Organization Development and Change in 21st Century
Prof. Ashish Pandey
Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture – 09
Individual Level OD Interventions: A Rationale

Today we are going to look at Individual Level OD Interventions. Before we talk about the interventions, let us look at certain situations, and think what a normal person would do in these situations.

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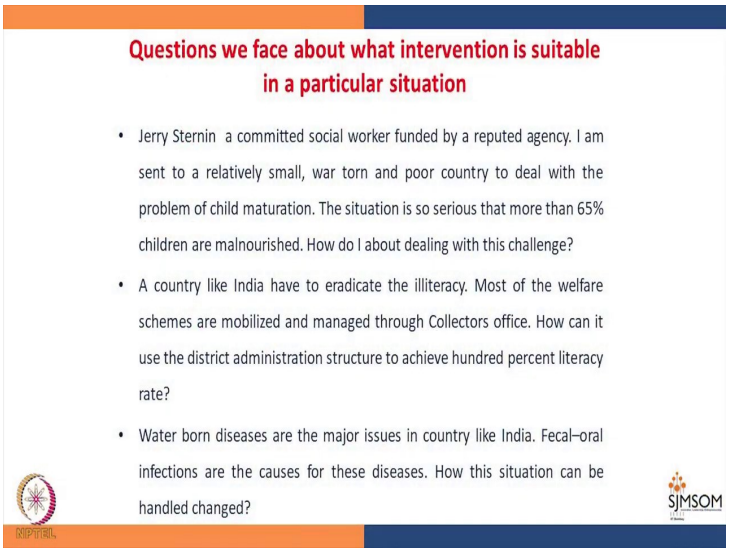

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There is one Jerry Sternin who is a committed social worker funded by a reputed agency. His agency sent him to relatively small, war torn and poor country to deal with the problem of child malnutrition. The problem is so serious that more than 65 percent of children are malnourished. How do we go about handling this situation?

A country like India had to eradicate the illiteracy. Now, most of the welfare schemes are mobilized and managed through collector's office - a district collector office. How can India use the district administration structure to achieve 100 percent literacy rates? So, collector office is a nodal agency, which routes may be dozens of welfare schemes and developmental schemes, literacy being one of them. They have to deal with malnutrition,

security, employment generation, constructing houses, health and so many things. If we have to make a collector's office work towards achieving the 100 percent literacy target with more eagerness, then what can be the way? Water borne diseases are major issues in a country like India. Fecal-oral infections are the causes for these diseases. How can this situation be handled?

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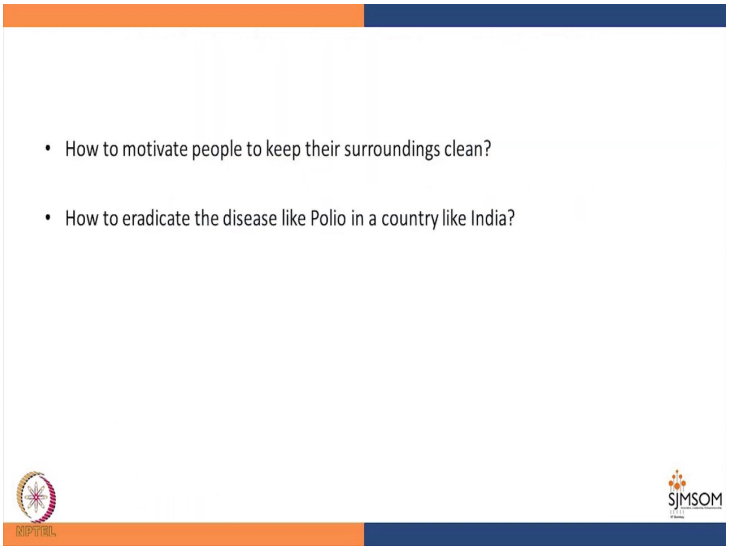

How do we motivate people to keep their surroundings clean? How to eradicate the disease like polio in country like India? In case of polio , you can arrest it, you can control it, just by giving few drops for two-three years, once in a year, it is that straight forward solution, but still it took many years to control that disease and providing solution at the door step.

