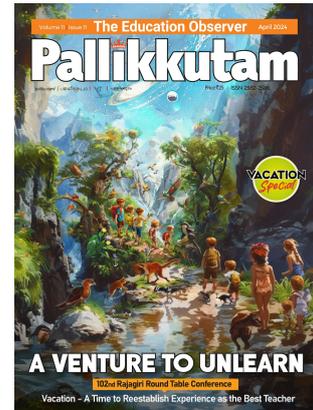


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## Horizons

### Leadership Lessons: Role of Personal Growth and Managerial Skills



*The story of Maragatham Ramalingam who runs a major hospital in Salem is an example of personal growth and managerial skills required for success as a leader.*

Personal development occupies significant role in everyone's life. Self-control, confidence, team spirit, leadership and service to the society and such attributes are important towards personal growth. These subjects are discussed and tutored in management schools as part of Human Resources (HR) curriculum. While such academic activities are well established and schools such as XLRI are known for such subjects. HR training and skill sets can be achieved both in formal and informal set-ups. In addition to these structured programs, practical and life experience can help with personal development and managerial skills. Observing

our society, neighborhood, family, and friends is a best source for lifelong learning.



**Maragatam Ramalingam**The spark for this article came to me by observing friends. I had the good fortune of knowing Mrs. Maragatam Ramalingam, who is visiting our city in the United States. Mrs. Ramalingam is an entrepreneurial lady, who is the Managing Director of Ramalingam's Hospital, Salem, India. Ramalingam's hospital is a regional multispecialty children's hospital in Salem. While visiting her daughter in Lubbock, it is impressive to know Mrs. Ramalingam is managing the hospital remotely by attending to administrative and daily activities by taking phone calls and engaging in managing in the night hours in the United States, which is daytime in India. People like this are indeed leaders to follow, learn and imitate. Discussions with Mrs. Maragatam Ramalingam provided a lot of learning lessons, which will motivate us for personal growth.

### **Personal Growth and Managerial Skills**

Personal growth and managing capability can be visualized as a table with four legs such as: 1) Self-development; 2) Team building; 3) Fiduciary management and 4) Human skill development. By getting a handle on these aspects, one can expect personal growth and accomplishment. Citing her growing up in a farm, engaging with the broader society, serving the rural community and involvement in extracurricular activities provided the necessary confidence to manage a multispecialty hospital, stated Mrs. Ramalingam.

#### **Self-Development**

Self-control, balanced aspirations, determination, and engagement with the community are pillars upon which self-development process can be built. In villages in India, we have heard most often that, "Be sharp in listening, but be cautious in response." This is a good self-management lesson that comes to us without any cost. By observing and interacting with the society, we get these pearls of wisdom, which provide equal or more than formal self-management workshops. In Gita, Lord Krishna highlights the importance of self-learning and measured response as, "Anudhvegakaram Vakyam, Sathyam--." In English speaking world, similar sentiment is prevalent, and we hear the oft stated phrase, "Don't let others know what you think," which again emphasizes the importance of self-control.

#### **Team and Project Management**

Individual's weakness, and strength balance in a team to produce a positive result based on collective effort. Given the competition for talents, resources, markets, workplace these days focus on collaboration and collective efforts towards achieving targets. Working in a team requires give and take, swallowing one's ego and practice flexibility. Team leaders must be like soccer coaches, motivating, strategizing, and leading by example. Importantly, handling personnel with different personality and talents is an important task for team

leaders and coaches. Soccer is recognized as a good example of team effort, where the coach endeavors to motivate and maintain the coherence of the team. Project team and lead can get clues from such games and other community efforts that occur in our society. "Handling people is a challenging task. In my experience in managing a specialty hospitality which serves many villages surrounding Salem, a leader must create interest among staff to contribute which benefits the organization and staff. Leaders are cheer leaders and must create a family atmosphere," stated Maragatam Ramalingam. Leader should be transparent and let staff know what is expected is a success yielding approach added Mrs. Ramalingam.

In the current times, the IT sector is a fitting example for team effort. Advanced industries such as biotechnology, IT, infrastructure, routinely support their staff towards achieving their personal goals with the help of continuous education programs. Regular training programs developed in-house, or structured programs offered by consulting agencies support continuous improvement. In all these programs, efforts should be made that personnel development subjects occupy prominence.

### **Fiduciary Skill Development**

In addition to personnel development, budget development and management skills are needed. Right from early age, family elders must emphasize the importance of budget planning and handling finances. Such encouragement at initial stages in life will kindle interest to gain in-depth knowledge and capability of controlling financial issues in later stages in life. Liberal education and the enacted new national educational policy provide flexibility to broaden skills, which is the need of the hour. These days, Universities consistently offer personal financial planning workshops and weekend certificate courses, which come handy for upgrading such broad skills. In stressing the importance of seizing opportunities, Mrs. Ramalingam highlighting her growing up in a village to now running an organization, stated, by looking for opportunities around us and managing complex situation as an adventure will pay off.

In this internet and globalized world, there are many opportunities for informal training in self-development, stress management and project development. Internationally reputed institutions such as MIT offer many courses free of cost in online mood, which provide additional support towards growth. It is in our own interest to engage with the society and utilize opportunities towards self-development.

Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

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