

# Strategic Visions

*To understand how great a person is, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what more he aspires to do. - Khalil Jibran*

**Suleman Ahmer**

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## Preface

*It is a terrible thing to see but have no vision!*

*Helen Keller*

Welcome to the Timelenders' Strategic Visions workshop!

Identifying a clear and meaningful vision is critical towards personal and organizational success and excellence. A life without a clear vision is a life without a direction, a life full of confusions and contradictions.

This workshop is designed to give you the fundamental paradigms, tools and the language to address this complex yet important subject. This workshop will not only empower you to envision but also set the ground for making your vision a reality both on a personal and organizational level.

Designed to facilitate your learning in this workshop, this manual has the summary of key concepts, definitions and exercises. It is being continually revised as our journey of teaching and research continues.

A question that I come across frequently is how is an Electrical Engineer teaching Visions? So here is how it all started 16 long years ago:

During my graduate studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in 1992, I volunteered to do relief work in ex-Yugoslavia. This brief period made me think of visions, or to be precise, the absence of them. As I traveled from one devastated town to another, I was struck with the absence of a vision and foresight which could have avoided the carnage if fostered a few years earlier.

My interest in relief work led to extensive international travel over the next ten years with a Chicago based relief foundation. This led to an interest in history and current affairs which further fueled my interest in visions.

I was part of a group which did a vision development exercise for the foundation I was working for in the mid-nineties and I witnessed its power of motivating individuals and giving direction to the foundation. I started helping other individuals and organizations develop visions.

Over the years, my belief in the power of visions to unleash tremendous individual and collective potential steadily grew. Moving back to Pakistan in 2001 after eleven years in the US was the perfect opportunity to practically apply this belief: this led to teaching and consulting.

Over the past six years, thousands of individuals have gone through our workshops and we have logged in hundreds of consulting hours with a number of companies and organizations. The journey continues as more and more knowledge pours in.

This workshop has continually evolved to where it stands today.

The sources that I have tapped into are my personal experiences, wonderful work done in the West and a rich Islamic heritage on visions. Furthermore, many of the participants of our workshop have enriched me with their insights, wisdom and knowledge. Lastly, I thank Allah (swt) for bestowing this knowledge on me and granting me the opportunities to further enhance it.

I pray to Allah (swt) that this knowledge enriches your life.

I wish you a wonderful learning experience.

Suleman Ahmer  
Founder and CEO  
Timelenders  
October 8, 2008

## **Acknowledgements**

I believe that this is the right place to acknowledge the sources which have contributed to the knowledge that you will come across in this workshop.

Quran and the life of Prophet Mohammed (sas) has been a powerful source of inspiration and knowledge for many of the concepts in this workshop.

Wonderful work has been carried out in the West especially in the US during the past few years from which I have drawn. Special mention is Stephen Covey, author of the '7 Habits of Highly Effective People' and Peter Senge, the author of the landmark book, 'The Fifth Discipline'.

My gratitude is to Allah (swt) for allowing me to travel many lands and experience many things first hand which hundreds of books can't replace; of meeting with hundreds of people.

Lastly, my gratitude to many of the people who enriched me with their wisdom and knowledge who I met in my talks, presentations and workshops. Once this material is compiled as a book, better referencing of these sources will be done.

Let me mention a few examples of how significantly people have contributed to the development of this material:

Dr. Tariq Jadoon, professor at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), pointed out that 'greatness' is not a dimension of the vision rather it is a dimension of a person. This illuminated a completely new angle and led to the development of the section on dimensions of a person.

Iqrar Ahmed, a friend and a real estate developer in Dubai, clarified the intricacies of a sound ideology.

Shazaib Akhtar and Fahad Raza Khan of Wavetech Pakistan corrected the graph of balancing roles and recommended a bar graph instead of a line graph. It was engineering knowledge at its best.

Hasan Masud of Interloop Pakistan provided the essay 'The Sand Castle'.

Irtafa Shahnawaz, my wife, helped me develop the diagram for selecting the final roles in life.

Dr. Asad Zaman, professor of Economics at International Islamic University, explained the importance of keeping away from words which are very common and have particular meanings deeply anchored in the minds of people. This led to the changing of the term 'Choice Roles' by 'Elective Roles'.

Dr. Abdul Bari Khan of Ruffadah Foundation helped us understand the Islamic perspective of 'Excellence' by doing research on this word as part of developing Ruffadah Foundation's vision.

Bjoern Bienert, CEO Bayer Pakistan, helped to further clarify the difference between the use of 'influence' and 'the ability to convince' under leadership which later lead to the present articulation which is that leadership has three elements: sharing, inspiring and facilitation.

Lastly, the dedicated team at Timelenders whose hard work in making Timelenders tick has been instrumental in helping to ensure that the journey continues. Special thanks are to Timelenders' stalwarts Rehan Siddiqui and Yameenuddin Ahmed.

The list is long. Thanks to all of you once again.

Suleman Ahmer

## **Training Norms and Guidelines for the Participants**

- 1.0 Timings:** While following time schedules is very important in all aspects of our lives, it is all the more so at training workshops. This is because training is generally aimed at “behavior modification” and thus offers us an opportunity not only to gain knowledge about the theme at hand but also to realign our self-development habits.
- 1.1 The Strategic Visions/Strategic Time Management Workshops are very sequential and missing out on even a small section would necessarily entail later challenges; it would be difficult to reconnect with the group which would have moved forward and the learning deficit would not be easy to make up. Unless the participant’s absence is due to an unavoidable emergency, such absence would, at the very least, mean missing out on his or her responsibility to the sponsoring organization and also to herself or himself as a conscientious learner. Accordingly, we expect all participants to be on time at the beginning of every session of the workshop. Care must be taken to come back at the scheduled /agreed time(s) after the breaks. We shall not wait for any participant when starting or re-starting a session.
- 1.2 In the event of an unforeseen happening, if a participant happens to miss out on more than one and a half hours of the workshop, we shall not be able to award the certificate to her/him. We have, however, developed a fair mechanism to offset the learning deficit and enable delivery of the certificate to such participants. We encourage any participant who has missed out on one or more sessions of the workshop to come to us after the workshop hours (preferably during the workshop or otherwise after it ends) for a special one-on-one make-up session in which our trainer(s) shall happily go over the missed out sections in our own time. It would only be after this special session that we would award the certificate. We are sure that participants would agree with us on this policy which essentially comprises a rights and fairness issue (it is the right of all participants to be treated equally and it is fair that a distinction be made amongst those who attend the training fully and those who do not).



- 1.3 Even though we will try to be on the minute in terms of starting and finishing our sessions but sometimes we might be in the middle of a discussion and extend our session by a few minutes and in this case we will inform you and try to give you a credit during the break.
- 2.0 Mobile/cell phones:** We believe that training is a full time assignment. Like all other organizational activities, training should be undertaken with full concentration and seriousness. A distinction should not be made between office work which is generally considered to be “important” and “mere” training. The ringing of mobile phones disturbs the whole group and sets back the training process, often severely. Accordingly, we cannot make any allowance or compromise on mobile phone usage inside the training room. While we strongly urge participants to keep their cell phones turned off, if that is not possible, the sets may be kept in silent or vibration mode. Although emergency calls may be attended by walking out of the room, participants should appreciate that doing so not only deprives them of the required focus and continuity but also disturbs other participants. We have lately become very strict after receiving strong complaints from our participants in this regard. Thus, if any individual participant continues to move out of the room very frequently, he or she should expect a “behavior modification intervention.” We believe this is also a rights issue – as one participant’s attending to phone (even by walking out) deprives others of their right to focus. There are ample breaks in which calls can be made and taken. Sending or receiving short messages (sms) from/in the classroom is also counterproductive to the important task of training and hence not allowed.
- 3.0 Questions & Answers:** We strongly request participants to ask questions. No question is irrelevant or trivial. We shall deal with these questions in the following five ways:
- 3.1 answer it immediately.
  - 3.2 ask you to wait as the coming section(s) will cover the relevant topic which will then answer the question.
  - 3.3 ask the individual to meet the trainers later for a one-on-one session (when the question is very specific to the questioner).
  - 3.4 put all questions on hold for a specific time.

3.5 admit our lack of knowledge and try to find the answer which may be given at a subsequent time.

**4.0 Workshop Language:** Depending largely on the choice of the participants (and partially on the facility of the trainers), the training shall be conducted in English, Urdu or a mix of both the languages (as is often the case in most Pakistani organizational settings). Sometimes we may have participants who are totally unfamiliar with Urdu and in such cases the training would be conducted in English. This shall be clarified at the outset of the training. During an all English session, we shall sometimes use Urdu (especially poetry) which we shall translate for our English speaking friends.

**5.0 Design of the folder:** The folder which has been provided to all participants for use in the workshop has been specially designed and includes the following features:

5.1 Sheets of punched paper have been provided; it is strongly recommend that these sheets be used for note-taking and be subsequently inserted into the folder so that all the notes and handouts are in one place.

5.2 All of our workshops undergo continuous changes. Accordingly, when a major section is re-written or developed anew old participants would be informed via email; they may then download the material from our website, print it and place it in this manual.

**6.0 Getting the most out of this workshop:**

6.1 The brain performs different functions in the body. Comprehension and expression of ideas are two distinct functions of the brain and amongst these two functions expression of an idea is higher in complexity. Whenever the brain is given a cue that an idea will have to be expressed together with being understood and comprehended, the brain sequences the information differently and comprehension is automatically increased. Also, the person is more attentive knowing that this information has to be reproduced.

The best way to get the most out of this workshop would be to make an intention of passing on the knowledge gained to at least one person, preferably who is close to the officer – and as soon as possible. Please also keep in mind that as a part of participants' homework individuals will be asked to deliver condensed versions of the sections of this workshop to someone who is close

to them. Generally participants would be asked to share the experience (of sharing the knowledge) the next day. This training delivery does not have to be very elaborate; only a few minutes of instruction would also suffice.

Participants have permission to reproduce all our training materials including the multi-media presentations; they are free to use it to train others and also to make further copies. Of course, it remains their moral obligation to acknowledge the source.

- 6.2 When someone is spoken to, the listener is usually doing three things:
- a. The act of hearing, which is a mechanical action.
  - b. Comprehension, in which the listener is making sense of what is being heard by comparing it with all the relevant data that is available in the brain.
  - c. Judgment, in which the listener decides on the authenticity of the information received and the usefulness or the lack of it (for example the information may be correct but the listener may decide that it is not relevant to him/her or that it has limited or no use).

Since (b) and (c) cannot happen without (a), we can easily declare that (a) is a pre-requisite. Similarly it is clear that the better the comprehension, the better the judgment.

One of the most common errors that normal listeners make is trying to do both comprehension and judgment at the same time. So as individuals try to comprehend information while it is still in the process of arriving and as they comprehend it, they are also in the judging mode, many a times they arrive at a judgment before the complete information has arrived. Since the judgment has been made, the mind then tunes off to later pieces of information which could have resulted in a different judgment had those were also factored in. In general, this is called premature judgment.

Also, judgment takes away brain resources which were better suited for comprehension at that time, thus impairing our comprehension.

Premature judgment is one of the major reasons behind a lot of unnecessary conflict and misunderstanding.

Here are a few steps that we propose – and which participants would find valuable in getting the best out of this workshop:

1. Suspend judgment till all the information has been received. If some information is not clear, then a question should be asked to fill in the information gap.
2. If there is a lot of information (anything that goes on for more than five minutes), please take notes so that not only the important points but their sequencing is preserved.
3. Once the information has been gained, participants should calmly analyze the information and then proceed to make a judgment. Also, judgment can be delayed to a later, quieter time.

Our workshop is interspaced with breaks, group exercises, simple stories and anecdotes which provide ample time for judgment of critical ideas.

**7.0 Reference manual vs. textbook:** Please do note that this is a reference manual; during the workshop we shall be going back and forth in the manual. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause. Our workshops are dynamically structured which means that the sequence of questions and the flow of the discussions is based on the nature of the group; as we will keep restructuring the workshop flow, there is the need to move back and forth. We assure the participants that the little trouble that they would face will be well worth the payback in terms of clarity in developing concepts and improving understanding of the subject matter.

**8.0 Quizzes:** Quizzes might be given at various times during the workshop. The purpose is not to embarrass any one or more participants but to make sure that the whole group understands what is being presented. If any one or more participants do not pass a quiz, they need not get worried. It happens. In that case, we will ask the not-so-successful participants to give us two hours of their time after the workshop so that we may go over their questions and concerns. Any participant who fails the quiz, shall have her or his certificate withheld until the extra time which has been sought is made available by the individual trainee(s) to go through the concepts in which they had difficulty.

**9.0 Guests:**

9.1 The guests will be allowed to sit for a maximum of one half day (either the first half or the second half) during the workshop. The guests are not entitled for lunch. However, they can pay and join us at lunch. If someone wants to sit for more time, he/she will be charged the full fee of the workshop.

9.2 If the participants are planning to bring guests with them, they must inform the Marketing Team or the Event Manager at least one day in advance.

9.3 Guests will not be allowed to participate in discussions or ask questions. They can quietly sit in the back. They must also observe all the training norms especially regarding mobile phones.

## 10.0 General Instructions:

10.1 **Pre-workshop questionnaire:** Please fill out the pre-workshop questionnaires if not already done by this time.

10.2 **Names for certificates:** Please fill out the sheet which will be circulated for ascertaining the correct and full names to be written on the certificates. Please fill this sheet whether you are a new participant or are repeating the complete workshop. Please do not fill it out if you are a guest.

10.3 **Highlighters:** These have been provided for use during the workshop and shall be collected at the end of the day.

10.4 **Blank sheets:** Please use the blank sheets for taking notes – but remember to be environmentally friendly by using as little paper as possible.

10.5 **Name on the manual:** Participants are requested to please write their names on the manuals and keep them securely at all times.

10.6 **Valuables:** All valuables like mobile phones must be kept on the person of the participants – and especially so when leaving the training room, especially when going for lunch and breaks. The organizers are unable to assume any responsibility for loss of misplaced or lost valuables.

10.7 **Comfortable atmosphere and regulating temperature:** It is important that the participants feel comfortable. Therefore, they are requested to please inform the Workshop Coordinator immediately if the air-conditioning or the heating is either too high or too low. We highly recommend that participants bring a coat or jacket with them to the training to counter cold.

10.8 **Soft copies:** Soft copies of selected slides of the workshop presentation are available on Timelenders' website ([www.timelenders.com](http://www.timelenders.com)).

10.9 **Assistance:** Participants should contact the Workshop Coordinator for any assistance.

