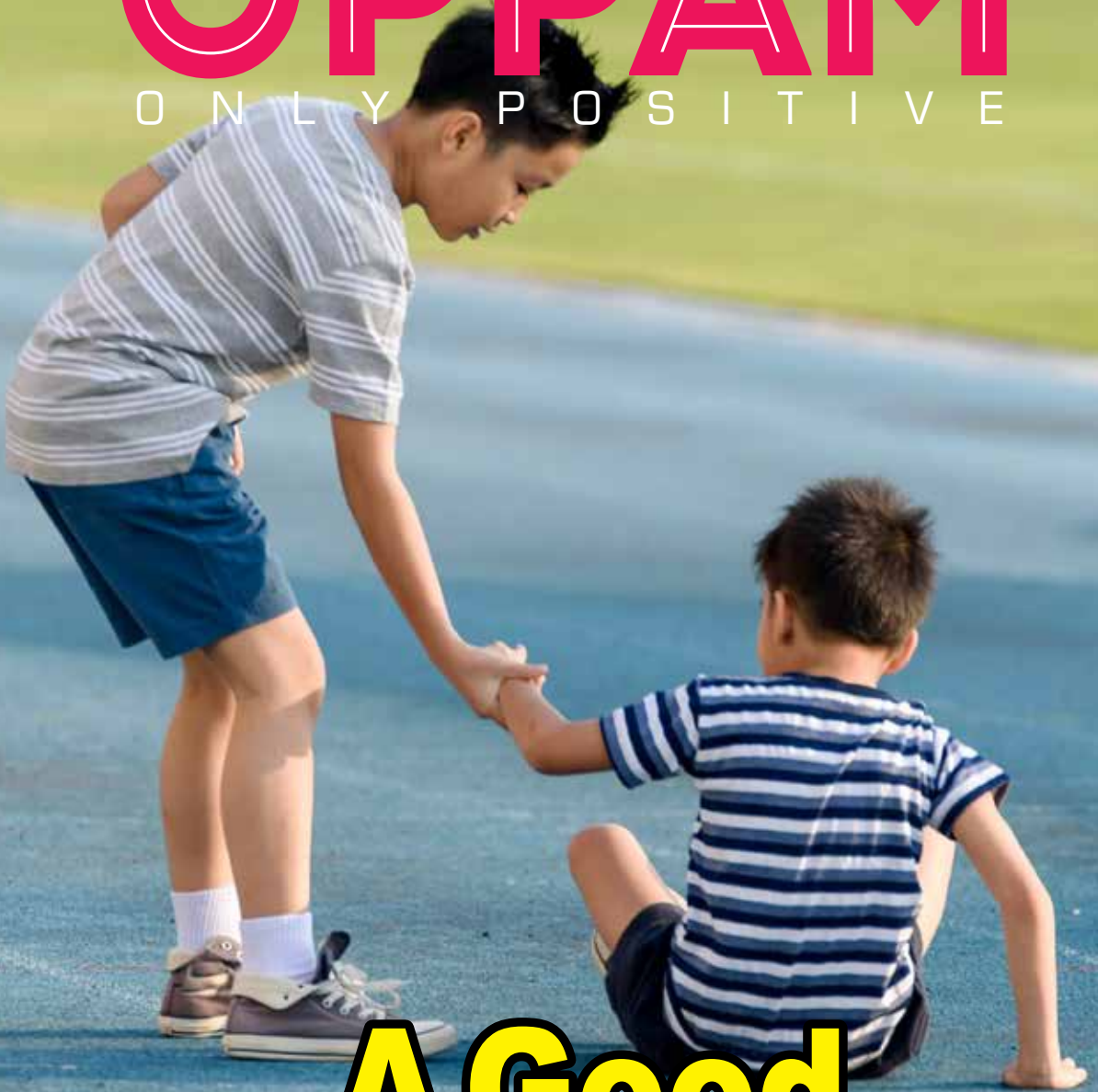


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O N L Y P O S I T I V E



**A Good
Human Being**



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Editorial

PROF ANTONY P JOSEPH
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Broken Pots

There was once an earthen pot in a household. Over time, it developed a crack. Everyone in the family concluded that it was no longer useful. But the grandmother of the house said, "Don't throw it away into the yard just because it has become unusable. Let us fill it with soil and plant a sapling in it." The family agreed. She filled the broken clay pot with soil and planted a young plant in it. Months later, the plant flourished. It bore buds, flowers and fruit. Beautiful blossoms bloomed, enhancing the beauty of the courtyard and spreading their fragrance all around.

