



**RV  
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*Go, change the world*

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# BEFORE THE OFFER LETTER

WHAT CAMPUS PLACEMENTS NEVER TEACHES YOU





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DR PHANI KUMAR PULLELA  
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*This book is published with the kind support of RV University, Bengaluru, as part of its ongoing initiative to strengthen the culture of mentorship and lifelong learning.*

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*Title: Before the Offer Letter-The conversations that decide your career*

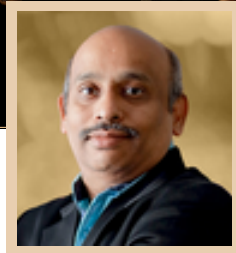
*Author: Dr. Phani Kumar Pallela*

*Publisher: RV University, Bengaluru (Supported Publication)*

*Edition: First Edition, 2025*

*ISBN: [To be assigned]*

*Printed and Bound in India*



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*Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela is a distinguished scientist, innovator, educator, and mentor whose work stands at the intersection of research, entrepreneurship, and human development. Widely respected for his “Design Thinking by Panchatantra” philosophy, he believes that the most profound lessons in leadership, innovation, and decision-making are often hidden within timeless stories rather than textbooks.*

*He holds a PhD from the University of Mysore and completed his postdoctoral fellowship at Marquette University, USA. Over the course of his academic and research career, Dr. Pullela has contributed significantly to the fields of biotechnology, innovation systems, and applied research. He is the holder of six U.S. patents, has authored more than 25 research publications, and has played a pivotal role in securing over ₹30 crore in competitive research funding.*

*In recognition of his contributions to innovation and translational research, Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela received the Biotechnology Product, Process Development & Commercialization Award from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, presented by the President of India in 2017.*

*Beyond accolades, his true impact lies in mentorship. He has guided 47+ entrepreneurs, mentored 30+ startups, and inspired students who have collectively won 60+ national and international awards across innovation, research, and entrepreneurship.*

*Known for blending scientific rigor with human insight, Dr. Pullela is committed to nurturing thinkers, not followers emphasizing depth over speed, purpose over prestige, and long-term impact over short-term success, principles that define this book.*

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# *Introduction*

*This Book Is Not About Placements*

*Let me start with a confession.*

*This book is not about placements.*

*If you are looking for:*

- *How to crack coding rounds*
- *How to answer HR questions*
- *How to dress for interviews*
- *How to build a “perfect” resume*

*You will not find that here.*

*There are already thousands of books, videos, trainers, and influencers shouting those instructions at you.*

*And yet, every year, I see the same confusion.*

*The same fear.*

*The same self-doubt.*

*The same heartbreak.*

*Which tells me one thing very clearly:*

*The real problem is not lack of preparation.*

*The real problem is lack of clarity of thought.*

*For more than a decade, I have worked closely with students before placements, during placements, and long after placements. I have seen students who got the highest packages collapse emotionally within a year. I have seen students with the lowest packages quietly build extraordinary lives.*

*I have seen toppers panic.*

*Average students bloom.*

*Silent students surprise everyone.*

*And “successful” students feel empty.*

*And after all these years, I can say this without hesitation:*

*What decides your trajectory is not your skill alone,*

*but the conversation you have with yourself.*

*Unfortunately, nobody teaches you how to have that conversation.*

*The Missing Layer Nobody Talks About*

*In colleges, we talk about:*

- *Technical skills*
- *Soft skills*
- *Communication skills*
- *Leadership skills*

*But we never talk about psychological skills.*

*No one prepares you for:*

- *Watching your classmates get placed before you*
- *Handling rejection after rejection*
- *Choosing between peace and package*
- *Saying no to something “good” for something “right”*
- *Dealing with parents, relatives, neighbours, and comparisons*
- *Feeling like you underachieved—even when you didn’t*
- *Knowing when to wait and when to move*

*These are not technical problems.*

*These are mindset problems.*

*And they are dangerous precisely because they are invisible.*

*Students don't talk about them openly because:*

- *You are adults now*
- *You don't want to worry your parents*
- *Your friends may judge or laugh*
- *Teachers often lecture instead of listening*

*So doubts stay inside.*

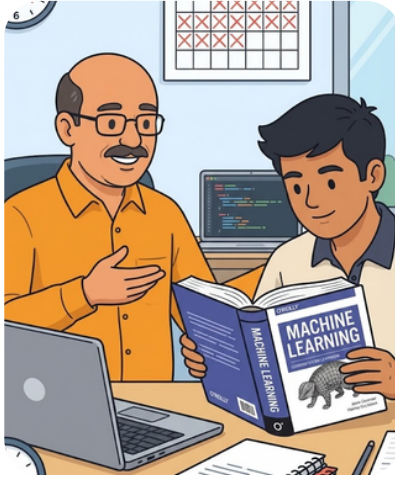
*They grow quietly.*

*And then one bad decision taken in panic, comparison, or fear can change the direction of an otherwise brilliant life.*

*This book exists to interrupt that moment.*

## TALE I

### Teja and the Myth of “Right Background”



*Boss, let me tell you about Teja.*

*Teja walked into my life around 2021–22. A mechanical engineering graduate by degree. But in his heart pure software, machine learning, and data science.*

*He was from BIT, Bihar. A good institute, no doubt. But let's be honest, not exactly Silicon Valley when it comes to exposure. Opportunities were limited. Ecosystems were limited. Mentors were limited. Ambition, however, was unlimited.*

*I've known Teja since childhood. So one day he came to me and asked a very simple question:*

*“Boss, how do I become a machine learning expert?”*

*I smiled.*

*Because here's the irony - I'm a chemistry professor.*

*Not a machine learning engineer.*

*Not a data scientist.*

*Not a Python ninja.*

*But mentorship is not about knowing everything.*

*It's about knowing what matters.*

*So I told him something very simple - something most people ignore. "If you are switching domains, entering as a fresher, and you don't even have an offer in hand don't become inch deep and mile wide. Become inch wide and mile deep. Obsess over one thing."*

*One domain.*

*One obsession.*

*No shortcuts.*

*There is a very famous machine learning book by O'Reilly — thick, heavy, expensive (around ₹2500). I bought it and gave it to him with just one condition.*

*Not ten rules.*

*Not motivational speeches.*

*Just one rule. Every single day:*

*Five hours.*

*Sit in one place.*

*No getting up.*

*No mobile phone.*

*No distractions.*

*After those five hours, anytime in the day, he would message me:*

*"Boss, today I completed this much."*

*That's it.*

*No drama.*

*No dopamine.*

*No "motivation needed".*

*No distraction.*

*No applying for any other company.*

*It took him about two and a half to three months. Slowly. Painfully. Deeply.*

*Then I called one of my students, Dhruv, and asked him for something very specific.*

*Not a job.*

*Not a referral.*

*Not sympathy.*

*I said, "Give him an opportunity for an interview."*

*That distinction matters, Boss.*

*A written test happened.*

*An interview happened.*

*Then another interview.*

*Then another.*

*Three... four... multiple technical teams interacted with Teja.*

*And something strange happened.*

*Nobody rejected him.*

*But nobody hired him either.*

*The feedback was consistent:*

*"He's very good... but he's too strong for a fresher role."*

*"We don't have a pure machine learning opening right now."*

*Now imagine this — a guy coming repeatedly, meeting teams, impressing everyone, yet not fitting neatly into any checkbox. That itself raised eyebrows.*

*Finally, a director noticed the pattern and asked:*

*"Why is this guy coming again and again?"*

*Dhruv explained, "He's strong. Everyone likes him. But there's no exact vacancy."*

*That's when a mature decision happened.*

*They said, "If he's that good, why don't we onboard him in a mixed role — data analysis with machine learning exposure?"*

*Salary discussion happened.*

*Offer happened.*

*Teja joined.*

*Now comes the interesting part.*

*Within weeks, Teja came back to me and said:*

*"Boss, the work takes barely three hours a day. I'm not challenged."*

*That's when I told him something very important — and very uncomfortable.*

*"Boss, my mentorship ends here.*

*A school, a college, a teacher, or even a parent can help you get a job.*

*After that, you must find a mentor inside the industry."*

*So he went back and spoke to Dhruv again.*

*Dhruv gave him golden advice:*

*"Do your assigned work.*

*Don't ask for a hike.*

*Don't ask for a title.*

*Just ask for more work."*

*And Teja listened.*

*For the next six months, Teja did something most people won't.*

*One role — officially paid.*

*Another role — quietly contributed.*

*No credit hunting.*

*No LinkedIn noise.*

*No complaints.*

*Managers were happy.*  
*Delivery managers were thrilled.*  
*Output was extraordinary.*  
*Then something happened.*  
*A new product was being developed.*  
*Suddenly, everyone asked:*  
*“Who can handle this?”*  
*They remembered Teja.*  
*They called him and said:*  
*“We are revising your salary.”*  
*Not an increment.*  
*Not an appraisal.*  
*They said:*  
*“We are multiplying your salary by 2.5×.*  
*This is a correction, not a reward.*  
*In September, we’ll revise it again.”*  
*So technically:*  
*From 1× to 2.5×*  
*Another revision pending*  
*All within one year and two months*  
*Boss, this didn’t happen because of luck.*  
*This happened because:*  
*He didn’t chase salary first.*  
*He didn’t get stuck with his degree label.*  
*He didn’t wait for the “perfect role”.*  
*He chose depth over drama.*

*The Message of Teja's Story*

*Sometimes, Boss, the first break should be about learning — not money.*

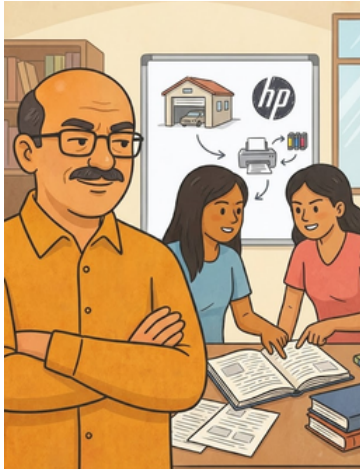
*If you are genuinely passionate about a domain, your past degree does not imprison you.*

*You can enter one field through another — if you are willing to go inch wide and mile deep.*

*And trust me — the salary will eventually chase you.*

## TALE 2

### Pranamyia and the Forgotten Third Factor



*One fine day, sometime around March–April, Pranamyia walked in with her friend. Two students. One ambition. Zero confusion.*

*They said,*

*“Boss, a company is coming. We are very passionate about this company. We both want to get in. Together. Same company. What should we do?”*

*Now listen carefully, Boss - this question itself already put them ahead of 90% of the batch.*

*The company was Hewlett-Packard.*

*Not “any company”.*

*Not “first offer”.*

*Not “whatever comes”.*

*They wanted HP.*

*They also knew something important being passionate is not enough. You need a strategy.*

*So I told Pranamyia something I tell very few students.*

*“Boss, there is a route to almost program a company into selecting you — especially at fresher level.*

*But it is very difficult.”*

*She didn't blink.*

*She said, “Boss, I'm willing.”*

*So I laid out the route.*

*I said:*

*“You don't prepare for HP.*

*You prepare about HP.”*

*Not just:*

- *Syllabus* ✗
- *Coding questions* ✗
- *HR answers* ✗

*But:*

- *History*
- *Evolution*
- *Products*
- *Business logic*
- *Strategy*
- *Failures*

