

SONA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

[An Endearing Shrine for Excellence in Education]

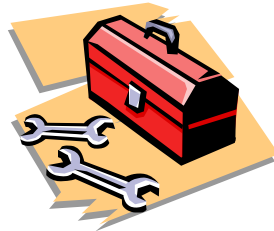
THE STUDENT'S TOOLBOX

A Self-Development Resource Kit

for

Personal and Professional Excellence

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The pages of this book are made of eco-friendly paper.











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Preface

This booklet entitled “The Student's Toolbox” is written with the intention of spurring young students of college to reach great heights in their professional careers through systematic personal planning and dedicated implementation.

It focuses on the salient features of personal organisational tools that can be used with immense success by any student, even one at school, who is bugged by the desire to achieve whatever s/he wants to in life.

The book is written in simple, easy-to-read style to enable even those raised through the Tamil medium at school to understand how the tools may be used.

Every effort has been taken to ensure that the contents are generic in nature and therefore useful to students of all branches of engineering, and technology.

The idea of including topics like 'Social Skills' and 'Environment Awareness' as important tools for students to learn about and practise is more than merely to reinforce whatever they have learnt at school. Social skills will help students to adequately meet the demands of today's world of work, and awareness of the environment is to make young persons alive and pro-active to the environmental challenges that we already face and those that we are likely to face in the days to come.

However great the effort put into a venture such as this, there will always be scope for further improvement. To this end, the author welcomes suggestions from those who have had the opportunity to peruse the contents of this book.

C. V. Koushik
Academic Director, SCT

A Note to Students

The Twelve Tips for Success

To be a successful student you have the '**Tips for Success**', compiled by Professor V. S. Venkatavaradan, and printed on the inside front cover of this book. Read all of the twelve tips carefully and practise acquiring the characteristics conveyed by them so they become an inseparable part of your personality and your behaviour.

Take Them One at a Time

Developing the twelve skills will be quite easy as you can simply choose one of them every month and work on it, practise it, until it becomes a habit. Thus, by the time you finish your first year you will have acquired them to a greater or lesser extent.

If you keep practising them sincerely thereafter, you will be ready to take on the world in the most professional way when you graduate from Sona College!

With these personality traits, you will stand out in a crowd; you will truly impress others around you. Potential employers will single you out for great jobs or better career opportunities!



Become a Master Student

The twelve tips noted above encompass most of everything that is desirable in any person, be it a student, a teacher, or just anybody else. However, for you as a student, they will help you first to become a 'Master Student'!

A **Master Student** is a student who is regarded with admiration by her/his peers (classmates) and appreciation by her/his parents, teachers and friends. A student who proves to be a consistently good achiever with a generally good all-round performance at college in academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and who also displays good conduct and behaviour acquires such a reputation.

In short, *a Master Student is an all-rounder who has a positive focus. Such a student does not have to be a topper but s/he should not have any arrears.*

Desire to Unlock Your Potential

Truly speaking, every single student is capable of becoming a Master Student.

Differences in students exist because of a difference in their desire to aim high, in their attitude to student life. An achiever student is always propelled by a strong desire to do well; an average student has only a feeble desire or attitude, if any.

Prepare Yourself for Success



So the first thing to do is to tell yourself, as often as you can,

“I would greatly love to be a successful student”.

Turn this thought around in your mind, again and again, so the desire is always alive!

Surely, you will meet with criticism or even failure in your efforts to do things to achieve your desire. But don't be disturbed or discouraged by failures along the way. Very often, you need to fail first to become successful. *Failure is a reason to strengthen your resolve to attain great heights and to achieve more.*

Keep reminding yourself that you have the potential to realise your dreams, just as the role models you look up to have. Act on those dreams with faith and determination and there will be no stopping you from becoming an achiever.

The Tools for Success

To kick-start and accelerate your efforts to become a successful student, here are just *seven tools* that you will find handy.



These tools form a part of the '**soft skills**' (or '**generic skills**') that industry expects of engineers today. This toolbox gives only broad guidelines for using the tools; but you'll find them very easy to use. They are a great way to get into action to develop some of the skills.

Those of you who are keen to learn more can discuss this with your Class Counsellor (CC) or Faculty Adviser (FA) for specific training programmes or workshops; or just talk to your HoD.

A Personal Notebook to Track Success

Buy yourself a notebook, preferably one made of eco-friendly paper, like a TNPL notebook (See Tool 7), and record all information on personal planning and progress as you use these tools.



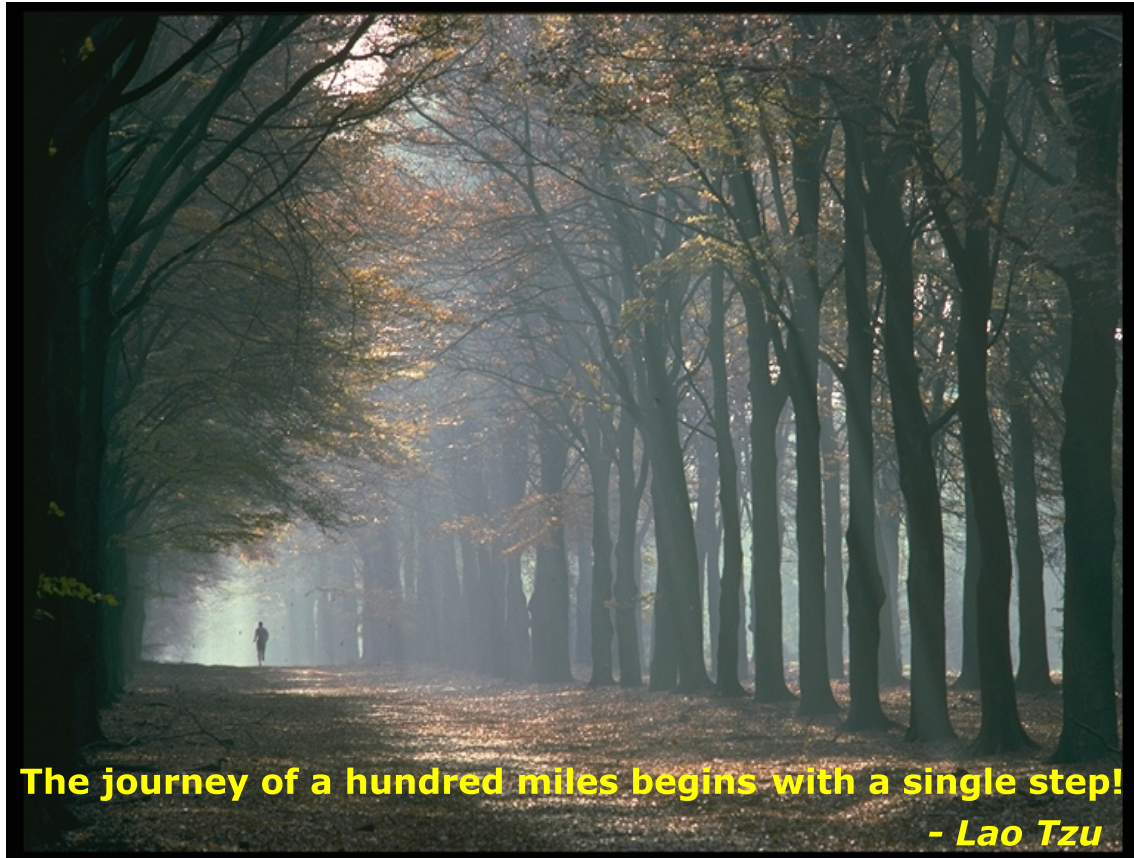
Track your progress as you go through student life in college, and thereafter too, as you go from one success to another, using your jottings in the notebook to solve problems, tackle change or to do things differently, but successfully.

In the end, you will find that your personal notebook is your friend, philosopher and guide!

Here's wishing you 'All the Very Best'!

C. V. Koushik
Academic Director, SCT

Make a positive beginning!



*Try very hard to get what you want in life!
Or else, you will be forced to like what you get!!*

As the Nike Ad says, "Just do it"!

Tool 1: Identifying Your SWOT Data To Know Your Own Potential!

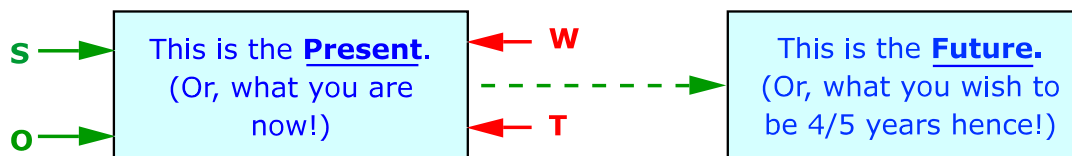
What is SWOT?

SWOT is an acronym for the factors **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. *Each one of us has the gifts of strengths and opportunities.* However, *we also have weaknesses and sometimes we face threats.* Not only individuals but also organisations like an industry, a business firm, and even a college like ours would have SWOT data. SWOT information usually varies from one person to another and even one organisation to another.

How can my SWOT data help me?

Your SWOT data can play a vital role in *goal setting*, which is the next tool you should know about and use. You can use your SWOT data intelligently to give you the necessary push to follow and achieve your dreams or your aims in life.

Look at the figure below to see how this can happen.



You will find yourself in the midst of opposing forces when you attempt to go from the present to your desired future. But your strengths and opportunities, if used well, can drive you towards your dreams. On the other hand, unless your weaknesses and threats are checked, you will make little progress.

Therefore, you have to be smart enough to,

1. *Enhance your strengths and use them well...*
2. *Take advantage of your opportunities...*
3. *Minimise or eliminate your weaknesses... and*
4. *Reduce or avoid your threats.*

See how easily you can be the cause of your own success!

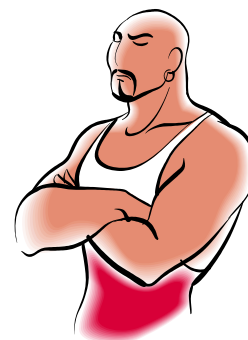
A clear knowledge of your SWOT data is thus of critical importance to creating an easy but feasible path towards your future.

How can I Identify My SWOT Data?

⇒ To identify your strengths ask yourself the question,

“What things do I do well?” or “What am I good at?” or “What are my positive qualities?”

Some examples of strengths students have are, *good handwriting, good memory, attentiveness during classes and labs, friendly and helpful nature, good communication skills, goal-setting skills, time management skills, good conduct, proactive behaviour, creativity...etc.*



Enhance your strengths!

⇒ To identify your weaknesses ask yourself the question,

“What things do I not do well?” or “What am I not so good at?”

Examples of weaknesses that students may have are,

not-so-good handwriting, insufficient memory, low level of attentiveness during classes and labs, not following teachers instructions, unfriendly nature, poor communication skills, lack of goal-setting and time management skills, wasting time, improper behaviour, unhealthy personal habits, poor personal hygiene...etc.

***Minimise or eliminate your weaknesses! Don't brood over them.
We all have weaknesses!***

⇒ To identify your opportunities ask yourself this...



“What situations in my life are helpful to me?” or “What are the external opportunities that I can utilise to advantage?”

Typical examples of student opportunities are, *excellent facilities at Sona, faculty teaching well and being helpful, IVs, in-plant training, project work, seminars, intensive coaching, supportive parents/relations/friends, family business background related to branch of study, family/friends willing to support entrepreneurial work, family support for higher studies in India or abroad, helpful joint family...etc.*

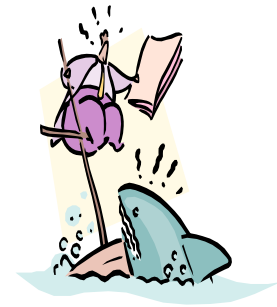
Opportunities knock on your door but once!

So don't miss taking advantage of them!

⇒ To identify your **threats** ask yourself the question,

“What situations in my life/home prevent my progress?” or “What are the external threats that I should avoid?”

