The background is a deep blue night sky filled with numerous small, bright stars. A prominent, glowing blue beam of light originates from a central point near the top and extends downwards and to the left, curving slightly. A silhouette of a bird in flight is positioned in the upper right quadrant, with its wings spread. In the lower portion of the image, several classical-style columns are visible, partially obscured by soft, white clouds. The overall aesthetic is ethereal and contemplative.

# A Richer State of Being

*One idea at a time*

Kamran Rizvi & Shireen Naqvi

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# Dedication

To all those who are alive to  
possibilities within and  
around them.

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- To our families and friends whose understanding and care has made all the difference.

A special thanks to Emran Baluch, our amazingly creative colleague in Navitus, for the cover design and for going out of his way to do everything he did to get the manuscript to print.

Kamran Rizvi &  
Shireen Naqvi

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Islamabad  
Nov 2013

# Prologue

***Words and ideas we entertain in our lives are relentlessly steering us into the future. They have changed the world as we know it and will continue to do so.***

While the contents of this book will appeal to a wide audience from a variety of cultures and traditions, we have written this book primarily for our readership in Pakistan. This is evidenced by use of a few local terminologies in a couple of passages.

The first chapter, 'Why this?' sets the tone for the Muslim readers amongst us. We hope that it will be equally of interest to others in terms of gaining a perspective.

Idea that inspires us the most is that we are richer beyond belief, if only we knew. This realization is ignited when we progressively develop greater awareness of self, of others and of the changing environment we live in.

Words and ideas we entertain in our lives are relentlessly steering us into the future. They have changed the world as we know it and will continue to do so.

As trainers, facilitators, coaches and mentors, we have had the privilege of interacting with thousands of diverse people from all walks of life, most of whom have finally decided to shun mediocrity and pursue excellence in their chosen fields of endeavor. Excellence is evidenced by the depth of how much we care – care for our relationships, for our environment and for ourselves; by the expanse and beauty of our dreams – dreams we see with our eyes open, for ourselves, our family and our society; risks we take to turn our dreams into reality; and the height of expectations we have from ourselves and from each other.

What's the point of living without dreams? It will be a sad day when we die and our dreams go with us, without our loved ones knowing about them.

**Action:** Document your dreams now and share them.

This book presents a variety of ideas for you to consider deeply. They are in the form of concepts, tools, quotes, short essays and articles that we have written and have come across. We have shared these with our participants in learning events spanning over three decades.

You do not need to read this book cover to cover. Chapters are stand-alone and short. Each chapter represents a core idea which you can reflect on, hence the subtitle of this book, “One idea at a time.”

Adopt only those thoughts and ideas that you see adding significant value to your life.

Ideas inspire us, but only when we reflect on them deeply. We only truly benefit from them when we relate them to our personal and professional circumstances by drawing from within them their essence. As a consequence, we not only enrich our being, but are also better able to make a difference to the way we see and do things.

We urge you to take your time as you read. Don't be in a hurry. Put aside a minimum of thirty minutes every day to read. Savor phrases. Feel the thoughts. Try not to rush through words and phrases while reading this or any other publication.

Do not take for granted the words you are familiar with. In fact, make it a habit of looking up words that you think you know, in a dictionary. Surprise yourself!

Some apparently simple words carry a variety of



meanings. These can vary according to the context they are set in. For example, consider 'land' in isolation. It can mean 'people', or 'to arrive', or 'space' which you or someone else owns.

Likewise, if you think you know a word well, you should be able to recognize it by its meaning. For instance, “Effort directed to an end.” This short sentence is rich in significance. It points to: 1) effort, 2) direction, and 3) an end or goal. It's a comprehensive idea that encapsulates an agenda for life. What's the word? You don't have to go too far. It is WORK!!! We usually see this expression as 'effort' only, which is so far from the truth.

As you continue to read, please think 'quality', and not 'quantity'.

One word represents an idea; one sentence conveys an idea; a paragraph expands on an idea; one chapter embodies an idea; one book amplifies one big idea.

Therefore, as you read books and magazines, do not be concerned about how many pages or sections you have covered in an hour. It is all about what you have gained along the way.

Relish the sentences by taking a pause and reflecting on them. Feel the thoughts they contain and consider their possible implications in your life, if you were to 'buy' any of the ideas presented.

In different parts of this book, you are invited to

reflect - one idea at a time. Engage meaningfully with each thought. Pen your reflections in the spaces provided. As you write, imagine yourself applying the idea at work, and in your personal and social life.

Do not confuse the 'self' (YOU) with the roles you play. It is the richer 'you' that will enrich the 'roles' you play – as a son, a daughter, a citizen, a professional, an entrepreneur and so many others.

Transport yourself from who you are today into to a richer state of being. You can't be what you can't see!

Enjoy the journey!

***Several instances of marginalization of the less privileged, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, can also be found in advanced economies of North America, Europe, and the Far East.***

# Why this?

# 1

***Regardless of where Muslims live, they find themselves in the midst of everything that is at odds with their faith.***

Muslims living around the world are generally perplexed at their plight. Most are experiencing insecurity, victimization, economic deprivation, civil unrest, poverty and many other social, political and economic ills. Not that these dire conditions affect only the Muslims, a number of people of other faiths and beliefs are also suffering. The situation gets worse for those living in underdeveloped and developing economies.

More than three billion of our fellow human beings are neglected – living day-to-day in poverty and squalor. Several instances of marginalization of the less privileged, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, can also be found in advanced economies of North America, Europe, and the Far East.

Regardless of where Muslims live, they find

themselves in the midst of everything that is at odds with their faith.

To apportion blame is easy. However, it is our belief that we as human beings are responsible for the outcomes we witness around us in our respective communities.

There is a disturbing absence of adherence amongst most Muslims to the key principles and values found in Islam that apply to all its adherents, regardless of their age and gender.

Our observations are based on what we have learned about Islam informally - on a personal level, from our elders, from readings of the Holy Quran; from traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); and from Muslim scholars who appear on media.

Our intent is to explore why a stark contrast exists between what most of us claim as Muslims and how we behave in our everyday lives.

Our current perspectives about what it means to be a Muslim are mentioned below. Each view concludes with a question to encourage deeper reflection on our lives as Muslims and the environment we have created around us.

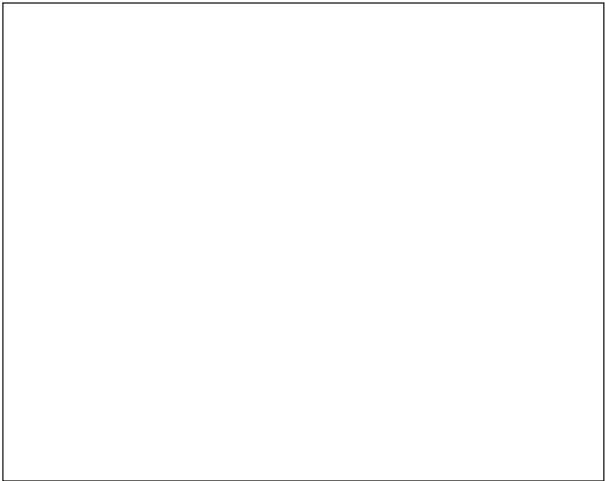
### **1: Mark of a Muslim**

Communities and neighborhoods are meant to feel comforted when a Muslim moves into their locality. Host community members expect safety and

goodness to flow from such an individual. Property values go up in areas where many Muslims reside and an air of prosperity and fairness is supposed to manifest itself.

*What are we doing as Muslims that is causing so much fear and resentment about us in this day and age?*

Reflection:



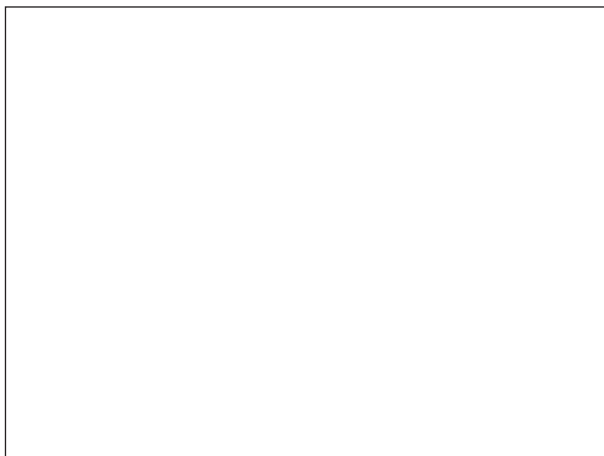
## **2: Hope and positivity**

Living in hope is the hallmark of all Muslims. It stems from our faith in Allah. Muslims acknowledge Allah to be the Most Merciful and the Most Kind. It is, therefore surprising to see the prevalence of despair and hopelessness amongst large numbers of Muslims.

Benefits of Tauheed (faith in Allah – There is no god but Allah) are innumerable. These include: Confidence; compassion; sense of security; integrity; cleanliness of body, mind, soul and the environment; hopefulness; sense of responsibility and duty; and sense of equity and fair play.

*Why do we witness despair, apathy and lack of social justice around us?*

Reflections:



### **3. Love for humanity**

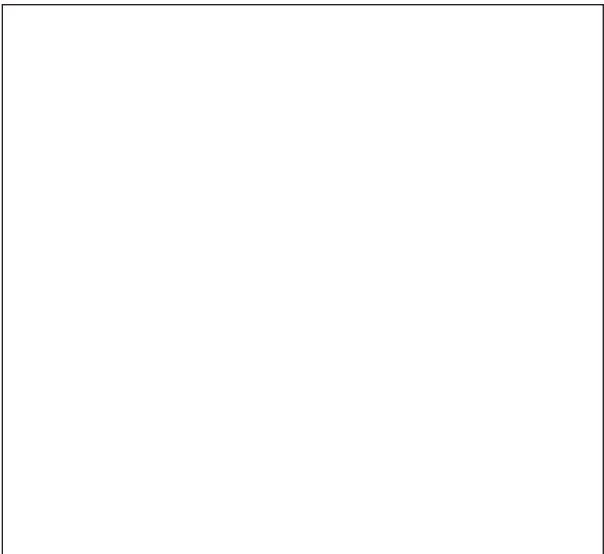
Love is life. Love heals and builds bridges of understanding between diverse people. Love for humanity at large is the essence of Islam. Prejudice and hatred towards others is rampant and completely uncalled for.

We are meant to hate evil deeds, not individuals or nations. Those who commit crimes, and are convicted in the court of law for what they did, must be punished for their deeds, with the express intent to guide the individual concerned and society at large to better future conduct. Nevertheless, their right to respect needs to be upheld at all times.

Human dignity and having a voice are recognized as basic human rights worldwide and are also the cornerstones of Islam.

*Why do we witness violation of dignity, exploitation, and prevalence of fear amongst the general populace?*

Reflection:





#### **4. An inspiring example for all**

Life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is an inspiring example for all of humanity, and not just for Muslims. We express our love for him, yet most of us do not follow his teachings.

He had friends and enemies. Some liked him, while others didn't. However, whether friend or foe, everyone respected him for who he was and what he stood for.

He was driven by love for humanity and displayed immense compassion and courage in his dealings with people. He was a Blessing for all of humanity from Allah, and no one could expect to be harmed by him.

His life symbolizes the value of character and stature over status and position. Despite this, pomp and ceremony, excessive protocol, and reverence for high office are common place in government offices and amongst the elite in most Muslim countries. Subservience, sycophancy, and duality have become part of the social milieu.

Islam teaches us that every human life is very important. We are all children of our mothers. A mother sees her child as very important. Every human life is very important, regardless of his/her role in society. Yet, we see the 'VIP' (Very Important Person) status accorded to a few, especially those, whose job it is to serve. Regrettably, they don't serve those they were meant to.

*Why don't we find enough examples amongst Muslims, particularly those with the means and the education, of such character today?*

Reflections:

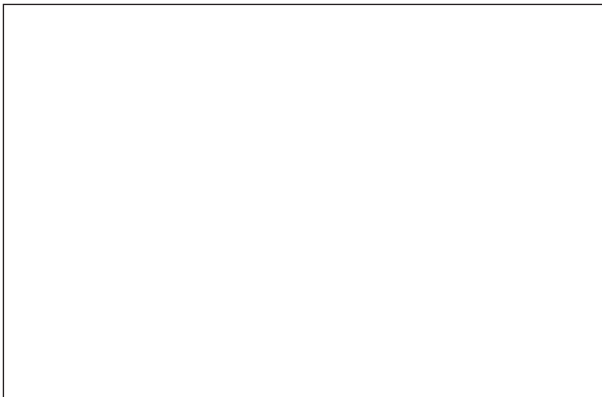
## **5. Best creation of God**

Every Muslim knows that all human beings are potentially the best creation of God. Unfortunately most Muslims do not come up to this scale.

If, as Muslims, we truly believed in being His best creation, we would take responsibility to think and act in ways that glorifies God. We would be keen to learn about ourselves, about our God-given attributes, our purpose in life and what makes us unique and useful members of society. Instead, what we often see is acts of self-aggrandizement and arrogance.

*Why, despite this belief, are Muslims not eager to learn and build their capacity to perform deeds that inspire?*

Reflection:



## **6. Value of time**

Allah swears by time in Sura Al Asr – which clearly conveys the essence and value of time. Value of time is not evident in most Muslim cultures. However, the call to prayer (Aazaan) is always on time all over world. Yet most Muslims are not punctual. Many in high office have made it a practice to arrive late to meetings and events as a sign of their importance.

Wedding invitations state the time, yet hosts and guests customarily arrive later, at times, more than an hour late. Managers who have an appointment with their senior, are known to be kept waiting for hours in lobbies, because their boss had other last minute priorities. What happened to honoring commitments? We as Muslims know that those who

waste their own time, and those of others, are wasting their life, yet we do not heed.

Key to growth and development is respect for time and precision with which we do everything.

*Why are we so careless about time?*

Reflection:

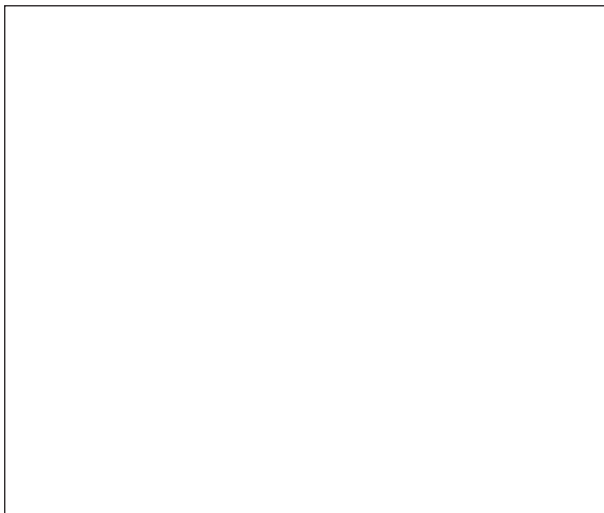
## **7. Cleanliness is next to Godliness**

As Muslims we know the significance of having a clean mind, a clean heart and a clean body. 'Safaai nisf imaan hai' i.e., Half our faith is based on cleanliness. This is so true. It is heart-breaking to see open and overflowing sewers and litter strewn across streets all over the place – in our neighborhoods and around mosques. How come we remain so blind to this glaring omission? Our comfort with and acceptance of our immediate environment,

whether clean or not, only reflects our individual and collective thinking.

*Why is personal hygiene and sanitation in urban and rural settings not given the priority it deserves?*

Reflection:

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We have only shared seven perspectives about what we as Muslims believe. Indeed, there are many more. They cover the entire spectrum of human life – its responsibility and privilege.

What we need above all is to be true to ourselves, instead of blaming all and sundry for the ills we suffer.

Change begins with self.

# Management is measurement

## 2

***What we don't count, we don't value.  
What we don't value, we neglect! We  
can acquire a richer state of being by  
counting our innumerable blessings.***

There are quantitative and qualitative measures at work and in life. For example, quantitatively we measure the plot of land we buy. We count the money we have. We buy or sell specific quantities of items. We count the number of students in schools. Parents know how many children they have! Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies (FMCGs) know how many SKUs they have. Steel factories know how many tons of steel they produce daily, monthly and annually. Countries know their unemployment rates, rates of inflation, GDP and the like.

