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START-UP

THE SPIRIT OF MANAGEMENT

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & BUSINESS

THOUGHTS ON MANAGEMENT & EDUCATION

THE FLAGPOLE



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FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

*"Your assumptions are your windows on the world.
Scrub them off every once in a while,
or the light won't come in."
~ Isaac Asimov ~*

Artificial Intelligence has, without our conscious knowledge, meta-morphed into a common-place term. We have started finding AI applications in a variety of things that we do today. In this issue, a simple, undemanding and uncomplicated understanding of AI and Business can be found in the interviews of the four resource persons.

A former CEO / Corporate Mentor has shared his childhood memories and corporate learnings in the candid interview that he has given us.

With education changing at a very fast pace in India, you would find the thoughts of an expert teacher and policy maker, interesting, relevant and appropriate.

The Start-up that we have focussed on this time works in the field of grassroots education, as narrated by the founder, who is passionate about making qualitative changes at the early-grade level.

We do hope you would find this issue of use.

We would be glad to know what you think of this issue.

Do pen in your thoughts at : domainjsb@gmail.com

Team



DOMAIN

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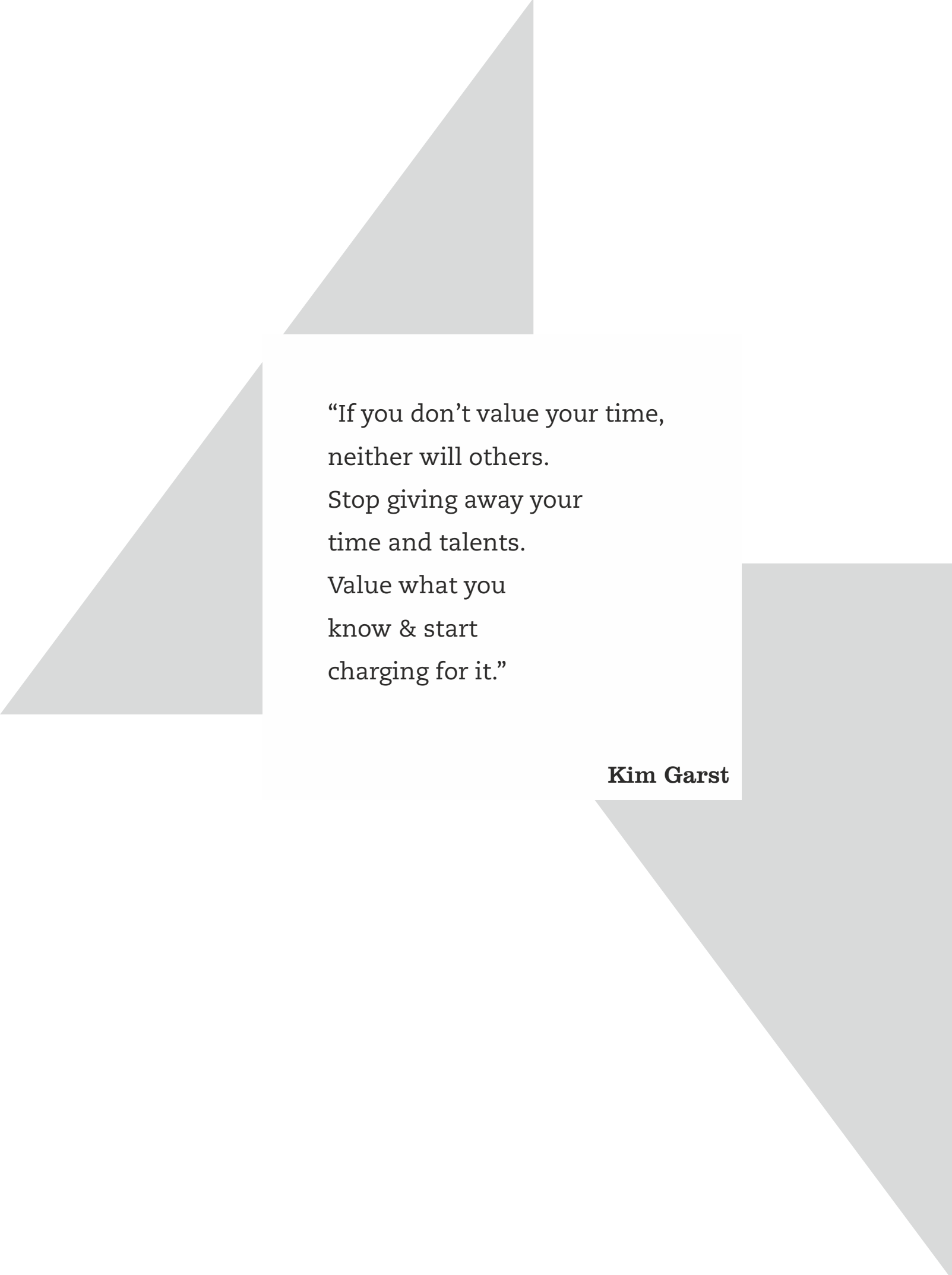
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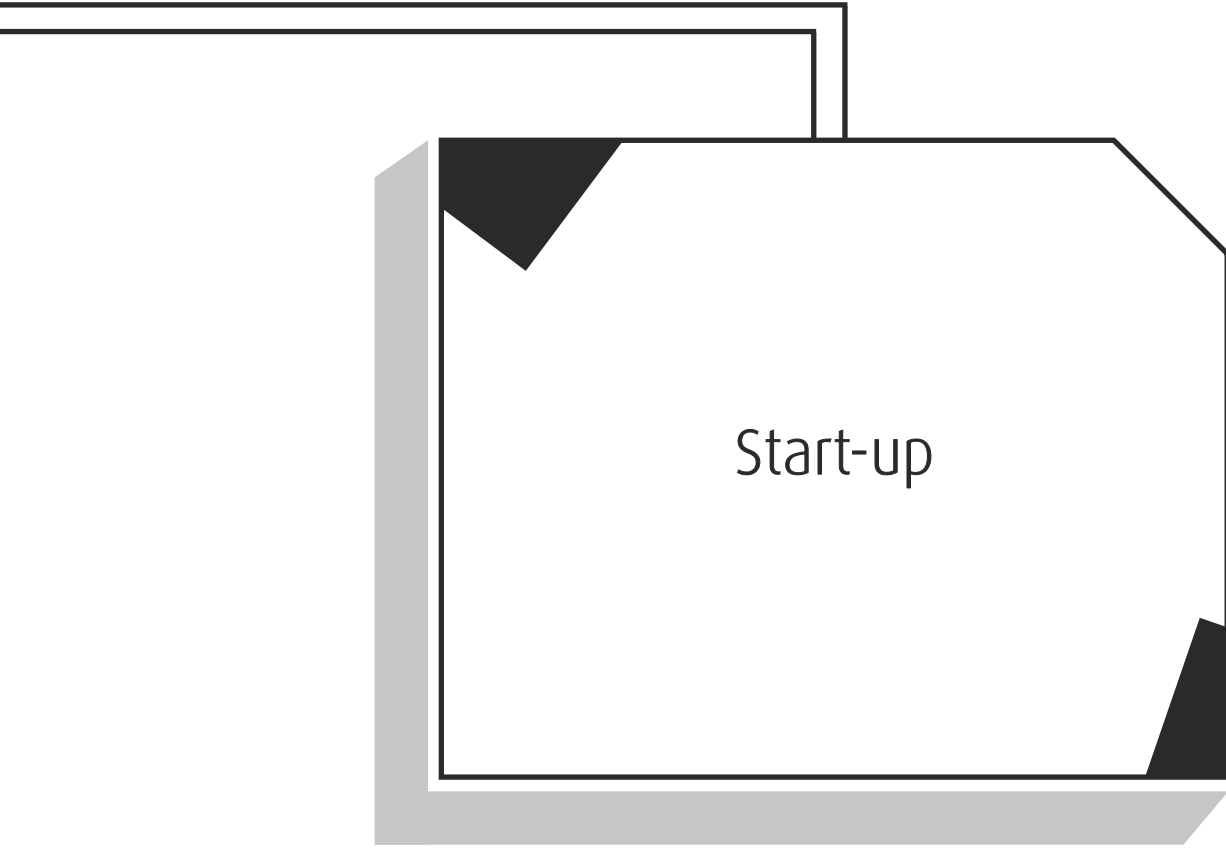
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The page features several large, light gray triangles that create a geometric, abstract background. One triangle is in the top right corner, another is on the left side pointing right, and a third is in the bottom right corner pointing left. The text is centered in a white rectangular area in the middle of the page.

“If you don’t value your time,
neither will others.
Stop giving away your
time and talents.
Value what you
know & start
charging for it.”

Kim Garst



Start-up



Building a Solid Foundation through quality early-grade education!

— An interview with —

Mr. Binayak Acharya

Founder CEO, ThinkZone,

on why providing quality education to the under-resourced communities is a huge challenge in India, and how his venture-backed social impact startup is making a difference in its own unique way.

Imagine being asked to read long paragraphs and tested on it without ever getting the chance to learn the alphabet; or having to solve mathematical equations, without knowing numbers. That is the struggle of nearly 25 million children (in India) in primary grades who are 2-3 class-levels behind in terms of their language and arithmetic skills... ThinkZone is an award-winning social enterprise that works towards improving the educational outcomes of children from under-resourced communities using a 'tech plus touch' model and activity-based methodology. We do this by empowering community educators, school teachers, public childcare workers, and parents to deliver quality early-childhood and primary grade education programs.

www.thinkzone.in

Q : Can you tell us about the genesis of ThinkZone?

A : I am a Laureate Global Fellow, MassChallenge Alumnus, and a CEMEX-TEC global social entrepreneur. I have had work stints with reputed organizations like The World Bank, VC fund Unitus and IT MNC L&T Infotech. I am passionate about inclusive development and have worked widely in BoP markets for several years. My background spans the fields of Pre-Primary and Primary Education, Impact Investment, ICT4D, Public Policies, Education Technology, Skills Development, and Livelihoods

*(The views expressed
are personal)*

I belong to Odisha, India which unfortunately has one of the worst HDIs. My thinking of what I want to do in life has been affected by my first-hand experiences of the massive societal inequality happening around me. ThinZone was born from many genuine interactions I had with youth across left-wing extremism affected districts of Malkangiri and Rayagada in Odisha, of how their fates could have been different had they received a good education early on! These real-time experiences while traveling during work stints showed me that education has the potential to change lives. This prodded me to take up the challenge of lessening the divide between 'Bharat'(undeveloped) and 'India'(developed).

Education is the foundation of a healthy and growth-oriented society. So, its development in the underserved areas is very dear to me. Providing a good foundation through quality early-grade education has become my passion. I dream that every Indian child not only goes to school but also has the proper learning competencies to succeed in life.

At ThinkZone, we have set ourselves an ambitious target – by the end of 2020, we want to improve the learning outcomes of 10,000 children by at least 50% across rural India as well as create livelihood opportunities for 300 women from low-income families. ThinkZone was started to solve the great educational crisis in rural Odisha, with the objective of scaling our work to other low-income states of the country. Our work/base location which currently happens to be Odisha has somewhat been a hindrance especially while starting out.

