

The Bull's Third Eye

A young and rather boastful champion challenged a Zen master who was renowned for his skill as an archer. The young man demonstrated remarkable technical proficiency when he hit a distant bull's eye on his first try, and then split that arrow with his second shot. "There," he said to the old man, "see if you can match that!"

Undisturbed, the master did not draw his bow, but instead motioned the young archer to follow him up the mountain. Curious about the old man's intentions, the champion followed him high into the mountain until they reached a deep chasm spanned by a rather flimsy and shaky log. Calmly stepping out onto the middle of the unsteady and certainly perilous bridge the old master picked a faraway tree as a target, drew his bow, and fired a clean direct hit. "Now it is your turn." he said as he gracefully stepped back onto the safe ground.

Staring with terror into the seemingly bottomless and beckoning abyss, the young man could not force himself to step out onto the log, much less shoot at a target. "You have great skill with your bow," the master said, sensing his challenger's predicament, "but you have little skill with the mind that lets loose the shot."

The above story elegantly depicts the relationship between technical acumen and balance of the mind. 'Technical' skill for the job is like the primary ingredient (such as chicken/paneer etc.) in an Indian dish. But without the supporting condiments (such as curry/masalas), this dish is tasteless! You see, without balance of mind/personality, our technical acumen has a rather limited applicability.

It is precisely for the above reason that 'technical skills' in mature organizations carry only a portion of the weightage during appraisals. The other portion is distributed among the other attributes of our overall personality. This measurement methodology encourages the growth of better poised professionals, eventually leading to the evolvement of a well-balanced organization.