*Why they exist the way they exist*

*So Pranamyia went deep.*

*She discovered that HP started in a garage and not just any garage. A story they are fiercely proud of. Two entrepreneurs, small tools, limited money, unlimited curiosity.*

*Then she found something most students never notice.*

*HP was among the first companies to sell hardware at a loss.*

*Why?*

*Because HP understood something fundamental.*

*Printers were excellent. But printers alone don't make money.*

*Cartridges do.*

*So HP priced printers almost at cost. Sometimes even lower than the sum of their parts. If you dismantle a printer, Boss, the components themselves cost more than the retail price.*

*But HP wasn't selling printers.*

*They were selling habit.*

*Once you own an HP printer, guess what you buy next?*

*HP cartridges.*

*That single insight changed everything:*

*From office-scale printers*

*To personal printers*

*To personal computers*

*To a mass consumer strategy*

*This "razor-and-blade" model later became famous. Many copied it. HP was among the pioneers.*

*Now comes the interview.*

*Out of 150 students, written test happened. Interviews started.*

*Pranamyia and her friend were technically good — not geniuses, not average.*

*Solid.*

*But in the interview, they didn't behave like candidates.*

*They behaved like students of the company.*

*They spoke about:*

*HP's garage origins*

*Their printer strategy*

*Why personal printers disrupted the market*  
*How business decisions shaped engineering choices*  
*Interviewers noticed.*  
*They always do.*  
*Both got selected.*  
*Later, Pranamy moved on:*  
*Left HP*  
*Went for her master's at a northeastern university*  
*Eventually landed as a senior engineer at Tesla*  
*But Boss, this story is not about HP.*  
*And it's not about Tesla.*  
*It's about a myth.*

*Most students believe campus placements depend on:*

*Luck*  
*Technical skills*  
*Wrong.*

*There is a third factor, and it's the most ignored one.*

*The Forgotten Third Factor*

*How deeply you prepare about the company.*

*If you:*

*Study their history*

*Understand their products*

*Know their markets*

*Observe their strategy*

*Connect your projects even remotely to what they do*

*Then something magical happens.*

*During:*

- *Pre-placement talks*
- *Q&A sessions*
- *Interviews*

*You start asking relevant questions.*

*And Boss, here's the real secret:*

*They lock your face in their memory even before results are declared.*

*Even before selection.*

*Even before final interviews.*

*Your name keeps surfacing.*

*Because for freshers, remember this:*

*Everyone is new*

*Everyone is nervous*

*Everyone is preparing "skills"*

*Very few are preparing alignment.*

*If in your first one minute, you say:*

*"I've done a project that connects even at a one-in-a-millionth scale to what you build.*

*You are one of my dream companies."*

*Then Boss, even a moderate performance often beats a perfect one.*

***The Message of Pranamya's Story:***

***Getting selected is not only about  
how good you are.***

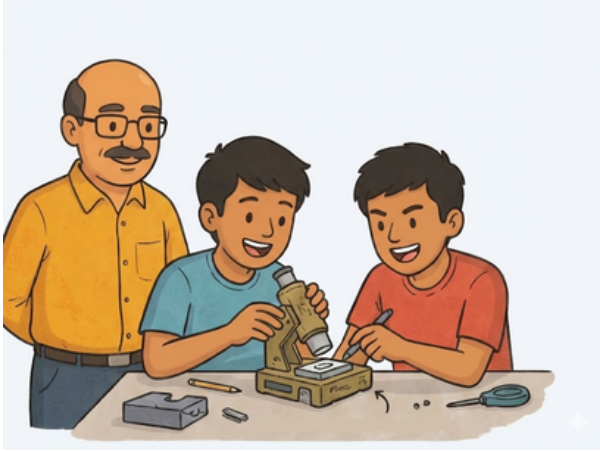
***It is about how well you understand  
who you are talking to.***

***Companies don't just hire skill.***

***They hire belonging.***

## TALE 3

### Srinivas SM and the Courage to Be Young



*Boss, this story is about Srinivas SM — a mechanical engineer by degree, but an explorer by instinct.*

*From day one, Srinivas had a very clear philosophy. He used to say, “Boss, if at the age of 18–20, I start behaving like a 30-year-old, then what’s the point of being young?”*

*He wasn’t reckless.*

*He wasn’t careless.*

*He came from a humble financial background, so he understood responsibility very well.*

*But he also understood something most students don’t.*

*Youth is not for safety.*

*Youth is for experiments.*

*So instead of chasing security immediately, Srinivas and his friend decided to work on a project called Pocket Microscope.*

*This was the time when a Stanford innovator had created something called Foldscope — a brilliant idea, ultra-low cost, paper-based microscope.*

*I happened to receive a few of those.*

*Supply chains broken.*

*Vendor prices shot up.*

*Movement restricted.*

*They couldn't even step out — and when they did, police were on the roads.*

*While their friends were drawing decent salaries, these two were stuck at home, watching savings evaporate, dreams stall, and timelines explode.*

*Boss, this phase broke many people.*

*What's remarkable about Srinivas is this —*

*He didn't romanticize suffering.*

*After nearly two years, he reached a point where:*

*He couldn't go forward*

*He couldn't go backward*

*And that's when reflection happened.*

*One of his elders — a grandfather or close relative — finally intervened.*

*Almost forcefully.*

*“Enough. Go work. Become an employee.”*

*Srinivas resisted initially. But within three months, something clicked.*

*He said to himself:*

*“If I'm going to be an employee anyway, why not apply to the right company?”*

*He applied.*

*He got into an MNC.*

*And Boss, this is where the real twist comes.*

*The company loved him.*

*Not because he was obedient.*

*Not because he followed instructions blindly.*

*But because he had already lived five careers in one:*

- *Sales*
- *Marketing*
- *Business development*
- *Finance*
- *Operations*
- *Technical execution*

*Entrepreneurship had trained him differently.*

*Where others said:*

*“That’s not my role.”*

*“That’s not possible.”*

*“That’s not my responsibility.”*

*Srinivas said:*

*“Let’s try.”*

*He behaved like a program manager, a team lead, a problem solver.*

*Every team he joined wanted him back.*

*Why? Because an entrepreneur never has Plan B.*

*Plan A has to work — so you prepare harder, think wider, and execute deeper.*

*Today, he’s in his third–fourth year at the MNC, doing exceptionally well.*

*He still says:*

*“Boss, entrepreneur by heart.”*

*And that’s perfectly fine.*

**The Message of Srinivas' Story:**

*If a student tells me:*

*“Boss, I want to try entrepreneurship for 2–3 years before entering the job market.”*

*I'm not worried at all. Because if you survive entrepreneurship — When you return, You don't become a fresher. You become unstoppable.*

*Being young is not about security.*

*It's about building capacity.*

## TALE 4

# Chetan and the Myth of “Relevant Experience”



*Boss, this story is about Chetan — a mechanical engineering graduate who did what many students are scared to even think about.*

*He worked for two years in core mechanical roles. Not glamorous jobs. Not LinkedIn-worthy designations. Just honest, odd, core-related work. After those two years, something became very clear to him.*

*“Boss, this is not what I want to do for the rest of my life.”*

*So he decided to do the most uncomfortable thing possible.*

*Shift domains.*

*Mechanical → Software.*

*Now here’s where most people panic:*

*“I’m non-core”*

*“I’m too late”*

*“Others are already ahead”*

*“How can I compete?”*

*Chetan didn't panic.*

*He planned.*

*He spoke to a friend who runs software training programs. This was around 2020. The plan was*

*simple:*

*Three months of Java*

*Then exposure to Dassault Systèmes tools, especially ENOVIA*

*So training started.*

*There was a mixed batch:*

*Software background students*

*And Chetan — mechanical, non-core*

*I was part of the WhatsApp group. I used to observe silently and occasionally guide.*

*One day, the trainer assigned Chetan a deep technical task — something even software students*

*find tricky.*

*I got concerned.*

*I called my friend and asked:*

*“Boss, why are you putting pressure on him? There are software guys in the batch. He's non-core.”*

*My friend laughed.*

*He said something that changed how I look at domain shifts.*

*“Boss, forget core and non-core.*

*In just one month, Chetan is the only person here who understands what it means to enter a job market and deliver.”*

*That shocked me.*

*I asked:*

*“How is that possible? One month of Java?”*

*He said:*

*“That’s the beauty. You’re looking at knowledge. I’m looking at experience.”*

*For two years, Chetan had learned:*

*How to take instructions*

*How to follow instructions*

*How to deliver on instructions*

*How to be accountable*

*That skill — Boss — is domain-independent.*

*Most freshers don’t struggle because they can’t code.*

*They struggle because they don’t know how to work.*

*People think:*

*“Core experience matters.”*

*Wrong.*

*Experience matters. Not the domain.*

*This is why many successful professionals — and entrepreneurs — emerge from Western societies.*

*At 15, they work at places like McDonald’s, coffee shops, pizza joints.*

*Not for passion.*

*For survival.*

*They learn:*

*How to talk to customers*

*How to listen*

*How to behave under pressure*

*How to show up every day*

*Those skills compound.*

*Back to Chetan.*

*Within three months, he shifted domains.*

*Today?*

*He's a team lead in a very good company*

*With a salary well above ₹25 LPA*

*How is that possible?*

*Because he didn't start from zero.*

*He started from two years of lived experience and applied that discipline to a new domain.*

*This is exactly what happens in entrepreneurship too.*

*If you fail once and start again, your probability of success increases — because you're not starting fresh, you're starting experienced.*

*Chetan did the same thing in the job market.*

*Yes, software was uncomfortable.*

*Yes, he was behind initially.*

*Yes, it was scary.*

*But he applied everything he already knew about delivery, ownership, execution and outpaced people who were “core” but inexperienced.*

***The Message of Chetan's Story***

***Stop obsessing over relevant domain experience.***

***Start respecting real experience.***

***If you've worked before — anywhere — You are already ahead.***

***Domains can be learned.***

***Discipline cannot.***

## TALE 5

### Pawani and the Power of Silence



*Boss, this story is about Pawani.*

*Extremely soft-spoken.*

*And I mean extremely.*

*For every three or four words, she would speak one word. Calm. Quiet.*

*Minimal.*

*Roughly 20% of our students fall into this category — and unfortunately, they suffer the most during placement season.*

