

FOCUS ON PRESENT

LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND
AND MOVE ON

ARUNA LADVA

"What's gone is gone. One of life's lessons is always moving on. It's okay to look back to see how far you've come, but keep moving forward."

Roy T. Bennet
Moving on is not really a matter of choice. Time itself moves on. We often feel we are stuck but we are constantly moving on, fast or slow, or even at a snail's pace – but we are moving. We can feel stuck in three different

areas of our lives, physical, mental, and spiritual. The most important thing is to keep moving.

Physically, we need to move to keep our bodies healthy. We need to find a way of doing this, even if in some way we are a little incapacitated. We can still move our body if we are confined to a chair. Micro movements, done consistently over time, strengthens us. We all need to make our bodies move, every day, consistently.

Mentally, we can remain stuck in certain belief systems for a long time. It is mainly the lack of belief that causes us difficulty. 'I'm weak', 'I can't do this', 'I've never done this before, so I won't be able to do it' – this is staying stuck. The way to start a new train of thought, a new neural pathway in the brain, is to replace these



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self-defeating 'mantras' into very powerful, counteracting messages. People say we have an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. Listen to the angel. Sports stars all realise that winning is a mind game. Tennis players can come back even one set down, just by shifting the

mindset, with a thought of determination. Whatever we have to deal with, thoughts of: 'I can do it!', 'I know what to do or can certainly find out', 'I have all the support I need', have a tremendous affect. These kinds of thoughts are very powerful. It is important to avoid distractions,

though. Sometimes we think that we have too many distractions, so we are unable to focus on what we need to do. However, Oliver Burkeman, a British author and journalist, says, that we consciously distract ourselves, so that we do not have to focus on what is too difficult to focus

on; those uncomfortable conversation or the painful thoughts we need to address. We actually get benefit from staying still for long enough to look at these things, to see the lessons that life is trying to teach us. It will pay off, because we will flex the muscles of our minds and

hearts and create bigger, warmer hearts. We always learn and grow when we face what is hurting us, and resolve it within ourselves, with compassion.

However, spiritually moving on is the key to our way forward. Spiritually, all of the above also hold true. Powerful thoughts, elevated thoughts, build our self-confidence and self-respect. Taking care not to be distracted from our spiritual aims, and truly looking inwards to see what is going on and what we need to face and deal with, takes us forward. When we are stuck, one of the ways to keep moving is to actually sit and not move at all. When we sit in meditation, we begin with a certain kind of consciousness. During meditation, when we contemplate and examine powerful truths,

we calm our breathing, focus our thoughts, and there is a shift in consciousness. Our awareness becomes broader, and solutions and ways forward appear, as if by magic. Whatever we are unable to face and deal with, will keep popping up on the path until we do. We are all spiritual travellers, and travellers, however much they wish to stay in one place, or even take things with them, cannot. Because we have to move on, travel as lightly as possible. We are guests in this world, so take little, give much, and move on. We need to leave the past behind and looking forward to the future, spreading as much light as we can, on the way.

Aruna Ladva is an author and Rajyoga meditation teacher based at the Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

HOW OUR THOUGHTS CREATE OUR WORLD



B.K. SHIVANI

It is our thoughts, attitude, and behaviour that have made the world what it is. Consider this, when there is loving relationships in a family and everybody lives together happily, people say that their home is heaven. Instead, if there is constant stress, shouting, and violence within a family, their house is called hell.

Who creates the heaven and the hell? It is the people living there. When their thinking and actions are influenced by vices, their life becomes hell, and when their life is informed by virtues, it is heaven. The same holds true on a larger scale: we all make this world heaven or hell, by the way we

think and behave.

Once we have understood this, can we take responsibility for making our home a heaven? We would probably think, 'But what about the wife (or the husband), and the kids? Who will change them?' We cannot change others, but we can make our life peaceful and happy by changing the way we see things and other people.

We just have to change from the taking mode – expecting from others respect, politeness, understanding, and much more – to the giving mode. That means having good wishes for others, unconditionally. Can we do it? Can we wish someone well regardless of what they have done to us in the past? Can we bless someone who has deeply hurt us?

Actually, it is easier than we believe. Someone may have used harsh words and hurt us a great deal, but they did it just once. We multiply the suffering by holding on to it in the mind – repeatedly thinking about it and experiencing the pain again and again. Then



The key to success is to focus our thoughts on what we want in life, not what troubles us.

we blame the other person for making our entire life miserable. The longer we hold on to old hurts and unhappy memories, rewinding the scenes in the mind and creating the sorrow, anger, perhaps even vengefulness, time and again, the deeper is their impact on our emotional and physical health. The biochemical processes triggered by the negative emotions we frequently create eventually manifest in

the form of an illness. This is how psychosomatic disease begins. Similarly, we hold on to harmful habits. If someone in the family is short-tempered, the others keep pointing it out to that person, and others: 'He is always angry...', 'He keeps shouting...' and so on. With everyone around them highlighting their habit of losing their temper, it gets reinforced.

