

Swanvesha

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“There is no path
to Happiness.
Happiness is the
path”

– Gautam Buddha



WELCOME TO SWANVESHA

Discover insights, stories, and practical tips to inspire your journey in leadership, growth, and innovation. Whether you're seeking fresh perspectives or actionable strategies, Swanvesha (Swa-Anvesha, Sanskrit for Self-Inquiry) brings you a curated mix of ideas to keep you motivated and informed.

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TALLY HO



WELCOME NOTES

We can draw inspiration from anywhere. Under “**MUSINGS**”, we dive into an extraordinary story that validated the Big Bang Theory, showcasing how curiosity can unlock the universe's mysteries. For “**NOVELLA**”, inspired by my colleague Justine Julie Chartlet's phrase, “*Playing to protect versus playing to win*”, we uncover a fascinating WWII story that brings this concept to life. Under **Corporate Culture**, we confront a growing challenge—*Imposter Syndrome*. It's becoming systemic in some workplaces. We'll explore its symptoms and share actionable remedies.

And finally, I'd love to hear from you! If you have thoughts, feedback, or a topic you'd like me to cover in future issues, feel free to reach out at swanvesha@gmail.com. I am an Executive and Leadership Coach. Get in touch if you want to talk about anything in your corporate life. You can also explore my website www.swanvesha.com for more resources.

Happy reading...

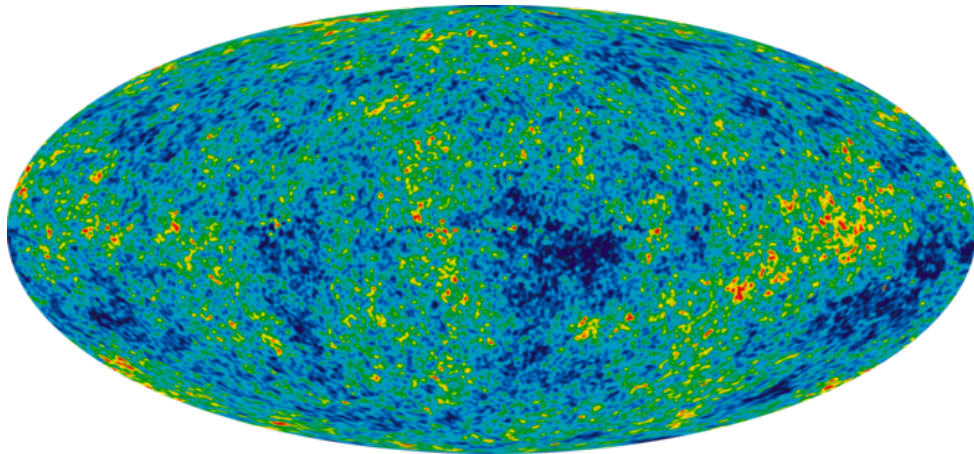
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Musings



BIG BANG INSPIRATION



Not many of us would have heard about Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB). It is a microwave radiation that fills all of space. The darkness we can observe in the sky is in fact a faint background glow which is stronger in some spectrums, as seen in the picture (www.nasa.org)

The discovery of the CMB is a story of curiosity, collaboration, and serendipity that transformed our understanding of the universe.

In the 1940s, physicists *George Gamow*, *Ralph Alpher*, and *Robert Herman* theorized that the remnants of the universe's hot beginnings should still exist as a faint radiation. Though their calculations were accurate, their prediction was largely ignored due to the lack of evidence.

Decades later, *Arno Penzias* and *Robert Wilson* encountered an unexplained noise while conducting experiments with a satellite communication antenna. This persistent hum, uniform and omnipresent, puzzled them. They ruled out every possible source of interference, even ***cleaning out pigeons nesting in the antenna***. Despite their best efforts, the noise persisted.

At the same time, Princeton University physicists *Robert Dicke* and *Jim Peebles* were revisiting the idea of relic radiation from the Big Bang. When Penzias and Wilson learned of this work, the connection became clear. The noise they had detected was not an error but the long-sought evidence of the universe's origins.

This accidental discovery was published in 1965 and reshaped cosmology. *Penzias* and *Wilson's* openness to curiosity, combined with the theoretical insights of their peers, turned an ordinary problem into an extraordinary breakthrough. Their Nobel Prize winning work highlights the power of persistence and collaboration.