*Now here's the twist.*

*Pawani was the 2014 I-Section class topper. Academically brilliant.*

*Consistent. Sharp.*

*But when interviews started, the usual advice started pouring in.*

*Soft skills trainers said:*

*“You need to be outspoken.”*

*“You need to express more.”*

*“You need to talk more.”*

*And as usual, good intentions did what they often do. They created self-doubt.*

*Pavani came to me disturbed.*

*“Boss, people are saying I won’t be successful. They are saying I will fail.”*

*I looked at her and asked:*

*“Why are you deciding whether you like a curry or not before even tasting it?”*

*Somebody said something. Fine.*

*Now go attend interviews. Let’s see reality.*

*Here’s my belief, Boss — and I say this without hesitation.*

*Being selective with words is not a weakness in corporate life.*

*It is a huge strength.*

*Corporates don’t need everyone to talk.*

*They need people to work.*

*And for work:*

*We need thinkers*

*We need listeners*

*We need people who don’t overreact, overtalk, or oversell*

*Pavani was still worried.*

*“They are saying I’ll fail, Boss.”*

*Somebody said something. Fine.*

*Now go attend interviews. Let’s see reality.*

*Here’s my belief, Boss — and I say this without hesitation.*

*Being selective with words is not a weakness in corporate life.*

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*They need people to work.*

*And for work:*

*We need thinkers*

*We need listeners*

*We need people who don't overreact, overtalk, or oversell*

*Pavani was still worried.*

*"They are saying I'll fail, Boss."*

*So I told her something deliberately counterintuitive.*

*"Why don't you fail?"*

*She looked confused.*

*I said:*

*"Go fail in five companies.*

*You have nine months of placement season anyway.*

*Fail in half a dozen. Then we'll sit and fix."*

*That took pressure off immediately.*

*Then she asked the most honest question:*

*"Boss, if I have to succeed... tell me one trick."*

*And the truth is — she didn't need a trick.*

*So I told her:*

*"The personality you already have is exactly what many companies want."*

*Then I gave her one instruction:*

*"For the first five interviews, don't change anything.*

*Just be yourself. Trust me."*

*She trusted me.*

*She went for her first interview.*

*And Boss — she got selected.*

*She came running back, smiling:*

*"Boss, I got selected!*

*I asked her:*

*"What did you do differently?"*

*She said something beautiful.*

*“I didn’t change anything.*

*When they asked questions, I paused for 10 seconds before answering.*

*Then I replied calmly.”*

*That pause did two things:*

*It showed confidence, not confusion*

*It ensured accuracy, not noise*

*No negative remarks.*

*No feedback about being quiet.*

*In fact she was selected at a higher role and higher package.*

*There was a salary bracket from ₹6–10 LPA.*

*Pawani was taken at the highest end.*

*That solved the debate permanently.*

### ***The Message of Pawani’s Story***

***Not every suggestion deserves a place in your head.***

***Changing personality takes years, not weeks.***

***Trying to imitate someone else during interviews creates stress, not success.***

***If you are:***

***Quiet → build depth***

***Soft-spoken → build clarity***

***Reflective → build precision***

***Trust your instincts.***

***Invest in your natural strengths.***

***The world doesn’t reward noise.***

***It rewards impact.***

## TALE 6

### Manogna and the Price of Peace of Mind



*Boss, this story is about Manogna.*

*Technically — one of the best software engineers I have ever known.*

*No exaggeration.*

*She was brilliant. Sharp logic. Clean code. Calm under pressure.*

*She won half a dozen awards with me. Hackathons. Technical recognitions.*

*Faculty appreciation.*

*Everything was ticking perfectly.*

*Manogna had one clear idea in her head.*

*“Boss, for my capability, there is a salary level  $X$ .*

*Anything below  $X$  — I don’t want.”*

*Fair thought. Logical thought. Even justified.*

*So when companies came with salaries below  $X$ , she did something remarkable.*

*She didn’t sit idle.*

*She helped her classmates.*

*She guided them, mentored them, debugged their code, prepared them for interviews, and watched them get placed.*

*By March, the atmosphere changed.*

*Panic entered silently.*

*Most of her classmates, some far less talented, were placed.*

*And now the comments started.*

*“You’re so good at teaching us, but you’re not placed?”*

*“Maybe being talented doesn’t help.” (Laughter. Casual remarks. Silent judgments.)*

*Boss, this hurts, especially when you know you’re capable.*

*April passed.*

*May came.*

*Placement season was nearing its end.*

*Then one company arrived.*

*Manogna:*

- *Cleared the online assessment*
- *Cleared the technical written test*
- *Cleared five rounds of interviews*

*And then — bam.*

*She got:*

- *A technical role*
- *Salary above X*
- *Exactly the kind of work that matched her capability*

*On paper — perfect ending.*

*But when I met her later, I asked a different question.*

*“Boss, if you could go back, would you do anything differently?”*

*She didn’t hesitate.*

*She said something very honest — and very painful.*

*“Boss, I would have taken a below-X salary offer first, and then chased this company as my second option.”*

*That surprised many people but not me.*

*I asked her why.*

*She said:*

*“Boss, our real value doesn’t change because of a company’s stamp.*

*But sadly, society believes it does.”*

*This is where the myth lives.*

*“I belong to ₹10 LPA.”*

*“I belong to ₹20 LPA.”*

*“This is my level.”*

*Boss, this is a myth.*

*What she explained next is something every placement student needs to hear.*

*“If my college policy allows a second offer below a certain salary,*

*I would first take any decent offer.”*

*Not for herself.*

*For peace of mind.*

*She said:*

*“Boss, it’s not for me.*

*It’s for the neighbour lady.”*

*Once you are placed:*

*Neighbours stop talking*

*Relatives stop questioning*

*Parents stop worrying*

*And here’s the painful truth, Boss.*

*The neighbour doesn’t talk to the student.*

*The neighbour talks to the parent.*

*Then during lunch or dinner, the parent says something casually:*

*“See, their son is placed...”*

*And if the student is already stressed, that one sentence can start:*

- *Arguments*
- *Shouting*
- *Crying*
- *Emotional breakdowns*

*All for what?*

- *Ego.*
- *Pressure.*
- *Silence.*

*Manogna said:*

*“What I did was emotionally very expensive.*

*It took a severe toll on me and my family.”*

*She was clear about one thing.*

*“If any junior asks me for advice, I will never ask them to walk the path I walked.”*

*Her advice was simple:*

*First job = peace of mind.*

*Second job = dream job.*

*Take the first offer that comes, if policy allows. Then calmly prepare and chase what you truly deserve.*

*Because once your mind is calm, Your performance improves.*

*The Message of Manogna's Story*

*Placement is not just about salary.*

*It's about mental bandwidth.*

*Ego delays success.*

*Peace accelerates it.*

*First, silence the noise.*

*Then chase your destiny.*

## TALE 8

### Charan Kumar and the Power of Staying Put



*Boss, this story is about Charan Kumar.*

*If campus placements had a “lowest package” column,*

*Charan’s name would have been there.*

*It was the only offer he had.*

*Lowest salary in the college.*

*A bond of two years and three months — meaning:*

*Two years compulsory*

*Three months’ notice to quit*

*No escape route*

*Before joining, Charan came to me and asked the obvious question:*

*“Boss, what should I do?”*

*So I asked him two questions instead.*

*Question One: Why are you obsessed with the package?*

*In two years, Boss, most fresher salaries flatten out.*

*Someone earning more today  
and someone earning less today  
will be almost equal after two years.*

*Think differently:*

*For two years, someone is paying you to train you.*

*I once heard a senior manager from a large software studio say:*

*“The first two years of a fresher are a loss for us.*

*Only after that do we start making money.”*

*So whether the salary is small or big,  
you’re still being invested in.*

*Question Two: Why are you thinking about quitting even before joining?*

*Charan smiled nervously.*

*“Boss, everyone is saying it’s a mass recruiter.*

*People are laughing.”*

*I told him:*

*“Your success will be a story people quote later.*

*Not today.”*

*Then I gave him one instruction.*

*“Within three to six months, find one good person in that company who can  
mentor you.”*

*Not the loudest.*

*Not the most powerful.*

*The nicest and most sensible.*

*And Boss, in every company, people already know:*

*Who is toxic*

*Who is decent*

*Who actually cares*

*So Charan joined.*

*Observed.*

*Listened.*

*Within three months, he found a mentor.*

*He shared his real story:*

*Responsibility toward his father*

*Dream of buying a house for him*

*Desire for stability and growth*

*The mentor listened.*

*Then came the advice:*

*“Pick this one domain and go deep.*

*Everyone says it’s dying — but trust me.”*

*Charan came back to me for a second opinion.*

*“Boss, everyone says this technology is dying.”*

*I said:*

*“Perfect.*

*Do a few online courses.*

*Become inch wide, mile deep.*

*Invest 30–60 minutes daily.”*

*He trusted.*

*And he invested — every single day.*

*Two years passed.*

*One day, his manager called him and said:*

*“I heard Company A has a vacancy. Why don’t you apply?”*

*He applied.*

*He got selected.*

*His salary?*

*Tripled.*

*This is important, Boss.*

*During bond periods:*

*No hikes*

*No corrections*

*So after two years, your true market value is often 2×–3× your salary.*

*Then something interesting happened.*

*His manager said:*

*“Why don’t you also apply to Company B?*

*My friend is there.”*

*He applied.*

*He got selected again.*

*This time — even more salary.*

*Now Charan was confused.*

*He went back to his manager and said:*

*“Sir, I got selected in both.”*

*The manager smiled and said:*

*“Then why don’t you apply to the company I’m moving to?*

*I’ll recruit you there — higher salary, on-site opportunity.”*

*Boss, this fellow who started with the lowest package:*

*Bought a house for his father*

*Built long-term career security*

*Positioned himself in a domain he can stay in for 20 years*

*Years later, just before his marriage, he met me and asked:*

*“Boss, is my success because of you or because of my industry mentor?”*

*I told him something very important.*

*Success doesn't belong to the mentor.*

*Failure doesn't belong to the mentor either.*

*Advice is neutral.*

*What matters is:*

*Your trust*

*Your consistency*

*Your follow-through*

*You trusted advice.*

*You executed without complaint.*

*You stayed patient.*

*That's why you succeeded.*

*Worst case?*

*Even if that domain had failed,*

*you would still have become inch wide, mile deep —*

*and that never goes waste.*

### ***The Message of Charan's Story***

***Don't reject beginnings because they look small.***

***Low package is temporary.***

***Skill depth is permanent.***

***Mentors guide.***

***But belief and execution decide.***

***Sometimes, staying put is the fastest way forward.***

## TALE 9

### Sonu and the Rarest Skill of All



*An incredibly pleasant human being.*

*Not loud.*

*Not flashy.*

*Not dramatic.*

*Just... genuinely pleasant.*

*During one campus placement drive, something unusual happened. In the first round itself, the*

*company randomly selected a few students and sent them to meet their CEO / regional head /*

*senior leader — not for interviews, not for evaluation, but almost as a courtesy interaction.*

*These interactions are not technical rounds.*

*They are observation rounds.*

*Nowadays, this happens even during pre-placement talks:*

*When students ask questions*

*When leaders interact casually*

*When they try to sense the student ecosystem*

*Sonu was one of the students sent in.*

*I was outside.*

*She went in.*

*After some time, she came out and said very casually:*

*“Sir, they told me not to attend the technical round. I can directly go to HR.”*

*I was confused.*

*She went to HR.*

*HR spoke to her.*

*And while her classmates were still writing tests and attending interviews,*

*Sonu was announced*

*selected.*

*Even I was scratching my head.*

*Why?*

*Later events answered that question.*

*After getting selected, Sonu did something that revealed her true nature.*

*She didn't relax.*

*She didn't disappear.*

*She trained 5–10 classmates who were still struggling. Many of them eventually got placed —*

*because of her support.*

*Then she joined the company.*

*Within two months, I received a phone call.*

*She was excited beyond words.*

*“Boss! They’ve given me additional responsibility. I’m building teamwork between members. I’m conducting activities. And... I’m already promoted!”*

