

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL)

**Course Title
Cognition, Transformation & Lives**

**Lecture -17
Biographical narrative of Gandhi**

**by
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So, welcome to this last hour of this course. So we ended the last lecture by putting forward an example of the transformative process the basis of which the components of which we have been discussing throughout. Mahatma Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and his process. So just to sum up we are talking, I am taking Gandhi as an example, because he is still not in mythology, we has his history.

All his actions were open book to everybody, he has left his experiments in 100 volumes of writing, not as a book as I said and there are another 5000 books on his name and millions of papers. And he is still a matter of research as Albert Einstein said on his 70th birthday that coming generations will scarcely believe that such a man walked in flesh and blood. So Gandhi still remains an igma and we are talking about Gandhi, the man not the politics. So we have sum up his, let us look at his self what we know, these are the things which described Gandhi.

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HIS PREMISE...

AHIMSA
Dispossession
FEARLESSNESS

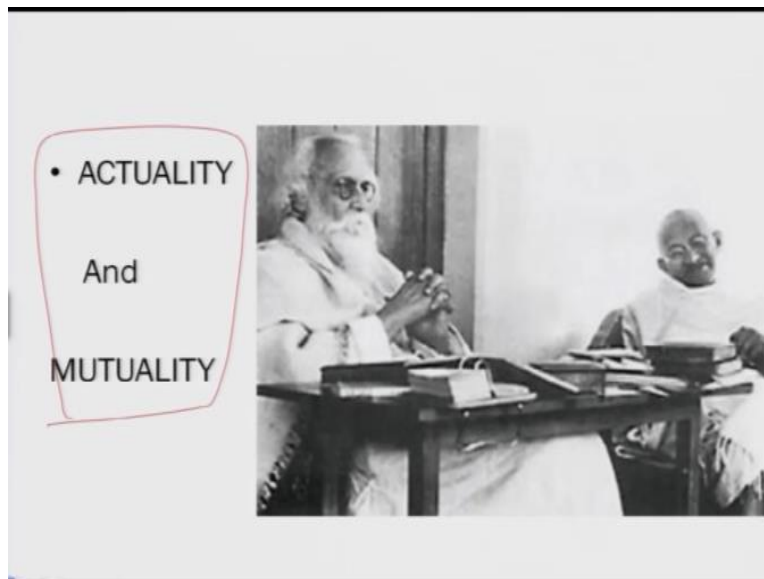
Persistence
Turning loss to opportunity

Honesty
Truth and accountability

• Above all HUMAN CONCERN.....till the last man —Truth is GOD

If you ask anybody to bring in few words when you are talking about Mahatma Gandhi they will, most of them even the children know all this and above all this human concern is need to connect we have been talking about needs to step beyond the self and empathy.

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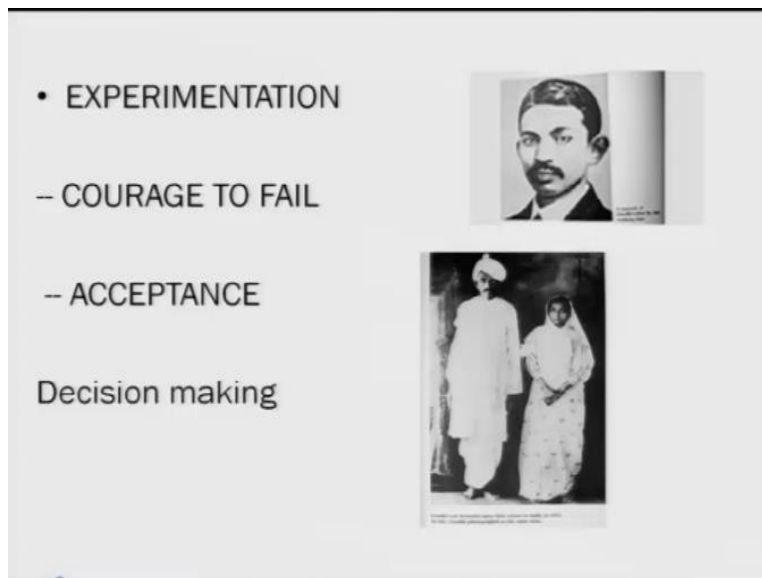
So Gandhi stood at this juncture, and this whole example of Gandhi is not to tell you that you should follow Gandhi, you should follow yourself as Buddha in his last days was asked by Anand his cousin and his disciple also, that he have told so many things. If I ask you to sum it up and leave one simple message Buddha said, “App Deepo Bhav”, be your own light. Gandhi must later said be the change you want to see in the world.

