

IMAGE

AN ACTION RESEARCH JOURNAL
ON
PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS and LENS INTERNATIONAL

IMAGE

AN ACTION RESEARCH JOURNAL ON PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The Action Research Journal is written to communicate designs, formats and ideas of transformational processes which promote the human factor in private and public sectors. It is published by the Corporate Services Division of The Institute of Cultural Affairs: India for distribution through the Asia Network of ICA and LENS International organisations. These include ICA: India (Bombay, Panvel and Pune), LENS Services Pvt. Ltd. (New Delhi), LENS International Malaysia Sdn. Bhd., ICA: Australia, ICA: Philippines, ICA: Taiwan, ICA Associates (Hong Kong) and LENS International Japan.

The Action Research Journal draws on a variety of sources including other ICA world-wide offices and affiliated professional consulting organisations to provide a spectrum of practical tools and constructs that facilitate individual and organisational transformation. We welcome comments and articles from our readers.

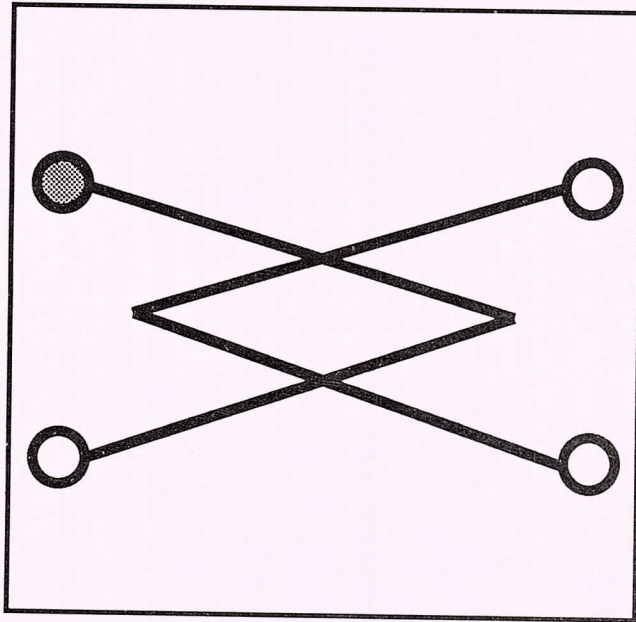
ISSUE FIFTEEN AUGUST 1992

"PERSONAL MASTERY and VOCATION"

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JOURNAL OVERVIEW



Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.

Confucius

Every organisation has the responsibility to facilitate the growth and development of its employees. For years this has been principally the responsibility of Personnel departments, or more recently, HRD managers. But few, if any, see that responsibility in the terms of vocation. Rather, they limit their role to that of career development, job enrichment, job rotation or other forms of putting the right man in the right job.

Today, that responsibility has grown to include all managers of people within the organisation. In the context of evolving a Learning Organisation the task of developing people has taken on added significance. The new task in getting the best effort in quality, innovation and service from individuals is to enable the intrinsic motivation to become the dominant factor in their performance. Two of the most popular writers and speakers today, Peter Senge, author of **The Fifth Discipline**, and Dr. Stephen Covey, author of **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, emphasize the role of personal mastery and personal vision in people's lives.

Although it is relatively easy to see the necessity of these disciplines or habits, it is far more difficult to actually have them function as a priority in a business setting. Partly, it is because of the dominant measurement of productivity through profit-centered focus, and partly it is the fact that the very nature of work makes it difficult to have a rich human development experience in the work place. We have

moved far from the age of the individual craftsman who found immediate satisfaction in his creative work. Today we are in a world of specialists, technicians or often mind-numbing routine types of jobs.

In addition, the scientific management of the behavioral sciences have often reduced development to human psychological levels only. People are tested, categorised and "developed" in terms that are far from the total picture of being a human being.

What is needed in transformation is a new partnership between the individual and the organisation that has as its mutual context the complete growth and development of the whole person. This would include physical health and well-being along with the intellectual and spiritual growth of the individuals. It would take into account the family and other roles that each individual has in a balanced and meaningful life. But most important of all, it would include a new vision for all of the organisation's mission and participation in the profound job of healing our world and making human centered activities the paramount purpose of us all.

This Issue

This is the fourth issue devoted to the fuller understanding of the disciplines of a Learning Organisation as outlined in Senge's book **The Fifth Discipline**. In issue No. Nine, we covered the discipline of Shared Vision. In issues No. Thirteen and Fourteen we explored Strategic Thinking and Systemic Integrity, two dimensions of Systems Thinking. Future issues will explore Team Learning, Mental Models and Current Reality.

The symbol for this issue is the Learning Organisation disciplines diagram we developed based on Senge's work and explained in detail in the issue on Strategic Thinking. Briefly, the two left hand tips of the wedge represent Personal Mastery and Team Learning, both relating and responding to Shared Vision at the tip of the wedge. The other two poles represent Mental Models and Systems Thinking, both relating and responding to the Current Reality at the tip of the other wedge. The symbol highlights Personal Mastery in the diagram.

The lead article is by Willis Harman from his book **Creative Work**. He sets the context for the major shift in understanding work in a new paradigm of human consciousness. Organisations need to shift from a "product or service" oriented mission to that of creating a Learning Society.

John Epps, of LENS International, Malaysia, writes of his thoughts on traditional images of career development and offers a different view of how a

person can develop in an organisation. He highlights the journey one undertakes when one really follows his/her personal vision. He calls his article **Debunking The Promotion Myth**.

Maintaining a balance in priorities between work and home is a problem world wide. Recent articles about the large number of deaths from overwork in Japan and the inability of people in the United States to relax from work on the weekends are indicative of a malaise that is prevalent throughout the industrialised world. **Peter Senge** has a chapter in his book that we are reproducing called, **Ending the War Between Work and Family**.

Covey's 2nd Habit, "Begin With the End in Mind", is about the importance of building your life around a carefully, thought-out set of values and a mission statement. We have taken his ideas and presented them as a series of exercises for **Personal Mission and Values**.

Some of the most practical, applied human development work by an organisation in India has been done by Mr. **V. S. Mahesh**, Vice President of Human Resources at Wipro Ltd., a high tech, rapidly growing company in India. Mahesh, a long time colleague of ICA's and an avid promoter of the ICA's technology of participation, is publishing a book called **Thresholds of Motivation: The Corporation as a Nursery for Human Growth**. In a recent interview with Judy Gilles he discusses the book and its thesis of how the corporation has a role to play if self-actualisation is to be experienced by its employees.

India has an ancient tradition of Personal Mastery and has mastered the disciplines required for an individual's total development. But it has not succeeded well in bringing those skills to the workplace. One author has been exploring this field for years and has written several books on his studies and consultations with Indian businesses. **S. K. Chakraborty** of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta has written a book titled, **Managerial Effectiveness and Quality of Worklife: Indian Insights**. We are publishing an edited section of one chapter that we are calling **The Work Ethic**.

Finally, we are publishing a list of past issues of the Image Journal for those who might like to order issues. Single issues are \$3 for our international subscribers and Rs. 30 for Indian members. We hope this issue will be of benefit for all those who seek transformation for themselves and their organisations. Please share your comments and reflections with us.

Jack Gilles, Editor

Past Issues of the IMAGE Journal

- I Apr/1987 **Leadership Development**
Participatory programmes for companies
- II Dec/1987 **The Journey of Transformation**
Focuses on alignment and attunement in organisations
- III Jun/1988 **Developing Human Potential**
Documents Dr. Jean Houston's programmes in Feb/March '88 in India
- IV Oct/1988 **Creativity and Innovation**
Overview of books and processes of creativity
- V May/1989 **Transformation Processes**
Highlights Dr. Jean Houston's Human Capacities Academy in India
- VI Sep/1989 **Service Excellence**
The concept of service explored from several perspectives
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Explores how organisations can become learning societies
- VIII Jun/1990 **Implementation**
How to ensure plans made are followed up
- IX Oct/1990 **Vision**
Articles, books and ideas on the role of vision
- X Feb/1991 **The Transformational Leadership Lab**
Design and concepts of the TLL programme for senior executives
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- XII Sep/1991 **The Feminine Principle in Management**
Explores themes of reawakening to the feminine dimension within organisations
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Research and experience in how strategy operates
- XIV May/1992 **Systemic Integrity**
Systems thinking concepts applied to business

CREATIVE WORK - Willis Harman

*Without work, all life goes rotten - but when work is
soulless, life stifles and dies.*

Albert Camus

There may be no aspect to the future about which modern society is more confused than the role of work in the life of the individual and in society. A basic cause of this confusion is the failure to recognize the full implications of the technological changes that have been taking place. Present conceptions regarding work were formed in an era when the primary societal function of work was the production of necessary or desired goods and services, and in which one could foresee no end to the social desirability of utilizing technological advance to increase the economic productivity of the individual laborer. Yet today those assumptions lead to a fundamental dilemma. On the one hand, if a country does not continually increase labor productivity, the industry of that country tends to become noncompetitive in the international market. On the other hand, if productivity does increase, then by definition, to maintain the same number of jobs the economic product must increase. Thus as various constraints - resource, environmental, political and social - tend to limit economic growth, chronic unemployment becomes an intrinsic characteristic of the future. Since that is an unpleasant thought to contemplate, countries and individuals have tended to use tortuous logic and subtly evasive actions to avoid confronting it.

In a few countries demographic trends are obscuring this unemployment dilemma for the short term, but the tendency is inexorable in the longer term. Some of the obfuscation is more contrived, as is illustrated by the progressive redefinition, in the United States, of the official unemployment rate corresponding to "full employment." This rate, which some claim represents the unemployment level necessary to maintain low inflation rates, has risen steadily from around 2.5 percent in the 1940's to over 7.5 percent in the late 1980's. A nation can, as did the Soviet Union for many years, insure that there is no unemployment by giving every adult a job whether or not their labors are really needed. But this expedient of "makework" creates a serious morale problem, because no one likes to feel unneeded.

Underemployment, working at less than one's full productive capacity, is the other side of the work dilemma. It is a major source of workplace problems and social malaise. In industrialized countries, underemployment is closely related to the prevailing concept of education. Education is viewed in modern society - whether we openly admit it or not - primarily as preparation for a job in the mainstream economy. As the intelligence and educational levels

of a people increase (and that is certainly the trend over the long term), increasing numbers of people are unable to find work that uses the skills and knowledge they were trained in. Discontent and alienation are the result. Education is no longer a sure route to increased status, power, and income. Neither does it insure work that is intrinsically challenging and that offers opportunities for creativity and self-expression. Increasing numbers of well-educated workers have to accept jobs - white-collar as well as blue-collar - that are routine, unstimulating and stultifying. A significant fraction of the jobs in modern society are neither intrinsically challenging nor obviously related to inspiring social challenges.

In the developing societies underemployment is in general not a consequence of "over-education," but of the destruction of traditional ways of rural and village cultural patterns. Cities in the Third World bulge with displaced peasants, able only to scratch out the meanest of livings in the most ignoble occupations. In some of these countries underemployment is the condition of the great majority of the urban population.

