

**THOUGHTS ON MANAGING THOUGHTS, STRESS AND EMOTIONS AND
CONVERTING OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES**

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INTRODUCTION

We cannot control events, situations and people. What we can control is ourselves.

Obstacles could come in various ways – failures, loss of loved one, frustration, devastation – and so many more catastrophes. Everyone experiences anxiety/ stress /negative thinking/doubt /worry, while some may gradually emerge out of it, others go further deep in the whirlpool of self-criticism and depression. But how does one emerge victorious from all of this and face life head on – that’s what counts. With a conscious change in our way of thinking and correcting our internal dialogue, we may succeed in harnessing these negative emotions and energies in forging ahead and achieving results.

The bottom-line is that ‘the show must go on’. So life moves forward. Nothing stops. And one has to go on living life with full energy and enthusiasm. Therein lies the elixir of life – We must take charge of our thoughts, cope with stress and manage our emotions - To convert obstacles into opportunities and keep forging ahead!

THE RIGHT WAY OF LIVING

It is rightly said that ‘Health is wealth’. Even a small imbalance in your body can turn your entire day upside down. Eat right. Live Right. The first and foremost thing is to remain happy and healthy, both mentally and physically. Listen to your own inner voice, and keep your own self happy, as only after that you can perform to your super best capability and achieve your desires.

Eating Right

Eating right has become a mantra in today's polluted and adulterated times. Every person is becoming more conscious of the substances he/she is putting into their body. A balanced diet comprising foods that contain vitamins and minerals, proteins, carbohydrates and right amount of fats are the way to a healthy life.

It is hard to make a radical overnight change in your diet and eating habits. But if you consciously make small changes, you will eventually reach an overall healthy diet. Find the strong and weak points in your current diet and start from there. See what you can immediately change, and what needs to be handled slowly. Consult a dietician for best results and healthy way of eating. Keep track of your food intake by writing down what you eat and drink every day. This record will help you assess your diet. Try baking or grilling your food instead of frying it, so as to reduce fat intake. Don't eat in large portions. If you truly want to remain young, energetic and keep your body in good health – you can make small lifestyle changes in your everyday life.

Exercise

There is strong scientific evidence to prove that whatever your age may be, being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life. Exercise benefits all parts of your body – skin, muscles, brain, heart, body weight and also prevents us from chronic diseases. With so many benefits to boost, everyone must obviously be exercising. But that is not so. We want to attain self-empowerment by developing skills and goal attainment but how will we have a body which is working in tandem with our goals and attainment of success. There can be no way in which we can transform our external life without first feeling totally fit, energetic and vibrant in our internal self.

Meditation

Meditation is an art which makes you aware of yourself. It identifies “You” to “Yourself”. As you meditate, you become more aware of each breath you take. Through Meditation you can identify your energies and then harness them to attract good fortune. To perform meditation and

achieve its benefits it is always advisable to get in touch with a certified Yoga and Meditation practitioner. If you have never meditated before, follow these simple steps to make a beginning.

1. Wake up early at a time when there is absolute silence for you to meditate. For meditation to be most effective (especially for a beginner) it is imperative that there is silence around you.
2. If you are comfortable indoors - Find a quiet corner at your home to perform Meditation. Otherwise go to the neighborhood park or other serene and peaceful area in your vicinity where you will not be disturbed.
3. Close your eyes and sit with your legs loosely crossed and both feet resting below the opposite thigh or knee. However, if this sitting position is uncomfortable for you, adopt the position that works for you. The idea is to be comfortable and totally at ease so that you are not distracted.
4. Keep your spine straight and rest your hands in your lap. It is important for the hands to be at rest so that the mind can focus within.
5. Shut out all thoughts and just focus on your breath. As you breathe in and out focus on each breath. This may be difficult at first but with continued practice every day you will master the art.

Social Activities

Man is a social animal. Healthy relationships are the fundamentals of good health and well-being in turn determining personal and professional success. When you forge strong relationships with others you will generate a sense of camaraderie. Declare your goals and aspirations with supporters and people you trust which will in turn move you one step closer to achieving them.

The secret of happiness is being part of a community – a part of a whole. It gives you a sense of belonging and the willingness to achieve. Life is a network of people, no matter whichever field you are in. You cannot be an achiever in isolation. To be super successful, earn lots of wealth, make it big – connect; network and unify.

Although each of us has different skills, understandings and interests, we can become more conscious of our own thoughts and feelings when we integrate with our surroundings. You can follow some of these ways to integrate with your surroundings:

- Stop to greet neighbours and try to make the newcomers in your locality feel comfortable by your friendly behavior
- Join your favourite hobby class in your area
- Start a book club and encourage people of your locality to join in
- Volunteer for community work. Be a part of your local resident welfare association
- Form an exercise club or morning walk or joggers club with people who you meet at the time of your daily exercise regimen
- If you are an employer, start a new informal interaction club within your organization allocating just 2 hours at the end of the week for employees to interact
- Join a business group to network formally or informally with others
- Learn a new activity or language. Acquire a new qualification

TAKING CHARGE OF OUR THOUGHTS

Life should be – simple and uncomplicated. It is high time you uncomplicated your life. Each person is given software ‘mind’ which he/she uses in combination with hardware ‘brain’ to function and live life. Along the way, the software (our mind) develops bugs and starts complicating the hardware (our brain) and in effect the entire computer (human being) breaks down leading to stress, anxiousness, feelings of inadequateness. Therefore, your software ‘MIND’ should function in the best condition so that you can achieve utmost excellence in all fields of life.

No matter how clichéd it may sound – your MIND is the single most important entity that determines your future. Everything begins in the intangible ‘Mind’. If you think it in your mind you can achieve it through your actions. However, this MIND or – *M-Mystical I-Imp having a N-Naughty D-Disposition* – is not as easy to tame as it may seem. Only the rare few who master

the art of managing their mind and maintaining that status quo – are the ones who achieve peace, contentment and ultimate fulfillment.

Ensuring that the Software Functions at Optimum Capacity

Yes! It is as easy as it sounds – Given below are 30 pointers in no particular order that will help you to take charge of your thoughts and transform your life forever. They are things you already know. They are suggestions you've heard before. They are for you to read in whichever order you like. You can spend a minute on each point or a lifetime on each point – depends on you. However, when you read them, your purpose should be to absorb them by looking at yourself differently and making a conscious choice to change your life forever!

There are always two ways to look at anything. The way we use our Mind and pick our way of looking at things determines our path to triumph. Ensure success by picking the right way!

1. EMBRACE LIFE

TO A SCARCE MIND: Life is unfair. I work so hard but I never get my due. I've slogged all my life but my college junior is the one who landed the high profile government job I had my eyes on.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Stop complaining and grumbling about what is coming your way. When you stop criticizing, complaining and cribbing – you will start living: finding solutions and growth patterns

2. CHANGE YOUR SELF-PERCEPTION

TO A SCARCE MIND: I have many shortcomings. I don't have a fair complexion and stand no chance at the upcoming model hunt. All the other contestants have some or the other special talent and will outperform me. To add to this, I am not very tall either. Why did I join this contest? I will end up making a fool of myself.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Connect with who you are. Be comfortable with your identity which makes you what you are. Your beliefs, your likes, your dislikes, your perceptions, your character need not be similar to others. Do not

imitate others to achieve success. Be aware of yourself and that will give you confidence to succeed as yourself.