Qualitative measures cover level of customer satisfaction and employee engagement. They inform us of our preferences with respect to designs, layouts, colors, menu items in a restaurant etc.

The kinds of measures mentioned above have to do with what is external to us. What we also need to

keep in mind is that people are behind everything that has ever been made, built or constructed on this planet. Sadly we are mostly focused on things outside of us, neglecting what's within us.

Half truths are worse than lies. This is a well known fact. We become victims of half-truths when we focus only on one side of the story – the 'outer'.

A deep dive into ourselves is also required to discover our infinite potential to make sense of the opportunities and threats surrounding us!

For instance, we have seen people speak eloquently about the 'outer' dimensions of life, commenting with confidence on the state of the global economy, the regional political conundrum and the like. However, the same individuals often stumble or find themselves tongue-tied, when asked, “Who are you?” “Why do you live?” “What makes you unique?”

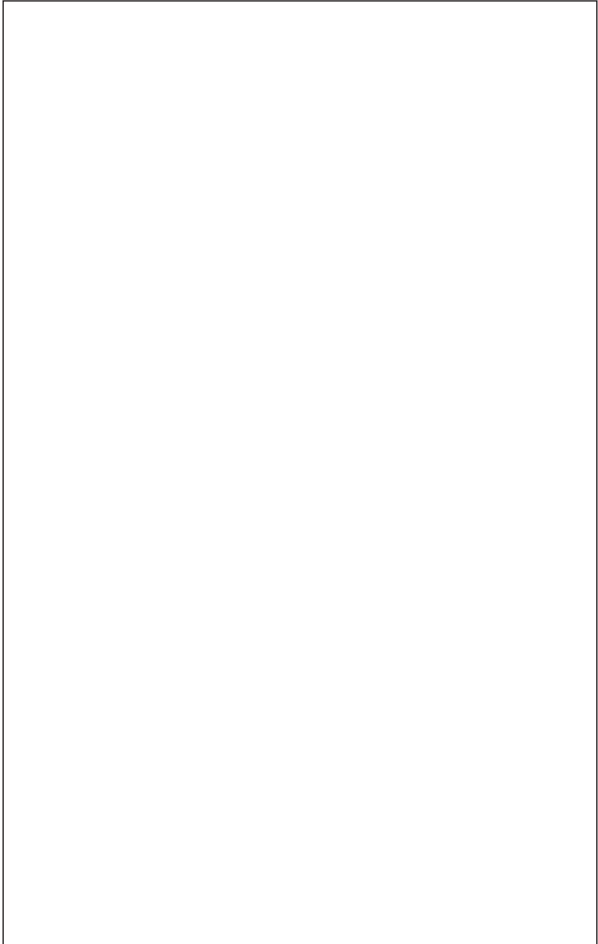
Whatever you have achieved to this point in life is by using your 'attitude,' 'aptitude' and 'attributes,' which we call our “AAA.”

How many strengths or qualities did you deploy to attain your current station in life? If your answer resembles these: “Quite a few,” “Never thought about it,” realize that these are vague and point to a significant area of improvement.

Knowing a precise quantity of your personal strengths indicates that you are managing yourself. Start by making a list of your attributes and qualities.

For example, you may write, confidence, patience etc.

List of attributes:

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Our attributes become our strength when they are in balance. For instance, over-confidence is a weakness, and so is being under-confident. Therefore, once you have made a list of at least a dozen attributes, evaluate yourself honestly against each. Ask yourself, whether you are using each of your attributes in an intelligent way, according to what the situation and person demands.

In addition to the above, something else you can measure is all the good things you feel you can do.

As you begin to make a list, you will be amazed with the sheer number of items you record. What may surprise you even more is that although you can do many of the things listed, you don't do some of them, even though you can make time for them, if you cared enough.

To miss out on a few tasks identified is no bad thing, as you need to focus your attention on doing those things that will help you achieve your goals. This means filtering out the irrelevant tasks and activities, and working on your priorities. And here lies the challenge. We don't live in isolation. As individuals, whatever we decide to do, impacts our relationships at home, at work and in our community.

For example, finding 'own time', say an hour, for daily relaxation and meditation can be difficult in the best of times, particularly when we consider others who are important to us. Our relationships have their own sets of expectations from us, which places

demands on our time, often more than we can afford. As a result we get stressed.

'Living for others' is a wonderful philosophy. It shows generosity of spirit through our concern for others, particularly those we care for.

Trying to live by this creed is great, but only if you care for yourself first! This you can do by doing all it takes to have a healthy mind and body.

Measurement is essential for self management.

Manage yourself before you try to manage others.

***You are rich beyond measure.  
This realization will come to  
you when you become acutely  
conscious of the blessings within  
and around you.***

# Count your blessings 3

***If human potential is infinite, ask yourself why is it that so many of us lead finite lives and settle for mediocrity?***

You are rich beyond measure. This realization will come to you when you become acutely conscious of the blessings within and around you.

The act of acknowledging your blessings is gratitude; and the more grateful you are for what you have, the wealthier you will be. You are alive!

Look around you. The sky above is for you. The sun that greets you every morning is yours to warm you in the winters. The trees that line your street are there to give you shade and clean the air. The birds that chirp at sunset lift your spirit and so much else. Your heart is beating. You are able to stretch and yawn. You can read, think and reflect and make sense of all the things you experience...

Take out 15 minutes in a quiet space, free of distractions. Now make a list of all the gifts within

and around you. Write whatever comes to mind, whether it is in words or phrases – just note them. You can start by listing your physical, intellectual, and emotional capabilities; your family, social, academic, professional and business relationships; the myriad elements in nature that serve you day and night, and so much more. Let your thoughts flow... Surprise yourself.

I am blessed with:

Repeat this exercise of listing your blessings every 15 days, or more often, for at least ten minutes each time. Make it a habit.

You will come to realize that your present self-knowledge is the only barrier between you and your greater potential.

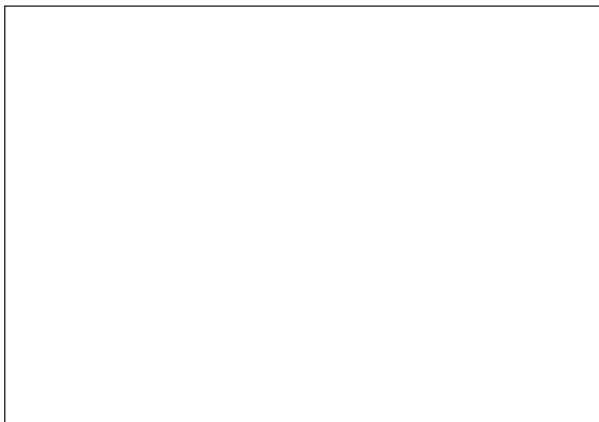
If human potential is infinite, ask yourself why is it that so many of us lead finite lives and settle for

mediocrity, instead of aiming high and pursuing excellence?

It is a fact that your current level of income is what you THINK you can earn. By expanding your thinking, you can significantly improve the quality of your life.

*How can you expand your thinking, and thereby, your possibilities?*

Reflection:

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***To be mesmerized means to be  
spellbound, to be fascinated.***

# Mesmerize

# 4

***All decisions you make are guided by your emotions. When combined with thought, such decisions acquire purpose.***

Excitement and enthusiasm – happy and awesome - these are some of the words that come to mind when thinking of a fascinating person or one who is mesmerizing.

Can you remember yourself being mesmerized by an individual – an event? What did you feel? What happened to you? Was it something you would like to have more of? Have you ever mesmerized others?

What works for you, may be different for someone else, and that is fine. When you hear Nusrat Fateh Ali's qawwali; or see a tree in full bloom in spring; or a young couple looking at each other affectionately; a pet seeking a pat; a waterfall gushing down a mountain; a tiger poised for its prey; an Airbus A380 take off; a dancing fountain – Ah! The wonders of our world are enormous and infinite. Do these excite you?

To be mesmerized means to be spellbound, to be



fascinated. This state of mind produces positive energy. One feels switched on and alive. The resulting excitement produces joy. We applaud; we praise or say a prayer, to convey our appreciation, which produces yet more joy. The emotion that drives the response is called enthusiasm, which stands for 'The God in you' or the extent of your spirituality. You will only move to act if your spirit is moved, which is called 'inspiration'.

Thus, it is enthusiastic people who are inspired, who then are mesmerized by the wonders of life and become inspiring for others.

What causes us to be mesmerized? Let's first look at the difference between 'feelings' and 'emotions'. We feel through our senses. These are the five senses that take their cue from the external environment. Most animals also have these senses, the difference being that their reactions are pre-programmed by a limited repertoire.

Though human reactions are also predetermined to a larger extent, we still have the option to choose a response. Our reaction will depend on our emotionality. A feeling will not produce an action. It is emotion thus created that will result in an act. For example, you want to buy a perfume. You test several of them, but the one you choose will not be the one that only smells good, but one that will connect you emotionally, subconsciously, to something more meaningful. All decisions you make are similarly guided by your emotions. When combined with thought, such decisions acquire

purpose.

The quality of the resulting action is determined by our attention to the emotion and the kind of response we decide. For example, many cars get burnt during strikes in Karachi. We read this news, feel it, shudder, pray that all is well and move on to the next article. If it was my car that got burnt, I would react differently. I would get off my chair (change in position), go to the police station to retrieve the remains of my car, call my insurance company etc. My neighbour's daughter standing first in class will be good news, but my daughter being first will cause a greater reaction, which may be buying a gift for her or organizing a celebration party. In gratitude, we may even give a donation to charity instead of spending on a party.

Thus, it can be said that emotions produce impulsive reactions, like falling in love, revenge, jealousy, or greed. But the quality of an act can be improved by paying attention to the emotion, engaging ones cognitive ability, and choosing or deciding an appropriate response. The word 'response' stems from the word 'to ponder', and implies a process of thinking, which is contra-impulsive.

What significance does this have on our daily lives, on its strivings, on our career or studies, on our relationships, our culture? It has immense significance. We are reacting impulsively most of the times. The repertoire of pre-programmed reactions, learnt by us through our nurture and environment, lead us to behave in certain ways. So if we are faced

with a problem, the reaction is to worry. On its own, worry has never helped solve a problem. On the contrary, it often disables action and puts us in a 'freeze' mode.

Psychologists have determined that, in a day, we react unconsciously two million times as opposed to one conscious response. Most of these subconscious reactions are necessary as they enable us to survive or make us go through routine matters that we need not spend our conscious energies on, but, left on their own, these also interfere with our ability to be more effective by choosing a better alternative.

When facing an issue, you can choose 'not' to worry. Like any habit, this too can be inculcated. The automatic reaction can be altered. You can choose to have faith, acknowledge that if the problem has come your way, you are sure to be bestowed with its solution, else the problem would not have fallen on your shoulders in the first place; and that if there is a problem, there has to be a solution. With this being the prerequisite, your brain is free from stress, oxygen starts flowing through it, and space is made for ideas to appear. This is called a 'chosen' act, or response. Once you have done this several times, and it is a habit, it becomes intuitive. An impulse, when trained with a chosen alternative, is called an intuition, the sixth sense, or the gut feel.

It is not only about what we do, but the quality of how we do it that determines the quality of our lives. For example, we can react to our studies as being a burden, as this is what our feelings will suggest, or

choose to respond to the challenge positively, allowing an emotion of striving, stretch and acceptance of the pressure and anxiety that goes with it. This response digs deep inside our being and illuminates our character and traits of courage, patience, persistence, trust are ignited.

Similarly, if you want to make up with a friend with whom you have had a disagreement, the feeling of having been hurt will stop you from doing so. But if you listen to your chosen emotions, they in turn, spark from your character the qualities of forgiveness, gratitude, and understanding and again trust. You will not let a precious friendship be sacrificed on the altar of the ego.

Since childhood, we have been conditioned to believe that work is difficult, tiresome and laborious. Work is a burden. We don't carry burdens happily. We make do if we have to. Work becomes something we have to do, or something we rather not do. Such conditioning occurs in many other facets of our lives where unquestioned traditions and customs continue to rule the ages instead of enlightened and innovative beliefs becoming the norm.

We work to earn money. If this is the paradigm we go everyday to work with, then we may not give it our 100%. If we are asked to do tasks we do not enjoy, work will further become onerous. This may lead to situations where we get offended too quickly; or we start blaming others for our shortcomings, mistakes or failures; don't take initiatives saying "Why rock the boat;" procrastinate;

fail to deliver on promises; lose sight of the big picture and feel caught up in the smaller issues; cut corners to 'get over it faster'. At times we even lie to get whatever is necessary done and over with.

Thankfully, we are able to emotionalise our work: it can be viewed as service. Every job and every position is relative to another person, community or society. Selling a product or providing a service makes life easier. Service is prayer, when delivered with heart, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. What would happen if the janitor did not come to your school or office for a week? Life and work would become pretty difficult.

Service delivered with heart is called 'emotional labor' and can become anyone's competitive advantage. In management, such people are seen as invaluable, and are appreciated not only for what they do, but how they deliver.

If you enjoy cooking, the dish that you prepare will taste far better than another's, who uses the same ingredients, but does not enjoy cooking. If you like meeting people and interacting with them, you will make a good customer service provider, compared to someone who prefers to work alone.

All people have their uniqueness and for each such distinction, there is a befitting vocation. How do you know what career fits you? That which mesmerizes you - turns you on - that which you can see yourself doing for the rest of your life - as you are in awe of it. All your senses are alert, your emotions are engaged and your character potential is liberated and

deployed.

Being mesmerized causes an itch. This itch needs to be so strong as to activate all your capacities to steer you toward the goal. You will not be free from this 'itch' till your goal is achieved. That is how Muhammad Ali Jinnah became Quaid-e-Azam. He didn't have to strive for a nation. He could have lived a comfortable life. But he had an itch that would not let him rest till he achieved his goal. The same can be said for all the great people we admire. They are legends because they contributed to and achieved a richer state of being.

***This moment, as you read this page,  
is very significant for you. It is  
important because you are alive!  
You didn't have to be, but you are!***

# Tapping potential 5

***Life is your most precious gift. You can choose to do something with your life, which will make a positive difference not only in your life, but in the lives of all those you care for.***

One of the many ways by which you can discover your current potential is to use the power of your imagination.

Regardless of whether you are 18 or 80 years of age, you have a past, you have a present, and you have a future – a future that you can imagine.

This moment, as you read this page, is very significant for you. It is important because you are alive! You didn't have to be, but you are!

Life is your most precious gift. You can choose to do something with your life, which will make a positive difference not only in your life, but in the lives of all those you care for.

Leaving an enduring and inspiring legacy for your



loved ones is something you need to think about right now.

Your dreams and aspirations define who you are and what you stand for. It would be a sad day, if you died and your near and dear ones had no clue of what you cared about deeply. This is your chance to put pen to paper and express your heartfelt vision for the future which not only drives you in the present, but also touches the hearts of others around you.

As Robin Sharma says, it is not tragic that we die; it is tragic that we let something inside of us die, while we live. What is that something inside us all? In our view, it is hope.

Hope is fuelled by faith – faith we have in ourselves, in others, in our future, and for many, faith in God's Mercy and Kindness.



Without faith, we lose hope. This leads to cynicism, despair, inaction and depression.

On the other hand, when we are hopeful, we dream of a better tomorrow for ourselves, for our family and for others we care for. Our dreams can be big or small. They can be boundless in their scope.

Regardless of their size, one thing is common – all dreams vaguely depict a beautiful scenario of the future, which in some cases is highly dramatic and attractive. Those who read it or hear about it are enamored.

Our story doesn't stop at dreams. Because if it does, it means we were flirting with our dreams, or worse, we were hallucinating!

*VISION + ACTION = MAGIC!\**

*\*Magic is logic others don't understand!*

*V-A = DAY DREAMING (SHAIKH CHILLI)*

*A-V = WASTE OF TIME (KHOTA)*

When our dreams emanate from a sincere desire in us to make them come true; we share them with those near to us, and we take responsibility for them. Vagueness of the beautifully imagined future turns to greater clarity. Intricate details appear before our very eyes – we see colors, shapes, textures, scale and beauty of the image that fully engages our five senses. We are totally captivated and our heartbeat hastens because we are magically transported to the desired state. We feel the excitement of being there. This is the power of vision. It allows us to see and feel success before it arrives.

