

2020 Workshop Report

Let's Make a Difference (LMAD) Workshop, December 25th, 2020 – January 2nd, 2021

Location: Ganga Yog Retreat, Rishikesh, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

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| <u>Attendees:</u> | Ankita Bajaj Ankit Rijhwani Arpan Yagnik | Bhargav Hasurkar Devyani Jachak Dharmu Hembram |
| Ekta Mohnani Harshal Thakare Jasmine Singh | Lakshay Chugh Maitreyee Borse Maitri Shah | Navendu Shirali Parth Gala Randhir Jachak |
| Saleha Azmi Sanjuli Khare Saurabh Gadiya | Sumeet Jaiswal Shloka Mehta Shreya Jachak | Vedang Sonawane Yash Munot |

Facilitators: Neha Mazumdar, Viral Mazumdar

Mandatory to bring: LMAD Diary

Type of meeting: LMAD December Workshop

Note Takers: Maitreyee Borse, Saleha Azmi

Timings:

1. *Morning Quiet Time*- 5:45 AM
2. *Yoga Class*- 7 AM
3. *Breakfast*- 8 AM
4. *Lunch*- 12:30 PM
5. *Tea*- 3:30 PM
6. *Dinner*- 7:30 PM



Group picture taken at Hideout Café on December 28, 2020.

Left to Right from the back: Saleha Azmi, Lakshya Chugh, Viral Mazumdar, Navendu Shirali, Shloka Mehta, Vedang Sonawane, Devyani Jachak, Yash Munot, Arpan Yagnik, Randhir Jachak, Sanjuli Khare, Ankita Bajaj, Shreya Jachak, Maitreyee Borse, Maitri Shah, Neha Mazumdar, Ekta Rijhwani, Dharmu Hembram, Ankit Rijhwani, Parth Gala, Saurabh Gadia, Jasmine Singh, Sumeet Jaiswal, Harshal Thakare, Bhargav Hasurkar.

Introduction:

The December Workshop 2020 took place in unique circumstances, amid the COVID pandemic and the travel restrictions. Instead of the usual venue of Asia Plateau in Panchgani, the workshop took place amidst the Himalayas and the banks of the river Ganges, in the holy city of Rishikesh at the Ganga Yog Retreat, situated near the famed Veerbhadr temple. Instead of the usual 10-15 Participants were now 23 in number, a first for the December Workshop. Due precautions were taken in order to ensure the safety of the participants, where the participants self-isolated 7 days prior to travelling to the workshop to ensure they are healthy and in the right zone of mind to attend the workshop. This workshop also had participants from the 2020 Virtual Youth Conference who were initiated towards the learning and teachings of LMAD. The conference ran for a total of 9 days, starting from December 25th, 2020 until January 2nd, 2021. Few participants namely Harshal Thakare, Navendu Shirali, Vedang Sonawane, Lakshya Chugh along with Neha Ben, and Viral Bhai arrived a couple days prior to ensure the place was prepared according to our workshop standards. This team of volunteers made sure our rooms, classroom, dining area and other places at the retreat were cleaned thoroughly, sanitized and prepared for a smooth functioning of the workshop. Neha Ben brought in food, medicines, utilities for all participants. Extra utilities relating to COVID precaution, such as sanitizers, masks, paper towels etc. were kept at various spots all across the venue.

Day 1 : December 25th, 2020

The participants started to arrive on 25th December in the early morning from various parts of India namely, Pune, Katni, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Tamar, Ahmednagar, Baramati, Nagpur and Yavatmal. Some of the participants flew halfway around the world from various countries like the Caribbean Islands and USA to attend the conference.

After freshening up and getting ready, at 5.30 pm the group started off the December Workshop on a positive note by seeking the blessings of the holy river Ganga by attending the famed Ganga Aarti held at the Parmarth Ghat at Rishikesh. Following the Aarti, participants were invited to the 23rd Birthday Celebration of the esteemed Acharya Naresh who welcomed the group to the revered Parmarth Ashram and graciously invited the group to be a part of his special day.

The group headed back to Ganga Yog Retreat to meet with the Participants who were arriving from an evening flight from Pune and Delhi. After a meet and greet in front of the bonfire, at 8:30pm the participants headed into the cafeteria to partake dinner prepared by the staff of Ganga Yog Retreat- Mohan (superman), Deepak and team.

At 9 pm, the participants gathered in the classroom to be formally welcomed to the December Workshop 2020 and were briefed on the circumstances precluding the actual workshop and the challenges faced in organizing it. They were also informed about the timings, electricity and water situation. Among the participants there were several first time attendees namely Bhargav H., Ekta R., Shreya J. , Maitri G. and Saleha A who were

briefed about the values LMAD, the process of Quiet Time and its integral role in the organization of LMAD. There was a discussion on the importance of writing down thoughts in the diary, sharing our discoveries in Quiet Time and the circle of trust, i.e, the subjects discussed in the group shall not leave the group. After discussing these topics, the participants decided to call it a day and headed back to their respective rooms at 10.30 pm.

Day 2: December 26th, 2020

The participants woke up fresh and gathered around the classroom at 6.30 AM for their first quiet time session of the workshop and a subsequent sharing session. At 7 AM, they were scheduled to have daily sessions of Yoga, an experience that is a must do when visiting Rishikesh. The yoga instructor, Ms. Abhashi Chauhan guided the class through various Asanas and Pranayama. The participants emerged from the class rejuvenated, ready to handle the demands of the workshop, physically and mentally.

At 9.30AM, the participants re-joined the session in the classroom, where a formal introduction took place. The participants introduced themselves to the group with their name, where they had come from, and their association and experience with the organization. There was a diverse group of participants who ranged from having several years of association, to participants who have attended the 2020 Virtual Youth Conference, new to the concept of IoFC LMAD.

The newer participants were explained further the concept of quiet time and writing down thoughts in the diary provided, as a medium to listen to our inner conscience speaking to us. The process of writing down was explained as a way to record messages from our inner soul guiding us, heard clearly during quiet time. The process of sharing and active listening was also encouraged from each participant to build a rapport between the group. There was a list of leading questions designed to guide the participants in their contemplation during quiet time, the first of which was posed to the group, “ Why have I come here?”, to analyse the objectives with which the participants had come to the workshop. The participants set out for their quiet time venues at 10.30 AM, which varied from the beach overlooking the river Ganga to the front lawns of the retreat. They rejoined for sharing at 11.45 AM with a discussion of what they hoped to achieve with this workshop and detailing the reasons of why they were there. The answers varied as some participants were inspired by the Virtual Youth Conference, some were inspired by their spouses to join the workshop, while others came to find direction in their lives and discover themselves. After lunch at 12.30 pm, the participants resumed the session at 1pm to listen to the remaining participants who had not shared earlier.

It was discussed in this session the objective of conducting the December workshop in challenging times like

these in Rishikesh, a deviation from the usual campus of Asia Plateau, the role of lockdown and the impact on our psyche.

The sharing session broke for quiet time from 3pm to 4.30pm, where they attempted to answer the earlier question during their quiet time. The participants met again for even more sharing and had tea at 5pm.

The group was in for a special surprise in the evening as at 6.30 pm, they were taken for a long stroll at the AIIMS Boulevard. The boulevard was a mesmerizing walkway overlooking the river Ganges as they took this opportunity to bond with each other and have interpersonal conversations and headed back to the resort at 8pm

Post dinner, the last session of the day started at 8.30pm, which discussed the working and future of Let's Make A Difference, especially in view of the ongoing pandemic, and the conduction of the 2021 youth conference. The discussion of the meeting touched upon topics of conducting a youth conference and the number of participants to be allowed, the early registration of fees, the number of sessions to be had and new topics for sessions for the current climate. With the discussion coming to an end, the participants decided to call it a day and headed back to their respective rooms at 9.45 PM to wake up fresh early morning the next day.

Sharing of the Day: Shloka Mehta talked about how working closely with Viral Bhai in the December Gathering 2019 changed him as a person and the group picture taken there hangs at his desk, reminding him to improve himself every day.