3. **DON'T INDULGE IN SELF-PITY**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I have made a mistake, which means I am a mistake. I always make mistakes.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Stay away from comparison, self-pity and victimization of yourself. You may have made a terrible mistake but it's over and done. No amount of regret is going to undo the mistake so why should you waste time feeling sorry for yourself. You will start enjoying self-pity before you know it. Stay away from it. Re-evaluate yourself based on facts rather than the opinions of others.

4. **BECOME YOUR OWN MASTER**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I would have become an actor if it were not for my father. He kept pestering me for studies and failed to see the creative spark in me. I wanted to act whereas he wanted me to be an engineer. So that has left me as a mediocre engineer stuck in a boring desk job from nine to five. I hate my life because of my father as he never listened to me.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Don't blame outward circumstances for your present conditions. Take responsibility for your actions and acknowledge you're your future lies in your own hands. What circumstances come to you in life is your destiny; however how you deal with them or react is not destiny but entirely your own doing which in effect determines your future. So take charge of your life and accept full responsibility for your failures or shortcomings.

5. **BE HAPPY**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I am sad. I don't want to be sad, but my circumstances just don't let me be happy. I have forgotten how to smile and be cheerful. I have to go through the same problems every day and what difference does it make whether I smile or cry.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Be happy and remain so.

Happiness is a habit. There may be many types of calamities faced by people - unforeseen difficulties, unfortunate circumstances, unwanted remarks, disabilities, poverty etc. – but very few remain victorious after going through them all. These few people have one common characteristic – they have learned to be happy in spite of their circumstances. It is definitely not easy, but it can be done. You have to make it a habit to be happy and keep a smile on your face no matter what, because even if you keep a gloomy face and keep sobbing for days it is not going to solve your problems. So you might as well smile and solve your problems.

6. LIVE IN THE NOW

TO A SCARCE MIND: I cannot do this. Mergers and acquisitions have always been my weak point since my college days when I was studying for my MBA exams. I cannot handle them. I will definitely make a mistake and the deal will fall through.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Don't let past events and circumstances cloud your thoughts. What has passed doesn't exist any longer. Don't stress over what is yet to come. Consciously block your mind from darting back and forth. Live in the present and focus on it.

7. STOP OVERANALYSING

TO A SCARCE MIND: I am uncertain of what I should choose. Should I join Delhi University for my bachelor of commerce course or should I opt for University of Mysore. No doubt university of Mysore is closer to my current residence, but the course curriculum of Delhi University is better. There are so many points of comparison that I fear I may end up missing the last dates of both.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Over-analyzing a situation will paralyze the outcome. In today's world we are spoilt for choice – every decision has n+ 1 possible outcome. Fear of the outcome makes us anxious. Fear of being perfectly ready before making a decision makes us anxious. Once you take a decision, Get on with it. Take Action on what is in your hands. No point pondering over the outcome as that is not in your hands.

8. LET GO

TO A SCARCE MIND: I just cannot get over his nasty remark. It wasn't necessary for him to pass such an insulting remark at my painting. He just doesn't have any knowledge of art work and doesn't appreciate art. He has no business commenting on my work.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: If you are full of anger & resentment towards anything, there is no place in you for a mindset required for striving for success. Letting go will unburden your mind and make you lighter. Just do yourself a favor and let go.

9. BE CALM

TO A SCARCE MIND: I have not slept peacefully for days. I am not feeling high spirited. I have so much work to do and so little time. I can't count on anyone to help me. I don't think I'll be able to meet the deadline. I need to speed things up. Hurry up. Go faster.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Slow down. A calm mind is receptive to the world. An angry and disturbed mind cannot listen and assumes its own. When you throw a pebble into a lake, you will see how it creates ripples in the perfectly still and calm water. Don't let problems create ripples in your life. They are just trivial situations which are meant to exist in some form or the other, whether big or small in everyone's life. So treat them as such – trivial situations.

10. TOUGHEN UP

TO A SCARCE MIND: I lost my mother who was my support system at a very early age. I feel I have not been able to get a hold on myself or my life after my huge loss.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Always remember – You aren't the only One; you aren't the first and you surely won't be the last. Many people may be in worse circumstances as compared to you. Life wasn't meant to be easy. If it were, it would have been boring and monotonous. So enjoy the game of life while you're still alive

11. FOCUS ON YOUR GOAL

TO A SCARCE MIND: My idea of establishing an online shoe dry cleaning startup seems to be too far-fetched for its time. The other day the washer man who washes our clothes told me he would wash my shoes, that too for free. I think there's no point pursuing this. My college mate has just opening a fashion portal, and he's earning great. I think I should speak to him and probably do something on similar lines.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: We tend to get easily influenced by the achievements, success and materialistic possessions of the people around us. Instead of focusing on our goal and making the most of what we have, we tend to speculate on problems and count our shortcomings instead. We need to put imaginary blinkers covering our eyes so that we condition ourselves to look only straight ahead and not get distracted. Believe in Yourself. 'You and Only You' can achieve your goal. Introspect, improve and innovate – challenge yourself and compete with yourself – to rise beyond your potential.

12. CHALK OUT YOUR PLAN

TO A SCARCE MIND: Once I complete my education, I will plan my future prospects. After I receive my degree I will chart out my further course of action, which companies to apply to and my prospects in self-employment. But I think it's too early to plan anything right away. Let me train a few years and then see where the tide takes me.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Organized planning is the only route to success. Success doesn't happen overnight. Hard work, perseverance and years of consistent implementation of plans eventually make you look like an overnight success. Plans crystallize desire into action which ultimately enables you to achieve your dreams. Your vision takes shape in the form of plans. To be effective a plan of action must have a definite deadline as the mind works on specific information. Planning without timing is futile.

13. DON'T SAY. WRITE

TO A SCARCE MIND: I was discussing with my dad about how I will achieve success once I join my new job. I will work hard to get promoted to managerial level in 5 years.

Thereafter I will acquire the necessary skills and training to become get absorbed into the planning a strategy division in another 5 years. I look forward to becoming my own boss when I am 40 years old. I have it all chalked out in my mind.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Identify your Goal and write it down in clear terms. The timeframe for achievement of your goal, the detailed step by step action plan, and the investment required, the monetary returns you expect to achieve – everything must be clearly written down. Then revisit your goal every day and read what you have written every single day. This will motivate you to keep striving towards your aim. Otherwise when you are busy in the daily humdrum of your life, you may lose sight of your goal and falter and this will lead to repentance and remorse in later years.

14. TAKE ACTION

TO A SCARCE MIND: It's my wish since childhood to become the best mountaineer in the world. I have always dreamt of climbing Mt. Everest and I can imagine myself atop this gigantic peak. I aspire to be like Bachendri Pal. I am thinking of enrolling myself at a mountaineering school to realize my dream.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: The concept of karma (the law of Action) is the core idea of the Bhagavad Gita, the Holy Hindu Scripture. Action is imperative to achieve. Action is just the simple act of doing. It is common knowledge that no idea can be turned into reality without action on the idea. Creation of an idea and the desire to turn it into reality backed by all the monetary power available will still not guarantee riches unless there is action performed towards that idea. Over- analyzing and over-thinking will kill the idea even before inception.

