

Swanvesha

JUNE 2026

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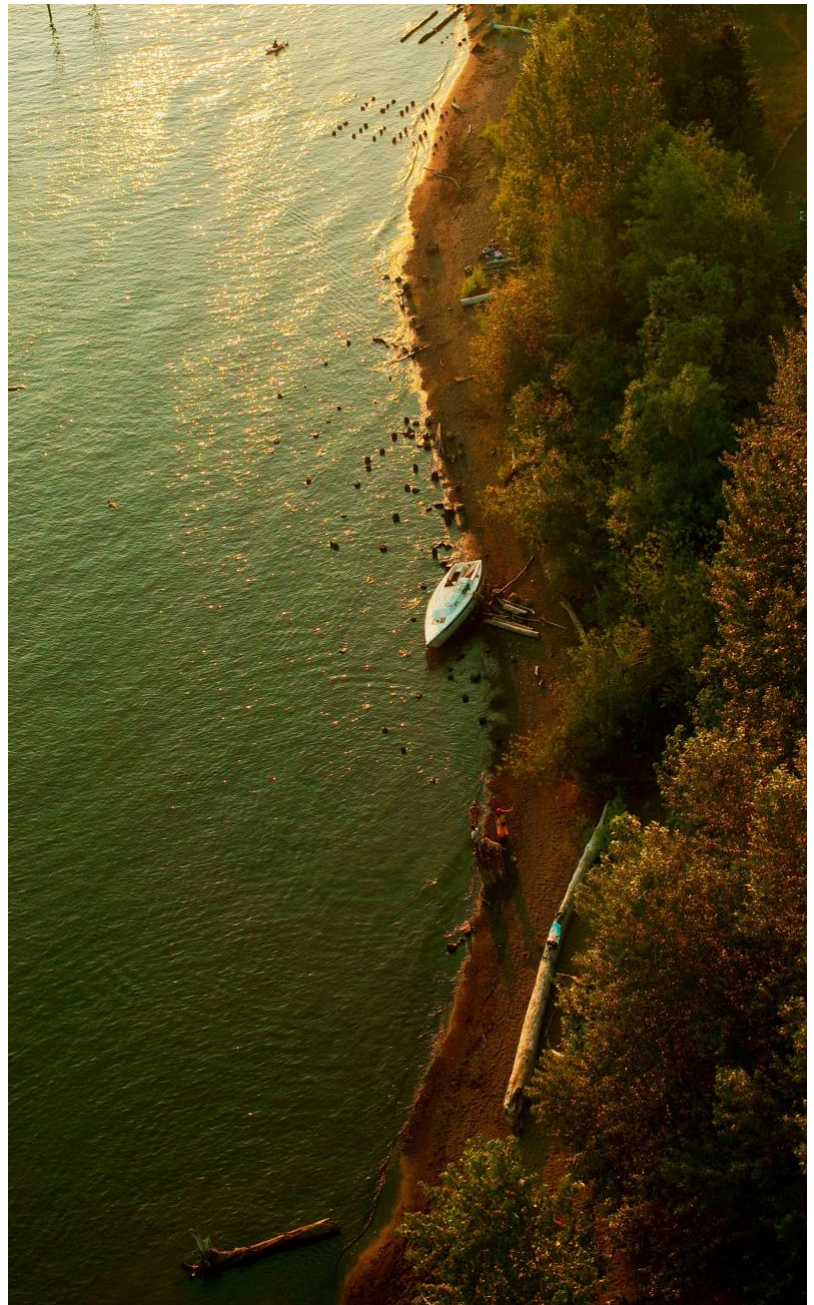
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"If you have more than 3 priorities,
you don't have any."

