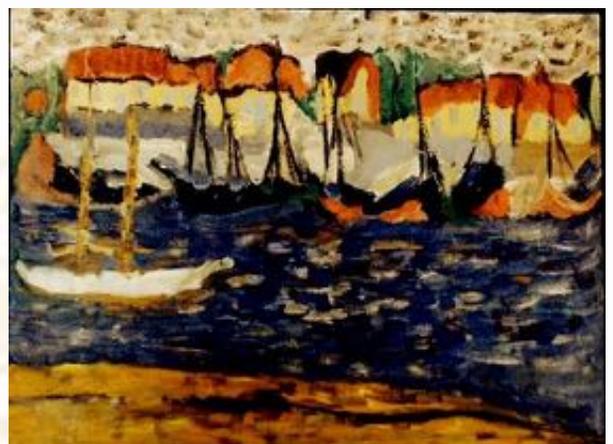
Autumn

I know that you love me.
It's the way you say my name.
In the pink of these autumn skies
What haunts me most of all
Is that kiss in your eyes.



Sangria

I am longing to be
With you by the sea
Where we can breathe the wet briny
air
And share
Hmm.. a sangria ?
And talk freely until those gulls return
Or maybe we could just pop into each
other's heart through our eyes
Or just float
Around in a dream boat
That bobs with rhythm on the silent
waves



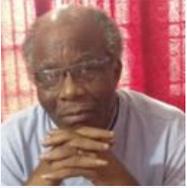
The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams

A brief study of ISABS PMs' Perception

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Zeal, Efficiency and Brotherhood (ZEB) is an ardent reader, appreciative Inquiry and Emotional Intelligence practitioner and facilitator, Principal at Center for Emotional Literacy and Leadership, Mysore and Dean, Professional Development Program, (PDP) ISABS.

Introduction

The world is constantly changing and so is the behaviour of the people in it. Leaders today are often confronted with global competition, new markets and evolving technologies, and this is complicated by a diverse and ever-changing workforce. Relying on consistent, predictable, positive performance of employees is vital to the survival and existence for any organisation, profit, non-profit or service. Applied Behavioural Science (ABS) is a branch of study that exposes why behaviour is a critical factor in implementing change, improving performance and creating an engaged workforce.

The Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Sciences (ISABS) is an accredited institute for teaching and certifying professionals in the area of ABS. Established in 1972 as a 'Not-for-Profit' institution, its measure of effectiveness centres on response to and variety of its offerings.

In recent times, there seem to be a lull in the response and participation as well as the number of people opting to become professional members. Efforts to identify the reasons for this trend have been based on unfounded and unsubstantiated assumptions such as, high cost, five-star culture, quality of delivery etc.

While these could be plausible reasons, what seems overlooked is the impact of the internal dynamics of the institution on its external appearance and perception by the larger community. A research proposal to understand these internal dynamics was rejected. The present work is driven by the curiosity of the author and forms part of a larger study by him. It is limited in nature and yet may help the organisation to provide some indicators to reflect, facilitate its ongoing learning for enhancing the public image/perception of the organisation.

Methodology

The 38 factor questionnaire Adapted from Patrick Lencioni's Team Assessment was administered to the Professional members of ISABS. The focus of the study is on what Patrick referred to as 'The Five Dysfunctions of a Team.



The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams – A brief study of ISABS PMs’ Perception

- **Absence of Trust –**

The fear of being vulnerable with team members prevents the building of trust within the team.

- **Fear of Conflict –**

The desire to preserve artificial harmony stifles the occurrence of productive ideological conflict.

- **Lack of Commitment –**

The lack of clarity or buy-in prevents team members from making decisions they will stick to.

- **Avoidance of Accountability –**

The need to avoid interpersonal discomfort prevents team members from holding one another accountable.

- **Inattention to Results –**

The pursuit of individual goals and personal status erodes the focus on collective success.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to assess to the extent that the Professional Members (PM) of ISABS agree to the prevalence of PATRICK LENCIONI’s Team Assessment factors in the PM community and also to the extent that the existence of these factors have potential to impact the overall outlook and general perception of ISABS as an institution.



Analysis of Result

A total of 63 questionnaires were sent out and 45 (71.4%) responses were received.

Table I – Response Rate to Questionnaire

Sample Size	Total number (percentage of responses)	Response		PM 1-10 Years		PM 11-20 Years		>20 Years	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
63	45 (71.4%)	18	27	8	5	8	14	2	8

Table II. Table of Mean and Standard Deviation

Factor	Mean	Std. Dev
Absence of Trust	2.80	0.17
Fear of Conflict	3.21	0.20
Lack of Commitment	3.09	0.11
Avoidance of Accountability	2.88	0.47
Inattention to Result	2.76	0.20

The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams – A brief study of ISABS PMs' Perception

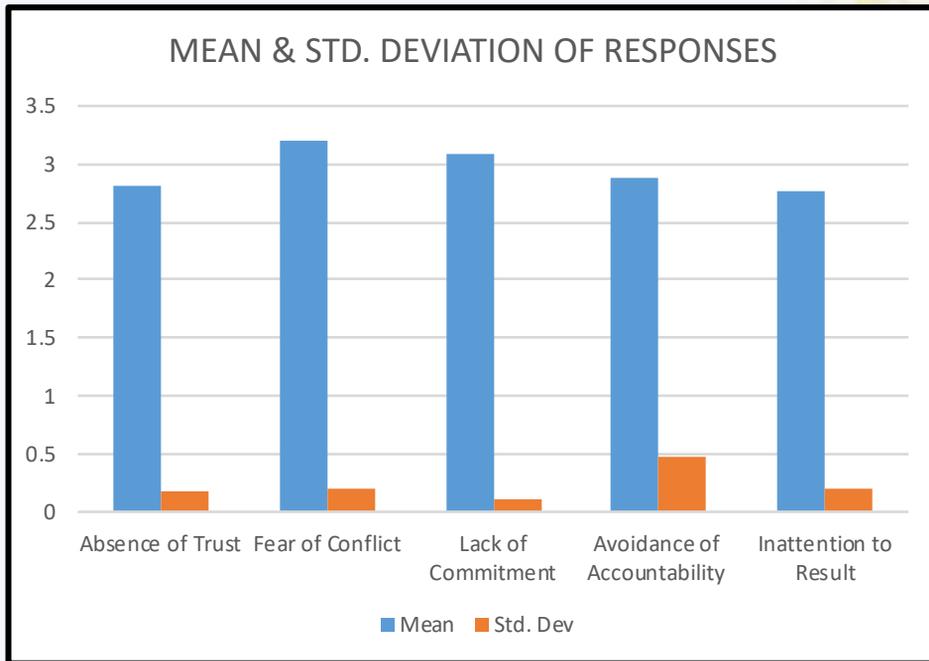


Chart 1: Graph of Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses

In the analysis of the responses from the PMs, the Standard Deviation from the Mean of the five factors are insignificantly high, meaning that the responses are not significantly different or do not vary much from each other. The following trend charts have been compiled from the responses:

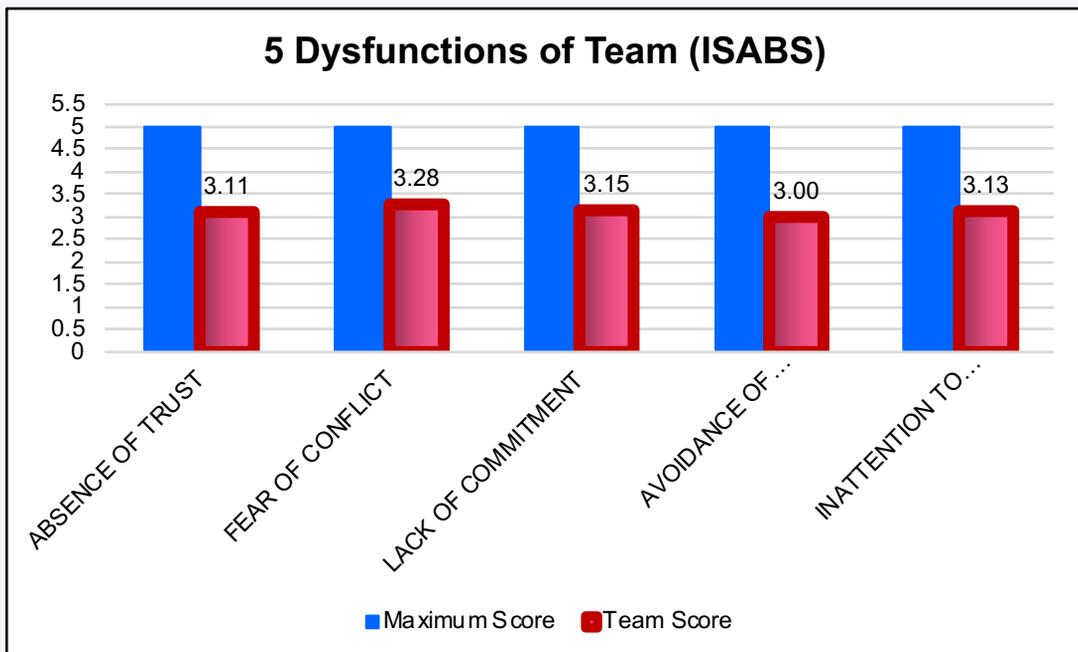


Chart II. Graph of response to questionnaire

The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams – A brief study of ISABS PMs' Perception

From Chart II, it is obvious that the overall perception of the PM community that responded is that these factors that inhibit team performance are prevalent in the community, with Avoidance of Accountability as the least and Fear of Conflict as the highest.

Accepting the fact that there's perceptual difference between men and women*, the author did a gender-classification of the responses.

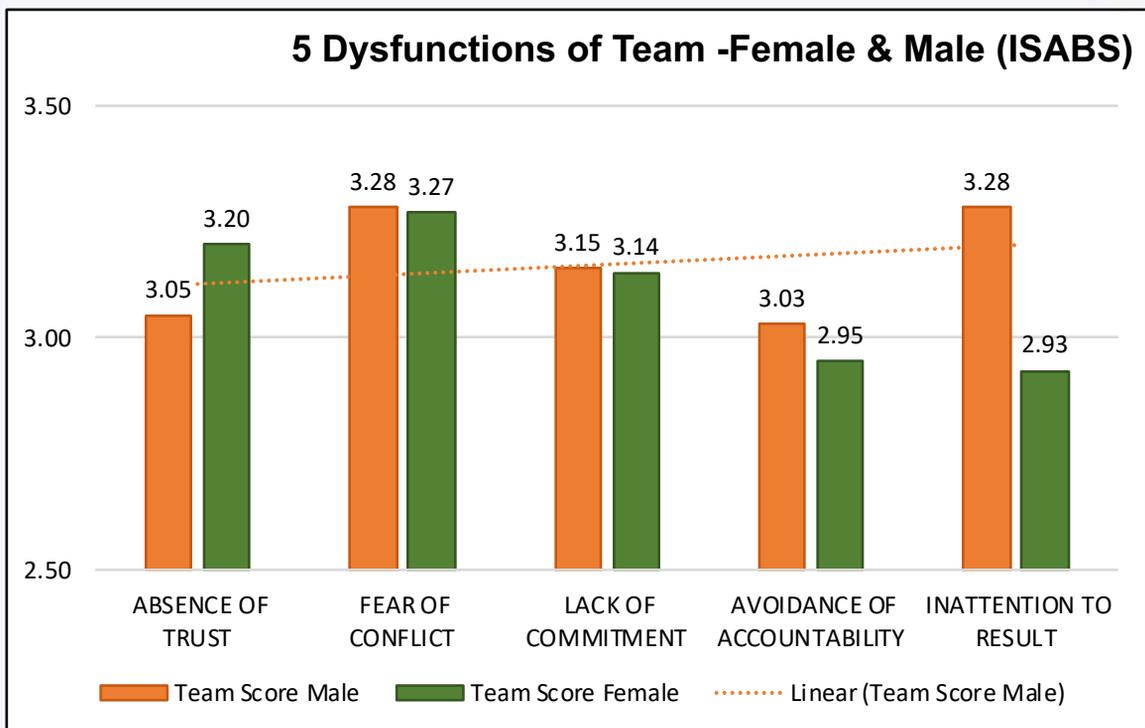


Chart III. Graph of Female and Male Perception of the existence of these factors in the PM community

In spite of the assumption of women seeing things more objectively than men, we observe from the questionnaire that the perception of men and women in their response is not significantly different thereby, bringing the information closer to the reality of the situation.

*Women and men commonly get frustrated with each other because they see many issues completely differently. A recent discovery is that women actually have more rods and cones in their eyes than men. This allows women to see more detail, which partially explains why men sometimes see an ordinary room, while women see complete filth.

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/healthy-living/female-perception-vs-male-perception/>

The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams – A brief study of ISABS PMs' Perception

Realising that the age or number of years a person spends in an organisation can impact a person's perception of the organisation, we grouped respondents into those who have been in the system as PMs from

- 1-10 years
- 11-20 years
- >20 years

Table III. Number of Female and Male respondents in each slot of Professional Membership

1-10 Years		11-20 Years		>20 Years	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
8	5	8	14	2	8

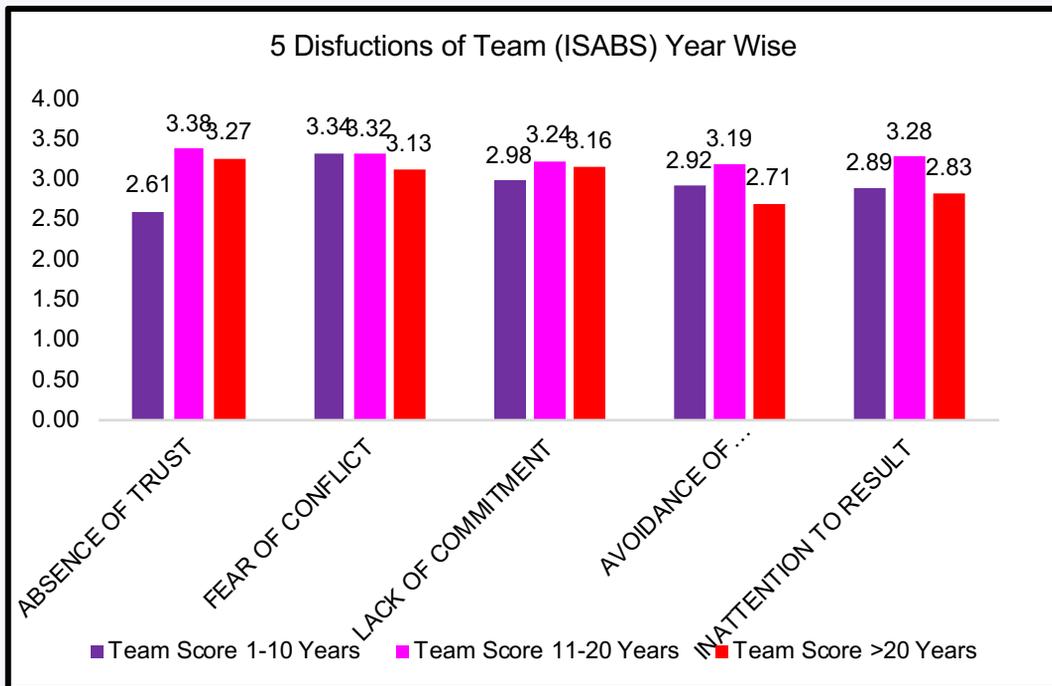


Chart IV. Graph of response trend on the basis of number of years of Professional Membership

From the above chart, note that while the group of PMs that are 1-10 years old in the system do not experience absence of trust, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and inattention to result as major issues of the organisation, the fear of conflict is on the higher side in their perception. The fear of conflict is significantly high for all the three categories. On the other hand, the absence of trust is significant for 11-20 and above 20 years PMs.