## **Learning Objectives of Strategic Visions Workshop**

**By the end of the workshop you should have learnt the following:**

### **1.0 The technical meanings of the words:**

- 1.1 Vision
- 1.2 Mission
- 1.3 Purpose of the vision
- 1.4 Ultimate Purpose
- 1.5 Ideology
- 1.6 Mandated and Elective Roles
- 1.7 Ultimate Vision
- 1.8 Ultimate Subvisions
- 1.9 Mandated Role Support Elective Roles (MSRs)
- 1.10 Vision Support Elective Roles (VSRs)
- 1.11 Time Restricted Quadrant 1 activities (TRQ1s)
- 1.12 Time Restricted Quadrant 2 activities (TRQ2s)
- 1.13 Excellence

### **2.0 Details of the following concepts**

- 2.1 The concept of Pony
- 2.2 Sound Ideology
- 2.3 Mine Maps
- 2.4 The concept of excellence
- 2.5 The concept of Balance in Roles
- 2.6 Mandated and Elective roles
- 2.7 The different dimensions of the vision
- 2.8 The different functions of the vision
- 2.9 The basis of the vision on the purpose of the vision (POV)
- 2.10 The basis of the POV on the Ultimate purpose which in turn is based on a sound ideology
- 2.11 How to proceed in developing a sound ideology
- 2.12 Format for developing our Ultimate Subvisions (USVs) based on our final selection of mandated and elective roles

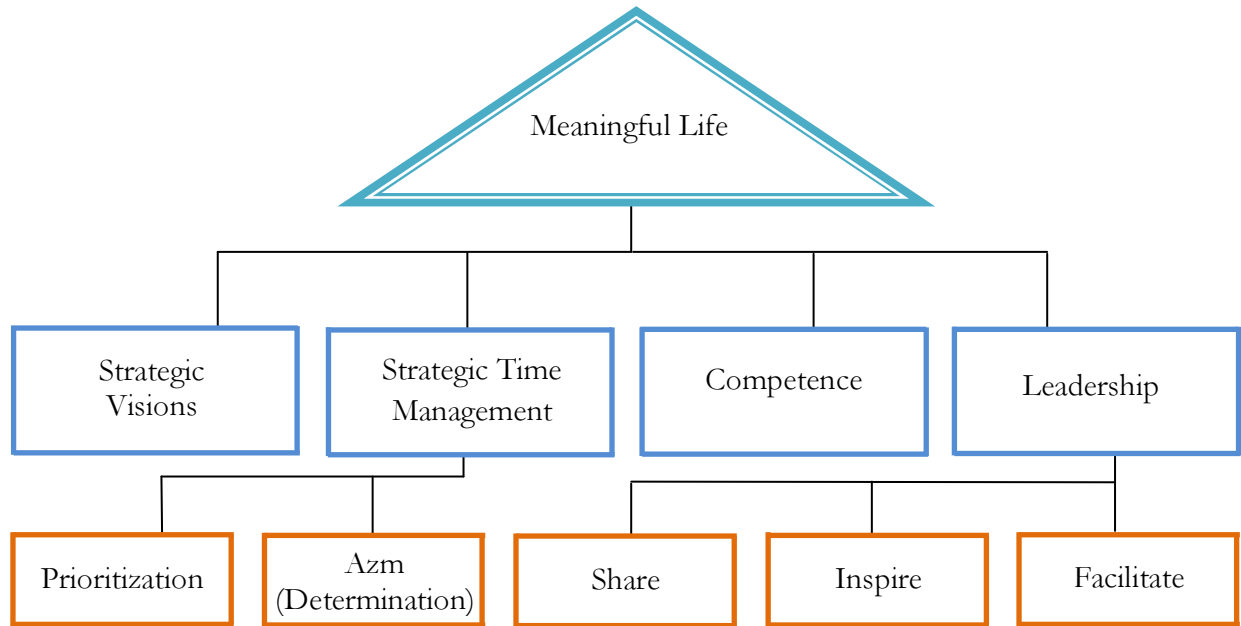
**By the end of the workshop you would have done the following:**

1. Should have taken at least one quiz to ensure that you understand the concepts well.
2. Chalked out your mandated and elective roles and gotten the final selection of your roles.



## A Meaningful Life

1. Would you like to look back at your life at the time of your death and exclaim:  
'It was worth it!'
  - Yes
  - No
  - I don't care
  
2. Suppose you are mentioned after your death in a gathering of a group of people with knowledge and wisdom. What would you like them to say about you?
  - This person's (your) life was really worth it
  - This person's life was not worthwhile

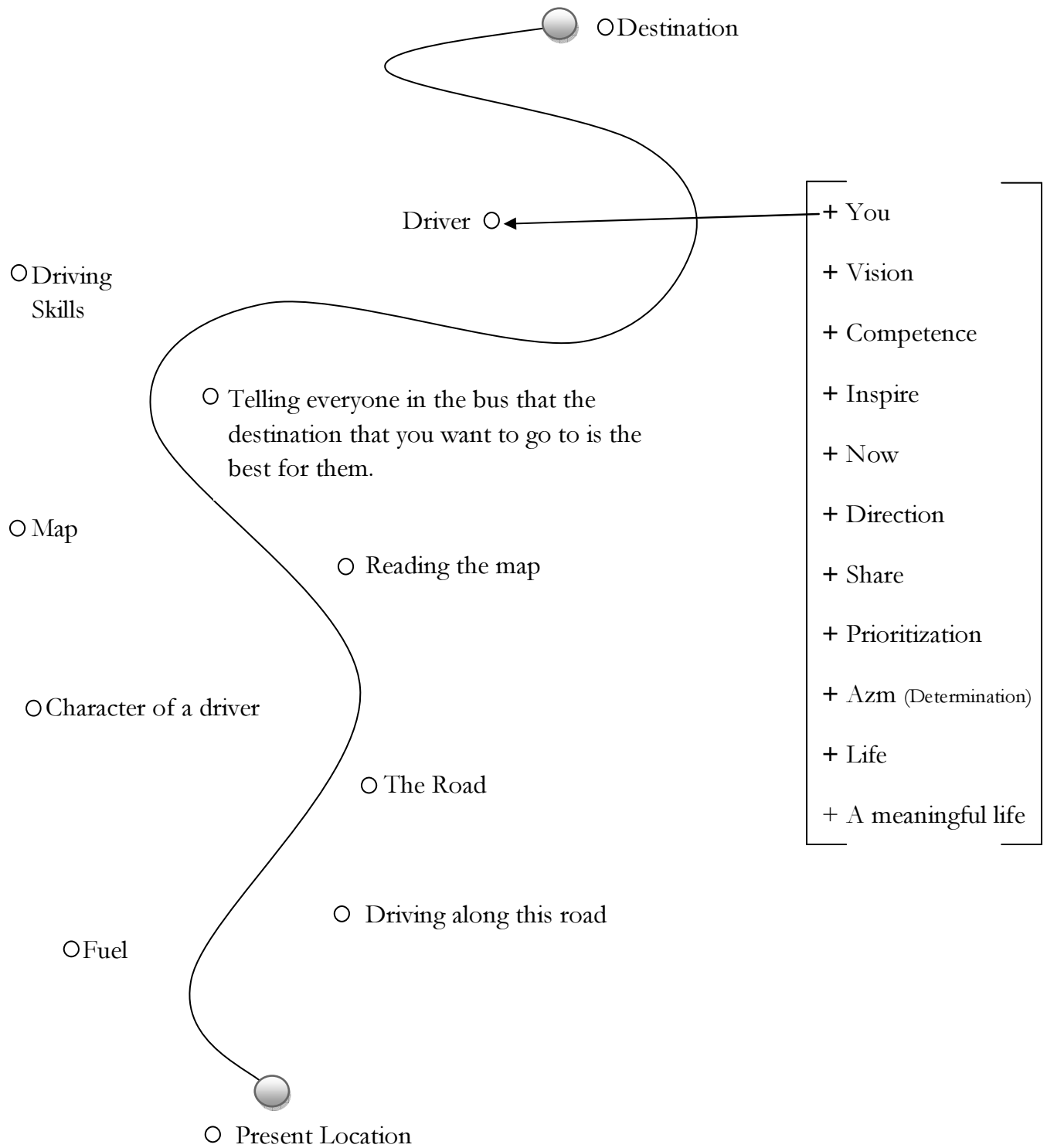


## The Elements of Meaningful Life

Meaningful life has the following four elements:

1. **Strategic Visions:** A long term sound vision in our life. A sound vision is defined as a vision which has clarity and correctness.
2. **Strategic Time Management:** Strategic Time Management is defined as our ability to prioritize our lives in light of a long term vision and then to accomplish these priorities with Azm (determination).
3. **Competence:** Competence is the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that are required for our visions. For example, our vision of scaling Mount Everest requires a minimum set of knowledge, skills and abilities.
4. **Leadership:** Leadership is defined as the ability to share our vision with others and to inspire and facilitate others in pursuing the shared vision. The key element behind the ability to inspire others to pursue the shared vision is a character worthy of that vision.

**Metaphor: A bus with people going to a destination.**



**The definition of a ‘Meaningful Life’:**

A meaningful life is a life that a sound ideology defines as meaningful.

## **Worksheet: Meaning of the word Important**

Important:

## **Worksheet: The challenges and possible solutions to the discrepancies in the meanings**

### Challenges

1.

2.

3.

### Solutions

1.

2.

3.

**Worksheet: Titles of concepts**

Meanings	Words	Word list
<p>Select a word from the list which best depicts the following meaning: “The picture of the future that one wants to see.”</p>		<p>Aim, Objectives, Mission, Vision, Goal, Purpose, Dream, Aspiration,</p>
<p>Select a word from the list which best depicts the following meaning: “The reason for seeing this picture of the future.”</p>		<p>Strategy, Reason, Planning, Goal setting, Long range planning, Hope, Wish.</p>
<p>Select a word from the list which best depicts the following meaning: “How will this future be achieved?”</p>		



## The Different Definitions of the words “Mission & Vision”

“For one thing, the term “vision” had been tossed around by so many people and used in so many different ways that it created more confusion than clarification. Some viewed vision as about having a crystal-ball picture of the future marketplace. Others thought in terms of a technology or product vision, such as the Macintosh computer. Still others emphasized a vision of the organization-values, purpose, mission, goals, images of an idealized workplace. Talk about a muddled mess! No wonder so many hardnosed practical businesspeople were highly skeptical of the whole notion of vision; it just seemed so –well–fuzzy, unclear and impractical.”

-Jim Collins

Kenneth Blanchard defines purpose in a dialogue as:

“As you see the first principle of ethical power is Purpose...By purpose, I mean your objective or intention—something towards which you are always striving.”

Values/mission statements: Articulation of what the company stands for.  
*Best Practice Framework*, p. 35, *Business Ethics*.

“...Businesses must have a vision about what they exist for, which is shared by everyone in the company.”

Moon and Bonny in the  
*Introduction of Business Ethics: facing up to the issues*.

Gouillart and Kelly write:

‘A strategic intent is the picture of the company’s ultimate purpose’. There are many classic examples of strategic intent:

- ❖ AT&T’s aim for *universal telephone service*; Coca-Cola’s drive to put its product *within arm’s reach* of anyone in the world;
- ❖ Pepsi’s commitment to *defeat Coke*; or
- ❖ Toyota’s design to *beat Benz*.”

“Real vision can’t be understood in isolation from the idea of purpose. By purpose, I mean an individual’s sense of why he is alive.

*Peter Senge*

“Vision is the picture of the future that we want to see.”

*Peter Senge*

## Know Your Purpose<sup>1</sup>

We can start by inquiring into what we mean by *mission* anyway. It is very hard to focus on what you cannot define, and my experience is that there can be some very fuzzy thinking about mission, vision, and values. Most organizations today have mission statements, purpose statements, official visions, and little cards with the organization's values. But precious few of us can say our organization's mission statement has transformed the enterprise. And there has grown an understandable cynicism around lofty ideals that don't match the realities of organizational life....

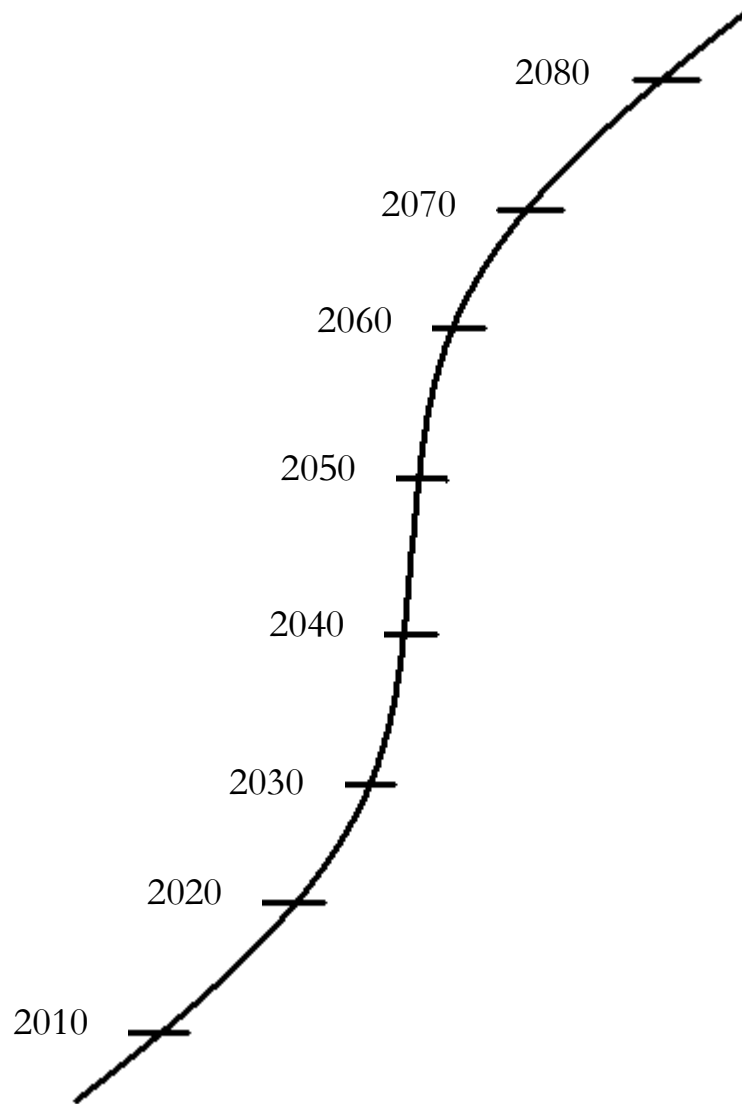
The first obstacle to understanding mission is a problem of language. Many leaders use *mission* and *vision* interchangeably, or think that the words — and the differences between them — matter little. But words do matter. Language is messy by nature, which is why we must be careful in how we use it. As leaders, after all, we have little else to work with. We typically don't use hammers and saws, heavy equipment, or even computers to do our real work. The essence of leadership — what we do with 98 percent of our time — is communication. To master any management practice, we must start by bringing discipline to the domain in which we spend most of our time, the domain of words.

The dictionary — which, unlike the computer, *is* an essential leadership tool — contains multiple definitions of the word *mission*; the most appropriate here is, “purpose, reason for being.” *Vision*, by contrast, is “a picture or image of the future we seek to create,” and *values* articulate how we intend to live as we pursue our mission.

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<sup>1</sup> From a 1998 article by Peter M. Senge of MIT

**Worksheet: Please plot your progression in age**



**Worksheet: What is your vision for the year 2030?**

Your age in 2030:

Your vision in 2030:

**Worksheet: My Vision: First revision**

## **Worksheet: My Vision: Second revision**

**Worksheet: My Vision: Third revision**



## The vision of health for three individuals over the next five years

Currently all three individuals are around 35 years of age, are enjoying good health with no illnesses or complications. All of them are around 5 feet and 9 inches tall and weigh around 80 kg.

Chishti (Category C)	Babar (Category B)	Ahmed (Category A)
<b>Good health:</b>	<b>Good health:</b> <b>1. Weight:</b> 75-80 kg <b>2. Waist:</b> 32-34 <b>3. Pulse:</b> 82-88 <b>4. Cholesterol:</b> 180-190	<b>Good health:</b> <b>1. Weight:</b> 75 kg <b>2. Waist:</b> 32 <b>3. Pulse:</b> 80 <b>4. Cholesterol:</b> 185 <b>5. Body-Fat Ratio:</b> 8% <b>6. Endurance:</b> Can jog 5 km, brisk walk of 8 km

**Worksheet: Impact on individual choices based upon the differences in visions for health**

Please explain the types of diets, exercise regimens and schedules (sleeping, eating, etc.) that the three individuals will need to take to be able to reach their respective visions:

	Chishti (Category C)	Babar (Category B)	Ahmed (Category A)
Diet			
Exercise			
Regularity in lifestyle e.g. sleeping, etc.			

## Worksheet: Impact on individual choices based upon the differences in visions for health

Based on the workings of the previous page, please answer the following questions:

Question 1: Who amongst the three has more directions in his life in regards to what to eat, when and what to exercise and how much to sleep?

- Chishti
- Babar
- Ahmed

Question 2: Even if they don't quite reach their targets, who has a better chance of having good health over the next five years?

- Chishti
- Babar
- Ahmed

Question 3: What percentage of people do you think fall in the three categories that these three individuals represent:

The percentage of people who belong to Chishti's category (C):	%
The percentage of people who belong to Babar's category (B):	%
The percentage of people who belong to Ahmed's category (A):	%

Question 4: In your view which category of people do you belong to?

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C

Question 5: which category would you like to belong to?

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C

**[PTO]**

Question 6: Why would you like to be in the category that you have chosen above?

Question 7: Based on the workings that you have done in this exercise, would it be safe to say that majority of the people don't have very clear visions, especially in the long term? (True/False)

Question 8: Again based on the workings that you have done, would it be safe to say that the higher the clarity in one's vision in a particular area of one's life, the higher the chances of achieving that vision? (True/False)

## Functions vs. Dimensions

The following are the functions and dimensions for a 4WD off road vehicle.

Functions	Dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Big Engine</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4WD</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Power</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Larger tires</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower center of gravity</li></ul>

## Functions of a vision

*You can and should shape your own future; because if you don't someone else surely will.*

*- Joel Barker*

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1. It gives us direction.
2. A vision greatly reduces the risk of realizing the worst case scenarios in life.
3. It gives us motivation.
4. It helps us fight adversity.
5. If we don't have a clear vision, we risk becoming the instrument of an undesired vision.
6. It helps us select some of our roles.

