

Here and Now

June 2022

My ISABS journey

Editorial

It is a pleasure to release the first issue of “Here and Now” for 2022.

The theme is ‘My ISABS Journey’ that lets us all look at how the going has been, the milestones, the roadblocks and how each one of us has faced these and other challenges and what the journey has meant to us in our life and work.

The pandemic is far from over, and its impact is still negatively affecting lives—our own and those of our near and dear as also our work-life balance, well-developed coping mechanisms notwithstanding.

As in the last issue, our contributors speak about the insights they gained about themselves and the learnings that they have valued as guiding their lives as a consequence of their ISABS journey and new perspectives that have broadened their horizon.

Sunita Raut speaks about how natural it felt for her to be in the here-and-now and to be working with her feelings of the moment. Dipen Sharma ponders over the happiness that has eluded him despite achieving significant success in his career.

Srinath shares about the impact several colleagues in ISABS had made on him along his journey and the learnings he has internalized in the process. Krushna Sawant talks in her reflective piece about her shift from an Introvert to an Extrovert.

Sanjyot links her own experiences in the journey to those of the protagonist Dan Miller in the movie “Peaceful Warrior” in facing and overcoming challenges due to her perseverance and through help she received from ISABS colleagues in strengthening her resolve to fight on. Kiran Lalsangi speaks about how inter-dependence helped his group transform into an energetic and self-reliant team.

Poonam and Ila bring out the continuing impact and relevance of Carl Rogers’ book “On Becoming a Person” in their review of the book.

Mukta Kamplikar in her poems delves deep into her ‘other self’ and the quest resonates with every one of us.

South, East and West Regions continue to hold meetings and run regular events including special learning sessions online while going ahead with in-person events. Go to the Regional Roundup section for interesting details of their activities.

But for the untiring and relentless efforts of all the members of our H&N team (VLK, Lakshmi, Mukta, Sanjyot and Kantha), this issue would not have seen the light of the day. We cannot thank each of them adequately.

To be associated with the team continues to be a pleasant and enriching experience also helping us upgrade our own skill sets in using today’s technology in communication.

VLK Sarma | Lakshmi Raman | Kantha Rao



Reflections



ISABS and I

T.T. Srinath

In April 1994, I was pursuing a fellow program that was being offered for the first time by The Academy of HRD, in association with XLRI and IIMA.

I was one among the first batch who had enrolled for this program.

The first contact program was organized in the IIMA Campus and among those who instructed us were Udai Pareek and TV Rao.

Over an informal chat with Udai and a longer one with TV, both of them recommended I consider training with ISABS.

I was given an introduction to PVR Murthy who lived in Chennai, the city I lived in too and PVR was also a professional member of ISABS.

My first lab, the BLHP, I attended was in Mysore, where Yawar Baig was my facilitator.

Vish (G Vishwanath) was an intern at that event, and he was working with Ganesh Chella who was facilitating a parallel lab.

I was admitted as a professional member of our community in 2000.

During the 6 years that I took to join our community I experienced various professional members in their capacity as facilitators of either the labs and the journey I coursed through to gain professional membership or as role holders, such as the Dean PDP, who was responsible to maintain the standards for

admission of a member, facilitators who I interned with, before being considered competent to be admitted or the two/ three persons who mentored me.

As Disney, which says it is in 'the happiness business,' I choose to think ISABS is in the 'business of fostering relationships'.

Given this conviction I am writing, briefly though, about those persons who saw me through the journey and have supported my ascendancy both as a facilitator, if I may so hazard, and as a well-meaning human being.

Yawar: it was probably the first time, sitting among fellow human beings that I was confronted by my lack of courage to hold myself both accountable and responsible. Yawar, his facilitation style being direct, pushed for me to admit my fears. There was no coercion, only his sharing in the 'then and there' (the event having occurred over 20 years ago) his experience of me as I spoke. What it meant to disclose, I received my first experience of.

Oriol and Sukhi: Oriol was largely reticent and spoke almost monosyllabically and it was Sukhwinder, who as an intern, in what I presume was one of her last internships did not restrain herself and offered 'feedback' as she observed, with data and without judgment. The loop of self-disclosure and feedback, both of which form the bedrock of our process have been learnings that I imbibed from my first 2 labs.

Somesh: Somesh Chadda, who facilitated the first week of Phase A, pursued the discipline of eliciting responses that required each of us to stay with what was happening to us. The distinction between thinking and feeling concretized in me owing to the week in the lab.

Uma and Lalitha: Uma Jain as facilitator and Lalitha as a senior intern, also I imagine her final internship, revealed with least doubt the importance of being 'present.' Nothing that did not belong to the group or was not spoken in the lab was allowed to be brought up. Observing what was going on within the confines of the lab and responding only to what was actually being spoken about, erased the possibility of losing focus and rid the group of conjecture, interpretation and unexamined evaluation.

Sushma: In week 1 of phase B, with only 4 participants, Sushma facilitated interaction by bringing forth spontaneity and creativity. Without prescribing she pushed for each of us to claim our space and offer in the moment ourselves without inhibition. The surfacing of dormant potential, one of our stated objectives, found expression in the room.

In a twist to the 'discomfort with ambiguity', she halfway through the lab, sprung Vasu on us, who was facilitating another lab, and leaving us with him left us. Vasu, very definitive both in style and intent, surfaced polarities by merely listening to us as we talked with one another and left us to hold those extremities without apology. How the lab can actually become an 'existential crucible' was a remarkable learning.

Udai and Rolf: Week 2 gave us the experience of balanced congruence. Both Udai and Rolf, sedate and purposeful, with the precision of a surgeon sewed up the loose ends for us.

Rupert: Rupert, Dean PDP who saw me through my years in the professional stream was unbending in what he sought from me. Every log I submitted had to be discussed and with his predilection for mathematical accuracy he believed in being brief and direct. Surely, I have learnt to conserve the verbosity

of language and expression from him. He told me to wait for what needs to be said and if it is imperative, it will find its way into the group. To pre-empt is tantamount to suicide, is what he told me once.

Vara and Rajanna: Both of them mentored me. Vara taught me the essence of mutuality, the need to feel and be equal and Rajanna what patience can do to push the envelope without having to arrogate to us the responsibility of enforcing shifts and change in people.

Marisa, Ram, Partha, Viren, Sanjib and Sushma: I co- trained with each of them.

