

## Silence to Bliss, 29th Dec 2011 to 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2012 at Asia Plateau

The December Workshop of 2011 commenced with a two minute prayer and a formal introduction of all 25 selected participants coming from different parts of the country. The introduction highlighted the heterogeneous nature of the assembled group. There were people from Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Solapur, Baramati, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad, Sangli, Chennai, Indore, Rourkela, Pune, Delhi and Mumbai. Some were students at the threshold of their lives; some professionals while others from business back ground.



A light sharing of the past experiences set the tone of the workshop. Viral mentioned that this workshop was unique because it helped us to discover ourselves and see our true nature if followed with discipline and regular practice of quiet time and once in a while creating the atmosphere of long hours of silence. This workshop is all about silence and only looking at your own self.

Many years ago during the extended silent time he experienced extreme tranquility. This inspired him to initiate something on similar lines at Asia Plateau. Thus began the trend of the December Workshop.

His experiences were of the past workshop where people had made resolutions and shared their success stories in the May workshop. The time spent in long silence and pondering over the questions which are pertaining only to one self gives immense clarity and focus to look ahead and also one feels guided and strengthen from within that I can do it. This is the sole objective of the December workshop. For Sanjay, the workshop was a realization that the flaws are in you and not in others. He advised all to submit absolutely to the activities of the workshop. Dipti discovered an effective connection with her inner self. Two others had incorporated the disciplined way of life and had come with a hope of imbibing more such qualities within them.

We discussed about plans for upcoming Youth Conference. We had a broad layout and it was decided that people would come up with suggestions for good speakers, musicians, skits documentaries or presentations. "We want to work hard and get 400 participants for the YC 12" was clear objective of the team.

200 participants to come through the invites sent to different academic institution across the country and urging them to send two of their best students from their institution for YC 12. 100 will come the way they are coming every year, the regular route. 100 underprivileged students should be searched from all over the country for this we need to find donors and also try to raise money from corporate sectors and other respective contacts to fund these students.

We decided to print T-shirts with the LMAD logo and sweatshirts for the coordinators. Designers and garment manufacturers need to be approached. Cameras are been purchased from the fund raised by Dipti. She shared her story of how she told the sponsors of the objective of LMAD and about the achievements of certain individuals. She also added that a lot of follow up had to be done.

The objective of the workshop is to make every individual feel empowered from within, where one generates self confidence on its own and the belief within should be so strong and committed that all one can see is the goal and how to reach. We started our deliberation by asking do we feel low and depressed some time in our life, and how does one come out of this mental block which is been created by none other then our own self. If we keep on ruminating on the past mistakes and remember the dull moments of our life which takes us into the depressive mode which shows us no clarity but only darkness. Human foundation is built not on failures but remembering that failure is the first step towards success. Reading our achievements of life can actually bring a smile to our face and give us the courage to slide through a depressing moment. So there we were all happily writing our success stories. Each one was encouraged to remember the smallest to the biggest success of ones life and pen it down. The evening ended on a light and jovial tone with all the participants sharing their success stories, some funny while others very special.



### **29th December 2011**

This was a day for some serious Quiet time where the participants were asked to ponder upon two questions- Why have I come for this workshop? The participants poured out a variety of thoughts during the sharing time. Some had come here to begin the New Year on a positive note while others were here to absorb the entire positive ness this place had to offer. The second question, what am I searching for life? Was a very profound and deep question and could not be answered immediately. The search will continue and every few years the search will deepen and even if the search is over it may be a momentarily phenomena and again one will embark on a deeper search, till one will find the real pearl which one is looking for.



The world moves on time and we all are aware time and tide waits for nobody but still we take time for granted. Everyone realized that they wasted a staggering amount of time daily. They also discovered the time that they actually had and were not aware of. New personal schedules were sketched which accommodated activities which were earlier ignored because of the so called 'lack of time'. The session ended with everybody having made a firm resolve to make an optimum use of the day light time available to them. Later we had a discussion on Quiet Time where he mentioned that quiet time is not for planning the day. It is not something which comes from your mind; rather it is a voice which comes from deep within. It was to be practiced regularly with discipline and not only when we were confused or agitated.