Typical *examples* of threats a student might face are, *living in a noisy neighbourhood, parents having little time for her/him, bad company, unhelpful faculty, mediocre teaching, lack of IVs and in-plant training, poor financial situation, home environment not conducive to study...etc.*

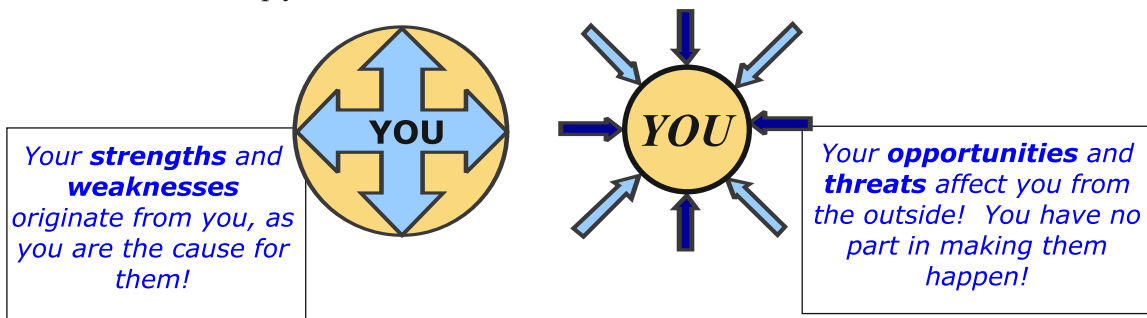


Reduce or avoid your threats!

Kites rise highest against the wind, not with it. - Winston Churchill

Get a clear idea of SWOT before you go any further!

Differentiate between *strengths and opportunities* and between *weaknesses and threats*. The picture below will help you do this.



Your SWOT data is the key to effective goal setting.

Tips for identifying your SWOT info

- i) Think about yourself when you answer the above questions and jot down all of the information that comes to mind.
- ii) Consult your friends, schoolteachers, college faculty, family members, etc to help you, especially for the strengths and weaknesses. *Very often, we do not realise our own strengths or weaknesses.*
- iii) Write down the five/seven most important items (or all, if you wish,) of your SWOT data in your personal notebook.

Update your SWOT data periodically

As times change, situations change. So too will your SWOT information!

Therefore, review and update your SWOT data every semester/year. Updated SWOT information will help you to decide whether you want to change/modify your goals and tactics, so you can be more effective. (See Tool 2 – Goal Setting.)

Tool 2: Goal Setting

To Aim at and Achieve the Right Targets!



You can never make a hit unless you have a target! So set targets for yourself and focus sharply on achieving them. These targets are obviously your 'goals'.

There are four simple steps to goal setting. Consult your CC/FA as you take them.

Most importantly, use your SWOT all the way.

1. **Start with a dream** and arrive at a **Vision of Success** - In this step you visualise yourself as a successful student/professional. Take time to think about your future-think about graduating from SCT, the kind of job you would like to be doing, the place of work, etc. Write down on paper what you see, the fine details of who or where you are 4-5 years from now! Writing down the details will help clarify your vision. If you need career information in your area of study, consult with your HOD/CC.

The more strongly you think about your future, the sharper will be your picture and the more specific your notes. The sharper the mental image of your future the keener will be your desire to realise it. Eventually you will develop a passion for working in your chosen field.

2. Write down a **Mission** statement - Develop a sentence of about 15 words that crisply represents your vision or dream. A mission is for a 4 to 5-year period. Think of it as a *long-term goal* or a *'macro-goal'*. A mission is like an umbrella under which you can have as many medium-term goals as are required to attain the mission.
3. Identify **Goals** - As stated above, these are the targets you aim for and achieve, to fulfil your mission. Normally, you might need 2, 3, or 4 goals. Goals are usually for the *medium term*, say from six months to one year. Besides academic goals, you may also have personal goals, like *'Enhance my communication skills by the third-year end'*.

*Be smart! And make sure you have **SMART** goals!*

SMART is an acronym that stands for,

Specific - Your goal must tell you precisely what you wish to achieve.

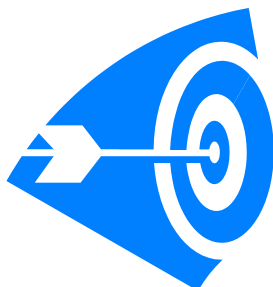
Measurable - It should include information that helps you to know when the goal has been achieved.

Action-oriented - It must specify action and so must begin with an 'action verb'.

Realistic - It must be achievable and must relate closely to your SWOT data.

Time (and resource) specific - It must include a timeframe or a deadline; it must specify the money or other resources required to achieve the goal.

(See Page 13 for examples of SMART goals and the 'Note' on page 14.)



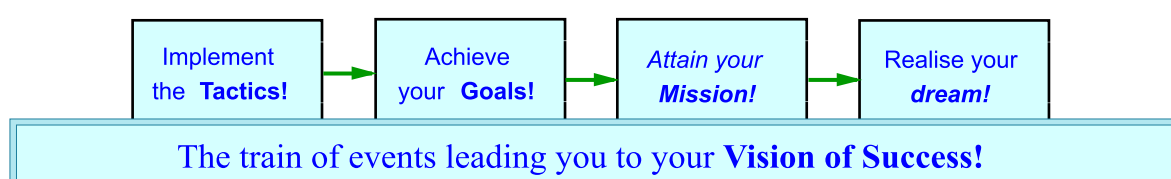
4. Develop **Tactics** - These are the action steps or the work you have to do to achieve your goals. Just as you need arrows or darts to hit a target, so too you need tactics to achieve goals! Have as many tactics as are necessary for each goal. Tactics are for the *short-term*, say one to two months. You can think of tactics as '*micro-goals*'.



Tactics are to goals, just as darts are to targets!

Your mission, goals and tactics make up your master plan for all-round success!

Implement the tactics for each of your goals sincerely and you will automatically achieve your goals. When this happens for all of your goals, you will have accomplished your mission. Thereafter, identify another mission and attain it with apt goals and tactics. You go on thus until you finally realise your vision!



By the time you have attained your first mission, you would have acquired goal setting as a habit.

Thereafter you keep repeating the cycle to take you higher and higher up in life.

**Your “reach should always exceed your grasp...”
So raise the bar after every success in life.**

Write down your mission, goals and tactics in your personal notebook and record/track progress.

Putting things down on paper helps you to see how your plan takes shape, to ensure that there is no inconsistency or contradiction in your goals/tactics and that they all match your SWOT data.



A Goal-setting Example!

Take a close look at the goal-setting example in the next few pages. It is based on a past student's goal setting exercise for an IT job.

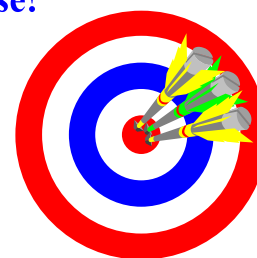
Use it as a template or a basis to develop your own SWOT data, mission, SMART goals and tactics *for any career in IT, ECE, Mech, FT, Civil*, etc.

***Give the goal setting activity all of your attention and care.
The output of a sincere and well-thought out effort will be so impressive that you will be motivated to put it to instant action!***

Sample of a Student's Goal Setting Exercise!

My Mission Statement!

*I aim to be a senior software/IT professional in a leading IT Company
At Bangalore or Chennai.*



My SWOT Information!

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1. Good memory	1. Not leading a goal-oriented life	1. Very supportive and helpful parents	1. Tough AU syllabi for some subjects
2. Regular attendance at theory and practical classes	2. Poor communication skills in English	2. Faculty help/ encourage students to perform well	2. Sona expecting good performance from all students
3. Friendly person with environment-friendly habits	3. Casual attitude to studies – studying at the last moment, just before test/exam	3. Good lab/internet facilities at Sona	3. A lot of competition in the class for good academic performance
4. Good handwriting	4. Self-discipline requires much improvement	4. Excellent language Lab in Sona College	4. Some of my friends lack positive focus
5. Neat in appearance and always well dressed	5. Low emotional quotient (EQ) sometimes	5. Good placement training facilities at SCT	5. Noisy neighbourhood and surroundings near home

My SMART Goals [to attain my mission successfully]

- I) Prepare a study plan and implement it without any compromise, and complete my BTech/BE with an aggregate of at least 80% and without any history of arrears.
- II) Collect and compile corporate information on the leading IT companies in Bangalore and Chennai by the end of the 2nd year.
- III) Participate sincerely and actively in the training programmes organised by the Placement and Training Department of Sona and secure placement in the 3rd year itself.
- IV) Complete successfully additional/advanced continuing education courses suitable job-wise, like C, C++, etc. at Sona/TPT by Semester 7.
- V) Use my goal-setting and implementation skills at my job and rise to the position of Project Leader within two years of joining the company.

Note

a) I have checked to make sure that all of my goals are “SMART” goals and are in complete agreement with my mission.

[They are Specific, not vague; they are Measurable, as I can easily know when I have achieved them; they are Action-oriented, as they keep me involved in activities; they are Realistic, as they are based on my own SWOT data and so I can achieve them; they are also Time specific where required.]

- b) I shall chase Goal I for all of the semesters.
- c) Goal II is for the second year.
- d) Goal III is for 2nd and 3rd years, until I get placed.
- e) Goal IV is for implementation during Semesters 6 and 7.
- f) Goal V is for implementation at the IT Company I get placed in.



Which goals do I select?
Like every other skill, goal setting too requires practice.

Tactics for My SMART Goals!

Goal I

Prepare a study plan, implement it without any compromise and complete my BTech/ BE with an aggregate of at least 80% and without any history of arrears.

My Tactics for Goal I

1. Develop a weekly study plan every semester mentioning the weekdays and times, for daily study of my regular subjects and for day-to-day academic work and follow it strictly.
[I can use Tool 3 to do this.]
2. Work out a weekend study schedule for Monday Tests aimed at getting at least 75% in each of the tests and stick to the plan.
[I'll use Tool 3.]
3. Prepare a study schedule every semester for the Model Exams (ICE) so as to end up with an overall 80% (in each semester). *[Note: This will work out to an overall performance of the targeted 80%.]*
4. Give 100% attention at the theory and practical classes, so that I will find studying/revising the topics much easier.
[Use 'Listening' tips in Tool 4.]

[General Note: All of the above tactics are aimed at overcoming my weaknesses relating to 'not leading a goal-oriented life', 'a casual attitude to studies' and 'poor self-discipline' and taking care of the first three threats that I face.

I can lessen the threat of 'friends lacking positive focus' by spending more time on my goals. To meet the threat of 'noisy neighbourhood', I can spend two of my evening study hours in the Sona library, or I can study in a quieter room at home.]

Goal II

Collect and compile corporate information on the leading IT companies in Bangalore and Chennai by the end of the 2nd year.

My Tactics for Goal II

1. Allot an extra library hour per week in my schedule to collect information from journals/newspaper on IT companies, IT bigwigs, SW products, etc. and maintain a record. *(Note: I can use the Sona library for this.)*
2. Join the class on industrial visits to have a tour of at least six leading IT companies in Bangalore and Chennai during Semesters III and IV. *(Note: I can meet IT persons and get first-hand information about the IT world.)*
3. Surf the Internet for an hour every week to collect company and product information on IT. *(Note: I can use the free internet facility at Sona.)*
4. Meet with IT faculty and the Placement Officer at least once a fortnight regarding company and product information. *(Note: This tactic takes advantage of the opportunity of having supportive and encouraging faculty at Sona and its good placement services.)*
5. Compile all of the company and product information systematically in a notebook. *(Note: This record can help me decide which IT Company I would best fit in.)*

Goal III

Participate actively and sincerely in the training programmes organised by the Placement Cell of Sona and secure placement in the 3rd year itself.