So the change which we keep experiencing in the world with external pressures, which has transitory sometime. So Gandhi did bring change in his life willfully. Now whether other people followed it through the will or because of the circumstances of India’s freedom movement is the matter of different discussion. But the fact of the matter was that Gandhi, I think Gandhi according to Erickson a famous psycho analyst who came to India and tried to analyze Gandhi’s first strike which is it in Ahmadabad.

He described two words about Gandhi, Actuality and Mutuality, broadly it can be understood as, as Gandhi moved towards self actualization he also took the world along with him in a mutual process. So we live in the society, we know the biology of it by now we know the psychology of it, we know the socio politics of it. So Gandhi brought in self actualization through a very, very

conscious, well decided process through continuous hammering, through the changes he brought in his life. And in the process change the world around him.

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We know about his life, we will just take one aspect of it in the last lecture. He was born as a fourth child to or the third, yeah he had two brothers and a sister out of, his father was a Prime Minister in Porbandar, Karamchand Gandhi, mother was Putlibai who was very, very religious ascetic women, very strong will who could do fasts for days together without eating. And he was an average child naughty, as anybody is experimented with lot of things which all teenagers do like smoking and eating meat which was a ban in his family.

So he was sort of rebel in his childhood, also but at the same time he was very, very socially anxious easily taking by powerful people, got married very earlier 13 years of age. Now you should look at the seeds which were going in, married early, later on he opposed child marriage from a mother who was very strong will at least in a religious rituals, father who was the man of justice being a Prime Minister.

And Gandhi went on small childhood experiences like, one he told a lie and he felt so guilty that he wrote a letter to his father, his father did not punish him for speaking a lie, probably that was the first lesson of non-violence he got from his father. And also a lesson that he should not be telling a lie, so very few people can actually maintain this throughout the life. Gandhi was one, people can blame him, his opponents may blame, but his opponents also do not criticize his transformational skills and his honesty.

They criticize him for his politics, so additionally he had a lot of fear and he used to sleep with lights open and in a continuous kougali with Kasturba who was his age, in fact 6 months elder to Gandhi. There was untouchability, the boy who is untouchability as we know is encouraged in India. And there was this childhood playmate called Hukka, every time he used to play, he used to get not punished, but reprimanded and he was forced to take bath.

And so that probably kept in Gandhi's mind till he actually fought against untouchability and got the temples opened up much later. So and then he went to England to study law against the wishes of his community and that time was the first time when he asserted his will. His mother gave him three vows that he would not eat meat, not take wine, not be friend an English woman and that was probably one of the changes which was happening under external circumstances.

Once Gandhi reach there, how could have done all these things nobody would have name there was no internet and no GPS locations or mobile or Facebook to track and trace. But he kept this vows to mother and did not do any of these things. So he may have been pushed for a change not to do all these things, but his will kept him from doing all these things. That was the first lesson of accountability, taking one's own responsibility.

I am just telling you the whole process of how Gandhi changed rather he transformed, because each of these changes which he brought in himself persisted for life. So once he decided not to tell a lie after his father did not punish him, he probably never told a lie. His life was as I said was very opened book right from South African days.

So he studied there, he came back, he met few people who changed his spiritual outlook, but he was such a socially anxious person that his, the law practice did not pickup in fact he fainted first time probably when he appeared in front of the judge and he returned the money to the client imagine this happening in this era, One incident which probably also would have gone into so his the point of transformation had to come later but all this defuse being built his brother him to go to a British officer to plead for some favor which Gandhi was not agreeing to but for his brother he went there.

He probably knew the officer from England but he was badly humiliated so Gandhi came back he wanted to protest at that time and this is I am talking of 1891 or something around that time, but he decided not even go and plead for wrong things so right from his childhood he had the seeds going in and then he got an offer from south Africa he went to south Africa and that famous incident which we all know happened almost 9th day of his arrival when he was thrown out the train and in spite of carrying a first class ticket that night we will discuss later on this lecture.

