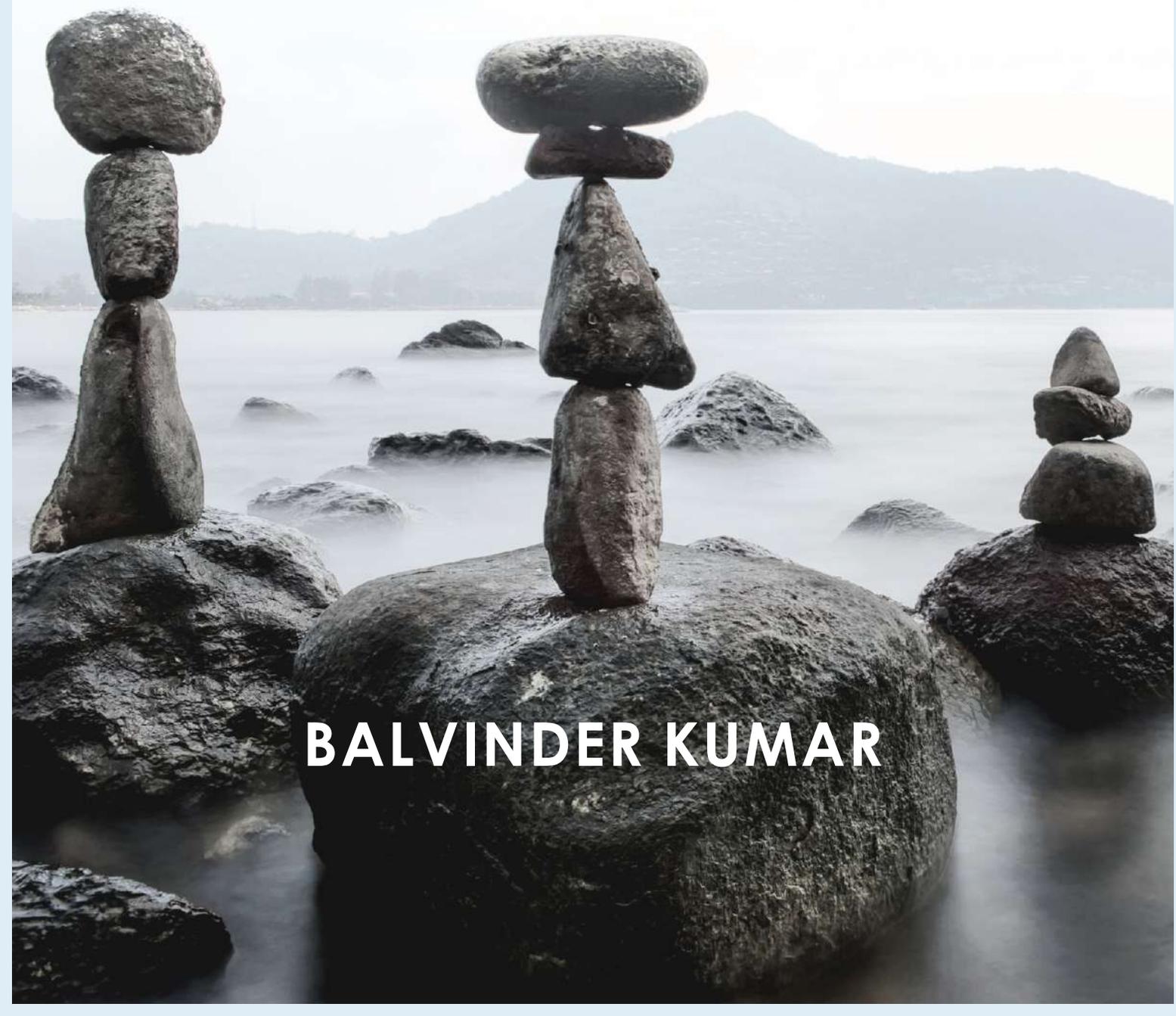


A COMPENDIUM OF 110+ THOUGHTS ABOUT LIFE

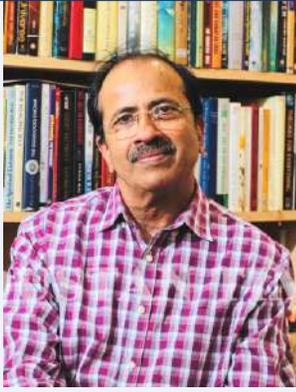
*Explore
your life
journey*



BALVINDER KUMAR

The ultimate meaning of life is all about knowing, learning and then growing till the last day. To grow, we should strive to keep on making a better version of our own self and that's possible when we explore life's complexities. Life is not simple and can potentially become complex if we don't attempt to look into critical aspects of life right from its spiritual side to our mind and body.

Moreover, we all tend to become habitual and conditioned in our thinking, behaviour and actions. The result is most of us get ourselves locked into 'self-made prison' or in milder words our 'comfort zone'. Taking the advantage of lockdown period, I have conceptualized and then pen down my 'thoughts' about life's journey in simpler manner for readers' convenience. The whole gamut of subject matters including contentious issues have been briefly, to the extent possible, explained.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Quite late in his life, the author ventured into spiritual writings. It's primarily the result of his passion for reading and curiosity to know about life's intricacies. He has keen interest in neuroscience, philosophy and spirituality. After *Man's Spiritual Journey*, *Awakening the Thinking Mind* and *Redesign Your Life in Modern Age*, this 4th book is in the shape of 'thoughts/brief extract' on various interesting subject matters pertaining to life.

The author is a retired bureaucrat, amateur painter (made about 100 paintings on canvas) and regular practitioner of mindfulness-based meditation. Currently working in a regulatory authority of UP State.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As it was done for previous book, Ishani Anand, an emerging artist, has been instrumental in putting my thoughts on images with her excellent designing ability. Her knack for selection of images and making them 'lively' is worth appreciating. Special thanks also go to Priyanka Babbar who has also assisted in making images with her developing skills in designing and social media.

CONTENTS

S.NO		PAGES
1.	Human destiny in Making – the humans stands on a vulnerable junction	1-3
2.	Spiritual and philosophical aspects of life's journey	4-20
3.	Life Journey can never be easy – it's full of paradoxes and challenges	21-40
4.	Emerging challenges of contemporary world	41-48
5.	To overcome the life's challenges, we must know the inherent nature of our inner world	49-69
6.	Happiness and contentment - this is what we all ultimately desire	70-79
7.	Our success and failures depend on how strong we can have internal control over our mind	80-88
8.	Design Your Destiny – we must carve out our own path to destination	89-106
9.	Accept the process of aging and dying gracefully	107-111

1

**HUMAN
DESTINY IN
MAKING – THE
HUMANS STAND
ON A
VULNERABLE
JUNCTION**

Know your life's journey

IS THE WORLD BECOMING A BETTER PLACE FOR US? 'NO' IS BECOMING FIRMER AND MORE CERTAIN

It's a highly debatable question whether the world is becoming a better place for humans to live. If we see various indicators like life expectancy, literacy rate, poverty alleviation, wealth generation and so many other, the world has amazingly progressed.

However, this feeling of euphoria and well being is neutralized by the host of crisis, the world is witnessing with increasing pace. Two most disturbing crisis are first, we got disconnected from nature and have demolished the delicate balance between nature and life. The result is global warming. We all know the consequences. Second, conflicts and aggression are rising sharply among the nations, religions, communities, races etc. The gap between 'us' and 'them' is increasingly rising.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

WE HUMANS HAVE PLAYED DANGEROUSLY TOO LONG WITH NATURE

We never thought, we, the most advanced version of mammalian species, will suddenly become so fragile, vulnerable and helpless. Almost the whole world is imprisoned and in lock-down position. It's a beginning of disastrous consequences, how and when it ends, no one can currently guess. Because, we played dangerously too long with nature.

Nature is now bouncing back on us. We humans forgot our true nature/inner self in mad race of economic growth, and pursuit of wealth, material and pleasurable things of life. Will, we learn..... in time to come??

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

EVENTUALLY THE WORLD WILL BECOME A GLOBAL MIND, IF IT'S SURVIVED THROUGH CURRENT CRISIS

It's extremely difficult to conceptualize what kind of human destiny is in store for the humanity in future. Presently, human destiny is in its nascent state. It's however certain that humanity will transcend from a collective of individuals to a synchronized global society. It's not difficult to imagine because of the way the humanity has already got hyper-connected.

As we increasingly connect through technology and quality of life improves sharply, the emergence of a global society seems certain. Brain-to-brain communication through direct transmission of thoughts will soon become commonplace. We are gradually moving to create a singular mind. It's certainly going to happen in future if humanity survives the going crisis on various fronts.

- Balvinder Kumar

2

**SPIRITUAL AND
PHILOSOPHICAL
ASPECTS OF
LIFE'S JOURNEY**

Know your life's journey

WE NEED GOD FOR EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Why do we need God in this modern age of science, reason, and rationality? We know, life is full of uncertainties, sorrows, and tragedies. No can escape such eventualities. At the most trying times, support from God is needed. We can justify deaths and other loss by believing that this is God's Will, or part of His greater plan, or maybe for a greater good. We get solace from such beliefs, attributing ultimate love and wisdom to God.

Without such support, misfortunes and any personal challenge can be far more painful. Therefore, the eternal being, and presence of God is required for humanity to fill the gaps when no other comfort or explanation is available.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey 

WHAT DOES SPIRITUALITY MEAN?

The essence of spirituality is to know our true selves and to discover the real meaning and purpose of our life. The self we know, the individual ego, is a limited representation of our identity. Since we are largely ignorant of our true selves, we derive a false sense of identity from what we feel about ourselves, and how others see us.

When we discover our deeper sense of Self, we are freed from many of the fears that unnecessarily plague our mind. We can then experience inner peace, an inner security that does not depend upon the behaviour and actions of others or the events taking place around us. Therefore, through spiritual practices like meditation, we increase self-awareness and gain better understanding of ourselves.

- Balvinder Kumar



Know your life's journey

ACROSS THE WORLD, PEOPLE ARE BECOMING MORE 'SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS'

In most parts of the world especially among younger generations, people are switching over to different kinds of spiritual practices, rather than participating in organised religion. However, absolute numbers of people belonging to any religious group may not be declining. Thanks to meditation and other spiritual practices, more people are joining the ranks of “spiritual but not religious.”

Interestingly, millennials (individuals born between 1981 and 1996) who tend to be passionate about their careers, fitness, and the climate crisis, but not interested in religion. For many of them, the gym or a beautiful park is their temple. This is how there is a shift towards spirituality from religion.

Know your life's journey

HUMAN'S GOODNESS IS SOMEHOW OVERSHADOWED BY EVILNESS

Both good and evil are deeply ingrained in the collective human mind. Are we, as many believe, fundamentally good, but somehow our goodness is contaminated by evilness? Or have we an inherent tendency toward being evil, which is overshadowed by goodness?

Abraham Maslow, one of the greatest psychologists of the twentieth century, believed that "people are all decent underneath." His unwavering faith in our goodness remained through the last days of his life, when he wrote that humankind "has a higher nature" as part of our essence, and our species can be "wonderful out of their own human and biological nature." We are inherently good human beings; however, goodness is overshadowed by evilness in many humans.

Know your life's journey

**SOMETHING HAS GONE TERRIBLY
WRONG IN THE WAY WE THINK,
BEHAVE, AND ACT**

What has happened to man's inherent nature, and why is it that those with such enormous capability to think and act rationally and intelligently are becoming increasingly aggressive and hostile to others? Why are we losing touch with the inner self, and how can there be so much ignorance of love, compassion, and care for our fellow beings? Something has gone terribly wrong in the way we think, speak, and act. These questions can't be easily answered!

However, with the advance of time, we lost our spiritual nature in the materialistic world. We got disconnected from our inner self and then lost in the cacophony of outwardly affairs.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

WE EXPERIENCE OUTER REALITY IN OUR OWN UNIQUE WAY

When we watch any movie, we all interpret the story in our own unique way. We go to the theatre to see a film rated four stars, then may find it hopeless and a waste of time. Our mind perceives the story based on our past experiences, beliefs, and our expectations. The subjectivity that reigns in the theatre we use all the time in the outside world.

From the vast input from the world around us, only a small fraction of it is consciously processed by our minds. Then, from our selective filter of past experiences, beliefs, mental conditioning, and other fixed ideas, we construct reality in our own unique ways. None of us construct the same reality, even when we are experiencing exactly the same situation.

Know your life's journey

WE MUST DISCOVER A MEANINGFUL PURPOSE OF LIFE

Two seagulls are shown in flight against a soft, hazy background of a sunset over the ocean. The birds are white with dark wings, and their wings are spread wide as they glide across the sky. The background is a gradient of warm colors, from light pink to a soft orange, suggesting the sun is low on the horizon.

Unless we have a meaningful purpose in life, we can't grow and make our lives worth living. According to Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher, the most common ailment of our lifetime is 'meaninglessness'. In the event of even extreme suffering, he argued that he who has a 'why' to life can bear with almost any 'how'. We all have our own job or vocation to carry out and the purpose to fulfil the same.

However, we all need to go beyond our routine tasks or obligations that keep on fulfilling. We must go beyond this and do something 'bigger' for the society/others that will give the feeling of intense satisfaction and fulfilment.

Know your life's journey

WHATEVER HAS HAPPENED HAS TO HAPPEN – AMOR FATI

One of the greatest ideas/concepts of Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the greatest philosophers ever born was that of 'amor fati'. It's translated from Latin as 'a love of one's fate'. It means acceptance of everything that has happened in one's life, whether good or bad, evil or wise.

We must not regret or feel bad because things would have taken place in any other way. Whatever has happened has to happen. He prescribed this formula for greatness of a human being. What we do in life is mostly the opposite. We don't accept the things as they are. We should develop an attitude to see things in the perspective of 'amor fati'. Even in the events of intense suffering or losing any close one, such attitude is of great help.

Know your life's journey

IS THE WORLD MEANINGLESS AND ABSURD? – MYTH OF SISYPHUS

According to Greek mythology, the king of Ephryra, punished Sisyphus for his sins and was made to roll a huge boulder endlessly up a steep hill. It was a maddening nature of punishment given by the King. It was an endless cycle of taking boulder uphill on the top.

