



Udaan Feature - Silent Change

India Calling...

Welcome Freshers. You are in the United States of America. You dreamt about coming here for last couple of years, if not more. You worked hard. Many of you have taken big loans. You are here, in search of a better future. America had been calling you and you have responded expending every bit of your emotions, energies and finances. As tiring it may have been, in the end, you have done it. Congratulations!

In the times to come, now you will experience the beautiful offerings of a developed nation. You have already experienced the beautiful roads when you rode from the airport to your new home. It begins there, and doesn't end. America offers best facilities of a developed nation.

But soon you will realize, it demands too. It will tell you that your dreams can come true - here lay the opportunities in front of you. But, rise. Raise your talents, your work ethic; make your hard work a consistent habit. It asks you to empower yourself. Because, it knows that is how this great country has become the greatest in the world. Its success is based on the undaunted entrepreneurial spirit and relentless hard

work of its inmates. So, for you to be here, it demands the same from you. And, you will have to respond to this call too. And, you will.

The days will pass by... and one fortunate day, sooner than later, there will be a silent change. A longing would arise, when unexpectedly as it may seem - your motherland will call upon you. Keep your eyes and ears open to pay heed to that.

Yes, India calls, as does America. Yet, the call is different. One is opportunist, the other is dutiful. You will long to find the answer to - why my India is not developed like USA? When this question comes, I hope you will pause. And reflect. At that time, realize India has given you a lot and ask yourself, what is that you can do for India? Be with this question for some time, and answers would present themselves.

What is the one thing you would like to do for India? How can you as an individual contribute to its development? How can you make it developed in your lifetime? You have lived twenty something years there; you know it by its grass-roots. Now, you are here in the US,

sitting at a vantage point. Open your eyes to recognize the positive differences, and realize you can bring these positive changes in India too. Respond to the call from your motherland with the same zeal you responded to America's. I am sure, if you could make it to here, your initiatives will make a positive difference in India. Become a torchbearer and lead the way to a developed India in your lifetime or earlier.

Inviting you to walk with us.

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Point of View - By Varsha Shridhar

A Policy of Dishonesty

To lie or not to lie, that is the question. Most people stop actively lying (or at least, make attempts to) by their late teens. They would have learned by then that lying is like a weed - once it starts, you cannot stop it from growing. One lie feeds another and another until finally you are forced to admit you cannot remember your first lie. After which, the rest of them tumble down and

you're caught with your pants down around your legs while the world watches and laughs. Not an enjoyable experience.

But the depressing alternative is the truth. As you grow up, you are expected to *act* grown up. And you're left with two choices. You could blurt out the unvarnished truth: "I overslept. My alarm rang, but I just couldn't bring myself to wake up since I'd been up all night watching 'Sex and the City' reruns" or "I totally forgot about our appointment because I had better things to think about", thus damaging whatever standing you ever held in society.

Your second choice is to maintain an air of mystery: "Something came up and I just couldn't make it on time". This second method, what I call the Omission Method, is very popular. And as one gets more and more practiced at it, the more smoothly the words come out, such that an expert can make those same words imply a number of things. The listener fills in the gaps- danger, excitement, a call from the President of the United States, a rescue mission of abductees, a family emergency- anything really, more interesting and urgent than the appointment at hand and feels not just pacified, but positively proud of you for having missed the appointment.

I, unfortunately, am not particularly good at the Omission Method. As the words leave my mouth, I feel an urge to giggle.

<http://www.pitt.edu/~sorc/pittankur/>

So I switch abruptly to an extra-serious manner, which immediately alerts the listener and causes him to say "Oh. Why, what happened?" At which I hem and haw and proceed to Choice # 1, all the while cringing and blushing.

No. Truth is not an option for people such as I (and I'm sure there are people in the world afflicted with the same issues). As Vida Winters so famously claims in "The Thirteen Tale", *"What succor, what consolation is there in truth? ...What you need are the plump comforts of a story. The soothing, rocking safety of a lie..."* Indeed.

Who says lying is a bad thing to do? Lying sharpens creativity, lying sharpens ones ability to think quickly and lying keeps everyone happy. The truth, on the other hand, is uncomfortable; it always ends up making *someone* sad. To me, the risk to benefit ratios couldn't be clearer.

Like every skill, this one too needs practice. Try it on your friends and see if they can spot your lie. Hone control of your facial muscles while you spout a story about how you lost your friend's CD or book. It helps if your story, while being believable, is utterly unverifiable. With greater established credibility, you can even try stretching the borders of belief ("I was walking down Atwood Street, and you know how uneven the pavement is over there. I tripped hard and your CD fell out of my hands and through

the gutter mesh and into the gutter. God, I'm so bruised!"). Like every skill, this one too, upon perfection, brings joy and deep contentment.

I wish I could end the article right here, to say unto the entire world "Go forth and multiply, ye liars" and leave it at that. Unfortunately, I cannot, in all good conscience. Hence, a last precautionary statement, somewhat like the statutory warnings on cigarette packs, meant to gently remind: Honesty is not always the best policy. Lie if you must, and if you do, keep your lies simple, and most importantly, keep them waterproof.

And now, my malingerers, my liars, my pretenders and imposters, spread the joy!

ANKUR – Upcoming Event

Cross Cultural Forum

Venue: CCLD Lounge (630 WPU)

Date: September 29, 2007

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 P.M

Refreshments will be served

For more information visit the

[International Week Homepage](#)

Co-organized by ANKUR and CCLD (Office of Cross-Cultural Leadership Development)

Hoping to see all of you (new students and the older folks) at the Cross Cultural Forum. Do keep writing to us and express your views through UDAAN.

Contact us at: pitt.ankur@gmail.com