

HERE AND NOW



Looking Back Looking Forward

December 2022

EDITORIAL

As 2022 draws to an end, we sense the world heaving a sigh of relief at having seen the back of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been an eventful year around the world – inflation, shortages, conflicts between nations, new political alignments, change of regimes, protests against religious intolerance and other trends have marked the year. Alongside we read and hear of stories of coping, even heroism and innovation in the face of incredible adversities in countries such as Ukraine, Sudan, Nigeria, Haiti, Afghanistan and many others. People have written about how they reviewed their life up to now and made decisions to do differently going forward.

This has led us to the theme of this December issue of Here and Now – “Looking back, looking forward.” Our contributors to this issue have reflected on this theme in the light of their own personal lives, learnings from having attended an ISABS lab, coming up through loss and intense grief to hope for a better tomorrow.

Amita Jalan writes of the breakthrough she experienced in an ISABS lab that she returned to after a 7-year hiatus, and how she is ready to plunge into anything the future holds for her.

Ankur Jayakar remembers the pandemic and both the ugly and compassionate faces of humanity it threw up. He writes of how he revisited his work and life, got in touch with his feelings and looks forward to the future as he stands on the cusp of a transition.

Ila Sharma in her review of the animation film Inside Out, reflects on how emotions shape our personality, how memories are complex and that sadness actually adds depth to our lives, while aiming for undiluted happiness all the time is not only unrealistic but would also pall.

In her poem My Journey from Then to Now, Neha Gupta speaks of how she ran away from shadows but then has made the journey back home to her soul and the long way to the future.

Meeta writes on her experience of growing self-awareness and acceptance of things which led to her experience of de-cluttering her mind (like clearing out unwanted stuff from a house) and Letting Go.

Mukta Kamplikar writes of how she was fascinated by the movie The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind after watching which twice she pondered on the future, her own meaning making and choices in life. Read her review which offers a new take on the lessons the movie offers her. Mukta’s poem Differently reflects on ‘stuff to love and care about’ and even miss someone ‘differently’.

Kantha Rao, in a scholarly article on Ways of Knowing and Working on Self urges the reader to explore and understand Self at various levels in order to be and become a facilitative person and not just a skilful facilitator of T-groups.

In BLHP Life-Asana by Priya Nagesh, she opens a window on what her experience of a BLHP meant to her and the turning point in the lab when she began to look at herself, people and life differently.

Sandhya Kulkarni presents an equally deeply personal and moving account of the welter of feelings that she went through after leaving a job, suffering loss of a parent and self-confidence to finding purpose in life once again.

TT Srinath talks to us in his piece of what Ikigai (finding purpose in life) means to him, to his client organizations and how the philosophy gives us the ability to remain rooted and relevant while we pursue our passion in life.

We have also included updates from the various Regions of ISABS. Many activities of the Regions have performed continued online, not so much from fears of Covid, but that the online mode is enabling more members, including new Associate Members, to take part, share their experience with ISABS and learn more about ISABS.

Finally, Sankarasubramanian gives us a glimpse of the backstage to the ISABS Golden Jubilee celebrations which were held at Goa in June 2022. It's an exciting read about the planning, the hopes, fears and great joy when the event went off more or less as planned.

Thanking the editorial team seems a ritual but it is nevertheless important. Only we, the Editors know of the continual efforts of all the members that our H&N team (VLK, Lakshmi, Mukta, Sanjyot and Kantha) has made to follow-up with contributors and select pieces and pictures that would be of interest to you, dear Reader. Ultimately, that is our intent – to present to you this year-end offering that you find a joy to read, provides food for reflection and possibly gives you hope and meaning as you read of the life experiences of others while you step towards 2023.

VLK Sarma | Lakshmi Raman

ARTICLES AND PAPERS



If there is a place....

By AMITA JALAN

Someone had asked me a few years back – “When did you last feel most alive?”

The first response seemed obvious to me – It was the first time I had fallen in love with my now husband.

When I recall the same question now, it is the second response that surprises even me. I felt most alive during my 2 human processes labs – my BLHP and ALHP at ISABS in 2015. I remember digging deeper into this second response and realized how the lab room setting, my two facilitators, the group members, the conversations, the breakdowns, *and the breakthroughs* were some of the things that created new life in me. I remember how my body felt in the lab setting - the increased fidgeting when I had to share feedback with a group member that would have possibly invited hostility, the lump in my throat when I called out my own bluff, the palpitations of my heart when I received feedback which I covertly denied, the butterflies in my stomach when I diagnosed a group process, the rolling tears in my eyes with the sadness of an epiphany and the insentient eye contact with the facilitators more than the group members. I recalled my evening conversations with my family when I was at a loss for words explaining to them what a “lab” is. You know well that to discuss it, to appreciate it or to critique it, you must experience it. ISABS had ignited my dormant seduction of understanding self and others. Before ISABS, words like “self-awareness”; “group processes”; “blind spots” weren’t even part of my vocabulary.



It was this cocktail of memories that surfaced that became the reason why, after a 7-year pause, I was back like a child in a candy store for my repeat ALHP before I could move along my PDP journey. During this 7-year gap, I had furthered my self-exploration through other means. So, I was keen to witness my own changed self between 2015 and 2022 – especially the dance between the “here and now” and the “then and there”.

The lab of 2022 was a unique place for me...

If there is a place where concepts and frameworks like Johari Window and Emotional Intelligence come alive in a highly unstructured way with strangers - then this is the place.

If there is a place where the looming question is “But, how are you feeling?” and I tap into my body to diagnose my feeling while differentiating it from thought – then this is the place.

If there is a place where I learn to start feeling my feelings and they become my barometer for self and relationships - then this is the place.

If there is a place where fear and excitement, anger and sadness, guilt and shame can co-exist at the same time, then this is the place

If there is a place where I express myself with a certain intention and it affects others in an unexpected way, and I then start appreciating the difference between intent and impact- then this is the place.

If there is a place where I test the boundaries of my vulnerability and explore myself looking into the mirrors that others show me - then this is the place.

If there is a place where an eternal dance of self-disclosure and feedback is on - then this is the place

If there is a place where I learn how to diagnose group processes, hypothesise, and test my assumptions - then this is the place.

If there is a place where I discover that unresolved traumas and shadows of the past are still my lens in my current relationships - then this is the place.

If there is a place where aspects of my psyche sitting quietly in some part of my core get the voice and vocabulary to make their presence felt – then this is the place

If there is a place where behavioural change begins to result in more fulfilling relationship with self and others - then this is the place.

This concoction was supported by two fabulous facilitators, the wisdom and presence of 10 group members, and also the recipe to learn about self, interpersonal relationships, group, and large systems.

As I sit in deep gratitude of the sacredness of those 5 days, I am also looking forward to the path ahead.

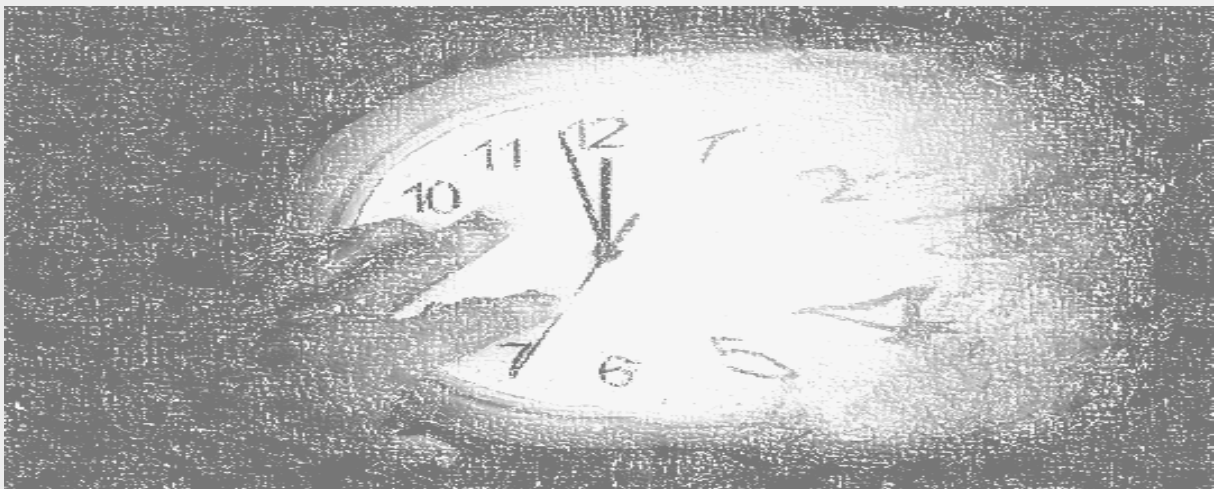
I know I will keep coming back to the lab for more – almost ‘choicelessly’, because I know I feel most alive here. My love affair with self and process work has just begun. Is it for personal development? Yes. Is it for professional development? Yes. Is it for spiritual growth? Yes. Is it a way of seeking peace and living a life of purpose? Yes.