People are aware of severity of polio, but many a time in the primary health care centers, the vaccine is not there. Sometimes people do not get time, sometimes they forget, sometime they give it once a year, but then they forget next year and so on . So, in India a program was introduced where till the age of 5, all the kids below the age of 5, were given polio drops. So, this was a simple movement to arrest that disease. The volunteers social workers, health workers etc. went to railway stations, markets, schools, and villages all that. So, in a specific time period every child less than 5 years as given that drop. So, you see that how behavior change follows a pattern. So, there are certain

insights about how behavior can be changed, and most of these things are about changing individual behavior.

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Chip and Dan Heath have compiled many findings about change in the human behavior.

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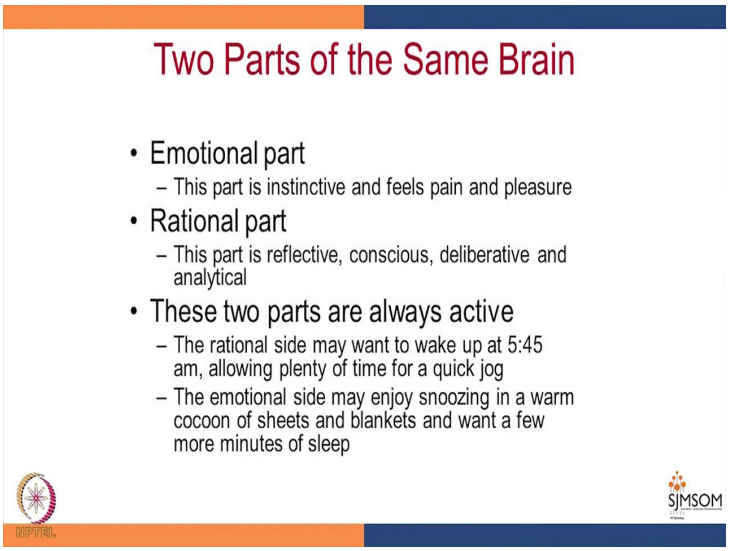

Brain has two parts. We all know about it. There is an emotional part and there is a rational part. So, emotional part is instinctive, it feels, pain and pleasure. What about the rational part?

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Rational part is the one dealing with logic, that understands research paper this part reflects, it is deliberative, and it is analytical. So, these two parts are always active. Which part do you think is stronger in terms of adopting any change, rational part? It is difficult to convince the rationality. So, rationally we all know that we should wake up at 5.30, go for a walk and do exercise, but that there is emotion which asks us to take one more nap. The emotion says that why is it necessary to start jogging from today, we can do it next day!

There is no dearth of knowledge in this word. The problem is that people are not willing to change their behavior. So, the rational side may want to wake up at 5.45 am allowing plenty of time for quick jog, but the emotional part may enjoy snoozing in a warm cocoon of sheets and blanket and want a few more minutes of sleep. Same thing is with chocolate or samosas or vadas. So, our rational part says that it is not good for us, but the emotional part says that let us enjoy now, and then from tomorrow onwards we will take care of this calorie business.

