

mistakes i made in my



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This illustrated eBook on the mistakes I made in my 30s is inspired from a thread I wrote on Twitter in August 2020.

It was a decade where I grew the most - I became an entrepreneur, a father, a content creator, pursued fitness.

And it was also a decade where I made some mega mistakes.

I share them with you not with the intent that you avoid these mistakes. Instead, when you do make the same mistakes (and it is certain you will make them - we all make mistakes), my hope is that you remember the lesson I drew from it, so that you know there is a lesson in it for you too.

Most importantly, you see how reflecting on our mistakes is the surest way to progress.

Yet again, I partner with the incredibly talented Shreya Shah, who has brought my words to life through her illustrations.

I am always left astounded how she is able to see through the emotions and sentiments behind my words and convert them into a visual that so beautifully represents them.

I call her a magician, and I am sure you will agree with me by the end of this book.

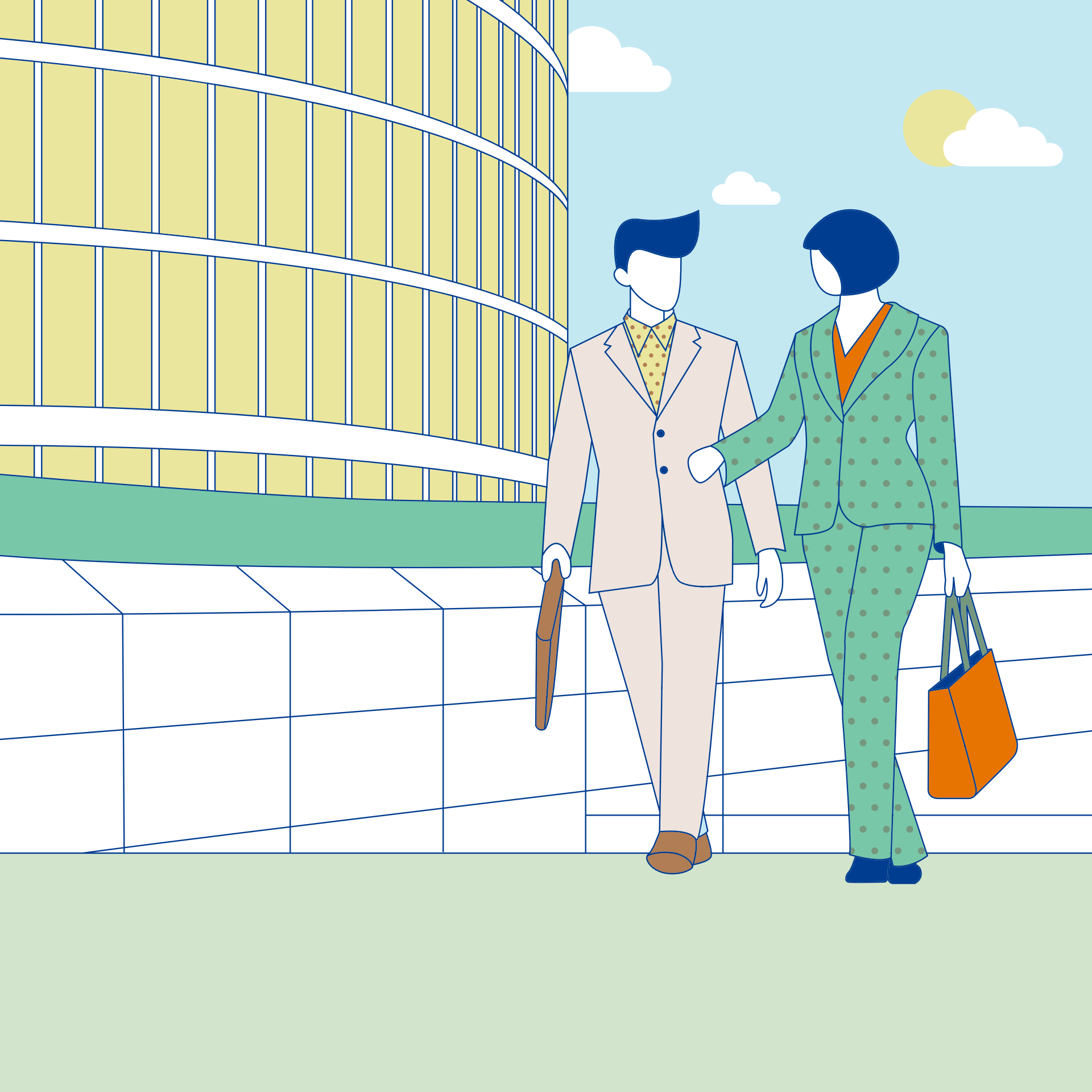
I hope you enjoy this book as much as Shreya and I enjoyed making it for you.

