

ENERGIZE the Self: Self-Leadership

Imagine you are twenty-four years old. It is the 1980s and you have just been offered a promotion to a highly visible job in a prestigious international bank headquartered in New York. The new job entails the opportunity to travel the world in first class, and to work closely with a very influential senior person who could help boost your career in the years to come. You enjoy both the prestige and the substance of your current job at the bank, but this new opportunity offers you a chance to succeed in ways you never thought possible. Imagine also that you grew up in a middle-class family with humble means, and that you still have student loans to repay. Now think about what you would do if, even as you are considering this new job, someone suggests you instead quit working at the bank to work as an ambassador of African women at the African Development Bank, focusing on women's development?

Even if you had dreams of making a difference and helping the underprivileged, conventional wisdom would suggest focusing on building a successful career first, then using your wealth and your power to make a difference later. However, if you were Jacqueline

Novogratz, founder and CEO of the Acumen Fund, you would go to Africa instead.

When Jacqueline was just six, she dreamed about changing the world. When she told Sister Theophane, her teacher at the Catholic school she attended, that she wanted to become a nun, she learned a lesson that she never forgot. “Regardless of what you become,” said Sister Theophane, “always remember, to whom much is given, much is expected. God gave you many gifts and it is important that you use them for others as best you can.” From then on, Jacqueline continued to clarify her thinking and ask herself what she wanted out of life. When she reached the point where she had to decide between Africa and Chase Manhattan Bank, her choice was clear. By this time, she was beginning to acquire greater clarity about the two most important foundations of personal leadership—her purpose and her values. This clarity gave her the energy needed to embark upon an unexpected course, and to stay the course despite the difficulties involved. The more I read about Jacqueline, the more impressed I became with her as a leader. I wanted to know where she finds her energy, how she manages to stay the course despite everything that comes her way, and how she motivates the people who work at Acumen. So I arranged to meet with her for a long interview.

From the moment I started talking with Jacqueline, I could feel her energy. I started by asking her to define her purpose, and her face immediately lit up with excitement. Her enthusiasm for her work was so strong that I could not help but feel energized myself. I had to hold back my urge to tell her how impressed I was with her vision and her work, and how much I wanted to help. “The metapurpose,” she said, “is to create a world in which everyone, including the poorest of people, have access to affordable, quality goods and services so they can make their own choices. I have a deep, deep belief that dignity comes from choice, and the vision is a world where people have the ability to make their own choices. We are trying to achieve this vision through Acumen, which combines small amounts of philanthropic capital with large doses of business acumen and innovation to build enterprises

that serve vast numbers of the poor—providing them critical goods and services like health care, water, housing, and energy, at affordable prices. So while Acumen is the tactical vehicle to achieve the purpose, the actual purpose is much more spiritual.”

Today, Acumen invests philanthropic capital in social enterprises around the world, mostly in the form of loans or equity, to help build organizations that can sustain themselves financially over the long term while providing solutions to the problems of extreme poverty. Based on the belief that pure charitable aid misses the mark and often creates corruption, Acumen operates in the space between pure charity and pure commerce. Using the rigor and expertise of for-profit businesses, Acumen invests in and helps social enterprises become successful and self-sufficient. By lending money instead of granting it, and by providing other support in terms of business planning, hiring, and marketing, Acumen builds metrics for success into the plan, and holds entrepreneurs accountable for delivering results. From its humble beginnings in 2001 with seed capital from the Rockefeller Foundation, Cisco Systems Foundation, and three individual philanthropists, Acumen has grown into a \$50 million fund financing and guiding social enterprises in the United States, United Kingdom, Tanzania, Kenya, Pakistan, India, and East Africa. Jacqueline built Acumen brick by brick through years of unwavering resolve and hard work. I asked her how she found the energy to stay the course despite all the obstacles and dangers she faced along the way, and she said, “Among other things, it was by constantly reminding myself about what I am on this earth to do.”

