

FOCUSING ON GOAL

Why is being focused so important in today's world? What results happen when you are focused? Does being focused make you less stressed? Happier? If it's so important, why don't people focus more? Being focused on one thing for a certain period allows you to do a better quality of work, more work gets done quicker, and your creative ideas flow easier. Being focused on one task at a time is less stressful on your mind. And being less stressed allows you to be happier. Being focused means that you have clear goals and objectives and your work is dedicated to achieving those goals and objectives. When you are deciding what you are going to do in any given moment; you base your decision on how you can make the most progress towards your goals with the time and resources available. Being focused in the present moment means that you are solely focused on the one activity that you are trying to complete. Anything else is unimportant so you shut out all distractions and give your full and undivided attention to the task at hand.

It's difficult for people to remain focused on one task for a variety of reasons. For one, we live in a world where we are constantly bombarded with TV, radio, cell phones, Internet social media, as well as a much larger population that lives closer together than ever before. Also, the modern economy is almost entirely dependent on consumerism. Governments, companies and credit institutions need us to keep spending so that they can keep raising money through taxes, sales and lending. This means that there are more and more disruptive ways (text messages, emails, phone calls, mail, billboards, neon signs etc.) to push advertising and marketing messages in front of us. It is difficult to even go for a quiet stroll or sit quietly in a park without having something advertised to us. With so many people trying to get our attention, it is more and more important that we learn to shut it all out and get focused. It's difficult to get completely away from all these distractions. One way is to go to a room where you can shut your door and turn off your phone and email notifications but even then, you must avoid telling anybody that you are there. When you focus on a single task, avoiding distractions, your brain becomes focused on that task alone. This lets you complete that task much more quickly than if you are trying to complete two or more tasks at once. By giving all your attention to the task without distraction, you can get it done much more quickly and with fewer mistakes. Your work will be of a higher quality as well. Another benefit of being focused is that your creativity will kick in too. You'll come up with new ideas associated with the task at hand. So, remove all the distractions and focus on your goal.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Do not match-fix your life, learn to enjoy it

Why are we so resistant to change? Why does change make so many people panic, or resort to rigid belief systems, whether religious or ideological? What makes us so afraid of uncertainty?

Interestingly, when people are young, they do not look for security; they look for life. By the time they hit the mid-twenties, however, their wild dreams subside, their zest and exuberance diminish, and they decide to turn 'practical'. By their mid-thirties, they have decided, "As long as I steer clear of trouble, it's okay." What they forget is that settling into a comfort zone isn't practicality; it is cowardice. If you resist change, you resist life.

A young person told me recently that her parents advised her to deal with uncertainty by always 'staying positive'. Now, this New Age mantra has its own problems. 'Staying positive' means you must embody confidence without clarity. This is a recipe for disaster! If you cannot see clearly, it is best to be cautious, not confident.

However, it is certainly possible to deal with uncertainty by enhancing your powers of perception. There are several yogic practices that can empower you to enhance your perceptual capabilities and grow in clarity. Once you enhance clarity, life will inevitably yield positive results. These are the human beings we need in the world today: individuals of clarity, not certainty.

It happened. A hardened criminal was sentenced to death. Just before he was sent to the electric chair, a priest came to him. "My son, what is your last wish?" he asked solicitously. The unrepentant convict replied, "Father, when they pull the plunger, please hold my hand." Unhappiness, depression, fear, rigidity -- these are inefficient

ways of killing yourself. If you want a peaceful, unchanging life, there is only one place to go: your grave.

Look at it another way. When you watch an ostensible 'suspense thriller' film, you dismiss it as boring if its ending is predictable. You enjoy it only when its ending surprises you. In short, when your predictions go wrong, you are excited. Why not enjoy your life just as you would enjoy a suspense movie? The problem is simply that you have lost your ability to enjoy uncertainty.

