

A Word from Navi

I grew up in Pondicherry, a former French colony in Southern India made famous by the book and movie *Life of Pi*. My tiny house was located next to an urban slum. Early on, I developed a keen sensitivity of scarce resources. Due to very dry climate, water was rationed so we would take a shower with one bucket of water. Several of my childhood friends lived in abject poverty and yet were highly creative: like a MacGyver, they were able to improvise makeshift solutions to everyday problems with very limited means. They did more — and better — with less. This resilient ingenuity and resourceful frugality form a philosophy that I have lived by since childhood and now strive to impart through my writing, speeches, and consulting work.

Steve Jobs famously said: “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards.” Last year, as I turned 45, I reflected on my life and saw a pattern. Until then, I had treated the various aspects of my background — my Indian roots, French education, and my professional life in the US — as distinct. I realized that the time has come for me to “integrate” these unconnected dots of my background into something more holistic. I also see this reflected in our times. We are entering what I call the Age of Convergence, in which first-world and third-world issues like climate change, escalating pollution, social inequality, chronic illnesses, are converging to create “problems without borders” that affect every person on Earth irrespective of gender, skin color, or income level. The human race needs to transcend its superficial differences and converge toward unity so that all men and women can join forces to co-create “solutions without borders” that overcome the wicked problems afflicting entire mankind.

I see this convergence and unity happening within my own being as I integrate the rich aspects of my multicultural background — the millennia-old Indian spiritual wisdom, the French tradition of rational thinking and scientific analysis, and the entrepreneurial spirit of Silicon Valley — to gradually become a “whole” person. I intend to infuse this holistic and integrative perspective into my work so I can inspire people worldwide to co-create a better future for humanity. I consider this to be my life’s mission.