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James D. Thomson
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DRIVING FORWARD

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A new way of thriving

In today's fast moving business world, your occupation can dominate your whole life. But according to Prem Rawat, there is a source of strength you can draw upon to thrive as a person, and he can help you find it.

Coping with the high-pressure demands that executives face every day can be exhausting, and it is sometimes too easy to start living to work instead of working to live. Many business people find themselves looking for satisfaction in their lives through their work, the material items they own, or fulfilling the targets they set themselves in sport or leisure activities. But this kind of fulfilment can be brief and never really brings what they are seeking – a way to feel satisfied with their whole lives and to navigate through the maze of business, work and home stresses.

This might sound like a familiar situation, but according to Prem Rawat, finding a way to cope with whatever life throws your way without getting stressed, ill or forgetting what is important is possible and what's more, is within your reach right now.

Rawat travels the world providing inspiration and guidance and believes that inside all of us is a source of supreme beauty, a strength that can be discovered and drawn upon, which brings inner peace, clarity, and satisfaction with your life. He has been sharing this message for over 30 years, and he travels continually around the world in an effort to bring his views to anyone who is seeking fulfilment.

I asked him how he would describe what he offers. "It can't be categorised as a product or service as it is really a possibility. What I offer is a method to look within - not to manufacture something or to create something, but to get in touch with the beauty that already exists inside each person." This strength is already present inside, and he can help find a way to access it.

Prem Rawat is keen to help anyone find this resource and offers the opportunity to "whoever wants to come and listen. The main thing is to feel the urge in your life towards this – some people do and some people don't. Some think they have got everything. But others are aware of a quest to understand something more in this life, and these are the people that feel attracted to come and listen to me. I can show them the possibility, and if they want to pursue it further, then it is up to them.

"First of all, what I offer is the lectures that I give. So people can come and listen and understand what I am talking about. Of course,

I offer them the opportunity to ask questions and clarify things. After that, they can listen some more, and as the thirst grows and the fog starts to lift, I offer the four techniques of finding 'Self Knowledge' which allow the person to take their attention from the outside and place it on the inside and be able to feel what is within them and to thoroughly enjoy it."

Sharing his ideas with the widest audience possible is the most important aspect of Rawat's work and he spends most of his time taking his message to areas where it has not been heard before. "I want to make sure that small communities, small remote villages in the middle of Africa and India, as well as major metropolitan cities, have the opportunity to look within, and my aim is to reach as many people as possible," he said.

Many people have found that his teachings have helped them in the world of business. Bearing in mind that some management gurus charge vast sums for consultations, he could obviously make a lot of money if he sold his product. But he doesn't, and so I asked him why that is.

"Because this is not a situation where you can say, 'Here is my \$20. Give me \$20 worth of joy in my life,'" he explained. "My teaching is based on a possibility that exists inside of you, and whatever you are looking for is inside of you. It is not so much a question of money but more a process of discovery. And of course, helping people to discover this beauty is obviously a very gratifying experience for me."

To keep to his gruelling schedule and continue to be motivated in this work must be hard, but he shows no signs of being tired or ready to stop speaking. "I have been doing this since I was very, very young," he said, "and right from the outset I felt a lot of joy at being able to give people access to the strength within themselves - not to have a life that is a struggle, but to enjoy every day and to enjoy every moment. To pass this message on and have other people open up to that is a very joyous undertaking for me; it is fulfilling in itself."

Finding success in business is what most company directors and chief executives are looking for, and this can overtake their entire lives. But in a recent interview with Leaders magazine, Prem Rawat

spoke about success as a matter of coming home. So I asked what exactly he meant by this.

“Coming home means coming to yourself, finding what you are looking for, finding that comfort within you. So much of our attention is placed outside and we are told that- if we are looking for fulfilment, we will find it anywhere but in ourselves. What I am saying is that exactly the reverse is true – what you are really looking for is within you. To find what you are looking for within you is the most amazing thing. We look so far and wide and are driven by the thirst to be fulfilled, yet we don’t take that thirst and try to apply it to our own selves.” In his experience, finding this strength within us can then translate to success in our outside lives also, as it brings balance, harmony and stability to the self.

In the same interview he spoke of the possibility of inner peace. But can there be inner peace if your job or business demands you focus on profits?

“I think they are two separate issues,” he said. “Outward success and inward success are two distinctly different things. They can co-exist and there is no conflict between the two.”

With his very full schedule of speaking engagements around the world, Rawat is an expert in time management. “To manage your time, the first thing you have to do is understand your priorities. If you go out there and you want to do ten different things, you have to begin with the one that is most important to you. Of course, in these

with ten different things, but you must include yourself as a priority. If you are not satisfied, and not happy, and if you can’t cope with your own existence, then how are you going to cope with anything else that happens in your life?”