*I was stunned.*

*Two months.*

*One promotion.*

*Later, I happened to meet that senior manager — casually, much later.*

*I asked him directly:*

*“Boss, one doubt has stayed with me. Why did you select a girl for a technical role without a technical interview?”*

*His answer stayed with me forever.*

*He said:*

*“When I spoke to her, I deliberately tried to provoke negativity.”*

*He asked things like:*

*“How are your faculty?”*

*“Are internships good?”*

*“How are opportunities?”*

*“Any problems in your system?”*

*Normally, people respond like this:*

*“Some faculty are good, some are bad.”*

*“There is scope for improvement.”*

*“Opportunities are okay.”*

*Balanced answers. Diplomatic answers.*

*Sonu didn’t do that.*

*He said:*

*“In my entire career, I’ve never met someone who could see positive in everything.”*

*No complaints.*

*No subtle criticism.*

*No excuses.*

*Only appreciation.*

*At that moment, he realized something.*

*“Skills can be trained.*

*Attitude like this cannot.”*

*He said:*

*“For sheer ability to remain positive, she is an asset to any team.”*

*That was his instinct.*

*And his instinct was right.*

*Within:*

*3 months → First promotion*

*1–2 years → Two more promotions*

*The company bent rules to retain her.*

*Why?*

*Because when someone:*

*Sees positives*

*Brings calm*

*Builds bridges*

*Never poisons conversations*

*They become the emotional backbone of teams.*

*The Message of Sonu's Story*

*Being positive is not naïve.*

*It is strategic.*

*Teams don't collapse because of lack of skill.*

*They collapse because of negativity.*

*If you already see positives — protect that gift.*

*If you don't — build it deliberately.*

*Sometimes, the single most powerful career skill is this:*

*Be someone others want to work with.*

## TALE 10

### Anoop and the Self-Doubt Before the Finish Line



*Boss, this story is about Anoop.*

*One of those scary-good students.*

*I still remember — first semester, we were discussing a project in class. The next day, Anoop walked in with the project completed. Not half-done. Not mocked up. Completed. Incredible.*

*And honestly, a little frightening.*

*Anoop was from my first batch, so he's very close to my heart. From the beginning, one thing was clear — he wanted to go for MS. No confusion. No Plan B. That was the plan.*

*We wanted the best for him.*

*And he got it.*

*He was selected into Northeastern University — one of the top universities globally for a specialized*

*data analytics–type master’s program. He did well academically.*

*Everything was on track*

*Because he was going abroad, Anoop informed the placement office:*

*“I won’t sit for placements.”*

*The placement team was happy — one less student to manage.*

*I wrote his recommendation letters.*

*He got admitted.*

*Visa interview was scheduled — F-1 visa, Chennai Consulate.*

*Now comes the real story.*

*The night before the visa interview, around 11:00–11:30 PM, I got a phone call.*

*Half-asleep, I answered.*

*“Boss... what should I do?”*

*Anoop was panicking.*

*He said:*

*“Boss, what if I don’t get the visa?*

*I shouldn’t have skipped placements.*

*At least I should have sat for one company.”*

*Boss, for one full year, this fellow was calm.*

*Focused.*

*Confident.*

*And suddenly — just before the final hurdle — Arjuna syndrome.*

*Exactly like the Mahabharata.*

*Just before the Kurukshetra war, Arjuna’s legs shook.*

*I asked him:*

*“For one year, you were confident. Why now?”*

*But logic doesn't work at 11:30 PM, the night before a visa interview.*

*So I did the only thing that mattered at that moment.*

*I said:*

*“Don't worry.*

*One of my classmates has a company.*

*If visa doesn't come, I'll get you a ₹75,000 per month job.*

*Go sleep peacefully.”*

*That's it.*

*He trusted me.*

*He slept.*

*Next day:*

*Visa interview done*

*Visa approved*

*MS completed with strong performance*

*Scholarship, credentials, everything*

*Today, he's doing extremely well at Cisco (or Oracle — either way, thriving).*

*Years later, I met Anoop again.*

*I asked him:*

*“If you had to redo everything, what would you change?”*

*He answered immediately.*

*“Boss, I would have sat for placements and taken one job — even ₹3 LPA was enough.”*

*I was surprised.*

*He explained:*

*“Boss, I could convince my parents.*

*I could convince my neighbours.*

*I could convince everyone.*

*But when you sit alone in a visa interview hall,*

*just before the final gate opens...*

*self-doubt creeps in.”*

*Not because you are weak.*

*But because you are human.*

*He said:*

*“To prevent that last-moment panic,*

*having one job in hand gives peace of mind —*

*even if you never plan to join it.”*

*And this is the key insight, Boss.*

*Even the most confident, talented, and passionate students*

*experience self-doubt just before success.*

*It's not failure.*

*It's psychology.*

### ***The Message of Anoop's Story***

***Dreams require courage.***

***But courage also needs insurance.***

***Even if your plan is higher studies, even if your heart is set elsewhere —***

***Secure one option for peace of mind.***

***You may never use it. But it will protect you when doubt whispers at the final step.***

***Sometimes, success is not about confidence alone — it's about calm at the critical moment.***

## TALE 11

### Ramya and the Day the Company Begged



*Boss, this story is about Ramya.*

*I recruited Ramya when she was very young, barely 21, just after her B.Sc. At that time, we were building a small startup team and needed someone reliable, sharp, and hungry to learn.*

*She ticked every box.*

- *Efficient.*
- *Energetic.*
- *Incredibly smart.*
- *Fast learner.*

*Like all good people in startups, she didn't stay confined to one role. Slowly, she became:*

- *Front office*
- *Finance*
- *Inventory management*

- *Inventory management*
- *IPR and data tracking*

*Basically, the glue that held things together.*

*Within three months, she got a 50% salary hike.*

*Then reality of startups kicked in.*

*For about one to one-and-a-half years, no hikes.*

*One fine day, even salary got delayed.*

*Put together, she worked with us for about two to two-and-a-half years.*

*Then one day, Ramya submitted her resignation.*

*My director immediately called me:*

*“Boss, she is an incredible asset.*

*We’ll double her salary. Please make her stay.”*

*I spoke to Ramya.*

*She calmly asked:*

*“Boss, you only tell me — what should I do?”*

*I said:*

*“Leaving is not a bad idea. But I need your final answer — otherwise my manager will shout at me.”*

*She was clear.*

*“No, Boss. I want to pursue my career as planned.”*

*I conveyed this to the director.*

*Then came the final offer:*

*“If required, we’ll triple her salary.”*

*Why?*

*Because she was doing the work of three people.*

*Boss — here’s the part most people don’t realize.*

*After Ramya left:*

*We hired three different people*

*Paid them more than her salary*

*They were inefficient*

*They struggled with startup culture*

*Two of them left abruptly*

*We suffered — badly.*

*Years passed.*

*Ramya's career exploded.*

*She became the Executive Assistant / Personal Secretary to the Vice President of Mercedes-Benz.*

*Her salary crossed mine — by a long margin.*

*Then she moved into a large investment firm, handling serious investment work.*

*Her profession evolved.*

*Her responsibility grew.*

*From her starting salary, her compensation increased by nearly 50× over time.*

*Recently, when I met her again, I asked her something I had always wondered.*

*“What gave you the confidence to quit, even when the company was ready to triple your salary?”*

*She smiled and reminded me of something I had once told her.*

*“Boss, when you recruited me, you told me one thing:*

*First, learn the work so well that the company cannot afford to lose you.”*

*She believed that.*

*She worked towards that.*

*And when the company started begging —*

*“2× salary... 3× salary... please stay...”*

*She realized something very powerful.*

*This is my real worth.*

*That moment gave her confidence.*

*She told me something beautiful:*

*“When a company goes into request mode when you resign,  
it is not a bad sign — it’s a certificate of value.”*

*And she’s absolutely right.*

### **The Message of Ramya’s Story**

**Don’t chase salary first.**

**Chase irreplaceability.**

**Every company wants maximum work for  
minimum pay — that’s normal.**

**But when you reach a level where:**

**Losing you hurts**

**Replacing you costs more**

**The system shakes when you leave**

**You are in a pivotal position.**

**Reach that level first.**

**After that — money, growth, confidence everything falls into place.**

## TALE 12

# Sahithya and the Frog-in-the-Well Illusion



*Boss, this story is about Sahithya.*

*Sahithya came to me along with her father. Both of them had one clear concern.*

*“Boss, we want a better placement than what she currently has.”*

*Now let me tell you who Sahithya really is.*

*She is a top 3–top 5 student in her class.*

*Her programming skills are so strong that if I want something developed, I’ll go straight to her.*

*That level of technical confidence. Calm. Precise. No drama.*

*She also comes from a background where:*

*A sibling works in a large MNC*

*Strong professional networks already exist*

*So I asked a very direct question.*

*“Why are you limiting yourself to only campus placements?”*

*Why not leverage your network and apply off-campus?”*

*Immediately, both the student and the parent reacted.*

*“Boss, off-campus salaries are low.”*

*“They’re marginal.”*

*“Campus companies give higher packages.”*

*I was scratching my head.*

*My data doesn’t say that.*

*In fact, the best salaries in the world are not restricted to campuses. They come from:*

- *High-growth startups*
- *Elite teams*
- *Deeply selective hiring processes*
- *Long interview cycles*
- *Stock options and ownership*

*If a 30-member team in a billion-dollar startup is hiring, they don’t care which college you’re from.*

*Every person they hire has to be best of the best.*

*So I told Sahithya again:*

*“Use your sibling’s network.*

*Apply aggressively.*

*Shoot your shots.”*

*Reluctantly, she did.*

*And guess what?*

*One shot hit the target.*

*She got an interview.*

*Then another.*

*Then another.*

*The process ran for 2–3 months.*

*About 7 rounds of interviews.*

*Most students would break.*

*Sahithya thrived.*

*She got selected.*

*Now here's the part that left me stunned.*

*After her selection, the company called me directly. They got my number from Sahithya.*

*They said:*

*“One of your students has joined us.*

*Can we come to your university to recruit for two more roles?”*

*Boss, pause here.*

*This girl didn't just get placed.*

*She turned the company into a recruiting partner for the university.*

*Later, she messaged me:*

*“Boss, thank you so much.”*

*I replied honestly:*

*“I should be thanking you.*

*Because of your skill, this company now sees the university as an asset.”*

*Incredible, Amma. Truly incredible.*

*And this is where I tell students something important.*

*Most of you are like Anjaneya (Hanuman).*

*You have immense power.*

*But you don't know it.*

*Until Jambavantha sits next to you and says:*

*“You are the only one who can cross this ocean.”*

*Most students are far more capable than what campus opportunities alone can reveal.*

*The problem is perspective.*

*When you sit in college, you’re like a frog in a well:*

*“Among these 100 people, I’m number 5 or 10.”*

*But when you step into the national or global market:*

*Companies hire 50–100 people at a time*

*Across India*

*Across the world*

*You might be ranked 15 globally —*

*and they will roll out a red carpet for you.*

### ***The Message of Sahithya’s Story***

***Don’t underestimate yourself by***

***limiting your arena.***

***Campus placements are one window,***

***not the whole world.***

***If you are truly skilled:***

***The market is much larger than your classroom***

***Your ranking improves when the pool expands***

***Your value increases when competition becomes global***

***You are not small.***

***You are just standing in a small pond.***

***Step out —***

***and watch how the world measures you.***

## TALE 13

### Augustin and the Half-Bitten Sandwich



*Boss, this story is about Augustin.*

*Augustin came from a core engineering background and wanted to move into a non-core domain.*