Day 3: December 27th, 2020

The workshop started to take place in a more intense manner on Day 3, where the participants gathered around the classroom at 5.45 AM for their morning quiet time. The early morning session was themed as an 'Introduction to LMAD workshop and quiet time' with an emphasis on morning quiet time, and the role it plays in guiding us. It was explained that quiet time had been an integral part of LMAD, as a way to resoundingly hear the voice of our inner conscience that will never steer us onto the wrong path in life. The role of diary was also elaborated upon, as a medium through which we capture our inner voices and record them. This serves as guidance to not only our present selves, but future selves as well. The standards of Purity, Honesty, Unselfishness, Love (PHUL) were also elaborated upon as the guiding values on which LMAD is based upon, the standards which have slowly been decaying. Participants were encouraged to evaluate their conduct towards others and their lives through this standard. The participants were then asked to reflect on the question "Can I remain Quiet ?" and examine whether their life complies with the standards laid down by PHUL. The group dispersed for their quiet time at 6.15 AM, and met again for a quick sharing session at 6.45AM for discussing their learnings during quiet time, on whether they were able to hear their conscience during quiet time and how their lives stacks up against the standards of PHUL till 7 AM.

The class resumed back at 9.30 AM , where there was a call back to the previous day's question of why are they here at the workshop. The participants were encouraged to delve deeper into their motives. However, the classroom shifted gears with the discussion of Habits- the practices inculcated in our lives which have tremendous effect on the person we become. The duality of habits were discussed- how bad habits like addictions to intoxicants, procrastination, not being punctual etc. have adverse effect on our lives and on the

flipside, how positive habits like waking up early, reading books and educating oneselfs, being punctual etc. have a positive impact on us. The participants were encouraged to analyze what habits they deemed positive or negative during their quiet time, in addition to evaluating the importance of cultivating Good Habits and taking steps to rectify the bad ones. With this exercise given, the participants broke for quiet time at 10.30 AM to complete the evaluation exercise.

Rejoining at 11.30 AM, the participants shared habits like procrastination, laziness, bad sleep hygiene, frustration and stress eating as some of the negative habits. Habits such as exercising regularly, performing meditation, reading books etc as some of the positive ones were shared during the discussion. The sharing dispersed at 12.30pm.

Post lunch at 1.40 pm, the session shifted from the classroom to the lawns of the Retreat. The participants sat upon a circular formation and continued the sharing in which the participants who have not shared earlier, shared the habits which defined them and how they were planning on improving upon it. The sharing continued till tea time at 3.30 pm with an extended quiet time post tea till 5pm.

At 5 pm, the group returned to its usual arrangement in the classroom. The discussion started by stating that while hard work is an important component in what makes us successful individuals, without knowledge and intelligence it is futile work. It was also said that the bad Habits must not be fueled by negative action taken and stressed the importance of ‘Will Power’; the battle of dominance over our life between good and bad habits and exercising will power will ensure good habits conquer over the bad counterparts.

There was further discussion on the importance of time and living in the present moment, but the main topic which pivoted the discussion of having a “I to We” mindset; which means shifting from an individualistic based perspective to a symbiotic mindset. It was explained that we remain so caught up in our lives, that for us everything revolves around us. This self centered mentality has been slowly eroding the structure of a cooperative society as people become more individualistic in their conduct. However, merely thinking of serving others before fulfilling one’s need is another pattern of self destruction, as an incomplete person cannot fulfil the role in a society. So participants were encouraged to find a balance among this and have a mindset which has their needs satisfied while simultaneously playing a greater role in bettering the society.

At 5.45PM, the participants broke for the quiet time reflecting on the learnings of the session and met again at 6.30 pm to discuss their thoughts on this mindset. The participants, in general, examined how they can make a shift from an ‘I’ based approach towards life to a more “We” based one and highlighted the steps they were planning to take as they embarked upon this path. The discussion continued up until dinner time at 8 pm.

Post dinner, the session took a tangential turn with the discussion on LMAD’s latest project in collaboration with Initiatives of Change Centre for Governance(ICCFG) on the Aspirational District Project. The session started with the song “Chalein Na” performed by Harshal T, Jasmine S, Sumeet, Saurabh G, Vedang S and Maitreyee B. The discussion moved forward with the discussion of the Aspirational district project where

Vedang S, Sumeet J, Saurabh G and Maitreyee B elaborated upon the latest project of LMAD in collaboration with ICCFG , where they presented on-

- a. What is the Aspirational district project ?
- b. Why did LMAD choose Haridwar as their district ?
- c. What they plan to do in the district and
- d. the schemes they plan to bring awareness too.

Viral Bhai also spoke about the guidance provided by Prabhat Kumar ji and Shanti Narayan ji, the former Cabinet Secretary and Member of the Railway Board respectively and provided the update soon the team's work on the aspirational district so far. After a session of questions from the participants which the team answered, the project was submitted as an idea for the larger gathering to consider where the response to this idea was overwhelmingly positive and participants showed their support towards this project. On that high note, the day drew to a close and the participants headed back to their rooms at 10.30pm.

Sharing of the Day: Dharmu Hembram shared his life prior to attending the Tamar Regional Conference 2019, the wrong path he took with the wrong company prior to being introduced to the concept of LMAD. He shared the antiquated and wrong belief system he had and how LMAD helped him change his worldview and inspired him to follow the right path .

Day 4: December 28th, 2020

The next day, the participants gathered around the classroom at 5.45AM, where the discussion gravitated towards the concept that everyone has a vacuum in their life- a vacuum they need to fill in order to move forward in their life, without which they are incomplete. Tying into the previous day's question, the question for quiet time for Day 4 was- "What Am I searching for in my life?". The participants were encouraged to introspect on what absence they are trying to fill to make them a more fulfilled person. It was explained that knowing the answer to this question gives the clarity to a person to discover even more deeper truths about themselves. With the question in mind, the participants set out to their respective quiet time at 6 AM. The participants rejoined for a quick session of sharing before the yoga class at 6.30AM, where some of the answers included peace, content, knowledge etc.

The participants rejoined the session at 9.30AM, there was a shift in the tone of the session with the discussion pivoting towards the prevalence of depression in the current generation, especially during the lockdown period. The participants were encouraged to shift out of a melancholic mindset by reflecting on the moments where they felt truly the happiest, no matter how small the moment felt, in order to be reminded that there are still happier moments to live for. The participants were encouraged to reflect on their happiest moments of life during quiet time and write them in their diary. They dispersed for their Quiet time at 10:15AM.

At 12:15 AM, the participants met again to share their insights on the nature of happiness and the defining joyful moments of their life. This included sharing achievements like being able to swim the first time, childhood memories, nostalgia or memories like cooking their favourite food, pranking their friends etc.

With a cheerful atmosphere of the session, the participants were treated to another joyful moment where they were taken to Hideout Café at 12.30 pm. The owner of the café, a quaint place overlooking the river Ganges, invited the group of the workshop to have lunch. The participants enjoyed delicious courses and bonded with each other while sharing stories of their happiest moments and got to know each other on a more deeper level.

After a hearty lunch and coffee at the cafe, the group headed back to the retreat as the session resumed at 1.30 pm. The participants who hadn't shared before spoke about their joyful moments which they look back upon and smile. While the discussion was initially focused on finding happy moments in life, it took a more nuanced turn pivoting towards the nature of depression. It explored the cause of it and how people often cope with it while trying to remain functional. Discussing how finding joyful moments may give a temporary relief to a melancholic mind, it doesn't address the central problem of it all. The state of depression was also displayed in some of the sharing where it was described what it is like to live with it and the constant battle of mind which occurs.

The session broke for an hour of quiet time at 5 pm and met back at 6pm, to continue with the sharing session for participants who wanted to share some insights over the topics "I to we" and "What am I searching for?". The discussion continued till dinner time at 8 pm.

