

# FORCENET E-ZINE

Magazine of the military veterans in the corporate

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Issue 9

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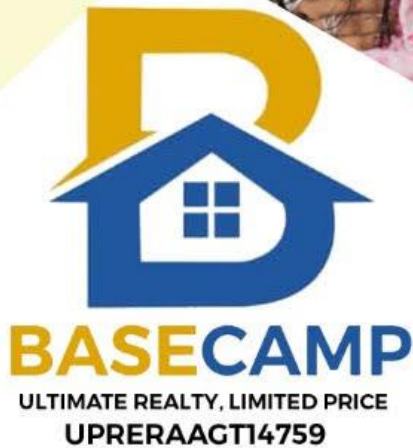
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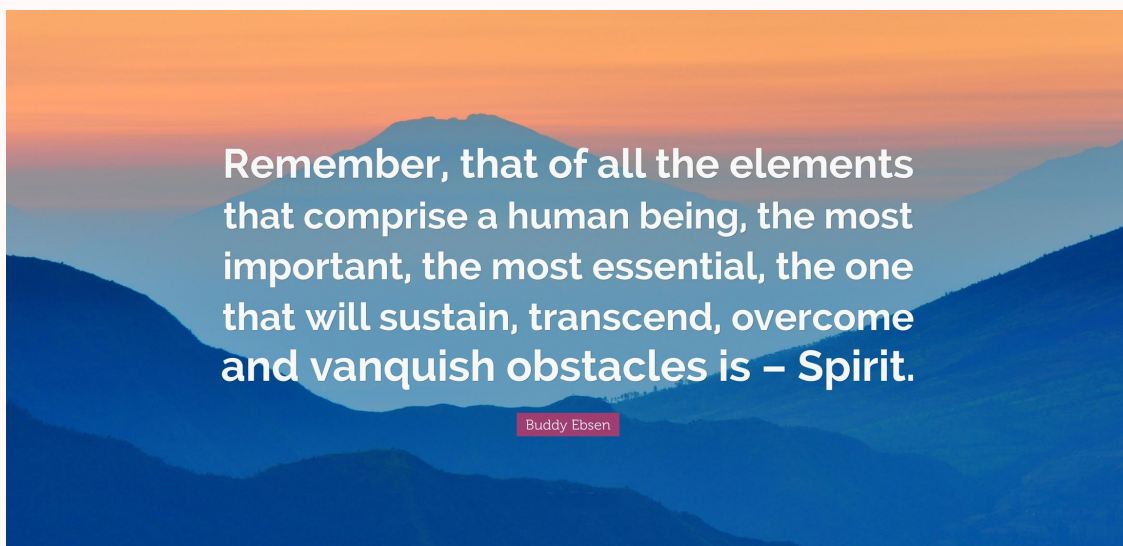
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# From the Editor

Dear Reader,

It is Unlock 4.0 now, in these trying times created by COVID-19. While it gives us the assurance and hope that every thing is soon going to be normal again, it also comes with the warning that we need to be more cautious and responsible now as curbs are progressively being lifted. It now merges the individual and collective responsibility of the population, on which the onus is slowly shifting to, from the administration and the government.

Corona virus is a global crisis and the biggest challenge we have faced in our life time. Proportionately, it has equal significance for any individual on this planet, as it is for the organisations, nations, and the world as a whole. While we are all facing our own unique challenges, it will however be only through collective effort that we would be successfully able to overcome this pandemic exhibiting enormous proportions.

Dr Amy Johnson, a Psychologist and Life Coach has stated, "We don't need to solve our problems as much as we need to transcend them and see the truth about them. Solving problems in the world gives us a momentary high and then an empty place for the next problem to fill; transcendence gives us freedom." What he has tried to indicate is that instead of seeking a solution for our problems, we should instead focus on changing our perspective.

All those who have been able to understand this principle, and adapted to the situation adversely impacting us, have re-set themselves on the path of progress and growth. On the contrary, all those who have refused to come to terms with the situation, and continued with a blinkered approach, are left fuming or sulking. It is thus essential to have a mouldable attitude towards life and approach towards situations. We need too do away with rigidity, and instead be progressive in outlook.

There are four essential ingredients for transcending our challenges, especially at these times. Firstly, we need to take inspired actions, those which come from within and from our intuition. Secondly, we need to own our expertise. We need to take the ownership for it, and kill all thoughts of self-doubt or those propounded by others. Thirdly, keep continuously sharpening your axe. Up-skilling yourself is also a part of sharpening the axe. And, fourthly, maintain motivation. Let no external factor adversely affect or impact your decisive resolve, and always put your best foot forward. Make conscious efforts to be proactive than reactive. And, above all, have a will to find a meaning in your life. Remember, you get it only once. So, here's wishing that you are able realign your thoughts and actions, prioritise your goals, and then embark on the journey of personal freedom and abounding success.

Until next time, take care, Cheers to Forces Network - the Network that Works!!!

Regards,  
Lt Col Ranvir Singh

# Stars of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

## ***IN INTERACTION WITH BIDISHA PANDEY***

**Col Ramesh Kuppuswamy**, an alumnus of the prestigious National Defence Academy, and after a glorious career of more than two decades in the Indian Army as a part of the Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, has worked with some of the best MNCs like Alcatel Lucent (now Nokia) and is currently with CISCO as Technical Program Manager. He has authored the book "Revelation: A Path Walked: A Catalyst to Transform Your Life", based on his spiritual journey experiences. He has published over 100 articles in Social media. Col Ramesh has also founded a Charitable organization, Aikya-Oneness Foundation in the year 2016 and the organization has touched more than 6000 orphans and old age people through various programs till now.



**Bidisha: What motivated you to join the Indian Army? What were the major highlights of your tenure?**

**Ramesh:** I hail from a small town in Tamil Nadu and belong to a humble family. The earnings of my father were meagre to meet both ends of the family of three children. Studying in a Government school under a thatched roof on the riverbed was how my schooling started. The tiny legs had to walk barefoot for two kilometres to reach the school. My maternal grandfather then told me about the Sainik School. I had difficulty in even pronouncing the school name right with no background or knowledge of Hindi, till I joined the school. Stepping into a boarding school at the tender age of 10 laid a strong foundation for my future. I was granted the Tamil Nadu State Government Scholarship for my education. The inspiration to join the Army came from two folds. The Sainik School, and my mother who belonged to a family of a freedom fighters. I looked for an opportunity to serve the country, and finally I cracked the NDA exam in my 11th grade to join the prestigious academy in 1984.

National Defence Academy, a cradle for leadership, shaped me from raw clay into a well-skilled soldier. With values and qualities to become a good leader ingrained in me, I had a glorious career of two decades plus in the Indian Army as part of the Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EME). It was an opportunity to cherish my father's and my dreams of becoming an engineer. I specialized in Telecommunication and Electronic Warfare (EW). My career began with Garhwal Rifles in Sri Lanka, fighting the

insurgents. Later, I moved into my parent organization and held various appointments in the Field and Staff. I commanded an EW workshop, and also had a tenure with DGQA before stepping out on voluntary retirement in 2008. I was instrumental for quality assurance of flycatcher radars and also led the team to Israel as part of the procurement team for BFSR system.

**Bidisha: What parameters did you keep in mind while choosing your second career?**

**Ramesh:** Most importantly, whether the choice of the sector which I am planning to take up as a second career aligns with my core capabilities, skill, and passion. Entrepreneurship never struck a chord as part of my interest. I had zero exposure to the business world. All I had was theoretical knowledge of how to do business learned from the Management Schools. So, I preferred to join a corporate firm and be part of their mission.

**Bidisha: How did you prepare yourself for the military to corporate transition?**

**Ramesh:** Keep skilling every day. That was the key mantra, I followed throughout my life. I was fortunate to do lots of technical courses and handle sophisticated equipment in the Army. Also, the year I was not on any course helped me to take up some courses in civil establishments online or otherwise. That made me more relevant to current technologies in telecom/IT industries which were rapidly changing.



**Bidisha: How has your experience in the corporate domain been so far?**

**Ramesh:** The uncertainties in the corporate are high. It calls for high performance all the time to add value to the role you are hired for. Everything is valued as money. Even as a resource, how one is defined in hiring is costed to the company. The journey has been good working with some of the best MNCs like Alcatel Lucent (now Nokia) and currently with CISCO for the past six-plus years. It gave me the best of the opportunities to handle some of the programs and operations of big telecom networks in India. Most creditable was the opportunity to lead the building of the core



backbone network for PAN India and Access network for East & South India for the World's largest greenfield telecom network, Reliance Jio with CISCO switches and routers. The bottom-line is that the corporates deeply value the high trust and performance which defence officers bring in.

**Bidisha: What does a normal working day look like in the life of a Technical Program Manager at CISCO?**

**Ramesh:** The role involves managing new products development of CISCO. A deep understanding of product and software life cycle is required. I am program managing the solutions for Apple Inc. As product and development teams are spread across India and the US, it calls for working in two different time zones. The day gets filled with meetings. The technical discussions help to learn new things and also to contribute to it. You get to work with the best of minds in the World. CISCO is employee focused and has great programs to enable continuous learning. Also, encourages its employees for work-life balance. Certainly, one gets time out for personal life too in the midst of this and weekends are off.



**Bidisha: You have authored the book "Revelation: A Path Walked: A Catalyst to Transform Your Life". What is it about? What was your motivation to write this book?**

**Ramesh:** I got connected to my Guru, Shri Chariji of Ramachandra Mission in the year 2014. The years of Sadhana (Practice) helped me in my spiritual journey, an inner journey to know myself and life better. There was a strong flow of thoughts that made me scribble and those thoughts were beyond my understanding of life. The book is a bouquet of various thoughts and experiences I had gone through during that phase. What I had experienced can be connected to anyone's experiences to understand that better, with the changed perception helping them to transform their life.

**Bidisha: What are your future plans?**

**Ramesh:** I started a Charitable organization, Aikya-Oneness Foundation in the year 2016 with the support of few well-wishers. The organization has touched more 6000 orphans and old age people through various programs. Have adopted six poor children for education support. Also, we impart knowledge to underprivileged schools through our volunteers. The footprints are spreading in many states. Maybe after a

couple of years down the lane, I will take retirement from the corporate to take care of this organization full time. A way to give back to society, expressing my gratitude for the support.



**Bidisha: What would be your advice to Armed Forces Officers who wish to pursue a career in Technology?**

**Ramesh:** One needs to have a passion for technology. The avenues are very high to do exceedingly well in any of these related industries. Hone your core skill to align with current industry requirements. The market experiences disruption with new technologies every day. The innovation is continuous with the changing needs of the customers. One has to learn to keep pace with new technologies or beat it to be relevant in the market for better opportunities. The job satisfaction one gets handling technologies is immeasurable. You got to step in to experience it.

**Bidisha:** Thank you very much, Col Ramesh for sharing a part of your life with us. It has been exciting to interact with you.

**Ramesh:** Thanks. The pleasure is mine too.



**Bidisha Pandey** is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learned from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site [www.sassyweekender.com](http://www.sassyweekender.com)

## ADVERTORIAL - From SCRIPBOX

### Asset Allocation - The Plan That Can Survive “First Contact”

As Ex-servicemen, uncertainty in a combat environment is not something unknown to you. This is why the Armed Forces place such stock in planning for the unknown. However, the famed Field Marshal Von Moltke also said that, "Rarely does a plan survive first contact with a hostile force."

That hasn't stopped armies from creating detailed plans. If nothing else, as you must have experienced yourself as a soldier, having a basic plan in place reduces your stress and response time to developments.

This applies to investing too. Proper planning and allocating your investments according to your needs, goals, and income generation capacity is the key to wealth creation.



### Rules of Engagement in Investing.

Stock markets, not unlike a battlefield, are by their very nature choppy, and while long term trends suggest an upward trajectory, they can go either up or down in the short to medium term. In uncertain times, volatility increases and swings are large. Most investors can find this stressful and confusing. In times like these, your asset allocation can contribute to your stress levels or can help with reducing it. There is an appropriate asset allocation for all of us depending on the life and wealth stage that we are at.

**Age-wise Asset Allocation.** To keep it simple, we've married asset classes, equity and debt (fixed income) to age appropriateness to get you started.

### FIXED INCOME

Your DSOP, PF, AGIF, Gratuity, Leave encashment (If you didn't reinvest this in equity or real estate), etc are part of this. However, [Debt mutual funds](#) should be the fixed income instrument of choice given no lock-in period, low taxes upon withdrawal, and returns that are at least on par with fixed deposits.

#### 1) If you are invested in [liquid funds](#):

- **Age 35-45:** Do nothing to existing investments. This is your emergency fund due to its stable nature, freedom from market movements, and high liquidity. The more uncertain your income, the greater the investment here. If you are a single-income family with kids, at least 12 months of your living expenses should be set aside, accounting for EMIs and school fees.

- **Age 50-60:** If you retired after a full-service term of 30 years, your DSOP, PF fund, gratuity, etc would normally be enough. You can move a portion of this, where available, to liquid funds due to near similar security but better liquidity.

## 2) If you are invested in debt funds other than liquid funds, and other government backed securities:

- **Age 35-45:** If you are invested in ultra-short-term and short-term funds, then stay invested and do nothing. Use this for any short-term needs along with your FDs and RDs.

- **Age 50-60:** It is recommended to be invested in only ultra-short term and short-term debt funds, apart from liquid funds. Your PF, and other government backed investments can remain as is, at this stage.

## EQUITY

Equity is the primary asset class when it comes to building wealth over the long term (7-10 years at least) due to its ability to stay ahead of inflation. The primary ways to invest in this asset class involve direct equity (stocks), ETFs, and equity mutual funds.

