

# CONVERSATIONS

*... In Search of the Inner Self*

NOVEMBER 2021

**“REIMAGINING THE FUTURE”**

# From the President's Desk: Reimagining the Future

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**W**e indeed live in a unique time in history where the heady mix of Pandemic and Digital way of life is making the future arrive much faster than most people think.

We are now living in a looking-glass world; where everything we think we know is being challenged, including our long-held notions of success and failure. The future promises to reset our intuitions and challenge our belief systems.

The good news is that it's also a world where we can imagine, create and enable like never before. Each of us has a unique story of how our purpose, structure, value, scenarios, ethics, and viability is being challenged, re-examined, and reimagined. This thought triggered the theme of our magazine's third issue: Reimagining the future!!

**In our youth, we who are parents of millennials today were battling between identity foreclosure and identity crisis. We all had imagined our life and career plans in our pristine youth. Once we committed to one life plan, it naturally became part of our identity, making it so tough to rethink the plan. Foreclosed!! Gotta stay on Track!! Our generation would rather plunge head over heels on a committed life or career path, instead of accepting uncertainty about who we want to become.**

**We were too scared to rethink or reimagine. We would rather not throw away two years of progress than waste the next twenty. As Adam Grant says in his book "Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know" (Penguin, 2013): "identity foreclosure sure is a Band-Aid: it covers up an identity crisis but fails to cure it!"**

Who wants uncertainty? We all have experienced that gut-twisting sense of waiting when we do our annual health checks --blood, urine, chest x-ray, ECG, etc., etc., till the results come the next day. No matter the blips here and there in the numbers, you heave a sigh of relief with the results ending the uncertainty. In real life too, not rethinking our plans may be the sure way of avoiding uncertainty, but at the cost of unrealized potential for much-improved wellbeing.



**The greatest unexpected blessing from the pandemic has been the empowerment of humanity with a new skill – to re-imagine; to imagine AGAIN and ANEW. Accepting uncertainty and finding innovative solutions to life, hitherto unknown to us, is beginning to open new windows and doors to our lives.**

The third issue of the magazine brings life to this theme with some unique perspectives on “Reimagining our Future” and how we, the Coaching fraternity, can help our clients discover newer and untrodden paths for their enhanced wellbeing.

On behalf of the Managing Committee of ICF Bengaluru Chapter, I thank all the authors of the articles who have provided their beautiful insights and wish the readers an enjoyable reading.

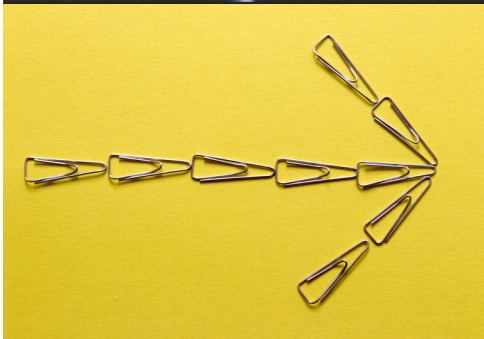
Cheers,  
Best regards,  
MG Raghuraman  
President, ICF Bengaluru Chapter  
iPause Consultants



## **MG Raghuraman**

*MG Raghuraman brings to the table a well-brewed blend of Corporate Leadership experience and Coaching skills. His work experience is a heady and unique mix of 22 years in the Railways and 16 years in the IT industry delivering to global clients. Known for his outgoing and energetic outlook, MG loves and thrives on people interaction. Post his 6-year long stint as CIO in Mphasis, he is a practicing full-time executive coach over the last few years.*

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# From The Editorial Team Desk

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## Reimagining a Better Future Through Coaching.

Dear Reader,

The Covid-19 pandemic swept the world with unprecedented changes. In response to these sudden global-local challenges, we moved from reaction to acceptance and over time towards reflection. There is scope for a reimagined and perhaps better future in this reflection. This is how I connect to this edition's theme of "Conversations: Reimagining the Future". Today, we live in a world where change is accelerating, and paradigms are shifting rapidly. This is the new normal.

Coaching as a learning and development tool has gained greater acceptance and application in the mainstream of life. While the profession of coaching is outside the purview of regulation, it is my belief that the growing demand for coaching is for good reason. Research has revealed the positive impact of coaching in achieving and maintaining mental fulfillment. Such studies have had a beneficial impact on coaches, coachees, and the profession in general.

It has been exciting to produce the monsoon issue. I appreciate our chapter members' enthusiastic efforts to share their stories and passion with us. The authors were generous with their articles and their time and patience taken over the editorial go-around. Thanks to everyone's writing efforts and cooperation with the editorial team, the current issue reflects how we coaches reimagine our future in the challenging context of the pandemic. I request and encourage all members to contribute to future editions as authors and stay connected.

Further, it has been an invigorating experience for me to collaborate with the Editorial team members, who have done a commendable job preparing this edition. I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to the Managing Committee for their unstinting support to the Editorial team.

Finally, I invite all of you to share your ideas, suggestions, and feedback with us about this and forthcoming editions.

Best wishes and happy reading!

Soundaria Lakshmi and the Editorial Team,  
Ravi Panicker  
Preethi. G.  
Amita Bharath





# ***A Meaningful Life Here to Celebrate***

***By Rashmi Shetty***

***The future is for us to see no longer, the uncertainties are certain.  
Each day, as it unfolds, is making us ponder, time for us to pull up our curtain.***

***Put your best self out each moment; moments matter, factor them in.***

***Measure those who matter, pause to believe you can make it a win-win.***

***Life is a blessing, each breath, each moment, each relationship you choose.***

***There will come times when you should be wise to choose or refuse.***

***The current scenario is a challenge for all of us to look within and without.***

***Make a difference to each one you meet, make an IMPACT, leave no doubt.***

***Life has many surprises, a lot to unravel, a lot to understand.***

***The last year has been proof, we have the chance to now expand.***

***Our thoughts, our attitudes, our minds with its expanse to increase,***

***Our knowledge, our awareness, and be the complete human who loves peace!***

***Reimagining a future we have no idea about, with challenges galore,***

***A human being is all we need to become, in all that we do more and more.***

***Take that journey within to see how much you can explore and discover.***

***Cheers to a future that is only going to be fascinating to uncover.***

***Layer by layer, peel by peel, a discovery that can only help us recover,  
from anger and everything negative, moving towards happiness and accelerate,***

