

Swanvesha

NOVEMBER 2025

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WELCOME TO SWANVESHA

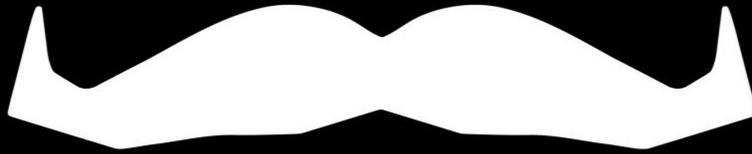
Swanvesha (*Swa-Anvesha*, Sanskrit for *Self-Inquiry*) offers insights, stories, and actionable strategies to help leaders grow and adapt in an ever-changing world. Stay informed, inspired, and lead with purpose.

Photo by [Richard Sagredo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

“All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.”

- *Blaise Pascal (Pensées, 1670)*

TALLY HO



WELCOME NOTES

November has a rhythm all its own. The fields are bare, the harvest gathered, and we pause to reap the year's efforts — both tangible and intangible. It is also a month of remembrance: for many, it means honoring the courage and sacrifice of those who served; for others, it marks the beginning of the festive season and a remembrance of loved ones they miss. Above all, it is a reflection on the irrepressible human spirit — one that oscillates between tangents yet always carries on.

Looking back invites us to look forward. As we step closer to winter and the holidays, the quiet encourages us to reflect on what comes next — to carry forward insights and prepare, mentally, emotionally, and strategically, for the year ahead.

In *Musings*, we explore the *Movember* movement — a celebration of courage and collective care, and a nod to the human spirit that remembrance calls us to honor. and in *Novella*, we turn to *A Fistful of Dollars* — not the Clint Eastwood version, but a story about a man, a dollar, and what leaders can learn from the gamble we call life.”. Finally in *Corporate Culture*, I share reflections from attending a school assembly and the surprising parallels it revealed with how organizations are run.

I am an Executive and Leadership Coach. Connect with me at www.swanvesha.com or write to me at swanvesha@gmail.com. Happy reading!

Musings



MOUSTACHE – THE START OF A CONVERSATION

Many conversations do not happen. Many conversations should happen, and many conversations do not need to happen. It's not wordplay—but about the importance of knowing which conversations matter and when silence serves us better. Blaise Pascal wrote in his *Pensées* that “Most of the troubles of mankind come from the inability to sit quietly in a room alone.”

People who know me personally, know that I can talk and sometimes talk more. But I have learnt, over time, the importance of silence. I had in an earlier article mentioned about a few seconds of silence, which changed the face of the Indian IT Industry. ([link](#)). But there are some conversations that needs to happen. Like the one that a Moustache can start.

In 2003, in Melbourne, Australia, as a lighthearted idea among a few friends, Travis Garone and Luke Slattery joked about bringing back the moustache (“Mo,” in Australian slang). They convinced 30 men to grow moustaches for the month of November to raise awareness for men’s health—particularly prostate cancer, a topic rarely discussed at the time. The rules were simple: start clean-shaven on November 1, grow and groom a moustache for the month, and use it as a conversation starter to raise awareness and funds for men’s health. Thus began the movement called Movember.

I would like to think that Movember can also be MEvember. Regardless of gender, it’s about having conversations about yourself—your health, your mental wellbeing. Honor yourself and use the month to be an ambassador for health and healing. Even Pascal, I think, would have approved of that conversation—and with his thin, neatly trimmed moustache, he would have made the perfect brand ambassador for Movember—and, in our own ways, we can all be ambassadors for MEvember —starting with a conversation with ourselves.

Photo by RogerHiggins via Wikimedia commons



There was once a gambler who had lost everything. One evening, with only a fistful of dollar left, he decided to play one last game. His wife begged him to stop, but he shrugged and said,

“I’ve already lost everything. What’s a few more dollars? If I lose, nothing changes. But if I win...” And so, he played.

Luck smiled on him. He won once, then again, and again. Slowly, he recovered nearly all that he had lost over the years. Then came the familiar temptation — to risk it all one last time, to win the reward of a lifetime. He placed his entire fortune on the table. And this time, he lost.

