

Person of Substance



Short essays on what it means to be a Person of Substance

Written by the applicants to the India-Bhutan Youth Summit '18

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2018 marked the first India Bhutan Youth Summit which was held in Bhutan. In order to select from a long list of entries for the summit, participants were asked to write an essay on what they thought makes a person of substance. This book is a compilation of their essays

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Essays

In this world of diverse culture, religion, belief, and caste what makes a person stand out in the crowd is his/her good deeds and behaviour towards others. The ability of a person to bring out the best in oneself and thereby making others happy and reinforcing their belief in humanity is a noble act.

Swami Vivekananda, renowned monk, philosopher and thinker said that the history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith called out divinity within them. It made them believe in themselves and with the help of purity, patience and perseverance they were able to succeed in their endeavours in bringing positive change in the world. This is what I believe makes a person of substance.

A person of substance is made the way a diamond is made. In the beginning it is just a rock, but with time and under tremendous amount of pressure the rock transforms into a diamond. In the same way with knowledge and the experience of hardships in life, a gem of a person is pulled out from dust and becomes bright and scintillating with a refined view of life. The rock that becomes the diamond has a few inherent qualities as well that are necessary for its transformation.

Similarly, there are a few important factors that are responsible in the making of a person of substance and only when all these factors come together does the transformation happen. The foremost important factor is a person's positive thoughts and attitude. This indicates that the person has a mindset to think good for others and would always be ready to help. When a person's thoughts are pure and positive that is when the person desires to help others. This leads to the second most important factor which is empathy. This is responsible for that person's ability to not only think about himself but also understand and share the feelings of others and help those in need. A person of substance willingly works in the interest of the society, community and environment at large. The third most important factor is having a futuristic vision, which means thinking about the future and not just the present. This helps building a world where people are not selfish and are use resources judiciously and sustainably keeping in mind the future generations. This leads to the final qualities which are leadership and teamwork. The ability to capture people's faith and not just lead them is what a true leader does. To value other's opinions and try and act in everyone's interest is what teamwork is all about. However, to capture people's faith qualities like honesty, trustworthiness, hardworking and being true to his/her word are very important qualities and these are needed inherently in the person of substance.

Being a person of substance gives the person a sense of contentment and joy in being able to enrich their own life by making others happy -- bringing greater change in society by helping more people, who in turn would be motivated to help others. The world will become a better place if people are inspired to become better people themselves.

In this world of diverse culture, religion, belief, and caste what makes a person stand out in the crowd is his/her good deeds and behaviour towards others.

To be told one is a person of substance is one of the greatest commendations one can get. While it generally refers to someone who is able to derive meaning out of life and become a solution-giver rather than sideline criticizer, I think it has other connotations as well. Through the rest of this essay, I will seek to establish the attributes I believe people of substance possess.

Experiences define human beings. Our personalities, behaviour and opinions are influenced largely by the experiences we face. One of these inevitable circumstances is failure. There are varying degrees of failing that can affect us in multiple manners, but the important part is how we deal with it. I believe a person of substance approaches failing with an attitude of learning from it and taking it in their stride, instead of getting angry or blaming others. They view not succeeding in their endeavour in a positive light and embody the adage, 'you must fail in order to succeed'.

The more diverse one's experiences are, the closer one is to understanding the larger issues plaguing the world. Exposure through these experiences help one accept and empathize with people who are not like him/her; who may have fundamental differences but are entitled to their own thought processes, as is the right of every human being. A person of substance thus respects different ideologies and backgrounds, and appreciates the nuances diversity brings to discussions and solution finding.

Challenging oneself regularly is an important part of being a self-aware, astute and strong individual. Whether it's through testing mental or physical limits, pushing oneself out of comfort zones helps one not only learn more about oneself but those around us, and the power of the human mind as an entity. A person of substance, does not restrict himself to the skill set he already possesses; instead he constantly strives to better himself and reach new heights.

Additionally, I believe having a strong value system is a prerequisite of sorts. Being ethical, fair and decisive is paramount. Unlike people who are indecisive and unable to take a firm stance on an issue, a person of substance stands up for he believes in. His strength and tenacity is also displayed in his ability to put others' problems above his own and treat them with as much care and effort as he would his own issues. His ideally unselfish nature also becomes evident in his capacity to be there for others, displaying a high emotional quotient that is cognizant of the emotional struggles people face and is equipped to provide a source of comfort to them.

As important as being caring is the quality of erudition also holds its own ground. Being someone who can have a conversation on multiple themes across different fields and who is aware of the political and social situations around the globe is frequently categorized as a person of substance as well. This becomes especially valuable when he is able to use his knowledge and creativity to generate solutions that can be implemented to benefit hundreds of individuals.

However, these monumental solutions are rarely the result of just one person's genius. Instead, they come from hours of deliberation among high-caliber specialists who use their specific expertise to collaborate and create the most efficient solution possible. Therefore, I believe people of substance are those who are open to listening to other viewpoints instead of focusing only on asserting their own. They are people who have spent years accumulating knowledge, yet are humble about their scholarship and always on a quest to learn more.

Finally, I think one of the most defining traits of a person of substance is the ability to inspire. This is someone who can motivate others around him or her to pursue their goals and empower them to continue their undertaking, even when they believe they cannot. Through leading by example, a person of substance sees a way out of the metaphorical dark tunnel and shows others the light.

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While the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a person of substance as someone who is rich and powerful, in this essay I would like to discuss the subjectivity of the terms “rich and powerful” and subsequently how that informs my understanding of a person of substance. A person who is rich and powerful is a person of substance — owning material wealth makes him powerful enough to possess whatever she/he wants. When I think of a person of substance, an influential authoritative figure who commands respect and honour comes to mind. And in our post-capitalist society with neo-liberal markets, anyone with a lot of money may buy himself respect, as is often portrayed in pop culture too. Buying respect means manipulating your public image which is not too difficult, with the Internet and sold-out media by your side. Similarly, influence is out for sale too. When making ends meet has become extremely difficult ethics are sold to finance everyday necessities and needs of the family.

The image of a rich person running huge corporate houses, networking with the political bigwigs, driving fancy cars must not be equated with “substance.” A person of substance must be someone who remains equally powerful and influential without leaning on the crutches of money and material wealth. I strongly contend that the qualities that make anyone deserving of being called a person of substance must be fundamentally innate.

A person of substance could be someone rich or poor, but what is more important is how she/he spends his/her limited time, energy, and resources. She/he would streamline their quotidian existence towards leading a meaningful life and making this world a better place to live in. She/he would help the people around and take a stand against prevalent injustice in society. Is only a full-time philanthropist a person of substance then? No. A person of substance is a regular man/woman. She/he could be a doctor, photographer, fashion designer, engineer, astronaut, or even an entrepreneur; but she/he has to have an admirable sense of work ethics and uphold moral values. Such an individual would work ethically and sincerely while making sure he/she gives back to the society and does not indulge in unfair practices and also not turn a blind eye towards the struggles of other people.

To sum up, a person of substance is rich and powerful, but what makes them so is not their material wealth and worldly possessions. She/he is morally rich and derives power and influence from genuinely being helpful to people around. She/he upholds admirable work ethic and leads a meaningful life by being a change maker. She/he recognizes the power of empathy, vulnerability, and ingenuity. What lends substance to someone’s personality cannot be quantified in numbers, and the title of “person of substance” is not restricted to the philanthropic elite of society either. It is all about their intentions and motivations.

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I remember hearing that phrase while growing up. It was always used with the understanding that being “of substance” generally meant “successful”, “classy” and so on. Being a man or a woman of substance meant to be and act like one from the upper echelons of society. I have learned something different which is my understanding. My pre-conceived ideas of “substance” is usually shallowness and haughtiness.

A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character. A person who is self-reliant, influential with class, ambitious and plans for her/his goals a person of substance. A person who becomes influential and famous through hard work also qualifies. A person who works in the interest of society and not for personal is praiseworthy.

There are many qualities which together makes a person of substance -- appreciation, belief in others, caring, committed, cooperating, courteous, confident, devoted, forgiving, grateful, honest, hopeful, optimist, patient, tolerant to name a few. Like all fingers are not of same size, all qualities are not the same in a person. Some people have strengths others have different ones.

The first and foremost quality for being a person of substance is humanity. We are so engrossed in our daily existence that we only think about ourselves. This is due to a loss of humanity. Humanity makes us human, the ability to love and have compassion, be creative and not be a robot, being kind, thoughtful and sympathetic towards others is essential. So, for being a person of substance we first have to develop humanity in ourselves.

The second is our thinking. As we know, good thought always sends a person at high altitude but bad thought becomes the cause of his/her destruction. Thirdly, the most important quality is to be a learner. It does not mean to study in a classroom but to learn from life. Our world is changing, so we must be constant learners just to keep up. One should learn to feel and think for ourselves and not be led by the media or other sources.

And the last but not the least quality is the ability to choose right. We always choose one person to look up and follow their path. But do all followers succeed? The answer is no. Success comes to those who are extraordinary. My mother once explained to me that there are two types of people, one who goes with the crowd and the other who walks apart from the crowd and chooses the difficult path. So, it depends on we choose to be. If we choose the first one we will be an ordinary person and if we choose the second one we will be a remarkable person. If we follow the herd chances are will won't do anything remarkable with our lives. But if we choose to think for ourselves and walk our own path we will be a “person of substance.”

A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character.

A person of substance is the one who fits in the proper definition of a decent human being. As we know the most vital and essential quality of a human being is humanity which is vanishing day by day. People no longer behave like a true human beings. Day by day their lifestyle, behaviour, thinking, and actions are like those of animals. So, logically a person of substance is the one who bears all the characteristics of a complete human being.

A person of substance is the one who fits in the proper definition of a decent human being.

Some basic requirements for being a person of substance:

Belief in others: It can be your attitude, your resolve that can lift someone up when they are down. Their doubt can be erased by your confidence. And something else amazing happens – belief is contagious – the more you believe in others the more you will continue to believe in yourself.

Caring: Caring for others, as well as self-care, allows you to extend a helping hand and to pass along some unexpected grace. When we take the time to show we care, we demonstrate the fact there are still plenty of good people left in this world.

Effort: No matter the outcome, there is always value in the effort when the effort is genuine and well-intended.

Forgiveness: To be clear, the purpose of forgiveness is not to absolve someone of the sin(s) committed against you but to free yourself from the pain and the anger that is keeping you stuck. When you forgive, you are better able to let go of the past and keep moving forward with your life.

Friendship: Friends support us and they provide an unfiltered view of our actions when asked. Friends sustain us through difficult periods and join us for the events we celebrate.

Gratitude: It is with a grateful heart that helps me to see so much abundance in my life. A feeling of gratitude reminds me that what I have today can be taken away tomorrow.

Honesty: To live honestly keeps our hearts and souls pure and our minds free of doubt or uncertainty. When we are honest we know we are doing the right things.

Hope: Hope is the fuel that keeps us moving forward when we are most tired. Hope reassures us that sometimes it's not a matter of 'if' but only 'when'.

Love: The presence of love in our life, the love we have for our families, our friends, our faith and for ourselves, is the single most important source of light and energy we can tap into when we have the need to be filled up; or when we see the need to fill someone else up with grace, hope and our love

Optimism: I was born and raised in the South. An expression I heard often went something like, "When God hands you lemons you make lemonade." The value of optimism is clear here – take what you have been given and make the best of it.

Patience: Patience is a value which can also improve productivity because it creates a better state of mind, a clearer state of mind, for better decision making.

Respect: We are all different, yet we are all the same in the sense we want to be respected for what we think and believe. When we show the proper respect we are not only validating the other person's dignity, we are also enhancing our own.

Sacrifice: Sometimes it's appropriate to put someone else's needs before your own. This is the meaning of sacrifice. Along with sacrifice comes some discomfort perhaps even some pain. This is what makes sacrifice a value to live by.

Tolerance: There are people who make us angry and we just can't seem to see eye-to-eye on an issue. Rather than showing contempt tolerance is a better alternative. It shows respect, patience and courtesy – all important values in their own right, too.

I would simply like to conclude that no one is a born person of substance. To be one of the kind one needs to be just a better human being.

“If you find yourself constantly trying to prove your worth to someone, you have already forgotten your value.”

–Unknown

I believe that depth and substance are as important to a person as to a poem. The initial step of this beautiful journey of transforming someone into a person of substance is deep introspection, discovering who we really are. Wise men’s philosophy is also derived from the act of introspection. The great Jain philosopher, Mahavira that “substance is all about the permanent attributes in oneself, it is about character building.”

Having said this, I have experienced such a vital change in my personality when I embarked on the enticing journey of preparing for the Civil Services Examination during the past one year. I have deeply felt that in this process I have grown as an individual. I form my own opinions, I am compassionate, emotionally intelligent, more patient, and a calm observer. My thought process and behaviour has matured enormously. Hence, I very passionately feel that these are some of the essential traits that make a person of substance.

“Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing.”

– Abraham Lincoln

Therefore, the materialistic aspect of life like the accumulation of wealth is of no value to the substance of a person but what really matters are the ideas, perspectives, wisdom, humbleness, the ability to simplify the complicated. A person of substance should also have the humility to believe that he needs to learn more, he must always walk his talk. Open-mindedness is also an essential attribute of a person of substance as an open-minded person doesn’t care to be right, he cares to understand. As rightfully said by someone: “You learn nothing from life if you think you’re right all the time.”

I also believe that strong ethical values in private and public relationships, high aptitude skills, integrity and probity are some of the eminent qualities that must be reflected in a person of substance. He must have the capability to utilize the peculiar combination of mixing subjectivity with objectivity according to the different situations. According to me, the best quality is his heart that is full of love and compassion and one who values friendships, honesty and trust. He must have the courage to fight tough battles and rise above difficult circumstances.

A person of substance takes nothing personally enjoying a significantly greater amount of freedom -- the freedom to ingest new thoughts, freedom of conscience, freedom to speak pragmatically. The credibility and acceptability of his ideas are some of the hallmark traits of a person of substance. I very profoundly feel that valuable experiences accumulated through life are an innate part of a person’s growth as it through mistakes that we learn. A magnetic personality consisting of exceptional leadership qualities, high moral standards, a disciplined life governed by philosophical principles, an intuitive mind are to my mind the trademarks of a person of substance.

I wholeheartedly concur with the fact that, “Exterior beauty, without the depth of a kind soul is merely decoration.”

I would like to conclude by referring to this beautiful quote by Suzy Kassem –
“True beauty is measured by the number of pearls within you, not those around your neck.”

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“What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.”

- Sri Aurobindo

I don't know who a person of substance is. Substance in general is matter which has a specific composition and properties. Describing a human being in a static, specific sense is challenging for me. In my understanding, becoming a person of substance would involve an evolution and probably a sequential process. My experiences have helped me outline a roadmap for myself which represents my definition of success, or in other words could take me closer to becoming a person of substance.

The journey towards becoming a person of substance moves from the inner to the outer world.

There's little that I really know, beyond my scope of experience, so I will use my roadmap with its three stages to answer the question – What makes a Person of Substance?

Stage 1: Towards Self

The journey towards becoming a person of substance moves from the inner to the outer world. The first stage finds its roots in spirituality, in answering the 'Why's' and silencing the 'I'. In the yogic system, it also correlates to the eight limbs described in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga. It is inspired by sages, philosophers and visionaries of the past, like Sri Aurobindo, J. Krishnamurti, Gandhi – all representing a deep spiritual search – which sowed the seeds for their work towards humanity.

This stage sets the foundations to work towards a strong and healthy mind and body, without which little is possible. With tools, such as yoga, meditation, introspection or self-work and being with nature, one develops synchronicity between thought, speech and action. It helps develop values such as discipline and control, confidence and clarity of thought. Truthfulness and courage also follow automatically.

One realizes that goals of creating organizations, serving humanity or working for fame, power or money – are simply egoistic. This frees the mind of fear or greed, bringing stillness and quietude. As Buddha once said: “You can only lose what you cling to.”

And with that understanding, we're ready for stage 2.

Stage 2: Towards Fellow Beings

With this fearless spirit, emerges love and compassion. To be a person of substance, it's imperative to develop a sense of brotherhood. In the complex world that we live in, the importance of being able to trust and be trustworthy, resolve inter-personal conflicts amicably, and respect others regardless of their status or power – cannot be overstated.

Thus, the mind becomes open, non-judgemental and able to acknowledge diversity. This can help develop the value of empathy and the skill to collaborate. More importantly, humility and integrity become a way of being. A defining characteristic would be to pass on one's own blissful nature towards everyone one encounters. Such a person would thus be an incredible team player and ready to take charge in the outer world.

Step 3: Towards the Ecosystem

Only with a strong mind and body, and a deep connect with fellow beings can one find

According to my understanding a person of substance is one who stands out from the crowd and is a great positive influence to others. A person of substance has unique attractive qualities – leadership skills, motivation, commitment, dedication, compassion and many more. He brings positive change to people around him. A person of substance is focussed and committed. He/she can face any kind of challenges and has the ability to tackle it patiently. He will face a problem head-on instead of running away from it.

A person of substance plans long term strategies keeping in mind the ever-changing future.

A person of substance is a lifelong learner. Instead of doling out advice he leads by example. A person of substance has a basket of knowledge which he uses to succeed in life. He thinks about the future. He is like a marathon runner who knows how to balance power to achieve his goal or to boost the speed at the last stage of a marathon to be a winner.

A person of substance plans long term strategies keeping in mind the ever-changing future. He is more insightful than the common person. He makes long-term plans and works dedicatedly to achieve his goals. He accepts responsibility and doesn't shy away from it. A higher position in a work environment comes with responsibility and he is up for the challenge.

He is quick to identify what is right from wrong and encourages others towards the right path. He is, therefore, revered by those around him. He is considered to be an honourable person in society and respected in the workplace and outside of it.

In short a person of substance is one who participates and solves problems rather than being an onlooker.

strength and direction to contribute or lead selflessly towards society, the environment, and the world at large. Such a person is then equipped with a wholesome and not fragmented view of the world, and has the ability to stay unperturbed under calamity. One is ready to work with impediments rather than against them, and work hard. Taking responsibility towards the wellbeing of all comes naturally. Most importantly, it's easier to adapt to dynamic environments or take decisions even when the chips are down. A person of substance is thus one who seeks to contribute positively wherever one goes.

A person of substance is a person of wisdom. One who learns to dance with the paradoxes of the above stages with grace. One who can crush the ego yet recognize the extraordinary strength that lies within. One who understands the Sanskrit aphorism - *Aham Brahmāsmīti*, which means 'I am the infinite reality'. One who contributes with humility, integrity and discipline, and without fear or greed.

As for me, I find myself going back and forth on the stages every now and then, but I have hope and perseverance by my side, and an inherent will to lead change which keeps me going.

“Success without honour is an unseasoned dish. It will satisfy your hunger but it won't taste good.”

- Joe Paterson

The above quote holds a similarity with being a person of substance. As being just a person will only satisfy one's moral hunger but transforming into a person of substance adds taste of values to those morals. There are lots of qualities in a person that makes him/her a person of substance. This makes him/her different from other species as well. Apes became human beings through evolution as they survived. It was all about “survival of fittest” according to Charles Darwin. Similarly, a person becomes a person of substance through the process of evolution.

What makes a person of substance? The characteristic other than human qualities is the human consciousness. This is fulfilled when a person is not only able to think positive but it able to uplift the thoughts of those around him. He/she is thus able to positive change in the community at large.

The humanistic-existential approach in psychology formulated by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers shares a belief that a person has the capacity for self-awareness and has the ability to make choices. The humanistic perspective views human nature as basically good, with a potential to maintain healthy meaningful relationships and to make choices that are in best interest of oneself and others. A person once he realizes this ability of making choices in his best interest transforms into a person of substance. This state is attained when the person continuously observes growth and tries to reach his full potential and chooses to act responsibly and innovatively instead of sinking into despair. Continuous work towards reaching one's full potential makes a person of substance.

When he is able to understand the meaning of “self” one becomes a person of substance.

When he is able to understand the meaning of “self” one becomes a person of substance. There are two types of “self”: i.e., the “ideal self” and the “real self”. The ideal self is the person ones strives to become and the real self is one's nature in reality. A person is of substance when he/she reaches the state of congruence between his ideal self and his self-image. This makes for a more tolerant, self-aware person and boosts his/her scientific temperament.

Moreover, the essential inner qualities of a person of substance are: neutrality which provides stability; commitment which increases credibility; discipline which provides ability to delay instant gratifications and resist temptations; humility which provides self-confidence and self-esteem; gratitude, i.e. feeling of being grateful; vision - the ability to understand others' feelings; perseverance, i.e. conquering failure and fatigue; and most importantly magnanimity which provides forgiveness and the ability to not be vengeful and similarly many more qualities helps in becoming a person of substance.

Learning plays an important role in making a person a person of substance. His/her ability to acquire knowledge and skills makes them work effectively and through their skills they take decisions beneficial for themselves and for society. This behaviour and knowledge makes them a living resource. Their skills are used in various fields like management, government, performing arts and formulation of policies etc. Not only the positive traits and abilities in a person make them a person of substance but their negative experiences turns them towards a responsible life. With the ability to cope and turn negative situation as a reinforcement a person attains the state of substance and hence they become beneficial and useful for the society, country and world as a whole.

It's all about the arrangement and gaining of qualities, values and goals that makes a person of substance and when all these are combined together, there lies the big difference between just a person and a person of substance. Such individuals stand out in a crowd.

*Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the wealthiest of all?
Is it that billionaire who owns all the riches and still has nothing to give away?
Or is it that beggar who shares his meal with his friend after being hungry all day?
Is it that man who owns that big house and lives there all by himself?
Or is it that labourer who lives with his family in that shack the size of a shelf?
'Ha-ha! The mirror knows it all', the mirror said,
'It's that beggar and that labourer who're wealthy
Because it is substance that matters and not the form,
While form lasts for a second, it is the substance which is the incorruptible norm.*

Going by the dictionary meaning, a person of substance means a person who is rich and powerful. But does money and power really make a person wealthy? Nelson Mandela, the first Black president of South Africa, who abolished apartheid in the country, was indeed the wealthiest person for the people of South Africa, because of his interventions to end their misery.

I think money by itself is worthless. Value of money comes from its ability to exchange it for goods and services. It just acts as a means to satisfy various ends but not all. One cannot buy health with money, or family, or friends, or wisdom, or values, or all those things that truly define a person, and not his net worth. This doesn't mean that money is not important. It makes life easier and it allows for luxury and comforts. The absence of money does make one unhappy, but its presence doesn't guarantee happiness.

A person of substance is one who has a good value system, one who is guided by ingrained virtues, one who has a good support system of friends and family, one who derives satisfaction in making others happy, one who doesn't only live for oneself but finds a greater purpose in life. Substance isn't something that can be bought or sold; rather it is something one nurtures over time by investing time, effort and hard work.

When one is having a bad day, it is one's friends and family who will provide the requisite assurance and motivation to keep moving forward. A strong support system of a loving family and loyal friends is one of the greatest wealth any man can acquire. A blanket closely knit with strong and lasting relationships can provide warmth even on the coldest of nights.

Although it is natural that human beings are self-absorbed, but rising above one's own needs and thinking of the greater good is something that brings utmost happiness in a person's life. Figuring out one's purpose in life is not an easy task, but if one really tries to think, the answer is clear. The most basic purpose of a person's life is to serve others. This doesn't mean giving away money in donations and charity. One can serve people in the simplest of form. The smallest gesture can spread happiness.

As rightly said by Abraham Lincoln: "Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing." Morals and values inspire a person to do something significant. A person who holds on to his/her values and morals is the one who can fight against wrongs because, during hard times, those who stand the test of character are the ones who survive. Therefore, having a strong character is also one of the things which contribute to being a person's substance.

If by looking back in life there is nothing that you feel like changing, and all the memories, whether good or bad are cherished, then probably you're wealthier than most people. Just like little drops make the ocean, all these minuscule yet paramount things form the base of substance in a person, and just like the ocean takes in everything that is thrown into it, whether good or bad, a person of substance absorbs not only the positive vibes of people around them but also all the negativity looming over people's life.

A person of substance is one who has a good value system, one who is guided by ingrained virtues, one who has a good support system of friends and family, one who derives satisfaction in making others happy, one who doesn't only live for oneself but finds a greater purpose in life.

There are two types of people in this world -- the ones shy away from adversity and then there are others who when faced with difficulties challenge it and beat it. The second type of individual is the person of substance, he is somebody who not only dreams but makes dreams come true. He is somebody who is not afraid to chase his ambitions and thrives hard to achieve them. He is a person with a vision. He is aware of his ikigai (a Japanese word, which means the reason why a person wakes up from his bed every day). The first thought that came to my mind was, do I know a person of substance? And yes, I know an individual like that and that person is my father.

A sixteen year old boy used to walk to his school every day and when on the way to his school he saw most of his classmates' parents dropping them off in their cars, he decided that one day he would have a car of his own too to drop his kids to school. He also wanted to become capable of donating things to the needy, helping a person just to see a bright smile on his face. These weren't just his wishes, this was his goal. He studied hard, worked every day to make a better version of himself. There were financial obstacles coupled with the pressure of being the eldest child in the family but he didn't blink an eye. Today he owns two cars and donates whenever he sees opportunities but his ikigai does not stop here, it wants him to do more; and I know that he will, not because he has done that before but because he still has that zest to solve problems and make a difference in the world. The entire neighbourhood feels happy when he is around, it is his charisma which makes that happen. He is a person of substance to me.

A person wants the greater good, wants to bring peace in this world, he is not just an individual who lets things happen and but gives his best, he is a person who is ready to fight for a better world and who is not afraid of the difficult times, is truly a person of substance. Rosa Parks, if she had given her seat to the white man on the bus then evolution of anti-racism probably wouldn't have started back then. Anandi Gopal Joshi, if she didn't go against all the odds and didn't get her doctorate then maybe the girl child education wouldn't have been that strong as it is today. These people believed in themselves, took initiatives to make the world a better place and hence were the leaders, leaders who fought for a better life.

To a twenty one year old me, a person of substance would be a person who fights against wrong for the right, not a man who supports the wrong by being quiet.

There are two types of people in this world -- the ones who shy away from adversity and then there are others who when faced with difficulties challenge it and beat it.

In a confusing age with a surge in violence, hatred, racism and an absolute struggle for power, we are both the perpetrators and victims of this war of ideologies. Quick to spot differences yet, oblivious to the obvious similarities, we thrive on pointing out the intricate details of how another person is different or wrong whereas we believe we are always in the right. Simple emotions are now too complex to express, and when expressed, are written off as an excuse or a sign of weakness, resulting in an endless loop of chaos and insecurity.

Times have changed, and how. People who were chosen to lead based on valour, loyalty, generosity are now a thing of the past. Money, power, political agenda fuelled and backed by religious sentiment is what earns an individual the top position. Yet, amongst these power-hungry people, we witness people who, in the simplest of terms, possess qualities that seem archaic and mythical. Empathy is one such factor that truly sets a person of substance apart from the rest. It is a much harder task to put oneself in another person's shoes and understand the pain or circumstance they're going through. This helps in developing a broader understanding of societal issues and sheds light on the harshness of the difference in monetary power of people from different sections of society. A person of substance is one who does not walk through life with a herd mentality and instead, advocates necessary change by accepting responsibility and not succumbing to the pressures of being a leader. You can either be a leader, or a follower, and a person of substance is the former, and carries out his/her tasks with honour and integrity.

Empathy is one such factor that truly sets a person of substance apart from the rest.

To be such a person, putting the needs of others before his/hers and truly embodying the spirit of selflessness and humility is of paramount importance. On a personal level, "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost and "If" by Rudyard Kipling are two works of art that, in my opinion are inspiring poems that teach real life lessons of not only how to be an honourable man, but a good human being and also highlights the importance of taking an unknown path in order to make the world a better place. Humans are self absorbed and striving for the greater good is a rare trait altogether.

This person is one who isn't afraid of failure, but one who gets beaten down and rises up time and time again through trial and error in order to find the solution that will help lead people down a better path and help right a wrong. This, however, calls for consistency and the determination to never back down no matter how hard the adversity may be. Although rare, a person of substance can arise from absolutely anywhere, but we need to stop depending on the efforts of an individual, and start believing in the power of a collaboration through concerted efforts that will see the world rid itself of the perpetual dark cloud of war and chaos.

What makes a person of substance is a purely subjective question. A house beautifully built can be compared to a person of substance where different bricks combine to form a house; in a similar way different qualities amalgamate to form a person of substance. First, and foremost, what makes a person of substance is what importance and meaning she/he derives from the word “humanity”. We are human beings and the most basic quality is knowing how to be human. It is the greatest asset in a person of substance.

Another very important value is empathy. Empathizing does not necessarily mean that the person helps out the others to show how empathetic she/he is but to feel what the other person is going through is a big deal in itself. Today, we live in a world where genocide, mass murders, bombing, oppression etc. are justified rather than seeing them as inhumane. A person of substance should acknowledge the value of life making it an integral part of his/her life.

He/she should not only respect and stick to his values but should also defend them. She/he should defend his/her values even when his/her stand seems less popular as they are rooted in honor, ethics and integrity. Such a person should take ownership for his/her mistakes and strive to go above and beyond the expectations set for him/her. If a person knows how to take ownership of his/her mistakes, she/he should also know how to forgive others whether they own up to their mistakes or not. Paul Lewis asserted that, “Forgiveness does not change the past but it does enlarge the future.” A person must be willing to move on after injustices are inflicted on them and inspire others to do the same.

Nelson Mandela is the epitome of a forgiving person. He agreed to make peace after being imprisoned for 27 years by the apartheid regime which had labeled him a terrorist and used excessive force against native South Africans. Leaving all fact aside I think forgiveness brings peace; peace to the heart, peace to the mind and peace to others. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa stated that, “There will be no peace without forgiveness. Any process of peace is bound to collapse if this is missing. There is no way peace and stability will come through the vengeance of the gun.” Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the possibilities of peace and hence an asset for a person who wants to make this world a better place to live for others.

Humility is yet another important quality that a person should possess. Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely. As people have more power and influence their moral sense diminishes. People of substance do not use their influence to benefit themselves and those close to them at the expense of the common man. In the 21st century, humble people should help bridge the growing gap between the rich and poor. Jose Mujica, of Uruguay is an example of a humble person. He donates 90% of his salary to charity and his lifestyle has not changed since taking office.

Hence, all the qualities mentioned above add up to being a person of substance. Besides this a person should live for others dedicating his/her life to bring about change in other people's lives and strive hard to bring a smile on their faces.

We are human beings and the most basic quality is knowing how to be human.

A person of substance is someone who does not fit into a specific mould set by society. He is someone who carves out his own path based on his beliefs. He is someone who has opinions and yet doubts himself, is open to ideas and advice but is strong enough to be decisive. He stands by his values and principles, and clearly knows when to lead and when to be led. A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life of value and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem.

He stands by his values and principles, and clearly knows when to lead and when to be led.

A person of substance has these qualities:

- Inspires or influences others in positive ways.
- Builds hope into our lives, the hope of living with integrity
- Wants everyone around him to grow
- Values principles in life
- Is true to himself

Let me further explain this with certain examples:-

- Arunima Sinha was a national level volleyball player until 2011. She was thrown off a moving train by robbers, as a result of which her legs had to be amputated. On 21st May 2013, she became the world's first amputee to climb Mount Everest. She could have been a spectator throughout her life due to the tragedy but she chose otherwise. She stood by her beliefs and created history. Her grit, resolve, determination is what made her a person of substance.
- Barack Obama when first ran for Congress in 1999, lost his elections very badly. He had invested a lot of time and effort into something that didn't seem to be working. But he focussed on the work at hand and forged ahead. As when you can keep it about the work, one will always have a path. Instead of choosing a comfortable life at a law firm he made history by becoming the first African-American President of USA. Despite all the odds being stacked against him, he stood by his beliefs which is what makes him a person of substance.
- Naina Lal Kidwai was the first Indian woman to graduate from Harvard Business School. Despite her time constraints, she made a conscious efforts to give back to society. She says that "choosing what you want to volunteer for should be passion-driven. I can write a cheque for street school children and help the schools scale up and manage finances better than spending time teaching them." Her awareness about her professional commitments and not attempting to be someone else is what makes her a person of substance.

A tombstone in a small English village reads, "Here lies a miser who lived for himself, and cared for nothing but gathering wealth. Now where he is or how he fares, nobody knows and nobody cares."

In contrast, a plain tombstone in the courtyard at St. Paul's Cathedral in London reads, "Sacred is the memory of Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere, gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God."

Two different individuals, but one was a person of substance.

As quoted in the Bhagwad Gita, “Anything in this world can be achieved or overcome through the power of will.” I too believe that my personal good is embedded in greater good. I believe that people of substance have in mind the greater good.

I feel that in order to transform our individual thoughts, behaviour and actions, I must be able to address my challenges in a peaceful, non-aggressive way, and this requires each one of us to be in a position of both opportunity and the power to choose between options. There will be bad experiences but how I process and make a good judgement based on introspection while learning from others, is important.

As the 1920s humourist, social commentator Will Rogers explained, “Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.” So, the solution-seeking person of substance will have had significant experience in both the good and the bad. He/she would choose to experience life outside his/her comfort zone to gain good judgement that can be used in solving problems.

“Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value.”

- Albert Einstein

I strongly agree that a person of substance understands that there is something greater in the world for them to serve, whether it's the community, their family, or a cause. The mere commitment to something greater adds depth to a person, and it communicates more of him/her. So, I should be doing small things consistently, the everyday doable things like thanking a public servant, beautifying my neighbourhood, complimenting people, planting a tree etc. So, no matter how small, but these acts are never wasted. It helps in deepening my self-awareness; it strengthens my sense of interconnection. These positive acts have an impact on those around and encourages others to follow suit.

A person of substance is not perfect, every individual on this planet has something to offer.

A person of substance is not perfect, every individual on this planet has something to offer. People are always ready to learn by coming into contact with new cultures, situations, and activities. For example, I have always wanted to work with street children, so I took it up in one of my fieldwork sessions. So, those who pursue their curiosity create energy, because they're acting on deep-seeded wonder, compassion, empathy which gives them immense satisfaction and happiness. People of substance are introspective, look at yourself and what you want to be and what you want in your life. Learn what gives you a deep satisfaction in life.

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Maya Angelou

At the core of humanity, it's about connection. We are social creatures. So whenever I get the chance to make an impact on someone's life, I need to interact in depth with them like when I worked with school dropouts, encouraging them and giving them my undivided attention along with actively listening was very essential to actually know their problems and understand how they perceive things.

In my opinion every person needs not be my best friend, or my confidante. But every relationship I have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, honour and being non-judgmental. When you have effective relationships with others you are there for people when they need you. I must learn to give to others more than I desire to receive from others.

I am striving to be a person of substance and it builds hope into my life --the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, the hope of looking at each moment with patience and the hope of knowing that God is at work in my life.

Someone once told me that there are two kinds of people in the world – those who keep taking from the riches of the world, and the others who strive to maintain a balance between what they take, and give back. And the latter are people of substance. They are not self-absorbed, but believe in constant self-growth, for themselves and for the betterment of people around them. They aren't just emotionally driven but understand the importance and power of knowledge, and constantly strive to improve their skill-set to be in a better position to serve society. For instance, I am an Architecture student, and because of a very humanitarian approach towards life, I would often get involved in social empathies, and deviate from designing, and slowly started to stray away from my professional study and practice. That was the moment I realized that it wasn't enough to feel for people, but to have the skill and the ability to do justice to them, through my architectural expertise. And that is the sensible, and sensitive thing to do.

People of substance have the courage to make a difference, and they aren't afraid of losing, and have a balanced sense of risk management. If they commit a mistake, which affects others, they own up to it and do everything in their control to mend it. They understand the importance of empowering people. I recall what my father taught me as a child – don't give a poor man fish, but teach him to fish. People of substance might not always be the leaders but would be silently willing to help anyone in need in whichever way they can. They have opinions which are not based on second-hand information, but those that drawn from subjective reading and real-life experiences. They are selfless by nature, and are consistent and reliable. Along with having a sensitive heart, they are strong-headed and win hearts by their effortless will to leave the world a little bit better than they came in. They are happy and content with what they have, and understand the value of mental peace. They have a sense of humility which keeps them grounded and doesn't let them lose focus in a world which will glorify and publicize their achievements. What differentiates them from others, is that they have empathy for people, not sympathy. And that is what makes them make humanitarian choices in what may seem ordinary, day-to-day situations.

People of substance have the courage to make a difference, and they aren't afraid of losing, and have a balanced sense of risk management.

In process of my Architectural Design Thesis study, I came across so many NGOs and groups, which are tirelessly working for providing basic shelters to the homeless in Mumbai, without caring for recognition, or affiliation. Such people understand that success is a momentary state, and gives momentary happiness, as opposed to having a sense of value in life which is perpetual and gives eternal happiness. In a generation where wants outnumber satisfaction and problems outnumber solutions, they look at themselves not merely as citizens, but people who have an immense capacity to make a positive difference, and not just to their immediate cultural and societal communities, but to anyone who needs it.

As Muhammad al-Bukhari rightly says, "Knowledge precedes speech and action", to become a person of substance is a life-long pursuit. It involves gaining knowledge, not just from books, but by being less self-occupied and learning about people. People of substance build strong and effective relations, which are made on mutual trust and love, and thus understand the value of human relationships, and place that above petty issues of the materialistic world. So many issues are sometimes based or aggravated because of ego hassles, insecurities and lack of communication. They make conscious, objective decisions based on clarity and conscience of mind. A person of substance is not afraid of moving away from his/her comfort zone, and challenges himself/herself to try new things, and add enthralling and surreal experiences making this journey of life more memorable and impactful.

A person of substance is someone who wants to derive meaning out of their life and makes a positive difference to the world by constantly striving and participating in activities that can facilitate such an act. The three most important factors that make a person of substance are:

- Self-Discipline
- Empathy
- Proactivity

- Thesis Statement

To understand the making of a person of substance, let's enter an office. The office has seven employees. The first employee is called Discipline, the second one is Laziness, the third one is Motivation, the fourth one is called Distraction, the fifth one is Reactive, the sixth one is Proactivity and the last one is their boss, Emotions. They gather together to discuss about a lot of issues concerning the Headquarter. Discipline, Motivation and proactivity make the Positive department. Laziness, Distraction and Reactiveness make the Negative department. Their work is to understand Emotions' command and comprehend it so as to benefit the Headquarter. The best comprehension of the commands (happiness, sadness, surprize, contempt, anger, fear and disgust) is chosen by the boss and is finally sent to the Headquarter.

There you go! You just entered my brain, met my qualities, got to know the boss (my emotions) and heard about my soul (the Headquarter).

At every moment in life we face a lot of emotions and our brain works to satisfy our emotions. Every human has the same set of emotions but every human's take on the same emotions are very different. I believe every human being has a person of substance in them. It is just about how they comprehend their emotions and what they choose to become.

Every human has the same set of emotions but every human's take on the same emotions are very different.

I believe the major constituents that make up the person of substance in oneself are self-discipline, self-motivation and proactivity. And the major emotion driving this possibility of such realization is empathy. Empathy helps us recognize any situation on a personal level and gives us the ability to get through any situation. It originates from love and compassion.

Love and compassion are experienced by all the human beings at some point in their lives. It is important that we realize the love we get, and it is equally important to transfer it to others. Such an act will give us a positive outlook activating our positive department. Empathy towards society and its beings will lead towards our purpose. It is the first element that makes us realize that something has to be done to derive meaning out of our lives.

Purpose and discipline exist in a symbiotic relationship. Discipline comes to you with a purpose and one can also say you become disciplined once attaining a purpose. The Buddha rightly preached, "The person who masters himself through self-control and discipline is truly undefeatable."

A disciplined way of life motivates us to do better. The more we achieve the more motivated we are. Motivation helps us to find solutions and makes us participative. Sometimes circumstances might affect our decisions. We might get distracted and loose track. There are multiple ways to react in such a situation. The choices what we make during such circumstances test the person of substance within. The right choice will help us bring it out in us.

It is important to empathize with our surrounding and bring a change to spread happiness. Even a minute change towards the righteous path will contribute to society as a whole.

"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

As per my knowledge the only way to become a person of substance is to gain a tremendous amount of knowledge and act upon it.” Knowledge precedes speech and action.” Therefore, in order to become a person of a substance we must have sufficient clarity in the way we think and communicate.

Knowledge is obtained mainly through reading and studying surrounding ourselves with people of substance. We must take beneficial knowledge from all available sources and we have to do some implementation as well.

We shouldn't waste time just pretending that we are working, instead we should find aspiration, meaning and challenges in the work we do. We have to accept that whatever may be the challenges in the work, we have to give our best in doing it. If we accept the challenges, we will not only be able to gain knowledge rather we will try to learn new things related to our work which will enable us to do our best -- and that is a good start of increasing knowledge.

I think it depends on our own individuality, how we look at things. But according to my perspective, we should firstly look at ourselves, what we want to be in life, learn the things which gives us a deep satisfaction in life, learn how to connect with other people. Understanding is one of the important things, by understanding we can change mindsets of other people and more than that we can change behaviour patterns. “Knowing ourselves and knowing others” will give us a kind of power that not many people have in this world. And, fortunately, I love to know about other people, I love to understand them, I love to solve the problems in their lives. I like to be a real friend, a real lover of people, a lover of ourselves which shows compassion and consideration for others. But in a balanced way.

Understanding and empathy will allows us to accept ourselves as well as others. It allows us to understand the greater depths of human nature, both the good one and the bad one. Understanding is a kind of power which allows us to look at the world around us and not to get lost within it to maintain our own boundaries.

Albert Einstein says, “Try not to become a person of a success, but rather try to become a person of a value,” and it is a really touching and inspirational statement for me.

The things which makes a person of a substance are: Selflessness, we have to think about other people in the world as about ourselves; consistency: be responsible no matter what the time or place. Our word is our oath. We have to be humble, simply let our life speak for itself. There is not a time nor a place where we should brag about ourselves. If it is great enough, someone will surely do it for you. Our identity should revolved around our ethics and not our laurels. Another thing to take interest to learn new things, encounter new cultures, situations and activities as well. Being empathetic is also important. As Maya Angelou says, “People will forget what you did but they will never forgot how we made them feel.” So, at the core of humanity it is all about connection. I think when we get a chance to make an impact on someone's life, encourage them and help them by listening to them.

Our integrity is more important than our likeability. A person of a substance works for the “greater good”. Seeking solutions to problems is another quality which makes a person of a substance.

He/she chooses what is important and what's in the long term in regard to relationships, understanding, accepting responsibilities. He/she is a leaders, he/she is good at risk management, is courageous, has integrity and honor. I think an officer is a good example of person of a substance. I would like to survive life as defense officer: “The safety honour and welfare of our country come first, always and every time, the honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last always and every time.”

As per my knowledge the only way to become a person of substance is to gain a tremendous amount of knowledge and act upon it.

And last but not least “Through all the success in my life, I have learned that people appreciate people.” We just have to add values to life and be our true self. Ultimately, “a shallow pond will feed you for a year, but a deep ocean will feed you for life.”

Abraham Lincoln says, "Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing." A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be a part of the solution as opposed to the problem. If you want to be a person of substance, go deep, not wide. Add values to lives, be true yourself.

Most of the people talk about their success e.g. acing their exams etc. These are markers for some level of success in life but it's not what people care about.

For me, the major components needed for becoming a person of substance are:

- Knowledge
- Empathy
- Active participation
- Selflessness
- Consistency
- View the 'the greater good'
- To be Interesting
- Seek solutions
- To be humble and candid

Knowledge:

The only way to become a person of substance is by obtaining knowledge and act upon it. Muhammad al-Bukhari says, "Knowledge precedes speech and action." Therefore, in order to become a person of substance you must have substantial knowledge in your heart and mind. Knowledge is gained through two organs: ears and eyes. What we hear and what we see is knowledge. Knowledge will help a man to make better decisions.

Empathy:

Become empathetic is to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understanding where that person is coming from. Empathy simply means that you understand. And in that understanding you can change minds, but more than that you can change hearts. Knowing yourself others will give you a kind of power that not many people have in the world -- an inner strength. This inner strength becomes who you are and others can feel it. Maya Angelou says "I've learned that people will forget what you said , people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Active Participation:

People of substance take risks. They try and they fail, but they never grow weary of trying. People of substance take responsibility, they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicenter of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that decision may bring. President Teddy Roosevelt spoke about these people in his address titled " The Man in the Area." Responsible wholehearted commitment and engagement in the world, points to becoming a person of substance.

Selflessness:

A person of substance understands there is something greater in the world for him/her to serve, whether it be humanity, their family or a cause.

Consistent:

A person should be consistent in order to become a man/woman of substance. Your word is your oath. A reliable person is worth their weight in gold, is someone who takes care of their responsibilities, no matter the time or place.

The Greater Good:

It is natural and accepted that human beings are self-absorbed, it's an attitude that benefits just one person among billion and would hardly make any impact on a significant scale. Guy

Kawasaki explains 'The Greater Good' in his book *The Art of the Start*. For him, the meaning for the greater good is to:

- Make the world a better place
- Increase the quality of life
- Right a terrible wrong
- Prevent the end of something good
- People of substance have a passion to make meaning for the benefit of the greater good.

Interesting:

Be interesting. Challenge yourself to learn new things. Encounter new cultures, situations and activities. Those who pursue their curiosity create energy because they are acting on deep-seeded wonder.

Seeking Solutions:

People of substance know that there is no middle or neutral position on anything. They identify with the sentiment that "If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem." Good problem solving between competing interests typically requires a person of sound judgment who has immense empathy, complete objectivity and solid life-honed values. As the 1920s, humorist, social commander Will Roger explained, "Good judgment comes from experience and a lot of that comes from bad judgment." So, the solution-seeking person of substance will have had significant experience in both good and bad.

Humble and Candid:

Be humble. Simply, let your life lived speak for itself. Your identity should revolve around your ethics not your laurels. Be candid through all the success in my life, I have learned that people appreciate people, they tend to not appreciate things.

These are the major components needed for becoming a person of substance. Life is not just about yourself. Learn to be a part of something bigger than yourself. Never be ashamed of a scar in your life. It simply means you were stronger than whatever tried to hurt you. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life, define yourself. It's a fact that some people will hate you and find faults in you but rise above impediments.

We have an insight on how to become one. It starts for all of us as it did for the poet Robert Frost (1874-1963).

*Two road diverge in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by
And that he made all the difference.*

For me, life is about being the best I can be. Albert Einstein says "Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value." Everyone are the gifts of God and he had given talents to everyone, start using them and stop wasting the precious time proving yourself to the world.

For me, life is about being the best I can be.

Homo sapiens are gifted with the ability to use their brains to make this world a better place to live in. A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life of meaning, and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be a part of the solution as opposed to the problem. Human beings have the power to solve problems. But nowadays, we humans are busy being a spectator and not a participant. We are busy solving problems of our lives but at the same time, creating one after another.

For example, we are solving our commuting problem by using a personal vehicle but at the same time we are causing pollution. The Tragedy of Commons by Garrett Harden explains this problem where every person is utilizing natural resources for his/her own benefit with a mindset that no harm will be caused as he is the lone user. But, in reality, this is the thought process of many people, and, hence, the ramifications caused are of a large scale.

As people of substance, it is important for us to understand that no action is an individual act. Each and every action of a person has an impact on a large number of life forms including humans and wildlife. We need to analyze every action and check how can the positive points be inculcated and negative effects can be reduced. The solution for a problem may be a creator of a new problem. So it is important for us to think for a long-term solution and subsequent actions that may be required to curb the negative effect of that solution. In this process, it is important for us to be participants and not just observers. Being a participant makes us realize the actual impact of that problem and then the solution will be devised based on empathy and not sympathy.

In a nutshell, to be a person of substance, one should act in a way that fulfils one's needs but also doesn't neglect the needs of others.

A person of substance is someone who has depth. A personality is broadly defined by understanding, acceptance, ethics and morality. A person is understanding when they allow different perceptions to weigh in equally in a conversation. They don't try to change or force alterations against the other person's nature.

For any person to have substance, he/she should add value to his/her surroundings in any possible capacity. His/her actions are considerate and meaningful. Substance is defined by how actively a person gives back what they've taken --someone who maintains the circle of sharing and growing.

You must not expect anything from others. It's from yourself you must ask a lot. One should be exacting towards oneself. This way it's up to you, and the choices you make. As Albert Schweitzer says, "What you get from others remains....a gift."

These lines aptly define what a person of substance should have -- all these qualities, and while you can't enforce this on others, you can make yourself capable of following this.

In a nutshell, to be a person of substance, one should act in a way that fulfils one's needs but also doesn't neglect the needs of others.

A person of substance is someone who has a zest for life -- to live a life that is worthwhile and to the fullest. Today's lifestyle is made up of beliefs that ties up an individual into the strings of society. People live a life according to the norm, which is to make others happy. I know people who were forced to abandon their dreams and passions just because they wanted to please society. This is where it is so important to be a person of substance in this society. He always has this incredible zest for life, a passion for what he does, and believes in making a positive change. A person of substance will be smart, hardworking and someone who tries to pave the way for others to follow.

A person of substance is someone who has a zest for life -- to live a life that is worthwhile and to the fullest.

My father used to tell me, "People say it is hard to survive in this world, hard to live. It's not. All you have to do is breathe and live the moment". Today every hour is a "rush hour", all are running towards something while complaining about life. Actually they are not even living. They are just running to keep pace with society. And on the other hand, we see people who stop and live the moment. They will never be a spectator in the arena of life, they will be gladiators. They will always fight for what is best and what is right. Life will always take us through ups and downs, and will never be as easy as we may think it is but with a positive attitude and desire to make a difference we can lead meaningful lives.

I grew up hearing the stories of great men and women who went through hardships but came out victorious. It's because they had the will to fight and a desire to make a change in the world. We know Mahatma Gandhi, we know A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, we know Beethoven, we know Lionel Messi. They fought their way to greatness. Today we respect them, we study them because they fought even when life knocked them down. That's always something a person of substance will have. The courage to break the notions of society, to prove others wrong and to do what they love.

We should always be able to do what we love that most. One has a great passion towards his/her chosen field, but today's society thinks that only a doctor or engineer could survive this world. No, anyone who fights will survive this world. If he is able to declare to the world that he wants to chase his dreams instead of following the herd and fights and works hard for it, tomorrow he will success and become a person of substance.

The main quality of a man/woman of substance is that he/she should be able to seize the opportunity that life gives him/her. Life always gives us the opportunity to display our talents. It's our decision whether to make history out of it or just leave it to be a history for us. Time never waits for anyone. A person of substance knows what his/her strengths and weaknesses are, and he knows how to make use of an opportunity. He is introspective and knows how to seize the moment. He/she should be able to understand what's best and do what's good for society. Even when life knocks him/her down he/she should be able to pick himself up and do better and be wiser the next time.

We choose whether to be a person of substance or not. Do what excites you. Make it a passion and set a goal. If you are not able to find an answer, then you are the problem. The only one who stands between you and your life is you. So live to be a person of substance, be the gladiator not the spectator.

It is a dream inside everyone to become an epitome of all noblest human qualities and be a role model. It is an incontrovertible fact that to achieve this goal is something very difficult, because no one in this world is born perfect. The mind set and perspectives differ in all aspects from individual to individual. Life conditions and the different elements of society plays a key role in moulding a person's character, attitude and behaviour. In my view, to an extent, being a person of substance is made possible by the pure moulding of one's mind set. Because this is your life and you are the only one who is capable to live it. No one can replace and play the role of a hero in your life other than you.

It is a dream inside everyone to become an epitome of all noblest human qualities and be a role model.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate and explore rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem. Obviously this statement is a reflection of the strength and weakness of our society.

In life, usually we find two types of people. First category are those who are overwhelmed with immense enthusiasm, optimism, wisdom and they face all the difficulties in life with great determination finally transforming such challenges to great triumphs. They are self-prepared and self-trained to face anything that life offers by making strong and unbreakable weapons using their own life experiences. They believe deeply in their bottom heart that every experience brings its own maturity and greater clarity of vision. Every experience in teaches them to move forward.

A mind that is stretched by new experiences can never go back to its original dimensions. Such category of people naturally transform and become the most respected, courageous and lovable personalities before the world and they adorn the real meaning of people of substance.

The second category people who are pessimistic, lethargic, desperate -- criminal minded fall in to the second category. They project themselves to the world shamelessly for self-gain. They use the same weapon called experiences either to destroy happiness, social harmony, peace or cause great catastrophes in the world. They do not possess the inner potential to fight and accomplish the challenges life throws out, instead they blame circumstances for their misfortunes.

So the magical key to open the treasure chest of success, happiness is experiences and the thirst for new explorations within and without. Experiences transform to knowledge and, ultimately, perfection in knowledge transforms a simple human being by birth to a person of substance.

One of the famous maxims from Dante's *Inferno* goes like this: "The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis." Well, it does not presume that one has to believe in the punishments of "hell" or the rewards in "heaven". It simply means that those who remain passive and inactive during an emergency situation while they can act ought to be the ones deserving the lowest of all predicaments. The question here is, how can somebody overcome the inactivity and become resourceful? Living in a rat race itself is very testing, let alone living the life of quality and substance. But there are a few people around us who are able to draw our attention and admiration. What makes them smarter than the rest? What characteristics win the hearts of a society? The answer is, those people are of 'substance'. Now let's take the word "substance"—the image that directly pops up is that of a 'solid' matter. It can be anything from a physical object to an idea, but with a substantial amount of sense and soundness.

What attribute substance to a person, are a solid conviction and a will power to participate in activities of betterment. Self-help and self-reliance must precede the action of bettering society. No one can more authoritatively persuade a group other than those who practice a few ideals in their personal life. For example, if a politician requests cooperation and duty-oriented mentality from the people, he/she is equally obliged to be a person who is ready to extend a helping hand and more importantly, abiding by the duties and responsibilities. Or, a spiritual leader ought to be rigorous about the principles he preaches in order to lead others and make them better human beings. Breaking a wave of trust kills the substance in a person. Besides, those who wear masks of fake emotions are more likely to be tagged as untrustworthy or a humbug. Well, that clearly states that hypocrisy is the strongest antithesis of a person of substance. It takes a great deal of courage to choose the latter; because it involves investing in truth, integrity and coherence. This investment could drain one's energy out, owing to the external pressures. But the winner makes it when they realize the significance of such a long-term commitment in serving the "greater good".

What attribute substance to a person, are a solid conviction and a will power to participate in activities of betterment.

Shouldering responsibilities sounds tough to everybody's ears, but they complain no less when the task is left incomplete or unsatisfactory. If one shows an example by being selfless and humble in taking care of a duty, it would spread a vibe of goodness around the person. It will naturally escalate one's respectability and reliability. Being approachable is a quality that will not fade away with time and place.

Another trait to be practiced is, 'be logical'. It's interesting to mention logic, because that is the one thing in this world each human being considers as an asset which is rightfully their brainchild! Logic is most of the times difficult to judge as to which is the true one. But be logical in such a way that it brings about sustainable harmony and optimal happiness. In short, be strong in one's values but with senses wide open. Hold out a mind ready for progressing and participating, rather than plodding and blaming. Let this powerful hymn from *Aitareyopanishad* remind us: "*Om vaangme manasi pratishttitha/ Mano ve vaachi pratishttitha*" (Let my mind be in accordance with my words/Let my words be fixed in my mind).

Substance is that essential element of a particular quality that gives it the “itness”. Suppose if I say “pen”, automatically its structural diagram will be imprinted in my memory and I will not think of a pencil. The essential criteria which makes a ‘pen’ ‘the pen’ is substance; like a refill, a cap, a cylindrical structure which holds the refill within it and the cap covers the nib of the refill. Now it was easy for us to think of a pen, a materialistic object. We all have used it, and it does not contain any sign of life in it. But thinking of what makes a person of substance is a very complex and quintessential question. If it was a dog or a cat it would have been easier for us to manipulate the idea of substance in a living being. Human beings are one of the most complicated and developed creatures on this planet, and are reservoirs of ample amount of emotions and thoughts. Externally, flesh, blood and other mortal elements may make up the body of a person, but those do not make a person of substance. Every other living being has those.

Then what extra feature did we get which will uplift us to a better world? In the course of time civilization evolved. We invented some absurd, some half absurd half concrete, and some fully concrete structures which helped us to contain whatever we built.

The law is one of the most important factors among those. We let it rule us. Ideas are the pillars of it. Why the law? Because it divides us between good and bad; it shows us the right and wrong way of living; in a simpler term it substantiates us. We cannot call a person, fit for society who murders, rapes or loots others. May be to him/her those are the things which give him the substance of life. But for the general good, for the law, for the society (s) he is none other than a criminal. Now we can assume what makes a person of substance now.

I personally think a person who holds all those compassionate attributes which help us to build this world a peaceful place is indeed a person of substance. Everyone takes birth, everyone dies. It is the inner self of a human being which makes him/her a true human being. We are not irrational or savage or wild creatures who only know how to survive. The voice within us must be heard. A person who does not know how to love an orphan boy on the footpath of a great city, cannot be called as a human being I believe. Humaneness is what can be called as the rudimentary substance of our life. Trust, love, compassion, empathy, benevolence, honesty- these are the few qualities that make the world a better place. Otherwise, even a cat survives too. Our era is a condensed sensation of betrayal, sorrow and death. Is that what we are living for? Don't we have anything to give to our own neighbours? Then it is useless to call ourselves civilized. We can give and we will be giving. Most importantly young generation must come out in search of new ways; because they will light up the tumultuous night in a poignant way. We, as the citizens of this world, have to promise ourselves, like Martin Luther King said, “We may all have come on different ships, but we're in same boat now.”

I personally think a person who holds all those compassionate attributes which help us to build this world a peaceful place is indeed a person of substance.

Life has blessed us with two astonishingly efficient support systems—the heart and the head. While working in isolation they give a sense of immensity, together they remind us of crucial proportions. The efficient use of these twin systems to the utmost in unison is what makes a person of substance. Bertrand Russell, the great Noble Laureate and thinker wrote in the preface to his autobiography of three passions “simple but overwhelmingly strong” that has governed his life—longing for love, quest for knowledge, and feeling for the suffering of mankind. The first two are good examples of the heart and the head working in isolation, whereas the last one subsumes under its fold the goodness of emotions and intellect together. Daniel Goleman preferred calling it “Emotional Intelligence” in his book published with the similar title in 1996.

Dilating the expanse of these systems further, we get hands on a few desirable qualities that appears to be constituting the indispensable peripheries of a substantial persons “core”. First and foremost, is the notion of “content”. An industrious person is not an empty vessel but filled up to the brim. No matter what their field of study/expertise, they know the ins and outs of their discipline and more. Secondly, the gap between their speech and conduct is negligible. It gives strength to their character and subsequent influence. Mahatma Gandhi is a good example of “strength of character” where he himself led a simple life that he preached. Thirdly, they are committed beings. No matter how strong the storm hits their life, they stick to their values like magnets to iron strips. Mohammad Ali, the world class boxer, personifies the man of conviction who preferred losing everything to oppose the Vietnam war, despite forced attempts by the American government officials. Later he came back with a bang and won the Olympic gold medal for U.S and also the title of “World Champion” defeating Sonny Liston. Fourthly, the power of resilience is high into their make. They don’t give up, despite multiple failed attempts, and are essentially optimistic towards life. Nelson Mandela comes to my mind thinking of resilience, who stayed in prison for 27 long years but remained committed to the cause of liberation for his people and finally made it happen. Fifth and lastly, they are “connection builders”. A person of substance with all the qualities is able to bestow them upon other fellow-beings. They, therefore, are necessarily “selfless people” as Voltaire once said “It is to him who masters our minds by the force of truth, and not to those who enslave them by violence, that we owe our reverence.”

A worthy person necessarily derives strength from his/her inner merit irrespective of material possessions like wealth, fame and power.

A worthy person necessarily derives strength from his/her inner merit irrespective of material possessions like wealth, fame and power. This is the reason why their influential longevity is high, no matter whether the immediate superstructure of society places them on a higher pedestal or not. The constancy and consistency of their hard work pays in the longer run and leaves a mark even after their physical demise. The accident of their birth, though endorsed, in no way limits the potential of their life’s journey. Gautama Buddha is a burning example of this. Born as Prince Siddhartha, son of a king, who was brought up in a luxurious royal palace, did not succumb to the charms of the material comforts around. He rather pursued his journey towards a higher goal of understanding the meaning of life and finding the cause of dissatisfaction among people. Though strenuous, his enlightened journey changed the map of history for all times to come and Buddhism was established as a world religion.

Taking into consideration all aspects, it suffices to say that persons of substance make the utmost of their lives. They are the “boundary pushers”, who are not easily satiated with what is given to them. They are seekers who build their life, each with a brick of passion, love and sincerity. Finally, the built structure turns an “immortal shelter” that potentially provides repose to all troubled souls of the world for all times to come.

A person of substance is thus someone whose deeds speaks louder than declarations!

The present condition of humanity can be analysed in terms of two parallel processes – the disintegration of an old fragmented world and the crystallization of a world civilization. The signs of destruction of the old order are readily apparent; words such as *crisis*, *confusion*, *fear* and *violence* are now common in everyday conversation, and have lost their original impact. The construction of a world civilization is a more subtle process and, although progressing in full force, is not as easily discernible.

Who is a man of substance? By common definition, he is a man with property, wealth and power. But can this common definition be held to be true in the current scenario? If so, then philosophy as we know it would have to be discarded. This definition can then include gangsters or fraudsters, who have power and money and property. Surely this common definition was propounded in a more innocent and honest age.

So then who would one hold as a man or woman of substance? Would Mahatma Gandhi be one? Perhaps Swami Vivekananda, Albert Einstein, Dr. Kalam, Jamsetji Tata, Dadabhai Naoroji, J.R.D. Tata, Sister Nivedita, Madame Curie, Dr. Anandibai Joshi, well the list could be endless. But still one cannot define a person of substance in one specific frame of thought as I believe it's a totally contextual term.

I would truly like to mention that all these eminent people espoused the quality of being able to use the power they possessed towards the spiritual, physical and social wellbeing of mankind, and in the pursuit of knowledge and widening the horizons of science. An important thing to remember is that all these people also had one underlying principle, to work towards bringing mankind together; and that can only be achieved if your underlying philosophy is that of peace for all.

Developing moral capabilities is the concern of those whose lives are governed by a moral purpose. In this age of transition, moral purpose must be focused on two paramount tasks: growing intellectually and spiritually as an individual and contributing to acquire knowledge, to control one's nature, and to increasingly manifest the spiritual qualities inherent in the human soul. One needs to struggle hard to gain "substance"; the word struggle should not, of course, bring to mind the image of angry and frustrated individuals at war with the universe. The conquest of the self is a joyous enterprise on which we are all embarked as we strive to achieve freedom, precisely from the struggles of animal existence. But why should not societal transformation be considered a mere outcome of personal growth? Is not society the sum total of all the individuals of which it is composed, and will it not change automatically as each one of its members is educated and endowed with the qualities of a good citizen? This is the thing which a person should learn and be a human of substance.

A number of shining lamps shed light and guide our steps along this path of life; among them are the lamps of principles. Principles are not inventions of the human mind, nor are they social conventions. They are expressions of the laws of material and spiritual existence and are built into the very structure of the universe. An indispensable condition of 'rectitude of conduct' is consistent effort to live according to spiritual, moral and ethical principles. So important is this concept of acting according to principles that we should pause here and examine the implications of a few principles, the validity of which is today accepted by every enlightened individual. Because, "the rectitude of your conduct shall be so noteworthy as to establish the validity of moral principles in the eyes of your fellow human beings."

People of substance also have within their fold those who struggle and fight to give nature and wildlife their right to live in peace on Earth. And those are marginalized or whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by greed, often masked under the guise of modernisation and unethical industry, such people too work towards a peaceful and equitable distribution of resources, wealth and power and, in my opinion, are also men and women of substance.

