

# PROJECT THRIVE

A RESEARCH STUDY BY QUANTUM CONSUMER SOLUTIONS PVT. LTD  
FOR DREAM A DREAM TO EXPLORE THE NUANCES OF THRIVING  
AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ADVERSE BACKGROUNDS

## **ABOUT QUANTUM CONSUMER SOLUTIONS**

Quantum Consumer Solutions is a human-centred design strategy company whose vision is to “design a better future with brave new thinking”. Quantum pushes to find new lenses into human motivations, behaviour and thinking in order to discover the human truth. By translating this human truth to impact, Quantum creates value and thereby solves for the most challenging and complex problems or opportunities. Quantum are Humanists who Design.

## **ABOUT DREAM A DREAM**

Dream a Dream is a registered, charitable trust empowering children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds to overcome adversity and flourish in the 21st century using a creative life skills approach. Currently, Dream a Dream works with 10,000 young people a year through two innovation labs – After School Life Skills Programme and Career Connect Programme. Through these Dream a Dream have trained over 7,700 teachers/educators from 206 partners impacting over 1,92,500 children and have impacted over 1 million children through strategic partnerships with state governments in Delhi and Jharkhand.



## FOREWARD

Adversity in life creates a hunger for food, for identity, for emotional sustenance and validation of self. These are burning needs that cannot be assuaged from within the fragmentation and limitations inherent to adverse circumstances.

Children and young adults, those who have suffered neglect, abuse and failure, the lost and the wandering, find a welcome into the world of care that Dream a Dream offers.

Dream a Dream has crafted a pedagogical method and a process, a science that allows for a re-definition of adverse circumstances by changing the lens through which the past is viewed.

Extended immersion within the non-judgmental and enabling ethos facilitated by Dream a Dream, allows for the emergence of Personhood and an integration of the divided self which may be called 'Thriving'.

Quantum Consumer Solutions Pvt. Ltd conducted an ethnographic study to understand the nuances of 'Thriving'.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **Quantum Consumer Solutions Pvt. Ltd.**

Vinita Kapur, Partner

Usha Rao, Consultant Anthropologist

Abhishek Dhulekar, Associate Manager Operations

### **Film credits:**

Anand Kapur, Director

Ujwala Aparna Viswanath, Cinematographer

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### **Contact Persons:**

All comments on the report are encouraged and welcome. Additionally, all requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be sent to Vishal Talreja ([vishal@dreamadream.org](mailto:vishal@dreamadream.org)).




## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

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# CHAPTER 1: THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH





Started in the year 1999, Dream a Dream, (henceforth also referred to as DaD), is a charitable trust which is impacting the lives of young people from adverse backgrounds.

Over the years of engagement with this demographic segment, DaD has extensive experiential data to show that adversity affects the ability of these young people to engage with the world, make healthy life choices and more significantly, to 'Thrive'.

The core question that DaD wishes to address is: what does Thriving look like? How does it manifest? How can the understanding of 'Thriving' be nuanced?

To address these questions, Ethnographic Research, using the Case Study Method, was undertaken by Quantum Consumer Solutions Pvt. Ltd over a period of 3 months, from August to November 2018.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The Methodology followed was a combination of Participant Observation, Habitat Mapping and Depth Interviews.

**Participant Observations** are non-intrusive immersions in the lived reality of the life of a person or social group. A trained ethnographer can seamlessly enter the life of the respondent and their social context in order to get a deeper understanding of socio-cultural norms, life circumstances, value systems, and material circumstances that form a part of their life worlds.

These observations allowed the ethnographer to observe respondents within their ecosystems, social world, their behaviour and modes of transaction with various actors (family, peers, colleagues, children they are mentoring) and the pressures and demands placed on them.

**Two Hour Participant Observations** were conducted within the family and home of the respondents

**Four Hour Participant Observations** were conducted within the professional set-up of the respondents to observe their interactions with peers and students. It allowed for an understanding of the styles of facilitation, the means and methods used by the respondents and how these represented the shifts that had taken place in their own lives.

**Habitat mapping** is an exercise to understand the wider social context of respondents. How does this context impact the respondents' definition of themselves, their opportunities, possibilities and future lives? These units were conducted accompanied by the respondents to understand:

- Where they came in contact with the Dream a Dream programme
- Current place of residence

**Depth Interviews** allowed respondents to share their narratives in detail. These illustrated the various aspects of their life context, which were relevant to the research.

These narratives formed the basis for understanding their life realities

- Vulnerabilities
- Anxieties
- Blocks and hurdles in the socio-cultural context of their lives
- The appeal of the DAD program; hesitations linked to accessing it
- Its transformative potential
- Lacunae therein
- The extent of internalization of new values, behavioural patterns newly learnt through the program

**Triad Interviews** were conducted with two friends of each of the respondents who were at school with them. This, towards probing the difference between the respondent's journey and those of their previous batch mates.

These enquiries reveal the extent and nature of the impact that the DaD intervention and programs have had on the respondent's life, world view, and sense of Selfhood vis-à-vis others of a similar profile who did not go through the programme.

**Online Journals:** Regular updates were given by the respondents to the Anthropologist on how they were feeling about themselves, their interactions with significant others and with their students. This was done using WhatsApp as this was the means most familiar to the respondents for recording experience.

The Ethnographic immersion into the lives of the Respondents has been recorded through audio and video devices.



**A Film based on the Research:** shows the emergence of Personhood and of “Thriving” as it is enabled by the programmes and methods of Dream a Dream. The research film is part of an ethnographic research conducted by Quantum Consumer Solution Pvt. Ltd. In the research, we explore the nuances of thriving amongst young people growing up in adversity and we invite you to see the film in the context of the research. Consent from the main subjects in this film has been taken to show their life stories with authenticity. The film is proprietary and cannot be shared without prior written permission from Dream a Dream. If you would like to show this research film and are seeking permission, please write to [vishal@dreamadream.org](mailto:vishal@dreamadream.org)

## THE SAMPLE AND TARGET AUDIENCE:

A total number of 18 units were conducted over a period of 3 months between August and November 2018, in Bangalore.

**NOTE: Short forms used in the document:** Participant Observation =PO, Dream a Dream = DaD, DI = Depth Interview, Triad = Interview with three respondents

All verbatims are in italics



PROFILE	DETAILS
Usership	<p>The woman: graduated from the After School Life Skills Program (ASLSP) and is now a facilitator for the same program leading life skills sessions for school children</p> <p>The man: graduated from the Career Connect Program. He joined DaD as a facilitator, first at ASLSP and now works with the Career Connect Program</p>

BANGALORE	4 POs - 2 HOURS 4 POs - 4 HOURS	6 DEPTH INTERVIEWS - 2 HOURS	2 TRIADS - 2 HOURS	2 HABITAT MAPPING- 2 HOURS
Respondent 1 Pallavi	<p>1 PO - 2 hours (Place where they grew up)</p> <p>1 PO - 2 hours (Place in Bengaluru where they are currently residing with their family)</p> <p>2 POs - 4 hours (Place where they are currently teaching and mentoring; to be scheduled on 2 separate days over 2 separate weeks)</p>	3 DIs scheduled once in a month over a period of 3 months - 2 hours	1 Triad (reunion with two of respondent's batchmates)	1- 2 hours Habitat mapping session
Respondent 2 Shiva	<p>1 PO - 2 hours (Place where they grew up)</p> <p>1 PO - 2 hours (Place in Bengaluru where they are currently residing with their family)</p> <p>2 POs - 4 hours (Place where they are currently teaching and mentoring; to be scheduled on 2 separate days over 2 separate weeks)</p>	3 DIs scheduled once in a month over a period of 3 months - 2 hours	1 Triad (reunion with two of respondent's batchmates)	1- 2 hours Habitat mapping session



# CHAPTER 2: FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY





## A STORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF PERSONHOOD: FINDING A SENSE OF SELF

Based on data gathered during the study, it is evident that while money and power may define social success, they are not necessarily indices of 'Thriving' in the way that Thriving is defined by Dream a Dream.

Competitiveness, disillusionment, psychological and physical violence are not specific to marginal communities only. Fragmentation has become a reality to contend with at all levels of the social fabric.

In addition, within the marginal space of lower income neighbourhoods, their quasi legal status in relation to land and property adds another layer of complexity in making life uncertain.

Some of these complexities are:

- Structure of the home is insecure and fraught with conflict
- Occupations are within the informal economy
- No certainty of earning
- No social net to take care of life contingencies
- Challenging for the parents to provide for their family

Regardless of economic entitlement, parenting has become focused on survival strategies. They do multiple jobs and just cannot make the psychological space to give what the children crave for.

- Children are pushed to fulfil parental expectations
- Not appreciated for their uniqueness
- Pushed to achieve success defined in terms of monetary and material gains

In relation to middleclass notions of childhood, children in these neighbourhoods inhabit a frightening world. With no one to mediate the harshness of the reality they face, insecurity is a way of life.

School symbolizes structure and order but does not address the child's need for care and personhood.

Hunger is an additional factor that makes a qualitative difference in terms of adversity. There is a deep hunger for love and to feel cared for; a hunger for an attentive concern that can recognise the person behind the mask; a hunger for food that will prevent stunting and make one strong in mind and body.

Family and kinship define a child's identity in a very fundamental way. They provide a sense of stability regardless of how dysfunctional the relationships may be.

Therefore, it may be stated that the conditions defined as adversity are not only economic. It is the space inside oneself which feels a lack of emotional sustenance and validation at all times.

However, these very conditions become the source of strength for these children when they are supported to find stability and a sense of self so that they are no longer completely defined by the external circumstances they are born into.

**THIS GIVING OF SUPPORT IS THE ROLE PLAYED BY Dream a Dream.** This support is a stable anchor embodied in an adult who facilitates the change.

DaD initiates change through a science of transformation that has method, precision and process. Some of the key motifs of the methodology are articulated below by a senior DaD Facilitator and Program Head, Pavithra.

1. **Re-definition of reality** - *One cannot deny or wish away the circumstances one is born into; But one can learn to manage them.*
2. **Acceptance** - *The vibe that we create in the centre is that there is no restriction, whatever they say we let them say and do and we are with them. If I tell them, you have failed then it will bring down the confidence.*
3. **Skill in action** - *The organization has built something and I am able to manage the difficulties because of the skills*



given by the organization, there are still a lot of personal challenges but because I have these skills I am able to thrive.

4. **Not succeeding but navigating** - I know dancing . I won't open an institute for that, but I can use my skills and I am able to survive through this. I think this is what I mean by thriving through the challenges. There is no success story, I don't consider myself as a success story.
5. **Breaking through and writing new life scripts** - Then there is the acceptance, if somebody says they are working in CCD (Café Coffee Day) we actually celebrate, there are lot of girls who do house painting as well.
6. **The enabler is the science embedded in the pedagogy** - I keep telling lot of the young people, they don't need money, only awareness, I don't know what would have happened to my life if I had not met D.A.D I would have been married early and I would have had children, I have seen a lot of my friends struggling, I keep wondering why they are like that and then I realize they don't have what I had, I have come through a lot of process.



Many of the kids seem to be dressed in uniforms that were well worn – some with slippers and scruffy shoes. Their bags had been donated by someone (bore the name). The overall impression was of children who were living just at the level of basic or minimum wage of their parents. (Anthropologist's field notes)

# THE CONCEPT OF HOLDING SPACE

Specific to DaD is the philosophy and methodology that is defined as 'Holding Space'. What does it mean to "Hold Space" for someone?

1. **Allowing someone to try something new** - *All I do is facilitate and leave it for them to deal with, it's all about creating ripples that change lives.*
2. **Have patience; not jump to giving solutions** - *A lot of patience is required as one cannot just jump to a solution which provides a short - term relief from the problem!*
3. **Giving the freedom to fail** - *I allow them to work towards a higher possibility while giving them the freedom to fail... the fear of failure shouldn't keep them from attempting something. This is because DaD let me make mistakes and I learnt from those mistakes.*
4. **Being a conscious role model** - *I need to build skill in a person so that he/she is able to fight against the odds and I function from behind the scenes. Every word and action I say, I am very careful.*
5. **Bringing one's authentic self** - *There are no restrictions. Whatever they say we let them do it and we support them.*
6. **Constant reflection on one's own behaviour and role** - *I reflect on myself. What is my role? how can I facilitate?*
7. **A 'you can do it' attitude** - *Having the right attitude is very important. One should feel that they can also do it.*

However, given the life circumstances and conditions within marginal communities, it is evident that in a fractured context no one can hold space for another.



Under these conditions physical growth is stunted, and disease is a constant threat. Inside sparse homes the stark reality of hunger is ever-present for many -> hunger for food and hunger for emotional sustenance. The disorder outside reflects the fragmentation that is inside the mind and the feelings.





Life spills out on to the streets  
The boundaries of inside and outside are thin and porous  
This goes beyond physical sharing  
Both conflict and joy are absorbed and shared  
Drunken-ness, Fights; children get frightened

*"Food is a problem for many of them - there is nobody to feed them or take care of them or love them. They get food in school. We also give them snacks after the class." Pallavi*

At best families try and create footholds within these marginal spaces. The places in which Pallavi and Shiva's families have established homes originally grew as informal settlements of migrants to the city of Bangalore.

In the early years, life mimicked the rural paradigm that had been left behind.

Recent years have witnessed a shift from the rural paradigm to an urban one. This has been the result of community efforts and help from the state that have resulted in the installation of taps, running water, sewage lines and some improvement in the infrastructure.

*"A lot has changed in the colony, cement and concrete have replaced most of the thatch and there is no sanitation or water problem any more. We all paid Rs.5000 and got water to our homes."*

While Shiva lives in a settlement of mainly Tamil migrants, Pallavi's family from Andhra have been settled in Bangalore over two generations. Her paternal grandmother is an important person in Gulbarga Colony. In their early years they saw thatched huts and no bathrooms or toilets. Water had to be carried in pots and clothes were washed in the BTM lake, especially before festivals.

*"Before any function or festival, we used to go there and wash our clothes, dry them out and bring them back. We don't do that anymore."*

More recently, there is an appreciation of living an urban life in the very centre of the city.

*"I like living here as it is very central and is fast developing,"* says Shiva.

However, Shiva and his friends laughed and pointed out the irony of their lives which are lived by a very large drain that overflows every time it rains. The drain with its foul odour stands testimony to the squalor and disorder that is endemic to life in the slums.

The settlement has been regularised by the slum board but the threat of eviction due to the machinations of politically and economically powerful people, is ever present.

Occupations continue to be in construction – either masonry, tile laying or manual labour in construction (Pallavi's father works as a tile layer). Among the younger generation, the women work in garment factories and men work as drivers – auto and now cabs.

However, life is lived largely in the public domain. The everyday world of families spills out into the narrow lanes. Drunken-ness among adult males is a problem. Fights happen on the street and sometimes children get frightened and run out onto the street. The sense of disorder is all prevailing, whether it is the drain or in the piles of litter and garbage that they are forced to confront. Inside sparse homes the stark reality of hunger is ever-present for many - Hunger for food and hunger for emotional sustenance.

Despite all of this, Shiva feels people in his colony are doing well and "upgrading their lives." Pallavi is strong in her belief that even though the externality is changing, old paradigms still dictate life. Although outwardly things might be changing – there are pucca homes, bikes and cars, Pallavi feels there is a fundamental backwardness that comes in the way of change. She feels that children are kept within a frame of superstition and custom which limits their exploration of the world.

*"If we go and convince parents, they will not listen as their mind set is to work and they don't bother about what the children are doing."*

This, according to her, is the main reason why things have not changed, and people have not been able to move out of the colony both physically and metaphorically.

*"They hold on to old beliefs – they don't think beyond basic existence, these people don't have education. I am very different, I have had education. My family is different; my uncle is a Press Reporter."*

*"The neighbourhood is dirty, there is lots of garbage, people use bad words, no one feels like starting a new lifestyle. I wanted to bring in some change but did not have the power to do so."*

**Solutions for dealing with a fractured reality are to seek unity and wholeness where it can be found.** Though they have grown up with disorder, they both have a felt need for order and harmony in their lives. They both have special places in the neighbourhood, which they frequent and where they feel a sense of belonging.

Shiva has a deep desire for averting disorder and being 'calm'. He seeks harmony and order at the temple, which has been a part of his life all along. His day begins with a visit to the Amman temple next door or a platform next to the mosque. This space embodies an island of peace within the surrounding chaos, mainly because he meets his friends here. For Pallavi, faith in Jesus is her mainstay.

**Despite all kinds of dysfunctionalities, kin and neighbourhood relationships are emotionally sustaining.**

Despite the chaos that the neighbourhood presents, Pallavi says that she would like to stay on here after marriage, look after her father and raise her children. Her link with the community is strong and she wishes that they could all become upwardly mobile together. Her dreams are for her entire community and not just for herself.

A physical and symbolic space that offers a counterpoint to the disorder are the centres run by Dream a Dream.

