

A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him or her.

– David Brinkley,
an American television newscaster

When you see the value of continued growth, the circumstances around you become stepping stones.

– Clyde M. Narrimore

Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success.

– Dale Carnegie (1888-1955)
American lecturer, author

CHAPTER 22

Musings

Dare to Make a Mistake and Dare to Accept

In the eighties, while V. P. Singh was at the helm of affairs in the Centre, and the Congress Party occupied the Opposition benches, Maharashtra politics veered in a different direction. The fortunes of the Congress went on a downward spiral at this time, and the scenario in the north was no different. To a large extent, V.P. Singh's Mandal bomb had sharply divided the electorate along caste and communal lines in the Hindi heartland and inevitably, this polarisation badly hit the Congress party. When it came to choosing the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee President, the mantle finally fell on Shinde who not only had impeccable credentials, but was someone who could keep the Congress flock together in such trying times. The decision was Rajiv Gandhi's and Shinde, as expected, said that he would abide by the High Command's diktat.

On 19 June 1990, Shinde was appointed the PCC President of Maharashtra and the brief given to him was very clear – he had to revitalise the party right through the state of Maharashtra from the grassroots upwards. Around this time, Pawar's detractors crafted a coup to oust him and launched a signature campaign to overthrow him with the signatures of at least half a dozen senior politicians who moved it with the ostensible tag of 'approval' from high command. When Shinde saw the signatures of some senior party leaders he too followed suit, and quite blindly and unthinkingly signed it without giving the matter a second thought, causing him tremendous political and personal embarrassment.

Shinde's mistake clearly lay in the fact that by signing on the document he committed himself to a course of action without verifying the veracity of the high command's 'approval'. When some senior leaders brought the motion to him claiming that they had the 'blessings' of the high command, Shinde took the Congress stalwarts' opinion at face value.

Recalling the event, Shinde says that it had taught him a priceless lesson, as indeed many experiences in the past had. "Now, I don't normally sign any papers without reading them," he says. Although the incident did weigh on his mind and impacted on his career to a minor extent, he did not get bogged down by it.

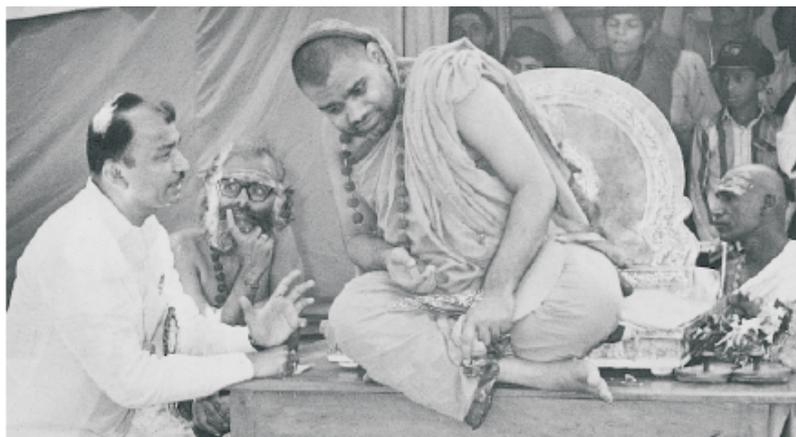
The fact remains that there was a huge brouhaha in party circles as to how a PCC president could lend his signature to such a motion of 'no-confidence' without the express consent of the party bosses. As it turned out, Rajiv Gandhi also felt disappointed because he did not expect Shinde to commit such a blunder. Consequently, when he was removed from the PCC president post, Shinde accepted it as a well-deserved punishment. At that time, Shinde was nagged by the thought that he had tarnished the image of the Congress party and that he had let Rajiv Gandhi down. For a while, Shinde thought he should subject himself to greater punishment in order to make amends or as a form of political penance. This event marked yet another watershed in the development of his personality.

No Space to Caste Discrimination

"Though I am a theist, yet I am not a fanatic. I have a longing to search for the truth-the truth concerning religion, Varna (caste hierarchy in Hinduism defining the various professions), conversion and so on." In other words, questions of identity troubled him. Though I was a dalit, my limited inspiration and low social status did not hold me back from tracing the reason for untouchability in Hinduism. Later, my

understanding about the Hindu religion widened. As I came to know more, I developed great respect for the morals and values of this ancient religion. I wondered how such a great religion could be misinterpreted and an evil practice was dominating. Though caste division is never mentioned in the Vedas, it was perpetrated by the people with vested interests. I did not ever consider myself to belong to a superior or inferior position on the social ladder and never hesitated to perform insignificant jobs that are looked down upon. I am of the opinion that to serve others is a privilege and wonder as to how many human beings are privileged like us to serve society! This led to the belief in me that a man, who tries to serve society, serves his own self and his family.

There were events that tested my patience. As a sub inspector, I found myself emotionally capable of handling any given situation owing to this healthy attitude. In course of time, I made an attempt to probe into matters concerning the Hindu religion, its philosophy, systems of governance and way of life. The tenets of any religion are wonderful. But it is the polluted human mind that plays mischief and creates divisions. Varna is essentially defined as a person's job description. The underlying philosophy got subverted and



later forced an individual to perform certain duties whether he liked them or not. Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism prompted me to search for reasons for choosing a new religion. Ambedkar's efforts to bring a casteless society remained a dream notwithstanding his struggles towards this cause. He witnessed helplessly the discrimination faced by the Dalits and sought to find solace in Buddhism which does not believe in a caste hierarchy. Instead of converting to another religion, I strove to seek answers to the issue of untouchability that existed in the Hindu religion. As I grew, though I was not subjected to much discrimination, my mind sought out information that would dispel some of the doubts that often disturbed me regarding the prevailing discrimination. Although I met many religious leaders, rarely did I get answers that I could describe as satisfactory ones – ones that satiated my appetite and cleared my doubts and misgivings. But I knew that someone or the other would clarify my doubts at the appropriate time and this happened in the form of His Holiness Jayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

