Aptitude and Power of Sub - Conscious Mind

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The major goal of the session is to highlight the significance of aptitude development among the trainees and the use of sub conscious mind as a powerful tool for self development.

Key Concepts: Aptitude, Skill, Talent, Attitude, Conscious and Sub-conscious mind, Visualization, Autosuggestion. An aptitude is a component of a competency to do a certain kind of work at a certain level, which can also be considered "talent". Aptitudes may be physical or mental. Aptitude is developed knowledge, understanding, learned or acquired abilities (skills) or attitude. The innate nature of aptitude is in contrast to achievement, which represents knowledge or ability that is gained through learning. Often it is difficult to set apart an outstanding performance merely because of talent or simply because of hard training.

Aptitude Tests

Grouped according to the type of cognitive ability.

Fluid Intelligence: The ability to think and reason abstractly, effectively to solve problems and think strategically. It's more commonly known as 'street smarts' or the ability to 'quickly think on your feet'. An example of what employers can learn from your fluid intelligence is your suitability for the role for which you are applying.

Crystallized Intelligence: The ability to learn from past experiences and to apply this learning to work-related situations. Work situations include producing and analyzing written reports, comprehending work instructions, using numbers as a tool to make effective decisions, etc. Theory of multiple intelligences. Combined aptitude and knowledge tests: Tests that assess learned skills or knowledge are frequently called achievement tests.

Relevance of subconscious mind

It is an unequivocal proposition to proclaim that 'with bad attitude we can never have a positive day, and with positive attitude, we can never have a bad day'. It essentially depends on the mind- set of a human being. There is distinct demarcation between the conscious and sub-conscious mind of a person. The conscious mind is the part of our mind that is responsible for logic and reasoning. It also controls all the actions that we do on intention while being conscious. For example, when a person decides to make any voluntary action like moving his hand or leg it is done by the conscious mind. So whenever we are aware of the thing we are doing, we can be confident that we are doing it by our conscious mind. The conscious mind is also known to be the gate keeper for the mind. In the mean time, the subconscious mind is the part of the mind responsible for all involuntary actions. Our breathing rate, heart beats and emotions are controlled by the subconscious mind. It would be

pertinent to have a look into the power of subconscious mind and explore its immense potential and possibilities as a character building tool.

All of us are born to lead successful lives but our conditioning actually leads us to failure. We are born to win but are conditioned to lose. Most often we hear statements like, that person is just lucky, he touches dirt and it turns to gold or, he is unlucky, no matter what he touches, it turns to dirt. This is not at all true. If we make a real practical analysis, it can be observed that the successful person is doing something right in each transaction and the person who fails is repeating the same mistake in each transaction. In the real sense, practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect. Practice makes permanent whatever we do repeatedly. Some people keep practicing their mistakes and they become perfect in those mistakes. So their mistakes become perfect and automatic. The real professionals make things look easy because they have mastered the fundamentals of whatever they do. Many people do good work with ulterior motives like promotions in mind. But the person to whom smart work becomes a habit quite deserves. Cultivating a habit is like plowing the field. It requires time. It has to grow from within. Habits actually generate other habits. Inspiration is what gets a person started, motivation is what keeps him on track and habit is what makes it automatic. The ability to show courage in the face of adversity; show self-restraint in the face of temptation; choose happiness in the face of hurt; show character in the face of despair; see opportunity in the face of obstacles. Strictly speaking, these traits are not coincidences; they are the result of constant and consistent training, both mental and physical. In the face of adversity, our behavior can only be the one we have practiced, regardless of whether it is positive or negative. When we practice negative traits such as hatred, dishonesty or cowardice in small events, hoping to handle the major ones in a positive way, the latter wouldn't happen because that is not what we have practiced. When we permit ourselves to tell a lie once, it is a lot easier to do it a second and a third time until it becomes a habit. Success lies in the philosophy of sustain and abstain. Sustain what needs to be done and abstain from what is detrimental until this becomes habitual. It is a reality that human beings are generally more emotional than rational. Honesty, integrity, probity and uprightness are the results of our belief system and practice. Anything we practice long enough becomes ingrained into our system and becomes a habit. A person who is honest most often gets caught the first time he tells a lie. Whereas a person who is dishonest most often gets caught the first time he tells the truth. Honesty and dishonesty to self and others both become habits. Our thinking pattern becomes habitual. We form habits and habits form character. Before we realize that we have got the habit, the habit has got us. We need to form the habit of thinking right. There is frequently used quotation in Behavioral sciences that, "Our thoughts lead to actions, actions lead to habits, and habits form character and our Character ultimately leads to our destiny".

