

1. What matters most to you and why?

Each year, before going on vacation, I have to live through one highly unpleasant week. All this week I have a distinct feeling that I should cancel my vacation and stay at work to make sure the projects will run smoothly. Deep inside I know: everything will be perfectly fine. Over the last several years I have built a strong team to take care of everything while I'm away. However, it is what makes me feel so uneasy: realization that the business will function without me, that I might be not needed. After thinking this situation over, I gradually realized that this feeling of being needed makes my world go round.

Realization that other people need me enables me to make a step out of my zone of comfort and become a better person and professional. It is also the realization of being needed that helps me to endure troubles and hardships. Wanting to be needed is my constant urge for self-development, an urge to reach further, dig deeper and step across the boundaries.

One of the memorable instances when I crossed the line into unknown occurred in the year 1999, when I was working at a tiny IT-company in **[no name]**. My so-called personal office was in a narrow room, previously used for storage of goods. There was just one small window beneath the ceiling, barred and covered with spiderwebs. Sitting in those luxurious surroundings I was pouring over the journals about the latest developments in IT-technologies. I felt like life was at its peak of activity elsewhere – in **[no name]** or **[no name]**, but not where I was. The realization struck me: if I stay in this closet with cobwebs any longer, no one will ever need me – life will pass by. I remembered the words my Mom used to tell me often: 'You have nothing to lose except your chains', and I decided to get rid of my chains as soon as possible.

In summer 2001 I packed my things and headed to **[no name]**. In the end of my trip I found myself in the middle of the highway, out of the city limits. The bus driver made a gesture to the horizon, saying '**[no name]** is there', and so I set on walking. It was one of the many situations in my life, when my goals would seem as far and unattainable, as that city on the horizon. Still, each time it would only strengthen my determination to succeed.

The result of my trip to **[no name]** was the agreement I have reached to transfer from **[no name]** to one of the most prestigious technical universities in the country – **[no name]**. I moved to **[no name]**, although it was not an easy step for me to make. I knew nothing of living on my own and could not even cook my food properly ... Still I did not lose my heart, because I knew that by getting a good education and becoming an advanced specialist I might have a chance to make an important contribution to lives of some particular people, people who need me.

I should admit, it has always been fairly impossible for me to think of humanity in general. Instead I often envision a person of two who will find the results of my actions of real use to them. Say, when I led a project of IT-structure optimization at the project in **[no name]**, I knew that after my job is done no engineer will have to jump up at night to go plug and unplug some cables in the middle of nowhere. Similarly, when offering our company's IT products for oil companies, I know that workers at the facilities will not have to make any more urgent calls, yelling 'Our reservoirs are already full – why do you keep directing oil to us?'

Realizing that those people need me is sometimes the only thing that helps me to keep going with the project when situation gets especially exhausting. Any big project is like a marathon race, where a runner needs a source of energy. Numerous times I found enough strength to go on, only because I felt that my work will make someone's life less complicated.

I realize that thinking on the individual people's level can be a somewhat narrow path to take – and I do feel a need to get a broader outlook. **[no name]** motto about the need to move on, changing organizations and the world as well, rings very true to me. I do hope that through **[no name]** experience I will be able to widen the

boundaries of my perception and goal-setting. Still, no matter which path I take in future, I know I will always be living in a people's world, where being needed by someone makes me capable of so many incredible things.