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**Management by valuing: A success and leadership archetype**

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**ABSTRACT**

This is an original account of a highly successful and well established management professor cum trainer. He is a PhD qualified professor currently employed with a university since last thirty years and is based in India. He is also a prolific trainer and one of the most sought after speakers. This case research article gives detailed account of his interpersonal and social behavior qualitatively and as observed by one of his friend and HR professional. It establishes various behavioural aspects of personal, social and organizational outperformance while one is practically working in a real context. It enlists the sets of behavioural competencies as manifested by the subject, which is required in a professor and trainer to rise and be successful. The behaviour described informs the reader about the various contexts and examples of professional situations faced by a professor cum trainer during his career span of over 30 years. Important learnings are then drawn and suggested as a possible professional behavioural practice to be followed by professors, trainers and HR professionals alike. They are mentioned as various 'Value' Dimensions indicating that leaders need to truly value what they have got in order to get what they aspire for. Some of these value dimensions are valuing self, valuing people, valuing life and so on.

**Keywords:** Leadership behaviour, Management skills, Emotional intelligence, Professional success, Professor, Trainer

**1. The case**

Navin was mesmerized with the amazing success of Professor Kumar. He couldn't hold the temptation of recalling how Dr. Kumar has effectively influenced professionals across this city, state and beyond and achieved a success which others may envy of.

**1.1 Feats**

Can there be a good learning event and Dr. Kumar is not invited there? Certainly not! He was invited as speaker in more than 75 organizations in and around this mini metro city in last few years. Almost no mentionable organization of repute in the city was left out. Be it a bank training centre, police training academy, administration training centre, management development centre, business training centre, university teachers' training, a speaking event by a local media organization, a seminar by an association, a seminar by an NGO, a B-school conference, a training company, an in-house training for a company, a government department et al. If there was any need for a trainer or speaker in HR, management or soft skills then his name will be put in first. Heads of various organizations would organize or

plan for a programme keeping him in mind. Secondly, anybody in the teaching or management fraternity you meet, he will tell this- “Yes! I know Dr. Kumar.” There were many who never met him but considered him as his ‘guru’ or ideal. In a local trainers’ association, once a young speaker was invited to take a session on ‘communication skills.’ He touched feet (Indian way of respecting teachers) of Dr. Kumar and said “Although we have never met but I consider you as my guru, mentor and guide. I have heard so much about you, and got inspiration by hearing about you.” That reminded Navin of the wise Sanskrit verse, (Joshi, 2013) “Gunnah Kurvanti Dutattvam Doorepi Vasataam Sataam, Ketakigandhamaaghraaya Svyam Gachhanti Shatpadaah” (Translation: The qualities of a leader act as a messenger, travel far & wide and attract others to him the way insects are attracted to the smell of a Ketaki flower). In a 20 years period, Dr. Kumar gave talk in about 500 different platforms and forums including conferences, seminars, trainings, meetings, symposiums, classes, workshops etc.

### **1.2 Degree or skill?**

Although he carried a PG & doctorate degree with him, but did he really need one? Anybody and everybody was his friend. He brought people together. Certainly he didn’t get a degree on people skills or interpersonal skills or social skills. But he was one of gems in that. Once Navin asked him directly about the secret of his being so good in soft skills- Sir, “What’s the secret behind?” He replied so humbly- “It’s your greatness that you are telling this. I do my duty. Just that. It’s the grace of God.” Navin reflected, if it was the effect of zodiac sign. Dr. Kumar never seemed to be exerting efforts for doing this. It was so seamless and coming so easily to him. If there was anything then it was his eu-stress (positive stress) and the swift excitement.

### **1.3 The hallmark greetings & meetings**

He met everyone with a broad smile always. The warmth was in his words and expressions- “Are..ey.... Navinji... Aaiye, Aaiye (Hey Dr. Navin, Come, Come on in..). Kaise Hain? (How are you doing?).” It was always with that ‘Josh’ (The enthusiasm). The speed and energy, with which he will get up and bend forward to welcome guests as soon as he sees them and the strong shake hands or ‘Namastey’ (Indian way of Greetings) were his hallmarks. Whenever he met anybody, at least there was one guffaw always. And, he invariably will be the initiator. The laughter will come from within and will be a whole hearted one. It was infectious. Those sitting nearby cannot remain unaffected. One felt like coming to him again, wanting to be in his company. He would always inquire about well being of others. “ ‘Aur kaisa chal raha hai aapka’ (How are things going on at your end?), ‘Sab thik hai!’ (Hope things are fine!), ‘Bachhe kaise hain?’ (How r kids?).” Then he may also add, “Mere layak koi kaam ho to bataaiyega” (Do let me know if I can be of any help), ‘Milte rahiyege’, ‘Baat karte rahiyege’ (Keep meeting, visiting; keep in touch).” One actually felt so valued. He valued people more than what they themselves would do.