1. It gives us direction.

“The more clarity we have in our vision, the more directions in life it dictates.”

2. A vision greatly reduces the risk of realizing the worst case scenarios in life

Statement: "I don't need a direction."

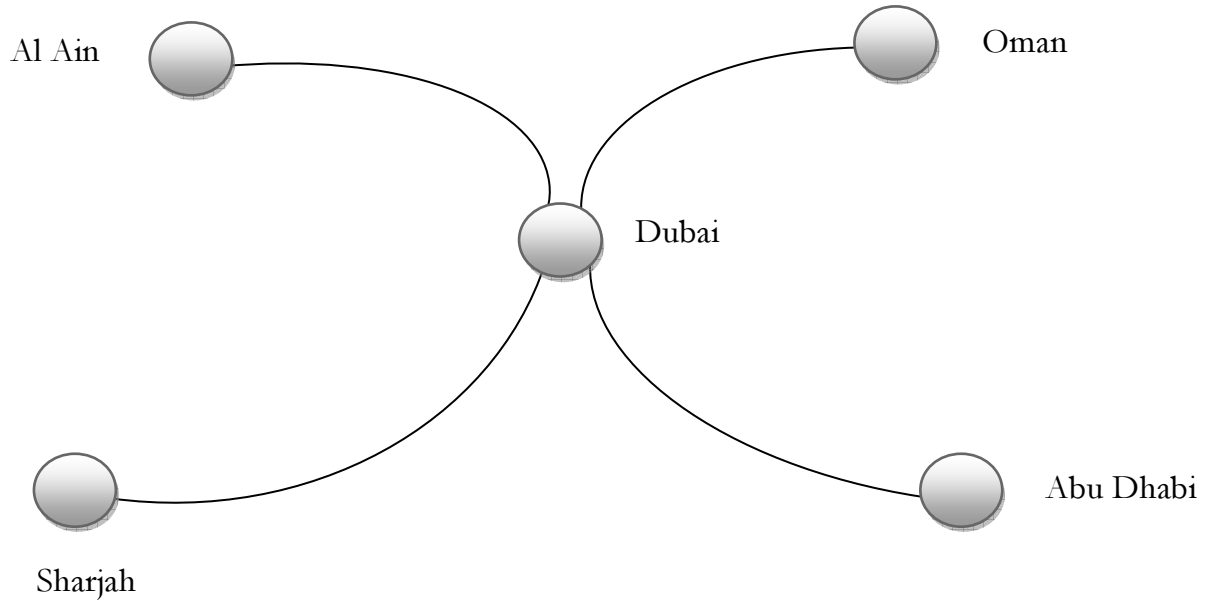
Pony #1: "All is fine."

Pony#2: "We'll cross the bridge when we get there."

Pony#3: "Everything is fate."



Pony #1: "All is fine."



“People who say that they don’t know what they want, definitely and passionately know what they don’t want.”

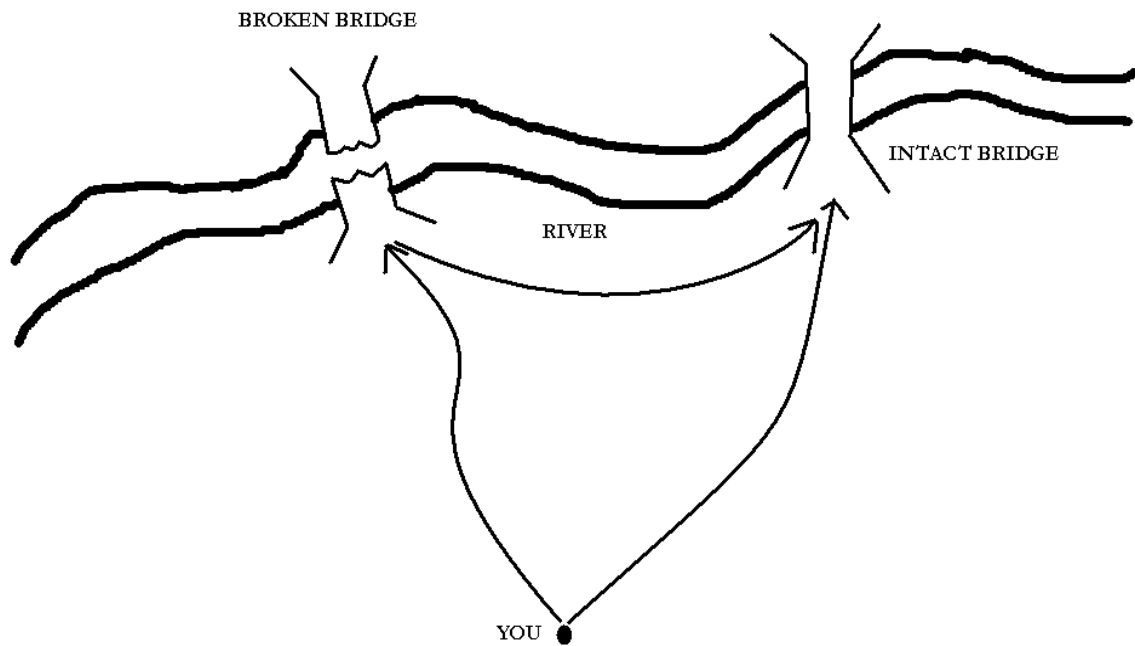
“If you do not plan for something that you want, chances are that you’ll get something that you never wanted.”

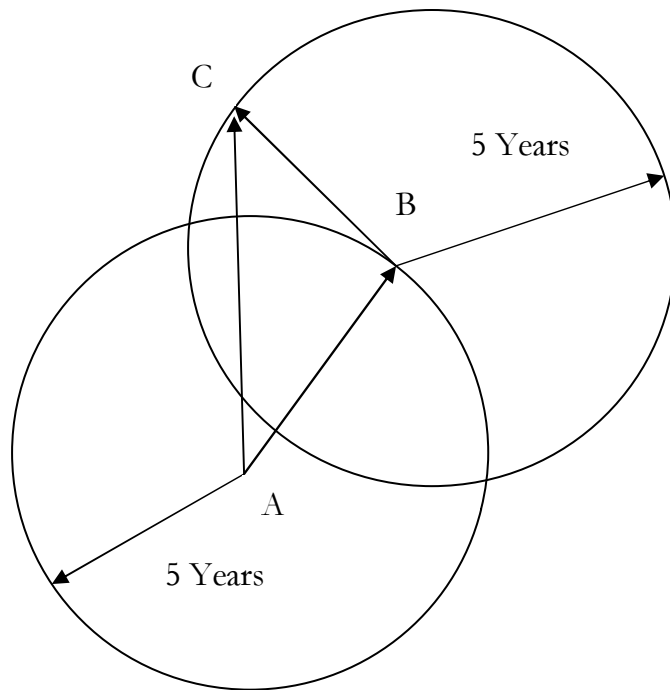
“If you don’t know what you want, chances are you’ll get something that you never wanted.”

“Your not planning for good health is a fantastic plan in itself for bad health.”

“Without a direction, we are at risk!  
Without a clear vision, we don’t have a direction!  
So, if  $a=b=c$ , then  $a=c$ ,  
Which means, without a clear vision, we are at a severe risk!”

Pony#2: "We'll cross the bridge when we get there."





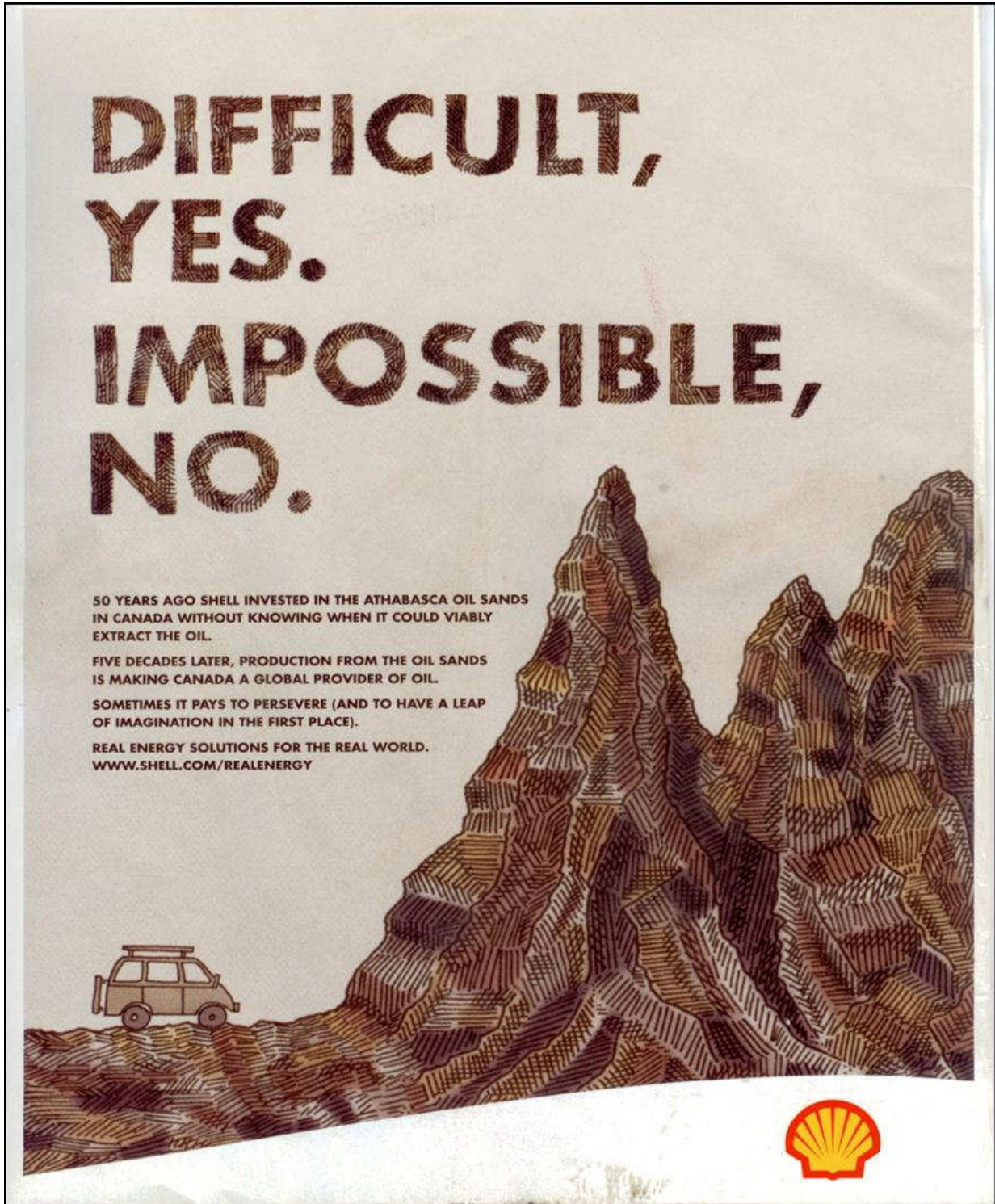
Pony#3: "Everything is fate."

## Dimensions of a vision

1. **Attainability:** What is the possibility of achieving your vision within the available resources?
2. **Lucidity:** An articulation of the vision which explains the main idea in clear and unambiguous terms.
3. **Concreteness:** The number of quantifiable elements and degree of quantification in those elements.
4. **Clarity:** Clarity is defined as a vision having high lucidity and appropriate concreteness.
5. **Complexity:** How complex or simple is the main concept behind the vision?
6. **Scale:** The scale of your vision in terms of geography, time and depth.
7. **Nobility:** Nobility is the degree to which your vision touches the lives of people other than yourself for a greater good.
8. **Loftiness:** The minimum cost required for the success of the vision.
9. **Correctness:** The correctness of your vision is directly proportional to the soundness of your ideology.

## Dimensions of a vision

1. Attainability: What is the possibility of achieving your vision within the available resources?



**DIFFICULT,  
YES.  
IMPOSSIBLE,  
NO.**

50 YEARS AGO SHELL INVESTED IN THE ATHABASCA OIL SANDS IN CANADA WITHOUT KNOWING WHEN IT COULD VIABLY EXTRACT THE OIL.

FIVE DECADES LATER, PRODUCTION FROM THE OIL SANDS IS MAKING CANADA A GLOBAL PROVIDER OF OIL.

SOMETIMES IT PAYS TO PERSEVERE (AND TO HAVE A LEAP OF IMAGINATION IN THE FIRST PLACE).

REAL ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR THE REAL WORLD.  
[WWW.SHELL.COM/REALENERGY](http://WWW.SHELL.COM/REALENERGY)

## Dimensions of a vision

2. Lucidity: An articulation of the vision which explains the main idea in clear and unambiguous terms.

An example of a low lucidity statement:

“I sell gold at different shops in the gold market of Doha, Qatar.”





## Dimensions of a vision

3. Concreteness: The number of quantifiable elements and degree of quantification in those elements

Chishti (Category C)	Babar (Category B)	Ahmed (Category A)
<b>Good health:</b>	<b>Good health:</b> <b>1. Weight:</b> 75-80 kg <b>2. Waist:</b> 32-34 <b>3. Pulse:</b> 82-88 <b>4. Cholesterol:</b> 180-190	<b>Good health:</b> <b>1. Weight:</b> 75 kg <b>2. Waist:</b> 32 <b>3. Pulse:</b> 80 <b>4. Cholesterol:</b> 185 <b>5. Body-Fat Ratio:</b> 8% <b>6. Endurance:</b> Can jog 5 km, brisk walk of 8 km

## Dimensions of a vision

4. Clarity: Clarity is defined as a vision having high lucidity and appropriate concreteness.

### Ultimate Vision (UV)

A vision which, if not accomplished, remains relevant with any passage of time is called an ultimate vision. An ultimate vision has high lucidity but very low concreteness.

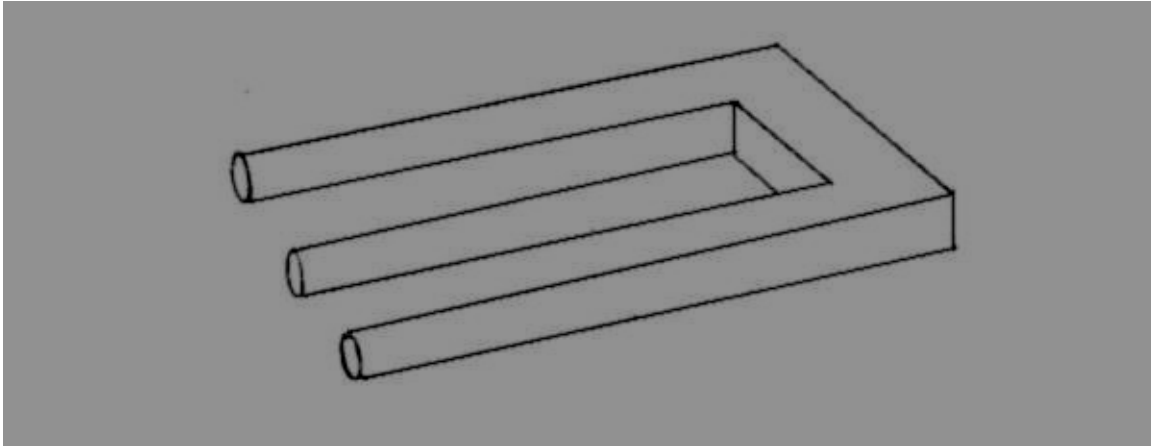
### Intermediate Vision (IV)

A vision derived from the ultimate vision for a particular instance of time is called an intermediate vision (IV). IVs are highly lucid but their concreteness increases with decreasing time.

$$\text{Concreteness} \propto \frac{1}{\text{Term}}$$

## Dimensions of a vision

5. Complexity: How complex or simple is the main concept behind the vision.



## Dimensions of a vision

6. Scale: The scale of your vision in terms of geography, time and depth.



---

*"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great." - Mark Twain*

---

## **Dimensions of a vision**

7. Nobility: Nobility is the degree to which your vision touches the lives of people other than yourself for a greater good.

8. Loftiness: The minimum cost required for the success of the vision.  
A personal attribute: **Greatness:** What is the level of sacrifice that you are willing to make for your vision?