But if someone is angry all the time, what else do we say

about them? Well, that may be the current reality, but do we want them to be angry the rest of their life, or would we like to see them calm and amiable? The key is to direct the energy of our thoughts to what we want to create. Suppose we have two pots, with a plant growing in each. If we want one plant to grow, and wish to get rid of the other, what do we do? We water one and ignore the other, and soon that plant

shrivels up and dies. Similarly, we need to focus on the qualities we want to see in ourselves and others, and nurture them with positive thoughts and good wishes. When we see the angry person and remind ourselves that every soul is originally peaceful, and have the pure wish that this person rediscovers his innate peace, our vibrations will slowly but surely make an impact, and they will gradually become calmer. Similarly, if a family is poor, instead of lamenting their wants, if they create abundance in their mind, their positive attitude will attract opportunities that will bring prosperity.

When we consciously, purposefully, and consistently create positive thoughts for the self, focus on solutions rather than the problems, then we can give concrete shape to the reality that we want to see. This is the way to turn one's life from hell to heaven.

B.K. Shivani is a well-known motivational speaker and Rajyoga teacher.

A THOUGHT
FOR TODAY

When I have done something wrong, it is best to admit it and be sorry. Holding on to a mistake or denying it will only make it grow like a stain in my consciousness. With humility, I see that I will not choke by swallowing my pride. In fact, I will feel clean inside and ready to try again. Today let me face mistakes with honesty and lightness.

DIMINISHING INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence versus Spiritual Intelligence



MARCELLO BULK

We are the only species that creates weapons that can kill us all. We are the only species that can damage the food we grow to feed us. We are the only species that are now in danger of letting others do our thinking for us. Artificial intelligence (AI) is the most talked about topic at the moment, and yet few of us really understand what is happening or how it works.

Research is pointing to signs of diminishing intelli-

gence in the young, because of what they are experiencing in cyberspace. We are all using AI more and more. Just a simple search on Google uses AI, social media sites use AI, booking a flight for our holiday also uses AI. It looks as though we are very quickly becoming dependent on AI – dependence on anything is not a great place to be. Each of us can check how much we are 'obsessed' with aspects of AI, how dependent we feel, especially if any of our devices stop working for a while.

AI is clever and is beginning to understand ever more sophisticated vocabulary, but it cannot understand 'meaning' or 'feeling'. Those are the very parts of our intelligence that deals with our 'being'. There may come a time when all the AI and technology will simply cease to function at



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all – and then we will have to rely on our own intelligence. We can take little steps to reduce our dependence, once we are aware of it. We can walk more,

remember phone numbers, close off 'Whatsapp' earlier in the evening. We can use the technology for what we need, but we need to take care not to let the AI start

'using' us – to buy more, stay online more, throw away precious time more, just because we have been pulled in. What is really needed is spiritual intelli-

gence. This is what gives us immense flexibility, to change when needed, to adapt, to understand, and deal with reality with a broader vision. With spiri-

tual intelligence and vision, we can listen to others who hold different opinions, with patience and a real desire to understand. Our relationships can be transformed. Spiritual intelligence is what gives IQ real power. Spiritual intelligence brings wisdom, which is knowledge in a practical form. A spiritually intelligent person touches our hearts, not just our heads. We can all experience our own spiritual intelligence through prayer, or meditation. When we meditate and connect with the Supreme Intelligence, then we go beyond knowledge, beyond the simple awareness of our role in life, our age or gender, and experience something invisible, intangible. Meditating each day fills our conscious mind with power and when we then resume our roles, and continue to fulfil our responsibilities,

then we see how smooth the path becomes. We will notice how much we have accumulated, by seeing how calm we remain in the face of difficulties, how happy we are with the simple, joyous things of life, how much love begins to expand in our hearts, for all of humanity.

All the time we spend stuck on our devices could never achieve even a nano-second of this kind of energy. With spiritual intelligence we can contribute to making the world the place we all want to live. We will have no need to go to the 'virtual worlds' on our devices, because we will be living in the world that our spiritual intelligence has created.

Marcello Bulk, a Brazilian coach and business consultant, is the National Coordinator of the Brabma Kumaris' services in Colombia.