The present condition of humanity can be analysed in terms of two parallel processes – the disintegration of an old fragmented world and the crystallization of a world civilization.

Finally I would like to conclude that a man of a substance is he who chooses to participate in the well being of mankind rather than just being an observer and who strives hard to bring and maintain harmony in society by simply following a philosophy of life well-known to many of us: "Live and Let Live."

In the capital of India, a visionary changed the mode of transportation and he did it by planning for the metro rail to connect different parts of the capital, making it easy for the life of common man, he was Mr. E. Sreedharan. Nobody wants to be a part of the mob. Although it is very easy to live a common man's life but an ambitious young person wants to do something different or special. In other words to become *Aankhon ka tara* is to become a person of substance. He/she is someone who is different from other people.

The first most important quality is vision. If a person wants to become different from others then his vision should be scientific, optimistic and enthusiastic. A person with a vision should have a path in mind related to his future life. Only a visionary leader can change the fate of a country. A will to learn continuously makes a person of substance. Verghese Kurian was one such person who made India self-dependant in the field of milk production with his clear vision.

Another quality is inner strength. The song *Humko man ki shakti dena* quite aptly conveys that inner strength is important and inevitable for becoming successful. Strong determination insures inner strength. It is only because of this quality that Sandeep Singh (a renowned hockey player) could represent India after being in a coma.

Himmat dikha, risk utha, Dar ke age jeet hai are some examples of inspiring phrases from different Indian advertisements. It is only when we overcome our fear then we get desired success in our life. The Flying Sikh, Milkha Singh is another example of self-confidence and self-reliance which are essential qualities for becoming person of substance.

Raja Vikramaditya was emotionally attached to his citizens. His emotional quotient was very high which made him a man of substance. Only an emotional person can feel the pain for others and works for the welfare of society. The love and care of Mother Nature is an integral part of having a high emotional quotient. Bhutan is the only carbon negative country because of high emotional quotient of the citizens as well as their love for Mother Nature. It is also the only country that measures development on the basis of Gross National Happiness, rather than Gross National Product. In India, we are facing the problem of environmental degradation because of highly mechanised production approach. Even though this production method gave us fast developments, it is accompanied with a rise in social evils.

A person of substance respects and cares for every living creature for the environment; he/she also contributes towards the betterment of society. The contributions of Baba Amte and Megha Patkar will always be remembered for saving trees and protecting the rivers. Due to their vision and hard work today we all are aware of the importance of protecting our forests and conserving our rivers.

A person of substance also lives by high moral standards and values. These qualities are needed for building boundaries into one's life and serve like guard rails on a highway. These high moral standards and values prevent a person from veering off course and from hurting others. Bhagwan Mahaveer also practised the policy of "live and let live" which made him a legend for the social cause. Nobel Prize laureates Mother Teresa and Kailash Satyarthi also worked on the same philosophy and worked for the welfare of mankind and society.

So, a clear vision with inner strength, self-confidence, selfless work, self-reliance, a high emotional quotient, respect for every living and non-living creature, high moral values and standards, and a positive approach to life are what make a person of substance.

A person of substance respects and cares for every living creature for the environment; he/she also contributes towards the betterment of society.

We all have our own capabilities, distinct personalities, shaped by our culture, our friends and families, our separate set of DNA, all of which makes us unique. Then, how it is that some people are revered and respected in society? Some, who are considered to be persons of substance. The individuals, whose company we seek and like to maintain, the persons, we love to learn from, and about whom biographies are written -- what makes them different from everyone else?

This is probably a question that has touched the lives of many. We learn about the lives of great men and women who have walked the Earth. Buddha, Mahavira, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa and many other greats, who have greatly touched the lives of others. We read about them and try to learn why they were revered and admired for their work.

All of them came from different backgrounds, and have their own stories to tell. But they all had an aim that guided the course of their lives. The aim was that of helping mankind. This goal surpassed their own personality making them humble and defined who they are.

Their journey towards a life of purpose and of self-enquiry made them great leaders, scientists, and most importantly great human beings. Life, to them, was a constant path of learning and discovery.

So, what we assimilate from them is that we should not just live but live with a purpose. A purpose that transcends and shapes our existence. The sense of clarity borne out of it, will lay down the principles to live a meaningful life. And that we should preach what we practice. Life has given us this beautiful opportunity to learn about our existence.

We accumulate experiences, memories and lessons with the opportunity to live a meaningful life, a life with purpose. A life lived thus doesn't shy away from failures, doesn't bank on accolades and medals. It is fulfilling.

It allows us to dream big and pursue those dreams beyond the rational comprehension of the society. Failures turn into milestones towards an ultimate journey of a life of learning. Persons of substance learn with the zeal of a child new to this world, while at the same time keep their conduct according to their principles. They strive to make progress inch by inch towards the dream, the purpose of their lives. And they enjoy the journey.

They know that it is not easy for everyone. But while we all have to endure our struggles, we can always do so with a smile and a bit of humour. They also establish that there are no specific rules. Everybody can walk the path towards their salvation; they should just have the courage to dream big and the conviction to follow their dreams. That's what I believe it takes to be a person of substance.

Persons of substance learn with the zeal of a child new to this world, while at the same time keep their conduct according to their principles.

It's not just this country rather this whole planet is suffering from the problem of overpopulation. Every person has the same senses, same life organs, a brain to think, a heart to feel and all the other organs to perform their respective work. But still the question is some people touch the zenith in their lives while others struggle to meet their basic needs. Which begs the question is: what makes a person of substance?

Let's see some examples:

- A tea seller can he become a Prime Minister of a country? Case in point Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But millions of tea sellers are born as tea sellers and die the same
- A person from the most down-trodden part of society can become the president of a country: Dr. Ramnath Kovind
- A person like Mr. Varghese Kurien can make the country the wealth capital of the world and become the milk man of India

By analyzing the above examples we can understand that by individual efforts a person can become whatever he/she wants in life.

Let's look deeper into what makes a person of substance.

The below mentioned qualities according to me make a person of substance:

Ability to learn: Some people learn fast and wherever they go, they analyze , understand and grasp the things around and grow faster, they learn new skills and they learn from everything and everyone around them.

Honing their skills: A diamond cannot sparkle without a proper finishing touch. The great people recognize their natural talent and polish them. Mr. Modi's oratory skills along with other factors helped them to reach whoever he's now.

A diamond cannot sparkle without a proper finishing touch.

Patience: A very important factor in personal growth is patience. This bitter fruit turns sweeter with time only.

Character, behaviour, confidence, managerial capabilities, perseverance , handwork, trust worthiness, etc. There are many essential qualities but the core of all lies in the perception of person. How he perceives life. It is the thinking pattern which finally makes a person of substance.

A person with a negative mindset will always complain about people, situations. Whereas, the person with positive thinking will go ahead and try to look for solutions for making it a better world. As Sachin Tendulkar says someone may get hurt and keep crying or you may have used them as a stepping stone to get to where you needed to, when the storm comes all the birds start crying but the eagle goes beyond the storm by crossing it. A Person of Substance would never complain about his/her problems, rather he/she would takes charge of responsibilities and create new possibilities. Such people wherever they go make a difference.

During my higher secondary school days some students were not using dustbins and the school ended up looking dirty. And we few friends with the permission of principal started a cleaning club in our school and within in few days we got many volunteers, and after a month of hard work the school was designated as the best school by District Collector,

If you really want to create incredible India, the people with great leadership abilities should come forward with their thinking and with firm actions we can make India again the Viswa Guru. According to me what makes a person a person of substance is his/her ability to grow, to think for the betterment of the mankind and the ability to act in the right time and in the right direction. So if people of substance with above capabilities come together India has a bright future and next golden days are waiting for us.

“Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value.”

– Albert Einstein

Many generations have come and gone but only a few countable personalities like Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Kailash Satyarthi, King Ashoka etc. are considered to be people of substance because their lives had a deeper motive. Only a few really live their life with a mission to serve the greater good. And these few people out of a 7.2 billion population can be called people of substance. This pursuit of their goal does not stop regardless of the obstacles, inner or outer. They are willing to do whatever it takes. They are not afraid of failure. They are not afraid to try. They are not afraid to lose because they were not doing it for themselves in the first place. They are as selfless and humble as they are passionate. They are willing to take risks and to take responsibility as well. They just do not look at the problems and grieve; rather they look for the solutions. They participate actively instead of being passive spectators.

But the question arises “What makes a person of substance?” According to Buddha’s view, human existence is a composite of five aggregates i.e. *Skandhas* which includes physical form, feeling or sensations, ideation, mental formation or disposition and consciousness. And a balance between these five *skandhas* makes a person risk-oriented, creative, an active participant, and a problem-solver, and, ultimately, a person of substance. The balance between these five *skandhas* can only be achieved through knowing oneself which means understanding one’s physical and social identity. Once a person gets discovers himself/herself, his positive and negative emotions, strength and weaknesses, he/she can achieve enlightenment through self control by walking on the path of meditation. Vajrayana Buddhism states that “special postures, mantras and icons are believed to help the practitioners identify with their deity and enlightenment”. Along with enlightenment, a person strives for self actualisation i.e. the fullest development of potentials. A self actualised person is self aware, socially responsive, creative, and spontaneous, open to novelty and challenge and have the capacity for deep interpersonal relationships. This is a person of substance.

A person of substance isn’t born with these traits, he/she develops them over time. Mahatma Gandhi, father of our nation India, is a great example of a person of substance. He found the meaning of life and had the strength for taking risks and finding solutions. He was never afraid of losing. He knew how to monitor his energy and emotions in the right direction. But was he a person of substance by birth’ and the answer is no. Mahatma Gandhi himself learnt through making mistakes in his childhood following his *Id*. According to Freud every person has “pleasure seeking *id*” along with “reality based ego” and “ethical super ego”. Like all youngsters, Mahatma Gandhi was also more inclined to pleasure, forgetting the reality and ethics but once he redirected his energy understanding his inner self and started listening to his superego making his morals stronger, he moved ahead on the path of self actualisation to become a person of substance.

Knowledge, Ethics, Mental Discipline, Self Satisfaction and Empathy are key to becoming a person of substance.

Knowledge, Ethics, Mental Discipline, Self Satisfaction and Empathy are key to becoming a person of substance. The evaluation of your own self through meditation and spiritualisation is the real path of becoming a person of substance.

There are 7 billion people on this planet, yet only a countable few are inspiring to others. The history of mankind has seen many influencers of different faiths, nationalities, cultures etc. What made them great? Was it their religion, their nationality or their culture? Instead of such externalities, the profound effect that one creates over others perpetuates through one's beliefs and the actions taken to fulfil them. I am of the opinion that without any deep beliefs and earnest actions taken towards them, one cannot be considered a person of substance. I will try to explain this viewpoint through some examples.

Recently, I read a book about the concentration camps where Jews were held during the reign of Hitler in the Second World War. The book – Man's Search for Meaning – written by one of the greatest psychologists of the 20th century, Viktor Frankl, captures the horrifying treatment the Jews had to suffer in those camps in order to struggle for their mere existence. Viktor, who himself was one such victim, makes it clear through his critical analysis that to survive even in the most severe conditions, one must find a 'meaning' to live for. Once found, the will to walk over any path leading there becomes persistent. To quote from the book – "Those who have the "why", can bear with almost any "how".

To further elaborate, consider the example of India's struggle for freedom. Gandhi, who fought exorbitantly, survived through innumerable tortures laid upon him by the oppressors. Still, he managed to gather the courage required to exhibit his stance of non-violence. How else can we explain the irrationality of his ability to walk over 280 miles during the Dandi March? Is there a rationale behind the torture he let upon himself during his fasts, up to the point of death? Now consider the example of another Indian freedom fighter, Bhagat Singh, who was ideologically polar opposite to Gandhi's way of non-violence. Despite a possible prosperous life that was laid in front of him, Singh sacrificed his material aspirations and his family, and withstood a hunger strike of 116 days in the Lahore jail in 1929. What is a rational justification for this? Both Gandhi and Singh found their 'meaning' in the 'independence of India'. Their extraordinary actions were a mere reflection of the earnest belief they carried around in their mind.

There are numerous such examples of people undergoing unbelievable sufferings to complete incredible tasks. These are the people who become the influencers for the generations to come. The purpose which they strive for and their achievements are what they are remembered for. People may try to justify "substance" through qualities like determination, persistence and what not, but fundamentally, they all arise through the constant struggle to pursue one's beliefs and the ability to endure until it is manifested. This is why, I believe, the meaning that one finds and the actions taken to pursue it is what make a person of substance.

There are numerous such examples of people undergoing unbelievable sufferings to complete incredible tasks.

When I was four years old, my grandmother asked me to share my ice cream with my cousins. I never understood why, when I was the one who had demanded it. When I was studying in boarding school, my entire dormitory was once punished for not keeping the room tidy. I never understood why when I had already made my bed. When I entered medical school, we were asked to show empathy for patients. I never understood why, when all we had to do was treat them.

I never understood any of it. Not until, years later, when I started my internship year with several of my colleagues. We had to share our limited resources, because there was not enough for everyone; coordinate with each other because that is how procedures were faster and better effective; and empathize with our patients because they had allowed us to be close to them at their most vulnerable moments. I understood, years later, that a “person of substance” is not made in a day and cannot be defined by a limited set of behaviours or character. It is a continuous process and a non-definable one at that too.

At the heart of it all, from my limited philosophical and psychological understanding, a person of substance takes on responsibility. He/she leads from the front, takes bold initiatives, handles challenges head-on, and completely devotes and engages to a worthy cause, unafraid of the final outcome. He/ she is the one who is respectful of others’ feelings and yet keeps an eye for those in need; one who never compromises with his/her integrity or values and still speaks out his/her opinion or stands up on what he/she believes in. One who is contented with what he/she has but still aims for his dreams and ambitions. One who challenges the rudimentary and nefarious notions of the society and brings positive change, wherever and whenever necessary. One who is willing to sacrifice his/her own personal desires for the greater good of society. One who strives every day to make the world a better place, not only to live in but to prosper in as well. It is highly possible and quite common, to not find all or any of these characters in one single individual. Yet, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Together, everyone achieves more. It may not be possible to find a single “person of substance” in our lifetime but we can find it in the collective mentality of us as a society and parts of it in each one of us.

In spite of all understanding and deep reasoning, if a person is still left in doubt of his “substance”, he/she should read Gandhi’s talisman: “I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man/woman whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him/her. Will he/she gain anything by it? Will it restore him/her to a control over his/her own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to *swaraj* (freedom) for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away.”

At the heart of it all, from my limited philosophical and psychological understanding, a person of substance takes on responsibility.

“The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”

- Martin Luther King

Our world is divided: On one end of the spectrum lies greed and materialism, while poverty, illiteracy and exploitation flourish on the other. Both parties desire a better quality of life. It, therefore, becomes easy to lose track of one's values and morals in such an entrapping game of aggrandizement. But there exist some individuals within these groups whom I would call people of substance. They belong to various cultural, social and economic backgrounds. What I find intriguing is that it shows that being a person of mettle transcends all barriers and unites us on humanitarian grounds.

According to me, a person of substance has the following qualities:

- **Morals and Values:** A set of beliefs and principles that one abides by, which provides structure and humility to one's life. Values ensure that a person treats others, himself as well as society with respect; and a person can know the value of others, only if he/she can decipher his/her own worth. In that respect, values also enable one to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, and push one to do what is right.
- **Seeks self-improvement:** Reflection in itself is a skill. It allows us to learn from our mistakes and gives clarity of thought. A person of substance will always try to improve his/her state of mind as well as condition of survival. He/she is constantly learning from others and from his/her surroundings and upgrading his/her 'operating systems'- the mind.
- **Looks at the bigger picture:** I feel that a person of substance also has the ability to pull away from the monotony of life and ruminate upon the bigger questions of life. When we start assessing our lives spiritually rather than materially, all earthly pleasures and possessions seem futile. One can start living in harmony with oneself and nature, when we start seeing life for what it is -- an extension of nature.

I could talk about people like APJ Abdul Kalam or Malala Yusafzi- who have received accolades in life, propagated for what they believed in, and have also generously given back to society but I won't. Instead, I shall pose the examples of two ordinary people I have come across in my life, from whom I have learnt tremendously, and I would definitely call them persons of substance.

Mr. Devender Singh is an acquaintance of my father. A retired army officer and father of two, Singh uncle spent 20 years in the Forces as he wanted to work for the country. Now, he works with a PR agency as a consultant as that is what interests him. He spends his weekends with his family, and ensures that his children frequent old age homes, work with under-privileged kids, and also volunteer in the local Gurudwara. He wants his children to learn to respect all and value all kinds of work. He advocates for better policies and works with political leaders of his ward to ensure that citizens receive the facilities they deserve. He leads a life full of discipline and principles. He doesn't own a car as he feels it pollutes the environment, and his entire family is vegan.

Mr. Raju is a rickshaw puller who waits for customers right in front of my building. Having run away from an abusive home at an early age, he lives in a nearby slum in Delhi. He has two children and earns very little per month. But not once has Raju bhaiya tried to cheat a passenger for some extra money. He sends both his children to school and appreciates his wife for working in the close by Anganwadi, while also taking care of the home and kids.

“Madam, we have one life to live and more often than not, people like me don't get to choose our circumstances. But we do get to choose how we want to spend our lives and what we want our kids to see and learn from us. I always tell my kids to first be good humans and treat everyone with respect, and in turn, be respected. Life needs to be lived with dignity, humility and compassion. God is watching us all.”

I truly believe that these two people lead commendable lives. Being social animals, how we behave and treat people and nature, matters - it formulates the society we live in. So if everyone could be empathetic, morally upright and civil towards one another like Mr. Singh and Mr. Raju, what a beautiful world it would be!

Being social animals, how we behave and treat people and nature, matters - it formulates the society we live in.

The moment you choose to do something different, you come in a niche category. This is how I would describe the current trend in India. It takes a lot of effort and determination to do something different in society instead of following general norms of daily life. A right path for a Person of Substance is made by himself/herself based on his/her own values rather than a society's culture and its norms. That said, a Person of Substance has certain skills and beliefs which I would like to address in three broader areas:

The moment you choose to do something different, you come in a niche category.

- **Self-Awareness and Progress:** A Person of Substance is well aware of himself/herself and well acquainted with all his/her good and bad qualities. He/her should be an open-minded person and willing to take feedback from others, it's only then that progress is made. There is nothing like a perfect person and hence he/she should work on all the qualities which he/she lacks while also learning new ones according to the needs of the generation. This will help him/her to improve every day and progress in life. Certain skills which needs to be there in a person of substance are leadership (lead people towards a common goal), unbiasedness, teamwork, integrity and truthfulness. These skills will help him/her to be on the right path and continuously progress along it.
- **Motivation:** This is not as easy. Self-awareness is the key to finding the right motivation in life. If you have the right motivation then you will be satisfied and happy while doing a certain task because it is chosen by you, or by your beliefs rather than it being imposed on you by others. It will help in creating your goal to which you will be leading your team. It also plays a critical role in handling situations under pressure because a person is well aware about his goal and rightly motivated to achieve the target set by him/her.
- **Vision:** Last but not the least is the vision, where a person works hard to move according to the vision. There will always be more than one way to go about life, but a vision will always keep you on the right track. While on a path, a person is faced with multiple opportunities and difficulties which might make him to choose a different path or deviate from it, but if you have the vision then you are certain about something and it becomes easy for him/her to take decisions which will make him/her move along his/her path. Vision also helps to set goals and benchmarks which will be followed by his/her team. Hence, vision plays a very essential part in determining the right goal and the right path towards the goal, which will be unique in its own way.

A person with all the three qualities will be the one who looks at the world from a different perspective and also makes people look his/her way. A Person of Substance is one who brings greater good to society because they were the one who questioned the current traditions, analyzed them from their own perspectives, found solutions according to the new and current needs, and finally lead the team on the path based on their solution. Hence, he/she is a 'Person of Substance'.

Before getting into college I always considered a person of substance is someone from the upper echelons of society. I always thought people of substance are superior. I have learned now that all of this has zero value, they actually lack the true meaning substance. The motive for these entire people is only to get noticed, appreciated and acquire material wealth.

The last couple of months have definitely opened my eyes to the rightful definition of 'substance'. Perhaps this is due to my learning of the subject field studies, as well as my natural level of empathy. I think this is something we all should strive for in our own lives.

A person of substance he/she should first show consideration for others.

A person of substance he/she should first show consideration for others. It doesn't mean faking others to get what they want, but to understand others' shortcomings and helping whenever and wherever possible. It means someone who chooses to participate in finding solutions rather than being just been an observer of a problem. Sometimes it may involve putting yourself last for a friend, partner or maybe a stranger. Person of substance is supportive and helpful. He/she shows empathy without judgement; is compassionate and caring. He/she is human in all of its wonderfulness.

A person of substance doesn't help people for the sake of appearances but to uplift someone and make their lives better. Even the Bible says that charity should be done in secret. It doesn't mean that a person of substance does charity by helping people; rather he/she participates in seeking a solution.

To be a person of substance one has to value the lives of others. It is natural that humans are selfish, we would always put our needs and demand over others. A person of substance would prioritize the need in person. People of substance work for the benefit of the 'greater good'. To be a person of substance one also has to be courageous and actively participate in the events of society. This will allow one to analyse the local surroundings. In order to solve the problem one needs to first observe and then find solutions. While the timid soul is safe from failure, they will never taste victory either. So people of substance take risks. They try and they fail, but they never grow weary of trying. People of substance take responsibility; they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicentre of the action, and fully accept whatever the consequences that that decision may bring. Responsible wholehearted and committed engagement in your world, points to a second element of becoming a person of substance. People of substance know that there is no middle/neutral position on any given issue. They identify with the sentiment that, "If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem". Now just as wants outnumber means to satisfy them, so too, problems outnumber solutions and real problem solvers in life are few and far between. Good problem-solving between competing interests typically requires a person of sound judgement who has immense empathy, complete objectivity and solid life-honed values. So, the solution seeking person of substance will have had significant experience in both the good and the bad. No doubt they will have lived and experienced a rich, full and multi-faceted life.

Choosing to experience life outside of our comfort zone to gain good judgement that can be used in solving problems, would appear to be another action that would lead to becoming a person of substance. So as Albert Einstein quotes, "Try not to become a person of success but rather try to become a person of value." In fact, we learn from our failure. Hence, we should focus on learning and uplifting each other rather than running after success.

In my understanding, a person of substance is one with critical thinking; he/she is aware about social issues and has empathy, especially for the disadvantaged. People with these qualities have an important role to play in society for educating others and spreading awareness on various issues about which he/she strongly believes in. Critical thinking means being able to look at any issue from different perspectives. A critical thinker does not simply follow what he/she is exposed to but rather has an attitude that involves questioning and then making judgements. By social awareness we mean being well informed about the issues that impact our society. Awareness brings a better understanding of the issues society is facing. And the ability to understand the feelings of another human (and other beings in nature) is termed as empathy. When all the three qualities come together in a person then that person could become a 'person of substance.'

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I believe that education plays an important role in helping a person attain these qualities, and thus making that person a person of substance. The ability to learn and gain knowledge comes from education. Education plays an important role in the life of an individual. It does not only help in the overall development of an individual but also in the development of the society. In today's life, being educated is an asset. India is a country where illiteracy is a major issue. A large number of population of the country is still unable to read or write, due to which they are unable to get out of the poverty. Education is the real wealth of the dis-advantaged people as it is the only key to eradicate poverty.

According to me, someone who can be called a person of substance is Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam – also known as “missile man of India.” He was a renowned scientist and a former President of India. Although Dr Kalam belonged to a poor and humble background but his desire to contribute to society never faded from his vision. He was one who always inspired and motivated many people, especially kids. He wrote many books to inspire young generations; among them “Wings of Fire” is his autobiography. His thirst of knowledge made him the most well-known scientist of our age. He worked on projects to solve the problems of the society. Dr Kalam was empathetic towards the people in our society and he treated everyone equally with respect and dignity. He never cared much of his designation or status. When he first moved to Rashtrapati Bhawan, he asked to lock all the luxurious rooms as he did not want to use them. He moved to a small room where he kept his bed. He used the same room for work and sleep. Not only this, the humble man also kept his dining room locked and had his meals on the floor with the staff who worked with him. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is a person of substance in true sense.

We human beings are different not only in our physical appearance but also in terms of gender, language, religion, culture, lifestyle etc. What is common between us are moral values. If we can inculcate values such as empathy in people and give them opportunity to educate themselves, a large portion of our population can become a person of substance.

When I entered the conference room, the session had already begun. All chairs except one toward the front of that elliptical conference table, were occupied. As I went it, my colleague sitting on the chair beside, with a slight wave of the hand and a smile, moved back (though just a couple of inches) to acknowledgement my presence in the circle of attendees. At another instance, as I was bringing tea for a bunch of colleagues at a meeting he stood up to help with serving tea to the group. This wasn't deliberate or a favour. It was a natural extension of the way he was to everyone. This colleague was deeply respected and one of the senior people at the organization – both by age and experience. I was his subordinate, a fresher with one year in the industry, while he'd been there for over 15 years.

These little instances are the first things that came to my mind when I read the question – What makes a person of substance? “Substance”, to me, personifies humility and involvement. Doing the little things right – daily. Because only then can one do the big things right. Situational awareness and conscientious action, to be precise.

“Substance”, to me, personifies humility and involvement.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, substance refers to “the quality of being based on facts or truth”, or “the main part of something”. To me, substance is a lot more than its dictionary meaning. “Substance” is akin to “attitude” – a flight safety poster read – ‘Your attitude determines your altitude’. In aviation parlance it literally means that a positive attitude (aircraft nose-up above the horizon) implies that the aircraft would climb/gain height and vice-versa. This is quite literally true in life too! Having been the daughter of a Naval aviator, this example sums up what I feel best. A person of substance has to have a positive attitude.

To be fully involved in a situation and yet be able to detach, when required – not in the sense of transactional attachment but as complete involvement to be able to savor the aftertaste of the experience. Quoting Sadhguru who puts this thought very well “Usually, if you tell people to relax, they become lax. If you ask people to be intense, they become tense. Do you see the difference? You have to learn to be intense and relaxed. If you can maintain your intensity and relaxation together, all the potential you have will always be used to its fullest.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald, the great American novelist said, “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.” This ability to create folders in the head, I feel, is key to maintaining focus and objectivity at all times. This feeds into equanimity, which in turn creates confidence. A couple of ruffled feathers shouldn't ruffle you from within. Substance is, after all, dynamic and timeless at the same time.

The ability to say ‘I don't know’, being able to imagine and see counterfactuals and their absence, in-situ, makes one more grateful and appreciative of what an individual has. To quote, the lyrics in one of the songs by Passenger “Well you only need the light when it's burning low, Only miss the sun when it starts to snow...” Carry this beautiful message.

“Life is not an essay,” said mom, which is when I realized that simply writing “a well-rounded and positive personality forms a person of substance”, was not going to suffice. I had to write more. The quality is independent of the profession that one is engaged in. Honesty, integrity, energy and passion, and commitment (goes hand in hand with willpower) to whatever task one has decided to take up, are essential prerequisites. An equanimous demeanor and compassionate involvement is but a natural extension.

My previous essays submitted for this are all based on personal experience and may serve to add perspective to the thoughts shared here. Nonetheless, such ‘person of substance’ is obviously not a perfect creature but certain qualities such as humility, integrity, complete involvement, a positive attitude, are the essence.

“Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value.”

- Albert Einstein

Being true to oneself is the biggest the purpose of a person of substance. Our world is a spiritual, magical and an undiscovered place to live in, it always holds surprises for each and every child at every step. So among the 7 billion people on this earth, everyone has a path. Some choose to live for themselves, and some choose to live for others. The proportion is 70:30. The people who live for others are the ones who really know where true happiness lies. When the human heart is full of empathy, compassion, kindness, and positive, it welcomes every new challenge life throws at it. The person who knows to face challenges within can fight the outside world. The hearty mind is one who knows how to use the energy and become an example for the world, and can bring about change. When a person pours his/her talent to the empty world is when a person becomes of substance.

Being true to oneself is the biggest the purpose of a person of substance.

Our mind contains a great unimaginable power, the thoughts we present comes back to us as our karma. Sharing the ability to make positive thoughts with others is a great contribution to the world instead of merely chasing after material gain which is not going to help mankind in any way. A person has to be true to oneself no matter what the challenges. A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem.

The firework within is what brings sparkle in the dark and brightens up the eyes and heart of others turning a dull community into a marvellously brilliant, happy and assertive place to live in. A person of substance is the one who has wisdom unlike a person who thinks that he has adequate insight. Life is a practical exam and the student who keeps on grasping things from a great teacher is the one who tops, so a person is always a worthy student if he holds on to the rank in the school.

Being victorious isn't always the hardest thing in the world. It is equal parts luck and hard work. But adding value to something is a lot harder, which is why Albert Einstein's quote is a good reminder if we find ourselves blinded by the hunt for success. "There is nothing wrong with success, but oftentimes it is easy to lose sight of who you are when you are successful. If you keep your eyes on your own values, you will end up both successful and a good person, which is pretty good combination."

A person who attaches values to whatever good practices he/she indulges in is a person of substance. He/she is someone who strives to live a life that means something and chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be a part of the solution as opposed to the problem. He must be a person of positive influence, meaning and of power.

Disregarding all the pressure and suppression put on an individual, a person of substance should never let the high demands and expectations get him down. The so-called perfect ideas should never influence them; instead he/she should embrace and develop his own individuality and must realize that being different and imperfect is far more interesting than being a perfect person. Being yourself just the way you are signifies the word beauty.

A person who attaches values to whatever good practices he/she indulges in is a person of substance.

As Jalal ad-Din Rumi says, "Raise your words not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers not thunder", a person of substance should inculcate the habit of opening up his views courageously. Down the ages, we have been brought up in a society where we are told stories of kings, emperors, warriors, rulers and leaders. These were men who ruled for years creating a patriarchal society. Society looks upon men as superior, realistic, confident and provides an abundance of opportunities in many aspects. As a by-product women haven't been able to avail of equal opportunities, have been subjugated and subjected to injustice and violence. The cruelty of man upon woman cannot be overlooked. Even in the 21st century traits of such practices are visible, not only women but also men are being discriminated on and are not allowed to raise their views and opinion whenever they want. A person who is being put down by the society itself can never develop the "substance" in him and work for the betterment of the world. Choosing what is the most appropriate and important is yet another quality. Most of the times people have many options in front of them, but making the right choice is crucial – instead of short term gains they should aim for something in the long term.

The element of 'substance' can be viewed in different dimensions, it combines several values like integrity, honour, courage, accepting responsibility, risk management, wholeheartedness, commitment etc... It can be related to different aspects of life from family to the world. A person of substance is at the base of every nation. As there is a saying, "The Youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity". The youth are often associated with vibrancy, enthusiasm, joyfulness and passion and they are ones who must be more focused in building substance in them than at any other age. This is because people belonging to the young generation are full of life. They have immense curiosity in them to learn new things and to explore the world. They are high on energy and do not want to conform to the customs and traditions set by the earlier generations. They try to apply logic to everything and question the radical thinking of the elders. When these two elements are combined (youth and substance) it channelizes the potential of the youth in the right direction that would in turn help in strengthening the nation as a whole.

Thus a person of substance tries to participate in all the developmental aspects of the nation and incorporates several elements which is for its long-term betterment. Rather than being a mere spectator he/she is a part of the action, always working in the nation's best interest.

“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

– Samuel Beckett

Hard work, self-respect, respect for others, confidence are the key to become a person of a substance. Life is hard on each one of us, it keeps giving us setbacks to check whether we can withstand it or not. People lose confidence, but the key is to stand and work even harder with much more confidence; even God can't help those who can't help themselves. A person's hard work at the end defines how he/she is no matter if he/she succeeds or not but one has to be consistent with his/her work to fulfil his/ her dream. One must never fear the challenges, or the hurdles life throws, he/she should try until he/she accomplishes the goals. Also, one must help others, because a person's success doesn't define him/her but one's nature and respect towards other does. Embrace yourself, try to be happy in whatever situation, be ready for every task come what may. One should always find his/her own dreams and pursue it, always find a goal in life, and live on values and morals set by you.

Hard work, self-respect, respect for others, confidence are the key to become a person of a substance.

Moreover, one should not judge others on what they do, be kind to everyone. Always think you are your own competition, with each passing day try to become better than yourself, compare yourself with how you were yesterday and try to be better. One should always be a person who can inspire others, doesn't matter what you are, where you are, or what position you carry. Always be a person who is always helpful towards others. A person needs to be calm each time. It has been very excellently said, to check how gracious the person is you only need to see two things – a person's patience when one has nothing and one's attitude when one has everything.

One must create effective relationships with people, build relations on love and respect. A tree that holds lots of fruits is always bent down towards the earth, similarly the person who has everything must be grounded and try to help others. The tree which has nothing on it always stands still. So, one must try to be the person who has all the capabilities and still worries about others and respects to everyone.

Moreover, no matter what life throws at you, work with all the resources that you have. Remember all the great personalities were never born great, they succeeded when they made the best of all the opportunities that came their way.

For instance, Walter Elias Disney faced rejection many a times but after many trials became legendary. Patience matters in whatever you do.

Also, we all know Stephen Hawkins had rare slow processing motor neuron disease that gradually paralyzed him, but he never lost the faith, and worked becoming the best known cosmologist for contributions to the field.

A person with the substance is someone who is calm and composed, who respects others, who is always ready to help others, who no matter in what position is never trying to be dominant over others; who has some goals in life that he/she wants to fulfil, who is always in competition with oneself and trying to become the best version of oneself.

A query that looks unadorned yet can unfold newer dimensions to my outlook towards people around me: what makes a person of substance. An immediate and non deliberate response to it could be to say that he/she is someone who adheres to a set of principles in their life. But, I am conditionalized to attach people who have been of great influence to society. This notion stems out of all the codes of morality that I have been “taught”. Yet, I want to take the liberty of thinking differently here.

Many people have certain clear-cut outlook towards their lives. They have an insight on how they can relate to the world. In the past, men and women have come and gone in this world, yet only a tiny population have left a mark in history. But have they all been people of substance? Some were popular and with a lot of followers. Yet, history shows us, that some of their principles have done more cruelty to humanity than amity, making them infamous. Thus, what makes some people different?

One does not have to be a great leader with a lot of people admiring him/her -- she could be a single mother of three kids, who migrates to a new country in search of a better future for her children. It could be a 60-year-old prisoner who gets out prison after rehabilitation hopes for a new life, or it could be you or me. Because when one becomes someone who accepts his/her faults, mistakes and limitations and takes responsibility for all their action and response to a situation, they do not go back on it. Being a person of substance is an acquired attribute. It may be when one is seventeen or seventy, but it really does not matter. One may start attaining certain qualities and realizations only much later in their life, but it does not make it any less significant than someone who has understood life earlier. Because to me, the whole point is to see if one has conquered his/her inner demons which makes them blame others, never take responsibility, be ingenuine and pretentious. Once those demons are silenced, a person becomes a man of substance.

But nevertheless, it does not come easy. It is a constant effort. Sometimes, life can go haywire due to factors which cannot be controlled by oneself. It could be society’s fault, it could be nature’s play or it could be due to the government that you are under. But it is unto oneself on how he/she reacts to it. A person of substance takes accountability. It could be in anyway, being aggressive, being in agreement or sometimes choosing to even not respond. However, the person is aware that his actions are his own choices always led by his own psyche.

No matter what happens as a result of those responses, a person of substance takes it as it is. He/she does not find comfort in denial of a situation, because he/she is aware that it is not a perpetual answer. And not everyone is a person of substance and not every person of substance has been famous. They might be one among us, silently progressing towards personal growth which eventually help people surrounding them in some way or the other. Because the presence of such people can invoke among others traits of observation and learning. There is a vibe that they give out which instills hope among their circle of people. He/she may not be of global renown but he if he/she reaches at least one person and does no harm to others can be a great feature in a person with substance.

They might be one among us, silently progressing towards personal growth which eventually help people surrounding them in some way or the other.

The best way to become a person of substance is by obtaining beneficial knowledge and acting upon it. Bhuhari says that, “knowledge provides speeches and action”. Therefore, in order to become a person of substance you must have substantial knowledge in your heart and mind. Knowledge is gained through two organs: ear and eyes. Every person must then read and study material of substance and listen to people of substance speak, and must take the beneficial knowledge that we acquire from those two sources and implement it.

The best way to become a person of substance is by obtaining beneficial knowledge and acting upon it.

We should be empathetic in order to become people of substance. That doesn't mean being sympathetic. Sympathy mean is telling someone, “Oh...that must be so hard for you.” Empathy is mentally putting yourself in someone else's shoes and understanding where that person is coming from. Understanding people's issues doesn't mean that you can't morally or ethically or even physically object to whatever it is they're projecting to you. It simply means that you should understand, and in that understanding you can change minds, but more than that you can change hearts.

The next point is being introspection -- look at yourself and your goals and aspirations; just as an artist has to have a clear vision before creating a work of art. Every person needs molding. If a person doesn't have direction then his/her life will be a failure. Learn what makes you tick. Learn what gives you deep satisfaction in life, then learn how to bring other people into your life that will aid in both your wellbeing and you in theirs.

Knowing ourselves and knowing others will give us a kind of power that not many people have in this world. An inner strength becomes who you are and others around you will feel it. This will draw people to you not because of your outer beauty but because of your inner strength. Our personalities will become magnetic.

The definition of the term “of substance” generally meant “successful”, “classy” and so on. Being a man (or woman) of substance meant to be and act like one from the upper echelons of society. I've learned something different, which is my understanding. What I've learned about the pre-conceived ideal of “substance” is, it usually is met with shallowness and haughtiness. Not of “substance” at all...rather a lack of true substance. All is done for face value, with the desire to succeed and be noticed. Being a person of substance is showing consideration for others, first and foremost! It doesn't mean faking it to get what one wants. It means understanding others' shortcomings and helping where ever possible. It means putting yourself last on occasion for a friend, partner, co-worker or even someone you don't know. How hard is it to take the brush and help clear a car of snow? How hard is it to make one extra pie for someone who needs their day brightened? Substance means that you are one that someone can count on to support and build them up! Not tear down to make them look smaller than you to others. It means showing empathy toward grieving people, without judgment or ridicule. It means being compassionate and caring. It means being human in all of its wonderfulness.

“Believe you can and you are halfway there.”

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

The above quote reminds me of how a little faith in oneself can bring you closer to your dreams. Men and women are filled with dreams and desires, and how they accomplish them speaks volumes about their grit and character. More so when they fail to achieve and still hold their heads high, ready to go again! A lot of things can define a person and how significant a mark they make.

Firstly, people of substance are those who believe in the collective aspirations of people and communities. They will bring everyone together to fight for a just and peaceful society. They do not discriminate or hold grudges, but cherish brotherhood. They are secular not only on paper but in spirit. They build nations, not destroy them. They do not just make promises but keep them. They channel their strength and forthrightness to keep the nation tightly knit. Many a great souls who have walked this path, for example, Mahatma Gandhi made it his life's mission to fight for the less fortunate, oppressed and downtrodden masses. He was against untouchability, segregation on the basis of caste, and the tradition of animal sacrifice in Hindu temples. Another exemplary human being was Nelson Mandela. He was an enigmatic leader who wanted all races to be treated equally and the violence unsettled him. He asked his people not to be stigmatized due to apartheid but to come forward and uproot it.

Firstly, people of substance are those who believe in the collective aspirations of people and communities.

Secondly, people today are in an aggressive competition of becoming more successful monetarily rather than becoming wholesome in values and ethics. To be a person of substance one must seek principles that can be put into action to find suitable solutions to any posed problem. This trait in individuals can be honed through education because the awareness that learning brings is unparalleled. Barack Obama, for instance, is a product of good education. An alumnus of Harvard Law School, the former President of the United States of America was a role model for the youth of the nation and worldwide because of his inquisitive and enterprising nature. He was adept in knowing the nuances of running his country.

Thirdly, there is a lot of wealth in the world but sadly it is concentrated in certain pockets only. The rich people of the world need to be more giving to society. A person of substance here can be the one who feels responsible for not only his growth but for the growth of people who are working under and around him. A good leader is someone who can carry his team towards success such as Bill Gates, founder of the Microsoft Corporation. Gates is a great example of how not to be blinded by wealth but to indulge in charity. He has achieved fame not only for being a business magnate but also for being a humanitarian.

To summarize, I believe that a person with integrity is a person of substance. If he or she is easily swayed by the fortunes that come with misdeeds, he/she will not make great leaders. People need to be filled with zeal to be ideal in this real world. One can be a politician, an entrepreneur, an army personnel or a college student, the belief in making this world a better place for people and posterity is what will make that person substantial.

Shri. Narendra Nath Datta, also famously known by the name of Swami Vivekananda is one of the most eminent and revered personalities, whose words still resonate in our Indian moral preaching and philosophies. He says, “Dare to be free, dare to go as far as your thoughts lead and dare to carry out that in your life”. I believe, his prescient and sagacious words address the topic most precisely. In my opinion, a person of substance is someone who is capable of discovering and appreciating new possibilities of human advancements, has selfless zeal and commitment towards producing changes in the world for good, and is not afraid to deal with any conundrums that might be a hurdle on his/her path. I also believe that one should adhere to the changes that he/she wants to see in the world. We should start the change from our own end and we might end up influencing others as well. We have a living example who has been my source of motivation, whose influence and charisma needs no introduction. I am talking about our honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. His Swatch Bharat Abhiyan, practicing yoga and, most importantly, his dedication to work continuously for 16-18 hours a day has encouraged me on various accounts.

I firmly believe that any revolutionary idea or thought encompasses three key components which are Vision, Mission, and Values. In my opinion, these are perhaps the most significant and governing constituents that have the ability to carry changes in everyone’s life. Values can be defined as those intrinsic set of principles that gives shape to our thought. These principles are generally imbibed over time by virtue of our experiences. The mission can be defined as the pathway leading to the ultimate objective. This path is paved on the foundation of values that we hold. Finally, Vision is the ultimate objective that we desire to attain. Further elucidation of this idea will be most apposite by citing Shri Mahatma Gandhi. Bapu, as our nation fondly calls him, for his remarkable resolve and thought that guided us in probably one of the most difficult times that India has ever witnessed, had thought of independence as his ultimate vision. To achieve this objective, he adopted protests with non-violence as his mission and finally, his whole objective was based on certain core values such as honesty. Components such as these, when consolidated in the form of actions aided India to withdraw itself from darkness and misery imposed by colonialization.

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Further, I would again like to underscore the significance of the consolidation of those components. It is a very well-known quote from the Dalai Lama, “Change only takes place through action, not through meditation and prayer alone”. The ingredients of thoughts must be heated on the stove of actions in order to produce intended results. By virtue of my father’s job, I have had opportunities to visit various NGOs and have seen that fervid passion with which many people selflessly serve for the benefit of others. One more such example, where shaping an idea and implementing them has brought tremendous results can be traced in Self Help Groups, originated in Bangladesh. This idea has proven to be very useful and can be traced to the southern part of India as well. The group has moralized people about the significance and power of aggregative efforts.

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance and utility of knowledge in order to be a person of substance. Knowledge can have highly varied definitions but I think of it as an acquaintance with the truth. Different people glean knowledge from different sources. For some, meditation and self-realization is the ultimate truth, whereas some are much more drawn to the breakthroughs of scientific and logical discoveries. I believe a true person of substance is the one who has a good sense of applicability of his knowledge along with its utility. For instance, Dr. Rani Bang has been working with one of the most underdeveloped tribal communities, and has established a society for education, action, and research. I firmly believe that every person holds the capacity to serve humanity in his/her own way, it is just the matter of initiative that juxtaposes those who become a person of substance and those who don’t.

We all want to achieve monetary success in our life and there is nothing wrong to desire it. We have all heard about successful personalities whether they are actors, politicians, entrepreneurs etc. but we must acknowledge the amount of hard work they have put in to achieve their goals in their respective careers. As rightly said by our beloved former president the late Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam and I quote, "If you want to be like sun first burn like the sun". A person of substance is someone who gets the attention of each and everyone in the crowd by his/her attentiveness. In this essay, I will share some of my experiences which I am sure others will be able to relate to as well.

Here are some qualities of a person of substance. They are always:

- Ready to take up challenges in their lives
- Hungry for knowledge
- Try to propose solutions to the given problems
- Try to take part rather than be a spectator
- Do not hesitate to enquire about issues whether small or big
- Do not get disheartened if their proposed idea gets rejected or they fail in their attempt

According to me, in today's world, there are two main obstacles which are stopping us to live a healthy and successful life. First one is log kya kahenge (what will people think) and the second one is procrastination. We are more concerned about other people rather than our own feelings and goals. Procrastination also plays a big role in our lives. One must know how to get over these to achieve the desired goal. Whenever I need motivation to achieve any particular goal I always seek the person who is most connected with the community and doing his/her work with at most sincerity whether he is a janitor or specially-abled person or doctor. I am most influenced by the former president of our country Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam and former president of the United States of America, Barack Obama. If we talk about the famous and successful personalities we will find some of the things common (which are listed below) and this is what I feel is a perfect recipe to achieve your goal.

I am most influenced by former president of our country Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam and former president of the United States of America, Barack Obama.

- First, you need to dream (in a positive manner). Start asking yourself some questions such as will I get happiness? Does it make me and my parents proud? Will it have any social impact?
- I will align my statement with one of the famous quotes of Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam: "You need to dream before your dreams can come true".
- Make a clear and transparent strategy to achieve the desired aim so that it looks visible as you go ahead. Ambiguity always leads to failure
- Now, just start working. Initially, it really doesn't matter whether you are starting in a suitable or good atmosphere, as long as you go with the right spirit and enthusiasm you will find the path
- Don't be afraid to fail. In today's world, we all want to be successful in our very first attempt at any cost. For example, if we take any exam we know that there are 10 times more applicants than the number of vacancies, and many of them will fail in their first attempt.
- Learn from the mistakes and start again. It is really important to not lose confidence. With each and every failed attempt we get better day by day. We just need to stay motivated and focused towards our goals
- Last but not least, stay away from any types of distractions, negative energies etc.
- Congratulations! You have successfully achieved your target

These simple steps make a person of substance which is really important in today's world to achieve not only self-goals but also to contribute to the growth of our world. The youth of the current generation is really the biggest resource of any country, and it must work in the right direction to achieve sustainable goals. I will end with a beautiful quote given by the great saint Swami Vivekananda: "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached".

All the judgments we pass in life, none is more important than the judgment we pass on ourselves. That judgment impacts every moment and every aspect of our existence. Our self-evaluation is the basic context in which we act and react, choose our values, set our goals and meet the challenges that confront us. A person of substance follows these pillars for character building: Live consciously, self-accepting, live purposefully, self-responsible, self-assertive and integrity.

All the judgments we pass in life, none is more important than the judgment we pass on ourselves.

People of substance know that there is no middle position on anything. They identify with the sentiment, “If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem”. Now just as wants outnumber means to satisfy them, so too, problems outnumber solutions, and real problem-solvers in life are few and far between. Good problem-solving -- competing between interests -- typically requires a person of sound judgment who has immense empathy, complete objectivity and solid-honed values. Active participation requires courage and people of substance have it in bucket loads. While the timid soul is safe from failure, it will never taste victory either. So according to me, people of substance take risks. They try and they fail, but they never grow weary of trying.

My father has always been my greatest inspiration. When I look at him I understand what it means to be a man of substance. He struggled all his life for principles, values and yet he is a successful person. For me, a man of substance is the one who follows his ethics and moral values throughout life. He is a man of his word. He’s a pillar of strength -- supportive and disciplined. His work is endless and, oftentimes, thankless. Although subjected to peoples’ opinions, he has the capacity to stand by his principles.

A person of substance should be loyal to his goal. He should have such qualities that he becomes an example for society. People of substance take responsibility, they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicenter of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that decision may bring.

As stated by Abraham Lincoln, “Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing.” A person’s reputation might vary based on the view point but the character of the person remains constant. Living by high moral standards they inspire, motivate and energize those around into doing something significant in the world. As children, we were always being told to be a person of high moral standards and were educated to understand what those values were. I think, when we grow older we seem to loose or forget about those crucial qualities and in order for us to be a decent human beings, we should consider re-educating ourselves on morals and values.

I believe that the most important quality that makes a person of substance is the ability to stand by one's principles even when it might not be in agreement with those around. This is when one's courage and capacity to follow the right path is really tested, as at all other times it is easy to abide by one's principles. Of course everyone might not be able to arrive at a consensus on which principles should be followed, but there are some basic principles like honesty, empathy, and sincerity which are a baseline everyone agrees to. This includes influencing others to follow this path as well. Though when there isn't certainty on which the right path is, this includes being tolerant to the viewpoint of those in disagreement with you.

With this in mind, a person of substance perseveres to make the world a better place by doing her/his best in whatever she/he wants can, the efforts being directed towards the betterment of society. And it is not that these endeavours necessarily have to be related to the so-called noble professions, like law, teaching or medicine, it includes business and industry as well, as it is most important to run these responsibly considering that these can cause the most harm if done wrong.

This pursuit demands continuous learning, be it formal learning through say a university, or more organically by learning from experiences, people and society around oneself. This also naturally requires an open mind and an ability to improve on one's opinions and if need be change them in the face of a more logical alternate position. This leads to respecting everyone around one, irrespective of the differences between oneself and others.

A person of substance thus is a consistent individual in society who respects those around her/him and is dedicated to its betterment and inspires others to lead such lives as well.

I believe that the most important quality that makes a person of substance is the ability to stand by one's principles even when it might not be in agreement with those around.

The substance of a person does not lie in the things he/she possesses, but in the way he/she behaves in the absence of those possessions. Henry Ward Beecher an American Congregationalist clergyman, social reformer, and speaker perfectly quoted, “He is rich or poor, according to what he is, not for what he has”. The attributes that make up a person of substance are the most simple to understand but tough to implement.

The substance of a person does not lie in the things he/she possesses, but in the way he/she behaves in the absence of those possessions.

The first and the foremost characteristic that makes an individual strong from the core is “acting responsibly”. The word “acting” signifies the importance of being in the moment and taking steps that are required based on the “present” situation. Such an individual is well informed about the need of that moment, without letting the past prejudices or future anxieties create any hindrances. Not only taking actions, but also holding responsibility for the consequences of those actions is vital. A wise person knows inside out that blame is a useless and time-wasting game. Thus he/she takes responsibility for the consequences that arise due to his/her actions.

Rick Warren an American evangelical Christian pastor and author said, “Knowing your purpose gives meaning to your life”. Having a purposeful life and a reason to strive for is what makes an individual full of substance. He/she is aware that a life without purpose is like a life spent wandering in the maze, wherein you entered but never reached the goal. Moreover, being aware about the purpose is a pre-requisite in order to act with responsibility. If an individual is unaware about what they are supposed to do, acting is always hindered by confusion.

The person of substance very well knows that reacting to situations is not going to do any good. Thus, the attribute of creating instead of reacting is deeply seated in the mind of such an individual. When faced with adversities, he/she knows how to accept them and turn them into something creative and productive. Such acts will not only enhance his/her understanding of life but will also benefit him/her as well and the people whom they are surrounded by. He/she understands that challenges come to teach us something, so instead of finding a reasons they learn from it.

Learning, unlearning and re-learning is a continuous process through life. A person with substance is attentive of the changing world and holds the humility to let go of the knowledge that is unnecessary with changing times. He is a continuous learner and adapts according to the altering environment.

The last point is about how to behave with the people we are surrounded with. A person of substance is aware that he is not above any other being and also not below any being. Everybody is on his or her own journey and comparisons are of no use. He behaves by way of Maitri (friendship-love) with the happy people, by way of Karuna (Compassion) with suffering people, by way of Mudita (Joy) with virtuous people and by way of Upeksha (Equanimity or acceptance) with the non-virtuous people.

To conclude, a person of substance will never wish for an easy going life but a motivating one. Such an individual will always want to learn from the loss incurred and mistakes made. Such learnings will enhance the strength and resilience, and guide the person to the realization of the actual potential of human life.

*Samujha samujha ek hai, ansamujha sab ek,
Samujha soi jaaniye, ja ke hriday vivek*

*All wise men are alike, so are all unwise,
Really wise is the one who is conscience.*

- Kabir

I'd define a person clear in his/her conscience as a person of substance. Someone willing to make an effort in making the world a better place for self and for others by being involved in finding solutions and not just be an onlooker. Mistakes when admitted and learnt from, shapes a mature person. Fostering strength and diligence to solve problems in life shapes one into a person of substance not by ending up as a timid soul, who neither knows victory nor defeat.

Everyone has to make choices, big and small. These decisions matter. And these are what make us who we are. The virtues that we have been exposed to in these developing scenarios make us people of substance. Looking back in history here is a list of people of substance in my view: the first moral philosopher, Socrates in the 5th century, Gautama Budhha in the 13th century, Galileo Galilei in the 14th and Kabir in the 15th, J. Krishnamurti, Rajneesh, Saadat Hasan Manto and theatre theorists and practitioners like Stanislavski, Grotowski and Peter Brooke are innate examples that come to mind. These people were self-aware and active participants in making others conscious of their actions and their consequences. Their work still inspires the modern world and ignites the chain of thought that lead other people into being persons of substance thus serving the purpose of involving in finding solutions for sustainability.

I feel that being a person of substance is an arduous journey because being self-aware is seldom easy. But with the appropriate inculcation of virtues, we can bring about a change considering our exposure to our roots, surroundings and situations. With courage and compassion, and profound knowledge of what is right and wrong, we can be persons of substance too. Social reformers, scientists, teachers and farmers, all live, work and contribute to the betterment of society, and can be called people of substance. When looking at individuals; we look at the multi-faceted values of a person . And only a few names fall under the ambit of person of substance when all values are put together.

*Sihnon ke lehad nahin, hanson ki nahin paat,
Lalon ki nahin boriyan, saadh na chale jamaat*

*Lions don't have a group, neither swans have flocks,
rubies aren't available in sacks, and true seekers don't walk in masses.*

Although rare, we are often surrounded by such people, whom we tend to overlook. Looking around us, we'll find a lot of people diligently trying to make the world a better place. In all considerable spheres, there are people contributing and making whatever little change possible, "selflessly".

As Kabir says "Kabira khada bazaar mein, liye lukaati haath, Jo ghar poonke aapna, so chalein humaare saath"

That the ones who keep away their wants and are willing to make a considerable change with courage as strong as a "lath" (cane) and burn their house of wants, may come along in the wave of reformation.

For all the maturity that a twenty-two-year-old me sustains, I feel that the need of the hour is to understand and spread virtues such that it helps sustains humanity and sadly the mode of education adapted in the world doesn't allow such conversations. The only solutions is providing platforms where these conversations can be held and people can open up their minds and hearts to others and be more compassionate towards fellow beings.

The world is facing a big threat from leaders who are leading the world into danger. People find it difficult to cope up with them. In the era of modernization moral values are greatly devalued. The over-ambitious politicians can harm the environment and life of mankind. The new generation is being misguided by them. To keep them within their limits, a person of substance should step in and take control. The world lacks leaders and socialists like Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama, and Mother Teresa.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live life well and work for the betterment of mankind. He/she works hard to make the world a better place, increases the quality of life, and prevents the end of something good. He/she is selfless, consistent, humble, interesting, emphatic and candid. A person of substance is someone who respects fellow man other and loves unconditionally. He is a person is strong, protective but is also loving and caring.

The person of substance has a definite mission and he/she will do whatever he/she needs to for a better world. He/she always thinks positively and works on his strengths and weaknesses. The way to become a person of substance is by obtaining beneficial knowledge and acting upon it.

He/she works hard to make the world a better place, increases the quality of life, and prevents the end of something good

“A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem.”

In simple words a person of substance has passion for working for the benefit of the greater good and that is a clear first pointer to becoming one. For me, working for the greater good means:

- Making the world a better place
- Increasing the quality of life
- Righting a wrong
- Preventing the end of something good

Here are the six characteristics that make up a person of substance:

Active participation: Active participation requires courage and people of substance have it in bucket loads. While the timid soul is safe from failure, he/she will never taste victory either. So people of substance take risks. They try and they fail, but they never grow weary of trying. They are the people that President Teddy Roosevelt spoke of in his address titled “The Man in the Arena” where he said:

“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

So be the “man in the arena”.

Be Selfless: Many of us are selfish. Why shouldn't we be? We're all we got in this world. However, a person of substance understands there is something greater in the world for him/her to serve, whether this be humanity, his/her family, or a cause.

So when you get the chance to make an impact on someone's life, go deep with them.

Be Consistent: Your word is your oath. Be someone people can count on. A reliable person is worth 10x their weight in gold. It's the, “who do you call when you get stranded at night in the middle of nowhere” concept. Be someone who takes care of their responsibilities no matter the time or place.

Be Humble: Simply, let your life lived speak for itself. There's not a time or place where you should brag about yourself. If it's great enough, someone will surely do it for you. Your identity should revolve around your ethics not your laurels.

Be Interesting: Challenge yourself to learn new things. Encounter new cultures, situations, and activities. If you've always wanted to learn how to dance enroll in a class. Think you want to skydive? Schedule it for this weekend. If you are working for an NGO with children then it will be very helpful because children are always searching for interesting things. So if you are an engaging person then they will automatically connect with you.

Be Empathetic: “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou

At the core of humanity, it's about connection. We are social creatures. So when you get the chance to make an impact on someone's life, go deep with them. Ask questions. Encourage them. Give them your undivided attention. Actively listen. That is what we actually do in

Snehalaya an NGO for sex workers and their children. The sex workers never get attention and respect from society, which we give but at the beginning it is very difficult to make them believe that we are there to help. So, I believe being an empathic is very important in making a person of substance.

It was a new class. Students enrolled into English department and everyone was new to everyone. Days passed by and gradually they created their friend zones. But there remained a guy who decidedly confined to himself and seemed insecure. When none of his classmates felt the necessity approach him, one good samaritan from the same class ventured towards him and engaged him in conversation. Soon the introvert was made to fit in a friend circle where he felt comfortable. It was just that empathy and the initiative to talk that brought about the difference.

The unlucky hostellers who weren't able to get rooms at the time of admission were allotted the dormitory. Eighteen members in each dormitory and naturally there followed the problem of dusting and cleaning it. After a few days one among them who is allergic to dust cleaned the whole dorm as a preventive measure in the presence of everyone. From the next day, the fellow boys took the broom stick and swept the dorm. The one with dust allergy dusted the room only after seventeen days. That student's personal sense of social responsibility transformed the dusty dormitory into a clean community room.

There is this incredible math instructor who has inculcated only two thoughts in his students' minds: One – “Transforming sentences into symbols is math.” Two – “Knowledge is nothing but observation. More observation leads to more knowledge and no observation leads to no knowledge.” When the students began solving the problems, they were repeatedly reminded of the first thought, and while teaching, the students were reminded of the second process of learning being a resourceful and enriching experience. This approach may not provide them with solutions but gives them the courage to face the problems. So, it rarely matters what you had or how much you had. What you give and how much you give is all that matters.

Trabhaksha. That was a conference on food waste management. Intellectuals bombarded the podium with the pertaining statistics, harsh realities of this ever-growing problem, etc. but there came one presentation that just focused on solutions. The whole auditorium gave a standing ovation to his ideas. The world is never running out of problems. Not even a minute part of the problem can be solved by repeated discussions. Focused dialogues on finding solutions make a big difference despite a small start.

The above instances did not make any big difference of international importance or steal the limelight anywhere. But these are all small contributions towards bettering mankind. We are all persons of substance made of the five elements --air, water, sand, ether and fire. Beyond these five, we have been governed by the largest and powerful substance. Some call it soul and some other name it God. The soul sparks emotions and aspirations within us. Because of the over growing pessimism in society and around us, the best powers remained dormant. People stop taking the lead and finding the new paths of life to make the world a better place to live in.

A person of substance is there hidden in everyone.

A person of substance is there hidden in everyone. Gradually when the circumstances demand, the person of substance plunges into action. As Shahrukh Khan, the *badshah* of Bollywood put it, “Neither power nor poverty can make your life more magical or less torturous. The dignity of a life, a human being, a culture, religion, country resides in its ability for grace and compassion. Love ceases to flourish if not practiced.” Simply put, a person of substance is the one who has content in the brain, rationality in the mind and constantly guided by the empathy in his heart.

In my opinion a person of substance is the one who has depth, inner feelings and understanding of society and forever remains uniform, living a very consistent and productive life.

Since childhood I have observed my parents being very socially inclusive and being with my father at his shop, I learned from him the value to earn honestly. He always taught me to never aim to become rich by cheating, and to always do business with a good honest fashion focused on customer satisfaction. Considering those values taught, now I realize that these daily activities done with the right attitude is what helps make the world a better place.

I believe in building effective relationships with the people I meet on a daily basis whether they are street vendors, small shopkeepers, etc., or my friends as I always notice that just a generous exchange of words makes them feel satisfied and happy. It's about building relationships on the foundations of trust, honor, respect and love.

A person of substance works with great enthusiasm and devotion towards his goals, and if at worst he fails, at least he failed while chasing his dreams. I failed in academics during my under graduation but during that course of time I learned a lot from my failures and came out as a more mature, humble and dedicated person. It was this failure which made me start Innovation-cum-E-cell to promote entrepreneurship for the larger benefit of the student community on campus.

A person of substance has empathy, is loyal, and is never ever shallow-minded.

We humans are generating inorganic waste and harming the environment. It's high time we contribute in building a circular economy for upbringing sustainable living. In 21st century, people working towards saving the environment even by taking one small step at a time, could be called people of substance.

Influencing others in a positive and powerful way, simultaneously making them believe in his/her deeds requires courage, and makes him/her a perfect leader. Being always passionate about working towards humanitarian and noble causes is also an attribute. I organized a Blood Donation Camp in 2014 & 2016 where 299 and 402 people donated blood respectively of which around 70% were the first time donors gave blood. It made me realize how good human relations can be of great help in the long run. During those days, I was totally overwhelmed with public response and realized people had immense faith and trust in our work. During such moment's one can feel like person of substance, inspiring people to become part of a noble cause. I believe that such small steps by any person can bring vast change in the society's perspective, making each individual a person of substance.

A person of substance works with great enthusiasm and devotion towards his goals, and if at worst he fails, at least he failed while chasing his dreams.

We are all made of substance. Man is a huge blob of atoms and molecules and what not. Almost 99 percent of the mass of the human body is made up of six elements, namely oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium and phosphorus. Humans were initially primitive beings, primal men and women leading a rudimentary lifestyle. Our earliest ancestors fulfilled essentially three basic needs -- those of food, shelter and clothing.

From being hunter-gathers foraging dense jungles, moving from one place to the next, to eventually settling down and owning lands, being farmers our whole social construct has changed in unimaginable proportions.

By building settlements and taking ownership of the land man began extending his authority over the entire ecosystem, while consequently shrinking into nuclear families with their own set of beliefs and practices. People that deferred from their way of living were commonly viewed as outsiders or those belonging to a different community.

Unequal sharing of Earth's natural resources often directly affected the growth or fall of a certain community, or an entire civilization. Thus, there came into existence a divide where people were categorized as rich and poor. This very divide still exists, toppling dynasties and initiating rule changes over the course of time. We have lost ourselves in the gamble, lost what we were originally meant to be -- people of purpose.

Love is also attributed as an essential quality that transforms an individual into a person of substance.

While running to acquire possessions deemed necessary in the eyes of society, we seem to have forgotten to listen to the actual desires of our heart, and those of our fellow beings. Whereas a person of substance is one who has a knowledge of himself and the world that he lives in. One who leads a life with firm principles and predetermined goals, and takes mature action to achieve those goals. In our present scenario, he is someone who strives to take up challenges, and dares to face problems. A real person of substance accesses a problem in all dimensions and surmounts them with courage and determination, even if it is at the risk of his very existence.