I am ready to plunge again into these mystical waters which don’t have a known depth or definite destination. The logs, the mentors, the manoeuvring through the system, the toil, the fun, the growth, and the ‘feeling of all feelings’ awaits me.

My PDP journey begins soon. I remember listening to my facilitators explaining the next steps in PDP and my own going inward into how I felt in that moment. I clearly envisioned the image of me, sitting in this lab setting... Will this vision evolve? Maybe, maybe not... But that’s food for “then and there”- Currently I am in the “here and now”.



Amita Jalan is the CEO at TrainCraft, a Learning & Organisational Development Firm. She is passionate about learning and development. She prides herself on walking the talk - embodying the tools, concepts, and frameworks that she shares in her programs. Apart from TrainCraft, she spends time with her six-year-old son, reading books and enjoying pockets of silence through the day. She also dabbles in understanding the world of energy and energy healing modalities.



Ways of Knowing and Working on ‘Self’

By V N KANTHARAO

As we lookback & look forward , we work on Self, that is juxtaposed in time, Past-Present-Future. We often hear “you must work on your *Self*” and the popular corollary to that is ‘*Self is the Instrument of change!*’ I too have given this advice to many. The real difficulty comes in articulating what exactly we mean by it and how should we go about it!

I am fortunate indeed, to have been introduced & guided into the *noumena*, and *phenomenon*, of *Self* by Dr Somnath Chattopadhyay. Since then, *Self-inquiry* has continued to inspire my preoccupation and deepen my experiential understanding of *Self*. Looking back, I see how much I have moved from ways of knowing earlier to how I integrate the knowing through different paths. This article is informed by the work I did over two and a half years in the ISABS Research group (which I termed Human Process Inquiry) with a group of individuals who were in the process of development to become professional members and also some professional members. It was initiated in 2001 by the ISABS Research team to bring specific orientation in understanding *Self* in the process of being and becoming a facilitative person and not just a skilful facilitator of T-groups. This approach presents a compelling rationale to synergize eastern and western approaches to working on *Self*. Through this approach, the integrity of the professional developmental process in ISABS can be enriched.

For the purpose of this article , we shall consider Phenomenal self (ego) with small ‘s’, and Noumenal *Self*, by capital ‘S’. Both refer to the self but the latter *Self* is the witness self.

Self-Work: Navigating contrasting realms

We possess two ways of knowing, through senses (mediated) and through intuition & insight (unmediated) . The inner domain is subtle and subjective, and the Outer is objective and rational. The objective is common everyday experience, so most people believe it is their senses that determine reality. The divide, Outer & Inner, is actually based on our levels of awareness. This is a significant challenge & an opportunity in this journey of *Self* Inquiry. The journey of working on *Self* implies capability, to move, knowingly, between the two.

1. *Phenomenal self*

Our work starts with the Phenomenal self (ego), which mediates between inner & outer layers and it appropriates to itself; e.g., ‘this is my car or this my family, I love my profession, It is characterised by drawing distinction between one’s self and others. Generally, it is considered as a set of attributes of some observable pattern, explains personality features as seen by a third person. For e.g., all psychometrics tests Psychological concepts & theories. Even T-group experiential data is about functioning of the ego. However, the same T-group experiential data can illuminate the noumenal dimensions of *Self* , which depends on the orientation of facilitators, mentors and the PDP process. The ego has the ability to rationalise anything in self-convincing ways, which can lead to uncanny ways of self-deception. However, it depends on how the learner approaches work on *Self*.

2. *Noumenal Self*

Noumenal Self is our Being and not a concept, hence it is our subtle and consistent awareness experience. It is the first person subjective experience of being aware of awareness itself - the *witness Self (sakshi)*. It does not potentiate any action unlike the phenomenal self. However, noumenal *Self* illuminates our inner apparatus like mind, intellect, ego and memory.

The difficulty arises in studying our noumenal Self because of pre-existing habits of mind. We are trained, culturally, from childhood in the phenomenal world of object reality.

We can work directly on the noumenal Self (direct method) directly by the *Gyan Marg* (Path of Knowledge) because it is not mediated through mind-body-sense instrumentalities, but is just the experience of unmediated awareness.

The experiential or direct methods of Self Inquiry, developed by spiritual leaders like Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj and Atmananda Krishna Menon and further elaborated by their non-dual followers & practitioners such as Jean Klein, John Levy, Alexander Smith, Philp Renard , Francis Lucille, Ramesh S. Balsekar, and Rupert Spira.

3. *Inculcating movement between level of Awareness*

Working on the phenomenal and the noumenal *Self* essentially is the facility of movement between 3 levels of awareness. Like gears in a car, we must learn to move between three levels.

1. *Stand to see the object reality*, the roads, building, table etc. By and large almost all of us recognize and operate from here. The problem arises when we get stuck here and believe this is ultimate reality.
2. *Stand to see our subtle mind* and the other's mind, different from ours. At this level of awareness, subject – object becomes the dominant frame. The difficulty arises when we are fixated.
3. *Stand as awareness* means our attention is steady in the awareness of being aware. Content in awareness such as thoughts, feelings, perceptions, judgements are all parts of the phenomenal self. The Noumenal self is witness Self.

4. *Inculcating 'Witness Self'?*

We shall illustrate a three-stage practice that helps integrate contrasting realms of Ego and Witness self.

Stage one

This starts with noticing the contents in consciousness, such as emotions, cognitive process and also cultural conditioned behaviour. By careful attention to these contents, one develops the perception to differentiate characteristics of the contents of awareness, and that of the process of Consciousness itself . While skill and steadiness are obtained in observing contents, intra-subjective witness is strengthened.

Stage two

The second stage is when self-awareness develops. In this stage, the witness-self is able to relate to the coming and going of emotions, desires and thoughts, and at the same time be free to make choices about those contents or emotions and be able to ask certain questions to one self. For example, in our endeavour

to be a facilitative person, asking oneself 'Are these habitual actions/old patterns of reactions or evolved based on deliberation?'

Stage Three

When the third phase is entered, self-sense is stably re-locates from embeddedness in the ego process to witness-self position. This is possible through a strong resolve to relate to the contents of awareness with well-developed non-attachment. So, for instance, in trying to be a facilitative person, we are able to detach from the ego-bounded role conception or demands, to allow things to ensue rather than pursue, and thereby transcend ego embeddedness.

Conclusion Undertaking of Self work is about working on our ego under the supervision of our ego – a bit tricky. And it involves working on many levels of awareness and developing the ability to move between these levels. It needs commitment totally based on Intrinsic consideration.

Note: The above is the summary note of an action learning project that used Phenomenology and Dialogic Self theory to deepen embodied Self-awareness and Self Inquiry. It was documented and shared by the Dean Research on 13th June 2021.

References

1. Goode, G. (2016). Standing as Awareness: The Direct Path. Non-Duality Press.
2. Hermans, H. J. M. (1999). Dialogical Thinking and Self-Innovation. *Culture & Psychology*, 5(1), 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x9951004> Hultgren, F. H. (1995).
3. The phenomenology of “doing” phenomenology: The experience of teaching and learning together. *Human Studies*, 18(4), 371–388. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01318618>
4. Hermans, Hubert J.M., & Kempen, Harry, J.G. (1993). *The Dialogical Self: Meaning as Movement*. Academic Press.
5. Maharshi Ramana (2016). *Nan Yar - Who am I?* Sai AI E-Publications
6. Nisargadatta, & Frydman, M. (1978). *I Am That: Conversations with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*. Chetana. Pillai, N. N. (2019).
7. Atmananda Krishna Menon (2019). *Direct Path to Realization - 'I' -principle*. Chattampi Swami Archive Project, Centre for South Indian Studies, Trivandrum
8. Sadānanda, Hiriyanā, M. (1962). *Vedānta-sāra (A work on Vedānta philosophy)*. Oriental Book Society.
9. SPIRA, Rupert (2018). *Being aware of being aware*. ReadHowYouWant.com



Kantharao Ph.D is an organizational development professional. He worked as HR/OD professional in large Indian organizations for 20 years, a freelance organizational consultant for last 18 years, consulting in the areas of Organizational Transformation , involving long term planned change interventions . He is also Dean Research for the Indian Society for Applied Behavioural sciences (ISABS). He is accredited practitioner of MBTI , Achievement Motivation, Organization assessment tools , Future Search conference, intensive course in Process work from Process work Institute, Switzerland and T group methodologies. He converted his 25 years of practical experience in change facilitation by writing and publishing in National & International conferences.Kantha can be reached through email: kantha5765@gmail.com and kantha@transformationworks.co.in . Blog- <https://essenceofbeingblog.wordpress.com/>



Looking Back, Going Forward, Embracing Change

By ANKUR JAYKAR

A lot happened in the last two years. The dreadful pandemic of COVID-19 created havoc, but slowly the human spirit conquered it – but not before learning new ways to lead life. A lot was lost but a lot of that was regained too. The last two years brought out the ugly face of human greed & indifference but was also contrasted by an equally endearing face of love and compassion towards fellow humans. A lot many things that were earlier assumed to be important turned out to be fallacies. The lockdowns and closure of businesses made us realise the fragility of things that we earlier thought were permanent. If I must describe the last two years in a single word, it would be “Change”.

