

Rediscovering Yourself – A workshop by Gaurav Shorey

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The workshop started with the question why do we need to rediscover ourselves? Our understanding of the world is based on our social conditioning and upbringing in which the line that distinguishes reality and perception is blurred. Most of the things we think, say and do are based on perception.

The workshop revolved around the theme “The map is not the territory”, a term coined by Alfred Korzybski, a Polish-American scholar. It’s a metaphor that illustrates the differences between belief and reality. Another phrase often used is “the menu is not the meal”. We draw conclusion based on the mental maps we have created and not what is real.

Language plays a big role in how we see things - what is real is not what the ‘word’ represents. While language is a tool that we use every day, it has also limited our knowledge of the world or of reality. For example we have all been told since childhood that boys don’t cry. This statement became so powerful to us that we actually believed in it. But it’s not the reality. We use language to define who we think we are but people around us might think completely differently. We often limit ourselves by what we say. If we limit ourselves with ‘beliefs’ that we have embraced so dearly for years, we lose sight of new experiences. We are not free to think differently because of this. Everything becomes predictable and therefore life becomes dull.

He also spoke on the idea of ‘rewriting’ the language we speak. The method of rephrasing the language called E-prime was discussed. It is a way of speaking the language without using the verb "to be" in any way (be, is, am, are, was, were, been, and being). This removes all dogmatic and absolute notions that we have about anything. For example a naughty child in the class may not be that way all the time but we label him as naughty, irrespective of his good behaviour at several other occasions.

One clear takeaway from the workshop is that we need to rethink and rediscover new ways and methods of knowing, doing and saying, all the time, with an open mind. The workshop was fun, interactive and meaningful.

