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NEXT STEP

CAREER ADVICE FROM THE CUNNING

What can a Chinese military general and an Italian political philosopher do for your career? A lot, apparently, if the general's name is Sun Tzu and the philosopher is Niccolò Machiavelli. They wrote two books that can immensely help you in your professional life.

The Art of War (written perhaps around 500BC), by Sun Tzu, is an ancient text on military strategy, an invaluable guide for rulers and their armies throughout history till today. On the other hand, The Prince (published in the 16th century) had given its author a bad name, literally: the term Machiavellian is used to describe someone who is selfish or deceitful.

The Prince shamelessly upholds that ends justify means, and offers advice to the politician (the prince), some of which may seem morally appalling, while the Art of War blatantly states that "all warfare is based on deception" and, among other things, discusses employing spies.

These books are now read by CEOs, sports coaches and marketers; they are helpful to anyone who wants to excel in competition. You too, can apply some of the tricks. While we don't ask you to be heartless or notorious, there are a handful of career lessons from these two maestros that can make your life much easier.

The Art of War

Win without fighting

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. Sun Tzu is not your common bloodthirsty, egotistical, historic figure. He knew well that wars cost lives and resources. So, even though he wrote a volume on how to wage wars, he said that the best way of winning is to settle things without fighting.

And that's what you should do when you have a problem with a colleague. Try to find a compromise. Instead of having heated arguments or getting into a continuous cat and mouse game, talk to him, clear the problem



Be a fox and a lion at the same time

It is necessary to be a fox to discover the snares and a lion to terrify the wolves. In the treacherous world of the prince, there were always forces who would want to overthrow him and establish their own power. To avoid that, the prince must look

out for any traps whilst being intimidating to betrayers or invaders.

This is invaluable advice for those who work in an environment of cut-throat office politics. Be smart and careful of whom you trust. At the same time, be tough and firm, so that nobody can exploit or take advantage of you.

Be kind and caring

Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you to the deepest valleys; look on them as your beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death. Sun Tzu stresses the importance of being loving and caring towards subordinates. He must have been a benevolent leader.

And you can be the same. If you have people working for you, treat them with respect. Be helpful, cordial and genuinely caring. This will give them the boost needed to run that extra mile.



and make peace.

Mum's the word

Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt. Sun Tzu wrote a great deal

on being secretive and keeping a low profile. He was a great believer of confidentiality.

Be like Sun Tzu. Never discuss vital work-related information with anyone outside the team. Respect your

company's confidentiality. In any organisation, you will sooner or later have information on future events or projects that its competitors should not know of right then.

Also, do not reveal too much of yourself and your future plans. Limit the gossip at the water cooler to casual chitchat.

The Prince

Change

Had he changed his conducts with the times fortune would not have changed. In today's fast-changing world, organisations understand the value of evolution. Machiavelli felt it centuries ago, and wrote that the prince who does not change with times will lose all his fortune.

Embrace the change your organisation is going through and promote it. It usually requires learning new things, for example, a new software replacing an old one. Survive the change to keep your 'fortune.'

Read and learn

The prince should read histories, and study there the actions of illustrious men, to see how they have borne themselves in war, to examine the causes of their victories and defeat, so as to avoid the latter and imitate the former. Machiavelli advised the prince to learn from people, to study how they won and failed.

