

2001: On becoming a person – The Internet, the Chakras and Neuro Linguistic Programming

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to design a practical model allowing the reduction of stress, the increase of creativity and well being. We look at the evolution of Information Technology and the Internet and at the nature of Man based on spirituality (7 chakras) and modern theories of communication.

1. Introduction

Knowing that we are at the eve of the Millennium, this paper is trying to build a bridge between technology, spirituality and communication. We look at the evolution of Information Technology and the Internet and at the nature of Man based on (Indian) spirituality and modern theories on communication (Neuro Linguistic Programming NLP). The purpose of this study is to design a practical model allowing the reduction of stress, the increase of creativity and well being.

To a larger extent it allows the development of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual being.

2. Trends

2.1 The Internet

The Internet reflects the world as it is with its good parts and bad parts.

We can focus on the following:

- More than 160 millions users: each one being a unique person
- Common language: institutions and communities are building a new Babel tower through common standards (e.g. W3C Consortium).
- The Spirit of the Net is illustrated by:
 - Gerry McGovern, Digital Age's philosopher wrote: " This is the information age, we are knowledge workers, the Internet is a well of information, a knowledge fountain."
 - The 'Give, Give, Give & ... Take' concept: business models of giving away turn the marketing laws upside down.
- Customized dynamic page : websites tend to identify the needs and preferences of the user, upgrade their content in order to provide the right information to the right person (e.g. www.broadvision.com).

- Multimedia: it is now possible to send and receive images, video, sound and... text. Mostly visual and auditive senses are being used.
- Huge volume of information but so much of it is ... dead, or 'negative'
- Some of the negative aspects include its propensity for anarchy, the spread of viruses, the chaos, the difficulty to make business transactions because of the hackers, etc

2.2 Information Technology

Information systems and operating systems have somewhat improved compared to the systems of the 70s and 80s. Computers are more user-friendly and flexible in the sense that they offer multimedia facilities, the possibility to design your own desktop with your own icons, preferred background, screensaver and sounds. Stardock Co. offers such possibilities with Windows Blinds (www.stardock.com).

However, there is still a long way before the launching of affective computer (see research at the MIT Medialab) that can detect a user's emotional state and modify its reactions to suit individual preferences.

Among the existing issues, we can cite the following:

- Fear of the computer and the Internet: University of South Florida researchers have published a study showing that fears of the Internet are replacing the CIA and radio waves as a frequent delusion in psychiatric patients. In every case of Internet delusion documented by the researchers, the patient actually had little experience with computers. (AP 5 Jul 99)
- Frustration: office workers are getting increasingly frustrated with their computers, according to MORI a London research firm, and the frustration is leading to high rates of computer abuse such as swearing at PCs, physically hitting or kicking the computer, bullying the IT department, absenteeism, and bad-mouthing the employer. (Washington Post 06/07/99)
- Repetitive Stress Injuries (RSI) connected to computers.

2.3 Communication

Using concepts taken from Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), behavioral and cognitive sciences, we can say that each person has his own map of the world that he grasps according to his five senses.

Then, a 'visual' person will need to "see" in order to believe whereas an auditive person will need to "hear" in order to believe it.

Another aspect of NLP is the creation of anchors that allow man to come back to a successful behavior. Anchors are usually created intuitively or systematically by a NLP practitioner: they link a specific emotional state to a visual, auditive and/or kinesthetic signal. For instance, a software engineer will be listening to a special song that will put him in the right state of mind when looking for a bug in his line codes.

2.4 Spiritual world

1,000 years ago, there was a tremendous turmoil at the eve of the first millenium. This time, the Y2K bug is bringing its share of fears and along with it, there is a growing interest in spirituality:

- The 'New Age' is knocking at the door of companies with the introduction of yoga classes, the term guru etc.
- People are looking for answers, seeking the truth. Notice that 'going back to the Answer' is the actual Hebrew translation of "becoming religious".
- People are talking about the importance of being "Here and Now"

In this paper, we describe and use the model of Sahaja Yoga (www.sahaja.org) taken from the Indian spirituality that can be also found in ancient scriptures from most religions: Judaism and Cabala, Islam and Sufism, Christianity...

