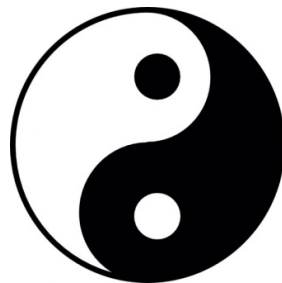


Behaviour Transformation

For

The Individual



METL Global Perspectives

Author's Note

Over the years, I have interacted with several individuals and families closely. My job as a management consultant necessitates me to meet many senior professionals and work with them. As a keen observer of behaviour and having imbibed behaviour analysis, I see very interesting ways in which people understand, act and react.

I have seen people going to religious places regularly, spend time in the company of great minds; but still be unable to detach themselves from self-centric thoughts. I have known people to say all the right things, but act absolutely contrary to what they say, and yet be in perfect harmony with themselves. I know some people who attend sessions by seers and sages, listen to the discourses intently, but display a very crooked and corrupt mind-set, and act in a manner that deliberately causes harm to others.

On the other hand, I have met individuals who have left business meetings midway to rescue a street dog in distress; I have seen beggars on the street pick up and throw in the trash, plastic wrappers carelessly thrown out of fancy cars.

I am sure you have witnessed several such instances too.

It might seem difficult to justify these instances, these actions bordering on irrationality; yet, there is a reason to all this. The reason is that over time, individuals shift from the life's quest for **destiny** to becoming a part of a **category**. They forget their true calling and focus on becoming 'successful', or 'happier' or an 'INTJ' (as defined by MBTI, a profiling technique).

All these categories and our relentless quest for achieving them makes us small parts of larger systems, and thus, we imbibe the thought process that is suggested by these categories. We then work towards fulfilling this thought process, rather than see a larger picture of why we exist at all.

Today, there is a great need for the individual to shift away from categorized thought processes, understand that everyone is unique, work towards destiny and transform oneself over and over again.

This book is intended for those who want to lead a meaningful life, are willing to work towards it over years and achieve their destiny. In the following chapters I will be introducing several concepts, followed by some experiences. These are expected to provoke you into introspecting and recording your thoughts.

As you keep writing what comes to your mind, you will witness the evolution of a thought process, which will then guide you towards the behaviours you need to demonstrate to transform yourself. Every individual is capable of any kind of transformation. One just needs to chart the course and be determined enough to stay on the course and work on it.

Focus on one chapter at a time. Think about it and discuss it with your friends and well-wishers. This dialogue will make you recognise yourself and realise the meaning of your life. At the right time, a teacher will appear and help you learn all you can.

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Nature's Cradle

Saurabh was very happy to have moved into the beautiful 7th floor flat in a high-rise at a dream location. It was a 20-storey building situated right next to a lake, with a large expanse of farmland nearby adding to the serenity. It was also not very far from his workplace, which meant an easy commute.

Nicely landscaped, the apartment complex was to have 30 such towers, which were coming up one by one. Tithi was looking forward to the completion of the other towers, as several of her friends would also move in. School was just a 20-minute drive away.

Work did increase a lot for Savitri, as there were no markets nearby for daily provisions, and good domestic help was not available either. Yet, the fresh air made her feel good. She would get up early in the morning and do the Surya Namaskar routine 20 times. It made her feel fresh and energised her for the rest of the day. Being a professional photographer, she kept her camera ready and had been able to take the pictures of several birds, small animals, honeybees, fish and peacocks.

As more towers kept getting built, more families moved in. Barring minor issues, everyone was happy living there.

The villagers nearby also were happy. They started working for the families in the complex, now called 'Nature's Cradle', and earned more. They were able to send their children to school, slowly moving away from the sole dependence on agriculture, and started saving as well.

'We need a shopping mall and a cinema complex nearby, and then the property prices will double. It's been a smart investment,' announced Saurabh. He glanced at Tithi, who was standing in the balcony. She had been silent, unusually so

'Dad, two years back when we came here, there were a lot of white birds on that tree. There are none now. Where would they have gone?' she turned to Saurabh.

