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OPPAM

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

Be Real



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Editorial

PROF ANTONY P JOSEPH
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The Monk and the Woman

Two monks, after walking for a long time, finally arrived at the bank of a river. They had to cross the river to reach their destination. However, there was no boat. Moreover, the river was flowing turbulently, its waters muddy and swirling. Even the monks were perplexed, not knowing what to do.

There was also a woman there, apart from the two monks. The river was flowing violently and the woman was afraid to cross it. One wrong step, and she might lose her footing. Therefore, she was waiting, hoping that either the turbulent waters would settle down or someone would come along and help her cross the river.

It was at this point that the monks arrived. After carefully assessing the river, one of them gathered the courage to cross it. Watching him, the woman asked, "Guru, could you please help me cross the river too?"

The monk knew that, in order to cross the turbulent river with the woman, he would have to hold her hand. So he replied, "I am sorry. I do not touch women."

He then stepped into the river and attempted to cross it.

The woman approached the second monk. Assuming that he, too, would give her the same answer as the first monk, she nevertheless decided to ask him as a kind of test.

"Guru, could you please help me cross the river as well? If I continue waiting here, I do not think anyone else will come this way. It is getting dark, too. If I could reach the other bank, I would be able to get home safely."

Contrary to the woman's assumptions and expectations, the monk replied, "Of course! Climb onto my shoulders."

With that, the monk bent down and crouched on the ground, allowing the woman to climb onto his shoulders. When they reached the other bank, the woman thanked him and went her way.

The two monks were now alone. The first monk turned angrily towards the second and said, "I never knew that you were such a hypocrite, pretending to be virtuous while secretly being otherwise."

"What hypocrisy have I practised?" asked the second monk.

"When even the slightest physical contact with a woman is forbidden to us, you carried that woman on your shoulders all the way across the river. Doesn't that prove that you love women and desire their touch and company?"

"Oh, is that what you think?" The second monk smiled.

"When an emergency arises, we should help people not by considering whether they are women or men, but simply because they are human beings. Had we not helped her, that woman would still be standing on the other bank. Look around. The river has not yet cleared, and darkness has fallen. Can we be certain that some wild animal or wicked person will not harm her?"

"When I carried that woman on my shoulders, I had no impure thoughts whatsoever. But I suspect that, throughout the incident, your mind was filled with improper thoughts. Am I not right?"

Hearing these words, the first monk lowered his head in shame.

Today, what we increasingly see are people who go about preaching morality rather than practising it in their own lives. They believe that it is their responsibility to protect the morality of every individual and of society as a whole.

There are many who mistakenly believe that a man and a woman travelling together, two girls walking hand in hand, or two men sleeping beside each other are all acts against morality and violations of ethical principles. This is a problem with their outlook.

What we need is a society that possesses moral integrity and a sense of values, not one in which people pretend to be virtuous while engaging in immoral conduct.

Pay attention to those who speak and write most fervently in the name of morality. When circumstances favour them, they are often not reluctant to violate the very moral principles they so loudly proclaim.

Things are not always as they appear to us. There may be more to a situation than what meets the eye. When we pass judgement solely on the basis of what we see, without understanding what lies beyond it, the truth may remain hidden somewhere out of sight.

Therefore, instead of judging a situation merely by what we see, we should consider its circumstances, context and necessity before forming an opinion. The first thing we need to do for this is simply to broaden our outlook.

Regards
Prof Antony P Joseph

Some Lessons We Must Never Forget



It is not because we lack knowledge that we sometimes fail in life, but because our minds are filled with certain misconceptions. Despite having the ability and qualifications we need, we are often left behind for a variety of reasons: blindly trusting others, trying to win their love and affection, or lacking self-confidence. How many such reasons are there for our failures in life!

Let me share a few things we must remember if we wish to succeed in life. Merely knowing these things may not be enough to guarantee success, but they may help us take a few new steps forward in life.