These last two years made me reaffirm my belief in my strength to hold my nerve when things around me fall apart. It made me aware of what matters the most in my life. A paradigm shift occurred in the way I looked at my work-life balance. It also drew my attention towards the health of myself and my family. Today I see myself as more cautious and conscious of what I eat and what I do not. I make attempts to weed out avoidable stress generators from my day-to-day life. I have now completely stopped following the news media in any of its forms. I spend the time so saved with my family and am reaping the resultant health benefits. My wife has become more attentive towards the meals that she cooks and the people she meets. Both my sons have gradually shifted away from their computer/phone screens towards sports, arts and reading. These have been some of the greatest advantages to us as a family after what we went through in the last two years.

Like the silver lining in dark clouds, a hugely beneficial spin-off of the pandemic was that the world accepted technology-enabled ways and means to bridge physical distances between people. The internet and digital platforms made it possible for us to continue doing things which we earlier assumed were possible only face-to-face. I was lucky, as this new way of functioning made it possible for me to attend Basic and Advanced Labs in Human Processes with ISABS which had been in-person events for the last several years, but now were being conducted on-line.

Those 10 days of my lab life opened new windows for me to look at myself and the world. These two life-changing experiences helped me see my routine interactions in professional, social and familial life in a totally different light, bringing to my awareness my needs and beliefs lying in the unconscious till then. Now, in every situation that I face, I consciously attempt to pause between the external stimulus and my response to it while being aware of my self-talk have during that pause. This has helped me become a better listener and handle conflicts in a better way. Post the labs, a good amount of soul-searching has happened, and this has helped me define new metrics of success & happiness for myself which is reflected in my short-term as well as long-term decisions.

More than just behavioural changes, both these labs resulted in heightened consciousness about my feelings. Not only am I more aware of the feelings that arise within me in different situations, I am also

more patient and skilled at handling my emotions as well as my responses arising from those emotions. I am more vocal about telling the other person exactly what I feel in the 'here and now.' Earlier, I would have simply blurted out a response without acknowledging my emotions. More often than not, that used to lead to arguments and misunderstandings. Nowadays, before responding, I declare how I am feeling. This helps me design my response in a manner that is neither distanced from nor excessively buried in emotions. I think this also helps the other person understand where I am coming from and so, they are generally more receptive to my message. To me, this new approach has worked wonders in striking meaningful conversations at home as well as at the workplace. Notably, in my experience, this technique seems to work equally well with elders/seniors and young persons /subordinates.

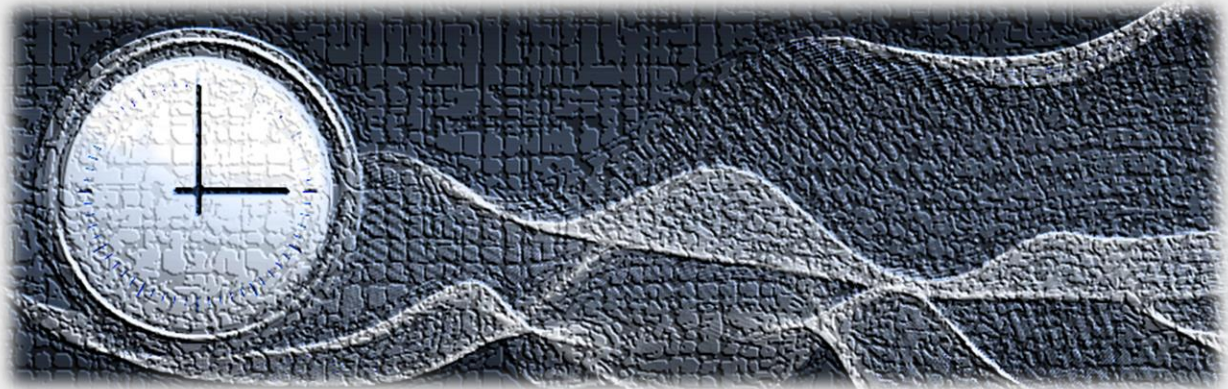
Another important change I have noticed in myself is my ability to relate to people in authority. I am more aware and alive to the way a person might be trying to exert his/her authority over me. In the past, I would surrender to such display of authority. But now, the moment I realise that someone is trying to use his position or age or experience as a tool to force his/her opinion on me, I try and separate my cognitive thinking and my feelings of suppression or respectfulness. There is still scope to improve my responses, these are still a work-in-progress! This is probably the one thing that works best in the reverse order too i.e., I am attuned to my own feelings and display of authority. As a result, I now use my authority with care to prevent suppression of new ideas and opinions divergent from my own.

I am aware that this is just the beginning and there is a lot of work I have yet to do. Several blind spots are yet to be illuminated in order to enhance my awareness. As the world recovers from the scars of the Covid pandemic, new rules of engagement are still being drafted, new processes of human interaction still being fine-tuned. The debate between working from home or the office, the great resignation, the quiet quitting, the moonlighting, etc., are all just symptoms of a new order of the human process. How I negotiate this maze as I stand on the cusp of a transition from 22 years of a military career to a corporate career, remains to be seen. But the one thing that I am sure of is that change is here to stay. Most of what has changed over the last two years is irreversible. At the same time, it has seeded several new ideas to strike root and flourish, promising more changes in the way we interact on the social, professional and personal levels. What the future holds for me, I don't know at this point of time.

Hopefully, exciting times ahead!



Col. Ankur Jayakar has been serving in the Indian Army for the last 22 years. A mechanical engineer and M.Sc. in Military Science who is a specialist in missiles, radars, and drones, he has served in 10 different states of India in various roles. During this journey of leading the finest soldiers in the world, the impact of behaviors on organizational culture and performance intrigued him the most. This led him on a path of becoming a trained life & executive coach, an NLP Practitioner, an occasional poet, and a blogger who writes about behavioral aspects from the lens of his own experiences.



Resourceful me??

By SANDHYA KULKARNI



I earlier worked in Mumbai for about 22 years. Some of my colleagues and a few of my friends considered me a guide to sourcing, be it head hunting or shopping. I, however, never felt it was my special skill. As an executive producer for films and television series, I always needed to look for suppliers, actors, writers, locations, crew members, equipment, hotels, clothes and what not. I loved my job and the fact that it kept me on my toes 24x7. I was living a vibrant life. I was a valuable part of the team, and I

knew that industry references work.

However, I left my job in 2012. While going through the process of deciding what to take up next, I was in very low spirits. Sunk in uncertainties and not knowing the way out, I was confused and unclear about everything. I was caught in a vicious cycle of illness, unemployment, funds getting exhausted, unclear about self and with a big question mark about what to do next?

Losing my father at that point was the darkest day of my life and my grieving for his loss won't end.

While I knew that gaining back my health would take some time, I kept telling myself – “Oh! You never network, how are you going to find a new job? And how and what will you do if you are changing your career track or even get back on the original track after all the diversions you took on the job?”

My confidence was out on a holiday! For me, keeping up my spirits was a daily struggle. I would look at everybody and wonder at “how everybody was meaningfully engaged in his or her work and how busy were their lives!”. Not having a sense of belonging after my father's demise, I would always end up questioning myself – “why I am alive and what is the purpose of my life?”

I would get overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness, and I would suffer in silence. I was struggling to find a way out of what seemed complete darkness, silence and stillness in my mind - as if my body was on autopilot and my living mechanical. I chose to stay aloof and cried inconsolably.

One day, out of utter frustration, I spoke my mind to my friend and that is when the shift started happening within me. My friend listened to me with empathy. She would ask me questions, which made me more aware of what I was thinking, feeling, and seeing but doing nothing about getting what I wanted for myself, but just staying dispirited.

Thankfully, I soon landed up in my first lab with ISABS. The experience was an eye opener for me. I could understand how I came across to others and how I was underestimating my own capabilities. I discovered that awareness was a trigger and then my journey truly began. I am thankful to have been blessed with good people around who never gave up on me during my tough times. They always made themselves available for the conversations I wanted to have or the experiments with self that I wanted to try out.

Slowly, I started seeing light at the end of tunnel, thanks to the awesome mentors who handheld me during this difficult journey. In due course, when I returned to good health, I needed to re-establish my beliefs about work-money-expectations from life. During all those rough times, I had put in quite a lot of effort and learnt a few required skills, and saw my confidence gradually returning. From avoiding people, I was now getting back to my gregarious self, always willing to meet people and help them in whatever way I could, and this added zest to my life.

I now seem to have found my purpose in life. Life is exciting and I feel 24 hours in a day are insufficient to do what I now want to do.

