

THE AUDACITY OF DREAMS

~ A True Story of a Peace Activist

From a tiny inch sized acorn, to a towering giant oak

From a speck, to an invaluable pearl of enduring beauty

From a vision and an ardent dream

To International Organisations of this Magnitude

“Uniting for Peace,” “Mehta Centre,” and “Fortune Forum Charity,”

The litmus test of a true enterprise revolves around how much it can contribute to development and growth, laying the foundations, where growth begets growth and quality begets quality. It is with this belief at heart; **Uniting for Peace** has embarked on its chosen mission. It is this ardent belief which inspires it to strive harder and look beyond the mile stones of achievement.

If we cannot envision the world we would like to live in, we cannot work towards its creation. If we cannot place ourselves in our imagination, it is hard to believe it is possible. When people can see a vision and simultaneously recognize what can be done step by step with dedication and sincerity to achieve it, they will begin to feel encouragement and enthusiasm instead of fright. The entry into the new millennium demands actions to implement a positive vision for the future - one which draws closer the Peoples and Nations of the world towards a common goal.

Vijay Mehta was born on the 9th April 1940 in Delhi. As a young boy, he used to accompany his father, K L Mehta, a liberal solicitor in pre-independent India, to prayer meetings convened by the 'Great Light' Mohandas Gandhi. His father used to tell stories about legendary leaders of his time like Mahatma Gandhi who was a great source of inspiration. Gandhiji's message of non-violence struck a chord in young Vijay's mind. A chord that would resonate throughout his life to shape his character and life's mission, thinking of the world and humanity as a whole. Many thoughts of great men, many writings, and many books enriched his mind. Vijay read the works of Gandhi who became a role model and whose influence moulded his mind to a great extent.

Not only father, but Grandfather Lala TD Mehta who had been a distinguished social reformer and champion of Hindu-Muslim unity, was also an inspiration for him. His august personality towered over all the family members. He taught Vijay to develop a world vision. People were thinking as Hindus or Muslims which prompted separatism and which he felt was harmful for the growth of the Nation. He wanted them to be Indians first setting aside caste. The spirit of secularism propagated was an eye opener and came to be accepted as a positive approach to world peace.

How lucky he was to have a father and grandfather with such noble and beautiful thoughts! He was interested in everything and delighted in sharing their enthusiasm. As a child, he was full of questions, and this enabled them to tell him about the world, about the men and women who inhabited it and who have moved others by their ideas and actions. Above all, they loved to speak about the country, its early achievements. Growing up with their teachings, companionship, thinking, vision and guidance, inspired him greatly to be ever dynamic.

Having graduated from the Hindu College, he went on to complete Masters degree at the University of Delhi, the city in which he met my wife Shanti. Despite Gandhi's fasting almost to the point of self-destruction in a bid to deter inter-communal violence, Shanti's brother-in-law was one of millions who died in the chaos that enveloped India during the partition of Pakistan in 1947, an avoidable tragedy created by the hubris and mismanagement of a disconnected political elite.

In the late 1960s Vijay moved to England to pursue a new life and they as couple welcomed into the world four children: Sanjay, Vimal, Ajay and Renu. He embarked into the clothing industry, with remarkable success, but found himself going far beyond his first vision to a much greater passion and enterprise. By the 1980s the business was well established to hand its management over to the next generation.

When you act according to your highest dreams, the outcome is often far grander than you imagine. His true vocation, however, took roots as a Co-Founder and Chair of Uniting for Peace; a role which he still holds today. He is the President of Mehta Centre and Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity, a renowned Author, a champion for truth, global activist for peace, development, human rights and environment.

Vijay got a strict work ethic, coming to office every day of the week to write, prepare for talks and strategise how best to spread the words of peace. He enjoys long walks, Yoga and meditation. He a vegetarian and teetotaler, have the habit of drinking herbal tea made out of his own recipe along with reading piles of books and newspapers.

Today, as a renowned activist for peace, development and human rights, I works tirelessly and devotedly around the world to help sow the seeds to bring an end to wars, militarism and poverty. The vision of an ideal, unceasing energy and deep dedication to the cause gives him strength, power and glory - forever an example. Intensely involved, yet withdrawn, unbending, lofty, cool and fearless, making a unique leader and a great peace activist who looks on to the world as indivisible, for peace and harmony.

The Bhagavad Gita states, "The actions of a great man are an inspiration for others. Whatever he does becomes a standard for others to follow."

Efforts to promote Universal peace, non-violence and poverty alienation have been given a thrust since 1979. With his passion growing stronger, as Co-Founder and Chair Person of Uniting for Peace, an organisation one of whose creator was Philip Noel Baker, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Uniting for Peace was devoted to building and promoting a global

culture of peace, nonviolence and poverty alienation. The Institution is thriving continuously to avert the prospect of nuclear annihilation offered by the Cold War logic of Mutually Assured Destruction - a disaster witnessed during the horrors of India's Partition. Vijay's second career as a votary of peace led him around the world, from Belfast to The Hague and back to his homeland, India, a country still rocked by unseen conflicts so often ignored by those who focus on Mumbai's new tower blocks, highways and Bollywood glamour.

