

May 2026



ISHKAMA

G L O B A L C H A N G E

IGC BUSINESS CONVENTION

Global Leaders & Changemakers Meet in New Delhi August 2026

AI IN 2026

Impact On Parenting, Farming & Business

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

Carmen Murray

CEO Of Carmen Murray Communications

TOP 3

INSPIRING STORIES

School Bag To Solar Desk
Meet The Pivot Queen
Manifesting Success

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**Prof. Dr. Amb.
Abhnash K Bains**
*CEO and Founder-
IGC/ Ishkama Ltd*

As we step into another inspiring month, my heart is filled with gratitude for each one of you- our readers, writers, contributors, supporters, global community, and the dedicated IGC team who continue to bring this vision to life. Your belief in our mission fuels everything we do.

This month, I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to Tammy Dawson-Doughty, who joins us as the President of IGC. Tammy's leadership, global perspective, and deep commitment to people and partnerships make her an invaluable addition as we enter a new phase of international growth. We are honoured to have her with us.

As we move closer to the IGC Convention 2026 in India, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our IGC Advisory Board, led by Dr Lady Waynett Peters, and supported by esteemed members Dr Angela Soong, Shabana Aziz Rajan, Susana Ecclestone, Vanessa Haripersad, and Dr Minakshi Koch. Your dedication, wisdom, and continuous efforts strengthen the foundation of our global work.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the IGC Convention Team, headed by Dr Lipika Sharma, for their tireless commitment as preparations for this landmark global gathering continue to build momentum.

We warmly invite everyone—leaders, creatives, entrepreneurs, changemakers, and emerging voices—to join us at the IGC Convention 2026 in India, where you can build meaningful partnerships, gain international visibility, speak on a global stage, sponsor a powerful movement, or be featured in our upcoming book alongside inspiring leaders. With only a few remaining slots, this convention

stands as a vibrant celebration of unity, leadership, culture, and global collaboration. If you believe in impact, inclusion, and elevating your work on an international platform, register your interest. Become part of a movement shaping change across continents. Because at IGC, we don't just host events, we amplify voices, open doors, and create opportunities that last far beyond the convention.

This month has also been personally meaningful. I had the privilege of participating as a guest of Lion Sreekanth to present the awards alongside DG Harvinder Singh Virdee and his lovely wife, to the lions who took part in the Lions Club Community Charity Walk, supporting children affected by retinoblastoma. Standing alongside families and volunteers reminded me of the power of compassion in action.

I am deeply honoured to receive the "Mother, Architect of the Future - Global Recognition 2026" award from the International Internship University (IIU) in partnership with the Mahila Udyami Foundation. My sincere gratitude to Dr Virginia Rivera Ríos (Global Affairs - IIU) for this recognition. It is a reminder that every step we take toward empowerment creates ripples far beyond what we see.

I was honoured to attend the Exclusive Women of Influence Circle (EWOIC) CIC hosted to serve as a speaker on the topic of Stress, Health, and Wellbeing. This month, we also observed Cultural Diversity Day, International Labour Day, the International Day for Biological Diversity, reminding us of our shared responsibility to honour humanity, protect our planet, and uplift every community we touch.

To all newly appointed IGC Chairs across the globe, we welcome you warmly into the IGC family. Your leadership strengthens our collective voice. If you wish to be part of the IGC community, collaborate with us, or contribute to our magazine, we would love to hear from you. Please write to us at: ishkama.igc@hotmail.com. Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Editor's Note

Winter is settling over South Africa, but warmth fills my heart as I think about the month passed and what lies ahead. This month of May I had the proudest moment as a mother watching my eldest son Mihir Shridhar graduate with a Bachelor of Commerce Degree. From a little boy, life was always an adventure, but he knew he wanted to be a businessman. He has worked hard, and experienced tough life lessons and I am so proud of the man he has become. He is kind, generous, diligent and the most wonderful human.

I had the opportunity to have a girls social and watch the premier of the Devil wears Prada at a private cinema with a group of empowered women. The movie had many poignant moments showcasing a female leader navigating uncertainty, tapping into her resilience and finally believing in her worth. It reminded me of the many women we have in IGC, who have overcome adversity and become beacons of light in the communities they serve.

A heartfelt welcome to our new President, Tammy Dawson Doughty. We look forward to walking this journey with you.

Mark your calendars: the IGC Annual Business Convention comes to Delhi in August, featuring exhibition stalls celebrating India's and the world's finest leaders and entrepreneurs.



Vanessa Haripersad
Editor-in-Chief

If you're ready to build your brand and share your voice on a global stage, contact Dr Minakshi at minakshikocho@gmail.com for speaker slots. There is also an opportunity to be featured in the Book of Prosperity 2026.



This edition is one close to my heart. I'm thrilled to feature the brilliant Carmen Murray, futurist, CEO, and global speaker alongside inspiring stories on self-belief, manifestation, AI in farming, AI in parenting, social entrepreneurship and so much more.

Thank you to our founder, our editorial team, and every contributor who made this edition possible.

With best wishes,
Vanessa



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LEARN ABOUT Ishkama Global Change (IGC)

Our Aim: IGC aims for global impact, championing inter-national peace, understanding, and gender equality. IGC offers a secure environment for inclusion, economic and social empowerment, and strives to diminish gender disparities within this decade. Celebrating remarkable individuals, we provide a platform for members to share, connect, and initiate community projects.

Vision: To cultivate a vibrant, inclusive community where entrepreneurs unite to strengthen networks, foster meaningful connections, and align around shared goals and values. To enable impactful collaboration by facilitating engagement with local and global leaders, businesses, and associations. To empower individuals from all backgrounds, championing inclusivity, equity, and equal opportunity for all.

To positively impact the broader community by addressing critical global challenges such as environmental sustainability, hunger alleviation, vision care, accessible education, and disease prevention.

Mission

To empower entrepreneurs by providing global visibility and support, enabling them to reach their full potential and achieve sustainable growth, irrespective of gender. To deliver humanitarian services that enhance health, well-being, and resilience within communities. To foster global impact through the promotion of international peace, cross-cultural understanding, and unwavering advocacy for equality for all.

Our Commitment

At IGC, we are dedicated to both business and social impact. We actively create awareness for meaningful causes and are always open to partnerships and collaborations with individuals and organizations that share our core values.

Our Purpose

We believe that when IGC Chairs and their volunteers come together to do meaningful work, they inspire others to join the movement. Together, we can uplift communities and create lasting, global change.

Ethical Framework: IGC Code of Conduct

This Code of Ethics and Conduct outlines a comprehensive set of principles for the members and

volunteers of IGC, ensuring that their actions align with the organization's values and best interests. It emphasizes core ethical guidelines and responsibilities, focusing on respect, integrity, accountability, and professionalism in their volunteer roles.

Key Points:

- **Introduction & Purpose:** The Code defines how IGC members should behave toward each other, the public, clients, and other stakeholders. It aims to ensure ethical actions, fairness, and a positive image of IGC.
- **IGC's Purposes and Ethics:** The Code highlights important principles such as Humanity, Voluntary Service, Non-Political Behavior, Unity, Neutrality, and Independence, which guide the conduct of members.
- **Standards of Conduct:**
 1. **Respect:** Treating everyone with fairness, courtesy, and dignity.
 2. **Integrity:** Being honest, transparent, and ensuring actions are in the best interest of IGC.
 3. **Empowerment:** Encouraging collaboration, growth, and skill development.
 4. **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions.
 5. **Representation:** Ensuring that personal behavior does not harm the reputation of IGC.
 6. **Champion:** Advocating for IGC policies and values, especially in protecting the well-being of members and clients.
- **Breach of Conduct:** Failure to comply with the Code can result in disciplinary action, handled by the club's Executive or higher authorities.
- **Public Conduct & Political Neutrality:** Members are allowed to express personal opinions, but these should not give the impression of being IGC's official stance. Political neutrality is emphasized.
- **Working with Children & Vulnerable Individuals:** Specific guidelines are provided to ensure the safety, dignity, and respect of children and vulnerable people under IGC's care, including rules on confidentiality, behavior, and reporting any violations.

