

## Enrich Self

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***This article mainly focuses on the basic concept of life and techniques that help in reducing stress and in balancing personal and professional life. Techniques like yoga, meditation, spiritualism, controlling the mind, etc., help in managing inner or personal life, and techniques like positive attitude, visionary thinking, commitment, dedication, discipline, sense of duty, etc., help in managing professional life. It focuses on self-belief and enriching self with values to lead a meaningful and happy existence.***

**Y**ou live and you die only once, so live life king-size. This is possible only when your approach towards life is positive and you are able to bring a balance in your life. Balancing personal and professional life in today's stressful world is a challenge. It can be achieved with right attitude and positive thinking. Right attitude with self-analysis, develops an understanding of the basic concept of life and self-belief. This article mainly highlights the techniques that help in developing right attitude, reducing stress so as to bring a balance in personal and professional life.

*“One who is virtuous is at peace, one who is at peace is happy and one who works towards it is enriching self.”* Virtuous here means pure with moral excellence and righteousness, one who has the quality of good conduct which leads to wisdom, that is having the ability to discern or judge what is true, right or lasting. Being virtuous and pure is not an easy task; one has to survive the test of time while holding on to the values imbibed. At every point, be it on the personal or professional front the struggle to maintain good conduct continues, but a positive approach towards life gives you the strength to sustain the balance.

## **Life**

Life is a beautiful opportunity and the greatest wealth one can have. But life in today's world is extremely competitive, with a dearth of time and space. People are overloaded, exhausted and stressed out. You know you can't satisfy everyone, but the people who matter most to you seem to be getting the least amount of your time and energy. You want to be successful professionally and still have time for your personal interests. This requires proper time management and strong self-motivation. Proper time management is possible by disciplining self. When time is utilized appropriately it gives you scope to do things, giving clarity in life. It gives you the ability to make better decisions both in personal as well as professional life. Right decisions result in success, leading to happiness. Happiness or self-bliss is the ultimate goal in everyone's life.

Life was never meant to be stressful. It is supposed to be like an ice cream to be enjoyed before it melts. Shakespeare has described life as a stage on which all of us are characters playing our part. Each character is supposed to perform his or her role well, until the curtain falls. William Wordsworth opines that life is a journey in which we all are passengers, and each passenger has his or her own destination to reach. What lessons one has learnt throughout the journey and, whether one has fulfilled the purpose of birth is the ultimate reality. “Life is a game, play it like a child without mulling over victory or defeat.” Just learn the lesson from each experience and move on. Complete dedication to one's professional life without concentrating on the rewards, will reduce the workload and stress and will lead to higher maturity in life. So be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living; this actually relieves you of the stress you encounter daily.

## Personal Life

An upright personal life is a reason to cherish life. As a human being, it is one's duty to benefit the self and be a resource to others. Self-enrichment is not a new concept in India; it has been in practice since ages. It focuses on giving direction to life. Oliver W Holmes had rightly said, "*The greater thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in which direction we are moving.*" Right self-direction is possible only with better self-understanding. Better self-understanding increases self-belief and strength. It reduces stress, and helps in optimum utilization of time. It enables a person not only to balance personal and professional life, but also to understand his peer group, thus becoming a resource to them. Hence, an appropriate perspective leads to a meaningful life making it worth living.

John Wooden had said "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." Character is not built in one day. It is molded by your beliefs and it is a habit long continued. Good habits make good character and vice versa.

According to Eleanor Roosevelt "*People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously*".

In India, character is believed to be the result of your belief and samskars, i.e., the values imbibed in you as a result of upbringing. Positive attitude, visionary thinking, right perception, commitment and dedication enable a person to build a strong character. Strong character always enables a person to take right decisions at the right time, whereas negative thoughts lead to loss of control over self, resulting in increased levels of stress.

## Professional Life

Self-realization is what one should strive for in order to know the self-goals. Once you realize your aims and ambitions, an upright professional life is not an impossible task. From an organization's point of view, when the management is clear about its targets or goals, it is in a better position to delegate duties and responsibilities to subordinates and so, employees know their duties well. But if the employees are confused with their own responsibilities, then the entire

organization fumbles. If the organization is strong with clear-headed, focused individuals then it is in a better position to coordinate and achieve its goals. Coordination among the employees smoothens the path for quick results. Leadership and delegation of authority is another important aspect in organizations.