1. The Dream a Dream centres are clean and orderly.
2. They have dedicated spaces for different activities.
3. In stark contrast to the tenuous links in the family and neighbourhood, they were representative of an organisation that “endured” and had continuity over time.
4. The organisation had an international presence. The feeling of legitimacy that DaD embodied showed them that there was a world they had not encountered as yet.
5. The association with DaD brings validation and a hope for upward mobility.
6. Their own neighbourhoods, though ‘legal’ are always subject to the exercise of power by local “big people” The threat of eviction or re-location remains an ever-present possibility.
7. Neighbourhoods, peopled by migrants, exist in psychologically liminal spaces. Externally they inhabit urban space but internally rural ways of making do with a lack of facilities; jugaad and uncertainty remain a part of their lives.

## SUMMING UP

On the one hand, all of this presents the potentiality for dynamism and the creation of opportunities which Shiva calls “entrepreneurship”. On the other, some hold onto old cultural and moral paradigms that inhibit the embracing of new identities and possibilities in the context of the city.

The lack of opportunity they contend with every day is crippling at mental, physical and emotional levels. Failure, disillusionment and the sheer burden of survival make alcoholism, drugs and domestic violence an inherent part of their life context.

Gender roles and differences are deeply internalised and played out. Some people attempt to rise beyond their circumstances by focusing on the positivity provided by religious devotion and faith.

Even then, the harsh realities of daily life are difficult to contend with. In a psycho-physical context that is tenuous and un-certain, institutions, whether religious or social, fulfil the need for order, continuity and stability

Dream a Dream is an enduring entity that has institutional legitimacy and continuity. It becomes the face of order and kindness in a fractured and brutal world.

# CHAPTER 3: TWO TRAJECTORIES OF GROWTH TOWARDS PERSONHOOD

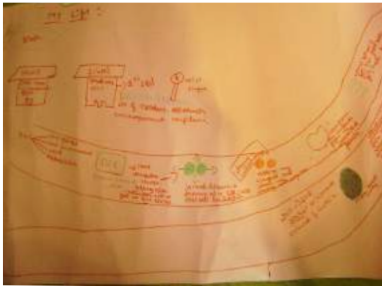




# PALLAVI'S STORY OF GROWTH TOWARDS THRIVING

Pallavi's life script has undergone a drastic change because of her extended association with Dream a Dream.

Pallavi's friends began the journey of life under similar circumstances. Today they are either confused about the direction they wish to take or feel that conventional options provide the security they seek.



**PALLAVI**

Re-definition of gendered identity  
An ongoing journey of self-discovery

**GEETHA**

Life full of struggle, conventional goals  
Provide security

**SHALINI**

Lots of choices  
Still seeking

*The negative thing is that children have to remove bangles and burkha and that is against our custom. I may accept new ways of thinking but society stays the same. In our own house people and religion both will be against us (if we decide to leave old ways) - Pallavi's friends*

**Within the neighbourhood, parental inputs focus on survival. The growth of selfhood is left to chance.** As stated earlier, financial resources are relatively low, and parents are under pressure to provide for their children.

Sometimes men do two jobs between the day and the night and women work in several households. Within these means, they may manage to send their children to school, feed them and clothe them.

The need for emotional sustenance is left largely unaddressed. Children have no one to turn to for sharing their troubles, nor are they appreciated for who they are.

For Pallavi, it has become important to address the emotional needs of the children who come within her ambit.

*Some of the children would not have gone outside of their neighbourhoods. There is no exposure to the city or beyond. I take them out to eat in 'hotels' – they feel so happy if I get them buns as they would never have eaten something like that – they remain happy all day."*

Pallavi uses her own funds to treat the children and take them out in order to broaden their horizon.

*"Some of them come home after school hours – their houses are nearby. We watch TV together, I give them whatever food there is at home. On Sundays I share biryani with those who are regulars at my home. They even come to church with me."*

Pallavi is aware of how these children feel because in her own case, the emotional vacuum has been difficult to deal with.

Financial resources in the family were depleted by Pallavi's mother's illness but even more acute was the lack of emotional sustenance.

*We never got any affection from my mother's side, she was ill, and she had a difficult relationship.*

Her father would drink and the relationship between the parents was difficult with a lot of violence that was witnessed by the children.

*"I had lot of problems like once to stop my parents fighting, I had poured kerosene on myself."*

Most of her early life, Pallavi would have fears and nightmares. She would wake up screaming and her father would soothe her. But the problem persisted. There was a place within her that could not be reached.

*"If I close my eyes, I get bad images and thoughts even now, in my sleep I shout."*

Faced with problems, inner and outer, Pallavi would cry. She could not deal with the issues that confronted her and would feel very alone. Shouldering family responsibilities facilitated the emergence of a sense of self.

Even her grandmother, though reasonably well off, has been antagonistic to her son and his daughters. She even filed a police complaint against her son for non-payment of rent. Pallavi went to the Police Station and brought her father out.

*"I was very bold from a young age. We are 4 girls and he never restricted any of us, he brought me up very bold, like a son, when I was studying 7th my mother had kidney problems and we had to take care of her."*

Within these circumstances, there was no one to look after the girls.

*"I used to cook and go to school, sometimes I did not cook and we would have some chilly rice, no one took care of us."*

*"Though my grandma used to be close by she used to feed my uncle's children and my younger sister used to cry when she did not give food. She did not even support us when my sister got married."*

Learning to stand on one's own feet was not easy, but it brought confidence. Her father compensated by making sure they studied till PUC (Pre-University Course).

*"Whatever skills we want for the future, my father had taught us, for example education, in all the difficulty he made sure we completed PUC. He used to work hard, and he asked me to go to work and stand on my own feet, he never expected anything from us."*

The neighbourhood was a rough place to grow up in. Women were vulnerable. Her father taught her how to

deal with the neighbourhood boys who ragged them.

*"I did my PUC at MES college. A man in a car followed me daily, one day he showed me a knife and threatened me. I ran home crying, my father and uncle came behind. I did not have any fear as I knew they were there at the back of me, they also came to the college then it was alright."*

The distress of everyday life is offset by supports within the extended community. The Church, a constant source of strength, has been part of her growing years. It is the place where Pallavi often cries and gets rid of all her distress or sadness. It is the place where she displays her talent as a singer – she learns new songs often (from YouTube) and sings for the congregation. This gives her a deep sense of satisfaction as she expresses herself and is also appreciated.

Today, the relationship with the community is symbiotic. Within the community, Pallavi is often seen sitting outside her home on a thada (platform). She does this to stay involved in the life of the people she lives with. She is quick to notice and to address the difficulties of someone walking past her place of vigil which allows for a flow of love and care for them. This is a movement that fulfils something in her as well.

*"It's about love and care for children. I get love from the children when I sometimes don't get it from my family."*

In reciprocation, when she herself is down, passers-by who know her ask about her. This soothes something within her.

*"Morning from 8.30 to 10 I sit here and talk to people who pass by. When I am sad, I come and cry here. This way someone notices me and asks me what happened? I feel relieved that way,"* says Pallavi.

Friends continue to be the main support during hard times but still hold onto familiar cultural paradigms. They feel Pallavi has always had a strong sense of direction and DaD has helped build on that. The growth that they witness is largely due to Pallavi's own determination.

*"What I like in her is she is very clear about her ambition, I will have doubt about myself, but she has very clear vision about her ideas. She knows how to handle situations, persons, and how she has to make them understand,"* say Pallavi's friends.

For them, the perception is that Pallavi managed to get where she is because she herself is exceptional.

*"Not everyone who joins DaD can go abroad she has put in effort and come to this stage."*

However, the difference between their trajectories and that of Pallavi is palpable.

## SUMMING UP

Affirmation of self through appreciation and care is the only possibility for re-assessing one's life and seeds the potential for changing circumstances that have been so crippling.

As the understanding of one's place within the larger context of life grows, personal history has the possibility of being re-defined.



# SIGNIFICANT POINTS OF INFLECTION IN PALLAVI'S STORY OF GROWTH

In the process of change and growth towards Self-hood, Pallavi went through several points of inflection. These moments are examples of an individual holding space for themselves.

**Affirmation of self:** DaD came to their school - The DaD team came to assist with computers, English and Rugby. No one had taught English so far and there had been no one to teach computers even though the school had a computer lab.

Through the DaD Life Skills program Pallavi experienced the thrill of affirmation. In a computer class a Facilitator (Pavithra), gave them an activity. *"Identify your ability,"* she said. Most of the children did not understand what was asked for but Pallavi said *"Ability is smartness, Pavithra Akka clapped and it gave me a boost, I was happy"*. For the first time in her life, she felt she could express herself fearlessly as there was no negative feedback for being or doing "wrong".

*"If we told new thoughts we would be appreciated but if we did anything wrong, they would not scold us."*

This affirmation was the turning point for beginning to express herself and to question her own actions and those of others. The impact of this learning was on her relationships at home. Pallavi became vigilant on behalf of her mother and younger sisters. She did not allow her father to ill-treat anyone and began to question his behaviour on all counts.

*"My father used to get scared of me as only I used to question him, no one else could. Now he feels that I am taking most of the decisions for the family, he listens to what I say."*

**Beginning to Trust:** Meeting the DaD Facilitators evoked a desire to fulfil an emotional need by touching them.

*"When we saw them, we felt happy. If you see someone you can make out if they are strict and when they came, they started happily, very jolly and gave us instructions. They were not like our teachers, the first day we were able to talk to them and we would touch them."*

**Leaning into one's own strength:** From the confines of her urban neighbourhood, Pallavi went to a camp at Shimoga with DaD Facilitators. She was in Class 8 and then class 9 when they went into nature and the jungle.

This was another turning point for her as she had to face her own fear and support others who were fearful. She could not indulge in her own emotional state. At night it was dark, and the young people were scared. Of that time, Pallavi says that she was also very frightened, but she did not show her fear.

*"We had to swim and touch the island and come back. I took some girls with me as they were feeling scared. When the waves came, all of them shouted, so I brought them back and I was appreciated for this. They told me you did good."*

She used her own resources to create a peaceful atmosphere for everyone by singing.

*"I prayed to Jesus and I sang songs in the camp that night, everyone felt peaceful."*

**Discovering one's passion:** This came about because her need for exposure was spotted and encouraged by the DaD facilitators she worked with. Being a good student at school, Pallavi's first choice with the DaD Life Skills Programme was to enrol in the Computer programme. Then, some of her classmates who had enrolled in

the Rugby team went to Mumbai for a Competition. They went by plane and when they came back, they were garlanded, stories were shared, and much was made of them. Pallavi felt she had missed an opportunity and that this was what she would rather do.

**The emergence of a new identity:** The shift to Football and Sport emerged as the conduit to a new and different identity. Travelling with her football team has brought different narratives into Pallavi's life. This has changed her world view and her view of herself, bringing about the possibility of viewing oneself in a larger context. Keeping up relationships with people in countries like Russia, Brazil, Zambia, Qatar has extended her sense of self way beyond the neighbourhood and the football fields. It has opened up an expanding horizon of possibilities.

The exposure has brought friends, an acceptance of self and pride in being the person she is today.

*"When I travel, I talk to these people and get to know their stories and how their journey has been, then I think about it."*

**Financial independence:** Pallavi finished her PUC with financial help from an elected representative of the State. After that she funded her own education and today, she earns a salary as a Facilitator for DaD.

Financial independence has allowed Pallavi to become the provider for her family. It has also brought the power to effect change around her, which empowers her in turn. In this role she has gained the respect of her father, siblings and others in the neighbourhood. She is now the chief decision maker in her family.

*"Whatever I need I get it myself, financially or anything else. I take care of myself, I don't take help from anyone. I am the one who purchases all the monthly rations and groceries."*

**Being the provider entitles her to extend hospitality to others:** For her, cooking and feeding her 'children' is her way of extending care and affection to them.

*"Sometimes I invite my kids home and make Biryani for them. We could not afford it in the old days, I want them to taste all this."*

**In addition, she is generous with giving to those in need:** Deeply affected by her own mother's kidney ailment, she searches out kidney patients and offers to pay a part of the cost for dialysis.

*"If there are any dialysis patients, I support them. It comes to about 3 - 4000 rupees a month."*

**Acquiring Legitimacy:** Dream a Dream has helped her acquire legitimacy and the power to 'do'. From feeling dis-empowered and unable to express herself, Pallavi has slowly transformed into a spokesperson. She is direct, clear and precise when she communicates. She networks, maintains ties with builders, corporators, politicians and non-DaD schools to fulfil the goals she has in mind. These interactions have increased her clout in the community. People now appreciate her and seek her out for advice and help.

Dream a Dream has provided her with a platform; a sense of belonging that allows her to relate with people at all levels. Several of these 'important' people have on occasion, felicitated her and that adds to her authority in the neighbourhood.

*"Now with DaD power there are people who listen to me as I can do something. If I go without Dream a Dream backup and I wish to organise events, they will ask me who are you? Dream a Dream gave me credibility to pitch myself."*

After going through the DaD Life Skills programme, she got a man-hole in her neighbourhood fixed, a drain was unblocked through an urgent call from her. She spoke with the local Corporator to get a whole field full of garbage and litter converted into a playing ground for children.

Her achievements have also brought legitimacy to her personal relationships.

*She says, "My father who used to come home drunk and quarrel listens to me now."*

**Trust is a science, a method and a process of transformation:** Immersion within the DaD programme has brought with it a sense of trust in the methodology of transformation that DaD advocates. Deeply inspired by the possibility, she wants to bring about change and to be recognized and acknowledged as a change maker in the area.

She does not think of poverty or lack of means as a structural problem but believes that it lies in the way of thinking about oneself. She feels things will change only when 'mindset' of adults changes and they can leave their backward ways behind. Her own approach exemplifies the stance she is able to take despite being socialised within the same ethos. She wants children to be free to grow and be recognized and given love and care.

*"What I can do is to help them break out of old ways – for example I teach them to wear neat clothes, to wear shoes instead of slippers to school."*

Her commitment to her neighbourhood is evident in her wish is to stay in the colony since she has lived there all her life. When she gets married, she would like to stay and look after her father and raise her children here.

**Re-defining her gendered identity has enabled a shift towards personhood:** For Pallavi, her DaD football outfit is power. She found the means to 'thrive' through football and DaD. Wearing track pants and shorts on the football field has signalled a major shift of identity beyond convention and confinement within a gendered role.

It is significant that, in keeping with tradition and in consonance with the traditional paternal role as gatekeeper of the daughter's femininity, the first time she wore shorts on the football field, she actually took her father's permission. Shifting to track pants was, for her, akin to removing a disguise, "... a cover" as she calls it.

**Her favourite track pants and jacket represent her life at DaD – her profession, her success and also the means to her success:** In other clothes, she feels that she would appear as a young girl and be judged through the lens of gender stereotypes.

*"This is what I wear if I have to meet someone important like the local corporator or the MLA. In these clothes I am somebody – a professional. It also carries DaD as an organization on it."*

**DaD has brought focus to goals that were diffuse and vague:** The shift is represented in her own words as the change from being the "Churidar girl to Football Miss."

#### **THE ENABLERS FOR THIS PROCESS HAVE BEEN:**

**AFFIRMATION** - Earlier she was a traditional girl who believed in not showing her body. She used to scold people who wore shorts or pants. Now she understands that she was using tradition as a cover to her real self. She sees herself as a modern girl who wears track suits when she goes out to play. She also encourages other girls to wear track pants and come for play.

Of the change in her own wardrobe, she says, *"I have several pairs of jeans now, and have a Nike upper."*

In addition, she is cognizant of the fact that people see her differently. Earlier, she did not have acknowledgement or respect from people in society. Others dictated her course of action for her. Now she wields power and has respect in her family and in society.

*"I didn't know who I was and used to behave according to what others would say."*

**DISCOVERING IMPERSONAL VALUES AND GOALS:** Earlier Pallavi's aspirations were based on purely personal desires. She wanted to be a singer, that was her only goal. Now, singing is only a hobby. The shift brings out the change in context and the larger world view she now has.

*"I have to achieve other goals, I have to come out of the house. I go for meetings with other organizations. For example, 'Teach for India.'"*

**DISCOVERING AN INNER SELF** – Growing up, Pallavi was always uneasy when witnessing gender inequality. Now, having travelled abroad for Football tournaments, she feels aware of her own strength and sense of self.

*She says, "I could see that boys are given more importance than girls, but I could not do anything about it. I felt that I can't compare with them, did not know my strength back then."*

It is noteworthy that as she has begun to feel stronger within herself, Pallavi is enjoying wearing the extra-feminine clothes. She loves buying them and keeping them in her cupboard. For her, this is redefining femininity on her own terms.

**Pallavi today is a strong and empowered woman. About what she has received from Dream a Dream, she says, "Of 100 %, 80% is DaD, 20% was within me."**

When she sees herself today, she sees a strong person who can take responsibility for her family and her community.

However, the shadows that she has grown up with still inform her life. Though her inner and outer circumstances have improved, there are areas inside herself which have not changed. These still bother her, but she feels that perhaps she needs to look at these parts of herself in a different way.