Most long term objectives can be met through investing in large cap and multi-cap categories. Large cap mutual funds typically invest in the biggest, and thus the most stable and reliable companies. Multi-cap funds invest across market capitalisations and thus try to be invested in both today's stable market leaders and tomorrow's giants which are minnows now. While volatile, they make up for it in long term growth.

**If you are invested in equity mutual funds.** Do not withdraw from equity funds unless you have no other sources to meet any urgent and critical requirements. At worst, stop SIPs and use it to fund unplanned but necessary requirements.

- **Age 35-45:** Stay invested and continue SIPs, especially, if you have chosen large-cap and multi-cap funds.

- **Age 50-60:** You are likely to have enough fixed income now thanks to your DSOP and PF. Your equity portfolio is to ensure your overall retirement corpus stays ahead of inflation. Having at least 30% of your overall money in equity is important to stay ahead of inflation.

## In Summary

The idea of a good asset allocation is to make sure occasional under performance in one asset class (such as equity) doesn't adversely affect your life and ability to meet your objectives. Solutions such as Scripbox [Long Term Wealth](#) or [Short Term Money](#) can further help you address your wealth creation needs by removing the problem of choice.

Learn more about asset allocation [here](#).

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# ForceNetPreneurs

In this series we plan to showcase a few entrepreneur members of Forces Network who have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as also to learn from them with a view to motivating more amongst our community to take up entrepreneurship as a full time vocation. Finally – we do need job creators in greater numbers than job seekers.

## ***IN INTERACTION WITH BIDISHA PANDEY***

**Lt Col Ishwar Singh** is an alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun and joined the Sikh Regiment of the Indian Army in 1993. He worked for Hinduja and Karvy in the Operations and Finance sector post retirement. Later, he and his wife, Mrs Vidya Singh, founded Orbit Staffing Innovation, a global recruitment solutions company that presently has offices in India, Dubai and Nepal.



### **Bidisha: Please tell us something about your career in the Indian Army.**

**Ishwar:** I am a proud alumnus of the Indian Military Academy which I joined in 1992, where I opted for Infantry and then proudly joined the Sikh Regiment in 1993. After four years, I suffered from a major spinal cord injury. I worked for Sub Area Headquarters for Bangalore for a few years and completed a few courses while in service. I knew my career prospects were not great after the injury, and I would not have been able to do my best for the service in those circumstances, therefore I decided to go for Premature Retirement after 15.5 years of service. I prepared for the transition by doing an Executive MBA at IIM Bangalore while in service, which gave me a good exposure, allowed me to network with the best in the industry and get accustomed to the corporate terminology.

### **Bidisha: How did you decide to set up your own venture?**

**Ishwar:** I did not start my venture directly after retirement. I was interested in knowing how things work in the corporate domain. I was mainly interested in sales, finance and operations. Getting into sales was a huge risk as I didn't have any previous experience. I was not a Chartered Accountant, therefore finance was also a difficult target. I ultimately decided to join Hinduja as AGM Operations. The package was not important to me, the role and the learning opportunity is what mattered. For the first few months, I worked day and night, as we had US based clients and the hard work paid. We were able to achieve a financial performance growth of 24% which led to my promotion as DGM Operations. In 2009, I joined Karvy, as GM Operations and moved from Bangalore to Hyderabad. At Karvy, I got the opportunity to learn more about finance, I handled the Reliance Mutual Fund, which was the biggest mutual fund at that time, along with 16 other major mutual funds. There was a lot of travelling involved in the role and that is when I started having issues because of my spinal cord

injury and decided to join my wife at Orbit Staffing Innovation.

My wife, Mrs Vidya, was also working at Karvy as DGM previously. In April 2010, she decided to finally fulfil her dream of becoming an entrepreneur and founded Orbit Staffing Innovation, a recruitment solutions company. The capital investment was low and she was only looking after clients in Hyderabad at that time. I joined my wife in 2012 and further expanded the business.

**Bidisha: What were the challenges faced in this entrepreneurial journey?**

**Ishwar:** When I joined my wife in 2012, I expanded the business and launched our offices in five more locations namely Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore and Coimbatore, which in hindsight was a wrong decision. We suffered serious losses, our capital and revenue expenditure increased, we had over 50 employees at that time and I had to pool in money from all possible resources to keep the business going. We finally had to shut down all the additional five offices and revert back to the Hyderabad office. Timely payments were a huge issue in the Indian market where the competition was high and the margins were less. My brother was settled in the middle east, and therefore we decided to venture out in that area. What we learnt was that the margins were far greater and the payments were made on time, and therefore we could purely focus on improving our processes and delivering effectively to the clients in the Middle East. So, we ended up opening two offices in Dubai, one in Nepal and three in India.

**Bidisha: What do you think made your venture a grand success?**

**Ishwar:** It was not that we didn't make mistakes, but I think the fact that we could learn from those mistakes, assess them and progress things made us what we are today. The mortality rate in entrepreneurship is close to 99.9% and we survived because of our commitment to business, tenacity and focus on improvement.



**Bidisha: Any regrets in the journey so far?**

**Ishwar:** None. I believe I have got more than what I ever imagined. Great organisational success and a fulfilled life. We have been able to grow at a very good pace and I am extremely grateful to those who supported me in this journey.

**Bidisha: What are the plans for the future?**

**Ishwar:** Post the COVID 19 pandemic, there is a lot of uncertainty in the market, but I am sure things will stabilise and look better in future. We wish to move into strategic investing in years to come.

**Bidisha: How hectic is a life of an entrepreneur?**

**Ishwar:** Extremely hectic and very demanding. An entrepreneur is married to his/her business, and therefore a lot of times, he/she doesn't have enough time for his/her near and dear ones, specially in the beginning. The failures are heart-breaking but one should have the resolve to succeed and be mentally strong.

**Bidisha : What advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up entrepreneurship?**

**Ishwar:** I would recommend starting by working in an corporate environment first in order to know how things operate. If you are clear about what kind of business you would like to set up, try and work for a similar company to know the dynamics on ground and then take an informed decision based on your practical experience. Start small, do not invest all your money at one go, do not go for capital intensive projects in the beginning itself. We tend to become overconfident in the process of thinking big and overlook the market demands. We should be extremely careful, and ensure that the services/products we are offering are in line with the market demands.

**Bidisha:** It is really enriching to hear you and I am sure that the readers will get enough motivation from your experiences. Thank you once again.

**Ishwar:** I hope it does. Nevertheless, I am always available to the members of the Forces Network for any guidance they would like to seek in this field.



***Bidisha Pandey** is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learned from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site [www.sassyweekender.com](http://www.sassyweekender.com)*

# Expatriate Interview

In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of the members of Forces Network who have settled abroad and carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination. The aim is to bring to fore the mechanics of such transitions, and thereby quell the apprehensions of the larger community in the Network. Learning from each other would help us exploit our true potential in any part of the World. And, it could be beneficial for our families too.

## ***IN INTERACTION WITH BIDISHA PANDEY***

**Lt Cdr Vivek Gupta** is an International Cyber Security Leader with 30+ years of enriched and unique cross industry exposure. He has been working at CXO level for over a decade across various business verticals/entities. He has crystal clear vision and laser-sharp focus on delivering complex Information/Cyber Security assignments both captive delivery (CISO) or Customer facing (Security Practice Head). On completion of his tenure with the Navy, he moved to the corporate world and worked with niche global firms and leaders in their arena such as Deloitte, IBM, Fidelity, Avaya, Airtel, EXL and Landmark. Currently he works with GEMS Group (the World's largest private Education Co.) as Vice President - Information Security (Global & Group CISO).



### **Life in the Indian Navy**

Lt Cdr Vivek, joined the Indian Navy through the 10+2 Cadet Entry Scheme (NEC) in Technical Cadre and was commissioned in 1989. He is a proud alumnus of the Naval College of Engineering, INS Shivaji. He went on to pursue MTech in Computer Science from IIT Kanpur. After attaining his Masters, he was appointed as Assistant Director, Information Technology at NHQ, New Delhi. He was part of the pioneer team that played the crucial role in formulation and adoption of IT in Indian Navy that included development of one of the first in-house websites (1998), e-book, WAN/LAN, ERP, Security solutions and IT policies to name a few.

### **Choosing Information Security as the Second Career**

Lt Cdr Vivek realised that the world was moving towards digitisation, and along with that there would be a growing need for Information Security and data protection. The strong foundation in Information Technology at IIT Kanpur and the implementation experience at NHQ, set his sight on Information Security as a profession while transitioning from military to civilian life. One can note that even after nearly two decades into this career, this domain has continued to grow exponentially in significance across the world.



## The Corporate Experience

Lt Cdr Vivek's corporate journey started with Deloitte (Big 4) as Manager – Risk Advisory Services where he established the risk advisory practice for North India. After a year, he joined IBM (Big Blue) as Head of Security Practice India and helped IBM establish the security portfolio. In 2006, he joined Fidelity International (Financial giant) as Chief Information Security Officer. His next stint was with Avaya as Director for APAC, Infrastructure Managed Services from 2008 up to 2012. Later, he joined Airtel as General Manager Information Security, followed by EXL as Vice President of Information Security, Data Privacy and Business Continuity.

In 2016, he moved to Dubai, as he took up the role as a Global and Group Chief Information Security Officer with Landmark Group. Subsequently, he moved to GEMS Education as Vice President – Information Security (Global and Group CISO). Lt Cdr Vivek has been recognised and commended for his contribution in Cyber/ Information Security by both his parent organisation and by external bodies.



## Major Corporate Transition Challenges

Lt Cdr Vivek shared that the top three major challenges that one faces when moving to the corporate sector from defence background are change in SEA (Skillset, Execution and Attitude) framework. After his career goal has been identified, the officer has to work towards building skillset in that area by undertaking relevant certifications, trainings etc. It is extremely important to remain updated with new developments in the domain and continue to learn and grow to remain relevant. Secondly, the execution of work in corporate world is based on SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) concept. Thirdly one needs to have an agile and malleable attitude. It is important to focus and quickly understand

the culture in the corporate environment that is much different than defence forces and should not be an impediment to the individual.

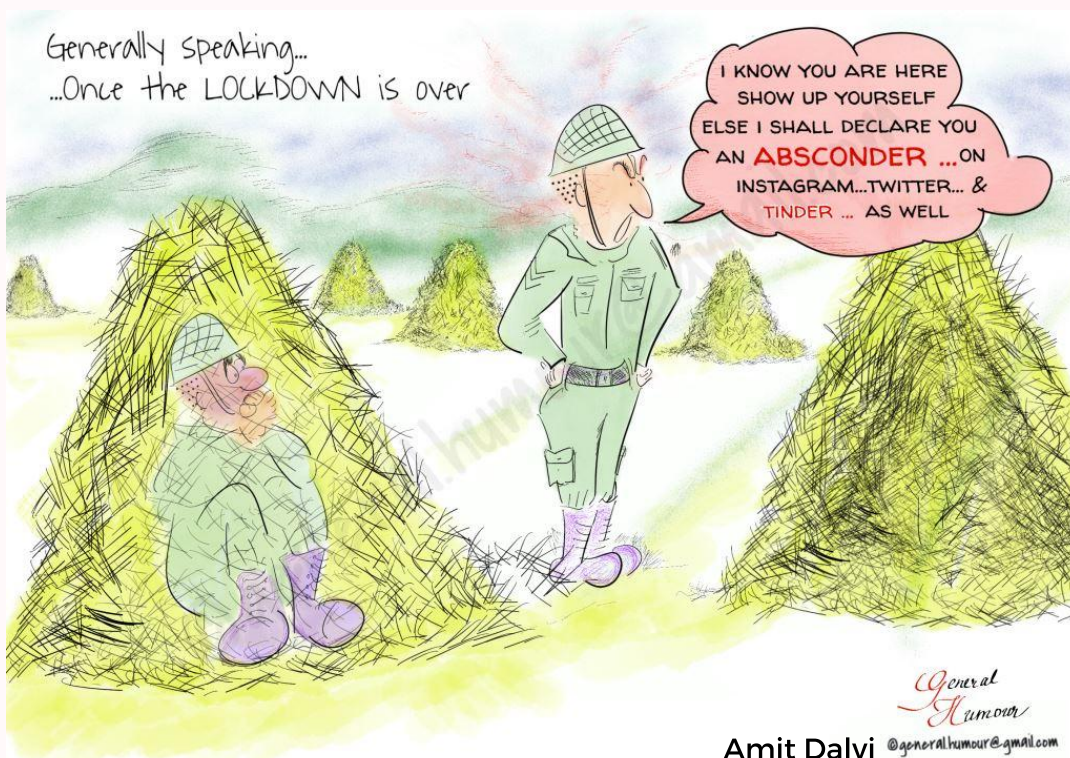
### Pros and Cons of Moving Abroad

Lt Cdr Vivek believes that defence officers have an advantage of adopting easily abroad. The frequent transfer in service, helps the officer to be groomed mentally and physically to adjust under diverse cultures. Secondly, with easy availability of better resources and tools, settling down abroad is generally easy and smooth. However, with the cultural differences in the new destination, there is potential that one would observe that the social life may differ from that one experiences in his own country. Family acclimatisation in a new city without the Cantonment life may be very different and could involve more settling down time. Moving abroad does bring financial reward which could vary from country to country and so it should be assessed judiciously before taking the leap.

### Advice to Fellow Officers

According to Lt Cdr Vivek, officers undertaking transition from defence to corporate world should adopt to the SEA framework highlighted above. Moving abroad has its own pros and cons that should be considered in terms of three prominent objectives namely: career objectives, family objectives (including children academics, financial benefits etc.) and self-objectives. In general defence officers armed with this ground work have transitioned well into the corporate world and excelled in their endeavours.