Next day also and they were multiple occasions in South Africa where Gandhi felt extremely humiliated even physically assaulted to the point of almost being dead but by that time he had decided to be non violent and he never retaliated with physical violence there were occasions when he could he was a young man after all so he stayed back in south Africa decided to fight for the rights of Indians and he saw this the fragmented disjointed Indian community brought them together they stood up underwent many of these protests when to jail and then he came to India in 1915 and when he came here he found that the leaders were all English speaking people the masses was down routine.

So some how he could at that point time identify himself with the masses that was the another big change and which continue till his death he somehow had this feeling that this country is mine, this people are mine. So, when you do not have hatred and violence with people who are your own and gave a different direction to the whole freedom movement which involved the masses which Gandhi was on to give them a training of nonviolence and disposition and all people followed Gandhi in different measures it was difficult to follow Gandhi and Gandhi

probably himself could not touch the ideals that he had set up for himself and he kept and he always said that if you met all your ideals you will not strive so but he kept trying.

There was this Chauri Chaura movement, the Chauri Chaura incident in civil disobedience movement in 22 in 21 he was jailed after that where few people burned a police station in Gorakhpur so Gandhi took back the movement against the opinion of many leaders but he said the country is not ready for a nonviolent struggle 10 years later when he did a dandi march that salt march he walked 348 km in 24 days to break the British law of salt control the whole country was nonviolent.

And then again after 10 years in 1942 he called for quite India that was largely nonviolent and following that India became free and but he was not just fighting the freedom movement with nonviolence he was out to change the whole outlook of this country almost offer a new civilizational way of living. He could have taught like many other leaders but the great thing about Gandhi was he never preached what he did not practice so he would first do it himself provide a model and then ask other people to follow if they wanted.

And there are huge many incidents they are simple things which he did in his life one of the famous stories was that a mother brought somebody to Gandhi a child and says that Gandhiji he eats a lot of sugar, so please tell him he said you come after a month and when the mother brought the child a month later Gandhi told him do not eat sugar so mother was like wow you could have told me a month before he said no I was eating at that time.

So now I have stopped it now I can tell now you can say this is high moral ground but it was not about high morality but Gandhi had almost all people who have met him people who have written about him no body in this country could say that Gandhi had an ego or he was trying to be a one up man ship, or he was trying to say superiority. It was a simple he was experimenting in his head and he was offering a new mode of living and the world was looking at us you read the American writings of that time.

You will know they have really looked at Mahatma Gandhi that the way he use to change the world but suddenly he was killed he was earning his dead in the process because he was going against whatever was retrogressive in the society although he would criticizing he was criticizing technology at one end but that those were the different reasons he try to unit people though the common threads of religion the common thread of humanity and offering them a constructive way of living I use the word resource activation if you remember Gandhi was activating the resources.

He wrote a book called Hind Swaraj in 1909 on a ship deck with both hands he had almost spelled out the problems of this country but he never came back and taught these ask the people to change it he himself first change it and the biggest things he said that unless you have self-respect like I was telling you about the belief that it is in me he was trying to raise the self respect and using tools like prayer like charka something which would bring in common message.

And it was very well know and that whichever area of country he would go people would identify with him. They would think that he is mine although there is always opposition so where was this quantities is coming from there were not coming because Gandhi was genetically different why I am saying Gandhi model is the best because it was happening then and there in the din in the politics in the life with this position here almost he was a very successful lawyer in south Africa but when he came to India he left everything and when he came here he saw the amount of poverty which people where living in so first thing he did was the great emphatic act that he was a master of he said I cannot provide things to everybody so I will leave it, now people may call it a hypocrisy fraud.

But look at it they were no television at that time there was no mobile, newspapers were less, how do you convey that I care for you? These are the CC you come and give a speech whether you care or you do not care you live a different life style but Gandhi was not one of the people he came down to the level where people will thriving, so now look at it the points of transformation when he wrote a letter to father not to lie.

The untouchability of his friend kept triggering him till he transformed the whole thing he got the temples open for it keeping accountability and persistence when he was thrown out of from the train that night the decision to stay back and fight. He could have taken next steamer and come back to come back to India or he may have say just suffered the life of insult which other Indians were living.

