

# **Shed Kilos, Become Younger and Get the Energy to Build Anything!**

*What Not to Ignore if You are Building Your Start-up!*

VINEET SHARMA



**ADHYAYAN PUBLICATIONS**

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*New Delhi*

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*Why You're Sick, Fat & Tired  
& How to get Slim, Fit & Energetic !*

*1st Edition*

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# Founders Speak...

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*“In this beautiful story book, Vineet has revealed the ultimate hidden secrets of achieving vibrant health & energy levels. Energy is the essence of doing & building everything and this book guides you to attain it. A must read for anyone who is yearning for a remarkable success in his life. Young entrepreneurs would love it!”*

**CHANDRASHEKHAR SINGH,  
Serial Entrepreneur & Start-up Mentor.**

*“An inspiring read for every wannabe entrepreneur, helping them realise the rarely spoken about importance of energy management”*

**SAMARTH RAO,**  
Co-Founder – [www.kidsconcepts.in](http://www.kidsconcepts.in)

“In today’s fast paced world, it is easy to neglect the old adage “health is wealth”. I am glad to see Vineet reminding us of this simple truth, in a fun and accessible manner.”

**SIDDHARTH TATA, CEO and Co-Founder,**  
Purple Chilli

*“Vineet gets it! This book is written straight from the heart, it’s a completely new approach which is both simple & fun to read. If you are a start-up entrepreneur, you are supposed to put in unending hours of work & energy. And if you want to have those everlasting energy levels, read this book”*

**AMIT AGRAWAL,**  
Co-Founder of HRTech Company, Ex- Engg. Lead at Amazon

*“An excellent read. I found it to be a guide in transforming your life and bringing your dreams and aspirations in line with your reality. Recommended reading for budding entrepreneurs.”*

**NIRMIT NABAR,**  
Co-Founder & CEO – GEM , Vapi

*“Vineet comes out as a great storyteller in this awesome book. This real-to-life story binds the reader completely and subtly gives them the ideas of fundamentals to everlasting health. The book is a short read. Entrepreneurs would learn a lot, and have fun doing it!”*

**RITIKA VASUDEV,**  
Life coach, Motivational Speaker, Beauty Expert.

*“This is not your another self-help boring health book. Vineet has binded a real life start-up story in this book touching the reader’s mind subtly about the important role health plays in life. A great new way to connect with the audiences, in this case, all start-up entrepreneurs!”*

**DR. SHIKHA SACHDEVA PATNI,**  
Founder and Director,  
Pavitra Physiotherapy & Spine Care Clinic

*“Finally, a book about personal health & energy for busy entrepreneurs. The entertaining story made me reading all the pages in just 1 night; long before I realised I was also learning along the way”*

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# Disclaimer

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This book is designed to provide information on health. In the context of this book, the author/publisher are not able to provide legal, medical or any personal consultation advice related to your health or start up. If legal or medical assistance is required, the services of a medical authority or legal advisor should be sought.

The purpose of this book is not to reprint the information already available but instead to supplement, compliment and amplify it. Readers are urged to read all the available material, learn as much as possible, experiment and tailor the information to individual needs.

This book does not provide any short-cuts. Anyone who decides to achieve weight loss and higher energy levels must expect to put a lot of time and effort into it. Some people become more successful than others but usually it is a direct result of the amount of efforts they put into it.

All efforts have been made to make this book as complete and as accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes, both

typographical and in content. Therefore, please use it only as a general guide and not as the ultimate source of health information.

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WHY YOU'RE  
**SICK, FAT &  
TIRED**



*Shed kilos, become younger and get  
the energy to build your startup!*

& HOW TO GET  
**SLIM, FIT &  
ENERGETIC!**



*What not to ignore  
if you are building your start-up!*

**VINEET SHARMA**

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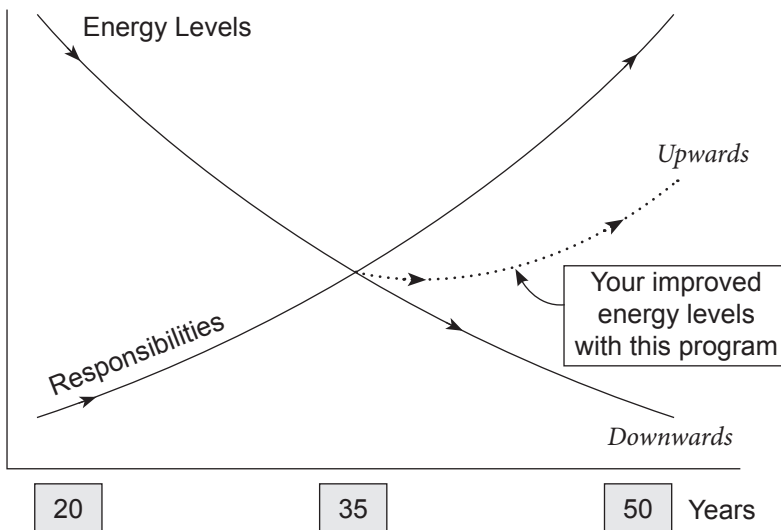
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# Is this the Right Book for You?

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**B**efore you start reading this book, let me share with you what this book can do for you and what it cannot, so that you will have a fair idea whether this book is worth spending your time & money.



Let's take an average human's life cycle in 3 Patches - At 20, 35 and 50 years which are also the peak of his working life & Career, considering 60 years as retirement age.

At 20 years, he has the highest energy levels with lowest responsibilities.

At 35 years, his energy levels drop but the responsibilities increase manifolds. This includes running a family, paying the bills, upbringing of children, school education, house & Car loans.

At 50 years, the energy levels further drop significantly and the responsibilities are at peak. It includes college education for children, their marriage, taking care of ailing parents and managing a team at work. The stress levels are at peak resulting in many life style ailments as well.

If this has been your story, what if you find a life style program that not only stops your draining energy levels but significantly enhances it in long term so that it starts going up again along with your ever increasing responsibilities. (See the dotted line)

If that makes sense and you feel that it will help you in managing your life with more control & peace, then look no further, this is the book for you!

What is the other thing where you need the highest energy levels – when you are building something! And building your business, building a start-up takes highest amount of energy levels.

That's why this book is also written primarily for every entrepreneur, who needs high energy levels to build initially and sustain it long term. Most of the young guns start their entrepreneurial journey, completely unaware about how to maintain vibrant health & energy levels and suffer in long term when they are stuck with life style diseases and ailments.

This book is written with an entertaining story line keeping in mind the young audiences. I hope this book helps every aspiring entrepreneur maintain a high energy life forever!

# A Forward by Dr. Irfana Akther

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**I**t is only when you get sick that you understand the importance of health.

“Health is wealth”. We have been hearing this adage since our childhood. “Human beings are energy systems”, is yet another adage that echoes in our ears quite often. If you have no energy, you become a dead duck. Every task that modern life demands consumes a lot of energy.

However, when it comes to our body’s health & energy levels, we grow up assuming doctors have all the answers regarding our health. But, who knows the body better than the one living in it? We have to start taking responsibility. We need to learn to feel what our body is doing and listen to what it is saying when we become injured or ill.

The surprising fact is that many people think that restoring health and curing diseases are solely the responsibility of the medical professionals.

When we submit ourselves to the care of another person (for example, a doctor) we must not place full responsibility on that individual to “make us well”. It is imperative that we take responsibility for our own healing and learn everything we can about the illness or injury.

In the holistic health system, responsibility for falling ill and getting well both rest primarily with the patient. The Physician can at best be a therapeutic partner and guide. The effort of the patient is decisive for recovery and healing.

It is in this perspective that this book becomes so important. With its gripping story, this book places the emphasis on health, not on diseases. It empowers the reader to take responsibility and control of their health in their own hands.

If you have never felt those energy levels where you can feel that you are on top of the world, this book will show you the way and unveil the hidden principles.

Finally, I am confident that this book will be a health guide for all its readers, especially start-up founders & working professionals, and it will be a powerful instrument to achieve vibrant health & everlasting energy levels.

**Dr. Irfana Akther**

MBBS, MAHM (UK)

Founder – ICAM Well Care Clinic, Bangalore

[www.icamwellcare.com](http://www.icamwellcare.com)

# A Doctor Speaks ...

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**W**e make our choices daily, whether it is health, relationships, and money – the sum total of all these choices make our life. Things also do not just happen to us. All the happenings are consequences of our choices made in past.

As a doctor I want to emphasize that latest trends in the healthcare is about prevention of chronic diseases by using healthy life style, which seems an easier to talk but difficult to practice.

This book talks about those practical issues leading to a chronic health problems and prevention of same by adopting healthy habits. There are many books written by several authors on life style modification but this piece is unique as it is in story format and would keep you engrossed till end.

One can experiment by following simple guidelines mentioned in the book and get magical results.

**Dr. Prashansa Agrawal**  
MBBS, MHA

# Introduction

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The world has changed drastically during the last 15 years.

With the advent of technology and new Job creations, an entire new upper middleclass has emerged. The trend to migrate to the metro cities has given birth to the concept of Nuclear families.

The fast-paced life in the metro has contributed to tremendous stress on young parents & children. The introduction to chemical laden fast food, hectic lifestyle, daily commuting in heavy traffic, corporate pressure and exposure to all types of environmental pollution has further added to the misery.

No wonder then, lifestyle diseases are on the rise. Obesity is a common problem in young nuclear families. You can find young people suffering from hypertension, high bad cholesterol, heart diseases and cancer within your own family and among friends, something which was completely unheard of a few decades back.

This demanding lifestyle and increasing responsibilities towards their young children as well as their old parents require young people to remain super fit & energetic. However, the kind of lifestyle choices most of them make (including the dietary choices) on a daily basis basically increases this energy gap and they end up creating more stress in their lives.

This lack of energy and negative stress wreaks havoc in family life on a day to day basis. Husband and wife are both unable to cop up with the ever increasing demands of their family life and engage in daily quarrels. The underlying reason is always the same – lack of energy.

Imagine this:, The husband comes home late in the evening after a long tiring day, and just wants to be left alone or actually expects his wife to care for him, may be with a short massage. Wife, on the other hand, having gone through all the household work (getting the kids ready for school, seeing them off and picking them from the bus stop in the afternoon, helping kids in the homework and making the meals for the entire house) now expects a dinner outing. Both have expectations from each other but do not have the energy to fulfil them. The result; an argument breaks out. The situation becomes all the more complicated if the wife is also working, because it leaves her with even lesser energy after coming home.

In the same scenario, if the husband comes home with loads of energy, he will look forward to playing with the kids, and then take the family to a dinner outing. When the wife has surplus energy, she will not demand a dinner out, rather she will be happy to care for her husband.

There is another strong trend, this first generation of youngsters, mostly in the age group of 30-40 years, is experiencing; to start on their own.

Having spent their energy and skills for the most part of their life in the corporate world, now they want to start on their own. For some of them the motivation is to become their own boss, for others it is the passion to pursue their own ideas or even pursue financial freedom.

The work for any start-up execution needs tremendous amount of energy & passion to succeed. Unlike the old age belief that the rich sacrifices their health to become successful, the new age entrepreneurs now believe that it is possible to have both health & wealth at the same time.

Happiness and fulfilment are the end goals for most of us, yet we often lose sight of that when dealing with our health & wellness.

Most of the time, we fall back on the Medical industry which mainly focuses on diagnosis and treatment of a condition with drugs and pills. Often the importance of addressing the cause of a problem (which is, more often than not, the lifestyle) is not stressed.

I have attempted to write this book on three different tracks. The first is the deep complex emotional issues families struggle with because of health issues, weight loss and lack of energy. The second is the role health, wellness & energy play in building a start-up. The last is the nuts and bolts of attaining supreme energy that allows you to organise both the tracks - Your family life and your dream start-up.

I didn't figure this out overnight. It took me a long time to experiment and realise the truth myself. I myself used to be fat, sick and lethargic, and realised the role energy played in leading a happy life. Sadly, I think many people never learn it themselves and leave their entire health in the hands of prescriptions, pills and medical doctors.

Years later, through lots of self-guided education through books and continuous experiments, I figured out what was most important in maintaining health & wellness. It wasn't until I was confronted with my own severe health issues, wife's post pregnancy sickness, seeing cancer patients within my family and working on myself and later helping hundreds of people with practical results that I learned what really mattered.