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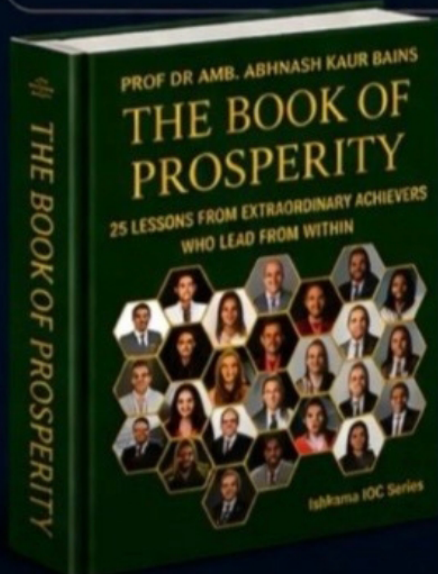
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DATE:
6TH – 8TH
AUGUST 2026



VENUE:
RADISSON BLU,
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CLOSING DATE:
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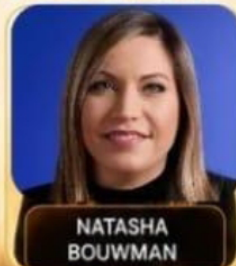
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DATE:
**6TH – 8TH
AUGUST 2026**



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CARMEN MURRAY

Futurist
Cultural Forecaster
Conscious Leader



There is a particular stillness to the way Carmen Murray talks about the future. Not the rehearsed confidence of a keynote speaker in cruise control, nor the impenetrable certainty of someone who has stopped listening. It is something quieter and more interesting than either: the grounded clarity of a woman who has spent years paying close attention — to data, to culture, to the soft signals beneath the noise of a world in transition.

In a year defined by AI anxiety, economic volatility, and a world-wide hunger for meaning, that distinction matters more than ever. As CEO of Carmen Murray

Communications, founder of the 15,800-strong Conscious LeadHERs collective, cultural forecaster, keynote speaker, and podcaster, Murray has built an entire body of work at the convergence of strategic rigour and radical human empathy. The intersection most people cannot find, she has made her home.

Ishkama sat down with Carmen for an exclusive cover conversation, one that ranged from the masks we wear for society to the untapped power of Ubuntu, from the collapse of institutional trust to the revolutionary idea that a young woman in Johannesburg is already leading, right now, whether she

knows it or not.

ORIGIN & IDENTITY

Ask Carmen Murray to describe herself and she resists the easy answer. Not out of false modesty, but because the truth is genuinely more layered. She is a futurist and cultural forecaster, yes, but her deepest obsession is understanding the mechanics of human behaviour: how culture shifts, how trust erodes and rebuilds, how technology reshapes not just industries but the very texture of daily life.

That spirit of building where nothing yet exists drove the founding of Conscious LeadHERs.

The initiative emerged from what Murray describes as a deep frustration – not just with inequality, but with the limitations of the conversation around it. Getting more women into boardrooms matters. But she began to question whether fighting for a seat at a table that is itself being dismantled was enough of an ambition for the era ahead.

Leadership, she insists, is not only about becoming a board member or a CEO of somebody else's vision. It is about building your own industry, your own ecosystem, your own economic power – about becoming a nation builder. The word sustainability, she notes, contains within it two ideas she returns to again and again: sustain, and ability – our collective ability to sustain a better future together.

What makes the founding of Conscious LeadHERs remarkable is not what Murray built, but what she chose not to have when she built it. She started deliberately with almost nothing – R600 – to prove a point she believed the world needed to see: that meaning, momentum, and even profit are possible under real-world constraints.

15,800

women in the Conscious
LeadHERs collective,

*united by purpose and the shared courage to
build the new world.*

THE AUTHENTIC INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK™

The Authentic Intelligence Framework™ was not born in a strategy session. It emerged from something far more personal – a diagnosis. In 2022, Murray received an Asperger's/autism diagnosis that, rather than defining her, prompted a question she has been exploring ever since: who are we underneath the masks we wear for society?

Her therapist told her that women are exceptionally good at masking. The observation lodged in her. She became less interested in the diagnosis itself and far more consumed by what it revealed about the performance we call modern life – the constant self-editing, the shape-shifting to meet other people's expectations, the distance between who we are and who we present ourselves to be.

Out of that inquiry came a framework built on seven

intelligences she believes are not only foundational to conscious leadership, but increasingly invaluable in a world where AI is handling more of what used to require human effort. The framework is not anti-technology. It is, in Murray's own framing, the human compass for navigating an AI-driven world – consciously, responsibly, and with the full weight of humanity intact.

THE AUTHENTIC INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK™

Seven human intelligences essential for conscious leadership in the age of AI.

1. **Emotional Intelligence** – The roots of self-awareness and conscious leadership.
2. **Creative Intelligence** – The capacity to imagine far beyond what currently exists.
3. **Cultural Intelligence** – Reading the room of society, not just the boardroom.
4. **Collective Intelligence** – Wisdom that only emerges when diverse voices are genuinely heard.
5. **Spiritual Intelligence** – The anchor of deep purpose beneath surface-level ambition.
6. **Learning Intelligence** – The commitment to remain a student – always, and without ego.
7. **Foresight Intelligence** – The rare ability to see around corners before others even look up.

THE SIGNALS BENEATH THE SURFACE

One of the most striking insights Murray has surfaced through her work is a fundamental shift in how authority flows. For most of the past two decades, influence moved vertically – from the famous, the institutional, the credentialed. Now it moves horizontally, peer to peer, through communities built on relatability rather than status.

“We are entering a world where technology is accelerating faster than human self-awareness. Authentic Intelligence is not anti-AI – it is the human compass we will need.”

– CARMEN MURRAY

The Edelman Trust Barometer calls this the insular trust mindset – people increasingly trust those who feel relatable over institutions, celebrities, or traditional authority. But Murray's reading goes deeper than the data. Beneath almost every major cultural trend of the moment – AI anxiety, the analogue revival, anti-corporate sentiment, the rise of hyper-local communities, the resurgence of spirituality and wellness – she finds the same thing: a human being who wants to feel seen, grounded, and emotionally safe again.

People are no longer looking for information, she observes. They are seeking wisdom. In a world of infinite content, what has become genuinely scarce is the sense that someone, somewhere, actually understands what you are going through. The modern consumer has also become far more psychologically sophisticated than many organisations realise – decoding corporate behaviour in real time, comparing what brands say to how they actually move through the world.

WHAT RELEVANCE LOOKS LIKE NOW

When Murray speaks about helping organisations become Future Fit, she is not describing a technology upgrade or a rebrand. She is describing a fundamental shift in orientation

“Beneath almost every trend right now – AI anxiety, the analogue revival, community building, the hunger for spirituality – there is one human desire: to feel seen, grounded, and emotionally safe again.”

– CARMEN MURRAY



— from the certainty of what has always worked, toward the intellectual humility of a perpetual beginner. Relevance, in her framing, is not about visibility. It is about resonance.

For women inside those organisations, the conversation Murray's community keeps returning to is both simpler and more profound than strategy. It is the question of identity itself. Who am I beyond my title, my role, and the expectations society has mapped onto me? Women who are extraordinary achievers on paper are privately navigating exhaustion, reinvention, and the relentless pressure of holding multiple worlds together simultaneously.

Increasingly, the question these women are asking is not how to advance within the system — but how to help redesign it. How to build something that outlasts them, that creates opportunity for others. The shift from personal achievement to collective stewardship, Murray says, is one of the most powerful movements she has ever witnessed.

AFRICA IS THE FUTURE

There is a particular frustration Murray carries about how Africa — and South Africa specifically — is positioned in the global imagination. Not as a signal, but as a problem to be solved. Not as a source of wisdom, but as a recipient of it. She wants to dismantle that framing entirely.

Innovation in Africa, she argues, is born from necessity rather than excess. The continent knows how to build under pressure, how to adapt *“What makes Africa powerful is precisely what others have dismissed.”*

when systems fail, how to create community when resources are limited. Those are not the characteristics of a developing market. In the age of uncertainty the entire world is now entering, they are among the most valuable capabilities

any society can possess.

Beneath that practical resilience, she identifies something even more important: Ubuntu. The philosophy — I am because we are — offers a counterweight to the hyper-individualised, increasingly polarised world that technology and economic anxiety are producing. At a moment when human connection is fracturing globally, Africa holds a living philosophy of interdependence that the world is going to need. Murray's vision is not passive. Africa's rise will require citizens, businesses, and leaders who step into the role of active nation builders — who align success with purpose, who create opportunity rather than waiting for it. The time has come, she insists, to stop seeing Africa as the pawn in the global story — and to start recognising it as the grandmaster.

THE VIEW FROM THE FRONT

Murray forecasts from an unusually wide aperture. Rather than leading with technology, she leads with people — working outward from the emotional reality of lived experience toward the macro forces shaping it. The most dangerous place to make decisions from, she says, is behind a desk, disconnected from the complexity of real human lives.

When asked which of the two great forces of the moment worries her more — AI, or the erosion of trust — her answer is immediate: trust. AI is an amplifier. The danger is not the technology itself, but what happens when it is wielded in a world already fracturing. When institutions lose credibility, fear fills the vacuum. Collaboration breaks down. And the amplifier does exactly what amplifiers do — it makes everything louder, including the dysfunction.