Albert Camus, a great French philosopher saw Sisyphus, an absurd hero who was condemned to meaningless task, a hopeless struggle. He says that life in general is meaningless and absurd - Theory of Absurdism. Unless we discover the meaning, life will remain meaningless. Sisyphus's task is somewhat similar to our lives. Most of us end up spending our lives in continual, infinite loop of repetitive tasks only to lose meaning and fulfilment.

Know your life's journey

SENECA EFFECT - 'WE SUFFER MORE OFTEN IN IMAGINATION THAN IN REALITY'

Seneca is a major philosophical figure of the Roman Period. He occupies a central place in the philosophy of Stoicism. This philosophy asserts that virtue like wisdom is happiness. We don't control and cannot rely on external world/events and we have control only over ourselves and our responses. Stoicism touch many practical aspects of life, that's why their ideas became very popular throughout the world.

Seneca once said, "we suffer more often in imagination than in reality." Because all too often, we tend to worry about circumstances that we can't control, and often end up overthinking every situation to a point where we become paralysed by fear. So practical were his ideas about life.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

TAOIST PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE – 'GOING WITH THE FLOW'

Taoism is based on the 81 'poems' that make up the Tao Te Ching, written around 2500 years back by Lao Tzu, an ancient Chinese philosopher. Taoism is a philosophy as well as a religion. It emphasizes doing what is natural and 'going with the flow' in accordance with the Tao (or Dao), a cosmic force which flows through all things.

Taoist philosophy says that life is unpredictable and random. So, the way to be happiest is to let go of the idea that you need to do very specific things for fulfilment. Another extremely important concept of Taoism is Yin and Yang. Everything has both a good and bad side to it, even if you can't see it. Thus, it's a dualistic philosophy.

Know your life's journey

HEDONIST PHILOSOPHY CLAIMS PLEASURE IS THE ULTIMATE MOTIVATING FACTOR FOR LIFE



Can pleasure be the only motivating factor behind one's life. Yes, according to Hedonist philosophy, the ultimate good in life is pleasure. At the core, life is nothing but to enjoy pleasurable goods and activities. Aristippus (435-356 BC) who a follower of Socrates, and the founder of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy had these controversial philosophical views on life. This philosophy claims that only pleasure motivates us. We seek pleasure which truly keep us happy. It also gives us instant gratification like in case of wine, sex and drugs.

However, this philosophy couldn't gain grounds because of many inherent weaknesses like true happiness and satisfaction can never come from pleasure.

Know your life's journey

WE CREATE A MEANINGFUL LEGACY AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE TERROR OF DEATH – ERNEST BECKER

Death is the most terrifying end result of our life. 'Since so long as we exist, death is not with us but when death comes then we do not exist,' says Epicurus, Greek philosopher. Ernest Becker, an American cultural anthropologist and author of the 1974 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, The Denial of Death, argues that the idea of death is, in fact, constantly with us. Death haunts the humans like nothing else.

That's why fear of death drives human behaviour giving rise to what he called the universal urge to heroism. We humans create a meaningful legacy as an antidote to the terror of death. We want to remain alive even after death. We want to leave behind our name.

Know your life's journey

NO EXPERIENCE OF MISTAKES AND FAILURES IS WITHOUT A HIDDEN LESSON



No matter what our plan or aim, life may change its course unexpectedly and sweep us into uncharted waters. John Lennon very rightly said, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Beauty, however, lies in our ability to be receptive and flexible in adapting to new situations.

We should accept challenges wholeheartedly and learn from these experiences when our plans fail. No experience of mistakes and failures is without a hidden lesson. Accept responsibility unconditionally for any outcome of our actions. Receptivity and acceptance of changing circumstances is a key to success and its associated happiness.

Know your life's journey

IT'S AT THE HEART OF THOSE PEAKS AND VALLEYS, WE TEND TO LEARN THE TRUTH OF LIFE

The more we love and accept ourselves by realizing the true nature of inner Self, the more we are able to love and accept others. Love is the ultimate essence of life for which we all strive. Fear and insecurity, which are so deeply ingrained in the human psyche, can be neutralized only by exhibiting love and compassion for others. Only through love can we lead our life with meaningful purpose.

We all inevitably go through ups and downs, feeling pain and sorrow, pleasure and joy, and it's at the heart of those peaks and valleys, while learning the truth of life, that we grow spiritually by expanding our circle of love, concern, and compassion.

Know your life's journey

PEOPLE WE ENCOUNTER DURING OUR LIFETIME ARE MEANT TO TEACH US

Along life's journey, we continue to encounter new faces. Some of them help us by holding our hand to overcome obstacles, inspiring us to a higher rung on the ladder (of success). However, others may hurt and betray us, insult and humiliate us, or even worse, push us off that ladder. Forgive them, though very difficult but still we should forgive them.

As Jesus said, "they know not what they do." These souls are also meant to cross our path and teach us crucial lessons about life that we would not otherwise learn. They teach us about trust and the importance of being cautious before we open our heart to them. Learning lessons is the sole purpose of our life!



Know your life's journey

MEANINGFUL COINCIDENCES – SOME INCIDENTS HAVE A BIGGER PURPOSE IN LIFE

Our life is full of coincidences and many of them prove to be very meaningful and important in determining our destiny. Like, someone is thinking about his very old friend that he hadn't met him for several years. Then incidentally he met the same friend on the next day itself. Similarly, we may see a person at work that we think we might like to know, only to find that that that very individual sitting across at a restaurant later that day.

Coincidences are, at many times, meant for some purpose which may lead to new opportunity and those very opportunity then changes one's path. Is this a luck or chance or should we say it a meaning coincidence for a bigger purpose?

- Balvinder Kumar



3

**LIFE JOURNEY
CAN NEVER BE
EASY – IT'S FULL
OF PARADOXES
AND
CHALLENGES**

Know your life's journey

LIFE IS A SOLO JOURNEY; BARRING A FEW FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS, NO ONE TRAVELS FOR A LONGER DISTANCE

Each one of us is generally lost in his or her own very busy world. We are perpetually "on the go," pursuing our goals and passions. Many see success in terms of having more money and power, higher status in society, and more creature comforts.

However, we humans are social animals, interacting and sharing with others all the time. In this digital age, we are connected with large numbers of friends on social media. However, true person-to-person, caring friendships appear to be becoming rarer. True happiness lies in having meaningful and true relationships. They are the ones who will happily accompany us during troubled times.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

ARE WE REALLY AWAKENED OR ENLIGHTENED BEINGS?

Of the vast pool of humans, how many of us are really awake or enlightened beings? In the absence of any objective criteria, it's difficult to identify the stages of awakening through which most of us pass during our life journey. Generally, we begin to awaken as we become more and more aware of ourselves. All genuinely enlightened beings have compassion and selfless love for all of their fellow beings because they no longer see separation between 'us' and 'them'. Besides, we become less identified with the dualities of life like pain and pleasure, good and evil.

Finally, we become aware of not only our strong identification with "I" but also our thoughts, emotions, feelings, and perceptions. Suffering eases, inner peace stabilizes.

Know Your Life's Journey

WE ARE MODERN HUMANS WITH PRIMITIVE MIND.

Human evolution has always been an extremely slow process. Modernity - just a blip on the evolutionary timeline -- has not given our brains a long enough time to adapt to our modern lifestyle. Even relatively simple changes in the human body can take tens of thousands of years. Our minds, therefore, have not sufficiently evolved to solve the problems that are typical of our modern times. That it is still well equipped to meet the challenges of hunter-gatherer ancestors is slight consolation.

Though our brains are far "brainier" and more efficient than the best supercomputer, they're ill-suited for handling the fear, aggression, stress, anxiety, depression etc. of modern times. It's therefore rightly said that we are Stone Age thinkers living in modern times.

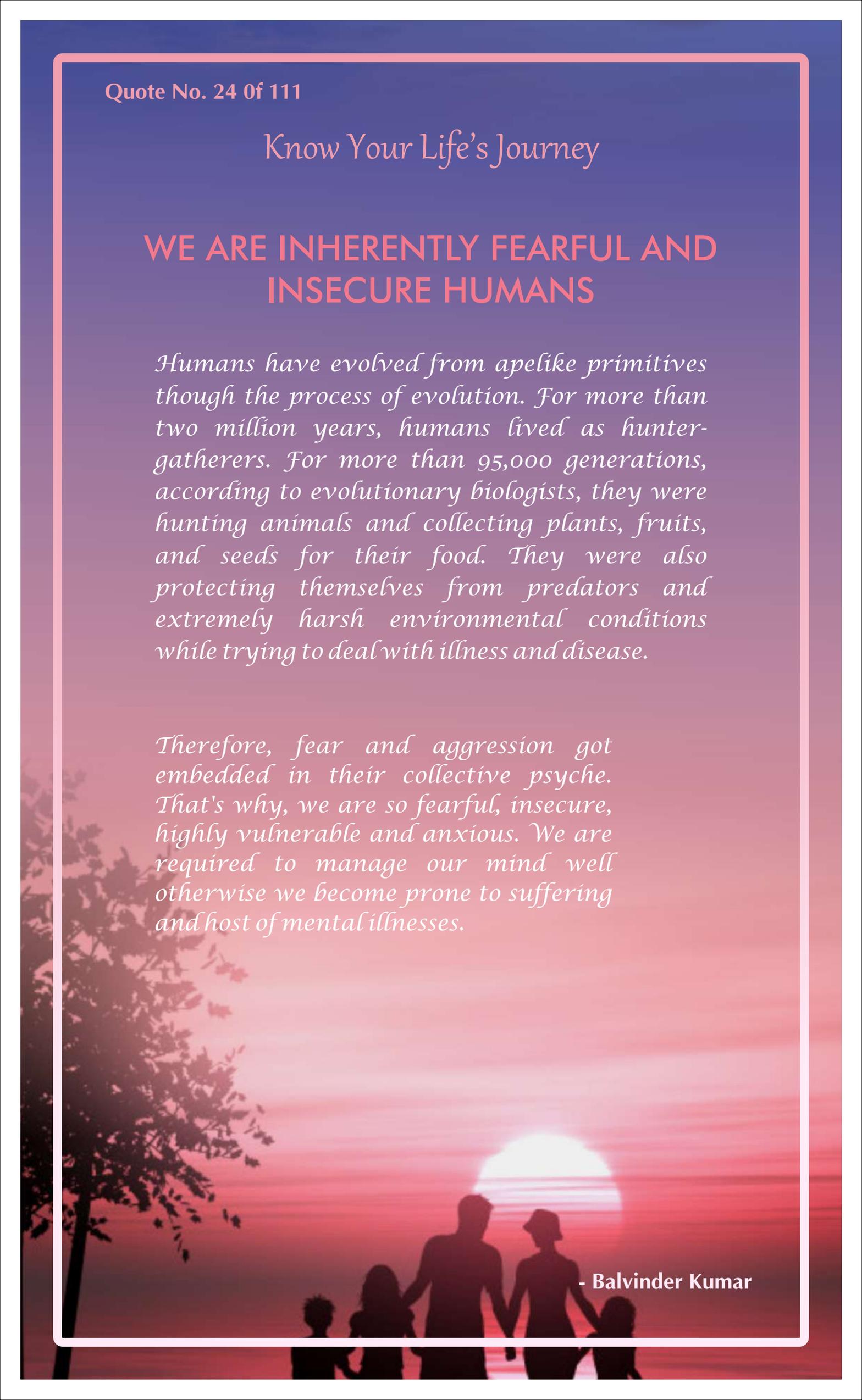
Know Your Life's Journey

WE ARE INHERENTLY FEARFUL AND INSECURE HUMANS

Humans have evolved from apelike primitives through the process of evolution. For more than two million years, humans lived as hunter-gatherers. For more than 95,000 generations, according to evolutionary biologists, they were hunting animals and collecting plants, fruits, and seeds for their food. They were also protecting themselves from predators and extremely harsh environmental conditions while trying to deal with illness and disease.

Therefore, fear and aggression got embedded in their collective psyche. That's why, we are so fearful, insecure, highly vulnerable and anxious. We are required to manage our mind well otherwise we become prone to suffering and host of mental illnesses.

- Balvinder Kumar

The background of the entire page is a soft-focus sunset with a large, bright sun low on the horizon. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of a family—a man, a woman, and two children—are seen walking away from the viewer, holding hands. The overall color palette is a gradient of warm tones from deep blue at the top to bright orange and red at the bottom.

Know Your Life's Journey

WE ALL CONSTRUCT OUR OWN STORIES WHERE 'I' IS ALWAYS PROJECTED AS 'HERO'

We all construct stories and then keep on updating it. Based on this very mega-story, we make our own identity or the Self. This is an experiencing Self based on our past memories, perceptions, impressions etc about ourselves as well as of others.

Without stories it's not possible to have our own narrative about life. In this story, 'I' is always projected as 'hero'. 'I' can't do anything wrong. 'I' is nearly at the times winner. If 'I' is loser then it's because of 'victim of circumstances or others. In order to preserve our own image or identity, we can even keep on editing/deleting or modifying our past memories. Studies have shown that even our past memories may not very reliable.

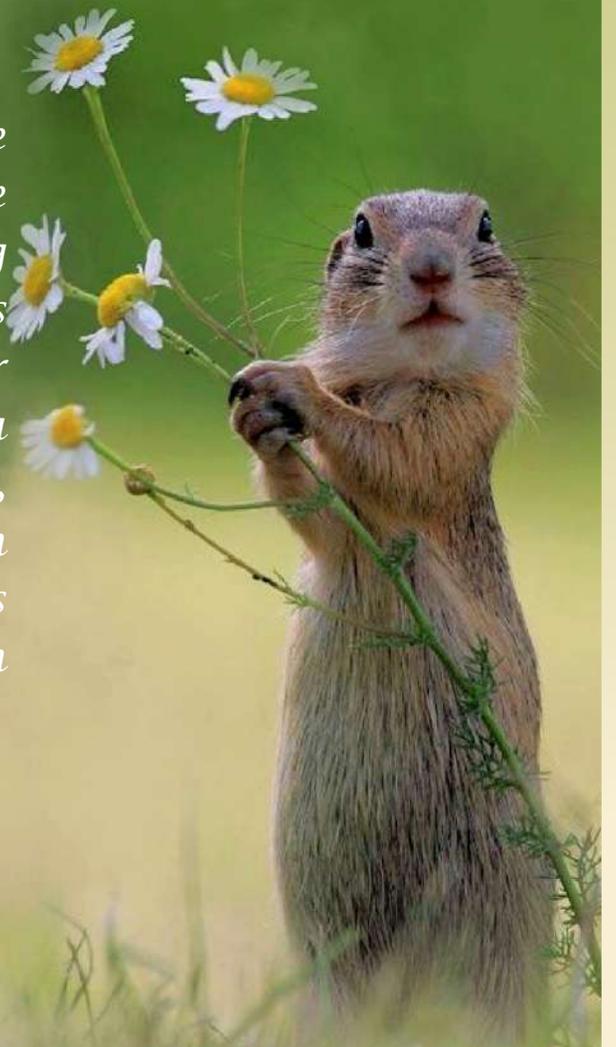
- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

NOT ALL OF US START SEARCHING THE MEANING OF LIFE

We all can grow in two phases. The first phase is when the purpose of life is nothing more than the inflation of our ego. Ego is purely self-serving. We accumulate wealth and its material expressions to satisfy our ego's desires and wishes. Many remain in ignorance and die while pursuing their ego goals. However, many of us start asking ourselves the perennial questions, such as, what's the meaning of life?