An aspect of underemployment is revealed by the old story of two stonecutters who were engaged in similar activities. Asked what they were doing, one answered, "I'm squaring up this piece of stone." The other replied, "I'm building a cathedral." The first may have been underemployed; the second was definitely not. The state of underemployment has not so much to do with what work a person is doing, as with what she perceives she is doing it for. The frontiersman, the old-time craftsman, the farmer blessed with a fine piece of land, the mother sewing clothes at home and caring for an infant, all would have scoffed at the idea that they were underemployed. But once mechanized agriculture is available, raising the same crops with hand tools seems less fulfilling; once a robotized assembly line can mass-produce an item, the meaning of the craft, and the challenge to make the same item by hand, are destroyed.

There is reluctant but growing admission in North America and Northern Europe that despite mass consumption and global arms races and a nonproductive but burgeoning "financial industry," the long-term future of industrial society looks to be characterized by chronic unemployment and underemployment. The reasons are basically two: 1) in the long run, economic growth may not continue to generate enough jobs to accommodate the expanding workforce; and 2) the quality of available jobs may not be compatible with the rising educational levels of the workforce.

So what do you do when the productiveness of the economy has risen to where the needs of society

can be met employing only a fraction of the potential workforce? The answer implicitly put forth in modern industrial societies is, create more needs! Become obsessed with consumption, to try to use up the product and keep the machinery running. What do you do when technology has advanced to where anything you can train a human to do, you can train a computer (robot) to do; and furthermore the computer will probably do it better, faster, and cheaper? The accepted answer is to become obsessed with economic growth to create new jobs for humans to do. *These are inappropriate responses arising from an inadequate concept of the role of work; they do not address the real human question.*

It is important to recognize that underemployment in the developed world arises partly because of modern society's successes in terms of the degree and diversity of developed capacity among its citizens. The fraction of the population who demonstrate both initiative and realized intellectual, skill-related, and aesthetic capacities is probably higher than for any other society throughout history. It is ironic that this outstanding success should now appear as a problem, namely the difficulties persons experience in finding niches in the mainstream economy within which to manifest their fullest capabilities.

Why is modern society unable to arrange things so that practically every citizen has ample opportunities for meaningful fulfilling work? That is the fundamental question, underlying all the more obvious aspects of work-related problems from unemployment and underemployment, through chronic inner-city poverty and homeless people, to environmental impacts of economic growth. "Meaningful work" is not necessarily work that is exciting and challenging at every moment; it is enough that it be part of a larger endeavor which is infused with meaning. It is mainly that "larger endeavor" for our modern, mass-consumption society which is lacking.

The authors are convinced that the above question is answerable, as well as the follow-on question: What must be done? In preparing this report we have aspired to contribute to the search for those answers.

Thus we have attempted to assess the changing role of work in a far broader context than is usually considered. Furthermore, we have especially focused on the role of business, since the institutions of business are so dominant in modern society. Our objective is to clarify the nature of the modern dilemma, to highlight a few of the kinds of constructive actions already taking place, and to suggest deliberate actions the business sector could undertake to find and play the most constructive role possible.

The Unrecognized Challenge: Redefining Work

All of history supports the observation that the desire to create is a fundamental urge in humankind. *Fundamentally, we work to create, and only incidentally do we work to eat.* That creativity may be in relationships, communication, service, art, or useful products. It comes close to being the central meaning of our lives.

Until recently in the West, the most important question to be asked of a man was: What is your vocation? That is, where do you create? (It was not necessary to ask the question of a woman since it could be assumed that the arena for her creating was the family and the home.) In traditional societies, particularly those of indigenous peoples, the creation was collective, and participation was through ritual and communal work. One of the great disservices of the modern paradigm is that it obscured the fact of our creative urge, and persuaded us that we really are economically motivated and work for economic reward.

During the earlier part of the industrial period the collective work, the "central project," of Western society was oriented around material progress, just as surely as during the Middle Ages it centered around building great cathedrals for the glory of God. Over the past half century, however, a "central project" of mere economic growth and technological advance, unguided by overarching values, seems decreasingly suitable, and the need is sensed to reorient around a new focus.

The new failure of jobs to perform their time-honored functions. Modern society needs to rethink the role of work. In approaching this issue it is helpful to remind ourselves of the functions that education and work together have performed historically. Essentially, these are four:

1. Promoting the *learning and development* of the individual citizen;
2. Providing the individual with a *social role* in the meaningful activities of society, with the opportunity to achieve a sense of contributing, belonging, and being appreciated, thereby developing healthy self-esteem;
3. *Producing* needed and desired goods and services for society;
4. *Distributing the total income* of the society in a way that is generally perceived as equitable.

In the past these four functions have been delegated largely to schools (learning and development), parents and peer groups (development and social roles), and jobs (all four).

In recent decades this arrangement has become progressively less effective. The production economy has difficulty providing an adequate number of

suitably challenging work roles for the ever-increasing educational levels. Through increasing labor productivity, it is no longer true that all of the potential labor force is needed to produce the goods and conventional services to fill previously felt needs. The "solution" in the recent past was for us to "need" more. But limitless consumption, even of services, eventually runs into difficulties with resource and environmental limits and consumer resistance.

Furthermore, jobs in the mainstream economy have become progressively less satisfactory as an equitable basis for income distribution. As labor productivity is raised through capital-intensive technology, each worker can apparently produce more wealth. However, as the process of industrialization has proceeded, the increases in wealth are less and less the contribution of routine, narrowly trained, or unskilled labor, and increasingly the contribution of capital and highly skilled technical work embedded in the production machines. Nevertheless, the real wages of unskilled or semi-skilled laborers have risen as fast as, or faster than, the wages of managers and technically creative workers. Thus wage levels have become quite divorced from the real value added by the worker. John Naisbitt says it is time for Marx's "labor theory of value" to be replaced by a new "knowledge theory of value." And perhaps it is time to frankly abandon the idea that the individual's compensation should be directly tied to his or her identifiable contribution to the economic output.

In response to the manifest inequities of income distribution according to productivity, and to the persistence of unemployment and "unemployability" of some workers, the government's role in redistributing income has grown vastly in most countries. Governmental redistribution is accomplished by direct transfer payments, such as social security and public assistance programs; by the graduated income tax and other differential monetary and fiscal policies; and by controls on wages, prices, and interest rates. These policies have weakened still further the link between wage levels and the individual's contribution to direct value added.

For all practical purposes, the notion that an individual's income is determined by the productivity of his or her labor (plus return from property) has become obsolete. As a substitute, society has been confusedly attempting to rationalize income distribution with vaguely defined principles of welfare and equity. Work is still the least controversial form of income distribution, but it has been becoming steadily less and less suitable for that purpose.

A similar situation exists with regard to the social function of work. Work is one of the most socially acceptable, potentially constructive ways for people to spend the major portion of their waking hours. But in the consumption-focused industrial economy,

deeply satisfying work opportunities tend to be in increasingly scarce supply.

Finally, the old concept of education as job preparation is totally unsatisfactory from both the standpoints of the individual and society. For a host of reasons, lifelong learning is the only kind of education that makes sense. Thus, the workplace can also be considered as a learning place. But the economy has difficulty adjusting to that idea. According to its rules, work is something you get paid to do, and education is something you *pay for*.

Toward a solution to the work dilemma. From the above discussion, the dilemma can now be reframed. The problem is to so redefine the four functions of work and education that the unsatisfactory aspects are eliminated.

We remind ourselves that we are dealing with a *problem of success*. In terms of its own goals of efficiency, productivity, material advance, and consumption, industrialization must be judged an unqualified success. From an economic standpoint, the production problem has been solved once and for all.

If human beings basically sought to escape from work, industrialization might be considered a success from a social and humane standpoint as well, since it has made possible the elimination of so much of the chore work that humans once had to do. But both from observation of worker behavior and from the findings of psychological research, there is ample evidence that *persons basically seek meaningful activities and relationships*. Humans thrive not on mindless pleasure, but on challenge. *Thus, although full employment is no longer needed from a production standpoint, full participation is essential from a social standpoint.*

As we have seen, the processes of production will eventually fail to provide enough work roles either for satisfactory fulfillment of the income-distribution function or the social-roles function. There appear to be two fundamentally different ways in which this situation might be approached.

1) The transfer-payments approach. One of these is essentially a top-down transfer-payments approach. The term transfer payment usually refers to income payments and transfers of purchasing power by governments to people deemed needy or worthy (or both). If the economists' usual definition is broadened to include transfers from institutions and individuals as well as governments, well over half the populations of most modern countries are already supported wholly or in large part by transfer payments. (Mostly housewives, children, and students.)

In this broader definition, there are at least four distinct kinds of transfer payments:

1. Those based on *membership*, entitling a person to support simply by virtue of belonging to a particular group such as the family, community, organization, or society (i.e., child support);

2. Those that are a *social investment* on promise (i.e., research fellowships and scholarships);
3. Those based on *need*, but *conditional* (i.e., substitutes for welfare where in order to receive payment persons must propose and carry out socially constructive tasks);
4. Those based on *need*, but *unconditional* (welfare and unemployment payments, assistance to the aged).

It is rather generally agreed that the fourth kind of transfer payment is often accompanied by deleterious social consequences. People do not thrive through being "kept." Both the third and fourth have mixed effects when, as is often the case, they are carried out in a highly centralized manner, administered by a multi-layered bureaucratic structure. Probably much more could be done with the first three. The first, distribution on the basis of membership, works particularly well when the group is small and bonded by other ties, such as family or religious commitment; (the Mondragon cooperatives exemplify this principle.) Much more could constructively be done with the second kind of distribution, on the basis of promise, which appears to be especially beneficial in its effects when supported on a very decentralized basis, by private philanthropy.

One of the most ambitious ways of redistributing on the basis of membership is the guaranteed income sort of proposal, pioneered by British economist Robert Theobald. The basic concept is that everyone is entitled, by virtue of membership in society alone, to a basic income, or sharing of the total national product.

2). **Toward a "learning society."** The second approach involves a much more fundamental transformation of society. It appears feasible because of the question toward which the above discussion of work leads us, namely: *When it no longer makes sense for an economically and technologically successful society to have economic production (and consumption) as its central focus, what then becomes that society's "central project"?* There seems to be only one satisfactory answer: *learning and human development*, in the broadest possible sense — as ends as well as means. Learning about self, health, meaning in life; learning skills to be used in service or productive creation; learning that the potentialities for learning are endless.

The Special Role of Business Leadership

It is especially important for business leadership to understand the sorts of issues raised in the above discussion. In modern society, business, with its associated technological capabilities, is a powerful shaping force of the future. Business creates most of the jobs in capitalist societies. Business has attracted a fair proportion of the most creative persons in society. The modern corporation is as adaptable an organizational form as has ever been invented, so that

in a time of fundamental change it may be expected to be on the cutting edge.

