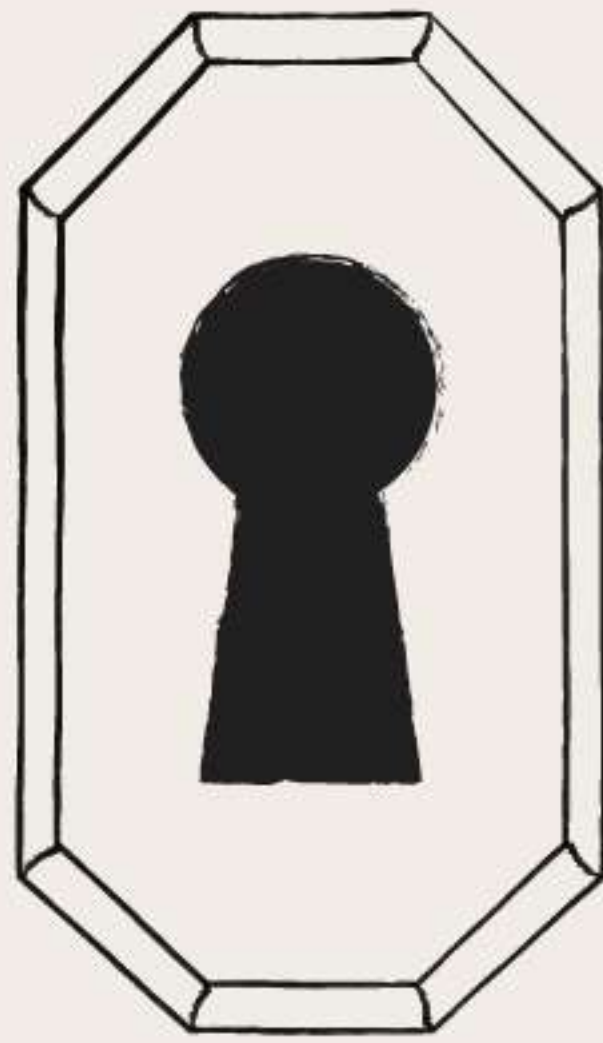


# Unlearning

KEY TO YOUR INNER SELF



# Contents



Note by NK Chaudhary	01
The Power of Unlearning	03
Unlearning in Business	05
Techniques in Unlearning	07
Steps in Unlearning and the Journey	11
Practise and Personal Anecdotes	16
Unlearning is the Future	18

**“Unlearning is not forgetting  
rather formulating one’s mind to  
step out of the existing world  
and create a new one.”**



Unlearning is one of my favourite words. I find it as a therapy for rediscovery and introspection.

I believe life is a continuous journey of learning unlearning and relearning. Through this e-book I share some of my thoughts which helped me in my journey.

I hope you find this e-book handy and meaningful in empowering yourself.

**NK Chaudhary**  
Founder, Jaipur Rugs



# The power of Unlearning

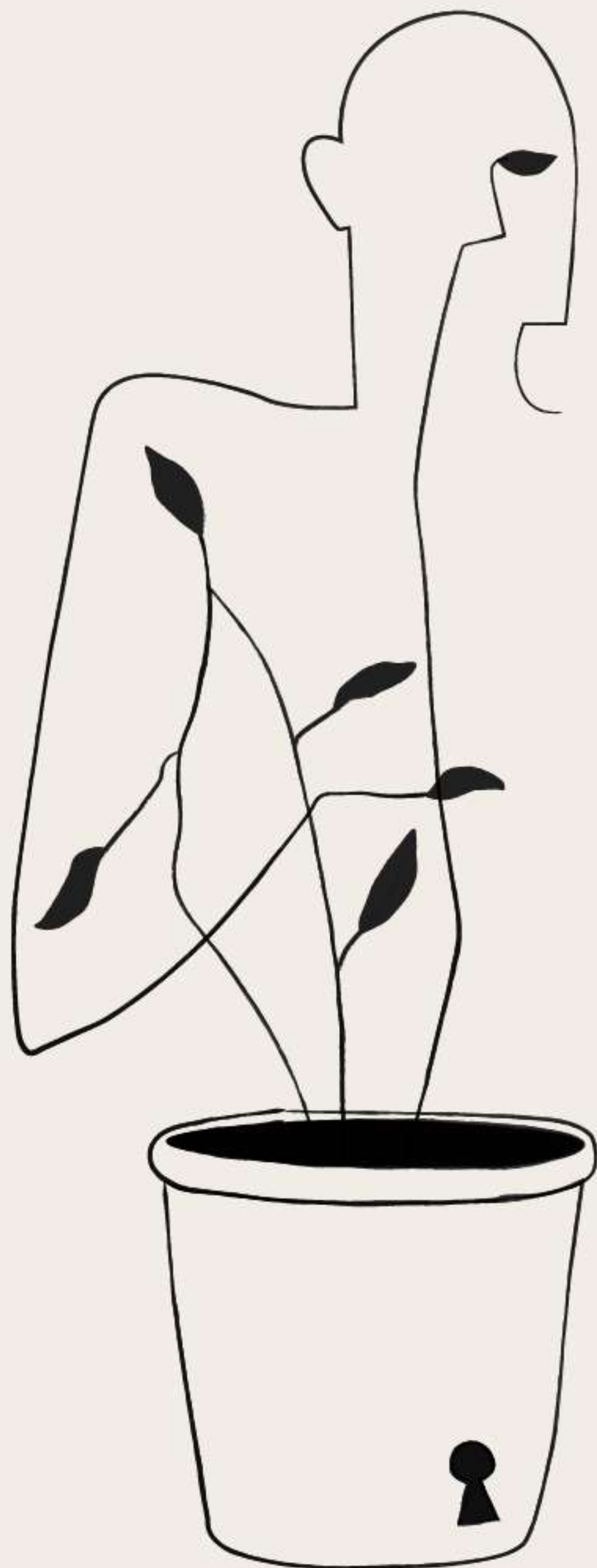
My relationship with education ended with my graduation but my learning started from there and still continues and flourishes far beyond. I often say that after my college, I took admission into a new university, **University of Hard Rocks of life.**