Founded in 2014, ThinkZone is currently implementing its education program across 400+ villages in 4 districts of Odisha – Cuttack, Kendrapara, Khordha, and Bhadrak. We have also started expanding our work in two new states as a pilot project. ThinkZone's work has also led to an average 30% increase in the overall skills of the educators who have gone through 1 year of ThinkZone training and mentorship.

Q : What is the philosophy behind this educational initiative?

A : Education to the BoP is a huge challenge across the world. In India, we have managed to enroll 97% of children in schools. But over 40% of students drop out before the age of 12. Imagine being asked to read long paragraphs and tested on it without ever getting the chance to learn the alphabet. Or having to solve mathematical equations, without knowing the numbers. That is the struggle for children in India every day and a key reason why they drop out of the mainstream education system. Education during the formative years of a child defines his/ her career and life.



To top that, out of 148 countries ranked on the world gender equality index, India ranks 132. All this translates to the human cost of poor health, hygiene, and social skills on an individual level, to unemployment, lower income levels, slower growth of the economy's growth on a national level. ThinkZone was conceived with the resolute intention of not letting these terrible statistics determine the future of India's children. This will be the very few times in India where a localized tech-based pedagogy is being built for first generations learners and for improving the skills of facilitators who come from a limited educational background. For children who have not started formal schooling and already behind actual learning competencies, the multi-level early childhood education programs make them school-ready through the development of skills like literacy, numeracy, engaging in learning activities, ability to follow directions, working well with other children, etc. Our five-level foundational primary grade program helps children who are already in primary school but several steps behind learning levels develop age-appropriate skills and perform better in schools.

Q : What is unique about your interesting logo?

A : ThinkZone's logo brings out the necessity of providing quality pre-primary and primary education programs in the country right now. The pencil stands for an early part of our education while the bulb which usually stands for ideas stands here for an education which is different and which gives the space for children to question and ideate, something which is usually not thought about for children who are so young.

Q : What are your actual operations?

A : ThinkZone's operation can be categorized into six different programs.

1. Quality Learning Initiative in Schools

The 'Quality Learning Initiative in Schools' focuses on improving the learning outcomes of students (Class 1-5) in language and arithmetic. This is a continuous program wherein teachers are supported with regular offline and online skill-enhancement workshops, activity-based teaching resources, and mobile application platforms for classroom management, assessments & learning activities. The program is implemented by school teachers who are supported by ThinkZone to manage various processes of the program.

2. Quality Learning Initiative in Anganwadis

The 'Quality Learning Initiative in Anganwadis' focuses on developing age-appropriate skills of children between the ages of 3 to 5. This is a continuous program wherein Anganwadi workers deliver quality early childhood education

programs and are supported by ThinkZone to manage various processes of the program. The Anganwadi workers are supported with regular offline and online skill-enhancement workshops, activity-based teaching resources, and mobile application platforms for classroom management, assessments & learning activities.

3. TIME Fellowship

The TIME (ThinkZone India Micro-Entrepreneurs of Education) fellowship provides an opportunity for youth to become micro-entrepreneurs in education. The fellowship program identifies, skills, certifies & equips youth to run learning centers for children in their own communities. The fellows implement quality early-grade education programs driven by ThinkZone's pedagogy and technology. ThinkZone supports the fellows with regular offline and online skill-enhancement workshops, activity-based teaching resources, and mobile application platforms for classroom management, assessments & learning activities.

4. School Readiness Program

The School Readiness Program is a time-bound program that is implemented at the beginning of or immediately before students are enrolled in Class I. The program helps in providing a transition from the home or Anganwadi environment to formal schooling. The 2-month program involves developing students' pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, with additional modules on motor skills and social skills. The program is implemented by ThinkZone Fellows (trained community educators) along with school teachers using activity-based teaching resources and following the 'school-readiness' module present on the ThinkZone mobile application

5. LEAP

LEAP (Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress) is a time-bound program focused on developing the foundational skills of students (Class 2 to 5) in arithmetic and language. The 2-month program is implemented by ThinkZone Fellows (trained community educators) along with school teachers using activity-based teaching resources and following the 'foundational skills development' module present on the ThinkZone mobile application.

6. Home Readiness Program

ThinkZone is building a community enhancement model via technology wherein low-income group families are engaged constantly via IVR based calls and an SMS based system to get regular DIY (Do-it-yourself) learning modules. These learning modules are usable by every parent – regardless of their literacy level or the type of mobile phone they can access, they can easily try this with their kids. These modules are completely user-friendly and are available in English, Hindi, and Odia.

ThinkZone has already provided 'level-based' quality early-childhood and primary level education for 5,000+ children across remote villages of India, who have shown 1-2 levels improvement in learning levels within a period of 1 year of going through ThinkZone programs.

More than 80% of the children enrolled in the primary grade program over a period of one year have jumped two levels up from their existing learning level(Ex:- From Level 1 to Level 3 in maths and language). Similarly, 90% of the children enrolled in the Early Childhood Program have developed age-appropriate skills over a period of one year under the 4 required skills (physical, language, memory, and social & emotional).

Q : What were your initial hurdles? How did you overcome them?

A : In terms of the startup space and being in Odisha, there was a serious dearth of quality support opportunities in the state, and this affected our enterprise to grow early on. We have seen many instances when corporate has asked us to come and implement our programs in pockets of Maharashtra and Karnataka because it happens to be nearer to Mumbai and Bangalore respectively (near their headquarters). One of them in fact had advised us to shift location to Bangalore for work! Many fail to realize that we want to currently focus our work to reach out to the Low Income Group States of the country.

The Odisha startup ecosystem has really flourished in the last one or two years with the state government taking an active interest in the promotion of local startups. While it will take many years to reach the level of startup hubs like Bangalore or Delhi, the signs are really positive.

Q : Who supported you in your initiative?

A : ThinkZone has constantly been supported by its partners such as Grey Matters Capital, Villgro (INVENT), BPCL, Unltd India, US Distribution Inc., Learning Equality, NSRCEL-IIM Bangalore and Department of MSME, Govt. of Odisha. In addition, we are also supported by D-Prize, Adani Foundation, Akshay Patra Foundation, IDEK, Meghshala Central Square Foundation, Youth Action Net, UBL, HDFC, and Millenium Alliance.

Q : Did you receive feedback on your work? How did it help in improving your work?

A : We follow a 360-degree mechanism of collecting feedback from stakeholders while also using accessible and non-internet based technology mediums of IVRS & SMS to take direct feedback from the community for improving our on-ground solution. Different levels of communication at multiple levels in a process-oriented

manner help us to make sure that the stakeholders are positively impacted by our solution. We consistently take feedbacks from our partners as well with whom we are implementing our program to make it better.

Q : What are your future plans?

A: ThinkZone is looking into expanding its work in the under-resourced communities across India.

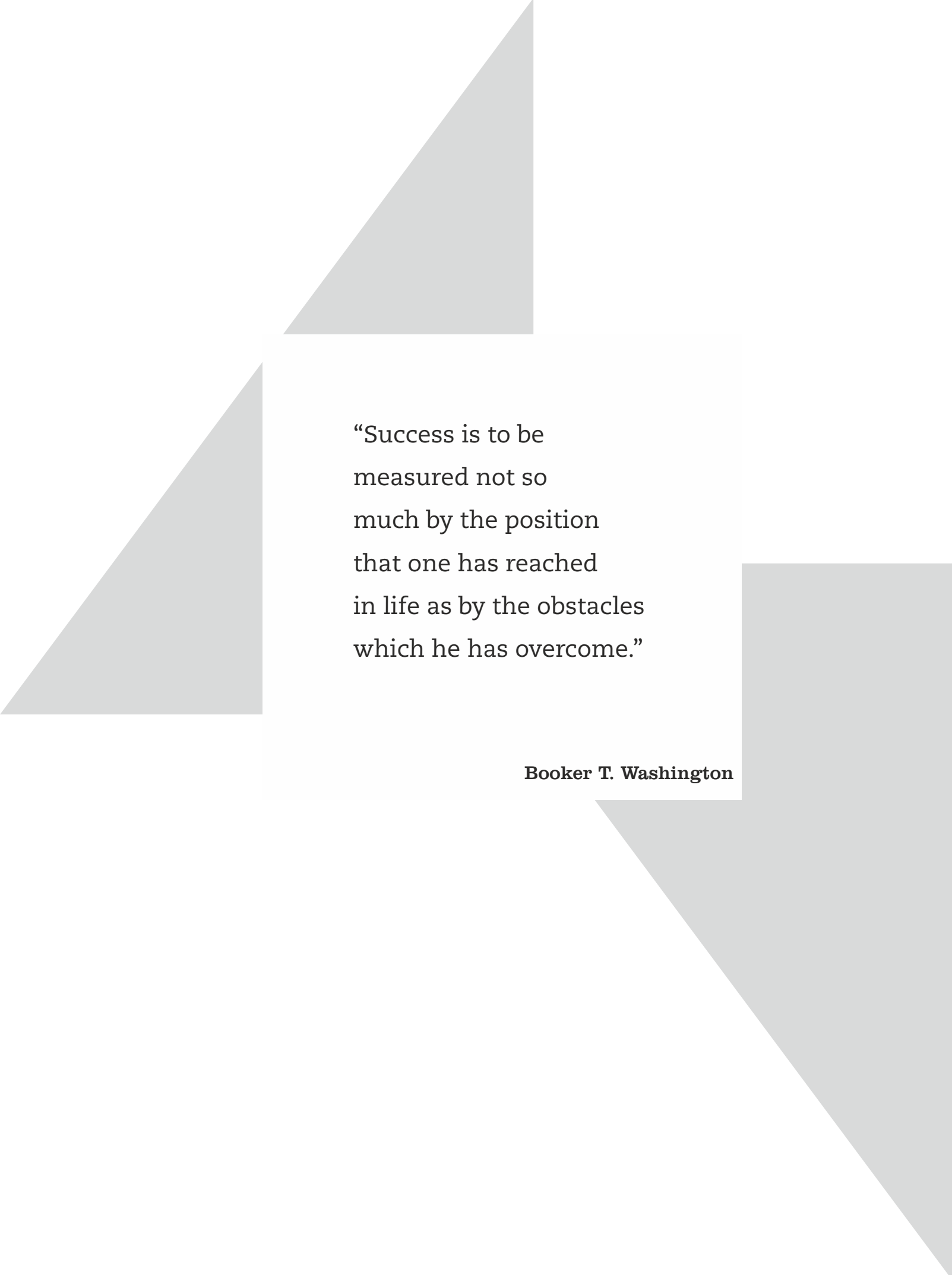
Technological enablement of education is inevitable. While it is happening at pace in urban India, the advantages have yet to reach the grassroots. ThinkZone is building learning solutions especially for first-generation learners and promoting social-impact startups like ours will aid in solving the serious learning crisis that is affecting our children at large.

