**Human Excellence through Positive Thinking**

By

VasuDev\* and Prof. PB Sharma\*\*

*“Positivity is the essence of human excellence. Humans are bestowed with the divine bliss to scale all the five dimensions of human excellence. Positive attitude does not mean that you expect everything to be good all the time but accept that whatever has happened is the best for the given time and situation but with the tacit condition that you put in your very best all the time. In this brief communication the authors unveil the seamless bonding between positive thinking and glow of human excellence.”*

1. **Why should we be Positive?**

A question is often asked as to why should we be positive? Why not critical (negative) or at most indifferent? The question is natural as generally the tendency is to sail and swim towards either indifference or towards negative. After all this is what we witness during Mahabharatha where almost everyone except the Lord Krishna joined the Kaurvas that is the army of the Duryiodhana, the epitome of utter evil, utmost negativity, or else how could it be that in the land of Bharatha not a single king, neither big nor small could come to the side of the Pandavas, the positive side of the Mahabhartha War.

This is all the more important as Pandavas were blessed with the presence of Lord Krishna on their side. How could then it be that the millions of Indian people and the armies of the kings at that time could not think positive and be on the side of the Pandavas who were fighting for a righteous cause? What is further surprising that even during the *Tretha Yuga* where Lord Rama was himself fighting for a righteous cause to win over the Devil King *Ravana*, there again no one from the society nor any of the kings had come on the side of Lord Rama except the Monkeys and their king *Sugreeva*. This must leave us to seriously ponder about the science of Positive thinking, so as to understand the whole gambit of positivity and its cultivation for human excellence.

I feel immensely happy to be with you this morning to share my thoughts which are based on an intimate dialogue with my grandchildren Vasu and Dev, on a topic so important that is the science of Positive Thinking. We must begin by asking a question to ourselves as to what we are here for in this life?, what is that purpose of existence and what is that we, the humans are supposed to be and are supposed to do for our Self, for our society and for the nature, the mother Earth and its environment. The natural answer is that we are in a perishable existence in otherwise a continuing, rather eternal existence and as such have a short time to enjoy this existence or to say it better to make the best use of our existence. So why worry about the purpose? Why not eat, drink and be merry, as the *Charvaka* philosophy says?

1. **What would Positivity do to us?**

If the purpose of life is to serve the Self (the Atamana) and through the service of self to serve the society, the mankind at large and mother nature then we are asked to be positive. As positivity leads to bliss and happiness and inspires us to do good in life, be on the side of the truth and adorn truthfulness. Positivity leads us to be on the right side and support righteousness and help the society to cultivate positivity in plenty to overpower negativity, so as to leave a little or no room for ill actions or even indifference.

So it makes sense to be positive and positivity creates bliss and happiness. It leads to creative engagement and bring out nobility in man as against negativity or indifference which breeds unhappiness and frustration. Today in the new knowledge age there is a mad rush to acquire more both knowledge as well as wealth, possess more to be on the side of the achievers and perform at the peak of the performance all the times to remain competitive and relevance. All this puts enormous pressure on man and his mind creating high excitement and high mental and physical stresses. As such we run around looking for stress relaxation and for rejuvenating the mind as well as body in this highly tensed and demanding time.

But just think if you practice positivity and do good all the times then hardly there is any scope for cultivation of stresses as stresses come only when you work against your own inner sense as then you stress your senses and sail and swim against your own inner voice ( *Antar Ataman*, also reffered as *Swadharma* in the Bhagwad Gita).

“*Swadharma nidinam sreshtra, pardharma bhayabhava”( Bhagwad Gita 3.35)* that is one’s own inner voice *(antar Ataman)* based Swadharma is the very best while copying someone else dharma could lead to dire consequences*.* Once we begin to listen to our inner soul, inner voice we get the best of the guidance as pure thoughts emanate from the inner soul and not from the lusty and illusion out worldly glare of forms and fantasies.