When he returned home, his wife asked quietly, “What happened?” He smiled and said, “**I lost the dollar.**”

We often think of gamblers as reckless. Yet there’s a strange kind of optimism in that mindset — the belief that even at rock bottom, the next throw might turn things around. To the gambler, loss isn’t final; it’s just another turn of the dice.

That answer — *I lost the dollar* — is a lesson in perspective. He didn’t see the fortune vanish; he saw only the last dollar, because everything else had been won and lost in the same breath.

Life, in many ways, is a gamble too. We try to calculate, predict, and control outcomes — in our careers, our investments, our leadership decisions. Yet a single tweet can undo a boardroom plan. A sudden shift in the market can redraw an entire strategy. One conversation can change a life’s direction.

The truth is that life doesn’t hand us certainty — only possibilities. Every strategic decision is a wager on the future: a market trend, a team’s potential, a changing world. No matter how well we plan, chance will always have a seat at the table. Smart leaders don’t deny uncertainty — they learn to dance with it.

As the Poet Dushyant Kumar wrote in Hindi (Devanagari):

"कौन कहता है कि आसमान में सुराख नहीं होता, एक पत्थर तो तबीअत से उछालो यारों"

English Translation:

"Who says that you cannot make a hole in the sky? My friends, just throw a stone at it with intent."

Photo by [Allef Vinicius](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Corporate Culture



ASSEMBLY LINES

I recently attended a school assembly at my daughter's school. It was to celebrate the Fall harvest, and the weather was just right — cool, comfortable, and bright.

The kids walked out to the playground and settled quickly. There were about 500 students, yet the noise level was surprisingly manageable. The discipline of the children was remarkable. Teachers stood at key checkpoints, keeping a watchful but relaxed eye. It was a happy place — filled with quiet chatter, warm smiles, and a sense of calm energy.