### **1.4 Positive thinker & appreciator**

Navin heard him both formally and informally in dozens of talks. But he hardly used the word like ‘no’, ‘can’t’ ‘impossible’. He was always optimistic. In fact, he commonly used the word ‘great’ ‘very good’ ‘bahut badhiya’ (excellent) and frequently so. But that didn’t stop him from taking and informing realistic stock of the situation. Navin didn’t recall a single meeting with Dr. Kumar in which he returned feeling low or pessimistic after meeting him. Where there was poor hope, he made the optimism alive by extending his help. Most

importantly, he never complained about his difficulties or about any other person. He always focused his energy on appreciating others by using words like ‘Kya Baat Hai!’ (What a performance or achievement!), “Congratulations” etc.

### **1.5 Politeness, humble, helpful**

‘Please’, ‘thank you’, ‘sorry’, ‘sure’, ‘can you help me’ ‘if you can’, ‘let me do it for you’ were some of the common words frequently used by him with everyone, be them younger or elder to him. “ ‘Dekh lijiyega’ (please see to it), ‘Use kar lijiyega’(Please do that) and ‘Haan bataiye Sharmaji’ (yes, please tell me Sharmaji)” were some of his common phrases which he used in local Hindi language while dealing with his juniors and students. Navin never saw him getting angry. Once, Navin met his parents. He could easily see how polite all of them were. In at least ten occasions, Dr. Kumar helped Navin. Navin recalled his help in getting two assignments by getting introduced to the concerned persons, two recommendation letters, three guest faculty invitations, two local chapter invitations and information about two expert resource persons for a workshop, Navin was organizing. Once Navin met Ms. Madhura and Ms. Mohini. Both of them got introduced to local chapters through Dr. Kumar. One of them was also invited as a guest speaker. Navin inquired with Dr. Kumar as to how he is giving his opportunity to someone else as that may create a competitor for him only. He responded, “I need to help youngsters grow and develop.” And so he helped scores of other people. He gave scores of recommendations for his students for various purposes. He took that risk and responsibility.

There are 100s of cases wherein people can count on the help extended by him. You meet anyone in fraternity, every second person will be seen indebted and feeling her expression of gratitude for him. By doing this he has created so much good feeling for him in the environment that the negative vibes cannot dare to come anywhere near around him. May be, his help to others returns back to him. That reminded Navin of famous quote by Zig Ziglar, “You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help enough other people get what they want.” (Ziglar, 1982)

### **1.6 Active & energetic**

Once, Navin asked him about the secret of his energy and enthusiasm. He informed its God’s grace and added that he went for swimming regularly. Alternatively, he went for a long early morning walk. There was almost no week in which he didn’t have at least one speaking engagement. Navin was surprised to see that just a week before his daughter’s marriage and immediately a week after Dr. Kumar went for a speaking engagement. Every week, he will have any of these four things going on- a participation in a conference, seminar, or a speaking engagement or a training program or an evaluation of a college student. In fact, in a month he did all these- guided PhDs, designed and delivered training programs, conducted university classes, participated in academic administration, chaired a meeting of an organization’s chapter, went to a university or college for viva or other examination, set or check papers, wrote book chapter or article, got busy in putting together a program for his organization and still been active almost every two hours on whatsapp. He was also on the boards of several colleges and universities in different capacities. Where does he get all that energy from? Is it the natural preference for ‘extroversion’ as depicted in MBTI personality types? How many extroverts are able to bring their energy for fruitful purpose and channelize it for society? He really lived life to its fullest and lived it in all dimensions. He gave importance to everything and almost everyone.