It was during 1978, as the Labour Minister, I had an opportunity to clear my doubts before a supreme religious authority. His holiness Jayendra Saraswathi came to Peetam in Jalna district. One of my cabinet colleagues Mr. Subrahmanyam, who knew my urge, took me to Jayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam where he formally introduced me to him. I requested His Holiness to spare me some time to clear certain doubts that had been haunting me for a long time. Swamiji was kind enough to add that he would be present till all my doubts were cleared. Mr. Subrahmanyam who was witnessing our conversation was highly apprehensive about my curiosity and the quizzing I might indulge in, putting Swami Jayendra Sarsaswathi in an awkward situation. This apprehension was at the back of his mind when he offered to sit with me right till the end – he wanted to give me some sort of a signal if I happened to cross

the limits of a questioner. I knew Swamiji was a storehouse of knowledge and I felt very comfortable when he responded to my questions with ease without showing any signs of embarrassment. His affirmation came in the form of a 'nod' when I asked him whether he knew the reason for a person like Dr. Ambedkar embracing Buddhism.

I asked him a volley of questions, including how untouchability, which continued to plague Hindu society, could be justified. He responded by saying that untouchability had never existed in Hinduism as such, though Varna prescribed the job of a Sudra, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Brahmin. Untouchability was indeed an aberration or a misinterpretation rather, he said. He added that any society needed the four broad categories that fall under the term, 'varna'. Untouchability, according to him, was a blot on the Hindu dharma. To think that a human being was untouchable and sear him with the philosophy of untouchability was something beyond his comprehension, he said. He also added that if religious leaders did not fight the growth of untouchability, it would finally eradicate the religion itself.

The revered Swamiji wondered as to how a human being could brand other human beings as untouchable and discriminate against them when he had no control over his own birth. He said that he did not mind taking up these issues to bring about a change in the Hindu religion in terms of the way it was practised.

I then asked Swamiji as to which 'varna' I belonged, if 'varna' defines a person's profession. I reeled off details about the circumstances in which I found myself from time to time – by birth I happened to be a dalit associated with tannery work. Later I performed the job of a Kshatriya as a police officer. In due course, I could be called a Vaisya as my occupation was that of a lawyer. Finally when I stood first in the University,



Dr. C. Natesan with Mr. Shinde

because of my academic excellence I could be described as a Brahmin. I then asked him to tell me as to which community I belonged to.

The Swamiji said – 'You are something special'. I shook my head in disagreement, which annoyed him. I repeated my question. Swamiji then said that by thought and deed a man was placed in the categories of being good or bad, but the question of untouchability did not arise.

Meanwhile, my colleague Mr. Subrahmanyam, the Finance Minister was growing nervous as I was engaged in a debate with Swamiji. Then immediately I asked him whether he was prepared to visit Dalitwada and interact with the local dalits. The Swamiji readily agreed to do so and visited the scavenger colony and spoke at length about the ills and evils of untouchability. His attitude and approach made me think that questions that had been dogging me for years had been answered. I came to the conclusion that the evil side of any religion lies in misinterpretation by man for vested interests. Later, I visited many Sankaracharyas but none impressed me

the way the Swamy of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham did. Afterwards, I met him a number of times. Another Sankaracharya of Sharada Peetham also spoke the same language as Jayendra Saraswathi did.

Who and where is God?

Mr. Shinde inaugurated Bharathi Raaja hospital located in T. Nagar, Chennai and a host of celebrities spoke at length leaving little scope for Shinde to address as they, more or less, covered every topic under the sun. When Shinde's turn came, he was cool and started speaking extempore and the verbatim is: "Many speakers praised doctors as Gods. Of late I have come to a conclusion that the real God is someone else, not the doctors. Gone are the days people portrayed doctors as Gods. Today the patient is God. We pray to God to be blessed with money but he doesn't give it. It is the patient who gives you money. You pray to God to give you knowledge and fame but the ailing patient gives you an opportunity to learn about a new ailment and become famous by giving you his/her body. (Of course, the patient also pays for it).

How to develop a Creative Mind?

There is a general perception among many people that creativity is the prerogative of 'only a few' and as such they never try to explore their creative abilities. But Shinde, who is generally known for creative ideas, has demonstrated his creativity wherever he worked. He is also known for lateral thinking and this trait has rewarded him throughout his career.

Now the question that arises here is whether it is possible to generate a creative mind?

"Yes, of course", claims Shinde.

A jasmine begets jasmine and so does the poison. You reap what you sow. You can't get a jasmine out of a rose plant. These

examples reinforce a simple theory that creativity stems from the root of composed mind and blossoms into millions of flowers. When someone asked Shinde whether it was possible to implant some mechanism to generate more creative minds in this country, he said "Oh! Possible, Absolutely possible" He continued: "Plant as many as positive seeds in the fertile minds and in due course Indian minds can over power the rest of the world because new inventions are nothing but a manifestation of creative minds and what we need today is encouraging curriculum that will facilitate the proliferation of creativity from childhood onwards which in turn breeds an ideal human race".

Shinde's positive mind is one such breed generating new ideas and he translated those thoughts into political resolution during his tenure as the minister in various portfolios. No wonder, Shinde is the only politician who rarely finds foes within and without.

Appreciation a Gateway to Prosperity

Sociologists and scientists conduct research into the factors responsible for intelligent quotient (IQ) level. They are unanimous in one aspect that environmental influence is one of the major contributors in the development of IQ and Shinde's exposure to different types and levels of environment developed his IQ in many ways. His humble origins, life in poverty and lack of opportunity prompted him to take up the challenge to become a respectable person in society. Call it fate or coincidence! Mr. Shinde's encounter with upper caste people and subsequent events moulded his personality giving him the right direction in the career.

