



# The Most Misunderstood - and Missing - Ingredient of Personal Development: Synthesis

To achieve empowerment and self-knowledge, every individual needs to go through a process to synthesise personal values, thoughts, capabilities, and knowledge - and coordinate any actions with a deliberate vision that can provide a life-long focus. This point is true not only for individuals, but also for families, communities, organisations, societies, and nations. But too many people neglect this process and fail to reach an optimum level of development that would allow them to get the most out of life while making a positive contribution.

## Wherein Lies the Problem?

Although many people I have met throughout my career often possess all the ingredients necessary to live a more fulfilling life or to be more successful in their efforts to achieve their desired goals, most of them do not take the time to synthesise all essential aspects. How can you get where you want to go, based on your personal mission (if you are even aware of what that is), without an inventory of the assets you have on hand in terms of knowledge and skills?

Perhaps the problem is that synthesising requires a more creative mind, a more open mind that allows one to explore endlessly - a somewhat difficult task for many people who may claim not to have the time or inclination to do so.

Of course, we all experience tribal (including family), cultural, societal, traditional, conventional, and religious influences on our lives and decisions - sometimes using such pressures as an excuse for failure rather than taking personal responsibility. However, this undeniable truth does not have to haunt us throughout our lifetime, especially as it is becoming more difficult to focus on what is important for ourselves due to all the distractions in our day-to-day living, be it technology, work, family, or world events. And those distractions too often prove to be overwhelming obstacles - or, for some people, yet another excuse to delay personal development.

Part of the difficulty - and maybe it is the worst problem - lies in the misguided advice we receive from seemingly successful people around us.



Such individuals promise that if you, for example:

By not demanding the analysis of cause and effect in our organisations, we are traveling on a road that leads to the end of common sense and optimal performance. Consider:

- "Just follow your passion, you can achieve whatever you wish in life," or
- "Just persist, do not give up, and keep trying (no matter how many times), because in the end you get what you want."

Conventional advice - "don't give up", or "you'll meet the right people at the right time who can open doors for you" or "you just need luck" - is not new. Nor is it all wrong.

### **Why Synthesis Is Critical**

So wherein lies the dilemma? The trouble with such traditional feel-good advice is that it is unwise and ineffective if absorbed alone; after all, success and empowerment do not happen in isolation.

- Synthesis - of one's values, thoughts, capabilities, and knowledge - is a necessary process, one way or another, which is why so many people unintentionally and innocently misguide others through simplistic and positive advice. As a result, this type of counsel can cause a significant delay in discovering one's capabilities or may actually block people from reaching their own truth.
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- What if, for example, a person was persistent and tried over and over again, hoping to achieve something, but picked the wrong means and tried endlessly? For example, many artistic individuals bemoan their lack of public success and accolades. While some may be satisfied and fulfilled by simply using their talents for personal enjoyment and satisfaction, happy to share their art with a limited audience, others may not know the best ways to achieve public notice. Consequently, they do not seek an appropriate agent, mentor, or school - none of which, by the way, can guarantee success.

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- This cyclical effort and trial and error is, essentially, the definition as being crazy: trying the same thing over and over and hoping that something different will happen one day. You can - and should - follow your passion and live a fulfilling life; but you cannot only follow your passion and expect to become successful. Every one of us needs to understand the difference between fulfilment and success, because the opposite is also true: You can become successful, financially and otherwise, but not live a fulfilling life.
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- **The Status Quo Is Not Set in Stone**
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- Many people suffer from this syndrome and live unhappy lives, not realising what fulfilment truly means to them. It is a burning issue today and liable to grow worse as distractions and stress intensify.

- If we can, one way or another, start helping such individuals to ease their pain and empower them to obtain a more compassionate perspective in life - instilling compassion for themselves and others - it can only serve to benefit them, as well as their families, communities, organisations, and nations. But to attain that perspective, synthesis is key.
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