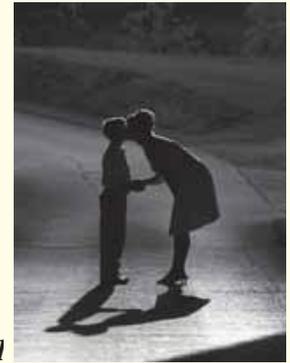


GO KISS THE WORLD



By Benedict Paramanand



Subroto Bagchi's success mantra for Indian professionals - "a sense of contentment, constant wonder, connectedness to a larger whole and learning from unusual sources."

The resurgent India has given Indian professionals optimism and a tad of arrogance as well. Nothing wrong with that! While the new-found wealth is always welcome, the challenge before the professionals – young and not-so-young – is to find a sense of direction, purpose and some guiding principles to lead them as they head into the chaotic, unforgiving and demanding world.

Subroto Bagchi, who now calls himself a 'Gardener' at IT services company, MindTree, is shaping himself as a master coach and mentor. In his second book *Go Kiss the World: Life Lessons for the Young Professional* (Penguin Portfolio June 08) through personal anecdotes, he brings lessons on working and living, energizing ordinary people to lead extraordinary lives. Bagchi urges Indian professionals **to recognize and develop their inner strengths, thereby helping them realize their own, unique potential.**

For those who constantly worry about building careers and successful businesses, Bagchi has this to say: "Our lives are like rivers – the source seldom reveals the confluence. Does a river fret over the long journey and about its end just as it is about to spurt? It simply does not do that, caring instead to flow, to begin its journey, and on its way builds a beneficial relationship with anyone who comes in contact with her."

To those who insist on clear definition of their role in a job and a corner office, preferably next to the CEO, instead Bagchi tells them to ask: "Give me the challenge of a tough, dirty, and strategic role that no one is willing to take... when your outlook changes from 'what is good for me' to 'Where is the organization hurting and how can I make a difference,' your professional

landscape changes." He believes that "if you are good at your job, your position in the hierarchy does not matter in the long run."

Bagchi is worried that today's professionals are confused about the word 'success.' To them Bagchi recounts his father's principles from whom he learnt that **"Success is your ability to rise above your discomfort, whatever be your current state of wealth... Success is not about building material comforts..."**

Sense of history

To CEOs who are nervous about getting the right person for the right job, Bagchi narrates the instance of why Azim Premji picked him for a challenging job (to lead the quality initiative at Wipro) for which he was not technically qualified. Premji told him that he wanted someone 'with a sense of history'.

"Many of us excel as first-rate line managers. Then comes an assignment that calls not just for functional expertise, it requires the capability to make an impact without necessarily having the authority. Such assignments require bringing about change in people's ways of doing things; to achieve this you need someone who has a sense of history."

From Premji Bagchi also learnt that "a leader's job is to focus on what is delivered, not on what a person's quirks are. Competence to do a job has far greater weightage than personal reverence."

Bagchi urges small town Indians who have made it big to retain their values of 'innocence and intimacy' because only these qualities will come to their rescue when confronted with a demanding and often chaotic world.