With yog, however, much of that suspense can be in your hands. Yog empowers you to turn into your own scriptwriter, writing your own destiny rather than handing it over to astrologers, pundits, and doomsayers. When you are the scriptwriter, all your focus can be on execution. If you take charge of your body, fifteen to twenty percent of your life will happen the way you want. If you take charge of your thoughts and emotions, fifty to sixty percent of your life will happen the way you want. If you take charge of your life energies, one hundred percent of your life will happen the way you want. This is the incredible potential of yog.

At the same time, life is a mystery to be celebrated, not a riddle to be solved. If you know how to deal with the here and now, you know how to deal with your entire life. This is an open secret: you can plan for tomorrow, but you can only handle today. It is time to live today totally and play the game wholeheartedly. But do not allow intensity to turn into tension, or relaxation into laxity. Make your life as profound and intense as possible but without trying to bribe the umpire or fix the result. Why 'match-fix' your life when you've learnt how to enjoy the game?

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

Protecting, promoting & developing infants

■ DR PARVEEN KUMAR

Shocking and painful, but truth it is that in 2019, 2.4 million children died in the first month of their life. This data came out of a finding of World Health Organization (WHO). Every day there are approximately 7,000 deaths each day, which constitute 47 per cent of all child deaths (under the age of 5 years), which estimates to one-third of deaths on the day of birth and approx three-quarter deaths within the first week of life. Although the total number of newborn deaths globally showed a decline in figures from 5 million in 1990 to 2.4 million in 2019, the report also stated that newborns face the greatest risk of deaths in their first 28 days. The rate of infant mortality in India is much higher than in other developed countries. According to the findings of The United Nations 'Child Mortality report In India', 721,000 infant deaths were reported in 2018, which means an average of 1,975 deaths per day.

The toddlers are little and vulnerable, like the beginning of all things, a ray of hope, and a dream of possibilities. After all, they are the future and it is rightly opined that 'today's children are tomorrow's citizens.' Hence it is very important to protect the infants for the sake of a peaceful tomorrow and to make the world a better place. Children are not anyone's property; they are neither the property of their parents nor the society but are for sure our collective responsibility. There are a number of factors for such a dismal performance. The increasing burden of the population with supplementary lack in the health service facility, lack of proper awareness, and ignorance are the leading factors mainly contributing to an increment of the mortality rate. Breastfeeding which is a boon to the newborns as mother's milk is the main source of protein and vitamins and proves as nectar for her child is not considered unfashionable in today's world and thus, to the lack of proper nutrition, the child succumbs to infections easily and even loses the battle of life, when it doesn't get medical facilities on time or proper care. Most of the infants and children do not

get minimum feeding. Globally, the year corresponding to the period between 2015 to 2020 saw only 44 per cent of infants aged between 0 to 6 months being exclusively breastfed. There are several other reasons behind the high infant fatality in the country. It may be due to defects that are present by birth, preterm birth and low birth weight, injuries (e.g., suffocation), sudden infant death syndrome, complications during maternal pregnancy and can also be due to infections of various types.

With all the challenges, the world has still made an appreciative substantial progress in child survival since 1990. But still, the world and India in particular has a long way to go to improve the health facility. UNICEF has also joined hands with many organizations including government, civil society, etc in building communities and families to make a better world for the newborns.

Due to the lack of care and safety, the new born suffer lots of difficulties which also become threats to their life. India is among the countries having the highest number of infants mortality rate (IMR). The Indian government has taken many initiatives that include building up of excellent pre and post natal services to take care of the new born, setting up of huge infrastructure from PHCs to district level institutes, provision of trained men power down to the village level in the form of ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and much more so that they can grow and live there life without any difficulties. The new born are cute, they are infant and innocent totally unaware of the outside environment, the weather extremes and the life consuming pollution of the planet. They are a completely pure soul. But in their birth time at least for some days they are in danger and for those most important days we have to take care of them in a very serious way we have to protect them with proper safety and care. For the new born to lead a healthy life by creating awareness regarding various measures and to reduce the incidence of infant mortality among the masses, the Infant Protection Day is celebrated every year on

November 7. Being careful toward them becomes our priority as the 'future of the society lies on the nobility of infants today'

