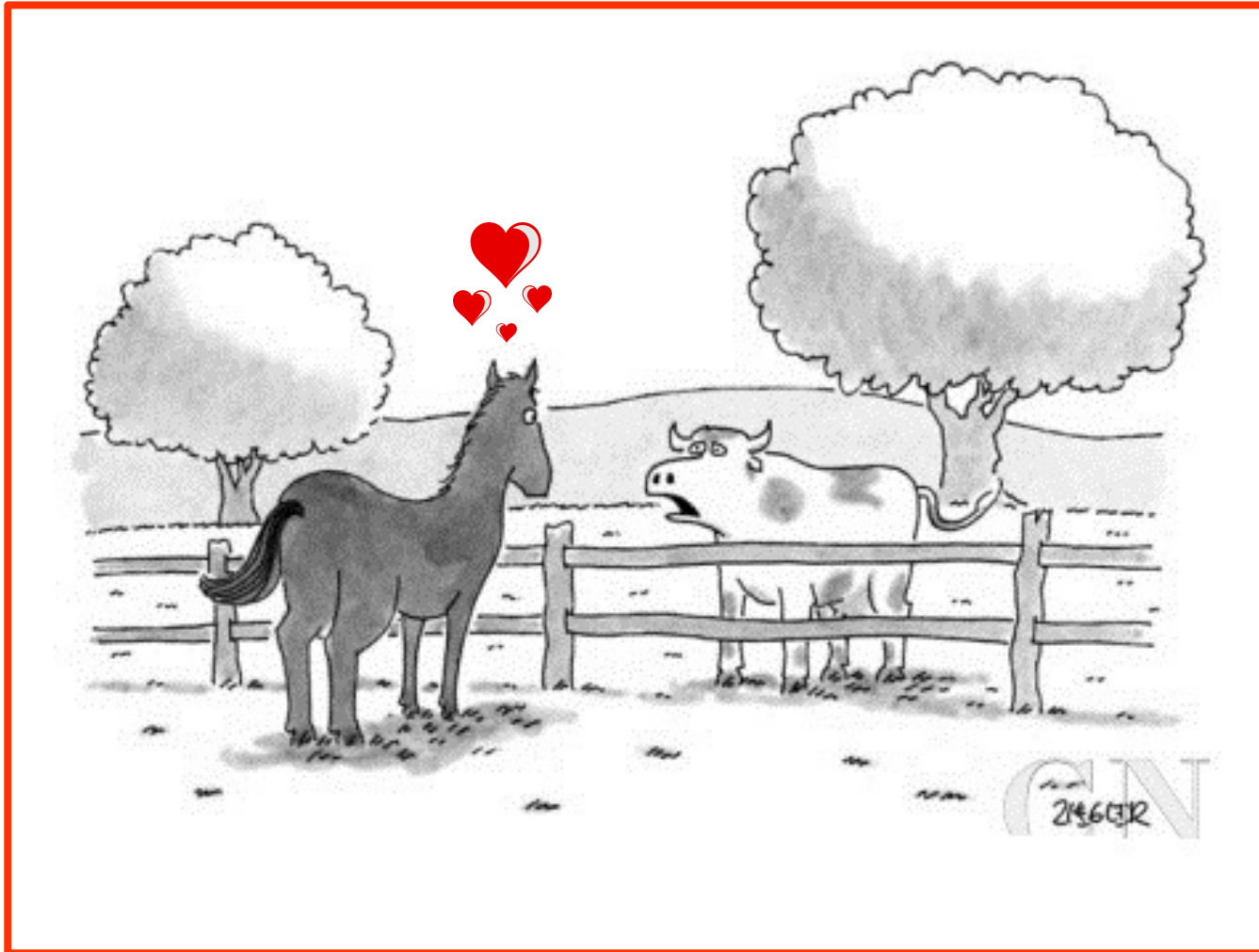


Discovering Constancy, Capitalising Change

Gideon Arulmani

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**I'VE BEEN A COW ALL MY LIFE HONEY... PLEASE
DON'T ASK ME TO **CHANGE** NOW?**

Constancy and Change

- The notions of “change”, “impermanence”, “flux”, “shift”, have become buzz words in contemporary thinking about career development.
- On the one side “chaos” and other side “construction” have been associated with career development!
- The word **change** has almost become synonymous with the word **future**.
- It is often said that the future world of work will be more **uncertain** and hence career guidance must prepare the individual to cope with constant change.