Each time a sense of incompleteness pushes me further to know and learn more.

We drink water to keep ourselves hydrated, we inhale oxygen to keep us alive. Likewise unlearning is the brain feed we consume to work on our consciousness and self-awareness.

In business we lose ourselves in the chaos of competition, market and success. Unlearning is the key to find our way back.

# Unlearning in Business



Often in business you get stuck with what you know from college and higher education. But our learning is incomplete which makes it ineffective.

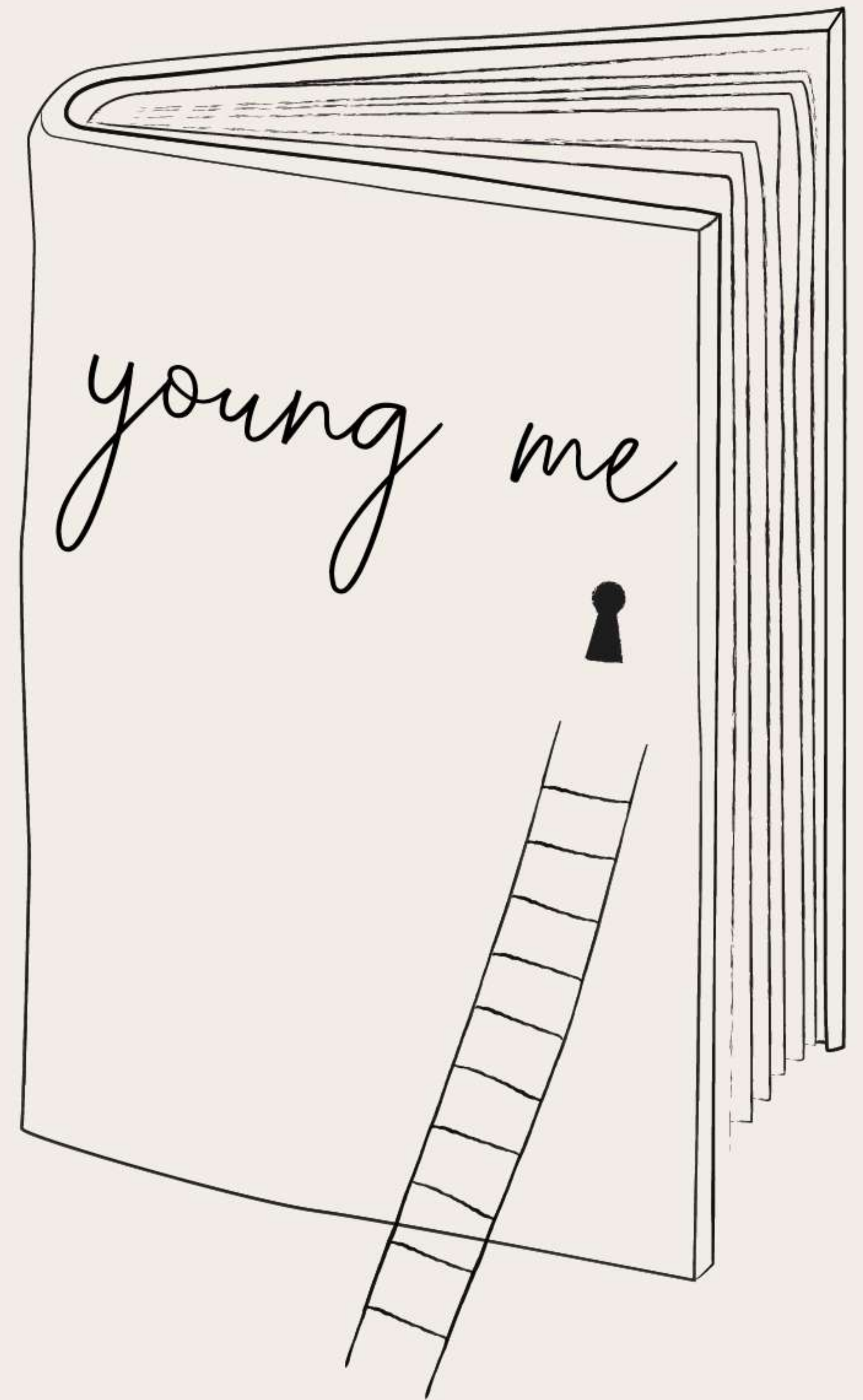
The seeds of unlearning grew in me while I took my first step in business. The artisans who helped me to make my dream a reality was then rejected by the society as untouchables. When I started working and living with them, I took the first step towards unlearning.