***A MEANINGFUL LIFE THAT WE ARE HERE TO  
UNFOLD, UNRAVEL AND CELEBRATE!***

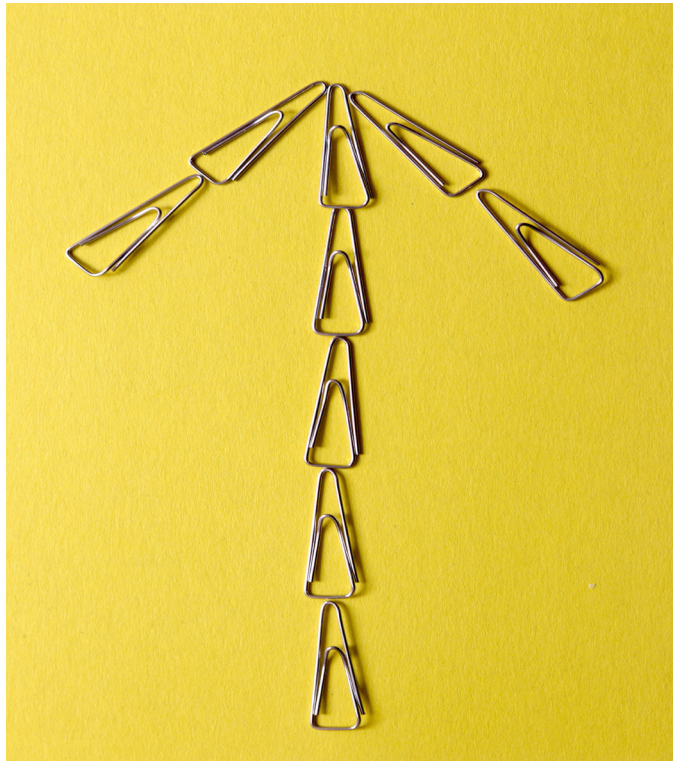


## **Rashmi Shetty**

*Rashmi Shetty is an ICF credentialed Professional Certified Coach and the Founder Director of The Third Eye. This Self-Expression Coach & Podcaster believes that “Your ATTITUDE decides your ALTITUDE.” Nature is her teacher, and she is actively involved in the Climate Coaching Alliance & leads the Asia chapter of the body. The environment is an integral element of coaching conversations with her clients.*

# The Story so Far...

By Sanyog Jain



***The Story so far, about The Unicon (University Connect) Program, an initiative of the ICF Bengaluru Chapter, is written by Sanyog Jain on behalf of all ICF Bengaluru Chapter coaches who have selflessly shared their time to coach leaders of tomorrow in the past year.***

Even the people who coined the word VUCA must have not imagined what full-blown VUCA will look like.

The world needs to be re-skilled and up-skilled. Amongst all the learning we must undertake, an important one-- if not the most important one-- is to enhance our ability to think about everything. To begin with, do we see the perpetual change as debilitating or as a catalyst to expand our potential? As coaching directly addresses how we think, I believe, the decade that follows 2020 is when coaching can really serve humanity.

Companies will support the existing workforce by reskilling and upskilling them. As far as new employees are concerned, they are expected to come equipped with the skills. It is this gap in the demand and quality of skill that we want to address with The UniCon initiative.

It has been 10 months since we, at ICF Bengaluru Chapter, launched UniCon, a community project. The program was piloted at 3 campuses under the flag of the chapter and, since then we have come to know of several such initiatives that have been introduced on campuses across the country. We have shared our experience and know-how with others in the spirit of true collaboration.

To date, we have coached more than 90 students. We are aware that there is a complete mismatch between demand and supply. Each year over 300,000 students graduate from management education institutes across the



country. To offer coaching to even a fraction of this population is an impossible task when we consider the limited supply of coaches in the country. The challenge will stand even if we were to rope in the entire fraternity of coaches in the country.

However, the mission is critical, so the question is what should we do? How do we scale up? Should we look beyond the traditional ways of making coaching available? We went back to the drawing board and asked a fundamental question: What is coaching?

There are plenty of definitions of coaching. One of our colleagues, N.K. Narayanan shared the following definition. “Coaching is expanding self-awareness leading to action and results.” The operative word is self-awareness. This is the source code of coaching. What if we create tools that are easily available to give students access to important concepts such as how to develop self-awareness. Further, could we cover a larger group of our target audience by using avenues beyond one-on-coaching? The answer that emerged was yes, our reach would increase.

Thinking on those lines, we have devised a plan of action. As part of our offering, a few steps of the coaching journey can be offered under self-care. We plan to publish a book, create an online course, and have a dedicated YouTube channel®. Our long-term vision is to ensure that everyone has access to the tools of personal mastery. Giving students access to coaching methodology via a book and online course can help in proliferating the benefits of coaching manifold.

One of the challenges that we face in the current system is that many students who join the program do not have the full appreciation of the benefits of coaching. They may drop out prematurely. This affects the capacity of coaches, who are already a scarce resource. An online course and a book could be used for evaluating and priming the commitment of the student to leverage the coaching journey.

The UniCon project is an important focus of the Bengaluru Chapter. This initiative has multiple benefits: It helps the students, it can expand the coaching market, increase the number of active coaches in India, and help businesses by providing better-prepared employees. It is an ALL-Win scenario.

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***We are often asked what keeps us striving. Given below is the story of a student from Dayanand Sagar University in her own words. This kind of feedback gives us the energy to continue this journey no matter how difficult the path ahead appears. Many students we coach are the first in a family to attend college. It is very fulfilling to consider that it is not just a student but an entire generation that we are touching.***

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Praneetha Beekal, a second-semester MBA student of Dayanand Sagar University shares her coaching experience. She was coached as part of The UniCon Program. She has chosen to publish her name.

## ***2. What did you learn about yourself because of coaching?***

PB: I learned about self-awareness, how to change my perspective, and be positive about my future. My obstacles vanished or became so tiny that I no longer saw them as obstacles.

## ***2. What have you become good at on account of this learning?***

PB: I've become more focused and less distracted.

## ***3. What new habits or behaviors have you developed from the coaching program?***

PB: I am singularly focused, more alert, being aware of myself, I keep a schedule and complete tasks on time. All these habits have made life easy.

