

# Press On

By Jim Camp

## Introduction Part 1

### **“What Is This E-Book All About?”**

#### ***What is this e-book all about?***

This book was written for you, soldier, for the family and loved ones you take care of, and for those who take care of you. Your lives and existence are so intimately bound that I cannot write for any of you without keeping all of you in mind. The impact and influence you have on each others lives shapes your common existence. Your noble decision to serve in the military has impacted, is impacting, and will impact many people, but its impact on your family and loved ones runs deepest.

I write to assist you co-create a happy, healthy, meaningful, purposeful, serene, and economically secure life. Co-creating such a life is entirely within reach of each veteran and his or her loved ones and care-givers, regardless of their personal situations or circumstances. I've personally done it. I've also helped thousands of people – many of them military veterans themselves – do it. At the time I started working with some people, they were in the midst of very trying circumstances. Desperate could even be used, legitimately, to describe the situations some of them were in. Working together, sometimes we turned things around within weeks. At other times, it took months. But we never gave up, and we never lost focus, until we prevailed. No matter your situation, I know that it can be turned around. Every challenge can be overcome. Your active and willing participation is essential.

Why do I believe that every challenge can be overcome? Because you have already overcome many challenges that stood in your way thus far. I am not going to plant the seed that will burst forth into the kind of life you wish for yourself and your loved ones. The seed has already been planted and has already produced grain. Prior to, and during your military career, you encountered and overcame numerous challenges, problems, and difficulties. Your courage, resilience, perseverance, and focus have already brought you to where you are. In that sense, I'm not laying a foundation with this book. I'm proposing that together, you and I build on a foundation that you laid in the past. Knowing a large number of military veterans, I know that each of them faced and surmounted numerous odds in the past. When our paths crossed, we simply worked together in surmounting problems that they faced at that moment in time. The potential already existed long before our paths crossed.

Coaching people to unlock their hidden potential has been the most important and fulfilling part of my life's calling. Fulfilling that calling– which I have formalized and taught for a quarter of a century as a person's Mission & Purpose Statement – led me to write this book and to propose a way you, soldier, and your loved ones, can build the life you desire. This e-book is part of the journey where you and I walk together, for a while. I sincerely wish to make it worth your while.

#### ***What to expect and not to expect.***

Before I tell you what to expect in the pages that follow, I will tell you what not to expect. This e-book is not filled with theoretical prescriptions or esoteric philosophizing. You will find neither pop-psychology of the 'feel good' sort nor motivational jargon, here. What you can expect are to further develop specific abilities you already have, and which are in your power to develop. If you develop them even more, and do so habitually, you will co-create the life you wish.

At the heart of this book is the fundamental decision to continue your journey with a specific mindset, and with some knowledge, skills, and abilities that will transform you, the journey, and who and what are already a part of it as well as who and what you are yet to encounter.

During a time of transition – leaving military life is a transition, not merely a career change – veterans, their families, and their loved ones ask similar questions. (In the following questions, I use the pronoun ‘I’ instead of ‘we’ though ‘we’ is equally appropriate here.)

- *How do I confidently deal with the challenges of reintegrating into civilian life and build the life I wish?*
- *How do I deal with the pressing issues that face me – health, work, career, finances, family life etc.?*
- *What must I do if I feel my life is spinning – or threatening to spin – out of control?*
- *How do I handle my daily interactions and my relationships with others within the new set of circumstances within which I find myself?*
- *How do I respond to the challenges, obstacles, constraints, and opportunities I encounter?*
- *What do I do, next?*

I show you how to answer these questions and any others you have, in a coherent and congruent way. I hope by the time you finish reading, you will draw upon the skills and abilities you already possess to gain what you don’t have, to modify what ought to be modified, to stop what ought to be stopped, and to start what ought to be started. I hope you will deeply engage my suggestions and solutions, test each one in small things, and find out how it all comes together.

The tone I adopt is one of uncompromising realism and encouragement. I make the effort to show you how much lies in your power and within your immediate reach. I encourage you to help yourself where it is possible; to get help where it is appropriate; and to be open to help where it is offered. Few people lose sight of their responsibilities to their loved ones. They may or may not discharge them, but they rarely remain unaware of them. On the other hand, a larger number of people lose sight of their responsibilities to themselves, and the interconnectedness of their life to the lives of others. I hope to help you keep all these clearly in sight, without getting anxious, worried, or stressed as you seek to fulfill these responsibilities.

## **Introduction Part 2**

### **“A Pervading Bias”**

#### ***A pervading bias***

Let me confess at the outset to a bias – I am even tempted to call it the bias – that pervades this book. In my view, co-creating the life I referred to depends is the direct consequence of one thing alone: making effective decisions founded on what I refer to as your valid Mission & Purpose statement, and continually improving the effectiveness of your decisions and decision making.

This is the way I have been able to coach individuals and organizations, for the past quarter of a century. What essentially separates you from that sort of life you wish is nothing more and nothing less than a series of decisions. A life filled with stress, anxiety, worry, tension, needless material poverty, avoidable ill health, and a lack of meaning, purpose, and happiness is the direct consequence of specific decisions. Similarly, a life filled with joy, serenity, love, health, meaning, fulfillment, and economic security is also the consequence of specific decisions. If I’m able to help you become aware of the

influence and the impact of your decisions on your life and the lives of your loved ones, you would have grasped the essence of this book.

I do not wish to, nor am I capable of, making a single decision for you. No one can, and if you reflect on it deeply, until date, no one has ever made a decision for you. You may have, at one time or the other, made the decision to accept and take another person's decisions as your own. Very many other times, I'm sure you have made decisions for yourself. The desire or attempt to make decisions for others when they are capable and responsible for making those decisions for themselves is destructive, irresponsible, misguided, and can even become tyrannical. People who attempt to do so (with the best of intentions) end up leaving those they desire to help, defenseless in the face of life's realities.

The most I want to do is show you how taking charge of every aspect of your life and existence is done easily once you take charge of, and responsibility for, your decisions and responsibility for your decisions in the face of the consequences and impact of prior decisions. The day you joined the military, you took responsibility for the decisions that would follow as a consequence of the decision to join the military. This in itself shows you are capable of making effective decisions for yourself, by yourself. I hope to show you how to elevate this capacity to make effective decisions, and to extend this to every aspect of your life.

### ***A common source of anxiety, confusion and a lack of congruence***

I have commonly witnessed the frustration, anxiety, and confusion that stems from ineffective decisions and ineffective decision making. In some people's lives, it is for a short period while in other people's lives, it's for a far longer period. Of course, it's easier to see the shortcomings in the decisions of others and give them advice on what to do next, and how to do it. But you may also have been in situations where you have wondered if the advice you gave another person was the most appropriate one. It's no secret that we are more prone to giving others advice – or finding fault with their decisions and choices – than we are with living lives congruent with the advice we give, or improving the quality of our own decisions and decision making. Immediately people detect this “Do what I say but don't do what I do” gap, they are turned off by it and by us.

What areas in your life do you experience frustration, anxiety and confusion? I'm convinced that this will disappear from every aspect of your life, if you face and tackle the causes of these, using effective decisions as the tool of choice.

### ***No matter what you are facing or anticipating, there's a way out.***

How many times have you been blindsided by the consequences of a decision taken in a fit of emotion? How many times have you made a decision on the spur of an impulse? How many times have you been adversely impacted by your own decisions, the decisions of your loved ones, or the decisions of others whose roles and responsibilities have far reaching consequences for you? How many times have others been similarly impacted by your decisions?

Many lives are trapped in a vicious cycle of hurt, anger, resentment, estrangement from others, anxiety, fear, material poverty, ill-health (physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual), guilt, stress or meaninglessness. But as I stated above, I have also witnessed and been part of remarkable turnarounds in the circumstances and situations of numerous people. The circumstances that existed prior to and those they 'co-created' subsequent to the turnaround was a direct result of their own decisions and the interaction and interdependence of their decisions with those of others they interact with.

I am fully aware that there are instances when the pain in people's lives is not the fruit of their decisions or those of their loved ones. There are enough bullies in this world who spread misery and pain. And in some cases, no human being is responsible for the pain in a person's life. It appears that life

has dealt them a particularly unfair hand. Even in these situations, the turn around that can be observed was the direct result of one decision, followed by many subsequent ones.

### ***The next decision***

As simplistic (or even infuriating) as it sounds, I can tell you that co-creating the life you wish begins with your very next decision. You can break free of whatever ties you down to the past or present. I don't mean to sound cold or unfeeling. There's simply no vicious cycle in life that can be perpetuated without input from decisions made by the person or persons trapped within it. Breaking out of it requires a 'first decision' and many subsequent decisions. Every virtuous cycle is also set up by a first decision and many subsequent decisions. I prefer to think in terms of an upward spiral of learning and growth, rather than virtuous cycles. The latter connotes an image of being fixed and immovable that remains stuck in the midst of change.

## **Introduction Part 3**

### **“How Do You Respond to Change and Failure?”**

#### ***How do you respond to change and failure?***

Many years ago, I came across a billboard that read “Change is inevitable; growth is optional.” Change is like a wild horse. It has to be tamed before it can be ridden. Each passing day, one rides with greater confidence. If you can't ride the waves of change, they will flatten you, or like the horse, throw you off. And no matter your age, experience, knowledge, or skills, you will also never reach a state where dealing with change comes without effort and courage on your part. However, dealing with change becomes much easier once you think of coming face to face with it, armed with the ability of making effective decisions.

Dealing with failure also becomes much simpler when one is accustomed to making effective decisions. No matter how much or how often we fail, we will eventually prevail – if we make the decisions that are required. Failure requires an examination of the faulty or ineffective decisions that caused it. And if there was nothing you could have done to prevent it, it requires you to make the decisions to learn what you can, from it.

#### ***An irreplaceable source of self-confidence***

I have never met an effective decision maker who lacks self-confidence. I am not referring to the macho guy image that is projected by too many people to hide their insecurities. Some of the most effective decision makers I've met have been quiet and unassuming men and women who don't say much while others have been lively and engaging. Effective decision making is not a function of temperament.

One unmistakable quality of effective decision makers is their interior strength, calm, courage, and the wisdom and maturity of their judgments. They are at peace with themselves, with others, and with life.

#### ***Having a valid Mission and Purpose is indispensable to becoming an effective decision maker***

Becoming an effective decision maker is impossible if your decisions are not founded upon, guided and guarded by, and oriented toward a valid Mission & Purpose. (I refer to it as M&P in the remaining parts of this e-book.) This is a concept taught by numerous people. I teach it with a twist that makes it grounded in reality, framed from a perspective that gives it greater power and effectiveness, and structured in a way that you can use it to evaluate each decision you make.

A valid M&P gives you crystal-clear guidance on what to pursue, and what to leave alone; what to say 'yes' to and what to say 'no' to; what is worth your while and what is a waste of your resources and abilities; when to stay the course and when to change course. You will learn how to draw up an M&P for each aspect of your life, and to consult it for everything, until you own it and it becomes part of the DNA of your decisions, your life, and your existence.

The concept of M&P is a source of much confusion. Many people think in terms of their plans, dreams, desires, hopes, or what they wish to achieve. This is where they go wrong. This is also why I distinguish between a valid and an invalid M&P. An invalid M&P is worthless. In fact, it is destructive.

How to make decisions guided by a valid M&P—in all your engagements with others and with various aspects of reality—is one of the most important parts in this e-book. I will go so far as to say that if you don't **see and understand** the primary role of a valid M&P on making effective decisions, you will miss out on the most important message of this book. I hope your contact with this book will lead you to make the decision to live each moment in such a way that your decisions are based upon, flow from, and are directed to your personal valid M&P.

***In order to live in such a manner, you must master these two most important abilities***

Basing your decisions on a valid M&P gives you the maximum advantage if you master two indispensable abilities. Both require effective decisions and effective decision making on your part.

1. **Become a negotiator:** A fact of life is that we exist in a network of interactions and relationships. This opens us to the necessity of reaching agreement with others in important, and sometimes unimportant things. Few things cause as much stress and pain as disagreements and a lack of agreement. You know that not every lack of agreement is a disagreement. The quality, durability, and benefits that we gain from agreements in various aspects of our life, and with various people plays a huge role in co-creating the kind of life you wish. It is therefore important that you master the ability of reaching agreements with everyone, in the real world, without having to depend on their benevolence or tendency to reciprocate your good will. In fact, if you live with a valid M&P, you will often seek to reach agreements that help you advance your M&P. Each agreement involves a series of decisions you and the other person (or group) make. Negotiation mastery enables you to reach agreements without falling prey to overt or covert manipulation, bullying, or deception.
2. **Become a strategist:** Complex challenges are part of the fabric of each person's life. You faced some such challenges before you joined the military, while you were in the military, and after you leave the military. Knowing how to make sense of, and design a suitable response to complex challenges is what a strategist does. A strategist who has a valid M&P identifies the challenges that stand in the way of being faithful to and in advancing his M&P. He then designs a response to it in such a way that he solves the root causes of the challenges standing in his way. A strategist's perception of reality and his understanding of the nature of the challenge is such that he draws up and executes plans that are designed to solve the real problems standing in way of achieving what is important to him.

Both negotiators and strategists have a bad name in certain circles. I readily admit that much harm and rubbish has been done in the name of negotiation and strategy. But much rubbish has also been done in the name of politics, religion, art, business, education, science, sports, entertainment, and self-help. I propose a different understanding of these two abilities and how they enhance and empower your decisions and decision making, and thereby co-create the life you aspire to.

## Introduction Part 4

### **“What Does Effective Decision Making Make You?”**

#### ***What does effective decision making make you?***

The answer is very simple. It makes you a man or woman of sound judgment. Nothing more, nothing less. Judgment is what all effective decision makers develop, with time, experience, and the constant effort to evaluate, correct, and improve their decision-making skills. Effective decision makers **become** people of sound judgment.

What is sound judgment? It is the ability to perceive reality as it is, and to respond appropriately to this accurate perception. A person who possesses sound judgment is able to distinguish root causes and symptoms; to distinguish essential features of a problem or challenge from inessential ones; to perceive interconnections and interrelationships; to see patterns and directions of causation; to see the progression and evolution of a particular challenge; to discover a (new) path to tackling a challenge by attacking it at one or more critical points; to identify and acquire the skills and abilities suited to the challenge or opportunity; and to simplify complexity. It's essential in a military career.

Here too, I am certain that you have acquired and exercised sound judgment at various times in the past, and in various situations and circumstances of your life. I hope this book helps you extend this to every aspect of your life and existence so that you will always know what decisions to take; and when, how, and most importantly, why you ought to take them.

#### ***The answer that we all seek***

In the final analysis, becoming a more effective decision maker is a journey that leads you to greater awareness of yourself, others, and of your environment. You will know what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and why you are doing it instead of something else. Nothing fazes nor overwhelms you.

At every AA meeting, the attendees pray “*Lord, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*”

This book is my effort to show what can be changed, how to change it, and in that way, help you achieve the serenity, happiness, meaning, fulfillment, you seek and enable you take care of yourself and your loved ones. Your deep engagement with its contents will enable you and your loved ones change what can and ought to be changed, accept what cannot and ought not to be changed, and acquire the wisdom to distinguish between them. Becoming a person of sound judgment enables you distinguish and respond appropriately to both.

## Chapter 1 Part 1

### **“Reality Remains The Safest Starting Point”**

#### ***Reality remains the safest starting point***

A habitual attitude of realism must characterize every aspect of your life. If not, a lack of it will trip you up and cause innumerable avoidable problems. Consider how successful military campaigns are planned, executed, and reviewed. Before we engage the enemy, we seek to assess his strengths, weaknesses, location, concentration in a particular location, possible responses, tactics, strategy, growth and decline in capabilities, motivations, and to gain accurate intelligence that assist us in deciding where, when, and how to strike or counter him. Isn't this an attempt to perceive reality accurately before engaging it?

Engaging the enemy without understanding the ground realities is a sure way of getting whipped in war. It is foolish, counterproductive, and can even be deadly. The military strategy drawn up before a particular campaign, and its evolution once the enemy has been engaged – as one encounters the unforeseen, unanticipated, unknown, and unexpected – is predicated on reality as reality is, not how a military commander wishes it to be. Only then can adequate or appropriate strategies – which give you a realistic chance of success – be designed and executed. Any other way would be gambling with human lives. Every responsible military commander and every responsible soldier is familiar with this.

This realism must characterize every aspect of your life, always. It is not simply something that only applies to your external world or external realities. It must also pervade your internal world, your relationships, your interactions, your responses to the challenges and opportunities you face in civilian life, and your attempts to envision and then co-create the kind of life you desire.

When we perceive reality accurately, we can respond to it appropriately. Otherwise, we will be responding blindly. We must not attempt to force reality into our hopes, dreams, plans, and desires. Actually, we can't. What we can do is to ensure that our interpretations and responses conform to it. This is crucial before setting out to pursue anything important, worthwhile, and that requires a significant commitment in terms of time, effort, money and emotional involvement. In addition, the impact and influence of what you pursue and how you pursue it has implications for the lives of many others. If you do perceive reality accurately, it will continually frustrate and confuse you, leaving you beat up and worn out.

#### ***The need to make accurate sense of reality in order to respond appropriately, is acute in a time of transition***

I believe the need to 'decode' reality is acute at every moment and in every aspect of our lives. However, life after military service is a time of transition during which the need is especially acute. The changes come quick and fast, and are deep. It is easy to feel confused and overwhelmed. Leaving the military is not comparable to moving from one job to another, or even 'reinventing' one's career.

Military service is an established way of living, interacting, and belonging. Our roles, responsibilities, and duties are often clearly defined. I admit that this is not always the case. Sometimes, you have to play the role of a peace maker, peace keeper, or even, nation builder. Whatever has been your experience in uniform, it is an unrepeatable one that shapes us powerfully. It molds many of our beliefs, values, and paradigms. The experience affects each person uniquely. The marks it leaves on our bodies, hearts, spirits and psyche run deep. The habits of behaving, relating, and thinking, and acting can have an influence that lasts even when we lay the uniform aside.

For many, leaving military service is a step into the unknown. The uncertainty of an unknown future; the demands of re-adjusting to new roles, responsibilities, and duties in civilian life; coping with disabilities and ill health; starting or restarting a career; inserting yourself into the dynamics of relationships with family and loved ones; coming back to a world (one that changed in some ways and remained the same in others while you were away changing while also remaining the same) contributes to the turmoil that a number of ex-military personnel face. The accompanying emotional upheaval may mean that we alternate between certainty and uncertainty, fear and courage, happiness and sadness, restlessness and calm, hope and despair, desire and aversion, and lots more. Establishing our bearings is a challenge that can be addressed only by gaining an accurate perception of, and insight into the reality that you return to.

It is important to begin by accepting the fact that reality does not seek to or have to fit in with your ideas, notions, convictions, plans, or efforts. Rather, it's the other way around. We – our lives, decisions, choices, plans, responses etc. – have to fit in with reality. That's why it is important to

1. Perceive reality accurately.
2. Respond appropriately.
3. Perceive the impact and consequences of your response, accurately.
4. Respond to these impacts and consequences.

If you don't see it clearly, your decisions and decision making will be gravely compromised. It will not be effective. The inability (or unwillingness) to perceive reality clearly and respond to it appropriately lies at the root of the problems many individuals and families face. A necessary consequence is that they are unable to respond appropriately. It may even be more accurate to such people they cannot but respond inappropriately.

## **Chapter 1 Part 2**

### **“How Do We Humans Respond To Reality?”**

#### ***How do we humans respond to reality?***

Since you and I can only observe the behavior and actions of others, it may be tempting to think that the primary reaction is via a behavior or an action. The first human 'act' is perceiving reality. This perception happens through the senses which give us access to reality. Of course we also interact with reality through our emotions, memory, imagination, and the workings of the intellect. After we perceive it, a number of mental acts take place. (Sometimes, these mental acts can be extremely rapid.) Once we perceive reality, a picture forms in the mind's eye. This picture forms regardless of the nature of the interaction with reality. It forms whether we are engaged in important things or unimportant ones. It is at this point that we actually start reacting to reality. I term what we see in our mind's eye 'vision'.

Now, what happens after the picture has formed, but before we react in a particular manner via the behavior or action I referred to above? At this point, the person makes a decision. The decision is made to validate this picture as fitting with (the nature and laws of) reality and thus validated by the intellect, or as not fitting with reality and is therefore rejected by the intellect. Whatever the decision, it then leads to a particular choice that is manifested, perhaps visibly, in a particular behavior or an action. Your greatest opportunities for success and happiness, and your greatest failures are born at the point where you make the decision.



This process is repeated an innumerable number of times, daily, and of course during the course of a lifetime. It is also the source of a anxiety and fear. Why? Because sometimes, more than one image can form, in quick succession, as a result of numerous interactions with reality.

### ***Vision drives decisions***

We decide on the basis of what we see in our mind's eye. People 'get it' when they 'see it'. If you want to do something, you must see how it serves something that is important to you. If you see it as something harmful or as something that throws you off track, you won't do it. If you see something as an obstacle, you will look for ways around it where as if you see something as an opportunity (think of an entrepreneur), you will pursue it. People choose a career, a job, a spouse, a house, a phone, or a vacation on the basis of what they see.

The roots of this vision are varied, complex, and intricate. It is influenced by our upbringing, experiences, expertise, our beliefs (of right and wrong, good and bad, what is possible and impossible etc.), our emotions and feelings, our prejudices, our conditioning, the structure and functioning of the human mind, our states of emotional and mental health and ill-health. There are also influences from habit, intellect, knowledge, training, study, and from the words, actions, example, opinions, and judgments of people we live and interact with, those whose decisions and judgment we trust, and those whose influence we are open to.

Effective decision makers will often seek to understand the roots of their vision in order to further improve their decision making. I don't advice people to do it when they initially set out to improve the quality of their decisions and decision making. At this and every other point, what is most important is being guided by a valid M&P.

## **Chapter 1 Part 3**

### **“Often, In A time Of Transition, We Don't See Clearly”**

#### ***Often, in a time of transition, we don't see clearly***

In a time of transition, disorientation, uncertainty, and even fear are normal. These are normal human reactions in the face of the unknown. Ignoring or minimizing these is not a sign of realism. They become destructive only when they overwhelm our capacity to make effective decisions. However, this is easier said than done because, often, in a time of transition, we simply lose the ability to see clearly. This is not simply the case for individuals. It's true for families, corporations, societies, and humanity as a whole. However, knowing this offers little comfort for us when we are living through the eye of the storm.

Or think of everything you see, hear, read about, and imagine of what you will do, should do, or will not be able to do, once you leave the military. The sheer number of mental images can be overwhelming. Many of them can be contradictory to each other. This means that these mental images must sorted out to form a coherent image. Sorting through, selecting, and even 'creating' them involves decisions and decision making.

#### ***Why is vision so important?***

Many people think their decisions are driven by logic. I disagree. I say they are driven by vision and, often, with the feelings of safety that these decisions generate. Even when we analyze data or look for information, we do so in order for to form a picture in our mind's eye. When a picture doesn't form, we feel confused. This is why people present data in a visual format. This is why people use statistics to buttress a point or position. They may do so thinking that they are going to 'convince you', but in reality, without being aware of it or even without intending to, they want to build a picture in your mind's eye and thereby influence one or the other decision you take.

Every decision I've made in my life has been based on the vision I had prior to the decision. This is true even when I'm not aware or conscious of it. It's also true for the decisions you have made and will make. The opportunities, challenges, solutions, responses, and what you decide to do or not to do, when you decide to do it, how you decide to do it, and why you decide to do something rather than something else or, even, tragically, if you decide to do nothing at all and simply go with the flow – all these decisions will flow from your vision. Even in something as personal and intimate as who we get married to, we decide on the basis of the future we see – with this person – that can be built and experienced, together.

***The vision must be validated by your intellect before the decision is made***

When the vision is that of a desirable outcome, and the intellect validates this picture, we make the decision to bring about that outcome. This validation is important. Without the validation by the intellect, we necessarily pause to examine the evidence – data, trends, our reasoning up to that point (or that of others) etc. We do this precisely so that a picture forms in our mind. If a picture does not form in our mind, and we decide any way, it will be a blind decision. In such moments, it appears as though we are merely reacting to the hold of our emotions and feelings. Emotions and feelings need to run their course. Sometimes they run their course after being validated by the intellect and sometimes, they simply 'burn out'. Whatever happens, we return to a state of emotional equilibrium.

In my teaching and coaching, I teach that your valid M&P serves this validating function. Taking a decision that fulfills your M&P is a good and effective decision. For numerous reasons, this decision may still not be the most appropriate one. It may be that you had incomplete data, or were facing some constraint or the other. Looking back, you might see that you could have made a better or different decision. That's not a problem. Life is not lived looking back over our shoulders. It's lived forward and the future brings many things with it. We can and we must actively co-create it even though we are not omniscient. That's the basic thrust of the book:-

To make sense of what I've written, think of receiving an email stating that something you applied for has been approved or rejected. Don't images of what this implies, form in your mind, immediately?

This is the crux of this e-book. What these 'effective decisions' are, how exactly you make them, and in which areas of your life you ought to make them, during the time of transition and beyond are fundamental to building the kind of life you desire for yourself and your loved ones.

## **Chapter 1 Part 4**

### **“A First Important Aspect Of Reality: It Is Interdependent”**

***A first important aspect of reality: It is interdependent***

This fact is lost on many people. We exist in an interdependent reality that encompasses everything and every aspect of reality that we engage with. I have often been struck by the words interdependent and interaction. Every aspect of your life – emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual – is dependent on the other, and with your internal and external world. Most of our actions and choices are interactions with others or with different aspects of reality. We must internalize this truth deeply, in order to see reality accurately and respond to it appropriately.

The interdependence of reality is something you can either harness or crash against. In that sense, it is like gravity. Your attitude towards this aspect of reality is a fundamental decision that in turn influences subsequent ones. Some people think that 'teamwork' is a nice thing. Others think it's an optional one. I know it is a natural consequence that flows from the nature of reality. It can be harnessed by anyone who wishes to achieve anything worthwhile.

In your encounter with the various realities that make up your life, and in your attempts to co-create the future you desire, this interdependence that pervades your life and mine will, if we so decide, become one of our greatest assets. Life – our success, happiness, and ability to plan, execute, and rise from failure, and more – is a team event.

***A second important aspect of reality: Distinguish what is and is not under your control***

I have pointed out that reality is interdependent. This is a crucial characteristic of reality that cannot be minimized or ignored. But to harness the true power of your decisions and decision making – to know where to apply your effort – you must become aware of a second aspect of reality. If this awareness is lacking, you channel (or are in danger of channeling) your time, effort, and money blindly and ineffectively. It might even be more accurate to say you waste time, effort, and money. You end up tackling the wrong challenge or the right challenge in the wrong way.

The awareness I am referring to is that of distinguishing what aspect of this interdependent reality is:

1. Under your control
2. Not under your control
3. Not under your control but open to your influence

A failure or inability to distinguish these three lies at the root of many ineffective decisions and their resulting consequences.

Distinguishing what aspects of the interdependent reality you live in is under your control, is not under your control, and can be influenced but not controlled, is crucial. Making the decision to control what you cannot control is a road to frustration and misery. Selecting where and how you apply on which you can apply the force of your resources (time, physical or mental effort, money, intelligence, emotional involvement etc.) depends on the quality and effectiveness of your decisions and decision making.

I shall have much to say on this later in this chapter.