Constancy and Change

The phrase:

“There is nothing permanent but change”

is commonly heard today.

Heraclitus, 2500 years ago!

Is this really true in its entirety?

- Is there nothing that can be relied on as being relatively stable through the course of our lives?
- What about the notions of “sameness”, “consistency”, “patterns”, “trends”?

Constancy and Change

The notion of **Equilibrium**:

The continuous interchange between
Constancy *and* Change = **Equilibrium**

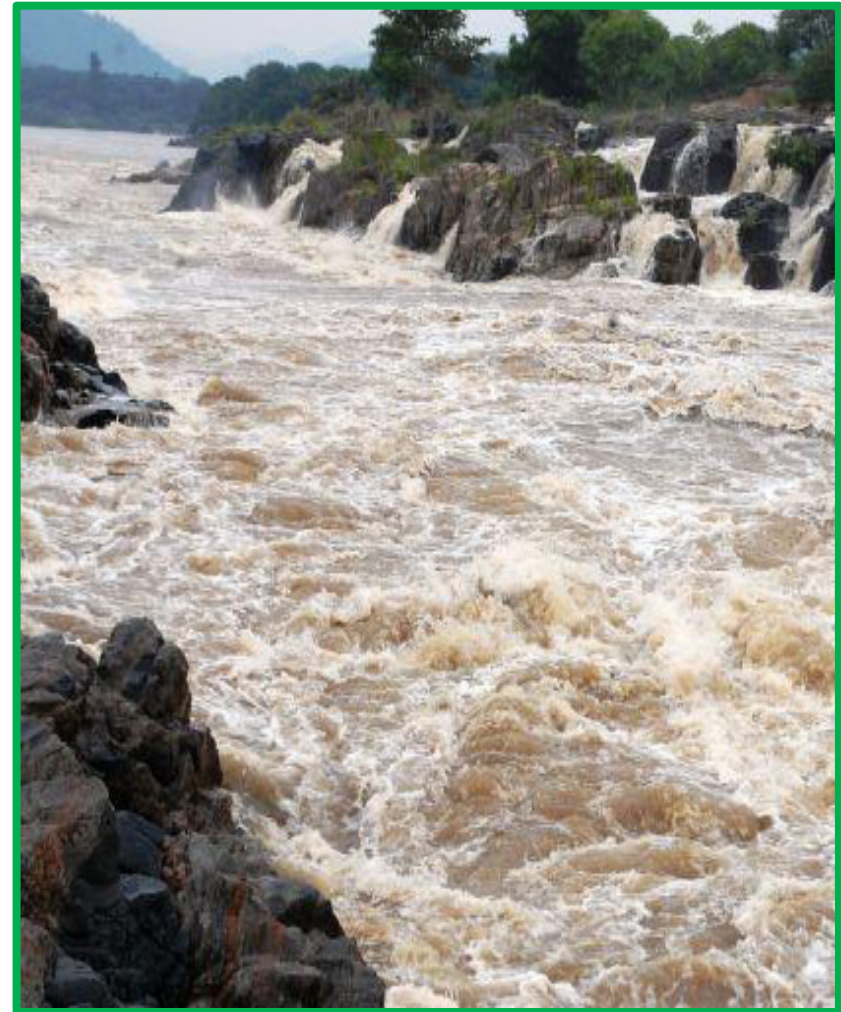
Stitha Prajna: stable state of *contented* existence



Can a person ever step into the **same** river *twice*?

Constancy and Change

- The waters of a river are always changing, yet the river stays the same.
- It is because the waters are always changing that there are rivers at all.
- But...*everything* is not changing.
- *Some* things change making it possible for the ongoing existence of other things.