Thanks to his association with Sonubhai, his imagination took wings. His artistic talent blossomed when he regularly interacted with musicians and singers who gathered there on week days to perform concerts. Their enthralling performance

was well appreciated by those who assembled there. The same appreciation enabled them to perform even better. But Shinde being a servant with limitations could not appreciate them. To substantiate that the theory of appreciation is a gateway to prosperity, Shinde fondly remembers an interesting event during his childhood. When he attended classes regularly, his teacher gifted him with a chocolate. He knew that he did not do a great job, because he attended classes regularly in his own interest. But he was overwhelmed by the appreciation of the teacher.

The sense of appreciation is a positive factor in one's character. It is not possible for a negative mind to be appreciative. Appreciating itself is strength. To appreciate people, one needs enough love and a sense of belonging. It is impossible for a disturbed person to appreciate a good food, a good music or a good joke. Even a good concert rarely gets appreciated and people who clap hands do it mechanically because of their non-involvement. Shinde developed this art from college days and patted the co-artistes in theatre arts whenever they performed well. The quality of appreciation is strongly embedded into his personality.

Change to Grow

Born into the Dalit community, I had encountered insults and humiliation, during my childhood. But in politics too I had to face a similar wound but in a sophisticated manner. But whenever I faced such situations, immediately my inner Shinde would say: "You are a minority within Scheduled Castes. Better keep quiet. You are always rewarded for your patience. Don't get charged by a few events. You have faced many such events in the past and your tolerance has befittingly brought much recognition. Wait and wait only to grow".

To a question how he would react now if he were to be restrained from taking a bath in a pond that belongs to a higher

community, Shinde took a few minutes and replied: "I remember how I was humiliated when I took a bath in a village pond. The people belonging to the upper castes felt that I, being a dalit, had polluted the sanctity of the water. We apologised and things turned normal. I don't think it can happen to me now even for a hypothetical discussion. To entertain the arguments I would now also say sorry not because I am afraid of them but I don't want to hurt the sentiments of others. As a child, I might have apologised in several situations out of fear but in the same situation I would now apologise out of understanding.

There are people who brand me as a Brahmanical dalit owing to my association with Brahmin friends, cultural exposure and performing rituals in Sanskrit. My practice might have prompted them to brand me so. Yes, I am. I have no hesitation in saying so. If Brahmins are growing and prospering why don't we adapt their ways? Don't we adopt some formula of success story when someone reaches dizzy heights in business or in a profession? This is what I did and I advocate, and I urge others to follow if they are really interested in growing and excelling in life. If English and Sanskrit are the tools for their upcoming, what is wrong in a dalit using them? I would go a step ahead and say that Sanskritisation within dalits should be the agenda of the day for dalits. How long the dalits should continue to live with the mercy of others?

Sanskritisation

Even names matter. Do you know the names of Hindu Gods which are never like the ones of Gods of dalits – Nallamma, Pullamma and Mysamma. As time passes why don't we rechristen their names like the one I have changed? Would anyone know who I am if I don't claim to be a dalit? It is because my name never identifies my caste whereas Dagadu proclaims my caste. Let me quote an event that took place

during my tenure as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh (AP). One Mr. Kaki Madhava Rao, a retired chief secretary of AP met me. Since I knew Madhava Rao sings well, I requested him to sing any song of his choice. He closed his eyes for a while and "Gurubrahma, guruvishnu, guru sakshad..." pervaded the ambience. I turned nostalgic and listened like a disciple.

"Look, this is what I expect a dalit to adopt. Let us tune and fine tune Dalits' mindset to sophisticate their life and style. I want dalits to join the streams of brahmanical traits. Having reaped and enjoyed the benefit of associating with Brahmins and well-cultured personalities, I strongly advocate the dire necessity for the Dalits to change their attitude. We, the Dalits in this country, travelled enough in the bogeys of favours and support. Time has come for us to introspect to bring attitudinal changes with a positive outlook and travel in a brand new vehicle of 'I can'."

He continues: "If it was possible for Shinde, why not for others? While saying this, I am aware that the uplifting of the downtrodden does not rest with the government alone. Certainly, every beneficiary of reservation should shed some share towards the underprivileged and the unprivileged. If a beneficiary of a reservation doesn't come forward, how do you expect the society to extend helping hands. Tell me how many dalits who benefited from the reservation shared their purses? I am not saying it for the sake of saying but if this statement can trigger one's thought process and someone redraws his/her agenda, my purpose is served. I would appeal to every dalit to work towards this goal. While making this statement I want the dalit community to introspect whether they are prepared to sit with a sweeper and eat and allow their daughters to get married to the sons of sweepers. When we blame the upper caste for discriminatory roles, are we doing justice to our own community? How many dalits accept the other castes of dalit community? One should not expect the society to change

overnight as change is a process. The first step should be set by none other than the dalits. How many officials and well placed technocrats contribute their share in some form or the other for the well being of the Dalit or the underprivileged? If every well placed dalit comes forward to adopt a poor boy or a girl, most of the social disparity would disappear. It is necessary for every dalit to introspect before pointing to others. In other words, an honest introspection is sure to bring social change among dalits. A real liberation of a dalit begins at home especially in a dalit's home. In-fighting within the community disintegrates and weakens us and I always believe we must be the forerunners of change if we wish to see the change in the world, and we must begin the process of change in a magnanimous way."

Gratitude

I am a product of gratitude and every cell of my body and mind vibrates with the chemistry of gratitude. I recall how I was fortunate enough to become what I am today. Since my childhood, I have been sheltered and nurtured by friends and well wishers. My sense of gratitude goes to every lane and by lane of road of travel and those persons whom I met during my journey. Most of my associates have helped me and I remain



grateful to all of them eternally. How many events should I recall, to say that I am a product of a contribution showered by many? Many times I searched for those people who helped me during my dire needs. My sense of gratitude kept me in good stead during my journey. Whenever I derailed, introspection brought me back on to the rails. Gratitude could be extended to living or nonliving things and it is scientifically proved that the body's immune system is strengthened when gratitude is expressed from the soul. In other words, gratitude is a tool that brings down the ego, and enhances the energy levels.