Use your power to visualize the next few minutes, or the coming year, or a decade or even a time which extends beyond your life. Let's start with an exercise.

**The first step:**

Draw an image (without words and numbers) using visual metaphors that best depicts what you see happening in your life 5 years from now. You can depict elements from nature (e.g., stars, sun, water, birds etc.,) and man-made objects/creations (e.g., buildings, cars, roads etc.):


Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (5 years from now – day, month, year)



**The second step:**

Now describe the picture you have sketched on the previous page, using words in the present tense. Think as though your picture has been achieved already. Put in as much detail as you can e.g., Your family situation – immediate and extended; your career responsibilities and challenges; your network – how many and in what domains; your lifestyle; your reputation amongst members of your family, community and friends etc.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (5 years from now – day, month, year)

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### **The third step:**

Mentally remain in the year mentioned on the previous page.

Having visualized and described what you have achieved in 5 years, explain in detail, how you achieved the results you have mentioned. What obstacles did you face along the way and how did you overcome them? What internal and external resources did you mobilize to get things done?

You have just concluded mind travel and you are back to NOW.

What you have expressed in the preceding three

steps is recorded in your subconscious mind as done. If you have stretched your power of imagination beyond your zones of comfort (the familiar), you have expanded your thinking and potential. Well done!

It doesn't end here. You need to review your vision periodically, preferably on a quarterly basis, to re-live the future state and keep updating it as new experiences and information that you come across will help you to enhance, and fine-tune your description of the future state you have envisioned. This act of re-visiting will not only help you focus on your priorities, but will also facilitate better planning and strategizing for your life and career as they unfold in time.

### **Converting vision into reality**

With your vision in place, immediately set 'S.M.A.R.T.' goals. For example, if you wish to lose weight:

- **Specific:** I want to lose 10kgs of weight. Why is it important to you? A strong case for change motivates.
- **Measurable:** What is your current weight?
- **Attainable:** In how much time do you intend to lose this weight? Are you allowing sufficient time? Do you have access to resources to carry out your plan?
- **Relevant:** Is your goal going to directly or indirectly

contribute in the attainment of your vision?

- Time bound: When do you plan to make a start?  
How frequently will you review progress? By when do you intend to achieve the goal?

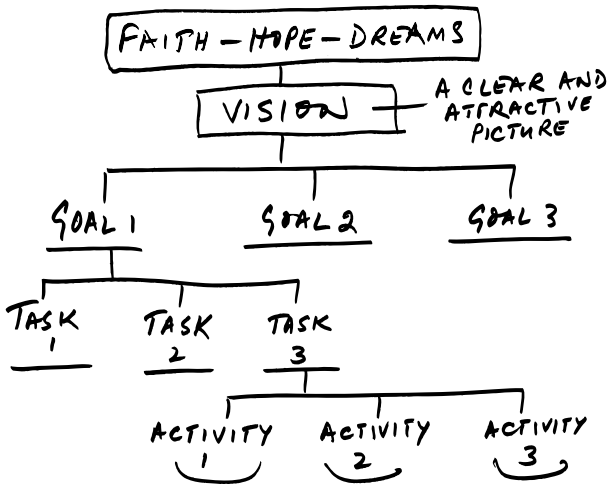
If construction of a house of a particular size and style, is part of your vision, you will need to set SMART goals for:

- Arranging financing
- Identifying a trusted property dealer
- Acquiring the land
- Engaging an architect and contractor ... and so on.

To achieve each of these goals, tasks need to be identified and all the activities within each task should be listed.

Once tasks have been listed, you need to decide which tasks you will perform yourself, and which ones you will delegate and to whom.

As a 'chairman' and 'chief executive' of your life, you need to structure and organize yourself and work with others to achieve your dreams. A goal is a dream with a deadline.





***We suddenly end up with 8  
billion worlds!***

# Inter-world travel

# 6

***“We see this world, not as it is, but as we are --- or as we are conditioned to see it.”***

Stephen R. Covey  
7 Habits of Highly Effective People:  
Powerful Lessons in Personal Change

Our sense of reality is based on our perception of it. We interpret what we observe and experience in our own unique way. Our beliefs and paradigms serve as a lens through which we view the world we live in.

It is a fact that all of the 8 billion plus human beings live on one planet called earth. This is an objective view. Through communications technology e.g., skype, facetime, facebook, whatsapp, tango etc., we are getting ever-more connected to each other. These developments have given rise to terms like the 'global village', 'globalization,' 'borderless world' and so much else.

On the other hand, each one of us also lives in our own unique world – you in yours, and I in mine. Think of the implications of such a thought. From an objective paradigm that gives us 'one world', we suddenly end up with 8 billion worlds, each with its

own flavor and texture!

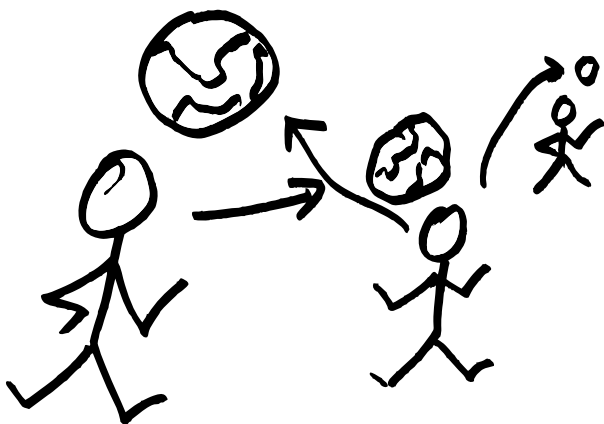
Ask a young female adult living in a village in Somalia to describe her world. At first, she will be taken aback by your request. But then she will happily provide an answer. What she expresses will be true for her. Contrast her response, with what a young lady studying law at Harvard might have to say. There will be a world of a difference in their descriptions. Their perspectives and that of anyone else describing their world will never be the same. Therefore, to truly understand one another, we need to step out of our own narrow assumptions of what we think this world is, and enrich ourselves by visiting the other 'worlds' around us using empathy as our vehicle.

This introduces us to the concept of inter-world travel. Each member of your family, immediate and extended, represents a different world. All your colleagues and friends inhabit their own worlds too. We hope that in your planned 'travels', you will be getting visas on arrival.

Inter-world travel is an interpersonal adventure – a journey into the unknown.

Start interacting with your immediate personal and professional relationships with this in mind. Make time for such an endeavor. You will begin to appreciate the richness of diversity around you. Your world of understanding and possibilities will expand exponentially.

The implications of 'inter-world travel' for our families, teams, and communities are immense. Imagine the benefits that will accrue in your life and in the lives of those who undertake this travel.



***Small thinkers spend most of their time talking about other people. Average thinkers invest their time and energy discussing local and global events, which are mostly outside their immediate sphere of Influence. Big thinkers, on the other hand, engage in exploring and sharing ideas that entertain and Inspire and serve to improve their quality of life.***

# Words & ideas

# 7

**Words and ideas have changed the world and will continue to do so eternally.**

Our thoughts make us who we are, how we see, and what we do.

Thinking, reflecting, meditating, visualizing and pondering is at the heart of self-discovery and learning. We can be big thinkers, small thinkers or average thinkers. The choice is ours. We need to find out what level we are presently at.

Small thinkers spend most of their time talking about other people. Average thinkers invest their time and energy discussing local and global events, which are mostly outside their immediate sphere of influence. Big thinkers, on the other hand, engage in exploring and sharing ideas that entertain and inspire and serve to improve their quality of life.

Thinking is the process of using one's mind to consider or reason about something e.g., "they have done some thinking about solving that production problem."

Words contain meanings. They help us see and feel things and also enable us to transport our thoughts to others. A word is a single distinct meaningful element of speech or writing, used with others (or sometimes alone) to form a sentence.

Since this book is about ideas that enrich us, let us take a deeper look at this word in the dictionary. Here's what you'll find:

**Idea:**

1. any content of the mind, esp the conscious mind
2. the thought of something e.g., *the very idea appalls me*
3. a mental representation of something e.g., *she's got a good idea of the layout of the factory*
4. the characterization of something in general terms; concept e.g., *the idea of a square circle is self-contradictory*
5. an individual's conception of something e.g., *his idea of honesty is not the same as yours and mine*
6. the belief that something is the case e.g., *he has the idea that what he's doing is right*
7. a scheme, intention, plan, etc. e.g., *here's my idea for the sales campaign*

8. a vague notion or indication; inkling e.g., *he had no idea of what life would be like in Africa*

9. significance or purpose e.g., *the idea of the game is to discover the villain*

Given below is an idea, which someone read a few times and made it actionable for personal gain:

"In the modern world of business it is useless to be a creative original thinker unless you can also sell what you create. Management cannot be expected to recognize a good idea unless it is presented to them by a good salesman." — David M. Ogilvy

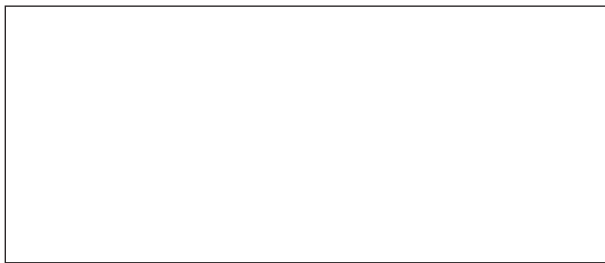
This is what Ahmed Chaudhry (a friend of ours) wrote after reading and reflecting on this quote for 5 minutes:

**I will create a screen shot of the interface for my personalized racing app idea so that my colleagues/investors can get a feel for how it would look to the end user.**



Now try your hand at the following quotes:

"Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things." — Theodore Levitt



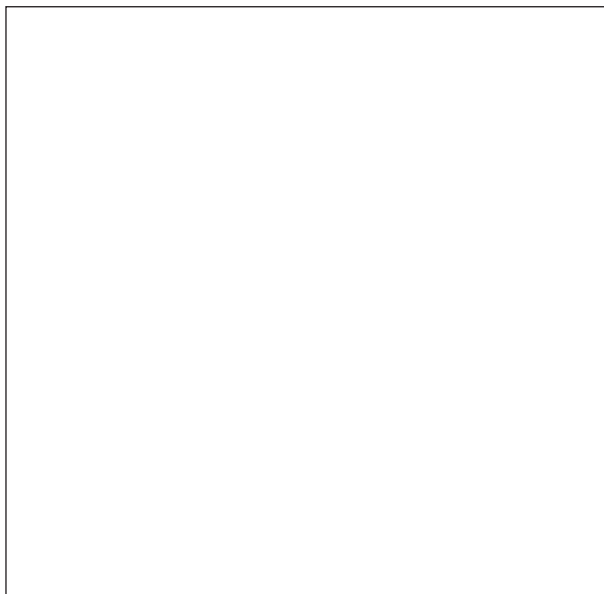
"Imagination is more important than knowledge."  
— Albert Einstein



"Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties." — Erich Fromm



"The innovation point is the pivotal moment when talented and motivated people seek the opportunity to act on their ideas and dreams." — W. Arthur Porter



By doing the exercises above you have seen how ideas inspire us, but only when we reflect on them deeply.

We only truly benefit from them when we relate them to our personal and professional circumstances by drawing from within them their essence. As a consequence, we not only enrich our being, but are also better able to make a difference to the way we see and do things.

***At the heart of most of our training sessions is the desire to help people discover their sources of motivation.***

# Coded for challenges 8

***We are genetically coded to take on challenges. Any excuse not to, is mere conditioning.***

Give people a nice office space, a high designation, a huge salary, but no challenge; they will shrivel. The younger they are, the sooner will they escape this spirit-less castle; the older ones most probably will hold on to the privileges as this is now their abode due slavery to habit.

Your personal reflection:

At the heart of most of our training sessions is the desire to help people discover their sources of motivation. It is to enable them to attribute meaning to their work and realize their personal worth or self-esteem. Rarely will anyone proclaim causes of their motivation to be other than extrinsic.

One such extrinsic factor is when our work is being observed by a senior, specially when done so with appreciation. Shouldn't the fact that "Allah is watching us all the time," be sufficient to guide our behavior? However, we tend to rely on what others think of us to feel respected, trusted and confident which becomes a source of our motivation.

While debriefing after teambuilding exercises, we ask what motivated participants to perform the seemingly impossible task. They invariably come up with the following:

- We had a purpose, which produced the drive.
- We enjoyed the challenge.
- We worked together as a team; learnt from each other.
- We had fun in the process.
- We had a shared sense of urgency.
- We found it new and different.
- We wanted to test ourselves.
- We were 100% involved in the tasks.
- We wanted to win.
- We engaged in mutual decision making.
- We chose the goals we wanted to achieve.
- We experienced a sense of achievement.

- We demanded new ideas from each other.

The above factors are purely intrinsic. External rewards such as, recognition, medals, certificates, trophies, incentives and bonuses, hardly get any mention, even though they are nice to have.

If this is so, why do we, at home or at school or in organizations, mostly offer extrinsic motivators to people? Wouldn't the above list of intrinsic drivers be easier, and definitely more cost-effective in terms of time, energy and money? Can we not see from this list that people can be encouraged to also be self-motivated? Why then 'hook' them to 'things' the impact of which tends to fizzle out in time? Can we not get over the carrot and stick approach that we have clung to since the beginnings of the industrial revolution?

How we behave with each other creates a climate of goodwill, participation and engagement around us, where the intrinsic motivators surface. This happens when we treat each other with respect, regardless of whether we 'like' the others or not. Intent and goal of our interactions with others is to acknowledge different opinions that might exist on a particular issue. Achieving clarity of expectations we have from each other, also helps.

Claude Bernard (1813-1878), a nineteenth-century biologist whose work challenged one-way cause-effect models of motivation, made many important discoveries concerning the internal processes of living organisms. His most important contribution

was his recognition that these processes serve to maintain a relatively constant internal environment in spite of disturbing external forces. This regulation or control of the milieu intérieur is an essential condition for all forms of life. In other words, a necessary requirement for life is the achievement of a degree of independence or autonomy from the external environment so that the normal cause-effect relationships found in nonliving systems no longer hold.

It is through this internal-dependence that the inner voice is heard, validated, strengthened and converted to action. This not only holds true for inventors, researchers, artists, scholars, etc., but for criminals too.

How do we get motivated? Nature is entropic, i.e. it ruins itself. Weeds will grow in an untended garden; weight will be put on if food intake is not regulated; anything will rot if not taken care of. The common words here are 'untended' 'not regulated' 'not cared for'.

Which force causes us to tend, regulate and care? It is human consciousness that allows us to steer away from the inevitable ruin to constructive creation.

Left to our own devices, we will fear, hate, be lustful, greedy, hurt, break and destroy. It is the quality of our upbringing and education that, hopefully, directs our motives to the contrary, these being the ability to question prevalent societal norms, which we unconsciously embrace.

Consciousness takes effort; it is about 1) realizing what we do, 2) stopping our inherent or spontaneous self-centred reaction, 3) choosing an alternate response that includes the well-being of others and concern for the environment, and 4) acting on this consciously chosen response. Living on this sequence is what makes us human. But what will drive us to avoid the selfish choice (ranging from a child snatching a toffee from another child, to a pickpocket picking your pocket, or a politician actively engaged in corruption, or a shopkeeper charging unjustly?)

We are born with the tremendous quality of curiosity. The need to explore drives us humans to push forward. This is one quality that has conquered the human instinct of fear, and has allowed us to venture out to discover new lands and oceans.

At birth, a child is richly bestowed with curiosity which makes him/her fearless, with the urge to try out everything. It is us adults that stop the child from discovery with warnings that he will 1) get hurt, 2) get dirty, and/or 3) break something. These are the debilitating societal norms mentioned earlier. Negative commands to our nervous system end up governing our lives. We fail to discover possibilities within us and around us. That is why very few of us become inventors and entrepreneurs, and instead settle for being enthusiastic consumers, docile workers and spectators.