We have earlier noted the tendency among those employed in modern business and industry to desire a work environment that promotes creative initiative and meaningful participation. As competition for excellent talent intensifies, one of the most significant factors in attracting and holding the very best people will be the quality of work environment.

Not only is a spontaneous awakening taking place, especially among the professional and entrepreneurial groups; it is abetted by a variety of personal development seminars and courses. These courses often are built around two key experiential insights which are more revolutionary than may be immediately apparent. One is the awareness and cultivation of personal empowerment, the proposition that you can create what you choose. The second is the discovery of one's own deep wisdom and understanding of the truth of the times; of access to inner resources that both guide the choice and contribute to its accomplishment.

Both of these insights are rooted in a picture of reality very different from the official one taught in school curricula and science courses. This picture involves a much more intimate sense of the whole, in which everything is connected to everything else, and it is obvious that no one really wins unless all do. This perspective also involves a deeper appreciation of the power of inner beliefs, and the possibility of reshaping these through techniques of visualization and affirmation. Because the interconnectedness includes minds at some deep level, the potentiality of intuition and creative imagination is far more unlimited than one would infer from a model in which the mind-brain system is assumed to be some sort of computer confined within the individual cranium. Awareness of the expanded nature of these inner resources leads to a shift in the individual's perceived source of authority, away from external dogmas and "experts" of all kinds, and toward deepened trust in the inner, intuitive authority.

As this sense of self-empowerment and inner authority spreads, the meaning of management and leadership changes. Management becomes much more a matter of encouraging others to develop and use their own creativity; leadership has a great deal to do with bringing forth the guiding vision in the collective.

The near-term future is going to be a time of redefining the world. Since business has become the predominant institution in modern society, it will inevitably have a strong hand in that reshaping. A key element has to do with society's ability to help the individual find his or her "creative work." The involvement with these critical issues is the "creative work" of business.

DEBUNKING THE PROMOTION MYTH:

THE OLD MYTH

The popular story goes that people work for benefits. One type of benefit is financial, another is position or prestige. Both are rewards for peak performance, and the better you perform, the higher salary and more powerful position you attain. Supposedly the person who performs best ultimately reaches the top, i.e. becomes CEO of the organisation. The career path has a clear destination in this scheme.

Of course, it is rarely that simple. There are many routes to the top of a company, and a cynic can name them all: relative of the boss; brown-nosing; back-biting; educational advantages; old-boy fraternising; wealth; family position; political pull; luck; etc. The fact that these routes are frequently taken, however, does not sway the purist from his myth about how things ought to be. "There are exceptions, but the pattern is still true."

Nowadays, the whole structure of organisations is changing: the drive for positions of higher authority has no meaning. Because organisations are "flattening out", there are far fewer positions of higher authority than there once were. You can't be promoted because there is nowhere to be promoted to! So what do you do . . . change companies? Change jobs? Keep on doing the same old thing until retirement? How can you continue to grow and advance when the opportunities for promotion don't exist? The myth that promised promotion and rewards for labour doesn't work any longer.

The real question is one of lasting motivation. If I cannot look forward to gaining a high position in the organisation with increasing benefits, then why should I continue to work hard and improve myself? What is the destination of my career path?

Professionalism

One answer has to do with commitment to a profession and its skills rather than to any particular organisation. A Marketer is a professional who can work for a wide variety of organisations, and can have a variety of experiences by practicing the profession in different environments. The same is true for an Accountant, a Systems Analyst, a Civil Engineer, a Chemist, a Secretary, etc. Virtually every field of expertise has its professional association, journal, gatherings, standards, etc. While the old guild structures have fallen into disuse, the ideal of professionalism they fostered is still appealing. In the case of limited promotional opportunities, you can be committed to a profession. You can up-grade your professional skills. Even though the skills may not be beneficial to the company, you benefit yourself by opening other employment opportunities through increasing your professional expertise.

As a self-story, the professional approach may be

quite adequate. You can continue to increase expertise in a particular field throughout a career. There is no such thing as getting so good that learning stops; in fact, many fields require continued learning just to stay abreast of new developments.

But it is really a little abstract. You aren't a banker in general; you are a banker in this particular bank which may be quite different from another bank. You aren't an accountant or an engineer in the abstract; you keep these books or build that bridge. The problem with the story of professionalism is its failure to take account of what you actually do. You have no alternative but to do it in connection with some organisation and therefore to support the values and direction of that organisation.

The moment you look beyond personal skill and satisfaction to what you are really doing and supporting, then this approach falls short. It matters what you are fostering with your expertise.

Company Loyalty

Perhaps the way to retain energy and productivity is through commitment to the organisation for which you work. The emphasis on teamwork and participation is a way to increase people's sense of belonging, to make the company a "family" in which you are at home. You identify with the philosophy and mission of the organisation and are committed to putting them into action.

In this approach, you seek "alignment" with the company purpose and "attunement" with its operating values. You believe in the service rendered by the organisation as a service worthy of your time and effort; you also believe in the way it operates to deliver the services.

There are noble ends sought by organisations, and working environments that encourage participation, creativity, and self-development. You look to find a suitable "fit" for your own personality, and once found, you stay with it through thick or thin.

Loyalty like this is most often typified by the Japanese who are known for their lifetime identification with the same organisation. Their training, development, home life, and culture all assume and enhance loyalty to one's company. From the viewpoint of the organisation, this is a near-ideal situation. If people can identify with the corporate aims and values, then there is less "sloughing off" and more creativity and energy towards realising them. The company can also avoid the problems of frequent turnover if people see it as their own.

Organisations try to promote this approach through a wide variety of rewards that enhance the quality of life — pension plans, and perks aplenty — so that in taking advantage of them, you attain a standard of living that depends on retaining connection to the company. Many companies also use

Finding A Destination For The Career Path - John Epps

Participation as a means of enhancing loyalty. You not only BELONG in the organisation; you OWN it, i.e., have some significant say in its direction. The danger here is that the approach may be perceived as a "golden handcuff" approach, surrender to which promotes a cynicism that prevents creative contribution to the organisation.

Much in consulting attempts to promote Company Loyalty. People are trained in problem-solving and teamwork and communications, NOT as individual skills, BUT as means of enhancing the operation of the organisation. Unfortunately, little can be done about the occasional necessity for "downsizing," and when it occurs, it dramatically shows how unreliable are companies as objects of loyalty. FOR-TUNE (April 1991) features stories of people discovering this fact. People seem prone to vocational crises in which rewards and participation lose their significance and can be tossed aside, if not easily, at least with some sense of liberation.

Job Enrichment

Faced with the abstractions of professionalism and the final dissatisfaction with organisational loyalty, many people have undertaken the approach of "job enrichment," that is, looking for a variety of experiences and responsibilities within the organisation. A career might include time in marketing, EDP, administration, personnel, etc. Your skills might be expanded and perspective widened by experiencing the business from a variety of viewpoints. Though remaining at the same "level" in the company, you still can enjoy a career with diversity and challenge.

Because rotation occurs periodically, teamwork is enhanced: people appreciate each other's roles since they have first-hand experience of them. The organisation becomes a sort of learning centre designed for the benefit of its staff. People may be rewarded for their acquisition of new skills; on-going training may become an expectation of everyone.

Immense amounts of energy are now being expended in training programmes within organisations. In the U.S.A., the private sector spend more on education of employees than does the entire public school system on the education of children. And who would doubt the pressing need to promote R & D and knowledge enrichment? Training is here to stay as part of any organisation.

But curiously, this approach to career-crisis management is self-defeating. Who wants to work for an organisation whose aim is improving me?

The whole point of the question is to find something worthy of my life's experience, energy and exertion. But enriching the potential of that life or adding to its experiences side-steps the basic question: "FOR WHAT?" What is being called into question in

the myth of crisis is the basic aim of your work — what you are accomplishing in history? Towards what are you moving? Soldiers in the Saudi desert said that they were not willing to die for cheap gasoline. Managers in business are saying they are not willing to die (or live) for a per cent of market share. So what DO people find worth living and dying for? That is the question that the promotion myth was designed to answer. Its evident inadequacy has provided the opportunity to probe deeper. What IS an adequate destination for a career path?

Life Purpose

An answer to this question depends on recognising the deep "sea changes" taking place in society, for they are altering people's consciousness and basic assumptions. They have to do with new perceptions of reality as more than material; of relationships as more than immediate; and of life as more than acquisitive. So long as job satisfaction is thought to derive from personal enrichment or gratification or financial rewards, then the various programmes devised to achieve it are doomed to failure.

"Life Purpose" is designed to point "beyond" jobs to that for which you decide to commit your life. Once you clarify this basic purpose, then you have multiple options for significant work. For example, you may say, "My life is about promoting a healthy lifestyle; I am now assigned to sell insurance both to support my real aim and as a vehicle through which to meet people and to encourage healthy practices. I also belong to a health club and volunteer time with a local clinic."

As the example shows, a life-purpose permits considerable latitude in what particular job you hold. The important factor is whether it supports the value you have chosen as your life-purpose. The greater the support, the more commitment you will have. But even if the support is minimal, the job has meaning by virtue of that support.

Furthermore, having a life-purpose undergirds Professionalism, Company Loyalty and Job Enrichment. Each is valuable because of its support of your life-purpose. None are valuable in themselves or because of benefits to you. But they help you to pursue your purpose with greater effectiveness. Your purpose, not some job, is the focus of your vocation.

People need the opportunity to think through their life-purpose, for that is the source of meaning in work. Periodic occasions to assess your position, your past and your opportunities are as important for individuals as they are for organisations. Just as companies create strategic plans and long-range mission statements, so also can individuals. And in

fact, we must in order to contend with the debilitating vacuity of culturally promoted destinations to the career path.

These basic values (or "sky hooks" as someone called them) can't be simply abstract; to be effective, you have the LIVE them. They are full-time directions from which you do not take a vacation (although you may take periodic discontinuity to refresh perspective and energy). An adequate life purpose admits no vacation and no retirement — How could you retire, for example, from promoting a healthy lifestyle? The form of your engagement might well alter, but that for which you are living will not.

There is always and inevitably a gap between the lofty sounding purpose for which one lives and the nitty-gritty jobs one is performing. When it becomes excessively wide, then a split occurs. The point is to keep the gap as narrow as possible, using every opportunity to rehearse how your work contributes to the whole and how the whole organisation is performing a valuable service for society.

THE NEW MYTH: An Ongoing Journey

Numerous programmes have been developed to help people identify their appropriate vocation. They range from intensive testing and counselling designed to disclose one's "aptitude" for a range of jobs, to evangelistic promotions of some cause purporting to enrich humanity. One of the more effective (and brief) vocational approaches is one in which the speaker assigns participants to name the three greatest problems in the world. Then he announces, "If you are not spending your life dealing with what you listed, then you are living inauthentically!" Most vocational counselling tacitly assumes that once the "right" job is found, you may expect a continuous climb up the ladder of success. It isn't so simple.