ThinkZone is creating a scalable model of technology and local community interventions that can be adapted to the local context. By collaborating with government education department and childcare centers, not only will ThinkZone expand outreach to 20mn children in India but also have an already established and trusted partner spread our efforts of providing quality education and bridging the gender barrier in low Income Group areas of India.

Our current goal is to directly impact 10000 children through quality education programs and also up-skill and provide livelihood opportunities to 1000 youth from under-resourced communities. We are also on track to reach out to 20000 parents with our home-based education programs in the next year. These 3 goals would be achieved through our existing B2B partnerships with both private and public players of the ecosystem.

ThinkZone plans to partner with select public sector organizations and private MNCs to implement its early-grade learning enhancement programs as well as its teacher-training programs in their work geographies. ThinkZone will scale this expansion through greater decentralization. Automating our teacher training system, upgrading our curriculum, improving performance monitoring along with integrating analytics with technology will help us scale. This will help us in our objective of scaling our program to 2 million children in India over the next five years





“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.”

Booker T. Washington



The Spirit of
Management



Every event in your life teaches you something!

— An Interview with —

Dr. A. Anantharaman, Ph.D

Former C-Suite Executive & Board Member in Global Corporations

Senior Corporate Leader, Advisor & Mentor

Former UNIDO Expert & Advisor

Professor of Strategy, Innovation and General Management

Until Recently Provost, XIME

Q: Can you tell us about your schooling and college life?

A: My grandparents brought me up. My grandfather was a judge at the Madras High Court. After retiring, he settled down at Coimbatore. I did my schooling at Coimbatore at a school called Suburban High School.

After my schooling, I went to National College, Bangalore. A graduate program in Physics at the Presidency College, Chennai, followed this. It was subsequently at the Government Engineering College at Jabalpur that I did my graduation in Engineering. Later I did my MBA and also an Advanced Management Program (AMP) at the Harvard Business School. Subsequently, I completed my Ph.D. from Columbia University.

When I passed my SSLC, I was barely 13 years old. I had the advantage of being the youngest school finalist. This early start gave me the opportunity to be the youngest graduate, youngest manager, and the youngest participant in AMP. Now, I am the oldest director, oldest professor, and the oldest student of all this online stuff. And when I received my certification for Scuba Diving, a few years ago, I was the oldest diver!

I have had my share of recognitions – being the youngest at some period of my life and being the oldest at some other period of my life!

*(The views expressed
are personal)*

Q: Who were the most inspiring people in your life?

A: My grandfather was one of the biggest influences in my life. He was my guide and mentor. He encouraged in me the habit of extensive reading. He used to tell me constantly, *'The world is your oyster, and you can do anything you want'*.

I still remember a particular incident. We are from an orthodox South Indian family, and when I was ten years old, he took me to a restaurant, ordered non-vegetarian food. And told me: *'One of these days you may go abroad. So get used to eating Non-Vegetarian food. To get on with life, you must be ready to do what is necessary, as long as it is ethical. Do not be influenced by prejudices.'* My grandfather was that kind of a man. And, being close to him I learnt to avoid prejudices and unnecessary judgments.

My communication skills were honed largely because of my grandfather. He wrote my first speech at Suburban High School, when I was about 8 years old. He made me practice and when I gave the speech, he stood outside the compound wall just to hear me speak. He encouraged me constantly in all my endeavors.

My grandfather was very well versed in the English language. I vividly remember this: When Sir Winston Churchill wrote the second volume of A History of English-Speaking Peoples, the publisher had said that if anyone finds even a single mistake in the book, the entire set of volumes will be given to the person for free! My grandfather discovered six grammatical mistakes in the first chapter. He wrote a letter to Sir Winston Churchill, and Sir Winston wrote a personal letter to my grandfather complementing him on his expertise in King's English! For my grandfather, good written and spoken communication was of utmost importance. He used to say that to convey anything, there was always only one right word. It required skill to choose that one right word!

Later in my life, it was my wife who supported me in all what I did. In fact, we were living in Bangalore - nice house, secure job and my son was in a good school. I just told her one day, *'I am getting tired of all this. Let us go abroad'*. She said ok, and packed all things, and we were ready to move in a week. And we moved to Nigeria. We had a glorious life in Africa – big mansion and many servants. I told her one day, *'Raj (my son) needs to go to a good college. Let us move to the USA so that I can earn in dollars to pay for his college'*. Without batting an eyelid, she said, *'OK. Let's go'*. She packed all the things, and we were ready to move in a week.

I have a small family, with one son, and we always moved around together. My family was always very supportive and readily moved with me. I am so glad that we are a close-knit family. And that family has been a great support to me.

**My grandfather was my
biggest influence in my life.
He was my guide and mentor.
He encouraged in me the
habit of extensive reading.**

Q: What about your choice in your graduation programme?

A: I liked Math and Science subjects. I loved the English language because of my grandfather's influence. We are a family full of lawyers and civil servants. At that time, Engineering was a growing field. Everybody went into that area, and so did I. That is how choices were made in those days.

These days, youngsters have a lot of choices to make. I always tell them, *'Make use of these choices. Try to excel in the area that you like most. When they ask me 'In which area will there be maximum opportunity?', I tell them, 'Don't think of opportunity in isolation, because the world is changing so fast, that you'll not know what will happen five years from now! Just go with what you like most and excel in that area. Opportunity will follow you'.*

Q: We would like to know about your corporate journey. Can you kindly walk us through it?

A: Management as a formal discipline did not exist when I graduated in Engineering. It was the Engineers who became Managers those days. I started my career with Hindustan Lever Limited, as a Management Trainee. Out of hundreds of applications they received, after an elaborate interview process of several rounds, they would select two or three people every year.

During one year, I was one of them. I was actually very surprised at my selection. I did not go to a fancy public school, I did not have a very fashionable and rich

Perhaps being frank and honest will get you into trouble in the short run, but in the long run, this is what will win.

upbringing. I don't think that I even had all the social graces expected of someone who would get inducted into a multinational firm like HLL. It was much later that I had the HBS education. So, I was very surprised when HLL selected me.

Dr K.S. Basu was the director at HLL at that time. He would later be my Mentor. After sometime at HLL, I went to him one day and asked him what

was the basis of selecting me as a Management Trainee. What he told me was an eye opener! Dr Basu asked *"Do you remember the answer you gave when we asked you the following question. 'You are a Mechanical Engineer. We are a soap and vanaspathi making company. What will you do if you do not find the job interesting?'"*.

I said, *'I will leave!'*

Dr Basu then said, *We then told you 'We are spending so much money on your selection and on your training. If you leave after all that it just indicates you have no loyalty'. Do you know what was your answer to that statement? I just said, 'I am afraid my first loyalty is to myself'.*

Every event in your life teaches you something!
Dr. A. Anantharaman

Dr Basu then said that it was that answer that ensured that I got selected, because that answer indicated total and complete honesty and reflected someone who knew his mind.

That has been my life's motto all along. Perhaps being frank and honest will get you into trouble in the short run, but in the long run, this is what will win.

After my stint at HLL, I made a move to English Electric Company, first at Chennai . From there, it was a long voyage that took me to several continents and countries like England, Switzerland, Nigeria, Kenya, and finally the USA.

I have been in CEO roles and Board roles. What impressed me during the corporate sojourn was the splendor of different places, different people, different contexts and different pressures. The variety of all these situations influenced me a lot.

Of course, there were successes and failures, but all were intense experiences. What stood me in good stead during these years was my grandfather's dictum that one could do anything one wanted as long as one approached the work in hand diligently, honestly and professionally.

In the same vein, I would also like to make a mention of the role of Destiny in this voyage. I strongly believe that Destiny has a role, otherwise you cannot find an answer to the question: why do some people succeed or why do some people fail? Moreover, why the same effort sometimes succeeds and sometimes fails. If I look at all the changes that I have made, right from Engineering to all the subsequent changes in my career and life, I can certainly sense a hidden hand. Not all were conscious, logical moves, but they all happened. When the changes happen, one does not know why they happen, but later you realize it is all part of a grand plan. Someone, somewhere has designed it. You may call it anything you want. But, Destiny does play a big role!

Q: How fulfilling has your career been? What makes you love what you do?

A: There are two ways of looking at this. You do the work you love, or you love the work you do and give your professional best. I have always believed in the latter and that gave me fulfillment in my career.

Q: Would you like to share a few anecdotes from your corporate journey?

A: I have always said, "Life is a succession of events which must be lived to be understood". These events happen all the time. Each event is a lesson by itself. And every person you meet is actually your teacher, if only you keep your mind open.

**When the changes happen,
one does not know why
they happen, but later
you realize it is all a part
of a great plan.**

For instance, I remember sitting with Dr Basu of HLL one day in his office when he received a call from a State Cabinet Minister. The Minister said that he was sending someone, and asked Dr Basu if he will hire him at HLL.

Normally, an HR man would jump at this and oblige a Minister because he can demand a *quid pro quo* later. I remember what Dr Basu told the Minister:

“As we receive a large number of applications, it is very difficult for any one to get an interview at HLL. However, since you have called, I will give the candidate a direct opportunity for an interview. Then, it is entirely up to the interview committee to select him or not. I will not influence them”. Such an answer from the Head of HR at the beginning of my career has stayed with me throughout. That shaped my value system all my life, a value system to follow in Life and business. I have never asked for a favour or offered a favour.

Later, when I joined the English Electric Company, which then merged with GEC (of UK), I was selected by the company to do a six-month Action Learning Program conducted by Prof Reeves. Prof Reeves believed that the only way to learn something was to “Learn it in Action. Not reading about it – just get down to work.”

There is an interesting story about how Prof Reeves came into contact with GEC. GEC was at that time led by Arnold Weinstock. One day, Arnold Weinstock accidentally saw Prof Reeves talking about the Action Learning program when he

was watching TV in his home office. He called Prof Reeves next day and hired him to conduct the program for the GEC group. GEC selected 12-15 youngsters from their units all over the world (young men in the 25 – 30 age group). Prof. Reeves, then, collected these young men and gave them intensive work experience in all kinds of environment. I was selected in one such group

On another occasion, I was working in a horse stable for three weeks at a horse breeding and training unit in South Africa!

and I underwent all kinds of varied work experience. Reeves believed that when you throw people into different work environments, they develop a mental skill, which gives them a balanced perspective to be an effective Manager.

So, it would be something like this: you go to work in a different field for about three weeks, and come back to Rugby in England for an intensive exchange of ideas and training. I was fortunate to be a part of this. In one the training sessions, I was working as a bank teller in Brussels for two weeks. On another occasion, I was working in a horse stable for three weeks at a horse breeding and training unit in South Africa!

During one such interlude, I had the fortune to spend a few days observing Harold Jeneen at work. Jeneen was the head of ITT at that time and a legend. He was a

Every event in your life teaches you something!
Dr. A. Anantharaman

remarkable man, celebrity. I had the opportunity to attend a business review meeting at Brussels conducted by Harold Jeneen. Jeneen was a man who believed in statistics and numbers. He used to grill people during annual review meetings. The story goes that at the end of these intense grilling, half the executives committed suicide and the other half got drunk!

