

Humanizing Growth Series



Deepak Chopra



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M Deepak Chopra, welcome to the Institute for Real Growth, Humanizing Growth series. If I can ask you to step back and look at the world now - a year into COVID - what do you think has changed?

D As you look across the human landscape right now since COVID-19 became a pandemic, what you're seeing is different stages of what is generally referred to as grief.

Grief is an experience that we all have when we lose something that we assumed was normal, or we took a way of life for granted, or we lose a family member, or we are in fear of death or somebody dies, or there's a catastrophe - then we experience grief.

And the first stage of grief is victimization. A lot of people are still in that stage. The second stage of grief frequently is anger, and a lot of people are still in that stage. Then there is hostility, which means somehow you think you can beat this thing and you get vengeful in your mind, it doesn't work and so the next stage is frustration and helplessness. And unfortunately, I've seen people go to that stage in the midst of a crisis and die.

I've seen these stages of grief within one hour in a patient who has a severe heart attack. And then you would watch this poor person dying helpless, frustrated, scared, frightened. It's an awful, awful experience just watching this experience.

So, is there another stage? There is. That other stage right now is what we need to embrace. Otherwise, I tell you, we're doomed - that stage is acceptance of the facts as they are right now, not anybody's emotional wanting this fact or that fact. The facts are available, right? So, you look at the facts because you have to, and if you look at the facts as they are right now, then the next stage is called acceptance. Acceptance, not necessarily what we did right or wrong, not necessarily or what we can do right in the future. No, no, no, Acceptance in this moment of what is.

Once you find that, something very interesting happens, you find peace. And once you find peace, you find meaning. And once you find meaning, then you find purpose. So for me, this one year has been that, going through these stages, experiencing acceptance, finding meaning and purpose, and now using that to reinvent my body, resurrect my soul and actually over the last one year, all this contemplative, self-inquiry and yoga and reading and all the exercise that I do, I used to do one or two hours, now I did four hours every day. And in this one year, I have come up with a theoretical world view of how we can consciously reverse climate change.

I've been putting it out there in short videos and getting an amazing response. And then out of the blue, my agent said "You have a new book here. It's called 'Consciously Reversing Climate Change' because else is talking about this." And so that's been my experience in one year.



M When you think about the role of business, what comes to mind and what have you seen change over the last year as businesses have been confronted with this new reality?

D Well, what I've seen over the last year as businesses have confronted the new reality is that most of them are dinosaurs. They're outdated. They have the traditional Wall Street mentality. They come from fear and greed and they are distressed. They're super stressed right now.

And the whole business world about jobs, about security, about safety, about competition and by and large this is the business zeitgeist that I am not part of personally. So, what I've seen is entrepreneurs (who are not big business magnates) are finding great opportunity in this last year. We're on Zoom right now, somebody thought of that, right? I have engaged with a lot of other business leaders in the last year and slowly, by the way, the traditional Wall Street types are coming along because they recognize they could be dinosaurs.

I'm focusing with business leaders, who are mostly entrepreneurs, in four or five areas. One is convergence of information technologies that includes not only what you're doing right now, Zoom, but VR, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and I've created an innovation lab in Lake Nona, which is putting together new algorithms to look at facial micro expressions, eye movements, mood, voice tone, and correlating that with heart rate variability and blood pressure and immune function.

"The future of wellbeing is going to be personalized, preventive, predictable, participatory, process-oriented, and replicable scientifically through technology"

So, one area for new business is convergence of information technologies and I would say these are in four or five areas. One is health and wellbeing. The second is convergence of information technologies just for information and other technology convergence for creativity. When you put a lot of people together with shared vision, that complement each other's strengths, that have an emotional and spiritual connection to an idea, then their convergence creates new businesses. It's called Emergence.

