

SELF GOVERNANCE: ‘SUCCESS KEY’ TO MEANINGFUL LIFE

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Introduction

Self-Governance always comes from within. It is to be practiced by individual self, controlling its mind and senses for the greater cause. The human mind is wrapped up with so many layers of unnecessary desires, expectations and shallow thinking that it had lost its originality of being love, calmness, happiness and peace. By losing the original identity, Man, of the day, had lost his real meaning of life and conditioned his pure mind with illusionary worldly senses like greed, lust, anger, undue favor, over expectations from others, etc.

Such conditioning of mind with worldly senses become the hindrance in taking right decision at right time for the benefit of the organization as well as for one-self. Here, in this article, ‘Quoted’ texts have been taken from the book “Man’s Search for Meaning” by Viktor E. Frankl. Some other authors have also been quoted at relevant places. How we have made our pure and crystal-clear mind as conditioned one and the identification of meaning for living life will be clear when we will go through this article.

The corporates are being run by the human being and to truly implement the corporate governance into the RNA of the corporates, it first must become the part of the RNA of the leaders who run it. The mind which is the driving force of human being must be escalated from its current position of delusion and must be purified to achieve the highest level of governance norms at every level. Let us understand at subtle level to be a purified human being. This will highly benefit us to be independent person in true spirit.

Textbook tell lies!

Since beginning, the human mind is programmed in such a way that it cannot see the things or event with holistic views and apply the set principles in each event which have been fed into it either by family, friends, society, science or any external elements. I am not saying here that all the information as programmed in mind are wrong nor I am challenging the validity of science or anything else. But just the conditioning of mind with limit which is actually limitless should be revisited. The author has quoted following in support of the same:

“The medical men among us learned first of all: “Textbook tell lies!” Somewhere it is said that man cannot exist without sleep for more than a stated number of hours. Quite wrong I had been convinced that there were certain things I just could not do: I could not sleep without this or I could not live with that or the other. I would like to mention a few similar surprises on how much we could endure: we were unable to clean our teeth, and yet, in spite of that and a severe vitamin deficiency, we had healthier gums than ever before.”

Further, it reminds me the dostoevski’s statement that flatly defines “man as a being who can get used to anything”. Yes, this is absolutely true. We have inbuilt power to survive and rather to say develop our inner being in any conditions, favorable or unfavorable.

This is the conditioning. From the childhood, we are programmed in this way. With every situation or every event, we are conditioned with set of rules and principles and hence we, as a human being, lose our inbuilt capacity to deal with every situation in more beautiful and unique way. When the boundaries of such conditioning are creatively destructed, the life will be much easier and simpler and ability to tackle any situation will be developed naturally. We as an individual being has developed wrong belief system that if certain conditions are there then only, we can survive and in absence of those we lose even before performing any action. Such belief system needs to be challenged by us to us.

Love

To love, to be loved or being love is the ultimate object a man can dream for. This must be the reason to live for. Even in the position of utter desolation, where a man loses all hopes for living, a dignified way of living, then also the love is the ultimate means for which a man can achieve fulfilment. When there is firm determination to live for the love, the love with inner self, then you are actually undisturbed by the knowledge of the outer suffering whether it is mental or physical one.

The author has beautifully described the passion for love in single line as -

“Set me like a seal upon thy heart, love is as strong as death.”

Beauty of Art and Nature

The way of looking at your life in the given circumstances will create your destiny accordingly. Even during the toughest phase of life, one can change his angle of looking at life with new perspective and be able to find the beauty out of it i.e. the beauty of Nature and Art. The mountains, the trees, sunset teaches us how to withstand in any circumstance. The nature teaches us the way of living life.

Similarly, the Art plays very important role in living meaningful life even in adverse situation. This all depends how you define the Art. The meaning Art has to be taken in broader sense here. Even laughing or crying or singing for a moment in the middle of the group of friends or loved ones will heal your sufferings even though it is momentarily only.

Sense of Humor

One could find sense of humor at any stage of life and even in difficult situation also. It will help escalate one to come out of any suffering in a more astonishing way. This is the art of living. One just need attitude to look at particular thing or situation in a humor filled way. This is the weapon through which one can realize the meaning of life even in a situation where survival is at the question. The author has described it as –

“It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds.”

Judging others

The person should take utmost care while passing any judgement about others without analyzing the event in its whole perspective. There may be certain compelling situations which has forced the person to behave in particular way. One should always put oneself in the same like situation and ask honestly to the inner self whether in a similar situation if I was there then what I would have done. It is very easy to blame someone or to adjudge someone faulty or wrong but very hard to practice the expected behavior from the others. So, as a leader, one should always stay away from the pre-conceived notion about others and have only positive angle towards the others whether he is superior or subordinate. This will create positive environment at the work place and your colleagues will also develop the mindsets to listen and implement to what you are expressing.