Another event that made a significant impact on me was the time I went to Harvard to do my Advanced Management Program (AMP). There were senior Business Titans who were all at one time or other students of this program. I have met and been meeting several of them and all of them have made a deep impression on me. AMP is a signature HBS programme on Management where 150-200 top leaders from great companies around the world attend. And many stalwarts came to teach that program. There was Michael Porter. There was Jack Welch of GE. There was Robert Kaplan of the Balance Scorecard fame. There was George Lodge, son of Henry Cabot Lodge. Each was a Titan. Rubbing shoulders with them was a great honor and a great opportunity.

I also had an opportunity to work in West Africa as an UNIDO Expert. In this capacity, I served as an advisor to ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), which gave me an opportunity to rub shoulders with other stalwarts. One of them was General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the President of Nigeria at that time, and who was later considered for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN). I also had the opportunity to know Mr Kofi Annan of Ghana, who became the Secretary-General of the UN. Such relationships stay with me as abiding memories.

And most recently, as a Provost at XIME, I had an opportunity to work closely with Professor Philip, another remarkable man, whom I would call as the Peter Drucker of India. He was a builder of great Institutions. From him, I learnt that Institutions are larger than their transactions and they succeed only by their Institutional logic of Purpose, Meaning and Values. From him, I learnt many cameos of Management Excellence.

Q: How did you develop such vast varieties of interests? How do you keep yourself motivated?

A: I was fortunate to move across continents, thereby engaging in an array of events and activities. People always interested me and so did places. I have always believed that the best Motivation in any activity and event, is not Reward or Money, but to succeed and win. I also believed that quite often what is more important is to put

I also had an opportunity to work in West Africa as an UNIDO Expert. In this capacity, I served as an advisor to ECOWAS.

your best foot forward and give your best professional support. When you do that, even if success eludes you, you can at least be happy that you did your best.

Q: What does Success mean to you?

A: Far more than the result, what is more important to me are

- (a) *Have I put my best effort?*
- (b) *Have I shown utmost professionalism?*
- (c) *Have I been ethical in my approach?*
- (d) *Have I carried my team with me, and*
- (e) *Have I shared with others the value received?*

This to me is real success.

Q: How have you taken failure in your professional life?

A: Success and failure are not always in your hands. There are factors beyond you that determine this. It could be chance, it could be karma, or it could be an unattainable result. The only questions I ask myself during such times are:

- (a) *Have I done my best?*
- (b) *Have I learnt from the failure?*

If the answers to the above are “Yes”, then I have not failed!

Q: What is the one big lesson that life has taught you?

A: Work hard, work diligently, and work with conviction. Never forget your value system. And do not be too concerned with results, because the results are not always in your hands. And do not hesitate to take the Road Less Travelled!

Best Wishes!



Dr. A. Anantharaman

on


What is Life?

Providentially, I have had many fortunate opportunities all my life. To me, Life is a succession of events that must be lived to be understood. Every experience is new, so you must enjoy it, and learn from it. As people say, either do all you like or like all you do, I chose the latter. Every event in your life, if you keep your mind open, teaches you something. And, the most important lesson I learnt from all these experiences is the significance of looking at all the happenings in life through a lens of total Professionalism and Ethical Values. At the end of the day, all that matters in life is to see if you have done things with sincerity and honesty!

Advice to Young College Graduates

Your parents gave you roots when you were born and wings when you grew up. Your college has strengthened those wings. This has enabled you to fly better. So, my suggestions to you young people would be:

- ❖ To make the right choices
- ❖ To use your gifts well
- ❖ To follow convictions and not bend
- ❖ To be original and not follow dogma
- ❖ To be kind rather than clever
- ❖ To compete, to conquer and to win
- ❖ And create history in anything you choose.

The page features several large, light gray triangles that create a geometric, abstract background. One triangle is in the top right, another in the middle left, and a large one in the bottom right. The text is centered in a white rectangular area.

“By far, the
greatest danger of
Artificial Intelligence
is that people conclude
too early that they
understand it.”

Eliezer Yudkowsky



Artificial Intelligence
& Business



Artificial Intelligence & Philosophy

— An Interview with —

Dr. Anoop George

Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

IIT Palakkad, Kerala

One of the well-known founding fathers of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Herbert Simon, predicted in 1957 that the future will be in the hands of machines that can think, learn and create. Today, after more than 60 years, we know to what extent these predictions have come true. Hardly anything today works without the integration of AI. Commonly understood AI is the attempt to imitate the human intelligent behavior using those programming techniques which has little or no resemblance to human mental processes. Intelligent machines continue to perform tasks which are done by humans in a better way as compared to humans. However, when AI comes under the preview of philosophy, it faces issues which are unfamiliar to it, for example, imagine the Socratic saying: "Man know thyself".*

Q : What is the philosophical argument behind the use of Artificial Intelligence?

A : There is only one argument 'Love of Wisdom'. Philosophy is generally defined as "Love of wisdom". One who 'loves' something considers it as highly valuable and will have an undisputable attraction towards it. Wisdom is all the more difficult to define. The ancient Greeks considered that wisdom does not come naturally to human beings. It is not the property of the weak minded but rather belongs to the strong and the intelligent one. Wisdom is the quality of being wise, the ability to have the right knowledge to make a good judgement. Hence loving wisdom makes a person perfect. AI has made human life easier and better and now it is in almost everything. A fundamental question remains for AI is that how much wisdom is there in its performance. Apart from many technical theories this is the only philosophical argument that can foster AI. Hence a bigger task lies on the creators of AI.

*(The views expressed
are personal)*

Q : What is the ethical dimension that we need to be aware of, if businesses become completely AI-driven?

A : Ethics is one of the fundamental branches of philosophy. It is the theory of right conduct. Ethics is derived from the ancient Greek word *ethikos* which itself is derived from the root word *ethos* which means character or custom. Defining a well-founded definition of ethics is difficult because it is defined by the unpredictable, erratic, capricious and wavering behaviors and actions of an individual human person. Another astounding aspect of morality is its locus. Ethics does not have an objective existence, we could only infer its existence in the actions of agents who are moral. Morality is also closely linked with the notion of freedom. It is only a free being who is capable of moral actions. Hubert Dreyfus in his book 'What computers can't do?' asks; "(1) Does a human being in "processing information" actually follow formal rules like a digital computer?, and (2) Can human behavior, no matter how generated, be described in a formalism which can be manipulated by a digital machine?".[#] Dreyfus is referring to certain intrinsic qualities that humans possess which would amount to calling an individual moral. Even if we move towards a completely AI driven world certain fundamental principles that underline morality cannot be altered. It is widely accepted fact that the AI systems are bereft of ethical dimensions, because apart from its intelligence which is artificial, the qualities like sentience, self-awareness, consciousness, rationality, responsiveness and responsibility are essential to be ethical. It is important to note that AI is artificial intelligence and not real intelligence. A real intelligence is necessary to understand the nuances of every given situation and to act and react accordingly. A robot is programmed to perform ethically but ethics itself is unprogrammable. This is also the reason why we find differing ethical notions across various human civilizations and in every unpredictable human individuals. AI would always remain a marvel of human engineering but we may have to go a long way before the AI itself replaces the human engineer.



**Among other things, Simon predicts: (1) That within ten years a digital computer will be the world's chess champion, unless the rules bar it from competition. (2) That within ten years a digital computer will discover and prove an important new mathematical theorem. (3) That within ten years a digital computer will write music that will be accepted by critics as possessing considerable aesthetic value. (4) That within ten years most theories in psychology will take the form of computer programs, or of qualitative statements about the characteristics of computer programs (Herbert A. Simon and Allen Newell, "Heuristic Problem Solving: The Next Advance in Operations Research," Operations Research, Vol. 6 (January-February 1958), pp. 7-8.)*

[#]Hubert L. Dreyfus, What Computers can't do: A critique of Artificial Reason. Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1972, p. 197.



Artificial Intelligence: The Engine of the Future

An Interview with

Dr. S. Sudhindra

Professor & Chair, Information Systems and Technology

Associate Dean (Academics)

T. A. Pai Management Institute (TAPMI)

Manipal

Q: What is Artificial Intelligence for a business establishment?

A: It makes sense to approach this question from two perspectives. Firstly, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is making inroads into all walks of lives. And as a consequence, new and previously unknown consumer products are emerging and proliferating. Examples are domestic robots such as vacuum cleaners, drones used in agriculture, surgical robots, intelligent virtual assistants, and virtual reality games. These have caused new industries to emerge and older industries to reinvent themselves. This is the product-oriented perspective.

*(The views expressed
are personal)*

On the other hand, AI has also impacted the way businesses achieve their objectives. Businesses will use AI increasingly in all aspects of a business be it Human Resources, Sales and Marketing, Operations, Finance, or IT. Its usage will bring down delivery times, increase efficiency, improve quality, bring down costs, and allow better customer acquisition and service.

Q: How will businesses be impacted by AI, both in a positive and negative manner?

A: There will be an initial negative impact on traditional businesses that refuse to introduce newer AI-based products. It will be similar to what happened to the companies that failed to adapt to the digital revolution and became extinct. Examples abound: Encyclopaedia publishers, clock manufacturers, traditional photography film manufacturers. We are likely to see a similar churn during the AI revolution too.

The industries that adapt will essentially operate in a Blue Ocean. They will face little competition, if any, in the near future. Like I said earlier, these businesses will make interesting products, acquire more customers, improve their efficiencies, and serve their customers better. And therefore, they will become the dominant players in the marketplace.

Q: Is the Indian business ecosystem ready for implementing AI?

A: AI implementations are a combination of software and hardware. The hardware components, electrical, mechanical, and electronics, form a larger proportion of AI solutions as compared to digital solutions. Although India has one of the world's best programming talent pool, we could not capitalize on it and become a dominant player in the digital electronics space. This was due to our lack of progress in the electronics hardware industry. If India has to make innovative products and capture markets, like China and South Korea, have done, then we must develop world-class infrastructure for manufacturing hardware and create a skilled workforce to go with it.

Nevertheless, Indian industries have shown that they are quick to adopt advanced technologies for running their businesses. Many industries have already started using AI for their marketing and HR practices. The presence of multinationals such as Amazon, Walmart, and Toyota will act as a catalyst in the proliferation of AI into all areas of a business.

Q: Can you give us a few examples of AI that businesses are currently using?

A: Sure. It is going to be a sprinkling because these are early days, and it is still difficult to create a morphology of the applications.

Some of the most powerful applications of AI have been in the area of customer handling. Customer analytics implementations such as Google Analytics have made it easy to make sense of the petabytes of visual, audio, and text data that get generated due to the activities millions of potential customers. Extraction of patterns from large amounts of customer data is being used create a customized experience for them. In another application of using past customer data, the initial success of Netflix has led to every e-commerce company to use recommender systems to influence customer purchase. Then there are robotic assistants or bots that handle customer service and have relieved lakhs of people to be available for more interesting jobs.

Fintech, largely driven by AI, has transformed the way investments are made, banks are run, and insurance companies operate. Risk-analysis is largely being done by AI-based systems. Robotic assistants are becoming low-cost and highly efficient financial advisors. Robotic process automation is transforming workflows in areas such as loan processing, banking, and customer care.