In addition to consciousness and curiosity, what gives direction to our actions? Challenge is the word.



It is the key factor that inspires consciousness to spark the Will and curiosity to discover and develop a process to get us to the desired destination.

Our natural stimuli i.e., climatic and geographic differences, give rise to diverse communities and cultures within which greed fuels wars; lust for power leads to dogma; and power of love drives peace and development. History of mankind is replete with stories of blood, death, famine, evil and suffering. It is also embellished with great ideas; inventions, art, compassion and achievements. The former are challenging and satisfy our curiosity, but are not guided by our consciousness. The latter, however, have all three - consciousness, curiosity and challenge.

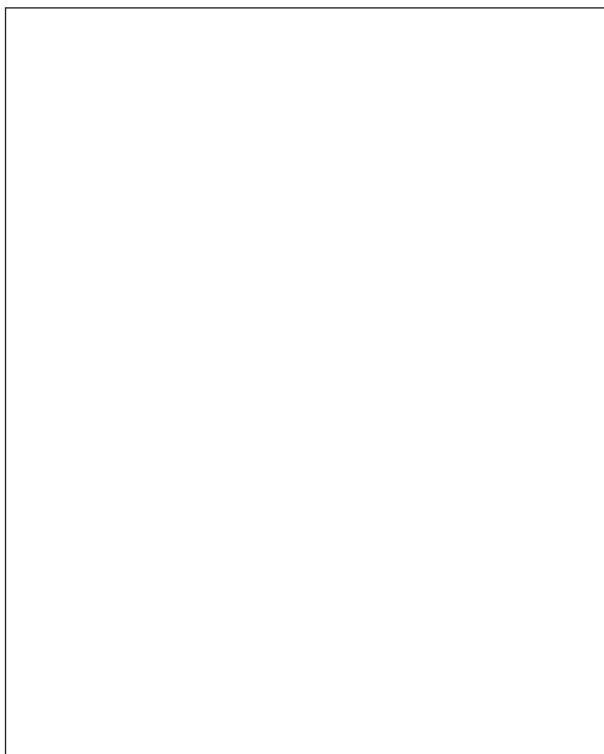
Even though history of the world spans thousands of years, many parts of our world today still showcase similar patterns. We still have those who hunt for food and struggle for survival; till the land; wage war to satisfy their lust for power; explore the intellect to advance, nurture and thrive. It is always the same opposites – one pulling us back; the other propelling us forward.

It is a delicate balancing act. Though the rules are set and consequences obvious, all faculties are available for us to choose the course. Our struggle to find a balance goes on. It's like walking a tight rope. The downward gravitational pull is powerful and persistent. It has to be countered with focus of mind to rise above the drag of entropy, inertia, fear and

laziness; so is the evolution of mankind a conflict of opposites. What we become is determined by the choices we make between these opposites and how we implement our decisions.

Will we become part of history as the destroyer or the creator? It's up to us!

Reflections:

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***We get trapped by disempowering beliefs and start seeing the environment as threatening or more powerful than ourselves.***

# Mind traps

# 9

***Your happiness depends on the degree of alignment between your dream and your daily actions that help actualize it. The bigger the gap (misalignment), the more stress and frustration you will experience, the more you will become a problem in society.***

It is fascinating to see how individuals react to a situation in different ways. One sees it as an opportunity while the other views it as a problem. The first one grabs it, the other tries to obliterate it or avoid it. The former is positively provoked by it, while the latter condemns it. Why? We unwittingly become victims of self-imposed limitations.

We get trapped by disempowering beliefs and start seeing the environment as threatening or more powerful than ourselves. Our constrained mindset becomes the toughest single barrier to self development. As a result, we experience frustration, psychological dissonance, anger and suffer from a

sense of helplessness. This phenomenon afflicts all kinds of people - the rich and the poor, the educated and the pre-literates, the young and the old, women and men.

Those of us, who do not want to see the light, will not. As the Holy Quran mentions repeatedly, there is a veil on the eyes of some, who remain in darkness. For such people, to delve into the unknown is inconceivable, to condemn is easier. Fear takes over and self-preservation becomes the only need to survive.

Faith is at the foundation of our being. We are raised in families that educate us in unconditional, unquestioned belief in the Omnipotent. We are surrounded by knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. We are blessed by teachings from Prophets - role models we can follow as examples to learn about what the highest form of human conduct is. Yet, in our daily life we mostly encounter people, situations and an environment that is hostile, disrespectful and uncaring.

Walk into the government's tax office to seek help with your tax returns. Upon entering, you will find officials discussing Quranic verses, clarifying meanings and enlightening each other on religious concepts. The moment you request for information, they will ask you for Rs 200 (with no receipt) to provide assistance. Go out into the market, and you will see billboards mentioning that half of faith is cleanliness. Beneath this board will surely be a heap of garbage.

Those fathers who teach their children respect, who run to mosques at the first call of prayer, and diligently perform other prescribed religious rituals, will not greet or thank the man in the elevator who takes them up to their office. Some of these very people treat their domestic help as sub-human, using a tone of superiority reserved only for them. They claim that is authority, without which 'these people' will not listen and may even cross limits.

What happens to children of such fathers? They are told to respect, but are disrespectful towards their parents. They are told that bribery is a ticket to hell, but are active in institutionalising it. They are taught not to lie, but learn to justify their own and their parent's lies. What happens to integrity in such a society?

Yet, pride and honor reign supreme. 'It can never be my fault, so the other is to be blamed'. The habit of blaming others takes root firmly and any sense of responsibility vanishes. What are the ramifications of such a way of life – a life without integrity?

RESPONSIBILITY  
= ZERO BLAME

Two dynamics hold us back from moving into a prosperous future. One, as mentioned earlier, is denial or non-acceptance of where we are, and how long it will take to improve, and secondly, we are mis-harping.

## Denial

Let's examine the former. Whether it is a principal of a school, a branch manager in a foreign bank, a teenage student or a bureaucrat, there is a tendency of seeing problems everywhere except in ourselves. We are in denial. We have managed to tighten the 'ego' noose around our neck so firmly that we'd rather hang by it than admit our shortcomings. It is sad to hear educated individuals, so-called emancipated employees of large organizations, making comments such as, "Good thing AIDS has started raging in non-Muslim countries. We will be rid of them without having to go to war." Or, as another one said, "The problem is that non-Muslims are unified against Muslims, and we are not." Such cruel and hateful expressions depict arrogance. This is scary.

Of course, there are also those who are firmly connected to their ideals and principles; connected to themselves and their reality. Such individuals lead their lives with purpose and fierce resolve. Included in this category would be those who work on daily wages on construction sites, the mazdoors (laborers); Maulana Sattar Edhi's team of empowered personnel; and decision-makers in corporations injecting huge funds into improving the

quality of education and healthcare to causes such as The Citizens Foundation, Layton Rehmatullah Benevolent Trust, the Kidney Centre; The Indus Hospital, SIUT etc. There are young boys and girls coping with studies, working and teaching others, all in one day. With God's grace there exist innumerable examples of such heroic and inspiring acts. They embody the spirit of generosity, compassion, humility and true greatness.

Opportunities provided by the disturbing state of affairs in Pakistan - the physical, mental and spiritual conditions we live in - are the mega challenges not to be found in the more developed parts of the world like North America, Europe and the Far East. For example, one of the highest income generating ventures in Pakistan is education. A few private schools in the country enjoy higher profitability and top lines than some of our largest industrial conglomerates!

### **Mis-harping**

The second reason, mis-harping, implies focusing on factors that are not really causes of a problem. People in organizations or students in schools and universities – often see working or learning as a means to making money (the monthly pay-cheque they get at work after graduation).

When money becomes the end in itself, it is the beginning of mental and spiritual stagnation. Just like stagnant water accumulates bacteria, smells and spreads diseases, so do people, communities and



even nations who are driven by self-sustenance only. The industrial revolution brought about quantum change in the way we work and how our societies are organized. Some management theorists and practitioners advocated means of growing businesses by manipulating people. Money, and what it can buy, became the end-all and be-all. People willingly gave away control to those who paid their salaries. The idea of capitalism got corrupted by leaders exercising power over people by playing on their weaknesses – either greed, need for status and/or security. A new form of slavery emerged, that of individuals chasing money, instead of the other way round.

The only way to break free from the rat race of man-chasing-money, is for man to pursue a worthwhile idea with conviction, sincerity and competence, thus becoming an attractive talent – one that adds value. It is only then that money will chase an individual. Think of any business, enterprise, organization, product or service; it was first an idea.

A person with an idea who makes it his life's dream, will attract opportunities. People around him will be inspired and will want to join. Investors, headhunters and the like will be in hot pursuit. In short, money will chase such an individual, similar to local and global brands that enjoy a 'pull' in the market.

The second factor under mis-harping relates to quite the opposite and may seem contradictory at first. In our view, role model institutions mentioned earlier, like The Citizen's Foundation, Edhi etc., are also mis-

harping. Conceptually, they are pursuing an idea, and money is chasing them. However, generating funds to keep the mission alive requires effort and leads to a degree of dependency on external resources, making the process inefficient and unreliable. To sustain one's mission, the source of funds must become self-generating. An organization working on a noble cause must acquire financial autonomy by generating capital on its own accord. This implies that non-profit entities must build-in commercial elements in their philosophy, not only to sustain themselves but to grow naturally and exponentially on an ethical and transparent basis.

Much needed logical and practical shift requires a commitment to a common desire, capability and purpose, whether at an individual level, or at an organisational level or in society. We need to know what one wants to pursue in life with passion and discipline. The urgent, driving desire and natural capability will lead to the discovery of purpose. This is easier said than done.

The quest for purpose and its identification is achieved by very few. A vast majority remains unaware that such thoughts exist. This is primarily the job of parents and schools. Imagine university graduates accepting a job only because they enjoy it, because it helps them actualize their higher purpose in life. After this, they will never have to work another day in their life. This reminds us of an old saying: "When you love what you do, you will never have to work a day in your life." Their inherent, preferred capabilities and their aptitude will be optimally utilized, with satisfaction as a natural

consequence. The job itself will become a mission and a key motivator, as it will align with the individual's values and beliefs.

It is by embracing the challenge of self-growth and by having the desire to take others along towards a shared goal that ultimately builds organizations to an extent and at a speed not deemed possible before.

Through our inspiring personal, business and collaborative leadership we not only foster economic growth, but also facilitate personal and social connection, and, in the process, expand human capability to a level that liberates us from the traps that blind us to possibilities.

Everyone is born with the ability to dream. Whatever your dream, you have the capability to make it come true. This starts with 'faith'.

Your happiness depends on the degree of alignment between your dream and your daily actions that help you actualize it. The bigger the gap (misalignment), the more stress and frustration you will experience, the more you will become a problem in society. You will tend to find fault in others and in your environment. You will fall and fail, get hurt and experience pain.

The lesser the gap (alignment) between your dream and your everyday actions, even though you may be far from the actual dream, you'll know you are on your chosen path; the happier and more satisfied you will be, regardless of the hurdles and challenges enroute. You will fail and fall, you will get hurt, but it won't break your spirit, as this is where you choose to be.

# The enemy within<sup>1</sup> 10

***In a contest between the rational desire to spread an idea by giving a speech and the biological phobia against it, biology has an unfair advantage.***

The lizard brain is hungry, scared, angry and horny. The lizard brain will fight (to the death) if it has to, but would rather run away. It likes vendetta and has no trouble getting angry.

The lizard brain cares what everyone else thinks, because status in the tribe is essential to its survival.

The lizard brain is the source of the resistance. It is our enemy within.

The daemon is the source of great ideas, groundbreaking insights, generosity, love, connection and kindness.

The enemy within spends all its time insulating the world from our daemon.

Daemon is a Greek term (the Romans called it a

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1. Inspired by the book: Linchpin: Are you indispensable? By Seth Godin

“genius”). Pressfield says that the daemon's enemy is the resistance. Your lizard brain, the part that the daemon has no control over, works overtime to get you to shut up, sit down and do your (day) job. It will invent stories, illnesses, emergencies and distractions in order to keep the genius bottled up. The resistance is AFRAID. Afraid of what will happen to you (and to it) if the ideas get out, if your gifts are received, if the magic happens.

Given the chance, the lizard brain will shut you down and the resistance will win. In the face of screaming resistance from your lizard brain, the rest of your brain is helpless. It freezes and surrenders. The lizard takes over and tries to protect itself. The lizard regularly suspends all civilized activity within your brain and takes over, putting you into lockdown.

The voice in your head has revealed the enemy within. It is trying to teach the daemon a lesson encouraging it to be more careful next time. The lizard hates your genius and tries to stamp it out. When you hear this dialogue, don't listen to it. Remember that it serves as proof of the resistance, and guard yourself even more diligently.

The challenge then is to create an environment where the lizard snoozes. You can't beat it, so you must seduce it. One part of your brain worries about survival and anger and lust. The rest of it creates civilizations. The lizard brain is here to keep you alive; the rest of your brain merely makes you a happy, successful, and a connected member of society.

When put on alert, the lizard brain wins, every time, unless you've established new habits and better patterns – patterns that keep the lizard at bay.

Some signs that the lizard brain is at work:

1. Don't ship on time. Late is the first step to never.
2. Procrastinate, claiming that you need to be perfect.
3. Ship early, sending out defective ideas, hoping they will be rejected.
4. Suffer anxiety about what to wear to an event.
5. Make excuses involving lack of money.
6. Do excessive networking with the goal of having everyone like you and support you.
7. Engage in deliberately provocative behavior designed to ostracize you so you'll have no standing in the community
8. Demonstrate a lack of desire to obtain new skills.
9. Spend hours on obsessive data collection (Jeffrey Eisenberg reports that 79% businesses obsessively capture Internet traffic data, yet only 30% of them changed their sites as a result of analysis).
10. Start committees instead of taking action.
11. Join committees instead of leading.
12. Excessively criticize the work of your peers, thus unrealistically raising the bar for your work.
13. Produce deliberately outlandish work product that no one can possibly embrace.
14. Ship deliberately average work product that will certainly fit in and be ignored.

15. Don't ask questions.
16. Criticize anyone who is doing something differently. If they succeed, that means you'll have to do something differently too.
17. Start a never-ending search for the next big thing, abandoning yesterday's thing as old.
18. Embrace an emotional attachment to the status quo.
19. Invent anxiety about the side effects of a new approach.
20. Be boring.
21. Focus on revenge or teaching someone a lesson, at the expense of doing the work.
22. Slow down as the deadline for completion approaches. Check your work obsessively as ship date looms.
23. Wait for tomorrow.
24. Manufacture anxiety about people stealing your ideas.
25. When you find behaviors that increase the changes of shipping, stop using them.
26. Believe it's about gifts and talents, not skill. Announce you have neither.

Any direction you go instead of the direction that succeeds is the work of the enemy within. When you say it out loud, the lizard brain retreats in shame.

The aim of the lizard brain is to make you safe, which means invisible and unchanged.

It's not because the books and classes aren't good.  
It's because the enemy within is stronger.

The lizard would rather follow someone else's map, then, if things go wrong, it's not your fault.

In a contest between the rational desire to spread an idea by giving a speech and the biological phobia against it, biology has an unfair advantage.

Fear is the most important emotion we have. It kept our ancestors alive, after all. Fear dominates the other emotions, because without our ability to avoid death, the other ones don't matter very much.

The temptation to sabotage the new thing is huge, precisely because the new thing might work. If it works, then you have to do it. Then you have to do it again. Then you have to top it. If it works, your world changes. There are new threats and new challenges and new risks. That's world-class frightening.

The lizard resists looking people in the eye, because doing so is threatening and exposes it to risk. Eye contact is enough to throw your lizard into a tizzy. Imagine how scary it must be to set out to do something that will get you noticed, or perhaps even criticized. This is the number-one reason people fear public speaking. It is the worst the lizard can imagine.

People who have a strong lizard often cannot push through the common fear of completion unless they can create a greater fear of total failure.

At work, the plans you may offer for better marketing or a strategy, they get turned down



because the lizard isn't listening and the lizard doesn't care.