'Birds need silence. We keep having parties here. That is why they must be going away to quieter locations,' said Saurabh.

'But have we come here and dislodged them from their houses? That is unfair!' exclaimed Tithi.

'Why is it unfair? Nobody has killed them. They will find a better place. Don't bother about them,' said Saurabh dismissively.

'You remember Dadaji always ended up crying whenever he talked of shifting from Lahore to Delhi due to the partition? He always said that the worst thing anyone can do is to force someone to move out of his home. Have we not done the same thing for the birds?' asked Tithi.

'I understand your concern, Tithi. But this is not the same thing,' said Saurabh. After a pause, he added, "If you are feeling so bad about the birds, why don't you write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner of the city? We have paid the development charges and it is their job to take care of urban biodiversity."

'Mamma, what do you think?' Tithi turned to Savitri. 'You have studied environmental engineering.'

'You are asking the right questions, Tithi, but why today, all of a sudden?' asked Savitri.

'We had a session in school on climate change around three months back, and I am also reading a book about it. It is very depressing to read what's happening to the polar bears. At the end of the session, we were asked to take up a project in our neighbourhood. I took up our lake,' said Tithi.

'Oh, that's interesting!' said Saurabh. 'What projects did the others take up?'

'Some took up automobile pollution or waste segregation; others chose rainwater harvesting or greening of the neighbourhood,' said Tithi. 'Do you think writing to the Municipal Commissioner is enough?'

'Well,' said Savitri thoughtfully. 'I think your work will only end when those birds come back on the tree.'

'Why are you getting bothered about birds? We eat chicken. Are they not birds?' Saurabh was getting a little annoyed now.

'I spent a lot of time on the Internet searching for information and have made a list of possible issues,' Tithi was totally into the topic.

'And what are the issues?' asked Saurabh, despite himself.

'Us... all of us! It's so depressing, but it's true,' said Tithi. 'We demand uninterrupted electricity; the diesel generators give out smoke. We need cell phones; the towers irritate the birds. We need cars; the smoke pollutes endlessly. We need vegetables; farmers have started adding more fertilizers which ultimately leaches into the groundwater. Once the water gets contaminated, the flora, fauna and the natural habitat gets destroyed slowly.'

'It's not all that bad, Tithi,' interjected Savitri. 'But yes, if we do not get worried about it, definitely a stage will come when everything will become irreversible and impossible to save.'

'Like what is happening to the whales and the polar bear,' said Tithi, gloomily.

'It all sounds very noble, but let us be realistic too. Are you willing to sleep only with the fan on and no air conditioning? Are you willing to stop travelling by car to the mall? Are you willing to get stung by the bees outside?' asked Saurabh in protest, getting visibly uncomfortable. 'We need luxury and nature suffers due to that. Bees get killed as we want to protect our children.'

'That's not the right way to look at it, Saurabh,' said Savitri. 'Are we not living on top of each other in flats and saving space, when most of us would like a large open house of our own, surrounded by land? There are many areas where we are also adjusting. The big issue is that we have stopped bothering about the habitat which makes us thrive. There are solutions and we need to address those collectively.'

'What do you mean? We are paying property registration charges and property taxes. It's up to the municipality to do the rest. They are not doing their job,' said Saurabh indignantly.

'Ok, who will benefit if the lake is maintained?' asked Savitri simply.

'We will,' Tithi was quick to answer.

'Then who should do the work for protecting the lake?

'Us, along with the municipality,' said Tithi.

'Absolutely,' said Savitri.

'So for a start, we can ask for the generators to be stopped for all the appliances in the rooms and used only for emergency lighting and lifts. So when the power supply is down, we will have to sweat it out. Are you ready for it?' challenged Saurabh.