The beauty of unlearning lies in its wholeness. To further dive into unlearning, I have penned down a few steps to focus while unlearning.



# Techniques in Unlearning

From a young age like everyone I also absorbed a multitude of things around me. This contributed in creating a perception of things in me. This was sometimes in alignment with the truth and mostly biased. So in order to fight that I decided to open up to unlearning.



# Letting go

Mindsets play a major part in helping one unlearn. Mindsets are the assumptions, values, purpose, beliefs and experiences of the individual. Once we let our mind open to accept, interpret and engage with new things we get to taste the essence of unlearning. The first part of unlearning is to let go and make space for new.



## **Giving away any prior prejudices and habits**

Unlearning also requires the ability to reflect, to step beyond one's individual role to see the whole. It involves resetting and challenging any old assumptions, experience, ideals, values, motives and beliefs that are used consciously or subconsciously in decision making and learning.

## **Modifying the old mindset**

Unlearning is about the rediscovery of new goals and responses by stepping out of our comfort zones and re-examining the beliefs.

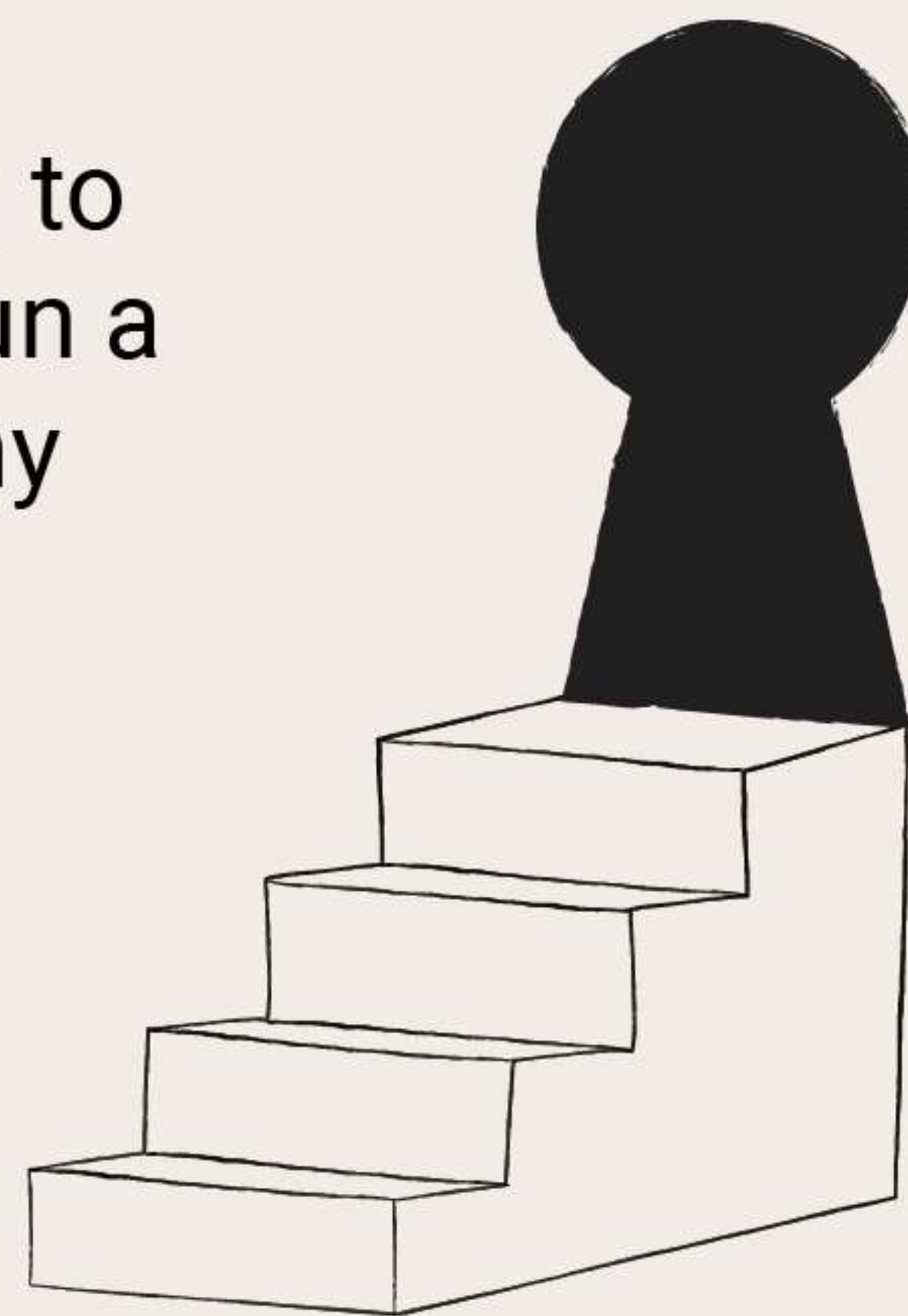
Learning and unlearning are like the two opposite shores of a sea. They meet only through channelizing wisdom over knowledge. The bridge might seem invisible but if we trust the process, then it is easy to cross.