9. Correctness: The correctness of your vision is directly proportional to the soundness of your ideology.

Correctness  $\propto$  Soundness

## **Excellence**

*“Excellence is an art won by habituation and training. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is then not an act, but a habit.” - Aristotle*

*I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection, excellence I can reach for; perfection is god's business. - Michael J. fox.*

---

“To do something in a fashion that in the available resources can not be done better.”

## ’احسان‘

حضرت مفتی محمد شفیع صاحبؒ اپنی تفسیر معارف القرآن میں احسان کے بارے میں فرماتے ہیں کہ :

”وَاحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ“

اس جملے میں ہر کام کو اچھی طرح کرنے کی ترغیب ہے، اور کام کو اچھی طرح کرنا، جس کو قرآن میں احسان کے لفظ سے تعبیر کیا ہے، دو طرح کا ہے، ایک عبادت میں دوسرے آپس کے معاملات و معاشرت میں۔

﴿سورہ بقرہ، آیت نمبر ۱۹۵﴾

## Ihsan

### In his Tafseer Maariful Quran, Mufti Muhammad Shafi says about Ihsan:

The last sentence of the verse (195): (And do good. Of course, Allah loves those who do good), gives an incentive to do everything nicely. The Holy Quran calls this *Ihsan*. Now, doing something nicely, can take two forms. When *Ihsan* relates to *Ibadah* (worship), its meaning has been explained by the Holy Prophet himself in the well known hadith of Jibrail where he said that ‘you should worship Allah as if you are seeing him, and if you can not achieve that degree of perception, then you should, at the least, believe that Allah is seeing you’.

And when it (*Ihsan*) relates to social transactions and dealings, the Holy Prophet has explained *Ihsan* by saying (as reported in the Musnad of Ahmad on the authority of the noble Companion Mu’adh) that ‘you should like for others what you like for yourselves, and in the same manner, you should dislike for others what you dislike for yourselves (Mazhari).



## **Balancing of Roles: The Balance-in-Life Framework (BIF)**

“A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, [build] a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly.”

*Robert Heinlein*

### **Introduction**

At Timelenders, we have developed a framework based on the Islamic Ideology. We have taught this ‘Balance-in-life Framework (BIF)’ to thousands of people with wonderful results and over the years, BIF has evolved and refined through teaching and research.

### **Crux of the Matter**

Do you agree with the quote of Robert Heinlein mentioned in the beginning of the paper? The ability to balance the different facets of one’s life with excellence has been a critical element of success since time immemorial.

Balancing one’s life is an age old challenge: wars had to be fought and long trading trips taken which kept families apart for months on end and resulting in a demand to find creative solutions<sup>1</sup>.

Islam, like other societies throughout history, has addressed this matter and the Islamic definition of balancing one’s life<sup>2</sup> and the ideas to achieve this balance are highly elegant, sophisticated and versatile and differ with the dominant intervention paradigms originating in the West today.

We have converted these definitions and ideas into an operational framework—the BIF—to restructure our lives to create a balance. Additionally, the framework is a great tool in understanding the underlying concepts and paradigms.

### **The Balance-in-Life Framework (BIF)**

We all have different roles in our life; we are fathers, sons, breadwinners, husbands, wives, mothers, CEOs, bosses and members of social clubs. Please see a sample list

of roles on the next page and on the following page please list down all of your Mandated and Elective Roles.

## **A sample list of different roles in life**

- Son
- Father
- Husband
- Grandfather
- Grandson
- Daughter
- Niece
- Nephew
- Uncle
- Aunt
- Neighbor
- Cousin
- Boss
- Subordinate
- Mentor
- Colleague
- Friend
- Engineer
- Doctor
- Human/Self
- Wife
- Rotarian
- Member of the Lion's Club
- Khateeb
- Member of the Yacht Club
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Christian
- Slave of Allah (swt) (Abdullah)
- Member of the Ummah of the Prophet (sas) (Ummatee)
- Son in law
- Daughter in law
- Sister in law
- Brother in law
- Father in law
- Head of Marketing
- Head of Finance
- Breadwinner

**Worksheet: List your mandated and elective roles**

<b>Mandated Roles</b>	<b>Elective Roles</b>

A clear indication of an imbalance in our roles would be a situation where someone is a good businessman but a poor father; or someone who is a good engineer but a poor wife.

Every society is built upon an ideology<sup>3</sup>. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines Ideology as:

**The basic beliefs and guiding principles of a person or group**

This underlying ideology defines the basic paradigms of thought in the society such as the definition of success, failure, happiness, contentment, the origins of the Universe and how it functions.

Ideologies are of two types:

**Defined Ideology<sup>4</sup>**

Any ideology which has been clearly articulated and written.

Examples would be Communism, Hinduism, Social liberalism, Capitalism and Christianity. According to this broad definition<sup>5</sup>, Islam is also an ideology.

**Personal Ideology**

The ideology which a person carries.

Another articulation would be ‘installed ideology’. Personal ideology could be identical to a defined ideology or could be a combination of some defined ideologies and unique personal beliefs and assertions.

In all societies, roles are of two types:

**Mandated roles<sup>6</sup>**

Those roles in life which your ideology doesn’t permit you to drop directly under any condition.

For example the roles of father, mother, son and brother would be mandated roles according to the Islamic Ideology.

## **Elective roles**

Those roles in life which your ideology permits you to directly drop under certain conditions.

For example the roles of employee, friend, boss, colleague and student would be elective roles in Islam.

All societies define ‘minimum performance levels (MPLs)’ in all possible roles. MPLs are dictated by the underlying dominant ideology of the society and form the foundation of the legal system.

Due to different underlying ideologies, MPLs differ from society to society. Underlying dominant ideologies in most of the societies are a mix of many defined ideologies and unique beliefs and views.

Not only do ideologies get redefined with the passage of time but their mix also fluctuates resulting in the continual changing of the MPLs; for example the West has moved from ostracizing gays and lesbians in their societies to the acceptance of these individuals and their norms.

The least flux in MPLs is observed in societies which are based on religious ideologies.

Islam is the only exception in Ideologies as it doesn’t change or evolve due to the preservation of its main foundation, the Quran. Hence, the MPLs are timeless and are not in a state of flux. This is the most important cornerstone of the BIF.

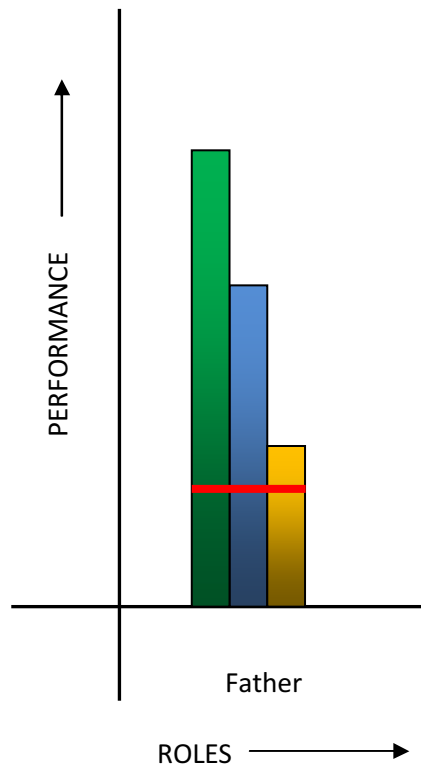
Not only are MPLs in Islam timeless, they are very precisely defined. This is one of the most beautiful aspects of Islam.

With this backdrop, let me articulate the definition of balance in Islam:

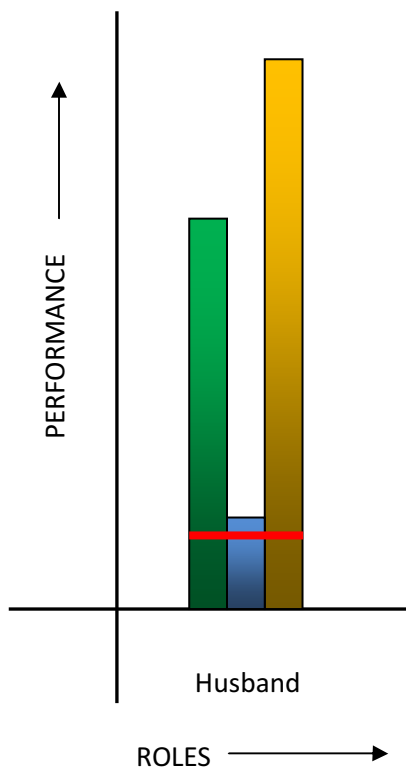
“Our performance in any one of our roles, Mandated or Elective, must not fall below the ‘MPLs’ dictated by Islam.”

To understand this, please refer to the following series of diagrams:

# Balancing Roles Diagram 1

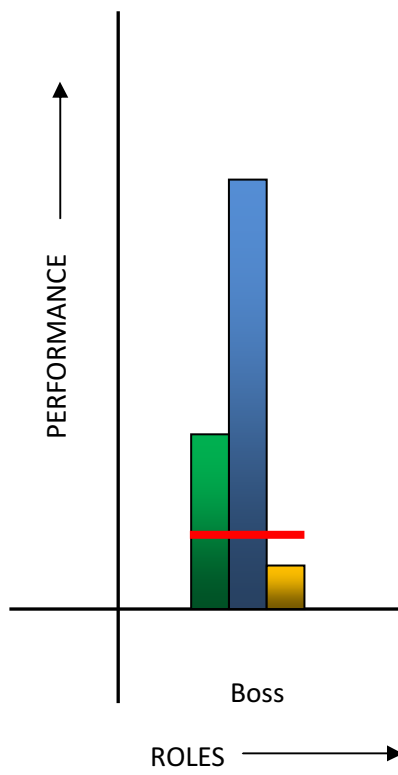


## Balancing Roles Diagram 2

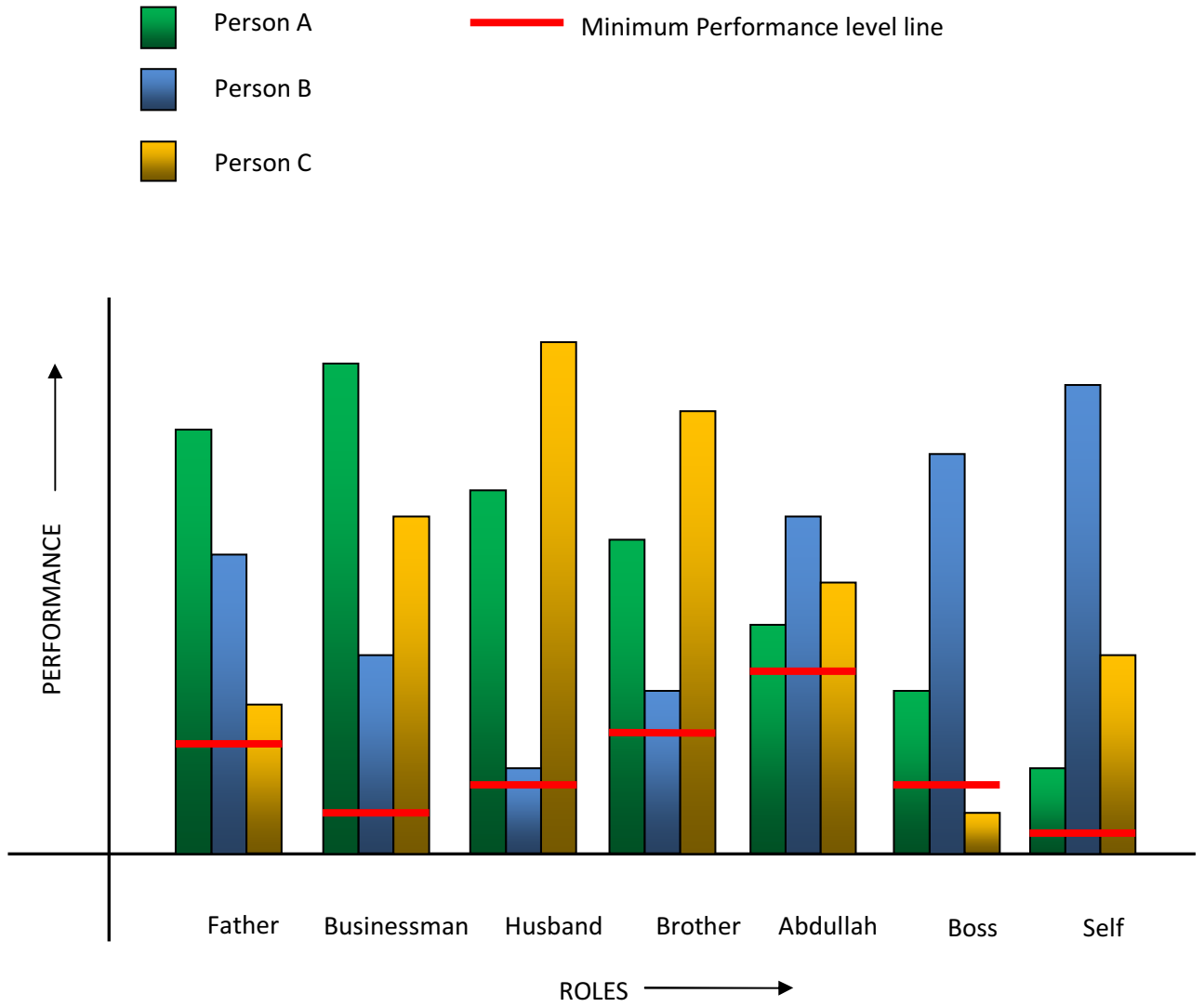




### Balancing Roles Diagram 3



### Balancing Roles Diagram 4



The Y-axis shows performance in different roles whereas the X-axis shows the different roles. The purpose of the bar graphs is to highlight that there are different standards of performance operating in each of the roles and being applied consistently to the three individuals.

In each of the roles there is a red line that shows the minimum performance level (MPL) in that role. For example the MPL in the role of a neighbor in Islam is that it is unacceptable that we sleep with our stomach full in the night whereas he is sleeping hungry<sup>7</sup>.

Now if we look at the definition of balance presented above, you would see that persons A and B are balanced while person C has an imbalance in his roles since he is below the minimum performance level in his role as a boss.

In conclusion, as long as a person is above the red line in all of his roles, he is fine. Looking carefully at this we can immediately see the sophistication and versatility of the concept: this model can apply to all situations that people may find themselves in.

For parents with infants and toddler, the excessive demand in their role as parents can be met by bringing down the performance in other roles. There are two types of resources that we have:

**Transferrable resources:** The resources that can be transferred across different roles.

The examples would be money, time etc.

**Non-transferrable resources:** The resources which can't be transferred across different roles.

The examples would be personal attention or activities which requires our presence: the two hours of time that the father gives to his child cannot be compensated by two hours of time of the babysitter. Similarly, we can't have someone else jog or exercise on our behalf.

**The application of BIF for creating a balance in our lives**

Here is a step-by-step intervention:

1. Make a list of all Mandated and Elective Roles in your life.
2. Apply the 'Selection of Roles Framework' for getting the final selection of your roles.
3. Research and find the MPLs in each of the roles: you may be in for many pleasant surprises as you may find that many MPLs are much below what you had in mind. Many of our participants have reported that they are leading much more peaceful lives now as they were previously trying to live up to incorrect MPLs which were unrealistic or idealistic.

Of course, finding these MPLs would require expert help: for our health, the first step would be a comprehensive health check-up followed by a consultation with a competent physician.

4. Mark roles where MPLs are being violated and then develop a strategy to systematically end these violations by:
  - a. Deploying resources which are available in that role
  - b. Deploying general transferrable resources which are available
  - c. And if transferrable resources are not available then carefully reducing our performances in one or more roles and using the freed up transferrable resources and applying them to the roles where MPLs were being violated and increasing the performances and ending these violations.
  - d. As a last resort, we may have to consider dropping one or more of our electives roles.

The two important pitfalls in the application of this framework are:

**Failure to clearly define the MPLs from the Islamic Ideology:** Unfortunately, sometimes the MPL are derived from personal whims or the incredulous expectations of the society. Life becomes a mess when we try to live up these erroneous MPLs. An

example could be the norms regarding marriage which are operative in the subcontinent today.

**Allowing our performance to fall below the minimum performance level to get performance in another role:** To increase our performance in one role, we transfer resources from the other roles and call this sacrifice and rightly so. But sometimes an extreme is witnessed where we continue to drop performance to a point where we go below the MPL in that role and justify it by calling it sacrifice. This is a transgression not sacrifice! The most common example is winning business success at the cost of one's family. This is easy to detect. Another example which is more difficult to detect and address is where a lady wastes her health (this would be her role of 'self') for trying to live up to false MPLs in the role of a mother while the society—and sadly she herself—believes that she is sacrificing and doing something very noble.