1. **Fundamentals of Positive Thinking:**

The practice of positivity in my opinion requires submission to the following fundamental tenants:

* Know yourself and learn to listen to yourself, your inner voice
* Work for the larger collective good of the society and nature as the self is better served through your service to the society and Mother Nature.
* Stresses are created only when you negate righteousness and work against your own *Swadharma*
* Recognize yourself to be in the company of the Divine, and live a life full of bliss and happiness.
* Remember that the God help those who help themselves (their Self)

It is for this reason that the Lord Krishna was on the side of the Pandavas as it is natural for the Divinity to be on the right side. But when the warrior Arjuna, the mightiest of the Pandavas, collapsed under the pressure of negativity, negating his *Swadharma,* not even recognizing that he is in the company of the Divine (Lord Krishna as his charioteer) he was over powered by negativity which made him collapse at the begging of the Mahabharatha War. It took Lord Krishna quite an effort to resurrect him from the vast ocean of negativity in which he was drowned and rather submerged to pull him out and reinstate in him the *Swadharma* of a warrior and make him fight of the righteous cause for which the Mahabhrata war was organized, that is to fight against negativity, Adharma, the epitome of the collective might of evil which was represented in Mahabhrata as the Kaurvas led by their evil king Duryodhana riding on the misguide of the mischievous Sakuni. For the Sakuni represented the propagation of the life philosophy to achieve the goals and objectives, as maybe set out by an individual or a group, at any cost by adopting any means right or wrong no matter, so as to achieve the goal and objectives with certainty, even though it may lead to destruction of righteousness and submission to all kind of immorals and unethical practices.

The diagram below above illustrates the impact of positive thinking on the growth of Human Excellence through thoughts, behavior, habits and the values.

Positive Thinking

The point to ponder is that how it is that the Arjuna who has spent a great deal of time in his life in the company of the divine that is the company of Lord Krishna could drift towards negativity and then it takes the Lord to pull him out from such a level of inaction and ineptness by investing such as great deal of effort as is in the Bhagwad Gita.

1. **Positivity for Human Excellence:**

In the context of meaning and purpose of life it is important for us to realize that we as humans are blessed with a unique opportunity to excel in all aspects of our human activity and glow that vital element of human excellence with which the humans are blessed with by the Lord, the Creator. One of the outstanding characteristics of human existence is that it is capable of comprehending the vast surrounding and is able to reflect through its thinking ability backed by a vast reservoir of knowledge and wisdom cultivated over generations after generations through birth and rebirth and through genetic transcription it allows the knowledge and wisdom to be carried forward from one existence to the next. It is this ability of man which is of high importance in cultivation and practice of human excellence.

For human excellence has five dimensions namely, the dimension of knowledge excellence (wisdom), the dimension of professional excellence (*Uthkrustrata)*, the dimension of service excellence, the dimension of ethical and moral excellence and last but not the least the dimension of spiritual excellence (Immortality, *Amritva*). In our opinion the above five dimensions of human excellence work together to elevate a man to the level of divinity and thus establish the vital connect with Godhead, enable man to live a life of divine and make him capable of going “Back to Godhead”.

Positivity is an essential condition for the cultivation of the above five dimension of human existence for positivity creates the enabling environment for cultivation of excellence whether in acquisition and synthesis of knowledge, utilization of acquired and synthesized knowledge to develop capabilities or use of the capabilities so developed to serve the Self and the society and glow the vital bliss of service excellence. Positivity also inspires to cultivate human values and keeps a man on the side of ethics and morality both in personal as well as in professional life committed to the well-being of the society and service to Self and the mother nature. As such positivity and human excellence have a seamless bonding as the absence of positivity creates a void for human excellence.

Let us not forget that we become what we think of ourselves. As such positivity shall enable us to have positive thinking, shall lead us to positive goals of life and shall inspire us to engage in positive actions for life fulfillment.

The diagram below above illustrates the 5 dimensions of Human Excellence.

Human Excellence

1. **What the noble souls say about positive thinking:**

Let us have a look at what the great noble souls have said on positivity and human excellence.

Albert Einstein, the great scientist of the modern age, has said that *“when I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking.”* He is further on record to have said “strange is our situation here on Earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men -- above all for those upon whose smiles and well-being our own happiness depends.”

Swami Vivekananda, the Indian Vedantic sage who brought India and its vedantic philosophy back to the front stage for a unified world order had said about education of man that *“Education is the manifestation of the perfection that is already in man… Each soul is potentially divine. The purpose of life is to manifest the divinity within…. The end of all education and all training should be man-making”.*

Human excellence was the constant theme of Swami Vivekananda. He will wel­come this spirit of rajas in our younger gen­eration today, but will also whisper the energy of his Vedantic message into every one of them to raise his or her energies to the higher level of *sattva* through self-discipline and cultivation of ethical and social awareness. That energy then will find expression in a socially oriented will and purpose and dedication, with its con­stant and spontaneous mood and temper of *tyaga* and *seva*–renunciation and service.

