

**THEATRE IT'S RELEVANCE IN CORPORATE TRAINING
AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

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Training using drama techniques helps build, refashion, define personality thus integrating the self.

In theatre there is a constant awareness of ourselves as we move, talk, relate and go through every activity including thinking. In its essence theatre involves a performer and an observer. When the observer within us is pleased with the performer within us there is delight and harmony. When the performer belies the expectations of the internal observer there is self-criticism and disharmony.

Theatre helps to integrate the performer and the observer within us. We are acutely aware on stage – the nature of the character we portray, the responses of the audience, the other actors and activities on stage and our internal comfort levels, insights etc., it becomes easy to relate to the observer who is watching the actor perform. Over a period of time it becomes possible to carry on this awareness outside the stage, as one realizes more and more, in a sense, that one is always performing and always observing.

As we move from play to play and role to role, we realize that it is possible for an actor to put on diverse personalities. In order to acquire the personality patterns that one needs to portray different characters, good directors generally put the actor through a series of exercises where he has to explore the unwritten background of the character he is portraying, in the process of doing this, the actor realizes that his own personality patterns have also been acquired through the experiences that he has lived through.

Once this realization dawns, we realize that everyone around us also has a deeper core, truthful and unchanging, below the diverse personalities that we see on the surface. Differences in behaviour and outlook no longer threaten us. Rather, there arises curiosity and wonder at the different life processes that have created these differences. We also realize that based on these patterns, each one's perception of reality is different. Words have different meanings. Relationship has different values. Concerns, passions, needs, ambitions and obsessions are different.

What is the relevance of this to communication and management? Imagine a group of people sitting in a conference hall not aware, of their insecurities, fears, suspicions, trying to communicate with each other to sort our problems or to decide on common priorities and objectives. A lot of words are exchanged. A lot of discussions take place. Tensions are created. Words have bounced from illusory pattern to illusory pattern carrying different meanings for the speaker and the hearer. Instead of hearing and understanding the music in the speaker's words, the hearer listens to his own reactions to the speaker's words, very often distorting the meaning and misunderstanding the purpose.

Now, imagine the same group, in the same conference hall, where each one is aware of his personality and a common and universal core of consciousness. Imagine that this group understands the inter-relatedness of this common core. Each speaker is aware that his words and thoughts are born out of his perspective which may be very different from the perspectives of others. The level of understanding and actual communication can be much deeper. Sensitivity will be much higher.

Theatre exercises give deep and experiential insights into human sensitivity, spontaneity and intuitive response. Workshops facilitate shedding of patterns, acquiring sensitivity and getting experiential insights into natural leadership, and intuitive, spontaneous, management styles. Workshops aim at increasing comfort levels within a work group and integrating them in harmonious interdependence.

In recent times we have come across a new phrase, "Spiritual Quotient" (SQ). The entire content of SQ is nothing but "effectiveness through ego-drop", or "pattern shedding", or "being in the HereNow".

Being in the HereNow is not an option. It is the only thing possible. At any given point of time we are in the HereNow. The past is over and done with. We have no control over it whatsoever. We cannot influence or change anything. Similarly, the future is unknown. The only thing that we can be in direct control is the amount of energy and attention we can put into this present moment, Here and Now. Any thing else is mere illusion.

Great teachers across the ages have told us that what limits the infinity of human power and energy is the illusion of the ego and the sense of separateness from the other. As the ego crumbles, the self expands to include more and more till it finally contains everything within itself. At this level of self-realisation, one influences reality by mere thought. The truth is simple. No amount of skills, techniques, or knowledge acquired by an ego-bound patterned individual can produce ideal effectiveness. His decisions, his relationships, his vision, are bound to be restricted by past conditioning, and anxiety for the future. He can never experience true compassion or genuine sensitivity for the other as long as he feels separate from the other. As one rises higher and higher on the SQ Scale, the energy the power to create, and the power to change, and lead keeps increasing.

Through the medium of theatre games an actor on stage, if he is to be effective cannot afford to divert even the least bit of energy to what he has been doing even a few minutes before or what he should do even a few minutes hence. Such distractions can make him drop out of character and the actor will be visible through the character that he is attempting to portray. There is no other way. Under the gaze of spectators on a floodlit stage, one has no option but to be in the HereNow or fail as a performer. Theatre games and exercises facilitate the actor in getting in touch with the internal process required to click into the HereNow. Once this has been experienced, it becomes more and more possible to latch on to the experience at will. Over a period of time one is able to become acutely sensitive of when he or she slips out of the HereNow, and is able to get back on track. The more time one spends in the HereNow, the higher the effectiveness as a person or as a leader-influencer.