I learned that people, including me, don't care about the latest diseases, drugs and researches in medical science. What you and I care about is leading a life with our families without any health issues. We want to and have to possess supreme energy which provides happiness in personal life and fulfilment in work life. What we want is to live extraordinary lives. This is what this book is about – a guide for enjoying supreme energy to achieve all our dreams and live an extraordinary life.

**With Love**

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# **Vijay & His Start-up Story**



# 1

## The Party



Vijay was rushing down the stairs so fast that he almost slipped. A shiver went up his spine when he thought of the prospect of his not so small body hitting the stairs with a thud. There hadn't been any time to wait for the lift to arrive. He paused, took control of himself and hurried to the basement car parking and nearly smashed into his car, exhausted.

He looked at his watch. The dreaded thing showed 5:55 pm. "Man", He murmured, "I'm in trouble!"

It was his 7<sup>th</sup> Marriage Anniversary. Vijay had loved giving surprises to Divya on all special occasions during their initial years of marriage. But, with his hectic work life coupled with worsening traffic in the city, almost everything had to be pre-planned. The surprise romantic zing had almost come to a halt in their married life.

Vijay had booked Marriot Courtyard for a special get-together to which they had invited close friends and families. The party was to start at 7.30 pm.

Divya loved him dearly but did not approve of his habit of turning up late, and this was an important occasion. Flashes of her standing at the door with closed arms and toe tapping came to his mind.

Worse still, her silent treatment during the drive and during the party would spoil the evening for sure.

Being an engineer, his mind was racing with time calculation. “Even if I drive like Michael Schumacher, there is no way I can reach home in 30 minutes to pick up Divya and Tanvi. The earliest it would take is 1 hour, and then coming back to the venue might take another 1 and a half hours. That would mean we would be at the venue not before 8.30. The invite says 7:30 pm. It will be really awkward for us to arrive late when we are hosting the Party”.

It was not that he was careless today. His promotion was due.

“Look Vijay, this is the most important project we have received in recent times, and if you can do a good job completing this in time to the satisfaction of our customer, you have your pending promotion”, his boss, Charles, had told clearly last month when he had a long appraisal discussion with him.

And today was the day! He surprised senior management with an early submission of the Project report which was only due 5 days later. And then he had a late afternoon meeting with the HR Head. His promotion was confirmed – from Project Manager to Customer Relationship Manager.

“How could I miss this meeting with my HR Head today”, he murmured to himself, justifying the delay.

Vijay was still breathing hard. He couldn't recall when he had last used the stairs for his 4<sup>th</sup> floor office. The car was not moving. Whitefield traffic is notorious for its traffic woes.

“Screeeeeeeech” Vijay pressed hard on the brake. He was about to jump a traffic signal and saw the cop right there in the middle.

The traffic sucked his energy. “Why could this anniversary not come on a weekend? Why did it have to come on a Monday? At least I could have had the energy to survive.”

For a moment, he thought that if he had a choice and if God appeared and provided him a bed right there, he would just crash into it and fall asleep!

He had thought of asking Divya if they could celebrate a day before on Sunday, but he did not ask for the fear of upsetting her. Last year, when he had asked Divya to celebrate his own birthday on a weekend, she had become very upset.

“Vijay, it looks like you just want the convenience. Important occasions need to be celebrated on that day.” And then she had started her standard tone, “If you are asking for your birthday celebration to be adjusted, you would want mine and Tanvi’s too to be celebrated on other dates”.

“Look, you have changed so much! You were not like this. Earlier you used to be so romantic and gave lots of surprises. Now you want the dates to be adjusted for the celebrations”.

It was not that Vijay had turned un-romantic. He just did not have enough energy to cope with life’s responsibilities. His job, his demanding boss, his daily commute in the awful traffic, weekend outing demands by Tanvi, dining out demands by Divya, responsibility towards his ailing parents and pending weekend household work were having a heavy toll on him. It seemed to him that there was never ending work to be completed and there was a huge demand-supply gap in his energy levels to carry out his life’s responsibilities.

Still stuck at the traffic signal, he sent a message to Divya – “Honey, I am on the way. Got a little late”. The

“whoosh” sound assured him the text delivery. Texting was always safer in such situations, he knew. But his mobile rang immediately.

“You had to text me.” It was Divya, without even saying hello. “Why did you not call and where are you?”

“I am on the way”. Vijay still tried to hide the truth that he had just started 10 minutes back.

“OK, what time are you reaching home? We are ready.”

This was always a standard question by Divya. “What time you are reaching home?” and Vijay always avoided answering this directly, because if he got late, then sooner or later a fight was due.

“I do not know, but I am at the signal, and it is not moving at all. May be, I will reach by 7:30 PM”.

“What? 7:30 at home? That is our invite time, for everybody to come in. We would reach the venue by 9 then”.

“Maybe, we should meet at the Hotel”, he suggested biting his lips.

There was a long pause at the other end.

“I am sorry, baby! The afternoon was crazy!”

He heard a big sigh.

“Alright! We are starting straight away. See you there.” Divya’s voice was firm.

“Love you darling”, he said, but he was not sure she heard him.

## The Mood



Vijay felt better. He could make it to the Marriot well before 7:30. He knew that once Divya reached there, she would calm down. He always had a couple of extra dresses in his car for unforeseen circumstances like this one.

It was 7 pm when he handed over his car at valet parking. He would need 10 minutes to get ready. He would be still having 20 minutes to oversee the arrangements before guests would start coming in.

He entered the men's toilet to change. There was a life size bathroom mirror. He watched his image closely in the mirror.

He was 35, but looked like 45. His belly had bulged so much that it was an effort for him to see the ground. And yes, shopping for clothes was always for oversize clothes.

He had bought this dress 2 months back and now it could barely fit. His waist had crossed 36 inches. "I am fat and with this dress, I cannot even hide that", he thought. "We are an oversized family".

Worries have this uncanny ability to queue up. His concern for his appearance was now overtaken by the thought of waking up at 3 am to catch an early morning flight to Mumbai. Having confirmed the promotion, his new Boss based in Mumbai, had called him for the orientation.

"The meeting starts sharp at 9 am tomorrow" He was told and that meant he would have no time to check in at the Mumbai Hotel.

He had to wake up, get ready and board the morning 6 am flight and upon landing, had to rush to the office.

And then on Thursday evening, they had their college alumni meeting in Mumbai. Vijay did not want to miss that. All 28 classmates would be meeting at Hard Rock Café to reminisce through the good old times and to catch up with the latest developments in their lives. This reunion was one of the reasons he was a little bit more excited to reach Mumbai.

"Thankfully, the next day is Good Friday and I will find time to crash and sleep once I return to Bangalore",

Vijay thought and finally felt a little relieved. “Why did God put in place only 2-day weekends, why not 3? Wish I could have 3-day weekends every week”, he murmured like a child.

He reached the small banquet hall, they had booked. He saw Divya & Tanvi standing there.

“Papa.....”, shouted Tanvi, and came in Vijay’s lap.

“My sweet betu”, he hugged his 5-year-old daughter, and kissed her.

“Papa, we are waiting here for long time and Taxi driver uncle left us on the other side. We had to walk across the road”, Tanvi explained. Vijay knew what was coming.

“I am sorry, Honey”, Vijay reached to Divya trying to soothe her down. Divya was upset for all the trouble she had dealing with the arrogant taxi driver, and then waiting alone in the banquet hall with Tanvi all the time wondering whether Vijay would be able to make it on time.

“Do you know what an idiot that Taxi driver was? He did not have the courtesy to drop us at the hotel. He dropped us at the other side stating that he would have to take a full 1-km U-Turn to reach the hotel. I and Tanvi crossed the road after standing 10 minutes in all the pollution.”

Divya was firing from all cylinders and Vijay was completely apologetic. He knew he had to save Divya’s

mood for this occasion. “I promise, I will never let it happen again. We all will go together to all the functions”.

“Promise? Promise this to Tanvi. At least you will not break that.”

“How am I looking? You did not even notice.” She was still not completely in a mood for truce.

Vijay watched Divya carefully. Once upon a time, she was slim & gorgeous. He had fallen in love 7 years back just by looking at her proposal photo. Now the reality was so different.

Divya had tried to hide her belly carefully by a light make up and dark sari. But, one careful look and anyone would declare her a Fat Hen. The fat was visible everywhere, on the chin, on the belly, on the thighs, on the waist, it was everywhere. She was 32, but looked 42. Most new acquaintances would call her ‘Aunty’.

“Am I looking fat?” Came the bouncer from Divya.

Vijay knew there was no honest answer to this question that any woman would like. But in their case, the lie would be too much to believe.

“Yes. We are a fat, oversized family. I, you and our Tanvi. All of us. And my parents.” Vijay wanted to tell, but he dreaded the reaction. The Party was yet to start and he wanted to save the occasion.

“No, not at all. You are looking gorgeous.” replied Vijay.

“You are lying. Even I know I am fat. Can’t you be honest with me, Vijay? At least that much I expect from you, an honest feedback, not a lie.”

This was how the flow of conversation on this topic always would progress. But now Vijay was mature enough to know how to handle this. Last time he had confessed to Divya on these lines and she had stormed out of the dinner. He could not take a chance today.

“Look, you just have a little fat. But with the dressing sense you have and with the light make up you have on your natural, glowing skin, you look gorgeous. That is what I meant. And the pink lipstick you have, you are just perfect for today’s occasion.”

Vijay knew he had connected the bouncer at the middle of the bat and hit it with perfect timing for a SIX. Divya loved when Vijay noticed small things about her dress, lipstick, hair and complimented her on such things. Vijay’s word meant a lot to her.

The first genuine smile on his lady’s face slowly took shape then. “Oh, Vijay”, Divya coloured a little more and planted a tender peck on Vijay’s left cheek.

“I am all yours this weekend”, Vijay said. “And”, he declared proudly, “I have some great News”.

Divya declared back, “I too have”.

# 3

## Announcements



**B**oth Vijay & Divya were giggling like school kids. They decided they would do the announcement for each other.

Friends started coming in. Vijay & Divya played the perfect hosts. Soon there were 2 groups. Ladies were chatting in open and the Men were in a corner.

And then the large 10-pound cake arrived. Children were hogging around the cake. It was almost impossible to stop the children from poking their fingers into the cake.

As both of them cut the cake, the congratulations started pouring in.

Divya took the charge and broke the first News, smiling. “Hello everyone, our 7<sup>th</sup> Marriage Anniversary, has become all the more special with some good news I got to know myself only in the evening. Vijay just got his promotion today.” With the whistles being blown loudly, Vijay announced, “And to add to that, today is also the day Divya turns an Entrepreneur. Her Online Boutique opens from today.”

The Crowd cheered on, and soon there were *Cake, Burger, French fries, and Coke* – all coming as snacks especially for Kids. Vijay could not resist the temptation and took 1 plate of snacks. Then he sneaked into a corner biting the cake and observed the guests. A few families were like them, trying to hide their obesity, yet a few others were normal. However, every eye was around Prem & Rachna and their son. They were the most senior in the crowd yet the most attractive.

“Prem should be 45, but he looks 35. And the same goes for his wife Rachna”.

To his surprise, he found Prem’s 12-year-old son spontaneously rejecting most of the food items other kids loved. He wanted to ask Prem about the secret of their youthfulness but resisted the urge. He did not want a discussion on Obesity to spoil the mood in the Party. “Divya would hate it”, he thought. Currently the topic among the ladies was Divya’s online boutique. She was evidently enjoying all the attention she was receiving.

Vijay observed Divya from a distance. If she had been slim, like she was 7 years ago, Divya could have easily

given all the other ladies a run for their money. A sense of pride swept through him for his choice. Divya could still be a stunner if only she took care of her body. And today she had started her online boutique. Wow, her wife had turned into an entrepreneur! A Combination of beauty & brains!

“Papaaaa.....papaaaa.....” Tanvi ran towards him shouting!

“I can’t find Mumma, and Shreyansh is calling me Baby Elephant”, Tanvi blurted out. Suddenly there was pin-drop silence.

You can hide the truth from adults but not from children. Tanvi looked like a 10-year-old though she was just 5.

“Uncle, we all are playing Jungle – Jungle. I am tiger and we need an elephant also. That’s why Tanvi is a baby elephant”, explained Shreyansh, the 8-year-old.