Wan2. S.

I hired people with strong pedigree and great brands on their resume,
ignoring how they operated as people.
I assumed their degrees will drive their success.

As you grow professionally, it is not what you know instead how you deal
with people, that determines your success.





I told myself that relationships can wait.
That call to my parents can wait.
Saying “I love you” to my wife and kids can wait.
Spending time with them without my phone can wait.
I told myself, “I don’t have the time.”

Time is the only thing that matters.
Everything else can wait.



I managed everyone the same way.

My way.

The way that was easy for me, scalable for me, convenient for me.

If there is anything that should not scale with size, it is leadership.

It should get harder for you to lead, as you grow.

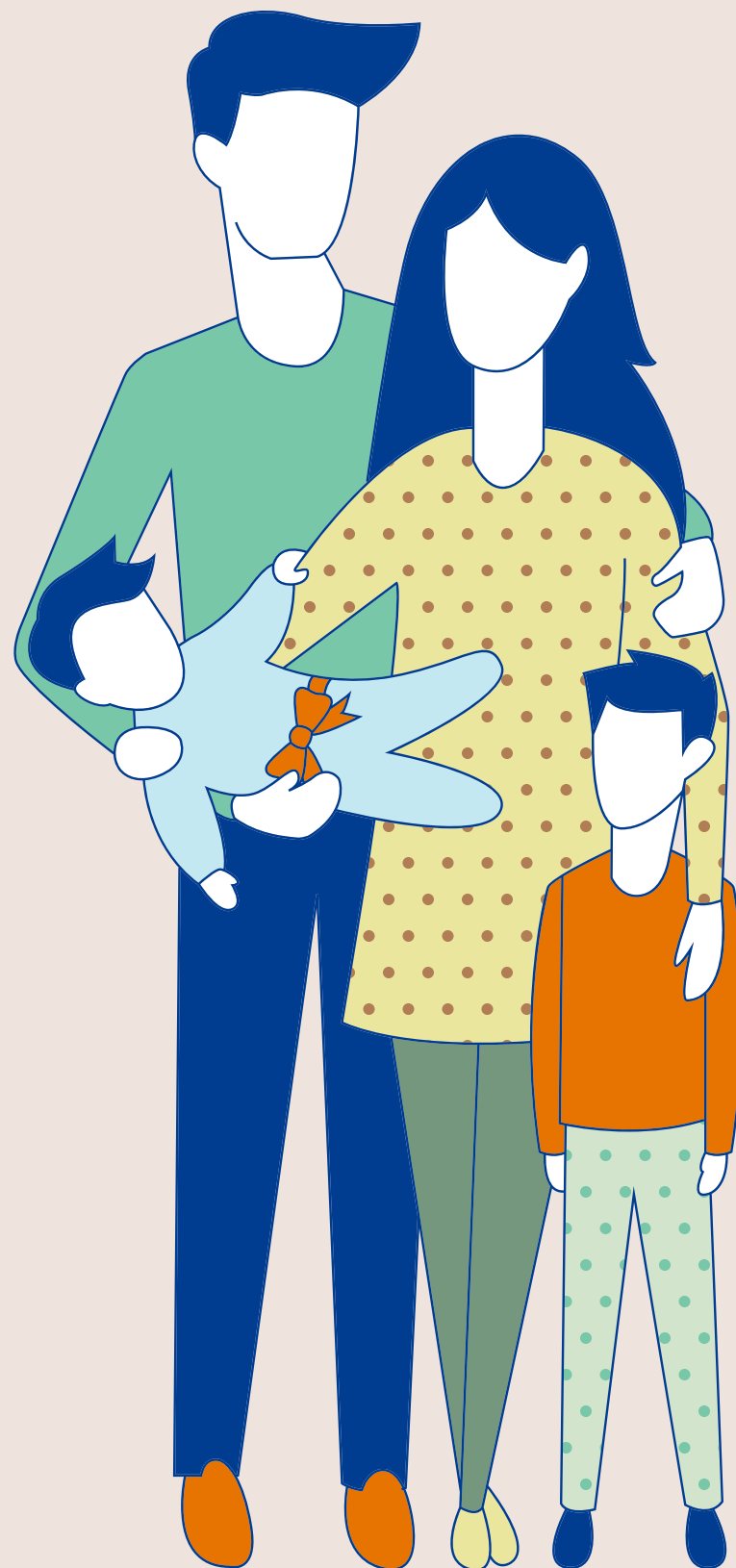
Because people are different.