Today after almost 28 years in the community, I know I carry within me a little of each of them.

In conclusion:

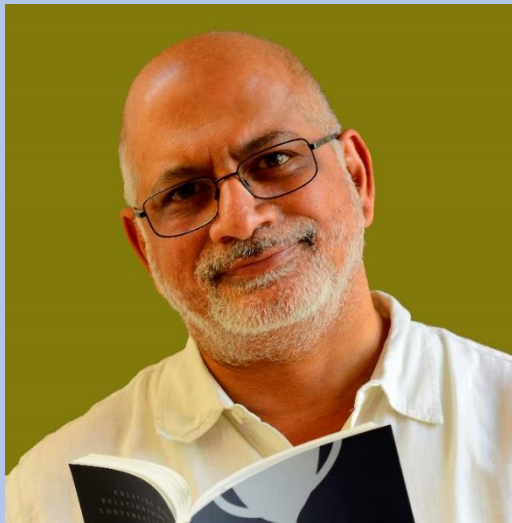
I have gained stature among the many I met,

This course was in 1994 set.

Whether ordained or chanced upon,

Surely child to man to child was born;

This today has unfettered me, Gratitude to ISABS and blessed it be.



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My Pune ISABS group experience

Kiran_Lalsangi

I did my phase A in 2011 and I got a recommendation to do one more advanced lab. In my ISABS journey it was not easy to accept and work on different feedbacks. To work on beliefs around religion, caste, class and gender was challenging to say the least. I found it difficult to see various patterns and human processes and work on feedback after the labs. My mentor Sridhar Kshirsagar supported me throughout and helped me to work through these challenges.

I was struggling to explore and work through almost continuously. In this process I was looking for opportunities (in Pune where I live) to consistently keep working on myself. In those days Prerana Rane was managing and coordinating the ISABS western region. I saw that they conducted monthly meetings in Mumbai. These meetings had some professional members along with different people at different stages in the journey of ISABS. I wished to attend a few meetings but couldn't, as it was impractical to travel to Mumbai every month only for these brief meetings, also given the fact that I was also working for a living. One day, I called up Prerana and asked if some of these meetings she was holding could be done in Pune. I told her I have other ISABians like Tina Ratra and Prachi Kelkar in Pune who would also be interested.

Prerana said – “well, if you have Aroon Joshi and Rahul Joshi, two professional members , why don't you hold those meetings there?” I initiated a conversation with Aroon and asked him if we could conduct monthly meetings in Pune. He immediately agreed to conduct such meetings at his home. After a few days, Tina Ratra whom I knew from Phase-A and two other members Amit dhabi and Vinita Saxena from Panchgani, also pursuing their ISABS journey, decided to join our group at the formative stage. So, Tina, Amit, Rahul, Vinita and me that was our group agreed to meet at Aroon's place on the 25 September 2016. However, due to a rally in Pune on that day and other reasons that rendered travel difficult, we thought that the meeting would have to be cancelled. But I was the only person who despite everything wanted to go to Aroon's place. I presumed that since I am the only one, Aroon may not be interested in a

one- on- one meeting. I called Aroon and he said, “So what? you just come. Even if there is one person, we will start monthly meetings.” That statement has stayed with me.

Amit, Tina, Vinita and I have been making these meetings happen now continuously for the last 5 – 6 years. Gradually, Manoj Walsangkar, Mukta Kamplikar and Anuja joined in. Leena John, Annie Acharya, Sandhya Kulkarni, Aishwarya Hariharan, Sanjana Vaidya and Mukund Joglekar also started dropping in for our sessions. In 2020 Mukul Joshi shifted to Pune and became part of the group.

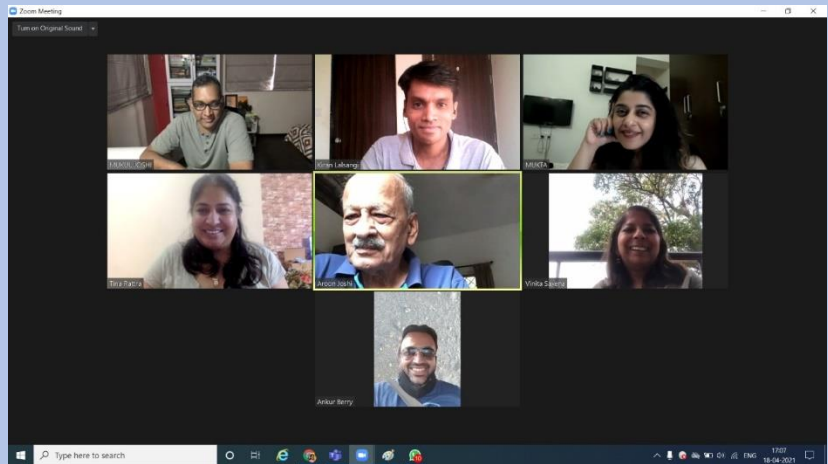
I was eager to learn. We decided to follow subjects from our ISABS Phase A brochure, and I started learning from that. We had topics like Intra-personal, Interpersonal and group processes, Defense mechanisms, self-esteem, Transactional analysis, catharsis , group development, power and gender for discussion and Q and A sessions in our monthly meetings. I also took up a few topics like defence mechanisms, self-esteem, diagnosis, Phenomenology and Dialogic self-theory, gender etc., Here in this forum, I also got the opportunity to facilitate two one-day labs - one with Tina rattrra and the other with Krushna Sawant. Aiswarya also took an initiative. She organized some pro bono labs for MBA students of K.J. Somaiya college with the support of Prof. Dr. Shiji Lyndon. I got an opportunity to work with Archana Srivastav for one of these labs. Our Pune meetings gave us conceptual understanding of processes, helped us explore depths of what we did in labs. These meetings gave us space to learn, to laugh, to cry and to share our vulnerabilities. They created bonding between people, and we as a group experienced a team spirit. We conducted more than 45 meetings even during the lockdown over Zoom and kept sharing and learning throughout. I would also like to believe that these meetings were a support system during those difficult days. I went through a journey from a learner to a competitor and then to collaborator in this group.

When I and my family suffered from Covid and its after-effects, I shared what I went through with our Pune group and felt tremendously supported and held.