“Ok, but then where is the monkey? I think you forgot to find the monkey.” Vijay turned around to see Prem coming to the scene and enacting a full monkey jumping scene on the spot. All kids surrounded him and were blown over by his monkey mannerism. Soon there were giggles and laughter.

Prem played with the children for the next 15 minutes. His energy was amazing. Vijay could not believe it. His own body was signalling for a crash by this time. He thought, “Here is a man, 10 years older than me, running with children for 15 minutes after coming from the office and driving in the same mad traffic and not a sign of tiredness!”

“Dinner is ready”, Divya came back after discussing with the banquet manager and announced. The children were being escorted by the parents towards the dinner tables. Vijay’s and Prem’s eyes met. Vijay’s eyes conveyed a silent thanks for saving the scene for Tanvi, and Prem’s eyes were reassuring. This is how a man would express his thanks to his buddy. Prem had earned tremendous respect in Vijay’s eyes. “And look at him”, Vijay thought, he was still in awe of Prem, “15 minutes of pure aerobics and no sign of any exhaustion!”

The Party ended at 10:30 in the night and by the time they were able to clear from the hotel, it was already 11 pm.

Vijay wanted to talk about the incident that happened in Divya’s absence, but he knew that soon the obesity issue would haunt the entire family including both of them. It was a very sensitive matter for Divya, directly related to her self-esteem and he did not want to hurt her.

Divya loved late night outings and then going to coffee shop to talk her heart out. She rarely got such chances.

“Can we go for a coffee”? Divya asked, with sparkle in her eyes.

Vijay just wanted to crash in the bed. *He had just finished a full plate of fried chicken with mashed Potatoes and 2 bowls of ice cream.*

“Have you forgotten that I have a flight to catch tomorrow at 6 am? I have to wake up at 3 am, take bath, get ready and have to work for the next 12 hours without

getting any sleep. And you are asking for a coffee now. We could have ordered a coffee in the hotel itself. What's the logic of wasting another hour?" Vijay wanted to shout at the top of his voice.

But he knew that coffee was not the objective. Divya wanted to savour this time together and today being their marriage anniversary, he needed to be extremely well-behaved.

"Sure, why not? Let's go." They stopped at Coffee Day. It was about to get closed, but Vijay requested to take their last order.

Divya wanted to talk, talk and talk. About the party, about her business, about his promotion and a little bit of gossip. She was on the top. After all, she was taking the next day off.

Vijay had no energy left to participate in the discussion. But he knew he needed to match the enthusiasm or else it would show that he did not care.

"Why are you so silent"? came another bouncer from Divya.

"Nothing, I am thinking about something". Vijay answered.

"Thinking about what?"

"May be, we can start thinking about a house." Vijay knew, it was a masterly straight drive.

“Oh, Baby!” Divya got up and hugged him tight.

“You are the best husband. I love you so much!”

She was bowled over. It was the perfect ending of a great occasion and a great party.

“I am sorry, I completely forgot that you have to catch the early morning flight. We are so late. Let’s rush home.” Divya got up from the chair. When they reached home, it was 12 O’ clock.

# 4

## The Mumbai Trip



Vijay crashed into the bed. He was yearning to crash since afternoon.

“Beep, Beep, Beep” Vijay heard the growing sound of his mobile alarm.

It felt like he had just lay on the bed, and he had to wake up immediately without even sleeping for 5 minutes. He stared at the mobile, it was 2:30 am.

He longed to sleep on, but there was no option.

For a second, he thought, “Can I cancel this trip”?

Immediately he had a flash of the HR Manager, who had asked him to report to his new boss tomorrow after handing over his promotion letter.

“No way”, and he dragged himself to the bathroom.

The flight was right on time and he went straight to the security with the pre-booked boarding pass.

By the time he reached Mumbai Office, it was already 9:30 am.

His new Boss, Mahesh, was waiting for him.

“Congrats Vijay, welcome aboard”! Said Mahesh.

“How was your flight?”

“All well, thanks!”

“Well, then lets join the discussion room. I have huge expectations from you in this role” Vijay followed Mahesh.

Vijay had heard about Mahesh from his other colleagues. He had quite a reputation of being a task master.

Vijay had donned the new role of Client Relationship Manager. Now he had to travel a lot and meet customers to fetch new business.

Vijay could hardly survive the day beyond 6 pm. Mahesh wanted to take him out for dinner but he just excused himself and reached the hotel.

He ordered room service. His favourite - *Chicken tikka with Mashed Potatoes with Coke & French fries. Followed by chocolate ice-cream.* By 7 pm, he was in bed.

“Ding dong”, the room bell rang. “Housekeeping, sir. Any laundry”?

He woke up and saw his mobile. It was 8 am.

“No thanks”. He said to the housekeeping lady.

“And I am still not feeling fresh after sleeping for 13 hours. What’s the matter with me”? He murmured.

He reached the office by 9:30. He checked the register. Mahesh had an entry at 8:30 am.

“If your boss reaches an hour earlier than you, it may not be a good start for your day.” He knew that.

“Good morning Vijay”, a sharp voice came from behind. Vijay was trying to sneak into his desk unnoticed, but it seemed Mahesh was waiting for him.

“I do not know about Bangalore, But Mumbai office works from 8:30 am. Sales managers need to report on time, so that they can do early planning for the day and leave the office by 9 am to meet the customers. You know, Sales is the most important function of any company. If we do not do our job right, company shuts down”, declared Mahesh.

Vijay nodded. He did not want to argue with his new boss. He knew every Boss had a unique working style. Mahesh was coming true to his reputation of being a task master.

Vijay survived the day with multiple coffee breaks. Next day he had to go out with Mahesh on some customer joint calls.

When the next day came to an end, Vijay took a big sigh of relief.

He reached the hotel room and lay down on the bed. He saw his mobile. There were 4 missed calls from Divya at different times during the day.

He dialled up. Divya answered on the 1<sup>st</sup> ring.

“Where are you?” Divya’s voice had a mix of worry and anger.

Vijay just realised they had not spoken for the last two days. It had never happened before.

“Just came back to the hotel room.” He replied.

“I was so worried. You know, I called up your Mumbai office today, but they said you had gone out.”

“Yes, I was. The last 3 days have been crazy. I am sorry, I should have called you, but I was so damn tired.” Vijay said in an apologetic manner.

“Papaaaaa....we are missing you so much. When will you come back”? shouted Tanvi on the Phone.

“Yes, my betu. I will come tomorrow and I will also bring a Barbie for you. And then we will also play in the Garden.” Vijay suddenly realized how much he missed Tanvi at that moment.

Vijay told Divya how he was extending his stay for their Alumni gathering the same night. He was going to use his hotel points to extend the stay for 1 night, and would catch the morning flight the next day. It was Good Friday, a holiday, and he would reach home late morning.

Vijay looked at his watch. It was 6:30 pm. The Alumni WhatsApp group was abuzz. The person reaching last at Hard Rock café had to pay the bills for the entire group.

“I surely don’t want to be the last in that case”, Vijay thought.

“I am coming, can’t wait”, he typed in alongside a huge smiley.

# The Alumni Reunion



It was a good 12 years since Vijay's College Batch mates had last come together.

The atmosphere was ecstatic.

And then came the shocker!

"Shilpaaaaaa....." Vijay could not believe his eyes.

"Vijaaaaaaay....." Shilpa had the same expression as Vijay's.

Vijay did not know what to say. Shilpa was the beauty siren of their batch, very close to stunning. And now with an extra 25 kg, she was barely recognizable.

“What has happened to you? You used to look gorgeous, slim and fit. How come all of this and the double chin?” Vijay wanted to ask but he was not sure if this was the first question he should be asking while meeting her after 12 years.

And Shilpa had the same thoughts going on in her mind. “Vijay, you used to be the stud of the batch! Whatever has happened to you, has happened to me as well. The belly, the double chin and the distortion of the body ... You look like an uncle now!” But she also remained quiet.

Vijay could sense that and hence could barely say, “You have changed so much”!

“You too!” came the instant reply from Shilpa.

Most of the people in the batch were in the same category, bald, fat with double chins.

Vijay was relieved he was not the only one in that list, but there were a few of them who had not changed much and looked like just a replica of their past.

There was another surprising statistic among their group. Eleven out of the twenty-six Batch mates had left their Jobs during the last 2 years and had set out on their own entrepreneurial journey.

Five of them had got their story published in “Your Story”. The atmosphere was electrifying.

On Group request, each of the 11 members started sharing how they had started feeling burn-out in their job

and why they started doing what they loved. Majority of them had set out to solve the problems they saw in the market and ended up starting on their own.

Suddenly, there was a loud spontaneous applause. This was their batch's rule to welcome the last comer, and for this occasion, the one who would choose to pay the bill.

Naresh came and with a large smile announced, "Yes, old habits die hard!"

Naresh was the back bencher of the class and was always late at the college. He could barely manage to pass.

"However, I must add that College rules do not apply to the real world! Today being a late comer, I am happy to sponsor this reunion. All bills on yours truly ..."

With this announcement, he circulated some magazine copies as well.

"And to add to that, some more reason to celebrate as this batch's back bencher is featured on Business world's latest edition."

Naresh was not joking. His start-up, of organic greens & vegetables was featured in the Top start-up stories after he had raised an investment of 2.5 million USD. Suddenly, he was the new poster boy of the Media.

Vijay instantly felt extremely proud of his batch. He went ahead and hugged him.

The next moment he felt extremely disappointed with himself.

“If Naresh, the back bencher of the class, can go so far and build a start-up, what am I doing, wasting my time, finding excuses and living a desperate life of 9-5?” His mind was putting bouncers after bouncers and he was getting bowled with every question.

The drinks were now being served and *Vijay picked up his favourite beer*. Surprisingly, Naresh only ordered fresh lime. Vijay couldn't help notice.

“How come no beer, Naresh?” Vijay asked.

“Long story, will tell you later”, Naresh replied with a large grin.

After a few drinks in the group, there were jokes everywhere and the batch mates lost all the inhibitions. The gossips included the time during hostel life, secret crushes, ragging episodes and bunking classes. The most hilarious time was the live mimicry of their HOD & few of the lecturers.

Vijay ordered the speciality – *double sided fried cheese chicken burger with spicy chicken wings*. He ate heartily. *The dessert was creamy chocolate caramel*. The party went on till late in the night and finally everybody agreed to meet again, this time may be with families.

Vijay caught up with Naresh before leaving and shook hands.

## Entrepreneurship: Naresh's Advice



# 6

“Naresh, let me tell you, you are an inspiration. And I have realised today that college marks have no relevance in life’s success and especially with financial success. Your story has woken me up, buddy. I will be in touch.”

When Vijay said those words, Naresh hugged him and came out to see him off.

“Can you share what is your greatest learning in entrepreneurship? How did it all start?” Vijay asked, on a departing note.

“Well, as you already know, I am a first generation entrepreneur. Both my parents

are from a Bank Job background. However, I grew up with a neighbour family that was into business. I was awed, inspired and influenced by the first-hand observation. It provided me with much clarity about the entrepreneurial process.” Naresh was sharing his journey.

“On my parent’s insistence I took up my first Job. The more I spent time on my Job, the more I realised that I wanted to become my own boss. I also felt very limited by the corporate structure. I found it a waste of my working energy convincing multiple people and attending all mandatory internal meetings before moving forward with a new idea.

However, I took the decision to become an entrepreneur because of my Passion, because I loved doing it and this was something I could do 24x7 for the sheer joy of it, even if I did not get rewarded for it. This Passion is so important on your start-up journey, because it adds to Tenacity despite failure.”

“Building an organisation means hundreds of unsuccessful attempts before you find the right successful way of doing it. And if you are not passionate enough, you will quit on your first failure.”

“Of course, along with passion, you also need to have execution intelligence and product focus to sail through.”

“Another important factor is your overall health and energy levels. When you fall sick, you cannot think straight. Taking good care of yourself will make sure you are not sabotaging your own success.”

“What do you mean?” Vijay asked.

“I have known people who exhausted themselves in building their organisations so much so that their body gave up just when they were on the threshold of success. It is important to invest in good diet and lifestyle habits and take proper sleep and rest so that you build up your energy reserves for lifelong.”

Vijay wanted to ask more questions on this but realised they were already late into the night. All the way to the hotel, his mind still lingered on Naresh and what he had said.