I wanted to know how Jacqueline conceptualized and ultimately settled on her purpose. It became clear as she narrated some early experiences. When Jacqueline started her career at Chase Manhattan Bank, she attended the bank’s rigorous credit training program. Soon after the program, she joined a group of sixty young bankers in a department called Credit Audit, and traveled the world to examine the quality of the bank’s loans, especially in troubled economies. It was during these travels (to Latin America and elsewhere) that she

first experienced the coexistence of extreme poverty and vast wealth, and began to feel a strong desire to make a difference. Wherever she looked, the gap between the rich and the poor was stunning, and she began to think about ways in which the poor could also have opportunities to succeed. She started at the obvious place, her own bank, and asked her boss about investing at least some capital in lending to the poor. Predictably, that conversation went nowhere. Her boss argued that the high transaction costs of small loans and lack of collateral among the poor made such a business unfeasible. In addition, the poor were entrapped by a “culture of poverty” and that meant that no one would repay the loans. The conversation only increased Jacqueline’s resolve. As I have said before, the difference between leaders and bosses is that while leaders are deeply moved by the inadequacies of current reality and decide to do something about them against all odds, bosses (or nonleaders) learn to cope with the present and don’t do anything about it. Clearly, Jacqueline was a leader in the making and wasn’t going to stop at one rejection. Soon after this meeting with her boss, she resigned from her job and decided to join the African Development Bank and head out to Africa. She had all kinds of doubts about giving up a lucrative career, and about losing the prestige of being an international banker, but the dream of making a real difference trumped those fears. During her two years in Africa, she faced no shortage of challenges, including a bout of malaria, threats to her safety, language barriers, and the lack of connectivity to the outside world in those pre-Internet days. Yet, by the time she boarded the plane back home, she had started the first bank for the poor in Rwanda, quadrupled the daily income of a group of women running a small bakery business, and learned a great deal. Her experiences in Africa further strengthened her resolve to combine business and charity as a more powerful way to address the problems of poverty.

To prepare herself for the next phase of life, she joined the Stanford MBA program. After finishing business school, she joined the Rockefeller Foundation, where she stayed for nine years before starting Acumen. When she discussed with Sir Gordon Conway, then president

of the Rockefeller Foundation, her idea of creating a different kind of institution, one that straddled the best lessons of philanthropy and proven business approaches, she received a very different response from that given by her boss at Chase Manhattan years earlier. She explains the meeting as follows in her book, *The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap Between the Rich and the Poor in an Interconnected World*:

“How different is it from the work of foundations today?” he asked.

The biggest difference, I said, is that we wouldn’t simply make grants, but we would invest in entrepreneurs who have vision and ability to solve local problems with market-driven ideas and approaches. We would hire creative people with the ability to read financial statements and balance sheets, not just budgets. We wouldn’t focus on specific projects, but instead direct our efforts toward building strong organizations that we would gradually help bring to financial sustainability.

To her surprise, Gordon asked her to take a few months to explore the idea while still working at the foundation. At the same time, another alternative arose. A major financial institution approached Jacqueline to build a \$100 million-plus philanthropic program for its clients. Again she was faced with a difficult choice. The philanthropic program offered her access to people of power, plentiful financial resources, and seven times her salary at the Rockefeller Foundation. On the other hand, there was the freedom of building the Acumen Fund—exactly what she wanted to do, although it involved a lot of uncertainty and risk. Needless to say, she chose the latter, and began raising money to start Acumen. Despite the abundance of naysayers, by early 2001, Jacqueline and her founding team had created a business plan and had raised \$8 million in philanthropic capital. Soon they began investing in the ideas of social entrepreneurs in India, Pakistan, and Africa. Today, the fund manages over \$50 million in capital, and is making a serious difference in the lives of the people in communities where they invest. To fully understand the work and the impact of Acumen, consider just two examples.

India's 650,000 rural villages house approximately 71 percent of the country's 1.1 billion people. Most of them live without easy access to trade, government, business, and health services. To access information available at the fingertips of the urban population, villagers need to travel long distances, often forgoing daily wages in the bargain. There are no telephones or computer and Internet services available in most villages. This makes it easy for intermediaries to demand hefty cuts and high fees to enable villagers to participate in the country's economy.