'This is why the environment always loses out. We need the balance to be restored. It is not about either mankind or environment. It is mankind *as a part of* the environment. So we must install solar powered systems and be willing to pay for it. We must reduce the use of water and take the least possible water from the water table through the borewell. We must harvest rainwater, we must plant more trees and make everything as green as we can. We must take care of the planted trees and water them. We must minimize the number of cell towers and work with farmers to promote organic farming practices,' said Savitri.

'Nice speech, Savitri,' said Saurabh. "Do it. No one will stop you. The issue is not about what must be done. The issue is always about doing what's needed.'

'Tomorrow itself I will drop an email to the society office and ask for volunteers for some of this activity. If the group is in place, we will start work immediately,' said Savitri.

'Again an 'if', Mamma? I am taking a bucket of water right now and going to water the plants near the lake bed. They seem to be drying up. And for the next five years, I will be slowly getting the lake back. Small steps... but sure ones,' said Tithi.

'Sure, Tithi. I will come with you,' said Savitri. 'It is said that if you are doing the right things, the entire universe will come together and support you to make you successful.'

'Come with us, Saurabh,' Savitri urged.

'Okay, coming. Tithi, you are doing the right thing. Just do not give up in between,' said Saurabh as he closed the door and joined his wife and daughter, feeling proud of his family. He felt that now there was a meaning to his life. Was there a reason why he had moved here with his family? He felt motivated and wanted to take up greening of his office building also.

He loved trees but over time had learnt to turn a blind eye towards them and their sufferings. This small nudge by Tithi had unleashed a series of thoughts in his mind. He knew he was getting closer to a larger purpose and wanted to follow that path. Home, office, tasks, responsibilities, pursuit of more ... all this was not getting him anywhere, though he kept earning more and more. What was the larger purpose? Why would watering plants outside his complex make him feel proud?

'While we are going down, can we give a few rotis to the poor people sitting outside the temple? They must be very hungry,' he wanted to say, but held back.

Unit 1: Knowing Myself

It is imperative that everyone lives a healthy, meaningful and happy life. Such a life is one where there is time for oneself, time for others and time for the environment. Every person must identify what matters the most and then dedicate time, energy and resources towards that goal. The day an alignment is achieved, meaningful life starts.

Is it easy? Definitely not. Most of us are brought up with the notion that earning more money, achieving more success translates into social status and a happier life. While part of it is true, the entire argument is not. There are individuals who would like to dedicate themselves to the world of writing, drama, dance, art, cycling, travelling, old age care or social issues...the list goes on.

How does one balance the need to earn well with the desire to live their dream?

Without sufficient funds, existing in this material world is difficult. So, if you really know which dreams are important to you, then you would focus on putting together sufficient funds so that you can pursue your ideas. It therefore becomes important to either make the two co-exist in your life, or draw the line and have the courage to focus on things that really matter to you.

Note that I do not agree to the idea of someone wanting to swing in a hammock for the rest of their life and read books while sipping a drink, even if the person has made enough money and can afford to do so. That might be a happy life, but would be a meaningless one.

Once you identify what matters to you, and walk on the path that takes you there, you will get the required support to carry on that journey.

How it works

The first step is to have an honest conversation with yourself, or with friends and well-wishers who really care about you. Take inputs, seek clarifications without any bias. Some of the questions you might ask are:

- What are my areas of strength?
- What are the areas that need improvement?
- What do you think I am good at doing?
- Where do I create a poor impression?
- What can I do where you think I can be successful?
- Which areas should I gain expertise on, to become successful?
- What is it that I really enjoy doing?
- Overall, what do you think I should be doing?

The Template

After the discussion, come back and fill up this template; or try to remember every input that you get – whatever suits you. At this juncture, it's not important to record who said what. Just record the conversation highlights.

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
My areas of strength		
My areas of improvement		
I am good at...		
I create a poor impression when...		
I can be successful...		
I should gain expertise in...		
I really enjoy...		
I should be doing...		