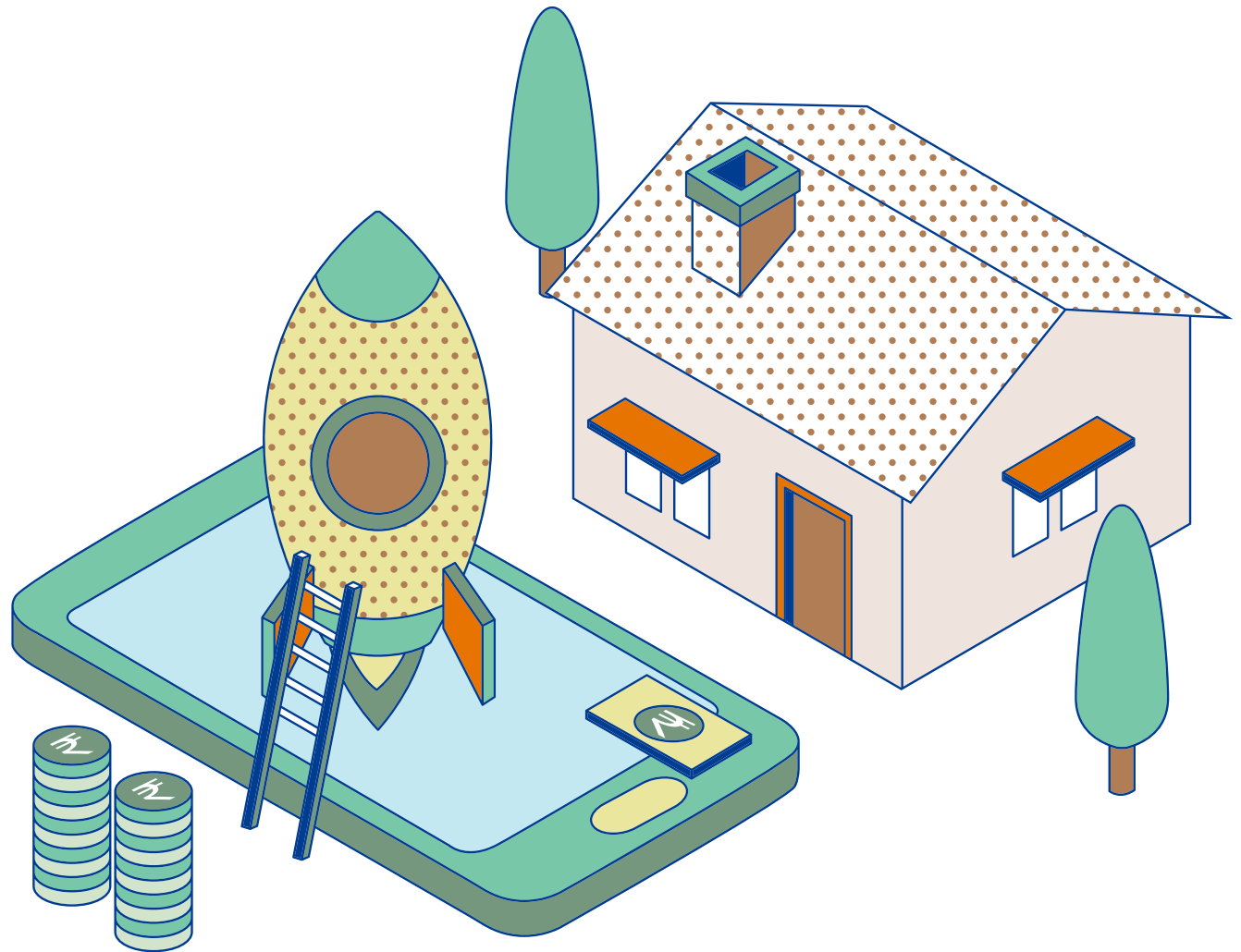
They are not you!