Looking ahead, two trends dominate her thinking. The first is Corporate Unrest — a deepening friction between large institutions and the people



they serve, fuelled by AI-driven displacement and widening inequality. The second is the Empire of One – the rise of the individual as a complete economic and creative unit. Together, they point toward a fundamental redefinition of how work, power, and ownership are understood. Not in a decade, but in the next three years.

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE VISION

The public version of Carmen Murray – confident, visionary, relentlessly forward-facing – exists alongside a private one that most people never see. She describes the texture of her mornings: the meditation before rising, the deliberate grounding, the conscious alignment of mind before the day's work begins. The work of staring into the world's chaos – reading every uncomfortable signal, looking beneath every headline – takes a toll that must be actively managed.

She speaks honestly about the loneliness that can accompany seeing patterns before others do. Despite her public visibility, she is fundamentally someone who treasures depth – stillness, meaningful connection, creativity, spirituality, and

the kind of quiet that allows genuine thought. She is not driven by status. She is driven by impact. By meaning. By the desire to leave the world better than she found it.

A MESSAGE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

There is a young woman somewhere in Johannesburg – perhaps many of them – who cannot yet see herself in Carmen Murray's story. Who looks at the cover of this magazine and feels the distance between where she is and where she imagines she would need to be before she could consider herself a leader.

Murray's message to her is not motivational shorthand. It is a reorientation of the entire premise.

"You are not a future leader. You are leading right now. Thousands of young people are looking up to you. Don't worry about the chaos – focus on building the ark."

It is, in many ways, the same message that animates everything Murray does: that the future is not something that happens to us, but something we build – with intention, with each other, and with the full, unmasked weight of who we actually are.

"You are not a future leader. You are leading right now. Don't worry about the chaos – focus on building the ark."

– CARMEN MURRAY

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TALITA BOODHRAM

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*Chief Impact Officer at MiDesk
Global and inventor of the MiDesk
- A social entrepreneur, U.S.
Department of State TechWomen
2025 Emerging Leader, and YOU
Magazine Top 10 Local Hero.*

FROM SCHOOLBAG TO SOLAR DESK: How One South African Teen Changed the World, One Child at a Time

Imagine doing your homework on a muddy floor, straining your eyes in the dark, with no desk, no chair, and no light. For millions of children across rural South Africa and beyond, this is not a hypothetical - it is everyday reality. It was this reality that I, as a 16-year-old, refused to accept. Today, I am not only the inventor of the MiDesk, a proudly South African patented innovation - I am living proof that one young person with a bold idea and relentless drive can genuinely change the world.

The Spark That Inspired It All

It started, as many great ideas do, with a simple question - but this one began at home, during an ordinary moment that changed everything. When I was 16, I was watching the news with my dad when we saw a segment showing children sitting under a tree at school, without desks. It struck us immediately, and we began talking about it. If these children didn't have desks at school, how were they expected to do their homework at home? That question stayed with me.

At the same time, I had been tasked with a science project at school. Instead of choosing something abstract, I decided to explore this very problem - the barriers preventing children in under-resourced communities from studying effectively. Rather than stopping at research, my dad and I went into the kitchen and built the very first prototype using cat litter boxes and spade handles. It was simple, unconventional, and deeply meaningful. That project went on to win gold at my science fair.

My mom saw something bigger in it. She recognised the potential to turn a school project into a scalable solution. She refined the concept, added a solar-powered light and a chair, aligned it with the Sustainable Development Goals, patented the innovation, and took it to market.

While this was unfolding, I went on to pursue my studies. When I returned, I stepped into something that had grown into a powerful social enterprise - and today, my mom and I work side by side to continue building it.



The MiDesk is now a wheelee schoolbag that transforms into a sturdy, ergonomic desk and chair, complete with a built-in solar light and USB charging capability. It is portable, affordable, and self-sufficient – a personal classroom that travels with the child.

At its core, this is more than an innovation. It is a journey rooted in purpose – combining lived insight, determination, and vision to ensure that no child is left behind simply because they lack a place to learn.



The Journey

What began as my high school science project has grown into a UNESCO-endorsed global

social innovation. To date, we have empowered more than 5,000 children, transformed over 50 communities, and enabled an extraordinary 9,720 additional study hours for learners who previously had nowhere to do their homework.

The impact is measurable and profound: schools where we have introduced MiDesks report increased attendance, higher homework completion rates, and notable improvements in overall academic performance. For a child like Zinhle – a 13-year-old who is the oldest of five siblings and her family’s anchor – a MiDesk is not just a bag. It is dignity, possibility, and a future.

Our reach has attracted an incredible ecosystem of partners and sponsors including McDonald’s, Santam, Visa, Richard Mille, and MiWay, as well as institutional backing from the University of Toronto and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). I am deeply grateful for every partner who has chosen to invest in the futures of these children alongside us.

Vision & Mission

Our mission is simple and powerful: Educate. Empower. Elevate. Everything we do at MiDesk Global exists to eliminate one of the most overlooked barriers to education – the absence of a safe, stable place to learn.

My vision is bold and time-bound: I want to place a MiDesk in the hands of one million children

by 2030, in alignment with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals – twelve of which the MiDesk directly advances, including SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Every MiDesk is made using recycled materials and is fully recyclable, because our solution must never become tomorrow’s problem.

I have always believed that systemic barriers to education are not insurmountable obstacles – they are design challenges waiting to be solved. This philosophy drives everything from our product innovation to our community partnerships, and it is what has earned us the endorsement of UNESCO as an education and SDG partner.

“My goal is bold and clear: to place a MiDesk in the hands of one million children by 2030.”



Get Involved

The road to one million children requires a movement – and I believe everyone has a role to play. Here is how you can join our MiDesk family:

- **Sponsor a Child:** Your donation directly funds a MiDesk for a child in need, transforming their ability to study and succeed. Visit www.mideskglobal.com to give today.
- **Partner with Us:** Corporates, NGOs, schools,



and government bodies can partner with MiDesk Global through CSI investments, supply chain collaboration, or community deployment programmes.

- **Spread the Word:** Share our story on social media - every share reaches a potential donor, partner, or champion. Follow us @mideskglobal on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- **Get in Touch:** Reach us directly at info@mideskglobal.com or call +27 (0)83 459 2602. I would love to hear from you.

As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Together, we are putting that weapon

in the hands of children who need it most - one desk at a time.

I have also been humbled by the recognition we have received along the way:

Recognition & Awards

- Named one of South Africa's Top 10 Local Heroes – YOU Magazine
- Selected as a TechWomen 2025 Emerging Leader – U.S. Department of State
- CSI Legacy Award: Best Rising NGO
- Honoured at the Mastercard Foundation & University of Toronto African Impact Challenge, Toronto, Canada
- French Embassy 1000 Challenge – Award Recipient
- CISCO Youth Global Citizen Award – Top 50 Finalist
- Bamelela Business Awards – First Prize (Hollywood Foundation)
- Tshwane Women in Business Awards – First Runner-Up

I have dedicated my life to ensuring every child has the tools they need to learn, grow, and thrive.





PAMELA HAYNES

About the Author:

Author, Motivational Speaker, Mentor, Educator

From Senior Probation Officer to TEDx speaker, author, educator, mother, grandmother and international connector, Pamela Haynes has become known by many as "The Pivot Queen". It is a title earned through resilience, reinvention and an unwavering belief that life's setbacks can become the foundation for purpose.

Born and raised in London as a second generation British woman of Barbadian heritage, Pamela's journey was shaped by navigating spaces where she was often the first in her family to experience major milestones. From being the first to enter secondary school, to entering the workplace, every chapter required courage, adaptability and determination. Early experiences of racism and exclusion could have diminished her confidence, but instead they strengthened her resolve to create opportunities not only for herself, but for others.

The "Pivot Queen" - A Powerful Story of Resilience, Reinvention and Purpose

At the heart of Pamela's story is family. As a devoted mother and proud grandmother, she speaks openly about the importance of legacy, nurturing future generations and creating pathways that were not always visible to her growing up. Her family has remained both her motivation and her anchor throughout every season of life.

Pamela's professional career began in the probation service, following in the footsteps of her late Uncle Colin Mascoll, a respected activist in Nottingham, UK and in Barbados. Working within criminal justice gave her a profound understanding of people, systems and the importance of second chances. It also revealed her natural ability to communicate, mentor and inspire transformation in others. Yet Pamela understood that purpose is rarely confined to one lane.

Over the years, she mastered the art of the pivot.