(The Pursuit Of Human Excellence by Sri Swami Ranganathananda, <http://yabaluri.org/TRIVENI/CDWEB/thepursuitofhumanexcellencejan93.htm>).

Further while speaking on scientific approach on religion and its sweet fruits, Vivekananda stressed that there are two aspects of human excellence

1. Harmony and peace - Being able to tolerate other regions and views

2. Strength and fearlessness- Being able to face the truth with courage and confidence

Vivekananda believes that we should strive to combine strength and gentleness to achieve human excellence. The strength of a positive personality and its values of gentleness and humility creates sattava in thought, deed and actions which enables man to rise to the high alters of name, fame, prosperity and happiness.

For Bharat Ratna Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the secret of success is in positive thinking, "Thinking should become your capital asset, no matter whatever ups and downs you come across in your life" he said. A boatman’s son, who sold newspapers in his childhood became India’s greatest scientist and rose to occupy the highest office of the President of India, is the finest example of what can be achieved on the strength of positivity. Kalam represents the nobility full of humility and his eminence glows the brightest in human excellence as scientist, technologist, statesman and above all an inspirational leader having capabilities of breakthrough leadership coupled with speed leadership qualities. The credit goes to his passionate hard work and positive thinking.

Positivity leads to optimism as against negativity which breeds pessimism and drags towards indifference. For Bill Gates, positive thinking leads to optimism “As I look forward, I'm very optimistic about the things I see ahead”. Optimism creates unprecedented excitement which in turn breeds positive thoughts giving rise to innovative ideas and creative actions. The vital ecosystem for innovation requires constant supply of noble thoughts which when translated in to new technologies, innovated products and new systems make mankind move on the path of progress and prosperity.

For the greatest innovator of our time Steve Jobs, the man who invented iPod, the advice is loud and clear “your time is limited so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t let the other’s opinions drown out your inner voice”. Does it not sounds like the advice of Lord Krishna in Bhagwad Gita “follow your own *swadharma”*. Positive thinking emanates from inner voice which creates noble thoughts giving rise to innovations infinite.

1. **What to do with Negativity?**

The vital question however is what to do with negativity around you in the work place and in the surrounding and society? Should we brush aside negativity as being nonexistent or fight it out on the strength of positivity? Our judgment based on our life experience is that negative and positive are two essential aspects of creation and are there to coexist. The question however should be as to in what proportion and to what extent? So long as the negativity is marginalized and kept as an essential evil and so long as it does not erode the horizon of positivity it may the tolerated as essential to sustenance. But if the negativity is allowed to grow to monstrous proportions then it gets prominence over positivity and then it takes a heavy toll of ethical and moral foundation of the human society. It is therefore the moral responsibility of the positive thinking people that they fight the menace of negativity with their strength and conviction of positivity. If not done then the Lord has to intervene and has to organize a Mahabharata war and thus ensure that the evil is punished and the righteousness is reestablished. Lord Krishna is on record to reveal in Bhagwad Gita that:

*“Yada Yada hi Dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata, Abhiyuthyanam Dharmasya tadatmanam srjamaham, Paritranaya Sadhunam binashaya cha dushkritam, Dharma sthapanathaya sambhavami yuge yuge”.* ( Bhagvat Gita 4.07, 08).

*Whenever there is a total loss of Dharma based on positivity and righteousness then I appear in this perishable existence to destroy the evil minded (negative thinking) persons so as to establish Dharma, positive thinking and righteousness.* But then why allow evil to grow to such monstrous proportions and then compel the Lord to do the clean up!

Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and the father of the Nation has said that “Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny.”

Well, it is time to wrap up. So **be positive and excel**!

\* VasuDev are two brothers: Aishwarya (Vasu) a student of class 9th and Anugyan (Dev) a student of class 2nd . They both study at Riverstone International School, Boise, Idaho, USA. They can be reached at [28ashcool@gmail.com](mailto:28ashcool@gmail.com)

\*\* Prof PB Sharma is the Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi Technological University, Delhi, India and he shall present this paper at the Workshop. He can be reached at [pbsharma48@yahoo.co.in](mailto:pbsharma48@yahoo.co.in)