

## Give it a Thought

You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus. - Mark Twain

Discovery consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else does and thinking something different.

- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

- Will Rogers

Every act of creation is first an act of destruction.

- Pablo Picasso

If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.

- Isaac Newton

The secret to creativity is knowing how to hide your sources.

- Albert Einstein

I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.

- Albert Einstein

The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.

- Winston Churchill



## The Facts

- The warmest 22 years ever recorded have happened within the last 25 years. The two warmest ever recorded, within the last three.
- Six million hectares of primary forest are lost every year due to deforestation through human interventions.
- Trees include the largest and longest living organisms on earth.

## Eye Opener

Recently, I was in a meeting at Chennai. The meeting ended by noon and we were moving out for lunch. Suddenly, Sheila Jones from CASA, who participated in the meeting, said to me, "I used to receive *DATA Newsletter* regularly. But now for some time I have not been receiving it. Please check if our address is left out. I read the columns regularly," she said.

For a second, I was wordless because only recently we at DATA office had decided to convert *DATA Newsletter* into a quarterly, thinking that no one will notice it. Moreover, we often delay the process due to absence of timely planning and because a few who write ignore deadlines. We had already received emails from some people

reminding us about the delay. Sheila made it clear to me that she noticed the absence of the newsletter.

It was a great feedback that motivated me. As soon as I came back to my office, I discussed with our staff team about the need to once again be regular and timely with *DATA Newsletter*. I also committed to write on time (since most of the time I delay the process) and to bring out the issues on schedule.

Thank you Sheila, for the motivation! Positive feedback motivates and brings changes - an eye opener!

We commit to be regular and on time.

- Reji Chandra

## Generation Y's Choices

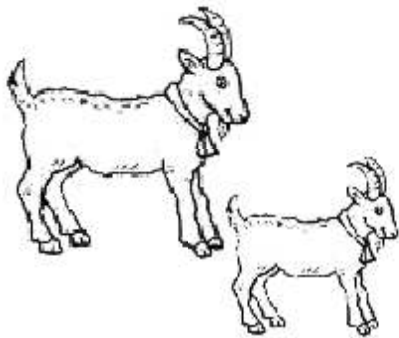
"...the generation y's thirst to create something lasting that has an impact and works towards the upliftment of the society is giving rise to a new breed of entrepreneurs - social entrepreneurs...". -Vinnie bhadra gives more details.

Social entrepreneurship, as a concept, has been in existence for a long time, but takers for it have been very few. However, the trend today shows that not only are youngsters taking the unconventional route, but also understanding social entrepreneurship in the true sense.

Social entrepreneurs combine the passion of a social mission with an image of business-like discipline, innovation and determination and try to come up with business models as good as the commercial sector. A business entrepreneur is someone who sees value in the creation of new markets, whereas the social entrepreneur aims for value in the form of transformational change that will benefit others.

The young generation today is opting for a balanced mix of qualities of a business entrepreneur to derive most benefits from their ventures. Social entrepreneurs use inspiration, creativity, courage, fortitude and, most importantly, direct action, to create a new reality a new equilibrium.

Source : Economic Times



### A Red Herring

**A**t the entry of the village, there stood the deity which the villagers worshipped as their protector God, whenever they go out or come back to the village.

One day a farmer was passing the deity in the morning. He had two goats with him and his little daughter was also with him.

They stopped before the deity and the poor, peasant, bowed before it and said, "My little son is suffering from fever, and I know, you alone can cure him. If you heal him, I now make this promise, that I will sacrifice the large healthy goat with me, in this altar for you."

He realised the soft scratch of his daughter on his knee and his daughter told him, "Don't promise the large goat. Let us sacrifice the smaller goat."

The father now looked back and whispered into his daughter's ear, "Let God cure him first. We shall decide about the goats later."

- A.M. Paramanatham

**Rule Four** - The lesson is repeated until learned. Lessons repeat until learned. What manifest as problems and challenges, irritations and frustrations are more lessons - they will repeat until you see them as such and learn from them. Your own awareness and your ability to change are requisites of executing this rule. Also fundamental is the acceptance that you are not a victim of fate or circumstance - 'causality' must be acknowledged; that is to say: things happen to you because of how you are and what you do. To blame anyone or anything else for your misfortunes is an escape and a denial; you yourself are responsible for you, and what happens to you. Patience is required - change doesn't happen overnight, so give change time to happen.