Sahaja Yoga (i.e. Spontaneous Union) was founded by HH Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi for the development and the enlightenment of every human being through self realization.

Inside every human being there is a network of nerves and sensory organs that interprets the outside physical world. At the same time, within us resides a subtle system of channels and centers of energy (chakras) which look after our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual being.

Each of the seven chakras has several spiritual qualities. These qualities are intact within us, and even though they might not always be manifest, they can never be destroyed. When the Kundalini is awakened, these qualities start manifesting spontaneously and express themselves in our life. Thus, through regular meditation and with an intelligent and effective use of the technology as we'll see in the following, we can clear our chakras, make sure that they do not absorb negativity. We become automatically very

dynamic, creative, confident and at the same time very humble, loving and compassionate. When a chakra is blocked, some problems appear and some twinkling, hot vibrations appear on the finger connected to the specific chakra.

3 . The 7 chakras – Qualities, Obstacles, solutions

3.1 1st Center: Muladhara

Qualities

-Innocence: you need to see the world with new eyes as much as the eyes of a child in order to consider the situation at hand, design a new product etc.

-Modesty: there is no need to impress people around you. If you do bring something good then people will know about it and will spread it quickly through the Internet.

-Intelligence: according to Sufi poet Rumi, “this second knowledge is a fountainhead from within you moving out.” You cannot acquire this knowledge from the books.

-Purity: this is a quality that can and should exist.

Obstacles and Solutions

Survivors will do anything in order to reach their goal including lying, being aggressive, hurting and even killing. This type is mostly based on fears and lack of trust.

A first step is to be close to the nature and even put a picture of nature on your desktop. You can make sure that your work environment does not include posters of violence scenes, pornography.

According to this model, each country in the world corresponds to a specific chakra: Australia is actually connected to the first chakra. This is a country that just passed a law on censorship to govern the distribution of illegal and offensive content of the Internet. “In its action, Australia has taken a decidedly different and somewhat surprising tack to many of the other leading Internet economies” (Burke, 1999).

The next release of Microsoft's Windows operating system software will include software that parents can use to the playing of computer games with unacceptable levels of violence, offensive language, or nudity.

The business terminology has been very much using words from the military world. Words have an effect on the people and even if these are only metaphors, stress is being created and spread through them. One should refrain from using such words and introducing some new titles as we can see the trend in companies.

In order to increase the trust and decrease the fear of users toward a company and its web site, there is a need to establish a presence, a need to be personal, to give an address, a phone number etc.

3.2 2nd Center: Swadisthana

Qualities

- Pure knowledge: usually, the information is inside the company or inside you. In other words, if there is a problem, it may be useful to introspect instead of accusing directly your counterpart.
- Pure Attention: the ability to be here and now without being distracted.
- Creativity: this comes without any effort like a flow as illustrated by artists such as Mozart and many more.

Obstacles and solutions

False theories can be a big issue and hide the knowledge required. In terms of management, defensive routines as defined by C.Argyris go against the pure knowledge. If you can create an environment where you can “discuss the undiscussable” as Argyris writes, then some learning will happen. It could be interesting to try through the Rumors Bulletin Boards where the messages posted are anonymous.

The huge volume of information through email, phone calls and other ways disturb the managers: a new survey from Pitney Bowes shows that the increasing amount of technology in use in the workplace is hindering productivity. The report found that the majority of workers are interrupted by communications technology every ten minutes.

There is a need to set up some filters, some organizational rules such as the possibility to be ‘off ‘ for an hour or more from every medium. Taking frequent breaks from the computer and doing some exercises or even going for a walk in the nature are crucial for the well being of the person. Some multimedia exercises could be set up on ... the PC or the Internet and adapted to the situation of the person (healing a specific chakra)

One should also know what is one’s best medium: for instance, do you prefer email or voice mail?

Exercises based on Neuro Linguistic Programming can help people understand what their cognitive styles are, their best way to receive information, communicate with others and thus bring all of their attention to a specific situation. There is a need to develop the right systems and environment that fit the cognitive styles of each and everyone.

Too much thinking and planning are obstacles to creativity. Inflexible information systems and software programs may prevent the spontaneity required for creativity.

