



# ...more than meets the eye

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// My friend was a brilliant girl acing her subjects who believed that her best is yet to come. An exceptionally good looking and talented dancer, she was loved by everyone for her warmth and friendly nature. There was so much going for her. Her parents were confident that her future was going to be amazing. And one day, after her last exam, she committed suicide.

I remember looking into her mom's eyes after the incident. Those eyes were filled with deep sadness and daze. Choking back tears, she said "...but we tried to do everything right for her". They didn't see any warning signs. Did anyone of us see this coming? Not really. All this happened suddenly! How on earth could this happen ... without being noticed?

What was it that drove her to take such an extreme step? What was the last straw which broke the camel's back? We will never know because we knew little about our friend other than what she showed us. Over and over again, I had asked "Why did she do this to herself and her parents? Didn't she dream of long life? None of us knew the answer. I wonder even now, when I think about it. - said the client, who looked still perplexed about an experience that happened 20 years ago.

**He was a very creative young man. He was married and had two children. When life was not going anywhere, he was employed by an organization that gave him all the freedom to express his talent and creativity. He loved his work and would lose himself in his creative space weaving magical creations which dotted his office. When one thought all is well, on an unassuming day he hanged himself. What happened to him? What caused such hopelessness? – His wife was inconsolable. "Couldn't he have told me?" she wept profusely.**

Such stories are aplenty - some personal, some that we bear witness to.

Life journeys of ours and others have affected us and will continue to do so. If we look at both these life journeys, one thing is common – the mystery behind the choice. While life journeys have both good and bad experiences and most people are able to move on - ponder over its deeper meanings or seek out answers for tough situations of their lives, for many the constant onslaught of their mind drives them to seek some way to quieten it. Sometimes, putting an end to the journey itself .....

The problem here is communication; it isn't about communication with one another, but about our communication with **our own selves**. Each one of us lives two realities in parallel - An outer reality - one that meets people's eyes and an inner reality - that can meet only our eyes. In the first one, we are constantly evaluating our lives from society's perception and in the second, we experience ourselves continually from sensing our inner world. We are all familiar with the outer world of physicality and expression. The inner world, however, remains more of an unknown quantity to many people. Like the tip of an iceberg, very little is seen and known - there is a whole portion of us that remains submerged under the surface of the water, unseen and unheard off by anyone else other than ourselves.

There is always something going on inside us, but we rarely express due to layers of conditioning, fear or lack of trust which blocks its continuous expression. This unexpressed voice slowly becomes noise which gets so unrelenting and persistent that there doesn't appear to be any way to stop it. Many of us try to drown out the noise by keeping ourselves as busy as possible or distract ourselves through TV, radio, music or even alcohol and drugs. Many addictions begin as an escape from this noise.

If we want to be in touch with what is going on within, it is essential not to escape but to listen closely to our inner dialogues. Are we supportive of ourselves or are we critical? Do we replay upsetting or cringe-worthy thoughts or events over and over again? Would we be comfortable saying those thoughts and words to a loved one?

Why this matters so much is - these inner dialogues influence how we feel about ourselves and how we respond to events in our life. It is the script that we use to write our lives. More often than not, it is the thoughts we think in response to life situations that determines how we feel, not just the external situation alone. As hard as it can be to accept, no-one or nothing can "make us" feel anything **other than ourselves**.

The outer and inner realities affect each other. In fact, our current reality is a mirror of what is going on inside us. If our outer reality is unhappy, chaotic or unfulfilling, it is a direct result of what is happening inside us. The truly sad thing about this is that it becomes a self-perpetuating situation – when we feel badly about ourselves, our outer world is unhappy. The worse the outer world becomes, the worse we feel inside ourselves, which directly impacts on our life experience. Without our knowing it, we have gotten in to a trap and like all traps getting in is easy, getting out is nearly impossible. It is a rare person who has both an understanding and acceptance of his/her inner life. Most of us are unable to let go of our victim stories and continue being both the victims and perpetrators of it.

The only way out is to bridge the realities which requires self awareness to comprehend the inner world and put continuous efforts to express it in the outer world. This is the only way by which we can get out of the trap. For this, we need be as open and accepting of our inner world as we are of the outer world. It is also important to find the root cause of why you feel the way you feel and then resolve it. Only then would there be a paradigm shift and things will change down at that level. When the client understood the inner mechanism of human choices is when she could actually move on from the 20-year old trauma.

Nothing in our outer lives can change without first making changes on the inside. Our outer reality will continue to evolve and change as we do, as it is merely a reflection of our inner world. In other words, the outside world is simply a mirror, reflecting back to us our own inner state. If we are inwardly in turmoil then we are certain to see a tumultuous world. A seemingly joyful world is only returning to us as our own inner joy. What we see and experience as an outer reality is a reflection of our state of being. **What you are, so is your world!**

The purpose of Aashwasan is to bring this deep awareness in to the Self, thus clearing away the self-defeating patterns at their root, not just the symptoms. Aashwasan services help people to begin a journey into responsiveness and acceptance of oneself - out of which comes extraordinary clarity about one's life. If we look deep, it is actually the unfruitful things in our lives that create pain; it is these things that obscure our life and stop us from actually understanding who we are. The services bring about a natural process of letting go of the inner stories that support pain. In doing this, the self-talk quiets down on its own and life starts feeling more free, alive, more radiant and vibrant. Self Awareness workshops of Aashwasan especially focus on the expression and release of repressed feelings; especially of anger, sadness and fear and heal the traumas within.

Transformation happens when we sync our internal and external world. As we begin to align who we are in essence with who we are in expression, we can bring to light the unseen reality of our inner world into the world of outward expression which assists us to integrate and be whole again. This is the ultimate life skill which can bring in harmony and connectedness.



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