The matter at stake is deeper than simply finding a job. It has to do with finding a purpose. This is not a simple, single event that once done, the issue is resolved once and for all. Pursuit of your purpose is a lifelong journey. Despite all its variables and roller-coaster ups and downs, there are three discernable phases to an authentic vocational journey: **Recognition, Crisis, and Persistence.**

The Recognition: Selecting Your Life-Purpose

They say the great heroes were "called" and "commissioned." Stories about leaders from Moses to Mahatma Gandhi describe situations in which the central figure was yanked into a new orbit by forces over which he had no control. Moses has his burning bush, Gandhi, his imprisonment in South Africa. But what about us who aren't party to such compelling "revelations"? The best approach is to assume that you are already moving in an appropriate direction, that your life already indicates what you find most

worthwhile. The question is to identify what it is. How can this be done?

You begin with a survey of your own experience, a life story with episodes of significance. A useful approach is to list in random order 50-75 events in your life as far back as you can remember. Then place them beneath a horizontal "time line" stretching from your birth until the present. Note on the line "turning points," events of special significance after which things were different (like graduation from school, marriage, birth of children, major decisions, etc.). Then give a name to each of the periods between the turning points.

Now begin to analyse the different periods of your life. List people who were important to you and values you were holding during each of the periods. Note where the values converge. These are likely to be your real guiding values. Try naming the "Cause" or "Purpose" your life has been pursuing. You may need to do this exercise several times, both to remember more events and to discover the significance and direction that is already there.

Continue the horizontal line 50 years into the future or at least as far as the point at which you expect to die. At the end of the line, list the accomplishments of your life, what you hope mourners at your funeral might remember. Working backwards to the present, list events that will lead from now until the end. The result is your projected lifeline. Although somewhat vague in particulars, it sets out the directions you intend to go.

The Crisis: Surviving Betrayal

It is always a surprise. No amount of lucid analysis or even cynical anticipation prepares you for the event that takes the significance out of your enterprise. It can be as minor as a toothache or a less than glowing assessment from your superior; or it can be as major as losing your job or discovering an unknown medical defect. (For a friend, it was finding his name on the office to which he had just been promoted was in a sliding holder!) The external event is inconsequential; whatever it is, its impact is devastating. Suddenly life has no more meaning. You see the triviality of your accomplishments, the thoughtlessness of your colleagues, the pettiness of your cares and the futility of it all. Most of all, you are alone.

Described in modern literature as "mid-life crisis", the psychological portrayals of this experience treat it as something to overcome. They prescribe various kinds of therapy, from exercise and diet to counselling and medication. No doubt exercise and diet and counselling and medication are good things, and most of us could benefit immeasurably from them. But for one who has been betrayed, they are quite irrelevant.

You will have to go through the classical steps of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, and accommodation. It is useful in this period to identify the value you held that has proven untrustworthy. And let yourself lament. But avoid placing blame. After all, it is no one's fault that you were living in illusions of security and significance; we all do. And life continues to confront us with reality. So lament, but do it discreetly .. privately is best. In fact no one can help you, and most comments anyone could make will only confirm your awareness of pain. Art can be a medium of release — music, painting, literature, movies, even TV. They all offer expressions by people sensitive to the "downside" of life, and participating in them can be cathartic.

You survive by knowing that this experience is no mistake, that it is part and parcel of authentic vocation — it is being in tune with the human condition, and wholly right. Furthermore, were you to select some other relationship, it too would reach a stage of crisis. Life is just not made the way we want it.

The Persistence: Keeping On Keeping On

It is difficult to continue with business as usual when your sense of meaning has gone. The Stoics are said to have excelled in it, but stoicism is not the answer. Stoicism is a defiant selfishness with heart for nothing but its own emptiness. The real aim is to invest this unworthy cause with all the passion, energy, creativity and enthusiasm you can muster — even when you know it is trifling in the cosmic scheme of things.

When you grind into your consciousness the utter and complete worthlessness of what you are about, so that never again can you be devastated by paltry results, THEN YOU ABSOLUTELY FORGET IT! You never let anyone know that you know it. It becomes a deep secret which you guard with your life. And you treat the work and the colleagues as though they were the most outstanding and significant realities in the universe. For, in a sense, they are.

Something happens that makes this possible. While you are struggling with your secret of life's meaninglessness, it suddenly becomes clear that if nothing is significant, then everything is significant. The paradox of being transforms your existence.

It works something like this: once you see your life in its ultimate context, then it is trivial along with everything else; but this very context of ultimacy pervades everything that is, and renders it meaningful. Its meaning is its relation to the ultimate, to which everything is related. An implication of this insight is that everything is also related to everything else, a fact now recognised by contemporary physics.

The exercises that help in this third phase of the journey are the exercises of transparency: attempts to "see through" the mundane experiences and episodes

of existence to their ultimate context. The exercise involves a certain humor in attributing real meaning to such events as seeing crows on a power line or smelling fruit along the roadside or walking through the neighborhood. Begin to note the little things that impact your consciousness during the day. Take one of them and assume it is a metaphor for the secret of life itself; develop the thought, on paper if you are a writer, in dialogue if you are not. The key is to perceive a relationship that is present but hidden in the particularity of the event.

For example, it can be as simple as watching birds sitting on the wires outside. There are five strands of wire, and they resemble a music staff. Birds on the wire look like notes; looking at them is like reading music, and what a tune they play! The commonplace fact of birds on a wire becomes a glimpse into mystery.

Or, take a normal conversation with a friend: suppose your task is to discover deep insight in whatever subject you are discussing. Continue to probe the topic, relating it to progressively wider contexts and see how that transforms its urgency and impact. What do you find out about the way life is?

These exercises need to go on at set times when you consciously work to develop your insight into commonplace events; but the transparency of things begins to intrude on your "normal" life too.

Every relationship and every event shimmers with the potential for transparency, and you find yourself driven to perceive it, to relish it, and to disclose it to everyone who will listen. In this third phase of the vocational journey, your "life-purpose" is your perception of significance in every detail. Though it sounds a bit mystical, it differs from Mysticism in being thoroughly caught up in mundane details of life. There is no other route to the meaning you have found than through specific, practical events.

And you being to notice that people seem to benefit from your efforts. Not that it matters, for they too are fallible, but there seems to be a level of effectiveness not previously noticed in your work, whatever your job. Perhaps it is because of your attention to minute detail.

This is what it means to have a life-purpose — to expend yourself in pursuit of the unattainable and in the process, to disclose the value that lies in life. This is the role of the hero, a role played by Moses and Gandhi and Mohammed and Martin Luther King and the rest of those to whom we look as people of authenticity.

The phases of the vocational journey, as described in the "new myth" are not linear; in fact they seem to repeat themselves at different levels throughout life. It is as though the three were dimensions of a spiral

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ENDING THE WAR BETWEEN WORK

In 1990 a Fortune magazine cover story, titled "Why Grade A Executives Get an F as Parents," observed that children of successful executives are more likely to suffer a range of emotional and health problems than children of "less successful" parents. For example, one Ann Arbor, Michigan study found that 36 percent of the children of executives undergo treatment for psychiatric or drug abuse each year, vs. 15 percent of children of non-executives in the same companies. The author went on to cite the executives' long hours and personal characteristics (perfectionism, impatience, and efficiency) as the chief culprits and counseled that high-powered managers need to learn how to boost their children's "self esteem." What was most interesting about the article, however, was what it didn't say. Nothing was mentioned about how the executives' organisations contributed to their problems as parents or what they might do to improve matters. It seems that the author, like most of the rest of us, simply accepts the fact that work inevitably conflicts with family life, and that the organisation has no part to play in improving imbalances between work and family.

In recent years, I have noticed a considerable increase in concern over the work-family issue among participants in our Leadership and Mastery programs. Today, "finding balance between my work and my family" is cited as a number-one priority by more attendees than any other single issue.

Traditional organisations undeniably foster conflict between work and family. Sometimes, this is done consciously - through the simple threat that, "If you want to get ahead here, you must be willing to make sacrifices." More often, it is done inadvertently, by simply creating a set of demands and pressures on the individual that inevitably conflict with family and personal time. These demands include travel, dinner meetings, the increasingly common breakfast meetings, weekend retreats, and just plain old long hours at the shop. The pressures arise primarily from the narrow focus on organisational goals and objectives to the exclusion of personal goals and objectives. In other words, if all that matters is the organisation's goals, there is simply "no space" for weighing the cost of those goals for an individual or the individual's family.

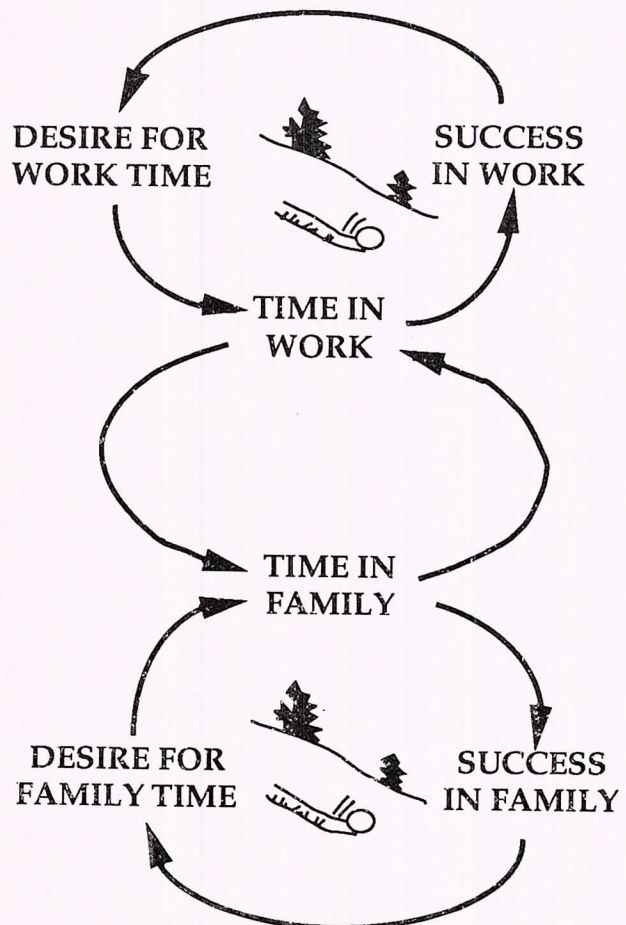
The disciplines of the learning organisation will, I believe, end the taboo that has surrounded the topic of balancing work and family, and has kept it off the corporate agenda. The learning organisation cannot support personal mastery without supporting personal mastery in all aspects of life. It cannot foster shared vision without calling forth personal visions, and personal visions are always multifaceted - they always include deeply felt desires for our

personal, professional, organisational, and family lives. Lastly, the artificial boundary between work and family is anathema to systems thinking. There is a natural connection between a person's work life and all other aspects of life. We live only one life, but for a long time our organisations have operated as if this simple fact could be ignored, as if we had two separate lives.