Here are a few of my realizations during my journey and for the road ahead: -

1. Speak up! There might be a very simple way out and you need not struggle endlessly in the dark. Though it needs courage, it is worth the effort.
2. When you don't trust yourself, trust your mentor for his or her intention to see you happy.
3. Be bold enough to check your belief system and restructure it with guidance if it is not helping you to live well.
4. There is abundance in universe and it totally depends upon how you see things. You are not caught in the situation; you are caught in your thought process. Change your thoughts and let appropriate action accompany them; there is always a way out of every rough situation.
5. If awareness is a trigger, then immerse yourself in the lifelong process of awareness and self-development.
6. A baby step each day is a good way to start and understand your struggle with self-discipline.
7. Find your tribe and if others are being a resource for you, you too be a resource for somebody. What goes around comes back multifold. So, give of your goodness to others, no matter what!



Currently juggling between two passions, one for teaching/training and creativity. Learning Escalator is a venture that helps and guides start-ups and MSME's about setting their HR structure and trainings whereas Hook2Knot customises garments and accessories in crochet and knitting. What I have learnt for my profession A is helping me immensely in profession Mail id: sandhyakkulkarni@gmail.com. Contact Number: 9518526892

BLHP Life-Asana

By PRIYA NAGESH



I attended the ISABS Basic Lab in September 2022, primarily because my Reiki and energy healing mentor, Anuradha Ramesh, recommended it.

One of the descriptions of *Asana* in Yoga is “*Sharira Samyama*”, that is, moving towards a better understanding of one’s body, what its feeling is at a given moment, what it can do and can’t do, what it is evoked and provoked by and how, its myriad sensations and so on. In my capacity as a Practitioner of Yoga Therapy, I tell students that they need to put themselves / their bodies into new positions, both on and off the mat. That new position and the movement to it is the process of doing an *Asana* and learning something new about oneself and one’s body.

The Basic Lab for Human Process was for me a life-*Asana*. Sitting with absolute strangers and attempting to be part of an intimate group process in a 5-day lab setting, was a back-bend, twist and forward-bend of the mind and feelings, all put together! It brought in much needed fresh air - a new breath, stretching of muscles that I didn’t even know existed in me, and the beginning of a healing process - a knot/wound that I had subconsciously carried for ages, had begun loosening already and also started to heal.

I did not enter the ISABS lab-*Asana* with wondering eyes and breathless expectation. I came in a bit jaded, asking myself cynically “*Okay, so what’s going to be new in this!*”, and carrying my ego of having done “inner work” for many years.

Obviously, therefore, I experienced a block within me in the lab scenario. The moment we were ‘released’ for tea breaks and at the end of the day, I would be all open and perky with my lab mates, who were fast becoming my friends now. I didn’t realise this until it was pointed out to me as feedback by my lab mates, that I was behaving a certain way (closed) inside the lab room, and another way (open) outside the lab. This triggered the process of unwinding for me. It further continued when one of the facilitators told me during the course of the lab that he was feeling excluded by me in the group, and said he wanted to hear from me and connect with me as I had been doing with others in the group.

The turning point for me came when, that evening, perhaps having had enough of my incongruent behaviour, my lab mates started ‘pushing’ me to share more, and wished to see more of what they were seeing of me. I was feeling cornered, bewildered. I genuinely wanted to understand what they were all trying to tell me. That was when the facilitator intervened and said, “Hey, let’s leave her a bit to process it, we can see she’s trying, and she’s admitted that she can’t, nothing will come out of pushing her further now”. That understanding of where I was, and the resultant space created for me was part one of the turning point. Part two was when the other facilitator asked me one time what I felt, since I appeared overcome with unstated feelings. I broke down and was only then able to see what the others had been seeing in me. It then struck me that it was only when there was compassionate understanding from the

male “authority” figure that I could begin to see him as a human/person. Until then, I felt blocked in his presence.

There is, of course, a lot here that one can go into about the process of setting up someone as an authority figure, the why’s and how’s which is not within the scope of this piece.

Not that I hadn’t already ‘known’ that I have issues with male authority figures, especially if they were elderly, and that a large part of this came from my childhood experience. However, what the ISABS lab did for me, and which is of particular relevance here is that the here and now process, and the heart-to-heart, open feedback---both given and taken - enabled my behavioural process to unfold in the group. It made me see in a meaningful way how this manifested outside and affected the group process’. I saw how I tended to get stuck in the group and how it limited my adding value to the group and prevented others from forming an accurate perception of me.

I realised after this lab that I need to stretch my newly acquired ‘muscles’ of openness and unguardedness, twist and shake off my old ways of communication, allowing the fresh air of safety and trust inside the group, in the presence of whoever I set up as ‘male authority!’ The next few days gave me the opportunity to do all this, but as the lab drew to a close, I was left wanting more time with the group. For me, this work had just begun. I have, since returning from the lab, been able to look at and heal more inwardly, thanks to Anu and my “energy-healing” group I gained the following significant insight that I hold and carry into other spaces because of seeing what was happening unfold in the group and through the actions and feedback of my lab mates and facilitators:

Each member is an equal resource in the group, and each carries his/her light within them by being whoever they are at that moment. Nobody has to ‘improve’, ‘become better’, ‘do something’ to be a resource in the group. Each one as he/she is carries something of the group in themselves as they come together to form this one organism. Whether it be ‘victim’ or ‘perpetrator’ or ‘saviour’ or ‘teacher’ or ‘student’ or ‘facilitator’ or ‘participant’ - no matter what labels, identities and roles we may give ourselves and each other, by virtue of being in the group, as who we are, how we are, whatever our process is, whatever limited or expansive or any other versions of ourselves we may bring in, we are still enough and a unique resource to the group. That is how it is meant to be. How that is so is the mystery/ grace, the inexplicable beyond life and space that works through each of us and the group.



Priya is passionate about individual and collective healing. She adapts Asana & Pranayama, Reiki, chanting, contemplative conversations and Ayurvedic practices in her healing spaces. Her search for herself has always found expression in poetry and play. She loves working with children in learning spaces. And finds primal creative inspiration in nature and the heartbeat of Life. She published her debut book, Footprints and Feelings in March 2022.
BLOG <http://mypreciseramblings.blogspot.com/>
BOOK <https://notionpress.com/read/footprints-and-feelings>



Letting Go

By MEETA



I have often wondered what kept me from moving forward, for so long. Looking backwards and getting pulled into the past, I tried to leave things behind but could not go far enough. I got stuck in the same, familiar patterns of thought and behaviour.

I think the first step forward in my journey was a growing self-awareness followed by a deep and honest acceptance; and finally I was able to turn the key and let go.

Letting go was liberating, and I have now experienced it in so many different ways.

One of the big moments was letting go of beliefs--- a belief system so ingrained in me that it became difficult to separate it from the idea of "me". To state a few of these beliefs----how I defined success, the importance of performance, that I was of value only if I performed, etc. My beliefs defined if I was ok or not ok, what I should do, and how I should feel. Over time, I was able to see the dissonance and realised that *I was not my belief system*. I realised that I could choose not to hold on to my belief system and that I could look at things differently. This moment was born out of deep reflection, pain and sorrow, but the awareness freed me. I kept falling back, but once you see the truth it sets you free. It has been a long journey that required hard work but at the end of it, I was able to let go of much that I believed in earlier.

Another kind of letting go that I experienced was of intense feelings. The feelings were not in my conscious mind and I had to first reach a point where they emerged in my consciousness. I have let go of hurt, sorrow and anger and that has eased my pain, allowing me to begin things afresh. I also realised that in order to move on, I had to let go of even happy memories. While pain and hurt of the past was a constant source of resentment and irritation, happy memories also tied me down, since I was trying to stay with them rather than exploring and being open to whatever new experiences awaited me.

Letting go resonates with the concept of *raag* and *dwesh* as I have learnt in Vipassana. It is said that we get miserable not just because we *don't want (dwesh)* hurt or pain but also because we *want (raag)* love and attention. Our intense attachment to our experiences and the emotions associated with such experiences become the baggage we carry with us. Letting go of this baggage frees us to experience whatever life has to offer in the here and now.

It reminds me of the spring cleaning that I do when my house has got cluttered. This metaphor of cleaning house fits in beautifully in my mind. I buy so much stuff on impulse and then it lies in a corner of the house, taking space, but not really serving any purpose. I have collected stuff because they are memories of places I have visited or holidays with loved ones or gifts from friends and families---- an endless list of reasons why I need to hold on to stuff that I have bought or continue to keep. So many things are broken,

so many clothes don't fit me, even some furniture is redundant, but I keep them because of the memories associated with them.

Many times I decide to throw away something, but then end up smuggling it back into the house because it reminds me of something else! On the other hand there are the needs and demands of my lifestyle today that I cannot accommodate because of this clutter. The few times that I have managed to shed some of this collected baggage, I have ended up feeling so good. So happy with the space created that I wait for the next such moment. Luckily I did some spring cleaning in my house and my mind recently, so I am in a good place.