*Authored by Bidisha Pandey, based on interaction with Lt Cdr Vivek Gupta, online and through e-mails.*



# Women Power

Spouses of Defence Officers have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such spouses of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

## ***IN INTERACTION WITH RANVIR SINGH***

**Vinita Mehta** wears many hats. A daughter and wife of the forces, a mother, a baker and an entrepreneur. One of those is her chef hat, as the lead baker and managing partner of Love is...Cakes, an established bakery in Delhi NCR. Vinita did her Bachelor's in Interior Design. She went on to teach Art & Craft in two leading Delhi schools, including The Army Public School, Dhaula Khan. But, it was in 2012 when she found her true calling and partnered her daughter into the world of professional baking. 'Love is...Cakes' is renowned for their designer wedding cakes and customised birthday cakes. You can find their sweet offerings at [www.loveiscakes.in](http://www.loveiscakes.in)



**Ranvir: Please tell us about yourself, what you do, and how did you start.**

**Vinita:** I run a bakery that is delivery only and specializes in custom desserts. My daughter and I started this as a small home set up in 2013 and over the years we have managed to expand our vision and set up an e-commerce model wherein you can order these products online and get it delivered within Delhi NCR. Apart from the traditional cakes, we specialise in theme cakes, cake jars, cupcakes, brownies, cakesicles and chocolates. We also cater to larger requirements through corporate cakes, customised gift boxes and gift hampers. Orders can be placed online on our website <http://www.loveiscakes.in/> and also on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/LoveIsCakes](http://www.facebook.com/LoveIsCakes) or at [www.instagram.com/LoveIsCakes](http://www.instagram.com/LoveIsCakes) on Instagram.

**Ranvir: What is your vision behind starting your businesses?**

**Vinita:** I had been baking for friends and family for years. The most exciting time for my kids in the lead up to their birthdays was what their cake design will be. At that time we had no fancy ovens or any of these modern baking equipment or tools, but such is the magic of cakes. It is so feel-good. After my daughter had got married and my son was busy with his job I found myself with time on my hands. I also noticed that there was a gap in the market between good looking cakes and well tasting cakes. My aim when I started was to bridge this gap.

**Ranvir: Did you have this passion even before marriage, or was it something that got ignited after marriage?**

**Vinita:** For me my fondness for baking and cooking began after marriage. We were often posted to areas where eating out was not a possibility. So whipping up gourmet food in my kitchen was more of a necessity. It didn't take long for it to become a passion

**Ranvir: Has the Army life had any influence in your decision to pursue this profession, and have had any related professional training?**

**Vinita:** Absolutely, the lack of options in remote places first ignited my passion to cook and bake.

Also importantly the variety of places and cultures I have been exposed to through our esteemed army life has broadened my culinary horizons.

I also find myself to be a calm person in any stressful situations which arise quite frequently in a business like this. I will credit that also to the discipline and teachings of an Army life.



**Ranvir: Would you like to share the details of your products, and your marketing strategy?**

**Vinita:** We specialize in customizing any desserts: from cakes to cupcakes to brownies etc. If there is an occasion, you can be sure we have ways to make it more special and memorable. Our marketing strategy from the beginning has been word-of-mouth, the most genuine way of spreading goodwill. Aside from this we have an active social media presence over Instagram and Facebook. Since we don't have a walk in store, we feel it is very important to showcase what we do online.

**Ranvir: What is your team like, and how did you build it?**

**Vinita:** We have a compact team of chefs, designers, delivery riders and managers. Some of my team members have been with me since 2014. Even our team growth has

been organic. We have slowly and steadily added individuals that share our working ethic and add to our value.



**Ranvir: Where do you operate from, what is your reach, and how do you tackle the logistic challenges usually associated with this business?**

**Vinita:** I now have a delivery outlet/workshop in dlf 4 gurgaon. Challenges once faced often enough tend to become easier to tackle. There is no substitute for hard work and patience. Our working process now is largely seamless but that is because we have spent a fair amount of time fixing vendors, setting up a working website and building a team. Tomorrow may bring with it a new set of challenges but we are ready to face it head on

**Ranvir: Any other challenges have you faced so far, on the way to establishing yourself?**

**Vinita:** Nothing other than the ordinary, if you are not being challenged then maybe you are not working hard enough.



**Ranvir: What are your future plans?**

**Vinita:** We just want to always be able to maintain our quality. Fast growth or franchises is not our aim. A business that sustains and one that we love going back to every day.

**Ranvir: How do you plan to tackle the challenges thrown at you in this COVID-19 situation?**

**Vinita:** Working with COVID has been our toughest challenge yet. It still is difficult every day but our discipline and ethics have seen us through these difficult times when being strict with hygiene and rules is of utmost importance. Our clients have faith in us and we believe in ourselves to be the best we can be.



**Ranvir: What advice do you have, especially for spouses of defence officers, who desire or aspire to be similarly independent?**

**Vinita:** Play to your strengths. The army life makes us disciplined, efficient and resilient. These are very important qualities when one is picking up a job or setting up a business. Remember anything is possible if you put your heart to it.

**Ranvir:** Thanks, Ma'am. It was a pleasure interacting with you.

**Vinita:** You are welcome. It's been encouraging for me too.



**Lt Col Ranvir Singh**, a product of Rashtriya Military School and an alumnus of National Defence Academy, was commissioned into 2nd Battalion The Bihar Regiment in June 1988. After hanging his boots in Jan 2009, he has contributed immensely as a Corporate Warrior for last 10 years to recognised organisations like IL&FS Technologies Ltd, National Institute of Bank Management of RBI, and MMTc-PAMP India Pvt Ltd. Apart from being a Security & Safety specialist and an Administration expert, he has a keen interest in the field of ever evolving Information Technology, and a flair for writing. He can be reached at [ranvirsm@gmail.com](mailto:ranvirsm@gmail.com)

# Author of the Month

## Tanushree Podder

*IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS*

After eight years in the corporate sector, Tanushree quit the rat race to wield her pen and found her calling. A well know travel writer and novelist, she is also known for the hundreds of 'Middles' that entertained readers of almost all English dailies in the country for over a decade. As a travel writer, she has travelled to more than 35 countries and collected dozens of interesting certificates that range from a wine-master's assistant at Australia, an international reindeer driving licence from Lapland, to one for pewter crafting from Royal Selangor.

She has written ten successful novels, a dozen best-selling nonfiction titles and over five hundred travel tales. Among her books are Nurjahan's Daughter, Boots Belts Berets, On the Double, Escape from Harem, A Closetful of Skeletons, Before you Breathe, and No Margin for Error. Decoding the Feronia Files, written by her, is the first Indian Cli Fi thriller. The Teenage Diary of Laxmibai is her tenth book.

Two of her books, Boots Belts Berets and On the Double have been acquired for adaptation into web series. She periodically holds writing workshops for aspiring writers. She lives with her husband at Pune.



**Uday:** Please share with us about your association and experience with the Armed forces.

**Tanushree:** I nurture many beautiful memories of my association with the armed forces. The best part is the amount of travelling we have done across the length and breadth of the country. Right from living in the inhabitable areas of Assam to a delightful tenure at a small town located at the foothills of the Himalayas, to the deserts of Rajasthan, we have been fortunate enough to see a lot of India. I have had

the good fortune of being a part of the large family that is the army. It has taught me several lessons, which have been invaluable in coping with challenges and dealing with people from all walks of life.

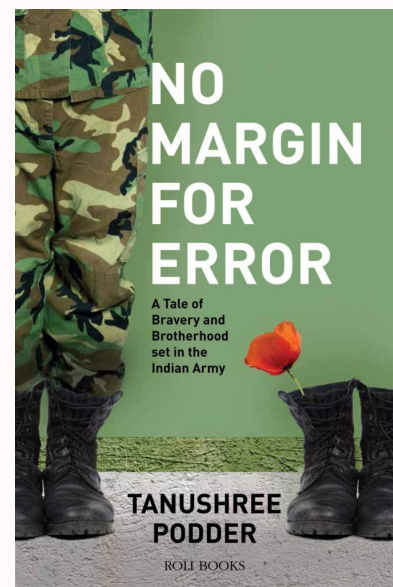
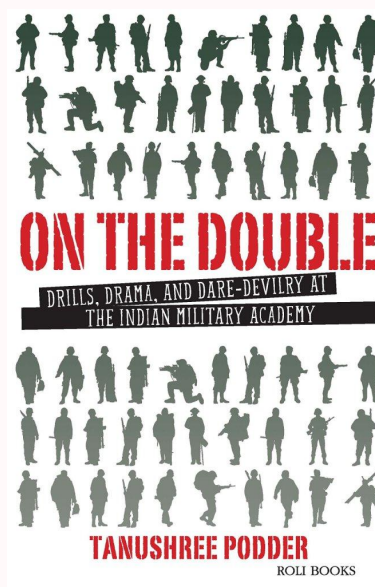
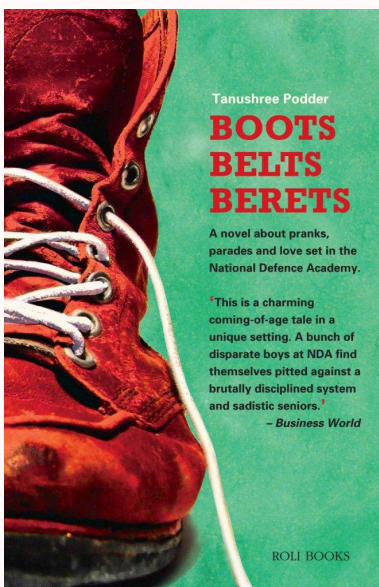
**Uday: When did you realise this passion for writing, and then took it as a serious profession?**

**Tanushree:** My writing journey began very early in life. It actually started when I was just ten years old. Being the eldest of four sisters, I often had to keep them engaged and one of the things they loved was the stories narrated by me. From an oral narrator, I turned into a writer. During my college days, I wrote short stories, articles and humour pieces for various magazines and newspapers. I studied management and took up a job as an HR professional with Larsen & Toubro Limited, but spent all my spare time as a freelance writer. As for taking it as a serious profession, it happened after my marriage with an Army officer because I had to make a choice. I could live in a metropolitan city working as an HR Executive or accompany my husband on his postings. I chose the latter, and began writing seriously. It wasn't an easy decision to make. I was doing quite well, professionally. To quit everything and travel to remote places required a lot of deliberation.

**Uday: Can you please share with us your achievements in this field of writing books.**

**Tanushree:** As on date, I have written 14 nonfiction books and 10 novels. Among my books are The Death of a Dictator – the Story of Saddam Hussein, Boots Belts Berets, On the Double, No Margin for Error, Nurjahan's Daughter, Escape from Harem, The Teenage Diary of Rani Laxmibai, A Closetful of Skeletons, Before you Breathe, and Decoding the Feronia Files. The last one is the first Climate Fiction thriller written in India.

The rights of Boots Belts Berets and On the Double have been acquired by Viacom 18. They will soon be adapted into web series. My publishing schedule, at the moment, is packed till 2022.





**Uday:** Since you have written a few books related to the armed forces environment, from where did you get the required motivation, and what was your experience in penning down these adventures?

**Tanushree:** It started with 'Boots Belts Berets', which is a humorous book on cadets in the NDA. To be honest, it's the story of my husband's life at NDA. The book was written way back in 2008 and remains a best seller as on date. In 2011, I was invited to speak about BBB at the IMA, and almost every GC asked me why I hadn't written a book on IMA. That's how 'On the Double' was born. The third one in the series is No Margin for Error. It is about the commandos who fought the terrorists during the Mumbai attacks.

The motivation for penning these books came from my husband. He was nostalgic about his days in the NDA. I thought of writing a book so he could revisit those incidents. At the same time, I was aware that the civilians knew nothing about the hardship teenaged boys went through. The book highlights the camaraderie and die-hard spirit of the cadets. At the time of writing the book I had no idea it would become such a big hit.



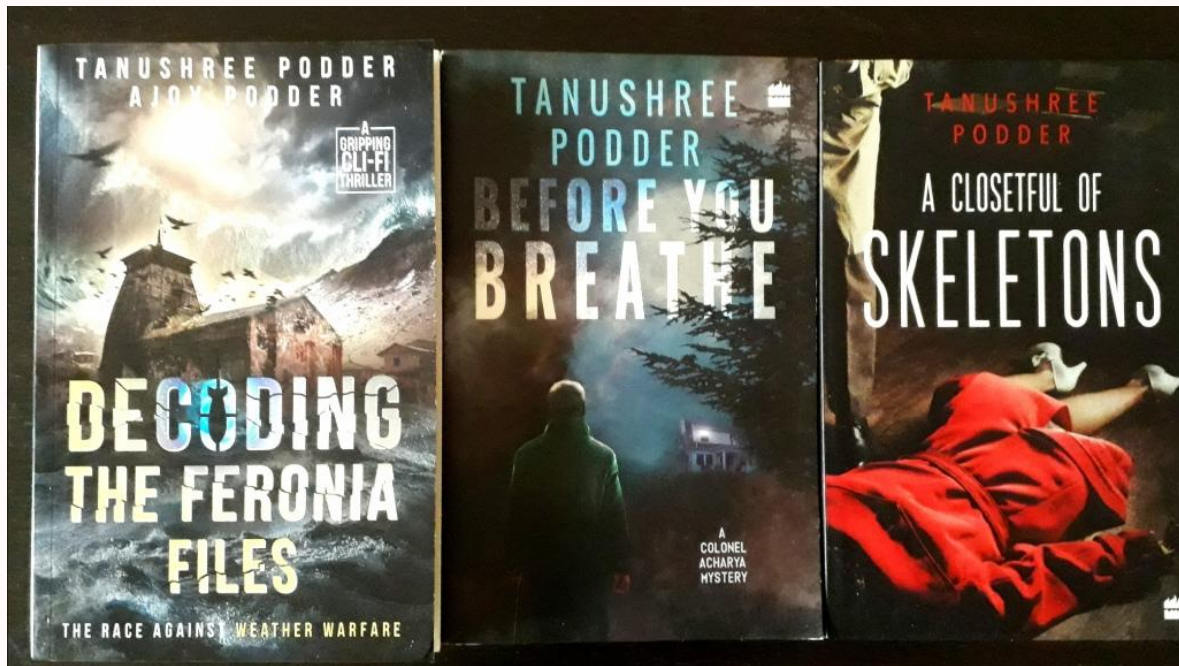
**Uday:** Did you face any challenges, and how did you go about overcoming them?

