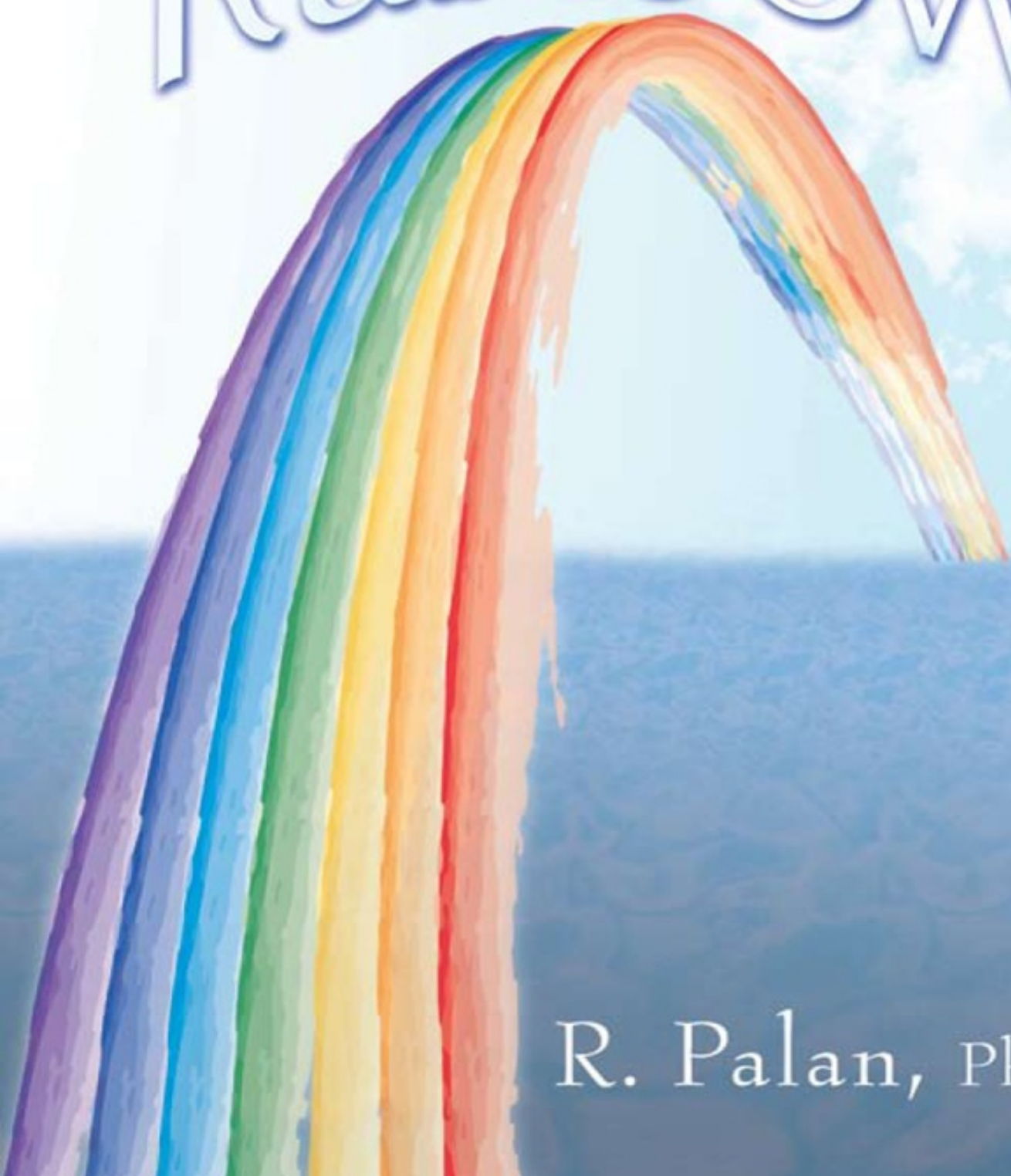


CREATING YOUR OWN

# Rainbow



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Published by:



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### **Creating Your Own Rainbow**

ISBN No: 967-5223-03-7

First Published : July 1998

Second Edition : July 1999

Thrid Edition : June 2005

Forth Edition : July 2008

Fifth Edition : May 2009

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# part one

## Chapter One:

# Introduction to Creating Your Own Rainbow

*“Look deep into nature and then you will  
understand everything better.”*

*- Albert Einstein*

## THE LOVELY RAINBOW

Have you seen a rainbow, the arch of brilliant colours that appears in the sky when the sun shines after a rain shower? Haven't you marveled at nature's wonder and been struck by its magnificence? Didn't you experience the deep sense of joy just watching the rainbow even though it appeared just for a very short while? Isn't it an inspiring phenomenon, a beauty waiting to happen under the right conditions? Yet, at times we look at the beautiful coalition of seven colours, without seeing it. We look at something “out there” but don't see beyond. We are stuck in the routine. Many of us have seen a rainbow but have not looked beyond.

