

## Out of the many journeys in life, He found the ones with meaning!

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From school to college, to a professional study and then a job, that's the route most children from economically comfortable families take. Performance pressures, cut-throat competition, thirst for recognition, lead to a meaningless rat race, that ends up with stress, health issues, and early age burn out. While many stay put calling it their destiny, some take a step aside, to find the true meaning to their life and existence.

Vinod Sreedhar walked out of college early, as he realized that the conventional science or commerce education wasn't serving him much. Starting as a music composer for advertisements, he found making advertisement jingles getting tougher, as the products & brands he could stand for, kept shrinking. This took him to a new world of making jingles on social issues, and he ended up spending the next several years working on a wide range of issues with different NGOs. During this period, he strongly felt the need to work on the underlying patterns of human understanding and behavior, that led to these issues, and what he found was: DISCONNECTS. The more he researched, he found more disconnects – People disconnected from Nature – Communities disconnected from each other – Thinking disconnected from Feeling – Actions disconnected from their consequences. It became clearer to him that the disconnects needed to be bridged first, in order for a lasting change to begin. He could see the invisible connections between apparently separate issues, and concluded that solutions could be found to these issues if one looked at the disconnects and their underlying relationships.



Vinod Sreedhar with his co-travellers

In an attempt to find these solutions, Vinod started 'Journeys with Meaning'. Taking a bunch of people with him, packed with treks and adventure in the wild, home-stays, listening to old local stories, visiting some great organizations, and reconnecting with local sources of wisdom & knowledge, became the heart of his journeys. It helped each co-traveler find their own disconnects, and their role in various issues. "After every journey, each one of us realized that time is a limited resource, and there is no way to know just how much of it is available to us. It makes sense, to treat each day simultaneously as one's last day on the planet, and also as the first day of the rest of our lives" says Vinod. Journeys with Meaning plans to take an on-the-ground ecological challenges that need greater attention and visibility and with the help of local partner organizations, offering different kinds of internships to people interested in working on these issues.



*Attempting a stream crossing*

According to Vinod, there isn't a one big problem in the world, instead there are many critical issues that require immediate attention today, and dealing with these cannot be deferred until later. However, it is important to look at why these issues arise in the first place – from disconnects – from Nature, from other communities around us, disconnect between minds and hearts and the split between actions and their consequences. What we are doing on the planet today is firefighting – putting out fires as they come up all around us, but not asking why these fires keep cropping up periodically. When all of us on this planet begins addressing this question seriously, there will be fewer fires to put out, over time. Finding a good balance between addressing immediate issues, and addressing the systemic causes and structures behind these issues, is what he feels, will help make a positive change in the world.

He took on to roads when he was 21 years old, and traveling became his principal way of learning, as it allowed a range of interactions, both planned and spontaneous, and a ringside view of cultures different from his. His curiosity about people, places, and why humans live the way they do, led him into many engaging conversations with the most inspiring people and organizations across India.



*Journeys with meaning team hanging out on a pleasant morning*

'Journeys with Meaning' was the outcome of his desire to share this mode of learning with others. If you too want to figure out why you are here on earth, is there anything you feel you have to do, before making a graceful exit from the world, – then ask yourself, what brings you the greatest joy, what is it that makes you jump out of bed and pour all your attention and energy to. And then, join one of the 'Journeys with Meaning', figure out how you can create great value for other people, both locally and globally, through doing what you love doing, and discover the true Meaning to your Life.

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