**Tanushree:** It's always easy to write something which comes naturally to a writer. I admit that the books with Army background were not easy to write, since I had to depend on my husband and other sources for my research. My biggest reward is the emails and messages I get from many young boys, who are aspiring to join the Army. Some of them have joined the NDA and written saying that they have been motivated by the books.

**Uday:** How do you go about writing a particular book? Like, what is your research methodology and how long does it take to complete one project, if we may call it so?

**Tanushree:** Writing a book requires a lot of effort. It doesn't happen in a few days. I am an intuitive writer, so I don't plan too much. I choose subjects that catch my

attention. Books with historical background require a lot of research, for which I have to spend many hours in various libraries. It's a painstaking job because one can't afford to go wrong. The other genre that requires extensive research is detective fiction. I had to seek the advice of forensic and legal experts to keep on the right tracks. Likewise, *Decoding the Feronia Files* required a lot of research since it dealt with scientific data and details about weather modification. It can take up to a year to finish writing a complex book that requires deep research.



**Uday:** Any book which is particularly your favourite, and why?

**Tanushree:** To that question, I will give the standard reply given by most writers. Each book is like a child and one loves all children equally. Jokes aside, each book has been a journey by itself. The joy of holding a book in print is a very satisfying feeling for a writer, and when readers appreciate the work, it's tremendously satisfying.

**Uday:** Do you find it easy to take out the required time to indulge in this passion of yours, with your family also demanding attention?

**Tanushree:** Writing is a lonely business. It's just the writer and the computer, shut off from the rest of the world. It's a world that doesn't tolerate intrusions. I can only work when no one's around and that is truly challenging.

Time is the one thing that's always in short supply. As a wife and mother, I often find it difficult to make time for my passion, which is writing. However, people manage to find the time for things they love doing. Time management is something one learns with experience. Over a period of time, I have learnt to cut off time-wasters. We often find ourselves trapped in avoidable activities. I call them time wasters. It is these activities that require to be curtailed.

As an Army wife, who had to juggle different roles, I have learned to slot my activities and allot time frames to them. It's difficult, of course.

**Uday: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous journey as a writer. Can you share a few from your experience?**

**Tanushree:** The journey has been a long and difficult one. I began by writing short stories, articles and graduated to writing travel features. Travel writing has taken me to thirty seven countries around the world. I was fortunate enough to be sponsored by the tourism ministries of those countries and didn't have to spend a penny from the pocket. I began with nonfiction and wrote 16 books on various topics, before I switched to writing fiction. As a writer I have evolved over time. One step at a time, I have covered a long distance during which I experienced joy, frustration and satisfaction. The biggest lessons writing has taught me are patience, humility and perseverance. Writing is like climbing a steep and summit-less mountain. You shouldn't look back but keep climbing. There are no summits.

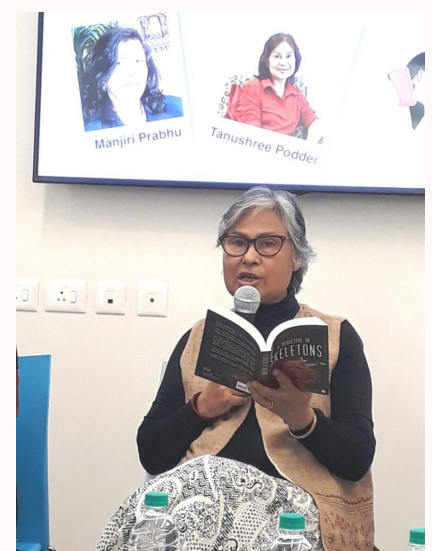
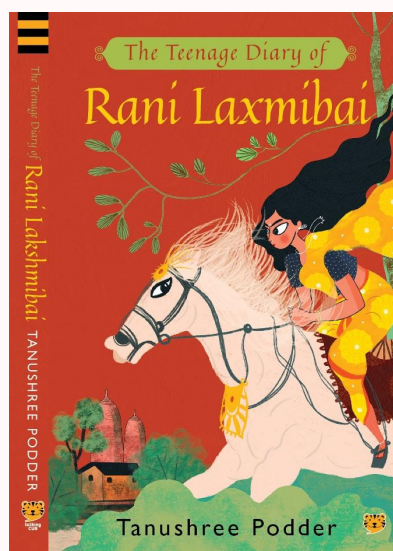
**Uday: With an exposure to life in the Army, do you think that the defence officers have in them to pursue this field of writing, and also take it as a serious career? What are the skill sets required to be successful?**

**Tanushree:** I think everyone has a story in him. To tell a story is an art. Conceiving a unique and interesting story, good knowledge of the language, grammatical excellence, perseverance and focus are the basic skills required for writing a book.

**Uday: What would be your advice for guidance to the budding writers, and potential writers in the uniformed fraternity?**

**Tanushree:** There are no shortcuts to success and more so in the case of writing. Writing is an exhausting business. It takes the wind out of your sails. Tragically, it is often a disheartening effort. One has to learn not to get disheartened and keep working towards one's goal.

Aspiring authors should learn to take rejections in their stride. There are many ups and downs. Sometimes more downs than ups. It is important to read a lot before one begins the process of writing. I always say that one should read at least two hundred books before one thinks of writing. Set aside a part of the day for writing and begin writing. You have to be disciplined and consistent.



**Uday: Do you have any other hobbies that you pursue?**

**Tanushree:** I love travelling and am a voracious reader. Apart from that, I love music.

**Uday: And, what are your plans for the future?**

**Tanushree:** As always, my plans involve writing, writing and more writing. I can't imagine a future without writing. I have signed contracts for four books which will be published in the next two years. I am currently working on a research intensive book, which will take me through 2020. Apart from that, I have brief story lines for five books that will be developed into full-fledged books over the next three to four years. So, my plans till 2025 have been chalked out.

**Uday: What are your footprints on the social media network?**

**Tanushree:** I have my own website <https://www.tanushreepodder.com/>, Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/tpodder/>, presence on Instagram with [@poddertanushree](https://www.instagram.com/poddertanushree), and my Twitter handle is [@tanushreepodder](https://twitter.com/tanushreepodder)

**Uday:** Thank you, Tanushree ma'am. It was great to get a chance to interact with you, and get an insight into your creative passion and your beautiful creations.

**Tanushree:** Thanks, Uday. It was exciting for me too, as it helped me relive my moments which I spent for these creations.



***Capt Uday K Shriwas** was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, and is now the Relationship Leader with Yes Bank Ltd.*

If a story is in you,  
it has got to come out.

William Faulkner

A GOOD STORY TRANSCENDS  
BOUNDARIES, BREAKS  
BARRIERS AND OPENS DOORS.

- BLAKE MYCOSKIE -

“Writing is an extreme  
privilege but it's also a gift.  
It's a gift to yourself and it's  
a gift of giving a story  
to someone.”

- Amy Tan

# Knowledge Bank

## Counselling/Coaching And The Wellness Industry

**BY MEENA ARORA**

The Wellness Industry in India is estimated at INR 490 Billion. It is also the highest booming industry in the world. This is attributed to the fact that people want to live longer and healthier lives and so wellness, at some level or the other, becomes the necessity.

The NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers) defines Wellness as “a state of a healthy balance of the mind and body that results in overall well-being.” As per a recent study by the Stanford Research Institute International, the global wellness industry represents a market of nearly US\$ 2 trillion as opposed to the Indian Wellness Industry, which is a US\$ 9.8 billion market; accounting for less than 2% of the global wellness industry.

Therefore, in India, there is a lot of scope and space to grow in this field. Moreover, most of the people and celebrities have already ventured into physical fitness and ayurvedic products. The most crucial aspect of Wellness, ie, Counselling and Coaching is still in the embryonic stage. The time has come when people are realizing that without appropriate counselling, coaching and mentoring, none of the other wellness techniques and products will work suitably.

Practicing in this field for about seven years, I can say this with assurance because Counselling/ Coaching takes a holistic approach towards a person’s well-being. The journey of a Coach or counselor does not begin with a pack of few courses or certifications. It begins with practicing self-awareness, challenging the limits of your potential and a zeal to help others attain their goals and solutions. Much beyond cognitive intelligence, a coach and mentor needs to advance towards managing relationships, problem solving skills, and facilitate in the overall development of his/her benefactor.

The Four Pillars of holistic approach may be listed as below:

- Physical Health - Exercise, Diet, Sleep patterns, Daily Routine, and Habits
- Mental Health - Emotions, Spiritualism, Social Work, Hobbies, and Expressions.
- Career - Education, Occupation, Finances, Investments
- Relationships - Marital, Parental, Family, Friends, Society

Counseling and mentoring caters to all above factors in a person’s life. In fact, all are so well related that it is difficult to focus on any one aspect without considering the others. Any pillar going weak will disturb the complete balance and equilibrium in a

person's life.

There are many ways to enter the counseling career, with varying degrees of specialisation. As a broad category, this field encompasses opportunities in a number of counseling sub fields, like - clinical, relationships, image consultancy, career, parent and child counselling, marriage counselling, business and sports coaching and much more. Counsellors can work in schools, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, NGOs, or they can run a private practice.

The main approaches are:

- Certifications in Coaching Skills, Neuro Linguistics Programming, Career Counselling, Past Life Regression, Reiki, Hypnotherapy, and the like.
- Short term courses in Guidance and Counseling.
- Masters, MPhil and/or PhD in Psychology.

Counsellors and therapists help their clients in a variety of ways, and there are many different types of counselors depending on their specialty. You may attain expertise on any one aspect, but you must develop knowledge in almost all areas for the benefit of your client.

For those who wish to step into this thriving field of wellness industry, let me share some facts to conclude.

- "At present, the worldwide wellness industry is valued at an astonishing USD 4.2 trillion and according to FICCI, in India, this figure is estimated to be INR 490 billion. Growing consumer awareness, increasing disposable incomes and a desire among the millennial population to transform their lifestyles for the better has given the wellness sector across the world an unprecedented boom." (Source: <https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/>)

- Around 89% people in India are aware of life coaching and around 59% have partnered with a life coach at some time, with 97% being satisfied with the experience, revealed the 2017 ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study... (Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/>)

- Microsoft, P&G and Deloitte are among companies that have sought professional assistance of psychologists, psychiatrists, and coaches to help employees tackle the turmoil due to social distancing. They even have a 24/7 helpline numbers for the employees and their families.

(Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/>)



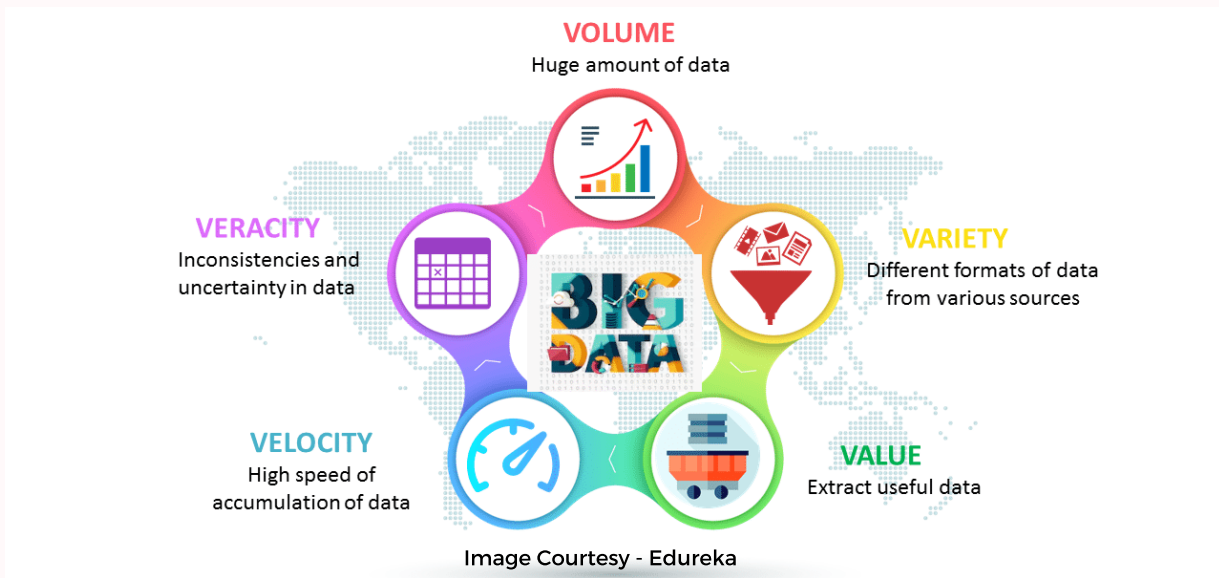
**Sqn Ldr Meena Arora** has served in the Indian Air Force for ten years. Thereafter, she has devoted herself completely to counselling and training. She is a competent Life Coach, Counsellor & NLP Trainer. She takes Personal Sessions (One on one's) and conducts Workshops in Schools, Colleges and Corporates. She also associates with organizations in creating specific training content, customized presentations, videos and audios, especially, utilizing her knowledge and awareness of Psychology and Neuro Linguistics Programming.

