

# Empowering TIMES



June 2012

## Editor's DESK

Dear Reader,

What does the power of self-belief do? It takes people to the moon, it helps crack the complex DNA code, it fuels innovations; it leads to unearthing something which has not been attempted hitherto. So why do many of us not realise the latent potential built into our self and instead create road blocks for our success? How difficult is it to believe in ourselves and our abilities to make things happen? This month's ET talks about 'the power of self-belief' and its implications not only on personal lives, but also its effects on the professional front. The primary idea is to build a belief system around ones' thoughts and then believing that it is achievable; only then can it come to fruition!

In **Thinking Aloud** this month, Jay writes about the power of self-belief, beginning with an example of the upcoming Olympics, where participants have reached that stage only because they believed in doing it. Whether they win a medal or not, they are winners, because of the fact that they have believed, attempted and reached that penultimate stage. He says that it is important for us to crawl out of the web of self-doubt in order to be successful. Everyone has certain weaknesses, but what is important is to fortify the strengths and undercut the shortcomings.

On **Podium** this month we have **Malli Mastan Babu, who is a Guinness World Record Achiever (Mountaineering) for climbing the tallest peak in each continent in the shortest span of time.**

An IIM, Calcutta and IIT, Kharagpur alumnus, Malli tells us what prompted him to chart onto this adventurous journey. He shares with us some of his harshest moments while on his expeditions, but despite all the odds he

In this Issue:

**Thinking Aloud:** The Power Of Self-Belief - Jay

**Podium:** Interview with **Malli Mastan Babu**, a Guinness World Record Achiever and motivational speaker.

**Between the Lines:** Collaboration by Morten Hansen

**Standing Ovation:** Bhagini Nivedita Pratihthan, Pune

## Figures of Speech

By Vikram Nandwani



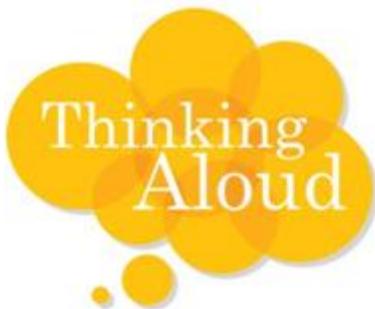
keeps going on. He also has shared some management lessons such as: aspiration for big dreams, target stretching, trusting your people and sustaining self-motivation. Malli says- "Take steps and ACT ON YOUR DREAMS!!" Currently, Malli is well on his way to climbing the highest mountain of each country in South America – and has already summited in 8 countries!

In ***Between the Lines*** this month we have reviewed the book 'Collaboration' by Morten Hansen. In this book the author drives home the importance of disciplined collaboration. A professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and INSEAD (France), Morten Hansen writes that it is very critical to decide when to collaborate and also when not to. He talks of four collaboration barriers split into two groups 'motivational barriers' and 'ability problems'. According to him the key to overcome these barriers is to unify people, create a T-shaped management and build nimble networks so that collaboration is done easily.

In the ***Standing Ovation*** this month features we feature Bhagini Nivedita Pratishthan, Pune, (BNP) a 33 years old NGO which works for the betterment of needy women and children. The focus is on women from the weaker strata of society and helping them to seize opportunities for their and their family's well-being. Till date, more than 10,000 beneficiaries have been helped by BNP through their educational, vocational, cultural, health related and entrepreneurial development activities. For its relentless efforts and its cause for existence, BNP deserves a Standing Ovation!

In ***Figures of Speech***, Vikram presents a 'cat and mouse' challenge!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Linked In](#) & [Google+](#).



## The Power Of Self-Belief - Jay

The Olympics are here. Come July, we will have our quadrennial celebration of Citius, Altius, Fortius, when the planet's best athletes become the cynosure of the world's eyes. Sure London will attempt to better the high benchmark set by the Chinese in hosting the last Olympics at Beijing but the real story is that of the tireless pursuit of excellence by a group of dreamers with stars in their eyes who have dedicated a lifetime to achieve glory.

Yes, only a handful will return from London with the medal which they have been pursuing at the cost of all other luxuries. But to us, in the true spirit of the Games, all who make it to London are winners.

What does it take to reach this level? While it is not my intention here to write about all the ingredients that go into creating a winner (I will save that for another piece), there is one common thread that unites all these champions - the power of self-belief.