We sometimes say of certain people that we can trust them with our eyes closed. Certainly, they may be trustworthy. Nevertheless, we should allow everyone a one per cent margin for the circumstances in which they find themselves. After all, they are human beings too, with the natural tendencies and weaknesses that are part of being human. They, too, can make mistakes. Therefore, we should not place one hundred per cent trust in anyone. They may not be people who deliberately hurt us, nor may they have any intention of doing so. Yet even that one per cent margin can make a difference, and an error on their part can turn out to be a mistake with consequences for us. So, never trust anyone blindly.

There may be people we like very much. When we go on a trip or to a mov-

ie, we may wish they were there with us. But they may not necessarily want to accompany us. They may have various reasons for declining. If they avoid joining us more than once, we should understand one thing: it is only we who need their company; they on the other hand do not need ours.

Expecting everyone to be with us all the time is an illusion. There is no need to feel disappointed because of it.

Some people always appear ready to help us and seem deeply sincere in their dealings with us. However, when we have nothing to offer them, they will abandon us. They will leave when they can no longer derive the benefits they expect from us.

Therefore, do not assume that everyone approaches you with affection and good intentions. Such an assumption can be dangerous and can also cause us sorrow.

Do not run after anything or anyone. The more we chase after people, the farther away they tend to move from us. Instead, whether it is an object, a situation or a person, seek to attract rather than chase. Never forget that the ability to attract is an art.

Recognize Your True Abilities

One reason we fail to achieve success in life is that we do not recognize our true abilities. Another is that we do not make full use of those abilities.

Even today, there are many young people around us who waste their time watching reels and videos created by



others, as well as comedy scenes from films. They have not recognized their own talents. And because they have failed to recognize them, they have also failed to make proper use of their abilities and their time.

We were not born merely to do what someone else has done. Nor is our destiny to become a photocopy of another person. Within you lies the potential to do things that humanity has never thought of or attempted before. Discover that potential and put it to use.

Haste and Enthusiasm Are Not Always Good

What we need is the patience to wait. Just as a certain number of days is required for a chick to emerge from an egg, certain things need a specific amount of time to happen. We must allow them that time and be prepared to wait until it has passed.

Everything great that has ever happened has taken time. We know from history that wars have been won, but no war has ever been won in a single day. Success in life is much the same; it too takes time. Therefore, wait patiently.

Take Charge of Your Own Life

There may be many people who wish for our well-being and progress. Nevertheless, never hand over control of your life to any of them. Have the courage to take charge of your own life.

Life is not like travelling in a vehicle while comfortably seated in the back seat, leaving the driving to someone else. If another person is holding the steering wheel, the journey will follow

the route and direction that person chooses. Instead, if you hold the steering wheel of your own life, you will be able to reach your destination in accordance with your own choices and aspirations.



A middle-aged man with dark hair, glasses, and a mustache is smiling broadly and giving a thumbs-up gesture. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt. The background is a solid light blue.

**Over Fifty? Here
Are Some Things
to Pay Attention To**



The age of fifty is a crucial stage in life. It is a complex phase in which youth begins to fade and the signs of ageing start to appear. During this period, various natural changes take place in the body. These include a reduction in muscle mass, a slowing of metabolism and the emergence of lifestyle-related diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

Therefore, this is an age at which we need to pay greater attention to our health. Let us look at some of the things people in this age group should be mindful of.

Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can often develop without any obvious symptoms. However, when it remains uncontrolled over a long period, it can affect organs such as the heart, kidneys and

brain. Therefore, have your blood pressure checked regularly.

Cholesterol and Blood Sugar

After the age of fifty, given the risk of cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes, tests such as a lipid profile and blood glucose or HbA1c tests should be considered. The frequency of these tests may vary depending on family history, obesity and other risk factors.

Heart Health

Do not ignore symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, unusual fatigue or dizziness. In particular, if you experience sudden, severe chest pain, difficulty breathing or cold sweats, seek emergency medical attention.