The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams – A brief study of ISABS PMs' Perception

In this system, I belong to the 11-20-year category as a PM and has been a member of the Board on 3-4 occasions. The above results resonate with me in different degrees and it is my hope that rather than see the findings as critical analysis, **let us look at them as challenges that we need to convert into opportunities** to be able to work together effectively and affectionately. I am drawn to one of the writings of Marcial Losada in his blog where he talks on the ways to bring teams from a “languishing” to a “flourishing” state. (<http://blog.enablersnetwork.com/2009/11/01/marcial-losada-explains-his-research-for-our-blog-readers/>) by observing an executive team's style of dialoguing: an equal level of external vs. internal focus, similar times spent exploring and advocating and a minimum three to one ratio of positive to negative behaviours as solid predictor of promising output.



Marcial also acknowledged his learning from Beat Blaesi, Executive Director for Leadership Development at the Julius Baer Academy, on offering reasons to why teams may dysfunction: The reasons are as follows:

i. The main symptom is the lack of trust between team members, due to their incapacity to “lower their guard” and hiding their vulnerability. This lack of authenticity is rapidly “sniffed” by human beings and immediately interpreted as “playing games” and having (indeed) something to hide. This is particularly damning in the “Open Network Economy” we are heading towards (I intend to explore quite a bit around this theme in the near future).

ii. The consequence of this lack of trust is the fear of conflict or the “artificial harmony” that takes the team over. On the contrary, when the team functions following Losada's prescription, its participants engage into “unfiltered conflict”.

iii. The conflict avoidance provokes the lack of commitment, of which the main symptom is neutrality. People just pretend. On the opposite, an engaged team will commit to a decision and action plan.

iv. The consequence of non-commitment is the avoidance of accountability, which translates into average standards for performance, “settling for mediocrity”, silo based measurement (“at least I save myself and my team!”) whereas a flourishing team will actively mind each other's business and hold each other accountable for delivering.

v. The terrible impact on business ends up being an inattention to results instead of a focus on achievement of collective results.

The Five-Dysfunctions of Teams – A brief study of ISABS PMs’ Perception

To our last question about the impact their responses would have on ISABS as an organisation and the nature of work it does, more than 50% of respondents agreed that their responses as the truth of how they perceive ISABS has a negative impact on the image of the organisation. On analysis, as shown in the table below, it is indicated that inattention to result is the highest culprit. It is on record that the institution has no record of its impact on individual clients / organisation in particular and the society in general. This is followed by avoidance of accountability which is legitimised by the absolute power of the president to choose his / her Board Members, we have also seen resignation from Boards with no explanation. In short, majority of the respondents tend to agree with the hypothesis that PMs’ perception of the five-factors vis-à-vis the institute impacts its public image hence, its attraction ability. There is sufficient data and stories to buttress these facts as it relates to ISABS.

No.of people	Factor	Maximum Score	Team Score
43	Absence of Trust	10	6.8
43	Fear of Conflict	10	6.3
44	Lack of Commitment	10	6.3
44	Avoidance of Accountability	10	6.9
43	Inattention to Result	10	7.5

Table IV. Perception of PMs relative to possibility of poor perception impacting public image of ISABS - Relationship between factors and public image of ISABS.

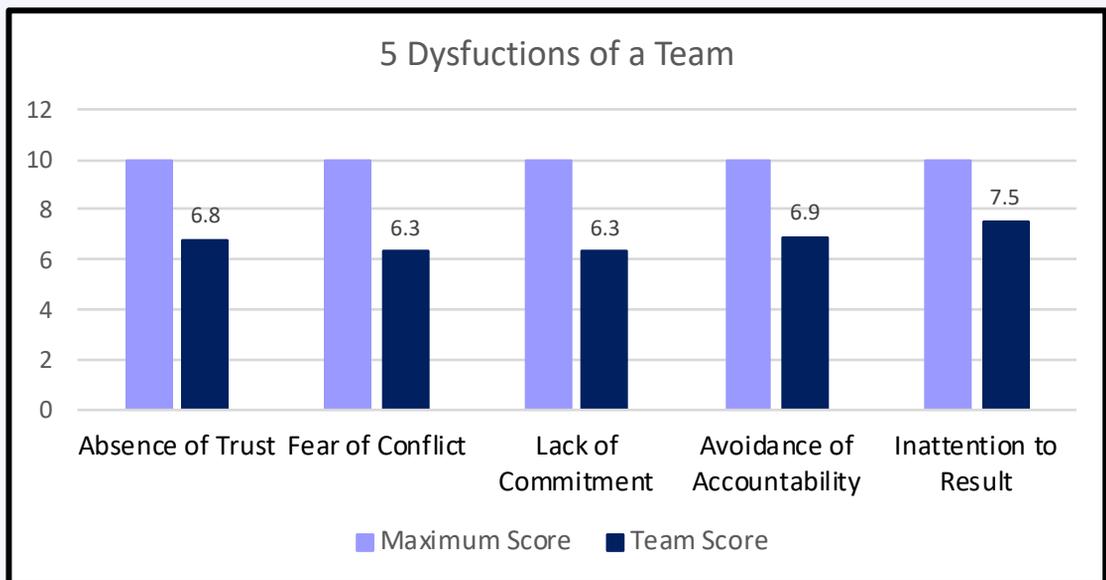


Chart V. Perception of PMs relative to possibility of poor perception impacting public image of ISABS

Conclusion

This is an independent study undertaken as part of a larger study but restricting this portion to ISABS as an Institution and which the author is passionate about. The study explored the perception of PMs relative to the existence of the 5-dysfunctions of a team and the result indicates that the majority of the PMs tend to agree to the prevalence of these factors with the PM community. The study was further intended to associate the existence / non-existence of the factors and the possibility of their impacting the public image hence the public participation in ISABS programmes. The result is that respondents tend to agree that the prevalence of these factors can affect the public image of the institute to the extent of more than 60%.



This is not a conclusive study but can serve as trend analysis and a wake-up call for the institution to look inside itself. Further and detailed research / study can be officially initiated along this line.

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GET Closing Community Poem

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A few of us recently facilitated a three-day lab for young graduate students about to begin their career. The closing session of this Campus to Corporate lab design, encouraged the participants to convert their insights & learning into poetry. Their poetic insights bowled us totally, you may experience the same here!



कुछ पल हम चुप बैठे, अगले ही पल कुछ
बात हुई
कुछ पल हम चुप बैठे, अगले ही पल कुछ
बात हुई, शुरुवात हुई
जीवन के बारे में कुछ बात हुई ।
है ओढ़े मुखौटे चेहरे पर नकाब हटाने की बात
हुई
कब तक हम ऐसे जियेंगे, कब तक हम ऐसे
जियेंगे
नए जीवन की शुरुवात हुई, मिले हैं कुछ दिन
पहले
एक अनजान सी शुरुवात हुई ।

विचार और भावनाओं से थे बेखबर
चलते चलते जाना सबने है मिलकर
क्या है इसमें अंतर
विचार और भावनाएं ही Feelings हैं Boss
कभी लगा की अभी टूटेगा मेरा सबर
फिर बातचीत से धीरे धीरे हुआ असर
उसके बात लगा मेरी जीने की नयी डगर
Open Session का हुआ ये असर



GET Closing Community Poem

मेरे अंदर कमी है उसमें goof करना सीख रहा हूँ
मैं चाहता हूँ हमे कुछ और वक्त मिले
क्योंकि इस जगह से मैं connected feel कर रहा हूँ
मैंने जाना की किसी को जानने के लिए और विश्वास के लिए उसे जानना ज़रूरी है
मैं दूसरों के emotions की कदर करनी सीख रहा हूँ
मैं positive रहना सीख रहा हूँ और बहुत motivated feel कर रहा हूँ
मैं लोगो पे विश्वास करना चाहता हूँ
because where there is a will there is a way

खुशबू जैसे लोग मिले अफसाने में
खुशबू जैसे लोग मिले अफसाने में
एक पुराना खत खोला अनजाने में
शाम के साये बालिस्तों से नापे थे
चाँद ने कितनी देर लगा दी आने में

ज़िन्दगी कुछ उलझी से थी एकसास सुलझने से से लगे हैं
अंदर बहुत विचार थे बहुत अरमाँ थे
अंदर बहुत विचार थे बहुत अरमाँ थे
आसमाँ की ऊचाइयों को छूने से लगे हैं
जिन्हे सिर्फ नाम से जानते थे खयाल जुड़ने से लगे हैं
अंदाज़ मिलने से लगे हैं
ज़िन्दगी कुछ उलझी से थी, सुलझने से से लगे हैं

हम आये थे बिना सर और पाँव के
जाना कुछ ना सुना था, कहाँ खोया था हूँ
आज मैं
सोचा की कुछ जान लूँ, औ सोचा की कुछ बाँट दूँ
जब शुरू हुआ कारवां तो साथ सबके बढ़ लिए
खोज रहे थे अपने आप को और साथ सबके हो लिए
जब जाना की बिछड़ जायेंगे तो साथ सबके हो लिए

कुछ ऐसा सुकून मुझे दिला दिया
कुछ ऐसा सुकून मुझे दिला दिया
बंद कली को फूल सा खिला दिया
औरों से तो रोज़ मिलते थे हम
औरों से तो रोज़ मिलते थे हम
तूने तो मुझे खुदसे मिला दिया



न जानते थे क्या होने वाला है आगे
न जानते थे क्या होने वाला है आगे
लेकिन जुड़ गए थे तीन दिन में दिल के धागे
हमने जाना एक दुसरे के जीवन का रुख
हमने जाना एक दुसरे के जीवन का रुख
लेकिन अब होगा बिछड़ जाने का दुःख
लेकिन अब होगा बिछड़ जाने का दुःख

आ गए हम एक अनजान जहाँ में
आ गए हम एक अनजान जहाँ में
GET बनने आए थे फंस गए कहाँ ज्ञान में
ना तो कोई रास्ता था ना ही कोई मंज़िल
मिले कुछ राही तब उलझन में था दिल
धीरे-धीरे बढ़ रहे थे खुद को सुलझाने की ओर
जितना सुलझाना चाहा उतनी उलझी डोर
जो भी थे खामोश वो भी कुछ कहने लगे
धीरे-धीरे अपनी कहानी सभी बयां करने लगे
जितना जाना दूसरों को उतना जाना खुद को भी
शब्दों को सुना तो था, पर महसूस न किया था कभी
अब समझ में आया क्या था इन तीन दिनों का साथ
उड़ते हुए पंछी तैयार आसमान को करने को पार

GET Closing Community Poem

चाँद ना मिले तो चेहरे से जगमगाया कर
चाँद ना मिले तो चेहरे से जगमगाया कर
मिलने को कभी कभी तो आगे आया कर
बैठा है कब से खामोश इन होठों को सीए
जब हम मिल जाएँ तू यूँ ही बस मुस्कराया
कर

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An interaction with the sea



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Shakti is a mechanical engineer but got interested in human behaviour after attending his first lab at ISABS. He then spent the last 15 years of his service career as a faculty in HR related topics. He is now retired.

As I enjoy the safe environ of my room and the swimming pool
I feel I am missing something.

"I am attracted to you, O Mighty Sea!

Fascinated by your majesty, your strength, your playfulness:"

So I leave the pool and approach you.

Your waves seem to beckon me, but I am scared.

Can I handle your might? I have doubts.

The sound of your waves is saying something to me,

But Alas! Their language, I do not know.

You flash your white teeth as I go nearer;

Is that a welcome smile? Or a threat? I do not know.

I see some boys enjoying themselves with you

And I too, want to be there.

"How do I do it? Can I trust you not to hurt me?

Do I trust myself?" I am unsure.

Photos by Linda Baptista



An interaction with the Sea

But I have this strong urge to go closer to you,
to touch you, to feel you.
So I gather some courage and collect a few more like me
And together, we all move towards you -
Tentatively, hand in hand, reassuring one another.

I cannot help but notice
The footmarks that we make
Are we hurting you? I wonder.
You come rushing towards us in the form of a huge wave.
Is that your anger or your outstretched arm in welcome? I do not know.

Photos by Kunal Shinde



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Some of my companions run back to the shore, scared; but I stay on.
I feel you calming down and gently caressing my feet.
“Oh! What a cool feel, tingling and tickling me, all over.”
I feel so much better and reassured too.

I look down; where are the footmarks?
They are gone!
You whisper in my ear “Welcome! My Dear, come closer.
Do not bother about the footmarks. See! I can handle that.”
I feel encouraged and am amazed that I now understand what you say.

I go closer, and your playfulness increases
You engulf me; the ankle, the knee, and still rising
You surprise me again and again
With so many different ways of expressing closeness.

“Oh you naughty boy! Why did you have to do that?” I cry out
In mock anger, as you wet me from head to toe with a wave head-high
I hear your laughter and have a hearty laugh myself
Enjoying every moment of this experience newfound.

I look back at those who had run away from you. And are watching us from a distance, Walking on the shore, leaving their footmarks
That you would find difficult to wipe away.

I feel sorry - for them, and for your too.
But they also seem to be enjoying, watching us play;
Or is it envy that they feel? I do not know.

And then there are others building their dream castles
Digging out part of you
Caught up in their own fantasy, oblivious of your pain.

An interaction with the Sea

I admire your endurance, you handle so much.
But I also know that you too have your limit
And cannot take it forever.
It's just a matter of time till it bursts forth.

That is when you would rush in, with all your fury
And wipe out all these dents that they make in you.
It is so sad that your anger at that time
Shall level much more - than only these dents that we caused.

Photos by Kunal Shinde



We shall blame you
And you alone for the destruction
Failing to look at ourselves –
Did we ever try to understand you, your pain?

I feel a gentle nudge and hear you whisper
“Forget the Past, and the Future,
Enjoy the Present.”
I agree with you, and start playing again.

And then I see that there are others
Who have gone deeper, closer to you
Just bobbing up and down, in unison with you
Where there are no waves, just the gentle lapping of yours.

I wish to be there too, and start moving in,
It is then that you hit me, hard and strong.
“Oh! How cruel of you”, I cry out in pain,
As I fall flat on my face, cursing you – not mock, in real now.

I hear you say, “Only this far Dear! and no further.
Do not trust me more than you can handle.”
“Oh No!,” I wail, “Can’t you be a bit more gentle?
Why don’t you accommodate me?”