# Beginning of a Tryst with Analytics

BY SIDHARTH RADHAKRISHNAN

One fine day, in the month of July, I received a call from Capt Uday and he asked me to consider writing about my three month journey towards understanding 'Data', I was very skeptical, because neither am I any sort of authority on the subject, nor have I reached any significant milestone in my journey. But, like he said, there is a lot to learn from the journey itself, and documenting it might help those who are wondering whether they should take the plunge into 'understanding data'.

To begin with, I'm Sidharth, and I was a Helicopter Pilot in the Indian Air Force for a considerably short period of seven years, before I had to leave service on account of a medical disability. Needless to say that I couldn't have planned my transition in a worse way possible - I was that clueless. Luckily, I had some good friends in decent positions in the corporate, and one of them got me a good launch with a high growth startup. The fact that the role was based out of my hometown made this deal even sweeter. Anyway, the whole point of this story is to get to the point where I met this fascinating entity called 'Big Data'. Of course we handle a lot of data as a routine in our military careers - in aviation you literally process tonnes of data real time to get to where you want to, in the way you want to. But this was different.



The image above depicts the five major characteristics that define Big Data. In short, with the advent of smart phones and IoT devices, there are unimaginable quantities of data being generated every instant and at such breakneck speeds, that conventional methods of analysis are not even remotely sufficient to help us get to the head or tail of the question being asked.

Now, coming back to the situation, I got myself into a position, that deals with the offline component of sales operations. I was in-charge of a department that organically interacted with administrators and decision makers of client accounts to generate business. And despite the fact that we introduced the clients to customised online booking portals, and though every action on the portal including clicks and

views were being gathered real time, none of the data being collected were used to derive any useful information. Or so I thought. In reality, however, the entire swarms of data being collected in the servers of a prominent service provider, was being used to derive actionable insights to drive the organisation to a completely online model, making the very role I was playing significantly redundant in the near future.

That prospect was scary, and I realised the day wasn't far when Artificial Intelligence and Automation would make many such jobs redundant. Of course, there would be many who argue that machines can never replace the human element in a transaction - and I agree, to an extent. However, it is not a contest between human and machine that I'm talking about here. It is the contest between a human who knows the machine, and one who doesn't. Even in a role that is likely to remain organic for the foreseeable future, it just makes more sense to equip yourself with the tools and techniques required to process and understand data, at least with respect to the domain you are in, rather than relying on 'analysts' for even the simplest of such instances. Moreover, having an understanding of the arsenal, helps you command a team, even if you're not the one directly firing the weapon.

Somewhere on a parallel timeline, I happened to join Forces Network, having been introduced to the forum by a good friend, senior and mentor - Flt Lt Amit Malik (Retd). Though I have never been able to attend a live M2C Transition Seminar, I can proudly say that I am one of the biggest beneficiaries of the forum, having gained insights in ways that I cannot practically explain in words. It was around the same time that IQ Sir floated the idea of ABCT - Anybody Can Tech, and I took that as a sign. Also, by then, I had quit my first corporate job after just 5 months - due to some personal reasons that ate up about four months of my time post my resignation (from the corporate job). I decided to use the time for myself, to sit and think about what I really wanted to do with my career, and I could come up with some really interesting options - namely Data Analytics, Blockchain and Cyber Security. I read in depth about each domain, and ended up with the understanding that all these fields would be intertwined sometime in the not so distant future. After some meaningful discussions with stalwarts of the industry like Brig Subhash Katoch (a Visiting Faculty for Business Analytics at FMS Delhi) - who helped me identify the right academic path to follow, Col Vinay Gupta (Head of Data Analytics and Business Excellence at Suzlon Global Services Limited) - who patiently listened to all my queries about the on ground roles I could possibly play with a decent knowledge in handling data, and Cdr Nitin Madhavan (VP Digital Technologies at Crimson Energy Experts) who showed with his own example that a self taught data professional can indeed climb the rungs of corporate leadership - I decided to start with Data.

So far, I spoke about the 'why's' of choosing data as my niche. Here again, I must stress on the fact that I don't intend to become a core Data Professional at this point of time, because I neither have the knowledge (yet) nor the experience required to handle a role of such immense technical possibilities. Also, the hype generated by the Data Science domain - especially about a million vacancies being created and skyrocketing salaries - attract a lot of professionals and fresh graduates qualified in



Computer Science, Statistics and Math to the field, significantly crowding the gateways into core Data Science/ Analytics roles. However, there is also a need to understand that in today's world, there is, possibly, not a single domain that cannot benefit from collecting and analysing data relevant to their operations. In other words, every management role any of us are likely to handle in days to come would have an element of data, and the ones who are familiar with the key concepts of the domain are likely to hold an upper hand - be it while presenting the best version of ourselves to a hiring manager, or while handling teams that work on data. Now, let me talk a bit about 'what' I chose to do in terms of courses and certifications. Here, I'd again like to post a disclaimer that 'I' am still a work in progress, and I'm in no way any sort of authority to claim what's best and what's not. Being the protagonist of my own play, the facts are presented from my own perspective here.

Just to get things in order - in simple words based on my understanding - Artificial Intelligence is a very broad term depicting the ability of a machine to think and act like humans do, encompassing applications from automation and robotics to text and speech recognition, recommendation engines and what not. It is basically a sub field of computer science that deals with programs that take smart decisions, machines that can mimic human cognition to an extent and systems that can make rational, autonomous decisions.



Machine Learning or ML is how a system implements AI, and is considered a subset of AI. ML is the ability of a system to learn from the environment and continuously improve itself based on the experiences without being explicitly programmed to perform the task. Much like how a child learns from his experiences. Deep Learning, going further, is a subset of ML that aims to attain near human intelligence, for instance, through the use of layers of Neural Networks - a bit too complicated to be included in the scope of this paper (and significantly beyond my own understanding)

And finally, Data Science is an umbrella term, the aim of which is to use various computational techniques to extract relevant data, and derive actionable insights from the data. It can rightly be called a combination of CRISP - DM Methodology mathematics, machine learning, computer programming, statistical modelling, data engineering and visualisation, pattern recognition and learning, uncertainty modelling, data warehousing, and cloud computing.

To understand in detail about the kind of applications, you may like to be familiar

with a methodology commonly used to undertake an entire Data Science project lifecycle. Known as Cross Industry Standard Process for Data Mining or CRISP - DM, the methodology uses a 6-step process to work on raw data to extract actionable insights.

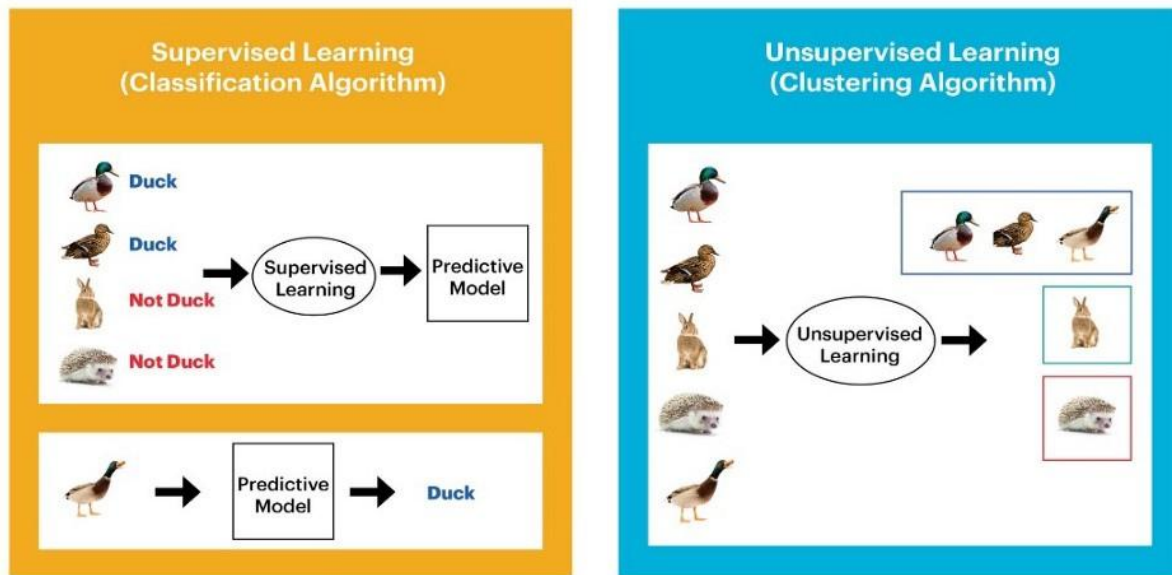
**Step 1: Business Understanding** - This first step requires you to have a Business Understanding of the 'problem' you are trying to solve - this is where you define the objectives, try and make sense of the 'question', what data is required to solve the problem, how you can use this data to answer the question, define success criteria for the project, carry out various go-no go analyses and decide how all this aligns with the strategic goals of the organisation. This is more of a management skill than a technical one.

**Step 2: Data Understanding** - This is where you acquire and understand the data required to solve the problem, as decided in Step 1, define where you are going to source the data from, and how you are going to acquire the data. Once acquired, we try and make sense of the data, about its type, quality, and quantity and uncover patterns and anomalies - through statistical or visual methods.

**Step 3: Data Preparation** - So far, we had been working on 'raw data', since it makes more sense to the human mind. However, the same model may not be readily suitable for a computer program to work on to provide predictions or classifications. Hence, in Data Preparation, we transform the data into a format that can be understood by the model, starting with eliminating several null or invalid values, and remove duplicates and attributes not relevant to the case at hand using a process known as Data Preprocessing. The raw data is integrated from multiple sources, and 'transformed' into formats more suitable for a program, such as floating point or binary numbers, using various data transformation techniques such as centering, scaling, one-hot-encoding, discretising etc. Data Wrangling comes after Preprocessing, and is performed iteratively during the interactive Data Analysis stage, where the analyst changes the shape and views of a data set in real time until it works well for finding actionable insights or building a good machine learning model. Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) is another distinct but closely related philosophy or approach, in which the data is allowed to present underlying patterns and models by itself through visual methods such as box plots, histograms, scatter plots etc, rather than by making assumptions early on about the nature of data. Data Scientists spend about 70 - 80% of their total project time cleaning and preparing data, making it the most time and effort consuming phase.

**Step 4: Modelling** - Finally, this is where we get to work on Machine Learning (ML) models. Here, we experiment with various ML models on our data, to see which makes the most sense. Supervised and Unsupervised Learning are used to create the ML models. Simply put, if you have a lot of historical 'labelled' data with actual results, you can split the dataset into 'training' and 'test' sets and teach the model with the 'training' set. This is called Supervised Learning. In the image below, on the left, you have a data set that tells the system exactly which all images are 'ducks' and which all

are not, so that the next time the model is fed an image, it uses it's learning to predict whether the image is of a duck or not. Regression and Classification are Supervised Learning Models.



Western Digital.

On the other hand, if you don't have a labelled data set with which you can train the system on, you would have to rely on the Unsupervised Learning models, which try and create clusters based on similarities. As the image on the right shows, using various clustering algorithms, the system tries to group together images that are similar to each other. Clustering and Association are Unsupervised Learning Models.

**Step 5: Evaluation** - In this phase, we measure the performance of various models created in Step 4, and evaluate their performance against the 'test' data to measure accuracy of the models. This helps in identifying the models best suitable to solve the specific problem at hand.

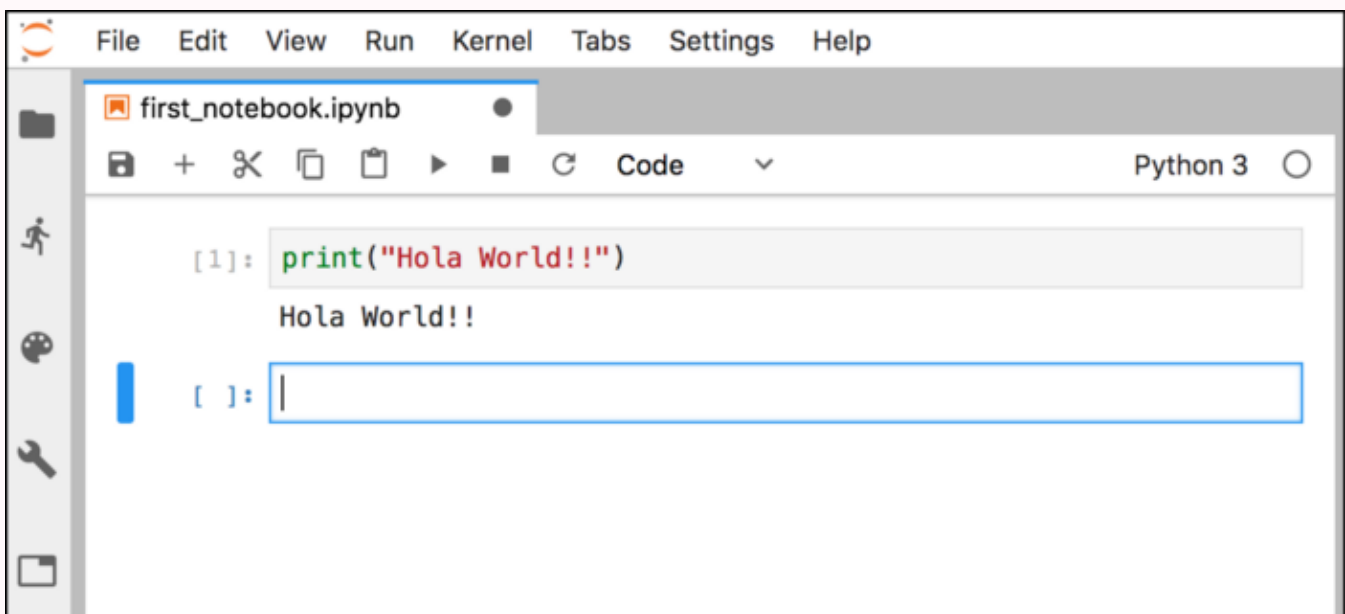
**Step 6: Deployment** - Here, the models created in the previous stages are scaled up as per requirement and put to production use. It also demands real time performance measurement of the model, to evaluate the efficacy of 'live' results. Based on feedback, the models are tweaked and redesigned to deliver optimum results.

