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It is so easy for us to allow our sense of reverence for higher-ups to interfere with our ability to make a true connection with them. They are, after-all, people, just as we are! This very thought is what liberates our minds and fosters free exchange of ideas among people from a variety of backgrounds and traditions.

Thought of the common humanity we share with others was put to the test in 1985, when, quite by chance, I got the opportunity to meet with Queen Elizabeth II at Marlborough House, in London.

Sir Sridath Ramphal, the then Secretary General of the Commonwealth, had invited my boss, manager of BCCI's Park lane Branch in London, to attend the Commonwealth Day celebrations. Since he was on leave, I was called upon to fill the gap. Hundreds of dignitaries had gathered that evening. They included foreign ministers, ambassadors, leading scholars and corporate heads. I was apparently the odd one out. At the time I was only 27 years of age and merely an assistant manager in a branch of a bank in London! It was very easy for me at the time to back out from this grand opportunity. But I didn't! Thanks to the confidence I had gained from attending the Dale Carnegie course earlier.

During the function, I networked with ease. In fact, I managed to enjoy my brief conversations with dozens of eminent personalities who had assembled that evening. They were fascinated by my youthful exuberance and eagerness to learn, while I enriched myself with their deep and varied perspectives on current affairs, global politics and the state of the world in general.

Soon, Her Majesty made her entrance, and the grand hall that was by now packed with hundreds of people and buzzing with myriad conversations, suddenly went quiet, as the master of ceremonies announced her arrival. There was pomp and ceremony as she graciously and ever so slowly walked through the crowd. The guests parted, much like the Red Sea would have done, making a path in the middle of the hall for her to make her way in and to mingle with the gentry. Her admirers were on either side of the divide, keen to shake her hands and greet her with their gentle nods. I made it a point to be in front too. She came closer to where I was standing. She moved unhurriedly, meeting people to her right, in turn, sometimes exchanging a glance and a nod with them, and at other times stopping momentarily to shake their hands, and exchanging a few words, but all the while, wearing a smile. My heart was beating faster with excitement as she came closer.

mce_style="font-family: verdana,geneva;" style="font-family: verdana,geneva;">Soon she was in front of me, turned, and looked me in the eye with a quiet smile. Her gaze was soft and penetrating. I bowed slightly, we shook hands and I greeted her with the words, ♦Your Majesty♦. My father had taught me this protocol a day before. She asked, ♦How is your chairman? Has he come this evening?♦ She was referring to late Agha Hasan Abedi, then president of BCCI, who was unable to attend. She enquired about what I did and I gave her a brief reply. Considering the occasion, to have had about a minute with Her Majesty was quite a feat. We had connected. Our backgrounds and histories simply melted away for that fleeting moment. I was able to interact freely, instead of getting tongue-tied and nervous. It was her humility and my confidence that made it happen. </p> <p class="MsoNormal">The point of narrating my Marlborough House experience is simply this: people are people. Everyone is worthy of respect. Whether or not we like them, is another matter. </p> <p class="MsoNormal">I am reminded of an Oprah Winfrey program, about five years ago, which was devoted to the question: Would you rather be liked or respected? I gained valuable insights from this show on what it means to be human. I have since used this question in some of my workshops and leadership retreats to initiate and stimulate a meaningful conversation on what it takes to build a team and perform as one. </p> <p class="MsoNormal">It♦s fascinating to see the relief on the faces of managers when I tell them that they don♦t have to like their bosses. All they have to do instead is just to respect them for who they are ♦ human beings!! Excessive desire to please breeds sycophancy. Imagine being surrounded by ♦yes♦ people in your organization. They deny you access to the truth which is vital for you to know. Leaders who seek popularity, in other words, those who wish to be liked, fail to hold their colleagues accountable, when things go wrong. They fear losing favor of their subordinates by talking tough with them. This weakness seriously compromises effectiveness.</p> <p class="MsoNormal">It is so easy for us to allow our sense of reverence for ♦higher-ups♦ to interfere with our ability to make a true connection with them. They are, after-all, people, just as we are! This very thought is what liberates our minds and fosters free exchange of ideas among people from a variety of backgrounds and traditions.</p> <p class="MsoNormal">Millions of people across the world have benefited from Dale Carnegie♦s simple, yet practical ideas. Amongst the many self-development books he authored, the best known one is <i style="style" mce_style="style">How to Win Friends and Influence People</i> which he wrote almost eighty years ago. I have had the good fortune of attending Dale Carnegie Courses in London. The first one was on Effective Speaking and Human Relations, in 1981. </p> <p class="MsoNormal">One of the things I learned was that being a leader applies to presidents, kings, corporate leaders and heads of institutions as much as it does to every other ordinary

human being on earth. It's not about status or position. Instead, leadership can be exhibited by every human being, based on his/her stature and contribution in life. Leadership is about credibility and connection with people, which comes from the reputation one enjoys through inspiring thoughts and deeds expressed amongst friends, family and colleagues.

For Muslims it is more beneficial to pray with a congregation in a mosque and for good reason our differences melt away and we become part of the ocean of humanity. We are a community of equals in Allah's sight. He who comes early sits in the front row. Status and position have no meaning in a place of worship. Our humanity, hygiene and clean intent are all that matters. This sense of oneness is even more heightened when performing Hajj. Once a year, millions of Muslims congregate for prayers in Khanae Kaaba from all over the world, dressed in simple pilgrim white. All assemble for the same purpose to worship the one God. Color, race, class none of these outer manifestations matter.