But he stayed there the whole night and that night something happened till that time Gandhi was running away from things then came Champaran when he came back to India or even before that leaving all his property and becoming dispossessed trying to become like other Indians live. Had it been a drama or a fraud, it could have sustained for few months and few years and he would have gone back to living his luxurious life.

But it continued till he died he does not possess a house in this country none of his sons he made into vice-chancellors or professors or administrative jobs in fact he is been blamed for this did not being a good father but imagine he would not be talking about Gandhi had he done all this, so these were the transformation. So, transformation is not a one off incidents like a change can be a one off incident.

When you move on another change comes transformation is an ongoing process and Gandhi's model shows it the best he whatever he initiated a transformation he did not leave the streak of it. It kept increasing in its dimension and complexity mixing up with other points of transformation so it was almost like.

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• EXPERIMENTATION ✓

COURAGE TO FAIL

- ACCEPTANCE

Decision making

The slide features two photographs: a portrait of a man with a mustache and glasses, and a photograph of two people in traditional Indian attire.

He changed here he went to one level something change here another level but all these were connected so that harmonization of life of the need of cognition and emotion continued in Gandhi's case. How do you do this? He had this all of us have this need for experimentation and urge for experimentation, Gandhi made it a tool and very consciously because after a certain point of time in life whatever used to say the way used to wear.

He was conscious of what he is doing so in a great economy of words he had the courage to fail, any lesser leader who would have started a civil disobedience women would have continued in spite of the violence in Chauri Chaura, but Gandhi did not he took the movement back and because he said that I believe in nonviolence and if people do it I am not going to do it and the country listen to him.

Beyond this decision making and acceptance in spite of people not agreeing to him not arguing with him or not following the what he has said Gandhi never had a rejection for anybody and this is very well recorded even with the sworn enemy he was to that is why his enemy also praised

him sworn enemies he would praise them now political differences and the political interpretation of it is different.

Which you all which we all read these days a lot Gandhi brushing his become a fashion but again I said do not bother about politics look at whatever he had decided and how he pursued to transform himself all of us can do it not necessarily what Gandhi was doing but what we decide in our lives we can use the same process in the content may be differing decision making, he would not first he would not agree to anything.

Once he agree he would not change his mind and decide in the best way for him he use to say that it is important that whatever decision we take should be not for majority because majority may be 51% minority may be 49% does not make a sense, so all decision should the beneficiary should be the last person standing.

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• AUTONOMY

• FREEDOM OF THOUGHT & ACTION

• ONE'S OWN TRUTH.....

• PERSISTENCE

will & decide

App Deepo Bhanu

higher cognition - abahhi - beneficial to most

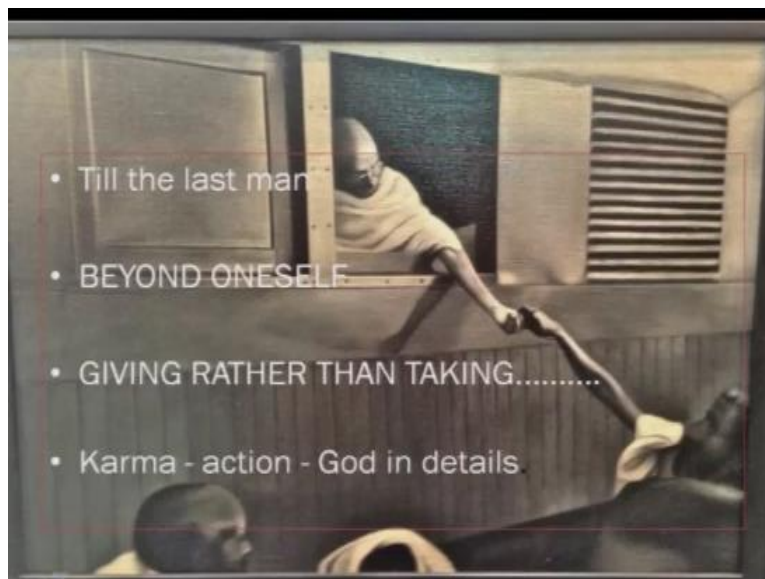
But what he stood was for autonomy some people call him an archaist and but his mind worked on what the freedom of mind and he said that autonomy to survive and freedom to live and decide is a prerogative of everybody had biology been this biology neuroscience which we know

had been there we would have easily been able to explain all this that if empathy is there with everybody, everybody has a choice to relate to people everybody have choice to improve their life and to improve the life for others.