## THE RAINBOW AND LIFE

Successful people are those who take charge of their lives and build their rainbows. They relate the rainbow to life. The rainbow actively reflects life. It is distinct and specific. It represents beauty, hope, optimism and success. And no one succeeds without dreams, goals and hard work. This is the secret about success. Did you ever know about a successful person who didn't tell you about it?

All of us can create our own rainbows provided we have the two basic needs:

1. The desire to want to create our rainbows and
2. The willingness to learn the skills needed to work towards creating our rainbows.

I have built on the works of many great authors in the field of personal development and brought together diverse experiences. I have used the rainbow as a *metaphor* and related the seven colours of the rainbow to seven steps that relate to *Life Management*. Life Management is an enabling process to make life more meaningful for each person as a totality, it is a vision.

## RAINBOW CREATORS

There are two types of people: *Rainbow Creators and Rainbow Chasers*. Rainbow

Creators know that the treasure lies within them. They focus their desire and sharpen their skills without putting any constraint on their own imagination. Since the rainbow as a totality is a vision, Rainbow Creators focus on the seven steps essential for life management to achieve their vision. On the other hand, Rainbow Chasers make their mistakes in assuming that pots of gold are out there somewhere waiting to be found.

## **THE SEVEN STAGES OF LIFE MANAGEMENT**

### **1. Recognising YOU can make a difference**

*you hold the key to your success.*

### **2. Authentic Change**

*you need to embrace and encourage change for success.*

### **3. Invoke your Determination**

*your persistence will drive you towards success.*

### **4. Never give up on yourself: Self-Image and Self-Suggestions**

*your opinion of yourself will decide your success.*

### **5. Believe in Desire and Enthusiasm.**

*your passion to achieve your goals is the key to success*

### **6. Optimal Leadership and Adventure**

*your ability to lead others with zeal will take you towards your success.*

### **7. Willing Love and Encouragement**

*your ability to inspire and motivate people are essential ingredients for success.*

## **THE BEAUTY OF A RAINBOW**

The rainbow is simply a brilliant display of colours. When the rain has been heavy, the bow may spread all the way across the sky. Its two ends seem to rest on earth. It leaves behind lasting impressions in your mind and more importantly, a meaning behind it. The rainbow is a colourful vision that is meaningful.

## **LIFE AND THE RAINBOW**

Life also rests on two ends, on birth and death, on arrival and departure and an interval in between that unfolds in time. A successful life unfolding in time is like the rainbow that offers lasting impressions and a meaning behind it. Successful people lead a life that leaves behind vivid memories.

## **LEGACY**

Rainbow Creators leave behind a legacy. Mahatma Gandhi and his non-violence

movement in India; Martin Luther King and his civil rights movement in the United States of America and the work of Helen Keller. We remember them even long after they have left this world. We consider these people to be successful because we admire their contributions toward humanity.

Our focus on the seven stages of life management, and the time and effort we put into achieving them will help lead us on the path of success to leave a legacy behind.

## SUCCESS IN LIFE

What is a successful life? Some say it is:

- ⊗ a good career,
- ⊗ acquisition of wealth - money and property,
- ⊗ a happy family,
- ⊗ good health, and/or
- ⊗ an unselfish life.

Success is much more than just anyone of these factors such as acquisition of money. It is a complex reality as it differs from person to person. Remember the famous Frank Sinatra love song: “I don’t want to be a millionaire because all I want is you?” To him, success was in finding love.

[Robin Sharma](#) asks the question – who will cry when you die? Your answer will pretty much indicate your success.

## CLARITY

One consistent factor present among all successful people is that they are clear in what they want to achieve in life. They are always passionate about what they do; more often than not they are contributing towards making the world a better place for fellow human beings.

Our success will depend on figuring out what we want in life, how intensely we want it, how hard we want to work for it, and what we want to contribute to the general well being of society.

There are many ways to figure out what we want out of life. We can decide on the basis of our inner convictions, by real life observations, looking at another person’s life, personal experiences and an inner drive to be different from others in a positive way. The intensity of our wants and our willingness to work hard to achieve our goals accelerates our drive towards success. Success is deciding what you want, working hard to achieve what you want. Your success is defined by YOU.