She wants to make a difference in the lives of people but knows that she can only do that if she can keep making a difference to her own life.

## SUMMING UP

External affirmation of self has the power to bring visibility and awareness of self. In this case, validation of self in the outside world came through DaD.

Self-expression was possible within a non-judgmental atmosphere. Being cared for by Facilitators created confidence in dealing with the world. The taste of trust started to become familiar; it manifested through wanting to be near and to touch those who could be trusted.

Those who 'held space' for her made it easy to take initiative and make choices. This opened up the possibility for discovering a personal passion and aptitude which in turn opened up a pathway to the crafting of a new identity.

As a sense of self began to coalesce and become firm, new opportunities began to present themselves. Further affirmation came in the form of financial independence.

With inner change, relationships with the world changed. With it came a growing understanding that gendered identity is only one aspect of oneself.





## SHIVA'S TRAJECTORY OF GROWTH TOWARDS THRIVING

In Shiva's case, the search for selfhood began early as difficulties within the home created a sense of unease. Despite the obvious support from his parents, the emotional vacuum was acute. There was no centre of gravity for his identity to coalesce around.

He searched for himself in relationships that had an emotional content. He went back to the hospital where he was born to "meet the delivery aunties" who had assisted at his birth. He wanted to emulate the doctor who treated him, by becoming a doctor himself.

Hunger was never far away. Finances were just managed. His mother worked extremely hard to send him to a private school while his sisters were sent to the local government school. His grandmother still works hard physically, doing manual work at the age of eighty. There was a time when Shiva's grandfather sold his watch to pay his school fees in class 7 when Shiva was traumatised by the headmaster who hit him so hard, he fell down. Today Shiva says, "I give most of my salary at home to my father who handles all the expenses."

The impact of these conditions on Shiva's body and psyche are easy to see. He was shorter than the other boys and his physique bothered him. He wanted to excel at Karate. "I only knew bullying, teasing and humiliation." In Bangalore High School, which he attended after class 8, he felt more comfortable than at the first school he went to because the other boys were short too.

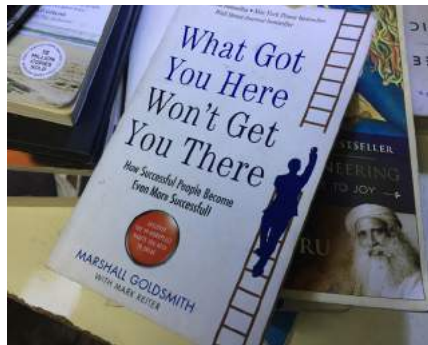
He says, "In BHS my school friends were short, and they were enjoying with me, that broke my fear."

Given the chaotic conditions within the neighbourhood, Shiva seeks peace, quiet, calmness and a place to reflect. Growing up with temples in the close vicinity of his home, and with a mother who led an agitation to protect the local Om Shakti temple, Shiva has a deep connection with religion. Sacred places and symbols are perceived as havens of peace. From an early age, he would hang out at the Ayyappa temple and sing with the devotees. Krishna, Murugan, Bhairava, Kali are important in his life. He also likes going to the temple with his friends. He likes the openness. He is convinced that if he goes to a temple, nothing bad can happen to him.



Few things in Shiva's home that reflect the person he is.

The most favourite thing is the fish tank. He bought it after his DaD job - he finds it peaceful to watch. **He** has chosen fish that don't fight with each other. *"I come home and watch them - sometimes I even talk to them."*



*"You cannot be a facilitator and not be knowledgeable."*

School was a frightening and demeaning experience. While Shiva views education as a “weapon” to move up in life with, his schooling was deficient in providing that. This is evident from his experience at school. The focus was on “memorising lessons”, reading aloud without really being taught how to pronounce words, and writing exams.

*“In school they taught complete discipline and a little bit of education they would check my inner baniyan, socks... whether I had worn them, also is my hair is cut and my shoes are clean. We were fined for speaking other languages apart from English.”*

The teachers were not kind and were outright cruel. The education they imparted did not engender life skills in the students.

*“It was only after leaving school that my skills improved. Until I was there nothing happened because we did not know of real life. They only made us memorize, we did not fully understand anything.”*

The community that Shiva lives in is different from where Pallavi stays. While Pallavi’s family are locally respected, and therefore have protection, Shiva is liable to be questioned by the people in power in his community. Therefore, Shiva’s response to his community is quite different from the way Pallavi feels about hers.

During the course of this research, local politicians enquired about the visit of the research team. Relating the story, Shiva said, *“I managed them very well saying what they are doing is like TED talks. I told them different stories about why the team was there were with a camera. I have managed them. You can come, just don’t shoot in the streets.”*

**For Shiva, creating social distance from the community is a way of ensuring mobility and freedom.** Not associating with the social context that one wishes to transcend, is one way towards social and psychological mobility. Reaching upward for a more evolved lifestyle is perceived to be possible only by sacrificing the lower end of the spectrum.

So, Shiva is clear that he does not wish to participate in the life of the neighbourhood. He distances himself from the people around and walks with his eyes on the ground. He does not wish to be associated with the local boys and does not approve of the bad habits of the young men in his neighbourhood.

**Shiva is aware that he has changed his script very consciously.** *In relation to his family, he says that everyone in his family is doing the same work for the last 30 years, but he has changed that for himself. “My journey is different, but their journey is the same, I am growing the choice I made was different. They only have one choice and that was their career.”*

Given the dissonance he faced in his early life, today, it is mainstream ideals that represent the stability that was lacking while growing up. He seeks the stability and rootedness of a regular family life. He has already tried his hand at entrepreneurship and would like to continue with it when possible. Being an Entrepreneur gives him a sense of independence and confidence. He wishes to explore new avenues and different ways of looking at life.

Towards this, he finds his work as a Facilitator challenging. New ways of improving the kind of work he does during facilitation are his passion.

*“I want to create new thoughts and get innovative ideas, start a business of my own. I want to be an ideal person.”*



The collage created by Shiva shows how he has taken responsibility for his own life



*I want to have a family of my own and become stable in life*

*I want to create new thoughts and get innovative ideas...start a business of my own*

*I want to be an ideal person*



*My work has changed me. I create changemakers. I am different because I don't interact with boys from my area.*

*I just wish hi and bye to other people...one or two might come up and ask something, then I reply. I don't want to mingle with them.*

## SUMMING UP

The search for a self that was beyond the troubles and fear began early.

Within the difficult circumstances of life in the neighbourhood, there was pressure to live up to social definitions of success.

The initial years at an English medium school were a punishing and humiliating experience. The cultural idiom at the school was borrowed from educational institutions set up in India based on Western paradigms of education. They mimicked values that were alien to the context of a child brought up speaking vernacular languages and living in a Bangalore slum. English was tortuous to read and speaking in any other language attracted a fine.

Among the adults at the school there was no awareness of the effect of harshness and punitive measures upon children. The institution did not measure up as a place of safety and learning. Quite the contrary.

Emotions coalesced around the devotion that was palpable at the *Ayyappa* temple singing. Even the aunties at the delivery room who had brought him into the world, were sought to fulfil an emotional need.

The only way out, one that is still taken recourse to, is to create social distance between the oppressive conditions in the neighbourhood and the people who foster them.

Family values, the sacrifice of a mother, the example of a very hardworking grandmother are dear to Shiva as they show that a way out can be found if one does not give up.

# SIGNIFICANT POINTS OF INFLECTION IN SHIVA'S STORY OF GROWTH

**Understanding that perspective changes what is perceived:** For Shiva, an important shift in the way of understanding life, came from learning that perspective changes the nature of what is perceived.

While at school there was a moment of revelation when he was shown a picture of a man and woman in an embrace. Shiva's reaction based on the way he was shown the picture by his friends was that this is 'dirty'. However, the teacher said, *"See it...you need to study this."* That was a significant moment as Shiva understood that the way he was interpreting the picture was incorrect. He says, *"My agenda was wrong."*

**Affirmation:** Initial affirmation came from an unexpected source. One day, at Bangalore High School, the teacher asked him to sing in class and he sang a song that he used to sing at the temple. The teacher would often ask him to sing when the class was empty. The appreciation he received brought with it the understanding that he was good at something. It also opened the door to gratitude. Even so, accepting positive feedback was a big step.

*"Saying thank you and accepting appreciation was a big step."*

Shiva says he felt that his *"body language changed in the 10th"*. He became more confident and mature.

*"I understood that I could see more than I could when I was in the 7th."*

**The blow of failure:** Failing in all 5 subjects in the 10th was a turning point in his life. Shiva's mother had worked very hard to send him to school and familial expectations were framed within social parameters of success.

When the results for the Class 10 exam came, Shiva discovered he had failed all 5 subjects. His parents were deeply disappointed, and he was very guilty about the hard work his mother had put in. So, he agreed to start working and earning. He was advised to go for a supplementary exam, but he chose to do otherwise. This was a turning point for him as he was forced to look beyond jobs that a degree would get for him.

*"Failure felt like I had let down my parents, I felt guilty telling my close friends about failing in all 5 subjects was a bit hard. Everyone said your score will improve in supplementary exam, the Principal asked my parents to give Rs. 6000 to increase my percentage, we did not do that."*

*"If I hadn't failed, I would have joined some software company. I wouldn't be the person I am today."*

**An exposure to care and appreciation:** This was an important input in Shiva's life as it was his first experience of care and concern. Going to a Free Computer class at an NGO, with some people from his neighbourhood, he came upon a Hippocampus Reading corner.

Sitting at a table there, was a lady called Tara aunty. The gentle kindness and positivity that emanated from her was a complete contrast to anything that Shiva had encountered in his life before. She asked him to read, appreciated how he read and that was the moment that changed his life. He would read with her regularly and soon he was allowed to borrow a book from the library.

*"There were levels in language - basic, white, red, green. I was still basic and improved beautifully. They said, "You are reading well, you can take a book home and read". This experience made such an impression upon him that even today he carries forward that feeling of kindness in relation to his own students."*

*"I remember Tara aunty sitting there, reading, correcting with a smile on her face. She was spreading the smile in the whole library, which was otherwise very quiet. No one could read like her. When I read today, somewhere I would like to be Tara aunty, very patient, very soft. The words should be very personal and touchin. The students should say "I felt the word."*

**Leaning into his own strength:** When he was at the NGO the first time, his initial reaction to the computer and technology was indifferent. He did not know how to use the mouse, or the keyboard and he came away. A few months later, he went back alone. This was the moment of leaning in and getting in touch with something in himself. Later he also learnt Art, Craft, paper folding and designing.

*"I understood that I can learn computers, I can meet Tara mam and many others, and I can paint if I want. That confidence came in me after I went there alone."*

**Making choices. Saying no to the things that were not aligned to his nature:** Shiva displayed a clarity of thought in the way he charted the course of his career. The rationale for the decisions he took shows down to earth pragmatism. On at least two occasions, at moments when he had nothing in hand by way of a job, he made a decision to leave jobs that he felt were 'not for him'. The first time was when his father had found work for him in a Dress Shop. This was just after he had failed the 10th standard exam.

*"I felt this is not suitable for me."*

At another time, he was working at a computer job collecting data at an NGO.

*"One day I felt that typing is not my work. Immediately I went, and I said that I can't work sitting in one place, I think I can work with children."*

**Re-crafting the body that had been deprived:** Martial arts were always attractive because Karate and physical strength gave him a feeling of power. In his early school days, he had suffered from being short and not tall enough in relation to the others in his class. He joined a Taekwondo class. He took the discipline so seriously that he would practice a lot. Taekwondo took away fear.

*"If I was sleeping, I would remember I have homework and I would get up and I would do it. Taekwondo broke my fear a little. I went to State Level competition and won a Silver medal."*

**Facing his fears in the process of making a living:** Shiva took up a job as an entertainer who would wear the heavy costume of a Cartoon Character. The experience was hard as he was hot and sweaty inside the costume as he danced and moved about. But he learnt that people, and in this case children, would come to the character he embodied while no one would come to him as he was. He understood the value of entering the role one needs to play, completely.

The big change was that playing Mickey and meeting people who would want to hug him and take photos with him, took away his fear of people.

*"I dressed as Mickey Mouse without knowing anything about Mickey. I understood that we had become in body and inside, the person we are playing – Facilitator, Son, or a Cartoon character. The whole body changed in the suit". Finding his voice was another challenge that came his way. In his quest to earn a living, Shiva stepped right out of his comfort zone. Initially he felt shy and was scared of exposing himself as he had to shout out loud in order to attract customers. A man told him that it was necessary to 'act' and add 'mother and sister' to his call. Soon he found that people were taking him seriously and buying T shirts from him. The big learning was discovering the use of his voice to convince others. He uses this even today.*

*"There was a very shy and scared person selling T shirts in City Market and shouting for people to come and buy them, the owner told me to add 'mother and sister to my calls, people would come and buy. I learnt to use my voice. Today,*

*I use my learning of 'convincing people' when I need to find placements for my students. I meet HR departments and companies, create a relationship, then send my students there."*

**An entrepreneurial move towards independence:** Using his learning of convincing people from the T-shirt selling experience, Shiva asked the manager of the Event Management company to help him become an entrepreneur. He asked the manager to give him a chance to show what he could do. The manager was impressed. At this time, Shiva was 17 years old. He started an Event management company alone. He would conduct theme parties for children at a fairly low cost, but it was a lot of money for him at the time.

*"I convinced everyone, earned Rs. 8,000. If it was a Chota Bheem theme, the floor, the ceiling décor, theme décor. Only Chota Bheem things would be there in the party. With the help of one person to take care of the tables and serving, I would do a Chota bheem party."*

## **AN ENCOUNTER WITH A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ETHOS THROUGH DREAM A DREAM**

After coming into contact with DaD, Shiva was taken to a four-day Camp at Honnemaradu. The camp initiated a connection with nature and ecology which is still an integral part of his life. The group trekked, planted trees, attended Go Green and Eco-Friendly events. The induction was strict. Shiva remembers that he learnt not to mix soap in the water, not to leave plastic in the woods, not to make noise because there were birds in the forest. He says he learnt hygiene, washing hands before eating. He learnt teamwork and how to support each other. He was inspired to take initiative.

*"I raised my hand and came forward."*

**Entry into a safe environment:** It was in the moment when Shiva witnessed Revanna (a facilitator with Dream a Dream), sharing his story, that he felt the empathetic atmosphere of the group. This is when he found the courage to share something of his own angst.

*"We were sharing, we listened to our heart, we all actively listened, gave full attention, that is how sharing happens. In the camp Revanna was sharing his stories and I was listening, everyone was involved in Revanna's story and crying, somewhere inside I felt I should tell something from my own life"*

*"I spoke about failing all 5 subjects in class 10."*

To be able to speak up in front of other people was empowering. It nudged Shiva towards joining DaD. Shiva realized there were others who had come through worse situations than his own.

*"Meeting Revanna was like meeting a Guru, always motivating others, encouraging, sitting and caring. After that he asked me to join DaD and I was interviewed, and I joined DaD as a creative facilitator."*

**Becoming conscious of emotional intelligence:** The context within which Shiva had grown up and his experience at school, both defined the world as a harsh and brutal place. This was a world that was frightening, and which forced one to be on the defensive all the time. DaD brought consciousness of a world of care.

*"Before coming to Dream a Dream, I did not know what emotion is. I only knew bullying and teasing. Now when someone shares his emotions, I feel very connected with them, with myself, I empathize."*



A picture of the Career Connect Centre where Shiva works as a Facilitator

## THE BIG SHIFT FROM BEING IN SEARCH OF AN ANCHOR TO TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIMSELF CAME THROUGH EXTENDED WORK AS A DREAM A DREAM FACILITATOR

### THE ENABLERS TOWARDS THIS SHIFT WERE:

**ACCEPTANCE:** From being fearful of showing his shortcomings, fearful of the future, fearful of expressing himself and fearful of failure, Shiva moved towards acceptance of his own situation. This gave him the confidence to approach the future.

*"Now I am growing mentally and physically. I have learned personal acceptance."*

**NON-JUDGEMENT:** From not being responsible for the family to taking responsibility for the family. Shiva manages interactions of his family within the neighbourhood with diplomacy. *"I am consulted in decision making."*

**FROM CONFRONTATION TO CONCILIATION:** When there are family fights, Shiva stops them. He accepts problems and gives solutions.

**RE-DEFINITION:** From suffering a given identity to identity defined by an inner sense of self. From identity being defined by outer circumstances like failure to using failure and difficulties as the means to craft a new identity. The growth of confidence and a new lens on situations that arise, allows for being able to 'manage'



despite the circumstances.

**EMPATHY:** From being absorbed in one's own difficulties to bringing inner learning to help others. Shiva says he want to be "an Ideal person."

From being a frightened young boy unable to make sense of the world, he has become someone who can care for others. What he has learnt is a science of how to look at one's life in a larger context.