Constancy and Change

Our task as career development specialists:

- examine the **reciprocity** between change and constancy
- focus on career guidance skills to help the career chooser negotiate the future by finding the **balance** between what changes and what does *not* change.
- The notion of **cultural preparation status equilibrium** could be used to discuss how career guidance can help the individual remain fruitfully engaged with the world of work, counting the **past** as valuable, living fully in the **present** and moving with assurance into the **future**.

The Cultural Preparedness Approach

- A culture **prepares** its members to engage with life in a particular manner.
- The learning that occurs between an individual and his or her culture is drawn from a deep **repository** of experience that has accumulated and grown over the ages.
- All of us have been **immersed** in a conglomerate of attitudes, opinions, convictions, and notions that coalesce and shape our engagement with life.

The Cultural Preparedness Approach

- Prevailing cultural practices tend to create an environment of attitudes and beliefs which we have referred to as **social cognitive environments** (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).
- They could be in relation to marriage, childrearing, sexuality, food habits, gender relations, or any other aspect of a given group's engagement with its surroundings.
- It is crucial to note that the nature of this engagement **could vary from one group to another.**



The Cultural Preparedness Approach

- The cultural preparedness approach points out that engagement with life occurs under the influence of a wide **range** of factors.
- Family and parents, social practices, religious persuasion, economic climate, political orientations... all come **together** to create a certain environment within which attitudes and opinions are formed.
- The effectiveness of an intervention could be higher when the ideas and concepts that lie behind an intervention **cohere** with the history, values and beliefs of a particular community.

**This requires the counsellor to first learn to
receive in order to give.**

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox

- Effective management small pox was known in India as early as A.D.1800.
- In Bengal (Eastern India) this practice was performed by a particular sect of Brahmins, delegated annually for this service.
- Dividing themselves into small parties of three or four priests, they arrived at their respective destinations some weeks before the usual return of the disease.

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox

In addition...

- Small pox was linked a special goddess: Śītalā, The Goddess of Smallpox.
- She had a terrifying countenance: studded with fulminating pustules, disfigured almost beyond recognition, in the late stages of infection, redolent of decaying flesh.
- The disease was said to be a 'possession' by Sitala – her presence in the body made evident by sitalika (pustules).

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox

Treatment:

- A Brahmin, possessed of faith, should recite the hymn of Sitala Devi in the presence of the sitalika (pustules).

While chanting he would:

- select a spot on the outside of the arm,
- rub it vigorously with a dry cloth for 8 to 10 minutes,
- make 15 to 16 minute incisions with a sharp copper tool sterilised in a sacred fire

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox

- place a small wad of cotton on the wound saturated with matter from the inoculated pustules of the preceding year, moistened with Ganga (holy) water
- ensure it remained in contact with the wound for several hours.

Remarkably comparable to modern forms of inoculation! Except that...

- All through the procedure the inoculator continuously recited the worship of the Small Pox Goddess.

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox

- This practice represents the blending of religion with daily life; naturalistic (scientific) facts were presented within the grab of religion.
- Religious interpretation placed upon this disease did not exclude naturalistic comprehension.
- Reverence of Sitala did not require people to reject such facts.
- In fact it facilitated a complete and whole-hearted acceptance of the entire procedure.

This is how this group was **culturally prepared**
to combat this virulent disease.

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox

- British rule in India also led to the control of Indian life and society.
- Shocked by such “barbaric” practices this form of treatment was banned and dissuaded such that it crumbled and decayed.
- It was replaced by other Western methods which were unfamiliar to people.
- Who were suspicious and did not comply unless forced.
- People were left unprotected against small pox.

Bengal subsequently experienced multiple small pox epidemics of devastating proportions.

The Cultural Preparedness Approach

Cultural preparation status equilibrium represents an aspect of the person or group that is relatively stable.

Recognising the **cultural preparedness** of a people would contribute to the effectiveness of a counselling service.

