

# December Workshop

## Report 2019

Followed by Let's Make A Difference Gathering from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December 2019 in remembrance of its 25 years journey, the December Workshop was organized from 27<sup>th</sup> December 2019 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 as per LMAD tradition. The workshop witnessed diversity amongst participants in terms of the places they belonged to, age, profession and their experience in LMAD. There were 14 people including the course convener who took part in the workshop coming from Delhi, Pune, Thane, Nashik, Baramati, Chandrapur, Tibet, Gorakhpur, Yavatmal and Katni.

December workshop is a very powerful and intense process which allows a participant to introspect deeply. In this course one spends most of the time with herself/himself in absolute silence reflecting upon their life. This workshop is a beautiful collection of various aspects and pillars of life which are focused and discussed in detail in the sessions. Limited number of participants ensures that everybody shares, personal space is provided and circle of trust is maintained. It is a life transforming experience that leaves participants with ultimate exuberance, a strong connect with conscience, clarity, purpose, vision and solutions for their individual challenges that troubled them before the workshop. Detailed noting of every aspect of the workshop will be provided by and by in the report.



## Responsibility of the participants

The December Workshop commenced with a session that brought everyone on a common platform and gave them the clarity upon how the workshop will unfold. They were made aware about the schedule, dos and don'ts of the workshop and the conduct one has to embrace in the process to take away maximum. Self discipline and punctuality are integral part of the workshop. Every participant is expected to constantly add values within and around. They should inspire each other by setting an example of excellence. It was made very clear that no one should come here with any sort of personal agenda. It is the responsibility of every person to stop any act that goes against the values without caring about being in the good books of the person who's involved in the act. This clear message provided the foundation required for the character of a participant.

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## Quiet Time

Quiet Time is the root of the December workshop and every other LMAD program. The silence reduces the distance from our soul and gives us the clear picture about who we are. Many wonderful ideas, judicious decisions and Eureka moments come up in our Quiet Time. Hence the first session started with the question, “Do you miss Quiet Time?” Everyone witnessed the consensus for the answer and understood that Quiet Time has played a very important role in shaping their life. Some have mended their relations, some reached the zenith of career, some were able to emotionally express only because of Quiet Time. However unfortunately everyone accepted that they have either lost touch or have become irregular in following the Quiet Time. Participants shared that after going back from Asia Plateau, it had been difficult to give time to oneself while living a hectic and busy life. One participant shared that it is very painful to introspect upon the deep and dark scars on the soul and hence avoids doing Quiet Time whereas other participant shared that he went through major changes in his life and in the process lost the touch with Quiet Time. After listening to everybody course convener shed some light upon this topic.

It was commonly observed that nobody within the participants was regular and disciplined in doing Quiet Time. People go to the conscious only when there's a need or one suffers a problem. Quiet Time is not a medicine to be taken only when one falls sick, rather it is a vital need of ours similar to any other necessity. One is not expected to use Quiet Time to plan our day or make a 'to do list' but it is supposed to be a very deep process of self observation and listening to the inner voice. A very marginal difference between thinking and listening changes the depth and purpose of Quiet Time. Mind is supposed to be at absolute peace to rise above the chaos and to be able to seek the thought of conscience. A participant asked the difference between Quiet Time and meditation. The course convener explained that Quiet Time is a path to know and use conscience for wellbeing whereas meditation is the path to reach the God. The process of Quiet Time is an initial stage of meditation. The explanation on Quiet Time by course convener gave the clarity on doubts everyone had regarding the same. All were ready to enter into the deep personal zones through Quiet Time. The interactive session on Quiet Time concluded with 10 minutes of self observation. Participants closed their eyes and deeply observed their body and mind in silence. This process helped to calm the physical and mental activities. Course convener suggested doing this before quiet time for 5-10 minutes. It will help to quickly get into the zone of silence, depth and peace required for a productive Quiet Time.

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## **Purpose**

What is my why for attending this workshop? This question had phenomenal significance as every participant had a unique purpose behind attending the December Workshop. The question meant to give a vision and direction towards experiencing the change one was looking for. The table witnessed diversity in answers for the question. A participant wanted to build a strong character and career. Another had come to experience strong positive vibes, be more responsible towards oneself and family. Many wanted to introspect, inculcate self discipline, have clarity upon life and start with a new path. Few also mentioned about getting easily controlled by mind and being vulnerable.