## **1.7 Communication & feedback**

Always listening, always enthusiastic and always humble! Dr. Kumar will always revert back. Navin made about 30 contacts to him in a year's period. But he didn't recall a single time when he was not reverted back either immediately or at the most on the next day. Once he called a staff who was not doing his duty promptly. One of his students had complained to Dr. Kumar about this staff. Navin observed he was very friendly, empathizing, laughing for several minutes and then only he told him about the work. This is how he started the conversation with that staff- "Hello Mishraji!! Kaise hain. Aur kya chal raha hai aajkal aapke department mein? Abhi to admission mein bahut busy honge? Haan Sir! Aajkal time ki koi limit nahi rahi hai organizations mein. Aur sab log kaise hain? Achha vo mere ek student ka letter release hona tha, Vo ho gaya kya? Haan, please samay nikalke ek baar dekh ligiyega. Ok. Ok. Thank you. Aur mere layak koi kaam ho to batayiega jaroor. Ok. Achcha phir baat karte hain. Thanks." (How are you doing? What's happening in your department these days? You must be busy in admissions. Yes sir! These days there is no time limit to work in offices. How is everybody else doing? Yeah, one of my student's letter was to be released. Is that happening? Yes, please take out some time to see to it once. Do let me know if there is anything I can do for you. Ok. We will connect again. Thanks.)" He first understood his position, difficulty, revitalised the rapport and then requested and reminded him for the work. After finishing the talk he turned to Navin and said-"Karna parta hai Sir. What we teach, we need to follow." Many times, it so happened that he will hold a call and ask another caller to please wait as he is busy talking on another call- "Can you please hold, I am on another call?" Later, he will make sure to connect with the second caller. Navin consistently observed this behavior in him. One could really count on him. He will remember to post festival greetings to all his friends. Navin got greetings on all festival or New Year eve from him, in all these years.

## **1.8 Non judgmental**

One will never hear from him about somebody being bad. He made friends with everyone and never ever tried to avoid someone because of a mistake or a past misdeed. He almost ignored the flaws of everyone while talking or welcoming him. He really accepted people as they were. Navin recalls a quote from the Holy Bible-"Do not Judge and you will not be judged." He practiced that. He valued everyone. He was invited by almost everyone to their functions or learning initiatives. He may comment on the reality of an organization but will not abstain from it just because it was not very good. In one case, he cautioned one of his ex-colleague not to make a change in the job. The colleague did change the job despite his caution. But he didn't make it an ego issue. And did whatever he could to help him in the new work. That colleague really became a much better friend of him after that incident. He would get well with almost everyone. Navin knew several people of past fame who were avoided by others for worldly reasons. But Dr. Kumar was always comfortable talking about them or with them. The amazing thing was that Navin met scores of people at various levels and from different walks of life who called him as his best friend, teacher, mentor and guide. People will express-"Dr. Kumar? Vo to hamare bahut achhe mitra hai (He is my good friend)." "He is my mentor, guide and so on." Navin wondered how he could get time to do all this mentoring, teaching, guiding or counseling to so many people. At any time, there would be 100 such persons in the city, state and country who would be taking help, guidance from him. He understood people in their bad times and gave them that space. Since he was not judging, he actually understood them. That reminded Navin of one of the 7 habits given by Stephen R. Covey-"Seek first to understand, than to be understood." (Covey, 2004)

### **1.9 Socially wise, practical & pragmatic, approachable**

One will never feel that he is meeting a senior person. He will talk to everyone at their level and comfort. He was always welcoming. He will always ensure that he is giving due importance to everyone.

If anyone wants to understand the meaning of pragmatic then just spend some time with him. Pragmatism is personified by him. He didn't carry idealism which Gen X usually carried while dealing with Gen Y. He laughed on their jokes, didn't object to their using some slang and responded to their whatsapp posts. His facebook page will invariably have one posting with a photo about his next session delivered in the week. Whenever you call him he will not be in a hurry to cut short or disconnect. He will give you adequate time, in other words will truly value you.

There is not one or two organizations he is associated with. The number is in dozens. He is active in all. In two organizations he is the chairman, in two others he is secretary and so on. He is member of four whatsapp groups and is very active in all of them. In fact, in many of them he is the oldest member and others are of his kids age. He is still sought after. Whenever he met with others, he would inquire about their friends, colleagues or family. For example- "Aur apke vo kaise hain? (How is your friend or relative?)" "Aur aapka kuch kaam age badhaa kya? (Is there any progress in your work?)" Navin observed that he just kept on taking work and never asked for amount of remuneration. People gave him petty honorariums which are unmentionable despite he being a reputed professor, prolific trainer, author and having 30 years of experience. But he did value the money. On many occasions he advised his friends, students and colleagues to accept the assignment or work even if it pays a petty sum. He will normally add- "Something is better than nothing." That reminded Navin of the verse (anonymous) from Indian mythology given by Sage Vashishtha to King Rama- "Dhanam Arjaya Kakutsa, Dhan Mulam Idam Jagath. Antram Naabhi Jaanami, Nirdhanshya Mritashya Ch (O' descendent of Kakutsa dynasty, earn money. since the universe is linked with money. I don't find any difference between dead and have not's.)"