The Jiva Approach to Guidance and Counselling

- Work and occupation are deeply integrated with the individual's life as a **whole**.
- Work is expressed as an extension of one's life, guided by clearly defined cultural practices.
- Based on this understanding of cultural preparedness in the Indian context, we developed an approach to guidance and counselling called **Jiva**.



The word *Jiva* means 'life' in most of the Indian languages.

The *Jiva* programme is based on the premise that a healthy career is integrally connected to one's life.

The Jiva Framework

The Jiva Career Spiral



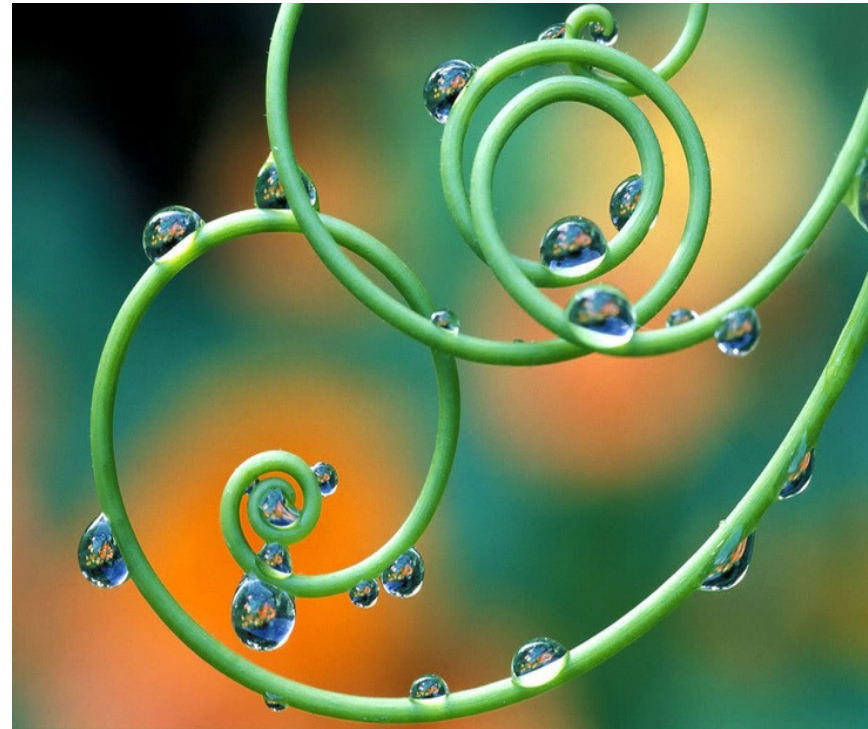
Four Indian Concepts

Principle 1

Development as a Spiral



Ladder to the Stars



Spiral Pathways

Principle 1: The Jiva Spiral

A non linear approach to career development

Cultural Value:

The circularity of life



- Development occurs in a spiral!
- One returns to where one started, but in qualitatively different manner.
- A career develops upon previous development; learn from the past and look to the future, throughout life.

Nonlinear Approach

- Career development is not merely achievement of mastery over **age-specific** developmental tasks.
- A collection of overlapping movements; a **continuous** elaboration and construction, characterised by adaptation, discovery and renewal.
- May not necessarily always point in the '**forward**' direction. The world of work may require new learning to face new challenges, it may require the individual to **return** to earlier learnings, it may also require the individual to **let go** of earlier positions and begin anew.

The Jiva Career Spiral

- The spiral is a common growth pattern in nature.
- Like a spiral, a career too has a beginning.
- The beginning of a career may be small.
- Learning from previous learning would ensure your career is growing and not boring.
- A career spiral mixes constancy with the change to create a new future.

The Jiva Framework

The Jiva Career Spiral

Assess Before you
Accept



Principle 2

Dispassion: Assess Before You Accept



Principle 2.

Dispassionate Decision-Making: Assess Before You Accept

Cultural Value:

*Nishkama: Dispassionate
decision making*



- Weigh up pros and cons and then accept or reject.
- How relevant is an opportunity to one's interests and aptitudes?
- Is an opportunity merely a job offering or is it an opening into a real career?