All of us are caught in the web of self-doubt at some time or the other in life, even the champions face this dilemma. However, what

distinguishes them from us mortals is that that they refuse to be cowed down by these nagging villains. The 'voice in the head', as Zander puts it so colourfully, has to be told by us to go away, lest it becomes a permanent resident in our mind, and prevents us from becoming what we are truly capable of. Too often, in the face of adversity (be it professional, or personal), we tend to doubt our ability and refuse to acknowledge that we are talented. Worse still is the insidious monster of self-doubt gnawing through your heart, questioning your success at every stage. Many of us are victims of this 'impostor syndrome' that makes us refuse to ever admit that we have in ourselves the ability, knowledge and skills to succeed. All success is attributed to luck and we keep wondering whether the others around us will 'discover' that we are really not as good as they think we are – or as we have made ourselves out to be.

It is in this context that we realize that there are some in our midst who are not victims of self-denial, who have in fact learned that while they have limitations, they also have strengths that can propel them to success. Appreciation of their pluses leads them to overcome the challenges that they face, and you see in them a self-belief that enables them to overcome new tests.

The press does feature good news if one chooses to seek them! Two recent stories come to mind, both from the field of outdoors, of individuals with unlimited quantities of self-belief. First, is the story of Spencer West, who climbed Kilimanjaro last week and raised over 500K dollars for charity. His mission: to 'Redefine Possible' and his method, reaching 19,341 feet – without legs, for a worthy cause!

The other story that attracted attention was about the 'youngster' who treks up to Sinhagad Fort (in the Sahyadri Hills, off Pune) every Sunday. Turns out that the youngster is Narayan Mahajan, only 92, and his trekking companions are grand-children of his old friends!

What's common to these two heroes? Don't ever tell them it is not possible!

Another who belongs to this unique group of self-driven individuals is Malli Mastan Babu (featured in Podium in this issue). With his personal philosophy of 'Never give up, Never give in', he is one who found that limits are self-made & and can be pushed back if one has the self-belief to tackle one's fears.

Is there an invitation there for us to re-discover ourselves? Yes, if you have self-belief, you can!

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**Malli Mastan Babu, a Guinness World Record Achiever and motivational speaker.**



**Malli Mastan Babu, a Guinness World Record Achiever (Mountaineering) for climbing the tallest peak in each continent in the shortest span (19 January 2006 to 10 July 2006) is an IIM Calcutta and IIT Kharagpur alumnus. He is a motivational speaker in the area of leadership and has conducted motivational talks for companies such as GE, John Deer, Intel, Sierra Atlantic (US and India) and Al Rostamani Group (Dubai). Besides, he has been a speaker at various international forums like The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), (California); Brahma Kumaris, a spiritual organisation (San Francisco) and the Indian Embassy, (Moscow). In addition, Malli has been invited to address Business Schools including the Indian School of Business (Hyderabad) and at the Convocation of IIMC International Executive MBA Program.**

**Malli has been into sports since his school days, but his adventure journey began from his IIM days (where he founded the Adventure Club) and since then he has gone from 'peak to peak'. One can read more about his achievements at [www.1stindian7summits.com](http://www.1stindian7summits.com).**



**ET: How did it all begin? What prompted you to undertake a life of adventure as against a normal corporate career?**

**MB:** It was at IIM Calcutta in 2004 that I decided to avow my desire to attempt the summit of Mt Everest but the seeds of this dream were sown in my heart when I was 11, studying at Sainik School, Korukonda (Andhra Pradesh). In 1985, one of my school seniors, Lt. M. Uday Bhaskar Rao, attempted Mt. Everest as part of Indian Army team. At above 26,000 feet when he and 5 others of his team members were attempting the summit, they got stuck in a snow storm and eventually all of them succumbed to the mountain. His statue was inaugurated in our School. I was a young boy & as I stared at the statue, I promised myself that one day if I grow up to become a man and believed that "I possessed the courage and strength to face this mountain", at any stage of my life, I will not back off from it.

Inspired by a feature in HBR (which was about the Wharton School students visiting Everest Base camp and drawing leadership lessons from the experience), my exposure to Adventure sports during my school and college days, as well as my inclination towards Mt. Everest, together prompted me to think of starting an Adventure club at IIM Calcutta.

I chose to be in this field of adventure as I was able to see viable and fulfilling entrepreneurial activity in this arena which is giving scope for my passion as well as professional capabilities. There is lot of scope for me to achieve and be the first in India & the World in several projects that I am aspiring to do. So I decided to continue the journey of Adventure missions as well as evolve as one of the rare and unique experts in the field of mountaineering in the world.

