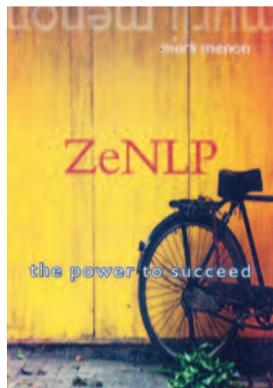


Be a better manager, plant a tree today

RITA ANAND



ZeNLP: the power to succeed

Murl Menon

Sage Publications

Rs 185

SPIRITUALITY is attracting more and more attention in the corporate world and it's easy to see why. If you want to succeed, change the way you think. And if you can find a guru who can tell you how, it is easier to embark on the road less travelled.

In recent years management schools have come in for a good deal of criticism. It is said they churn out employees not entrepreneurs. But businesses run as much on gut and

instinct as they do on rational choices and predictability.

Murl Menon teaches people to listen to those inner voices. His motivational workshops are based on Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Zen meditation techniques. Blue chip companies invite Menon to de-stress their CEOs and managers. When we met up with him he was off to do a workshop for Jubliant, a chemicals company. But his list of clients includes schoolteachers, NGOs, government officials and spastics.

NLP regards the mind as a computer. If you want your PC to work differently, then you have to change its software. To make you think afresh, Menon relies on auto suggestion, visualisation, meditation, mantras and even tree planting. Wisdom from the Vedas and tribal traditions has been culled together.

Does it work? The answer comes from Murl Menon's life. On January 1, 1995, Menon, then a product manager with Astra Zeneca, was returning from a New Year's eve party when he was hit by a truck. The accident caused brain haemorrhage and paralysed the left side of his body.

No doctor was willing to predict when and how Murl Menon would recover. He was prescribed strong anti-epileptic drugs. But Murl Menon was made of different stuff. He had undergone training in Neuro Linguistic Programming and was doing Zen meditation before his accident. He was sure his mind would heal his body.

So he began practising NLP techniques: visualisation, chanting, tribal meditation. It took him four months to recover without any medication.

Murl Menon stepped out of the corporate world to spread his knowledge. He discarded his suit for a flowing kurta-pyjama and comfy sneakers. In the beginning, his methods were looked upon with scepticism. Today his workshops of 20 participants with their spouses, are not only motivational, but great fun as well. Books and pencils are banned. You get to plant your own tree, chant a special mantra and follow your dreams, seriously.

Menon has recently published a book explaining his techniques. It is a step by step guide which anybody can use to rid the mind of cobwebs.

A valuable lesson is that trust matters a lot in business. Communicate in a language which touches emotions and you are sure to get a response. Some react to pictures, others to sound or to touch. According to Murl Menon's Internet survey, 35% of Indians respond to visuals, 35% to sounds and the rest are sensitive to touch.

The book is interspersed with thought provoking sto-



Murl Menon: "Those who tend to their saplings find that their trees grow fast and so do their careers."

ries from Zen and older Indian texts to make you pause.

Ancient wisdom perceived the universe and humans to comprise earth, water, air, fire, ether and believed there is a healthy balance between man and nature. Zen meditation involves finding out the element dominating each individual and then connecting it to liberate cosmic energy.

Murl Menon believes dreams are important signposts. He lived with tribals in Simlipal forests, Orissa to understand their perceptions. If you remember a dream, then it means something, he believes. Significant events are often predicted in a dream.

Each individual has an affinity to a particular tree. Murl Menon's book on ZenLP has a list of trees with their particular qualities. Trees should be watered at sunrise, followed by a session of visualisation and meditation.

Negative thoughts can be silenced by chanting mantras. They silence the inner voices inside your head and provide coherence in thinking. Murl Menon chants the Gayatri mantra. But again your special mantra is based on your individual make up.

Tree plantation meditation is an equally important therapy since harmony with nature releases cosmic energy. Each individual has an affinity to a particular tree.

The book has a list of trees with their particular qualities. Trees should be watered at sunrise, followed by a session of visualisation and meditation. "The faster the tree grows the quicker you will achieve your goal," says Murl Menon.

There are practical lessons to help you remember names of people. A helpful diet chart is provided. Murl Menon insists on vegetarianism: eat healthy, think better. Zen meditation techniques are detailed and management lessons from animals: dolphins, gulls, owls and ants.

Murl Menon is a compulsive traveller. He could be on a Himalayan trek to Kailash Manasarovar, stopping on the way to pay his respects to the mighty Om Parbat, the source of kundalini. Or he could be off for a workshop for managers. Civil Society met up with him in Delhi:

Is your book only for managers?

No. It is meant for everyone: housewives, schoolteachers, NGOs or anybody who wants to learn about NLM and increase their spiritual quotient. I have even helped to motivate a sculptor.

Have you tried motivating government employees?

Yes. We have conducted workshops for IAS and state level officials in Karnataka, Orissa and public sector employees. We get feedback from them. They follow diets we prescribe and send photographs of their trees. Those who tend to their saplings find that their trees grow fast and so do their careers.

Aren't there lots of management institutes which tell people how to succeed?

Most produce managers not entrepreneurs. Intuition and creativity are supplanted by cold logic. Good luck and that gut feeling play a big role in success. Traditional entrepreneurs never went to management schools. You can use NLM scientifically by visualisation. Management institutes could also benefit by inculcating some successful traditional methods into their courses. Take for example the Marwari system of accounting. The Arthashastra could be designed into management courses.

You really believe in dreams?

If you remember a dream it serves a purpose. Even if it's a pin dropping it does mean that a forthcoming event is going to cast its shadow. I stayed with the Simlipal tribals in Orissa to study their attitude to dreams. Tribals are highly evolved.