Spiritualism

I was a theist. It was not conscious. I just believed in God because my mother asked me to. I followed because she insisted. Going to a temple and praying was something mechanical during my childhood. Searching for a square meal and a decent cloth itself was a war. I never expected, I could remain a religious person during my childhood. I was a part of a mela whenever they went to the temple. At times, I enjoyed attending religious functions because I got good prasadam at the end. Since most of the prasadam were sweet, I used to participate. Later, my interaction with the intellectuals, communist party leaders and rationalists made me rethink about my faith in God.

I am of the opinion that simply going to a temple, praying to a god and practising contrary to the righteousness will not take one anywhere. I feel the prayer and the practice should become one and that alone would liberate a person. A prayer is for the well being of others and the practice also should be the same. I am reminded of a good quotation of a Swamiji who redefined spiritualism very befittingly in a few words and I feel he is right. "Spiritualism is nothing but shedding the unwanted and possessing the most wanted."

Change or Perish

If at all anything could be labelled as 'perpetual' than it is 'change'. What you were a second ago, you are not now. Millions of cells die and millions are born in every living being every seconds. It is left to the perception of the individual to accept changes. I look at things this way: I did not know that change is a perpetual process when I was young. I learnt it later and am enjoying the change. How can I find fault with nature because I am a part of it. What I was and what I am and what I will be is a reflection of change. Just because some changes are not palatable to some individuals, we can't tag them as bad. People who could not cope with the change become stagnant and perish away.

Compromise/Accommodation

Every human being knowingly or unknowingly adopts compromise formula irrespective of his liking or disliking. You want to go to a film and compromisingly you adjust and watch the movie when you don't get a choice of your class. The compromise euphemistically put as 'accommodation' or 'adjustment' does help one to kill one's ego or hide it for sometime. This adjustment is a necessary ingredient to make life happier and meaningful. A person with larger heart alone can accommodate. The more you accommodate the greater space you gain. I am reminded of a story often told by a friend.

It was raining heavily and a certain house owner was sleeping comfortably until he heard someone knocking. He opened and saw a man, wet and shivering. He accommodated him and in a few minutes there was another knock, where two more men wanted some space. The house owner took them inside and after some adjustment all the four lay down. Before they could sleep there was another alarm call and the house owner opened the door only to find four men pleading to allow them inside as it was raining continuously. Smilingly, he took them inside and woke up all the others so that everybody sat

comfortably. Before they could talk to each other, there was a knock on the door again and the owner opened the door to find ten more waiting. The owner happily invited them inside. This was the time one of the persons started appealing to the house owner whether it was right to allow ten people inside when they didn't have space even to sit. The house owner smilingly asked him where he would have been, had his predecessors posed the same question. Without further discussion, he told them to stand and everyone stood up the whole night.

This is a befitting story to demonstrate the spirit behind adjustment. In my political and personal life, adjustment alone accommodated me and my career was as smooth as silk though there were events which caused anguish and pain.

Copy Master

Shinde advocated emulating and growing. He says there is nothing wrong in copying good things and most of the best things are adopted. It is a universal phenomenon to copy role models. People copy their style, mannerisms and many more and most of the role models who acquired name and fame are flooded with millions of fans and followers. Shinde says: "I am one such politician who always tried to copy the best and incorporate the same in my own way. Whenever I went abroad, I used to observe the road map for growth. I would also find how those road maps were followed. If it was a tall building I would ask about Floor Space Index ratio and if it was larger dam then I would ask "why"? Successful irrigation projects in any country were my normal attractions but social projects like eradication of poverty, reservation for the under privileged helped me to copy and apply it with little or major modifications. I would advocate a policy to copy the good wherever it may be, be it Indian or foreign to make us powerful'.

'Copying' is always portrayed in a negative way. But I advocate copying. Does it look absurd? Certainly not! Human evolution is a process of copying. A child copies its father or mother as long as it finds it worthy. Later, children try to copy things, events, language, cloth, behaviour and so on. There are two schools of thought about copying.

"Copying is a concept. When one copies other, it is necessarily due to a need or a compulsion. For example, someone may try to follow the accent of American or British English, when he/she is impressed by a speaker's good presentation. Ultimately, I would emphasise that one should try to accept and adopt the best available for the improvement of one's self and others. I was attracted by Y. B. Chavan whose literary knowledge moulded my approach to learn. Sharad Pawar's rhetorical speech inspired me and I tried to copy it. Soniaji's sacrifice became a source of inspiration to mend my attitude. Mahatma Gandhi's ahimsa pushed me to the path of tolerance. Booker T. Washington taught me the art of accepting things. The list is endless. I am a blend of copying and I feel proud that my personality is a potpourri of copying. I am proud to say that I am a copy master and would like to remain a copy master forever.

Comparison

Comparison is possible only with equals. One cannot compare oneself with unequal persons. In other words, comparison between individuals is a wrong concept. "Every individual is unique and different from the other. I don't compare one leader with the other but I would share my perceptions about the concept of comparison. I never compare one election with another or one person with another. It is only an analysis. Comparison never gives you a right evaluation because comparison is not the right tool to evaluate things. I am aware that I never compare but at the same time try to find out the unique characteristic of every individual."

I have witnessed teachers comparing one student with the other and demanding him to become like the other without considering the individual's potential to perform. We cannot grow a jasmine out of a rose plant and vice versa. The teachers' attempt to make a rose out of a jasmine is an impossible task. In the process of such comparison, neither a jasmine nor a rose blossom, rather they decay. A student whose bent of mind is towards arts may not excel in science and a logical mind may not be able to adapt to artistic attitude. These contrasts in individuality should be studied to promote one's capability and encourage individual potential and channelise productivity.

We have been witnessing how parents compare their children with neighbours' without knowing the individual's likes and dislikes. "Become a doctor or an engineer", parents normally command their children. Their wishes of becoming a doctor could not be fulfilled and so they expect their dreams to be implanted in their children's mind. In the actuality, a boy's or a girl's dreams are totally different from those of their parents.

