

IMPROVING ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Entrepreneurship is a crucial driver of economic growth, job creation, and innovation. To improve entrepreneurial opportunities, governments, institutions, and individuals must work together to create an ecosystem that fosters innovation, provides access to resources, and removes barriers to success. Here are key strategies to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities.

Entrepreneurial education should be integrated into school and university curricula. Training programs focused on business management, financial literacy, marketing, and digital transformation can equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the necessary skills. Additionally, mentorship programs connecting young entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders can provide valuable guidance. The rise of digital platforms has revolutionized entrepreneurship by providing cost-effective ways to launch and manage businesses. Expanding internet access, promoting e-commerce, and investing in digital literacy can empower entrepreneurs to reach global markets. Governments should support tech-driven entrepreneurship through initiatives like incubators, accelerators, and research grants. Innovation is at the heart of successful entrepreneurship. Strengthening partnerships between universities, research institutions, and industries can foster new ideas and technological advancements. Incentivizing research and development (R&D) through tax breaks and grants can lead to breakthrough innovations that create new market opportunities. A supportive network can significantly impact entrepreneurial success. Networking events, business expos, and industry conferences create opportunities for entrepreneurs to connect, collaborate, and gain insights from peers and experts. Governments and private sector organizations should facilitate such networking platforms. Diversity in entrepreneurship leads to more inclusive economic growth. Special initiatives aimed at supporting women, minorities, and underrepresented groups in business can ensure equal opportunities for all. This can include dedicated funding programs, mentorship initiatives, and policy support to reduce systemic barriers. Expanding local and international market access is crucial for entrepreneurial success. Governments can facilitate trade agreements, reduce import/export barriers, and support small businesses in scaling globally. Encouraging collaborations between startups and large corporations can also open new market avenues. By fostering a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem, nations can drive economic prosperity, encourage innovation, and create sustainable employment opportunities. When entrepreneurs thrive, economies grow, and societies progress.

The Weight We Carry: A Silent Battle We All Fight

ANUSHREE BHATTACHARYA

One of the heaviest weights that we carry is the expectation to always be okay. Whenever someone asks, "How are you?" Our default response is, "I'm fine." But "Are we actually fine?" Why every time we have to feel the need to pretend that everything is okay even when it's not?

Work pressure, stress, hypertension, anxiety, depression and so many things that a human body has to go through almost daily but can't explain to the others.

Have you also felt so heavy sometimes like you're carrying an invisible weight on you? It's the collection of everything that affected you so hard and you couldn't even share it with anyone. It's a fast-paced world that demands a list of things from us, this weight isn't just metaphorical; it manifests physically, mentally, and emotionally, affecting people of all genders, ages, and backgrounds.

The burden of Stress

It's not only about the feelings, stress is a chemical reaction that happens inside our body. When we are under some constant pressure our body releases cortisol (a hormone that regulates metabolism, inflammation, blood pressure, and other functions), in small doses to help it cope up with the immediate emergencies. But when stress becomes chronic (long-lasting), the body's stress response system can become dysregulated; this causes destruction.

Cortisol Dysregulation:

Prolonged exposure to stress can cause a variety of problems with cortisol regulation in the body, such as:

**High Cortisol Levels:** The body releases high levels of cortisol even after the stress is not present.

**Inadequate Regulation:** "Cortisol dysfunction", a condition occurs when the body's ability to control cortisol levels is compromised.

**Low Cortisol Levels:** In rare cases, paradoxical situations are created where the person's cortisol levels are actually lower than usual, even though the person is experiencing high stress.

It weakens the immune system, causes digestive issues, and leads to conditions like hypertension (high blood pressure), hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism.

Hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid) increases the metabolism of the body that leads to anxiety, weight loss, and fast heartbeat. Whereas hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid) slows down the metabolism which causes fatigue, weight gain, and depression.

Most of the people suffer from hypertension, thyroid imbalances, and many issues and blame their symptoms on laziness or mood swings but in reality, it's their body crying out for help. It's not only the individual's fault. In this case, society is also at fault since it leads us to assume that stress, anxiety, panic attacks, depression and so on, are not any health issues, rather the excuses of avoiding work. These issues don't require any medical help, because in their era nobody was aware or recognised these as health issues so we are forced to think of them as nothing more than laziness. Even after witnessing numbers of young children commit suicides, parents still fail to take these issues into consideration and take care of their children. They don't allow themselves to change over time; the result is their child unable to openly communicate with them since they never created that atmosphere with them. Later on, they accused their child for never sharing such things with them.