# Steps in Unlearning

## Begin from where you stopped

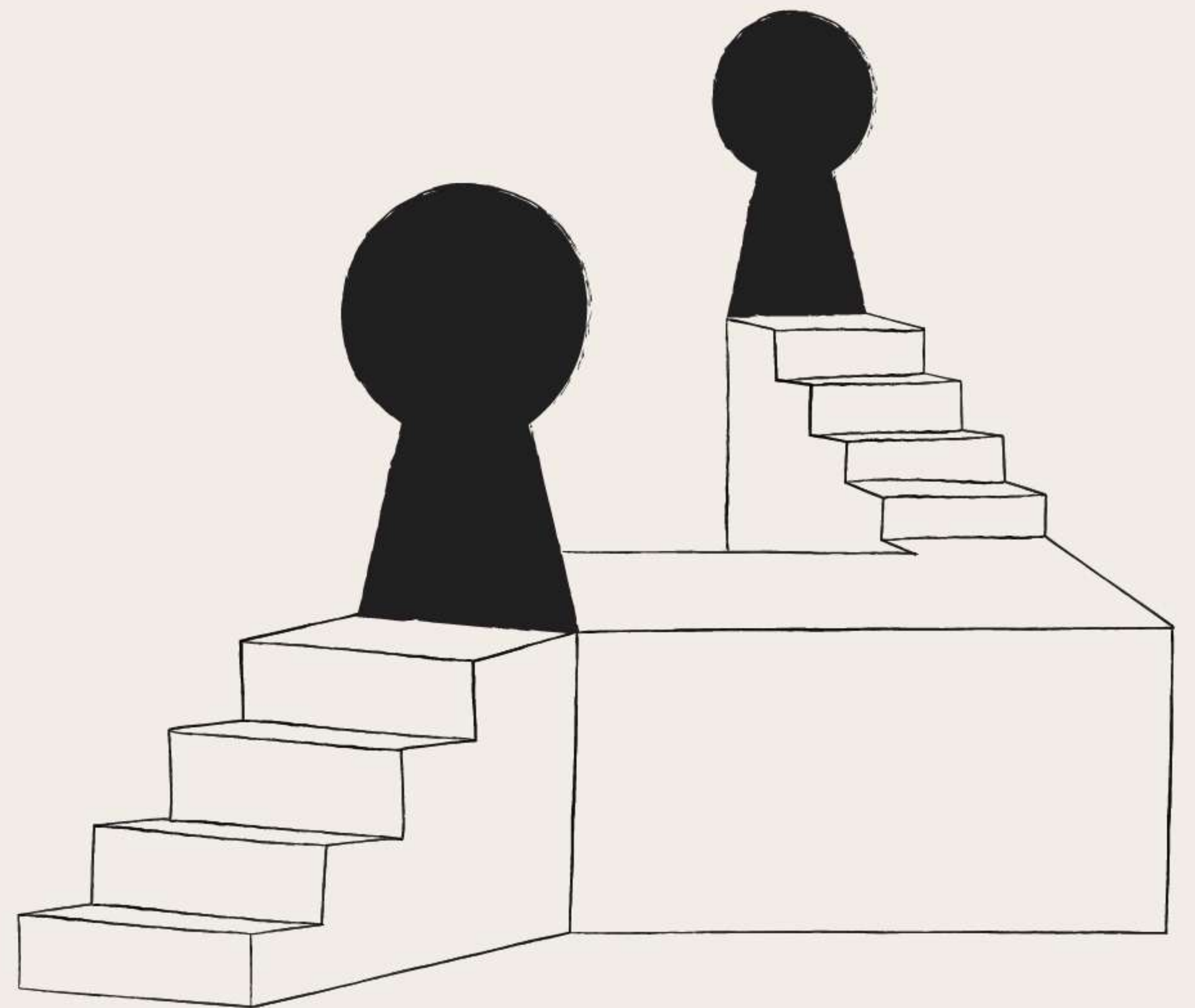
When I first stumbled upon unlearning I wasn't sure of its benefits. Well, I didn't even know how to start unlearning. The initial days were confusing and blurred. In the late 1990s when I came back to Jaipur to set up my head office and decided to take my business global I didn't know where to begin. Later, after pondering on every other alternative I came to the conclusion, I shall begin from where I stopped. I was prone to rural leadership that restricted company's growth. This made me realise it was time to unlearn.