The only hope for our species is that the rest of the brain, the civilized part, will care so deeply about positive outcomes that it will organize to avoid the lizard and will invest in systems that make the resistance less powerful. Some of these are: The cult of done!

1. There are three states of being: Not knowing, action and completion.
2. Accept that everything is a draft. It helps to get it done.
3. There is no editing stage.
4. Pretending you know what you're doing is almost the same as knowing what you are doing, so accept that you know what you are doing, even if you don't and do it.
5. Banish procrastination. If you wait more than a week to get an idea done, abandon it.
6. The point of being done is not to finish, but to get other things done.
7. Once you are done, you can throw it away (don't cling on).
8. Laugh at perfection. It's boring and keeps you from being done.
9. People without dirty hands are wrong. Doing something makes you right.
10. Failure counts as done. So do mistakes.
11. Destruction is a variant of done.
12. If you have an idea and publish it on the Internet, that counts as a ghost of done.
13. Done is the engine of more.

Your true work is to glorify the daemon. Your work is to create art that changes things, to expose your insight and humanity in such a way that truly puts your genius to work. Your work is to do the work, not to do your job. Your job is about following instructions; your work is about making a difference.

Letting silence into your day gives the daemon a chance to be heard.

Reality is the best reassurance of all. Over time, the cycle is broken. The resistance knows that the 'anxiety trick' doesn't work anymore, especially if you're friendly to the anxiety. Pretty quickly, the anxiety cycles starts to diminish and eventually peters out.

A personal note from Shireen Naqvi

Imagine a human being who is:

1. Courageous and ready to explore anything, get her hands dirty, as long as 'it gets done'.
2. Gets down on her knees and even flat out to rescue what's stuck.
3. Has unmatched determination and does not turn her back to a task till it is completely done.
4. Once the task is done, she moves to the next challenge, without expectation of a reward or praise.
5. Perpetually inspired and 'on the go'.
6. Always sees/finds, in her environment, things and ideas that will enable the accomplishment of her goal.

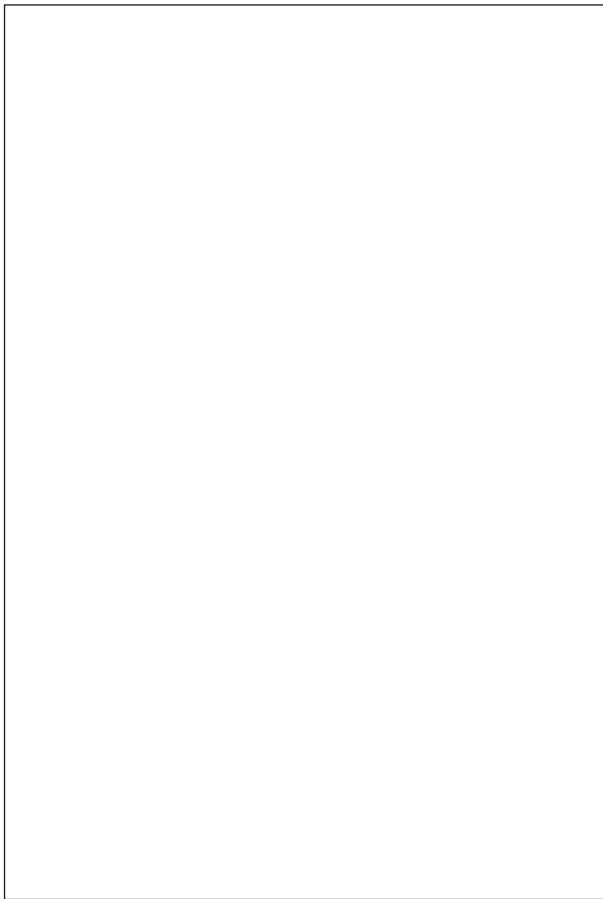
7. Even when she gets hurt she doesn't care as she is on her mission.
8. Follows instructions to the 't', but creates a 'way around' when she gets stuck.
9. Is able to clearly explain anything – a goal, a problem, a complicated situation. If someone does not understand, she will not leave till the message is fully communicated and understood.
10. Will set a target and make sure anyone in her environment, who is needed to accomplish the goal, is listening and available for action.
11. Is a natural negotiator.
12. Will go to any length, anywhere, to find any resource (of which there is no shortage in her world) to get the job done.
13. Create the most out of least resources.
14. A joy to be in the company of.

How much would you be willing to pay this person?  
Think and answer before you read on.

This is the description of my two-year-old granddaughter. It's not just her - we are all born with the gift of 'the best'. Then our upbringing ruins us. At birth, the soul is most advanced, the body and mind are least. As time goes by, the body grows, the mind becomes conditioned and the soul is subdued by fear.

Our challenge as parents, employers, citizens is how to keep the spirit alive.

What's the one thing you will do differently to solve your problems?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above.

***People genuinely want to become ethical and positive in their conduct but find few examples in their environment to inspire them.***

# Emerging mindset

11

**Science validates that entropy is stronger than evolution. In our view, there is nothing more powerful than the human soul on fire. Trap it, constrict it, beat it, burn it – it has to rise.**

There is light at the end of the tunnel. We have seen it in recent weeks. We are enlightened and dazzled. In the last twenty years, we have been working with our sincere and devoted colleagues, for this time to come – and it has arrived.

'Elevating the human spirit' has been our mission since 1991; awash with adventure; immersed in an urgent drive to witness people of Pakistan recognize and stand up to their immense potential. The seed then planted; was preparing its roots. The first buds are opening now.

A new mindset is emerging. We are witnessing a presence of hope in desperate situations. The daily

traumatic and tragic occurrences of blasts and bodies, strikes and strife; has shaken people to the core. The tremors are light, but can be felt.

The focus of our work has been to develop the human factor. The thousands we have interacted with have enhanced our craving for good news. So far, most of what we had seen were heads, torsos and limbs coming to work; habitually going through the motions of doing a 'job' to meet the basic necessities of life. The head on this form clearly had a brain powerful in every respect. Yet, the rote of activity pressed this intelligence and tucked it away in the corners of fear, lest a spark ignited it to challenge kismet (fate). Glimpses of this beautiful mind were evident in expressions of desire; often brutally crushed at the altar of 'loag kia kahein gay' ('what will others say').

People genuinely want to become ethical and positive in their conduct but find few examples in their environment to inspire them. They, therefore, end up embracing the comfort of dogma and become fanatical. This could be due to an apparent struggle with their own guilt. Dr Thomas Harris in his book 'I'm OK, you're OK' states that when a child grows up to find his reality differing from the script authored by his parents, his mind enters a state of conflict in which he tries to uphold the integrity of that script. This internal conflict keeps the intellect occupied, thus diverting its capacity to be creative. A sense of desperation takes over, leading to yet more irrational attachments for escape to freedom which the soul seeks.

What we have seen over the years is the common notion and belief amongst the well-paid-or-not educationists and corporate, social and public sector employees, that: 'My self-esteem depends on what others say about me'. This self-debilitating belief is entrenched even amongst new-entrants and fresh graduates from colleges and universities including the likes of Cornell and Princeton. Mood swings and internal conflict/peace are mostly controlled by an entity other than the individual.

'Shadenfruede' is a term explaining a state of joy one feels at the pain of another, is also evident. Criticism of anything and compliment of nothing is the most indulged in pastime. Impatience brings push to shove for more material self-expression. The strongest desire is the desire to be noticed, without which nothing is worth doing. Not doing what you say and saying what you're not doing comes naturally, instigating hypocrisy.

Not coming on time is fashionable. Lying is justified as a necessary way of life. Self-centered talk is the hottest topic. Ingratitude arouses moaning; mistrust corrodes relationships, and arrogance rules, covering up insecurities. The outcome – a quality of work and life far removed from its positive possibilities. We have also seen the graph of self-worthiness falling, and may have hit rock-bottom.

A few brilliant organizational leaders have struggled to pull, push, tug, twist, cajole and heave this dying force. A combination of relentless efforts by several from most sectors of society has brought us to a



tipping point. A consciousness is developing at last. Smart, fresh views and opinions are dimly visible. Thought processes are flipping for the better. There is not only a sense of realization at what we have been doing to ourselves, but also a keen desire for self-evaluation.

The awareness has always been there in the head but never urgent enough to move (or stop) the hand. The eye is roving, but now knows the look it is giving – control of its lid is slowly in grasp. Our proof comes from working with people mostly from local organizations and some multinational companies, who make statements such as:

- “Those who seek appreciation, are not worthy of it. Those who are worthy of it are too busy doing good.”
- “Often it is the lazy and the incompetent that oppose talent.”
- “We always look at others. Let's stop and ask, 'What have I done?'"
- “Why can't we look at women with respect, as we do our mothers?"
- “We see people who say and do what Islam requires, but their life doesn't reflect gratitude.”
- “Why are we so far from the rest of the world; because we have become like machines, only our hands and legs are moving. Like a calculator, we add one plus one is two; and no more.”
- “Our jealousies keep us preoccupied and take up our time; thus we cannot think creatively and invent.”
- “We want justice and wait for others to give

it to us; not asking why we don't give it first.”

The actions that support such thoughts are:

- Need for challenges has become a top motivator; not adding to but replacing appreciation, reward and recognition; bringing into question conventional HR practices.
- Stopping the hand, midway, while attempting to throw garbage. Bending to pick up litter from the floor thrown by others, putting ego aside.
- Conscious effort to be on time.
- A hunger for knowledge and openness to fresh paradigms (another bookshop has opened at Karachi airport. Bookshops are the largest stalls in Sunday Bazaar. Youth-led conferences and learning/action forums have increased ten-fold in the past 3 years).
- Guts to ask questions and share opinions.
- A need for trusting and happy expression, free from shame and remorse. We have had madrassah teachers in Swabi dance to Michael Jackson songs and ask for more, purely as innocent fun and joy.
- Young people working with the poorest with unmatched sincerity, not for a certificate but the sheer pleasure of connecting with our common humanity.
- People, for a change, not being ashamed to serve a waiter and cater to his emotional needs as a human being.

And so much more .....

This oasis is not a mirage. We are not fooling

ourselves; we have proof.

You find what you seek. The quest continues;  
conception is ongoing; the embryo of change is  
forming AND the labor pains are getting stronger.  
Soon, the head will emerge.

Science validates that entropy is stronger than  
evolution. In our view, there is nothing more  
powerful than the human soul on fire. Trap it,  
constrict it, beat it, burn it – it has to rise.

A quotation says, “People don't change when they  
are given a choice; they change when there is no  
choice.” Is that so?

# Sequence of change 12

***Destiny is not the chances you take,  
but the choices you make.***

“Mrs Iqbal, good morning. This is Ahmed, the college secretary. Your son, Noman was involved in an act of misconduct this morning. The principal has asked me to inform you to please come and take him home. He may return to class tomorrow.”

It was 10.00 a.m. Aliya Iqbal freaked out when she got this call. Her son Noman had never been involved in any misconduct. He was fun loving, had a great sense of humor, but never destructive. On the contrary, he had always stayed clear of disruptive activity, and often advised his friends to do the same. How could this be possible? What humiliation. What is going to happen now? What will the principal say?

These and similar thoughts consumed Aliya as she grabbed her handbag and rushed to the car. By the time she reached the first turning out of her house, she suddenly realized that she was mistrusting her son. She had full confidence in him then why was she panic stricken? There was no need. She calmed down

and felt sure that Noman will have a valid explanation for what he did. She switched on the radio and started enjoying the music on FM 89.

At college, she cheerfully greeted Noman. He was anxious about what she had to say, and relaxed after seeing her smile. He knew she would understand.

During the drive home, without Aliya having to ask, Noman began narrating the happenings of the morning. “You know Ama, today I did what all other boys do all the time. After the teacher marks our attendance, several boys jump out of the window and bunk class. They never get caught. Something came over me today and I decided to do the same.” Noman checked Aliya's expression, and was surprised that it continued to remain calm. That gave him confidence to continue with the truth. “I jumped out of the window. I did not hear the teacher scream after me and said to myself, 'Yes! I did it'. That feeling, however, did not last long. Soon I was overcome with a sense of guilt. The only way I could manage that guilt was to make amends – and do so quickly. I returned to class, told my teacher what I had done and apologized.”

That's it, Aliya thought, that's my Noman. Every young person wants to test his or her guts, even if it is unethical at times; without harming anyone. But as long as they realize the consequences of their act, make amends and learn never to do so again, the act becomes forgivable. Aliya kept nodding, affirming Noman's discipline and urging him to continue. There was no judgment required from her; Noman had

made his own decision, and that's what he'll have to do for the rest of his life. So he better learn it now in the care, understanding and love from his parents.

“The teacher was so nice, he told me never to do it again and to sit down and do the assignment.”

Noman continued. “Then walked in the teacher from the class next door who had been observing what transpired in our class. He angrily told my teacher not to let me go so easily and that I must be punished to set an example for others and to maintain the college discipline. That's when I was taken to the Principal. She listened to my explanation. I could see she was in two minds about having to discipline me and to appreciate what I had done. That's when she told me to go home just for today and return tomorrow.” That was the story.

“Ama, why does this happen to me? Why did I have to get caught? Other boys get away with it all the time. I am so unlucky.”

Aliya allowed enough pause for that last statement to sink in. Then she said, “Noman, you are the lucky one. It's those other guys, who get away with it, who are the unlucky ones.”

“How's that? I'm the one you are taking home. Those other guys are enjoying themselves at the canteen.”

“Sure Noman, they are enjoying themselves now. Since they get away with this behavior each time, it gets reinforced and they commit it again and again. That is how bad habits are formed. Their confidence

increases each time they get away with breaking the rules and this confidence makes them bolder. Their egos become bigger. Their security lies in the fact that they are too clever to get caught, that they can fool the authorities and get away with anything. You are lucky because you did not get away with it the very first time. God sent that message to you that made you walk back into your class and face the consequences, else you would not have been able to live with yourself. You had the courage to do so. That is real courage, not what those other boys think they have. Noman, you are special because God helped you today. All you can do now is be grateful and never forget this lesson.”

“You are right Ama, I never saw it that way. Thank God today happened. That is why the Principal did not expel me, she also knew, deep in her heart that I have set my own high standards that I would not compromise. I did a foolish thing and that is why you are taking me home. I've missed my classes and will have to work on catching up.” Noman reached across and gave his mother a hug – an expression of relief and gratitude.

In the next few days, to gain further clarity, Noman began analyzing patterns of behavior. Why do people behave the way they do? If someone is not happy with their life what do they have to change?

Probing deeper and deeper into the reasons, he arrived at the Sequence of Change, which says that if you want to change your life, you have to change your behavior, your actions. But where do actions

come from? From your attitude. The dictionary said that attitude is 'the direction of thought'. If it is negative, behavior will be negative; if it is positive, actions will be positive. That sounds pretty simple. "Can I change my attitude?" thought Noman. Sure I can. It's like the TV antenna. If the picture is not clear, I change the direction of the antenna and get the picture back on my TV.

What will I have to alter to change my attitude? Ah! I will have to change my thoughts and beliefs. If my belief is, for example, that I cannot become what I want to be because circumstances are tough, then I will give up, blame others, and not achieve my goal. Or, that I cannot get a good job after I finish college because one can't do so without 'sifarish' (favored referral) then I won't get a good job. But if my belief is that I can do anything, except become God, then the word 'impossible' becomes 'I-M-Possible'. After all, I am God's best creation, there is nothing stopping me from positively contributing to this world. I am endowed with infinite qualities, the best computer - my brain, a conscience and a Will. We do not have the result in our hands. We can act appropriately in any given situation and leave the outcome to God. Then why the desperation? When I despair it means my faith is weak.

Now comes the tough question. If I want to change my thoughts and beliefs, what do I have to change? That took a while to figure out. When the answer came, Noman realized he had been doing it all along. To change ones thoughts and beliefs one has to change the way one sees an experience or a



situation. 'Perception' is the word. "If I see myself as the best creation like all others are, then I become possible." That's what his mother had done for him. She changed the way he was looking at the episode that took place at college the other day, where Noman saw himself as the unlucky one and despaired. Whereas, actually, he was the lucky one and was saved from repeating an undesired act.