Everybody has a autonomy to will and decide and people should do it so that means he was telling people about a very, very higher cognitive ability freedom of thought and action but he also want them that it should be beneficial to most, do not follow Gandhi find out your own truth what Buddha said App Deepo Bhav be your own light it may be a sounding like a spiritual sentence.

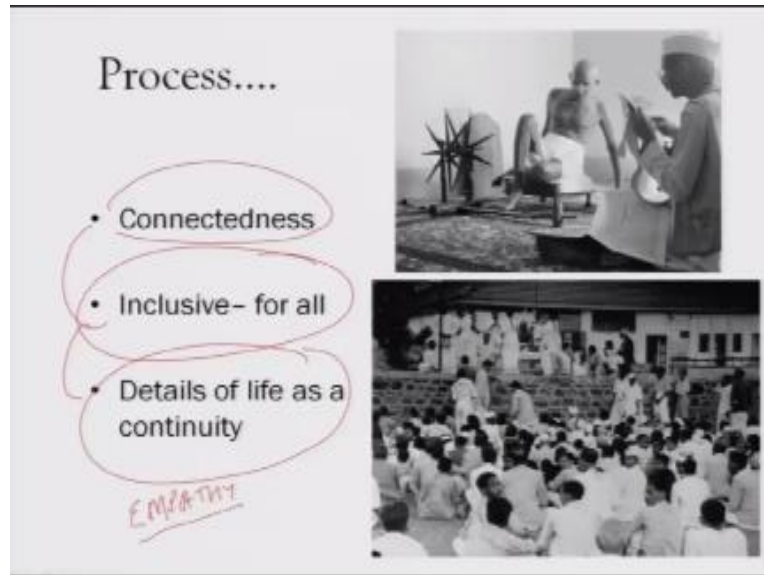
But all transformation all you are thought all your emotion all your societal pressure all your need everything actually boils down to this otherwise what else is life for and once you decide you have to do the consistent hammering we were talking about.

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So as I said till the last man, beyond oneself, giving rather than taking and action so how could you do it.

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How will you do this and he was pretty successful in what he decided to do even the politics was successful for some time and later on situation change how could it is easy he had this process of connectedness, inclusiveness and details of life has a continuity. For him everything was one connected whole and he wanted to say look at life as a one continuous whole and not fragmented disjointed actions and when being connected did not being connected on my own.

It is inclusive for all say was he talking already of a universal mind of a consciousness that was continuous in everybody. So, when you are not looking at life in a fragmented way when you are looking at continuity in your life and this being continuous with the next person with the next person the details of life are continuous between your life and my life and somebody else life social impact everything seems to be now falling into place.

And that is why he had a model for society also, he said developed villages into a honey comb structure have few nodal cities and then the whole thing will be a big strong honey comb structure when the villages individual to the country should be autonomous in thinking and as self independent as it could be each villages has a independent unit would conduct in trade to the

other than to the other and it would be a great honey comb structure. But the base line again started from this world call empathy.

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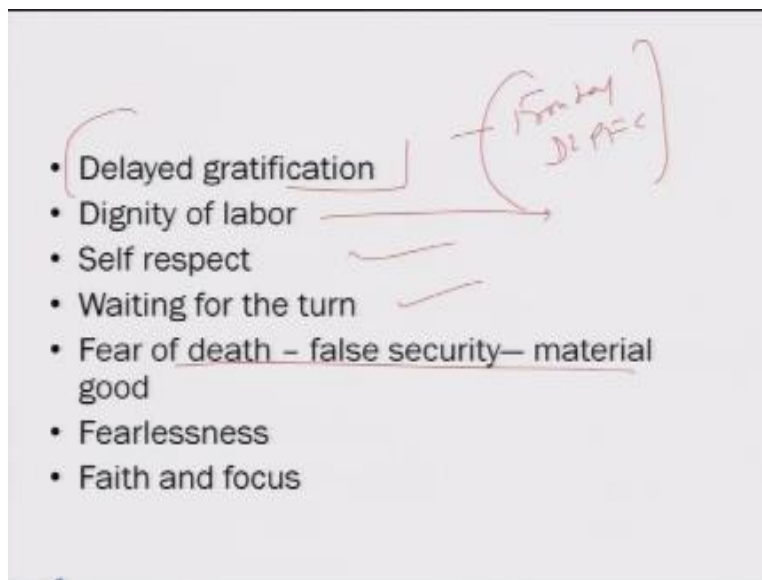


So the biggest technique which he used and I think this is one of the important thing when we want to transform anything, forget Gandhi you have to immerse into to it and keep innovating the important thing is unless you immerse into it because Gandhi's conscious decision would not have survived societal pressure had he not been tweaking with his mind 24x7 and that requires a total immersion. Once you immerse into your whatever decisions we have taken your mind will keep aware of it.