There are methods to come to this. One has to care enough to find them. Punctuality, communication skills, a logical mindset, practicality and empathy all go into "*building opportunities for others.*"

*"My work has changed me, now I create change makers."*

As an Anchor, Shiva feels his responsibilities are very high. "*I should handle programs in a balanced way as I have to support other programs, entrepreneurs, scholarships, placements. To handle these I need to be calmer. This year I made a curriculum for Entrepreneurs for 30 days, I think we can add a program to Basic English and Computers.*"

## SUMMING UP

Every new experience has the potential to be used for change.

The big learning was that perception has the power to alter the meaning of a situation.

The experience of Failure need not be negative. If viewed without judgement, it can be the basis for questioning given paradigms and discovering new possibilities.

Kindness, sincerity and a lack of judgement can counter the harshness, brutality and humiliation of years.

Appreciation can provide the impetus for pushing boundaries and trying new things.

Kindness evokes courage and strength, making it possible to pursue a dream. Once touched, it is possible to seek out the person and place again.

Reaching towards a more unified way of being, engagement with all that which is perceived as negative needs to be sacrificed.

Submitting to discipline and constantly challenging oneself can reveal strengths hitherto unknown.

Trusting others, one can discover that one is not alone; that others have traversed the same paths through even greater difficulties.

Entering a circle of care is like coming home.

# CHAPTER 4: THE WOUNDED HEALER







Holding space for others is the act of Facilitation. The possibility for Holding Space for others comes from a sense of 'Thriving'. Thriving is a state of well-being which is not dependent on external circumstances.

Thriving is an inner state of confidence and surety in one's own self that allows a re-evaluation and re-definition of the circumstances that have in the past and still do form the context of life. This re-definition allows for the emergence of a new identity and consequently enables the possibility for crafting a new relationship with the world.

THRIVING ALLOWS FOR:

- Managing in a difficult and changing scenario
- Being able to operate from a place of stability in oneself
- Taking charge of the situation
- Not giving up
- Recognizing one's own potential
- Finding a solution

Shiva felt that the example below was an instance of young people finding their own solution as a result of the offer of support – an indication that someone cares is enough for them to feel confident about handling a situation. This, according to Pavitra is 'Thriving.'

**Example:** *One of the girls was weeping and almost fainted from crying. Shiva noticed this in the beginning of the session. There was a group anxiously sitting around her. First Shiva attended to her. He made sure someone gave her water and then he moved her to the front of the class. He made sure there was wet cloth on the forehead and that she gained her composure somewhat.*

*It turned out that she had lost money and was afraid that her mother would beat her in addition to feeling the loss of hard-earned money. Grief and fear weighed on her.*

*Later, Shiva mentioned that he began by asking whether he should help arrange a replacement sum to which she did not agree. "I'll manage it," is what she later said to him.*

*The girl was quiet through the session, but Shiva kept his eye on her – not forcing her to participate but not ignoring her either. The other young people seemed very concerned about her. (From the Anthropologist's field notes)*

## Both Pallavi and Shiva express the reasons for continuing as Facilitators with DaD

Pallavi started life disenfranchised and disempowered. This gave her the impetus to get beyond her circumstances. The difficulties she faced acted as the trampoline for her to leap away from the limitations of that life. Today, Facilitation enables her to extend the power of her selfhood to bring order into the lives of others whom she is responsible for. The impact she can create drives her to action on behalf of them.

*"In the beginning I had asked everyone how many of them shared their feelings with their parents, one boy had started crying as he does not have anyone to share how he feels!"*

One of the boys she mentors, told her *"I have achieved so many medals/prizes, but no one cares/bothers about me. There is no use for me. When he said that, it troubled me."*

**For Shiva, being a Facilitator is like being a live wire.** He finds enabling others like oneself towards personhood a highly creative act. Facilitating another's growth is a mix of empathy, urgency and immediacy.

*"Now I can go to a class without any structure because I can create it within a fraction of a second. By seeing young people, I understand what I need to create for them."*

**Facilitation emerges from the facilitator's own experience of life.** It means translating knowledge of human behaviour into active learning for the benefit of the students. On the ground, being a Facilitator means learning and questioning oneself all the time.



Pallavi Today. Medals and prizes she has won, on display at her home

**Pallavi and Shiva view Teaching and Facilitation as two distinct spaces.**

While the teacher teaches ‘theory’, going by the books, the latter involves empathy, bonding and becoming aware of the needs of the children. Pallavi feels that like in her own case, the real need is an emotional one. *“The problem is that nobody is there to care for them and love them.”* Therefore, she sees herself as a nucleus for the lives of these children for whom she provides the love and care they seek.

**Shiva feels the usual way of loving children actually cripples them.**

*“Parents are uneducated, they do not have life skills. Unconditional love results in tremendous failure, parents do not explain that bad things are not to be done, this is not your age.”*

For Shiva, discovering the difference between mentoring and teaching was empowering. Someone told Shiva about the film ‘Dead Poet’s Society’. The way the teacher interacted with the students made a deep impression on him. *“In the movie the teacher talks about walking a different walk and about how different the world is seen from up there.”*

**An Excerpt from the Film Dead Poet’s Society, reads:**

*When you read, don’t think about what the author thinks, consider what you think. You must strive to find your own voice because the longer you wait to begin, the less likely you are to find it at all...*

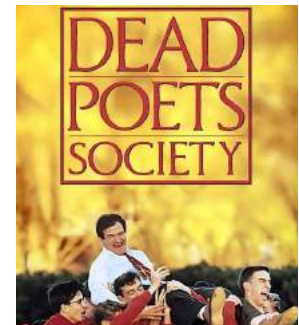
*Show me the heart unfettered by foolish dreams,*

*And I will show you a happy face...*

*But only in their dreams can men be truly free,*

*Tw ‘as always thus and always thus will be...*

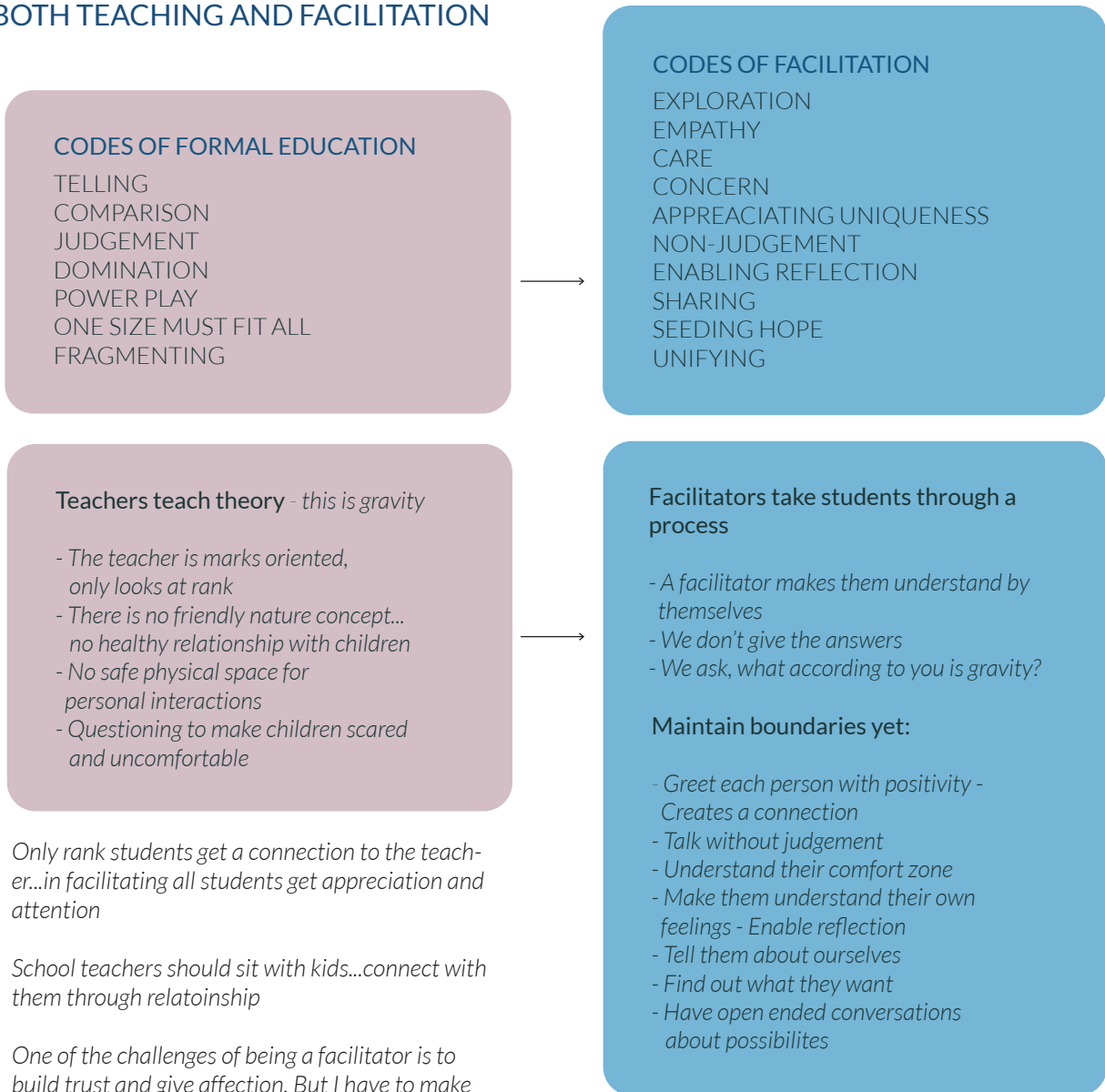
- Dead Poet’s Society



Shiva saw that a teacher could be motivating and inspiring rather than the indifference and brutality that he had witnessed in his own life. *“I liked the idea of a teacher who would play music and take classes ...so much so that I put soft music in my laptop to calm the students.”* With the methods he uses in his own sessions, *“Sometimes the younger people cry...they are attentive to the music and the singing,”* says Shiva.

# MAPPING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CODES OF TEACHING AND FACILITATION AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE D&D FACILITATORS.

GIVEN BELOW IS A DIAGRAMMATIC MAPPING OF THE CODES THAT UNDERLIE BOTH TEACHING AND FACILITATION



Only rank students get a connection to the teacher...in facilitating all students get appreciation and attention

School teachers should sit with kids...connect with them through relationship

One of the challenges of being a facilitator is to build trust and give affection. But I have to make sure that they don't get too close to me...distance is important.

I liked the idea of a teacher who would play music and take classes....so much so that I put soft music in my laptop to calm the students

Sometimes the younger people cry....they are attentive to the music and singing

**THE DELTA BETWEEN TEACHING AND FACILITATION IS HUGE.  
WHAT IMPLICATIONS DOES THIS HAVE FOR RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION?**

## Reimagining and re-crafting gender relations by creating sensitivity.

### What Pallavi does on the field, Shiva does in his sessions

Shiva played a video about a young woman who made it through difficulties by finding her own meaning in life and focusing on her dreams. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIF5BnugxYM>

The video touches upon several issues – gender, motherhood, adoption, self-reliance, failure etc. I observed that the students were very engrossed in the video at the end of which there was applause and tears as well.

The students began talking about it on their own. Shiva did not have to ask for a response which indicates that they have learned that these sessions invite their own thoughts and responses – something that is discouraged in college and school.

A young woman said that she was very moved when the protagonist talked about the loss of her ability to becoming a biological mother – and the distress it caused. But she was equally moved when the person decided to adopt and give a child a life. This brought out stories from other young women about how they had advised various family members to adopt children.

One of the striking moments was when a young man – must be 16 – self-confident and assured broke into tears and said that he was so upset to see how parents get their daughters married at a young age 'What about her dreams – what kind of parents are these to have got her married despite her dreams.' There were tears that set others crying as well.

The whole session was charged with empathy for the protagonist but also reflection on particular circumstances.

Shiva was present – quiet and attentive and allowed the comments and the sharing to unfold.

The message of the video was picked up by some of the students. It resonated with the Dream a Dream approach – focus on self, strength and finding expression from within the circumstances that cannot be altered. This relates to their interpretation of what it means to thrive. (From the Anthropologist's field notes).

## Facilitators understand the context that the student's face as a part of their everyday lives.

One of the interesting exercises that Shiva did with the group was a discussion about the community. He asked about all the dangers and unpleasantness associated with it. Many of the young men came up with examples of gangs, drunkenness, harassment of women and the presence of 'bhais' or dons within the community.

These scenarios were enacted by some of them by using the bodies of their peers (as if they were statues). Shiva used the body to discuss and demonstrate some issues that are part of their everyday lives. **Rather than discuss or deconstruct material, this way they learned by doing via the medium of games and exercises.**

## Real work needs a dedicated space

**The creation of a dedicated space for work is perceived to be the first step in Facilitation.** The principle that underlies the creation of a circumscribed space is the creation of an enabling atmosphere for true learning.

On the field, Pallavi asks other players to leave and cleans all the litter off the field. The students help her in this act which acts as a means for establishing ownership of the space for the duration of the class.

- Creating a special space for special activity
- Imbuing the space with focus; making it ready for a performative activity
- Initiating spirit of teamwork
- Conscious awareness of body boundaries; evoking conscious participation

*"We need to do this every day, kids throw rubbish and we need to clean it all up! The children follow suit – when one of the girls does not help, the other girl says, "Your hands won't fall off if you pick this up."*

**Shiva works very consciously to create an atmosphere that will be relaxing and refreshing.** He uses special sensory inputs to create a separation between the outside world and the inner world of the class at the Career Connect Centre.

*"If they don't have a context, they will be confused...before I did not know how to set the tone of the context, now I do know," he says.*

Once in class the students can forget their troubles and work with others to uncover deeper aspects of themselves. The interesting thing is that Shiva has learnt all of this himself and is constantly exploring new ways that he can bring to his work.

Once, Shiva had the experience of entering a hotel and being enveloped in a fragrance that made him feel relaxed and fresh. He now puts perfume that lasts for a while at the 4 corners of the room, once in 3 days.

*"I like to prepare the room – I use smell - I light agarbatti and music to create a different kind of feeling. It makes the students feel fresh."*

He also learnt the use of candles and music to create a soothing atmosphere that will enable relaxation and sharing. He finds music calming for himself and it also enhances his focus. So, he uses it for his students as well. He went to great lengths to get a Tibetan Singing Bowl as *"the frequency was relaxing us."*

## Creating an atmosphere for learning that is light, fun and enabling

*When we arrived, the centre was buzzing with activity. This was between sessions and all the groups were 'hanging out' waiting for their sessions to begin.*

*There were young people huddled together in the 'library' section and around the carom board. There was much animated conversation and laughter. The inner room – the computer room emanated snatches of music from YouTube. Young people – boys and girls were gathered around laptops watching programs of their choice, hanging out and talking to each other. There seemed to be a cohesive energy as they hung out in groups. Many of them were 'graduates' who had finished the course but had come to meet friends. "I come here daily to meet my friends after college," said a young woman in a hijab who is in her second year B.Com. (From the Anthropologist's field notes)*

**Looking at one's place in a larger context:** According to Shiva, the Facilitator should be Knowledgeable and a Scientist. Shiva brings knowledge from all the facets of his life as well as from books, conversations and his own learning to encourage his students. The session is a mix of learning about the world and learning about themselves.

*"In the Career Connect office talking to a lady manager, I learnt that a girl should be at least 21 years old before she is mentally strong to be able to handle a baby, because of this kind of knowledge that I bring into my family, they follow what I say," says Shiva.*





Students at the Career Connect Centre and Shiva facilitating

*I need to create a space for learning*

*Switch on the lights and fans*

*Prepare materials*

*Children should not feel too much is to be done... they lose interest... so I secretly display the materials*

*Plan stories that will keep the mood*

*Generally stay with the plan but might suddenly need to add an element*

**Learning takes place within the context of the relationship between the Facilitator and the student:** *“We have to see that they identify their skill and potential if they have to be successful in the 21st century they have to have more skills.”*

**All life skills may not come naturally. Learning them paves the way for freedom.** For Pallavi, life skills mean coming forward and taking the initiative/leadership – of talking to others, distributing snacks etc. She cites an example of portrayal of both strong and weak life skills in relation to a boy she is mentoring.

*“If I am not well, he takes the initiative and will lead the session. That’s a strong life skill. However, sometimes he gets angry on kids and will react by either hitting/scolding them. That’s not a life skill.”*

**Good Life Skills allow for:**

- Taking the initiative –exercising leadership
- Speaking up - expressing oneself without fear
- Meeting new people
- Asking for support and help
- Having the confidence to solve problems within difficult circumstances

**My failures are my strength:** Shiva actively uses the example of failing all five subjects in the 10th as a motif to inspire his students. The fact that he occupies a position of great responsibility in an international organization today is the proof that the students need to see. It makes them feel that they do not need to allow failure of any kind to threaten their sense of self and their self-esteem. In fact, it can be the impetus for the discovery of an unknown facet of themselves.