# 7

## Everything Changes



“Beep... Beep... Beep...” His mobile alarm alerted at 6 am.

Vijay just didn't want to wake up but he had to catch his flight back to Bangalore.

“What's the need to get ready and take bath? Anyways today is a holiday”, he thought and snoozed for another 30 minutes.

Vijay nearly bounced off the bed when the room telephone rang. This was a wakeup call reminder from the house keeping. He knew now that a few minutes' delay could cost him his flight.

He hurriedly checked out from the hotel. Luckily, he had done his web check-in the day before, so he knew he could directly go to the security with his hand baggage at the airport.

After security check, he saw the bookstore at Mumbai Airport. He could see India Today edition with Naresh on the cover. This edition had an exclusive coverage on Indian start-ups. He bought five copies of the magazine.

The economy class always made him struggle to sit in those smaller seats for his bulkier body, but he had no other choice. The Jet flight came with a free meal option. *He opted for non-veg; chicken biryani with chocolate caramel pastry.* After eating, he could barely remain awake and instantly dozed off. He was woken up by a lady co-passenger shortly, “My baby is unable to sleep. You are snoring too loud.”

The effect of the previous evening’s reunion was profound. Even during sleep, Vijay’s mind hovered around Naresh and his start-up. It was more inspiration and less jealousy. “If he can do it, why can’t I?” This was the question he was trying to find an answer to.

“You need to have an absolute passion and an unwavering state of health to work towards it.”

The parting conversation with Naresh was flashing in Vijay’s mind. Naresh had placed primary emphasis on two points – Passion and Health & Energy.

Vijay ran a quick check: “Do I have the passion to build something? Do I have the energy levels to support building it?” He murmured to himself.

“Passion – Yes, I want to start something on my own. That is clear. And I want to be my own boss. But I do not know what I want to start.”

“The second part - Health & Energy – This is sure something I do not have. How is it impacting my life currently”? Vijay started thinking about it.

Pictures of his daily life came in front of Vijay’s eyes. He required lots of energy; the energy to wake up early and go to his Job, the energy to come back home and play with Tanvi in the garden, the energy to take Divya for weekend shopping, the energy to live up to the expectations of his New Boss and **the Energy to build his start-up!!**

Suddenly, Vijay was smiling wide. This was true! How could he miss on something as basic as this? Why it did not come to his mind earlier? His eyes were sparkling – like a kid who had found the treasure.

The building blocks became very clear in front of his eyes what it would take him to build something of his own.

When he reached home, Divya opened the door.

He took her up in his arms and kissed her. Divya was surprised and smiling.

“What happened”? she asked with a glitter in her eyes. “What’s the Good News”?

“The Good News is that”, Vijay explained, “I have got the answer!”

“What? What Answer???” Divya asked with a puzzled look.

By that time, Vijay was humming. Tanvi came out from her room running. He took Tanvi into his lap and moved out of the house towards the Garden, still humming his favourite song.

“I hope all is well with Vijay, the last time it happened to me was when I fell in love with him initially!” Divya murmured to herself.

# 8

## Inspiration



Next morning, when Divya woke up, she did not find Vijay in bed. It was quite unusual as he used to sleep till late morning on weekends. She could finally see Vijay with a pair of scissors and Fevicol in their study.

“Honey, you are up so early!” Divya was still rubbing her eyes.

“Yes Baby! You could say I am in love, again!” Vijay teased.

“With whom?” Divya came closer to see, all her sleep was gone!

There was a collage on the cardboards and there were lots of pictures posted on

that, mostly selfies of Vijay with another person. Vijay was looking at least 10 years older than the other person in those pics. As Divya came closer to see the pics, the Printer produced one more colour picture.

She also saw the cuttings of India Today Magazine with the same person on the cover.

“Ok, with this gentleman?” she had understood Vijay’s joke by now and wanted to match it.

“But what is there in him which you don’t find in me? Has he got longer legs than me”?

Vijay had not expected Divya to come up with such wit at that time of the day. Both of them looked at each other and laughed their heart out.

“He is my classmate Naresh and I met him after 12 years in our reunion the day before.” Vijay replied, still smiling. “I am unable to get him out of my head.”

Vijay narrated all the details of their get-together. The success stories, the electric atmosphere and the new poster boy, Naresh.

“So, this Naresh is kind of a celebrity now!” “And are you sort of his fan”?

Divya asked, still curious to know the reason why he was doing all this. She remembered when she was in Class 9 and Titanic was released, she had put Leonardo’s poster in her study room. She had become his fan during those days.

“Look honey, when I met him, after the initial happiness, I was immediately disappointed with myself. I had two choices; one was to be jealous, remorseful and brush away the success of the back bencher of our class, the other was to accept his success, learn from his journey and draw inspirations from him. I chose the 2<sup>nd</sup> option.”

“This collage now will remind me that if he can do it, anybody can do it, me included.”

Divya nodded in agreement. She knew a man sooner or later becomes, exactly the company he keeps. And being an entrepreneur herself, this was very motivating for her too.

“Mumma, Papa, I was looking for you”. It was Tanvi standing right behind both of them.

“My betu”, Divya took her in lap and showered kisses on her cheek.

Tanvi was very excited to see the pictures and the collage.

“Papa, who is this uncle?” She asked.

“Beta, he is my college friend, like Isha is your school friend,” explained Vijay.

“But why have you put up so many photos here?”

“Well, I will try to explain. That uncle has done something which I also want to do.”

“Ok. So you mean to say that this uncle is your hero?”

Vijay was thinking. Till now, his male ego had not allowed him to accept this simple fact which Tanvi had stated.

“Yes beta. I think he is my hero because I want to become like him.”

Tanvi was satisfied with the answer. Vijay got up and went to take a shower.

By the time he came on the breakfast table, Divya was reading ET. Vijay had never seen her reading newspaper in the morning before this.

“You are reading newspaper, honey?” Vijay asked.

“Your friend is here as well. A half page story on him and his start-up”. She handed the newspaper to him.

It was an interview with a detailed story on his start-up. Naresh had shared his starting journey, his failures, his challenges and his learnings.

“It is not an overnight success. It is an overnight recognition of my hard work of many, many years” Naresh was quoted saying.

Vijay was feeling a rush of adrenaline through his veins.

“Naresh, the back bencher”, Vijay was thinking. “If Naresh can do this, I can do this ten times. I cannot waste my life anymore in this 9-5 rat race, working for somebody else and paying the bills, living the life of quiet desperation.”

When your mind is focussed, you see only what you want to see.

The cover story had multiple quotes from other Young achievers with a concluding note from Jim Carrey – “If you give up on your dreams, what’s left?” Vijay felt various emotions making a rush inside his nerves.

When he went into the study, he saw Tanvi pasting all their family photos on the wall. The family album was almost torn and all their photos were lying on the floor.

Vijay was about to scold Tanvi, but keeping his cool, he asked Tanvi.

“Betu, what are you doing”?

“Papa, I am also putting lots of photos”.

“Yes, I can see that.”

“Because YOU are my hero. I want to be like you!”

Vijay’s eyes turned moist. He hugged Tanvi tight. Tanvi also hugged him tightly.

“Papa, we will go to the sand pit area and make a big castle now”, demanded Tanvi.

*Vijay was in fact feeling sleepy after the big breakfast he had just finished – eggs, toast, cereals and lastly some fruits. He actually wanted to lie down.*

“Wait, let me grab a cup of coffee”, he said.

Gulping down the coffee, his head was filled with only one thought – Energy.

He could now move. Tanvi held his hands and almost dragged him to the Garden.

On the way, Vijay was thinking – “I need energy, and lots of it; something like what this coffee gave me instantly. But I need it 24 x 7, not for just 1 hour. I need it to fulfil my responsibility as a father, a husband, to fulfil my dreams, to live life on my own terms, and to build my start-up!”

“And I do not have much time to think now. It is high time I find a way out. Time to figure it out.”

# 9

## Energy Pill



Vijay was not particularly fond of cricket, but when there was a match between India & Pakistan, he surely wouldn't miss it. They were playing a T20 match, and the bonus – It was Sunday!

The entire table was set up. *It had Popcorns, Cold drink, Chips and roasted peanuts. And finally, Divya was making "Hot Pakoras."*

The Indian Captain came up with a century and Vijay whistled so loud that it almost woke up Tanvi.

The next moment, there was an ad on TV and Vijay could not believe his eyes.

His favourite cricketer was promoting an energy pill.

“Take this pill and get your energy boost. I take it on a daily basis.” The star claimed.

“Wow, it is so simple!” Vijay was thinking. “When it can help him, it surely will eliminate my problems.”

Vijay could not hide his happiness. Getting Energy back into his life meant he could do anything. Yes, he could be a super Dad, play with Tanvi, take Divya to shopping, work tirelessly to make his new boss happy, and yes, he could even build his start-up!

India cruised to a thrilling win and Vijay was on cloud nine. Like every Indian, victory over Pakistan meant a celebration for him!

It was late into the night, but Vijay did not have patience. He went to the nearby medical store and bought a full 1-month course of this New Energy pill. He did not want to wait any longer.

The next day he took the pill after his breakfast as suggested in the advertisement.

Whether it was the real effect of taking the pill or it was a placebo, Vijay felt a significant improvement in his energy levels.

And Divya & Tanvi did not fail to take note.

Vijay came from office and took Tanvi to the Garden to play. The next day they all went out for dining. Earlier it

was impossible to expect this behaviour from Vijay during weekdays.

However, after 3 days, Vijay felt that his energy levels had dropped back to the earlier levels.

“May be I should increase the dose”, he thought and started taking double the quantities. But, after experimenting with this pill for 2 weeks, he found his exhaustion back to the earlier levels.

“This Pill is not working and I need to find out a better way!” he told himself, though he was quite frustrated with the results and the expectations he had.

Looked like he was losing control of his life. But he was determined to find a way out. “I will find another way”, he promised to himself.

# Argument



In his new role as customer relationship manager, Vijay had to travel a lot and meet important customers every day. The role required him to access CXO level and win the new business for the company.

Mahesh, his new boss was planning to come to Bangalore that week and Vijay was busy seeking appointments from top clients. It required hard effort to secure the appointments at the top level. Most of the CXO had busy schedules and securing their time slots and then coordinating the travelling itinerary was almost intimidating.

# 10

On top of it, Mahesh had his own demands, and he was a task master. The demands of the new role, new boss and increased travel in Bangalore traffic were taking a toll on Vijay's stress levels.

Meanwhile, Divya's online boutique had started well and she wanted Vijay's help initially for shipment of her new orders.

"Honey, can you come back early from office today? I have lots of orders and I need you to drop them to the courier office today", Divya asked while Vijay was leaving to the office.

Vijay was almost feeling exhausted in the morning itself and to compound his woes, Mahesh was in the town.

"I will try honey. Mahesh is in town. If not today, I will do it tomorrow". Vijay rushed to his car.

The day was very hectic and Vijay could only get free late night. To make life difficult, Mahesh was further staying next day till afternoon; planning to return to Mumbai only in the evening.

It was 11 pm by the time Vijay could reach home. Divya opened the door.

"So late! How was your day?" Divya knew Mahesh was in town.

"Very hectic", Vijay wanted to just go to bed and crash.

Divya wanted to talk. In his new role, Vijay had become extremely busy.

“How is your new boss”? She asked.

“He is a no non-sense guy and extremely focussed about his work. People call him Ring Master. He expects people to give their 200%”. Vijay wanted to cut it short, desperate for the sleep.

“And how is your relationship with him?” Divya still persisted, hoping to spend some time with Vijay finally.

“Look Honey, I am extremely tired. Let’s talk about it later. Right now I just want to crash”, Vijay tried to be as polite as he could.

“I thought we could go for a Coffee.” Divya tried one final time. She terribly missed the fun they used to have together. She craved for the time and attention Vijay used to give her.

Vijay was irritated, but at this point of time he was too tired even to argue.

“May be tomorrow”, he said and headed to the bedroom.

“Beep.... Beep.... Beep ....” The mobile alert jolted Vijay in the morning at 6:30. Vijay wanted to get up but just thought to take a nap for 5 more minutes.

Next, it was Divya, almost shouting “Vijay, Don’t you have to go to office today”?

Vijay woke up and checked the time. It was 8 am.