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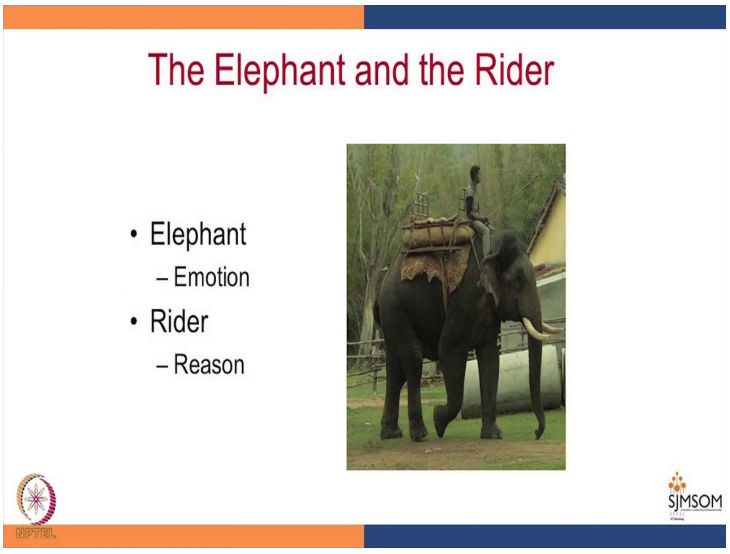

If we compare elephant and rider with this emotional and the rational part, then between elephant and rider, which one is emotional, and which is rational? So, rider is basically the rational part that directs, and elephant is the emotional part.

Why do you think most of the changes fail? This is because the rider says something which the elephant is not willing to follow. Why emotions do not follow the rational guidelines, the emotional part (the elephant) is not motivated about it.

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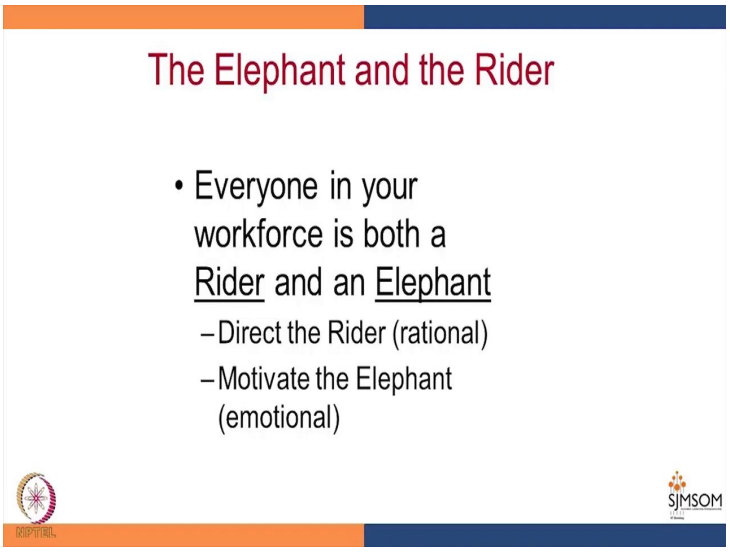

So, everyone in our workforce is both a rider and an elephant. Riders direct; elephant has to be motivated.

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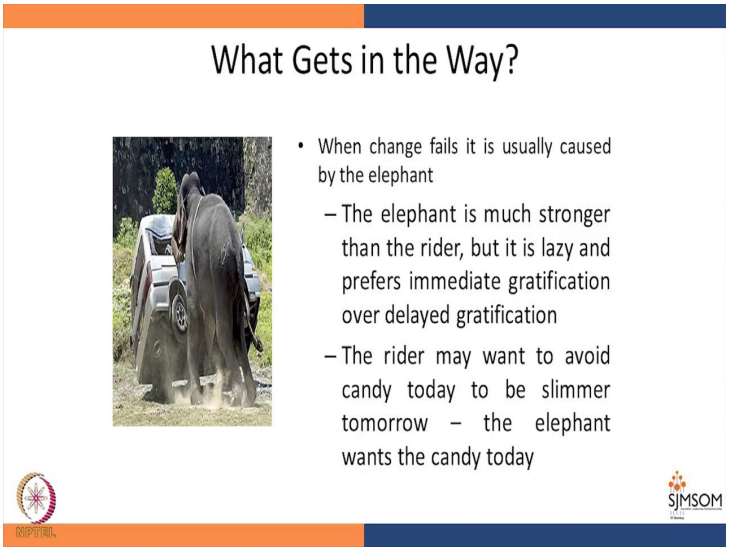

As we said, the problem is most of the changes fail, because elephant is not sufficiently motivated. Elephant is much stronger than rider, but is lazy, and prefers immediate

gratification. So, the rider may want to avoid candy today to be slimmer tomorrow, but elephant wants the candy today, and that is the story about any individual level change initiative.