*That itself is not unusual. What made him different was one non-negotiable rule he set for himself.*

*“Boss, I will not lie.*

*No fake resume.*

*No fake projects.*

*No exaggeration.*

*Nothing.”*

*Now remember — this is the era where students come and tell me:*

*“Sir, someone used ChatGPT and got placed.”*

*“They faked projects.”*

*“They lied and succeeded.”*

*“And you keep telling us to be honest.”*

*Augustin still refused.*

*I asked him, "Why are you so stubborn about honesty?"*

*He smiled and told me a story I will never forget.*

*"Sir, my resume is like a Subway sandwich.*

*The recruiter is eating it to understand who I am."*

*I was listening.*

*He continued:*

*"Imagine the recruiter eats half the sandwich...*

*and suddenly sees a half-bitten cockroach inside."*

*Boss, I felt disgusted instantly.*

*I said, "Stop. I can't even eat lunch now."*

*Augustin asked calmly:*

*"Sir, will the recruiter continue eating the sandwich?"*

*Of course not.*

*Then he said:*

*"That cockroach is a lie in the resume."*

*Once trust is broken:*

*Skill doesn't matter*

*Marks don't matter*

*Effort doesn't matter*

*Nobody continues.*

*Then he said something even sharper.*

*"Sir, I don't want to wear a tiger's skin when I am a jackal.*

*Maybe it will work once.*

*But one day they'll know I'm not a tiger."*

*Why lie?*

*Why build a career on something that can collapse any day?*

*Why build a career on something that can collapse any day?*

*Boss, that perspective hit me hard.*

*Later, during an RV1 leadership program, I casually asked 3–4 senior industry professionals:*

*“What is the biggest problem you face today?”*

*They all said the same thing:*

*Lies in resumes.*

*Before the ChatGPT era, lies existed — but were limited.*

*Now?*

*Fake projects*

*Fake internships*

*Copied answers*

*Zero understanding*

*One company from Mysore did something brilliant.*

*They gave an online assessment.*

*Then in the interview, they gave the same paper and asked candidates to explain their answers.*

*Out of the top 13 scorers (100/100) —  
not one could explain even a single answer.*

*That’s not just dishonesty.*

*That’s career suicide.*

*Now back to Augustin.*

*He didn’t get instant success.*

*He took time.*

*But today — it’s his third year in the industry.*

*He is doing incredibly well.*

*His managers trust him.*

*They depend on him.*

*And that's the key word, Boss – trust.*

*Quick success built on lies is like a sandcastle.*

*Looks impressive.*

*One wave – gone.*

*Sustained success built on honesty?*

*That compounds.*

### **The Message of Augustin's Story.**

**You choose.**

**Fast success with cheating or slow success that lasts decades.**

**Your resume is a sandwich.**

**Make sure there's no cockroach inside because once trust is broken,  
nothing else matters.**

**Boss, honesty may delay success but it never destroys it.**

## TALE 14

# Madhurekaa Kalairasu and the Power of Alignment



*Boss, this story is about Madhurekaa Kalairasu.*

*On the very first day of her first semester, she came to me and said:*

*“Boss, I have a dream. I want to do my master’s abroad.”*

*Along with her came her father.*

*And he said the exact same thing.*

*“Sir, I want to see my daughter study abroad and do her master’s.”*

*That moment itself was unusual.*

*Over the semester, I met her father at least eight times.*

*Every single time — same dream.*

*No confusion. No deviation. No mixed signals.*

*And Madhurekaa?*

*Exactly the same clarity.*

*Father and daughter — perfectly aligned.*

*She later scored around 325 out of 340 in GRE, so academically everything was smooth. Writing a strong recommendation letter was easy.*

*Then something extraordinary happened.*

*She got admitted to Carnegie Mellon University.*

*Now listen carefully, Boss.*

*I had seen students go to Carnegie Mellon before — but usually:*

*With 4–5 years of work experience*

*Often for MBA or specialized programs*

*For a young student, this was rare.*

*Later, when I met her again — online and offline — I told her honestly:*

*“In 10 years of mentoring nearly 800 students,*

*I’ve never seen this level of alignment between a parent and a child.”*

*I asked her the obvious question:*

*“How did you do it?”*

*Her answer was brilliant.*

*She said:*

*“Boss, you always told us — everything in life is a transaction.”*

*She explained further.*

*“My parents had their dreams for me — let’s call them A, B, C, D.*

*I had my own dreams — X, Y, Z.”*

*Instead of fighting, she mapped them.*

*She found overlaps.*

*She created equivalences.*

*She made her parents see:*

*$A \approx X$*

*$B \approx Y$*

*And where there was no overlap, she created a common ground — let's call it  
P, Q, R — where both sides were comfortable.*

*Once that happened, something powerful occurred.*

*Her parents didn't just agree —*

*They started echoing her dream.*

*From that point on, everything aligned:*

*She saved money during undergrad*

*She built a portfolio aligned to top universities*

*She studied forums and admissions criteria*

*She shaped her skills exactly to what Carnegie Mellon looks for*

*By the time she applied, there was no randomness.*

*Success followed naturally.*

*Boss, this is the part students forget.*

*You can discuss your dreams with:*

*Friends*

*Faculty*

*Mentors*

*Random people*

*That's fine.*

*But if you want real success, you must first bring your parents on board.*

*Why?*

*Because they are your primary stakeholders.*

*Just like a faculty mentor wants your success —*

*your parents want it even more.*

*If there is constant friction at home,  
no matter how talented you are,  
your energy will leak.*

*And remember:*

*A house divided cannot build a career.*

### **The Message of Madhurekaa's Story**

***Dream big – absolutely.***

***But before chasing the world,***

***align your home.***

***Life is transactional.***

***Not in a bad way – in a practical way.***

***Find the mapping between:***

***What your parents want for you***

***What you want from life***

***Create a shared sentence.***

***When family becomes your support system instead of resistance,  
your probability of success multiplies silently.***

***Get your parents on board.***

***Everything else becomes easier.***

## TALE 15

# Sanjay and the Truth Nobody Wants to Hear Everything Is Sales



*Boss, this story is about Sanjay.*

*Incredibly capable. Sharp mind. Calm temperament.*

*Sanjay got placed in Byju's at a time when the salary itself was enough to silence most critics —*

*₹75,000 per month. Solid money. Respectable role.*

*But there was a catch.*

*He was assigned to the Udupi–Mangaluru region.*

*Boss, anyone who understands market realities will immediately see the problem.*

*This is a region where people think ten times before spending one rupee.*

*Selling a ₹2–3 lakh*

*learning product? Almost impossible.*

*And yet — Sanjay performed exceptionally well.*

*He survived.*

*He delivered.*

*He learned.*

*After about nine months, something inside him said:*

*“This is not what I want to do long-term.”*

*So he exited.*

*No drama. No regret.*

*He moved on:*

*Joined KPMG*

*Went abroad*

*Completed his Master’s*

*Built a solid global career*

*Later, when I met him, I asked him very directly:*

*“Sanjay, was taking a sales role so early in your career a good decision — yes or no?”*

*Without hesitation, he said:*

*“Boss, it was the best decision of my life.”*

*That surprised me.*

*I said:*

*“But your heart wasn’t in sales. You left.”*

*He smiled and said something profound.*

*“Boss, everything in this world is sales.”*

*I asked him to explain.*

*He said:*

*Kindergarten admission? Sales.*

*Coaching institute convincing parents? Sales.*

*College admission? Sales.*

*Marriage? Sales.*

*Campus placement? Sales.*

*“When you sit in an interview,” he said,*

*“you are selling your candidature as the best fit for that role. Fancy people call it pitching. I call it sales.”*

*Then he went deeper.*

*A college fest?*

*Selling tickets.*

*Convincing students to pay ₹500 and believe this fest is worth it — pure sales.*

*A doctor?*

*Also sales.*

*“If you don’t take this tablet,” the doctor says,*

*“I’ll meet you in heaven.”*

*Negative reinforcement, maybe — but still selling.*

*Sanjay’s belief was crystal clear:*

*If you get a chance to do sales, grab it — especially as a student.*

*It could be:*

*A sales internship*

*A business development role*

*A college club*

*A fest organizing team*

*Three months. Six months. Enough.*

*Because sales teaches you things no textbook can:*

*Stakeholder management*

*Rejection handling*

*Convincing without begging*

*Speaking with confidence*

*Understanding human psychology*

*Then he shared another hard truth.*

*He graduated during the Donald Trump era — global uncertainty, visa fears, hiring freezes.*

*He said: “Boss, at that time, jobs were lottery tickets.”*

*So he adapted.*

*He applied to 3,000 jobs on LinkedIn.*

*Not randomly — strategically.*

*Through that process, he learned:*

*How to network*

*How to follow up*

*How to talk to strangers*

*How to sell himself without sounding desperate*

*And eventually — he landed his dream job.*

### **The Message of Sanjay’s Story**

***You may hate sales.***

***You may think:***

***“I’m technical.” “I’m not a people person.” “Sales is not my domain.”***

***But the world doesn’t care. Because whether you like it or not —***

***You are selling every day.***

- Your ideas.***
- Your skills.***
- Your candidature.***
- Your value.***

***Every student — irrespective of branch or background should experience sales at least once.***

***If you survive sales, you survive life. Sales doesn’t make you smaller.***

***It makes you sharper.***

## TALE 17

### Sathya Shree and the Courage to Stay



*Boss, this is a long-back story.*

*Her name is Sathya Shree.*

*I know her journey completely — from student life to where she stands today.*

*As a student, Sathya Shree did very well. She got a good campus placement, a respectable corporate job that most people would proudly accept.*

*At the same time, she also got selected as a bank clerk in State Bank of India, in a branch very close to her village.*

*She came to me and said:*

*“Boss, I want to join the bank.”*

*I was honestly perplexed.*

*This was 15 years ago.*

*Corporate jobs were glamorous.*

*Bank clerk roles were considered “settling”.*

*She joined the bank.*

*Then something strange happened.*

*Every time she became eligible for promotion,  
she refused.*

*Promotion after promotion — she said no.*

*She continued as a clerk, later as a cashier.*

*Years passed.*

*At an alumni meet, almost 15 years later, I met her again.*

*I asked her directly:*

*“Amma, what happened? Why didn’t you take promotions?”*

*She smiled calmly.*

*“Boss, if I take promotion, I’ll be transferred to another state for three years.*

*As a clerk, I can stay in my hometown till retirement.”*

*She stayed close to her parents.*

*She got married.*

*She has two children.*

*Life looked... peaceful.*

*Then she told me something deeper.*

*“Boss, I come from a family of musicians.*

*Music is everything for us.”*

*Because she worked 9 to 5, she went home every evening and taught music to  
children in her village.*

