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EMBRACING CHANGE: FROM UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION

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ABSTRACT

It will not be an exaggeration to mention that twenty first century netizens are overloaded by 'information pollution' and not information explosion. We live in a 'Vuca' world, characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Our world is witnessing tremendous change in communication patterns, with expanding social spheres, openness in communication, and professionals working in multicultural environments. To create and nurture successful professionals, the acquisition, cultivation and fine tuning of soft skills are highly essential in today's corporate world. Soft skills are in fact a compendium of several components like attitude, abilities, habits and practices that are combined adeptly to maximize one's work effectiveness. They are about integrating the right proportion of these components into formidable skills and eventually transforming those skills into competencies. The paper attempts to provide a basic understanding of the soft skill called personal accountability and how the mastery of this skill ensures success in one's professional life.

Key terms: netizens, information pollution, volatility, ambiguity, compendium, adeptly, competencies, personal accountability.

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood...
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference."
Robert Frost's "The Road not Taken"

Robert Frost is one of the major American poets of the twentieth century. "The Road not Taken" is one of the oft-quoted and famed poems inked by the American poet, Robert Frost. The poem is all about making choices in one's life. It requires a great deal of precision to materialize it. Frost uses the road as a metaphor for the journey of life. The road here could mean the career or occupation or any choice every man has to accept in his life. There are several occasions in our life when choices are not clear and

times when we regret having chosen one particular "road." The speaker of the poem comes to a fork in a path in the woods. He is unsure which way to go. After much mental debate, he reaches a point of definitive conclusion. He decides to travel through the road that was "less travelled by." He took the road which was not much used by people and that has made all the difference in his life. This power of decisiveness in him, he claims, is accountable for the corresponding, related changes in life. The important decision that he had taken at the beginning changed the course of his life. The speaker announces to the world, "Hello, I am accountable."

Personal accountability, a soft skill, is about being an enabler of things and having the will to do anything in your power. It is about how deeply you

are committed to your job. It is about being thoroughly knowledgeable in all aspects of your domain. It is about how much you love your job and enjoy doing it. It is about accepting your roles and responsibilities at work, without making any excuses. It is about looking inwards for directions, rather than waiting for superior's instructions on everything. It is about completing a job perfectly, without any loose ends.

Personal accountability is an exciting potential that makes one a self-starter and a clean finisher of things in one's area of expertise. Taking initiative at work, pushing for a solution and achieving complete closure is the essence of personal accountability. In today's fast paced environment, it is not unusual for employees to have to think on their feet and take some decisions on their own, instead of waiting to receive specific and detailed instructions on everything. In this swim or sink environment, an obvious ingredient to success is the ability to take ownership and be accountable to the tasks assigned to you. How success actually happens is a question to be addressed as there is direct correlation between personal accountability and success.

Personal accountability and success are personal in the sense that both are products of the choice of an individual. We live in times when breathtaking technological changes; dramatic business paradigm shifts are occurring all around us. If you are out of touch with things for a week, you begin to feel like several steps behind. In this super-charged climate, only the fittest survive. If you are not constantly aware of the changing environment around you and not able to adapt and change as necessary, you will find yourself slowly dropping out of the race. Our world is witnessing a major change in communication patterns. It is crucial that the so called 'workforce' remains world class through re-training and continuous improvement, to remain competent, competitive and successful. An ability to communicate effectively in English without a heavy accent is still considered a measure of your smartness. A good command of English is an added advantage if you want to thrive in today's globalized business world.

Keeping all of the above in mind, here are some simple pointers on how to improve your proficiency in English. Nothing improves English like reading. Make it a habit to read magazines, newspapers and internet blogs. Watching TV shows, movies etc., help in building your accent and pronunciation. Listening and talking to other people, especially at work, is a nice way to improve your English. Getting an English language coach who can tutor you on your areas of handicaps in English and attending toastmasters meetings improve communication and leadership skills. Interaction with the native speakers of UK and USA is also another effectual measure to get better with English. Charles Darwin has rightly remarked, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." It's high time to recharge ourselves from the point of understanding to the stage of action. Let's get started. So start today!

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