“Would you like me to be a pond, or a pool,
With no waves and flow, fully safe and with no playfulness?
Would you still call me a Sea and still come to me
As you do now?” You ask.

I reflect and seem to agree, “Yes!
I do not want you to lose your identity.
I shall not expect to change you.
Rather I shall go out, to a pool and with an expert may be
To learn and equip myself
On how to deal with you, and your vitality.”

I walk back, leaving your cool touch and playfulness behind
I hear you saying goodbye, through the sound of your waves.
“Will you wait for me till I come back better equipped?” ask I.
“Till Eternity” is your reply, I feel touched.

An interaction with the Sea

Photos by Kunal Shinde



As I near the shore I feel the pain of separation,
I also notice the footmarks, that you are now unable to fill.
I feel sorry about the pain I am causing you, but hear you saying,
“Do not bother about that. I am enjoying our good time together,
And wish that you do that too.
Goodbye! My friend, Goodbye!”

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Chopsticks – a movie review



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Linda is the founder of Earthfully Yours. She curates and holds spaces for personal transformation. She is an OD Consultant and champions the cause of Diversity & Inclusion.

This review has been featured on www.bingewagon.com

I'm relieved to have watched some refreshingly original content, a Netflix film, 'Chopsticks.' While the movie is locally relatable, I'm struck by the characters it portrays. Each with their quirks and dualities only seem whole and real.

A girl from Aurangabad who makes a living as a tour guide in Mumbai, buys her first car. But she has trouble holding onto it. 'Nirma' played by Mithila Palkar, though naive, is determined to find her car, once it's stolen. While she indulges in confidence-building affirmations and harbours a nervous twitch in her fingers, she ultimately stands up to a gangster who even renowned thieves fear.

Her courage comes from a deep value and respect for life and relationships, over objects and possessions. Because of her name, Nirma is mocked at by various characters in the film. Not once does she laugh along just to fit in. Her identity remains rooted within her.



Chopsticks – a movie review

The film starts with her negotiating with the car showroom Manager, telling him that she had specifically asked for a number plate that totals up to 9 and her car had one that totalled up to 11. She explains to him how 11 is an unlucky number, however still gives in and accepts the key from him.

Through the film she struggles to learn how to use chopsticks and is excitedly happy when she finally succeeds. At the close of the film however, she refuses the chopsticks, which also resemble number 11, and instead makes a bold statement by leading her Chinese tourists to savour their meal the Indian way, using their hands. Thus, her transformation comes full circle.



Through this act she also asserts herself at the workplace where she was once asked to be more like her colleagues, to be able to succeed.

The comfort and familiarity she builds with, 'Artist,' a conman played by Abhay Deol, stays where it is. Unlike the traditional script, it does not lead to a relationship, sex, marriage, betrayal or heartbreak. It remains purely as what it is - a transitional connect in life. Two people who journey together, learn about each other and themselves, in the process.

'Artist' is an expert at breaking locks and is passionate about cooking. A creative thinker and a recluse who decides to help the naive, Nirma.

Similarly, 'Faiyaz' played by Vijay Raaz, is a gangster who dotes over his pet goat. He goes to the extent of slapping the cook for serving mutton to the guest at the goat's birthday party.

The characters in the movie lead the audience to question their stereotypes. Can a gangster feel affectionate towards a goat and treat it like his child? Can a conman have a passion for cooking and aim to participate in a cooking competition on national television? Can a twenty-five year old girl from Aurangabad stand up to a gangster when she could barely stand up to the creepy internet guy, her colleagues and boss? Would one expect her to speak fluent Mandarin when she can't get most English words right?

Conversations about diversity tend to lean towards what's out there. What about what's in here? Am I willing to accept the diverse dimensions of the human form? Of my own being? Would I rather spend my life trying to be some concept of who I think I should be?

Can I say no to the metaphorical chopsticks, roll up my sleeves and eat merrily with my hands? Can I be open to the diverse individuality of both myself and others? What a rainbow we are, in ourselves!

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Broken Time

When I broke time
To steal a moment
When a second
Seemed like eternity was in it
When days
Seemed no different from nights
When dreams
Were more than fantasy flights
When hours went by
And the hurt didn't show
When minutes kept me
Wanting much more
When hands ticked
To a waltz so slow
Yet time deserted me
Whenever you'd go.



Photo by Linda Baptista

The Dance

Dance to the tune
Make music out of noise
Give it your all
But don't give it your voice
Care like a lover
Laugh like a child
Hold it in your arms
Until it goes wild
Trying to let go
I could be better at it though
Have I grown up at all
Even if I do stand tall?
The waves take me on
Am I yet to be born?
Seeking my soul
Imperfect, yet trying to be whole.



The Gift



Photo by Linda Baptista

What were the chances that I'd meet
you?
I didn't know much about you.
I knew that your smile vibrated
through spaces.
I knew that your laugh echoed in
hearts - it always will.
It has power, strength and beauty - all
of which is you.
Merely your presence placated restless
souls.
How you brought order to madness!
Or maybe, just hope.
Even that was way more.

You left something with me.
A to-do box that hasn't been checked.
A jig-saw that hasn't been solved.
A question that hasn't been answered.
Ever since, I scramble to find the
answer.
Sometimes trying to find you, instead.

Then I remember,
It was never the answer that was you;
You are alive in the question.

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Nothing Ventured, Nothing Lost

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Jasmeet is a Professional Member of ISABS since 1996. She is a psychotherapist (B.A.-Psychology Hons., M.Sc.-Counselling Psychology) and an independent process-consultant. She has been working for the last 29 years with individuals, couples, organisations and groups.

As you begin reading this, you may be feeling curious, hoping to read something new or intellectually stimulating or enjoyable. When you saw that it's a very short piece, maybe you felt even more motivated to read it because you thought that it will not take too much time nor involve having to remember many points nor link the different thoughts of the piece. Actually this piece is about nothing – it has no beginning nor ending nor some core focus. I would like to caution you to not read this piece any further.



It will be a waste of your time and you may even get annoyed with yourself for not having used good judgment. Despite these starting words, you may still be interested in what the article is about – well, it is me telling you to not read. You could do something fun or satisfying or just reduce your daily chores list instead.

If you have not believed me, you will have continued reading and reached this second paragraph. You are doing so at your own risk. Curiosity is a healthy quality and helps us grow but sometimes it takes us on a useless ride. I would like to tell you again to please leave this alone and stop reading. I am being honest with you that there is nothing of substance here. You may wonder why would I want to just fill space in this interesting newsletter? Do I basically want to see my name in print in “Here & Now”? Did the Editorial team not get enough articles and requested me to write something, anything? Well, it is just me doing time-pass. The ending is most likely to leave u dissatisfied & feeling silly. And , this is the ending.



Patriarchy and ownership of change

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***Gautam** enjoys exploring dimensions of human behavior and culture in organizations and how it influences change and vice versa. His keen mind facilitates deep inquiry and his empathetic nature seeks to help people and leaders enable sustainable transformation.*

The idea of writing this piece came to me as I was engaging with the promoters of an organization that I was consulting. Before I proceed to detail anything more, I feel I must clarify that by “patriarchal” I wish to metaphorically represent an authority/control dimension to the reader rather than a gender one. Herein and in the context of this write-up, “patriarchal” would imply the following:

An organization that is led by owner/proprietors or a professional. Decisions on all key matter as well as operational decisions are taken by the individual leader himself/herself.

Compliance and obedience seem to be the cultural norm in such organizations.

The Situation

I was in a meeting with the promoters of a company discussing the organization and their expectations in terms of its growth.

I asked them what they meant by “driving growth through people”, it was essential to understand what it meant for them and how did they see it.

Me: What do you mean when you say, “growth driven through people”?

Promoter1: I mean, the people should be at the forefront of driving the organization and decisions.

Promoter2: Also, the people, our leaders need to take up ownership of their own decisions and for their own business units and functions.

Promoter3: We would like to take up only an advisory role and not interfere into day to day operations and decisions. Only key decisions on investment and capital expenses etc. should come to us and we will collectively decide together with the business heads.

Promoter1: We need you to assess whether they are the ones that we can bet on and identify any development inputs that may be required for any of them.

Me: Ok. Seems fine. So, you want me to assess their competence and skill levels as business leaders. What do the leaders feel about this? Has this been discussed with them?

Promoter1: No, we have not discussed this with them but we know that this is needed and once we tell them they will agree.



Patriarchy and ownership of change

Me: What you mean is that they will do it because you have asked them to?

Promoter1: Yes.

Me: What are the challenges with your appraisal process?

Promoter1: We have had challenges with moving the process online so this year we executed it through paper forms only and ensured that the forms were filled by everyone. But a significant challenge has been for the people to adopt the normalization methodology. We have had too many iterations of sending the ratings back and ensuring its done.

Promoter2: Its simple. We gave people an ultimatum by when they need to close the process at their end.

Me: What happened then? Did they close it?

Promoter2: No. We received a lot of deviations and the leaders said that they could no longer force fit their teams into the curve anymore. So, we had to close the same between the three of us.

Me: What did the leaders have to say about this?

Promoter1: The leaders were ok with it, they accepted it.

Me: How have they communicated it to their respective teams?

Promoter2: That's the issue as well.

They have said that the promoters have done it and that they (team member) should ask HR or the promoters. They just don't want to own the ratings!

Me: Why should they own the ratings when you have decided for them? Seems to me they are right in escalating the issues to you. You seem to be solving their problems, for them.

Promoter2: Hmm.

The Contradiction

While they (the owners) wanted their leadership to take ownership of their actions and decisions, they were themselves unwilling to let go of their control. It was evident that they were still holding on to their power and were not sharing it with their leadership. As an effect the leadership did not feel that they were empowered to take certain decision and assumed that certain controls and decisions will continue to remain with the owners/promoters.



They saw it as their duty to do what was right for the company and give decisions where resolution was required. Their decisions were accepted as final word. What they felt was right for the company was accepted by the employees as being right as well. What effect did this have on culture and on leadership and on people?

Patriarchy and ownership of change

Culture

The company is a warm and friendly place to work. People are amicable and apparently have good relations with each other. There aren't any evident conflicts or differences of opinions, and even if there are, they are perhaps nestled in the mind and not openly thrashed out. Employees comply and obey the decisions of the owners while, with their business / unit leaders, they may venture an idea or an opinion. A lot of feelings and emotions seem to be held in by people as there may not be a channel available for expression.

The culture also seems to be highly relationship oriented with long tenured employees clearly at advantage in terms of comfort of working and environment.



Performance orientation is not a key feature of this kind of culture. Compliance to authority and obedience to the word of seniors, is what typifies this culture.

Leadership

Managers, business unit leaders are looked up to by their team members. Years of experience and tenure are revered and respected without doubt. Compliance and obedience is implicitly (or in some cases explicitly) demanded of people. Authority is seldom questioned.

Leaders and managers are highly task oriented and are driven to get the job done. Focus on people and development is low.

Leaders are tolerant of non-performance in view of tenure and seniority of incumbent. They would continue to take a soft stand on people.

People

I sensed that people have a "job" "task" oriented relationship with the organization.

With a focus on task, people learn to "do" rather than "think". They prefer following instructions rather than ideating, thinking or proposing. They leave the thinking to their seniors.

Ironically, while task orientation is high, people care for each other on a personal level and are aware of each other's personal matters. They share a close camaraderie with each other.

In the case of their owners their relationship is different and they view their owners as providers.

Also, owners are supposed to play a role of a "benevolent parent" in a way of reprimanding for mistakes as well as encouragement for good work done.

In conclusion

Piecing each of these together gave me a sense of the kind of organization I was dealing with and what would be the approach I would have to take. The owners now wanted to change the nature of things and way of being to gear the company for the future.

Patriarchy and ownership of change

They wanted accountability, ownership and a performance driven organization (who doesn't?) that would innovate and lead the charge into the future.

But again, the irony of it all remains that, this is what "they" wanted and it was assumed that the voice of the owner was the voice of the people.

Changing the narrative – The way ahead

Patriarchal organizations are all around the world, this is how we have built empires, a world of control, a world where authentic conversations are an exception, a world where we are in constant competition with each other fueled by a perennial sense of scarcity. We are driven by results and outcomes which we are ready to achieve at any cost. We do not want deviations of any kind and strive to build predictability.

What we sometimes do not realise is that our constant insistence on results and dependence on measurability is a defense against change. Our fear of ambiguity manifests in our insistence on predictability.

So , when a leader says" I want to get this done quickly" or "we need to get this done right away", they are actually saying, "I do not want to create any ambiguity or space for anything else". Speed is often mistaken to be effectiveness. We need to shift the context to abundance, that's when we will begin to take a long-term perspective.

That is when we will move away from numbers and results and quarters to vision, possibility, innovation and creativity. The narrative must change.



Patriarchal organizations will find this journey difficult and if they do, they will be forced to confront a reality that they may not have noticed, exists. Whether they are ready for it is another question. But unless they do, they will only be envisaging a future without the courage to co-create it with their people.

Being Intimate



Photo by Gautam Nabar

It takes the softness of the rain to coax life from a rock. Similarly, it takes understanding and affection to allow years spent building defenses to melt away and the child in you emerge. Being intimate is about allowing that child in you to connect with the child in the other person.

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Nothing Ventured, Nothing Lost ... (Continued)

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If you had read the short piece titled “Nothing Ventured, Nothing Lost” and got in touch with your feelings and reactions to it, this P.S. is for you. I am describing below some facts about human behavior and processes that the above-mentioned short piece reveals. If you think of any other(s), do email and share with me.

1. We don't like to leave things/ tasks incomplete.



2. The curiosity to know what happens next is a very powerful motivator and can override rational choices.



3. The more someone tells us to not do something, the more we want to do it – this is the phenomenon of paradoxical intention or behavior.



4. The belief that there is always something good/constructive that will emerge is a very strong belief. The existential truth is that life does not come with some universal or innately-laid out design or purpose – it is inherently meaningless and we need to create or imbue it with purpose and meaning to make our life satisfying, purposeful and worthwhile. Recognizing this gift of human existence is a difficult & sometimes frightening prospect, so we deny it often or create illusions for ourselves. This denial or false hope leads us to not being able to admit there could be meaninglessness in any task or experience. Hence, we make meaning even where none may exist. Now you may be thinking – the author has given these abstractions about human behavior and I am reading them, so see, I did get something out of this whole exercise ultimately. But, these abstractions could also have been written and read by you without the earlier piece!



5. At the unconscious level, sometimes we do things which give distress or discomfort to us because the distress has something familiar or comforting & real about it..

Role of hidden v/s visible needs in feedback giving



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Take a look at the above diagram. It is a picture of an Iceberg, a lump of ice that floats in water. It is said that only 10% of its mass remains above the surface, visible to the eyes, and 90% remains submerged in water, which is not visible. It is an extremely dangerous proposition, especially for seagoing vessels who may grossly underestimate its bulk and collide with it with disastrous consequences. Who doesn't know of the ship TITANIC? It sank after a collision with an iceberg because the captain failed to correctly gauge how big the iceberg was. He thought of it as just a piece of ice floating on water and didn't change his course. But what lay underneath was huge and tore the ship apart.