An Overloaded Mind

Although physical health problems like hypertension, thyroid disorders can easily be diagnosed with a test.

But what about mental health?

Those struggles are almost invisible but they can lead to some serious issues. Anxiety,

depression, and panic attacks aren't just "bad moods" they can be harmful. Anxiety can make basic decisions feel like life-or-death situations, while depression can turn even the simplest tasks to feel like climbing mountains.

With Societal Discrimination

We cannot expect women and men to constantly behave in a way that satisfies the society because their mental struggles as well as capacities differ with each other.

If we talk about men, the expectations of society are too high which often makes it difficult for them to acknowledge the internal conflicts inside their head. Phrases like "Be strong," "Don't cry," "Man up," "You're a man, don't show your emotions much", pushes a man into an emotional isolation far away from the outside world.

On the other hand, the same society mocks women for showing their emotional struggles as being "too sensitive" or "because of hormones" and so on.

The truth is, mental health doesn't discriminate between genders, so we should also respect it as well and encourage each other rather than passing judgement.

Social Media: A Double-Edged Sword

Today social media becomes a necessary part of our life and also plays a role in the weight we carry. On one hand, it provides an escape from the real world, along with that it's a place to connect, share, and express ourselves. But on the other hand, it is full of unrealistic comparisons, insecurities, body shaming, and the constant pressure to perform well to create your own digital identity.

We scroll through some influencer's vlogs and suddenly realise that people are living their "best lives," achieving success, looking perfect, traveling the world, being joyful, and here we are just struggling in our life. Social media has made it easier than ever to feel like we are falling behind, not good

enough, not productive enough.

Platforms like Twitter (now X) and LinkedIn, which are supposed to be places for discussion with different ideologies and professional growth, but turn into spaces for judging and trolling others. If you're not presenting yourself 24/7 on the internet, are you even trying enough? People are ready to troll you as "lazy," "outdated". The pressure to be constantly present online, working, and succeeding is getting suffocating. Instead of real conversations, people started showing off, judging others and making excuses to get roasted.

The other side of social media; it becomes a platform where mental health conversations are normalized. Influencers and activists openly discuss the symptoms and cure of issues like anxiety, depression in detail and also provide support for the struggling communities. Social media can both weigh us down and help us to lift the weight.

The Weight May Never Disappear, But We Can Carry It Differently

The world never pauses for anyone, and is itself exhausting differently for everyone. Life is full of challenges and struggles. Stress, anxiety, and societal pressures won't vanish overnight. But we can learn to acknowledge our struggles, prioritize our well-being, and support each other so that we can carry the weight in a different way that doesn't break us.

So the next time someone asks, "How are you?" take a deep breath and tell your true feelings. And if you're struggling, always remember that, you are not weak, you are not alone, and you do not have to carry the weight all by yourself, seek for help and talk to your loved ones. Let's normalize not being normal.

(The writer is a master's degree mass communication student at Central University of Jammu)

Beyond the Smile: Exploring the Science of Happiness

DR. RITU SHARMA

As you look for the meaning of happiness in Cambridge Dictionary, it shows "the feeling of being happy" and the meaning of it is explained by a statement, it was only later in life that she found happiness and peace of mind.

This statement led me to think of it in much intense way that we always correlate our happiness with something; like if I will crack the exam, I will be happy; if I get the suitable job, I will be happy and so on. This pattern of happiness makes it more situational and dependent. So, I can rather say what we were taught about happiness isn't true.

Most of us are led to believe that happiness is a final destination- one that can be reached if we make the right choices, learn from our mistakes and keep pushing forward. We are taught that once we finally find it, we will be forever satisfied in our lives and so we live feeling overwhelmed and inadequate, chasing that dream, never stopping to question if it is, in fact flawed.

Yes, happiness is FLAWED because it is not a destination. It is a state of mind, and you don't need to be in it every moment of every day. Life is complex and uncertain. Ups and downs are normal. The day you land that promotion

you have been longing for might also be the day you suffer your first heartbreak. How do you experience happiness if you don't know sadness and pain?