From my Phase A until now, I have facilitated four labs as an intern (besides of course practice labs that I do for my learning). For me, my ISABS journey is meaningful and challenging. The Pune group helped me develop an ability and an attitude to learn and understand processes. It is and will always be a wonderful space for all of us to explore and experiment and learn.

I have deep gratitude for our group. I specifically want to say this about Aroon. Most of our meetings were held at Aroon’s place and he was present in all those meetings. He always gave us an environment to learn and thrive. Since last two years Mukul Joshi is also very active and present for us for most of our meetings.

Beginning as a learning group for progress in my ISABS journey, we in the group now experience the process of learning as a joyful one. . We are eager to meet each other every month and take time to decide our subjects to learn and look forward to our upcoming meetings.





Kiran Lalsangi is a Learning and development Consultant He also designs and conducts leadership programs around team building, Diversity and Inclusion. He has written many articles for newspapers, books and magazines. He also published paper on diversity. Kiran has a passion about music he sings and plays different music instruments.



My Deep Reflective Piece

Krushna R Sawant

This reflective piece is an integral part of my Co-facilitation Log which I had written and submitted in month of January 2022, after successfully completing my 5th Co-facilitation in SABRANG EVENT 2021, Delhi.

I am happy to share this reflective piece of my inner process work in this edition of H&N.

Over the past few months, I have been reflecting deeply on my ISABS Journey from BLHP till date and wanted to include this piece in my last and 5th Co-facilitation Log without which my log would be incomplete.

In last 11 years and eight months of my ISABS Journey which is on-going, what emerges for me is the shifts that I have made within me and consequently the changes that have come over me and in my being.

From a “Me” who was an introvert, performance-anxiety driven, averse to feedback, judgemental and not open but experiencing the need for closure in my interactions,

I have, after working gradually and consistently over the years, evolved

as a “Me” who is an extrovert and open to feedback, while performance-anxiety though still present, works as fuel for me to achieve!

On reflection, I realised that my passion for process work with my inner self, awareness of my vulnerability and my spirit of volunteerism--- a wonderful combination ---was instrumental in my journey.

In my pursuit of ISABS Journey and my need to work on self, after my ALHP, I started attending the monthly Process meetings that used to take place in the Western region’s Professional Members’ residence twice in a month. I later found other spaces to carry on the work when Labs weren’t happening for me, and process meetings eventually stopped.

So, in my desire to learn experientially and experiment, I chose to work as a volunteer in ISABS spaces. It started with my volunteering for GUNJAN Event in the year 2014 and since then I haven’t stopped volunteering.

While I volunteered for all Gunjan Event since 2014, I also participated in various theme labs that were conducted during the event and I also got concession in fees. I continued to volunteer and participate in Gunjan Events till the very end.

Years later and in the recent past, I volunteered once again and took initiative to anchor Learning Sessions for Western Region, at first in person and later on, in the online mode from December 2019 to December 2020.

Also, simultaneously I volunteered as Event Buddy for ISABS online Events, of which I worked for two events and also conducted online Zoom Orientation for participants of these online events. I contributed to ISABS Learning Management Systems (LMS), by volunteering to make a few parts of LMS content grammatically correct and have also translated ISABS Ethics Code from English to Marathi just before Udaan Event in 2020. Simultaneously I have also volunteered to work with Human Process Inquiry for few months till I got busy with my Post Graduation in Urdu Literature.

I must say, I got all these opportunities because I was willing to avail of them and also because ISABS supported me. The Western Region stood behind me unconditionally and empowered me to do all this!! My spirit of Volunteerism helped me also in my inner process work.

I found it challenging to be with people and to work with them as I was not comfortable in claiming my space while with them. I am sharing an insightful work of mine. Claiming my space was something that I was depriving myself of.

Gradually I learnt that too! Now I claim my space, and in doing so I am assertive and available to the other person. Initially when I was experimenting with it, I sometimes came across as slightly irritated, aggressive and anxious---irritated with self, I realized later on reflection, as I was trying a new pattern and anxious because it was challenging for me, as I was doing something that was different from my regular behaviour, and turning out to be aggressive in the process. I also became aware that it demanded stoic strength. While claiming my space, I was aggressive with the other person, for it then stemmed from my belief that to claim one's space, one needs to be aggressive and in doing so, I realised later, that while I was available to self, I was not available to the other person. This realization gave me another dimension to work on my inner process, whereby it made me reflect and consider the various choices available to make the interaction effective to all concerned.

What I found most challenging in the process of claiming my space was first checking with self and then saying what I felt like without getting anxious about whether that's what others want too! And that was the next level of progression that I had to learn to achieve and that meant, what matters is "ME" and while taking care of myself, I am still available to others, by being assertive and compassionate simultaneously.

Yep! Rarely though, my scale tips towards the others involved and I do consciously abandon myself, but that happens because doing so gives me happiness and joy!!

There were challenges that I experienced within self, but I never stopped working with passion, facing these challenges. While doing this, I fell, got wounded but got up and with renewed vigour continued to make shifts and evolve I did, though gradually but definitely.

Given my introverted disposition, volunteering to work and face people in roles such as coordinator and anchor, as I now look back and reflect, I see myself having made the shift and embracing the change that is experienced in the core of my being and has brought me this far in my journey.

This journey has consequently impacted my professional and personal life in an effective way and has made me continue to be in this space at my professional and personal front too. It empowered me to challenge self and explore terrains that I felt were challenging and difficult for me. It opened whole new avenues of opportunities to work with self and to grow and evolve.

As I started doing co-facilitation, I grew a little more bit by bit. In each co-facilitation, I experimented and tested self, learnt from the participants, from their sharing, from my co-facilitators and from the community sessions!