When trying to find that elusive balance between working life and home life, some people can feel overwhelmed, and so when also trying to dedicate time to personal fulfilment, they may feel that they are being selfish or unrealistic.

But Prem Rawat thinks that this is an investment for personal happiness and satisfaction and will bring rewards both in life and in work. “I think that you have to be of your own mind every step of the way. With whatever is happening and whatever is going on, there is at least some realisation and understanding that you exist too, whether it is for just a second or a minute or an hour. The amount of time depends on you, but you have to keep yourself in mind, you cannot lose perspective on yourself. If you lose perspective on yourself, eventually you can lose perspective on everything else in your life.”

Is it possible then for a person to be both successful in business and also have the time to find inner fulfilment in their life?

“Absolutely, I see no contradiction between the two. To compete in business you have to be standing on a stable platform and then whatever happens you will still feel peace and sanctity in this life. And if you are stable, you can deal with situations as they come along.” As



ten things that we think are important to us, we never include ourselves. So when we can’t cope, everything else suffers. We have to be working on a stable platform. Then juggling the ten tasks is not a problem.

“A lot of people think that if you renounce these tasks and go live on top of a mountain you will be perfectly happy. I am saying that is not necessarily so. As long as you are on a stable base, you can cope

most people spend the majority of their waking hours at work, I wondered if it is possible to fully enjoy life while working. He assured me it was.

“You have to try to be as conscious as possible, to try not to cut off parts of your own existence, to remember that whatever it is that you are doing, there is the process of breath and the process of life going on, even if you are waiting for something. That is what so many

people spend their lives doing – waiting, waiting, waiting – for the bus, for the plane to take off. And when they are doing this, there is only one focus: ‘When is this going to happen?’ You can use this waiting time to remember that an amazing process of life is unfolding, - and that even if you aren’t aware of it, it is still happening. You can start to broaden your scope to improve yourself and your view - not just the view outside, but a view inside. Start to include what *is* happening, not what *will* happen. That is the most fundamentally important step that has to happen.”

Prem Rawat emphasized that the journey to Self Knowledge is totally flexible. “It can take as long as you want or be as short as you want, because so much of it depends on your understanding. A lot of people say ‘I like what you are saying but I don’t have time’ and so their focus is constantly going to be placed on other things. The person is going to say, ‘This is no good. I am just as frustrated as I ever was’. The key part here is not to find the well; it is to actually to drink the water. That is the key process. A lot of people say, ‘All I need to do is find the well and I will be happy’. That is not quite true. We have to drink and accept the water in our lives.”

I asked him to summarize his views. “Personal fulfilment is a possibility that already exists inside every single person on the face of the earth. It doesn’t matter who they are; it doesn’t matter how excluded they are; it doesn’t matter how rich they are or how poor they are - the possibility is inside of them. It is innate. And so is the desire to be fulfilled. If you can get in touch with that, the process towards fulfilment begins. And that fulfilment is a process of discovery; it is a process much like turning on a light bulb. When the light comes on, it doesn’t create the objects you see. When it is dark the objects are still there. You just need the light to allow you to see them. Fulfilment is very much like that. In our own way we are always trying to be fulfilled in what ever we do. Whether we are a person who has to dig a ditch or trim a tree or fly an aeroplane, somehow at the end of the day we would like to feel good, we would like to feel like what we have done was worth it. To address this in your life - not just follow a routine, but to actually address it and say it really matters to me that I am fulfilled in this life - is the process of finding fulfilment.”

In an era where the epithet ‘no pain, no gain’ is commonplace, it is easy to assume that personal fulfilment would require personal sacrifice. He asserts that quite the reverse is true. He said: “For the first time you realise you don’t have to sacrifice yourself. - that you can be you. So much of the world’s formula is ‘where there is no pain, there is no gain’ and yet what do you do with this pain? It becomes frustration, with people not being able to cope with what’s going on. But there does not need to be any pain for the real gain. The real gain is to realise how beautiful this life is and what a wonderful gift you have been given. I think it is wonderful news that you don’t have to sacrifice yourself and that the fulfilment you have been looking for is right inside of you.”

He makes the journey within sound challenging, so I had to ask about the personal cost of this practice. He explained that the cost is the time and patience you invest in the process, and that sometimes it is hard when you finally have to acknowledge that you do have a life. But, as he emphasised: “The reward is going to be fulfilment and that is one reward that no money in this world can buy. Personal



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fulfilment means that in the darkest hour and in the brightest day, you will carry a little light inside - a little light of sanity, a little light of joy, a little light of fulfilment. And I think that is an incredible reward.

“The length of the journey towards fulfilment is up to each individual person and how much they want to apply themselves towards it. The more they can understand themselves the quicker it will be. People start to find themselves drawing parallels between their inner life and the outside world. They will start asking lots of questions and having lots of doubts. But when these are resolved, these questions are replaced with a simple thing called *understanding*. When a person starts to understand their own self they are knocking on the door of fulfilment.”

