

# GURU GUIDE

with  
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with  
**Jennifer Randive**

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# FINDING YOUR INNER STRENGTH



# A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'guru guide' is an attempt to cull out decades of hard earned expertise to be distilled into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic : rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice : it is advice from battled hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

## The Guru Guide has a pre determined format :

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples : so that you can customise it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

## INTRODUCING

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**VIDUSHA  
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise lies with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON  
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.



# INTRODUCING JENNIFER

We got to know Jennifer first through our record breaking 17 hour non stop webinar. From the get go it was clear Jennifer was no ordinary person - and that behind the laughter, ever smiling face was a depth of character that was both sincere and honest. As we got talking, we found our first impressions to be true: and that her story was something that very very few would be able to even comprehend - leave alone endure...

Having lost all, she had not once but twice, having a daughter with down syndrome to go through open heart surgery twice over, and an appendix removed all at the same time, whilst trying to find a job and

make a living in a country completely alien to her, changing and shifting careers many times over to accommodate her life's situations and also to stay true to her dignity, pride and values, being a mother, wife and also, a daughter taking care of ailing parents, Jennifer's life has been one that resilience has truly been tested.... What is amazing is how Jennifer faced all these challenges without being warped, without being bitter, without being angry: and turned each of these life situations into being something that made her stronger, made her more focused, but above all, made her a better human being.

Having had an illustrious career in many different industries, Jennifer set up her own recruitment agency that won accolades for the authenticity with which placements were made.

Today, she is a An Advisor A Mentor, A Facilitator of Holistic Change and Transformation in the Corporate World. A Consultant working with some of the most illustrious organisations and individuals In Dubai and Abu Dhabi: helping both organisations and individuals to be the best versions of themselves. Jennifer has also co-authored a book entitled 'How the Phoenix Rose', 21 Feathered Ones, and created an Audio Book entitled the CEO-U of Your Life and Living.

## WHEN SACHA WAS BORN WITH DOWN SYNDROME DIDN'T YOU ASK WHY?



Sure I did.... But then, having a conversation with another mother in a similar circumstance changed my entire perception. She told me 'God gives specially-abled children to extra special parents': and that did it for me. I never looked at 'why' after that. Bottom line was this: she was my daughter: and she was my responsibility. That's all that mattered. All of life is about how we perceive it. The fact that Sacha has down syndrome does not mar anything: nor affect the relationship she has with me. Today, she is a young woman of 34 and works at HSBC - and has a full and wholesome life of her own. I didn't treat her like a 'problem' and my approach to raising her had a lot to do with how she in turn perceives herself and the world around her. It's all up in our head:

how we see it in our mind is how we internalize it : and you have the choice of making that a positive or a negative image : and whatever you perceive it to be you will internalize it... So, whether it was Sacha, what we faced in Kuwait when Saddam Hussain attacked and we had no where to turn to: or whether it was any of the multitude of challenges I had to face - no matter what emotions I may have had initially, I always anchor myself in the here and now: I can choose to react or respond and take inspired action to take me beyond any situation at hand, when you go enough is enough there's this confidence that fills you up and you sense you can take on the world.

My perception and attitude is what rules everything else that occurs afterwards... There really is no point asking why.

Entertain it for a moment for sure - and ask it if you must - but rather quickly move to 'now what...' - which is a far more progressive question to ask...

I am a firm believer in what Challenges show up they really are a Gift disguised to Catapult you into being a grander version of you. But you must choose to see you as a Gift First! Because You Are!

The first port of call in any self discovery or self improvement is to know that you are a powerful creator, if something is not working for You, you have a choice to choose to change it. Once you really recognize anything is possible and you as the creator can do this, you then, either be consumed by what is not working, or rise above it. That is your personal choice.

You may well say, why would I not choose to rise above it? True, why wouldn't you? Well we all have our unique way of doing things. We all have our own thoughts, feelings and emotions that constitute who we are and how we show up, and that translate into the actions we take. Would you agree. I term that as Our Unique Operating System.