***A third aspect of reality: Re-reacting is what gives you the edge***

All of us have emotions, moods, instincts, likes, dislikes, preferences, and hot buttons. Temperamentally, some people are choleric and sanguines who may be more prone to impulsive decisions and actions. And of course, life is filled with the unpredictable, the unforeseeable and quite simply, the unknown. Add this to the pull to react to a pressing pain or constraint, and the ability to re-react instead of reacting to what we are facing or experiencing can be too much to resist. In fact, if we don't acquire the ability to re-react rather than react in the heat of the moment, it will be impossible to resist this pull.

In certain cases, this ability to react quickly can save lives. In certain professions – including the military – people are trained to such an extent that their reactions save lives, deal effectively with emergencies, and leave little or no time for conscious thought between a particular stimulus and a reaction. As a rule, this is achieved through training, effort, and repeated practice. All those who have mastered a particular ability have learned that the ability to re-react rather than react gives them an edge.

Every decision can be either a reaction or a re-reaction. Because it can be a re-reaction based on a decision or a series of decisions you make, it means you have control over your decisions. Earlier on, I stated that vision drives decisions. Vision is the result of both what strikes us as well as what we turn our

attention to. We can always turn our attention to various aspects of the realities in our external and internal worlds that impinge on us, see the whole and the parts, and see what these in turn are connected to. This is actually what all effective decision makers do. In fact, it is impossible to become a person of sound judgment if we don't learn to re-react, habitually.

## **Chapter 1 Part 5**

### **“The Role of Awareness in Change”**

#### ***The role of awareness in change***

Awareness is the starting point of all lasting change. It doesn't matter what aspect of your life that you desire to change, or bring about a change in. An exquisite awareness of the interdependent aspects of your life, and of those aspects you can and can't control, gives you the opportunity to engage the confusion and upheavals associated with transitioning from the military to civilian life. This awareness then becomes an aid to effective decisions and decision making.

A decision precedes every volitional encounter with any aspect of reality as well as every conscious re-reaction to every aspect of it. When you start paying attention to, and consciously trying to improve the quality and effectiveness of your decisions and decision making, you necessarily grow in exquisite awareness of how you perceive and interpret reality, of your actions, of your reactions, of the dynamics at play in human interactions and relationships, and of how your re-reactions afford you the greatest opportunities for success and happiness, of recognizing a complex challenge when you encounter one.

People who have a greater awareness of a particular aspect of reality – gained through knowledge, effort, training, study etc. – always see what is hidden to those lacking in this awareness. Actually, they see different aspects of it as well as its interconnections – because they see differently.

## **Chapter 1 Part 6**

### **“Nothing You Face is Unique but Everything You Face is Personal”**

#### ***Nothing you face is unique but everything you face is personal***

The challenges, problems, and difficulties you face can appear overwhelming. And your habitual response may be to do more or to try harder. Sometimes, this may work. Other times, it may not be the most effective decision you can make.

Events, circumstances, and situations can combine with the difficulties inherent in a time of transition, to knock the wind out of us. If your military career ended as a result of disabilities, it may mean you have to depend on people for many things. If not confronted and dealt with, your self-image and self-esteem takes a beating. You can end up feeling humiliated, vulnerable, weak, afraid, and incomplete. Patients who have been ill for a long while, people who've been involved in an accident that leaves them crippled, or those who have suffered a stroke leaving them paralyzed to varying degrees all have a tendency to feel this way. It's particularly trying for those of us with a fierce streak of independence in our personality. Losing limbs or one or more senses, or ending up as a quadriplegic or paraplegic is a huge challenge. PTSD and its numerous symptoms and manifestations are scary. We might think we are watching ourselves fall apart. No matter the nature of the disability, it need not be a crippling or daunting one.

Returning from the war with disabilities is a huge challenge. Returning to civilian life is another huge one. If both coalesce, you can end up feeling helpless and dependent. While in active service, most

of us prided ourselves on our levels of fitness, our toughness, and our abilities. Coupled with the motivations we had for entering the military, the rigorous standards we met when we enlisted, the demanding training we underwent, the privations we endured, and the feeling of being masters of our own destinies, these challenges seem to mock us. If left unchecked, people fall into the grip of a cycle of self-pity, self-doubt, misery, and desperation. Sometimes, it ends tragically in suicide.

Various other challenges exist. You may encounter prejudice from people who think your military background makes it harder for you to fit within their specific corporate culture. Or you may be facing the challenge of unemployment, family disputes, relationship troubles, or financial pressures. Or, you may not know what to do with the rest of your life, now that you've left the structured environment of a life of active service. You may be thinking "Now, what?"

Overcoming all these is simple, though not easy. Ease implies an absence of effort. Simple means it's not complex or complicated. You will have to make the required effort. In the face of this, the discipline, mindset, and training you acquired and received in the military – especially the ability to form the required habits – will be a tremendous asset.

Before I proceed, it is essential for me to state something clearly. Confronting the challenges we face cannot be done, effectively and sustainably, on the basis of will power or positive thinking. Our military training did not consist of pep talks. We underwent a sustained process of acquiring increasingly advanced skills and capabilities which enabled us meet the demands of active service. Eventually these skills and capabilities translated to making good decisions or correcting bad ones – which crystallized into habits of perceiving, behaving, thinking, and re-reacting – while we discharged our duties and responsibilities.

## **Chapter 1 Part 7**

### **"A Sense of Control and Effective Decision Making"**

#### ***A sense of control and effective decision making***

What you can control and what you can influence provides you with the 'substrate' for your decisions. At this point, it is important to be clear about what you can control and what you can influence so that your decisions will revolve around these and these alone. You must also never lose sight of what you can't control and how things that lie beyond your control impact you.

Once you become deeply aware of what is under your control, what is not under your control, and what is open to your influence, you can begin to make effective decisions pertaining to all of them. People sometimes make an effort – knowingly or unknowingly – to compensate for their inability to distinguish these three by substituting effective decision making with intelligence, education, knowledge, expertise, talent, education, wealth, power, strength, beauty, authority, relationships, affiliations or a combination of all or some of these. This does not shield them from consequences of ineffective decisions or decision making: the needless pain, worry, anxiety, stress and the impact on relationships, interactions and manners of interacting. A vicious cycle is then born when people spend their time, energy and resources dealing with the problems that their own ineffective decisions gave birth to.

We all need a minimum sense of control, order, predictability, rhythm, flow and unity to our waking moments. When these are lacking, we feel lost, disorientated, confused, and overwhelmed. We feel life is unfair, too hard, and filled with chaos. We can begin to rely on luck, on connections, on the power of a job title, an MBA from a prestigious school or some other external thing, to give us a sense of control over life. A feeling of helplessness or of being at the mercy of events, circumstances, and people or that your life has spun out of control, or the world is filled with people who are too selfish, self-centered

or lacking in understanding can lead to, or compound, emotional and mental ill-health, relationship dysfunction, addictions, and in extreme cases, suicide.

A person who doesn't experience this minimum degree of control lives in desperation, anxiety, worry, feelings of uncertainty, and fear. No one can live life like this without such a life leaving deep wounds on them. One does not simply feel alone, but one actually feels alienated from reality.

When we are in the eye of the storm of a life that has spun out of control, or of one threatening to spin out of control, our energies can become focused on just making it through the day. We blow up or break down for apparently unimportant things. Feeling that life is totally out of control makes us spend enormous energy but without a specific object to direct it towards. If this progresses for any period of time, we feel and become overwhelmed by the effort and a complete physical or mental breakdown – and all the resulting consequences of this – cannot be ruled out.

On the other hand, we can also become habituated to it and take it like stoics. Then, it becomes difficult to relax after we have made it through the eye of the storm. We also are in danger of becoming mechanical beings incapable of feeling or of enjoying life. Many military veterans and their families and loved ones are familiar with this.

A loss of a sense of control is often an experience that many people who undergo a major change in their lives experience. Leaving active service is a major change. Therefore, it is imperative to establish, as soon as possible and feasible, this sense of control. We have to feel that we are actively shaping our days and our lives.

### ***A growing sense of control***

An immediate consequence of becoming a more effective decision maker is a growing sense of control over your life. I teach that each person has a very short list of needs in life. A minimum degree of control is on that list. Once you (are able to) distinguish between what is under your control, what is open to your influence, and what is not under your control, it is easier to make effective decisions regarding each.

These effective decisions give you a growing sense of control over every aspect of your life. Since your the aspects of your life are interdependent, and since your life is interdependent with other lives, these effective decisions and effective decision making has beneficial impacts on many others. In the next chapter, I shall explain how this happens.

## Chapter 2 Part 1

### **“The Role, Influence, and Impact of Your Valid Mission and Purpose Statement”**

#### ***A complex web of influences on your decisions and decision making***

If you see your life through the prism of effective decisions, you will see the responsibility you have to break from the prison of fear, anxiety, and worry surrounding any problem or challenge. Every person who has broken free has had to make a decision.

Any and every aspect of reality has the potential to impact or influence your decisions. It is impossible to identify the full range of influences even on a single decision. If you don't provide the foundation, assistance, guidance, and unifying force required to your decisions, you will be at the mercy of the strongest force with the potential to influence your decision – an intense emotion, habit, prejudice, popular opinion, your reaction to something from our internal or external world or anything or anyone else.

The foundation you build on must remain unchanging in the midst of superficial changes and it must be responsive to substantive ones. It guides the decisions you make in your various roles, interactions, relationships, and in the discharge of your duties and responsibilities. It must empower you to tackle complex challenges in a coherent and congruent manner. It must align your decisions. Complex challenges have numerous individual (and interdependent) elements. Some of these may adversely impact your decisions if you focus on them and neglect others, if you fail to identify the root causes of these challenges, or if you tackle them in the wrong way, at the wrong point, at the wrong time, or even for the wrong reason. It must be aware that your internal and external worlds are constantly changing and enable you know when to change with them, and when to remain unchanged by them or in spite of changes in them.

The route I have followed for decades to help people improve their decisions and decision making is simple, straightforward, and in keeping with the realism that characterizes everything I teach and coach. What gives you the edge – both in the complexity and confusion of the moment and over the long haul – is a valid Mission and Purpose Statement. It is the foundation that individuals, families, groups, institutions, businesses, political parties and even countries need, in order to make effective decisions, effectively.

## Chapter 2 Part 2

### **“What is a Mission and Purpose Statement?” (M&P)**

It is a clear, concise, and written statement of your long-term aim (what you are going to be as a person, family, group, institution etc.) and your continuing and never-ending tasks and responsibilities (what you are going to or ought to do) that are directed toward fulfilling this aim. This in itself is powerful because most people don't think these issues through and allow such a statement to provide the criteria for their decisions and choices. As I stated earlier, I teach it with a twist that gives it much more power and effectiveness. The twist is that this statement must be rooted in the world of those you interact with, live with, work with, have responsibility for, or seek to reach agreement with.

Your M&P must be written from their perspective, not yours. Your long-term aim and your continuing tasks and responsibilities must be thought of, expressed, and described in terms of the benefits it brings to them, not the gain it brings to you. Those benefits must be directed to what is important to them, and what drives them – the hopes, fears, aspirations, needs, short and long-term

objectives, constraints, challenges etc. I repeat: your long-term aim and your continuing tasks and responsibilities must be conceived of, and framed, from their perspective, not yours.

There is a world of difference between thinking of your long-term aim and your responsibilities from the perspective of your world and that of theirs. It helps you step into their world and become familiar with it. It helps you see the real problems they face, the manifestations and root causes of these problems, and how what you do and what you are trying to be, help them overcome these and become what they want to be, achieve what they want to achieve, do what they want to do, and get what they want to get.

If you see this clearly, it has served a second function. In addition to becoming the solid foundation for all your decisions, it also serves the function of a vision building tool. I shall explain this in greater detail, later.

### ***Valid M&P Statements***

A valid M&P clearly states what your long-term aim is from the perspective of those who benefit from this aim. People live their lives, and make decisions based on a 'What's in it for me' perspective. Your long-term aim must clearly express what's in it for them.

When your M&P is rooted in the world of the other party, it is a valid one. Otherwise, it's an invalid one.

As a negotiation coach, I want to help my coaches develop negotiation mastery to enable them reach profitable and durable agreements, ethically. But that is my aim from my perspective. No matter how noble it sounds, it will not take me very far, because it is not conceived in terms of the benefits that flow to my coaches.

In order to do so, I have to clearly describe the benefits of mastering negotiation – being in control by always knowing what to do and how to respond, confidently dealing with the threats they face when they negotiate with bullies and manipulators, becoming aware of the mistakes they make and how those mistakes are hurting them, helping them see the danger of out-of-control emotions (theirs and those of their counterparts) and how not knowing how to deal with these puts them in danger, the undesirable consequences for them, their families, their organizations, and their constituents that arise from ineffective negotiation skills etc. These are the realities in their world, and my aim must be addressed to those realities.

My long-term aim – conceived in terms of the benefits that my coachees stand to gain from my coaching them – also means that I have certain tasks to fulfill and responsibilities to carry out, in order to achieve this aim. These tasks and responsibilities never come to an end. I must continually meet my existing and future coaches where they are, and address the obstacles that stand in the way of them trying to achieve negotiation mastery. Different people learn at differing paces, and their personal circumstances and situations vary widely. I must become intimately familiar with what they are facing, and continually exert myself to provide the training in an accessible way.

With a valid M&P, my decisions and decision making are guided by providing these long-term benefits, and the tasks and responsibilities that arise from this long-term aim. I am also protected from the dangers of short-term thinking (valuing short term gains at the expense of long-term losses or long term pain), of taking ethical short cuts, of settling for what is easy and within reach.

I also don't fall prey to pie-in-the sky dreaming of a long-term aim that is not rooted in reality. If I am not meeting the needs of others, now, I can examine whether my M&P needs to be changed or



modified. (The problem might also arise from a faulty strategy or an inability to negotiate.) Whatever the reason, the feedback I get keeps me grounded.

The beauty of thinking in terms of tasks and responsibilities is that I am aware of the interdependence of roles, relationships, responsibilities, and interactions that I referred to in the previous chapter. I know that my responsibilities to provide the benefits expressed by my long-term aim cannot blind me to other responsibilities. I am able to see how an isolated decision in one role impacts others.

The realities in their world also mean that I must continually be aware and attend to their changing needs and its manifestations. I don't get trapped in my world and in attempting to chase my objectives and aspirations without reference to them and their needs.

## **Chapter 2 Part 3**

### **“A Valid M&P Guides and Guards You During the Time of Transition and Beyond”**

What do you intend to do, after leaving the military? If you have already left, what are you engaged in? It doesn't matter what you do or intend to do. At home, your efforts have an impact on the quality of life, the happiness, the health, and the security of your loved ones. In professional life, your efforts must satisfy the needs of others in order to earn a living. Anything you aim to be, in personal or professional life, imposes continuing tasks and responsibilities on you in the form of building up and perfecting your skills, acquiring knowledge, identifying means and areas for improvement and the like.

It provides guidance to you regarding what decision to take, and what to avoid. You are clear about what you are doing, and why. Every decision is assessed in terms of whether it fits with your M&P or goes against it. If it fits, you embrace it; if it doesn't, you reject it. In this way, all your decisions, choices, actions, activities, and behaviors have a valid reference point.

In chapter 1, I stated that vision drives decisions. I also stated that you must be able to influence what is not under your control. Your valid M&P is a vision-building tool. Firstly, it builds your vision clearly with regards what you are trying to be and how this benefits those you live, work, and interact with. Then, it helps you build the vision of these others. I shall explore this and other far reaching impacts in greater detail in chapter 5. I shall also treat the impact and the role of a valid M&P in the ensuing 4 chapters in various crucial aspects of your life.

## **Chapter 2 Part 4**

### **“Invalid Mission and Purpose Statements”**

Human beings naturally tend toward a particular aim or objective. People who live aimless lives are rightly considered as merely drifting through life. However, even those who have specific aims, goals, and objectives they aspire to, frequently make two mistakes in terms of how they understand and define them. Certain goals and objectives that people set for themselves are guided by what I refer to as an invalid M&P statement. They think and decide in terms of something they wish to achieve, with no thought of how to satisfy the needs and interests of others that ought to be satisfied in order for them to achieve what they want, or the tasks and responsibilities that arise from trying to achieve this. Think of how ridiculous it is for a soldier to say “I want to win a Congressional Medal of Honor” or “I want to win a Purple Heart”. How different is that from “I want to make a million dollars”, “I want to graduate at the top of the class”, “I want my kid to finish at the top of the class”, “I want to save \$3,000.00 each month”, “I want to stop experiencing panic attacks by this time next month”, or “I want my wife/husband/child/girlfriend/boyfriend to love me more”, “I want to double revenues of my company over

the next 12 months”, or even “I want to discover a cure for cancer”. All these statements could be uttered by a person who is ruled by a me-centered aim. Often, it’s merely a performance goal over which they have no control. (In the next chapter, I address a crucial distinction regarding valid and invalid goals, and goals and objectives.)

A me-centered M&P traps you in your world, keeps the focus on you, and is a powerful temptation to use others to get what you want, regardless of what is important to them or whether they are interested in your plans, efforts, and dreams. It also traps you in trying to control and to chase what is not under your control.

When a person sets up a goal over which he has no control, and loses sight of his continuing tasks (at the service of the goal) and responsibilities (to himself and others), his decisions and decision making is powerfully influenced and directed by this performance goal. Everything and everyone become subordinated to that goal. Despite not having any control over it, he willingly sacrifices his life, his resources, and everything else that is (or should be) important to him, in the service of something he cannot control. That goal is naturally connected – I explored the interdependent nature of reality – to many other things and many other people. Such a person must therefore seek to control those other things and people. The person gets trapped in a vicious circle of trying to control what lies outside his control.

A me-centered aim is tremendously constricting, feeds your less than noble tendencies, and is downright stupid. It is something that makes you blind, reduces your awareness of your environment, and sets you off on the slippery slope of becoming a bully, a manipulator, or even engaging in deception. In the service of such a goal, the end justifies whatever means is employed.

It’s even worse. Why? Because such a goal gives you a snapshot of reality, but makes you disconnected from how reality is changing and evolving.

### ***Without a valid M&P, it is impossible to make effective decisions***

The innumerable influences on your decisions, the uncertainty and emotions attached to a time of transition, a changing world, and your pressing concerns can combine powerfully into a formidable challenge. As a result, you could easily make some very ineffective decisions.

I must warn you that as much as living with an M&P reveals a clear pathway to happiness and well-being, so too does it strip away the veil that lies over, and progressively reveals, the sharper edges of reality. Both this pathway and these edges remain unseen to those who, for one reason or the other – which may or may not be their fault – don’t perceive them, and so don’t (have to) factor them into account in their decisions and choices. You will be spared the needless anxiety, worry, fear, confusion and cyclical emotional upheavals they face and experience, but you won’t be spared the effort of living a life that is coherent and congruent with a valid M&P.

Building and constructing a valid M&P is a decision. But there’s little point in making that decision if you are unwilling to commit to it emotionally and intellectually; if you don’t refer to it to guide your every important decision, and if you are unwilling to follow its guidance.

## **Chapter 2 Part 5**

### **“Building Your Valid M&P”**

Before you begin building a valid M&P, I want to tell you that this is the most fundamental activity a person can become engaged in. One of the continuing and never-ending tasks and responsibilities that

flow from living with a valid M&P is to continuously monitor and evaluate your M&P in order to ensure that it fits in with the realities of your present situation and circumstances. Sometimes, a valid M&P that was suitable 6 months ago is not suitable today. Living with a valid M&P is a life-long task that engages the whole 'you'. It is not something that you can attempt for lack of what to do, because you want to get out of a crisis immediately, or even to simply satisfy your curiosity. It is a life-altering decision. More than any other thing, an M&P will impact and shape your decisions and thereby shape your existence through the invisible bonds of the roles, interactions, responsibilities and relationships in your life. If for any reason you are unwilling to change, to heal and to grow – through the decisions your M&P directs you toward – it is better not to attempt to build one. At least not right away.

Those who set out to improve their decisions and decision making eventually realize that a valid M&P requires emotional commitment far more often than it does intellectual commitment. As I stated earlier, it progressively reveals the sharper edges of reality which require some tough decisions from you. I know you are capable of doing so, because joining and remaining in the army is a tough one that, like a valid M&P, shapes your life and existence. I hope the fact that you are reading this book means that you are willing to continue making tough decisions as required. For some people, the priority is to heal and grow emotionally before attempting to build a valid M&P. For such people, it is advisable to engage the concept of a valid M&P after they have taken the steps toward emotional healing and growth. Otherwise, the pull and push of emotional turbulence is great enough to rob them of the focus and commitment required. In a later chapter, I explicitly address the issues of emotional healing and growth. After reading it, you may wish to come back and re-engage this chapter, and perhaps even the whole book.

You can build a valid M&P in 4 steps which, in themselves, are easy to understand.

**1. On a plain sheet of paper, list the “features” of what you do well.**

It might be a character or personality trait, a particular skill (or set of skills), specialized knowledge, or some particular abilities. The questions I ask are meant to jog your imagination and memory.

- Are you good with numbers?
- Are you gifted in connecting with (older or younger) people in particular?
- Do you connect with children?
- Do you speak more than one language? Do you learn languages quickly?
- Do you speak the lingo of the street and can you simultaneously connect with troubled kids?
- Do you work well with your hands? With paint, clay, wood, or metal?
- Do you know how to assemble and disassemble mechanical/electrical gadgets?
- Are you good at making people laugh?
- Are you good at organizing events?
- Do you write well?

- Are you good at handling machines and equipment? Household, office, or industrial?
- Do you cook well?
- Are you a quick learner?
- Are you persistent and courageous?
- When you think back into your past, what achievements are you particularly proud of? What skills or abilities did those achievements signify?
- What part of military life did you enjoy the most? Does that signify any particular skill or ability?
- What do others turn to you for, most often?
- Is there some puzzle you have been trying to solve for a while?
- Are you passionate about something?
- Is there something you enjoy doing, and simultaneously do well?
- Are you orderly and meticulous?

It is essential that your final answer be in the form of a list of **specific features**. If you connect well with children, you must be able to understand what you do. Do you have the ability to keep engaged in their play and work? If you can connect with troubled teenagers, are you a person they confide their troubles and worries to?

Take your time with this list. Building it might last hours, days, or weeks. It will vary from individual to individual. You are discovering where, how, and when you engage reality in a unique and exceptional way. Each person is uniquely gifted. It is a task that you must complete, to your satisfaction. Don't proceed until you are satisfied. It is not a question of whether you have produced a complete list or not. What matters is that you have shone a powerful search light onto what you do well.

As a negotiation coach, I help people master the ability to identify and overcome every conceivable problem they face when they attempt to reach agreements with others; help them reach durable, profitable, and ethical agreements; help them to reach agreement in negotiations they are involved currently involved with; and help them master the ability to negotiate at their own unique learning pace.

These are features of what I do.

**2. Once you have a list of features you are satisfied with, write down the benefit that another person (or group) stands to gain from each feature.**

Sometimes, the feature is itself the benefit or each feature might have a corresponding benefit or multiple features might add up to provide a single benefit, or one feature might have multiple benefits. You must clearly see what you provide to others that they value. You must be specific about which benefit accrues to whom. What specific problems and challenges do these benefits solve? To do this successfully, you must

1. Gain deep insight into the world of those you live, interact, and work with now, or those you have done so with, in the past.
2. Avoid generalities. They cloud your ability to see clearly because each generalization hides things that you must perceive clearly and accurately.

Writing well does not imply that you write novels, articles, training manuals, and copy for advertisements equally well. Cooking well does not mean you cook equally well for a group of 10 people as for a group of 500.

The benefits that flow from what I do are many. I help people save time, energy and money; I help them overcome fear, neediness, and other debilitating emotions; I help them take charge of their decisions and make effective decisions throughout a negotiation; I show them how they can influence the decisions of their negotiation counterparts without resorting to bullying, manipulation, or deception; I help them deal with bullies and manipulators; I help them to avoid getting burnt by misplaced trust; and help them to learn at their own pace without feeling rushed, pressurized, or stressed.

Here too, you must take the time required to think the list through, thoroughly. You must clearly see the specific benefits that flow from your list of features, and for whom. If you can't see the complete value of the benefits you bring to others, how will they see it? You must become thoroughly and intimately familiar with the problems they face, and how the benefits of what you do well helps them overcome these problems.

It is what enables you step out of limits of the natural egoism and blindness that we are all born with. It also enables you step out of your world and enter the world of the other person. Remember that I said your M&P must be set and rooted in the world of the other party? The next step enables you do just that.

3. **Prioritize and order your list in terms of what is important to you – for the sake of others – and what is important to them.**

This step keeps you anchored in the world of those who stand to benefit from what you do well. You ought to think both in terms of what is important to them immediately and what is important to them in the long run. You must be able to think both in terms of root causes of, and immediate relief to, their problems.

The ease or difficulty with which you are able to do so reveals the degree of your familiarity with their world.

This step also enables you think in deep rather than superficial terms. It will naturally lead you to the fourth and final step of building a valid M&P.

4. **Create your M&P from the final prioritized and ordered list of features and benefits in terms of your long-term aim (what you are going to be, grow into, or become for their benefit) and your continuing and never ending tasks and responsibilities (what you are going to do, do repeatedly or cyclically, engage in, start, stop, change, modify, attend to, develop, invest in etc.) in order to provide the benefit of what you do well.**

In this step, everything comes together. Your M&P must be written from their perspective. A person who wants to work with troubled teenagers might write his or her M&P as follows:

*To provide teenagers in and around (here, state a specific locality, neighborhood or group of teenagers) with a safe, accepting, empathic and unconditionally affirming environment, and become a trusted and loyal confidante by listening to them, spending time with them, helping them develop new skills, jointly discover their hidden potential, and provide advice suited to age, gender, temperament, beliefs, and personal circumstances.*

You can create an M&P that is specific to and enables you navigate the time of transition. It could be something like:

*To discover the areas in my life that require growth and healing, draw up and commit to a specific plan to assist and bring about this healing and growth, and thereby become able to develop the skills and abilities I need to build a career and earn and grow my income to enable me take care of my family, meet our needs, and build a healthy, happy, and meaningful life, together.*

Once you successfully go through the cycle of building an M&P statement, you will be able to repeat it, as and when you need to. As I have stated, it is the most important and life changing thing you will attempt. All your decisions – and your subsequent decisions choices, behaviors, actions, activities, selecting and pursuing of objectives, planning, rising from failure etc. – will be guided, oriented, and guarded by your M&P.

## **Chapter 2 Part 6**

### **“Building a M&P Can be a Joint Effort”**

If you are building an M&P for a family, a team, a group, an institution or an organization, it is essential that those who are part of being and becoming what your long-term aim expresses, and fulfilling the never-ending tasks and responsibilities that flow from this aim, play an active role in creating it. You cannot create an M&P for others. Just as neither of us can make decisions for others, we cannot decide on an M&P that will guide the decisions of others.

Of course, if your group already has an M&P that it has developed, any person wishing to or being invited to join the group must be allowed to freely decide to embrace it. If they are unwilling to do so, your M&P will provide the guidance needed for your next decision. The same thing applies for a valid M&P for your family, now, or in the event it grows in size.

Your ability to build a valid M&P that ‘fits’ the world you live in, and brings together the needs of others that you can satisfy well with the continuing duties and responsibilities this imposes on you, and thereby makes you what you are capable of becoming depends to a large extent on your ability to perceive and think about reality accurately, creatively, and completely. One day, you will discover that it is guiding your decisions and choices and has become the fabric of your thinking, decision making, and finally, your judgment.

When it guides your goal setting (your behavior goals and activity goals), your activities, your planning, selecting the obstacles you choose to pursue, your re-reacting to opportunities and challenges and everything else that happens to you, then you realize that you have started co-creating the life you wish and aspire to on the basis of the solid foundation of your valid M&P.