It is a truth that most of our behavior is habitual. It comes automatically without thinking. The sum total of our habits is our character. If a person has positive habits, he is considered a person possessing positive character. Similarly a person with negative habits is a possessing a negative character. Habits are a lot stronger than logic and reasoning. Habits start by being too weak to be felt, and end up becoming too strong to get out of. Habits can be developed by default or determination. That is

the major essence of our parents' advice in our early childhood, to cultivate good habits because habits determine our character.

How our Habits are cultivated?

Anything we do repeatedly becomes a habit. We learn by doing. By behaving courageously, we learn courage. By practicing honesty and fairness, we learn these traits. By practicing these traits, we master them. Similarly if we practice negative traits such as dishonesty, unjust behavior, or lack of discipline, that is what we become good at. Attitudes are the reflections of habits. They are behavioral patterns. They become a state of mind and dictate our responses. It is interesting to observe that most of our behavior comes as a result of conditioning-it is habitual. If we want to do anything well, it must become automatic. If we have to consciously think about doing the right thing, we will never be able to do it well. That means we must make it a habit. We are all being conditioned continuously by the environment and the media, and we start behaving like robots. It is our responsibility to condition ourselves in a positive manner. It can also be observed that, the trained classical musicians often practice the basics of '*sa ri ga ma*' and in martial arts even the black belts use to practice the block punch, the basics, because if they needed to use these skills, they should come automatically. Because good habits are hard to come by but easy to live with. Bad habits come easy but are hard to live with.

Conditioning of habits

Just think of the mighty elephant who can lift in excess of a ton of weight with just its trunk. How do the people condition the elephant to stay in one place with a weak rope and a stake? The elephant, when it is a baby, was tied to a strong chain and a strong tree. The baby was weak but the chain and tree were strong. The baby was not used to being tied. So it kept tugging and pulling the chain, but all were in vain. On a fine day, it realized that all the pulling and tugging will not help. It stopped and stood still. Then it was conditioned. When the baby elephant becomes the mighty giant elephant, he is tied with a weak rope and a small stake. The elephant could, with one tug, walk away free, but it goes nowhere, because it has been conditioned. Human beings are constantly being conditioned, consciously or unconsciously, by exposure to: the kind of organization we keep, the kind of literature we read; the kind of films and TV programs we watch; the kind of music we listen to; etc. Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. If we keep doing what we have been doing, we will keep getting what we have got. The most difficult thing about changing a habit is unlearning what is not working and learning positive habits.

The effect of 'GIGO' principle

It is quite fascinating to look upon the computer phrase GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) Negativity in; negativity out. Positivity in, positivity out, Good in, Good out. Our input equals our output. Our subconscious mind does not discriminate. Whatever we choose to put into our subconscious mind it will accept and our behavior will reflect that accordingly. The television has a considerable impact on influencing our morals, thinking, and culture, for good or bad. TV, while bringing in substantial useful

information, has also made an outstanding contribution to degrading our tastes, corrupting our morals, and increasing juvenile delinquency. That is a pretty high price for so-called free speech or free television. Advertisers are good at conditioning their audience. Obviously, advertisements sell products, otherwise why would companies advertise? When we watch TV or listen to a radio advertisement, our conscious mind is not listening, but our subconscious is open and we receive whatever is being dumped in. We can never argue with the TV. When we watch the movies, we laugh and we cry. It is not because they put something in the seats. The emotional input has an immediate emotional output. When we change the input the output automatically changes.