Leaders devote themselves to serving the needs of organization members and focus on meeting the needs of those they lead. They develop employees to bring out the best in them; coach others and encourage self-expression; facilitate personal growth in all these who work with them; listen and build a sense of community without being autocratic in delegation of duties. Servant leaders are felt to be effective because the needs of followers are looked after, helping them reach their full potential, and hence perform their best. Autocratic leadership brings in more levels of stress, as employee perspective may not be taken into consideration, with only the final word being that of the authority's. That invites more resistance, politics, backbiting and loss of time in avoidable gossip. Moreover, the level of stress that it creates among individuals is contagious.

According to John Gray author of *Mars and Venus (A Match Made in Heaven)*, women and men workforce react differently in stressful situations. There are three symptoms of stress in men, i.e., withdrawing, grumbling and shutting down. Similarly, three major indications of stress in woman is said to be overwhelm, overreaction and exhaustion. The symptoms of stress are so commonly seen in the work culture, that it varies only in the degree of levels. One can see individuals affected with stress shouting at others, misunderstanding things, mismanaging responsibility, spreading confusion everywhere, backbiting, having sleepless nights. So, it is very important to know how to relieve the self from stress. Stress management is the ability to maintain control when situations, people, and events make excessive demands.

Few techniques to manage inner or personal life so as to relieve the self from stress and bring balance in personal and professional life are as follows:

- 1) **Spiritualism:** A strong sense of direction often requires assurance that you are moving in the right direction and spiritualism is the base for such assurance. In fact, it is an additive fuel to better performance at work. Spirituality is not a new word. It has just lost its meaning in today's fast-

paced world. Ancient India is known for its epics and scriptures that concentrate on morals, values, dharma, karma, forgiveness, commitment, sincerity, dedication, etc., and in today's world of inner ignorance and uncertainty the hope is to revive the spiritual being again, inspiring it to reduce the levels of stress and bring a balance in personal-professional life thus leading to the control of mind and optimum utilization of time. If one is able to explore the boundaries of one's own powers and abilities, realizing one's inner powers, one will be in a position to provide better shape to his or her life both at a personal and professional level. Indian heritage is rich with Vedic principles and values, like Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. These values guide us to perform our duties rightly, be free of worldly pleasures, strive towards attaining salvation etc. These principles guide a person to be focused in life and his career. When one is rightly focused, one is able to maintain self-balance. Great people ranging from Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, Ramakrishna Paramhansa to Narayan Murthy, all believe in self-strength. Doctrines of karma and self-realization are all meant to and are capable of inspiring people to do great work. It guides the common man with a purpose keeping in view what is right and wrong to achieve great heights in whatever they undertake. After all, every human aspires to make a mark for himself, be it in personal or professional life. But in today's hectic life, balancing work and personal life remains a constant challenge. Self-understanding and pure consciousness is the main source of strength in the success of a person, which is not easily achievable.

- 2) **Yoga, Meditation, Reiki, Pranic healing, etc.**, immensely help in reducing stress and, understanding self, resulting in better performance at work. These techniques help in activating the flow of energy. Yoga makes you feel better. Practicing the postures, breathing exercises and meditation makes you healthier in body, mind and spirit. Yoga lets you tune in, shape up simultaneously. Yoga postures help in relaxation; slow deep breathing exercises relax the nervous system, which is very beneficial in decreasing the levels of stress. Meditation means awareness. Whatever you do with awareness is meditation. "Watching your breath" is meditation; listening to

the birds is meditation. As long as these activities are free from any other distraction to the mind, it is effective meditation. Meditation is not a technique but a way of life. It describes a state of consciousness, when the mind is free of scattered thoughts and various patterns. The observer (one who is doing meditation) realizes that all the activity of the mind is reduced to one. Pranic healing is an energy-based healing technique that works on the principle that the healing process is accelerated by increasing the flow of healthy energy or the healthy 'prana' which is also known as 'chi' (pronounced 'ki'). Reiki (pronounced as ray - key) is a laying-on-of-hands healing technique. All these techniques help the self to open up to others, becoming a resource to them. A person is able to help others, only when he is self-sufficient. Becoming self-sufficient does not imply only monetary achievements, but achievements of self-understanding for self-development. It helps in making a person have a better control over his mind and a well-adjusted personality is an asset to any organization.