The areas I'm looking at and encouraging people to invest, market, be entrepreneurs - one is convergence of information technologies. Second is new ideas on resurrecting the microbiome, the planetary genetic information, combine it with precision fermentation for food production. So you never have to kill an animal and you can make trillions of proteins. Right now, the world is looking at five proteins, chicken, fish, poultry, and meat, or lamb or beef, that's it. There are trillions of proteins with the genetic information we have in the soil right now under the ground, especially in places like the Amazon.

The third is transportation, energy-free transportation. And the fourth is energy itself and creating energy from waves and particles and gravity. And the final would be transportation. These are areas that people are

really looking at - people are investing not millions or billions but trillions of dollars to reinvent humanity. So, this is their opportunity to work with entrepreneurs, with investors, with visionaries, for what we call Emergence. Emergence happens when maximum diversity of talent, maximum diversity of race, gender, maximum diversity of education, shared vision, complementing strengths, and emotional, spiritual connection, and technology all have to come together. Otherwise, humanity is on the road to extinction. I guarantee you that.



M Now before we write off the dinosaurs. There are a lot of companies such as Patagonia that have now publicly made the commitments to move away from shareholder primacy to a multi-stakeholder orientation. Do you have any confidence?

D I'm glad you mentioned Patagonia, I think that's the one company that's very authentic and believes in the issues that they're talking about, particularly climate change, they're getting a good business out of it as well. So, it might be authentic. A while back, I founded a non-profit with Paul Tudor Jones called JUST Capital. And one of the things we do is identify companies that are authentically changing the value system in Wall Street. And we identified about 1,000 such companies.

But we also find that a lot of companies are doing that right now because of PR. They feel that they will be left out, so they still haven't figured out the mechanisms. They don't have the right leaders. Right leaders listen carefully. They are emotionally aware of other people's situations. They expand their own awareness of the zeitgeist. They are action-oriented, they take responsibility, they make their own good luck whenever there's a crisis. And it's very rare to find these leaders.

Right now, the cutting-edge people, by the way, are not the big companies. They're the entrepreneurs in their garages and they're millennials and I'm seeing so much creativity coming out of them. I'm totally shocked that these guys will disrupt the dinosaurs, unless the dinosaurs follow what these guys are doing.

M If you look at people today versus just a year ago, in terms of their demands of the companies they do business with, what changes do you see?

D With JUST Capital we surveyed thousands of people that you would identify as investors, but also as employees, also as employers and as customers. And what we found was that the most successful companies were those that were very aware of the wellbeing of their employees. When it comes to employee wellbeing, that means - Is the employee using his or her strengths? Do they feel acknowledged? Do they feel taken care of? Does their wellbeing, physical, emotional, mental, spiritual matter to the company?

“If your employees feel like they are being taken care of and are happy, it immediately translates into customers being happy”

And if customers are happy, it immediately translates into investors being happy and if investors are happy, then the employers are happy. It's a full circle. Focus on your employees and their wellbeing and their purpose and their mission and their strengths, and create an ecosystem where they find fulfillment in their work and you complete the full circle of economic growth responsibly.

M People wrote me questions around colleagues whose wellbeing they care for drastically, but they don't see in-person because of COVID. They haven't met for a year. They have conversations that are almost completely limited to business because everybody has 15 Zoom calls a day now. Have you seen any best practices in companies doing this, taking care of their colleagues in this last year?

D Yes. I'm seeing that in bits and pieces across the world. It's not enough. What I'm encouraging people right now since we can't meet physically, we can have these conversations and work around four areas.

First is attention, which means deep listening to each other. Second is affection, reassure everyone that you're there and you care. Third is appreciation - notice everyone's strength in your ecosystem and see how you can actually capitalize on their strength and offer them your strength as well. And finally, practice some degree of acceptance of the situation as it is. I am confident that the pandemic is going to be over, that there is going to be more than enough of the vaccines, that the mutation is going to die down. And that you are going to come back a little more humble, with a little less hubris and a little more respect for each other and the environment, because the deeper reality is this, it is the inflamed environment that causes these mutations.

Unless we fix the environment, mutations are going to keep coming notwithstanding that we're at a solid base with new vaccines, it's this traditional story, your new antibiotics, new resistant organisms, on and on, we have to address the deeper issues and those that do will make money.