The relevance of conscious and sub-conscious mind

 Looking the true perspectives of the introductory remarks of this article on the conscious and sub-conscious mind, it was already revealed that, our conscious mind possesses the ability to think. It can accept or reject. But the subconscious mind only accepts, it makes no distinction regarding input. If we feed our mind with thoughts of fear, doubt, and hate, the auto-suggestions will activate and translate those things into reality. The subconscious mind is the data bank. Of the two, the subconscious mind is more powerful. The subconscious is like the automobile while the conscious is like the driver. The power is in the automobile but the control is with the driver. The subconscious mind can work for or against us. It is not rational. When we are not successful we need to reprogram the subconscious. The subconscious mind is like a garden; it doesn't care what you plant. It is neutral; it has no preferences. But if we sow good seeds and grow good plants, we will have a good garden; otherwise we will have a wild growth of weeds. Speaking a step further, even when we sow good seeds and grow good plants, weeds still grow and the weeding process must continue constantly. The human mind is also is exactly like this. The positive and negative thoughts can't occupy the mind simultaneously. Big companies spend millions of rupees for a 30 second advertisement, during a major event. Obviously, they do get results. We see an advertisement, for a particular brand of toothpaste or hair oil and we go to the supermarket and buy that brand. We don't want any tooth paste or hair oil or soft drink but only that brand. Why? Because, we are programmed and becoming liable to act accordingly. In order to succeed, it is inevitable that we need to get programmed in a positive way.

Getting programmed ourselves

We can think in terms of learning how to drive a car. There are four stages: The first stage is 'unconscious incompetence stage'. This is a stage where we don't know that we don't know. The person doesn't know what it is to drive a car (unconscious) nor can he drive a car (incompetence). This is the stage of unconscious incompetence. The second stage is called 'conscious incompetence stage'. This is the stage where the person grows and becomes conscious of what he is to drive a car but cannot drive one himself, so he is consciously incompetent. But then he starts learning and now comes a third stage which is called 'conscious competence stage'. Now he can drive a car but has to think every time to do it. So with all the conscious thought and effort, the person is competent to drive a car. The fourth stage is called 'unconscious competence stage.' It comes when the person has practiced consciously driving the

car so much that he doesn't have to think. It becomes an automatic process. He can talk to people and wave to others while driving. That means he has reached the stage of unconscious competence. At this level, we don't need the concentration and thinking because the behavioral pattern has become automatic. This is the level that we want all our positive habits to reach. Unfortunately, we have some negative habits too which are at the unconscious competence stage and are detrimental to our progress. Some conspicuous international studies have shown that approximately 90% of all smokers became smokers by the age of 21. If a person has not become a smoker by the age of 21, then there is a very small chance that that person will ever become a smoker. This only proves that smoking is conditioned subconsciously and our conditioning starts at a young age.

A vacuum gets abhorred by nature

We have to realize the importance of keeping us involved in positive activities. Otherwise they would be attracted to the negative because nature abhors a vacuum. Either, we have a positive or we have a negative; there is no possibility of neutral or passive ground here. Character building becomes a habit. If we want to build a pleasing personality, we have to examine our habits closely. What begin as an occasional indulgence turns into a permanent flaw. We have to examine ourselves with the queries such as 'Do I let the quality of my work deteriorate?', 'Do I indulge in gossip?, 'Are ego and envy the constant companions of me?' and 'Is empathy in short supply?' We are the creatures of habits. It is good that it is that way because if we have to constantly think before doing anything, we would never get anything done. There is just not enough time. We control our habits by exercising control and self discipline over our thoughts. It is high time that we need to harness the power of the subconscious mind. We need to cultivate the habits during childhood which build character in adulthood. Plant the right things early in life. But it is never too late to start. Every exposure to a positive or negative makes a difference. Learning new habits takes time but positive habits, once mastered, give new meaning to life. Optimism or pessimism is a habit. Habits are a matter of the pain and pleasure principle. We do things either to avoid pain or to gain pleasure. So long as the gain is more than the pain, we continue with the habit. But if the pain exceeds the gain, we drop it. For example, when the doctor tells the smoker to stop, he replies "I can't! It is a habit and I enjoy it!" and he goes on smoking. Here the pleasure is greater than the pain. Until one day, he is faced with a major medical problem, and the doctor says "You better stop smoking immediately if you want to live" and he stops. Here the pain is greater than the pleasure.

Why we impose resistance to change

Even when people recognize or become aware of their negative habits, most probably they don't change. This is essentially because they refuse to accept responsibility. Besides, the pleasure of continuing is greater than the pain. They may lack the desire to change, discipline to change, the belief that they can change and the awareness for the need to change. All these factors prevent us from getting rid of our negative habits. We all have choices. We can ignore negative behavior and hope it will go away-the ostrich approach-or face up to it and overcome it for life. Behavior modification comes from overcoming irrational fears and getting out of the comfort

zone. Remember, fear is a learned behavior and can be unlearned. These excuses are generally the most common explanations for not changing negative habits such as: 'I have always done it that way', 'I have never done it that way', 'that is not my job,' 'I don't think it will make any difference' and 'I'm too busy.'