Now, let us consider the story of another pot. It was an aluminum pot. In time, it too developed a hole. However, being made of aluminum, it did not immediately become useless. Yet, whenever water was carried in it, a considerable amount would leak out. Even so, since the family was poor, they continued using the pot instead of discarding it.

Months later, the family noticed that along both sides of the path they regularly took to fetch water, numerous plants had sprung up. These plants were covered with beautiful flowers, transforming the path into a lane filled with blossoms. The water that had leaked from the cracked pot had quenched the thirst of the dry, parched earth, enabling seeds to sprout, plants to grow and flowers to bloom.

The first story reminds us that most people are quick to judge others by their shortcomings and discard them without looking beyond their flaws. Very few realize that even with those imperfections, a person can still produce meaningful results or perhaps even greater ones. Instead, many are eager to identify the faults of others and reject them because of those faults.

After all, who among us is without shortcomings? What we should do is identify our weaknesses as much as possible, work to overcome them, and continue moving forward. Sometimes we may not even recognize our own flaws. When others point them out, we should humbly accept those criticisms that are valid, correct ourselves, and keep progressing. Such an attitude will surely bear fruit.

Now consider the pot in the second story. At first glance, it too appeared defective. Yet, despite its flaw, it enriched its surroundings. Therefore, never ignore or reject anyone simply because they have imperfections. Instead of focusing on the shortcomings of others, recognize the goodness that can flow through them.

Every person who has made this world a better place had their own limitations and weaknesses. Yet they made remarkable contributions to humanity. Our shortcomings do not make us failures, nor do they render us worthless.

Perfection is a good thing. But when we carry the burden of perfectionism, it is often those who live with us who suffer the most. Some people insist that everything must be done with absolute perfection and that everyone else should be as perfect as they imagine themselves to be. But don't these perfectionists also have shortcomings? Sometimes, their obsession with perfection is itself an attempt to conceal their own flaws.

So, instead of judging people by their imperfections, look at the good that emerges through them. Let us strive to create a better world and a healthier society. May this world become like a beautiful garden.

Regards
Prof Antony P Joseph

Is Life Moving into a 'Phone Body'?

Our hands seem to be losing their strength. It feels as though they have become so weak that they can no longer grip even an ordinary object firmly. Our vision is becoming blurred. These are not descriptions of people who have crossed a certain age threshold; rather, they refer to the new physical health conditions increasingly seen among young people. They are symptoms of the new lifestyle that has emerged among adolescents and young adults.

Phone Body

The term “phone body” is now used to describe the various physical problems that arise from the excessive use of digital devices such as smart phones, tablets and laptops. Spending hours each day looking down at a phone, holding it in the same hand, constantly scrolling with the fingers, typing and staring continuously at a screen- these are the kinds of repetitive physical stresses that the modern world now refers to as ‘phone body’.

Symptoms

As a result of these habits, the neck, shoulders, hands, eyes, back, sleep and even mental health may all be adversely affected.

Weakness in the hands, numbness

in the fingers, pain in the thumb, pain in the elbow and difficulty holding objects are among the conditions associated with phonebody.

Vision-related problems may include blurred vision, dry eyes, a burning sensation in the eyes, headaches and discomfort in bright light. This condition is commonly described as Computer Vision Syndrome, or Digital Eye Strain. It occurs because prolonged screen use causes the eyes to blink less frequently than normal.

Similarly, neck pain, shoulder pain, back pain and muscle stiffness may also develop. The average human head weighs about five kilograms. However, when the head is bent forward, the pressure exerted on the neck increases many times over. It is this increased strain that gives rise to such pain. In fact, even one's posture can be adversely affected.