The increased availability of information and communication technologies can significantly help rural populations to participate more actively in the economy, and to receive fairer remuneration for their goods and services without having to go through corrupt intermediaries who extort from them. Drishtee.com, a social enterprise dedicated to helping the rural poor, is in the process of establishing a network of tele-kiosks, one in each village, to alleviate this problem. A tele-kiosk is a small office operated by a local entrepreneur, and usually has a phone, a computer, and a camera. Villagers walk up to the kiosk to get a range of services like accessing information on current crop prices, receiving computer training classes, or making long-distance calls. The kiosk operator charges a small fee for the services, and shares a part of the profit with Drishtee. In return for connecting them to consumers, Drishtee also receives a commission from service providers like telecom operators and crop buyers. According to Satyan Mishra, CEO of Drishtee—which means “vision” in Hindi—every dollar spent on connecting the country's 300 million poorest citizens to the national economy yields twenty dollars of social benefit. With several thousand kiosks already established, Drishtee's vision is to provide kiosks for each one of India's 650,000 villages. Acumen has invested a total of \$1.6 million (\$1 million in the form of equity and \$600,000 as debt) in Drishtee to help facilitate the expansion of the tele-kiosks. In early 2008, Drishtee began expanding more quickly than Starbucks did in its early years, opening about four kiosks a day. By the fall of that year, the company was operating in more than four thousand villages, creating more than 5,300 jobs and serving 7.5 million people.

Another of Acumen's impressive contributions is preventing deaths caused by malaria. The disease kills anywhere from one to two million people each year, 90 percent of whom are in Africa. While there were many reasons for the spread of malaria in Africa, the nonavailability of affordable bed nets was certainly one of them. If insecticide-treated bed nets were more easily available to people, they would help keep malaria-carrying mosquitoes away and allow people to sleep more peacefully.

Sumitomo Chemical Company of Japan had already developed a method of impregnating a polyethylene-based netting material with organic insecticide and created a bed net that could last five years. The challenge was to find a manufacturer in Africa that could take this new technology and produce these bed nets locally. Acumen's team not only identified A to Z Textiles as the company to do this, but also provided a loan for the first bed-net weaving machines. With Acumen's initial help, Anuj Shah, CEO of A to Z, went on to ultimately employ more than seven thousand women to produce 16 million nets a year, saving thousands of lives.

These are just two of a host of examples of the positive changes that Jacqueline's Acumen Fund is helping create. Jacqueline is a perfect case in point of how once you are clear about your personal sources of energy, virtually no obstacle will be insurmountable. Very early on in her life, she began to ask herself what she really wanted to achieve and what principles would guide her pursuits. Once she attained clarity on those issues, there was no looking back. "I did not want to become old at 35, and knew instinctively that a combination of service and adventure could lead to a life of passion and constant renewal," she writes in *The Blue Sweater*.

The old saying is true: Lead yourself to lead others. One of the biggest reasons for the abundance of poor or mediocre leaders is that people accept leadership positions for the wrong reasons. They either do so for personal fame, fortune, or glory or are picked to fill positions of

leadership based on technical expertise alone. They fail to ask some critical questions about themselves. Gandhi chose the path of leadership not because he wanted personal fame or fortune, but because he believed in his purpose and wanted to harness the power of millions toward achieving it. He fully understood the dangers involved and knew he would create a lot of conflict by painting a picture of a better future. Yet he willingly created the conflict and had the courage to act according to his values in the face of grave danger.

Leadership is not about personal fame or fortune alone. There is nothing wrong with working for self-interest, most of us do, but leadership needs a purpose bigger than self-interest. Personal fame and fortune should be a by-product of leadership, not an end in itself. It is not a popularity sport. People who go into a leadership position without fully understanding this end up being dissatisfied with their lives, and make terrible bosses. I am not proposing selfless pursuit here. All I am suggesting is this: If personal gain is the primary goal, there are other avenues to achieve it—those that don't involve leading and managing others. Leadership and management often require putting self-interest on the back burner in order to achieve results for the greater good.