Post dinner, the participants took part in an unique exercise. The session started by stating the importance of sitting still and how this stillness amplifies the voice of our inner soul. It was discussed that in the busy day to day life, the art of stillness is slowly diminishing in the constant state of activity. It was also discussed how people have mastered sitting still so much that they hear their pulse and blood flowing through veins. Participants were encouraged to perform this exercise, by sitting in a comfortable position and observing pin drop silence across the room. They focussed on their breath and heartbeat for over 30 minutes with complete silence disregarding any other distractions. After 30 minutes, the participants slowly opened their eyes and after composing themselves, had a session sharing their experiences of this exercise done. The participants head to their rooms at 10.30pm.

Sharing of the Day : Devyani Jachak shared her story of living in depression and the intrusive thoughts that occur in her mind. She also delved on the impact it had on those around her and her quest to find a career which helps her fulfil her passion and helps her become financially independent.

Day 5 : December 29th, 2020

As per the schedule, participants gathered around the classroom at 5.45 AM. Reaching the midpoint of the conference, the discussion geared towards the vacuum that is present among all of people, a thing that feels

missing in life which the soul searches for. It was said that unless there is an effort to exactly identify what absence it is, one cannot progress in their journey of self improvement and discovery. Therefore, the reflection of the previous day continued with the question - "What Am I Searching For?"

The participants were asked to ponder upon this question and dispersed for Quiet Time at 6 AM. Rejoining the session at 6.45 AM, there was a brief session of sharing where some of the answers to this question included answers like Stability, Clarity, Happiness etc. which continued till 7 AM.

The class met at 9AM, where in addition to thought provoking question raised earlier that morning, another question was posed to them: "Who Am I?". The participants were asked to identify the traits, attributes, attitudes and experiences in their lives which played a formative role in shaping who they are. They were asked examine themselves in a critical sense to understand themselves better. The question was also left a bit open ended for room for interpretation by the participants who took on the challenge to define who they are. In addition to this, they were also encouraged to ponder upon the question asked in the previous session- "why have I come here?" To aid in this heavy introspection, participants were asked to maintain silence throughout the day so as to not disturb the atmosphere of contemplation that particular day.

From 9.30AM till 12.30 AM the participants left for their Quiet time reflection, where the participants attempted to answer this question by critically evaluating the traits, nature and circumstances which has led them to become them. At 12.30 PM, the participants moved to lunch and rejoined the session at 1.30 PM for sharing and reflection on today's exercise. The participants delved deep into their insecurities, dreams, hopes and the steps they would aspire to take in order to improve themselves. It was discussed that family plays a formative role in shaping an individual right from their childhood and that a happy, stable family with healthy communication patterns form an individual who is well adjusted in a society. The participants were encouraged to analyse their relationships and stressed upon the importance of having honest conversations within the family about their role in our development, to seek the guidance of the elders in the family while simultaneously recognizing that elders may be wrong at times and practicing forgiveness and humility towards the family members. At 3.30 pm, the class dispersed for their respective quiet time, and gathered at the cafeteria at 4.30 PM for tea.

The participants reconvened for a sharing session at 6pm for sharing their insights on who they are, where the participants who hadn't shared before shared the experiences, the relationship with their family members and attributes which made them an unique individual. The participants recognized the significance of circumstances- both negative and positive- which played a huge role in shaping them into the individual they are today, whether it is moving out, associating with LMAD, or even experiences that completely changed the direction of the old life they were leading. The discussion also witnessed some sharing of the question asked in the morning session- "what am I searching for?", where the participants identified the vacuum in their lives till dinner time at 7.30 pm. Reconvening for an extended sharing session at 8.30pm, there was a continued discussion on "Who Am I?" and the participants who had not spoken up earlier, shared their findings. At 10 pm, the day came to an end as the participants headed back to their respective rooms.

Sharing of the Day: Sumeet Jaiswal analysed the question, “ Who Am I?” in a spiritual context where he equated himself to a “drop in the ocean” and said that he is an being connected to every organism in the world with the respect of soul, which is eternal in nature and talked about “I to We” in this interconnection of soul.

Day 6: December 30th, 2020

At 5.45 AM per usual, the participants gathered around the classroom to take part in the early morning session . As the workshop was rapidly approaching its end, it was decided that different topics shall be distributed throughout the day to cover more diverse topics and to have an intense quiet time to aid in the journey of self discovery.

Keeping this in mind, the session started off with the discussion on various trials, tribulation and challenges thrown at an individual, which in retrospect serve as a catalyst for their evolution as a human being. It was said that no matter what challenges life will throw, the inner voice of the soul will never steer someone wrong and will always have an answer to the problems. Through this inner voice, one can prepare themselves to handle life's challenges effectively to emerge as a better version of themselves. With this description, the question of the day was posed to the participants, “Who Do I want to be?”.

The participants set off to their respective quiet time at 6.15 AM , to answer this during their quiet time. At 6.45 AM, the participants reconvened for a quick sharing session where a couple of participants shared what their aspirations for themselves are such as becoming more calm, optimistic in nature etc.

After a couple of sharing, the participants proceeded to their yoga class at 7 AM. The participants had an extended quiet time till 11 AM, to understand the gravity of the question and contemplate on it even more.

The session resumed at 11 AM, where the discussion gravitated towards Daylight Saving Time(DLST), the idea of harnessing more time by smart allocation of time to productive activities and cutting down on unproductive one. The oft used excuse” I don't have time”, or complaining about not having time to engage in things that actually do matter in life and instead spend it on frivolous things. While this topic was briefly touched upon the previous days, in this session there was an increased emphasis on saving daylight time and adding a few extra hours a day for productive activities. The participants were asked to describe their routine in a day, and the amount of time they spent on each activity. The participants described their respective days, and realised the time they allocated to frivolous activities such as social media, excessive sleep, binge watching etc. where upon taking out these activities from schedule, gave them almost 20-30+ hours a week to allocate on important things in their lives. The participants were tasked to map out their day and share with the group their routine, in addition to reflecting on the morning question of what do I want to be?. Furthermore, the participants were also handed a piece of paper where the participants were asked to write down the most Unpleasant moments and qualities of their lives, privately and write a personal prayer, inspired by the river ganges. The participants moved to lunch at 12.30 AM, following which they had an extended quiet time till 3.30 pm, to contemplate over the various topics posed during the session.

The participants rejoined for a sharing session at 3.30pm, where they mapped out their day, and described their daily routine for everyone. Narrating their day, they demarcate the quantity of time spent in various unproductive activities and the attitude of procrastination they have towards time, and realise the amount of time they would have if they cut down on unproductive time. Additionally , there were discussions on the importance of spending time on productive habits like reading books or listening to audio books. Furthermore, there was discussion on procrastination and laziness in our lives and the detrimental effect it has on us, and the role procrastination has in affecting our careers, especially in a creative sector. Some of the participants also share their findings on the morning question who do I want to be, and their vision for an enhanced version of themselves.

The participants broke for tea at 5 PM, and had a specialized sharing session of who do I want to be? Where the participants shared the qualities and attitude they would like to develop in themselves to grow in their life and achieve happiness and success, which included answers like being emotionally resilient, strong, calm, level headed, courageous, physically fit, determined, optimistic etc. The sharing session came to an end at 8pm as the participants headed towards dinner.

The dinner was a special affair as joining the group for dinner was Acharya Naresh ji and his friend, where participants had a chance to interact with Acharya and have a discussion with him over the dinner table.

Post dinner at 9pm , the Acharya stayed for a session where the participants introduced themselves and Viral Bhai gave a brief introduction of the esteemed Acharya. It was an interactive session where the participants asked the Acharya his introduction to this realm of spirituality at a young age, his background growing up and the Acharya detailed the role of science in the ancient traditions and how ancient practices were an instrument for people to understand science and implement them in their lives. He also spoke about how these traditions are dying with the current generation and his venture on providing the priests, astrologers etc a sustainable livelihood. He applauded the work LMAD did in spreading the moral values across India, and as gift of remembrance was gifted the white diary of LMAD, which the participants write down their quiet time thoughts in, which he gladly accepted as he bid farewell to the group, promising to meet them soon at the Ganga Aarti.