According to Shiva, *“Children have to reflect, do what they want, we will be non-judgmental. Now in my sessions, I tell people that I failed in the 10th class in all 5 subjects, and so I become an example for them as they see that some who had failed back then has come so far in his journey.”*

**A safe environment allows me to express myself freely:** Facilitation is an art that does not tell the student



what to do. Rather it helps the student to express what is in them and to come upon solutions by themselves or with a little nudge. This process is enabled by a feeling of safety; a psychological environment that is not judgmental.

Both Pallavi and Shiva ensure that there is no possibility of negative feedback as students take the first tentative steps towards expressing themselves. They are not shy of exposing their fears and their difficulties in this atmosphere.

*“DaD encouraged me and gave me self-courage. Before I was too shy to talk,”* says a student at the Career Connect centre.

**This gentle and supportive atmosphere is held preciously by both facilitators and students. Towards this, the facilitators, do the following:**

- Evoke normalcy, bring everyone “in tune”
- Create relaxation and ease
- Notice particular needs, especially of the silent and diffident ones
- Evoke self-expression by giving responsibility
- Encourage positive feedback and appreciation

Shiva reiterates *“I am a Facilitator and I should be able to see without judgement. I should be able to take all the negatives and put in the positive is what we have learned.”*

**Facilitating is skill in action: listening with attention and empathy while retaining objectivity.**

**The fine lines between the personal and professional need to be negotiated all the time.** Attentive listening involves putting oneself in the other’s shoes but retaining enough separation to be able to help. The training they receive teaches them how to be empathetic but not to show sympathy as it erodes self-confidence and encourages dependence. This is difficult as the inner angst needs to be brought out before healing can begin.

Shiva speaks about the growth of strength and confidence. *“The inner self needs to be made strong, until we cry it won’t go, until it is cured the pain will be there, after it is cured, we can come out of it.”*

Pallavi affirms the methodology in her own way. *“Children who get care and affection don’t need it from outside. But children who need it, I give them. The way we speak, children will change, whatever is the child’s interest, that is encouraged.”*

*“Facilitators have to keep themselves strong, emotionally, we cannot cry with the children. That would make their confidence come down, then there is no energy,”* says Shiva.

**Reimagining and re-crafting gender relations:** Gender inequality and violence in gender relations is embedded in the daily lives of most children who come to the DaD centres. As part of the creation of a non-threatening atmosphere, gender relations and equality are gently addressed by facilitators.

Pallavi was always deeply affected by the gender violence she witnessed around her. She faced both ragging and stalking in her own younger days. *“I always felt I was not as good as the boys.”* Today she makes certain that the boys and girls in her football team feel comfortable with each other.

Towards this she facilitates the breaking of rigid boundaries between boys and girls by encouraging them to freely engage with each other during play. When they play, they play as equals.

*“As part of the session, I make sure that the group has equal representation, 4 girls and 4 boys and also the exercises planned*



Pallavi encouraging boys and girls to play together

*for the session involves interlocking bodies and hands, lifting each other up they start off with hesitation but emerge as friends by the end of the session."*

**In his sessions Shiva brings up the topic of nourishment for girls** and the need for them to drink a lot of water. He hints at their need for taking care of themselves because of menstruation. In these ways, he establishes a respect for the female body in the eyes of the boys who are a part of the group.

**Creating a Relationship of Equals:** Creating an environment that is not hierarchical is essential to facilitating an atmosphere of growth. *"How can one bring in a culture where there is no hierarchy? we want to create a space where they own the space,"* says Pavithra.

Manish, a graduate of the Career Connect Programme who comes back regularly to meet with the Facilitators and his friends says. *"There is no need for the students to justify either their presence or what they are doing."*

**Other Facilitators and students testify to the life changing role of seeing each child as unique:** *"In DaD we say that each person is unique and special and that touched me."*

*"When I first entered the Centre, I did not know who a student was and who was staff. Now I am also able to ask questions earlier I was afraid,"* a girl student tells us. Shiva testifies to the welcoming atmosphere when he says, *"Almost all the children call it second home every child has their own skills and it has to come out, that is what we do."* (Anthropologists field notes)

**One for All and All for One:** Commitment towards each other is perceived as essential for working together. This could be a batch at Career Connect Centre or on the Football field. Every incident positive or negative is viewed as an opportunity for learning. Facilitators encourage students to help resolve the issues and difficulties that members of the group might have. The ethos they foster is one of mutual support. The Facilitator guides the group towards owning up to a mistake or getting to the root of an issue that is troubling someone. It is resolved together.

*"There will be problems, we work with them."*

**Trust is fundamental to learning together.** At the end of a football session, Pallavi emphasizes the value of trust. A few students raised the issue of carrying heavier team members and how difficult it was. Pallavi's response was to ask them *"How could it have been done differently?"*

*"Every day there is some learning for me, I learnt huge last week. There was a girl in the circle who was sharing, but she stopped because of a gesture that I made, I apologised, gave her time and she was fine."* It took a while for Shiva to realise that it was this gesture that made her stop. He communicated this mistake he had made in expressing

himself, to the whole class and once they all understood, they all cheered, and the girl was able to continue sharing.

**Taking forward a legacy of empathy:** The Facilitators use their training and skills to understand the inner and outer realities of the children. For them, walking into the shoes of the young people who come to DaD centres is like walking into an older identity that they have known intimately. The neglect, the emotional vacuum, the hunger and need and the fears that they carried as young children are experiences that help them to understand others who are going through the same hardships.

They work actively to reduce the fear and diffidence that the students carry at the start of each fresh batch. The outcome of being dealt with through kindness and understanding is that these values are carried forward into life by the students.

Shiva testifies to the shift that takes place in relation to others.

*"There is an increase in confidence in interactions with others and helps the students build their own relationships too. With family members and outsiders in the same way, how to behave with others."*

**Drawing out the child within a circle of care:** Knowing the diffidence that most children have to speak out in a group, the Facilitators make special efforts to draw them out.

This was evident during a session at the Career Connect Centre:

*Differences in perceptions - different eyes see different things was demonstrated through the use of images. The idea seemed to be to introduce these concepts as a way of handling conflict which sometimes arises from difference in perception. Perception and 'image' exercises were also used sketching and drawing. The closing exercise brought in silence and quiet (with music) and palming of the eyes. All the students were given a box of juice before they left.*

*Today's lesson spilled over so Shiva was anxious that the students who came from far reached home safe. When I asked whether the parents would have a problem, he said "They are aware that they come here so there is no issue."*

(From the Anthropologist's field notes)

**The diffidence of children is overcome by drawing them out. Their emerging self is nurtured within a circle of care created by Dream a Dream.**

There is a conscious creation of a 'safe' place for self-expression. Within this all activities are conducted within an overarching circle of care and consideration for others. There is a focus on practicality, thoughtful planning and skill in execution.

**The atmosphere of care for each other is what encourages self-expression:** Knowing the diffidence that most children have to speak out in a group, the Facilitators make special efforts to draw them out, ensure they work together and that participants are considerate towards the others.

**Going beyond the brief is inherent to the ethos of facilitation:** Facilitation is the act of nudging growth by enabling students to find their own solutions. This is possible only when the student is cared for as a person and not just as a student within the ambit of a classroom or session. Both Shiva and Pallavi have enduring relationships with their students. This kind of care has its roots in the organizational ethos.

*"My mentors were available for me beyond the professional space, that is what supported me,"* said Pavithra.

**Constant learning and innovating have become an integral aspect of the way that the facilitators work:** The facilitators are always looking at new ways of increasing the impact of the work they are doing.

Pallavi is like a mother to her students. She calls them home, cooks for them, plays games with them and curates special experiences for them by taking them to restaurants and giving them tasty treats, they might not have eaten. All of this for her, is giving them emotional sustenance that they do not get in their homes.

## Facilitation is enabling without creating dependency

A combination of sensitivity and sharp observational skills are required to understand the uniqueness of each child and create opportunities suited to their particular needs. This prevents dependence on the Facilitator and allows the students to trust their own judgement and become self-reliant. On the football field, Pallavi does not mother her students. In fact, on the field she is coach and mentor, brusque and practical in her approach.

*"We make the silent ones express themselves through a game or song then see if they take initiative and tell them." "the next class has to be done by you". They search the net, YouTube, then they conduct the class from Check in, to Reflection and get feedback at the end," says Pallavi.*

**To be Authentic I must be the same Inside and Outside:** Being authentic is a value as it is the basis for trust. This was a lesson that Shiva learnt while playing different roles during his event management days. In order to play the role, he had to become the role. He had to embody the character through attitude and body language. Only if he can be true to these roles can he be authentic and only if he is authentic can he evoke trust from his students. He feels it is important to get students to thinking about the inner and outer self – what we project versus what is going on inside.

*"Today I am a son to my parents, and I am a Facilitator, I have to be true to these roles."*

**Seeding hope and showing possibility:** The Football Event brought together 200 children from across DaD schools in Bangalore and some government schools where they have not been working. The first half of the day was devoted to Life Skills exercises and the second half was the football time. The matches were played with mixed teams of boys and girls from different schools together.

**The formula for this game was that the children had to choose some of the rules themselves. There were no referees, but the monitoring team watched the game and asked the children to evaluate themselves.**

The primary goal, as stated by the event blurb – fair play, gender equality and teamwork.

*"Children get an opportunity to interact with other players who share their experiences with them – how they were in life, what brought them here – and the children think 'If I study/work hard, I can achieve this,'" says Pallavi.*

## Challenges encountered as a Facilitator

Social and cultural norms and beliefs create limitations for both parents and children. Parents view their children through the social lens. They impose cultural stereotypes upon them. Not wearing bangles or wearing track pants or shorts brings long held beliefs and values into question. For parents, breaking these codes threatens the future of girl children as they may be perceived as being immoral. This is more so among Hindus and Muslims, where the wearing of bangles, covering the body and not interacting with boys are symbols of a moral upbringing.

Pallavi's strategy is to explain to the parents, *"I tell them that if your kids wear bangles while playing, they might break, and your kids might end up getting hurt. Sometimes the children do not get the support."*

Shiva told us the story of a young girl. *"One of the girls even got a scholarship to study, her parents did not encourage her, they sent her to work in the garment's factory."*

### The challenges for the Facilitators are complex:

- The challenge of fostering a new identity for someone else
- Challenging inherited, cherished and internalized meaning systems
- The challenge of breaking stereotypes for others
- The challenge of instilling new codes into the body
- The challenge of accepting the unknown taste of personal freedom in mind and body

**Holding oneself back and not providing solutions is not easy:** The ethos of Facilitation requires that the facilitator provide the required inputs with sensitivity and then let go. This philosophy and methodology permeate the process of facilitation. It keeps the Facilitators within a non-judgmental frame of mind.

*“I sit with Shiva, we have a personal connection and a professional one. I give suggestions for Shiva at work, all I do is reflect with them and leave the decisions to them. The only thing I do is to facilitate and leave it. Shiva keeps saying, Akka now I understand that you did not lose your temper and you did not scold,”* says Pavithra

**The challenge is to maintain a high level of energy while remaining centred:** Shiva says he needs to be calm so that he does not react to what happens in the class – what students say and do – and instead, he can respond appropriately without censoring them.

*“As a Facilitator I need to prepare myself – get myself to a state of mind from which I can hold the lesson. I have to bring myself to a calm state.”*

**Those who are intimate know what working as a Facilitator means, but outreach and education are required to bring the family and community into the picture:** Without knowing what Shiva is doing, his standing within the family and neighbourhood is still not what it could be.

Others within his ambit need to change for the transformation he is effecting to create ripples. Real change would require the extended community to become aware of the inner life and changes that their children have gone through.

Shiva’s friends have their own lives and trajectories, but they are clear that the work that Shiva does has great worth. Bringing transformation into one’s life is very important, and he does that work, say Shiva’s friends. However, they feel that family members and the rest of society have no idea of what Shiva actually does. *“His family don’t know what ‘Facilitator’ means, he has to say Administrative assistant or, teacher.”*

## Facilitation is enabling transformation by embodying the change

The transformation brought about through the method and process of holding space is embodied by the Facilitator who has been through the process.

In Pallavi’s case, there seems to be an inner resource that allows her to create an atmosphere of learning using her strong presence. The training has given her credibility and a ‘position’ from which this can operate.

**Example from the Ethnography:** *The playground was occupied by groups of young men who were playing cricket. “I have to go and ask them to move,” she said. She went up to them and firmly and politely asked them if she could have the space at 12:30. She let them play and reminded them again. I watched her as she approached them with confidence and calm. There was neither fear nor arrogance or assertion of a ‘right’ in some overt way. She seemed to know how to talk to the young men, many of whom were from the neighbourhood.*

*The manner in which they left after being reminded seemed to suggest there was some level of respect for her and what she was doing in the community. (From the Anthropologist’s field notes)*



Pallavi has to stand firm and be noticed physically – she projects physical strength. She says little and works through her body language which communicates centeredness and ‘no nonsense’ in a way that is not stereotypically ‘feminine’. (From the Anthropologist’s field notes)

## Facilitation is enabling transformation by using the body to express and imprint new ways of being

There is a degree of performative element in his style. The age group (easily bored and restless) and the nature of the reflective exercises demands that Shiva ‘perform’ his facilitation. Humour, presentation of himself, expression, dramatic expressions are all part of his repertoire.

- He is ‘conciliatory’ but firm, using humour and youthful ‘cool’ talk (use of ‘maga’, ‘super’ and other colloquialisms associated with ‘street’ slang among youth especially) -- creates a connect with them.
- He presents himself (posture) as centred and confident.
- He rarely raises his voice– cues confidence.
- Appreciative physical gestures (patting on the back) are minimally used.
- He is very respectful and affectionate around boys and girls.
- Although he may be aware of elements of ‘hero worship’, he does not seem to change his body language or facial expression in response to this.
- Affection is communicated through the tone of the voice – he is expressive in terms of words and tone.
- He often says ‘beautiful’ to their answers; he gives plenty of positive feedback.



## SUMMING UP

### FACILITATION IS AKIN TO AN ACT OF COMPASSION

Helping another towards thriving is possible only when a Facilitator feels stable and on firm ground. The hardships stated by others are often mirror reflections of the Facilitator's own set of experiences and unresolved issues. Facilitation allows for the healing of their own wounds through healing others. Affirmation and appreciation from significant others build responsibility and confidence in their own abilities.

**Facilitators build on strengths that have emerged in the course of their own journey, regardless of usual parameters of success like degrees, passing exams, doing a standard job.**

Facilitating is both a passion and a trajectory for growth, one's own and that of others.

**There is a science in the pedagogical approach to be able to embody stability.** DaD has created definite training modules for Facilitators that embody the ethos of "Holding Space" for others.

What the Facilitators carry forward are a mix of this philosophy, the practices and their own concern for enabling others.





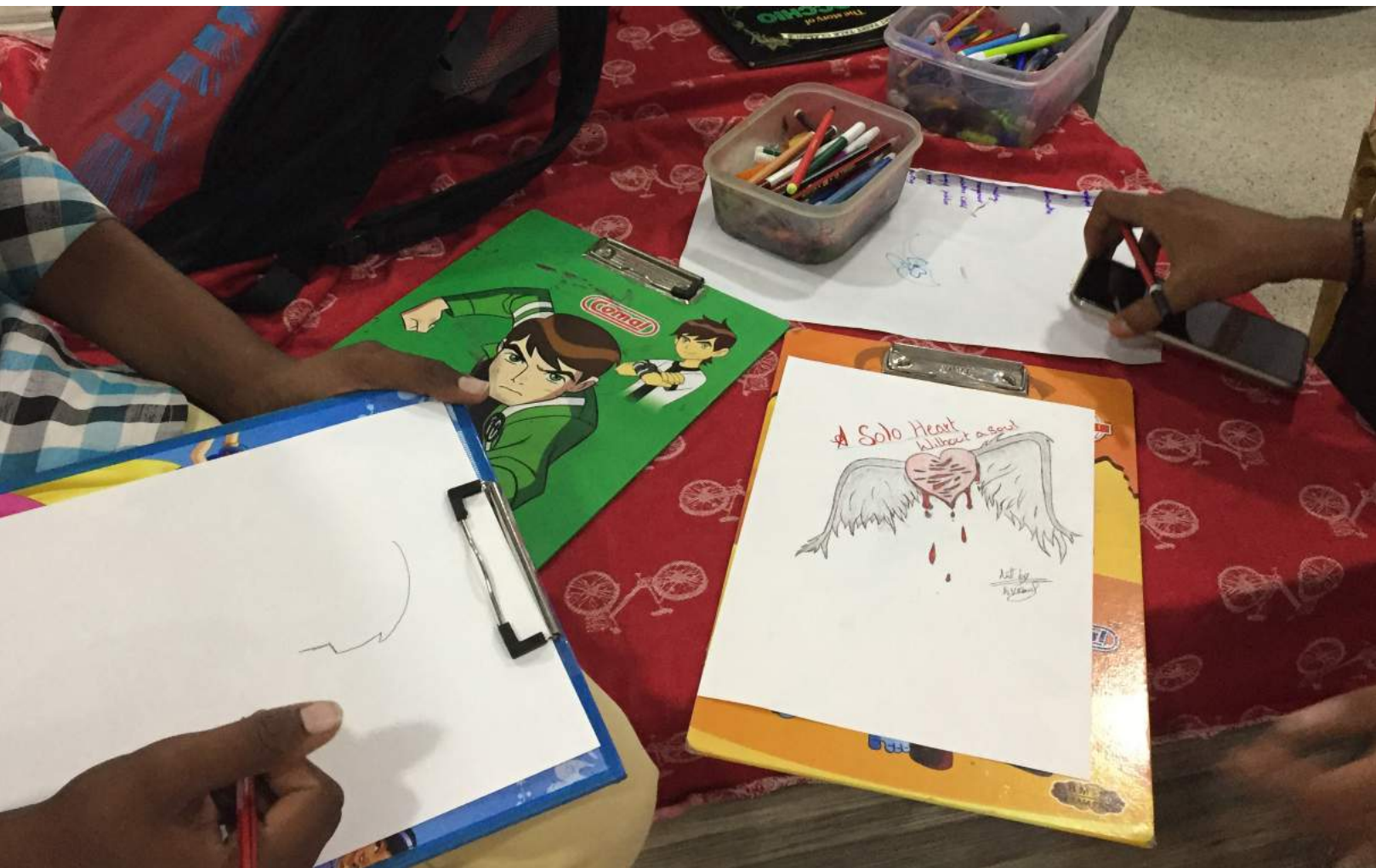
Given below is a diagrammatic version of what Facilitation is and what it is not.