After analyzing the responses everyone put across, the course convener made everyone realize that the vision of everybody was to be a better person than who they were; having a better career option, health, wealth, relations, habits etc. December workshop will equip to satisfy the 'I' factor but one must strive to complete our personal needs as quickly as possible and move towards 'We'. A genuine concern and honest efforts towards family, society, nation and humanity will make you rise above yourself. The ratio of what we have received and very little we have given back can never be calculated. Safety, food, education, facilities are few of the examples that we receive because someone else has been able to think beyond her/his 'I' to 'We'. It is our responsibility that we broaden our vision and work for a larger purpose. In this process we not only elevate ourselves but also take many like us on a higher level. After regular practice of Quiet Time one starts getting thoughts for other people in their Quiet Time which is an evolution for a soul. Things could be done at a very faster pace and ease with December Workshop learning.

## **Habits**

With passage of time we tend to inculcate some acts that give us pleasure/comfort. These acts might be good as well as bad for us. The feel good factor behind them slowly encourages us to repeat them again and again. The repetition becomes subconscious and we don't understand that it has become our lifestyle and in the end a part of us. These are nothing but habits. One has to be conscious while inculcating good habits and require perseverance and discipline to completely imbibe them into us. However bad habits seem good at first, are addictive in nature and have very deep roots. A habit once developed is very challenging to be replaced by another. A habit can be a way of behavior, vices, attitude or a routine. Extraordinary people breed good habits. Mostly we are not aware about our habits, succumb to bad ones and end up turning a mediocre. Many times in order to get involved in a particular group of people we tend to accept their bad habits. One must understand that friendship is a connection of heart. Following of other's habit does not bring you close to them. However it also implies that a person with bad habits need not be a bad person. There's no point judging a person by their habits which often causes a crack in relations.

Participants were asked to introspect in their two hours quiet time and list down all of their habits. Habits like wasting time, gaming, sleeping a lot, Anger, gambling, Drinking, Smoking as well as being extremist, procrastinating, judging, comparing, lying, overeating, getting jealous, overthinking, daydreaming were shared by the participants. Positive habits like staying connected with people, exercising, starting the day with a positive thought, respecting people (especially women), being adaptable were also put forward.

After everybody shared their habits in front of the group, course convener emphasized and highlighted some very important bad habits.

- Wasting time on social media
- Poor Hygiene
- Addiction
- Abuses
- Fidgety habits
- Daydreaming

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## **Happy Moments of Life**

Many of the participants shared that they think they have become vulnerable over time. Some of them were or have been in depression. Depression is a mental illness caused by a weak mind. Losing faith in oneself due to circumstances in the past or not having any hopes for a bright future makes us feel down and lose the potential to achieve extraordinary. It is a chain reaction. The more negative and unworthy we feel, worse the situation becomes. An interesting exercise was conducted to completely flip this negative mindset. Participants were asked to sit quietly and introspect upon all the achievements, ah-hah moments and sweet memories their mind can recollect and write them in their diary. Participants really enjoyed jotting down the golden time of their life. The sharing session was loaded with joy, laughter and positivity. Everybody had forgotten their negativity and was savoring the juice of ecstasy. There was no need to mention that in reality our life is loaded with positive incidences, memories and joy. There are very few moments of challenge and apathy. We only cling on to our unpleasant past and waste our beautiful and precious time forgetting that we all have lived a wonderful and a happy life. The exercise gave a new perspective towards looking at life and boosted them with confidence. If I was able to achieve what I had just written down, I can surely achieve what I want to. Course convener suggested referring to these happy moments when we feel very sad or hopeless to get charged with confidence.



## Who am I?

A very simple yet subtle question shifted the gears of the workshop. No explanation, briefing or clarification was given beyond these three words. It was the time to be with oneself and make a genuine attempt to know who we are. In our mind we have made many assumptions and images about ourselves but this quiet time put all of them under a question. We come across judgments, comments and labels given by the people surrounding us and make that our identity. Many of us put a mask on our real personality and keep changing them like a chameleon changes its colors. Only we know ourselves better than anybody else and if we want to see what the reality is, there is no other option than surrendering ourselves to the silence and being courageous to accept what we are. The process might take us on a journey to the darkest sides of our life that we have always put under the carpet; it might also clear the stubborn bottlenecks choked within for years. When the question was put, most of the participants were blank and took a long time to dive deep within. In the sharing session various perspectives about looking at oneself were put. A participant shared that according to him he was a form of energy or a soul. Another added that his identity is uncertain and scattered as he plays different roles in different situations and different people which make him confused. Some participants added that their professions, hobbies and their