Interestingly, most of the children simply nod their heads though they do not like to become what their parents want. Because they are afraid of the financier (parents) who may not support them to continue their study, they say 'yes' to their parents' demand. I wonder what would happen if the children start questioning their parents by comparing the parents with the neighbours who are number one in business or MDs or directors of a company while their parents are just mere clerks.

It is necessary for every one to introspect and stop comparing between individuals as this science of comparison may not be workable concept. Every individual is different from another because uniqueness is the ultimate creation of Mother Nature. Accept children as they are.



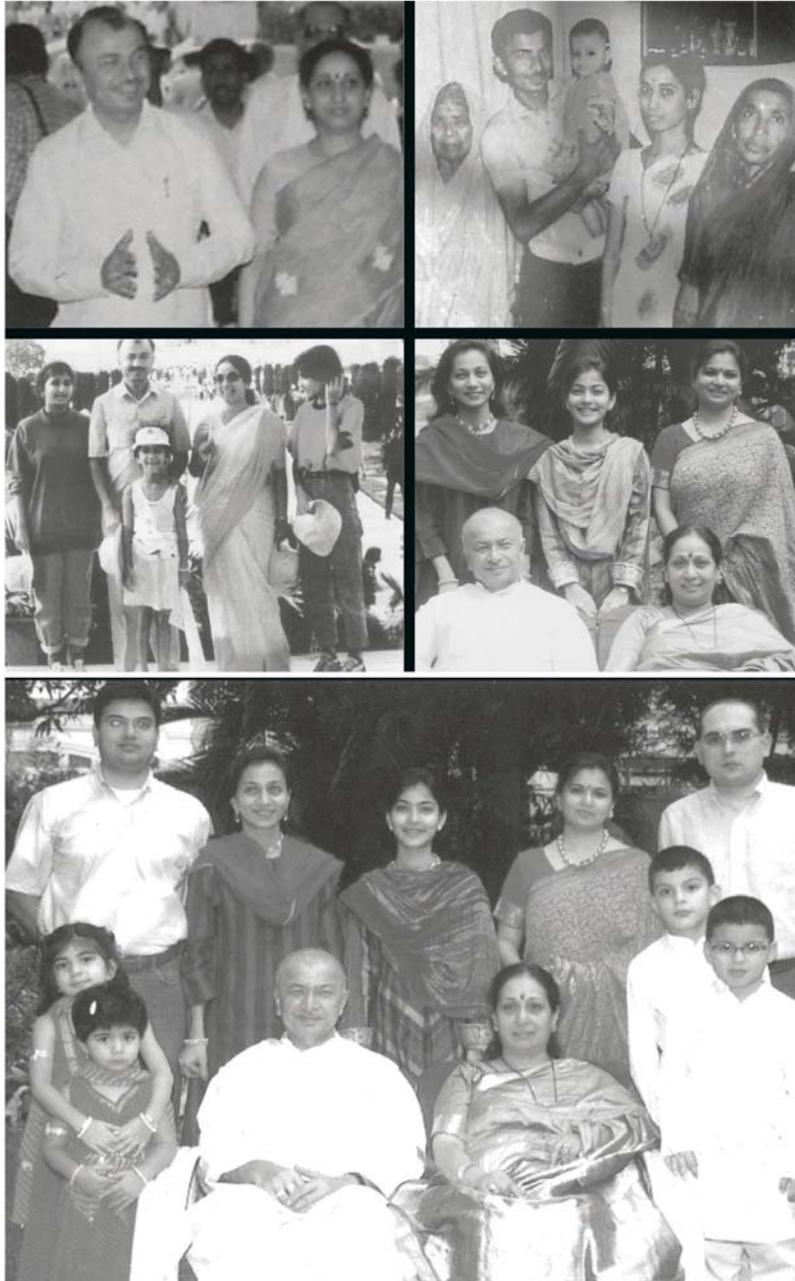
Single Parenting

Home is a factory where citizens are manufactured. Parents play a pivotal role in shaping and sharpening the mind of the children. Socio-psychologists observed that children groomed under a single parenting are prone to psychological problems, although there are cases of children becoming problematic even under normal parenting where incompatibility prevails between spouses. A study authenticates that children under normal parenting excel. In other words, development of a child mostly rests on a wholesome parenting that includes parents, relatives and grandparents who also contribute their share in the overall growth of a child. If this is the finding of child care, my story is different from others. I was the only child to my parents, and at the age of six, my father passed away before I could experience his affection. I was brought up by my biological mother and step mother who were like father and mother. I was not regular to school due to poverty. Now one could ask how single parenting did not affect my upbringing. I have a scientific answer to this question.

Both my mothers played a big role. Above all, the environment where I was groomed was so positive that it shaped me very well. The association, where I was a male servant, was a well-cultured and a highly sophisticated Brahmin family that transformed my personality. Nearly twelve hours of association everyday over a period of about three years moulded my personality to a normal child. Their behaviour, language, dress culture, and attitude towards people had a greater influence in the making of my personality. The environment in which I grew up left an indelible mark in fine tuning my trait. In other words, a congenial atmosphere is the only and ultimate alternative rather a scientific compensation to those who are groomed under single parenting.

Race Vs Caste

I have been pondering over the problems of untouchability creating divisions between societies. I do know how a crooked mind tries to dominate the meek. It has been happening for ages. Though untouchability is one of the evils, of late I have noticed greater aberration, predominantly creating asymmetrical society among humanity and that is 'Racism'. If a dalit from Orissa or Tamilnadu goes to Delhi or Mumbai, he/she will not be identified as dalit unless he or she ties a banner on the forehead proclaiming him or her as a dalit. Shockingly and contrastingly Racism deliberately distinguishes an individual as a white or a black. To me, racism is the worst evil. We have heard how Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King fought against racism, though the virus is still prevailing to divide the society. If I were asked to wage a war against untouchability or racism, my choice will narrow down to the latter.