There could be multiple ways of distributing resources within roles and still lead a balanced life. The question of how to create the most optimum distribution of resources can be answered by having clear short term intermediate visions derived from sound Ultimate Sub-visions in each of the roles. (Remember that soundness of the vision equals clarity and correctness)

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<sup>1</sup> This is a gist of a hadith of the Prophet (sallalahualahiwassalam)

<sup>2</sup> Just as many things are defined more by their antithesis than their own precise definitions, work-life balance is being defined by work-life imbalance. After teaching this subject for over seven years to thousands of individuals, I find that there are multitudes of definitions of what is work-life balance but there is a general agreement as to the consequences of work-life imbalance of which the two main symptoms that are generally understood across the board are:

- a disturbed family life where the understanding develops that we are not living up to the expectations or the norms
- neglect of self, the biggest manifestation of which is deteriorating health followed by a sense lack of fulfillment and happiness

The moment any or both of these symptoms are detected, the dominant paradigm in corporate world today's is to term it an issue of work-life balance or more precisely the result of work-life imbalance.

The corporate world's interest in work-life balance started from the West as it was the West where industrialization took place which led to massive urbanization of people, dislocation from traditional abodes of living and hence the breakdown of many centuries-old established structures that ensured balance in lives. The saying that 'it takes a village to raise a child' is true but unfortunately difficult to apply in the current modernized/industrialized landscape. The consequences of work-life imbalance started affecting employees' performance at work and hence a history of corporate and workplace initiatives and interventions started to take shape.

Note: In 1996 Hilary Clinton made famous the ancient African Proverb "It takes a village to raise a child." The proverb is from Igbo and Yoruba regions of Nigeria and the basic meaning is that raising a child is a communal effort." Quoted from "Assessing 'it takes a village to raise a child' by Amelia Tibbett in [www.helium.com](http://www.helium.com).

<sup>3</sup> Work life balance is a subset of the issue of balancing of the different roles that we have in our life. Work-life imbalance is a serious issue today as long hours at work are stealing quality hours from the time that we dedicate to our families and our personal pursuits. Globally, the corporate world is waking up to this reality and a myriad of interventions are being proposed and implemented.

<sup>4</sup> An introductory enquiry into history and philosophy will reveal this. I quote from Wikipedia in the section on 'Specialty Definition: Ideology': "Every society has an ideology that forms the basis of the "public opinion" or common sense, a basis that usually remains invisible to most people within the society. This prevailing ideology appears as "neutral", all others differ from the norm and are often seen as radical, no matter what the actual vision may be. The philosopher Michel Foucault first wrote about this concept of apparent ideological neutrality." We discuss this in depth in our Strategic Visions workshop and here for the sake of brevity the statement that 'every society is built on an ideology' will suffice.

<sup>5</sup> These definitions of ideologies are mine and are a result of the need to develop a framework. They are pretty commonsensical as opposed to things coming out of intricacies of philosophy.

<sup>6</sup> I would like to caution at this time that I am using Ideology in a broad sense while acknowledging that there are some very technical definitions of ideology which if taken can make my statement pretty contentious. In other words I am using the word ideology for lack of a better word as the word 'philosophy' is shadowed by far greater demons. In Arabic the word would be *Deen* which in its technical definition is right on the mark when we say that

Islam is a *Deen* amongst others.

<sup>7</sup> Again the definitions of Mandated and Elective Roles are mine and have come about after years of struggling with the subject. Why these definitions were required to be articulated and the precise function that these definitions serve would become clear in the ‘Selection of Roles Framework’.

---

## Quiz on Work-Life Balance: Reflections and Interventions

1. The Islamic perspective of balancing of life is:
  - a. Based on the Western corporate model
  - b. Is in line with the modern trends today
  - c. Differs with the dominant intervention paradigms originating in the West
  - d. Very complicated
  
2. Balancing of different areas of our life:
  - a. Is an age old challenge
  - b. Is a challenge of the middle ages
  - c. Is a challenge that came about after the Industrial revolution
  - d. Is a challenge that comes about whenever someone faces a challenging mother-in-law
  
3. Contemporarily, work-life balance:
  - a. Has a uniform, singular definition
  - b. Has many definitions
  - c. Has two definitions; one is Western and the other Islamic
  - d. Does not need a definition as we have a feeling of what it is
  
4. Work-Life imbalance has two main symptoms; one is a disturbed family life and the other is:
  - a. Poor health
  - b. Poor relationship with the distant cousin's mother-in-law's, aunt's neighbor
  - c. Neglect of self
  - d. Frequent nightmares
  
5. We have quoted 'it takes a village to raise a child' because:
  - a. It is an African quote
  - b. It is the responsibility of the village to raise a child and not only of the parent
  - c. In traditional set-ups, the responsibility of raising a child gets distributed to many people as people live together
  - d. Parents were so busy that the people who lived around them had to get involved in raising of children



- e. Because people had so many children that the village had to step in and now it is not an issue thanks to fewer children
  - f. It implies that we should have larger families only if we live in villages
6. Defined Ideology is an Ideology:
- a. Which one subscribes to
  - b. Which one believes in
  - c. Which has been clearly articulated and written
  - d. Which is used by a person to define things like happiness, success, failure, etc.
7. Mandated roles are roles which your ideology doesn't permit you to drop under any conditions. (True/False)
8. Minimum Performance Levels are dictated by the dominant Ideology on which a society is based. (True/False)
9. All ideologies are in a state of flux. (True/False)
10. A person who distributes resources in different roles at random runs a risk of creating an imbalance in his different roles (True/False).

## **Worksheet on Balance-in-Life Framework: Group exercise**

1. Write down all of your mandated and elective roles. (Please fill out page 59)
2. List other definitions of balancing of roles that you can think of?

3. Please give 2 examples each of extremes in the balancing roles:

- a. Taking MPL from the society instead of Islam.
- b. Going below MPL but still calling it 'sacrifice'.

4. In which one of your roles do you think you are below the MPL?

5. If you had to, which elective role would you drop first?

## The Paradox of Our Age<sup>1</sup>

Today we have bigger houses and smaller families  
More conveniences, but less time

We have more degrees, but less common sense  
More knowledge, but less judgment

We have more experts, but more problems  
More medicine, but less wellness

We spend too recklessly  
Laugh too little  
Drive too fast  
Get too angry too quickly  
Stay up too late  
Read too little  
Watch TV too much  
And pray too seldom

We multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values  
We talk too much, love too little and lie too often  
We've learnt how to make a living, but not a life  
We've added years to life, not life to years  
We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers  
Wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints  
We spend more, but have less  
We buy more, enjoy it less

We've been all the way to the moon and back  
But have trouble crossing the street to meet our neighbors

We've conquered outer space,  
But not inner space

We've split the atom

---

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1995 by Dr. Bob Moorehead

But not our prejudice

We write more, learn less, plan more, but accomplish less

We've learn to rush, but not to wait,

We have higher incomes, but lower morals

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies

But have less communications

We are long on quantity,

But less in quality

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion

Tall men, and short character

More leisure and less fun, more kinds of foods but less nutrition

Two incomes but more divorce

Fancier houses but broken homes

That's why I propose, that as of today, you do not keep anything for special occasion,  
because every day you live is a special occasion

Search for knowledge, read more, sit on your front porch and admire the view  
without paying attention to your needs

Spend more time with your family and friends, eat your favorite foods, and visit the  
places you love

Life is a chain of moment of enjoyment, not only about survival

Use your crystal goblets, do not save your best perfume, and use it every time you  
feel you want it

Remove from vocabulary phrases like "one of these days" and "someday"

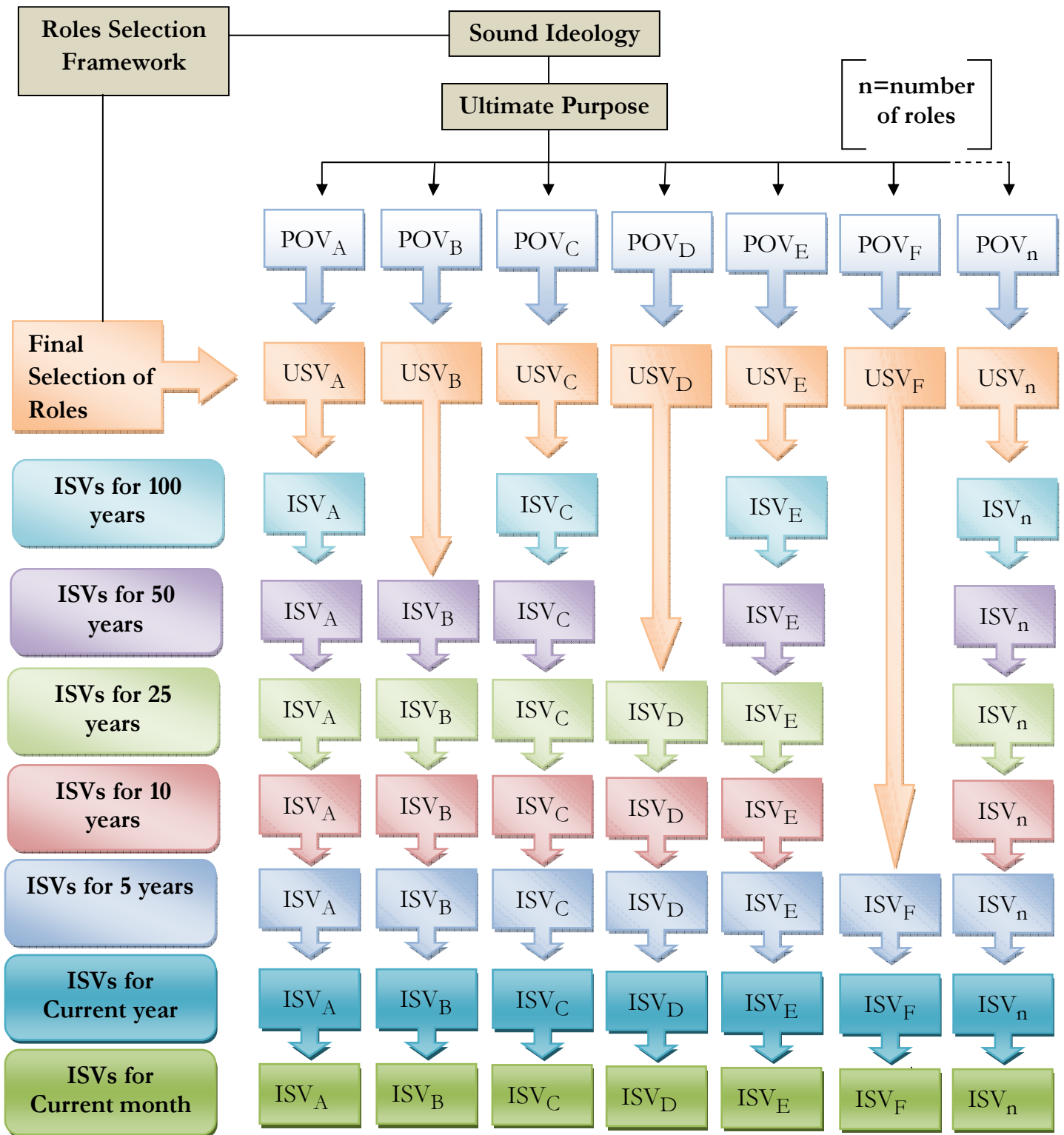
Let's write that letter we thought of writing "one of these days"

Let's tell our families and friends how much we love them

Do not delay anything that adds laughter and joy to your life

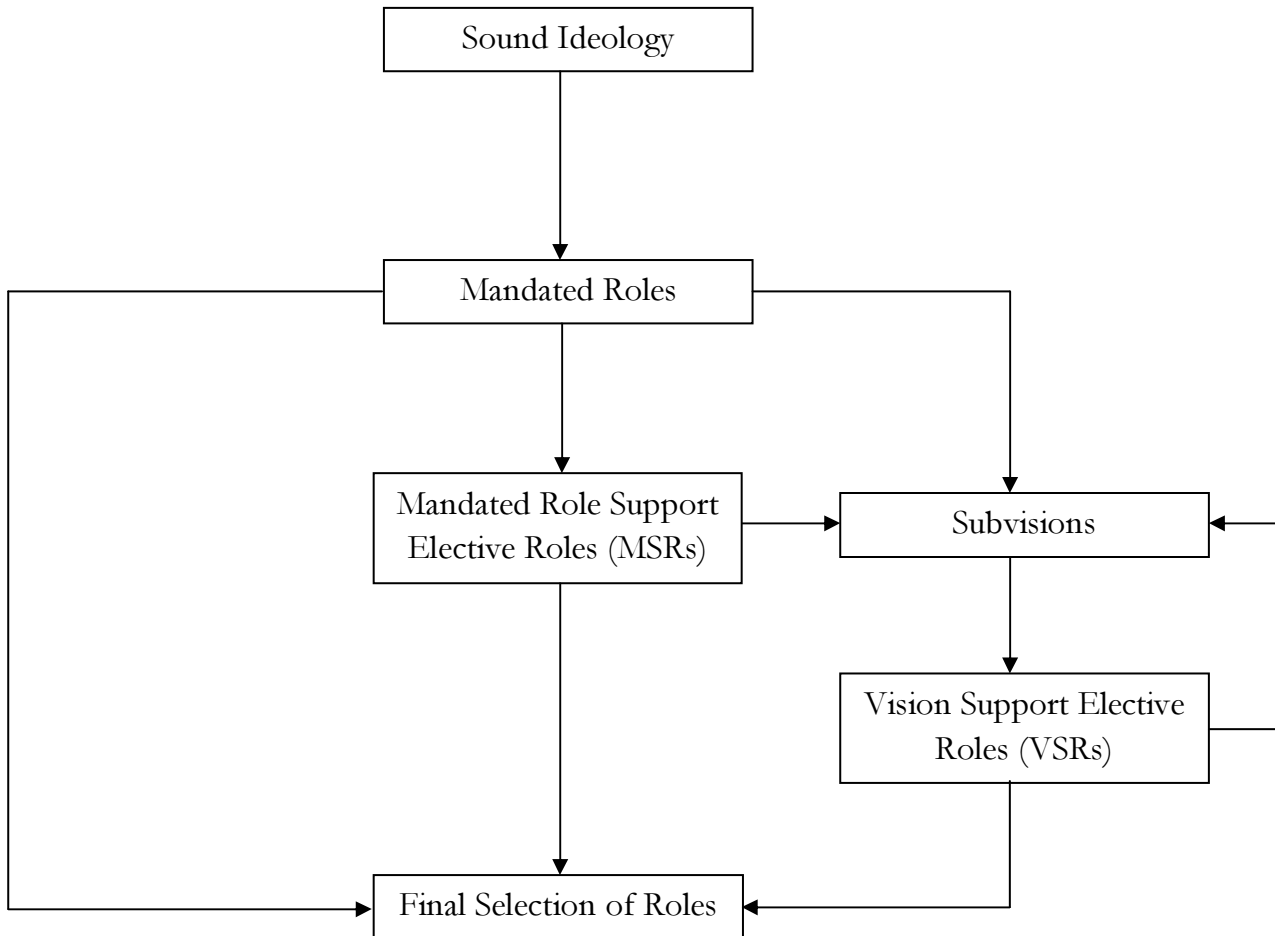
Every day, every hour, and every minute is special

### The Vision Framework



Role ← ISV<sub>A</sub> (50) → Intermediate Subvision for 50 years

## Roles Selection Framework



1. **Mandated Role Support Elective Roles (MSR):** An Elective role which is required to keep the performance of a Mandated role above the minimum performance level.
2. **Vision Support Elective Roles (VSR):** An Elective role which is required to keep the performance of a corresponding role of a sub-vision above the minimum performance level.



## **Worksheet: Identifying MSRs and VSRs**

Identify at least one MSR and one VSR in your life.

**Worksheet: Find corresponding roles for USVs<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>Ultimate Sub-visions (USVs)</b>	<b>Roles</b>
1	I want my father to have lived a vision oriented, healthy and a spiritually fulfilling life.	Father
2	I want my employees to be healthy, productive and to become assets for the community and the nation.	Son
3	I want to see my husband make a substantial contribution in the uplift of the nation, to see him lead a healthy and content life.	Citizen
4	I want to see my coming generations developed to a point intellectually and spiritually where they make a significant contribution to the revival of the Ummah <sup>2</sup> .	Business Owner
5	I want to see my mother die in a state where she is happy, healthy and has pleased Allah (swt).	Self
6	I want to see myself die in such health where I am able to enjoy the bounties of Allah (swt) and perform all of my religious obligations completely.	Wife
7	I want to see my fellow citizens as effective individuals and amongst people who lead in all walks of life in the world. I want them to live lives of dignity and be a source of blessing for all the wretched and oppressed of the world.	Daughter

<sup>1</sup> Many of these USVs are actual statements of the earlier participants of this workshop. Statements may have been reworded.