They say knowledge is power. Knowing oneself while at the same time feeling for another fellow being, gives us an inner strength to rationally judge any decisions taken at any point in life. Substantial knowledge of this sort is obtained through reading, interactions and personal experiences that mold a person to be ready to face any risk at hand during an adversity or times of trouble.

Love is also attributed as an essential quality that transforms an individual into a person of substance. A person who is at peace with himself would only find it natural to love his neighbour, his community, and society at large. It is from selfless love that qualities of empathy, compassion, understanding, and acts of altruism and generosity originate.

A person of substance always lives by a set of moral values, that which is not based on fallacious principles or inferences, but a morality that is genuine, and which does not infringe on the rights of others -- a morality that is not pretextual or a farce. Such a morality that is based on genuine human values will give him or her the conviction to act freely, to strive to do things differently, and go the extra mile for the benefit of society. It will force his consciousness to participate, rather than be a spectator in life where he is a part of the solution working against the problem.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in moments of challenge and controversy."

Substance might mean to unabashedly question the deeds of a society that is moving towards a delinquent direction. And if our substance is strong enough, we can face the world with our

heads held high, paving the way for the future in the process. It is often like rowing against the flow while holding steadfast to our satchel of strong morals and principles, fighting till the last breath.

It is only a person of true substance who makes history.

We mold ourselves to face the tough battles and Herculean tasks in our lives. Misery, mischance and misfortune will never our enthusiasm. We are always put under rigorous rites of passage. Hence, being the six-sensed complex living beings that we are, we try to tide over all of this in order to achieve our thrones; some earnestly while some frivolously. The ways in which one pursues his/her life expedition is what matters. One should always remember to have integrity as one is under high scrutiny of an extremely powerful lens. The moral ethics one designs for oneself will speak of his/her laurels in the course of life and even after. We should put our heart and soul towards our destination in spite of obstacles that life throws at us. We must not be afraid to dream a little bigger. We should not only see, but also live our utopia when we forge ahead courageously to make a difference.

One should always remember to have integrity as one is under high scrutiny of an extremely powerful lens.

I can still remember the following incident clearly though it happened a few years ago when I was on a school trip because of its impactful nature. Taking in the sight before him, a solitary stranger looked at the old lady seated in a gritty blanket, a trio of young, unkempt children swarmed around her, wailing, moaning in desperate hunger. She tried to hold back the helpless tears as she clutched an old, battered, heartbreakingly empty bowl in her hands, devoid of even a morsel of food. He went over to her, passing her his lunch as the children squeaked excitedly. He looked at her, his eyes holding a distinct sheen at the thought of how unfair life seemed just then. He continued looking at her with the kind of pity she was unused to, and warmth of humanity that seemed almost entirely non-existent in today's world. Her eyes spoke a language of sheer gratitude and unrepeatable indebtedness that words failed to articulate. This made me realize the necessity to have compassion, to love and accept one another. Changes cannot be avoided but we can work towards making the inevitable changes favourable to us. We should not let the vehement contradictions, prejudices and conclusions of anyone other than our hearts to rule our lives. Standing out or being different is a prerequisite for a person of substance.

In my view, there are various facets that make a person of substance. I have always remembered hearing this sentence since my childhood. It was emphasized and reiterated to me to give me the opportunity to understand what constituted “substance”, and how to make sense of the term. Being of substance actually means successful or being an achiever, though it has many other meanings depending on the circumstances.

In my life there are few people who inspired me: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Che Guevara, Lenin, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King, to name a few. They inspired me to work for the underprivileged and made me to think from their point of view. I have also worked on some weaknesses in my nature after reading the works of these great personalities. I still have long to go but I hope to persist and be a person of substance.

Some of the important aspects I consider important are:

1. Being a happy soul: Being different and imperfect is really far more interesting than being a perfect person. Accepting oneself for who one is the way to feeling happy and successful as one doesn't let the high demands and expectations from society get one down. I want to live in a tolerant society where people are given free space to be the way they are. There is so intolerance across the world in the name of religion, class, caste, race, nationality, people are treated with discrimination. In order for there to be peace in this world we need to give people freedom to be the way they are.

2. One has to live with moral standards and values: If we look at people closely they seem to be losing their morals and values. The elderly, fellow citizens, teachers and other sections of society don't get their share of respect. University students these days respect their teachers and make noises during class. The modern trend is to leave elderly parents in old age homes instead of receiving care at home. There are all threats to human values and which we should be built up rather than destroyed.

3. Some set of goals: Everyone must have goals in life like an education (and higher education) and contributing to society, for example, uplifting the poor, tribal and Dalit and other neglected communities.

4. Cultivating personal relationships and bonds with people: We should build effective relationships with people wherever we go. Respect, love and honour them without discrimination against anyone.

5. Active participation: Active participation requires courage and people of substance have it in bucket loads. While the timid soul is safe from failure, they will never taste victory either. So people of substance take risks. They try and they fail, but they never grow weary of trying.

Taking Responsibility: People of substance take responsibility, they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicentre of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that that decision may bring. Responsible, wholehearted and committed engagement in my world points to another element of becoming a person of substance.

Being of substance actually means successful or being an achiever, though it has many other meanings depending on the circumstances.

Empathy is a prime quality of a person of substance. All human beings irrespective of their place of birth, caste, creed, colour and religion want to be happy, but still, as a society we are miserable. As a society, we are caught in a vicious circle of problems like corruption, pollution, disproportionate distribution of wealth and power etc. We often tend to reason that the problems which we do not see are not relevant to us and hence we ignore those which do not directly affect us. We have the privilege of ignoring and underestimating the problem; the privilege of ignoring the people who are suffering from that problem; the privilege of having a good sleep when someone in some part of our society does not even have shelter. All of us have our own share of problems and some aspects of life in which we are privileged enough. There are problems which we ignore and there are those which we suffer from and no one else can see. What if someone could just acknowledge our problem and give us a helping hand during the most difficult times of our lives? Life would be so good and happy if everyone could just see everyone else's problem and help each other, empathize with each other.

Empathy is a prime quality of a person of substance.

Think how this world would transform if in addition to our “evolved minds” we started acting with our hearts rather than animal instincts. A person of substance chooses to see the world not as a spectator but as a part of the solution to the many problems; he /she is someone who has constructive thoughts rather than destructive ones, who encourages people to be the best form of themselves, and most importantly is sensitivity towards the people of this society. If this kind of “substance” is present in enough members of society than it will result in developing trust and love between communities at large. This would also make it difficult for the disrupting elements of society to intimidate a mass of people, breaking the peace. This would create a successful model of a self- sustainable society and a prolonged peace in a world as a whole.

The idea of making the world as one community is both scary, daring and intimidating but believing that it's a doable task is in itself a one step towards accomplishing it. Hence, the solution to all the problems in this world begins with us, with us as an individual effort, with us by refusing to play the role of the culprit but instead taking responsibility in finding solutions.

Great human beings like Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa are the paragon of “substance”. These people have the shared common trait of being sensitivity towards society. Imagine, if only one human being can transform the fate of society to such an extent, what would be the face of the world if the majority of people acquire the qualities of a person of substance?

Since the beginning of evolution, man has overcome myriad forms of obstacles which tested his character and proved that human actions can have far-reaching consequences on mankind and life on the planet in general. From King Ashoka to Hitler, to Mahatma Gandhi, the life situations may have been different under different circumstances, but the true test of a person's basic character has always been measured by the same set of values, regardless of the times; ancient or modern, religious or scientific.

A man who is guided by his values, thoughts and ideas and works for the betterment of mankind without just focusing on personal gains is a man of substance. This happens when one's character is in coherence with the cardinal truths of life. If we look at Hindu mythology, three golden words *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* hold supreme significance -- what is true is godly and God in turn is beautiful.

Now the question arises -- what is truth? Truth is purity without malice, ill-will and wickedness; just like a newborn baby, who blissfully enjoys the gift of life bestowed upon him, not having any remote thought about his colour, caste, creed, country or religion. His soul is as pure as God and his offerings of lovely smiles for whosoever comes across him are a replica of God's blessings to the whole mankind without any discrimination. And that is what adds beauty to a child's existence. This is what a person of substance should be -- pure, Godlike and admired by everyone for the eternal beauty he possesses.

A man who is guided by his values, thoughts and ideas and works for the betterment of mankind without just focusing on personal gains is a man of substance.

If personified, Nature itself is a perfect example of a "Person a substance." it is perpetual like truth, ever giving like God and an epitome of beauty. It caters to everyone's needs, desires and aspirations; it lifts up a saddened heart, pacifies a growling wrath and offers its love to everyone and expects nothing in return. The more a person stays connected to nature the more likely he is to be a person of substance.

Our body is an external dimension of various internal phenomena. These are subtle, systematic and spiritual as well. But whereas our bodies remain clouded with chaos and confusion due to the materialistic world we dwell in. These two components -- body and inner phenomena -- constitute a man. A third component -- inner conscience -- converts a man into a person of substance; clearing all the clutter created around him by this world.

A person of substance is a benefactor of all, he works for the welfare of humanity over his personal gains. He is a person of integrity and honour. He is selfless in the pursuit of happiness. Humanity, commitment and empathy all are his values. As Albert Einstein has rightly said, "Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value."

A person of such a character is not just a person of moral values but also wise enough to act with circumspection. He will tend to look at the constructive side of this eventful journey called life. Emotional, mental and physical stability are his traits. A person of substance has poise, and the outer challenges do not harm his existence. He neither moans over his past nor is anxious about the future, he is man of the moment. A person of substance imbibes whatever comes from above, ready to face the turbulent times or thank God for his bounties in the same vein.

I would like to conclude with the last stanza of the poem 'If' by Rudyard Kipling:

*If you can talk with crowds and keep the virtue,
Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run--
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And-- which is more -- you'll be a Man, my son!*

*The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden fight
But they, while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night.*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

So many lives lived, many wasted. Ages are lost but the predicament of how a person could be the master of his fate and the real captain of his soul, still remains contentious and hyped.

But it is not the critic who counts, not even the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds went wrong and could have done better making all the difference. The credit goes to the person who genuinely belongs to the realm; who strives valiantly and with chivalry for the betterment of mankind who surpasses great wealth and finds himself a worthy cause; who at best knows the triumphs of life, and high achievements, and who at the worst, if he could not make it work, at least fails with daunting bravery. This way his efforts shall never be juxtaposed with those frozen and bleak minds who know neither taste victory nor defeat.

The foremost approach of being a true participant in your own life is to start living one. The doctrine of Nihilism argues that life is without objective, meaning, or purpose. They have arguments of their own and I have mine. George Bernard Shaw was questioned on his deathbed about what he would have done differently if he could live his life over again to which he reflected and then sagely replied with a deep sigh, "I'd like to be the person I could have been but never was". The virtues that allow us to manifest our highest human potential while we, at the same time, also add value to the lives around us is what truly has meaning. The values we inherit, the attitude we acquire, everything matters while we strive for excellence to build a world that is rich and real.

To live a happier, more peaceful life, we must begin to see that the richness of our society comes from its diversity. What makes communities and countries great are not the things that we have in common but the differences that make us unique. One should stop condemning and start commending the potpourri of thoughts, cultures and diversity. We all want to succeed in life. However, rigours and hardships make a person's role stronger and consequential. Without these engagements, it's like driving an engine on a smooth road that never makes good drivers. Choosing worthy opponents reflect on a person's caliber. Tiny and trivial thoughts are not worth having. One should shed the shackles of tiny thinking and follow a code that comprises root values, virtues and vows which infuse a renewed sense of responsibility, purpose and focus. We must be unorthodox because we are not what we think. Instead we are the thinkers and creators of our thoughts. We must associate with the wonders of great ideas that serve to stifle the endless chatter which fills our minds so that our true brilliance can be liberated.

Why just sit back and procrastinate the things we believe we can do? Curiosity should never fade away. One has to be invincible and strong and free the fetters of complacency and send hearts soaring through brave pursuits and adventures. Life should brim with novelty, humbleness and compassion which will keep on driving our souls towards the fantastical discovery of who we really are and what we can truly become.

**To live a happier,
more peaceful
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For a person to be made of substance it is necessary that he thinks about society before his personal goals. For example, before thinking about how the banning of plastic will help me, it should be thought that plastic ban will help conserve the environment for future generations.

A person of substance is someone who not only thinks beyond borders but also of the benefits of having larger goals for society. Imagine if Medha Patkar should have thought about her personal goals and benefits before the environment. But she didn't, and her thinking about society at large makes her a person of substance. That doesn't mean that a person of substance can't think about his/her personal benefits. If his/her work is makes a little change to society then it is beneficial for him/her also. A person of substance values his/her family and society and treats everyone as equal. He always tries to become a man of values rather than a man of success. He/she always tries objectively assess right from wrong without bias. He/ she values relationships and is committed and principled. He always tries to choose the right path to success, i.e. the path of hard work. He/she always challenges and always tries to put up a good fight. He/she always gives importance to others' points of view. He/she has integrity and is honest.

As Martin Luther King says, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in moments of challenge and courtesy."

I would like to end with this famous quote:

"There are two great days in our life, the day we are born the day we realize why."

-William Barclay

A person of substance is someone who not only thinks beyond borders but also of the benefits of having larger goals for society.

A person of substance as I see it might not necessarily be an intellectual: someone who can vociferously talk about any subject that exists on the planet at length, quoting numerous thinkers. A person of substance is that rare breed who is equipped to make his/her life a masterpiece in both theory and practice. The necessary ingredients for the same constitute a long list of highly subjective adjectives debatable both in quality and intensity. It will be audacious to try to create a formula for the same. So, I would rather try and enumerate a few condensed factors that can make a person, a person of substance.

1. Choosing to fight

Every person of substance has a fight they are sincerely and naturally or experientially drawn towards, that may even become the crux of their life. Whether it be developing cheap transport to Mars, making better robots, treating cancer, abating human rights violations, making good education inclusive, freeing a nation, making the atmosphere cleaner, or even providing financial and emotional security to one's own family. Irrespective of the cause of the fight, small or big, the fight is sincere and ardent. One has to have the relevant skills and understanding to be able to fight the cause at hand. There has to be enough patience to delve into the problem and design the path for change.

Progress is a subjective milestone. It can be about breaking a strong conventional paradigm, creating awareness, generating viable solutions for the issue at hand, bringing in a new lens to analyze the problem, etc.

2. Sensitivity and balance

A person of substance is hardly ever radical. He/she may be zealous about the cause that he/she fights for but not blinded by extremism. A very good example of the same can be Adolf Hitler's policies. His cause was to free Germany of the burden of World War One and make it great. His effective economic regime, his military expertise, his largely unselfish dream and his charismatic persona were all largely discounted by the fact that he lacked balance and sensitivity. He demanded far too many martyrs and was indifferent to the tragic consequences of the fulfilment of his dream.

A person of substance is that rare breed who is equipped to make his/her life a masterpiece in both theory and practice.

3. Principles

Persons of substance have some principle they abide by in the means to reach their goal. As the Hindu philosophy says it, it is only the means that is under control and not the result and thus it becomes our responsibility to consciously adhere to a certain set of ethics that guide all behaviour. Morality does not guarantee happiness; it rather makes you worthy of happiness. Even at the greatest temptation, a person of substance must not falter from certain self-imposed principles.

Maybe this is the recipe for an ideal human. Maybe the examples I have mentioned might mislead the reader to believe that people of substance belong to an elite group which is impenetrable by common men/women. However, the characteristics mentioned above can be found in any simple god fearing person, who tries to help others around in maximum capacity. All men of substance might not have the same ambitions to change the world but whatever their ambitions, their fights may be, they are most likely to achieve success. To end, I would like to quote a few famous lines by Arundhati Roy, an Indian activist:

"To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away."

Growing up in a patriarchal orthodox Muslim society from southern India, I always wondered what it means to be an initiator of a solution to a problem which affects the lives of people significantly. This cannot be done by being a mere spectator, it requires a strong passionate mind to be a leader or participant to bring out change in this world. Even a person's smallest action can lead to something big. It could be minimising the usage of plastic or could be an initiative of a beach clean-up. No matter how small your action is, one should always strive to find a solution to the many problems that exist around the world. It's never too early to start to make a difference and that can inspire so many young minds to come up and solve problems. And it's never too late to be the change you want to see in this world.

To be a person of substance is to be someone of positive influence who stands up for what he/she believes in. As a young responsible architect, I believe living by your morals and values can bring something significant into the world. The story of the hare who believes in easy predictions and the tortoise that works hard and wins the race by her perseverance taught me that at a tender age.

To be a person of substance is to be someone of positive influence who stands up for what he/she believes in.

In a world of booming issues and problems what makes a man strive for a meaningful life really matters. Such a person wants to make the world a better place, end poverty, increase the quality of life or eradicate world hunger. It can vary with time or from person to person. But what matters the most is a person who wants greater good for the world. That makes a person of substance.

He/she takes initiative to always learn and explore various ideas that exist around the world. A person of substance is selfless and passionate in what he/she does with great empathy which makes him/her understand and share the feelings of others.

'If you're not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem'. A person of substance believes in this ideology which makes them the change-makers of the world. One might fail in doing the right thing, but that creates experience and inspires one to become the best. An active participation in various issues can increase ones experience. Therefore a person of substance should take risks for worthy causes and face the consequences in every possible scenario. He/she takes responsibility and shows wholehearted committed engagement.

As the world renowned poet Robert Frost once wrote, "Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less travelled by and that has made all the difference." All of us make various decisions and choose between the good and bad. And being a young person, to be a person of substance is to do what is right for the long term with wholehearted commitment and accepting responsibility for the greater good, and I strongly believe that a person of substance always chooses the road less travelled.

In the world there are few people who have a philanthropic personality. Man is made of blood, skin and bones. Nature has not been partial to anybody on the earth. Lord Shiva teaches us to love animals, serpents, trees, all creatures and be friendly to nature. Lord Buddha teaches to follow non-violence, be humane to all creatures, serve all, love all and treat everyone as your own family members towards the path to nirvana and above all to follow the Panchsheel and Astangik Marg keeping away from damaging nature and the entire world. Lord Christ also teaches us to observe the path of brotherhood, love the have-nots and respect all, which is echoed by all great seers the world has known.

By following and translating into words and action the above teachings -- war, inequality, exploitation, violence, hunger and all sorts of evils affecting our society can be removed to achieve happiness all over the world. And by adopting the above teachings man can establish his substance and keep himself away from all the evils of our society.

The great poet Neeraj has said, "Let us make a new religion through which man may be made man."

The trees do not eat their own fruits, the rivers do not drink their own water, the sun doesn't shine to brighten itself, the earth does not grow grains for its own sake, rain does not shower for itself. Similarly, the birth of the man is to live, to serve others. It is this value which makes different from man and animal.

Men should connect with their higher nature. The choices made between the harder right and easy wrong defines a man. A single person cannot progress in all directions. People are meant to perform different tasks according to their respective strengths. Uniqueness of their qualities makes them substantial. Limits cannot be imposed. There is no framework. Everyday the value changes according to the need of the society. Stagnation cannot be appreciated, one should go along with the times. What is in the past cannot be dealt in the future as it will be destructive for the present. Above all, keeping a scientific attitude and progressive thoughts make a person of substance.

There are many men who change their behaviour according to the need of the circumstances for their own selfish end, but on the contrary, there are people who revolt against evils, exploitation and tyranny, inhumane attitude and sacrifice their lives for the cause of people. Sacrifices made for the welfare of other people are the real signs of a man's value. The values of men are inversely appreciated not by the extent of their wealth and power. Merely taking birth, living and seeking enjoyment does not add any value. But those who contribute towards society and make changes in the world will be recognised.

And the will to do anything comes from within. Great people can inspire, show the path but cannot force others to follow. We recall the name of Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismill, Subhas Chandra Bose so on and so forth. They were people of substance are ever-lasting guides for us and the coming generation.

These great men of the world taught us how to be people of substance couple with Lord Buddha's spiritual guidance.

"Timeless principles never age, and truth is as young as the day it was spoken into existence."
- Craig D. Lounsbrough.

Life is a journey full of memories. Good memories speak of happiness to achieve that being a person of substance is the need of the hour.

The choices made between the harder right and easy wrong defines a man.

Faith. Integrity. Truth. Humanity.

Giving strength to the weak, sympathy to the suffering, and heart to God makes an individual a real human being. A person of substance, according to me is one who wants to be the reason for people to believe in the goodness of human beings, who has depth, who wants to improve himself/herself and his inner character, who wants to grow; and most importantly the one who celebrate his/her individuality and who doesn't attempt to be someone he/she is not.

Giving strength to the weak, sympathy to the suffering, and heart to God makes an individual a real human being.

A person of substance is the one who follows the philosophy of "Dream-Thought-Action". This is the person who thinks about what he/she can do for others rather than expecting what others can do for him/her. A combination of knowledge, enthusiasm and hard work is a dynamic fire that leads an individual to be a person of substance. A person of substance believes that he/she has a right as well as responsibility to leave a positive legacy for posterity for which they'll be remembered. Each one of us on this planet creates a page in human history irrespective of who he or she is. And the person of substance realizes that though his/her experience is a small dot in human history, it has a life and light that illuminates.

What really makes a person of substance?

- The dictionary meaning of "substance" is "a particular kind of matter with uniform properties". Thus, person of substance lives as the same person, no matter with whom he is or what he is doing. He lives a consistent life. The consistent behaviour is the sign of an impeccable individual. Following the said words as an oath makes the person reliable. Consistency is what leads him/her to be a person of substance.
- The very idea of working for the greater good also makes a person of substance
- Living by moral standards and values is of course another way to be a person of substance
- At the core of humanity it's about connection. It's more about heart-to-heart talks. And this quality of empathy is the first step towards being a person of substance.
- Most importantly, I believe to be a person of substance one should have radical faith in God. One should identify his/her lessons in adverse circumstances and believe that whatever happens in one's life is always for good and God has better plans. The person needs to have a "God Loving" philosophy rather than that of "God Fearing".
- Another significant value for being a person of substance is integrity and truth. The person needs to be honest not only with others but also with his himself. Integrity with oneself makes the person fearless. The dynamic blend of truth and integrity gives the person a different kind of power, the power to be confident, to present one's thoughts and views confidently, the power to connect deeply with others. And Shakespeare has correctly put this: "No Legacy is as rich as Honesty".

Hence, I believe that to strive to be a person of substance, along with the crucial values of faith, integrity, truthfulness and humanity, one should follow the principle of 3Ds- *Determination, Dedication and Discipline*. Thus, the efforts entailed in being a person of substance builds hope in our lives, the hope of living with integrity, the hope of being real and sincere and the hope of knowing that God is at work in our life.

Is it the Kryptonian lineage of Superman? Or the bite of the radioactive spider for Peter Parker? What makes them who they are? Is it really these extraordinary happenings in their life? After all, isn't this what the typical story of a comic book hero portrays: one day a chap is normal and then something out of the ordinary happens which propels this person to greatness?

Readers tend to single out the extraordinary event as the special ingredient in the making of people of substance. These events do contribute to the scale on which superheroes affect things. However, it is the ordinary events in their lives that shape them into persons of substance. It was the death of a near one which made Peter Parker fight for justice as Spider-Man. And it was being brought up by a common couple on Earth that made Superman the saviour of life on Earth.

Fiction is a window to reality. If one looks hard enough, one will find reflections of one's own world in the worlds of fiction, even in those designed for light-hearted fun such as cartoons. The persons of substance in those fictional spaces are caricatures of their real-world counterparts, their representations painting in broad strokes the attributes of a person of substance in the real world. In this instance, they show that the extraordinary in life does not make a person of substance, the reaction to the ordinary does. It is by continuously winning small battles against the insurmountable odds that one wins the war for greater meaning in life.

Readers tend to single out the extraordinary event as the special ingredient in the making of people of substance.

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

– Helen Keller

This statement sums up how people of substance view life. For them life is not a flowing river to be watched from its bank, it is a boat in the river they are guiding. Consider the life of Helen Keller herself. She was the first deaf-blind girl to earn a Bachelor's degree. Deprived of the primary sensory functions since childhood, she had to learn everything through unique gestures. Her everyday struggles turned her into one of the strongest characters of her times. Every ordinary battle of her life was training her how to be a champion, a person of substance.

Although Helen Keller's struggles were unique, the efforts she put to overcome the difficulties represent the machinations in every being's life. A school for visually impaired in the state of Meghalaya in India is trying to setup a science curriculum for its secondary school students. The students cannot learn through traditional teaching methods which are hugely dependent on visual reception. Yet their indomitable spirit is open to display in every science class when they try unique methods to unearth new approaches. This molds them into persons of substance.

A feeble old man from India who made a mighty empire shake, M. K. Gandhi, showed the contemporary world that every ordinary person can become a person of substance by refusing to bend in front of institutional discrimination. After him came Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, both advocates of equality in countries divided by race. Each of them showed whole generations in their respective nations the power of standing against daily oppression. Every fighter who took up this cause against oppression transformed into a person of substance.

These are just a few examples which show that in real life, as in fiction, it is not the power of the body that makes a person of substance, it is the power of the will. A person of substance doesn't let the exterior reshape his/her interior; he/she makes the interior shape the exterior. Every one of us has the potential to be a person of substance, one just has to unlock what's hidden inside.

"Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one."

– Marcus Aurelius

A person of substance is someone who lives a meaningful life and is always a part of the solution instead of being the problem. He/ she tries to make the world a better place. There are a lot of people around us who are so proud in their success and regret in their losses, but a person of substance will take risk and his /her soul is safe from victories and defeat. It is a rare breed and not easy to find. President Roosevelt spoke of these people in his speech “The man in the Arena” where he said: “The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

People of substance take responsibility and wholeheartedly; if you put them at the epicenter of the action they fully accept whatever the consequences that decision may bring. A responsible, wholehearted and committed engagement in the world points to a second element of becoming a person of substance.

As Will Rogers, a humorist explained “Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.” So, the solution-seeking person of substance will have had significant experience in both the good and the bad. He/she will have “met with triumph and disaster and have treated those two impostors just the same” as the poem “If so” elegantly proclaims. No doubt they will have lived an experience rich, full and multi-faceted life. Choosing to experience life outside of our comfort zone to gain good judgment that can be used in solving problems would appear to be another action that would lead to becoming a person of substance.

After reviewing the components of what makes a person of substance it appears that becoming anything involves a series of decisions followed by appropriate actions. As Robert Frost said (1874–1963):

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
and that has made all the difference.*

I believe a person of substance chooses the less travelled path at each and every divergence his/her decisions and behaviour impact people where ever they travel. A person of substance sets a high moral standard making those around want to emulate him/her.

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“What would life be, if we had no courage to attempt anything?” asked a man who saw the world in an unconventional way, Vincent Willem van Gogh. His 128th death anniversary nears us and the topic for this essay reminds me of not only him, but a handful of such unconventional people that possessed the quality to change the world.

A person, regardless of their gender, sexuality and social status, who craves a new direction and is not afraid to carve a new path by themselves, is in my interpretation a person of substance. For generations we have heard about people who stood by their beliefs. People who are not afraid to jump out of the rat race, we as a civilised society are accustomed to, and live in pursuit of genuine happiness. Some of the elements in this pursuit may comprise of a balanced sense of virtue, polity and love.

A beautiful poet and philosopher from Tamil Nadu called Thiruvalluvar spoke of these senses in the form of 1,330 couplets in “Thirukkural”.

“Righteousness is all about removing the four flaws – envy, desire, anger and harsh words.” –Book of Aram (Virtue)

As we grow up, we slowly notice how the menial things influence us as a person, such as someone else’s success, greed, and an argument that eventually turns us bitter towards others. As Chaucer says, “Human error is inevitable...” hence, even if we cannot be perfect or ideal, we sure can at least make an effort to be so at a small percentage.

“One who accepts without assessing, will invite harm that will last for generations.”
–Book of Porul (Materialistic World)

We, as a generation must strive for this particular ability, to make sane assessment and differentiate between right and wrong. We tend to rush into decisions and pass judgements without a care in the world. When we have a sane and quiet mind, and the sense of polity, we take decisions after we have acquired the basic information so no injustice is done. Instead, we see cases where social media posts are forwarded without any such assessment that lead to the destruction of peace in the community.

“Brewed spirits intoxicate only when they are consumed. They cannot, like love, enthrall even those who merely behold.”
–Book of Kamam (Love)

Humans thrive when in love. Love with a sexual partner, siblings, parents, and friends. Empathy, affection, compassion and gratitude is what can lift us when brewed in our hearts, making us as humane as possible. In my opinion, when a person possesses these qualities, no matter in what percentage, he/she is a person of substance. Sane assessment, righteousness, and affection for others, that is what brings change and that is what inspires movement. Being someone who practices secular ethics, and has a non-denominational nature, with similar insights to life, could be a person of substance, who influences the lives of people around him/her, and makes a difference instead of standing on the shore and waving goodbye to the opportunities that make us worthy of the term “human”.

A person, regardless of their gender, sexuality and social status, who craves a new direction and is not afraid to carve a new path by themselves, is in my interpretation a person of substance.

A person of substance, in my opinion, is an individual who looks at the world in a positive light and endeavours to tackle the problems surrounding him/her through his/her actions, rather than just talking about those problems and blaming the government machinery for them. He/she is an individual who seeks the truth and gives back to society whatever way possible. He/she is aware of the privileges and the problems which plague the world of the individuals who do not have the same socio-economic background. He/she respects the views of people around them, even if he/she doesn't agree with them. He/she considers it a duty to work towards positive social change in the world without the agenda of boosting his/her image in social circles.

It is evident then that the first and foremost quality that a person of substance must possess is sensitivity.

It is evident then that the first and foremost quality that a person of substance must possess is sensitivity. If the person is not sensitive to the world around him/he, to his/her parents, siblings and friends, he/she won't be able to understand and support them whenever the need arises. Consequently, he/she would not be able to build empathy in order to work for the causes closest to his/her heart. When a person is sensitive, he/she is affected by his/her surroundings more deeply. To have the awareness of stepping up and working to uplift society, we have to be sensitive enough to be moved by the inequalities at various levels in our world.

Another quality which a person of substance must possess is compassion. An individual who takes pride in mocking and insulting other people can never bring about positivity in the world. Compassion enables us to understand the challenges faced by others. It allows us to build empathy with others, something which is crucial for an individual who wants to make a difference in the world. Compassion also kills our ego and makes us humble, and humility is another prerequisite for being a positive individual. Humility allows us to put our achievements at the back of our minds so that we endeavour towards doing better work and becoming better individuals eventually.

People of substance should be highly efficient in the work that they do. Their work shouldn't be something which merely pays their bills. They should work towards something which they are passionate about, something which constantly challenges them, something which they love doing so much that it does not seem like "work" to them. Their occupation should be a major part of who they are as an individual. Moreover, while working, they should be open to criticism of all kinds, take that criticism in their stride and work towards improving themselves. They must strive diligently, and react to success and failure in a similar fashion; they shouldn't become complacent after success or despondent after failure. They should show resilience in the face of difficulty and have an action-oriented approach to every problem.

The key to maximize the impact of one's work is to live by one's ideals. A person of substance is someone who sets rules for himself/herself and then lives by those rules. If one is very good at work but picks up the wrong habits, then there won't be consistency in the work. Moreover, the person should be honest while working. He/she should give honest feedback to the people at work, accept one's mistakes readily and express one's concerns openly. He/she should also know how to function with people in teams, how to lead teams, and how to bring out the best in every individual in his/her team. He/she should be open-minded and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of caste, class, colour, age, region, religion, gender and sexual orientation. A person of substance knows that to get respect, one has to respect others as well.

In the confusion caused by the numerous aspects surrounding us, a person of substance should be someone who is a part of the solution. In addition to working diligently, he/she should be able to work towards the progress of the people surrounding him/her, and at the same time ensuring that he/she plays a part in contributing towards making our world a better place to live in.

I understand “substance” to be skill, wisdom and enthusiasm in life. A man is empowered with these qualities when he is good with the following six aspects.

I understand
“substance” to be
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enthusiasm in life.

First is his ability to see. If a man has the skill to see beyond what others can, his fellow-beings will look up to him for guidance. He would be capable of identifying the hurdles sooner. His actions can be performed with a big picture in mind, because he can foresee the ripples of his actions. The capacity to see things the way they are brings a sense of discrimination -- the distinction between the temporary and the permanent. This helps him move across short term misery and attain long-term happiness, for example, to overcome the initial hesitation while developing a new useful habit.

Second is integrity. Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev says “Integrity is a certain coherence between what you say and what you do, and what you think and how you feel about life around you. It is not just in your actions. Integrity is in the way you are and the way you carry yourself.” This is important to build trust, and essential to collaborate in a group. As a collective effort is required to do anything significant in the world today, integrity is an important virtue to possess.

Third is the ability to fall in love with the people around. This has to be immediate as others take their own time to reciprocate the same emotion. Once there is love it makes living a beautiful experience.

Fourth is the unwavering dedication towards the cause. To make a significant impact in the field of his work, a man needs to have mastery over the contributions already made to the field. Then he can work towards taking them a step further. The world is growing increasingly complex, so any useful major contribution to the world happens only with broad and thorough understanding of the context of the action. This requires a long-term commitment to the cause. He should not give into distractions on the path. To have unwavering dedication he needs a support to hold on to, whatever the situation be. So he has to have a compelling source of “inspiration”, this happens when his work is aimed towards achieving desires that are truly dear to him.

Fifth is *sadhana*. By *sadhana* I refer to the spiritual practices. Regular *sadhana* is the means to make the very life energies malleable, so that a man can mould his personality as the situation demands. It strengthens dispassion and forbearance, giving the necessary stability when a situation around him goes amiss. Being stable includes maintaining a happy state of mind. This is a rare skill. Very few people can be at their best in tough times, though these are the times when people are needed to give their best. *Sadhana* leads to a state where a man can be passionate and dispassionate at the same time. This means he has enthusiasm towards life, yet he has no feverishness about the result of his actions. Moreover, *sadhana* gives clarity in perception, so that he can act consciously without being compelled by emotions like anger and jealousy.

And the sixth is having a realized being as his guru. A guru makes a disciple aware of his shortcomings, creates the right for his growth, works on his inner self so that all the curtains that cover the inner strength and beauty are removed, and gives him the strength to walk untrodden paths which might be necessary to reach his goal. A guru brings out the quality of devotion so that the very emotions of an individual are sweet always. To such a man, the inner and outer worlds offer their best. Life truly becomes a celebration! Equipped with these attributes, may every man know the power of being the master of his own destiny.

“Do not mistake the finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself.”

– Zen saying

The dictionary Merriam-Webster defines “substance” as “essential nature”, “a fundamental characteristic” and interestingly, “ultimate reality that underlies all outward manifestations and change”. The last definition is extremely crucial, for it affirms that things/people/energies never exist in isolation but in a fluid tandem with each other.

After some very fascinating discussions with different people I know, I have come to an understanding that the question can be usually dealt with in two distinct ways -- either from an external perspective of what the world thinks is substantial in a person, or from one’s inner churning and contemplation. The former is relatively easier to define and deliberate upon whereas the latter can only be brought to the fore by the individual, with the true nature of substance lying somewhere in the disruptive yet harmonious intermingling of both these perspectives.

Substance, to me, is the essential inherent core of our being present in each of us. By this definition, each and every person on this planet is a person of substance but this substance has a tendency of getting lost beneath a multi-varied layer of myths and affiliations that prevent us from even glimpsing our true nature. A person of substance is a cohesive and progressive amalgamation of the different archetypal energies that come alive during different phases in our life, births causing a shift in the grounding axis of our life every single time. A person of substance is accommodative yet firm, simultaneously a disruptive yet harmonious force. His/ her values are like a spinning coin intertwined with society’s values in a separate and non-separate way.

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He/she is the best approximation of truth that society wants to project on itself; a contradiction of sorts whereby we want to reach the stars by having our heads buried in the ground. The odyssey of understanding, apprehending and molding the moral persuasion of society towards the arc of justice and questioning things fundamentally makes a person of substance.

Earlier on, a very peculiar question struck me: Was Hitler a man of substance? The ability to navigate the sufferings of our being without a claim of liability on someone, something or a circumstance is what makes a person of substance; not being bogged down by the constraints of one’s situation/life events be it sociological (Ambedkar), biological (Stephen Hawking), economic (Prof. S. Parasuraman), psychological (Gautam Buddha) and yet reach the epitome of human excellence that is harmonious and not exploitative is what embodies substance -- shunning both supremacy and indifference.

In order to be blissful, it is imperative that we focus on substance that enriches our lives instead of substance that is merely appreciated by others. This substance that enriches and resides within us -- and to be able to glimpse and begin to understand this life-enriching force -- requires silent persistent contemplation and a slow peeling of the numerous layers that envelop us as a result of our uncritical affiliation to circumstances, our upbringing and other stimuli that shape our world view. Once we begin to peel these layers, we begin to flow from a stage of stagnancy. Stagnancy is toxic, whereas flow is invigorating and brings substance to the fore.

Take the example of a river. It is always flowing and yet it is always there, it is the same and yet it is always new. It is silent, gushing, melodious, a trickle, and a behemoth during different phases of its journey but respects its boundaries on either side. It incorporates so much into it, but it never ceases to flow. Just as the river flowing within its boundaries at most times but becomes destructive when it breaks free, so also is the case with the stream of human life. It is only when it flows between the two bounds of Dharma and Moksha that it will be conducive to the happiness of both the individual and society. It is only this arrangement that can strike a balance between enjoyment and peace of mind and ultimately lead one to the state of highest bliss, the praxis of which makes a person of substance.

A person of substance is someone with a vision, a dream, and a mission in life. A person of substance is someone who is neither rich nor poor, who may be highly educated or illiterate. The person has no idea and does not know about the ways and means to achieve that vision, dream and mission. All this person has is courage and a never-ending desire to achieve what has been conceptualized in his/her mind. Such a person is not afraid of being the odd-one-out in the crowd, but a person who prefers to sacrifice his/her life for a better tomorrow. He/she stands out and has the ability to gather masses and raise money for a cause. A person who goes all the way till the end, gives more than a 100 percent, a person who is not afraid to die for a cause. A person who gives back to their society is a person of substance.

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We all know and have read about great names in our school and colleges like Alexander the Great, Christopher Columbus, M.K. Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Steve Jobs, Bills Gates and the likes. These people and many such people are well known to the world.

There are also people like Dashrath Manjhi who was thought to be a crazy madman for toiling on the rocks, creating a path through a small mountain to benefit the entire village by carving an entire road with hand tools, working for 22 years. Manjhi started off his extraordinary task in 1960, after his wife was injured while trekking and to reach the nearest hospital, he had to travel around the mountains for some 70 kilometers. He was from Gehlour Hills in Bihar and wanted his people to have easier access to doctors, schools and other facilities. With just a sledge hammer, chisel, and crowbar, he single-handedly began carving a road through the 300-foot mountain that isolated his village from the nearest town. People told Manjhi that he wouldn't be able to do it, that he is a poor man who just needs to earn and eat. He sold the family's three goats to buy the hammer and chisels and toiled every day. After plowing fields for others in the morning, he would work on his road all evening and throughout the night. Finally, the road was completed, with the sides 25 feet high and 30 feet wide and 360 feet in length. Because of his singular dedication, the distance to public services was reduced from 70km to just one. There are many such heroes who are unsung and nameless with big and small acts of sacrifice.

I have been fortunate to learn from people – my parents, teachers, professors -- and from books. My first conscious memory goes far back when I was in the 4th Standard where my English teacher told us in class to write in bold letters “Please come back later, busy studying right now” and to stick it on our doors and to lock our doors and study. Back then it felt quite rebellious and fun to put to practice but it was later in life I actually understood what she was trying to say.

Experience makes me better, it is a process, it is a journey. I was brought up to believe that values are more important than money. I do my best at every opportunity I get. Doing my best is enough and as time goes by there will be learnings which will make me to think bigger and for the better and that is why I am here today for contributing and doing my best for the Indo Bhutan Summit 2018.

A person of substance is one who is comfortable with his or her own self. Substance comes in life when we work for others, for those in need of help. Substance defines the purpose of our lives. It defines for what we live for. It defines how we view ourselves in relation to the home, the city, our country and the whole world.

Substance comes in life when we work for others, for those in need of help.

Substance comes in life when we work for others. It even gives happiness. Like, a parent when taking care of one child with true unconditional love experiences the best feeling in the world. So when one gives true love one is actually getting it. And what one receives at that time cannot be quantified, it is just so immense when a person is happy, stable from within and is being able to bring happiness in others' lives. It is this that makes the person's life full of substance. When a person is happy from within only then the person can truly make others happy. Happiness is a state of mind. One can always choose to be happy. It just depends on the person to be happy or sad. The same goes for other things too. One can always choose between good and bad. One can always choose between love and hatred. What matters are the people around us. Being natural and truthful towards them is the best thing. One can always improve upon oneself. Even if there are bad habits since childhood one can always choose between living with them or quitting them.

When the pursuit of truth becomes the focal point it leads to happiness. Living for the Right thing, without thinking of how much big or small the consequence may be is the best option. Being happy even for the small positive changes has effects in the long run. One must focus on the present and not dwell on the past. One should just strive for good at the present moment.

Parents are very important, when the need arises one should take care of them. Even in normal circumstances one should take care of one's parents. Help should be empowering and not make the person dependent. The empowered person has higher self-esteem than the dependent one. Empowerment requires more effort in the short run but very less effort in the long run. An empowered person can also motivate those around. It can have a multiplying effect. Any society progresses in a gradual manner. Having faith in progress and making efforts for the progress is the right way forward.

Thus what will give substance or meaning to life is when a person thinks of the whole world as one's own, works for its betterment, takes care of all fellow human beings, plants, animals, nature. This will not have boundaries -international or whatsoever. Humanity will define one's life that too towards all.

One focus on personal gain. One does not have to achieve anything -- just living for others with true love. The person should have neither insecurities nor any fear. It is true that living like this will be challenging and that too on a permanent basis. Neither should it become a goal. But it is the effort, dedication, commitment and belief that living for others will bring that gives meaning to life. And when one considers everyone as one's own and love them unconditionally then that meaning and substance in life will be limitless.

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A person of substance is one who is comfortable with his or her own self. Substance comes in life when we work for others, for those in need of help. Substance defines the purpose of our lives. It defines for what we live for. It defines how we view ourselves in relation to the home, the city, our country and the whole world.

According to me, a person of substance is someone who is out of the ordinary.

Substance comes in life when we work for others. It even gives happiness. Like, a parent when taking care of one child with true unconditional love experiences the best feeling in the world. So when one gives true love one is actually getting it. And what one receives at that time cannot be quantified, it is just so immense when a person is happy, stable from within and is being able to bring happiness in others' lives. It is this that makes the person's life full of substance. When a person is happy from within only then the person can truly make others happy. Happiness is a state of mind. One can always choose to be happy. It just depends on the person to be happy or sad. The same goes for other things too. One can always choose between good and bad. One can always choose between love and hatred. What matters are the people around us. Being natural and truthful towards them is the best thing. One can always improve upon oneself. Even if there are bad habits since childhood one can always choose between living with them or quitting them.

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In the second decade of the 21st century, we take pride in being enslaved by technology. We have an application for everything. We are improving our modes of communication but minimising the need to use skills of communication. We are forgetting how to talk with human beings. In fact, we are choosing to avoid human beings altogether. Even the government is marketing one of the perks of GST as “minimised human interface”. In a technologically-oriented time like this, it is not particularly difficult to disguise oneself as a person of substance. How easy it is to pretend to be popular when in real life people cannot recognize these social media celebrities by their real faces? How easy it is to pretend to be a philosopher with a panache for poetry when in reality those are copied works of lesser known artists? How easy it is to act as a person of substance by voicing the popular opinion of supporting women’s rights, reading Murakami, hating Trump and bashing Rupi Kaur?

What is substance, anyway? To have unshakeable opinions stemming from a person’s well-read persona and the ability to gauge multiple perspectives before making a judgement while being unbiased towards the moral code and religious values the person was raised with, but is that all?

Do we easily spare the person conforming to these requirements? In the end, we station ourselves pompously on the judging panel in front of this person of substance who is, at the end of the day, a person before anything else. And human beings evolved to their current state because of their ability to be emotional, which is the only thing that separates us from animals. Other than being social animals, we feel deeply and we remember our feelings.

So, the judgement and opinion of a human being is bound to be compromised at some point of time. Let us hypothetically corner this person of substance into a debate about the religion that he was raised with. All of his happy childhood memories, which are attached to that particular moment of gifts, food and celebration during the school annual festival, start coming back to him. He sees nothing wrong with his version of that religion. The version where every member of the family comes together to celebrate life and existence and where God is a comforting name before every exam. Therefore, when it is a debate about his religion, he loses perspective, because for him, as a 10-year-old kid, it was all about rose sherbet and meat delicacies but for somebody else on the other side of the world, it is about terror and horror. In such a case, is the said person not of substance anymore? He lost perspective on his own religion. Does it make him shallow in that moment? But he is only human, isn’t he?

A person of substance does not have a definition, he does not have a code of conduct, he does not have a reading list comprising of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, he does not have to wear organic cotton and listen to jazz of the 1950s. A person of substance is a person who is conscious about himself and his origin, who is respectful towards the opinions of other people, who is brave enough to voice his opinion, and whose actions support his opinions in making his surroundings better for his community if not the entire world. This person may not be well-read and might not even keep up with the global events but in the end he is humble enough to learn at every stage of his life and from anybody who can teach him, regardless of their age, sex, religion or nationality. A person of substance is aware that after all, we are all humans and so is he.

A person of substance is a person who is conscious about himself and his origin, who is respectful towards the opinions of other people, who is brave enough to voice his opinion, and whose actions support his opinions in making his surroundings better for his community if not the entire world.

So many people live within unhappy circumstances, and yet, do not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity and conservatism. So many people lack the courage and give up on their dreams, being bound by societal norms or expectations. And so many people dismiss their desires as impractical or not being consistent with the greater “cosmic” plan.

Hence, today, we are witnessing a generation that likes to settle for mediocrity. People are settling into mediocre jobs, mediocre relationships, mediocre outcomes and a mediocre life.

Moreover, the world today is changing at a faster rate than ever before. What may be considered an absolute necessary skill today, may completely lose its relevance in a few years. Similarly, what were considered to be new-age technological breakthroughs in the recent past, have already started to become archaic, being replaced by newer discoveries and innovations.

In such a scenario, there exists a recurring urge amongst most people to constantly upgrade themselves, citing the fear of becoming outdated or musty.

*Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdeer se pehle
Khuda bande se khud pooche, bata teri raza kya hai*

These words by Allama Iqbal begin to ring in my mind, whenever I'm confronted by any such enigma, constantly reminding me of the power of oneself in shaping one's own future and destiny. They reinstate in one, the importance of self-assurance and self-awareness.

As a child, I loved watching my favourite cartoon character: the Road Runner. Despite having a lingering threat to its life, in the form of Wile. E. Coyote's grit and relentlessness, the road runner backs in its own capabilities, never tries to change its desired path and manages to successfully outsmart its opponent every single time. The road runner's character presents great learnings for one who has been a victim of self-doubt and timidness.

Allama Iqbal's words and the Road Runner's character also highlight the significance of facing one's fear, taking risks to achieve desired outcomes and seeking answers internally rather than externally.

That person, who is able to embrace and imbibe these values/qualities in his/her personality, is certain to excel in whatever he/she pursues. That person, who is able to endure such circumstantial hardships and come out strong without being deviated, shall experience incorruptible riches or unparalleled satisfaction. That person is indeed a person of substance.

Being a person of substance, I believe, cannot really be perfectly marked by tags and labels thrown on an individual. A person of substance is one who identifies his own actions and underlying assumptions, biases, affiliations subsequently trying to identify his/her core values in clear terms while being open to new ideas and thoughts in life. However, these notions may or may not be acknowledged by people for they never may have put in a conscious thought towards “substance” which is not “materialistic”. Most people do not strive towards things that they make them happy but channelize their energies towards goals that provide social recognition and acceptance. A person of substance is just not just one who is conscious and aware but along with that he/she is “collective unconscious” that has to be discovered. Collective unconsciousness refers to a segment of the deepest unconscious mind not shaped by personal experience. It is genetically inherited and common to all human beings. This term beautifully coined by Carl Jung means subconscious nuances that a person is relatively unaware of have to be brought into the awareness by constantly working upon instincts and archetypes.

A person of substance is one who identifies his own actions and underlying assumptions, biases, affiliations subsequently trying to identify his/her core values in clear terms while being open to new ideas and thoughts in life.

John Locke, in a study, used a series of cases to make three points:

- Personal identity over time does not consist in being the same man (living human body)
- Personal identity over time does not consist in having the same immaterial substance (also known as a “finite intelligence”, “spirit”, or “soul”)
- Personal identity over time does consist in the extension of consciousness over time

A person of substance, I believe can never come to a point where he/she may think that there is nothing left in this world to learn, explore or work upon. It is rightly said that the learned thinks that he knows nothing and the person with a shallow thought process thinks that he has conquered the world. A person of substance never really rejects any idea/thought/plan/concept, even if it is lies on another axis from his. Rather he/she develops his own idea about the same by questioning, understanding and imbibing fresh perspectives.

Another fact is that a person of substance never really feels the need to put down others in the surroundings. This kind of an attitude is built steadily, brick by brick, through years of one’s own effort in understanding and acknowledging the fact that no two people can ever be the same at any given point; everybody moves forward at their own pace and according to how open and interested they are to imbibe new concepts and ideas. He/she places emphasis on the larger system of happenings behind a response or reaction rather than just the reaction, keeping in mind the importance of minding the gap between the stimuli and the response for it is right there where the wisdom lies.

A person of substance can never be viewed or thought of as someone associated with any one fixated field in terms of their work and interest areas; he/she is an amalgamation of various disciplines and perspectives that enables him/her to smoothly navigate through the various challenges in life without losing their own centeredness.

I truly believe we are all born with abilities to be absolutely amazing. To be successful, to be satisfied and to be happy -- all our answers lie within us.

This is perhaps the reason we love being around kids. They have a sense of pure and untouched wonder about them that excites something within us. Even adults who may normally be very “well-behaved” tend to lose themselves and be their silly and spontaneous selves with children. In addition, children have a learning ability that is unmatched in adults. They try something and fail at it a hundred times a day, and still try with renewed enthusiasm! They laugh freely at the smallest of things, and truly sleep like a baby at night.

But why then do we not see these qualities in most adults around us? Somewhere somehow, our children lose these qualities as they come of age. I think this is due to society’s conditioning, slowly but surely changing their perceptions of themselves and this world.

As children we dream big. We aspire to be actors, pilots, prime ministers and cricketers. As adults, all we are looking for are bigger paycheques. As children, we are energetic and running around 14 hours a day. As adults, we find it hard to complete eight hours of work and just laze around on weekends. As children, we fall a thousand times before our first proper walk. As adults, the thought of failure scares us so much that most don’t even try new things.

Due to whatever reason, children are fed thoughts that start limiting their imaginations. They are told that becoming the Prime Minister of India is impractical, and lakhs of strugglers enter Bollywood every day and 0.01% of them ever manage to get a role. Young girls are told it’s not okay for them to play cricket, and young boys are laughed upon if they wear a saree.

As a result of years of this conditioning, most adults confine to these norms to be accepted in society. The thought of not fulfilling these expectations itself is scary. Therefore, we see a world where cynicism is disguised as practicality, and dreaming big makes you a social outcast. It’s not tough to lose your inner voice and go with the flow. It’s not easy to be laughed upon, derided and insulted for stepping out of line.

However, some men and women still emerge who manage to do that tough job. They trust their inner selves, and set out to achieve what will satisfy them, not society. However hard the process gets, they stay true to their own notions of right and wrong, not surrendering to the outside world. Be it Mahatma Gandhi who faced repeated humiliations and beatings, but stayed the course of non-violence, or be it Gauri Sawant, a transgender fighting all odds to raise a child despite the stigma. Be it Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who doesn’t lose his temper even if a billion Indians do and criticize him, or be it an office senior who rather than scolding a young employee for his mistake, comforts him. For all of them, it was easy to do what was expected of them. Except that they made a choice to do what’s right.

It doesn’t matter how big one’s achievements. It doesn’t matter how big a difference one is making or how popular or rich one is. In my opinion, the only thing which makes a person of substance is shunning out the unimportant and at the end of the day, following one’s inner voice. People who tend to do this usually have a presence and energy about them which gives joy and comfort to others... a little reminiscent of children.

I truly believe we are all born with abilities to be absolutely amazing. To be successful, to be satisfied and to be happy -- all our answers lie within us.

A child is brought up with various tales of courage, truthfulness and integrity usually narrated to them by their grandparents. The child although amazed by it at this early stage finds them to be more and more distant as he grows. He becomes a cynic towards and accepts the “realities”. But a man of substance doesn’t wander off from the convictions that are embedded in those tales. While others find it expedient to push off these convictions he finds intrinsic meaning as well as utility of qualities like courage, truthfulness and integrity in his life. Others have long adopted occasional cowardice and butcher personal integrity in the name of practicality. Convictions are inherent in a man whose life has a purpose and meaning.

A man of substance sees that the only thing that one gains out of such self-betrayal is materialistic wealth which only satiates human greed and dries up real soon. Thus, he chooses to tread his own path not facilitated by the complicit society. He always faces resistance from his fellow human beings who would prefer to bow down to the ways that society deems fit. He is unmoved by society and its hollowed-out traditions. He leads life with a purpose with pure mind without greed. He must lead a life according to the age-old dictum of “simple living and high thinking”. The great bard Rabindranath Tagore in his song *Ekla Cholo* writes: “O unlucky one, if the dark night brings a storm at the door - then let the lightning ignite the light in you alone to shine on the path. If no-one heeds your call - then walk alone...” He has described such a person being often alone and calls him unlucky because he must face hardships that no other human does or want to, yet he must simply forge ahead to seek meaning and purpose in life. His frugal nature, his simplicity and his forbearance are the facilitators for the capacity to bear the hardships.

He has an unwavering dedication to what is important to his life and discards rest as mere distractions. Iterations and failures are integral to his life and he understands that these are only meant to refine his resourcefulness. He knows that any form of failure wouldn’t be able to put him in an internal jeopardy as he is master of his own life and losing his material wealth or societal prestige which is merely for namesake isn’t a drastic loss. He must be prepared to lose it all and without a whimper must restart his journey. He knows that he himself doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of life but the changes and the deeds that he was able to bring forth matters to those who are touched by it. He is an insignificant man, he understands and realizes this fact, so he ceases all his operations to achieve prestige. Our lives are wrapped around benchmarks of success set by society, many of us do realize the sheer futility of this pandering but do not possess the conviction to act against it. We argue that it is imperative for our existence and well-being that we follow the norms and be complicit about such matters. The fear behind this is the fear to walk alone.

Simplicity guides a man’s life, stoicism shapes his courage. He is the man that we may rely upon as our conscience keeper, to open our eyes which are contrived to be shut off by our thoughtlessness. He is the statesman who guides the masses and inspires them. He opens their eyes so that they are able to see. He may very well be a lonesome traveler with no one to look out for him and with no one left behind that he has inspired, yet he belongs to the ages and he treads on with a smile on his face and a satiated soul.

A man of substance sees that the only thing that one gains out of such self-betrayal is materialistic wealth which only satiates human greed and dries up real soon.

From my childhood memories, I can recollect hearing that phrase, “person of substance”, from my parents and most of the house elders many times. It actually gave me an understanding of leading an economically “successful” and socially “acceptable” life. But later on I realized that the phrase has nothing to do with economic wellness or socially-accepted positions. I think, all these things are for face-value and has nothing to do with true “substance”.

I think one can be a person of substance only through showing love and being your real self to others.

I think one can be a person of substance only through showing love and being your real self to others. A person of substance means that you are someone that someone can count on to support and build them up. Not tear down to make them look smaller than you, to others. It means showing empathy toward grieving people, without judgment or ridicule. It means being compassionate and caring. It means being a real human, in all of its wonderfulness.

Life is breathed freely into our souls by the great Giver, we shouldn't live it with pretense, we shouldn't live it in accordance to what the prying eyes of society expects us to do. We all are free spirits to start with. It reminds me of Louis L'Amour who always considered it the highest compliment if you were “someone to ride the river with.” It didn't mean being perfect. It meant sticking to it no matter how rough it got. It's having an outlook and philosophy that, no matter what happens, you're sticking up for it because that's the foundation of what you firmly believe in.

It is also important to be a real friend, to be a real lover of people and to be a real lover of oneself. Because if you don't love yourself how you can love others? We are living in a society full of fake personalities and fake actions. People pretend for personal gain. But a person of substance should be real. He/she should consider others, first and foremost! It doesn't mean faking it to get what one wants. It means understanding others' shortcomings and helping where ever possible. It means putting yourself last on occasion for a friend, partner, co-worker or even someone you don't know.

Empathy allows you to accept yourself as well as others. It allows you to understand the greater depths of human nature, both the good and the bad, and most importantly, the why of both and everything in between. Mastering empathy, and truly using it, is to have the capability to look at someone who has done a great deal of good in the world and understand where they were coming from. It's looking at the heroes of the world and putting yourself in their shoes to understand the choices that they made.

Placing boundaries are also necessary. The boundary of saying that this is what you believe in your core and no matter who screams at you telling you that you're wrong it's still there, telling you to keep believing in yourself. This understanding of people and yourself, of human nature, will give you substance because it will give you inner strength. After that, it's just about what you decide to do with it.

Selflessness, humbleness, reliability, and empathy are values that make a person of substance. It is better to go wide and deep while adding values in one's life. A shallow pond will feed you for a year, but a deep ocean will feed you for life. While adding values to lives, it is important to be one's true self.

What makes a person of substance? To be honest, I could not find a conclusive answer to this question even though I spent a great deal of time and energy on deciphering the meaning of the term “substance”. The meaning of the term substance varies according to cultural sensitivities and there can't be and should not be a fixed answer to this question. Nevertheless, we must attempt to list out the broad parameters that sets a man/woman of substance apart from her/his ordinary peers. Indecisiveness is definitely not a virtue of a person of substance and she/he must take a stand or/else concede that she/he has no knowledge over the subject and that she/he would try to find the answer.

I believe that a person of substance is the one who is a lifelong learner and a true seeker of knowledge who can critique the dogmas prevalent in society and at the same time can offer solutions to the existing problems. She/he engages in critical quests and doesn't take things at face value but at the same time she/he appreciates the beauty in small things. She/he doesn't take things for granted for she/he knows that what is now obvious was once remarkable and vice versa. She/he is a visionary and has the willpower to escape the routinized life and works for the development of herself/himself and the larger society in general. She/he might be a woman/man of riches and fortunes or an outright ascetic but she/he won't be egoistic and won't be a slave of her/his possessions. She/he respects the views of others and understands that the generation of knowledge comes through the “churning of ideas” and that even though she/he may have mastery over her/his subject but even a child can find fundamental flaws in her/his wisdom and she/he happily accepts her/his defeat without caring about or disrespecting the background of the rival. A person of substance is at peace with herself/himself but deep inside her/him is a constant burning desire to solve the problems of society. If she/he is a wo/man of riches she/he would be utilizing those riches for the betterment of the society and for bringing about peace in society by minimizing the reasons for conflict. If she/he is a wo/man of knowledge she/he would spread the knowledge in society without bothering about copyrights.

A person of substance is well aware that there can be disagreements in society but that there is always a way out to live in harmony and peace and that human beings have the capability and wherewithal to live together peacefully. She/he lives her/his life in such a way that even if she/he is unable to bring about a positive change in somebody else's lives, she/he would never indulge in any act which would disrupt the peace of society. She/he is aware that sometimes it may be difficult to reach a peaceful solution to a contentious issue but she/he is equally aware that no difficulty is insurmountable, and that there is a peaceful solution to every problem. She/he is a peace lover but not an appeaser. She/he fights for her/his genuine rights as well as the rights of her/his fellow citizens but she/he is also flexible and is aware that there can be multiple logic at work and that one should respect the rationality of others' views. Having said that, I believe the reader might or might not agree with my views entirely/partially but if my answer generates more questions I would be satisfied that the four days of contemplation has finally served the purpose. As Jawaharlal Nehru once said, “Let us be a little humble; let us think that the truth may not perhaps entirely be with us”.

I believe that a person of substance is the one who is a lifelong learner and a true seeker of knowledge who can critique the dogmas prevalent in society and at the same time can offer solutions to the existing problems.

“Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing.”

-Abraham Lincoln

I would like to begin answering this question by defining what a person of substance is. According to me a person of substance is someone who is not just a bystander. He/she is someone who makes the effort and tries to bring about a positive change both in his/her own life and in the lives of others. Such a person chooses to participate and find solutions to problems rather than just sit and whine about the difficulties in everyday lives.

But what makes a person of substance? In my personal experience, I believe that the attitude of a person defines whether he/she is of substance or not. The way someone thinks, the way he/she interacts with those around him/her explains who and what a person is. And all that comes from the attitude. If someone has a negative attitude, he/she will dissuade others around him/her. And to bring about a positive change is a distant thing for such a person. But someone who has the right attitude not only thinks and acts for a better future, but even inspires those around him/her.

In my personal experience, I believe that the attitude of a person defines whether he/she is of substance or not.

Here I would like to give my father as an example who I feel is a person of substance. I really like his attitude. He is very encouraging and inspiring. He pushes others to be better. He is positive despite difficult circumstances and seeks solutions. He is passionate to teach others and to have a positive impact on their lives. That is what I find to be a person of substance – one who has the right attitude and the drive to make this world better.

Then again, the question is how does someone develops such an attitude to become a person of substance? Well, the first step in the process would be by controlling your thoughts. Because it's rightly said that your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions and your actions define who you are. So, naturally if you begin to think better and in a positive manner, it ends up reflecting in your actions. And that ultimately ends up reflecting in your lifestyle. You begin to be positive and seek solutions to problems and not problems to solutions.

In addition to your thoughts, one also needs to have a passion that one is driven by. And the passion can be anything. Either to right a wrong, make the world a better place or to increase the quality of life and so forth. This passion keeps the energy and spirit of someone high. It keeps him/her going even in the toughest of times. Such a passion is the driving force behind the person.

These values add up to make someone strong and to build a good character. They help develop the right attitude in a person. Such a person then becomes a person of substance. This is what I've seen and this is what I believe.

A person of substance is a person of power, a person of positive influence and a person of meaning. To be branded a person of substance is one of the greatest compliments one can give someone that wants to be influential. Below, I have assembled four qualities a person should possess in order to become a person of substance.

Embrace your individuality and be happy the way you are. The pressure put on person in today's society is immense and I admire any person out there who doesn't let the high demands and expectations get them down. In my experience, I have learned that we should not let the likes of idealized versions of perfection and criticism affect us. It has come as such a relief to me to realize that being different and imperfect is far more interesting than being a perfect person.

A person of substance is a person of power, a person of positive influence and a person of meaning.

One: I believe that being yourself and feeling happy just the way you are signifies the word beauty. Two: Use your voice. We are all blessed with voices so use them! I am a relatively quiet person of not many words who next to never will indulge in small talk. It's just who I am. However, on the other hand, when it comes to standing up for what I believe in or voicing my opinions on things, I never fail to make use of my voice. And neither should you! Make use of what God has given you and say what you think, say what you believe in, and argue against what you don't. Three: Find your dream in life and pursue it. Follow your heart never give up and you can do anything. We all have the ability to do whatever it is we want to do and fulfill any dream we want to fulfill we just have to go and do it. When you find your passion it creates a meaning in your life and gives you a purpose in the world which generates happiness. Four: Live up to your morals and values – never lose sight of them. Living by your morals and values in life inspires you, motivates you and energizes you for doing something significant in the world. As children, we were always being told to be a person of morals and were educated to understand what our values are.

