Departure Lounge — Mumbai

Where Every Journey Begins

Purpose. It is an easy word to say. People do not really think about it when they use it. It gets thrown around, often in the wrong context. But purpose is actually what drives you and your life. It's why you get out of bed every morning.

Earlier this year, I travelled to Dubai as a founding member of the Dubai Magic Circle. It brings together people from different walks of life who are experts in their fields. The idea is simple — create a room of people who can generate exponential synergies. And that is exactly what happened. I met a wonderful lady named Priya Pinto. She runs a program called the Awakened Heart, which helps you "debug your bugged beliefs" and write a new "code" for yourself.

But I didn't do the program in Dubai. I came back home to Mumbai, sat at my desk, and worked through it here. Priya's approach gets you to define your long-term, medium-term, and short-term goals — and then backwork them. You start from where you want to end up and trace the path back to today.

When I did that, one thing became very clear to me. I needed to write this book. Not someday. Now.

That moment — sitting in Mumbai, looking at my own goals written out in front of me — is where this journey really begins. It is where this book begins too.

Because everything that follows is a journey outward from here. Hyderabad. Bangalore. Delhi. Ahmedabad. Jaipur. Chennai. Kolkata. Pune. Rishikesh. London. And then back to Mumbai — but not the same Mumbai you left.

Think of this as your boarding pass. Mumbai is the departure lounge. The gate is open.

Now let me tell you what this book is — and what it isn't.

There are plenty of books on angel investing. Most of them will walk you through term sheets, valuations, cap table mechanics, SEBI regulations, and all the rest of it. And if you read them, you will come away knowing the vocabulary. You will be able to sit in a room with investors and nod at the right moments. But you will still not know what is really going on.

Because the most important decisions a founder makes when raising from angels are not financial. They are about people. Who do you let onto your cap table? What kind of partner do you actually need — not just what kind of cheque? How do you read what an investor is really saying versus what they want you to hear? How do you negotiate well when you need the money and they know it?

These are the questions no term sheet can answer. And these are the questions this book is built around. I am going to take you into the rooms where deals actually happen — not the polished version, but the real one. You will meet the founders I backed, understand what I saw in them, and learn what happened next. The good exits and the painful ones. I am not hiding either.

You are not selling stake. You are choosing a partner.

I say that as someone who has been on both sides of the table — and got one of those sides badly wrong.

In 2019, I started a wellness brand called Leviosa. I was already an angel investor by then — sitting in pitch rooms, asking founders hard questions about their unit economics and market research. And then I launched my own business and ignored almost everything I knew.

The market was saturated. My pricing was off. The unit economics were terrible — high import costs, expensive operations, margins that just didn't work. I kept pumping money in because it was my own business and I was too emotionally attached to see it clearly. Things felt miserable and frustrating. I felt worthless.

In 2023, I stopped putting more money into Leviosa. I applied to myself the same advice I give every founder who is bleeding — stop the burn, cut your losses, and think clearly about what's next.

And then came the question I wish someone had asked me in 2019, before I spent a single rupee:

"What is your purpose in starting this?"

Back then I would have said “to make money.” And honestly, making money is absolutely a value — I want to be successful, and there is nothing wrong with that. But your values need to go deeper than that for a specific business to truly work. With Leviosa, I didn’t have fitness and wellness at my core. I wasn’t living that life. Back then I was overweight, not working out, and that world was simply not part of who I was. If those values had been there, I would have been far more driven to make it work no matter what — and I would have had the right network to promote it naturally.

Today I run a startup consultancy called Dynastic Dimensions LLP where I work with founders on fundraising, lead generation, and growth. I get to do every day what I love most — sit with people who are building things and help them build better. That is what my values look like in action.

Your value system defines your purpose. And if your values don’t connect to what you’re building, you will always be pushing uphill.

This is the lesson I learned the expensive way. You don’t have to.

Building with purpose does not mean having all the answers from day one. It means knowing why you are building in the first place — what problem genuinely matters to you, what kind of person you need to be to solve it, and whether the life this business demands is a life you actually want to live. A founder who is clear on that walks differently into every room. They ask different questions. They attract different people. And when the hard moments come — and they always come — they have something deeper than ambition to fall back on.

Purpose also changes fundraising in ways most founders don’t expect. When you know exactly why you are building, you stop chasing every cheque and start evaluating investors the same way they evaluate you. You bring a filter to the table. And that filter — far more than any pitch deck — is what attracts the right angels.

So here is what we are going to do. I am going to take you on a journey — city by city, founder by founder, deal by deal. Real investments. Real mistakes. Real lessons from both sides of the table. By the time we get back to Mumbai, you will know not just how to raise from angels, but how to choose the right ones, ask them the hard questions, read what they are not saying, and build relationships that last.

Every city on this journey has something to teach you. Hyderabad will show you the ecosystem and what it is really made of. Bangalore will show you what showing up actually looks like. Delhi will show you the rules of the room. And so on, all the way to London and back.

But the most important lesson of all starts right here, before you board. It started for me at a desk in Mumbai, staring at a list of goals I had written for myself for the first time in my life. It is the same lesson this entire book is built on.

Know your purpose. Everything else follows.

Before You Board: *Before you read a single chapter, ask yourself these questions and write the answers down. What is the purpose behind the business you are building — not the commercial opportunity, but the human reason? Do your personal values connect to what you are building? And what kind of angel do you actually need on this journey — not the cheque, but the person?*

The gate is open. Mumbai is where we start.

Let's go.