Letting go is a good thing. You might want to try it!



Meeta Vadera. MBA (PM-IR) from XLRI. She has been an HR professional for 30 years, and still carries these labels to introduce herself till can find new ones. In reality as per the accepted definition of work, she is not currently working, but she likes what she is e whatever I am doing. I call it holding the stillness space. I am not fond of social media but can be reached at meetavadera@yahoo.com.



Looking backwards to go forward

By T. T. SRINATH



The title of my article is, perhaps, an oxymoron. And yet, reassurance is offered to me by life when I know I have passed through many 'dark nights' and emerged from 'larva to butterfly'.

Sometimes though, as I realize I am still a work in progress, I see myself as not quite a caterpillar, and not yet the butterfly and instead as a 'caterfly' emerging with genuine effort.

In a recent talk, one of our very accomplished colleagues from ISABS stirred us with questions that ISABS itself, over the years, has called me to respond to. I have ducked answering them for they tend to shake me up. But if, however, I do not answer them, sooner than later I may become a casualty?

The questions he posed were:

1. Why do I ask that life MUST be fair?
2. If I skirt what I know within and is perhaps repressed (if not allowed to surface), might I be ruled by it and then classify it as fate?
3. Can I live in a constant state of 'unknowing'?

Through my journey as an ISABIAN, these have been questions that, time and again, have been tossed at me over the years. I deflected them, simply because the 'mirror' that I stared at was unwiped and fogged due to confusion and was thus hazy. However, when I heard our colleague speak, I realized that his asking came not from a place of interrogation but from genuine curiosity.

It was a great shift: my willingness to receive such questions without fearing that I was being put in a spot, realizing that the questioner operated only with the 'desire' to walk alongside me.

Till 2 years ago, I used to be briefed by senior members in my client organizations to focus on assisting the leadership to stay relevant and help build into their psyche the possibility of making themselves redundant over a period of time. This request has since been altered. Instead of suggesting I work on relevance and redundancy, the invitation to me now is to help the leadership in the organization remain relevant but build in them the required resilience to cope with new challenges. The urgency with which this is being asked has convinced me that organizations are gripped by a feeling of fear and great discomfort with ambiguity.

A model that has shown up for me in pursuit of this effort is a cyclic one. It starts with the need to establish clarity of intent, to build immediate capability, to demonstrate courage in the face of onslaught of uncertainty and be able to experience congruence; and to stay centered even when wafted by the winds

of change. And, finally, then circle back to recognizing new realities that are emerging and seek further clarity.

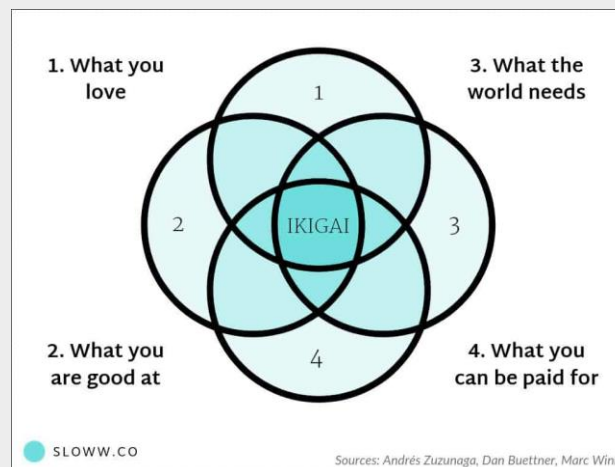
Another compelling requirement that has arisen over the last 2 years, particularly when the boundaries between professional and personal roles are getting blurred is for clarity over certainty, to choose productive 'conflict' engendered by dialogue over harmony at any cost, to pay attention to results rather than wanting to prove one is always right, eschewing the need to be popular for being accountable; and finally supplanting the need to feel all-powerful with display of genuine trust in others and a willingness to share power.

Carrying the above thoughts further, I opine that ISABS, and many of those including I, who are members of the Institution, are now poised to look at where we are or where we choose to be, through the framework the Japanese idea of 'IKIGAI' offers.

The 4 questions that we are invited to explore under the IKIGAI philosophy/model are:

1. What do I love doing?
2. What am I good at?
3. What may I be paid for?
4. What do I believe the world needs?

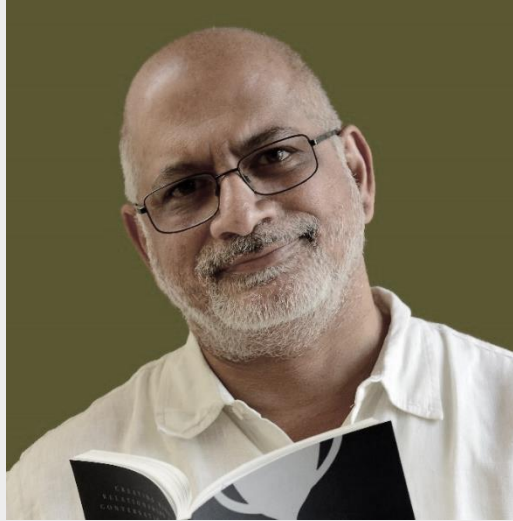
The IKIGAI model captures each of these questions in the form of a Venn diagram, with 4 intersecting circles:



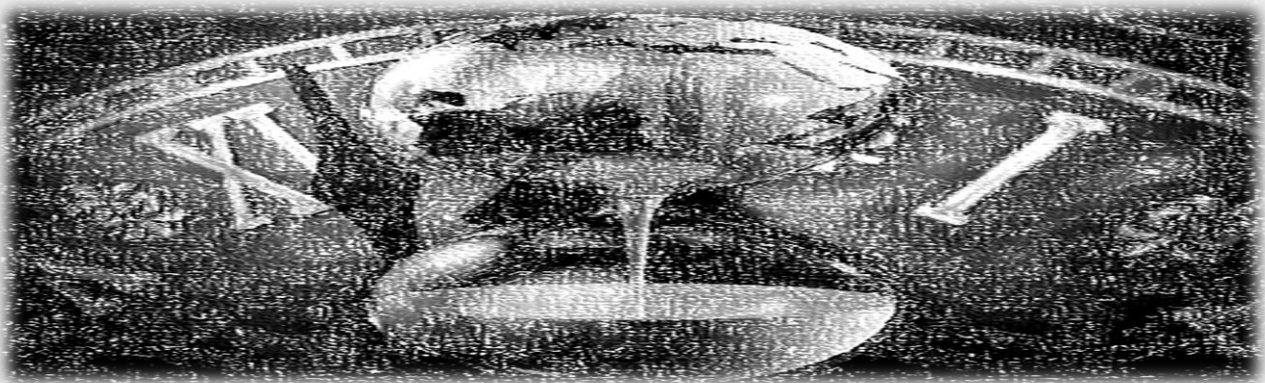
Where the circles 1 and 2 intersect defines what we love doing or are passionate about. Where circles 2 and 3 overlap defines what profession we are good at. Where circles 3 and 4 overlap gives us the possibility of recognizing our vocation and finding it productive and remunerative. And where circles 4 and 1 overlap is where our mission lies.

Thus, while our profession and vocation may provide us with the ability to remain rooted and relevant, our passion and our mission may surely provide us with wings to expand.

It is therefore germane to stop asking *quo vadis* (where are you going?) and instead say to us *carpe diem* (seize the day) and move on.



T.T.Srinath, Ph.D., lives in Chennai, India. He has done extensive work in Gestalt, Psychodrama and Sociodrama. He works in both the corporate and non-corporate sector, facilitating human interaction processes. He is an active member of the oldest English Theatre company in India, The Madras Players. He can be reached at ttsrinath@gmail.com and his website is www.ttsrinath.com. He is a professional member of ISABS.



MOVIE REVIEWS



‘Inside Out’ makes you go ‘Outside In’

By ILA SHARMA



Recently as I prepared for a lab with ISABS, I approached a Professional Member for suggestions about key topics to reflect upon. They asked me to watch a Pixar animation movie, *Inside Out*, to further explore the entire gamut of feelings. Through this movie review, I intend to highlight several key topics of Applied Behavioural Science which may be further explored after watching it. But hey, without any major spoiler alerts!

Much of the film depicts the thought chain and the dominant feelings that pass through in the head of an 11-year-old girl named Riley, with five emotions—Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust—embodied by cartoon characters who help Riley navigate her world. Joy is the leader and helps the controls inside Riley’s mind; her overarching goal is to make sure that Riley is always happy. Joy, in her attempt to protect Riley, commands Sadness to not touch any memories as they would become sad memories. During the introductory scenes, the character Joy outright explains the purpose of each emotion barring Sadness. Joy explained that Fear keeps us safe, Disgust encourages caution, and so on. Joy admits that she doesn’t understand what Sadness is for or why it is in Riley’s head.

I think that Joy was not alone in this dilemma as, at one time or another, many of us have probably wondered what real purpose sadness serves in our lives.