**Rule Five** - Learning does not end. While you are alive there are always lessons to be learned. Surrender to the 'rhythm of life', don't struggle against it. Commit to the process of constant learning and change - be humble enough to always acknowledge your own weaknesses, and be flexible enough to adapt from what you may be accustomed to, because rigidity will deny you the freedom of new possibilities.

**Rule Six** - "There" is no better than "here". The other side of the hill may be greener than your own, but being there is not the key to endless happiness. Be grateful for and enjoy what you have, and where you are on your journey. Appreciate the abundance of what's good in your life, rather than measure and amass things that do not actually lead to happiness. Living in the present helps you attain peace.

**Rule Seven** - Others are only mirrors of you. You love or hate something about another person according to what love or hate about yourself. Be tolerant; accept others as they are, and strive for clarity of self-awareness; strive to truly understand and have an objective perception of your own self, your thoughts and feelings. Negative experiences are opportunities to heal the wounds that you carry. Support others, and by doing so you support yourself. Where you are unable to support others it is a sign that you are not adequately attending to your own needs.

**Rule Eight** - What you make of your life is up to you. You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. Take responsibility for yourself. Learn to let go when you cannot change things. Don't get angry about things - bitter memories clutter your mind. Courage resides in all of us - use it when you need to do what's right for you. We all possess a strong natural power and adventurous spirit, which you should draw on to embrace what lies ahead.

**Rule Nine** - Your answers lie inside of you. Trust your instincts and your innermost feelings, whether you hear them as a little voice or a flash of inspiration. Listen to feelings as well as sounds. Look, listen, and trust. Draw on your natural inspiration.

**Rule Ten** - You will forget all this at birth. We are all born with all of these capabilities - our early experiences lead us into a physical world, away from our spiritual selves, so that we become doubtful, cynical and lacking belief and confidence.

The ten Rules are not commandments; they are universal truths that apply to us all. When you lose your way, call upon them. Have faith in the strength of your spirit. Aspire to be wise - wisdom the ultimate path of your life, and it knows no limits other than those you impose on yourself.

Compiled from Carter-Scott's book 'If Life Is A Game, These Are the Rules' by Vidhya R

On a pleasant October morning, around 15 women streamed into a spacious room in Pillar Hall, Madurai. Even as we entered, it was obvious that this would be a workshop with a difference. The room had a carnival look—colourful cotton sarees draped elegantly, a floral rangoli in the centre, earthen lamps, duppattas in various shades, and packets of decorative bindis... the festive setting was ideal for **Just a Pause** a residential workshop for personal renewal and leadership for women. The four-day workshop (October 5-8) was anchored by facilitators Bhanumathy Vasudevan, Vijayalakshmi Chari, and Suneeta Deb, who have been working with women on personal and leadership development.

As women, we juggle with and negotiate multiple (and often demanding and complex!) roles as home makers and professionals. Yet how many of us take time off from our multiple roles and examine our lives and the choices we make? Most of us don't either because we think it is frivolous ('what a waste of time!) or just plain ignorance about even the need for such a space for reflection and rejuvenation.

"As women we are used to being care givers; not care receivers. Our lives are full of commas and semi colons. What we need is a pause from the endless role plays; to take time for ourselves to reconnect to our deeper identity", said Bhanumathy Vasudevan. The workshop thus provided an exclusive space for women to reflect, share and learn from each other: a time and space in which women were free from the demands of everyday life.

We worked individually and in groups as we undertook an inner exploration to enhance our understanding of personal identity ('who I am');



discovering patterns that block us from living life with full consciousness of who I am; and reconnect with our deeper identity, uniqueness and inner resources to be 'me'.

The workshop consisted of individual and group based experiential activities such as role play, meditation, imagery, body movement, journaling, self-care practices and other women-friendly learning methods. At the end of each activity, participants had the opportunity to journal their experiences and then share them with the group. Personally, while the space and time for reflection was enabling, I also learnt equally from simply 'listening' to the experiences of other participants through an unconscious process in group dynamics known as 'resonance.'