15. KEEP THE FAITH

TO A SCARCE MIND: I want to achieve the award for the Best Entrepreneur by the end of 2024. I still have 4 years. My friend Mukesh says I can do it. I am skeptical but my friend Mukesh says that my organization is really good and if I persist with my line of action I will make it big. I don't know whether he is just trying to please me or if I am really that good.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Believe in your idea, believe in your line of action, believe in the outcome, and believe in yourself. If you don't truly believe in the innermost soul of your heart in whatever it is you set out to do, you most definitely will not succeed in it. However, if you believe in your thought, even though it may sound foolish to the world and unachievable at that point of time, it will most definitely bring you laurels sooner or later. When we truly and honestly from the depth of our soul believe that anything is possible then even the universe somehow works with us to create circumstances which end up making it possible. Faith removes constraints and turns adversity into opportunity and we can accomplish that which seemed impossible.

16. **BE BRAVE**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I am scared. I don't know if I'm making the right decision. What if this backfires? I'll lose all my money. I've analyzed the market intently and done all my homework, but what if something unfortunate happens and this stock plummets, I'll lose a lot of money and will go in debt.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Fear is generally of the unknown. We mostly fear that which is unfamiliar to us. So, the first time we go up on stage in an auditorium full of people – we are fearful; when we are investing in a new stock – we are fearful; when we are about to undergo an operation – we are fearful. It is only when we transcend that fear; we set the wheels in motion for what is to come next. We would miss out on a whole new world if we are stuck in our fear. Instead of focusing on the end result, just concentrate on the present act. Remember you are capable of more than you think. You just need to make a beginning and one single act of courage will set into motion a chain of acts of courage.

17. **FUEL THE PASSION**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I have to go to work to earn a living. I have to go to work so that I can support my family. I have to go to work so that I can pay all the bills. I have to go to work because I don't have inherited wealth and there is no other option.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: You have to find what you

are truly passionate about. If today were the last day of your life, would you want to do what you are going to do today? If the answer is 'No', it is certain that something is wrong and needs to be changed. No doubt you have to work, but seek work which you are passionate about for you will attract riches and fame only if you are doing something you are passionate about. Fuel the passion. Infuse enthusiasm into your work – then only you will achieve success.

18. CHANNELISE YOUR ENERGY

TO A SCARCE MIND: I can't control the situations around me and neither can I control myself. I don't have the energy to restart and do this all over again. I've just retired as bank manager and now it's time for me to relax. My son wants me to start a new business from scratch at this juncture of life. I won't be able to take the stress of restarting my life all over again.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Be a livewire: always full of life. Take life as a challenging game and participate in it with full enthusiasm. Have a goal and channelize your passion towards your goal. Be consciously aware of the energies around you. Assimilate these energies and then merge them to create a power source in yourself which can be consciously controlled by your mind so as to guide your body towards dynamic action to achieve the impossible. The most important gift of nature to a human being and what differentiates him from other organisms is his 'ability to reason and analyze' and 'control over his own mind'. So, apply your thought process and abilities of the mind to harness your energies and accumulate it to a point that you exercise full control over it.

19. ATTRACT YOUR DESIRES

TO A SCARCE MIND: I hope I am able to achieve my dream of becoming a chartered accountant. I have studied hard and I expect to clear the exam this time.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: My dream is not based on hope or expectation; it is a passionate desire and I will dedicate my whole life to it. I will not rest until I achieve what I desire. Whatever comes in my way in my journey towards

the attainment of my desire are not obstacles but situations which I will mould in my favor. The universe will work with me for me to achieve what I desire.

20. **DON'T QUIT**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I quit. I give up. I cannot do this. I will not be able to do this. I surrender. If I continue with this, what will people say? Everyone must be laughing at me behind my back.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Quitting means it's over. A significant reason why people quit and give up on their dreams is the fear of criticism. It is so unnerving to imagine how other people may perceive you that it may lead one to abandon his goal of life. You may be just around the corner to hit the jackpot, but you will never find out because you quit. Be 100% present in the current moment and visualize only your goal and nothing else. Give yourself a pep-talk. Think of something positive which will liven you up. Then repeat the thought to yourself till you are no longer feeling miserable.

21. **POWER OF PERSEVERANCE**

TO A SCARCE MIND: I have been waiting for years and years for my business to become a success. No matter what I do and how much I do, I'm just not able to achieve my goal. Every single day I leave for work at sharp 9:00am, work hard and return at 9:00pm. I never take a day off. But to no avail.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Patiently persist. Don't lose your enthusiasm when you suffer setbacks on your road to success. They are mere stumbling blocks. Gather your determination and tenaciousness and with single-minded strength of purpose forge ahead. The harder you work, the closer your goal will seem.

Remember: Giving Up is NOT an option. Let things happen slowly but steadily and motivate yourself everyday so that you don't lose patience.

Success doesn't happen overnight for 'Rome was not built in a day'

22. CHANGE YOUR OUTLOOK

TO A SCARCE MIND: It's a bad day. I woke up late, missed the bus and reached late for work. The boss has been scolding me since and I'm sure the day will end on an equally horrible note.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: You are the master of your own attitude. Remember that 'You' alone are responsible for your outlook and 'You' alone can change it. So your attitude and the perspective with which you look at the situation when you suffer adversity – is entirely in your hands. Change your attitude and you can change the moment.

23. BE SURROUNDED WITH POSITIVITY

TO A SCARCE MIND: There are so many problems at office, which I have realized after talking to Mr. Zee, my colleague. All the time he keeps complaining about the incessant work load at office and the unhygienic working conditions. He grumbles so much that now even my energy has started depleting and I am losing all my enthusiasm of working.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Consciously be around optimistic people: Those people who bring out the best in you. Stay as far away as you can from people who drain your energy and have a pessimistic outlook towards life. When you surround yourself with negativity and stressful people you weaken your attitude. The Negative energy saps your vitality whereas positive energy rejuvenates you. Surround yourself with optimists and achievers.

24. LIVE EFFICIENT

TO A SCARCE MIND: I will do one activity each day. I think there is no point finishing everything in one go. I will take my time and complete one task a day so that I may get some good ideas. I can multitask or even delegate some jobs to my assistants, but I prefer to do it all by myself so that I can check the work while I'm doing it.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: It is relatively easy to list what you don't have and what you may have accomplished if you had it. However, it is very tough to make do with what you have and deliver magical results out of them. We generally blame 'lack of time' as the reason for our inefficiency. Efficiency has got

nothing to do with the ‘lack of time’ and everything to do with the ‘lack of planning your time’. Efficient people achieve more and move faster to their goal.

25. ACCEPT CHANGE

TO A SCARCE MIND: I don’t like changes. It took me 5 hours to prepare my presentation and now the organizers want me to alter a few points to include some aspects of the ongoing happenings in the Parliament session. I sent it to them for approval long back but they did not raise any objections at that time. There may be three days left for the seminar but I think it’s too much trouble to change my presentation again.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: ‘Change’ is the only constant. Sometimes we refuse to accept ‘Change’ in our lives. We are too settled in our comfort zones and feel uneasy on experiencing something different from the usual. What we forget is that the only permanent thing in this word is ‘change’ and one who does not change with the times gets left far behind. The ability to modify our actions instantly, change directions easily when required and compromise when appropriate, is a quality which people with strength of character possess.

26. ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE

TO A SCARCE MIND: I’m not participating in the quiz show because my general knowledge is not good. I have studied till post-graduation level but I am lacking in areas of sports and history, so I don’t think I’ll be able to tackle the genre specific questions in the quiz show. I wonder how a housewife from a remote and rural part of Uttar Pradesh aced the quiz show and walked away with the super bumper cash prize of rupees one crore. These shows must be rigged and there must be some cheating going on behind the scenes.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Knowledge is free. You can acquire it if you want. It is everywhere around you. To acquire education, you may need money, but to acquire knowledge all you need is desire and intense focus. With presence of mind, common sense, observation and an intense passionate desire to learn – you can learn from anywhere. You may need expert knowledge for the goal you want to achieve and specialized knowledge may come at a price but it may be a small price to pay for the

achievement of your goal. Acquiring knowledge and training is an investment; it should not be an afterthought.

