How to improve quality of life dramatically

Dr. Arthur Caliandro was one of America's most trusted and revered spiritual advisors. Through his books Simple Steps, You Can Make Your Life Count, and Lost and Found he shared his philosophy with the world. To illustrate how to take responsibility for our lives, he narrates one of his boyhood experiences as follows:

One of the best pieces of advice I have ever received came when I was a school boy. When I was a junior in high school in Portland I was trombonist in the school band. That year, I saw a notification that announced a music contest in which I really wanted to participate. The prize offered was a free trip to New York City and the Metropolitan Opera. It was an exciting offer and I decided to submit my nomination.

But I had a serious drawback. I was not a very good musician. In fact, I had already stopped taking lessons. But somehow I gathered up my courage and told my brother's violin teacher what I wanted to do. I sought his help. Mr. Howe, the teacher, explained to me his strategy in detail. He promised, "I will help you under the following conditions: First, if you work with me, you will decide you are going to win. Never doubt that fact. Secondly, this is the reason you are going to win. Most of the contestants will choose music that is beyond their capacity. They will want to show off. Do all kinds of fancy things, and under the pressure of the contest they won't do well. But you are going to select a piece of music that is within your ability – and you are going to master it. And you are going to win."

Mr. Howe meant what he said. Before I even put the trombone to my lips he, over a period of time, drilled me on every note of the music. He played it for me. I counted it out, I grasped it and finally I knew what to expect. By the time I picked up my instrument, he had the music inscribed in my head with utmost clarity. Then I practised it thoroughly. Mr. Howe arranged to have me invited to every possible music programme in and around, and I could thus practise playing my music before an audience.

When the day came for the contest, there were 20 contestants in the hall. Four of them would win. And Mr. Howe was right. Nearly every other contestant was better than me, and most of them had chosen something too difficult to play. As a result, at the competition they faltered, but I played what I had prepared confidently and competently.

I was surprised when the judges announced the winners. I was one of the four winners.

That was a lesson that had served me well. Ever since that day, I sought to follow Mr. Howe's advice, which I sum up in these words:

If you are competing, operate within your competence, never beyond your scope. Focus where your strength lies. If you do so, you can master any challenge life places in your path.

Success is rarely achieved in the grand, great wins. It is the result of many small victories that lie well within our abilities. If you can take one simple idea and live with it to the heights and to the depths, the quality of your life will dramatically improve.

Dr. G.P.C. Nayar

B Tech students develop low-cost incubator for newborns

In an attempt to help the state address the issues relating to neonatal deaths, a group of final B Tech mechanical engineering students of SCMS School of Engineering and Technology has devised a portable budget incubator that can be introduced in all hospitals at an affordable rate in order to provide better neonatal care.

Currently, the incubators that are being used in the hospitals to maintain body temperature of neonates are available at around Rs. 50,000. Our students Akhil Joseph, Akhil R. Krishna, Akshay Raj and Binu Raj have devised an incubator which would cost less than half the above cost, say, around Rs. 20,000 to 25,000.

The students display the low-cost incubator they have developed. L-R: Dr. Newton Luiz, Head Pediatrician of Dhanya Mission Hospital, Binu Raj, Akhil R. Krishna, Mr. Sijo M.T., Assistant Professor - Mechanical Engineering, Akshay Raj and Akhil Joseph.
Premature birth is a significant public health problem across the world because of associated neonatal mortality and other complications in life. In India, more than 3.34 million babies are born prematurely each year and more than 3.6 lakh children die due to complications of premature birth. Yet, most of these deaths could be avoided by simply keeping the babies warm. A baby’s body temperature drops as soon as it is outside the controlled environment of the mother’s womb. So, soon after birth it is important to regulate the temperature. Premature babies have very little body fat and are unable to regulate body temperature. Such babies need incubators to help keep them alive. State-run hospitals often find it difficult to afford to have sufficient number of incubators because of the high cost of the devices now available in the market.

"Initially we surveyed hospitals in Thrissur and Ernakulam and found out that several hospitals do not have adequate number of incubators as they are expensive and take up a lot of space," said Prof.M.T.Sijo, Assistant Professor-Mechanical who is the mentor for the students.

