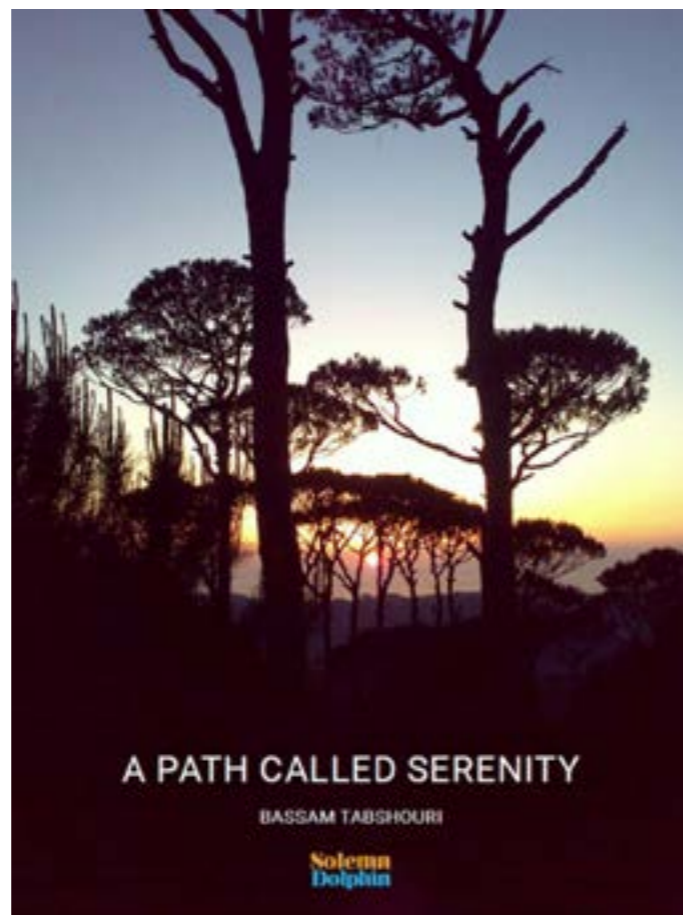


A Path Called Serenity



Bassam Tabshouri
Chair of HTMA
(Healthcare Technology Management
and Advancement)



On the other hand, the Russian writer Dostoevsky suggests an enigmatic approach: “Beauty will save the world”—and this includes us. Yet just how could such a thing be possible? When, in the turbulent, uncertain, and blood thirsty course of history, had beauty saved anyone from anything?

Control of Thoughts (and Emotions)

Exercising control over one’s thoughts (and emotions) is needed, since controlling what is going outside us is an impossible task. What goes on inside us will determine how we deal with others and our environment. However, this is a particularly challenging task—some studies mention

Introduction

These difficult times of economic crisis, Corona pandemic, and other stressful situations are being coupled with uncertainty and fear about the future. Life now feels like being in a raft in a river full of rapids, not knowing what to expect next. Or like flying an airplane, in very turbulent conditions, and with no clear destination. In addition to that, the lockdown is causing mental health problems and interpersonal problems. Some may find themselves agreeing with the famous words of Sartre: “the other is hell”. This other may be a friend, brother, sister, spouse, child, parent, etc. A famous writer in the USA observed, “As a result, ... therapists are swamped with clients who are having a difficult time coping and finding their sense of direction.”

Amidst this chaos, how can one find serenity? How can one find joy? How can one keep a positive attitude for this hard life? How can one cope?

The Starting Point(s)

Modern psychology and accumulated human wisdom consider self-awareness of one’s thoughts, mindset, and emotions as a particularly important starting point. Thoughts and feelings start like small waves, which can become tsunamis if not recognized and dampened at the onset. Self-awareness is a skill that will improve with practice.

that the brain has 15,000 thoughts a day, and others up to 50,000!

A good starting point in controlling thoughts is to focus on beauty, as Dostoevsky suggested, instead of focusing on ugliness.

There is a short story which compares the bee and the fly. A fly in a field of flowers will ignore the flowers and go to the dirt found on the ground. On the other hand, a bee in a place full of dirt and with only one flower will ignore the dirt and go to the flower. In our modern world, and thanks to modern communication, one can enjoy the beauty of art, music, dancing, nature, and the universe, even if we are locked in a room. One can also learn from beautiful spirits who have great wisdom and positive attitude, despite their handicaps and the hardships they have been through.

It is worthwhile adding that there are wonderful beauties and wisdom compiled over ages in religious teachings, experience, and chanting. These a religious person can also use to control the thoughts and emotions.

Control of Emotions and Handling Others

To master our emotions, instead of letting them master us, is a particularly important skill—as recognized by Aristotle, by the several teachings of different religions, and by psychology. In handling emotions—including anger—one needs to watch out for two pathological extremes: being like a wild horse easily overwhelmed by raging anger, or like a stoic who denies or suppresses all emotions and feelings.

An important part of handling emotions is empathy. Empathy comes from the Greek word ‘empathia’: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, to be in the shoes of others and feel what they feel. This is a particularly important point, and which can put brakes on the use of harsh words. Words can cut deep wounds like a sharp blade.

Dealing with Expectations, Unpredictability, and Fear

Our modern world is turning out to be a highly unpredictable one in which our expectations, plans, and hopes regularly do not materialize. We live the future, always awaiting the arrival of the special hour when our life shall unfold. As a result, we do not focus on the present day, the present hour,

and the present moment of our life. Life flows like water through our loose fingers.

One theory about worry proposes that it is a mechanism triggered by intolerance of uncertainty. Another theory states that it might be an avoidance mechanism from fear. Irrespective of any theory about fear or its origin, most of the time its results are the same: people spend large amounts of their time dealing with worrisome thoughts generated in their minds, and with the hypothetical future consequences of these fears.

One needs to be flexible and appreciate challenges. Make plans and contingency plans and be flexible if your plans do not work out. After all, “challenges are what make life interesting, and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful”. You cannot control all what happens to you, but you can control your attitude towards what happens to you, and by that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you. One needs to appreciate the wisdom of the song: “Que sera sera, whatever will be will be!”

Final Words

Diving into the depths of the soul or one’s psyche is like diving into a deep lake, where the surface may look calm but the depth is unknown. This is a life-long, never ending, journey of knowing oneself. Surely, trained divers know better how to probe these depths and can inform us about what is there. Yet, these experts: psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, etc. are swamped. People need to work on themselves.

An innovative and comprehensive self-help approach to handle challenges, accompanied by the enigmatic statements of Dostoevsky, is presented in “A Path Called Serenity,” a compilation of wisdom which took nine years to accomplish. It is a voyage on a multidimensional joyful and beautiful journey along which one will enjoy the beauty of art, music, dance, inspiring quotes, stories, and videos—from all over the globe—via paintings and photos and links to music and videos. Interwoven with these is a bouquet of different psychological principles, spiritualities, and wisdom from different cultures leading one to dive more and more into the depths of one’s hidden inner beauty.

Reference: Bassam Tabshouri, “A Path Called Serenity”, Kobo, 2019 www.solemndolphin.com