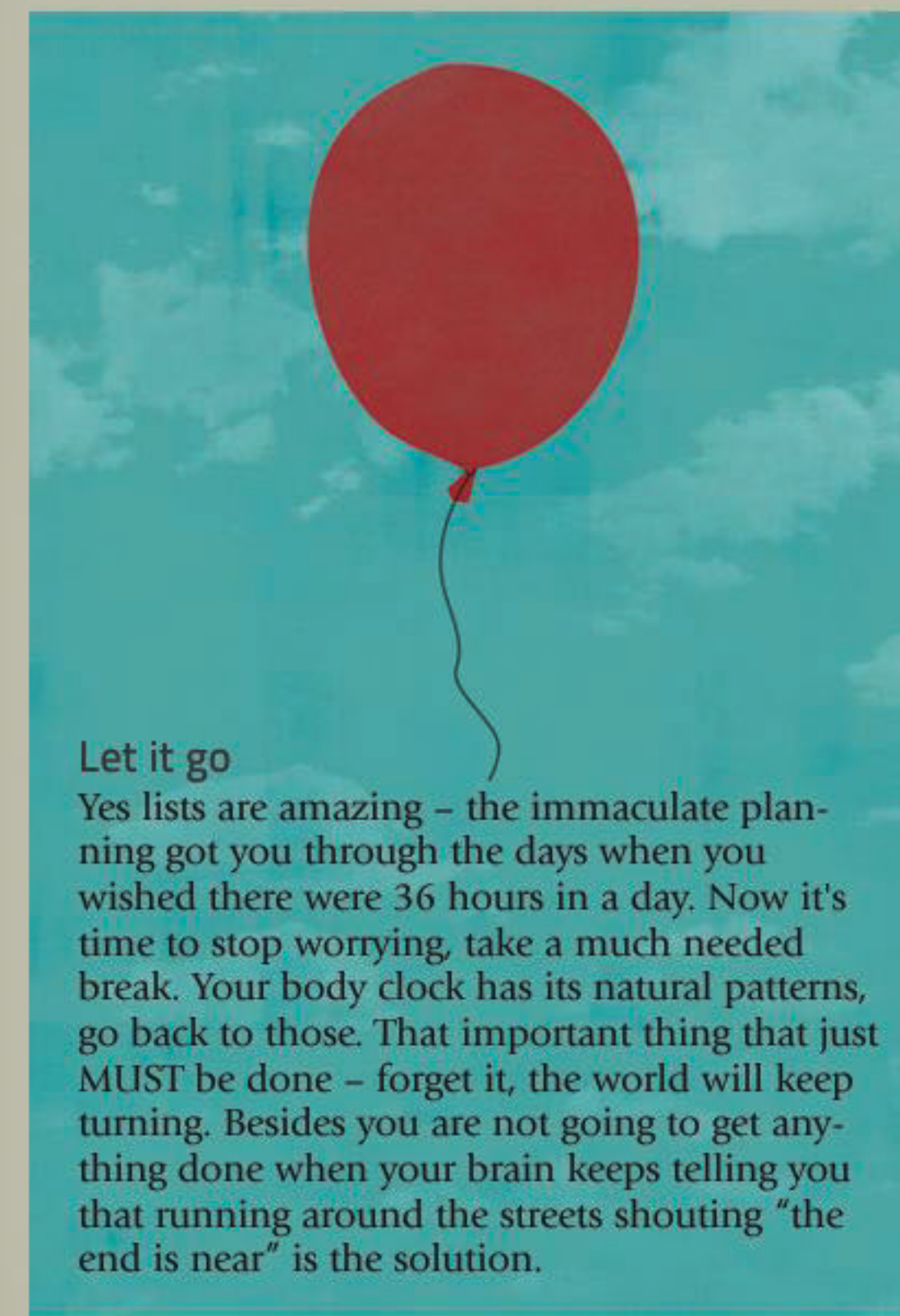
Read biographies and interviews of renowned CEOs and those who inspire you. Study and apply their tactics, just like you should – if you had in fact come this far reading through this write-up – from these two ingenious, cunning books.

M H HAIDER

WATER COOLER CHRONICLES

5 TIPS FOR WHEN YOUR BRAIN IS FRIED

So that other day, after a week of cramming for exams, assignments submissions, late night coffee binges and a routine worthy of some superhuman world leader, my friend managed to successfully walk into a perfectly visible door. Multiple times. And not notice till the next day that she had a bump on her head. Everyone has busy, hectic weeks, and we usually manage to stop before our brain is completely fried. But at times when you need to keep going till you drop, the following symptoms start to pop up: tiredness, slow responses, difficulty in concentration, irritability and sometimes chronic walking-into-things syndrome. Here are five things to do to ease back into a state of having a normal functioning brain.



Let it go

Yes lists are amazing – the immaculate planning got you through the days when you wished there were 36 hours in a day. Now it's time to stop worrying, take a much needed break. Your body clock has its natural patterns, go back to those. That important thing that just MUST be done – forget it, the world will keep turning. Besides you are not going to get anything done when your brain keeps telling you that running around the streets shouting "the end is near" is the solution.

No light, no light

Our bodies are accustomed to a certain light pattern – high intensity, bright lights tell our body that it needs to stay awake. So while your brain tells you to curl up and sleep till eternity, it does just the opposite. Turn down the lights, if necessary, be around dim yellowish lights and just try to fall asleep.

My favourite things

As prosaic as it sounds, a day only for you might be just what you need to get you back to your prime. This does not necessarily mean spending the day by yourself. Avoid work and worry, sit back and enjoy a cup of tea and read that book that you have been meaning to get to. Invite friends over and hang out with them, go out and get something good to eat. In short, give yourself a treat. This will not put you behind schedule, it will only make sure that when you start work the next day, you are charged up to handle it.

