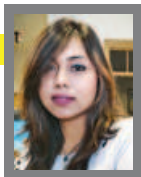


**LIFE AS IT IS****WARA KARIM**

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It is that time of the year in Delaware, USA when maples, sycamores, cherries, and oaks are raining leaves; their colours are crimson, amber, maroon, and more. It is not only the vibrant colours, however, that set autumn apart from the other seasons, but her scent, too; an earthy-organic scent. It is the scent of leaves turning red, orange, yellow, and brown and then falling to the ground to decay. If you live close to nature, you can smell the crisp scent of autumn every time you step outdoors; it is all around.

Although the woody 'base note' remains the same, the overall scent of autumn may smell slightly different each day. The base note of this scent, which is dried leaves decaying, is constant. However, when other elements of nature come into play, new notes are added to this woody autumn scent. For instance, in this part of the world, where rain is a common occurrence in autumn, on a rainy day, the rainwater adds a new note to this earthy-organic scent. To me, autumn smells even more earthy on a rainy day. It is the smell of rain-soaked fallen leaves



breaking down and uniting with wet earth to become one.

On a windy day, the earthy-organic scent spreads far and wide. On such a day, by cracking a window open, you can invite autumn in; her scent will diffuse throughout your home, bringing the outside world indoors.

The day's temperature plays a role in how strong or faint an autumn day will smell. On a cool autumn day, you can smell the approaching winter in the air. On such a day, the earthy-organic scent is faint, as if it is dying. It is the opposite on a bright and sunny day, however. I think the autumn's earthy-organic scent smells the freshest when the sun shines bright and there is a light breeze blowing.

Although many associate the scent of autumn with smells of cinnamon, apple cider, musk, pumpkin spice, etc., these are not really what the season itself smells like. The most popular of these smells is pumpkin spice, a blend of ground cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger that

is used in baking pumpkin pie. Since the arrival of autumn, I have been smelling and seeing pumpkin spice everywhere. I see pumpkin spice candles and hand soaps and pumpkin spice breads, cookies, doughnuts, yoghurts, cereals, beverages, etc. at stores.

The pumpkin spice, however, is a manufactured smell that businesses have successfully taught American consumers to associate with autumn. However, the real scent of autumn is of death and decay, although not in a morbid way. The crisp-sharp smell of leaves rotting and giving off gases is the scent of autumn! It may sound morbid but it is not really so. This natural process of leaves dying, mixing with the earth to give nutrition to plants and trees is how life happens around us. I think no other season smells as earthy as autumn. No other season makes you feel closer to nature and makes you contemplate how the death of one thing gives life to another.

While the scents of spring and summer come from baby leaves, fresh blades of grass, and wild and cultivated flowers, the scent of autumn rises from the earth, the very earth or soil that sustains life on our planet.

**By Wara Karim**  
**Photo: Courtesy**

**#LIFEHACKS**

# So, you are a CEO?

## It's time to create a personal brand

The definition of CEO is arguable; everyone seems to have a different opinion of it. The one thing most agree on though, is that every CEO is expected to be a 'brand' themselves. Being unique and memorable seems to be a requirement to becoming the top-performing professional you want to be.

Personal brands are the hardest to control, and naturally the most rewarding. People's associations, beliefs, feelings, sentiments, attitudes, and expectations make up what you mean to them. All of which are incredibly difficult to get a grasp on. As they say, your personal brand is what people say about you when you are not in the room.

Here are a few less-spoken reasons why you must start building your personal brand.

**It makes you seem indispensable**

Historically, an articulate leader's follower interaction has always been greater than the following of their brand itself. Leaders achieve significantly more engagement than their company does. Don't believe me? Tell me what Kim Kardashian's brand name is. Or count how many brands



Shakib Al Hasan has become the brand ambassador of.

After a certain mileage, your personal brand as a CEO becomes inseparable from the corporate brand you loyally represent. Customers do not simply buy your products; they buy into the vision and charisma of you.

**Employees become an extension of you**

Ever noticed how after a leader leaves a job, numerous employees also jump the company ship with them? This is because their loyalty is towards a human being. His or her culture is their work culture. All of which can be labelled as the essence of their personal brand. In other words, power.

Now, let's talk about the CEO-employee disconnect. Without personal branding, the CEO can seem like a distant figure, living in an ivory tower far away from the daily grind. Feeble, irrelevant, zoomed out.

It is important to remember that any dedicated team craves attention and advice, which is not always easy to give in person, but perfectly possible through the power of social media. It fills the gaps of care which you as a CEO cannot give in the day-to-day.