I remember back in 1993 attending Friday prayers in Sultan Masjid in Islamabad. To my right was Wasim Sajjad, praying, shoulder-to-shoulder with me. At the time he was serving as interim president of Pakistan. It was a wonderful feeling to be able to connect with another soul, regardless of his station in life, and without having to deal with the masks and symbols that divide us.

What happens to us when we step out of our mosques, churches, synagogues and temples? Where does the sense of oneness disappear? How come we don't carry the essential learning of our common origins into our daily practical lives in our communities, at home and at work? Workplaces will transform positively, when we start treating people as people.

Lee Iacocca's remark inspires: *Sometimes we forget that government officials and heads of nations are human beings. The greatest impediment to getting along is having preconceived notions that someone is all-holy, all-evil, or made of stone or steel. In my life I've been amazed by how often my negative ideas about people are proven wrong when I actually meet them.*

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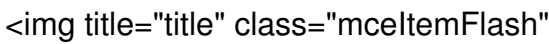
There is honor in any work that facilitates a good and safe life. Imagine relationships where each one is seen as a king or a queen interacting with one another with confidence and respect, while finding dignity in meaningful work; where no task is seen as menial.

Whether you sweep the floors, plough the fields, manage a hospital, or head a global business you are first and foremost human.

From his book, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?* Published by Scribner, April 2007.

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No matter how big your organization gets, continue to empower your people at every level to deliver. Only this way will size lead to advantage.

It is always useful to explore the history of any company to understand how they got to being what they are today. Corporate success usually follows some combination of visionary entrepreneurship and luck. When companies acquire early successes and achieve a dominant position in some market or markets they become profitable and usually follow a steep growth trajectory in their early years.

style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">With the passage of time, however, pressures on managers come mostly from inside the firm. Building and staffing a bureaucracy that can cope with growth is the biggest challenge. External constituencies are neglected. The firm needs, hires, and promotes managers, not leaders, to cope with the growing bureaucracy. Top managers allow these people, not leaders, to become executives. Sometimes top management actively prevents leaders from becoming senior executives. Managers begin to believe that they are the best and that idiosyncratic traditions are superior. They tend to become increasingly arrogant and aloof. The problem is compounded when top management does nothing to stop this trend and often ends up exacerbating it. </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">◆</p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">A strong, insular and conceited culture develops. Managers fail to acknowledge the value of customers and other key stakeholders. They behave in an inward-looking, sometimes political fashion and fail to acknowledge the value of leadership and the talent available at all levels that can provide it. They tend to stifle initiative and innovation. They behave in centralized and authoritative ways.</p> <p class="MsoNormal">◆</p> Consequently, as organizations grow, whether in terms of sales, number of employees, range of products and services, market share, or whatever, they start to lose the advantage they once had. According to John Naisbitt in the book <i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">Rethinking the Future</i> ◆it is the small companies who are creating the global economy, not the Fortune 500. And these days a small company can be as small as one person.◆ In his book, <i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">Megatrends 2000</i> he gave the example of his neighbors Linde and Lito who have a publishing company called Western Eye Press. He continues, ◆It◆s just two people and they publish wonderful photographic and guide books. They create them on Macintosh computers in their basement in Telluride. They printout the camera-ready pages on their own high resolution laser printer. Then they FedEx◆ed these pages to Seoul, South Korea, and the printer there manufactures their books and ships them to distributors all over the world. Western Eye Press is a key player in the global economy and its just two people on this little mountain perch in Colorado.◆◆Large corporations and global conglomerates, if not careful, end up becoming highly bureaucratic, over-managed, rule-driven and inflexible by virtue of their size. In this day and age of cyberspace and nanotechnology, fetish with size of a business can become an impediment. This is particularly

true for organizations that have grown significantly in scale in terms of revenues and market share. Organizations like Citibank have lost touch with their core constituents. It may be a major player with a strong brand image, but customers interacting with its frontline employees are often disappointed by their state of helplessness in resolving routine problems. This could be on account of slavish adherence to archaic procedures. Often, individual contributors in big companies don't take the initiative needed to listen and understand customer requirements with the intent to ultimately delighting them. There is a lot to be said for systems and processes, but if they are not customer oriented and responsive, the game is as good as lost.

Quality can now be replicated anywhere in the world. China is leading the way in this respect. With the falling of trade barriers and dropping of quotas, the Chinese have taken their global market share in textiles from 16% to over 50% in less than a decade. In recent years, the Pakistan market has been flooded with Chinese products (mostly electronic, light engineering) that are low priced and in much demand.

We no longer live in a world of big mainframes. We live in a world where the real power is large networks a lot of individuals connected together Facebook & Twitter are pointing the way. A network does not have any headquarters. Chinese excel in this field and have spread their global business through this means. Naisbitt cites Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) as a great example of a huge company that thrives and grows through networking. He quotes Percy Barnevik (Former CEO at ABB) as having said, We grow all the time, but we also shrink all the time. As the network gets larger, the nodes get smaller.

So, no matter how big your company gets, continue to excel by empowering your people at every level to deliver. Building agility and responsiveness is the key.