Using a phone before going to sleep exposes the eyes to the blue light emitted from the screen. This interferes with the body's natural sleep cycle, resulting in delayed sleep, poorer sleep quality and fatigue the following day.

Apart from these physical problems, this condition can also have



a negative impact on mental health. Constantly checking notifications may contribute to reduced attention span, anxiety, psychological stress and an increased tendency to compare oneself with others through social media.

Who Is Affected by Phone Body?

Who are the people most likely to experience these physical and psychological problems?

They are seen more commonly among those who use their phones for four to six hours a day, people whose work is largely done on mobile devices, those who regularly engage in online gaming and those who spend long hours on social media.

Preventive Measures

How can one protect oneself from phone body? Self-discipline is the only effective remedy.

Every twenty minutes, look at an object about twenty feet away for twenty seconds. This helps reduce eye strain. Instead of bending your head down to

look at your phone, hold the device as close to eye level as possible while using it. If you use your phone continuously for an hour, take a break. Get up and walk around for at least five minutes. Stretch your body. Avoid screen time before going to bed.

When to Seek Medical Help

If you experience persistent numbness in your hands, increasing weakness in your grip, frequent blurred vision, severe neck or back pain or pain that interferes with your daily activities, you should consult a doctor and obtain appropriate treatment.

Phone body is not a disease in itself. Rather, it is a warning of the health problems that may develop in the future. It reminds us that although technology is immensely useful and often indispensable, it can also adversely affect both our physical health and our mental well-being. If we recognize these warning signs and respond to them in time, we can protect ourselves from more serious health problems.





Poverty is not merely the absence of food to eat or the failure to meet one's basic needs. Poverty is also the loss of self-respect and the compulsion to live dependent on others. Yet definitions of poverty have largely confined the matter to a condition of life marked by the lack of food, clothing, shelter and clean water.

As I write this, I can still see before my eyes a young man walking with his visually impaired wife and their two little children held close to him. I can still see them eating what seemed like a last supper, and then, with extraordinary care, making their way along a road crowded with vehicles, the young man holding his visually impaired wife and children close. Though he carried and protected them with the unwavering

resolve that no harm should befall his loved ones, were all those efforts, in the end, merely preparations for a common grave in which they would all lie together?

There was a time when social media overflowed with emotional declarations of the sort: Had that family come to me, I would have embraced them and shared with them even half of what I had. But one must sincerely ask how many of those who made such declarations would actually have helped that family had they encountered them in the full intensity and harshness of their circumstances. And even then—for how long? To what extent?

That young man was, at times, blamed and ridiculed even for having married and for bringing children into



the world. Advising those who come seeking help, scolding them and dwelling on their weaknesses and shortcomings are all expressions of the sense of superiority and condescension we exercise over them. When we help the poor, we imagine ourselves to be greater than they are. But no one is greater or lesser than another. It is each person's misfortune that creates the circumstance in which they must stretch out a hand before someone else. If you have never, until now, passed through the experience of poverty, you may count yourself fortunate- for the poverty that has been allotted to so many has not fallen upon you.

No one can carry on the ordinary business of daily life by depending on

another person indefinitely. Nor can anyone continue helping another forever. That is why everyone labours, with the sweat of their brow, for their daily bread. Yet the contradiction is this: some toil from dawn until night, and still nothing remains for them. Or rather, their labour is not valued in proportion to what they have given. For some, even a few minutes are worth millions; for others, an hour is worth scarcely ten.

Only one who has experienced poverty can truly understand the weight of another person's deprivation. Only one who has stretched out a hand before another can understand the helplessness of someone else extending their hand in need. Poverty cannot be wiped away; it can only be endured.





Human beings are, in the ultimate sense, free. It is into freedom that they are born. Breaking through the secure abode in which they had lived until yesterday, they are suddenly born into their own individuality and sense of self. Their very first cry at birth is a declaration of freedom. Although the cries of all infants may sound alike, each child's cry is distinct enough to be recognized as its own, for within that cry reside its individuality and its awareness of self.