I think, when we grow older we seem to loose or forget about those crucial qualities and in order for us to be decent human beings, we should consider re-educating ourselves on morals and values. A person of substance chooses what's right: thinks of long-term betterment, values relationships, wholeheartedly commitment, works for the greater good, accepts responsibility, is good at risk management, lives a life of challenges, courage, integrity, and honour.

To become strong person of substance learn to love yourself and the world. Start every day with a smile and positive thoughts. Never go against your conscience. Express yourself strongly. Never wrong anyone but choose your priorities wisely. Live by moral standards and values. These qualities build needed boundaries in your life, and serve like guard rails on a highway. High moral standards and values prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself. Set goals continuously. People of substance have goals such as additional schooling, wise money management, keeping up with technology, purchasing a small home, getting into shape, improving parenting skills, travelling, learning more about ethics, and a thousand other goals. When you have goals you give direction to your life.

Build effective relationships with people. Every person need not be your best friend your deepest confidante. But every relationship you have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are there for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others. These are the factors of what makes a person of substance. Each day we make thousands of decisions, we choose between best or worst, urgent or important, between what is best for us and what is right between short and long-term betterment. I think a person of substance choose the less travelled road that is different from others, and this makes the huge difference between the ways of thinking of different people.

In my opinion our former Late President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is a man of substance as he devoted his entire life for society, he was a scientist with great values and principles which everybody should possess. He was sensitive to social issues. He always loved children. When he died he left no physical property.

*Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
And your values become your destiny.*

- Mahatma Gandhi

A person of substance has good qualities, values, a strong thought process, and opinions and isn't defined by ethnicity, religion or geography. In this world there are many people of substance from different backgrounds and places. They all are unique but are similar in their values and thought process.

Can we rephrase the question: "What makes a person of substance?" to "What makes Gandhi a Mahatma?" I choose to answer this question through the example of Gandhi. I believe he is the best example.

Gandhi all through in his life, held the values of Ahimsa and truth close to him. He led his based on those values and included them in his regular routine, and set to be an example to his followers. Gandhi was a learner who saw this world as a place of learning. Whether he was young or old he was ready to learn, was empathetic towards his fellow humans.

A person of substance is moved by his/her surroundings. In this world all great change makers from Gandhi to Marx were influenced by the times they lived in. All their hard work was for the betterment of their respective communities. They had a bigger vision for their community. They were ready to make mistakes and learn from them. Social commentator Will Rogers explained, "Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment."

A person of substance has a long term vision in place. For example, Nelson Mandela who chose his path as democracy and his vision was to make Africa a rainbow nation. He held the Gandhian principles of courage and a clear vision leading him in most difficult situations. He had courage to run the country peacefully and he was actively involved in building good relationships with the neighbouring countries. Mandela's integrity played a major role in uniting nations. He is a great example of a person of substance.

"Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves". These are wise words by Gandhi. The ultimate measure of a man of substance is not where he/she stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he/she stands at times of challenge and controversy.

A person of substance has good qualities, values, a strong thought process, and opinions and isn't defined by ethnicity, religion or geography.

Working as a domestic in a small town called Dewas, Moni is a 41 year old lady who single-handedly raised her two daughters. In a society riddled with patriarchy she refused to succumb to the societal wrath perpetrated against her. Over a cup of *chai* she narrates her story of how she was ostracized from her village because her husband left her to marry another woman. Her in-laws equally unsupportive as she had borne two daughters. As someone in her late teens she was convinced that come what may, she would not only live but thrive, if not for herself but for her daughters. She emotionally recounts how every day she would reiterate to herself that she would make her daughters strong and independent – in sharp contrast to her timid personality back then. Moni swallowed her self-respect, and started working as a domestic since it was the only job she was adequately qualified for – she was illiterate and vocational training entailed forgoing her immediate earnings, something she couldn't afford given her distressing circumstances.

Twenty-one years later, she's happy for her being so resolute. As for her daughters – although given the harrowing circumstances she couldn't continue her daughter's education, they are nevertheless doing well for themselves. Her elder daughter is a beautician and is married while her younger daughter who lives with her, works as sales girl in a local shop. Today, as Moni Bhabhi prepared my lunch she reiterates that if there's one lesson she imparted to her daughters, it was to be financially independent.

As a person who's born and brought up in privilege, Moni Bhabhi's story made me introspect the kind of challenges I have had to confront in my life thus far – it wouldn't be a stretch to say that they are nowhere close to the hardships she had to surmount. It's easy for a person like me to take my educational qualification, socio-economic background and other privileges for granted and then feel noble about being committed to work in the socio-development sector. In such a backdrop, it is people like her and their lived experience that remind me that the real deal is not just in becoming professionally successful. Instead, in living a life where we outperform the limitations that society sets for us. In fearlessly demolishing those barriers which can potentially handicap us and bring forth our powerlessness; in magnanimously living our lives; in challenging and breaking stereotypes; in gratefully internalizing the fact that it's a blessing to be alive and enthusiastically living it while pursuing one's vocation. And perhaps, most importantly to give back to those who have provided for us and to those who haven't, sans discrimination.

A person of substance then is someone who embodies the above listed values and faces life head-on. From confronting hardships to inspiring people through their actions, they are not just the eminent personalities but unsung heroes too. The working definition of substance according to Oxford Dictionary is "The real physical matter of which a person or thing consists and which has a tangible, solid presence". The physical matter then is to live beyond just mere one's existence – this is why Moni Bhabhi makes for a woman of substance!

From confronting hardships to inspiring people through their actions, they are not just the eminent personalities but unsung heroes too.

Try not to become a (person) of success, but rather try to become a (person) of value

– Albert Einstein

Success is something around which our lives revolve in today's world. Everyone is running after success leaving behind their basic qualities and morals. Compassion, love, affection, respect, care are some of the qualities that are inscribed in human nature but today for all the worldly desires we have left these all behind. People no longer strive to work for the feeling of contributing something to society but instead for the sake of grabbing money. Hence, there is a dire need for people of value within us and our society.

A person of substance has values and contributes his/her actions for the betterment of society, who has some meaning of life, who is a doer and chooses to participate in the problems apart from ignoring or running away from them. Such person has selfless love, compassion for others, is humble, consistent and the one who always fights for the right whether on a personal level or on the part of society as a whole. People of substance have this unique quality of active participation. It requires a lot of courage to stand up for something. People generally withdraw from such bold decisions but people of substance have such guts. They take risks in what they do and never stops. Such people may fall and rise and then again fall until they succeed. Such people take full responsibility and work hard; they wholeheartedly put themselves at the center of the action and devote themselves for the success of that work.

People of substance know that there is no midway -- finding a solution is the only way. Hence, such people come forward to take a stand. They identify with the saying "if you are not a part of the solution, you are a part of the problem." They work on the problem however hard it may seem, and find solutions at the end with their unbreakable confidence and hard work. No doubt they will experience a multi-faceted life, but that's ok because they choose it as a part of their right and just full decision. They either meet with victory or with disaster, but they remain unfazed in their efforts. Their lives are filled with both good and bad experiences, they accept both with their hands open. Bad experiences make them learn the good lessons of life.

People of substance know that there is no midway -- finding a solution is the only way.

It appears to me that becoming a person of substance is the need of time. It involves a series of decisions followed by appropriate actions. It starts from every action we take in our life. We take many decisions everyday -- whether small or big, just or unjust, short or long, between professional life and personal life, between giving up and wholeheartedness, between taking and giving away, between caring for others and helping them in need to overlooking a situation, between a safer life to a life of challenge, between expediency and honour -- every decision requires great strength. And this shapes a person of substance. I believe a person of substance walks on the road that nobody has travelled and then makes footprints.

In the realm of science, every substance has a precise composition and possesses unique properties. There are set formulas to create desired outcomes. The slightest of alterations can create vast differences, even disasters. Well lucky for us humans, there is no set formula to make a person of substance. Is there? As subjective as this notion might seem, it can equally be viewed objectively. At least, that has been the attempt of the education system in most countries. Every teacher teaches a standard set of values and morals. Then why are no two people composed absolutely alike? What makes one person as someone with more “substance” than the other?

In my understanding, there are two components of one’s character that vastly contribute to his/her life’s trajectory. First being one’s ability to learn. The most successful people in the world are those who never stop learning. The pillar of learning rests on the foundation of courage, determination and patience. Mastering this art, requires building one’s command over these three values. We are most familiar with learning in an academic or professional setting where it takes courage to take up a subject/skill we know nothing of, even more patience to keep at it, and determination to fair well in it. However, isn’t everything we ever learnt, something we didn’t know earlier? Hence, this process is essentially a cycle of learning-unlearning-relearning. As kids we all start out with new wheels, but most people give up on active learning after a certain age, resulting in rusting and stagnancy. The underdog in the realm of learning is the one in our personal lives. This in fact in ways is more important than the professional aspect, because this gives us the human touch for even a computer can do the former learning. Building on our social skills and self-awareness, helps us learn from our mistakes and grow as more profound constituents of society.

The most successful people in the world are those who never stop learning.

The second component is love. Love is so much more than the romantic love our pop culture has strived to enshrine. In fact love, the emotion, not just for near and dear ones, but even for strangers, becomes compassion. Standing up for the ones who can’t stand up for themselves, such as protecting the needy, the environment, animals etc, is what signifies true compassion. A person automatically becomes trustworthy and respected if he/she can care for the right causes. While it’s important to care for others it’s equally important to love yourself, even in the darkest of times you see no self-worth. Such circumstances, are when you decide to make yourself worthy of your own love, to pick yourself up and fulfill your purpose.

In conclusion, I believe that the degree of application of these two notions, determines and differs one’s essence. I propose them because, that is what I have learnt from my parents. My father, a hardworking businessman, is always striving to keep learning and innovating his methods with the changing times. Despite multiple professional hardships, he has never backed down from his goals. My mother, with her warmth and compassion has been my role model on how to live a purposeful and happy life. They create a great balance in the family, and that is what ensures me that these two aspects are of prime importance in living a balanced and substantial life.

Most of us would have definitely come across people in our lives, who have made a statement like this—“That person is full of substance!” I myself have used the word “substance” to describe many people in my life. What exactly does this mean? On the outer surface, this term is used in the same connotation everywhere, but the reason for its usage can vary from person to person. In my opinion, individuals who are non-pretentious, at all times and in every situation, are people of substance.

A person of substance need not always be that street smart boss/CEO, a Nelson Mandela or a Barack Obama. No doubt these are fantastic personalities, who have created a positive impact on this world through sheer hard work, knowledge and conviction, and have set a high benchmark for the leaders of this world. However, as per my definition, even taxi drivers or street peddlers can be people of substance—there is no need to always do something extraordinary for the world in order to belong to this category.

So what attributes do these individuals have which makes them so strong? I'd like to call these Triple S [SSS].

- Self-Aware—people who know what exactly are their strengths and weaknesses, and do not hesitate in accepting them. When a self-aware person says, for example, he/she is a chess master, they indeed are one! And when such people say, for example, they need to work on their decision-making skills, they indeed are not great decision makers. They don't need to pretend on these grounds—they have accepted what they have and what they don't and thus don't fool themselves to please others
- Secure—people who are satisfied with what they have are mentally at peace and rarely inculcate feelings of jealousy. These individuals accept that everybody has their own set of attributes and flaws. They also do not hesitate in acknowledging the positives in others and appreciating them. One of the biggest causes of social distress, in today's time, is people projecting their insecurities onto others. They get happiness in others' defeats and get disturbed in their success—while it should be the opposite. People of substance, will not just acknowledge others' success, but will work on their own to bring that positivity in their lives as well, rather than harbor thoughts of disgust and envy towards others. They are comfortable in their own skin and never pretend to be someone else
- Sense of purpose—people who are in a constant learning mode, irrespective of where they are in life. Before digressing into this further, I'd like to elaborate on learning here. Just reading books, attending academic institutions and watching educational videos is not learning. It is theoretical learning and theory alone cannot help in one's enlightenment—it has to be accompanied by putting it into practice. Practice does not just validate what is learnt theoretically, one can entirely disqualify third theory on the basis of one's experiences—leading to creation of better theories for greater learning of the community.

No one is born with substance, they acquire it over time through life experiences and beliefs

Another important aspect of learning, and unique to people with substance, is the time they spend on introspection. This is also a type of learning—understanding the needs of their mind and body. People with substance will not just blindly follow what others do; they decide things for themselves, post tremendous thinking and analysis.

Every time life goes haywire for them, they know, just little introspection, will bring things back on track for them—precisely why they are Self-Aware, Secure and have a Sense of Purpose. They, thus, have no need to be pretentious.

In my opinion, all these attributes make a person of substance.

Summing it up—no one is born with substance, they acquire it over time through life experiences and beliefs. Thus, anybody under the sun, irrespective of their caste, color, social status, etc., can be individuals of substance.

It's been three years since I've embarked on a journey of writing and meditation. In those three years, I've seen dynamic changes take place in not only my personality but my family as well. The clarity, wisdom, and undeterred focus gained from meditation have helped me come up with inspiration to define a person of substance and what it takes to be one.

Adolf Hitler and Mother Teresa were both people of substance. They had a purpose to their life, a reason to live for, and the confidence to lead. They chose to act and not sit down and waste away their lives. But what made Mother Teresa different, was her object of focus and passion, which is why we remember her and criticise Adolf Hitler.

The object of our focus is what makes us different from each one.

"I think probably kindness is my number one attribute in a human being. I'll put it before any of the things like courage or bravery or generosity or anything else."
– Roald Dahl

A person of substance is a hero. A hero who doesn't necessarily have super powers or wears a cape, but being a hero is being kind; being so very kind, that your kindness would be the definition of a hero or in this case, a person of substance.

A person of substance empathises and understands human beings. To understand, you need to stand under. You need to evolve from sympathy to empathy.

A person of substance cares for the Mother Earth, the environment and the creation. We may not be able to give back to the Earth, but the least we could do is leave it in the same condition as it was provided to us.

A person of substance takes action. You need to act in accordance to your heart. This means, you need to be disciplined if you want to go higher; just like you can spend your whole life in a small town or discipline yourself to a seat and toothpaste diet in a rocket if you want to explore the universe.

A person of substance never gives up. Every failure acts as a motivation for newer inspiration and trying once again to succeed.

A person of substance knows what love is. He/she is so full of love that it just oozes out of him/her drowning the whole universe with it. As Roald Dahl said, "It doesn't matter who you are or what you look like as long as somebody loves you."

A person of substance is a teacher. He/she is the inspiration the world needs.

A person of substance exists inside every one of us. You are a person of substance, as long as, you are true to yourself.

Putting together all those points mentioned above, it comes out something like this.

Hero = H

Understand = U

Mother Earth = M

Action = A

Never Give Up = N

I love you = I

Teach = T

You = Y

Putting all the letters together, they spell the word, HUMANITY.

The clarity, wisdom, and undeterred focus gained from meditation have helped me come up with inspiration to define a person of substance and what it takes to be one.

Humanity is the art of being human. And the act of being humane is what the world needs. When each one of us does what the universe expects us to do, no more and no less, definite changes will come. A person of substance is a hero who gives back to the Earth; a person who never gives up; a person who knows what love is and teaches others and leaves behind a legacy of kindness, spreading across the universe like ripples. It was Mother Teresa's humanity which made her a person of substance.

It is humanity which makes a person of substance capable of changing the world.

Everyone is unique in their own way. Some people try to blend in with the majority, but they are still unique. Some people take their uniqueness, stand out as different, and use their unique persona to create and experience the life they want. Just know that you will stand out once you embrace everything that makes you different, but you will also be in complete control of your life and your happiness.

Some people take their uniqueness, stand out as different, and use their unique persona to create and experience the life they want.

However, there are universally sound personal principals that will be considered as good personality traits, no matter where you find yourself.

- Kindness
- Gentleness
- Peacefulness
- Patience
- Self-control
- Understanding
- Fairness
- Assertiveness without being obnoxious or overbearing
- Ability to listen and assess before making decisions
- Willingness to work hard and participate
- Lawfulness
- Non offensive appearance
- Economically active contributor

And I'm sure the list can go on and on. But that does not matter, it is best to look at your own personality and see what you like in another person. So what makes a person of substance? In my opinion it's not only one factor which makes a substance of a person, but several.

The temperament, attitude, thoughts, beliefs, behaviour, and character makes up a person's personality. Your personality is very unique, and it is what other people see when they interact with you. Often people will describe people based on their personality, which shows how unique it is.

No one has the same experiences in life. Not one person. Everyone experiences variations in their day, even when they are working at the same place or spending time together. Your experiences throughout your entire life, as well as your day-to-day experiences, are what make you the unique person you are today.

The way you view life is not going to match up with anyone else. Sure, you may have some moments where you and your friend perceive the same thing, but for the most part you will see things slightly differently than others. Perception accounts for how we experience things as well as how we think and feel, so it plays a huge part in what makes a person unique.

Everyone is creative in some way, but there are many different creative talents that we can have. Some of us are good at improvising, some of us are good at inventing, some of us are good at creating, and some of us are good at envisioning things

Robert Frost writes in the final stanza of his Poem "The Road Not Taken"
"I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference."

The main theme of the "The Road Not Taken" is that it is often impossible to see where a life-altering decision will lead. Thus, one should make his/her decision swiftly and with confidence. The road, itself, symbolizes the journey of life, and the image of a road forking off into two paths symbolizes a choice.

Moreover, most people are not willing to show off their true personality and how they interact with the world. The most unique people in the world are those who fully embrace

who they are and are willing to live life according to everything that makes up who they are. Celebrate these people when you meet them because they are a true testament to what living a passionate and satisfying life is all about.

Nothing is limited -- not resources or anything else. It is only limited in the human mind. When we open our minds to the unlimited creative power, we will call forth abundance and see and experience a whole new world. The universe offers all things to all people; but you have the ability to choose what you want to experience.

A belief in the responsibility to serve and contribute to society and for the greater good in words and actions altogether makes a person of substance.

“Depth and the substance: the two most exquisite qualities both in a poem or a person.”

-Sanobar Khan

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary a person of substance is “person of wealth or power”. But the first names that come to mind when hearing people of substance is not Donald Trump but Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dr. Martin Luther King. That is because being a person of substance means more than success or power, it means person of significance or usefulness to society at large. To me, people of substance are simply those who incessantly exploit their potential to the degree that their skills, talents and gifts can help to find solutions of problems of society at large, those that inspire people and those that push human lives forward.

The question that arises here is what leads a person of substance to find solutions and to challenge the status quo? Which are the qualities that make them different from everyone else?

1. Beyond the ‘me’ mentality

“Compassionate people are geniuses in the art of living, more necessary to the dignity, security, and joy of humanity than the discoveries of knowledge.”

-Albert Einstein

“A human being is happiest and most successful when dedicated to a cause outside his own individual, selfish satisfaction.”

-Benjamin Spock

The prerequisite of what constitutes a person of substance is that he/she is not self-absorbed. He/she has a level of empathy that supersedes self-interests. People of substance are able to see past themselves to those in pain or plight because it is only their compassion that leads them to decide a course of action that is of greatest benefit to the whole community.

The prerequisite of what constitutes a person of substance is that he/she is not self-absorbed.

2. Courage

“People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

-Steve Jobs.

The second and most important quality required for being person of substance is being insanely courageous and take risks to do something great for society. Almost every person of a substantial character, regardless how complicated his/her goals are, begins with two beliefs: “the future can be better than the present”, and “I have the ability to make it so.” People of substance are visionaries who can look ahead and see possibilities. But it is courage that make them take bold and unpopular decisions to follow through these possibilities and tackle the problems head-on.

3. Integrity

“The difference between a moral man and a man of honour is that the latter regrets a discreditable act, even when it has worked and he has not been caught.”

-H.L. Mencken

Integrity is major constituent of a person of substance. In today’s world where integrity seems to have taken a back seat, when a person demonstrate integrity it shows honesty and soundness in his/her character that naturally leads people to trust and follow him/her.

4. Humility

“I believe the first test of a truly great man is in his humility.”

-John Ruskin

A person of substance never self-identify as heroes. .He/she simply acts out of an ego-less, natural instinct -'It was the right thing to do.' It is this innate humility that usually attracts people towards him/her.

5.Turning endings into new beginnings

“The greatest battle wasn’t fought in Africa or Asia, the greatest battle was fought inside your head. It is impossible to beat someone who refuses to give up.”

It’s easy to feel discouraged, especially after a tough fight but a person of substance doesn’t give up after disappointments; he/she learns necessary lessons and works on an action plan to turn failures around, or find a better way. Even when others say it can’t be done and goals seem temporarily impossible, he/she rolls up his/her sleeves and moves forward with ‘I can and I will’ attitude.

6.We-not-I Attitude

“When the snows fall and the white wind blow, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives.”
-Game of Thrones

Success is only achieved with the help of others. A person of substance shows genuine appreciation for those who help achieve goals provide encouragement, develop trust and boost morale. Hence, he/she is appreciative of his/her supporters and well-wishers and demonstrates a considerate attitude towards them.

After knowing what constitutes a person of substance I would like to end by paraphrasing the sayings, “The potential for greatness lives within each of us” and “Don’t squander your potential living a life that amounts to far less than the one you are capable of living.”

Mother Earth has existed for thousands of years. And this means life on earth has evolved over a long period of time. There are a wide variety of species that coexist on this our planet. But among all those what makes homo sapiens so-called humans more special than the rest of the living beings? Is it the behavior, intelligence, thinking, feelings, activity or combination of all these which helps in dominating the world over other life forms?

Having all these capabilities, does it mean man knows everything and can do all he want as per his wishes? Most of the time it is because of his/her activities many problems arises. Does he/she hold enough courage to face the problem and find solutions? This is the question which needs to be answered.

When problem arises a person has three choices:

- Know the problem and just observe it with no courage to face it
- Know the problem but neglect it leading to an increase in intensity of the problem
- Face the problem boldly and find a solution

Marilyn Monroe once said “Don’t let your fear of failing triumph over the joy of participating”.

Actively participating in life is itself the key to lead a happy life. Rather than brooding over the decisions taken at vital stages in life it’s better to participate and give a try and have gain satisfaction.

Staying positive and keenly observing at all times is one of the biggest factors. Seeing, understanding and analyzing the situation, taking it positively will be one the foremost step for approaching a problem. Taking every problem as a positive hurdle makes the problem look simple

Patience is also one of the most crucial factors. Many of the times problems either solve by itself or decreases when the person is constantly waiting for his turn of action. Urgency in an essential situation reduces one’s efficiency in dealing with it.

Truth and obedience in one’s life is necessary to lead a complete life. When we are on the path of truth and obedience we will experience a unique confidence in oneself. Bitter truth is much better than comforting lies. Lies give us a temporary feeling of pleasure but truth is the existing fact. Being obedient to the work we do will fulfill the objectives of living.

Confidence and belief makes and shapes one’s personality. In a group of people a confident person shines and outstands every other person in the community. Believing in one’s capacity and capabilities can benefit a person incredibly.

Good environment creates an opportunity to discuss and solve the problem more effectively. Like-minded people in your surrounding can boost your self-confidence and can have a positive effect on your life.

Discipline and determination is another prominent factor. Principles in life are necessary in order to accomplish great things. And also to solve problems a person has to be determined enough to go to any extent to find a solution to it.

The word “impossible” does not exist, as the word itself says “I’m possible”. Life is a wonderful gift and how we utilize it is what matters. There always lies a solution to every problem which we face. When we are born, we bring nothing to this mortal world and take nothing with us when we die. Hence, all should have a purpose and goal in life.

As rightly said by Albert Einstein, “Try to become not a man of success but try rather to become a man of values”. So all it matters is how we take up life, lead it and make a difference.

The prerequisite of what constitutes a person of substance is that he/she is not self-absorbed.

“What is the one thing in the world that you would be willing to die for?” the speaker, Dr. Ramaswami Balasubramaniam, asked the audience. “When you find an answer to that, you will find your true purpose,” he remarked. Sitting in the audience, in a leadership session last year, the question really affected me. It troubled me for days as I tried to contemplate an answer. I turned to the modern day know-it-all tool, the Internet, to see if it had a solution. I tried to look up eminent personalities who seemed to have found an answer, their *raison d’être*! What was it about these people that made them stand out, that helped them touch the lives of so many people?

As I read on, I made some observations. These wonderful, inspiring people possess the courage to travel inwards, on the difficult journey of self-discovery that makes their existence worthwhile and substantial. When one uses awareness and self-actualization to get as close as possible to one’s true inner identity and uses this potential, resources and understanding to bring out the best version of oneself to make a difference in the world, he/she is heading towards a fulfilling life. One must, however, ask the right kind of questions on this mentally draining journey-- replace the “why” with the “what” questions -- it makes all the difference. So, instead of asking, “Why is there a problem?” ask, “What can be built out of this or what can be done about this problem?” If we apply this concept to every problem prevailing in the world, soon enough we will become the solutions we seek. Barack Obama once rightly said, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

To be a person of substance, one has to constantly seek growth and be a lifelong learner. When exposed to new information, asking critical, focused questions helps you acquire knowledge without being susceptible to misinformation. Being aware and having a perspective and standing up for the greater common good, and at the same time being receptive of other people’s outlooks, fits the mould of a person of substance. As for example, John Wallach, an award-winning author and journalist opined that children of war must be given an opportunity that equips them to have a more secure future. In 1993, realizing this vision, he founded Seeds of Peace International, a platform that inspires leaders of tomorrow to transform conflict, lead change, stand side by side as humans, and raise their voice for justice and peace. The organisation brings together youngsters from conflicting nations in dialogue. The agitated angry teenagers who come in filled with hatred for the “other side” leave with love and friendships to be cherished for a lifetime, with the youth at the other end. These bonds enable them to fight for one another rather than fight with each other as they try to create impact in their communities back home. Sticking with his standpoint, John Wallach gave birth to an outstanding initiative that is creating a hopeful impact world-over today. His unwavering belief in the power of tolerance and subsequent action makes him a person of substance.

To be a person of substance, one has to constantly seek growth and be a lifelong learner.

Lastly, defining value systems clearly and abiding by them authentically; cultivating courage to chase dreams whilst acknowledging its costs; inspiring others to be and believe in their true selves; impacting the lives of people with love, compassion and humanity; committing to using privileges and resources to build a better, sustainable community for another generation; and making a significant contribution that leaves behind a legacy, even when oblivion is almost inevitable makes a person of substance!

In India, people commonly greet each other with a namaste with folded hands. Namaste means “the divine in me recognizes the divine in you”. But we simply miss the noble message in this greeting. Do we even recognize who we are? Do we recognize the divinity that inhabits us? What will be the qualities of such a person? The answer lies in a thorough investigation of the qualities, processes and effects of becoming a person of substance.

A person of substance is rare to find today. In an increasingly busy, industrialized and urbanized world, we have lost touch with our surroundings, nature, one another and even ourselves. The results are widely known by rising cases of depression and feelings of alienation. We get caught in the vicious cycle of more and more surface-level, sensory, material indulgences which comfort us for a short time but leave us extremely dissatisfied and unproductive. This creates an urgent necessity to stop and reflect on the features of a person of substance who is free of negative indulgences, and moreover, is deeply connected with self and committed to others and surroundings.

Such a person of substance must be a deeply conscious being. The two most important qualities of a person of substance are happiness and non-dualism. Happiness is generally seen as a positive emotion. The happiness of a person of substance is slightly different. This happiness originates from a deep satisfaction. It creates a neutral experience which allows a person to cultivate presence of mind, level-headedness and nimble-footedness. These qualities enable a person of substance to analyze complex problems much better and fully devote energies to reaching cooperative and creative solutions. On the other hand, non-dualism is a way of being for a person of substance. Non-dualism is also at the core of many spiritual traditions, particularly Buddhist. Non-dualism sounds similar to ambiguity but is very different. A non-dualistic thinking is the ability to see multiple perspectives, many dimensions of the same situation. She/he is engaged as well as detached. A person of substance employs non-dualism to creatively hold tension on both sides, channelize the volatile energy away and transform negativity into creative solutions. Such qualities make a person of substance capable of deep consciousness, humility, sensitivity and balance. He/she is connected to self and others deeply, making her/him a guiding light who leads as well as listens for the larger community.

The two most important qualities of a person of substance are happiness and non-dualism.

But there are many obstacles today in becoming a person of substance. Negative emotions are very powerful in the urban atmosphere which feeds on cut-throat competition. It feeds the false self, making it impossible to overcome. A person of substance, therefore, needs to differentiate between false self and true self. She/he needs to constantly negotiate with material existence and conscious existence to navigate complex issues. This means that person of substance is not a sage disconnected with the world. Instead, a person of substance takes up the difficult challenges of people and the world, engages with them deeply but with subtle detachment. A person of substance has great clarity but is also very sensitive to the suffering and problems of the world, and commits to resolving them in harmonious ways. But how does one become such a person of substance? This requires us to reconnect with ourselves first. It is possible through constant spiritual practice. Regular meditation increases self-awareness, concentration and power of analysis. Over time one evolves and builds the stamina to maintain happiness and non-dualistic thinking.

With impossibly difficult problems of the 21st century, a person of substance is required but also has greater challenges than ever. Therefore, we need much more dynamic, peace-loving and creative people than ever before. A person of substance embodies responsible ethos and good ethics who will release the pain and suffering from the world. Recognizing the true meaning of namaste, a person of substance will employ all the above qualities to inculcate respect for each other and stay committed to positive change.

A person of substance is basically a person of asset. Different individuals grade persons differently taking into account what he/she aspires to become in the future. Some parameters upon which I'll describe a person of substance with some stories of my personal experience are as follows:

A person of substance is basically a person of asset.

Have a purpose and dedicated to work for it: "If you want to shine like a sun, first burn like a sun" – Abdul Kalam. A long-term plan and a dedication to work relentlessly for achieving it is a necessity to make an informed, aware and developed person. He/she must explore all areas and realize where his interest lies regardless of what the herd is following. Shri Ram College of Commerce has 40+ societies, each working at different fields and levels. I explored all the opportunities, chose what suited me and then gave my heart and soul to the project and got selected among 50 competent for Project Vishwas, a social entrepreneurship model for differently abled people.

Opinionated not fickle minded: By opinionated I don't mean passing on your opinions to everyone but to places where they matter and are required. This in no means mean having half knowledge and giving opinions but knowing where you are fit to pass opinions and where not to. During the Innovative Product Making Competition, I and my team mates were had a communication gap. They couldn't understand the working model I was speaking to them about but I kept firm, supporting my stance and ultimately they also realized that it was the most feasible process.

Clear distinction between what is material and what is not: There are hundreds of things happening in our lives each day. Not everything might be material in five years. A person should understand and should be able to distinguish between things that hold value in the long run. I got an offer from a start-up founder to become a content contributor for its newsletter. I knew that I was not interested in this field, I said no to him politely. He then later on came to me asking for suggestions for some problems he was facing regarding his start-up and I agreed to it because that was my interest area i.e. to give innovative ideas.

Sympathy: People who are truly respected are not usually the richest persons but those who care for people who understand their problems, contribute towards finding solutions etc. During my internship, I met a 12 year old girl who was mentally handicapped and sexually harassed in the Child Line India Foundation. For taking the girl to shelter home, we needed a lady police officer to do her daily diary entry. We went to the police station with that girl, she firstly denied it but then I, even though being just an intern requested her to do the entry.

Not only an opportunity grabber but also an opportunity maker: The world is full of people who pinpoint problems, but what the world needs is a solution giver. In the innovative product designing competition in which I stood first, the professors and mentors praised my ability to see a product in real life and deeply explore the problems that it may face in real life and brought solution to it also.

Satisfaction: Satisfaction with your present state is the ultimate key. By satisfied I don't mean that people should just sit down and forget about the opportunities but that they should not be mentally disturbed if things don't work out as planned. They should be satisfied enough to enjoy their life and live it to fullest.

Live by values: There should be a certain set of values that a person should always live by. Concentrating on one's own business and not poke one's nose everywhere, to be sympathetic to the poor and needy, always being thankful for this life and being happy are essential values that should be a part of healthy living.

Think and analyse: Our lives are full of difficult situations but how best we tackle these situations rests in our hands. One should introspect with a quiet mind and place. Whenever I feel low due to some problems, I rest for some time and then jot down the reasons that are making me feel that way, and then analyse it to come up with solutions.

Value time: Time is priceless. A moment lost can never be returned. A person should make the most of time instead of wasting it. A person should not only value one's time but also that of others'. Punctuality is one of the most important factors in this regard.

Add value: A person should add value where he/she is engaged. If he/she is engaged in any activity, he should make sure that his name shines whenever that particular thing is recalled. Currently, I'm working with Project Vishwas which was dormant for half a year and there was no significant work done in it due to some problems with the NGO we were in collaboration with. I was then made the project head on 25 May, 2018. I set my aim that I'll set this project no matter how much of time commitment and hard work is required. We have started a new online series for disabled people on Facebook called Project Vishwas, contacted 50+ NGOs, formulated a proposal for them, and had a meeting with 50% of the interested NGOs, deployed online marketing techniques on Facebook and Instagram that has increased the page likes by 400.

Take responsibility of their work instead of blaming others: A person should be mature enough to do unbiased analysis to find out the reason about why something didn't work and should take its accountability and responsibility. If it turns out to be his/her fault, he/she should learn from his mistakes and take necessary precautions or mistakes to avoid that mistake to happen again. This not only motivates you to achieve more but pushes you to stay committed to your work.

Positive and confident about himself, believes in hard work not luck: A person must have faith in himself. If he loses hope he no longer is worthwhile. Do we not realize that self-respect comes with self-reliance?

Stands up for what he believes: Courage to stand up for what's right and fight for it. Courage to lead changes. Courage to live alone and not be dependent. A person should possess the courage to move forward alone and not just wait for people to join him that might exhaust the opportunities.

Gives his best: Make sure whenever you are participating in any activity, contribute to it whole-heartedly. Opportunities are priceless, make the best use of them and build your image which can open a thousand doors.

Self-realization: Spending quality time with oneself is one of the most fundamental practices. Unless you're unaware of yourselves, your values, assents and dissents, you will always be confused about your stance.

A person of substance creates his destiny. He is a doer and not a destitute griever, he always finds himself on the driver's seat of his life. It is an instinctive tendency of a man to remain self-absorbed and barely seem to gather the courage of looking beyond himself. Such a self-centered attitude fails to resonate on the significance scale. A man who develops an innate conviction to be driven by the cause and imbibe this sensibility in his own mindset is a man of substance. His disposition lies towards making the world a better place, ameliorating the living conditions of fellow humans, and to prevent anything terrible around him. Such ethos of standing up for what is right is clearly the first step in the direction of adding a sense of purpose in one's life. As Albert Einstein once said, "If you are not a part of the solution, then you are a part of the problem".

He is a doer and not a destitute griever, he always finds himself on the driver's seat of his life.

In life, the likelihood of facing odds is as probable as tasting success. While a timid and shallow-hearted person is immune to failure, he shall not see victory either. Late American President Theodore Roosevelt has put this sentiment precisely, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

The man of substance keeps himself at the epicenter of his actions, his decisions are not myopic; he cautiously analyzes the possible outcomes, with immense empathy, objectivity and life-honed skills. Thus, even during his low phase he propels optimism and head on spirit. Since, he has the endurance to see all his efforts crashing down, yet hold his head high and not give up trying. The one who follows *nil desperandum* as the motto of life is a man of substance. When he has the nerves of dealing with triumph and disaster, alike, as Rudyard Kipling in his poem "If" so elegantly proclaims.

Also, it is during this juncture of a man's life that his true self is revealed. Relationships and commitment towards them is another crucial aspect, his demeanour towards his partner, family and friends speaks volumes about his personality. A man must be forgiving, he must initiate to absolve differences, and realize that the worth of relationships is much higher than any erroneous incident. He must carry compassion in his soul for everyone around and never delve into actions which may be hurtful.

Such a man shall be fueled by his honour and integrity. A man should possess a virtuous attitude when encountering crowds and addressing them. He must feel humbled by his achievements and fortunate for the opportunities that come his way. He must fulfill the obligation of sending the escalator back down for the underprivileged. At the same time, he must not lose his integrity and remain unpretentious when walking with powerful people.

The man who shows vigour by rising above his himself shows consistency while seeking his goals, is never disillusioned by failures and carries the full responsibility, never channels his dejection by deriding others and leads a life of righteousness and humility -- is a real man. He brings glory to the entire human race and through his exemplary life inspires others. He holds a promise for a better world, he is the force against widespread despondency and a hope for the revival of humane qualities, creating a world of equality. He shall bring back lost morality in the world which seems to hold no place for it. Such a man is worthy of his salt.

Honesty, empathy and accountability are some of the qualities that came to my mind when I read the question for the very first time: What makes a person of substance? Even though it is fairly simple to understand, there are endless ways in which this question can be interpreted. Not by the words used, but by the person answering the question. Curious to understand this completely I asked different people of the first thing that came to their minds when they imagined a person of substance. Naturally, everyone had a different picture perspective. They named their parents, change makers, successful businessmen, social workers, priests and teachers etc. as people of substance, everyone with a strong character made it to the list. Qualities like compassion, empathy, morals, strength, purpose, patience, accountability, inquisitiveness, loyalty etc. were amongst some which were mentioned by these people.

Honesty, empathy and accountability are some of the qualities that came to my mind when I read the question for the very first time: What makes a person of substance?

Some people went as far as believing that someone who stands in the face of death for what he/she believes in is a person of substance; on the other hand some were convinced that even a criminal who stands by what he says can be called a person of substance. And despite the fact that every person has a different opinion, there was something similar about all of them -- an underlying behaviour, which makes a person inculcate all these good qualities in his character. This I believe is what makes a person of substance.

And although it would be really hard to describe this I will explain it by anchoring all these qualities to a balance as a measure -- a balance between inside and outside, where the inside signifies self-interest like one's own goals, quality of life, wealth, desires etc., and on the other hand the outside signifies altruism, qualities like empathy, compassion, kindness, working for the greater good etc. I believe a person of substance would have a strong hold on this balance, knowing what is good for him as well as good for society. For example, change-makers like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi had everything they would have needed to lead a life without challenges but they identified a problem and worked to solve it. Substance means standing up for what you believe in and fighting for it.

A majority of the world believes in the right thing, some might fantasize about bringing change, they imagine themselves achieving what they have always desired but very few look forward to the struggle of getting there. We imagine having a fit body everyday but what we don't look forward to is the pain that comes with it. Substance means working towards change instead of just dreaming it. It means getting out on the streets to make the change possible!

It is said that to enjoy something on the outside, you need to develop something on the inside. To enjoy art, you need to first learn about it. To completely enjoy music, you need to develop a taste in music. To enjoy life, you need to develop a character. Rich people with all the materialistic and worldly desires become depressed about their lives while someone who earns enough to survive lives his life to the fullest because he/she might not be rich but certainly has a wealth of character. A person of substance is someone who is compassionate, caring and most importantly human. A person, who lives by his morals and values instead of just milestones and maintains a balance between them.

I believe we all are, to an extent, wrong about things in life, however, with constant thirst for knowledge and the struggle to build a life of meaning, we become less wrong every day. And that is exactly what people of substance do; their constant thirst for knowledge and the determination of living a life of purpose makes them thrive for mastering the balance.

What makes a person of substance? Understanding. Each person is a reflection of the pattern of understanding of his/her dispositions and how it translates into social roles. Hence, the distinguishable nature of human understanding plays an important role in making a person of substance.

The dimension of self-understanding: Self-understanding plays an important role in shaping one's personality, in turn, in making a person of substance. An individual's personality is shaped by the know-how of one's self which helps each person to be him or herself. Hence, one has to learn to be comfortable in one's own skin. This is tantamount to accepting your flaws as much as your strengths. This is important because an individual's comprehension of people and situations is a reflection of one's personality. Possessing an understanding of oneself as a complete individual – as a self, thus paves the way to a dispersed understanding of the world at large.

Each person is a reflection of the pattern of understanding of his/her dispositions and how it translates into social roles.

A simple example comes from my experience of working in a tribal belt. Attapady in Kerala is perceived a “traditional, closed” system of the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba tribes. I had to spend a month and a half in Attapady as part of data collection for my Masters' thesis. I was apprehensive, having heard stories of tribes living in a protected space where extreme revolutionist ideas are rampant. But spending time amidst the Irula community was an eye-opener. Contrary to popular beliefs, they are the nicest, extremely welcoming, always giving group of people I have ever encountered. It was an experience that helped me understand the meaning of acceptance – the acceptance of myself the way I am and the acceptance of others the way I saw how I was being accepted. Being in Attapady opened my eyes to who the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba tribes are. I saw them and grasped the situation for the way it is rather than how it's often interpreted. In Kerala, anybody who looks skinny, lean and dark, are teased, “Here comes an Adivasi (slang for a tribe)!” This trend of using caste, colour or creed as forms of teasing is a global phenomenon. But little do we know what each of these ideas stand for. Understanding is the only way we learn to value these principles of society for what it really represents.

In order to rise to this train of thought on what makes a person of substance, I believe, one should have the ability to accept oneself the way he/she is, rather than conforming to traditions. This makes one an aware and conscious human, who in turn, is willing to understand the world by keeping aside his/her prejudices. With understanding comes knowledge of how/ why something happens, knowing how someone feels or behaves in a particular way, knowing how to do something, knowing what it takes and means to be empathetic, kind, forgiving etc. It also makes you think rationally. Works on the nature of understanding and its distinctive role in the study of human action is also extant in the philosophy of social sciences.

In short, to me, a person of substance is anyone who is tries, is willing to set aside his/her prejudices, biases and judgements against anybody, any worldly ideas etc. and is willing to understand people, situations or events for what it looks like; in his/her strive to be a better person. With this willingness to understand, then comes the knowledge and wisdom to identify solutions to worldly issues.

I would like to conclude with one of my favourite dialogue from the movie “Blood Diamond”:

Benjamin Kapanay: “My heart always told me that people are inherently good. My experience suggests otherwise. But what about you, Mr. Archer? In your long career as a journalist, would you say that people are mostly good?”

Danny Archer: “No. I'd say they're just people.”

Benjamin Kapanay: “Exactly. It's what they do that makes them good or bad. A moment of love, even in a bad man, can give meaning to life.”

Human life is considered to be a blessing and according to Indian mythology it's the only life form to attain salvation by abstaining from materialistic goals to pursue the ultimate purpose of human life to reach God. Life is full of complexities entangled around various issues that balance the sorrows and joy in life. But in order to strive for happiness often we develop a state of competitiveness, which leads to a building up of hatred and enmity in our subconscious mind towards fellow humans and that is the point where we lose our worth.

We often misinterpret the meaning of being a person of substance with being successful or being classy; further yet being rich and being included in the echelons of society. The world of materialism is just an oasis which looks more appealing but is a place of hollowness providing momentary happiness and value, same as the temporary achievements and wins in life. The importance we give to our status in society is a reflection of the lack of our own true identity.

A tombstone in a small English village reads, "Here lies a miser who lived for himself, and cared for nothing but gathering wealth. Now where he is or how he fares, nobody knows and nobody cares."

A man of a substance is someone who has the values and morals that are needed to maintain and uphold a peaceful co-existence -- a person who influences others in positive ways and someone who is honest and beautiful within. He is true to himself. The inculcation of these positive values in his life makes him a man of substance.

In today's world we're running in a race to achieve success and gather wealth and as a result, to come first we often forget to be humane in order to accomplish the materialistic goals and devalue ourselves.

Knowing your worth and your capabilities also makes you a person of substance like the scientific principle explains, "Substance is a physical material from which something is made of, that "something made of" holds value and contributes to the importance of substance, similarly as humans our worth and positive values make us people of substance too

"If you find yourself constantly trying to prove your worth to someone, you have already forgotten your value."

-Anonymous

It's more care for our own actions rather than degrade someone for theirs. Improving yourself first and then helping others should be the way forward. To be a person of substance you need to be a better and more beautiful version of yourself.

**To be a person
of substance
you need to be a
better and more
beautiful version
of yourself.**

“Conquer yourself, rather than the world”. The process that makes a person of substance could be summarized in this quote from the French Philosopher Rene Descartes. Being a person of substance is more about attaining an internal equilibrium whereby one is able to understand, accept and project oneself as he or she is. Attaining this internal equilibrium is a continuous process of learning wherein one learns about oneself and subsequently others. To be capable of attaining this internal equilibrium and thereby become a person of substance, one requires two major assets in one’s life - Integrity and Wisdom.

Being a person of substance is more about attaining an internal equilibrium whereby one is able to understand, accept and project oneself as he or she is.

Integrity is the courage to do what is right even when no one sees it. This indeed is a quality that many of us lack. Being a hypocrite so as to please others is quite easy. But being a man with integrity takes a lot of courage as it involves doing what one preaches and preaching what one does. This provides a great amount of freedom in the sense that the person doesn’t have to act but rather be oneself without any inhibitions. Being a man of substance thus involves the ability to be honest to oneself and to others.

Wisdom is not something that one acquires through the intake of bookish information, but rather is the result of an amalgamation of experience and wisdom that he or she acquires through the interaction with society and with oneself. Our thought processes involve both positive and negative attributes, but wisdom helps in choosing the right option at the right moment. This would require a lot of experience to understand the fact that what matters is not the external display of wealth or knowledge, but rather the integrity of the person. True wisdom would also result in humility wherein one realizes that every single human being in this world is to be treated with respect and politeness. Understanding oneself with all one’s strengths and weaknesses would thus enable us to be humble enough to accept oneself and subsequently others.

Being a person of substance is a path to happiness. From my experience with my parents, teachers and friends, I also realize that real happiness comes out of giving oneself to others. Once you understand and accept yourself and others, there would be no issues in sharing what you have with others. If one realizes that he or she has been able to have a positive impact on someone that is the great satisfaction one can ever have.

As a person, I also believe in the righteousness of action. This is guided by the spirituality that one believes in. When I refer to spirituality, it must be made clear that this is free from the shades of organized religion. One is spiritual if he or she is able to introspect and thereby understand what he or she is. So it is not the blind belief in God that makes a person but rather the true belief in the goodness of humanity. If God exists, He would be pleased by an atheist who gives himself to others and He would surely shun a believer who is so full of himself that he has no time for others. There is not a single problem that exists without multiple solutions. It is this perspective that makes the difference. Sometimes this simple difference in our perspective could make a huge difference in others’ lives.

There is a great dilemma in the life of every single human being; the choice between the road paved with rose petals and the one with thorns. The former is easy to travel but the destination could only be arrived at by depriving several people of what was rightfully theirs. The latter requires a lot of integrity and persistence but the end is much more satisfactory. The choice is open. You take the road to being untrue and you please everyone except yourself. But if you choose to take the road to being a person of substance you end up making both yourself and others happy. Each time one sees the presence of a wide smile on the face of another the sparkling experience is unparalleled.

“Try not to become a [person] of success, but rather try to become a [person] of value.”
-Albert Einstein

“You wake up at 8:00 AM. You start your computer at your office desk at 9:00 AM. You know the best you can do is finish the work in an hour. But somehow nobody cares about your work efficiency. Your boss doesn’t care if all the nuances in the company minimize your potential or not. You are left on your own. You feel exhausted by all the unexpected small troubles and problems. You hate the troubleshooting work so much that minute by minute, day by day and month by month you start to finish the work 10 times slower than when you first started your career. You think this is okay because nobody cares and everybody else is probably doing the same.” This outlines possibly a typical work scenario for most people. One will never get to be someone of substance if one keeps finding him/herself in the idle and meaningless trap most of the days. To escape this trap, we need to either find aspirations or challenges, either in work or somewhere else in our life.

Working towards these challenges often lead to some kind of success, and then our lives begin to revolve around our successes. Often we wonder if anyone cares about us and our successes, even though they nod their heads and smile as speak about them.

- I have played Volleyball in Sweden and trained international students
- I have won 50 gold medals in different sports activities and athletic events
- I’ve visited 18+ countries

These are markers for some levels of success in my life, but it’s not what people care about, hence, even mere success does not make a person “a person of substance”.

Here are six ways which make a person of substance:

Be Selfless: Many of us are selfish. However, people of substance understand there is something greater in the world for them to serve, whether that be humanity, their family, or a cause. The mere commitment to something greater add depths to them as people, and it communicates more about them to others than they can ever express over drinks and dinner.

Be Consistent: Your word is your oath. Be someone people can count on, a reliable person is worth 10x their weight in gold. It’s the, “who do you call when you get stranded at night in the middle of nowhere” concept. Be someone who takes care of their responsibilities no matter the time or place.

Be Humble: Simply let your life speak for itself. There’s not a time or place where you should brag about something you did. If it’s great enough, someone will surely do it for you. Your identity should revolve around your ethics not your laurels.

Be Interesting: Challenge yourself to learn new things. Encounter new cultures, situations, and activities. If you’ve always wanted to learn how to enroll for a dance class. Think you want to skydive? Schedule it for this weekend. Those who pursue their curiosity create energy, because they’re acting on deep-seeded wonder instead of an advertisement of the next season of Game of Thrones.

Be Empathetic: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou

At the core of humanity, it’s about connection. We are social creatures. So when you get the chance to make an impact on someone’s life, go deep with them. Ask questions. Encourage them. Give them your undivided attention. Actively listen. Who knows? You may change the world, one person at a time.

Working towards these challenges often lead to some kind of success, and then our lives begin to revolve around our successes.

Be Candid: Your integrity is more important than your likability. Once all is said and done, people will respect those who acted on what they believe in rather than believed what others want them to act on. Be your true self. Through all the successes in my life, I've learned that people appreciate people; they tend to not appreciate things. If you want to be a person of substance, go deep, not wide. Add value to lives. Be your true self.

A shallow pond will feed you for a year, but a deep ocean will feed you for life.

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

-John C. Maxwell

What makes a person of substance? Is it only a person who has a lot of depth and has knowledge on various things or is it someone who actually does something with it? According to me, it's the latter.

A person of substance can have various characteristics. It's someone who does not sit and complain about circumstances but actually goes forward and does something about what she/he thinks and tries to bring in a substantial change. For me, a person of substance is a good leader and is someone who does not only lead but also sets an example by doing so. She/he also encourages and motivates her/his peers and people working under her/him to follow her/his steps but have a mind of their own and do creative things. A person of substance would also be someone who doesn't act impulsively or isn't whimsical but has a clear vision and acts accordingly. She/he is someone who also strives to inspire others and persuade others to follow. So when times get difficult, they look up to her/him and follow her/his steps. A good leader should also be able to take calculated risks and work accordingly. Apart from leading, he should also have a commitment and passion towards his work. A good leader has the power to have a profound effect towards masses so she/he takes the right and a quick decision when required. As the saying goes, with great power comes great responsibility; a good leader should not become a tyrant but be accountable to her/his subordinates, he/she should exercise empathy and should also try to understand the problems of her/his subordinates.

For me, a person of substance is a good leader and is someone who does not only lead but also sets an example by doing so.

Taking all these characteristics into consideration, the first person who comes into my mind is Deng Xiaoping, a great political leader of People's Republic of China, who I've always idealized. Even though he was never the head of the state or government, he was still a good leader and a person of substance in the truest sense of the term. Concurring with the various features I mentioned above, I consider him so because of his various achievements, some being bringing out China from the clutches of poverty and bad policy decisions made by his predecessor, Mao Zedong and bringing out China from the social instability and conflict. His achievements and the reformations he brought to China through his visions, determination and diligence are second to none. He took a more practical approach to development than Mao by taking a realistic plan of his Four Modernizations Programmes which included reforms in the industrial, science and technology, agricultural and military sectors. He helped turn China from a poor socialist country, by adopting market economy by opening its markets to foreign competition, to a superpower with one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Being a student of International Relations, I also laud the foreign policy of Deng Xiaoping which is that he believed that to walk on the path of success China had to stop engaging in external issues and start focusing on its own development. I believe and hope that one day India learns from the experiences of China and of Deng Xiaoping who helped China reach its pinnacle today and I believe this is what makes a person of substance and woman/man of her/his words.

I feel that a person of substance is a very relative and subjective term. Giving it a definition or tracing a path for how such a person ought to be seems impossible, as there is no single way in which this can be categorized.

In the traditional way of thinking we would classify a person of substance as someone who:

1. Rises above all odds by going beyond the limits of caste, gender, religion and social backwardness by making dedicated efforts to break away from inherent prejudices and stereotypes
2. Gives importance to morality above everything else by condemning social evils, fighting corruption and immoral practices
3. Is a leader and visionary who has the ability to stay ahead of times and work dedicatedly with a clear vision
4. Is driven by a social mission to work amongst communities and societies for their upliftment

I do agree that such people are people of substance. However, I would like to chart a different path because this is an incomplete categorization. I would like to point out some reasons for this and share my perspective on what makes a person of substance.

I feel that rising against the odds is a narrow perception of people's lives. If we classify people this way, an impoverished farmer living in a drought affected village or drainage workers who clean the sewers of our cities, or an uneducated housewife belonging to a conservative household and others who are unable to come out of their difficult situations would be tagged as "people of no substance". If we view the world this way we would be overlooking the significant contributions and sacrifices that many individuals like them make.

Moral values seem to come about as another deciding factor for a person of substance. However, being a qualitative factor which is very subjective I feel it is a futile attempt for classification. For instance, what if a very poor man steals medicines to save a friend's life? What if a woman practices prostitution to feed her family? If an IT Professional can sell his brains to an MNC for remuneration why must we judge a woman who sells her body? In such situations what is moral and immoral? Are these acts crimes or sacrifices? These questions remain unanswered.

Being a visionary and having leadership skills is an important trait. But we often see these traits as something that is restricted to corporate executives, politicians and bureaucrats. Take the case of a street sweeper who is dutiful, punctual and hardworking. Even though government officials might bring out a new law to keep the country neat and clean, it is the vision and initiative of people like these sweepers that bring in the real output but their leadership is barely acknowledged.

Being a visionary and having leadership skills is an important trait.

Quite often we also think that people running NGOs and grassroots level organisations are the only heroes who bring development. It is a common narrative that working with such organizations is the most meaningful thing to do in life. We overlook the impact that businesses and for-profit enterprises have on welfare- in fact our Small and Medium Industries (SMEs) are often underappreciated for the work they do. The huge taxes that the businessmen who own these institutions pay is as important, or probably, more important than the contribution made by local social workers, but their contributions are hardly appreciated. In our skewed perception only gigantic corporation's CSR funds seem important.

Thus, unlike traditional definitions that portray a person of substance as someone who leads others or as someone in power, who thinks ahead of times, or as someone with superior morale, I feel that anyone who positively impacts another is a person of substance. It could be an intentional or unintentional effort, and be anything-- economic, personal or political contribution since a 'person of substance' is a very relative and subjective term.

All people who bring a positive change to someone else monetarily, emotionally,

psychologically, socially or in any other way, are all people of substance. These people may not enjoy the limelight but in their limited roles they do make a huge difference and are people of some substance.

In my opinion it is as subjective as the age old dilemma of which came before the chicken or the egg? There is never an answer which is absolute in such scenarios and each appears as correct (or wrong) to a person depending on which direction the train of his thought is heading. From the way I see it, a person can be regarded as a man of substance if he leads a life of balance. To draw an analogy, like how scholars of Ayurveda claim the body to be a perfect amalgamation of five elements (pancha mahabutha), I believe a balanced life can be led by equating one's time between five important aspects - family, health, spirituality, work and the right amount of frolic. The reasons why I have chosen these among other qualities and traits is elaborated as follows:

From the way I see it, a person can be regarded as a man of substance if he leads a life of balance.

Family: The one thing that sets Barak Obama apart from all his contemporaries is the heart-warming relationship he had with his wife and daughters. It played an important role in shaping his personality and won him the hearts of millions of his countrymen. In this regard developing a healthy bond with not just family but friends and fellow humans in general is in my opinion the first step to greatness, and thus finds the top spot on my list of must-have qualities for a person of substance.

Closely behind I have placed *Health*. The interpretation of the word health must never be restricted to mere physical fitness. It is the wholesome wellbeing of the body as well as the mind and can be associated to the overall endurance of a human. The reason I have given health second place in my list is when I asked myself the question: Could the Hopliters run the famous marathon if they suffered from arthritis or fatigue? Definitely not, and as a result Athens would have fallen. Thus, however big or benevolent your aspirations might be, you can never accomplish them if your body and mind don't stand strong with you.

Next comes *Spirituality*: People derive their spirituality from various sources such as religion, the universe, nature, and so on. But whatever the source may be, spirituality in my opinion serves as a moral compass for people and enables them to differentiate between right and wrong. It helps to purify their intentions, develops compassion and keeps a person humble. Anybody could attest that the Buddha was a textbook example of a man of substance, and the primary trait that moulded him to be so was, in my opinion, his spiritual awareness.

The reason why *Work* has found its way into my list is because it is the means to acquire wealth, and the way in which man utilizes his wealth helps to accurately gauge the depth of his character. Bill Gates can be the perfect example to explain this point as he has used his massive wealth to change thousands of lives. Through his charitable work, Mr Gates has proved that not the accumulation but the sharing of wealth is the greatest achievement of man. For this reason I think of him as a gentleman of great substance and an example to be followed by all.

The legendary Sam Manekshaw always reminded his soldiers about the importance of Folic. Uncertainty is ingrained in the nature of human life and the old general understood this all too well. Like him, one must accept it and learn to enjoy life while it lasts, living up to the fullest every day with a contagious smile and joyful enthusiasm. Despite having all other qualities mentioned above only a person who can be cheerful in the gravest of times would qualify as a person of genuine substance.

This is a list of focus areas to lead a life of balance. A person must consciously strive to bring harmony among these essential aspects of human life and the day he brings these to an equilibrium his life would be a peaceful and a perfectly balanced scale and he would have become a person of substance.

Whenever we see stars, we are astonished by their beauty. For some people, stars lie in sky and for some others, beyond the clouds but for few, in the universe. Universe! Yes, the guts to think that we are not just living on a planet but we are sailing in the universe with it. The guts to think this way, is what makes a person of substance. But not just this, there are some specific qualities which differentiates such people from others....

For some people, stars lie in sky and for others, beyond the clouds but for few, in the universe.

Curiosity: Today, we are so self-absorbed in our tiny world that we forget some people are out there who might need us. It all depends on how curiously one wants to help these people. And a person of substance possesses this curiosity. He/she doesn't only possess this but also strives for it.

Meaning: Why we eat certain kinds of food, what we wear, how we see the world, our tastes, our likes -- everything has a meaning but it needs a keen eye and an attentive mind to understand these meanings which opens a door to look beyond, and that's what a person of substance does. But it's not easy to find these meanings but a person of substance discovers it and if still he/she fails then invents it. And such meanings are always conscious and rational.

A poem by Robert Frost beautifully describes it:

*"Two roads diverged in a wood,
And I -- I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference."*

We all come across choices between different paths in our lives. Everyone wants to live a successful and healthy life, have a good and happy family, money, name and so on. But few people make a difference and add some happiness in this tormented world in which they hug the less fortunate to make them know that there is a beautiful life waiting for them far away from their present circumstances. And, yes, this we know as a person of substance.

We all are made of tiny atoms, water, hydrogen, lots of chemicals. We all have bones, muscles, skin and yes, most importantly a brain and heart. So that means, we all have the potential to do what is termed impossible. But, are we willing to do that? The answer to this makes all the difference. Humans also have other special substances like compassion, courage, and positivity.

So what's this call? This is an inner calling. People who possess this substance know that there must be a reason of our being here on this earth. Some know this reason and some don't but deep inside we all know that there's a fire burning in all of us, it's a flicker in some and a wild intense fire in others but it is there and we know it. This fire is a call, an inner call which always goads us to do something, which pushes us towards our purpose. But not everyone listens to this but people with a special understanding do that which makes them different from the rest of the people in the world.

These people of substance were all, at some point in their lives, inspired by others or an incident -- the hardships they experienced or might have seen somebody else going through them. It is these stories which defines them -- stories that make them realize that life is much more than a pay cheque, a big car or a house.

Hope: People of substance live in the hope that once all barriers are crossed and the wait is over there lies fulfilment in the end.

People of substance are the ones who knows that "they are born to fly not crawl".

“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

He is person of substance who lives forever in others' hearts.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem. A person of substance stands out from the crowd by his deeds; the way he/she acts, responds to others and sets goals in life; he/she has depth, inner character and wants to grow and improve himself.

A state of self-awareness when a soul is in connection with mind and body creates a person of substance. This means that our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes can positively or negatively affect our biological functioning. Therefore, it is emphasized that a calm soul and a fit mind and body leads to healthy functioning which results in being solution oriented, making good judgment, being consistent, humble and empathetic.

A state of self-awareness when a soul is in connection with mind and body creates a person of substance.

*“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.”*

- Robert Frost

Not everyone in the modern world is willing to take the road less travelled. The world is full of people who live for themselves, who care for nothing but gathering wealth. But their existence fades away with time. In contrast, there also exists such mentors and saints who give their strength to the weak, their substance to poor and their sympathy to the suffering and they tend to change the lives of others. The former might be known for their success but the latter are remembered and cherished forever for their contribution to the world. Therefore, that's the reason that not every excellent student can be a good mentor as a mentor knows “the art of giving”, which remains unknown to many.

The state of awareness, the courage to stand up for his/her thoughts, the sense of responsibility of his/her actions, a dedication towards life and the attitude of “not giving up even after certain failures” makes a person of substance.

“There was a time she wasn't sure. In middle of a hurricane, it always made her question— Wonder whether she will get through it, whether all of it is worth it or what if she could not handle, she always had a thought to quit at the back of her mind. But she did not quit because she is not an escapist. The day she realized she had to fight back, she won because she was not scared to lose. In middle of the storm, where she was the most vulnerable, her ears could not listen to the chaos where she listened to her heart which told her to calm down, her soul became free, her mind was calm, she worked for the better, she had the courage to do what is to be done, she tried and failed and tried again and continued till she succeed. She knows this life is not a comforting lie so she pushed others forward too on her journey. She does not choose the easy. She does not live a lie, she made others look up to her. In the era of menace and survival, she lived.” This is my view of becoming a person of substance.

A person of substance is someone who has principles, value systems and a moral framework to help them navigate life and its challenges. The values and principles instilled in a person define him/her and it is what makes him/her a valuable asset to society. But what exactly are values and what constitute a value system? Values are multifaceted and quite subjective in its scope, so it is up to us as individuals, with our unique upbringing and personal experiences, to determine which values form the core of our value system. For me, values such as honesty, integrity and compassion form the lifeline of an individual.

A person of substance is someone who has principles, value systems and a moral framework to help them navigate life and its challenges.

Honesty: The quality of being honest, i.e. staying true to yourself and your commitments either it's related to professional or personal life is a valuable asset that is highly sought after in leaders and successful employees.

Integrity: Integrity is the quality of upholding your values in the face of adversities. It means that a person of substance will stay true to his/her value system even when circumstances seem not to be conducive for taking such a stand. An officer refusing to take a bribe even when he is in dire need of money is an example of such a person. He chooses to stay honest and do his duty as per procedures without accepting bribes that could have otherwise helped him in his personal life.

Compassion: We are all social beings. We are dependent on fellow humans, animals, plants and nature for survival. So, being compassionate is a natural and basic quality of being a human. To be a compassionate person means to relate to others' pain, misery and suffering and put my efforts in improving their condition in whatever way possible.

Whoever lives by a set of rules is a person of substance. Such people have their own unique identity which they strongly feel connected to. Basing their identity on value systems rather than transitional characteristic is a sure recipe for success. In the words of Einstein, "We should try to become a man of values than a man of success."

A person of substance can be defined in a number of ways. In my opinion, a person of substance is someone who has a deep moral base and has the ability to give and share unconditionally. When a person gives unconditionally, he becomes a representative of God on earth. God himself does not give, but it is as though he has appointed representatives to do this task. Mother Nature, for example, is one such entity. When the sun shines, when it rains, when the trees ripen and when they shed their fruits, they do it for every living being on earth. They do not have any reservations as to whom they give or how much they give. Unlike most humans who search for the deserving before they give, Mother Nature gives her bounties to everyone alike.