- 3) **Controlling mind:** This refers to the ability to keep the mind free of thoughts. As mentioned by Eckhart Tolle the author of "The Power of Now", freeing yourself from your mind is the only true liberation. Just try to observe how long you are able to keep your mind free of thoughts. Is it five minutes, fifteen minutes or an hour? Are you able to do that? The mind loves to feed on thoughts. It keeps itself busy thinking of something or the other, thereby controlling all the sensory nerves, all the time shadowing your soul or inner self, thus making you the slave of your mind, leading to self-pity and sorrow at all times. In Buddhism, it is called the 'chattering monkey mind'. It never stops. Themes are repeated over and over without any solution presenting itself. This only strengthens the incident by constantly thinking of that which is irrelevant, resulting in energy loss and an unprofessional approach to decision-making. Clarity of thought is obscured making the individual agitated. If the soul is able to control the mind and heart, then peace is guaranteed and where the mind is ruling the heart or vice versa, the self is lost with no sense of direction. Hence, it is very important to keep one's mind free. One can keep oneself free of thoughts by observing the thoughts entering the mind.

Monitoring the thinker increases your power over the mind by reducing the intensity of the thoughts. When thoughts no longer exist in the mind, a gap of “no mind” exists. The more you are able to increase the gap, the more your consciousness grows stronger. It is not a trance-like state. It is stillness that gives rise to peace within you, making you realize pure consciousness and inner soul. It takes you beyond what you previously thought of yourself. The idea of “no mind” or turning the mind off is based on the fact that continuous thinking is a waste of energy, as what one’s thoughts concentrate, is either for the past or the future, over which man has no control. It only leads to stress and the energy, which could have been used for constructive work to gain success on the professional front. Thinking is a form of addiction in which man does not realize where he has lost touch with the inner self. When one is able to understand that the inner soul and mind are two different aspects and it is the soul, which should rule the mind and not vice versa, making self-understanding more clear. The surroundings may influence the mind, but the soul is influenced by right morals and values. Therefore, a carefree mind is what an individual should strive for to attain success in business life.

- 4) **Living in the present moment:** Often humans worry about the past or the future, losing touch with the present moment. What they don’t realize is that the past is gone and future is not in their hands; what remains is, only the present moment, which, if lost worrying about the past or the future, will never come back as even it will have become the past within no time. It will result in losing energy on issues over which you have no control. If this energy is utilized elsewhere, it will give fruitful results. Even in the professional arena, you always find people arguing over events that have passed, holding on to it and blowing it out of proportion, which will only waste precious time and limit new opportunities. So, it is important to focus upon the creativity of the moment. If the present moment is shaped up rightly it helps in shaping one’s destiny. The Great Master, Ramana Maharshi said, “Neither is everything predestined, nor do we have free will in everything.” According to him, man is the creator of his own destiny. Earlier, we had free will to act upon. We acted, and that act produced a

certain result. That “result” became our destiny. We could not escape it. We acted again. This time, our free will carried with it the experience of our first act, and was qualified and limited to that extent. This act again produced results, and these results again curtailed our original freedom. Now that we have been acting and producing results since birth, these actions and their reactions act upon us as our unavoidable fate. Our body, mind, intellect, and reasoning are fashioned by these and make us choose a certain course, and we shall reap in the future what we are sowing now. So, to create a bright future, one should sow the right seeds, which, in turn, will avoid stressful situations.

When the self is free from stress, it has more energy to concentrate on personal and professional life. In today’s fast-paced world, comprising style statements, latest electronic gadgets, junk foods etc., the lifestyles have changed, there is continuous competition to outdo each other in professional life too. The current changing scenario has brought a change in the mentality of the people as well. With most of the families comprising working parents, both the spouses are sharing the responsibilities equally and struggling to manage the home. Today, every individual aspires to balance his or her personal and professional life well. To bring balance in today’s stressful world is not an easy task.

This balance may differ from person to person, because individuals have different goals, values and definitions of success. However, there are some common definitions of balance. Having a sense of time to effectively accomplish work-related tasks; the ability to get through one’s daily work and family responsibilities, without feeling drained and also having the ability to participate in activities that we enjoy on a regular basis. A successful work-life balance involves:

Accomplishment: getting the stuff we need to get done, and

Enjoyment: having the time for loved ones, fun, rest, exercise and hobbies.

Although, the concepts of achieving balance are simple, actually creating a balanced life isn’t easy, but it is definitely worthwhile. Here are some steps to help in the journey towards life and a balanced existence requiring a Positive

Attitude; Visionary thinking, Commitment and Dedication. These characteristics are either imbibed by upbringing or by self-exploration.