But what has that to do with our subject on feedback giving? Let us find out.

One of the main roles of a trainer is to provide feedback to participants about their functional and not so functional parts and also about their performance and progress during the training.

Theoretically, and what the trainers also tell the participants is that, there is nothing as negative or positive feedback, and all feedback is just feedback. In spite of this, and whatever efforts the trainer may make, a large part of their feedback is likely to be sensed as 'Negative Feedback' by the participant. The whole purpose of giving feedback would be wasted if it is not received by the receiver. It is therefore very important for a trainer to provide feedback in a manner so that it matches the wavelength of the receiver and does not create defensiveness or rejection.



While there is a lot of literature about how to give feedback objectively and make it acceptable to the receiver, I would like to present here one of my own experiences.

In one of my sessions, I was required to critique the feedback giving process of a group of trainers attending – 'Training of Trainers' programme. It was feedback on feedback - and a very interesting model evolved that I would like to share.

The participants were all trainers or aspiring to be trainers.

Role of hidden v/s visible needs in feedback giving

The objective of this particular session was for them to learn how to give feedback in a better way. The session was so designed that each participant would make a presentation on any topic as a trainer, and then the group would give its feedback to that person about the presentation. Finally I was to give my views about their process of feedback so that they may know what went well and what could have been done better.

During their feedback giving to one another, I sensed a lot of processes other than mere feedback giving - a lot of undercurrents. I could have named them myself, but I wished that they discover it themselves. That would be an experiential learning and might lead to better acceptance. In fact I too was experimenting on my feedback giving process.

So I posed a question to them, 'Why are you giving the feedback?' The question took a little time to sink in. Some said that it is part of the programme design, because it is the custom etc. I then elaborated, "What is the objective, purpose, thought process behind your giving the feedback?"

Spot came the answers - "To develop the other person", "To bring out their weak points.", 'To encourage them through positive feedback', 'To make them aware of their dysfunctional behavior', 'To improve their way of working", 'To sensitize them about how their behaviour impacts others', etc.

These were all very relevant and very obvious points. These are also listed as 'the shoulds' in any book on giving feedback. There is nothing new in that. But I asked them to probe further, go deeper, relate to their own experience in the present case. It again took some time till someone said hesitantly, 'it gives a boost to my ego'.



Well! That was the turning point. It opened the floodgates. I must appreciate their honesty in that. After that there was no stopping and they quickly rattled out so many reasons that are never talked about. But, in reality, those are the ones that almost always influence our feedback giving behavior.

We plotted these in the traditional iceberg model - separating all the purposes of feedback into two parts as shown in the diagram - The "Visible" (talked about) objectives and the other being the "Hidden" (not talked about) objectives. We can also call them as Trainee's Need (visible part) and Trainer's Need (Hidden part).

We then deliberated on the impact of these needs on the feedback process and the feedback receiver. Very quickly the group came to the conclusion that the visible needs largely lie in our conscious and we are happy to accept those. On the contrary the hidden needs lie mostly in our sub-conscious and we find it difficult to acknowledge them.

Role of hidden v/s visible needs in feedback giving

It was also agreed generally that it is easy for the feedback giver to identify the visible needs; but it takes time, effort, an open mind, a non-threatening climate and deep reflection by the individual to touch one's own hidden needs. On the other hand, the participants said that, as receivers of feedback they could almost instantly know whether the feedback giver was coming out of genuine concern or had some other agenda. In other words, the feedback receiver was able to identify whether the feedback was driven by visible needs or by hidden needs.

When the feedback giver is extremely alert and sensitive to one's own needs, one would limit the feedback to the visible needs, i.e. for the genuine development of the receiver etc. The receiver would also sense it accordingly. Since it matches with the objective of the receiver, it would be better received.



On the other hand the feedback driven by unconscious, with hidden purpose, would also be immediately detected by the other person. Since there is a mismatch between the agendas of the giver and receiver, the feedback would almost always fail. It can in fact have a serious negative impact too.

It is only the visible part that is truly driven by the motive of helping, developing others, out of real concern for other.

Feedback driven by the hidden part could be in the form of flattery (pleasing other person for some other motive), deriding (out of jealousy), scolding (imposing authority), boasting self-ego (I am an expert, take it from me), getting even (you put me down earlier, now it is my turn), advising / directing / lecturing etc.

In all such cases, the feedback receiver quickly understands that the feedback giver is satisfying one's own motive more than being concerned about the benefit to the receiver. So it leaves the receiver nothing to act upon. At the most the receiver may counter some of the feedback, if one feels offended or attacked.

My biggest learning from this session was that in my role as a trainer, and especially while giving feedback, I must constantly keep myself conscious about my motive. The motive must be solely, and only, concern for the receiver's development, focusing on trainee's need. The moment there is any hint of there being a self motive, it must be checked immediately, it cannot be allowed to take charge. I have practiced on this and have experienced that it is a very difficult task. It requires high sensitivity to self to understand when my motive creeps in surreptitiously, then to control it and focus on Trainee's need rather than 'my need'.

Role of hidden v/s visible needs in feedback giving

SOME OF THE VISIBLE VS HIDDEN NEEDS IN FEEDBACK

Visible Purpose Trainee's Needs Conscious Needs	"Hidden" purpose Trainer's Need Unconscious Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making them aware of their areas for development • Concern for their development • Providing encouragement though positive feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfying own ego, proving 'I am superior' • taking revenge through criticism and hurting the receiver • flattering, pampering, to get a favour in return • validating own theories, checking hypotheses - perceptions • biases, pre-set notions • creating good bad image for a person amongst others for any specific purpose • Showing off to others

This is just an indicative list. But it is quite obvious that 'Hidden Needs' much outweigh the 'Visible Needs', just like the visible and hidden parts of an Iceberg.

There were many slips initially. But as I went on practicing, it became more and more manageable. At first there were very frequent and strong 'I' motives, then they gradually became less strong and less in number too. The need for me to be on constant vigil has also become lesser and lesser as it is gradually becoming a part of my behaviour and I am moving from 'unconscious ignorance' to 'conscious awareness' and then to 'unconscious practice'.

Let me try to illustrate through an example. Before I proceed, I wish to clarify my understanding that there is no universal rule in human behavior, and therefore most examples can only be one-sided, just as this one may appear to you.

I am also trying to pick up from an experience that most of you who have been in human process labs would have probably gone through.

Recall the initial period of most of the labs, and also the latter part in some labs. After the initial struggle of forming an agenda, in the absence of any concrete guidance from the facilitator, the participants finally realize that it is they that have to drive their learning, and sharing their problem or weakness and discussing it with others could be one of the functional ways.

So, one person takes the lead and shares any such issue that bothers him/her.



Role of hidden v/s visible needs in feedback giving

No sooner has it been done, that person is flooded with directions, advice, prescriptions, sharing of own experiences by others about how they have tackled the issue – and so on.



In all this, when or if they are asked about their purpose, they invariably say that they are coming from their concern and they wish to help the ‘person in distress’. Another thing that is almost universal is that they call this all as ‘feedback’. Amongst these well-meaning well-wishers, there are some who continue in this phase till quite late in the lab, some continue even till the end. These are also usually the persons who appear to be intent on establishing their leadership on the group.

No matter how many times they get feedback about the futility of their prescriptions in the disguise of feedback, they rarely confront themselves about their own need to give this feedback. Their ‘feedback’ also has very limited or mostly no impact on others because others too realize that the person is serving his/her own agenda. On the other hand, there are others who realize sooner or later that their need was more of ‘their need to feel good’ than ‘concern for others’. Once they are able to understand this, a noticeable change is observed in their behavior.

Such persons have been able to go deeper down from the apparent ‘concern for others’ (the visible part of the iceberg) that lies above the surface to the hidden part of the iceberg. Having been able to go below the surface, they can locate what was driving their behavior, out of the so many possibilities that exist in hidden needs. The feedback thereafter takes a different shade and is also found to be more acceptable by others. Gone are the ‘you should do this..’ or ‘I am telling you from my experience....’.

This is just one example, and I am sure you would have seen it happening at many places at many times in our life outside the lab also. Many parents wish their child to excel so that they can be proud of him/her. They object to their child marrying outside their caste or in a poorer family, more because their image in the society will go down.

In reality they are driven by such self needs that lie below the surface, but as they are unaware of it, they present it on the outside as ‘wishing welfare for the child’. It is however interesting that the tone, use of words, timing etc. is unable to hide their hidden need and the child immediately picks up the signals. Some simple indicators are the efforts to browbeat, creating pressure, not willing to engage in dialogue, not listening to the rationale or the feelings of the child, adopting take it or leave it attitude etc. All these stem from giving precedence to their own needs (mostly unconsciously) and not from real concern for the child.

Role of hidden v/s visible needs in feedback giving

This results in total rejection of the feedback by the child. Whether the child succumbs or revolts is another issue, but the relationship is hurt, sometimes so deeply that there is a permanent break.



On the contrary, when we are able to go below the surface, identify our hidden needs and then talk to others out of genuine concern and also share our personal need, the process is totally different. This leads to mutual exploration that may include listening, dialoguing, examining pros and cons, searching for and creating options etc. The result is likely to be more amenable to both the parties. In any case, the relationship is strengthened.

Therefore, we may conclude that when we are able to identify our hidden needs in our interactions with others, either by ourselves or through the help of others, we are able to build better relationships.

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It's Simply You



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You may look for it
In the tinkle of your bangle
The glimmer of your dangler
The scent of jasmine in your hair
In the expensive cosmetics you wear..
Or your signature perfume.

It's not in the click of your smart heels
Nor in the swish of your scarf..
It's not your smile - don't be fooled
(That con has been on for centuries)
Is it your sweetness?
(If you believe that
You'll be half a fool)
Your femininity, oh woman...is you.
The darkness
The rage
The passion too
The scatteredness
The confusion
The courage too

You were born of the
Divine feminine
Look for no confirmation
It's in every pore of you
Wear your rawness
Like you adorn your jewels
You can never lose it
It pays no homage to any role you
choose
Oh Woman, wake up and see
It's simply You.

Reflecting after a Human Laboratory



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A person with passion for learning and an enthusiastic ISABS co-traveler.

The human laboratory is a path lesser known and selectively taken when it comes to knowing “SELF”. I am happy I took this road and walked few miles on it. This year it was my 3rd year at ISABS national event and lab was for two weeks. When two previous one-week labs had left me with lot to think about and work upon for the next few months, I was curious to know what would be the outcome of two weeks lab. Yes, two weeks were very heavy to deal with and I could see my journey from known issues to blind spots. So much happened in the lab, and if I were not mindful enough to take timely notes, I would have missed much of the reminiscence.

When I opened my notebook and wanted to reflect upon what happened during those two weeks, my mind played the button “replay” and I could go through the whole experience once again. Now I understood the meaning of “Second arrow of suffering” without anybody explaining it to me. Whatever had happened then, hit me hard again and while reading each note I started thinking with regret; I could have done this, I should have said this, and so on.

I could understand my communication pattern; how I speak, how much I speak, what I speak and how much impact my tone makes on others. Once it was brought to my notice that my choice of words is generally strong and the receiver may feel it offending.

My spontaneous reactions and communication were not received well, and that had left me feeling ignored or misunderstood. The thing I missed out all these years was being aware of checking how does my communication land on others? When one participant said, “She uses strong words, I would like to give her that discount”, I was shocked. I felt like somebody is showing me a mirror and this feedback was very valuable. I always want another person to listen to me and take me seriously as I mean what I say. I realized for the first time that my choice of words and tone of speech can be a reason why people may discount what I said. I could see the articulation and communication style of other group members and feel how much I could connect with them during those 15 days or which style of communication would work better for me. I could understand that once a person is affected by an attacking sentence, he/she then may not listen to even good things said by you. How listening is a very important part of the communication process and how I listen selectively when overwhelmed with emotions was another realization. After this realization I started paying more attention on purpose while listening.



Reflecting after a Human Laboratory

Another important learning was how my expectations play a role in my communication. While dealing with anybody, either an individual or a person in the role, how I set my expectations and keep interacting with that understanding in my mind. If a person meets my expectations, I feel he/she is good. The moment he/she fails to fulfill my expectations, I discard that person saying that he/she is not up to the mark. I had a confrontation with one of the participants who would say let me help you. My irritation was why was he offering me help when I do not need it, and if at all he thought I needed it, why he could not do so without using the word help. My understanding about help is I will seek it when I need it. I will ask for and then welcome it. The funniest thing was I didn't tell the other person about my expectation from him, nor did I own up my expectations. I blamed the person for offering help when I was not in need of it and rejected the person instead of accepting or rejecting his help. In a way it was my loss, as I hurt the person for no reason and lost an opportunity for any help from him in future.



It was very easy to make a tall claim that I am not biased. My behavior in the lab showed otherwise. I realized I had a bias towards age and could challenge my own belief about “elder people are more knowledgeable.”

With the millennial generation around I could feel knowledge flowing from the younger generation also and my belief now changed to “age and knowledge always do not have direct relation; sometimes the number of years necessarily does not mean more knowledge and at times less number of years does not mean less knowledge. A person can be young and still knowledgeable.” Another bias I had was “People older than me should nurture me and I should nurture younger ones.” In my experience, not all people know how to nurture, not all can or want to nurture. Also, I realized that when I wanted to protect somebody it was my need to nurture. I never checked it with the other person whether he/she needs it from me. My act and behavior were completely from my point of view without giving a consideration to the other person's wish or need. On one hand I have a need to nurture or to be nurtured and when somebody does it without asking for it I get irritated; I found dissonance in my behavior because of my bias.

When I behave the way I behave, I feel it's my style. But when the same style was projected in other participants' behavior, I could clearly understand how it makes me feel. The funniest thing about my style is I get so stuck with it that I do not accept deviation in own behavior or perceived behavior of another person. At times I have failed to see a person as a whole; I see a part of the personality and think that's it. I realized that I need to be more open to make new relationships. I have experienced during the lab how I block myself from forming new relationships by not willing to take initiative or giving time to explore that relationship.

Reflecting after Human Laboratory

It is natural for participants to want to be the center of attraction and claim his or her space in the lab. I however experienced how difficult was it for me to claim my space and how important it was to display my competitiveness to the group members. When others were aggressive and bold about showing their competitiveness, I was shocked by my passive behavior. If I think I am equally competent, why I was not demonstrative of it? I was not stating anything related to my competitiveness nor was I displaying it in my behavior and was still expecting participants to understand it; it was very weird of me.



In the lab, when things started happening the way I never expected or imagined, it became difficult for me to stay functional and be present in “here and now”. When I got in touch with my grief about losing my father I connected with some “then and there” issues and drifted away from the present moment. The journey from “here and now” to “then and there” happened in a jiffy but it took me a lot of a time to get back to the present moment. Cognitively I was aware that it happened four years ago and nothing can be done about it now; still that feeling of loss is so deep that it took me a long time to come back from “there and then” to “here and now”. Most importantly I could go two layers below my feeling of grief and acknowledge my secondary and tertiary feelings around it. It was not only the surface feeling of grief, but also secondary feeling of helplessness due to loss of a confident or a deep connection.