That would mean that every experience has at least two ways of looking at it. One must be aware of the negative side, but focus first on the positive. It depends on the choice one makes of how to view the experience. That choice, or conscious decision, contributes to the future outcome. And if the outcome is not as desired, change the way of looking at it and choose another response. That's it, so clear, so simple.

Armed with this knowledge, Noman acquired the skill of changing his lens, through which he viewed the world, whenever he chose to. When others used the word, "Hopeless," he chose to see hope; when friends said, "Cannot be done," Noman chose to think, "Can be done." And when he asked "How?" his creativity was ignited and ideas came flooding to his mind. All that was left for him to do was to choose among them and opt for the best alternative and persist patiently.

Which human faculty enabled him to become creative, due to which ideas automatically were fabricated in the mental factory? It was this power that not only allowed him to design a future but to

visualize consequences of the choices he made?  
Noman thought hard and long. Then he realized he  
had already said the word – visualize! Yes, Eurika!  
That was it!

Humans are the only beings gifted with the ability to  
imagine. We can create the vision of a future state. In  
it we utilize stockpiles of material from our memory,  
garnish it with cognitive analysis and interpretation  
of our experiences; avoiding causes that led to  
failure; applying those by which we win, and come  
up with a blueprint of what we consider to be a  
better and desirable future. No wonder Einstein said,  
"Imagination is more powerful than knowledge," and  
Bill Gates of MicroSoft put a premium on it, as does  
Google and other winners alike.

There is no excuse for not being rich. A richer state  
of being comes from utilizing these natural  
endowments, this super powerful equipment by  
which we can reach the deepest oceans; the highest  
stars. Look back into time and ahead into the  
frontiers that may not yet exist. The only limit is YOU!

We have the power to interpret any experience to  
our advantage.

Your reflections...

***It helps if you have a clear vision for  
yourself before starting your  
job search.***

# When preparation 13 meets opportunity

*It breaks our heart to see that majority of employees are still caught up in the same old rules of command and control, where fear rules and the 'boss' is always right!*

Are there plenty of job opportunities out there or is it more a case of graduates remaining unemployed for a long time? This was a question asked to a panel of CEOs at an international marketing conference held in Karachi recently. 100% of the CEOs answered that they are always on the look-out for talent but struggle to find the right fit for available positions. What's the catch?

**Lack of preparation = lost opportunity.**

Of the many people, young and/or experienced who walk in; apply for a job; send in their references, CVs and resumes, what factors guide employers' decision to select one and not the other?

Candidates who tend to lose out haven't bothered to:

- Find out what the company does before applying.
- Find out what they want to do in that company or in life.
- Explore the employer's expectations.
- Investigate challenges the company wants to overcome.
- Link their education and transferable skills to the tasks that need to be performed by them to delight the company's internal and external customers.
- Learn how they can add value to the company, by contributing (directly or indirectly) to its top line, bottom line, efficiency, effectiveness, growth and sustainability.

Candidates also blunder when they over-emphasize their interest in:

- The salary and perks they expect.
- Authority, but not necessarily the ensuing responsibility.
- A readily available pleasant environment.
- Career prospects.
- What they will get instead of what they can contribute.
- Self-satisfaction instead of focusing on long term growth of the organization.

Employers are keen to hire talent. They are eager to meet a job seeker who will:

- Bring a few solutions to the company's problems.
- Show willingness to take on challenges and learn on the job.
- Be confident to make tough decisions wisely.
- Deliver on promises.
- See their personal growth as a consequence of organizational growth.
- Be happy with salary which reflects the level of responsibility they take to deliver desired results by performing according to company values.
- Contribute to maintaining and enhancing the reputation of the organization.
- Take initiative and act decisively
- Be excited about their work because it has a larger meaning.
- Readily admit mistakes, learn from them and mentor others.
- Be a team player and take others along.

What must you do as soon as you join an organization? You need to acclimatize yourself with its culture. This is tough, since you bring with you your own perspectives, preferences, expectations, aspirations, apprehensions and habits.

Along with discovering your fit in the big picture (organization's vision, mission, values, codes of conduct, strategies and plans), you need to be clear in terms of what's expected of you, and what are roles, responsibilities and tasks that you need to perform.

In addition, you need to develop a better understanding of the words and their meanings that are used in your new organization. Many of the words used in organizations may be the same, but their meanings tend to vary from company to company. Eg., Let's take 'Respect'. In one organization, respect is seen as following orders of your superiors. To question decisions of seniors is seen as a mark of disrespect. In another organization, respect is defined as freely sharing ideas that one believes are good for the business, and challenging status quo when needed to provide better customer service.

In the early days of the industrial revolution and with the advent of mass production, there was a huge demand for skilled labor. Jobs were mostly limited to physical ability with very little or no intellectual input. Only minor decisions had to be made at the shop floor level to keep the assembly line running. But in the 21st century, automation has changed all that. Repetitive tasks are increasingly being automated. Employees are more empowered. They are making bigger decisions, taking risks and are being held accountable for consequences. It is an exciting time for those who have adapted to the new way, and terrifying for others, who are stuck in the past.

It breaks our heart to see that majority of employees are still caught up in the same old rules of command and control, where fear rules and the 'boss' is always right!

This century belongs to those who have a dream; big or small doesn't matter.

Have a dream that is larger than life and includes concerns for the success of others. A dream that is so clear that you can actually see it and feel it in full sound texture, and color. Have a dream that can be vividly described and attracts others. Applying for a job without first having a dream, is inviting trouble. It helps if you have a clear vision for yourself before starting your job search. It will help you determine the criteria by which to choose the industry and shortlist the organizations within it. Your probability of success will be higher when you find an organization that is on a path which is largely aligned to yours.

Congruence of organizational and individual purpose determines how time is managed instead of it being a chronological schedule i.e., a 9am to 5pm mindset. Individuals joining an organization because of its vision and guiding principles will be inclined to shape their behaviors according to its values and codes of conduct. This serves to create a corporate culture characterized by openness and trust. In a principle-driven organization, minimal supervision is needed and people have the headroom to perform freely and with discipline.

People with integrity and competence as their hallmark create an inspiring future. In such a future, age and experience have no relevance. Regardless of



ethnicity and socio-economic background of an individual – merit ensures that diversity is leveraged by thought, intent and action.

Give yourself a chance – prepare yourself to create opportunities so that you can join the ranks of those who lead and also develop future leaders.

# Flow of intended inner richness

14

*As knowledge grows; faith rises and fear decreases.*

Many words in the English language that begin with the prefix 'in' imply an inner state. Influence is one of them. Others are internal, individual, introspection etc. They indicate an aspect of the inner being.



'In' is a Latin prefix meaning 'intend' 'invite' 'incur', while 'flu' in Latin means to 'flow'. In

Physics, fluence is referred to radiant exposure, and is a measurement of energy over an area. I see the word 'fluence' stemming from the word 'affluent', i.e. riches, abundance.

Thus, the word influence means 'flow of intended inner richness'. When one is rich inside, one is able to influence others.

Inner richness is the abundance of character. Our

character is endowed with integrity, honesty, respect, patience, forgiveness, faith, justice and all that gives us the ability to be human. We also have the opposites of these characteristics, i.e. dishonest, disrespectful, impatience, unforgiving, fear. When we say a person has character, we imply the positive attributes. These make a person credible and believable. We have faith in them. We listen to them, they move us, we find answers to our questions that remove doubt and inspire us toward action.

What does it take to be influential? Let's obtain guidance from this picture. The people moving the pieces look the same. Genetic scientists have shown that humans are different from each other only by 1%, and similar by 99%. Ask a doctor who has done thousands of endoscopies, or a cardiac specialist and they will tell you every human being is the same from inside. That means nature makes us similar.

In the picture, each person is offering a different design. These can only come together when, firstly, we know what our design looks like, and secondly, what the other's design is. The more we know about what others have to offer, the greater will be our reach and connection.

If we change our design in such a way so as to fit any other, then we have attained the 'master key'. This happens when we achieve immense self-awareness, as it is said, "What is most personal is most universal."

People who have made a mark in history are

amongst such people. Whether it is Muhammad Ali Jinnah; Mahatma Gandhi; Mother Teresa; Abdul Sattar Edhi; Thomas Edison; Albert Einstein; each found their way and acted to bring the change they dreamed.

Let's look at us ordinary mortals, what do we do to earn the position of being influential. Most often, this word suggests someone who is in high office and enjoys formal authority. If such a person's influence continues after he retires or relinquishes his/her role, then one could say that he/she was truly influential.

Imagine you have stopped at a traffic light, while those who were behind you, overtake, break the red light and drive ahead. You watch them go; thinking injustice has been done because they will reach their destination before you. If you stand fast on what you think is right, i.e., what is just, and respect the rights of others by fulfilling your responsibility, it will build strength of character. You will be more believable than those who broke the red light, even though they reached their destinations before you.

However, standing at the light with others passing by looking at you as if you are stupid, will hurt. A strong force within you will urge you to give up your silly discipline and principles and continue to drive. Your head will get filled with justifications and rationalisations - look, there is no traffic; see if I drive now, I can still catch up with those who unfairly overtook me; no one is looking, I might as well go. These voices come from your ego.

The ego is also called the pain body, as it makes you suffer for being right. More often than not, we give in to this pain body, to calm it, to quieten it and settle the stress caused by the dilemma. This giving-in becomes a habit and a society's norm. Such individuals/societies lose their ability to influence as they are unable to be influenced by the voice of their conscience.

This simple example can be extended to any situation to understand what admired leaders do and who, even to this day, are enormously respected. They were fair, patient, had faith in their ideals, struggled with discipline and made things happen. The key to character building is persistence, guided by principles. It is not about doing what is right once or twice only, but doing it consistently – every time, no matter what anyone says or does.

Another aspect of this process is to grab such opportunities that test your character. When a challenge presents itself, that is the time to face it, not walk away from it. Our survival instinct reacts in ways to prevent harm to us, to give us comfort and rest, due to which we turn away from difficulties. Only when we make a conscious choice, form an intention, is the Will ignited to prepare our faculties to accept the challenges we confront while turning away from temptations.

For a moment look at yourself and see what influences have shaped your thinking. Which personalities have inspired you the most and why? You could be thinking of your parents, or Prophets or

teachers, maybe even a boss. Invariably, you will think of people who have been good to you, even if they drove you hard to believe in yourself, because they had faith in you.

Name at least two individuals whom you consider great.

Name	Why do you admire them?
1.	— — —
2.	— — —

Notice that the right hand column contains virtues and qualities you admire in a person. There is hardly any mention of worldly wealth or academic credentials.

How many of these qualities don't you have within you?

You, like all the greats, were born with these attributes. The fact that you mentioned the qualities you admire is evidence that you have them in you, waiting to be tapped.

What made them use these qualities more? Imagine if you have a BMW, which is brilliantly engineered and offers reliability, safety, performance, and



luxury. It is parked in your garage. You clean it every day, it looks good, and you admire it. If not used, it will start rusting; the battery will die, the tires will get

ruined etc. However, if your mother asks you to go to the supermarket to buy some grocery, you will then insert the key, start the ignition, which lights the spark plugs and revs the engine. Why? Because you now have a purpose - a clear direction in which to travel. Similar is the case with your potential and characteristics.

Character is built in the storm and strife of life. Only when you have a compelling purpose, like all great people have, does the mind set a goal, the Will (spark plugs) light up, the potential is discovered and the body is set in motion.

The word used is 'purpose' not 'goal' or 'objective'. The latter two signify the desired outcome of an act, whereas 'purpose' is more the 'felt' quality of why we do what we do – a reason which connects us to a bigger picture and moves us to action towards goals.

When you 'feel' good about what you are doing, no matter how difficult it seems, only then will your best capabilities come to the fore, else you will find your mind making excuses to justify non-performance. The quality of work thus produced, harnessed, strung and adorned with your love of the work; will

influence others in the way they think, believe and act.

It is only when you truly feel for something, do you work with your heart and mind to achieve it. Self-motivation is ignited, persists and thrives, as opposed to being driven by others through promises of material gains, rewards, gifts or a letter of appreciation and applause.

It is only natural to encounter problems when pursuing goals, particularly when your values are threatened. You will have to take risks by not succumbing to inducements and unethical means to stay on course by making tough decisions. It is in tough times that character is built.

The second factor of influence is that if the purpose is too close and can be achieved too quickly, motivation ends as soon as we attain it. The further and higher a goal, the more it will continuously inspire us. For example, if you are hungry, you will be motivated to have food. Once your hunger is satiated, that motivation ends till the time you are hungry. But if you have a purpose of eradicating tuberculosis from the world, or poverty or you passionately want to ensure every child is educated; your actions will be a daily affair of striving. In a day you will only do so much while the next day will promise more. Your short term goal, caused by hunger, will merely inspire and influence the other hungry ones, who will eat and forget about you and the blessing they have consumed. But, let's say in the fight against poverty, you will enable people to stand



on their feet to learn to not only feed themselves, but to contribute to wealth creation.

A grand purpose energizes every step; every move you make, every day, for the rest of your life, and continues even after you are gone, through generations of capable and inspired hands that have been developed along the way.

You will find yourself to be healthier, more agile and enthusiastic about life. Problems will come, and by taking them as challenges, you will face them head-on with conviction and a positive approach. Your faith will become stronger as you are doing something constructive. Each day will be productive. You will feel useful; which in turn will enhance your self-esteem, self-respect and dignity. In time, you will be inclined to extend these gifts to others. They will be inspired by your everyday conduct and become more mindful of what they are doing. Soon they will turn to you for guidance.

This leads us to the third feature of having influence: Only when you do what you say, repeatedly, will you become credible. Actions speak louder than words. You may tell people to trust you, but they will only be convinced if you have a track record of being trustworthy. You may speak great wisdom, but the words will be hollow unless you have done what you say, learnt from mistakes you have made in life, and achieved successes through the techniques you now share. This is called integrity – do what you say; or even, say what you do. Walk your talk; or talk your walk. Practice what you preach; or better still, preach

only after you have practiced it.

Much has been written and said about the power of influence, but here we can sum up this chapter with Hegel's immensely powerful quote:

“Change is the cardinal principle of life. Struggle is the law of growth. Character is built in the storm and stress of the world, and man reaches his full height through compulsions, responsibility and suffering. Life is not made for happiness, but for achievement. The history of the world is not the theatre of happiness; periods of happiness are blank pages for they are periods of harmony, and this dull content is unworthy of man.”

*What will you do differently to influence positive changes around you?*

Reflection:

***We have been fascinated with how human beings, who are aware of what is good or bad for them, do not act with wisdom.***

# Expansion of thinking 15

***The ultimate effect of this evolutionary process is those who are able to see further become the creators of ways to conquer the waters, hail and storms, while others are enslaved to serve the commands of those stronger.***

Travelling at 36,000 feet in a plane, and looking through a 14 by 10 inch window, we can see the vast expanse of our planet earth. From rivers, to land; mountains to fields; tree to plants - it's all there.

What else does one need to not only make life worth living but to consistently enrich it? The natural wonders we enjoy today were also available to those who excelled in their chosen fields, the likes of Khalil Gibran, Picasso, Einstein, the Wright Brothers, and thousand others who inspired mankind through their work to mentally and culturally evolve.

There are countless who have changed our everyday ways of living. What about the inventor of the

intermittent speed of your car's windscreen wiper? Who invented nylon? What about steel and how did we learn to extract it from stone? What about glass as lenses to see light years away into space where no one has gone before? How about the credit card; Internet or animation; the mirror, faucet or a ship? Solar panels, carbonator or the jet engine? Think about the revolutionary impact of the micro-chip, telecommunication devices or the fridge? These and many more conveniences we use every day, we are taking for granted. Just stop and reflect on the phenomenal effort, time and expense that went into masterminding them.

Anthropologists tell us that before fire was discovered, it would take an entire day to eat and digest raw food. Once we learnt how to make fire, we learnt the art of cooking our food. Since this made it easier for the stomach to digest food, blood was now available to be diverted to the brain, thus allowing more of its use, which led to the start of more thinking, reflection and decision making to a level far greater than merely feeding oneself.

