



quarterly perspectives vol 12

SAILING SHIPS



More Inside This Quarter



Did you know?



Creative Chronicles



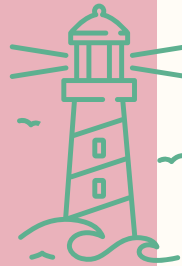
Breakthroughs



Your Playground



Mindful Pause



Favourite Finds

Swades gently invites us to reflect on what it means to serve others. Mohan Bhargava returns to an Indian village and, instead of simply offering help, listens, understands the community's needs, and uses his skills to create meaningful change.

The film reminds us that seva isn't always about grand gestures. It can be listening without judgement, including someone, checking in, or offering our time and skills. Sometimes, seva begins with a simple question:

"What can I do with what I have?"

Favourite Finds



Fredrik Backman's *A Man Called Ove* is a touching story of loneliness, grief, community and connection. Beneath Ove's gruff exterior is someone who cares deeply, expressing it through small acts of service; fixing things, helping neighbours and simply showing up. The story reminds us that seva doesn't need grand gestures. It can be listening, helping, sharing, or noticing someone's need. Perhaps the quiet beauty of seva is that while caring for others, we may rediscover connection, purpose and belonging ourselves.

Did You know?



The article explores seva as a multifaceted form of selfless service, challenging the idea that it is limited to traditional acts of helping. It suggests that people can contribute through their different strengths, talents, interests and roles whether through caring, creating, researching, leading, organising or practical work. What transforms these actions into seva is the intention behind them: offering our abilities towards improving human wellbeing, without making personal recognition or reward the primary goal.



Seva: The Ways We Show Up for One Another

When we hear the word seva, we often think of volunteering, charity, or helping someone in need. But seva can also be found in the small, everyday ways we show up for one another.

Research on prosocial behaviour helping, sharing, supporting, and caring for others has linked these actions with emotional wellbeing and, in some situations, physical health. Research in neuroscience also suggests that helping others can engage the brain's reward and stress systems, while strengthening our sense of connection and belonging.

This feels especially relevant to mental health. Feeling seen, heard, and supported can make a meaningful difference during difficult moments. Sometimes, seva is a friend checking in, a teacher noticing when a child is struggling, a colleague listening without judgement, or helping someone find the right support.

Seva can also mean sharing what we have our time, skills, knowledge, patience, or simply our presence. We don't always need to have the right answers. Sometimes, being there is enough.

At the same time, seva should not mean constantly putting ourselves aside. Caring for others also means recognising our own limits, setting healthy boundaries, pausing when needed, and knowing when to ask for help.

Seva is not about emptying ourselves for others. It is about bringing what we can our time, attention, compassion, skills, and presence to make another person's journey a little lighter.

Perhaps seva begins with something very simple:
Noticing someone, and choosing to show up.



What If Seva Does Not Always Look Like Helping? ✨ ✨

We often imagine seva as something done by people who naturally enjoy caring for others. But perhaps seva can look very different for different people.

Someone may serve by teaching, another by creating, organising, building, leading, researching, or simply doing the work that keeps things moving. Our skills, strengths, and talents can become a way of serving when we offer them towards something beyond ourselves. But there is another part of seva that may be harder to notice the intention behind what we do.

If we serve only to be appreciated, recognised, thanked, or to gain something in return, can we still call it seva?

The idea of selfless service invites us to pause and look within. Not only to ask, "What am I giving?" but also, "Why am I giving it?"

Perhaps receiving joy, fulfilment, gratitude, or a sense of meaning from serving is not the problem. These may naturally arise when we contribute. The deeper question is whether receiving something in return becomes the reason we serve.

Seva, then, may be about taking what we already have our time, abilities, knowledge, creativity, resources, or talents and offering them without making personal reward the goal.

It also reminds us that service does not have to fit a particular image. It may be quiet or visible, practical or creative, individual or collective. Perhaps seva is less about how much we give and more about how freely we offer what we have.

In that sense, seva is not only about what we do for others. It is also about learning to give without keeping score.