### **Changing your M&P**

Given the importance I have ascribed to your M&P, it may appear to be a contradiction to state that your M&P can be changed or ought to be changed. A little reflection of source M&P reveals that this contradiction is apparent not real.

The world you and they live in, changes. This may be as a result of:

1. Changes you undergo: You may acquire new skills and abilities that enable you satisfy their needs in ways that may be cheaper, faster, or better.
2. Changes they undergo: One of the building blocks of your M&P is the needs, problems, constraints, and challenges that others face. Whenever these change, your M&P automatically ought to change.
3. Bigger changes that impact and affect both of you: Markets may shift. New markets may open up. Technology changes often. Government regulations may change.

All these affect your long term aim and your continuing tasks and responsibilities. The challenges and threats that the nation faced 3 decades ago were not the same that it faced 2 decades ago. They are not the same it faces today. The military's long term aim remains the same, but its continuing tasks and responsibilities changes in the way it goes about fulfilling that aim.

## **Chapter 2 Part 7**

### **“The Danger of Not Having a Valid M&P”**

I think it is safe to say that the majority of people do not live with a valid M&P. They may be driven by an invalid M&P or it may be that they don't even have an invalid one. The danger of not living with one makes it certain that you will be reacting to things, events, and people. You put yourself in danger by not having a valid M&P. Imagine the following common scenarios and situations.

1. Imagine working for, starting a business with, or hiring a person who doesn't have a valid M&P and is unwilling to build or embrace one. You can't ever be sure that their decisions and decision making is not driven by a vision which in turn is based on mood, whim, fancy, or the emotion of the moment. Having such a person as a business partner or a boss is a very taxing experience.
2. Imagine the danger of serving another person's invalid M&P. If a person is driven by an invalid goal, or the need to avoid conflict, or to be liked and respected, or to keep up appearances, you can easily be roped into the service of that invalid M&P. The world is not filled with boy scouts who want to do one good deed a day. Even how you and I define good deeds is sometimes tainted by our narrow self-interest.
3. Imagine experiencing deep and profound change – like a time of transition or a loss due to death, divorce, disability etc.– and the numerous challenges that it throws up. How can you maintain your focus, discipline, and unify your efforts so that you make through that time without falling apart?
4. Imagine dealing with the unknown and the unknowable. How do you face the future calmly and confidently without a valid M&P?
5. In the introduction, I stated that becoming a negotiator and a strategist are 2 abilities you must master in order to thrive in this interdependent world. How can you do so without a valid M&P? Neither negotiation nor strategy is a bag of tricks and gimmicks.

All these scenarios are meant to help you see the importance of a valid M&P, and the risks you put yourself under, when you make decisions without the strength and guidance of one. I hope you will deeply engage the process and the responsibility of building a valid M&P. I know, from personal experience, from the experience of my near and dear ones, and from the experience of thousands of others that a valid M&P is the only true foundation on which a successful, happy, meaningful, and calm life can be co-created.



## Chapter 3 Part 1

### “The Presence and Influence of Decisions on Your Life”

#### ***Every aspect of your existence is shot through with decisions.***

Your impact, influence, and responsibility as a decision maker is incalculable because it's often hard for any of us to fully and accurately perceive and understand to the full extent of any decision. Your role as a decision maker reminds me of the famous words of the ancient Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer, and astronomer: “*Give me a place to stand, and a lever long enough, and I will move the world.*” Whether you accept, like, perceive, or understand it or not, your decisions move your world and others' worlds. It will contribute to unifying or fragmenting your life and other lives. The impact and influence is often hidden from our sight. It is deep, lasting, and extends across other lives and even across generations. You can become aware of the impact and influence, in numerous ways:

Firstly, consider the various roles you play and the relationships you are a part of, and the responsibilities that flow from each. When I consider the roles I play in my personal life, I become aware of being a husband, father, brother, grandfather, brother in law, father in law, uncle, cousin, and more. In my professional life, I'm a negotiation coach to individuals and organizations, entrepreneur, author, vendor, buyer, and more. In each of these roles, I make decisions that impact other lives and impact outcomes and results of things that I am engaged in, interdependently, with others.

#### ***So, what roles do you play?***

Secondly, consider that closely related to the roles you play, is the network of relationships you are a part of. Many of the roles you play signify relationships that you were born into; that you entered into (e.g. through marriage, friendship, military service etc.); or that others related to you entered into as a result of which you became part of a relationship with those they entered into. My children's spouses have caused my original family to grow and made me a father in law to some very special people. When I married my wife Patty over 4 decades ago, I became a part of a network of relationships that I was not a part of until that point.

#### ***What relationships are you a part of?***

Now might be a good moment to take a piece of paper and list out the roles you play and the relationships you are a part of.

Thirdly, observe how your decisions impact and influence others in the innumerable human interactions you are a part of – with those you live and work with; with those you haven't met, and yet collaborate with over the phone or the internet; with those you meet in the course of the comings and goings of each day.

#### ***What interactions are you involved in?***

Many (perhaps even most) of these roles, relationships, and interactions come with attendant responsibilities which require effective decisions and decision making on your part. None of these roles and responsibilities can be neglected nor can all of them be given equal priority because they don't impose the same responsibilities. Decisions made in one role, relationship, or interaction often have an impact on others – transmitted like an electric current – through the network of roles, relationships, and interactions that bind you to others, and others to you.

Fourthly, consider the specific sort of interaction in which you make the effort you make to reach agreement with others. An inability to reach agreement can have far reaching consequences for you and those in your care. You and I must reach agreements within the contexts of interactions and relationships. In relationships that you are a part of, few things cause as much wear and tear as the

habitual inability to reach agreement or of reaching agreement in a way that leaves one or both parties feeling brutalized or devalued. The ability to reach agreements with others is simply the ability to negotiate.

While negotiating, you must respect each person's right to say 'no'. Respecting this right is essential for you and your family's mental and emotional happiness, for your economic well-being, for your career, and, for your self-confidence. It will also protect you from people who attempt to take advantage of you; from those who – consciously or unconsciously – think only of their needs and interests, and of course from those who bully, manipulate, or deceive in order to achieve what is important to them. The ability and necessity to reach agreement reflects, in a very particular way, the interdependent reality I referred to, in the previous chapter. In your efforts to reach agreement, both you and the other party will have to make one decision after the other.

## **Chapter 3 Part 2**

### **“How Effectively Do You Negotiate?”**

#### ***How effectively do you negotiate?***

Fifthly, consider any and every area of your life that stands in need of growth. If a particular area is requires growth but you don't make the decisions required for growth, it will spill into many other roles, relationships, and interactions. Look at your life, holistically. It's one life lived by a one 'you'. Any area in your life that is not growing is an arena where ineffective decisions or ineffective decision making is already at play. What this implies is that they are arenas for effective decisions and decision making.

#### ***Which area in your life is resistant to growth? Or more accurately, in which area are you resisting growth? Are you growing in mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health and maturity?***

So often, we fall into the trap of clearly seeing the areas in other people's lives that are stagnant but remain blind to ours. Depending on the nature of the role, relationship, or interaction, this can be very destructive. We unconsciously slip into the habit of trying to control what is not under our control – the decisions others make to either grow or not – and neglect the decision that is under our control – to be open to, and to foster, our own growth and, perhaps, healing.

The sixth arena I bring to your awareness and consideration is the need for effective decisions and decision making in pursuit of a particular objective. The complex challenges I referred to in the previous chapter are typical examples. Without effective decisions, we will be unable to tackle these challenges in a focused, coherent, congruent, and coordinated manner. We will misdiagnose the challenge and be neither unable to distinguish essential and inessential features, nor will we be able to distinguish symptoms from root causes. Above all, our plans will not be crafted and executed in ways that solve the real problem.

#### ***How effective are your decisions when pursuing a particular objective or dealing with a particular challenge?***

The last and most crucial area of effective decisions and decision making I shall touch upon is creating your own personal M&P. Without an M&P, you are essentially flying blind. Your decisions have no foundation and no criteria. Your M&P is what gives a foundational orientation to your decisions, choices, actions, plans, and re-reactions. Developing your M&P is one of the most important things you do in life. So it sticking with it, or modifying it. Developing, sticking to, and modifying your M&P requires numerous decisions and requires effective decision making, at its most important.

#### ***Do you have a personal Mission & Purpose? Is it a valid or an invalid one? What guides your decisions?***

I shall explain, in detail, what a valid and an invalid M&P is, and the profound impact that the presence of a valid or invalid one has on your decisions. I shall also show you how the absence of an M&P affects your decisions.

### **Chapter 3 Part 3**

#### **“Ineffective Decisions and Non-Decisions”**

In a time of transition and in the course of each person's life, the need to confront and overcome challenges and obstacles, or to recognize, utilize, or even create opportunities will inevitably arise. Without the habits that mark an effective decision maker, pain, anxiety, confusion, desperation, and stagnation easily take root and grow.

Sadly, despite the threat or existence of this in many people's lives, their lives are still shot through with ineffective decisions or with what I term 'non-decisions'. I teach that an ineffective decision is one that does not flow from a valid Mission & Purpose statement or one that flows from an invalid Mission & Purpose statement. These are two 'types' of decisions. A 'non-decision' on the other hand is the unwillingness to make a decision. This may lead to, or be the result of, ineffective decision making, ignorance, decision making paralysis, or indecisiveness.

#### ***An ineffective decision or a non-decision is very different from a wrong decision***

We humans are not all knowing and all powerful. I explained how we are often unaware of the consequences of a single decision. This means that inevitably, we will make wrong decisions. The objective of being an effective decision maker is not to become a neurotic perfectionist who never makes a mistake. That's impossible. If you are an effective decision maker, you will eventually discover that you make or made a wrong decision. That, paradoxically, is further proof that you are becoming an effective decision maker. And what do you do when you discover that you've made a wrong decision? You correct it with the next decision. Only one decision stands between a wrong decision you've made and correcting it.

#### ***You are one decision away from correcting a wrong decision***

Whatever your particular situation or circumstance, you are one decision away from setting out to changing the trajectory of your life. It might be a decision requiring you to cope with disability, to allow yourself to be taken care of, to regain your mental or emotional health, to acquire a particular skill or competence, to learn what it takes to re-react instead of reacting blindly, to be patient, understanding, and affectionate toward yourself as you heal, to gain clarity about what next to do in your professional life, to get married, to seek help in healing your marriage, to spend more time, pay more attention, or show more affection to your wife, husband, kids etc.

If you persist in making effective decisions and improving your decision making, that first one set of a chain of effective decisions that lead you into an upward spiral of growth, learning, effectiveness, happiness, health, serenity, meaning, fulfillment, and economic security.

Often, in our lives, there is a decision or a series of decisions that we keep putting off. The vision that drives us to make this ineffective decision may be the effort required, the price we must pay, the consequences it imposes on us, or not knowing what to do next or how to do it. Sometimes, it may even be that we don't know where to turn for help. From experience, you and I know that things don't improve by putting off making it.

## Chapter 3 Part 4

### “The 6 Characteristics Of Peak Performers”

#### ***The 6 characteristics of peak performers***

Before I go on, I would like to bring a list to your attention. It is a list of characteristics shared by peak performers in all fields of human endeavor. If you build these 6 characteristics into habits, these alone will change your life and help you co-create the life you wish. Of course, if you incorporate it within the context of everything else contained in this book, your opportunities for success and happiness increase exponentially.

#### ***(i) Effective decision maker***

Since this is the common thread that runs through this book, I won't add any comments here. To me, this is the most important one of the six.

#### ***(ii) A Valid Mission & Purpose (M&P)***

I have explored M&P in detail, in the previous chapter.

#### ***(iii) Valid Goals and Objectives***

A long time ago, I came across the definition of a goal as “An action or effort to an end”. Using that definition, an essential feature of a goal is that it is something that a person can control. You can start or stop an action or an effort to an end, at will. This is what I term a valid goal. That is why I teach that your activities and your behaviors are what qualify as valid goals. You have total control over your activities and behaviors. Now, I do not discount the fact that we all have undesirable habits that manifest in our activities and behavior. I maintain they are under your control because you can replace an undesirable habit with a desirable one. The fact that it requires effort and practice does not mean it is not under our control. On the contrary, it illustrates that are under your control. When you think of a goal, it will help you tremendously to think in terms of activity goals and behavior goals.

Invalid goals are goals over which you have no control over. In the previous chapter, I showed you how people's long term aims often consist of performance goals over which they have no control. Any goal that does not fall under an activity or a behavior is something you do not have control over, and consequently falls under the category of either an invalid goal or an objective. Outcomes and results of any sort fall into the category of invalid goals. An outcome (or result) is dependent on numerous variables which are not under your control. Thus, you can influence an outcome but you cannot control it.

An objective is something you aspire toward because

1. It helps you execute the plan you draw up to solve a particular problem/challenge.
2. It advances your M&P.
3. Is something you achieve using valid goals.

Use valid goals to help you prepare, execute, and review your performance. In that way, you can pinpoint what works, what doesn't work, and what changes and improvements are required. Valid goals are a necessary means in growing in focus and discipline.

Gaining mastery in a language is an objective. Selecting which language is based on your M&P. Deciding how you will go about it – to take a class, an online course, engage in self-study, and determining how much time and effort you spend on it daily or weekly – are valid goals.

In the military, you mastered a number of skills. You achieved this mastery by focusing on your behaviors and activities and building these into habits. You focused on what was under your control. You must continue to use that method to build mastery in anything.

***(iv) Habitually create and execute plans that solve the real problems***

To achieve a particular objective, and solve the problems and challenges that stand in your way, you must plan. This becomes even more important when you are dealing with complex challenges.

Think of any challenge you are facing, or that you foresee. In a time of transition, the challenges you face in life do not come at you in an easily managed, linear sequence. Interdependence means that many of these challenges are linked to others. In fact, the solutions to some could be the seed of a new challenge. It could be anything – building a career, building a business, wisely using the funds you get upon your discharge from active service, rebuilding a life after disability, straightening out a dysfunctional relationship (or relationships), building a career, straightening your finances, increasing your income, investing your discretionary funds, improving your skills and abilities to generate a bigger or more stable income, planning and prioritizing your day or week, or settling a family dispute that is affecting too many people, or (and this might not be too popular), admitting and seeking help for emotional or mental ill health.

It's not enough to engage in certain activities and then label the end result a plan. Your plan must be designed to identify and solve the real problems that stand in the way of you achieving your objective(s). Effective plans firstly identify them (and the interconnections with other problems if these exist) and then solve them by solving the root cause. Otherwise, your plans run the risk of being little more than wishful thinking or intellectual gymnastics.

When trying to solve complex challenges, it's almost certain that you will be required to readjust your goals and objectives. If you have a valid M&P, it won't matter. Each such adjustment will be an effective decision. On the other hand, if you choose to stick with the plan you already have, that too will be an effective decision. In fact, if you are an effective decision maker, you can even change your M&P. But that will happen on the basis of new facts, trends, information etc. If you have created an M&P carefully and thoughtfully, it won't change on the basis of moods or emotions. Keep in mind that you execute your plan using your activity goals, behavior goals, and effective decisions.

I shall explore this in detail when I show you what it takes to be a negotiator and a strategist.

***(v) Develop laser-like focus***

More than something that you do, developing this sort of focus is actually a consequence of living the other five. This focus will help you clearly see what is required for an effective decision, and what represents an effective decision in a particular situation. You will see the knowledge, information, skill, or expertise gaps that exist and that must be filled in order for you to make an effective decision.

This laser-like focus will help you see clearly what is important and of consequence, and what is not important and merely incidental, and distinguish between the two. You will also clearly see what is under your control, what is not under your control, what you can influence but not control, and the interconnectedness that exist between all three.

You will also see the obstacles that stand in the way of living out your M&P both in the here and now, and over the long run, and help you become aware of the opportunities you encounter and which, if utilized, will advance your M&P. It is also this focus that will help you become aware of when and how to change your M&P. This is a far-reaching decision that cannot be undertaken lightly.

You will then be able to bring this kind of laser-like focus to bear on each aspect of your life and identify and solve any challenge, using effective decision making, effective planning, and effective goal setting. The benefits will be incalculable.

#### **(vi) Growth Vs. Fixed Mindset**

A mindset is the *habitual mental attitude or disposition* that predetermines our responses to, and interpretation of, events and situations. Stay with that definition for a few moments. It's a habitual mental attitude or disposition that predetermines how we perceive or how we respond to things. Habits, as we all know are built or broken by repetition. We are all creatures of habit. However, since it's a mental attitude/disposition, our mindset may actually operate in our lives while we remain unaware of its existence and influence.

Simply put, the Growth Mindset is a deep-seated belief that knowledge, intelligence, skills, talents, and abilities are capable of growing and growth. This mindset is expressed and observed by a simultaneous willingness to learn, improve, and grow regardless of one's current intelligence, skill, talents, abilities or achievements. Events and experiences, successes and failures, and challenges are seen as opportunities for learning and growth. Every area and aspect of our lives is perceived as one growth can and should occur. No level of achievement or success is seen as having made or transformed us into a "finished product" nor does any failure make or transform us into "damaged goods".

A Fixed Mindset is an equally deep-seated belief that "you either have it or you don't". The "it" often refers to a particular skill, ability or capability. It views that ability or skill as fixed and incapable of growth or change. It views skills as possess inherent limits which are, sadly, imposed a priori. The particular manifestation of the Fixed Mindset might vary from person to person, situation to situation, circumstance to circumstance, or event to event, but the manifestations and consequences are fairly predictable. If you believe you are not capable of doing something, or that you already know it so well that there's no need or scope for improvement, you are going to decide, plan, choose, act and respond on the basis of those beliefs.

It's a sobering truth to realize that the Growth and Fixed Mindsets operate not only in the lives of individuals. Families, public and private institutions, organizations, companies, societies, and even civilizations operate (and have operated) on the basis of one or the other. A crisis may stimulate action, but once it blows over, the dominant mindset kicks in.

I do not consider the Fixed Mindset to be the opposite of the Growth Mindset. When I observe these mindsets in the lives of specific individuals, groups, organizations, societies and even civilizations, I notice that ***the Fixed Mindset is the absence of the Growth Mindset*** just as darkness is the absence of light.

We human beings are born with the Growth Mindset. The toddler is constantly learning about the reality that surrounds him or her and constantly adapting to it. That's how he or she begins to master it and acquires the knowledge and abilities needed to live, grow, and thrive. The toddler is the ultimate learner. Just observe one learning to walk. To me, this means the "default settings" of each human being is the Growth Mindset. The Growth Mindset is innate whereas the Fixed Mindset is something acquired or developed.

What would have happened to you in your military career if you had been caught in the grip of a Fixed Mindset? A host of unseen and undesirable consequences awaits you if you get caught up in a Fixed Mindset, now or in the future.

## **Chapter 3 Part 5**

### **“Unifying Your Life and Existence”**

#### ***Unifying your life and existence***

I have highlighted all these to enable you become aware of the extent, impact, and influence of your decisions. They are merely an invitation to live up to your responsibilities. They are also an invitation to improve the quality and effectiveness of your decisions and decision making.

In order not to be pulled apart by the demands of and for, effective decisions and decision making in your life, I stated that your decisions must be anchored and rooted in a valid M&P. The M&P contributes powerfully toward unifying and harmonizing your life and existence. This is why I teach and coach that a valid Mission & Purpose Statement is the foundation of all effective decisions. My take on Mission & Purpose is contrarian and contains a twist that gives it power and effectiveness. This is what I turn to, now.

#### ***Effective Vs. Ineffective decisions***

An effective decision is one that is in harmony and that receives its guidance and orientation from your valid M&P. An effective decision also

1. Enables you achieve a particular objective which in turn moves you closer to achieving an outcome/result you desire
2. Helps you execute the plan you designed to achieve this objective
3. Focuses only on what is within your control.
4. Seeks to influence what you can control.
5. Is a re-reaction not a reaction.
6. Does not rely on assumptions or guesses.

An effective decision cannot be defined in terms of a result or an outcome nor is it equivalent to the right decision. In decision making is you must never aim for a 100% track record. That is impossible. Reality shows that in hindsight, we often see aspects, consequences and impacts of our decisions that we did not, at the time we made them. You are neither all-knowing nor all-powerful. We all make mistakes. If you equate effective decisions to always being right, you will be on the road to becoming a neurotic and you will actually paralyze your decision making, ending up with non-decisions rather than effective or ineffective ones. You will also deny yourself the opportunity to learn. Mistakes are a source of genuine learning for us humans.

It is also important to state that becoming an effective decision maker is not an attempt to become a perfectionist. I believe that perfectionism is abnormal. I urge you to aim for mastery instead. The objective is to improve the quality of your decisions and decision making within the limitations of our human limitlessness.

## Chapter 3 Part 6

### “Decisions and Decision Making”

#### ***Decisions and decision making***

Decision making is a field that is exploding with new knowledge and discoveries. Studies in neuroscience, behavioral economics, human cognition, various aspects of psychology, mental and emotional health, and many others are contributing to (and changing) our understanding of human decision making.

To become an increasingly more effective decision maker, you and I don't need to (and may not have the opportunity to) stay abreast with the latest developments in these fields. We do, however, need to be aware of why we make the decisions we do, constantly evaluate our decisions and decision making, and do all in our power to improve the quality of our decisions and decision making.

Human beings cannot make logical decisions. They make decisions emotionally, based on vision, and then 'check in' with the intellect to see if the decision fits in with our conception of reality. If the intellect validates the decision as one that is congruent with reality, and it produces feelings of happiness, safety, comfort – either immediately or in the future – the person takes the decision. If the decision based on vision produces the opposite feeling, but is still congruent with our vision of reality, it results in confusion and anxiety. The person becomes torn between choices. The same thing happens when a clear vision doesn't form.

All these situations simply highlight the importance of a valid M&P. With a valid M&P, effective planning, effective goal setting, and effective decision making, you cannot go wrong for a considerable length of time, nor will you expend a substantial amount of resources without all these kicking in to bring you back on track.

#### ***Obstacles preventing you from improving the quality of your decisions and decision making***

It is impossible to compile a list of all possible obstacles to effective decision making. The best way to identify the obstacles to your effective decision-making is to discover them for yourself. Effective decision makers constantly evaluate their decisions and constantly try to improve them.

Common causes of ineffective decisions and ineffective decision making I have observed include

1. Not having an M&P or having an invalid one
2. The pull of (destructive or ineffective) habits
3. The structure and functioning of the human mind.
4. The attempt to control what's not under your control
5. Working with assumptions, expectations, and guesses instead of working with facts
6. The stagnation born of a Fixed Mindset
7. The belief that decisions are driven by logic instead of vision.
8. An inaccurate understanding of the role of emotions in human life.



9. The inability to negotiate or think, plan, and execute like a strategist.

Ineffective decision making is a vicious cycle; effective decision making is a virtuous cycle. Breaking out of a vicious cycle often requires a painful re-decision. That is the pain of growth and healing. Some decisions are tough and demanding. That is the nature of human life and human existence.

## **Chapter 4 Part 1**

### **“Negotiation mastery: Effective Decision Making in Every Interaction and Relationship”**

#### ***Distinguishing interactions and relationships***

If you’ve read this far, I hope you’ve begun to see that your life is filled with decisions. I have also attempted to show how the decisions we make (or don’t make) impact others through the network of relationships, interactions, roles, and responsibilities that you have or are part of. In my life’s work as a negotiator and a negotiation coach, I have come to a deep awareness of the pain, stress and other avoidable consequences of not knowing, understanding, living and interacting in a way that is congruent with an accurate conception of human nature and the principles that drive human behavior.

If we don’t understand the nature of a thing – what it is in itself – it becomes very hard to use it well. We accept this instinctively when we are dealing with inanimate things such as matter and energy. We also accept it when dealing with animals. But we have a tendency to go horribly wrong when it applies to human beings and human nature. If we don’t understand human nature, it is very hard to derive valid principles that drive human behavior. And few aspects of our lives as a community clearly reflect the effects and impact of this confusion as do our interactions and interacting with each other – both within and outside the context of a relationship with the other person or group. As a result, human interactions become intensely stressful and painful and relationships become shot through with dysfunction.

In keeping with the requirement of starting with reality, I realize that a logical starting point would be to describe human nature before describing the principles that drive human behavior within the context of interactions and relationships. But this is not a book on psychology or anthropology. To be faithful to my M&P for writing this book, I will invert this order. I hope once you see the principles that drive behavior in the context of interactions and relationships, you will see better see the nature from which these must necessarily flow. It’s a roundabout way of describing things, but in this case, I decided it’s a more effective one.

In earlier chapters, I strove to increase your awareness of the pervasive influence and impact of your decisions through the network of roles, relationships and interactions you are a part of. In this chapter, I shall try to increase your awareness of one of the most frequent ‘types’ of interaction you and I engage in within that network of roles, relationships and interactions. We engage in it very frequently each day, and over the course of our lives. That interaction is the attempt to come to agreement with others. This attempt is termed ‘negotiation’.

#### ***My discovery of what a negotiation actually is***

Shortly after I left military service, I started flying commercial airplanes. At the time, I had a young family and needed to make ends meet. In the course of trying to earn a supplementary income, I wanted buy certain goods from dealers in Hong Kong and sell them in America. I wasn’t making much progress. I was getting frustrated with the lack of success. It was at that point that I stumbled on an insight that changed the trajectory of my life. It was the definition of negotiation that I checked out in a dictionary, at a bookstore in Hong Kong. This is what I discovered in that old edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

*A negotiation is the effort to bring about an agreement between two or more parties with all parties having the **right to veto**.*

Four decades later, I can still clearly remember the particular place, moment, and the intensity of the experience. In every interaction in which we attempt to come to an agreement with others, or they with us, each person has the right to veto – the right to say ‘No, I don’t agree’. It is a right you and every other person you interact and have a relationship with, have. Neither of you can take away that right because neither of you gave it to the other(s).

This insight led me to study the principles that drive human behavior – the inner structure and the contours of how we human beings actually relate and interact with each other, and how we can form durable, profitable, and ethical agreements with others. The Camp System of Negotiation, a System that can be used to negotiate agreements in every context, is built around the right we and others have, to say ‘no’. Too many man-made tragedies and problems – relationship dysfunction, personality disorders, divorce, deals that fall apart, friendships that disintegrate, litigation; conflicts and disputes in the home, workplace, public square and even on the net; diplomatic impasses, and armed conflict within and between individuals, groups, and countries – result from people saying ‘yes’ when they ought to say ‘no’, saying ‘no’ when they ought to say ‘yes’, and especially when they deny others the right to say ‘no’.

Typically, we have learned three responses when this right is taken away or in danger of being taken away: flight, fight, or compromise. I suggest a fourth one that does not require any of these three: negotiate. When people exercise their right to say it, and respect the right of the other party to also say it, they are negotiating. When they don’t respect or exercise it, they are not negotiating. They are engaging in manipulation, bullying, deception, or simply begging for a favor. The consequences, as pointed out above, are ugly.

## **Chapter 4 Part 2**

### **“Negotiation is a Fundamental Part of an Interdependent Reality”**

#### ***Negotiation is a fundamental part of an interdependent reality***

During your military career, I’m sure you can remember numerous instances when staying alive literally depended on the efforts and decisions of others. You take it for granted your life is intertwined with the lives of others in a seamless unity. In the face of the enemy, you and they make decisions that can be the difference between life and death.

The nature of civilian life is such that the consequences and impact are not usually that grave. It does not mean that they are not just as important. The outcomes of the negotiations you are involved in provide benefits and impose costs that are shouldered by you and others. These benefits and costs may be monetary, but are not necessarily so. Much more may be at stake. I have mentioned that the lives, happiness, health, security, and well-being of your near and dear ones depend on the decisions you take. All of these may ride on the back of the negotiated agreements you make, making negotiation one of the most consequential decision-making activities you engage in.