Continuing its tirade against the infant mortality in the country and to promote awareness about the protection of infants and children through well being of both mother and children, every year the day is celebrated with a particular theme. The theme of the Infants Protection Day for the year 2021 is all about, 'Protecting, promoting, and developing infants'

Alarmingly the first few hours and days are the most critical ones, for both to be carefully handled for their healthy future. It has been recommended by both WHO and UNICEF that early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, introduction of nutritionally-adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months together with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond are a prerequisite for the well being of newly born children. Optimal breastfeeding is so critical that it could save the lives of over 8, 20, 000 children under the age of 5 years, each year. Under nutrition is estimated to be associated with 2.7 million child deaths annually or 45 per cent of all child deaths. Breastfeeding is most important to improve & encourage the wellbeing of the child, improve their survival rates, and promote their growth and development. The starting two years are very crucial for the child as a lack of proper nutrition during this period can result in serious problems. According to sources, the first two years of a child's life are particularly very important as the fulfillment of all the proteins and minerals can boost the child's health or the lack of it can lead the child to suffer from under nutrition and other diseases. Today, on this Infants Protection Day, let us commit ourselves to provide a safer environment to the new souls and to work towards reduction of Infant mortality rate until it comes down to zero.

(The author is a Scientist at KVK-Leh).

Is a zero-waste life possible?

■ VIJAY GARG

It's no secret that the world today looks very different from what it used to be 30 years ago. Of course, the amount of waste that the world was generating back then was a fraction of what it is now as well. Some of the more common results for the hashtag are photos of kitchens with pantry supplies in beautiful uniform glass containers, and photos of people at bulk supply stores where you can take your own containers to buy your kitchen staples, thus avoiding the packaging waste. But while buying things free of plastic packaging, or in recyclable or reusable packaging is great, packaging waste forms only one part of the waste we generate. We need to consider managing the end-life of a product - whether it gets composted or recycled or dumped into a landfill. This is called downstream waste, which we will talk about a little later. But again, that is not all. We quite often tend to forget that there is waste produced in the manufacturing process of the things we consume. This is referred to as upstream waste. Maybe it isn't quite as 'grammable' as the typical zero-waste aesthetics of brown paper, glass, wood and unbleached cotton - but it would be a mistake to lose sight of it.

Upstream waste is real: The shirt that you're wearing did not just come in the box or plastic wrapper that it came in. Assuming it's made of natural fibres, someone cultivated crops, tended to and harvested them. It was then turned into yarn, dyed and then woven into fabric. After the fabric was ready, it was tailored into a shirt and shipped to a warehouse before it reached you. At every step of the process, there was waste generated - agricultural waste, effluent waste, tailoring waste - and not to mention, the fuel used and the footprint of transporting to reach you. (The textile industry is one of the most water-intensive ones.) This is upstream waste. When we buy a shirt and think of how to take care of the disposal of the packaging and the shirt itself once we're done with it, we are only thinking of downstream waste. All our attempts at recycling or responsibly disposing of the downstream waste still won't offset or make the upstream waste disappear.

This is applicable to everything we consume - personal care products, shoes, gadgets, household goods, and the food we eat and many more things as well..! It is an irrefutable fact that there is upstream and downstream waste created for everything we use and consume, and that they both need to be managed as responsibly as we can. Instead of managing the waste, the easiest solution is to try and not create it in the first place. Especially with upstream waste not being wholly in our control, it is the simplest thing we can do. And how do we do that? By simply reducing the number of things we buy. It's fairly obvious if you think about it. By buying what we only absolutely need, and by looking for secondhand options wherever possible, we are reducing the demand for new products. Of course, this isn't always an option with all the things we might need, but it's worth exploring when it is. Can you imagine how much the load on our planet will lessen if, on a larger scale, we all move towards buying lesser and buying used when we can? The good news is that there are many options available now to buy, sell, or even swap used goods, especially clothing. Buying lesser and buying second-hand are things that we as consumers can do to reduce waste. Besides these, bigger changes at a systemic level will enable quicker, and large-scale impact. This is where the concept of a circular economy comes in. Everything in nature is cyclical. The night follows the day, and the day follows the night and the cycle repeats. Plants are food for animals, and animal excreta in turn become food for plants. The seasons change like clockwork every few months and the cycle goes on. What if our systems were designed that way? Instead of a linear pattern, what if our systems were designed to run in a cycle. Currently most systems are designed to be linear - we take resources, make products and then discard them. A fresh batch of raw material is then used to make every new batch of products in linear systems. In a circular system, the idea is to discard nothing, or reuse as much as possible. So the components from an old machine would be either refurbished or recycled