Yet the one who is born into freedom and longs to be free is soon seen being constrained by the world around him. In one sense, this too is a comforting kind of dependence- or rather, a prudent de-

pendence. His freedom of independent thought, his longing to be free, is restrained by others. Certain experiences that he is capable of touching and understanding for himself are forbidden to him out of fear and the awareness that they might harm him. What is lost in the process is his freedom itself. Yet this dependence is, from his perspective, for his own good. Through it he learns a profound lesson: freedom is not the license to do whatever one feels like doing. To do so would ultimately harm oneself.

Many events in later life wound his longing for freedom. Others come together to restrict his freedom or to draw boundaries around it. Thus, the human



being who is born to be free is gradually reduced to the limits of dependence.

Love, religious faith, and human relationships all wound freedom in different ways. They impose limits upon it. The more a person values relationships, the more deeply religious they are or the more they are loved, the more their freedom is circumscribed. The bonds of love tighten around them in many ways, binding and restraining them.

Today, everyone seems to advocate freedom beyond all limits. “This is my freedom” has become a refrain heard in many homes and social settings. It is a rallying cry for the freedom to do whatever one pleases. We also live in a time when publicly hurling abuse, drinking alcohol, using narcotic drugs and even

engaging in sexual relations are mistakenly proclaimed as expressions of freedom. Not every freedom is meant to be abused. Freedom is a celebration; but excessive freedom is anarchy.

It is we ourselves who must define and regulate our freedom. My freedom acquires its true worth only when I decide how far, for what purpose and in what manner I shall exercise it. It ceases to be freedom when someone else determines my boundaries. Greater than external freedom is the inner freedom a person experiences.

It is inner freedom that makes one happy and content. True freedom resides in the soul. Of what use is every other kind of freedom if there is no freedom within the soul?



Some Lessons for Life

Respect, honour, love and recognition are the desires and needs of every human being. No one wishes to be ignored. Very few people willingly turn away from being honoured. Yet how can anyone earn respect, win the love and esteem of others and establish credibility except through their own efforts?



- If you wish to be respected, never go in search of respect. Those who pursue honour and recognition with undue eagerness often become objects of ridicule. Being respected may be your desire, and you may indeed deserve it. But do not beg for respect or obtain it through influence. If you are worthy of honour and yet it does not come your way, that itself is a form of recognition. Not all honours are bestowed upon those who truly deserve them. When the genuinely deserving are overlooked, those who obtain honour and recognition through the back door are, in another sense, themselves undeserving of honour.
- If you want others to trust you, respect you, and take you seriously, you must have succeeded at least once. Success is what determines a person's worth in the eyes of the world. Ability is, at times, only a secondary factor. People may be willing to invest money in the business of someone who has already succeeded or enter into partnership with such a person. But if someone is capable and yet has not achieved success, very few are willing to acknowledge or trust them.
- Although we often say that inner beauty is greater than outward beauty, what first attracts us to a person is, in fact, their outward appearance. Physical appearance, dress and bodily presentation all matter. In a crowd, our attention is naturally drawn first to the person we find physically most attractive. Therefore, even while speaking of inner beauty for the sake of inspiration, encouragement or applause, we should not ignore the importance of outward appearance. Some may cite Abraham Lincoln as an exception, for he is often described as having been physically unattractive. That is true. But he came to command attention only after becoming President. Once a person attains a position of distinction, the position itself often makes that person appear attractive. If you are someone living in sorrow, despair and disorder, you are unlikely to draw others towards you.
- If you believe that no one loves you, trusts you or that your relationships are poor, be willing to examine yourself instead of blaming others. It is true that not everyone can love everyone else, trust them or build deep and sincere relationships. But if everyone, without exception, neglects you and distances themselves from you, then perhaps the reason lies with you. Therefore, stop blaming others and be prepared to rebuild yourself.
- Only those who possess happiness within themselves are capable of bringing happiness to those around them. Consider the small unit called a home. A husband or a wife who constantly grumbles, becomes angry, and complains does so because they are inwardly dissatisfied. They lack inner happiness. Why does a manager continually criticize and fail to appreciate a colleague? Because there is neither joy nor contentment within. We must understand that our happiness cannot depend upon the happiness of others; what matters is preserving the happiness that exists within

ourselves.