#### ***The most dangerous negotiation you are involved in***

For you, and for those you have responsibilities for, the most dangerous negotiation is the one you are in without being aware that you are in it. Engaging in something as consequential as a negotiation without being aware of it, of what you are doing, or knowing how to proceed is a good way of getting your teeth kicked in. Negotiating in an ad-hoc manner, or fooling yourself that experience and expertise combine to form mastery, is a good way of getting beat up, repeatedly. Not only will you be

faced with a negotiated agreement that is worthless (or even downright harmful) but you will also be stuck with the consequences of such an agreement.

### ***Negotiation is a decision-filled event***

Every negotiated agreement requires one or a series of decisions. The final agreement is itself a decision and is the result of a series of decisions made by both parties. En-route to the agreement, all parties have the right to say 'no' at each step of the way, and must say 'yes' in order to reach it. Every 'no' and 'yes' is a decision. Everything you want during and from a negotiation requires a decision from the other party. Otherwise, you wouldn't be negotiating. You'd simply go ahead and get it, achieve it, or do it by yourself. The very fact that you are negotiating means you require the other party (or parties) to make a decision or a series of decisions in order to get, achieve, or do what you want. In essence, decisions move a negotiation forward or stop it in its tracks. In certain instances, a decision puts it off to a more suitable time, brings the parties back to the negotiating table, or even kills the negotiation.

During negotiations, effective decision making is mandatory. There's a lot going on, simultaneously – information is being exchanged or sought, people who are not at the negotiating table (people who are influencing the parties in the negotiation, or third parties who are not directly or indirectly involved in the negotiation) are exercising tremendous influence and impacting the decisions made. Emotions may be running high. Bullying, manipulation, and deception may be going on. Offers and counter-offers are being made and rejected. Threats, appeals to fairness, compromise, bad manners, suave manners, power, misdirection, and more are a staple in many negotiations.

Making effective decisions in the middle of all this is not a task for wimps. It is not whether you will or won't make decisions. In a negotiation, even a non-decision is a decision. The challenge is to make effective decisions without getting distracted and losing focus as a result of all the noise and clutter within and around you. The temptation to react during a negotiation is great. But such reactions will be the cause of your failure. What is important is to learn to re-react, in the moment, to what the moment brings without losing sight of what you want or abandoning your M&P.

### ***Distinguishing what you can and can't control, and what you can influence***

This also brings to light something I explored in a previous chapter: the necessity to distinguish between what is under your control, what is not under your control and what is open to your influence.

Numerous things in a negotiation are under your control:

1. Your every decision during a negotiation. (Since 'yes' and 'no' are decisions, saying these are under your control. Hearing and inviting a 'no' calmly are also under your control)
2. Your activities and behaviors during a negotiation. (In the Camp System, you master a specific set of activities and behaviors)
3. Building your plan for the negotiation. (In the Camp System of Negotiation, you build and execute a checklist)
4. Building a valid M&P prior to the negotiation.
5. Ensuring that the decisions you make are aligned to your M&P.
6. Entering and inhabiting your counterpart's world.

7. Your re-reactions.

8. Using a systematic approach, at every point in a negotiation, with focus and discipline

Numerous things are not under your control:

1. Your emotions are not under your control. (Your re-reaction to any emotion you feel is, however, under your control.)
2. The activities and behaviors of your negotiation counterpart(s).
3. The reactions of your negotiation counterpart(s).
4. The result or outcome from the negotiation.
5. The tactics, strategies, and tricks of your negotiation counterpart.
6. The motives of your negotiation counterpart.
7. The influences that impact your negotiation counterpart's decisions.

Only one thing is open to your influence though not under your control:

This one thing is the decisions of your negotiation counterpart. Their decisions, like yours, are driven by vision. You can influence your counterpart's vision using your valid activities and behaviors, in the service of your valid M&P.

### **Chapter 4 Part 3**

#### **“Negotiation is a Learned Human Performance Event”**

##### ***Negotiation is a learned human performance event***

A human performance event is the human effort to perform a learned skill that possesses principles, rules and laws that define it and which are not intuitive. Examples include playing a piano, flying a jet, martial arts, brain surgery etc.

Mastering every human performance event in which we have already been engaged requires learning by unlearning and re-learning. If you were learning a language for the first time without any prior exposure to it, there would be nothing to unlearn. If on the other hand, you have learnt bits of it in an ad-hoc manner, and without being taught correct and wrong usage and how to distinguish the two, you'd have to do a bit of unlearning. In some cases, it could even be quite a lot. If you have ever played a sport without a coach and played the same sport with a coach or a professional to guide you, you will resonate with what I am saying. The same applies in mastering negotiation because in your life, you have been attempting to reach agreements with others both in your personal and professional life. You may not have been aware that you were negotiating when in fact that was exactly what you were doing. And you have to unlearn the behavior and activity habits that have been the cause getting sub-optimal results.

Mastery of any learned human performance event boils down to building the habits required to re-react in every situation and circumstance. It is a great source of calm and assured self-confidence that

can be observed in all top performers in an field of human endeavor. This self-confidence is something I have observed in soldiers, athletes, pilots, doctors, and many other professionals. I have also witnessed it take root and grow in thousands of my coaches as they have mastered the System. This confidence is essentially that of people who have built decision making into a habit. They are empowered to respond in the moment to the moment, without feeling or being pulled in conflicting directions by the impact or influence of stimuli from their internal or external environments. Nothing adversely affects their focus and discipline as they prepare for, execute, and finally, review their performance.

### ***What is the Camp System of Negotiation?***

It is a practical arrangement of the rules, laws and principles that govern human behavior within the structure common to all negotiations, arranged in such a manner that you control what is under your control, influence what you can influence and leave what you can't control alone, and thereby solve every problem associated with reaching agreement.

The System helps you clearly see the decisions that must be made by both parties to arrive at an agreement without robbing the other party his or her right to say 'no' or giving up your right to do so. It does not rely on tricks, gimmicks, or techniques of any kind.

The System has been successfully used for over a quarter of a century, in every conceivable environment, where agreement is required. It has been used in hostage negotiations, settling family (including marriage) disputes, settling labor-management disputes, negotiating business deals (by every businesses of every size), therapy, career (and salary) negotiations, and sales. It has been successfully used by alike by teenagers and professionals with decades of experience. The System not only teaches you what to do but also helps you identify the mistakes you make; shows you how to recover when you make a mistake; and shows you what to do in order to prevent such mistakes in the future.

### ***The Camp System enables you to master this human performance event***

Like lasting personal change of any sort, mastering any human performance event starts with awareness. When I built this System, I had the model used by the United States Air Force to train fighter pilots in mind. That was how I was trained. The Air Force has perfected a system to train fresh college graduates to fly supersonic jets within 6 months from the day their training commenced. My aim to help people achieve mastery has been a fundamental part of my M&P. I have built the System in a way that you can master it, and thereby become a master negotiator.

It can be used in every situation where you seek a negotiated agreement – whether these involve emotionally charged issues, business deals, or crises situations. Using and managing the system by relying on valid behaviors and activities – without needing or resorting to power – you can safely and surely reach agreement. You are never left wondering “What should I do/say next?”; “What happens next?”; “What will he/she/they say if I say \_\_\_\_\_?”; “What do I say/do if they say or do \_\_\_\_\_”; “Should I make the first offer?”; or “Did I get the best deal?”. You will find answers to all the questions that cause you worry, anxiety, or stress when you are attempting to reach agreement. As you master the system, the ways in which you act, re-react, and make decisions will become effective and build up into habits that are always aligned to your M&P.

It also helps you gain exquisite awareness of your conditioning. They remember when they were brushed aside, or abused emotionally (or perhaps even physically) when they were told 'no'. They resolve to never do that to others and end up becoming people pleasers who never say 'no' even when they ought to, thereby exposing themselves and their loved ones to even more danger.

Over and above all, you will have a sure way of assessing whether you should be involved in this negotiation, or continue in it. There will be no hoping, wishing, guessing or relying on a wing and a prayer. You will also never experience worry or anxiety. Ever.

## **Chapter 4 Part 4**

### **“Principles of the Camp System”**

#### ***Principles of the Camp System***

I define a principle as a fundamental that is required in the performance of the event. This fits in perfectly with the dictionary definition of a principle as “A basic assumption: an important underlying law or assumption required in a system of thought”.

These are the principles on which the System is built on and around.

#### **1. *What is negotiation?***

*Negotiation is a learned human performance event*

#### **2. *How is a negotiation defined?***

Negotiation is defined as the human effort to bring about agreements between two or more parties with all parties having the right to veto.

#### **3. *What drives all negotiations?***

Decisions are driven by vision.

#### **4. *How do we healthy humans make decisions?***

Decisions are made emotionally, at all times

#### **5. *What is required in any negotiation?***

Every negotiation requires an action, a reaction, and a re-reaction

#### **6. *What is the safest decision a person can make?***

The safest decision you or your counterpart can make is to say ‘No’. It maintains the status quo and does not bring about change. ‘Yes’ implies change.

#### **7. *How is the negotiation moved forward?***

Decisions move a negotiation forward. ‘No’ and ‘Yes’ are decisions

#### **8. *What can we manage?***

Our activity and our behavior

#### **9. *What can never be managed in a negotiation?***

The outcome or result of the negotiation can never be managed.

#### **10. *How many sections are in the personal budget you and your counterpart invest in a negotiation?***

Four: Time, energy, money, and emotion.

#### ***Myths surrounding negotiation***

Numerous myths surround negotiation. They persist for various reasons which I shall not go into. Some of these include:

1. Negotiation is all about bargaining; hard bargainers get a better deal.
2. The choice is between being a hard bargainer or a soft one.
3. Compromise is a necessary part of every negotiation
4. Negotiation is all about Win/Win and I must aim for Win/Win in every negotiation.
5. 'No' is the end of the negotiation, so always seek to avoid a 'no'
6. Power/leverage is necessary to succeed in a negotiation
7. You know why this person is negotiating. (No you don't. You must find out. People negotiate for their reasons, not yours.)
8. Based on experience and expertise, you can predict what the other person is going to say or do.
9. Humans negotiate (or make decisions), rationally. People make decisions when you clearly show them the benefits of reaching agreement.

The truth is that decisions are driven by vision.

### ***Living and inhabiting the others' world is crucial***

Since vision drives decisions (yours and theirs), you must attempt to see their reality as they see it. This is where your M&P becomes a vision building tool. First you have to see reality as they see it. Then you have to help them see reality as it really is. Finally, you have to help them see a replacement picture of reality as it could be, based on your product, purchase, idea, advice, or whatever it is that you and they are negotiating about. You can only help that person see and decide for himself or herself. You cannot convince another person nor can you decide for him or her. Vision, as I have repeated often, drives decisions. It is by carefully painting a vivid and clear picture that you build this vision. You do this in both verbal and non-verbal ways.

If you enter a negotiation with the desire to convince them about something, you will fail. No human being can convince another person about anything. Facts, figures, logic etc. are in your world and based on your vision. Any attempt to use them is an effort to drag the other party into your world. You can only do so with them kicking, screaming, and resisting every step of the way. Facts are perceived differently by different people and every fact can be refuted with another fact that is perceived and interpreted differently. The decisions that are required to move a negotiation forward come from your counterpart's world. And she makes those decisions for her reasons and based on her vision, not yours.

### ***People negotiate for their reasons not yours***

Their decisions flow from their world. You don't have control over their decisions but you can influence them. It is important to realize that people negotiate for their reasons, not yours. As a soldier, you know that the enemy is fighting a war for his reasons, if necessary at the expense of the life, freedom, and well-being of your side. They are trying to impose an agreement onto you and those you protect and defend when you wear the uniform.

Expecting them to be benevolent, fair, or factor in your needs and interests into the final agreement is what causes tremendous pain, anger, resentment, litigation, money and more, down the line. Using my System, you learn to negotiate having no positive or negative expectations and entertaining no positive or negative assumptions.

## **Chapter 4 Part 5**

### **“The Effects and Consequences of Not Negotiating and Not Knowing How To Negotiate”**

#### ***The effects and consequences of not negotiating and not knowing how to negotiate***

The pain, price and cost of an unwillingness or inability to negotiate is huge. I have had clients whose inability to negotiate (before I coached them) caused them to put their families, their teams, their businesses, and those they have responsibilities toward, in harm's way. It had caused them to nearly run themselves out of business, put their marriages at risk, exposed their teams and their organizations to unscrupulous people, or put strain on relationships they valued.

The consequences of a lack of negotiation mastery could be monetary, wasted professional opportunities, avoidable disputes and conflicts, avoidable strains and stresses in relationships with near and dear ones, opening yourself and your loved ones up to manipulation, bullying, or deception, entering into agreements that are not beneficial to you, holding out on agreements that are beneficial to you; or being blindsided by the consequences of agreements you reached.

Much of the unnecessary and needless pain, anxiety, worry, or stress in our lives is associated with the difficulties, problems, and challenges we encounter in our interactions with others where we are trying to reach an agreement with them. Sometimes, it seems like chewing glass. At other times, we are at the receiving end of deception, manipulation, broken promises, or agreements that fall apart after they have been reached. Living and working in an environment where disagreements are the norm or one person behaves as though his or her word is law, is brutalizing and dehumanizing. The home or the office becomes a theater for war. Much of organizational politics and politicking is merely a failure and an inability to negotiate.

An inability to negotiate may lead some people to try and compensate by improving their communication skills, learn the certain aspects of body language, try to become sensitive to cultural differences etc. All these efforts are in a bid to avoid the dangers of miscommunication, prevent flare ups, or achieve a specific outcome. In reality, they ought to conserve their resources by mastering the ability to negotiate. This addresses all these issues, holistically.

#### ***Ripe for the picking***

People consciously or unconsciously look out for 'numero uno'. We can't change others neither can we allow them to hold us and our interests, hostage. You don't know what kind of people you will meet, what their agendas are, whether or not they are worthy of your trust, or whether or not you should be engaged with them to pursue a common objective. Whether or not you master it, you will encounter such people. Of course, you're better off knowing what to do when you meet them.

Some people are plain bullies and do not try to hide it. They shove it into your face and unleash a barrage of threats, ultimatums, demands, and even insults. They throw tantrums and can be unpleasant, if not downright nasty. But these types instinctively put us on our guard, and we make some sort of an effort to defend ourselves. The truly dangerous ones are the friendly, charming, and suave ones. Some have mastered and honed the art of manipulation and deception to very high levels that the only defense you have is effective decision making on the basis of a valid M&P. You also have another source of help – your intuitive knowledge and in some instances, the help of doing the research required.



***What people are searching for***

The vast majority of people are unconsciously searching for a proven, reliable, and repeatable way to reach agreements with others. The number of books in the market related to communication skills, persuasion skills, influencing skills, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and of course sales and negotiation is impossible to read even if one spent a whole year attempting to do so. In addition to that, the advice given in some run counter to that given in others.

My System keeps you safe, focused, and gives you the edge, in every negotiation you will ever be in. Of all the learned human performance events that you participate in, negotiation is undoubtedly the most frequent one. Too much hangs on it for you to aim for success by winging it.

## Chapter 5 Part 1

### **“The Strategist: Habitually Creating and Executing Plans That Identify and Solve the Real Problems”**

#### ***The Strategist: Habitually creating and executing plans that identify and solve the real problems***

*(I am indebted to Prof. Richard Rumelt's book, “**Good Strategy Bad Strategy: The difference and Why It Matters**”. He displays a rare and thorough understanding of what strategy is, and what it is not. I warmly recommend his book if you want to become a strategist. The ideas contained here are the fruit of the interaction of my System with his ideas and my observations and experiences. They are, however, not endorsed by him.)*

One of the characteristics of peak performers I shared earlier on is the ability to create and execute plans that accurately identify and solve the actual problems that stand in their way when they set out to achieve a particular objective or solve a particular challenge. Every objective you set out to achieve is achieved on the basis of your efforts. As I have insisted previously, these efforts must revolve around valid goals – things you can actually control. They must be channeled and concentrated to delivering the biggest bang for your buck and must solve the actual problems you face without creating new ones. This is the work of a strategist. Strategy is something that military personnel are already familiar with because strategy – or a lack of (an appropriate) one – is often at the heart of military success and defeat.

Achieving a particular military objective involves numerous decisions which are necessarily part of a larger coherent plan. This plan is drawn up after an accurate understanding of the nature of the overall challenge. Once the challenge has been clearly defined, alternative approaches to solving the challenge are evaluated and one is selected within the limits of existing resources and constraints. Contingency plans are also drawn up. Additionally, specific milestones – important to assessing progress or lack of it with regards solving the challenge may be selected; and a series of specific actions and activities are executed in a coherent, congruent, and coordinated manner so that all efforts to execute the plan are adequately and appropriately channeled. This chapter is devoted to showing you how to plan such that you accurately perceive and solve the problems and challenges associated with a specific challenge you encounter during a time of transition – building a new career.

In a time of transition, the mindset of a strategist wedded to negotiation mastery, and both founded on a valid M&P, is the difference between solving the real problems that you face or wasting your time, energy, or money battling symptoms or spending these in an uncoordinated and reactive manner; coping with the consequences and side effects of misdiagnosing the problem; or making plans that don't solve the actual problem or challenge. Quite simply, it is gambling with your life. Taking a calculated gamble that is part of a plan is very different from gambling.

#### ***A necessary simplification I make***

In order to better describe how the mindset of a strategist can deliver a decided advantage to you, I will simplify the challenge you face to that of building a career. I narrowed down on this because it is a common challenge faced by vets. I hope to show you how to apply a strategist's mindset to solving this challenge, with the hope that you will be able to apply it to other aspects of your life, and to adapt it to your particular circumstances and situations and thereby build the life you wish.

Building a career is not the only challenge you face. In fact, for some people, this may not even be the most important challenge they face. Some of you may be returning to pursue a degree, others to look for a job, some with the hope of setting up a business, and yet others to help run an existing

business. And some need to heal and recuperate more than anything before they set out to build a career. A strategist's mindset applies equally well in dealing with these challenges.

### ***What is the primary task of a strategist?***

A strategist's primary task is to understand the nature of a complex challenge and to design and implement a carefully crafted response, by combining available strengths and resources, within the limits of existing constraints. The strategist must perceive the nature and features of a challenge accurately, and draw up and execute a plan that responds to it appropriately. He must also re-react and adjust the plan because the plan interacts with reality that itself is dynamic not static. Please note that even though I use the word 'challenge', such challenges also often exist in the form of opportunities which must be understood and cultivated before they are utilized.

Complex challenges are the bread and butter of a strategist. The world of military strategists revolve around a dynamic mix of a complex mix of existing and potential problems, constraints, weaknesses, strengths, uncertainty, risk, resources, objectives, plans, execution, review, adjustment etc. They must plan and implement a plan while each of these variables simultaneously interacts with one, some, or all of the others. In addition, the past, the present, and the future have a bearing on the crafting and the execution of a strategy. This is what makes the strategist's mindset such a valuable asset, and also difficult to acquire.

## **Chapter 5 Part 2**

### **“Strategy and Effective Decision Making When Trying to Build a Career”**

#### ***Strategy and effective decision making when trying to build a career***

Every serious professional, regardless of his specific discipline or field of endeavor, must think like a strategist, if he is to stand apart from the crowd.

Every effort you make is preceded, accompanied, and followed by decisions. Your valid M&P gives your decisions (and consequently your efforts) guidance and a solid foundation. What gives them bite is the plan that focuses, channels, and coordinates them into an overall effort that is coherent and congruent. You may have heard the saying 'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail'. Like other sayings, this contains much truth, but is not entirely accurate. I believe it should actually state 'If you fail to plan appropriately, you plan to fail'. If your efforts are not coherent and congruent, and if they are not channeled, and coordinated with each other, you will often run around in circles. Without a strategy, every effort to build a new career runs the danger of becoming a gamble or a reaction to the moment. The realism of a strategist enables you understand the challenges associated with building a new career, and building a plan that solves them.

#### **Building a valid M&P gives you a perfect start.**

The process and discipline of building a valid, unique, personal, and non-transferable M&P provides the realism and the simplification of reality needed to build a strategy to utilize specific career opportunities. The effort, discipline, and realism involved in building a valid M&P gives insight into the nature and characteristics of the opportunity. It helps you discover what's going on in your world and in the world of those whose needs you must attend to, in order to build a career. In my work, I have to deal with the worlds of small and large businesses, of labor and management, of crisis situations, and of family disputes among many others. In all these environments, people are trying to reach agreement. I must therefore be familiar with the challenges they face, and provide a solution to these challenges. I must therefore be very familiar with their world, and must set my M&P in it.

This simplification of reality – in order to gain insight into the nature and scope of the challenge – is the first responsibility of every strategist. Without this insight into the essential aspects and elements of each situation and circumstance, it is impossible to re-react to it, appropriately. When building an M&P that will guide and orient your professional efforts, you start simplifying those aspects of reality that influence your efforts and on which your efforts will be focused. You must seek increasing clarity regarding your long-term aim and your continuing tasks and responsibilities, and you must see these through the eyes of those you will be dealing with, in your new career. In this way, the opportunities, obstacles, and constraints become clearer. You also gain insight into what you ought to do in order to utilize the opportunities, surmount the obstacles and eliminate (or at least cope with) the constraints.

### **Your valid M&P for your career must be aligned to your valid M&P for life**

Building a valid and personal M&P provides you the perfect start to take a hard look at your life and personal circumstances – what you do well, the benefits you provide, the needs of people around you, your continuing tasks and responsibilities that together enable you become what you wish to become – and make a fit between all these. You make that fit by specifying your long term aim and continuing tasks and responsibilities, and doing so from the perspective of the others. You know as much, from chapter 3.

One of the biggest tragedies we observe all around us is the breaking up of families, or the dysfunctionality that seems to rule in many families. I believe that this is in large measure due to the fact that few families bother to build an M&P that guides the decisions of the family and each of its members. If the decisions and choices of each family member are to be aligned to the valid M&P that guides the family, it means there must already be a valid M&P in place.

It is important to clearly see that your professional life cannot be an occasion to neglect the needs of your family and your loved ones, nor your responsibilities towards them. In the short and long term, it is much more demanding (and satisfying) to build a family than it is to build a company or serve a larger-than-life cause. Shouldering the day to day responsibilities that flow from the roles we play in life is not for wimps. That is why your M&P for your career must be aligned to our M&P for life. Otherwise, a conflict between the two will necessarily arise.

Building a family and a career are neither opposed nor do they have equal priority at all times and in every situation. A career is always at the service of your responsibilities to your loved ones. If your family has a valid M&P, they will gladly make the sacrifices needed to help you do your work with professional excellence. But professional excellence or advancement cannot be an excuse to neglect them, or to make them bear the cost of your advancement. Whenever a conflict arises, look to the M&P guiding your life.

Becoming M&P driven and evaluating each decision in the light of your valid M&P helps you gain the clarity you seek, and make an effective decision when these kinds of conflicts arise. I make this distinction because destroying the shared existence that you and your loved ones are a part of is an avoidable man-made tragedy – with inter-generational consequences – that is born of ineffective decision making. It's often due to the fact that the person either does not have a valid M&P or because he has an M&P for his professional life that is not aligned to his M&P for life and for his family. Then, your family and your work seem to tug at you from opposing directions. It need not be that way.

Now that I have explained that this opposition is apparent rather than real, and how it can be resolved, I can proceed onto showing you how to build a strategy that helps you build a career.

## Chapter 5 Part 3

### “Steps in Building a Strategy to Build a Career and Achieve Specific Career Objectives”

#### ***Steps in building a strategy to build a career and achieve specific career objectives***

I shall specify 5 steps that help you build a strategy which in turn can help you build a career and reach important career objectives.

#### **1) Develop situational awareness: Form a clear and accurate picture of what's really going on.**

The military depends on good intelligence, reconnaissance missions, and the careful study of the influence of various factors affecting a particular situation – historical, sociopolitical or geopolitical – in order to design an effective military response. In both these instances, the individuals or groups involved are trying to form a clear picture in their minds before designing and implementing a response. Once you form a clear and accurate picture of what's really going on, it becomes easier to make effective decisions. In turn, those effective decisions help you form an even more exact picture. Otherwise, you will essentially be flying in the dark.

Every career related challenge contains the overall nature of the challenge, one or more opportunities, specific constraints, and resources that are personal to you – knowledge, skills, abilities, habits, aptitudes and the like. You also work with a specific budget – the resources that can be deployed to draw up and execute your plan. When trying to build a career, developing situational awareness is an advisable first step. The more situational awareness you develop, the more you possess a clear and accurate picture of what is going on in that field.

A useful starting point is seeking answers to a number of questions. Below, I share a list of possible questions. The list is neither a definitive nor an exhaustive one. I hope it helps you develop your own personalized list and helps you carefully think the issues through while you build a career plan.

#### ***A) Foundational considerations***

- 1) Have you built/are you building a valid and personalized M&P?
- 2) If you haven't started building a valid M&P, how emotionally committed are you to building one that fits with your particular situation and circumstances?
- 3) What field do you wish to build a career in?
- 4) Where is the fit between this field and your M&P?
  - Do you see the fit?

#### ***Why is this important?***

No matter how you slice or dice it, building a career involves numerous decisions, choices, and responsibilities. Some of these can be very tough and demanding. Reality is also complex and dynamic. As with every other aspect of your life, the lack of a valid and personalized M&P adversely impacts your career through ineffective decisions and decision making.

Your M&P is not rooted in your world. It is rooted in the world of the others. An accurate awareness of what is happening in the world of potential employers, colleagues, customers and clients is important. If you want to get ahead of the crowd, find out what the crowd is doing, and do it differently in

a way that employers and customers alike perceive the difference. Without an M&P, you run the risk of getting trapped in your world.

**B) Critical research considerations**

5) To gain in depth knowledge and accurate information about the field, what research should you engage in?

6) What do the leading lights in this field say about trends in this field?

7) What are the most contrarian lights in this field saying?

8) Is it a growing, declining, fragmented, or concentrated field?

- How is it changing?
- What opportunities and challenges exist as a result of these?

9) What are the various certifications awarded by professional governing bodies, in this field?

**Why is this important?**

Without having a thorough understanding of the field and how it is evolving, how can you identify the opportunities, challenges, and trends that are shaping it? You must research this field, thoroughly, to show a potential employer that you are intent on becoming a world-class professional in it.

**C) Discover what is important to those already in it**

**i) What is important to a potential employer?**

10) What opportunities is he pursuing?

- This person's opportunities are the wants, needs and problems of his customers or clients

11) What constraints is he facing?

12) What obstacles is he facing?

13) What vision is driving him?

14) What unique value can you add?

- How does this flow from your M&P?
- How does it fit with your knowledge, skills, and abilities?

15) How can you help him achieve or attain these priorities and his long term aim?

16) What stands in the way of his success?

**ii) What is important to a potential employer's clients or customers?**

17) What priorities are important to a potential employer's client/customer?

- Consider his challenges, his constraints, and what he is trying to do and to achieve
- Why are these priorities important to him?
- What are the needs, priorities, challenges, and constraints of his clients/customers?
- What is the link between his priorities and those of his clients/customers?
- What are the customers or clients in this field actually buying?
- What vision of problems, needs, challenges etc. is driving these buying decisions?

**iii) Who is this organization competing against?**

18) How do you assess the competition with the same set of questions you use to assess the potential employer?

**iv) What is important to this organization?**

19) Does this organization have a valid M&P?