In my opinion, a person of substance is someone who has a deep moral base and has the ability to give and share unconditionally.

There are some people who give for fame. They expect recognition from society in return for their acts of generosity. Some people give to relieve them of the pain or guilt of something they have done; they do it for redemption. For some, giving is their duty and for others giving is a part of their religion. Then there are a few, who give without expecting anything in return. They give unconditionally and they give from everything they have. A person of substance belongs to this group.

Giving does not mean giving from ones possessions or wealth. Our wealth is what we have earned in life; it is a representation of our fear or insecurity about our future. Our wealth does not represent who we are. True giving happens when you are ready to give a part of who you are to others. That includes your love, friendship, respect, honesty, trust, care and empathy. These values define who you are as a person and a human being. These values define your character. Unlike wealth, which you lose when you share, these values makes you rich when you share. When you love and offer your friendship, you get the same in return. When you are honest, people start trusting you. The same is the case when you show care and empathy. Thus, a person of substance is not rich by wealth, yet he is wealthy by his character and conduct!

To be worthy of giving, a person of substance is continually on the pursuit of his better self. He always sets his standards high – whether it be his moral values, his professional values or his personal values. He is always true to his character and his identity and he is proud of the beliefs, values and virtues that he upholds. He takes inspiration from others around him but never tries to be them. He works hard to be independent yet he is a constant presence in his community, where he remains as a beacon of charisma and positive energy. Amidst all this, he is open to criticism and he treats every arena that life puts him in as an opportunity to improve. A person of substance makes mistakes like everyone else, but what makes him different is his commitment to correct those mistakes and to learn from them.

To summarize, a person of substance is someone who has a good character built upon values like love, friendship, honesty and trust, yet he is in a continuous pursuit of his better self and uses every opportunity he comes across to share these values unconditionally with any person that he meets.

It is rather tricky in a socio-political context to define substance. What it encompasses and how it entwines itself within a man. Then there is always the question, is substance gender normative or gender neutral. To begin answering the latter can be a herculean task but is still a plausible one. The former, however, is subject to change with time, cultural differences and regional disparities.

What makes a man of substance? And if it can be truly answered what would make a woman of substance as well? Or is it being asked in a generic gender normative manner? Even though the question therefore that truly needs to be asked is, what makes a human being of substance? The lack of clarity makes us assume we define the need of the man first, use a rather gender neutral approach while doing so, and then revert to our original predicament, of whether or not it is truly possible to define substance.

A man is not merely defined by what he holds true to himself but also in the civil society that is constructed around him. In the process of developing oneself is where the question arises. What is substance? Substance that one can hold dear to themselves. Within this struggle lie experiences and thereafter a man starts developing the first pillar to sustain the ceiling of his substance. A local raggedy bus with overflowing passengers will teach you humility on the first ride. A beggar on the street starving to death and sleeping in fear would give you the eyes you need to build a civil society that doesn't merely benefit a few. All that this matter of substance is built upon is by life experience.

Second is the acknowledgment of your recurrent scenario to its truth. Reporting it in life as it could be. Speaking about it as bluntly and honestly as an individual can. Bringing justice to thought. Achieving truth to power. All the ideas and themes that a person finds abhorrent are subject to discussion -- that builds courage to face them. An individual's capacities are only as well defined as his ability to face his apprehensions. Substance would need to be built not only on the recognition of differences but also voicing the need of them.

And then is the acceptance of the inevitability of differences. The need of an open mind. Substance can merely be as strong as the biological magnification it may hold. A man is only as strong as his varied culture. A man is only as great as the impurity of his breed. A man is only as strong as the cross pollination of his ideas. At the center of the Holy Trinity of what would make a man of substance lies an open mind. A mind full of acceptance and overviews. A mind free from bounds of organised religion, divisive politics or capitalizing economics. A man rooted in traditions enough to question them. A man that isn't blinded. But what holds to the extremities of substance will always be willingness towards scepticism. An open mind to all.

A man is only as strong as the cross pollination of his ideas.

And thereafter comes traits that would make a man of substance. If his words are his oath, he is responsible, reliable, humble, and most importantly, empathetic. I believe he is a man of substance.

A man devoid of either can never claim himself to be that of substance. The broadest guidelines adhered, neither would a woman be able to call herself of any substance either. If the approach be either gender normal or gender neutral, substance still would remain the same if an individual has affinity for experiences, the honesty to dictate them and the strength to accept differences in them. Substance can be culturally different and complex, but it would hold true in any human socio-political scenario that an individual of substance would hold his ideals as high as heavens. A man of substance will always uphold his role and take them on with complete fervor.

According to me, a person of substance possesses a set of qualities which makes him stand out from the crowd. Firstly, he takes initiative, a leader rather than being a passive follower. He always tries to be a part of the solution rather than the problem itself.

History is full of incidents where people of substance became the drivers of change in human society. He/she must be a person of great determination and courage. He/she must be passionate enough to drive the change despite facing hardships. He/she must be committed and passionate about his goal.

Good social skills are a must as humans are social animals and we can't do away with interacting with people. He/she must set himself/herself as a role model which inspire others to drive the change they want to see in society. Integrity, the quality of being honest and having strong moral foundations, is a must. He/she must be accountable for his/her actions. And even if that individual has some flaws he/she should not hide that and work on mitigating those flaws.

Thinking clearly and articulating what he/she thinks is a very important part of being a person of substance. He/she must be consistent in his/her actions in order to drive the change he/she wants to see in the world.

According to me, a person of substance possesses a set of qualities which makes him stand out from the crowd.

If someone would have asked me this question a few years ago, my answer would have been quite prompt and clear. A person of substance is the one who succeeds in life, whatever path one may choose; one who earns substantial wealth and sets an example for everyone to follow. The person is the centre of attraction wherever he/she goes. The real person of substance -- if you asked me this a few years ago -- would have been flamboyant and the epitome of conventional macho-ism. Everything else mattered a little too less if this criterion was met.

However, it would take me a couple of years to realize that this was not an original idea at all. This ideology was implanted through implicit social construct while I was growing up. There was an unsettling curiosity to find answers for these abstract thoughts. It was a difficult journey to crawl out of the tunnel of ignorance to witness objective reality but I was compelled to take on this journey.

I recognized that life is not only limited to shades of black and white but comprises of a whole varied spectrum of colours. Thus, a person of substance can't be narrowed down only to a few idealistic notions. The "one" must represent the vast diversity that flourishes around him/her. This diversity stems from the depths of a fundamentally core value. A value that offers a uniqueness of its own while acknowledging and respecting the existence of others. A person of substance is the one who acts out of his/her own core value. The action that arises out of this value is not in conflict with others but finds a balance and operates in sync with the collective.

A person of substance can not be found in isolation. The "one" participates on a collaborative platform striving to serve the greater cause while maintaining a fine balance between achievements of personal goals. One has to be aware of one's most intimate aspirations and tune one's actions to fit into a macro perspective. One has to be in sync with oneself, one's socio-cultural surroundings and nature at large. Therefore, I think that finding a balance between one's inner and outer self is a mark of an exemplary human being.

As our collective consciousness grows natural differences in our ways of thinking and functioning are bound to arise. We, as human species, have derived a plethora of ways to reach our collective and individual goals. I suppose, it is in the way one handles differences that accords one a certain value. A person of substance acknowledges, accepts and respects the diversity of existence. One shouldn't shy away from recognising patterns alien to him or her and incorporate them in one's functioning with a sense of experimentation. The chances of failure may be higher yet there are calculated efforts to succeed albeit through a newer and fresher way. Accepting a difference of opinions, imbibing counter view-points and working together are the highlighting traits that establish an aura of a person.

Although there may be ample downfalls through repeated shots at experimentation, a person assumes value not through successes but through one's failures. It is not the end result that shapes the person but the perseverance that enabled him/her to gather distinct experiences every time he/she tried. Any person who has failed multiple times is inherently empathetic to others' needs and wants. He/she understands what deprivation means and feels deeply grateful for one's privileges. It is a virtue for a person to express compassion to all living beings and exercise power with utmost responsibility. If only we had enough compassionate leaders in the world today, we would have had the opportunity to deal with the most pressing issues of the world in much better ways!

I think the one who acts out of belief in one's own values and respects those of others, aspires to make the world a better place to live in, and most importantly, doesn't flinch to exercise his/her creative energy, which serves as an inspiration to the rest of us. The manifestation of sheer humanity and expression of good-will make a person of substance, at best.

Although there may be ample downfalls through repeated shots at experimentation, a person assumes value not through successes but through one's failures.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”

- Martin Luther King

There are two types of people in the world – one who blames others for their loss and have no values in life and the other who is totally opposite, he/she has a conscience and is a person of substance. As per my understanding a person of substance is someone who has the ability to face every difficulty and live every bit of life. People of substance don't fear the dangers and like to take whatever risk is needed. They enjoy participating and being involved in each and every task of life. They know what they want to achieve in life and are always ready to fight every difficulty coming in their way. They have the courage to overcome hardships never giving up on his/her values and virtues. Weak people always see the negative in every situation but a person of substance sees only positivity even in the worst situations. Therefore, he/she is a kind of person who has a positive influence on everyone and always tries to grow higher. He/she does this not only for himself/herself but also for others because he/she is always ready to help the weak and poor people.

The values of inner positivity and principles are central to such a person. But in a male- dominated society women tend not to be noticed. Today it is very important to be a woman of substance. A woman of substance is someone who has a strong character and has various interests outside and also within her family. She has a lot of curiosity to know things, possesses deep personality and an influential character. There is one more quality that a person of substance possesses i.e. he/she should never be quiet when it's time to voice her opinions. The outer beauty is not important one is negative inside with no enthusiasm to achieve something. We all know that everyone tries to be physically beautiful but outer beauty never defines someone truly. Therefore, it is very important to accept yourself the way you are and be happy as acceptance is the path to progress. It is one's inner character and beauty which makes us evolve as human beings.

There aren't a large number of people of substance. But there are some ways that can make you one. Firstly, never make your life worthless and try to live by a set of morals, standards and values. These qualities set up some limits in your life and protect you from making mistakes. Secondly, make yourself a lifelong learner i.e. learn something every minute and second of life. Thirdly, always be positive in life because it makes you more efficient to work. Fourthly, always interact with people with a smile as it gives a positive influence on others and makes for efficient interaction which is the foundation of trust, love and respect. At last, believe in yourself because the biggest difference between successful people and unsuccessful ones is that successful people are determined to make the situation work for them rather than playing the role of the victim and searching for reasons why a situation won't work.

At last I want to say that a person of substance builds hope in our lives – the hope of stronger and deeper relationships with an incentive to stay positive, happy and never give up hope.

There are two types of people in the world – one who blames others for their loss and have no values in life and the other who is totally opposite, he/she has a conscience and is a person of substance.

A person of substance is someone who believes in himself/herself. He/she doesn't let his/her mediocrity lower his/her self-esteem. In a world where everybody struggles to be the best, he/she embraces the fact that he/she is mediocre. But that doesn't discourage him/her from aspiring to do whatever he/she wants to. In the twenty-first century, instances of anxiety and depression are rampantly increasing. This is primarily because we have become so obsessed with success, fame and money that it is driving us towards disappointment and negativity. We are just trapped in the labyrinth of our lives, striving to be someone who we never were. And in doing so we lose our individuality and forget to live. I'm not advocating that a person of substance isn't ambitious. I'm just trying to imply that ambitions can differ. He/she doesn't hide but seeks. He/she strives for knowledge, not merely education.

A person of substance has a feeling of self-worth. He/she accepts his/her flaws and the flaws of others. He/she exudes positivity and happiness. He/she is not perfect, he/she makes mistakes but she learns from them. He/she might fall, but keeps stumbling forward and is continuously evolving. Besides, a common misconception that some people might have is that a person of substance is like a utopian character who is totally impeccable, compassionate and entirely selfless. However, we're all humans, right? The basic premise of human psychology is that we're all driven by self-interests. It's okay if one might want to enjoy the material pleasures of life, but that doesn't mean one is materialistic.

A person of substance does not need to conform to a singular definition of perfection. A person of substance need not be a Nobel Prize winner or someone who has changed the world. For me, my parents are people of substance. I am from Bihar, a state where educating the girl child definitely isn't the priority of the family, let alone sending her to a reputed (and expensive) English medium school. Yet, my father fought with everyone in the family so that I could go to school. We're two sisters, and my mother was constantly mocked at all family functions because "she just bore two useless daughters who would eventually be married off to another family and are only a burden". She was even called barren despite the fact that it was my parents who decided that they would not have any more children. At times, the mockery was replaced with sympathy. My parents haven't done anything that influenced millions or changed the world, but that doesn't make them any less of people of substance. They have constantly made sacrifices for me and my sister all their lives.

A person of substance for me is my teacher from Class 5. She explained to me the importance of education. She has influenced my journey from being an average student to someone who is pursuing a Master's degree in Economics from one of the most renowned institutions of the world.

People of substance need not be Godlike. You can find them anywhere and everywhere. They need not be famous professional sportspersons or actors or someone who started by selling tea but eventually became the Prime Minister of the country. People of substance are around us. They are the ones who helped transform our lives for the better. They are our guiding light in times of distress. All, we need is to believe in ourselves and keep evolving into better version of ourselves. You can be a person of substance with all your imperfections, and so can I.

Every time I think about what makes somebody a person of substance, the image of a strong, sensible, self-aware, and socially responsible individual comes to my mind.

A strong person is a self-made person. He/she is somebody who has internal control: he/she believes that he/she is in charge of what happens to him/her and that he/she can decide the course of his/her life. He/she is a happy person with a positive outlook towards life. He/she faces challenges with optimism and courage. He/she knows how to transform anger into a force that helps him/her change things for the better. He/she looks at hard times and struggle as a golden opportunity to burn his/her ego; to build himself/herself anew, and to emerge as a wiser, stronger, more resilient human being. Not just that, he/she is also capable of protecting his/her people and of defending them without fear, when he/she believes they are right. He/she respects his/her seniors; he/she obeys the experienced, but refuses to agree with ideas that go against his/her values and principles. He/she is straight-forward and honest. Although polite and well-mannered, he/she does not shy away from speaking his/her mind.

Strength when coupled with sense becomes twice as powerful. A sensible person values knowledge and wisdom. He/she makes sincere efforts to know his/her environment. He/she is forever a student, who strives to nurture his/her intellect and is always curious, and eager to learn. He/she is high on the need for cognition and protects his mind from prejudices and stereotypes. He/she is ready with a plan, has clarity of purpose and knows exactly what his/her priorities are. He/she is constantly onto acquiring what David Wechsler defined as intelligence: "...the global capacity to think rationally, to deal effectively, and to act purposefully."

Strength when coupled with sense becomes twice as powerful. A sensible person values knowledge and wisdom.

A strong, sensible person can achieve all that he/she desires, provided he/she knows who he/she is and what he/she is capable of. Self-awareness can be defined as being conscious about one's nature, including one's needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Being aware of one's weaknesses gives one the chance to make oneself better. And if you know what your strengths are, and if you learn the ways to put them to use, you become an asset, not only to the society you live in but also to humanity. A person who is self-aware has metacognitive abilities. He/she thinks about the causes of his/her behaviour and uses introspection and self-control to constantly change himself/herself towards making his/her life more meaningful and worthwhile.

These set of qualities make one great and can be achieved when one has a goal that goes beyond the narrow boundaries of self-interest, and has social responsibility. The larger your dream, the more the number of people it involves, the greater your motivation and energy. A socially responsible person has a purpose in life and goes by this thought: "If the world is a cold place, make it your business to build fires"; if society needs to change, make it your duty to design and implement the transformation. While being a self-assured man who can be happy in his own company, he does accept the fact that there are some targets that can't be achieved without the strong support of a variety of experts and specialists. He, therefore, forms strong relationships with different people and collaborates with them to jointly follow common goals and objectives. He knows how to put personal differences aside to make sure that his team remains united in their pursuit of dreams that got them together in the first place.

You take strength, sensibility, self-awareness, and social responsibility, you bind it all together using the strong glue of intrinsic motivation, you provide it with the time and space it needs, you polish it with the tool of experience, and you have a person of substance.

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

– Robert Frost

I learnt this when I was in the ninth grade and it immediately struck a chord from within. I have always remembered these lines from Robert Frost’s poem.

The first time I took part in an art competition I was in the third grade. One of my teachers sent me to participate in a pencil drawing competition and I bagged a second prize. Then I repeated it again in the tenth grade. It was later on in college when I started participating in more of such competitions and bagging prizes with no technical knowledge that I realized that this was my thing -- art and volunteering. The immense happiness that it gives oneself and others is simply magical. I chose this, and that has made all the difference.

Born as the eldest son of eight children, I come from a very orthodox background. Having lived in hostels all my childhood, I never connected with my parents or home in a sense that I was supposed to. I remember I had no preferences. I was happy with whatever everyone gave me, chose for me, to make them happy -- never saying no, never choosing for. Whether it was dressing or studying, nothing was, in fact, mine. At 25 years of age now, when I look back I realize all that I am, started with volunteering. Instilling certain values, helped me find the courage to follow my heart and helped me find myself and my passion.

I see a few people around me, fighting all odds, making a huge impact in the lives of other people. I know someone who is bedridden yet with wings to fly into each and everyone’s hearts with his presence everywhere. Be it any program or camp, he is there with his serene face and playful smile on his mobile bed covered till his neck, paralyzed. Then there is another man, my cousin, whose very wild spirit has always made me realize about the deeper and little things in life, always being around as a huge source of inspiration.

I see a few people around me, fighting all odds, making a huge impact in the lives of other people.

They have all touched my life, especially those who have smiled at me with a twinkle in their eyes in places where I have volunteered. They have made me feel stronger, powerful, almost like I have something within me that is beyond all that the world runs behind. To help others, to put a smile on their faces, to make a difference in their lives and over all that, the strength to be me, to be what I want, to be happy, it’s a constant struggle. Every single day, to live through that, fighting all odds, feeding your soul, to enjoying the little things in life and being a human, now, that is what I call substance and what I strive for every day. In today’s world, when all eyes have been blinded, all voices silent, all ears deaf, this makes all the difference. This gives hope. This helps us bloom. And this helps us grow.

When I told a few friends and mentors that I was going to write an essay on “What makes a person of substance”, I was met with resounding suggestions about the qualities that make such a man. He is one who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem or simply a person of substance...

If I continue in that line of thinking, Adolf Hitler whose actions resulted in the death of over 50 million people; Mussolini, the founder of Italian Fascism and Ajmal Kasab, who took part in the terrorist attack in Mumbai and killed 166 innocent civilians, are all people of substance. As far as I am concerned finding a meaning to life by being a part of something and seeking a solution does not make a person of substance. A person of substance must have elements of Universal Humanism and Global citizenship.

To put it in another way, Emotional Intelligence (EI) makes a person of substance. The Harvard Business Review defines Emotional Intelligence as an individual’s ability to accurately recognize, understand and manage his own emotions as well as that of others.¹ It affects how we manage behaviour, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results. Emotional Intelligence has four pillars: self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and relationship management. If someone has an understanding of his abilities, attitude and emotions and if he knows how to manage or use them effectively, then he can involve and work on something that has a meaning from his point of view.

Yet, does it create a sustainable social change or what is the impact of his engagement in his surrounding and the world around? Does it create a positive or negative impact?

To answer these questions in terms of Emotional Intelligence, we must take into consideration of the third pillar of EI -- empathy. Empathy is the capacity to place oneself in another’s position or make less distinct the differences between the self and the other. Empathy and relationship management help humans to be a part of a larger community of people with a difference in socio-cultural and political ideologies, catalyse mutual interaction and encourage them to recognize and respect similar or different communities.

However, we can’t define or specify what makes a person of substance. The answer depends on the perspectives of the writer. The meaningfulness of one’s life can be seen through the lens of society and through the lens of his perspectives. The later lens is more important because that is what defines a person. My point is, Emotional Intelligence helps us to rejuvenate, improve and expand our perspectives and priorities. There is no point in living a life that is perfect through the society lens if we can’t find happiness and satisfaction. Emotional intelligence help us to bridge both the lenses.

The meaningfulness of one’s life can be seen through the lens of society and through the lens of his perspectives.

Reference-

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What makes a person of substance? It is a tough question to answer. The qualities that make a person of substance are hard to master but once a person is able to inculcate those qualities no one can stop him from being successful and getting whatever he wants. What is a person of substance? A person of substance is the one who influences others in positive ways. He/she has depth and inner character; has a desire to improve himself day by day. He/she does not attempt to imitate others rather he tries to be what he is. A person who has the opposite nature believes in show off his materialistic successes in front of the world. There is no depth and inner character in the lives of such type of individuals. They are like a balloon that looks pretty from the outside but have nothing beautiful inside. Such type of people always make excuses and try to play the victim. So we should try to be a person of substance not to a person of commodity.

A person of substance is the one who influences others in positive ways.

A person of substance should be selfless. Although a human being is considered selfish but a man of substance is just the opposite. Instead of thinking about oneself a person of substance thinks about others and also what consequences one's action have on others. He/she is considerate about others first rather than himself. For him society comes before an individual. A person of substance always sets his goal high. He sets goals for himself such as achieving a good education, wise money management, travelling, buying a home etc. When a person has goals then only life becomes meaningful and has direction.

I believe that being a person of substance stands for hope of a better life, the hope of having stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being real without faking it, the hope of living with honour. No matter whatever happens if a person has strong relationships and has goals in life he will be able to achieve everything and contribute his best to society. If a person works towards achieving these qualities then surely he will succeed in becoming a person of substance.

I believe that even though I'm a long way away from being perfect, I do see myself as someone who can be considered as a man of substance. Knowledge is something that I believe in acquiring and sharing with others to constantly stay updated on all the new things happening in the world. I believe in my relationships and protect and nurture them through communication. Selflessness comes to me naturally - be it to the society that I'm living or in my circle of family and friends. It's easy to say that I'm good, but the realisation of the fact that at the end of the day I am a human being keeps me rooted. My conscience reminds me to constantly work on myself to be a better human being than I was yesterday - be it in my words, in my thoughts or in my actions. It may also be in the decisions I take either for me or for others collectively.

We know that a person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem. He/she always tries to make the world a better place; always seeks peace; increases the quality of life by doing hard work. He/she can make a terribly wrong thing in to purely right.

A person of substance is consistent in his efforts and focuses on the richness of the results. Generosity lies within his heart where God enriches him with rewards. He/she works for that reward. This doesn't mean that one works hard in order to be rewarded. One has to work selflessly. This is when one truly feels fulfilled. It is then that he/she shall lead the community, single-minded and selflessly. Everything conveys the true essence of such a person who is not a terrorist but a superhero, not a sexist but functions equally, not an opportunist but takes the opportunities.

A person of substance is consistent in his efforts and focuses on the richness of the results.

The practical mind of the person enables him/ her to think clearly and get the desired results. Therefore, this uniqueness makes one a person of substance. Apart from all this he/she should be kind to everyone. He/she should always promote sustainability in everything and initiate lateral thinking abilities.

This all needs active participation which requires courage. People of substance have plenty of courage for this. They may commit errors, because there is no effort without errors. They strive with great enthusiasm, devotion; and spends themselves in a worthy cause. They at best know the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if they fail, at least fail doing something great. They shall never be those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

People of substance take responsibility, they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicentre of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that that decision may bring. Responsible, wholehearted and committed engagement points to a second element of becoming a person of substance. He/she knows that there is no middle/neutral position on anything. They identify with the sentiment that "If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem". Just as wants outnumber the means to satisfy them, so too, problems outnumber solutions and real problem-solvers in life are few and far between. Good problem solving abilities between competing interests typically requires a person of sound judgment who has immense empathy, complete objectivity and solid life-honed values. Such a person no doubt will have lived an experienced, rich, full and multi-faceted life. Choosing to experience life outside of our comfort zone to gain good judgment that can be used in solving problems would appear to be another action that would lead to becoming a person of substance.

Likewise empathy should be in his blood. And he or she should always be candid; humble towards his colleagues, friends and relatives. And above all he should be a nature lover with love and peace in heart.

A person of substance is one “who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem”. Substance doesn’t mean material wealth it’s all about the inner character, knowledge and attitude that an individual possesses. He/she is the one who actively participates in solving problems and seeking solutions. He/she can influence the others in a positive way and wants to grow and improve himself/herself.

Substance doesn't mean material wealth it's all about the inner character, knowledge and attitude that an individual possesses.

So, how one can be a person of substance?

1. Believe in yourself

He/she should believe in oneself. Self-belief is the best motivation to do the best in all the activities that a person engages in. If he/she is confident then he/she can excel in all situations.

2. Positive attitude

A person with a positive attitude can face all the situation in a positive way. He can find happiness in all situations. He can easily face all problems. A positive person can find positives even in the negatives. He can solve problems in a rational way. Every situation have a positive and negative. He/she should be able to avoid the negative and accept the positive.

3. Rationality

A rational person is one who finds the best out of the given alternatives. He/she always chooses the best. He/she can easily find best solutions to problems and he can actively participate in everything.

4. Goal oriented

A person should be goal oriented to become a person of substance. The goal can be short term or long term. These goals will motivate the person to face life positively. Goals will motivate him/her to pursue work hard and that goal-oriented mind will enable him to face all problems and find the best solutions.

5. Be a learner

A person should be a learner always that means he/she should learn things from each and every situation in life. Learning is a process that will not end; it's a continuous process so he/she should have the mind to learn new things all the time.

6. Be a social person

A social person is the one who actively participates in social activities and one who interacts with others effectively. To be a person of substance one should be a social person.

7. Active participation

To become a person of substance it's necessary to have active participation in all the things that happens around him without any hesitation.

8. Free from fears

To be a person of substance one should not have any fear of failures. He/she should be free from fears and that will enable him to participate in each and every situation.

The one who is positive, has self believe, a passion for learning, a social mind, a learning attitude, goals and no fear of failures can become a person of substance.

The Latin root of the word “substance” is *sub stare*, which means “to stand firm”. The Middle English definition is “essential nature”. Nowadays, we use the word to define someone who possesses honesty and intelligence, or when we examine a message to find its essence. To be thought of as a person of substance is a good thing, but to be thought of as a substance abuser is not so good.

India has a demographic advantage of having a large youth population. Let us rise up, think, identify a purpose of life and persevere in a positive direction no matter the obstacles and lead the Nation. Apart from the infinite other qualities, there are a few basic ones that make a person of substance. Today, it is empathy that the world needs and not sympathy. Sympathy will only do the job of making people feel better but it won't actually make them better. Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another; so that we can understand people and do something about it only when we are an empathetic being. Having a purpose-driven life or the passion to create a change in ourselves is something that gives us purpose. It gives us a life in a true sense as it is said that “a shallow pond will feed you for a year, but a deep ocean will feed you for life”. As one person has described it, “a person without substance is just loud, but has no melody”.

So, what can we do to become people of substance?

1. Find your dream in life and pursue it - Follow your heart...never give up...and you can do anything. We all have the ability to do whatever it is we want to do and fulfil any dream we want to fulfil; we just have to go and do it. When you find your passion in life, it creates a meaning in your life and gives you a purpose in the world: it generates happiness.
2. Set goals continuously. People of substance have goals such as wise money management, keeping up with technology, getting into shape, improving parenting skills, traveling, and a thousand other goals. When you have goals, you give direction to your life. Instead of you settling for the “same old, same old,” your life begins to take off.
3. Build effective relationships with other people. Every person need not be your best friend, chum, pal, or your deepest confidante. But every relationship you have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are “there” for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others.
4. Live by moral standards and values. These qualities help build needed boundaries into your life and serve like guard rails on a highway. High moral standards and values prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself.

I believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope into our lives—the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity. I do believe we should view our entire life as an education—we should be ever-learning, every moment of time, everywhere, and in all circumstances. Did you know that about 33% of adults have not read a book since high school? Our world is changing, so we must be constant learners just to keep up.

“Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves”.

- Mahatma Gandhi

India has a demographic advantage of having a large youth population. Let us rise up, think, identify a purpose of life and persevere in a positive direction no matter the obstacles and lead the nation.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life.

Generally there are two types of people, one who live for themselves i.e. they don't care about anything except their life; the others are people of substance.

The fact is nobody can become a person of substance in a single day. It is a lifelong process which takes time, effort and contribution. The foundation of a person of substance starts during his/her schooling, and to be such kind of person one has to be a lifelong learner, but this does not mean spending your whole life in a classroom. But I do consider we should view our whole life as an education. We should be ever-learning, in all places, and in all situations. There are a lot of adults who have not read a book since high school. This world is changing every single second, so we must be constant learners just to keep up.

A person of substance is always there when help is needed. He/she gives to others more than he/she desire to receive from others. A person of substance believes in making the world a better place. He/she makes efforts to increase the quality of life and preserve goodness in the world.

A person of substance take responsibility, he/she wholeheartedly puts himself/herself at the epicenter of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that that decision may bring. Responsible, passionate and dedicated engagement in your world points to a second element of becoming a person of substance.

Being an active, energetic, creative and enthusiastic part of society, he/she has the ability to take initiatives. Leadership abilities, team spirit, creativity, awareness about surroundings, discipline, punctuality, all of which are traits of a person of substance and is very useful for making an impact towards our society.

I believe that such people contribute and will continue to do so towards this world. As people of substance, we all will change the world and contribute to the development of society. Together we all will make our world a better place.

A person of substance is always there when help is needed.

The moment I see the phrase “person of substance” I am reminded of the poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling that I read in school that sums up the phrase. I think, self-belief is the most essential trait. It comes from self-awareness which in turn is the result of one’s ability to understand her/his body, the functioning of surroundings and the way society evolves. Self-belief also results in detaching oneself from the immediate yet being an integral part in its making. It aids one to not bow down to pressures around and not jump the bandwagon. He/she is able to hold her ground against the world when it says two plus two is not four. Social reformers are able to visualize a better society when the world does not. Thus, self-belief serves as an ingredient of his/her courage of conviction.

Persons of such magnitude are able to make a difference in many lives, including theirs.

Persons of such magnitude are able to make a difference in many lives, including theirs. They have a constant urge to learn from their surroundings and the systems around them, and unlearn and evolve from negative past experiences. This helps them maintain a fair balance of ethics in life which in turn is their key asset to evolve into a person of substance. Life struggles are the biggest lessons in their life.

Lord Rama, with all the difficulties posed to him in different phases of life, always stood by his code of ethics. Whether it was to leave his palace for fourteen years in exile, or to suffer the pain of separation from his beloved wife, and then challenge the powerful Lanka Empire with just an army of monkeys -- at every step of his life journey he did not lose his integrity or patience. Perhaps unsure of the consequences that the future held, but he didn’t flinch to observe and act on what was an ethical response and what was needed to be done.

Another characteristic, according to me, is the ability to empathize with others’ complexities and struggles. People of substance are high on emotional intelligence, and are able to understand the limitations of whom they interact with -- not to mention, this makes them interactive, gregarious and trustworthy. This very fact is the reason for their positive influence and ability to convince people.

Their absence of hatred towards anyone makes them different from others. To forgive someone is to forgive oneself, as it helps the forgiver jettison hatred that keeps her/his body under negative stress and restlessness. As the saying goes to forgive is divine: President Nelson Mandela’s absence of hatred for his colonial oppressors makes him stand out in any list of world leaders with substance. Hatred, or the very lack of it, determines the shape a leader can give to his struggle. Mandela, with his famous call to forget the past and work towards reconciliation has made South Africa a prosperous nation, instead of a civil war that could have ensued a politics of hatred as is the case in some other countries with similar histories of conflict.

Lastly, they have tolerance for contrasting ideologies and the ability to see the world as a composite place instead of monochromatic version of a single reality. They appreciate the processes of historical (anthropological) development, rather than scoff at the very existence of opposition. This characteristic is a result of their immense faith in the processes of nature, and respect for diversity.

In a nutshell, a person of substance is an amalgamation of many qualities and traits he/she absorbs during his/her formative years and are further shaped by his/her life processes and struggles. Most importantly, they are self-aware and compassionate to others.

Every time I slip down to the negative side of my life’s sinusoidal journey I ruminate what is it that makes one stand out when others jettison any thought of holding up. What does it take to be a person of substance? As I ponder more, I also think perhaps the societies that throw up such people at the helm contribute in equal measure in their making.

Before I begin, I would like to differentiate between a person of substance and a successful person. In my opinion, they can be very different. A person of substance might not be a successful person according to the conventional definitions of success by society. Furthermore, it is possible that a successful person might not be a person of substance. While our society judges success on the basis of the amount of money earned, positions held or power acquired, a person of substance should be judged on his/her values and qualities. Some of the most important qualities of a person of substance are:

Continuously striving to improve with integrity: A person of substance is constantly learning and growing. He/she is someone who always tries to improve and be a better version of himself. Improvements can be in any sphere of life like being a better cook, being more generous or even coming up with a better product. It is important that on this journey of constant growth, the person always maintains integrity. He/she should not deceive people or break their trust. However, integrity does not mean that the person should be bound by the morals and laws of his/her society, as morals are transient. Certain acts which are deemed illegal or immoral might be pursued to achieve higher goals. During the Second World War a heavily injured American soldier landed in Japanese territory near a Japanese doctor's house. The doctor decided to help the soldier, even though it was illegal and some of his citizens would have called it an act of treason. However, in my opinion, the doctor was right in healing the American man, as he was serving the higher goal of serving humanity. So, people of substance must decide for themselves what their values and morals are and act accordingly.

Continuously striving to improve with integrity: A person of substance is constantly learning and growing.

Resilience and Determination: I believe these are important qualities for someone for a person of substance. It is impossible to go through life without facing adversity, but those who are able to keep their heads above the tide will emerge winners. What underlines resilience is a belief in oneself. As it's only when you believe in yourself, failures will not act as setbacks but rather motivate you more, because you know you'll succeed sooner or later. Failures are important because they give us an opportunity to learn and to reflect. Any person of substance will try to learn not only from his/her own mistakes, but the mistakes of others also. He will strive to not repeat these mistakes, as he knows that making mistakes is not bad, but repeating them, is. If a person is self-aware of his mistakes, and sincerely tries to learn and improve from them, he will be given a chance.

Kindness and Humility: Last but not the least, the person should be kind and humble. H/she should be kind towards each and every living organism, and should be willing to make sacrifices for the happiness of others around him. It is important that these sacrifices are made because of pure concern and a desire to help. Sacrifices or charity undertaken to gain popularity or achieve other goals are not characteristics of a person of substance. Furthermore, no matter his/her achievements, all is lost if the person starts viewing himself above the rest. Such a person will be consumed by his/her own accomplishments and soon be hated by society. People might continue to treat him/her well because of the power or status he/she has acquired, but they will not truly admire him.

What makes a person of substance? The answer is not a definite one it varies person to person. A person of substance is an individual that lives in harmony with nature. Every individual is unique in character, personality and attitude. So we can't judge a person with his/her qualities. Every human being has substance is hidden in their mind, but some people take action appropriately and on time. There are many characteristics that make a person of substance – experience is one of them. For another person it depends on their environment, culture, tradition etc. Religion is another factor that helps to emerge substance in one's life. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism possess good qualities. In Buddhism there are noble eightfold path; in Christianity Ten Commandments help a person to improve his substance.

A person of substance is an individual that lives in harmony with nature.

There are many persons with substance -- Mahatma Gandhi who is known as the father of India, had qualities such as simplicity, non-violence, loyalty which made him a person of substance. A P J Abdul Kalam the missile man, through his hard work, consideration to others, knowledge, optimism, and inspiring character he stood out from others. The Dalai Lama in Tibet is another example of a person with substance. Another current example is Hima Das, a girl from a poor village who made India proud. She could have got married just like any other girl, looked after her kids and lived her whole life inside a small house. Rather, she decided to be an athlete, tried hard and made the entire nation proud. She didn't hide her substance. She achieved her dream.

In brief, a person of substance is more than what meets the eye. He/she aren't predictable he/she rises above obstacles no matter how difficult. Such a person of substance realizes the goodness, power and value within them and reflects it in society by their words and deeds. He/she may not be a saint, historic leader but he/she makes a positive impact in society. Such person is careful of actions and if he/she makes a mistake is quick to correct it. No matter whether rich or poor such a person always has values of love, friendship, honesty and trust. No matter where he/she stands in moments of comfort or challenges he/she will find the harmony within it.

It is my dream to be a person of substance as I advance in years because of my parents and teachers. I would like to adopt certain qualities that a person of substance should possess through his/her behaviour. It would be useful for the citizens of my nation, an asset to my society my institution and my family.

To me, a person of substance is someone motivated to discover himself/herself and strives to bring out the best. In our life, we face restrictions in one way or another. We are often not able to express ourselves due to the boundaries created by us or the society we live in. We are always tempted by emotions which tend to derail us. No one is perfect in this world, it is our effort to bring out the best in ourselves. We are born to be real, not to be perfect. Above the value of money, there is one factor which everyone should consider - self-realisation.

To me, a person of substance is someone motivated to discover himself/herself and strives to bring out the best.

Understanding ourselves, discerning and rectifying our flaws to accomplish our dreams is not a tedious task. It is easier said than done. Everyone who needs to unravel their lives should be prepared to face any situation. Every situation, irrespective of feelings, are lessons which help us to achieve our dreams. There is no space for emotions in this ride. It is all about achievement and willpower.

The people around us are of different perspectives and we occasionally hear motivational speeches on success and on achieving dreams. They tell us to fly out in different colours and reach the top of the mountain, but how to do it is always a question in our minds. To be honest, I Googled this topic and saw similar such notes on it by others. Accepting the truth of failure, the perseverance to overcome repeated failure, the strength to face new defeat, preparedness are the things which we should obtain. These situations are a part of our lives and we would definitely go through these situations. Experience is definitely the best teacher.

I am from a middle class Indian family where my mother is a teacher and father, a contractor. My parents have pinned dreams on me and my younger sister. They have spent their life working hard. Being the elder daughter, I have to think and act more responsibly, without depressing my parents. I wished to learn aeronautical engineering but the course was not available in Kerala and due to my parents' concern, I had to succumb to the courses available near me. My parents wanted to provide me with a good education, so that I could get a job and settle in life with a proper marriage. In spite of knowing my dreams this is the life which they had dreamt for me. They always reminded me that there is a boundary for everyone in society.

With my compulsion, I did my Masters in environmental engineering and my professor taught me to live the life to one's contentment. Whenever I approach him with a problem, be it personal or regarding studies, he guides me and lets me find a solution on my own. This helped me in many situations in life. He is the one who told me to participate in IBYS. So my goal is to be a person of substance, understand what I want to be, set myself on the right track and be ready to accept whatever obstacles on the way, overcome it and seek victory in life.

“A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others.”

- Ayn Rand

It is important for a person to understand the difference between quantity-work and quality-work. A person of substance is someone, who might take more time to complete a task but does it in its full perfection, learning and growing through the process. A commitment towards our goal is what makes our life valuable, however, our happiness should never be compromised. We must do what makes our soul happy and satisfied.

Any dedicated and determined person must contain some strong qualities or substance that would allow and let him achieve his goals. A person needs to be strong-willed, and should have a high threshold for failures. Nothing can be achieved without tasting a few instances of failure, a strong-headed person would rather learn from these failures than give up on their goal. Once a commitment to his/her goals is made, a person shouldn't back up from it no matter how many hindrances he/she faces.

A person of substance is someone who is socially conscious, takes enough initiatives to change things, and is highly participative. Jotting down ideas, being a mere spectator, passing rhetoric comments is not enough. A person has to contribute a bit to the world he/she lives in and to have a meaningful life.

One must not look for the amount of work he/she does, but for the value his/her work yields. Observing the world, interacting with communities and stakeholders brings many ideas to us. That is not where it should end, working towards pursuing and turning those ideas into reality is the real game. Turning these ideas into goals through proper planning and channelizing our inner energies is what makes a person of substance. Being consistent with this plan of action, coupled up with being an open-minded person always willing to learn from every person we meet in our journey, is what makes a person of substance.

Humility is highly important, it keeps us from ruining ourselves and our achievements, and keeps us always fresh and concentrated. A person of substance, who doesn't lack depth and commitment must never make himself an idol, because the learning process is never over. We discover something new about ourselves every day, and through people around us. It is important to be critical and self-reflective while working on our goals and commitments. A person who can reflect upon his own flaws will never be stopped from achieving the greatest of heights.

No excuses! Resource scarcity, perfect timing... nothing can come between a person and his/her goals once there is a strong will, another important component that makes a person of substance. Being decisive and choosing the right option amongst many will help a person achieve an efficient result.

Another important component for a person who doesn't lack substance, pushing oneself to the greatest of challenges; choosing the paths that go against our comfort zone, trying things that we have never tried before, expanding our horizons everyday makes our learning process more exciting and helps us grow beyond the known zenith.

A person of substance is someone who is socially conscious, takes enough initiatives to change things, and is highly participative.

In my point of view a person who possesses democratic values like liberty, equality, justice, truth and tolerance is a person of substance. A person with these qualities will be able to define his life and can lead society in an inspiring way. A person who acquires these values will have a deep sense of commitment towards the betterment of mankind. Democratic values mould a person with humanitarian values of love, kindness, peace, justice, empathy, respect, loyalty, honesty, openness and equality as well.

In my point of view a person who possesses democratic values like liberty, equality, justice, truth and tolerance is a person of substance.

Liberty is a democratic value that offers complete freedom of life to a person where he is free to live his life according to his creativity and vision. Liberty provides a person with the freedom to go wherever he wants to go, to wear whatever he wants to wear, to follow whatever he wants to follow. Liberty ensures us the right to freedom, right to life, right to speech and expression, right to assembly, right to media, right to movement.

A person who is gifted with this value of liberty will be open-minded. He will be able to understand the life situations of his fellow beings better. He will be able to wipe the tears of his neighbour. He will be able to lead society away from rigidity and complexities to a more flexible society.

I was very inspired by Martin Luther King, a great leader, activist, and Nobel Peace Prize winner (1964). He was a leader who was endowed with the democratic values of liberty, equality, justice, truth, and tolerance. Using the instrument of non-violent resistance he fought against the racial discrimination in America. He led humanity from darkness towards light. I would say that he was a person of substance.

Equality is another core democratic value which I am much attracted by. A person who is imbued with this quality will be able to treat others with a sense of justice and equality. He avoids discrimination at all levels of interaction. He ensures equal opportunities to his fellow beings. He acts as a conveyor of peace and equality society.

Mahasweta Devi, an Indian, Bengali writer and socio-political activist was a powerful lady of letters who fought for the rights and empowerment of the tribal people of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Values of equality, truth, justice are found deeply entrenched in her persona.

Justice is another democratic value which I consider to be a major value that a person of substance must possess. A person embedded with the value of justice will be just towards himself and towards his surroundings. A person with this value will fight for justice in his society. He will be considered to be a noble man. I respect persons who fight for justice in society, who are willing to be the voice of the voiceless, the marginalised.

I was deeply influenced by Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani activist and youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She fought for establishing right to women education in Pakistan. She had the values of equality, justice, truth, tolerance, liberty in her that made her fight for the rights to women education in Pakistan.

I believe that any person who have inbuilt values of democracy can be a person of substance. He/she will be able to bring far-reaching and lasting changes in this world. He/she will be a great warrior who fights against inequalities and injustice that remains rampant in our society. Let us all uphold democratic values in our lives and let the changes begin with us. Let us be the change that we long to see around us. Let me close with Carol Burnett: "Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me."

A person of substance is a very subjective term and can drastically differ from one individual to another. I list the following qualities that makes a person of substance according to me.

Thousands of decisions and mistakes are made by each one of us every day knowingly or unknowingly. We choose between what is right and wrong based upon our experience, knowledge and situations. Yet, some of us end up affecting others in one way or the other. The first step, in this regard would be to gain immense self-control. It has been rightly said that “your worst enemy lies within and the most arduous battles are fought with your conscience”. Keep trying, but never get tired of trying. Failures leads to self-analysis enabling a person to have full control over one’s actions. This can make one invincible. Life is all about accepting failures and learning to overcome the same. Winning in its truest sense means striving to achieve your goal by giving your 100% each moment and does not mean competing with others and trying to get ahead of everyone. Thus, maintaining consistency becomes essential. One should have the ability to rise above failures by never giving up and striking harder next time. The more you fail, the more your desire for success should increase exponentially. A person of substance has the courage to right a wrong.

The more you fail, the more your desire for success should increase exponentially. A person of substance has the courage to right a wrong.

Another important aspect that makes a person of substance is by staying humble. You might want to be “perfect” in every way and even believe that you are so, but you need to stay humble so that you can be a better person, a better friend, a better colleague and a better life partner. Humbleness is achieved when you recognize your faults, appreciate and encourage others, by being grateful, not boastful for what you have, admitting when you are wrong, being thoughtful and considerate. One should also possess the ability to think from others’ perspective and feeling their plight. Putting aside your point of view enables you to see things from others’ point of view. Accepting others as they are and for what they could be is very important. When you get the chance to make an impact on someone’s life, do not hesitate to do so. Lend your ears. Eldridge Cleaver has rightly said, “If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.” Act upon things you believe in and follow your heart. It is essential to develop a neutral attitude towards everything by staying unfazed by both success and failure. Have a heart to face anything. Gandhji has said, “Be the change you want to see”. One has to step out of his/her comfort zone. A person of substance would try his level best to improve his surrounding, prevent a wrong from happening, and increase optimism around him.

Thus, one must aim to perspire, aspire and transpire to truly become a person of substance. I would like to conclude by quoting Albert Einstein, “Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value”.

Do you feel like you've already achieved your goals or you're still on the path to achieve what you've always wanted to? Or, is there any way in which you've made even a small contribution towards a cause? According to me, the two questions are some out of the many questions that all of us need to answer to find out if we're people of substance. We live in a world, where human beings come from all walks of life, are mentally, psychologically and spiritually unaware of their own strength. A very small percentage of human beings on this planet are aware of their ability to influence the entire globe, which is why, their presence, ideas, practices and ways of life dominate the remaining population. This is a person of substance.

Once Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world", and he led by example. The point here is, what makes a person of substance is his/her will to be of use and benefit for others' good in any way possible. Becoming a person of substance involves a psychological journey, which transforms one from being self-centered to being concerned about others and their wellbeing. It refers to being brave enough to opt to right a terrible wrong and work hard to make the world a better place.

If I want to be a person of substance, I must choose to do what is right and not what is easy.

If I want to be a person of substance, I must choose to do what is right and not what is easy. For instance, being an Environmental Activist and Animal Rights Patron, it's very easy for me to express my views on social media and the Internet through articles and posts. But, what about my values and beliefs? If I talk of being eco-friendly, plastic-free, vegan and sustainable, then I too should be eco-friendly, plastic-free, Vegan and sustainable to justify what I stand for and promote. I must be rational enough to understand why, what and how I'm doing what I hope to do. Standing up for change is not enough, it must be accepted by me as well. Only then what I'm doing is worth doing.

To be a person of substance, it is very important to realize that it doesn't matter if your life was long or short, it will be remembered for what it was lived for. Those who work passionately for any cause to the extent that they let go of their own desires are the people of substance. Such people are ready to become the pillars of strength for those who are unaware of their own capabilities. They do not let life merely pass by just like that, rather, they choose to participate in it. They choose to give new definitions to everything they touch. They choose to find solutions instead of just discussing the problems.

I am really dedicated to Environmental Conservation and Animal Welfare. I want to see the world become more aware of the threats and consequences we're facing and are about to face because of the injustice we've done to the natural habitat, and also, help people worldwide in making this world more sustainable. But, how can I contribute to this? The answer is simple - by standing up for what I believe in and being a part of it. If I talk about the positive change which I hope to see around the world someday, I must work for it.

It doesn't matter if we're rich or poor, white or black, man or woman, blind or mute. It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from, but what matters is what we make out of it. What matters is the battle we fight within ourselves which makes us a person of substance. This is the battle between good and evil that resides in our mind and heart. Bringing about difficult, significant and required changes along with following our calling by ignoring the materialistic desires contributes equally in making a person of substance.

It's a general notion that being successful, wealthy and classy makes a person respectable in society. These are the characteristics mostly talked about and observed in our neighbourhood, and to some extent, in our families too. I call these characteristics as notions because in my personal opinion they sound vastly overestimated if not shallow. I have learnt something different. I often ponder over what makes a person of substance. What characteristics make us align our internal world with the external experiences called reality? The below quote aptly describes the thought process:

"If a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he is not fit to live."

- Martin Luther King

I believe developing a sense of purpose influences our ability to live a meaningful life. This purpose is something that gives us happiness and satisfaction, and also a reason to get out of bed in the morning to keep going on. It also brings with it more time in which to enjoy that meaning.

I believe developing a sense of purpose influences our ability to live a meaningful life.

In order to seek solutions a person of substance maintains active participation. He/she has a perspective on everything. I strongly believe that the history of silence has not done us any good because silence perpetuates more silence while communication offers awareness and change. A person of substance is always aware of his/her actions. He/she is vocal about the issues impacting his/her surroundings.

A person of substance is selfless; he/she is compassionate and caring. It's about showing consideration for others, it means understanding others' shortcomings and helping them however possible. In this process he/she becomes a transformational leader. These leaders are motivated by creating a positive change in lives of others. Steve Jobs and Jeff bezos are inspiring examples of our time. Such leaders carry the will and the goals to accomplish their goals. Steve Jobs didn't reinvent Apple thinking of the dividend it enjoys now, rather he was just determined to get his purpose solved.

People of substance ask for help: One knows how to give help and how to receive. They don't hesitate in taking help from others. Some of us would rather suffer silently than ask because our self image is so brittle. Asking for help calls for humility, one has to set aside the fear of rejection pride and self assertion. They believe all of us are here together. When one asks for aid he/she is giving the other person a chance to be generous, helpful, thoughtful, and a number of other things. An exchange of energies is the very foundation of all these interactions.

Being perseverant, they continue the course of action without regard to discouragement, opposition and failures. They adapt to different situations and don't shy away from bringing new changes. Nelson Mandela spent 27 years and 6 months in captivity for raising his voice over anti-apartheid practice. However, he wrote later, prison gave him plenty of time to stand back and look at the entire movement from a distance. He revised his views and values while keeping his moral authority for political judgments. He became South Africa's first Black African president by meeting all the challenges of his life. As a political and moral leader he made possible for humanity to extend one's capacity to rethink politics in terms of ethics, of empathy, and the politics of forgiveness.

A person of substance is empathetic; he/she put himself/herself in someone else's shoes to understand him/her. And in that process they go deep where they get to chance to make an impact on someone else's life.

Unfortunately, people these days devote their time, energy and money in showing off. They become so absorbed trying to live the lifestyle to which they don't belong to. While pretending to lead a perfect life in society they forget who they really are. A person of substance is a person who does not pretend. He/she is joyful of his strengths and aware of his weakness. He

“The Ultimate measure of a person is not where he stands in a moment of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenges and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King

Every person on planet earth is valuable and has worth because we humans are made in the image of God. Humans are one of the finest assets on this planet. As per my experience with life, having substance means that that someone can count on you for support. Being a person of substance is being empathetic, the one who shows consideration for others. It means understanding others' shortcomings and helping wherever possible.

Every person on planet earth is valuable and has worth because we humans are made in the image of God.

There are many ways by which we can describe the person of substance, I follow the six principles and strongly believe that it really makes a difference: The first is living by moral standards and values which prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself. Second is continuously setting the goals, the ultimate goal of every person on this planet is to be happy, and there are myriad ways of reaching that happiness, setting goals both from personal and professional side gives a person a direction in life. None of the goals can be achieved without learning new things, so the third is to be a lifelong learner. Our world is changing at a fast pace, so a person of substance must be to be ever-learning, in all circumstances. With these constant learning abilities the person is able to be consistent which indeed helps them to build the effective relations with people built on the foundation of love, respect, trust and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are there for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others. A person with substance always finds a way to connect with God. He/she fervently believes that God really does answer prayers; he/she steps out of his/her comfort zone and trusts God to equip him/her for the task. People of substance also influence people in positive ways, and they learn from their mistakes.

At last I believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope into our lives—the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, and the hope of knowing that God is at work in your life.

does not change his “acting” but he changes his being. The more he changes himself for the better, the more people respect him. Such a person values his/her integrity above likability. He/she doesn’t desire to shock and awe others. He/she knows that silent water runs deep.

Nowadays the world runs on networking and electricity. But for the world to actually progress, it needs hope and hope needs hosts. The host has to be the receptacle of change to. Sometimes even little things impact the world and its future.

Such hosts, who are always determined for the betterment of the society and are constantly striving for better solutions, are aware of their capabilities. They are constantly learning and updating their own best version. They are humble and kind enough to never let their self-confidence result in arrogance. They sweat every day to encourage others to move towards progress.

Why do other people still believe that ignorance is bliss or can it be an invitation to disaster? In fact, ignorance is none other than incognizance. But the host, who is committed to sustainable development possess the ability to discern a problem with deep understanding.

“Some people believe holding on and hanging in there are signs of great strength. However, there are times when it takes much more strength to know when to let go and then do it.” This quote by Ann Landers reflects their quality of judgement for resource optimization.

They distinguish the elements that can be used in solving problems. At the same time they never loses their integrity. Their aim is to serve mankind to the best of their capacities.

This kind of host – who is determined works with the understanding and commitment to face every challenge, who takes risks, is humble and attentive, encouraging and inclusive, empathetic and responsible without losing his/her own integrity and who has the confidence to not feel the need to defend his point of view and at the same time possesses the openness to accept others’ point of view, without being judgemental, yet managing to stay true to his convictions – is a Person of Substance.

But do such people really exist? Yes, they do. On December 10th 1914, there was a massive explosion in West-Orange, New Jersey, USA. Ten buildings in a factory owned by the legendary inventor Thomas Edison were engulfed by flames. Many fire departments rushed to the scene but couldn’t curb the fire. Thomas Edison calmly stood there watching the fire destroy his life’s entire hard work. In a calm voice, Edison said to his son, who was standing next him, “Charlie, go and get your mother and her friends. They will never be able to see a spectacular fire like this in their entire life.” Astonished and shocked by his father’s response, Charles asked Thomas Edison, “Our entire factory is being burnt down to ashes dad.” Thomas replied, “Yes, our factory is being burnt down to ashes but all mistakes we have done so far in the factory have also been burnt down to ashes. We will start all over again, tomorrow.” That evening, Thomas Edison told a reporter “Although, I’m 67 years old and I’m completely exhausted from trying to control fire. Tomorrow I’ll start all over again afresh with new hopes of workers.” And so he did. This is what life does to us. But people with substance, even if they lose, they try to rebuild the dream for society. They don’t give up, they live up to the challenges. They grow through the difficulties and risks. They start all over again, with great hope, grit and determination “A man does not need to be perfect to have substance. All he need is a vision and the drive to see it happen.”

Such hosts, who are always determined for the betterment of the society and are constantly striving for better solutions, are aware of their capabilities.

“It’s in our interest to take care of others. Self-centredness is opposed to basic human nature. In our own interest as human beings we need to pay attention to our inner values.”

- Dalai Lama

The time-bound journey of life has disguised itself in various phases of ups and downs. This expedition is no cake walk for the pathway is fabricated with mighty mountains, frictional streams, silent valleys and humble plains. For any traveller backpacked with desires, hopes and dreams, it is of vital importance that he or she moves forward in this arduous journey with an attitude reflective of substance. What constitutes this “substance” is subjective because the journey everyone undertakes is inherently different because of the manifold desires. However, a common thread binds all the journeys because of the immanent tumultuous nature. This ubiquitous yet rare thread personifies a unique amalgamation of positive mental attitude, active rational conscience and societal sensitivity which constitutes a person of substance.

A conscious positive attitude is the hallmark of a substantive human being.

A conscious positive attitude is the hallmark of a substantive human being. It constitutes the realization and assimilation of constructive optimism in various walks of life so as to pacify the hardships while striving for collaborative progress. It serves as the one-stop solution in the face of imminent threats and challenges. Prevalence of positivity pushes the predetermined limits and boundaries set forth by an individual thereby paving the way towards creation and exploitation of various opportunities. Moreover, a positive mental attitude serves as the breeding ground for self-belief and perseverance which are essential to accomplish goals central to the individual and societal well-being.

Another infallible trait which paves the way to personal and a resultant societal growth is an active rational conscience which basically stands for the presence of a reasonable sense of right and wrong in carrying out various deeds. It indirectly lays down the foundation for the courage to pursue righteous chores and oppose deleterious actions, which is central to the healthy functioning and survival of multifarious institutions.

In order to strengthen the ideals of substance, it is crucial that a positive attitude and rational conscience are worked upon in conformity with societal sensitivity. It is societal or social sensitivity which promotes the substantive growth of any individual in a social order. As encompassed in the Sanskrit phrase, *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, man, being a social and political animal, cannot thrive in isolation with the environment and its various components. Therefore in order to harness cumulative well-being, social benevolence is necessary in the present day inter-dependent institutional global order because the progress of a man lies in consonance with societal growth.

To conclude, the hallmark of a substantive being is constituted by the traits which are natural to the human creation but the advent of such qualities is marked by extensive experiential learning. What makes a person of substance is an unfailing desire to attain the highest level of a rational being. It is the realisation of inherent humane qualities of compassion, determination, rationalised courage and optimism which makes one a person of substance. In other words, to be a person of substance is to be human in the most rational and constructive sense of the term.

A person of substance is a person of power, a person of positive influence, and a person of meaning. To be branded a person of substance is one of the greatest compliments one can give a person that wants to be influential. I have put together four qualities a person should possess in order to become a person of substance. Embrace your individuality and be happy the way you are. The pressure put on a person in today's society is immense and I admire any person out there who doesn't let the high demands and expectations get them down. In my experience, I have learned that we, as people, should not let the likes of "perfected" images or "criticism" affect us. It has come as such a relief to me to realize that being different and imperfect is far more interesting than being a "perfect" person.

A person of substance is a person of power, a person of positive influence, and a person of meaning.

I believe that being yourself and feeling happy as yourself, just the way you are signifies the word "beauty". Second: Use your voice. We were all blessed with voices so use them! I am a relatively quiet person who next to never will indulge in small talk. It's just who I am. However, on the other hand, when it comes to standing up for what I believe in or voicing my opinions on things, I never fail to make use of my voice. And neither shall you! Make use of what God has given you and say what you think, say what you believe in, and argue against what you don't. Third: Find your dream in life and pursue it. Follow your heart never give up and you can do anything. We all have the ability to do whatever it is we want to do and fulfil any dream we just have to go ahead and do it. When you find your passion in life, it creates a meaning in your life, and gives you a purpose in the world it generates happiness. Fourth: Live up to your morals and values - always remain aware of them. Living by your morals and values in life inspires you, motivates you and energizes you for doing something significant in the world. As children, we were always being told to be a person of high morals and were educated to understand what our values are.

I think, when we grow older we seem to lose or forget about those crucial qualities and in order for us to be decent human beings, we should consider re-educating ourselves on morals and values. A person of substance chooses what's important, what's right for long-term betterment. He/she values relationships, is wholehearted, committed, works the greater good, accepts responsibility, does risk management, lives a life of challenge, courage, integrity, and honour.

To become a strong person of substance learn to love yourself and start every day with a smile and positive thoughts. Never go against your conscience. Express yourself strongly. Never wrong anyone but choose your priorities wisely. Live by moral standards and values. These qualities build needed boundaries into your life, and serve like guard rails on a highway. High moral standards and values prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself. Set goals continuously. People of substance have goals such as additional schooling, wise money management, keeping up with technology, purchasing a home, getting into shape, improving parenting skills, travelling, learning more about the Bible, and a thousand other goals. When you have goals you give direction to your life. Instead of you settling for the "same old, same old" your life begins to take off.

Build effective relationships with people. Every person need not be your best friend, chum, pal, or your deepest confidante. But every relationship you have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are there for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others. These are the factors of what makes a person of substance as we see it, becoming a person of substance is no different. Each day we make thousands of decisions, we choose between best or worst, urgent or important, between what is best for us and what is right between short and long-term betterment. I think a person of substance takes the less travelled road that is different from others and this makes a huge difference between the way of thinking of different people.

I once remember studying the formation of the universe and everything within it. Amongst the various theories I came across, I wish to address two here. The first suggested that we're all insignificant particles in this abysmal universe and the second suggested that the world would be nothing like the way it is if even a single particle hadn't aligned itself the way it did! I'm not an ardent believer of either theory but both have something to teach. The first one may teach us to be lazy considering it deems us unnecessary but it also teaches one to be grounded. The second might be a boost to someone's ego but it's the driving force that we need to set out and make something of ourselves.

Well, where does that lead us? It has led me to understand how no theory is perfect or complete in itself and it depends upon us humans to understand them all and strike a balance. I can present innumerable examples of people of substance ranging from Mother Teresa to Bill Gates, all wonderful women and men who have been striving to make this world a better place to live in. And though these may definitely be inspiring people I was fortunate to have been born to two lovely humans who motivate me each day by teaching me that wisdom is meaningless until your own wisdom has given it meaning and that there is wisdom in the selection of wisdom.

Mom didn't lose hope when the doctors told her that her daughter suffers from albinism, has a 6/36 vision, won't be able to read or write or do anything by herself. She cried, then brushed her tears off, got up and fought all misgivings while training her daughter to go ahead and cherish this journey called life. I am that daughter. And, I proudly sit here today in one of the finest IITs at Roorkee as I lay down my thoughts for you to read!

I was born to a father who was in a road accident that left him with two bones crushed in his legs, a wife, 12 year and 6 year old daughters. I don't even remember seeing Papa cry. Well, honestly, I do remember him screaming sometimes when they injected those medicines in the middle of the night. But I think the happiness he felt seeing the bewildered expression on the doctor's face when he responded to the doctor's "Rakesh ji, you can start walking to the washroom by yourself now!" with, "Doctor *sahab*, I already started taking 20 rounds of my house LAST WEEK!" kind of made up for all that pain! I am born, basically, to parents who practice the "never say die" approach while finding an opportunity in every obstacle.

Lives of Martin Luther King Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi may have plenty to teach us. But it's time we took inspiration from unsung heroes like Dasharath Manjhi who dedicated his entire life to ensure that none other has to endure the same fate his wife did or Arunachalam Muruganantham, who's been redefining sanitation or Sindhutai Sapkal, the Mother of Orphan", who has adopted more than 1400 children. They make me realize that substance rarely ever comes wrapped in a shiny paper. It is generally unappealing to the eyes, unpleasant to the nose, unbearable to the skin but welcome to the soul!

A person of substance, I believe, has the ability to look beyond conventional definitions, rise above criticisms, all that is wrong around them, and set out to quietly make a difference; while others sit there talking of integrity, compassion, humility and selflessness as mere words.

In my humble opinion, neither are we an insignificant particle in the universe nor do we define the course of how it works. We all simply have a space to fill and are important in some respect or the other! A space unoccupied is but that – space. But if occupied, we have ourselves the opportunity to carve a niche that will forever be ours! Thus, what separates a man of substance from any other is what he decides to do with this knowledge.

A person of substance, I believe, has the ability to look beyond conventional definitions, rise above criticisms, all that is wrong around them, and set out to quietly make a difference.

Every day phrases like, “make the world a better place” or “increase the quality of life” are incredibly comforting to the mind, and they give a sense of tranquility to the heart. What makes a person of substance is the passion he or she has, to add some meaning to these phrases we pick up all the time. What makes a person of substance is his or her on-the-go contribution in the initiative to raise the quality of life. Someone who takes responsibility, is accountable for his or her actions, and is a part of the solution more than the problem itself. A person of substance adds value, meaning and power to life. He or she isn't afraid to take decisions, be spontaneous and worry about the consequences.