The Structure of Work/Family Imbalance

There is a systems archetype underlying the work-family imbalance. This archetype is called "Success to the Successful" because it consists of two reinforcing growth processes, each of which tend to fuel increasing levels of success - albeit to competing activities. This archetype underlies a wide variety of situations where individuals, groups, or organizations compete for a limited resource. The success of one means that it tends to get more of the resource, which then reduces the success of the others. The resource could be limited dollars to invest in competing divisions of a business. It could be limited praise of a teacher in a crowded classroom. Or it could be the limited time of a busy manager.

At the top of the diagram, there is the reinforcing



AND FAMILY - Peter Senge

(amplifying) growth of time and commitment in one's work: more time leads to greater success, which leads to more and more interesting opportunities and more desire for time at work, which leads to still more time at work. At the bottom of the diagram is a similar reinforcing growth of time and commitment at home: more time at home leads to more "success" (satisfying family relationships, healthy kids, family fun) at home, which leads to the desire for still more time at home. The two reinforcing processes are connected because if time at work goes up there is less time available for home, and vice versa.

Like other structures dominated by reinforcing feedback (recall the "escalation structure" underlying the arms race), the "Success to the Successful" archetype is intrinsically unstable. Once it starts to drift one way or another, it will tend to continue to drift. And there are several reasons why it tends to drift toward more and more time at work. First, there is the matter of income. If time at work falls too far, income falls and creates pressure for more time at work. (This could be drawn as a balancing process controlling time at work but is omitted from the diagram for simplicity.) Secondly, the reinforcing "time at home" process tends to be especially strong in the negative, "vicious spiral" direction. If you find yourself in a situation where less time at home is leading to poorer family relationships, there can be strong psychological pressures to avoid family problems still further. "Pushing ahead" with one's work becomes a convenient excuse for avoiding the anguish of going home to an unhappy spouse and troubled children. As you spend less time at home, "success in family" diminishes further, leading to still less desire for family time. Thirdly, for most highly successful professionals, there are more "external" pressures for time at work than for time at home: norms of twelve-to fifteen-hour days for high performers, new opportunities that require more travel, subtle peer pressure from colleagues with their own family problems.

Because of the dominant reinforcing feedback in "Success to the Successful," the imbalances are not self-correcting. Indeed, they grow worse and worse over time. This is why work-family issues are so vexing.

For several years, we have worked with this archetype in training programs. It has been fascinating to see how frequently people realise the futility of trying to manage their lives from within this structure. Any one-time improvement in, say, success in family tends to get overwhelmed by the continually escalating pressures for more and more time in work. Eventually, people realise that the structure itself must be changed - you cannot cope successfully within it if you want to achieve a balance between

work and family because it will always be driving you toward imbalance.

The Individual's Role

The first task is stepping outside the structure - asking yourself if, given your ambitions, it is really your vision to have a balance between work and family. How serious are you? This is not a trivial question. If it were simple to achieve this balance, more people would do it. Many people lament the problem, but few have made a conscious choice to achieve the balance they espouse.

Making a conscious choice will entail setting clear personal goals for time at home. For example, when will you be home at night? What about dinner meetings? What about weekends? The Fortune article described several executives who committed themselves to being home for dinner so many nights a week, gave up weekend golf, and reduced evening business meetings. These may seem like modest steps but they are exactly the types of steps required to translate a vision of balance into tangible goals. Just setting goals without a genuine vision will likely lead to backsliding when the goals prove difficult to realise.

In some organisations, managers may pay a price in their career opportunities if they take a stand for a vision of balance between work and family. Very often, the person who takes such a stand will command the respect of their peers - many of whom may wish that they too could make a similar commitment. Nonetheless, such a stand can also generate conflicts, especially between managers who are committed to balance between work and family and those who are not. I know of no simple advice to offer in such circumstances except for these principles of personal mastery and enrollment:

- * Identify what is truly important to you
- * Make a choice (commitment)
- * Be truthful with those around you regarding your choice
- * Do not try to manipulate them into agreement or superficial support

Ultimately, the consequences of individuals' choices regarding work and family will depend, to a degree, on the overall organisational climate.

The Organisation's Role

Ironically, conflicts between work and family may be one of the primary ways through which traditional organisations limit their effectiveness and ability to learn. By fostering such conflict, they distract and unempower their members - often to a far greater degree than they realise. Moreover, they fail to exploit synergy that can exist between learning organisations, learning individuals, and learning families.

"It's ironic," says Hanover's Bill O'Brien, "that we spend so much time and money trying to devise clever programs for developing leadership in our organisations and ignore a structure that already exists, and which is ideal for the job. The more I understand the real skills of leadership in a learning organisation, the more I become convinced that these are the skills of effective parenting. Leading in a learning organisation involves supporting people in clarifying and pursuing their own visions, "moral suasion," helping people discover underlying causes of problems, and empowering them to make choices. What could be a better description of effective parenting? The fact that many parents don't succeed well simply shows that we haven't created the learning environment for parenting, just as we've not created the environment for developing leaders."

O'Brien's reflections open up what I suspect will become an increasingly important topic in coming years: looking for the synergy between productive family life and productive work life. The old world of sharp boundaries between work and family is falling away. A new world of blurred boundaries is here, and it is a world that only a few organisations are facing up to.

In the old world, the man worked and the woman stayed at home to raise the children. Today, in families with children where at least one member holds a management position, only 51.5 percent have a stay-at-home spouse - in 28 percent either both spouses are at work or it is a single-parent family. And the percentage of families with no spouse at home is continuing to rise. One of the implications of this dramatic change is that family issues spill over much more into the manager's lives simply because there is no one else at home to whom the problem can be delegated. It also means that there are, by and large, more family issues.

In the old world, people's personal interests were their own concern. The corporation wanted only "an honest day's work for an honest day's pay." In the learning organisation, the boundaries between what is personal and what is organisational are intentionally blurred. Learning organisations enter into a new compact, or "covenant" as Max de Pree puts it, with their members. The essence of this compact is the organisation's commitment to support the full development of each employee, and the person's reciprocal commitment to the organisation. Intentional or inadvertent pressures that make success at work and success at home an "either/or" proposition violate this compact.

I believe these changes will lead more organisations to recognise what is long overdue - that organisations must undo the divisive pressure and demands that make balancing work and family so burdensome today. This is necessary because of

their commitment to their members. But it is also necessary to developing an organisation's capabilities.

There are many specific steps that organisations can take to begin contributing to more balance between work and family. Some steps, such as providing day care for single parents, have already been taken in many firms. But there are a broader and more challenging set of steps ahead. For example:

- * Support personal mastery as a part of the organisation's philosophy and strategy

- * Make it acceptable for people to acknowledge family issues as well as business issues and to interject these into pertinent discussions, especially discussions involving time commitments.

- * Where needed, help people obtain counseling and guidance for how to make effective use of their family time (many of the difficult problems in parenting and family relationships do not arise solely from inadequate time but from not knowing how to handle the issues effectively).

There are, undoubtedly, many other concrete steps that can be taken. But the most important step is the first step - acknowledging that one cannot build a learning organisation on a foundation of broken homes and strained personal relationships.

The conflict between work and home is not just a conflict over time, but over values. All the habits that an executive learns in an authoritarian organisation are exactly the habits, as Fortune's article showed, that make them unsuccessful parents. How can an executive build up a child's self-esteem at home when he or she is accustomed to tearing down other people's self-esteem at the office? The values and habits learned by practicing the five disciplines of a learning organisation serve to nurture the family as well as the business. It is a virtuous circle: not only is being a good parent a training ground for being a learningful manager, but being a learningful manager is also good preparation for parenting. The conflict between work and home diminishes dramatically when the organisation fosters values in alignment with people's own core, values that have equal meaning at work and at home. Only then will it be possible for managers to stop living by two codes of behavior, and start being one person.

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on which you move continually. As long as you stay aware of the journey itself and your place on it, then you assume a certain passionate nonchalance about the particulars of your job. Whatever it be, it is both unfulfilling and deeply meaningful, worth doing well and passionately, but not the source of your significance. This is the cash value of the new myth.

PERSONAL MISSION AND VALUES

Visualisation Exercise

Please find a place where you can be alone and uninterrupted. Clear your mind of everything except what you will read and what I will invite you to do. Don't worry about your schedule, your business, your family, or your friends. Just focus with me and really open your mind.

In your mind's eye, see yourself going to the funeral of a loved one. Picture yourself driving to the funeral, parking the car and getting out. As you walk inside the building you notice the flowers, the music. You see the faces of friends and family as you pass along the way. You feel the shared sorrow of losing, the joy of having known, that radiates from the hearts of the people there.

As you walk down to the front of the room and look inside the casket, you suddenly come face to face with yourself. This is your funeral, three years from today. All these people have come to honour you, to express feelings of love and appreciation for your life.

As you take a seat and wait for the services to begin, you look at the programme in your hand. There are to be four speakers. The first is from your family, immediate and extended. The second speaker is one of your friends, someone who can give a sense of what you were as a person. The third speaker is from your work or profession. And the fourth is from your church or some community organisation where you've been involved in service.

Now think deeply, what would you like each of these speakers to say about you and your life? What kind of husband, wife, father, or mother would you like their words to reflect? What kind of son or daughter? What kind of friend? What kind of working associate?

What character would you like them to have seen in you? What contributions, what achievements would you want them to remember? Look carefully at the people around you. What difference would you like to have made in their lives?

If you participated seriously in this visualisation experience, you touched for a moment some of your deep, fundamental values. The most fundamental aspect of Habit 2 is "begin with the end in mind" - to begin today with the image, picture or paradigm of the end of your life as your frame of reference or the criterion on which everything else is examined.

This means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. If you look clearly at the funeral experience, you will find your definition of success. All things are created twice. First there is the mental creation and then a second or physical creation. The best example of this is the blueprint of a house which is prepared before the physical job of putting together brick and mortar are ever begun.

Expand Perspective

1) Ask yourself what is really important. Why am I doing what I am doing? The way to do this is to

create situations where you are forced to look at your whole life, as in the funeral visualisation. Write your own eulogy.

2) With your spouse, imagine your 25th and 50th wedding anniversary. Try to capture the essence of the family relationship you want to have created through all your day to day investment over the period of years.

3) Visualise your retirement from your current job. What contributions or achievements will you want to have made in your field? What plans after retirement? What second career?

4) Expand your mind to be rich in detail. Involve as many emotions and feelings as possible in a visualisation or in a situation you observe. Involve as many of the senses as you can.

5) What happens when you broaden your perspective and the central theme of their activities is the underlying principle of love.

One of the best ways to begin with the end in mind is through the creation of a **PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT**. It is a personal constitution, the basis for making major, life-directing decisions, the basis for making daily decisions in the midst of the circumstances and emotions that affect daily life.