We know so many things that we should not do, but still we engage, and indulge because there is an emotional part in us which is not willing to follow the instructions of the rider. Even if the rider's instructions are supported by research, or backed by data, or coming out of the ideals of the human life, elephant is still unwilling.

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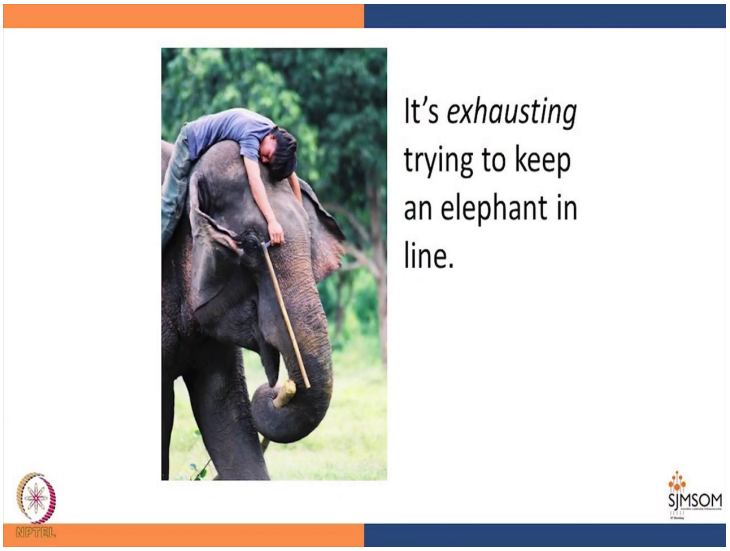

So, at the end what happens if I keep breaking my promise, if elephant keeps over-powering me, then after a while I stop even making effort to motivate elephant. So, many of you will stop making new year resolution by the time you reach to my age. Because many of us will be exhausted with those resolutions, and resolutions just do not fulfill because, our emotional part, which is the elephant, is not sufficiently motivated to pursue that resolve.

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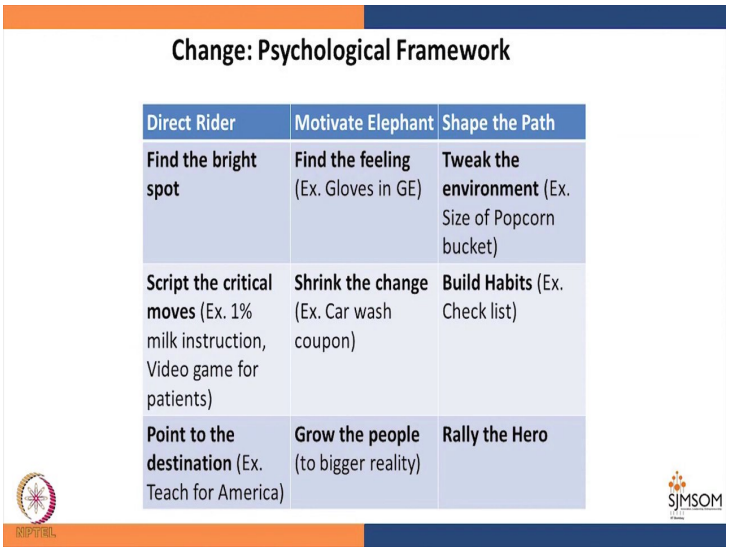

So, we decide that it is better if we stop making resolutions. So, what can we do about it? What is to be done and what can be done is the essence of this book called Switch. The authors have given a very simple, but very impactful modeling. What is required is we direct the rider, towards what is needed, and motivate the elephant and shape the path. Sudden change initiatives require giving the proper direction, some changes require more about motivating the emotional part, and some changes are possible when we make small interventions to make things easier to follow the change process or to implement the change. We will look at it through certain examples.