Apart from such regular applications of technology, AI is also becoming the default technology for high-end and mission-critical applications such as space exploration, military, and healthcare.

Then there are innovative products based on AI. AI-driven cars, routing algorithms that help people in their everyday navigations, robotic vacuum cleaners, intelligent refrigerators and air-conditioning systems, entertainment delivery devices are converting residences into smart homes. New applications are now available that can help in genome research, biotechnology, oceanography, and even create art.

Q: How will the future of businesses unfold in an AI-driven world?

A: While predictions on technology are always difficult, it would be difficult to find people and businesses not touched by AI in the next 5- 10 years. Entire workflows of organizations will be operated by intelligent systems. Customers would rarely be interacting with human beings and will not even know the difference.

Value chains will undergo a major transformation. Physical products will be digitally printed at customers' homes or delivered either through drones. Factories will not only have workers but also may be completely be managed by robots.

A major technological breakthrough in AI is likely to come through advances in Quantum Computing. When it finally becomes technically and financially feasible to use, the kind of power Quantum computing provides can potentially solve most of the computational problems that are not solvable in a reasonable timeframe. The kind of applications that can be put to use cannot be imagined today. For example, a quantum computer can break any of the cryptographic systems that exist today. With such advancements, businesses will be offering products such as virtual and augmented reality experiences that cannot be distinguished from reality.

The education system is unlikely to be immune to changes. Online courses will be made personalized with the use of AI. With that, classrooms will move to homes, and university degrees may be awarded based on virtual learning.

All these also will affect the way people work. The skill requirements will undergo major changes. Businesses and governments must find avenues for employment of the labour force that becomes available. Perhaps it will be up to the academics and researchers to help businesses and governments to develop innovative business models.





Artificial Intelligence & HR Management

— An Interview with —

Dr. Ramesh Ranjan

Associate Professor - HRM

Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship (XIME)

Bangalore

Q: Can you kindly tell us about how AI technologies will impact Human Resource functions in the corporate world?

A: Technology is a key driver in Business Transformation. Spending on digital transformation technologies and services is forecast to grow 10.4 percent in 2020 to \$1.3 trillion according to IDC estimates. Yet, a significant number of organizations are not getting transformation right because of a fundamental quandary over what digital transformation really is. While organizations are investing in innovative technologies, most are lagging or failing to respond to consumers' new expectations due to "meager digital literacy."

So is true in Human Resources Management. HR needs to leverage Technology to create value and services for its stakeholders. HR needs to strive towards ubiquitous optimization across processes, divisions and the business ecosystem of a hyper-connected organization & employees to deliver superior Employee & Stakeholder experience within the organization and deliver value to its stakeholders through an intelligent use of technologies and information.

AI can be leveraged in Hiring decisions, the way we Induct employees, assess their Performance, Reward them for their performance, manage their Career aspirations, identify Top Talents & Future Leaders, proactively prepare Future Leaders through a robust Succession Planning process, identify Development

*(The views expressed
are personal)*

Needs and chart out an Action Learning program, gauge the Moods/sentiments of people in the organization, proactively identify dissatisfied/disengaged employees and retain them or thwart any untoward Employee Relations problem. AI can be leveraged to work with Business and Optimize the Workforce utilization and productivity of the workforce.

AI and Digital Technologies is helping HR to automate a lot of tactical processes, integrate various HR processes within HR and also integrate HR across functions in the Business environment, help HR, Business Leaders and employees to be connected/engaged and work in a collaborative way. Most importantly it has helped to empower Managers and Employees to take People decisions. AI and related technologies will help HR to move towards a Personalized delivery plan vis-a-vis the conventional one size fits all strategy.

Q: We would like to know your take on how AI-integrated systems help in teaching and training employees.

A: Technology aided Learning systems are changing not only the how of learning, but also the where and the when. By facilitating a “pull” rather than a “push” system of learning, these technologies are pushing learning far beyond the traditional classroom style learning.

It has helped create immersive online learning environments (such as simulations), and tools that foster better communication and collaboration. Training will become more personalized and adaptive. It will foster social learning through networking, peer learning, and collaboration amongst employees, across departments, and even other stakeholders outside the organization. It will track & evaluate the learning efforts and measure the outcomes with measurable ROIs linked to Business.

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced most of the Education & Training to the online platform for some time to come at least. The world (Trainers, Employees, Students & Teachers) wasn't prepared for it. Added to that, the new generation of learners is hard to please and harder to engage. You put in all efforts to make your online classes amazing and learners are still not impressed. So, how do you engage your online learners?

We started our learning as kids. As kids we learn through Play and Curiosity.

***Play:** Play is the first language we learn. It is how we discover the world and learn through our experiences. **Curiosity:** Curiosity is part of human nature to explore, and it lies at the heart of all innovations.*

To make learning awesome we need to combine the two, in a fun and social way, so that we can unlock the learning potential within all of us, no matter the subject, age or ability. Learning is not a spectator sport. Learners learn better and retain more when they are directly involved in their learning, not just sitting back and being lectured.

Here are some tools that helps us to bring in some fun, stimulate our brains, challenges our IQ, simulates real life situations through gamification and helps us to apply classroom theory in the real world and learn through the experience. Classroomscreen, Padlet, Crosswords, Puzzlemaker, ProProfs, Mentimeter, Ahaslides, Raptivity are some tools that can be used to make learning engaging and fun. Besides we can use CESIM, NUTURNS, StratXSimulations, GameLearn for gamification and simulations on line. Many of these use AI for creating a personalized learning experience.

Q: How quick is the adoption of HR-related AI technologies in the Indian business arena?

A: Digital transformation has the potential to transform when done right. It enables HR to reap significant benefits. But in most cases the execution doesn't match strategy and live up to the expectations. One of the main reasons is that HR is not Digitally Literate or Digital Savvy.

There has been so much of advancement in the use of technology in HR like agile goal management, conversation-based systems, voice-recognition, intelligent chatbots, Employee listening and engagement platforms, organizational network analysis, culture and sentiment assessment, intelligent sourcing, intelligent assessment, talent mobility, talent network platforms, dynamic & real-time Performance Management system, agile, self-directed learning tools, social recognition tools, continuous & real-time listening, micro learning platforms, AI-based prescriptive learning, video assessment, gamified assessment, gamified learning, real-time wellness / fitness monitoring through wearables, real-time analytics, network behavior, intelligent self-service

However, these are being used in bits and pieces and mostly in the West. Most HR Leaders and organizations are probably somewhere between Doing Digital and Becoming Digital. We are yet to see HR fully digitized and leverage the full spectrum of AI and related technologies within HR.

Q: What is your opinion on the future of interaction between AI and HR areas?

A: Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration into Human Resources Management function will make organizations better because it can analyze, predict and diagnose People related issues to help HR Leaders make better decisions. HR also has large volumes of repetitive, mundane, tactical responsibilities that could be replaced by AI-led automation. AI presents an opportunity for HR to automate repetitive, low- value tasks and to increase focus on more strategic work. AI won't replace all of HR, but it will cause significant change and disruption in the way the HR functions in the future. HR professionals need to embrace and prepare for this reality, where administrative skills are more and more going to be taken over by AI led automation.

Roles that focus on activities like sourcing, screening and scheduling will be automated, but roles with a focus on the complex decisions associated with key steps like salary negotiations will continue to be managed by people. AI provides HR professionals with data-backed resources and insights gathered from the various transactions of the past. AI can use historical company HR data to “learn” from past successes and failures. AI can help analyze a candidate's work experience & interests and match them with open roles best suited for them within the organization as part of Career Planning & Talent Mobility program.

AI can identify which candidate prefers what platform for communication – for instance, a Gen Zer might be more comfortable with Instagram, while millennials may prefer Facebook. GenX might be comfortable with face-to-face Training Programs, while millennials and GenX might prefer e-learning and online learning. GenX will want their compensation package to save for retirement, while millennials want more cash in hand. AI-backed chatbots allow HR professionals to understand employee sentiments & moods so they can proactively address potential employee relations roadblocks which boosts engagement and reduces turnover. AI helps HR to adopt an employee centric approach and make tailor made decisions for each employee in the organization based on their individual experiences and preferences.





Artificial Intelligence: Applications in Business

An Interview with

Dr. P. Sridevi

Head & Associate Professor, Information System Area,
Department of Management Studies
National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli

Q: What is Artificial Intelligence? Why it is an important part of a business establishment in today?

A : Artificial Intelligence (AI) makes machines to learn by itself from experience, adapt to new inputs and perform cognition and perception related human like tasks. It works by combining huge amount of data with quick iterative processing methods allowing the system to learn automatically by inferring intelligent patterns in the data with the help of supporting intelligent algorithms defined in the software.

(The views expressed are personal)

Some of the major subfield of AI are Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Deep Learning (DL).

I can point out that, in today's digital era, AI- the new generation technology is considered as an integrated element for business establishment. The impact of these new technologies on business and the economy not alone reflected in direct contributions but also in its capability to enable and stimulate complementary innovations in business environment. New products and processes are being made possible by better vision systems, speech recognition, intelligent problem solving, and many other capabilities with the support of AI.

Organizations willing to sense and respond to opportunities will grab the advantage in the AI-enabled landscape. So the successful strategy of any business is to experiment and learn quickly to handle its competitors.

Q : How will businesses be impacted by AI, both in a positive and negative manner?

A : To my understanding, business has to go through the adoption procedure before and after implementation of the AI to assess both pros and cons of the impact of AI in business.

Artificial intelligence can improve customer service with the use of chatbots and recommendation systems, increase revenue by identifying and maximizing sales opportunities, predict product demand, classify customers, predict customer behavior, detect fraudulent credit card transactions, detect malware, review documents, do research, help diagnose patients, and so on.

The major challenge with AI into the business is not alone in management, implementation, and business imagination but in finding the values it can bring to organization out of implementation.

If business doesn't capitalize the benefits of AI, they might need to face the challenges in terms of automating business processes, gaining business insight through data analysis, and engaging with customers and employees.

Q : How ready is the Indian business ecosystem for implementing AI?

A : Really an interesting question to answer! India regarded as a developing country, Indian companies are trying to adapt AI to serve the customers in a better way and also to retain or grow their own market share. Currently, few startups like Ola, Swiggy are already using AI a lot to drive their business decisions. Recommender systems are a common application of AI that is already implemented by multiple companies working in the FMCG Sector. With the development of online delivery of multiple products by multiple companies, the use of AI has become the need of the hour. The Indian business ecosystem is slowly adapting to the use of AI.

The fundamental challenge is that, few of the advanced AI which has been developed using an ecosystem other than the Indian market will not work perfectly well. For example, Tesla's self-driving cars which have been primarily modeled using machine learning which uses object detection and scene detection, the scenario for Indian roads is entirely different. The pre-trained models require further fine-tuning to understand the Indian scenario. However, there are decisions being taken in this regard as well to facilitate innovative startups which also have AI in mind. In the next few years, a lot of companies are on their way to adapt AI into their business processes. But India is yet to be prepared for a full-scale implementation of AI across all sectors of business. Primarily implementing AI in the Agricultural Sector and IT Sector should be the major focus as these are the industries with higher revenue-driving potential in India.