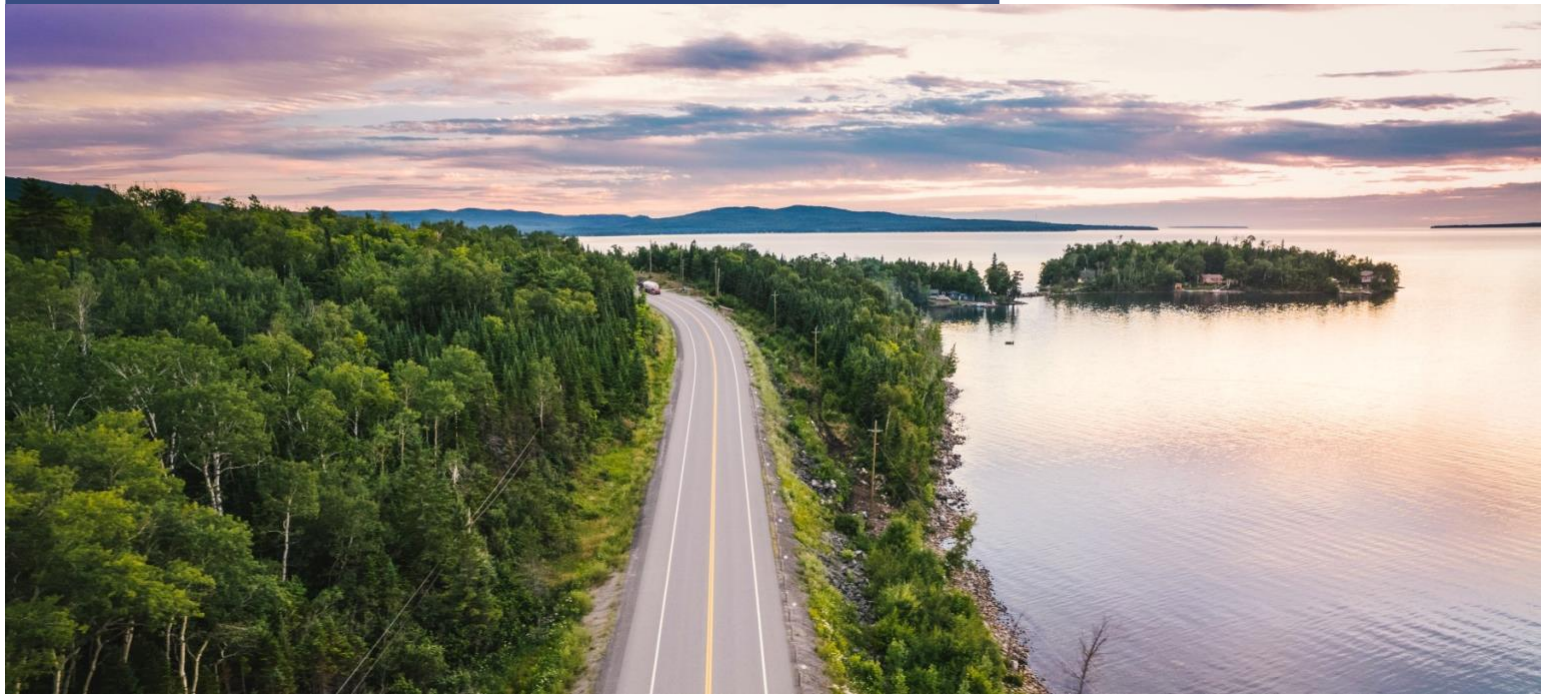
—Jim Collins



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.

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WELCOME NOTES

The FIFA World Cup is here, but the fever is missing. Exorbitant ticket prices, travel hurdles, and rivalry from peak summer sports are choking the world's biggest event. But the cure is simple: put the fans first, and the fever will catch. In this month's newsletter, we will go through the same idea. One simple thing that can change more than the hundreds. Under ***Musings***, I share a story about a successful doctor who wanted to be a dancer, and we explore whether success and fulfilment are the same? In ***Novella***, the art of storytelling and a mythological story and a modern corporate story that embodies the art. Finally, in ***Corporate Culture***, a story that is a mirror to the modern professionals, who have a buffet of self-improvement books, podcasts and trainings.

I am an Executive and Leadership Coach. Connect with me on my website www.swanvesha.com for more resources or write to me at swanvesha@gmail.com. Happy reading.