To begin the process of forming a Personal Mission Statement, we must go to the centre of our Circle of Influence, the people and circumstances over which we feel we have the capacity to influence. Here we are focusing on our vision and our values. Whatever is at the centre of our life will be the source of our:

- * **personal strength**, our security, identity, and self-esteem;

- * **guidance** or our source of direction, internal frame of reference, standards, principles and the implicit criteria that govern decision making;

- * **wisdom** or sense of balance, discernment, perspective on life, our understanding of how the various values and principles relate to each other;

- * **power** or the capacity to act, the strength and potency to accomplish something, the vital energy to make choices and decisions. It also includes the capacity to overcome deeply ingrained habits like the intergenerational habits we may wish to stop and cultivate higher or more effective ones.

The harmony of the above four is important in coming to terms with the paradigms of our lives. Each of us has a centre or core paradigm, although we sometimes don't recognize it.

Some centres are:

- * **Spouse Centredness**: Emotional dependence on the moods and feelings of spouse.

- * **Family Centredness**: Those who get their sense of security or personal worth from the family tradition and culture or the family's reputation. Thus they become vulnerable to any changes in that tradition or

culture and to any influences that would affect that reputation.

*Money Centredness: Money-centered people often put aside family and other priorities, assuming everyone will understand that economic demands come first.

*Work Centredness: workaholics

*Possession Centredness: If my life is tied up in my possessions then I am in a constant state of threat and jeopardy that I may lose them, or when I am in the presence of someone with "more", then I am less.

*Pleasure Centredness: It will ensure that a person's capacities lay dormant or become narcissistic.

*Friend/Enemy Centredness: The social mirror becomes the key determiner either as the friend whose life you want to copy in the same way or as the enemy who you wish to hurt or put in a bad light. Either way you lose your freedom of action because your life is governed by others and your reactions to them.

*Religious Centredness: If the focus on image or appearance of "religiosity" is not living the religious life.

*Self-Centredness: selfishness becomes stagnant

What is the center of your life? What about living as a **Principle Centred Person**? A Principle Centred Person tries to stand apart from the emotion of the situation and from other factors that would act on them, and evaluate the options. Looking at the balanced whole, a Principle Centred Person determines what is the best solution.

Writing and Using Your Mission Statement

As we go deeply into ourselves we begin to discern our mission statement. We begin to understand what is important to us. We detect our mission more than we make it up. It takes time to create and write it out but slowly over time it forms into your statement, your constitution. Writing and reviewing your mission statement changes you because it forces you to think through your priorities deeply, carefully, and to align your behavior with your beliefs.

To help you do this kind of thinking requires the use of the right brain. Here is a simple technique of visualisation that allows you to see yourself affirming situations which normally tend to drain your energy emotionally.

You can spend a few minutes each day and totally relax your mind and body. In this time you can think about situations in which, for example, your children may misbehave, or your co-worker says something which makes you angry. Visualise the people and situations in rich detail. See yourself handling the situation with all the love, power and self-control you can generate. If you do this day after day, your behavior will change. Eventually, you will be living out of the script you write for yourself

instead of reacting to someone else's script.

A good affirmation has five basic ingredients: *it's personal, it's positive, it's present tense, it's visual, and it's emotional*. So you might write out your visualisation in a form something like this:

"It is deeply satisfying (emotional) when I (personal) respond (present tense) with wisdom, love, firmness, and self-control (positive) whenever my children misbehave."

Identifying Roles and Goals

One of the major problems that arises when people work to become more effective in life is that they don't think broadly enough. They lose their sense of proportion, the balance, the natural ecology necessary to effective living. You may find that your mission statement will be much more balanced, much easier to work with, if you break it down into the specific role areas of your life and the goals you want to accomplish in each area.

Look at your professional role. You might be a salesperson, or a manager, or a product developer. What are you about in that area? What are the values that should guide you? Think of your personal roles - husband, wife, father, mother, neighbor, friend. What are you about in those roles? What is important to you? What about community roles?

After you have identified your roles, you can think about your long-term goals in each of them. Use your imagination, creativity, conscience and inspiration. If the roles are in harmony with your mission statement, they will be drastically different than goals normally set. They will be in harmony with your principles. They are your goals, growing out of your deepest values, your unique talent, your sense of mission. An effective goal focuses primarily on results rather than activity. It identifies where you want to be and, in the process, helps you determine where you are now. It gives meaning and purpose to all you do.

Based on the knowledge you have on personal mission statements, you can also work on family and organisational mission statements.

Habit 2 Applications:

1. Take time to record the impressions you had in the funeral visualisation at the beginning of this article.
2. Set up a time to completely separate yourself from daily activities and begin work on your personal mission statement.
3. Take time to write down your roles as you see them and specific goals for each one.
4. Go through the different centres and locate which ones you identify with. Do they form a pattern for your behavior that you recognise? Are you comfortable with the implications of your analysis?

MOTIVATION - An Interview with V. S. Mahesh

JG: In your book, *Thresholds of Motivation*, what is the basic premise and what is your insight into it?

VSM: I started chapter one of the book with the question, "Is nobility and perfection a natural quality in man, and cruelty and pettiness an aberration or *vice versa*?" I'm seeking an answer or stating an answer to this question. In the traditional method of learning in Hindu philosophy, one normally makes an axiomatic statement and comes around back to finding the truth in that axiomatic statement. You don't necessarily start from first principles and come to the deliberative; so it is really something along those lines.

I have no doubts at all in my mind, in the twenty years that I've worked, that perfection is a natural state in a human being and you need to help a person reach that state. It's like peeling the layers of an onion to get to its core. Then you say, what is the core?

The basic core premise is the fact that nobility and perfection is a natural quality in man. Throughout, I have used the Aristotelian simile of the acorn and the oak tree. To become a great oak tree is natural for an acorn. What a good gardener has to do is to see that he provides the correct nutrients, the correct conditions, water, sunlight, and so on, to allow that potential to actualise itself. Similarly, a human being does have the potential to reveal his state of perfection. Managers, like good gardeners, need to help them reach that state of perfection, as a manager, a parent or a teacher, or anybody in a position of authority.

JG: You speak of moving to "*sahaja*". This is an Indian term. Would you please explain what it is?

VSM: Well, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs which I have used as a starting point in building the model, he talks of the five levels of needs. He talks of physiological, safety, belongingness, recognition and self-actualisation. But, if one reads Maslow in depth, he does talk about, though not distinguish very clearly, within the recognition level, recognition by others as against recognition by one's own standards. I have, in redrawing the model, kept recognition by others with the lower three order needs as one group, as being conditioned and controlled in other's domain; and recognition by one's own standards as a goal one moves toward in whatever job one does, whether one is a carpenter, a millwright mechanic, a personnel manager or production manager. True quality develops in a person in his working through intrinsic motivation to reach standards in which he believes he is capable of achieving. This is distinctly different from doing things because you want others

to pat you on the back, or you want to satisfy the belongingness need or other biological needs. So, if you look at that model, that is a distinctly different step.

Beyond that, the person who is seeking recognition by his own standards, where there is still dualism in the sense that the doer and the done are two separate points that a person is trying to reach something, reaches a standard in what he is doing. But in Maslowian terms, if a person does that long enough, he is capable of reaching peak experience, or self-actualising himself. Well, there is some amount of lack of completeness in that situation. In the Indian context, I've tried to use an ancient tenth century model of Rajashekara's which is a model that describes creative development of the human being. Rajashekara talks of three levels of development - *Aupadeshika*, *aharya* and *sahaja*. *Aupadeshika* corresponds with Maslow's recognition by others; *aharya* with recognition by one's own standards, and *sahaja* very loosely and broadly with self-actualisation. To articulate it slightly better, *Aupadeshika* is the level at which a *shishya* receives recognition from a guru. So the state of *Aupadeshika* is where the *shishya*, the pupil, is solely governed by seeking recognition - a pat on the back or saying that "Yes, you are on the right path" by the guru. There is nothing wrong with making that the sole goal at that stage. But the master has to recognise the point when the student has to be left to himself to practice, or *abhyasa* in Indian terminology. *Abhyasa* is really practice where you try to reach a state of perfection in what you are trying to do by your own standards. This is where you move from being a technician to a master craftsman. A master craftsman bends the rules, takes risks and plays around with what he is doing and a different quality begins to come. That is really the state of *aharya*.

Even then the master craftsman is conscious of the difference between him and what he is doing. When a master craftsman has done this long enough, a few of them reach a state which Rajashekara calls *sahaja* where the doer and the done coalesce, the singer and the song merge and the dancer and the dance become one. *Sahaja* really means confluence. Colloquially, one even talks about *sahaja* as a natural state. Strictly speaking, Maslow's definition of actualisation is that. It is a state where one is idiosyncratically doing or is being what he or she is meant to be. So it corresponds with *sahaja*. But though Maslow continues to talk about peak experience, when talking about self-actualisation, it's as if it is a temporary phenomenon. It is something you reach and then fall behind. But I think *sahaja* has a slightly more permanent connotation to it, where the master can, when he wants to, get back to that state.

JG: In enabling people to develop, how does this model apply?

VSM: I have tried to introduce and adapt the concept that Spinoza talks about in ethics where he differentiates between appetite needs and desires. Where in Maslowian hierarchy one distinguishes appetite and desire at the lower levels, let's say at the physiological level, 2000 calories a day is a legitimate appetite, but 4000 calories of vodka, caviar and so on is greed or desire. So, a person needs to have a threshold limit set which differentiates appetites and desires. I've talked of a threshold spring where a person has a kind of a grey area of liberty, so that there is no sharp line differentiating between appetite and desires. Where you may be controlled at 2000 calories, but occasionally you are given a nice presentation of a buffet dessert, which is not going to send you into a trauma, but you know you need to be able to accept another 200 calories which is going to taste nice. You may have to work it out the next day or compensate by a lack of breakfast the next day, or whatever.

Similarly, at different levels right up to recognition by others, one needs to set threshold limits, develop threshold springs which help you to not move towards too much of desires. We have bad words to describe people who have gone a bit too far into the desire domain, because by definition people who grow crooked can't grow straight. If your desire for safety is too much, for example a miser who is someone one looks down upon because to improve his safety needs he sacrifices the higher need of belongingness. When you try avoiding paying the bill too much every time it comes around, you'll soon lose your friends. So a miser typically, in order to increase his desires at safety levels, sacrifices a belongingness need level and he is growing crooked. Similarly, at each of these levels you can have bad words to describe crooked behavior. So, in terms of development of people, consciousness of the fact that you need to differentiate between appetites and desires is important.

This is what all the great religions have said, but it doesn't really help because knowing and doing are two different things. I have suggested in the book that rather than advising people to set low threshold limits, one can be smarter and make his direction towards reaching recognition by his own standards in his area of work as the focus or, a vision of perfection in his job as a focus. Tempt him to direct his energies towards it and automatically his threshold limits will come down. Thus, that becomes a secondary offshoot of helping a person move in the right direction towards *sahaja*.

JG: It is more a sense of vision you are after?