I felt having a second child would be a disaster.
It would make me feel even more guilt for not being present as a father to our son.

When you don't have anyone, you have your siblings.
And that's something you don't ask for.
Your parents gift you that gift.





I put all my savings into illiquid assets - real estate, startups.
And when we went through financial turmoil, we lived like urban poor.
Selling jewelry to make ends meet.

It is easy to cut a cheque.
Only when you see money come out of it, do you call it an investment!

I assumed everyone's definition of motivation for success is the same.
That of glory. That of respect. That of inspiring others.

Everyone has a different definition of success.
And only if your work sets other people up for their success, will you be
successful yourself.





After the birth of our first child I felt I lost my partner to my son's mother.
I missed my friend, my confidante.
Because she was always busy in rearing our child.

It is only when both parents contribute in raising their child, that they keep
their partnership alive.

I felt bad once all the awards stopped coming my way, after I started nearbuy.

When I had an easy job at Groupon, I was spoken of.

When I worked the hardest ever, no one noticed.

The awards were never for us.

They are for the positions we hold.





I felt VCs were in the business of building businesses together with the founders.

And our interests were thus aligned.

VCs are in the business of entering and exiting businesses.

And that often means, the interests will eventually clash.

I was convinced I would do well financially, if I became an entrepreneur. I would raise tons of money, be worth millions.

Never start up because you want to make money from it.

The odds of making the same money through a “boring” professional career, is much higher.



I assumed people will be okay if we lay them off and find them another job.

No!

Laying people off is rarely about the job.
It is about their self respect.



I maxed my credit cards, borrowed money from friends, delayed on my payments, just so I could continue to maintain the lifestyle that I had. I felt going down on that was a sign of failure.

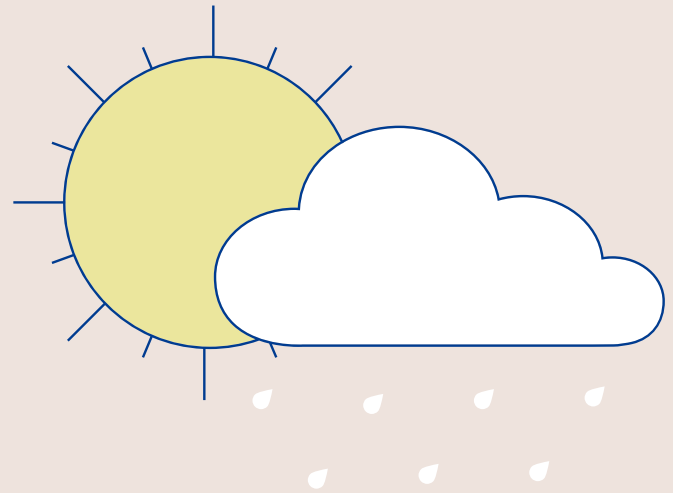
Treating our lifestyle standards as a measure of our success, is a sign of failure.

I thought that no one wants to be led. Everyone wants to do their own thing, so let them.

Not true.

99% people want to be led. They want to be told what to do, and then they will go on to do their best. They want to be led. Not managed.