And at the bottom of it I could feel betrayed and taken for granted regarding distribution of family fortune. For me this moment of truth was too difficult to digest because all these years I had just labeled it as grief and never dealt with it in detail.

I knew I always become conscious in the presence of “Authority” and there is a fear of being watched. How “Authority” becomes “elephant in the room” and how my behavior started getting affected just by the presence of 2 facilitators in the room was an amazing experience. While the presence of facilitators was overwhelming to the whole group, one of the facilitators asked a beautiful question – ‘If ‘you’ decide when to bring facilitators into the group or ask for intervention, who is the authority?’ I could understand the thin line between authority, power, and influence during the lab. One more interesting angle on authority came to my awareness that I tend to see through the person holding authority and challenge the authority when I do not like the person holding it.

Gender seems a much generalized word and I used to feel I do not have such an issue. I could understand shades of gender bias I hold and its impact on my current life situations. I also discovered a gender issue hiding within me. I could experience how the female in me feels when any person appreciates my femininity; and how my masculine side just discards it and ignores such appreciations. I am not a feminist but I don’t appreciate the female in me either. .

Reflecting after human laboratory

My subconscious mind clung on to so many unwanted or irrelevant things regarding gender issue from the past that they have become deep-rooted in my mind and impacted my behavior. For me knowing what I hold, understanding its irrelevance, discarding that structure of the mental model and forming the new one is the toughest thing to change.

Another aspect of my personality is my confidence. While I always seem to be confident and capable to deal with whatever it may come, I understood that I tend to do self-beating over certain personal issues. In the family context, I feel I am not good enough and my family will never appreciate whatever I might do for them. I carry that monkey on my shoulders and it shows up repetitively in my behavior. For me getting to know my monkey, confronting it and accepting it for my betterment was a huge effort. I understood the story I was writing for myself and I am seeing drastic changes in me the moment I changed the script.



ISABS gives a warning - do not make any major life decision within next 6 months, which they had given in 2 earlier events also; but this time the turbulence it caused me was worth looking mindfully.

Lab surprised me by taking me to so many blind spots and my defense mechanism was an eye-opener. Do I always do it? Why do I do it? What is the prevailing emotion and belief underneath? What is that I am afraid of? What are my fears and is there any other way to deal with the situation? Do I stick to my standard behavior pattern or am I experimenting with something new?



Well there is no end to reflections and learning from the lab. I have designed some action plan and am working on aspects of my reflections with help of my mentor. The action has begun and I am amazed with my dedication to work on the toughest project ever – “Project SELF”. I am eternally grateful to the facilitators who are encouraging me to walk few miles within. I wish to liberate myself from past, learn to live in the present moment and stop worrying about future. I am very sure ISABS will help me to get there.

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Liberating oneself from limiting beliefs and behaviour patterns

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Unraveling the mystery of life and human behaviour is an exciting field of study for me. During my recent facilitation of an ISABS Sensitivity Training Lab, many dots connected for me leading to a remarkable discovery of a liberating process. This process shares how certain behavioural processes having their origin in our childhood decisions while coping with uncomfortable and painful feelings can lead to a lifelong pattern of behaviour which keeps us limited, or bound or brings for us repeated pains.

I am giving below nine patterns from nine group members observed in the lab by various members of the group. The advantage of Sensitivity Lab is that it surfaces the patterns of behaviour for the member to see its consequences for themselves.



First. Here is senior marketing person, aged 54 years, with a brilliant track record of career in a leading company.

Members in the group found his behaviour of creating laughter at serious issues being deliberated in the group quite odd. His humourising would trivialize the seriousness of the matter being deliberated as well as would offend people's sensitivity. When it kept happening despite him being pointed out, almost compulsively, he became quite alert about this behaviour. He also mentioned that back home, at his workplace and family setting also similar pattern is there and because of this people do not take him seriously. He himself is wondering why he does it when he knows well that it irritates people and also his image takes a beating as well.

The group helped him to realize that this is the strategy he picked up in childhood to make light of his unpleasant feelings, a coping strategy that might work in childhood but is now inappropriate. He learnt to own his unpleasant feelings and used them to make a remarkable shift in his behaviours during the course of five days. Similarly, he worked on relating with authority figures as one person to another and not project onto authority any halo by coping with his fear of authority in a more functional way.

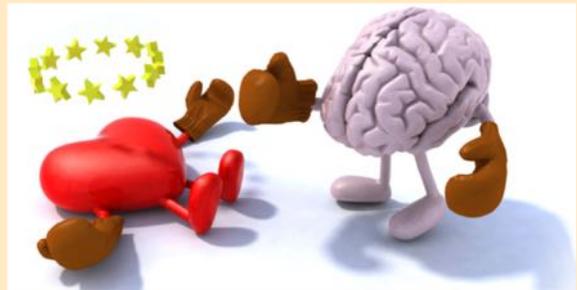
Liberating oneself from limiting beliefs and behaviour patterns

Second. Here is this youthful man in his early thirties working for an IT company with couple of years of experience in USA. Very articulate as well as excellent grasp of conceptual ideas being discussed. However, he had difficulty feeling the feelings of others; for him it would be a case of some painful situation so he could not empathize whenever others shared some painful feelings being generated in the 'here and now' mostly but occasionally in back home as well. Moreover, whenever someone asked him what was he feeling, his response would be intellectualization or discussing about what was happening rather than the feeling. Members could not resonate with his conceptual response as they are empathizing with his feeling but he is not able to touch his uncomfortable feelings. This dissonance would trouble him as well as the members. He would be confused as to why people are not understanding him.

Some of the feelings he could feel easily like feelings of happiness or jealousy etc.; but difficulty would be relating to guilt or embarrassment or such uncomfortable feelings. He also shared that his relationship with his parents is more transactional rather than emotional. He is a 'good boy' who has to perform certain duty religiously regarding parents or wife or friends.

The genesis of his problem started when he was drilled to be a good boy by his mother and not hurt others ever. So, when he hurt others, he would feel extreme guilt.

Coping with it by intellectualizing became his favorite style since teenage, like many intelligent people. And now he understands the consequences of intellectualization, often a dysfunctional coping mechanism. And he also understood how unrealistic it is to be a good boy and therefore need to decondition himself from this.



Third. He is an experienced sales executive aged 52 years, full of interesting anecdotes about his travels and other experiences. However, initially he came across as casual, late-coming, at times behaving irresponsibly like not returning pen after borrowing from another member etc. His response when pointed out by members initially was, "the elephant walks while the other animals keep saying/ barking; it does not affect the royal elephant a wee bit". Mind you, he is an overweight person with a paunch so elephant was an appropriate analogy chosen by him. Since he was quite sensitive about his feelings, he took the feedback and made remarkable shift in his casual behaviour/ attitude. All the same this tendency to block painful or uncomfortable feedback learnt during childhood had its effect. He regretted that he is at times being taken casually by others, especially at home. Besides it has been a source of unpleasant argumentation with his wife as well.



Liberating oneself from limiting beliefs and behaviour patterns

Fourth. She is a very sharp and understanding Chartered Accountant. She would understand quickly any process happening in the group and would contribute to others in their personal growth struggles. All the same she had difficulty accepting praise and would maintain a low profile. It was difficult for her to let people come close to her. She realized in the course of group work that her fear of rejection, which she experienced in her childhood, led to this pattern. By not letting people come close she would preclude any chance of rejection by them. All the same she would lose out on affection and warmth as well. When she realized the consequences and experimented with letting people come close, she found a sense of liberation.



Fifth. She is an experienced teaching professional for MBA students with years of experience. Quite articulate, good looking but still stays on the periphery. She still carries the belief from her childhood that she is 'not good', the belief acquired by her due to her experiences in childhood such low marks in exams, being the so called 'inadequate amongst her siblings' etc. Despite her PhD and other achievements, the belief of being 'Not OK' persists and hence the same is reflected in her patterns of relating.

The reality is she is 'OK and Good' as shared by group members based on their experience of her. She experimented with pushing her boundaries by attempting to operate from the positive belief. All the same the journey has just begun. For her I can quote Faiz, 'Lambi hai shaam, magar shaam hi to hai'. The new day is going to dawn and the night cannot last forever!

Sixth. He is a mining engineer with more than 20 years of experience. He has difficulty taking unpleasant feedback and defends himself quite vocally. The hypothesis could be he has a fragile self or something else. But the issue starts after he argues. At times he lands in hurting others due to this behaviour. However, when he says something that hurts others, he feels extreme guilt and to ease the same he gets into pleasing mode. So he is caught in double bind: he needs to argue to defend his stand while at the same time he cannot hurt as otherwise he feels guilty. Why should he feel guilty, right? Because he has been brought up by his parents not to hurt others at any cost. This socialization is making his life difficult because the moment he hurts others, his guilt makes him miserable. He needs permission to hurt others whenever the situation demands! When group made him feel okay to say what one feels even if it hurt others and countered his conditioning, perhaps he experienced some relief. It was a liberating experience, all the same he needs to strengthen his 'fragile self' enabling him to receive feedback functionally.

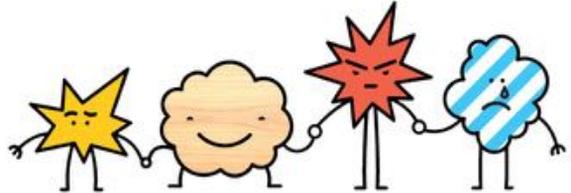
Liberating oneself from limiting beliefs and behaviour patterns

Seventh. She is a seasoned HR professional, but very quiet, responsible, sincere and a typical 'Good Girl'. It is difficult for her to be loose and natural and let her childlike part feel free. The reason she explained lies in her bringing up by her strict father who would not let her play with other children or let her go out on her own etc. The moment she became aware and understood her behaviour pattern causing the pain of her extreme self-control and not letting her free child enjoy herself, she could see hope for herself. It was again a liberating experience. All the same the journey of greater freedom and happiness has begun and I hope she would be able to enjoy herself more.

Eight. He is another 'good boy' who has been brought up to say yes to others and behave dutifully. He has been a sincere student and now a sincere engineering manager who has difficulty saying "No" to his boss. All the same he is having work-life balance issues due to being overloaded at work. He had difficulty saying 'No' to unreasonable demands from him by members too. But because he has been brought up to be good boy, he has difficulty standing up for himself. This is one hypothesis for this behaviour, it could be something else too. He has to learn that it is okay to say 'No' to elders at times and stand up for what you believe is correct.

Nine. He is the eldest brother of the family who has been brought up to take responsibility for his siblings since childhood.

A very sincere and responsible man who does not take care of his own childlike self. For him having fun is not a good thing, a childhood belief perhaps that needs to be examined afresh.



From above, following are some of the common themes leading to dysfunctional and limiting behaviours:

1. Unrealistic demands on children to be a 'good boy or girl' making them feel guilty so often that they pick up some dysfunctional coping strategy like intellectualization, argumentation, etc.
2. Again, in parenting, unconsciously parents make the children feel inadequate or 'Not Okay' or fearful or highly 'responsible child without childlike joy' so that they live very inhibited life or acquire dysfunctional patterns.
3. Sometimes due to recurrent painful experiences children learn to block others and lose out on affection and warmth and joy.

One can clearly see one process which I have called 'Good Boy- Good Girl' Syndrome. Parents and other socializing agents unknowingly condition their small children to behave in a 'good and responsible way' and many times this precludes having childlike fun for the child.

Liberating oneself from limiting beliefs and behaviour patterns

When this kind of upbringing happens, the child when grows up, lives a very restricted and controlled life and cannot enjoy having normal pleasures of life or has to be very good towards others causing lot of pain to himself/herself.

There is a clear caution for parents here but I believe they operate out of their own conditioning and it becomes a child's destiny to live in a restricted way and perhaps cope with it in a dysfunctional manner.

The liberation happens when we realize the limiting beliefs or behaviour patterns and their consequences for us. It is a great experience of sense of freedom and lightness to rid oneself from such beliefs and patterns. Since they operate unconsciously and without our ever discovering it, we can behave under their influence throughout life. Fortunate are those who discover and free themselves and learn to enjoy life responsibly.

In sum, the thesis is the following: As children we learn to deal with painful feelings in a simplistic way. And with repeated coping it becomes our pattern of behaviour; which usually turns out to be dysfunctional when we grow up. Personal Growth involves dealing with these issues in oneself and thus living life more fully and richly. It enables us to live life more meaningfully and build warm & intimate relationships.

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The poem talks about Shadow and it's deep relationship with the 'Self' in general, and the 'Persona' in particular.

अंधेरे की रोशनी से गुफ्तगू -

में रात भर चलती रहूँ,

पर तुम मेरे साथ चलना।

में सुबह फिर बिखरती रहूँ,

पर तुम समेट लेना।

में सुध- बुध खोकर तुम्हे तकती रहूँ,

पर तुम नज़रें न फिराना।

में सुलझी उलझी सी बातें करूँ,

पर तुम बोझिल, बेचैन न होना।

में हर बात में तेरा ज़िक्र करूँ,

पर तुम कभी बोर न होना।

में तुझे लेकर अपनी फ़िक्र करूँ,

पर तुम मेरी ओर ही होना।

में खुदगर्जी की 'शह' बन लूँ,

पर तुम मेरी रूह में रहना।

तुम रहना, रहना, बस मेरे रहना।

चाहो तुम हाथ न दो,

मेरा कभी साथ न दो।

मेरे जज़्बातों को कहीं निजात तो दो।

तेरे एहसास में मेरी कोई बात तो हो।

तुम रहना, रहना, बस मेरे रहना।

तुम रहना, रहना, बस मेरे रहना।



The Hero's Journey – My travel diary

Amol Pawar

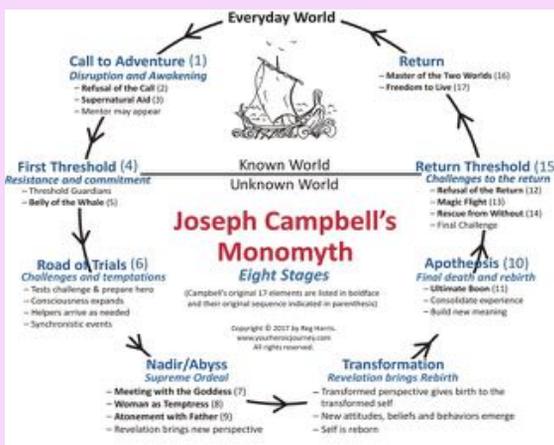
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I recently attended a 2-day program titled 'The Hero's Journey' facilitated by Rahoul Joshii. This is the first time I attended a workshop partly on gut instinct and partly based on user review and feedback. It is commonplace for us to trust the wisdom of the crowd but when it comes to self-development it was difficult for me to trust ratings given by strangers. I finally decided to take the plunge. Firstly, because the framework is of great interest to me and secondly because my gut told me so. Here is what I discovered in the process



The Framework

I was first introduced to the work of Joseph Campbell and the monomyth, during my writing workshops. In that context, I learned that all good stories, stories that we remember and make an impact on us, follow a similar pattern.