Education became one of the cornerstones of her transformation. Pamela studied for a Diploma in Social Work and later earned a degree in Criminal Justice Studies at Kingston University, graduating in 1999. Her passion for learning continued with further studies at Goldsmiths, University of London and qualifications in teaching and lifelong learning.

Rather than seeing education as something limited to youth, she embraced continuous professional development as a lifestyle.

Her learning journey expanded far beyond academia. Pamela immersed herself in creative pursuits including flower arranging, cake decoration, balloon artistry, public speaking and writing programmes. She attended the Pree Writing Studio at the University of the West Indies Mona Campus in Jamaica and trained with respected international speakers and authors. Each new skill became another pivot point, another layer to an already dynamic career.

In 2025, Pamela faced one of the greatest challenges of her life when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was a life changing moment that tested her emotionally, physically and spiritually. Yet even during one of the most difficult periods of her journey, she chose courage over silence. Pamela began sharing her story openly to give other women hope, strength and reassurance that they are not alone.

Her honesty about breast cancer survivorship has inspired many women navigating their own health battles. By speaking publicly about fear, faith, recovery and resilience, Pamela has transformed a personal diagnosis into collective empowerment. She

reminds women that vulnerability is not weakness and that survival itself is an act of leadership.

Despite the challenges of 2025, Pamela continued to rise and evolve. Her work and impact were recognised through a number of prestigious awards during the year, including international recognition for leadership, storytelling and community empowerment. These accolades celebrated not only her professional achievements, but also her courage, authenticity and commitment to uplifting others through every season of life.

Today, Pamela is celebrated internationally as a speaker, mentor and connector. She has spoken at prestigious platforms including TEDx in Abuja, Nigeria, and at the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, where she was recipient of a fellowship from the Caribbean Global Institute. Her ability to connect people

across industries, countries and generations has become one of her defining gifts. Pamela believes deeply in collaboration, often describing her network as something to be shared generously to help others thrive.

As an author, she has used storytelling to uplift, educate and preserve community narratives. Her award winning books, including *Loving The Brothers* and *Loving The Sisters*, reflect themes of identity, resilience, healing and empowerment. Through literature, she amplifies voices that are too often unheard and creates spaces where readers feel seen and understood.

Pamela is also currently collaborating on an anthology project with colleagues at the University of East London, further expanding her contribution to literature and collective storytelling. At the same time, she is writing her highly anticipated

third novel, *Loving The Children*, which will complete her powerful trilogy. The new book is expected to continue her exploration of family, identity, trauma, healing and generational legacy.

The nickname "The Pivot Queen" resonates because Pamela embodies reinvention with authenticity. In a world where many fear change, she embraces it. Whether transitioning careers, overcoming illness, entering new industries, speaking on global stages or mentoring emerging leaders, she demonstrates that pivoting is not about abandoning your past. It is about building upon every experience to create a richer future.

Pamela's influence also extends to women's empowerment and leadership. She consistently encourages women, especially women of colour, to pursue visibility, ownership and personal growth without apology. Her journey proves that reinvention has no age limit and that even in the face of adversity, purpose can still flourish.

What makes Pamela Haynes remarkable is not simply the number of achievements she has accumulated, but the spirit in which she moves through the world. She carries wisdom with warmth, leadership with humility and ambition with generosity. She is a woman who understands that every obstacle can become an opening and every transition can become transformation.

Pamela Haynes stands as a powerful example of what it means to pivot with purpose. The Pivot Queen is not just a title. It is a movement, a mindset and a legacy still being written.





DR(H.C) ASSEM MOUSA

About the Author:

Think Tank board member in Langbustech University, Global Chair IGC, Chief Engineer EGYPTAIR.

Smart Agriculture with AI and IoT: A Path to Sustainable Food Systems

Agriculture faces unprecedented challenges from population growth, climate change, and environmental degradation. To meet future food demands sustainably, a transformation is essential. Smart Agriculture, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), offers a solution. These technologies enable precise, data-driven farming that boosts productivity while conserving resources and protecting ecosystems.

Current intensive farming relies on excessive chemicals and irrigation, causing soil degradation, water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change worsens these issues. Sustainable agriculture must balance productivity with environmental stewardship, a balance achievable through AI and IoT.

Role of IoT in Smart Agriculture

IoT creates an interconnected network of devices that collect real-time field data.

Soil Monitoring: Sensors measure moisture, temperature, pH, and nutrients, enabling precise water and fertilizer use to maintain soil health and prevent waste.

Smart Irrigation: Systems use sensor data and weather forecasts to automate watering, reducing consumption and costs.

Climate Monitoring: On-farm weather stations provide hyper-local data, improving decisions on planting, spraying, and harvesting.

Artificial Intelligence in Crop Production

AI analyzes IoT data, turning information into actionable insights.

Precision Farming: Machine learning optimizes planting times, crop choices, and field management, increasing efficiency and yield.

Pest and Disease Detection:

AI-powered image recognition via drones and cameras identifies early infestations, allowing targeted treatment that slashes pesticide use.

Reducing Chemical Dependency:

AI recommends precise chemical dosages or biological controls, helping farmers adopt sustainable practices.

Smart Livestock Farming:

IoT and AI also enhance animal husbandry.

Animal Health Monitoring:

Sensors track vital signs and behavior; AI detects early illness, enabling prompt treatment and improving welfare and productivity.

Optimized Feeding: Automated systems adjust rations based on individual animal data, reducing feed waste and methane emissions.

“As global pressures intensify, embracing this digital transformation is essential to ensure long-term food security and planetary health.”

Environmental Protection Through Smart Agriculture

These technologies directly contribute to ecological health.

Reducing Pollution: Precision chemical application prevents harmful runoff into waterways.

Conserving Biodiversity: AI tools can monitor pollinators and wildlife, helping farmers support local ecosystems.

Climate Mitigation: Efficient resource use lowers farming’s carbon footprint, while data-driven adaptation builds resilience against climate variability.

Challenges and Future Outlook
Adoption faces high initial costs, limited rural digital infrastructure, and a need for technical training, especially for smallholder farmers. Overcoming these barriers requires supportive policies, financial incentives, and training

programs. The future points toward fully integrated, efficient, and sustainable smart farms.

Smart agriculture, driven by AI and IoT, is critical for developing sustainable food systems. It enables precise management to enhance yields, protect animal welfare, and conserve the environment. As global pressures intensify, embracing this digital transformation is essential to ensure long-term food security and planetary health.





DR JAMSHID RAUPOV

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Founder & CEO, Farish.uz
Uzbekistan

Why the Future of Commerce Belongs to Open Digital Ecosystems

The global marketplace is undergoing a fundamental transformation. The era when scale alone determined market dominance: colossal budgets, giant warehouses, and tight control over physical supply chains, is fading into the past. Today's competitive advantage is built on responsiveness, personalization, and adaptability. In this new reality, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gain a unique opportunity to compete on equal terms with transnational giants. However, the viability of this model depends not merely on the availability of technologies, but on the institutional conditions of access to them. To transform SME potential into a genuine driver of macroeconomic growth, the global trade infrastructure must offer entrepreneurs frictionless access to digital ecosystems.

Platform Solutions as a New Infrastructure

The shift from traditional retail to platform-driven solutions has become the primary factor in market resilience during periods of uncertainty. The experience of international ecosystems such as Shopify, Etsy, Alibaba, and WhatsApp Business has clearly demonstrated that business survival is measured by digital mobility rather than the size of a brick-and-mortar retail network.

Digital storefronts have erased geographical boundaries, allowing local producers to capture the attention of a global audience. In parallel, fintech tools like Stripe or Square have minimized transactional friction, making mobile payments a standard part of doing business. While technologies have leveled the playing field at the basic functional level, they have simultaneously introduced new structural challenges.

Widespread digitalization carries not only advantages but also new structural risks:

Asymmetry of Platform Control:

Channels of access to consumers are increasingly concentrated around a limited number of large platforms capable of changing the rules of engagement unilaterally.