Q : Can you give us a few examples of AI that businesses are currently using?

A : Plenty of examples could be highlighted as most of the business have started incorporating AI. Listed below are few to indicate.

Semantic is the word used for web searches in internet search engines like Google, Yahoo and is a kind of artificial intelligence (AI) which understands the basic needs and words looking by the searchers and take into consideration the intent and the meaning of the query.

Walmart using AI technology to explore both store and customer applications, including the ability to track and replenish low supplies of inventory, detect numbers of shopping carts available at the store entrance and other capabilities, for optimizing home delivery routes, using facial recognition to identify happy & frustrated purchase behavior patterns and so on.

Amazon's AI applications include autonomous Prime Air delivery by drones; the Amazon Go convenience store that uses machine vision to eliminate checkout lines; and Alexa, the cloud-based AI assistant. AI drives the algorithms for demand forecasting, product search ranking, product and deals recommendations, merchandising placements, fraud detection, translations, and much more.

Q : What will be the future of businesses in an AI-driven world?

A : I can say businesses are in the pace of techno-driven environment. The ongoing corona virus pandemic has changed how traditional business models work around the world with a major focus shifting on doing work from remote environment. Artificial Intelligence paves the fundamental roadway for development of tasks which can help in the "New Normal" which is how the current business and work environment can be described. Businesses around the world are looking for more

levels of automation in tasks which can be scheduled. Let's see the AI demand in different business sectors.

Logistics and Supply Chain Sector: A lot of the supply chain and logistics businesses have already adapted a significant amount of AI in their business making decisions. From forecasting demand of products to understanding customer business requirements, AI contributes majorly to most business making decisions.

Healthcare Sector: From detecting diseases like Cancer through advanced machine learning models to generating patient diagnosis reports and maintenance of records, AI has found its way to drive decisions in the future business models and play a key role.

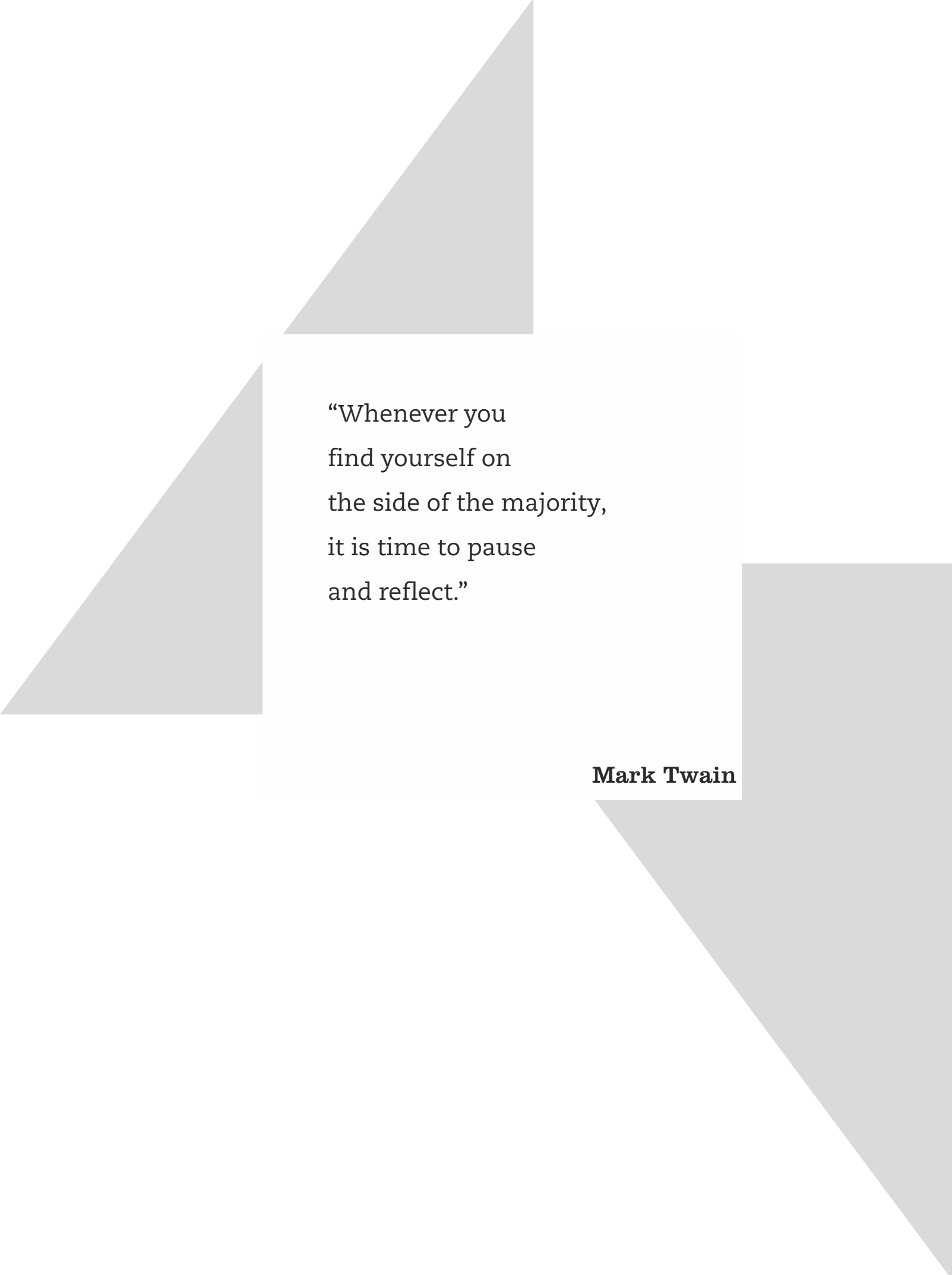
Automotive Sector: Designing of engines, car components and automatic driving cars through the use of AI will prove to be the major use of AI in the automotive sector in the future. With the advent of self-driving cars which are developed based on image recognitions and multiple levels of training through machine learning models, the automotive sector will heavily rely on AI for driving business in the future.

FMCG Sector: The FMCG Sector is one of the most diverse sectors which have a lot of challenges due to the presence of multiple products. The use of AI will pave the way for creation of recommender systems which will help companies create custom purchasing profiles for unique customers and as a result fine tune the loyalty, retention and brand awareness perspectives for customers.

Educational Sector: The use of AI in the educational sector will help institutions and other MOOC content creators to create assessments based on cognitive abilities of the students as well as create courses which adhere to the diversified requirements of candidates. The use of AI in the Education sector will not only drive a progressive growth culture but will also help in generating a holistic learning approach.

AI will be present at all the key influencing decision taking points for a business to either automate the entire decision making process or suggest applications of alternatives to aid in the decision making process.





“Whenever you
find yourself on
the side of the majority,
it is time to pause
and reflect.”

Mark Twain





The Future of Education is 'Education' itself!

— An interview with —

Dr. M. K. Sridhar

President, Centre for Educational and Social Studies, Bengaluru
Formerly Professor of Management, Bangalore University

Q: Who is an Educated Person?

A : Basically, how do you differentiate between educated and uneducated? We will have to ask the question whether it is based on literacy or the kind of degrees that somebody has got. I feel that if you are differentiating an educated person from a so-called 'uneducated' person just on the lines of literacy and degrees, it means that we have really not understood the meaning of education. If anyone says that one is an illiterate or 'uneducated' because that person has not even entered the portals of a college, it reveals our lack of education. This is one perspective we have to keep in mind.

*(The views expressed
are personal)*

Secondly, how do you differentiate between educated and uneducated? I don't think we need to have different measurements for them. After all, what is very important for any 'educated' or 'uneducated' is to lead one's life meaningfully and wisely and make positive contributions to yourself, your family, your surrounding and to your country. Such a person is truly educated in spite of illiteracy and no degrees.

Q: What is the definition of Education, then, Prof Sridhar?

A: Let me clarify that this issue of defining things is more exclusive than inclusive. What I mean by that is that you are actually building a wall around by defining it, which makes it very limited in scope as you cannot include all those things that are outside the wall. You have to include information, data, literacy, numeracy, digital awareness, knowledge, skills, and competencies for understanding education. In fact, it is much more than all this. All these have to fine-tune what is already present in you. Nobody can add anything original to you. As per global research done on brain development, 85% of the brain development happens by the time the child reaches the age of six. So, you see, formal education can make only very little difference, but it will be significant. The question that I am trying to ask is this: "What is already there in a person, how do you bring it out?". Hence, the focus of education should be on facilitating the brain to bring out its own repository of knowledge and skills that is already present. This, according to me, is the real education.

Even though we have a very fair idea of what is this Indian Ancient System of Education and civilization, we have not de-coded them to the fullest...

Q: Would you kindly throw some light on how to rekindle the Ancient System of Education in India?

A: Even though we have a very fair idea of what is this Indian Ancient System of Education and civilization, we have not de-coded them to the fullest extent. We don't know the complete and real picture. For example, during

the recent excavation work in Ayodhya, an ancient slab with a variety of designs was found. These measurements on the inscribed slab are beyond any calculations of modern mathematicians. There are many such instances. Hence, decoding has to search for the facts and meaning of such knowledge bases.

The other point is that we need not adopt everything that we find in the ancient system of education. We have to see the relevance of it, and check whether it will fit with the modern contemporary requirements, and then adopt. We need to revisit its meaning and relevance. For example, the practices of 'Namaste', washing of hands and legs have become very relevant during Covid-19 not because of culture but due to hygiene reasons. One thing that is paramount in all this is the sense of appreciation but not with any condemnation while attempting to de-code.

Q: Since you have been a part of Management Education in India, can you share your thoughts on this ecosystem?