I started reading books, listening to speeches, and learning how to run a global business which opened my mind to new possibilities and perspectives.



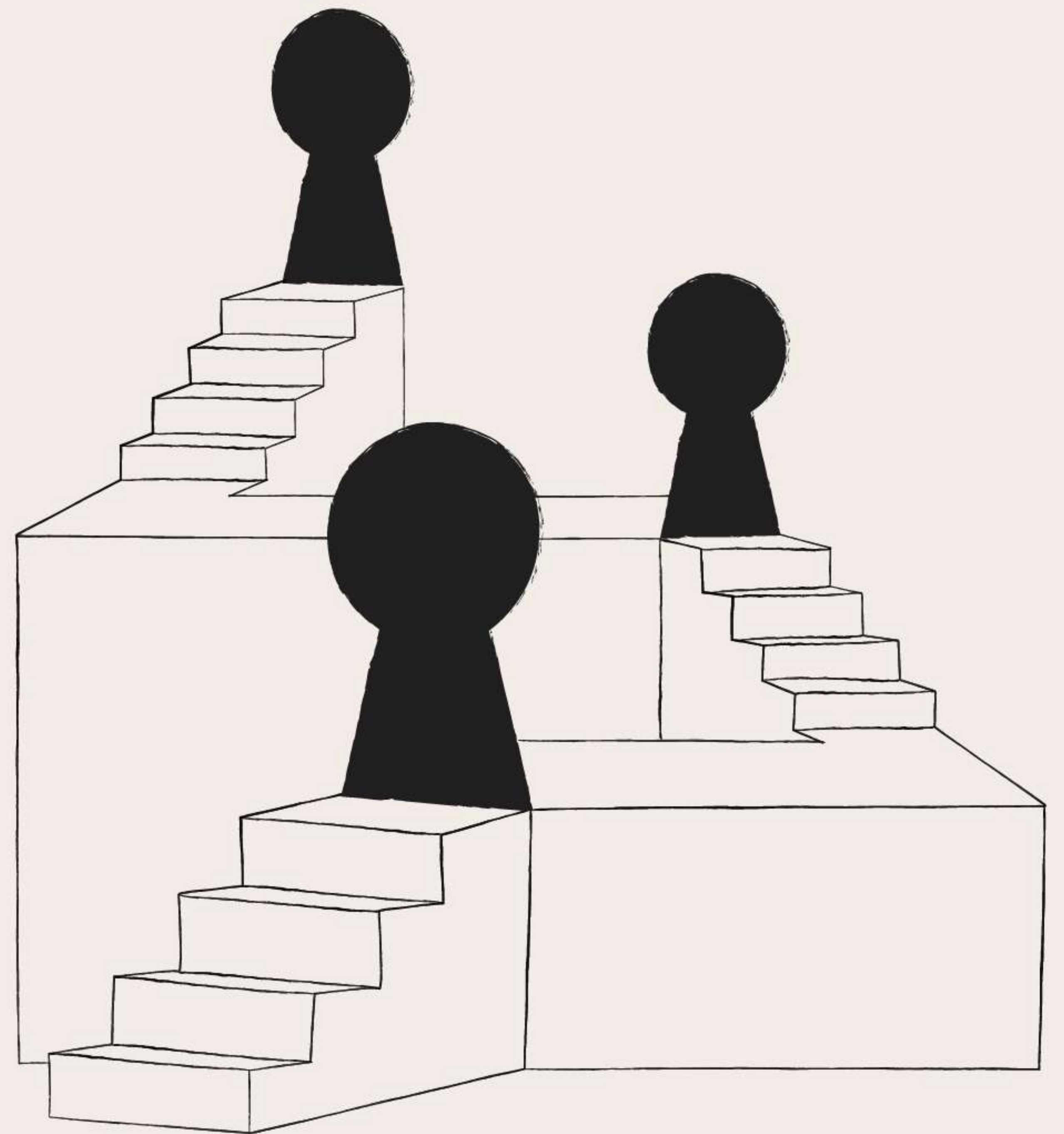
## Be ready to unlearn

The tug of war is real as we near. Staying open might feel like a piece of cake but as time passes the going gets tough. The mind and heart is at a constant war. Prior learning is something we should forget in the process but that doesn't mean we are devaluing it. I had to find myself but that is only possible if I lose my old self.