Neuro-scientists say that if we use our brain continuously for four hours, we will faint as this will sap too much energy from our body. Being born with this mighty organ, what is there that we cannot do? And if we don't do it, what stops us?

We have been fascinated with how human beings, who are aware of what is good or bad for them, do not act with wisdom. And when we do take action, it is often out of fear, or coercion by an authority figure

or blind adherence to dogma.

Let's investigate what made us develop from what we were to who we are and can be. How did we manage to grow from a few thousand to an immense 8 billion plus population, whereas 99.9% of the earth's species is extinct?

"Our brains became powerful because we moved. Though human history goes as far back as 8 to 10 million years, we started developing only when we began moving out of East Africa. Motion was mandatory for development to happen. Any time there was stability, contentment set in and stagnation happened. The smart strategy humans applied was to make change the consistent factor. Adaptation to variation became the principle to stay alive and move forward. Covering about 12 miles a day, humans started spreading out over the globe around 100,000 years ago; much of that earlier period without even the concept of a wheel let alone the use of one."<sup>2</sup>

"This required constant use of the brain, which developed in time. Survival of species depended on mutation or on strength to stay alive against the challenges of the environment. Since humans are more delicate, physically, than most species, getting any stronger was not our ability. Instead, we became smarter. We added neurons instead of muscles. Those unable to rapidly solve new problems or learn from mistakes didn't survive long enough to pass on their genes."

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<sup>2</sup> Brain Rules, by Dr John J Medina; Pear Press, 2009

“The early humans for the first few million years were only able to use rocks to crush so as to make large things smaller and usable. For the next few million years we started making the first tools out of these rocks. About 40,000 years ago, signs appeared of aesthetic value. Humans developed the ability to paint, sculpt and make jewellery. 37,000 years later the pyramids were made, while 5,000 years later, rocket fuel was invented.”

“These outcomes come from the profound human ability to fantasize. We are able to make sense of symbols and extract meaning. So if we read an alphabet, we recognise it on its own, make sense of it in a word, while attaching meaning to the word and act on that meaning. The same holds true for mathematics or all objects that we learn to recognize. The more we are exposed to new experiences, the greater our repertoire becomes, and the more versatile we are in our behaviour. The opposite is also true. The less we recognize, the narrower will be our action and outcomes. The lesser the reasoning, the more restrictive the culture. This confines the ability to invent; the capacity for art, music and poetry. Humans are the only creation capable of this expansion or constriction.”

The ultimate effect of this evolutionary process is those who are able to see further become the creators of ways to conquer the waters, hail and storms, while others are enslaved to serve the commands of those stronger.

The actions and situations may vary, but the principles remain the same. Whether it is bullies at school, or the nerds; relationships amongst colleagues at work and siblings and parents at home; people in society merely survive or thrive according to these rules of smartness. Those trees, rivers, mountains, fields are available to all, yet those will flourish who face challenges of the environment, instead of fighting them, and design means to not suffer the problems and issues of mere existence, but rise to a level of inventing solutions, applying them and persistently and restlessly innovating to conquer the next, greater storm.

*What one thing can you do to become wiser and smarter?*

Reflection:



***To understand the self is to  
understand the universe.***

## No escaping the self 16

***“It's easier to donate a few thousand to charity and think oneself noble than to base self-respect on personal standards of personal achievement.”***

***Ayn Rand***

Whose responsibility is it to develop the self? Who is going to make the difference? Who will confront the tough realities of life? Who will rise to better his/her economic and social condition? Who will choose to be happy and make others happy? Who will dream and dare to make those dreams come true? Who will cooperate with others in worthwhile endeavors? Who will pray? Who will forgive? Who will apologize and mend fences? Who will listen? Who will lend a helping hand?

It is the 'I', the 'self' that has to perform. The 'I' came to this world; the “I” will die to this life; and the 'I' will do whatever it takes, in the interval between birth and death – no matter how long this time happens to be! There is no escaping the “self.”

The realization that it is you, and no one else, that

must initiate all thoughts and actions to build self, is essential. What does it take? Where do you begin?

To understand the self is to understand the universe. It is a very tall order. Whenever we ask participants in workshops: “Do you know yourself?” The typical reply is a spontaneous “Yes!” If you think in the same way about yourself – beware, your mind is shut. Know that you don't know yourself to the extent you think. It is very likely that your current understanding of yourself is superficial. We realize that you will find accepting this suggestion difficult. You are not alone. In fact, you may be in a state of what is best known as 'denial' – a kind of invisible shell that rejects any idea which threatens your own concept of 'self'.

Consider some extracts from a book, *The Fountainhead* by Ms Ayn Rand:

“The way people generally live today, have no self. They live within others. In what act or thought of his has there ever been a self? What was his aim in life? Greatness – in other people's eyes. Fame, admiration, envy – all that which comes from others. Others dictated his convictions, which he did not hold, but he was satisfied that others believed he held them. Others were his motive power and his prime concern. He didn't want to be great, but to be thought great. He didn't want to build, but to be admired as a builder. He borrowed from others in order to make an impression on others. There's your actual selflessness. It is his ego he has betrayed and given up. But everybody calls him selfish.”

Ms Rand asks, “Isn't this pattern at the root of every despicable action? Not selfishness, but precisely the absence of a self?”

“Look at them. The man who cheats and lies, but [tries to] preserve a respectable front. He knows himself to be dishonest, but others think he is honest and he derives his self-respect from that, second-hand. The man who takes credit for an achievement which is not his own. He knows himself to be a mediocre, but he's great in the eyes of others. The frustrated wretch who professes love for the inferior and clings to those less endowed, in order to establish his own superiority by comparison.”

“The man whose sole aim is to make money. Now I don't see anything evil in a desire to make money. But money is only a means to some end. If a man wants it for a personal purpose – to invest in his industry, to create, to study, to travel, to enjoy luxury – he's completely moral.”... Aren't they [those who claim selflessness] all acting on a selfish motive – to be noticed, liked, admired? – by others, at the price of their own self-respect. In the realm of greatest importance – the realm of values, of judgment, of spirit, of thought – they place others above self, in the exact manner which altruism demands. A truly “selfish” man cannot be affected by the approval of others. He doesn't need it.”

“It is so easy to run to others. It is so hard to stand on one's own record. You can fake virtue for an audience. You can't fake it in your own eyes. Your ego is the strictest judge. They run from it. They spend their lives running. It's easier to donate a few thousand to charity and think oneself noble than to base self-respect on personal standards of personal achievement. It is simple to seek substitutes for competence – such easy substitutes: love, charm, kindness, charity. But there is no substitute for competence.”

These excerpts from Ayn Rand are meant to get you thinking about who you are. Why you behave the way you do? Why you seek security outside of yourself? Think for a moment. Look at all the investments you make: buying a house, a car, saving money in a bank, putting money in defense savings certificates, gold, stocks and shares – all with the expectation of a decent return and having peace of mind from knowing that it is 'secure.' Ask yourself: 'What is safe?' You know that you are the instrument through which everything happens, yet you have greater confidence in people and institutions outside of yourself. Why?

Self development is a process which begins with believing in yourself, caring for yourself, knowing that you have infinite potential. It also means being aware of others and knowing that we are all different.

We all have preferred habits of thought that influence how we make decisions and interact with others. Ask yourself: 'What do I do well?' Once you have the answer, maximize on it.

*Confront your 'self', because it is your job to become and achieve whatever you desire!*

Reflections:

## It's worth the pain 17

***“Most leaders die with their mouths open. Leaders must know how to listen - and the art of listening is more subtle than most people think it is.***

***But first, and just as important, leaders must want to listen. Curiosity and empathy fuel good listening: What's really happening here? Can we put ourselves in someone else's shoes? It's hard to be a great listener if you're not interested in other people.” Prof. Ron Heifetz***

Listening is a simple act. Yet at the same time it is as hard as it is rewarding. Listening with intensity and focus is vital for building commitment, grooming successors and leading change in any context. Listening is one of the skills in leadership that is most talked about and least applied. Most leaders suffer from the delusion that they are great at listening. This false comfort continues till someone with

audacity gives us a rude awakening! Most corporate leaders love to talk; give directions; and provide solutions to problems that are brought to them. Furthermore, a number of them quickly get agitated when dealing with a disagreement, or when people make mistakes or challenge status-quo.

The value of the simple act of listening is huge. According to Rachel Naomi Remen:

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words."

Yet, examples of poor listening are abound: "Cut the chase and tell me what's on your mind right now! I don't have much time." "Uhhh... let me tell you what your problem is...!" Remarks of this kind hardly ever encourage two-way communication. Who ends up losing? The leader of course! Without getting to the bottom of an issue, leaders tend to make assumptions and end up making rash decisions, which they live to regret.

According to Prof Ron Heifetz, of Harvard, "Most leaders die with their mouths open. Leaders must know how to listen - and the art of listening is more subtle than most people think it is. But first, and just as important, leaders must want to listen. Curiosity and empathy fuel good listening: What's really happening here? Can we put ourselves in someone

else's shoes? It's hard to be a great listener if you're not interested in other people.”

Heifetz goes on to say, “Great listeners know how to listen musically as well as analytically. President, Jimmy Carter relied on 'rational discourse' to weigh the pros and cons of various initiatives. He would have people prepare papers and then he would sift their views in private. Doing it that way enabled him to listen to their arguments analytically but not musically. What do I mean by that? Jimmy Carter did not enjoy being in meetings with people who were posturing, arguing, haggling. But there's an enormous amount of information in the haggling, and that information tells us quite a lot about the values, the history, and the personal stakes that people bring to an argument. It's difficult for someone who's lost the last six arguments to say in a policy paper, "I've lost the last six arguments. If I don't win the next one, what am I going to tell my people?" But in conversation, the tone of voice and the intensity of the argument give clues to that subtext. Listening musically enables leaders to get underneath and behind the surface to ask, 'What's the real argument that we're having?' And that's a critical question to answer - because, in the absence of an answer to that question, you get a superficial buy-in. People go along in a pseudo-consensus, or in a deferential way, but without commitment.”

One of the barriers to good listening is the leader's heightened sense of self-importance. This flaw doesn't necessarily arise from bad intentions. In fact, it is quite natural to feel needed and wanted.



However, when this need is excessive, leaders end up solving other people's problems because it makes them feel desired: "Hey... don't worry, come to me whenever you face a problem." Such a paternalistic orientation gradually becomes a habit. They keep taking problems off other people's shoulders. At a subconscious level leaders seem to be gaining authority in the eyes of their constituents. By the time they progress to becoming a senior executive or a CEO, their 'helping' attitude is so deeply engrained that it becomes hard for them to stand back and listen. Leaders lose their ability to learn from others, because they start believing they know it all.

It is only by listening attentively and with empathy that leaders manage to influence others. Telling often falls on deaf ears. By telling more than listening, leaders fail badly as they are unable to persuade people, mostly competent professionals, to take more responsibility than they feel comfortable with.

Leaders who are conflict or risk averse bury their heads in sand like an ostrich. They are afraid of listening as it often involves them seeing their own face in the proverbial mirror!

Shutting your eyes to problems doesn't make them go away. No matter how painful the process of listening is, it does bring to the surface useful insights for leaders.

Leaders must be able to stretch their people by getting them to take greater responsibility. This can

best be achieved by leaders who steer conversations by asking questions and listening.

We recently sent out the following case study to around fifty managers in Pakistan to find out for ourselves whether listening was part of their repertoire:

The Case Study:<sup>3</sup> “I was asked to replace the vice president/general manager of a franchise company in the personal development industry. Almost immediately after accepting the job, I sensed that one of my key assistants was having a very hard time with the change. She had been unfailingly loyal to my predecessor, a seasoned veteran in franchising and a man of great integrity and knowledge. She was terribly disappointed that he was no longer with the company and was deeply concerned that the organization would suffer with a relative upstart like me thrust into the leadership position.”

“I very much wanted to set our relationship on a positive track because she was exceptionally talented and invaluable to the organization. She had earned the trust and respect of the franchisees as an extraordinary resource. Yet, despite my efforts to break down the barriers, I could feel her resistance to my leadership whenever we were together. I was having a difficult time trying to figure out how to earn her trust. Without her full support, moving this young company forward would be a huge uphill battle.”

“After giving her some extra space for a few days, I

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<sup>3</sup>From a book: Beyond Success by Brian D. Brio. Published by Perigee

finally asked if we could get together and talk. When she arrived, I could immediately sense her discomfort.”

The case ends with the following questions: a) “What would you do in this situation?” And b) “What will your action achieve?”

Almost all responded. What most had to say confirmed our fears – they were not good listeners. Here are some examples:

- **Manager 1:** *“I would let her go. The action will get things out of a stand still and moving, for better or for worse. I had to do this once in 1996, when I was made divisional manager with a staff of 40, of which the top 4 (most experienced) would not cooperate. We let them go after they practically made any work impossible.”*
- **Manager 2:** *“Knowing the reason, I would start talking about her previous boss first, praising him for his qualities and the way he trained his staff, like her. I would ask her for her co-operation to uplift the standards from where he left. This action will calm her down and I may get her co-operation.”*
- **Manager 3:** *“Here's what I would do: 1) I will invite her across the table to finally discuss the matter, irrespective of her discomfort. I will discuss the matter at length with her and try to resolve it, as a first step. If this does not work, I will try to resolve the issue by offering some additional incentives/perks. Even then if*

*the matter is not resolved, I will warn her about the serious consequences, and if she still persists I will issue her a show cause notice, and finally, terminate her. Although the employees are assets for an organization, but they are not indispensable. 2) This action will serve as a warning to those who were being de-motivated by her negative attitude. It will also bring discipline amongst other employees as well.”*

As you would have gathered by now from the examples above, listening, either as a strategy or tactic doesn't figure prominently in our thinking. We wonder what your approach might have been.

By listening, instead of sermonizing, you not only sharpen your own alertness, you also increase that of others, because you enable them to discover their own solutions instead of merely carrying out yours. Mr Azhar Rathore, former director at Roche Pakistan, is one of the few leaders, who is a great proponent of this method. He has successfully led a significant corporate turnaround by effectively using his listening skills.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “The worst thing you can do for those you love is to do the things they could or should do for themselves.” By taking interest in your people, by listening to them, you empower rather than overpower them.

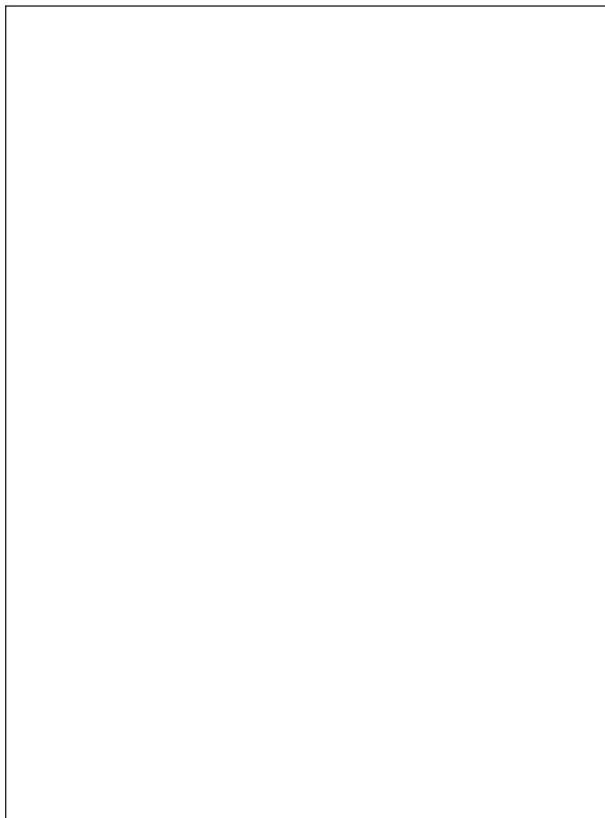
By listening effectively, you will develop leaders who are ready and eager to make decisions. After all, leadership is about creating value and meaning in

other people's lives.

Lending your ears is worth the pain!

*Are you ready to take the pain of listening? What do you plan to do differently, when and with whom?*

Reflection:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the reader to write their reflection on the preceding text.

