

Swanvesha

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“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”

– Lao Tzu



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.



WELCOME NOTES

Thank you for taking the time to read this month's edition of my newsletter. Happy New Year! I hope you had a restful break and are finding your rhythm as you get back to work.

In this January issue, I am sharing a few practical tips on **"Restarting After a Break."** Following that, we have a story about "Sticking to your goal." Then we dive into **Corporate Culture**, focusing on the common use of filler words in conversations and their impact.

And finally, *hmm, aah, err, you know, sorry*, 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 or check my website www.swanvesha.com

Happy reading...

Musings



“It’s like riding a bike or swimming—the muscle memory is there; you just need a little time to get going”



RESTARTING – AFTER A BREAK

The holidays are over. The decorations are packed away, and it’s time to get back to work. But how many of us feel like our minds are still on holiday? Ever feel like your brain is stuck in vacation mode? It’s a little like writer’s block—the break refreshed us, but restarting feels like an uphill climb. Here are a few tips:

- **Embrace the nerves** - Feeling anxious is completely normal—it’s part of the process
- **Plan** - Write down a few goals for your first day or week to create structure
- **Start small** - Reconnect with others or ease into tasks that feel manageable
- **Pick priorities** - Focus on one or two key things rather than everything at once
- **Create energy** - Engage in group activities or collaborative work to feel connected
- **Pace yourself** - Take short breaks to recharge during your first week back

Nouvelles (Short stories)



STICK TO YOUR GOAL

A Zen master sent five disciples on a difficult journey to a remote monastery on a mountain top to meet another master, who needed an heir. Along the way, each disciple faced challenges:

1. The first disciple rushed and became exhausted, giving up.
2. The second became distracted by the surroundings and got lost.
3. The third focused too much on the difficulties and turned back.
4. The fourth lost faith and abandoned the journey.

Only the fifth disciple, steady and focused, persevered despite the hardships. When he reached the monastery, the second master asked him why he succeeded. The disciple replied, "**I stuck to the path and didn't deviate from my purpose. I didn't get distracted by obstacles or think about anything other than what I was supposed to do.**"

In real life, when someone joins a new team, it's natural for them to align with their manager or boss. This helps ensure you're on the same page with the company's vision, structure, and your role's expectations. However, many fall into the trap of overcommitting, saying yes to everything, and taking on tasks that aren't part of their core job description.

Soon, they're working late nights, weekends, and holidays, pushing themselves too hard. The sad reality is that they're often appraised only for the work that is in their job description. Over time, people stop referring to their job descriptions and just go with the flow, doing whatever is asked. When these employees rise to management positions, they end up imposing the same expectations on their own teams. This cycle creates an environment of long hours, stress, burnout, and unrealistic expectations—ultimately turning into a toxic culture. Always remember to focus on your goal.



The most important tool for any leader is communication. You don't have to be exceptionally brilliant or highly knowledgeable— even the average Joe can be incredibly effective with strong communication skills.

There are many aspects to a good conversation. This month, we focus on an irritating one. “**Filler words.**”

Filler words—like “uh,” “um,” “ah,” “you know,” “I mean,” and “like”—often

sneak into our conversations when our subconscious mind struggles to find the right words. They fill gaps or mask awkward silences, but over time, they become ingrained in our speech and do more harm than good. Here's how filler words affect your communication:

- **Dilute Your Message** – Think of any memorable speech or conversation that moved you. Did you hear filler words? Likely not. A good conversation is focused, to the point and clean.
- **Distract the Audience** – Filler words can pull the listener's focus away from your message. Instead of remembering your key points, they may only recall the repetitive "um"s and "like"s
- **Makes you feel casual** – Lastly, it makes you sound less professional and confident. Ask yourself: have you used them in conversations where you felt fully engaged with loved ones?"

So, what are some options to mitigate the usage of filler words?

- **Self-Awareness** – The first step is identifying which filler words you use and when you tend to use them. Awareness is half the battle won. Once you're conscious of it, you can pause and pick up the conversation without the filler word. Repeating this process consistently helps break the habit. You might also ask a trusted friend or colleague to point out when you use filler words or record yourself speaking to identify patterns. No matter the approach, awareness is the foundation for improvement
- **Pause** – The second step is to pause whenever you feel a filler word coming. This step builds directly on self-awareness. Instead of saying the filler word, pause briefly, gather your thoughts, and then continue the conversation
- **Practice** – Finally, combine awareness and pausing into regular practice. Over time, with consistent effort, you'll notice significant improvement and the difference will amaze you

If you ever needed motivation for not using filler words, imagine Mark Anthony saying, “*Friends, Romans, uh, um, sorry, Countrymen. Lend me thy ears, you all!*” Shakespeare might turn in his grave.

Hasta Luego (See you later)



THANK YOU

Thank you very much for reading my newsletter. It was a humbling experience for me to put together this one, I hope you would have enjoyed reading. 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.

A leader sent out an email to the entire company about an upcoming event. The email read: *"Please RSVP if you plan to attend the team-building lunch this Friday."*

Unfortunately, they forgot to disable the "Reply All" function. One enthusiastic employee quickly responded:

"Count me in! I love free food!" And the email exchanges that followed changed the course of corporate communications forever."

Keep growing and be well.