

My association with Dr NH Atthreya

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Our association was spanned over four decades from 1981, and covered not only our common profession of Management Consultancy, but included close friendship between us and our family members, combined learning, scholarship, travel and exploration. He was for me a mentor, a coach, a counsellor, an educator and a spiritual guide. His spirit and written works are still with me. I hold him in high esteem and I continue to seek and benefit from his wisdom.

We came together first, to collaborate for a professional paper he was to present at the MBOS – Management By Objectives and Self-control seminar in USA. He wanted to incorporate an Indian Case and I happened to work on one. I was at once impressed by the depth of his knowledge, and his humility and willingness to learn, in spite of that. I also got acquainted with the high ethical standards he practiced.

He was instrumental in launching my career as a professional speaker and management consultant. He gave me courage to quit employment and become self-employed. He helped me by associating me in the assignments with his clients. I could take his help in my assignments.

MTNL assignment was a major one. We were competing with very powerful and large institutions. What clinched the deal in our favour was a simple idea that Dr Atthreya suggested. We offered three consultant days of free service to MTNL, available only to the head of the organisation. This idea could get us the golden opportunity to know the exact expectations of the chief and design the whole program to suit his vision.

In MTNL assignment, we also faced the gigantic task of reaching thousands of Telephone Operators and maintaining same standards of learning. Dr Atthreya came up with the idea of video recording and playing it in the class room, which was not very common then. This one idea enabled us to do full justice and complete the task in record time and cost.

I could witness Dr Atthreya holding class room sessions. It was pure magic. He would speak less and listen more. He would ask a gentle question or two; and the participant would come round to the desired outcome on their own

volition. He engaged everyone in learning tasks and encouraged learning by doing.

In public speaking, I admired the way he introduced a speaker. He connected the audience with the speaker and both the parties established instant rapport.

Once we were together in Madurai and staying in the company guest house. Keeping in mind his advancing age and his habit of going to bed early, I went out alone to visit a distant site. Because of heavy traffic, I could return only around midnight. I was shocked to see him waiting anxiously for me and without taking his dinner.

Late Swami Jitatmanadaji called Dr Atthreya - 'Raj Rishi' – a well-deserved title. In ancient times the kings consulted their family Rishi in complex matters. Many industrialists consulted Dr Atthreya and found solution to their issues. He was a visionary in true sense. His thinking and ideas were way ahead of his times. He was the first in India to start management consultancy as a profession. Others followed.

Today he would have been 100. We are joining dear Usha, his daughter, dear Pranav, his grandson and numerous well-wishers and admirers in offering him our heartfelt Pranaams.

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