I allowed my irrational optimism about the future to take over the need to be deliberate and thoughtful before taking decisions.
I assumed an “everything will be okay” approach towards everything.

Hope is not a strategy.



In my 20s, I dropped out of my PhD, finished an MBA, worked in consulting, earning a lot, started up with some success, had founder conflicts that led me to leave.

At 29, I was jobless, with no money, no plans and no visibility.

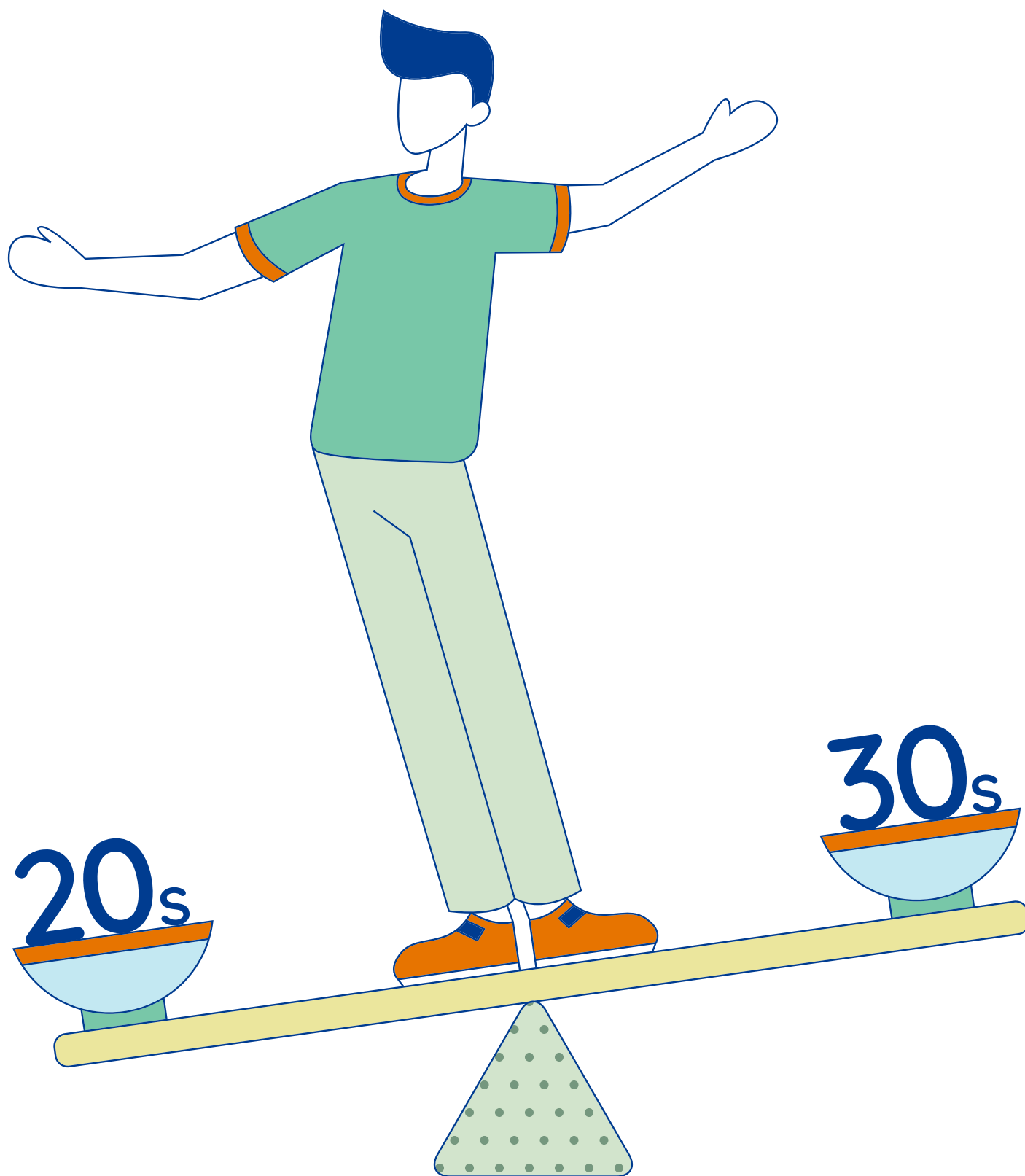
But I learned a lot.