27. CREATE YOUR LUCK

TO A SCARCE MIND: She's lucky I'm not. I'm not destiny's favorite child. Infact, with the amount of setbacks I keep encountering, I think I'm destiny's most hated child. I don't know when will my stars change and I too will be lucky.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Create your Luck. You determine your destiny when you react to situations you are confronted with in life. Your reactions determine your future and the life you create for yourself. Don't ponder over whether luck has favored you or ignored you, go out there and make your luck. Be alert to opportunities so that when they present themselves they are grabbed at the first go. When you have the right attitude and are persistent in your efforts you are bound to taste success. The adulation may come late but it will surely come. At times it may take months, years, a decade – but success will come your way.

28. STRENGTHEN YOUR RESILIENCE

TO A SCARCE MIND: All that wealth I accumulated has been reduced to rubble by the earthquake. My house is in ruins and along with it all my years of hard painstaking work has been demolished in matters of minutes.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Stand up, dust yourself and get back to work. Tough times don't last forever. Obstacles are as powerful as you imagine them to be. When you don't pay heed to them, they magically fizzle out. Have the ability to spring back into shape. Even though you have been punched and knocked down by life time and again, bounce back stronger each time. Instead of letting miserable situations break your determination, face your demons head on. Deal with your problems – that's the only way they will go away. Failures are not an end in itself. They are just new beginnings of something new. Get back up on your feet - you just have to transform, change perspective and work from a different angle.

29. REASON FOR EXISTENCE

TO A SCARCE MIND: I'm clueless as to why I have joined the science stream in my 11th standard. My mom said that it would open up many career opportunities for me in the future whereas my dad wanted me to go for science since he reasons that I could go for a degree in medicine whereby I can join him in his clinic. I don't know, I guess I'll just go ahead with it and see what comes my way in the future.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: Identify the reason for your existence – the reason for your action, the reason why you go to work, the reason why you sacrifice, the reason for your smile and joy, the reason for your being alive. Generate a positive reason and it will give you the required push towards your goal. When the going gets tough and you are feeling down and out, motivate yourself by thinking about your 'reason for existence'. This will recharge your batteries and get you back on the path with renewed determination to achieve your goal. Give yourself the necessary inspirational talk to create a positive stimulus for energized action. Importantly when you have a purpose or reason – you keep your eyes focused on that and distractions around you fade into the oblivion as you single-mindedly set out to achieve your goal.

30. I CAN. I WILL

TO A SCARCE MIND: I cannot do it. I've tried before and failed. I wake up every morning before sunrise and go for my cricket practice. I eat, sleep and breathe cricket but I don't think I'll ever get to play for India.

TO A MIND FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY: If you think you can - you will. If you think you can't - you won't. Your 'WILL' can change everything. It can pull you out from the depths of misery. It can give you hope. It can make you millions. It can change your fortunes and your future. The 'will' comes from 'within'. You are unstoppable once you have willed it.

The way you think of the world, is the way the world will look to you. Get up every morning with good thoughts. All events, dreams, achievements created in this world, are first created in our thoughts. If your thoughts are positive and you have a good reason, then your thoughts/your dreams will come true.

We all have our tools – health; intuition; memory; perception; optimism; will; reasoning power; mental strength; resilience; perseverance – whether in born or cultivated. Use these tools along with your software ‘Mind’ and Hardware ‘Brain’ and prepare the roadmap to achieve utmost excellence.

EXPERIENCING STRESS AND IDENTIFYING ITS CAUSES

According to global analytics and advisory firm Gallup’s 2021 survey data from adults in 122 countries, 41% of adults’ worldwide, report experiencing a lot of stress. The adoption of the term stress as a psychological concept is generally attributed to endocrinologist Hans Selye, when in 1936 he wrote about a stress condition known as general adaptation syndrome (GAS), wherein response to stressors is a three-stage process consisting of alarm reaction (stage one), resistance (stage two) and exhaustion (stage three). However, the term ‘stress’ can be said to be developed by Walter Bradford Cannon, an American physiologist when he coined the term "fight or flight response", and developed the theory of homeostasis.

Depending on how stress affects a person, stress can be said to be positive (eustress) or negative (distress). However, in today’s times, we look down upon stress as a negative experience and keep looking for techniques to manage it or eliminate it from our lives.

The use of the term stress is now so integrated into our thoughts that it feels completely natural in our normal course of life. We have started to feel that our world is full of stressors and we constantly have to deal with and adapt to many stressful situations. Dealing with stress and being satisfied with life is the most important goal of almost everyone. Since each individual is different and comes with his/her own past experiences and upbringing, therefore, each person manages the anxiety and worry in life by his/her own techniques. However, these tensions and conflicts are harming our human body both physically and emotionally.

‘Stress - the new killer’ is here to stay. It’s a part and parcel of what we do. It was always present even in earlier times, but probably didn’t get as much respect as it gets now. Stress is the body’s response mechanism against situations. So, when the body senses an uncomfortable situation it automatically kick-starts a “fight-or-flight” reaction to protect itself. Walter Bradford Cannon, a physiologist and professor coined the term ‘*fight or flight response*’, and described it to mean a

physiological reaction that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival.

Stress can strike anywhere and anytime - before an important Board meeting, an approaching deadline, a job interview, your child's board exam, a surgical operation of a loved one etc. The cause may be as trivial as the impending weather conditions. Some people may even get stress just by the ringing of their phone, even without having seen whose call it is or without even having picked up the call. It may be caused due to circumstances which are totally outside of human control and thereby imminent – however despite that knowledge, when you continue thinking of the circumstance, it completely stresses you out. In fact, stress is so bizarre that even happiness can cause stress – like marriage, pregnancy, start of a new job etc.

Stress need not always be harmful though. It motivates you and helps you to perform better. Stress to complete a project may actually motivate you to do a better job. Similarly, stress before a presentation may result in excellent preparation and practice which in turn may turn out an exemplary performance from your side.

However, too much of Stress – turns it into a disease. It can create negativity and generate inappropriate behavior which can cause immense loss in both personal and professional life. Therefore, if you learn to manage your stress, you can take total control of your emotions, responses and mindset and truly empower yourself to take control of your life.

Causes of Stress

Stress is created by the demands and pressures we feel. Their effects can be physical, mental and emotional. Causes of stress, also known as stressors, are not the same for everyone. So what may upset one person, may be normal for another. It is not universal but individualistic. Thus, it's important to understand which things are creating individual stress, and then begin to take action to deal with them.

Some causes of stress for most people are:

- Change – change in circumstances, situations, responsibilities and place etc., and difficulty in adapting to the change

- Fear, uncertainty, doubt – especially of the unknown or future
- Expectations
- Your attitude and perceptions, mindset etc.
- Overwork or Lack of work
- Isolation
- Lack of information or communication

Symptoms and Consequences of stress

- Complete Exhaustion or Burnout
- Inability to sleep or Insomnia
- Anxiety or extreme nervousness
- Headache
- Stomach aches
- Heart palpitations
- Hair loss
- Irritability
- Mood swings
- Low self esteem
- Low energy
- Contracting infections
- Increase in sweet intake
- Eating disorder
- Avoiding people
- Indecisiveness
- Inability to Focus
- Increased intoxication

Once you've identified situations that create stress, you can begin to lessen their effect. Some can be eliminated completely. Others may be unavoidable, but can be reduced.