However, even now I experience Performance Anxiety, but it's no longer the all-consuming fire with its flames it used to be, but a warm hearth. In this journey of mine what helped me was my Honesty, Vulnerability, Determination, Perseverance, Resilience and support from ISABS and few of its members

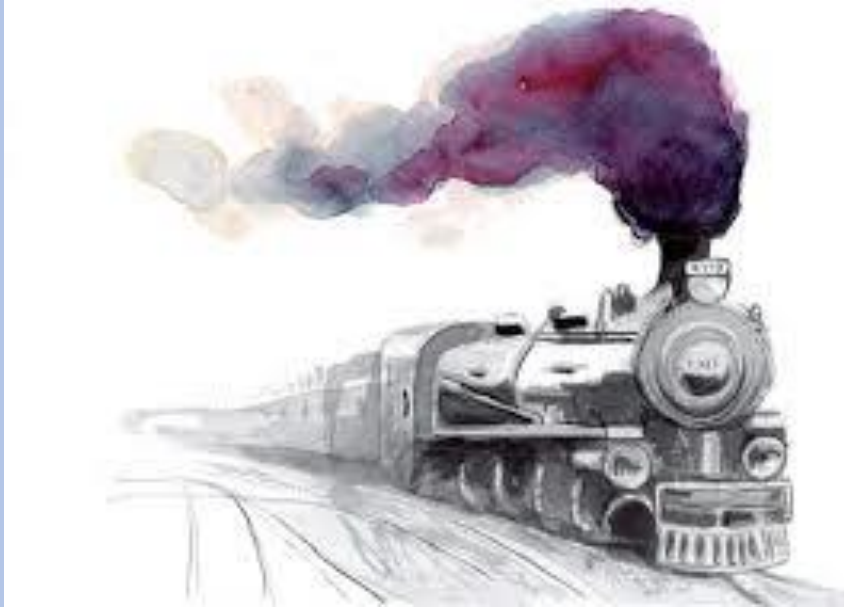
without which I would not be where I am today. I like the way I have evolved, and I am in touch with abundance of gratitude towards people who have helped me in various stages of my journey.

I am not done nor are all my challenges conquered, there's miles to go and I feel it's just a step that I have taken towards Inner process work, an iceberg awaits me, and I am ready and willing to dive deep. In Gratitude to all those who walked with me and held the space for me to evolve and grow..... 😊



Krushna R Sawant is an intern at ISABS. She is a counsellor, and yoga therapist. Presently she is Professor at Pillai's Institute of Management Studies and Research. She is passionate about Cross Country Driving and Languages. She is Shayara and her Sher o Shayari in Urdu & Farsi have been published in various publications. Krushna R Sawant can be reached at krushnarsawant@gmail.com





Another life Another lifetime

Sunita Raut

It was in the year 1995 that I believe I did my BHP. Yes, it was another lifetime. However, it seems like yesterday as every moment is etched in my memory. Perhaps, that is the greatest advantage of living in the here and now for me. It has given me a way to remember things, something which I have had a challenge with since my childhood.

I still remember that I felt like a fish in water. My experience was unlike many others who I have spoken to over the years for whom T-Group seemed foreign. You see, as I mentioned earlier, I have had a memory and concentration challenge since my childhood and this translates into learning difficulties in a traditional setting which, for me, focuses mostly on the adult learning stage of Abstract Conceptualisation. Concrete Experiencing, Reflective Observation on one's own lived reality, Active Experimentation which is the alternative way of learning that ISABS introduced to me was a delightful new world. Throughout my school years, university and my MBA I had struggled with brain fog, with blanking out, with great difficulty in holding my attention in class, an inability to read through books and study material. So, of course, I have been judged as an insincere student who day dreams.

ISABS was a completely different story for me. I went through my BLHP with distinction if one can call it that. My facilitators told me that I could go directly to Phase A if I wanted. I remember how happy and at the same time surprised I was. You all can now guess for sure the reasons behind that.

What made the difference for me was that what we had to do in a T-Group was to tap into our feelings as they were emerging. And this made me alive. I noticed that my brain functioned spectacularly when not only I but others were in the here-and-now and operating from their feelings. Over the years I have mapped how precisely those events of my life where I was fully present — i.e. alive with all my emotions and completely in the here and now— are the ones where I have none of the challenges I shared with you earlier.

I jokingly say that I have an internal ISABS meter. If I feel the drowsiness overpowering me it means I have moved into my thoughts and am no longer in the here-and-now. As I scan my environment I notice that it many times is also an indicator of where the people around me— some or all— are operating from. So, if there is a lot of talk on theories and concepts, information is shared without feelings, when people are saying something but somehow it seems that they mean something else my brain starts to shut down and I feel the brain fog and the overpowering sleepiness descend on me like a dark cloud.

In the past few years I have started some explorations about what my physical and mental challenges could be about. It has been a tough journey as many people discount it as whining and a bad attitude. So, my explorations have largely been individual and now I take help of a mental health professional. I am beginning to get some answers that are helping me to connect the dots from ISABS, T-Groups, being in the Here and Now, having access to attention and concentration, and overcoming memory challenges. All of this is purely based on my own mental struggles and my discoveries along the way as I try to achieve the same results as most people around me do. It is also the early stages of my explorations and the reasons for all of my mental challenges are certainly very complex.

I do not wish to drag you all into the complexity so I will focus on a very small discovery. It seems that I was born with a brain that was different from others and there is a possibility that a certain area of the brain called the hippocampus may be smaller for me. Hippocampus, for those of you who possibly don't know, plays a major role in learning and memory functions. So, having a smaller hippocampus could definitely be one possible source of my memory and learning challenges.

Now, I want to bring your attention purely to the practice of being in the here and now i.e. being fully present. Here we have an overlap with the practice of mindfulness which some describe as having a mental state of focus, awareness, and openness. Apparently this state of presence allows us to engage fully in what we are doing at any moment. It seems that research is pointing towards the fact that mindfulness training boosts the density of hippocampus and therefore increases the activity in these areas.

I hope that you are beginning to see, just as I do, the connection between ISABS, T-Groups, practice of Here and Now and how that can help a brain with a smaller hippocampus to overcome memory and learning challenges. So, it is possible that there is a scientific explanation to why a person like me who had learning challenges in a traditional set-up did well in a T-Group.

For me the excitement lies in being able to find a non- pill option to working on my brain fog, blanking out, day dreaming, memory challenges, learning disabilities etc. I am right now experimenting with bringing T-groupish way of being and behaving in more and more spaces in my life. I find that I am able to overcome my mental challenges by consciously practicing many of the T-group behaviours in my day to day life.

One of the strong reflections I had was that even today when a participant of my lab from decades back meets me, I am able to recall that person's journey in the lab. It is amazing as in my normal life I still struggle with simple things like remembering codes on my credit card for example, something I use almost everyday. So, I am thinking constantly about of how can I use my brain in a T-group style in an everyday context so that I can have the same concentration, attention and memory as I have from my lab experiences.