A: There is no doubt that Management Education is more of an applied and practical area. Presently, it is very much driven by placement, pay-cheque, company and geographical location etc. But, it is not just about the first job but subsequent ones and careers. This deals with the whole life of a person who has to manage all that comes in, whether goals, resources, challenges,

There is no doubt that Management Education is more of an applied and practical area. Presently, it is very much driven by placement, pay-cheque...

opportunities, personality, ethics and values in one's life. The pertinent question is whether our B-Schools are preparing students for a job, career or for the whole life itself. Between one who manages a very good first job and one who do not have any decent job but managed the

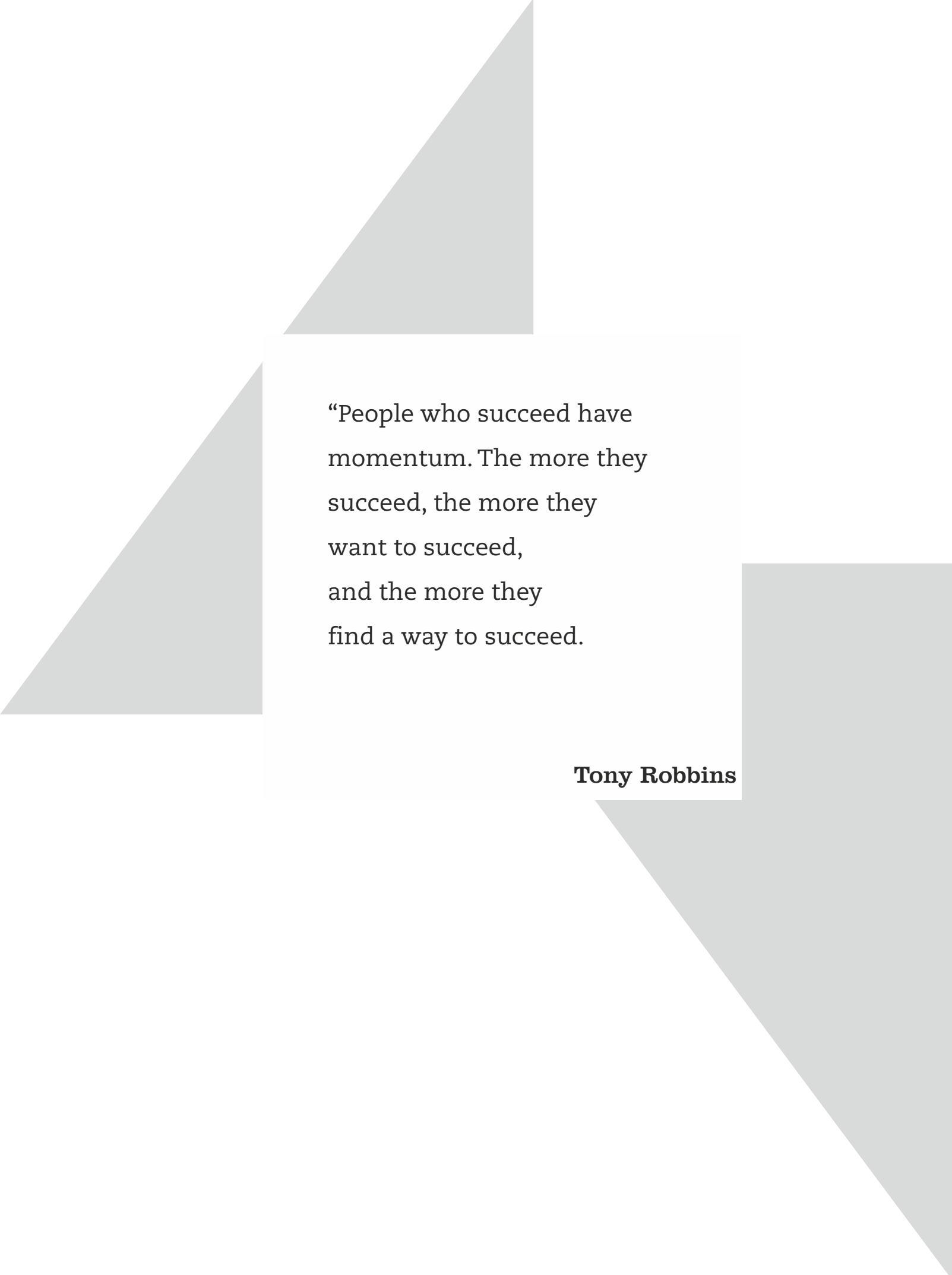
family and life very effectively, I consider the latter is having better management education when compared with great job getter immediately after examination. This is what I call as 'Management in Common Man'.

Q: What will be the future of education in India, especially for higher education institutions like B-schools?

A: I am a part of the National Education Policy Committee of Ministry of HRD, Government of India. While it is true that there is future for digital education in our country but it is not everything. There are lot many technologies on one side and many new models on the other. It is to be taken/considered for teacher development, governance and for assessment apart from teaching-learning. Another writing on the wall is the emergence of multi-disciplinary courses in place of mono faculty or limited discipline based. Hence, the so called B-Schools' have to undergo metaphorsis and prepare themselves for paradigm shift towards multi-disciplinarity, autonomous degree granting institutions and liberal approach towards education. This is the writing on the wall.

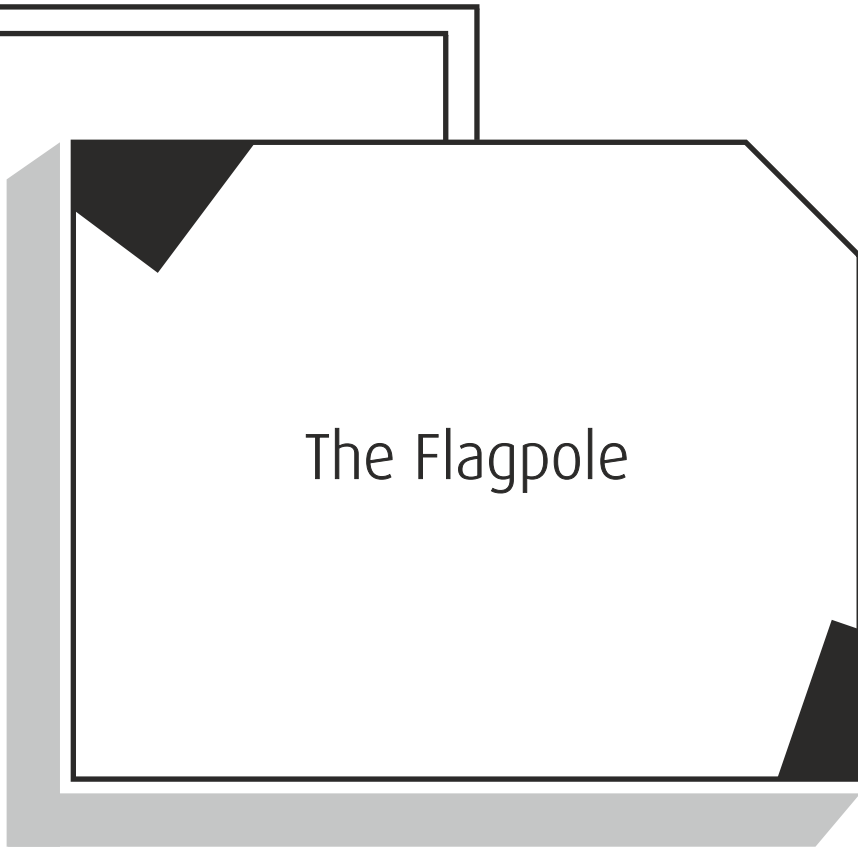
Better we read and internalize them before we become outdated.





“People who succeed have momentum. The more they succeed, the more they want to succeed, and the more they find a way to succeed.

Tony Robbins



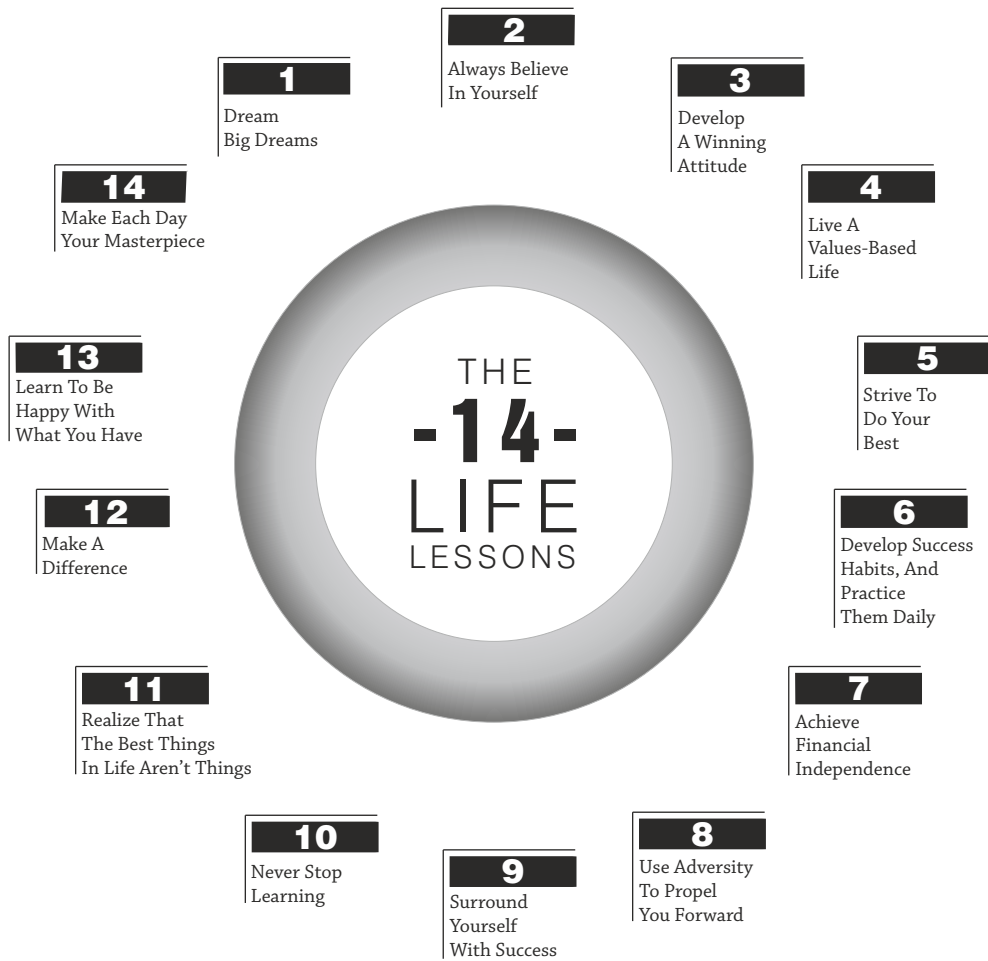
The Flagpole

Life Lessons:

A Guide to Creating and Living Your Best Life

By Brian E Bartes, Legacy Publishing, Michigan, 2011
 ISBN-13: 978-0-9-776773-2-0

In this short and impactful book, Brian Bartes, who has decades of experience in the world of business, comes up with 14 important “principles for success”. Bartes is unequivocal in stating this: *“While there are no “secrets to success,” there are certain immutable principles—“life lessons” if you will. This book is a compilation of those principles. By learning and applying the lessons contained in this book, you will greatly increase your likelihood of achieving success, however you define it.”*



For almost 30 years, Brian Bartes has observed the common characteristics of happy, successful people, and applied them to his own life. Among his many accomplishments, Brian became the Chief Financial Officer of a \$100 million company at the age of 23, and helped grow it to almost \$1 billion in annual revenue.