There are three ways of directing the rider: Find the bright spot, Script the critical move and Point to destination. One example of "find the right bright spot" is this: Jerry Sternin was not from a very rich development agency. When he reached Vietnam along with his team, he did not receive a great welcome. The minister in that country said that Jerry had 6 months to show any change.

Jerry and his small team conducted a survey about the nutritional conditions of kids in sample villages. They would go to the families, request the family members to weigh their kids, and made their profile. In whichever village the conducted survey they ensured that they cover as many kids as possible. First insight was that children and their malnutrition was not at all connected, and malnutrition was poorly corelated with the

education level or socioeconomic status of the parents. Something other than education and socioeconomic factors was causing malnutrition.

They looked at the food habits. They identified the kids who were not malnourished and were from lower socioeconomic class. So, they looked at the bright spots, and they found that in such cases mothers of these kids were adding shrimps while cooking rice. This was one simple practice that they noticed. So, their conclusion was that shrimps gave these children the desired nutrition.

So, this is an example of how to find a bright spot. Jerry and his team popularized this practice of adding shrimps while cooking the rice.

Similar logic has been applied by one NGO - they made an iron fish - called magic fish. This fish releases iron in a small quantity when it is put in the vessel in which rice is cooked. This became popular in Nepal and some other developing countries.

In India they have found that drumstick has strong nutritional value and availability of drumstick is not linked to economic class. If one adds drumsticks in the food regularly it can supply lot of nutritious element to the kids. So, this is one example of finding bright spot and from there bringing about change.

Second way of directing the rider is, to “script the critical move”. in case of water borne diseases, the critical move was to construct toilet. There is one research study about cancer patients. In Adolescent and teenager cancer patients, the disease could be cured, but if they do not follow the medical regimen, they do not take the medicine, the chances of relapse are very high.

Now, when one is not feeling any weakness, when one is disease free, generally one is not motivated to take the medicine, and patients also forget taking medicine, because their body is not giving any specific signal that they are feeling weak or there is any discomfort. So, they forget, and they do not seriously follow the medication.

Some video games were designed by the team of medical professionals and the IT professionals. In these video games, certain moves were allocated certain points, and those moves were related to not forgetting taking the medicine. In order to score high points, one needed to remember the schedule of medicine intake. This was a strong

signal conveyed in a very interactive environment. It was found that in case of the kids who played those video games – the tendency to forget medicine-intake reduced significantly.

Third way of directing the rider is “point to destination”. Teach for America, this campaign was very popular. In India a similar campaign was launched for spreading literacy awareness. The challenge was – how to motivate a collector office that manages multiple welfare schemes and public distribution schemes – how to motivate such an office to work more diligently and more sincerely on the literacy.

In mid 80s, one district in Kerala, Ernakulam was declared 100 percent literate. When this 100 percent literacy was declared for that state, other collectors were motivated to make their district also 100 percent literate. So, it became a very clear destination. A clear recognition was made that the collector office was instrumental in bringing that district from x percentage of literacy to 100 percentage literacy. So, when the destination is clear, that gives the direction to the riders.

Then comes the motivation part - how to motivate the elephant. Generally, these are not about lot of facts, it is about how to make people see what is required to be done. There is a story about GE. GE being a huge corporation had many manufacturing units. One purchase manager looked at varied types of gloves that were being supplied to different GE companies. He studied and compiled various suppliers and designs. He found that there were 200 different designs of gloves being supplied by dozens of suppliers.

Naturally, this made the system more complex and difficult to manage. Further, bargaining power of GE also reduces because of so many suppliers. This person wrote about it; he made various people aware of it; managers would express their concern, but still no specific action or policy decision was made.

