

Article 3: Don't just think or react, think and act!

Article 1 and 2 were mainly written with the intention of placing the problem in perspective. The fundamental problem of being so immersed in a problem that we may not even recognize it as a problem!

So what do we do once we've agreed with the points made in article 1 and 2? Now that we see the problem, we realize that it is so deep rooted in us and in society, that a solution may even seem impossible? That is not true.

Well, then what can I, as an individual, do about it?

The first step is to change ourselves, our attitudes. This is not an easy step in itself and will be the focus of a future article, and essentially, is the purpose of our entire forum.

Then, as we see the problem in the outside world, we find that we begin reacting to it. Instead of ignoring it completely as we did earlier in our passive state. In our new state, we begin to react to everyday instances. It's a first step, it is a small step, but it must be taken. It must be taken because a lot of thought but no action would lead to an unpleasant situation. We may end up getting overburdened with thought and eventually may feel overwhelmed and helpless. Or we may feel that the problem is so large and begin to ignore it once again, saying that it is beyond us. This is, of course, is not the solution.

The solution is to react and then act. Sometimes, if the situation is so grim that a reaction is not possible, it should not hinder us as individuals. For even more powerful than reaction, is action.

What is the difference between reaction and action?

Reaction is merely, not being passive, while this is important in everyday instances, real change is brought about by careful thought, followed by planned action. Action can be of various stages, styles, methods.

When I speak to friends about reaction, sometimes friends say, "Well, I do react", "If someone tries to cut into the line in front of me, I'll surely yell at him", that's great! But then sometimes, they'll say, "well, I do react, but there was this one time that I tried to stop someone from breaking the line and he slapped me, he spoke in a manner that suggested he was a *big guy a dada*."

There are *many* ways of handling a situation like this.

1) Is to react to that *dada* attitude by either fighting back at the time, looking him in the eye, standing your ground and facing possible consequences or simply backing away and then do nothing about it after that.

2) Another way of handling the situation is to stand your ground, or not react at the time, at all, depending on your bravery at the time, or the grimness of the situation. But Act later. By all means possible.

Of course, various permutations and combinations of the various reactions and actions mentioned above are possible, but the most important thing is to act on it later on.

So how would one act after being bullied by a *dada*?

As I said earlier, action implies that there is thought followed by a planned execution. The more thought, planning and hard work put into an act, the greater the level of action and stronger the impact.

One level of action will be to write a letter to the local newspaper. This may seem like a simple or ineffective deed, but it makes a difference.

People in our system often underestimate the power of thought and words. To impress this point, I will give you a small example.

Not too long ago, my Mother wanted to make a change in society and met a political head asking her how she could help society. The person replied,

"Madam, the world of politics is very tough; it is not a world that a gentlewoman like you can enter at this stage in your life.... But there is something you and other women like you can do....", he said, "when you see issues and problems, write to the newspapers"

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“editors are human”, he said, “if you write, and people like you write, eventually the editor will realize the importance of the issue and the newspaper will have to do something about it!”

Today, everyone talks about how the number of convictions of important people is on the rise because the media and the people are not willing to let things slip. Isn't the media run by everyday, regular folk like us? aren't they human too? If every one of us, recognize passivity, or everyday corruption as an issue, and start writing to them, wouldn't it start to make a difference?

So that's one level of action, in response to being bullied you wrote to the media. Of course, you may not be happy with the *dada giri* that you were victim to, or bore witness to, and you may not be happy with just writing a letter. Then you may feel like there is nothing else you can do and you may be tempted to feel self pity and helplessness. But there are always higher levels of action.

The next level, would be to organize your efforts. Ask yourself, are you in the minority? Is the world full of *dada's*? Or is the majority of the population living under their fear and subjugation? Who do the numbers favor?

Why don't you talk to your friends and family and see if they feel the same way as you. It will be very likely that a majority of the people in your community are not happy with what the *dada* is doing, but no one reacted to it. So everyone thought they were alone and nothing happened. But have you every considered how much more powerful a collective effort will be? What if you got your friends and family together, and got everyone to write to the local media? Or stage a local protest outside the *dada's* house?

If you think about it further and boil it down to the root of the problem, you may find that the local public servants (maybe the police) are not doing their job, or the local government is corrupt. Or the government at the center is corrupt. Often we say, “this politician takes money, but at least he get's something done.” As article's 1 and 2 point out, it is this very attitude that's the root of all problems in society. The attitude that it's OK, *chaltha hai*.

What if we decide that the root of all problems is corruption? And this particular *dada* was taking advantage of the system and throwing his weight around. What if you decide that you will not tolerate this subjugation to *dada giri*, so you will stop it if you have to end corruption in India?

What if you find that corruption in India, is again linked to corruption of our own minds? what if you find that our own minds are corrupted to a certain extent because we don't react to the small instance of corruption that take place around you? Assuming you read articles 1 and 2 and they made sense to you, and you started reacting to a police man taking a bribe, or a servant being subjugated. Then you realize that you will have to drill this sense into everyone else around you. Before you can change the government and blame the government for their corruption.

I assure you that although it may seem like you have come full circle, it will be the most valuable lesson you have learnt in your life. You may find that you haven't felt as weak or helpless before, cause now you know that the problems of society and the government, can be closer to your everyday life than you think. And you can begin to change the people around you as well as yourself.

Or you may decide that you want the government to end it's cycle of corruption, how would you go about it? Would you be able to target a sizeable number of people who want to do the

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same and get the majority of the nation to put their foot down and say “No”, “we don't want this to continue anymore”, “stop this please”. Then call for a day of prayer and fasting, and continue that way, one day every week, until the message is made clear—That we will act, until our problems are resolved and everyone is treated with respect, or the law is properly enforced.

As you may have gathered by reading this article, it has been a very long time since anyone in our country has set out to perform the ultimate type of act, of seriously striving to solve the most visible and invisible problems in our society.

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