



We Shall Overcome



Even during the pandemic spread the leaders were seen overcoming adversities in the family and stay focused on their



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rite it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year," beautifully scribed the famous American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson. We welcome the New Year 2022 with hope, positivity an optimism. Having witnessed enormous distress for past two years due to the pandemic, these high qualities are the ones that will keep us moving. The mere fact that we are withstanding the ongoing stress as best as we can, by adhering to safety directives, such as vaccinations, using face masks, etc., is a testament to our fighting spirit. While there is quite a road ahead to return to normalcy, ongoing

collective actions by the governments and the public clearly showcase the good will and our determination to overcome any dire situation.

There is no greater textbook than life experience. Younger generation have gotten an important lesson thrown on to their laps due to Covid-19—facing difficulties head on.

Marching Ahead

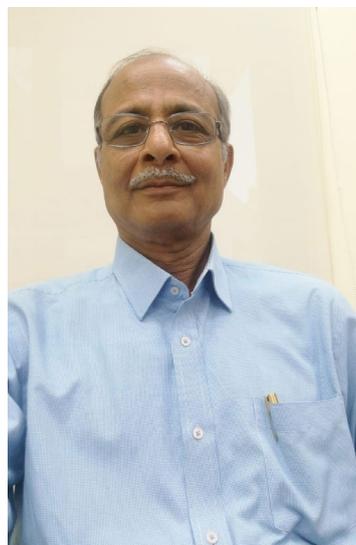
Right from planning ahead for college, career growth, saving for retirement are basic planning necessities. Even with careful planning, life may throw curve balls, but with planning, certainly negative effects can be toned down. Here again, Covid-19 serves as an example. When the viral infection became a pandemic about March 2020, public-private partnerships delivered important countermeasures in a record time. While vaccines came out in a record time, the science behind vaccines had years of investment in terms of funding and research. In a similar vein, we have been fighting the war against cancer which began some 50 years ago with a clear planning to win over this dreadful disease.

Current scenarios have showcased to us national leaders, medical experts and policy makers who are exhibiting determination and courage in facing not only the virus but also the public. These qualities are not only limited to a select few, we are seeing this in every household. “Uncertainties bring the best out of us because we consider ourselves highly evolved over other living beings because of our developed brain and superior intellect, that enable us to care for others and face challenges,” stated Pune-based Mr. Amarashish Phanse, who lost his wife due to Covid-19 complications. We are blessed to witness grit and courage among our fellow beings, who offer great life lessons for us as we hope for a better 2022!



Views from Heroes

As briefed above, despite all the ill effects, the pandemic has shined light on many who are everyday heroes. Although it is nearly impossible and an onerous task to talk and showcase these role models, it is however important to highlight a few among us who have cared for their family and our society. Such an activity is itself a mark of gratitude to first responders and all those who care for us every day.



Amarashish Phanse

“Obviously, we can't plan for unexpected challenges. However, any challenges whether expected or unexpected can be met with ease if the mind is in equilibrium,” stated Mr. Nelaturi Muralidharan, who served as a banking executive for 35 years and cared for his large family of brothers and sisters making sure his siblings are successful.

“Hope and positivity helped me and my family to overcome the loss of my dear wife of 33 years due to severe Covid infection while my son and I barely scraped through after 25 days of hospitalization,” stated Amarashish Phanse, who has had a 37-year career in marketing and business development. Such acts are sacrifice and compassion, which are needed to face tough situations.

Four 'S'

Our life is like a table. To have a table that is well balanced to bear heavy weights, all four legs “S” need to be balanced. Similarly, one should have 4S in one's life: 1) Sensing; 2) Shaping; 3) Shielding and 4) Sustaining (Growing). Many high-tech strategies and products have evolved based on these concepts, which have been promoted by U. S. Department of Defense.



While we plan our future, first step is to analyze our current situation and the second step is to identify our goals. To achieve our goals, we need to determine the path and resources to accomplish our goals, i.e., shielding us from barriers. After achieving some success, we need to march towards the finale and maintain and grow—this is sustaining and growing. All these four steps enable us to counter every challenge in life. Again, there are many heroes who are showcasing these aspects every day.

Fighting the Pandemic

While biomedical experts were working hard to come-up with biomedical solution, due to the nature of the virus, there was critical need for personnel protection equipment (PPE) and face masks. Institutes like Coimbatore-based The South India Textile Research Association (SITRA) and Advanced Materials Laboratory at Texas Tech University were working to develop test methods and products as countermeasures to the infectious virus. SITRA was the first and only accredited testing facility to test PPEs in India at the outbreak of the pandemic. This milestone did not happen overnight. Vision, investment, and planning played its role, highlights Dr. Prakash Vasudevan, Director of SITRA, who lost close family members due to COVID-19.

“We must appreciate the fact here that Government of India had the vision to establish a Centre of Excellence for Medical Textiles at SITRA way back in 2008. Therefore, planning is important to face new or unexpected challenges,” added Dr. Vasudevan.

How did we come-up with countermeasures so quickly amidst all odds? Planning and more importantly determination to come-up with a panacea played their due parts. In other words, caring for fellow human beings and passion in what we do to make



Dr Prakash Vasudevan



Nelaturi Muralidharan

this world a better place. “Whatever work we take up, we need to apply our mind and heart and being passionate helps,” stated Muralidharan. Citing his personal life, Muralidharan touchingly stated struggles were overcome when resources were few and far between some four decades back by having perseverance, building better understanding among family and support from friends. Building good understanding and support structure are necessary not only to overcome family struggles but also to counter major problems. This is clear in the ongoing pandemic, where we need buy-ins from stakeholders for policy support, vaccination mandates and other hygiene measures.

“What is important is not to lose the sense of mental balance, being more realistic and taking help from near and dear, when necessary, prove to be helpful,” advised Dr. Vasudevan who cared for the society while losing family members due to COVID-19.

Hope for Better Future

Covid-19 has been a good teacher that has emphasized the need for planning ahead, care and compassion and proper execution of policies and countermeasures. As highlighted in this article, there are so many role models in every household whose experience is such a treasure trove to overcome stressful situations. Listening to these people and seeing them lead the life will instill great qualities to lead a good life. Qualities like hope, passion, determination, and courage to face the world will equip us to face any challenges.

Dark clouds are going away soon as the sun has started rising on the horizon. Indeed, humility will serve us better—a valuable life lesson from Covid-19. Future is always better as envisioned by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2022!