I admire somebody who embraces his or her individuality, isn't afraid of the ever-so-judgmental society we live in and does not let high expectations and demands affect his/her ability to conquer the situation. I admire somebody with patience, one of the greatest virtues along with honesty and kindness, two values that can make or break you. Put all three together and you're indestructible.

As women, we believe there are certain standards set up for us by the society we live in and whether we admit it or not, they do affect us in a way that makes it difficult to bounce back stronger. It is of immense importance that we treat this spirit of being women with boundless responsibility. As a woman myself, I strive to do that. I strive to become a person who bounces back stronger and more courageous than ever, who does not let such expectations bring her down. I strive to embark on a journey that would lead to somebody coming up to me and saying, “You are a woman of substance.” That is when I would know for a fact that I've bettered my quality of life. That is when I know that my life has meaning and value.

I strive to embark on a journey that would lead to somebody coming up to me and saying, “You are a woman of substance.”

I think it is crucial to have an ambition in life, be it small or big. This ambition builds the road towards adding a sense of meaning to a life that may be difficult as it is. I do not want to be afraid to tread on this journey, with intention and passion. I want to be able to cultivate positive attitudes and habits that will help me become a mature, strong woman of purpose. I want to be able to offer my potential to this world. I want to take a seat on the table of transformation, my voice to be heard, and to pave the way for other women. This is my ambition. This is what will make me, or anybody, a person of substance.

In the words of Maya Angelou, “I would like to be known as an intelligent woman, a courageous woman, a loving woman, a woman who teaches by being.” I don't want to limit my challenges, but challenge my limits. I want to be strong enough to overcome each curveball life tosses at me, and emerge as someone who is invincible; as someone with substance.

A great man once said, “Don’t be afraid of being different, be afraid of being the same as everyone else is.” According to me, there is not one particular characteristic which determines a person of quality. Considering a person’s peculiarity to be his/her asset, I think that it is his/her uniqueness that makes him/her stand out. Well, to judge a person on the grounds of their God-gifted qualities might be biased as there are other components which are equally important. A person might be very intelligent but if he/she doesn’t make use of it effectively, he/she cannot be classified as a role model. Similarly, a person with less intelligence and outstanding hard work could be considered ideal. Therefore, with the diverse specializations of this quirky world, a particular talent or skill cannot be the only way to determine a person substance.

The question that subsequently arises is, “How should a person of substance be?” I believe that someone who has an appropriate balance in life can be much more efficient than someone with a flickering mind. Stability in one’s mind along with a clear vision and a set of guidelines can lead to an eminent performance. A person who aims to perform the best in whatever circumstances is someone of worth. To be a person of substance we have to set an example, there has to be a stature. Talking about this balance and stature, one has to have a blend of different qualities. We, hence, need to know ourselves first to think of something bigger or to formulate a larger goal. Another important element for analyzing the aforementioned characteristic is self-realization. It is only after this stage can we move forward in our endeavours. Leading a thoughtless life and being satisfied can never make someone better and help in his/her growth; it can never contribute in building a perfect self. After realizing one’s potential, he/she needs to work towards it and add value to it, making sure it is not wasted. Nothing but a deep quest for cognizance can make a person of substance; and curiosity to learn, grow and evolve adds to it. Selflessness is as necessary as the other aspects because it creates a better world to live in. Transforming ourselves is the first step which will eventually lead to a transformation in the people surrounding us by setting up a true inspiration. It is therefore very important for an idealist to take proper care of his/her mental and physical health. The list for a perfect person is endless as there is no end to perfection but a person of substance comes close.

A person who aims to perform the best in whatever circumstances is someone of worth.

“If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for everything.” It is, hence, imperative for a perfectionist to keep up to his/her sense of righteousness in whatsoever he/she encounters. A person of substance depends on the parameters we judge them on and therefore depends on person to person but for a general connotation it is important for us to live with the values important to us. We could only look up to ourselves if we follow our aspirations in the best way possible and make sure we are inspired. The constant betterment of oneself is what a person of substance should be striving for.

Motivated by the will to drive change by using diverse skill sets, individuals of substance are not mere spectators but active participants in life. To stand up for what you believe in and to use that belief to address the challenges of the world requires fortitude and courage. People of substance understand that the world faces pressing challenges, and those challenges impact others in complex ways, but they also understand that working towards finding solutions to these problems is essential in order to implement change - and each small step can work towards making the world better.

Compassion and empathy are at the heart of what they stand for and who they are. To make a real positive difference requires fighting for radical change and for causes bigger than the self, but even in this struggle the core of empathy is not lost by people of substance. They use their insightfulness and empathy to contribute to the wellbeing of humanity while learning and growing in social, personal and intellectual spheres. A person of substance is committed to understanding the breadth and depth of problems and has a constant flair to learn more from people of all walks of life. Humility is an important aspect in this constant learning and unlearning from different contexts and cultures as perspectives change through exchange and cooperation between diverse people. I believe that the most distinguishing quality of a person of substance is that of an unwavering belief that when more people come together, there are greater chances to make the world better. The belief that uplifting others and not just a select few can lead to faster positive change, and that this can be done by an open exchange of ideas and knowledge with people from various backgrounds is what distinguishes a person of substance. Such individuals are not just devoted to helping others but their real passion is to get to the heart of the issue so that people are empowered enough to rescue themselves. This requires commitment to create a movement to right the wrongs, no matter how big or small.

One such example that comes to mind is journalist, writer, industrialist, inventor, and charity worker, Nellie Bly. At the age of 18 she was bold enough to call out a famous writer and in 1885 highlighted topics such as the negative consequences of sexist ideologies and the importance of women's rights issues. She was brave enough to pose as a sweatshop worker to expose poor working conditions faced by women, ushering in a new style of investigative and undercover reporting. In an effort to truthfully expose the terrible conditions of a mental asylum, she pretended to be a mental patient in order to be committed to the facility, where she lived for 10 days. However, she did not stop after writing her piece; she went to court and demanded a thorough inspection of the asylum. This spurred a large scale investigation and resulted in significant changes in the treatment of mental health. Nellie Bly's determination in the face of odds, her courage to use her skills for good and her commitment to justice are skills that distinguish a person of substance. She is one of my several idols of strong, committed and passionate individuals who are exemplary people of substance.

Motivated by the will to drive change by using diverse skill sets, individuals of substance are not mere spectators but active participants in life.

In this digital age and the age of knowledge, it's not difficult to find a good doctor, engineer, teacher, lawyer, worker or a professor. But it's difficult to find a very good human being in this world. I personally agree that it is a collective responsibility to create good human beings. Lack of a humanitarian attitude is one of the most severe problems before the world. I think we can solve this problem with the help of some basic changes in the educational system across the world. Unfortunately, education has become more exam centred. It has become more machine-like and more stereotypical. We should prescribe and introduce a value-based educational system across the globe. It has also observed that value-based education creates very good and successful human beings.

I also believe that a person must have a logical and scientific approach towards the world and life. It is a very essential quality to be a successful human being. A person who has a good education, good moral values as well as a scientific approach will turn Lord Buddha's dream into a reality. Such a person will activate the Dhamma Cycle which is recommended by the Buddha. It has been accepted worldwide that the best way to introduce peace in the world is to learn the lessons of Buddha. For example, Nelson Mandela, who received the Nobel Prize in 1993, for peace was deeply influenced by the Buddha's ideas as well as his philosophy of love and peace. Therefore, every successful person should follow the path of Buddha to introduce love and peace in the world. In this way, we can have love and compassion within everyone in this world.

A successful human must have leadership qualities. It can be observed that dictatorship in the two World Wars was due to the ambition of the contemporary leaders. I also believe that a leader is expected to go ahead along with his people. We need such a leader who will be absolutely positive in his/her approach. If everyone is a good leader it gives a responsibility to lead the world towards happiness. A successful person is expected to have a great love for Mother Nature. It can be observed that pollution is one of the severe problems before the world. It is proved that only nature lovers can save the world in future. A love for nature is the best remedy problems like Global Warming and pollution. Nature also symbolizes equality, universal brotherhood and oneness in the world.

A successful human must have leadership qualities.

I personally feel that a person should prefer betterment and welfare of the nation to his/her own or private development. He/she must love his/her nation and must have affection towards all member of society no matter, what caste, class, society or economic strata. The quality of oneness should be there within every successful person. Therefore, I believe that a person of substance should have the above qualities so that the world will be the utopia that is recommended by the Buddha.

I would rather begin by discussing the poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling than ranting on with what I think makes a person of substance. In my view, the poem encompasses all the characters that a person of substance should possess. It talks about trusting oneself when everyone else doubts one, while giving them the right to doubt. It also talks about not giving much way to hatred while also not trying to be very good and likeable all the time. Even in the wildest of dreams one shouldn't let dreams take possession of one's course. It talks about serving our turn despite having withdrawn with dignity for the world's sake. The graceful presentation insists on holding on with having only the will to do so and nothing but it. It also insists on being in the crowd yet not losing oneself to the mentality of the mob and being in the company of every kind of person yet being individualistic.

I believe a person of substance is someone who lives a life of meaning and is not a spectator in his own life. The meaning of life can come from an internal or external cause -- it could be something that one finds terribly wrong in society; something that one wants to change in oneself; something that will make the world a better place. He/she should contribute something to society as a sign of gratitude. I believe that a person should have short-term and long-term goals in life to be someone of substance. Long-term goals give us purpose and meaning in life. While, short-term goals inspire us and keep us going. A person of substance lives a purposeful life which keeps them positive and lets them grow holistically.

A person of substance is the one who stands on his/her own merit holding his/her integrity paramount. Montaigne, the 16th century philosopher, epitomizes the idea of integrity by saying, “I shall see to it, if I can, that my death reveals nothing about me that was not already known about me in life.” This means that people of integrity are those who are the same in front of everyone and when no one is watching. There should not be much of difference between their words and deeds. They are those who live and abide by the principles they espouse and hold high. They live by their ideals and are never apologetic for anything they have ever done based on their principles. In other words, people of integrity are those who do not give up on their principles for cushy benefits. They are those whom others can trust with their secrets. They, at no cost, use other people or their information for their benefit. Keeping promises, remaining consistent and unyielding optimism keeps them on the right track every time. Their respect for everyone, ability to create a niche for themselves in the society, living a life of dignity and setting larger than life goals make them epitomes of greatness.

Putting others' interests first, being selfless yet not gullible makes them unique. They respect everyone's opinion and see the beauty in the differences. Taking someone for granted and thrusting their opinions onto others is not their cup of tea. Putting themselves in others' shoes is what makes them empathetic, rational and non-judgmental. A lot of contemplation goes into being people of such merits. They are the ones that do not regret the decisions that they took after a lot of deliberation.

They keep up with moving times. They keep themselves attached and aloof all at the same time, like the true *stitha prajna* the Bhagavad Gita refers to, which translates roughly as “the even-headed one”. The curiosity and the dauntless effort to discover oneself mark a person of substance different from the crowd.

*Shree bhagavaan uvaacha
prajahaati yadaa kaamaan-sarvaan-paartha mano-gataan
aatmany-evaatmanaa tushtaa sthita-prajnas tadochyate*

The supreme Lord said: O Partha (Arjuna) when a person completely relinquishes all cravings of the mind and is satisfied entirely in the self, by the self, that one is considered a person of settled wisdom. (Source: <http://bhagavadgita.wiki/2/55>)

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A person of substance is fearless and stands up for his/her values; he/she is high on ethics and morals, and whose core values are integrity and honesty; he has crystal-clear clarity of thought and conveys them equally well. He/she stands for his beliefs even when the conditions are not favourable. He/she is proactive, has unshakeable confidence and is not dependent on external factors to achieve the desired results -- this is a person of substance. And to be a man/woman of substance, he/she doesn't need to be powerful at all.

First and foremost, keeping one's words and stance aligned with one's core-values and beliefs, and having the courage to take action to align them, no matter what the external conditions, is the foundation stone for being a (wo)man of substance. (S)He stands for the right and even alone, in opposition of the crowd if need be. He/she has a strong character and is truthful to self and the world, in whatever action he takes.

Mangal Pandey was one such character. Being an ordinary sepoy in the 34th Bengal Native Infantry regiment of British East India Company, even while knowing death was imminent, he stood against atrocities of his powerful masters and happily embraced martyrdom. He was a man of substance, though he was neither powerful, nor educated nor any bigwig.

Then comes the premise of being impactful, for which being pro-active instead of passively participating, with a high level of energy, endurance, self-belief and undying conviction in whatever one desires to pursue is of utmost importance. A man/woman of essence has great self-control and determination, and is not swayed by distractions. He/she is accountable, responsible, reliable, and trustworthy. He/she carries himself well and is thoughtful with his/her actions and words, both distant from by any kind of impulsive or irresponsible behaviour.

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the iron man of India proved his essence of steel when he single-handedly united more than 550 princely states in the Union of India including the adamant states of Junagarh, Hyderabad and Jammu-Kashmir, in addition to liberating Goa, Daman and Diu from the clutches of the Portuguese.

Another substantial example is Neerja Bhanot, who was an ordinary air-hostess for the airline Pan American World Airways who lost her life trying to save passengers on Pan Am Flight 73, which was hijacked by terrorists during a stopover in Karachi, Pakistan, on 5 September 1986, who did not let the fear of death deter her from saving the lives of many civilians.

A man/woman of substance is modern, liberal, rational and adaptive. He is full of optimism, patience and serenity. He is humble and compassionate and he will achieve his goals not by hook or by crook but by the book.

A great example is the present king of Bhutan. Even though born as Dasho Khesar-Crown prince, of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, started his reign with the democratization of his country, voluntarily transferring all powers to his subjects stating that the responsibility of this generation of Bhutanese was to ensure the success of democracy. Ruling with *Kidu* - a tradition based on the rule of the Dharma King whose sacred duty is to care for his people, the king proved himself to be a man of substance when he himself rushed to the scene of infamous fire of 2012 within hours to save the lives and property of his subjects; and, who unlike other known rulers, took permission of his subjects for marrying a civilian girl on national television; and in the world of capitalization and materialism, introduced gross happiness index.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the father of the Indian Renaissance, who led the socio-religious reform movement in India, is another man of substance who took a stance and fought off the very common and prevalent social evils like *sati pratha*.

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All said, a person who leaves a seat for the elderly or needy in a train or a bus; the one who is working with principles to earn bread for his family and fulfilling his duties; the one who stops and interferes when he sees an innocent being tortured; the one who helps a stranger in case of an accident on a road, all are men/women of substance.

The answer to the above question lies entirely in three words: Values of Life. Becoming a person of substance is the fruit of the values that you have gained in your life. Taking birth is a natural process but converting it into a meaningful life requires values. If your values are alive you won't fall morally creating pain in others life, instead you will work towards making others comfortable. A person's character is made by his values he accumulates in his life. Our life values allow us to choose our path rationally. If you possess life values you won't deprive others of their rights. If you are full of life values you will be committed to working selflessly. Even an individual develops sensitivity from these values for others.

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To justify my thought, I can better relate giving examples in today's context. People usually talk about eradicating corruption from the system but how one do when the person in questions lack values? Industries when they violate the emission test are run by people lacking values. An individual is not concerned about the environment if he lacks values. One of the most concerning crimes in the coutry is rape. I feel if a person lacks in his life values he commits such heinous acts.

A person of substance is one who thinks deeply, has a set of values, and works hard to follow them. Financial wealth is not a part of it -- being of service to others is of high priority.

Being a person of substance is showing consideration for others, first and foremost! It doesn't mean faking it to get what one wants. It means understanding others' shortcomings and helping where ever possible. It means putting yourself last on occasion for a friend, partner, co-worker or even someone you don't know. How hard is it to take the brush and help clear a car of snow? How hard is it to make one extra pie for someone who needs their day brightened?

A person of substance is one who thinks deeply, has a set of values, and works hard to follow them.

Substance means that you are the one that someone can count on to support and build them up! Not tear down to make them look smaller than you, to others. It means showing empathy toward grieving people, without judgment or ridicule. It means being compassionate and caring. It means being human, in all of its wonderfulness.

So here are a few ways to be a person of substance:

1. Live by moral standards and values: These qualities build needed boundaries into your life, and serve like guard rails on a highway. High moral standards and values prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself
2. Set goals continuously: People of substance have goals such as additional schooling, wise money management, keeping up with technology, purchasing a home, getting into shape, improving parenting skills, traveling, learning more about the Bible, and a thousand other goals. When you have goals you give direction to your life. Instead of you settling for the "same old, same old," your life begins to take off.
3. Be a lifelong learner: I am not talking about spending your whole life in a classroom. But I do believe we should view our entire life as an education - we should be ever-learning, every moment of time, everywhere, and in all circumstances. Did you know that about 33% of adults have not read a book since high school? (This fact comes from the Statistic Brain Research Institute.) Our world is changing, so we must be constant learners just to keep up. Don't allow yourself to become a person who prefers sound bites and videos to actual reading and reflection.
4. Live a consistent life: The dictionary definition of "substance" is "a particular kind of matter with uniform properties." Are you a person with uniform properties? Do you live as the same person, no matter who you're with, or what you're doing? Does your Sunday morning self match with your Friday night self? Can people depend on you? Do you keep your promises?
5. Build effective relationships with people: Every person need not be your best friend, chum, pal, or your deepest confidante. But every relationship you have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are "there" for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others.
6. Believe God can do powerful things in your life and in the lives of others: When you have a radical faith (1) you pray fervently because you believe God really does answer prayers; (2) you step out of your comfort zone and trust God to equip you for the task; (3) you influence people in positive ways; and (4) you see the lessons in your adverse circumstances.

So, these are my views on how to be a person of substance.

When we live away from our family and experience the reality of life, it changes our thinking towards the way we see life.

Academic knowledge doesn't give us the chance to gain life experiences. Our attitude towards society changes with knowledge of the outer world; we tend to become a good person when we are ready to accept these changes in a positive way. Science is important to protect ourselves from nature and to protect nature from us. History gives us prestige, makes us feel proud and gives inspiration for creating our own history. Geography teaches us the beauty of nature. Sociology shows us the different colours of people. Political science creates our ideology. Psychology teaches us to observe ourselves and understand the people in different situations. And, the most important, according to me, is economics, because to think about all this in various aspects we are supposed to have sufficient economic knowledge. The goal to achieve sustainable development relies basically on economic factors for which the study of economics is a must. These subjects have increased my understanding of the world -- that's why we have these subjects in school. To make life beautiful and meaningful I took Arts as my career.

It has been seen that people that have different mindsets, if brought together under one roof, can bring drastic change in the surroundings and in the thinking of a society. I am very grateful as I have got various opportunities to present my views by attending various camps, competitions (debate and elocution) dramas and conferences.

Following your passion can bring immense happiness and one can indulge oneself in this happiness by working on our hobbies. Sometimes hobbies become the reason for our participation and makes us an active participant and not a mere observer.

It is wisely said when you cannot compliment someone, then don't try to insult someone either. Without participating, judging others and giving unnecessary suggestions is bad. Use your words only when you have experience of the work. And when you become a student representative it brings in experience of responsibility and teaches you how to deal with official members. And I have availed this opportunity in my graduation. Being a cool and supportive person, I had a great experience under my tenure. Trust and honesty is an important factor in your life if you break it then you can't able to achieve it again. Doing new things in life makes it worth enjoying and one must always have the courage to step forward for doing new things.

Doing new things in life makes it worth enjoying and one must always have the courage to step forward for doing new things.

“Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

As the thought clearly says actions are what determine an individual's contribution in anything that he or she does. What motivates an individual to do things is to satisfy needs. Needs differ from person to person but the only value that remains constant is achievement of the particular goal or need for satisfaction of the self.

For me, substance means something that has value and something that can give value to the accompanied surrounding -- be it nature, be it the human race. It is very difficult to understand the complex thinking process a person because it is scientifically proven that our actions are reactions of the chemicals released in our brain. The aim should be to develop and imbibe the qualities that are needed for the good of society just by observing and developing morale. And in this way we can contribute our bit.

I had a life-changing experience when I was assigned to go and interview children who did not go to school. I started my journey by just roaming the streets of Bangalore to find something really impressive and then I saw a kid holding a baby in his arms and trying to figure out how to feed her sister. I sat there quietly observing the kid. She did not try to beg for food or money to any of the people who passed by. She had only one motive in her mind and that was to provide food. Half the day was over but still the kid did not lose hope of getting food. I followed them till the end. What I saw then is what I believe is substance, the kid along with her sister started folding dried leaves into plates with the help of dried roots. She then went to the tea stall and tried selling those plates, but the kid did not get anything in return. There was an old man who was observing this scenario along with me, later I realized that he was the head of all the NGOs in Bangalore and rescued the kid and her sister.

The only impact it had on me was the never giving up attitude of the kid. My report was blank, I had not written anything. The experience taught me the values that I lacked as an individual. Being human is given, but keeping our values intact and going forward with it is a choice.

I may still not know what might make a person of substance, but what I do know for sure is it's all up to us no matter how much of logical reasons might be behind our actions. I believe what we perceive is what we exercise. In order to perceive better things to make a mark on the world, we as individuals, should first try to solve our own mysteries in order to clear the mystery of a life lived fruitfully.

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Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities coupled with a disposition to make an impact is what in all things distinguish the strong from the weak. I firmly believe vision and clarity are the prerequisites that are fundamental for achieving success in any facet of life. Having an idea about what a person wants and how he/she works towards achieving it, determines his/her fortitude. Following one's heart, never giving up, or getting swayed by peoples' opinions is what makes a person of substance.

Even though there may be times when no ray of hope is discernible, the manner in which we strive to create avenues for success is what differentiates mediocrity from excellence.

My understanding of life from my limited experience has been that there are four mantras to excel in life - having a great aim, acquiring knowledge, hard work, and perseverance on the path that leads to our destination. A capacity for hard work and the willingness to undertake it at the cost of more trivial or superficial attractions is what sets style apart from substance. Being different and imperfect and not conforming to norms is far more motivating than being a perfect person.

A person of substance doesn't let anything get him/her down, and doesn't buckle under societal pressure rather he/she strives to build a solid record of achievement and keeps doing so. He/she has clarity as to what he/she wants to pursue and why? As Shashi Tharoor puts it, "If you don't know where you come from, how will you know where you are going?"

We need to explore and embrace ourselves and become more open to different views. We must read, inquire, and exert the utmost power of our mind to explore and absorb new ideas and ideologies. If one way does not lead to the desired goal we should take another, and if obstacles arise, then still look for yet another. Eventually we will find the right path. As Franklin D. Roosevelt has rightly said, "When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on." To become unique, the challenge is to fight the hardest battle which anyone can imagine until you reach your destination.

We need to stay determined to our vision and goals. Having a straightforward attitude with less attention-seeking motives and more inclination towards one's work is something that would deliver a sense of purpose in one's life. Besides, being positive in nature will enhance our capacity and growth. We actually need to reflect as to what purpose we have to fill in our lives. A man of substance is more action oriented and hence is better able to deliver a change in society at large. It's indeed a lack of clarity that creates chaos and frustration. Those emotions are poison to any living goal.

As people of substance we must embrace our individuality. At the same time we must allow valid criticism whereby we are able to accept others' viewpoint.

Staying away from the habit of fault finding and focusing more on one's aims and aspirations would make more sense. One needs to explore every avenue and possibility of each situation at high speed with total clarity. One should use common words to say uncommon things. As Barack Obama has said, "We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

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“If you find yourself constantly trying to prove your worth to someone, you have already forgotten your value.”

- Anonymous

A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character. He/she wants to grow to improve himself. A person of substance does not attempt to be something he/she is not. People of substance have a passion to make meaning for the benefit of the greater good and that is a clear first pointer to becoming one. Bukhari says, “Knowledge precedes speech and action”. Therefore, in order to become a successful person of substance we must have substantial knowledge in our heart and mind. Knowledge is gained through two organs: Ears and eyes. We must then read and study material of substance and listen to people of substance speak. Then, we must take the beneficial knowledge we acquire from those two sources and implement it.

A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character. He/she wants to grow to improve himself.

Here are the eight ways to become a person of substance:

1. Build an effective relationship with people – be generous with your kindness. It will go a long way. People will remember, whether you know them or not. Every relationship should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust and honour
2. Be a lifelong learner – ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability
3. Set goals – when you have goals you give direction to your life. First consider what you want to achieve, and then commit to it. Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals that motivate you and write them down to make them feel tangible. Then plan the steps you must take to realize your goals, and cross off each one as you work through them
4. Live a consistent life – to find consistency in life, we need to be consistent in our methods, habits and ways of thinking. Finding consistency can help you persevere through hard times and periods of personal doubt. It starts with building a more stable, consistent way of living for our self, and extends outwards into other areas of our life.
5. Believe God can do powerful things in our life – when we have radical faith we pray fervently because God really does answer prayers; we influence people in positive ways, we see the lessons in adverse circumstances, we step out of our comfort zone and trust God to equip us for the task
6. Live by moral standards and values – moral values are the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual’s behaviour and choices. An individual’s morals is derived from society and government, religion, or self. High moral standards and values prevent us from veering off course, and from hurting others and ourselves.
7. Be empathetic – “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”- Maya Angelou.
8. Be candid – your integrity is more important than your likability. Once all said and done, people will respect those who acted on what they believe in than believed what others want them to act on. If you don’t know who that is, go find you.

I believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope into our lives - the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, and the hope of knowing that God is at work in our life.

Being a person of substance can have diverse notions which change with changing viewpoints. According to me, what makes a person of substance are values, integrity, ethics, and skills with which one wants to grow and to improve oneself and influence others in positive ways. He/she the one who not only looks lively and cheerful from the outside but is equally beautiful from the inside, as illustrated in a story popularly known as “The Balloon Story” in which the seller tells the kid, “It does not what is the color of the balloon, it’s what’s inside the balloon which makes it fly high”. Extending this story to real life, the character of a person is not defined by the external appearance or the wealth of a person. But what builds the character of a person is his/her deeds and how he/she treats others, especially juniors at school, in the workplace or in society.

According to me, what makes a person of substance are values, integrity, ethics, and skills with which one wants to grow and to improve oneself and influence others in positive ways.

The qualities which make you a person of substance to the people around you are primarily what enhances your value to them. And this is a result what people around you feel about you. If people find your presence delightful, if they appreciate your advice/work and want to be around you, you are definitely a person of substance to them. “You are the average of the five people you most associate with”. These words by Tim Ferriss signify your value if people love to spend time around you.

But what makes one a person of substance to the world or a principled person of substance is moderately different from what makes one a person of substance to his society or acquaintances. Because how this world understands interprets such a person can have various facets including one’s kindness, empathy as well as the contributions made to society and the world at large. Seeking solutions to the problems the world is facing, or at least being a part of solutions will surely make you valuable and fruitful. For the sake of a simple example, by using dustbins rather than throwing garbage on the road you are becoming a part of the solutions, on the other hand by participating in cleanliness drives or developing additional ways to clean this world, you are attempting the solutions to existing problems. Similarly, just being fruitful, kind and empathetic to everyone will make you more of a person of substance. “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” These words by Maya Angelou prove to be capable of making one a person of substance. So keep bringing value to the world and do your best to make valuable contributions to make yours as well as others life better.

Lastly, being a person of substance to oneself can be most difficult of all for selfless people. Adding value to oneself is the most important of all because when one is not bringing value to oneself, how one you bring value to the world? So, by centering your attention on personal as well as professional growth, expanding your skill set and keep learning new things you can bring distinguished value to you. Setting incremental goals can help one in becoming a person of substance. Building strong relationships with people in this small world and helping people in unimaginable ways will surely make one a person of substance.

To conclude, a person of substance keeps learning and growing consistently by sharpening his/her skills and boosting knowledge to solve the problems to make this world a better place for everyone including oneself. This desire to learn, grow and contribute makes one a person of substance.

“Try not be a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value”. This phrase by Albert Einstein reminds me of the importance of values and ethics, and how they make a person of substance. Our values and ethics define the person we are. People might be remembered for a particular time for their success, but people will always be remembered for their good deeds and selflessness. Success and failures are temporary and will always be followed by one another. So, if someone is successful once, that doesn't mean he/she will be successful always. But the thing which will remain forever is our deeds, our identity. A person of substance understands the importance of being selfless, and he knows that there is more to serve and give back to society than being selfish. Whatever he/she does, he/she does to serve society because he/she understands that society (directly or indirectly) has given him/her a lot, so it's his/her time to pay back.

A person of substance is one people can rely on. He/she is trustworthy, knows his/her responsibilities and is always ready to help the people in need without any expectation of getting back what he/she does for people.

A person of substance is one people can rely on.

American poet and author Maya Angelou says, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”. It's about connection. A person of substance knows how to connect with others and encourage them, motivate them. Being humble is another important quality of a person of substance. Rather than bragging about ourselves for something we did, let our life lived speak for itself. One who is truly humble and a person of substance, his/her life and identity revolves around his/her ethics and values and not around his/her laurels.

“The only difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little term “extra”! I completely agree with this phrase. This extra is in terms of everything, like being hardworking, being hopeful, optimistic. It's said that success always comes to those who work hard to achieve their goals. A person of substance is the one who works hard and makes things work in his/her favour rather than complaining about the difficulties or problems. People only see and praise the success and not the hard work and effort done to achieve that success. So it's useless to waste our energy on complaining about things. Rather we should channelize our energy in the direction to achieve our goals. And the people who manage to do this, they are the ones who come up with flying colours and are praised by the people.

And most importantly, a person of substance is the one who truly is himself/herself and does not pretend to be someone else. We should be the way we are. How long can we fake our identity? Not very long, and once our true self is revealed, people find it difficult to trust even if we are correct and honest. So we should just be ourselves and be honest.

So in a nutshell, I would say that a person who is humble, hardworking, sensitive, selfless, trustworthy, and who gives importance to values and ethics in life is truly a person of substance. He/she is the one loved by everyone and always receives praises from other people. He/she is the one who really cares about society and always tries to give back to it.

A person of substance must be like the “Brook”. To understand this better, I believe there are three aspects that make a person so. First, the nature of an individual. Every individual is highly opinionated, and these opinions are a result of his/her upbringing environment, educational environment, and the knowledge gained using his/her own abilities. All three factors affect the thoughts of an individual and shapes his/her train of thought. When faced with a situation, the combined effect of the three play a significant role in how he/she responds and when this response is something that is beyond focusing on one’s own self and is about a third person or a bigger group, he/she becomes capable of understanding and learning others’ perspectives. To have such clarity in thought and perspective to care about others unrelated to himself/herself, he/she must also understand his/her roots. This is significant because only after you have understood who you are and where you are from can you go ahead and think beyond. This is the base of adding any sort of meaning to one’s life.

The second aspect is the act of doing. Once he/she has a thought and believes in the idea, it takes a great deal of courage and determination to execute the idea/thought. Of course, there are various challenges and possible failures, but it isn’t by the amount of success that he/she is judged but the courage to try and make a difference. The effort he/she puts in to make a change for anything around him/her, living or otherwise, speaks volumes about his/her vision. The vision he/she must have is to bring about a Systems Change. This means to address the root causes of global social problems or any problem at hand, where the change in the world remains even after he/she, the change agent, is no longer a part of the system. Being able to alter a system of wrong to make it right is a mammoth task for just an individual. Apart from being a part of the action, he/she must also foster an environment conducive to enable others with the same vision and mission to contribute to the cause.

The third aspect is being a visionary. The changes start from within and then grow from there. Ensuring a systematic and sustainable system/environment for the future is part of the vision. This includes ensuring the change is taking effect in a positive manner and it continues to change for the best. To envision the bigger picture and to have a mission to be a part of this bigger picture, both constitute a successful changemaker. Every person faces hurdles and every decision becomes binary. The one who understands that the world isn’t just full of black and white but has many shades of grey is someone who thinks about and listens to those around him/her. In the end, a person of substance is someone who is on a journey of self-actualization. It is he/she who uses all his abilities and knowledge for the betterment of those who are more in need using the simplest of tools. His/her selflessness teamed with a drive to change the uncertainty in the world, an unending cycle of discovering and rediscovering, and a being courageous leader with a vision is what adds the substance in his/her life.

Like “The Brook” a person of substance will live on for aeons to come simply through his/her ideas, actions, and vision.

Alfred Tennyson wrote in “The Brook”, “For men may come and men may go but I go on forever.” Like “The Brook” a person of substance will live on for aeons to come simply through his/her ideas, actions, and vision.

I believe that every human being has this quality of being a person of substance. But most people don't show that, or hide it within themselves. This may be because they are forced to be a certain way dictated by society or sometimes they just don't feel that within themselves. We live in an age, where we don't have time for enjoyment / societal works and we run to make a living. It's very rare when someone speaks out what he/she thinks about society. A very small segment of society knows the difference between right and wrong. People mostly pretend that they like something, for the sake of society (be it parents or so-called other well wishers).

I believe that every human being has this quality of being a person of substance. But most people don't show that, or hide it within themselves.

As per its definition "a person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem." How many are able to achieve this? I guess it would only be 2% of the total population on Earth. That is, out of the total 7.6 Billion people, only 150 Million people could be like that. It is also true that the changes in society have always happened by a 2-3% population.

I completely believe that the people contributing this change have always been persons of substance. With this, we could clearly come to a conclusion that persons of substance are the ones whom we study in history textbooks. Not the boring ones, but the brave ones. Few examples could be, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Che Guevara, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, K Kamaraj, E.V. Ramasamy Periyar, Velu Nachiyar, Rani Laxmi Bai and a many others for that matter.

Am I a person of substance? If yes, what is that thing that makes me one? The answer is yes. But, I haven't really proved myself yet -- maybe partially, but completely no. If my answer is confusing, I would suggest you to read further.

I was born in 1997, in the hottest month of the year (May). I was born in the southernmost tip of India, which is Kanyakumari, the place where three seas meet - Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. I had always stayed in a place near the seas - Chennai, Pondicherry and have always not known so much about forests. So I always look forward for opportunities, where I can be near a forest. I have been to some forest areas in Karnataka and have always wanted to stay in such a place forever. That is why, I was very excited to travel to Bhutan which has 60% Forest Area.

I have been the leader of the school ban and the class representative at college and part of the students' council as well. I have always been among people and have already contributed a little for the betterment of society.

As you know, India is filled with castes and I belong to one of the castes which is placed in the middle of the Varnashrama Dharma caste hierarchy. I have been oppressed and at the same time, I have seen my fellow neighbours dominating few people who belong to the so called lower castes. Probably, these caste freaks are the only ones I stay away from. I have always hated caste hierarchy from my birth and I believe in humanity and love for mankind. I have led rallies and spoken at gatherings to eradicate caste from my society. Thus, I have been a person of substance within a small group.

But my goal is just not that. I really want to do this on a larger angle, for my community called the world. I know the world is very well divided in the name of caste, creed, race, religion, nations and many other stuff. And I would really want this world to be free of such stuff. I would want myself to be the highest contributor in such a change and work for a united and happy tomorrow.

In the present world – where all of us are working very hard to create an identity of our own – we are increasingly losing humanity at the upfront. We do not want to look at little things in life which cannot be expressed in numbers. We have become obsessed with external indicators. Amidst this cold deterioration what we are actually losing is human substance, and becoming progressively forgetful of what constitutes a person of substance.

A person is the aggregate of his/her tendencies; the sum total of the bent of his or her mind.

A person is the aggregate of his/her tendencies; the sum total of the bent of his or her mind. If the sum total of good impressions prevails, the character becomes good; otherwise, it is evil. It depends on us, and what we practice.

People are to be judged on their most common actions, and as John Dryden says, “Ill habits gather through unseen degrees”, those common actions reveal unto us our real character. To build our character, we define certain standards for ourselves. These are, in fact, certain struggles that we rise to face every day. Unbeknownst to others, we fight every day to honour our standards to do better. The quality of this struggle defines the depth of our character. This is what makes us a person of substance.

As a human being, our most important duty is to build our character, and thereby be a person of substance. How do we do it? Every day we make several decisions. These small decisions patch together to make what we are. It takes only a moment to choose which side of the world we want to put ourselves on: the side of the solution or the side of problems; the side of the spectators or be the person in the arena.

To be the people of substance we choose the right side, and the choice of right comes from experience. We fail and seek betterment, and find a beautiful experience for when there's a next time. As people of substance, we do not fake things; we stick to our standards and do not compromise for the sake of fitting in. We make commitments, take responsibilities, and fulfil them wholeheartedly. We challenge ourselves and do not seek safe refuge in some dark cave. Neither we do try to isolate ourselves; we think for others empathetically. Aspiring to be people of substance does not mean we want to be perfect, it just means trying to improve ourselves continuously, to be more human and less perfect.

We see a lot of chaos around us, but the only variable in our control is choice; how we decide to affect the environment around us. Taking an extra step from our side may not always bring a lot of change but it certainly affects the energy around us. We can behave like a sink of negative energy and a source of a positive one. Like a series of dominos, the impact of our little effort can be unimaginably huge and significant. The elemental entity of a society is an individual; the functioning of a society is a derivative of the sum total of individuals. An individual's response to his or her environment certainly reflects in how a society behaves. In the present world, we face many problems related to the environment, women safety, miscommunication, communal violence etc., which can only be eradicated if society wants to. The force or laws can suppress, but cannot eradicate. This is just an implication how we affect society as a person of substance.

Being a person of substance is our choice of what we aspire to be as a human being. It's the moment of decision that alters everything in and around us; the moment when we decide whether to give up or to go strong.

“We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.”

– Swami Vivekananda

The choice of such moments is a consequence of our thoughts, and it is the thoughts that make a person of substance, creating ripples that affect the things beyond us.

It is almost impossible to arrive at a few attributes that capture the essence of being a woman or man of substance. Words can only provide a skeletal idea of a person of substance; it is only in their presence that their extraordinariness can be felt.

One of the first people that come to my mind when I think of a person of substance is a woman who I met during a health survey that I worked on. Hailing from a quaint rural community in Punjab, Dolly is a health worker. Driving in and out between her in-laws' and parents' villages, Dolly is the champion of healthcare delivery in the community. From vaccinating infants, organizing health camps, to educating the common folk about health issues, she has dedicated her life entirely to the well-being of the people of the community. It was only later that I was told of the tragic life that the 40-something woman has endured – losing first her husband and then her only son, all within a span of a few months.

Nevertheless Dolly is undeterred in working actively towards the cause dearest to her. Shunting in and out on her humble scooty, she brings healthcare to people's doorsteps. Held in high regard, she is a mother/daughter/sister/ counsel/ friend/ to the community.

There are countless such men and women of substance around the world who have overcome all kinds of hurdles and dedicated themselves to the well-being of the people around them. While we may not have honoured these heroes with the Nobel Prize or even a sufficient salary, nevertheless their efforts continue to make small differences in numerous lives.

I do not think anybody aspires to become a man of substance. It is the grace and diligence with which an individual leads their life that confers them of having substance, just as the kindness and generosity that they choose to put in everything that they do.

One of the key attributes of a person of substance, I believe, is that he/she has a sense of balance in life, a balance between public and private lives with none interfering with the other. Naturally, such a conflict-free relationship between the two spheres would allow for him/her to evolve more in all aspects of life.

It is the testing times which reveal who a person really is. To keep calm and maintain one's composure at all times is an art. Equanimity thus becomes an integral part of the character of a man/woman of substance.

Much like how water which appears soft can carve its way through mountains by never giving up, a person's tenacity and persistence in the face of failures defines them. Every great task seems uphill at first, and it is only with continuous efforts that mountains are scaled and barriers broken.

There are times when people make mistakes. To acknowledge that, one requires a sense of humility, another hallmark of a person of substance.

I do not believe that a person of substance would be concerned about affiliation. Most acts of kindness go unnoticed and forgotten -- like the person who offers to share their lunch with you at an exhausting job interview, or the stranger who shares his/her umbrella with you on a rainy day. What we are looking for is not something grand or elusive, but something that can be found in all of us.

What makes these people stand out are not glitzy outfits or expensive acquisitions but the little habits which empower them and others to be the change in this world. In other words, it is the little things that make the big difference.

It is the grace and diligence with which an individual leads their life that confers them of having substance, just as the kindness and generosity that they choose to put in everything that they do.

Is there one quality that makes a person of substance? No. There are an infinite number of qualities that make a human an actual person. It could vary from an individual to another, as each one of us is out of the ordinary.

Before anything else, the one thing that makes a person of substance is acceptance. Accepting people and the world the way it is, is something that needs an effort and the one who takes the effort to understand every perspective, the evil as well as the good one and tries to find a band-aid for the problems encountered can be called as a person of substance. We must understand the fact that changing people and creating a good change are two different things. The first one seems a challenging task while the latter one is definitely within our power and something that we ought to do.

Apart from the infinite other qualities, there are a few basic qualities that make a person of substance. Today, it is empathy that the world needs and not sympathy. Sympathy will only do the job of making people feel better but it won't actually make them better. Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another. It is only then that we can understand people and do something about it, only when we are an empathetic being. Having a purpose-driven life or the passion to create a change in ourselves is something that makes us something. It gives us a life in true sense as it is said that "a shallow pond will feed you for a year, but a deep ocean will feed you for life". The way charity begins at home, it's exactly that way the change begins from us. And only when we are capable of changing ourselves, can we create a change around us which can benefit people. Courage as in the ability to stand up for what is right is very essential, because each time we lack courage to speak up or assert ourselves, we take the journey of empowerment a step behind. Social conscience is a very essential quality that makes a person of substance. It's not just the injustice against us that we need to fight against but also the injustice against others should be our cause. So, being a spectator to others' problems would be a misdeed as it is said that "if you are not a part of the solution, you are a part of the problem".

Today, it is empathy that the world needs and not sympathy.

Individuality is a quality that makes us stand out from the rest. The way one person feels about something cannot be felt by the other person, and, therefore, that person can make a change in his/her own way which cannot be done by someone else. Hence, it is essential to maintain your individuality to be a person of substance. The world is already full of cynics and we don't need more of them. We can't love people if we judge them and that is why the ability to appreciate and encourage people would be a great thing in itself. Observation is a quality that would definitely make its way in the list of things that make a person of substance as it is the key to get an insight into the working of the world. When we have an insight, we get a direction in which we ought to proceed, and, thus, it helps us in an incredible way. Finally, yet importantly, being self driven would be one of those infinite qualities that make you undeniably a person of substance because there can't be any large scale revolution until there's a personal revolution on an individual level.

The concept of a “person of substance” is essentially a philosophical one. Its uses in ordinary language tend to derive, often in a rather distorted way, from the philosophy. “Illegal substances” is nearer to one of the philosophical uses, but not the main one. There is an ordinary concept in play when philosophers discuss “substance”, and this, as we shall see, is the concept of “object”, or “thing” when this is contrasted with properties or events. But such “individual substances” are never termed “substances” outside philosophy. There could be said to be two rather different ways of characterizing the philosophical concept of “substance”. The first is more generic. The philosophical term “substance” corresponds to the Greek *ousia*, which means “being”, transmitted via the Latin *substantia*, which means “something that stands under or grounds things”.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem. Breaking it down further to discover what makes a person of substance, we could ask the questions: What drives a person to make meaning, to actively participate and to seek solutions? And how can I imbibe this mindset in my own life? Maybe by looking at each of these factors in turn, we may well discover how we could become a person of substance. I believe that it is by working for the greater good and to pursue causes that make the world a better place, increase the quality of life, right a terrible wrong, and prevent the end of something good. People of substance have a passion to make meaning for the benefit of the greater good, and that is a clear first pointer to becoming one. Moreover, people of substance take responsibility, they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicenter of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that that decision may bring. Responsible, wholehearted and committed engagement in his/her world, is a second element of becoming a person of substance. People of substance know that there is no middle/neutral position on anything. Good problem solving between competing interests typically requires a person of sound judgment who has immense empathy, complete objectivity and solid life-honed values.

People of substance know that there is no middle/neutral position on anything.

In the development of self-concept, positive regard is key. Unconditional positive regard is an environment that is free of preconceived notions of value. Conditional positive regard is full of conditions of worth that must be achieved to be considered successful. Human beings develop an ideal self and a real self-based on the conditional status of positive regard. How closely one’s real self matches up with their ideal self is called congruity.

The moment you open your television or newspaper you will see that there is so much violence and injustice in the world. There are terrorist attacks, bombings, killings, kidnappings, wars, racial discrimination, exploitation, rapes, abortions, hungers and many other acts of violence. Recently, the world was surprised because thousands of people were killed and hospitalized because of the political and religious protest all over the world. Among other living beings, man has a privileged position. He is endowed with rationality and good nature. The very reason why man falls into violent tendencies is that he has forgotten the true nature of how to be a person. The human person is a concrete “I”, existing and acting. Then, as a unique subject, he stamps his existence and every utterance, action, and attitude with uniqueness. All human beings have a purpose; we must uphold the dignity of persons and must not treat them as means to an end. Being humane transcends ideological, cultural and political differences. Regardless of colour, religion, creed and belief, we are all human beings and we enjoy the same dignity. Such essence and dignity are shared and must be enjoyed by everyone, they are what transcend the limits posed by the differences in worldviews, beliefs, convictions and ideologies.

*I wanna try everything
I wanna try even though I could fail
I won't give up, no I won't give in
Till I reach the end*

These are the lyrics of my favorite song “Try Everything” by Shakira and it seems pretty good to mention them here because they perfectly define the person of substance.

A person of substance is someone who lives his/her life for a meaningful cause; who chooses to participate and never give up in order to bring change in life, gain knowledge and skills to solve problems. Such a person believes in sharing knowledge and doesn't have personal gain as his/her motive. Knowledge multiplies once shared. No one can take it away from us.

Active participation, in any event, requires a lot of effort and dedication. It is most required for making a person of substance. The courage to take risks and never to give up is the key to victory. One can face failures and defeat many times on the path to victory but only the person who makes a sincere effort tastes success. Sometimes a person may have very little time to reach his/her goal; it becomes difficult to even think of achieving it. Active participation is the only way to reach the goal, although involves squeezing out each drop of your sweat. But its end results are extraordinary. Sportsmanship is the best example for active participation. It can be clearly seen in the biographies of Indian sports persons like Mary Kom, Geeta Phogat, Milkha Singh, Sania Nehwal and many more. They all achieve a great success due to their active participation and dedication to win.

It is correctly said that a game is won in the mind before it is won physically. A person of substance is always prepared physically as well as mentally to face any type of situation in his/her life. The person should experience success first in his mind and then translate it on the material plain. He/she is always on the side of a solution, not the problem. To solve any problem a person must have good judgment. It is well said by Will Roger: “Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment”. It is not compulsory that one has to make mistakes to learn, things can also be learned from the mistakes of others. Observe the things around you carefully and learn from them.

There is a meaning to everything for the person of substance, the meaning which benefits not only them but society too. It might happen that one sometimes goes off track; even then he/she doesn't hesitate to accept it and ask for guidance. He/she works to achieve a specific goal with a definite purpose and have a proper plan and a clear path to follow. He/she is practical dreamer who has always been and always will be the pattern- makers of civilization.

So, the person of substance is someone who never tires of trying, has a burning desire to achieve goals and lives his/her life for a good cause.

A person of substance is someone who lives his/her life for a meaningful cause; who chooses to participate and never give up in order to bring change in life, gain knowledge and skills to solve problems.

“We must look for ways to be an active force in our own lives. We must take charge of our own destinies, design a life of substance and truly begin to live our dreams.”

- Les Brown

The person I am is the most authentic self I can ever be. But is it my socio-psychological make-up or is it the DNA which I obtained which makes me what I am? Thinkers and philosophers have delved into this idea for millennia; everyone came with their own answers, which suggests, their answers can only guide me, show me my path, but it is upon me to undertake my own journey to discover “The Self“.

The person of substance is one who treads on his/her own path and has genuine experience and contemplation about what life is all about. As Taoism encapsulates in its principle of feng shui the simplicity, likened to natural elements of air and water and their adherence to their original character of being upwards and downwards respectively, no matter what their position be, they serve society in their own way, without any attachment to -- humans need to be learn this.

As homo sapiens, we continuously move towards fulfilling what society expects from us without paying heed to that inner voice. That means the society and environment has positive and negative impacts on our growth, and this might help or restrict us in actualizing our potential. This is what corrupts originality, and this struggle of the inner being with the external environment is what spiritual journey is all about.

Originality in thought, action and character is what makes the personality ideal. While everyone is born with an empty mind, my perspective is that it is not an empty mind, but a pure mind, ready to create a unique art out of his life. The imprints might be externally imposed, but the individual has the capacity to modify it while it consciously endeavours to maintain the originality. This will come through curiosity combined with a rational faculty to discriminate the higher levels of truth from the lower level of truths, not between the dichotomy of truth and falsehood.

Originality is in manifestation of purity in character, and that comes from strength of values we uphold and the values come from learning. The primal source of all knowledge is Nature. A person of substance takes cues from Nature, survives in its sublimity and learns about the intricacies of life, the truth which someone in all comforts might not be able to realize.

Some of the foremost qualities I see in a person of substance are:

Wisdom – According to me wisdom is an exceptional trait which incorporates thinking efficaciously while keeping in mind both the theoretical and practical aspects. Wisdom tells us how to put the other virtues into practice—when to act, how to act, and how to balance different virtues when there are multiple outlets. Experience and understanding of the subject are essentials for good judgement.

Honesty – Being honest to yourself and others always pays off in extraordinary ways. I feel honesty gives you both the courage and the satisfaction you need when there might be adverse circumstances. Honesty provides you with the strength to accomplish what you dream of.

Active participation – A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem. People of substance have a passion to make meaning for the benefit of the greater good. Active participation requires courage and people of substance have it in bucket loads.

The person of substance is one who treads on his/her own path and has genuine experience and contemplation about what life is all about.

Compassion – Compassion I feel is the brightest and the most adventurous way to look at the world. Go and love someone exactly as they are. And then watch how quickly they transform into the greatest, truest version of themselves. Feeling appreciated in their own essence, one is instantly empowered. Compassion carries with itself the virtue of positivity, confidence, forgiveness and respect for others.

We are all living in a world where the concept of an ideal person has become fallacious. The criteria which qualify a person to be called ideal has a very limited scope in today's era. At the same time, this concept is very relative in nature because every individual might have a different definition for the same. To become a person of substance, one does not need to follow a set of rules which has been made sacrosanct for all. Rather, a person can have his or her own individualized ideas of how a person of substance should be and then affirm the same with his/her own inner-self.

I too have in mind a set of qualities which I feel is preeminent in a person is of substance. The first thing that comes to my mind is patience and acceptance. In a world where everyone is in a rat race to achieve the end result, waiting is what makes us live life to its truest potential. In the quest of life patience is the key. We must learn to accept that things will not always go our way. Only then will we realize that it is the process not the outcome that bears more fruit.

Another important quality that is required in a person of substance is self-belief. In this era of forever existing competition, I feel believing in oneself is of paramount importance. At the same time, the person must also keep room for the criticism that he faces because that is what will help him or her ameliorate. A person of substance must reach a state of mind where one doesn't feel the need to try to convince others; because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval; because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her.

The next ability which a person should profess is the ability to take risks. A person of substance sets himself or herself apart by thinking and doing things that others just expect to be done. This in itself is taking a risk because he/she does not know what the outcome of his or her actions will be. Today, people are chained down to the shackles of their own preconceived notion of satisfaction; they remain mere spectators and complainers, an ideal person should have the ability to tear apart such chains and rise above mediocrity by becoming the change maker rather than the change seeker. Living with fear stops us from taking risks, but if we don't step on the branch, we can never get the best fruit.

A person of substance sets himself or herself apart by thinking and doing things that others just expect to be done.

We can include many such similar qualities that are imperative for a person of substance to avow. Yet, I feel that rather than individually delving into all of them, we should look at the broader spectrum under which all the individual qualities are subsumed.

The most important factor which can differentiate a person of substance from the common crowd is his ability to foster the right emotions at the right time and also to be able to control them. Along with this, the person also needs to have a balanced thought process. If one can harvest these two qualities in the right proportions, he or she is all set to become a person of substance. The person can not only be the one who speaks up but also balances it out by listening, and understanding other people. When other people have views and beliefs that are different and unique, the person of substance can find the right mix and balance of emotions which will not just make him or her feel empathetic towards other people's views, but also help him or her stick to their own stance. Finally, the person will neither get too swayed away with a victory nor get too affected by a loss. As Rudyard Kipling had rightly pointed out in his poem "If",

"If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!"

“Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value.”

-Albert Einstein

Homo sapiens have evolved to be the only known creature in this multi-universe with the most glorious and precious gift called the Analytical Brain. Albert Einstein's words have a meaning deeper than an ocean for the human community, which is continuously striving for betterment in every sphere of human life. Lucky are we that the ultimate power of existence blessed us by sending us into this world as human beings' unlike other living entities. As humans, it is the responsibility of each one of us to make a difference in this world for the successful completion of our lives. I use the word responsibility instead of duty because duty is something which we have to do by compulsion, but responsibility is something where the deed runs in our blood, and only then, can we make a difference for the good of every organism taking shelter in our Mother Earth. This is what according to me, makes us a person of substance.

The person of substance is one who treads on his/her own path and has genuine experience and contemplation about what life is all about.

As the phrase goes “Life is not a bed of roses”, so true it sounds. We are bound to face difficulties and struggle to enjoy every moment of success that we face. So, as a child of Mother Earth, born in India, I have also faced many problems and still do to keep surviving in the game of life. But going with the words of my ideal person Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, “We should be the master of our problems and failure.” We need to think out of the box. This is the simplest method followed by every great personality ever born on this planet. Every person who works for the betterment of mankind is key to making this world a better place to live in.

India being the second populous country in the world with a population of 1.3 billion faces a never-ending list of problems day-to-day. So with the case of Bhutan, although it is only with a population of around 6-7lakhs, still it faces many difficulties as discussed in the Indo-Bhutan Youth Summit. Some basic similar problems faced by both countries are: education, employment, food, disease, poverty, caste discrimination, gender bias, power, science and technology, socio-cultural, economic aspects etc.

I am a 3rd-year student pursuing IMSc in Physics. So, my area of expertise is science and education. But, as a social being involved in socio-cultural events right from my childhood, I always see a sense of love, respect and brotherhood in every human being and the culture of any human community. I really thank my parents and teachers in every walk of my life for giving me the best guidance in being able to think and work positively. Also, I always have a burning passion inside me to make a difference on Earth through hard work. I think at this stage of my life, I would like to get involved in the cultural and educational sectors by giving value to my life, as this is what comes under my capacity now. I would be very blessed in sharing my knowledge about academics to my fellow younger brothers and sisters across the globe free of cost who are in a crisis and cannot afford education. I believe if we are able to make the youngest generation fully educated in the right way, we will successfully create the strongest pillar for the sustainable development of our planet.

My training in Indian classical music sharpens my consciousness for the inclusive growth of humanity. Moreover, my interest in acting on stage makes me aware of the socio-political happenings of our times and gives me the platform to connect directly with the hearts of the audience. Cultural manifestations like music, dance, and drama depict the roots of a community in a geographical location and the inextricable relationship of the community with nature since time immemorial. So, if we can mobilize the cultural activities in a large scale to various nooks and crannies of the world we will be successfully creating a sense of mutual understanding amongst the uncountable tribes and communities of the world which will further help in eradicating hatred from people's heart and minds.

These are some aspects which I can take right away personally. But, the problems I have

mentioned are very serious ones and have to be solved with the cooperation of the right people in the right place. Thus, this will give substance to life of not just one person but to all that strive for making a change for the good.

“Each one of us can make a difference. Together we make change.”

-Barbara Mikulski

There are two most important days in our entire life, the day we were born and the day we know for what! Every individual should find some purpose in his/her life -- something to live for. A person of true substance has realized his purpose and motive of life, no matter how small or big, and works towards its fulfillment.

A man is not remembered by the riches he had or by the land he conquered, he is known by how many minds he influenced and how much of happiness he gave. So what actually makes a person of substance? To make meaning? To choose the right path? To choose the road less travelled?

Every individual has three connections: one with himself, second with his family and friends, and third with the society. Every connection is affected by the individual directly or indirectly, and these connections are also responsible for making this individual a person of substance. Exposure to various types of people and their thoughts and teachings in addition to his own emotional intelligence would define his own substance.

This generation has no great wars, no freedom fights, and no battles for peace. We have a war with ourselves, a psychological battle we fight to find peace amidst the chaos, and find our purpose in the crowd of individuals running fast nowhere. A person of substance finds happiness from within, is happy with what he has without depending on outer sources of happiness. Inner peace is what makes a man different.

A man should learn to accept and respect opinions of others, unconditional acceptance is where mankind actually starts to understand each other and starts working together for a much wider purpose. And if such a person would want to change something, it would begin with himself, "Be the change you want to see in this world" – says the person of highest substance, Mahatma Gandhi.

The person of substance is made when he starts treating others the way he wants to be treated by others. This automatically makes him more humble, loving, understanding and good to others and actually caring for them.

I believe that a person of substance is the one who strives to live a meaningful life; who chooses to participate rather than be a mere spectator in the journey of life. He lives every day of his life assuming that it is his last, or by living every moment of his life to the fullest realizing that it's not going to come back again. This is the moment a simple individual becomes a person of substance and starts taking serious decisions backed by appropriate actions, knows his priorities well, starts flying towards the fulfillment of his purpose, starts accepting the responsibility of his actions, realizes that he has to give something back to the society. Such a person works for the good of society and is a man of integrity. He finds happiness in little things, strives to connect hearts and for happiness, speaks his mind, lives up to the morals and ethics, and tries to make the world a better place to live in.

The main quality of a person with substance I think is the strength to never lose hope, to never give up! Hope makes you rise like a phoenix from the ashes of shattered dreams! It's the only thing that would push you towards achieving your purpose and maintain all the qualities that makes a man of substance no matter how adverse the situation or how great the temptations he would stay true to his values. This is what would separate a person of substance from others, because it's easy to look sharp and a man with values when you have nothing to lose, but hard times create true substance.

Hence the ultimate measure of life of a person of substance isn't how many years he lived, but how he lived and how many lives he touched, in those years.

A man should learn to accept and respect opinions of others, unconditional acceptance is where mankind actually starts to understand each other and starts working together for a much wider purpose.

On 11th September 1893 in Chicago, a young Hindu monk from India spoke about religious tolerance, unity and peace, at the Parliament of Religions. He was Swami Vivekananda, whose powerful words made such an impact on the audience that he was instantly recognized as a man of substance. In the present times, many self-styled gurus or godmen emerge in a multi-religious society like India but most of them lack substance.

“Substance” would comprise of one’s possessions one can offer to others to cause value-addition. Traditionally, people with power, armaments and gold were seen as persons of substance. However with time, the scope of the term has broadened to include knowledge, influence and such other intangible attributes. Whether hiring a new employee or while voting in the elections, it is the person of substance that everybody looks for. It does not always depend on one’s formal education or designation. According to William Shakespeare, “Thy substance, valued at the highest rate, cannot amount unto a hundred marks.”

Knowledge is the most basic quality that makes a person valuable. For example, in a panel that formulates a corporate or government policy, a person with domain knowledge is appointed. It is not just a high profile concept. Even a small tourist-guide is a person of substance because of his knowledge about the place.

Often, a person’s experience in a particular field adds to their value. Mountaineers from around the world climbing Himalayas and scaling Mt. Everest are accompanied by local sherpas because of their familiarity with the geophysical conditions of the region.

Similarly, analytical abilities are required to be more resourceful. By applying one’s knowledge and referring to past experience, one can analyze a given situation. It is an inherent part of designing and problem solving processes.

Critical analysis may lead one to finding drawbacks and loopholes in a system. Under such circumstances, expressing dissent is equally crucial. Constructive criticism and feedback create a roadmap for improvement. This is largely done by social activists and media in a free society.

Beyond criticism, it is also important to come up with alternative solutions. One’s substance could be creativity and innovation that gives birth to new ideas to tackle problems and plug loopholes.

Additionally, the person who continuously updates his/her knowledge base remains relevant in the dynamic world. The 21st century world is a fast changing one, where technology has a multiplying effect on people’s lives. One who fails to keep up with the times is likely to lag behind. A senior artist, who also acquaints herself with new art forms and advanced gadgets related to her art, is also a person of substance.

Being a person of substance, matters not just in professional but also in personal lives.

Also, taking calculated risks is a dynamic quality. In fact, the biggest risk is not taking risks. Recently, an all-women crew of INSV-Tarini of the Indian navy achieved the feat of circumnavigation around the globe in 254 days. Their professional wisdom, determination and courage demonstrated through this extraordinary venture incremented their substance.

Being a person of substance, matters not just in professional but also in personal lives. Such a person has a greater voice and influence in the family, among friends and in informal groups too. The person with the ability to present a 360° view of the concerning matters and convincing what is right in one’s view, remains more in command.

Even as individuals, people who fight all the odds against them are said to have some substance. The grit and persistence of a physically challenged person or a destitute woman, who overcome their physical and social barriers to create a place for themselves are persons

of substance. After all, the best example of hope could be that of the Thai boys stranded inside a flooded cave for 2 weeks. Their patience and cool minds helped them make peace with the situation. In no time, they became persons of substance, so much so, that the whole world got interested in them.

Therefore, what makes a person of substance would vary with the context. Those qualities cannot be measured by a common yardstick. In short, the person who makes an impact on people, takes the road less travelled and goes an extra-mile is a person of substance.

As soon as we hear the term, “person of substance”, we know that the statement is referring to the most remarkable trait of a human being; one who strives to live a life that has significance, and one who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in order to find the solution of the problem.

What I personally feel an amalgam of active participation as well as seeking a solution is key to becoming a person of substance. We all are surrounded with multiple issues and problems, but just cribbing about them and doing nothing to work on it is never going to solve them. A person of substance is one who makes sure he understands the problem and takes a stand to work on it. He not only strives to find a meaning to his life but also to motivate others to bring meaning to their lives too. The values of a person of substance are built on a platform of moral values and ethics. They are imbibed within him who further inculcate a sense of integrity in him wherein his thoughts and actions are not based on his own personal gain rather based on values. The person can have immense qualities within him but if he has no moral standing he is destructive to humankind. Albert Camus had rightly said, “A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.”

What I personally feel an amalgam of active participation as well as seeking a solution is key to becoming a person of substance.

As soon as you have developed the mindset mentioned above you are half way through. In today’s era, to be a person of substance you should also know how to use your skills for the development of society and use all the resources available to you to get the best out of it. But creating this mindset is not enough because the difference between a helping hand and an outstretched palm is just a twist of the wrist. And it is very important that the person of substance understands this. The moment the person inculcates these values in him and implements them in his life, he can become a person of substance. These values will give him a pair of aces that he will never fold to.

A person of substance does not develop these values and help society for any personal benefit or to glorify his deeds but to genuinely and compassionately work for the greater cause. He works in the direction of the change he wishes to see in the world, and despite all the odds in his life, he does not budge away from his goals. He fights all the tough battles and crosses all the hurdles in his path to his goal, come what may. And eventually, he becomes his own inspiration and his own motivation. The ripples of positivity which he creates around himself encourage thousands of others and saps motivation in them. My words might seem excessive but if we want to see positive change around us, we should all take step towards it. In short, be a person of substance.

When I read the topic first, my mind immediately started to list qualities that I thought a person of substance should have—compassion, ambition, humility, respect for others, love, etc. The list went on. It wasn't long before the futility of this exercise dawned on me. First, I realized that even if I did manage to make a list, it could never be exhaustive. There was no way for me to curate a list of qualities, the possessor of which would be a person of substance. Second, even if I did make such a list, it would be impossible to rank those qualities. Who's to say that compassion is more important than respect? Or that a big heart is more valuable than a great mind? The idea itself seemed absurd to me and decided to let it go.

But the question remained—what makes a person of substance? I started to think about the people in my life who I thought were of substance: my parents, siblings, teachers, friends, colleagues, and so many others who I have had the good fortune of coming in contact with. There were so many people who have loved and inspired me, having very positive impacts on my life. They each had qualities that made them people of substance. They might not fit into the definition of a people of substance for a lot of people but they did in mine, even when I had no definition to begin with.