Prostate Health

Enlargement of the prostate is common as men grow older. If you notice changes such as difficulty urinating, a

weak urine stream or the need to urinate frequently, seek medical attention promptly.

Bowel Health and Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer screening becomes increasingly relevant around the age of fifty and beyond. Screening is recommended from the age of forty-five for adults at average risk. Symptoms such as blood in the stool and unexplained weight loss should be taken seriously.

Muscles and Bones

Muscle mass may decrease with age. Engage in regular exercise every week, including strength training. Make sure your diet provides adequate protein, calcium and vitamin D.

Waist Size and Body Weight

Excess fat around the abdomen can increase the risk of diabetes, heart disease and other health problems. Therefore do not focus on body weight alone. Pay attention to your waist circumference, eating habits and level of physical activity.

Smoking and Excessive Alcohol Consumption

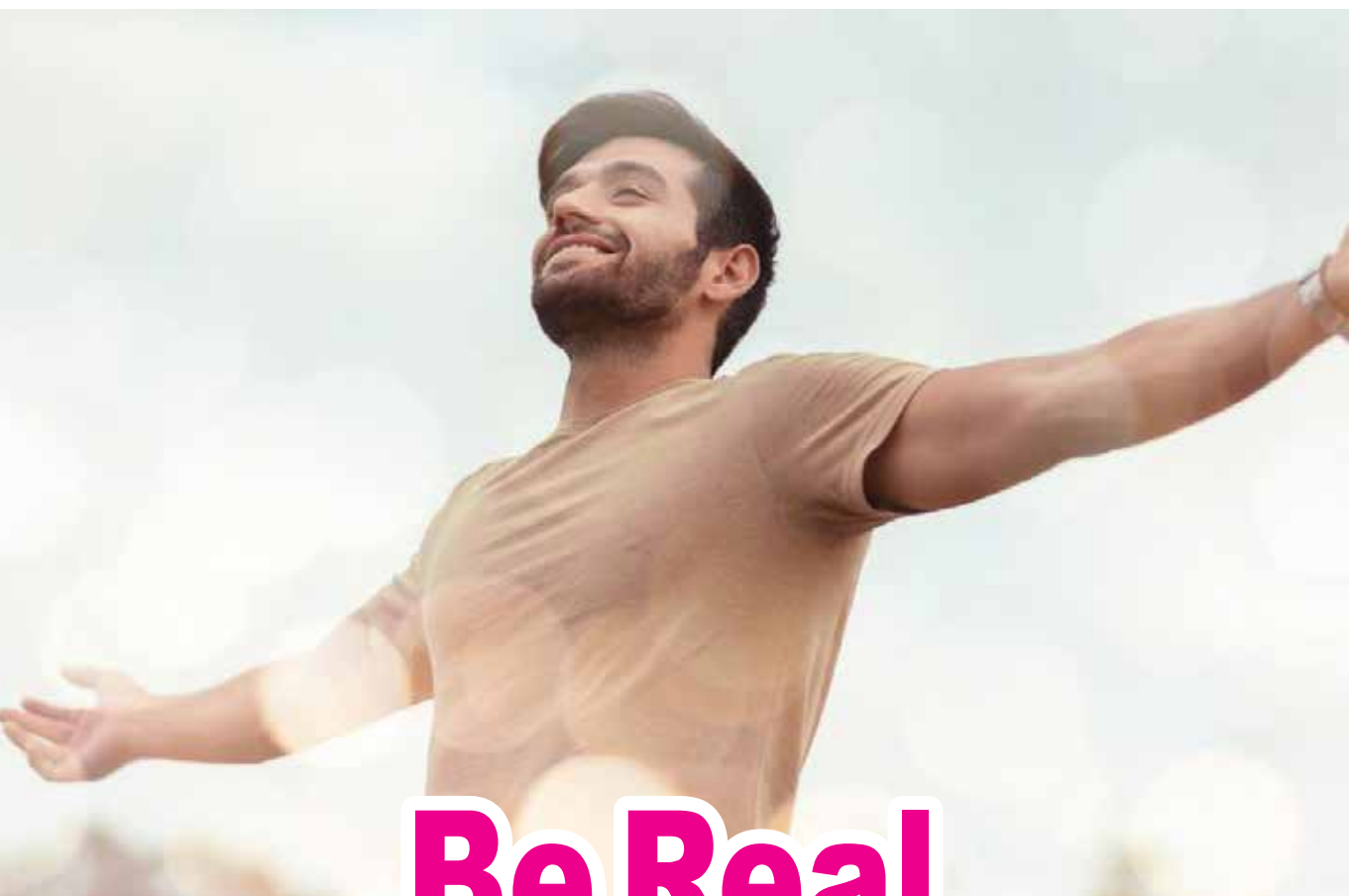
Smoking and alcohol consumption are harmful to everyone, regardless of age. The risks become greater after the age of fifty. Therefore, give up smoking and alcohol as you enter this stage of life.

