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The warrior and the leader- value –based leadership

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An organisational and behavioural consultant. I am a qualified sensitivity trainer, qualified with the Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science, the Indian arm of NTL, USA.

TT SRINATH

My life as an entrepreneur has often told me that I am 'an unfinished leader'; that I am work in progress.

I am no less human than those who I lead, perhaps in many ways even doubtful of the steps I am taking going forward and the pathway that I am treading. All I know is that I



am also hacking my way through the forest of uncertainty, sometimes despair, pain yet laden with hope and faith.

My evolving takes me through conflict of choice and I realise that I evolve to the choices I make.

Thus my condition comes with a boon and a curse. I have the boon of choosing and the curse of the conflicts that I must face when I make my choices.

Yet I realise that when I experience a conflict I must know that there is no such thing as conflict in reality and that the conflict resides in the content of my own mind.

As a leader, as an entrepreneur I will have to negotiate not only the urgent but also the emergent. I need therefore to attend to my unfinished business, which is the fight within. I have to first arrest my own mind before I can aim for the bull's eye.

I have therefore to first focus on my inner resolve.

In my journey as an entrepreneur I have had to contend with several countervailing forces. Yet in all this I have preserved through adoption of simple ways to live and exercise my choices. The ways of living and the choices I have made have come through the values that I have adopted.

In working with my colleagues and staff I have attempted to establish shared values that to me define the fundamental character of the organisation I oversee. I have thus been able to create a sense of identity for myself and for those who have worked with me in the organisation and made myself and each one feel special.

As the adage says, 'charity begins at home,' I have had to start with myself.

Eleven principles have defined the way I have operated and these I believe form the very basis of my existence:

1. The recognition that all relationships are co-created
2. The need to self-appreciate and therefore be able to appreciate others
3. The ability to unconditionally accept self and therefore others
4. To recognise that life is like a poem interpreted differently by different people and therefore celebrate similarity and diversity
5. The ability to choose my attitude
6. To recognise that what I believe is what I choose to see and therefore can I direct my vision to believing that good exists all around and therefore see evidence of it.
7. To ask of each other and myself questions in a way that is enabling, non-violent, supportive and credible.
8. To recognise that growth only happens when the energy that draws it towards itself is positive and non-toxic.
9. To recognise the need to be present in a relationship continuously and therefore acknowledge self and the other moment to moment.
10. To celebrate and enjoy existence demonstrated by the bounty that surrounds us
11. To seek continuous improvement in self

1. The recognition that all relationships are co-created:

There is no dance form, in any culture, now available to our understanding that can be performed alone. Even in dance where the protagonist may be alone on the floor, he or she creates for the viewer the impression and the visual of another. It could be one's alter-ego, a lover, nature or simply another human being. Thus it is my belief that in any relationship it takes two of us, the 'I', which is me and the 'thou' which is you, to make the relationship happen and matter. I can only take responsibility for my share and

contribution to the harnessing of the relationship and the other needs to take equal responsibility for the effective functioning of the collaboration. Thus the value of co-creation becomes paramount.

As an entrepreneurial leader I walk the step with you, alongside and expect that you will handhold me as much as I will, as we journey forward.

2. The need to self-appreciate and therefore be able to appreciate others:

If I cannot learn to appreciate myself, value myself, my contribution and who I am, I will not be able to appreciate or value the other. As the 'good book' says 'what I do unto self, I do unto others.' The value of self-appreciation thus becomes the basis for my existence.

3. The ability to unconditionally accept self and therefore others:

Unless I learn to accept myself with all my warts, scars, my shadow side, unconditionally, I will not be able to accept the other so. For if my existence is circumscribed by conditional acceptance of myself I will be only be able to recognise the other person with the limitations he / she brings and not as an expansive human being.

4. To recognise that life is like a poem interpreted differently by different people and therefore celebrate similarity and diversity:

When each of us reads a poem we make our own meaning of it. Yet when the poem has been completely distilled we will recognise there is a common thread, a sutra that runs across our understanding of the poem and the understanding of others who have read the poem as well. Thus I learn to appreciate the others' different point of view and also acknowledge our similarity. In so being I can disagree with the other but I do not have to be disagreeable.

5. The ability to choose my attitude:

Choosing one's attitude determines the choices I make in how I wish to look at opportunities or failures. If I can see in the choice that I make possibilities rather than limitations I am able to expand my vision and vista and thus become a victor rather than a victim.

6. To recognise that what I believe is what I choose to see and therefore can I direct my vision to believing that good exists all around and therefore see evidence of it:

The nature of man is to either confirm and ratify or deny and disprove. In fact when we undertake research we construct hypotheses and often work towards proving or disproving them. Thus when I believe something is good or someone is good I look for signs for endorsement working on the premise of fundamental trust. Likewise if I believe something or someone is not good, I attempt to prove it. Thus the value of nurturing a belief system that is enabling becomes critical.

7. To ask of each other and myself questions in a way that are enabling, non-violent, supportive and credible:

We often address one another in violent ways. While my intent is positive I tend to ask the other a question which is invariably framed in judgement and evaluation. Thus it is important that I choose my words and value the manner in which I address the other, enhancing in the process my ability to interact in enabling fashion.

8. To recognise that growth only happens when the energy that draws it towards itself is positive and non-toxic:

Life does not distinguish between good and bad. However the stronger of the two energies that is positive or negative tends to attract attention. It is therefore important that I nourish positive intent and thus help self and others blossom.

9. To recognise the need to be present in a relationship continuously and therefore acknowledge self and the other moment to moment:

Zero based budgeting encourages dropping past data of the other and working with 'what is' and the 'now.' Thus it is important to be able to bracket ideas and thoughts of the other that I am carrying from the past and see him / her in fresh light, therefore allowing us to focus on the 'here and now' rather than the 'then and there.'

10. To celebrate and enjoy existence demonstrated by the bounty that surrounds us:

Life is short and we are given only one opportunity to make the most of it. To recognise life as a gift, an offering granted for us to make the most of, helps us to continuously celebrate and enjoy the bounty that surrounds us. To therefore celebrate and enjoy the moment, to play, to make another's day are values that will stand us in continuous and good stead.

11. To seek continuous improvement in self:

Kaizen encourages us to make slow yet continuous improvement on ourselves and not attempt to cross a large chasm in one leap. In so doing we are able to constantly improve, better ourselves and rise to the occasion. To leap across a gorge which is vast and deep in one attempt will cause us to falter and often times fall.

Finally the value that I have practiced as an entrepreneur is what Goethe said several centuries ago which is 'If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.'

In summary 'treat people as they are meant to become and they will rise like a phoenix.'

(The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at ttsrinath@gmail.com).

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