During one of the meetings, where the top management from manufacturing, supply, purchase and the finance department were supposed to meet, he collected a dozen or two dozen gloves which were not very different and put that stack near the entrance of this meeting. Seeing that stack of two dozen of gloves, people became curious about what was being communicated.

The message was conveyed to them that these gloves were very similar, but were being supplied by many different suppliers, and that is not good to enhance the bargaining power and to get the best deal. In the same meeting the decision was made to reduce the number of suppliers and to optimize the number of gloves and design of gloves. So in this case, people were aware of the issue but it had to be conveyed to them with more tangible evidences, more tangible messages to bring about any change.

"Shrink the change", when change appears l not very distant, people are motivated about it. In one such experiment, in a car wash company, they gave coupons to their customers. They gave 10 coupons stating that "once you finish these 10 coupons by taking 10 car wash, you will get the next car wash free. However, because the campaign is going on, we are tearing two coupons right now. So, you have to take only 8 car washes, to get the free car wash". By this action of tearing 2 coupons, they made people think that ok, now I have to only get eight car washes from this same garage.

With another group, they gave 8 coupons with the request that once you finish this, 8 coupons, you will get the free car wash. What was found that 17 percent customers who were given 8 coupons came back, they completed the 8 car wash and came for the free car wash. But in the first case, (i.e. customers who were given 10 coupons, and two were torn), 34 percent customers came back for additional car wash. So, in the first case the follow up rate was much more, almost double comparing to the second one.

So, when people think that the change is manageable and that they have already come some distance, and now with small effort, with relatively lesser effort, they can make the change possible, they feel motivated towards change.

Grow the people to the bigger reality: Teach for India, or if you look at the cleanliness movement, or if you look at the taking care of the tourist and communicating that how we behave with tourist is a reflection on our country. When people are in foreign countries, they represent their country. These are the examples where you see people behave very differently when they are made aware about the bigger reality.

So, there is a story of the 3 workers, they were asked same question- what are you doing? One worker said I am just the paying back for what I did not do in the childhood, had I worked better and could have got more education, I would not be doing, what I am doing. So, I am just painting.

Second worker said that ok, I am doing this because I have to take care of my family. And the third worker said that I am contributing to make this Westminster Church. See all three things are correct, but the third stand make people motivated to contribute, more whole heartedly. So, if we make people to see what they are doing is something very important and contributing to the larger reality, they are motivated.

Shape the path: Sometimes small procedural changes or administrative changes or a structural change can help to change the behavior.

Tweak the environment: To deal with this problem of obesity, it has been realized that we have to motivate people to eat less. Now, how to eat less? If you have huge servings in the restaurants and most of the people rely on restaurant food, how to convince people about eating less?

One experiment was conducted, and popcorn was given in the same size of bucket in both cases. However, in one case, from outside the bucket appeared same, but in the inside the space was covered with paper.

When they were surveyed about their hunger and their satisfaction, there was no difference in their satisfaction level. So, a small change in the environment, can bring about some changes.

Building habits: One example is of the check lists. If you make the check list and every time you ensure that you tick mark the check list, it ensures that people follow that path. Rally the hero: Generally, people feel more uncomfortable on path of change, if they have to walk alone. So, wherever a new change is initiated, if there are more people or there is a group of people who are going through the process, people feel more comfortable.

So, if you remember, the second stage of the John Kotter's models of steps of change talks about building guiding coalition. When we convince few people for change and when they work in the group, it strengthens, the emotions, and the motivation of entire group to work towards achieving the desired change. So, rally the hero and have the group of people to go through the change process. Make them much more comfortable in the change process. So, if you introduce say a new performance appraisal system. If you do it to the larger number people, larger number of groups, people will feel more

comfortable, likewise there has to be a group which is subjected to change and that makes people comfortable.