Unfortunately, the only way to advance your career in most companies is to take on more managerial/leadership responsibility. If you fail to ask yourself if leadership is for you, and if you fail to carefully consider what is involved in being a leader of others, it can easily become a very difficult experience for both you and your subordinates. Do you know of someone who became a parent by accident when they really did not want to be one? Can you imagine how miserable life can be for both the child and the parent in this case? There is no guaranteed reward (fame, fortune, or glory) at the end of the parenting journey. The reward is in the journey itself. Most people realize this and cherish every moment of their parenting journey—the good as well as the difficult. Leadership is like parenting. The reward needs to be in the journey. Accepting a leadership position without carefully considering what you really want for yourself and for the people around you is a very dangerous proposition.

PERSONAL ENERGY

So how does one energize oneself? The first step is to clearly identify one's personal sources of energy, and as I've said, the underlying sources for all of us are our purpose and values.

Gaining clarity about them isn't as simple as one might think; it calls for a very high level of self-awareness. Far too many people go through life without really knowing what they want out of it. They seem clueless about what is important to them, and end up living a very reactive existence. Have you ever worked for an unpredictable and volatile boss? Chances are you were working for someone who was very unaware of his or her own purpose and values. When you are unaware of your own larger purpose and values, every situation feels like a matter of life and death, and you have little control over your emotions—hence the volatile behavior. Laser-sharp clarity on purpose and values forms the basis of a high level of self-awareness, which, in turn, is the very foundation of leadership.

Having a purpose, and the values to guide you in pursuing it, is so important to true leadership because in its essence, leadership is about creating a future that is better than the present. Doing so first requires that you imagine that better future. Without clarity of personal purpose, it is virtually impossible to imagine a better future. Once a clear picture of the desired future takes shape in your mind, the next step is to determine the values that will guide you while pursuing it. Together, your purpose and values define your leadership identity, and give you the energy you need to stay the course. Just as an architect designs a building before actually building it, you need to proactively design your leadership identity.

Think for a moment about when you worked long and hard and achieved something exceptional in the end. It could be something work related like redesigning a whole process or function, a community project, or even a recreational project like climbing a mountain or

giving a performance of some sort. Chances are you had a clear picture in your mind about the future you were trying to create. Chances are you were also clear about the values and principles you would use to resolve difficult dilemmas. Surely, you must have faced a lot of resistance and difficulty while pursuing your goal. Did you feel tired at times? Did you feel like giving up at times? At such times through the journey, how did you reenergize yourself? My guess is, each time you felt overwhelmed by the difficulties involved, you reminded yourself of the future you were trying to create and visualized the end result. It was the visualization of anticipated success that kept you going. If you had to make a difficult decision, you probably dug into your values for guidance. This is how clarity of purpose and values gives you energy. Purpose and values are lasting, almost limitless sources of energy. For sure, the lure of huge monetary rewards or the need to secure yourself against a threat of some kind will energize you to act, but such sources are finite and temporary. Leadership is about the long haul, and you need lasting sources of energy.

Unfortunately, no one can teach you your purpose and values. The reason why the multibillions spent each year on leadership development and training are a complete waste is that most leadership programs look at personality and character traits of great leaders from the past and try to get participants to emulate them. They often create simplistic models of behavior and have participants engage in role-play-based practice sessions. But as I've said, copying someone else's behavior or personality is not leadership. There is no shortcut formula to becoming a better leader.

The only way to define your purpose and values is to ask yourself some tough questions and answer them honestly. Answers may not come to you right away, so you have to keep asking the questions until you find the answers that are right for you. I wish I had a simple formula which would help you do this quickly, but I don't. It will take you a considerable amount of time to get clear on these questions, but I can guarantee that this will be the best investment of time you will ever make. Among other things, it will bring you inner peace because

it will help you put things in perspective. People who don't have such clarity are rarely peaceful, and if you are not at peace, you cannot be an effective leader.