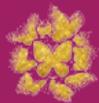
Now then, unless you do not get clear of what that Operating System is and whether it is truly contributing to you, there is little hope anything can change. We tend to disregard what it is we are going through and never take the time to address it, perhaps, we think if we try hard enough things will sort themselves out.

So then we go back to trying to be like someone else and that constant comparison of yourself to someone else is not creating anything new, on the contrary, we tend to judge ourselves as a result of not becoming like someone else, It's that Hamster Wheel Scenario, going round and round in circles trying to get to a resolve while being stuck in the Hamster Wheel. Does that work for you? Is that a good use of your energy?

Now here's the good part you will also notice that you will get the different nudges to budge from what you have made the perfect way of operating, because that's the only way you are familiar and comfortable with. But here's the question, what is it doing to and for you? Anything new showing up? That is what you got to be aware of, That nudge to budge is like please get out of your own way, There is another way,

My personal and professional operating system is Clarity Quality Speed. Clarity is what kind of questions you ask to get the information you require, that determines the quality of whatever you are wanting to pursue, and that gets delivered with a catapulting effect on the impact you can choose to create.

**“ SITUATIONS AND CHALLENGES CAN PIN ANYONE INTO A CORNER. NOW MANY WILL CONCLUDE ALL SORTS OF STUFF ABOUT YOU. IT'S YOUR CHOICE TO BE VICTIMISED : TO REACT TO IT : OR CHOOSE TO CHANGE IT. IF YOU DON'T JUDGE YOURSELF OR THE SITUATION THERE IS A KIND OF FREEDOM TO CHOOSE CHANGE AND CREATE BEYOND THE SITUATION ”**



*Jennifer Randive*

## **BUT ISN'T IT NORMAL FOR US TO FEEL ITS UNFAIR...**

Sure... It is normal. It is human. But then, ask yourself : what good does it do to you ? The constant comparison of your life to someone else's and asking yourself why me : or why not me is a sure way of losing focus, becoming utterly demoralised and above all, just losing yourself. We each have a set of certain circumstances and contexts and situations we live in : and it is different to every single one of us. NONE of us ever have the same situations happening to us in the same sequence : it just doesn't happen that way. So, what is the earthly point in the comparisons in the first place ?

The ONLY thing that should matter to you is where you are now : where you want to be at in the future : and figuring out how to get there - without driving yourself insane or bitter in the process. If you start homing in on this: and ensuring you focus on yourself to your own journey - rather than trying to compete with anyone, then, you are on the right track. Remember, life is not a race : it is a personal journey... Let that penny drop...



*Sacha Randive*

**BEING JOYFUL IS  
WAY MORE  
FUN!**

# SO, WHAT IS RESILIENCE? HOW DO YOU SEE IT?

Resilience to me the ability to bounce forward, not back, to where you were, and it is a matter of Personal Choice. I believe, all experiences one has had, helps us to look at situations, people, relationships, work, business differently to what we had thought it was or must be. It Changes and Transforms us on the Inside to a new way to show up in our life and living, which in turn impacts how we show up on the outside. Change is the very essence one can learn to imbibe not to just survive, but to thrive! I always say, Change is Constant, we all know that, but Changing is a Personal Choice looking For Us To Give It A Voice....

“When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at Change”. It is all about how we view and then interpret situations and circumstances and our attitude towards them. We can choose to be victimized or choose to use those situations to create beyond what at that time we see as limitations.

I had to become aware of what I had made the only way in my world which was not allowing for anything else to make itself known. I had to allow me to get out of my own way. That allowance was what shifted all my preconceived notions of what things had to look like. I had to learn to be malleable to shift and change on a dime what did not seem in my range and did feel very strange at the beginning.



*Sacha Randive*

You know when you have those interesting conclusions based on what everyone is saying that does your head in. It sounds something like this “This is the right way, or This is the wrong way, or There is no other way I recognized that way may have worked for them, but it was not resonating with me, so I used to suggest another way that seemed to work for everyone. I had to trust me and choose to be present with what was going on. I became more focused at recognizing when I was in my own way, and every time I acknowledged it, I became more aware of what was stopping me, what I could do to approach things differently.