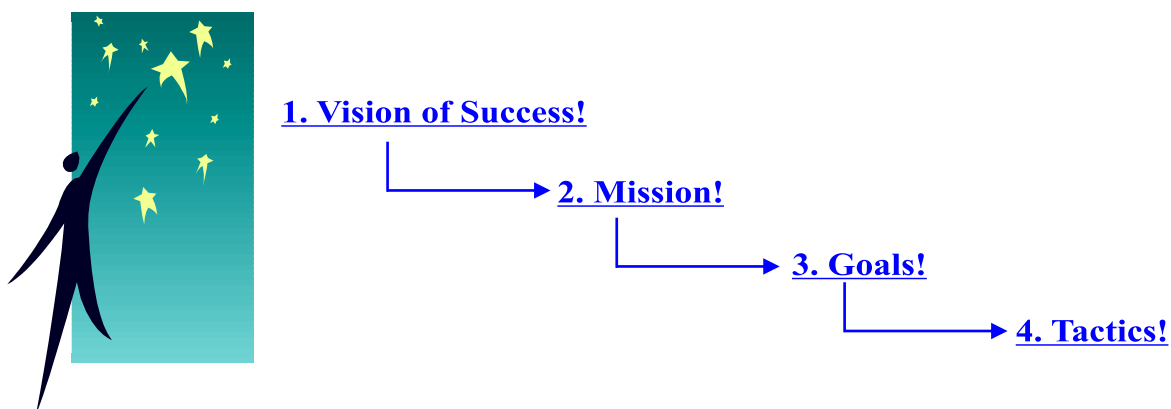
My Tactics for Goal III

1. Keep in touch with the IT faculty in charge of placement activities in my department or the Placement Section to know the training schedule when I enter the 2nd year.
2. Include at least three hours of study per week in my study schedule to prepare for the technical/aptitude/GD/etc. training given by Placement Section.
3. Join a continuing education course in oral and written English communication skills, in consultation with the English Department, during the second and third years. *(Note: This tactic will greatly lessen my Weakness No. 2, namely, 'inadequate English communication skills'.)*
4. Develop the daily habit of reading a standard English newspaper (e.g. The Hindu) and hearing at least one English news bulletin of NDTV or Headlines Today Channel. *(Note: This is one more tactic to improve my communication skill and vocabulary. And while this happens, my general knowledge will also be increased; GK is required so much for good performance in the GD sessions for placement.)*

5. Utilise all of the drill and practice sessions of placement training at Sona to advantage and gradually improve my performance in all of the tests and mock GD and interview sessions.
6. Participate actively in the campus placement opportunities and successfully secure good placement by the end of 3rd year.

You can similarly develop tactics and the notes for Goals IV and V.

The FOUR STEPS of Goal Setting - A Recap!



That's how easy goal setting really is! Your personal mission plus your goals and tactics together make up your personal plan for success.

Focus on your tactics on a continuous basis and act on them consistently. If you have developed a passion for your area of interest you will find goal achievement an easy exercise.

However, if you have problems in implementing your personal plan there are two powerful and effective ways to help you. Refer to pages 34 - 36 for more information on this.

**Not interested in an IT career but keen on another job?
Please see your HOD or Class Counsellor for a plan!**

Tool 3: Time Management **To Get the Best Out of Your Time!**

Time is the only resource we have that can never be got back. Once time is gone, it's gone forever! So as a student, you would do very well to manage your time well.

Like all other skills, time management too can be easily developed.



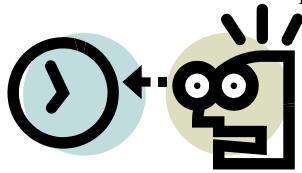
How we would all love to turn the clock back!

However, time management (TM) can be successful only if you have set goals for yourself.

Without goals, time management is ineffective!

So assuming you have set goals, what do you need to do to manage your time well? Here are some pointers.

There are two techniques to get the best out of your time.



1. Following 'to-do' lists
2. Using a Time Management Plan (TMP)

Now let us see how we can use the techniques.

TM Technique I: Making 'To-do' Lists (See also Page 19 for an example)

- As a first thing every morning after your favourite cup of coffee/tea, **prepare a list of the 'things you have to do'** that day. The jobs may relate to academic or personal work.
- Think about each of the jobs to be done by day's end and **consider their relative importance.**
- **Prioritise the things to be done,** i.e. give No. 1 to the most important of them, No. 2 to the next in importance and so on.
- When all the jobs are numbered, start tackling them one by one in the order decided and **get them done.**
- At the end of the day, just before you hit the bed, **review the list** and tick the jobs that you have completed and identify, with a cross mark, those yet to be done.
- The unfinished/yet-to-do items become the top priority jobs for the next day, and so on. This goes on everyday.

By using “to-do” lists everyday without fail, you will find that you can manage all of your everyday work more effectively; you would also have more free time on your hands than you ever did before!

TM Technique II: Using a Time Management Plan (TMP)

- Calculate the total number of 'free hours' that you have every week. These are the hours that you have available to work on achieving your academic and personal goals.
- Prepare a list of the things that you need to work on and complete every week. Prioritise them in terms of the 'time required for completing them', i.e. in terms of how tough they are or how easy they are. The jobs may relate to studies and other personal goals.
- Allocate your free hours to each of these tasks or jobs such that you give more time for the tougher jobs and less time for the easier ones. Have two/three/four hours as spare hours in the schedule during which you can make up for an hour or two lost during the week due to unexpected events. These are called the '*contingency hours*'.
- Prepare a **Time Management Plan (TMP)** or a schedule of the things you have to do from Monday through Sunday so that all of your jobs are included. Have the spare hours during the weekend.
- Give a test run of the TMP for a week or so and fine-tune it so that you are comfortable with the routine.
- Follow your schedule strictly from Day 1 and you (and certainly all those close to you) will be pleasantly surprised at the highly positive results you achieve!

Following a TMP will certainly be more challenging and will require greater self-discipline than managing time with to-do lists. But your achievements with a TMP will be even more impressive!



If you acquire the skill of effective time management, you will have more spare time for hobbies and relaxation!

To trigger you into instant action here are examples of a typical student's 'to-do' list and a TMP on the next two pages that you can very well adapt to your needs.

Student's "To-Do" List - A Sample!

<u>Things to do</u>	<u>Date</u> 27-2-06
1. ✓ Visit Bus Company to confirm a bus for the I.V.; Fix route, cost, time and place of departure.	
2. ✓ Meet with _____ Sir re: collection of I.V. money from students.	
4. ✓ Check with _____ Ma'am about the doubt in _____ (subject).	
10. ✗ Meet with _____ Ma'm to find out last Monday's test marks.	
5. ✓ Study the topics taught this week in _____ (subject).	
6. ✓ Complete the assignment in _____ (subject).	
3. ✓ Ask _____ (classmate) about the topics taught yesterday (when I was ill and missed my classes).	
7. ✓ Buy medicine for _____ (family) on my way home.	
8. ✓ Go to photo studio for my PP-size photos asked for by the CC.	
11. ✗ Get my guitar repaired.	
9. ✓ Remind father about the last date for payment of tuition fees.	

Note: The above is a list seen at the end of the day. The numbers on the left are the priority numbers of the jobs to be done. They have been written after the list was made, to prioritise the jobs. See the ticks for jobs done and cross marks for those yet to be done. Jobs 10 and 11 get carried over to the next day's to-do list.



Always try and be ahead of the clock, never behind it!

Student's Time Management Plan (TMP) - A Sample!

My TMP for Semester III

My tactics (or micro-goals) for this semester

I aim to achieve the following...

- a) 70% marks in all Monday tests; 75% in ICE and 80% in the AU Semester Exams
- b) Be in good shape (Monday to Friday jogging - 1 hour/day)
- c) Improve my guitar skills (Two hours/week).



How time flies!

TIME DAY	5-6 a.m.	6-7 a.m.	6.30-7.30 p.m.	7.30-8.30 p.m.	8.30-9.30 p.m.
Mon	Jogging	Subject II	Guitar	Subject III	Subject V
Tue	Jogging	Subject VI	Subject II	Subject V	Subject III
Wed	Jogging	Subject I	Subject IV	Subject II	Subject V
Thu	Jogging	Subject III	Guitar	Subject VI	Subject I
Fri	Jogging	Subject V	Subject III	Subject VI	Subject II
Sat	5-6 a.m. Subject VI	6-7 a.m. Subject	3-5 p.m. Assignment/L ab Record	5.30-7.30 p.m. Subject III and V	7.30-9.30 p.m. Extra Time (ET)
Sun	7-9 a.m. Subject I and IV	9-10 a.m. Test Revision	10-12 noon Assignment/ LabRecord	3-5 p.m. Assignment/ Lab Record	6.30-9.30 p.m. Test Rev 1/ET2

How the above TMP was developed

- Total 'free hours' available for pursuing goals = 43 hours (h).
- These hours have been allocated on a priority basis as follows:
 - ▶ Study of Theory Subjects 24 h (Subject-wise distribution is shown below.)
 - [i) Subject I 3 h; ii) Subject II 4 h; iii) Subject III 5 h;
 - iv) Subject IV 3 h; v) Subject V 5 h; vi) Subject VI 4 h]
 - ▶ Assignment – 3 h; Lab Record – 3 h; Monday Tests Revision – 2 h; Physical Fitness – 5 h; Guitar Skills – 2 h; Contingency time (10% of free time) 4 h (Contingency time is extra time to be used for any scheduled work that I cannot do due to specific reasons.)
 - ▶ Total hours = 24+3+3+2+5+2+4 = 43 hours

Follow your TMP even to 90% efficiency and the positive results that emerge will amaze you and stun all those around you!

Tool 4: Communication Skills

To Get Across to Others Easily and Effectively!

Communication skills represent a very important tool or soft skill that you require for professional success, not only for an IT career but also for all engineering, technology and management careers.



Like most other jobs, those open to an engineer or executive will invariably require good communication skills, and these include both *spoken* and *written communication*.

Spoken Communication Skills

1. **Speaking** - When you speak, make sure that you speak at a normal speed, are *clear and loud* enough, so the audience you are addressing or a person you are talking to can hear you well. Use *simple language and the correct pronunciation and grammar*.
2. **Listening** - This is different from hearing, which is simply a physical ability. You may easily hear a speaker but you have to make an effort to 'listen' to her/him. Listening thus involves concentrating on what a speaker is saying so that you understand her/him well. *Listening is thus important and it has to be practised.*
3. **Paraphrasing** - This skill helps you to listen well. In paraphrasing, you confirm your understanding of what you hear by rephrasing the speaker's viewpoint; paraphrasing also helps the speaker to clarify her/his point of view. *Use this skill to show the speaker that you are 'listening'.*
4. **Body Language** - By far, the most important component of communication is 'body language', which *makes up for nearly 95 percent of communication*. You could be conveying a lot to the speaker, without even saying anything, through your facial expressions, your eyes, your gestures and your bodily movements.
5. **Eye Contact** - Ensure eye contact with a person while talking, listening or responding to the person. *Your eyes and facial expression could convey attentiveness, agreement, surprise, wonder, lack of interest,* etc. Or the occasional nods of your head may tell the speaker you are with her/him.

The big paying jobs of today do not expect you to speak like an Englishman! They are happy if you can communicate with comfortable ease without making glaring grammatical mistakes. As frequent talks with overseas people will be involved, they are just looking for people who can speak/understand English easily.

Written Communication Skills

1. **Grammar** - Write simple sentences so they easily convey what you wish to communicate. *Simple sentences involve only basic grammar, so you have less chance of going wrong.* Try avoiding the passive voice. Punctuation is most important - a misplaced comma can often convey a totally different meaning; and remember to use a full stop at the end of every sentence! Look up and revise what you learnt in the English class.
2. **Handwriting** - If your communication is handwritten, e.g. an assignment, answer paper, a note or letter, etc. make a deliberate effort to write neatly and legibly. If people cannot read what you have written, they will hardly know what you wish to convey. *(If your handwriting is poor, set a micro-goal to improve it and work on it until you achieve It.)*
3. **Formatting** - These days most people write using computers. Whether you write by hand or communicate through a computer, ensure that your letter/note has a neat layout and an impressive format.

Always keep in mind when you write something for others to see, that they are going to read and try to understand what you have written, mostly in your absence. So try making it easy for them!



HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SPOKEN ENGLISH?

Practise the following five exercises every day!

- i) Pretend you are a newscaster and read out an article in an English newspaper to your mirror.
- ii) Read national newspapers, like “The Hindu”, “Times of India”, Etc. (Do not read local newspapers.)
- iii) While reading a book, underline in pencil, all the words you do not know. Look them up in a dictionary.
- iv) Make a list of these words and their meanings, and make sure you use at least five of them in a conversation during the day.
- v) **Most importantly, make a genuine effort to speak in English to your faculty, friends and family.**

Set a goal like '*Improve my spoken English by the end of the 2nd year*' and work on the five tactics listed in this box.

Very soon, you and all others in your life will be thrilled at the remarkable results! You will never believe this can happen until you give it a real good and honest try.

Tool 5: Presentation Skills...

To Ensure a Telling Effect on the Audience!

Presentation skills are required mostly when you make formal presentations, which are *'talks in front of a small or large audience'*. You could be Introducing a guest or delivering a vote of thanks at a Students' Association function, or presenting a paper at a competition. In each of these cases, you would be making a formal presentation. So let's see what it takes to make effective presentations.