*"Birds fly over the rainbow,  
why then  
- oh, why can't I?"*

*If happy little bluebirds fly  
beyond the rainbow why,  
oh why, can't I?"*


*Lyman Frank Baum*



# REFLECTIONS ONE

Think of some of the Rainbow Creators and Rainbow Chasers in your life.

*Rainbow Creators*



*Rainbow Chasers*



List the qualities of a Rainbow Creator and a Rainbow Chaser.

*Rainbow Creator*



*Rainbow Chaser*



## Chapter Two

### Four distinct features of a Rainbow

*“All that we are is the result of what we have thought.”*

*- The Buddha*

We can relate personal success to a rainbow. There are four distinct features of a rainbow that relate to life:

1. Blending,
2. Two Bows: The Inner and Outer,
3. Prism, and
4. Completeness.

#### THE BLENDING

Just as the brilliant colours of the rainbow attract individuals, so is the desire for recognition and success. Everyone wants a life as beautiful as the rainbow. However, it is critical to note that the beauty of the rainbow is due to the blending of the seven colours that appear in each rainbow - violet, indigo, blue, green; yellow, orange and red. The colours blend into each other, into a “singularity” that illuminates the world.

Do we blend or integrate the seven steps of life management seamlessly? The seamless integration of the seven steps of life management is what differentiates successful and unsuccessful people.

There have been examples of many wealthy people who led very unhappy lives. People with outstanding skills have remained mediocre because they missed the blending of the seven stages of life management.

Very few people are blenders i.e. people who integrate the seven steps of life management into their daily life. Those who are not blenders are known as drifters or stirrers.

Drifters are those who go about life in a mechanical way! There is very little self-reflection. They go about life in a routine way. Just like a boat that drifts in the ocean with no particular direction, the drifters in life wander about with no goals or plans.

Stirrers are those who complain about everything and everyone else except their own weaknesses. They not only drift in life but also have poor self-esteem. They create problems all the time and try to make life miserable for everyone. Stirrers lose their circle of friends gradually.

How many of us have had some quiet time to reflect on what we want? Some questions for us to reflect upon:

- ⚙ Are you a blender, a drifter or a stirrer?
- ⚙ Do you blend the seven stages of life management into your daily life or get carried away with one or two things while you forget about the other essentials?
- ⚙ Do you drift in life without a clear plan?
- ⚙ Do you stir problems and blame everyone else but yourself for all the problems that affect you?

## **CONNECTING WITH REALITY**

I have come across people who get into a problem because they are convinced they are the only ones who are correct in this world. They come to the conclusion that the whole world is unjust towards them. These people find it very uncomfortable to accept the fact that they are not correct and for the need to listen to other people. The inability to connect with reality is a major obstacle to their growth.

Self-deception will only make it more painful for us in the future. The inability to connect with reality and to be aware of one's own self often results in the individual living without a purpose.

Rainbow Creators have a clear purpose. They are blenders who want to create their own rainbows besides helping others create their own. They are connected with reality and dare to dream and endeavour to fly in the world of possibilities for they really want to succeed in their own way.

## **THE TWO BOWS: INNER AND OUTER**

In a rainbow, a complete bow shows two bands of colours. The primary bow is the inner and brighter one. The secondary bow is the outer and less distinct one. Life consists of two bands too - the inner self and the outer self. Psychologists often talk about the primary and secondary needs of people.

Rainbow Creators focus on the need for friendship and love, the need to care for fellow human beings and the need to be connected to what you want in life. When you do that, you create your own rainbow and success automatically follows you. Most of the time we are not governed by our inner self. This is simply because it is not always visible. Just like the outer rainbow, the outer or secondary needs take over sometimes. Materialistic needs dominate our life. Aesop once commented: "Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth."

When I once asked my father to buy an expensive car to reflect status, he asked me a simple question: "Why do you need it when you can't afford it?" His contention was "Never live your life to please others. Do not try to showcase your life for others. Please yourself not others, it is your life." I understood what he was trying to say -do not pretend to be what you are not and to what you cannot afford.

There is a saying that people would rather be complimented for one quality that they do not have rather than for the nine qualities that they do. Creating Your Own Rainbow requires you to be honest with your inner self. You need to be ready to accept feedback from others for self-renewal and recognise that growth is a continuous process.