Compile the responses from all the people you have discussed this with on a large chart paper and put it up on a wall.

Study it for the next few days to look for common threads and evolve a theme about yourself. In case you see a huge deviation between your own analysis and what others think about you, you need to introspect. Either you are correct or they are: it's a tough call.

Duration

Give yourself time. Do not rush. This is not an initiative to be started and gotten over with. This is the start of a complete individual transformation.

Give yourself a week for studying the chart on the wall, and another ten days for a theme to evolve.

Unit 2: My Behaviour

Often throughout our growing-up period, many of our true behaviours are distorted and new behaviours ‘installed’. I have heard several people telling their children to stay away from dogs as they might bite and spread rabies. On the other hand, children naturally want to approach and play with dogs; that is their true behaviour. Over the years, when adults repeat the cautionary message, children absorb it and develop a fear of dogs, which they, in turn, may pass to the next generation.

Do not let any psychometric profile define your behaviour. What makes you feel good, what makes you feel bad, what hurts you and what gives you genuine happiness – these actually define your true behaviour. Should you really want to understand your behaviours, a good friend or even a psychiatrist can help, but definitely not a profiling tool!!!

The starting point of behaviour transformation is to identify your behaviours, list the ones you want to enforce, and do away with the ones which are counter-productive. And it’s not that easy to identify these. Very often, others can identify your behaviour better than you can.

Consider the following scenario:

Several teams are rafting down a river. They are working together to stay the course and are enjoying the activity. Suddenly, a person in one of the groups shouts, ‘There are crocodiles in the river! Be cautious!’ Hearing this, the people on the rafts quickly start lifting their feet out of the water. The rafts destabilize and they all plunge into the water.

A behaviour expert watching this remarks to the person who shouted the alarm, ‘You have a streak of cruelty in you.’ The expert would be right. This is the kind of observation that I am referring to in this unit. I am not referring to commonly used terms like listening, feedback, etc.... I am referring to deeper observations.

Having been appraised of this behaviour, it’s on the individual to check his ‘streak of cruelty’ or not.

How it works

This needs a deep dive into yourself and the need to be truthful to yourself. Spend some time with yourself and think on the following lines:

- Who are your good friends and why are they with you?
- Who are the ones who ignore you and why do you think they do so?
- Who trust you and have expectations from you?
- Who are the ones who mistrust you and have no expectations from you?
- Whom do you want to spend time with and are they there for you?
- Who are those that want to spend time with you? Are you there for them?
- What makes you feel bad?
- What makes your heart weep while you put on a brave face?
- What delights you and yet you do not express it?
- What are the memories you carry with you?
- Which life events define you?
- What are your darkest, deepest fears?

- What are you really looking for?

If you have heard a few comments about your behaviour from others, mention them. If you have friends or well-wishers willing to spend time with you; then ask them for feedback. Be aware that this process can be a bit painful.

The Template

Once you have spent time on understanding your behaviour, use the template below to compile your thoughts and write them down in the following format:

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
How do my close friends define me?		
Why do some people ignore me?		
Why do some people trust me and have expectations from me?		
Why some people mistrust me and have no expectations from me?		
Why do people, who I want to spend time with, like me?		
Why do people, who like spending time with me, like me?		
These make me feel bad.		
This makes my heart weep while I put on a brave face.		
This delights me, though I may not express it.		
Special memories that have stayed with me		
Past events which have defined me		
Some of my deepest fears		
This is what I am really looking for		

Compile the responses from all the people you have discussed with in the above template and put it up on the wall.

Study it for the next few days to look for common threads and identify the behaviours that define you. In case you see a huge deviation between your own analysis and what others think about you, you need to introspect. Either you are correct or they are. It's a difficult fact to face but it has to be done.

Duration

Give yourself time. Do not rush. This is not an initiative to be started and gotten over with. This is the start of an individual transformation.