- Does it guide day to day decision making?
- Is there a fit between your valid M&P and the organization's own?
- How do they react when you ask specific questions about their M&P?

20) What is this organization's culture?

- What kind of people do they hire, reward, promote, and let go?
- Is it heavy on slogans and pep talk?
- Is it all about numbers and targets?

Working for a person or an organization that does not have a valid M&P –which guides day to day decision making – puts you at a tremendous disadvantage and exposes you to the risk of being impacted by decisions made on the spur of a whim, a mood, or even a sense of insecurity.

You may be in a situation whereby getting a job – any job – is the most pressing priority. Most people encounter situations where they must provide for themselves and their loved ones even if it means taking up a job they don't enjoy or that is especially tasking. If you are in such a situation, the decision will flow directly from a valid M&P. Your responsibilities for others are a part of your reality. But you must never lose sight of your M&P. It also specifies your long term aim. As soon as it is possible or feasible, take the plunge into something that takes you closer to actualizing that long term aim.

#### ***D) Assess your personal level of preparedness***

21) What constraints stand between you and starting out in the field you have narrowed upon, for building a career?

- Not having relevant education
- Not having the required specialized skills and capabilities
- A lack of fit between its demands and your aptitudes and strengths
- A lack of relevant experience and/or a track record

22) What knowledge, skills, and habits have top performers in this field acquired, and how have they acquired these?

23) What must you do to acquire the knowledge and skills you require?

- Enroll for a certification
- Enroll for a part time degree course
- Draw up and execute a good reading plan
- Network with other professionals by registering in some professional body

24) What does it take to build a track record in it?

25) What causes people to stagnate in it?

26) Can you get a coach?

27) Can you get a mentor?

#### ***Why is this important?***

To distinguish yourself, it is necessary to have the most relevant and important skills required in that field. If you have what everybody else has, your career will be more influenced by luck, the economy, or the whims of others than by your conscious efforts.

This set of considerations is closely related to the next section devoted to your motivated skills. A big part of career success is developing your motivated skills and pitting these against a promising opportunity – one that exists or one that you can cultivate. I shall explain this in a later section when I treat the importance of developing leverage when competing in the market.

You can also assess your level of preparedness by interacting with professionals in the field to find out what's going on in it, and what their experiences have been like. Use professional networking sites such as [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and [www.focus.com](http://www.focus.com) to network with other professionals in this field. Join professional networking groups. [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) enables you to connect with other professionals and to also join groups composed of professionals who have similar interests and face similar challenges. Depending on the particular field, there may be various chat groups and networking portals you can use.



Subscribe to blogs to stay up-to-date about developments and trends. Become as familiar with this field as you were with your military career and its demands and requirements.

### ***E) Motivated Skills***

28) What are your motivated skills?

29) In which fields are they most in demand?

30) What options are available in those fields?

You must find out what your motivated skills are. Simply put, these are the things you do well and that you enjoy doing. Of course, these must be skills which can be put (or packaged) to use because it provides a value for others that they are willing to pay for. If you don't enjoy doing something, you are not emotionally committed to it. You will find it very difficult to become a world-class professional in it. Even if you become very good at it, it will require a brutalizing effort.

Identifying what your motivated skills are, gives you greater awareness and insight into yourself. If you do not discover what your motivated skills are, you are in danger of gambling. This is why I asked you to examine why you are contemplating entering one field instead of the other.

### ***F) Budgetary considerations***

31) What is the budgetary investment – time, energy, and money – required of me, on a daily and weekly basis?

32) On what am I going to spend this time, energy, and money, and why am I spending it?

33) If necessary, how will I fund the education/training I may require while still being able to take adequate care of myself and my loved ones?

34) What is the median remuneration in this field? What do top performers earn?

35) What are the economic realities (income and expenditure) facing me and my loved ones?

36) Will a career in this field help me grow my income as my needs and those of my loved ones grow with time? How? (Staying ahead of inflation is simply not enough, nor is incurring more debt always a solution.)

37) How emotionally committed am I to becoming the best professional that I am capable of becoming?

### ***Why is this important?***

One of the principles in the Camp System of Negotiation is that you have a budget for each negotiation. This budget has 4 components – time, energy, money, and emotional involvement. I have discovered that this same budget consideration applies to other worthwhile things that we are engaged in. This is why I titled this section 'budgetary considerations' rather than 'economic considerations'. Whichever field you decide to pursue a career in, it will help you think in terms of these four budgetary components required from you and your loved ones.

Of all the components of your budget, your emotional involvement counts the most if you are to persevere in this field, and become a world-class professional in it. Your emotional involvement will play

a huge role in effective decision making, once you select the field you wish to enter into. I will explain why this is so in the next chapter.

Also keep in mind that your family and loved ones need you more than your money. Your valid M&P, if constructed well, will show you as much. Remember your tasks and responsibilities.

## **2) Be clear about what you want to do and what you don't want to do**

- 1) What area in this field would you like to begin in?
- 2) What role do you want to play in this area?
- 3) What other roles are incompatible, at this time, with the one you have chosen?

It is essential to narrow down to a specific aspect in a field you wish to start out in, and to specify the role you want to fulfill in this area. Not all the players in a football team (can) play in every position. This crucial decision must flow directly from your valid M&P. If you are clear about the role you want to play, you will be clear about the responsibilities that flow from that role and the duties attached to it. You will see the interaction of this role with other roles, and will be able to see what is important to those who play these other roles. Don't think in terms of a job or a job title. That is tremendously restricting and blinding. There's a big difference between a person who sells hot dogs in a road side stand, and one who thinks in terms of providing meals for people who are pressed for time, or who are on the go. The latter may soon discover that he has to stock bottles of mineral water, juice, or fresh apples. He sees what he does in terms of the needs of the others, and he sees his role as satisfying clearly identifiable needs.

Looking at a field from the outside cannot give you the actual experience of it. Part of every journey is the actual experience of being on it. But every journey has a starting point. This is why it is essential to make this decision. Most people's career develops in a very different way from how they initially conceived it, or thought it would develop. Mine certainly did and so did the majority of my coaches. The reason is very simple. We don't know the opportunities, constraints and obstacles we will encounter, nor do we have control over how the world, the economy, or even that particular industry will evolve. Sometimes, a particular opportunity opens up on account of something we did years ago. Or we are able to actually cultivate an opportunity over time. The entry point and having an M&P that helps us focus on what we wish to start out with – and what we don't – is indispensable.

## **3) Use/develop the leverage of your motivated skills and your Growth Mindset**

Leverage is simply a unique source of power that can be applied to give you an edge over others. I advise you to think of leverage in terms of knowledge, motivated skills, capabilities, and habits. Simply put, try and become the best professional you are capable of becoming. Remember that you are competing in the market with numerous other professionals who also possess knowledge, skills, abilities, and other resources which they use to compete in the job market and to build their own careers. That is why you must leverage the power of your motivated skills and a growth mindset that never settles into a routine of mediocrity or a prison-like 'comfort zone'.

This means also that, except for a lucky break, you cannot expect to build a career in a field where you are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis other candidate. Your efforts then must be to level the playing field, and to eventually tilt it in your favor. Of course, you must do so in a way that is ethical and professional. How you do it is a decision that, like all others, flows from your valid M&P.

Identify specific existing or potential points of leverage. You must use the former and build the latter. Your leverage must give you an edge over those you compete with in a way that is perceived as

valuable by a potential employer or client. Your situational awareness and your valid M&P make clear what is important to them and how you can provide it to them.

Apply the leverage of your motivated skills, your knowledge, your aptitudes, and your budget (time, energy, money, and emotional investment) against the problems and needs of others. When I described the four-step method of building a valid M&P, the last step involved writing your long term aim (what you are going to be) and your continuing tasks and responsibilities (what you are going to do and how you are going to do it) from the perspective of the world of the others. This is indispensable. People don't care about your career plans and objectives. Most people consider and make decisions from a 'what's in it for me?' perspective. If you can answer these questions from the perspective of the others, you'll get an edge over others who are merely chasing their objectives without paying careful attention to the needs of those they are providing a service for. Remember, you don't pay yourself a salary nor do you do business with yourself nor do you provide a service to yourself. You do all these to others. You must NEVER lose sight of this fact.

The problems, needs, obstacles, and constraints of others are your opportunities. These are opportunities that exist or that could be cultivated. This is why the strategist, like the negotiator, must be at home in the world of the other party.

Keep in mind that your constraints are a possible source of leverage for those you compete with. Like you, they compete on the basis of their strengths. That is why you must also know how to compensate for the constraints you face. Sometimes, this won't be possible and you must move on in search of another opportunity that fits with your strengths.

#### ***4) Gain clarity regarding the overall objective and secondary objectives that serve as milestones***

Assume you are a person who enjoys working with troubled teenagers. A primary objective might be to have the skills and knowledge to provide counseling and to provide an environment they can come and spend time in, on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

A secondary objective will be selecting a specific location to site your office. Before this happens, you must set up specific objectives to get the knowledge and training required in the form of degrees or certifications. After you select a location, you might want to get in touch with youth groups or find out where such youth hang out etc. This may even be an objective you pursue before selecting a location, which will in turn influence your decision on where to locate an office.

Similarly, you may have the objective of establishing an interaction that has nothing to do with counseling, at the beginning. You may have the objective of earning their trust and confidence. To do so, you may wish to set up the objective to create a safe and nurturing environment they come to on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. You can begin by finding out what problems they face that you can work on, together, to solve. This may be something like having a comfortable, quiet, and well-lit place to study, having a plan for coaching and practice in subjects they are weak in, or providing a place for extracurricular development away from unhealthy peer pressure or the drug scene etc. It might be that you set up a ping pong table or a place they can play indoor soccer. All these in turn are at the service of the longer objective of building a safe and long-term relationship, one in which they become open to your advice and influence.

#### ***5) Implement and Execute: Channel and unify your efforts based on your valid M&P***

All successful execution depends on the crucial channeling of all your efforts. You must get used to seeing implementation and execution through the lens of valid activities and behaviors. This is how your strategy is used to solve problems or utilize opportunities. Otherwise, strategy remains in a person's head or on a document.

This channeling of efforts requires that your efforts are congruent, coordinated, coherent, and perhaps even sequenced in a particular order. Your efforts must become unified. All these efforts are at the service of primary or secondary objectives. Otherwise, they become diffused and scattered and simply lead to a wasting of your budget. They may also create problems that you have to spend time and energy (and maybe even some money) resolving.

A simple example is the effort you make to develop a CV. Knowing how to develop a visually appealing CV is one thing but creating a CV that is set in the world of a potential employer, and that matches your skills, achievements, and knowledge with the problems she faces is something entirely different. This does not depend on your technical proficiency of creating the actual document. What is required is careful thought and effort on your part. It might require you to spend time researching the industry, the particular company, or its market. You must be able to show that the skills you possess and used in other situations are transferable and important to that particular industry. This will lead you to write and rewrite the CV until you have adequately shown a fit between your knowledge, skills, and abilities and a potential employer's needs and problems.

Without a careful channeling of your efforts, you will necessarily be reacting rather than re-acting to what you encounter. Remember that for a team to win, it is not sufficient for each person to play at his or her best. They must all play as a team. In the same way, you must channel and unify your efforts to reach a desired objective.

#### ***6) Review, readjust, and realign your efforts based on feedback***

Your review must be based on at least one fully implemented cycle of your plan. For the person who wants to work with troubled teenagers, the cycle might begin with getting to know a group of at risk teenagers and end with one or more of them coming down for a non-counseling related activity. Then the entire plan can be evaluated and she can find out what to improve, stop, start, or modify.

The nature of a complex challenge is such that you must be able to identify the critical variables and the critical points at which you apply your leverage. The achievement of secondary objectives helps. At the end of the day, adjusting your strategy (or any part of it) is an act of judgment that develops with time and practice. Your military career has shown you that strategy is a decision-rich activity. I hope the above 5 steps have also shown you how much hinges on your ability to make effective decisions.

Your strategy is not an end in itself. It is not meant to lock you into a particular course of action but to enable you perceive and better respond to reality. Don't fall in love with your strategy such that you become unable or unwilling to change. The feedback you receive from executing your strategy may require you to readjust your efforts, to readjust your objectives, or to go back and take a hard look at whether you have accurately identified the opportunities, obstacles, and constraints. It may lead you to develop another source of leverage, or re-examine the nature of the challenge. Things rarely proceed as planned. Every strategy is an attempt to bring about a particular outcome in the face of the unknown, the unexpected, and the interaction of numerous variables over which you don't have control. Quite simply, feedback helps you discover how and if your plan is working.

Readjustment of your strategy can also come about by a change in perception of a fundamental change. In my first book 'Start with No', I made mention of Bill Gates turning around his company after it missed the boat when the internet became available to the general public. The military's strategy during the cold war is not its strategy today. Strategy, like your M&P, starts with reality as it is. Never forget that.

## Chapter 5 Part 4

### **“Both Success and Failure Are Crucial For Successful Strategy”**

#### ***Both success and failure are crucial for successful strategy***

Strategy requires feedback. Without feedback, it is impossible to evaluate a plan. Feedback prompts us to go back to any part of our strategy and readjust it as required. This feedback is provided by both success and failure. However, it requires repeated practice to be able to pinpoint which part of it is not working. Prof. Rumelt rightly points out that every strategy essentially starts out as a careful hypothesis. The nature of a hypothesis is that it seeks confirmation. Since strategy is not confirmed in a laboratory, your ‘lab’ is the real world. That is where you test your hypothesis.

#### ***Strategy cannot be mastered but you can become increasingly better at it***

In negotiation, what gives you the edge is mastery of the principles, rules, laws, and tools, arranged within a system that enables you solve all the problems that stand in the way of reaching agreement. Because negotiation is a learned human performance event, it can be mastered. This is not the case with strategy. It is impossible to design a system that enables you master strategy. That does not mean that one cannot become increasingly better at it.

It is popularly said that *every battle plan works until you engage the enemy*. No strategy or strategic plan is carved in stone nor can you execute a strategic plan like a robot. On the battle field, your strategy is adjusted the moment it encounters the challenge you are trying to overcome. In order to do this successfully, you require leverage. Leverage is simply a source of power that enables you tackle the challenges, obstacles, and constraints as well as utilize the opportunities you face. You need a source of power, incorporated into your plan that gives it a good chance of success.

In building a source of power career wise, the most important leverage is found in your knowledge, skills, track record, and capabilities that can solve the problems and satisfy the needs and wants of others, for which they are willing to pay you in return. It’s really that simple and that difficult. If they can see that you can do this, you have found yourself a job, and possibly, a career. Their vision drives their decision to pay you. Quite simply, the needs and problems of others are the substrate of your job and career.

#### ***Strategy, like negotiation, is an arena for effective decision making***

Even before you started reading this book, you were probably aware of the intimate link between strategy and decision making. From this perspective, there probably is not much that’s new, here. I decided to include it because while becoming a strategist may or may not be essential to finding a job, it is certainly important in building a career.

Every decision you make in building a career must be faithful to your valid M&P, and must help you implement (and readjust) a strategy that enables your success. Defining the challenge, designing a response, executing it, and adjusting your plan as required, mandates effective decision making, again and again. With regards building a career, this chapter has revealed how many decisions you have to make and how many areas you have to make it.

From everything I have said about the problems and needs of the other side, I hope you have begun to see that in building a career, mastering negotiation is a strategic decision. It is a source of leverage. It is impossible to get what you want without reaching agreements with others. Some careers, admittedly, are more negotiation intensive than others. Selling is one that comes readily to mind. However, every leadership role requires excellent negotiation skills as does every managerial one in

which you are responsible for the results produced by others. If you are an individual contributor, you must master negotiation when you are selling an idea or a proposal.

Similarly, customer/client facing roles, project management roles, a career in law, medicine, research, and others require mastery in negotiation for career success. In whatever field you decide to pitch your tent, take a long and hard look about how often you will be required to reach agreements, and how much hangs on reaching agreement.

## **Chapter 5 Part 5**

### **“A Strategist Learns, Grows and Succeeds, Incrementally”**

#### ***A strategist learns, grows and succeeds, incrementally***

Babies and toddlers are the best example of how we humans learn and grow in every area of our lives – physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. They are not afraid of trying, failing, and trying yet again. They do so each time they need to learn or try something new. It doesn't matter if they are learning to walk, play with their toys, read, write or everything else. They are not obsessed with the final outcome. In fact, it can be argued that they don't even think in terms of outcomes.

Adults must necessarily think in terms of outcomes. Even the definition of a goal I shared – an action to an end – is conceived of in terms of a result. There's nothing intrinsically wrong in this. What is wrong and terribly ineffective is thinking in terms of immediate outcomes, refusing to try because of a fear of failure, or trying to control an outcome.

We humans learn incrementally. This will become evident to you even if you restrict yourself to reflecting on all you learned during your military career and indeed throughout your life. That's how a baby who has no experience of the world learns to adapt and thrive in it.

Start by aiming small. Don't take on everything at once. Identify the real challenge or problem, and create and execute a plan to solve or overcome it, and implement it incrementally using valid behavior goals and activity goals. Set objectives. If you fail, you'll fail in small ways. And when you succeed in small ways, your confidence will grow, and you will be able to build on those successes. You will never eliminate failure. Failure is a feedback mechanism. It helps you start a necessary readjustment process. Failure then becomes an ally.

I know that if you put all that's been discussed above into practice, you will necessarily lose your fear of failing. You will learn to learn and grow in the best way – like a baby who's always open and responsive to reality, to learning, and to being taught.

## **Chapter 5 Part 6**

### **“Every Strategist Habitually Re-reacts to Change”**

#### ***Every strategist habitually re-reacts to change***

Change can weaken any individual, organization, institution, society, or nation. It can even destroy some. Strategists, like master negotiators do not react to change. They re-react. And their re-reactions are born from careful decisions and decision making. Strategists know that change is often not something they can control. There may be situations that they can successfully turn it to their advantage and make an opportunity out of change. At other times, they must simply ride the storm out. Whatever

they do in the face of change, every true strategist is not merely folding his hands and doing nothing. There are numerous occasions when they are merely biding their time.

Over the past 25 years, I have watched numerous master negotiators develop into first rate strategists. They have re-reacted, calmly and confidently, to the winds of change or to internal and external challenges. I have observed them improve the performance of the teams and organizations they lead; pulled themselves (or their organizations) back from certain bankruptcy; reinvented their careers; built organizations that survive (and sometimes even thrive) in the face of economic downturns; built strategic alliances that have given their organizations a decided advantage over competitors, and more. To become a master negotiator, you must master the ability to identify the real problems standing in the way of an agreement. You must also develop the ability to change your valid M&P when required. These are transferable skill that help you become a strategist who is able and willing to face and tackle complex challenges, confidently.

### ***Your strategy and your valid M&P***

Tremendous interdependence exists between your strategy and your valid M&P. A clear picture of your long-term aim and your continuing never ending tasks and responsibilities rooted in the world of the others gives you the best point of entry into simplifying reality. The strategy you develop helps you is guided by your M&P. The feedback you receive from implementing your strategy also helps you evaluate your M&P and to change it when necessary.

You must be clear about this – your strategy grows out of your valid M&P, not the other way round. I readily admit that accidental discoveries have set a few individuals on a road they never dreamed of traveling on. But this is the exception, not the rule. If an accidental discovery, an insight or a latent need you stumble upon takes your life on a trajectory, seize it. But don't count on it. Counting on it will be like hoping to win the lottery in order to meet your financial needs and obligations.

Your strategy must be anchored and directed by a valid M&P. If your M&P doesn't fit reality, change it first. This will help you clarify your thinking about what you are about, and what you are trying to achieve. Remember that an intimate link exists between what you are trying to be, what you are trying to do, and how you are trying to do it. That is the realism required to thrive in an interdependent reality.

### ***You can't predict the future but you can co-create it***

I am a big fan of Peter Drucker, regarded by many as the father of modern management. His first PhD student, Maj Gen William A. Cohen (Retd) has written a very good book titled '*A class with Drucker: Lost lessons of the World's Greatest Management Teacher*'. One of the chapters is titled 'You cannot predict the future but you can create it'.

I believe that we can co-create the future by re-reacting to the present. That is how you and I have lived our lives to this point. Naturally, your life and mine have been impacted by things we had no control over. But we have had and will always have power over our re-reactions to what happens to us. As I have stated, every re-reaction is a decision. Over and above everything, your re-reactions co-create your career, success, happiness, and security. With a strategy, you don't need luck, though every 'lucky break' fits right in with the strategy. A strategy ensures that for the most part, your re-reactions are channeled within a plan that enables you solve the real problems you face and utilize the opportunities you encounter, and thereby co-create the life and future you wish.

## Chapter 6 Part 1

### **“Self-Management: Negotiating With Yourself to Spend Your Budget”**

#### ***Self-Management: Negotiating with yourself to spend your budget***

We negotiate far more frequently with ourselves than we do with others. You and I experience being pulled in different directions by our thoughts, desires, feelings, emotions, ideas, decisions, and resolutions to stop or start doing something. We also experience being pulled in different directions by the thoughts, desires, emotions and resolutions of others. Who hasn't spent time thinking 'Should I do it?'; 'Should I have done it?'; 'Should I have said that?'; 'Should I go there?'; 'Should I say 'yes' or 'no'?'; 'Should I take another drink or not?'; 'Should I take up the offer or not?'; 'Should I spend this much on this thing or not?'; 'Should I speak up or remain quiet?'; 'Should I go on or should I stop?'; 'Is it worth it making the effort or am I just wasting my time?'.

'Should I/Shouldn't I...?' are common enough questions that all of us ask in both important and unimportant things. Coping with the demands that come with our roles and responsibilities, with our own needs and the needs of others, with the challenges we face and those faced by our near and dear ones, can pull us in many directions. It produces a certain level of tension and feelings of stress and anxiety that are very unpleasant and that can end up paralyzing our decision making. The pull of our emotions and feelings can be both deeply satisfying and helpful at certain times, and deeply scary and hard to resist at others.

During such moments, we are negotiating with ourselves. In many respects, these are the most consequential negotiations we engage in. Being able to successfully reach agreements with ourselves – agreements that we are happy with and are able to keep – and to do so habitually, is as essential for developing a healthy and accurate self-image; for our happiness, peace of mind, sense of fulfillment; and for that minimum sense of control we need over our lives. It is as important as developing the ability to negotiate and reach agreements with others.

All such negotiations that we engage with ourselves end with a decision we make. It enables us meet the demands of our roles and responsibilities; meet our physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs, wants, and desires that are vital to our happiness and flourishing; and meet those of our near and dear ones. The final decision of such successful negotiations must be the same as those of our negotiations with others – in harmony with and a consequence of our personal valid M&P such that it moves our M&P forward.

A typical example of such negotiations would be the decision to build a specialized set of skills and acquire a body of knowledge that is important to a career you choose, after leaving the military. It requires careful planning and careful budgeting of your time, physical and/or mental effort, money and financial resources, and an emotional commitment to that decision.

#### ***Managing our budget in our negotiations with ourselves***

I teach that in negotiations with others, we and the other party (or parties) have a budget that we must keep track of. This budget has 4 components – time, energy, money, and our emotions. If we don't keep track of, and control our budgets, we are in danger of over-investing our budget and compromising our decision-making. The end-result is that we often reach agreements we will regret when we confront the consequences of our decisions, or when those decisions hit us without warning. An out-of-control budget is deadly. Such a budget means we lose control of the negotiation and open ourselves to abuse, manipulation, deception, or bullying by others. There are exact parallels between these negotiations with others and your negotiations with yourself.



At every moment, you have a particular budget that you can bring to bear to the tasks, duties, and responsibilities at hand. The budget you bring to each moment, task, and responsibility, according to the specific role you are playing at that moment, is limited.

1. Time: In some instances, you might have a limited time budget. In certain instances, this might matter a lot, and in other instances, it might matter very little.
2. Energy: There is a limit to the physical and mental effort you can bring to a particular task, event, or responsibility.
3. Money: There is also a limit to the financial resources (your money budget) that you can bring to the demands of a particular moment. Your money budget is limited by other legitimate and competing needs and those of your loved ones.
4. Emotions: Our emotional budget is also limited because you are neither moved emotionally nor can you move yourself emotionally, in equal measure, and at all times, to all tasks and responsibilities. Some tasks and responsibilities require a greater emotional budget. At all times, your emotional budget must be guided, conserved, and spent with the direction provided by the intellect.

From this perspective, you can see that ***self-management is actually a misnomer***. What ***we are actually managing is our budget for each of the roles in our lives and for the various tasks and responsibilities that flow from each role***. However, since self-management has become popularly accepted, I choose to go with the term, with the hope that you have understood that what you are managing is your budget for your tasks, responsibilities, and roles and not managing yourself. For instance, if you decide to coach a group of youngsters in a particular sport each weekend, your budget has to be balanced by your role as a father or a husband and the needs of your family and loved ones who also need you to spend your budget on them, daily, and a bigger budget on weekends. You cannot spend your entire energy and emotional budget in the office and come back home exhausted and have nothing left over for your family and loved ones. Whether you decide to be a working mom or stay-at-home mom, you have tasks and responsibilities of a wife, a mother, and maybe even the chairperson (or member) of a committee in the neighborhood. As a military veteran, you also have responsibilities towards fellow veterans, people with whom the bonds that unite you have literally been forged in the fire. This too requires a budget. Harmonizing all these budgets, in accordance with a valid M&P and in such a way that it takes you M&P forward requires numerous negotiations with yourself.

## Chapter 6 Part 2

### **“The Mindset of a Negotiator and a Strategist is Indispensable in Managing Your Budget”**

#### ***The mindset of a negotiator and a strategist is indispensable in managing your budget***

Much of what you spend your budget on is not under your control. It may depend on

- (i) Others making effective decisions either as a result of the ties that bind you to them or because you are jointly engaged in a particular task, responsibility or project.
- (ii) Tackling challenges which contain variables that are not under your control and developing a strategy to do so.

(iii) Seeking to find ways to increase the resources you can commit to solve a particular challenge or achieve a particular objective.

(iv) Negotiating with yourself so that you can commit, emotionally and intellectually, to your valid M&P, your strategy, and the coordinated, coherent, and congruent activity and behavior goals this requires.

(v) Re-reacting to every internal or external stimuli that impacts your world so that you don't spend today's budget creating solutions that become the seeds for tomorrow's problems.

If you don't develop the mindsets and skills referred to above, it is impossible to avoid wasting your budget or reacting blindly based on what you are feeling or experiencing at a particular moment. It is also impossible to acquire the awareness and insight required to know what to spend your budget on, and in what way to spend it. In other words, it's impossible to avoid wasting your budget.

### ***Wasting your budget***

It's not possible to come up with a list of 'budget wasters'. However, I have observed that those who waste their budgets often do so for very similar reasons. Some of these reasons I have observed over my coaching career include

1) Procrastination which almost always arises as a result of a lack of (emotional and/or intellectual commitment to) a valid M&P.

2) Reacting to the here and now, or on the basis of what you are feeling and experiencing.

3) Unwillingness to face the real problems you are facing.

4) Not developing the skills and mindset of a negotiator or a strategist

5) Not having a valid M&P, or having M&P statements that are not aligned with each other, for different aspects of your life

6) Allowing others to waste your budget because you don't negotiate and arrive at agreements you require to move your M&P forward, implement your plans, or fulfill your tasks and responsibilities in a coordinated way with others.

7) Trying to please everybody and not knowing what to say 'yes' and 'no' to.

8) Trying to become a one-man army instead of leveraging the power of interdependence.

9) Attempting to control what is outside your control.

10) Stunted emotional growth.

11) Not taking care of yourself and your loved ones physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

12) A lack of clarity regarding the activities you will engage in daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly, and the plans and objectives that these activities are geared towards.

