



Excerpts from the book **Esoteric Project Management:**
The Development and Application of Inner Power in
Management.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS BASED on many years' experience in esoteric project management, including daily application of these approaches. The idea behind the book is to expand the classical approach to management by developing a range of inner qualities through meditation and spiritual practice. If you look at the science of project management as the construction of a beautiful frame or shape, the inner component provides the interior.

Having worked in project management for more than 20 years, and having completed a lot of training courses, I have often found myself thinking that all the beautiful formulas, graphs and approaches are often incomplete in real life. This is not because they are wrong, but because quite often they do not reflect an integral approach that includes the inner dimension.

After practicing meditation for three decades, I began to look for answers to these problems inside myself. Once, while sitting in a course on Change Management provided by Carnegie Mellon University, I began to think that the classical approach to project management could benefit from the addition of inner qualities to help ensure that all these beautiful theories will work. Everyone can agree that willpower, the ability to remain calm under stress, insight and intuition can make an enormous contribution to effective management. But few, if any, books on project management address the development of these capaci-



ties. At the same time, books on meditation don't discuss project management.

In this book, I have tried to address the main areas of project management and discuss the improvements that could result from applying the appropriate inner qualities. The result is an interesting synthesis of meditation and project management. Or, to put it another way, the application of spiritual practices to project management. This is my concept of Esoteric Project Management.

The spiritual practices and meditation exercises that I refer to in this book are taken for the most part from the works of my teacher, Sri Chinmoy. And of course, I have verified them in my own life.

Stutisheel Oleg Lebedev





SETTING THE GOAL

Where Does a Project Really Begin?

THE CLASSICAL DEFINITION OF A PROJECT is: “a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result.”¹

Many activities fall under this definition. Classical project management training approaches project implementation by breaking a project into stages, setting up dependencies, assigning responsibilities and so on.

The topics I want to discuss go deeper than technical analysis, which certainly helps clarify the question “How?” I want to address the questions of “What?” and “Why?”

In 1995 I participated in a training course in Washington, DC for Ukrainian project managers organized by the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank. I listened wide-eyed to the many theorists and practitioners who shared their experiences.

Since taking that course, I always try to look at the big picture and to ask myself, “Why am I doing this?” (I address the question of motivation later on: “Why do people do what they



do?") Many experts say that a project receives life from the Vision of the end result. But that begs the question of how to create a powerful Vision that can guide and strengthen an entire project. This is a subject on which the science of project management remains mute.

Most people are preoccupied with getting a job, and planning their career and financial growth. They plan to purchase a car, build a home and so on. But on the deepest level, we strive to get joy from life, to be happy.

In my own life, on several occasions I found that even after achieving a goal by breaking through walls and making Herculean efforts, I got little or no satisfaction from the results.

On the one hand, it turned out the deadlines for which we had made every possible effort turned out later not to be so critical. On the other—and this is worse—the goals to which I aspired in my business projects or my private life were losing their relevance, both for me and my customers.

The question of what the customer needs or what the market needs is more specific than asking "Why am I doing this?" or "What goal will give us satisfaction in life?" It cannot be found without self-examination. Opinion polls, marketing analyses, ratings and other studies simply pale in comparison to what we can do with our developed inner capacities. We can open the door to our inner world to find our purpose, our mission on Earth. Moreover, with this Vision comes the power to implement it. This is an extremely powerful experience.

Stop the Mind

What does it take to obtain such a Vision? Paradoxically, we need to stop the mind. While the mind is a pretty good instrument for ordering our outer life and implementing our dreams, it is absolutely inappropriate for receiving a Vision, the embodiment of which brings to us not fleeting pleasure, but lasting satisfaction.

Sometimes we can have a very lofty dream, which we might call “prophetic.” It can give us answers to our questions and aspirations. But do we have the capacity to take these messages from above or within, that is, from a higher or deeper divine reality, as the foundation of our conscious life? We can develop this ability to receive these hints from Above. Actually, everyone can do this, because the relationship between our inner world and today’s material needs is absolutely natural. The capacity to tune in to the inner wisdom is given to us by the Creator Himself. You do not need to be a psychic or a clairvoyant—you just have to have a receptive heart. It is only necessary to wake up and feel this burning necessity to find your true Goal and Mission in life. Once you have it, you can move forward with your attempts to connect inwardly. The best way to do that is simply to meditate.

A quiet mind is the first result of a good meditation. Calming the mind—not to speak of stopping it—is an extremely difficult task. We are constantly thinking. Even when we are asleep, thoughts continue in our mind, usually expressed in our dreams. The main thing is not to give up! A good signal that you are on the right track is if you have more peace after you do a meditation exercise. You may start to smile or think positive thoughts about somebody—quite different than before the exercise. You will have a more positive attitude.



AUM.1 Exercise to calm the mind

Now for the exercises. There are many ways to stop the mind. I will mention only a few. According to my meditation teacher, Sri Chinmoy, these are more than enough ways for everyone.²

1. One way is to repeat the name of God or a particular mantra, which is a sacred word or incantation. When we repeat a mantra or God's Name, there is a continuous flow. If what we are repeating is "God, God, God," then inside the repetition we will forget ourselves. Then the mind stops.

2. Another way is to see the mind as a material object. We can take a material object and put it anywhere we want, or throw it the farthest possible distance, according to our strength. So either we can grab the mind like a material object and throw it far away, or we can put the mind in a place where it will not bother us. If a mischievous child is bothering us, we can put him into a corner and warn him not to move. We can do that to the mind also.

3. A third way is to totally forget about the existence of the mind and feel that we are only the heart. It is not enough to say, "I have a heart" We have to say, "I am the heart, I am the heart!" Then the qualities of the heart will permeate the entire being

and automatically the mind will stop.

When we do these exercises regularly, we allow the deeper realities that embody our heart and soul to come to the fore and to operate in our life. They are well aware of our goals and mission. Allow them to reveal this treasure to you. Our spiritual heart has the ability to picture our life as a whole. This ability is foreign to our mind. The mind specializes in dividing reality into parts and analyzing each part. However, we can call on the mind for the implementation of our dreams.

It may take time to begin to feel the spiritual heart and then to learn how to explore the world with its help. But the effort is more than worth it. We cannot even imagine what a rich inner world we have!

Extremes On the Path To Enlightenment

I discovered yet another way to calm the mind and dive deep into myself: long-distance running. Over the past ten years I have been participating in the longest footrace in the world—the Self-Transcendence 3,100-Mile Race. Each time I run the race, the experience is so rich and I have so many discoveries I feel that I am living through several lives! During heavy exertion, the mind automatically calms down and you get access to your real life. You become vividly aware of what life-activities are truly essential. This impulse to write book is the result of just such an inner revelation...

So with faith in ourselves, let's begin the journey!