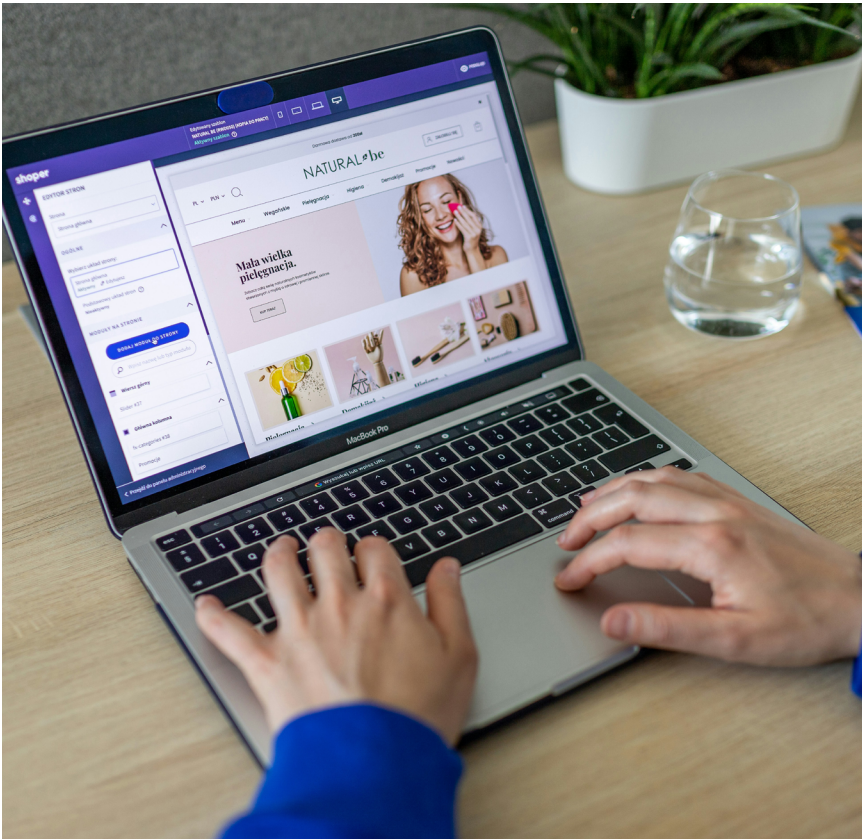
High Transactional Barriers:

Listing commissions, marketing expenses, and mandatory subscriptions impose a significant burden on the economics of an early-stage business.

Digital Inequality: In the early stages of development, such costs significantly restrict the growth of promising entrepreneurial projects.

Frictionless Access as a Growth Driver

This is precisely where the need



for a paradigm shift in support arises. In the early stages of development, entrepreneurs require low-barrier digital access: the ability to showcase their goods and services without high commissions and mandatory subscriptions.

The opportunity for the free listing of products and services during the early phases of business development is capable of shifting the economic trajectory of a young enterprise.

Reducing initial operating costs allows businesses to redirect freed-up capital toward improving product quality, optimizing logistics, and creating jobs. By lowering transactional barriers at the starting line, we stimulate the natural transition of micro-enterprises into medium-sized and eventually large enterprises. True reduction of the market entry threshold occurs when digital platforms facilitate the scaling of a local producer rather than its financial depletion.

A New Resilience for the Global Economy

This process is critical not only for individual companies but also for the systemic flexibility of

the entire global system. Amid geopolitical instability and the fragmentation of global supply chains, a distributed network of small and medium-sized enterprises becomes a key factor in the adaptability of the world economy.

The broader the access entrepreneurs have to open digital ecosystems, the higher the adaptability of national markets to external shocks. Small business transforms into a distributed risk absorber, capable of rapidly filling vacant niches, stabilizing domestic demand, and maintaining economic balance.

The Future of Open Ecosystems

The future of global commerce is being shaped at the intersection of technological accessibility and balanced regulation. When platform solutions transition from closed access models

toward more open ecosystems of interaction, the global marketplace acquires greater adaptability to external shifts. SME empowerment today is not an act of charity, but a strategic investment in the architecture of distributed economic opportunities.

The future of commerce will belong to those economies that succeed in transforming digital platforms from tools of rent extraction into a growth infrastructure for millions of entrepreneurs.

“Small business transforms into a distributed risk absorber, capable of rapidly filling vacant niches, stabilizing domestic demand, and maintaining economic balance.”

AI and Learning: How Technology is Transforming L&D



ANNE NYACHOMBA
CCXP, ACIM, CAIC™

About the Author:

Anne Nyachomba is a Certified Artificial Intelligence Consultant (CAIC) and A Certified Customer Experience Professional (CCXP),

Human-Centered Design strategist and the Founder of The CX Design & Innovation (CXDi). She holds a Masters in Customers Experience and Innovation from IE Business School in Spain.

“Technology should not replace human capability, it should expand it”

The digital revolution is no longer a distant prospect for Africa; rather, African professionals are actively auditing and architecting their own future. In a recent webinar leading up to the Learning and Development Africa Conference 2026, industry experts gathered to discuss the theme: AI and Learning: How Technology is Transforming L&D.

The session unpacked how artificial intelligence is lowering barriers to content creation, driving personalization, and closing critical skills gaps across the continent.

Topic 1: AI Gives L&D Speed, HCD Gives it Sense

Speaker: Anne Nyachomba (Customer Experience & HCD Specialist)

Anne opened the discussion with a powerful historical analogy: the late-90s transition from typewriters to computers. Computers didn't change the human need to think, write, or make decisions—they simply changed the how. AI is following the exact same evolutionary trajectory.

While modern L&D has successfully shifted its focus from “what training to deliver” to driving true performance and behavioral change, the introduction of AI brings a distinct risk. Because AI allows us to research, design, and draft at unprecedented speeds, we risk creating the wrong answers

faster if we do not ask the right questions.

“Speed alone is not enough. If we don't think about the people, then it just ends up being extra content.” — Anne Nyachomba

To counterbalance this, Anne advocates for Human-Centered Design (HCD). L&D professionals must look beyond topics and deliberately design around the learners, their real-world work, and required behaviors. Anne demonstrated a practical workflow:

- **Fido:** A free tool used to transform messy, experiential thoughts into structured, well-guarded prompts.
- **ChatGPT (Extended Thinking Mode):** Used as an expert assistant to generate deeply thought-out training frameworks.
- **Gamma:** A presentation tool that can instantly convert raw text into visually stunning, company-branded slide decks.

Anne reminded the audience that AI will never replace human expertise; its true purpose is to amplify it.

Topic 2: AI Tools for Experiential Learning

Speaker: Rhoda Kingori (Digital Learning Leader & Co-Founder of Zidi)

Rhoda shifted the focus to the psychological realities of modern



RHODA KINGORI

About the Author:

Rhoda Kingori is a thought leader, and keynote speaker co-founder and COO of Zydii, the digital upskilling platform for African SMEs, podcast host of African Hive. A Kenya Top 40 Under 40 Women honoree and holds an MBA from USIU.

learning. Today's L&D professionals are competing for the attention of a workforce raised on media like TikTok and Instagram. To achieve true experiential learning, complex concepts must be converted into multi-format, highly engaging media.

Historically, digitizing high-quality learning content required massive studio budgets and marketing agencies. Today, AI has completely democratized production, allowing L&D pros to create rich audio and video within an hour for a fraction of the cost. Rhoda highlighted three essential tools for building an affordable content workflow:

- **NotebookLM:** A tool that can synthesize complex documents and instantly generate highly conversational, realistic

podcast episodes featuring automated speakers debating the topic.

- **11 Labs:** An advanced audio tool capable of cloning a trainer's voice with natural inflections. This allows organizations to instantly translate standardized training into multiple regional accents and languages (e.g., Kiswahili, French), dramatically increasing learner relatability.
- **Heygen:** A video generation platform where users can select hyper-realistic digital avatars or upload a 30-second mobile

phone clip of themselves to generate custom training videos from a simple text script.

Rhoda concluded with a vital reminder: while micro-learning and digital clips are excellent for training retention, they should augment, not entirely replace, the profound power of human connection in learning.

The Learning and Development Africa Conference 2026 will continue to showcase how African architects are leading the charge in workplace transformation.



LnD Africa Conference 2026

Theme:
Reshaping Africa's collective image: Global access and opportunities through L&D

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RETHEKA SARAVANAN

About the Author:

Retheka is a PGDM graduate in Marketing and Digital Marketing from GIBS Business School, Bengaluru, and the Student of the Year 2026. A two-time Overall Student Excellence Awardee, Business Pitch winner, Best of Best Speaker. Current Role, Trainee Account Executive - PR at Verbly Integrated Communications.

I Wrote My Acceptance Speech a Year Before I Won!

**"எண்ணிய எண்ணியாங்கு எய்துப
எண்ணியார் திண்ணியர் ஆகப் படுறின"**

"Those who are resolute in purpose will achieve exactly what they set out to achieve — just as they envisioned it."

— THIRUVALLUVAR • THIRUKKURAL 666

There is a document saved on my phone - undated, unshared, quietly sitting in a folder, that I wrote nearly a year before the night I stood on a stage at GIBS Business School and received the Student of the Year 2026 award from Bollywood actor and producer Mr. Arbaaz Khan. It is my acceptance speech. Word for word, it is exactly what I said that evening. Not because I got lucky. Because I believed, with a certainty that sometimes frightened even me, that the moment was already mine.