There was also a session interviewing Neha Ben, where Arpan Y. engages in conversation with the woman behind it all who works tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the december workshop, where she details the experience of conducting the Youth Conference, Answers questions about Viral M. and her introduction to MRA and what it stood for and her experience running programmes for LMAD for past several decades. Ending the day on a light hearted note, the participants headed back to their respective rooms at 10.30 pm

Sharing of the day: Sanjuli Khare in her sharing on “ Who Do I want to Be?” talked about introversion and attempts to come out of her shell, dream of being successful and work with the biggest name in the design industries, and one day see herself under the Times “ 30 under 30” list.

Day 7 : December 31st, 2020

Nearing the end of the December workshop, the participants were prepared to have an even more intense quiet time, especially while approaching the end of 2020, a challenging year for all. The session discussed the importance of finding the purpose in life- the reason why we are put on this earth and the reason we wake up every morning. This purpose forms the most important part of our being, one of the central reasons why we are alive as humans on this planet. It was also discussed that man has tried to find its purpose in various pursuits like religious texts like Bhagvat Gita, Quran and Bible etc. which is a question each person, regardless of their affiliation, seeks answers for. The purpose of life makes a person have a definite goal to strive for and inspires them to work hard for the pursuit of their goals. The purpose was also said to differ from person to person, which makes the sharing session even more poignant as listening to others purposes brings even more clarity on our purpose. Ancillary to this question, participants were encouraged to ponder upon the question asked the previous day , “ What do I want from My life?” and encouraged to seek answers to this question of their hopes and dreams for their lives, not only for 2021, but for the road ahead. With this in mind, the participants headed to their quiet time at 6.15 AM, and rejoined the session at 6.45am for a brief session of sharing where some of the participants laid down their hopes, expectations and wishes for the journey ahead, and what their purpose is on this earth, the goal they were meant to achieve, before breaking for the yoga session at 7AM.

The session resumed at 9.30 AM, where the discussion came about the role of mindfulness, focus and concentration where Viral Bhai shared his thoughts on the role of willpower and concentration plays in shaping one's life and the tremendous discipline and dedication it takes for an individual to become successful in their lives. The participants were asked to ponder upon this questions-“ How am I going to achieve what I want to be?” to detail the self improvements and transformation they are going to undertake in order to become the best version of themselves. In addition to that the participants were asked to list the instances in their lives where they displayed tremendous willpower and courage to go on even when the circumstances were against them, and to take inspiration from the past, in order to realize their future and exerted complete control over their mind. Furthermore, the participants were also asked to write a personal prayer, inspired by the holy surroundings of Rishikesh and share them with the larger group as an activity. With the tasks in mind, the participants set out for their respective quiet time at 10 AM till 11.30 AM.

At 11.30 AM, the class reconvened for a sharing session where The participants shared the instances where they have shown tremendous will power over their mind and have overcome negative circumstances and mindset to emerge victorious from it, whether it be small victories like getting up early when you don't feel like it or huge achievement of conquering your fears and emerging victorious from it, which went on till 12.30 AM. The group had an extended quiet time post lunch from 1pm to 2pm. At 2pm, the participants reconvened for a sharing session where the participants who hadn't shared earlier detailed their stories of personal courage, resilience and tremendous willpower.

The session was paused at 3pm, as the participants were scheduled to catch the last sunset of 2020 at the Kunjapuri Temple, a temple nestled in the hilltops of the city. The participants travelled in cars through hilly roads to reach the ancient temple, which is one of the famous shakti peeth temples, known for their wish fulfilment properties. Upon reaching there, the participants climbed up a flight of 274 steps to reach the temple

, where they were told the story of Shaktipeeth and the sacrifice of Ma Sati and offered their prayers to the temple and joined the evening Aarti by taking turns doing the Aarti. The paper on which the participants detailed their “Bad moments and incidents I want to remove from my life” written the previous day were collected and burned as the participants watched the last sunset of 2020 set upon the horizon and hold their hands in a collective prayer, wishing for a peaceful next year filled with growth and opportunities. The participants returned to the retreat right on time for their dinner at 8.30 pm.

At 9.30 pm, the post dinner session taken by Navendu Shirali. was focused on the future and vision of LMAD and the steps to be taken in progression of LMAD as an organization which included topics like feasibility of conducting the session at Asia Plateau and expanding LMAD's reach to national level, tackling problems like farmer suicide, politics etc. There were discussion on further outreach to colleges all over, having a global presence and having a production company of LMAD.

Shifting the focus, the discussion went to the upcoming New Year and the year 2021, where the group in consensus decided not to stay up late for the midnight to strike and decided to start the new years' fresh minded. With this decision in place, the participant decided to sit in a circular formation and offer their prayers for the new year by individual lighting of candles by each participant and holding each other's hand in silence. The participants were in for a surprise with a gift distribution done by Viral Bhai and Neha Ben, where each participant received a personalized gift. After a toast to the couple, the participants decided to call it a night, wished each other happy new year and head out to bed at 10.45pm, to wake up in 2021.

Sharing of the Day: Shreya Jachak in her sharing of the instances where she displayed tremendous willpower, talked about her incredible journey of losing 12 kgs of weight gained undergoing medical treatments and the strength and resolve she discovered inside her while undergoing an incredibly difficult process.

Day 8 : January 1st, 2021

The participants woke up early in the first morning of 2021 to pay a visit to the ancient temple of Virbhadra mandir, a temple dedicated to one of the avatars of Lord Shiva. The participants started towards the temple on foot at 5.45 AM in groups and reached the temple, just as the priest began to offer the first pooja in the morning. The participants joined in for the early morning pooja and offered their prayers to the deity. They also took part in a specialized Aarti to start off the year on an auspicious note where each and every participant took part in the pooja. Starting off the new year with prayers and spirituality, where the participants began 2021 on a spiritual note.

They reached right on time for their last yoga class and thanked Ms. Abhashi Chauhan for guiding the participants through it all, at the end of it. Post yoga class, the participants headed towards breakfast and rejoined the session at 9.30 AM. While the previous sessions had instances where participants displayed tremendous will power, this session focussed on the instances where the participants failed in their will power and courage, where they felt a loss of control over their minds. The participants were asked to introspect on

the instances where their mind was the most vulnerable and their will power failed them during their quiet time and their learnings from it.

With this task in mind, the participants set out to their respective quiet time at 10 AM, to contemplate over the task given, in addition to contemplating over the questions asked over the previous course of the workshop. The participants rejoined the session again for sharing at 12 PM, where they detailed instances where their will power failed them in their lives, their regrets over it in life and how it affected them in life in general. Willpower was also discussed in the context of procrastination- how it affects the lives of people around it and hinders an individual's progress in life. It was also stated that waking up early for the workshop was also a display of tremendous willpower by each and every participant and they were encouraged to continue this practice even when they are back home in the "normal world". The participants broke for lunch at 1pm and reconvened at 1.45 PM for additional sharing on the topic and their resolutions for the new year. At 2.45 pm the session ended for participants to get ready to go for the famous Ganga Aarti of Rishikesh at Parmarth Ghat.

Dressed in white kurtas, the participants reached the Ghat through Rickshaws, and proceeded towards the ghat by crossing the river Ganga through a boat. Upon reaching the venue, the participants took their respective seats and prayed alongside other devotees present at the site during the Aarti, a magnificent sight on its own. After the Aarti, the gathering collected Gangajal to take back home and lighted a diya to float across the river. They met Acharya Naresh at the Ghat, where he invited the group to the Ashram. Inside the ashram, the group were given a tour and a lesson on the marvellous history of the Ashram, and the life of Parmarth ji. The participants split in two groups, one breaching out to explore the markets of Rishikesh and other opted to stay at the ashram and spend some quality time with the Acharya. The group re-joined at 8.15 pm, where they travelled together at the retreat, where dinner was waiting for them at 8.30 pm.