Positive habit formation

The paradigm shift for a change is imperative right now. It is never too late to change. Regardless of our age or how old the habit has been, this can be done by awareness and using techniques that modify our behavior. Often we hear that, we can't teach an old dog new trick. We are human beings, not dogs. Neither are we performing tricks. It is possible that we can unlearn self-destructive behaviour and learn positive behaviour. The secret of successful people is that they form the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do and won't do. When we think about the things that failures don't like to do, it can be realized that, they are the same things that successful people don't like to do but they do them anyway. For example, failures don't like discipline, hard work, or keeping commitments. Successful people also dislike discipline, hard work (an athlete doesn't like and want the discipline to get up and train every day but he does it regardless), but they do it anyway because they have formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do. All habits start small but end up eventually being very difficult to break. Attitudes are habits and can be changed. It is a question of breaking and replacing old negative habits with new and positive ones. It is easier to prevent bad habits than to overcome them. Good habits come from overcoming temptation. Happiness and unhappiness are habits. Excellence is the result of repeated conscious effort until it becomes a habit. It needs sufficient practice to become a habit. We all have some negative habits that are pulling us down. We have to analyze ourselves by sparing some time alone keeping the mind undisturbed to make a list of all the negative habits those are pulling us down.

Forming positive habits and Auto-Suggestions

The most significant part of this article to understand the relevance of what an auto-suggestion is. An auto-suggestion in simple terms is a statement made in the present tense, of the kind of person we want to be. Auto-suggestions are like writing a commercial to ourselves about ourselves for ourselves. They influence both your conscious and subconscious mind which in turn influences attitude and behavior. Auto-suggestions are a way to program our subconscious mind. They can be either positive or negative. Examples of negative auto-suggestions are: 'I have a poor memory', 'I get angry easily', 'I am tired', 'I'm not an athlete' 'I'm not good at Maths' etc. When we repeat to ourselves a negative auto-suggestion, our subconscious mind believes it and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and starts reflecting in our behavior. For example, when I am talking to someone and I forget what I had to say, I tell the other person, "See, I forgot what I wanted to say. I have such a poor memory."

Auto-suggestion is a powerful self-help technique. Long before affirmations and the 'Law of Attraction' became common talk; auto-suggestion was used for many purposes, either consciously or unconsciously. The subconscious mind receives all kinds of information from the conscious mind. These bits of information come

through our five senses and are related to how we see and perceive the world around us. When these experiences are repeated continuously, they sink into the subconscious mind and become an intrinsic part of who we are, what we believe and how we behave. We can condition our subconscious mind to hold certain beliefs those enhance our living experience; thus, through repetition, they become the reality we experience on a regular basis. The auto-suggestion technique when learned and applied correctly has the power to influence the subconscious mind according to our instructions. In other words, auto-suggestion helps the subconscious mind believe a specific affirmation with an intended goal. An interesting fact is that auto-suggestion goes one step beyond positive affirmations. This is because affirmations are broader in structure while the auto-suggestion technique bypasses our thinking mind and awareness of our material body and goes to affirm our unique human spirit identified with the words: 'I AM.' This fact alone makes it a more powerful statement directed precisely to the subconscious mind.

Here is an example for comparison. The first statement is a positive affirmation; the second is an auto-suggestion: "I enjoy happiness and wealth" and "I AM happy and wealthy". By reading both statements out loud, we can feel the difference while stating out loud "I AM". Use of "I AM" to state our suggestion in the present moment and in the first person. There is something intrinsic and very powerful in those two words. It centers us right at that precise moment. As stated above, one simple example of this is "I AM happy". When this self affirmation is stated on a regular basis, it becomes an auto-suggestion which eventually sinks into the subconscious mind where it will be taken at face value. Moreover, this practice will help us to focus on happy moments on a more regular basis versus the sad, anxious driven or depressed moments we may be encountering in our life.