Fundamentally, keep in mind the points mentioned above under spoken communications skills. Nevertheless, here are four more nuances that contribute to effective presentations.

- **Content** - This refers to *'what you say'*! Prepare the content well so it has *a catchy introduction, a good body or substance and a conclusive ending*. Keep the language simple and include relevant examples, anecdotes, etc, to keep audience interest throughout your presentation. Interject humour where necessary to make the presentation lively.

**You never get a second chance to make the first impression!
The key to this lies in having an impressive introduction.
So prepare very well for any presentation and give it all you have!**

- **Appearance** - *'How you look'* is important! Dress neatly, taking care that the dress is appropriate to the audience you address. Maintain a good posture and display pleasant body language and gestures to reinforce your presentation. Make regular eye contact with all the members of the audience.
- **Voice** - Most audiences will be keen on *'how you sound'*! Use your voice to good effect. Keep it loud enough so all can hear you without strain. However, avoid being excessively loud. Modulate it at the right times. Use pauses for effect, i.e. to allow what you have said to sink in. Make a good effort to develop a neutral accent and aim at good articulation.
- **Interaction with the Audience** - *'How you relate to the audience'* is important. Involve the audience in your presentation. Throw around general questions related to your topic. Respond politely, but convincingly, to them. If a tense situation arises, continue talking politely and keep your cool, no matter what.

Tool 6: Social Skills (or Social Grace)... To Be a Respectable Citizen of the World!

Social skills involve the display of acceptable behaviour when you are with a private group of people or in a public place with other people.

Social skills include 'social etiquette', or the formal rules for correct behaviour in society.

A part of social etiquette may also be common to social/professional ethics.



Your social skills indirectly reveal how 'educated', well groomed or refined you really are. The skills are easy to practise. Desire strongly to acquire them. Above all, practise hard to perfect them! *Remember, social skills are very important workplace skills. They will determine how good your interpersonal, teamwork, negotiation, conflict-resolution skills, etc are. So you can never do without them.*

- **Display Good Manners** - Be polite in conversation. Be considerate to others, in general, wherever you may be, in a hall or classroom, on the road, in the canteen or at home. Develop good table manners - munch your food with your mouth closed. Don't make unpleasant munching noises! Avoid spilling food.
- **Respect Others' Opinions, Feelings** - Be assertive but never argumentative or aggressive. Exercise good interpersonal behaviour and develop a high degree of *emotional quotient (EQ)*. *This is what industry looks for in a candidate more than the IQ. In short, keep your cool at all times.*
- **Be Frank and Honest** - As the old saying goes, "*Honesty is the best policy.*" *It still is!* Honesty in action is also related to integrity, ethics and values. Politely admit any mistakes you make, at home, among friends or at the work place. *People who swear by good work ethics will not even check their personal e-mail or make/receive personal phone calls during office hours.*
- **Speak Clearly** - so others can easily understand you. (See Tool 5 for more on this.)
- **First Understand** what the other person is saying, reflect on it for a moment and respond with clarity. As Stephen Covey says, "*Seek first to understand, then to be understood.*" Use paraphrasing to do this. (See Tool 5 for this).
- **Avoid Gossip** - This is easier said than done. *Gossip is a mere waste of your precious time;* it will not get you anywhere at all.
- **Be Helpful to and Friendly with Others** - Gestures of help, even to strangers, are always well taken. *Be cordial to others; in turn, they too will be friendly.*

- **Be Punctual** at an interview, meeting, class, lab, etc.; if possible, *be there a few minutes earlier.*
- **Be Clean and Tidy** - Be neat in appearance and develop good personal hygiene - use deodoriser/mouth fresheners if you must. Keep your workplace and surroundings tidy; wherever you are, develop the habit of using a waste-bin. (Check out Tool 7 for more practical hints.)
- **Follow Rules in a Public Place** - Do this even if you are the only one doing so! This is a *social responsibility and as an educated person* you would only be doing the right thing. The following hints on this point may be useful.
 - *Join a queue at a public place* where people are in a queue to buy a ticket or to get information, etc, and wait for your turn.
 - *Practise obeying traffic rules.* Do not worry if others are not following the rules. Have a valid driving licence, kept ready at hand for inspection where required. Follow speed limits. Park your vehicles neatly without inconvenience to other vehicles parked adjacently i.e. they should not struggle to roll out their vehicles to leave the parking lot.

Driving through private property/grounds

- When driving through a private area, such as our campus, strictly follow any signs you see, like those for speed limits or use of horns, etc.
- The roads and walkways are primarily meant for students/staff to walk to a particular building or from one to another, and not for vehicles.
- So slow down or stop when you see somebody walking across a road, and let them pass before you move along. **They have the first right of way!**

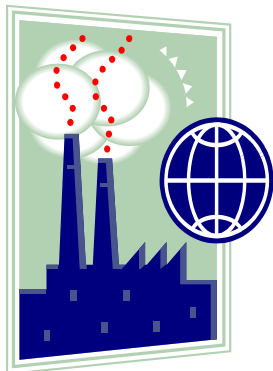
- *Do not destroy or defile public or private property.* Avoid marking on, writing, dirtying, spoiling or damaging furniture, doors, windows, cupboards, flooring, walls, etc. in a public place or at a college or office.
- *Do not soil library books or other borrowed books.* Avoid scribbling hints or points in, or tearing off pages from them.



Social Skills are a must for the workplace!

Tool 7: Environment Awareness

To Evolve into an Environment-Friendly Person!



As young students of the 21st Century, you need to be aware of the major environmental concerns that we face today. You will be reading (or would have read) about these issues and ways to solve them in your “Environmental Science” subject at school or college.

Governments across the world, environmental organisations, scientists, researchers and environmental activists are addressing these global issues.

In your professional career, you could well end up as an engineer working on a major environmental project or involved in the manufacture of environment-friendly devices.

However, whether you are involved professionally in environmental activity or not, you would do the environment a lot of good if you are an environment-friendly person (EFP). *In today's context, being an EFP amounts to discharging a greatly desirable social responsibility.*

If you wish to be an EFP, which indeed you really must, simply ask yourself the question,

“What can I do at the personal or local level to contribute positively to the environment?”

Or

“What should I do to be an environment-friendly person?”

Ways to Become an Environment-friendly Person

If you are not already an EFP, you can easily become one. Just note and meticulously practise the following.

1. Dispose off rubbish with love for your home, college, your country and Mother Earth!

Always, always use a dustbin to throw away trash. This may sound easy, *but most of us still involuntarily drop trash on the floor/ground.*

So make a grand effort to be among those who always use trash bins, *wherever you may be* (like a classroom, lab, anywhere else on the campus, or at home, a railway station, on the road, etc.)



At home: Use bin liners (thin plastic bags, available in the shop) inside a trash bin, especially for kitchen waste. When it gets full, close the open end securely and drop the bag into the nearest corporation bin. (Waste will tend to fly away all over the place if the bag is not closed well.)

Avoid throwing household rubbish into a vacant, nearby plot of land - you would be one in a thousand people or more if you did so!

You may have observed that some people burn waste material in open air either on the road or in a vacant plot of land. This adds to the air pollution and is a nuisance to nearby people/houses. So, *never incinerate waste material;* instead, use the nearest corporation bin.

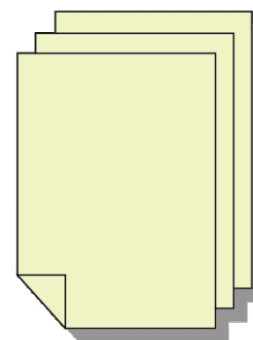
When you travel: Buses and trains mostly do not have waste bins. When you travel by bus/train, avoid throwing any waste material (like used disposable teacups, plates, etc.) outside the window, even if the vehicle is moving in uninhabited (barren) terrain. Instead, keep it with you in a small plastic bag (that you always carry as a part of your luggage), until you get off. Dispose it off when you get off the bus/train, in the first bin you come across. If you do not find any, you would do well to carry the trash home and dispose it off in your waste bin.

Encourage family, friends and even strangers, to develop the bin-using habit. Keep at it and they too will soon change.

Avoid littering a place just because there are people employed to clean up the place. Their job is only to keep the place dust (and mud) free.

2. **Use stationery sensibly** - make a special effort to use *eco-friendly* products. Today, stationery like writing paper, notebooks, etc. made of eco-friendly material are available.

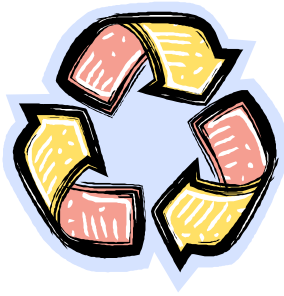
For example, **Tamilnadu Newsprint and Paper Ltd (TNPL)** manufacture eco-friendly paper using 'bagasse' (the fibrous pulp that remains after sugarcane is crushed for manufacturing sugar).



Using TNPL or other eco-friendly paper thus prevents many trees from being cut; and we badly need our trees to be preserved. (See boxed info on Page 27.)

Our College Office and Sonaversity buy only eco-friendly Xeroxing and other paper every year! All the note books supplied to the students are also made up of eco-friendly paper.

Be a proud part of a college demonstrating eco-friendly practices, and insist on using only eco-friendly stationery in your personal life too.



Symbol for the 3-R Cycle; it is also called the 'Mobius' Symbol.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (The 3-R Cycle):

The international symbol for this is shown at the left. It just reminds us to avoid adding to pollution.

For example, use both sides of paper for writing/printing; use the unprinted side of one-side-printed paper before disposing it off; **reuse** envelopes too for internal (within-office, friendly) communication, etc.

This is the computer era, so wherever possible, **reduce** the use of paper. E-mails or the MIS in an organisation come in handy for this. Large quantities of used paper can be given away (or sold off) to **recycling** units.

3. **Preserve Trees** - The picture here is a grim reminder of what we should stop doing to trees. Instead we should care for them.

Plant and care for at least two trees in your lifetime.

Avoid products made of wood. Use doors, windows, furniture, etc made of recycled wood or other eco-friendly substitute material.



Did you know these facts about recycled paper?

Recycled paper uses fewer natural resources, is a less toxic papermaking process with fewer chemicals and is the safest ecological way to handle toxic materials in wastepaper.

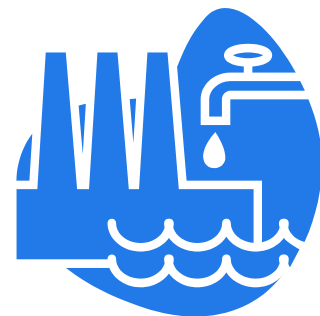
It has been estimated that one tonne of paper made from 100 percent wastepaper, rather than from virgin wood fibres saves:

- a) 17 trees
- b) 4100 kilowatt hours of energy (enough to power an average Indian home for over a year!)
- c) 26,000 litres of water and
- d) 27 kg of polluting effluents

4. **Conserve Water** - Water is a scarce commodity these days. Do all you can to conserve it. Never use more water than you need.

Avoid leaving taps running when you brush your teeth, have a shave, etc. If you find a tap dripping/not closing properly, have it repaired immediately or inform somebody who can take instant action.

Practise using the minimum amount of water in public places/trains/planes – the supply is limited and others too need to use it.



5. Be judicious in the use of motor vehicles - Use a motorcycle or a car only if you must use one. For everyday college/workplace use, see if you can share a two-wheeler in turn with a friend living close by. Or use the town bus every alternate day. If living nearby, use a bicycle or better still walk to the college/workplace. Follow manufacturer's instructions to get the best out of your vehicle.

All of these ideas are to conserve precious petrol.

Ensure that you always have your vehicle in good tune, so it uses *the optimum amount of petrol, gives you good mileage and causes the least amount of pollution.*

Have it checked for emission levels at least twice a year to ensure a '*clean-exhaust*' certificate.



If buying a new vehicle, choose one of good design (i.e. safe for the environment) as well as one that gives most mileage.

Car users! Did you know this?

An average car uses up about as much oxygen in a day as is produced by a large tree in the same time! So car users should play a leading role when it comes to planting saplings and nurturing them into big trees.

6. Conserve gas and electricity - Both of these originate from our limited fossil fuels. Use them sensibly. Switch off unnecessary fans and lights at home, in the classroom or lab. Use the 'simmer' control on a gas stove, whenever possible, in the lab or at home. Go in for solar water heaters instead of electric water heaters.