Post dinner was the last formal session of the workshop, which was a reminiscent affair for all as the closing ceremony took place by first thanking the participants for their patience and understanding of the completely new environment they were exposed towards in Rishikesh. He further elaborated on the challenges on conducting a conference in such a challenging time like these, where a few members who had arrived earlier single handedly helped out in cleaning out the classrooms, arranging the masks, sanitizers or even providing blankets, which were ordered specially for the participants and which were now to be donated to those who need them the most, facing the harsh weather of the city. There were also discussions on the various hiccups encountered during the duration of the conference including tripping of electricity and water shortage etc. which were solved in due time thanks to the timely assistance of the participants and the staff of the resort. While there was a lament on missing out some of the topics which needed to be addressed in the workshop, overall the workshop was pulled successfully, in a different city in the middle of a pandemic where the safety of each participant was ensured to the maximum. Furthermore, the star performer of the workshop was also named of the workshop, the person who impressed everyone the most by enthusiastically partaking in the sessions and sharing, where this prestigious title went to Bhargav Hasurkar, who impressed everyone with his dedication and complete surrender to the process, who was awarded a certificate with words testimonial to his dedication and enthusiasm. The session closed off with the recital of Bhargav Hasurkar's written prayer as the December Workshop 2020 formally came to an end.

Sharing of the Day: Yash Munot shared his heart wrenching story of getting into gambling in his life and how this habit backfired on him and how his family stepped up for him to rectify his mistakes. He made a resolution to apologize and express his gratitude to every single member of his family, going into 2021.

Day 9 : January 2nd, 2021

In the last morning quiet time of the workshop at 5.45 AM, there was a recap of all topics and exercises covered during the workshop including a rundown of all the questions they had introspected during the workshop and the participants were encouraged to keep on reflecting on these questions as they go back to the real world, as these questions are dynamic and the answers keeps on changing as the participants kept learning and growing. It was especially stressed on the importance of writing our thoughts in the diary, which will serve as a reminder of the aspirations and goals which are yet to be achieved and serve as a record of the progress made by an individual. It was also said that the other guests staying in the premises of the Retreat enquired about the workshop and expressed their interest in the teachings of LMAD. The session then commenced with the last Quiet Time of the workshop, where the participants visited their favourite quiet time spot in the resort one last time. At 7 AM, the last sharing session of the workshop commenced, where the participants detailed what they have learned from the workshop, the experiences and bond they had with each other, what they are taking away from this workshop and their overall feedback of the workshop. Following the emotional sharing session, some of the participants opted to leave before breakfast, while the rest of participants chose to leave after breakfast, except Ankita Bajaj and Lakshay Chugh, who were staying in the premises for another day alongside Neha Ben and Viral Bhai.

The participants took their turns to say their goodbyes to each other after which, with a heavy heart and armed with the learnings of the workshop, they set out to their respective destinations.

Sharing of the Day: Bhargav Hasurkar, who was named the star performer of the Workshop, elaborated on how attending both the Virtual Conference 2020 and December Workshop 2021 helped him grow as a person, to form connections with other people and how the process of quiet time helped him introspect certain aspects of his life. He pledged to continue practicing quiet time, once he goes back home and to share his thoughts with this groups as much as possible.

Conclusion

With the workshop coming to an end, the analysis of the time spent in quiet time and the difference it made in the participants is detailed below in a quantitative form viz. the reporting of quiet time spent during the workshop and qualitative form viz. the testimonial of the participants, a week post the workshop in their takeaways from the workshop.

Day wise analysis of the hours spent in quiet time :

| Day | Hours spent in Quiet Time |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| Day 1 | - |
| Day 2 | 3 hours 15 minutes |
| Day 3 | 3 hours 45 minutes |
| Day 4 | 4 hours |
| Day 5 | 4 hours 45 minutes |
| Day 6 | 4 hours |
| Day 7 | 3 hours |
| Day 8 | 2 hours |
| Day 9 | 1 hour |

- *Average hours spent in quiet time per day:* 3 hours approximately
- *Total Hours spent in quiet time during the entire workshop:* 24 hours 25 minutes approximately

Annexure

Participants, a week after settling into their daily life, shared their takeaways and their thoughts from the December Workshop via an Email Chain connecting everyone :

1. “I feel blessed and fortunate to be part of December workshop again.

Immersing in deep thoughts , next to Ganges was fascinating experience. Long hours of quiet time were filled with profound reflections about my life.

The shear positivity of this place allowed me to sit in peace and reflect on all the past happenings, and the gravity of it was how I was easily able to conclude that it held no bearings what so ever on my present but it could easily dictate my future if not channelised in right direction.

The positive vibes and sharing of the group allowed me to go deep within my conscience and helped me in knowing Who I am , what I want in my life and how am I going to achieve what I want. I got clear perspective in many aspects of my life. This change of perspective has assisted me in regaining self confidence, determination and most important of it all- I am as chuffed and enthusiastic as I used to be.

I am sure we all have really given it a great thought about our exterior and how we look which again didn't allow us any soul searching. But this workshop helped me to learn great depths as to how our soul is what people are going to hold on to for eternity and hence it required an absolute cleansing. Now that I think of it, I know I am on right path to first search myself and then try to better myself every passing minute of my day.

For me I have come up with my own definition of awareness ,and that is , Controlling the controllable while inhaling and letting go of uncontrollable while exhaling and therefore being in a meditative state all throughout.”

2. “My takeaways from the workshop-

Understanding of the difference between 'what happiness is and we think of

In the state of peace, in the state with least expectations, in the state of still mind which automatically turns into satisfaction and leads to happiness.

Happiness once an internal factor pops out and turns into external factor.

Closure to everything is much more important than what I had been understanding.

Once things are cleared, concluded and brought to a closure, it will eventually settle in some part of the brain without disturbing at all (directly or indirectly).

In the course we as humans can lead a life with least burden.

Closure also relates to focus and concentration.

We can better focus on 2 or 3 things at a time than plenty of things.

Awareness or being present in the moment comes into practicality when our mind is in control.

I can feel it very strongly because I have sensed both the scenarios.

Focus and concentration have direct connection with Awareness.

We can only focus once we are aware and present in the moment.

MULTIFUNCTIONING, MULTI SWITCHING, REALISATION OF LESS KNOWLEDGE, INTELLECT IN PROPORTION TO MY AGE.

MY ONE OF PURPOSE OF LIFE:

"TO BECOME A BETTER HUMAN BEING EVERY COMING DAY"

.....Much more”

3. “My best experience of DW was the experience of spending exclusive time with myself and getting reacquainted with the aspects that need correction. DW encouraged me to know myself by spending time with myself. It was so much joy getting to know myself but what was even better to see, feel and be aware of the duality in me-the mortal self and the immortal soul. My desire is that they both move from Sammelan to Sangathan. However, with the deeper reflection and awareness of the differences between the two, I have identified areas of improvement where I need to work on myself and exercise my WILL to dominate over the weaknesses that are fueled by the fickleness of my mind. My experience was enriching and my takeaway was three pronged. 1) There is a gap between what I am and what I want to be. I am aware of the steps I need to take to fill that gap and I taking them. 3) I have clarity on what I am looking for and why I exist. I have to continue to walk on that path. 3) I need to spend more time with the Shastras and understanding them better.”

4. “The December workshop for me was a fascinating experience. I have never put myself in so many situations and tried to analyze my own perspective and understanding. DW gave me an opportunity to get to know my vulnerabilities and my shortcomings. I now have an opportunity to work upon them. To be able to move from I to we is very crucial and I now know what is the way forward. I can say with certainty that my resolves are better positioned now. There was always confusion between the aim and purpose of life. I have come to understand that we may have several aims but they will be worth pursuing only if they are aligned with the purpose.”