“Shhhhhittt ...” He shouted. Mahesh’s face came in front of his eyes. He did not like his subordinates coming

late even by 1 minute. There was no way he could reach office by 9 am and they had a meeting at sharp 9:30.

Vijay got ready in 5 minutes, skipping the shower.

“Listen, you need to come early today. I need your help for the courier and we also have to go to Shreyansh’s birthday party.” Divya was saying. Vijay did not even care to listen and was almost running.

In spite of literally running, Vijay could reach office only at 9:15. Mahesh’s hard stare welcomed him when he entered in the office.

The next 30 minutes were pure torture for Vijay. Mahesh gave a lengthy lecture on the importance of discipline in life. They were late for customer meeting by 15 minutes. Mahesh even went to the extent to blame the delay on Vijay in front of the customer.

Though Mahesh left in the afternoon, the day was emotionally draining for Vijay. He was angry partly on himself and partly on his boss, Mahesh.

He drove back home feeling a severe headache and uneasiness.

Divya & Tanvi were ready in their party wears. Divya was expecting to get a compliment from Vijay on her new dress, but Vijay hardly noticed her. It was a tough day and he was drained out both emotionally and physically.

“Look honey, I know there is a birthday Party but I am too tired. I am sick of this hectic everyday routine, this

daily traffic & commuting, this everyday pressure and this sales stress”, Vijay said. “And today was a hard day. You could have woken me up a little early at least. It could have saved my day.” Vijay blurted out.

Divya’s mood was spoiled. First, Vijay did not even notice her new dress. Secondly, he said no to the Birthday Party which she had intimated to him in advance. But the last line, a blame from Vijay for the bad day, made her completely mad.

“And I am sick of you always being absent. You’re never with us anymore. Do you expect us to go alone to the Birthday party where all the families are invited? And, what am I supposed to say if people ask about you? Should I say my husband feels tired? Everybody will understand that you did not want to attend this Party. Why can’t you take up even ordinary responsibilities that every husband does?” Divya retorted.

“We are not going to this Party”, Divya pushed Tanvi so hard in anger that she almost fell.

“Mamma, why are we not going to the party and why did you push me?” Little Tanvi had big tears on her cheeks.

Whenever there was an argument between Vijay & Divya, Tanvi was an easy prey for Divya to vent her anger and frustration upon and she made her cry, something that she always regretted later. However, this behaviour of Divya was completely unacceptable to Vijay.

“I woke you up in the morning and instead of thanking me, you are blaming me”, Divya paid no heed to the weeping Tanvi. She was still on, badly hurt.

Vijay was mad seeing little Tanvi crying. He was very fond of her. However, he tried to control his temper. He took Tanvi in his lap and kissed her realising he should not have said the last line. “Honey, I did not want to blame you”, he tried to back paddle but it was too late. He knew it would now take considerable time to explain and say sorry to Divya before she could be normal again. He did not have the energy to be patient for so long.

Divya’s phone rang. It was her customer. She was very apologetic on the phone.

“What happened?” he asked.

“Nothing. You go and sleep.”

“Tell me please, what happened?”

“The Customer has cancelled the order since I could not ship it in time. It was my largest order till date.”

Vijay recalled. She had been requesting him for this for the last two days.

He felt both guilty and helpless. He knew now that Divya’s mood had completely gone for a toss and he would have to spend more time to get her back to normal. But he felt drained out to even make an attempt at that. He put Tanvi down from his lap and headed towards the bedroom, silently and distraught.

Divya was expecting that at least now Vijay would heed and console her. But seeing Vijay walking to the bedroom without even putting any efforts gave her only one message - “He does not care. Is our relationship dead?” She was exhausted. It was all getting too much.

The next thing Vijay knew once he lay on the bed was that Divya was crying. He rubbed his eyes. “What the hell this day had led to?”

# 11

## Slimming Centre



**N**ext morning Vijay tried to talk to Divya a couple of times, but she did not respond. Always in a hurry in the morning, he left for the office.

While on his way to the office, Vijay was thinking – “There has to be a way out. I cannot live my life like this. I have reached a stage where I am not even able to fulfil my responsibility as a normal husband.” Divya’s words of last night were echoing in his ears.

Later in the day, while he was waiting at the reception for a customer meeting, he picked up the Newspaper and browsed

through it. There was a full page ad of a Slimming Centre. “Millions of people have rediscovered themselves. Come, be part of this change”, the ad said. It also had lots of pictures of people who had lost weight with quotes that swore and declared that they had regained their youth & energy.

Vijay saved the numbers in his mobile.

After the meeting, while returning to his office, he dialled the number. The receptionist insisted that he should come to the centre immediately for a detailed consultation. He got an early morning appointment for the next day.

When he reached home, it was late evening. Vijay again tried to talk to Divya. He knew if he could propose coffee out, things would be normal. But, he reminded himself that he had to wake up early tomorrow and he could not survive the next day by squeezing his sleep.

Divya expected Vijay to at least turn up by now with a full apology and spend enough time with her, and coffee out. But seeing Vijay retiring to bedroom, she only had one thought in her mind – “Vijay really does not care for me. Worse, he does not even love me now!”

Vijay was in the slimming centre the next day at 8 am. He could see people like him in the centre getting the treatment done. The receptionist at the centre gave him the package options. She insisted that if he signed up immediately there would be additional discounts.

Vijay wanted to talk to the doctor and nutritionist first. However, the receptionist asked him to complete the payment formalities first insisting again that there would be a discount.

Vijay started getting uncomfortable. It was being hurried and he at least wanted to have a consultation first. He insisted to have a word with the centre head first.

The centre head came after a good 15 minutes and Vijay explained that he would like to consult the doctor and nutritionist first before making the payment. Finally, it was agreed and Vijay proceeded to fill up the application form.

While filling the application form, all the family medical history was asked in detail. The last column in the form asked about the current health and medical issue faced. Vijay wrote – “Obesity and Complete lack of energy”.

He entered the Doctor’s cabin. After having a glance at his medical history, the doctor took his blood pressure. The exercise was repeated a 2<sup>nd</sup> time and then a 3<sup>rd</sup> time.

“Your blood pressure is high. You should be on medicines”, said the doctor.

“I didn’t know. I never got it checked.” Vijay could murmur only these words.

The doctor prescribed a few blood tests and asked him to see her the next day.

Vijay wanted to tell this to Divya on phone but he thought he would reach home early today. Divya was surprised to see him so early back from his office.

Vijay handed over the Doctor's slip. There was a surprised look on Divya's face.

"I have high blood pressure, and the Doctor has advised a few more blood tests."

Divya's chin dropped. "Are you all right? How bad is it?" she asked, vision of him getting hospitalised running through her mind.

"I'm fine. Nothing to worry. Doctor has advised some pills", Vijay replied.

Divya hugged him. The fear about Vijay's health completely melted her. Her anger and hurt had vanished. She could not imagine her life without Vijay.

"Shall we go out for a coffee?" Vijay asked.

"No. No coffee any more. And tomorrow I will come along with you to see the doctor." She insisted.

Next morning, while taking the blood report, Vijay could see lots of red circles on the test reading.

The cholesterol was high.

"My fears were right. You have a high blood cholesterol as well." The Doctor stated with a concerned look on her face.

"But don't worry. I am prescribing you the pills which have to be taken every day." she tried to reassure.

“For how long doctor?” Vijay asked.

“For the rest of your life, I guess”, replied the Doctor.

“But are there any side effects?” Vijay wanted to know.

“Well, side effects are there for every pill in medical treatment, but if you do not take them, the main effect could be fatal. There is no choice”, she said.

Vijay & Divya looked at each other. There was no choice.

Vijay filled up the treatment program sheet. The packages were designed for the weight loss in KG – 5, 10, 15 and even 20. Vijay chose the highest weight loss package available – 20 kg. It included consultation with the dietician and a total of 24 weight loss sessions in 3 months’ time.

When they heard the cost of the package, their jaws dropped. They could buy a new 2 wheeler with that amount. Vijay wanted to settle for a cheaper package, but Divya insisted.

“Nothing is more precious than you and your health in my life, Vijay.” Divya had turned into a completely new avatar and Vijay could sense it.

He was not sure whether it was her love or her fear of loss that made this change so dramatic but Vijay loved the attention and care he started getting from Divya. This unexpected turn of events concerning Vijay’s health had brought both of them closer.

The next 3 months were spent in full discipline. Before starting the program, the centre asked Vijay to submit his current photo. The Dietician planned Vijay's full diet around calories and portion counting. Vijay had to maintain a diary about the food taken during the day and his weight was monitored on a regular basis. Twice a week, the weight loss treatment was given.

Vijay started losing weight. The changes were noticeable. Even his colleagues at the office started complimenting him.

However, Vijay had cravings for large portions and for sweets. He missed his regular meals. During this 3-month period, he was invited to 4 parties. However, keeping his weight loss goal in mind, he reined in his voraciousness.

Divya was very supportive during this process and never insisted on going out for dinners. In fact, after seeing Vijay's results, Divya was toying with the idea of undergoing the same treatment herself.

Finally, it was the last day of Vijay's 3-month program. He was ecstatic after losing 20 kg. It was sort of a dramatic transformation. The centre insisted he posed for a photograph.

That weekend, Vijay posted "before" and "after" pics on his Facebook wall. The likes and comments started pouring. At last, Vijay began to feel confident and happy.

When he posted his pics in his Alumni Group, the comments reached epic proportions. A compliment from Shilpa further reinforced that the Goal had been achieved.

That night, Vijay felt like a winner and slept like a child.

## The Ghost Returns



# 12

Next morning, when Vijay woke up, he went to his wardrobe and admired himself in the mirror. The sense of achieving the goal and the pride of being successful filled him with inner joy.

Divya was excited too. She wanted to follow the same course. However, Vijay wanted her to wait to see the long-term result.

When Vijay travelled to Mumbai next week for the Quarterly planning meet, the weight loss was evident. This time Vijay made sure he reached Mumbai office at 8 am.

“Hello Vijay! Wow, what a transformation!!” uttered Mahesh entering office at 8:30.

Mahesh was a tough nut to crack and a compliment from him was an utmost validation for Vijay. Explaining about his goal and how he achieved it gave a new high to Vijay.

However, during lunch, Vijay found it very hard to resist the cravings after seeing the lunch menu options in the canteen, but he convinced himself on the need to remain disciplined. Most of the people complimented him in his new avatar, but there were a few who told him in person that he had lost the shine on his face and that his skin looked dull. One old fat fellow told him that he had done these experiments enough in his life and had now accepted his fat looks as it kept his shine on his face. Vijay was quite amused by this theory. He himself, was not happy about a few changes in him.

First, though he was unsure about losing the shine on his face, one thing was sure that Vijay was feeling a loss of energy in spite of losing weight. His whole idea and all the effort to go for the weight loss program, was based on an assumption that he would feel super energetic after losing weight, but the reality was completely different.

Secondly, there was not much improvement in his high blood pressure problem. He was still taking the pills and according to the doctor, he might have to take them for the rest of his life.

Last but not least, after 3 months, when his weight loss goal was achieved, he was finding it increasingly difficult to control his cravings for all the foods that were banished from his diet.

It looked like God was testing Vijay's will power about losing weight.

The next weekend in Bangalore brought an invite to the house warming ceremony. A family friend had booked a villa overlooking the lake. The party was really grand and the family had got the chef and cooks from their native place.

When they arrived, there was a *strong aroma of Ghee & spices. The cuisines had multiple varieties. It was a fusion dinner of north, west and southern cuisines. The starters consisted of delicacies from freshly made samosas & Jalebis to khamman dhoklas & bakharwadi to fried rava idlis & appam to Ghee dosas. The main course was made up of special thalis and a separate counter of Chinese varieties. The dessert consisted of varieties of fresh payasam, Gulab Jamun, khubani ka meetha and ice cream & frozen desserts.*

The aroma pierced through Vijay's nostrils and he could not resist it. The weight loss goal was achieved and he wanted to celebrate his success by allowing his cravings to binge on the same food which was abandoned during the last 3 months.

Vijay ate like he had not eaten for a long, long time. He had a feeling of filling and satisfaction, his stomach

was really full now. By the time they reached home, Vijay had begun to suffer from a strong sense of guilt. However, he justified his indulgence as a reward for the efforts and sacrifices he had made in the past 3 months.