Why are we here? These are the ones who enter into the second phase of life, seeking answers to those questions by way of expanding their consciousness. They seek a higher level of awareness, at which love, compassion and empathy for others hold all the meaning in their life.

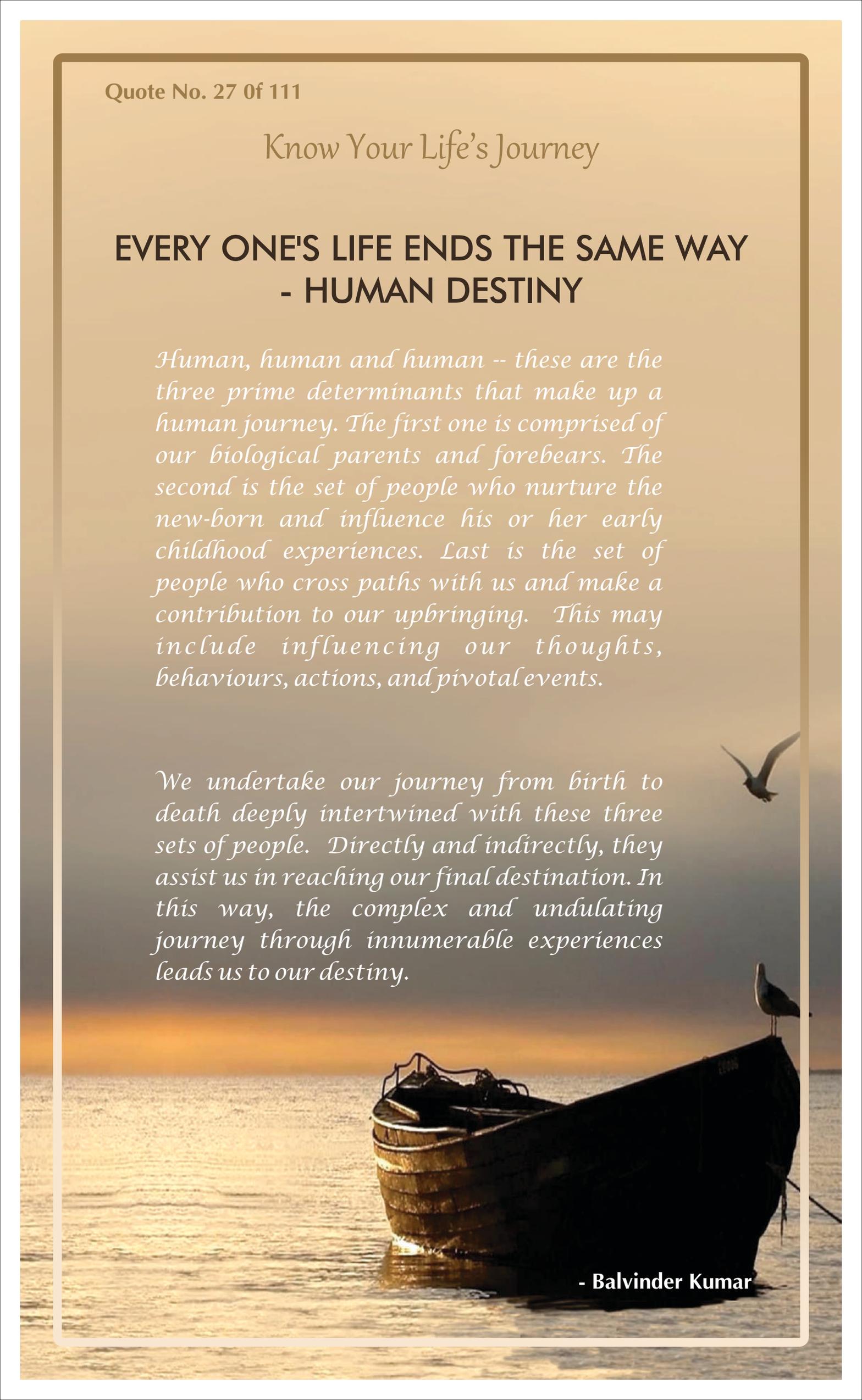


Know Your Life's Journey

EVERY ONE'S LIFE ENDS THE SAME WAY - HUMAN DESTINY

Human, human and human -- these are the three prime determinants that make up a human journey. The first one is comprised of our biological parents and forebears. The second is the set of people who nurture the new-born and influence his or her early childhood experiences. Last is the set of people who cross paths with us and make a contribution to our upbringing. This may include influencing our thoughts, behaviours, actions, and pivotal events.

We undertake our journey from birth to death deeply intertwined with these three sets of people. Directly and indirectly, they assist us in reaching our final destination. In this way, the complex and undulating journey through innumerable experiences leads us to our destiny.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

ULTIMATELY, IT'S NURTURING THAT REALLY MATTERS IN LIFE

Most of us come into this world with a perfect set of genes. The genes in every cell carries the unique blueprint for everything, from our height and complexion to our risks of serious illnesses like cancer. No two humans are genetically identical, but we are nearly 99.9% the same. The genes we are born with remain constant, but their expression through environment influence us as we age.

Medical science now suggests that nurturing i.e. the environment in which we grow is far more important than the genes we get from our parents. Even if we have harmful and detrimental genes but they can mostly remain dormant as long as we lead a healthy and active life.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

LIFE WILL NOT MAKE US PERFECTLY HAPPY

Life is complicated and it dictates its own terms over us. We all love to be happy and contended in life. Being happy is a result overall positivity and satisfaction at the particular time. It's far more than the absence of unhappy feelings. It's neither easy to define what it is nor prescribe how to achieve it.

Happiness is in fact the outcome of many internal factors, including the delicate balance of neurochemicals that are secreted in our brain. It is also a product of our thoughts, and the feelings they generate. If thoughts are toxic, fearful, angry, or even vaguely negative, we can't feel happy. Mental peace is prerequisite to experiencing pleasant feelings. However, we haven't been designed to be happy all the time.

Know Your Life's Journey

EVERYTHING IN LIFE EXISTS IN EQUILIBRIUM

Life, on the face of it, looks random but it always seems to have a meaningful pattern. Everything that happens in life, in the long run, gets balanced and evened out. Everything in life, such as pain-pleasure, success-failure, win-lose, light-darkness, and ups and downs, exists in equilibrium. This is how nature behaves. Dualities apply to everything that we witness and feel in life.

Each one of us will, in the long run, get a more or less equal share of pain and pleasure, success and failure, etc. Hell, and paradise may both be experienced in a single lifetime. This truth is realized only when we see life's events in broad perspective. Knowing this, we find everything to be much more "acceptable," and suffering naturally eases.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

WE SACRIFICE PRESENT FOR THE SAKE OF IMAGINARY FUTURE



Despite the fact that we all are destined to die on any future day, no one knows, we still keep on struggling to accumulate material goods.....wealth, status, power and so on..... We keep on chasing desires, even after having sufficient means to live a decent lifebut why.....

The obvious answer..... we want to become immortal..... we want the world to remember 'our name' even after death what a great tragedy of humans..... we sacrifice the present for the sake of imaginary future.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

THE 'FREE WILL' WHICH WE USE ALL THE TIME IS LARGELY ILLUSIONARY IN NATURE

We always feel that we are free to take any decision or for making choices. However, the reality is that unconscious factors mostly influence the process of decision-making. Our decisions are made on the basis of thoughts generated at that very time. First, we have no control over the thoughts that come into our mind, and second, the thoughts are greatly influenced by many other factors, such as past experience and belief system.

We feel we are the author of our conscious decisions, but these decisions are greatly influenced by our lifetime experiences, which differ significantly from one individual to another. Therefore, how free is our 'free will' becomes a highly contentious issue.

Know Your Life's Journey

MAN SUFFERS HIMSELF AND MAKES OTHERS SUFFER TOO, WHILE LEADING A MATERIALISTIC LIFE

We entered this world with clenched hands, and will eventually leave it with empty hands. However, we keep on accumulating wealth and other worldly comforts as if we are not going to die at all. This common delusion has led to the domination of materialistic life. This worldview permeates every aspect of our lives. It assumes that the world is indifferent and mechanical, with no place for soul and spirit.

Many of those who believe they are following religious paths do so without love and compassion for those who need them the most. Too many have lost touch with goodness and nature's beauty. Man suffers himself and makes others suffer too, while journeying on the materialistic path.

Quote No. 34 Of 111

Know Your Life's Journey

WE GENERALLY DON'T CHANGE MUCH DURING OUR LIFETIME

*Most of us don't change throughout our life. Even if we try, we mostly fail to change.....
What are the reasons?*

First, we always treat ourselves, above average, better than others. So, no need to change. Second, we all live in our own comfort zone. We are habitual and conditioned to think, behave and act in similar way. Third, it requires a huge effort to change ourselves.... So not worth to spend so much of energy and effort to come out from comforting space, better to enjoy so called 'easy going life'.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

WE ALL TEND TO OVERESTIMATE OURSELVES COMPARED TO OTHERS

Most of us tend to ignore our flaws or the weaknesses that we harbor. Most of us appear to have a generally inflated image of ourselves that we protect at almost any cost. A surprising number see ourselves as being "above average," better than others. Of course, we all have a desire to become superior or especially talented in at least certain areas.

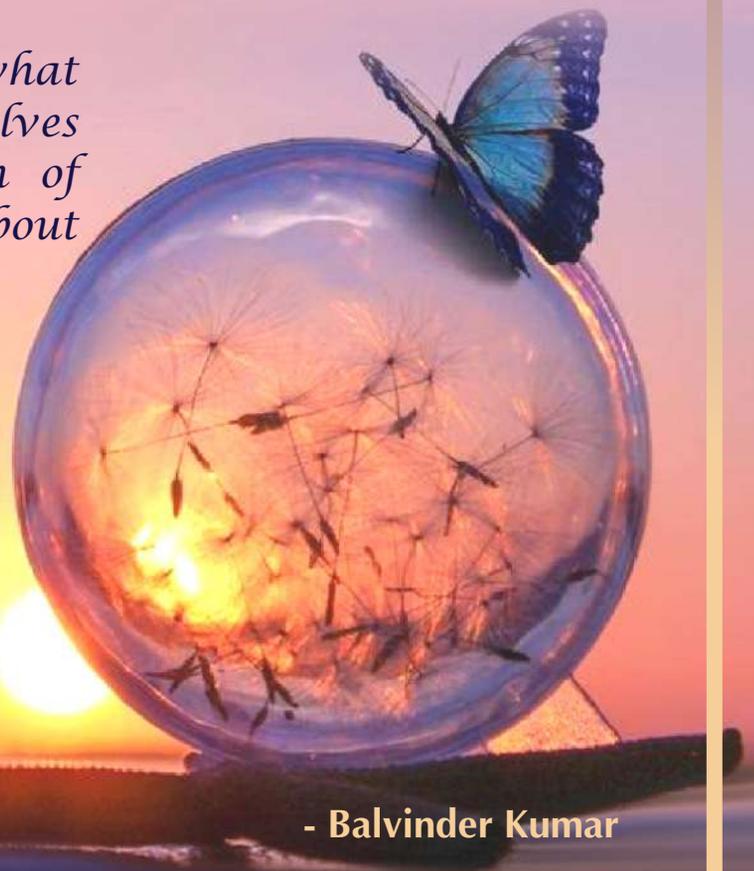
It's a part of human nature. In order to protect our shining image, we may try to blame others or the environment if something goes wrong, rather than blaming ourselves. When we commit any mistake or error, we often try to rationalize what we did. We want to keep our self-image intact by blaming external factors rather than looking inside.

Know Your Life's Journey

THE 'LOOKING-GLASS SELF' – SELF IS IN FACT A PRODUCT OF WHAT OTHERS THINK ABOUT US

Our self is shaped by reflected opinions of others around us. It means ours is not a real identity, it's in fact a product of what others think. When it comes to understanding ourselves, social interaction plays a more important role than many of us realize. According to American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley, individuals develop their concept of self by observing how they are perceived by others. He coined the concept as the "looking-glass self. Now in the age of social media, we are creating our 'cyber' self too.

Therefore, self is not what we think about ourselves but it's a perception of what others think about ourselves.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

WE ALL TEND TO IGNORE THE OBVIOUS AT OUR RISK – WILFUL BLINDNESS

Very often we choose to ignore or avoid something that we don't want to confront or accept. We avoid our attention or focus on those areas, though unconsciously we are aware of the same. Fear of conflict or change keep us that way. We don't like to see how trapped we are inside our own identity.

We feel if we confront those truths our peace, happiness or feeling good about ourselves will be threatened. Take a very common example of child abuse. Hundreds of thousands of these cases are reported every year. This is, in fact, a small percent of actual unreported cases, as the parents or victims themselves escape through 'wilful blindness'.

Know Your Life's Journey

EGO IS THE BIGGEST IMPEDIMENT TO OUR GROWTH

Ego is self-image that we have built over time; it's another name for self. We create our self-image by all the labels that people pin on us. There is a very strong sense of self-identification: "This is what I am." Ego, as we age, may become greedy, fearful, and increasingly self-centred.

Most of our emotional and psychological problems arise from this largely false idea of ourselves. Many people keep on accumulating material things in order to satisfy their ego, which, by its very nature, tends to inflate if not held in check. In this process, we also forget our true nature. However, for creating a deeper sense of satisfaction, we need to "dissolve" - or at least tame! -- our ego. Until this happens, it's almost impossible to grow spiritually.