#### WHAT IT IS NOT

- Is not remedial
- Is not building of skills for enabling mental ability
- Not foregrounding numeracy
- Is not aimed at creating cogs in the Industrial machine


#### WHAT IT IS

- PHILOSOPHY
- METHOD
- PROCESS
- The art and science of the validation of the self
- Re-defining the world
- Re-defining identity in the larger context
- Enabling the process of transformation



# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS



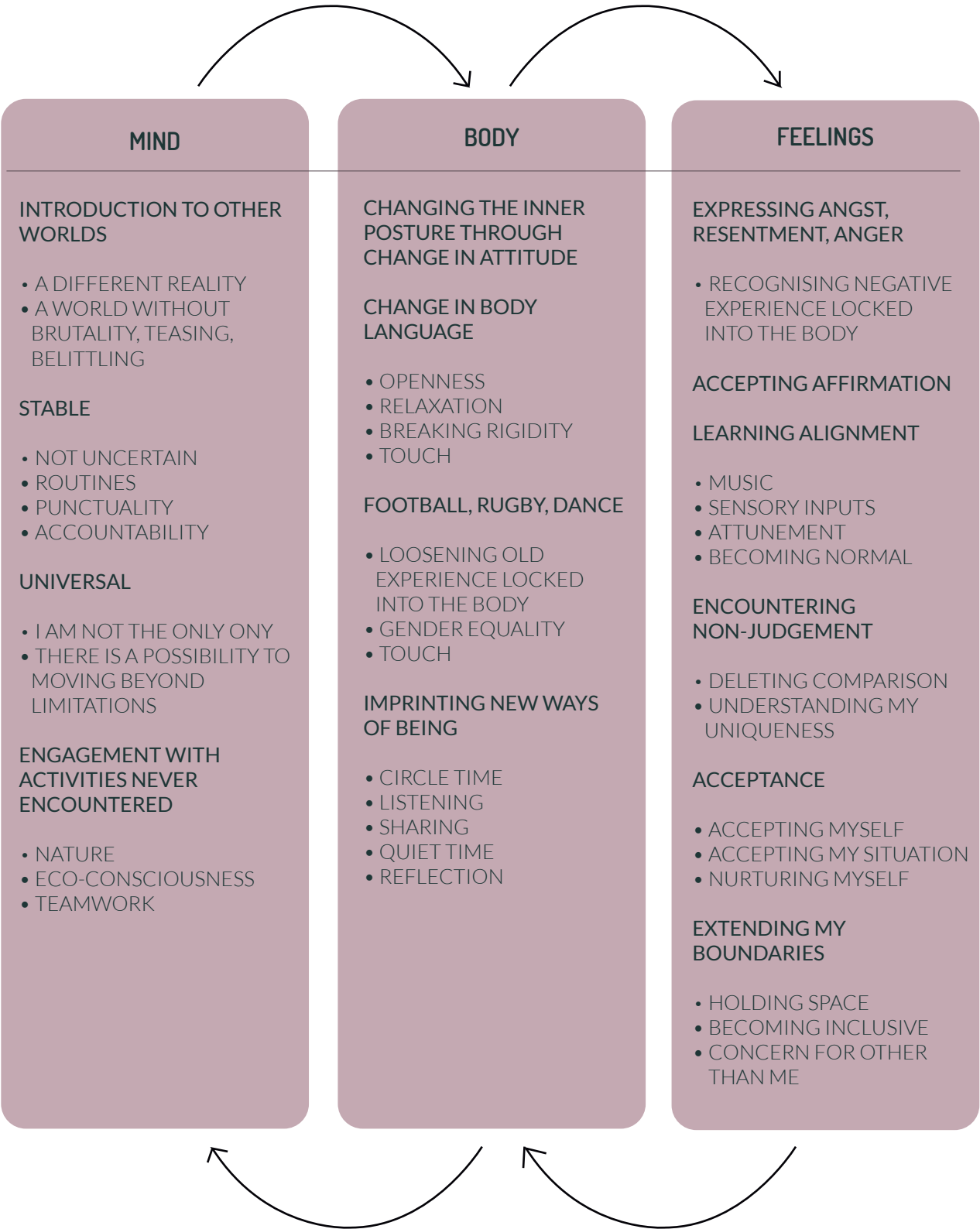


To understand the complexity and layers that the Dream a Dream model addresses, it is worth looking at it through the philosophical lens of the Alexander Method.

Ways of thinking, attitudes, beliefs and experience are embedded within the psychosomatic system. The Alexander method posits that fundamental and long-lasting change requires change at all three levels of the mind, body and feelings. Through the philosophy, method and process adopted by Dream a Dream, it is evident that the Mind, Body and Feelings can come together to enable transformation of the self. If any one of these aspects of the psychosomatic complex is left unaddressed, lasting change is difficult to bring about.

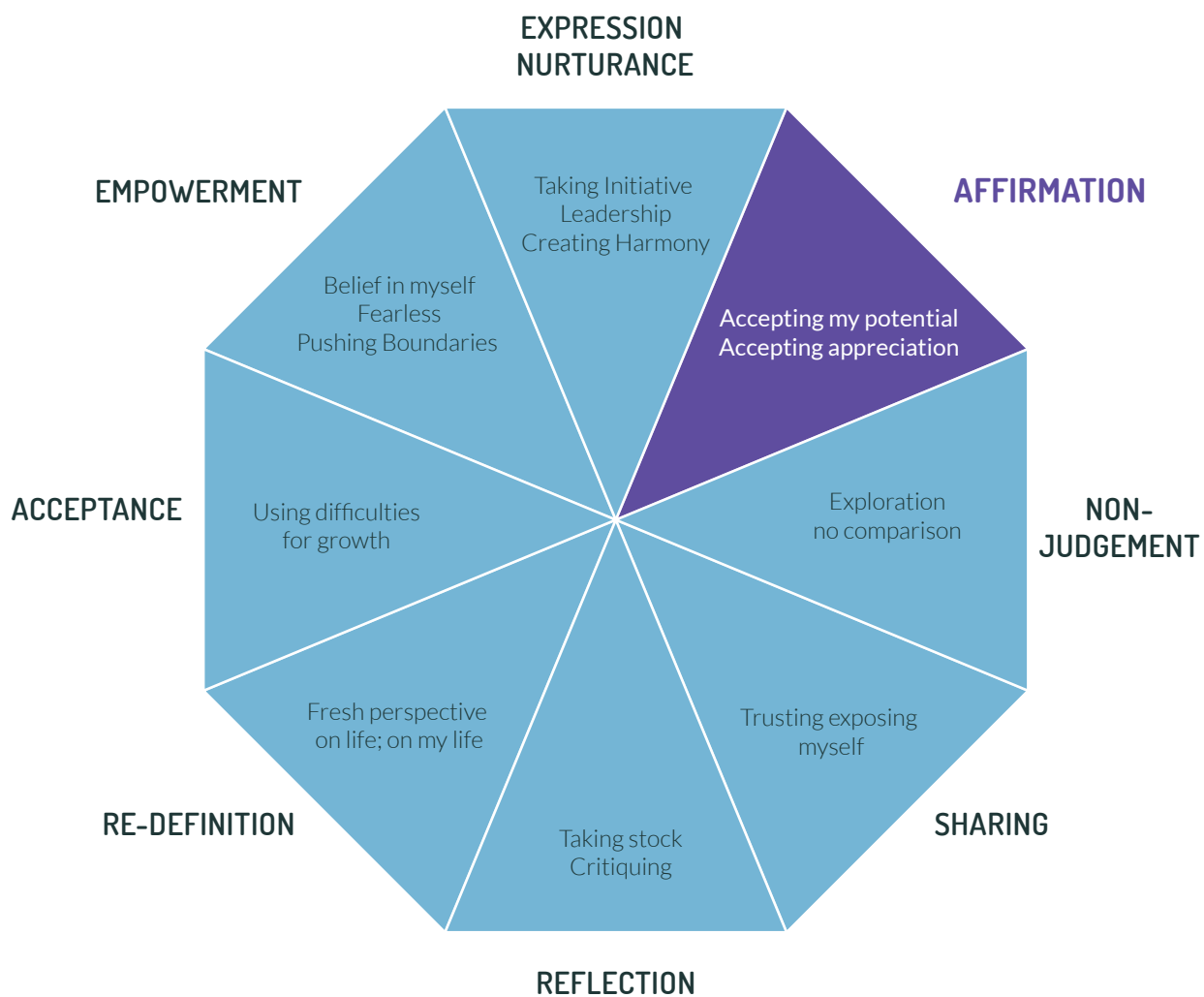
# Dream a Dream Has Crafted A Pedagogic Model That Can Enable Personhood

"You translate everything physical or mental or spiritual, into muscular tension in the body." - F. M. Alexander



**WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE NUANCES OF THRIVING THROUGH A THE MAP OF THRIVING GIVEN BELOW. EACH FACET ON THIS MAP IS INDICATIVE OF A SHIFT FROM FRAGMENTATION TOWARDS WHOLENESS.**

**THE TRANSFORMATION EFFECTED BY THE DREAM A DREAM METHOD IS VISIBLE IN THE EFFECT IT HAS IN TERMS OF 'THRIVING'.**



## FROM

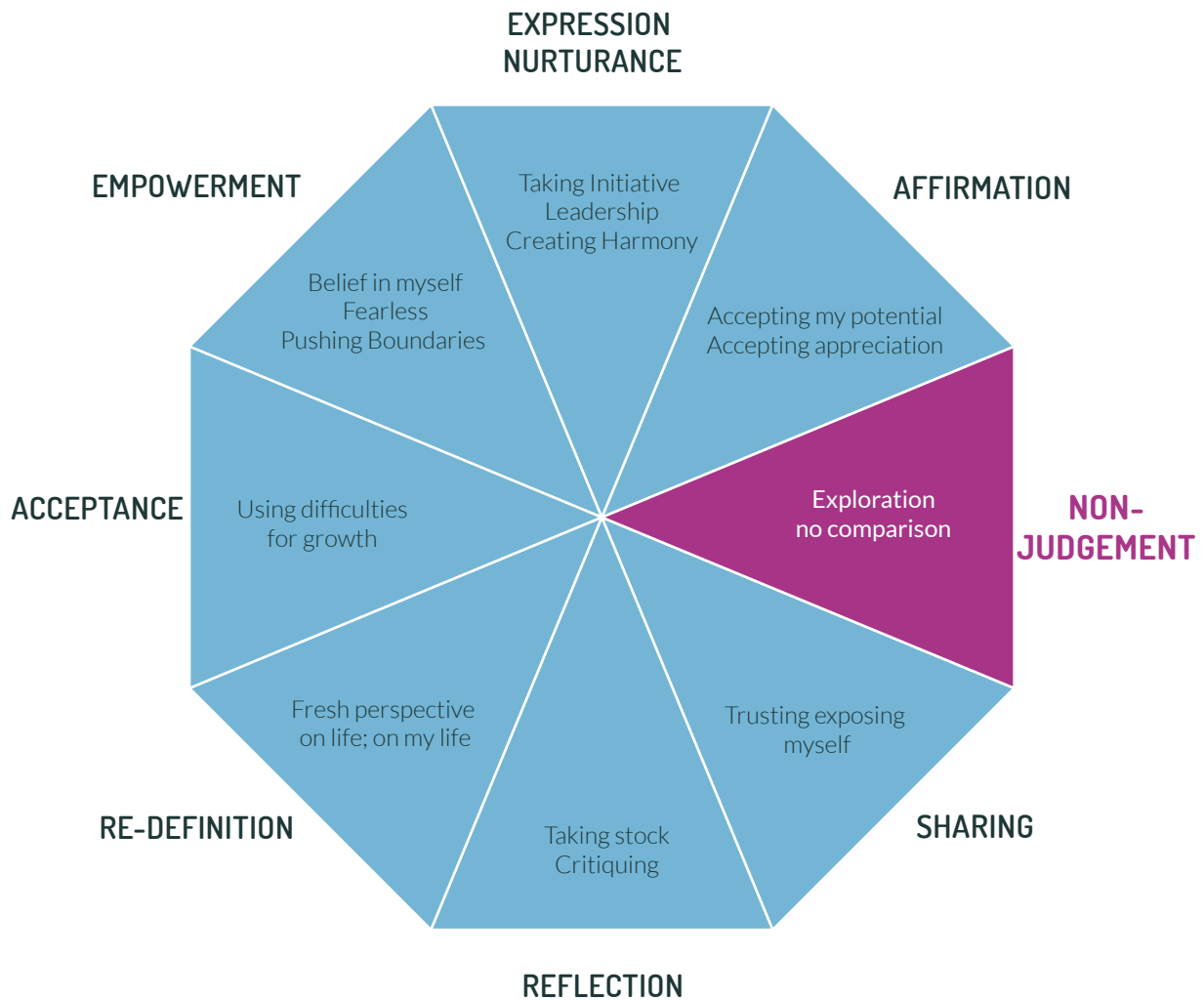
- I am fearful
- I am not visible to anyone
- I am not respected
- I feel I have something but can't hold it
- The world is hostile
- I am a victim
- I have no support



## TO

- I exist
- Someone sees me
- I am respected
- I have something in me and I can manage it
- I am not a victim
- I can seek support

*"Saying thank you and accepting appreciation was a big step"*



## FROM

- This is how the world is
- This is who I am told I am
- Others are better off than me
- I feel deprived
- My life is bad