<sup>2</sup> This was the statement of Mr. Amanullah Khan, the Dean of Management Sciences, Riphah International University, Islamabad, and shared with his permission.

**Worksheet: Please write the USVs for three of your roles**

## The checklist for writing USVs (Ultimate Sub-visions)

An Ultimate Vision (UV) of a role is called an Ultimate Sub-vision (USV).

Each role must have a USV and the accumulation of all the USVs result in the final Ultimate Vision of a person.

The USV should have the following characteristics:

1. **High Lucidity:** It is well worth the effort to clearly articulate the USV. If we are required to use words which may have nuances in their meanings then we should clearly define these words. For example, during one of our consulting assignments, our client wrote that they want to carry on the legacy of their forefathers through their business. Legacy is a word that may have different shades of meanings for different people and we went ahead and clearly defined the word and added it in the appendix defining such words in the statement.
2. **Low Concreteness:** Concreteness must be as low as possible without compromising the intended scale or scope of the USV. For example, if you want to provide medical coverage to a particular geographical area then please mention it. This will increase the concreteness level to some extent but is required.
3. **The two sides of the coin:** If the USV addresses people then you need to look at both sides of the coin. Let me explain by a simple example: in the role of a spouse we must not only have an Ultimate Vision for where we want to see our spouse in the distant future but also where would we want to see ourselves as a spouse. Similarly, in the role of a father we would not only want to know where we would want to see our children in the future but also where would we want to see ourselves as fathers? The common error is to ignore the other side of the coin where we are very concerned about the future of our children but completely ignore our development as fathers. For example many fathers might not have considered the following:
  - a. Physically developing themselves to inspire the children's physical development.
  - b. Creating excellence in a particular sport to inspire children towards excellence in that particular sport.
  - c. Taking classes on child or behavioral psychology to be able to handle children well.

I would like to point out that many of us do some of the above intuitively because, after all, it is simple common sense but doing things intuitively is not sufficient. Any such development should be a part of a well thought out plan with milestones and standards of measuring performance.

4. **Comprehensiveness:** Again in the USVs which address people, I recommend that we go through the following checklist<sup>1</sup>:
  - a. **Physical**
  - b. **Spiritual**
  - c. **Intellectual**
  - d. **Visions**
  - e. **Emotional**

This checklist doesn't mean that we must have all the four elements; it is there to ensure that no element that applies should be overlooked.

For example, if I would like to have a USV for my son then I must envision as to where do I want to see my son physically, spiritually, intellectually and lastly, what sort of a vision would I want my son to develop for himself.

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<sup>1</sup> I give credit of this idea to Stephen Covey who has mentioned four dimensions, albeit a little differently, in his book, 'The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit'.

## **Breakdown example of an Ultimate Subvision (USV)**

### **Role: Father of one son**

### **Purpose of the Vision (POV)**

My son is a great blessing and a great responsibility for me.

I see my son as an extension of my own vision which is to contribute to the vision of the prophet (sas) which was to bring mankind to a comprehensive submission to Allah (swt). I have started late in my life and I would like to give my son an edge to contribute to this vision of the prophet (sas). I believe that this is the duty of all Muslims to share the precious gift of Islam with the mankind.

Alhamdulillah I believe that I am in a position both managerially and financially to facilitate such a development of my son; I see that my son is intelligent and able and would be able to mold into this vision beautifully.

If I can put my efforts in this direction, my son would become a sadaqa-e-Jaria for me in Akhirat.

In my USV as a father, I believe that these attributes are the attributes that Allah (swt) desires in me and are important for the development of my son as envisioned.

## **Ultimate Sub Vision (USV)**

### **Father**

I want to see myself as a caring and loving father, following the teachings of our holy prophet (PBUH) and his Sahaba.

A role model for my children.

To fulfill all my responsibilities as commanded by Allah SWT.

### **Son**

I want to see my son grow up as a practicing Muslim, as a great visionary contributor to the Ummah in the best of his health, wisdom and intellect, with the fear of Allah in his heart, as a role model for others to follow.

## **Intermediate Vision-50 Years (2059)**

### **Father (Age: 85)**

I am a caring and loving father and have followed the teachings of our holy prophet (PBUH) and his Sahaba in regards to the upbringing of my children.

I have worked hard to develop my character which is worthy of a father who would like to have his son develop such a powerful vision.

I am a role model to my son and he has emulated me in vision, courage and selflessness. He has seen me lead a life of a vision and sacrifice for it.

I am there for him as an inspiration in his vision, as a person who he can turn towards for advice in the most difficult of the times.

I have fulfilled my responsibilities according to the will of Allah (swt) towards my son.

### **Son (Age: 53)**

#### **Spiritual and Emotional**

A man with excellent character and sound knowledge of Islam. A true practicing Muslim. The fear of Allah SWT in his heart has made him balance his personal and professional roles excellently. He is emotionally balanced with a mature personality.

#### **Intellectual**

1. He is an Islamic Scholar and a hafiz of the Quran.
2. He is fluent in Urdu, Sindhi, Arabic and English
3. He has a bachelor's in Mathematics, Logic and a minor in Anthropology from Sindh University
4. He has a Masters in History from one of the top 10 international schools with a minor in business management.

### **Vision (Role of the member of the Ummah)**



He has led a change in Sindh where he has been able to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and oppression from 30 percent of the Urban and 50 % of the rural population.

He has authored four books on the following subjects:

1. His experiences in working with the people of Sindh and his vision for this region for the generations to come
2. His experiences in Mechanized Farming in Sindh and the other countries that he has worked in.
3. His travelogue with historical sketches of the countries that he has worked in
4. A work of fiction where he introduces his vision for Sindh. The novel is set in the background of Sindh.
5. He has published at least 10 papers in international journals on Mechanized Farming and geopolitics of the countries that he has business presence.

Successfully running his own enterprise with a workforce of 4000 people. The enterprise is a group of businesses which includes large scale mechanized farming and export of local produce (Mangoes, Dates, Bananas etc.) to a global market. The enterprise will also own farms in at least 5 different countries including some in Africa where mechanized farming would be used to fight poverty and help alleviate illiteracy.

### **Head of Household**

He has fathered 12 children and has been able to transfer his vision oriented life to his children.

He has focused on the education and healthy upbringing of his family according to the teachings of our sound ideology.

### **Physical**

He is healthy and physically able to handle all requirements of his vision and life with excellence

## **Intermediate Vision-25 years (2034)**

### **Father (Age: 60)**

I am a caring and loving father.

I have educated myself on how to bring up children according to the Quran and Sunnah.

I have a mentor who I turn towards to seek advice for bringing up my children; my mentor is an aged and wise man with sound knowledge of Islam.

I have struggled hard to live a life of a vision and balance in all of my roles so that I can develop a character which is worthy of the powerful vision of my son.

I have taken on the world when it comes to the defense of the truth, I have demonstrated courage in battling the hardships that have come through my own vision; I have led a simple life, kept away from excessive luxury and have worked hard to develop my children.

I have prayed to Allah (swt) that I am inspiration for my son and others so that this inspiration is a source of Sadaqa-e-Jariah for me.

I am fulfilling my Islamic responsibilities towards my son.

### **Son (Age: 28)**

#### **Spiritual and Emotional**

He has courage, humility, Adb (manners), fortitude and Taqwa.

He performs all of his religious obligations, has made a habit of praying Tahajjud, has completed his hajj with his wife, pays Zakat regularly and contributes in charity.

He has developed a vision in all of his roles and applied the Strategic Visions framework and is actively pursuing it. He has achieved balance in all of his roles. He is attached with two scholars who are his mentors. He goes to them regularly and takes their advice in the different facets of his life.

## Intellectual

1. As a hafiz he leads Taraveeh prayers every other year in a masjid and alternate years at home.
2. He has completed his Dars-e-Nizami from a top reputed Islamic Institution.
3. As part of his education, he has spent a year in a Syrian institution learning Arabic and Hadith.
4. He is fluent in Sindhi and has competency in the Sindhi language equivalent to bachelor's level which he has done through private tuitions and appearing in exams privately.
5. He has secured a position amongst the first five in his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Logic and minor in Anthropology from Sindh University.
6. He has read 5 books on the history of Sindh and has written summaries of 2 of the books and submitted book reviews to newspapers on another 2 of the books.
7. He has completed his planning to get his Masters from one of the following Universities: Oxford, MIT, Harvard, Princeton or Yale. He has selected his topic for his Masters in History from one of the following areas: History of the Sub-continent with an emphasis on Indus Valley; Ottomon History with a focus on the elements which lead to the demise of the Empire; Central Asian History with an emphasis on the years leading to the conquest of Central Asia by Russia.

## Vision (Role of the member of the Ummah)

He has bought a farm in the area around Khairpur, Sindh and has built a home there.

He has started farming and networking with the locals of that area. His farm has become financially viable providing a steady and handsome source of income. This is also the areas of his in-laws (he has married into a local family) and he spends at least a month every year at this place with his family.

The manuscript of his Novel on Sindh has been completed in Urdu where he introduces his vision for this region. The plan for publishing it in the year 2021 has been finalized.

He has spent at least 4 months in a war stricken area providing relief work.

He has spent at least 4 months with a poverty alleviation program in Africa.

He has spent 4 months with Tableegh in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

He has taught the principles of Strategic Visions to at least 250 people and is leading a balanced life.

He has started his research on Mechanized Farming, has developed a business plan for launching a company on Mechanized Farming in Pakistan and has attended at least 4 international conferences on Mechanized Farming.

### **Head of Household**

He has 3 children from his marriage at the age of 22 from a local family in Khairpur.

He has selected his wife who is from Sindh and is educated, religious, physically strong and vision oriented.

He has educated his wife in the intricacies of visioning and along with her has developed a vision framework in all the roles for his wife; her parents and siblings; and his children. His wife is responsible for ensuring that his 3 children are meeting their targets set out in the intermediate visions. His vision for her includes her development to ensure maximum contribution to his vision in the role of the member of the Ummah.

### **Physical**

1. He has a black-belt in Tae Kwon do.
2. He has excellent horse riding abilities and owns two horses which are kept at his farm.
3. He is a member of the Karachi and Hyderabad shooting clubs and is an excellent marksman.
4. He has a passion for hunting and has completed 6 hunting expeditions in different parts of Pakistan with at least 3 in different areas of Sindh.
5. He has played intercity squash in under 18 category
6. He has appeared in intercity swimming in under 18 category

7. For two years, he has held squash coaching for the youth of Khairpur. This is to introduce the youth to the game of squash. These camps would last for 3 days once in a year.

## Intermediate Vision-10 years (2020)

### Father (Age: 45)

In addition to the regular care or providing accommodation and nutritious food with excellence, I give regular time to my son for his proper development on all of the aspects of the vision that I have developed for him.

I have had a one on one meeting with him once a month for the past 3 years over dinner where we discuss different matters pertaining to our mutual visions.

I have developed a habit of hugging him and kissing him on his cheeks every time I come home.

I have studied at least 4 books child psychology and how to bring up kids.

For the past 6 years, I have met monthly with my mentor who advises and guides me on how to bring up children. I have kept detailed notes of all of such meetings and have shared these notes with my wife.

I have developed Ultimate Visions in all of my roles and struggled hard to meet all of the intermediate visions. I have worked hard to develop my character which is worthy of the powerful vision of my son.

My life is simple: I avoid all forms of *Israf* and *Tabz'eer* (forms of being spendthrift).

My accommodation and form of transport, clothes and the food are chosen on the basis of their importance towards my vision and the vision of my son (even the selection of his mother was made on the basis of the vision for the son as she is one of the most important contributors toward his vision!)

I pray to Allah (swt) regularly for the success of my son's vision. I get up in Tahajjud at least once a week to pray for the success of the vision.

I have researched on what are the Islamic responsibilities that I have towards my son and have worked hard to fulfill them.

## Son (Age: 13)

### Spiritual and Emotional

He has Adab and good manners. He has completed reading Al Raheeq ul Muktoom (the biography of the prophet (sas)) and has written a summary. Also, he has gone through 'Tableegh-e-deen' by Imam Ghazali with his mentor and has understood all of the contents.

He prays 5 times a day and has performed Umrah with his father.

He has taken the Strategic Visions workshop and has started to understand the visioning process and has started to now participate in the refinement of his own vision document with his father and mother.

He has identified a scholar as his mentor and goes to him once in a week for an hour where in addition to going through Imam Ghazali's book, he learns some important lessons in life. He is keeping a log of all of his weekly meetings with his mentor and the key learning points from the meetings.

### Intellectual

1. He has completed his Hifz and is has started learning Qiraat
2. He has completed 7<sup>th</sup> grade in O Levels and is now registered in Dar-ul-Uloom Karachi for doing traditional knowledge. He is continuing his O-level studies privately through private tutors.
3. He has traveled to Syria and Jordan and visited some of the religious schools in Syria.
4. He has completed 4 grades of education equivalence in Sindhi language and this is adding on to his proficiency in Sindhi as it is spoken at his home.
5. His academic performance is that he is amongst the first five in his school.
6. He has developed a habit of reading fiction and has his own library with 100 books both fiction and non-fiction.
7. He has regularly contributed articles to the children section of two newspapers.
- 8.

**Vision (Role of the member of the Ummah)**

Along with his father he has trekked for four days in Tharparker and for a week in Northern Areas.

He has completed reading the 2 volumes of Syed Ahmed Shaheed by Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi.

He has spent a day in at least 3 Eids distributing Zabeeha meat to poor villages around Karachi along with his father.

He has attended at least one Congregation of Tableegh in Raiwand and visits Madani Masjid to hear the speech at least one Thursday every month.

He has spent at least two 15 days vacations with his uncle on his farm in the interior of Sindh.

**Physical**

1. He has a green belt in Tae Kwon do
2. He has learnt horse-riding
3. He has accompanied his father on one hunting expedition in Baluchistan
4. He has played intercity squash for under 12 years category
5. He has competed in intercity swimming for under 12 years category



**Intermediate Vision-5 years (2015)****Father (Age: 40)**

In addition to the regular care or providing accommodation and nutritious food with excellence, I give regular time to my son for his proper development on all of the aspects of the vision that I have developed for him.

I have taken him to parks regularly once in a week for the past four years, spent two hours a week playing with him for the past four years all the way from toys to board games.

I hug him and kiss him at least once daily and maintain a close physical contact with him.

I have gone through 2 books on child psychology and the art of raising children. Every quarter for the past 3 years I have met with my mentor and shared with him my experiences of raising my son and taken his advice. I have recorded this advice and have shared it with my wife.

I have developed Ultimate Visions in all of my key roles, derived the Intermediate visions and have struggled to fulfill the intermediate visions.

I have for the past 3 years worked with a mentor who I had selected to help me develop a character worthy of my son's vision.

I have kept my home, transport, food and clothes simple and have avoided wastage of money. I have bought Quicken, a personal finance software, and have managed my finances by keeping budgets for the past three years. I am financially disciplined and I put 10% of my income every month into savings.

I pray to Allah (swt) regularly for the success of my son's vision. I get up in Tahajjud at least once a month to pray for the success of the vision of my son.

On the prescription of my mentor, I have selected 5 books which outline the responsibilities of a father towards his son and have gone through these books and shared the gist with my wife.

**Son (Age: 8)****Spiritual and Emotional**

Once a month he goes with his father to attend a lecture by a scholar. He prays at least 3 times a day and understands that he should be praying 5 times a day. He has completed the reading of the Quran and has memorized the last juz of the Quran.

He has read at least two books by Nasim Hijazi (history of Islam set in a fictional setting).

He has gone on Umrah with his father and has visited Madinah, Badr, Taif and Uhud.

He has completed a children's book on the biography of the prophet (sas)

He fasts for 15 days in Ramadan and is present in Taraveeh prayers for at least 10 days in Ramadan.

**Intellectual**

1. He has completed 3 grades in O-levels with excellent grades
2. He has completed 1 grade level of competency in Sindhi language
3. He has started reading books regularly and has 25 books on fiction and non-fiction in his personal library.