and go into a new machine, instead of mining for fresh raw material and starting from scratch. This is the core of the concept of circular economy. Wouldn't it be great if all companies cared for the environment as much as they cared for profits? What if they pooled in resources and shared their know-how to find the most optimal and sustainable solutions? Wouldn't it be great if circular systems become the norm and not the exception? What can we do to minimise the waste that will continue to mount? We can get into the habit of doing some simple things that can go a long way in making an impact on our planet. The emphasis is on getting into the habit, because ultimately, living sustainably has to be something that we can sustain. Buying less, and buying used wherever possible are a couple of broad ideas. Here are twelve tips to keep in mind: Before you buy something, pause and ask yourself if you really need it - or if you're buying it because it's on sale. And also, take a moment to think about where this comes from and what the end of its life will look like. These questions will give you pause and help reduce impulse buys. Besides your phone, wallet and keys, add a water bottle, bag, handkerchief and a snack to your list of things to take when you step out. This will drastically cut down on the single-use waste you generate. Start segregating your waste - besides dry and wet waste, try and segregate paper, hard plastics, soft plastics and cartons. This will give you a sense of how much waste you generate. Wash all your takeaway containers before throwing them away. If possible, find a waste management service near you who can take them and ensure that they get recycled. Avoid single-use products, regardless of whether they are made of plastic, paper or even 'biodegradable' materials. Opt for things that you can buy once and use over and over again. Avoid impulse-buying clothes from 'fast fashion' brands - those that have cheap, trendy clothing and launch new styles every other week. If the price is too good to be true, it is likely that someone else is paying a price for it - most likely the people making it, and our planet.

in the government's tax collection but higher mop-up in other taxes is expected to bridge this gap. No doubt it can well be taken as an outcome within 24 hours of the by-elections results in 11 states, the results of which were not entirely to the liking of the ruling party. A 'Charcha' in common streets has picked up that present dispensation realizes the common man's issues only, when it is given a dent in elections. Everybody understands that it is because of the facts that the government is facing a lot of criticism and has crucial elections in the future in the states of Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh probably in the month of March 2022. This political move is to

Roots of migrant massacre in Kashmir

■ ER PRABHAT KISHORE

Migrant workers are those, who work away from their home, especially in other states or even abroad and earn for their livelihoods. They include not only labourers engaged in various sectors, but also the bureaucrats & many other officials. Although these officials do not suffer as much pain as the labourers, who have to work without counting hours. The term 'Migrant worker' is not new in the global history and also in the multi-lingual lexicons. Old people recall, the Kabuliwalas from Kabul, residents of areas located thousands of mile away from India. They used to travel through the village streets to sell their dry-fruits and were much popular among youngsters. These migrant people garnered love & affection according to Indian culture & tradition of 'Atithi Devo Bhavah'.