Dispassionate Decision-Making

- This principle of career guidance exhorts the individual to practice dispassion in the face of emotional arousal: **restraint**, **flexibility** and **self-mediation**.
- Support the individual to shape the future through actions executed **thoughtfully** and **wilfully** in the present.

Assess Before You Accept

- A skilled career chooser knows how to assess an opportunity.
- The foundation of this assessment is knowing what about myself is relatively stable and what about me is more likely to change.
- Interests change more quickly than talents.
- Just because an opportunity exists, it does not mean it must be taken.

The Jiva Framework

The Jiva Career Spiral

Assess Before You Accept



Sensitivity to the "other"

Principle 3: Sensitivity to the “Other”

A healthy career cares for the ‘other’

Cultural Value:

Sensitivity to the ‘other’



- All forms of work are critically connected to the “other” in one’s environment.
- This could be both people and nature.

Sensitivity to the “Other

- The term ‘career’ today is often synonymous **promotion of the self**, increasing consumption and an unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.
- This principle asks the individual to define the **purpose** and outcomes of his/her engagement with work.
- The manner in which an individual engages with work can promote **harmony** within oneself, the community, and the environment.
- The realisation of an individual’s potential could **support** rather than exploit the environment in which the career is practiced.

A healthy career cares for the 'other'

- Career success rests on knowing what one can give before considering what one wants to receive.
- Here, career is first a duty before it becomes a privilege.
- Careers that cause us to consume more, are harmful.
- A green career does not exploit the weak and disadvantaged.
- A green career does not harm the environment.

The Jiva Framework

The Jiva Career Spiral

Assess Before You Accept



Green and Blue!

The Changing and the Unchanged

Gideon
Arulmani



Principle 4: The Changing and the Unchanged

A healthy career allows change with stability

Cultural Value:

Paradox of change and constancy



- The individual is growing; the world of work is also changing.
- A career develops in finding the balance between what changes and what does not change.
- Personal interests for example, are liable to change while aptitudes are deeper traits.
- Healthy careers and livelihoods are in tune with a dynamic and moving world and at the same time grounded in values that are constant.

The Changing and the Unchanged

- The last decade has seen tremendous **shifts** in the labour market. The traditional “9 to 5 job” has changed and the contemporary worker must perhaps consider 5 to 9 jobs in one lifetime!
- A career develops in finding the **balance** between what changes and what does not change. Personal interests, for example, are more liable to change while aptitudes are relatively more stable. Jobs are tied to the boom and bust of the labour market. But a career, composed as it is of a collection of jobs, does not go out of demand as easily.

The Changing and the Unchanged

- Some parts of me change quickly, while other parts do not change so quickly.
- My interests are more likely to change than my abilities.
- The popularity of a career changes in the world of work.
- I can succeed by knowing what about me is stable and use that to deal with the changing world of work.

Discovering Constancy, Capitalising Change

Applying the Principles

Discover Constancy

- Develop a deep understanding of self: interests and talents, strengths and weaknesses, areas of comfort and discomfort
- Look for patterns and indications of stability
- Identify your deeper cultural values.
- Identify your network of relationships.
- Locate your career within your other roles and responsibilities.