Human mind is a strange but super intelligent machine. It innovates and brings the stories, excuses and justifications to suit and defend its actions. Over the next 3 weeks, Vijay kept giving justifications to himself about his cravings for his old food habits and choices. His waist size quickly shot back to its original shape, from 32 to 36 inches and after 2 and a half months, he was back in his original shape. Worse, his energy levels were continuously falling and he felt cheated by the results he got in end.

Mahesh, his boss, came to Bangalore the following month.

“Hey Vijay! You are back to square one! What happened to you?” The instant reaction from his boss was a reality Vijay was struggling to get used to.

The FB Friends, his office colleagues and practically everybody had a sympathetic look for Vijay and he started hating it. He was hugely disappointed and was getting kind of depressed with this entire experiment. Even before, during and after the program, Vijay had never felt a surge in energy that he had expected out of this program. The new clothes he had proudly purchased in the recent past could not be worn anymore and they teased him from inside the wardrobe.

The weight loss turned out to be a temporary phenomenon and it came back very strongly.

## Joining the Gym



# 13

Vijay soon weighed the same as he did before he had joined the weight loss programme. More than the reverse weight gain, it was this overwhelming feeling of failure and frustration that was sucking his happiness. He felt more tired than before.

It was Divya who kept him motivated during this entire period. She was observing Vijay's behaviour closely and was able to understand his mental agony.

Finally, she decided to talk about it. After putting Tanvi to sleep, she came and sat on the bed.

“Honey, what’s the matter? You seem to be upset these days.” Divya knew the reason very well but she knew that the problem has to be acknowledged and uttered by Vijay himself first.

“Divya, you know it well.”

“Tell me please.” Divya probed.

“You know it Divya. This entire experience of losing and regaining weight, I am not happy about it.”

“It has not helped me at all. I still feel fatigued for the most part of the day and life cannot go like this.”

“I know, but let me tell you I have also seen people not losing weight in spite of joining the slimming centres.” Divya went on to cite multiple examples in her friend circle. “You did that in the 1<sup>st</sup> place instantly, and I am proud of you.” She wanted to cheer Vijay.

“Actually it is not all about losing weight alone.” Vijay started opening up. “I opted for this program because I thought that by losing weight, I could regain my energy levels. That did not happen. And with this fatigue, I will fail in my Job, I will fail as a husband and father and I cannot even think about starting on my own. I will die with my dreams inside.”

“Vijay, I know you for years and I also know you are a fighter. If you set your mind on something, you will get it, come what may.” Divya knew Vijay needed emotional support this time. “It is this strength of yours which makes

me feel proud of you. You have still got this strength inside you, I am just reminding you about it.” She kissed Vijay on his cheek and hugged him tight.

“Why don’t you try joining a Gym with a good personal trainer? May be that can help.” Divya suggested.

Next morning, when Vijay was reading the newspaper, he saw an ad about a fitness club.

“The Diamond Gym”, the ad read “with a personal trainer”. Vijay made a mental note of the address and decided to check it out.

That evening, Vijay found himself in the fitness club. The club had an array of packages, and Vijay opted for the package which had a personal trainer. He enrolled for a 1-month program.

Waking up early at 5:30 am and reaching the gym by 6 was quite a task for Vijay considering his hectic Job routine, but Vijay had to take action now. The trainer did not have much information on the fatigue and energy part. He recommended Vijay saw a doctor. However, his explanation on losing weight was simple; Calorie in and Calorie out. “Whatever calorie you get from the food, you need to spend more calorie in comparison and you will start losing weight.”

The trainer further explained, “Even if you eat 1 Samosa, it gives approx. 200 cal and if you do treadmill for 45 minutes, you burn 150 cal. So you still have a balance

of 50 cal left in your body and hence need to be really careful about the choices.”

This explanation centred around the food portions and calorie counting. This was on the similar lines Vijay had heard in the slimming centre. He knew it was a theory focussed on deprivation which could not be sustained in the long run.

However, while in the slimming centre, the weight loss was achieved by heating & sweating, here it was supposed to be done by running, aerobics & sweating. Since Vijay was on medication, he was advised to take up light exercises.

The weight loss did not happen much though Vijay was feeling relaxed after the exercise. The program went on for a month.

Around this time, Vijay had to go to Chennai to attend some important meetings, and Divya's parents came to stay with them. A break of 10 days disrupted Vijay's routine and though he knew Gym would benefit him, the change was not drastic enough to push him to go for it in a focussed manner.

He was busy in his high pressure job again managing his work and his life – trying to make a balance, but it looked like the real answers to his problems were not close anywhere yet!

## Slimming Powder



**I**t was fiscal year-end, and the pressure at work was mounting day by day.

Mahesh's trips became more frequent and it almost became bi-weekly. In the meanwhile, Divya's clothing business had started picking up and she longed for Vijay's support for expansion but Vijay did not find much time and energy to get involved and support her.

He went to office early morning, dropping Tanvi to school on his way, and by the time he came back, it was almost 10 pm. Life had become a routine affair

and he was not finding enough time to spend with Tanvi as well.

Vijay still had Naresh's pics on the collage and now they had a WhatsApp group for their college alumni as well. They all were planning to meet again. Seeing other classmates' success stories, Vijay was sometimes inspired and sometimes feeling desperate – the pain of carrying all his dreams inside him was too much to bear.

It was becoming a life of quiet desperation for Vijay. He was lost managing his Job, his Boss, his family, and now Divya had also started reminding him about the house that they wanted to buy. It was a dream home for Divya. Vijay also wanted to buy the house but this new demand meant that he had to start hunting for it. It would be a long process and would take a few months, especially all the weekends.

Vijay wanted to have the energy so that he could go back to his life and do all of this. His cholesterol and blood pressure pills were still on. The slimming centre experiment was not successful and joining the GYM again did not appeal to Vijay. His mind was actively looking for some solution which could fix his problem quickly.

It was during this time that he came across an ad in a popular magazine. It was about a slimming powder. The powder was not available in India. It had to be imported. There seemed to be lots of customer testimonials around it. It had to be taken 2 times a day and it would dissolve

body fat and increase the energy level. It also mentioned that it had only minimal side effects, which were possible with any drug and that it was completely safe.

Vijay was so desperate for something like this that he did not bother to check further. His first 2 experiments were public failures and this time he wanted to keep it a secret affair, so much so that he did not even inform Divya about it. He wanted to play it safe. If it works, it will be a great story that he was able to do it on his own. There is nobody else to be given credit to, all credit will be to himself like so many customer testimonials published in that magazine. If it does not work, at least he does not need to face another public humiliation. It will die a secret death.

That night Vijay filled up all the details on the website. On punching in the credit card details, the 6-digit OTP number appeared on his mobile. Vijay took a long breath. The price was high, but this time he was doing it privately. He was trying his best to solve his issues. He punched the OTP and pressed the enter key. “Please do not press back / refresh this page”, the message blinked on the monitor.

Vijay’s mind was still racing.

“Shall I press the back button? Have I made the right decision?”

Before he could think further, the message was displayed –“Your transaction has been successful. Please check your email for further details.”

Vijay checked his mail box and there was an email from the company. This was a legitimate email and Vijay finally took a sigh of relief.

That night when he went to sleep, Vijay was all smiles.

“If this works”, he was thinking, “I would be able to move on in my life.”

## The Real Opportunity



It was the last week of the year end closing. There was still lot more to be done to record YOY growth. Vijay had no time to relax. Two of his major customer contracts were still pending to be closed.

When he was just coming out of the conference hall after the team call by Mahesh, he saw Charles, his ex-boss, waiting for him outside.

“Hey Charles, How are you?” Vijay asked.

Vijay was so busy in catching up with his new Job that he barely met Charles

# 15

after his role change. However, he always had that rapport and comfort with Charles having worked with him for a good three years.

“I am great Vijay. I want to spend some time with you. May be during lunch?” Charles suggested.

“Why not boss, anytime!” Vijay replied.

Charles took Vijay outside for lunch.

Vijay could not believe his ears. His ex-boss Charles was talking about entrepreneurship and his start-up. And he wanted to bring Vijay on-board.

It was an idea about an ambitious project. Charles was talking extremely passionately about it –something which would change the course of citizen rights in this country – The Online Voting System.

The problem was very simple. A significant portion of urban population do not cast their vote. One of the primary reasons is the migration of population. People who migrate to another city for jobs or business opportunities fail to vote in an election because they are registered voters back home. They cannot travel back to cast their vote. Besides, there are people with health issues who won't be able to cast their vote on a particular day. The online voting system will eliminate any need to travel and people would be able to cast their votes sitting at home, even if they are unwell on that day.

This will change the course of this country. However, there were multiple issues – security and safety concerns, political will and initial funding. The concept was to build a prototype and test it in a pilot projects and later present it to the Government.

Charles was looking to build an initial core team. Based on their dedication and output, the roles and responsibilities will later be defined and carried out. The first few pilot project tests had to be done on their own and then they could pitch for VC Funding.

Vijay had goosebumps as Charles unfolded his plans.

He looked at Charles with a side glance. Charles was 52, yet looked in his 40s. He was full of energy & verve. He had proven experience, a solid reputation, a track record of success and he sounded extremely passionate about his business idea. Any possible venture capitalist would look to his personal credibility very positively.

# 16

## Persuasion



Vijay was so excited that he could barely sleep the entire night.

It was a dream come true for him, to get an opportunity to be on his own. However, building something new while doing a full time job was never easy.

The first sacrifice would be family time. With his day time travelling job, he was not sure by what time he would be reaching home and then working from home till late night on his start-up. That would mean no time for Divya and Tanvi.

Images of Divya's silent treatments with seething anger almost pushed Vijay into thinking mode.

"What could be the other option?" he thought.

The only other option was to squeeze time during the weekends. Either way he had to stretch himself if he wanted to build his start-up.

Vijay knew he had to play some drama, but the efforts would be worth it and finally he could start his journey about building something on his own.

So the next day, when he returned home, he was completely silent.

"What's the matter?" enquired Divya.

"Nothing". Vijay was playing it very carefully and brought some more melancholy to his face.

"There is something you are hiding, what's that?" insisted Divya.

"Nothing much to discuss. You know my ex-boss Charles. He is now starting on his own and he wants to on-board key people to build his core team." Vijay pretended with a causal tone. "However, when he asked me if I was interested, I told him I was not sure."

"But why? You did not like his plan?" asked Divya.

"I liked his plan. What he is setting out to do is very ambitious and exciting. However, to be able to commit to

him would need two things – Time & Effort. You know, I cannot leave my full time job at this point of time.”

“So, where is the problem exactly?”

“The efforts part, I can manage. I will slog it out and work more. However, the time part – either it has to be squeezed from the week days or during the weekend. Either way, it is yours & Tanvi’s time which will be sacrificed, and so I told him I might not be able to do it. What’s the point of doing something which takes away our family’s happiness?” Vijay had bowled the googly.

“Vijay, when you can think about our happiness”, Divya came close to Vijay, “why can’t we think about your happiness?” She put her arms around Vijay’s neck.

“Give us at least one outing in the week and we will not complain”, Divya reassured.

“By the way, how long is it going to last?” Divya asked.

Vijay knew this was an important question and had to be answered carefully.

“I am not sure, but I guess at least 3-6 months to begin with”, answered Vijay. He knew if he told that he was going to do this any longer, Divya might change her mind.

“I think, Tanvi and I can do that much for you”, Divya replied.

“Thank you Honey!” Vijay was smiling, knowing that the next innings would be interesting.

## The Slogging



**D**uring the next few months Vijay worked tirelessly day & night. Managing the job and his work at Charles's start-up was not easy.

Mahesh's visits to Bangalore had become more frequent and it meant Vijay needed to be on his toes always. His numbers and pressure in the sales job had increased two folds. Now he used to start early for office and would come late in the night. Sometimes there were late night phone calls with Charles as well about their project.

Meanwhile, the slimming powder had arrived at Vijay's office address. He had been able to hide this perfectly from everybody. After taking the powder, Vijay used to feel very thirsty. The instructions on the cover unambiguously said a lot of water had to be taken along with the powder.

In spite of working madly and always exhausted & short of energy, Vijay was still very happy from the inside. Whenever he was pissed off with Mahesh's sales pressures and illogical customers, he just engrossed himself into his project and spoke to Charles.