In my 30s, I started 2 businesses, raised money, laid off people, made absolutely no money for myself and my investors, made poor people decisions, wasn't a good father.

At 39, I am jobless, with no money, no plans and no visibility.

But I wouldn't have it any other way.



I am fortunate that my 30s were much better than my 20s, when it comes to the mistakes that I made and the impact of them.

As the decade passed, I realized what is truly important in life.

It wasn't money for me, or fame or
recognition.

It was the ability to do what I
wanted to, without caring about
what the world thinks of me.



I made a lot of mistakes on my way, to
arrive at this definition of success for me.

And I consider myself fortunate.

If it weren't for these mistakes, I would still
be a ill-aware 39 yr old adult, who knows
nothing better than a 5yr old does!





Reflecting upon my mistakes has taught
me the most about myself.

I hope it does the same magic
for you too :)

I hope you enjoyed going through the mistakes I made in my 30s.
If you are in your 20s, this is a precursor of what's to watch out for.
If you are in your 30s, this may have connected with you :)
If you are 40+, then were you smiling at the mistakes I made and saying to yourself, "happens to all of us!"?

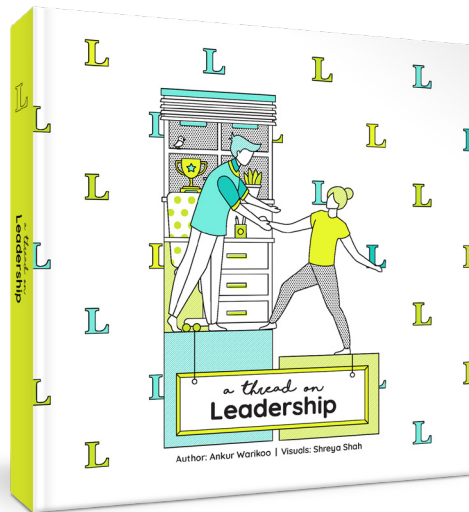
You can connect with me on <https://www.ankurwarikoo.com> and Shreya on <https://www.instagram.com/visualnarratives23/>

It will mean the world to us, if you shared your feedback about the book on warikoo@ankurwarikoo.com

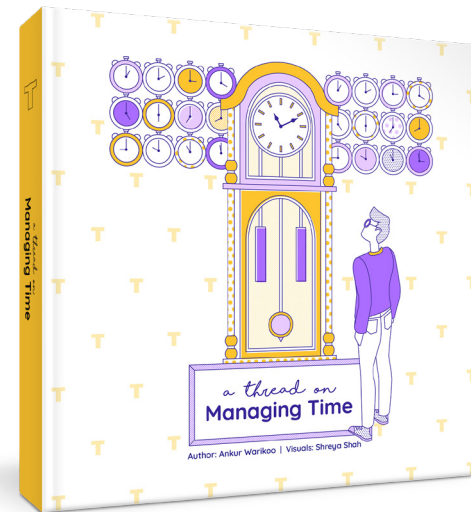
Thank you for your time and attention.

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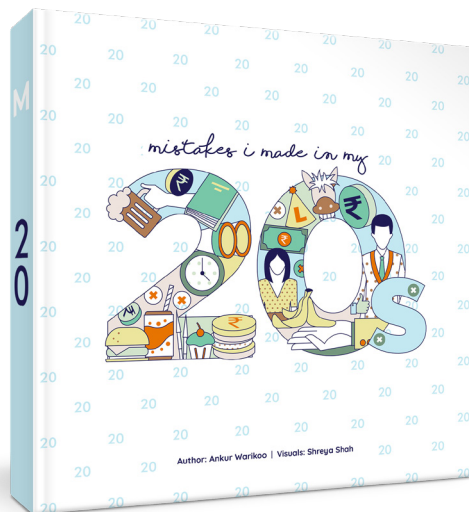
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