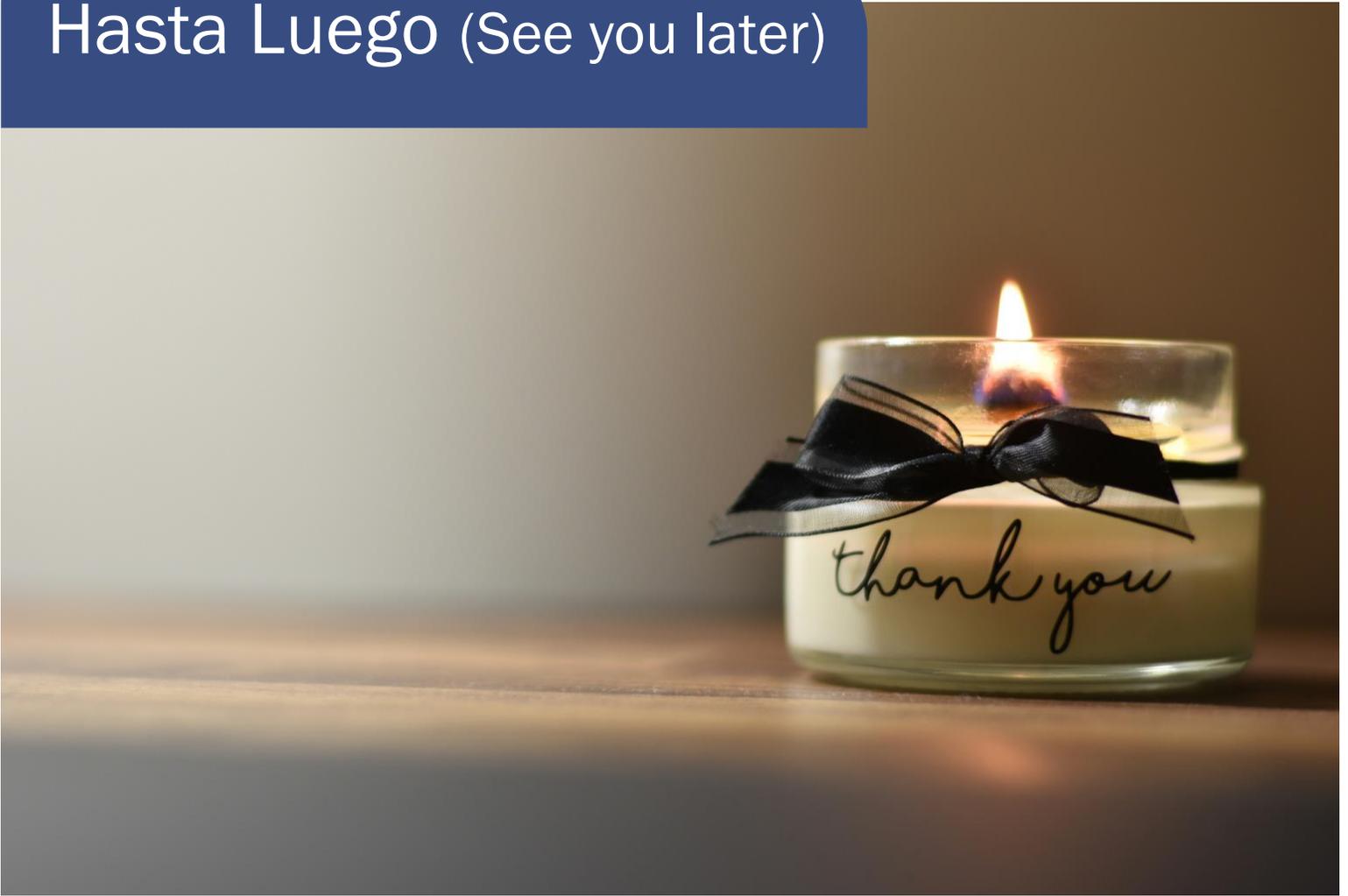
The principal and a few key teachers gathered near the front as the assembly began. A group of students — the day's MCs — took the stage to welcome everyone and speak about the harvest and Canadian Thanksgiving. Then came the activities: handcrafted paper leaves with good wishes dropped into a large basket, an apple-bobbing race that brought out pure joy and laughter, and teachers joining in — with the male teachers, to much amusement, drawing the loudest cheers.

There were acknowledgments for the custodial and support staff too, and when it all wrapped up, the students filed back in, while teachers and janitors efficiently tidied up. Some students even stayed back to help. The whole event ended on time — well-planned, well-executed, and quietly impressive. As I walked back, a couple of teachers I knew thanked me for attending. I thanked them in return — and found myself thinking about how closely this assembly resembled how most organizations run.

Every organization, like that assembly, depends on two forces: visible execution and invisible coordination. Despite all the talk about “vision” and “culture,” much of an organization's rhythm comes from people who simply know their roles and do them well. The magic isn't in grand strategy decks or slogans — it's in *the choreography of everyday discipline*: people showing up on time, doing their part, adjusting when plans change, and still cheering others on.

Behind this visible rhythm, leadership plays the role of quiet orchestration — setting direction, creating safety, and trusting the system to work. When those elements align, even the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Like a swan gliding across still water — graceful above, yet paddling steadily below — well-run organizations move with quiet coordination. The visible calm is supported by invisible effort. When we witness that balance — between structure and spontaneity, direction and freedom — we realize that culture isn't built in boardrooms; it's rehearsed every day, in the small, ordinary rhythms of how people show up, help out, and make things work.

Hasta Luego (See you later)



THANK YOU

Thank you for reading this month's newsletter — I hope you enjoyed it. As we wind down, here's something to make you smile:

A few biology students decided to prank their professor. They took body parts from various bugs, stuck them together with adhesive, and presented the creature to him. "What kind of bug is this?" they asked.

The professor looked at the mishmash and asked calmly, "Did it hum when you caught it?" The students, thinking they'd fooled him, replied eagerly, "Yes, it did!"

The professor nodded and said, "Then it's a *humbug*."

Stay safe, stay curious, and keep growing.

Photo by [Daniel Andrade](#) on [Unsplash](#)