

# The voyage of post-graduation

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Figure 1. Muhammad Saarim Naeem ©

Hunter S. Thompson, journalist, father of gonzo journalism, and writer wrote a letter to his friend Hume Logan in the year 1958, when the latter sought Thompson's advice. Despite being 22-years of age, in the perspicacious letter, Thompson (while backing up his premise with an allusion to the words of the 'Bard of Avon') offers his percipient advice for finding the true purpose and meaning of life through self-consciousness and self-discovery. Thompson writes:

*"To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles ... (Shakespeare)*

*And indeed, that is the question: whether to float with the tide, or to swim for a goal. It is a choice we must all make consciously or unconsciously at one time in our lives. So, few people understand this! Think of any decision you've ever made which had a bearing on your future: I may be wrong, but I don't see how it could have been anything but a choice however indirect — between the two things I've mentioned: the floating or the swimming."*

Thompson later on despairs, that in the pursuit of one's goal, one often forgets to understand oneself. He says:

*"The answer — and, in a sense, the tragedy of life — is that we seek to understand the goal and not the man. We set up a goal which demands of us certain things: and we do these things. We adjust to the demands of a concept which cannot be valid. When you were young, let us say that you wanted to be a fireman. I feel reasonably safe in saying that you no longer want to be a fireman. Why? Because your perspective has changed. It's not the fireman who has changed, but you. Every man is the sum total of his reactions to experience. As your experiences differ and multiply, you become a different man, and hence your*

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*perspective changes. This goes on and on. Every reaction is a learning process; every significant experience alters your perspective.”*

It is rightly said that with age comes maturity. Our perceptions and decisions keep changing in the light of new experiences that we experience throughout our lifetime. These experiences help shape our responses and decisions to the situation at hand. You may find yourself at a ‘cul-de-sac’ even when you would have thought that you have deciphered the meaning of life in itself.

During the fateful year (when our world was being split asunder by a tiny organism) of 2020, when I was nearing the end of my graduation, I found myself under similar circumstances. Navigating the throes of the lockdown and languishing over the thought of a bleak and uncertain future, I came across a course called MBA in Sustainability Management offered by TERI School of Advanced Studies. Intrigued, I began researching about the course. While researching I came across various opportunities present in the field of sustainability. Finding the course quite fascinating, I also found a plethora of opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry with respect to sustainability. Be it the reduction of emissions during the manufacturing of medicines, management of wastewater, treatment of APIs during the waste disposal process, or initiating various health programmes for creating an impact on the society, the realm of sustainability isn’t alien to the pharmaceutical industry.

I am currently in the second semester of my course. As I learn something new each day, I come across various new possibilities and opportunities every day. Life is a process of learning and unlearning. Let us become resilient in the face of such hard times and pledge to make our planet a better place to live in for the generations to come.

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