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beliefs are what they are. A participant mentioned that she was lost in a different world altogether and had no idea where she stood and what she was. In the conversation a participant shared that he was taunted by many people of his worth and capability which touched and made him think very seriously about him. A feeling of guilt and fear of living a life without knowing the answer of this question was also expressed by another participant. Everyone expressed their perceptions towards the question however they were not satisfied with the superficial answers they had and they knew that a deep real and profound answer present within had still not come in the quiet time diary. After listening to everybody, the course convener shared his quiet time write-ups since many years he has been answering this question. It helped participants to get in the right direction required for this important question. They were given another extended quiet time later in the workshop to introspect on the same. They were able to touch upon their real self and know their reality. This awakening quiet time provided the foundation required for the rest of the workshop.

## **My Search**

Once everyone had achieved clarity upon the question 'who I'm', the course convener took everyone one step ahead by asking what each one of the participant is looking for in life. The search is nothing but what we seek in life. Every person consciously or subconsciously is in search of something that will make him/her a complete and satisfied personality. However one might not have absolute clarity about the same.

The question meant to reveal that out of every desire that I run for, what is the ultimate purpose behind it? Is my education, profession, habits, attitude, awareness and course of life aligned to set me in the direction towards my search? Am I even aware of what my search is or I'm just lost in the ocean and flowing with its waves? Some questions like these came up corresponding to the main question in the quiet time. Clarity on search gives a purpose and meaning to life; a reason to breathe. The question also helps to know who we are in further extent. The answer to this question is not terminal and specific but capable enough to give us a direction.

The question touched very deeply to a participant. He regretted that till that point he did not know what he was searching for. He felt like he was just moving without direction and following others without having a purpose of his own. He shared that now he is in search of perfection, transcendence to a next level and to cross the horizon. Another participant shared that she was in search of new opportunities, lost confidence and also a person to motivate her and a good listener. Inner peace, purpose, good health, freedom, happiness, stardom, love, respect, creativity and strength were the points added by rest of the participants in the session. After this fruitful sharing of Quiet Time thoughts, everybody had found what their life was actually demanding.

## **Take off**

Now was the time to sketch the canvas of our own self; the answers to the previous questions being the pencil and a new vision and ferocity being the colours. The participants were the artists and were supposed to paint the masterpiece of themselves to see themselves. They were asked to introspect upon where exactly they want.

After taking a long journey within ourselves, coming up with unexpected revelations and getting to know the direction with guidance of soul, participants were waiting to take actions and walk the first step towards the transformation. Previous questions had equipped them with clarity and momentum for this Quiet Time. Everyone had a great time sitting in the serene premises and pleasant weather of Asia Plateau jotting down what they wanted to become. In the sharing session after the mesmerizing Quiet Time, there was a crystal sparkle in the eyes of participants.

A participant shared that he would excel in his business by setting a very high and achievable goal, take ahead his passion for wildlife photography, be a strong minded, hardworking and independent personality. Another participant added that she would like to help dumb and deaf people and would start her own café soon.

Continuing to her one shared that he would like to live a life without regrets. Adding to the conversation a participant expressed the desire to change his course of profession and follow acting, his real passion. Others also added that they would want to improve their relationship as a daughter or being lovable to their colleagues without being judgmental.

With the help of this question, one of the most provoking question of *what am I doing in life?* was given a pause. By then everybody was able to clear the fog that made the mountains in front of them disappear. The target was crystal clear and so were their intentions. Everybody was ready to start climbing the peaks they dreamt for.