I continue to struggle with mental concentration, and memory challenges even today. However, I am becoming better at turning on what I started calling 'my here and now brain function', I do it to concentrate in meetings and conversations. Just as I remember events of my lab, I am beginning to remember contents of my interactions long after the meetings are over. In fact, what is amusing is that I have noticed that I have started having a better memory than others despite my learning disability.

In a filmy way I can say, “I got another life due to ISABS”

And thus the title of my life journey with ISABS— Another life, another lifetime

So all in all it has been a worth while ride and the wonderful friends I made in the bargain are just the cherry on top of a delicious cake.



Sunita works at Four Rooms of Change Group, Sweden. It is the conscious, consistent practice of this theory and model that brought her the realisations that she shares. She says with confidence that more than a professional degree it is life seen from the Four Rooms lens that has taught her the lessons that defines who she is today. You can reach her at sunita.raut@fourrooms.com







Poems and Paintings

Who am I?

I am a delicate thread that connected me to you
I am water that flowed from the eyes when we emoted
I am the sound that emerged when we played ...and argued
I am the helplessness of being misunderstood
I am the magnanimity of warm friends and givers
I am a surprise thrown by an occasional stranger
I am the heat of fights and passion
I am the hurt of unrequited love
I am the defiance of paternal
authority
and the apple of a grandfather's
eye
I am joy that could make them
sing
I am a possibility of anything
My insides hold some people
and moments
and they hold potential.
This is what I am made up of
This is who I am



Mukta

Chase

I am Not done with him

Nor is He!

There are many layers to him than I have discovered

I love him like I love Sherlock's chase

Like those mysteries I love to solve

I am content...

I am just happy to learn one new thing each day

Mukta



To the one in the mirror

We have been through so much

You and I

I have seen you

-grow, endure

-quite often be very unsure

and yet put up a brave face

I have seen you

-Try to fit in

-Make innumerable mistakes

-Search for ways to be accepted

and loved truly despite being so unapologetically you

I have seen you

-Race hard in a way that just nothing could stop you

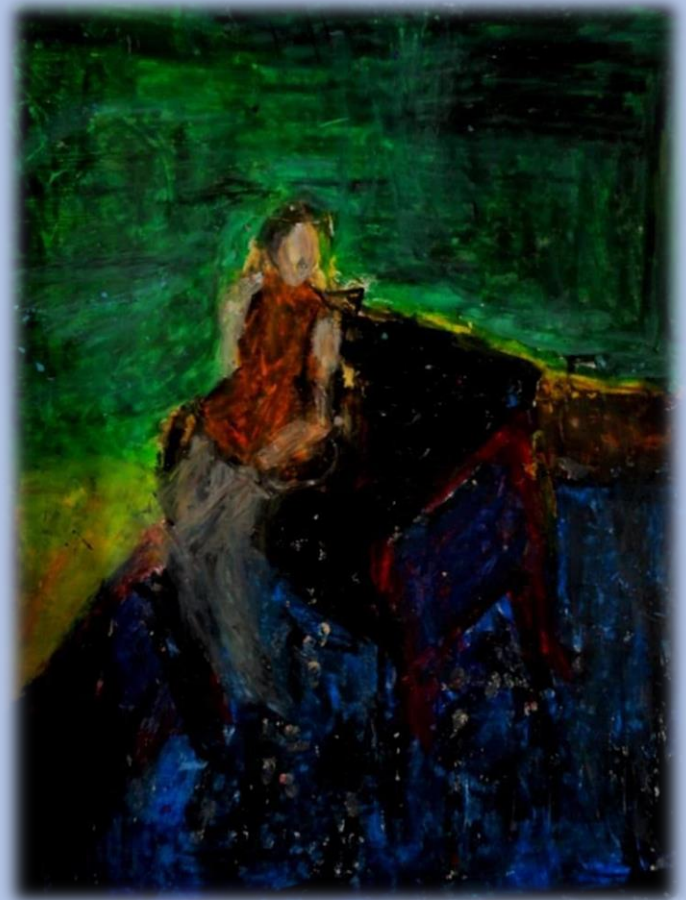
- and trip while jumping over hoops
- and feel those suicidal failures at times
- I have seen you Swear like a sailor
- Thank like a saint
- Laugh heartily with friends
- And Love with all of your being

There have been times when I have hated you as well

Here's is a note to tell you that I love you even when I hate you

Because you are the only one who has always always stayed true to me!

Mukta





Mukta 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) and is associated with Heidrick and Struggles as an executive Coach. 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.

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How far have I come, and how little have I achieved?

The journey so far has been full of chances since it started,
I have had every planned step of mine thwarted,
Every turn has changed, every road has strayed while I took it,
Many of my people, many a person challenged my beliefs and shook it.
I made a lot of turns and twists, broke a few rules, signals jumped,
Each time for a new reason, or person, or for that case, people dumped.
Some change was made on purpose, some by happenstance, some with happiness, some made me sad,
Some people changed, some people changed me, some situations made me go mad.
Destiny made me go off the plan, sometimes for my efforts in vain,
As much as I tried to be in a straight lane, I had to veer off the course, much to my disdain.
My list of achievements was always events, and the recognition that I received,
I sit back and realize I haven't earned people, and this challenges everything that I believed.
I realize I collected things more than original thoughts,
I spoke less to people, and perhaps more with human bots.
This makes me ponder, how much have I given, how much I have received,
How far have I come, and how little have I achieved...?

I have come this far, because I could,
but now I want to live the life that I possibly should.
After today, I don't intend to stop at what I have built so far,
I wish to claim what is rightly mine, my benchmark is my north star.
At this point, I decide that I no longer shall seek,
I will not lower my hand towards people, not to sound meek.
I am pushing myself so hard, that those who find me, will come ahead to meet,
Those who need me will reach, the ones who don't, will definitely retreat.
I intend to define the narrative, and then be the thought hereafter,
I intend not to seek, but to be sought after.
I push myself each day a little more to stay on course, push myself a little more than I believed,
I ponder over and over, how far have I come, and how little have I achieved...

~Dipen Sharma



Dipen is a professional in the IT and ITES sector for over 16 years now and has dabbled in assignments mainly in Human Resources Partnering, HR process Standardization, and HR Project Management. He is also pursuing his Post Graduate Executive Diploma in HRM, at XLRI Jamshedpur. Dipen recently completed his ALHP lab in the ECHO 2 format in August 2021.