M There's lots of people out there right now, burning out, stressed out, hurting - what recommendations do you have for addressing that?

D Well, social science has a lot of work on this and what makes people happy. In fact, if you go across the studies that social scientists have done, you can come up with what they call (in various forms) the happiness formula. Ultimately that's what everybody is trying to achieve, some degree of joy and happiness.

So, this is how it's usually framed. Happiness, H stands for S, Set point in the brain, which I'll explain in a moment, plus conditions of living, plus voluntary choices. So, once again, happiness formula H is equal to Set point in the brain. Set point in the brain accounts for 50% of your daily happiness experience.

What is the set point? Unhappy people see only problems, happy people see only opportunities, no matter what the situation is. This set point is determined in our childhood by our parents or caretakers. If they were criticizing, condemning, complaining, playing the victim, then you grow up to be unhappy. If they were looking for opportunities, then you grow up to be happy. So this 50% of your daily experience and you are not to blame for it, it's your parents or caretakers.

“You can change your set point by asking one question: What is the opportunity?”

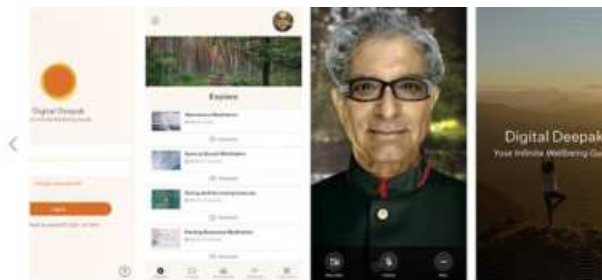
No matter what the situation is and slowly you start to change your set point, if you just ask that question.

The second part of the formula is conditions of living, which is mainly financial conditions, which is about 15% of your daily happiness experience. So, if you win the lottery, it will be exciting. In six months, your happiness will plateau. In one year, it will be back to your setpoint. So, happiness from financial resources, about 15% important. Very rich people are extremely unhappy because they think of money all the time. Very poor people are also extremely unhappy because they think of money all the time. A lot of rich people confuse net worth with self-worth, it's the biggest cause of unhappiness.

The third part is voluntary choices. So we make two kinds of choices every day, personal choices for personal pleasure. Alcohol, entertainment, sex, food, et cetera. Those choices make you happy, but only transiently. The second kind of choice that makes you happy is what you call fulfillment, which means you have meaning, purpose, and you know how to manage relationships and you make other people happy.

So, that's basically it. Happiness dependent on whether you're looking for opportunities or problems, number one. Secondly, you're financially secure without being driven by greed and fear. And thirdly, you make choices that are meaningful, purposeful and make other people happy. If you've fixed staying on course with that, this crisis will be an opportunity for you.

But overall, there's a movement in the world and I'm very busy creating digital AI right now, my own twin that can personalize meditation for you. So it's digitaldeepak.ai. If you go there, you can actually have me as your personal coach for the rest of your life. I will know you and I will tailor everything, all my coaching based on your needs. This is already out there, and we are working 24/7 to upgrade the technology every day. We feel the future of wellbeing is very closely tied into artificial intelligence, including what people might think is a contradiction - your spiritual wellbeing can be enhanced through artificial intelligence.



M Talk a little bit more about Digital Deepak. How is it that you are always able to reinvent yourself and be on the cutting edge? Because that really is quite amazing.

D I focus on four things every day. My day starts with the four intentions, joyful energetic body, because if I don't have a joyful energetic body, then step one is already gone. Second, love and compassion in my heart. Third, clear mind, creative mind. Fourth, no worries, lightness of me. I start my day with that. Then I ask myself,

"What is my deepest desire today to help the world?"

I don't have goals. I only have what I call in my heart, one formula - love and action. Love and action is very important. Love without action is irrelevant and action without love is meaningless. But when I focus on love and action, then I automatically download information that I find ends up in a book. I'm doing my 92nd book right now. And I'm also talking to companies that are interested in climate change and so on. So, my day passes very effortlessly and joyfully.