**Vision (Role of the member of the Ummah)**

He has trekked with his father once in the Northern Areas of Pakistan for at least 2 days.

His mother has read out to him at least 5 children's books on Islamic history.

He has the complete collection of Nasim Hijazi's books in his library collection gifted to him by his father.

He has spent at least a week long vacation at his uncle's farm in Sindh

## Physical

1. He has completed two years of coaching in Tae kwon do and has a yellow belt.
2. He has completed a year of coaching in Squash
3. He has completed two years of coaching in swimming and can swim in the sea. He is comfortable with free style and backstroke.
4. He eats a healthy and balanced diet and understands that junk food has to be avoided.
5. He has had a comprehensive medical examination and his vaccinations are all completed.
6. He has had regular dental check-ups twice a year every year.

**Intermediate Vision-1 year (Dec. 2011)****Father (Age: 36)**

I have shifted this year to an apartment which is spacious and the complex where my children can easily play in the neighborhood. There is a masjid at a walking distance within the complex.

I have exchanged my new car for a used 4WD vehicle in which I can travel by road across the country and use it for camping out in the desert and hunting.

I have taken the Strategic Time Management workshop and learnt to use the Daily Scheduler, GK Book and the to-do lists. I have marked TRQ1s for the time that I would need to take out for having my son meet the intermediate visions that I have set out for him. I have taught all the fundamentals of Strategic Time Management to my wife so that she can facilitate me on helping our son meet his targets.

I have kept all of my weekly DS sheets as a reference to see how well I have been able to meet my targets in the year. I have reviewed these sheets for the past year and incorporate my learning points in the new year Intermediate vision that I have developed for my son.

My new intermediate vision for the year has been developed for my son, extracted from the IV-5 year and tempered by my learning points and wisdom acquired over the past year. I believe this is much more realistic than what I had in mind last year.

I have taken him to the parks once every week, spent two hours a week playing with my son and have introduced him to Mechano and Lego.

I have hugged him and kissed him daily, have given him a shower at least once a week (even though my wife would have preferred that I gave him more showers a week) and assisted my wife in potty training him.

I have read one self-help book on raising children (Dr. Spock) and have bought two books that I intend to read next year.

I have refreshed Strategic Visions workshop this year and had my wife take it for the first time. Both of us have taken the Vision's Retreat together and I have acted as a

facilitator this year which has given me a good working knowledge of the Strategic Visions framework. As a facilitator I have assisted 2 people in developing their visions as fathers.

I have started to keep a budget for my home expenses and trained my wife to follow a budget. I have started to save 5% each month from my income and put it into my savings. I have helped my wife start a bank account and asked her to start saving some from her pocket money.

Every month in the past year, I have prayed 2 rakah salat ul hajjat every month for the success of my son's vision.

I have read one book on the rights and responsibilities of a father towards his children. I have shared the gist of this book with my wife. I have selected a mentor who can guide me on bringing up my son in an Islamic manner.

#### **Son (Age: 4)**

##### **Spiritual and Emotional**

He has learnt the Kalima.

For three months he has spent half an hour every week with his father discussing fundamental concepts of life like the Creator, universe, good behavior, cooperation with parents etc. The father has kept a log of all of these meetings.

##### **Intellectual**

He is being home schooled and has exceeded the learning targets of children of his age. He has his library of story books with at least 20 books. He understands the concept of a library and knows that he is a proud owner of the books which are arranged on a shelf with his name marked on them. He has his own room with a map of the world, a map of Asia, a map of Pakistan and a detailed map of Sindh.

##### **Vision (Role of the member of the Ummah)**

With his father he has taken at least 2 road trips on vacations lasting at least a week long.

## **Physical**

He has a balanced diet and has developed a love for the swimming pool where he goes at least twice a week with his mother. Once a month, he goes to the sea with his father.

He has gone at least once to Gwadar and accompanied his father on a jet ski.

He has gone once with his father to a water resort where he has spent a day.

## **Intermediate Vision-Current month**

### **Father (Age: 36)**

I have researched on a better living accommodation and environment which is conducive for the vision of my family and my son. I have discussed with wife and 2 friends on what I should be looking for.

I have researched on which vehicle would be better suited for my vision and the vision that I have for my son.

I have registered for the upcoming Strategic Time Management workshop. I have downloaded the manual from [www.timelenders.com](http://www.timelenders.com) and have skimmed through the ground rules.

I have shared the vision document with my wife and asked her to reflect upon it. I have registered her for the Strategic Visions workshop after four months. I have also signed myself up to refresh the course this month ahead of time since there are limited seats available for refreshing of the workshops.

I have spoken with a friend whose wife can attend to my son for three days while we take the workshop. Since we still have time, I have asked the family to block their days well in advance. To compensate we shall be baby sitting their children while they take the Visions workshop next month.

I have identified the parks in the vicinity where I should be taking my son to and in this month I have taken him to parks at least 4 times and played with him there.

I have played with my son for 2 hours every week this month.

I have hugged him and kissed him daily, have given him a shower at least once a week.

Asked Timelenders to identify a few child psychologists from the Timelenders family so that I can meet with them and ask them to give me names of a few good books on child psychology and raising kids.

I have met with one scholar to find out about a good book to learn about my rights and responsibilities towards my children.

### **Son (Age: 4)**

#### **Spiritual and Emotional**

He has learnt how to read the Kalima correctly when asked to recite after someone.  
Intellectual

His father has met with two educational consultants to select the proper home schooling curriculum for the son.

His room has been affixed with a modular bookshelf that can hold 25 books.

In his room there is a map of the world.

The father has explained to him what a world is and what a map is.

#### **Vision (Role of the member of the Ummah)**

Initial research completed on which road trip to take and which trip would be the most intellectually stimulating to a toddler 4 years of age.

#### **Physical**

His mother has met a nutritionist and has a chart of what should be a balanced diet for a child 4 years of age.

A check-up done with the pediatrician to ensure that his vaccination is on the mark.

Inviting the pediatrician to the Strategic Visions workshop so that once he is done he would be able to understand the visioning process of the child and help in the section on the physical side. For example he could advise as to when the child should start horse riding etc.



Research on the possible trip to Gwadar and enquiring about the jet ski facility. Also, researching on the possibility of becoming a member of the Pakistan Adventure Foundation.

A list of water resorts in the vicinity of Karachi in addition to the Sunway Lagoon.

Taking membership of Shapes (pvt.) Ltd. so that the mother can start taking the child for swimming.

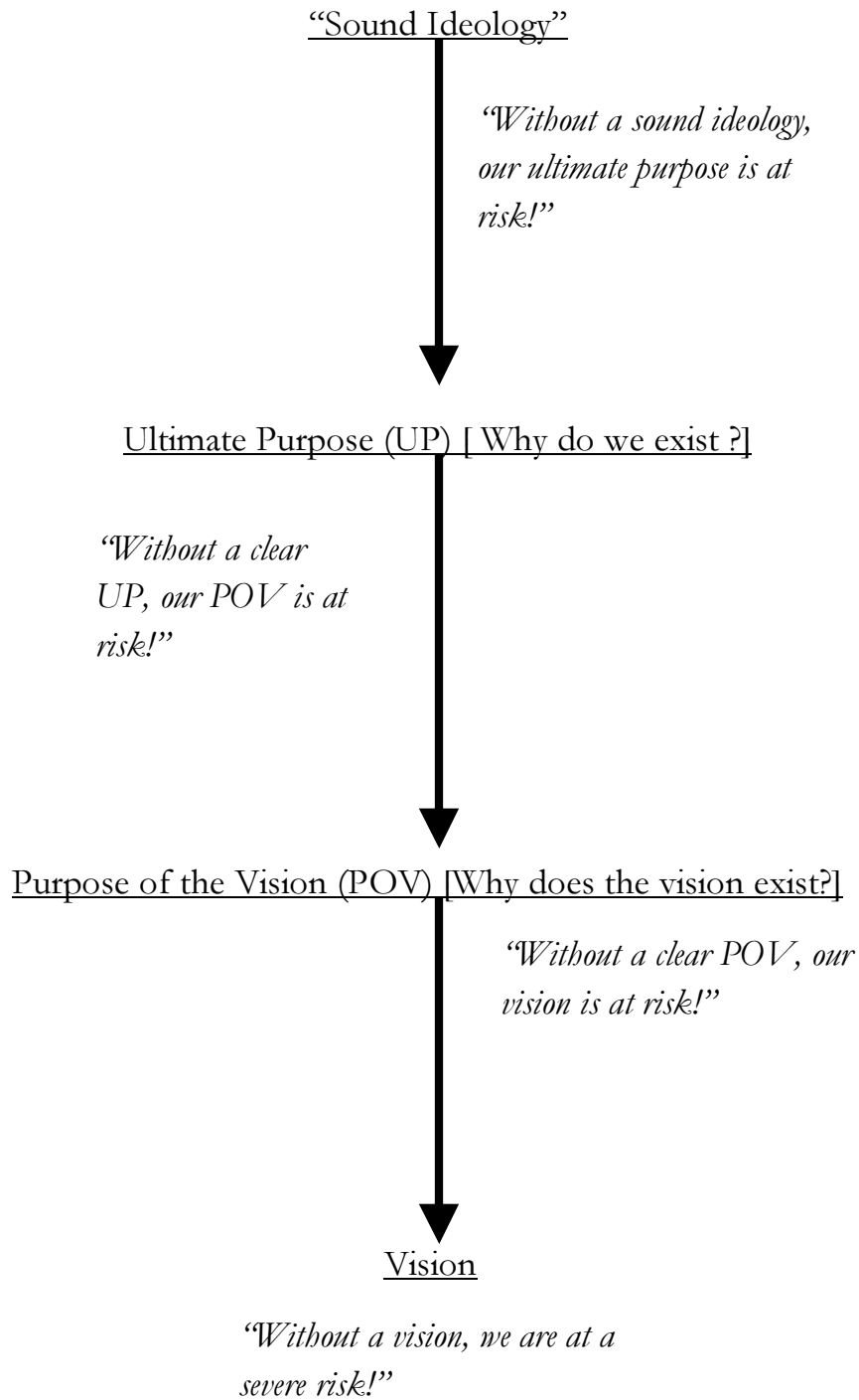
## **Ideology**

*Merriam – Webster Dictionary defines ‘Ideology as:*

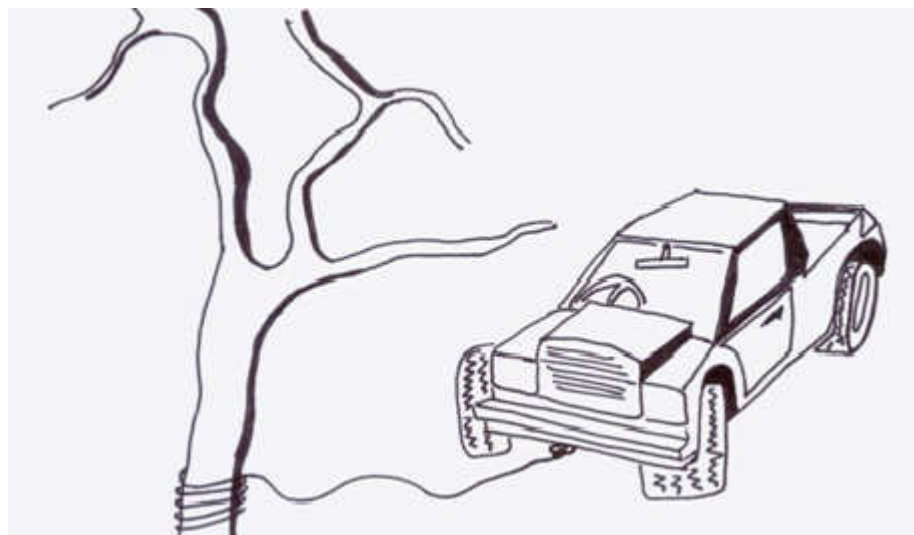
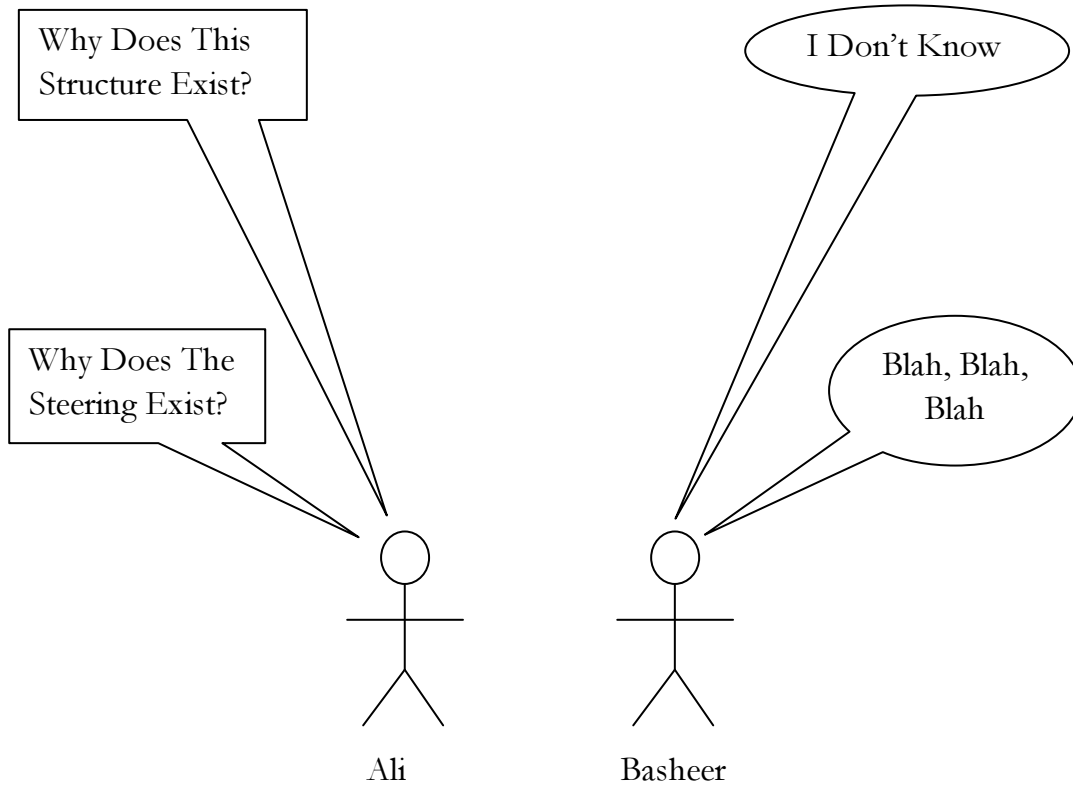
“The basic beliefs and guiding principles of a person or group.”

“A systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture.”

“A manner or the content of thinking characteristics of an individual, group or culture.”



## Sound Ideology and the Jeep Story



## **"The Sand Castle"<sup>1</sup>**

Hot sun. Salty air. Rhythmic waves.

A little boy is on his knees scooping and packing the sand with plastic shovels into a bright blue bucket. Then he upends the bucket on the surface and lifts it. And, to the delight of the little architect, a castle tower is created.

All afternoon he will work. Spooning out the moat. Packing the walls. Bottle tops will be sentries. Popsicle sticks will be bridges. A sandcastle will be built.

Big city. Busy streets. Rumbling traffic.

A man is in his office. At his desk he shuffles papers into stacks and delegates assignments. He cradles the phone on his shoulder and punches the keyboard with his fingers. Numbers are juggled and contracts are signed and much to the delight of the man, a profit is made.

All his life he will work. Formulating the plans. Forecasting the future. Annuities will be sentries. Capital gains will be bridges. An empire will be built.

Two builders of two castles. They have much in common. They shape granules into grandeurs. They see nothing and make something. They are diligent and determined.

And for both the tide will rise and the end will come.

Yet that is where the similarities cease. For the boy sees the end while the man ignores it. Watch the boy as the dusk approaches.

As the waves near, the wise child jumps to his feet and begins to clap. There is no sorrow. No fear. No regret. He knew this would happen. He is not surprised. And when the great breaker crashes into his castle and his masterpiece is sucked into the sea, he smiles. He smiles, picks up his tools, takes his father's hand, and goes home. The grownup, however, is not so wise. As the wave of years collapses on his castle he is terrified. He hovers over the sandy monument to protect it. He blocks the waves

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous

from the walls he has made. Salt-water soaked and shivering he snarls at the incoming tide.

"It's my castle," he defies.

The ocean need not respond. Both know to whom the sand belongs...