His professional interest areas include Organization Strategy, Organization Development, People Strategy, HR Design and Effectiveness, and overall Employee Experience.

Personally, he loves solo rides on his motorbike and occasionally cooks for his friends and family. He is a proud father to 10 years old daughter. He is reachable at dipensharma@gmail.com for any conversations or more.





Book and Movie Review



Book Review

On Becoming a Person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy

by Carl Rogers ((1902 - 1987)

Robinson UK - Original 1961, 2016 (Reprint)

Poonam Prakash and Ila Sharma

Context of Book

First written in 1961, the book is a fascinating read. It is a book which we would like to read again and again. Considered a classic for anyone on the journey of personal growth as well as becoming a facilitator, the book is a compilation of lectures and manuscripts between 1951 and 1961 written in a simple and engaging style. Reading this book will not transform you into a perfect version of yourself but will set you on a path of creating a more accepting and honest self.

Embedded in the Humanistic Psychology Tradition, the theme of this book was in opposition to psychoanalysis of Freud and the theory of Operant Conditioning of Skinner. Humanistic psychology supports the belief that humans, as individuals, are unique beings and should be recognized as such. Humanists are concerned with the fullest growth of individuals in the area of love, fulfillment, self-worth and autonomy.

The book is divided into seven parts with 21 chapters. Part I and II describe the personal position of the author and the central exploration in the book. Reading the chapter, I can give one an insight into the techniques of writing a biographical sketch that all of us interested in entering the PDP journey are required to do. Part III and IV form the main body of the book. Part V explains the validity of the research. Part VI explores implications of the research in other facets of life like education, family, group relations etc., Part VII sets the limits of behavioral sciences and its responsible use.

The key inquiry in the book revolves around the hypothesis “If I can provide a **certain type of relationship**, the other person will **discover within himself the capacity** to use that relationship for growth and **change** and **personal development** will occur”. This statement can be broken into three parts which form the central questions in the book. These are:

- What is the nature of a **helping relationship** and how do I create it?
- What would be the **process** of discovering one's potential?
- What does change or **psychological growth** or maturity mean? Or what kind of person emerges from the above process?

Helping relationship and its nature

Helping Relationship is defined as “a relationship in which at least one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, and improved coping ability with life of the other.” Teacher-student, parent-child, counsellor-counselee, therapist-client, maybe employer-employee are some examples of the same.

The author identifies 10 questions that a therapist needs to ask himself/herself to understand the nature of helping relationships.

1. Can I come across in a way that the other person would perceive me as really trustworthy - **(congruence)**
2. Can I be expressive enough as a person that would unambiguously communicate what I am - **(congruence)**
3. Can I let myself experience a positive attitude toward other person - **Warmth, care, respect**
4. Can I be strong enough as a person to be separate from the other? **(Freedom to self)**
5. Am I secure enough within myself to permit separateness of the other? - **(freedom to the other)**
6. Can I let myself get into the world of the other? - **(empathy)**
7. Am I willing to accept the other person unconditionally? **(non-evaluative)**
8. Am I willing to show Sensitivity to the other person, so as not to be seen as a threat? **(non-evaluative)**
9. Can I free him from any possible perception of the threat of evaluation by others? **(non-evaluative)**
10. Can I be in touch with the process of the other person “becoming” without my being biased/influenced by his/her past

These questions that are discussed in detail in the book highlight the values of congruence, empathy, being non-judgmental, allowing freedom to self and others and showing respect and care for others.

Being Authentic is the key - Authentic living consists of congruence between caring and living, being trustworthy, dependable and consistent. Roger’s desire is to open up space for real conversations to take place, help people experience each other, listen to each other, free of judgement and evaluation and participate in their journey of becoming a person by realizing their full potential. It gently opens the possibilities of knowing and loving oneself.

One of the core concepts in a helping relationship is being **CONGRUENT**. Congruent persons behave in accordance with what they truly feel—when they feel sad, it is okay that they shed tears. When a person is incongruent, he/she wears a mask/ builds a wall and is thus removed from and ‘unaccepting’ of his/her true self. Persons unaccepting of self, remain ignorant of their true self (their feelings, perceptions, and perspectives). As a consequence, they assume the personality characteristics expected of them by their environment or culture. To the extent that one is ‘unaccepting’ of one’s true self, one cannot be ‘accepting’ of others.

The Process of Psychological Growth

The second question in the book revolves around the question---" **What is the journey of personal growth? What is psychological maturity and what would be the process of moving in the direction of personal growth and psychological maturity?"**

According to Roger, motivation for personal growth and psychological maturity is inherent, but it is often obscured.

Therapy can facilitate and release a tendency to psychological maturity. Just as organisms grow physically, psychological growth is intrinsic to humans. It was really intriguing to see therapy as a process of personal growth by the author unlike the negative connotations usually associated with therapy. According to Rogers, the only condition required for this growth is experiencing oneself fully and completely.

After elucidating the meaning and conditions of psychological growth, the author describes the "PROCESS" that will lead to this growth. The mystery around the process gets clarified in the way the author describes the transformation in seven stages across seven dimensions. For our understanding we prepared a visual flow of the process and divided it in broadly three phases as shown in Fig. 1.

Stage	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Aspects	unaware/mildly aware phase			acceptance and personal responsibility phase		experiencing and spiritual phase	
Recognition of feelings	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green
Expression of feelings	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green
Self-----ownership/accepting personal responsibility	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green
experiencing feelings in the here and now	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green
Acceptance of feelings	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green
recognition of contradictions and incongruent behaviour	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green
differentiation between feelings and personal constructs	Red	Orange	Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green

- Broadly this process can be described as getting behind the Mask, experiencing feelings and discovery of self in such experiencing.

We wear masks because we fear others might see the real person behind the mask and reject us. People can find themselves wearing an externally imposed mask in order to prevent friction with significant others. Often, others respect, love, accept and even admire the mask, leading to the belief that **the real person (self) would not be accepted.**

Living this way, a person builds an impenetrable wall that hides even from one's own self who he/she truly is.