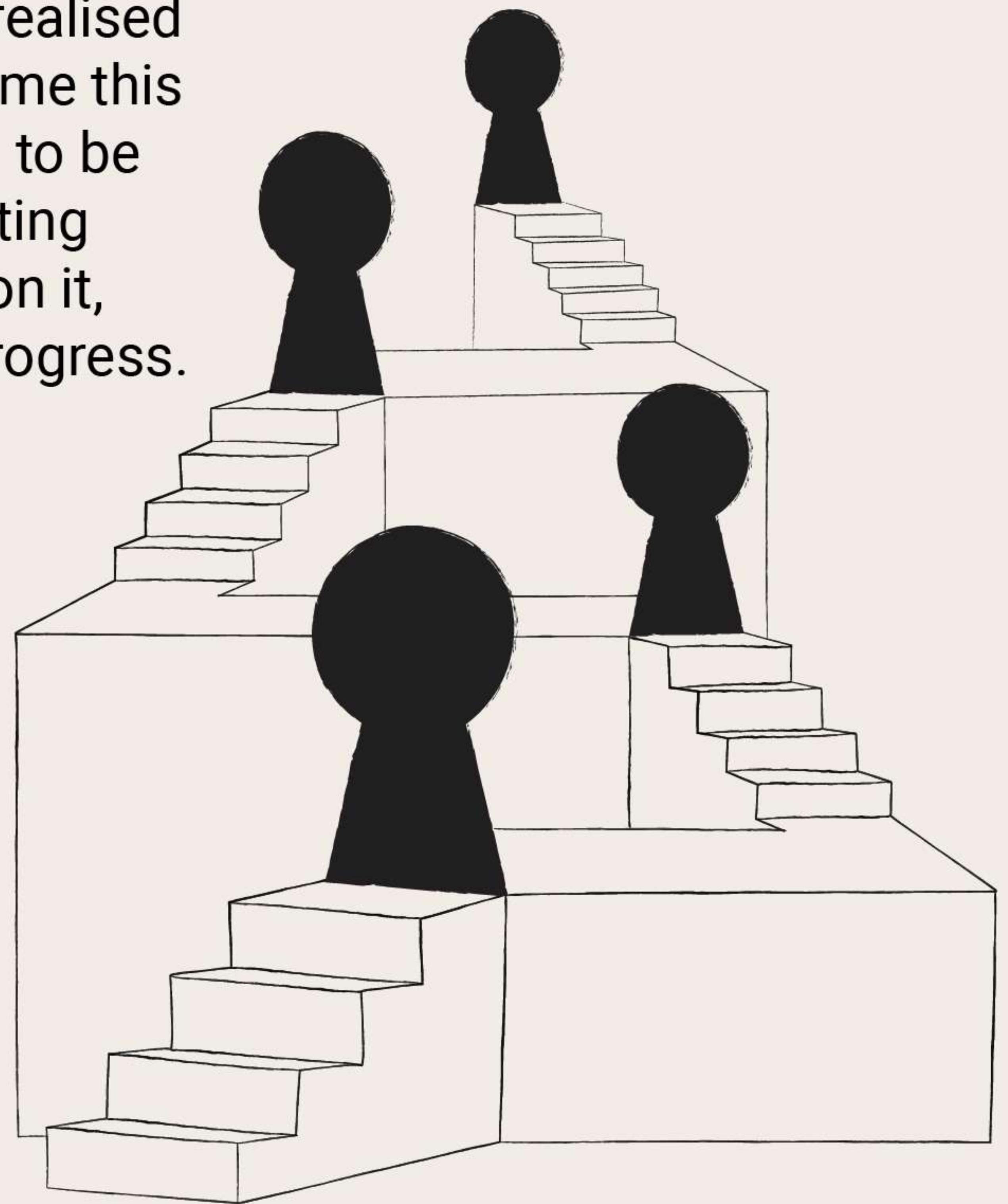
## Question your beliefs

Examine your beliefs and question them. They are the indicators of behaviour. New beliefs will ultimately contribute to new behaviour.



## Clean up your mirror and get going!

It's during the global expansion, I started observing myself. I created a timeline of my inward journey. It wasn't easy, I often felt restless and impatient. There were days when I even thought of giving up. But then I stood in front of the mirror, cleaned it up and stared at the reflection. That's when I realised that I can't give up when I've come this far. The journey inward is going to be narrow and slippery, full of existing beliefs. But when we continue on it, it leads us to the path of true progress.





My unlearning journey took a major turn when my friend, **Ilay Cooper** re-emphasized about the blessings of having a girl child. Once my wife, Sulochana told me that people are looking down upon her because of having three girl children.