We began the round of self-introduction through an activity known as Birth Story. Besides factual details such as our names, mother and father's name, family tree on both sides, and the current size of our

family today, it involved sentence completion items such as the important roles in my life today... and I am a woman who is.... The activity highlighted the need for each of us to accept and honour ourselves for what we are today. Another activity 'looking at my life' in chronological order reiterated the need to acknowledge ourselves as storehouses of treasures and to own and accept the fact that we are intrinsically resourceful complete beings. The session on body wisdom enabled us to reacquaint ourselves with the body and view the body as a gateway to personal growth and freedom. The sessions on voices (both outer and more important, the inner voices we as women carry within us), boundaries, and boxes, highlighted unconscious dynamics at play in interpersonal relationships. Most important, it enabled many of us to realise the need to move from a victim consciousness that blames external circumstances and people to a creator consciousness in which we assume full responsibility for our lives based on the choices (or lack) we make in our lives.

The most defining moment in the workshop was when each participant symbolically represented our inner voices on paper and individually consigned it to the flames. A participant was going through a traumatic marriage and had decided to legally separate from her husband. Yet the process was painful and she felt her inner voices were questioning her bold decision. At the end of the session, however, she addressed her inner fears and expressed how free and peaceful she felt. I am sure she has a long way to go, and, small though it was, it certainly was an important first step for her. The strength and peace on her face still lives in my memory...

- Nandini Murali

Vijayakumari is a member of Thangamutharamman Self-Help Group in Tirunelveli District. This SHG is affiliated with Karpagasurabi federation, promoted by RED, a NEERA partner.

Vijayakumari had been living with her family, in a small hut made of palm leaves. One day, after cooking, she had gone out of the house, for work. The gas cylinder used for cooking suddenly burst. As a result, the entire house was completely consumed by fire.

On hearing the news, Vijayakumari reached her house. The very sight of her house shocked her and she was shattered.

The staff from RED and Self Help Group (SHG) members immediately rushed to the spot, consoled her and arranged food, temporary accommodation and clothes for her family.

The SHG members convened an emergency meeting to discuss how to respond to the disaster and decided to extend relief measures to her family. Accordingly, each SHG member contributed Rs.500 each and Rs.1000 was drawn from SHG savings fund. The SHG raised Rs.7500 to help Vijayakumari rebuild her.

This enabled Vijayakumari to purchase essential vessels, groceries, vegetables and clothes to meet the immediate needs of her family.

Leaders from Karpagasurabi federation motivated and facilitated Vijayakumari to submit a petition to the Panchayat President, for construction of a new house with a subsidy from the government.

Accordingly the petition was sanctioned. Currently, the house

construction has been carried out, with their assistance from the government. Her family is temporarily staying at a relative's house, in the neighbouring village.

Vijayakumari was deeply touched by the role of RED staff, the SHG and Karpagasurabi federation. "The disaster had destructed everything including my hope for the future. But the staff of RED, SHG members and leaders from Karpagasurabi stood with me, during my crisis, supported me with their timely relief and had revived my hopes. They also encouraged and assisted me in constructing this new house with a subsidy from the Government".

The group members felt that this was an opportunity for them to respond to the crisis with appropriate and timely relief and rehabilitation measures.

- Compiled by

Muthunayagam and Leo Joseph

## Happenings at DATA

- On Jan. 12, 2010 ADI evaluation de-briefing meeting was held at RCPDS, Madurai. Thirty three participants from ADI network participated in the meeting.
- On Jan 27, 2010 Ms. Andrea Kowalski and Ms. Pascaline Servan Schreiber, INSEAD-PEPPAL team visited PWDS and projects for studying the organisational change process in PWDS.
- NEERA Partner's Review and Re-planning, NEERA Programme Committee Meeting and DATA Review meeting were held between Feb. 10-12, 2010 at Pillar Hall and CC Office, Madurai. Chief Executives from partner organisations, NEERA Coordinators, field staff, federation representatives, CC staff and consultants participated in the meeting.
- On Feb. 23-24, 2010 Mr. Pranav Prasad, Grant Officer, Social finance programme, ILO, Geneva visited the micro-insurance programme.



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