The newly designed incubator has also been fitted with a GSM module which will send body temperature, humidity, pulse rate and blood oxygen levels of the neonate at regular intervals to a predefined mobile number. The module will also send distress signals in the case of an irregular reading.

The incubator has also been fitted with a phototherapy unit for jaundice treatment. The students have designed a portable incubator that will occupy lesser space when compared to the incubators now available in the market.

Dr. Newton Luiz, Head Pediatrician of Dhanya Mission Hospital had been helpful to the students in their venture.

In her presidential address, Dr.Radha P. Thevannoor, Group Director said, “SCMS is giving lot of importance to teaching total technological edge, right from the beginning, so that when SCMS students go outside people say they stand apart."

Major resource

Traditional knowledge is a major resource for innovation and innovation is the mantra of the day, said Prof.P.C.Pillai, Senior Group Director offering felicitations. It is a welcome trend in these days that there is a vibrant activity in the society to go back to the traditional knowledge, restore them, reassemble them, establish warehouses for those knowledge, and use them for further studies, he appended.

Dr.C.Mohankumar, Director, SCMS Institute for Bioscience and Biotech Research & Development welcomed the gathering and Dr.Sashi Kumar G., Principal, SSTM proposed the vote of thanks.

Dr.Shanthikumar Nair was the keynote speaker in the first technical session on ‘Indigenous Nanotechnologies for Kerala.’ “I am more interested and would like you to be interested in basically innovating some new technology and creating new intellectual property.” Then you become the first of the kind in the world. You can then have a market not only in Kerala but all over India and the rest of the world. You will be in a position to apply for patent either in the US, Europe or Japan as the case may be and you become the sole owner who has the right to market the product to any of those countries. Thus getting intellectual property right is the most important step to go forward. Without that you won’t get enough economic value for your investment, he argued

Own more IPRs

If our state has to make economic progress in the field of nanotechnology it has to own more IPRs. I don’t mean in the government sector, but in the private sector because when energised, private sector can do a lot of commercial activity leading
Contd. from page 2

to economic growth. For that, our private industries have to engage in lot of R & D activities, he argued. Nanotechnology offers enormous potential. There is some amount of research going on at present in nanotechnology in our state in centres like Amrita, RCC and so on, but not in a big way. To create an economy or to create indigenous industry the research has to become translational and product oriented. Dr.Santhikumar Nair called upon the students to take up such kind of research because they represented the future of the country. “Ask yourself how can I take the advanced technology and implement it in a translational way and how to make it into a product,” he recommended. “To make a product it actually requires huge effort,” he cautioned the students. To make Kerala a nanotechnology hub we require huge investment. It cannot be done in a small way. We have to create resources and facilities at a level in which one can do the large manufacturing, testing, evaluation and all in a large scale, he pointed out.

Political will

If Kerala has to grow from an indigenous low technology society to indigenous high technology society we have to make the right kind of investment. It would also require lot of political will to bring ideas into reality, he emphasised.

The second keynote speaker, Dr.M.Chandrasekharan, Emeritus Professor, Department of Biotechnology, CUSAT spoke on the topic ‘Indigenous Microbial Technologies for Sustainable Development.’ Microbial technology is the oldest technology, he claimed, citing the examples of microbial fermented products like curd, idli paste, and toddy. When we think of sustainable development we should consider in three aspects like economic growth, preservation of eco-system, and improvement of quality of life. There was a time not long ago when Kerala had surplus supply of water and power. But today, we are facing acute shortage of both these fundamental resources. Our ancestors had taken care to leave us in a safe environment. But what do we do? We should seriously ask ourselves the pertinent question: “Are we going to leave this environment safe for our future generation?” he commented.

Dr.C.Mohankumar, Director, SCMS Institute for Bioscience and Biotech Research & Development, the keynote speaker for the afternoon session spoke on ‘Utilisation of natural resources of Kerala for the development of viable technologies.’ Discussing in detail the process of development of neera technology in SCMS Biotech lab he described how individual knowledge gets transformed into national knowledge. He also dealt with the highly nutritive and medicinal properties of neera which is now being tried as a therapeutic drink by doctors.