This is not a story about an award. It is a story about what happens when you decide quietly, privately, and without guarantees that you are going to show up for something bigger than yourself, every single day, until the world catches up to what you already know.

The Stage Was Set Long Before the Spotlight Came!

Every year at GIBS Business School in Bengaluru, the flagship Student of the Year ceremony brings together students, faculty, parents, and distinguished guests to celebrate the very best of the

graduating cohort. The Student of the Year is not a participation trophy. Out of a batch of over 200 extraordinary individuals, each with their own ambitions, capabilities, and fire, one name is called. This year, that name was mine.

The recognition spans everything - academics, extracurriculars, competitions, leadership, and the attitude you bring to all of it. It is, in the truest sense, a measure of who you chose to be over two years.

But here is what the audience in that room did not know: I had already lived this moment. I had rehearsed it. I had written every word of gratitude, every acknowledgement, every line because somewhere in me, I had decided that when this moment arrived, I would be ready for it. Not scrambling. Not stunned into silence. Ready.

"I didn't just dream about this moment. I worked for it - consistently and wholeheartedly"

Two Years. One Principle.
When people ask what carried me

through two years of a PGDM programme: the late nights, the research, the competitions, the collaborations, the presentations, the moments of doubt. My answer is always the same two words: "Right Mindset".

Not talent. Not connections. Not luck. Mindset.

From the very first week at GIBS, I made a conscious choice: to approach every situation, every project, every setback, every opportunity with the same quality of attention and intention. Whether it was a classroom debate, a business pitch, a leadership role, or a conversation in the corridor, I asked myself the same question: Am I bringing my best here? And when the answer was no, I didn't move on. I went back.

What I have come to understand is that mindset is not a feeling. It is a discipline. It is the quiet, unglamorous work of choosing again and again to protect the wellness of your mind, to keep your inner world steady even when the outer world is turbulent. And it is precisely that steadiness that creates the conditions for extraordinary things to happen.

Consistency Is Not Exciting, Until It Is. I will be honest: Consistency is not a glamorous concept. There is no dramatic turning point, no single night of brilliance, no eureka that changes everything. There is just Tuesday. And then Wednesday. And then Thursday. Showing up. Doing the work. Refusing to let the noise; internal or external, pull you off course.

Over two years at GIBS, I accumulated what I now think of as a mosaic: academic milestones, competition wins, conference participations, leadership journeys, research projects, and collaborations that stretched me in directions I hadn't anticipated. None of these felt particularly monumental in isolation. But together quietly, cumulatively they built something. Something that, on one evening this year, was recognised in front of Mr. Arbaaz Khan, Mr. Ritesh Goyal (MD and Chairman, GIBS Group), and an audience of people I love and admire deeply.

This is my second Student of the Year recognition



as I was previously honoured as Best Outgoing Student during my undergraduate studies in 2023. I do not see it as repetition. I see it as proof that the compound interest of consistency is real. That every small, deliberate act of showing up adds to a balance you cannot yet see, until one day, you can.

"I never chased the title. I focused on the journey. and somewhere along the way, it led me here"

The Gestation Period

Looking back, I think of these two years as my gestation period, the quiet, unseen stretch of time in which something significant is being formed, before it is

ready to emerge. During a gestation period, from the outside, nothing looks like it is happening. But everything is.

I gave GIBS that time. I gave myself that time. I did not hurry toward outcomes or become fixated on milestones. I invested in the process in learning, in growing, in becoming the kind of person whose name, when called, did not surprise her.

And when that name was called, when I walked up to receive a trophy and a prize of ₹51,000 from hands I had only ever seen on a cinema screen, I was not overwhelmed. I was grateful. Because I had already written this moment. And Thiruvalluvar, two thousand years ago, had already explained why it worked.

My Message to those who Are Starting their Journey

Protect your mind like it is your most valuable asset because it is. The wellness of your mind is not a luxury for after you succeed. It is the foundation upon which success is built.

And manifest. Not as a passive wish, but as an active declaration. Write the speech. Build the vision. Live as though the moment is already on its way to you. Because when you are resolute in purpose, as Thiruvalluvar says, you will achieve exactly what you set out to achieve, just as you envisioned it.

I am proof of that. And so, I believe, can you



DR. AMRIT PATTOJOSHI & DR.
ANINDA SIDHANA

About the Authors:

Dr. Amrit Pattojoshi: Leading neuropsychiatrist, known for combining neuroscience with empathy to reshape mental healthcare in India.

Dr. Aninda Sidhana: Renowned mental health professional who believes in the healing power of conversation, empathy, and awareness.

“When women in mental health unite, they don’t just share a profession; they weave a safety net.”

THE ARCHITECTURE OF “US” Safe Stadiums to Safe Minds: A Global Manifesto for a Game Well Played

Healing does not happen in the sterile comfort of a clinical pedestal. It happens in the trenches. As the world pivots toward the 2026 FIFA World Cup, we are witnessing a collision of two defining storms: a warming planet and a fracturing collective mind. In this “Heat of the Game,” the most radical act of leadership is the Sacred Pause. Because a game is only “well played” if the souls playing and watching it are safe. This architecture is not merely about logistics; it is built on the sacred bond of mentorship and the unstoppable synergy of women working in tandem to heal a broken world.

A. The Thermal Pressure Cooker: Climate & the Cortex

A stadium is a neuro-chemical reactor. When global temperatures rise, the heat isn’t just environmental—it’s neurological. Science tells us that thermal stress hijacks the prefrontal cortex, the seat of our impulse control. It erodes our shared humanity, turning joy into aggression.

Our vision, “Safe Stadiums to Safe Minds,” is the operationalization of the UN 2030 Agenda (UN SDG #3 and UN SDG #13). We have seen the failure of reactive security; we now choose the humility of proactive care. We cannot fortify concrete while neglecting the cortex. Under our clinical direction, the ‘PlayWell’ Protocol transforms mass gatherings into sanctuaries, replacing punitive force with clinical triage.

B. The Power of us Safety Net

When women in mental health unite, they don’t just share a profession; they weave a safety net. The strength of this manifesto lies in collective feminine resilience—the ability to look at a stadium and see not just a crowd, but a thousand individual heartbeats.

By joining forces, we are:

- **Decentralizing Care:** Moving healing from the “clinical cell” to the “grassy pitch.”
- **Normalizing the “Abnormal”:**
- Validating the survivor’s journey through shared narratives like WINGS and Dignity Dialogues.
- **Creating Psychosocial Cooling Sanctuaries (PCS):** Sensory zones, optimized at 21°C, that offer a thermal and neurological sanctuary in the midst of chaos.

C. Allyship in Action: The Architecture of Mentorship

True progress is built on the shoulders of those who came before us. This manifesto is a tribute to the spirit of mentorship and allyship, from the ethics instilled by Dr. Roop Sidana, to the shared clinical frontiers we explore today.

In global advocacy, true healing happens in the shadows. Mentorship isn't about creating followers; it's about lighting the way so the "Trench" can be brought into the "Light." And when external voices try to sow discord or trigger a "fight" within this circle? We don't. We don't trade in the currency of ego; we trade in the currency of Friendship. In this circle, no one is "boss" we are a team, sewn into the fabric of a shared, safe dream.

THE MANIFESTO: THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE HEART

I don't look for "broken" beings or parts to fix,
Or sterile lines where the shadows mix.
I look for the bridge we forgot to build,
For the heavy voices, silent and filled.
Healing is a team sport, fiercely played,
In the stadium's glare and the deepest shade.
It's not found in a vial or a clinical cell,
But in the raw, jagged stories we finally tell.
"Labels are for jars upon a shelf," Not for a soul trying to
find itself.
If our science stays locked in a quiet room,
It can't help a stadium—or a woman—bloom.
A billion dollars in the ground,
Concrete rising all around.
But tell me, in the roar and glare,
Is there a mind in safety there?
When the mind starts to waver in the crowd's heavy roar,
We don't offer a diagnosis; we offer a door.
From the grassy pitch to the dust of the street,
We make the circle of care complete.
No one heals in a vacuum of one;
The game isn't over until the healing is done.
We are the ocean, the drop, and the tide—
Walking this journey, side by side.
"We built the gates, we paved the way;
Now let the Safe Mind lead the play."

"When global temperatures rise, the heat isn't just environmental—it's neurological."





TAKA SANDE

About the Author:

Taka Sande is the Managing Director of Fasford and Principal at Anvil Advisory, where he supports boards, executives, and aspiring non-executive directors to strengthen governance effectiveness, ethical leadership, and board readiness. He is a Certified Director®, Project Management Professional®, and author of Roadmap to Non-Executive Directorship – The Essential Handbook.

