



From Head's Desk

December 2021



Dear Staff,

One of the best things about Smartphones and Social Media is that it throws back memories. Recently two memories popped up on my mobile.

One was of a concert I attended a couple of years ago. It was a SPB (S.P Balasubramanian) Live concert, probably one of the last ones at Chennai before the pandemic hit us and swept him away as well. He was one artist that I truly admired, not just for his music. At this programme, I was sitting in a premium seat (sheer luck!), and could hear little quips he made off the microphone to fellow artists on stage. Every rendition of his was magical, as expected. He picked a song from the movie 'Hey Ram' to sing. The crowd was roaring as the first notes began. He began the song and a few seconds into it, he stopped. He said "*let's begin again*"... The crowd was still ecstatic. The second time around the same thing repeated.... It happened the third time and he began

with an apology and said, *"Would you give me one more chance, to start again?"*. It was at the fourth attempt that he sang the full song and the applause was thundering after his presentation. Then he took to explaining what had happened. Apparently, the first couple of times he hadn't hit the right note, or had slightly missed a beat and even if he could have gone on, as many would not have noticed the slip ups, he demonstrated the respect he had for each of the orchestra members, lest they were wrongly mistaken for what was actually his.

Around the same time, a year before that, I was in an Education Conclave here at Chennai, attended by very prominent educationalists from Schools and Universities, Policy Makers, Executives of large corporations who were involved in Primary Education as a part of their CSR. The keynote address by Honorable Minister Smriti Irani was scheduled post-lunch.

I was in a sectioned-off Lunch room, when suddenly there was a hustle and bustle amidst the organisers. The Keynote speaker had arrived and she was going to wait out the remaining of the lunch time at this very enclosure. As she walked in, she happened to pick a seat close to where I was standing. Dressed in a stunning handloom sari with a shawl over her shoulder, she took a seat and asked a couple of us in her vicinity to join her. The organiser, out of obligation introduced us. But she acknowledged each of us individually. She keenly listened to what we said, asked some questions and shared her perspectives as well.

Before I realised, it was time for the keynote address which she delivered with gusto. Claps galore and she walked out for a 3+ hour flight back to Delhi, to her work.

I remembered that I had watched a TV interview of her's in one of the National Television channels. Unlike other interviews, this was shot during her morning walk, and she shared tidbits of her life; her initial days as a TV personality, to raising two children, balancing her role as a leader, a parent and spouse.

I was reminiscing about these two experiences as I was transferring my data to a new phone. When I was checking the data transferred to my new phone, I realized that this data was not transferred. I tried hard to retrieve them, but couldn't. I then realised that the experience of seeing them at close quarters was worth much more than a photograph that I had had.

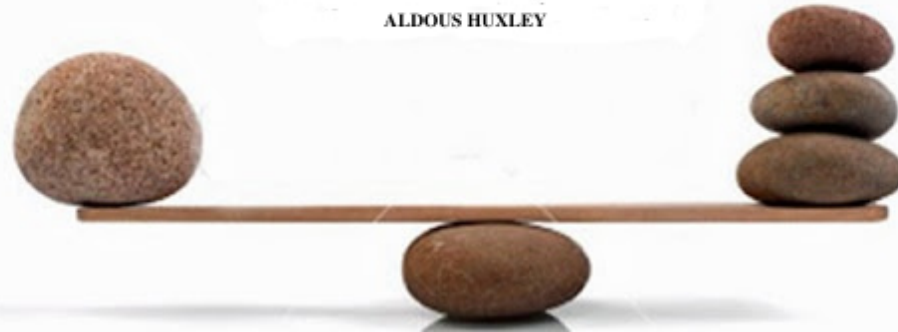
These memories seem more alive now and that is something I will continue to cherish for a long time. As we close in on 2021, sift through the memories you have had this year and

do share them with your near and dear.

Warm regards,
Priya Dixit

Experience is not what happens to you,
it is what you do with what happens to you.

ALDOUS HUXLEY



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