

Does Everything Go as Planned?

If there is one common factor that encompasses the whole of humanity – it's the fact that everybody does planning! This planning goes around the year for all of us. Students plan and prepare for their exams. Professionals plan for their work. Entrepreneurs plan for their business. Most of us would have drawn up plans as to how we would be spending our holidays this summer. Since last December we too have been hearing of coronavirus, but we were so preoccupied and kept busy planning not knowing how suddenly life would change!

And suddenly the virus travelled far and wide from country to country and brought the whole world to a standstill. The COVID-19 crisis raised questions and concerns with regards to planning. It hampered our so called 'meticulous planning'. That's when a thought crossed my mind, while we can plan a lot of things, do we also need the luck factor or some divine intervention? There are so many things that 'I want to do' and may have all the monies in the world and every influence under the sun but does that mean everything will go as per my plan or does 'HE' have some other plans for us?

You would have heard of Yudhisthira from Mahabharata who was a very generous King. He never refused whatever had been asked for, no matter who asked for it and nobody went empty-handed from him. However, one day after he had exhausted distributing and there was nothing left, one poor person approached him. He said, now I have finished everything, I will give you tomorrow. Bhima, his brother, who had a dhol (drum) started to beat the drum as if rejoicing that his brother has conquered 'Kaal (time - Death,life)' – since he was sure he would be there tomorrow to give the alms. Yudhisthira got the message that nobody can be sure whether he/she would be there or not to see tomorrow. Hence, one wonders -is there is use of all this planning? As the famous Kabir saying goes.. काल करे सो आज कर, आज करे सो अब । पल में प्रलय होगी, बहुरि करेगा कब ॥

That's why we need to understand we do not have control over time and future. So to quote Frank Karkota, past is but a memory and the future just a dream; only the present is real, so today is what you have...live it.

So, does this mean that we should not plan at all? If at all we plan, then what should we do? While planning, the first thing is to envisage what we want to do. Then our focus should remain on what is important to the organization we serve, what is important to our heart & soul and try to do things which are good and therefore plan to have them in our work in the form of tasks. We must work towards them and allow it to happen when it happens. Yes, we will do so and break it up into tasks and have enough things to do to please all the senses. It is always better to have a backup i.e. Plan B, if for some reason Plan A does not work for whatever reason. And in most cases Plan B is 'to be' in the present.

I had personally planned a lot of things to do this summer. We had planned to go to Tirupati as I took-over a new role. In the month of May, we had planned to travel overseas for learning session. In June, I planned for a family holiday. I didn't realize that I also had to keep a fallback plan in place, if for some reasons this did not materialize. Plan for contingency, plan for alternate is what I learned, and I would recommend.

It also taught me a lesson and that is to learn to be happy with what you get. Even if things did not go as planned, learn to accept things and try to live with it. In the current COVID-19 scenario, instead of complaining, use this lockdown time while working from home to spend time with family rather. You are getting the benefit of being at home without taking leave! Develop a new skill. Read a book. Sit in silent introspection. Do those things which you had always wanted to do but forced to procrastinate due to lack of time!

Also, during these testing times what will you do for Jan Kalyaan before you think of self-kalyan. So for example, knowing that you are not infected and instead of cribbing "why am I not allowed to do what I want to do and why am I not able to exercise the option of basic freedom to go out and do what I what to do", Jan Kalyaan takes priority and everything else becomes secondary.

Therefore, draw up a priority list of things that shouldn't wait, things you may have been putting off either intentionally or unintentionally. Use this time to reconcile, maybe it's calling a long-lost friend or patching up an old friend / colleague that has festered way too long. Putting our 'egos' aside and letting people who really care for you and your wellbeing know exactly how you too feel about them. It is these little things that truly deserve your attention and it won't be difficult.

Listen to the most quiet and gentle voice of your 'Heart' and decide of what you really want." "Don't believe" in negative voices around you which can be misleading. Let's not just read this but PUT it to PRACTICE - never postpone anything for tomorrow, what you SHOULD do TODAY .. क्या पता.... कल हो न हो?

I have put forth my thoughts, I am sure a lot of my friends will have more tell / share. I will be happy to hear more views around this.....

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