## ***4. What will you do to ensure that the changes are sustainable?***



PB: I will make these practices part of my daily routine and I would like to continue the sessions for achieving other personal goals.

**5. How will the changes you have made impact other areas of your life?**

PB: Today I can handle my career goals with confidence, and this allows me space to enhance my creativity and work towards my other personal goals.

The techniques I picked are not just for my career but are applicable for living the best possible life.

**6. Now that you have experienced coaching, how would you describe it to a fellow student?**

PB: I would say to all students that this course will enhance their self-awareness and make their road to success bright and easy.

**7. Would you recommend coaching to others?**

PB: Yes, I would recommend coaching as it helps clarify goals and shape personal life.

**8. Anything else you want to share?**

PB: I would like to thank Mr. Ajit Bedekar sir who is an amazing coach and now has become a guide to me. I am very thankful to have met him.

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## Sanyog Jain

*Sanyog Jain is an organizational development practitioner with more than 3 decades of international experience. He is deeply interested in developing the next generation leaders today using coaching as a modality. His other interest lies in expanding the coaching profession in India by creating opportunities in the education sector. Sanyog is the Director of UniCon Program of ICF Bengaluru Chapter and along with a team of 29 coaches is credited for introducing coaching in the higher education sector in India.*

# Business Impact of Pandemic & the Outlook Going Forward.

By PK Narayanan

The business impact of the Covid -19 pandemic has been mixed and varied. While some business segments boomed and prospered, some faced extreme difficulties. One thing that businesses felt commonly across segments was the need to re-evaluate every aspect of the business -- from the granular to gross level--including the purpose, goals, the way the goals are delivered, people, processes, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), and so on.

In a recent survey, the top 3 concerns that engaged CEOs were Cash-flow and Liquidity, Employee Well-being, and Safety of Family and Friends. The times have been quite demanding for CEOs with them having to make decisions in an environment of uncertainty for extended periods of time.

The top-performing CEOs focused on building and enhancing their Leadership by consistently following decisive strategic leadership, doing what was essential, and demonstrating their Leadership Presence. They also focused on Innovation, Collaboration, and leveraging Technology even as Remote working or Working from Anywhere became the norm.

Looking ahead, the IBM 2021 survey of over 3000 CEOs across the globe brought out the top 3 priorities for CEOs as Agility or the ability to respond quickly and pivot without losing momentum. The other two priorities are Technology and Regulation. Technology is expected to have the biggest business impact over the medium term. The regulation including rising assertiveness by governments around privacy, data, trade, and health.



The 2021 Fortune / Deloitte CEO Survey reports that the CEOs' hopes have evolved into bold plans for growth, innovation, digital transformation, and workforce and talent transformation. CEOs are optimistic about the year ahead, expecting strong growth fueled by innovation and pent-up consumer demand. Nearly 75% of the CEOs say their organizations are undergoing or preparing for digital transformation. A close second, 71% of CEOs say the same for workforce and talent transformation. 77% of CEOs say they expect their organization's growth to be strong over the next 12 months. PwC's Annual Global CEO Survey also shows a record 76% of the CEOs believe that global economic growth will improve in 2021.



### **PK Narayanan**

*PK Narayanan (CEO Coach - <https://pknarayanan.com/>) helps CEOs, Business Owners, and Business Leaders Scale-up their Business, Enhance their Leadership Presence and position their Business for Long-term Success.*



# Coaching to Unlock Potential in Young Leaders

By Nisha George



- “I feel trapped. The door is unlocked and yet I am unable to get up and walk out of the door.”
- “I feel like I am in a bubble and it’s black in color. I feel secure there and if I come out of the bubble the monsters will attack me.”
- “I’m trying to force-fit myself into a certain image.”
- “I have become so good at pretending. People just cannot tell the difference anymore.”
- “I envy the 18-year-old Instagram influencer who has a goal and is all sorted in life.”
- “This is a respected career, so I have to follow it. But my heart is elsewhere. I’m happy doing something else.”

These are from 18 to 25-year-old young adults who volunteer with a non-profit organization where I just signed up for a coaching assignment. First call and in less than 5 minutes, some of them broke down. All of them wanted to be heard. It felt like they were longing to pour their hearts out to someone who will simply listen and not judge them. Some even reconfirmed, “whatever we speak will be confidential, right?”

The future seems so uncertain, say some of them. Some are so scared of the future that it gives them sleepless nights, while a few others simply refuse to leave their beds. One of them even said to me, “...but I don’t know what will happen in the future so how do I imagine or plan for it?” Many of them are bogged down by the weight of heavy expectations – from themselves, their families, and society at large.

They are conditioned, like all of us, to think and act a certain way.

With all this conditioning and expectation to fit in, are we creating carbon copies? Are we stifling the younger generation?

I shared this inquiry with my significant other who is also my biggest cheerleader (and critic) and his response was, "but this is not limited to just 18 to 25-year-olds, even older folks experience this." If so, then the question is, are we, older adults, just better at putting on our masks and showing up in our world as we get older and more experienced?

Thankfully, the future is not all dark and gloomy and all hope is not lost. This generation is very self-aware and willing to have deep conversations. There is a desire to invest in themselves and become better individuals. They are ready to fight back and do not wish to settle. Many are full of life and bubbling over with enthusiasm for their plans. These 18 to 25-year-olds are among many others who are the future of our country and the world at large. They will go on to become leaders in various spheres of life. They already are leaders and influencers in their own right as they volunteer, and are role models, encouraging and strengthening the youngsters they work with. Despite the battles that they fight in their minds and their lives, they are determined to show up to help the less fortunate.

What would happen if this younger generation experienced coaching? Why do we wait until they become senior leaders? Why can we not start young? What are some possibilities if coaching was accessible to everyone?

What if inspiring one individual at a time could collectively change the world? The late Robert F. Kennedy (1925-1968) spoke of the power of the individual in bringing about change: "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

At the end of the day when I hear almost all of them say "Thank you for listening to me so patiently, I have no one to talk to ", I realize the power of the coaching competencies. Just being fully present, establishing trust and intimacy, actively listening, and following one's gut to ask the right question at the right time have been instrumental in creating so much awareness for them. A young man said to me towards the end of a conversation, "I don't think I really know who I am. Maybe we can explore this in our next call."