### Application Softwares Best Suited for Various Steps

**Python vs R** - 'Python' and 'R' are programming languages adopted by Data Scientists across the world, and they have the functionality required to undertake a Data Science project right from extracting data to final deployment. On various online platforms, you'll find that 'Python vs R' has been a long ongoing battle, with loyalists coming up with more and more arguments in support of their favourite language. From what I could figure out so far, Python has a larger user base in real world data science applications, while 'R' is widely used in academia. So, if you intend to do an MBA with Data Analytics or Business Analytics, you are more likely to use R for your coursework, but I would suggest going through the syllabus of the Universities you

intend to apply to, for a clearer understanding.

I have used Python for my learning since the beginning, and have found it a very comfortable language to handle. I run Python on Jupyter Notebook, which is an 'open-source web application that allows you to create and share documents that contain live code, equations, visualisations and narrative text', and created with a purpose to 'support interactive data science and scientific computing across all programming languages.' It is available on virtual labs and platforms such as the IBM Watson and Google Colab. You can download an instance of an application called Anaconda Navigator to run Jupyter Notebook offline on your computer. This is what it looks like:



Don't worry if all this sounds too complicated, because it isn't. These are just names you are not yet used to. To get a fairly decent basic understanding of Python, I followed the course: '2020 Complete Python Bootcamp: From Zero to Hero in Python' by Jose Portilla (Link: <https://www.udemy.com/course/complete-python-bootcamp/>). It explains in great detail about Jupyter Notebooks and how you can use it to run Python.

The course starts right from the basics, and is well suited for even beginners with no prior coding experience. However, I found the assignments significantly more difficult than what the course contents cover, for which I had to rely on other sources such as GitHub and StackOverflow. But again, that is how you learn from the open source, Kaggle being another top platform where you can learn all about data science in a more practical way.

Python has various open source libraries such as Pandas, for instance, which is a software library written specifically for data analysis and manipulation. Combined with other libraries such as Scikit-Learn (for implementing ML models such as regression, classification and clustering), Matplotlib (for plotting data) and Seaborn (data visualisation library), Python becomes an exceptionally strong tool across the entire spectrum of a data science project lifecycle.

**ETL** - which stands for Extract, Transform and Load, is a data integration process which consists of three distinct, but interconnected steps (Extract, Transform and Load) and is used to blend data from multiple Relational Database Management Systems (RDBMS). In simple words, this is how to acquire and load the data. There are various ETL tools available in the market, such as XPlenty, AWS Glue, Alooka, Talend, Stitch, Informatica PowerCenter, Oracle Data Integrator, and so on. The data extracted from various RDBMS sources are transformed and loaded into data warehouses.

However, what I have found from my limited research (again, in no way to be taken as authority), is that you can just use SQL or Structured Query Language for ETL purposes, without using an ETL tool. It might strip you of some benefits offered by ETL tools in terms of performance, user interface, reusability, speed etc, but with improvements in computing power and cloud computing, it serves almost as well.

This makes SQL one of the most desired skills when it comes to Data Analytics. It is a computer language for storing, manipulating and retrieving data stored in relational databases, and the standard language for Relational Database System.

Post completion of the Python Course, I pursued the IBM Professional Data Science Certification on Coursera (Link: <https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/ibm-data-science>), which is a nine course specialisation, covering the entire data science methodology, right from understanding data science, to applications of AI/ML ending with a capstone project. Though the course included SQL as required from a Data Scientist's point of view, I intend to pursue a certification specific to SQL from Udemy as well in due course.

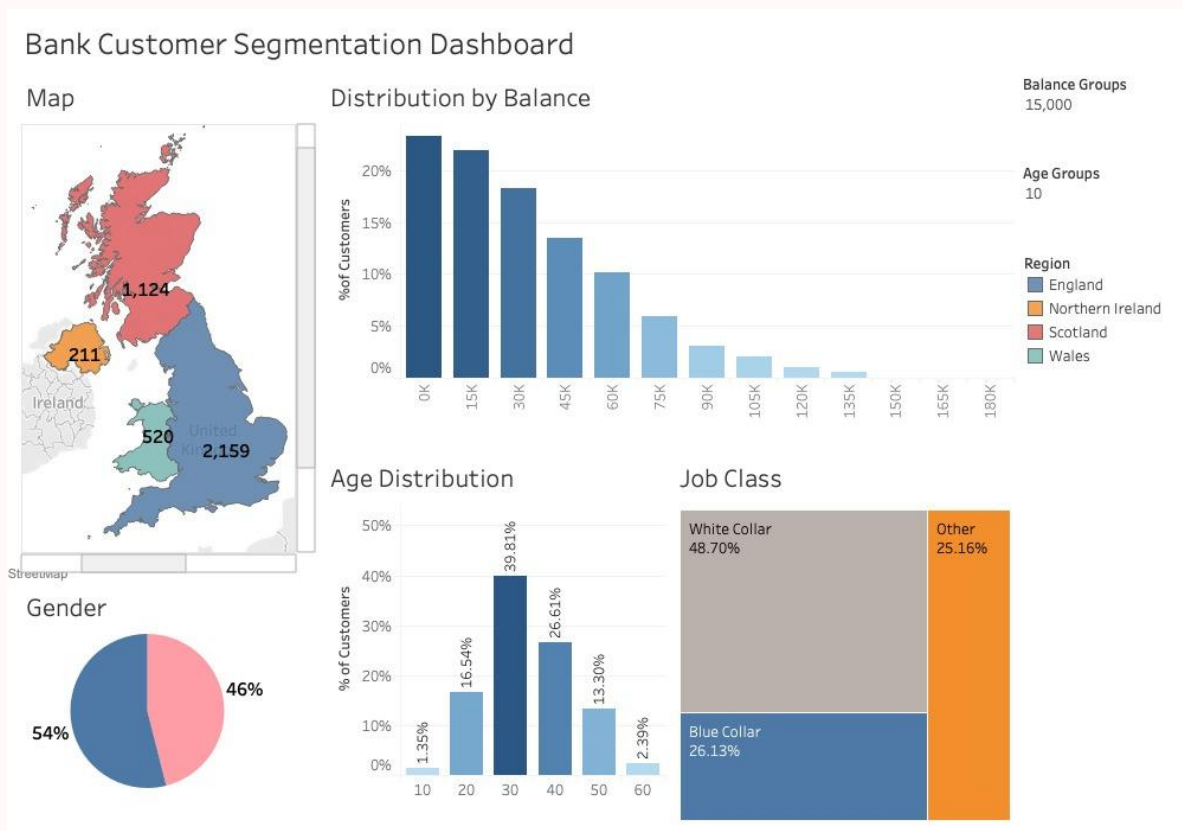
The IBM Professional Data Science certification would certainly test your mettle, especially if you're like me with no programming or statistics background. But with small short steps in the right direction, it doesn't overwhelm you with a barrage of information. I took about 2.5 months to complete the certification on an average pace. The aim is to leave wiser at the end of it, rather than just heavier with 9 course certifications and a professional certificate. I felt the course on Data Visualisation could have been done a bit better - that part was in fact a bit overwhelming for me. But fear not.

**Tableau** - Yes, I did find creating data visualisations with Python libraries (be it matplotlib, seaborn or plotly) a bit too cumbersome. The basic plots are okay, but customising the plots to your liking can become a bit too much at times. Again, an expert could have a totally different view on this.

Anyway, this is when a friend of mine introduced me to Tableau. Tableau is a very powerful Data Visualisation tool used in the Business Intelligence industry. In fact, if Python and all the coding involved scares you, you can just use Tableau for lightning quick analysis and super customisable visualisations (with limited functionality as compared to Python). I did a course on Tableau from Udemy, called 'Tableau 2020

A-Z: Hands-On Tableau Training for Data Science' by Kirill Eremenko and SuperDataScience Team. (Link: <https://www.udemy.com/course/tableau10/>)

To be very honest, I was mind blown by the potential and user friendliness of the tool, and you can basically use multiple data sources such as Comma Separated Value (.csv) files, Excel files, or even PDFs and text files to load data, and create beautiful visualisations by just dragging and dropping the data fields. It is practically that simple. Tableau Desktop is a paid version, but if you download it the day you start your course, you get a 14 day trial you can efficiently use. Tableau Public is a free version, but has its limitations, obviously. Shown below is an interactive dashboard I created using Tableau, and I'm not even half an expert. Just imagine how beautiful you could make your presentations with a tool as powerful as this.



Microsoft PowerBI is another powerful business analytics service by Microsoft, which provides interactive visualisations and business intelligence capabilities with an interface simple enough for end users to create their own reports and dashboards.

**Integrating Data Science Tools** - 'Python + SQL + Tableau: Integrating Python, SQL, and Tableau' is another course that's been added to my Udemy cart, for reasons as evident from the title itself. (Link: <https://www.udemy.com/course/python-sql-tableau-integrating-python-sql-and-tableau/>). I believe knowing the three, and the optimum manner in which they may be integrated, would be a powerful combination.

All said and done, if you interact with Data Scientists, they would say they still use MS Excel for basic utilities such as data cleaning and transformation, to an extent. Practically, it is more convenient too, as you just need to know basic add and delete operations to prepare your data on Excel. If you intend to do the course on Tableau,

you'll see that they have included this particular aspect in the course.

I had thought I would keep this as short and crisp as possible, but once I started writing, I felt I should write as much, just in case it helps someone gain a little understanding before taking the leap of faith. Data Science is an ocean, and it's nearly impossible to gulp it all down. If I could recommend a possible course of action, it would be to first decide on a domain you intend to work, see the real life applications of data science specific to the domain, gain a broad understanding of data science with the help of courses such as the ones suggested above, and then specialise on the domain specific applications.

This is my humble attempt to give back to the community that continues to help me, as I'm sure is the case with countless others. Fair winds and blue skies!



**Fg Offr Sidharth R Nair** served in the Indian Air Force as a Helicopter Pilot for a relatively short tenure of 7 years. Post retirement, he had a short stint in Sales, Operations and Business Development for a startup in the hospitality segment. Fuelled with the zeal of equipping himself, post ABCT movement stirred by the Forces Network, he embarked on the journey of having a solid understanding of the latest technologies, in order to excel in any domain in tomorrow's corporate world. He currently works for a cybersecurity start-up based out of Trivandrum, treading on uncharted territory and happily learning on the go.



# Book Review

## Night: by Elie Wiesel

**BY SURESH CHANDRA**

**About the Author:** Eliezer Wiesel aka Elie Wiesel (30 Sep 1928 - 02 Jul 2016), is a Romanian-born Jewish writer and a Holocaust survivor. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1986. Consequent to annexation of Sighet by Hungary in 1940, the Wiesel family along with other Jewish families were forced to live in ghettos. In May 1944, Nazi Germany deported the Sighet Jews to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland. Elie Wiesel was a 15-year-old young boy at that time and was sent to Buna Werke labour camp, a sub-camp of Auschwitz III-Monowitz, with his father where they were forced to work under deplorable, inhumane conditions. They were later transferred to other Nazi camps and force marched to Buchenwald where his father died after being beaten by a German soldier, just three months before the camp was liberated. Wiesel's mother and younger sister Tzipora also died in the Holocaust. Elie was freed from Buchenwald in 1945. Elie and his older sisters Beatrice and Hilda were the only survivors in the family. Wiesel moved to New York in 1955 and became a U.S. citizen in 1963. Elie Wiesel a writer of more than sixty fiction and non-fiction books, a teacher and an activist is known for his memoir *Night*, in which he recounted his experiences surviving the Holocaust. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he said:

*"Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe."*

(Source: <https://eliewieselfoundation.org/elie-wiesel/>)

### The Book Review

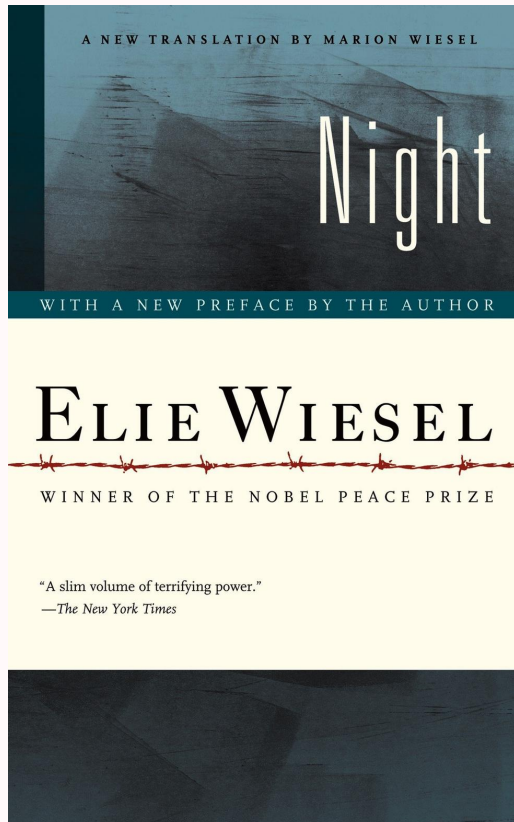
An astute reader will have noticed that there is no shortage of books, documentaries, and movies on the Holocaust. "**Night**" is a powerful memoir that narrates the author's experience during the Holocaust in several concentration camps. Translated from the much longer original version titled "Un di Velt Hot Geshvign (*And the World Has Remained Silent*)" written in Yiddish in 1956, it is a candid and horrific account of his survival as a teenager in the death camps.