While filming The Documentary Film I produced  
*"Mommy Says I'm Special"*

# **YEAH YEAH - BUT HONESTLY : ALL THAT MUMBO JUMBO IS ALL WELL AND FINE : BUT THE REALITY IS THAT WE DO HAVE TO COMPETE ISN'T IT ? AND IT IS A RATHER TOUGH WORLD OUT THERE !**

We notice Jennifer having a rather big smirk on her face!

Yes : the world seems like a tough place. Life CAN be hard. There IS competition. However, whether YOU want to be tough and unfair, whether YOU want to be cutthroat and downright nasty, whether YOU want to win at others expense: now THAT is a PERSONAL CHOICE.

That's what you need to understand. How the world is, and is not, you need to be aware of. You don't, however, want react to it, that's when you get victimized by it and what is going on. Essentially you must learn to trust yourself. And really know this, that the world does NOT decide how you show up, and the question here is instead of reacting, which is depleting, it only takes you into a whirlpool of you judging yourself, then having to prove your worth and then having to justify what you judged in the first place. Not a very good use of your energy!

So let's just flip reaction into action here. If you are here to really stand out you got to know what that is for you, what brings you joy that you can employ. Everything else is a distraction.



*Sacha Graduates from Manzil Vocational Training Centre*

LET IT GO! Ask yourself today: What is that which brings me joy?. You see, you get to choose that. The world isn't in charge of your joy you are, that is your JOB, (JOY OF BEING) so might as well be joyful about it. Inner Confidence and Resilience cannot be found any place outside of yourself : to be resilient you need to be self aware first : and be totally responsible for everything about you...



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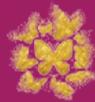
**Sacha Randive**  
Credit Services Officer  
HSBC Bank Middle East

A person who will Change your beliefs about what's possible.  
A person who will Change your beliefs about something that limits you.  
A person whose every inch of personality radiates confidence and power

Meet Specially-Abled Catalyst  
#SachaRandive sharing her thoughts in #LEADUAE



**“ WHAT IF WE DID NOT  
FUNCTION FROM A  
CONSTANT DISPARITY ON  
THE INSIDE PRETENDING TO  
SHOW WE ARE OK ON THE  
OUTSIDE ? INSTEAD WE  
ASKED QUESTIONS TO FIND  
CLARITY ? WHAT IMPACT  
WOULD THAT CREATE  
WITHIN US - AND FOR PEOPLE  
AROUND US ? ”**



*Jennifer Randive*

# SO, WHAT IS INNER STRENGTH ?

## HOW DO YOU SEE IT ?

WE ASKED JENNIFER THE OBVIOUS QUESTION - THAT MANY NEVER BOTHER TO ASK...

See : we all are quite fallible - and human - and flawed : and we all go through a range of emotions as reactions to what is happening around us. Far far too many times 'confidence' is seen as a constant trait - it is not. Confidence is not something any of us are born with - or without. Confidence is something we all have - and all fall short of based on the myriad of circumstances we face : and the key is this : to be able to dig deep and find that confidence when we need it the most.

We are all far far more capable : and way more stronger than we give ourselves credit for. The entire human race would have been wiped off the planet if not for our ingenuity, resilience and ability to find solutions. It just that sometimes we just give up - give in : and convince ourselves there really is no way out - and that's the problem...

Even if we DO feel despondent momentarily we should never let that get hold of us : and allow a situation to define us.

Inner strength is in all of us : we just need to know how to find it : and when you do : you really are unstoppable - no matter what the world may throw at you...



*Sacha, 2 weeks after Open Heart Surgery*

2 open heart surgeries, Appendix Removed, Gall Bladder at the 10 year Removed, 4 surgeries in all, And Yet Happy And Smiling!  
How does it get any better than that?



