Article FAMILY-10

LOOK WITHIN YOURSELF

Accepting people as they are and refusing to blame others for one's own failures is sure to pave the way for success.

■ **by D. P. Sabharwal**

Case I

I am overweight and want to reduce. I have read all the possible literature on the subject. I have reduced my diet. I have changed my eating habits many times. I set goals and time frames and tell myself that I can do it. But I really don't.

I just can't carry on with the promise I make to myself. I have remained overweight for the last 4 years, in spite of everything.

Case II

I am an executive in a factory. Mine is a well-paid job. I have to deliver goods obviously. But I have lots of problems with my employees. I don't feel they are loyal to me. I think if I am not in office for a day, they all feel very happy and would be spending the day celebrating it, instead of working. No doubt, they are being paid adequately.

Moreover, I work hard to be friendly towards them. I try to treat them rightly. I cannot find out what is wrong with them. I have taken many courses on effective management techniques. I don't understand why they cannot be responsible.

Case III

My teenage son is rebellious. I know he bunks classes. I am almost certain that he smokes. In all probability he drinks too. No matter what I try, he does not listen to me. What can I do?

Case IV

There is so much to do. And there is never enough time. I work almost 16 hours a day, on all days including Sundays and holidays. But still I don't feel I have achieved everything I wanted. I am not living the happy and peaceful life I want to live.

I have attended many time-management seminars. I have tried different working and planning systems but I feel pressured and hassled all day.

All the above 4 cases are real. In fact, the first one concerns me. Now if you have read them carefully, you would have observed a few things.

First, all these cases are very common. You, your friend, relative or neighbour might have gone through a similar experience some time or the other.

Secondly, in all these cases the person concerned is feeling helpless and defeated in spite of having put in best efforts.

Thirdly, whatever is stated is not the complete story. There is something missing because it is improbable that one does everything and yet does not achieve the desired results.

Not the complete story

Yes, you are absolutely right. There is something more to each case. Something that is hidden, which is not apparent something that is not done correctly, not done in the desired manner. Let us go into each case one by one.

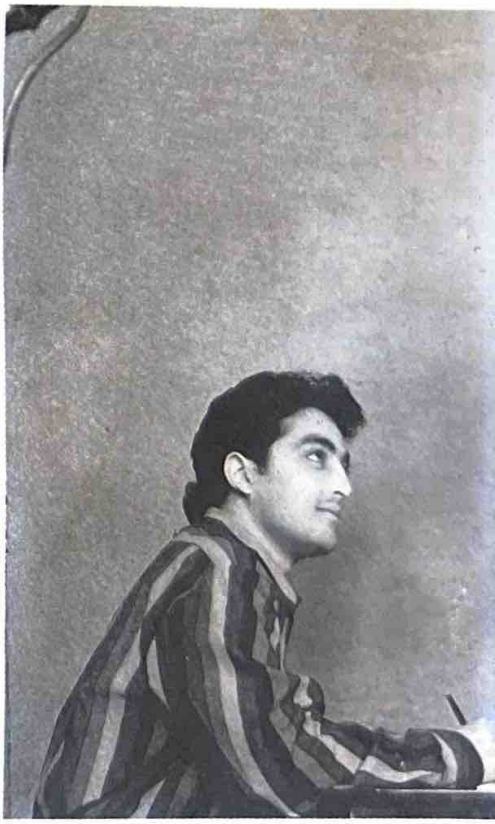
Case 1: Being overweight

I am determined to reduce weight. I am earnest and put in efforts. I do achieve results, but for a short period. After a few weeks, I fizzle out. You must be wanting to know why? Well, I myself did not know the answer till a cousin of mine probed me and helped me in identifying the real cause of the problem.

You see, I am very social. I never miss any function or ceremony. And my problem has been that I cannot say "no" to anybody for anything including food. Thus on all such occasions, whosoever asked me to eat something or forced me to overeat, I just could not refuse.