The book begins with a powerful preface where the author justifies his reasons for writing the book and very aptly says:

*"CONVINCED THAT THIS PERIOD in history would be judged one day, I knew that I must bear witness. I also knew that, while I had many things to say, I did not have*



*the words to say them. Painfully aware of my limitations, I watched helplessly as language became an obstacle. It became clear that it would be necessary to invent a new language. But how was one to rehabilitate and transform words betrayed and perverted by the enemy? Hunger—thirst—fear—transport—selection—fire—chimney: these words all have intrinsic meaning, but in those times, they meant something else.”*



**Author:** Elie Wiesel

**Publisher:** Original - 1954  
Hill & Wang (1960) –  
English

**ISBN:** ISBN-10: 9780374500016  
ISBN-13: 978-0374500016

**Goodreads Score:** 4.34/ 5.00 from  
955615 ratings

**Author's Profile:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie\\_Wiesel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie_Wiesel)



The introduction also brings out extracts from the original version which were edited out of the translated version. The preface sets the tempo of the book and ends with:

*“For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive future generations of a past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; **to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.**”*

Night is a 120 page fast one-sitting read with many themes dominating the book. “**Silence**”, as theme, in its theological, existential, and linguistic manifestations dominates the narrative: the mystery of the God’s silence in the face of evil; the muteness of the dead; and the utter disproportionality of language and events of the Holocaust. In one of the most famous passages of the book, the author states, “**Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.**” The divine silence that he finds most troubling, is an event at Buna where the Gestapo hangs a young boy and a man asks, “Where is God?” and the response is a total silence throughout the camp.

The author’s **struggle with this faith** is another theme that comes in the book

frequently. Having been exposed to religious studies at a local yeshiva, during his childhood, where he studied the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the Cabbala (a doctrine of Jewish mysticism), he quickly became influenced by the traditional spiritual beliefs and liberal expressions of Judaism. The same came crashing and his faith in the goodness of the world is irreparably shaken, by the cruelty and evil he witnesses during the Holocaust. Night was one of the first books to have raised many questions like “**where was God at Auschwitz?**”.

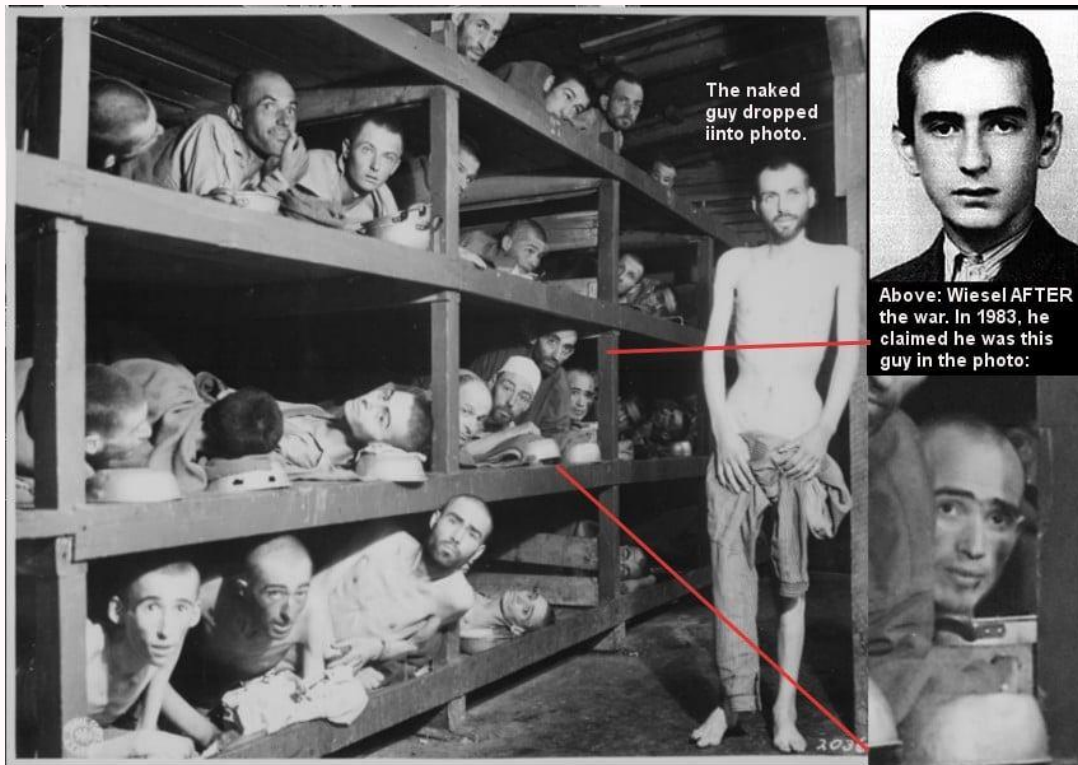


**Strong Father-Son bond** also dominates the narrative. He sees around him family bonds breaking in the face of adversity and mentions sons mistreating their fathers on at least three occasions. He depends on his father for support, and his love for his father allows him to endure. During the long run to Gleiwitz, he says, “**My father’s presence was the only thing that stopped me [from allowing myself to die].... . I had no right to let myself die. What would he do without me? I was his only support.**” Their relationship demonstrates that Eliezer’s love and solidarity are stronger forces of survival than his instinct for self-preservation.

**Book Summary.** Divided into nine short chapters, the book describes his initial childhood days and how in 1944 they were forced into small ghettos only to be inhumanely herded into railway cars to be transported to Birkenau, the gateway to Auschwitz. Upon his arrival in Birkenau, Eliezer and his father are separated from his mother and sisters, whom they would never see again. The “selections” to determine whether they should be killed immediately or put to work are painstakingly described in the memoir. The unimaginable cruelty at display in the camp forces him to see the open-pit furnaces where the Nazis are burning babies by the truckload.

Consequent to the “selections”, Wiesel and his father are brought to the Buna work camp where they are all subjected to beatings and repeated humiliations. A cruel foreman forces Eliezer to give him his gold tooth, which is pulled out of his mouth

with a rusty spoon. The prisoners are forced to watch the hanging of fellow prisoners in the camp courtyard. After a couple of months Eliezer suffers a foot injury and had to undergo a surgery. The Russians who were advancing to liberate Buna forces the Nazi's to evacuate the camp in the middle of a heavy snowstorm with an injured foot, the author and fellow prisoners begin a death march to Gleiwitz concentration camp. They run more than 50 miles and anyone who was incapable of keeping pace was shot dead. At Gleiwitz, the prisoners are herded into cattle cars once again. They begin another deadly journey: one hundred Jews board the car, but only twelve remain alive when the train reaches the concentration camp at Buchenwald.



Throughout the ordeal, Eliezer and his father help each other to survive by means of mutual support and concern. In Buchenwald, however, Eliezer's father dies of dysentery and physical abuse by a German soldier. Eliezer survives, hollow from the inside and on 11 APR 1945 he is liberated by the US Army. Lawrence L Langer, a renowned Holocaust expert, says, that "moral honesty that helps undermine the sentimental responses to the Holocaust" is what sets "Night" apart.

The book has sold over 10 million copies and has spent over 80 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list after Oprah Winfrey picked it up for her book club. It is the first book in a trilogy comprising two other books "**Dawn**" and "**Day**". It is a must read and must not be seen only as a memoir, but as an outstanding literary work.

### Some Quotes from the Book

#### Quote 1:

*"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke.*

*Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.*

*Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.*

*Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.*

*Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself.*

*Never.”*

#### Quote 2:

*“Where is God? Where is He?” someone behind me asked.*

*For more than half an hour [the child in the noose] stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes were not yet glazed.*

*Behind me, I heard the same man asking: “Where is God now?”*

*And I heard a voice within me answer him: “Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows. . . .”*

#### Quote 3:

*We were masters of nature, masters of the world. We had forgotten everything—death, fatigue, our natural needs. Stronger than cold or hunger, stronger than the shots and the desire to die, condemned and wandering, mere numbers, we were the only men on earth.*

*At last, the morning star appeared in the gray sky. A trail of indeterminate light showed on the horizon. We were exhausted. We were without strength, without illusions.*

#### Quote 4:

*[Rabbi Eliahou’s son] had felt that his father was growing weak, he had believed that the end was near and had sought this separation in order to get rid of the burden, to free himself from an encumbrance which could lessen his own chances of survival.*

*I had done well to forget that. And I was glad that Rabbi Eliahou should continue to look for his beloved son.*

*And, in spite of myself, a prayer rose in my heart, to that God in whom I no longer believed.*

*My God, Lord of the Universe, give me strength never to do what Rabbi Eliahou’s son has done.*

#### Quote 5:

*One day I was able to get up, after gathering all my strength. I wanted to see*

*myself in the mirror hanging on the opposite wall. I had not seen myself since the ghetto.*

*From the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me.*

*The look in his eyes, as they stared into mine, has never left me.*

### Prologue: My Visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau

I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2006 and no matter how many times one may have watched "Schindler's List" or read "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" or even "Night", the experience of visiting the actual site is overwhelming.



The words from books and scenes from movies immediately translate into real people whose faces, names, nationalities, ages, and occupations bring to life the people who have been dehumanised. The mixture of fear, horror and defiance in their expressions is heart wrenching.



**Col Suresh Chandra** was commissioned on 11 Jun 1988 in the 94 Field Regiment. He commanded 121 Light Regiment and superannuated from service on 30 Nov 2017. An MTech (CSE - IITD), he has been instrumental in the design and development of the ACCCS / Project Shakti. He was an instructor in School of Artillery and DS, JC Wing, Army War College. He has also served with the Wargaming Centre, SWC and was Col GS (Systems) Western Command. Post retirement he divides his time between mentoring underprivileged kids in Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science of Class XII level, and freelancing as a cyber security and data analytics expert. He is available at [sureshchandra@protonmail.com](mailto:sureshchandra@protonmail.com)

# ForceNet Connect

## FRUITS OF 'ABCT' MANTRA

Subsequent to attending the Forces Network Seminar on 26 Aug 19, Lt (IN) Bhaskar Shukla, set for himself a one year target to upskill himself in the technical field by passionately implementing the 'ABCT' Mantra which is being regularly impressed upon in the Forces Network, and also some personal targets.

He started with attempting 7 km non-stop swimming in his company swimming pool in September, followed by 100 km Ultra-Marathon in November 2019. Thereafter, he completed his CPP Certification in Feb 2020, Full Marathon of IDBI in 3 hrs, 42 mins, remarkable 175 Certifications in 50 days during Lock down, and finally CISM in August 2020. He will now be taking a pause before setting new targets.

He attributes his success and resolve to the Founder for creating this amazing forum, and Capt Mayank as well as other esteemed members for their continual guidance.

## TRAVEL TO THE US, ON B1/B2 VISA

Brig KJ Singh encountered the need for urgent information related to travel to US on B1/B2 Visa. He had been informed by other sources and travel agents that in these restricted travel times, airlines may deny boarding in India for B1/B2 visa holders. He needed an urgent clarification, and so resorted to seeking help from the Forces Network group.

He realised and wholeheartedly appreciated the beauty and significance of the group when immediate mails and calls were received by him. He feels specially indebted to Cdr Gorthi, who was first off the block and filled him at length with the required information, and thus removing the ambiguity in his mind.

## PMP CERTIFICATION SUCCESS

After attending the M2C transition Webinar, Col V Girish embarked upon, and then successfully cleared his PMP Certification Examination. He expresses his gratitude to Col Sajan whose counselling session helped him make a conscious career choice, Col Sandesh Sharma for his wonderful PMP Certification training classes, Col Ajay Sharma for constant support and motivation, Capt Uday for his tremendous pointers which helped him reactivate his LinkedIn profile in April, and above all, IQ for his foresight to provide this excellent Network. He strongly feels that success is not individual, but an outcome of the people that you surround yourself with which make a huge difference in your outlook towards life.

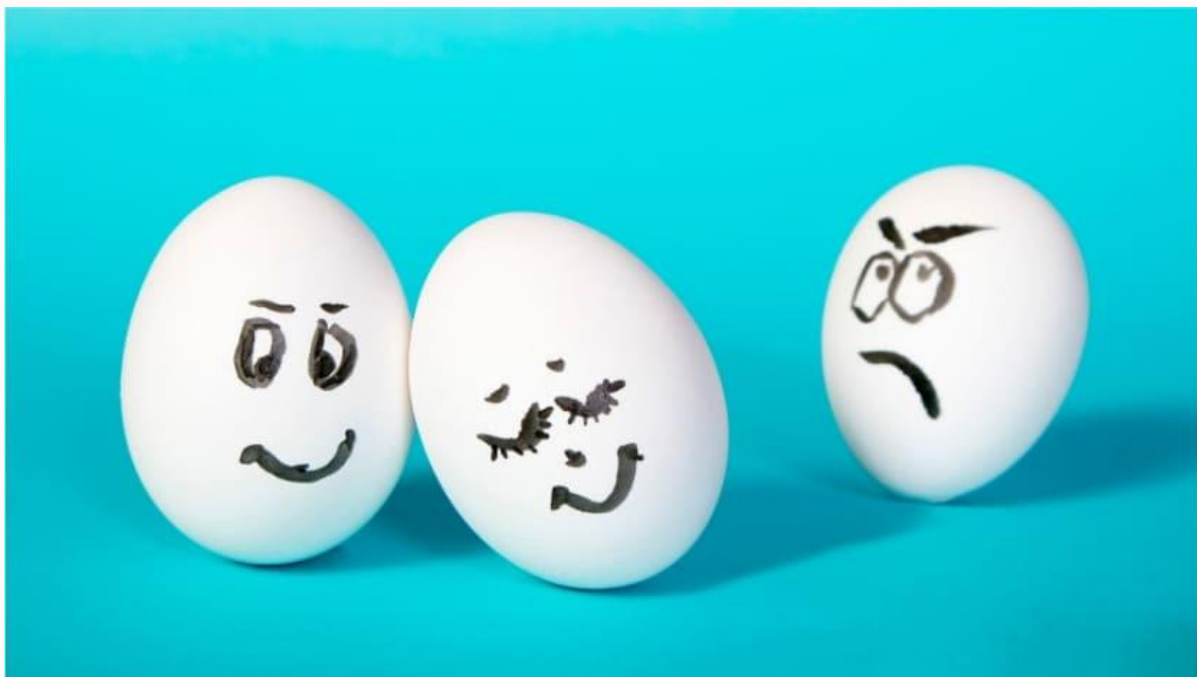
# Stories

## Jealousy

**BY DINESH DUTT SHARMA**

*O, beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eye'd monster,  
which doth mock The meat it feeds on."* - William Shakespeare

I was reminded recently of these words when I observed a colleague of mine congratulating another on his promotion. Even as they shook hands and the wishes were conveyed through lip service, he could not resist adding that in most offices these days, promotions went not to the most deserving but to those who managed to keep the boss the happiest. Jealousy was evidently rearing its ugly head and it left an unpleasant taste to the evening. Others, who had been in hearing vicinity, sniggered and commented on the obvious exhibition of jealousy and at the same time claimed how totally free they were of this human failing.