# Missing the wave of destiny 18

***“Sayyid Ahmad may have made light of the BA's and MA's of Bengal, but his idea for Aligarh was to raise a new generation of Muslims who would have the knowledge, skills and values necessary to qualify them for public leadership.”***

**David Lelyveld <sup>4</sup>**

The year 1875 saw the establishment of Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO College), located in the district town of Aligarh, in India. It was founded by a group of Indian Muslims under the leadership of Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Almost seventy years later, Pakistan, a country created for Muslims, came into existence. This nation started its life with a unique advantage – that of having access to an impressive pool of educated Indian Muslim talent in thousands, who had

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<sup>4</sup> Author of *Aligarh's First generation (Muslim Solidarity in British India)*. p.317/8  
Published by Oxford India Paperbacks, 2003.

graduated from Aligarh earlier. The Aligarhians could have provided the kind of leadership this new-born nation needed so desperately. Sadly, this was not to be.

Despite the Aligarh advantage, Pakistan has continued to face a perpetual leadership crisis since its birth, and does so to this day. We seemed to have missed the fortunate wave of destiny that was served to us on a silver platter.

Institutions are not bricks and mortar, but built on the labor of sincere and competent people. In this sense, Pakistan seemed to be a privileged beneficiary of Divine planning. People were groomed and educated, decades before the nation came into being.

Good management is about first being good human beings who strategize, plan and execute with wisdom – by making correct use of knowledge. Example of how the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) was built in Karachi, approximately three decades ago, comes to mind. About twenty years prior to the construction of the buildings, a nursing college was built. This was to ensure that as soon as the hospital was erected, it could be manned with competent and qualified staff to provide immaculate care and attention to its patients. That's visionary leadership! Likewise, trees were planted a decade earlier. As a result, when AKUH opened its doors to the public, everything was in place... a beautiful green environment with a fully staffed and equipped hospital, ready to provide quality care.

The AKUH analogy prompted me to think about Aligarh and Pakistan. The results have been profoundly different and I wondered why, particularly when you consider Sayyid Ahmad Khan's and Sayyid Mahmud's high ideals for educating the Muslims of India. In fact, they chose Cambridge University as their benchmark. In this regard, the timing couldn't have been better. Cambridge had been transformed by J R Seeley's thinking around the time of Sayyid Ahmad's trips there in the late 19th century.

Seeley, then Professor of History at Cambridge, was of the view that the work of education was a vitally important area of social action. He had formulated a new understanding of the role of higher education in modern society. Sayyid Ahmad was apparently aligned to such a perspective, as he had long denounced any system of education that left the inner spirit dead.

According to Seeley, “democracy and industrialization did require a new kind of education, but it was not to be a simple surrender to vocational training. What was needed was a generation of intellectuals capable of rigorous scholarship and research, but also sensitive to the totality of human needs. Such men would be the leaders of the new society. To achieve these ends courses of studies were revised to emphasize general ideas over detail and the role of the professor and don was redefined to include real personal involvement in intellectual dialogue with the students. The residential character of the Cambridge colleges was crucial to the



emotional as well as the intellectual purposes of the university: the extension of family feelings to universal concerns.” This view was very egalitarian. It also resonates with the spirit of Islam, which promotes equality and brotherhood... a society which is classless and just.

The United States' Declaration of Independence includes a kind of moral and legal egalitarianism in the phrase, "All men are created equal." Each individual is to be treated equally under the law. Similar to many other developed nations of the time, it was not until much later that the American society extended these benefits to slaves, women and other groups. Over time, universal egalitarianism has won wide adherence and is a core component of modern civil rights policies and enlightened management practices.<sup>5</sup>

At a cultural level, egalitarian theories have developed in sophistication and acceptance during the past two hundred years. Among the notable broadly egalitarian philosophies are Socialism and Human Rights, which promote economic, political, and legal egalitarianism, respectively. Several egalitarian ideas enjoy wide support among intellectuals and in the general populations of many countries. Whether any of these ideas have been significantly implemented in practice, however, remains to be seen. For instance, some argue that modern representative democracy is a realization of political egalitarianism, while others believe that, in reality, most political power still resides in the hands of a ruling class, rather than in the hands of the

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<sup>5</sup>Wikipedia

people.

Study of Aligarh's history while inspiring, is also very painful. For example, according to Lelyveld, the founders of Aligarh, spoke in the name of all the Muslims of India, but offered a program designed to make contact with a considerably narrower group: the north Indian Muslims literate in Urdu who formed the reservoir of Muslim Intelligentsia and government servants.

The old habit of social exclusivity colored an otherwise noble intent. We see strains of this social disease in many quarters of our society to this day. This is evident in class distinctions that still permeate our everyday lives. For example, the job of public servants is to serve the public at large – in providing basic healthcare, quality education, basic infrastructure, timely judicial remedy and so much else. This fact is known to all. Yet, service delivery by government officials is apparently aimed elsewhere as what we see is that the public continues to suffer in silence, pleading and begging, for what is essentially their right as citizens.

To Sayyid Ahmad, English education at Aligarh was a political strategy to enable Muslims to achieve, eventually, their rightful position of power, even within the British empire. In numerous addresses to students Sayyid Ahmad would reiterate the basic theme that: *“Indian Muslims, the former rulers of the country, had declined, and that the only hope for their regeneration was to mobilize them under the aegis of Aligarh.”* Lelyveld<sup>6</sup> goes on to share that it was an

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p 319

axiom of the Aligarh party line that only in the context of British-Muslim friendship and complete loyalty to British rule could Muslims hope to improve their position in Indian society. According to the written rules of the Union Club, *“No matter shall be discussed which raises the question of permanence or stability of the British rule.”*

The lesson we derive from the Aligarh story is this: If all our efforts are aimed at acquisition of status, privilege and power, and that too, at any cost, we are surely doomed.

As leaders, managers, students and citizens, we urgently need to break out of this debilitating habit of duality, and embrace congruence in our words and deeds.

# Epilogue

***"No man can attain firm faith unless he develops strength of character, and that cannot be achieved unless one acquires the habit of speaking the truth. The four pillars of faith are patience, certainty, justice and struggle" Hazrat Ali (A.S.)***

Can you **imagine** what your life would have been like had everything happened as you had **planned**? Look back and **reflect** on how much of the time you have spent on earth. Has it been truly as you thought it should have been? Not much, right? It is something as follows:

90% of our life is different from what we expected it to be.

We do not plan for 90% of our life.

10% people think they do not have control over 90% of their life.

Only 10% of those 10% plan their life.

They only plan for 10% of their life.

Of that, only 10% actually happens.

And then we **wonder** why we don't get what we want?

**Think** of a day in which you plan to go to Karachi airport to pick up a friend who is coming to visit you from Islamabad. You are excited to have him come over to stay with you for a week. You've prepared a room for him at home, made menus for the various meals, chalked out where to take him for sightseeing and to hangout. But first, you leave the house a good half-hour before his **ETA (Expected Time of Arrival)**, knowing you'll be at the arrival gate well in time to welcome him before he comes out with baggage. As soon as you turn onto Shahrah-e-Faisal, you get **locked** into a terrible **traffic jam**. Had you **foreseen** this, you would have taken the Korangi by-pass. Now you can't **move** forward or backward, you are caught in the **flow**. A wave of panic hits you, till your brain kicks in to calm you down. This may be a small jam; flight may take a little longer to arrive; baggage takes for ever to come out anyway; we both have mobile phones so no issue. Another voice interrupts with what if this jam is up to Star Gate? What if there is a jaloos (group of protestors) and they start burning cars and firing guns? What if the flight comes before time and the unusual happens with the luggage delivered pronto? What if mobile signals are jammed? Your mind races to construct a world around you

that is full of doom. The point being, you do not make it to the airport on time. You arrive home; the friend is tired and hungry and you are exhausted and angry.

What is this 'traffic' phenomenon? Have you ever wanted to lose weight? Give up smoking? Do you recall a time when you knew you have to study more for your exam, and didn't? Have you ever been late in getting to an appointment at the agreed time? Have you ever wished you could visit your parents more often? Give your loved one a flower? Save up for the rainy days? Buy that expensive dress or jewellery? Do you wish you had not cheated in the test? Could you have taken more time off to spend with the children, and on and on the list goes. Well, Ask yourself why things didn't turn out as you had hoped?

The destination was clear, the energy existed, the opportunity was bright, but there was too much traffic!

The 'traffic' is the **noise** in your head that keeps blocking your way on the journey to your destination. This noise tells you to start your weight loss program next week, now you have other priorities; it yells at you to spend on the dress now as it is important to wear something new to that wedding; it **convinces** you that you should sleep a little longer instead of studying a bit more; it **persuades** you to have fun with your friends instead of spending time with your parents; it permits you to cheat and **justifies** it one way or another. This 'noise' mostly wins. The traffic jam will happen no matter

how much you wish it wouldn't.

There will be accidents, a crash between knowing what you should do and what you actually do. At other times, there is a whole pile-up, when one thought after another rationalizes an inappropriate act. At yet another time, it may just be rush-hour, where you think you have too much to do rather than look after your **important**, long-term **goals**. The ETA is achievable but we get caught in the traps of laziness, fear and ego.

How does this 'traffic' impact our life? On occasions, we plan in time and space, utilizing information we have through our past **experiences**, analysis of current situations and ETAs in the future. Then the **chaos** hits and the storm begins. One thing leads to another and the whole plan is a mess. At other times, we hardly think about what we have to do. We turn on our 'robot' button and go through a day like a zombie, dancing to the tune of the environment, its culture and those in it. Yet there are some times when **continuous examination** of plans, processes, outcomes reduce the disturbance caused by the traffic jams. It is these moments of **conscious reflection** that this book was about.

The chapters have addressed the power of our **beliefs** and how these become our **values**, behaviors, **habits** and cultural norms. We picked up '**one idea at a time**', viewed it from the **perspective** of those who find a way through the 'traffic jam' no matter what, and may or may not become an example for someone else to follow, but are able to live up to

their **standards** and expectations. Such people live a life of **quality** that everyone aspires for.

Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort. And when performance appears effortless, it has quality and **grace**.

Messages in these chapters, when **practiced**, make sense out of the chaos in life. We can either 'let it be and let it take its toll' as life will never be without 'traffic jams', or we can **conquer** the 'noise' and commotion of our conditioning and the biases, disillusionments and fears it imbeds and **sculpt a Richer State of Being**.

To be the master of ourselves, we can give **commands** to **direct** our own beliefs and actions and not fall prey to moods, whims and appeals.

Next time you are about to be late, cheat, waste or disrespect; avoid the sign in your head that says '**Exit**' to take the short cut, and do it your way instead, or you'll cause the 'traffic jam'.

Put up the sign that says '**Go**' and **choose** the **avenue** that will not only get you to your destination, at the ETA but also blaze a trail for others to dare to follow.

In this epilogue, notice the words that are in bold. When read together, they will give you the main lessons in this book. Decide on which words you will use often to become your behavioral triggers and which ones you will avoid.



Repeat the positive commands whenever you are stressed or distressed and your body will obey. In this way, you are in charge, steering the course to reach your purpose.

Remember, the 'traffic jam' will happen, but you will not be a slave to its dynamics. You are the source that either causes the jams or releases them. Have faith in yourself!

What is your truth? Know it and act on it...

# About the authors

## **Kamran Rizvi**

Kamran is Founding Director, trainer, executive coach, keynote speaker and consultant at Navitus, and brings with him a wealth of cross-cultural management and leadership



experience having worked in Europe, South Asia and the Middle East for over thirty years.

He specializes in behavioral and organizational change and is a well-known inspirational speaker. Kamran facilitates learning programs locally and internationally for the corporate sector, non-profits and youth to enhance their managerial and leadership effectiveness, covering inspirational and visionary leadership; out-of-box thinking; change leadership; team performance; mentoring & coaching for excellence and the like.

Kamran is an author of three books on personal improvement and leadership, and regularly contributes management articles that are published in Pakistan's leading business magazine, Blue Chip ([www.bluechipmag.com](http://www.bluechipmag.com)).

Clients he has served in Pakistan include the non-profit and public sector organizations and leading multinational and local companies in the following industries: FMCGs, beverages, packaging, oil & gas, telecoms, engineering, manufacturing, textiles, banking and finance, pharmaceuticals, travel, and hospitality.

His learning and development interventions abroad include facilitating sessions with young community leaders in the UK, speaking in Toastmasters clubs and conducting workshops for clients in the Middle East, Europe and North America. Other than conducting international trainings for Pakistani companies like Engro Foods in Canada, Kamran has also rolled out localized versions of international programs for multiple clients in Pakistan; these include Pakistan Tobacco Co, MOL, BHP Billiton, and ICI/AkzoNobel.

Kamran obtained his MBA degree from the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, where he majored in organization development. He is a graduate of the Dale Carnegie Inc., having completed courses in Management; Executive Image; and Effective Speaking and Human Relations. He has also attended a number of courses that include “Leadership for the 21st Century”, at the J F K School of Government, Harvard University; Dr. Peter Senge's “The Learning Organization – Building a Sustainable Future”; and “Strategic Leadership and Change Management” at the Wharton SMU Program, in Singapore. Kamran is an approved training resource for members of YPO (Young Presidents Organization), headquartered in the United States.

He divides his time between Toronto, London & Islamabad.

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## Shireen Naqvi

Shireen is a senior consultant and facilitator at Navitus. Her focus areas include personal development and visionary leadership. She excels in the field of emotional intelligence and brings to Pakistan a fresh and challenging business paradigm that builds endurance in organizations.



She holds an MBA from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Karachi, where she majored in Management Information Systems.

Shireen has conducted a variety of management development programs mainly covering training of trainers, interpersonal communication, team building and team working, customer service, presentation skills, conflict management/resolution, and project planning and design for organizations such as Thal Engineering, Thal Jute Mills, Novartis Consumer Health, Pakistan Tobacco Company, Procter & Gamble, Merck Marker, Nestle, Warid Telecom, Mobilink, AMC (Target Sourcing Corp), Fauji Fertilizer Company, GlaxoSmithKline, Shell Pakistan, Philips Electrical Pakistan, Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited, United Bank Limited, OMV Pakistan, MOL Pakistan, Standard Chartered Bank, Reckitt Benckiser, Agriauto Industries, and others.

She is regularly invited by a number of local and

multinational corporations, NGOs and educational resource centers across Pakistan for challenging assignments, where her exposure to multi-cultural audiences and their nuances has led to a deep understanding of the human psyche and how to best communicate with them.

Shireen's success in facilitating competency-building programs lies in her intense belief in infinite human potential and her phenomenal ability to adapt and relate to individuals from diverse backgrounds at an intellectual and emotional level. She provides consultancy on training needs assessment and carries out follow-up impact evaluation studies to assess training effectiveness.

Shireen is Founding Director, School of Leadership (SoL), which is well known for its flagship program for youth, organized annually, since 2002, popularly known as, "Young Leaders Conference (YLC)." Being a Trustee of the School of Leadership Foundation (SoLF), Shireen has embarked on the ExtraCorp project of setting up business ventures for people with special abilities.

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## Enrich yourself one idea at a time

Words and ideas we entertain in our lives are relentlessly steering us into the future. They have changed the world as we know it and will continue to do so.

In this 4<sup>th</sup> kZR.co publication, Shireen Naqvi has joined Kamran Rizvi. The idea that inspires them the most is that we are richer beyond belief, if only we knew. This realization is ignited when we progressively develop greater awareness of self, of others and of our changing environment.

Contentment is not only about being happy with what we have. This half-truth causes us to stay in our zones of comfort. We end up embracing mediocrity as a way of life. True happiness and fulfillment is attained when we remain grateful for what we have, while pursuing excellence.

**Excellence** is evidenced by the depth of how much we **care** – care for our relationships, for our environment and for ourselves; by the expanse and beauty of our dreams – **dreams** we see with our eyes open, for ourselves, our family and our society; **risks** we take to turn our dreams into reality; and the height of **expectations** we have from ourselves and from each other.

In this book, you are challenged to question what you know about yourself and your life so far. You are invited to consider and reflect on a variety of perspectives, one idea at a time.

Transport yourself from who you are today into a richer state of being.

You can't be what you can't see!

## About the Authors

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