Photo by saulttourism.com

Musings



THE DANCE THAT NEVER HAPPENED

At a retirement celebration, a celebrated doctor sat in the middle of applause, warm speeches, and a dance performance arranged in his honor. Everyone around him seemed joyful. Yet one close friend noticed that he was not smiling. When the friend asked what was wrong, the doctor confessed that he never wanted to become a doctor. His real passion had always been dancing and seeing the performance brought back memories of a life, he missed.

He explained that this happened gradually. First, he needed to earn a living, then came family responsibilities and later, by the time his children had grown and gone to college, he had become a respected and famous doctor. His reputation had become its own kind of trap. The dream had not died all at once; it had simply been postponed long enough to become unreachable. And in moments like watching the performance, brings it to the fore. That is the quiet tragedy. People do not always abandon their true calling in one dramatic moment. More often, they delay it for sensible reasons until one day they discover that the delay has become their life.

If we look back at our lives, most of us wanted to be teachers when we were in kindergarten. Then maybe a police officer, or a nurse, or something our parents did. Gradually, influences start to shape direction. Not always through one decision, but through small shifts that feel practical at the time. A small percentage of people end up doing the “dance” they once imagined for themselves. Some never quite figure out what they want and settle into work that simply sustains them. And then there are professionals who begin with a dream, but slowly surrender it to necessity, expectation, and identity.

In leadership, the same pattern appears all the time. A leader may begin with curiosity, courage, and a desire to create, but over time become bound by role, status, and institutional expectations.

The title grows; the freedom shrinks.

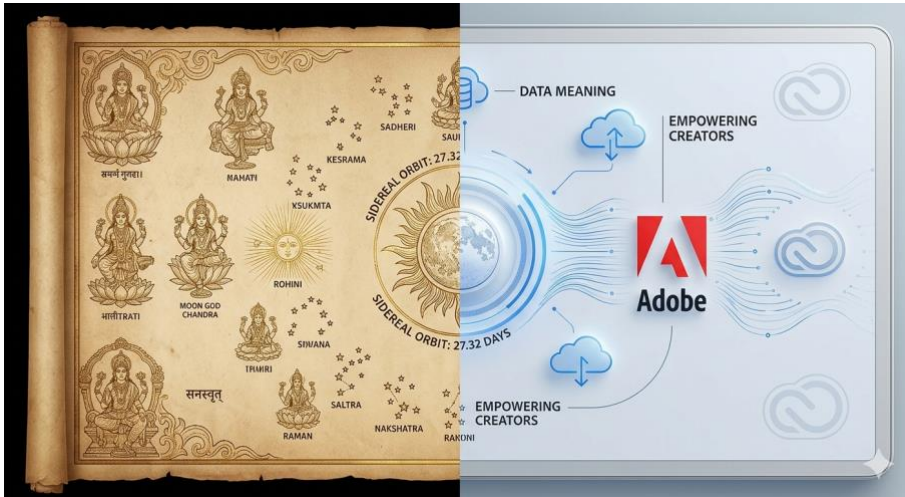
Perhaps the saddest part of the story is that nobody around him would have called his life a failure. They would have called it a success. And maybe that is why stories like this matter. They remind us that success and fulfillment are not always the same thing.

Image created by Gemini AI



In Indian mythology, Chandra, the Moon god, married the 27 daughters of King Daksha. These daughters represented the 27 Nakshatras (Constellations) that span the night sky. Chandra promised to spend equal time with each of them, but he became devoted to one wife, Rohini (**Aldebaran**), and neglected the others.

The neglected sisters complained to their father. Daksha cursed Chandra, causing him to lose his brilliance and slowly fade away. As the Moon diminished, the balance of the world was disturbed. The gods appealed to Shiva, who softened the curse. The Moon would continue to fade for part of the month but would then regain his brilliance and return to fullness. Thus began the cycle of waxing and waning.