Divya was observing the changes in Vijay's routine as well as his ever busy schedule. She was now concerned about his pace.

"Vijay, you are working too hard. Slow down." She came into the study room late one night.

"I will Divya. A few more months' slogging, and then hopefully we can have a new beginning." said Vijay.

"Look Vijay, I am concerned. I do not know if you have observed the changes in yourself but you have gained weight significantly, at least 15 kg more from your earlier weight. On top of it, your physical exercise is zero and last time you were diagnosed with high blood pressure and cholesterol. I feel very scared sometimes." Divya came closer to him.

"And now you have started hiding things from me as well", it was almost a complaint.

Vijay was dumb struck. “How did Divya see it? In my Bag?” His mind was racing.

“Oh that powder, I just ordered it to experiment honey.” Vijay’s mind was still trying to find a logical explanation on having been caught red-handed.

“Next week, we are going to the doctor for your full body check-up. No more excuses”, Divya declared.

“Not next week dear. Because, we have a presentation on our final prototype. But the week after, for sure, as per your order, me lord!” Vijay smiled.

Divya smiled back, a frown still creasing her forehead. Vijay tried not to stare – she always looked pretty that way.

The Pilot had progressed fast and after five months of sweating, their initial prototype was planned to go live next week. So much so that Charles had arranged for a meeting with potential investors.

They had done the final testing and the prototype was ready to be presented the next morning. Vijay slept early that night, so that he could remain alert next morning.

It was going to be a big day for their entire team!

# 18

## The Crisis



**T**he alarm went off at 6 am.

Vijay opened his eyes but he could not get up. He tried hard but he was at a complete loss of energy. Moreover, he was having excruciating abdominal pain.

Vijay had to shout for Divya, who finally woke up and seeing vijay's condition panicked at first. However, she soon dialled for ambulance.

Divya left Tanvi with their neighbour and sat in the ambulance along with Vijay.

Though Divya had put up a brave front, she was shattered from inside. Her worst

fears had come true. While she was sitting beside Vijay, she had a close look at him - There was, to all appearances and by the accepted standards, nothing wrong apart from the obesity which was visible.

The doctors moved Vijay to the ICU and ordered all the tests. It was cirrhosis of the liver, coupled with the excruciating pains of neuritis, which was definitely not something to ignore.

The doctor advised six weeks of complete bed rest followed by more tests and monitoring.

Divya was still not satisfied.

“What do you mean by more monitoring?” she asked the doctor.

“I do not want to give a false assurance to you. We are taking all possible measures. His condition is bad. He has been carrying a condition called fatty liver disease alongside his obesity, which has now caused the cirrhosis. Cirrhosis of the liver is not completely curable. Liver transplant is the only option available. However, your husband’s condition is not that bad now. But, you need to be very careful and go for a complete life-style change.” The doctor said coldly. “Do not give him anything which would put a burden on his liver, for example, alcohol. His blood pressure and cholesterol levels are high. They must be under control to avoid any further damage.”

Divya’s heart was sinking. But In her moment of panic, she became determined to do anything to keep her family

intact. She called up Vijay's parents who immediately flew in from Pune.

Vijay was discharged 3 days later and was asked to come for routine check-ups thereafter.

However Vijay did not recover from the setback quickly. He saw clouds in the horizon. He found himself on a shaky wicket. He realised that if he does not have energy and vibrant health, he cannot do anything – no job, no business. Deep in his subconscious mind, he also became aware of the fact that all of his previous efforts to regain his health & energy had not yielded the desired results.

Divya tried her best to put up a brave face. She tried to demonstrate that she was in control of the situation and pretended as if it was not as bad as it was being perceived. She knew that all her tenacity and courage would be put to test in the coming days. Often she had to attend to the calls from her customers while busily engaged in some other work with the ear phone plugged in and the phone tucked into the pocket of her apron. When alone in the kitchen, she wanted to cry. She began to feel the pangs of guilt for not having been conscious of her husband's health needs. She was worried about Tanvi's emotional wellbeing too.

Tanvi on her part was ignorant of the real seriousness of the situation. She was told that her father would not be able to play with her and pamper her like before, at least

in the immediate future. However being just 5 year old, it was a bit difficult for her to come to terms for it and understand the actual reason. Also she was emotionally close to Vijay. However she found new companions in the house – her grandparents.

The presence of Vijay's parents in the house did not help much in the beginning. Vijay's father himself had obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes and was on severe medications. However he started spending some quality outdoor time with Tanvi. Soon, they became very fond of each other.

Vijay's mother had arthritis and was unable to do much work. However Divya found someone with whom she could share her stress and it helped her becoming calm. Vijay's mother morning prayers and chants in the house started bringing positive vibes and Divya realised that in spite of not being able to help, the presence of Vijay's parents gave her lot more emotional support.

# 19

## A Ray of Hope, Finally



Vijay applied for a long leave from work on medical grounds. Mahesh phoned him to enquire about his health.

Charles also visited Vijay at his home. Charles updated Vijay that the meeting that day had gone quite well. However, Vijay was unsure whether he would be able to contribute further to the project at that point of time.

Couple of weeks passed by but Vijay's recovery was very slow. He was still unable to regain his strength and his days were passed in much pain and weakness.

Divya wanted a clear information from the Doctors but they were still kept on a wait and watch mode. Finally, she was able to impress upon one of Vijay's doctors that she would be better off if she had the real picture about Vijay's health. The doctor took her to his office, made her relax for a while and then informed her that although Vijay's condition does not seem to be deteriorating, the sorry part remains that he wasn't making progress towards recovery and that there wasn't much that could be done at the moment. "He should be in bed for at least a few months", he said with a tone of finality.

It was exactly 16 days from the date of discharge, when their neighbour Prem returned from abroad and dropped in to see Vijay.

Vijay always admired Prem. Prem was one of the most vibrant, energetic and healthy individuals in their neighbourhood. He was almost 45 but looked at least 10 years younger.

Vijay opened up with Prem about his hospitalisation and his current medical condition - cirrhosis of the liver, accompanied by excruciating pain of neuritis.

"Cirrhosis is a progressive disease, developing slowly over many years", Prem declared. "The liver carries out several essential functions, including the detoxification of harmful substances in the body. It synthesises vital nutrients. Cirrhosis is a reflection of what all wrong is going on inside the liver for a long period of time."

“Have you been feeling extremely tired of late?” asked Prem.

“Are you a medical doctor man?” Vijay was amazed at Prem’s knowledge.

“I am not a medical doctor, just a student of health”, Prem was smiling.

Vijay’s mother peeped in and said a feeble ‘Hello’ to Prem and disappeared into the kitchen. Prem called out to her and said he would not have anything to drink.

For Vijay, It was a relief to finally have someone to talk to about everything. He found himself opening up about all his experiments with Prem, his hide and seek play with his body weight and his continuous experience of feeling loss of energy for the past few months and his experiments– starting from energy pills, slimming centre, the gymnasium and the slimming powder.

“I think I have a unique problem. Whatever I try does not work. Either my body is not supporting or I am doing something fundamentally incorrect.” More than looking puzzled, Vijay’s face had feelings of pain and frustration.

Prem had a sparkle on his face.

“I can understand your situation”, said Prem. “Because I was exactly in the same situation 8 years back.”

“Really?” Vijay asked in surprise.

“Really”. Prem opened his wallet and handed a business card to Vijay. “I suggest you consult with this person.”

Vijay took the card. “Harish Bhat.”

“I highly recommend him. He’s a health & wellness coach.”

Vijay looked at him blankly.

“Health coaches are a new breed of health professionals. A Health coach is a supportive mentor and wellness authority who works with clients to help them feel their best by making healthy lifestyle choices. Whether the goal is to lose weight, increase energy or sleep better at night, a health coach motivates individuals to make lasting changes and feel their best”, Prem explained.

Vijay was not completely convinced.

“But why a health coach? Isn’t the doctor enough?” He asked.

“There are two issues here. First of all, traditional doctors and physicians study the disease in a major field called as Pathology. The main focus is on after-the-fact; repair and damage control. Certainly, that is most important once you have already fallen sick. However, there is no focus on before –the- fact; what needs to be done so that you stay healthy. So much so that there is not even a word in modern medicine about study of health - Prem explained.

“However the time is changing now. Many of the traditional doctors and physicians have started incorporating nutrition and health with their practice of

medicine. They take a keen interest in it but they do not always have the time & resources to help their patients build the healthy habits and change their lifestyle. Less than 3% of doctors' visits are spent discussing nutrition. Trillions of dollars are spent on healthcare, yet less than 2% of that goes for prevention. One in five people will die of obesity and every year there are over 30 million preventable health related deaths worldwide. Relationships, exercise, career and spirituality are factors sometimes as important to our health as what we eat and yet the current system fails to address that."

There was an uneasy calm in the room. This was a new information and Vijay was still processing it in his head.

"Does that make sense?" Prem asked after allowing enough time for his message to sink in Vijay's mind.

"It does, actually." Vijay nodded his head. It was time to figure it out, for his life to work.

"Can he help me for a speedy recovery from Cirrhosis?"

"He is an expert on weight loss, disease prevention and lifestyle disease reversal. Cirrhosis is a progressive disease attributed to lifestyle as well."

"Is he expensive?"

"You will be saving more money in the long run by eliminating the root causes."

Prem's words were making sense and after a long time, Vijay felt better and more in control of his life.

## The Second Advice



# 20

As Prem was about to leave, Divya returned from the market. She had gone out to buy the new medicines prescribed by the doctors.

Divya had told Vijay not to try anything new without involving her. She was kind of scared after Vijay's hospitalisation. Although when Vijay told about Prem's recommendation, she listened to it attentively, her mind wasn't yet open to go for a new experiment.

“Vijay, why don't you take advice from Naresh as well? He is your good friend and

somebody who was talking to you about the importance of health and energy.” Divya asked.

Vijay realised it was time he spoke to Naresh and sought his advice. He had tried everything but nothing was working out.

“Naresh should be able to help”, Vijay agreed with Divya.

Vijay called up Naresh. Naresh said he was concerned about Vijay’s health and that he had come to know of his illness from the group, although he didn’t know how serious it was.

After listening to Vijay patiently for half an hour, the recommendation from Naresh was similar he had heard before. Naresh too advised that he needed to consult a health coach.

“Health coaches consider all areas of a person’s life and address a wide variety of wellness factors. They work in conjunction with physicians, nurses and dieticians and serve to fill a void in our current healthcare system. Health coaches serve as wellness mentors who help people find foods, relationships, fitness routines and lifestyles that make them feel their best.” Naresh explained.

“Any good reference in Bangalore?” Vijay asked.

“There is one gentleman that I personally know of – Harish Bhat. He is very passionate and down-to-earth. He has helped hundreds of people achieve their health goals and should be able to help you as well.” Naresh replied.

“You have always been a fighter, Vijay. You have always been positive. I can see you coming out a winner this time too. Do let me know if I could be of any further help.” Naresh reassured.

“Thanks a lot Naresh. You are already proven helpful. Will catch up with you soon. Bye”, Vijay already seemed to be on the way to recovery.

Divya did not fail to notice it and turned her face sideways to rub off the lone tear that had rolled down from the corner of her eye.

“So, that saves us the difficulty of taking a decision now. We have this common recommendation from two reliable people.” Vijay had seen Divya fighting her tears. He took her hand in his hands and gently massaged it.

“I have put my wife and the entire family into a very difficult situation. I appreciate the way you have risen to the occasion. And that gives me the strength to fight on. You are my strength, and your courage is my armour”, Vijay said feeling Divya’s untrimmed fingernails.

Divya buried her face in his lap and cried.

Vijay ran his fingers through the silk hair of his wife. He couldn’t open his eyes for the fear of revealing the moisture there.

# 21

## A Different Experience



When Vijay dialled Harish's number, there was only a recorded voice message which seemed somewhat strange to Vijay. The voice explained that Harish accepted only very few clients and they had to fill an application form. Harish would then review the form to determine if they would benefit from a one-hour orientation appointment.

After putting Tanvi to sleep, Divya joined Vijay who was browsing through the site. It was very informative. It clearly explained what a health coach is and how they help. There were a number of

testimonials as well. Vijay saw Prem's picture also among the testimonials. There was a section dedicated to FAQ.

After downloading the application form, Vijay just opened the PDF file.

