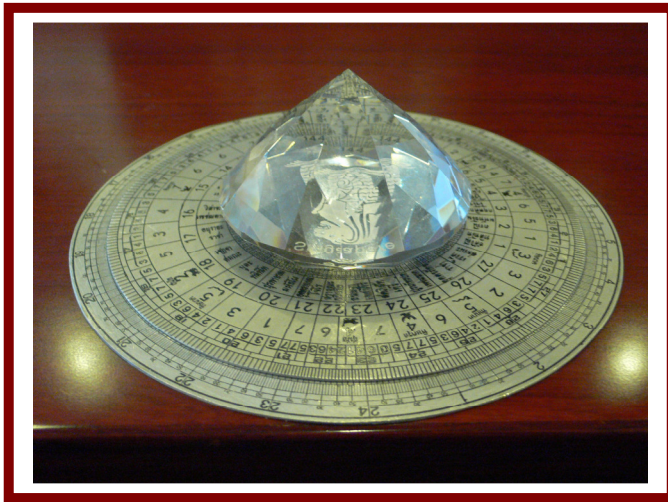

Learning the ropes

Completely vexed, Fiona was on the verge of pulling her hair on her current situation. "Nothing is going right for me, and if things keep up this present way of development, I am going to lose my mind!" It was 5 years ago when I first saw Fiona, a young teen curious about making the jump for the sake of developing her future...



"I want to study marketing." I remember well the conviction that resounded in her voice as she placed her clasped hands before me on the table. "My parents are willing to finance my dreams, but I want to know if the stars will prove favourable for me if I should pursue this path, or if I am just deluding myself with this pipe dream and should do something else." Like a child, she shook with excitement about the unknown possibilities, yet there was a part of her that trembled for fear of the same feeling.

Her chart then reflected that her 9th House of Education sheltered a myriad of positive planets which favoured new beginnings and life prospects should she choose to venture forth and up-skill herself with further education. Pleased, I reported back to her that her prospects were good and that if she decides to further her study she will achieve good results and would be well on the way to a bright future. Inspired by my counsel, she decidedly went ahead with her plans and dedicated herself to achieving her goals. Working hard and long hours, with the driven fire to succeed, she excelled in her course and graduated with a Bachelor Degree, with high distinctions. Returning to her homeland, she went on to begin the new page of her corporate life.

Which was where it all began ...

With such grades and qualifications, it was easy for her to secure a good position with what seemed like a relatively interesting company. Being a person who had proven her theoretical application of marketing skills to situations, she went into the working rat race fairly confident of what she could offer the company. However, being relatively new to people experience and work experience hindered her work. Her colleagues were uncomfortable over her position and prospects, and saw her potential as a threat to their own jobs. Instead of embracing her as a team member, they pushed her to solve dilemmas on her own without offering working experienced insights into what they knew. This immensely troubled her as she tried to win their trust through her hardworking nature, but to no avail. All they saw was a person who was trying to outpace them, and furthering their disinterest to not treat her as a key player in their workforce.

To add to the problematic setup, her supervising manager lived up to his reputation of being a domineering stuck up fellow. He was the sort that believed his Masters degree was a symbol of how to superceded all the other degree holders, and his ranking (which was given to him by chance as the previous manager jumped to a better paying company) further whet

his behaviour. He did not like any ideas that Fiona could out rank him with her hard working nature, and shot her down with every opportunity he got. Believing he had the power over Fiona's position in the company, he constantly filled her with fear about her ability to work and how much further she could keep her job based on her "incapable" nature.

It took this incident to make Fiona finally realize how much this job was affecting her. The manager had come up with an idea to promote the company and had liaised with the sponsors. After doing all the initial talks, he commanded Fiona to come up with the funds to finance the project first. "The sponsors will reimburse you soon. This is your first project as a new employee on probation. I expect you to do well in this task. Pull up your socks and make this project a success." Even though Fiona was stunned by the indirect way he had threatened her to fork out hundreds of dollars for the company's sake (and for keeping her job), she meekly sought ways to finance the project on her own, eventually turning to her own family for the cash. She wanted to succeed at this job and she thought that by making this project work, he would credit her for her efforts and working at the company would take a turn for the better.

Instead, the more she worked on the project, the more she came to hate her job and working with that manager. He was a man whom stole credit for her ideas, pitching it across to others after he has squeezed it from her privately. To further irate her, he demeaned her in front of her colleagues and labeled her as the weak link, with nothing constructive to contribute to the table, further thickening the wall between herself and her colleagues. The only way to go about the project was to become a "yes" person and agree to only his exclusive ideas, no matter how common they seemed. That seemed to slightly ease the tension at work.

At the end of the project, Fiona faced with a much bigger problem. The sponsors had yet to contact her about reimbursing her the money, despite her manager insisting she turned to them for such matters. Which was why she sat here before me. "I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't do anything! I was so stupid to think that by sacrificing my hard earned money, I could secure my job. Now I feel alone, and sorry that I crippled my own family by using their money and not being able to pay them back! That manager even laughed off my plea and told me to sort it out myself! Roy, please tell me what I should do... With the state of things, I am going through breakdown soon..."

Empathising with this girl who had lost all her self-esteem, I worked out that Jupiter (her luck planet) was facing adversities that came with the 6th House. This created the liabilities and stress that she encountered in the work place and with what she was relating to me, a breakdown was surely inevitable. So I asked her this, "If you were given a choice now, would you quit the job?" Firmly, she replied. "Yes. Enough is enough." And she knew what she had to do.

Turning in her notice, she started applying for more jobs and a month after she had left that horrid experience behind her she was offered a better position with another company. "The only lesson I have learnt from that company was to eat humble pie and start on lower grounds. I want to learn from my more experienced colleagues and build rapport with them in order to achieve success together as a team. I've learnt that if I had stayed on in that company, I would be as miserable and insensitive as my previous manager, who thrived from putting others down. I am glad to be able to move onto better pastures. Thank you for giving me the strength." And yes, just before she left, she demanded her money back, even going so far as to lodging a complaint with human resources, that action instilling so much fear in the manager that he managed to return the rightful amount to her on her last day of work.

I am glad that things worked out for Fiona, and I wish her well for her journey to the future ahead.