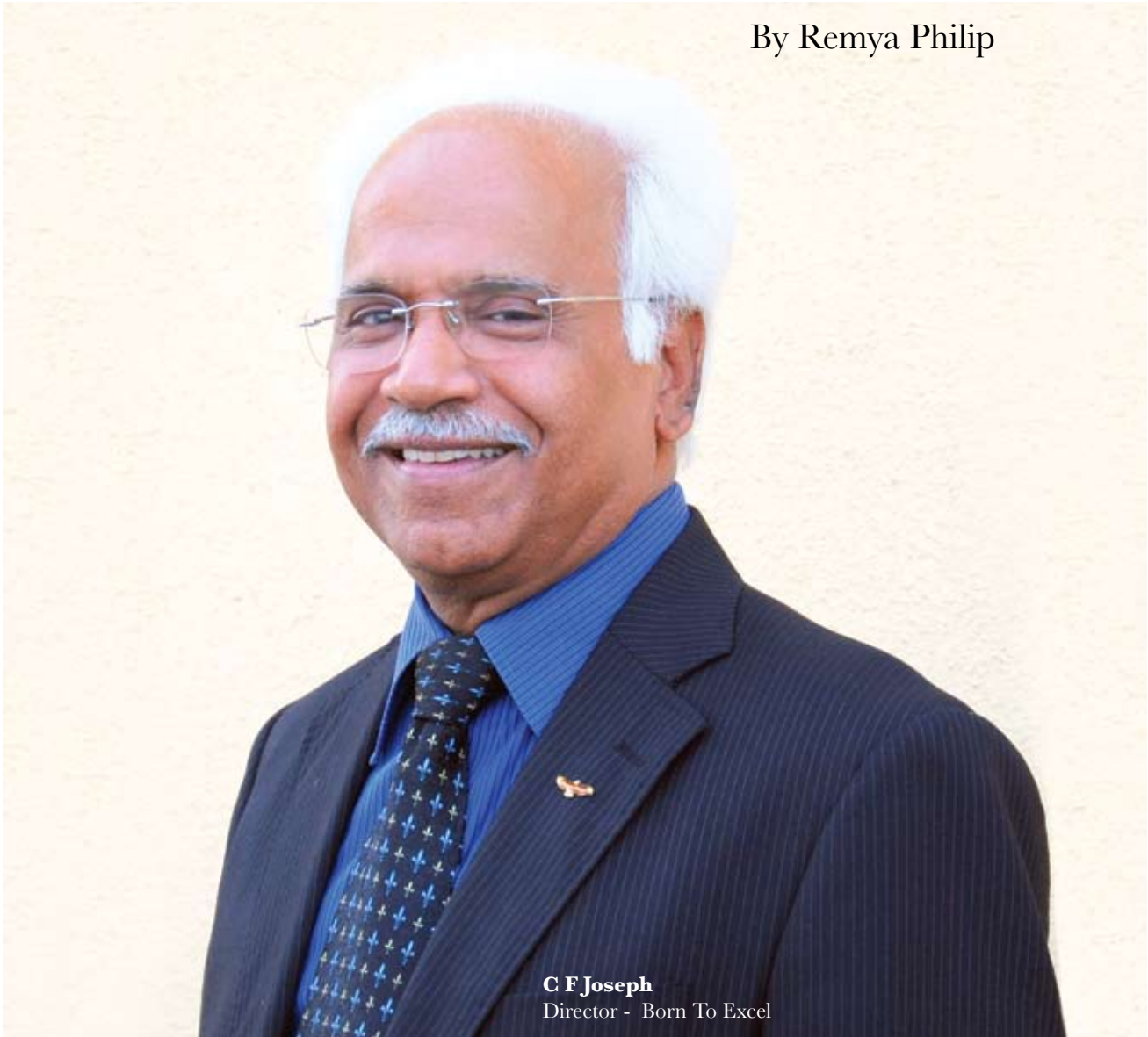


# The Leadership and Personality Guru

By Remya Philip



**C F Joseph**  
Director - Born To Excel

Changing lives, changing personalities, sharpening your strengths, overcoming your weaknesses - these are just a few of the things that C F Joseph is responsible for. For those of you who think the above are impossible, you have definitely not heard of *Born To Excel*. The brainchild of C F Joseph, *Born To Excel* was established in 1993. This

journey that Joseph embarked on more than fifteen years ago has only grown from strength to strength.

'If you have a vision for a year, plant for a good harvest. If you have a vision for a century, plant oak or teak trees. However, if you have a vision for eternity, cultivate people.' This is

the quote Joseph lives his life by. After holding very successful career titles in the corporate world with well known firms in India, Bahrain, USA and UAE for over 25 years, Joseph decided to establish his own corporate and student training programmes. His background in Educational Psychology and his experience in the management world

only gave him an edge in seeing his goal through.