It was a simple lesson for me as I was looking to get better at telling stories from my own personal and professional life.

As Akshay Gajria of 'Tall Tales' would tell us during these workshops, the only difference between Humans and other animals is we make and tell stories to each other. It is fascinating to note about work that started in 1871, and concluded in some sense with Joseph Campbell's book in 1949, is relevant even today. Our style of constructing stories has not really changed. The overall structure of the framework is very relatable. You can start to see this in the movies that you have loved. (This has altered the way I watch movies).

The framework is an extremely exciting narrative. It drew me to itself on its own. When I learnt about this program based on the framework applied to self-development, I was intrigued. My initial tentative nature soon got cleared post discussions with a few past participants and I decided to jump into the adventure.



The Hero's Journey – My travel diary

Who Is A Hero

Everyone is a Hero of their own life. I am a hero for my kids. Just like my dad was a hero to me. My mother was my hero for the longest period. But we all know that when we realize that heroes are humans too is when our heart breaks. It is balancing this polarity of being human and being a hero (aka Salman Khan) is what we need to learn. The homework for this workshop was to watch 3 movies specified by Rahoul. And when the homework is to watch movies with a different lens the workshop looked yummy.

I noticed, the protagonist in all movies, given as homework, is male. The equality hero in me awoke, along with the rebel. We discussed and agreed that the hero is a gender-neutral term in the context of the workshop. It's then I realized the dearth and need for more stories of heroism by a woman to be included in our narrative at every level.



In the room were 14 individuals with a healthy gender balance and that helped me relax. It also helped as I was consciously aware of my need to get in touch with the feminine within. Doing that in presence of women felt more natural than with men, though I ended up exploring most of these conversations with other men in the room.

Imagine- Attract – Create

I have a strong belief in being able to shape your own destiny. This has resulted in surrounding myself with positive people and thoughts. The other belief is to imagine what you want to create. Once you can imagine it you may attract it and create it.

But then what is the difference between fate and destiny? In my opinion, fate is the call to adventure that you would get. We all get a different call to adventure in our life. It will vary in our life stages. In my early life, my call to adventure was to ensure financial upliftment.

Having secured it to an extent, it stopped serving its purpose and hence a new call to adventure had to appear. It isn't a coincidence this 2nd call to adventure appears in our life in the 2nd half. This is also called the mid-life crisis. Though some people argue about its existence, I can certainly say I am in the middle of one and know a few other souls who are in it. I however have an objection to the word crisis and not so much to the word mid-life. Hence, I prefer to call it the 2nd turn, the twist after the interval in a movie. Engaging with the Hero's Journey framework from a self-development lens allowed me to look at my life events like a movie. And we all know anything is possible in a movie. So, when I looked at my life events through this lens of it being a movie, certain patterns of my behaviour became more real. Some I was conscious about and a few I wasn't. This discovery process was aided by large and small group conversations. I was helping others and that process itself was helping me.



The Hero's Journey – My travel diary

In this process of looking at my life like a movie, I realized, I was carrying the entire burden of solving my own challenges on my shoulders. I realized that it was a ridiculously resource-intensive and extremely unjoyful journey. Instead, if I engage with others and try to help them discover their knots, I can probably untie a few in me too.

The Mentor

We all seek one. I have always sought mentors in all spheres of my life. In fact, in one of my early self-development works, the image I was given was of Hanuman in Search of his Ram. That felt so right and even today does for me. I have always believed that a mentor who is wiser, smarter and preferably older than me is all I need.

I have been fortunate to have met my mentors at different times. They have come in all forms and genders. I rediscovered this during the workshop and realized that mentor need not necessarily be an individual. It could even be a group. Like the group of 14 of us who had gathered together. We didn't know each other before the workshop, and we may not even meet in person in a planned manner again. Yet we were willing to be each other's mentors in the moment.



I will steal a line from Rahoul here – “Not every transformation is a process. Some transformation is just an event”

Nadir

The good part of hitting the rock bottom is, the only way from there is up. I don't remember whose line is this or in which movie this has been used. But it is an extremely positive phrase for anyone who is feeling down and out. And I have been in that phase for a while. Despite certain positive things happening, I chose to look at the darker sides.

The Arabic meaning of nadir is the counterpart. And it's so true. There cannot be a zenith without a nadir. There cannot be light without a shadow. In all stories of heroism, we have seen the hero hit rock bottom. She then makes a choice to rise above the gloom and doom to become a transformed individual.

The 3 stages outlined in this Nadir phase are very relatable. Your goddess and temptress could well be an image or projected on a person. It could also be a craft. I found mine in my craft and in a person. I am most grateful for having met both, the person and the craft.

The atonement with father is another very real and relatable topic for me. I have had a very difficult relationship with my father. I finally could find closure through the craft and chose to present my story to a room full of strangers. That process helped me heal. It is when that happened, that I realized how much energy was being trapped there. I thereafter started and continue to feel connected and loved by my father. It's a very different feeling than what I felt earlier.

The Hero's Journey – My travel diary

What's Next

I did realize and relate to the framework through my life events and stories. My belief that things happen for a reason got further strengthened. Felt extremely blessed and grateful about being able to do this at this stage.

The journey will continue; knowing it's not an easy ride. But now I have the confidence that help and mentors will appear magically. There is hope that the wisdom to recognize the signals and respect the help, will exist.

I hope that I can also be the help and mentor in others journey. It could well be my path to apotheosis.

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Stay Strong



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I live in cantonment with ample greenery and fresh air. Often people living in densely crowded cities, categorise us as lucky to live in such a wonderful habitat. Just a few metres away from my house are three *peepal* trees which have grown in perfect alignment. The trees have been there for centuries. No one knows who planted them or how they came into existence. Still, they play a pivotal role in our lives. A *Shivlinga* has been placed in one of the trees and a small temple has been constructed. It is regarded as a place of faith, belief and hopes with most of the neighbourhood praying there. One must see the charm and color it reflects during *Shivratri*. Small kids gather around it since morning, cleaning and decorating the premises, along with grown ups. It is a landmark for delivery boys, postmen and strangers to reach to us. The trees give us relief during hot summer afternoons. For kids, they make a small playground.

I share a special bond with those trees as I have spent almost two decades of my life under their shade. As a child, I have enjoyed swinging on the swing which was made out of rope and discarded bicycle tyre. The swing was a major attraction for the children.



Photo by Bhawna Rai



Stay Strong

But, one had to wait for his/ her turn to avail the excitement. The trees also served as an umbrella during hot scorching days when there was no electricity. I used to pick a *charpoy* and look for the best place with maximum shade and cool air. I studied there until dusk. The natural light and fresh air boosted my learning ability. I can recall several incidents which are associated with me, the trees and my childhood.

One windy night, the winds were blowing terribly. All of a sudden my sleep was interrupted with a loud “bang”. I could not sleep well for the rest of the night and kept wondering about the sound. Next day, when I stepped outside, to my utter disappointment I saw one *peep* tree; the one in the middle had fallen down. Its branches were crying in pain and extending for help. I went to scrutinise its roots to see if there was possibility of life. It was termed as a “dead” tree by all.

Days passed by. Then one Sunday, I saw a sparkingly green, tiny shoot surfacing on the branch of “dead” *peep* tree. I could not control my happiness and rushed to examine its beauty. I gave a soft pat to the newborn leaf and admired its determination and strength. Quickly, I rushed to pick my phone and took a picture of it. I stayed there for some time thinking about the challenges and difficulties that we face in our everyday lives. The “give up” attitude which is so easy to follow.

My close encounter with the tiny shoot made me realise the power of determination, zeal to perform and peaceful struggle. I have always believed in hard work and no short cuts. I have never run after money or engaged in unfair means. The tree somewhere reflected my inner self and celebrated my hardships, wrong decisions, failures and successes. It inspired me to stay focused and believe in my strengths.

After all, “We need no capes to do something extraordinary.”



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Me, Myself and I - The Songs of Life

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*Founder CEO Potentia, OD Consultant, Executive coach and Business & Leadership catalyst. **Harish** has led his team to support over 350 organizations in past decade. He is sought for elevating business performance, shaping enabling culture and strategic HR.*

About three decades ago, as a Management Trainee at SAIL, I was exposed to Management education with a deep dive into HR function. That was also the time when besides being heavily influenced by Ayn Rand, I got introduced to psychometric tools such as FIRO-B.

10 years later while undertaking my PDP journey at ISABS, I got an opportunity to flirt with psychometrics once more. I was labelled ESTJ on MBTI. Though my visible behavioural propensities were in line with ESTJ descriptors, I didn't like being boxed into just one of the 16 boxes. To me that labelling undermined my potential. Over the years, I would often dispute with die-hard MBTI practitioners' belief that the personality types were hard-wired. I saw many MBTI exponents living a self-fulfilling-prophecy as per the script.



Even before I had learnt about neuroplasticity, my belief was that the day one discovers her/ his propensities and the framework, one is broadening their horizon to embrace the other 15 styles of MBTI.

Over the following years, my myriad roles helped me claim space from Sensing to cultivate an **iN**tuitive side and Judging paved way to **Perceiving**. MBTI step-2 taken in 2008 concluded me as an **ENTP** with three OOPs. My marriage, kids, journey in ISABS et al, helped bring out my **F** to surface alongside **T**. As I write this, I am in touch with my makeover that's still unfolding – from being a compulsive extravert, who always thrived on the noise, to the one who has begun to enjoy 'the quiet'.

*Oh, it's just me, myself and I
Solo ride until I die
'Cause I got me for life
Oh, I don't need a hand to hold
Even when the night is cold
I got that fire in my soul*

Last July, listening to this song humbled me. Reminding me of the *solo ride* of life, it inspired me to continue being in touch with that *fire in my soul*. Seeking the fulfilment within doesn't need a big plan; it just surfaces when one adjusts the radio frequency to peep within.



Me, Myself and I - The Songs of Life

The other day, driving to airport during the bewitching hours I tuned into Fever FM wherein, RJ Urmin was chatting with Bollywood score composer Jeet Ganguly. Jeet's narration about making of the title song of खामोशियाँ (khamoshiyan or the silences) touched me deeply. The songs says –

खामोशियाँ आवाज़ हैं
तुम सुनने तो आओ कभी
छू कर तुम्हें खिल जाएँगी
घर इनको बुलाओ कभी
बेकरार है बात करने को
कहने दो इनको ज़रा...

क्या उस गली में कभी तेरा जाना हुआ
जहाँ से ज़माने को गुज़रे ज़माना हुआ...

खामोशियाँ एक साज़ है
तुम धुन कोई लाओ ज़रा
खामोशियाँ अल्फ़ाज़ है
कभी आ गुनगुना ले ज़रा...:

The journey of accepting my unclaimed introversion has been a transformative trek for me. Finding myself with nothing but my heartbeat by my side, initially was lonely, perhaps painful at times but precious. Movement from loneliness to solitude has turned out to be satisfying, peace-triggering and joyous.

When you spontaneously tune into the music around, breaking free from the societal boxes, becomes easy. My gratitude for life kindled to a new high, when a song I stumbled upon not only put me in touch with the "fountain of youth" but also made me realize that "I'm getting to my best years yet". "The Older I Get" by Alan Jackson which goes like this --

The older I get
The more I think
You only get a minute,
better live while you're in it
'Cause it's gone in a blink
And the older I get
The truer it is
It's the people you love, not the money
and stuff
That makes you rich

The older I get
The fewer friends I have
But you don't need a lot when the ones
that you got
Have always got your back
And the older I get
The better I am
At knowing when to give
And when to just not give a damn

And I don't mind all the lines
From all the times I've laughed and
cried
Souvenirs and little signs of the life I've
lived

The older I get
The longer I pray
I don't know why, I guess that I
Got more to say
And the older I get
The more thankful I feel
For the life I've had, and all the life I'm
living still



Me, Myself and I - The Songs of Life

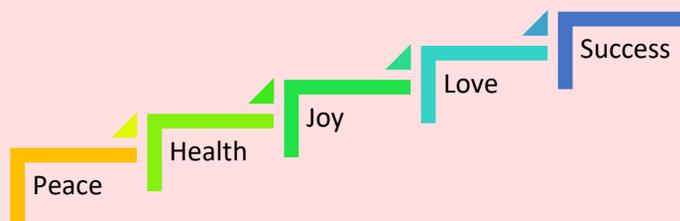
Serendipitous instances, much like listening to these songs and realising a few home truths about my being, have often proved *transcendental*. Such points have helped me uncover the holes & crevices I didn't know exist; letting discover elements within myself. These times have made me less incomplete. My sole companion during these transitions - *my heartbeat*, has helped me own up my disowned parts thereby making it easy to realize the *wholesomeness*.



My realization, when one's life is punctuated by *silences* (reflections within) and hyphenated with *mindful moments*, it facilitates the *'makeover'* process. A process where fragmented "I" paves way for a more aligned "me" and the fractured "me" makes way for an integrated "myself".

For me the journey from "I" to "Me" and "Me" to "Myself" has often meant to shed facades, embrace the disowned parts and celebrate the transitions. However, I must hasten to add that this process is never complete. For, it gives rise to a new "fragmented I" as soon as Harish makes the "integrated myself" a holy grail, making this an ever-expanding spiral.

"Be satisfied enough to be happy and dissatisfied enough to grow" has been an adage that has propelled me through life. However, embracing this adage has meant finding a pause or ठहराव; it is a word in Hindi, for which I don't find an English equivalent (the closest perhaps is *pause/abeyance*). At different points of time in my life I have found a mantra or a formula or a philosophy that has anchored me to a new depth and yet propelled me to find a new high. My current *contentment equation* is –



To me the five elements of my current *'pause stage'* represent panchbhootas of contended life. To me not just the elements but even their order is precious; with the foundation of 'peace' being dearest.

The title of this autobiographical sketch might sound egoistical however, to me it appealed lyrical with the spirit of *Poetic Principle*. Keen to hear poetry & songs from your life. Do get in touch with me.



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Gender and Role Expectations

Manoranjan Dhal

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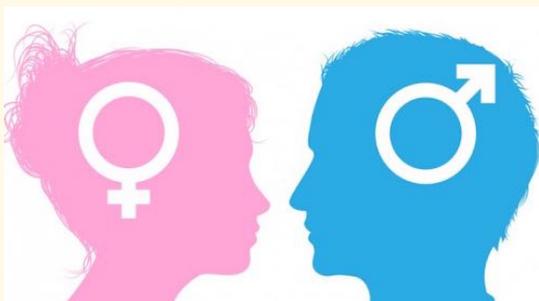
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INTRODUCTION

I hope you must have come across a male colleague / boss who is very delicate, caring, emotional and dependent on you. You may also have come across a female colleague / boss who is courageous, stubborn, forceful, forthright and risk taking. How do you perceive them? Do you hold high esteem towards them? Do you face conflict with them? If your answer to the above is affirmative and you feel conflicted leading to an entangled professional relationship, there is a serious need to look into your own perception of how gender has influenced your thought process and a fixed notion of what behaviour is expected from those roles.