Know Your Life's Journey

OUR HABITUAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDITIONING ARE THE BIGGEST HURDLE IN OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

When we are on autopilot mode, we continue to react to various situations in a habitual and conditioned manner. Consequently, we don't always respond appropriately to distressing and challenging situations. Quite often, our behaviour is impulsive and automatic. These conditioned responses prevent us from living our life mindfully.

This in turn is apt to retard our personal growth. Our habitual and highly conditioned responses also become a major impediment to our spiritual growth. We miss many opportunities in our life's journey because we are not open and receptive to them. We must learn to respond to the challenges of difficult conditions in a mindful and harmonious way.

Know Your Life's Journey

WE MOSTLY GET ENTANGLED IN NEVER-ENDING DESIRE/FEAR DUALITY

Where there is desire, there is a fear, and vice versa. Most of our actions and behaviour are controlled by this desire-fear duality, which very often leads to suffering, discontentment, and anxiety into our life. The fact is that the more desires we have, the greater the fear of their non-fulfilment. If we desire healthy old age, then the fear of early death starts.

By understanding the nature of life and its inherent dualities, we can diminish fear and thereby the suffering associated with it. If we make ourselves aware that illusory "I, me and my" is behind the web of desire/ fear, that's the first and the foremost step in mitigating suffering.

- Balvinder Kumar

4

**EMERGING
CHALLENGES OF
CONTEMPORARY
WORLD**

Know your life's journey

LONELINESS IS INCREASINGLY TAKING THE SHAPE OF AN EPIDEMIC

More and more people of all ages are feeling socially isolated. Other than business and social gatherings, people generally don't meet others in person. Loneliness has become widespread across the world. It's a serious concern for all of us.

Whatever people have free time, they tend to spend on a digital screen. Obviously, to escape from loneliness, we need to nurture meaningful and quality relationships. Better to have a few true friends with whom we meet regularly and share our feelings than to have legions of friends on social media. Besides, we must spend more time in those places where we can meet others, like parks, gyms, sports complexes, community centres, houses of worship, and libraries. Also, we should continue to experience new things in life.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

ANXIETY IS FAST SPREADING AS MENTAL SICKNESS ACROSS THE WORLD

These both among the most common and destructive of emotions. They are related and often coincide. Their symptoms may also overlap. While fear is a response to any specific threat or danger but anxiety has a vague and unpleasant sense, ranging from mild apprehension to impending doom. Often anxiety follows from an unknown or poorly defined threat. Millions of people from all walks of life suffer anxiety disorders.

In moderation, anxiety is fine, as it prods us on to work for favourable outcomes, as when we prepare for an interview or study for an exam. But when this feeling becomes acute, it morphs into a mental disorder. All across the globe including India, the prevalence of anxiety is rising sharply.

Know your life's journey

MENTAL STRESS EMERGES AS A SERIOUS CHALLENGE BEFORE THE HUMANITY

All around us are the signs of a society under stress. Mental stress is becoming endemic in the modern world. Many of life's situations may trigger a stress response in the body, problems such as unfriendly working conditions, overload of work, and relationship problems within one's family or with a boss or colleagues.

The majority of us do suffer from mental stress; however, its severity varies. Stress causes a wide range of physical changes in the body. Stress itself is not an illness, but if left unchecked, it can contribute to major health problems, such as high BP, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Chronic stress also increases the risk of developing depression and anxiety.

Know your life's journey

AS TECHNOLOGY USE INCREASES, ATTENTION BECOMES A SCARE RESOURCE

We are entering into an 'attention economy.' Attention in humans is fast becoming a rare commodity. As information/digital content has grown increasingly abundant and available on various platforms, attention has become a limiting factor in this age of I & T. Just about everyone is spending hours and hours together on digital platforms like smartphones and computers.

This digital lifestyle has made it difficult for not just students but all of us to stay focused, with the average human attention span shortening over a decade from 12 seconds to eight seconds. As cognitive overload weakens self-control, our ability to focus on and to design our destiny also suffers.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

EXCESSIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPACTING OUR LIVES IN MANY WAYS

All around us, we can see the widespread sickness of “busyness.” Everyone is absorbed in their mobiles or other digital platform. Any available spare time is now consumed mostly by social media. By doing so, we becoming more distracted, less attentive, and less focused. There is also an adverse impact on our health and well-being. When our distracted mind wanders in various directions, it becomes bewildered and unhappy.

Excessive use of social media can also impact our productivity and creativity. Many studies have shown a direct correlation between excessive use of mobiles and poor sleep quality, leading to mental health problems. This newly emerging addiction is impacting our lives in many different ways.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

GROWING SICKNESS OF DIGITAL ADDICTION FEAR OF MISSING OUT

When we are busy on digital media, we are intentionally or unintentionally under the spell of FOMO (fear of missing out). We don't want to miss anything, especially the news and presumed fun that our friends are having. There is an obsessive desire to check and see text messages and videos. In nutshell, FOMO is real and has become an epidemic because of social media

Attention span is reduced from the continuous temptations and rapid-fire pace of digital distractions. We are becoming attention deficient. Because of this obsession with social media, people of all age brackets are suffering from mental disorders like depression and anxiety. The younger generation, especially high school and college students are the most affected.

- Balvinder Kumar



Know your life's journey

LEARN THE ART OF JOMO - JOY OF MISSING OUT

As more and more time is spent on social media, we miss out on real-life interaction and the authentic joy that only it can offer. Since we are nearly addicted to social media, awareness of the present moment is lost. During that time, we lose our precious moments of joy, which we would have otherwise enjoyed.

Danish psychologist Svend Brinkmann coined the term JOMO -- Joy of Missing Out. Brinkmann argues that the biggest barrier to JOMO is our tendency to check mobiles etc as we don't want to miss anything. It's a fear of missing out. Instead of anxiously responding to social media, we must learn to be receptive to experiences that give us the feeling of joy and happiness.

Know your life's journey

WE FEAR SILENCE, DREAD BOREDOM AND INSTEAD LOVE TO CHOOSE AIMLESS DISTRACTION

“All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone” said famously by Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, physicist and writer in 17th century. He was so right in articulating about human's basic nature.. We don't try to observe our own thoughts and feelings. We never learn the art of solitude. Now it's becoming more difficult in view of massive inflow of interesting information on social media.

We should try to sit alone, in silence for few minutes every day to observe closely our own thoughts, our feelings. This is nothing but 'Know Yourself' through introspection and contemplation.

5

**TO OVERCOME
THE LIFE'S
CHALLENGES,
WE MUST KNOW
THE INHERENT
NATURE OF OUR
INNER WORLD**

Know your life's journey

THERE IS NO CEO IN OUR BODY

There is no permanent Self or soul in us. It means, there is no fixed Self. It doesn't mean that we have no Self or that it doesn't exist, simply that it is impermanent. It essentially means that everything is constantly changing within our physical body. Thoughts, feelings, emotions, and millions of biochemical processes are changing. Nothing is static in us.

In Buddhism, "I" consists of five aggregates -- body, feeling, perception, emotions and consciousness. If we examine these constituents, we see we have no ultimate control over any of them. Moreover, their properties are not associated with the Self. If 'I' has no control over any of the aggregates, then obviously there is no CEO in my body.

Know your life's journey

OUTER WORLD IS A TRUE COPY OF OUR INNER WORLD

There is no reality outside of our mind. Everything we perceive in the world has its roots in our inner world of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. Tranquillity of mind will make the world wonderful with friendliness all around. Similarly, if our mind is in turmoil, then we see a tumultuous outer world.

Buddhist Zen masters say that the reality in the mind is displayed in our outer world. We try to fight the external reality without realising that we first need to address our own thoughts, inner feelings, and the conflicts arising within us. Fighting the external world is like breaking the mirror; it serves no purpose. As the outer world is a true copy of our inner world.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

THE NATURAL STATE OF MIND IS UNSTABLE AND RESTLESS

Close your eyes and observe mind for one minute. You will notice that despite trying to stay in the present, your mind keeps wandering off to thoughts and physical impressions. Mind's wandering increases when we perform boring tasks. When we attend any lecture or meeting and the topic is either not relevant or not to our interest, our wayward mind will not be attentive to subject at hand.

We will invariably get lost in our own thought processes. We are either planning or anticipating the future, day dreaming or worrying about something. This is in fact is our mind's natural and inherent state. If it's disturbed, then mind is more unstable, restless and in wandering state.

Know your life's journey

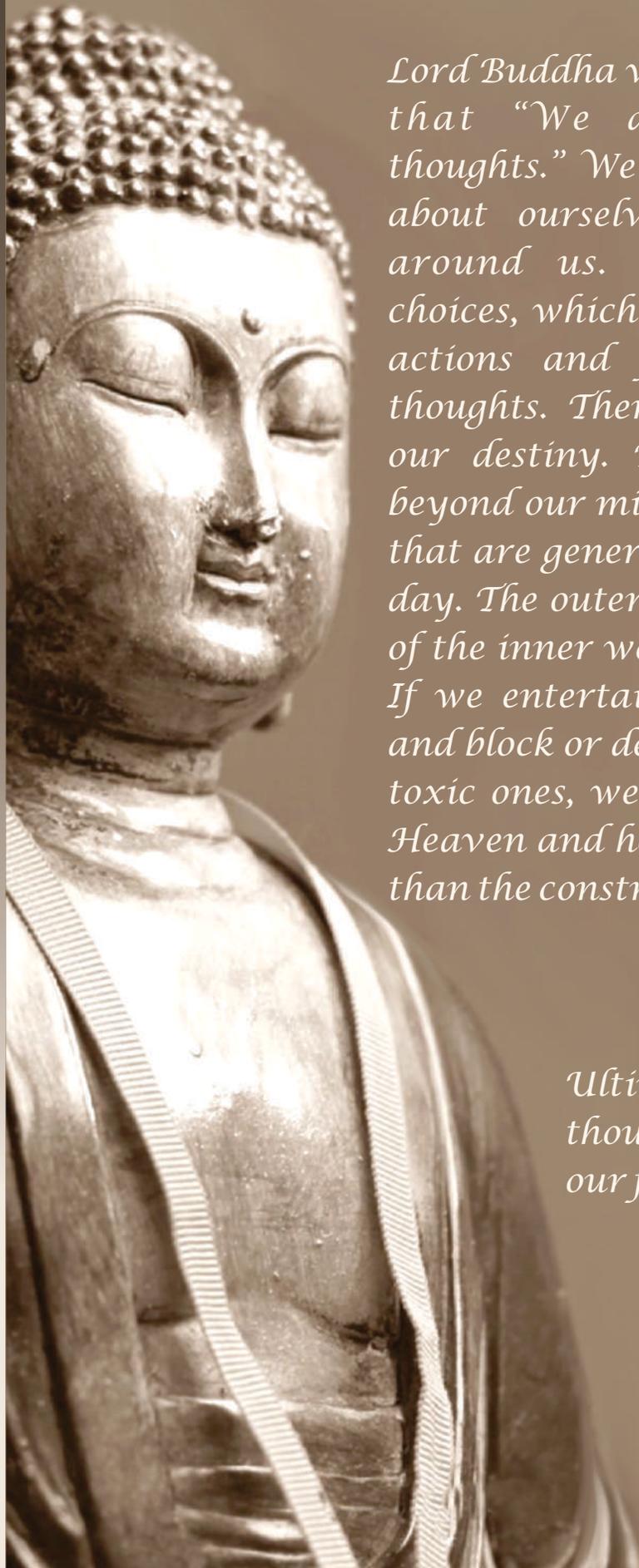
MOST OF OUR THOUGHTS, ACTIONS, BEHAVIOUR ARE DRIVEN BY AUTOMATIC PROGRAMMING

Most of our actions that we perform during the day are on auto pilot mode. Our subconscious and unconscious mind is half a million times more powerful than our conscious mind, according to one study.

Another study establishes that 95% of our actions are performed through unconscious automatic programs. Rest 5% of the mind is conscious. This is the reason that once we become habitual and conditioned to think or act it becomes extremely difficult to change the habit. The body runs by automatic pilot. By the time we are in mid 30s, our identity or personality is mostly complete. Most of our thinking, actions, behaviour are driven by automatic programming. Therefore, it's not an easy task to change ourselves and others.

Know your life's journey

WE ARE WHAT WE TELL TO OURSELVES



Lord Buddha very rightly asserted that "We are nothing but thoughts." We are what we think about ourselves and the world around us. Thoughts lead to choices, which in turn become our actions and fodder for further thoughts. Then our actions make our destiny. There is no reality beyond our mind and the thoughts that are generated throughout the day. The outer world is the mirror of the inner world, and vice versa. If we entertain positive thoughts and block or defuse distressing and toxic ones, we are happy persons. Heaven and hell are nothing more than the constructs of our minds.

Ultimately these very thoughts will determine our future, our destiny.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

OUR LIFE DEPENDS ON THE CHOICES WE MAKE WHILE WATERING THE SEEDS LYING DEEP INSIDE THE MIND

Our quality of life depends on the quality of the seeds that lie deep within our mind. Some seeds we get from our ancestors (by way of genes) and some are sown by others like our parents and teachers during childhood; other seeds we sow and grow ourselves, as we age.

Our life depends on the choices we make while growing and watering those seeds. If we water the seeds of love and compassion, we grow on a spiritual path, while enjoying inner peace. On the other hand, if we choose to water seeds of hatred and anger, we reap stressful moments, eventually leading to pain and suffering.