Personally, it took me years to understand that ups and downs are part of life, and it is said, while you have to go through hell, you have to GO THROUGH it, because then only you will understand what actually happiness is. It's high time, we need to overcome from the fantasies of the Bollywood movies and realize that sadness, pain and other emotions are the spices of life and together they will make up a perfect recipe called 'Life'. I have made some mental notes about possible roads to happiness. I think and I believe it will help you to find your real state of happiness. Here are some of the points:

**1. Practice Gratitude:** Gratitude is the best attitude, they say. Gratitude is the way to express thankfulness to every little thing in life. Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative and is associated with several mental and physical health benefits.

You can practice gratitude at any time of the day; be it morning or in evening. You can show gratitude for being alive, for having a wonderful day, for a sound sleep and for all the good things you

have. By practicing gratitude, you start to observe the little things of life and ultimately it will add to your happiness.

**2. Focus on the things that are in your control:** See, we can have two perspectives regarding all the things that are happening with us. Some things are in our control, and we can work on them and set it right. Some things are not in our control, so instead of lamenting on the things that are not in our control, we must focus on the things that are in our control, work on them, accept them and make things productive.

**3. Go for solutions:** We must cultivate our mind to always go for the solutions of every problem we face in life. People keep lamenting on the problems and this lamentation keeps on going and going. It is not fruitful. Search for the solutions and see what works for you.

**4. Me time:** People have time for everything in life and not for themselves. Some people don't know what actually is the "ME" time or how to spend time alone. It is a schedule of time you can allot to yourself only for the things you love to do. It can be an hour in the morning or evening or anytime of the day. This time and space should exclusively be yours. You can use this time for doing some yoga, stretches, book reading, having a cup of tea, listening to your

favorite music, spa time or anything you like to do. I personally believe by giving yourself your ME time, you fill yourself with all the love and peace and you make yourself full and you are ready to spread love and positivity to others or in a nutshell, I can say only when your cup is full, then you will be able to pour in the empty cups of others.

**5. Go out in the nature:** Going out in the nature acts as a therapy. It is also called as Ecotherapy, or green therapy and it helps to get connected with the evolutionary roots and revive their instinct to engage with and cherish the natural world. What science is showing is that we can reap the healing powers of Mother Nature and gain immense health benefits. Spending time in nature is a low cost and highly effective way to improve various aspects of our psychological wellness. So, next time you feel anxious or stressed, go out in nature for a walk and you will experience a sudden shift in your mental state.

**6. Talk:** One thing we should learn from our younger self or from the kids around us is to be vocal about everything. Kids don't hesitate to speak their mind and, in a way, they went out everything. So, whatever problem you have, talk about it with your family, friends and relatives whom you trust. Piling

things in mind leads to cluttered mind. The more you clear the clutter, the more space you have for better things.

**7. Do the things that make you happy:** Do whatever that makes you feel alive. It can be anything that you used to do during your childhood, or you can also cultivate some good habits like painting, gardening, DIY projects, learning a new language etc. This will make you feel accomplished, release many feel-good hormones in the body that ultimately gives you a purpose in life.

**8. Exercise:** We all know "A sound mind resides in a sound body". Like brushing our teeth is a regular regime of our life, exercise should hold the same spot also. Daily exercise of 40-45 minutes has many health benefits. It improves mood and energy, increase self-esteem and confidence, reduces stress, anxiety and mental fatigue, increase focus and motivation, and reduces loneliness by providing opportunities to meet new people, enhance brain health and support cellular growth, improve cognitive development in children and adolescents.

**9. Live in the present:** We must not carry the baggage of the past because it is over and we should not worry about the future also because we don't know what

life unfolds for us. Live in the present, enjoy and work on the things that come your way. Cherish the past, learn from it and make yourself ready to face all the opportunities of life.

**10. Meditation:** Meditation has been around for thousands of years. It is a type of mind-body complementary medicine. Meditation can help you relax deeply and calm your mind. It helps you learn to stay-centered and keep inner peace. The emotional and physical benefits of meditation can include Giving you a new way to look things that cause stress; Building skills to manage your stress; Focusing on the present; Reduce negative feelings; Helping you to be more creative; Helping you to be more patient; and it helps in lowering of BP and helps you to sleep better.