Even there are several professions which are gendered such as police, nursing etc. This article endeavours to explain the gender role conflicts and gender role expectation, and also tries to suggest some measures to deal with the same.

WHAT IS GENDER

Gender is a biological form of human being by birth. While 'male' and 'female' are the predominantly accepted gender the LGBT are still struggling to find their place in society. However, this article does not focus on the biological gender, rather talks about the gender characteristics. Every gender is attached with a set of characteristics and the same become the perceived and expected behaviour in everybody's personal and professional life. For example, perceived gender role characteristics are also attached to leadership, and perception generally associate leadership with masculinity.

The expected leadership behaviour are directive, dominant, aggressive, and self-confident which are masculine behaviours. In contrast the traditional stereotyped femininity includes such behaviours as being emotional, passive, submissive, intuitive, nurturing and indecisive; these attributes are negatively associated with leadership. Exhibition of a different type of behaviour such as a male showcasing female characteristics or vice versa is not well accepted by the people around us which leads to conflict. But why does it happen?



Gender and Role Expectations

Though the gender, characteristics develop because of the biological developments of a person, that does not mean the complete absence of the characteristics related to other gender. Gender characteristics are of three types:

- Masculine – the behaviours and characteristics primarily displayed by male
- Feminine – the behaviours and characteristics primarily displayed by female
- Androgynous – the behaviours and characteristics primarily displayed by both

Sex-linked attributes leads to the development of a gender-schema which is constituted of cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness. Past research on 'gender role identity' lists the characteristics which are attached to a particular gender (see table 1)

Table 1: Summary of gender role characteristics

MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTRAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active • Acts as leader • Adventurous • Ambitious • Assertive • Athletic • Competitive • Courageous • Enterprising • Hard Working • Independent • Individualistic • Intelligent • Masculine • Powerful • Self-Confident • Strong personality • Willing to take risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodating • Affectionate • Charismatic • Compassionate • Delicate • Docile • Does not use harsh language • Domestic • Eager to soothe hurt feelings • Easily expresses tender emotion • Feminine • Gentle • Graceful • Innocent • Kind • Loyal • Loves children • Nice • Quiet • Self-sacrificing • Soft spoken • Submissive • Sympathetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive • Compassionate • Disciplinarian • Forgiving • Flexible • Friendly • Generous • Happy • Helpful • Humane • Loves children • Modest • Pleasant • Protective • Reserved • Tactful • Understanding • Warm

Source: Basu et al. (2012)



Gender and Role Expectations

Nature vs. Nurture

While the gender is by birth, the gender-schema is more of a nurturing process and outcome of the learning. Our brain is like the hard disk of a computer which is programmed to operate in a conditioned manner. These programming are developed through the nurturing process and becomes a pattern / rule to behave in a particular way. The schematic processing is nurtured during the developmental process when children learn to link to gender-related attribute starting from the colours they like, toys they play with as well as their physical attributes such as height, weight, hair style; which helps in developing a self-image influenced by gender perception.



Kids also start connecting themselves to the social roles such as doctor, nurse, pilot, movie actor etc. and try match their self-image with ideal self (what they would like to be) and consequently accepting it as a self-concept since s/he belonged to that particular gender. But, sometimes the learning itself is biased which creates a straightjacket pattern which might lead to problematic consequences. For example from the childhood the boys are reprimanded not to 'cry like a girl'. Similarly, the 'flamboyant' or 'tom boy' attitude in a girl is rarely accepted by others. The social acceptance or rejection of the patterns shapes the self-concept. The socialization process is the foundation of building the self-image.

This includes the unconditional love and affection received during childhood, the right and wrong definitions provided by the parents and educational system, the acts and behaviours which are socially and culturally accepted or rejected leads to a cultural conditioning. For example, passing an object to other by using one's left hand is considered as disrespectful in several culture. One student felicitated the chief-guest by offering a bouquet in her left hand which created an uproar and she was reprimanded. Nobody considered the fact that she is a left-handed person. This pattern gets reflected in every aspect of human experience including the modes of dress, social roles, including the ways of expressing emotion and sexual desire. These coloured perception by using the 'lenses of gender' influence the reality and produce or reproduce the gender traits. An example from my personal life may help in explaining this phenomenon.

"Being a father of two school going kids, where my wife spends most of her time in helping them completing their homework; I receive all the complains about the disengaged behaviour of my kids. But, I always try to convince my wife (when we two are alone) to do away with the pattern. We can't preach about gender parity and display the gender hierarchy by 'whatever does not get resolved by the mother is escalated to the father'. Who has created the hierarchy - we the parents. Thus, we can't blame the children. The children are unconsciously learning and there is a maximum likelihood of the same being reproduced unless they are sensitized to follow a different pattern."

Gender and Role Expectations

GENDER AND ROLE EXPECTATION

Traditionally societal roles as well as roles in organizations are assigned by stereotyping gender. For example home making and child rearing are stereotyped as a feminine role. These stereotyped assignments of roles also lead to role expectation. Gender is viewed predominantly from two perspectives; gender stereotypical traits or social identity. Gender identity has played a significant role in the perception of gender discrimination at work. The traditional outlook towards women in India has stripped women from their individual identities and reduced them to be a part of the family of group.

Since male employees are traditionally socially independent, they tend to avoid seeking support from a variety of sources. Conversely, female employees are usually socialized as interdependent, and therefore may employ support from various sources more effectively and to a greater extent than do male employees. It is also believed that gender plays a big role in the pain perception. The sex role stereotype expectations of pain are divided in three categories: pain sensitivity, pain resistance and the willing to report pain. It is interesting to note that both the gender feel males are more unlikely to report pain than females, whereas the later are more sensitive to pain. This stereotyped socialization also leads to a pattern of stress taking behaviour at work. There is a presumption of biasness in selecting female leadership owing to the above perceived stress tolerance. The two genders are influenced by the sex role assigned to each sex.

The social learning leading to the social identity determines the role expectation from people belonging to a particular gender. The upbringing process, life experiences, culture, parenting, education, caring environment, mental stimulation, the availability of unconditional love and support including the warmth, food, and healthy environment are the part of the nurturing process which shapes the gender role and the expectation from these roles. I have come across several female members who had difficult childhood experiences such as losing the father at an early age, no male members in family or being raised among all male members are all of which created a kind of environment that had led them to identify and nurture the masculine side of themselves. Similar are the cases of male members who had disturbed childhood, absence of love and care in life, youngest member in a hierarchical family without much authority for decision making. These male members are noticed to identify the feminine side of them.



The above illustrations are from my interaction and experiences of members observed in small group settings in various forms of human process laboratories. These members are found to be in a denial mode and are not ready to accept the other side of their gender so also not ready to recognize the gender characteristics attached to it though biologically they belonged to that particular gender.

Gender and Role Expectations

One lady while describing her passion for driving explained how she loves her bike as heavy weight, powerful and strong and distinguished herself from the girls who love to ride the lightweight vehicles. While she enjoyed the masculine side of her, she constantly denied the feminine aspects. When I met her after her participation in a T-group process, she told me how would she like to celebrate her womanhood. Being sensitive to both the masculine and feminine side of us helps in improving the personal effectiveness at work.



Negotiation at work is influenced by how people use power at work. Men are often perceived as better negotiators than women. Gender role expectation is also associated with the individual's status apart from power. While status can be defined as the extent to which an individual is respected by others, it is distinct from power. Power is an individual's control of resources and often conferred by roles an individual holds, including societal and organizational roles. Status differs based on gender, with individuals associating greater trait competence with men than women. Men are considered to be rational, assertive, and highly protective of their own interests during negotiation, while women negotiators are perceived to be passive, emotional, and accommodating of others' needs.

GENDER STEROTYPES AND CONFLICT

Gender stereotype shapes the gender role expectation. While studying the gender stereotypes in advertisements Lafky et al. found that a stereotypical representation in advertising do encourage viewers to internalize the socially constructed image of femininity, thus helping to define femininity and acceptable female roles. Stereotypes in particular, can play a role in guiding and shaping behaviour through a widely held stereotypes, with an exception that a person will engage in a particular behaviour having the potential to lead an inference that a person has engaged in that behaviour.

The research on negotiating behaviour found that men's focus on maximizing their own earnings meant that they either competed or cooperated. Women, on the other hand, held an interpersonal orientation and focused on relationships. Men's economic negotiation outcomes are found to be typically better than are women's economic outcomes. During negotiation men only penalized women negotiators, but women penalized both men and women.

Conflict is a process of social interaction that involves a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, preferences, and desires. Conflict arises when we feel threatened by someone whom we perceive operates from a different set of values and beliefs; is different from us in some way which causes us discomfort. In other words, it's a conflict of pattern between two people.

Gender and Role Expectations

The gender stereotype behaviour creates a role expectation and when the same expectations are not met, it leads to conflict. When a gender stereotyped role expectation from a female leader is to be loving, caring, nurturing, but in reality she turns out to be aggressive, individualistic and powerful, it leads to conflict.

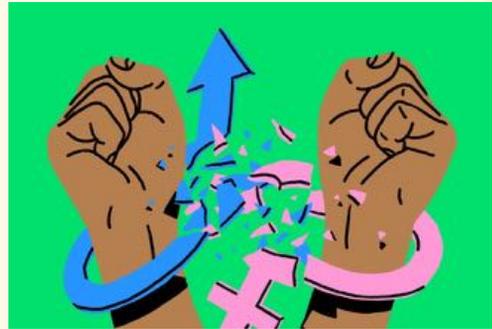
HOW TO MANAGE GENDER ISSUES

The above discussion portrays that gender characteristics and the related gender role behaviour and expectations are shaped based on the learning experiences. Hence, the only solution to handle the gender issues is to unlearn and relearn. This unlearning can happen through conscious effort and awareness about our own pattern, being sensitive about own gender characteristics and how do I behave towards the other gender. It is also important to know my own stereotypes. This sensitivity can come from training, feedback, self-assessment including understanding of self in relations to other in programmes like 'Human Process Laboratory'.



My decade long experience with the T-Group process or sensitivity training has helped me in recognizing and accepting my gender role and effectively applying it in desired situations.

While I am conscious about the application of my masculine side at work, I recognized and nurtured my feminine side for taking care of my kids. This has added to my personal effectiveness. The second benefit of being aware and conscious about the gender role behaviour is to reduce the gender stereotypes.



Once you are aware about your own stereotypes about the other genders, a conscious effort can help in reducing the same. But, it requires you to be open to feedback without questioning the same. It mandates you to be a good listener without questioning the feedback, though you have every right to accept or reject the same. Thus, the practice of self-examination, feedback and effective listening can not only bring clarity to your gender role expectations, but also be an aid to reduce your gender stereotypes.

The third step is to be assertive in your communication. Gender stereotypes and gender role expectation not only leads to conflict, but also takes the form of either bullying or victim behaviours. The awareness about the gender role expectation, your own patterns, and stereotypes can help in a behavioural modification, thus reducing the bullying and victim behaviour.

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Learning to work together

Dilemma of 'Doing' v/s 'Being'

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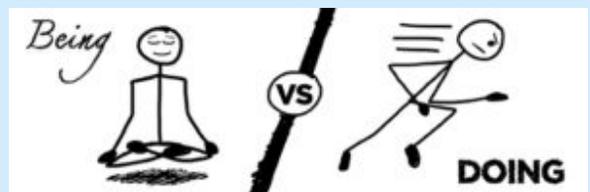
Prof Nagendra P. Singh is currently President of ASEED international Innovative learning centre Knowledge park Greater Noida. He is also chairman of the "Applied Behavioural Science Summit 2019" being held during 8-9 November New Delhi, organised by ISABS.

Many working teams stay in coma since individuals align to work for their personal unstated agenda more than the group agenda. They remain, quite often, engaged in working towards a blurry outcome till the crisis of deadline 'knocks' the bell. There could be variance in styles and individuals' manifestations. A few tend to make many or no promises to deliver the outcome. Some individuals interact and hangout for too long, ceaselessly work on multiple issues, and no sooner do they swing to non-issues without doing much work. They would explore a sojourn unless they find a sense of worth for themselves and purpose in it. Some of them make too loud promises to deliver; later they fade away on some excuses.

Eventually such people do have reasons to do nothing at the end of the day. ISABS-ians working groups' actuality offers classical insights that are so vivid with eye-opening meanings into *how a working group may need to learn the sensitivity and process of working together*. There could be different kinds of needs of one or the other that are generally satisfied, though collective outcome may not be satisfying at all.

The paradox is that poorer the outcome by a working team with non-adherence of agreed deadline and

shoddy outcome at the end, greater is the satisfaction it would give to selective psychological needs of a few. The mystery lies in invisible or visible dilemmas of "people on their purpose of 'doing' versus 'being'". While in all faculty meets on work agenda, we do begin with the ritual of emotional connect with feelings, asking "*where we are in here and now*", in reality those are hardly addressed by the group, as it prefers to move on the work with their own agenda in mind.



The fact is that "doing goal" assumes critical significance as against the latter. I have had several experiences of working groups where well known process trainers would display interesting mix of such psychological needs as a manifestation of their dilemma of doing and being goal driven behaviour. Let me share with you what I have churned out for myself as perceptible varieties of needs. I think that people tend to indulge in seeking satisfaction of these needs in the garb of "*doing, undoing or by being*" whatever they are in during the group work.

Learning to work together

Dilemma of 'Doing' v/s 'Being'



I think that people tend to indulge in seeking satisfaction of these needs in the garb of “*doing, undoing or by being*” whatever they are in during the group work.

Manifestations of ‘Displaced’ Behaviour

Individuals with strong doing goal would tend to rub others in pursuit of achieving outcome in deadline with their own obsessive quality parameters. They may find themselves uneasy in being an empathetic listener nor would they be sensitive to sense how others feel about what is being done in group. How others are affected in the group by their action or words is of least concern for them. A few might be carrying their ego-centric need to ensure that they do what they want to, by taking different circuit or path or by a short circuit mode. Another kind of behaviour would be visible in abetting, justifying or staying in torpidity with their feelings of hurt, staying at the periphery or in slumber with self-exclusion for a long time. It may sometimes get stretched till the end of outcome. However, they might suddenly rumble like a ‘thunder in the midnight’. They seem to wake-up at a wrong time for a wrong cause with a manifestation of displacement.

It may seem from the above that following ‘doing’ behaviour is fraught with problems. Does the solution therefore lie in ‘being’ orientation? It may not be so; therefore, let us examine.

Learning to Live with Dissonance:

I have come to believe that “being” always takes over the “doing” goal of a person in whatever situation or task the persons is engaged in. Therefore, in ISASBS-like work groups, where we carry personal experience of each other and also hold our own stereotypes about each other, many would be comfortable choosing one or the other for running small group process work. It is a conspicuous quest of affiliative needs and search for a comfortable working team. They of course display, with authenticity, their comfort for one another. Many of them, while choosing faculty partnership have been living with such a ‘comfort of partnership’ while working together for several years. I am aware of a partner team handling PDP group always together for several years. ISABS seems to encourage this process to avoid any discomfort to the preferred partnership in disguise of its own institutionally incorrect –‘*political comfort*’.