Thus I continued putting on weight. And since I always thought that others were responsible for it, I never really felt guilty whenever I gave up the exercise for reducing. But when I felt convinced and realised that it is me and me alone who is responsible for the ever-increasing girth, the results were different.

Now I had no one else to blame. Therefore I had to show results myself. Needless to say, I have



It is your attitude towards your employees that determines their behaviour.

reduced and I am 100% certain that I will remain reduced.

Case 2: Problem with employees

It happened with a friend of mine. He is highly educated and experienced yet production in his unit was on the decline. I suggested that he go to some consultant. In a week's time the consultant came out with the problem as well as the solution.

Well, the problem was that my friend used to think that employees were basically lazy, lethargic and disloyal. Not only that, he had conveyed these feelings inadvertently. Moreover, he used to treat them like mechanical objects who were paid adequately for their efforts. He never ever smiled at them. For all practical purposes, he was alien to them, as if a man from another planet.

The day he changed his ideas, thinking and method of behaving with his employees, the results were encouraging. The production show-ed an upward trend and my friend's worries and tension started disappearing.

Case 3: Rebellious child

It is a clear-cut case of perceived notion on the part of the parent that "whatever I say is right." Well, it was true about 30 years back when the father himself was a teenager. But in the present-day context, when the social system, customs, ways of life and family size as well as set-up, have undergone tremendous change, it is no more applicable.



Bunking classes, smoking and drinking are no more considered as sins. It is a part of college life nowadays and a large percentage of students indulge in them just for fun or company's sake.

When this fact of life was understood and accepted by the father, the conflict resolved itself. The teenaged son started listening to his father and changed from a "rebellious" to "a bit difficult to handle at times."

Case 4: Endless work

What happened to Mathur in this case is happening to many people who presume certain things without talking to concerned parties. Mathur is a successful businessman who has everything—a house, a car and all modern luxury items.

Above all, he has a family which is contented and happy with all they have. Yet Mathur had a feeling that since his family never asked for anything it was because they thought that he might not be able to give it to them. This presumption drove him from one project to another, adding constantly to his working hours.

He suffered from another supposition that nobody else could do the job as properly and as efficiently as he. Thus he never shared his work. As a result, he always had too much work on hand.

Although convinced of his misconception, he has been unable to change his style of working. Thus he is carrying on under utter confusion and terrible pressure. But the solution to his problems lies with him and him alone.

New level of thinking

Albert Einstein said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we are at when we created them."

Thus we have to resort to a new level of thinking, a deeper level of thinking to sort out our problems. This is a new approach which says that for everything look into yourself; the key for every lock is within you.

Thus if you want to reduce, take the onus of putting on weight yourself, do not blame others for overfeeding you. If you want results from others, trust them, treat them humanely, accept the fact that it was your wrong behaviour that turned them non-productive and non-responsive. If you want to have a more pleasant, cooperative teenager, be a more understanding, empathic, consistent, loving parent.

Some more cases

My marriage has turned sour. We do not fight or argue even, but do not love each other any more. I have tried talking to her many times, but she does not reciprocate. We are just carrying on. The flame of love has extinguished.

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I want to teach my children the value of work. I want them to be absolutely methodical. But to get them to do anything, I have to supervise everything. Not only that, I have to listen to their grumblings as they work. It is so much easier to do it myself. Why can't they do their work willingly, cheerfully and without being reminded?

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All unhappy situations arise when people feel they are victimised or when they focus on the weaknesses of other people or they think that circumstances are responsible for their own situation.

Unhappy marriages result because each spouse wants the other to change, or each one is concentrating on the sins of other. Problems persist because each individual thinks and is convinced that the problem is because of the other person and that it would be sorted out if the other party learns to behave (the way I want).

It obviously is a wrong approach. The right approach to overcome any problem is to look afresh and to look within ourselves. Let us consider our role in every problem.

Let us find out our share of blame in everything that goes wrong. That way we will not feel frustrated. Moreover, we shall be able to solve the problem in a much better way without any hiccups. ■

● A bore always lights up the room when he leaves.