Here are the questions that I've found are most effective in gaining clarity. The first three questions will help to define your purpose, and the last three help to define values. I'll list them all first and then go into more detail about each.

1. What few things are most important to me?
2. Do I want to:
 - a. lead a simple life rich with everyday small pleasures
 - b. achieve great success in an individual endeavor, *or*
 - c. lead others toward a better future, *or*
 - d. do something entirely different with my life?
3. What results do I want to bring about?
4. How do I want people to experience me?
5. What values will guide my behavior?
6. What situations cause me to feel strong emotions?

PURPOSE

1. What few things are most important to me?

Here, we need to make a brutally honest assessment of what it is we really want. Is it money, hard work, leisure, fun, learning, being liked, being a good spouse or parent, being a good manager, making a difference to others, service, integrity, or something else? Having clarity

on the three to five most important things greatly helps in putting your finger on your life purpose.

Clarity on what is important to you has a direct bearing on one of the most common challenges of living the corporate existence—work–life balance—something a lot of executives complain about these days. I find the debate about work versus life very interesting. It is almost as if work is not life, and that you can only have one of the two, or more of one at the expense of the other. The only way to achieve balance is to be clear on what is important to you. People who don't have this clarity can never achieve work–life balance, even if they work in a company with flexible work arrangements. The very term “work–life balance” seems to suggest that when one is working, one is not living. This is indeed a very unhappy situation, but contrary to conventional wisdom, it has nothing to do with the number of work hours in a day or with working conditions. I have known many people who worked extremely long hours, yet had very meaningful personal lives. I also know many others who spent far fewer hours “working,” yet lived very satisfying professional lives. The trick in either case is to know what you really want.

I once coached someone who was on the cusp of a major promotion at an investment banking firm. All that seemed to matter to him was making it to managing director—that coveted title on Wall Street telling people you've arrived. I began by asking him to describe the work he liked most and the work he liked least in his job. Each time he told me of the times he had been on television to share his views on markets, his eyes would light up. Each time he would talk about working with anything that involved communication or public affairs, I noticed a passion in his voice. But when he talked about what he did for most of his day, he came across flat at best. Something told me he wasn't clear about his overall purpose and/or values—what he really wanted to do with his life—or at least that he had not thought about them proactively. While he seemed fixated on his possible promotion to MD, it didn't seem as though he had considered what he really wanted to do with his career or personal life. In the absence of clarity on what

he really wanted out of life, the short-term goal of making MD had become a be-all-end-all situation for him. It worried me that should he not make it for some reason, he would be totally devastated without realizing that there were probably better opportunities for him doing something else.

I gave him the six questions and asked that he set up our next meeting after he had reflected upon them. He took one quick look at the questions and said, "I don't want to think about these questions." Surprised, I asked him why, to which he responded, "I am scared. I have worked at this firm for twelve years; this is the only place I've worked since college. I don't know the outside world. What will I do if these questions point me toward something outside this firm and this industry? I will not know what to do. I am scared." I empathized with him, told him I understood his concern, and asked, "What if it were true—that your real passion and purpose is somewhere other than your current world—would you rather find out now or after another five years?" I left it to him to decide if he wanted to answer my six questions or not, and told him to call me either way in a couple of weeks.

He called me two weeks later and set up a meeting. When we met, he said he had thought long and hard, and concluded that he did not enjoy his work and wanted to move full-time into financial journalism. He began to thank me for helping him realize his true passion and told me that the next promotion to MD was not that important to him anymore. I was happy for him that he was beginning to define his purpose, but also wanted to make sure that his new purpose was what he really wanted. I advised him not to abandon his quest for MD, to continue to work hard toward it, and keep thinking about his new passion. I said, "If after making MD in six months, you still feel passionate about changing careers to financial journalism, you should definitely do so." I wanted to make sure he got the coveted award under his belt so that he did not have regrets. He did exactly as advised, made MD in six months, and left his firm a few months later. He now works in the financial media industry and often tells me how much "richer" he is even though he makes less money than before.