Oscar-winning actor Sir Ben Kingsley and Alexander Siddig, stars of The Last Legion, with Sacha Randive,



**“ WHAT SOMETIMES  
YOU THOUGHT  
DEFINES YOU  
MAYBE THE VERY  
THING THAT BINDS  
AND CONFINES YOU ”**



*Jennifer Randive*

# CONCEPT ONE : THERE ARE NO MISTAKES IN LIFE : ONLY LESSONS

One of the best ways of finding resilience is in understanding that life is not a series of events which are either positive or negative - or a series of wins and losses - but an endless opportunity to learn and better ourselves - in every conceivable aspect.

Whatever situation you are in, if you look at it from the perspective of a lesson to learn, and move forward with, the whole perception of life changes. This way, whatever that is external to you does not become a threat : it actually becomes an opportunity to learn.



You lost your job ?  
What can you  
learn from it ?



You had a  
messy divorce ?  
What can you  
learn from it ?



Someone close  
to you died ?  
What can you  
learn from it ?

Change the inevitable general question of 'why is this happening to me ?' to  
'What can I learn from this situation that will help me grow to a better version of myself ?'

This one paradigm shift will help you truly become resilient : no matter what happens  
around you...

# TOOL 1 : 3 LENSES TO SEE LIFE AND SITUATIONS WITH

One of the easiest ways to put the 'life is about lessons' concept to practical play is through using 3 simple lenses to see any situation with...

## **Reverse Lens:**

looking at the situation with YOU in the equation 'what could I have done differently?'

## **Long Lens:**

Take yourself into the future and ask yourself 'in five years will I be feeling the same way I am feeling now' - and chances are you will realise for yourself that it is NOT THAT IMPORTANT after all.. So, this is the lens to manage your emotions with

## **Wide Lens:**

This is where optimism and broader perception come in 'what can I learn from this - and do differently next time ?

**HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE LENSES AT PLAY.**

**IMAGINE YOU HAD A ROARING ROW WITH YOUR BOSS OVER A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION...**

### **Reverse Lens:**

rather than berating your boss ask yourself what YOU could have done to make the interaction more civil, and get your boss to see things your way

### **Long Lens:**

sure, you are frothing mad with your boss now - but will you be this mad in five years too ? No ? Then, don't write that Nasty mail in the heat of the moment - nor give in your resignation in the fit of temper you are in. Sleep on it for a day or two...

### **Wide Lens:**

ask yourself what did you learn about yourself in this ? What did you learn about your boss through this ? What are the steps you can take to repair the relationship ? What do you think you expect from him to have a more fulfilling work relationship ? How can you have this conversation with him ?

## **CONCEPT 2 : FINDING WHAT YOU CAN INFLUENCE AND LEAVING THE REST**

One of the most powerful concepts in finding resilience is in believing, and truly knowing that you ALWAYS have options : even though they may not be evident immediately or at the heat of the moment. Being able to discern between what IS and what is NOT in your sphere of control and being able to focus SOLELY on the (even one) thing that you CAN control starts giving you onus and power rather than resolution and despondency and a sense of helplessness.

The reality of ANY situation is this : there is ALWAYS ALWAYS a way of doing SOMETHING about it : but it requires :

### **A.**

Genuine belief that you are able to always be in control

### **B.**

The ability to have clear thought and focus

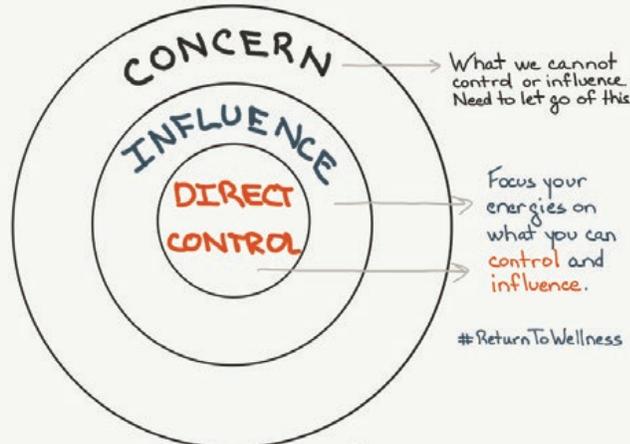
### **C.**

Not being distracted by the multitude of things you may not be able to influence

### **D.**

A genuine WANTING to do something about the situation - rather than merely whinge about it...