New antibiotics

Scientists are now in search of new antibiotics. In tune with the new trend of producing recombinant antibiotics, SCMS Biotech lab has successfully produced recombinant lactoferrin protein of Vechur cow milk in the lab.

He went on to discuss efforts made by SCMS Biotech Institute in creating various viable technologies based on natural resources like production of neera, neera honey, neera sugar and neera squash from coconut, biofuel from coconut oil, lactoferrin from Vechur cow’s milk, bromelain from pineapple and so on. He specially mentioned about the challenging task entrusted by Coconut Board to make neera which can withstand room temperature for more than 60 days. He revealed that neera bottled in 2014 still remains flawless in his room without any change. All the major researches made in SCMS Biotech Institute relates to the resources of Kerala, he remarked.

Dr.Shalini Bhaskar, Senior Scientist, SCMS Institute for Bioscience and Biotech Research & Development proposed the vote of thanks.

National Technology Day celebration at SSET

National Technology Day was celebrated at SSET in association with Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment on May 12. Prof.M.Madhavan, Director, SSET inaugurated the seminar on the topic ‘Technological Innovations to Solve Water Crisis,’ at a function presided over by Dr.Sunny George, Director, SCMS Water Institute. Dr.P.S.Harikumar, Senior Scientist, Water Quality Division, CWRDM, Kozhikode delivered the keynote address. Dr.Shabu Thomas, Head of Environmental Education and Conservation, Tropical Institute of Ecological Science, Kottayam and Dr.Ratheesh Menon, Associate Professor-Civil Engineering also addressed the participants.

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Guest lecture
Mr. Suresh Krishna Pai

Mr. Suresh Krishna Pai, Head-India Business, Analytics and Information Management, Cognizant Technology Solutions engaged a session for the PGDM students on the topic ‘Overview of Business Analytics,’ on May 22. He gave an introduction to business analytics and described how business has now come to know the benefit of data analytics in the day-to-day decision making. He began explaining how business analytics can help the marketer to efficiently resort to targeted marketing by telling what the customer is going to buy. That shows the power of business analytics, he emphasised.

“If you want to learn the trick of management” he advised, “I think you have to watch the movie Moneyball.” In the movie, Billy Beane the baseball coach is handicapped with the lowest salary constraint of players. If he ever wants to win the World Series, Billy must find a competitive advantage. Billy’s successful attempt to assemble a baseball team on a lean budget by employing computer-generated analysis to acquire new players is the amazing story of the movie. More than analytics it also tells about management – how to manage a team, how to coordinate a team and how to make an average team a winner.

Data analytics is all the game of making meaningful data. If you can make meaningful data you are doing analytics, Mr. Suresh Pai revealed. You need to find data, extract it, make sense out of it, distribute it and monitor it. Companies that make maximum use of data are valued by shareholders, he remarked. Those who want to learn the art of analytic thinking and use it to transform the basic data of a company into a competitive tool must read the book Competing on Analytics by Davenport, suggested Mr. Pai. Technology has empowered us to analyse the data, the video, the text, and even the smell. That is why data analytics is becoming a prominent practice now, he commented.

I was only an average student till I joined SCMS

(Karthik A., Chairman’s Gold Medalist in PGDM batch 24, sharing his thoughts and experiences with us – Editor)

The day I was awarded the Chairman’s gold medal will always be a memorable one for me because it was the result of a change that I made in myself when I came for pursuing PGDM from SCMS. While receiving the medal, I was excited about my decision proving to be right in taking up a different approach towards my studies and work.

I was only an average student till I joined SCMS, struggling to find my path to academic excellence. While joining the college, I decided to try and follow a different approach in my method of study, I decided to enjoy and study. When I started to recognise the core reason why I was learning a particular subject, I began to find my own ways of making it useful in my career. This made me enjoy what I was doing. Slowly I started reaping results by way of better marks. Then I extended this technique to other activities as well. I preferred to take up activities in and around the college with the purpose of finding how those activities would benefit me to be a better competent person at my workplace in future. This made me exploit more and more opportunities for activities. Literally I enjoyed taking up the work, because I worked with a hope that it would help me to become a competent person in future.