However, when we hide our true 'self' we also experience psychological distress as it takes all the strength and creativity to keep the mask and the wall in place. Rogers believes that in a genuine, accepting and empathic therapeutic relationship, participants feel safe enough to slowly remove the mask and dismantle the wall when they are comfortable with and 'accepting' of themselves. This is Rogers's definition of **'successful' therapy**

Person that Emerges

The last question explored in the book relates to the person that emerges through this process. The process helps the person move AWAY –

- from Facades
- from oughts
from meeting expectations
- from pleasing others

And move TOWARDS

- Self-direction
- Being process-oriented
- Readiness to face complexity
- Being Open to experience
- Building Trust in one's organism leading to wholeness
- Creating an Internal locus of evaluation
- Showing Willingness to be part of the process

The process facilitates answering the question **'Who am I?'** In the process of this personality change, the **locus of control shifts from the external ('What is expected of me?') to internal ('What do I want?')**. The person grows more aware and accepting of self, tends to view his/her emotions as something truly one's own and not as an external phenomenon.

This question made me (POONAM) a **'thinking human'** and helped me begin to understand myself and gave me insights that allowed me to eventually discover what makes me happy, what motivates me, what I need to avoid in life and in general gain a framework for finding my inner self.

Questions for reflection

While the experience of reading this book was truly illuminating, there also were some questions which we would like to leave the readers with. Considering T-Group is not therapy - Is the discovery and awareness of the process as seen in T-Groups enough to sustain changes we see in the T-Group ?

- Is unconditional acceptance and positive regard possible - what are the challenges?
- Journey of becoming -what are the obstacles encountered? ---does this journey end at all?
- Does not the human potential movement, by giving far more weightage to individual responsibility, dilute the fight against unequal power relations and unjust structures ?
- What are the implications of power in the hands of the therapist/ facilitator in practice?
- Does it resonate with the Indian tradition of acquiring knowledge through self-enquiry and experience? Is it not a case of dominance of western thought over Indian tradition of self-enquiry?

To sum up

Before I manage my emotions, I have to accept my emotions

Before acceptance, I have to identify my emotions

Before identifying, I have to acknowledge my emotions

Before acknowledgement, I have to be honest with myself

AND THAT TAKES WORK



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Note: This write up is prepared from the presentation made as part of ISABS Books and Concepts Review Learning Circle on 2 February 2022.

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Movie review

Engendering the “Peaceful Warrior”

Sanjyot Pethe

I am at the midpoint of my PDP journey and from this position the feelings are mixed. Clarity and confusion coexist. There are shifts in me as a person and also enhancement in my understanding of processes and T groups. The journey so far has been enriching, enjoyable, meaningful in many ways. There are moments of being a warrior, a learner, a friend, a philosopher. It reminds me of movies like Kung Fu Panda, Peaceful Warrior and others.

I was rewatching “Peaceful Warrior” and it reminded me of my journey in ISABS. The movie in many ways brings back memories of my explorations, including my interaction with my mentor.

There are two major characters in the movie – Dan Millman, a university student and a gymnast who is very restless and therefore steps out at night for a run. On one such occasion Dan comes across an old man with whom he interacts and whom he later names as Socrates. Through repeated discussions, Dan comes to value his advice and instructions.

Dan one day meets with an accident and Socrates, through his teachings and encouragement over a period time, builds up his confidence and gets him to win a coveted championship. The movie is about Socrates teaching Dan to be a gymnast and a successful person.

As in the case of the gymnast in the above-mentioned movie, there are twists and turns in our lives, the memories of which we hold on to.

In the ISABS context, for me, there have been moments of joy, anxiety, sorrow, anger, reactions, and helplessness and also the supportive words of my mentor, facilitators and coparticipants. But the hold and the act are entirely mine. That’s my experience of this journey.

In my own “gymnastic”, I often asked myself ---much like Dan initially---if I want to be “the gymnast” who willingly undergoes rigorous training as part of a long-drawn process OR “only win the gold at any cost in the Olympics.”

But as I went further, my preoccupation with performance orientation moved towards unhindered experience orientation through the journey.

Learning lies in the process

One of the earliest dialogues in the film is where Socrates asks Dan if he was happy. Dan answers “What’s happiness got to do with it. I will be happy only when I get the gold. If I don’t get it, I don’t know what else is there?”

Learning and enjoyment and pain at times are part of the process, when we observe and reflect and act and interact thereafter. We all want positive and satisfying end results but if we don’t experience the process, the end result will not mean much.

In the initial part of the movie, Socrates picks up Dan and throws him into water. As he was falling, all Dan could think of was about that moment.

Being in the here and now means to be present in the moment and observe self and others in the moment. The reality is all about being in the here and now. Everything else is trash - the trash of the past that cannot be changed and of a future that is uncertain.

Later on in the movie, Dan’s accident leaves him with a rod in his leg and his coach and others give up on him. But Socrates helps him recognize how much he enjoys gymnastics in the moment and asks him to focus on that enjoyment. He encourages him to do in the moment whatever he could.

“You need to lose your mind before you come to your senses” says Socrates to Dan.

Experimentation, spontaneity, being in touch with one’s own feelings - sadness, anger, hopelessness, being honest with oneself are some of the key markers of a lab. Keeping an open mind, not rationalizing, but being authentic and in the moment are some of the approaches that lead to learning in this journey.

“There is never nothing going on.” When this was said by Socrates in the movie, he was actually asking Dan to pay attention to what was then going on. The words “There is always something going on, there are no ordinary moments” deeply resonated with me. I have heard those words often from my mentor. Lab experiences and reflections expanded my ability to see what was going on around me, to pay attention and truly observe.

There is an inner voice, a gut instinct that guides us. Our observations, attention, being in the here and now improves and deepens this voice. Taking in all the feedback and working on it and trusting one’s own connection to oneself leads to growth.

A warrior is conscious of his choice and responsible for his actions.

I ask myself---“How do I impact people; how do I get impacted and what do I choose to do with it?”

Living with one’s own vulnerability and choosing whether to be a victim or not is a dilemma one often faces. In labs and so in life, learning to choose and learning to take responsibility leads to greater freedom and effectiveness.

In the movie, as Dan has a rod in his leg, he is told that he cannot participate in games in that state. He is disheartened but Socrates tells him “A warrior does not give up what he loves, he brings love to what he does, there is no starting or stopping -only doing”.

My work is a long journey that does become hard from time to time. Like life, this journey also is not along a straight path. It is bringing love to whatever I do, that helps me to constantly engage with people.

One cannot control the outcome. Being in the here and now, being in touch with my own feelings helps me be spontaneous. In the movie Dan is faced with a difficult situation with his gymnastic coach not allowing him to participate in Olympic trials. He was guided by Socrates to show up at the stands. He goes to the stands and demonstrates what he can do despite having a rod in his leg.