***If only more people cared enough just to listen.  
If only we provided unconditional acceptance.  
If only we took the time to nudge them to awesomeness.  
If only we let them be.***



## Nisha George

*Nisha believes life is precious and that everyone is a bundle of huge potential. She goes with the philosophy of actions speaking louder than words. She is an ICF accredited Coach (ACC) who after 16 years in a corporation followed her heart and took a leap of faith to work with nonprofit organizations. She loves working with young people and believes that she is forever young at heart.*

# *Reimagining a Spirit-led Future*

By Leni Mathews

The word “Imagine”, always brings with it many associations --from John Lennon’s lyrics, Imagine there are no countries... nothing to kill or die for, living life in peace... no greed or hunger... a brotherhood of man-- too innocent childhood memories of imagining you could fly to the moon or be Alice in Wonderland. It evokes within us a sense of not just longing and hope for a better world but even dares us to believe that the impossible is possible. It challenges us to discover the magic, mystery, and miracles of life: perhaps lead ourselves to create a new and different narrative or history.

In the new normal today, it is easy to lead oneself by default rather than lead by design, though it isn’t hard to do. The practical philosopher in all of us would examine oneself from the perspective of “what” or “who” is in control of us. Who is sitting in the driving seat of our lives? Do we operate from the Greek soma (body), the psyche (mind and emotion), or the nous (ideas and soul)? John Lennon caps it with no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace.

In a very visibly impacted pandemic world, we are forced to recognize what the invisible virus is doing. What else is invisible in our lives that we need to recognize, realize and recalibrate?

In a coaching approach, the questions we need to ask ourselves are, where do we live? Do we believe we live in a house in this physical world? Do we live in our body or mind? Or do we live in our spirit? When a person dies, what changes? The body is still there. But the spirit, the soul, has left. That which makes one alive is no longer there! Are we able to recognize the significance of what is invisible within us?

History will remember 2020 and 2021 as years of the pandemic. The question is what are our learnings from the high price we have all paid? Has the new habit of keeping ourselves home and avoiding contact with people and the community





become our default behavior? Has the loss of freedom and lack of social interaction or communing with nature given rise to reactive and default behavior or decisions? We must ask ourselves-- can we rebirth ourselves in spirit?

What can reimagining our life and the world create for us? What do we need to remember about humankind? The humankind that all scriptures behold as the most beautiful of God's creations, how many impossibles have we made possible even in our ver own lives? What can an appreciative inquiry into your life reveal to you about yourself and what your true potential is.

What is the dream and aspiration we want to manifest? How can we design it? If we operate from our spirit, the one source that lives within us all, we are already strong and empowered to master and lead our body and mind to where we want to go.

It is said that creation happens twice -- first in our imagination and then, in reality. So let us dare to reimagine our lives, powered by the eternal spirit and hope.

My hope is for history to document spiritual growth as the legacy we leave behind!



## **Leni Mathews**

*Leni is a founder-director and Mentor coach (PCC) at Emmpower, an ICF accredited coach training program. She has been a leadership facilitator and social catalyst since 1997, and an executive coach and ICF accredited Coach Certification Trainer since 2014.)*

# Team Coaching: Today and Tomorrow

By Nitin Goyal and Rachel Gojer

During our recent discussion with the Human Resource head of an organization, the goals established for coaching were:

1. Work better with each other
2. Overcome fears and ego issues
3. Bring clarity on business priorities.

When we gently suggested that this team may benefit more from Team Coaching, the immediate response was, “*We have done some good team building activities and an offsite recently. So that bit is taken care of.*”

While there are many organizations that use and benefit from team coaching, there are still many that see Team Coaching as either team building, team facilitation, or process consulting. This sums up the understanding of Team Coaching for most in the industry.

Without going too deep into the theory, we define team coaching as the **interweaving** of coaching, consulting, training, and team building in a manner that allows the team to understand the **outside-in perspective** of stakeholders and the **future-back perspective** of the three-time horizons to enhance the **value for stakeholders**.

A study (Sherman and Bailey, 2009 published by ICF Global) found that stakeholders rated the capability of *individuals* in a team higher than the *collective capability* of the team. This gap widens as the hierarchy in the organization goes up.

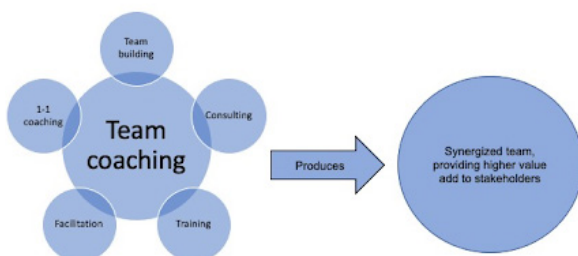
Another ICF research highlights Team Coaching as currently the fastest growing area within the coaching industry. Seventy percent of leading organizations say they intend to invest in team coaching over the next two years and at all levels.

Dr. Peter Hawkins, Professor of Leadership at the Henley Business School, writes that one factor behind this rise of team coaching is due to what he describes as the “*unholy trinity of challenges*” that companies now face. These are: *increase in demand from stakeholders; greater expectations of quality and the diminishing availability of resources.*

Organizations now seem interested in investing in teams along with individuals at the top. This seems to be an acknowledgment that the Team is the critical unit behind any project’s deliverables.

We also see the team and individual coaching co-existing and complementing each other to maximize the potential of individuals and teams, eventually enhancing the value for stakeholders and organizations. While individual coaching helps people change what is between their ears, team coaching helps people change *what is between their noses*. i.e., psychological safety, conflict resolutions, and interpersonal relationships thus placing a higher value on team purpose than individual purpose.

Sometimes, the pressure of calculating ROI (Return on investment) for Team Coaching can be very intense. Many of the existing methods rely on self-reports by clients, who are vested parties themselves to show positive outcomes. Hence many a time, this self-report may not be reliable.





impact of Team coaching. We do foresee that in the coming time showcasing the impact of team coaching will become more quantifiable.

With the predictions about the future employing terms such as gig economy, automation, and AI, there is no doubt that the workspaces are going to change. This scenario invokes some questions that need to be engaged with.