Interestingly enough since ages, this perennial process of migration has been continuing at various levels across India. People often migrate from one place to another in search of livelihood; and, this is a positive sign for fostering integrity among diversity of cultures across our lovely India. The progress & prosperity of some States is a testimony to the diversified contributions of such migrant people. When the migrant workers returned to their native destinations during the pandemic COVID-19, this cycle of progress got stalled in many states and the organizers eventually had to request their workers to return to the places of work. Similarly, the people of Bihar, irrespective of their castes, religions, faiths, cultures, languages, food habits among various other factors, have spread to different corners of the country and have intermingled with local people in the respective regions. Of course conversely, Bihar is also welcoming the migrant people from various other states. During the winter season, Kashmiri people often travel to sell their shawls & sweaters. The Lhasa markets of Tibetan refugees are famous places for woolen clothing in many towns. Once, Chinese dentists had a monopoly in the field of dental treatment across the Indian towns. Not only migrant workers or vendors, but Bihar has established several powerful politicians through its constituencies, notably George Fernandez, Madhu Limaye, M J Akbar, Syed Shahabuddin, I K Gujral, Sharad Yadav & others. Numerous bureaucrats & officials have also served in various states for their entire service tenure, but the masses of those respective States have never treat them as migrants.

On the other hand, Bihari workers are often the soft targets whenever and wherever there is disturbance for local causes in any corner of the country. In this endless series, now the migrant labourers & street vendors, who are the poorest of the poor, were massacred in Kashmir without any fault. Old parents, life-partner wife and even young children were eagerly waiting for their kin to return home with new cloths for the Diwali & Chhath Puja; but the separatist forces dashed their dreams in the blink of an eye; and the hapless family found dead bodies of their kin wrapped in shrouds.

After abrogation of article 370, it was ardently hoped that the Central Government will crush the separatist forces. But the recent events indicate that the roots of these foreign elements are deeper in the region. The intelligence system has completely failed. Although some foreign terrorists have been gunned down; their whereabouts are yet to be traced out and razed.

More responsible for the latest killings of the Hindus & the Sikhs are the pro-Pakistan unemployed politicians, who are frequently praising Pakistan & China while provoking the terrorists. Such gun-men are just the branches & leaves of the 'Anti-Indian' trees; the roots are those politicians, who ruled this beautiful State for their own petty reasons and never ever did anything for the State & the common masses. They were, of course, involved in brain-washing the public. The deceased migrant workers were not foreigners; but were breathing at their roots. All of them belonged to the 'Maharishi Kashyapgotra', whose name Kashmir owns. They were engaged in the developmental works of roads, bridges, tunnels, telephone towers and other infrastructures of the Himalayan state; and in lieu of their variegated services at the ground level, they were supposed to be paid wages for the livelihood of their families. Any kind of development in the region is nothing short of a thorn for the masters of stone-pelters, communalists and anti-peace forces.

The most ironic aspect is the continued appeasement politics of the political parties. For instance, there have been a series of political tourism of leaders during the aftermath of the brutal incident at Lakhimpur Khiri. But no one has a word of condolences to the family of the unfortunate victims of the barbaric merchants of death of these innocent migrants. Is this not simply because they donot belong to a particular community and have not been gunned down by Hindu miscreants? Such selective attitude of the parties is supplying oxygen to the communal agenda of the terrorists. Those who believe and talk about the so-called 'Two-nation Theory' have already parted ways with their share. Now not only the Biharis, but also each & every son of the soil has Constitutional as well as the very vital Spiritual Right to live, learn, work and earn in any part of the Bharat Mata and that too with respect & dignity. Though, the migrants in Kashmir have shifted for a moment, yet they will definitely return to work at the same spot very soon.

If the Central Government wants the development of the natives across Jammu & Kashmir, then along with the gunning down of the terrorists & local criminals, the white-dressed provoking persons have to be penalized for their anti-national, anti-social and anti-people activities. In the name of democracy, pro-Pakistan leaders cannot be left free to spread their poisonous messages, resulting in the massacre of the innocent sons of the soil.

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reduce the opposition's leverage against BJP over the issue of fuel taxes and price rise. The Centre had raised the excise duty by Rs 13 on petrol and Rs 16 on diesel between March and May last year when oil prices collapsed due to the pandemic and these hikes and almost daily dose of price hike had lead to Centre's fuel tax collection by 88 per cent in 2020-21 to more than Rs 3 lakh crore in spite of lower sales amid the pandemic. We have to understand the underlying move and have to be more cautious about political gimmick to win the elections.

Mahadeep Singh Jamwal, Udhampur.