Its implications could, however, be harmful to institution building due to “pairing culture” perpetually stretched over long years by a few or many in the organisation. You cease to learn from each other, not willing to experiment and discover others who are your colleagues but may be less known and less intimate and less affiliative .

Learning to work together

Dilemma of 'Doing' v/s 'Being'

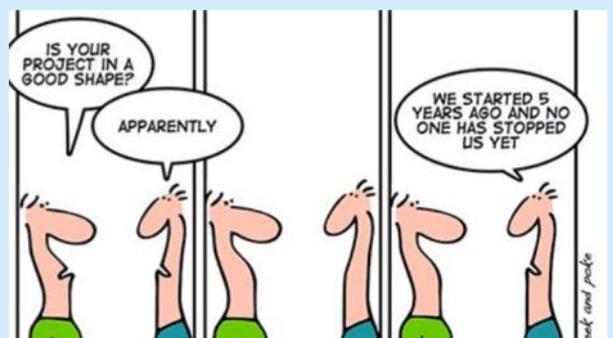
Many do not learn to live with discomfort while working together. 'Being' takes over and thereby 'feelings' ride our actions. My belief is that organisations more aligned to process dominance like ISABS does get in to illusive power tussle in the disguise of testing each one's process competencies while working together. We tend to process every time for everything without a tangible move towards action. One would notice that *purpose and nature of being* remains hidden, feelings stay accumulated, and one can never predict moments when the person would burst and why. Displaced behaviour of many doers is inadequately addressed neither by the person himself, colleagues nor by the key anchor in group work. So it thwarts the movement of the group, group process takes a different tangent, 'doing goal' is lost in oblivion and falls in a lurch of new process dynamics.

Thus there are several unstated needs that get manifested. Let us examine the variety of needs and its manifestations in group work experiences. These can be broadly classified here as the three "I"s - **Inclusion, Influence and Intimacy**. 'I' matters more than the outcome of the work

Need of Inclusion

It might be driven by one's need of visibility or sheer presence. He or she is always there to volunteer and raise her hand to work together, seemingly for a group cause. Almost everywhere, for every social or group purpose for the organisation, the person is out there.

'What a proactive person?' you might imagine of him. He marks his presence everywhere. Later however, he is in deep trouble as a result of the huge self-created demand on him by the group. The person would assume responsibility of doing for the team, and later would fail to adhere to the deadline. The person includes himself without losing any chance, is too generous in making commitments, and has visible presence everywhere. But that would create high pressure on the person to deliver and he would eventually come back with 'sorry' or genuine excuses. My several experiences of Process trainers' working teams largely from ISABS background have unravelled myths of such redundant inclusive behaviour with little of team spirit.



Need of Influence

Taking lead, setting agenda, voicing larger purpose and making tall inspiring promises would bring the person to a perch of the centre stage. It is a very influential behaviour. Group would raise its self-standards, self-expectations, get motivated and inspired by leading and influencing behaviour of these persons at the outset. These people are very useful in business meets and early stages of group work.

Learning to work together

Dilemma of 'Doing' v/s 'Being'

They eat-up much time and use maximum space of the group with their bright ideas and verbosity but on the action front, they would set conditions and guidelines without being sensitive to where others are. Rather, they would shut themselves off to the group members' needs. These persons would neither appear empathetic nor sensitive to manifestations of others 'being'. Such a person is typical to blame other things in case of a delay or failure. Such a 'Doer' keeps demanding the quality and end result without listening to what others or co-players would feel. He plays in the last over by hitting the 'sixer' on a cricket ground. His personal being demands impact of his own unique manifestation in the quest of self appreciation, and also projects an image of an outstanding doer. Rather he tends to make others do his job by influencing and pressurising.

Need of Intimacy

It is a very interesting process, as a spin-off of our so called affiliative culture, generally seen in ISABS work group meets. People choose to work together where individuals' wavelength, mindset, styles or unconscious attractiveness to each other is perceptible. In some cases, faculty members would latch on to one or other for team work. They would choose their partner, to work with X person, in advance even before coming to the venue for meeting. Affiliative signals are shown and stances are taken to justify the nature of proposed partnerships quite often.

In reality, being intimate and friendly becomes the prime purpose of working together. As a consequence, experimenting, exploring a new person to learn about oneself and other, would find a secondary place. Such a manifestation at time breeds new social dynamics of *collusion, pairing, cliques* that go unaddressed. Of course, ISABS or any other similar organisation would become victim of its consequences. It propels the work group to new power dynamics and thwarts the purpose of doing together for a larger common goal. Task that can be done in few hours would continue for several hours and days. Finally it gets derailed because process driven people are too good in processing the variables of the consequences of 'being' than 'doing' or addressing purpose of working together around a task. As stated, the task is delayed or undone or it takes off on a completely tangential path.



So a balance of 'doing' and 'being' is what is needed. Is it that our inability to live with our inner discomfort and uneasiness for taking up a larger 'doing goal', a matter of self analysis and exploration?

Learning to work together

Dilema of 'Doing' v/s 'Being'

Summing up

I have shared what I learnt while working in several work groups, faculty team for process learning, organisational task and facilitation work. Insights stated here are my personal reflections and what they mean to me. Needless to say, there have also been quite a few occasions in ISABS domain, where I was thrilled to have very meaningful moments in several working groups. Members would not hesitate to appreciate each other and build up on each other's piece of job. They would take something undone without any judgment and bias to complete the process. There have been differences in degree of maturity and competence within the group in different working groups of ISABS. But the 'being' does matter. However, to my utter despair, value based learning, transparency and accountability, shared responsibility with authenticity seem to have eroded as the core of many a team-work.



Yet, I have learnt to live with my discomfort and have begun accepting the way the other person is. I do not question why he or she is not the way I want her to be in my work groups. Eventually the outcome does suffer many a times.

But I do not walk out nor do I run away. I do not sulk, nor do I lodge complaint with anybody. I choose to stay with my dismay and dissonance and test my abilities whether I can cope. I wake up, assert and make sense to my worth - with dignity to others' and mine. I do not get into the game of "intimacy", nor of "influence"- I get into 'doing'. A 'Doing' goal would then be on the driving seat - enriching, fulfilling, deviant and different, new; and innovativeness creeps within.

As a consequence however, a 'Doer' gets isolated and sits on the pinnacle of his loneliness. His excellence and completeness of action does not always build a congenial relationship in the team. At times, I do experience that state in pursuit of excellence. At some other occasions, I choose to just let go, instead of pushing myself. I discover that I have grown by seeing the unknown sides of many and also mine through others' eyes. Had I not worked with them, I would not have discovered so much of my being. Thank God I could live with my inabilities, without disgust and apathy, and remained functional as well; I say to myself. So what if I fail; I tell my little bird inside me *"learning does not come by being a skillful and veteran "Process trainer" with a brand and perch of prestigious role, but by being a genuine learner. Let me strive to be that I meant to be."*

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Rakhee is energetic & passionate with an amazing ability to connect with people. An artist, poet and avid learner who is deeply intrigued with human psyche. Her quest in life is to understand the why behind our actions. Her motto in life is "Lead your life like a dictionary providing meaning to everyone who refers to you."

Wisdom! Wisdom! Good old wisdom
where do I find you?
Tell me some signs that can help me
recognize you
Wisdom my dear is everywhere,
You need to spot it for it to appear
It is the obvious thing to do
But we often are too driven by our own
motives / judgement / intents
That we completely fail to see what our
most natural response should be

In every situation we tend to react
Without thinking enough of the impact
we create
This causes confusion, chaos and
mistrust all around
Remember a wise Never reacts but only
responds
Keeping in mind what the context
demands

Another trait which the wise displays is
that
He has the ability to clip his haste
His every action is thought through
So the impact it creates is always
desired and true

Holding your judgement is not an easy
task,
The wise seems to have mastered this
art

When you see a wise in action,
You see the power of communication
unfold
Its nothing fancy but the sheer
authenticity of what they speak
which touches your core

Just as wisdom is not easily seen
Similarly the wise are not easy to spot
They are often lost in the crowd
They don't proclaim their greatness by
talking about it aloud
They often lie low and speak when
asked to
But what they speak makes a world of
difference
Because of the perspective they bring
Which changes the entire scene.

Remember wise is not here to prove a
point
He is around to ease the tension
To foster collaboration and spread
happiness around

Being wise is a responsibility which
demands a lot from you
Because everything you do
You have to take the responsibility for it
As there is no one with whom you can
pass on the blame to

Wisdom

Taking Credit is often the one the wise dislikes most
They often shy away from their own Sunshine
For they are busy helping the others shine
Gratitude my friend is their biggest virtue
Which is the jewel every wise displays too

People with wisdom don't blow their trumpet
Reminding others about what they have done for them
They believe in doing well for others is their opportunity to serve the world
They empower you and move on without any expectations in return
Humility is what they embody in every act they do
For giving is what satisfies and liberates them too

A wise is always lost in a thought deep within
It's the place where he challenges and reasons with self
That's where he answers his own self
His depth is his edge which differentiates him from the herd
It's his originality which is both compelling and weird

A wise has to charter his journey alone
For he walks the path which is unknown
Not everyone can relate to him
For he often challenges the set patterns of the world
With a strong logic & conviction which cannot be denied
Hence many people usually opt to avoid

Wise is a power house of Personal power
They are driven from within
Everyone who connects with them experiences this power
And then they become a fan forever
The beauty is they don't command respect
It's just the charisma that they carry
Which makes you respect them for who they are

Wise are born story tellers
They mould your actions through the stories they tell
They are never eager to prove a point
They often leave you with a question unresolved
Which compels you to find your own solutions
Building your skill to face the world and be more wise and sorted
All the while they sit back silent and carefully observe how you fare
Quick enough to intervene when you need support and care

There are very few such wise gems around the world
Remember to hold them when you find one
For wisdom is a virtue which is rarely found.



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Patriarchy, Feminisms, Empathy and Egalitarianism

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I was once explaining Patriarchy to my 11-year old daughter, what it means, its origins and impact on society today. As a curious test of my support for feminism in our family, I asked my daughter, “So, what do you think, what kind of family are we?”. She thought for a while and said patriarchal. My heart skipped a beat at the signs of a potential failure. She however, immediately spoke “No, no, matriarchal”. And before I could make sense of what she is trying to say, she blurted “No, actually we are a “bi-triarchal family”. I started to laugh and wanted to tell her that no such word exists, but then it stuck me what she was actually trying to say.

That is when the true sense of feminism dawned to me. It is not about more power to women or less power to men – it is about equality – of power and freedom. And in fact, there is already a term for it – **Egalitarianism**.

Unfortunately, today feminism seems to be seen only as more power to women and hence is in a constant state of clash with patriarchy. Patriarchy does give more visible power to men and when Feminism seem to be taking this away this power from them, there is a fight (both visible and subtle) to hold on to this power.

Men wouldn't want to give-up this power and fear rendering themselves powerless and live in a fear of being exploited (*what they have been doing to women for centuries*). No wonder the war and struggles and push and pull between genders has been raging on for so long with no end in view.

For true equality to be set-in, fight needs to move away from power.



This statement may come in as a rude shock to many. Especially in the times, when, due to higher levels of sensitivity to gender issues, the ills of patriarchy are coming out in open every single day. Thereby further increasing the overall awareness of the issue.

In a society where gender inequality is right in your face. From overt issues like women not having a say in decisions regarding their own lives and choices they should make; misogyny being on a rise; women safety and crime against women being one of the biggest issues we deal with. To covert issues which

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to covert issues which run much deeper and equally damaging e.g. objectification of women, especially in the main stream media, (*which is not even seen as a big issue*); the implicit expectation from women to sacrifice her dreams for the well-being of the family; girls expected to be nice, not get angry and violent and looking good is kind of obligatory; for working women, making a balance between work and home seems to be only her responsibility as many men still don't take up these responsibilities at home.

The Ills of Power due to Patriarchy are just too many, that one cannot think of anything but fighting it.



However, even in such a scenario, for true equality to be set-in, we need to say good bye to fight for power. We need to say good bye to the notions where a woman is seen as powerful only when she acts strong (man like), takes powerful corporate roles and as they say in the US, Kicks ass.

This only creates a counter power force, which is then attempted to be pulled down by all those who start feeling intimidated and experience an apparent loss of power.

On the contrast egalitarianism is not about “more” but equal power to everyone. And the most important form of power is power of choice. And for that to happen, the first step is to understand that power exists beyond its visible manifest forms - the brute power, which, in today's society, men have more of and women have less of (hence the struggle to have more of it).

There, however, is another form of power, the softer form, which is beyond (and probably even more powerful) than this visible manifest form – the power of sensitivity, flexibility, nurturing and vulnerability.

Have you ever imagined that the stereotypical macho-man also lacks power? Maybe not the typical visible hard form of power, but of a subtle form. That he has no power to act soft and vulnerable; that he does not have the power to act nurturing, flexible and kind; that he is powerless to access his own feminine energy (*Anima – the feminine inner personality of the man – as described by Carl Jung*). For men due to this repressed sensitivity, Anima becomes one of the most significant complexes they face. Jung viewed the anima as being one of the sources of creative ability, and imagine men being powerless to access this source.

Both men and women need to understand and acknowledge the powerlessness of men too, which however, unfortunately is not even recognized by most, let alone acknowledged. The reasons being for most women, it is due to ignorance that such issue can exist ...

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And for men, it is because - one they do not have spaces to be able to speak and talk about this; and two that it is so suppressed, that they don't even acknowledge this powerlessness.

For example, if a man does not want to follow a corporate career, wants to be a sit-at-home dad, one can imagine what kind of reactions it will generate in his close circles. Some will ridicule and some will look down at him. Do we see the powerlessness of not being able to live one's choices, even for men!

Men have to live under this constant pressure to "Be a man". To be the provider, to stand tall and brave, even when he may be feeling weak inside. To be able to act tough and strong, when within him he may want to mourn and cry in despair. And it is a huge pressure to live with. And to make it worse, unlike women, men have no spaces to speak about it, not even to their close friends, as they fear being ostracized, ridiculed and called a sissy!



Most men have been forced to live this all powerful super-macho-man role. And we all know that this super-macho-man is just a myth and being forced to live it all the time is a trap, which internally tires the man and externally makes him insensitive and rough.

And when feminism tries to take away this brute-macho-power, we only see a see-saw of power balance moving from one extreme to another.

True equality is possible only when both men and women are able to see and acknowledge the suppressed side of each other. Where women are able to empathize with the lack of sensitive spaces for men and men are able to empathize with the lack of freedom and individuality for women, can there be a shift.

Patriarchy is a curse for both Women and Men.

While highlighting the issues men face, I am not discounting the challenges women face. However, only when we see patriarchy as a curse for both men and women and attempt to see the **victim in the prosecutor**, can we move to a possibility to have more equality in the society, and egalitarianism – i.e. the power of choice and freedom for both men and women in their own forms and shapes – hopefully would be more accepted, recognized, respected and lived.

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