**ET: Please share what are the 3 biggest challenges that you faced in the 7 Summits expeditions and how did you**

**overcome them?**

**MB:** Garnering financial support, operational challenges (such as understanding international travel regulations, a whole gamut of associated difficulties, such as language problems, food and cultural), and the weather patterns of the mountain regions were the ones that I faced even before I reached the mountain.

On the mountain, extreme cold temperatures of negative 40 degrees Celsius, avalanches and steep slopes were the challenges I experienced. One of the most severe blows for me was when an airline misplaced my entire mountaineering gear and I had to attempt my climb with the used gear that I bought in Nepal at short notice.

Some of my most fearful moments were while crossing the crevices in the Khumbu icefall on Everest and climbing through the summit ridge of Mt. Everest. With snow goggles and oxygen mask covered over your face it's not possible to see the mountain terrain and climbing path and much of your thinking capabilities are not functional at the altitude above 28,000 feet. With the depth perception of the mountain terrain not very clear and the danger of falling off the 10,000 feet steep face of Everest, I had to take a call as to give into snow blindness or to slip off the summit ridge of Everest. I walked the final hours to the summit without snow goggles. I was affected with snow blindness and extreme pain in my eyes during the descent. I descended to the base camp without any Sherpa support from South Col, 26,000 feet, under the same conditions, which was one of the most difficult times that I survived through during the life I lived during 7 summits expedition.

**ET: It is often said that Indians are not oriented to adventure activities as we are risk averse in nature, given our social settings. What are your thoughts in this regard?**

**MB:** Mountaineering originated as sport in Europe and later spread across the world. Indians in the past have visited mountains mostly for spiritual and religious reasons & this continues to draw significant numbers.

We need to learn from nature as well as nurture the spirit of Adventure. That we need to have respect for nature (for the simple reason that we are dependent on the eco-system for our own survival) and that it needs to be respected even for reason apart from "spirituality", is slowly sinking into the people who are visiting these places and they are trying to sensitize others through their experiences.

In recent times, with increasing disposable income with younger people and more economic opportunities and greater awareness generated through the web and media, there is an increasing trend of Indians participating in Adventure activities.

There will be fresh thinking, new ideas and innovations happening in professional lives too by participating in such Adventures.

**ET: According to you, what are the management lessons that an organisation should learn from the feats that you have achieved?**

**MB:**

1. Aspiration for big dreams and willingness to undergo difficulties and hardships & being sincere with the effort: I avowed to attempt Everest summit with almost negligible experience in mountaineering and zero financial status as well as least operational experience in handling such expedition.
2. Not afraid to stretch your targets in very big numbers or significant ways, with proper self assessment of oneself with the feedback from the environment: I was quick to learn about myself and believe in my climbing capabilities as well as natural instincts and stretch my targets from climbing only Everest to aspire to summit the highest peak in each continent, as well to be the fastest in the world to do the 7 summits. Beginning from a novice to aspire for such levels was an exemplary

attitude of courage and self-conviction. Leaders who want to inspire others must take risks, aspire for bigger dreams and not be averse to venture into discomfort zones

3. Sustaining self-motivation: intrinsic motivation and satisfaction to continue with the best performance, in “achieving excellence irrespective of others acknowledging” it. As was said years ago – Karma Yoga without any expectation.

**ET: What is the message you would like to give to individuals who have high aspirations, but probably lack the initiative to try and realise their dreams?**

**MB:** *‘Among all the fears what holds most of us back from aspiring for either big dreams or to follow our passion, is the fear of failure and facing self-humiliation. Try to equip yourself with the courage and self- conviction to face it - not to shy away from it.’*

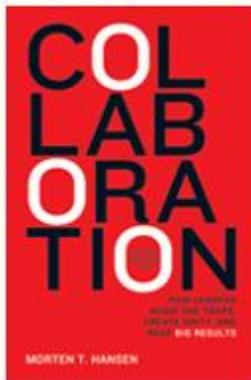
As the saying goes, whatever amount of theory you know about swimming, it does not matter You need to get into the water & put your head and body down, to realize how to float and swim through the water.. Take steps and ACT ON YOUR DREAMS NOW!!

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## Collaboration by Morten Hansen



In his book “Collaboration”, Morten Hansen rightly says that “Bad collaboration is worse than no collaboration.” So where does the power lie? According to Hansen, leaders should focus on disciplined collaboration which is keeping in mind the goal of achieving results. For Apple, it is innovation, for Wells Fargo, it is cross selling and for some others it is sharing best practices.

