

## Open Mind or Hole in the Head?

There are some statements that we make without realizing the damage they cause. [I must confess here that I too have made those, but recovered in time!].

'My marks do not reflect my potential' is a statement I made as a student so HE is punishing me by making me hear it from some of my students! When I joined the corporate world I graduated to even better one - 'How can my boss appraise me?!'

Needless to say that these statements serve no purpose. The author of such statements is aware of the bungled up performance, but it is nice to hide it under a big statement that protects his self-image. Repeating it many times, people who make these statements start believing them to be true!

The problem does not stop there. What they prevent themselves from understanding is that the equation  $p = P - i$  is a very powerful equation with a deep meaning. Small  $p$  represents performance, capital  $P$  represents potential and  $i$  represents interference. The problem is that the make-believe statement prevents people from examining the interference, or the recurring patterns of thoughts and feelings that come in the way of delivering performance to the full potential.

For several years the Indian Cricket team failed to win matches, and lost those which had a win almost in their hands. Jana Novotna loses Wimbledon finals to Steffi Graf when she is all set to win it. Sharad Pawar, a great leader himself, fails to reach the heights of his mentor YB Chavan and has given up hopes of becoming India's Prime Minister. Sehwag undoubtedly a great player, but he does not achieve the consistency of Sachin Tendulkar so the overall achievements fall miles short of the Little Master. Vilasrao Deshmukh, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra goes to Taj after 26/11 with film makers instead of reaching out to people. Why does this happen? The power of  $i$  [interference] is tremendous; it prevents you from giving your best.

When you say, however, that 'My marks do not reflect my potential' you prevent yourself from examining the ' $i$ ' [the recurring patterns of thoughts and feelings] that will keep interfering in your performance; what can be more destructive than that?

There is nothing like keeping one's mind open. But people must learn the hard way, like me! People tolerate your nonsense because they are not interested in you and they are tactful. They smile as if approvingly, when you utter the big statement about your performance not reflecting potential, and some even would readily nod in agreement. That makes us happy! But beware of such people, and beware of your own attitude.

"Tact is the ability to tell a man he has an open mind when he has a hole in his head" somebody has said. Actually, 'very well said' I would say!

Vivek