Life Sketch

Born on	4th September 1941
1942	(1-year old)
1947 June	1 st standard (6 years old) father died
1948	2 nd standard
1949	3 rd standard
1950	4 th standard
1951	5 th standard (he became a school drop-out at the age of 10)
1952-55	After 6 months of miscellaneous work, he worked at Sonubai's house for two and a half years
1956	Aug; He joined the 8 th standard at the age of 15 (Worked as a boy-peon and studied simultaneously)
1956-57	8 th standard
1958	9 th standard (boy peon) was working in Solapur court
1959	Failed 10 th standard as he could not get through the English language test
1960	11 th standard (passed SSC)
1961	Joined pre-degree while working. He was promoted from boy peon to peon
1962	1 st year BA
1963	During 2 nd year BA, he appeared for Army Short Service Commission but did not join.
1964	3 rd Year BA (Promoted from peon to clerk)

- 1965 June, resigned from the job of a clerk and joined Pune Law College. (On 5th December, 1965, he was selected as a Sub-Inspector of Police)
- 1966 1st year L.L.B. passed
- 1967 Could not continue L.L.B. due to work load. Continued to work as SI in Police
- 1968 2nd year L.L.B. at Mumbai (transferred from Pune to Mumbai Law College. He also appeared for the Civil Services Examination
- 1969 3rd year LLB
- 1970 Continued to work as SI of Police, married to Ujwala on 1st May
- 1971 6th November, resigned from SI of Police to join politics
- 1972 Selected by the State Election Committee of Maharashtra for MP seat. But denied. Again selected to contest as an MLA in Karmala Constituency but Sonawane was given ticket
- 1973 Started Law practice. (Sonavane, sitting MLA dies)
- 1974 April - he became an MLA in the constituency where Sonavane contested (Mr. Vasant Rao Naik CM)
- 1974 Became a Minister of State for Sports & Culture on 7.11.1974 (Mr. Vasant Rao Naik CM)
- 1975 Minister of State for Sports & Cultural (Mr. Shankarrao Chavan CM)
- 1976 Continued as the Minister of State
- 1977 Minister of State for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture
- 1978 Minister of State for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture (Vasantdada Patil CM)

- 1978 Cabinet Minister for Labour, Tourism
(Mr. Sharad Pawar CM [PDF])
- 1979 MLA
- 1980 MLA (Antulay CM), Rejoined Congress on
28.02.1980
- 1981 MLA
- 1982 MLA (Babasaheb Bhosle, CM)
- 1983 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning Sports &
Culture (Vasantdada Patil CM)
- 1984 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning Sports &
Culture (Vasantdada Patil CM)
- 1985 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning Sports &
Culture. (Vasantdada Patil CM)
- 1985 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning,
Environment (Shivajirao Nilangekar Patil CM)
- 1986 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning, Industry,
Law & Judiciary Social Justice (Shankarao
Chavan CM)
- 1987 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning, Industry,
Law & Judiciary Social Justice (Shankarao
Chavan CM)
- 1988 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Cultural, Sports &
Planning. (Sharad Pawar CM)
- 1989 Cabinet Minister for Finance, Cultural, Sports &
Planning. (Sharad Pawar CM)
- 1990 Minister for Urban Development, Law & Judiciary
and MPCC President (Sharad Pawar CM)
- 1991 Minister for Urban Development, Law & Judiciary
(Sharad Pawar CM)
- 1992 General Secretary AICC (16.05.1992 – 07.01.1996)
He was nominated to Rajya Sabha

- 1993 MP (RS) General Secretary
- 1994 MP (RS) General Secretary under P.V. Narasimha Rao, PM, who was also the President of Indian National Congress
- 1995 MP (RS) General Secretary
- 1996 MP (RS) General Secretary
- 1996-97 MP (RS) PCC President, Maharashtra
- 1998 MP; When Sonia became the President of Indian National Congress, she appointed Shinde as a General Secretary (10.03.1998 to 26.04.1999). He became a member of 12th Lok Sabha, (Solapur Constituency)
- 1999 MP Lok Sabha 10.10.1999 to 30.03.2003. General Secretary (19.12.1999 – 08.07.2000)
- 2000 Congress Working Committee Member
- 2001 MP Lok Sabha
- 2002 MP Lok Sabha
- 2003 Contested for the post of Vice-President
- 2003 Became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, holding UD, ULC, Revenue, GAD portfolios (18.01.2003 – 30.10.2004)
- 2004 Governor (Andhra Pradesh) (04.11.2004)
- 2005 Governor (Andhra Pradesh) till 28.01.2006
- 2006 Minister for Power (29.01.2006) Government of India. Nominated as Member of Rajya Sabha
- 2007 Minister for Power
- 2008 Minister for Power
- 2009 M.P 15th Lok Sabha & Minister for Power (Till date)

Portfolios held by Mr. Sushilkumar Shinde under various Chief Minister

Name of the Chief Minister	Period	Portfolios held
Shri Vasantrao Naik	07.11.1974 to 20.02.1975	Minister of State for Sports & Cultural Affairs
Shri Shankarrao Chavan	20.02.1975 to 17.05.1977	Minister of State for Sports & Cultural Affairs
Shri Vasantdada Patil	17.05.1978 to 05.03.1978	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture
Shri Vasantdada Patil	05.03.1978 to 18.07.1978	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture
Shri Sharad Pawar	02.08.1978 to 17.02.1980	Cabinet Minister for Labour, Tourism
Shri Vasantdada Patil	07.02.1983 to 09.03.1985	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture
Shri Vasantdada Patil	12.03.1985 to 01.06.1985	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture
Shri Shivajirao Nilangekar Patil	05.06.1985 to 06.03.1986	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning, Environment
Shri Shankarrao Chavan	12.03.1986 to 26.06.1988	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Planning, Industry, Law & Judiciary Social Justice
Shri Sharad Pawar	26.06.1988 to 04.03.1990	Cabinet Minister for Finance, Family Welfare, Sports and Culture
Shri Sharad Pawar	05.03.1990 to 25.06.1991	Cabinet Minister for Urban Development
Shri Sudhakarrao Naik	26.06.1991 to 22.02.1993	Cabinet Minister for UD, Law & Judiciary
Shri Sushilkumar Shinde	18.01.2003 to 30.10.2004	Cabinet Minister for UD, ULC, Revenue, GAD