For leaders, this story is a reminder of the value of staying curious and fostering partnerships. Sometimes, the answers to our greatest challenges lie not in immediate solutions but in revisiting overlooked ideas and working together to uncover the truth. The discovery of the CMB inspires us to see obstacles as opportunities and to trust that even the smallest insights can lead to transformational progress.



PLAYING TO PROTECT VS PLAYING TO WIN



In May 1940, Allied forces (primarily British, French, and Belgian troops) were trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk, France, surrounded by advancing German forces. The situation was dire, and the loss of these troops could have spelled disaster.

Military leaders recognized that the immediate priority was to save as many soldiers as possible.

Operation Dynamo prioritized evacuation over confrontation, mobilizing all available ships (even civilian and fishing boats) to rescue over 338,000 troops across the English Channel. This defensive effort preserved Britain's military strength for future battles.

Churchill famously called it a **“miracle of deliverance”**, but he was clear-eyed about the fact that this was not a victory. It was a strategic retreat designed to safeguard human resources and prevent the collapse of the British Army. Even as Britain played defensively at Dunkirk, Churchill pivoted to an offensive mindset almost immediately. Recognizing that the war could not be won by playing cautiously, he rallied the nation with his stirring speech:

“We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

Churchill's determination to prepare for a long, hard-fought war was evident. Britain fortified its defenses, strengthened its air force, and began forging alliances, particularly with the United States. This shift from protecting troops to planning for eventual victory set the stage for the Allied counteroffensive that would ultimately lead to the defeat of Germany.

For corporate leaders, this story highlights the critical balance between safeguarding what's essential and boldly pursuing long-term goals. True leadership is not only in leading teams to successes. It is also about protecting your team, resources, or reputation during crisis and then turning those defensive moves into a foundation for future success. It's about recognizing when to regroup, realign, and then take decisive steps toward innovation, growth, and lasting impact.

Corporate Culture



IMPOSTER SYNDROME



Imposter Syndrome refers to the persistent feeling that one doesn't deserve their success or position, despite evidence to the contrary.

Sometimes, these feelings aren't purely internal but are reinforced by external factors—like being told, explicitly or subtly, that you're not good enough.

This constant negativity can make you feel like an imposter even when you get promoted or succeed in your role, creating a cycle of self-doubt and insecurity.

Addressing Imposter Syndrome, in such cases, requires not just personal growth but also a supportive and affirming work environment. Classic symptoms of workplace dynamics that exacerbate Imposter Syndrome include:

- **Lack of Recognition:** Accomplishments go unnoticed or unacknowledged
- **Constant Criticism:** Feedback focuses solely on flaws, with little acknowledgment of strengths
- **Subtle Exclusion:** Being left out of important meetings, decisions, or opportunities
- **Unrealistic Expectations:** Facing unattainable standards or excessive demands
- **Microaggressions or Bias:** Experiencing subtle or overt discrimination based on identity or background
- **Undermining Behavior:** Managers or colleagues making you feel inadequate or questioning your abilities

When individuals are consistently told—implicitly or explicitly—that they don't belong or aren't good enough, these messages can be internalized, fueling self-doubt and Imposter Syndrome. Some things to do, if you notice these symptoms are:

- **Build Awareness and Track Success:** Journal key incidents, achievements, and feedback to identify patterns, reframe negativity, and focus on your value while recognizing external influences
- **Prioritize Well-Being:** Reduce stress through mindfulness, exercise, or creative hobbies
- **Speak Up:** Address concerns with managers or HR using clear examples of exclusion or unfair treatment
- **Set Boundaries:** Say no to unrealistic demands, advocate for yourself, and highlight your accomplishments
- **Leverage Support:** Rely on trusted colleagues, friends, or a coach to gain perspective and create an action plan

Overcoming imposter syndrome starts with taking charge—by recognizing your worth, setting boundaries, and advocating for yourself, you can break the cycle of self-doubt and reclaim your confidence.

Photo by [Oler Mopos](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Hasta Luego (See you later)



THANK YOU

Thank you very much for reading my newsletter. I hope you enjoyed it. If it triggered something in you or you want me to write about any other topic, drop a note to swanvesha@gmail.com.

As we wind off, here is something lighthearted.

During a team meeting, the manager stood up confidently and said, “From now on, we won’t call them *challenges*. We’ll call them *opportunities* instead.”

A voice from the back of the room piped up, “Great! Does that mean my ‘performance challenge’ is now a ‘promotion opportunity’?”

The manager paused for a second and replied, “Well, let’s just say that opportunity is still... under review”.

Keep growing and be well.

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