



**"Greater energy and greater passion is more extraordinary than greater genius."**

**— Lt. General Arjun Ray, (Retd.), PVSM, VSM**

**Issue 136, May 2014**

**Dear Friends,**

## **Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning is a key competency to survive and flourish in the 21st century. This is because knowledge is getting outdated rapidly. The greatest challenge is the process for re-learning, which involves unlearning and then re-learning. Unlearning is difficult, because our ego and personal experiences get in the way of unbiased, objective reflection. Unlearning can happen through cognitive dissonance and crucible experiences. These processes call upon our ability to think critically and to measure the applicability of the knowledge and experience we possess.

Common to both these processes of change through cognitive dissonance and crucible experiences, is the art and science of reflection. If an individual cannot reflect, experiences are meaningless. I went to war in 1965 and 1971, but learnt nothing. Absolutely nothing. How many business leaders consciously reflect or know how to reflect? It is a process to be learned and cultivated. It is what liberates us from becoming static and hidebound. It is what makes us strong in the face of change.

Dissonance can be caused by a book, offering contrarian views to what the reader believes in. A guru or friend or mentor can challenge your present views and provoke you to re-think. In the process she or he can get you to reflect. From a leader-perspective it is, therefore, very important to be surrounded by subordinates who are more competent, if not more than you are. From the leader-perspective you must be an avid reader and listener. As a leader, you will need a mentor.

A corollary to lifelong learning is learning about oneself. That is how self-awareness arises. It will firmly put one on the road to self-actualization. If leaders are not aware of their potential or their shortcomings, success and happiness will always elude them. Conversely, an unhappy negative leader cannot evolve, cannot inspire and eventually, cannot lead.

The real self is dynamic and if a leader is true to herself and is a lifelong learner, who reflects and rebuilds experience and thought, there will be no dearth of future leaders, who will emulate and adopt such qualities of leadership.

**With warm regards,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arjun Ray". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**Lieutenant General Arjun Ray, PVSM, VSM (Retd.)  
Chief Executive Officer  
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