## TOOL 2 : HOMING IN ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL AND INFLUENCE



This model is by Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, 1989

Pic drawn by  
B BARTCOCK 2019

This simple diagram that Stephen Covey popularised is a good place to start when it comes to any issue. Imagine your son has been diagnosed with Dengue : which is often life threatening...

**A. Direct Control** : making sure he gets the best medical attention is completely in your control. Do that. Also in your control is educating yourself about the disease and also, about what you can do to ensure you help your son fight this.  
Do this too...

**B. Influence** : you can influence how your family handles this challenge : and ensure they rally around. You can influence how your son handles this : ensure he is mentally strong - and have the assurance you are all with him through this.

You can influence how the family keeps vigil : and ensure your son has all the support he needs : ensure there is a structure in place to keep him company in hospital - and also, no one is stretched unduly...

**C. Concern** : whether or not the medicine will actually work (there actually is no medicine for Dengue - the body must fight it) is largely speculative : don't fret over it. For sure, it IS your son, so, there is a hell of a lot of emotions involved : but 'worrying' about that is not going to help anyone - least of all your son...

## CONCEPT 3 : BITE SIZING

Most of the time we feel overwhelmed : because we are looking at the 'whole problem' : and most problems when it presents itself in its entirety is certainly daunting...

The key to not being overwhelmed and being resilient - and also, positive, is to bite size the problem - and looking at what can be done immediately, what can be addressed in the medium term and what needs more time to address. Whatever the problem, there is always something you can do NOW - and that's where you start : but, before you take ANY action, always take the time to think, reflect and 'dissect' the issue first : and bite size your response.

Bite Sizing helps you understand the 'components' any problem is made out of : and the more you dissect the issue the better it is : because each time you dissect it, things become more and more manageable : and each time the problem becomes 'smaller' the less daunting it seems...

So, next time you feel overwhelmed, grab a cup of tea - and bite size the problem, and then look at the response...

### IMAGINE YOU LOST YOUR JOB...

DO I HAVE IMMEDIATE CASH FLOWS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS ?

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WHAT ARE THE KEY LIABILITIES WHICH ARE FIXED ?

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IS THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY DO MAKE SOME CASH AT LEAST TO PAY OFF IMMEDIATE EXPENSES

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IS THERE SOMEONE TO ASK FOR HELP ?

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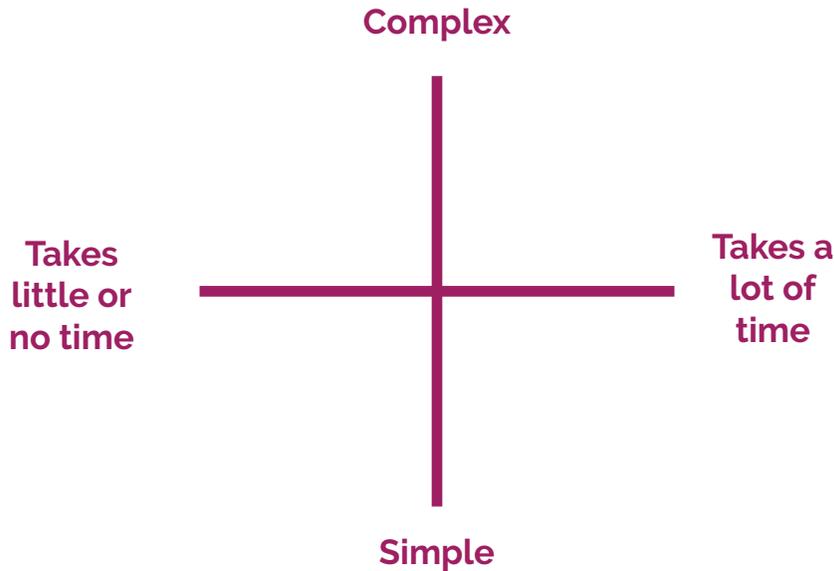
DO YOU HAVE ASSETS THAT CAN BE LIQUIDATED QUICKLY

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ARE THERE ASSETS TO LIQUIDATE WITH SOME EFFORT ?