Contd. on page 5
SCMS, for me, was a huge learning hub, with endless possibilities. The tight schedules forced me to become more punctual at my work, the strict discipline made me be more precise with my work, and the faculty members made me believe that nothing is impossible, particularly my mentors (Dr. Sengottuvelu and Dr. Mohan B.). There is pressure in pursuing the PGDM course, but trust me, it is positive pressure. It will only help you to be a better professional in future. The IMLP programmes had gone a long way in moulding me so as to enable me to present my ideas in a more professional manner. It helped me in earning respect from my co-workers and guide at my place of internship and also during various management fests.

My journey at SCMS taught me that opportunities seldom knock at your door, but when it knocks, grab it with both your hands, because this may be the last time that you get an opportunity like it, to learn about you and bring the change that you wish to see in you. Enjoy the work you do and good results will follow.

My life has completely changed after the two years in SCMS

(Mithun M. Mohan, the best outgoing student of PGDM batch 24, shares his views and experiences with us – Editor)

April 25, 2017, the convocation day, will be the most memorable day of my life. I was shocked and surprised when my name was announced as the Best Outgoing Student of PGDM batch 24. The award was really unexpected. I have pleasure to dedicate the award to my parents.

For me, life at SCMS was so good because I involved in every activity that was organised by the college. My life has completely changed after the two years of college. SCMS has contributed to a great extent in moulding me to what I am today. SCMS taught me to manage time properly, accept challenges, and never to give up in life. Organising sports, shikhar, and conferences made me understand and nurture the skills required to become a good manager. Media relations club (MRC) was the best part of my life in SCMS. As the content planner of MRC, along with my friends Emerson, Sushi, Sethu and Sabareesh, I was able to bring out my creative talents and interact with great personalities from the industry. All these were possible because of the guidance and encouragement from the faculty members of the college.

All that I have to tell my juniors is to enjoy each and every moment in SCMS. You may feel hard at times but once you leave this campus you will realise the worth of SCMS.

Knowledge sharing programme

The first talk under knowledge sharing programme during the month of May was by Mr. George K. Mathew, Associate Professor on the topic ‘Skill development through management education’, on May 1. The second talk was by Dr. V. Raman Nair, Group Director on the topic ‘Seminar Speech – Tips for Novices’ on May 8. The third talk was by Dr. N.K. Shalma, Assistant Professor on the topic ‘Time Series’, on May 15. The fourth talk was by Dr. Sobha Menon, Associate Professor on the topic ‘Destination Competitiveness’, on May 22.

Article contributed

Dr. P. Madhu, Professor and HoD-HR contributed an article titled ‘Reflective Rethinking, A Pedagogical Tool for Preparing Students for Career Success’ held at SCMS Campus on April 24.

Chaired session

Dr. Shobha Menon, Associate Professor, chaired a Technical Session in the National Conference on ‘New Paradigms in Business and Management’ organised by School of Management Studies, CUSAT, on April 20 and 21.

Publications

Dr. R. Rupa, Associate Professor published an article titled ‘Performance of MFIs in India and Bangladesh – A Comparison,’ in the UGC-approved journal ‘Researchers World – Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce’, Volume 8, Issue 2(1), April 2017, ISSN: 2321-4172.

She also published an article titled ‘Indian NBFC MFIs Vs. Bangladeshi NGO MFIs,’ in Asian Journal of Management (UGC approved), Volume 8, Issue 2, April-June 2017, ISSN: 0976-495X (Print), 2321-5736 (online).

Dr. Shobha Menon, Associate Professor published an article titled ‘Motivations and Performance of Exhibitors: An Exploratory Study of a Destination Marketing Event’ in the Asian Journal of Management (UGC approved journal, ISSN (online): 2321-5763, ISSN (Print): 0976-495X, Vol 8, Issue 2.

Conference presentations

The following papers were presented at the South Asia Council of Business Schools and Programs Region 10 Conference on ‘Preparing Students for Career Success’ held at SCMS Campus on April 24.

Mr. George K. Mathew, Associate Professor presented a paper on ‘Skill Development through Management Education: A study of the alumni from the Management Institutes in Kerala State.’

Dr. Mary Fatima Cross, Associate Professor presented a paper on ‘Design Thinking - A Pedagogical Tool for Preparing Students for Career Success.’