## THE PRISM

Each colour has a certain wavelength. We see the rainbow when the sun is behind and the rain in front of us. As a ray of sunshine passes through a drop of rain, the water acts like a prism. The ray is bent as it enters the drop and separates into different colours. When it strikes the inner surface of the drop, it is reflected. It is then that you see the true beauty of a rainbow, nature's delight.

Life is very similar. We see our life based on the past though life has to be lived forwards. We often forget that all we have is NOW! We miss the present. As we go through our life experiencing various situations and interactions with people, either the situations or the people or both act like a prism.

They help us grow into better people. People encourage and give us the feedback to grow and develop, to help us create our own rainbow. To achieve our full potential, we need prisms.

Two Jesuit priests who were my school teachers, Fathers Leonard Paul and George Maliekal of St. Campion High School, were my prisms. They encouraged me when I was ten years old to go up on the dais to speak in debates and act in dramas. It was a disaster many a time. There was a time when I was playing Hamlet and completely forgot my lines. My teachers would not allow me to be discouraged; they helped me grow with support and feedback.

There were many people who would say that you are lousy. However, my prisms did not let others' label of me become a reality. Les Brown, the dynamic speaker always says – do not let others' perceptions of you become true for you.

It is true that it is not easy to accept feedback. There were moments when I fared poorly in dramas or debates, I would be in tears and angry with myself for not memorising the lines well enough. Sometimes I would be angry with the prompter for not prompting the lines loud enough. There were times when I felt compelled to give up theatre and speech because I felt I had made a complete idiot of myself. In moments like these I could not see beyond the anger or the defensiveness. There were many reasons for me to give up but my school teachers acted as my prisms. They showed me the real and good reasons to stay the course to create my rainbow. They always helped me focus on the present moment and learn from it.

[Eckhart Tolle](#) says “Realise deeply that the present moment is all you have. Make NOW the primary focus of your life.”

I could relate to that. For my prisms in life, Fathers George Maliekal and Leonard Paul, it was better to learn from the incident then and there. There was never a moment when they would let me give up. There was no such word as “giving up” in their vocabulary. They taught me to accept tough feedback and helped me learn that giving up

without making an effort was cowardice. Today, I realise the value of their support. They developed not only my skills but also, more importantly, my inner self.

## **COMPLETENESS**

Though the rainbow is known by different names across the world, its beauty characterises it. In India, the Sanskrit term is “the bow of Indra”, Italians call it the “flashing arch,” the Africans call it the “bride of the rain,” some others call it “the girdle of God” and “the little window in the sky.”

Similarly in life, people define success in so many ways. As we discussed earlier, it is different from person to person.

The common denominator though is a sense of happiness when you achieve what you want. It is about completeness and wholeness. Most of us desire a great family, a progressive career, material wealth and status though we say, we want our life to be successful in all respects.

It is true that very few of us blend the seven steps of life management, focus on our inner self, recognise the power of NOW and use the prisms in our life to create our own rainbow.

The rainbow helps us see life in a total perspective. It helps us see life from the perspective of seven dimensions. It helps us see life in a different way than we do now.

## **NARROW PERSPECTIVES**

The human eye is usually able to see only about four or five colours of the rainbow at any one time. In a rainbow; the amount of space each colour takes upon it depends on the size of the raindrop through which the rainbow forms. Similarly, the amount of time we spend on each activity depends on the intensity of our wants. And many of our wants are mostly narrow.

Life is mostly viewed from a narrow perspective: making money or building a career. There are many of us who are so focused on our jobs and the pursuit of material wealth that we do not see the other important things in life. The amount of time we invest or spend on something reflects our lifestyle. We do not seem to be able to prioritise our needs. Not many of us have the time to reflect on what we have done, what we do or what we want. A narrow approach towards life does not result in completeness.

## **SATISFACTION**

There are also people who are totally satisfied with what they are. This satisfaction combined with the narrow focus does not enable us to grow. This is what prompted Bernard Shaw to say, “As long as I have a want, there is a reason to live. Satisfaction is deadly.” The need to grow does not arise from a satisfied person.

## **YOUR GOALS AND ACTIONS**

An observer on a high mountain is able to see clearly the whole circle of the rainbow when the sun is near the horizon. You can see clearly the value of life if you can see the connection between your actions and your goals. The clouds on the horizon are necessary questions about ourselves that we need to answer before we can create our own rainbows.

## **YOU**

So, in a sense, the key to achieving completeness in your life is just YOU. Yes! You can succeed if YOU want to succeed. Just as the source for a lovely rainbow is the sunlight, which is a combination of the seven colours; the source for creating your rainbow is YOU.