List of Maharashtra Chief Ministers and their tenures

S.No.	Name of C.M.	From	To	Year	Month	Day
1)	Shri Yashwantrao Chavan	01.05.1960	19.11.1962	02	06	19
2)	Shri M.S. Kannamwar	20.11.1962	24.11.1963	01	10	24
3)	Shri P.K. Sawant (Caretaker)	24.11.1963	05.12.1963	-	-	11
4)	Shri Vasanttrao Naik	05.12.1963	20.02.1975	11	02	18
5)	Shri Shankarrao Chavan	21.02.1975	17.05.1977	02	02	25
6)	Shri Vasantdada Patil	17.05.1977	05.03.1978	-	09	20
7)	Shri Vasantdada Patil	05.03.1978	18.07.1978	-	04	14
8)	Shri Sharad Pawar	18.07.1978	17.02.1980*	01	07	02
9)	Shri A.R. Antulay	09.06.1980	12.01.1982	01	07	04
10)	Shri Babasaheb Bhosale	21.01.1982	01.02.1983	01	-	12
11)	Shri Vasantdada Patil	02.02.1983	09.03.1985	02	01	06
12)	Shri Vasantdada Patil	10.03.1985	01.06.1985	-	02	23
13)	Shri Shivajirao Nilangekar Patil	03.06.1985	06.03.1986	-	09	05
14)	Shri Shankarrao Chavan	12.03.1986	26.06.1988	01	06	16
15)	Shri Sharad Pawar	26.06.1988	04.03.1990	01	08	09
16)	Shri Sharad Pawar	04.03.1990	25.06.1991	01	03	13

S.No.	Name of C.M.	From	To	Year	Month	Day
17)	Shri Sudhakar Rao Naik	25.06.1991	22.02.1993	01	07	22
18)	Shri Sharad Pawar	06.03.1993	14.03.1995	01	03	07
19)	Shri Manohar Joshi	14.03.1995	31.01.1999	03	10	18
20)	Shri Narayan Rane	01.02.1999	18.10.1999	-	08	18
21)	Shri Vilas Rao Deshmukh	18.10.1999	18.01.2003	03	03	02
22)	Shri Sushilkumar Shinde	18.01.2003	31.10.2004	01	09	12
23)	Shri Vilas Rao Deshmukh	01.11.2004	07.12.2008	04	01	07
24)	Shri Ashok Chavan	08.11.2008	15.10.2009	-	11	08
25)	Shri Ashok Chavan	07.11.2009	Till Date			

* President's Rule from 17th Feb. 1980 to 9th June 1980. (Governor Mr. Sadiq Ali)
Source: Maharashtra Information Centre (Govt. of Maharashtra)

Epilogue

If you have not read the whole book for any reason, take the trouble of reading these paragraphs should you choose to write your own destiny.

You know that Mr. Shinde was an orphan born to illiterate parents, a school dropout, a pilferer, an errand boy, a domestic help, a boy-peon and above all a minority dalit brought up by single parenting. He could write his success story, setting aside all these disadvantages. How was it possible?

Very simple: Synchronising one's thought, word and deed.

If you will something with your heart and work to achieve, it, I promise you that anyone and everyone can rewrite his destiny.

Let us see how a thought can influence your body metabolism? Imagine...

"Upon entering a vegetable shop, assuming you are looking for a good, fresh and juicy lemon, you discover that the shopkeeper who had stored it for his personal use had given it to you. On reaching home, you take the lemon and begin the process of savouring it by cutting it into halves. The juice frothing on the surface of the lemon appears to overflow, you sprinkle salt and pepper on its surface. Imagine you're beginning to taste the lemon juice laced with salt and pepper. The very thought is a mouth-watering experience.

How do you get saliva when lemon, pepper and salt are not really there in your hands? Isn't it the very thought that triggered this impulse?

If you deny this, sorry, this book is not for you. Such is the power of thought, as recognised by great philosophers and seers from the earliest of times. "I can" if repeated over and over again, makes the seemingly impossible possible, as this book demonstrates at every page and at every stage.

Words are the thoughts manifested and expressed. To authenticate the power of words, I wish to share with you a story based on Nitharsana, a writer's anecdote published in 'Kungumam', a Tamil weekly.

A gentleman was going to see his ailing mother, who was living in a village. While driving, he got stuck in a sudden downpour making the journey more difficult. In a few minutes, the vehicle got mired in a pit and his effort to extricate the mired vehicle proved futile. He became nervous for two reasons – he was eager to see his mother and was also anxious to extricate his trapped car. With no visible alternative, he got down from the vehicle and tried to mobilise a few people to pull the car out of the jam. Luckily the rain stopped for a while. After a few yards, he was pleasantly surprised to find an old house. He knocked at the door to find an old man who welcomed him. He narrated his problem and pleaded for his support. The old man coolly listened to him and said: "Look I sympathise with you. I live here with my only son who is visually challenged. Although it isn't a very fair description, you could call him a living robot. He can help us but please don't mind if I impose a condition." The old man paused for a while and continued, "you should not utter a word till the vehicle gets going. All you have to do is to start and keep the ignition on as we push the car from behind."

"Certainly sir", replied the gentleman. The old man went inside the house and woke up his son who was sleeping. On hearing his father calling out to him, the son got up. The old man, after whispering something in the boy's ears, guided him



to the car. He narrated the whole story to his son and asked him to lift and push the car as hard as he could, so that the car could start moving, and eventually help the gentleman go on his way to see his mother.