### **1.10 Connecting hearts, connecting people, teaming up**

He is always having the habit of introducing people to each other during a meeting, gathering. And while introducing, he will always highlight the qualities or achievements of the person being introduced. He will make it a point to give importance to everyone and be friends to two sets of people having different opinion about each other. On one occasion, Navin saw how he brought two old colleagues closer. In fact, if he is holding or chairing a function then it would be platforms to both sides to come as they couldn't have refused to him. So people who had decided to avoid each other will end up meeting in a program organized by him and in many cases the old acquaintance is revived. Number of times, he introduced Navin and several others with their customer or clients. That helped Navin and others getting work, getting temporary or long term assignment and generate income. A lot of Dr. Kumar's work was a joint outcome. He befriended and made good team with several persons in various sphere of his work and life in dyads and triads and then came out with books, papers, training programs, seminars, conferences etc.

### **1.11 A long term player**

This city, just two decades back was lagging behind in education and majority of people didn't really value college education. He stayed back in such an environment. This being his

home town too was a motivating factor. He slowly and patiently contributed to creating the awareness with almost negligible short or medium term gains. He kept on creating and building that space, those relationships, the subtle but stable influence on a large section of people through various small sessions over a decade. Today, he has come to such a situation where, people are inspired to learn, re-skill themselves and are motivated to organize a learning event or take up a learning course. They know that they have a desired speaker available and budget is never a constraint for him. He seemed to be deriving spiritual satisfaction from worldly behavior.

### 1.12 Leader & successful everywhere

Be it religious group of his sect, be it social group of caste, be it colleagues' group, be it an organization's chapter, be it an online group, he led everywhere either through an official position which invariable came to him or through sheer initiatives taken by him and the interest shown by him. At family, he is a proud father of a daughter and son who are well educated at prestigious institutions and are professionally independent. He lives with his wife, parents and takes care of them. Looked like it was success which was chasing him wherever he went, whatever he did and not the other way round.

Navin realized he had just learned some important guidelines to achieve success and leadership. In fact, he could develop a new 'framework for leadership and professional success' based on Value dimensions. (Figure 1)

Sr. No.	The 'Value' Dimensions	Behavioural Highlights to be practiced	Implications for HR/Organizations
A	Valuing Self	Do I love myself? Do I believe in myself? Do I take care of my health?	Ensure people are given an opportunity to excel and are recognized; A positive environment in which everyone is respected and valued; Bringing in a mechanism in which employees are persuaded to keep themselves fit; Measures like Groups for Gym, Walking, Stepathon etc.
B	Valuing People	Do I postpone Judgment? Do I Respect? Do I laugh? Am I enthusiastic? Do I warmly welcome others? Do I value everyone? Do I sense and offer help?	A mechanism in which everyone is valued, everyone is highlighted, everyone is helped and a culture of forgiving and forgetting. Managers to consciously put efforts to develop people as one of their key responsibilities.
C	Valuing Hard Work	Do I willingly put in more efforts? Do I sometimes accept stretching and staying late for work completion?	Create a mechanism of challenges, taking stretched targets; promote and reward hardworking
D	Valuing Money	Do I value money? Am I willing to work extra for earning money? Do I value financial independence?	Create a mechanism wherein prudence, is practiced and efforts are made to generate revenue

E	Valuing Location	Do I value my city, my place my colony? Do I value relationship and familiarity?	Encourage people to change themselves, adapt to the current situation rather than changing the place or organization
F	Valuing Life	Do I value life? Do I value what life has to offer?	Create a mechanism to ensure & encourage various activities pertaining to all domains of life
G	Valuing Work	Am I willing to contribute?	Making people realize the importance of work and placing great value on work
H	Valuing Organizations	Do I own my organization? Do I take responsibility?	Organization is to be kept supreme and sense of ownership, partnership needs to be developed
I	Valuing Society	Do I value society? Do I value various groups of society?	Promote corporate social responsibility initiatives, and super ordinate goals
J	Valuing Family	Do I ensure right education for children? Am I a proud father? Do I take care of my elders?	Create a culture of family in which people take care of each other

**Figure 1:** The Value Dimensions: Success & Leadership Framework

## 2. Conclusion

Navin wondered whether this Professor Cum Trainer was made or born. Whether it was the effect of his formal education or family Sanskar (naturally acquired values)? Did he consciously develop it or was it in his genes? Is it that no credit can be given to him for his energy and enthusiasm which he brings to where ever he goes? Is it possible to imitate him? What makes him a people savvy person? Is it the zodiac sign in which he is born? Was he born with these cells in him? Where does this wisdom come from- A conscious choice, a deliberate exercise of free will, a disciplined effort or an innate ability one needs to be born with? Is it that both the luck n labour shape this personality? Can one develop it? How much? Are these behaviours relevant and transferable for HR or management professionals? While he pondered over these questions, he did realize that the following learning could be drawn from the case (Exhibit 1)

## 3. References

1. Ziglar, Z., (2005), See you at the top, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Magna Publishing Co Ltd.
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