DEALING WITH STRESS

When there is ‘low battery’ you need ‘power bank’ – similarly when your body experiences stress it needs stress busters to cope. There may be many ways to deal with stress, and as the causes of stress may be different for different people, the consequences of stress and solutions to manage it may also differ from person to person.

Some methods you can use to deal with stress may be:

- Acceptance – Accept what is being offered to you by life. Stop doubting and start accepting. If you believe that there is a universal energy over which there is no human control, it will help you to accept everything as positive. Even the most unspeakable negative situation can be dealt with acceptance – ‘what is...IS...it cannot be changed. Focus your positive energies on things you can change to decrease the negative situation if not eliminate it
- Imagine – Imagination plays a big role in helping you to create positive pictures in your mind and relieves you of stress. Visualization involves the systematic practice of creating a detailed mental image of an attractive and peaceful setting or environment which serve as an element of distraction from stress
- Laughter – Laughter is the best medicine. Robert Holden, British psychotherapist and stress consultant who is considered ‘Britain's foremost expert on happiness’ has said that *‘laughter can be a great workout for your diaphragm, abdominal, respiratory, facial, leg and back muscles. It also benefits digestion and absorption functioning.’* Norman Cousins, political journalist and author, professor in his 1979 book *‘Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration’* suggested that laughter and positive emotions have healing power. He recovered from a fatal illness ‘ankylosing spondylitis’ and he claimed that 10 minutes of hearty laughter would give him two hours of pain-free sleep.
- Connect with nature – Nature calms. It is said that the cure for every problem is found in nature itself. Since the first human civilization on earth, records show that a universal power has created a self-rejuvenating mechanism whereby every requirement needed by man to naturally heal is existing in the environment around him. Nature has healing

powers. It has been proven that we are unusually different when we are in the midst of nature - it makes us healthier, happier, calmer and smarter.

- Don't Exaggerate with Internal Dialogue – Before something actually happens, we make it happen over and over again in our own mind through our internal dialogue. By the time the thing actually happens we have stressed our self out just by communicating about it internally in our mind. Stop this internal dialogue – if your interview is on a particular date it is going to happen on that date, no point internally discussing about this interview with your internal self, months before the actually date as it's not achieving anything.
- Rest – Rest and sleep are very important to overcome stress, and they are the most difficult to attain as stress permeates all your senses. Just before you hit the sack, create a picture of something you are really very fond of in your mind. For e.g. if you like cake – imagine a delicious chocolate cake. If you are fond of travel – imagine yourself in Paris admiring the Eiffel Tower. Let your last thought be a happy thought before you sleep and you are bound to get a sound sleep.
- Relation techniques – practice relaxation techniques like Meditation and Yoga
- Diet – eat healthy and balanced meals. Stay away from junk food and unhealthy snacking
- Exercise - Exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good
- Activity/Hobby – get involved in an activity which ensures your complete involvement. Spend time on your hobby so that it livens you and relieves stress
- Music – Listening to music has always been termed a stress buster
- Express your feelings – If you aren't comfortable sharing your feelings with others, then maintain a diary
- Interact with friends
- Keep away from technology
- Seek Professional help

Whatever your stress (it could range from something drastic as the death of a loved one to something as moderate as loss of a lifetime opportunity) and whatever your method you chose to adopt to deal with your stress, there could be one '*root-mantra*' you could consider keeping in mind which will most assuredly assist you in eliminating stress out of your mind. That '*root-mantra*' is - "*the fact that you are alive and in a stressful situation is a blessing – dead people*

are not stressed; so be thankful for being alive and solve every situation without a feeling of gloom. If it goes your way – it is good; If it doesn't go your way – it is probably good which you cannot see as of now and time will reveal sooner or later.”

Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of your thoughts, your emotions, your schedule, your environment, and the way you deal with problems. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun – plus the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on.

*“Everything is going to be right at the end. If it's not right, then it is not the end.”
- A Quote made famous by the 2011 movie ‘The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel’*

MANAGING EMOTIONS TO ATTAIN SUPER SUCCESSFUL LIFE

Question - Why are some people happier and thus more successful than others? Answer – It's because even though they have problems and difficulties in their life they have learnt to manage their emotions to deal with their worries.

Emotion is defined as “*a strong feeling (such as love, anger, joy, hate, or fear)*” by the merriam-webster online dictionary. The word "emotion" is believed to be adapted from the French word *émouvoir*, which means "to stir up".

Every person experiences strong feelings of anger, hatred, fear, jealousy at some point in their lives or sometimes even on an everyday basis. Things go terribly wrong and then we pledge that we will definitely control our emotions next time, but sadly that ‘next time’ never comes and before we know it we have lost out on some great opportunity or relationship and are sucked into a whirlpool of regret. But then again, the same cycle keeps repeating itself and every time happiness eludes us. Slowly and steadily as time passes, without realizing the joy seems to have gone from our existence and we yearn for the happy carefree days of our childhood when we didn't understand emotions of anger, jealousy, greed, insecurity, hatred etc.

It is impossible to return to childlike innocence and be devoid of emotions, however it is indeed possible to accept and recognize that these emotions are a part and parcel of our inherent character and the only thing required is to deal with them by managing them.

Multiple Intelligences and their Significance

If you have skills and knowledge, they are useless unless they can be applied appropriately as and when required. That ability to be able to acquire the right amount of knowledge and then apply it accordingly as the situation demands is known as intelligence. Multiple intelligences are needed to become a leader and attain success in any field— cognitive, spiritual, moral, behavioural, and emotional.

The theory of Multiple Intelligences was propounded by American developmental psychologist Howard Earl Gardner, Ph.D., Professor of Education at Harvard University in 1983. According to his theory a ‘one-size-fits-all approach’ is not feasible and humans have several different ways of processing information, and these ways are relatively independent of one another.

In his book “*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*,” Mr. Gardner’s theory was that there are multiple types of human intelligence, each representing different ways of processing information. Earlier identified as six, today there are nine types of multiple intelligences as listed by him.

Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences:

1. Verbal-linguistic intelligence (Focus area: reading-writing)
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence (Focus area: reasoning-numbers)
3. Spatial-visual intelligence (Focus area: images-pictures)
4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (Focus area: body movements)
5. Musical intelligences (Focus area: rhythm)
6. Interpersonal intelligence (Focus area: other people)
7. Intrapersonal (Focus area: self-aware)
8. Naturalist intelligence (Focus area: nature)
9. Existential intelligence (Focus area: deep understanding of life)

People have different strengths and intelligences and they succeed in particular fields as per the strong intelligence they have in that field. Additionally, a strength or weakness in a particular intelligence does not imply strength or weakness in another. For example – a person is good at mathematics because of he/she has strong ‘Logical-mathematical intelligence’. However, ‘multiple intelligences’ as proposed by Gardner is not synonymous with the concept of ‘learning styles’ and ‘senses’.

Accordingly, as a person requires multiple skills to achieve success, similarly he/she requires multiple intelligences for success. Some of the common quotients used are mentioned below.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

Intelligence Quotient signifies a number representing a person's cognitive abilities (measured using problem-solving tests) as compared to the statistical norm or average for their age, taken as 100. Standardized tests are used for this measurement.

The term ‘Intelligence Quotient’ (IQ) was coined by William Stern, a German psychologist and philosopher noted as a pioneer in the field of the psychology of personality and intelligence.