## **ADAPTING**

Life is a journey. Making it complete requires adapting to life and also creating opportunities for change. This is a continuous process. Shakespeare in his play "*As You Like It*" describes the seven stages of life; right from entering the world as a new born to the stage of old age where we revert to the same infant-like stage. At every stage there is a need to adapt to the life stage. Equally important, is the need to create opportunities and become the focus of change as change agents. We also need to lead the change when the situation calls for it. Just as there is a need for us to meet the challenges of the seven stages of life, we need to meet the challenges of the seven stages of life management that are positive determinants to creating our rainbow.



## **Chapter Three:**

# **The Story of a Rainbow Creator**

*“The world is filled with willing people; some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.”*

The world is full of stories of people who created their own rainbows. They lived their lives well and left behind a legacy of achievements. They succeeded simply because they blended the seven stages of life management to leave behind a lasting impression of their contribution. Colonel Sanders, in his sixties, succeeding with the Kentucky Fried Chicken recipe is a very popular story. I have no need to go that far.

## **MY GRANDFATHER AND HIS RAINBOW**

The story of my maternal grandfather, Narayanan Chettiar, and his brother-in-law, Nagappa Chettiar, creating their own rainbows is truly an amazing one. It is a story about people with a desire to succeed and make a difference to the world in which they lived in.

My grandfather was a chronic asthmatic and a very fragile person physically but not emotionally. He managed one of the world's largest leather businesses -India Leather Corporation and with his brother-in-law, the Chrome Leather Corporation. The business employed thousands of people and had offices all over the world. That was in the 1950's. My grandfather could not eat any solid food. He survived only on liquids. Two men had to support him if he wanted to move. He managed his business through the snail mail, telephone and telex. Neither he nor his brother-in-law had any paper qualifications in leather technology but they knew the business. One of them could tell when he saw a piece of skin, the quality of the leather without sending it to the lab for chemical analysis. They did not have money, qualification or other critical resources when they started the business. They were certainly not the most qualified people to run the business.

But, they were not going to let the lack of anything stop them from creating their rainbows.

They blended the seven steps of the life management process, they were honest with their inner selves, and they used their experiences as a prism to learn to have a complete wholesome experience. This helped them create their rainbows; as well as help other people create their own.

## **RECOGNISING YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

My grandfather had a single-minded devotion for what he wanted to achieve in life. He

tempered this goal with a fierce determination to make a positive contribution to society. What he lacked in resources, he made up for with a clearly defined plan of what he wanted to achieve. The driving purpose in his life was to generate employment. He wanted to make a positive impact on people. He showed the world that, if you wanted, “YOU” have the seeds of greatness in you to make a positive difference. It is up to you to create the opportunities and work towards your rainbow. Just as seeds require nourishment for effective growth, you need to continuously reinforce your thoughts with a “can do” attitude. Money was not the goal but a means for my grandfather. The real goal was to use the money earned to make a positive contribution to society.

## **AUTHENTIC CHANGE**

As a management student, I was amazed at some of the techniques they used to motivate people. Though they had grown up in a totally different environment, they recognised the need to change their style of management to suit the times. Managing a large corporation was different from running a retail shop or a farm. It was a 360-degree change from what they did. They realised the need to change their thinking, their actions and the way they managed people if they were to succeed in creating their own rainbows. They changed their styles to suit the life cycle of the business – growth, maturity, recession time and diversification.

## **INVOKING YOUR DETERMINATION**

Though I did not have the benefit of working with my grandfather and his brother-in-law, I am proud of the positive ways in which they affected other peoples’ lives. To learn more about my grandfather, I talked to the people who worked with him. They told me about his ability to remain focused in what he wanted; This was tempered with a fierce determination to achieve what he wanted. Apparently, he would always say “Never ever give up for nothing is impossible.”

## **NEVER GIVE UP ON YOURSELF-SELF-IMAGE AND SELF-SUGGESTION**

My grandfather and his brother-in-law believed in what they were doing. My grandfather would not allow his poor health or disability to stop him from doing anything that he wanted to do. Other people talked of his disability but he was only interested in discussing his abilities. Together, they created wealth for the society. They believed in themselves and also helped the people who worked for them to believe in their vision. The business made millions and that was all put to good use for the benefit of the community and society.

He believed and often told to the people who worked for them, that the human side of management could lead to high levels of productivity and high levels of commitment. This was the reason why the reporting lines were unbelievably simple. He trusted people for their inherent goodness.

