

# THE MAGIC OF TEAMWORK

By Sam Pitroda

## UNIT 1

*'The Magic of Teamwork'* deals with some proven principles employed by the organizations with a view to build a successful team in their business. In this essay, the writer also discusses the basic issues in connection with teamwork, the characteristics of a good team player, and how teamwork is important to corporate and national governance.

The essay begins with the writer's reference to lack of teamwork and co-operation among Indians. In his view this is one of the most serious problems hampering progress where Indian workers are involved. The key problem affecting India's progress is implementation, not the lack of policies. Here we have great policies and ideas about how to do things, but we severely lack of teamwork. When the Japanese came to work in India to develop the Maruti Suzuki car, it was proved that one Indian was equal to 10 Japanese, it means Indians were very smart, capable and dedicated individuals. But 10 Indians were equal to 1 Japanese, it means Indians lacked team spirit and co-operation. Here the writer talks about the crab mentality of Indian people. If someone is trying to climb higher and achieve more, the others just drag him down. In other words if by chance someone starts succeeding in his life they will all gang up and make sure that he doesn't get to do it. This attitude comes from our cultural background. We have been involved in a hierarchical system where we think the senior is the master of knowledge. This was good in the past times where knowledge and wisdom were orally transformed, but in modern society there is no way that one person can know everything. Today a young computer trained person has more answers for an accounting problem than a senior accountant has. Here the writer again suggests that we will be able to create the right kind of teams when we will understand how to utilize the diverse experience and obtain results.

## **UNIT 2**

The writer takes us back to his younger days in the US where he took part in an executive seminar for Rockwell International. About 25 senior company executives had assembled for a week for strategic discussion. They were divided into five different groups comprising five people each. Each group member was asked to do something such as making coffee, taking notes, cleaning the board and someone is supposed to be a chairman. They all performed their task sincerely without any complain. But in India if this was happening people would be saying, "But I'm the senior secretary, why should I make the coffee and you be the chairman ?" Hierarchy comes naturally to the minds of Indian people.

The writer stresses that group work needs a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of every individuals. Our background has not taught us how to accept the leadership and follow the lead of others simultaneously. But in true teamwork everyone needs to do both.

In teamwork being a good team player must respect others, tolerate different points of view and desire to give. A team player must possess the ability to tackle conflicts without either egotism or sycophancy. In India people stress on attaining complete agreement on a conflicting issue, but it is impossible. Instead of waiting for the total agreement for beginning a work, it is important to work on the agreed upon aspects. The characteristics of a good team player are openness, clarity and honesty. Most people have a hidden agenda that they say something but mean the exact opposite. A good work ethic is to say and mean the same thing.

## **UNIT 3**

The writer takes us back to his work place C-DOT company. There he used to tell the inefficient employee directly to his face in a general meeting. To the employees, writer's blunt exposure in the general meeting was humiliating. They should be pulled aside individually to be told of the inefficiency. Actually the writer's intention behind open criticism in a meeting was for the benefit of all present employees and everyone could learn from that individual's mistakes. Then the writer learnt about Indians' lack of differentiating between criticizing an

idea and criticizing an individual. But criticizing an idea doesn't mean criticizing an individual. The writer points out that an employee cannot afford to criticize the boss in India. But it is acceptable for anyone to criticize the boss if he is doing wrong. It is important for an organization's Chief Executive to get a report on the psychological health of the firm. The key elements of a team's success are stability, confidence, security and comforts of its members. Another serious problem in India is the dichotomy and difference in between physical and mental workers in terms of power and position, which affects teamwork. The writer had a driver named Ram, whom he thought was one of the best drivers in the world. The writer was not interested to treat him like a mere driver. He motivated the driver to be a team player. The writer wanted him to assist in office work when he was not driving.

#### **UNIT 4**

According to the writer variety of tasks help the workers enhancing their self esteem, motivation and make them good team players. It is difficult to build teams in India, because nobody is interested to be in a subordinate position to someone. Everyone should be expert in working with diversity, but it can only happen when we get rid of personal, caste and community interests.

The writer says that age doesn't matter for holding a position, but it is capability and expertise to hold a senior position. So there could be a 40 years old CEO with a 55 years old Vice President. These attitudes are not found in India. The writer has observed that the managers in the US corporate environment working with Indians and Asians in general, that they are not getting recognition or they are not being respected. Therefore senior must give attention and encourage a little more the employees having lower self esteem. It makes them feel better and work better.

The writer ends the essay by suggesting some fundamental ideals in corporate environment. They are respect for others, frankness, honesty, communication, willingness to disagree, solution of conflict and the recognition of the larger interest of the team. Everyone should not be afraid of pressure, it can turn something worst to best.

## **IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:-**

**1- What is the key problem affecting India's progress ?**

Ans- the key problem affecting India's progress is lack of implementation and lack of teamwork.

**2- What is the joke about the Indian and Japanese workers at the Maruti Suzuki Company ?**

Ans- The joke about the Indian and Japanese workers at Maruti Suzuki Company is that one Indian is equal to 10 Japanese. Indians are very smart, capable and dedicated individuals. But 10 Indians were equal to 1 Japanese. This means that Indians lack team spirit and Corporation.

**3- What is the 'crab mentality' ?**

Ans- The crab mentality is pulling down any member who achieves success beyond others out of envy.

**4- How can the right kind of teams be created ?**

Ans- The right kind of teams can be created when we understand how best to use a quality or advantage to obtain a desired effect or result.

**5- How does hierarchy come in the way of doing a task together in India ?**

Ans- While doing a task in India, hierarchy automatically comes to our minds. A senior person in the group wants to be the leader instead of a follower.