The second question was Digital Deepak. What I realized was that, and by the way, there's science to back this up. Only 5% of disease-related gene mutations are fully penetrant. Let me explain what that means. 5% of genetic mutations, which are genetic mistakes, guarantee disease.

For example, if somebody has a BRCA gene for breast cancer, a famous example is Angelina Jolie. She had bilateral mastectomy to prevent cancer, to prevent cancer, and she'd made the right decision because that particular gene mutation will lead to cancer in women. Okay? So she did the right thing. Now, for that also there's future technology coming in less than five years, things like CRISPR and so on, where you will be able to cut and paste genes the way you cut and paste your email. You'll be able to read the barcode of a gene, delete the defective gene and insert the rightful gene.

Unfortunately, that'll help only 5% of people. 95% of disease, chronic disease, including heart disease, diabetes, depression, anxiety, cancer, autoimmune illness, accelerated aging, frequent infections, 95% is related to one of the following, lack of sleep, lack of stress management, lack of exercise and mind-body coordination, what I call vagal tone and good breathing, number three. Number four, unhealthy relationships and emotional turbulence. Number five, not being connected to biological rhythms, jet lag and all that stuff that used to happen even more in the past.

And then the next thing would be nutrition to improve the genetic information in your body. The microbiome, because you only have 25,000 human genes. So, nutrition now assumes new importance when we understand the genetic microbiome in our body and finally spiritual wellbeing, those are the seven pillars of wellbeing. What I did was I codify those seven pillars. I created algorithms. And so if you check in Digital Deepak, I will, if you want to share your information with me, I'll be able to know you personally, know what your challenges are and then get care for your wellbeing that is personalized, predictable preventive, requires your participation, and I can be your personal coach for the rest of your life and if people have a handheld device, I can do that with 7 billion people one-to-one simultaneously.



And this guy will hang around until I'm dead. So he could be a personal coach to the grandchildren of my grandchildren and learn from them as well, the latest technologies.

M I sense a lightness around you. Your reality is slightly different than most people. Through the people that you've worked with that are part of companies, part of ecosystems that demand things from them, how do they create that lightness for themselves?

D Sometimes it just comes through personal growth and time. Sometimes nobody listens, but when you get to where I am, you see that my colleagues right now are unhealthy and a lot of them are dying and I feel like I'm 35. And my biological markers in fact are 35. So why would somebody lose... The average person lives 80 plus if they're in good health, okay?

That's a very short time, that's nothing. Okay? And it flies by like this, like a dream. So, if you make every day meaningful, purposeful, and joyful, you have a full life. The only moment you have is right now, and the response that you have to right now is determining your entire life. So what is the meaning of life? Well, depressed people say, "It's a sexually transmitted incurable condition." But happy people say, "It's your response to the present moment." That's it. Because that's all you have.

M So that living in the present is very clear. At the same time, you talked about purpose. So, to wrap up this conversation, how does purpose offer a direction? And how did you come to your purpose? What is it and how does that make you make choices?

D I come from a tradition of yoga. So there are four kinds of yoga. One is the physical, practical yoga, your meditation et cetera. That's called Raja yoga. The second is Gyan yoga, which is intellectual. You try to figure out what the heck is going on in the world and what's your role in it. That's intellectual, very focused on self-inquiry. The third is the yoga of love - you just focus on love and everything takes care of itself. And the fourth yoga is service. And I believe in that very much, I believe in Karma yoga or service as the only way to be joyful. And that is where meaning and purpose comes in.

I ask myself, "How can I help? What is my deepest desire and how can I help?" That's it. And then everything is organized. That's my meaning and purpose. I don't have to plan that by 2022, I'll retire because then I'd be dead. Why would I retire? And then you use the word responsibility and the word means two things, ability to respond. Okay? That's all responsibility means. The more creative you are in your ability to respond the happier you will be.