7. Use renewable energy sources - Solar-energy products are available today, but they may seem expensive. The government subsidises these products, so they are quite affordable. *Be sure to use them.*

8. Reduce the use of disposable plastic products - All of us use plastic bags, (carry-bags of different shapes and sizes). Shopkeepers happily give away plastic carry bags to customers, who are equally happy to receive them! It is for you as an EFP to decide how to deal with plastic bags. Some tips for this follow.

- *Follow the 3-R Principle (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) to the best possible extent.* You can *reduce* the number of carry bags in your possession by taking a cotton or jute bag to the shop. You can repeatedly *reuse* carry bags until they are no longer useful.
- You can give away used and spoiled bags to a plastic *recycling* factory. *Less energy is required to produce recycled plastic than to produce plastic from virgin raw materials.* Use eco-friendly/paper cups and plates instead of plastic ones at functions or parties.

Plastic bag menace: The frequent clogging of drains and waterways in residential areas is due mainly to the accumulation of plastic bags thrown carelessly into them. *Avoid adding to this serious problem.*

9. **Use CFC-Free Products at Home** - You have read all about the ill-effects of CFC in 'environmental science'. Make sure that personal products like perfume, deodorant or other stuff available in aerosol cans that you buy are CFC-free. Also make it a point to have a CFC-free refrigerator at home.

10. **Join the NSS or an Eco Club at college or near home and contribute your mite to preserving the environment!**

You do not have to spend hours on this activity. Jump at the opportunity of planting a sapling or two or to clean up a place. Educate people where necessary. Show them that you are not a person who has merely read about environmental science and that you practise what you preach.

So What's the Bottom Line on Environment-friendliness?

Little drops of water and little grains of sand make the mighty oceans and the endless sands!

Similarly, your contribution to the preservation of the environment at the personal level will most certainly have a visible impact.

Transform all of the above ten environment-friendly ideas into your personal habits and you will see others too following suit. Encourage them and guide them, if required, to become EFPs.

Being an EFP is a very important social responsibility today. It is a skill that you should be willing to display, practise and demonstrate all the time!

For the good of the world, may the members of the EFP tribe increase!



**We have not inherited the earth!
We have merely borrowed it from our children!
So let us all take very good care of it.**

The Last Word!

The tools or soft skills that have been discussed in “The Student's Toolbox” are not the only ones that you would need to practise in life; but they are excellent ones to begin with, to give your career or even your life a head start to great successes.

Remember and try hard to act on the saying,

**“Whatever your mind can conceive and believe,
and your heart desire, you can achieve!”**

- Norman Vincent Peale

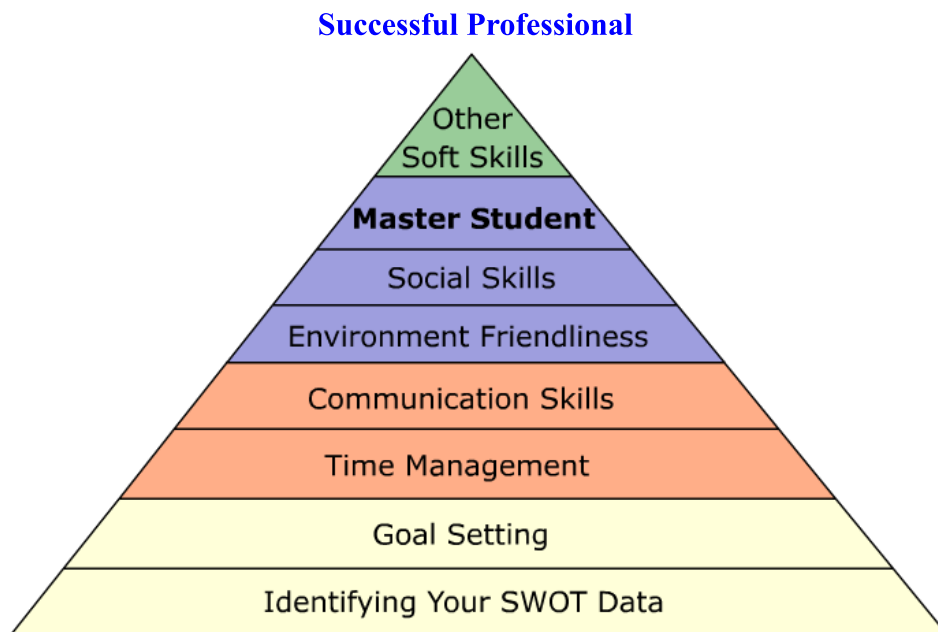
If, as you read through and learn these skills, you believe that you can add to what has been said about them, please contact HOD/AFT in person or write to cvkoushik@yahoo.com.

There are many other soft skills like teamwork, interpersonal (or human) relations, negotiation skills, leadership skills, business etiquette, managing change, stress management and so on, that you can get to know and sharpen at the workplace during your professional life.

But, for now, this toolbox is just fine.

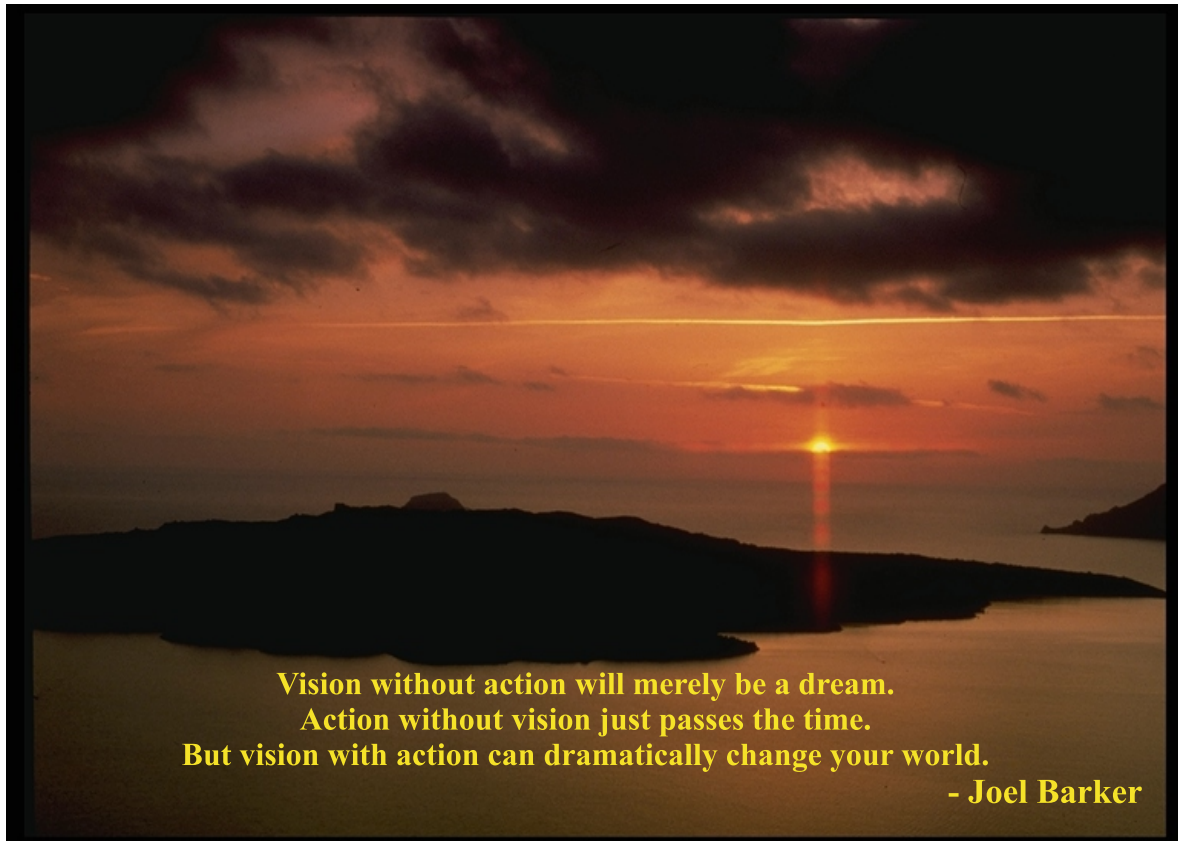
The Pyramid of Personal and Professional Success

The following pyramid is a pictorial representation of the build-up that you can create for yourself in your path to personal, academic and professional excellence. The pyramid is broad at the base, so a greater effort would be required to build a strong foundation. As you learn and develop these skills, the going will become a lot easier and you will find yourself becoming more confident and successful, and your life becoming more comfortable.



A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him or her!

- David Brinkley



Live through the sheer joy of learning and practising these skills!

It will be a truly remarkable experience!!

Some More Techniques, Ideas and Information for Continuous Improvement

All of you students pursuing excellence and aiming to become Master Students will find the material on the following pages very interesting, useful and even inspiring. Please take note of these articles and make a good effort to apply the ideas they convey.

These are just one, two or three-page articles that have been developed in the AFT Department or culled from other sources.

You can read through any of them in a few minutes, say during lunchtime or a break or other free time.

You will surely find all of them highly motivating and of great practical help.

The Articles

- . *Two Techniques to Achieve Your Goals!* - C. V. Koushik (Pages 34-36)
- . *Sure-fire Success in Monday Tests!* - C. V. Koushik (Pages 37-39)
- . *Stay Cool with ICE!* - C. V. Koushik (Pages 40-41)
- . *Cramming Doesn't Pay in the Long Run!* - C. V. Koushik (Pages 42-44)
- . *Are you good at Group Discussion!* - Brijesh Singh (Pages 45-57)
- . *Key GD Tips, Revealed!* - Brijesh Singh (Pages 48-50)
- . *The Business Ethics of J R D Tata!* - R. M. Lala (Pages 51-54)
- . *An Oath for India! His Excellency* - Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam (Page 55)

"If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange apples then you and I will still each have one apple.

But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas."

- George Bernard Shaw

. . .

Two Techniques to Achieve Your Goals!

C. V. Koushik

Let's assume you have your goals for the year or semester written down and you are all set to implement them. You begin to do so with great enthusiasm and all seems to go well for some time.

All of a sudden you find yourself confronted with other distracting activities or events in your life that make it difficult for you to focus on your own goals and work towards achieving them. The distractions could be in the form of a great weakness for watching the TV at home or friends urging you to go out with them to a movie, or join them in playing games or in other unplanned activities.

When this happens you are confused and you slowly begin to put your goals in the back of your mind. You do little to achieve them.

If this is what is happening in your life, don't worry. There are two well-known techniques that can greatly help you to bring your mind to focus on your goals and make you achieve them.

These techniques are stated below.

1. AFFIRMATION

2. VISUALISATION

Affirmations and visualisations are related techniques that help you mobilise and focus your mental resources on your intended goal/s, and help you to achieve them.

What are Affirmations?

- An *affirmation* is simply a statement, directed towards yourself, that *what you want to happen is happening*. “My academic performance is improving.” or “I will achieve my micro-goal by October 1.”
- The goal or micro-goal you want to focus on is written down, ten or fifteen times in a row, every day. *The repetition of this positive idea*, over and over again, *lets the deepest centres of your brain know that this is to be taken seriously*.
- This is your task, it tells your brain; *this is what all available time, energy and effort should be directed to*.

How Can I Practise the Technique of Affirmation?

To successfully follow the *affirmation* way of focussing on your goals,

- ▶ Select your most important current goal or micro-goal.
- ▶ Write it down repeatedly on a page of a 40- or 80-page half-sized notebook, preferably a TNPL one, line by line, till the page is full.

And as you write down your goal each time, utter it just loud enough for you to hear it. Write a page like this everyday until you are constantly thinking about your goal and acting on it.