The constant asks for staying in the here & now has helped me focus on what I want to do in this moment rather than worry about the outcome.

Socrates then teaches Dan about principles of living as under. I found these very important for life as well as for any challenge one may take on.

- a. Life is a mystery, don't try to figure it out
- b. Humour – keep your sense of humour, specially about yourself
- c. Change – Knowing that nothing stays the same

In some sense reflecting on what was happening and being in wonderment that it is happening, has made me enjoy this process more. Getting caught up in right and wrong, whether it should happen or not, does not help the process. Maintaining a sense of humour, has especially helped me stay sane many a time. Knowing that nothing stays the same has helped me judge myself and others less on past behaviours.

I enjoyed the movie and the scenes while thinking of my ISABS journey. As of now I am enjoying the journey, thinking very little about the destination.

About the movie

Peaceful Warrior is a 2006 [drama film](#) directed by [Victor Salva](#) and written by Kevin Bernhardt based on the 1980 novel [Way of the Peaceful Warrior](#) by [Dan Millman](#). Set at [U.C. Berkeley](#), the film stars [Scott Mechlowicz](#) as a troubled but talented gymnast who meets a spiritual guide portrayed by [Nick Nolte](#). It is an inspirational movie without long dialogues or unrealistic event and is worth a watch.



Sanjyot is a pre-intern. She is a leadership development consultant, coach and somatic experiencing practitioner. Sanjyot loves reading and has a flair for writing and storytelling. She can be reached at sanjyot@joyousleadership.com.



Regional Updates



Southern Region –

In January 2022, Southern region conducted a Facilitator skills workshop on zoom , open to all , Facilitators were Lalitha Iyer and Shyleswari Rao .In April we did a pilot of Seniors Lab "Charaiveti " , it was Ms Lakshmi Raman's brain child and we ran it across 3 days , online for 2 1/2 hours each. The facilitators were Lakshmi Raman and TT Srinath. Based on the learnings and feedback, we will be re looking at the design and hope to offer it to Senior Citizens across regions. After a long break Southern Region has its first in person meeting on June 18th - Agenda is members connect , a chance to meet new Associate members and reconnect with already existing members. Sridhar Venugopal has been making sure that PDP in the region have regular meetings. They have had 2 sessions on log writing and one on boundaries.

Wisdom Circle – Sessions for PMs

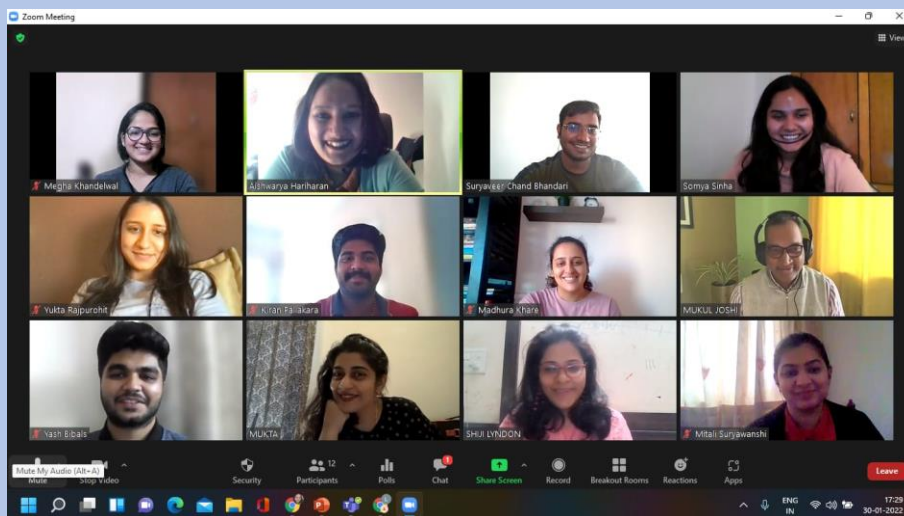
- Gender Processes in T-Groups by Uma Jain
- Creative Action Method by TT Srinath
- Tavistock approach to Group Relations: an Introduction and Exploration by Dr. Anuradha Prasad
- Gestalt OD by Sushma Sharma

Western Region –

Learning sessions for WR

- The Art of saying 'No' with Dr.Wasundhara Joshi
- Making meaning of our experiences – by Veda Srinivasan – open to all regions

January 22 - 28th 29th and 30th we did the KJ Somaiya Lab part two - with Mukul and Mukta facilitating Aishwarya was coordinating and observing , Shiji Lyndon was helping us from College to coordinate .



January at the Pune Group meeting we discussed the topic - HR Engagement in the current times - Facilitated by Sanjana

February - Topic - Is T-group about focus on Self or Group - Facilitated by Aroon and Mukul

March -Topic - Power in Everyday Life - Facilitated by Aroon

April -Topic - Gender and Group Processes - Aishwarya and Kiran

May - Group Processes- Mukul Joshi

June - Anxiety and Group Processes - Tina Rattrra

Eastern region-

One event at Durg with 2 labs and 15 participants, 4 facilitators

2 Regional meetings

Northern region –

Change of RC-After a successful stint as Regional Co-Ordinator of North Region Kumud Issar has handed over the baton of the RC to Satyakki Bhattacharjee. The hand-over-take-over was documented and well transitioned between the erstwhile RC and the incoming RC.

Regions Activities

Regional activities are team-based. There are regional teams to carry out activities. The region has been functioning normally with its regular monthly meetings on various topics. A regional event was planned for June 2022 but was withdrawn as it had the potential to cannibalize the national event. It is proposed the next regional in-person event in the north will happen in Aug-Sep 2022.

PDP Growth Initiatives

The ongoing system of learning events and activities for the PDPians is working. PDPs of the region volunteer to organize activities periodically and it appears to be an effective learning intervention.

In-person or Online

Monthly Meetings are still happening online as it facilitates more number of people to attend them. However, there are requests for in-person meetings coming in. Hybrid seems to be a preferred method for monthly meets.

Letters to the Editor and Feedback on the Issue:

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



I travel to seek places and souls

To find rivers and shells and to bathe in sun drenched thoughts

I travel to write and never arrive

I travel to stray

and to meet myself one day

Mukta

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