Whether one admits it or not, the fact remains that this green-eyed monster is a predominant component of man's emotional make up. The world today has graduated from focusing on IQ to evaluating and assessing an individual's EQ (Emotional Quotient). It is true that a healthy emotional balance is far more important than intellectual prowess in determining a person's professional success and personal happiness. There is an immense kaleidoscope of emotions which govern a person's behavioural responses and each emotion from love and compassion to anger and hatred, is present in each person; albeit in varying quantities.

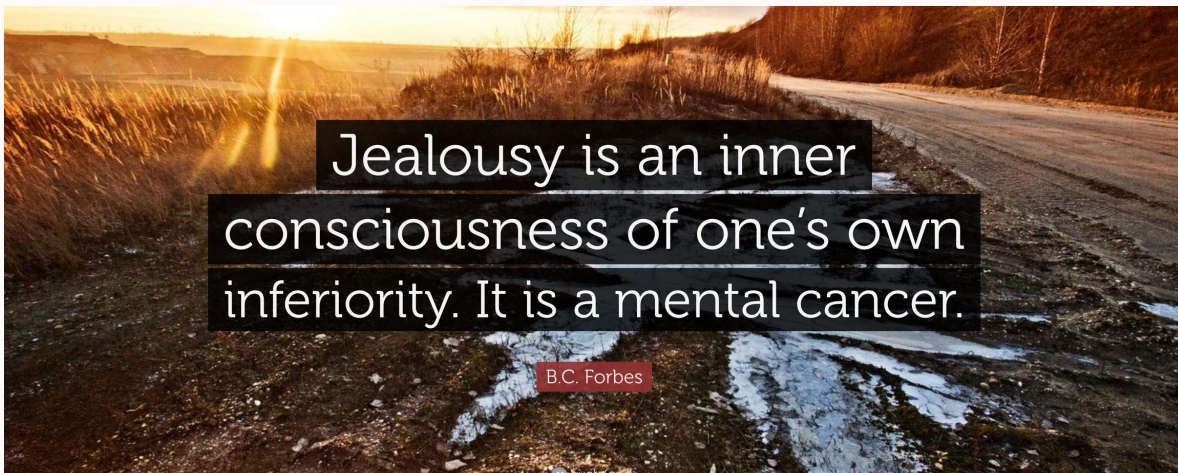
If someone says he has never experienced jealousy; then he is either a liar or abnormal. It is degrees of jealousy which lead to possessiveness, competition, a desire

to improve and at times cut throat professionalism. If you envy Amitabh Bachchan his rich baritone or his magnetic charisma - you are undoubtedly jealous but it is acceptable because you are well within the limits of positively accepted behaviour.

It is when any emotion crosses its desired optimum level that it becomes a monster. It can lead to dangerous consequences like violence and criminal behaviour. There was an incident a few years ago when a young school student of class 7 battered one of his class mates with a stone because he coveted his attractive wrist watch and insane jealousy and a desire to possess overcame his sensibilities. The secret lies therefore not in negating the presence of jealousy but in recognizing it, accepting it and taming it to work to your advantage.



**Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma**, an alumnus of Military School, was commissioned in to Army Service Corps in 1985 from IMA Dehradun, and Qualified from CAG's International Institute of Finance Management and Audit Sensitization Noida.. He has served in all corners of the Country and in prestigious appointments in ASC, Directorate of Recruiting and NCC. He has also served in Ministry of Defence (Directorate of Standardization). He is presently on re-employment in Sena Bhawan.



Jealousy is the result of one's lack of self-confidence, self-worth, and self-acceptance.

— *Sasha Azevedo* —



# You: A Summer Memory

BY SHRIYA BHARDWAJ

i remember that summer  
it's a faint yet vivid memory  
sunshine wrapped itself in your hair  
the amber of the sun brought out the hazel in your eyes  
you brushed your thumb on my cheek like you always did  
delicate, like a dandelion  
you intertwined your fingers into mine like you always did  
intricate, like a honeycomb  
you held onto me a bit too tight  
the bees stung us  
leaving no nectar but only tender crimson wounds  
i remember the summer that followed  
it's a vivid yet faint memory  
sunshine fell on my toes, i didn't wiggle them like i used to  
the amber of the sun brought out the paleness in my body  
i wiped the tears off my cheeks  
they burned, like an itch  
i drew a familiar face as yours on a torn off ivory paper  
reminding me, of you  
i stuck it on my refrigerator with a dirty canary magnet  
i know this summer  
as sunshine fell on the last piece of you i had  
i remembered you vividly for a moment  
but you were faint.



**Shriya Bhardwaj**, is pursuing her bachelor's in history from the University of Delhi. An avid reader and writer, she draws inspiration from writers like Sylvia Plath, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Haruki Murakami along with people and things she feels for deeply. Her works have been published and awarded by Delhi Poetry Slam. She is also fond of films, photography and learning new languages; currently learning Urdu. She is available at [nerdyshriya@gmail.com](mailto:nerdyshriya@gmail.com)

# Parents...

**BY ANITA SHARMA**

It won't ring any more....

I remember

The many times it trilled

I am feeling restless...

Mom is missing you...

The fresh water supply has not come...

Our electricity has gone....'

An endless list

Of insignificant worries

My father at the other end

And me restless, irritable

In an office miles away

Unable to resolve

And unwilling to hide my impatience

'Make a short trip

Meet us and go

Come for the weekend

Its been a long time'

My mother

And my reply

I was there last week maa...

Can't get leave again so soon....

You have to understand .....

I stare at the dark screen

Willing it to come to life

Willing it to ring

And flash that familiar name

If only to complain

If only to insist that I come home

But it maintains its stoic silence

It won't ring again..... **Miss you both.**



**Anita Sharma** is a science graduate with masters in English Literature and works as an educator. With about 28 years of teaching experience, Science remains her first love. She has done her first level as a Reiki healer and indulges in tarot reading as an aside. She is married to Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma.

# Matrimonials

## Brides Desired

Suitable match is sought by Maj Gen N Sethi for his son. The son was born on 15 Jul 1989, and is 5' 11" tall. He has done his BBA and MBA, and presently employed as Manager (Specialist) with PNB Delhi. Father is a serving super-specialist doctor. Mother was an educationist, and is now a home maker. The family is settled in Delhi-NCR. A well educated and working girl, aged 25-31 years with a height of 5'2" to 5'10", is desired. Religion/caste no bar. Horoscope match not necessary and no dowry required.

Maj Gen N Sethi can be reached at +91-9873029832 and drnavdeepsethi@gmail.com for additional details

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Suitable match is sought by Wg Cdr Nirjhar Ghosh for his son. The son was born on 15 Aug 1993 and is 176 cm tall. He is Master of Science from Carnegie Mellon University, USA, and is presently employed with Apple in California, USA. Father is a retired officer and now working in Corporate Sector. Mother is an educationist and a home maker. He is their single child. The family is settled at Gurugram. A post graduate girl preferably working in the USA is desired.

Wg Cdr Nirjhar Ghosh can be reached at +91-9717006158, and nirjhar63@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought for Col Deepak Kohli s/o Late Maj ML Kohli. He was born on 12 Nov 1966, and is 168 cm tall. He has done his MTech, and served in the Army for 32 years. He is presently posted at Bathinda. A convent educated, and preferably working graduate lady, with age between 44 to 51 years and height 5' - 5'4" is desired. Horoscope match is essential.

Col Deepak Kohli can be reached at +91-9419274629 and trideepak.saikohli@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Col KB Marwaha for his son. The son was born on 12 Sep 1993 and is 190 cm tall. He has done his BTech (IT), and is presently employed as a Marketing & Business Development professional. Father is a retired officer and now serving in the Apex Court. Mother is an educationist and a home maker. He is their single child. The family is settled in New Delhi. A non-manglik, tall, talented, qualified and a working girl from a family with service background is desired. Religion and caste no bar.

Col KB Marwaha can be reached at +91-9560711005, and kbm7mbk@gmail.com for additional details.

## Grooms Desired

Suitable match is sought by Col Pradeep Dhau for his daughter. The daughter was born on 14 Apr 1992 and is 158 cm tall. She has done her Masters in Mass Communication and is now working as PR/Digital and Social Media professional in a 5 Star Hotel at Gurgaon.. Father is retired and presently working with an International humanitarian organisation. Mother is a home maker. Her younger brother has completed his BArch. The family resides at Gurgaon. A well settled graduate/MBA qualified boy aged below 32 years and height between 5'7" to 5'11" is desired. Preference is for Defence Officer, from a Punjabi/Hundu Khatri family. Caste no bar. Would prefer horoscope matching, but is not a must.

Col Pradeep Dhau can be reached at +91-09871573123 and pradeepdhau@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Col Virender Yadav for his daughter. The daughter was born on 10 Jul 1990 and is 5' 3" tall. After completing her Hotel Management, she is presently working with Mirage Group at Dubai in the Event Planning domain. Father is a retired officer, and now serving with Manipal University at Jaipur. Her elder brother is married and settled at Singapore. A compatible professionally qualified boy with pleasing personality is desired.

Col Virender Yadav can be reached at +91-8003599902, and viren1960@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Maj Ashok Kumar for his daughter. The daughter was born on 18 Apr 1987 and is 168 cm tall. She has done her M.Sc (Biological Science) and is working as a Senior Consultant. Father is retired and self employed She has a brother and the family resides at New Zealand. A well settled engineer/doctor aged 33-38 years and height between 178-184 cm from a Hindu Jain family is desired. Preference is for a boy who is in New Zealand, or willing to relocate to New Zealand.

Maj Ashok Kumar can be reached at 006421652875 and ashok2342@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Col Hardeep Sharma for his daughter. The daughter was born on 5 Apr 1987 and is 167 cm tall. After completing her DM (Psychiatry), she is presently working as a doctor with AIIMS New Delhi. Father is a retired officer, and settled at Panchkula. She has a sister who is married, and a brother. A compatible professionally qualified boy, preferably a Doctor (MD/MS) with pleasing personality is desired. Horoscope match is a must.

Col Hardeep Sharma can be reached at +91-9717013994, and baba37881@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Lt Col Ramesh Kumar for his daughter. The daughter was born on 24 Jan 1995 and is 163 cm tall. She has done her Masters in Commerce and PGC in Professional Accounting from University of Dundee. Father is retired and has his own business. The family resides at Gurgaon. A well settled and employed boy aged below 29 years and height below 170 cm, and from a Yadav family is desired.

Lt Col Ramesh Kumar can be reached at +91-7986029740 and dhigtana72@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Wg Cdr Deepak Yadav for his daughter. The daughter was born on 13 May 1992 and is 160 cm tall. After completing her B.Tech from Nagpur and MS(CIS) from Colorado State University, she is presently working as Business Analyst with HappyFox Inc at Chennai. Father is a retired officer, and now serving with DDA at Delhi-NCR, and mother is a home maker. Her younger brother is studying. The family resides at New Delhi. A compatible professionally qualified and well settled boy exhibiting acceptable social behaviour is desired. The girl is a Manglik, but horoscope matching is not essential. Caste and religion no bar. No dowry.

Wg Cdr Deepak Yadav can be reached at +91-8527150564, and deepak.srivastava1967@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Col DS Bhati for his daughter. The daughter was born on 4 Aug 1992 and is 5'6" tall. She has done her Psychology Honours and MA from TISS, and is working as In-charge of a NGO. Father is retired and now working in corporate, while the mother is a home maker. Her elder brother is working in a MNC. The family resides at Jaipur. An independent, well settled boy with matching age and height, only from a Rajput family in India or abroad, is desired. Preference is for a boy who is in Defence/Uniformed Service/Government job.

Col DS Bhati can be reached at +91-8349201108 and krdsbhati@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Col Sudhir Handa for his daughter. The daughter was born on 29 Jul 1991 and is 163 cm tall. She has completed B.Sc, MBA and B.Ed, and she is presently teaching. Father is a serving officer, in Punjab. She has one brother. A compatible professionally qualified boy, preferably a Defence officer, or in a government job, or in a good position in Corporate, with pleasing personality from a Punjabi Khatri family is desired.

Col Sudhir Handa can be reached at +91-9858519335, and sudhirhanda67@gmail.com for additional details.

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