Riley moves with her parents from Minnesota to San Francisco, a new town, leaving her lovely house, best friend, ice hockey rinks and her school. All her feelings are in action when she gets to her new city, new house and new school. As nothing is similar in experience, Riley struggles with her feelings and their multiple attempts to keep her happy, Joy and Sadness accidentally get dragged out of Riley’s head and into her memory bank. For most of the film, she bottles up her emotions in order not to exacerbate her parents’ feelings, but the suppression leads to her break down. As Riley cannot not feel happiness without Joy, both Joy and Sadness try multiple ways to get back into her head.

At one point, Joy attempts to prevent Sadness from having any influence over Riley’s psyche by drawing a small “Circle of Sadness” in chalk and orders Sadness to stay within it. I see it as a funny moment, but as an ISABS practitioner, I recognize that Joy is engaging in the risky behavior of emotional suppression—an emotion-regulation strategy that has been found to lead to anxiety and depression. Sure enough, trying to contain Sadness and deny her a role in the action ultimately backfires for Joy, and for Riley.

In the absence of Joy and Sadness, the other emotions struggle to keep Riley functional but fails. Joy is the most dominant emotion but in her absence, Fear, Anger, and Disgust inadvertently increase Riley's stress and encourage her to plan to run away to her old home, as if that would be the answer to her problems. They plant the idea of stealing her mother's credit card to return to her happy self. The growing dominance of these emotions and recklessness shows Riley's conversion from childhood to adolescence because adolescence is a time of confused, strong emotions in which joy is not always the dominant one.

Possibly the stereotype of the moody teen is where this comes from. It is no surprise therefore, that trying to force herself to be happy actually doesn't help Riley deal with the stresses and transitions in her life. In fact, not only does that strategy fail to bring her happiness, but it also seems to make her feel isolated and angry with her parents, which is factored into her eventual decision to run away from home.

In the final scenes of the film, Riley allows herself to feel sadness in addition to fear and anger, at her idea of running away from home. She then decides not to go through with her plan. This choice reunites Riley with her family, giving her a deeper sense of happiness and contentment in the comfort she gets from her parents, even though it is mixed with sadness and fear.

I realized, after watching the movie, that prioritizing positivity does not mean avoiding or denying negative feelings or the situations that cause them. This kind of single-minded pursuit of happiness can be counterproductive. That is the crucial emotional lesson for Riley and her family when Riley finally admits that moving to San Francisco has been tough on her—an admission that brings her closer to her parents.

Sadness, both the character and the concept, are important - for Riley to adjust to the reality of moving away from her friends, home, and hockey league. Joy finally sees the importance of Sadness despite her apparent undesirability only when Riley cries and confesses to her feelings and is able to adapt to her new situation. Accepting Sadness helps Riley grow up.

As I reflected upon the scene, I realized the validity of what I learnt in the many ISABS Labs I attended - that the emotion of sadness enables people to connect to other people and face realities; and ignoring/hiding sadness only makes matters worse.

In the movie, at first, Joy sees emotions as simple and does not understand that a person can feel two emotions simultaneously. In a pivotal scene, Joy looks back on one of Riley's "core memories"—when the girl misses a shot in an important hockey game—and realizes that the sadness Riley feels afterwards elicits compassion from her parents and friends, making her feel closer to them and transforming this potentially awful memory into one imbued with deep meaning and significance for her. She has an Aha! moment when she notices that she has the ability to feel both sadness and happiness at the same time and thus, memories are not cut and dry, 'this or that'. Joy comes to accept that emotions are complex and no memory evokes just one emotion. This affects the way in which Riley views relationships and memories.

Development of personality is another psychological aspect in the movie. It shows that Riley's mind contains five "islands": Goofball Island, Hockey, Friendship, Honesty, and Family. Each island is highly passion-driven as she cares deeply about them. For Riley, she personally enjoys the experiences of ice hockey, spending time with friends, and goofing around with her parents and she needs to deliberately carve out ample time for those experiences. The islands begin to deteriorate as Riley has unkind

experiences and becomes more depressed, culminating in her running away and shutting off her emotions until Joy and Sadness finally return to the headquarters. After Riley returns home and expresses her true feelings to her parents, each island is rebuilt in course of time and newer islands are also formed.

I loved that Sadness, rather than Joy, emerges as the hero of the movie. Sadness connects deeply with people as a critical component of happiness—and helps Riley also recognize the same process. When Riley’s long-forgotten imaginary friend Bing Bong feels dejected after the loss of his wagon, it is Sadness’ empathic understanding that helps him recover, not Joy’s attempt to put a positive spin on his loss.

In the film’s final chapter, when Joy cedes control to some of her fellow emotions, particularly Sadness, Riley seems to achieve a deeper level of happiness. Emotions indeed shape our personality, and makes us understand why there happens to be a link between being happy and being outgoing, between competitiveness and athleticism, and between love and strong family ties. The film has some deep things to say about the nature of our emotions and has moved viewers - young and old - to take a look at what happens inside of their own minds. I commend the movie's depiction of a girl's mind and how it matures due to the change in environment where the same feelings and same people exist, yet for her, everything has changed.

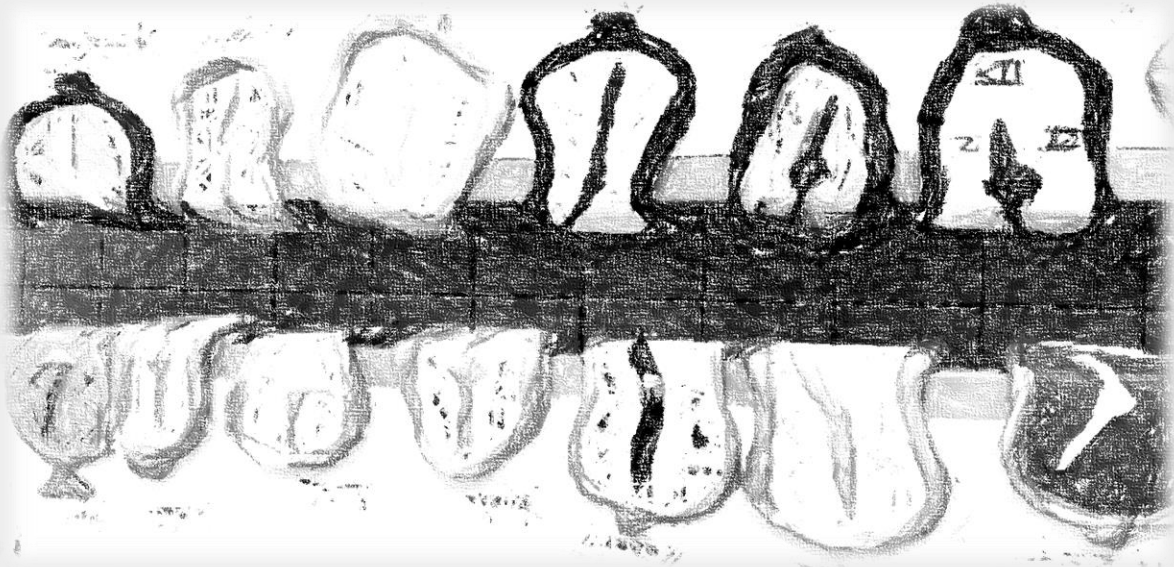
I was able to distil a few other insights in our emotional lives, findings that are also backed by research:

- 1) **Happiness is not just about joy** - There is much more to being happy than boundless positivity.
- 2) **Don’t try to force happiness** – I felt an old, familiar frustration when in the film, Riley’s mother tells her to be her parents’ “happy girl” while the family relocates and her father goes through a difficult period at work. As a child, I got similar messages and used to think that something was wrong with me if I wasn’t happy all the time. Research suggests that making happiness an explicit goal in life can actually make us miserable. The more people strive for happiness, the greater the chance that they would set very high standards of happiness for themselves and feel disappointed and less happy when they are not able to live up to those standards all the time.
- 3) **Mindfully embrace**—rather than suppress—tough emotions, especially Sadness which is vital to our well-being - With great sensitivity, the film reflects on how difficult emotions like sadness, fear, and anger, can be extremely uncomfortable for people to experience—which is why many of us go to great lengths to avoid them. But in the film, as in real life, all of these emotions serve an important purpose by providing insights into our inner and outer environments in ways that can help us connect with others, avoid danger, or recover from loss. Rather than getting caught up in the drama of an emotional reaction, a mindful person keenly observes what they are feeling without judging it as the right or wrong way to feel in a given situation, creating space for themselves to choose a healthy response.

The film’s fundamental messages about emotions are consistent with scientific research even though the movie may not be entirely accurate about the human psyche, since neither humans nor their psyches are that simple. Viewers across the globe have commended the movie for the values it projects. Even when it is an animation movie, adults as well as children are able to enjoy it and in the process, get in touch with feelings and, possibly, foster deeper and more compassionate connections to themselves and those around them.



