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*When hunger and thirst for real learning is ignited in people, we will witness a revolutionary change, fuelled by the power of love, knowledge, wisdom, courage and compassion.*

*A life without a story that has twists and turns and the challenges that go with them is insipid. Example of Steve Jobs points the way. He was born in February 24, 1955, to two University of Wisconsin graduate students who gave him up for adoption. Smart but directionless, Jobs experimented with different pursuits before starting Apple Computers with Stephen Wozniak in the Jobs' family garage. Apple's revolutionary products, which include the iPod, iPhone and iPad, are now seen as dictating the evolution of modern technology.*

It is encouraging to see that the corporate world in Pakistan continues to change for the better, despite the odds facing the nation. Appreciation and practice of professionalism and teamwork is on the rise. Many companies are now paying greater attention to vision and values. A sense of mission and purpose is taking root.

Investment in learning and development has become a norm. This is evidenced by the growing number of trainers and consultants who have entered the field and the increasing frequency of seminars, workshops and conferences being held throughout the country. Local companies are joining in the foray in large numbers. Corporate sponsorship of creative educational initiatives, particularly by the youth, is also on the rise.

All this goes to show is that more and more people, instead of falling prey to despondency arising from a perpetual barrage of bad news, are taking a more balanced view of the current socio-economic and political climate. They are beginning to realize that where there are extreme threats, there are an equal number, if not more, of remarkable opportunities waiting to be identified and tapped.

That day is not far when people will be queuing up for books and will surf the internet in larger numbers for knowledge, to furnish their minds and broaden their vision. I look forward to the day when students in schools, colleges and universities will be bubbling with curiosity and will be actively engaged in wide-ranging discussions and debates on matters they care about.

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a revolutionary change, fuelled by the power of love, knowledge, wisdom, courage and compassion.

As a trainer and teacher, I strive to inspire and motivate managers and workers alike. A question I often ask in my learning programs is: "What do birds do that is different from us humans?" Participants usually reply, "They fly!" Think about it. Do birds really fly? No. They merely flap their wings and *mother nature* gives them flight. Clip a few feathers from the wings of a pigeon and it will lose its freedom to fly, because we have interfered with the laws of aerodynamics.

Our primary responsibility is to discover and gain practical insights from the laws of nature - insights that will help us lead fulfilled lives. I have come across many managers behaving as though their *wings* were clipped. Such managers often engage in mindless motion, getting no-where; remaining indecisive, insecure, ineffective and uninspiring.

Our *flight* comes from our capacity to imagine. When we use our mind to invent the future, we acquire miraculous powers. Power of imagination helps us attain great heights in life. Charles Handy says, *The great excitement of the future is that we can shape it.* He goes on to say, *We are living in very confused times, because many of the things that gave structure to our lives are disappearing. Institutions that we relied on, particularly the work organizations are no longer so sure or so certain. To give ourselves some sense of cohesion, we have to work out what the future is going to be like.*

Why do people find themselves helpless in the face of adversity? There are several possible reasons. Some have resigned themselves to their present condition, believing that this is just the way they were destined to live. Others are frustrated with setbacks and blame bad luck for their misfortunes, finally quitting. Many are just not aware of the immense potential within and around them. They merely exist in blissful ignorance or denial. They neither seek to discover who they are nor are they really interested to see beyond their noses. Such people spend their time devoid of purpose, whiling away their days in futile endeavor.

Then we have the *spectators*, who merely comment on matters about which they seemingly can do nothing. In general, such people see themselves as victims, surrendering to circumstance or chance.

On the other hand, we see examples of people who are in love with life. They know what it takes to really live. They are turned on by the possibilities that life offers, and wake up each morning with a burning desire to make things happen. They make each day count and enjoy their life to the full.

What type of a manager are you? A drifter *the type who blames others for non-achievement of his goals?* Or, are you a leader and a visionary? Someone who seeks to take on greater responsibility for results and welcomes challenges to

overcome?

Self deception does not allow us to confront reality and know it for what it is. If you feel your wings are clipped or you find yourself in a rut, ask yourself why and how you got this way. For meaningful answers, you need to look at your past. Go back to recollections of your earliest childhood. Imagine that you are rewinding your video tape. What can you see, feel and hear? Perhaps you hear your parents, teachers or relatives saying: "You can't do this," "This was stupid of you," "You will never learn," "These lofty dreams are not for ordinary mortals like you," "See! I knew you would mess this up!" Alternatively, you may hear some of them saying: "You are very intelligent," "You are destined to do great things," "Oh, I love your ambitious nature," "Don't worry, mistakes happen learn from them and never fear failure." These are a few examples of how our environment has influenced us during our formative years.

Most parents, teachers and managers are well meaning. But they often do not know, that in their desire to help, they sometimes inadvertently clip the wings of their loved ones. Our belief system is shaped in our childhood. Our beliefs turn into our very own realities the ones we live and experience daily.

Examine your beliefs closely. Our beliefs serve as our wings. Disempowering beliefs are like having our wings clipped. Look at your relationships at work, at home and in society. See the problems you face. Analyze them. It should not surprise you to find that what you believe about life, people and problems, manifests in everything that you experience. I have yet to come across a person whose beliefs do not match the reality he/she uniquely encounters!

To me, success is not about achieving fame and fortune. Instead, it means enjoying good health, true respect, and profound happiness, no matter what your vocation. The reward of such success is peace of mind, which comes from a sense of freedom that we achieve through self-discipline. For successful people goals only serve as milestones on a journey to a beautiful end.

Successful people care about themselves and their relationships. They make their own luck by being more skillful. They love problems and see themselves as problem-solvers. They search for bigger problems and challenges to overcome. They use environmental resistance as an aid to fly even higher. Study the life and beliefs of a few successful people closely. You will find that their beliefs about life are similar.

In order to really live, believe that life has its ups and downs. Believe that laws of nature work for you when you recognize, respect and use them to your advantage. Take risks and be willing to lose all you have in order to achieve higher goals. Live by principles you hold dear. Value relationships. Make it your business to understand human needs and, where relevant, strive to satisfy them.

Successful people seek to influence, while remaining open to influence of

others. They believe in Karma: ♦What you give is what you get." They are not impatient for the rewards of their efforts. They are driven by big, daring and at times seemingly crazy goals! They immerse themselves fully in every moment. Such people seek and find the company of other successful people.

♦Birds of a feather flock together♦. You will never see crows flying in the company of eagles! The best way to learn of your present beliefs is to look at the company you keep ♦ one which gives you most comfort - in other words - your natural surroundings. If you feel that your companions are successful in terms you define - great! If not, make a change. Change your thinking and seek out people in your organization and community who are on the path you admire and desire.

As Stephen Covey puts it, ♦Become an island of excellence in a sea of mediocrity.♦ This will be painful at first. Continue to be respectful and tolerant towards others. Your immediate family, however, deserves your greater commitment, love and understanding. They may at first not understand when they experience the changes in you. If this happens, take it as a positive sign. This is proof that you are improving.

To achieve real change in yourself and in your organization, you must first become aware of the cost of not changing. Then have a clear vision of the desired state, where the visible benefit is greater than the cost of not changing. Devise a clear strategy of how you aim to get there. Engage your key stakeholders in the journey.

To really live, go forth with confidence and accomplish your dreams through the inevitable complexities strewn in your path. Let your story inspire!

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<http://www.biography.com/people/steve-jobs-9354805>