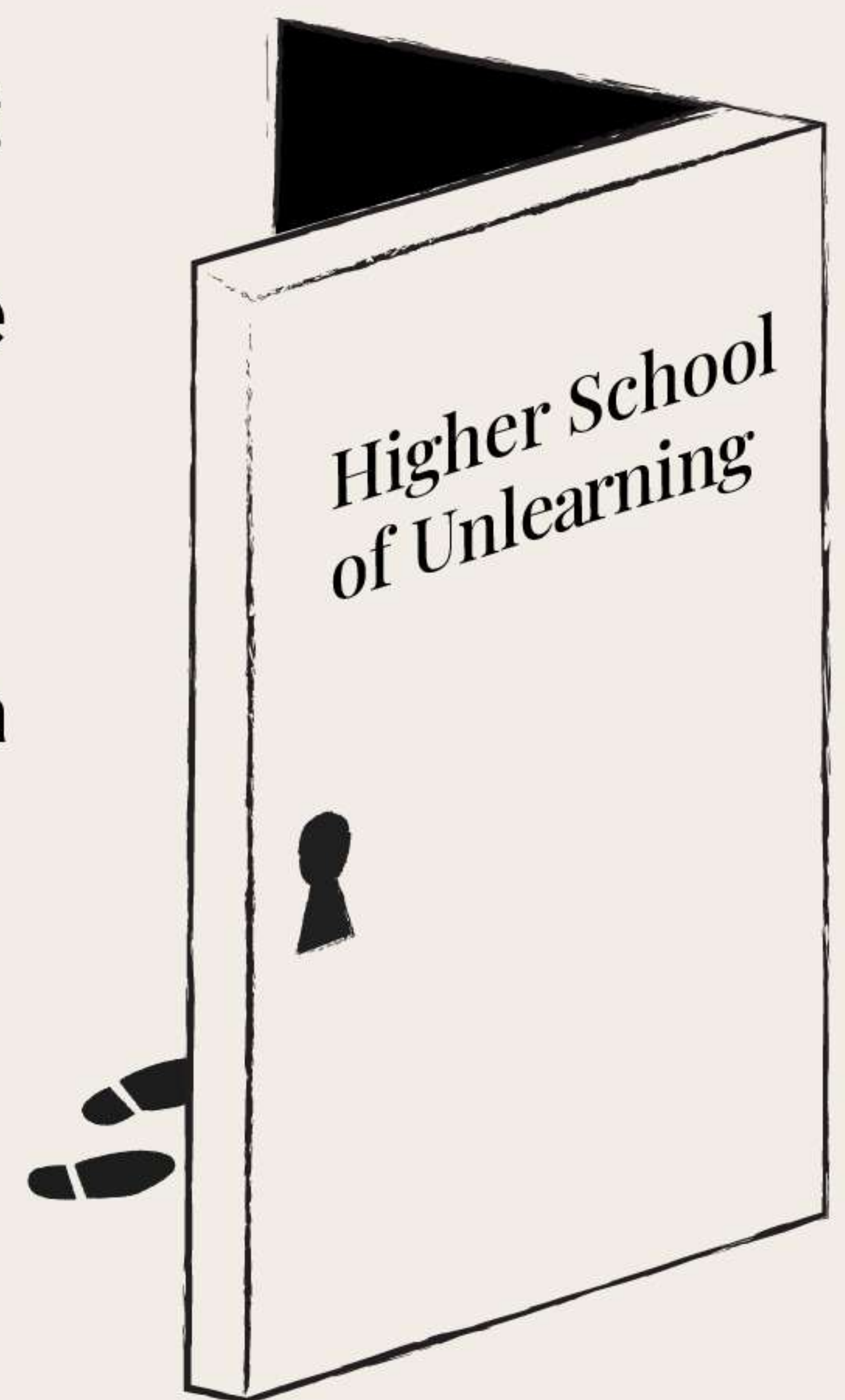
This had put me in a dilemma because I never understood what is the problem in having a girl child. I went to my friend Ilay for advice. He made me realise that our society puts the girls down, and favor boys which results in girls not getting a fair chance. So I decided to give all my daughters and sons the share of respect they deserve and to treat them all alike.

We sent our daughters to study abroad, and so our sons. It wasn't easy to convince everyone around us, but now when I reflect, the daughters have made the Jaipur Rugs brand what it is today, and I can't be more proud of them.