Give yourself a week to study the chart on the wall, and another ten days to identify behaviours.

Unit 3: Knowing my Influencers

Our thoughts get influenced by what we hear, what we read and whom we follow. Often these happen unconsciously. In this age of excess information and media explosion, it's important to know who and what influences your thoughts, and therefore, your action. There are prevailing views and counterviews to almost everything and no single data point for almost anything now.

Influencers subconsciously impact our decision-making process, change our logic, rationale and belief. It's important to know whom and what have you allowed to get into your thought process. Powerful role models also change one's orientation. I know people who, when faced with a challenge, imagine what their role models would have done in the scenario, and accordingly decide their course of action.

There's nothing wrong with this approach, except that by doing this, your own thought processes get limited and do not evolve. It's important, therefore, to understand your influencers and the impact they have on your behaviour. Then, you focus on developing your own thought process.

I have seen people behave the same way when they try to understand new things. A person new to the stock market decided to blindly purchase what a leading analyst used to recommend. He kept investing and made some money. He developed no understanding of the dynamics of the stock markets. When the recessionary environment hit the marketplace, he lost a lot of money. Since then he has gone back to investing in fixed deposits only.

Who was to be blamed here? What was the real issue?

How it works

Very often, we do not give enough thought to who influences us. Usually, they are family members or great leaders. We also get influenced by groups which we belong to or identify with. Spend some time thinking about the following:

- Who influences my thought process unconsciously?
- Who influences my thought process consciously?
- Why have I let them into my way of thinking?
- Which are the groups I tend to align with?
- How do these groups influence my thought process?
- Which are the groups I do not like at all?
- How do these groups influence my thought process?
- Who do I like?
- How do they influence my thought process?
- Whom do I dislike?
- How do they influence my thought process?
- Whom do I hate?
- How do they influence my thought process?

You need to be truthful while addressing these questions. Socially desirable answers do not help here. You need to do a bit of soul searching to come with the true responses. Drop your masks.

The Template

Once you have spent sufficient time thinking about your influencers and how they have affected your thought process, use the table below to list:

Statement	Influencer name	Thought process influenced
Influencer – unconsciously (person/incident)		
Influencer - consciously		
Influencer group(s) that I like		
Influencer group(s) that I don't like		
Influencer(s) that I like		
Influencer(s) that I dislike		
Influencer(s) that I hate		

Compile the responses in the above format and put it up on the wall.

Study it for the next few days to look for common threads and identify your behaviours that got significantly influenced by individuals or groups. Some of these can be positive behaviours, while others can be counter-productive ones.

Duration

Give yourself time. Do not rush. This is not a quick-fix process. It is a process of individual transformation and has to be given ample time.

Give yourself about a week for studying the chart on the wall. Then give it another ten days to identify the influenced behaviours.

Unit 4: Goal of Life

Once you are well aware of yourself, the next step is to determine your goal in life. One's life goals and aims change with time, as one grows and matures. When we're young, our goals can be transactional, such as getting into a good college, bagging a plum job, moving overseas, and so on. However, over time, these start changing and become more meaningful.

Most often, people who have been able to lead meaningful lives are the ones who are most satisfied. The term 'meaningful' itself has a contextual perspective to it. For someone who hails from a village with no school in it, it might be meaningful to enable a good, functional school for the village children. For another individual, it might mean creating a place where aged animals are taken care of.

Nevertheless, a meaningful life has four elements to it.

1. It continues beyond the lifetime of the individual.
2. It touches other lives.
3. It is carried out directly by the individual.
4. It makes the world a better place.

This meaningful life then helps in defining your goal. If you feel that you have not been leading a meaningful life, then this is the time to wake up.

I must mention here that leading a meaningful life does not necessarily mean that you need to quit your job and dedicate yourself to social service. You can quite well work and earn, and spend a part of your earnings towards creating the meaningful life. It's important to remember here that donating a part of your salary to a charity might make you feel good, but it does not satisfy the conditions of a meaningful life.