Mr. Manu Melwin Joy, Assistant Professor, presented a paper on ‘The impact of Gamification on education and adult learning.’

Place article contributed

Dr. Sobha Menon, Associate Professor on the topic ‘Destination Competitiveness’, on May 22.

Participated in syllabus revision course

Dr. Sashi Kumar G., Principal, and Mr. S. Santosh, Associate Professor participated in MBA syllabus revision course conducted by M.G.University at Giridhipram Business School, Kottayam from April 5 to 22.

Chaired session

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Placement news (B Com students)

The following companies conducted campus recruitment for B Com students at our campus during January – April 2017.

Cabot, Quest Global Solutions, Microland, Genpact, Federal Bank, UST Global, and Amazon.
On teaching and learning through discussion

Dr. V. Raman Nair
M.A., M.Com., M.B.A., Ph.D., SMP (IlM-C), ITP (IMD)
Group Director

Research has shown that it is impossible for students to absorb all the information given in a lecture. Generally, students are not attentive 40 percent of the time to what is being said in a lecture. They retain 70 percent of the information in the first ten minutes of a lecture, but only 20 percent of the last ten minutes. Learning occurs not by recording information, but by discussing and interpreting it. Lecturing is useful for conveying information and sometimes understanding but not effective for higher order outcomes.

Students will learn more and work harder if they find the classes spark their intellectual curiosity and allow active engagement and involvement. Well planned discussion in a class will enable students to articulate their view points in a public setting, take risks, accept or challenge their classmates’ views and develop communication and persuasive skills.

Discussion is a disciplined and focused exploration of mutual concerns but with no end point determined in advance. It is the technique used for pulling knowledge and ideas and enables students to practice analysis and evaluation. Faculty members handling discussion-based classes should be able to generate student's enthusiasm, and develop insight into the material being discussed.

Leading a discussion: Discussion in a classroom becomes more lively and productive if the students come prepared. Learning becomes effective if students realise the importance of active listening, is ready to tolerate opposing viewpoints and understand that there are multiple answers to the point under discussion.

Form study groups: Study groups enable brighter students to learn more by analysing and explaining ideas to others and weaker students gain from peer tutoring.

Do brainstorming: Brainstorming can enable the student to break out of stale and established patterns of thinking and can generate a large number of ideas, probable causes, consequences and possible solutions.

Employ case studies: Case study method by capturing and analysing real problems the students are able to bridge the gap between school and real life experience. Case discussion enables the student to loosen up, collaborate, let the mind roam free, and react with emotions and intellect to other's contributions. Students are expected to come to the class prepared and class time should be spent analysing case through a series of questions. In case discussion great questions are more valuable than great answers.

Ask questions: Faculty should be professional question askers since much of effective teaching and learning depends on how questions are asked in the class. A list of questions prepared in advance can guide and focus the discussion. Questions should move from simple to those require serious thinking. Questioning strategies should lead to higher order thinking, to value analysis, to create responses to new situations, and to independent thinking among students.

The type of questions could be exploratory to probe facts and basic knowledge, or challenging that examine assumptions, conclusions and interpretations, or relational which ask for comparisons, or diagnostic that probe motives or causes. Other types are action questions that call for a conclusion or action, and effect questions which seek causal relationships between ideas, or even hypothetical questions that pose a change in the facts and issues. Priority questions can be used to identify the most important issues and summary questions to elicit syntheses. The best questions, however, are those that do not have a ready answer.

Questions can also be used when there are signs of discussion not going well in the desired direction. Answers should be handled tactfully so that students are not discouraged from making further contributions. Positive comments should be provided to insightful and creative answers. Others should be provided with hints or suggestions to think differently and provide more specific answers. Follow up questions or probes can be used for more elaborations and specifics.

Some amount of disagreement is necessary to stimulate discussion but students should show tolerance to divergent points of view. The discussion should not get bogged down in confusing information or deteriorate into heated arguments between students. Faculty should intervene when the discussion gets off track, defuse the arguments and keep the discussion focused.

Summarise key concepts or ideas: While concluding the discussion, students can synthesise what they have discussed by writing down few important concepts or ideas. A few students can also be designated as ‘summarisers’ who can sum up the major issues, concerns and conclusions generated during discussion.