# Journey and Practise

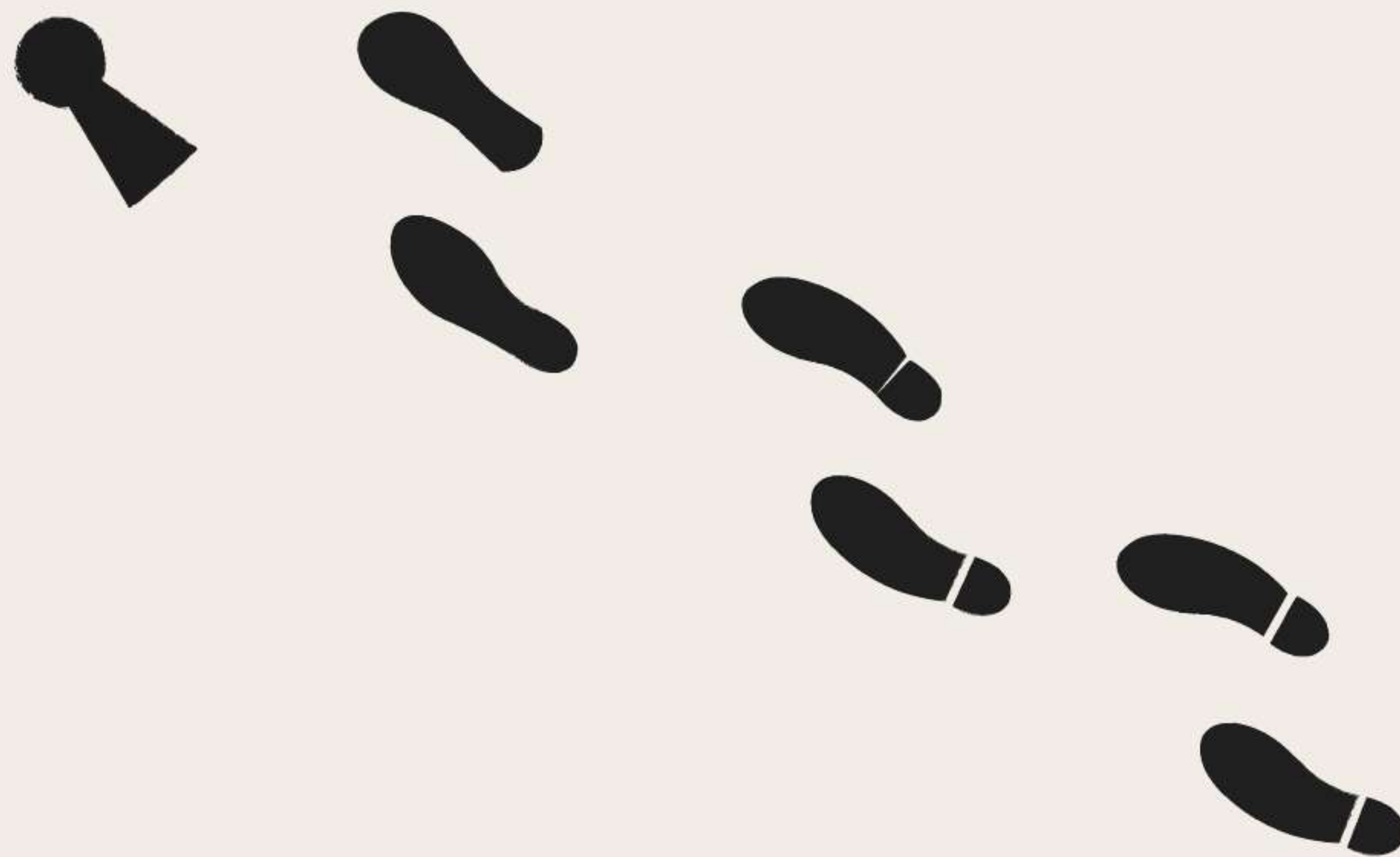
Learning, unlearning and relearning is a continuous process and it brings a child like innocence which is important for business to flourish in an organic manner.

When my five children joined the business, it started growing like a wildfire. To support the rapid growth of the business I had to hire experienced and educated professionals. But they put me upside down. I learnt that knowledge is power but too much knowledge and knowledge gained without practice develops ego. Practitioners sometimes get the skills without having the knowledge. To break the ego of the professionals, I started a learning initiative which we named as 'Higher School of Unlearning'.



We made the professional work with our older uneducated managers in different departments to develop a deep understanding of the business process. I also took the challenge to teach them the basic fundamentals to manage the business and people like ours, which they never learnt in their school and college. This helped to develop a culture of shared wisdom and benefited the business at large.

Unlearning is neither a natural skill nor is it an easy one to acquire. It makes one uncomfortable in their shoe but if the size doesn't fit then we should buy a new one rather than not wearing a shoe altogether. Likewise unlearning doesn't contradict once old beliefs rather it modifies once perception and understanding. It is necessary to remove from the once system what's unhelpful and useless.



# Unlearning is the future

With all this said, there comes a question

## **WHY ARE WE UNLEARNING?**

Are we unlearning to win some competition or race? Are we unlearning to attain success? If so, then is unlearning a formula for success which many were looking for?

If I had to put it, I would say unlearning is a vaccine to remove ego from the self. The ultimate goal of unlearning is to push the self into deeper levels of introspection for an increased level of awareness. So through unlearning we continue to grow in ways uncomfortable yet fulfilling like the ship that sets sail in the storm without remaining in the harbour.



Being an avid reader of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, I remember a piece in Gandhi's book 'Hind Swaraj' about the loopholes in western education then and how he had to unlearn it in order to fulfil his dharma. Gandhi highly believed in self study and not formal education. He is a classic example of unlearning and makes us realise that we have to first let go of something we thought we understood to make way for a new understanding.

So remember to let go and keep unlearning.



*Thank you*