Like, what would require human presence? What would teams look like in that context? What would the workspace of the future look like? How much collaboration would be needed in spaces where most of the processes are automated, or machine-driven?

The definition of team talks about interdependence. But how much, and what kind of interdependence will be needed in the future is unknown.

Time and again the human species has been surviving and thriving through the changes. If we are Present to the changes that are happening and are agile to respond to changes along with being nimble to unlearn and learn new things, we will create the future that we want.

A claim of improved financials or business growth is difficult to prove as there are many factors contributing to that measure. Some researchers claim that the impact is visible in improvement in efficiency and thus time saved, correlating time to a dollar value to show the impact of coaching. This correlation too must be taken with a pinch of salt as the reporting party again has a vested interest in showing a positive outcome.

Some experiments, which are still in nascent stages, are looking to establish goals in team coaching in order to enhance the value perception of the Team in the eyes of the external and other stakeholders in a more definitive way. These experiments hold the promise of showcasing concretely the positive



## Rachel Gojer

*Rachel is a Leadership and Team Coach. She works with high-achieving individuals and teams to help them to stay focused, manage overwhelm, and move ahead with confidence and power. She is passionate about working with people who want to get the most out of their careers, business, and lives. She has worked for 14 years in Technology, leading and managing teams across different geographies and product verticals before transitioning into coaching senior executives and entrepreneurs.*



## Nitin Goyal

*Nitin is a sensitive yet challenging Coach. His coaching expertise involves Teams and individual coaching for Change Management in Organizations – Strategic planning, Leadership development, Alignment, Innovation & Execution. Few organizations that he is coaching have grown from 3x to 8x. Post various leadership positions for 25+ years in the corporate organization he transitioned into being a coach to enable people & teams to reach their potential.*




# Metamorphosis: What is the Next Big Transformation for Yourself?

By Sanghamitra Dhar

**SELF TRANSFORMATION**

*Which habit would you want to break out of?*



- Expecting others to spontaneously notice and reward
- Reluctance to claim your achievements
- The disease to please
- Putting your job before your career
- Getting into perfection trap
- Failing to enlist allies from day one
- Attaching too much of emotion

Book: How Women Rise?  
www.themanoamiga.com

Just as a larva must grow into a pupa on its way to becoming a butterfly, our professional journey is a constant process of metamorphosis. We all have our share of struggles, fears, self-doubts to overcome to go through the transformation. We just need to wade through the fear and push through the discomfort of growth to become a butterfly. We must experience good and bad to learn, and to expand from the lessons each stage imparts.

Recently I was reading the book “How Women Rise: Break the 12 Habits holding you back from your next raise, promotion, or Job” by Sally Helgesen and Marshall Goldsmith (Hachette Books, 2018). I realized that irrespective of gender and across cultures, we all have deep-rooted childhood beliefs and behaviors that hold us back from taking risks and advancing in our careers to reach our best potential. It always feels safer NOT to go through the metamorphosis. We choose to go from FEELING STUCK to settling back into our old familiar self.

The fact is that we are never stuck, there are always options to break out of our comfort.

*So, are you ready to evolve?*

*Is it time for you to change?*

*Are you ready to reinvent your career?*

*Are you ready to spread your wings?*

To begin transforming, it is important to identify for oneself the blockages and patterns to take the first step to evolve. Below are some of the common behaviors and habits that make us feel stuck, sometimes unknowingly. Whatever pops into your mind from the list below is your next big transformation.

**Reluctance to claim your achievements and Expecting others to spontaneously notice and reward them:** One of the most common behaviors of women is they struggle to claim their achievements. Women should not depend on colleagues or superiors to notice and highlight their work.

Self-effacing habits often tend to derail women as they aspire to climb up the organization hierarchy. Effectively marketing oneself is an important part of every job. Women should be proud of their abilities and highlight their potential. This will ensure that they get noticed and would create opportunities for them in the future.

**The disease to please:** This is the most deep-rooted habit which women tend to have because of their childhood conditioning. The key learning from this habit is learning to prioritize the needs of the self which require more attention and align to a larger goal. Frequent apology-like statements such as “sorry”, “little time”, “quickly”, “don’t mind” in conversations should be avoided. Working on these habits will help women to be assertive and enjoy their presence.

**Putting your job before your career:** Too much focus on the job can be a huge cost to one’s career. There is no shame in positioning yourself for what you want next from your job. Women are generally uncomfortable admitting self-interest for themselves.

**Getting into the perfection trap:** In the quest of being perceived as perfect, a woman could possibly attain job satisfaction but not necessarily an upward career trajectory. The cost of attaining perfection can be huge and detrimental. The best way to serve oneself is being ready to take measured risks, to delegate and prioritize the work frequently, based on the environment and circumstances.

**Failing to enlist allies from day One:** In their book, Helgesen and Goldsmith emphasize the importance of leveraging relationships as the key to success in any role. Women should take advantage of their characteristic of building strong relationships to bring deep connections into play that may be advantageous for the future. Actively engaging with one’s allies brings a lot of value to the job. Women need to focus outward to build support and lasting professional networks, instead of working inward.

**Attaching too much emotion:** Women have been always labeled as emotional and expressive. As it is said, too much of anything is not good. Learning to calibrate emotions in the organization based on the circumstances and making them work in your favor is a key skill. Women also have the tendency to give a back story-- in the corporate world, however, attention spans are short, and time is a constraint.

We often get blindsided by our blind spots and are unable to consciously reflect on our personal growth. Chances are that our colleagues and friends are better at noticing the good and bad patterns than we, ourselves. The key is to start by trying to change the habits and behaviors that you identify are holding you back. Start by reflecting on which specific habit you want to address, one at a time. At the same time getting caught up in self-reproach can lead to feeling stuck, so getting a coach to act as a partner can be easy and rewarding along the corporate journey.



## Sanghamitra Dhar

*An HR professional, Sanghamitra is a coach by passion. With over 10 years of experience in the HR role across global companies, she has moved seamlessly into amalgamating her corporate experience and love for personal transformation through coaching. She is certified and trained as a coach, and in Neuro-Linguistic programming techniques. She is on the path to getting the ACC credential from the ICF.*

# Reimagining Career Development In a Time of Crisis

By Nivedita Dasgupta

‘Reimagining career development in the time of crisis’- this is how the headline reads in my LinkedIn® account. Founder, director, leadership coach, career coach--these titles probably would have helped me in appearing in more searches. However, I am quite at ease about it because of the innumerable interesting conversations I have had, both online and offline, perhaps because of this headline. The article that follows, let me reassure you, is not about the headline.