The entry into new millennium provides an ideal opportunity to pledge and implement a positive vision for the future – to bring together the Peoples and Nations of the world towards a common goal. Harnessing current trends, executing future focussed projects, garnering powerful resources, working closely, productively, effectively and qualitatively is the true vision. The true karma of a leader with humanity at heart. For an enterprise to ally itself with a great purpose it must have courage, conviction, discipline and endurance -- qualities which engender organisational growth and all round success.

Vijay's untiring efforts in this direction would go on to promoting the UN's Millennium Development Goals by 2015. As a Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity, he along with his daughter Renu Mehta Founder of Fortune Forum charity held three summits in London in 2006, 2007 and 2008. The Summits attracted a worldwide audience of 1.3 billion people (one fifth of humanity) including print and media coverage. The keynote speakers for the first and second summit were Bill Clinton, former US President and Al Gore, former US Vice-President, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize 2007. He addressed and attended many international conferences and served on many advisory boards, forums to address the dynamics between peace and disarmament, offering dialogue and non-violent solutions to tackle conflict.

His actions show that every successful human endeavour is a consequence of the right combination of elements-a fiery determination, focussed direction, forceful impetus-these are the elements that spark off and sustain the saga of progress. These are the forces of human nature which combine with the vision create and conceive new worlds of achievement, where ideas transform into reality.

Through his peace missions, he came across, many influential luminaries, including Nobel Peace Prize winners Mairead Maguire, Dr. Shirin Ebaadi, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He galvanises everyone he meets with boundless energy, optimism and passion to effect change in the chaos, violence and unpredictability in the society. As a chair person and activist of Peace Mission campaigning has provided an opportunity for extensive travel around the Globe advocating peace, bringing an end to wars, arms trade, militarism for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

He is wholly Indian at heart but also a universal citizen reaching out to the world. Vijay's life, actions, feelings are committed to humanity. The rich or poor nations, the blacks or browns, the east bloc or the west bloc, the Christians or the Hindus, the strong and the powerful or the weak and the suppressed – to him, they are all people of one world, where every human being has a right to live in a world free from wars, want and fear.

Throughout life, he never missed an opportunity to stand for the cause of humanity. He travelled extensively, attending global meetings and conferring with leaders and experts by acquiring a wider perspective of life, on finding solutions to various issues facing the world. The need for an alternative to the nuclear threat was also very much on his mind. He represented the spirit of moderation, tolerance, and understanding for human development.

As he deploys his boundless energy and optimism as an advocate of non-violence and dialogue with a world that grows more chaotic and unpredictable with every passing year, and one in which security crisis are entangled with rapidly changing economic, social, and technological trends, he knows the importance of working with all sections of society to bring in lasting peace. In 2009 he met former prisoners and hunger strikers in Belfast and had a direct dialogue on the real problems of keeping the peace after the Good Friday Agreement in Belfast.

He served on many advisory bodies on peace and disarmament and was a Member of the Team of International Experts who met in Greece, at the invitation of the Mayor of Athens and Global Governance Group. As a result, The New School of Athens was created on November 2004. In the classical tradition of ancient Athenian democracy, the school is determined to bridge divergent opinions so as to produce pragmatic proposals in favour of innovative international dialogue and more effective global governance.

One of the most stirring events was when Vijay participated in the **historic march** against the threat of **War in Iraq**. Just before the outbreak of the Iraq war, a demonstration and a march took place in 2003 in which millions of people participated all over the world. The February 15, 2003 anti-war protest was a co-ordinated day of protests across the world against the imminent invasion of Iraq. Millions of people protested in approximately 800 cities around the world.

In 2009, he was invited by Bookmakers and Dreamers Club and Pages for Peace foundation to contribute to "**The Big Book: Pages for Peace Project**" in which kids built the biggest book in the world. Each page of the book is 12 feet by 10 feet. The questions the contributors were asked to answer were: What is world peace? Would there ever be world peace? Where would you like to see the world in twenty years? Among other contributors to the Big Book were Former US President **Jimmy Carter**, **His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama**, and UN Ambassador **Anwarul K Chowdhury**. He addresses the student community worldwide and is a frequent visitor at the famous Oxford University in London and other Universities. In 2008, Vijay was invited to address students at Magdalen College, Oxford, a college whose 5 students have become future Prime Ministers of United Kingdom.

In 2010, he along with my wife Shanti Mehta attended the international conference hosted by IPB **International Peace Bureau conference "Climate of Peace", Oslo, Norway**. It was an important conference as it celebrated the 100th anniversary of the IPB's receiving of the Nobel Peace Prize. In the conference, he gave a talk on "**Disarm the Military Juggernaut for Peace and Development**".