5. “My takeaway from the workshop,

I had a list of things by the end to add to my schedule, that has been going quite well, but on the other part to be honest I haven't been very productive with work and giving some peaceful time to myself, because of some health issues due to sudden weather change and also things here have become even more difficult

But at the same time I feel stronger from inside than before, I have realised one thing that whatever the other person does, I don't have to reciprocate to it, I just have to do what is right because at the end of the day, I have to face my conscious and myself, so if nothing my guilt can eat me up. So this is one major change

I have started believing more in myself and been able to differentiate between right actions and wrong actions, I feel more lighter from inside. But I still have to overcome overthinking.

I'm presently not in a very good state also to write and that's why dint reply till now but today again I couldn't justify myself for not writing a simple reply in a week's time, Just for the sake of framing it nicely in a good mood.

Also, I have been really motivated just by reading what everybody has written and been doing and really looking forward to be an active participant to this sharing. And really fortunate to spend those 8 days with the 25 beautiful souls, and thankful to viral bhai for inviting me and Neha Ben for taking utmost care of all of us."

6. "It's been exactly a week and two hours of reaching home after a pilgrimage with you all. I attended my first workshop way back in 2013 and that proved to be the turning point in my life. When the learnings and realizations from December 2013 were as fresh as they can I got this opportunity to attend the workshop for a second time.

When I questioned myself why you want to go to this workshop and why you should not, very few things that are irrelevant in larger context were on the why you should not and it helped me to clearly identify my expectations from me and from the workshop.

Those 10 days in Rishikesh and 7 days of the workshop helped me go deeper within myself and identify the fears, insecurities, and many more negative aspects of myself. At the same time focus on the positive aspects of my personality. I managed to seek answers to many questions and in some questions, I got directions to answers I am looking forward to.

I wanted to take this time to focus and concentrate on many difficult aspects that are conveniently ignored by me and my ego, I got the courage to face those things. One of the biggest takeaway from this workshop is the renewed courage and confidence I got to dive deeper within because going out is easier than going in and feel blessed to be part of this brave group.

When I was mentally preparing myself for the workshop, one of the major fear or inhibition I carried with me was of sharing or deeper sharing and I feel triumphant on this front I managed to open up to a great extent and it helped me to embrace many things which I kept on hiding under the carpet.

I have taken up many exercises during this workshop which will keep me in action to dive deep within over a longer period of time. I am taking things slow so that I will be able to give a good time to each and every thought. The last year ended on a very high note and the New Year started with a bang as I am receiving many great news from my academic and career front.

Writing this to remind my self, during the workshop I said that I will make an attempt to write my biography as an extension of the exercise "who I am?" and today morning I got up pretty earlier and managed to write about few incidents which I could have handled in a very positive way but I reacted in pretty negatively resulting in losing some good friends and who managed to paint me the way they wanted to. Soon I will share the document with this group.

Some other immediate things which I got in this workshop is freedom from many things by sharing with the larger group, the courage to take different and may be difficult paths instead of convenient shortcuts, a redefined sense of I and WE, and more clarity on the relationship between I and WE and way to build a strong bridge between both of them. A log list of aspects and attributes I want in me to be the person I want to be.

I started my writing in my diary for December Workshop 2020 by Buddhist saying- "Appo Deepo Bhava"- and phrase from the Bible "Let there be light". I hope I will succeed in following and practicing what I wrote and said in the workshop and in the diary."

7. "My biggest takeaway from the December workshop was - "Yes, it is possible." I remember myself as a child, with so much confidence in myself, believing in so many possibilities. Then cynicism kicks in. "Life happens" blah blah. And mind you, I'm not talking about the possibilities of achieving big things in life, in fact that's all you start focusing on as an adult. I'm talking about achieving the little things. I want to be happy, and yes it is possible. I want to be more focused, and yes it is possible. I want to have belief, wholeheartedly, and yes, it is possible. I'm thankful for this push. I feel energetic, confident and motivated. And in the times that I don't, I now feel like it is possible to change my mind."

8. "My takeaway from the DW - Firstly I need some peace in my mind as I was really very disturbed from past few months or the whole 2020. The way I ended it was completely different what I imagined it. For me biggest learning was how the situations can be changed and things can be altered in life, how much we know ourself is way to less on how we pretend to know.

My main motive was how can I mend my relationships within my family and with the people whom I was closed to. For myself I had become a way too negative person and didn't think anything positive. I lost my capability to communicate with people freely. I was downgrading my performance at work.

Though with the help of this DW which I was afraid to attend, I realized how really it helped me to know more about my passion and how to heal myself with the stillness and quiet time. DW have helped me to realign my goals and how I want to achieve it with all the hardwork I can put into it."

9. "My takeaway from the December Workshop is the importance of being present in my surroundings and not zone out and live in my head. I had a lot of time to self introspect during the workshop and of course, sitting on the banks of Ganga was very conducive to this process, but my inability to stay in the present moment had caused some major hindrances in my life, a fact I realized in the workshop. It was very easy for me to imagine all the negative outcomes of a given situation and only panic about it and not take any action against it, but circumstances immediately after the workshop led me to take decisive actions calmly and act when it was necessary and not be stuck in this "analysis- paralysis" of sorts. It also led me to be more courageous in my approach and to be a strong support system, not only for me but for my family. This is something I did not know I could do, but after December Workshop and especially after hearing the stories of courage shared by every member of the group, this has been an inspiration for me to be strong and decisive in my actions, not only for myself but for the people around me as well. It is a difficult transition from a self-centred "I" mindset to a more "we" based harmonious mindset, but I'm sure the journey is worth the challenges, and I'm grateful for this opportunity to improve myself and for all of you who have had such positive impact on me, the effect of which I cannot possibly state in words but hopefully would be visible in my actions."

10. "My awareness from DW:

Was blessed to be under Lord Shiva and River Ganga. The experience was amazing and happy to be part of aarti because of you Viral sir.

The sharing session been very helpful for me, I feel great and felt that I have remove all most kachara which was stored inside me since many years, and that also helped me being stress free. The day I have return I don't feel that much stressful which helped me to focus on my health issues and fitness.

Quiet time at starting day's were really difficult for me. Initially it started with big question mark on my thoughts. Day by day i came to know things which is required and to be done by me. Helped me to get clarity to some extent about my goals and relationships.

I always use to give importance ki mai yeh karugi toh samne wala kya karega ya bolega, but after coming from Rishikesh i told myself that I don't need to pay attention for those who don't even valued or respect me. Things got changed in many ways and way of looking, which helped me not to relied on others. It also helped me to get improve with my relationship with my parents, my brother , my husband & my in laws as well as I came to know my actual friends.

Still I'm facing difficulties to pursue my goals but surely will i will get way from my quiet time.

Thank you Viral sir for inviting and making me a part of December Workshop."

11. "The whole workshop for me only revolves around one question: Who am I ?

The question is so deep that it is still continuing in my head again & again. Every action I do post the conference is giving an answer to this question. Each & every habit of mine is defining the question.

Things that we do subconsciously & don't even notice that it the way we are. Post workshop there is a guilty feeling for each & every action that I am suppose to do but ain't able to do.

There are many things that I have and many things that is going on a lower pace to achieve

Biggest things that I have took away from DW is better self management. Now for many things I feel I am very well organised can plan or do things in much more better way. My day to day activities have gone very simple. I am more over enjoying my work rather than taking lot of pressure.

I have many points written in how am i going to achieve my wants. I am even working on many of them i have a short term goal and vision. I am much more creative. My life is ahead of my work.

But few things that is taking time is going daily on workout. My workout makes me very exhausted at the end of the day and i tend to sleep more. If I didn't sleep more I get very exhausted. I am gradually doing it first by simple walk. I have decided to fast for two days a month & I am very sure about that. I have brought down my dairy & sugar consumption.

I have a new page of habits written in a new QT diary. I get daily lectures from my family regarding my bad habits & i am in very much interested to change them.

Still the question is revolving in me who am I. Not spiritually but physically & mentally I am taking a step ahead. I am trying to control my anger, my relations are getting better. I have cut off unwanted relations. Unwanted chats & friends

I have noticed I am much more aware when I am in peace. Biggest enemy of awareness is day dreaming. I am still in terms of coming out of it and live in reality. But many times I have been successful in fighting it.