Sense towards the Profession

One should always be loyal and dedicated towards its profession and be always ready to discharge its primary duty for the betterment of the organization or society at large under any circumstances. This will definitely give you the inner satisfaction towards fulfilment of duty and ultimately lead to contentment of living life with reason because when you are living then there must be some sense of living the life. There may be situations arises when there is a question of life or death and to perform the duty. In such cases, the passion towards the profession will lead you to live life with contentment.

Human values and self-respect

In any organization or society at large, when human is not being treated with dignity and make full use them as physical resources then the human values finally suffers loss and the existence is degraded to the level of animal life. The human being is completely and unavoidably influenced by his surroundings. It is the human values and dignity which realizes him as somebody. He has right of freedom i.e. inner freedom and spiritual freedom or human liberty. The author has beautifully raised questions about human existence –

“Is that theory true which would have us believe that man is no more than a product of many conditional and environmental factors be they a biological, psychological or sociological nature? Is man but an accidental product of these? Does man have no choice of action in the face of such circumstances?”

There must be a difference between the things and human being as things can be compared and determined with each other but man is identified by its self-determination. He has best potentialities which he can explore from within by his own decision without comparing with the others. Therefore, in any corporates, irrespective of its size, product line or structure, human being must be dealt with specific attention considering the human values and dignity of human being irrespective of the designation he holds.

This reminds me the book written by *Arie de Geus* titled **“The Living Company”**. The relevant extract of the book is reproduced below:

“Why do so many companies die young? Mounting evidence suggests that corporations fail because their policies and practices are based too heavily on the thinking and the language of economics. Put another way, companies die because their managers focus exclusively on producing goods and services and forget that the organization is a community of human beings that is in business—any business—to stay alive.

Managers concern themselves with land, labor, and capital, and overlook the fact that labor means real people.”

So, human values and self-respect plays very pivotal role while surviving in difficult situations. The absence of the same proves very fatal to the existence and preservation of oneself.

Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the weapons including nuclear weapons; however, he is also that being who died out of the use of those.

Choice of Action

The life offers you the choice of action at every day, every hour, and every moment. It is YOU who have to decide whether to surrender to particular force or energy or to live the life with complete inner freedom and with dignity. No one can take away from you the freedom to choose your attitude, to choose your way of life and the experiences you earned in the past and from the sufferings.

Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress. This will create your destiny and provide your life with purpose and reason for living.

Dostoevski said once, “There is only one thing that I dread; not to be worthy of my suffering”. Under any circumstance, man can decide what shall he become of him eternally, physically, mentally and spiritually. Sometimes, suffering only make the man achieve the miracles and gain the inner achievement.

Suffering vs. Enjoyment

Whenever any event occurs, there is some purpose behind the same and the purpose is always for something good. The life is full of enjoyment, sufferings, beauty, art and nature. The human being with its pure identity needs to identify the hidden purpose of the event and learn and escalate oneself from the same.

The successful man is the one who accepts its fate and all sufferings in total and learn and convert that into opportunity and move ahead for better life experiences which life has stored it for him in the Pandora Box. The author has greatly put this as –

“If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as face and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete.”

Man can change his destiny with his great determination and inner strength to achieve the final goal of the life, the reason to live life. Everywhere man is confronted with fate, with the change of achieving something through his own suffering. Life’s meaning is an unconditional one, for it even includes the potential meaning of unavoidable suffering

I am Life, eternal life

You can identify the reason to live life from the art and nature or from the experiences of full and complete past. The life is beautiful as it is. The past, sufferings, happiness, love, sorrow, peace, nature,

arts, etc. are inseparable ingredients of the life. The author has quoted beautifully the case of one of his patients –

“In my former life I was spoiled and did not take spiritual accomplishments seriously. Pointing through the window of the hut, she said, “This tree here is the only friend I have in my loneliness.” Through that window she could see just one branch of a chestnut tree, and on the branch were two blossoms. “I often talk to this tree,” she said to me. I was startled and didn’t quite know how to take her words. Was she delirious? Did she have occasional hallucinations? Anxiously I asked her if the tree replied. “Yes.” What did it say to her? She answered, “It said to me, ‘I am here I am here I am Life, eternal life.’”

Provisional Existence

A man who could not see the end of his “provisional existence” was not able to aim at an ultimate goal in life. The man should always be ready to bear with the uncertainties which are destined in life. When he could not absorb the uncertainties turning into reality and future becoming present at one cannot survive due to trauma the future has brought for him. In the book, the one of the prisoners of the Nazi Camp dreamt in the month of February that he along with other prisoners will be released from the camp in the month of coming March. But when exactly reverse happened to his dream, he could not absorb the realities and died.

Those who know how close the connection is between the states of mind of a man, his courage and hope, or lack of them and the state of immunity of his body will understand that the sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect.