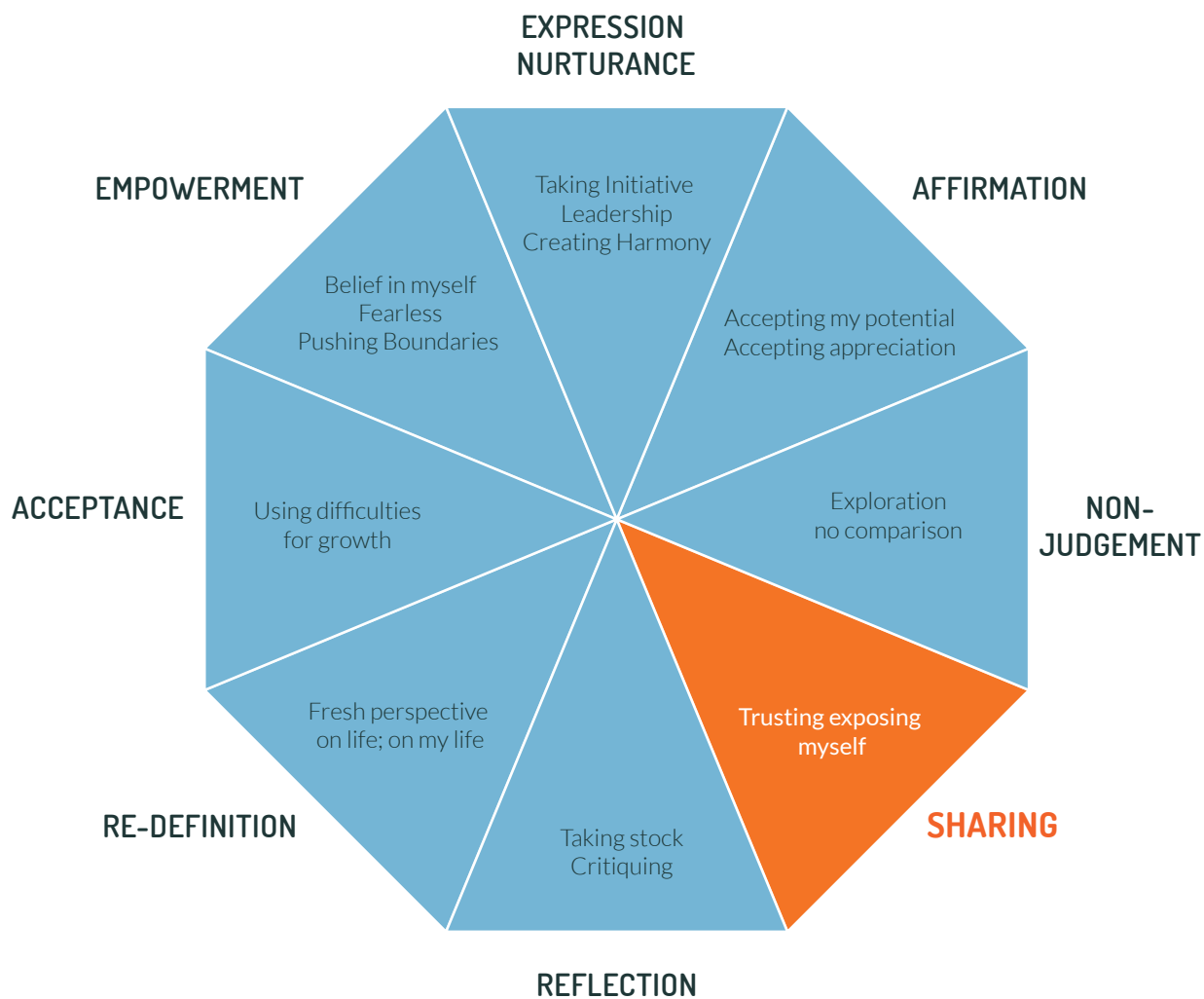


## TO

- The world remains the same. I change
- I might be other than what I am told I am
- Are others really better off than me?
- I might not have 'many' things but I have the taste of something real
- My life is an exploration

*"Before she was exposed to DaD, Pallavi was fearful, What if I do or say something wrong...I will be scolded..."*





## FROM

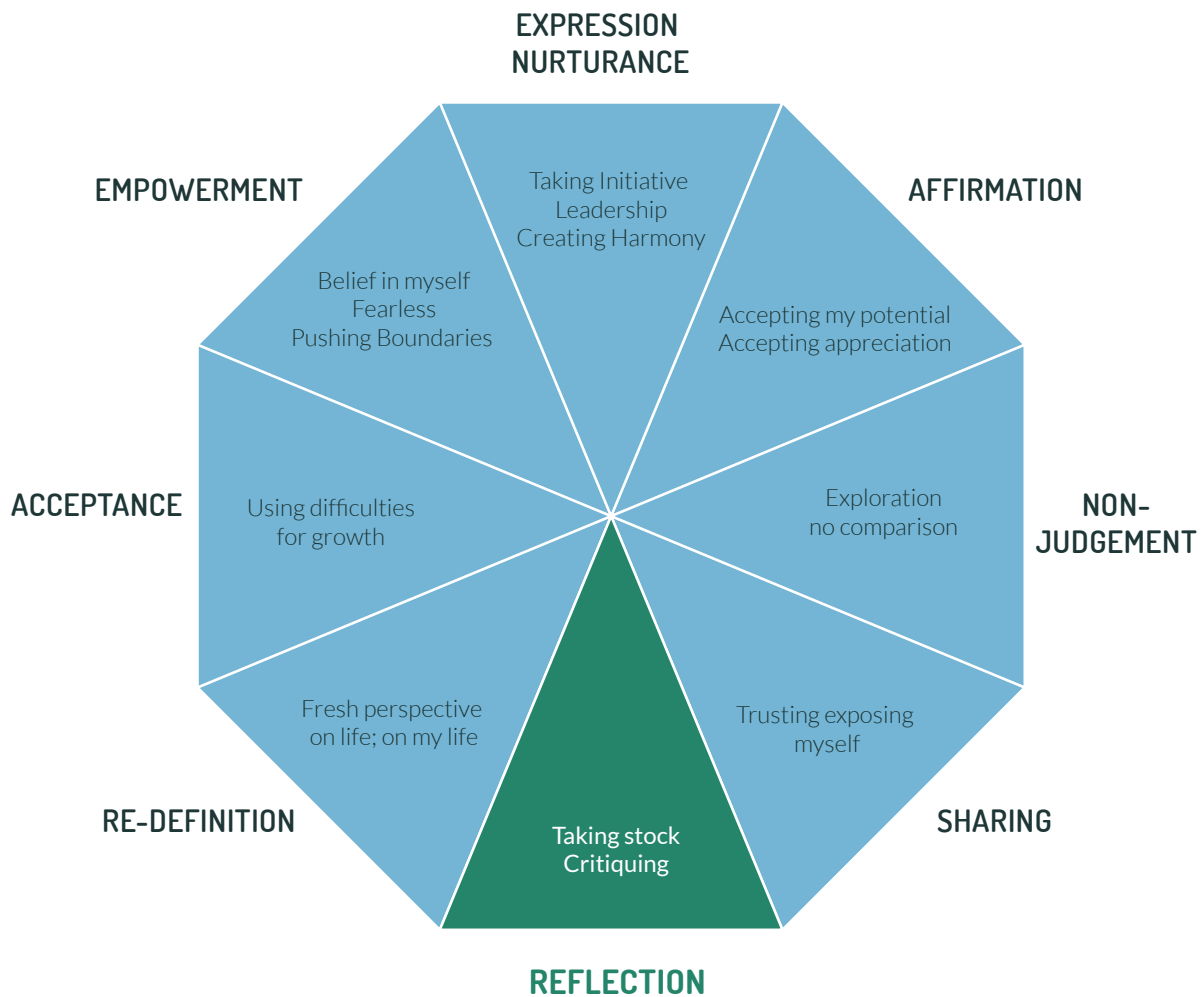
- I am alone
- I am always ready to ward off blows both physical and those that hurt my feelings
- I wear armour to shield myself
- I live inside inside my fears
- I keep others at a distance



## TO

- I am not alone
- I am enveloped in care
- Others have been through worse situations
- If they can come out so can I
- I can take off my armour
- I can allow them to touch me

*"I felt there was no one who would listen...they would see my background and won't give importance to me...would think low of me"*



## FROM

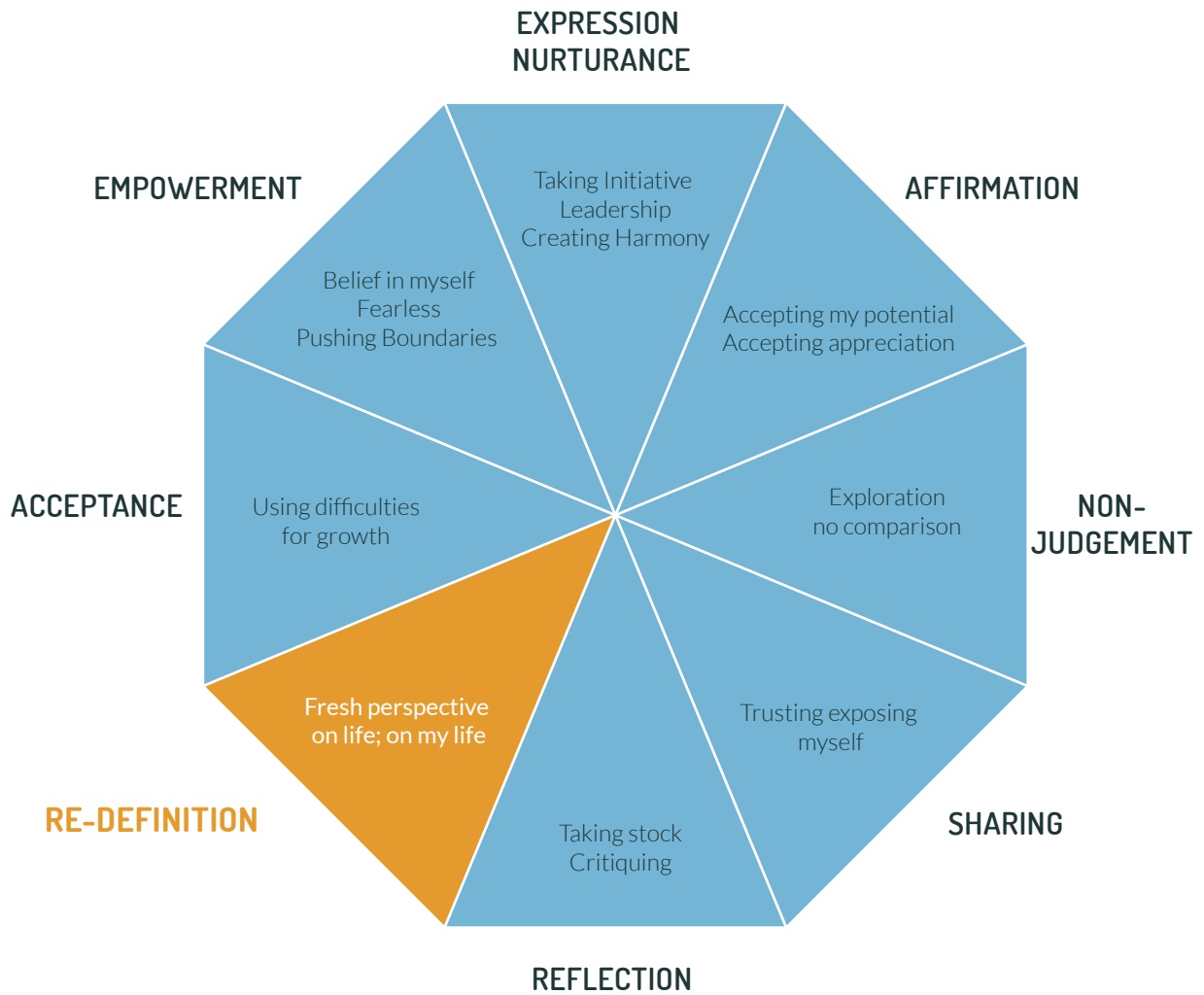
- Fear and pain make me react
- I am alert to anticipate aggression, attack, unreasonableness
- My concern is to protect myself
- The world is centered around me



## TO

- The world is the same but I am different
- There is more to the world than me
- I need to be acutely aware of every little gesture, every word to avoid injuring another
- I need to provide the blanket of care they need
- They are opening and relaxing they should not close because of me

*“Everyday there is some learning for me..I learnt huge last week. There was a girl in the circle who was sharing something but she stopped because of a gesture that I made..I apologised, gave her time and she was fine.”*



## FROM

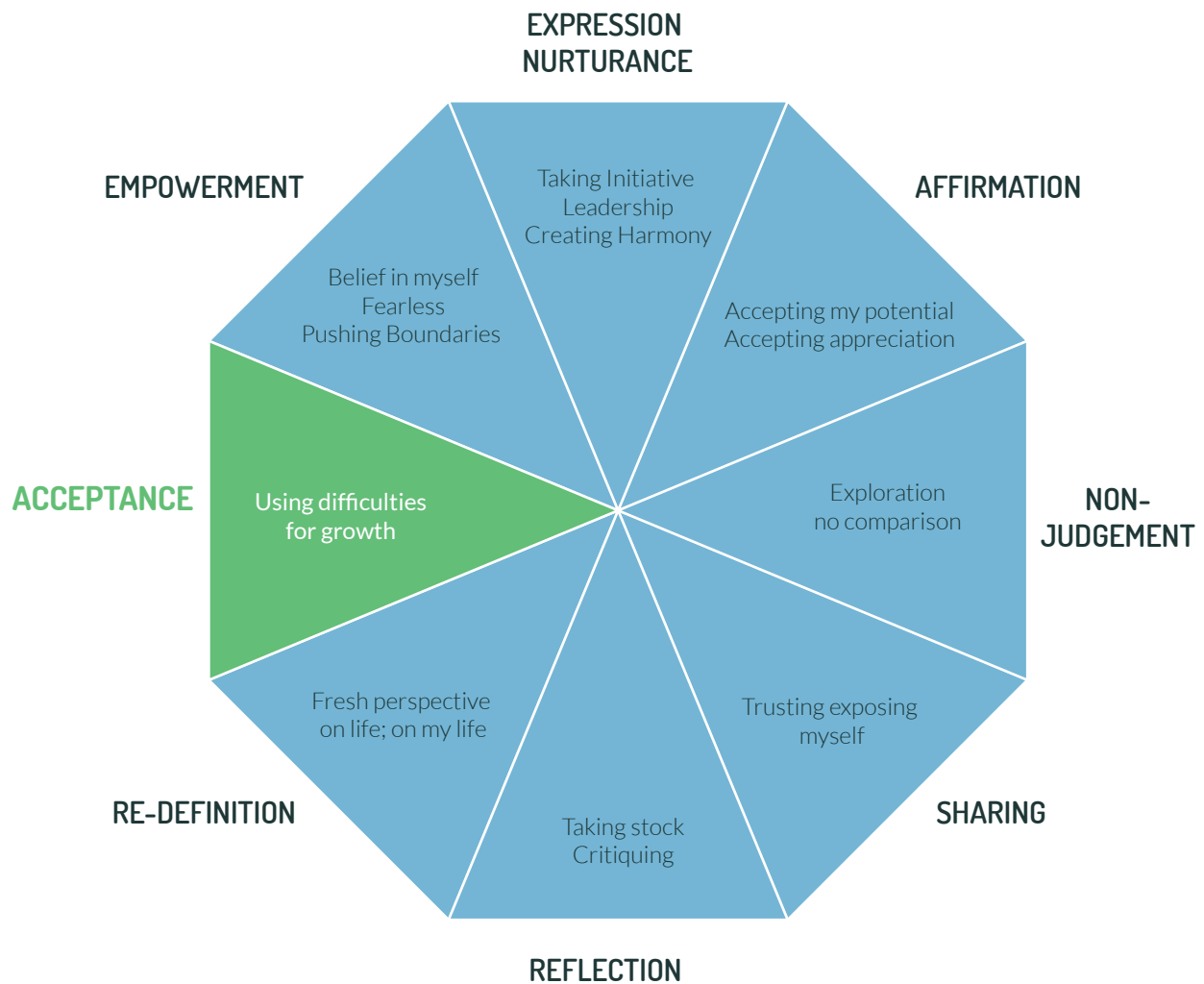
- Life is a maze of frightening episodes
- If you are not at the top of the heap you have no possible
- I am dis-enfranchised to begin with
- Though fearful in my mind and body, I am forced to negotiate my way as best as I can



## TO

- I have support from a large, legitimate organisation --> Dream a Dream
- I deal with life as a representative of DaD
- With support I have the courage to view my life in a larger context
- I still have anxiety but I also have a sense of positivity to offset it

*"Shiva feels the usual way of loving children actually cripples them. Parents are uneducated...They do not have life skills. Unconditional love results in tremendous failure...parents do not explain that bad things are not to be done..this is not your age."*