My biggest take away is now caring about what people will think about me & just day by day loving who I am & what I do.

I really appreciate and am very thankful to Viral Sir for giving me second opportunity to be present at DW. I am sure this chance is going to bring something amazing in me."

12. "My takeaway from December Workshop.

I had come to workshop with many questions in my mind which were always used to revolve around me and the pure long hours of quiet time near the Ganges, sharing of each one in the group opened up new avenues, ideas, perspective of leading a happy and satisfied life.

After attending the previous years workshop in 2019 I had planned everything about how I am going to make changes in me for what I want to be. To some extent I pursued what I had planned but I did procrastinate in many things which I am definitely working upon after coming back from this years WS.

I had never thought that Willpower can make a major difference in me whereas now I am constantly AWARE and I dont allow my mind or any external factors to take charge of me in any situations and this is helping me to perform better on Work as well as the Self development front.

I have learned not to get involved in unnecessary conservations which are not at all important to be discussed at that time and which will definitely divert my focus in what I am doing or what I want to do.

The Level of understanding between me and Shreya has increased drastically and both of us are on the same page now.

Thank you Viral Bhai for Inviting me for the December Workshop."

13. " Have the hunger to go within" was expressed by VM when we approached the topic of "who am I".

Earlier I approached this quest with some fear as I thought I wouldn't like what I'd find. That working on myself would require tremendous effort. What I didn't realize though I was over working in the wrong direction, going all over the place and listening to OTHERS rather than figuring myself. Major takeaway was All my answers were within me – my approach has solidified by learning and practicing to conquer my mind. Something as abstract as Mind and Consciousness were and sometimes still are a challenge to work on. My mind was conditioned to work on the outer aspects of myself to realize who I was, which were getting a good education, going to the best of universities and getting a solid job. All that being necessary, did not give me the tranquility in finding and knowing myself as much as going within did/does. It is SO important to listen to your consciousness. To take the time to build self-awareness, staying true to your vision and values and for saying no to things that do not align with your values for inner-thriving. Going within has made me meet so many aspects of myself, and addressing them has enabled me to shed layers of old conditioning, unconscious choices that were made, and sensing a shift in perspectives and interests. I realize transformation is natural as we travel the road to greater self-awareness, happiness and peace. My challenge will be change of environment, change of situation if I can still continue to find the courage to go within and seek answers from myself.

"I will not take orders from my mind, I will give orders to my mind. I will create my own narrative" I realized that the idea of healing is no longer reacting to old triggers with the same intensity as before. The memories are still there, but they do not have the same power over my mind.^[1] I was so caught up in managing my emotions, triggers and others, but the December workshop reminded me that our brains are wired to think how WE train them and not the other way around. In our eyes it is important to give ourselves positive affirmations to enable us to do better. To be better.

When we approached the topic of Habits on December 27th, the following words by VM struck me, clarified so much about how we see ourselves vs how others do. "You are recognized by your habits. It creates impressions for others. That is how people see you. Your outward behaviour is the truth. Your inner perception of behaviour is an illusion". We do not realize the power of discipline in small habits such as, how we spend our mornings, how we talk to ourselves, what we watch and read, how we spend our time commuting, etc. Building self-awareness at this level not only keeps us present in the moment, but also helps build character. If we listen to our inner consciousness, if we can manage to stay true to our core values in every situation, we are subconsciously strengthening our character. Whereas, if we betray ourselves and our inner voice, if we say untrue things to ourselves due to our "monkey brain", if we act out a lie, we are weakening our character.^[2] Couple other thoughts that I had penned down which are good reminders for me are: "Find clean, good, pure people, connect with them, stay in touch with and learn from them" - "Peace with family gives you phenomenal success outside"

14. “My take away from the December workshop:

The most incredible part for me was that I got to spend the time with myself, in my daily routine, I wasn't able to think deeply. Initially, my approach was more on the lines of materialistic things, but since as the days passed I was able to look at the things more from my conscious point of view.

Habits and DLST made me kind of understand that waking up early can give you so much time in a day, working up till late night because I used to feel I am more productive at that hour is just an excuse because the same work I can do in the morning.

Maybe I was aware of some of the facts about me, but I didn't have the courage to accept it and I was being ignorant about them, writing it in the diary and what I have shared there will make me work on those things especially being able to be vulnerable in front of others and being more expressive. Self-acceptance is important.

Setting up the aim with the purpose of my life will give me more motivation and happiness to work towards things I want to.

The environment at Rishikesh acted as a catalyst to think deeply. Now coming back to the normal environment, it will be my duty to have the same focus, concentration, discipline and my approach towards things.

Who am I? What I want to be? What I am Seeking? What is my purpose? I want to keep working and thinking on these questions as I feel they will keep me grounded to myself.

My approach is more practical, but listening to one's soul is very important as it comes from consciousness and is pure and makes one happier. I have to learn a way where I can make a balance between my mind and soul. It is very important for me to incorporate balance in many things as most of the time I am at extreme ends

In movies, the character-defining moment comes once, but in a person's life it is an everyday phenomenon, therefore I should just keep working on myself.”

15. “Back to the routine life and taking actions on the plans which were jotted down in my LMAD diary.

For me this December workshop was a pure time for self awareness and a remapping for major course corrections in my life. For what I want to become... it's a daily and an hourly campaign against my own mind. To avoid temptation of being lazy and to take actions.

Awareness is about understanding, it's about gaining knowledge and enhancing my own mind, which comes from use of 5 senses and the involvement of these 5 senses to the maximum. (Not very easy all the time but being aware about being aware is the key).

It's also about the environment which I'm In. (Sometimes physically I'm in an environment but the mind diverts its focus to some concern from the past or sometimes future) So I have learned to be more aware by being present and connecting to my breath.

Awareness is also about the systems we set for ourselves. One of them is QUIET TIME. And the soul connect. I'm Making a point to follow this gift of Quiet time routine everyday.

In this December workshop the level of awareness was at a different level, as the mindset before coming there was clear. The Why was clear and the what to do was also clear.

The workshop was designed well and this has bought a lot of clarity for the search in my life. This will surely keep my mind alert as there is a lot of clarity on the larger purpose of my life and this will act as a map which will surely guide me to move in the right direction and avoid the vulnerability in many situations in life.

The extended quiet time sessions and the stillness experience this time was also one of the highlights for me.

Overall the December workshop was a pure quality time spent with self and was worth every minute which was used optimally. A Truly Memorable Experience.”

16. “My take aways from the workshop are-

There is so much to know about myself. The aspects I have never touched before needs to address urgently. I have realised I need deeper sense of understanding in whatever I do. Shallow approach makes no growth.

Waking up early is the first and foremost priority of my life.

To keep checking my thoughts, if they are coming from mind or conscious level.

To strengthen the will power.

(I have started applying will power- taking bath with cold water)

Who am I ? What I want to be ?

These questions are at my conscious level, which doesn't let me loose the track of it.

Realisation of the fact that I have extra 6 hours in a day, made me do what I had been procrastinating since long time. (To stay healthy)"

17. "I hadn't responded till now as I knew for a fact that after coming back home, somehow, I was still the same me. I started procrastinating again, couldn't wake up early for the first week and I just wasn't feeling that good. The difference between what and how I wanted my day to be like and what my routine was, was still huge. Being aware of this, I started introspecting more on my habits. Our quiet time session on habits gave me a good headstart and I realized that it wasn't a particular habit but a chain of habits (like a cycle) that had led to a very unproductive routine.

Waking up during the DW was a bit easy (thanks to Laksh Bhai; he'd start yelling 'SHLOKA UTHH!' after 5 am) but here, almost every day, even if I had woken up at 6, I'd tell myself 'abhi itna jaldi kyu? It's so comfortable here. Let's sleep for 5 more minutes'. Obviously, those 5 minutes were never just 5 minutes. Even if I did manage to wake up early, I wasn't able to do anything productive which worked as an incentive to not get up early.