The goal of one's life has to be achieved by defining what a 'meaningful life' means to you and then taking the right steps towards achieving it. The behaviours that you figured out earlier will go a long way in the search for the true meaning of your life and its goal(s).

How it works

Life gives you plenty of chances to work towards your goals and achieve them. However, due to self-imposed constraints you may be unable to walk that path. It is important to work out a step-wise approach to identify the meaningful Goal of Life. For doing this, you need to develop your intuition, get in touch with your deepest feelings and respond to the questions below:

- What makes you feel happy and complete?
- What makes you feel sad?
- What do you really want to do?
- Are you feeling complete doing what you are doing?

The Template

Strengthening your intuition takes time. It is about recognising your feelings and developing the ability to trust those feelings and hear the little voices. Over a period of time, learn to develop your intuitive ability and then respond to the following statements:

Statement	Response – self
This makes me happy	
This makes me sad	
This upsets me	
This is what I really want to do	
Am I feeling complete? (Why/Why not?)	

Compile the responses on a large sheet of paper and put it up on your wall.

Study it for the next few days with the aim of evolving the Goal of your Life. Put a timeline to this goal and work backwards to list the sequence of steps you need to take to reach your Goal of Life. Think very hard as you might be on a new MISSION!

Duration

Give yourself time. Do not rush. This is not an initiative to be started and finished. This is a critical process of self-transformation.

Give yourself a week to study the chart on the wall.

Take a fortnight to define the goal of your life.

Finally, spend about a month to identify the series of steps to reach your goal.

Unit 5: My Destiny

Meaningful life is closely connected to destiny. The role of every individual is to work hard and achieve one's destiny. If one is on the right path, and is working hard, all forces of nature come together to support the individual. Nature assesses the individual before participating in the journey. Once the individual is judged true by the forces of nature, the right connections are made, the right people come forth and things start falling in place.

Throughout life, you meet individuals and go through situations that push you forward on the path to your destiny. However, we are trained to follow the path of job-money-needs-family-growth-social norms-obligations; due to this, we are often unable to see the path of our destiny. Thus, we may lead a relevant life but not a fulfilling one.

Life is not just about amassing wealth or maintaining a lifestyle (though there is no harm in these pursuits, as such). Life is about fulfilling a defined objective, which unravels itself like a set of clues. You need to understand the clues and put the puzzle together.

Think about the times when you were at a crossroads and had to choose one path. If the choice was made with a selfish motive or based on convenience, you have ignored the call of destiny.

Every life is different, each interaction is unique. Every individual you meet can have a lasting impact on your life, depending upon how well you recognise the path to your destiny. In case you are not on the path to your destiny, sooner or later you will get a 'wakeup call'. When you do, do not ignore it.

How it works

Think about your life's journey till now. What were the instances where you were at a crossroads, when there were decisions to be made, to go one way or the other? These could involve functional choices, 'people' choices or situational choices. Having thought through, respond to the following questions:

- What were the crossroads in life where you had to make a choice?
- Were you stubborn and denied yourself a possible choice?
- What functional choices (e.g., career/studies) did you make?
- Did you feel happy with the choice or just made peace with it?
- What 'people' choices (e.g., friends/partners) did you make?
- Did you feel happy with the choice or just made peace with it?
- What situational choices (e.g., where to go for a vacation/ where to live) did you make?
- Did you feel happy with the choice made or just made peace with it?
- What thoughts keep bothering you about life?
- Do you feel a void in your life?

The Template

This can be a soul-searching exercise. Capture your thoughts on the template provided below. Try not to miss out any individual who has had a meaningful impact on you.