Ila Sharma is a passionate HR professional who believes in creating a culture of working with heart, leadership with empathy and inclusion with purpose. For Ila, many accomplishments and failures later, it still seems Day One ; with a lot to be learnt and achieved. Ila can be reached on her email: ila.s.sharma@gmail.com, and her LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ila-sharma-644b5a9/>



Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

by MUKTA KAMPLIKAR



I watched 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind' twice and I was at first fascinated by the sheer fictional idea of *being able to erase bad memories*. As I progressed through the film, some deeper meanings emerged. It was quite a journey of what might be – “Looking back, Looking forward.”

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind is a complex, eccentric and delicate love story. Fiction and fantasy, yes, but it also raises interesting questions as we Look Back and Look forward. To me, the film felt surreal, flowing and fresh in terms of a new idea. It had some tear-jerking shots as well. The film investigates real-life themes like love, the nature of attraction, destiny, regret, communication, and the importance of memory. There are a lot of life lessons for relationships and love, of the whole idea of existence and faith. With themes so human, the film resonates with me.

The storyline: Joel Barish (Jim Carrey) is an emotionally withdrawn man and Clementine Kruczynski (Kate Winslet), his girlfriend, is a dysfunctional free spirit. They are inexplicably attracted to each other despite their different personalities. They did not realize it at the time, but they are former lovers now separated after two years together. After a nasty fight, Clementine has had her memories of their relationship erased from her mind. Upon learning this, Joel is devastated and goes to the doctor to have the same procedure done. However, while unconscious, Joel has second thoughts and decides he wants to keep his memories of Clementine. Much of the film takes place in Joel's brain as he tries to find a way to preserve his memories of Clementine, while two Lacuna Corporation techies, Patrick (Elijah Wood) and Stan (Mark Ruffalo) try to erase the memories. We watch their love and courtship go in reverse: The memories are slowly erased while Joel tries his best to resist the procedure and hide inside his mind.

In separate, but related story arcs, the employees of Lacuna Corporation are revealed to be more than peripheral characters in scenes which further show the harm they cause by the memory-altering procedure. Mary (Kirsten Dunst) has had an affair with the married Dr. Howard Mierzwiak (Tom Wilkinson), who heads the company. She agrees to have the affair erased from her memory when his wife discovers the relationship.

Lonely, socially inept Patrick becomes fixated on Clementine and uses Joel's personal mementos that he gave to Lacuna as part of the procedure, to seduce her. These romantic entanglements turn out to have a critical effect on the main storyline of the relationship between Joel and Clementine.

Once Mary remembers the affair she has had with Mierzwiak, she steals the company's records and sends these to all its clients. Thus, Joel and Clementine both get to listen to their initial tape recordings at Lacuna, and afterwards realize that even if everything in life isn't perfect, their relationship can still be worthwhile. The title of the movie is taken from poet Alexander Pope's 1717 poem "Eloise to Abelard". Dr Mierzwiak's staff are enamored of Nietzsche's paradox about how the strong man forgets what he cannot master: "Blessed are the forgetful, for they get the better even of their blunders."

Moving on and getting closure - which is what the end of relationships is supposed to be all about - is easier said than done. Not dwelling or brooding or obsessing about why someone fell out of love with you is easier said than done. In the absence of marriage for life, serial monogamy is what people have come to expect. And so, cultivating the art of forgetting to manage these transitions is easier said than done. Oblivion, of the kind suggested in the film, could offer peace, but evidently at the cost of self-destruction, which is clear when Joel passionately feels that his unhappiness over Clementine is actually a part of his identity. Moving to a paradisaical land could be great, but it is also frightening to imagine a future in which our current happiness and unhappiness will no longer exist. There is a flowy surreal mist that takes over the mind at this juncture in the film and makes you question your ways, your meaning making, your choice- making at various points in time. Extrapolation of some of these to my own life, my ideas of love, my romantic fantasies, crushing realities that call out those fantasies, the so-called elephantine memory I have, the suffering it is likely to bring when I haven't processed my experiences, the barrage of emotions, my own meaning-making and choices, and then bringing it all together - was indeed a rich experience for me. Like Walt Whitman says - "These are the days that must happen to you."

Some of the dialogues from the film that stay with me:

(Joel Barish to Clementine) *"I could die right now, Clem. I'm just... happy. I've never felt that before. I'm just exactly where I want to be."*

(Clementine to Joel): *"Joel, look at me. You'll remember me in the morning, and you'll come to me, and you'll tell me about us, and we'll start over."*

*"Too many guys think I'm a concept, or I complete them, or I'm gonna make them alive. But I'm just a f*cked-up girl who's lookin' for my own peace of mind; don't assign me yours."*

(Joel aloud): *"What a loss to spend that much time with someone, only to find out that she's a stranger." ... "I wish I had stayed too. NOW I wish I had stayed. I wish I had done a lot of things. I wish I had... I wish I had stayed. I do."*

(Mary, quoting Nietzsche): *"Blessed are the forgetful, for they get the better even of their blunders."*

The film instantly reminded me of this work (below) by Salvador Dali that I was stunned by at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Called *The Persistence of Memory*, it plunges the viewer into a dreamlike and definitely strange universe, contraposes Surrealism to reality and questions the ineluctability of time. Are we really at the mercy of time? Dalí's painting suggests that time passes but leaves behind memories; the memories persist.



Mukta Kamplikar Ph.D. is an intern at ISABS. She is the founder and chief consultant at MUKTA – Liberating Human Potential (a Human Capital Development and OD Consulting firm). She is also associated with Heidrick and Struggles and KPMG . Mukta paints and writes with passion and has published 4 poetry books that are available on Amazon. Mukta also dabbles in theatre and uses many art forms in her work.

She can be reached at - mukta.kamplikar@gmail.com and [+919920960075](tel:+919920960075)

POEMS



I shall let it be

By MUKTA KAMPLIKAR

I will think of you when I see out in the distant water

- those ships hidden behind the far-off island...

I will think of you when there is an unexpected downpour - thunders from nowhere

I will think of you with care...

When I see a burst of wildflowers in an unlikely place

I will think of your face

When I see flying birds getting lost behind a cloud

or when I suddenly laugh out aloud

I will think of you when a mountain whose other side I haven't seen will make me wonder

of what it could be like

...but I won't go on that hike to see

I shall just let it be ...

Let the other side be the other side

I shall just wait to be surprised -

all over again

(Of Freedom and Fairytales | Mukta | 2021)



Differently !

By MUKTA KAMPLIKAR

...Now that I have grown or so I presume
And I know that I am dying every hour
There's stuff to love and care about
so am more oblivious to who you are ...
and I have learnt to miss you differently !
I have learnt to miss you to the core
so much so I don't have to anymore .
because it's often cool and not too bad
to miss something, I've never had !

(Of Freedom and Fairytales Tales | 2022 | Mukta)



Mukta Kamplikar, Ph.D. is an intern at ISABS. She is the founder and chief consultant at MUKTA – Liberating Human Potential (a Human Capital Development and OD Consulting firm). She is also associated with Heidrick and Struggles and KPMG . Mukta paints and writes with passion and has published 4 poetry books. Mukta also dabbles in theatre and uses many art forms in her work.

She can be reached at - mukta.kamplikar@gmail.com and [+919920960075](tel:+919920960075)

For so long

By **NEHA GUPTA**

For so long I ran away
Afraid of shadows
Looming large.
For so long
I listened to the world
The clamor
The noise
Drowning the soft beats
Of that eternal heart.
I hid
I ran
I walked away with bravado
I wept
I clung on like a stubborn child...
To the mirage.
Maya - the ultimate irony
Of our lives
The illusion
Of comfort
Security
Certainty
In things outside.
Till one day
There was choice no more.
I had to come back home
To my own soul.
Sure, the path is rocky
The winds cold
Nights balmy
My shoes wear out sometimes
Sometimes there is no rest
Yet sometimes
Joy sparkles
Lightness spreads within
No unnatural high
But from a source pure
It's a long road
A long way to go
All I know,
There is running away no more

The shadows are larger
From a distance
They are less menacing
Up close Step by wavery step
I come home
To my own soul.



Neha Gupta is an Executive Coach, Organization Development Consultant and Facilitator based out of Mumbai. She is the Founder of Alchemy of Organization Development, an MBA and a Certified Organization Development Practitioner (ODCP). She holds that both the rational and creative, the conscious as well as unconscious aspects of the self, have to be understood and celebrated for individuals, teams and systems to work at their best. In her work she brings both a mind and heart connection. She loves metaphors, travelling and the sea.