During this whole period, my day started with regret. A regret for wasting my one good hour, where I could've done so much but I just wasn't able to change myself because of my habits. This regret then led to a negative mindset which then led to a whole another cycle of procrastination which ultimately led to more regret (the stupid endless loop).

Then, I remembered what Navendu bhai had told me during one of the conversations that I had with him. He had told me, 'Every time you do something wrong, you punish yourself by giving up something that you truly love'. I wasn't very sure about this whole method but I gave it a try; so one day, I decided that if I don't wake up on time or if I do wake up but stay lazy and unproductive, I won't exercise on that particular day.

The very next morning, I again didn't get up early. As decided, I didn't go to the gym that day. By doing so, I had so much regret in my heart for not waking up early but this is where the magic happened. This regret was in a way good for me. I realized the importance of being productive by keeping my workout sessions at stake (thank you, Navendu Bhai!).

This way, gradually I started getting better and better (I still have to make a lot of improvements though). All the emails that you guys have sent also motivated me to level up my routine.

My takeaway from the DW: EXECUTION!

Quiet time is just a tool to understand ourselves better. It is our physical body that has to follow and execute the thoughts and instructions given by our inner voice. The more we stay in touch with our conscious (awareness), the better we are able to understand the difference between what we are doing and what our conscious wants us to do. Only then, with strong dedication and will power, we can bridge this huge gap."

18. “I got to know myself more during quiet time and it is really helping me.

I got to know the importance of time.

I have developed an habit of reading.

Getting up early is helping me in doing my work on time and do productive things in free time which will add values in my life.

I had a fear of failure, I used to underestimate myself and couldn't do things which I wanted to, but after attending December workshop I realized each one has some or the other good qualities in us so never underestimate ourselves.

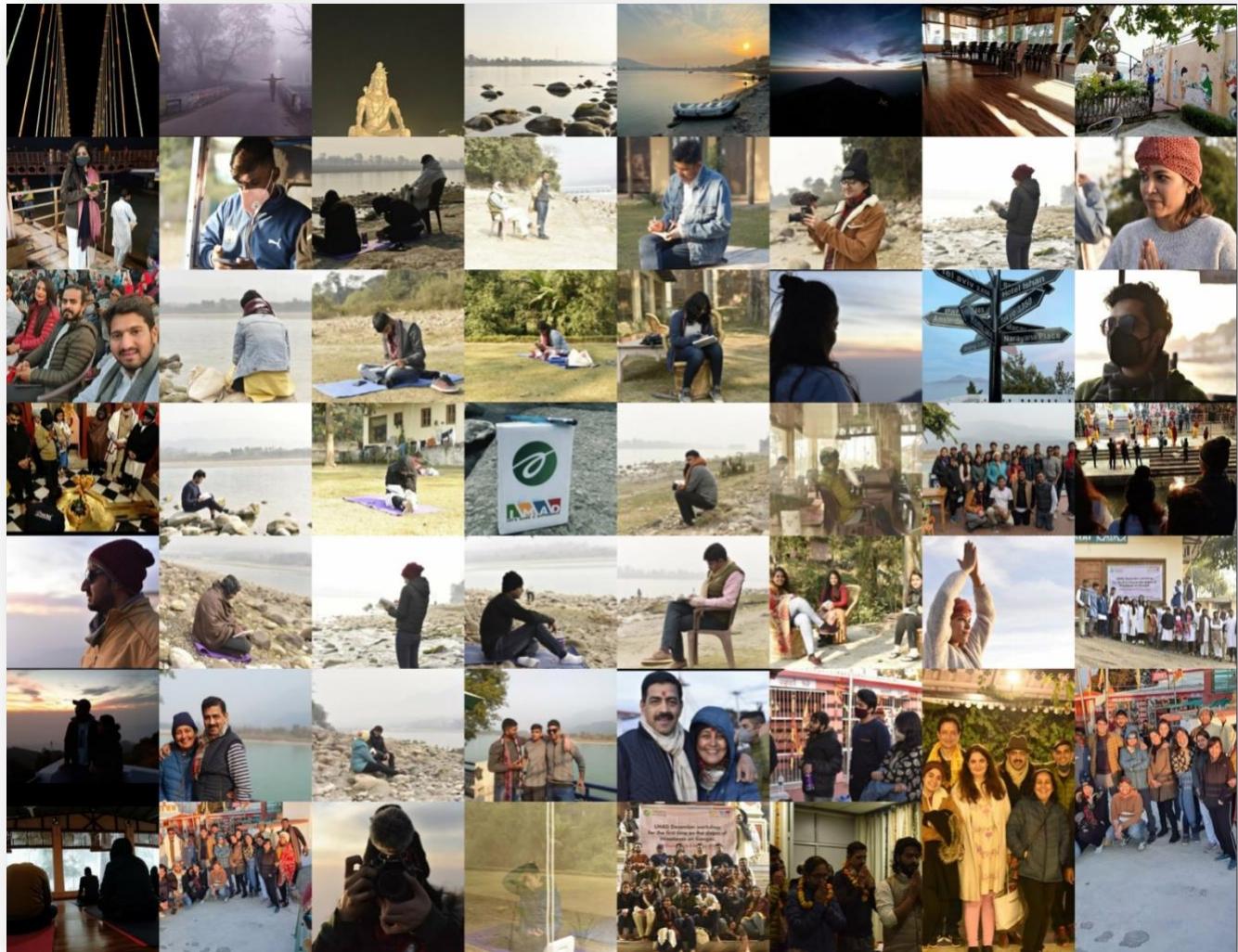
I got to know so many people and learnt many things listening n talking with everyone during the course of workshop.

The memories I had during this workshop are unforgettable they will always be remembered.

Thank you Viral bhai for inviting me for the workshop.”

19. “ My take away from the DW was definitely enhanced levels of awareness. According to my definition, awareness is where my conscience is in the driving seat, it is consciousness for me. And unconsciousness is when the mind is in the driving seat. I do not recognize myself with the mind because the mind is the tool that I have been given to sustain and survive, and is just the means to an end. For me, the goal is freedom, realization, and awareness. The mind is only the bunch of collectives that have been conditioned for the past 23 years, that too most of it without my conscious choice. My soul is where I get to observe everything objectively. That is awareness. Awareness is something that a soul does. The soul is already conscious. At first, awareness and realizing it will be tiresome but after a point of time, it becomes the default state of mind and nothing my mind or other people's mind do, say can affect me. Awareness also ensures that whatever my mind has been unconsciously conditioned comes up gradually as and when I am experiencing my life. I will see that what my insecurities are, what my projections are and what is triggering me, what is making me angry is nothing but the faulty conditioning which is getting unconsciously projected by me and is hence coming in conflict with my soul and divine and objective life experiences. That's why I believe that any experiences we come across on a daily basis are nothing but lessons to be learned. To make us realize what we have to realize. Our true self and consciousness. Awareness is a continuous process and can only be achieved when practiced at all times. I tend to bring my controlled mind to help me create practical and creative ways to constantly realize my consciousness, leading me to have more and more awareness. it is not something I can only practice in 20 minutes of quiet time. Quiet time is where I evaluate. the main objective is to not just follow 20 minutes of quiet time a day my whole life but to gradually extend that heightened state of awareness to 24hours. Hence if you see, our thoughts that are coming from the mind (Most of them anxious, fearful, nervous, hateful, vengeful, negative in nature) fade away and disappear after a point of time and can't be remembered what we were anxious/panicking about, but thoughts coming from awareness and consciousness stay with you forever.

Anything and anyone which is not bringing me peace, calmness, stability, unconditional love, and clarity. it is not coming from my soul.”



A compilation of photographs celebrating the moments of the December Workshop 2020 and capturing the memorable experiences during the workshop- including the trip to Parmarth Ashram, Kunjpuri Temple, Veerbhadr Temple and the Hideout Café. The compilation also includes photographs of participants engaging in their quiet time and partaking in deep self reflection.