*Two batches.*

*About 40 children.*

*Each child paid ₹2,000 per month.*

*That’s about ₹80,000 per month.*

*I asked her:*

*“But aren’t you losing salary hikes and promotions?”*

*She laughed.*

*“Who cares, Boss?”*

*She explained:*

*Her house is owned*

*Living costs are low*

*She’s close to family*

*She raises her children without stress*

*She takes vacations*

*She is healthy and happy*

*Then I asked a final question:*

*“Don’t you think you restricted your potential?”*

*She shook her head.*

*And then she gave one of the wisest messages I’ve ever heard.*

*“Boss, my message to juniors is this:*

*First, write down what you want.*

*Just because a tiger has stripes,*

*doesn’t mean every animal should paint stripes on its body to become a tiger.”*

*She continued:*

*“I don’t need to compare with my classmates.*

*Many of them, 15 years later, have high BP, diabetes, stress.*

*I’m below 40.*

*Healthy.*

*Happy.”*

*She said something beautiful:*

*“Every student is like a fruit.  
Every dream is like a fruit.  
Apple has its taste.  
Orange has its taste.  
Lemon has its purpose.  
You cannot compare them.”*

*Each student comes with:  
Different family backgrounds  
Different values  
Different responsibilities  
Different definitions of happiness*

*Someone’s package may be ₹10 LPA.  
Mine may be ₹3 LPA.  
But if I am peaceful, fulfilled, and aligned —  
I am successful.*

### ***The Message of Sathya Shree’s Story***

***Success is not:***

- Package***
- Promotion***
- Designation***
- Location***

***Success is alignment.***

***Stop living in a micro-managed, comparison-driven world.***

***Don’t try to become someone else  
whose life conditions don’t match yours.***

***Happiness is internal.***

***And once you define it clearly — your career choices become very simple.***

## TALE 18

# Pranav and the Day Intelligence Became the Obstacle



*Boss, this is a true story.*

*And it's about Pranav.*

*If raw intellect had a face, it would look like Pranav.*

*Top 5 in the top 10 of the class.*

*Highly analytical.*

*Lightning fast.*

*Global perspective.*

*Technically frightening.*

*This fellow solved 2,000 aptitude and reasoning questions.*

*I once promised him ₹5,000 if he would train his classmates for placements.*

*He trained them. Properly. Earned it.*

*That's how sharp he was.*

*Placement season started.*

*Something unbelievable happened.*

*Pranav cleared 21 online assessments consecutively. And got rejected in all 21 group discussions.*

*One by one.*

*No exceptions.*

*His classmates came to me and said:*

*“Boss, please speak to him.”*

*Honestly, I wasn’t worried initially.*

*If someone clears 21 written tests in a row, he’s not the problem.*

*And because he wasn’t getting selected, others were — so indirectly, he was helping the batch.*

*But here’s the danger, Boss.*

*When a mistake repeats and nobody reflects, it becomes a habit.*

*So I caught him in the canteen.*

*Bought him a Sambar Idli.*

*Food lowers ego — always works.*

*I gently asked:*

*“Pranav, what’s happening?”*

*He exploded.*

*“Boss, everyone in GD/Personal Interview is an idiot.*

*They don’t know the topic.*

*They don’t read newspapers.*

*And companies are selecting these idiots.”*

*Interesting.*

*That statement meant:*

*His classmates are idiots*

*Employees are idiots*

*Managers are idiots*

*Basically... the world is full of idiots*

*I let him talk.*

*Then he said something revealing.*

*"My brother-in-law once told me —*

*it's good to have idiots next to you.*

*You'll look smarter."*

*He even gave an advertisement analogy —*

*a dirty shirt makes detergent look powerful.*

*Boss, his analysis was not wrong.*

*Compared to him, most people were not as intellectually strong.*

*That's Einstein's relativity — agreed.*

*But then comes the real question:*

*Will the world change for you — or do you change for the world?*

*I told him calmly:*

*"Right now, given your family needs,*

*you can't afford to see only negatives."*

*He resisted.*

*"Boss, it's impossible. These people are hopeless."*

*I told him something important.*

*"At some stage in life, every successful person feels:*

*'If this fellow can succeed, why not me?'"*

*That feeling is human.*

*But here's the poison:*

*When you carry judgment into a group discussion,*

*your body language leaks it.*

*Your tone leaks it.*

*Your pauses leak it.*

*Your eyes leak it.*

*GD is not about being right.*

*It's about being acceptable.*

*I asked him to do one thing only:*

*Assume that others may also be correct.*

*Not smarter.*

*Not better.*

*Just... also correct.*

*That small shift changed everything.*

*Next two companies:*

*He got selected.*

*Then something surprised me.*

*He chose the lower package offer.*

*I asked why.*

*He said:*

*“Boss, I need mental clarity.*

*Lower salary means less stress.*

*More time to learn.”*

*Smart decision.*

*He exited placements.*

*In the next nine months, he:*

*Went deep into intellectual property*

*Cracked the Patent Agent exam*

*Completed LLB from his village*

*Built a niche profile*

*Today, he handles intellectual property strategy for three NIRF top-10 institutions — either directly or through firms.*

*The same fellow who once said:*

*“No point doing slavery for someone.”*

*But here’s what he learned:*

*Before you build your own world,  
you must first learn how the existing world works.*

*And here’s the real elixir from Pranav’s story:*

*You can be right and still lose.*

*You can be brilliant and still be rejected.*

*The moment he stopped judging others  
and started seeing that others may also be right,  
doors opened.*

### ***The Message of Pranav’s Story***

***Intelligence without empathy becomes arrogance.***

***Arrogance is invisible to you — but obvious to others.***

***In group discussions, interviews, and life:***

***Don’t prove others wrong***

***Don’t showcase superiority***

***Don’t leak judgment***

***Assume others can be correct.***

***That mindset alone can turn***

***21 rejections into multiple offers.***

***Be sharp.***

***But be kind.***

***That combination is unstoppable.***

## TALE 19

### Sid Dhodi and the Habit of Studying Forward



*Boss, this story is about Sid Dhodi — and every time I narrate it, people are amazed by what he did*

*whenever life slowed him down.*

*Sid Dhodi did his undergraduate in Fermentation Technology from a top institute in Kanpur, Uttar*

*Pradesh. A core, niche discipline.*

*Those days, almost every engineering path eventually led to software.*

*So he joined Infosys.*

*He was assigned to a Japanese client. And anyone who has worked with Japanese teams knows one*

*thing — they don't switch languages for you.*

*So Sid Dhodi did something simple and extraordinary.*

*He learned Japanese.*

*He learned it so well that when he decided to leave Infosys, the Japanese client literally begged him to stay.*

*But Sid Dhodi wasn't done.*

*He went on to do an MBA from Indian Institute of Science.*

*After that, he joined our startup. I worked closely with him for about one and a half years.*

*Boss, this fellow was unreal.*

*Targets? Delivered.*

*Grant proposals? Written and approved.*

*New domains? Learned by end of the day.*

*Anything you throw at him — he absorbs and executes.*

*Then one day, he said:*

*“Boss, I'm not challenged enough.”*

*So what did he do?*

*He started studying again.*

*He enrolled for CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) from Singapore — a qualification many consider*

*tougher than CA.*

*And he completed it.*

*Then again, he said:*

*“Boss, still not challenged enough.”*

*So he applied to Cornell University for an MBA.*

*Cornell called him to the US for an interview.*

*He travelled.*

*He cleared it.*

*And here's the beautiful part.*

*The university itself arranged his education loan on the spot.*

*He completed his MBA.*

*Then joined Amazon.*

*Later moved to Google.*

*Today, he holds a global leadership role in renewable energy.*

*But Boss, the title is not the story.*

*The pattern is the story.*

*Look at the sequence:*

*Undergraduate → Study*

*Infosys → Learn Japanese*

*MBA (IISc) → Study*

*Startup → Work*

*CFA → Study*

*Cornell MBA → Study*

*Amazon → Work*

*Google → Work*

*And even now — he wants to study more*

*Every time Sid Dhodi felt stuck, he didn't complain.*

*He studied forward.*

*Now here's the most important part for today's students.*

*Sid Dhodi did not have the luxury you have today.*

*He couldn't:*

*Do degrees in parallel*

*Do online Ivy League programs*

*Stack credentials while working easily*

*You do.*

*Today:*

*Students do undergraduate at RV University and online degrees from IIT*

*Madras*

*UGC-approved programs*

*Rapid skill-up platforms*

*Micro-credentials*

*Domain depth courses*

*The world has changed.*

*But one myth hasn't — and it must die.*

*“Once undergraduate is over, I'm done studying.”*

*No, Boss.*

*That's when real studying begins.*

***The Message of Sid Dhodi's Story***

***Whenever you feel stuck:***

***Don't panic***

***Don't complain***

***Study***

***Pick one domain.***

***Go inch wide, mile deep.***

***Do course after course until success shows up.***

***And mark my words, Boss — Once success comes through skill,***

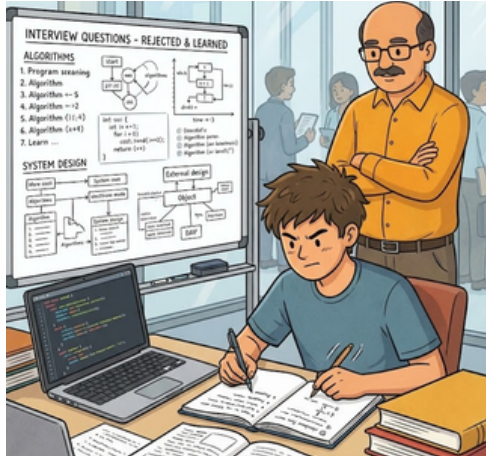
***it stays with you — as long as you stay in that domain.***

***Learning is not preparation for life.***

***Learning is life.***

## TALE 20

# Athreya and the Art of Turning Rejection into Syllabus



*Boss, this story is about Athreya, my 2016 A-Section student.*

*He didn't get placed on campus.*

*He went off-campus.*

*And not just anywhere — he cracked one of those elite tech companies people love to abbreviate*

*and glorify. You know the category. If you get in there, society already stamps you as “successful”.*

*He was doing well. Very well.*

*But inside his head, there was still a dream company.*

*So over the next six years, Athreya did something that sounds insane to most people.*

*He appeared for 100 interviews.*

*One hundred.*

*When I met him, I asked him directly:*

*“Boss, why on earth would you attend so many interviews?”*

*You already made it. Wasn't it exhausting?"*

*He smiled and corrected me.*

*"Boss, I didn't attend interviews to get selected.*

*I attended interviews to learn."*

*That sentence made me stop.*

*He explained his method.*

*"After every interview, I wrote down every single question they asked me.*

*Technical. Logical. System design. Edge cases."*

*He said:*

*"Those interviews were not rejections.*

*They were free masterclasses."*

*Boss, think about that.*

*Most people walk out of an interview thinking:*

*"I failed."*

*"They rejected me."*

*"I'm not good enough."*

*Athreya walked out thinking:*

*"Okay, this is what the market expects."*

*"This is my next study material."*

*He treated interviews as input, not judgment.*

*Each interview taught him:*

*What companies actually care about*

*How questions evolve*

*Where his gaps were*

*What to learn next*

*Every “rejection” refined him.*

*By the time he reached the dream company, he was no longer the same candidate who had started.*