Climate Change and Intellectual Dishonesty

By Chandran Nair, Jan 2020

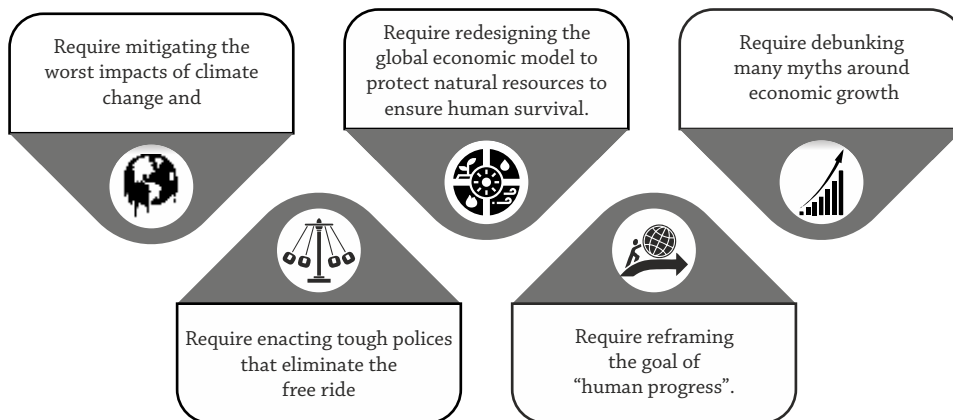
<https://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/climate-change-and-intellectual-dishonesty>

Calling Climate Change an existential threat, Nair points that *“Only full redesign of our growth-obsessed, resource-exploiting and wasteful economic model can resolve this human-created threat.”* It is disturbingly unfortunate that our earth and the inhabitants are girdled by economic avarice and uninhibited materialism.

As Chandran Nair puts it, without mincing words: *“Our economic model is at war with the biosphere and human survival. Yet we have demonstrated inability to tame economic growth. The truth is that a free ride on negative externalities is at the heart of the economics of profitability.”*

“ Accurate scientific data and economic projections on the effects of carbon, resource constraints and ecosystem damage have been around for decades, along with related concerns around globalization, inequality and consumerism. Still, most leaders and policymakers choose to ignore the data, construct elaborate public relations exercises that masquerade as strategies or feel incapable of making change. Radical change is not in their job description. And too many publications have fallen victim to the charm of corporate hubris when it comes to questions about sustainability and the need to reshape capitalism. ”

This Century's Biggest Challenges



Chandran Nair is the founder of the Global Institute for Tomorrow and member of the Club of Rome

Article



Video



Lessons from the Trenches

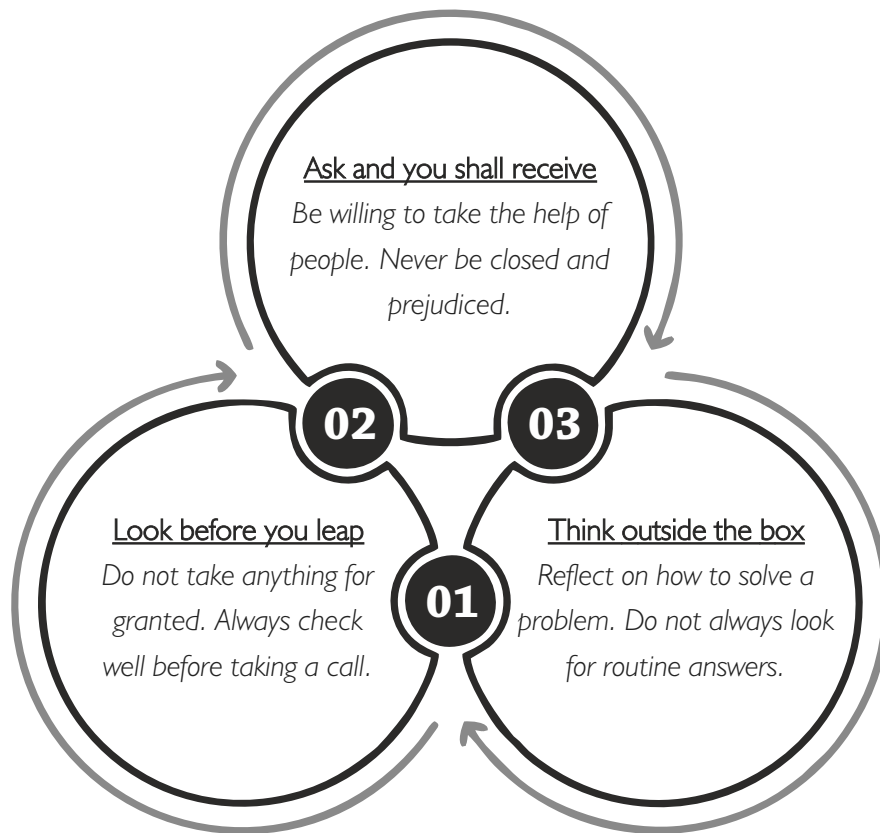
By Peter Morgan

Ideas & Inspiration, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL7Qv5XkX2A>

Peter Morgan, the steely-eyed cop, has spent about 33 years with the Hong Kong Police Department. In this inspirational video, the former Assistant Commissioner of the Hong Kong Police, talks about three lessons that he has learnt which may seem very simple at first. However, he finds these three lessons to be his guideposts. He even calls them his secrets of success.

The Three Lessons



Morgan recounts three incidents where he had to be very proactive, vigilant and observant. This was so, as one small wrong move could mean the difference between life and death. Interestingly, what Morgan has narrated in this video is very much applicable to the business world. If we paraphrase Morgan's three lessons, they would be something like this for the world of commerce:

Do your due diligence | Be open to ideas | Be creative and original

The Secret to Giving Great Feedback


By Lee Ann Renninger, Jan 2020

https://www.ted.com/talks/leeann_renninger_the_secret_to_giving_great_feedback#t-287

Lee Ann Renninger, a Cognitive Psychologist, is the founder of LifeLabs Learning, a company that trains managers and teams at innovative companies around the globe. In this short video, Renninger reminds us that *“Humans have been talking about feedback for centuries. In fact, Confucius, way back in 500 BC, talked about how important it is to be able to say difficult messages well.”* She goes on to give even a biological answer to why giving feedback is a difficult process: *“There's this part of the brain called the amygdala, and it's scanning at all times to figure out whether the message has a social threat attached to it”*. So, whenever we want to give feedback or receive it, there is always some form of resistance. In this video, Renninger makes a clear case for a four-part formula that you can use to say any difficult message well, understandably aimed at making oneself a “Great Feedback Giver”.




TED Talks

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The first part of the formula is what we call the micro-yes. Great feedback givers begin their feedback by asking a question that is short but important. It lets the brain know that feedback is actually coming.
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The second part of the feedback formula is going to be giving your data point. Here, you should name specifically what you saw or heard, and cut out any words that aren't objective. There's a concept we call blur words. A blur word is something that can mean different things to different people.
- 

The third part of the feedback formula is the impact statement. Here, you name exactly how that data point impacted you.
- 

The fourth part of the feedback formula is a question. Great feedback givers wrap their feedback message with a question. They'll ask "Well, how do you see it?" Or "This is what I'm thinking we should do, but what are your thoughts on it?"

Renninger ends with a very important message for all of us: *“Great feedback givers not only can say messages well, but also, they ask for feedback regularly”*.

Self Help (1859)

By Samuel Smiles
(1812-1904)

“ Even the best institutions can give a man no active aid. Perhaps the utmost they can do is, to leave him free to develop himself and improve his individual condition. But in all times men have been prone to believe that their happiness and well-being were to be secured by means of institutions rather than by their own conduct. Hence the value of legislation as an agent in human advancement has always been greatly over-estimated. To constitute the millionth part of a legislature, by voting for one or two men once in three or five years, however conscientiously this duty may be performed, can exercise but little active influence upon any man's life and character. Moreover, it is every day becoming more clearly understood, that the function of government is negative and restrictive, rather than positive and active; being resolvable principally into protection,—protection of life, liberty, and property. Hence the chief “reforms” of the last fifty years have consisted mainly in abolitions and disenactments. But there is no power of law that can make the idle man industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober; though every individual can be each and all of these if he will, by the exercise of his own free powers of action and self-denial. Indeed, all experience serves to prove that the worth and strength of a state depend far less upon the form of its institutions than upon the character of its men. For the nation is only the aggregate of individual conditions, and civilization itself is but a question of personal improvement. ”

Samuel Smiles was a Scottish author and government reformer. Although he campaigned on a Chartist platform, he concluded that more progress would come from new attitudes than from new laws. His masterpiece, Self-Help (1859), promoted thrift and claimed that poverty was caused largely by irresponsible habits, while also attacking materialism and laissez-faire government.



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SOCIAL
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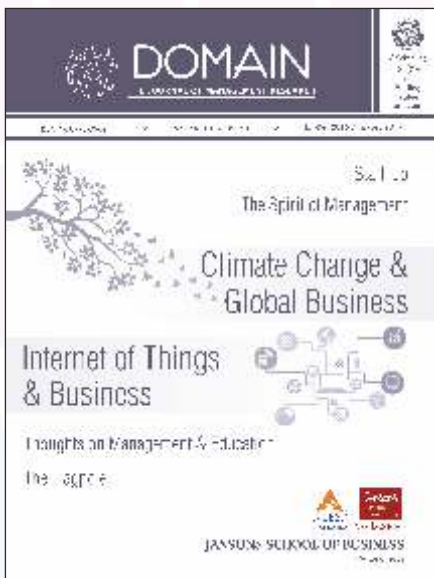
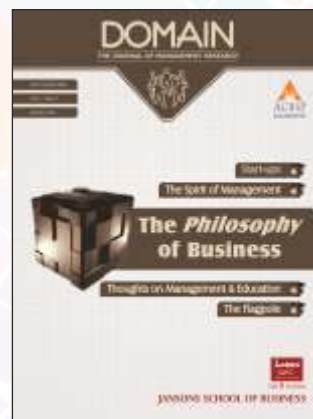
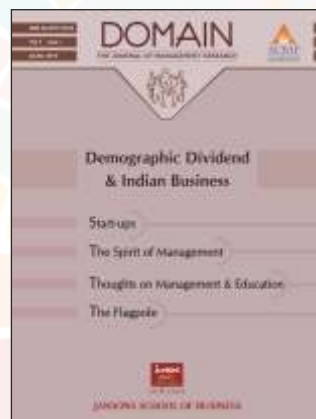
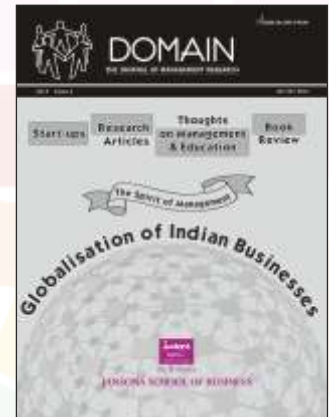
GLOBAL
BUSINESS

Quo Vadis?

An old man lived in the village. The whole village was tired of him; he was always gloomy, he constantly complained and was always in a bad mood. The longer he lived, the viler he became and more poisonous were his words. People did their best to avoid him because his misfortune was contagious. He created the feeling of unhappiness in others. But one day, when he turned eighty, an incredible thing happened. Instantly everyone started hearing the rumor: "The old man is happy today, he doesn't complain about anything, smiles, and even his face is freshened up". The whole village gathered around the man and asked him, "What happened to you?" The old man replied, "Nothing special. Eighty years I've been chasing happiness and it was useless. And then I decided to live without happiness and just enjoy life. That's why I'm happy now".

Don't chase happiness. Enjoy your life!

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