Evaluating the discussion: Faculty should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the discussion process in terms of student's contribution, faculty domination, quality of student’s comments and the questions that worked well.

Discussion classes fail when the discussion loses focus as faculty lectures frequently, looks for ‘correct’ answers and do not involve students by asking poorly worded questions. Therefore, faculty members need to consciously reduce lecture time, seat work and other rote activities by challenging the student's brains.

If the triads of posing skillful questions, active listening, and effectively responding to the process and content of the class is practiced by the faculty, students are bound to learn and practice what they have assimilated in the class.
Academics
The even semester examinations of Mahatma Gandhi University commenced on May 10.

Paper presented
Mr. Mahesh Rengaraj, Associate Professor-Mechanical Engineering presented a paper titled ‘A Study on Factors Influencing Musculoskeletal Disorder Pain among Welders employed in Fabrication Industry’ in the International Conference on Safety and Fire Engineering, during April 27 and 28, organised by Department of Safety and Fire Engineering, School of Engineering, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi.

Mr. Manoj Jose Kalathil, Assistant Professor-Mechanical Engineering also presented a paper titled ‘Fuzzy Failure Mode Effect and Criticality Analysis in Tyre Manufacturing Industry’ in the above International Conference.

Seminars and workshops
Mr. Mahesh Rengaraj and Mr. Manoj Jose Kalathil also attended the above International Conference on Safety and Fire Engineering at Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi.

Dr. Manoj Kumar B, Associate Professor-Automobile Engineering participated in the IEDC Nodal Officers Meetup 2017 at Kerala Technology Innovation Zone, Kochi on March 24 and 25.

Staff achievements
Mr. Anu N. S., Lab Supervisor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, obtained his MBA in Information Systems from Annamalai University during May 2017.

Mr. Sreesyam Divakaran, Assistant Professor of Electrical and Electronics Engineering successfully passed five-day Proficiency Improvement Programme (Certificate Course) on Hybrid Drives, Traction & Controls organised by the Automotive Research Association of India at Kothrud, Pune from April 3 to 7.

SSET stall at Popular Rally exhibition
Automobile Engineering department of SSET participated in the exhibition conducted as a part of Popular Rally 2017 at Marine Drive, Kochi on May 13 and 14. The crowd pulling stall of SSET with Vehicle Cut Model was managed by Ananthakrishnan K. S., Ajith Sankar A. and Chandraprakash J. (students of S4) under the supervision of Mr. Vipin Raj P. G., Mr. Sujay K. and Mr. Aravind P. V. (Assistant Professors) and Mr. Haridas K., Foreman.

SSET at off roading event at Vagamon
SSET was one of the sponsors of the off roading event at Vagamon ‘Izuzu 4x4 Extreme’ 11th edition organised by Kottayam Jeeps in association with Izuzu. Ten automobile engineering S6 students and two faculty members from the Automobile Engineering department were present as event marshals.

Placement news (Engineering students)
The following organisations conducted recruitment drive for our 2017 batch students during May 2017.
Training for Forest Department staff

Dr. Sunny George, Director, SCMS Water Institute conducted training cum awareness programme for the staff of Vazhachal Forest Division on the topic ‘water conservation with special reference to Chalakudy river,’ on May 13.

Vineetha Rose Vincent wins German fellowship

Vineetha Rose Vincent, M.Tech Environmental Engineering student (fourth semester) of SSET has won a German fellowship to undergo summer school programme in the University of RWTH Aachen, Germany. This is one of the most prestigious universities not only in Germany but in the whole of Europe. SCMS Water Institute had collaborated with them and jointly conducted a workshop on biomonitoring of water quality at IIT Madras last year.

This is for the first time a student outside the IITs being selected for this prestigious summer school in Germany. Vineetha was selected from hundreds of applicants from various engineering institutes in India.

Since we started our MTech Environmental Engineering programme in 2013, every year at least one MTech student from SSET had received fellowships to visit either universities or top research institutions in Germany.

SCMS Water Institute branded as knowledge partner

SCMS Water Institute has been branded as the Knowledge Partner for the Kerala Water Summit to be organised by Confederation of Indian Industry Kerala on July 2017 in Kochi.