An interesting thing to notice is that those sad, anxious moments don't just disappear; however, our subconscious mind is being trained to focus on "happy" moments instead; thus, bringing more of those experiences to our life. People, who come into contact with crime the first time, hate it. With constant exposure, they get used to it and if the exposure is long enough, they may embrace it. And they become creators of their own misfortune. When a person repeats a belief long enough, it sinks into the subconscious and becomes reality. A lie repeated long enough becomes accepted as the truth. Positive auto-suggestions are being widely used in the field of sports and medicine. Why do we make positive statements? Because we want to create a picture in our minds of what we want to have rather than what we don't. Any picture that we hold in our mind becomes reality. Auto-suggestions are a process of repetition. A person who repeats a statement long enough lets it sink into the subconscious mind. For example, I am relaxed. I am cool, calm and collected. Auto-suggestions should not be practiced in a negative way 'I am not' tense, I won't be angry etc. Positive statements are made because we think in pictures and not in words. If we say ourselves "don't think of a red elephant," the first picture that comes to our mind is that of a red elephant. If we think of "mother," the thing appearing in our mind is a picture of our mother. We never start spelling m-o-t-h-e-r. That means, when a negative word comes in the auto-suggestion, it forms a negative picture which we want to avoid. There is also a necessity to put it in the present tense. Because, our mind can never tell the difference between a real experience and an imagined one. For example, when the parents are expecting their child to come home at 9 p.m. but the kid is not at home by 1 a.m. then what is going through the parents'

mind? They are probably hoping everything's okay. "I hope the kid didn't get into an accident." But it is definite that, their blood pressure level goes up! This is an imagined experience. The reality could be that the kid might be having fun at a party, and is irresponsible, and did not get home when he was supposed to. Let's look into the reverse scenario. Suppose the kid was very responsible and was actually coming home at 9 p.m. but got into an accident and still didn't get home at 1 a.m. then also the parents' blood pressure naturally goes up! The first scenario was an imagined experience. The second one was a real experience but the body's response in both cases was identical. Our subconscious mind cannot distinctly differentiate between a real and an imagined experience.

Tuning up the subconscious mind with auto-suggestions

It is quite necessary to think how we can use auto-suggestions to eliminate negative habits and develop positive ones. We have all used auto-suggestions unconsciously. For example, when we have to catch an early morning flight, we automatically tell ourselves that we have got to get up. And invariably, we do (sometimes, even without an alarm clock). A prepared subconscious mind has hunches and gut feelings. Auto-suggestion is a way to program and condition our mind to make a statement into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Auto-suggestion is a repetitive process through which we feed our subconscious with positive statements which translate into reality. Repetition alone is not enough, unless it is accompanied by emotions and feelings. Auto-suggestions without visualization will not produce results. The first time, when our mind receives auto-suggestion, it rejects it. Because it is an alien thought, contrary to our belief system. Success would depend on our ability to concentrate and repeat the process.

Practical Session

The practical session was focusing attention on systematic Steps to follow on auto-suggestions
The first requisite to follow an auto-suggestion is going to a spot where we won't be disturbed and writing down peacefully our suggestions. The self-discipline to finish what one starts is imperative. Auto-suggestion is a powerful character building tool. Translating auto-suggestion into reality requires the following steps:
1. Making a list of our auto-suggestions in the present tense.
2. Repeating auto-suggestions at least twice a day: first thing in the morning and at the end of the day. This is because in the morning, the mind is fresh and receptive and at night you deposit the positive picture into your subconscious overnight.
3. Repeating it consecutively for 21 days until it becomes a habit.
 Auto-suggestions alone will not work. They need visualization. Let's come to final paradigm of visualization.

The Significance of Visualization

Visualization is the process of creating and seeing a mental picture of the kind of thing we want to have or do, or the kind of person we want to be. Visualization goes hand in hand with auto-suggestion. Auto-suggestion without visualization is mechanical repetition and will be ineffective. In order to see results, auto-suggestion

must be accompanied by feelings and emotions (visualization). The important caution regarding the auto-suggestion is that it may not be acceptable to the mind the first time you do it because it is an alien thought. For example, if for the past few decades I have believed that I have a poor memory and now all of a sudden, I tell myself, "I have a good memory!", my mind will throw it out, saying, "You are a liar! You have a bad memory!" Because that is what it has believed up to this point. Behavioral experts through experiences and observations proclaim that it will take 21 days to dispel this notion. Because it takes a minimum of 21 days of conscious, consecutive practice to formulate a habit. The big question which may arise here is: Is 21 days of conscious effort a heavy price to pay to change a lifetime for the better? It all sounds simple but it is not easy.

Immense examples have been observed in many case studies, how auto-suggestions and the subconscious mind have been utilized to the fullest potential as a powerful character building tool. It is never too late or better late than never for a positive change by realizing the power of subconscious mind and auto-suggestions.