The techniques to manage outer or professional life are as follows:

- 1) **Positive Attitude:** This helps in times of adversity; it helps in redirecting destructive, negative feelings in a positive way. It helps to face the ups and downs of business, the changes in the organization, etc. If we get hurt or fail, it is because we have not paid attention and are overlooking something important. In any given situation one should focus on what is to be learnt, rather than on guilt, revenge, or some other destructive behavior. Instead, it should be treated as a treasure hunt searching for hidden meaning and truth. This process makes one increase one's insights and sensitivity, leading to self-discovery and bettering oneself. Attitude is the main rhythm of well-being. If you do not want to find beauty, you will not find it. If you do not want to be happy, you won't be happy. If you constantly undermine your achievements and drag your worries with you everywhere, you will poison every opportunity for enjoyment and fulfillment. Yet, if you want to find beauty in a cactus also, you will be able to do so. If you want to be happy even as death stalks you, you can be happy. Without a positive attitude, without the desire to see beauty and experience joy, one cannot achieve fruitful results. With a positive attitude one can turn failures also into new opportunities, thereby marching towards personal and professional success.
- 2) **Futuristic or visionary thinking:** It is nothing but getting to the future first with thoughtful analysis, deep understanding, logical thinking and a substantial amount of intuition. All this is possible only when your mind is free of unnecessary thoughts. Visionary thinking is what gives the CEO the ability to assess situations and plan ahead.
- 3) **Apart from controlling self-mind,** one should also have a focus in one's life. Commitment and dedication are also part of the game. One should be able to bind oneself to the course of action undertaken. Even at the workplace if one is committed to a particular work, one should have the dedication to complete the work successfully. One should be able to motivate his or her mind to fulfill the respective commitment. This helps in focusing on the company's goals for both the employers and the

employees. All this is possible when self-understanding is clear. It can be achieved through Yoga, Meditation, and Reiki, etc. These techniques are extremely useful in managing the deeper self. Apart from self-understanding, moralistic perception is also of immense help.

- 4) Benjamin Franklin had said, "Happiness is discipline and confidence". Discipline helps in self-motivation, makes a person manage time properly. When time is managed properly half of the worries can be sidelined. Proper time management makes a person perform well in his work, thus building confidence, which, in turn, helps a person take right decisions, and good decisions always bring happiness in one's life and success in work.
- 5) Sense of duty: Whatever work or birth, one has acquired, one should be able to follow it dutifully. Be it in personal or professional arena, when one carries out one's duties righteously, only then the conscious remains alive. It is always better to give than to receive, when a person is self-conscious he or she is a source to others. By being of help to others, one is able to open oneself to others to become a channel of force of benefit. This paves the way for growth. True giving is a token that evens out boundaries dividing individuals. In a way sharing is an act of recognition that we all are part of the same human race. We can share only when we have it. We can have it only when we perform our dharma properly, and dharma performed well will result in a positive approach to work.
- 6) Never under-or overestimate yourself: Be balanced, it helps you to assess one's potential and build your required skills. Over estimating yourself ultimately leads to loss of self-respect or self-hate. When you over-estimate yourself, you are bound to project a superior image of yourself and others are ready to pull you down. This will only lead to confusion, making you wonder as to what's wrong with you. In case you are underestimating yourself, then again you are not able to realize your potential and are unable to give the required respect to the self. Others in such a situation, also may not be able to give the required respect to you. So one should respect one's own self as well as others.
- 7) Every human being is unique: J Wilbur Chapman had rightly said, "Look for strength in people, not weakness, good not evil. Most of us find what we search for".

If you respect others, you shall receive the same. Self-respect is important whereas haughtiness is “pride before fall”. There is a very narrow demarcation between self-respect and pride, but the human being is always susceptible to ego or pride and loses his or her path consequently. An egotistic mind always tends to criticize others; this makes the opponent defensive, where the work, which could have been carried forward with minor changes, would be hurdled by unnecessary arguments.

- 8) Establishing priorities: One can set priorities by differentiating among needs, wants, and urgency. Based on these one can plan for their short term and long-term goals, personal and professional goals. Once the goals are clear, working towards it and achieving them is not difficult.
- 9) Sense of humor: “Keep your sense of humor. There’s enough stress in the rest of your life to let bad shots ruin a game you’re supposed to enjoy.”— Amy Strum Alcott (1956) US golfer. A good sense of humor always helps in reducing stress at a personal or professional level. Always keep smiling to maintain a healthy body and mind.

Summing up it all, self-realization is the key to success and the techniques mentioned above to manage personal and professional life, go a long way in building character which helps in not only reducing stress, but also in balancing personal and professional life. Ultimately, one should aim at worthy living and be an asset to the society.

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