Capitalise Change

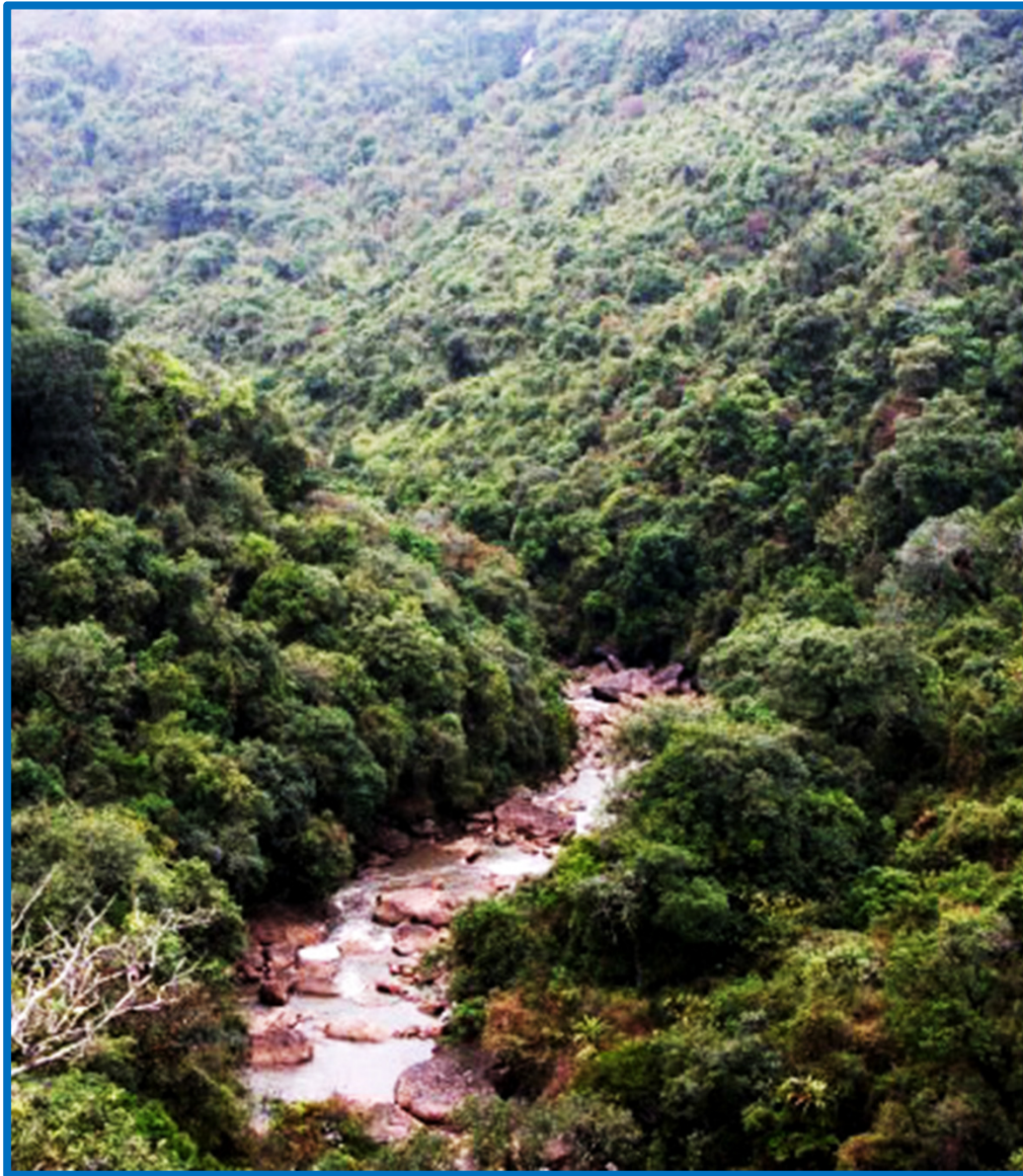
- Act in the present with an eye to the future. Understand that going forward can require taking a step backward.
- Identify your transferrable skills. Persist with ongoing skill development.
- Distinguish between a “good job” and a “suitable career”.
- Learn to say “no” even to what appears to be a “good” opportunity.
- Distinguish between “need” and “want”.

Concluding Thoughts

- Change and transformation must be embraced. However it is important that the individual considers this necessity from the essentially unchanging core of one's self.
- A self-sustaining way of dealing with change would be to discover, accept and strengthen aspects of oneself that are stable and relatively constant.
- The desire to **be** more, to **have** more, to **occupy** more, to **own** more (this list could go on for it is a long one!), comes quite naturally to us. While on the contrary the ability to say "**enough**" does not seem to arise with the same spontaneity.

Indeed wellness emerges in the balancing of “needs” with “wants” and knowing the difference between the two. It results from giving and receiving.

It reaches culmination in the
discovery of contentment.



Thank You!

Gideon
Arulmani