### **30th December 2011**

This day marked the beginning of the journey the participants were about to take, deeper into their thoughts. We started the day with the question 'what Quiet Time meant to us?' as it was a thread which bound the LMAD family together. Viral shared that QT had helped him to evolve, move upward in life and not remain stagnant. It helped him discover that the thoughts he encountered during the QT were special and close to his heart. One of the participants discovered that her conscience had become her best friend in the process.

Later in the morning we were to answer the question, 'What am I?' all of us picked our spot in the campus with a mat and our diary and dived into the deep sea of thoughts. In the sharing that followed, everyone agreed that it was indeed difficult to answer this 3 word question. People came up with harsh realities about themselves and also some beautiful things. Now that all of us were clear about our true identities, we were to evaluate ourselves against the four absolute standards- Purity, Honesty, Unselfishness and Love.



Later in the evening we had lighter moments reminiscing over all the conferences of 2011. To be a coordinator, one had to subscribe to the values of 'coordinators way of life' given on the LMAD webpage. We also had to decide as to how to bring all the groups to the same page, since group discussions generally seem to distort the direction in which the conference was proceeding. However, we did not reach a concrete conclusion on the same.

It was wonderful to hear the great success of all the conferences this year and the major role played by Navendu. The Baramati team had displayed some excellent team spirit. In spite of some infrastructural hardships in Nagpur, it was an equally enjoyable conference. Viral mentioned that Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan of Lok Satta party which wants such conferences to be held for lakhs of students and farmers of Andhra Pradesh. All in all, these conferences also crated a bond between the coordinators, something which was evident only in the YC's of 90's and early 2000.

### **31 December 2011**

We started the day with our quiet time focusing on what we wanted to be. It was comparatively easier to answer this question as all of us had identified our flaws by now and was keen to correct them. Another venture into the serene campus and we came with our diaries filled with answers. All of us had set ourselves definite goals to achieve. Some wanted to improve as human beings, some wanted to be punctual, some wanted to become thin while others wanted to value their dear ones more. Most of the sharing was pertaining to oneself but life exists beyond me so it is important to think and widen our horizons beyond the narrow thought of 'I'. We are taking enough from our surrounding and thus also think about giving back. We should therefore widen our perspective and think about what we can do for our society, community and country at large.

In the evening we took a piece of paper and wrote down all the dull and depressing moments of our lives. We then trekked to the plateau off to a secluded cave to watch the last sunset of 2011. We all held our hands and prayed to the last sunset of the year, asked it to take away all the sad happenings of 2011 and rise the next day with a new hope. Symbolically, all the papers with the negative moments were burnt and forgotten, to start the New Year afresh.

Later that evening each one of us lit the Second lounge in Asia Plateau with candles and splurged in to a long prayer. We prayed at stretch during the transition from 2011 to 2012. The day was called of with New Year wishes on everybody's lips and smiles on their faces, but not before cup cakes celebrating Navendu's successful completion of his sabbatical term.



### **1 January 2012**

The first day of the New Year came with another difficult yet important question, "how am I going to achieve what I want to be?" Once again we set off on a journey to think deeply on where we are faltering and where we need to correct ourselves. Some heartfelt resolutions were shared and in order to abide by our plans for our achievements, the two most important aspects are needed within us to achieve and that is perseverance and overcoming laziness. He also pointed out that the real challenge begins ones we leave Asia Plateau. Therefore we have to constantly live with our conceived idea and keep it revolving around ourselves because if we could conceive an idea we could definitely achieve it.



Lunch was followed by a power nap to compensate on the previous night's lost sleep. After tea, the New Year's special cake was revealed, a dedication to Dipti for her hard work in raising the funds to purchase cameras. We all celebrated the new beginning with sky rocketing hopes of a better year ahead and a step towards our evolution.

The December-January workshop will be etched in our memories forever as we all had our own special moments to take away some cherish some personal, some inspiring and some amusing moments.