

The Lesson of the Maharaji

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Several months ago I was at a party and found myself seated next to a world famous media personality and star. This person is so famous that I see them on the magazine covers, on television, on billboards in malls, and pretty much everywhere I look.

I'm not in the entertainment business and by no means travel in that crowd; however, the short conversation I had with this person was extremely elucidating.

The person told me that they owed all of their success to listening to and studying the teachings of a certain motivational speaker.

"They made me realize the power I had inside me to do what I have done," the person told me.

I'm like you and when I hear something like this I am naturally skeptical. However, when you step back and look at most people who end up doing great things, you will almost always find they were influenced by someone, or something, that showed them that they have the capacity for greatness.

- It could be a coach in sports.
- It could be a certain teacher.
- It could be a parent.
- It could be the teachings of a certain writer.
- It could be a priest or other religious figure.

Regardless of who it is, most people who do important things are reminded of the strength, power, and goodness they have inside them by someone else.

For years, I lived next to a home owned by a world famous religious figure, Prem Rawat—also known as Maharaji. This man was brought over from India by his followers in the United States while still a teenager. He has followers all over the world and is a very important man.

He is considered, by perhaps millions of people, to be the incarnation of God of Earth.

Financed by donations from his followers, Maharaji flies around the world on his own \$45,000,000 Gulf Stream jet giving speeches, meeting with followers, and staying in his homes. He has significant homes all over the world.

Maharaji preaches one simple message.

Maharaji has lots of critics—as most important people do. Religious figures are always polarizing. Jesus Christ, for example, was famously killed.

Despite all of the critics, though, you need to admit that if people are constantly giving him money, supporting him, and wanting to hear him speak, he must be offering something to people of profound benefit. People simply do not continue to support others at such a high level if they are not being given something in return.

Because I was living next door to one of his many homes and saw his wife all the time, I wanted to know more about this man and read a few books about him. What amazed me most is even his most ardent critics stated that he had opened the door to them feeling the presence of God.

In his presence and in his teaching, the people were somehow transformed.

While I have never studied Maharaji, this sort of ability to show people peace, God, or what have you is profound.

Therefore, despite all of the criticism about him—and regardless of the fact that he has obviously not taken a vow of poverty—I believe there is something profound about this man and what he is doing for people.

Here is a distillation of Prem Rawat's message from one of his websites:

Prem Rawat, known also by the honorary title Maharaji, has traveled the world for four decades, inspiring people to find peace within.

His message is simple and profound. It is independent of and compatible with any philosophy, religion, or spiritual path. At the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, he said, "Peace needs to be in everyone's life. The peace we are looking for is within. It is in the heart, waiting to be felt. It is not the world that needs peace; it is people. When people in the world are at peace within, the world will be at peace."

From this, I take that there is a certain peace that the Maharaji gives people. He is able to show people that peace is within them. Everything they seek is within them.

In the Book of John in the New Testament, when preparing to leave the world, Jesus tells his disciples: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

I'm not giving you these examples to convince you to become a disciple of Christianity, or the Maharaji. Instead, what I am trying to get you to understand is that people who are able to show us what we are capable of and the good that lies inside of us are hallowed as among the most important people in the world.

People who are able to show us our strengths also make us stronger.

- The famous star that I met believed that all of her success came from someone showing her the skills and potential talent she already had inside of her.
- People follow many religious figures (and religions) because they show people the good and strength they have inside of them.

I love watching sports movies about sports characters overcoming the odds to achieve great victories. In almost all of these movies, it is the influence of a coach showing the person what they are capable of that enables them to achieve what they do.

What is it that you are capable of that you have not yet tapped into? The odds are very good that you have talents within you that are dormant and that you have not yet tapped into. If you can tap into these skills and talents, you will be setting yourself up for greatness.

We all possess intangible qualities and assets that we may not have taken advantage of. If you can take advantage of these assets, it is likely you can experience great windfalls in various areas of your life. It is all about what you decide to demand of yourself. The more you demand of yourself, the better you can ultimately do.

I met a marathon runner recently in his late 40s. He is ranked in the top 20 in the United States for runners in his age bracket. To my astonishment, he told me that he was running faster in his late 40s than he ran when he was in his 30s (when he also ran competitively).

"That's amazing," I said. "How have you ended up improving so much despite getting older?"

"It's been all about asking more of myself," he said. "I started practicing harder. I've been exercising with weights. I've been eating better before races."

I love stories like this. People can do incredibly well when they look within themselves and start demanding even more. Everyone has significant untapped power within them that they may not even realize.

How much of a greater result could you get from your career if you really became aware of your opportunities and strengths? What if you developed your greatest strengths and focused your efforts in the direction of these strengths? The odds are your career and life would drastically improve. Do you really know what is inside you and what you are really capable of?

I recommend that everyone have a cheerleader or mentor on the sidelines. When I read about the careers of the most successful businessmen in biographies, most of the time I find that they have mentors and people they are constantly turning to for advice and inspiration. This person could be a parent, it could be another business person, or it could be an old teacher or boss. Regardless, most of the most successful people out there have people who support and encourage them. You need people like this in your life, too.

People who do not reach their full potential are most often isolated or they are afraid of criticism. If someone is afraid of any form of criticism or becomes defensive when constructive criticism is given, people will avoid critiquing them in the future and the person who is afraid of the criticism may be held back. You need to be open to people who want to take you under their wing and help you grow.

There is a final point here and it is perhaps the most important one. In addition to the importance of going inside yourself to bring out your strengths and allowing people to bring out your strengths, the greatest power and success often comes to people who are able to bring out the strengths in others. We like people who make us feel good about ourselves and bring out our strengths. The lesson of the Maharaji is not only that success lies within ourselves but the true lesson lies in his example: Great power, wealth, and influence accrues to people who are able to show people the best within themselves.

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