Self knowledge, as with so many new business management theories, requires a change in thinking, but the rewards promised are not limited to the confines of a work environment, but can be felt as a complete life-changing experience. As he pointed out: “Self knowledge is about the commitment to life and we are not taught about commitment to life. We are taught to be committed to work, to be committed to family, to be committed to projects. But with self knowledge, you acknowledge that life is an incredible project unfolding, and that one day it will not unfold. So while it is there, it is so important to recognize it and understand it and to listen to it. It is so interesting to try to see yourself in a different light and to try to understand yourself. There is so much effort that goes into trying to understand the neighbours, the colleagues, the friends that very little time is actually spent understanding our own selves. If you bring yourself into the picture, you can see that there is your life and there will be ups and downs, but you are always included in that as well. Of all the things in your life, the one thing that has been there all along is *life*. So why not acknowledge its potential and beauty and what it means?”

Personal accounts of Self-Knowledge

Many leading business people have found Prem Rawat's teaching has benefited their lives. Below they describe the way Self Knowledge has helped them in business and beyond

LUCIAN JAMES WARREN, 59, is President of Anacapa Construction, Inc., specializing in the construction of high-end custom homes since 1976.

"Prem Rawat speaks with clarity and understanding about many aspects of life. He inspires me to practice his techniques for finding peace within. This provides me with much enjoyment. When I first heard about him, my biggest obstacle in the pursuit of contentment was my intellectual approach to finding happiness, which interfered with the simple things my heart wanted. As I experienced the freedom and peace that comes from the practice I was taught, I became aware of more choices in my life.

"I have become more detached from the turmoil that can arise from daily activities and feel more joy throughout my days. As I enjoy my life more and more, my everyday interactions seem simpler and easier."

RICHARD EATHERLY is President of Yerba Prima, a manufacturer of natural food supplements that are distributed globally. The company has been in business now for 23 years.

"A lot of challenges come with running a successful manufacturing business. There are always issues to deal with, decisions to make promptly and effectively. The techniques of Knowledge that Prem Rawat has shown me have provided me with clarity and a sense of decisiveness and direction. This has helped me deal with changes, which are constant, including changing customer needs, personnel problems, equipment breaking down at the wrong time, unforeseen maintenance needs - basically the constant barrage of issues that can so easily dominate my life. However, practicing the techniques of Knowledge helps me come from a place of strength and look at these issues for what they really are: just issues, and not what is most valuable to me in life.

"Through the ups and downs of daily life, I now am able to find peace and contentment within. Customers sense in me a confidence that is genuine and comes from within. They sense that I am open to hearing their needs and that I am trustworthy. I have been shown a way to trust life within. Through thick and thin, I enjoy my days and feel at peace, and I think people around me, including customers, can sense that."

MARIELLE ROY is President of Proeffica, a Quebec designer and manufacturer of custom industrial machinery, including training devices for the aviation industry.

"Last year things were difficult. Recent world events had struck the industry a heavy blow. My business was severely affected. Several of our key clients and suppliers were impressed that we kept going as we did. We laid off almost all of our employees. Now, we've rehired a new team. The economy is still fragile, but now we are profitable again.

"My responsibilities are considerable. To succeed, I need to have faith in myself, every day. Practicing the techniques of Prem Rawat's Knowledge has allowed me to focus on the big picture and to detach myself from the all-consuming details of every day life.

"I have become better able to distinguish between facts and emotions. Prem Rawat has helped me find my own clarity and understanding within so I can move forward. I have also learned to find and draw courage up from within myself, and to better tap into my capacity for growth. I now can feel at peace in spite of uncertainty because I have been shown how to find the inner strength to get through anything."

BARBARA MARVIN is a major shareholder in a large, third generation, family-owned lumber company. The company is celebrating its centennial this year. Recently the company received a "Sustainable Development Award of Excellence", after investing \$15 million upgrading operations to improve efficiencies and enhance the sustainability of the resources it has relied upon for three generations. Ms. Marvin sits on the board of directors and takes part in the ongoing governance of the company. She became interested in Prem Rawat and his message in 1973.

"As a young adult, I sensed that the mechanism for feeling secure within myself was my own set of internal resources but I was struggling to find how to access it. What Prem Rawat has shown me has helped me draw strength and clarity from within. Each day, I feel something very peaceful and tangible within myself to focus on, independent of outside influences. My whole life runs better; my values have changed. I have understood that achievement, wealth, success in my work and family have value to me, but are not the sole source of my contentment. My need for contentment is satisfied from within.

"I used to be driven to be active all the time. I still keep really busy, but I sit quietly once a day and practice what I have been shown to connect with a place of peace within myself. Where there was harshness in me, there is kindness. Where there was impatience, there is appreciation. The things I learn from Prem Rawat are some of the most valuable things in my life. I have never had a finer mentor."