

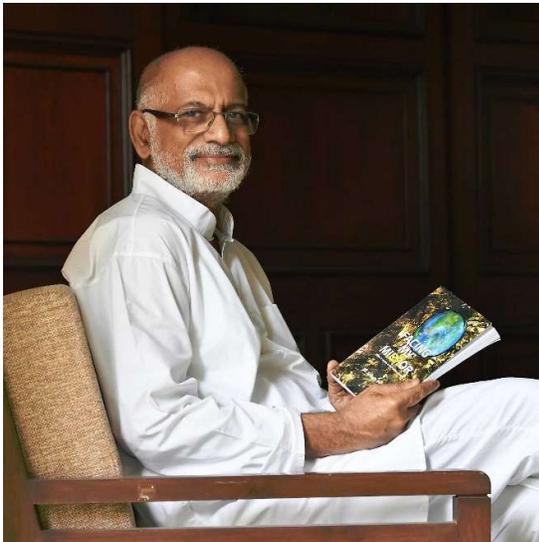
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Journeys to the centre of the soul

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TT Srinath's Facing 'My' Mirror, helps the reader navigate towards a more purposeful life

Religious texts have long shone a torch on the path to enlightenment, happiness and gratitude, yet we walk the aisles of book stores in search of a compass that will help us navigate resentment, grief and modern love. Sensitivity trainer TT Srinath has been at this for a while now — asking existential questions since he lost his father as a teen, struggled as an entrepreneur and trained thousands as a human interaction facilitator before finding his voice as a writer of four books and a column in MetroPlus. Over the past few years, his 'Conversations with Self' that appears on our Health pages has engaged with the world, warmly without being preachy.



When we meet to discuss his latest book, Facing 'My' Mirror – What It Means To Live In This World, Srinath, from a well-established industrialist family, looks back on the tough years that shaped his life and thinking, with disarming humanism.

“What I would now define as setbacks in life primarily because of circumstances that were beyond my control were actually instances when life was presenting me a fork in the road; asking me to make a choice. While I made those choices, I did not like the consequences. But choice also gives you the power to be responsive rather than reactive. When I came to appreciate that it led to who I have become,” says Srinath. “I realised that there is no point being futuristic, no point of worrying about the past. Every day is a gift.”

While Srinath had enough material from his own journey to help others accept or avoid life's minefields, the idea for the book originated in early 2018, when he was unwell and juggling a training workshop — he has trained nearly 30,000 participants and worked with 120 organisations across the world. A member of the Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science, Srinath holds a doctorate from Anna University, Chennai, in Organisational Behaviour. His first introduction to existentialism came from a Jesuit, Father John Prabhu, while pursuing a post-graduate degree in Human Resource Management at XLRI, Jamshedpur. “He lent me Man's

Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. The book could not have come to me at a better time — I was still low from the death of my father, I was trying to find my place in my extended family. It helped me recognise that there are certain givens — you are born and you will die. So between those two posts, how do you embrace life, embrace people. And accept the pain that comes with the choices you make. The only choices we have are — can I learn to appreciate my uniqueness, celebrate it and, therefore, celebrate the other; can I take charge of my life and find my authenticity.”

Frankl continues to remain an important part of Srinath’s book that had a soft launch, anchored by historian Pradeep Chakravarthy, earlier this week. Industrialist Suresh Krishna received the first copy from N Ravi, director, Kasturi and Sons. While Krishna spoke on how the book defines the weighty concept of existentialism in simple language, Ravi spoke on how it was a reflection of the writer who “has transformed many times over in the four decades I’ve known him. It does not handout bailouts for a perfect life; instead it suggests how to find a path”.

Nirmala Lakshman, director, The Hindu Group Publishing, who has also written the foreword for the book, said, “This is a book that must be dipped into often, a much-needed manual that can show us who we really are.”

The book begins at what we consider the ‘end’ — death, and demystifies a subject that many do not wish to dwell upon. It is also an outpouring that the path to happiness is to not be in pursuit of it at all.

Facing ‘My’ Mirror, published by Shakthi Forms, will be launched today at Higginbothams, Anna Salai, at 6.30 pm. The author will be in conversation with Vinay Kamath, Senior Associate Editor, The Hindu Businessline, and author-playwright-poet Shreekumar Varma.’.

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