3.3 3rd Center: Nahbi

Qualities

The third chakra is the one that gives us the sense of generosity, complete satisfaction and contentment: the ability to be satisfied with the present situation. When enlightened, the Nabhi chakra gives us our spiritual ascent, righteousness and inner sense of morality, and complete balance at all levels in our life.

Obstacles and solutions

Learning to listen to yourself, introspect and trust yourself are the first steps to be done. This can be done at a personal level or at the level of a company or a department.

Some people tend to be over-perfectionist which does not go well with contentment. It is clear that perfectionists do play an important part but they need to be advised as to limit their enthusiasm for utopian perfection.

While the bottom line is a very important issue, focusing only on short terms returns and for more \$ can be very negative in the long run. There is the importance to be happy, satisfied at work: the paycheck is not the only criterion.

3.4 The Void

Surrounding the second and the third chakra is the Void which stands for the principle of mastery (guru principle) within us. In a sense, you are your own master, your own guru! You discover that your body talks through vibrations: Mohammed said in the Koran "Your hands will talk".

In many spiritual traditions, this area is the "ocean of illusions" that needs to be crossed so that mastery is established within us.

Rigid hierarchies, conditioning and conventional ways to work are indeed an obstacle to be your own master.

There is a need to change the organization, write, create new rules of behavior taking into account the use of technology (Scheimann 94, 99).

3.5 4th Center: Anahata (heart)

Qualities

-Faith: if a person does have faith in himself, one can feel the spirit of it, the compassion.

-Fearless: fears disappear and instead actions are made out of love.

-Responsibility: the person trusts that others will do their work so he does not take too much responsibility and on the other hand he is ready to take any responsibility.

Obstacles and solutions

Instead of compassion and faith, there is a tendency to scepticism, lack of trust toward oneself, toward people. Companies based on fears are still very common. There should hopefully be fewer and fewer companies like this. In terms of responsibilities, the power of the Internet and the information era have brought on our screens the sad reality of a violent and frightening world. On the other hand, we can easily react, constitute communities, publish some letters, set up a web site, filters etc....
When there is a lack of responsibility, one can start taking care of plants or ... even "Mopyfish", this virtual fish that needs to be fed in order to live.

3.6 5th Center: Vishudi (throat)

Qualities

- Self-respect: the ability to see oneself in the true light and to love oneself
- Communication: the ability to communicate with the others in a positive and effective way
- Collective: you are part of the collective and the world is in yourself
- Respect toward others: the ability to consider everyone at the same level.

Obstacles and solutions

There is a tendency for people to feel guilty for any 'bad' actions that happened in the past which block this center. The concepts of single loop and double loop learning of C.Argyris should be helpful to make sure that you do not make the same mistake again. Also, it helps if a company has a positive attitude towards making a mistake: this can be a good way to learn. The set up of a community is a complex process but this model can be a good indicator as to where the effort needs to be made.
Irony and sarcasm are phenomena that are bad for this center. Changing such an atmosphere can bring tremendous changes whether it is in the cyber-world or in the real world. One can take a look at moderated mailing lists : the job of the moderator is crucial in terms of handling debates, making sure that there is no 'flaming'. As a good example, see the mailing list (www.Internetadvertising.org) moderated by Adam Boetigger .

3.7 6th Center: Agnya

Qualities

- Perception: one talks about the vision, the ability to perceive the world
- Forgiveness: the ability to forgive oneself as well as the others

Obstacles and solutions

A main problem here is the importance of the ego and the conditionings.

Reducing the ego and the conditioning is possible as long as the person starts forgiving himself and the others.

Moreover, if a manager thinks that no matter what he is the one who is right, that he does not need to change anything, that he dedicated enough time on planning, and that is HIS work, then he is very likely to... fail.

3.8 7th Center: Sahastrara

When this center is opened as well as the 6 others, this is the state of union with yourself and with the universe. It is the state of thoughtless awareness: you are in the "here and now" with no thoughts coming from the past that no longer exists nor from the future that does not exist yet.

And yet, you are aware of the whole situation, of the present and its events that pop up spontaneously.

4 Conclusion

We are at the eve of a new millenium, the world is getting more and more complex and hectic. Yet, going back to the roots and using effectively the technology, we can see that this model can solve the issues and give a pfor becoming an enlightened person and improve the world.

This is a long path but is not it worth it?

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