And when this happens,

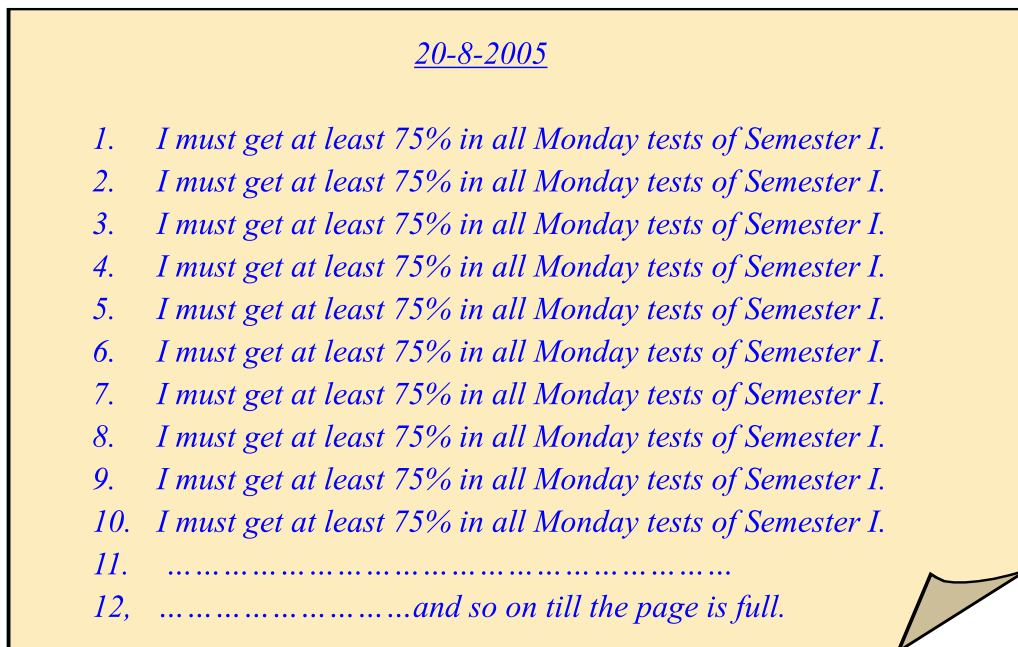
a) You will be well and truly motivated!

b) Implementation of your goals becomes a habit!

c) You will, without doubt, be totally successful in achieving your goals!

What your daily affirmation sheet would look like!

If one of your micro-goal for the semester is to get at least 75% in all of the Sem-I Monday Tests, your daily affirmation sheet would look like this...



Have You Seen the Affirmation Technique Used in Everyday Life?

Surely you have seen people practising this technique in everyday life. You must have seen their affirmation sheet too. And if so, are there pages and pages of e.g. “*Sri Rama Jayam*”, written copiously in a notebook? This is their way to get their mind to focus on divine thoughts and actions. Similarly, any “imposition” your school teacher may have given you is merely the application of the technique of affirmation to get you to focus on what s/he wanted to!

This is also exactly how you can get your mind to focus on your goals and the tactics necessary to achieve them. As you keep doing this everyday, your resolve to go about your own plan of action will get stronger by the day.

You will ultimately be in total control of yourself and your actions in a very positive, constructive way. Your performance will automatically go up. Very soon, you and those who care for you will see the dramatic and systematic changes in your approach to life.

Why is the Affirmation Technique So Effective?

- The key here is that your mind is capable of doing some very amazing things when properly directed. *The combined actions of seeing your goal in writing, hearing it being uttered repeatedly and also being focussed upon mentally provides your mind the right direction.* It is on account of these positive and conscious actions that the technique of affirmation is also called 'auto-suggestion'.
- When you can truly mobilise your mind's resources thus to accomplishing a goal or even a task, you should be prepared for some powerful results.
- This technique is also very useful in overcoming limiting beliefs (weaknesses). Telling yourself, *“I am good at drawing figures” or “I feel relaxed and comfortable taking tests/exams” or “I find it easy to solve mathematical problems”, etc.,* every morning gradually establishes this idea in your mind, even when you previously believed the opposite.

What is Visualisation?

- In *visualisation*, the successful achievement of your goal is pictured in your mind in as much detail as possible.
 - ✓ First put yourself in the most relaxed state of mind you can reach.
 - ✓ Then spend some time concentrating on your goal and imagine it as if it were already achieved.
 - ✓ See this in your mind, picture the details: happy, smiling faces of your faculty, parents, friends; the news of a prize or award, the feeling of success, etc.
- Imagine the happiness you feel at your moment of victory and feel it already, right now. Know that this is, in fact, going to happen.

Combine visualisation with written affirmations on a daily basis and your brain will respond effectively to achieving any of your goals!

The Joy of Achieving Your Goals!

- Reaching a challenging goal is something that can change your life forever. It can cause growth in unexpected areas and deliver unexpected rewards. Many factors can influence success in achieving a goal, but few things play a bigger role than *the Motivational and Goal-setting Processes.*
- It is possible for everyone to set goals and succeed in reaching them. *Using the techniques of affirmations and visualisation, it is possible to overcome ingrained habits that have led to defeat in the past.*
- In the process of *setting, chasing, and achieving a goal, you will change, grow, and hopefully, with the right goal, improve your life.* Along the way, you'll also discover ways to motivate and inspire yourself. ***Learning to find your own inner motivation may be the most important skill you can ever acquire.***

...

Sure-fire Success in Monday Tests!

C. V. Koushik

What are Monday Tests?

- As the name suggests, Monday Tests are tests conducted for every student in the college during the first two hours of every Monday.
- There will be two tests of one hour's duration each. If you have say, eight theory subjects in a semester, and you have tests in Subjects 1 and 2 on a particular Monday, tests in Subjects 3 and 4 the next Monday and tests in Subjects 5 and 6 on the third Monday and so on, a cycle of tests is completed every four successive Mondays.
- If you have nine subjects in the semester, the cycle will finish with the first test of the fourth Monday. Then the next cycle would begin in the second hour of that Monday, and so on.

Why are Monday Tests Important for Me?

- Attending Monday Tests (MT) are very important because the marks that you get in these tests will be considered for your internal marks (IM) for every subject. And this is 20% of the total marks for any subject under the Anna University (AU). The IM will take into account the best of your test performances.
- So being successful in all of your tests is the key to end up with high IM. And getting high IM means that you will be more confident when you write the AU exams. The pressure on you during your study holidays will also be much less and you can revise your subjects more thoroughly. You will therefore be very relaxed and feel positive during the AU exams. You will definitely end up with very good marks.

How are the Monday Tests helpful to me?

- First of all, you have to look upon these tests as *opportunities to test your understanding and learning* of all of the subjects in the semester.
- You will know how well you have understood a topic properly in the class or after studying it at home only by taking a test in that topic. So you must realise that these tests are there only to help you to feel confident and knowledgeable in the subject. And this could be a definite advantage at placement tests and interviews.
- If you have done badly in a test or could not be present for one, you have something to worry about. But if your reason for doing so is genuine, the concerned faculty will give you a further opportunity, like a re-test, to make up for the poor performance or absence.
- The next section tells you how you can be successful in your Monday Tests every time!

How can I do well in all the Monday Tests?

This is quite easy if you really *set your mind to getting good marks* in the tests. The following activities or tasks will help you in *goal setting, goal focussing and goal achievement*.

1) **Identify MINIMUM TARGET MARKS:** Think about each of your subjects and your current performance in tests; then *set minimum target marks* that you can aim at in the Monday Tests for each of the subjects. The minimum targets you set will vary from one subject to another and of course it will also vary from one student to another. So for any of you, it will be high for a subject you find easy to understand and learn, and comparatively lower for a more difficult subject. *But it should never be below 50%!*

2) Set a **micro-goal**: If you have a long-term (3-year) goal to excel in your BE/BTech, etc. or a short-term (3-month) goal to aim for a specific aggregate percentage in your year-end or semester-end exams, setting a micro-goal (or developing a tactic) for your Monday Tests every semester could help you achieve these bigger goals.

And the minimum targets that you have set out to achieve in each subject in the earlier task will help you to set a *SMART micro-goal!* Take a look at the following SMART micro-goal and set one like it for the MT.

MICRO-GOAL: *I aim to reach or exceed ___% marks in all the Monday Tests.* (You can decide the percentage of marks you wish to score and fill in the blank space accordingly.)

3) **FOCUS on Your Micro-Goal:** Use the techniques of affirmation and visualisation discussed in the previous article to focus on your goal.

Once the goal is firmly set in your mind, you will constantly think about and act on your micro-goal and achieve it successful. *The key here is that your mind is capable of doing amazing things when properly directed. So take special care to direct your mind the right way.*

4) **TAKE ACTION to successfully achieve your micro-goal** *(or identify the right micro-tactics and implement them!)*

i) Find out the portion for the coming Monday tests by the previous Wednesday of an MT - you or your Class Rep can do this by asking the concerned subject teachers.

ii) At home, carefully and quickly read through the portions for both of the subjects and make a note of the topic or topics that you do not understand well enough or have doubts about. You should do this by Thursday; so you have two evenings to do this, those of Wednesday and Thursday.

- iii) Meet with and consult the concerned teacher regarding your doubts on Friday or Saturday. If the coming Saturday is a holiday, remember to do this by Friday.
- iv) Prepare thoroughly for the tests on Saturday and Sunday and make sure you are ready for the tests by Sunday night. Practise writing any mathematical or chemical formulae or important points of a topic and by drawing any figures, so you can do all of this at the test without any mistakes and in quick time.
- v) Come fresh on the Monday morning and tackle the weekly test questions with confidence.
- vi) Remember to read every question at least twice so you understand them well enough before you attempt to answer any of them.
- vii) Manage your time well during the test so you are able to completely attempt all the questions. If you have prepared well at home, you should have no problem.
- viii) If your handwriting is not easy to read, print your answers (i.e. do not use running handwriting). Label your neat figures using capital letters. Use numbers or bullets for the points in your answers. When you do all of this, your presentation will be greatly improved and the faculty will feel happier valuing your answers.

**ALL THE BEST! SURELY, ALL OF YOU CAN MEET AND EXCEED YOUR
INDIVIDUAL TARGETS!**

**Remember, you cannot achieve any of the above if you do not maintain good
health. You just can't study if you are unwell!**

So take very good care of your health.

• • •

Stay Cool with ICE!

C. V. Koushik

1- Good Academic Performance is Vital to Success!

- Performing well in your tests and exams is important for academic success. You know this very well by now!
- Just to check how well you have learnt your subjects, you have 'tested' yourself through the three or four Monday Test Cycles covering every subject. Surely you have found success (and perhaps happiness!) in doing well in most of the subjects.
- But there may be one or two subjects in which your marks are below your own minimum targets. You may feel you could have done better in these subjects. This kind of a feeling is quite normal for most students. And if it has happened to you, you may be worried that you will end up with low internal marks (IM).
- So now you have to think seriously about getting high IM. And to do this you have to improve your performance in these subjects in all future tests.
- Even if the Monday Tests Schedule comes to a close, *you will still have one last chance to improve your academic performance. The “ICE” will help you to do this!*

2- What is ICE?

- ICE stands for *Intensive Coaching Exams!* ICE is organised about three to four weeks before the final Anna University (AU) Exams.
- The ICE will consist of two/three coaching sessions and two/three examinations per subject. The questions papers for each of the exams will be exactly like the AU question papers. So the ICE will give you a feel of the AU examinations.
- *Taking the ICE seriously is very important for you because this is the last chance you get to excel in your academic performance.* The ICE and the model practical exams finish around 10 days before the AU Exams. So you will have a good number of study holidays after the ICE.
- You would be SMART if you considered the ICE as the AU exams. Study for them very hard, so you are able to achieve or exceed your set target marks. This is how ICE will help you to *“stay cool during the real AU exams”*. You would have already prepared well during the ICE so you will be relaxed during the AUE. And you have more than a month after the ICE. So all of you can be rank-holders at AU, provided you use the days well and maintain the tempo until you finish your degree programme.

3- How do I get ready for the ICE?

- First of all, you have to put firmly in your mind that these exams are the last opportunity that you will get at the college level to test your understanding and learning of all of the subjects.

- Next, get to know the ICE Schedule. Study it carefully to find out when you have the 'easy' subjects and when you have the subjects in which you have to score higher marks.
- Then think about each of the subjects and write down in your personal notebook (TNPL, of course!) the minimum number of marks you wish to set as 'targets' for each of them.
- The next step is to total up the marks and find out the average percentage of marks. This would be your micro-goal for the ICE! By now you know how to write a goal statement. Just to refresh your memory a typical micro-goal will read as follows.

MICRO-GOAL: I must obtain or exceed ___% marks in the ICE.

4 - Bring Yourself to Focus on This Micro-goal

- You have been introduced to the techniques of *affirmation and visualisation*'. So use your notebook and get to work using these techniques.
- Once your micro-goal for the ICE is firmly set in your mind, you will constantly think about and act on it and achieve it with flying colours. As stated twice before, the key here is to believe and realise that your mind is capable of doing amazing things when properly directed.
- Once your mind is focussed, prepare a TMP for the ICE. If you have been following a regular TMP for your daily academic work and have obtained good marks in the Monday tests, you may continue with this plan, with slight modifications to suit the ICE schedule.