Statement	Response – Self
Crossroads and choices	
Stubborn and forcing a choice	
Functional choices (e.g., what career option to choose)	
Happy, or made peace with it?	
People choices (e.g., who to be friends with)	
Happy, or made peace with it?	
Situational choices (e.g., where to go for a vacation)	
Happy, or made peace with it?	
Thoughts that bother me	
Gap in my life	

Compile the responses on a large chart paper and put it up on the wall.

Study it for the next few days to trace your destiny. As you think, reflect and introspect, your destiny will become clearer to you. In the end, it will be crystal clear and the path will be very well defined.

Duration

Give yourself time...Do not rush. This is not an initiative to be started and finished. This is a process of individual transformation.

Give yourself a week for studying the chart on the wall, and about a month to define your destiny.

Unit 6: Create My Destiny

Meaningful life and destiny must somewhere come together so that the journey of life that you have undertaken becomes the right one. There are many reasons why people shy away from meeting their destiny. Some of those being:

I will focus on destiny-related aspects after retirement.

I have a family to provide for!

I do not have the time to really do what I want to do!

Where is the money for all that?

I am happy as things are... why bother? Just enjoy life as it comes.

There is a difference between a hobby and a profession, and the happiest person is one whose hobby and profession are one and the same. A person whose regular work and destiny come together is the most satisfied one, as he is leading a meaningful life aligned to the path of destiny.

One has to make conscious efforts to align with destiny by volunteering with organizations which are into similar work, by undertaking initiatives at the workplace and ensuring time is spent well. It's not all that difficult once you stop making excuses for yourself.

How it works

Look into the mirror. Understand that we all continue to age, and over time you will have grey hair, less energy, more experience and either a meaningful or wasted life. Think about what you really should do. Listen to your inner voice, and answer the following questions:

- Who should I associate with?
- What should I be doing?
- What should I start doing?
- What should I stop doing?
- Who/what is stopping me?
- Where should I be going?
- Why am I not doing what I should be doing?

The Template

This is the 'doing' portion. It is important to carry out adequate background research before you create plans to work along with an entity. Once you have decided the course, feel free to talk about it with your friends and well-wishers. Capture your thoughts on the format provided below.

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
I associate with		
I should be doing		
I should start (doing)		
I should stop (doing)		
What or who stops me		
Where I should go next		
Why I am not doing what I should be doing		

Compile the responses on a large chart paper and put it up on the wall.

Study it for the next few days to identify the way to create your destiny. Be practical and keep challenges and constraints in mind. Use timing to your strategic advantage. Create a phase-wise plan to overcome your challenges.

Duration

Give yourself time. Do not rush. This is not an initiative to be started and finished. This is a process of individual transformation.

Give yourself a week for studying the chart on the wall, and about a month to create your destiny.

Unit 7: Behaviours for Transformation

You have done a lot of soul searching. To create your destiny, you need to transform yourself. The target behaviours are the ones demonstrated by someone who is your role model. Spend time studying your role model. Then use this as the external stimulus to identify the behaviours you need to transform in yourself. Behaviours are transformed by a four-step process:

1. Interacting with an external stimulus – human or non-human and taking inputs from it.
2. Questioning your own deeply held beliefs
3. Arriving at an evolved understanding
4. Internalizing the transformed behaviour

It is your role to go to people, forums and events so that external stimuli can reach you.

Consider this scenario:

I used to be a non-vegetarian and would only look for non-vegetarian food in a menu. A chance meeting that I had with Prof. Ramaswamy, an individual who worked tirelessly for alleviating the plight of the domestic animals and their exploitation, changed my thinking altogether. He explained to me the deep injustice that is meted out to animals which are bred for work, exploitation and slaughter.

He was very convincing and very correct and helped me modify my views. Over a year, I saw various instances where he was proven correct time and again. I saw calves being ruthlessly dealt with in the dairy industry, small lambs being slaughtered, camels being abused and killed, and goats being killed in the name of sacrifice. I turned into a vegetarian and now, whenever possible, try to influence my friends to make them see the plight of domestic animals.