Beyond the Board Seat: What Mentoring 100+ Aspiring Directors Has Taught Me

Everyone wants a board seat. Far fewer are truly preparing for one.

Over the past few years, I have mentored more than 100 leaders who aspire to serve on boards. They have come from different sectors, professions, countries, and stages of leadership. Some were accomplished executives. Some were already close to the boardroom. Others were only beginning to imagine themselves as future directors.

Across these many journeys, one truth has become increasingly clear: Board ambition is common. Board readiness is not.

That distinction matters because the boardroom is not a reward for seniority. It is a place of responsibility, judgment, ethics, restraint, and stewardship. The quality of a director is not measured only by what they know, but by how they think, how they listen, how they challenge, and how they carry the burden of institutional trust.

Here are five of ten lessons that have stood out from mentoring more than 100 board-aspiring leaders. This is a two part series

Part 1 of 2: The Mindset Shift

1. Wanting a board role and being ready for one are different things

Many professionals are attracted to the boardroom because they see influence, status, and strategic

relevance. What they do not always see is the weight of responsibility. A board role requires maturity beyond personal achievement. It requires the ability to think in terms of stewardship, accountability, ethical leadership, and long-term institutional health. Many want the seat. Fewer are doing the work to deserve it.

2. Executive success does not automatically create board effectiveness

This is one of the most common misconceptions I encounter.

Executives drive delivery. Boards provide oversight. Executives manage performance. Boards evaluate performance. Executives operate inside the business. Directors must remain above operations while still being sufficiently informed.

The transition from executive to director is not merely positional. It is psychological. Some leaders make that shift well. Others carry operational instincts into a governance environment that requires independence, perspective, and discipline.

3. A polished profile is not enough

Board CVs, LinkedIn profiles, personal branding, and visibility all matter. But they do not replace substance.

One of the most revealing questions I ask aspiring directors is

simple: What exactly do you bring to a board?

Not in broad motivational language. Not in generic executive phrases. Specifically.

Strong candidates answer with clarity. Weaker candidates answer with ambition. Boards do not appoint vague potential. They appoint relevant value.

4. Governance maturity shows up before appointment

You can often see governance maturity before appointment. It shows up in how people handle complexity, the questions they ask, how they separate ego from stewardship, and whether they understand accountability beyond compliance.

Some leaders have impressive credentials but still think like operators seeking control. Others, even before appointment, already show the instincts of responsible directors.

Titles can be granted quickly. Judgment cannot.

5. Visibility may open doors, but substance keeps you in the room

Visibility matters. Thought leadership matters. Networks matter. A credible public profile matters.

But visibility without substance is fragile.

Eventually, every aspiring director reaches a point where image is no longer enough. Board readiness becomes visible in how they reason, how they engage with complexity, how they challenge constructively, and how they hold ethical tension.

A visible but shallow profile may attract attention. A grounded and credible profile earns trust. And trust remains the real currency of the boardroom.



“The quality of a director is not measured only by what they know, but by how they think, how they listen, how they challenge, and how they carry the burden of institutional trust.”

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RAKHI SINGH
AUTHOR/EDUCATOR/
ENTREPRENEUR

About the Author:

Multi-award winning and best-selling author of fiction and non-fiction children's books. Believes in connecting communities through storytelling.

Raising Mindful Children in the Age of AI

“Alexa, why is Diwali celebrated and what is its significance?”

Tanu asked the question casually while colouring in her drawing book.

Beside her, Grandma sat at the dining table shaping laddoos for Diwali. Her wrinkled hands moved gently through the flour and ghee, but for a brief second she paused and smiled to herself. A little amused, a little wistful. Why had Tanu not asked her instead? She would have loved to tell the story of Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya, of light over darkness, of the fragrance of marigolds and oil lamps from her own childhood. But perhaps this is the world we live in now.

Questions are answered by gadgets. Curiosity is directed towards screens. Even before a child turns towards a parent or grandparent, a digital voice is ready with an instant response.

And somewhere in this quiet shift, human interaction slowly begins to fade.

Is this entirely wrong? Perhaps not. Technology today is woven into every aspect of our lives. From warming food in a microwave to asking questions to search engines or AI tools, modern technology undoubtedly eases our workload and simplifies life. I believe in embracing progress. Every generation evolves with its time, and resisting change entirely is

neither practical nor wise.

Children today are astonishingly quick at adapting to technology, often much faster than their parents. They are growing up in a world driven by urgency, stimulation, speed, and instant gratification.

Everything is available now. Answers are immediate.

Entertainment is endless. Attention spans are shrinking.

And while this digital efficiency has its advantages, it also creates an invisible overload of information, stimulation, and noise. In the rush to consume more, children are slowly losing the ability to sit with silence, patience, wonder, and emotional reflection.

Yet despite all the advancement around us, children still deeply need the same timeless things:

Attention.
Emotional safety.
Imagination.
Storytelling.
Rituals.
Connection to heritage.
Moments of stillness.

Children are like little saplings. They need nurturing, warmth, reassurance, and roots strong enough to hold them steady in changing winds.

When every answer comes from a device, children slowly stop turning towards relationships for comfort, guidance, or understanding. Dependency on technology begins replacing emotional dependency on family. And that subtle imbalance can quietly affect relationships within a home.

No technology, however intelligent, can replace emotional presence. A machine may answer a question, but it cannot read the silence behind it. It cannot sense fear in a child's eyes, excitement in their voice, or loneliness hidden behind "I'm fine." Emotional resilience is built through human interaction, through eye contact, shared experiences, affectionate gestures, storytelling, patience, and empathy.

I often think back to my own childhood summers spent at my grandparents' home. There were no smart devices or endless entertainment. Evenings were

slower. We sat together on woven charpais under the open sky while elders narrated stories from the Ramayana, folktales from villages, and memories from a time long gone. At that age, we may not have understood the deeper meanings, but those stories quietly shaped our emotional world. They taught us patience, kindness, courage, and belonging.

That too, was mindfulness though we never called it by that name. Today, parents walk a very delicate path. Parenting in the digital age is perhaps one of the most emotionally demanding responsibilities. The challenge is not to completely remove technology from children's lives, but to create a balance.

Cultural wisdom can become a powerful tool in this balance.

Parents can introduce mindfulness and emotional grounding through storytelling, role play, festivals,

music, shared meals, nature walks, family rituals, and conversations with grandparents. Something as simple as explaining the meaning behind a prayer, listening to soft classical music before bedtime, cooking together during festivals, or sharing stories from family history can gently anchor children emotionally.

These moments may appear old-fashioned in a fast-moving world. But perhaps these are the very moments children will remember most. These are the emotional hooks that stay with them long after childhood passes.

Can AI help in raising emotionally resilient children? To an extent, yes. Used wisely, it can support creativity, learning, language preservation, and curiosity. It can help bridge communication gaps and open new ways of understanding the world.

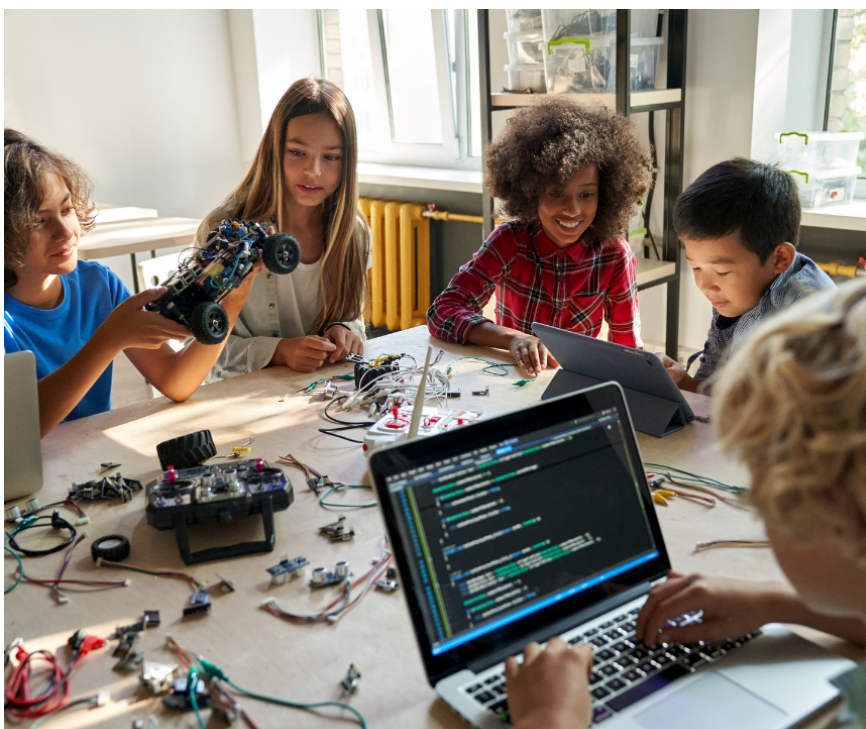
But AI can only supplement parenting, never replace it.