In my journey of engaging with the liberal arts, I have learned the indispensability of context and perspective in any discourse. If one is too quick to pass judgments, one is much more susceptible to error. Without understanding the context and perspective of anybody's actions, we cannot understand them. For instance, there are many rebel groups in India—from Kashmiris to Naxalites. The narrative that is endorsed by the mainstream media and government is that these are people who have gone rogue and present a security threat to the nation -- something that might be true. But if one reads literature from these areas and from people sympathetic to the rebels and their cause, one sees a completely different picture. The same “terrorists” then become “freedom fighters”, and our common socio-political sense tells us that freedom fighters are people of substance but terrorists are not. So, are the members of Naxalite and Kashmiri rebels groups people of substance? Again, it all depends on the context and perspective.

I finally never did try to define a person of substance, because in some way everyone is one. Perhaps there ought to be a few minimum standards to call someone a person of substance—to at least not have committed a heinous crime, etc. But at this stage in life I feel inadequate to lay down those minimum standards. Therefore, I will stick with what I have realized so far: everyone has the potential to be a person of substance at some point in time. It all remains a matter of context and perspective.

Everyone has the potential to be a person of substance at some point in time.

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.”

- Robert Frost

Oftentimes in life we are confronted with choices that are hard to make. The two roads may lead to very different paths and our choices may completely alter our future. The society we live in, the people we interact with, our personal fears or lack of conviction can lead to a dilemma while making a choice. A person of substance is someone who knows his/her path and has a clear image of himself and his/her capabilities. He/she has a sense of individuality and can face life confidently, regardless of fear and whatever obstacles comes up.

Life is a long journey. The journey of self-actualization – from being a “human being” to being “human”.

Life is a long journey. The journey of self-actualization – from being a “human being” to being “human”.

“His journey led him to his destiny.” Paulo Coelho painted a vivid portrait of life through his book *The Alchemist*. Its message is to pursue our dreams by following what our heart desires. From the start of our journey there is a lesson to be learnt at every step. Each lesson teaches us the importance of following our hearts. One must realize and go on with the “personal legend”, no matter how difficult the journey seems.

“The simple things are also the most extraordinary things, and only the wise can see them.”

- Paulo Coelho

To be different is the greatest and simplest thing that one can do. Being different is being yourself and realizing that our personal legend is ours and ours alone. There are many ways in which one can define a person of substance and there are different factors that makes a person of substance.

“Substance” here basically refers to the personality. Some people may be like an onion, with different layers of personality. He/she does not have a consistent outlook towards his/her surroundings and is easily shaken by the thoughts and actions of others. Basically, he is a follower, an imitator who tries to become like others. He/she never strives to be a leader.

On the other hand, a person of substance is one with great integrity. He/she has a strong conviction in life and has the drive to achieve it with constant effort. This does not mean he/she is invulnerable. He/she may face his/her own set of emotional backlashes. But he/she never lets it conquer him/her. He/she is also able to inspire others through his/her actions, rather than words.

There is a thin line between conviction and obsession, and a person of substance is able to see it clearly. He/she is the embodiment of qualities like the ability to learn from experience and reflect upon it, craving for knowledge, skillfulness for the application of acquired knowledge, ability to comprehend difficult situations and overcome them. With efficiency, consistency, confidence, integrity and truthfulness, he/she stands for what he/she preaches.

Experience brings meaning to one’s life. The past teaches lessons, but the future is where we apply them. A person who understands his/her life knows that there will be lot of obstacles and negativity on the path. To find positivity amidst the chaos needs a lot of courage. He/she who can withstand, saying that “I will stand right here and fight for the positive side in every situation” is a man of substance.

“Your words mean nothing when your actions are the complete opposite”. We should always make sure that our actions and behaviour live up to and reflect our words and ideas. Our thoughts and actions should be based on values than personal gains. If a man of integrity gives his word, it is a life-long promise. If one can create one’s own jar of happiness, he/she immediately becomes a person of substance.

To summarize, a person with substance is someone who can handle life and experiences with equanimity. Someone who is rich in insights and experiences, who introspects and understands the purpose of life, who strives toward enriching the lives of others, respects everyone equally and is humble enough to want to learn even from a child. I could just go on and on and on.....

Every person has the ability to be a person of substance. But the question here is – what makes a person of substance? Well honestly, I could not come to a conclusive answer. However, I've jotted a few points that leads to a person to becoming one. The very first is circumstance. Human nature is such that, only when a certain circumstance befalls a person it is only then that he/she tends to ponder and discover his/her true self. So, a situation, good or bad, brings about a change in one's mindset. This mere notion marks the beginning and if paired with a correct amount of determination, it could possibly steer someone towards growth.

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Decisions are taken in almost every walk of our lives, no matter how big or small. The third aspect could then be “decisiveness”, something really essential. A person of sound judgment and values is generally expected to be firm and a problem solver. Because of that, the element of diplomacy is usually lesser in one who have made it big and influences the masses. His/her stance is clear-cut.

There are several other factors that are imperative to making one a person of impact. Some of these are discipline, passion, willpower, compassion, leadership, accountability, commitment and consistency. Altogether, they add up to one's purpose and help evolve a better understanding of life. They help advance a collectively robust approach, to which many are likely to adulate.

As for personal character traits, it is obvious that one should not be biased, should be patient and a good listener. It also depends on how others perceive one's standpoint. General opinion does matter and is essential. Hence, people's points of view must be given due consideration. A person should be resilient enough to take criticisms in the most positive way possible. Due regard for a work done can be secured only when the work reflects a certain civility for the masses.

Also, a person should have a zest for life and be driven to induce a transition -- be adaptable, yet progressive. I believe that an effort towards self-improvement also makes a person of substance. Being a constant learner will far-reaching constructive outcomes. Therefore, for me, a person honestly attempting to make a change, for self or mankind, is a person of substance.

“Try to become not a man of success, but try rather to become a man of substance”

-Albert Einstein

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that creates value for society and dedicates his life to making the world a better place to live in. He chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem. He believes that it is his responsibility to work towards the betterment of society.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that creates value for society and dedicates his life to making the world a better place to live in.

His objective in life is working for the greater good which means to pursue causes that:

- Increase the quality of life
- Promote truth and justice
- Ensure development of all
- Prevent the end of something good
- Spread positivity and optimism among others
- Spread peace and harmony
- Make the world a better place

Selflessness:

A person of substance puts the welfare of others over his personal desires and strives to uplift others selflessly. He believes that the world can become a better place only if all the sections of the society can grow and develop irrespective of their caste, creed, religion or race.

Humility:

This is one of the inherent characteristics of a person of substance. His identity revolves around his ethics and not his laurels.

Empathy:

A person of substance has a deep understanding of the emotions of others and he strives to connect with everyone he is in contact with. He understands the pain and problems that someone else is going through, and tries to find a solution.

Truthfulness:

He is always true to himself and to others. He never supports a lie and always inspires others to follow the path of truth.

Embracing individuality:

He does not let the high demands and expectations get him down. He has a set of principles and he sticks to them at all times. He raises his voices for the betterment of society and takes criticism in a constructive way.

Having a purpose in life:

A person of substance has a well-defined goal in his life and makes every possible effort with all his might to reach closer to his aim. He is passionate and enthusiastic about working on new challenges and finding solutions to the problems that the world is facing today.

Spreading harmony:

A person of substance works on spreading the message of peace and harmony among all and discourages any discrimination on any basis. He believes in the principle of equality for all and strives towards making opportunities available to all.

Optimism:

A person of substance is always filled with positivity and spreads positivity among his peers. He is happy and cheerful about whatever he is pursuing in life and tries to complete all tasks meticulously.

Responsibility:

A person of substance performs all his duties with the utmost care and diligence and strives to achieve excellence in whatever he does.

Diligence:

He believes in hard work and perseverance in achieving his goals and is always ready to put his 100% in every work he undertakes. He is always punctual and stays motivated for achieving his aim.

Active participation requires courage and people of substance have it in loads. While the timid soul is safe from failure, they will never taste victory either. So people of substance take calculated risks to achieve their targets. They are confident about their abilities and work towards removing their weaknesses.

Conclusion:

A person of substance is the one who tries to inculcate all the good qualities in his personality and tries to improve himself and make himself better every day. He tries to contribute to the betterment of the world in every way possible by his deeds. He tries to take everyone along on the path of growth and development. He has a vision for the future and believes in the development of the current generation without endangering the existence of the future generations. In the end, I would like to assert that persons of substance are an inspiration for all and we must all strive to become a person of substance.

When this topic came in front of me certain points came to my mind. A person of substance should be:

- Confident
- Someone with conviction – a strong belief and opinion
- Pathfinder
- Leader -- He/ she should show leadership qualities. The book Wings of Fire by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam elucidates my point. Prof. Satish Dhawan was the Chairman of ISRO at that time. India was building its own rocket launch vehicle in Sri Harikota, India. The Countdown started and Dr. Abdul Kalam along with six other experts monitored the launch anxiously. The experts advised Dr. Abdul Kalam to go ahead with the launch and they were confident about their calculations. Instead of the satellite going into orbit, the whole rocket system plunged into the Bay of Bengal. It was a big failure. The whole world media was waiting for the press meet curious to know what had happened. Dr. Kalam was very frightened to face the media and answer their criticism of wasting millions of people's money. Prof. Satish Dhawan, the chairman of ISRO took Dr. Kalam to the press meet and made him sit aside and he took the blame for the team's failure and said: "We failed! But I have a very good trust in my team that next time we will be succeeding for sure," and made everyone believe in the team.
- Have self-belief: It is rightly Said that "God believes on those who believe in themselves"
- Generous: And certain other points also came to my mind while watching a Netflix TV Series "Sacred Games"
- Daring: Develop a persistent will power and a tactful approach that will cause aggressiveness in your voice and actions.
- Experimental: A person should be experimental without taking care of the end results he should at least try out his ideas
- No fear of failure
- Knows how to convert dreams into goals and plans into action. A person of substance is uses his sweat and blood to get his task/dream done; who comes short again and again, and understands that there is no success without failure,
- Consistent and Humble

Be someone people can count on. A reliable person is worth 10x their weight in gold.

Be someone people can count on. A reliable person is worth 10x their weight in gold. It's the, "who do you call when you get stranded at night in the middle of nowhere" concept. Be someone who takes care of one's responsibilities no matter the time or place.

Simply, let your life lived speak for itself. There's not a time nor place where you should brag about something you did. If it's great enough, someone will surely do it for you. Your identity should revolve around your ethics not your laurels.

Laugh a hell of a lot. Especially when it's uncalled for but never at the expense of others, therefore, mostly at yourself. The more you make fun of yourself the less afraid you are of ridicule and failure.

A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem.

Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow, the shadow is what a timid soul thinks of, whereas the tree is what a person of substance thinks of and there lies the difference. It is said that listening is a fine art, observation is a keen perspective and chalking out things is a science which only few have understood. It is in the nature of human beings not to recognize or appreciate the good that comes their way until they have lost it. They may spend their entire life searching for something despite it being right in front of them. This recognition of the innate quality not quantity and without being manipulated or influenced makes the core build-up of a person of substance.

It is in the nature of human beings not to recognize or appreciate the good that comes their way until they have lost it.

The recognition belongs to the person who is out there in the field, covered with sweat, blood and mud, the one who works hard, the one who doesn't think of the result but forges ahead. A person of substance is one who has perseverance, he strives valiantly, makes errors and also comes up with solutions because there is no effort without error and shortcomings. He/she is the one who treats triumph and imposters just the same and will not complain about his/her defeat nor boast about his/her success. Success can never be for those timid souls who neither have the taste of victory nor for defeat.

A person of substance should have confidence and should always have his/her head held high even in moments of strife. He/she should blatantly trust himself/herself when all the bashful souls doubt him/her and should not be tired of waiting. The person should know the value of time. He/she should not deal in lies and not be vindictive. He/she should stand by his words. A person of substance should be one who will never breathe a word of his/her loss and will risk all his resources to regain his previous position. A person of substance should be down to earth and embrace mankind regardless of caste, colour or background. He/she should have the capability to judge a person as a friend or enemy.

A person of substance should take responsibility, should wholeheartedly put himself into action and should have the guts to bear the consequences which it will bring. A person of substance should always remember that if he/she is not a solution to a problem then he/she is the problem. As demand outnumbers supply in inflation similarly problems outnumber solutions in real life, as compared to sugar coated reel life, problem solvers in real life are few and far between. Good problem solving skills between competing interests requires a person of sound judgment who has empathy, complete objectivity and values. So, according to me a person of substance is the one who can differentiate between the right and the wrong without being hesitant like Arjuna did in Mahabharata, despite his foes being his own family members.

All that glitters is not gold and millionaires are not necessarily people with substance. One can inherit richness but one cannot inherit perseverance, motivation, the decision making ability, politeness and determination which make a person of substance. The most important quality he/she should possess is the ability to cooperate with others. Cooperation helps in sharing the burden of challenges, knowledge for discovery and the sweet fruit of success. It is that mode of a person's life which will make him the role model for others.

Becoming a person of substance is not a rocket science that we need to have a PhD in. Anyone can become a person of substance.

“For some the song has ended, but the memory lingers on”

- Frank Sinatra

The above quote exemplifies the life and death of a person of substance. People who don't have anyone at their funeral might or might not have lived a fulfilling life. It's hard to tell. But, it's fairly certain that people, whose funeral ground is well attended must have done something right when they were alive.

Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Junior, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Lady Diana and Mother Teresa have one trait in common. While they all were famous for different roles which they portrayed in their lifetimes, they all have one thing in common: Their memory still lingers on. Even today, each one of them is fondly remembered for what they did when they were alive. That is exactly they are people of substance. Each one of them has left a mark on the world with their kindness, sheer tenacity, simplicity, humility and generosity.

A person of substance isn't a term which has a textbook definition. While it is possible to become a person of substance in several ways, each person of substance will have a few traits in common. The biggest common trait is common trait is the ability to influence others in a positive manner. Every single person whose name was mentioned earlier has influenced generations after generations. Their words and famous sayings are mentioned in every single moral values book read by children all over the world. Their words and deeds are of inspiration. The inspirational and motivational character is something which cannot be taken out of a person who is called a person of substance.

A person of substance is never selfishness. Napoleon Hill once said, “Great achievement is usually born of great sacrifice and is never the result of selfishness”. In order for a person to become a person of substance he cannot afford to be selfish. Nobody remembers a person who lived a life for himself and then died. A person who is selfish can never achieve anything which will benefit others and the only benefit a selfish person ever gains is to help oneself and that is not considered as an achievement in any part of the world.

On the very opposite end of the spectrum, a trait which is inherited by every person of substance is the quality of being selfless and generous. Again, every person whose name was mentioned above did all that they did for the benefit of society. They were selfless and resolute in their resolve. It's exactly why everyone remembers them today. Their generous acts of life are remembered even now. Selfishness will never be remembered by others because at the end of the day everyone is selfish but selflessness is what will always be remembered, and that is exactly what makes a person of substance inherit the title.

On a concluding note, while there is no straight answer to the question “what makes a person of substance”, it is my interpretation of the term.

While it is possible to become a person of substance in several ways, each person of substance will have a few traits in common.

What makes a person of substance? That might be a simple question with a difficult answer. Individuals don't exist in a vacuum and thus, are a part of the social reality in and around them. And, thus, society is formed by an interconnected web of different individuals, situated in different socio-economic, cultural, and political scenarios.

The term -- person of substance -- usually represents a positive connotation, however, what is essential is to understand that this social construct varies from society to society and from individual to individual. What we, however, see is a perceived broad generalization about the idea of goodness attached to this phrase. As much as it is important to keep in mind the grand narratives regarding this goodness associated culturally with individuals, it is also essential to understand what are the individual ideas regarding what makes someone a person of substance. These ideas about what forms a person of substance depends upon our environment and upbringing. Ideas can vastly differ based on one's social position. Given that it is a social construct, what becomes essential is to understand the social fabric upon which it is formed. These ideas can't be a fixed because societies go through different stages of development, and the material reality forms the base for the occurrence and prevalence of any thought. Thus, the dynamic process of change prevalent in every society will have an effect on what makes a person of substance in that society.

In today's capitalistic world, a person who is very driven towards his/her career might be seen as a person of substance, but what happens to those who want to follow their passion and live a life based on it? Who will we call a person of substance? Someone who never had a chance to acquire a formal music training but is extremely passionate about singing, and earns a meagre income by singing on the street, or someone who has worked very hard to become a playback singer in the Bollywood industry? We might be faced with such differences every day, but, it is essential to understand that these differences may not be dichotomous. We need to keep the spectrum broad enough to accommodate differences, and yet regard them as persons of substance.

Having said that, in my view, I feel, a person of substance is a multicultural man or woman with the enthusiasm to learn about new things. Someone who will not disregard differences but accommodate them on an everyday basis. It definitely has to be someone who will understand that status quo leaves a lot of voices unheard, and that there is a need to hear these voices in order for this world to be a better place to live in every new day. He/she should be able to realize that individual goals and dreams are as important as the greater good of the community; and thus, should be a well aware citizen who is able to balance both. It is not about losing oneself into grand narratives, but about finding oneself through it. Common identity can serve as a road for the enhancement of individual identity. A person of substance should be someone who would know that borders are man-made, and that no borders are tough enough to divide humanity. He/she should know that nation, state, race, class, caste doesn't define humanity. What defines humanity is how humane we are.

All these might sound utilitarian, given that man has an innate nature to increase pleasure and reduce pain, but, if we look at the long term picture, it is quite possible to have people who believe in these ideas. And, that is what will make a person of substance!

A person of substance is a multicultural man or woman with the enthusiasm to learn about new things.

For a country to develop and progress what it needs is not a multitude of resources or the best technology, it needs the right people who can put the minimum resources to the best possible use and derive maximum results. These people are of immeasurable value to the nation and society alike. These people are strong by character, humble by nature and true to their values and morals. These are known as the people of substance.

People of substance are not those who have lived without a single scar marking their face, who have never encountered hardships, or those who stand beautiful on a podium in an ironed suit. People of substance are those who are marred by dirt on their hands and faces, who sweat profusely for the benefit of others, and whose faces shine with the spark of determination and a will to do even better.

A person of substance needs to have a strong moral character. He/she needs to be able to differentiate between what's right and what's wrong for the people who depend on him. He/she need not be physically strong but needs to have a conscience strong enough to not fall for the trivialities in life. He/she should have the ability to persevere and not give up for as long as it takes. A man/woman of substance accepts failure but never gives into it. He/she admits defeat temporarily to learn better from his/her shortcomings and toils further to reach his/her goal. He/she puts himself in the epicenter of action, never shying away from failure and defeat. Instead, he/she looks at defeat as a way to perform even better at the next given opportunity.

He/she also pays attention to the little details in life. It is often said that a man who cannot be bothered with the little things cannot be trusted with the big things. A man/woman of worth starts by first contributing to his/her own home. He/she works to fulfill his/her duties towards family members who contributed to his/her upbringing, then works for the society which together made him/her the person he/she is and then works to lead the nation to better living standards which prove his/her worth on the whole.

To be called a man/woman of worth, it is not necessary to be in the highest tax bracket or to be a social leader or to be a well-known personality. We can all be people of worth and substance in our own little ways by doing what we can for society and contributing our time and skills to the development of sections which are not as privileged as the others. It is the little things in life which ultimately add up to enhance a person's value in society and in the eyes of others. Things which seem to go unnoticed, like honesty, respect for others and generosity, add up to exponentially enhance someone's worth in the eyes of others. Such a person can live with his/her head held high in society and that counts more than all of the material privileges which one might run after.

A man/woman of substance is known to be at peace with his/her inner self. He/she is calm in his/her thoughts and can think rationally rather than being influenced by certain imposing ideas. He/she doesn't give in to the pressure exerted by others because he/she has the ability to be confident in what he/she believes in. He/she stays by his/her ideologies though remains open to different opinions to come up with better and new ideas for the benefit of all.

A person of substance doesn't always project the image of an ideal citizen or an all-rounder. He/she is not good at everything and definitely errs at many. However, because of his/her ideal character and his/her strive and determination, he/she deserves to be an idol for the rest. He/she can be a regular citizen or the owner of a multi-billion dollar company. However, it's a person's values, morals and will which makes him/her a man/woman of substance.

For a country to develop and progress what it needs is not a multitude of resources or the best technology, it needs the right people who can put the minimum resources to the best possible use and derive maximum results.

In a world that continues to be plagued with countless threats to the sanctity of life through terrorism, conflicts, hatred and divisiveness, with their roots lying in the disrespect for human life, it is a person of substance who realizes the depth of the problem and takes this up as a mission to lead the movement and establish humanism as the central guiding force across the globe. In other words, a person of substance not only believes but also makes countless efforts in creating value in society. The two most important ingredients in being a person of substance are, a sense of responsibility and awareness of the role to lead the way to world peace.

In the process of being a person of substance one of the most essential components is education. Education helps in developing a value system that guides us in our actions in the future. Educational institutions focus on building the youth as the pillar of peace, courage enabling them to forge ahead and develop an unshakeable character to work committedly for the greater good. In order to transform the challenges and complex problems we face in the world today, it is essential to not only take action but also have respect for the dignity of life, which comes by achieving the primary goal of education.

In the process of being a person of substance one of the most essential components is education.

A person of substance is selfless not only taking actions for others but also encouraging other people in the community to bring forth their wisdom to find ways to contribute to society. Through sincere efforts one can sow the seeds of peace throughout the globe. The most important means for bringing people together is being persistent in dialogue.

There is substance in every individual; it is just a matter of the choices we make as individuals. The primary goal for an ordinary individual is to achieve happiness in ones life but working for the happiness of others is what a person of substance does first. His/her vision is to work dedicatedly in bringing about world peace and giving his/her best in fulfilling this vow.

Indo-Bhutan Youth Summit will give the youth a chance to enhance the substance in them and strive towards greater good. Through this opportunity we will be able to create a mutual understanding with others, think of ways to solve problems to bring a change in not only each other's communities and in the world. People of substance are the solution to every problem in the global scenario. It's a long way to go but with strong determination to strive towards oneness and unity on the path of establishing world peace with unwavering resolve is the key to be a person of substance. I firmly believe in working for a world where the people whatever their nationality, would never find their rights or interests trampled on.

Out of seven and a half billion people on the earth, where are you really? This is one question, which brings every individual's existence into question. It gives rise to a self-doubt whether one's existence or non-existence matters or not. Most of us are living in a tiny universe of our own thinking it is the be-all and end all. We are no different from a flock of sheep grazing in a field aimlessly and waiting for some master's whip to be commanded to move in the desired direction. What is are worth in a flock of seven billion sheep? Can't we choose our own direction? The answer lies in the people who have outshined the flock proving this to be possible and achievable. All it takes is realization of one's existence, and discovery of the substance in oneself.

Transformation into a person of substance is not an overnight process. It comes after hundred failures and hundred and one recoveries. It is the urge to mark your presence, to tell the world when you leave, "I was here". And it all begins with courage, to do that one has to actually make things happen and not merely be a spectator, not be the sheep but the master of the sheep.

The journey of a person of substance is not of success, but of failures. It is a journey to learn how to overcome one's failure and not to stop until one achieves what he/she has been striving for. It is marked by the daring to take risks and eliminate the foggiest fear of failure. Getting confined to one's comfort zone is the biggest obstacle in the way of exploring oneself. No great men have ever achieved their feats by surrendering to the situation. As Robert Frost has said "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less travelled by, And that has made all the difference." Every time when decisions are to be made, it is the person of substance who chooses the "less travelled" path. He/she has the courage to take up a challenge. Avoiding responsibility is the trait of an insignificant man who is habituated to a safe and leisurely life.

While everyone is busy with their lives, there are people who strive for leading a life. They do not take life for granted. They lead it into a better one, every day. They are not content with what they have, but they strive for knowledge. That is where the substance comes from. Rather than getting lost in the flock, they surpass others. They are not influenced by the mob but are headstrong and committed to their goals.

Substance is what they have in the end. They maintain genuineness and resist becoming like others and this genuineness makes them different from others, stops them from departing from this world unheard and unnoticed. They do what their heart asks them to do. For them, suffering is just a form of experience.

Everyone has this element in them. Everyone has something substantial in them but only a few are able to bring it to the forefront. And those who do, don't just do it for their place in the sun but for the millions of lives around them, making the world a better place.

Everyone has something substantial in them but only a few are able to bring it to the forefront.

“You learn to be resilient to survive when you know you are capable of making worthy contributions to the world; you fight it when you have nothing to lose and so much to gain.”

According to the Chinese concept of “yin yang” (that black and white symbol) seemingly contradictory forces actually complement each other. Humans are social animals, they need society as much as society needs them. We strive all our lives to become valuable contributors to society, to spread the message of love, to make the world a better place or in other words to become a person of substance.

To be a person of substance is easier said than done. It isn't a set of skills that you can learn overnight. A person has to persevere in darker times and learn that difficult times are just always around and you cannot run away from them. Either you can learn to be resilient and stand up to the challenge or just suffer the consequences. Manjhi, a labourer, had all the reasons to sit back and do nothing instead of doing the impossible and cutting through an enormous rock in order to create a pathway for his village but he chose to not let anyone from his village feel the anguish that he once felt. He not only showed remarkable perseverance but set an example of empathy towards his people.

Empathy sets aside humans from all other human beings. One should have the courage to put yourself in someone else's shoes, honestly and be able to connect with others at an imaginative level to feel their pain. Mother Teresa was one such human being who could absorb the sorrow from persons just by being able to connect to them on an unprecedented level. She was a mother to all -- that one bond of empathy that could never be broken. There's one thing in common in both examples the enormous sacrifice that these two persons made for mankind. One could argue that these two are extremes but degrees of these qualities are evident in the society and persons around the world. Parents have to sacrifice their whole lives for the wellbeing of their child.

As Gandhiji believed to change the world one should look inside and start the change from there first. In order to overcome the numerous challenges that are being faced by the world in order to combat them one should be self-aware, confident and patient. While diligence and discipline will always make us keep a check on ourselves still the scenarios aren't going to change magically we need to be patient and have faith in ourselves.

Such traits are inculcated in an individual right from his/her childhood by parents and teachers. But the aspirations of respect, prosperity, fame and other self-centered acts sways the mind. The ability to have the vision, action and determination makes a person of substance.

Empathy sets aside humans from all other human beings. One should have the courage to put yourself in someone else's shoes, honestly and be able to connect with others at an imaginative level to feel their pain.

Each of us is a unique strand in this intricate web of life and I believe that guarantees a unique perception about everything around us. On that note, I take the liberty to define what makes a person of substance.

Sometimes I wonder what the greatest personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa, among others, had which separated them from the crowd. Time and again I end up with a similar observation. They had the vision for a better world, not better in the sense of their own needs but a brighter future for everyone. They had the audacity to act on this vision and be change-makers who inspired others to bring a better version of themselves.

So, according to me, out of all the traits a great personality could possess, an empathetic and selfless heart is one that truly makes the difference and what really forms a person of substance. I feel the ability to understand and share feelings really has the power to connect us as humans. And more often than not, we tend to forget the importance of this connection. Undeniably, a person of substance acts on his or her vision with perseverance and a strong resolution, and I don't wish to diminish the importance of this vital component but the aforementioned traits are of greater consequence, especially when we define a person of substance -- one whose life holds meaning, one whose actions are not limited to personal gains.

As an economist, I have studied many challenges to development. The biggest challenge of them all is that development is always subjective: what might be good for you, could easily be bad for somebody with a different perspective. But when a person cultivates the ability to connect with the masses on a broader scale, he/she lays down the path which leads to collective good in the most veracious and unvarnished form.

I'd like to end with one of the greatest poets of all time, Robert Frost.

“I shall be telling this with a sigh
somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
and that has made all the difference.”

Each of us is a
unique strand
in this intricate
web of life and
I believe that
guarantees a
unique perception
about everything
around us.

To obtain the answer to this question, one might want to know what the definition of a person of substance is. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it is defined as a person who is rich and powerful. I beg to differ. I feel there are a lot of qualities such a person possesses apart from being wealthy and powerful. One may be filthy rich, and still may not be happy; another may be very influential but not honest.

In my view, here are the qualities of such an individual:

- They're kind but not weak: One should not mistake one's kindness with weakness. It takes great compassion to be well composed and act in a gentle, but honest manner. In a way, being kind also requires strength and empathy. However, it's not kindness when you use it to further your own agenda.
- They empathize with, and work for an altruistic cause: While it is natural and taken for granted that humans are egocentric, being self-centered benefits just one among billions, and would hardly resonate on the significance scale. Significance arises out of a cause that benefits the greater good, like working for the betterment of the quality of life and living in harmony with the neighbouring communities and countries.
- They're strong but not harsh: People will wait to see if a person is strong before they decide to follow him or even work with him well. Such people also make excellent leaders and people need courage in their leaders. The public always needs someone to make good decisions especially in the toughest of times. Display of strength by one, encourages strength in others as well.
- They're confident, but not cocky: We are attracted towards confident people because it is a contagious virtue, and it helps us to believe that there are great things in store. However, arrogance should be kept away from our minds. People with substance don't allow their accomplishments and position of authority to make them feel that they're better than anyone else. While they are ready to take initiative and do what's necessary, they don't ask anyone to do anything they aren't willing to do themselves.
- They stay positive, but not unrealistic: Keeping a positive attitude is one of the most essential qualities for the birth of new innovations and breakthroughs. As the saying goes, the electric bulb would not have been invented if Edison would not have tried for the 100th time despite his 99 failures. However, as is the case with everything in nature, balance is key. One should not let thoughts blinded by overly imaginative aspirations keep us toiling in vain.
- They are goal-oriented and aim high: They know that great feats were once mere dreams and aspirations, and they must always aim high and work hard towards achieving their goals. Without aiming for the stars man would not even fly.

We are attracted towards confident people because it is a contagious virtue, and it helps us to believe that there are great things in store.

Clearly, it is very difficult for all these qualities to be present in any one individual at birth. We have to gradually try to inculcate all these traits along our journey towards our goals. A person with all the above traits is surely destined for great deeds, and is indeed a person of substance.

“A mind that cares for others’ point of view is the preserver like the Lord Vishnu, the householder. For him nature is the source of enrichment and abundance.” Since my childhood, I was born in an environment full of true compassion which was not just preached but was a practice. I have always been taught to trust the man inside me and that our minds are small but our hearts are big.

A person of substance is not someone who has got it all but is someone who is compassionate enough to realize the good in all, i.e., a person who evokes affection for the human condition. To realize that it is just not about surviving but it's about thriving. The experiences we have in life, the personality we have, the way we approach different situations moulds us into fascinating beings. But a person of substance challenges himself to understand what the true meaning of acceptance, tolerance and compassion is.

An example of compassion was when a tennis player suffering from cancer told the Make-A-Wish Foundation that her dream was to meet the Swiss tennis star Roger Federer. And he took time out of his busy schedule to brighten the tennis player's day. What do you think of Federer's gesture? Because I think it is one of true compassion.

In order to care for others, we have to first see then, understand them truly. Instead of changing the world, we have to help the world. What really matters is our intentions not only for us but for others too. A person of substance cannot be self-indulgent and indifferent to the points of view of others.

I have always believed in the Karma theory -- whatever you give you get it back. I believe very strongly that it embraces the whole meaning of living. I believe a person of substance understands this theory -- that compassion not only for ourselves but for others is also equally important. When I was small I was recounted “The Gift of Magi” where the husband and the wife bought each other gifts for Christmas sacrificing their greatest treasures without thinking about the consequences and focusing instead on making one another happy.

Compassion is innate, I understood that when I was interning last year in Delhi. I used to travel one hour for work and complain about it daily. I used to whine about it when it got late, unaware that my co-intern had to travel two hours and also get up an hour earlier to cook her own food. She never complained about it even if it got late. We all came to know only when our senior inquired about where we were staying. She smiled and said, “I stay two hours from this place”. I asked her does it not bother her. She smiled and said, “I get time to read.” I promised her that I would get a little extra lunch. I understood that a little compassion to those around us goes a long way. That day I understood the difference between empathy and compassion. While empathy would just mean to feel the emotion of the person, compassion here was larger -- I wanted to help because I had felt the same thing. Empathy and sympathy are not the same as compassion. Compassion is this light you give to others only when you're fully aware of yourself.

And here I believe all it takes is the ability to connect that makes someone a person of substance.

A person of substance is not someone who has got it all but is someone who is compassionate enough to realize the good in all, i.e., a person who evokes affection for the human condition.

What is a substance? A particular kind of matter with uniform properties. Well, that's what Google says. Then what makes a person of substance? A person of substance is someone who strives to live life in a moral and uniform manner. A person with goals, consistency, commitments, courage is a person of substance.

Those who choose the hard path to make a better life and take risks to achieve something for the betterment of the world and for themselves are people of substance. As the poet Robert Frost says in "The Road not Taken" we make lots of decisions in our life everyday but most of the time we choose the easy path over the important ones. We should take the road that is less travelled.

Being a person of substance literally means being a human in all of its wonderfulness. Caring for others, standing up for someone no matter who they are: Co-worker, life partner, brother, sister or friend. Offer help whenever someone is in need. Be someone that people can count on to support. You should trust, honour and love those around. Never judge them on the basis of money, looks and education. You should give to others more than you desire to receive from others.

Being a person of substance literally means being a human in all of its wonderfulness.

There are thousands problems world faces right now. We should be the solution and not the problem. Instead of being a spectator take part in solving problems; take some risks and even if you fail try hard again and again until you find a perfect solution. Problems outnumber the solutions. So the more you solve the problems the more problems you will face; it's a never ending cycle. So being the one who solves problems for a better future is what makes a person of substance.

Shannon A. Alder said, "Sometimes, it is how you shine in the darkness during other people's misery that is remembered more than anything you could have said or done when you have suffered just as much". Being a good person means having experience in both the good and the bad because good judgments comes from the bad decisions you made in your life. Experiencing things outside of your comfort zone will help you solve many problems in your life more effectively.

People of substance have the courage to participate in everything. Whether or not they taste victory, they never grow weary of trying. People of substance take responsibility, they wholeheartedly put themselves at the epicenter of the action and fully accept whatever the consequences that decision may bring. A person of substance has a passion to make meaning for the benefit of the greater good and that is a clear first pointer to becoming one.

The Sunscreen, Beach, and Shade Theory

I look through the window pane glistening against the bright sun as I ask myself, “What makes a person of substance?” A wave of instances and tales washes through my mind until the pedestrians in my view serve as the denouement to this monologue. The answer was simple, it is the sunscreen, beach and shade theory that makes a person of substance. What do these seemingly vacation elements have to do with an individual’s persona? Most importantly, why are they being referred to as a theory? Read on to find out...

When I trailed my way to answering this question, my instantaneous route led me to the lane before the destination defining who is a person of substance? A person of substance is someone who doesn’t simply wear sunscreen before stepping out in the sun, instead, he/she builds a shade for everyone walking under the sunny sky. A person of substance is much like the sharp rock by the shore standing strong against the uncertainty of the sea. Just as the thunderous storms, unpredictable movement of the waves and the wandering clouds make a rock sharper with each passing day, it is the flurry of experiences and withstanding will of a human being that makes him/her a person of substance.

Being a person of substance is not a destination, but a journey instead, that begins when one places “we” before and above “me.” It is a journey that progresses with every step, one day at a time. The steps that evoke empathy before sympathy, solutions over suggestions, and, most importantly, a purview of a world larger than what meets their eyes. However contrary to the popular notion of taking the road less traveled to make a difference, it is the road often traveled that helps one amass experiences and stories that act as binding components building a person of substance.

It is the willingness and courage to bypass and eventually break the desire of being a cynosure and instead be of value to everyone than simply successful for one’s own self that makes a person of substance. The day when an individual chooses to be responsible for not just himself but everyone, he has set himself free from the heaviness of the world residing within him; and he’s now ready to set foot into a larger universe that he must embrace for every hue that it paints. When he chooses to find beauty in the bizarre circle of life, he has already begun painting the masterpiece called a person of substance.

To conclude, a person of substance is the amalgamation of the rises and falls that he experiences through his journey. When he chooses to imbibe every particle in the wind to build as a rock-solid lesson, implementing it to make a difference in others’ lives, he is established as a person of substance. How to spot a person of substance? Keep an eye for the person who isn’t just listening to you, but who is comprehending.

Being a person of substance is not a destination, but a journey instead, that begins when one places “we” before and above “me.”

Integrity, honesty, commitment, calmness, patience and resultant actions are essential features that make a person of substance. Like Paulo Coelho's Warrior of the Light, a person of substance accepts perfection as a goal and keeps striving towards it. A person of substance is a believer; both in the causes as well as the people associated with them, and keeps them motivated to achieve the desired results. Inspirational hard work and diligent actions, the choices one makes, and the strength to stand by them makes one a person of substance. The ability to not feel saddened by a great loss, and not go overboard because of a triumph, make such persons remarkable.

Integrity, honesty, commitment, calmness, patience and resultant actions are essential features that make a person of substance.

A person of substance is dependable and delivers even in extreme adversities. The person is a quintessential part of the team, and inspires several such persons to take the team forward. Persons of substance daily try to make a substantial change. A firm believer in incremental growth with exponential success at times, a person of substance is grounded and learns from the experiences of the past. He perseveres, but is also wise enough to know when to lose a battle, in order to win a war. Every problem is presented as a challenge, and each is tackled through its own means. A person of substance is thankful for every opportunity and makes the most out of it to create new ones. An all weather friend, a person of substance has a touch of madness. The madness is conjunctive and grows into passion.

Always helpful, a person of substance keeps others happy. Living in the present, the person is immune from prophecies of the future or the ghosts of the past. He is a decision maker and writes one's own destiny. He is alive to the situation and persons around him. A person of substance is an effective communicator, effortlessly crossing the barriers of languages to invoke emotions in the recipients. He instills confidence and trust in those around him. The drive to disrupt the status quo is a hallmark of a person of substance.

He is also a saviour of his own dreams as well as of those who aren't privileged enough. Positivity oozes out from such a person, and self doubt is kept at bay. The focus is always on the process with an eye on the result. A person of substance maintains objectivity and is not swayed easily. Yet, the person understands enough to see through reasons and arrive at an informed opinion. A person of substance is quiet in action and loud in praising peers. A good manager, a person of substance is above material pursuits. A person of substance is involved and always contributing. He is like a flower, blooming to its maximum and thereafter providing seeds for more flowers. Every person plays a role in the history of the world; every person is a person of substance.

A person of substance is someone who strives to create value wherever he or she goes. This entails going into anything that he/she, be it a job or a project, with a willingness to leave something behind that is greater than what it was before. It might mean adding more responsibilities to an existing job role, transforming a small local issue into a national movement or simply finding new and effective ways to tackle old problems.

A person of substance is someone who strives to create value wherever he or she goes.

My definition of what makes a person of substance relates to my experiences as a member of a family of civil servants. When my grandfather took me on visits to Himachal Pradesh, where he had served as an IAS officer, he didn't take me to large development projects he had started. Instead, he showed me the little things: small hill bunds that he had helped construct that prevented soil erosion. He could have finished his probation training without achieving much on the ground but to him the idea of public service was to add value wherever he went. Once, he was given a punishment posting in the Cultural Department. Undeterred, he used it as a platform to usher in a new age in Himachali writing and poetry. From my grandfather, I learnt that a person of substance focuses on the job at hand, no matter how big or small, and looks for a way to make a difference.

One of the foremost examples of this, who stands out to me because of my interests in diplomacy, is Archer Blood. Blood was an American diplomat who, as U.S. Consul General in Dhaka in 1971, risked his career by strongly repudiating the U.S. policy of supporting Pakistan while it was committing genocide in present day Bangladesh. Horrified by the brutality of Pakistan's repression of Bengalis, he authored the Blood Telegram and castigated his own country for "moral bankruptcy" in the face of a U.S. ally committing genocide. By taking a public stand against what he knew was wrong, Blood changed the diplomatic profession from being one of bureaucrats who were expected to toe the line to a profession of activism, where diplomats actively stood up for what was morally right. Blood was a person of substance because he chose common values of decency and humanity over personal ambition and, in the process, left his profession as something greater than when he found it; in short, he created value.

In some small way, I've tried to emulate this definition of a person of substance: someone who creates value and leaves something behind where ever they go. When I was offered the chance to study at Brown University in the U.S., I was sorely tempted by the opportunity. Yet when the choice came, I remembered something of my desire to be a person of substance. It was a lifelong dream to join the IFS and serve my country, something I couldn't do if I went abroad. In a career in public service, I saw the ability to create value and leave a legacy behind in the way my grandfather did while serving the common good as Blood did. My definition of substance led me to stay. In the same pursuit to be someone who adds value and serves the common good, I wrote a research paper that highlighted solutions to Delhi's smog problems. I wasn't an expert but I was a resident who had suffered under the smog and wanted to add my voice to the debate involving climate change. The paper I wrote went to the Ministry of the Environment and became an official government recommendation. My desire to add my voice to the debate and create change represents what being a person of substance means to me.

Lest anyone say that creating value can only be the work of giants like Archer Blood, all of us can be people of substance. From giving more to our relationships with friends and family to being team players at the workplace, being a person of substance, as Einstein eloquently said, is about "putting in more than you get out".

“The real test of a man is not what he is unto herself but what he is in relation to others.”

A person of substance is above materialism. He/she thinks good of others, lives for others sincerely, honestly and selflessly. The first lesson in life is from one's family which lays the foundation in making a person of substance. It is here one learns the meaning of love, affection, caring and cooperation. The high morals and values are inculcated here. The habits and perceptions gained at home are translated in later life. The parents are the real role models for their children. Every word, movement and action has an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parent.

**A person of
substance
is above
materialism.**

I also perceive my parents as my idols. I see my mother as a woman of substance -- an upright one with positive thinking, ever ready to help her students and others. I see in her a woman of conviction and try to imitate her. She says to me, “All the materialistic things are of no value if you win the love and affection in the society especially amongst the needy.” She has her own voice as an activist in NGOs Lok Adalats Community Programs etc. She has taught me to follow my heart and never give up. She has been living up to her ideals, morals and values she has set in her life. She consistently inspires me to do something magnificent in this world by bringing hopes in the life of others. She encourages me all the time to do more and tells me that one can enjoy only when one works selflessly for others without thinking of any expectations or returns. Only then one will attain peace of mind and satisfaction. She says, “Always be positive and do not get deterred by criticism, rather take it constructively to build a better you. You should be in competition with yourself and that would lead you to your goals and help in making you a person with difference.”

In fact, it is not only my mother but my father too who I look up to. Both of them are the epitome of positivity. Both of them have high moral standards and values, they hold such position in society that people look up to them with regard. They have always set their goals first, achieved them and then set higher ones. They are achievers, learners and God fearing folk. All this has made them people of substance. I believe and try to follow in their footsteps by working with NGOs for people with special needs, the deprived and the downtrodden to improve their index of happiness. I think this is a sincere attempt at human reclamation. I have also realized that when a person connects with his/her soul, he/she sees the presence of the Supreme Power in each and every individual. He/she is ready to serve anybody who is in trouble or needs help. He/she does his/her job selflessly as the Gita teaches us to believe in Karma.

Nelson Mandela spent his youth behind bars for forty years to get justice for his people. Mother Teresa served compassionately in the villages of Bengal to help the poor and diseased. Martin Luther King Jr. strived towards ending racial violence and inequality in the United States to emancipate the weaker sections of society. Mahatma Gandhi led the Indian freedom struggle through Ahimsa and Non-violence to get India independent from the British. Abraham Lincoln abolished and banned slavery from the American society to provide justice to the downtrodden. All the above mentioned world leaders have worked in different spheres of public life. However, all of them have one thing in common: A self-less action towards serving humanity. This is what makes them a people of substance.

In words of Jean De Le Bruyere:

“A person’s worth in this world is decided by the amount of value he puts in himself, and not by the amount of money he amasses.”

This means that there exists a core value system that works within the heart and mind of a true man of substance. With his/her simplicity and sobriety, he/she has the ability to win over the whole world. He/she has an ardent desire to struggle and sacrifice for his/her society. He/she is commitment towards his/her goals and firmness in his/her actions.

However, there are certain key elements that make an individual a man of substance. These are:

1. Ethical value system and morality:

Ethics and morality are two most important factors towards inculcating substance in an individual. They allow an individual to discriminate between right and wrong. It determines what is best for humans in life. Further, morality allows people to connect with an individual and build a truthful relationship with him/her. It, therefore, develops an everlasting faith in him/her.

2. Honesty and integrity:

Both honesty and integrity develop a wholeness in the character of an individual. With honesty, an individual is true to himself/herself and the people around him/her. It allows him/her to develop enculturation with the environment. Integrity, on the other hand, brings honesty into action.

3. Spirit of service and commitment:

A man of substance is dedicated to a cause and works to his/her fullest to achieve it. He/she no expects nothing in return. His/her soul aim is to help society, and therefore make the world a better place to live in. Following what Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, said, “Be the change you want to see in the world”, these men/women are hell-bent towards bringing the transformation required in the contemporary time.

4. Tolerant and Compassionate attitude:

Tolerance towards thoughts, behaviours and actions of others is central to their attitude. Be it religious, cultural, ideological, or political tolerance, they readily accept others. Further, they have a feeling of empathy and respect towards the sorrow of others. As Carlyle once said, “A Great Man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men”. Therefore, a man of substance compassionately helps others and works towards the upliftment of the downtrodden.

5. Emotional intelligence:

Emotional intelligence means a combination of heart and mind. It allows an individual to understand, control, and restrict the emotions of self and others. To take prompt decisions for society, it is important to take decisions from the heart as well. A man/woman of substance decisively uses this quality to help others and connect with a wide network of people in both personal and public spheres of life.

It does not matter whether one is rich or famous, his/her effective personality is enough to distinguish him/her from everyone around.

Today, it is rare to find a man/woman of substance around. Due to ongoing global capitalism, people have become materialistic, and have lost touch with their core. It is now, therefore, imperative that people work on their attitudinal aspect and ingrain these five key elements to become a man/woman of substance. It does not matter whether one is rich or famous, his/her effective personality is enough to distinguish him/her from everyone around.

Can a beggar on the streets be a person of substance? Can a transgender individual be a person of substance? Can an individual who has failed innumerable times and is still on his quest for success be a person of substance? The Merriam Webster thesaurus defines a person of substance as someone who is rich and powerful. None of these people are rich or powerful and it goes without saying that just like the biased parameters of the thesaurus the common societal perception does not qualify them as people of substance.

Not quite satisfied with this literal meaning of the phrase I started reading through web pages and Quora answers. I had an existing indefinite and abstract set of ideas in my mind, regarding the same, none of which seemed to be in concurrence with what I had read on these pages. There was a part of me looking for an explanation which was to an extent spiritual, and another part which wanted it to be realistic and applicable.

Following the saying, the wisest of ideas come from the oldest of men, in its most literal sense I sat down speaking to my grandfather about my cluttered and perplexed set of ideas. His perspective of “a person of substance” was the crispest explanation of the phrase I had come across – how a man perceives substance, dictates the amount of substance in a man. To know the depth of anyone’s true substance, simply measure the weight of what consumes and excites their inner drive.

To know the depth of anyone’s true substance, simply measure the weight of what consumes and excites their inner drive.

Now comes the second and the more challenging portion of my task, enumerating the qualities which make a person of substance. A plethora of idiosyncrasies flooded my mind and the list of parameters seemed to run as long as the cardinal number system. We, humans, idolize particular individuals, consider them to be role models, and try and tread their path. There are three individuals whom I consider to be the epitome of the term, and all three of them apparently seem to possess very different skill sets and ideologies, but upon further deliberation, I realized that there is one locus which is a culmination of all their individualistic qualities.

Steve Wozniak the tech guy behind Apple Incorporation’s success had once asked Steve Jobs, “What do you even do? You’re not a coder, not an engineer, not a marketer, then what do you even do?” Jobs replied by saying, “Musicians play the instrument, I play the orchestra.” This is the most deep-rooted understanding of one’s role in life, the ability to not get lost in the noise around you, the ability to stay focused and true to one’s self. Too many of us are fish trying to climb trees, monkeys learning to swim, and lions trying to live the life of a cat, thereby losing our core element in the process. Philosopher Cooley once said, “ Today I’m not what I think I am, I am not what you think I am, I am what I think you think I am”, which portrays our current plight of trying too hard to be someone else.

From a monk’s perspective, the greatest power is to be self-controlled, to be able to train the mind and energy to focus exactly where you want it to be. You are completely detached from external hiccups and balanced in equanimity. There’s a beautiful verse in the Bhagavad Gita saying that detachment is not that you own nothing, detachment is that nothing owns you. No matter how utopian this sounds, all men of substance have mastered this art to a certain extent. They’ve learnt to plant trees under whose shade they don’t want to sit.

I will not disclose the names of my role models, because I want you to be unbiased and think about yours, and I’m sure that all these individuals you are thinking of also share this common locus, the ability to stay focused and be true to one’s self. For me, if that same beggar, that same transgender person, and that same individual who has been tagged a failure possess these qualities, then they too are people of substance.

The first image or thought that came to my mind upon reading the words “person of substance” was a halo, which, I believe is the result of a conditioning beyond recall for me. This aura of positivity that we attach to certain notions, which in reality are irrespective of a person’s conditions in life makes our worldview very restricted, excluding a major chunk of the common folk. Upon a second thought, skimming through prejudices, and with a little more clarity, I discovered that the answer to this question for me is not a million qualities (again irrespective of good or bad) but a very simple logic. A person of substance is someone who does what he/she says. This roots from a very basic reasoning that honesty, valour, ambitions, passions, lethargy, beliefs, love, hatred, influence, concern ad infinitum are emotions present in all humans to varying degrees. Now one cannot quantify as to when a person reaches this benchmark because this a paradigm not rooted in abstraction but as the word itself says “substance”. So, the quality of action, of course with intention is what makes a person of substance.

The first image or thought that came to my mind upon reading the words “person of substance” was a halo, which, I believe is the result of a conditioning beyond recall for me.

Another dimension to it is, qualities can be ascribed, attributed or even exemplified in specific situations which makes them temporary and, hence, subject to change. To objectify the situation, one has to have a constant. As much of a paradox as it is, only reality is a constant. The person as close to this constant, that is to say, only one who believes in the present and so turns his words to actions before they become forgotten and lost (which again is a misconception as it continues to stay in our karmic cycle) is our subject.

Coming back to the beginning of this essay, I choose to refrain from the idea that only deeds of high morality make our subject. A person of substance can be the president of a country, but he may not be so for his neighbours; a teacher may be one for his students but not for his wife; an entrepreneur may appear to be so for a business magazine but not for the beggar down the street; an activist for the beneficiaries but not for the government; a terrorist for his sect but not for the victims. The thing that binds all these people is the simple act of choosing to deliver what they promised. Not to the world, not to anybody but themselves. This commitment that took them to the call of action makes them grounded in their own realities. The truth they stand by is the only difference between a person of substance and one without. So, with battles small or big and fights good or bad, if a person is so involved in converting their intentions to reality, they have proven their worth. I am sitting here, writing this essay, all out of the abstraction of my mind. These words on paper look beautiful, when uttered with grace sound even more enchanting and promising but only my actions can bring about change which essentially is all that matters.

“Don’t settle for style. Succeed in substance.”

- Wynton Marsalis

Since the understanding and definition of “substance” to people is subjective, I shall be describing what according to me, makes a person of substance. What do I understand and define as substance? Substance is that non tangible wealth and power that makes a person rich socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. A man of substance hold an incredible amount credit in the eyes of his social groups. A person who influences others in positive ways. A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character. A person of substance wants to grow and improve himself. A person of substance does not attempt to be something he/she is not.

I believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope into our lives—the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, and the hope of knowing that God is at work in your life.

He is unlike the colourful balloon which is flashy and all pomp on the outside, and on the inside is just filled with air, which bursts and simply disappears. As person without substance is just loud, but has no melody.

He follows these simple rules:

- Live by moral standards and values: These qualities build needed boundaries into your life, and serve like guard rails on a highway. High moral standards and values prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself
- Set goals continuously: People of substance have goals such as additional schooling, wise money management, keeping up with technology, purchasing a home, getting into shape, improving parenting skills, traveling, learning more about the Bible, and a thousand other goals. When you have goals you give direction to your life. Instead of you settling for the “same old, same old,” your life begins to take off
- Be a lifelong learner: I am not talking about spending your whole life in a classroom. But I do believe we should view our entire life as an education—we should be ever-learning, every moment of time, everywhere, and in all circumstances. Our world is changing, so we must be constant learners just to keep up. Don’t allow yourself to become a person who prefers sound bites and videos to actual reading and reflection
- Live a consistent life: One dictionary definition of substance is “a particular kind of matter with uniform properties.” Are you a person with uniform properties? Do you live as the same person, no matter who you’re with, or what you’re doing? Does your Sunday morning self-match up with your Friday night self? Can people depend on you? Do you keep your promises?
- Build effective relationships with people: Every person need not be your best friend, pal, or your deepest confidante. But every relationship you have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are there for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others.
- Believe God can do powerful things in your life and in the lives of others: When you have a radical faith:
 - You pray fervently because you believe God really does answer prayer
 - You step out of your comfort zone and trust God to equip you for the task
 - You influence people in positive ways
 - You see the lessons in your adverse circumstances

I believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope into our lives—the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, and the hope of knowing that God is at work in your life.

“Mix a little shake of laughter in the doings of the day,
Scatter golden bits of sunshine as you plod along the way,
Stop to cheer a fellow human that’s a bit worse off than you—
Help him climb the pesky ladder that you find so hard to do;
Show by every daily motive, every thought and every deed—
You are one that folks can turn to when they find themselves in need;”

- Roy Neal

Have you ever wondered who has been the greatest motivation in your life? Who perpetually pushes you towards progress? Who incessantly ignites the flames within you to endeavour for success? Who has never stopped being an inevitable inspiration not just for you as an individual but for society to look up to? Who is selfless in his deeds and substantial in his work and never backs down? This is a person of substance-- a person who understands the meaning of his existence in this world full of bewilderment with the population lost in the maze of materialism. Roy Neal’s poem subtly puts forth the peculiarity and the endowments of a true person of substance.

So what makes a “person of substance”? Substantiating the purpose of your life is the first step towards becoming a person of substance. It requires a person to gain mental maturity, the ability to comprehend things deeply and not to be deceived by the superficial characteristics of things. He should be a leader in his soul with thoughts as serene as the sky and actions as lofty as the waves.

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“It is under the greatest adversity that there exists the greatest potential for doing good, both for oneself and others.”

- Dalai Lama

For one to become as stunning as a diamond he has to undergo the adversity of bearing the cuts and bruises of the process. Inculcating meaning to your life requires you to become introspective, look at yourself and what you want in your life. Learn how to bring other people into your life that will aid in both your well-being, and you in theirs. A person of substance should have compassion to form bonds of love, brotherhood and friendship in the world, to put himself in the shoes of a hero and understand the choices they would make. He should be able to gather his skills and ethics and deploy them towards building a society where people realize the significance of giving back to society. A person of substance should maintain the nation’s integrity and discover what his true place is in the world. He should leave a mark immemorial in the sands of time for the generations to remember.

Abraham Lincoln, the American President, the most powerful person in the world, with a lavish life and all the services at his disposal, with no hope for personal gain chose to fight for the slaves and their freedom. He chose to be a man of substance.

Let your life lived speak for itself. Your identity should revolve around your ethics not your laurels. Let the substance in your personality showcase itself. I would like to conclude with another passage from the same poem, “Credo” by Roy Neal:

“Just forget the rugged places—make believe they’re slick and smooth;
When you spot the troubled faces, pull a grin and try to soothe;
Pretty pomes and marble towers won’t avail you very much,
When you’ve passed—unless you’ve helped to lighten heavy loads and such;
Never mind about the fortune you made up your mind to pile—
But just live the golden rule, lad, and your life will be worthwhile.”

“When I was five, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down ‘happy’. They told me I didn’t understand the assignment, and I told them they didn’t understand life.”

–John Lennon

When asked what we want out of life, all of us ultimately want to be happy. But what does happiness actually look like? Usually happiness comes from having a sense of purpose, a sense of identity and a meaningful life. “A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem.” But does it really explain what makes a person of substance?

A person of substance makes the best of what’s available to his/her, who grows in character and faithfulness, into someone who is a blessing to people around him/her, and who finds a purpose in life. It reflects the image of a person, who lives life with purpose, values and compassion to grow and to be a continual source of blessing to others. He/she doesn’t shy away from taking risks. He/she tries and fails, but never grows weary of trying. He/she wholeheartedly puts himself/herself at the centre of the actions and fully accepts whatever the consequences it may bring. He/she takes responsibility for his/her actions, successful or not.

A person of substance makes the best of what’s available to his/her, who grows in character and faithfulness, into someone who is a blessing to people around him/her, and who finds a purpose in life.

It’s an intentional choice to become a person of substance, a person of worth and value, to invest in something that’s valuable and lasting, that has weight. Just like the chaff blows away with the wind when the grains are tossed up due to its light weight and lack of density, similarly when we haven’t invested our lives in something that is really useful, we don’t have the weight to remain when the wind blows, we just disappear like the person wandering off on the path, we’re aren’t really going anywhere.

There is an adage - Find a job you love and you will never work a day in your life. This is so because we discover the purpose of doing, the joy that is found in serving, and the excitement when we’re doing something that is uniquely suited to us.

Having a leadership gift that is not wasted on negative things, having a gift of making people smile and laugh that is not wasted on hurting people and making the best use of those gifts and turning them into something that are a blessing is what makes a person of substance.

Let your day to day actions reflect the person you think you are even when others aren’t noticing because you are what you do and not what you say. Put more into the world than taking out of it. Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value. Don’t be the person who has never invested in anything of value. Instead of judging people by their looks or clothes, define them by the battles they fight each day, and the courage they show to face them. They may be more than what our eyes see. Their lives may not be glorious or they may not have medals to flaunt, but the biggest trophy is their heart is love, honesty and compassion. This makes a person of substance who will survive despite all odds in his/her life.

The man not the suit, the woman not the dress, the relationship not the ring, the time not the watch, the light not the lamp, the people not the place, the mind not the muscle, the liquid not the bottle, the drink not the glass, substance is everything.

What do you represent? What are your values? What do you embody? We all should take a pause from our busy lives and answer these questions. These answers will make us achieve what we want to be, “a person of substance.” Who is this person?

A person of substance is the one who strives to live a life which means something and who prefers to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be a part of the solution as opposed to the problem because if you are not a part of the solution, then you are a part of the problem. What drives a person to make meaning of his/her life?

As Guy Kawasaki explains in his book *The Art of the Start* making meaning for the greater good means to pursue causes that:

- Make the world a better place
- Increase the quality of life
- Right, a terrible wrong
- Prevent the end of something good

People of substance have a passion to make meaning for the benefit of the greater good and that is a clear first pointer to becoming one.

The person who is responsible has sound judgment, he has immense empathy and a solid life with core values is the one who can give meaning to his/her life. People of substance are the ones who take responsibility, they put themselves at the core of the action and completely accept whatever the conclusion that decision may bring. Responsible, wholehearted and committed engagement in your world points to a second element of becoming a person of substance.

Active participation requires courage and people of substance have it in bucket loads. While the timid soul is safe from failure, they will never taste victory either. So people of substance take risks. They try and they fail, but they never grow weary of trying.

There is this story of two little mice who fell into a bucket of cream. The first mouse quit immediately and drowned. The second one didn't quit. He struggled hard and eventually was able to churn that cream into butter and dragged itself out. The second mouse represents the person of substance.

A person of substance leads a solid life with core values whatever the situation -- for example, truth, duty, and honour was that of Lord Ram. These are the values which help a person come out from the trickiest of situations and makes a person reliable for others. He/she is someone who can be relied upon to come to help people in need. Be that person, be that human being.

As Robert Frost said, “Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less travelled and that has made all the difference.”

I feel that the person of substance chooses the less travelled option at each and every divergence. I also believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope in our lives—the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, and the hope of knowing that God is at work in your life.

People of substance are the ones who take responsibility, they put themselves at the core of the action and completely accept whatever the conclusion that decision may bring.

This question reminds me of some people in my life and I want to talk about them first. The first person that came to my mind is my father Raghavendra L. I feel safe around him. If he is there with me, nothing can happen to me. Why is that? My father always stands for what is right. If something is remotely wrong, he is the first one to stand up for the truth. He is the first one to not accept injustice. Seeing this from my childhood, I understood that I should be a good human being by standing up for the truth and never tread along the corrupt path. I realized that no matter what happens, he will be there. If something wrong happens with me, he will be there with a fiery glint in his eyes. If I do something wrong, my father will be there. With the same fiery glint in his eyes, to reprimand me, to correct me and to push me towards the righteous path.

The second person that comes to mind is my best friend Ashok Krishnan. Ashok is someone who is the epitome of a man of action for me. I trust him a lot because he has given me that space to trust him by saying what he means and by doing what he says. He is someone who always keeps his word and never breaks a promise, and I admire him a lot for that. He values people's time as well and is punctual. I cannot remember a case where he turned up late or did not complete a task or broke his promises. He is like the ideal picture of "a good boy" but let me tell you, he's not. He is equally naughty and has his dark side too (like eating my share of pizza). However, I hold him very high in my daily dose of motivation and role-models.

The third person that comes to mind is my friend Anupama Ray. She helps adolescent girls and boys for Gender Equality in Delhi and Greater Noida. She helps her family with finances and participates in local events in Delhi. Recently, her family started forcing her to marry and she was compelled to move out of her home. She shifted to a hostel. She related this incident quite casually as if it was a daily event. She could have easily given up and succumbed to her situation but she didn't. She decided to stay in the same place and fight back. I totally love that dedication. She is the best example of sheer dedication for me. She is my role model. I even dream of being like her.

When I think of these three people, I try to understand why it is that I think of them as people of substance. I realize that a person of substance is:

- Not someone who is always right and strong but someone who does get afraid but always tries to go ahead in spite of that, and shows courage to stand up for what is right –someone like my father
- Not someone who always completes work on time or is confident and honest but someone who never gives an excuse -- like Ashok
- Not someone who is brave and firm but someone who is vulnerable and afraid and still doesn't give up -- like Anupama

It can be anybody with all the good qualities, the right behaviour and deeds but how they make people around them feel and how they take people along with them in their journey by doing simple things is what makes them people of substance. We think they are the most influential, powerful people but I believe they are just simple people with powerful habits. The people who make things happen.

It can be anybody with all the good qualities, the right behaviour and deeds but how they make people around them feel and how they take people along with them in their journey by doing simple things is what makes them people of substance.

A person of substance is someone who fights against unfairness of this world rather than being beholden to society. There is nothing in the world that can make a person, the person of substance rather than his/her own will. It's the person himself who decides to fight against the problems he sees and wants to find the solution to his own problems and not wait for someone else to help or leave it on time to heal.

A person of substance is someone who fights against unfairness of this world rather than being beholden to society.

A human being is selfish by nature. He/she is the uppermost priority for himself/herself and takes decisions accordingly in order to make sure that what he/she is doing is not causing any loss to self. But when we talk about a person of substance, he won't think about his personal benefit but he will make sure that his decisions are not harming the nation or community in any way. He will make sure his policies are not harmful and will try to see that they always benefit society.

Being a substantial person is nothing extraordinary but requires an extraordinary vision. He/she notices the same things as any other human -- the scenarios occurring around him/her, the decisions that are being made, the disharmony, the destructions etc. He/she will just be a step ahead as compared to other people who are just spectators. He/she will analyse the problem, take it upon himself/herself and think about it. His/her first thought will always be: what if this certain thing would have happened to me? How would I have coped with it? And how can I prevent it further because it is damaging me and society?