Morten T. Hansen is a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and INSEAD in France. Previously, he was an associate professor at Harvard Business School, where he taught leadership and general management. In addition to his academic career, Hansen has been a management consultant for a number of years with the Boston Consulting Group. He holds a PhD from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

The first critical step, Hansen says, is deciding when to collaborate and also to know when not to do it. It is a challenge not to get caught in the costly trap of collaboration by wasting time, resources and money. Explaining about Kennedy’s goal to land a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth, Hansen lists the four criteria for a compelling unifying goal which are creating a common fate, being simple and concrete, stirring passion and putting competition on the outside.

Talking of barriers, Hansen states, *“Different situations have different barriers. Leaders must first evaluate which barriers exist in their organization. Not doing so is the same as throwing darts in the dark; you have no idea what you’re hitting.”*

According to him, the four barriers to collaboration are:

- Not invented here, which means that people are not willing to seek input from others outside the unit.
- Hoarding, where people don’t share information.
- Search problems, when people are unable to find information and people easily

- Transfer problems, the inability to transfer complicated knowledge from one unit to another

Hansen says that the first two are motivational barriers and the latter two are ability problems.

The levers to unlocking these barriers, according to Hansen, lie in unifying people, creating a T-shaped Management and building nimble networks. The description of an unusual experiment conducted by a Turkish born, Harvard educated psychologist, Muzafer Sherif, beautifully brings out the concept of unifying people. T shaped Management is about leadership development efforts aimed at changing managers collaborative behaviour. Though this book is based largely on research conducted in 1990, Hansen talks of networking which has strongly evolved quite recently.

Hansen covers this complex issue of Collaboration in this 169 pages of tightly focused, well researched and action oriented approach. This makes the book, highly recommended for executives and managers looking to figure out how to create the right kind of collaboration in their companies.

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## Bhagini Nivedita Pratishthan, Pune



Bhagini Nivedita Pratishthan (BNP), Pune is a 33 year old organisation formed by Leela Shintre, Vasundhara Kelkar, Sulabha Deuskar, Neelima Karkhanis, Manik Marathe, Usha Kulkarni Wagh, Vimal Limaye, Anuradha Kulkarni, Usha Shiralkar and Usha Patwardhan in 1979, and it continues to be nurtured by a dedicated group of volunteers working for the welfare of women and children. At BNP, they believe in grasping the essence of the problems of a common woman and in helping her flourish and flower in her own way. The focus is women of weaker sections and they aim to prepare them to seize better opportunities for enriching their own and their family's life. BNP also educates children through the self-learning mode with an aim to reap the benefits of a bright career. In a

nutshell, BNP delivers on all its endeavors towards women empowerment and children welfare with the motto "Work, work and work".

BNP interacts and associates with well-known national and international organisations, which helps them gain from co-operation offered in launching and implementing projects in a variety of areas keeping in view the scope demanded by future. Till date, more than 10,000 beneficiaries have been able to derive advantage from BNP's educational, vocational, cultural, health related entrepreneurial and skill development activities. The organisation has its own premises of 10,000 sq ft at Dighi (18 km. from Pune) out of which 5,000 sq. ft is used for the ladies hostel for students, working women and senior citizens and the remaining area of 5,000 sq.ft. with a playground for children is utilised for conducting regular activities of the organisation.

With its mission of 'up-liftment of women and children with a special emphasis on socially and economically weaker sections', BNP's activities are:

Women Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; computer training</li> <li>• Science popularisation activities</li> <li>• Health &amp; cleanliness awareness</li> <li>• Homeopathy dispensary</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helper nurse training program</li> <li>• Socio Economic Programmes</li> <li>• Cultural Activities</li> <li>• Hostel for ladies</li> <li>• Library for women</li> <li>• Activities for adolescent girls</li> <li>• Skill development training programs</li> </ul>
Children Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech Correction Centre</li> <li>• Robotics workshop for school children</li> <li>• Self Study Centre</li> <li>• Hobby Workshops</li> <li>• Science Centre</li> <li>• Library for children</li> <li>• Education through Games</li> <li>• Study/Exposure visits</li> </ul>

For all the benign work that the organisation is doing, it deserves a Standing Ovation!

If you want to get more information and support Bhagini Nivedita Pratishthan, Pune, you can visit their website [www.niveditapune.org](http://www.niveditapune.org) or write an email at [punebnp@yahoo.co.in](mailto:punebnp@yahoo.co.in)

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