‘Why’ to live

“He who has a ‘why’ to live for can bear with almost any how”. It should be the guiding motto for all. Whenever there is an opportunity, one should give to himself a ‘why’ an aim for his life, in order to strengthen himself to bear the terrible how of one’s existence.

“It did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us.”

“Life” does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete, just as life’s tasks are also very real and concrete. They form man’s destiny, which is different and unique for each individual.

“But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.”

Human life under any circumstances, never ceases to have a meaning, and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death.

Impossibility vs. Responsibility

“When the impossibility of replacing a person is realized, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its continuance to appear in all its magnitude.”

What you have experienced, no power on earth can take from you. Not only our experiences, but all we have done, whatever great thoughts we may have had, and all we have suffered, all this is not lost, though

it is past; we have brought it into being, Having been is also a kind of being, and perhaps the surest kind. Sometimes, all hopes for being in existence are faded, still there is one element 'the responsibilities' which drives as the motivating factor to live life that becomes the driving force to achieve the highest level of satisfaction.

No right to do wrong

It is the commonplace truth that no one has the right to do wrong not even if wrong has been done to them. It is the greatest principle of living life with peace, happiness and calmness. You do your work at the best. Don't have an attitude of taking revenge or reaction. Even if you are being hurt by the words or actions of the others, don't react. Simply stay in silence and pray for the betterment of the person who had hurt you. This will bring the miraculous results in the action and behavior of yourself as well as in others.

Mahatma Gandhi has quoted a beautiful line in support of this – *“My greatest weapon is mute prayer”*.

At first instance, it looks somewhat unrealistic to practice but with firm determination, it can be implemented and with that you can exercise your independence in any sphere of life whether it is emotional, spiritual, social, physical, corporate or any other.

Self-transcendence vs. Self-actualization

Sometimes, it is very difficult to dive deep in to the inner soul experience of oneself and cannot realize his life object within oneself. Then it is advisable for such human being to look for the same in the outer world. However, it may be noted here that there with very thin-line difference between inner self and outer world but yes man can find life objective remaining in connect with outer world either for something or for someone to love for. The author has beautifully put this as –

“By declaring that man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man of his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. I have termed this constitutive characteristic “the self-transcendence of human existence.” It denotes the fact that being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself. What is called self-actualization is not an attainable aim at all, for the simple reason that the more one would strive for it, the more he would miss it. In other words, self-actualization is possible only as a side effect of self-transcendence.”

Happiness Within

Happiness cannot be pursued; it must be ensued. Happiness can only be found within you by loving yourself. When you try to find happiness from other human being or other things, you are unknowingly being webbed into the circle of expectations. Expectations are nothing but imposing your way of doing or acting on others and when others are not acting or doing as per your way, you are being hurt and

ultimately it leads to unhappiness. Meaning orientation had subsided, and consequently the seeking of immediate pleasure had taken over.

The author has beautifully quote as – *“Live as if you were living for the second time and had acted as wrongly the first time as you are about to act now.”*

By this attitude, you can find happiness. People have enough to live by but nothing to live for; they have the means but no meaning. For happiness, one requires reason. The reason to remain happy internally and not for the show off to something or someone.

This reminds me one beautiful word put up by *Louise L. Hey* in her book titled **“The Power is Within You”** as –

“Who are you? What did you come here to learn? What did you come here to teach? We all have a unique purpose. We are more than our personalities, our problems, our fears, and our illnesses. We are far more than our bodies. We are all connected with everyone on the planet and with all of life. We are all spirit, light, energy, vibration, and love, and we all have the power to live our lives with purpose and meaning.”

Holistic look or past

It is the human tendency to look at only negative events or sufferings of their past and create a negative impression of past as who which lead them to abstract life road ahead without any reason to live for. Whatever happened, happen for the good cause. To find out the real meaning behind the particular event of the past, the one has to take the holistic view of the past and try to understand the big picture and then move ahead with the learnings. Past experience whether it is bitter one or good one always teach lessons to live life with more zeal and vigor. When you view the past holistically, the cause and effects you shall find will be unconditional one only.

George A. Sargent was right when he promulgated the concept of “learned meaninglessness.” He himself remembered a therapist who said, “George, you must realize that the world is a joke. There is no justice, understand how silly it is to take yourself seriously. There is no grand purpose in the universe.

Conclusion

When we are born, we are the purest human being without any layer of worldly senses or attachment towards worldly things. What happens during our life journey which conditions our mind and thus lose the ability take best decisions and judgements for the larger objective of the corporate or for the society at large. We are basically the human being full of love, happiness and peace. When this state of mind is achieved, a human being as a leader will never fail to achieve the organizational vision keeping in mind the best interest of all stakeholders. Therefore, to achieve highest standard of self-governance and independence, one should first look within and start searching and clearing your conditioned mind. With clear and unconditioned mind, highest level of self-governance can be attained which will in turn be intertwined as best corporate governance system in any corporates.

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