These are some of the things that you not only should read but imply practically in life. So, if you ever find yourself getting lost in your search of happiness, consider reflecting on this famous quote.

Take a resolution this International day of happiness (20th march) to explore yourself and your sources of being on that ultimate state. It's my wish that this article will be of some help to all of you.

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Knee Osteoarthritis and Knee Replacement Surgery

DR VIKAS PADHA

As the life expectancy of human beings has increased in modern times, the population of the elderly is increasing all over the world including in our country. And with the increase in the aged population, certain problems related to the human body are becoming more common. Problem related to Knee joints is one such issue that is drawing everyone's attention and has become talk of town everywhere. Let's decode this enigma today.

Anatomy

Knee joint is one of the most important joints of lower limb and plays an important role in our walking. 'Joint' is the junction where ends of two or more bones meet together and along with other structures like ligaments and meniscus, covered by synovial membrane and nourished by synovial fluid, they form a mobile unit that ensures the mobility of body because they allow the flexibility. Knee joint consists of ends of bones called femur (thigh bone) and tibia (leg bone) along with Patella (knee cap). Nature has developed a protective layer at the ends of bones in the joint that come in contact with each other that is known as articular cartilage.

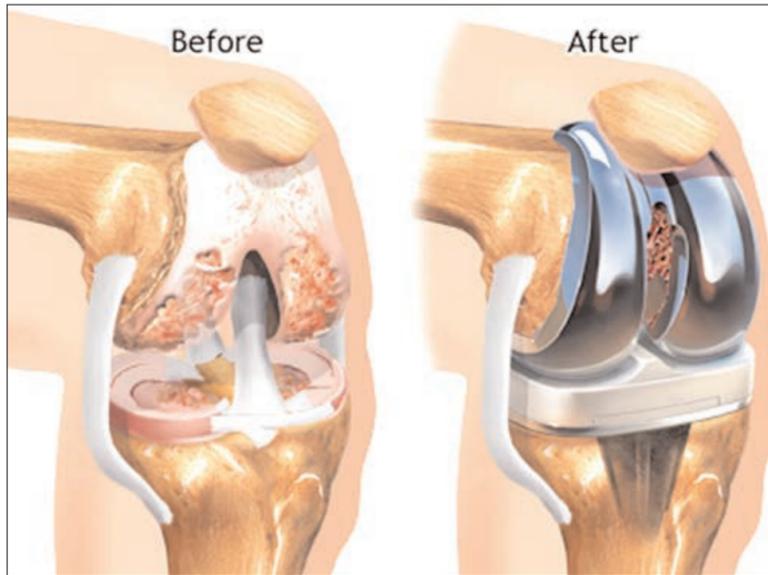
What is Osteoarthritis?

Our joints function well till this articular cartilage is intact but problem starts when this articular cartilage starts degenerating because of various reasons including aging. And this degeneration of articular cartilage marks the beginning of what is known as Osteoarthritis (OA)

What predisposes to Knee Osteoarthritis ?

Men and women are equally likely to develop OA but more joints are affected in women than in men. Certain occupations which cause repetitive stress like workers engaged in knee-bending activities have association with OA Knees. Fractures involving joint surfaces of bones can result in OA. Obesity causes increased joint loading and predisposes to OA of Knees. And there is family history too as it has been found that women whose mothers had generalized OA are more likely to develop the same condition. Osteoarthritis of Knees is often bilateral.

Patients usually present after middle age (over 50 years old). Many are overweight and may have longstanding bow-leg deformity.



Symptoms of Knee Osteoarthritis

Knee pain is the usual presenting symptom that becomes worse after the use of stairs. Stiffness is common especially after periods of inactivity but with time it becomes constant and progressive. Swelling is also common and sometimes giving way or locking is present.

Deformity may also be present but in advanced stages of OA. Bending of knee joint is terminally decreased. Loss of function is the most distressing symptom. A limp, difficulty in climbing stairs, restriction of walking distance, or progressive inability to perform everyday tasks or enjoy recreation may eventually drive the patient to seek medical help.

Natural History of Knee OA

The natural history of Knee Osteoarthritis is one of alternating 'bad spells'(with lot of symptoms mentioned earlier) and 'good spells' (with no symptoms at all). Patients may experience long periods

of lesser discomfort and only moderate loss of function, followed by exacerbations of pain and stiffness (usually after unaccustomed activity).