Career development is everybody’s concern—it interests someone who has just started their career, those who are somewhere in the middle of their trajectory, or those who are close to the end or on the last leg of their career. And I have noticed, people generally want to get this right. Most people are cognizant of the fact that their career trajectory is a sum of their talents, their efforts, and the way they manage situations and the people involved. How circumstances pan out around them is also given its due.

When these circumstances become too volatile, uncertain, complex or ambiguous, (VUCA) much more than what their minds can conceive--that is where they find themselves at a loss. This is where the word ‘crisis’ gets into the picture. This crisis may be an individual or a global one. The terminal illness of a family member is a crisis that has huge repercussions on a person’s immediate career growth. Floods, earthquakes, and cyclones have been known to impact local businesses for a length of time, beyond the duration of the natural calamity.

The global pandemic is a crisis that we are currently navigating that has impacted probably every person, in every corner of the world. In the larger context of health and mortality, careers seem to be rather

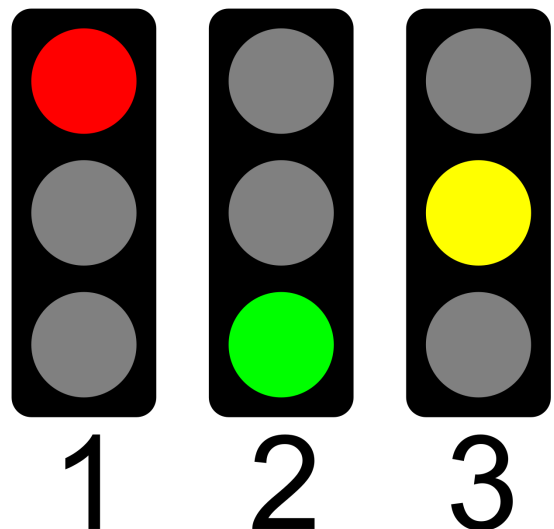
inconsequential, but they have been affected, nonetheless.

Whatever be the crisis, how do we re-imagine career development?

When met with a crisis, most people tend to take a problem-solving approach. The instinct of fight or flight kicks in; getting the physical, logistical, financial pieces together takes priority, and saving the job becomes the immediate goal. And when everything --all the activity--settles down, people realize that their careers have moved around a bit and in most cases, the alignment may have shifted into retrograde or a regressed state. This is the space in which the career reimagining begins.

This is a simple 3- step process

1. **Stop** the over-drive.
2. **Pause** and reflect
3. **Start** in a structured manner



## 1. STOP

While the first instinct in redevelopment or restart is to get into a flurry of activities, it is the first thing to be avoided. People try to learn new skills; they enroll for all kinds of programs for getting a diploma here or a certification there. However, when people do this as a knee-jerk reaction, they make wrong decisions. This is so because the approach is more about getting 'something in place' rather than 'something that is of value'. While the common adage goes as, "to make your dreams come true you have to wake up", I take this a little ahead and say, "to dream you first have to sleep".

So stop! And by stop, I mean completely stop all activities for a short period. It is okay to be doing nothing because it is the stillness and the emptiness which help the thoughts to settle. William Bridges has written in "Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes" (Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2004), "We need not feel defensive about this apparently unproductive time-out at turning points in our lives .... In the apparently aimless activity of our time alone, we are doing important inner business."

## 2. PAUSE

Now that the mind has gone into stillness, this is the time to look inwards. Many times as we quest after development, we look outwards to see what others are doing. While we look to them for inspiration, we inadvertently also pick up a lot of pressure from there. Funnily, peer pressure does not work only in schools and offices, it also works in the way people look at each other during times of crisis: they start

picking cues and replicating what their peers are doing. Here, I state the obvious when I say, "What's good for Ravi may not be good for Rajesh". Thus, this is the time to look inwards, understand oneself, and deeply reflect on what one wants out of his or her career. By pausing we get a chance to understand -- what we stand for, what are the values we want to live life by, and what beliefs we truly cherish. Once this clarity is achieved, the remaining part of the journey of career development becomes much easier, and more importantly, more fruitful.

## 3. START

Starting in a structured manner is now very easy. Evaluate the skill sets or the experience and the education that you already have, which helps you in this new leg of your career. Plan to leverage your already existing skill set, experience, and education. Separately, identify areas which you need to work on and that might be a new set of skills you need-- some market knowledge or technical knowledge or sometimes even a mindset shift. For example, a person moving from employment to entrepreneurship might need to begin with a mindset shift before anything else. It is also important to identify areas in which you need to collaborate with others, so step upon reaching out and networking. It is important to do all of this, but the planning and pacing are key- this either takes you ahead or makes you move in circles.

When the three stages are done properly, it is just a matter of time and perseverance before the results show.



## Nivedita Dasgupta

*A learning and development professional, Nivedita founded Mindmine Consulting 20 years ago. She is a Certified Coach from the ICF and a post-graduate alumna of the University of Delhi. She has trained over 30,000 people from junior to top management in every function. Some of her clients are Asian Paints, BASF India, Crisil, Godrej & Boyce, Unilever India among others. She coaches clients in areas such as leadership communication, cross-cultural capability, executive presence, strategic thinking, people management, business development, and stress management.*



# *To My Dear...*

*By Pavani K.N.*

It's been a long time since we communicated with each other. Even as I searched for answers to many questions about life, I realized that some clues to my puzzles related to you. Life is continuous learning and unlearning and relearning. In these processes, equations in many relationships change, and new ones are established. I realize that the most significant connection I lost over the years was with you. Hence, I want to confess and restore our relationship. Be patient and read my letter....

I approached life in an idealistic way; I always wanted to be on the right side, in the good books of others. So, I observed you critically: I made you responsible for what did not go right and never bothered to inform you when things did go right. The communication became one-way. You never questioned this, and you humbly took all the blame. Maybe you tried to tell me, but I was not willing to lend an ear. Unfortunately, I took you for granted, and let you down. You did not resist, and I did not realize that you were getting crushed by my criticism. I flaunted my control over you.