“Too long”, he said.

Divya was also surprised. “How long is that?”

“It's several pages long and only after we fill and submit this, he will confirm if he can meet us.”

Vijay gave the print command.

“Then if he agrees to meet us, we have to get an appointment.”

When Vijay had called up the slimming centre, his appointment was immediately fixed. The receptionist was almost insisting on immediate payment. Here on his website, it was a complete contrast. It was written that he only accepted clients he thought would benefit from him, and the objective of the first meeting was to know each other well and determine if they could work together as a team for a long-term relationship.

“I am feeling like I am applying for a Job”, Vijay said, slightly discouraged.

# 22

## Application Form



The application form was long and unlike what Vijay and Divya had seen before. Divya wanted to check it out too.

This was nothing like an ordinary medical form. Apart from the fields for regular medical history and current medications, there were fields for detailed description of their daily and weekly lifestyle habits, Diet, Exercise, Sleep & Rest, Relaxation, Relationships, even career and spirituality. It also asked where they lived, what kind of surroundings they had, and whether they had access to clean air, water, and sun shine. They had

to tick if they spent any time close to nature, in parks or in woods.

It took over an hour for Vijay to write in detail about his food habits, his daily work life, time taken in commuting in traffic and time taken to watch TV. After completing this first section, there was a self-assessment – “How healthy and energetic do you feel right now?” Vijay gave himself a rating of 1 on a scale of 10.

Section 2 had the essay-type questions. The starting question took considerable time and thinking for Vijay to answer. It started with a statement – “Being healthy is not a goal, it is a lifestyle choice”. “What would you do if you get vibrant health and supreme energy? What goals would you want to achieve?” It further asked, “If health was no issue and you had unlimited energy, what are the 3 important things you would want to do, want to have or wish to achieve in your life?” And yet another one asked, “How important are these 3 goals for you in your life? Are they plain wish list, or are you serious about them? How would you feel if you are able to achieve these goals within a stipulated time period?”

Answering these and the rest of the questions on the application involved lots of thinking and soul searching. Vijay wrote his first priority about having a disease reversal of Cirrhosis and attaining vibrant health & unlimited energy. He would like to build his own start-up. It was his dream. He wanted to become his own boss and it would

bring satisfaction to him, to be able to create something on his own.

His 2<sup>nd</sup> goal was to be able to have enough energy to spend quality time with his family – Divya & Tanvi. He wanted to be an ideal husband and an ideal father to his family by making sure he spent enough time with them in spite of his busy schedule.

His 3<sup>rd</sup> goal was to feel happy from inside. He had tried so many approaches and had failed in all of them. He felt he was not able to take control of his life. If he could find a way out and succeed, it would bring internal joy, satisfaction and mental victory for him. Further, he could help and inspire others who are in through the same struggling journey.

Writing these answers made Vijay really think about what he wanted in life. Becoming healthy was not a goal, it was a tool, a process to live his life fully. After he finished, he scanned and uploaded the form online. Instantly, he received an automated message that the application would be reviewed soon, and he would be notified if he merited an appointment.

Vijay felt like he had appeared for his engineering exam again and was waiting for his results. He was anxious but at the same time hopeful. Whatever insight he had gained from the whole exercise made him feel reassured. Further, he felt satisfaction after the ‘self-discovery’ exercise which, he realised now, had reinforced his motivation to work on

his health issues. He knew that he was looking forward to hear back from them.

Finally on Friday he received an email confirmation about his application having been accepted. This was followed by a telephonic confirmation from his assistant.

# 23

## Initial Appointment



**D**ivya insisted she would accompany Vijay on his first visit to Harish's office as she wanted to be with him on this important occasion. She understood the importance of this meeting and wanted to know how she could also pitch in. She craved for those happy days of the past. She was hopeful.

It was a new experience for Vijay. To begin with, sending an application form and then doing an online payment for this initial meeting was very new. Then he was invited to Harish's house which was also quite different from the established

protocol. He was also advised to bring all his test reports and records pertaining to his recent hospitalisation.

Vijay had remembered his first meeting at the Slimming centre. Within 10 minutes, the receptionist had got him to sign up the program. He was now clear of one thing. He was not going to sign up for any program without discussing it with Divya privately.

It was a modest yet decent 2-storey house in HSRLayout and the basement served as the office. The surroundings had thick vegetation and the front had a small cute lawn with beautiful flowers.

Harish, a lean man in his 40s, in Jeans and half sleeves check collar shirt, with a radiant smile welcomed them at the door. He ushered them to the drawing room. He had a glow in his eyes and on his skin. "Welcome, and thanks for coming", he said. "We can discuss in the basement office. But if you prefer, there is a terrace garden as well with enough shade and sunshine and today is a beautiful day."

"Terrace garden would be a better choice" Vijay replied.

It was a beautiful terrace garden, almost hidden from the front view. It had colourful flowers and different types of plants & herbs in earthen pots. Vijay & Divya were surprised with this informal setting and environment, but they were at complete ease.

Harish went to the chairs placed around a round table and waited till Divya and Vijay made themselves

comfortable. Divya was looking at the white, yellow and red Bougainville that lined the terrace.

“During the next 1 hour, I am going to ask you lots of questions to find more information about you and to find whether I can help you. If I feel that we can achieve good results, I will explain how I work. Please feel free to ask any questions that you have in mind. Do you have any questions before we start?” Harish said when he saw his guests were relaxed.

Vijay was hesitant in the beginning but the informal set up and Harish’s smile made him at ease.

“I am glad to meet you Harish, but you are not exactly what I had expected to see!” He exclaimed.

“Oh”, Harish said, “What had you expected to see in me?” With a wide smile now.

“Actually in our family and circle, portly and imposing men are considered healthy. You are too thin to be a good example for your teachings. I know I am obese but you should be much heavier!” Vijay was actually in awe of seeing a fit Harish, but he was presenting the same argument which he heard on a daily basis.

“Oh really”? Harish replied. “You never have a headache, indigestion, acidity, heartburn, gas or liver trouble? Did you ever see a fat race horse? My body is of the race horse type, never troubled with any of these disturbances.”

“But aren’t they natural conditions which everybody is subjected to?”

“Not at all. Once you lose 10-20 kg, you would realise that these conditions which you call natural are, literally indications of a sick body.” Harish explained.

“In fact”, Harish added, “there are many degrees of health.” Someone says, “Oh, I am doing pretty well!” Another says, “If it was not for my joint pains or Acidity or Gas problem or Constipation, I would feel fine”.

Yet another one may say, “I have just returned from a visit to the doctor. My doctor says there is nothing wrong with me. I wish he could feel the same way I feel right now, then he would know.”

“How many of us, when asked, how are you today? Can honestly answer- I am right on top of the world. That is what vibrant health is all about.”

Vijay was sure he was talking to a man who was an epitome of supreme health.

“Any more questions?” Harish asked.

“Nope.” Both Vijay and Divya replied in unison now.

“Great. I have gone through your application carefully, but let’s begin by you telling me what brought you here today.”

“To be specific, we have come here for a speedy recovery from cirrhosis of the liver and from this excruciating pains

of neuritis as you would have seen in the hospitalisation reports.” Vijay explained.

“Cirrhosis of the liver and neuritis are progressive diseases largely contributed by lifestyle. They are symptoms of what is going inside your body. How was your day to day health and energy levels before this hospitalisation?”

Vijay explained his experiments and struggles and his continued fatigue and loss of energy.

“So, in addition to the speedy recovery from current ailments, what else do you want to achieve?”

“I want to achieve a constant state of vibrant health, the way you just explained, so that I can experience this feeling of being on top of the world with unlimited energy. That will help me doing the things and achieving my goals I care about”. Vijay fixed his gaze on Harish.

“And what are those goals”? Harish asked.

Vijay spoke about his start-up dreams, how he needed to manage his work life and how he wish he could spend more time with family. Harish was all ears.

“And how would achieving these goals make you feel”?

“Well, achieving these goals would bring so much joy. It would make me happy from inside. I want to have a feeling to be able to create and contribute in this world through my start-up. It will give me a sense of purposefulness about my life. And spending time with my family is a bliss.” Vijay had started smiling even while talking about it. He went on talking about it for quite some time.

“All right”, Harish said when Vijay finished. “I can see achieving these goals is important to you. Remember, it is extremely important to have clear goals which would keep you motivated to bring out the changes you are seeking in life. Being healthy in itself is not a long term goal. It is more like a tool, like a process. What all you can do after becoming healthy, after that newfound energy, what would you like to be, have or become – that is what your goal needs to be and something which will drive you from inside for long term.” Harish explained.

“Now let’s see how far we can get with the basics.”

Harish started with specific questions like, “Do you have any other specific medical issues?” And some very broad philosophical questions such as, “What would it take to live the life you’ve always wanted?” Some of these questions were things Vijay had not considered and he had to think about them.

Then Harish went into some of the specifics about medical history, recent hospitalisation reports and current lifestyle choices regarding food, sleep, rest, exercises etc. Vijay talked about all the experiments he did for weight loss and how it was always a temporary success. Also, how he felt like a failure and loser after trying so many ways out. On this Harish said, “Failure is not bad. In fact it is the stepping stones to your success.” Harish went ahead to share some of his life experiences about failures.

It was well past 1 hour when Harish said, “I think we could work well together, so I’m willing to take you on as my client”.

Harish's words had already begun to instil hope and confidence in Vijay and Divya. Divya was only listening till this point of time.

“But we do not know anything”, she said.

“That's true. But if you would have figured it out yourself, you wouldn't need me.” Harish smiled. “I receive multiple applications every day but I want to work with those people who are genuinely interested in improving their lives. Your sincerity towards filling up the application form and the time you spent getting all the information together prove your strong desire to improve your health. Further your clarity about the goals you want to achieve makes you a committed person and it will be my privilege to help you out in this Journey.”

Vijay was happily smiling. “What next from our side?” he asked.

“Next, if you want to schedule a meeting again, you can do that or if you first want to talk about it internally, you can go home, discuss it out and then schedule a meeting if you would like to work with me.”, Harish replied.

Vijay was impressed with this down-to-earth approach and he felt completely at ease.

He looked into Divya's eyes. Divya's eyes were reassuring and satisfied. She closed and opened her eyes in a way that only Vijay could understand and it meant 'Yes'.

“We would like to schedule an appointment now while we’re here”, Vijay suggested after getting this secret nod from Divya.

“Great. You will be able to save some time as my schedule fills up fast. While you are back home, you can discuss more and I would be happy to answer any questions when we meet again”, Harish said.

They fixed the next appointment for early next week.

# 24

## First Impression



“I was thinking about the same but your nod gave me the encouragement to book it right away”, Vijay said while smiling at Divya driving back.

“You know honey, I get the vibes very easily and my hunch is never wrong”, said Divya. “His eyes had a glow, he made us extremely comfortable and he was genuinely interested in knowing more about you and your health issues.” She continued.

“You are right. He did not force us for any sign up. It was me who did most of the

talking. And the kind of questions he was asking was very intriguing and thoughtful. In fact, it is almost opposite to the experience I had in the slimming centre, where I was chased up to sign the program.”

“So, shall I sign up with him?” Vijay asked.

“Well, when both you and I get agreed on something quickly, it definitely means it is special and not ordinary. And this person falls into that category”, Divya was smiling.

“In fact, I am also very hopeful that you will be able to get a quick recovery from Cirrhosis of the liver. And I see myself enrolling to his program too”, she continued. “I think he understands your situation very well.”

“All right, let’s do it”, Vijay said, pressing on the accelerator. It felt like a very smart decision.

“But wait, we did not ask his fee”, Vijay recalled all of a sudden.

“Hmmm, Hope he is not expensive. But anyways, even if he turns out to be expensive, I think we have not much choice left and it will be our smartest decision off late”, Divya replied, almost like reading Vijay’s thought.

# 25

## The Decision



When Vijay and Divya went to meet Harish the next time, he took time to explain in details how his health consulting engagement will work. He went through line by line and made sure both of them understood everything.

When they were done, Harish took out his fee letter and quoted his fee. Both Vijay and Divya looked at each other. It was the same amount Vijay had spent on his slimming course for 3 months engagement. Harish explained how an investment on disease prevention and disease reversal would save them lots of

money in comparison to the treatment of only symptoms. When they signed, they knew it was one of their best decisions so far regarding health.