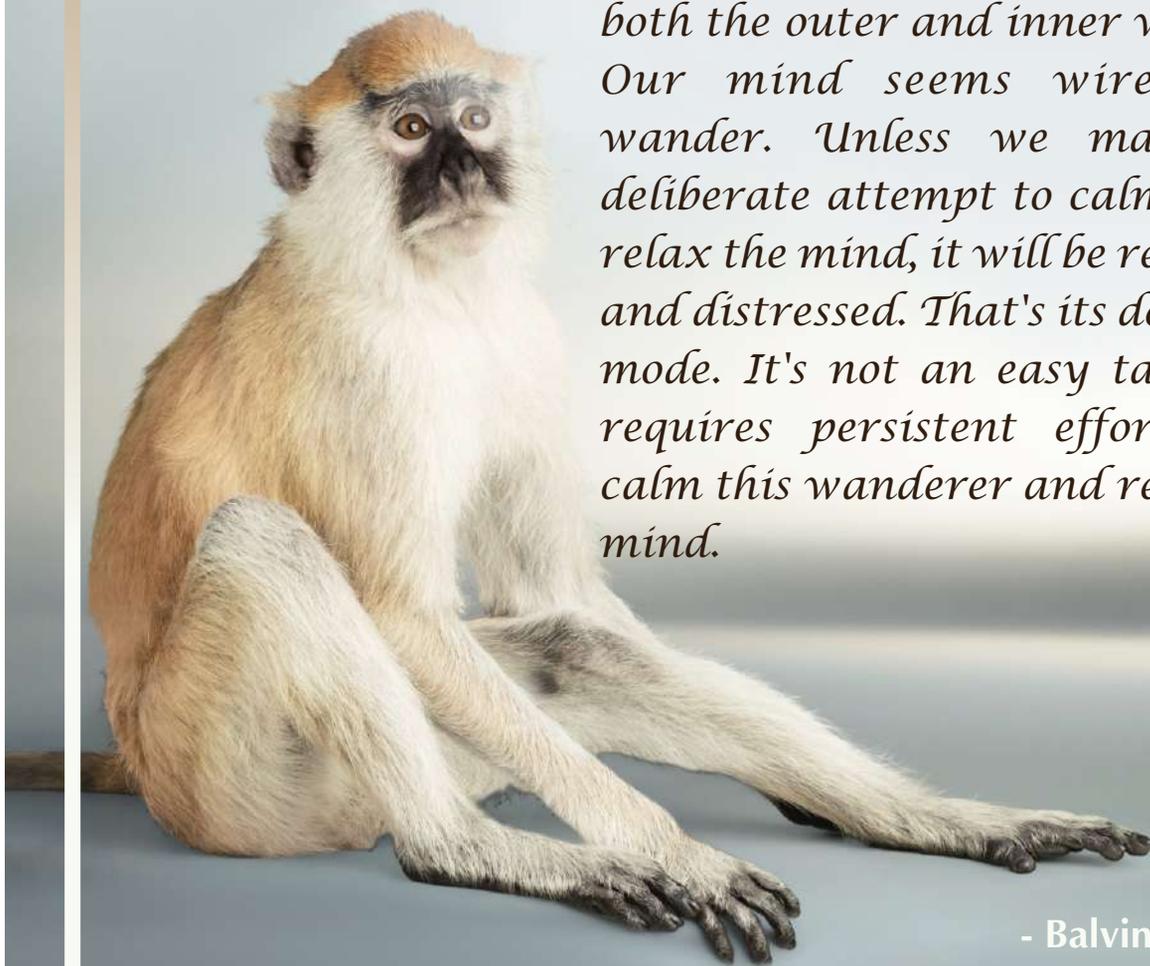
- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

OUR RESTLESS MONKEY MIND!

If we closely observe our mind for a few moments, we see a nonstop stream of thoughts. From one set of thoughts to another, the mind is always engaged in repeated and recycled thoughts. Like a monkey, it jumps and swings from one branch of thought to another, alternately eating and throwing out 'half eaten fruits.

Our mind is highly sensitive and vulnerable to any stimuli from both the outer and inner world. Our mind seems wired to wander. Unless we make a deliberate attempt to calm and relax the mind, it will be restless and distressed. That's its default mode. It's not an easy task. It requires persistent efforts to calm this wanderer and restless mind.



Know your life's journey

MIND IS A THEATRE AND OUR THOUGHTS ARE LIKE A MOVIE



Imagine we are watching a movie in a theatre. We are completely engrossed in the storyline. As story proceeds, we feel happy, joyful, sorrowful or amused. The movie to us becomes a real-life happening. Though the events in the movie are not happening to us, we empathetically feel that we ourselves are playing one or more of the roles. We forget that we are merely watching.

Similarly, our thoughts are like a movie, running in our mind. Completely identifying with its thoughts and feelings, we feel that this drama is real, and part of "I." We lose our ability to watch our thoughts as a simple observer. Rather than witnessing our thoughts, we become an integral part of the thoughts themselves.

Know your life's journey

DOING NOTHING IS FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN DOING SOMETHING

Most of us love to be busy. We enjoy being very busy, even if it adversely affects our health. Simply being busy is not a problem, but when busyness expresses as chronic stress, it becomes a serious issue. There is a direct relationship between busyness and stress. 'Doing nothing' doesn't mean that we sit quietly in a room and go into contemplative mode.

We are not required to think or start analysing or imagining things. What we do need is to go beyond the incessant stream of thoughts. We should observe our thoughts, let them come and go. Just be aware of those thoughts. This is nothing but meditation. Through it, we can experience amazing effects on our physical and mental health.



Know your life's journey

OUR MIND HAS CONFLICTING MODULES – MODULAR MIND

Our mind has a number of modules that are acting separately at the same time. There is no part of self that controls or coordinates these modules. They don't report to any authority stationed in our brain/mind. When we are in conflicting situations, different modules are active and trying to dominate the others.

Noted American journalist and science author Robert Wright explains: "Your mind is composed of lots of specialized modules—modules for sizing up situations and reacting to them—and it's the interplay among these modules that shapes your behaviour. And much of this interplay happens without conscious awareness on your part... This model also helps make sense of some of life's great internal conflicts.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

THOUGHTS CREATE THOUGHTS THEMSELVES!

Watch your thought, you will see that thoughts are created on their own. There is no effort required. Samuel Harris, a popular American author, cognitive neuroscientist and philosopher, firmly claims that we are not the author of our thoughts because we don't control them. They just mysteriously appear or show up, automatically in our consciousness.

Not only do we not control when a thought comes upon us, but also, "The thought thinks itself." However, we have been conditioned to believe that we are the voice behind our thoughts. This is the reason that many decisions we take or choices we make, we are not their authors.

Know your life's journey

THE TENDENCY TO OVERTHINK MAY LEADS TO CHRONIC STRESS AND OTHER MENTAL ILLNESSES

We always have a tendency to overthink the set of thoughts especially when we get mentally disturbed. Such a condition, if not checked, may leads to chronic stress or even depression and anxiety. This condition, in turn, reinforce the overthinking. In a way this becomes a loop. Under both conditions, we are deeply mired in distressing thoughts.

Studies have shown that overthinking leads to serious emotional distress. When people can't escape from this condition, they often resort to unhealthy methods to cope with the problem. Many start abusing alcohol, some start or increase smoking, while others overeat. It becomes extremely difficult to enjoy sound sleep when our mind is disturbed.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

WHY ARE MANY OF OUR ACTIONS 'MINDLESS' AND DRIVEN UNCONSCIOUSLY?

Most of our mental processes occur automatically, and without the involvement of our conscious mind. This prevents the mind from being overloaded with simple tasks. When it comes to decisions, we tend to assume they are made by our conscious mind, but to a greater extent, they are made by the unconscious mind. All the groundwork necessary for decision-making is laid behind the scenes by the unconscious mind.

It is also true that our unconscious mind, over which we have hardly any control, plays a crucial role in making choices at critical moments, many of them unfortunate. Unconscious "kneejerk" responses to difficult situations can spark impulsive and mindless behaviour.

Know your life's journey

WE IMPERFECT HUMANS OFTEN ACT IRRATIONALLY

We are imperfect humans. Our thinking is often far from perfect. It is not always based on logic, reason, and rationality. However, we remain ignorant of many things when we act, decide, or make choices. Each one of us is prone to such errors, also known as cognitive bias. We tend to make illogical or irrational decisions on many occasions.

There are some very common examples of cognitive bias in our everyday life. Like, we tend to attribute success to our own better qualities while blaming failure on others or outside factors. Also, we tend to believe things because many other people also believe the same. We tend to interpret information in a biased manner. The result is that we sometimes make poor and irrational decisions.

Know your life's journey

WHY IT'S SO DIFFICULT TO MANAGE DISTRESSING THOUGHTS

Quite often, we are bombarded by unruly distressed thoughts. We then try to divert our attention to other things. We talk to friends, watch movies, go to games, and engage in various other entertainments, but gain only temporary relief. Those disturbing thoughts just don't want to quit! In fact, the more we suppress them, the more forcefully they continue to come to mind.

The mind loses control. We become increasingly agitated and disturbed. Our mind becomes disobedient, and is no longer listening to us. They get stuck inside the mind and not easily leave our head. The best way to handle them is be aware and mindful of those thoughts and try to replace them with positive thoughts.



Know your life's journey

WE BECOME MORE UNHAPPY WHEN OUR MIND WANDERS

Mind wandering is a natural and inherent feature of our minds. Normally, 50% of the time our mind is not focused or attentive, in fact, it's on wandering mode. When we are bored or doing routine or any other uninteresting work, mind's wandering is as high as 70%. However, when we are engaged in mind-absorbing or concentration-demanding tasks, this percentage is low, as low as 10%. There are many studies now available that establish the relationship between mind's wandering and unhappiness. Also, focused mind is happy mind. When we are disturbed or distressed, we can't focus our mind.

Frequency of wandering increases sharply as we become more unhappy, sad or worried. That's why, mindfulness works miraculously in controlling mind wandering.

Know your life's journey

WE ALL SUFFER FROM NEGATIVITY BIAS IN EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE

We are highly sensitive to negative thoughts and emotions. The reason, our capacity to weigh negative inputs is very high, whereas positive ones is less compelling. This is due to the evolutionary reasons. Because of our past, living the life of hunter-gatherers for millions of years, this negative bias got deeply embedded in our mind. We used to live in constant fear of wild animals and other predators. Living conditions were highly dangerous. So, we became sensitive to any threat - whether real or imagined -- due to prevailing living conditions.

That's how the negative bias got hardwired into our brain. We became in identifying threats and remembering such experiences so that we could better handle such situations in future.

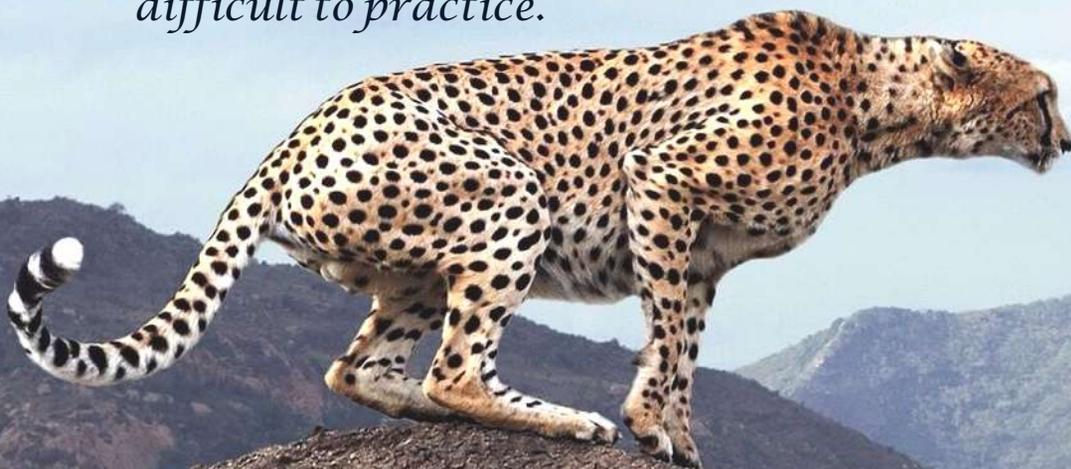
- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

WORRYING OFTEN BECOMES AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR THINKING

We all have a very common tendency to worry over petty things. Though many of us do have a number of concerns to worry about. However, it's just a waste of time and mental energy. Mostly it's imaginary in nature. Fear of something or of the unknown is the reason. When we hold on to the same negative thoughts and fears, we fall into a vicious cycle. We invariably generate streams of many associated thoughts.

All possible scenarios relating to the troubling subject run rampant through our mind. We never keep in mind that "whatever is going to happen will happen, whether we worry or not." Though the solution is simple. Mere awareness of those thoughts can have profound effects on their intensity, but difficult to practice.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

THE INNER VOICE – WE ALL HAVE AN INNER CRITIQUE, BUT WE NEED TO HANDLE IT CAREFULLY

We all are too familiar with the experience of silently speaking to ourselves. When we do something, stupid, forget to do something very important, or say something inappropriate or out of context, we are likely to follow up with self-criticism. This phenomenon is called as "inner voice." Whenever we are caught by the critical voice, we should immediately become aware.

However, when we're fully aware of a situation, weakening of that negative voice will begin. With increased self-awareness, we are able to make conscious choices and decisions about our lives. Therefore, we can limit our own critical and negative 'inner voice'. Otherwise, this inner critique can harm us badly.

Know your life's journey

MORE WE SUPPRESS NEGATIVE THOUGHT, MORE FORCEFULLY THEY RESURFACE

Why it is so hard to avoid unwanted thoughts? When we try not to think of something, one part of our mind does avoid the forbidden thought, but another part tries to ensure that the thought is not coming up, therefore, ironically, bringing that thought to mind.

The result is often a vicious cycle of negativity. Suppression of negative thoughts makes the situation worse. Thoughts rebound, regardless of one's attempts to divert attention from those disturbing thoughts. These unpleasant emotions tend to recur, compromising well-being. Many of us experience a similar situation when we try to fall sleep with a disturbed mind. Trying hard to avoid our disturbing thoughts, we attempt to distract ourselves with other thoughts. We are then trapped in the "paradox of insomnia."

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

ONE OF THE GREATEST SOURCES OF SUFFERING IS BOREDOM, AS IT SEEMS TO BE AN INSULT TO ONESELF

When we have nothing to do, that's the state of feeling bored. It's an unpleasant emotional state when there is lack of interest and difficulty in concentration on current activity. It's unpleasant to feel bored because it's an insult to oneself that he/she has nothing interesting or productive to do something else. One of the greatest sources of suffering is boredom. No one is spared by this emotional state. We all suffer from it at one time or the others. Though we perceive 'getting bored' in negative sense but sometimes it has positive outcome.

According to one study 'being bored can motivate people to 'engage in prosocial tasks and encourage more meaningful behaviour'

6

**HAPPINESS AND
CONTENTMENT -
THIS IS WHAT WE
ALL ULTIMATELY
DESIRE**

Know your life's journey

WHY WE CAN NEVER BE PERFECTLY HAPPY?

While there may be many things we want to achieve in life; the ultimate purpose is to be happy and live life to the fullest. Satisfaction and contentment never come from the pursuit of wealth, material goods, or pleasure.