5 - Take Action to Successfully Achieve Your Micro-goal!

- Prepare the 2-marks questions very well so that you are sure of 20 marks in Part A. If you have any doubts, consult with your faculty.
- Students who feel that their fluency in written English needs to be improved can prepare answers to the long-answer questions in point form using simple English. Use numbers or bullets for the points in your answers.

Review the tactics stated in the previous write-up on Monday Tests and follow them along with the above ones. All these are ways to ensure that your presentation in the answer paper will be very impressive and the faculty will feel happier valuing your answers.

Surely, all of you can meet and exceed your targets! ALL THE BEST!

• • •

Cramming Doesn't Pay in the Long Run!

C. V. Koushik

The rush of student life!

As a student of today, you are always under some pressure or other. You have assignments to submit, lab records to complete, tests to study for, a cultural event to practise for, a paper to prepare for presentation, family functions to attend and so on.

Amidst all of this pressure, you also need to have stretch breaks, time to chat with friends or family to 'catch up' on the latest, spend time on a hobby or sport, listen to music, etc.

For a student to be successful in the real sense of the word, s/he has to manage her/his time effectively and get all of the work done to everybody's general satisfaction. But it is quite surprising to note that only a few students are able to cope with all of these activities and pressure with notable success.

So what happens to the majority of them? They 'cram' their way through student life until it becomes an ingrained habit. And as habits die hard, they even cram in later life with little or no apparent success.

It would not be incorrect to say that most students are addicted to cramming. Ask any teacher and they will vouch for it. Even you would admit to doing it. But before we go any further, let's understand what cramming is all about.

What is cramming?

If we have students' academic performance in mind, *cramming just means memorising the lessons in a short time just before the final test or exam and reproducing the contents in the answer sheets*. In general, it is doing whatever you have to do, at the eleventh hour, at the nick of the moment without any planning or serious preparation.

Two kinds of 'crammers!': Students who cram are of two kinds. The first kind 'crams' very well because they have a good memory for this 'style' of learning and they end up getting good marks. These students have perfected cramming to the state of a personal art! The other kind also crams but they come out with only a mediocre performance because they are not endowed with such a good memory. The last-minute study is not effective as they had so much to cram and so little time to cram it all.

Why cramming is hardly any good

Let us look at the case of two farmers, one who avoided cramming and the other who didn't, just to realise why cramming amounts to little good.

The farmer who avoided cramming...

Imagine you are a farmer and that you normally tilled the soil in March/April, sowed the seeds in April/May and nurtured them through meticulous planning and loving care through the next six months or so until you reaped a bountiful harvest in January.

If you did all of this regularly without any lapse or flaw, you would have excellent yields year after year. Your income would steadily rise, you would expand your agricultural business and eventually you would be a highly successful and wealthy farmer.

The farmer who crammed...

If, instead of the successful, well-planned and well-practised routine of the farmer above, you decided to take it easy, you decided to 'cram', just visualise what can happen. Let's say you took it easy until September. Then, in October, you begin to till the land. You work day and night at the farm to raise a great big harvest in December.

What would be the result? What would you get? It would be easy for you to realise that you would have no harvest worth talking about. In fact you would have no harvest at all. You would thus have failed to utilise the advantage of a rich, productive soil and your agricultural skills to get what you wanted... a good harvest.

So, as a farmer, you would have merely 'crammed' your way to bad results!

Cramming at college

Whether you cram as a farmer or an engineer or a student, you would always end up with poor results.

Now let us see how cramming can affect you as a student. You now have a good idea of what cramming is, so you can easily imagine its effects in different student situations.

Assignments - a 'crammed' assignment would be of mediocre standard. You would have failed to take advantage of the intended drill and practice, meant to strengthen learning.

Lab Record Books - you would end up just as you did with the crammed assignment.

Tests and Exams - You can easily guess what cramming can do here... low test marks, low overall test performance and therefore low internal marks. Most importantly, you will remember little of what you studied after a few days or weeks after the test (or exam) as you have blindly memorised information just before the test or exam. The last-minute study would hardly have offered much time or scope for real (long-term) learning. So you will have little knowledge to recall at interviews later on in life.

Paper Presentation - You would stand nowhere if you 'crammed' the presentation... you would be rated last in a competition or evaluated as poor in presentation or communication, etc.

Coordinator of a Student Activity - the activity or function would be poorly organised and you and your peers would not want to remember it at all.

These are but a few examples... you can visualise many other instances of cramming.

Is there an alternative to cramming?

There sure is! Cramming, we have seen, involves last minute, rushed activity; that is why it leads to disastrous results. Even with high-performance students who indulge in cramming, the results are not as extra-ordinary as they might have been otherwise. So, how can one avoid cramming? Just follow the steps listed below, as sincerely as you can.

a) *Set goals for your academic work and achieve them*

You all know how to set goals. Remember **Tool 2** on **Goal Setting**. Review the contents if you must. Typical micro-goals (or items on a “things-to-do” list), to avoid cramming would be,

- *Prepare a given assignment, study it well and submit it by (date) .*
- *Study semester subjects on a daily basis, according to a study schedule.*
- *Prepare for Monday Tests from a week before the test dates and end up with an average of 80% marks.*
- *Develop the contents for a technical paper for competition right from the date of its announcement, in the form of a great PP presentation and prepare for it well.*
- *Work sincerely as the Coordinator for _____ function and practise organisational, interpersonal, leadership skills, etc.*

b) *Manage your time effectively*: Use the tips given in **Tool 3** on **Time Management** and get into the habit of developing and implementing “to-do” lists on a daily basis or a 'Time Management Plan' (TMP) on a weekly basis.

c) *Review your academic performance*: Take stock of your academic performance after the completion of every cycle of tests. Use the 'affirmation' and 'visualisation' techniques to increase commitment to achieving goals.

Please do spend time to read the relevant contents of **The Student's Toolbox** from time to time for continuous improvement in your performance and ultimately for excellence in anything you do.



Are you good at group discussion?

Brijesh Singh (Project Head, Top Careers and You (www.tcyonline.com))

Have you ever seen a football game?

Or been a part of a football team?

These questions might seem awkward and absurd when talking about 'How to crack a Group Discussion' to get into a top B-School or a top IT job.

But they are relevant to understand the nuances of a Group Discussion.

Just reiterating the cliché that a Group discussion, or GD, as it is commonly called, is a group process or a team building exercise does not help students.

As in a football game, where you play like a team, passing the ball to each team member and aim for a common goal, GD is also based on teamwork, incorporating views of different team members to reach a common goal.

A Group Discussion can be defined as a formal discussion involving ten to 12 participants in a group.

They are given a topic. After some time, during which they collect their thoughts, the group is asked to discuss the topic for 20 to 25 minutes.

B-Schools use the GD process to assess a candidate's personality traits.

Here are some of the most important personality traits that a candidate should possess to do well at a GD:

1. Team Player

Employers lay great emphasis on this parameter because it is essential for prospective employees to be team players.

The reason: You will mostly be required to work in teams.

At the beginning of your career, you will work as a team member. And, later, as a team leader.

Aspirants who lack team skills cannot be good team players or team leaders.

2. Reasoning Ability

Reasoning ability plays an important role while expressing your opinions or ideas at a GD.

For example, an opinion like 'Reduction in IIMs' fees will affect quality' can be better stated by demonstrating your reasoning ability and completing the missing links between fees and quality as:

'Reduction in IIMs' fees will result in less funds being invested on study material, student exchange programmes, research, student development activities, etc.

'Moreover, it costs money to attract good faculty, create good infrastructure and upgrade technology.

'With reduction in fees, less money will be available to perform these activities which will lead to deterioration in the quality of IIMs.'

3. Leadership

There are three types of situations that can arise in a GD:

- A GD where participants are unable to establish a proper rapport and do not speak much.
- A GD where participants get emotionally charged and the GD gets chaotic.
- A GD where participants discuss the topic assertively by touching on all its nuances and try to reach the objective.

Here, a leader would be someone who facilitates the third situation at a GD.

A leader would have the following qualities:

- S/he shows direction to the group whenever the group moves away from the topic.
- S/he coordinates the effort of the different team members in the GD.
- S/he contributes to the GD at regular intervals with valuable insights.
- S/he also inspires and motivates team members to express their views.

Caution: Being a mere coordinator in a GD does not help, because it is a secondary role.

Contribute to the GD with your ideas and opinions, but also try and steer the conversation towards a goal.

4. Flexibility

You must be open to other ideas as well as to the evaluation of your ideas: That is what flexibility is all about.

But first, remember: Never ever start your GD with a stand or a conclusion.

Say the topic of a GD is, 'Should India go to war with Pakistan?'

Some participants tend to get emotionally attached to the topic and take a stand either in favour or against the topic, i.e. 'Yes, India should', or, 'No, India should not'.

By taking a stand, you have already given your decision without discussing the topic at hand or listening to the views of your team members.

Also, if you encounter an opposition with a very strong point at the 11th hour, you end up in a typical catch-22 situation:

- If you change your stand, you are seen as a fickle-minded or a whimsical person.
- If you do not change your stand, you are seen as an inflexible, stubborn and obstinate person.

5. Assertiveness

You must put forth your point to the group in a very emphatic, positive and confident manner.

Participants often confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness.

Aggressiveness is all about forcing your point on the other person, and can be a threat to the group. An aggressive person can also demonstrate negative body language, whereas an assertive person displays positive body language.

6. Initiative

A general trend amongst students is to start a GD and get the initial kitty of points earmarked for the initiator.

But that is a high risk-high return strategy.

Initiate a GD only if you are well versed with the topic. If you start and fail to contribute at regular intervals, it gives the impression that you started the GD just for the sake of the initial points.

Also, if you fumble, stammer or misquote facts, it may work against you.

Remember: You never ever get a second chance to create the first impression.

7. Creativity/ Out-of-the-box thinking

An idea or a perspective, which opens new horizons for discussion on the GD topic, is always highly appreciated.

When you put across a new idea convincingly, one that the group discusses at length, then it can only be positive.

You will find yourself in the good books of the examiner.

8. Inspiring ability

A good group discussion should incorporate views of all the team members.

If some team members want to express their ideas but are not getting the opportunity to do so, giving them an opportunity to express their ideas or opinions will be seen as a positive trait.

Caution: If a participant is not willing to speak, you need not necessarily go out of the way to ask him to express his views. This may insult him and hamper the flow of the GD.

9. Listening

Always try and strike a proper balance between expressing your ideas and imbibing ideas.

10. Awareness

You must be well versed with both the micro and macro environment.

Your awareness about your environment helps a lot in your GD content, which carries maximum weightage.

Caution: The content or awareness generally constitutes 40 to 50 percent marks of your GD.

Apart from these qualities, communication skills, confidence and the ability to think on one's feet are also very important.





Key GD tips, revealed!

Brijesh Singh, *Project Head, Top Careers and You*
(www.tcyonline.com)

In the previous article, we discussed the personality traits required to excel at Group Discussions.

Let's go on to how GD is initiated and summarised.

A group discussion can be categorically divided into three different phases.

- i) Initiation / Introduction
- ii) Body of the group discussion
- iii) Summarisation / Conclusion

Let's stress on the initiation and summarisation.

Initiation Techniques

Initiating a GD is a high profit-high loss strategy.

When you initiate a GD, you not only grab the opportunity to speak, you also grab the attention of the examiner and your fellow candidates.

If you can make a favourable first impression with your content and communication skills after you initiate a GD, it will help you sail through the discussion.

But if you initiate a GD and stammer/ stutter/ quote wrong facts and figures, the damage might be irreparable.

If you initiate a GD impeccably but don't speak much after that, it gives the impression that you started the GD for the sake of starting it or getting those initial kitty of points earmarked for an initiator!

When you start a GD, you are responsible for putting it into the right perspective or framework. So initiate one only if you have indepth knowledge about the topic at hand.

There are different techniques to initiate a GD and make a good first impression:

- a) Quotes**
- b) Definition**
- c) Question**
- d) Shock statement**
- e) Facts, figures and statistics**
- f) Short story**
- g) General statement**

- **Quotes**

Quotes are an effective way of initiating a GD.

If the topic of a GD is: Should the Censor Board be abolished?, you could start with a quote like, 'Hidden apples are always sweet'.