When the term IQ was put forward by William Stern in 1912, a number of intelligence tests were developed in Europe and America to offer ways to measure a person’s cognitive ability. One of the oldest and most famous way of measuring IQ is the ‘Stanford-Binet test’ which measures intelligence through five factors of cognitive ability - fluid reasoning, knowledge, quantitative reasoning, visual-spatial processing and working memory. Each of the five factors is given a weight and the combined score is often reduced to a ratio known commonly as the intelligence quotient, or IQ.

The question whether a person’s IQ score is a somewhat accurate representation of his intelligence, is a topic of debate. As mentioned earlier, some psychologists believe in the concept of multiple intelligences rather than a single intelligence concept as a reflector of one’s abilities.

Spiritual Quotient (SQ)

Spiritual intelligence is a term used by philosophers, psychologists, and developmental theorists to indicate spiritual parallels with IQ (Intelligence Quotient) and EQ (Emotional Quotient).

The term Spiritual Quotient (SQ) was coined by Danah Zohar, a physicist and philosopher introduced the idea in 1997 in her book 'ReWiring the Corporate Brain'. Danah Zohar believes that *SQ is uniquely human and, the most fundamental intelligence. SQ is what we use to develop our longing and capacity for meaning, vision and value. It allows us to dream and to strive. It underlies the things we believe in, and the role our beliefs and values play in the actions that we take and the way we shape our lives* as stated in the back cover of her book *Spiritual Intelligence: The Ultimate Intelligence*.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence means the ability of a person to manage his own emotions and the emotions of others. Therefore there may be people who may not be in the top performers and top scorers, but end up becoming super success stories in life – they have always been able to conduct themselves well, display extreme coolness and grace in stressful and turbulent times; they are empathetic to others need and display foresight and understanding when in uncomfortable situations – these kind of people may not have high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) but they may most certainly have a high level of Emotional Quotient (EQ).

Emotional Intelligence is a term coined by Peter Salavoy and John Mayer in 1990 describing it as *“It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.”* The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is an ability-based measure of emotional intelligence which measures emotional intelligence through a series of questions and tests the participant's ability to perceive, use, understand, and regulate emotions.

In a 1995 book by Daniel Goleman, science journalist titled “Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ”, which went on to become a bestseller and made EQ a world-famous term in languages like English, Portuguese, German, Chinese, Korean, Hindi etc., it is propounded by Mr. Goleman that EQ is as important as IQ for success. Based on brain and behavioral research, the author shows the factors at work when people of high IQ falter and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well.

In his book, Goleman lists five ingredients of Emotional Intelligence:

1. Self-Awareness – the ability to understand your own emotions
2. Self-Regulation – the ability to be able to regulate and manage your emotions
3. Motivation – the ability to be motivated by internal reasons that go beyond external rewards
4. Empathy – the ability to understand how others are feeling
5. Social Skills – the ability to interact well with others

However, later in 2001, Goleman sought to put the ingredients that define EI on a more systematic basis as follows:

	SELF Personal Competence	OTHER Social Competence
RECOGNITION	<u>Self-Awareness</u> Emotional Self-Awareness Accurate Self-Assessment Self-Confidence	<u>Social Awareness</u> Empathy Service Orientation Organizational Awareness
REGULATION	<u>Self-Management</u> Self-Control Trustworthiness Conscientiousness Adaptability Achievement Drive Initiative	<u>Relationship Management</u> Developing Others Influence Communication Conflict Management Leadership Change Catalyst Building Bonds Teamwork and Collaboration

In 2002, UNESCO launched an international campaign to promote emotional learning in the classroom.

We are not taught Emotional Intelligence as part of curriculum in professional courses, but it has appeared in our lives and it can be learned as a skill and acquired through continuous practice as our brain is flexible and continues to learn at any age.

Energy Boosting v/s Energy Weakening Emotions

Emotions are powerful. They determine our outlook to life. Psychologists have tried to understand the various kinds of emotions; Many authors have written books on the subject; There have been numerous research on how these emotions impact human behaviour.

Paul Ekman, an American psychologist and professor emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco is a pioneer in the study of emotions and their relation to facial expressions. Ekman's facial-expression research examined six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise.



Paul Ekman's 6 Basic Emotions

However, as a layman, one can simply categorise emotions into two types – ones that boost your energy and make you happy and enthusiastic and others that weaken your energy and leave you drained and exhausted.

Energy Boosting emotions:

- Acceptance
- Affection
- Contentment
- Enthusiasm
- Faith
- Gratitude
- Happiness
- Love

Energy Weakening emotions:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Contempt
- Disappointment
- Embarrassment
- Envy
- Fear
- Grief
- Guilt
- Hatred
- Hostility
- Loneliness
- Pride
- Regret

- Rejection
- Remorse
- Resentment
- Sadness

To achieve success and growth in life, we need to manage our emotions. We need to ensure that we can convert negative energy weakening emotions into positive energy boosting emotions.

Mastering The Art of Managing Emotions

The Holy Scripture ‘The Bhagavad Gita’ has identified the most important way for managing emotions in the restless mind in Clause 6 verse 35 as follows:

*“śhrī bhagavān uvācha
asanśhayam mahā-bāho mano durnigraham chalam
abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grihyate”*

This can be translated as *“The mind is undoubtedly restless and difficult to curb, but it can be controlled by constant practice and non-attachment.”*

Therefore, it is common knowledge that the mind is impulsive, and is accustomed to speed into emotions at lightning speed, however with repeated training and practicing detachment we can consciously control our mind into not falling into the abyss of negativity, fear, anger and likewise.

The ways to Manage our Emotions & Attain a Super Successful Life:

1. Acceptance of our Emotions and Willingness to Change Them

The worst reaction we have when we are angry is that we tend to pin the fault on others. We will never be able to change ourself and manage our feelings if we refuse to first accept them. So the first and foremost step to manage our feelings is to accept responsibility for them. To accept that we need to change.

- Take responsibility for your actions and don't pin the cause of your behavior on others.
- The solution to each and every challenging situation lies within ourselves.
- Don't attempt to change others, change yourself.
- Observing others, Observing ourselves and Observing situations as a neutral observer
- Paying acute attention to our emotions and behavior
- Determining if our behavior and emotional reactions would have been different if different people were involved
- Examining what makes us happy and calms us in stressful situations – When you are in the midst of a stressful situation, think of this thing which motivates you and don't react negatively to the stressful situation
- Direct your emotional energy into productive energies

2. Realization of Limitations of Control

We have no control over External Circumstances and other people. We only have control over our Internal Response to those circumstances. The key to managing emotions is to focus on the things that we can control – and that is only OURSELF. *Viktor Frankl*, a Holocaust survivor who endured Hitler's Nazi concentration camp in his famous book "*Man's Search for Meaning*" said, "Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation". He says that the last of the human freedoms is — "to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." If we understand this one basic fact, we will know that we can control our responses, our behaviour, our words and thereby our circumstances in our own way.

3. Mindfulness of Impermanence

The nature of life is 'transitory' – here today, gone tomorrow. Zen Master *Thich Nhat Hanh* says "*It is not impermanence that makes us suffer. What makes us suffer is wanting things to be permanent when they are not. We need to learn to appreciate the value of*

impermanence.....impermanence teaches us to respect and value every moment and all the precious things around us and inside of us.”