Sleepyhead

So you do not have the luxury of letting go of everything. That doesn't mean, you don't have a few 30 minute chunks in between. Use those to take 20 minute power naps - these will keep you sane enough to get you through the day. Your body is fatigued, the sleep will come naturally. Do this in small chunks, because if you end up sleeping too much, you will feel groggy. Have a cup of coffee, take a nap. It will take about half an hour to kick in, and that should wake you up. In the end, the best solution is to not end up in a position that you are brain-dead and need to keep going. Schedule well, keep time for rest and do not overestimate your abilities. Till then, happy sleeping!

MOYUKH MAHTAB

PRESS RELEASE

First National Financial Career Fest held at UIU



The first National Financial Career Fest was organised by United International University Finance Forum from April 18 to 20, 2015. This was the first ever national finance career festival organised in Bangladesh. The main objective of the program was to create career consciousness among students interested in developing a career in finance.

MDs, CEOs and professionals from different banks and financial organisations discussed the kinds of jobs available in the finance sector, entrepreneurship and other career related topics. The chief guest of the inauguration ceremony was Dewan Hanif Mahmud, Editor, Daily Bonik Barta, and the program was conducted by S. M. Shamsul Alam, Ex-Managing Director and CEO, Premier Leasing and Finance Ltd.

Four panel discussions were held on: Stock Market Crash and Thereafter; Career Development Challenges and Prospects in Financial Organizations; Islamic Banking: Challenges and Prospects in Bangladesh; and Non-Banking Financial Organizations: Career Development, Challenges and Prospects.

Many students from different public and private universities attended the event to obtain a vivid picture of career opportunities in the financial sector of Bangladesh from the event.

The tech literacy revolution

Shajahan Ali had dreams of becoming a high ranking official since his student days. To fulfil it, he completed his post grad at the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Economics. He came to the capital in search of a livelihood, but job placement for people with a humanities background is rare. He applied for the IDB-BISEW scholarship programme of Islamic Development Bank. The programme was a great experience for Shajahan. On completion, he became an Oracle certified professional and is now serving at Square Informatix. The above is just an example of the success stories of the trainees of the IDB-BISEW scholarship programme.

THE ERA OF REVOLUTION

The programme started in 2003 to create a youth community for a technology driven society. The initial step of the programme was a professional diploma course. International certification from Microsoft and Oracle gave extra advantage within a short time.

Around five thousand trainees have gotten national and international job placements under the supervision of the officials.

Muhammad Enamul Huq, one of the trainees, got an award from the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) in the freelancing category. Enamul is now working to develop a youth community to promote online outsourcing.

THE SCHOLARSHIP

Applicants have to pass a written examination and a subsequent viva. The two venues for the examination are in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Reputed personnel hold training for four hours, six days a week. Most of the activities of the programme are regulated through the internet. There are 26 organisations that maintain the international quality of the training tools.

TECHNOLOGY COURSES

The training course is designed focusing on the contemporary needs. It should also be noted that some 75 percent of the trainees come from rural areas. There are 8 categories in the programme, which include Basics on Computer Literacy, Computer Fundamentals, Architecture and Civil Cad, Computer Assisted Animation, Database Design and Development, Enterprise System Analytics and Design, Networking and Web Presence Solution and Implementation.



The IDB BISEW students have been involved in many cross border activities in Malaysia, Abu Dhabi, Canada, America and Singapore, competing with BUET graduates

INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION

There is a great opportunity for trainees to achieve international certification after completing the one year training programme. The trainees of the programme can easily apply for the IT Vendor certification examinations of Microsoft and Oracle free of cost.

The IDB BISEW students have been involved in many cross border activities in Malaysia, Abu Dhabi, Canada, America and Singapore, competing with BUET graduates. They have an average salary of Taka 50,000 after the training.

Another initiative of IDB BISEW is the Online Career Hub that helps students connect with successful seniors. The initiative increases the job placement ratio. The Chief Executive of the organisation, Niaz Khan says, "We are working on a network where all students are connected with each other. We move with the joint initiative of students and trainers. This kind of co-operation is very rare in our country. Every student is an ambassador of our programme."

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Course overview

Do you feel the need to better understand the basic meaning of a conversation, or a presentation given at the workplace? What about the need to identify what is being said to you in a more effective manner? Although relatively straightforward in theory, the process that transforms effective listening into successful communication requires great skill, awareness, and practice. This course will review the various types of listeners and the benefits of being able to listen effectively when communicating. The course also reviews some popular misconceptions about listening. Active listening techniques for improving your listening and maximising your understanding are also covered.