Questions are the first step to finding solutions. And only a substantial mind will question itself. Thus, where there will be questions, we tend to solve them. A substantial mind will answer these questions and apply them to the problems he/she sees around. Because being substantial is not a trait that people can acquire, it is a mind-set. But nothing comes easy. There are always some strings attached, some conditions attached to anything we want to achieve. A substantial person is an epitome of dedication and generosity. He/she is a person with the least possible amount of selfishness.

He/she knows how to distinguish between personal interest and society. He works honestly and dedicatedly for society making his/her decisions beneficial for everyone. For him/her nothing comes above humanity. He/she works for humanity, for a noble cause, to uplift the lives around him/her, and to cope up with the problems of his/her community. A substantial person is the one loaded with skills, values, integrity, ethics and he/she does not only use all these resources for his/her own development but influences others in all the possible ways he/she can. He/she respected by everyone irrespective of what he/she does for a living or how much he/she earns.

He/she adds value to the nation. And every substantial mind would relate to this quote by Sir Albert Einstein: "Try not to become a person of success but rather try to become a person of value". Because they know why values are important, why illuminating the surroundings are important, and why it is necessary to use your skills to enhance the development of our nation.

The 21st century is about looking in the mirror and taking a selfie. One's Facebook friends and Instagram followers validate one's cool quotient. There is an increasing sense of selfishness, loss in individual personalities, and a continuous chase for virtual stardom. These are the times when a man of morals is looked down upon, while a cut-throat competitor is at the center of success.

We do not need to win every battle, however, winning the right ones should always be the aim.

How then does one become a person of substance? It all begins with three simple questions put together like a continuous chant in our consciousness -- Who am I? What do I want? Why do I want it?

Who am I?

I am "me". I was born in a world and not for the world. Why do I need to continuously live for someone else like someone else? The basic problem is that we have forgotten to speak to ourselves. We live in a society where other people take decisions for us, maybe not literally but they influence our mindset. We have become dependent, and, therefore, incapable of doing what we like. We are scared. We are mighty scared; scared of being a loser.

What do I want?

To realize one is a loser, is one third of the battle won. When a sense of failure fades, a sense of winning heightens. Many philosophers have spoken about how a shameless man is most dangerous to this world. Here "dangerous" is not a negative term. In fact, it emphasizes that while society wants you to be someone else, you must have confidence in who you are, and what you want. And you must want something. Sit down with a pen and paper if you might, take a laptop or use your smartphone, and ask yourself... what do I want and shamelessly want it. Set your goals, it is important.

Why do I want it?

We want many things: From a fancy car to a geeky Harry Potter t-shirt, from a raspberry soda to a chocolate fudge ice cream; from becoming an actor to wanting to become an IIT pass out engineer who is making a difference in this big-big world. Do not confuse yourself. Wanting comes naturally. Desires cultivate in human beings like grass weeds. But to streamline what is important is essential. You must know what is it that you want to make your goal for life. They may change or evolve with time, but they need to define who you are.

Once you ask yourself these three imperative questions, know that this is not it. It is time to begin looking for answers. These answers are all around you, what you need to do is start your search for it.

Explore the World: Go out, meet people, have real conversations. Talk more, listen more. Know that your opinions matter, but so does someone else's. While discussions are important, debates can be softened. We do not need to win every battle, however, winning the right ones should always be the aim.

Grow Fruitful Relationships: Not how many but how many that are honest, should be your criteria for a relationship. If you must pretend, then probably you need to find new people. People should value you for who you are. Self-love is mandatory. If people you love are the people who are pulling you down in life, then your choice of company needs to be evaluated. Our elders have been right all along, your company defines who you are and who you become.

Live by your Morals: We all have our own sense of right and wrong. There is nothing to be ashamed of. Always remember that your instinct guides your morals and your morals make you take wise decisions. Be your own version of crazy, one who respects the world he/she has created for himself/herself.

Help Others: Every day there are battles being fought on a personal front. There are days when others find it more difficult; be a bigger person and know when to lend a hand. The joy of giving is insurmountable.

Be Consistent: Once you have found your way through all this, know that consistency is what will in the end decide your substance. One day's king is not a king. He is just a passage of time. A real king is one who knows how to continue the reign he has created for himself.

In a world where we are continuously becoming someone else, a man of substance is not a myth. However, it is a lost concept waiting to be revived.

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People are very often defined by the choices they make. These choices have consequences. However, what separates ordinary people from people of substance is the impact of their choices. People through their chosen profession, passion or personal intellect may stand out and be recognized as people of substance. There isn't and can never be a formula or algorithm for this.

People are very often defined by the choices they make. These choices have consequences.

History is testament to stories of people who through their own way (large and small) have contributed to our world and have as a result stood out from the ordinary. Mahatma Gandhi through his sheer belief in his principles and values changed the history of not just his country but that of the world, and inspired generations around the world to stand up against injustice, irrespective of the outcome. Malala Yousafzai after surviving a shot to the head simply picking up herself and went back to school, and this sent a message to millions around the world. Nelson Mandela, inspired by India's non-violence movement led the people's movement in South Africa and won -- today he is a symbol of victory of truth. The thousands of nameless and faceless protestors in the US who responded to Martin Luther King Jr.'s call and did not relent till they realized their -- and his -- dreams are an inspiration to many.

These and many more stories which have a common thread. People who stood up for what they felt was right, people who stood firm in the face of atrocities, and people who did not relent till they achieved their goal. These individuals who persisted for their cause through the ups and downs represent people of substance.

This being said, it is not always necessary to be a national revolutionary or a social reformer to show your character. People in their daily lives experience tremendous challenges which they overcome, literally on a day to day basis. A single mother who single-handedly raises her children while balancing her professional life is one example. A person in power who resists the temptation of earning a few extra bucks and instead chooses to do what is right. Common citizens who in times of difficulties stand up for their fellow citizens by putting others' interests over their own. Army men who guard our borders day and night, fighting for a larger cause, putting their own lives at stake.

People who value their integrity at all costs, people who display courage and conviction in all their decisions, people who stand up for what is right, people who inspire others --these individuals and many more through their own way are people of substance.

We see examples of such people almost regularly in our daily lives, but very often end up overlooking them. Having substance does not always come from grand standing or national/international prominence. Such personalities very often go about their own lives in an unassuming manner, very often going unnoticed. However, along with tall leaders of the world these heroes too are people of substance.

“A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem.”

What is a person of substance? I am talking about a person who influences others in positive ways. A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character. A person of substance wants to grow and improve himself/herself. He/she does not attempt to be something he/she is not. The opposite would be a shallow person. By shallow, though, I mean a person who focuses on trivial things, too concerned about being flashy. A shallow person devotes time and energy to showing off. Often, a shallow person wants to be the center of attention. In other words, there is no substance, or depth, to his/her life. A shallow person is like a colorful balloon—he or she looks pretty on the outside but is all air on the inside. Shallow people give in to laziness, make excuses, and play the victim. A person without substance is just loud, but has no melody.

A person of substance is an individual who has depth, inner character. A person of substance wants to grow and improve himself/herself.

Being a person of substance is showing consideration for others, first and foremost! It doesn't mean faking it to get what one wants. It means understanding others' shortcomings and helping where ever possible. It means putting yourself last on occasion for a friend, partner, co-worker or even someone you don't know. How hard is it to make one extra pie for someone who needs their day brightened? Substance means that you are one that someone can count on to support and build them up, not tear down to make them look smaller than you, to others. It means showing empathy toward grieving people, without judgment or ridicule. It means being compassionate and caring. It means being human, in all of its wonderfulness.

What can we do to become a person of substance?

- Live by moral standards and values: These qualities build needed boundaries into your life, and serve like guard rails on a highway. High moral standards and values prevent you from veering off course, and from hurting others and yourself
- Set goals continuously: People of substance have goals such as additional schooling, wise money management, keeping up with technology, purchasing a home, getting into shape, improving parenting skills, traveling and a thousand other goals. When you have goals you give direction to your life. Instead of you settling for the “same old” your life begins to take off
- Be a lifelong learner: I am not talking about spending your whole life in a classroom. But I do believe we should view our entire life as an education—we should be ever-learning, every moment of time, everywhere, and in all circumstances. Our world is changing, so we must be constant learners just to keep up.
- Live a consistent life: One dictionary definition of substance is “a particular kind of matter with uniform properties.” Are you a person with uniform properties? Do you live as the same person, no matter who you're with, or what you're doing? Can people depend on you? Do you keep your promises?
- Build effective relationships with people: Every person need not be your best friend, chum, pal, or your deepest confidante. But every relationship you have should be built upon the foundations of love, respect, trust, and honour. When you have effective relationships with others you are “there” for people when they need you. You give to others more than you desire to receive from others.

Please, be real. Be a real friend. Be a real lover of people. Be a real lover of yourself, which shows in you compassion and consideration for others. But be so, in a balanced way.

A common understanding of the term “substance” is usually what something is made of or its vital component. Similarly, in my opinion when we say a person of substance we point towards his/her nature, behaviour and approach towards things.

What makes a person of substance is his/her will and strong intentions to abide by a positive attitude and a set of principles and morals that he/she follows. The net result of these principles should be peace. I feel that there cannot be one single definition or explanation of a person of substance as this is based on everyone’s perspective is different. I feel that anyone who believes in something positive and against all odds works towards it, is empathetic to sensitive situations and always understands the other person’s situation, adjusts and adapts to something new yet keeping his/her own principals in check is a person of substance. He/she is also tolerant to the practices of other cultures unless they cause harm to society. He/she has balance and control over himself/herself in this rapidly changing society.

In today’s world I feel that it is very important to understand the change that is taking place and accordingly adjust to it. We are witnessing a cross culture/community/race/nationality interactions in this globalizing world which was not the case earlier. It is important to accept new thoughts and traditions that float around us with an open mind, and at the same time not forget our roots. This becomes especially important in the present times when world peace is hanging by a string. People are fighting against each other in the name of their caste, religion, nationality, etc.

To conclude, for me a person of substance is someone who accepts the change happening around him/her for the good, does not forget his/her roots, is fair and unbiased in any situation, and treats everyone be it a man, a woman, a transgender, his superior or junior with equal respect and dignity. He/she does not boast rather uses his success that he/she’s experienced with his/her job to help the people around him/her. A person who lacks substance is someone very empty and shallow; who would expect all the kindness from the world but would not want to give any in return and would rather cause problems.

I strongly feel that this world needs more people of substance to make it a better place to live in, and each of us must incorporate these essential principles in our lives to be better human beings. Man is a social animal and cannot stay on his/her own. Hence, we need to function in a way where a cycle of care, respect and dignity is created amongst all of us as we are a community together as a whole.

What makes a person of substance is his/her will and strong intentions to abide by a positive attitude and a set of principles and morals that he/she follows.

A person who understands the true value and virtue of life would make him a person of substance. But it is not an easy road. To be a person of substance he/she has to start from scratch. He/she should know how to take responsibility and fulfill their duty and be at the center of action, and accept the consequences of their decision. He/she might face a lot of hurdles and difficulties but he/she should learn how to accept both success and failure. He/she should have the courage of accepting mistakes and the capability of correcting them. He/she should learn to treat both success and failures with equal measure. Overcoming failures, pursuing the goal and still working towards it no matter how many hurdles you may face makes you a person of substance. A person of substance would have enormous depth within him/her and will always introspect, improvise and work on himself, and also act as a mentor to guide others when needed. A person having substance will bring depth in his/her life.

A person who understands the true value and virtue of life would make him a person of substance.

A person of substance doesn't think about success, future and fame. He/she has a long term plan of action accompanied with short term goals which will include family, charity, and travelling etc. bringing more meaning to life. He/she is a constant learner and tries to apply his/her knowledge and wisdom on every aspect of life. He/she will always keep faith, which helps in creating positive vibes that keeps the person going.

A person of substance would have the wisdom to know where to focus and how to overlook on certain areas of life which is unattainable. He/she knows and understands themselves, identifies his/her strength and uses it to achieve success. He/she doesn't obsess about themselves or anything in particular. He/she knows how to strike a balance, respect it and give meaning to it. A person of substance would always prefer to be a participant rather than a spectator. He/she believes that success and failures go hand in hand. A person of substance would never believe in false confidence or flashiness. He/she would also never show-off. A person of substance would also accept challenges and would prefer the less travelled road. He/she would trust his/her instincts and can make a difference no matter how small it may be. He/she would never compare but evaluate. He/she would have lived a life full of richness, experiences and doubts as well. He/she accepts all the aspects of life and knows that after every hurricane there follows a rainbow. His/her life doesn't only revolve around himself/herself; he/she knows that there is more to life than making oneself happy. A person of substance believes in the greater good and wants to improve the quality of life for everyone around him/her. He/she doesn't believe in momentary pleasure and materialistic goods. His/her idea of happiness is the one which cannot be bought with money. He/she also believes in and has a passion for doing something for the people around him and even for the world. A person of substance would also have the power to attract others towards him/her and has the ability to teach others on how to live for a cause. And most importantly he/she would gain a lot of wisdom through his experiences which would eventually make him a man/woman of substance.

Hence, to become person of substance we have to remember that everything happens for a reason, and what matters is how we handle them. Also we should be grateful for what we have and always feel confident about what we can do.

“A man is but the product of his thoughts what he thinks, he becomes.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

We human beings, as we stand today, are manifestations of unparalleled successful evolutions across millions of years. Time has been witness of slow but solid steps. This would have been impossible without uncommon and unseen qualities among other animals, like learning with errors, curiosity and steady attempts to sort them. We have inter-wired complex network of billions of neurons with causal and collaborative learning which would take years even for best of deep learning algorithms to emulate.

We human beings, as we stand today, are manifestations of unparalleled successful evolutions across millions of years.

We strived to evolve and amend our actions based on feedback. As time progressed, we learnt the importance of social-cohesion and designed concepts of morals and ethics. These set of obligations and push for a better tomorrow, shaped animals of substance into human beings.

There are ifs and buts with aforementioned processes and adulterations, but I believe one which lands out of place will be wiped by iron-strength of time. Consistency, values, responsibility and a life with a goal will be revered as elements of substance irrespective of time and boundaries.

There is the other side of evolution: In this chaotic and fast moving world where, we are achieving goals by inhuman nature. It's no more surprising when people walk the streets with eyes gazing on a screen, continuously chatting on a mobile phone while our for dinner or shooting a video while an incident is taking place instead of helping but it's reality! The qualities humans are naturally capable of fulfilling which should be taken as an advantage are not being utilized. These are rather being thrown off into the ignorance bin and this is not how we should be.

To understand this better, let's take an example of this particular instance, where an old man falls on a moving elevator and needs immediate help. A few people just jump over him and continue their work, a few become spectators, while a few gather to help, but one human takes up the charge with his quick response to stop the elevator, lift up the old man and comfort him. We definitely don't want the world of ignorance. Spectator is a job which can be very well done by a machine, especially when equipped with all those sophisticated tools. Trying to help is never enough, so what's left is that heroic human who saved the old man's life. Nope, he wasn't some superhero with extra powers but a person of substance!

A person of substance actively participates in his world and isn't a mere spectator. He/she always works towards the holistic development of society and self, has a clear and broad vision and is not easily moved by behaviour or thoughts of others and maintains his/her stand. While doing so he/she takes into consideration others' perspective as well. People with these traits are ready to help others in need, irrespective of time and the world idolizes them as persons of substance.

To end with I would like to quote a saying which my father always encouraged me to follow -
“*Khuch janna hai toh khudko Jano;
Khuch karna hai toh seva karo*”.
“If you want to know something, know yourself;
If you want to do something, help”.

In simple terms to define a person of substance, I feel that any person who possesses the qualities of courage, passion, interest, participation, and also the ability to bring a change can be called a person of substance. The courage to think out of the box, the interest to pursue what others are not concerned about, to participate in finding a solution is what defines him/her.

A person of substance always puts his/her thoughts, ideas and emotions in choosing between the right or wrong without fearing its outcome. He/she keeps trying until he/she achieves his/her goal. He/she is willing to adapt to changes and mold himself/herself as per the situations. To describe a person of substance through Robert Frost:

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

So a person who is willing to take the road or methods that are not used by everyone is a person of substance.

Decision making and leadership are other traits that a person of substance would have along with being true and committed to every decision that he/she makes and every step he/she takes through his/her actions. Morality is a major concern to such people as he/she would believe Mahatma Gandhi's notion strongly that “morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality”. A person of substances realizes that “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in a moment of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy” as said by Martin Luther King. So, he/she is ready to take up challenges, face controversies and is yet determined to bring a change for the better.

Though being strong and challenging, a person of substance tends to have a sensitivity and respect for his/her family, nature, culture and values. He/she would lead others to follow their dreams and to put their strengths and abilities to the maximum use for their benefit as well as that of society. Personal gain is generally the motive of every human being but a person of substance never strives for his/her personal gain alone. He/she is also concerned about the benefits to the society at large. Values and virtues are of great importance to such a person. He/she wishes to educate himself/herself and others and for him. Education does not just limit itself to the formal education. He/she follows and teaches the importance of tmoral education and value education which are important aspects in bringing a change for the better.

Hence, a person of substance is one who cannot be judged by his/her looks, he/she is more than what meets the eye. He/she is defined by the tough battles he/she fights each day to bring a change for himself/herself, his/her nation, family, society, nature and everything thing that surrounds him. He/she is defined by his/her courage to face all those battles no matter how difficult. His/her life may not be glorious and he/she might not have any medals to flaunt about, but his/her heart is filled with love and compassion for the people and society. He/she values love, friendship, honesty and trust. He/she is survivor despite all odds in his/her life because he/she is strong through and through.

I feel that any person who possesses the qualities of courage, passion, interest, participation, and also the ability to bring a change can be called a person of substance.

*A wealthy man can be poor
A poor man can be the richest
An abundant man can be the miser
A deficient man can be the donor
Only if, we count
Substance over wealth
And not wealth over substance*

According to me, a person of worth is far greater than a person of wealth for he/she has the power to drive millions towards wealth without a penny in his/her pocket. Mahatma Gandhi, a simple *dhoti*-clad man with empty pockets yet an exemplary vision, single handedly drove India out of the shackles of colonialism and led the country towards a path of prosperity. Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic nun, was awarded a Nobel Peace prize for her selfless and charitable work. A person of substance is an internally and eternally wealthy individual, within whom resides a treasure of knowledge, values and virtues, worth more than anything money can buy.

The foundation of an individual is set upon his/her values, morals and beliefs. An honest defeat is more valuable than a manipulated victory. A race lost while giving a hand of help is more valuable than a race won in ignorance of others. The magnitude of failures is more valuable than the magnanimity of success. The wealth invested in the service of others is more valuable than that employed in leisure and pleasure. The values of integrity, compassion, empathy and perseverance define a person of substance. Adding to this, our scriptures have given knowledge a stature of highest wealth, protected from perils of theft, perishability and expenditure. A person with a treasure of knowledge holds the present in his/her hands and future in his/her eyes. As it is rightly said, only a lit up candle can lighten up others of the lot. A knowledgeable person can not only provide a direction to his/her life but also enlightens the path of others. A soldier, driven by the love of his country, does not hesitate in risking his life in the hands of an enemy. An individual with purpose is steered by passion and held by courage. The ability to take risks defines his/her decisions and actions.

History celebrates the glory of such people who have conquered the world with the virtues of consistency, persistence and determination. The late Nelson Mandela, who faced a struggle of twenty seven years before becoming the President of South Africa, is one of the most respected and revered leaders of the world. Not giving up on the face of defeat is a sign of success. "Even if you lose everything, if you have confidence, then you can recreate everything again and that is success," H.H. Sri Sri Ravishankar. Confidence is the first gear in the drive of life. It is the fuel required at every break point which marks an intrinsic quality that can pull the person out of shallow failures and restart afresh.

In my opinion, a life of service is a life of substance. Mankind enjoys the highest hierarchy of evolution pyramid. However, superior evolved are those who have found a greater purpose to strive for. Others simply spend and expend on survival, comfort and luxury. Catering to the needs of self and immediate ones falls under the purview of our inherent and inborn roles and responsibilities. We outperform when we go beyond and extend a hand of service towards society at large. It is then that we add value to the world we had initially inherited and become a person of substance. Thus, a life of substance would entail a substantial value addition that makes the world a little more beautiful for the posterity to take forward, sustain and grow. People are mortals, people become immortals; their deeds make all the difference!

According to me, a person of worth is far greater than a person of wealth for he/she has the power to drive millions towards wealth without a penny in his/her pocket.

A person of substance literally means a wealthy person, who possesses great amounts of money. But this is a narrow and inappropriate definition. In the true sense, a person who has a lot of money but no morals is completely worthless. As Mahatma Gandhi said: "Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality."

A person of substance is one who possesses some inner qualities, who is able to put others before him/her, who is selfless and has the courage to do things that creates a greater impact; a person who is never reluctant to accept challenges and treats them as an opportunity to learn and grow. He/she performs his/her tasks with utmost dedication without caring about the results and is always ready to accept both failure and success. He/she treats failure as a lesson rather than as a source of disappointment and sadness. He/she learns from his/her failures and introspects to do better in the future. He/she never gives excuses for mistakes and always takes responsibility for them. He/she focuses on doing things with a greater aim of development of the society. He/she tries to find solutions to problems rather than being a part of those problems.

He/she not only care about humans but all other living beings on the planet. He/she believes in sustainable development and judiciously uses all the things that nature provides. He/she is always thankful to everyone and believes that each person he meets has something to teach him/her. He/she never stops learning throughout his/her life.

His/she encourages and motivates others to do better things. He/she always follows his/her heart and is truthful to himself/herself. He/she puts in consistent effort to achieve his/her goals. He/she doesn't mask himself to please others. He/she believes in himself/herself and follows the words of Frank Outlaw:

"Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."

A person of substance is like our idols Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther, who did selfless service to humanity and became the change drivers of society. They never thought about themselves and stood against injustice.

Such a person has to face a lot of criticism but he/she ignores it all and continues fighting for what is right. He/she will never support the wrong cause just for the sake of small gains. He/she never do things to get fame and even if he/she achieves something he'll never be egoistic. He/she always gives his/her best to every task at hand.

He/she believes in the words of former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam: "If you fail, never give up because F.A.I.L. means 'First Attempt in Learning' End is not the end, if fact E.N.D. means 'Effort Never Dies' If you get No as an answer, remember N.O. means 'Next Opportunity'."

A person of substance is one who possesses some inner qualities, who is able to put others before him/her, who is selfless and has the courage to do things that creates a greater impact; a person who is never reluctant to accept challenges and treats them as an opportunity to learn and grow.

“A man does what he must in spite of personal consequences in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures – and that is the basis of all human morality.”
- Winston Churchill

A person of substance has qualities within himself or herself which contribute towards building communities and nations, with concern for equity, the environment etc. Such a person would think global and act local. He/she is a person who has character, depth of thought, and functional, non-toxic relationships.

A person of substance can appreciate both external and internal beauty, he/she is someone with the courage to live by his/her values. There will of course be temptations, like the opportunity to take a bribe, but a person of substance would do the work with professionalism and integrity. He/she would have thoughts that are not narrow like a horse's blinders but like a pebble thrown in a pond that creates ripples. Such thoughts would be based on accurate knowledge and not hearsay, accompanied with a mind open to other ideas as well. Such a person, when faced with a problem, would analyse it, critically and creatively think about it to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions.

A person of substance can appreciate both external and internal beauty, he/she is someone with the courage to live by his/her values.

Even the casual relationships of such a person wouldn't be ephemeral. A person of substance tries to walk in the other's shoes for a few miles, to understand what he thinks and why. He/she would also be willing to sacrifice what is important to him/her for a cause he/she truly believes in.

This could result in such a person being viewed as somewhat different from others. His/her thoughts and opinions about religion, for example, would be rather unconventional. Most people fear God as some entity who would punish them for doing wrong. A person of substance, on the other hand, would have a more open and personal, almost Sufi relationship with God. One which is based on his/her readings and interpretations of the Holy Scriptures as well as a certain amount of rationalism and modernity.

Such a person would also have good, strong relations with others in the family and extended community. His/her ideas would be out of the box, innovative and would go a long way in resolving issues. A brave man stands up for himself but a man of substance would stand up for others as well. The contribution of a person of substance to society would be long remembered, whether it's for a social cause like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, or for overall human development, such as Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's scientific achievements.

Lastly, a person of substance would ensure that the progress he/she started in this world would not leave with him/her. He/she would create a second generation of leadership so to carry on the good work on long after he/she has passed on.

India today is facing many concerns, be it terrorism and insurgency, religious persecution of minorities, poor development indices and unresponsive public systems like health and education. Most of these issues would require a fundamental change in our mind sets along with grass roots action that challenges established power structures. But isn't eternal vigilance the price of democracy? And for this we would need to be people of substance ourselves.

“A man who stands for nothing will fall for anything.”
- Malcolm X

“Try not to become a person of success but rather try to become a person of value”.

- Albert Einstein

The aforesaid lines aptly sum up the mindset sought after by individuals looking to manipulate their lifestyle in a meaningful way for society at large. A person of substance, isn't necessarily a trait but a mindset itself, wherein the person looks beyond the purview of himself/herself and opens his eyes to the world, and tries (may fail) to change the world in a positive way.

A person of substance is defined by his/her perseverance to continue even though the odds may seem stacked against him/her, for his/her will to change the world making it a better place to live in, is far more dominant than any fear of failure. In the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The man in the arena may fail, but he failed daring gently, he differs himself from those cold souls, who shall never know victory or defeat.”

A person of substance watches the world like any other human being may do, he/she notices the same problems, the same shortcomings, the same lacunas and the same suffering. The same scenario affects him/her as well, the worsening situation is not unknown to him/her. The difference is that instead of merely complaining he/she chooses to act in whatever small or large capacity that he can. Instead of only being sympathetic, he/she shows empathy towards the people facing the problem; he/she isn't merely a listener but he/she tries to inspire a change in the mind and hearts of the people, one person at a time. Instead of being a failure and accepting it, he/she consistently tries to ratify the mistake he/she made the last time. He/she is consistent with his commitments, be it work or a promise to someone (or himself/herself), words mean a lot to him/her than just mere syllables.

It is an accepted fact that humans by their very nature tend to be selfish, anything coming their way, favouring them or beneficial to them isn't denied easily; people tend to think of themselves first than about others.

Subconsciously every decision we take is a product of a completely random Risk-Benefit analysis that our mind does for us, even without our knowledge. A person of substance would do the same, but his/her analysis would be affected by the commitments that he/she has towards selflessness for a greater cause, that cause can be anything, the world at large, family, a philosophy, an ideology, whatever it be, it brings a depth to the character of the person, giving him a cause to sacrifice things for, for which he tends to think beyond his personal gains and losses, in the process he/she becomes a person of substance.

Finally, in the words of Professor Dumbledore as he explains to Harry, courage in the face of the greatest adversaries, acting selflessly towards a greater cause, sacrificing things for peace, lifting ourselves over and above the veils of interest, is what defines us as a human being. At last, a person of substance can clearly recognize the difference between his/her personal interest and how that may negatively affect the world at large, and chooses to abandon his/her personal gain for the greater good, as was exemplified by Professor Dumbledore, when he sacrificed himself for the greater good of humanity sensing that there was no other way the world could be saved -- that's what a person of substance would relate with.

A person of substance is defined by his/her perseverance to continue even though the odds may seem stacked against him/her, for his/her will to change the world making it a better place to live in, is far more dominant than any fear of failure.

Divergent questions always manage to leave me stumped. If you ask any given person to describe “what makes a person of substance?” he/she will readily supply you with a string of adjectives, a list of character traits and qualities. However, for some reason, I find it hard to articulate a paragraph or even a few words as a manifestation of my thoughts on the topic because I vehemently believe that it is a culmination of several penchants and habits which contributes in the making of an ideal person.

There is no single factor or a unidimensional change which makes a person of substance. Perhaps the reason I find it so arduous a task to list one quality or character trait is that my upbringing, and by extension, my experiences have been so diverse that I find it difficult to pinpoint certain aspects which I admire in people around me, and that is why I believe in my stance so ardently.

The answer? It is a fair tie between discipline because I have seen my father religiously note down expenses as trivial as bus fares at the end of each day, and eagerness to learn because I have seen my mother kick start her career by distributing Ayurvedic products as a part of a multi-level marketing company at the age when most people choose to sit back in leisure. It is a deadlock between dedication because I have seen my cousin crack the final level of the prestigious Chartered Accountancy exam after thirteen attempts, and passion because I have seen teachers and professors stay back late until after class hours to help me overcome my fear of not living up to everyone’s expectations for a competition on the following day. It is a draw between courage because I have seen acquaintances on my Facebook friend list come out of the closet in front of the world, (despite the fact that they had a traumatic childhood), and believing in the greater good because I have seen my grandmother live a very simple life until the age of fifty, only to be lucky enough to visit more than fifteen countries in the next twenty five years of her life.

I may not have profound experiences in my life to draw from in order to have an opinion on what makes a person of substance but I arrived at my own epiphany – a realization that our personalities as humans are nothing but an accumulation of what we’ve been exposed to over the years. I thus, consider “what makes a person of substance” is a sum of all the different places they’ve lived in, the people they’ve met and the dreams they’ve dreamt. It is curiosity which makes a person of substance. It is his/her courage to ask questions and not just cease there.

It is his/her undying resolution to go ahead and discover all answers. But in totality, it is his/her objectivity to accept those answers, even if she/he has his/her own beliefs, which makes a person of substance.

Though this may seem slightly chaotic, the truth is that I cannot see “substance” as an unchanging factor. It is essentially an oscillating set of governing factors deeply rooted in an individual’s multifarious interests and passions, not confined by constraints of space and time, but a sustainable balance in his/her life which is attributed to his/her twin abilities to: ‘Enjoy learning’ and ‘Learn while enjoying’.

So, in conclusion, what makes a person of substance? It is a harmonious combination of the myriad musical notes of curiosity, drive and the exuberance of youth, which together form a beautiful symphony.

It is indeed an amalgamation of discipline, dedication and determination. Perhaps the most accurate description of a person of substance is ensconced in the lyrics of a song by my favourite band “High Hopes” by Pink Floyd:

“Encumbered forever by desire and ambition,
There’s a hunger still unsatisfied.”

There is no single factor or a unidimensional change which makes a person of substance.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King

When I think of the term “person of substance”, this saying by Martin Luther King always comes to my mind. Before thinking about what makes a person of substance, I’d like to think about who is a person of substance in the first place. In our daily lives we come across a lot of people all of which have different personalities and ways of life of their own. Then, there are a few, we always respect and admire, it’s their inner integrity that inspires us. We meet such people, we read about them and we idolize them. They are persons of substance. They exhibit unusual depths of character, perhaps great loyalty, kindness and generosity. We always look up to such people of worth.

In the functioning of today’s world finding hollow people isn’t a tough task. They are double faced. They carry an outer façade and an inner self that they don’t want to face. They lack honesty, honesty to others and to themselves. When one associates with them a person always has distrust -- does he mean it, is it the truth, should I believe him -- arising continuously. And even if you don’t feel it at that moment you will experience the outcome later. Whereas, while being with persons of substance, their honesty and reality makes us believe them whole- heartedly. You may also find hollow people being extremely affected with their outer appearance while the real ones believe and stand by their character and personality. The real worth of a person comes from his heart, his priorities in life, his choices and his actions to finish it. A man of his word is a worthy person.

I believe that our choices determine whether we are people of substance. When we make a choice or a decision, we weigh both sides, the advantages and disadvantages, our benefits and losses, how it affects us, how it affects people close to us, our relationships, and how each decision will land on our conscience. While we analyze all of this our true self and our true nature comes to play.

I believe that our choices determine whether we are people of substance.

A person of substance embraces his individuality and physical appearance. He understands that physical appearance has nothing to do with one’s true self and well being. He uses his voice to differentiate right from wrong and to implement decisions for the greater good. He is focused towards his goal and works towards accomplishing it. He lives by his principles and morals. His commitment to his work and to the people in in his life makes him such a person. I don’t mean to imply that he is perfect or never makes any mistakes. He does, but he accepts responsibility for it rather than playing the blame game and trying to escape. His heart is filled with courage to work towards the greater good. He values relationships, he values feelings, respects the people who stand by him in difficult times and honours them. His whole- hearted bonds with people is commendable.

While the people with a façade always choose what is urgent over what is important. They prioritize money, a life of safe leisure, timidity, deceit and expediency. They only think of what’s best for them and are absolutely self absorbed. They avoid any responsibility. The value of feelings, relations and people in their life are nil. They never mean what they say and never say what they mean. It’s always lip service.

In a nutshell, a life where you’re considered trustworthy and credible, where you can look at yourself and not feel ashamed of your actions is what we all yearn for. It is our choices that make us a person of substance.

Our Dream run...

I asked myself this question a hundred times and each time my heart held a different answer. Is it hard work? Persistence? Character? Discipline? Or is it the unrelenting endurance Robert Frost talks about? And each time one answer outweighing the other only leads me to realize that underneath all the answers could only be one fundamental trait.

I vehemently believe it is our dreams that elucidate the purpose of our robust endless race to go on and on in spite of all odds to make a difference. "A person of substance is someone who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem".

The world today races on the responsibilities of earning and caring for the family is weighs people down. But was that the purpose? Human beings walk through life in a zombie-like fashion with no destination in sight. It is our dreams that give us a sense of purpose and gives us substance in our lives.

A person of substance is an inspiration, a well-disciplined representative of hard work with a clear goal ahead. He/she makes people believe that all the change in this universe is possible when you become a person of substance, slowly yet steadily through tireless efforts to run for your dream.

It is this person that President Teddy Roosevelt spoke of in his address titled "The Man in the Arena" where he said: "The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

A person of substance is an inspiration, a well-disciplined representative of hard work with a clear goal ahead.

Being a 21 year old young girl from an agricultural background, I look at my country, India, with a feeling of responsibility. It is this strength for active participation to find solutions to make the world a better place to live in, increase the quality of life, to right a terrible wrong and to prevent the end of something good that gives me purpose to run the dream run.

A person of substance does not spend his life by just sitting back and spending his time complaining; instead he lives life by doing what he believes is good and could make a positive difference that he wants to see and for people to cherish and live in. He is someone who turns even feeling like misery, bitterness; blame etc. into positive attitudes, like helpfulness, gentleness, empathy or anything constructive in nature! A person of Substance is someone who observes things, events, situations, possibilities and does what he can to improve things. He does not sit around and just keep passing comments but tries to make things better by doing something.

There might be several qualities of people of substance and they could even differ from one to another but a few characteristics in common are that they are honest with themselves, have integrity, can understand various aspects of a situation, and the best ways to resolve issues. They are brave and take risks for the better good, they keep on trying without giving much attention to failures and are committed towards their mission to make the world a better place. They work to preserve Mother Nature and animal life. They are courageous and take responsibility for their actions; they never go behind instead they go beyond and keep their word.

Our world is full of problems, pain, suffering, and now the issue of pollution and global warming too is a major cause of concern for humanity, the Earth and its ecosystems. A person of substance is the one who tries to find the solution to solve the problems and ease suffering in regard to social and cultural issues, environmental issues, pollution, and political problems and so on. They don't look for acceptance or validity of their view by others, they respect differences of opinions. Neither do they require a mass following because they believe whatever they are doing is for the better good and eventually people will understand their view and vision and their goodwill and start following them.

In reality there are very few people of substance and in their comparison there are humongous amount of problems and issues, and it is also true that people of substance suffer lots of hardship and failures and rejections but to them all these are nothing in comparison to the problems that the world and humanity is facing, and they keep on trying to work for the good of the world. They don't care about what others. They work committedly for the greater good.

A person of substance does not spend his life by just sitting back and spending his time complaining; instead he lives life by doing what he believes is good and could make a positive difference that he wants to see and for people to cherish and live in.

“The mind tends to shun all things good for our life and seek all things bad for our life. To attain wisdom, witness the tricks of the mind”

- Ravan

This is a translation of the words spoken by Ravan, after he was shot with an arrow of piousness.

Ravan was and is still referred as the greatest villain, however, in some parts of the world he is worshipped and is revered as a learned scholar and the greatest ruler. A person of substance one could say.

There are plenty of women and men who have proved themselves to be great humans in different circumstances. They all are very different from one another and work very differently but all of them help in making lives easier and creating opportunities for growth. A person of substance is one who realizes that he/she does not have the best but always works to make things better.

“If they can dream- and not make dreams their master;
If they can think- and not make thoughts their aim;”
- Rudyard Kipling, “If”

A person of substance is one who realizes that he/she does not have the best but always works to make things better.

This poem, in my view, defines a person of substance. He/she sees life for what it is -- acknowledges the situation but does not accept it. He/she is passionate and compassionate; a person who embraces change even though he/she is afraid of it; a person who is hardworking but also likes to have fun; a person who wants to grow and also loves themselves; a person who is courageous but not necessarily brave -- because a person of substance is still a human being and not a hero. A person does not have to be brave, kind, smart, hardworking, beautiful, pure, true, unbiased, confident, intelligent, clever, and glorious all at once.

We need to accept that a person of substance will have flaws. We shouldn't encourage any wrong doings but isn't it human to err? Forgiveness is not what he/she asks for but a chance for improvement. Hence, everyone can be a substantial person and in fact everyone is, even with their flaws and inadequacy.

A person just has to be willing to learn and teach. Ravan might not be the greatest character but he did great things and was an incredible learner. He was willing to share his knowledge, even on his death bed, with the person who took his life. Ravan possessed all the great qualities and did all the right things, but only for himself. He was so close to being an actual hero but his selfish desires brought an end to his greatness and his life itself.

The rickshaw driver who brings back a purse full of money or a policeman who works beyond his working hours to safeguard his fellow citizens; a mother who gives her children the right values and morals; the soldiers at the borders; a farmer who does not mind facing loss and abstains from using toxic pesticides or even a boy who runs to help the elderly to climb the stairs are all people of substance more than any number of learned scholars. Hence, I would like to conclude by saying that a person of substance is not necessarily an idealized, or well know, figure but anyone who goes out of his/her way to help others even if it's at the cost of his/her own loss.

If I ask myself with whom I would like to surround myself, I imagine people whom I am going to describe as people of substance. They come with certain expectations and fulfil basic obligations. Naturally, they would expect the same of me—assuming permanent, or rather long-lasting connections, require both parties to match on similar wavelengths—and it is my constant endeavour to maintain and enhance my image in this regard. So who is a person of substance—a person I wish to be around and a person I aspire to be?

He/she would come across as an ideal person, or a person to look up to, which, in today's times, is becoming rare. In any society there are very few people who would carry this image of a person of substance, and the general public would look up to them, or in other words, respect their uniqueness. These people are typically do-gooders, mean no harm to others, do not hold on to trivial aspects of a relationship, value the people they interact with for who they are, respect their time and opinion, and most importantly, keep their word. What usually happens is some people may appear to check all the boxes in this list but may turn out to be someone else altogether. This can happen when a person behaves differently with different people, does not behave consistently with one person, and this individual's erratic behaviour comes to light due to the intermingling social circles.

I am speaking from a very recent experience where I was forced to re-regard a particular individual for whom he/she really is. When I began pondering on the given topic, all I gathered was this individual is not a person of substance. In this case, expectations of typical social behaviour were not met, as it turned out to fluctuate, not only at various instances but even at the same time with different people. This mismatch occurred because the individual's manner of interaction completely changed when his/her needs and priorities began to be placed before everything else and his/her actions were based solely towards that end. Of course, one is not expected to be a good samaritan at all times by placing others' needs before one's own, but the context here is expectation-setting. In this same case, a friend of this individual maturely reacted to the situation by accepting the individual for who they were, and not lashing out, criticizing, or condemning the individual. This is a person of substance. I saw the image of a person shatter, and I learnt how important it is to be consistent in behaviour and to keep your word. To be a person of substance, one should also not engage in actively (visibly) shunning people out—here what is necessary is detachment with just enough amount of involvement. You never know when who would come to your rescue. A person of substance would treat each and every relationship with grace, without judging people on any particular instance.

In the context of international relations, it is very important that the involved stakeholders be true to themselves and the public they serve. Maintaining cordial relations for the benefit of the greater good and not just one party is essential. Very few political leaders are known to be people of substance. The recent exchange between PM Modi and Congress President during and after the no-confidence motion was not in good taste. Steering clear of such behaviour if our leaders act as worthy role models, the nation and its people stand to prosper. Thus, an individual trait can play an active role in shaping the country and its position on the international sphere. A person of substance can go a long way in creating a positive impact.

In any society there are very few people who would carry this image of a person of substance, and the general public would look up to them, or in other words, respect their uniqueness.

“Depth and substance. The two most exquisite qualities. Be it in a poem or a person.”

- Sanober Khan

One dictionary definition of substance is “a particular kind of matter with uniform properties.” A person with character irrespective of situation in life, someone who values the things that have real worth, who strives to live a life that means something and who chooses to participate rather than be a spectator in life in order to be part of the solution as opposed to the problem is a person of substance.

“Substance” means that you are someone that a person can count on to support and build them up, not tear down to make them look smaller than you, to others. It means showing empathy toward grieving people, without judgment or ridicule. It means being compassionate and caring. It means being human in all of its wonderfulness. As children, we were always being told to be a person of moral and were educated to understand what our values are. We are molded into people of substance. Knowing who you really are, your strengths and weaknesses beyond the perceptions of the world and beyond the lure of who society says we should be is important. One of the most compelling and distorted perceptions is that respect comes from status. We tend to focus on what we do, how much we earn, what we look like, what we wear, and what we have. We see it in popular culture played up in magazines, television shows, and movies. Such a constant onslaught perpetuates the perception that respect comes from status. But truth is status doesn’t make a man.

People of substance know that there is no middle/neutral position on anything. They identify with the sentiment that “if you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem”. Now just as wants outnumber means to satisfy them, so too, problems outnumber solutions and real problem solvers in life are few and far between. Good problem solving between competing interests typically requires a person of sound judgment who has immense empathy, complete objectivity and solid life-honed values.

A person of substance never fails when it comes to voicing his/her opinions or standing up for what he/she believes in. He/she says what he/she thinks; expresses what he/she believes in and debates what he/she doesn’t. A person of substance knows from the beginning what he/she wants and works towards achieving it and remains a lion in the park and refuses to surrender to grass even when economy is not conducive.

I believe that striving to be a person of substance builds hope into our lives—the hope of stronger and deeper relationships, the hope of being sincere and real, the hope of living with integrity, and the hope of knowing that God is at work in your life.

In the end I would like to quote some lines from poem of Robert Frost:

“Woods are lovely dark and deep
but I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep.”

A person of substance never fails when it comes to voicing his/her opinions or standing up for what he/she believes in.

Many philosophers and thinkers have different views on the issue of classifying population and identifying a person of substance primarily because there cannot be one single universal attribute that defines the term. The very definition of a person of substance leads to myriad conflicting perceptions. Shall we only look at larger than life personalities to classify them as people of substance? Is it enough to honestly fulfill the assigned responsibilities with absolute determination and integrity to become such a person? Shall we create an overarching system where people with certain traits can be called people of substance, even if their actions lead to societal harm directly or indirectly? Do the personal priorities and societal priorities have equal importance? Can those who have failed miserably in their personal responsibilities but have done exceptionally for society be called people of substance and promoted as role models for the masses? Can we, perhaps, ascertain the quantitative achievements over a lifetime when incidental actions, nowadays, overtake the lifelong journeys in creating impressions? Are we just creating another class of social elites by putting a tag on people as of substance or no substance? Shall the criteria for defining such people be incidental or should we only judge a person for his/her substance over a long period of time or sustained contributions? Can saving a life be less substantial than saving 100 lives? Do all doctors, who have directly or indirectly saved lives, become people of substance? Do certain professions provide an advantage in creating people of substance? Do some people have disadvantages due to their environments - poverty, exploitation, illiteracy, untouchability, discrimination, unequal opportunities? These are a few questions which need attention before we decide on the attributes of calling someone a person of substance. Nonetheless, I consider the spirit of rebellious efforts for common social good, absolute dedication in performing civic duties and repeated attempts on achieving holistic excellence as the key for any such person.

In this world of unequal wealth and opportunities, there remains a need for creating and becoming a people of substance who can predominantly serve as social warriors for the common good, to bring about changes in the lives of those who struggle to find food and shelter. Why just food and shelter? Well, 900 million people sleep empty stomach each night and one billion don't have a shelter to sleep in! If I must ascertain certain attributes of a person of substance I would look at the:

- Integrity - truthfulness and dedication for assigned responsibilities or self-initiatives
- Compassion - empathy for men, animal or nature alike
- Rationality- self and social critique for biases, unjust or dividing agendas

Let's define a minimal requirement for, a person of substance within an environment constrained for resource he/she's one who can't sit at home and wait, rather he/she creates the door for opportunity, a person who strives to live a life with certain ambitions and acts thereto, a person who chooses to participate and share the problems of fellow humans rather than being an analytic spectator. For revolutionary efforts and long-term societal impact, a person of substance should be:

- Visionary - to see beyond self-interest to identify bigger, broader goals of common good
- Planner - ability to create/find a path with novelty and collaboration to empower peers
- The executioner - streamlined efforts, dedication and unstoppable spirit in failures

In the past, we have moved from John Locke's concept of "Social Contract and Consent" and Jeremy Bentham-Sir James Stuart Mill's concept of "Greatest Happiness of Greatest Number of People" to today's broadly the "Elite theory" driven by persons of substance. Perhaps what we are striving for is as Bertrand Russell describes a "good life" which is "inspired by love and guided by knowledge", possibly the only approach to fulfilling our dream of becoming a more just and compassionate society. We don't need a handful persons of substance, we rather need the global youth being trained to critique "the goal, aim, agenda or purpose of life" for contributions towards the common good and for society.

In this world of unequal wealth and opportunities, there remains a need for creating and becoming a people of substance who can predominantly serve as social warriors for the common good, to bring about changes in the lives of those who struggle to find food and shelter.

It is rightly said, “We go as we come, naked and alone.” So, what makes us different from the rest? Our accomplishments? How well off we were in our lives? Well, I believe it’s also what kind of a person we were and what impact did our decisions and actions have on society and the people around us. People remember those who live not only for themselves but also for others. Thus, to stand out, one needs to add meaning and substance to his/her life.

According to me, a person of substance is one who does the right thing and lives a purposeful and meaningful life leaving behind his/her footprints on the sands of time for others to follow. I feel that how much of those values and ethics he has actually imbibed in his life makes him/her a person of substance. The morals and ethics of a person help him make the crucial distinction between right and wrong. A person of substance has all the values and virtues that are always looked and admired in a person. The purpose of one’s life can be achieved by innumerable ways but how long that glory will stay depends upon the path, whether right or wrong that he has chosen to reach that victory. Otherwise, that victory is just like a bubble, the life of which is short and uncertain. But how do you think you decide upon the right path to follow? To be more precise, how can you identify the right path? Well, I believe that once again, the morals of a person come into the picture that guides his/her actions and influences his/her behaviour. Furthermore, even the purpose of our lives is guided by the values we learn during our lifetime. It is a matter of fact that the decisions and the choices we make are guided by our thinking, and our thinking is molded by our values and morals. If we take the example of Mahatma Gandhi, he is known not only for his accomplishments but also for the purpose for he devoted his entire life. Similarly, there are many national leaders who inspire us to emulate them and give meaning to our lives.

According to me, a person of substance is one who does the right thing and lives a purposeful and meaningful life leaving behind his/her footprints on the sands of time for others to follow.

A person, having attained a position of power, should look for ways by which he/she can use that position to bring about changes in the world. Our morals play a very important role at this point. Why do you think the terrorists after having so much power do what they do and take the path of death and destruction? Well, the answer is quite simple. It is a noticeable fact that the moral character of those people is shallow and they are devoid of any feelings of compassion and brotherhood. It is because of this lack of morals and ethics that Osama-bin-Laden instead of using his/her knowledge for the betterment of the world applied the same in its destruction. Therefore, no matter how high a person reaches the ladder of success, he/she should never forget the lowest point from where he/she started his/her journey and stop looking at the positive side of life. This modesty and optimism comes only when he/she holds onto his/her values and ethics.

Thus, it is not just your knowledge that makes you different but also the way you use it that actually makes your life worth living and adds meaning to it. In order to stand out, a person need not to do different things but do things differently; different in a way that it leads to the betterment of everyone around him/her.

“Substance of a person is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing.”

- Abraham Lincoln

Human civilization and its growth is an interesting field of study. Since time immemorial when times were hard, diseases or war threatened the rise of society naturally or by human induced deeds, mankind looked for a man of the hour. A man who could rise above the cut and make a valuable difference to the human race. Not only does history but mythology capture this spectacle be it Greek or Hindu mythology -- Hercules was needed to defeat the giants and Lord Rama became the ideal king for millennia to come.

The simplest way to define a “person of substance” would be a person who lets go of his/her personal interests for the larger good of society. So what are the traits that define the person of substance? What are the common denominators of all great men, women and legends?

The simplest way to define a “person of substance” would be a person who lets go of his/her personal interests for the larger good of society.

First and foremost they invoked hope and positivity. When there was no way out and the world looked doomed, they came as a beacon of light guiding mankind. The great Maratha warrior Shivaji not only took on tyranny head on but infused positivity and vigour not only in the ranks but in his subjects as well.

Honesty and integrity come next. I personally have always wondered how the homo sapiens came and flocked together. How did they decide their Alpha males? And how did the Alpha male convince the community to allow him to discharge the right over a long period of time? One answer comes to my mind, honesty and integrity of the Alpha male. Accountability of every action. This indeed is a of a person trait of substance.

Empathy: Probably it is what we need more than anything in this world right now. Oscar Schindler, the German industrialist, during the Second World War, who first employed Jews because they were cheap, but later saved the lives of at least 1200 Jews comes to mind.

Which also brings me to accepting mistakes and analysing them. All men commit errors, but how many have the ability to accept their misdeeds and analyse them? Abraham Lincoln had two business ventures fail, lost eight different elections and had a complete nervous breakdown before becoming president in 1860. His story is of great inspiration.

Having quoted some examples of some truly wonderful human substance stories, we must not fall in the trap of thinking, normal humans aren't doing these things daily.

The mother who imbibes values in her child; the father who would sacrifice his meals for a better tomorrow for his children; the teacher who imparts the knowledge; the fireman who risks his/her life to save an old woman in a fire; the Janitor who keeps the surrounding clean without a twitch on his face while cleaning the mess others create... the list is endless.

Every human can be a person of substance if we were to observe. The world be a chaotic place if it weren't the case, isn't it? But as humans we do need someone to idolize -- the textbook definition of hero.

Bachendri Pal was the first woman to climb Mount Everest despite the prevailing gender norms which did not support women taking part in strenuous activities. Bachendri Pal said something very interesting in a news interview which has stuck with me since I heard it, “It is not how much or how well you do, it is about how much love and affection you put in what you are doing”. It is from this quote that I derive what a person of substance means to me. It teaches me that though there may be many obstacles in life, and there may be many things we could do, we should focus on that one thing we love: our inherent trait. When we focus on our inherent trait, we participate in it with love and devotion. This love and devotion makes us a person of substance. It also helps us to be satisfied with our lives because when we do what we love, we never compare our successes with others. What others say doesn’t matter to us. In this essay, I will use examples of women from sports to explain what a person of substance means to me.

Every person is born with an inherent trait. These traits can include various things like politics, social work, dancing, singing, a desire to explore, mathematics etc. These traits are what drive people to reach happiness and calm in life. When this trait is utilized to the full extent, it can benefit the person by giving him/her satisfaction. These traits are our source of power, and once we try to reach our full potential with respect to this trait, we achieve happiness. A person of substance tries to reach the maximum potential with respect to the trait that they have in a way that benefits themselves to achieve mental peace.

A person of substance tries to reach the maximum potential with respect to the trait that they have in a way that benefits themselves to achieve mental peace.

Mary Kom is another of my inspirations. She said in one of her interviews when the reporter asked her about what techniques she uses to win: “I do not only rely on technique or strength, but also on my mind”. Mary Kom was involved in a sport which was considered to be only for men. In the boxing field where men receive support, sponsorships and opportunities, Mary Kom had to struggle her way through. But she never gave up and rose in her talent getting acknowledgement and love from millions of Indians. She put so much love into her sport that though her young daughter was fighting for her life in the hospital, she chose to attend a boxing match over staying at the hospital with her daughter. When a person loves their inherent trait, they respect it and nurture it to growth. The unstoppable pursuance of the inherent trait is what drives people to happiness in life. A person of substance is unstoppable with regard to his/her inherent trait. He/she never feels deterred and takes his/her steps with measure and joy.

In our generation, unfortunately there are still various women fighting to achieve their goals and their dreams, especially in the field of sport. They are always stopped, asked questions and deterred from following their dreams. My heart says to them, “Don’t stop do what you love, don’t lose substance. It may be hard to fight with the people who stop you from sports, but never lose hope, keep trying silently.” I have a very special place in my heart for all the women who have excelled in sports and are happy with it. Those women to me are people of substance.

There may be various hurdles to reach your goals, even these women faced obstacles in their lives. But they never let the outward circumstances affect their mental peace, they silently struggled to achieve what gave them happiness, to light that candle of potential which lay within their reach. I respect them and see them as having “substance” not because they are famous or have achieved their goals. I see them as having “substance” because they faced obstacles and still received happiness in life. “Substance” isn’t about achieving your goals, it is about doing what makes you happy with devotion. That devotion pays back at the end, in the form of happiness and satisfaction.

Sometime in June 2016, I sat in a room, gazing at the walls when I saw a quote hanging on the white board. “To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived -- this is to have succeeded.” It resonated with me -- the whole purpose of my existence seemed simplified. Even the most contrasting thoughts streamlined, like a confluence of two each with their own destination but coming together to give life. Poet Ralph Emerson has been an inspiration for me. Substance is essentially the immaterial asset that contributes to the core principles of a living being such that it adds value to one’s existence. The art of adding value to one’s life and contributing to humanity as a whole in anyway is what makes a person of substance.

The pursuit of being a person of substance begins by introspecting the meaning of your own life. What is vivid and unique about yourself? It’s an intrinsic trait of a person of substance to follow this/her calling passionately. Additionally, he/she looks back to connect the dots and see if there is a meaning to the trail that has been left behind; if the world is any better with them in it. He/she is self-reliance and carves out his/her own path. A person of substance’s ultimate aim is to attain the highest form of enlightenment; not eternal wisdom, but a mastery of his/her part of wisdom. Eminent writer Devdutt Patnaik says, “Within infinite myths lies the eternal truth, who sees it all? Varuna has but a thousand eyes, Indra but a hundred, you and I, only two.”

A person of substance builds only on the truth that is known to him/her. He/she has a passion for life and seeks his/her immortal bhag, his/her truth; unlike “bhag-wan” (bhagwan), everyone’s truth, one who consolidates universal truth. The chase, in fact, is about understanding his/her life over everyone else’s and that is what sets him/her apart. Understanding his/her own life gives him/her the capacity to take control of it and figure out a way to help others take control of their lives, which forms the basis of his/her selfless altruism. He/she focuses on a collective steady growth over personal steep growth as a realization of his/her duties towards human progress and maintain an optimistic outlook of the future.

There is no yardstick to measure the value of a person with substance in a society. Nor is there a straightforward word to describe a person of substance because unlike words, substance has no bounds. The qualitative nature of this attribute can only be felt on the receiving end. No two deeds are comparable, instead they have their own importance in the moment. What counts is genuinely caring for everyone around you and putting it to use. The ability to add value to humanity in any way is a mark of person with substance. It might be pitching a farm or dwelling into the depths of abstract art. What matters is the temperate attitude and a hope that someday an aged farmer would rest longer or the next generation would paint their own canvas. When each incident is an opportunity and not a poignant reminder of passing time; when empathy is what you resort to and not sympathy; when you let your life speak blatantly for yourself while others turn to twisted fiction, that is your value and all within it, which makes you a person of substance.

There is no yardstick to measure the value of a person with substance in a society.

“Try not to become a person of success but rather try to become a person of value.”

- Albert Einstein

Throughout history mankind has wondered about the meaning and purpose of life -- people have gazed at the stars and wondered how it all came to be and why they exist. A person of substance, in my opinion, is someone that finds meaning in what he/she does and understands the true value of life. He/she adds value to his/her life every day and to those around him/her. In today's fast-paced world people make choices without a lot of thought and as this goes on they realize that they have lost their individuality and are stuck in the rat race. A person of substance introspects - he/she thinks about why one does what one does. In simple terms, he/she understands himself/herself - the subconscious, deep desires and thoughts.

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He/she takes responsibility for his/her actions and accepts the consequences of the same. The difference between an ordinary man and a person of substance is that while the ordinary man might crib about the problems around the world, he/she makes every effort in whatever capacity he/she can. As they say “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”.

A person of substance is unique in his/her own way - he/she has his/her own preferences, likes and dislikes with little influence from others or society. He/she strives to be unique in a world where everyone is constantly reinventing themselves. He/she is not merely a facade to cover up the inner self. He/she exhibits courage even in the darkest moments and shows deep commitment to his/her work.

He/she also guides those around him/her towards the righteous path. However, this doesn't mean that he/she is a perfect or saintly altruist - mistakes do occur. The difference lies in how they are handled. A wise man learns from his mistake and also makes others understand what he' learnt. He/she respects those around and values their presence. This is a two-way street - when more people feel valued, their relationships improve and, as a result they are happier as a whole. He/she doesn't compare himself/herself with others but evaluates their attributes and takes steps to correct their flaws.

Ultimately, it all comes down to decision making -- every choice we make adds up. A person of substance has a deep moral and ethical foundation, has an incisive thought process to make every decision weighing the opportunities, costs and long term benefits. He/she prioritizes family over money, quality over quantity and, people over profits. To conclude, I quote this line from Robert Frost's poem “The Road Not Taken”, a great reminder of the choices we make in life and the process of choosing a path for oneself:

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

“If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.”

- Eldridge Cleaver

Being positive in life is a choice not just merely an option. A positive outlook never goes in vain irrespective of the failures encountered in the past. To carry a positive action, one should have a positive vision. If we go to the literal meaning of a person of substance, that means someone who refuses to be merely a spectator and always rises after failures to try again. He/she leads a meaningful life being an inspiration for others. Most commonly they are termed as “heroes”, and “leaders” and their making encompasses bringing in numerous characteristic/values such as leadership, courage, humanity, patience and empathy.

Anyone can control his/her mind, but the fact is that people don't have control over their emotions.

Anyone can control his/her mind, but the fact is that people don't have control over their emotions. To overcome this fact one should start believing that whatever he/she is doing can be achievable with hard work. He/she may face obstacles, but with determination, no one can stop him/her. The presence of such individual inspires others to lead a meaningful life; he/she helps in making decisions, achieving long-term goals, imbining empathy and demonstrates how to work for the greater good. It is necessary to mention that his/her significance can't be measured, but a person of substance plays a vital role in our evolved society.

As the poet Robert Frost (1874–1963) said:

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

Everyone makes many decisions every day. He/she chooses between what's urgent and important, between what's best and what's right, between short and long-term betterment, between money and relationships, between giving lip service and wholeheartedness, between apathy and commitment, between being self absorbed and working for the greater good, between avoiding and accepting responsibility, between risk avoidance and risk management, between a life of safe leisure and a life of challenge, between timidity and courage, between deceit and integrity and between expediency and honour. It is stated that the person of substance chooses the road less travelled at every divergence.

Everything can be taken from a man but he always has the freedom to choose his attitude in any given set of circumstances. As for the future, it remains unwritten, anything can happen, and often we are wrong. The best we can do with the future is to be prepared and savour the possibilities of what can be done in the present; add values to live and make the world a better place to live in.

To even begin explaining what makes a person of substance, I need to define what makes a person. You must be wondering, why would anybody need to explain what a person means? Don't we all already understand what constitutes a person? Well, you're right, and wrong. Yes, it is true that all of us understand what a person is. But, when you think of a person, you have your own mental definition of what it is. When we speak, we are essentially trying to convey our thoughts using symbols, referred to as words. And all of us have a unique understanding of these symbols. So when I tell you that I'm happy, you would interpret it in the way you understand happiness. In the same way, when I talk about humans, everyone experiences a different response to it depending on the way their brain decodes the words I use to talk.

While this difference in interpretation is still mostly subtle for very generally used non-abstract terms, like a human or a cat or an ocean, sometimes things can get really complicated. We, as humans, are shaped to a great degree by our experiences, especially in our childhood. And yet, no two people who have been subjected to similar lives can have the same understanding of the world. There is something unique about our brains that sets us apart from everybody and everything else. It's almost like in a way, we are entirely helpless of how we shape up to be and in a way are in total control of our conscious selves. And yet, most of us fail to inhabit more perspectives than one. Suppose I told you that $10 + 10 = 100$ and argue on it being correct. You would dismiss me as illiterate or ignorant or even plain stupid! $10 + 10 = 20$, right? Once again, you're right, and wrong. When you claim that $10 + 10 = 20$, you are reading the digits, the symbols, to be in decimal notation. But when I claim that $10 + 10 = 100$, I might be looking at the exact same digits in the binary notation ($10 = 2$ and $100 = 4$ in binary).

Do you see where I'm getting at? Perspective! Every time we are exposed to a conflict of opinion, we try to explain our stand and understand the other person's stand using our perspective on things. And this is where I feel we, as a species, miserably fail to successfully execute the concept of a discussion. If you insisted that I explain $10 + 10 = 100$ in the decimal notation, I would never be able to defend my point of view! I believe the sole purpose of a discussion should be to exchange and understand perspectives. Because sometimes this difference in interpretation can be massive and hence, if we manage to get ahead of the curve, we could end up entirely transforming the confines that we subconsciously impose on our understanding of the world.

Humans are creatures that are motivated by the benefit of the self. When a mother throws her life away to save her child, she is committing an act of selfishness, and not altruism. Sounds wrong? Let me break this down. When a mother watches her child dying, her brain does not interpret the child as another person as such. The sense of identity that the brain has for the body it inhabits extends to the child. Hence, it views it as a part of itself, sometimes even more so than the person themselves. And this characteristic of the brain can be used to explain this behaviour of the mother.

What I'm trying to get at is, in my opinion, if a person can lead a life in which he/she can actually put her/himself in the place of the creatures he/she encounters and still chooses to see the good in them, as he/she understands it, such a person is a person of substance. Someone who commits acts that help other creatures without the possibility of ever getting back anything. Someone who understands everything that I've stated, and more, and chooses to extend her/his sense of identity to encompass the entire world.

Someone who commits acts that help other creatures without the possibility of ever getting back anything.

The person who lives a meaningful life with a sense of purpose is a person of substance. This person lives a life without harming others and without harming himself. He connects with people, with nature and with the self, and it gives meaning and contentment to his life. In order to achieve this he practices to increase awareness and sensitivity towards his surroundings and towards himself. He does those things which gives meaning to his life and to the lives of others. And to understand what the world needs is most important for him.

The person who lives a meaningful life with a sense of purpose is a person of substance.

The world needs people of substance because we are living in an era where we have given most of our attention to the comforts of life. As a consequence we are in a rat race which doesn't give contentment to an individual. At the same time our lifestyle is also consuming Mother Earth. It is damaging the environment, forest, the lives of animals, and at the same time, human lives. I know one of my friends who lives in Delhi who suffers from asthma. And she was telling me that she cannot breathe fresh air and she has to spend the whole day at home, as has breathing problems because of the pollution in Delhi. And she also says that she has to use air conditioning in the car when she travels in Delhi which helps to increase the same pollution which made her life worst in the first place. This is the irony of this era. In this era we get money and comforts but not the happiness and contentment. And happiness and contentment are the two things which brings meaning in our lives which makes a person of substance.

So if the world has more people of substance, then those people will think about happiness, contentment and fairness with a holistic approach to life. And it will create harmony, happiness and peace in the world.

