

BREAKTHROUGHER Volume 1

Surpass your Aspirations

CHETAN WALIA

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VOLUME 1

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Foreword

Breakthrougher is a collection of essays. These essays, at the start, were mostly centred around sales subjects. However, the topics covered came to extend to leadership, coaching, breakthroughs, success, achievement and general observations on life.

Each chapter is based on some personal experience and the realization resulting from it. Each chapter is an account of a personal discovery. The topic under discussion may be sales, or leadership, or even politics. However, the realization goes beyond these subjects and has a bearing on our everyday lives. Each essay presents an opportunity for change, for something different, for a breakthrough.

This is about me. This is about you. This is about people. This is about the way we are, the way we perceive of ourselves, and the way we can be and deserve to be. Whether you are in the profession being discussed or very far from it, I assure you that you will relate to the learning experience in these pages. I have endeavoured to write this in a manner that the reader acquires some insight by the end of each reading, whether into life, work or human and personal behaviour.

All the chapters here are independent of each other. Do not feel compelled to read more than one at a time. In my experience, those who have read or re-read these essays on my website find a new meaning in them every time. Everyone finds his or her own meaning.

I have often found that we have insights and realize the presence of opportunities and patterns, but hesitate or forget to act on them

and make a change. Hence, the breakthrough does not take place. The few who do make the change and as a result, move closer to living a fuller life, are the ones whom I term “breakthroughers”. I have realized that the difference between a breakthrougher and you or me is simply the element of “action”, and not “realization”.

I therefore invite you to not just read the following pages, rather experience them and ‘act’ upon the realizations they may lead you to.

In these chapters, I have tried to take the reader to the edge. The edge is the only deciding point. It is the point from where you see both sides—the side where you have been as well as the side that you could go to. It is from the edge that you need to decide to plunge. It is the edge from where you make a choice. It is very easy to move back from the edge because it is safer on the known side. Most of us come back, unhurt, unharmed. The few who take the plunge are the breakthroughers. I hope that you will be one of these.

1

Receiving or refusing what you really want

A question that sometimes drives me
hazy: am I or are the others crazy?

—*Albert Einstein*

If you want something badly, but are
not getting it, look inside. You are
refusing it. This isn't mad behaviour.
This is consistently mad behaviour.
This is so 'human'.

—*Chetan Walia*

Is it possible that knowingly or unknowingly, we might be declining success; that we might actually be saying “no” to what we really want? I am not implying that we simply overlook opportunities. Though we do that, too, I think we may actually be completely shut to receiving.

Before we dwell on how and why we do this, let me share a few experiences and observations I have made over the last few months that have led me to believe this.

A couple of years ago, I was engaged in coaching a CEO. After a few sessions, the conversations became uncomfortable, mostly due to certain subjects that were being explored. We were very close to a breakthrough, perhaps just a session away. He knew this. But we never had the session. He did not want it, this session that would have led to the breakthrough he desperately wanted.

I was in Jaisalmer earlier this year on a holiday. One day, while driving to the border with the owner of the hotel in which I was staying, we stopped at a village. The village was populated only by women—about a hundred of them. These women are sex workers and frequently have children. Whenever a male child is born, the father invariably appears. Do the women enjoy this life? Obviously not. Do they wish for a change? I guess they do every day. Out of curiosity, my friend and I started chatting with one of the women. We learnt many things about them, including the fact that they are unhappy, deprived, and have no access to education and the outside world. We would soon learn that they refuse probably the only help that is offered to them for rehabilitation. I could not believe it.

There is a friend of mine who has been keen on doing her PhD for

a long time. She has not been able to do it due to financial problems and because of a dilemma over giving up her current job, as this would mean a break in employment. A few years ago, I offered her a job in my company. We would sponsor her doctorate and give her a salary in the interim. In return, she could make some sort of commitment to us in terms of the number of years she would work for us after her PhD. One would think this was a winner of a deal, but apparently it was not!

I conducted a sales training programme with a manufacturing company in May. The programme went well and we identified a few elementary roadblocks that were hindering the salespeople's performance. A few days after the programme, I called the head of sales and offered (for no fee) to accompany the salespeople on a few of their visits to customers to help them sort out the error. It is hard to believe that this never materialized!

Around the same time this year, a business school in Goa called me for a coaching programme for teachers. They had been referred to me by a client. Working with teachers is something I have always wanted to do and it has been a long-standing goal of mine. I just realized while writing this that strangely enough, I never went to meet them. I have been to Goa thrice since May.

We gift books to colleagues in office on their birthdays. We choose any book that looks interesting or go by someone's recommendation. For two people, however, I specifically thought of books I felt would be of great help to them. I went to the bookstore and bought them myself. Both these people returned the gift. I was not surprised. I am getting used to this.

A couple of months ago, I met someone in sales who was complaining, "I have nothing to do. My target is completed." Who says that meant he should have nothing to do and could just lie back? Wouldn't this attitude make him unconsciously lose or deny sales?

I have seen several people in different companies refusing 'promotions', simply because this would mean relocation or a different role. But what are the real reasons? I have never understood them.

These are not isolated cases. Look around you and you will find them everywhere. Look within and you will find such self-defeating behaviours in abundance. People, including you and me, are generally not open to receiving, especially the things they really, badly want. Try helping an obese person who wants to lose weight and you will know what I mean.

You may read all this and conclude that you are indeed open to receiving and this is not about you. Please examine yourself carefully. We create barriers to prevent us from receiving what we want. These barriers were, no doubt, appropriate at the time they were created, to feel safe, but now they serve to shut out desired experiences.

I will give a few examples on how we create these barriers.

I have seen some people spending a lot of their time alone as a means of protecting themselves from being hurt by other people. They need to recognize that this 'barrier', which may have helped overcome a problem at some point of time, has ceased to serve them now. Some people do not share their secrets of success for fear of losing their exclusivity. Others do not seek help because they do not want to expose themselves or appear vulnerable.

If one of your goals is beginning to exercise, I can almost guarantee that you refuse every offer from a friend or your spouse to go for a walk. If you have wanted to write a book, you are probably declining opportunities to even contribute an article.

If you wish to learn how to swim, drive, play a musical instrument, sing or dance and have not yet learnt, look back and try to remember how many places you have been to that had a swimming pool and where someone offered to teach and you did not take up the offer. How many times have you come across an advertisement for a music teacher or a friend who referred you to one? Ever found yourself ignoring it?

If you want to quit smoking or drinking, have you found yourself looking the other way when someone is narrating their experience on how they quit?

Often, the things and people we want to draw into our lives elude us because we are blocking them out with our defences or barriers and simply do not acknowledge their presence or availability. The more you think about it, the more you will realize the truth of it. The reality is that we create barriers to protect ourselves and in doing so, we become so monominded that we fail to see, and be open to, opportunities on the periphery of our desires.

If you are looking for something, be it a material or non-material goal, love or friendship, business or professional success, you need to look within yourself to see where you are closing down. You must avoid becoming fixated on where you might find it. It comes to you; you have found it more often than you think. It is just that you have also refused more often than you have received.

Breakthrougher is a collection of short articles on various subjects. Each about human enterprise. About achieving the best within each of us while frankly examining why many of us don't even attempt to go there.

Chetan draws on his experience as a coach and a consultant to highlight both the roadblocks as well as the pinnacle of achievement that his coachees have experienced. The open discussions touch a common chord across all bounds of thinking and one identifies with many of the stories and experiences narrated.

Read it to feel the highs, the lows, the inspiration and the hope of breaking through your current reality!

This book can be bought at www.breakthrougher.com

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