We tend to forget this basic fact. Money of course is needed for happiness, but only to a certain extent. Rather than seeking happiness in the outside world by way of possessions and indulgence in pleasures, we need to look inside our mind. We must learn to manage our mind if we want happiness. This we mostly don't do. That's why we can never be perfectly happy: we don't set our priorities straight and more importantly; we look for happiness in the outside world.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

HAPPINESS AND BEING SUCCESSFUL ARE INVARIABLY CONFLICTING IN NATURE

All around us, we see extremely successful people leading highly stressful and unhappy lives. They have all the money and comforts but little to no time to enjoy. With success comes wealth, material goods, status and comforts to enjoy. Most of us strive to be successful in life, in whatever way we may define success.

People generally believe that it is success that leads to happiness and not the other way around. However, success generally comes at a cost. It often leads to stress and unhappiness because of the demanding nature of successful positions. On the other hand, happiness doesn't come from outwardly material things. It comes from inside.

Know your life's journey

WE ALL HAVE A HAPPINESS LEVEL, AROUND WHICH OUR HAPPINESS FLUCTUATES

Regardless of what we experience, we generally return to our usual level of happiness. Each one of us occupies a particular place on a scale of, let's say, 1 to 10 (1 being most unhappy and 10 the happiest). We more or less hover around that emotional baseline, which remains relatively stable through all our days. This is known as the hedonic treadmill gradient.

It is a common phenomenon in which people repeatedly return to their baseline level of happiness, regardless of what happens to them. Since so much of our happiness is determined by our thoughts and actions, which tend to be habitual and unchallenged, our happiness level remains generally static, with small fluctuations.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

IS MONEY SO IMPORTANT FOR HAPPINESS? MOSTLY, WE BELIEVE SO.

Whatever we may have the purpose or goals for the future but we want to be happy and enjoy life to the fullest. However, most of us believe firmly that we would become happy if we have plenty of money.

In fact, money plays an extremely important role in our society. A mad race to generate wealth is evident in most parts of the world. It's a harsh reality. Money is undoubtedly very important for all of us but to a certain extent. Till we achieve our basic requirements and needs of life, money is essential. Beyond that level, it's either neutral or it becomes counterproductive. It creates other problems rather than creating happiness in life. Obsession to accumulate money may even be detrimental.

Know your life's journey

NURTURE FEW MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS FOR TRUE HAPPINESS

People who spend more time with their friends feel happier than those who spend less time with friends. However, it's always preferable to have a few true friends than friends in large numbers. Decades of research studies show that social relations predict mental well-being over time, and that people who actively endeavour to cultivate and vitalize their connections with others often becoming happier.

There is a strong association between happiness and close relationships, such as family, friends, and social circles. Personal connection creates mental and emotional stimulation, which are automatic mood boosters. Therefore, to be happy and satisfied in life, we must nurture meaningful relationships.

Know your life's journey

IF WE WANT HAPPINESS, THEN WE MUST HAVE REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS WITH RIGHT PRIORITIES

Indeed, we must have right ideals and priorities in pursuing our goals, both short and long term. If our priorities are not set right, and we keep on pursuing our every little thing, our stress levels will soar.

One must learn to see things in the broader perspective. In fact, one of the biggest causes of stress and unhappiness is that we fail to take in the Big Picture. We must not involve ourselves in petty and wasteful tasks. Often people spend lot of time on such activities. Therefore, to lead a happy and contented life, we must keep our expectations in a reasonable range, directed by right priorities.

Know your life's journey

CHASING PLEASURE INVARIABLE LEADS TO GREATER UNHAPPINESS

Who doesn't need the life with plenty of joy, money and comforts? We need pleasurable moments and activities. However, by its very nature, such pleasure is fleeting. Temptations abound in this pleasure-driven world. Pleasurable goods such as tobacco, alcohol, sugar, social media, drugs, and the Internet, where we can uninterruptedly watch anything, are readily available. However, pleasure never offers true satisfaction or lasting happiness, and in fact can make us more miserable.

This happens when, in order to maintain the pleasurable feelings, we increase the frequency, quantity, or intensity of things that give us pleasure. This is called 'hedonic treadmill'. In its extreme, it becomes outright addiction. Few can resist it as the cause lies in our brain due to the secretion of biochemical namely dopamine.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

DOPAMINE FASTING – THE LATEST TREND TO ESCAPE FROM INDULGENCE IN PLEASURE

Most of us try to experience pleasurable goods and activities thinking that such experience will bring joy and happiness at least for some time. We get pleasure through junk food, wine and whisky, porn, recreational drugs, shopping and visiting nightclubs and exotic places. Pleasure is highly addictive due to surge in dopamine, a biochemical in the brain. We need more and more experience, frequency or dose of those pleasurable good/activities.



In many cases, if unchecked, lead to addiction. To exercise self-control, people have started dopamine fasting, when they totally restrict/avoid for certain period like 24 hrs that pleasure inducing experience. While doing so, they will be able to enjoy more of pleasure next time.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

FLOW WITH TIME! THROUGH IT WE CAN CREATE PLENTY OF HAPPY MOMENTS

When we are listening to our favourite music, painting on canvas, practicing dance with our instructor, playing games of our choice, running on a treadmill, or being engrossed in talk with a friend on any interesting topic, time seems to fly. People can forget that they are hungry or even tired when they are absorbed in interesting activities.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a Hungarian-American psychologist coined the term 'flow state' to describe the focus, absorption, and enjoyment of full immersion in any activity. He says 'Flow is a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience is so enjoyable that people will continue to do it for the sheer sake of doing it.'

Know your life's journey

WHY WE GET A FEELING OF EUPHORIA AND WELLBEING WHEN WE EXERCISE?

Whenever we do physical exercise like running or briskly walking, cycling, swimming, or a gym workout, we get feeling of well-being - sometimes even one of euphoria. We feel good and experience an elevated mood. The reason is the secretion of certain biochemical, endorphins, in our nervous system. Endorphins have profound effects on our mind and body. Even yoga and meditation are supposed to increase one's level of endorphins.

That's the reason doctors recommend aerobic and other physical exercises to patients suffering from depression. These are potent long-term antidepressants. These chemicals are also said to enhance our immune response. The best thing is that this biochemical can be produced within our own body.



7

**OUR SUCCESS
AND FAILURES
DEPEND ON
HOW STRONG
WE CAN HAVE
INTERNAL
CONTROL OVER
OUR MIND**

Know your life's journey

**WE HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO SUFFER,
BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO HANDLE IT.**

Suffering lies at its root, just as it lies at the root of life itself. We are born into the world of pain, and we all experience sadness and loss. Obviously, we experience happiness and joy as well, but suffering seems to be a dominant influence in our lives.

Suffering is an outcome of distressing thoughts and emotions associated with physical pain, fear, anger, shame, loneliness, etc. However, when we learn to manage negative thoughts, we can easily get rid of them and avoid much suffering. The choice lies squarely with us as to how we interpret any situation, whether we allow it to cause suffering or not.

Know your life's journey

AVOID TO FALL INTO THE TRAP OF NEGATIVITY

Watching and observing thoughts in a non-judgmental way can bring about a big change in the way we respond to negative situations. The more we pay attention to what makes us happy and feeling good, the greater would be our capacity to manage what makes us feel bad in the first place. We should look for positive experiences whenever and wherever possible. We must frequently recall our past experiences which reinforce pleasant feelings. To the extent possible, we should avoid watching negative news. We should share good experiences among ourselves.

There is no dearth of good things happening in the world. What's required is to pay more attention to those experiences and events, rather than falling into the trap of negativity.

Know your life's journey

LEARN TO MEDITATE – SIMPLY START OBSERVING THE PRESENT MOMENTS

By following the steps listed, anyone can learn meditation.

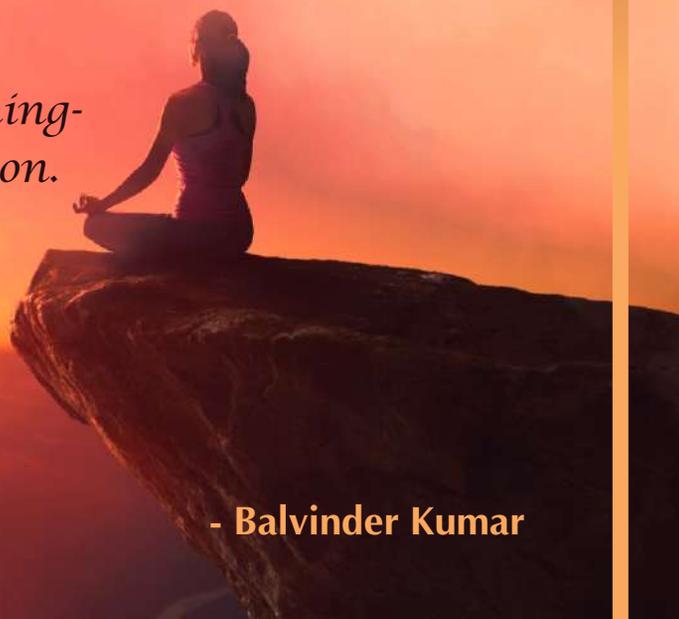
Sit on a cushion on the floor, or on a chair. Pay close attention to the movement of the breath. Breathing in, be aware that you are breathing in, and how it feels. Breathing out, be aware that you are breathing out.

Feel the coolness of air going in, and the warmth of the air coming out from the nostrils.

Continue this simple process for the length of your meditation practice, constantly redirecting the attention back to the breath.

While we meditate, we are, as to be expected, distracted by say surrounding sound or the irrepressible arising of thoughts. Whenever this happens, bring the attention back to the breathing.

This is the essence of breathing-based mindfulness meditation.



- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE MEDITATE?

When we are not attentive and focused, our mind is wandering in many directions. Nearly half of the time, we are not concentrating or focusing on the task at hand; it means we are on default mode. At that time, in the brain, the default mode network (DMN) is active. It's a network of interacting brain regions. When the brain is at rest, DMN is active. This is in fact the thinking brain.

When we practice meditation, our DMN becomes quieter and less active. In other words, our thinking mind is under check. We gradually inculcate the habit of becoming more and more nonreactive and nonjudgmental. This can truly be called "becoming awakened". We can experience inner peace and serenity in a stressful world.

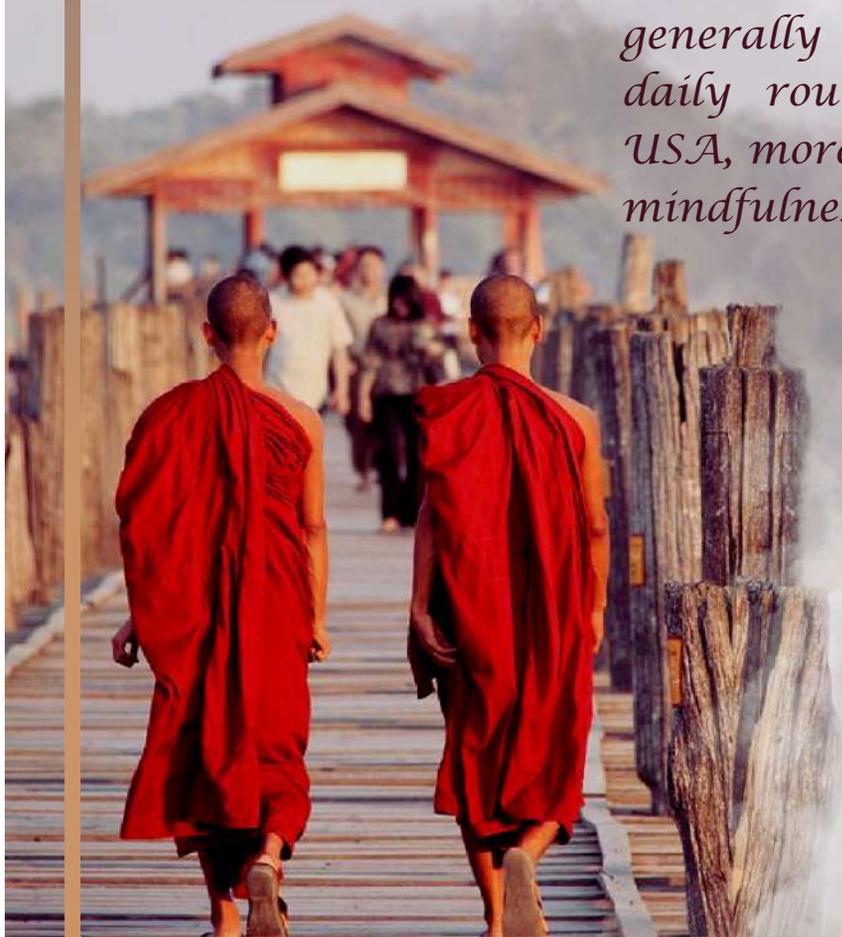
Know your life's journey

EVEN WITH AMAZING OUTCOME, PEOPLE AT LARGE ARE NOT CONVINCED ABOUT MEDITATION

The reasons why meditation practice is not becoming a widespread movement in India (as it has happened many other parts of the world) are the beliefs and myths that are attached to it. First, people are not convinced in their heart that just sitting silently can stop the movement of thoughts in their mind. Second, people are not able to calm their mind so they leave hastily. Third, people feel it's for monks or people who leave their homes and go to remote areas to practice it. It's not for worldly people.

That's the reasons, people don't generally adopt this as their daily routine. Surprising in USA, more than 12% people do mindfulness-based meditation.