VSM: That's right. A personal vision if you can, which a small percentage can, but a large number of us require a leader or a manager, guru or a parent to define a group vision of which we can be a part. So however small a role you play, the fact that the team or the group you belong to is working towards a goal, together with other team members, you sacrifice your desires and lower your threshold limits.

JG: In your long history of being in HRD, how have you used your model to tailor human development in an organisation?

VSM: I find that almost anything that you read about, whether it is counselling, Johari window, any model that one talks about can really be described simplistically in terms of the model I'm talking about. Counselling can be described as a method by which you help a person consciously accept or identify the fact that he has a problem which could do with high desires or could do with not satisfying his appetite needs itself and having to do something about it. In fact, in Chapter 7 of the book, I've done a correlation between Freudian psychology and my model which, applied in day-to-day terms in organisations, really means how you can help a person deal with a problem which he faces at work. It could be a boss who refuses to satisfy a belongingness need, or a recognition need or safety need in the organisation which isn't doing it. How does he cope with that, such that his basic thrust towards seeking perfection in his job is not thwarted? Basically, all human interactions with a human being in an organisation can be reduced to this one factor. How do you help him maintain his natural thrust toward reaching perfection in his work, either individually or as a member of a group.

JG: Do you feel India has a unique advantage or role to play in bringing human development through a corporation?

VSM: It is tempting to believe that it is so, but during my travels and stay abroad, one thing I've learned is that there are far more things common among people across the globe than there are differences. In fact, when I was making a presentation of my model a couple of years ago here in India to young, 21-year old people who had just joined the Taj Group, an English lady who was in the audience was quite struck by the fact that such 21-year old people should respond to words like *sahaja*, self-actualisation, consciousness and so on and wondered

what would be the impact of a similar presentation on a similar age-group audience in England. As chance would have it, a year later I was in England and the same lady organised for me to speak to about a hundred students of the same age on the same topic. Both of us were struck by the fact that there was no difference whatsoever in the way in which people responded. This has been my experience everywhere. You talk about low thresholds and good behavior and one is reminded of the Protestant ethic. I remember a young Jewish girl who was listening to me at the City University in London. At the end of the talk she came to me and said she must talk with me. She kept waiting until everybody went away. Then she told me that seven years ago she had been in *kibbutz* in Israel. They used to be advised that they should live a life of moderation. This was drilled into them, day in and day out, the favorite theme-song of her father and grandfather. She never did understand what it meant until she heard me talk about threshold springs and threshold strings. So, I've found that it is not something unique which one talks about from the point of view of Hindu philosophy but I think it applies equally everywhere. To answer your question, I don't think it is something unique to which India alone can give. I do believe that anybody who connects what you are doing in organisations with the basic scriptures, traditions, or whatever, would get to the same kind of final results.

JG: The pity is that there are so many cultures that don't take opportunities to make this available to a lot of young people to delve into the scriptures, certainly not what you might have seen a half century ago.

VSM: Well, maybe so, but from my limited experience abroad where I lived in midwestern U.S., I think the kind of life that they lead, the kind of orthodoxy one sees, is not too dissimilar to what you see in India. Whether or not they attend church in large numbers is a different question. I don't think there are too many educated Indians who go to temples as regularly as their parents are going. So one could also say that it is declining in India. But I think when you scratch the surface, you get to the same responsive level in all.

JG: Are there any other questions that you would like for us to raise relative to the book?

VSM: There is a question that I have been asking myself. What would it take for the contents of what I have said in the book to take root? I've been talking about this in organisations for ten years or more in

different forums. There is hardly anyone who says he disagrees with the contents. At the cerebral level it is very easy for people to understand, but to have it actually implemented in corporations, for corporations to actually need to be nurseries for human growth, that is the difficult part. I have tried to marshal the argument that in the current context of service being very important in all organisations, service having to be bundled with manufactured product information, there is no way to reach quality unless you have highly motivated and thrilled people who are approaching *sahaja*. There is no other way to reach quality. So, at least for selfish reasons, corporations need to allow a human development to take place. But, again, cerebrally one will understand; logic they will understand and accept, but to actually put it to practice takes a lot of effort. It takes a great deal more of rigor, commitment and purpose in this. I'm hopeful, but it's going to take a lot of doing. What you are taking about is how to create visionary zeal in organisations, the kind of visionary zeal that religious orders have had, that great campaigns have had.

(continued from page 23)

being fulfilled. The worker is taken as given and normal. Everything around him has to change and adapt, while he changes not a bit. It does not seem to be appreciated that the fulfillment of such higher level needs, granting that they are the highest which formal scholarship can accept at the moment, is itself a function of viewing work in an altogether different light. If this education and training could become a part of our upbringing from childhood, then much of these short-term experiments might either become unnecessary, or else could be placed on a firmer footing for more enduring results. Indian thought attacks the problem right at the root by looking at needs straight in their face and by devising ways and means to control and discipline them so that the problems of organizational and work-design do not assume the gargantuan proportions they do now. It is like the Japanese method of work-in-process inventory control which eliminates altogether the machine resetting timelag in car factories. The psychological equivalent of this tactic is contained in a paradoxical reply given by Yudhishthira, the eldest of the five Pandavas, when accosted by the guardian-Yaksha of the pond, where all his younger brothers lay dead under the Yaksha's spell:

'Renouncing what does one become wealthy? Yudhishthira replied: 'Desire, when renounced, makes one wealthy'.

THE WORK ETHIC - S. K. Chakraborty

Man is a congenital worker. Nay, the entire Universe, from the tiniest ant to the biggest whale, from the lowliest creeper to the tallest tree is ceaselessly at work. Every member in an organization starting from the peon and the mechanic to the clerk and the manager, is a worker too. The owner and the entrepreneur are also likely to feel offended if not described as workers. Despite whatever praise Bertrand Russell may have sung about idleness, even the idlest of men is a veritable worker. From time to time we have questioned participants in management development programmes about why they work. Our jottings on the blackboard have revealed a rather common pattern of responses:

- * to earn a living;
- * to discharge family and social duties;
- * to actualize my talents and capabilities;
- * to prevent ennui or boredom;
- * to leave behind some enduring creation;
- * to earn a reputation and win recognition.

For our purposes, this summary of responses seems to be quite adequate. but it is necessary to draw a distinction between the work of an employee, the work of a self-employed, or independent professional, or an owner-entrepreneur (i.e., as an individual, not the State). Our principal concern here is with the work of an employee-worker for, the managerial functions in organizations flow typically from such individuals. We shall, however, try to develop the theory and method from a wider perspective. It would be a sort of general theory for any kind of work situation for anybody, but the employee-worker and his work shall remain the underlying keynote.

Since the intention here is to move towards a general theory, questions like 'what is work', and even more importantly 'how to work' will also need to be answered. A mere positivist approach is not likely to suffice; the adoption of a normative stance will be inevitable. We are aware that a lot of thinking in the West has been going on for sometime with respect to 'quality of working life' which represents, to our mind, an essentially normative thrust. While we shall be referring to some of them in passing, our chief aim here is to cull from traditional Indian psycho-philosophical literature some of the wise answers to questions about the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of work. Their relevance to the contemporary environment shall of course be examined closely. Ideas about 'what' and 'why' shall broadly span the theory, and those about 'how', the method of work.

Why Work?

It should be apparent by now that the reasons offered for work, mentioned above, are relatively trite and superficial. Although some other ideas like

lokasamgraha, or "world maintenance", which constitute the core of work, might be explored in greater depth.

If the superordinate character of work is sacrifice, then we should also discover a superordinate meaning of human life in order to identify an adequate answer to the question 'why do we work'? Why should work begin to be understood as sacrifice? Answer to this all-important query may be attempted as a series of propositions:

- (1) The principal difference between human beings and other living entities is that the former alone can ask for and pursue the quest to discover what they really are: the immutable, all-perfect, luminous consciousness or *atman*, which is a fragment of the Universal, Supreme Brahman or Energy. The latest insights of Physics - happily for us, corroborate this view of man which was firmly grasped by our own ancestors through *sadhana* (a word for which no real English equivalent seems to be available). Men like Vivekananda, Tagore, Tilak, Gandhi, and Ramana have also proved this fundamental truth in contemporary times - if only we are ready to listen to them. And they were workers and achievers par excellence!
- (2) Yet we are unable to live and act in the consciousness that we are the *atman*. This is because like a burning flame, concealed by a soot-smearred glass dome our mind and intellect are sullied by nescience, or *avidya*, or wrong understanding, thus apparently sealing off the radiant *atman*. *Avidya* finds daily expression in acts of pettiness, deceit, anger, greed, pride, etc.
- (3) The superordinate reason why we human beings should work, therefore, is to gradually cleanse our sullied mind and intellect so that the perennial, luminous true Self shines forth from our lower nature in its full glory. This process of refinement is what is called *chitta-shuddhi* in the *Geeta*.
- (4) It is only with the superordinate orientation of sacrifice that work can be converted to be a means of *chitta-shuddhi*.

In this sense, this set of four propositions conveys the message that we should search for a kind of genuine and workable trans-humanistic approach to work for humanizing human society. This trans-humanism of course includes humanism, but it rises above the tangle of humanistic concerns, no matter how genuine they are, to provide the worker with a vision and understanding of the role of work from an altogether richer and superordinate standpoint.

To return to the statement of the reasons for work cited in above, only a little thought will show us that impulsions such as these, no matter how innocent and laudable they might appear on the surface, are the same ones which in practice lead to acrimony, back-biting, anger, sycophancy, politicking, arrogance, jealousy, power-mongering, selfish-

ness, egotism and the like in every organization. These are the factors which make for a much more pernicious dehumanization of work than any machine. It is such phenomena which constitute the impurities of the mind. If work progressively goes on adding to their stockpile for the vast majority of us, then obviously we have not worked for the right reason or aim. And we must confess that the reality of work today is increasingly becoming a process of reinforcement of these contaminations. The one great purpose of all work for all of us should, therefore, be to combat and subdue these impurities, instead of attempting to rationalize or intellectualize them under the delusive cloak of organizational dynamics, ambition and what not.

In the *Geeta*, slokas 5.11 and 6.12 specifically mention the role of work in effecting the purification of the mind and intellect. Thus, although Singh rightly discerns the keynote of *atma-shuddhi* in the *Geeta*'s teaching about why we should work, we fail to appreciate his observation that "self-purification is a highly subjective goal and may mean different, or even contradictory things, to different people". For, if purification through work means, in practice, overcoming pride, envy, selfishness, greed and similar tendencies of our mind, we do not see how these things can mean different or contradictory aspects to different people. For, within each one of us there is always an unfailing inner voice which does invariably sound an initial warning against impure attitudes. But we successfully (?) silence this inner voice, and begin to lament on the lack of organizational health. Consultants are then ushered in to wave their magic wands and work miracles.