How to make diagnosis ?

OA Knee is diagnosed with history and examination along with X rays of Both Knees that must be obtained with the patient standing and bearing weight. It's very easy to make the diagnosis of OA Knees without any high end investigations.

Treatment of Knee OA

The treatment of OA Knee depends upon whether this is diagnosed in Early stage before any structural damage to the knee joint or in late stage after the irreversible structural damage has happened in the Knee joint.

Treatment of Early Osteoarthritis of Knees

- In Early OA, the principles of treatment are:
  - ▶ Maintain movement and muscle strength.
  - ▶ Protect the Knees from 'overload'.
  - ▶ Relieve pain.

▶ Modify daily activities.

The mainstay of treatment in the early stages is physical therapy which should be directed at maintaining joint mobility and improving muscle strength. The Physiotherapy can include aerobic exercises but care should be taken to avoid activities/exercises that increase impact loading. Heat therapy and local application of analgesics may reduce pain as well but their effect is short lived and needs repetition.

Protecting the knees from excessive load may slow down the rate of cartilage loss. It is also effective in relieving pain. Weight reduction for obese patients, wearing shock absorbing shoes, avoiding activities like climbing stairs and using a walking stick can also be helpful.

Pain relief is very important but all patients don't need drug therapy and those who do may not need it all the time. If other measures don't relieve pain, simple analgesic like paracetamol can be useful and if this fails to control pain, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines can be added or opioids too can be supplemented in case of very severe pain. Certain supplements known as Nutraceuticals have also been used with the aim to regenerate the cartilage but their efficacy is not proven yet.

Treatment of End Stage Osteoarthritis of Knees and Total Knee Replacement Surgery

In late stage of OA Knees, Total knee Replacement (TKR) is an excellent surgery for end-stage arthritis of the knee joint (final stage of osteoarthritis). In this late stage of Osteoarthritis, the knee joint gets damaged irreversibly. This causes severe disability resulting from pain, deformity and limited function. Total knee replacement relieves pain, corrects deformity and improves walking ability. This excellent surgery has changed the lives of millions worldwide including Indians. With more than 90% reported survival rates at 15 years, total knee replacement is one of the most successful surgeries being done worldwide in today's world.

What is Total Knee Replacement Surgery?

This surgery is also called the knee transplant surgery. But this terminology creates a lot of confusion as layman thinks that total knee replacement is also a very complex surgery like organ transplant surgeries. For example: heart trans-

plant, kidney transplant or lung transplant. But in reality, total knee replacement is a very different surgery when compared to organ transplant surgeries. In organ transplant surgeries, the organ of the donor is transplanted to the recipient which is a very complex surgery but in total knee replacement surgery, no such transplant of knee is done from the donor to the recipient. Here, only the damaged surfaces of ends of bones articulating with each other in the knee joint, (namely femur or thigh bone, tibia or leg bone and patella) are removed and are covered with artificial components made of materials like stainless steel, titanium and ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene. In a nutshell, only resurfacing of knee joint is done instead of transplantation and this is much simpler procedure and safer also when compared to kidney transplant or heart transplant. Here, the knee joint of the patient is retained and only the damaged portion of articulating surfaces of bones is covered by artificial components as already described. In reality, this is Knee RESURFACING surgery as only articulating surfaces of Knee Joint are replaced.

This confusion between knee replacement surgery and organ transplant Surgery has resulted in knee replacement hesitancy amongst the vast population who don't agree to undergo knee replacement surgery readily just because of this confusion. Hence, this reality needs to be propagated to the masses so that the patients who need this surgery agree to undergo this excellent surgery without any further delay.

After undergoing Total Replacement Surgery, patient gets following advantages :

1. Permanent relief of pain.
2. Deformity is fully corrected.
3. Range of motion of Knee Joint is fully regained.
4. Well done Total Knee Replacement surgery transforms the life of patient from a painful sedentary life to a comfortable painfree dynamic life.

To conclude with, Total Knee Replacement surgery is needed ONLY and ONLY in cases of End Stage (Advanced) Osteoarthritis of Knees and has an excellent outcome if done in proper indication.

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