The stage was set; the car owner sat inside the car and ignited the engine. The old man and his visually challenged son went behind the car while the old man started shouting: "Hey Rajan push, David you also push, Krishna you lift the car, Saleem you also push a little harder, push... push... push... push... the car started moving. The car is moving, a small push is all it takes now, hey Krishna you push on this side; David you lift the car on the other side... push ... push". And as the gentleman revved up the engine, the car came out of the pit and on to the road.

Unable to believe how just two persons literally lifted and pushed the car, the gentleman got down from the car to thank them, but was reminded of the promise that he should not utter a word. He could not resist his overpowering sense of gratitude which made him break the promise and he said: "Sir I am grateful to you", and before he could continue, the old

man gestured at him not to open his mouth. The gentleman did not speak further.

The old man took his son inside the house and made him sleep. He returned to the car owner who was in tears of joy and gestured whether he could speak. The old man nodded.

“I am moved by your kind help. You have come like an angel to help me during my crisis. I understood everything except one thing – you were calling out to so many people when there were just the two of you... Why was that?”

The old man answered with a smile: “I know there wasn't a third soul to help us. When I narrated your problem to my son, I also told him that there were a couple of workers around to help us tug the car and that we needed one more strong person like him so that all of us could together pull the car out of the pit. He was under the impression that there were many more people pulling and lifting the car. Had he known that others weren't there, he would not have believed that it was possible to lift the car.”

He further said: “When I shouted out to the others – all of whom were imaginary folks – he thought that he was supported by many others in this difficult task and this thought gave him abundant energy and that in turn helped him to put his heart and soul to extricate the car. Such is the power of the 'word', something advocated by all great philosophers and religions. It was merely 'the word' that performed this miracle and the faith of collective effort sparked off additional energy. A success story is an essence of rhythm between Manasa, Vacha and Karmana, i.e. the thought, the word and the deed.

This apart, the car owner had a great urge to see his ailing mother, a righteous intention which was also responsible for this event to become successful.

Who Wrote My Destiny is a fine story, but a story of possibilities. A story of "I can", a story of word power, a story of thought power, a story of deed power, a story of absolute faith, a story of impossible becoming possible and a story of success.

If he can, you also can and we all can.

Are you ready?

Glossary

AICC	All India Congress Committee
Acharya	Teacher; also the honorific title bestowed on a learned person
Ashramshala	A kind of education with hostel facility
BC	Backward Class
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party, a major national Party in India
Congress party	Founded in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume during the British rule and has been ruling the country since Independence (except for a decade or so)
CET	Common Entrance Test
Dalit	A "depressed" community / person from the "depressed" community
DEO	District Educational Officer
Dhor	Literal meaning "cattle". Dhor community was among the socially and economically lowest castes in Maharashtra. Traditionally engaged in the task of curing the skin of dead cattle and selling it as raw material for leather wear
Doordarshan	Official television channel of Government of India
Galli	Lane
Gilli Danda	Name of a local street game played by the boys with a stick
Hanuman	One of the most important personalities in the Indian epic, The Ramayana

Harijan	Mahatma Gandhi called members of the socially depressed communities " <i>Harijans</i> "
Harmonium	A free reed aerophone; a musical instrument where sound is produced as air flows past a vibrating reed in a frame. Air pressure is typically generated by breath or with bellows.
High Command	The highest decision maker group within the Congress
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
Janata Party	Political party; formed in 1977 with the merger of four major opposition parties
Ji	Suffix for first name or surname denoting respect for the person, as Indiraji, Rajivji
Kannada	Principal language spoken by people of the state of Karnataka
Karma Yogi	One who works without expecting results
Karmic Mantra	A theory from the Bhagavad Gita, which means, one has to work without expecting results
Karmala	An Assembly Constituency in Maharashtra
Karma	Deed
Kurta	A long shirt
LLB	Bachelor of Legal Law
Lok Sabha	House of People, the Lower House of the Indian Parliament
Lord Ram/Rama	One of the many popular figures and deities in Hinduism, the hero of the Ramayana
Maharaj	Godman (also title of a King) as per context
Mantra	Verse - to be recited as part of Hindu rites at various auspicious occasions; a sacred

	counsel
Mantralaya	The building in Mumbai that houses top administrative offices of the state of Maharashtra; State Secretariat
Marathi	Principal language spoken by the people of the state of Maharashtra
Marathwada	A region of Maharashtra state
Marg	Road
Manasa	Mind
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MPCC	Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee
Mysamma	Local deity, worshipped by low caste Hindus
NCP	National Congress Party
Paisa	A fractional monetary unit
PCC	Pradesh Congress Committee
Polleramma	Local deity, worshipped by low caste Hindus
Pranams	Regards
Prahlada	A character from the Hindu religious epic
Peetam	Learning centre
Puranas	Hindu religious epics
RPI	Republican Party of India
Sant	Saint
SC	Scheduled caste
Shramshala	A school in a remote place; such schools have a provision for hostels, with Government support
Shiv Sena	A political party founded in Maharashtra by Bal Thackeray

Shukravarpath	Name of a street in Solapur in Maharashtra state
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
ST	Scheduled Tribe
Swadeshi	<i>Swadesh</i> means one's own country; <i>Swadeshi</i> refers to the products made in one's own country. Mahatma Gandhi's independence movement included boycott of British goods and promotion of Swadeshi products
Taluka	A taluka consists of a number of villages. Several talukas form a subdivision of a revenue district
Untouchability	Evil practice of treating members of depressed communities as not worthy to be touched by those belonging to so called upper castes
Upper caste	Higher caste, such as Brahmins
Vacha	Word
Veena	A stringed instrument of India that has a long, fretted fingerboard with resonating gourds at each end
Veda	The Vedas, "knowledge", are a large body of texts originating in Ancient India. The texts are composed in Vedic Sanskrit, and are the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism
Vinayaka Chaturthi	Festival of Lord Ganesha, the Indian deity with the face of an elephant
Vidarbha	A district in Maharashtra
Vishnu	One of the Supreme Gods in the Vaishnavite tradition of Hinduism

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