Had he not asked himself the questions, I am not sure he would have made the change.

Once you've identified the most important things in your life, the next step is to take a very serious look at how being a leader will either allow you to focus on those important things or perhaps pull you away from them. Deliberating over the second question will help toward this.

2. Do I want to:

- a. lead a simple life rich with everyday small pleasures
- b. achieve great success in an individual endeavor, *or*
- c. lead others toward a better future, *or*
- d. do something entirely different with my life?

The first thing to get clear on here is if you want to be a leader at all or not. There is nothing wrong with leading a simple life rich with everyday small pleasures. You need to be honest with yourself—something that sounds obvious, but very often people are not. My friend Johannes in Germany was very clear that he wanted neither to be a leader of others nor to achieve great heights of success at a solo endeavor. He loved nature, outdoor sports, and adventure travel. He knew right from a young age that he did not want an overly demanding career so that he could devote as much time to his hobbies as possible. I have known him for over twenty-five years, and he hasn't changed his habits one bit. He is an executive at an engineering firm and is very content with his job; in fact, he loves it because it gives him ample opportunity to devote free time to his passions. One of his favorite sports is scuba diving. Even after years of diving all over the world, his eyes light up and you can sense the joy in his voice as he describes his most recent dive. Each time I hear him talk about his travels or his sports, I cannot help feeling envious because he sounds so happy with his life. Judging by any yardstick, I think he has built a very successful life for himself.

He is the perfect example of someone who knows what he wants from life and enjoys the everyday small pleasures to the maximum. I have rarely met anyone as “rich” as he is.

But if you aren’t like Johannes and you are interested in leadership, you first need to choose between options B and C—self-leadership or leading others. As the term suggests, self-leadership is about driving yourself hard to produce results individually. Here, you dig deep into your own energy and persevere against all odds. Leading others (option C) is about channeling the energy of others and acting as a conductor. Similar to parents who toil for a lifetime to raise good children, sometimes leaders who drive results through others do not even get recognized for their hard work. But they are OK with this because they are ambitious less about themselves and more about collective results. The point is, one needs to be clear about what one prefers.

According to BodyBuildingUniverse.com, Arnold Schwarzenegger was once asked why he picked bodybuilding over any other sport. He said he preferred it over other sports because “I didn’t like the fact that I couldn’t be personally gratified.” He tried other endeavors: track and field, boxing, javelin throw, and weight lifting. But only when his coach suggested he try working with weights to strengthen his legs did Arnold find his true vocation. When he first walked into a gym he was literally awed. As he wrote in his book *Education of a Bodybuilder*, “I found myself in a gym, in awe of muscles I had never seen before and of which I didn’t even know the correct name. The bodybuilders were powerful, Herculean. Before my very eyes, my true future opened up: I had found the answer I had been looking for.” Thus began, when he was sixteen, the career of the greatest bodybuilder of all time, the man who would be crowned Mr. Olympia for a record seven times. There is no doubt in my mind that he was able to endure years of hard training and sacrifice because (first and foremost) he found total clarity about what he wanted. To him, it was all about achieving greatness in an individual endeavor.

You need to know very clearly what you want out of life. As stated earlier, leading others is neither easy nor glamorous. The key question

here is, in the interest of greater good, are you willing to put self-interest on the back burner and focus more on others' success? That is the true essence of leading others. Leading others is not better or worse than self-leadership, it is a preference and requires a different orientation—one that focuses more on others and less on the self. Do you want to be a soccer player or a singles tennis player?

If you indeed want to lead others, you must want to be a team player. Most companies try to teach the value of teamwork. Like leadership, teamwork cannot be taught. You either want to be a team player, which means sharing credit with others, or you don't. Neither is right or wrong, it's just a preference.