### The inspiration

Joseph was brought up in Kerala, and did his schooling in a Malayalam medium school. He started learning to write English only by the age of 12. His ingenious idea of *Born To Excel* stems from an experience at this tender age. Joseph explained, 'I was lucky to listen to a teacher who passed by our village and offered to speak to us about opportunities available in Mumbai. The guest speaker spoke in English and we did not understand a word of what he said. A teacher from our school translated the speech. The words I heard then, linger on even now, "Heights by great men reached and kept were not attained in a sudden flight. But, they, while their companions slept were toiling upwards in the night."

These words struck Joseph like a wake up call and changed his life, triggering him to work extremely hard from then on. He passed out with a first rank in Educational Psychology at the Masters level from the Pune University after which, he went on to pursue Management Training from the Roosevelt University of Chicago.

'The awareness that inspired me during my teenage years made me realise that it is during the teenage that children need most inspiration. Recognising this, I always wanted to do something for them in order to give them greater self confidence, communication skills and proper career guidance. These are today three core areas that the *Born To Excel* programme for children focuses on.'

The title of the training programme was inspired from famous ideas he got from one of the Motivational Gurus, Zig Zigler, who called his programme *Born To Win*. *Born To Excel* Success Motivation Centre as it is officially named, has its head office in the UAE

"I always wanted to do something for teenagers in order to give them greater self confidence, communication skills and proper career guidance"

but conducts programmes in all the Middle East countries, India, The UK and Switzerland. The programmes are sponsored by companies as well as like minded individuals who work together to promote and support the cause of enriching lives.

The insights that Joseph provides at

his training programmes are what he has acquired as part of his formal training in Educational Psychology and management training. A lot of it is also gathered from his direct work experience and observation of people and children living in different parts of the world. He provides training programmes for children as well as adults and their responses are his biggest motivation to keep going on.

'When a student performs even better than me especially in the art of public speaking on the last day of the programme, I feel great because I am assured that I have done my best. The finest feeling is however when the weakest participant makes a significant progress,' said Joseph rather cherishingly. He added, 'One of the most valuable comments I got was from **HH Sayyida Zawan bin Fahar al Said** of the Sultanate of Oman, when she saw the outcome of my programme at the Al Falaj Hotel a few years ago.'

On being asked the extent to which a child's creativity can be molded, Joseph answered, 'If a professional like myself tries to instill worthy ideas of noble goals, most youngsters listen and act. They may sometimes turn a deaf ear



C F Joseph with participants at a Born to Excel workshop in Muscat



**Teenage Student participants**  
Art a Born to Excel workshop in Muscat in July 2010

to parents, but they do take in such ideas when they are given from real life experiences of a qualified professional.’ In the area of public speaking, Joseph believes that if children interested in such skills are encouraged by their parents and schools to take part in related activities, the skill can be kept alive and improved. He thinks such children can also attain a lot by joining public speaking clubs like the Toast Masters for example. He said, ‘Nowadays parents give undue importance to their kids learning skillful activities like music, dance, sports, etc. which are good activities to train in. But in doing so we neglect inculcating in them the art of Public Speaking, which is an essential requirement in today’s competitive world.’

During the regular training programmes at *Born To Excel*, Joseph cannot provide the extra training and help for children who come from backgrounds where they haven’t undergone a good or adequate socialization process. But he makes up for this with the help of personal counselling sessions for such children at his office in Dubai. Both adults and children often seek his help in personal matters through emails and phone calls.

### **Moulding Personalities**

Joseph is of the opinion that parents play a significant role in the holistic development of children. He thinks

that one of the first things that parents must realize is that their children do not only resemble them physically; their personalities and intelligence levels are also a combination of two separate and distinct individuals like themselves. Some children are easier to streamline according to parents’ wishes but many others prefer to grow and develop based on their own notions of personality development. Such children must be

“Life without goals ahead is not worth living”

given the freedom to do so. However in the case of both types of children it is the parents who have the right to point out any negative trends in their development and mould them to build acceptable styles of personality and behavior.

‘Life without goals ahead is not worth living,’ stated Joseph when asked about his plans for the future. He has some very clearly defined goals ahead of him and believes that he still has a lot more to learn and do. To begin with, he would like to train a few qualified teachers from schools in the Middle East to carry on *Born To Excel* programmes for teenagers after he leaves. He would also like to train teachers with a background in Educational Psychology to conduct

professional aptitude tests for students of class 10.

### **Future Plans**

Joseph’s plans for his home country are not any lesser. Once he gets settled back in India he plans to provide a world-class language laboratory absolutely free for the children of his village Muttar in Kerala, to train them to speak English the way the World does. He would also like to inculcate in them basic leadership and survival skills that they would need before they step out in to the real world.

Joseph vehemently expressed that molding the youth as well as adults into leaders with integrity for the corporate world and for the society in general gives him much greater satisfaction than what he experienced in his corporate life. Although the corporate world was financially better off, the sense of accomplishment he feels with *Born To Excel* is matchless.

With the success that *Born To Excel* has achieved, this certainly does not come as a surprise. And the testimonies of people who have attended his training programmes prove this point further. It can thus safely be said that Joseph through his charismatic personality and desire to do good for humanity, is only going to continue to enlighten and enrich many more lives in the years to come.