"A mind once experienced by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions"

On 15th March, 2012, **Uniting for Peace's** flagship campaign **4D for World Peace** has gone Global with its launch

4D - DEMILITARISATION, DISARMAMENT, DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT

One of Vijay's thrust areas is Uniting for Peace's flagship campaign 4D for World Peace. A campaign to create global frameworks for taking actions on interconnecting global issues of disarming and demilitarising the world and the savings thus achieved to be deployed for development and democracy. The 4D for World Peace campaign is inspired by his book - **The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World**. This campaign in a way is a handbook for peace activists to take actions that a better world is possible. It also provides strong symbols of hope for others throughout the world that change is possible and we can achieve peace and prosperity. World Peace is not a utopian dream. It can be realised by overcoming forces of destruction, violence, and war mongering. Uniting for Peace, merging Action for UN Renewal and World Disarmament Campaign, is a civil society organisation helping to do just that.

The mission of the campaign is to take the **Quantum Leap Faster, Higher, and Further to spread the message of 4D.**

"Peace is not only the absence of war, it means calm and it means conditions where human beings can maintain their human integrity."

~Dr. Shirin Ebaadi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2003), Iran

"I support Uniting for Peace for a safer world and endorse 4D for World Peace. 4D, Count me in...!"

~Deepak Chopra, Best Selling Author and Founder Chopra Foundation, USA

iCONGO AWARD for 2012

"We are what we repeatedly do, Excellence then is not an act, But a Habit"
~Aristotle

In 2012, Vijay Mehta has been selected for the Global Indian Karmaveer (Action hero) Puraskaar (Award) by iCONGO as a noble-laureate 2012-2013. It is an award for outstanding luminaries working for peace and social justice.

Some of his Notable Publications

- The Fortune Forum Summit: For a Sustainable Future,
- Arms No More
- The United Nations and Its Future in the 21st Century,
- The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World [2012]
- Development Dialogue no. 56
- Climate Change 365

In his latest book **The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World [2012]** – which examines the power of Military Industrial Complex, it's continuous engagement in perpetual wars bringing untold suffering to mankind. It outlines a world which can move away from war economy to peace economy based on policies of disarmament, demilitarisation and sustainable development. The book also advocates for a move from the war economy to a green economy that would create green collar jobs such as renewable energy, waste management, pollution control and carbon capture. On conflict resolution, the book advocates for peaceful settlements through dialogue such as the Good Friday Agreement, the Indian independence movement and the civil rights movement.

Appreciation

Thank you for all you do Vijay - both the Organisation and yourself are inspiration and give us all hope that both yourself and Uniting for Peace can bring a world without war. Indeed it is possible, even in our own time.

-Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976)

Vijay is a leading peace campaigner working tirelessly for peace. He is amazing. If anyone could sell fridges to Eskimos it will be him.

-Bruce Kent, Vice President, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)

A leading activist once taught me UN values and its mission to solve the world's most intractable problems—challenges that directly or indirectly affect us all: issues such as health, the environment, human rights and justice, peace and security, population, hunger and peacekeeping. For all of our human diversity, the UN represents the global, the local and the truly indispensable. That activist and my mentor is also my father Vijay Mehta.

-Renu Mehta, Founder Fortune Forum Charity

People like Vijay are 1 in a million

~Norbert Stute Director Better World Links

Longstanding activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment, who along with his daughter, Renu Mehta, has set a precedent for striving to change the world.

~The Sunday Times (London, 1 February 2009)

The effort to secure world peace and cooperation demands mutual understanding and friendship among the nations and a will to work together. Vijay continue to tirelessly help nurture the movement in an international environment, which was, and still is clouded in many ways by east-west rivalry. He considers Non-Aligned Movement positive and dynamic and is one of the history's greatest peace movement. Human beings should not be viewed in geo-strategic zones on maps but as people struggling against the existing inequalities of centuries to get justice and equality for their advancement. Our world is small, but it has room for all of us to live together in peace and beauty and improve the quality of the lives of men and women of all races and creeds.

Born for the universe, we cannot narrow our loyalties. Belonging to humankind, nothing human can be alien to us. We should achieve our objective through the bond of unity. Our work is not for ourselves alone but for all mankind. Uniting for Peace in its mission has become a sentinel of world peace, security and a voice for disarming for a better world. We are respected and loved by all peace loving peoples and nations. His mission and vision for achieving peace continues.

Even during the preceding millennium, creative minds dreamt of the impossible and the impossible happened. As we ushered into new millennium, the next generation of visionaries, through their most curious and daring minds have brought to life ideas that astound and amaze us all

From a Powerful Vision to a Powerful Reality. And so the saga continues...

And miles to go before I sleep...

"Life has taught me to be humble and realise how small a cog you are in this universal scheme of things. Understanding this essence of life, I try to spend every waking hour to speak, write and act for reducing violence, wars, suffering and bringing peace, justice, harmony joy and happiness. My passion and spirit is in my motto ~ Be good and do good."

~ Vijay Mehta