- Balvinder Kumar

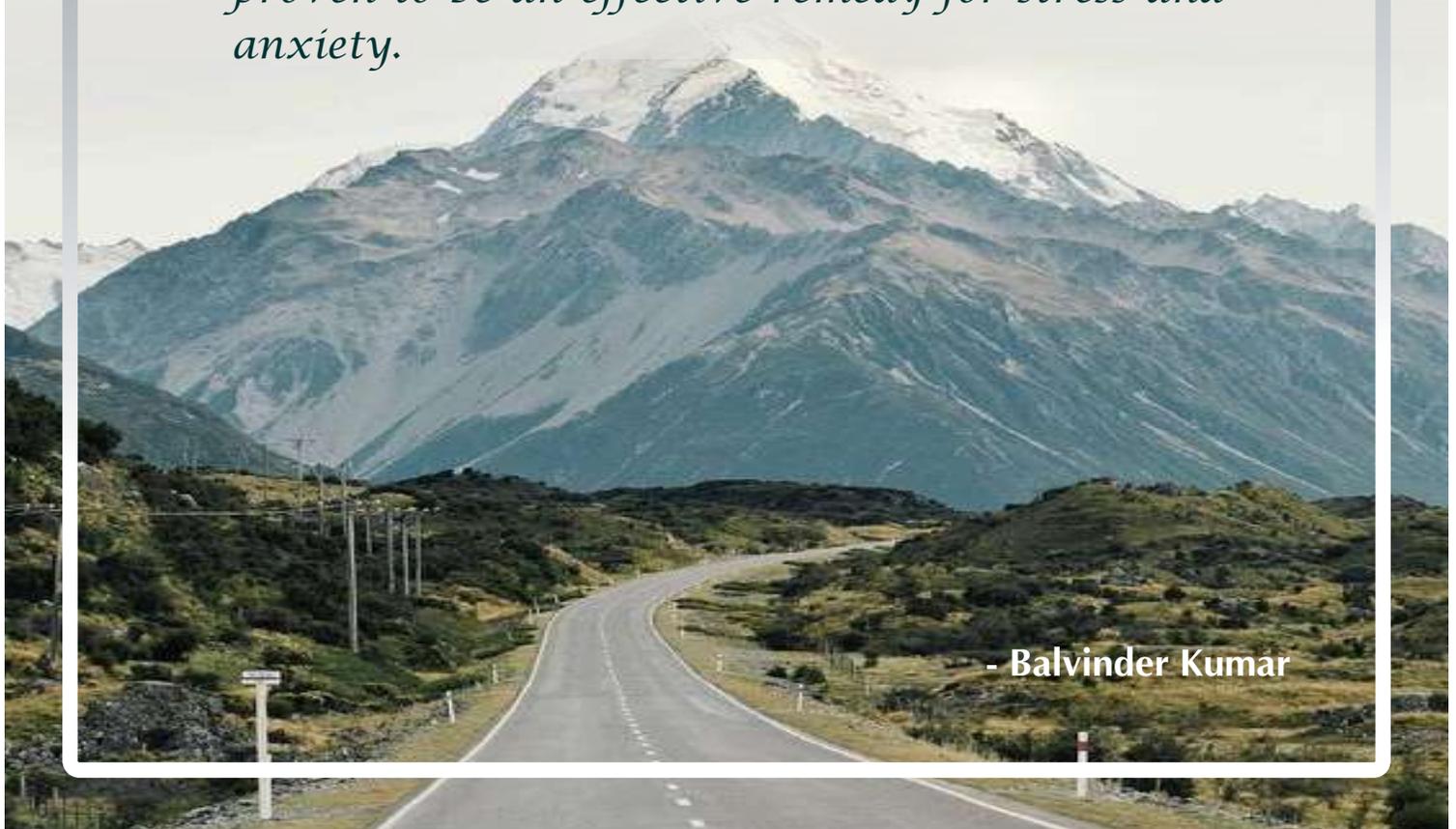


Know your life's journey

TO OVERCOME MENTAL STRESS - LEARN THE ART OF NIKSEN

To address the problem of mental stress and so called too much of busyness, in the Netherlands, the Dutch people practice a lifestyle concept called Nixsen. It means doing nothing. Nixsen is promoting the art of really doing nothing, and taking time for oneself. During that time, they just sit idly and don't do anything of any utility or use.

Nixsen enthusiasts take time out to sit quietly and observe the surrounding environment. They might listen to music or lose themselves in thought; a long walk in their neighbourhood or a pretty forest is a popular choice. People can simply relax in a dark room. Now growing popular in other parts of the world, Nixsen has proven to be an effective remedy for stress and anxiety.



Know your life's journey

LETTING GO OF THOUGHTS – A THIEF IN AN EMPTY HOUSE

One of the best qualities we all can inculcate is 'letting go of thoughts.' We all must have noticed that once we get trapped in negative and distressing thoughts then we are not able to get rid of them. Those very thoughts get stuck and resurface again and again. We are not able to let the thought go.

To handle such thoughts, we need to understand that suppose a thief goes to any empty house, he finds he has nothing to do or steal there, so the thief will just leave. Likewise, if we don't entertain or focus on some thoughts, then their intensity will start weakening and gradually they will 'leave' the mind.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

GOING INWARD MEANS TAKING THE PATH OF INTROSPECTION AND SELF- CONTEMPLATION

The outside world is illusory and quite often deceptive, its "rules" very often unpredictable and arbitrary. To understand the true reality of this world, we must go inward. An inward journey is necessary for true realization of who we really are. Going inward simply means taking the path of introspection and self-contemplation. The only person we have the power to change is ourselves. Through the inward journey, we can learn about the direction we are taking, and why.

So, the greatest gift we can give to ourselves is the opening to and flowering of self-awareness. By doing so, we get to observe the mind and its thoughts coming in and out of our awareness.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know your life's journey

**TO DEFEAT FEAR, JUST BE AWARE,
MINDFUL AND DIRECTLY CONFRONT IT!**

How to handle fear can be best explained by a small Zen story. Once there was a young warrior. Her teacher told her that she had to fight with a monster i.e. fear. She didn't want to do that. Monster was too scary, big and aggressive. To cut the story short, she asked the monster, 'How can I defeat you?' Fear/monster replied, 'My weapons are that I talk fast, and I get very close to your face. Then you get completely unnerved, and you do whatever I say. If you don't do what I tell you, I have no power'.

So, in that way, the warrior learned how to defeat fear. Just confront and don't react to fear. Be mindful, be aware and attentive to it.

8

**DESIGN YOUR
DESTINY – WE
MUST CARVE
OUT OUR OWN
PATH TO
DESTINATION**

Know Your Life's Journey

WE ARE THE SOLO DESIGNER OF OUR OWN DESTINY

Destiny is, undoubtedly, shaped by our choices, the decisions we make, and actions we take throughout our lives. So, the main question is whether we can create our own destiny or everything is pre-planned. The answer lies in the extent to which we exercise control or free will over our decisions and actions.

A silhouette of a person jumping joyfully in a field at sunset. The person is in mid-air with arms and legs outstretched, set against a bright, glowing sun low on the horizon. The foreground shows a field of tall grass, and the sky is filled with soft, golden light and some clouds.

If we have no control over our actions, then obviously our destiny is a reality. Whatever is to happen will happen as destined. If we feel and also exercise complete control over our choice, decisions, and actions we make or take, then we are the architect of our destiny. Though there will always be some uncertainty but we can largely design our destiny according to our wishes.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

WE CAN REDESIGN OUR BRAIN STRUCTURE AT ANY AGE DURING OUR LIFETIME

Although we come into this world with a genetically predetermined body, we have enormous potential to structurally and functionally change our brain. This is a paradigm-shattering discovery made by neuroscientists in recent times. For centuries, neuroscientists were of the opinion that our brain is immutable, unchangeable, and static, and that therefore whatever genes we inherit from our parents would to a large extent control our destiny.

Now the fact is, we are all amazingly empowered to change ourselves. Mind has unlimited potential to upgrade itself to learn and create new skills, behaviour patterns, belief systems, etc. Neurologists call this brain plasticity or neuroplasticity, which refers to changes in the brain via modification in neural pathways and synapses.

- Balvinder Kumar



Know Your Life's Journey

WE ARE WHAT WE BELIEVE

Life is all about believing in ourselves and the world around us. What we believe and tell ourselves from moment to moment determines the journey we undertake during our lifetime. The beliefs we carry along with us shape the contours of our life.

These beliefs create our future, the destiny we design. These are both the catalysts and inhibitors of our growth. So deeply are embedded our beliefs that we hardly care or dare to challenge them. For the most part, we live with them throughout our lives. The quality of our beliefs exerts significant impact on our day-to-day life. What we do and what happens to us are reflections of our core beliefs.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

LEARNING THROUGH MISTAKE IS IN FACT, THE BIGGEST LESSON, WE CAN LEARN FROM LIFE

During our life's journey, we are bound to fail or commit mistakes. We can't escape such times, because, we are imperfect humans living in uncertain times. Rather than justifying the mistake or blaming others or treating ourselves as victim of others or the circumstances, we should own the responsibility gracefully on those occasions.

We must learn from our errors and failures and move forward. It's a part of acceptance. For success, it's imperative to keep on learning from the mistakes. Learning through mistake and failures can surely take us to the higher plane of consciousness.

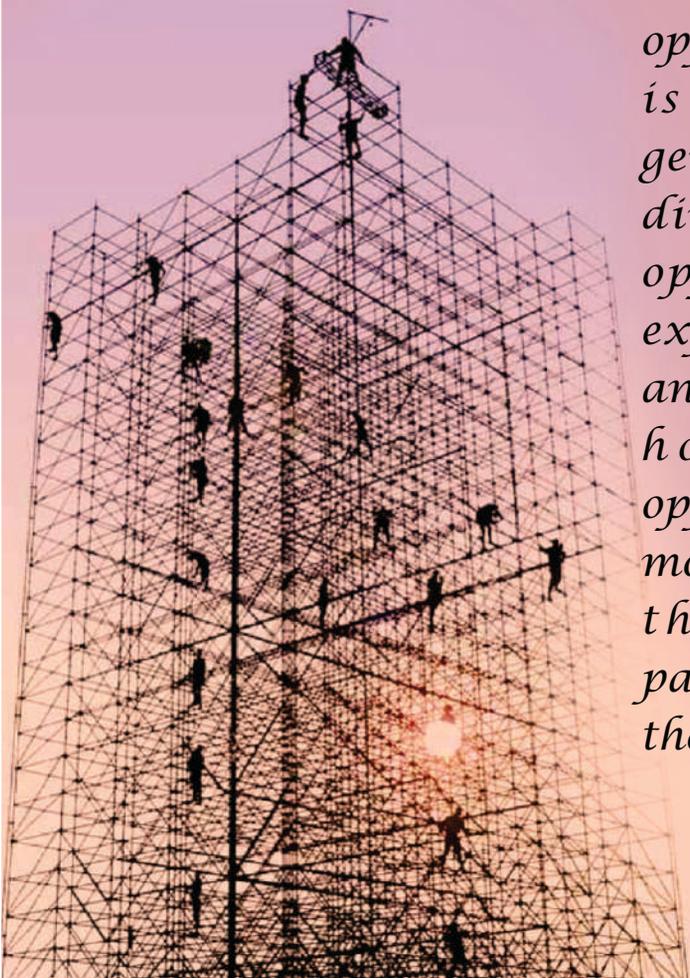
Know Your Life's Journey

WE ARE THE ARCHITECT OF DESIGNING THE MAP OF OUR OWN LIFE'S JOURNEY

Each of us possesses a unique gift given by Supreme Being at the moment we landed on this planet. The purpose of our individual lives is to express that gift to its fullest potential. We all have special qualities and attributes, along with unlimited opportunities from an inconceivably vast pool of potentialities by which those unique qualities may be expressed.

Beauty lies in the way we are open to those opportune moments. God is always infinitely generous and clear in directing us to those opportunities, but He expects us to be receptive and smart enough to catch hold of the right opportunity at the right moment in life. We can therefore be active participator in designing the map of our journey.

- Balvinder Kumar



Know Your Life's Journey

WE ALL NEED TO LISTEN TO OUR INNER SELF/VOICE

During difficult periods of life, it's only the inner self that can truly help us. It's our inner voice, from our heart, and not from the egoic mind. Our inner self is always in sync with our best interests. Since most of the time we don't hear our inner voice due to the heavy noise of the materialistic world, there is no one to guide us.

People often advise their disturbed friends to 'listen to your own inner voice.' Many of us can recall at least one occasion during our lifetime when we were about to commit some big mistake but were impelled to resist by the inner self. When we are in solitude or serenity, we can hear that feeble voice.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

HOW WE REACT TO WHAT HAPPENS TO US, REALLY MATTERS IN LIFE?

Our life is not determined by what happens to us, but by how we react to what happens to us. In other words, what really matters is not what life brings to us, but rather our attitude in embracing life. A positive attitude sparks a chain reaction of positive thoughts and events. It seems people with a positive attitude simply live longer, happier, healthier, more successful lives... and who doesn't want that!! Realize that it's not about what happens to you, it's about how you react to what happens.

It could possibly be the best thing we could do for both our emotional and physical health!

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

THE MORE SELF-AWARE AND CONSCIOUS WE ARE, FASTER IS THE RECOVERY FROM ANY TROUBLE/DOWNFALL

How fast we recover from the fall depends on We all travel a slippery slope and are susceptible to falls, even when we take all the care and precautions required. Those who prepare themselves well for such unforeseen events can pick themselves up quickly and rise to any challenge.

The greater the control exercised over mind and body, the faster we recover from such falls; the more self-aware and conscious we are the faster is the recovery. The deep acceptance inherent to self-awareness smooths our transition to normalcy. Although we have little to no control over what happens due to outside forces/events, fast and quick recovery from difficulties is in our own power.

Know Your Life's Journey

INVEST IN YOURSELF - IT'S THE BEST CHOICE WE HAVE

In our life, we keep on investing time and energy to make ourselves better human beings. Maximum possible returns are to be expected when we make a strong investment in ourselves. Whether this investment takes the form of money, energy, and/or time, it's the best choice. Whatever the purpose or purposes of our life may be, they cannot be realized unless we grow in life. Even more important than physical development is our mental and spiritual growth. Without it, life becomes habitual, stagnant and even robotic. Obviously, such a life offers little to no satisfaction and is sometimes characterized as a "living death."

Therefore, whenever and wherever possible, we should invest in ourselves, so that we may continue to grow.