13) A lack of clarity regarding your roles, the harmony and interdependence that should exist among these roles, and the tasks and responsibilities that flow from each.

14) Not having a plan to spend and grow your income and spending it based on what you feel instead of on what you ought.

15) Having a Fixed Mindset that prevents learning and growth. This imposes huge costs further down, costs that you will necessarily have to try and cope with, or try to circumvent.

Wasting your budget boils down to an inability or an unwillingness to perceive reality accurately or to respond to it appropriately. This common reason runs through all situations whether you are negotiating with yourself, with another, or trying to understand and respond to a challenge, objective, or opportunity.

## **Chapter 6 Part 3**

### **“Spending Your Budget is an Arena for Effective Decision Making”**

#### ***Spending your budget is an arena for effective decision making***

Responding to a challenge, objective, or opportunity should always be done within the framework of a strategy which always requires that your activities and behaviors are coordinated, coherent, and congruent. The budget you spend on a particular activity, and in a particular negotiation with yourself, with another, or as part of your strategy is always dependent on your decisions. You decide what to spend and what not to spend; how and where to spend it; and why you are spending it in one way instead of another.

The corollary of choosing to spend a particular budget is the decision to stop spending a budget no matter how much has already been spent. Pulling out after over-investing, or because one did not understand the nature or the extent of the challenge is an effective decision. Sometimes, a military effort must be aborted. Otherwise, it becomes easy to fall into the trap of wasting your budget because you have over invested your emotions and these emotions are now in control of your decisions and decision making.

#### ***So is growing your budget***

Your budget is not something that is fixed and unchanging. You can grow each of the 4 components. You can grow your time, energy, money and grow your emotional budget by growing and helping others grow, emotionally.

(i) Growing your time budget: Being part of a team, and building a family, that has a valid M&P is a great way to multiply your time and energy. In that way, you don't have to supervise or watch over everything. If each person in the team (and each family member) is aware of the M&P and the tasks and responsibilities that flow from it, and has been taught and coached on how to perform them, you don't have to stay awake at night wondering whether things are being taken care of. To multiply your time, you must be willing to invest a substantial amount of it educating yourself, and then, to educating others by your example, by your active coaching and mentoring, by your patience as they learn, and by correcting them when they fall short.

(ii) Growing your energy budget: The ways in which you grow your time budget applies equally well in growing your energy budget. I'd also like to bring another aspect in which you can grow your energy budget – taking care of yourself and your health. If any aspect of your life – physical, intellectual/mental, emotional or spiritual is unhealthy, whatever budget you have will be focused on it, or on compensating

for it. As a veteran, you must accept the wounds and scars that combat has left on your body, heart, and soul, and desist from anything that prevents or slows healing. You must overcome all denial and seek the help required to heal. I shall have more to say about this in the next chapter.

(iii) Growing your money budget: You grow your money budget by growing your income generation capacity in tandem with the growth in expenses, inflation, and responsibilities; by living within your means; and by learning to manage your finances. If there are sources of income you can generate by the side, you must assess them to see if they fit with your M&P, and if you can come up with a strategy to earn it.

(iv) Growing your emotional budget: Growing your emotional budget is done by both growing emotionally, and helping your near and dear ones grow emotionally. More on this in the next chapter.

One way in which you can grow your budget in all these areas is by conserving it. Conserving your budget means that you approach your expenditures with the mindset of a strategist. This applies especially with regards to your time, energy, and money budgets. It applies in a different way with your emotional budget.

You may conclude, rightly, that growing your budget is an area where you must have excellent leadership skills. If you did, you are absolutely right. In many of the roles in your life, your ability to coach and mentor others, to negotiate, and to strategize will propel you to being and becoming a leader whether or not this comes with a corresponding title or recognition.

***As with everything else, spending and growing your budget begins with a personalized valid M&P***

Without an M&P for life, it is difficult, and for many people, impossible to harmonize the roles, responsibilities, tasks, and budget expenditures. (It is also impossible to fall into the trap of an invalid and destructive M&P.) If you don't harmonize them, their demands will constantly tug at you, in different directions. That is why when constructing your M&P, you must give each role its due, and simultaneously realize that these various roles do not have the same degree of importance. Some things in life are truly more important than others. Many of us were taught this as kids, but forget it as we grow older.

Clarify your roles, tasks, and responsibilities in the light of your valid M&P. What you are trying to be takes precedence over what you are trying to do or ought to do. In fact, what you do – as your M&P clearly expresses – flows from and is directed toward what you are trying to be. Every soldier is consciously and unconsciously aware of this. Protecting and defending the lives of your brothers and sisters in uniform is your first priority because you **are** a soldier and not simply because you act or behave like one. Because of who and what you are, you do not expose them to unnecessary risk or danger and you do what you can to protect them from danger. Your loyalty, concern, and commitment to their safety and well-being has guided you through situations where you may have had to make tough life and death decisions. But it all starts from trying to be and become what you are. If you are clear about your roles and which should have precedence over the other, it will be because you already have a sense of mission about your life, or because you have been successful in building a valid M&P.

## Chapter 6 Part 4

### **“Before Any Significant Undertaking or Commitment of any Sort, Negotiate Effectively With Yourself”**

#### ***Before any significant undertaking or commitment of any sort, negotiate effectively with yourself***

In the previous chapter, I showed you how to think like a strategist when it comes to selecting and building a career. When you are trying to figure out what to do, you are negotiating with yourself. Each choice comes with a budgetary requirement. At such moments, your emotions, thoughts, and decision making can all be in a state of flux. The first step is always seeking clarity. In order to negotiate effectively with yourself, the following questions may be helpful in gaining that clarity

1. Do you have a valid M&P guiding this undertaking or commitment?
2. Is this M&P aligned to your larger M&P?
3. Are you thinking in terms of decisions?
4. Have you clarified the roles that may be involved?
5. Have you clarified what other roles may be impacted?
6. Have you identified the real problems, obstacles, and constraints?
7. Have you understood and simplified complexity and gained insight into what to do?
8. Do you have a plan/strategy?
9. Have you specified objectives?
10. Have you tied your tasks and responsibilities to specific valid activity and behavior goals?
11. Have you assessed your budget – both what is required now and what may be required in the future?
12. Have you assessed any tradeoffs that may be required?
13. Have you negotiated with others who may be involved or impacted and reached agreement with them?
14. Have you negotiated with yourself and reached an agreement that you are emotionally committed?
15. Are you emotionally committed to the consequences of this negotiation with yourself?

This has a lot in common with what you do when you construct a valid M&P or gain insight into the nature of a challenge or opportunity when you are building your strategy. Without this insight, it is hard to match the budget you must invest to what you must spend it on. In order to understand this well, I'd like to revisit the 6 characteristics of peak performers.

## Chapter 6 Part 5

### “Another Look of the 6 Characteristics of Peak Performers”

#### ***Another look of the 6 characteristics of peak performers***

In chapter 2, I listed the 6 characteristics that are found in peak performers regardless of their areas of endeavor. You might find it useful to take a look at it and to take a look at managing your budget through the prism of these 6 characteristics. For convenience I'll list them here.

A peak performer:

- 1) Is an effective decision maker.
- 2) Has and is guided by a valid Mission and Purpose statement
- 3) Has valid goals and specific objectives.
- 4) Is good at conceiving and implementing plans that solve the real problems that he faces. (From chapter 5, you know this means he is a strategist.)
- 5) Has and develops exquisite focus with regards the realities he is engaged with.
- 6) Has a Growth Mindset which means he is always (open to) learning.

These 6 characteristics give you tremendous insight and help in enabling you spend your time, energy, money, and emotional budget, in each aspect of your life, well.

Keep in mind that you don't decide whether or not to spend your budget. Each day, you will spend the budget you have. What you can decide is how to spend it, and why you choose to spend it in one way and not another. In the next and last chapter, I will examine various issues relating to your emotions, emotional growth, emotional healing with the hope that it provides some insight into what your emotional budget is, and how best to spend it. Your emotions are the most powerful force in your life for good or for ill.

#### ***The Power of Focus***

One of the 6 characteristics of peak performers is the power of focus. As I stated, focus is the result of all the other 5 characteristics coming together. Focus enables you see the problems, challenges, objectives, and opportunities, clearly. It helps you match your budget to the requirement, in line with your valid M&P. This focus gives a tremendous clarity, congruence, coherence, and coordination to your decisions and thoughts. It also enables you become aware of when you are over investing, when you have over invested, and when it is time to cut your losses and pull out.

It is said that a person lies more often to himself than he does to another. Certainly, our capacity for denial and self-deception is great. Often, in our negotiations with ourselves, we try to skirt around the problem and find solutions that require the least budget possible. In the final analysis, focus keeps our realism alive. Without focus, a mismatch will always exist between the requirement and the actual budget expenditure. We will also often lose track of our budget and remain unaware when we start overinvesting.

### ***Developing well-honed judgment***

How does a person in the military develop intuition (intuitive judgment) regarding split-second decisions? It starts with training, develops with continued study and expertise, and is refined with experience made in real-life situations. It depends on a loop of planning, implementation, feedback, review, and readjustment. When this is repeated, the person develops a 'sixth sense'. Though the specifics vary from person to person, it involves all these various elements and phases.

The more you negotiate with yourself in your various undertakings, the more you will become aware of your budget, and alert to the danger of over-investing a budget in a particular undertaking. You will also develop judgment about what goes against your M&P and what does not. You will develop an almost intuitive feeling for plans that have identified the problem and those that haven't. You will also gain insight into those situations and moments when you don't have the budget for a particular task or undertaking.

When you reach the zenith of self-management, you become able to say 'yes' or 'no' to yourself and to others, based on what you intuitively perceive as required and demanded by your M&P. But this sixth sense is the fruit of encountering and resolving numerous conflicting claims to your budget, claims that arise as a result of you spreading yourself too thin, or of others (who may or may not have a valid M&P) who lay claim to some part of your budget. Every veteran knows that combat training is very different from actual combat. He also knows that real judgment and intuitive judgment is formed on the basis of the latter, not the former.

Good judgment relies on the power of habits. The habits you require for self-management is simply the habits required to grow and spend your budget, appropriately, given the particular circumstance or situation. These are the habits associated with understanding complex challenges, decision making, and re-reacting.

## **Chapter 6 Part 7**

### **"Effectively Negotiating with Yourself is Possible Only if you Keep Your Valid M&P in Sight"**

#### ***Effectively negotiating with yourself is possible only if you keep your valid M&P in sight***

Sir Winston Churchill is a man I admire and have studied, deeply. As I prepared this chapter some words of his came to mind:

*"To each there comes in their lifetime a special moment when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to them and fitted to their talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds them unprepared or unqualified for that which could have been their finest hour."*

What Churchill did not say explicitly is that such moments do not always come with pomp and majesty. Sometimes, you become aware of the moment long after you reached it. For others, they are aware of the moment as it arrives. For some, they can even see it approaching. To my mind, your 'finest hour' is that moment when you realize that you have become one with your valid M&P for life, an M&P that you own, that you commit to, that guides your every decision and choice, your every 'yes' and 'no'.

The finest of soldiers don't go looking for a mission. Their mission is to prepare, anticipate or respond, adequately, to the threats against liberty. This is the prism through which I look at self-management. It is not an end to itself. It is a necessary means to living and becoming one with your unique, personalized, valid M&P. Every soldier knows that boot camp is not the end of one's preparation for the demands and responsibilities of wearing the uniform. At the heart of it, ***self-management***

***enables you integrate and harmonize the roles, tasks, and responsibilities of each moment to your M&P, and fulfill those roles, tasks, and responsibilities as an expression of your M&P. In other terms, it is the ability to re-react – at all times and in all situations – in an M&P centered manner.***

If you have not been living in this way, it can feel inauthentic, artificial, terribly constricting, and lacking in the spontaneity that makes life's moments so rich and satisfying. From my life's experience and those of the tens of thousands of people I have coached, I know this initial perception is simply a normal human reaction to what is new, and therefore possibly strange. When you make the effort to habitually become one with your M&P, and spend your budget accordingly, it will open the door to happiness, peace of mind, economic security, and will enable you co-create the life, career, family, and relationships you wish. In this as in everything else, a valid M&P is the only foundation on which to build

### ***Your happiness and your valid M&P***

I'm sure you've heard the saying 'People who say money can't buy happiness clearly do not know where to shop.' I understand that in a different way. People can clearly distinguish when they feel happy and when they feel unhappy. What they often don't know is what currency to use and what to buy. It requires money, and it requires a lot more than money, too.

Your budget extends to every aspect of your life – building a family, a marriage, a career, a business, building your skills, developing a hobby, learning a particular martial art, deepening your knowledge of and practicing your religious beliefs, recovering your physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual health, becoming involved in a particular cause, becoming a negotiator or a strategist, developing your valid and personalized M&P, and yes, even reading or writing a book. There's so much time, energy, money, and emotional investment you can bring to the demands and responsibilities of each moment; to each of your roles in life; to the discovery of the 'why' of your life; and to a time of transition and far beyond; to the pursuit of happiness. Learning to allocate the appropriate budget for each, in line with your valid M&P is the art of shopping for happiness in the right way. Every person seeks happiness. You and I are not exceptions. No one deliberately seeks unhappiness. I've never met anyone who sets out to seek unhappiness. And yet, it seems the decisions and choices people make in their search for happiness ends up destroying their happiness or leading them to dead-end streets where there is no happiness.

- How satisfied and at peace are you with the various happenings in your life?
- Is your life all of one piece?
- Are financial worries part and parcel of your daily existence?
- Do you sense a certain fragmentation and lack of unity in your life?
- Is life simply too hard, too complicated, too demanding, or too unpredictable?
- Is anger, guilt, loneliness, hurt, pain, money troubles, overwork, stress, worry, anxiety, resentment, and more dominating your life, waiting to explode into the open, or exploding ever so often?
- How healthy are you emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually?
- Are you at peace, and joyful about the 'here' and 'now' of your life?



Are you at peace with the decisions and the consequences of those decisions you made in the past?

## Chapter 6 Part 8

### **“Bring a Strategist’s Mindset to your Decisions on How You Spend Your Budget”**

#### ***Bring a strategist’s mindset to your decisions on how you spend your budget***

Every strategist has his eye on the resources that are available to him (and those he could cultivate in a way that these could become available at a later time) and how these resources can be deployed to achieve his objectives and solve the complex challenge(s) he faces.

When you set out to pursue some objective, think like a strategist. View the challenge in the light of your M&P, and start building a response. Assess your budget – both that which is required right away and that which might be required at a later point in time. Calmly consider how much of your budget you can spend in pursuit of this objective, or to meet and solve this complex challenge. This too must be done in the light of your M&P.

Whenever possible, plan how you spend your budget for each year, quarter, month, week, and day, ahead of time. Spend it on what your M&P directs you to. Look to your M&P for life and to the aligned M&P you have for that aspect of your life, for guidance. Don’t spend it blindly, based on what others want (which is often based on what they are feeling or experiencing at that moment in time) or what you feel or experience at that moment in time. Remember that if you don’t manage your budget carefully in an M&P driven manner, others will hijack it.

Remember that a strategist leverages the power of interdependence. There is a huge difference between interdependence and dysfunction. Strategy by its very nature requires that you harness, leverage, and coordinate the power of your efforts and those of others. It is only when you have a common valid M&P, and have mastered the ability to negotiate durable agreements with others that you can leverage the power of interdependence.

#### ***Negotiating with yourself within an M&P centered existence***

The more you develop the habits and mindsets of an M&P driven negotiator and strategist, the more you will develop the capacity for intuitive judgment as to whether or not you are able to, or would like to spend a budget on a particular undertaking, singly or with others. Your decisions and your commitments will become aligned to your M&P, and you will never experience the anxiety and stress of having too much to do, of spreading yourself too thin, of being constantly overwhelmed by fires and fire-fighting. You will develop the intuitive judgment regarding what should have pre-eminence and what should not.

Another benefit is that you will learn to simplify your life style and learn to live an authentic one that is, at every moment, congruent with your M&P. When you learn to assess and spend your budget on what your M&P directs you to, and to ignore or set aside what your M&P asks you to, you will be able to do so with increasing ease. Your relationships will be richer and more meaningful. You will make every moment count without getting into a frenzy about what is still yet to be finished or accomplished. You will learn to spend your money and your income well, and wisely, learning what and how much to save, invest, donate, and spend.

## Chapter 6 Part 9

### **“Effectively Negotiating with Others is Often the Starting Point for Effectively Negotiating With Yourself”**

#### ***Effectively negotiating with others is often the starting point for effectively negotiating with yourself***

When you master negotiating with others, you begin to become exquisitely aware of the budget you spend negotiating with them, and the danger of over-investing a budget. Using my System of negotiation, you learn to control things that are under your control, and don't try to control things that are not under your control. You learn to negotiate always with a valid M&P, and see every negotiation as a decision filled effort. You become more aware of the need for a valid M&P as a pre-requisite to effective decision making. By learning to free your mind of expectations and assumptions, you learn to negotiate without being tied down or pulled away by your emotions. By learning how unresolved baggage can destroy a negotiation, you learn to identify and dispose it, at the outset. As you learn to negotiate, you begin to harness and leverage the power of interdependence. It dawns on you that as foolish and risky as it is to be a one-man army in military life, it is equally foolish and risky to become one in civilian life.

The more you master negotiation, the easier it is to become aware of when you are negotiating with yourself. You can then extricate yourself from the pull of emotion, and 'coach' yourself to negotiate effectively with yourself. You learn when baggage – from the past – is clouding your judgment and compromising your decision making. You learn to assess the budget you can invest in a particular endeavor.

#### ***The future is NOW***

Very often, we think of the future as a time waiting to arrive. But today was once the future, as was this week and this year. At every moment, the decisions you take with regards how you spend your budget is creating your future. It's easy and tempting to get caught up in the bubble of the present moment, or to get trapped in prison of the past. It's also easy to not be aware of how you are spending your budget or to consciously spend it building castles that crumble under the weight of ineffective decisions piled on top of each other with our health, happiness, relationships, career, reputation, and peace of mind buried under the rubble of what we built at great cost. Without effective decision making guiding every aspect of your shared existence with others, this will happen. It will be the future you are building.

Power, influence, money, professional success, or fame will not be strong enough defenses to block off the powerful forces that build up and eventually explode in a life where the consequences of yesterday's ineffective decisions are the seeds of tomorrow's problems. A life spent in building things of value and destroying other things of value (perhaps even more important ones) is not the kind of life I hope you will co-create. No one explicitly wishes to achieve professional success at the price of physical, emotional, and mental ill-health; relationship dysfunction and its attendant emotional pain; or a nagging sense of emptiness in which one is left asking “Has it truly been worth it?”, “Is this all there is to it?”.

You must see that the future is born at this very moment. It is born whether you make an effective decision, an ineffective one, or what I previously referred to as a non-decision.

#### ***Your Growth Mindset is crucial***

The challenges and demands of life are constantly evolving. Those you live with, work with, compete with, and collaborate with are either learning and growing, or being stagnant and 'dying'. To get the biggest bang for your buck, you cannot always bring yesterday's skills and solutions to today's and tomorrow's problems, challenges, and opportunities.

I mentioned earlier on that with repeated practice and effort, you will develop intuitive judgment. But to do so, you must experience success and defeat, victory and failure. You must be willing to step into the unknown, and experience the pain, the process, and the joy of growth. Think back to how you grew your stamina when you joined the military. It didn't happen overnight. Learning to spend, conserve, manage, and grow your budget will similarly require a budget in its own right and a Growth Mindset.

## Chapter 7 Part 1

### **“Growing, Healing, and Thriving”**

#### ***Growing, healing, and thriving.***

(Disclaimer: I’m neither a therapist, nor a psychiatrist, nor a psychologist. My intention in this chapter is not to give specific therapeutic advice relating to emotional and mental health. In line with the theme of this book, it is assisting you to make effective decisions that will help you face and deal with the ill-health and disabilities you suffer from which may have been a direct consequence of your military career. The sole purpose of this chapter is help you make the decisions required to regain your health, and to keep yourself health. From a certain perspective, this last chapter may be the most important one for quite a number of veterans. For many veterans – and for all human beings – ill health and disabilities make it difficult to make effective decisions regarding spending and growing their emotional budget, thereby making self-management a huge challenge.

I am indebted in a huge way to many experts in the fields of emotional and mental health from whose published works, I have learned a lot. In particular, I must mention the works of the late Dr. Conrad Baars, Dr. W. Doyle Gentry, Dr. Les Carter, and Dr. Mark Goulston among others. I am also indebted to Scott Lee, a military veteran from the First Gulf War who maintains one of the best blogs that explores issues relating to PTSD, documents his own personal struggles, and even provides information regarding the benefits and assistance that you as a veteran are entitled to.

Competent medical care is important in many instances. It is important that veterans and their loved ones gain accurate knowledge about what a mental illness is, and what it is not, how to deal with it, how to prevent it from tearing apart their lives. This is a necessary step towards healing, health, and happiness, and to co-creating the life you wish within your single shared existence. Apart from this being integral to your happiness, it is what every effective decision maker and strategist would do. These issues are feared, ignored, minimized or blown out of proportion because the nature of the challenge is not understood, and the solutions to them are possibly understood even less.

Here as elsewhere, developing a Growth Mindset is essential. The mindset required to understand emotional or mental ill health also applies to coping with physical disabilities. Neither emotional or mental ill-health, nor physical disability signal the end of a happy and productive life. But you have to see this for yourself. I hope to assist you see it, clearly, and deal with these challenges, calmly and confidently.

#### ***Is he disabled or distinctly-abled? Nick Vujicic’s amazing story***

As I prepared this chapter, I recalled a story of 2 individuals which brings together everything I wish to convey in this chapter. Both are stories of ordinary people who fought tough battles and won. Neither of them are veterans but both possess the courage and the heart of a soldier.

Nick Vujicic suffers from tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder. People suffering from it are born without arms and legs. Though he grew up as a happy child, by his 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, he had become embittered, and by his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, he attempted suicide. Luckily, he survived. He raged and grieved and questioned. His pain and anger led him to ask the kind of questions that all of us do when we are wounded in the most sensitive part of our heart. After a long and painful struggle, he realized that not only did life have meaning, but that his own life had a personal and unique meaning. He saw a different life and co-created what he saw.

Nick eliminated the possibility that his life would roll along on the tracks of self-pity and passivity by taking decisions based on a different vision of what his life could be and on the basis of the meaning he found. After winning the war on the inside, he tackled and won the battles on the outside. He learned

to swim, use a computer, write, brush his teeth, comb his hair, climb a flight of stairs and swim. His complete lack of self-pity strikes me each time I listen to him. However, Nick gets into my heart in a very special way when he narrates his story – his struggles, his pain, his despair, his discovery of a sense of purpose, and how this helped turn his life around.

Today, Nick is a very famous individual. He still does not have arms and legs. But he's not merely coping or getting by. He's thriving and helping thousands of able-bodied men and women find hope and inspiration. He addresses audiences from different parts of the world, speaking with the compassion and the wisdom of a soldier who's been tested in the trenches. Using the words and in the tone of a fellow traveler, Nick helps those who listen to him face and confront their fears. His words have a healing effect on many and offer encouragement and hope. Today, he is married and speaks to thousands of people, around the globe. You can check out his website [www.lifewithoutlimbs.org](http://www.lifewithoutlimbs.org). Nick is a survivor but he's not merely surviving; he's thriving. I warmly recommend reading his books *"Life without limits: Inspiration for a ridiculously good life"*, *"Your Life Without Limits (10-PK): Living Above Your Circumstances"*, and *"Unstoppable: The Incredible Power of Faith in Action"*.

Personalizing the lessons of life and applying them to the 'here' and 'now' of your circumstances and situations is essential for learning. It is a step you and I cannot skip. Theorizing about life, meaning, or any other thing for that matter, without discovering what's asked and required of me, and without providing a personal response, is a waste of your budget. In practice, it's no better than spending our lives haunted by a never-ending cycle of "What if?" or "Why me?" and "If only...."

## **Chapter 7 Part 2**

### **"Co-Creating a New Life From Scratch"**

#### ***Co-creating a new life from scratch***

The second individual I would like to introduce you to is also an ordinary though no less remarkable human being. As I type, he's just come out on parole, after spending 25 years in prison. His name is Michael Santos.

As a young man, Michael got involved in the drug scene and started making easy money. When the law enforcement agencies got onto his trail, things got out of hand. A person he worked the drug scene with got killed. Michael was arrested. Despite not having a previous record or a previous history of violence, he was tried and sentenced to 45 years in jail. At the time, he was 22 years old. He started his prison sentence in 1987 and has just come out 25 years later, on parole. By the time he came out on parole, he was married, had acquired 2 degrees, had written a couple of books aimed at helping people understand the realities of prison life and the criminal justice system.

Michael paid a huge price for the decisions he made as a young man. He talks about the culture of prison, a culture of violence and despair. He writes about how it sets up inmates for failure once they are released, making it even more likely that they will end up back in jail. Despite everything that stood in his way, Michael faced and overcame all the challenges he faced in prison. Now, he is slowly going about trying to rebuild his life, and put his experience to good use. His website is [www.michaelsantos.net](http://www.michaelsantos.net). Michael writes about how important it is to have a sense of purpose. His focus, his sense of mission, his discipline and dedication in the middle of circumstances that can test any person's courage, is deeply moving. While in prison, he mentored numerous young prisoners and helped many find a sense of purpose. Now that he's out on parole, I look forward to watching how he continues to serve and to live with a sense of mission.

### ***One lesson shines through in the lives of Nick Vujicic and Michael Santos***

Both of these remarkable individuals show that your personal circumstances and situations neither define you nor constrain your life to a certain path. They have both faced and overcome remarkable odds, odds that can test any person's limits. In Nick's case, the circumstances were not of his making. In Michael's case, he had direct responsibility. Neither of them was constrained by their circumstances and situations such that they just folded their arms and gave up. They both took responsibility for what they were facing, engaged it fully, and co-created a different kind of life. As of today, they are still engaged in co-creating a different kind of life for themselves and for those around them.

Your life will unfold on the basis of the decisions you make, and based on a future you see. Through all the ups and downs of life, through the hair pin bends and road blocks, through challenges that appear insurmountable and the difficulties and irritations of each day, you can and must create the future you and your loved ones want.

All the elements I have spoken about in previous chapters come together in co-creating such a life – distinguishing what is under your control, what is not under your control, and what is open to your influence; becoming an effective decision maker; having a valid M&P statement; developing the mindset of a negotiator and that of a strategist; having valid goals and objectives and distinguishing between both; developing exquisite focus, and having a Growth Mindset etc. None of the challenges you encounter during a time of transition are insurmountable challenges.

## **Chapter 7 Part 3**

### **“Ill-Health and Disabilities”**

#### ***Ill-health and disabilities***

Human beings have a rich, varied, complex, and intricate nature. They share characteristics with the lower forms of life, and yet transcend these forms of life. Their one life has physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Too often, these pull the individual in different directions and set off a state of war within.

Ill-health and disabilities often worsen these internal conflicts. The uncertainties that surround a time of transition don't make things any easier. Every part of this book is written with the objective of helping you face and overcome the challenges you face, and thrive.

#### ***What vision is driving your decisions?***

The flesh and blood stories of fellow human beings who have surmounted huge odds may be an occasion to re-examine your personal situation and circumstances and to examine the vision driving your decisions.

If we see mental and emotional ill health or physical disabilities as a stumbling block as insurmountable challenges, this vision will drive your decisions. On the other hand, if you see these as opportunities to learn and grow, this vision, too, will drive your decisions. As I have already stated, vision drives the decisions of every single person on the planet regardless of the person's situation and circumstances.