Sleep and Mental Health

Adequate sleep is essential for both physical and mental well-being. Persistent lack of sleep, excessive stress, depression and social isolation are also issues that require attention. The age of fifty is not the final stage of good health; rather, it is the time to lay the foundation for good health over the next thirty years. Walk every day, exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables, avoid smoking, maintain a healthy body weight and undergo the necessary health check-ups. These small habits can bring about significant changes.

(Acknowledgement: Information sourced from the Internet)





Be Real

Imagination is a good thing. We have all kinds of imaginings about many things. However, imagination that is not grounded in reality can be dangerous.

We are now living in a world where people pursue fantasies and unreality, making a sense of reality seem irrelevant. This is none other than the world of artificial intelligence (AI).

Today, almost every human form seems to have an AI-generated counterpart. Many of the faces we encounter on social media are AI-generated. These images challenge our perception

of real life, making us wonder whether they are human beings at all. Moreover, as someone once observed, reel life has now become more important than real life. Reel lives are gaining the upper hand, overshadowing real life.

As technological growth and scientific advancement reach astonishing heights, we need to reflect deeply on whether human beings are losing their individuality. We should also wonder whether life is losing its authentic human touch. It is only when we recognize that reels and AI do not constitute real life that we become capable of loving

life and human beings, despite all their shortcomings, imperfections and harsh realities.

Look at AI-generated images. They display such remarkable physical perfection and beauty that they can amaze anyone. But we can never make these virtual beings our own. We can never share our sorrows with them or develop

genuine friendships with them. They create a world devoid of reality. Step out of such an imaginary world and establish yourself firmly in the real one. What matters is not the reel, but the real.

Reality may not always be as attractive, but it has our individuality and our identity. Therefore, be happy to be real. Be proud of being real.



A Few Restrictions for a Good Kitchen

A good kitchen does not mean a luxurious kitchen or one where expensive foods are prepared.



Do not misunderstand the title. This is not about a new kitchen in a house worth crores of rupees, or about a kitchen designed in some fashionable new style. Rather, it is about a kitchen that can improve our lives and health by following certain essential practices that every kitchen should observe.

A kitchen is the focal point of a home. When the kitchen is well managed, the family thrives and so do its members.

What should we do to achieve this? Let us look at a few ways to create an environment that promotes health, happiness and peace throughout the family. Even small changes in the kitchen can bring about significant improvements in family life.

Control Sugar

Sugar is one of the most heavily consumed ingredients in some kitchens. I have seen family heads buying sugar for their households in quantities of several kilograms. There are also homemakers who add generous amounts of sweetness, almost as though pouring honey, to tea, coffee and practically everything that requires a sweetener.

I have even seen sugar left undissolved at the bottom of cups after people have finished drinking tea or coffee in certain homes.

It is essential to control excessive sugar consumption. We take in considerable amounts of sugar every day through tea, coffee, sweets and packaged foods. We do not need to add extra sugar on top of all this.