- Do not remind those who have forgotten you of your existence. This is not an act of revenge or hatred; rather, it is a matter of self-respect. It simply means that they value you only to that extent. If you keep sending messages on WhatsApp, see the blue ticks indicating they have been read, and yet never receive even a forwarded message in return, the indication is that you have become an unwelcome intruder in their lives. Withdraw-with gentleness and with quiet dignity. Let me say it again: do not remind those who have

forgotten you. You may remember them, but do not remind them.

- Do not become arrogant because of your achievements or successes. Today's success may not be repeated tomorrow. The success you now enjoy may not prove permanent. Today's achievements may one day turn into setbacks. Receive success with humility. Bow your head before your accomplishments rather than letting them inflate your pride. The world has room for everyone and can accommodate all kinds of people, but an arrogant person is unfit for any world.





A Good Human Being

We often look at someone and say, 'He is a good person.' That impression comes from the way that person behaves or speaks - how they make us feel. But what really makes someone a 'good human being?' or on what basis do we call a person 'good'? Let us look at some of the qualities such people possess.

One mark of a good person is the ability to respect and value others as they value themselves. It comes from the realization - 'You are just like me.' Unfortunately, what we often see is the opposite attitude: Everything should be

mine. You deserve nothing or Respect and honor belong only to me - you are not worthy of them.

Such attitudes are never the ways of a good person.

It is not necessary that a good person should be able to help everyone or fulfill every need. Yet, what matters is the willingness to help others as much as one can. Doing good doesn't always mean giving money - it can also mean offering guidance, advice or a helping word when needed.

Appreciate the good deeds of others. Many people only wish that others



should speak well of them, but they forget that others, too, long to hear words of kindness. Avoid gossip and refrain from spreading rumors. Even if humility does not come naturally, learn to speak with respect toward those who disagree.

Do not treat someone as an enemy just because they hold a different opinion. If there is any good in what they say, be willing to accept it.

We may not be able to make everyone better, but let us at least ensure that we are not the cause of anyone's downfall. Many people fall into habits like

drinking or smoking because of certain company or influence - such relationships can lead a person toward harm. So never be the reason for another's destruction.

At the end of each day, take a moment for self-reflection.

Did I hurt anyone knowingly? Did I behave improperly toward someone? If there is a chance to make amends, take it. No one is free from mistakes - but a true human being is one who, when he realizes he has done wrong, is willing to correct himself.





If a Soulmate Chooses Not to Continue the Relationship...

Even after loving someone wholeheartedly, when a friend neither loves in return nor understands you and goes further to cut off all ties with you and begin other associations... how heartbreaking that is! We go

through the same pain when a friend excludes us and treats us as someone who does not belong to the group. The first thought that usually comes to mind is whether all this happened because of some fault of our own.

When faced with such a situation, the first thing to do is to think calmly and approach the issue in the right way. What is needed first is to acknowledge your emotions. Feelings of loss, sorrow and anger are natural. They should not be ignored or denied. Pain is pain, so do not suppress it.

The next step is to find out why the friend distanced themselves from you. Was it a misunderstanding, the manipulation of others or something that happened because of your own mistake? Whatever the reason may be, talk about it openly. Do not speak by blaming the friend. You should express your own

feelings. Say it like this: “I feel that I am being avoided and that makes me sad.”

What if the friend is not deliberately avoiding you at all? Do not think that the friend moved away or ignored you because you have no value. Not everyone is able to recognize our worth. Just because one person rejects you does not mean you lose your value. If X does not need you, Y does.

Avoid those who repeatedly ignore you and accept those who respect you and value your presence and friendship. If one person leaves you, there will be two others ready to accept you. Do not forget that.



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