I believe that appreciation will make you egotistic. I did not give you the attention, affection, and love that you deserved. I always thought you should change for the better, be acceptable to the people I needed to impress.

My unrealistic benchmarks made you out to be a misfit on many occasions.

But never did I realize that you longed to be appreciated, recognized, loved, and accepted for who you truly are. I now realize-- all the happiness and contentment I was running for was getting further away; the path I chose was longer and creating a distance between us. I was getting more unhappy and discontented every day. I stopped running and found you, my inner-self, my soul. You are the source of all happiness and contentment.

Today I promise to respect you so that everyone shall respect me.  
Today I promise to accept you unconditionally so that everyone loves me.  
Today I promise to recognize your worth so that everyone appreciates me.  
Today I promise to trust you so that everyone believes what I say.  
Today I promise to listen to you so that everyone follows me.  
Today I promise to sync my thoughts with you so that my intentions manifest.  
Today I promise to thank you for everything so that I connect to abundance.  
Today I promise to value your presence so that the universe aligns for my benefit.  
Today I promise to unite with you so that I am blissful.



## **Pavani K.N**

*Pavani K.N. is an ICF-certified Emotional Energy Coach. She acts as a catalyst to channelize emotional energy in the direction that maximizes the potential to manifest desires.*

*She coaches clients who are looking to connect with the cosmic abundance by empowering them to experience the cosmic connection and harness the cosmic energy to manifest their desires.*

*Additionally, she coaches students in uncovering self-confidence, and self-trust as they embark on their life journeys through academics and careers.*

*Her coaching helps people in the prime of their life in clearing their cluttered minds, breaking necessary conditioning, and experience emotional equilibrium. In her own words, she helps clients “Passionise Challenges and Celebrate Life”.*

# Reimagine the Future: Is it Time To Review Career Paradigms?

By Suba Lakshminarasimhan

Until a year back, both my parents were using antique phones, for making or receiving calls, with no camera, and no big screen.

My mom is always inquisitive; my sister got her a smartphone. She quickly learned how to scroll up and down; eight-year-old grandchildren became her coaches. From security features to WhatsApp video calls, each day became a new learning experience for her. My dad also enjoyed the transformation.

Fast forward....

Covid & the Lockdown happened; the smartphone came in handy. We had to handle everything remotely from Bangalore when a sudden health crisis developed--both parents had to be hospitalized in Chennai, The smartphone became our savior and a stress buster; we could see them and better understand the situation. Parents embracing technology helped us in a crucial situation.

As coaches, are we ready to embrace digital media and technology beyond 'Zoom Calls' and 'Learning Management Systems (LMS)'? I witnessed many with a 'Mere Practitioner' approach struggling a lot in the

initial period of Pandemic. Those who had been making a mark on social media for a long time thrived better.

**Do we REALLY understand what the future of technology holds for us?**

In connection with that, here's my second experience. A link shared on a Marketing Group I am part of caught my attention and got me into deep introspection mode. It was about an innovative business model from a start-up owner, Sahil Lavingia.

*"We have no meetings, no deadlines, no full-time employees; Freedom is our goal," says Sahil Lavingia, Founder, Gumroad (a marketplace for creators, designers, authors, and innovators). He also claims that the creators earn over \$175M, and the company generated \$11M.*

**A little birdie in me predicts that even the established organizations might adopt such unique architectural models in the future. How READY are we to sail through such organizational, architectural changes?**

Let me take you through a third scenario --a change that is happening in people management.



*“What attitude my new hires show, I am sure, if the other company offers Rs.500 extra, these guys will jump.”*

*“Oh, how I hate these Gyan sessions that my HR organizes!”*

*“I am stuck between oldies and freshers; my time goes in managing conflicts rather than the key deliverable.”*

Do these dialogues sound familiar?

Irrespective of the size, a majority of organizations today have people from four different generations working together. The definition of attitude, behavior, communication, and learning agility is changing. “Reverse Mentoring” is picking up as well.

**One Key Concept I would like to share here is ‘Intergenerational Learning.’**

New ideas, start-ups, fresher outlooks, and the current generation of leaders establishing different attitudes and behaviors: all these changes are critical to recognize not only for the job seekers and aspiring leaders but also for us, the coaches. We must adopt “out of the box thinking” and “reimagine the future”.

I firmly believe in trailblazer science fiction writer William Gibson’s words: *“The future is already here-- it’s just not evenly distributed.”*

Do you?



## **Suba Lakshminarasimhan**

*Suba Lakshminarasimhan is a Workplace Conflict Management & Career Growth Coach, and a Personal Branding Strategist. An award winning entrepreneur, she comes with 18+ years of global corporate and Entrepreneurial experience, She has worked in IT and telecom sectors in the USA, UK, and India extensively. Suba has been a keynote speaker, mentor, guide and advisor on various prestigious platforms like Cherie Blair Mentor Foundation among others.*



# Conscious Leadership by Coaching Self & Leading Others to Collaborate

By Sunil Kumar Vaya



## Conscious Leadership

Change is inevitable, and time and generations march on with new perspectives and practices. Leadership as a topic has been evolving over the decades with every new generation contributing a new way of thinking about it.

I have seen the Command-and-Control leadership style--this has been the hallmark of the last generation of leaders. This idea of leadership was also conflated with the idea of “respect”. However, as our understanding of leadership expanded and matured, it became clear that there are different ways of giving and gaining respect other than the command-and-control style.

The more formal “Sir” and “Madam” way of addressing superiors has been replaced in corporations: Bosses are now being addressed by their first names. Interactions between employees and their superiors have become more open and less constrained, resulting in a friendly and less formal work environment.

Greater openness and more interaction between team members and leaders have given the team a place and a voice in the discussions and decisions. A more friendly manner of interacting has developed in corporate workplaces.

I have witnessed the older style and have seen the changing, emerging perspectives of leadership. This change has been reflected by changes in societal norms as well. While the older style may still linger in the government bureaucracy and the political class, the workforce at large has adapted to the newer, less formal way of interacting.

What is next in the realm of leadership is the question that came to me even as I reflected on the changes I saw. In this regard, a dialogue for annual review and personal development with a colleague last year was an awesome, eye-opening experience. I approached it differently: She and I engaged in a conversation in which I sought her perspective on how the previous



year had been for her and what changes or developments in her career she looked forward to, and what needs to happen for those changes.