Over time, I realized that animal slaughter can be done away by producing lab-grown meat and am now an active supporter of the science that can eliminate the need to kill for meat altogether. I also realize that I am party to the sins committed by mankind due to the age-old practice of killing animals for food, fur, hide and profits.

By generating demand, we influence supply and then supply-driven consumption leads to even more exploitation. This is a very dangerous economic cycle. Also it is global in nature and thus animals get slaughtered in one country for consumption in another country.

Such practices and even indirect involvement in such practices take us away from leading a meaningful life and away from destiny.

How it works

This takes time. Once you have identified the behaviours which need to be transformed in you, give yourself sufficient time to inculcate and internalize the new behaviours. Ask the following questions to yourself and your near and dear ones:

- Who are your role models?
- What are the behaviours demonstrated by your role models in the path to achieving your destiny?

- Which of your behaviours need to be changed?
- Pick up the most difficult one and start acting on it using the four-step process.
- Seek feedback from your close friends on whether you are changing.
- Carry out course correction or stay on course.

The Template

This stage needs you to have yourself, a few friends and a role model to figure out. This is also the longest phase and the starting point of the deep transformation process. It's important to stay focused here. Use the template below to transform yourself by evolving your behaviours.

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
Role models		
Behaviours demonstrated by role models		
My behaviours which need change		
My focus behaviours		
What I am doing to change		
Am I evolving?		

Compile the responses in a chart and put it up on a wall.

Study it for the next few days to identify the behaviours you need to change in order to create your destiny. Changing oneself is much more difficult than changing others. So focus...

Duration

Give yourself time. Do not rush. This is not an initiative to be started and finished. This is a process of self-transformation.

Give yourself a week for studying the chart on the wall, and about six months to change your behaviour.

Chart 1 – Knowing Myself

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
My areas of strength		
My areas of improvement		
I am good at...		
I create a poor impression when...		
I can be successful...		
I should gain expertise in...		
I really enjoy...		
I should be doing...		

Chart 2 – My Behaviour

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
How do my close friends define me?		
Why do some people ignore me?		
Why do some people trust me and have expectations from me?		
Why some people mistrust me and have no expectations from me?		
Why do people, who I want to spend time with, like me?		
Why do people, who like spending time with me, like me?		
These make me feel bad.		
This makes my heart weep while I put on a brave face.		
This delights me, though I may not express it.		
Special memories that have stayed with me		
Past events which have defined me		
Some of my deepest fears		
This is what I am really looking for		

Chart 3 – Knowing My Influencers

Statement	Influencer name	Thought process influenced
Influencer – unconsciously (person/incident)		
Influencer - consciously		
Influencer group(s) that I like		
Influencer group(s) that I don't like		
Influencer(s) that I like		
Influencer(s) that I dislike		
Influencer(s) that I hate		

Chart 4 – Goal of Life

Statement	Response – self
This makes me happy	
This makes me sad	
This upsets me	
This is what I really want to do	
Am I feeling complete? (Why/Why not?)	

Chart 5 – My Destiny

Statement	Response – Self
Crossroads and choices	
Stubborn and forcing a choice	
Functional choices (e.g., what career option to choose)	
Happy, or made peace with it?	
People choices (e.g., who to be friends with)	
Happy, or made peace with it?	
Situational choices (e.g., where to go for a vacation)	
Happy, or made peace with it?	
Thoughts that bother me	
Gap in my life	

Chart 6 – Create My Destiny

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
I associate with		
I should be doing		
I should start (doing)		
I should stop (doing)		
What or who stops me		
Where I should go next		
Why I am not doing what I should be doing		

Chart 7 – Behaviours for Transformation

Statement	Response – Self	Response – Others
Role models		
Behaviours demonstrated by role models		
My behaviours which need change		
My focus behaviours		
What I am doing to change		
Am I evolving?		

My Action Plan

Note to Myself