To most people, this is simply mythology. To ancient astronomers, it was something else entirely. Hidden inside the story were observations about the Moon's movement through the sky, it explains Moon's Sidereal month of 27.32 days, the extra time the Moon stays in Aldebaran than the other constellations. It was not merely entertainment. It was a way of preserving knowledge. Instead of sharing complex observations, they created stories. These stories carried the information. The information survived because the stories survived.

Even today, the importance of storytelling endures. In 2013, Adobe faced a difficult transition that could easily have been misunderstood as decline. The company was moving away from its highly successful boxed software model—where customers paid large upfront fees for products like Photoshop and Illustrator—and shifting to a subscription-based “Creative Cloud” model. On paper, this looked risky. Revenues became uneven, analysts questioned the strategy, and customers were unsure about paying continuously for software they were used to owning outright.

But instead of explaining it purely as a financial or operational shift, Adobe used storytelling to reframe the change. They didn't position it as “we are changing pricing.” They framed it as a shift from ownership to access. The story was about empowering creators with constant updates, seamless collaboration, and always-available tools—rather than periodic product releases. The strategy succeeded because the numbers were given meaning.

Thousands of years separate Adobe's transformation from the story of Chandra and his 27 wives. Yet both reveal the same truth. Human beings rarely remember data. We remember what the data means.

Stories are not the opposite of facts. They are often how facts survive.

Corporate Culture



THE SELF-IMPROVEMENT BUFFET

We have an obsession with the buffet of self-improvement. Walk into any corporate environment or scroll through any professional feed, and you will find an endless cycle of consumption: a podcast on the morning commute, a two-hour masterclass on empathy on Tuesday, a webinar on strategic agility on Thursday, and a pile of unread leadership books on the nightstand.

We treat personal and professional development like a checklist. We collect insights like badges, but we never stop long enough to let a single one truly permeate our skin. Real change is slow, repetitive, and uncomfortable—so instead, we meander.

There is a beautiful Sufi story that explains this. There was once a devout man who spent his days in deep prayer and contemplation. His neighbor, however, was a cynical man who mocked him relentlessly. One day, exhausted, he prayed for relief. God replied, *“Do not be angry with him. He is very close to me, and I am fond of him.”* The next morning, the devout told his neighbor what had been revealed. Upon hearing this, the neighbor went completely quiet. By the end of the day, he packed his few belongings and left the village entirely.

Years later, the devout man met him again during a pilgrimage. The neighbor had become deeply spiritual. The devout man approached him and inquired about his sudden disappearance all those years ago. The neighbor replied, "When you spoke to me that morning, I was shattered. I could not believe that God said He was fond of me. Had you told me He was fond of you, and that I needed to mend my ways, I would have understood it. But when you said He was fond of me, it transformed me completely. I realized I had to find Him. I have been traveling, searching, and trying to find Him ever since"

Think about the geometry of that transformation. The neighbour received one profound realization, and it disrupted his entire identity, uproot his life, and dictate the next several decades of his existence. He picked one direction and walked it completely. If he were a modern professional, his story would look very different. He would have heard the devout man's words, called it a "great insight," posted a quote about it on social media, listened to a podcast about "unearned grace" on his drive home, and then gone right back to teasing his neighbor the next morning.

We meander because gathering new content is easy, but integrating an old truth is hard. True development requires a "holding space"—a period of deliberate silence where we stop hunting for new information and instead ask how the information, we already have, challenges the way we currently operate.

Stop collecting. Stop meandering. Find the one truth that disrupts you, step out of the buffet line, and let it become your journey

Hasta Luego



THANK YOU

Thank you very much for reading my newsletter. I hope you enjoyed it. I am starting a new series called **Corpspeak**—an exploration of the beautifully convoluted sentences senior leaders use to wrap simple concepts in layers of buzzwords.

Here's our first installment:

"In order to optimize our fiscal footprint and drive cross-functional synergy, we must execute a strategic pivot toward the rationalization of our human capital allocation, thereby facilitating the sunseting of redundant operational workstreams"

What it actually means: **"We need to fire some people to save money."**

Stay curious.

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