PAINTINGS

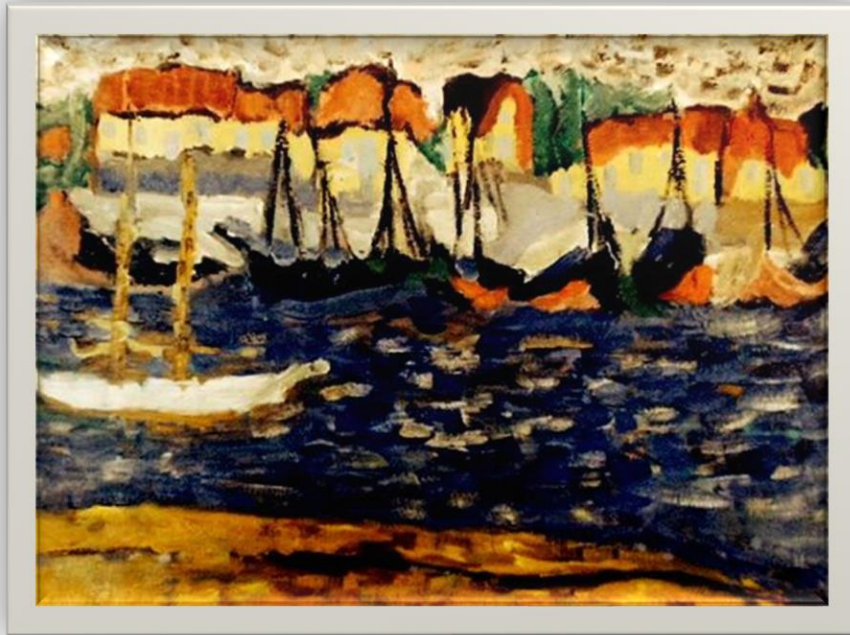




orange candy by MUKTA KAMPLIKAR



the black taxi by MUKTA KAMPLIKAR



...colors by the sea

by MUKTA KAMPLIKAR



...goa

by MUKTA KAMPLIKAR

UPDATES



Uploading...

Connection, Co-creation, and Celebration!

Behind the scenes planning for ISABS Golden Jubilee 2022

The Golden Jubilee (GJ) group to design and execute the 50th anniversary celebrations was set up by Joy, our President, early in 2021. Raji, Ruchi and Joy were the members. I joined this group much later in the year. Payal and Sunita joined towards the beginning of 2022.

When individuals or institutions celebrate a milestone, they tend to approach them at two levels – action level and reflection level. Action in celebration is a spontaneous joyful expression of the gathering. Behaviorally, one would witness activities, fun, games, music, dance, cake-cutting and so on. In contrast, reflection is a process of bringing back memories of the past, distilling the learning from the journey and contemplating the future. Behaviorally, one would witness storytelling, honoring the contributions of members and envisioning the future as a community.

It was clear to our group that we needed a blend of both action and reflection in our design. But implementing such a design, especially in a diverse community like ISABS, was not an easy task. Some of our colleagues can break into a song or dance at the drop of a hat and some would like serious introspection as a community on our contributions and failures as a society. The challenge was to honor and blend both these processes.

The post-pandemic scenario in the country posed an additional challenge. ISABS hadn't met as a community for the past two years since no in-person events were held during the Covid pandemic. Many of us were looking forward to meeting friends and colleagues in person and hence the need for interpersonal connection was high.

The challenge was to design a two-day event that honored and enabled all the three processes - connection, reflection, and action. We made these the three themes for our design – Connection, Co-creation, and Celebration!

Creating the themes was the easier part of the job! Converting these themes to a workable design, keeping in mind the venue, the number of people coming in, our culture of music, poetry and movement, the weather in Goa and our own inclinations was the tougher part. Long processes of dialogue, critiquing, conflicts, feedback, and our own reflections helped the design to emerge from these themes. In retrospect, I must admit that our own microcosmic processes of connection, co-creation and celebrations helped us to imagine the larger macrocosm of the GJ event.

We divided the tasks amongst us where Ruchi and Raji focused on the connection and celebration dimensions – the session on writing, poetry and drumming and the party. Payal and I took up the design of sessions on co-creation, while Joy focused on the formal session along with all the gifts to be given, people to be honored, etc. Sunita took responsibility for communication. In addition

to us, the ISABS administration team of Subhojit, Vennaa and Mohan did a great job in managing all the logistics.

The design process also held the value of blending the themes together rather than holding them in separate compartments. For example, when we began by thinking of telling stories of ISABS, we also designed it using the café method so that people could mix, connect, and celebrate while co-creating the story. Similarly, when we designed the session on music and poetry, we brought in the element of celebrating each other by writing letters or poems.

It was also important for us to keep the design light, provide space for people to freely flow and find their own rhythm while allowing processes to emerge in the moment. We knew only too well that our community rebels against things they are forced to do and hence choice needed to be provided - always!

The next challenge was to communicate the event and the design to the community in a manner that would generate excitement, curiosity and signing up. Our initial efforts in that direction met with a tepid response. Sunita focused exclusively on this area along with Ruchi to bring creativity and energy to our communication process. The results started showing up when nominations to the event surged.

To cut a long story short, we were on tenterhooks till we concluded the event and announced lunch on the second day. We knew that the ISABS community was not totally predictable, and that anything could happen that could completely change the process! We were prepared to abandon the design, if need be, and deal with the moment. I believe that the magnitude of the moment and the love we all hold for our dear institution won the day and every moment was one of connection, co-creation, and celebration.

The design team had just one regret. Ruchi, who was one of the founders of the GJ planning group and had worked tirelessly to make this happen, couldn't make it to the event because of personal circumstances. We missed her presence, and she missed being there too.

The ISABS Golden Jubilee helped us to honor our past and dream of our future while strongly being connected to the present. We will celebrate a fabulous past and a brighter future as an institution when we celebrate ISABS's Diamond Jubilee.

I hope to be there!

- **R. Sankarasubramanian with inputs from some erstwhile GJ core team members**

—

ISABS Golden Jubilee Snapshots 2022



Regional updates 2022

Southern – Hema Sekhar

In June - we attempted an in-person regional meeting. But as the attendance was rather low, we decided to go back to online meetings.

In September, we held a Regional Event in Bangalore. There were 6 labs: 1 Kannada BLHP , 4 English BLHP , and 1 ALHP. In all, 48 participants attended: 26 women and 22 men. We felt very heartened at the increasing number of women attending our events. We had facilitators from all regions and a really diverse group of participants, making for a rich learning event.

On the joyous occasion of the launch of ISABS book 'T Group Facilitation-Theory and Practice of Applied Behavioral Science,' Lalitha Iyer (Co-author and Co-editor of the book) shared her perspectives on Applied Behavioral Science at an online Southern Region meeting. The session was based on the chapter she wrote for the book, the first chapter in the book. We had a wonderful interactive session.

Western – Sonali Kelkar

Mumbai

The Western Zone September Regional Event, an n-person event, was held in Nasik. We had 4 labs: 3 BLHPs and 1 ALHP. There were 31 participants – 11 of them from the social sector - and an observer. The event went of very well indeed with keen involvement of all present

Wisdom Circles, an initiative mooted and anchored by Professional member Sankara Subramanyan for 2 years were held over the year. Each session had a professional member make a presentation on some aspect of Applied Behavioral Science, followed by discussion. This year's Wisdom Circles were as follows:

1. Gender processes in T Groups - by Uma Jain
2. Creative Action methods - by TT Srinath
3. Tavistock Approach to Group Relations - by Anuradha Prasad
4. Gestalt OD - by Sushma Sharma
5. An Introduction to Hypnosis and how it plays out in T Groups - by Khirod Pattanayak

Activities in Pune

Online Sessions were held on a range of topics related to ABS and T-Groups:

- 1. June'22- Anxiety and Group Processes - Facilitator -Tina Ratra
- 2. July'22 - Authority and Group Processes - Facilitator Prachi Kelker
- 3. Aug'22 - Rules of confrontation - Facilitator- Aroon Joshi
- 4. October'22 - Reflections from the lab: ODCP batch 14 - Facilitators - Aroon, Aishwarya and Rashmi



- 5. November'22 - FOMO - Fear of Missing Out - Priya
- 6. December 22 Polarity Management – Leena John



Eastern – Khirod Pattanaik

The Region held 2 events: at Kolkata and Bhubaneswar in August and September 2022 respectively. The Kolkata event had one Basic lab and the Bhubaneswar event had 2 Basic labs.

We held 2 meetings of Professional Members and Associate Members of the Region. Both were held online. Having these online helped more members to take part in keeping in touch with one another.

A larger than expected number of people from the Region attended the ISABS Golden Jubilee celebrations at Goa in July. We are hoping that our outreach efforts are yielding better results.

Khirode's term as Regional Coordinator ends on December 31st, 2022. Consultations amongst the PMs in the Region have resulted in consensus over Snigdha taking over as the next RC. Wishing her and the Region all the best for the next 3 years of her term.

Letters to the Editor and Feedback on the Issue:

Please send your feedback and suggestions to isabs.hnn@gmail.com



**Here and Now Team — Kantha Rao, VLK Sarma, Lakshmi Raman, Sanjyot Pethe,
Mukta Kamplikar**

Design and Layout — Mukta Kamplikar