3. What results do I want to create?

Whether you choose self-leadership or leading others, here you visualize the future in terms of results you want to create. Visualizing a better future is the basic prerequisite of leadership. Leaders look at issues and opportunities today and visualize a future that addresses the issues or exploits the opportunities. According to Robert Quinn, author of *Deep Change*, you become a leader when you move from problem solving to purpose finding. Leaders take it upon themselves to create a better future, and motivate others to join them on the journey. Gandhi made freedom and equality his main purpose, and decided to galvanize millions of people toward the achievement of his purpose by making it a shared purpose. In business, it is easy to find many managers and bosses who are excellent problem solvers and great at follow-through. But few challenge the status quo and visualize a new and different future. Even fewer invite their teams to participate in brainstorming sessions about how to challenge conventional wisdom and create something different.

I learned the beauty and power of visualizing success early on in my career when I worked for a manager who would often get us all together and ask us to imagine that we were the best team in the world at our work. "What would it look like? What can we do that others are

not even thinking about?” he would ask. By making us visualize success, he would push us to come up with steps that would make it happen. “How should we execute? What will the major obstacles be?” He would keep pushing until we had not only a compelling vision but also an executable strategy. I remember feeling energized as a junior member of his team each time he involved us in such an exercise. I pushed myself hard to come up with new ideas to make the team more successful. That often meant I was given more work, but I willingly took on more. I found the energy within me to do more because the visualization of success was so stimulating. This is a simple insight, but surprisingly few leaders use it. I have used it repeatedly as a leader and it never fails me. It also takes a lot of the burden off my shoulders—now I don’t have to have all the answers as a leader. Involving my team in this manner is an all-out win-win.

Good leaders have a natural tendency to question the status quo. Kiran Bedi, whom we will meet in more detail in chapter 5, was the first woman to become an elite police officer in India, in the 1970s. Known for her integrity and courage, she made policing and prison reform her purpose. She was deeply moved by the inadequacies of India’s criminal justice system. According to her, the system focused exclusively on punishing criminals, making no effort to reform them. Furthermore, the system did not do enough to prevent crime in the first place—it was only reactive. She decided to use her time as an officer to change the system into one that gave criminals a chance to become responsible citizens once again.

In a male-dominated world where corruption was rampant and working conditions inhuman, it was hard, if not impossible, to achieve what she set out to do, but she never gave up. Each time she found herself in a difficult situation, she dug into her purpose and values and found remarkable energy to fight the fight. Legend has it that as she was leading a small police unit to control a large religious mob armed with swords, her outnumbered colleagues (all men) ran away, fearing for their lives. Alone, and armed only with a baton, she fought the mob single-handedly until more help arrived and the mob was finally con-

trolled. When asked on national television how she did it despite her petite size, she said she had the power of determination by her side. She knew it was the right thing to do, and she just did it.

As she continued to clean up corruption and stop much malpractice, she clearly began to upset certain government officials and ministers. As the officer in charge of traffic control in New Delhi, she even towed away then prime minister Indira Gandhi's car when it was parked in a no-parking zone. Many officials tried to "fix" her and demoralize her by transferring her to insignificant postings or by spreading untrue allegations about her, but she carried on despite the toughest of obstacles, eventually winning the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize—the Ramon Magsaysay Award—for her work in transforming the Tihar Jail in New Delhi from a violent dead end into a place where criminals made responsible new beginnings.

For a woman in India during those times to have achieved what she did under the circumstances is exceptional. She was able to do it first because she was very clear about her purpose, and second because she had the courage to act according to her values. Her fame and fortune were the by-products of her leadership, not the other way around. While there are many women in the Indian police force today, Kiran finally retired in 2008 as the highest-ranking female officer in history. Through her nonprofit work aimed at educating rural women and rehabilitating drug addicts and former criminals today, she continues to help those in need and inspire millions to step up to a cause without worrying about resources or power.

VALUES

Purpose defines what you want to create, and values define how you will create it. The next three questions will help you to define your core values. Knowing your values, and having conviction about them,