I don't know much about sandcastles. But children do. Watch them and learn. Go ahead and build, but build with a child's heart. When the sun sets and the tides take applaud. Salute the process of life and go home.

## Determination of Sound Ideology

As discussed in the workshop, an ideology is only sound if it is backed by sound evidence and proof. To ensure that our personal ideology or its different components are sound, we need to have clear evidences to provide support. Here is a quick format for getting a preliminary audit of your personal ideology:

1. Make a list of wise people that you know in your life. Please keep in mind that the creator has bestowed wisdom on mankind and there are people who are wiser than others. Such people are found everywhere regardless of nationality, ethnicity or creed. We all come across such people as we traverse through life. Make a list of such people and try to compile five to a maximum of 10 names. This list may include people such as your teachers, elders in the family or religious authorities.
2. Visit these individuals and strike a conversation and ask them questions regarding ideology. Be open to their answers, suspend judgment and take notes. Once you have collected information from all on the list, sit down and try to paint a complete picture. I am confident that you would find that you have gained invaluable knowledge in the process. Pray to God for guidance. If you need assistance with the process, please feel free to contact Timelenders. My advice is not to add any officer of Timelenders in your list. I recommend that you tap your own resources and discuss with people who you are comfortable with.
3. Before you begin your dialogue, please explain to the person the logical sequence of the Ultimate Vision being built upon a POV (Purpose of the Vision) which in turn is built upon the Ultimate Purpose (UP) and lastly, the importance of UP being drawn from a sound ideology. You will find—sometimes to your surprise—that these individuals will know this sequence. They might be articulating it differently.
4. Here are a few questions which I recommend should be asked:
  - a. **What is your Ultimate Vision in life?** Usually people will give you an overarching vision in one or two roles in their lives. This is fine. Remember that they have not gone through the concept of the balancing in roles (BIF). If you have time, you can explain to them the concept of the balancing in roles and I believe this will further enhance their ability to articulate their visions to you.
  - b. **What is your POV behind your USV?** Keep in mind that each USV has a POV behind it. Also, understand that USV (Ultimate Sub-Visions) and POVs have a one-to-many relationship. Which means that

one POV may have multiple USVs but one USV can't have more than one POV. Please do keep in mind that both USVs and POVs may have multiple elements and that is fine. Also, please keep in mind that these elements have a logical relationship to each other.

- c. **What is your UP?**
- d. **What is your personal ideology?**
- e. **Which element of this personal ideology have you used to come up with your UP?**
- f. **What are your evidences behind these elements?**
- g. **Are these evidences sound?** If the person in question is confused about the above questions then please confirm whether it is because there is indeed a confusion or whether you have not been able to articulate clearly the above concepts and questions. If indeed that person is confused, then please strike that person off the list of wise people as in my experience, there are many people on such lists who shouldn't be there and there are many people who should be on this list and are not. I believe this would be a great favor that you would be doing to yourself.
- h. **What should be my USVs?** Please select a few roles and ask this question for each of those roles.
- i. **What should be my POVs behind these USVs?**
- j. **What should be my UP?**
- k. **What should be my ideology?**
- l. **Do you believe that my ideology is sound? Please explain?**



## **“I Have A Dream”**

### **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now.

This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the

unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by a sign stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.  
Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,  
From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.  
Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

*Free at last! Free at last!*

Thank *God* Almighty, we are free at last!

## **Basheer: A friend's farewell<sup>1</sup>**

***March, 1999***

The assassin didn't have to wait for long in the cold winter morning: Basheer was seldom late.

I was in Florida raising funds when the news came. It was a shock: I was with him just a couple of months ago. The sequence of events, as they probably occurred, flashed into my mind.

Basheer had to be in the office in Dushanbe—the capital of Tajikistan—by 8:00 AM to let the other officers in. Dawlat Baig picked him up at 7:40 AM, 100 hundred meters from his apartment in the suburbs. Facing a wholesale market, the street is very busy in the morning. I had accompanied Dawlat Baig a number of times. As we would pull up the car, Basheer would appear out of the sea of people, walking fast with long purposeful strides with an air of confidence and mission. To be at the intersection on time he would have left at least 5 minutes earlier, putting him in the line of fire at precisely 7:35 AM on Monday, January 11, 1999.

The first time I met him was at the Tajik refugee-camps in Afghanistan in 1997. He was tall, slim and strongly built. He had become fluent in Persian and wore traditional Afghan dresses. What gave him away were his strong Arab-Berber features. A smile was never far from his stern face, which spoke of years of struggle and hardship. The oldest son of a government officer, he came from a village 200 miles from the capital of Algeria. He gave up his studies in Engineering to help out in Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion. He later joined BIF<sup>2</sup> to provide relief assistance to the Tajik refugees in Afghanistan.

Life was hard in the camps in Kunduz and Takhar—the northern Afghan provinces bordering Tajikistan—with no electricity, running water or communication with the outside world. Food and medicines were always limited. Malaria, Typhoid and TB were close to assuming epidemic proportions. Basheer was going down with Typhoid every year, spending weeks in bed. Kunduz was a lawless area then. A few months

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<sup>1</sup> Written by the former manager of Basheer

<sup>2</sup> Benevolence Int'l Foundation

prior to my trip, bandits had fired at his jeep, narrowly missing him. None of these challenges had shaken his resolve.

I once asked him how he managed to stay there for five years. “I can’t see myself deserting these people.” He had said: “I see myself as holding a post. If we leave, the vultures will come in.” He was referring to some of the secular organizations. Alarmed by the return of the Tajik refugees to Islam, they were trying to get the Muslim relief organizations to leave. These organizations had one camp in their control where they distributed music and movies while the children in the Muslim-run camps learned Quran.

He had kept in touch with his family through letters, which would take up to six months to get to Algeria from the forgotten Mountains of Afghanistan. Basheer’s younger brother, whom he had last seen as a young boy, was in college now. One of his sisters had gotten married. We decided to arrange for a phone call. Using a wireless set, we connected via radio to Peshawar and then through telephone to Algeria. It was a joyous occasion, as the family hadn’t heard his voice in five years.

They initially failed to recognize him as out of emotion, he could only speak in his adopted Persian. He had broken down during the call and wept.

Basheer managed a staff of 24 Tajik Muslims in the refugee camps and I could see the love and respect that flowed towards him. I didn’t have a shred of doubt that these Tajiks could have easily stood in the line of fire for him.

He was like a father to the orphans who had known him for 5 years and loved him dearly. Some, who were orphaned very young, didn’t know their fathers but they knew Basheer. I asked some of the young orphans—I didn’t ask the older kids, as they understood—where the money for their sponsorship came from. They pointed to Basheer. I explained that Basheer was just an officer and the money came from the Muslims in the US. They weren’t convinced: it was Basheer who cared for them and had been with them for years. To those little, simple minds that was what really mattered. I gave up. I wish I could tell them now that Basheer gave much more than care: he ultimately gave his life.

This dedication and compassion endeared Basheer to the Tajik Muslims. He loved them and yes, they loved him. He had gradually become an inalienable part of the Tajik cause, a hero who had come from a far away land. As the Tajik Muslims

struggled in their war against the Communists, Basheer stood by them, supporting their orphans, running clinics, sharing their joy and wiping their tears. His presence whispered to the Tajiks, ‘I believe in you and your struggle. Don’t give up.’

A cease-fire took hold and there were reports that the refugees may move back to Tajikistan. Basheer asked me whether we would move BIF into Tajikistan. I told him that we were thinking about it. “If BIF goes into Tajikistan, I would like to continue with you.” He said. I asked him what he would do if we didn’t move in. He paused. “I belong to the Tajik struggle. I will go to Tajikistan with the refugees.”

In the summer of 1997, the refugees started moving back into Tajikistan bringing an end to the five years of exile. Deciding to start work in Tajikistan, we established an office for BIF in Dushanbe in November of 1997 and later arranged for Basheer and the staff to move from Afghanistan.

A few months after moving to Dushanbe, Basheer married a Tajik sister by the name of Sadbarg—the only child of a local family. The mother requested Basheer to move in their apartment where they had lived for so long. She was widowed in this apartment when Sadbarg was very young. Basheer agreed.

The Muslims signed a peace agreement with the Russian backed Government and the overall situation started to improve.

We took Dr. Nazr-ul-Islam—a surgeon from England—to Dushanbe and established a TB hospital for children. Furthermore, we continued with the sponsorship of the orphans; started supporting families of men disabled in the war and started rebuilding homes of orphan families destroyed during the war.

A group of young sisters, who had set up an Islamic study group in Dushanbe, approached us for help. Concluding that the sisters were high on enthusiasm but low on knowledge, we decided to teach them the fundamentals of Islam and prepare them to reach out to more women in Dushanbe. We gave Nurudin—a graduate of the Islamic University in Medina<sup>3</sup>—the charge of the program.

Nurudin had come to Afghanistan in 1993 and had set up an Islamic School for Tajik students in the refugee camps. This is when Basheer and Nurudin became friends.

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<sup>3</sup> A holy city in Saudi Arabia



After the cease-fire, Nurudin had moved independently to Tajikistan where he had also married a Tajik sister. He had started some Dawah<sup>4</sup> programs in the mosques in and around Dushanbe.

When we decided to sponsor the Sister's Dawah program, Nurudin was like a gift from Allah (swt): he was there; married to a local sister; spoke fluent Persian and above all, was a gifted scholar.

The classes started in March of 1998 with a group of 32 sisters and 20 brothers. Unfortunately, the political situation started deteriorating. Soon it became apparent that a cold war was taking shape fueled by the Secular and Communists elements to undermine the Islamic movement in Tajikistan.

On June 15, 1998, only three months since the start of classes, Nurudin was shot and martyred outside his apartment. Only 36, he left behind a pregnant wife and a four-month old daughter, Asma.

No one claimed responsibility and the Tajik Government denied any involvement. 'Could it have been the Russian intelligence?' we were left wondering, 'Or could it be the breakaway Communist faction—which had split from the Government—and violently opposes the peace agreement?'

Nurudin was also involved in Dawah programs in some of the mosques in and around Dushanbe, an activity he had started even before joining us. Also, his brother-in-law was a known commander of the Muslim troops.

The shroud of mystery surrounding Nurudin's death left us all guessing. The only thing confirmed was that he was killed for being identified as a Muslim activist but how much his death had to do with working for BIF, we could not tell. We were faced with a question: 'should we pull out of Tajikistan on the basis of our unconfirmed suspicions?' By the grace of Allah (swt), our work was directly saving lives in the TB hospital. We immediately froze all Dawah activities. Our staff of 9 people in Dushanbe included two foreigners so we had reasons to be worried. Our CEO traveled to the area and told both Basheer and Dr. Islam that they could leave if they wanted to. Both refused saying that we need not worry since we were no longer involved with Dawah and the relief services being offered to Dushanbe were badly

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<sup>4</sup> Calling towards Allah

needed. Soon a contract was signed between BIF and the Ministry of Health, finalizing the administration of the TB hospital. With all Dawah activities frozen and only relief projects remaining, we reasoned that the anti-Islamic elements—if indeed they were behind Nurudin’s death— would surely back off. I arrived in Dushanbe for three weeks in September of 1998 to restructure the operations, gather information and personally evaluate the situation. Everything appeared under control. Our office in Dushanbe faces the parliament building in the Independence Square. A statue of Firdousi, a famous Persian poet, stares down at the beautiful gardens lining the main street. In these gardens are small cafés where one can dine on a lunch of rice and Kabab<sup>5</sup> on tables scattered under the tall trees. Basheer and I would walk down, have lunch and talk. Surrounded by the rustle of leaves in the autumn breeze, we would spend hours talking with the snow-capped Pamir Mountains in the background. These meetings are now memories to be cherished for the rest of my life. We talked about a lot of things: our time spent together in Afghanistan, our families, BIF, the political situation and our plans for the future. I was amused with Basheer’s accounts of adjusting with his in-laws and how they were adjusting to him as a foreigner. They were impressed with his honesty and commitment to a cause. He was investing a great deal of time with Sadbarg and was very proud that she was quickly picking up Islamic knowledge.

In one such meeting I asked him why he didn’t leave Tajikistan after the death of Nurudin. “My mother-in-law would be left alone.” He said. I smiled. We both knew that there was more to it. I was also his manager and he was aware that I could have asked him to leave. He was careful in wording his answer. “Look,” he was very serious and thoughtful, “ you know that I have given myself to this cause. I know that I am in Tajikistan for no other reason but for Allah (swt),” then he paused, “and if I were to die, I have the confidence of knowing that I shall be a Shaheed<sup>6</sup>.” We visited the grave of Nurudin in Dushanbe. I fought tears as I read Fatiha<sup>7</sup>; the death of the Sahaba<sup>8</sup> dying for Allah (swt) in far away lands came to my mind. ‘Nureddin’ I felt like saying softly, ‘you left too high a standard for us to follow.’ Little did I know that in a couple of months Basheer—then standing by my very side— would also be brought here.

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<sup>5</sup> Grilled meat

<sup>6</sup> One who dies for the cause of Islam

<sup>7</sup> A chapter from the Quran

<sup>8</sup> Companions of the Prophet Mohammed (sas)

Basheer was shot at point blank range. I can conjure an image of his assassin, most likely a local Tajik clad in a black suit—so common in Dushanbe—walking up to him as he stepped out of his home. Alone and unarmed, Basheer stood no chance and was hit a total of 7 times in the chest and the head. The \$600 in his pocket—a lot of money in poverty stricken Tajikistan—were not touched. I could envision the residents filing into the street on hearing the shots including Sadbarg and her mother.

Basheer was 34, at an age when most of us start thinking seriously about life. It would take us lifetimes to do what he did in his last 12 years.

For Sadbarg—who had lost her father when young—he would be a dream forever: a young handsome man who came from continents away to struggle along her people; who married her; led her closer to Allah (swt); gave her joy and walked out of her home one fine morning never to return.

For us he was and will remain an inspiration, a statement that this world is worthless in front of the hereafter and if it takes our lives to establish Islam, then so be it. While we talk, write and lecture about sacrificing for Allah (swt) and Islam, Basheer lived it and etched it in history with his blood. He was a true embodiment of the statement that ‘a faith not worth dying for is not worth living for.’

He leaves behind in his legacy one more reason for us to struggle for the dream both he and Nurudin gave their lives for—to return Muslims to the arms of Islam from the torturous clutches of Colonialism and Communism. Basheer, may Allah accept your shahada<sup>9</sup>. (Ameen).

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<sup>9</sup> Death for the cause of Islam

## **Visions' related workshops by Timelenders**

1. Strategic Visions
2. Where do you want to go?- Islamic perspective on visions-4 hour workshop- Free for STM graduates
3. Vision Retreat ( Eligibility : Strategic Time Management Workshop + Strategic Visions Workshop)

**Resources for Vision:**

1. Jim Collins, *Built to Last* (HarperBusiness, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 1994)
2. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (Little, Brown and Company, March 2000)
3. Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (The Random House Publishing Group, 1964)
4. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Little, Brown and Company, 1994)
5. Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist* (HarperCollins Publishers India, 2006)
6. Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc. 1990)
7. Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 1989)
8. Suleman Ahmer, *The Embattled Innocence* (Presslenders, 2009): Read Basheer: a friend's farewell, an essay in the book. You can order a copy of the book from our website or download a free version at [www.timelenders.com](http://www.timelenders.com)

**Resources for Leadership:**

1. Jack Welch with Suzy Welch, ***Winning*** (*Harper Collins, 2005*): This book has wonderful practical advice on leadership from a corporate perspective.
2. Jim Collins, ***Good to Great*** (*Harper Collins, 2001*): This book provides a wonderful primer in the current context and I specially recommend it to demystify the whole notion of leadership as something very complicated and accessible to only a few.
3. Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri, ***The Sealed Nectar: Biography of the Noble Prophet*** (sas) (*Darussalam, revised edition, 2002*)
4. Samuel Walton, ***Made in America: The Autobiography*** (*Doubleday, 1992*)
5. Stephen Covey, ***Principle Centered Leadership*** (*Simon & Schuster, 1992*): Another wonderful book which takes some of the basic concepts of leadership and provides simple logical templates and paradigms for application across one's personal and professional life.

### Comments/Suggestions

Thanks for being with us at this workshop. We at Timelenders would appreciate your comments and suggestions regarding this workshop. This input would help us improve. Thanks!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please use the back side if required.*

**Please suggest any other person(s) that you think would benefit or be interested in this workshop.**

Name:

Date:

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