## FROM

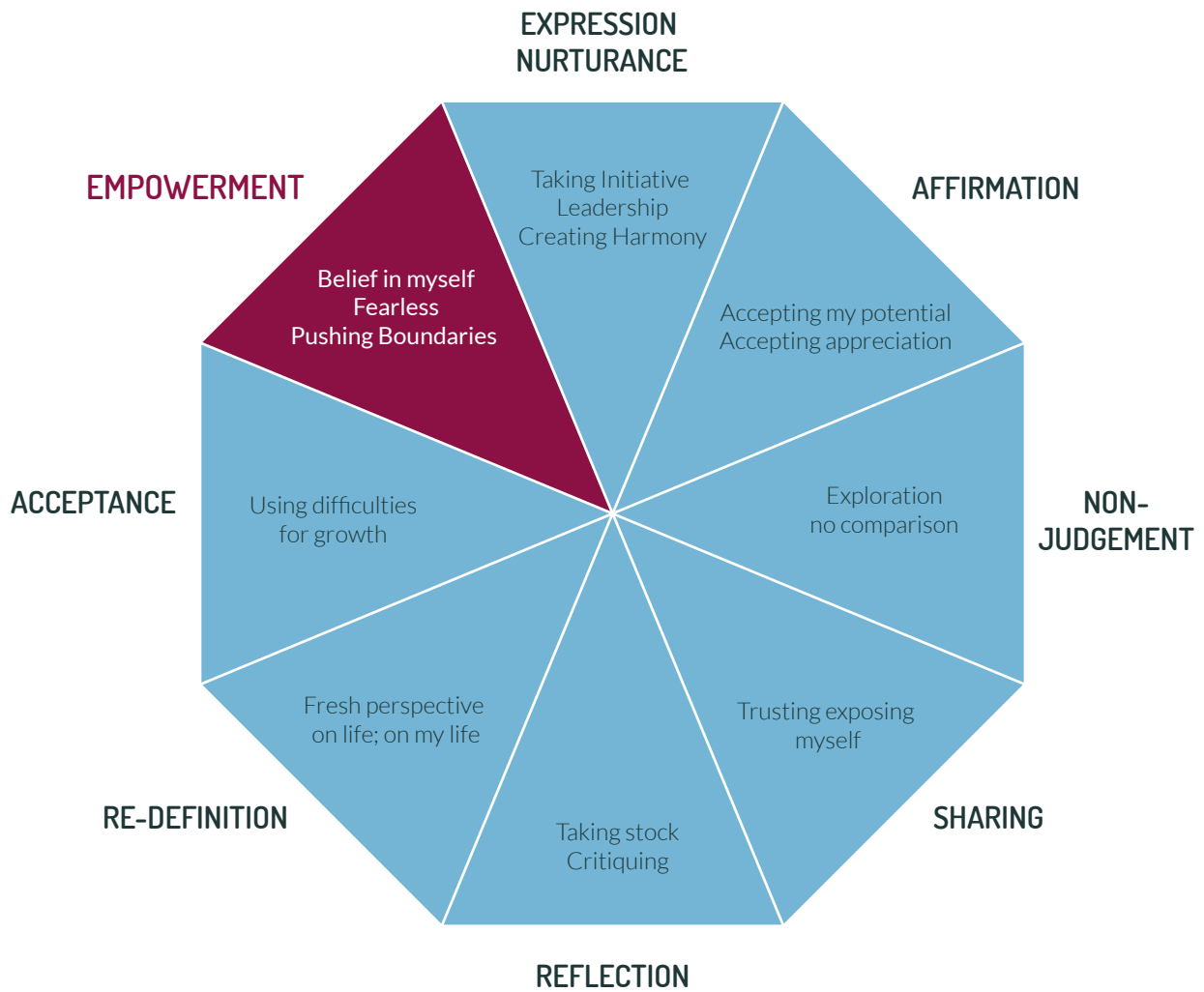
- I am a failure
- I have let down all who bet on me
- I need to find how I can stay afloat
- I can handle difficulties outside but they haunt me inside
- Fear and anxiety are my constant companions



## TO

- I accept all that happened as essential to my growth
- Others have been through worse situations
- They have grown beyond them
- Without the hardship I would not have searched for a way out
- I am more than these situations
- I can help others to see this too
- I have become a changemaker

*"I tell people that I failed in the 10th class in all 5 subjects. Because of this I have become an example for them as they see me as someone who has failed in the past and has yet made it this far in his journey."*



## FROM

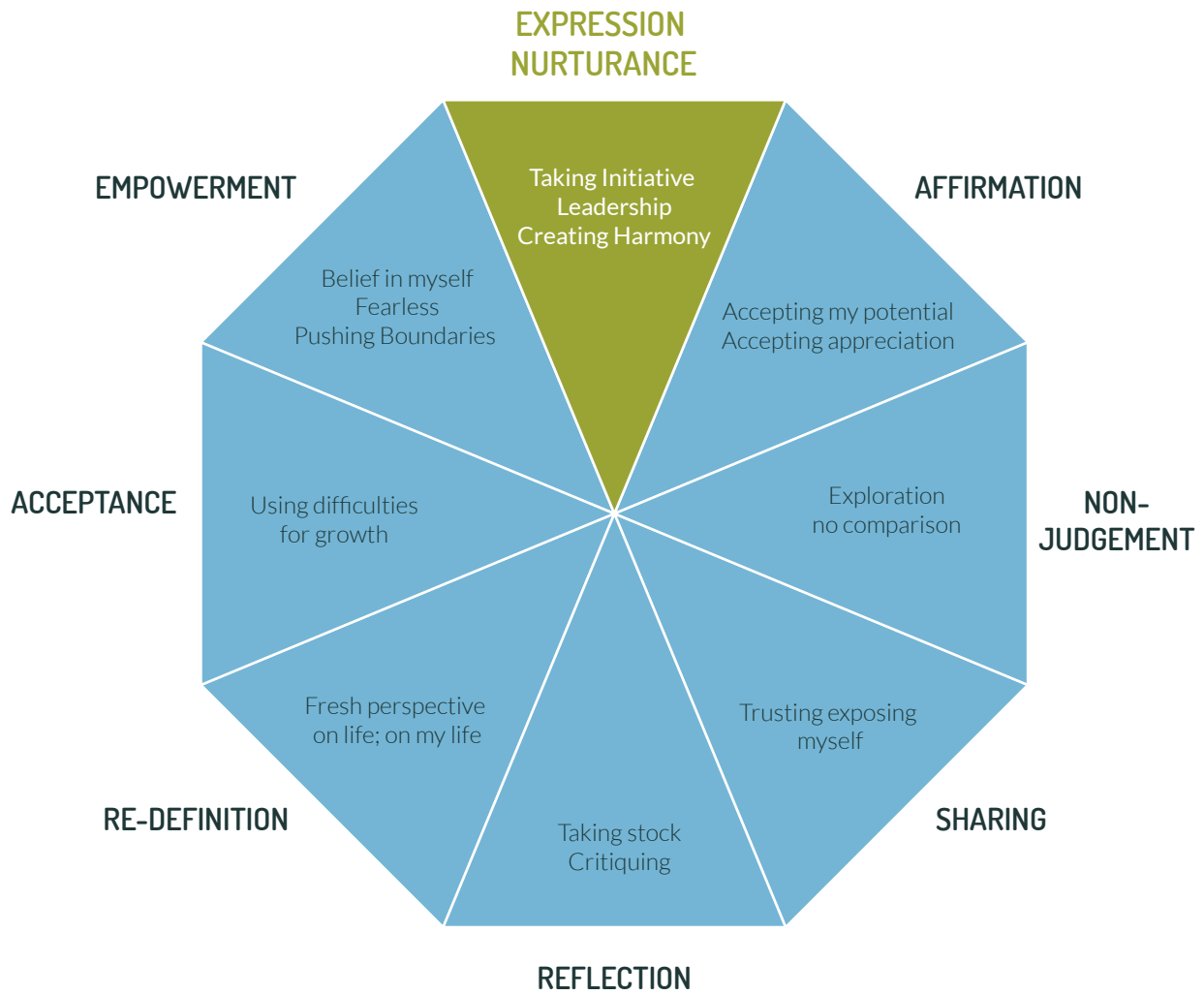
- Trembling inside acting outside
- Uncertain about my own abilities
- Feeling demeaned
- Puzzled about the way others behave towards me
- Unable to see a positive future



## TO

- I am full of ideas on how to make things better for others
- I have come through a process, I need to help others come through
- I know just where it hurts and how to soothe it
- I use all my abilities in service to that

*"Sometimes I invite my kids home and make biryani for them...we could not afford it in the old days...I want them to taste all this"*



## FROM

- As I am uncertain, I wait for others to take the lead
- I am fearful but I use what I have to help others feel better

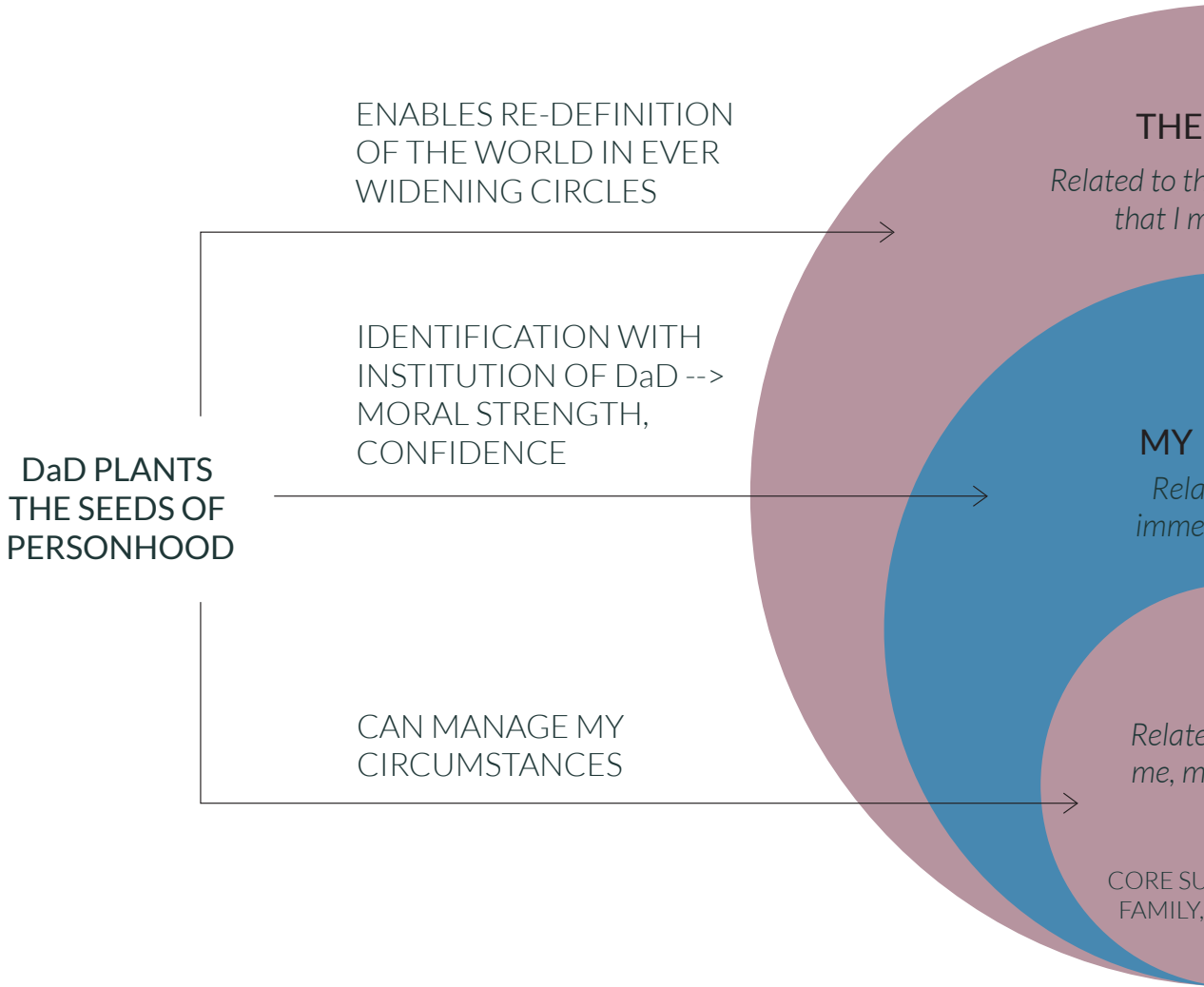


## TO

- Situations may remain the same but I know how to manage
- I intentionally use the knowledge I have been given to enable others to feel empowered
- The methods have been tested by others and by me
- I know they work
- Working together we can all grow out of adversity

*“My work has changed me, now I create changemakers”*

DREAM A DREAM AS A SET OF BELIEF SYSTEMS, VALUES, UNIQUENESS OF INDIVIDUALS, PRACTICES, DISRUPTIVE METHOD AND PEOPLE ENABLES ONE TO REDEFINITION OF ONE’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD TO ONE OF PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTION

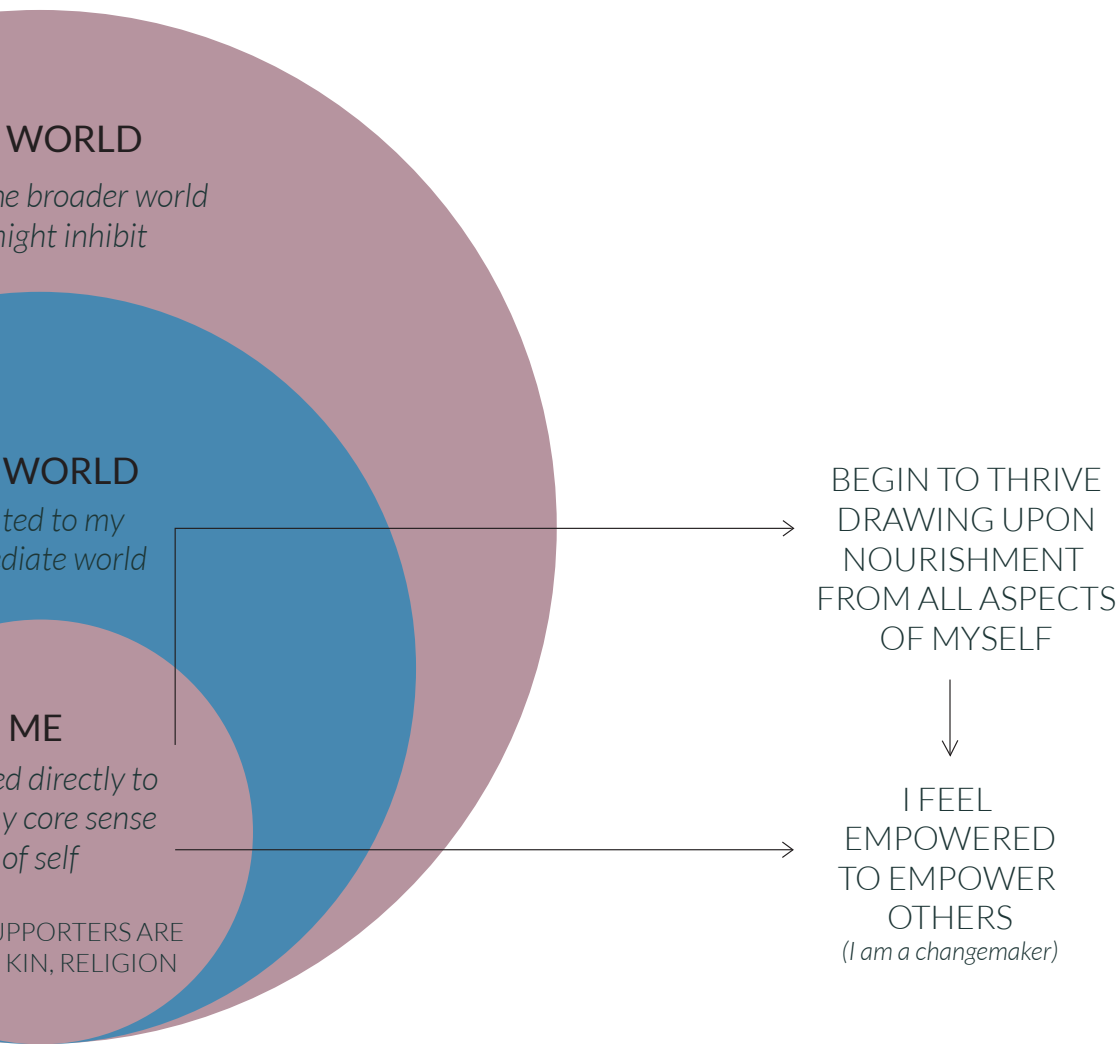


The methods and process of Dream a Dream are focused towards initiating a process of change within the self. The shift is from dependence on the other. This is akin to an initiation into a new world. It enables a re-definition of past experience through a new lens.

The new identity is closely linked to a feeling of belonging through being a part of the large legitimate organisation that Dream a Dream is.

All the strengths and skills of the personality begin to re-group around this new identity. This new grouping manifests as persons 'Thriving'.





fragmentation and dispersion to unity and wholeness. Dream a Dream plants the seed of change through affirming the exist-

Dream is. It provides the strength and backing required to deal with the world.

s who feel empowered, not only in themselves but feel empowered enough to help others as well. This end result may be called

# FACILITATION IS THE SCIENCE AND PROCESS OF VALIDATION OF THE SELF; WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS LEAVE US WITH?

The methods that have evolved with DaD are disruptive of old ways of approaching life and education.

The fact that they have been 'proven' over more than one generation of learners elicits several questions:

1. Can the entire paradigm of education be re-imagined through the Science of Facilitation? A new form of pedagogy that challenges the old models of 'transmission of knowledge' to enable a discovery of the world and oneself.
2. Can age as a factor in enabling transformation be understood at depth?
3. Can gender differences be harmonized under the wider umbrella of personhood?
4. Can anxiety be studied to understand its potential for fuelling growth?
5. Is it possible to qualitatively follow the trajectories of those who come to the programmes and those who Facilitate, to understand inflection points for interventions?
6. What is the archetype of the Facilitator? How can this understanding lend itself to refining the methodology of facilitation?
7. What are the possibilities for further training and growth for the Facilitators? What direction should they take?
8. There is a science to Facilitation. Can this become an employment model? "Children should not go to school...it destroys them." -Shiva
9. What kind of possibilities could DaD consider for creating outreach programmes for significant others related to their students?
10. Unless families and communities too are also exposed to the possibility of growth and change, students who become a part of the DaD programme and are on the road to transformation, find it difficult to communicate their new learning and orientations. "My relatives have their ego, they think I am younger to them and won't listen to what I have to say." -Pallavi
11. Real change would require the extended community to become aware of the inner life and changes that their children have gone through.