For a GD topic like, Customer is King, you could quote Sam (WalMart) Walton's famous saying, 'There is only one boss: the customer. And he can fire everybody in the company - from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.'

- **Definition**

Start a GD by defining the topic or an important term in the topic.

For example, if the topic of the GD is Advertising is a Diplomatic Way of Telling a Lie, why not start the GD by defining advertising as, 'Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services through mass media like newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor'?

For a topic like The Malthusian Economic Prophecy is no longer relevant, you could start by explaining the definition of the Malthusian Economic Prophecy.

- **Question**

Asking a question is an impactful way of starting a GD.

It does not signify asking a question to any of the candidates in a GD so as to hamper the flow. It implies asking a question, and answering it yourself.

Any question that might hamper the flow of a GD or insult a participant or play devil's advocate must be discouraged.

Questions that promote a flow of ideas are always appreciated.

For a topic like, Should India go to war with Pakistan, you could start by asking, 'What does war bring to the people of a nation? We have had four clashes with Pakistan. The pertinent question is: what have we achieved?'

- **Shock statement**

Initiating a GD with a shocking statement is the best way to grab immediate attention and put forth your point.

If a GD topic is, The Impact of Population on the Indian Economy, you could start with, 'At the centre of the Indian capital stands a population clock that ticks away relentlessly. It tracks 33 births a minute, 2,000 an hour, 48,000 a day. Which calculates to about 12 million every year. That is roughly the size of Australia. As a current political slogan puts it, 'Nothing's impossible when 1 billion Indians work together'.'

- **Facts, figures and statistics**

If you decide to initiate your GD with facts, figure and statistics, make sure to quote them accurately. Approximation is allowed in macro level figures, but micro level figures need to be correct and accurate.

For example, you can say, approximately 70 per cent of the Indian population stays in rural areas (macro figures, approximation allowed).

But you cannot say 30 states of India instead of 28 (micro figures, no approximations).

Stating wrong facts works to your disadvantage.

For a GD topic like, China, a Rising Tiger, you could start with, 'In 1983, when China was still in its initial stages of reform and opening up, China's real use of Foreign Direct Investment only stood at \$636 million. China actually utilised \$60 billion of FDI in 2004, which is almost 100 times that of its 1983 statistics.'

• **Short story**

Use a short story in a GD topic like, Attitude is Everything.

This can be initiated with, 'A child once asked a balloon vendor, who was selling helium gas-filled balloons, whether a blue-coloured balloon will go as high in the sky as a green-coloured balloon. The balloon vendor told the child, it is not the colour of the balloon but what is inside it that makes it go high.'

• **General statement**

Use a general statement to put the GD in proper perspective.

For example, if the topic is, Should Sonia Gandhi be the prime minister of India?, you could start by saying, 'Before jumping to conclusions like, 'Yes, Sonia Gandhi should be', or 'No, Sonia Gandhi should not be', let's first find out the qualities one needs to be a good prime minister of India. Then we can compare these qualities with those that Mrs Gandhi possesses. This will help us reach the conclusion in a more objective and effective manner.'

Summarisation Techniques

Most GDs do not really have conclusions. A conclusion is where the whole group decides in favour or against the topic.

But every GD is summarised. You can summarise what the group has discussed in the GD in a nutshell.

Keep the following points in mind while summarising a discussion:

- Avoid raising new points.
- Avoid stating only your viewpoint.
- Avoid dwelling only on one aspect of the GD.
- Keep it brief and concise.
- It must incorporate all the important points that came out during the GD.

If the examiner asks you to summarise a GD, it means the GD has come to an end. Do not add anything once the GD has been summarised.



The Business Ethics of JRD Tata

A tribute to a great captain of industry on his 101st birth anniversary

R.M. Lala

IN THE public mind, ethics in business are mainly connected with financial integrity. Important as that is, the real meaning of the word "ethics" goes far beyond that. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as "the science of morals in human conduct, a moral principle or code." So the word ethics encompasses the entire spectrum of human conduct. Business ethics encompass how a person in business deals with his or her:



J. R. D. Tata... setting high standards

1. Colleagues
2. Staff and workers
3. Shareholders
4. Customers
5. The community
6. The government
7. The environment and even
8. The nation and its interest

JRD always said his model in whatever he did in business was the founder of the House of Tatas, Jamsetji Tata and that whenever he needed inspiration, he would read about his life. In 1895, Jamsetji Tata said in one of the few speeches he delivered:

"We do not claim to be more unselfish, more generous or more philanthropic than other people. But we think we started on sound and straightforward business principles, considering the interests of the shareholders our own, and the health and welfare of the employees the sure foundation of our prosperity."

JRD started Tata Airlines in 1932 along with an English friend, Neville Vincent. Tatas and Neville had an agreement whereby Neville would get one third of the profit. The investment and the services of JRD came from the Tatas."

In the first year of operation, the profit was Rs.60,000, which by today's value be a hundred times more. Five years later in 1937 when the contract expired, the profit was ten times as much! JRD was not then the Chairman of Tatas and the legal advisor of Tatas, J. D. Choksi, felt the contract should not be renewed on the same terms as the profit was much larger.

JRD was not happy but went and told Neville Vincent so. Neville Vincent was terribly upset. JRD knew in his heart that it was not fair to the man who had come to him with the idea and helped him to establish it.

He went to another solicitor, a friend and advisor on his personal matters, named Dinshaw Daji. Daji opined that while Choksi was legally correct, his opinion was not morally so. JRD recounted, "I went and told Neville, 'forget it,' and assured him that the terms would be the same as before".

"But did you not consult your co-directors?" I enquired.

"No", JRD replied. "It was not right and not fair and I just told him."

JRD was then thirty-three years old. Only a year later was he selected Chairman of Tata Sons.

What guided JRD was the power of his conviction and not the fine print of law.

JRD was meticulous on financial ethics. When I observed to him in 1979 that Tatas had not expanded as much in the 1960s and 1970s as some other groups had, he replied firmly:

"I have often thought about that. If we had done some of the things that some of the other groups have done, we would have been twice as big as we are today. But we didn't, and I would not have it *any other way*."

One of India's best known tax consultants, Dinesh Vyas, says that JRD never entered into a debate between "*tax avoidance*", which was permissible, and "*tax evasion*", which was illegal; his sole motto was "*tax compliance*".

On one occasion, a senior executive of a Tata company tried to save on taxes. Before putting up the case, the chairman of that company took him along to JRD. Dinesh Vyas explained to JRD: "But sir, it is not illegal."

Softly JRD replied: "Not illegal, yes. But is it right?"

Vyas later wrote in an article, "JRD would have been the most ardent supporter of the view expressed by Lord Denning: "The avoidance of tax may be lawful, but it is not yet a virtue".

JRD's strong point was his intense interest in people and his desire to make them happy. Towards the end of his life he often said, "We don't smile enough". Once he added, "When people recognise me from a passing car, I smile at them. It costs me nothing and it makes them happy."

When I was writing *The Creation of Wealth*, he told me about his dealing with his colleagues:

"With each man I have my own way. I am one who will make full allowance for a man's character and idiosyncrasies. You have to adapt yourself to their ways and deal accordingly and draw out the best in each man.

"At times it involves suppressing yourself. It is painful but necessary... To be a leader you have got to lead human beings with affection".

It is a measure of his affection that even after some of them retired he would write to them. He thought not only of business but also of people.

In dealing with his workers he was particularly influenced by Jamsetji Tata who at the height of capitalist exploitation in 1880s and 1890s gave his workers accident insurance and a pension fund, adequate ventilation, and other benefits.

JRD wanted the workers to have a say in their welfare and safety, and he wanted their suggestions on the running of the company.

He founded in 1943 one of the early personnel departments in Indian industry. As a further consequence, two pioneering strokes of Tata Steel came about, namely a profit-sharing bonus, and a joint consultative council.

Then, JRD looked further ahead. In a speech in Madras in 1969 he called on the management of industries located in rural areas or semi-urban areas to think of their less fortunate neighbours in the surrounding regions:

"Let industry established in the countryside "adopt" the villages in its neighbourhood; let some of the time of its managers, its engineers, doctors and skilled specialists be spared to help and advise the people of the villages and to supervise new developments undertaken by co-operative effort between them and the company."

To put JRD's ideas into action, the articles of association of leading Tata companies were amended and social obligations beyond welfare of employees were accepted as part of the objectives of the group. The articles of association were altered to include that the company could "subscribe or continue or otherwise to assist or to guarantee money to charitable, benevolent, religious, scientific, national, public, political or any other useful institutions, objects or purposes."

In the nineteenth century the poet, Baron Edward Thurlow, had asked; "Did you ever expect a corporation to have a conscience?"

The answer from JRD Tata was, "Yes."

On shareholders

He once had his own way of dealing with shareholders. Once at the annual general meeting of Tomco, a shareholder said: "Sir, the quality of Hamam soap has deteriorated. Even the wrapping paper is not as good as before."

"Who says so?" JRD shot back. "Sir, my wife says so." "In that case you can do either of two things: you can change your soap or change your wife." Shareholders delighted in such repartees by him. At the same time he was very conscious of the shareholders who were the owners of his companies.

Thinking for the nation

He was never against government participation but wanted government and private industry to move in harmony together. He succeeded in starting Air India International on that basis. It was his first and last success along these lines.

He never bent the system for his benefit. L. K. Jha recalled in 1986 that when he was Secretary to the government

JRD never approached him on behalf of any Tata company but the whole industry. He wanted no favours, only fairness.

Business ethics is sustained by a purpose higher than one's own self-interest. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao observed, "His (JRD's) business endeavours were embellished by a higher vision... a concern for the nation and a social purpose."

When JRD was once asked what his guiding principles were, he spelt out five points, one of which was:

"No success or achievement in material terms is worthwhile unless it serves the needs or interests of the country and its people and is achieved by fair and honest means."

Concern for the environment

In his last years he was very conscious of the environment and the industry's part in spoiling it. In 1992, he wrote in his Foreword to *The Creation of Wealth*: "I believe that the social responsibilities of our industrial enterprises should now extend, even beyond serving people, to the environment. This need is now fairly well recognised but there is still considerable scope for most industrial ventures to extend their support not only to human beings but also to the land, to the forests, to the waters and to the creatures that inhabit them. I hope that such need will be increasingly realised by all industries and their managements because of the neglect from which they have suffered for so long and the physical damage that the growth of industry has inflicted, and still inflicts on them."

The JRD Tata Centre for Ecotechnology at the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation was established in furtherance of his desire.

Love for people

To JRD, India was not a geographical expression. It was people. When travelling by car with him once, an unkempt man with a bundle on his head was crossing the road a sight familiar to all of us, and hardly noticed.

JRD turned to me and said, "Look, this is probably all the poor man really possesses."

When he was awarded the *Bharat Ratna* in 1992, Tata employees arranged a function where a gentle breeze was blowing inland from the Arabian Sea. When JRD rose to speak he made the point:

"An American economist has predicted that in the next century India will be an economic superpower. I want India to be a happy country."

This was not only his hope, it was also his life. He brought sunshine into the lives of many of us who knew him.



[This is an excerpt from the "Afterward" in the writer's book, "In Search of Ethical Leadership", New Edition, Vision Books, New Delhi, 2005.]

AN OATH FOR MY INDIA!

(Envisioned by India's First Citizen His Excellency Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam)

Dear Students!

- Let each one of us draw inspiration from our highly enlightened and respected President of our proud nation.
- Let us take a pledge right now to strictly practise and make a personal habit of *at least two* of the following principles advocated by our respected President every year.



1. I will pursue my education or work with dedication and I will excel in it. I will teach at least 10 persons who cannot read and write to read and write.
2. I will plant at least 10 saplings and shall ensure their growth through constant care.
3. From now onwards, I will always keep my home, work place, campus, surroundings and all the wide-open spaces of my country clean by practising good environmental habits.
4. I will visit rural and urban areas and permanently wean away at least five persons from addiction and gambling.
5. I will constantly endeavour to remove the pain of my suffering fellow countrymen.
6. I will not support any religious, caste or language differentiation.
7. I will be honest and endeavour to make a corruption-free society.
8. I will work for becoming an enlightened citizen and make my family righteous.
9. I will always be a friend of the mentally and physically challenged and will work hard to make them feel normal, like the rest of us.
10. I will proudly celebrate the success of my country and my people.