**6- What should the members of a team learn for effective teamwork ?**

Ans- For effective teamwork, the members of a team should learn to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individuals of their group irrespective of status.

**7- What are the qualities of a good team player ?**

Ans- The qualities of a good team player are respect others, tolerate different points of view, desire to give and the ability to tackle conflicts without either egotism or sycophancy.

**8- What does a 'good work ethic' imply ?**

Ans- A good work ethic implies saying and meaning the same thing.

**9- How did the author handle inefficient employees in C-DOT ?**

Ans- In C-DOT the author handled inefficient employees by telling them directly to their face in a general meeting.

**10- What was the author's intention of criticizing openly ?**

Ans- The author's intention of criticizing employees openly was for the benefit of all present there and to make everyone learn from that individual's mistakes.

**11- What did the author learn about Indian attitude to criticism ?**

Ans- The author learned about Indian attitude to criticism that Indians do not differentiate between criticizing an idea and criticizing an individual.

**12- What are the key elements of a team's success ?**

Ans- The key elements of a team's success are stability, confidence, security and comforts of its members.

**13- What affects team performance in India ?**

Ans- The difference between physical and mental workers in terms of power and position affects team performance in India.

**14- How do diversifying tasks help workers ?**

Ans- Diversifying tasks help workers enhancing their self esteem, motivation and team spirit.

**15- Why is it difficult to build teams in India ?**

Ans- It is difficult to build teams in India because nobody is interested to be a subordinate to someone.

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# TO MY TRUE FRIEND

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**By Elizabeth Pinard**

The poem 'To my True Friend' is an "Ode" written by Elizabeth Pinard. Ode is a lyrical poem addressed to someone or something. Here in this ode the poet Elizabeth Pinard has addressed to her friend. The poet has written the poem about her best friend. She describes her friend as a true friend who kept her going when things did not look too bright, who always encouraged and supported her when she felt low, who made the poet learn to love herself. Though they are separated by thousands of miles, their friendship remains the same.

## **Poem analysis :-**

(Line 1 – 8)

*"The day I met you*

*I found a friend*

*And a friendship that*

*I pray will never end.*

*Your smile so sweet*

*And so bright*

*Kept me going*

*When day was as dark as night".*

» In this poem the poet recollects her past memories. The poet goes back to a day when she met someone and later she found her as a true friend. The poet prayed that the friendship she made will never end. The smile of her friend was sweet and bright that gave the poet strength and support when she was passing through a difficult time.

(Line 9 – 16)

*“You never ever judged me,  
You understood my sorrow.  
Then you told me it needn't be that way  
And gave me the hope of a better tomorrow.  
You were always there for me,  
I knew I could count on you.  
You gave me advice and encouragement  
Whenever I didn't know what to do”.*

» Without any judgement, she understood the poet and her misery and told to get rid of it. Instead, her friend gave the poet the hope of a better tomorrow. It means she gave the poet emotional support and compassion. Her friend always stood by her, and the poet trusted her friend. She used to give advice and encouragement when the poet didn't know the right or wrong.

(Line 17 – 24)

*“You helped me learn to love myself  
You made life seem so good.  
You said I can do anything I put my mind to  
And suddenly I knew I could.  
There were times when we didn't see eye to eye  
And there were days when both of us cried.  
But even so we made it through  
Our friendship hasn't yet died”.*

》 She helped the poet learn to love herself. She made her life so good. She gave the advice and encouragement when she was in difficult situation. There were times when the poet and her friend fell in misunderstanding and both of them cried, their friendship had not been yet died.

(Line 25 – 32)

*“Circumstances have pulled us apart,*

*We are separated by many miles.*

*Truly, the only thing that keeps me going*

*Is my treasured memory of your smile.*

*This friendship we share*

*Is so precious to me,*

*I hope it grows and flourishes*

*And lasts unto infinity.*

》 Situation separated them from each other. They lived far away from each other. In spite of being separated by distance, the poet cherishes the smile of her friend. The poet speaks highly of their friendship. The friendship that they shared was so precious to the poet. Even the poet hopes it to be grown and flourished for ever.

(Line 33 – 40)

*“You are so extra-special to me*

*And so this to you I really must tell:*

*You are my one true friend,*

*My Guardian Angel.*

*Our friendship is one in a million*



*So let's hold on to it and each other.*

*We cannot let this chance of pure bliss fly away*

*For there will never be another.*

*I love you.*

*I will always love you”.*

》 The friend is so extra-special to the poet. The poet finds her as a true friend and a guardian and protector. The poet thinks that their friendship is one in a million. So she wishes to hold the friendship for ever and they cannot allow such a pure happiness to go away. At the end of the poem the poet expresses her deep and true love for her true friend by saying “I love you. I will always love you”.

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## IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**1- What does the poet pray for?**

Ans- The poet Elizabeth Pinard prays for keeping their friendship for all time. It means she prays for their never ending friendship.

**2- How did the friend encourage the poet?**

Ans- The friend encouraged the poet to keep her going ahead when she was passing through a difficult time.

**3- How does the poet cherish the memory of her friend?**

Ans- The poet deeply cherishes the memory of her friend by remembering her sweet and bright smile with great love.

**4- Why does the poet call her friend extra special?**

Ans- The poet calls her friend extra-special because she is her only true friend, her guide and protector.

**5- What is the poet's final wish?**

Ans- The poet's final wish is that they should hold their friendship safe and they cannot allow such friendship of pure joy to go away any more. There will never be another friendship like her.