## **TOOL 3 : COMPARTMENTALISING BITE SIZED ELEMENTS BASED ON COMPLEXITY AND TIME**

### **COMPLEX**



Once you have identified certain things that you can Do, plot it based on any two aspects like complexity And time, or risks and reward. The key is this: you are Able to look at different elements and factor in Different aspects before you start taking action. Taking action in a time of crisis or time of dire need Requires you to be at your best - not at your worst. This is the time to really bring in both your intellect And your emotional resilience to play for you rather Than against you.... So, bite size the problem - and then Bite size the action also: which ensures you are never Overwhelmed

The second 'trick' is this: consider each thing one Day at a time. Never look at the whole thing once you Have conceptualised a solution. Sure - keep the 'bigger picture' in your mind - but as far as activity is Concerned - just focus on the day - just that day - and Make sure you make that one-day count: and that you Do all you were meant to be done for the that one Day. Before you know it, you will be really making a Dent: and your problems out to sort themselves out.

# 3 PIECES OF ADVICE: THE NEW SLA FOR SELF IS TO STOP – LISTEN – ASK QUESTIONS.



## STOP:

The old adage was to 'try, try, try again'. When you do this and see that it is not working, you need to STOP. Then evaluate what is the issue. Evaluate what is happening with the situation. What have I been doing? Is this really working for me? What else can I do? Take a moment to look at the situation differently.



## LISTEN:

Not just to what is happening on the outside, but more importantly, what's happening inside you. When you keep repeating what you do over and over, there is irritability. This leads to frustration, which leads to confusion, desperation and you become reactive. These are the kind of emotions and feelings you need to listen to from within. We often ignore or disregard these emotions. These are all energy in motion and instead of trying to solve them in your head, you need to listen to these so that you can address them positively.



## ASK QUESTIONS:

Now that you have STOPPED to look from different perspectives. Then you started to LISTEN to the emotions and feelings so you understand who you are in all this equation. Now you need to start asking the key questions that are meant to open doors within you that were never touched. We have always tried to solve problems by ourselves and never thought of asking for support or help. We think we have to have all the answers. We believe that if we asked for support we will be looked down as someone without competency, we are not good enough. Actually we become vulnerable and this is a great place to be as we will learn so much. So ask the questions from the space of really being vulnerable: What is going on here? What am I avoiding? What is good about this situation that I am experiencing, but I am not getting? What is good about me in this situation, that I am not willing to receive? Who here can help me do this even better? We have not been training to ask for help.

This will help you to look beyond...this will be the first step in creating change and transformation. This is the first step in helping someone get out of their own way..and become a better version of themselves.

**“ THE DESIRE  
TO CHANGE SOMETHING  
COMES THROUGH OUR  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF  
SOMETHING NOT WORKING  
FOR US. WITH THAT  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CAN  
AWARENESS SHOW UP AS  
CHOICES FOR US TO ALLOW  
THINGS TO CHANGE FIRST  
WITHIN US : THAT CHANGES  
EVERYTHING  
AROUND US ”**



*Jennifer Randive*

*Empowering Engagement Transforming Performance*

## TRUE ENGAGEMENT IMPACT STARTS WITH

EMPOWERING  
YOUR  
ENGAGEMENT

1. The Individual
2. The Team
3. The Organisation
4. The Customer  
and in that order

## THE INSIDE OUT STRATEGY

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As the **CEO of Focus Direct Management Consultants** which focused on Executive Search and Recruitment one has questioned, contributed, created, empowered and reformed many a position, person and company focus on what and who is a valuable contribution to businesses and individuals alike. I have been privileged to work with some of the most prestigious Government and Semi-Government, Private and International and Multinational companies, assisting them with their talent search.

As the **Owner of Focus Direct Management Consultants** I have had the opportunity of playing various roles based on what was required in the moment. The Maverick CEO is what suits my way of Being The Change. The Catalyst, The Paradigm Buster, The Mindset Shifter, The Coach, The Mentor, the Counsellor and The Consultant.

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