*He had already seen the questions.*

*Solved them.*

*Failed on them.*

*Mastered them.*

*And finally — he got in.*

*Boss, I was honestly holding my head.*

*How does a student have the maturity to say:*

*“This didn’t reject me — it prepared me”?*

*That’s elite thinking.*

### ***The Message of Athreya’s Story***

***You can only skill up when you understand:***

***What the world is asking***

***What businesses need***

***What interviews really test***

***Interviews are not verdicts.***

***They are feedback loops.***

***If you:***

***Write down questions***

***Reflect honestly***

***Learn deliberately***

***Then after 20, 30, 40 interviews — you are not the same person anymore.***

***Rejection doesn’t matter.***

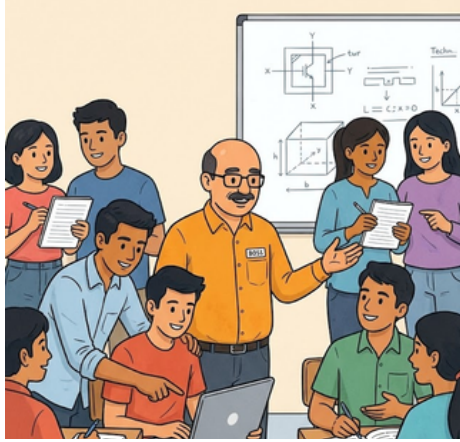
***Learning does.***

***Treat interviews as syllabus, not as judgment.***

***That mindset will eventually take you exactly where you want to go.***

## TALE 21

### Naren and the Currency Called Classmates



*Boss, this story is about Naren.*

*He was never a class topper.*

*Never flashy.*

*Never loud.*

*But technically?*

*Rock solid.*

*Naren always knew what he was doing. No show-off. No noise. Just quiet, consistent competence.*

*He joined Sony and did extremely well there. After gaining industry experience, he went for his Master's to Northeastern University.*

*He completed his Master's, landed an internship at Walmart, converted it into a full-time job, and was doing well professionally.*

*Now comes the part that defines Naren.*

*One of his classmates — someone who had helped him during undergraduate days when Naren was struggling technically — wanted to go for higher studies.*

*Naren didn't forget.*

*He:*

- *Helped him get into Northeastern*
- *Guided him through the Master's process*
- *Connected him to a good supervisor*
- *Helped him land a job as well*

*Payback? No.*

*Gratitude? Yes.*

*Later, when I met Naren at Reserve Bank of India during an interaction, I asked him one simple question:*

*“What is the most important message you have for your juniors?”*

*His answer was immediate.*

*“Boss, classmates are your life.”*

*Then he explained.*

*“After undergraduate days, we don't really make friends.*

*In companies, we get colleagues, not friends.*

*In Master's programs, everyone is busy, selfish by necessity, and two years pass very quickly — one year is anyway gone in internships.”*

*He continued:*

*“The bonds you build during undergraduate days — those are the ones that last.”*

*And then he said something very important for placement season.*

*“Boss, don't be greedy for multiple offers.*

*Once you get placed, don't:*

- *Show off*
- *Hurt classmates who aren't placed*
- *Create distance or jealousy”*

*Instead:*

- *Sit with them*
- *Guide them*
- *Empower them*
- *Share what you know*

*Because you never know who will help you tomorrow.*

*The friend Naren helped later in life was the same friend who once helped him when he was struggling.*

*Life came full circle.*

*His closing line stayed with me.*

*“These relationships are not for one year.*

*They last for decades.”*

### ***The Message of Naren’s Story***

***Your CGPA will fade.***

***Your package will change.***

***Your designation will evolve.***

***But your relationships compound.***

***Undergraduate classmates are not competitors.***

***They are co-travellers.***

***For short-term gains, don’t burn bridges.***

***Don’t backstab.***

***Don’t forget kindness.***

***Empower each other.***

***Lift each other.***

***Because the strongest professional network you’ll ever have is sitting right next to you in class today.***

## TALE 22

### Arun and the Classroom Outside the Classroom



*Boss, this story is about Arun.*

*Arun won a Leadership Award while studying, and I was his mentor. Everyone in class knew he was different. Not necessarily because of extraordinary marks — he wasn't a topper — but because of the way he moved through life.*

*Focused. Observant. Intentional.*

*One thing Arun did exceptionally right:*

*He invested heavily in networks outside college.*

*He was part of:*

- *Rotary International*
- *Multiple social and professional clubs — five, six, sometimes ten at a time*

*Then came something interesting.*

*He attended Bangalore BarCamp — a technology conference.*

*First year: participant.*

*Second year: organizer.*

*How did that happen?*

*Because after attending the first event, Arun didn't disappear.*

*He stayed in touch.*

*He kept communicating.*

*He kept contributing.*

*By the next year, the organizers trusted him enough to say:*

*“Okay, you take charge.”*

*Fast forward another 2–3 years.*

*Arun landed a job at Google.*

*When I met him after that, I asked:*

*“Boss, what is the real secret behind your success?”*

*His answer shook me a little.*

*He said:*

*“Boss, success for a student is not inside the classroom alone.”*

*I was holding my head.*

*Was he saying undergraduate education doesn't matter?*

*No.*

*He was saying:*

*Undergraduate education is necessary — but not sufficient.*

*What changed his life were the networks he built outside college.*

*His growth in Rotary was unbelievable.*

- *Local chapter leadership*
- *Then South Bangalore*
- *Then South Asia-level responsibility*

*And remember — he wasn't even 25 or 27 years old.*

*I asked him:*

*“How do students even start networking? Everyone talks about it.”*

*His answer was simple — and powerful.*

*“Boss, networking is not about what you get.*

*It's about what you contribute.”*

*He gave an example.*

*At Bangalore BarCamp, he observed carefully.*

*He realized:*

- *The organizers were hardcore tech professionals*
- *Money wasn't their problem*
- *Time and coordination were*

*So Arun stepped in and said:*

*“Sir, I'll handle the organizing next year.”*

*For them, that task was painful.*

*For him, it was manageable.*

*That single decision changed everything.*

*Because while organizing, he noticed something crucial:*

- *Half the participants were working in FAANG / MANG-type companies*
- *These were people with inside knowledge*
- *These were people who could guide, refer, mentor*

*Arun had a dream company in mind.*

*So instead of applying blindly, he:*

- *Entered the ecosystem*
- *Contributed genuinely*
- *Built trust*

- *Learned how those companies actually hire*

*And eventually — he got in.*

*Here's the most important advice Arun left behind.*

*If you have a dream company:*

- *Find out where those employees hang out*
- *Conferences*
- *Clubs*
- *NGOs*
- *Tech meetups*
- *Social initiatives*

*Join those spaces — not to beg, but to contribute.*

*And remember this, Boss.*

*As a student:*

- *Time is still on your side*
- *Academic load doesn't occupy you from 9 AM to midnight*
- *You can always find one hour a day*

*Use that one hour to build real networks.*

*Not LinkedIn connections.*

*Human connections.*

### ***The Message of Arun's Story***

***Your degree opens doors.***

***Your network decides which door stays open.***

***Don't limit learning to classrooms.***

***The real syllabus is outside.***

***Contribute first.***

***Be remembered.***

***That's how dreams quietly become reality.***

## TALE 23

### Smaran and the Three Kinds of Satisfaction



*Boss, this story is about Smaran.*

*A 9.86 CGPA student.*

*Topper of the toppers.*

*Technically brilliant.*

*Extremely pleasant.*

*Soft-natured. Obedient. Calm.*

*One of those students who can grasp things left and right without noise.*

*If talent were enough, Smaran's career should have been effortless.*

*But placements don't work like that.*

*His first offer came — and it was below his true potential.*

*Not bad.*

*Not insulting.*

*But... less than what he deserved.*

*He came to me quietly and said:*

*"Boss, my classmates are getting much better packages.*

*I also deserve one."*

*And here is where I told him something very uncomfortable — but very real.*

*When you feel you've underachieved,  
nobody will come and clap for you.*

*Nobody will lift you.*

*Nobody will motivate you.*

*Nobody will reassure you.*

*In fact, remember this rule of life:*

- *If you say one negative word about yourself,*
- *someone else will add two more.*
- *If not to your face,*
- *then behind your back.*

*When you are flying high, everyone is your friend.*

*When you are down, silence becomes very loud.*

*So Smaran did the right thing.*

*He paused.*

*Not panic.*

*Not drama.*

*Just a small break.*

*That pause gave him clarity.*

*He reflected honestly:*

- *Is this role making me happy?*
- *Do I see myself growing here?*
- *Is this what I want — or am I chasing comparison?*

*He dusted himself.*

*Came back stronger.*

*And then — almost quietly —*

*he got his dream company and dream offer.*

- *No noise.*
- *No announcements.*

*Just alignment.*

*That's when I told him — and this applies to every student — something extremely important.*

*There Are Three Types of Satisfaction in Life*

1. *Financial Satisfaction*
2. *The money you believe you deserve.*
3. *Social Satisfaction*
4. *Society clapping.*
5. *Relatives saying “wow”.*
6. *Neighbours nodding in approval.*
7. *Self-Satisfaction*
8. *The hardest one.*
9. *The most misunderstood one.*

*Self-satisfaction has nothing to do with:*

- *Salary alone*
- *Designation*
- *Power*
- *Other people's opinions*

*It has everything to do with:*

*“Do I like what I'm doing when nobody is watching?”*

*Undergraduate students often don't know what truly makes them happy — and that's okay.*

*Some discover it early.*

*Some discover it late.*

*Some change their mind — also okay.*

*But if your career path eventually satisfies:*

- *Your financial needs*
- *Your social context*
- *Your inner sense of purpose*

*Then Boss, you will not just succeed — you will sustain.*

***The Message of Smaran's Story***

*Your first job is not your destiny.*

*It is only your starting point.*

*Don't let comparison define your worth.*

*Don't wait for validation when you're down.*

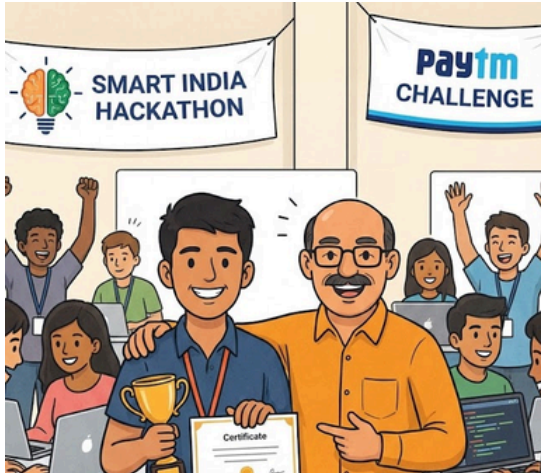
*Pause. Reflect. Realign.*

*Chase not just packages — but peace, purpose,  
and pride in your work.*

*That's where real success lives.*

## TALE 24

### Bhavya and the Power of One Win



*Boss, this story is about Bhavya.*

*Bhavya once participated in a hackathon with me. And like many students, he didn't initially realize how capable he truly was.*

*That realization came after success.*

*Once that success arrived, everything started falling into place:*

- *Excellent job role*
- *Strong packages*
- *Great companies*
- *High satisfaction*
- *A career trajectory many students dream of*