## Roadmap

The final step in the series of questions and the process of workshop was to draw the roadmap to reach the destiny. After setting the base, the time was to build the infrastructure above it. Participants spent time thinking how they are going to chase their dreams. They pondered upon actions they would initiate, major decisions they would take, kind of routine they would set for themselves and finally how they would achieve their goals under any given circumstances. One thing was very clearly mentioned to the participants that what they have written in their Quiet Time will not change their life but actions taken upon them will. Absolute application is required to see the results and for having productive Quiet Time ahead. A believer in actions is a believer in progress. Everyone was ready with the roadmap and a recipe of transformation. All were waiting to enter the real world and make it happen

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## Day Light

Time is something most of us run short of. We commonly give the excuse of not having time whenever a new opportunity in form of learning, a person or a work tries to peep in our life. Inefficient use of the same restricts us from achieving our ambitions, keeping us engaged for no reason and wasting our energy in trivial matters. Time once gone cannot be earned again and hence is one of the most precious assets of life that we should learn to invest judiciously. It's very difficult to feel time passing by. Either one wastes or optimizes it; the presence is unfelt which makes it even difficult to remain aware of.

When the discussion started on this topic, everybody emphasized the lack of 24 hours in a day and how they are less to achieve what one wants in life. Course convener called up one of the participants to share how he uses 24 hours of his day. He split his week day and weekend day into various activities and amount of time he gives to each of them. When he actually put these calculations on the board, everyone including him was amazed. By then he was not aware that he was giving time to many unproductive work and dedicated too much of time to a single activity. But more than that, everyone remained stunned when the calculations showed that 5 hours of day light time was not assigned to any activity. Hence he unknowingly wasted 5 hours every day. The course convener asked everyone to do the same exercise. There was absolute silence when everybody completed the exercise. On an average everybody wasted 2.5-3 hours a day. According to the sharing most of the time was being wasted on social media, sleeping, daily chores and travelling. It was advised to reduce the time given to unnecessary activities like excess sleep, mobile phones and use productively the time given to unavoidable activity like travelling. Everybody realized that they had enough time for all the new and value adding things that they were complaining about.

## The Mind Game

Mind is the most vital organ of human existence. It is the collection of all the information gathered through senses. It's software that runs human mechanism and must be strong, sharp and well maintained. Focus comes from concentration, concentration comes from strong mind and ultimately strong mind is derived from Willpower. Mind always has to be fed with good thoughts so that it can retain positivity despite the circumstances and their intensity. Many a times mind comes up with most creative thoughts but because of lack of application it dies there itself. Once Mind and willpower go hand in hand, there is nothing which can defeat it. Every time will power is practiced, the mind gets stronger and a clear message is sent to the mind that mind is not my boss but a servant and has to obey me. Most of the time we end up making mind our boss. One must understand that our past failures are not our future but just learning. The only difference between success and failure is starting once again. When you start once again after a failure, at that very moment you have succeeded. One must venture the toughest and scary paths first. It helps to generate the willpower and load with self belief.

The appetite for challenges increases and so does the strength and capacities of mind. Strength of mind eases the process of achievement. Quiet Time helps us to rise above mind and turn from a mediocre to an extraordinary.

## **Welcoming a new decade**

December Workshop is very special in nature because it is scheduled in the end of the year where participants get a chance to leave their past behind and start a new year with exuberance of the learning and the intensity of this workshop. It is a very unique and fulfilling way of celebrating New Year than any of the fancy modern way one has witnessed before. That is the reason one LMAD family member travelled all the way from Pune to Asia Plateau just to spend the New Year time in LMAD way. This year's batch was Luckier than others because it got a chance to start not only a year but a decade with December Workshop. Course convener had asked the participants a day before 31<sup>st</sup> to write all their dark past of the entire year that had somewhere affected them negatively. Nothing was to be kept within; every single scar was to be emptied on that paper. On the evening of 31<sup>st</sup> December, all the participants along with course convener went on the plateau for the trek. As the sun started to approach the horizon, everyone burnt their papers together and released themselves from the burden of dirt. Everybody held each others' hand and said good bye to the last sunset of the year 2019. Once everyone was back to the centre, course convener asked the participants to write a prayer in our own way and words to god. In the night everyone lit a small lamp and prayed resembling a hope beginning a new journey and wished each other a prosperous new year. With no doubt everyone woke up early in the morning on the first day of 2020 waiting to welcome the first sunrise of the New Year. As the Sun rose and blessed everyone with its fresh golden sunrays, everyone felt rejuvenated.



## Conclusion

In the last session of the workshop, the course convener asked everyone to come on the podium and speak for 3-4 minutes about the experience of December Workshop and their 3 takeaways. He also gave personal inputs upon everyone's involvement and code of conduct during the workshop. The workshop concluded with the announcement of certificate of excellence.

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