Whenever we crave something sweet, choosing fruit is a good habit. Fruits provide not only natural sugars but also fibre and vitamins. Many people recommend honey and jaggery as alternatives to sugar. However, these too should be consumed only in moderation.

Control Oil Consumption

Using more oil in the name of choosing a healthy oil is not beneficial to our health. The type of oil we use is important, but so is the quantity.

Limit the amount of oil used in cooking. Instead of deep-frying food, try other methods such as boiling, steaming and grilling.



Control Snacks

In many households, having snacks with the four o'clock tea is almost compulsory. However, these snacks, too, need to be kept under control.

Packaged foods such as chips, biscuits and instant noodles often contain high amounts of salt, sugar and fat. Therefore, whether you are having your evening tea or feeling hungry at some other time, choose nuts, fruit or boiled chickpeas instead of biscuits and chips. Just remember to watch the portion size, as nuts can be high in calories.

Control Salt

Many households have the habit of adding extra salt to make food tastier. Instead, enhance flavour by using spices and herbs such as pepper, ginger, garlic, turmeric, cumin, coriander and curry

leaves. Be mindful of the salt content in packaged sauces, pickles and instant foods as well.

Limit White Rice and Maida

Include whole grains such as brown rice, oats, whole wheat and millets in your diet instead of relying heavily on highly refined grains. These foods contain more fibre, which also helps with digestion.

A healthier kitchen leads to a healthier home, better relationships and consequently, better health.

A good kitchen does not mean a luxurious kitchen or one where expensive foods are prepared. Rather, it is a kitchen that gives priority to the health of family members by reducing harmful ingredients and increasing beneficial ones.

Is yours a healthy kitchen?



Is Life a Library Book?

“I am an open book. I have no secrets.”

Some people make statements like this. But our life is not a book placed on the shelves of a library for everyone to read. Rather, it is a treasured book kept in a private collection, made available for reading only to a select few.

There is no need to reveal so much about our personal lives and privacy or to disclose every secret concerning our lives. The reason we cannot share

everything with everyone is that not everyone is the same to us, nor is everyone dear to us.

Life has its own privacy and mystery. These are what determine its beauty. When we lay our lives open before others, we lose that very beauty. Moreover, doing so may invite various kinds of problems into our lives.

Some people believe that the truly smart way to live is to safeguard one's privacy, live without attracting too



much attention and refrain from discussing one's personal life with others.

Similarly, have you not heard some people say, "I have a lot of friends"? Having too many friends can itself become a problem. After all, when we have so many people around us, how can we choose just one person with whom we can share everything?

We cannot trust everyone with our personal matters. However, when we keep our circle of close friends small, the

intimacy, affection and trust between hearts are likely to be much deeper.

We have absolutely no obligation to explain our personal lives to others.

If you share very little of your private life with others, then that is all they will be able to access of your life.

Let your life be such that others look upon it from the outside with wonder and admiration. Let it be a precious book in a private collection, available for reading only to a select few.





Do You Like Me... Do You Like Me?

Is someone secretly in love with you without your knowledge? Here are a few simple ways to recognize the signs of affection.

Rajeev was a new employee who had recently joined an office. He was handsome and physically well-built. Amal soon became friends with him. One

day, Amal said something to Rajeev.

“I think someone likes you.”

“Who?” Rajeev asked, looking perplexed.

“Look over there,” Amal said, cleverly pointing towards Neha.

When Rajeev turned to look, he saw Neha gazing at him. The moment she re-



alized that he had noticed her looking at him, she quickly turned her eyes away. This left Rajeev thoroughly confused.

Many people may have experienced similar situations in their lives. Is there any way to find out whether someone secretly loves or likes us without our knowing it?

- They look at you more often than they look at others. Their eyes repeatedly seek you out.
- They try to spend time with you. Even when there is no particular reason, they find opportunities to

talk to you or sit near you.