*Today, he is doing extremely well. I keep meeting him, he is my mentee, and honestly, I'm very proud of him.*

*One day, I asked him a simple question:*

*“What was the single biggest parameter that changed your career track?”*

*His answer was immediate.*

*“Boss, success — even a very small one.”*

*He explained.*

*He had won a Smart India Hackathon, a country-wide challenge, and also a Paytm challenge. On paper, these look big — but according to Bhavya, the size of the prize didn’t matter.*

*What mattered was winning once.*

*He told me something most students don’t realize.*

*“Boss, before that win, I had participated in at least 30 hackathons.*

*I didn’t win a single one.”*

*Thirty.*

*No prizes.*

*No certificates worth framing.*

*No applause.*

*But he kept going.*

*Then one success happened.*

*And that one success flipped the narrative of his career.*

*From that day:*

- *His posture in interviews changed*
- *His confidence while speaking changed*
- *How people looked at him changed*
- *How he looked at himself changed*

*That undergraduate success still feeds his career even today.*

*If he goes for a job interview now, he still mentions that win — and interviewers still pause, listen, and acknowledge it.*

*Bhavya made one thing very clear.*

*“Projects make placements.*

*Projects are equal to packages.”*

*Walking into placements with:*

- *Marks*
- *Certificates*
- *CGPA*

*...may or may not excite today's industry.*

*But projects and competitions show proof.*

*He gave very practical advice.*

*Students should participate relentlessly:*

- *Hackathons*
- *Challenges*
- *Competitions*

*It doesn't matter if you fail repeatedly.*

*Out of every three competitions, he strongly believes:*

- *At least one should be industry-driven*

*Where:*

- *Industry experts judge*
- *Feedback is real*
- *Expectations are practical*

*That feedback alone is worth more than any prize.*

*He also said something refreshing.*

*Competitions need not always be technical.*

*It could be:*

- *Sports*
- *Music*

- *Dance*
- *Any structured competition*

*What matters is this:*

*Testing your mettle against the outside world.*

*That's the only way you truly know how good you are.*

*And Boss, this experience directly reflects in placements.*

*Because when a student has felt success once,*

*they no longer speak from theory —*

*they speak from experience.*

### ***The Message of Bhavya's Story***

***You don't need ten wins.***

***You don't need perfection.***

***You need one success.***

***For that:***

- ***Step outside the classroom***
- ***Compete***
- ***Lose***
- ***Learn***
- ***Repeat***

***Your breakthrough is closer than you think.***

***One win can change everything.***

## TALE 25

### Abhilasha and the Power of Silent Skill-Up



*Boss, this story is about Abhilasha.*

*Until the day she got placed, nobody noticed her.*

*No spotlight.*

*No hype.*

*No “star student” tag.*

*She was my mentee.*

*Academically — decent. Top 10%, not a topper.*

*Not active on stage. Not loud. Not visible.*

*And then — boom.*

*She got placed in what was, at that time, the highest package company on campus.*

*Suddenly:*

- *Everyone knew her*
- *Everyone clapped*
- *Everyone asked, “How did she do it?”*

*After that, she joined the company, grew rapidly, and later moved to Google.  
Today, she's doing extremely well.*

*At the last Boss Alumni Meet, I caught hold of her and asked:*

*“Tell me one secret — just one — that juniors should know.”*

*She didn't hesitate.*

*She said:*

*“Boss, industry mindset and rapid skill-up.”*

*Then she explained her method.*

*Whenever she heard her classmates discuss anything new —a concept, a tool, a framework, a technology — something she didn't know but was related to her domain...*

*She didn't ignore it.*

*She went straight back to the hostel.*

*And she deep-dived.*

*Sometimes 6 to 8 hours at a stretch:*

- Watching videos*
- Reading documentation*
- Doing calculations*
- Trying examples*
- Understanding the “why”, not just the “what”*

*One skill.*

*One topic.*

*One intense session.*

*Every week — at least one rapid skill-up.*

*Sometimes in her core domain.*

*Sometimes adjacent.*

*Sometimes completely new but relevant.*

*Slowly, something magical happened.*

*She started knowing things others didn't even know existed.*

*So when she went for high-package interviews, the format was brutal:*

- *3 to 5 interview rounds*
- *Different teams*
- *Different domains*
- *Different problem statements*

*At that level, companies don't want a one-dimensional expert.*

*They want:*

- *Someone deep in one area*
- *But comfortable collaborating across domains*

*Abhilasha fit perfectly.*

*She told me:*

*“Boss, that rapid niche skill-up is the elixir.”*

*Then she laughed and added something very honest.*

*“Boss, below 25 years, if a student really wants to learn something, they can become decent in 6 hours.”*

*Six hours.*

*Heart + focus + hunger.*

*She joked:*

*“At your age, Boss, for the same thing, maybe you'll need two years.”*

*And she's right.*

*Youth has an unfair advantage — speed of learning.*

*Skill up silently.*

*Let success make the noise.*

*The Message of Abhilasha's Story*

*You don't need to be visible.*

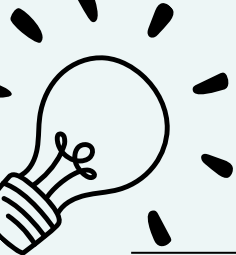
*You need to be valuable.*

*If you want extraordinary success:*

- *Every time you hear something new — chase it*
- *Research it*
- *Understand it*
- *Own it*

*Do this consistently, quietly.*

*Visibility will come looking for you.*



# Conclusion

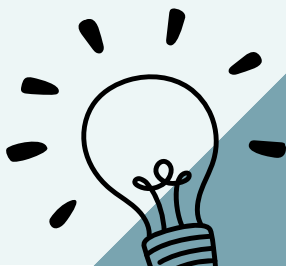
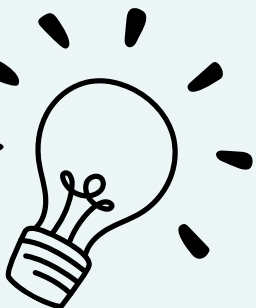
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*Careers rarely unfold exactly as planned. They grow through uncertainty, pauses, detours, and moments of self-doubt that are invisible to others. Long before job titles, salaries, or recognition come into play, what truly shapes a career is the way we think, the choices we make under pressure, and the standards we hold for ourselves when no one is watching.*

*The stories in this book reveal that there is no single formula for success. Some people move fast, others wait. Some begin quietly and grow steadily, while others learn that achievement without inner peace often comes at a cost. What connects all these journeys is clarity, the ability to reflect, to resist comparison, and to choose what aligns with one's values rather than external expectations.*

*As you step forward, remember that no offer letter can define your worth and no single decision can determine your future forever. What matters most is the clarity you carry into every choice you make.*

***Because careers are not decided by offer letters, but by the clarity you build long before they arrive.***





# Acknowledgments

*This Mentor–Mentee book is sponsored by RV University as part of its sustained focus on nurturing mentor–mentee relationships that can last a lifetime.*

*The author gratefully acknowledges the kind support and encouragement of:*

- a) **Hon'ble Dr. Ramkumar Kakani**, Vice Chancellor, RV University;
- b) **Dr. Sahana D. Gowda**, Registrar;
- c) Pro Vice-Chancellors — **Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee and Dr. Dwarika Prasad Uniyal**
- d) Deans of Schools of Study — **Dr. G. Shobha, Prof. Priya Nair, Prof. Alok Verma, Prof. Piyush Roy, Prof. Arindam Mitra, Prof. Pushkarni Panchamukhi, Prof. Lakshmi Arya Thathachar, Prof. Diganta Chakrabarti, Prof. Madhvi Sethi, Prof. T. Hongray**
- e) Placement Leaders - **Mr. Girish Pahadiya , Mr. Sachin L , Mr. Gopal Krishna E R , Mrs. Shashikala R , Mr. Ravi Shankar, Mr Sivakumar Sathaiah, Mr. Dhanush Ganesh**

*This book is humbly dedicated to the student mentors of RV University as a token of gratitude and recognition of their selfless service toward student well-being and, by extension, society at large.*

*The book forms part of a series documenting the mentoring experiences of Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela over the past decade. While mentee identities have been anonymized, informed consent has been obtained to share these experiences for the greater benefit of students and educators.*

*References to “Boss Alumni” denote the mentees of Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela, and all narrations are confined to the scope of academic engagement and protected under the provisions of the Copyright Act, 1957 (as amended).*

*Thank You!*





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# RASPHERA



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*RASPHERA, founded by Rajesh Somashekar and co-founded by V. Spandana, is an eco-friendly wooden gaming brand creating handcrafted, culturally rooted games that bring people together across all age groups.*

*We promote screen-free play that enhances creativity, cognitive development, and emotional wellbeing while reducing stress and digital addiction.*

*RASPHERA has successfully conducted interactive gaming events and workshops for corporates, schools, families, and senior communities, creating engaging experiences that foster teamwork, bonding, and innovation.*

*Built on sustainability and local craftsmanship, we aim to create a scalable, play-driven wellness ecosystem.*

*At RASPHERA, play becomes a tool for connection, creativity, and lasting memories.*

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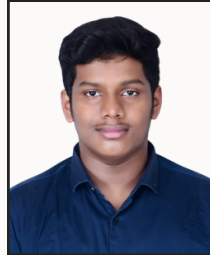
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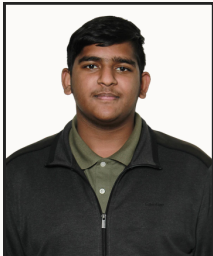
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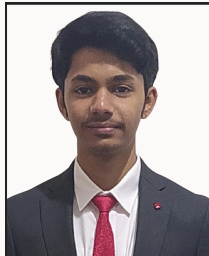
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CRAFTING TOMORROW'S THINKERS THROUGH PLAY



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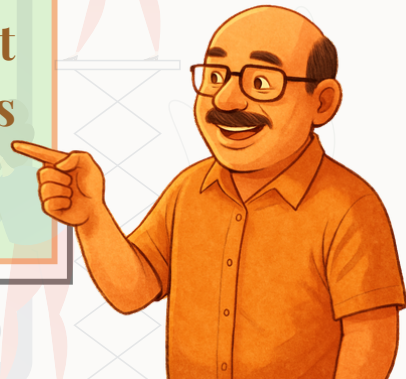
# Boss Mentee Startups



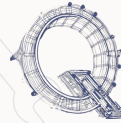
E-Actuell



A mentor's true reward isn't the spotlight - it's seeing his stars shine.



# Boss Mentee Startups



Each of them carries a part of the mentor's dream — to turn learning into lasting impact.







**This book is not a placement guide; it is a mindset guide.**

It captures the unseen, unspoken, and often ignored psychological and emotional realities students go through during placements. While technical training, soft skills, and leadership programs focus on what to do, this book focuses on how to think. Through real student stories, it exposes the myths, assumptions, fears, comparisons, and inner conflicts that quietly influence career decisions. Each story reflects a situation students recognize instantly but rarely discuss openly. The book helps students pause, reflect, and make informed choices rather than panic-driven ones. It bridges the gap between being trained and being truly ready. Ultimately, this book offers the missing piece that turns placement preparation into placement clarity.