If the Indian theory of work is thus seen as founded on 'sacrifice' with a view to achieving *chitta-shuddhi*, we might then anticipate a few doubts from our readers, particularly those who are 'pragmatic'. One such doubt is: 'If I begin to follow this approach then I may soon consign myself to oblivion in the present-day environment'. This very anxiety is a telling commentary on the reality that all is definitely not well in the world of work in human society. Indian thinkers have always stressed that such efforts cannot and should not be contingent upon whether others reciprocate the same attitude or not. Such a contingency approach will tend to act as an obstacle to the initiation of change because each one is waiting and guessing what the other(s) might or might not do. To go it alone is the right frame of mind to apply. Besides, the apprehension of being left last in the race is also speculative. For, we again have the assurance from our thinkers who have put to practice such ideas, that, if the cause, the intention, the motivation is right and pure, the effect, the result must also be wholesome. In the cosmic scheme, this

law is just immutable.

Here is the capsule of a full-length story narrated to us by a noted Indian industrialist. In the mid-seventies he was trying to diversify into a high-technology product for the steel industry. So far, only one firm held the monopoly. As soon as this move for a new plant became public, the existing monopolist tried everything from getting a court injunction, bribing of politicians and bureaucrats, to even cornering licences for two more plants for the item, to throttle the new venture before birth. Yet, as luck had it, by the time our narrator's plant became commercial, the monopolist's original plant faced an eight-month strike, and the new plants experienced prolonged technical bottlenecks. So the new entrant had a field day. In its very first two years it appeared in the *Economic Times* ranking of top profitability companies, and is today the market leader.

But the real obstacle lies in our own mechanical mental assumptions and constructions that such-and-such cause should produce such-and-such result at such-and-such time. While adopting the 'sacrifice-*chitta shuddhi*' approach to work, we have to cultivate an inner certitude that its effects are bound to be wholesome in a total sense. And a sincere beginning does indeed produce evidence soon enough for the practitioner to prove its truth. For, his mind by then gets tuned to observe and interpret facts and events in an altogether new and integral light. He begins to perceive meaningful cause-and-effect linkages in all the apparently random happenings to and around him.

The other question about this theory may stem from intellectuals of a particular orientation who could detect in the sacrifice theory of work another lethal weapon for the high and the rich to aid them in their oppression and exploitation of the lowly and the poor. The first response to such a charge is that the 'sacrifice-*chitta shuddhi*' approach is meant for universal practice, without any exception whatsoever. Therefore, the theory is making its target the rich and the high as well. Secondly, the 'sacrifice-*chitta shuddhi*' approach is in fact postulated as being applicable in an ascending order of intensity to the economic level and social status of individuals. Thus, in the *Manusmriti* we find that the king has to protect and not oppress his subjects, has to be humble, has to shun the eighteen vices, has to sacrifice, has to restore or make good stolen property, has not to begin or hush up lawsuits, has to seek immediate purification because he is for the protection of his subject, and so on.

Thus, the highest man of the land has the most wide-ranging injunctions in work to comply with to justify his being enthroned. Does all this have any relevance to our modern epoch?

It appears, therefore, that it might be more useful on our part to confess our lack of courage and stamina to begin practising the 'sacrifice-*chitta shuddhi*' theory, instead of inventing pseudo-pragmatic or neo-intellectual arguments against its validity or relevance.

How To Work?

After our brief attempt to crystallize the Indian theory of work, centering around the 'what' and 'why' of it, we may now turn to the 'how' of it. And it is here that we become concerned with the *method* (technology is not the right word here) of work.

Picking up the trail left by Marx's concept of labour's alienation from his output, numerous social and management scientists in the West have been concerned with the quality of working life. The human relations school of the thirties, the socio-technical school of the fifties, the job-enrichment/enlargement school of the sixties, and kindred offshoots from these schools have all been deeply concerned with the organizing of the social and technical components of the task or work in order to harness a more total man at work. The central aim of all these allied efforts has been the progressive humanization of work.

Thus Herrick and Maccoby have observed:

A central goal of our society, therefore, should be the development of institutions of work that stimulate the creative abilities of workers: activeness, cooperativeness, interest in learning and self-development - all of which will encourage positive attitudes of citizenship and spark the hope necessary to build a more just and human society.

Similarly, Walton has listed eight major conceptual categories in terms of human need and aspirations for the improvement of working life:

... adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, opportunity for continued growth and security, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and the total life space, and the social relevance of work life.

The goal set by Herrick and Maccoby is echoed in detail by Walton for his eight criteria are amongst the ones which could build the kind of humanized institutions the former are aiming at. Again, Dyer and Hoffenberg speak thus:

... it is now assumed that the quality of working life can be defined, in terms of the organization's contributions to the economic and socio-psychological needs of those individuals actively engaged in furthering its goals.

Thus, here too we notice the unmistakable emphasis on the needs of workers, an increasingly complex and growing list, to encompass which

enterprises and organizations have to change and adapt.

The entire corpus of such literature from the West implicitly makes a fundamental assumption: workers (in the universal, generic sense) know *how* to work, and it is only the organizations and their systems which stultify their work know-how. While sociologically, this may be a useful and lofty starting point, psychologically it seems to be rather immature. From an even more pragmatic viewpoint, one could ask how long is it going to take the affluent West to develop even a reasonable number of such total need-serving organizations which might occupy a noticeable niche for themselves in the museum of organizations? Maybe a least another fifty years, or it may be never. For, the grand notes of the Hawthorne and Glacier Metals experiments, the long-wall coal mining and the Volvo action researches already seem to be faint echoes of short-lived euphoria - although they are by no means altogether lost. The tremendous dedication and thoroughness behind all these great experiments are anybody's envy - and shall always remain so.

If the aforesaid then is the past - and the future - of the efforts for raising the quality of working life in the affluent West, which might well be able to afford such elaborate and expensive experiments over several years, the crucial question before a poor, developing economy like India is: can it launch such experiments while trying desperately to catch up with the techno-economic backlog? If at all it can, when? And, how long can she wait for the results? If the West itself is unlikely to achieve any significant breakthrough even in four or five decades from now, notwithstanding Toffler's third-wave scenario, may we visualize a doubling of this timespan for India - again notwithstanding the accelerated pace of technology-spread? And, even then will or should this lag be acceptable to us? Need we therefore seek any alternative?

The Indian approach to this fundamental problem has been radically different, representing an opposite polarity. It has not attached too much importance to the task, the system, the organization, and the environment. The basic assumption here has been not to take for granted the fact that humans know how to work. And as a corollary, another assumption has been that the quality of working life is not usually an increasing function of the satisfaction of various hierarchies of needs. The searchlight is thus turned inwards within each individual, away from the eternalities of his work-environment as exemplified by Walton's list. We think, that in the long-run, these two assumptions of Indian thought are far more practical. Frankly, we can scarcely visualize economic or other organizations bending over backwards, and successfully so, to satisfy

millions of combinations of shifting and multiple needs (very often conflicting) which hundreds and thousands of their employees would be harbouring. To attack the problem in this objective, frontal style is likely to end up in the futile toil of Sisyphus. That the Indian method of solving the problem is both practically and conceptually more sound is probably proved, unless we are too obsessed with her immediate present predicament or that of the past few centuries, by the sheer power of survival of our civilization through several cycles of ups and down in her history, spanning about six millennia. In addition, many of these epoches have blazed glorious social, economic and political trails. But all of them rested, amongst others, on the firm foundations of the 'sacrifice-*Chitta Shuddhi*' theory of work, and the details of how to practise such a theory. The comparatively younger and poorly experienced civilizations of the West, especially the USA (in the sense of not yet becoming sobered and tempered by rises and falls in their fortunes), possess no comparable accumulation of insight to controvert this proposition.

So, what is this way, this science of work, where the individual himself, and not his eternalities, is the main focus? The quintessence of this 'how' is contained in sloka 2.47 of the *Geeta*:

Thou hast a right to action, but only to action never to its fruit; let not the fruits of thy works be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inactivity.

The modern mind is prone to immediately dismiss this sloka as a hopelessly impractical guideline for the man at work. To him, work is just impossible without the motive of results-for himself. And that is where the catch lies. It is these motives for the self which are amongst the biggest causes of dehumanization at the workplace. As Aurobindo comments on this sloka:

Therefore it is not the works practised with desire by the Vedavadins, it is not the claim for the satisfaction of the restless and energetic mind by a constant activity, the claim made by the practical or the kinetic man, which is here enjoined.

It is important therefore to clarify the import of this sloka with as much precision as possible. Here is an attempt to do so.

(1) Reduction of concern about results or fruits is suggested as a psychological principle of conservation of energy. Once the decision to act has been taken; after due deliberation about the ends and means, from that moment our entire energies should be focused upon execution. The result, if not favourable or according to expectation, will then not tend to make us feel completely beaten and hopeless, and neither will its fulfillment puff us up with euphoria and pride. Both these states of mind are an obstacle to *chitta-shuddhi*, the aim of all work. They are the

stressful *dwandwas* (the inevitable dualities stemming from our tireless strivings). Meticulous performance of action will be perceived slowly as its own reward once we begin to work with this principle in our consciousness. Even other rewards will not desert the performer - they will knock at his door, rather than he chasing them.

(2) The principle of non-attachment to fruits or results is directed toward the individual's narrow self-interest. Nowhere in the *Geeta* or in other Indian literature is there a suggestion that one should be apathetic to results for others, for the organization, for the nation, for humanity at large. (Thus, the *Avadhuta Geeta* clearly states that the true worker-yogi is *sarvabhuta hite ratah*, i.e., devoted to the good of all beings because he is free from his personal interests.) But concern for such successive superordinate results can be genuine only, if only, concern regarding results for one's own self ceases to be the principal motive. The kind of humanism which thinkers like Fromm talk about can only spring from such a method of work. If we cannot learn to respect and apply this principle, the quality of work-life is fated to remain a slogan in the void.

(3) The reason why attachment to results or fruits is warned against is expressed authoritatively in slokas 2-62 and 63 in the *Geeta*:

The mind dwelling on sense objects becomes attached to them; attachment breeds; desire generates anger; anger leads to confusion; confusion gives rise to loss of memory; loss of memory breeds destruction of intelligence; and destruction of intelligence leads to man's annihilation (figuratively). This graphic outline about the psychological process within each one of us is a timeless masterpiece. But if desire (i.e., *vasana*) has an unshakeably strong hold on us, then the psychology of the *Geeta* implies giving a higher turn to it-towards sacrifice, *lokasamgraha*. Desire to do well for others, for the organization, for the world is a wholesome antidote against desire for the self. It is a restoration of the former by gradual effort which the *Geeta* implies through sloka 2.47. Work-ethic will then be a resulting by-product.

(4) Another dimension of this instruction to educate oneself to gradually wean away from attachment to fruits or results is the persistent de-emphasis in Indian thought on the spiralling of needless needs as the mainspring of human existence. The last six needs in Walton's list mentioned earlier are needs nonetheless, although couched in more sophisticated terms. Yet, they are all directed towards the individual self. There is no recognition, far less an articulation, that it is in the inner disposition and attitude of the individual towards work itself that there lies any assurance for these aims

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