An incomplete vision (coupled perhaps to the force of habit) gives rise to your reactions. A more complete vision, a valid M&P, and carefully spending your budget will give birth to your re-reactions. And your re-reactions will co-create the responses to the challenges you face which in turn will co-create the life you wish.

When I discussed the necessity of being a strategist, I mentioned that a strategist's vision is based on reality as reality is, not as he wants it to be. Often, the strategist has to consciously build his vision. He has to gain insight into the nature of the challenge, and underlying patterns. Then he has to see an appropriate response. Once he has 'seen' the challenge and an appropriate response, he has to build and execute the response. Finally, he has to review, and readjust that response based on what he sees as the interaction between the response and the challenge as he initially saw it.

It is not too hard to imagine what vision led Nick to become bitter and depressed. Being born without limbs is a challenge that does not even cross the minds of most people. But imagine what it might have felt to Nick. Most people around him might not even have seen the fact that they were born with limbs as anything special. They probably would have taken it for granted. Imagine how jarring it feels to lack what others take for granted. I have also wondered what vision Michael would have had after he was sentenced to a jail term that was more than double the number of years he had been alive.

As a veteran suffering ill health or disabilities of any sort, you might feel the same thing – that you are lacking what others take for granted, or are facing a highly uncertain future. If you must convert your ill health and disabilities to an opportunity and a means to live a happier and richer life, you must see them and your present circumstances and situations, differently. You must see it for yourself. Only if you see differently can gain insight into what you can and cannot control. Only if you see differently can you decide differently. Only if you see differently can you re-react differently. Only if you decide to re-react differently can you build a different life and gain control over your life. Nothing and nobody can force you to see differently. You must begin to look, to spend your budget wisely and well, if you wish to see differently. When it comes to co-creating the life you wish, what you see is truly what you get.

## **Chapter 7 Part 4**

### **“Mental and Emotional Health, Ill Health and Physical Disabilities, and a Valid M&P”**

#### ***Mental and emotional health ill health and physical disabilities and a valid M&P***

A nervous breakdown, a panic attack, sustained anxiety and/or depression is frightening. It strikes at the very heart of our sense of self, our self-image, and our self-confidence. It shows us just how tenuous is our hold on reality and sometimes make us feel like we are held to reality by a single thread. The thought of the thread snapping can paralyze us, and our decision making.

Physical disabilities can also give rise to fear and a sense of helplessness. Losing one or more limbs or senses can strike at the heart of our sense of who we are and leave us feeling dependent, incomplete, and cut off from the flow of life.

In both instances, we encounter a moment of decision. It is a moment to first build an accurate vision based on an accurate insight into the realities we face, build a valid M&P based on an accurate perception of those realities, and base our decisions on that M&P.

If you don't build a valid M&P, you can't gain insight into reality, and you don't know where to start, how to start, and how to proceed. It will become IMPOSSIBLE not to react to your feelings and emotions, which may themselves be in a state of flux.

#### ***Here too, change starts with awareness***

As I have stated on numerous occasions, you must become deeply aware of your environment and your personal circumstances and situation before attempting to re-react. This helps you become clear about what is under your control, here and now, and what is not. Not everything is under your control, and not everything lies outside your control. Your actual state of mental or emotional ill-health is

a reality that is not under your control. Your recovery from ill health and adaptation to disabilities is open to your influence but not under your control.

This awareness will lead you to see that healing and adaptation are more a function of your decisions and choices than they are the assistance of a therapist, a course of treatment, or a change in your external circumstances. Indecision or non-decisions will feed fear, compound the challenges you face, and worsen ill health and a sense of helplessness.

***What is your 'why' for seeking, desiring, experiencing health and healing?***

Your M&P to regain your health must be set in the world of your near and dear ones. This is nothing new. People strive to build a career, and earn an income in order to support themselves and their loved ones. It is not simply enough to be healthy or to attempt to regain your health. Of course health like all the good things in life is good and desirable in itself. But it also provides you a means to live for a larger purpose.

I can think of 5 important reasons why veterans should personally seek, desire, find, and experience health. I hope you will engage in careful thought about each of these reasons, personalize them to your personal circumstances and situations, and develop a list that fits you like a glove. Healing of mind, heart, soul and body is essential to

- 1) Satisfy the deepest and most basic need of each human being – to love and be loved, and thereby find authentic happiness.
- 2) Contribute to the happiness of your loved ones which is inextricably tied to yours. If you are healthy, you will spare yourself and them a lot of needless and avoidable pain, anxiety, and hurt.
- 3) Fulfill your personal valid M&P. Only a valid M&P enables you fully develop and express your potential, find meaning, fulfillment, and build a life and career that enables you meet your legitimate needs and those of your loved ones.
- 4) Become a channel of healing and hope for others – your near and dear ones, for your brothers and sisters in uniform, and for those you encounter, who see no way out of a pain filled and mediocre life. You will not see or hear the pain of others if your eyes are fixed on yours, and your ears are filled with its sounds. When I was writing this book, a rifle commander who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan sent me a mail in which he described himself as a 'wounded healer'. Every veteran war can become a 'wounded healer'.
- 5) Become an effective decision maker and gain (or regain) control over your life and destiny and – through your influence – help others gain control over theirs.

Once you have a sense of your M&P, and clear reasons to heal, you can emotionally commit to becoming healed, to identifying the enemies that stand in the way of your healing, and to distinguish the real and unreal enemies that stand in your way.



## Chapter 7 Part 5

### “Fear”

#### **Fear**

Most soldiers know that courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to face and overcome it. (It may be that some don't, but I'd like to think that most do.) I'm assuming that you have experienced and overcome fear. The first and most consequential battle during a time of transition, and especially in the face of mental and emotional ill health or physical disabilities, is of fear.

I'd like you to carefully consider these words from one of the greatest boxing coaches who ever lived – Cus D'Amato.

*“You must understand fear so you can manipulate it. Fear is like fire. You can make it work for you: it can warm you in the winter, cook your food when you're hungry, give you light when you are in the dark, and produce energy. Let it go out of control and it can hurt you, even kill you. Fear is a friend of exceptional people.”*

Cus is right. Fear either paralyzes us or spurs us to action. In dealing with emotional or mental ill-health, or with disabilities of any sort, fear is either an ally or a foe, depending on how you respond to your experience of it.

I urge you to experience your fear, fully. Don't stifle it or minimize it. In your mind's eye, observe yourself experiencing it. See yourself experiencing it, and see what exactly gives rise to those fears. Then, respond to it using everything you are learning, and have learnt during your military career. Address your time, energy, money and emotions to the root causes of your fear. Discover for yourself that fear is '... a friend of exceptional people.'

#### **Fear robs you of the ability to focus on the real enemies**

From what I have been able to observe, you face 6 powerful enemies. These enemies may or may not exist separately, and may mingle with each other to form a volatile mix. They worsen the difficulties that veterans face in a time of transition – financial pressures, conflicts with near and dear ones, prejudice, unemployment, emotional or mental ill health, or disabilities.

These enemies feed and worsen fear. If you confront them by educating yourself, they will tighten their hold on you. Educating yourself is where you harness, cultivate, and leverage the power of a Growth Mindset. I will take a brief look at each of these enemies.

#### **(i) Denial**

It is said that we lie more often to ourselves than we do to others. If we can't or won't face the reality of our own lives, we have started living a lie, and are in denial. Much of the denial with regards mental and emotional ill health is a direct consequence of the stigma attached to it, and the horrifying ignorance that exists among individuals and indeed entire sections of society. Denial is not the road that leads us to creating the kind of lives we desire. Life is not intrinsically chaotic and human existence is not meant to be a long, brutal, lonely, and wearisome struggle.

Denial makes a person unwilling and unable to face the difficulties and challenges that he ***is already facing and experiencing***. If a patient refuses to face up to and admit his illness, or an addict to his addiction, no power on earth can help him. Those living in denial cannot make the decisions and choices required to get out of their circumstances and situation precisely because they are unwilling to admit that a problem exists. They must therefore live with the consequences of their denial, and the

resulting indecision and non-decisions. Some wait wishing for a miracle, never recognizing or utilizing the opportunities they encounter to get rid of their problems. The only solution to denial is the realism of strategist who is also M&P driven. There is no other way around it.

### **(ii) Discouragement**

What makes people give up? It's hard to say. It could be as a result of ignorance, a lack of a valid M&P, an over reliance on will power that finally peters out, focusing on the length or duration of the journey instead of a living out their M&P, or anything else.

Such a person may feel that his budget has been used up and that it's impossible to grow his budget. He may have watched his plans go up in flames. It might also be as a result of having tried to solve the challenges he has faced using the wrong tools or the wrong mindset. It might be that he tried solving a challenge without understanding and gaining insight into it.

Over and above all these, discouragement could be the result of simply becoming overwhelmed by fear, and seeing no way out. The latter is a lie, but unless a person knows and sees it to be a lie, it can actually appear as the truth, or as being 'objective' or 'pragmatic'.

### **(iii) Indecision**

I have already treated indecision, at length, in chapters 1 – 3 so I shall not say anything regarding it, here. The only thing I will add is that like in every other area, indecision is both a problem in its own right, and gives birth or worsens the problems one is faced with.

### **(iv) Prejudice**

All human beings are prejudiced one way or the other. Healthy prejudices such as believing all men and women are equal; respecting the rights, property, conscience and well-being of others etc. are good prejudices to have. Unfortunately, in the real world, people have unhealthy prejudices born out of fear and ignorance. Some may have it out of bad will, but I believe they are a tiny minority.

You may encounter prejudice when you apply for a job, or appear for an interview. You may encounter it on the streets or with a prospective land lord. You might even encounter it in someone you love. If you master negotiation, you will be able to anticipate and deal with prejudice. Otherwise, the prejudice you encounter becomes a destructive force that robs you of many opportunities you can use to build a career and a life.

### **(v) Stigma**

The line between unhealthy prejudice and stigma is often blurry. Stigma, like unhealthy prejudices, is almost always a result of ignorance.

In today's world, mental ill health is unfortunately something still surrounded by stigma. Some people erroneously believe it is a result of a lack of will power, indiscipline, or a result of a person not controlling what is under his control.

You must not buy into it. Ill-health of any sort is nothing more and nothing less than ill-health. It is possible to regain one's health, and to cope, effectively and well with what cannot be regained. You may, unconsciously, buy into the reality of stigma if you don't educate yourself.

### **(vi) Ignorance**

This to me is the single root of all these enemies. More than any other thing, ignorance worsens our fears and does damage to our decision making. When ignorance combines with any of the 5 I listed above, it worsens them and thereby worsens fear. Ignorance is the biggest ally of fear.

The only effective antidote to ignorance is a Growth Mindset. With a Growth Mindset, you never stop learning and growing. Without one, you either stagnate or deteriorate. Ignorance makes us feel like victims of a cruel fate. It is what makes us decide, choose, and act, blindly.

You alone can disarm all these enemies. In this effort, your Growth Mindset is your biggest ally. With your Growth Mindset, you can deal with and overcome ill health and convert your disabilities into an opportunity for learning and growth.

## **Chapter 7 Part 6**

### **“Educating Yourself is Something You Cannot Avoid”**

#### ***Educating yourself is something you cannot avoid***

Many people appear to have an aversion for continuous learning. Maybe this is a reaction to the effort it took to pass through a formal system of schooling. I remember reading the story of a person who sits at the head of a multi-industry multi-billion dollar corporation. The person confessed that he never reads books. That is tragic, because knowledge, rightly understood, truly is power.

Today, every form of emotional and mental illness can be tackled, and the vast majority of such people can heal, become whole, and find true joy. Similarly, people with every form of conceivable disability are not at the mercy of their disabilities and consigned to a life of helplessness and dependence.

The state of mental or emotional ill health or the disabilities you suffer from is something you don't have control over. Educating yourself reveals the powerful ways in which you can aid your recovery and regain charge of your life.

Before I show you how to leverage the power of your Growth Mindset, I'd like to share a few thoughts on the relationship between a Growth Mindset and growth.

#### ***Growth is holistic***

The Growth Mindset is as indispensable just as food and water are indispensable. It aids the growth of our intellectual abilities, our skills, our knowledge or those things we typically associate with “success”. Growth in Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, and Habits (KASH) is important. But this is not the whole picture.

The Growth Mindset has to help the “whole you” to grow. This is the hardest part of growth. All of us naturally play to our strengths and downplay our weaknesses. As I mentioned earlier, sometimes, we dare not even admit the latter. Growing intellectually, emotionally, physically, spiritually, (and in cases of mental ill health, growing in mental health) is important for us to be at peace with ourselves, others, and with the here and now of our lives.

Don't set up artificial boundaries in your life. If a part of you is not growing, you will be forced to compensate for its stunted growth. People who have a problem with a particular limb will necessarily compensate by making up with their other limbs or in some other way. There's nothing wrong with that. In fact, it's admirable. But to hide or make up for stunted emotional growth with heightened intellectual growth is tragic. Some people hide their underdeveloped social skills behind the façade of a job title or a designation. They use their strengths and achievements to cover up or paper over their failings and shortcomings, hoping that others won't notice. These are masks that people use all the time. Don't get involved in these games. If you are involved, admit it, and stop playing them. It is the Fixed Mindset at play, coupled, perhaps, with the problem of denial, ignorance or both.

Every area and aspect of your life should be open to growth: relationships, learning to spend and grow your 4-part budget; learning to learn; learning to negotiate instead of resorting to flight, fight, accommodation or compromise; growing in emotional and mental health; growing in your career and work; building a happy and peaceful family life in which each person helps the other to grow etc. If you are not growing, in all probability, your near and dear ones are not growing too, or doing so with extreme difficulty, or growing in a stunted manner. Do not doom yourself and your loved ones to spend a life asking “What if...?” or wishing “If only....”

### ***Become informed about the nature of the challenge***

I have been exploring how a Growth Mindset is essential to tackle these issues. In chapter 5, I explored the realism with which a strategist deals with complex challenges. If you combine both, you will be able to assist your recovery, and to stay healthy. You will also be able to deal with any issues arising from physical disabilities.

This mindset and realism deals a death blow to all the enemies I referred to in the previous section – denial, discouragement, ignorance, prejudice, stigma, and indecision. Watching animal trainers and biologists in the wild shows that they can play with lions, hunt crocodiles, swim with killer sharks, and carry snakes in their hands and pockets simply because of their knowledge about these animals and their habits.

Whether you are dealing with emotional or mental ill health or physical disabilities of any sort, becoming informed about what you are experiencing and going through is the first step. Become informed and knowledgeable about the nature, the causes, the predisposing factors that contribute to mental and emotional ill health, and the courses of treatment available to you. Once you do that, it begins to appear like what it actually is – a manageable problem that you can influence through valid behavior and activity goals. Suddenly, your attention and energy is not being spent fixated on the problem (like a deer in the headlights) or spent on just trying to cope with it or escape from it.

There are things that people can help you with, and there are things that only you can do. You must know which is which because regaining your emotional and mental health requires both. You must seek help you require, and help yourself where appropriate. Believing that mental and emotional ill health is something you can beat based on will power is wrong and misguided. These have little or nothing to do with a lack of will power.

Coping with these challenges may or may not involve medication or therapy. You cannot decide this ahead of time. You can make an informed decision if you educate yourself about these issues. However, this education is not, and should not be a form of self-medication. It is not meant to replace competent help where required. It is simply an effort to know what is happening to you, especially with regards things that are not under your control.

Educating yourself about the role of emotions, the proper development of emotions, and what happens when emotional growth is stunted, or when emotions and your emotional life are not integrated to the other parts of your being, and to other aspects of your life, is a responsibility you and your loved ones have. As a veteran, this is indispensable because of what you have experienced and witnessed.

## Chapter 7 Part 7

### **“How Do You Build This Pool of Knowledge?”**

#### ***How do you build this pool of knowledge?***

As I prepared this book, I got in touch with a therapist who uses my System of Negotiation when he deals with his clients. I presented a list of questions to him and asked him to provide me with written answers. I'm reproducing my questions and his answers, below:

#### **1) What mindset should a veteran approach mental health issues with?**

*Mental health problems are problems like any other. They can be scary, but they can be managed effectively and even solved completely some of time. They are misunderstood by many people so seeking help from people who you trust is important, but they may only be able to do so much – this is why seeking professional consultation is important.*

#### **2) What challenges do they face – regarding both the nature of the therapy and the therapist's attitude – when they begin seeing a therapist?**

*The hardest part, like in many things, is getting started. Therapy often helps, even if you don't completely understand why. You aren't there to show that you have it all together, so ideally you would relax and take a 'wait and see' attitude. Nevertheless, you should also have a conversation about expectations for the therapy, and in particular, what the plan is if the therapy happens not to help. Negotiating this up front will save you a lot of wasted time and effort.*

#### **3) How can they clarify expectations regarding the therapy, at the word go? What expectations should they clarify?**

*See answer to question 2. Any expectation is worth bringing up at any time, and you may not know you have them until they are not met. A good therapist should welcome you bringing it up, and a better one will help you to discover your expectations and assumptions sooner than you would normally.*

#### **4) How can they remain assertive and in control of the therapy? How can they remain in control of and responsible for all their decisions without handing this over to the therapist?**

*At the risk of sounding glib, just be yourself. If that is really hard for you to do with a particular therapist, you may have to move on. You may feel uncomfortable talking about certain topics, and the therapist may challenge you to try, but you should always feel in control of what you talk about, when, and the degree of detail.*

*The only way they can patients can literally lose control in therapy when patients are deemed a danger to themselves or others. They should clarify what this means with the therapist, but suicidal thoughts with intention to act on them and a plan to succeed will result in hospitalization without the patient's consent. Suicidal thoughts by themselves do no merit mandatory hospitalization, and therapists will help patients develop plans to be safe to prevent hospitalization.*

#### **5) How can they make effective decisions regarding seeking or benefitting from therapy?**

*Meet therapist . Call them and talk to them or come in to an appointment to meet them. Hopefully you will like the first one you meet, but be ready to say thank you very much and move on until you feel comfortable with one. Be ready to move on if you are not beginning to get better in the first 6 sessions. Staying with a therapist when you are not improving is just an unhealthy dependence. Be willing to try different therapeutic modalities, and trust your own thoughts about what you think will work for you.*

#### **6) What inner resources should they rely on?**

*All of them. If you have trouble identifying your inner resources, a great focus for therapy can be to identify them, and how and when to use them.*

## **7) How can they educate themselves on issues of mental health?**

*Read. Try websites of therapy clients that have dealt with issues similar to your own. Apart from reading what the experts say, investigate your own experience and that of people you admire and trust. They may have gotten through a mental health issue without ever seeking help formally. So be open, but be loyal to yourself and your way of doing things. Discovering your own way is an education in and of itself, requires self-reflection and conversations with safe parties, but is not risk free. BE ready to try and fail. But keep on it will be worth it.*

### **Taking personal responsibility for your healing and growth**

This may involve seeking professional help. If you have experienced anxiety, depression, panic attacks or emotional pain of any kind for more than one month, taking personal responsibility implies seeking some kind of external help. In an earlier section, I shared some ideas about how you can take charge of your own therapy.

Despite the best of intentions, no one can coerce or manipulate you into making the decisions required for healing and growth. If you don't desire healing, the problem exists at another level. The lack of interest or desire for healing is a symptom of something deeper. I shall explore this in detail, when I consider the issue of emotional ill-health.

### **It all starts (and ends) with a healthy and accurate self-image**

Once you start becoming informed and knowledgeable and interact with others who are making an effort to heal and grow, your self-confidence will grow. Once your self-confidence grows, your self-image will automatically become healthier and more accurate. You will see that you are not an illness nor what others say you are, nor what others expect you ought to be. Your image cannot be based on the expectations or opinions of others. This is a vital point that I hope you will deeply internalize.

Your self-image must be grounded on a solid foundation. This sense of who and what you are – apart from your achievements, your abilities, your potential, your experiences etc. – will guide and guard you. I hope you will not buy into the many stereotypes about who or what a veteran is or should be. You are simply 'you'. If you bear the wounds of war on your heart, soul, or body, you are a wounded soldier. Soldiers get wounded. It's part of the deal you and I agreed to, when we signed up for to serve in the military. We knew that the possibility existed that we might get wounded or even get killed.

You are not superman nor should you try to be. Individuals who start out with a poor self-image spend their lives on the treadmill of winning others' approval, esteem, gratitude, affection, or love. Sometimes, tragically, they are on the treadmill of proving themselves to themselves. And since they are never quite satisfied with themselves nor are they quite certain that everyone else holds them in awe and esteem, they can never quite relax. Living on a treadmill is not a route to peace and happiness.

A related danger of a poor self-image is that of falling prey to the superficial or erroneous judgments of others. Seeing a distorted image of yourself or believing that the distorted image that others see is the real you, are both destructive illusions. They lead to self-rejection rather than self-acceptance. Self-rejection is not a route to happiness and peace.

### **Be careful how you treat yourself**

Be compassionate, gentle, and patient with yourself. Treat yourself as you would a loved one going through what you are going through. If you adopt this perspective of treating yourself as you would a wounded loved one, you will treat yourself appropriately. We want our loved ones who are ill to recover. We know that recovery proceeds at its own pace.

If you are compassionate, gentle, and patient with yourself, you will be able to calmly, firmly, and politely say 'no' to those who have expectations regarding what you ought and ought not to do, and how to do it. We cannot demand compassion, gentleness and patience from others. But we can establish legitimate boundaries that others, no matter how well-intentioned, do not cross.

If you are critical, unforgiving, impatient, and rough with yourself, you will consciously or unconsciously attract others to do the same to you. The truth is that if you don't love yourself, you will be unable to love others, or to recognize and accept their love. And love, more than any other thing, brings happiness and healing along with it.

## Chapter 7 Part 8

### "Common Issues Faced by Veterans"

#### ***Common issues faced by veterans***

I will share a number of resources you can use to become better informed and knowledgeable about the health challenges you may be facing.

#### ***A) MENTAL ILL HEALTH***

##### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Many times, untreated PTSD can be the root cause of the issues relating to anger, depression, relationship problems, and the material poverty resulting from unemployment, not living within one's means, or not growing one's income. Today, everything required to help a person recover from this illness exists. But you have to supply the willingness to seek treatment and to stick with it. You have to face and defeat those 6 enemies that stand in the way of you seeking and sticking with treatment.

I warmly recommend a thorough, easy-to-read, jargon-free, and conversational book titled '*Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*' (part of the popular 'for Dummies' series) written by Dr. Mark Goulston. The book covers everything you need to know in order to become sufficiently informed about PTSD – its symptoms and causes, how it is diagnosed; how you can select and build your plan for treatment; how it is treated; the myths that surround it; how you can help a loved one suffering from PTSD; and what you can do to recover. Dr. Goulston's book provides a thorough understanding of this illness and what you can and ought to do, in order to recover.

An excellent feature of the book is that it is loaded with things directed specifically to veterans. (Dr. Goulston is on the board of advisors for American Women Veterans Foundation – [www.americanwomenveterans.org](http://www.americanwomenveterans.org). I also warmly recommend that you visit his website – [www.markgoulston.com](http://www.markgoulston.com)– and read his blog and take a lot of the resources he makes available for free download from his site.

These sites offer much help and information about PTSD.

<http://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-overview.html>  
<http://www.ptsdhelp.net/index.html>

Scott Lee, a veteran from the First Gulf War, also maintains this excellent site.  
<http://ptsdasoldiersperspective.blogspot.in/>

Please remember the advice to network with other veterans and to meet with therapists. Please don't think you can beat PTSD using will-power. You can't simply because the problem is not a lack of will-power.

## **B) EMOTIONAL ILL HEALTH**

### **1) Emotional growth, healing, and integration**

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that the most consequential aspect of your 4-part budget is your emotions. In order to manage, spend, and grow this budget, you must gain a thorough understanding of your emotions, become emotionally healthy, integrate your emotions to the other aspects of your life, and find happiness in the here and now of it.

To do this, I warmly recommend the works of the late Dr. Conrad Baars. Dr. Baars was a pioneer in his lifetime. The number of helpful insights you stand to gain from his works are too many to mention in this small section. However, I shall list a few that might have the greatest value for you.

- i) An accurate understanding of the different kinds of emotions and the specific functions of these different kinds. It might be eye opening to realize there are no negative or positive emotions. No emotion in itself is a threat to a person's health, happiness, and well-being.
- ii) Distinguishing between emotions and feelings, and how both are necessary for your happiness and well-being.
- iii) The role and importance of emotional growth and what happens to an individual when the emotional life does not grow in harmony with physical and intellectual growth.
- iii) Understanding what authentic will power is, and distinguishing it from inauthentic will power. We are used to thinking of will power and discipline in terms of gritting our teeth and getting things done in spite of our emotions. Dr. Baars shows how to leverage the power of emotions and thereby gain what he terms 'authentic will power'. (Grit alone cannot last the distance when we consider a person's life as a whole. It is easy to buy into the macho tough-guy image. But if the price of maintaining that image is your health, happiness and serenity (and those of your loved ones), then it's too much of a price to pay. Asking for and relying for help when you can't do it alone is a way of life in the military. So is assuming personal responsibility. Neither Nick Vujicic nor Michael Santos relied on grit to get them through their challenges.)
- iv) How to integrate your emotions with your intellect and will and how the intellect guides the emotions and how the will should temper and harness these emotions. Integration every aspect of our life – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually – is a decision that most people make unconsciously.
- v) How emotions cannot be controlled but can be guided. This is closely connected to the idea of intellectual health that I will treat in another section.
- vi) The importance and need for unconditional love in order for a person to experience authentic happiness, emotional growth, and emotional healing.

There's much more and I advise you to discover Dr. Baars' insights and suggestions for yourself. He has written a number of excellent books. I suggest you start with '*Feeling and healing your emotions*' and '*Born only once*'. The first of these Once you read and understand these two, you can choose to read the others that are more technical especially '*Healing the unaffirmed*' and '*Psychic wholeness and healing*' (Psychic is popularly used in a way that has nothing in common with how Dr. Baars uses this term. What he explains in these books has nothing to do with the magical, mystical, or paranormal.) You can visit the website maintained by family – [www.conradbaars.com](http://www.conradbaars.com). Some of his works are available as audio books and if you prefer that format, you can make inquiries about what is and is not available.



## **(2) Anger Management**

There is possibly no emotion that is more 'troublesome' than that of anger. It seems to show up in so many other conditions. It can wreak havoc on our own selves, our near and dear ones, our careers, and indeed our road to recovery. It is even viewed as a 'negative' emotion.

But anger is a human emotion that is good and necessary for us to thrive in this world. The problems arise when anger gets out of hand and starts controlling us. Then our decisions, choices, and behaviors, and reactions become destructive. When we lose control of our decisions with regards anger and cannot direct it, lots of destructive things ensue.

Dr. Baars' book *'Feeling and Healing your Emotions'* gives you a good understanding of the role of emotions – including that of anger – in your life. But given that anger is tied to so many issues that veterans struggle with – guilt, forgiveness, pain and lots more – it is necessary to become informed about and sort out these painful issues.

To deal with these issues and ridding yourself of destructive anger, I recommend that you turn to the works of Dr. W. Doyle Gentry. A perfect starting point would be *'Anger Management for Dummies'*. It is also written in the same mold as other books in the 'for Dummies' series – in a conversational and easy to understand tone. Another equally useful (and smaller) book is *'Getting the Best of Your Anger Before It Gets the Best of You'* by Dr. Les Carter.