- They remember even the little things about you. They pay attention to and remember small details you have mentioned before, including your likes and dislikes.
- Their body language changes noticeably. For example, when talking to you, they turn their body towards you, move closer to you or maintain eye contact.
- They attach special importance to your reactions. They show greater interest in what you think, what you like and what you dislike.
- They try to make you happy. Through small gestures such as joking, offering help or giving compliments, they try to attract your attention.
- They may appear more shy or nervous than usual when talking to you. They might stumble over their words or find it difficult to express themselves.
- They try to deepen the relationship. They show an interest in learning about personal aspects of your life, such as your dreams, family and interests.

It is important to pay attention to subtle physical movements and signals. Often, these are cues that other people may not readily notice. How we interpret these signals is equally important.

Some people have an exceptional ability to understand communication styles and show deep empathy. Their natural tendency to listen attentively and with genuine interest may make others feel special. What appears to be genuine affection, however, may simply be their unconditional and considerate way of treating everyone. If you mistake

the way someone treats everybody equally for a special affection reserved only for you, you may end up disappointed.

Moreover, if someone likes you, they may not always behave with confidence. They may become nervous when talking to you and try to keep their feelings under control. Some people may not be skilled at expressing their emotions, while others may be held back by the fear of rejection.

Therefore, do not conclude that someone likes you based on a single action. You need to analyze the circumstances and consider who else is involved in the situation.

When interpreting signals conveyed through body language, intuition is also important. We all have certain intuitive feelings at times. We may think,

“Perhaps this is love,” or “Perhaps it is just my imagination.” To some extent, relying on such intuition may help us avoid jumping to incorrect conclusions.

Rather than judging a situation in isolation, pay attention to each signal individually. People may be attracted to one another through subtle gestures or distinctive personal qualities. However, the presence of love cannot be established on the basis of a single action alone.

Remember: Just because you notice one or two of the signs mentioned above, you cannot be certain that someone is romantically interested in you or feels a strong attraction towards you. Consistent behavior over time and clear communication are essential to understanding whether someone has genuine interest and affection for you.



Is Afternoon Drowsiness a Regular Occurrence?

Some people feel the need to lie down and sleep immediately after lunch. However, not everyone has the convenience or circumstances to do so. Even those who cannot lie down may find themselves feeling sleepy soon after a meal. Have you ever noticed office workers and teachers nodding off in this way? Why do we feel sleepy immediately after lunch?

Feeling sleepy after lunch is a common experience. Afternoon drowsiness can occur for several reasons. Some of the main causes are listed below.

- The body's natural rhythm: Between approximately 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., the body's level of alertness naturally

declines. Even after a good night's sleep, we may experience a slight dip in energy during this period.

- Eating too much: Large meals require the digestive system to work harder. In particular, eating large quantities of carbohydrate-rich foods such as rice, biriyani and parotta may make us feel more tired after a meal.
- Fluctuations in blood sugar: Sweets, sugary drinks, white rice and foods made with refined flour can cause blood glucose levels to rise rapidly and then fall. This may lead to sluggishness and drowsiness in some people.



- Lack of sleep the previous night: Sometimes, the real reason for feeling sleepy in the afternoon is not lunch itself, but insufficient sleep the night before.
- An unbalanced meal: If we eat too much rice while consuming too few vegetables, pulses and protein-rich foods, we may experience a significant change in our energy levels after eating.
- Reduce your intake of refined carbohydrates, sugary drinks and desserts.
- Walk for 10-15 minutes after eating.
- Drink enough water throughout the day.
- Go to bed at a regular time each night and get seven to nine hours of sleep.

Feeling slightly sleepy after a meal is normal. However, if you experience severe drowsiness every day, excessive fatigue even when you have not eaten, loud snoring or interruptions in breathing during sleep, excessive thirst, frequent urination or dizziness, it is essential to consult a doctor.

What Can We Do to Reduce Afternoon Drowsiness?

- Avoid eating excessively large lunches.
- Include more vegetables and protein in your lunch.



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