Life is short. When we truly understand this axiom, we will behave differently. Our negative emotions will lose all significance. We can only hold grudges or feel envious of others when we think of life in terms of eternity. When we know that we are here on a holiday – maybe a 7 night 8-day package – then we will make the most of our Life vacation and enjoy it to the fullest with positive, vibrant energy and enthusiasm!!

4. Replacing Negative Thoughts with Positive Ones

Every time a negative thought enters your head, replace it with a positive thought. It may take effort at first, but slowly and steadily your mind will get trained to automatically do the same.

Fill your mind with positive thoughts. Let there be no place for negativity, gossip, worry and criticism. You will destroy the beautiful seed of pure thought even before it germinates. Water your thought, nurture it and let it grow into unimaginable wealth and success. Every individual is his own person. He alone knows what motivates him and drives him to achieve. With his personal experiences and emotions, he alone can work on his impulse to make it a reality. Don't poison that beautiful ability by clouding it with negative thoughts. Try to always find the positive in everything, so that the mind becomes trained to only see positive and ignore negative things.

Negative thoughts are like toxins for the mind. They annihilate the vast universe of the thought and reduce it to rubble. Add to it the venom of gossip and you have the perfect recipe for disaster.

5. Create an outlet for your Emotions

To deal with stress, anxiety, anger or any other disturbing feelings, some people like to paint, others like to sing and many others like to play sports. An emotion needs an outlet because if let bundled up inside you – it can wreck disaster on your mind and body. It needs to be let out but in a controlled and calm manner.

Develop a defense mechanism for yourself. So that if and when you encounter a negative emotion, your mind uses this defense mechanism to cope with it. It can then divert you to some positive thought process or nudge you into some creative pursuit of your choice. When we do something we enjoy, we tend to focus more at that activity and in the process change our mindset to one of acceptance and thus are able to deal with our emotion better.

It is always a good idea to maintain a journal or diary to vent your feelings. It lightens your mind as you let your heart out on paper. At the end of this practice you may realize that would be easier to now manage your feelings.

6. Exercise and Meditation

Exercise has multiple physical health benefits. It can also have a positive impact on emotional well-being. Exercise not only changes the mindset it also benefits all parts of your body – skin, muscles, brain, heart, body weight and also prevents us from chronic diseases. There can be no way in which we can transform our negative emotions into positive ones without first feeling totally fit, energetic and vibrant in our internal self.

There is strong scientific evidence to prove that whatever your age may be, being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life. Exercise releases certain hormones like dopamine, serotonin oxytocin etc. which are known to help promote positive feelings. You must have noticed that when you spend too much time indoors in a closed room you tend to experience mood swings or a sinking feeling. Throughout the covid19 pandemic people experienced phases of highs and lows as they remained stranded indoors. Doctors always advise you to go out in the open and get some sunshine. These are important factors to stay happy, manage your mind and keep your emotions in check.

Apart from outdoor exercise, one should definitely try meditation. Meditation is an art which makes you aware of yourself. It identifies “You” to “Yourself”. As you meditate, you become more aware of each breath you take. Through Meditation you can identify your energies and then harness them to attract good feelings. To perform meditation and achieve its benefits it is always advisable to get in touch with a certified Yoga and Meditation practitioner.

7. Have a Goal, Purpose

Having a sense of purpose always keeps your focus on your goal and every time you feel anxious, fear or other limiting emotions, it brings your focus back to your goal. When the mind has a point to return to, it does not dwell on negative emotions. “*Ikigai*” is a Japanese concept which means "a reason for being" or “the reason for living”. According to Japanese culture it is important to find your *Ikigai*, because discovering it brings satisfaction and meaning to life. Your current situation may be good or bad but your *Ikigai* gives you inner strength and makes you feel that your life is valuable. Thereby your mind discovers a purpose to dwell on and does not pursue the negative feelings you may have developed for too long.

More meaning in life would likely make you feel more content and thus less likely to dwell more on any negative emotions you experience. Having a purpose in life helps in faster emotional recovery from negative experiences or situations.

8. Train your Mind

A ‘Thought’ is the Alpha and Omega of success. *Buddha said ‘what you think, you become’*. To be successful, you have to first train your mind. You must master your mind and have dominance over your thought. Every emotion can be transformed into a positive energy with the right kind of thought process. Train your Mind to transform your Life.

The only way to control your mind and nurture positives thoughts is to live in the NOW. There is no past and no future. Your present moment is the only truth and that is all that exists. Just focus on the immediate present moment which is here and now and you will make yourself powerful enough to control your mind.

“Empty your mind. Be formless, shapeless like water. Now you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. You put water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or it can crash. Be water my friend.” – Bruce Lee

Just like the water takes the shape of the vessel it is poured into, let your thought also blend into the current moment. Let it not focus on what has passed and what will present itself in the future. Be aware and chalk out a planned action strategy to achieve your goals, but while on the path of achievement don't let your thoughts sway. Train them to remain focused on your goals.

Managing Emotions is one of the most important life skills one should have. People who are good at recognizing their emotions and learn to cope with them, tend to remain more progressive as they keep themselves happy and thereby keep their focus on their goals intact. They can compose themselves faster and adjust their behavior and therefore develop stronger relationships and manage obstructions with ease.

CONVERTING OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Character is not made in adversity; rather it is exhibited in adversity. The right outlook towards 'problems' reduces their stature to mere 'situations' and they do not seem daunting any more. It is the case of the glass being half-full or half-empty; your attitude is everything.

Be like the Phoenix. The phoenix bird symbolizes immortality, resurrection and life after death, and in ancient Greek and Egyptian mythology it is associated with worship of the sun god.

Difficulties, Defeat, Disappointment – they come in each and every person's life in some form or the other – sometimes its physically visible, sometimes it's not. Your success and your future is determined by your 'response' to the adverse situations – have you perished by it or have you emerged from the ashes like the phoenix bird.

All obstacles from smallest to biggest can be converted into opportunities. For e.g. When Milk curdles – we convert it to paneer; When Covid19 pandemic emerged – it made India emerge as a preferred business destination. You will observe on reading biographies/autobiographies of all famous & successful people – the one thing in common in all of them is that they all overcame some obstacle or the other to emerge victorious & achieve success. It wasn't smooth sailing for any of them.

First published in 1959, "The Magic of Thinking Big" is one of the most influential self-help

books of all-times. Written by David Schwartz, it has an entire chapter on ‘How to turn Defeat into Victory’ and sums up the same saying that “*The difference between success and failure is found in one’s attitude towards setbacks, handicaps, discouragements and other disappointing situations.*”

Opportunities always come disguised as Obstacles

Real action only happens when you are pushed into a corner. Desperate times lead to desperate measures. When humanity faced the covid19 pandemic all of a sudden, it pushed everyone into a corner. People lost their jobs, their relationships and even their sanity. Normal life as we knew it came to a standstill. But then amidst the hopelessness and devastation rose new found ideas which had not been explored before. Out of job workers discovered entrepreneurship and started turning their passion into their new profession. At home ladies and men who had always thought they were lacking meaning in life started pursuing their hobbies and eventually turned them into money-making ventures. There was a plethora of cloud kitchens, home cooked food ventures, online tutoring and new stock market enthusiasts everywhere. What had only been a starry eyed dream before, started turning into a reality. Eventually, without even moving an inch out of their house because of covid19, people were achieving new heights and conquering all their fears – because the ‘obstacle’ had been converted into an ‘opportunity’.