It cannot replace the warmth of a grandmother's voice telling a story. It cannot recreate the comfort of shared laughter around a dining table. It cannot teach compassion through human touch or emotional security through presence.

In a world where children can ask machines almost anything, perhaps the deeper challenge for parents is teaching them how to listen to themselves, to others, and to the stories that make them human.

Our heritage is not merely tradition; it is emotional grounding.

And in this rapidly evolving digital age, attention may well become the greatest inheritance we leave our children.



Ovarian Cancer Day: Understanding the Silent Disease and the Importance of Awareness

8 MAY

What if the signs your body was giving you seemed too ordinary to take seriously? A little bloating, tiredness after routine activities, discomfort in the stomach, or changes in appetite may not immediately raise concern. Yet for some women, these symptoms can point to something more serious. Ovarian Cancer Day exists to create awareness about a disease that is often difficult to recognize in its early stages and to encourage people to pay closer attention to their health.

Ovarian cancer develops in or around the ovaries, which are part of the female reproductive system and play an important role in producing eggs and hormones. It is often referred to as a silent disease because the symptoms can be subtle and are frequently mistaken for common digestive or lifestyle related issues. As a result, many cases are diagnosed after the disease has progressed.

The symptoms of ovarian cancer are not always obvious, but understanding them can make a difference. Common symptoms include persistent bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, frequent urination, unexplained tiredness, and changes in digestion. These symptoms can occur for many reasons and do

not automatically mean cancer. However, when they continue over time or become unusual for a person's normal routine, they should not be ignored.

One of the most important messages of Ovarian Cancer Day is the value of awareness and early action. There is currently no single screening test that detects ovarian cancer effectively for everyone, making awareness especially important. Knowing family medical history, attending regular health checkups, and seeking medical advice when symptoms persist can support earlier diagnosis and treatment.

Several factors may influence the likelihood of developing ovarian cancer. Increasing age and family history can play a role, particularly when close relatives have experienced ovarian or breast cancer. However, having risk factors does not guarantee someone will develop the disease.

Beyond physical health, ovarian cancer can affect emotional and mental wellbeing. Receiving a diagnosis often brings uncertainty and fear. This is why emotional support is just as important as medical care. Encouragement from loved ones, support groups, healthcare professionals, and community awareness initiatives

Important Dates of May:

- **1 MAY:** International Worker's Day
- **1 MAY:** Global Love Day
- **3 MAY:** International Bereaved Mother's Day
- **8 MAY:** World Ovarian Cancer Day
- **15 MAY:** International Day of Families
- **21 MAY:** Cultural Diversity Day

can help people feel less alone.

Ovarian Cancer Day also reminds society to normalize conversations around women's health. Creating open conversations encourages earlier attention and reduces stigma around reproductive health topics.

Awareness should not be limited to women alone. Families, workplaces, educational institutions, and communities all have a role in encouraging healthcare awareness.

Ovarian Cancer Day is ultimately a reminder that health should never be postponed. Listening to the body, recognizing changes, and seeking timely advice are acts of care, not fear. Through awareness, education, and support, more people can take action and move toward healthier futures with confidence and hope.

Celebrating Cultural Diversity Day: A World Connected Through Differences

21 MAY

Imagine a world where everyone dressed the same, spoke the same language, celebrated the same traditions, and thought in the same way. Life would become predictable and limited. What makes our world meaningful and vibrant is the diversity of people, cultures, beliefs, traditions, and experiences that exist across different communities. Cultural Diversity Day is a celebration of these differences and a reminder that our uniqueness is what brings color, creativity, and connection into society.

Observed globally, Cultural Diversity Day encourages people to recognize, respect, and value the many cultures that shape our world. It is more than a celebration of traditional clothing, food, music, or festivals. It is an opportunity to understand that every culture contributes something valuable and that learning from one another helps create stronger and more inclusive communities.

One of the main reasons cultural diversity is important is because it promotes understanding and mutual respect. In today's world, people from different countries and backgrounds interact daily through education, work, travel, and technology. Without understanding different cultures, misunderstandings and stereotypes can grow. Taking time to listen,

learn, and appreciate other perspectives builds trust and reduces barriers between people. Cultural diversity also helps preserve identity and heritage. Every culture carries stories, customs, languages, values, and traditions that have been passed down through generations. These elements reflect history and give people a sense of belonging. As societies become increasingly global, protecting cultural identity becomes even more important to ensure traditions continue to live and inspire future generations.

Another important aspect of cultural diversity is its contribution to creativity and innovation. When people with different experiences and viewpoints come together, they bring fresh ideas and unique ways of thinking. This exchange often leads to better problem-solving and more creative outcomes. Whether in business, education, science, or the arts, diversity encourages progress by introducing perspectives that may otherwise be overlooked.

Education plays an essential role in creating awareness about cultural diversity. Schools and educational institutions can help students develop respect and curiosity toward different cultures from an early age. Learning about global traditions, histories, and values encourages empathy and prepares

individuals to live and work in diverse environments. Education helps replace assumptions with understanding and creates more accepting communities.

Workplaces also benefit from cultural diversity. Employees from varied backgrounds bring different skills, experiences, and approaches that strengthen teamwork and communication. Inclusive work environments often lead to greater collaboration, employee satisfaction, and better decision-making because people feel respected and encouraged to contribute their ideas.

However, celebrating cultural diversity should go beyond a single day or event. True appreciation means creating spaces where everyone feels included and respected every day. It means challenging discrimination, encouraging equal opportunities, and being open to conversations that help people understand one another. Even small actions such as showing interest in another culture, respecting traditions, or participating in community events can make a meaningful difference.

Cultural Diversity Day reminds us that differences should not divide people but connect them. Diversity allows societies to grow while preserving individuality and identity. When people choose respect over judgment and curiosity over assumptions, communities become stronger and more united.

By embracing cultural diversity, we create a world where every voice matters and every culture is valued. In understanding one another, we discover that despite our differences, humanity remains our strongest connection.

June 2026 Horoscope: A Month to Reflect and Move Forward

June 2026 brings a feeling of movement, fresh energy, and opportunities to reset routines and priorities. As the middle of the year approaches, many people may find themselves reflecting on goals, relationships, and personal growth. This month encourages balance—moving forward while also taking time to understand what truly matters. Whether you are looking for motivation, clarity, or simply a little inspiration, here is a simple horoscope guide for all zodiac signs.

Aries: June may push you to slow down and think before making quick decisions. Career opportunities could appear, but patience will help you choose wisely. In personal relationships, open communication may bring positive changes.

Taurus: This month may feel more stable and comforting. Financial planning and practical decisions could work in your favor. Spend time with people who make you feel supported and relaxed.

Gemini: June may bring social energy and new conversations. You could feel more confident expressing ideas and taking initiative. Balance busy schedules with moments of rest.

Cancer: This may be a month of emotional clarity and personal reflection. Focus on what makes you feel secure and fulfilled. Family and close relationships may become more meaningful.

Leo: Your natural confidence may help you move ahead this month. Career growth and recognition could become possible if you remain consistent. Avoid taking on too many responsibilities at once.

Virgo: A month for learning and personal growth. You may feel inspired to explore new ideas or skills. Travel or education could play an important role.

Libra: Balance becomes important this month. Relationships may require honest conversations and understanding. Trust your decisions instead of seeking approval from everyone around you.

Scorpio: You may feel ready for change and personal growth. Let go of situations that no longer bring value. This can be a strong month for rebuilding confidence.

Sagittarius: Adventure and curiosity may guide you through June. New learning opportunities or travel plans could appear. Stay practical while exploring new possibilities.

Capricorn: This month may highlight discipline and progress. Small consistent efforts could lead to noticeable results. Try not to become too focused on work alone.

Aquarius: Creative ideas and new perspectives may shape your month. You may feel inspired to try something different or reconnect with personal interests. Stay open to unexpected opportunities.

Pisces: June may encourage emotional balance and self care. Trust your instincts but remain realistic while making decisions. Spending time with supportive people may help you feel recharged.

As June 2026 unfolds, remember that horoscopes are meant to inspire reflection rather than predict the future. Every month brings new possibilities, but personal choices, effort, and mindset continue to shape the journey ahead. Use this month as a chance to pause, reset, and move forward with confidence, hope, and a positive outlook.



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MAY 2026

BUSINESS NETWORK EDITION

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