BREAKTHROUGHS

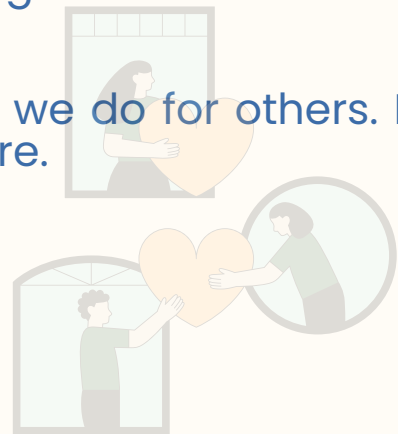
He walked into the session frustrated, unable to find the words for what was happening inside him. So we stopped asking for words.

Instead, I placed colours, paper and a few objects in front of him and simply said, "Show me." At first, he pushed everything away. Then he picked up one colour. A few minutes later, the paper was filled with dark, heavy strokes. He looked at it quietly and then pointed to one corner.

"That's where I feel stuck." It was only one sentence. But it was a breakthrough.

For the first time, he had found a way to show us what he couldn't yet explain.

Sometimes healing begins when we stop asking, "Tell me what's wrong?" and instead offer, "Show me. I'm here."





YOUR PLAYGROUND

What is your natural way of serving others?

Pick the one that feels most like you:

-  I Teach — I share what I know.
-  I Create — I bring ideas and creativity.
-  I Organise — I make things happen.
-  I Listen — I offer my presence.
-  I Build — I solve problems and make things work.
-  I Care — I notice what people need.

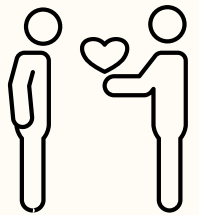
Your reflection:

What is one small way you can use this strength in service of someone else this week?



MY SEVA SUPERPOWER

MINDFUL PAUSE



What Can I Offer?

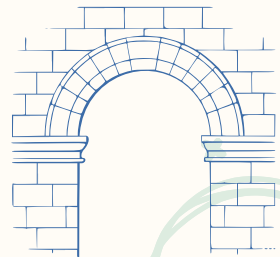
Take a moment to pause. Put your phone aside and take three slow breaths.

Notice your surroundings. Then gently ask yourself:
“What do I have to offer today?”

It could be your time, attention, patience, creativity, knowledge, kindness or simply your presence.

Choose one small thing you can offer someone today, without expecting anything in return.

Before you move on, notice how it feels to give freely. Sometimes, seva begins with simply noticing what we already have.



WALL OF FAME

One of our proud moments this month was taking our work in Arts & Play Therapies to an international audience in Bangkok.

Through an experiential workshop, we explored how art, movement, music and play can create meaningful ways of connecting, communicating and learning especially when words aren't enough.

The room became a space for curiosity, experimentation and shared learning, as educators and practitioners experienced the power of creative expression firsthand.

From Pune to Bangkok, this experience reminded us that creativity can cross cultures, languages and borders.

One workshop. New connections. Shared learning. And a whole lot of creativity.

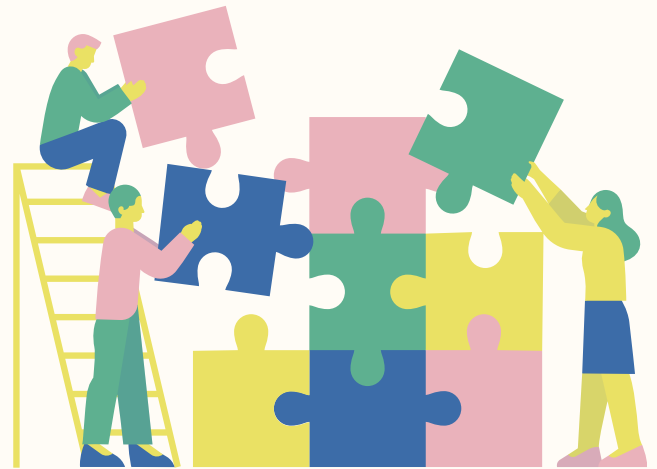


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