## **(3) Gratitude**

War wounds us in so many ways. It doesn't depend on whether our side wins or loses. The reality of human conflict is both ugly and brutal. No one can forget that the realities of human conflict can cause men and women in uniform to become cynical and jaded about life. Seeing man's inhumanity to man is not a very humanizing thing. Of course the moments and acts of heroism, courage, loyalty, friendships, and extraordinary acts of kindness make up the full and accurate picture of war. When veterans have been in combat for extended periods of time, the realities of war can cause multiple wounds at multiple levels.

To provide an antidote to all the ugliness, it is essential for us to experience the beauty and love that exists in the world. Ugliness and cynicism can corrode our hearts. Gratitude arises spontaneously in our hearts when we experience love, joy and beauty. In that regard, it is not something that we can aim for. We can, however, make the decisions and choices that either take us away from or take us towards love, joy, and beauty. This is not simply philosophical thinking. People living in deep emotional pain are often unaware of those things that give rise to gratitude. To feel gratitude for life is a sign of emotional health, or at least that healing is taking place.

## **(4) Guilt and Forgiveness**

Guilt is a normal reaction to doing something wrong, bad, or lacking in moral goodness. It is abnormal not to feel guilt. However, it is essential to distinguish between true and false guilt. War always implies a loss and destruction of human life. The casualties of war often involve civilians and non-combatants. Sometimes, we must make tough decisions in the blink of an eye. Sometimes things go horribly wrong, despite our good intentions, levels of training and preparation, and levels of technological progress that seek to limit the casualties of war. Such things can give rise to a haunting sense of guilt. Getting trapped in guilt is a destructive and dangerous thing. A proper response to guilt is to seek, receive, and accept forgiveness.

You must seek forgiveness and must also forgive yourself. Both go hand in hand. I hope you will set out on the road of forgiveness and discover the profound peace and authentic healing that exists on the far side of forgiveness. Forgiveness, in the final analysis is a search for the beautiful and joyful face of unconditional love. It cannot be learned and mastered any more than love can be learned and

mastered. Ultimately, forgiveness revolves around forgiving ourselves, feeling and knowing we are forgiven, and forgiving others.

Sometimes, in addition to authentic guilt, it is also possible to be held hostage to false guilt – feeling guilt for what was not our fault, or for consequences and effects we could not avert. Breaking the cycle of hurt, pain, and guilt is something that must be done. Forgiveness and distinguishing between true and false guilt is something intimately connected to emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health.

There are some great resources available to help you learn about forgiveness. What I have shared with you previously is an excellent foundation on which to build. But don't stop at the foundations. I have learned a lot from the books and videos on forgiveness what were written and produced in the aftermath of one of the worst human tragedies in recent human history – the Rwandan genocide. The books of Immaculée Ilibagiza, a survivor of the genocide, and a deeply moving video titled 'Wounded Healers' (<http://vimeo.com/12598191>) produced to document how victims and perpetrators of the genocide have gone through a profound healing process and are now able and willing to live, face to face, with each other. It documents an authentic and deep forgiveness, not a superficial one. These might be a good place to start. You might also find hope and help in the books of Dr. Everett Worthington. I warmly recommend his books '*Forgiving and reconciling*' and '*A Just Forgiveness*'.

Your search for forgiveness and the authentic healing and happiness it brings will open you to a whole new adventure about life. It will help you see life and people, differently. It will help you see the past, present, and future differently. These words from Henri J. M. Nouwen shed light on the meaning and nature of forgiveness

*"Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all people love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour increasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human family."*

(It may interest you to know that Nouwen also wrote a book titled '*Wounded Healers*'.)

Emotional health, healing, growth, and integration involves those intangibles that make life beautiful and worth living. Love, compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, and more interact in hidden ways to build your happiness and contribute to authentic healing and wholesome growth. Emotional health or ill health is intimately associated with our experience of receiving and giving unconditional love. If we don't experience this sort of love, everything else has the taste of ash.

### ***Misusing emotions***

Because of the importance of emotions in our lives, and how things that are good in themselves can lead us off a cliff when we don't use and harness them properly, I shall explore this issue in a little more depth.

Our emotions have many uses. However, these uses do extend to habitually trying to get rid of a 'negative' emotion using a 'positive' one. I have already said there are no 'negative' or 'positive' ones. Sadly, too many people insist on viewing certain as 'negative' and others as 'positive'. As a result, they seek to repress such 'negative emotions' using what they consider as positive ones. Similarly, emotions are misused when they are used to block emotional pain. We must, instead, seek to identify and resolve the root cause of the emotional pain. Sometimes, after a death or an event over which we have no control, we must learn to fully accept and experience the emotions of sadness and the pain, and then let go of both.

A second misuse of emotions is to seek to block emotional pain that manifests in the form of depression, chronic anger, or even aggression. Others seek to relieve boredom, restlessness, stress, or tension of some sort or the other by engaging in (high risk or extreme) behaviors that dull the sharp edges of reality. Behavior that courts danger and risk for its own sake cannot be said to be 'normal'. The human instinct for self-preservation is what is normal. When this is lacking, the person refuses to accept some aspect of reality as it is. The thrill of excitement and the rush of adrenaline is a normal human reaction. But to live for such a thrill and deliberately expose ourselves to danger, no matter how popular it becomes in our culture, goes against that fundamental needs of each human being.

A third way of misusing emotions is to rely on them as a valid guide to your decisions and choices. Some people are ruled by doing things because *'I felt like it'* and avoiding things because *'I didn't feel like it'*. Your emotions should assist your will and your intellect, not direct them. If your emotions are the guiding light for your decisions, actions, activities, and behaviors, you will experience a lot of grief both as a direct consequence of your own emotions, and those of others.

The potential to misuse your emotions and make ineffective decisions as a result of their extremely powerful pull means you must become informed and educated about their proper use, their malfunction, their growth, how to guide them, and their integration with other aspects of your life.

### ***Becoming a wounded healer***

Our homes, offices, and streets are filled with people living trapped in emotional pain. Some have lived in emotional pain for decades. In today's world, there are numerous wars going on that does not involve armed conflict. Its casualties are children from broken homes, from abusive homes, running offices that are equally abusive. It is said that *'Hurt people hurt people.'*

Nick Vujicic writes

*"It's easier to have no arms and legs than to be a kid from a broken home."*

*When I say this to audiences all over the world, tears begin to flow. The anguish and pain of divorce is so devastating to young people. The sorrow runs to the depth of their soul."*

This is an opportunity for you to heal and grow. If you look around you, you will see many people who are facing the same problems you are, even though they have never been in combat situations. While writing this book, I was in constant touch with some veterans I know and have coached. In answer to a question I asked him, this is part of what he wrote:

*"I found an awesome psychologist who specialized in dealing with Vets. It turned my life around and I am using what I have been taught to help vets that are in bad places. I am a wounded healer."*

I believe every veteran has a call to become a wounded healer, first to near and dear ones, and then to those within reach, who are suffering. But please don't spend the budget you ought to spend on your loved ones taking care others. A veteran who is a wounded healer must also bring order, discipline, and harmony to his calling as a wounded healer. When you notice the pain of those around you, you will realize, deeply, that your life is a gift given to you and given you so that you may enrich and heal others. There is no greater human calling.

### ***C) PHYSICAL DISABILITIES***

Like every setback and difficulty in life, disabilities can be life altering. Given that physical fitness is a fundamental requirement of a career in the military, men and women in uniform go to extraordinary lengths to maintain their levels of fitness when they are in active service. The requirements, training, and demands of military life impose a certain rigor and discipline. In this way, a soldier's self-image is powerfully bound up with his or her levels of physical fitness.

Disabilities suffered during combat can strike at the heart of this self-image and make us feel weak, helplessness and dependent, and incomplete. Coping with disabilities is easier when a person is emotionally and mentally healthy. To actively convert our physical disabilities to an opportunity, you must be at peace with the here and now of your life. Remember the anger, pain, and confusion Nick Vujicic experienced? He was able to convert his disabilities after he searched for and found healing, joy, hope and meaning. In fact, Nick found it after he discovered the power of faith and was able to see meaning and purpose through eyes illumined by faith.

Physical disabilities may require that you undergo physical therapy of some sort. The duration of such therapy will necessary vary according to the nature of the disability. It may mean you have to learn new skills, use technological aids to help you cope, take medication of some sort, go through physical therapy, and go through a process of readjustment to the new realities of your life. You must be willing to be taken care of. This is one more reason why I wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Baars' ideas about authentic will power. You cannot and must not demand what your will cannot provide, if it is constrained. At the same time, on no account can you give in to despair.

Physical disabilities are often compounded by issues like PTSD and emotional ill-health. This will possibly be the most difficult challenge of your life thus far. I am convinced that only supernatural faith, the unconditional love of your family and loved ones, and effective medical care can provide a foundation to fully accept your situation, to see meaning in it, to find hope in your darkest hour. But all this, without your personal input can only go so far. It is the power of your spirit that is being tested, and your will power, rightly understood. Only after you fully accept the situation you are in, accept the reality of your ill health, and take full and personal responsibility for your healing can the process of healing, rebuilding, and growth, begin. The battle on the inside must be fought and won before the one on the outside.

Below, you can find online resources to get some of the help you need to face and overcome your disabilities.

- 1) An excellent disability evaluation has been prepared by Dr. Philip Plattner. It is available at <http://www.ptsdhelp.net/id21.html>
- 2) <http://maketheconnection.net/> is also an excellent site for veterans. It has numerous resources including this one – <http://maketheconnection.net/events/injury/> – which is related physical disabilities.
- 3) Disabled American Veterans (<http://www.dav.org/>); Paralyzed Veterans of America (<http://www.pva.org/site/c.ajlRK9NJLcJ2E/b.6305401/k.BCBB/Home.htm>); and Blinded Veterans Association (<http://www.bva.org/>); and National Resources Directory (<https://www.nrd.gov/>) are also excellent sites that offer varied kinds of help and information.

#### ***D) INTELLECTUAL HEALTH***

Your healing in every aspect of life must be accompanied by what I term 'intellectual health'. This profoundly impacts your ideas, decisions, choices, actions, behaviors, and relationships.

In my System of Negotiation, I teach that M&P is the foundation for success. In the midst of the emotional turbulence of a negotiation, you need a fixed and unchanging standard by which to assess your decisions. The pull of emotion is not a valid guide. In fact, it will lead to making disastrous decisions, even though they feel right in the heat of the moment. In negotiations, emotions can get very intense, both yours and those of your negotiation counterparts.

A very similar thing happens in life. Too many people buy into the line 'If it feels good, do it'. This piece from the New York Times Op Ed page (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/13/opinion/if-it-feels-right.html>) captures what I mean. From the article, it appears that a number of people subscribe to the assumption (which is often a rule for decisions, choices, behaviors, and actions) that anything and

everything is 'ok' provided one feels it is right, or feels intensely about it. This can be deadly when it influences consequential decisions and choices that have unseen and far reaching effects on our lives and the lives of those who share it.

Our feelings and emotions are not a valid guide neither in the decisions made during a negotiation, nor decisions made in the course of our lives. They have a specific purpose and providing an orienting and guiding function. They do not replace or substitute for decision making. We must form our intellects and our consciences well, in the light of objective valid norms.

The fact that everybody does something does not make it right. (It's also a lie because neither you nor I know what everybody else is doing or deciding, and more importantly why they are doing or deciding it.) The intensity and duration of emotions do not legitimize them.

Your intellect needs guidance. Your M&P will provide crystal clear guidance for the decisions you take. But also look to the values and beliefs that your M&P are founded upon. These have a great and often unseen bearing on the consequential decisions you take in your relationships, in therapy, in how you build your career, in your beliefs, in your world view, in how you form your conscience with regards how you spend our budget, how you interact with one another, how you decide the basis of distinguishing between good or bad, moral or immoral, right or wrong. Always chew the ideas and opinions of others before swallowing. And, chew your own ideas and opinions before deciding or choosing on account of them.

#### ***E) SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND THE ROLE OF SUPERNATURAL FAITH IN HEALING AND IN MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH***

I'm aware that many people have baggage in this area. Some people feel uncomfortable talking about faith, and some see faith as a cause of division and strife, and some see it as optional to living a good and worthwhile life. Others are openly hostile and antagonistic to faith. And some see it as an essential aspect of their life and well-being.

Looking at the human race as a whole, we see that humanity does need some sort of faith to make sense of life. Faith is a powerful anchor that provides an anchor through many of the storms of life. But for faith to be genuine and for a person to direct his or her life on account of faith, it must be embraced or rejected, voluntarily. This is an area, like many others, where you are responsible for your choices and decisions.

A person like Nick Vujicic writes and speaks from a position of faith. Many others who have weathered the storms of life don't speak in terms of faith. I hope you will engage this question seriously – if you haven't already done so – and come up with answers to which you can hold yourself accountable to, and responsible for. Nobody believes in 'nothing'. Everybody believes in 'something'. That 'something' is that you must decide and choose, for yourself. It is a life-altering and life-centering decision and choice.

#### ***Create and belong to a community that heals and grows together***

We human beings are hard wired for community. We are social beings. We seek to live, work, recreate, and celebrate in community. This is the same regardless of culture, upbringing, personality, or any other difference. We veterans are no different. We need a sense of community. In a time of transition and far beyond, this sense of community and this need for community is acute and, in all probability, will only grow.

There are things about your military experience that those who haven't experienced it cannot fully appreciate. That's natural. You must be prepared for it. This is all the more reason why no veteran

should ever have to shoulder the burden of reintegrating into civilian life, and coping with its demands, alone. The bonds you formed in the military were often forged in the fire. You gave a part of your life, in a specific and very possibly unrepeatable way, to the military, and to your brothers and sisters in uniform. You have been through difficulties and dilemmas together. That is why those bonds need to be strengthened upon your re-entry into civilian life.

At different points in life, you and I need a helping hand, a kind word, a listening ear, and the acceptance and affirmation of others. Different people struggle with different things, for differing periods of time, and with differing intensities.

Loneliness and isolation make every challenge much worse. It also makes you erroneously feel that you have no responsibilities towards others and towards your singular mission in life. It makes you see yourself and your life inaccurately.

### ***Growth and maturity***

When we observe the world around us, we see that maturity is always the end result of growth. There can be no maturity if there is no growth. Maturity is not something that you will into existence. It is a result of growth and integration of every aspect of your life and being. The healthy human person is one who is emotionally healthy and whose emotions are fully integrated to every aspect of his being – his decisions, his actions, his choices, his behaviors, and his beliefs.

Any and every good thing is capable of being taken to extremes and thereby abused instead of being used responsibly. Growth, as I pointed out, is holistic. Yes it always comes with a price tag, and yes it does require an emotional commitment to embrace change, risk, uncertainty and ambiguity, and yes many a time we don't set out with safety nets or guarantees. We cannot get around any of this. Does this mean growth requires a brutal, lonely, and debilitating effort? No. Not if we have grown and matured, emotionally.

A vital part of the pain and price of growth is paid on the road to emotional growth and maturity. Sometimes, this may require emotional healing. It is only when your emotions, your will, and your intellect act harmoniously and are integrated within you that you gain authentic will power. Then, your will becomes powerful because it is assisted by your emotions. It then becomes easier to strive towards a particular objective. Your emotions can and will (eventually) overpower your will if you don't integrate both of them, or if they are not guided by your intellect. This integration is part of the pain and price of growth.

The effort becomes equally hard if your will has to fight two battles: against your emotions, and simultaneously, towards a particular objective. No human being can continue in this internal state of war for a long time without adverse effects. Something will give way, eventually. Continuing in a state of war, internally, is a route to misery, not happiness. This lack of integration or, more accurately, this fragmentation of the harmony that should exist within you has disastrous consequences that unfold over the course of a lifetime. Sadly, given the interdependent nature of reality, these consequences will be borne by others, too.

It makes everything boil down to effort, effort, and more effort. Just the thought of this unending slog can wear you out and trap you in a vicious cycle. You may then feel pulled in conflicting directions, unable to do, decide, and choose all that is necessary to achieve a particular objective. As a result, you may remain in a state of emotional turmoil and indecisiveness, unable to achieve those things that really matter, discharge your responsibilities, and make your life worth living. Stagnation ensues.

You may also find yourself becoming impatient and critical of others. Growth is a gradual and tender process. We cannot force a child, a puppy, or a plant to grow faster. We cannot even force ourselves to grow at a particular pace. People grow at different paces. Your journey is not another's. Sometimes, we will have to bear the pain of watching our loved ones take disastrous decisions and make choices that could have far-reaching negative consequences. We can bring it to their attention, but cannot force them.

All these highlight the importance of emotional growth, maturity, and healing. It is an area in which confusion abounds. I shall lead you to the sources who will educate you and shed light on this important aspect of life.

## **Chapter 7 Part 9**

### **“Without a Valid M&P, You Are at the Mercy of the Most Powerful Force in Your Life”**

#### ***Without a valid M&P, you are at the mercy of the most powerful force in your life***

You have, at various points in this book, kept bumping into the concept of a valid M&P. Without a valid M&P, your life will spin out of control. The wounds, scars, and memories of the past; the pressures and difficulties of the present; and the ‘unknowability’ of the future will combine in powerful ways to work up your emotions and make you react to whatever you are feeling and experiencing at a particular moment. And your emotions are the most powerful force at work in your life.

You can never be sure where any of the many roads you walk will lead you. Without a valid M&P to guide and light up the way, you will simply react to your feelings and emotions of the moment. Your feelings and emotions are good and necessary. (If you don't grow emotionally, and integrate your emotions to every aspect of your life, you cannot be happy. Your decisions and decision making will be far from effective if you are unhappy. I'll discuss this in the next chapter.) They have a specific purpose. But this purpose is to provide input, not guidance to your decisions. That guidance is the role of the intellect. The intellect cannot provide effective guidance without input from your emotions and feelings.

Your emotions are like the tires of a vehicle. When they are in good condition, they can take you through any terrain. But they cannot decide which terrain to take to, and which to avoid. This is opposed to a culture that screams ‘If it feels good, do it’. If it feels good, it feels good. Whether you ought (or ought not) to do it is something the feeling itself cannot provide guidance on. That moment to moment guidance is provided by your valid M&P. When this becomes a habit, you will intuitively be able to discern that some roads, despite providing the possibility of desirable feelings and emotions, ought not to be walked. Other emotions, assisted by your will, and illumined by your intellect, show you which road to walk, which road to leave, and which turn to take, and when to do a U turn and go back. All these are decisions that need a valid M&P for guidance.

More than any other single thing, underdeveloped and unguided emotions can and will wreak havoc on any and every aspect of your life. When your emotions are running wild, it is impossible to budget your time, energy, and money, appropriately. It is impossible to negotiate with others or with yourself. It is impossible to think with the clarity and focus required by a strategist. Unguided emotions have destroyed careers, marriages, carefully conceived plans, and resulted in abusive homes and organizations.

#### ***With a valid M&P, you can harness this most powerful force***

The picture of emotions is not complete if you only look at the trouble they can cause. Your emotions have assisted you in taking on difficult tasks and challenges. They have brought you happiness and contentment. They make your life richer, more authentic, and deeply human. They give you much

satisfaction in your friendships and your relationships. Isn't it true that people who haven't fallen in love, who haven't experienced unconditional and affirming love are as a rule not very happy?

Your emotions can provide the glue and the bonding to your valid M&P. It is only when you emotionally own your valid M&P that it becomes yours. If it remains as something you do, it will always remain external to you. Since it expresses what you are trying to be and to become, there must be no gap between you and your M&P. A me-centered M&P is an invalid one as you have read. It's also insipid. It doesn't inspire you. A valid M&P is something that you can connect to both intellectually and emotionally.

If you don't budget your emotions, you will pay a huge price. A virtuous cycle is set up when you budget your time, energy, money, and emotions. Budgeting these must be done holistically, and in an integrated manner. These four are not water tight compartments. It is after all the life of a single 'you'. Only a valid M&P can show you how to budget these, appropriately. Nothing and no one else can. Your emotions, by nature, seek the direction and tempering influence of your intellect. They cannot direct and govern themselves. If you don't guide and direct them using your intellect and your will, they will take control.

### ***Effective decisions and your emotional budget***

Without a healthy and well-developed emotional life, it is IMPOSSIBLE to make effective decisions. Why? In one sentence, it is because without emotional growth, healing, and integration, it is impossible to manage your emotions, and thereby manage your budget.

For your M&P to play the decisive guiding and guarding function it ought to serve, you must emotionally commit to it, even when you don't feel like it. This cannot be the result of will power alone. Life will become a brutal, lonely, and agonizing struggle if you have to rely on will power without the assistance of your emotions. It will also be devoid of happiness. And one day, this iron-discipline based on the will alone, will break down. To enjoy what you do and do what you enjoy, your emotions play a huge part. In fact, I can't think of doing anything enjoyable in which my emotions don't play a huge part.

In my work as a negotiator, and as a negotiation coach, I tell people that decisions are best made in a state of emotional calm. Emotions gone wild undermine effective decision making. This is as true for you as it is with those you are negotiating with. Similarly, can you think of a strategist being able to conceive and execute an effective strategy in a state of emotional agitation?

If you don't spend, grow, and manage your emotional budget, it will not matter whether or not or even how well you manage your budgets in those other three areas – time, energy, and money. Your emotions will sooner or later overwhelm your ability to manage the others. And in the rare case that they don't overwhelm the others, you will be consigned to a life of unhappiness, loneliness, and self-inflicted pain. No veteran should go through that entirely avoidable experience.

### ***Spending and growing your emotional budget***

In the previous chapter, I described how to spend and grow your time, energy, and money budget. Before I end this chapter, let me share with you how you can spend and grow your emotional budget.

- i) Have a valid M&P and committing to it both emotionally and intellectually.
- ii) Become intellectually healthy so that your intellect can play its guiding role instead of relying on the 'I feel like it' or 'I don't feel like it' rules on the basis of how many people decide to spend their emotional budget.



- iii) Allow yourself to fully experience each emotion. Don't misuse your emotions.
- iv) Allow each emotion to grow and flourish under the guidance of the intellect.
- v) Experience profound healing – in every aspect of your life that requires healing. Overcome the 6 enemies I described above, and learn to deal with anger without denying, minimizing, or pretending it away.
- vi) Learn to distinguish between true and false guilt. Forgive yourself, forgive others, be open and receive forgiveness.
- vii) Become grateful for the past, and for the present, and for every moment.
- viii) Live fully in the 'here' and 'now', making your decisions in the light of your personal valid M&P.
- ix) Distinguish between what you can control, what you can influence but not control, and what you cannot control. Spend your total budget only on the first two, and always keep an eye on the last one.
- x) Love unconditionally. When you learn to love unconditionally, you will draw unconditional love into your life. Love brings order, harmony, acceptance, meaning, fulfillment, and joy. A lack of love necessarily leads to unhappiness, which in turn leads to emotional restlessness, and a subsequent wasting of your emotional budget.

As you can see, growing and spending your emotional budget requires numerous decisions, daily. It requires both a mindset, and the ability to re-react, habitually. These will be some of the most important decisions you make, daily.

There's just so much emotional commitment we can bring to our duties, activities, responsibilities, interactions and relationships. Growing and spending your emotional budget requires growth, healing, and the integration of your emotions with your intellect, and will. It also will require healing at a spiritual level. This journey of course, lasts a lifetime.

## Conclusion

### **“Transition: A Time for Effective, Coherent, and Congruent Decisions”**

#### **Conclusion**

##### ***Transition: A time for effective, coherent, and congruent decisions***

I have covered a lot of ground here. I have had to convey much within a limited number of pages. I hope you will engage each chapter in this book more than once; I hope your engagement with the contents of this book will lead you to engage yourself, and life, at ever deeper levels; I hope this engagement will be at ever increasing levels of understanding and insight into reality; I hope all these will lead you to do for yourself what you alone can do, and seek help where help is necessary and appropriate. In the final analysis, I hope this e-book sheds light on that prayer I referred to in the introduction:

*Lord, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

To me, it represents and contains the highest manifestation of human maturity and sound judgment. Your journey through life, as an effective decision maker, will bring you back, again and again, at increasingly higher levels of growth, maturity, and wisdom to the truth of how your decisions – founded on a valid M&P – are what you can control, and what gives you ultimate control, happiness, serenity, and every good thing, in abundance.

##### ***The courage to be, become, and remain you***

The Growth Mindset is necessary to live free from the fear of incompetence, stagnation, failure, and the approval of others. However, despite its presence, many things can undo much of the good it is capable of doing: a lack of a valid M&P, ineffective decision-making skills, and a lack of emotional growth and maturity are just some.

Your valid M&P protects you from a disease that afflicts so many – they are constantly comparing themselves to others. Keeping up with the Joneses or competing against another person robs you of the opportunity to be yourself, and to be happy being yourself. It keeps you on your own path and helps you realize that your path is not another's. You cannot walk their paths nor can you walk the paths they point out simply because you want to get along with them. A valid M&P gives you the light and the guidance to walk your journey without getting trapped in your world. You know that your M&P is not set and rooted in your world. You also know that being rooted in the world of the others does not mean you can't or won't say 'yes' or 'no' whenever your M&P so directs.

Being, becoming, and remaining you, is the journey of your life. Even if you possess the Growth Mindset in every aspect of your life, not everything about you needs to be, ought to be, or can be, changed. The ability to distinguish between what needs to be stopped or discarded, improved and strengthened, and left alone is a judgment call that becomes easier with the passage of time, experience, growing holistically, living with a valid M&P, improving your decision-making skills, and of course failing and succeeding. Growth, when it is holistic, has a way of showing us what needs to grow, what is growing well, what is growing badly, and what needs to be uprooted. I am reminded of the words of the famous British poet, T.S. Eliot: *“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”*

### ***Keep these in mind***

1. Everything you do, get, achieve, or become, is a fruit of your decisions and your re-reactions.
2. Comparing yourself with others is the result of not having a valid M&P, having an invalid M&P or not sticking to your valid M&P. Your M&P inspires you when it is valid. An invalid M&P is petty and me-centered.
3. Control what you can control; influence what you can influence; keep an eye on what you can't control or influence.
4. To be able to influence what you can influence, you must master negotiation and become a strategist. There is no other way of influencing what you cannot directly control if you don't do both.
5. Happiness is achieved when you love and are loved, unconditionally. To love, you must grow, heal, and be fully integrated in every aspect of your life.
6. Don't attempt to handle a time of transition alone. Seek the help you need, accept the help you are given, and create a community of people who collaborate with, and help, each other.

With a valid M&P and everything else you have learnt here, you can calmly and confidently face risk, uncertainty, and conflicting choices; and competing claims to your time, energy, money and emotional commitment. You can co-create a happy, serene, successful, economically secure, meaningful, and deeply fulfilling life, flowing out of your effective decisions and decision making, and a healed, growing, and integrated life.

### **How the Camp Negotiation Institute can help you**

We at CNI are committed to helping veterans co-create the life they wish. The System of Negotiation I have developed is used by people in the most diverse situations, and by people from the most diverse backgrounds. If you master the Camp System of Negotiation, you will learn a System which fits seamlessly with the training you received in the military.

My System of Negotiation is both a systematic means to reach agreements with others, and a proven system to acquire the life skills you stand in need, in order to manage your budget for each day, for each interaction, and for each objective, activity, and task. My System of Negotiation will also help you develop the mindset of a strategist.

I end with these words from the Japanese writer, Haruki Murakami.

*"In this world, there are things you can only do alone, and things you can only do with somebody else. It's important to combine the two in just the right amount."*

Of course, I am biased towards what I teach. But as I explained earlier, prejudice can be of a good kind or a bad kind. The results that individuals, teams, and organizations have achieved over the past 25 years convinces me that this one is that of the good kind.

To your growth, success and happiness.