When faced with crisis, we tend to revel in an ‘obstacle mind-set’. We need to instead develop an ‘opportunity mind-set’. The best way to do this – focus on the solution, not on the problem. There will always be a solution, but the only catch is that it may not be the one ‘you’ had hoped for. Therefore, it may seem easier for you to keep wallowing in the problem rather than tackle it with your not-so preferred solution. Focus only on overcoming the obstacle, after that let nature take its course and lead you to wherever it wants to lead you. You will make new discoveries and find new strength which you never knew was present in you. Focus only on your strengths and not on your weaknesses. Keep your mind in a positive mind-set and don’t cloud it with negative thoughts. And thus, eventually bit by bit before you know it, you would have transformed the obstacle into opportunity. Later, when the turbulence is over, you will be able to appreciate the ‘new perspective’ it has taught you.

Toolkit you will need to convert Obstacles into Opportunities

i. DETERMINATION

Your ‘WILL’ can change everything. It can pull you out from the depths of misery. It can give you hope. It can make you millions. It can change your fortunes and your future. The ‘will’ comes from ‘within’. You are unstoppable once you have willed it.

GRIT, Determination – is the Most Important tool to tackle obstacles.

“Nothing is impossible in this world. Firm determination, it is said, can move heaven and earth. Things appear far beyond one’s power, because one cannot set his heart on any arduous project due to want of strong will.” – Samurai Yamamoto Tsunetomo

A man enters the world alone and he is alone when he leaves it. So do not depend on others for fulfilment of your dreams and your life. Take responsibility for your actions and realize that you alone are responsible for what you have achieved or failed to achieve. Blaming circumstances and situations will do no good. The will and determination to conquer all odds and emerge victorious is what makes a person successful.

ii. RESILIENCE

“When we tackle obstacles, we find hidden reserves of courage and resilience we did not know we had. And it is only when we are faced with failure do we realise that these resources were always there within us. We only need to find them and move on with our lives”. -- Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam better known as A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the 11th President of India and an aeronautical scientist

The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape is called resilience. Some people get punched and knocked down by life time and again, and each time they bounce back stronger. Instead of letting miserable situations break their determination they face their demons head on.

Stand up, dust yourself and get back to work. Tough times don't last forever. Obstacles are as powerful as you imagine them to be. When you don't pay heed to them, they magically fizzle out. Have the ability to spring back into shape. Deal with your problems – that's the only way they will go away. Failures are not an end in itself. They are just new beginnings of something new. Get back up on your feet - you just have to transform, change perspective and work from a different angle.

iii. ATTITUDE

“Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude”. – Thomas Jefferson, 3rd U.S President

It is the way you look at life that determines your success. If you want to change life, change your attitude. You can achieve only what you think you can achieve. The proverb ‘Attitude determines Altitude’ is a reminder that anything is possible for the person with the right attitude.

When you surround yourself with negativity and stressful people you weaken your attitude. The Negative energy saps your vitality whereas positive energy rejuvenates you. This is a simple fact which has existed since time immemorial and doesn't need to be proved by science. Remove negative people from around you. People who criticize, complain and grumble all the time sap you off your positive energy and leave you exhausted. Consciously be around optimistic people: Those people who bring out the best in you. Stay as far away as you can from people who drain your energy and have a pessimistic outlook towards life. Surround yourself with optimists and achievers. A good apple will also rot if kept in company of bad apples.

Stop complaining and grumbling about what is coming your way. When you stop criticizing, complaining and cribbing – you will start living: finding solutions and growth patterns. Don't let past events and circumstances cloud your thoughts. What has passed doesn't exist any longer. Don't stress over what is yet to come. Consciously block your mind from darting back and forth. Live in the present and focus on it.

iv. PERSISTENCE

It isn't easy; but it has to be done. The only way to get over with it is to go through it: face it headlong. That in a nutshell is perseverance – the persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

It's not that I'm so smart; it's just that I stay with problems longer. ~ Albert Einstein

There are many great men and women in history who have achieved their success through determined insistence – Thomas Edison's perseverance is legendary and he famously said genius is "1% inspiration and 99% perspiration"; Henry Ford; J.K Rowling; Walt Disney; Brazilian retired professional footballer Edson Arantes do Nascimento, known as Pelé; Venus and Serena Williams; the list is endless. The only way to your goal is to keep moving forward. Keep at it all the time. Persist, persist, persist; no matter how slow you are and how far the goal seems.

He conquers who endures. – Persius, Roman poet and satirist of Etruscan origin.

Patiently persist. Don't lose your enthusiasm when you suffer setbacks on your road in life. They are mere stumbling blocks. Gather your determination and tenaciousness and with single-minded strength of purpose forge ahead. To reach the pinnacle of success you have to climb the small little steps on the staircase which will take you there.

The more you work, struggle and do whatever it takes to reach closer to your goal, you will observe that the worst is over and somehow things are getting better and better. Remember your goal and your well defined plan to achieve your goal, just focus on it; it will give you the strength to keep moving forward.

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race." - Calvin Coolidge. So every time you feel like throwing in the towel, remember this famous quote of John Calvin Coolidge Jr., the 30th President of the United States of

America. A Republican lawyer from New England he had a quiet but methodical climb up the political ladder,

Success and riches are not for the weak. You have to be made of strong metal to survive all odds and march on.

If you can't fly, then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward. ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

CONVERTING STRAINS LIKE ANXIETY, STRESS AND NEGATIVITY INTO SUPERPOWERS

Every person who has achieved something in life has probably not had it as easy as it looks. His/her achievements may have been built over a mountain of struggle, sacrifice and persistence. He/she would have faced endless instances of tensions, stresses, worries, anxieties and pressures – but probably chose to rise above it all and sail through, because their eyes were set on something beyond. Each and every person, whether famously known or little known, has some or the other negativities which they have to deal with in life. What makes a person unique is their way of navigating through these challenges and still happily living their life.

Throughout Asia and even beyond, the bamboo tree is regarded as sacred and is famous for its strength and endurance. But growing the bamboo tree is not an easy job. Creating a beautiful and strong bamboo tree requires about five years of patience and persistence but once it matures it can become one of the fastest growing plant on the planet – wherein it can grow 3 feet in 24 hours under appropriate climate conditions!

There are two important values to be learnt from the Chinese bamboo tree – patience and perseverance. When you plant a bamboo, even after nurturing it for one year you will see absolutely no growth above the ground. In the second, third and fourth year too there will be absolutely nothing above the ground – four years i.e. 1460 days of watering the soil, caring for the soil, providing it adequate sunshine and nurturing it like your child will show zero visible results for all your efforts. You may probably start feeling discouraged and feel like giving up. But if keep taking care of the plant in those four year and persist even after that, in the fifth year

you will see the bamboo plant suddenly shoot up from the soil and develop to about 80 feet of growth! So all this while your persistent efforts had been developing a strong structure for the tree underneath the ground which makes a bamboo what it is – dependable and strong. It bends but does not break; In the face of the wildest of storms it bends but once the storm passes over, it regains its posture once again. Just like bamboo farming is not an overnight, monthly or even yearly process, achieving your goals in life also requires blood, sweat and tears which can be frustrating and unrewarding at times, but will ensure sure shot success in future.

Imagine yourself in ten years' time. What would you like to look back upon? What would you like to achieve in 10 years from now? Now remind yourself that your tough circumstances are just an obstacle between your 'Now' and your 'Future' which you can visualize ten years from now. It isn't easy: but it has to be done. The only way to get over with it is to go through it: face it headlong.

Learn to Manage your thoughts, stress and emotions and Convert your anxiety, stress and negativity into Superpowers!