This approach was experimental, and it struck me that engaging with colleagues to enable insights with the right questions led to a better outcome than recalling each failure and success and providing feedback on what went well and what needs to improve. This approach provided a much better outcome, which led to much more ownership being taken by the colleague and not being enforced by me.

This experience seeded in me a vision of what could be inspirational leadership. I envision the leader as a coach. A leader who is also a good coach can understand and inspire the members of the team by his awareness of their unique qualities and strengths. In this way, leaders can inspire their colleagues to

work to the best of their abilities, using their skills optimally. For this to happen, leaders must become good coaches. When leaders become coaches, the need for frequent monitoring and regular review can be dialed down as the team members function at their highest level.

The word “Leader “then lends itself to the idea of leading oneself rather than others. An individual who can lead themselves can have an inspirational impact on others when he engages with the others within the coaching parameters. I visualize leaders with the skills to lead themselves into the best version of themselves and coach their colleagues into tapping their potential and performing at their highest. This vision if realized will effectively replace the command and review model of leadership.

Further, I visualize coaching as a tool that can be used across all levels: team leader coaches colleagues in the team, and leaders engage each other in peer coaching at various levels. The coaching methodology can be used as an aid in reviews of mid-and senior-level leaders with top executives. In these situations, there are opportunities for the top executives to coach their mid-and senior- level colleagues to generate insights in place of the usual command and review approach.

To my mind, an organization can optimize its performance by using the coaching approach extensively in review meetings, team meetings, and one-on-one reviews into one-on-one coaching. The insights generated can empower the organization’s team to maximize its performance by tapping the potential of the individual member and inspiring them to deliver their best.



## Sunil Kumar Vaya

*Sunil Kumar Vaya has 27 years of corporate experience. An ICF credentialed coach, he is passionate about coaching younger leaders and youth to develop positive consciousness for success with happiness. Designing a stress-free Life and career for success with a positive attitude are his areas of practice. At present, he is serving as an Indian Administrative Fellow with the Government of Karnataka in the inaugural cohort of private and public sector leaders to scale sustained social impact.*

# Purposeful Choices!!

By Sidhartha Satpathy



Satish sat down to take one more look at the list of his employees. This was the fifth time in the day he had gone through the list; his heart ached to release anyone from his organization.

It had been five years since he started his venture and in all these years, his team had stayed with him through thick and thin. He had been a Web designer with a loyal and effective team of 20 members. The pandemic came as a shock, and to add to the misery, business dried up. He was running through his cash reserves to make the livelihood of his family and the 20 who depended on him. His last option was to retrench.

That evening when he got into a conversation with a friend, he poured out his woes about the challenge he faced. Thirty minutes into the conversation, a question struck him: “What is his purpose of starting this business?”

This question shook something at his core, and at that instant, he dropped the list of possible layoffs. For the next two days, he made frantic calls to various friends and people, known and unknown. And then called his team to lay out his new plan. He switched course from web designing work to get started with supplying emergency medical materials to hospitals. His entrepreneurial skills swung into action and a new line of business was born.

Today he is back at web designing with a larger team of more than the original 20 people. His team has grown as business lines have grown for him.

*How do you define your purpose?  
What drives you?*

Are you looking for the infinite possibilities of abundance or settling into the desperate call of “No-Go” or No Other Option? So, who governs your Choices-- your Purpose or Situation? A valid question to reflect on.

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## Sidhartha Satpathy



*Sidhartha Satpathy (Sid) is an Author, Storyteller, Coach, Podcaster, Blogger, Explorer and is also an HR professional too with experience of over two decades. He is a Life Coach & a passionate storyteller and looks out for stories in everything around him. In his journey as a storyteller, he not only tells stories but also facilitates various leadership and thinking processes through stories. He helps build a storytelling culture at workplaces.*

*His core value is “Enabling Infinite Possibilities” for people whom he engages with.*





Chai Pe Charcha (CPC) started as a forum for coaches to be with others in the fraternity when Covid started. Most sessions started without a topic but became interesting, courtesy posting a question or sharing of experiences.

*Venkatanarayanan N K*

Chai meeting is something like an informal meet of friends at a nukkad (corner of the lane) chai shop. It has been a place to hang out especially during lockdown.

*Soundaria Lakshmi*

Chai Pe Charcha for me (a coffee drinker) is starbucks-like experience --more than the coffee, it is the lovely opportunity of interacting with other coaches, and charcha on those small lovely tidbits...about the fun of coaching.

*MG*

CPC- a club house for coaches.

*P K Narayan*

I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of like minded and un-like minded folks here in "Chai-pe-Charcha". It has opened a new perspective about many topics of relevance in the last few months. I have, apart from meeting many lovely people, also have the opportunity to learn about the realities in the coaching space, especially about potential clients and challenges faced by many veteran coaches.

*Johnny K Joseph*

Wish the Covid curtain would lift soon, and we actually gather around a table and speak your mind, listen to others, laugh while learning from each other and relish the hot cup of chai or coffee as well.

*MG*



Type a message





Chai Pe Charcha is the place where I can come, meet all fellow coaches, have a lot of fun pulling others' legs (and getting mine pulled) and also learn a few things in the process.

**Mukesh Sharma**

Chai Pe Charcha is a very insightful forum. It is informal. The topics discussed are unique but there is always a message to take and reflect. This forum is more than a chai meeting in person. A good catchup with the coaching community over the weekend.

**Soundaria Lakshmi**



Type a message



COVID-19 hit in early 2020 and a long lockdown followed. Chapter members expressed the need, in one of the virtual meetings, to be able to relate and share with each other how they were coping with the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. And that's how the Chai meeting was born. Now, even though the situation is much better-- after one- and a- half years-- the sheer enjoyment of meeting and sharing with fellow coaches continues. The Chai meeting is a no-agenda, no-judgment platform where everyone associated with ICF Bengaluru, even their family and friends, can join and just feel part of the family. It is equivalent to water-cooler space in the office or a street corner chai shop where you meet and talk about anything.



**Pankaj Dixit**

*As a coach, every time I see the immense potential of the inner wisdom which all of us have, I am awestruck.*



**Bengaluru**  
*Charter Chapter*