

Giving back to society brings happiness

[Dr. Anil K. Rajvanshi](#)

E-mail: anilrajvanshi@gmail.com

In the ancient Indian tradition a person was supposed to go through four phases of life; *Brahmacharya* (education); *Grahashta* (raising family); *Vanwas* (going to forest for contemplation) and *Sanyas* (getting detached from all activities and preparing for death). Each of these phases was of about 25 years duration since ancient Indians believed that life span of humans was about 100 years.

The above system was also based on the principle that the purpose was to live a decent life based on *Dharma* and to increase the progeny. Once this was done then the purpose was over and *Vanwas* followed by *Sanyas* was the ultimate end.

I think in the present connected and global world an important aspect of good life is to give something back to the society. Not only giving back to society helps the less fortunate citizens but also gives a tremendous sense of satisfaction and happiness to the giver.

Nevertheless giving back to society should be based on individual's capacity and capability. For that he/she should live a happy and joyful life according to the following four phases:

1. **Absorption phase:** This phase is similar to *Brahmacharya* and may last anywhere till the age of 25 to 30 years but with a peak of around 20-25 years. This is the phase when an individual absorbs knowledge, experiences and information. This is the most important phase of one's life because what we become and will do later on is formed and decided during this phase. It is my belief that the basic template of a person's personality is formed by the age of 16. Experience of later years simply adds or subtracts to it. Also as our brain is at its peak, we are hungry for the experience and the quality of experience decides what type of individual we will become. Thus the quality of schooling, the peer pressure and the environment play an important role during these formative years.

2. **The Evaluation phase:** This phase sometimes runs concurrently with the absorption phase and peaks at the age of 30-35 years. During this phase the person is evaluating various options for his/her future life. He/she will raise the family, is looking for options of where to take his life and this phase is generally characterized by ambition and desire to do something.
3. **Consolidation phase:** This phase lasts from 35 to 55 years of age. Once the course of action by an individual in evaluation phase is nearly fixed then comes the phase of consolidation and building a whole body of knowledge and wisdom. This phase is also characterized by ability to get wisdom or *vivek* which dictates a persons desire to give back to society. This is a very critical phase since the experiences gained based on a persons capabilities and outside influence decides whether a person becomes internally secure or insecure. An insecure person will only be interested in hoarding and accumulating and hence will not give back to the society.
4. **Dissemination or donation phase:** This is a phase which lasts from 55 years and onwards and really differentiates the boys from men. The people with wisdom and those who are secure want to give back to society according to their abilities. Hence money, knowledge and resources are freely given for the common good. This giving back gives a new purpose to life in the old age.

I believe that those people who give back to the society are the happiest and the most contented and can leave this world as happy human beings knowing fully well that they have contributed to betterment of mankind.

[HOME](#)

Published as an [Opinion Ed article in Times of India](#), 21 January 2013.

©Anil K Rajvanshi. December 2012