Together with the people they created their rainbows.

## **BELIEVE IN DESIRE AND ENTHUSIASM**

My grandfather's desire and contagious enthusiasm to follow through on what he wanted to achieve in life was superb. There were lots of stories of him looking out for new opportunities and seizing them. What other people thought of as impossible, he saw as an opportunity and proceeded to succeed with unlimited enthusiasm.

## **OPTIMAL LEADERSHIP AND ADVENTURE**

My grandfather's success was not confined to his business. His ethnic community, his family and his employees accepted him as a true leader who put his people before himself. To him, leadership was about helping people realise their true potential. Success was not just about winning in business; it was much more than that. It was caring for people and helping them to create their rainbows. It prompted him to venture into uncharted waters in the world of business. My grandfather and his brother-in-law soon expanded internationally when no one else in his circle of friends dared to.

## **WILLING LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

My grandfather believed that loving and caring were essential ingredients for successful relationships. People felt loved, supported and encouraged by my grandfather. He did it in his own way. There were no hugs and kisses but he communicated care and love much better than anyone else. He sacrificed his personal needs to make a difference to other peoples' lives.

Despite his frailty and ill health, which were obstacles, he still visited the workstations everyday demonstrating the importance of Managing by Wandering about (MBWA) in the fifties. Now, of course, Tom Peters has popularised this concept as a management tool, which was basically common sense to my grandfather in the fifties. Professor Richard Boyatzis was the one who remarked that common sense is not necessarily common practice. There were only simple common sense practices, no complex management formula. Talking to people, giving them time and treating them with respect and dignity were common sense to him. He was fond of saying that there are many types of lunacy but there was only one type of sense-common sense.

He valued people for their people skills. For example, there was no restriction on any employee to see my grandfather. He would sit in the garden for two hours in the morning and evening. The employees found it easy to talk to him about their personal lives as well as work. Irrespective of their status - an operator or a manager - they would always be given a cup of coffee or invited for a meal. Food was accessible to everyone. Hospitality was extended as a basic human right. People were given opportunities not charity. The fact that my grandfather, who had never gone to school, could like people for their basic worth and not treat them like things was the reason why his death was mourned by thousands of people.

# CREATING YOUR OWN RAINBOW: NOTHING IS PERMANENT

We all make mistakes, so did he. His hope for the business to remain within the family and the lack of management leadership after his demise hastened the company's decline. If only he or his brother-in-law had the benefit of a prism that could have reflected the facts to them more clearly, they could have ensured the selection of professional managers who would have had the leadership capabilities and the passion to make the business a great contributor to humanity. The business could have made a sustained contribution to society. We would have continued to see beautiful rainbows. Perhaps the business would have still been productive.

But the rain had stopped only to be replaced by dryness, and the sunshine had gone only to be replaced by scorching heat. Just as the rainbow is not permanent, my grandfather and his business were not permanent. The rainbow does not exist for eternity. Similarly, nothing in life is permanent.

You need to continue to work on what you have and want. There are many famous companies that are no longer around today. Remember Laker Airways, the London based company that introduced cheap fares and made air travel an affordable necessity? It was a great example to many other successful low cost airlines such as Southwest Airlines in the US and Air Asia in Asia. Laker Airways showed the world low cost air travel is possible. Laker Airways helped millions of people achieve their travel dreams. The company, unfortunately is history today. Nothing can guarantee permanence in this world. Permanence is indeed an illusion but what we can do is to continue to work for the betterment of humanity without letting this bother us. We need to reinvent and stay relevant in a changing world; and work for growth.


Today my grandfather's business remains only as an asset for the family. It is no longer an employer. It makes no specific difference to society or any positive contributions. It is sad that none in the family today share my grandfather's philosophy of making a positive contribution as no one in the family seems to have an idea of what they want other than the sheer pursuit of money. The greedy focus on money has destroyed my grandfather and his brother-in-law's contribution though their legacy stays on through the thousands of Rainbow Creators they helped develop.

The rainbow my grandfather and his brother-in-law created lasted for 30 long years. It, however, disappeared when my grandfather died at the age of 69. His goals also died with him. His life was as beautiful as a rainbow. My only sadness is that it was a short one.

Just like the rainbow is being admired for its beauty, he was admired for his nobility. He was a candle that brought light to thousands of others.

## REFLECTIONS TWO

*Think through the purpose of your life*

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a person to write their reflections on the purpose of their life.

*How would you like to be remembered for your life?*

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a person to write their reflections on how they would like to be remembered.

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