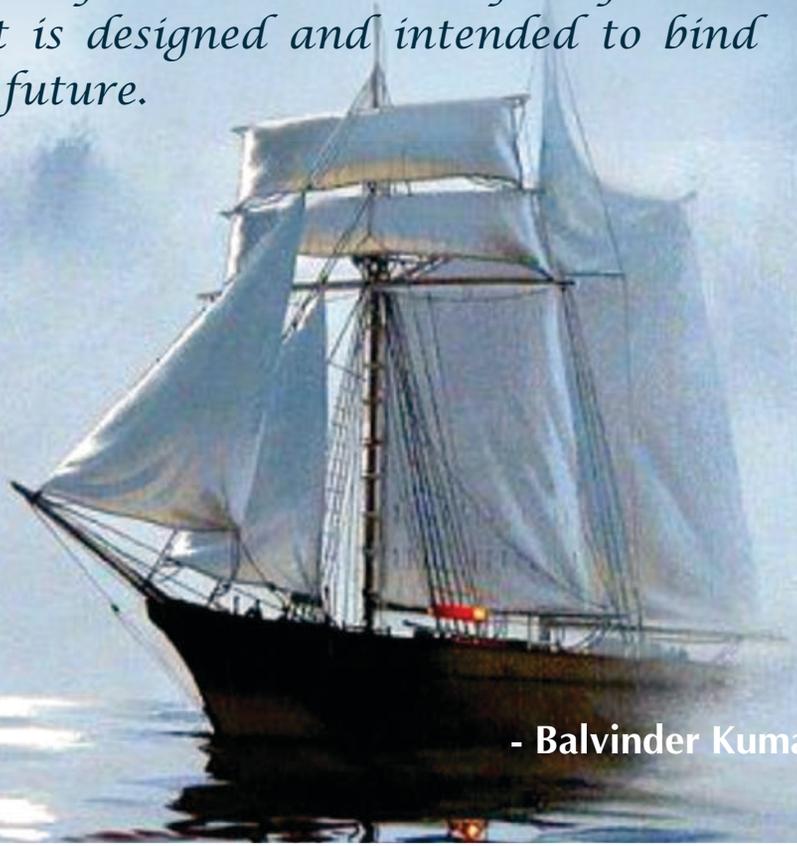
- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

ULYSSES CONTRACT – THE DEAL BETWEEN THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Very often we tend to put our future in risk for the sake of enjoyment of the present. Greek hero Ulysses wanted to hear the alluring but fatal song of the sirens as his ship sailed past them. To ensure he would not succumb to the temptation he had his crew stuff their ears with cotton and tied himself to the mast of his ship, so that he wouldn't hear the sound.

Every day we face dilemma while going for junk and unhealthy food, smoking, drinking and likewise. Knowing well the consequences in future, we succumb to the temptation of the present. That's why we need to take a balanced decision. A Ulysses contract is a freely made decision that is designed and intended to bind oneself in the future.



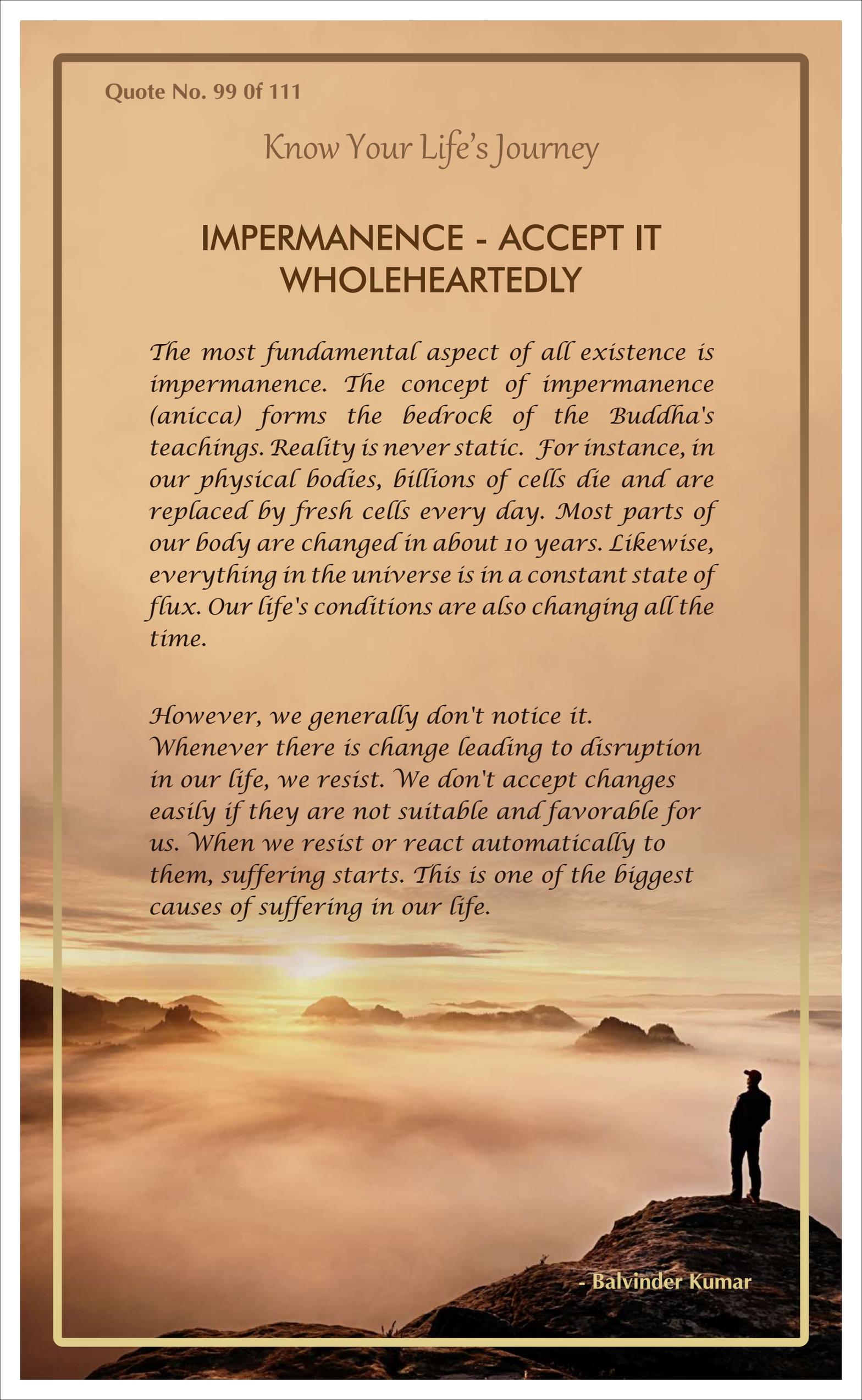
- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

IMPERMANENCE - ACCEPT IT WHOLEHEARTEDLY

The most fundamental aspect of all existence is impermanence. The concept of impermanence (anicca) forms the bedrock of the Buddha's teachings. Reality is never static. For instance, in our physical bodies, billions of cells die and are replaced by fresh cells every day. Most parts of our body are changed in about 10 years. Likewise, everything in the universe is in a constant state of flux. Our life's conditions are also changing all the time.

However, we generally don't notice it. Whenever there is change leading to disruption in our life, we resist. We don't accept changes easily if they are not suitable and favorable for us. When we resist or react automatically to them, suffering starts. This is one of the biggest causes of suffering in our life.

A person is standing on a rocky peak, looking out over a vast, misty landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The landscape is filled with rolling hills and mountains, all shrouded in a thick layer of mist or fog. The person is silhouetted against the bright light of the sun.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

LIFE CAN NEVER BE SIMPLE UNLESS WE KEEP ON LEARNING LESSONS

We navigate our developmental journey from womb to cremation or burial ground. Mistakes that we occasionally commit and failures we experience are all parts of on-going learning process. Life is not simple; on many occasions, unfolding of events takes place in mysterious way. Along the way, we grow physically, mentally, and spiritually, simultaneously or may be one after the other, while learning lessons about life.

Gradually, as we learn from life's complexities and appreciate its mysteries, quite often through painful experiences and failures, we begin to enlarge our own circle of love and compassion and feel more of other people's pain; this is what the meaning of spirituality is.

Know Your Life's Journey

IF WE DON'T LEARN, THE LESSONS ARE REPEATED UNTIL THEY ARE LEARNED

We keep on learning lessons until the very last day of our life. There's no part of life that doesn't contain its lessons. Everyone makes mistakes and faces failure at one time or other during one's career or service or in relationships during lifetime. But the choice is always there to convert those incidents/events into opportunities, and to use those hurdles and obstructions as stepping stones.

. If we don't learn, the lessons are repeated until they are learned. Lesson-bearing circumstances are attracted to us in various forms until we have learned what we are required to learn. It's an old saying that failure is the mother of all successes.



Quote No. 102 of 111

Know Your Life's Journey

**WE MUST ACCEPT THE LIFE AS IT'S
PRESENTED TO US FROM TIME TO TIME**

Life is a dazzling collection of experiences of all kinds. No one is immune to trying times, such as those we meet with serious accident, the loss of a loved one, sudden business failure, heavy financial loss, or any other miseries.



Despite our best efforts, we simply cannot avoid eventualities in life. If we resist such situations, suffering is invariably aggravated. The best possible way to handle life is to accept as it's presented to us. We should accordingly respond to emerging situations rather than reacting in different ways. Acceptance has a great power. We must invariably adopt and experience it. We shouldn't take it as a weakness.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

FOR OUR DESTINED FUTURE WE NEED TO HAVE A FOCUSED PURPOSE

Life is the outcome of a series of actions and decisions we continue to make throughout our lifetime. We never know, even a small decision that we take inadvertently or otherwise can have wider implications in the future. Such action may lead us to altogether new territory. And just as likely, large decisions can take us nowhere.

Without purpose, we simply can't carve out our path for future journey. Those of us who identify their purpose and then work in that direction are already in the act of fulfilling that purpose or intent. So, the key in life is to identify purpose and to work on it so that your destiny will be in alignment with your purpose.

- Balvinder Kumar

Know Your Life's Journey

BELIEFS IN OURSELVES ARE, IN FACT, THE PRECURSOR TO SUCCESS

Life is not easy in any situation. It's critically important to believe in yourself. Opportunities are available in almost all situations. Beauty lies in the belief about oneself, in one's strength and ability to handle whatever comes our way. Our well-wishers, friends, and colleagues can help in making opportunities available to us, but belief in ourselves is needed to make good of those opportunities.

Beliefs in ourselves are the precursor to success. Success starts with the belief that we are the creator of our own destiny through actions. If we change our thoughts, we can change our reality. It all begins and ends with our beliefs. The main difference between successful and ordinary people is their belief system.

Know Your Life's Journey

WE MUST ALL STRIVE TO MAKE A BETTER VERSION OF OURSELVES

For all of us, the sole purpose of life should be to evolve, grow and become a better human as we travel along the life's journey. For this, we need to invest time and energy in making a better version of 'I'. This 'I', at this time, should be an improved copy of 'I' of 5 or 10 years back. We should judge ourselves on time to basis.

One way is to make a balance sheet and then assess where we stand. What kind of strengths and weaknesses, we have and what challenges and opportunities we face? We should have better control over external as well as internal world. Besides, we must become more self-disciplined, self-aware and mindful.

Know Your Life's Journey

WE NEED TO CONNECT OURSELVES WITH OUR OWN INNER SELF

In this materialistic world, we are increasingly disconnected from our inner Self. Emphasis is now purely on the outside world. We have forgotten that happiness and peace lie within ourselves - that, in Jesus' words, "The kingdom of heaven is within." We don't pay attention to the inner governance of our mind.

Since we are largely ignorant of the mind's, inner workings, we mostly fail to keep it under check. Completely identified with our mind, we are largely dominated by it. There is hardly any genuine emphasis on our own spiritual nature. We have almost no place for soul, spirit, and inner governance. Close attention must be paid to spiritual development. Otherwise, our sense of alienation and aloneness will only deepen.



9

**ACCEPT THE
PROCESS OF
AGING AND
DYING
GRACEFULLY**

Know your life's journey

TIME RUNS FASTER AS WE AGE

Each one of us experiences time in our own unique way. Though time is objective, our experience of it is subjective. Do you know, time seems to speed up as we age? The reason is the perception of time changes radically as we age. No newness in life. No new memories are excitedly added. So, life speeds up.

Now the question arises as to whether we can slow down the pace of time as we get older? Yes, we can do it by being open to trying and experiencing new things in life. We can minimize our routines. We should learn new skills. By doing so, we can productively use our time in the older age.

Know your life's journey

LEARN TO SLOW DOWN THE AGING PROCESS!

We are all programmed to die one day. How many tomorrows each one of us will see, astrologer or palmist can tell. People can survive for decades with terminal illnesses. Thanks to improved living conditions and medical interventions, people can now slow the aging process. We can better treat some of the leading causes of death, impacting how long we live.

At least 10 - 15 years of additional life after 60 is our hands. It's all depends on our life's style. How healthy and active that's. By way of regular physical and mental exercise, healthy diet, good sleep and experience new things in life can easily healthy years to our life.

Know your life's journey

ACCEPT THE PROCESS OF DYING AND LEARN TO DIE GRACEFULLY

As we get older, most of us slowly and reluctantly start accepting the inevitability of death. Our only wish for those final days is to die gracefully, without pain and suffering. Besides, we don't want to experience uncertainty about death. However, when people face imminent death, they start accepting it and focusing on the positive because they know they don't have much time left. Absent soul-searching and acceptance, most people are uncomfortable in talking about their death.

The only way to accept death and the process of dying is through mindfulness. The greater the self-awareness and mindful living, the more easily we can accept death and prepare well for the last leg of our life's journey.

Know your life's journey

WE SHOULD BECOME MORE AWARE AND ACCEPT DEATH AS A NATURAL ENDING TO LIFE

When we forget that we will die, we tend to lead a habitual and complacent life. We may even start doing things that we don't really approve of or wish for ourselves. There is a Buddhist meditation practice called Marāṇasati, which uses various visualization and contemplation techniques to meditate on the nature of death.

This is also known as mindfulness of death or death awareness. Through this meditation practice, we become more aware and accepting of death as a natural ending to our life. In Maranasati, practitioners learn to accept impermanence and suffering, while also becoming more closely and intimately aware of death.

Know your life's journey

WILL SCIENCE EVER ANSWER THE QUESTION OF 'IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH'?

'Is there life after death'? has become far more contentious question than 'Is God exist'. With the progress of science, reason and rationale, existence of God is almost a settled issue. The question now revolves around faith and religion. Whether there is life after death, there are thousands of convincing examples exists in India and elsewhere that prove life after death.

However, scientific community is not convinced on this issue due to lack of firm evidences. Then there is regression therapy which is widely practiced by Dr Brian Weiss and many other doctors across the world. In well documented therapies, the subjects are taken back to past births. Now comes the more powerful theory of panpsychism and 'biocentrism' put forward by Robert Lanza - consciousness is everywhere and it can't be destroyed.

Thank you