Now you can relate the neuroscience, if whatever self has formed under the experiential inputs your needs get altered, your emotional layering gets altered, your decision making gets alter and you keep getting this 500 milliseconds of a snap shots of reality or short stories within of minutes in thought, and if the action does not take you to your desired goal the feedback loop will create frustration.

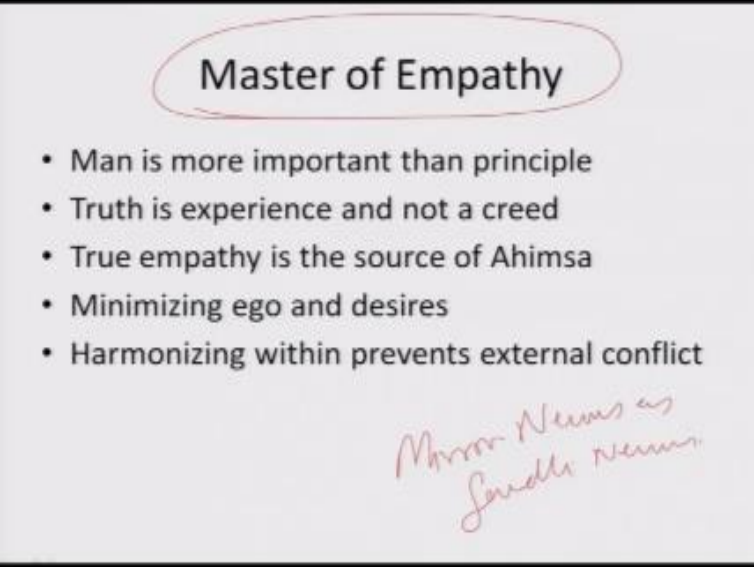
Again you do not achieve, again frustrate do not allow this deeper negative emotions to come like anger, like violence, like lust, not that Gandhi did not have it till a very late age say 25 or something maybe 30, he was a very, very volatile man, very restless, very volatile and especially in his relationship with Kasturba and not physically violent, but with every lesson he learnt and he practiced non-violence in every minute we will talk about it. Once you said I will live like this he immersed himself into it, he said I will live like villages he immersed into so unless we immerse into.

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Whatever we have decided and the important thing we talked about whenever we were talking of addiction that one has to learn to delay gratification, the frontal cortex and also lateral prefrontal cortex were they more developed in Mahatma Gandhi something we do not know, we have not preserved his brain. The equality came from dignity of labor this was the conversions in behavior of the thought process of the connectedness which he had seen self respect as I said waiting for your own turn that fears somehow may transgress.

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Master of Empathy

- Man is more important than principle
- Truth is experience and not a creed
- True empathy is the source of Ahimsa
- Minimizing ego and desires
- Harmonizing within prevents external conflict

Mirror Neurons as Gandhi neurons

But he was the greatest thing was master of empathy, he somehow got into his head and all human beings belong to me and I belong to human beings this country is mine, this country man are mine so even when death came in form of bullets he was not angry, it is return and recorded then when people used to go even care say abuse him and insult he would not shake, he has brought to his mind that any impulse or this snap shot of reality which is frustrating which is making me angry.

If it comes to my head I will either ignore it or counter it with the positive thought that this is okay, this is, this person is what I am, and if the other person is like what you are obviously there is not going to be any violence. Wherever you used to go fearlessly you used to go to northwest frontier which was the very violent area, fearlessly you used to counter his adversaries and this is not Gandhi was written about himself, the people have observed so his master of empathy is the real game.

In fact, of late some of us have started calling mirror neurons as Gandhi neurons we will stop at this and just continue this in the next lecture, and look at this empathy as a process of larger transformation, thank you.

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