

*Ashok a twenty-first century Gautam Buddha has produced a working manual of existence during every hour of life. Ashok does not believe in failure and frustration. It is a book of joyous existence to which the young can aspire and achieve .*

**Ram Jethmalani**

Ashok's purpose of writing this book is to make the youth more confident, by giving his own example and assuring them that it's not necessary to be born in a rich, powerful and well-connected family to succeed in life. He has tried to impress upon the students the importance of cultivating their personalities to become complete human beings, by having a balanced physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual health, so as to enable them to be an asset towards nation building and serving the cause of humanity.

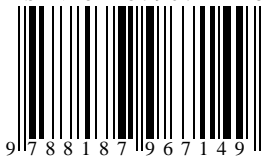
The author has dealt with many important aspects of life and the ground realities, the truth of life, to guide the next generation. The book makes interesting reading and has attempted to address all relevant issues in an informal manner that is bound to appeal the young audience. In fact the book would benefit every one since we all have our share of stress and strain in life and every event of life is an exam.

The real beauty of this book is that one has to just understand and be aware of the issues discussed and without spending any money or extra time adopt the simple tips the author has formulated to look smart and achieve maximum in a blissful manner. It is certainly not a bad bargain to have a peaceful and successful life by just spending an hour every day as per his suggestions.

**Ashok Arora**, a well-known lawyer, former secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association has done a lot of research and has practical experience of more than twenty-five years in child development, personality development and communication skills. Feeling concerned about the growing violent and suicidal tendencies and falling standard of physical and mental health of the youth world over and the stress and strain they go through, he resolved to sacrifice a lucrative law practice at the peak of his career to dedicate his life to selfless service He is in the real sense a 'monk who sold his Ferrari'! Ashok has a 25-year-old son, Kushagra and lives in New Delhi, India.

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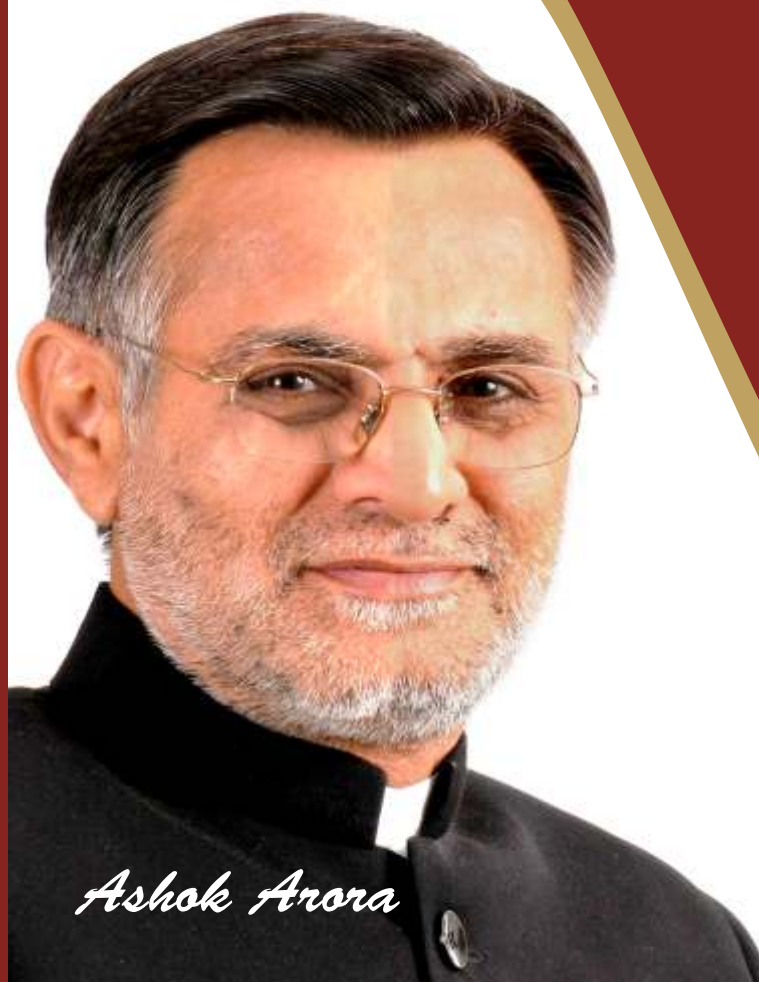


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Simple Tips for Sureshot Success

Ashok Arora

# Simple Tips *for* Sureshot Success



Ashok Arora

Simple Tips  
*for*  
Sureshot Success



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*for*  
Sureshot Success

*Ashok Arora*

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MAA TUJHE PRANAAM

## Dedication

I wish to dedicate this book to the memory of my revered mother Gyan Devi who gave me tremendous love till her last breath. My dedication is to my parents, enlightened souls and the books written by them. To my teachers in whatever form they guided me throughout my life affectionately. To my friends, and experiences in life and above all, to my dear students for their great inspiration, love and affection.

My special acknowledgment to the enlightened masters whose quotes are mentioned in this book.

# Foreword

It is rare that an author of a new book asks me to write a foreword. I am not an author of any readable books, have never produced a prize winner and literature is not my forte. So when my friend Ashok dropped by one day and announced his product and wanted me to release it after adding a foreword to it, I was quite flattered. At the same time I was a little alarmed by his insistence that I complete the job in a week. With my preoccupation with Parliament, the courts and teaching I knew it will be tough but could not say 'No'. I may be late by a couple of days but that is not inexcusable.

Now I had known years ago that Ashok was a competent and flourishing lawyer, who was much in demand. His status in the profession was fast growing and he could well dream of rising to the top one day. I am sure he did. But one day I was astonished to see in front of my eyes Ashok a monk - a twenty-first century Gautam Buddha. Somehow I had lost him during his sudden onset of renunciation, discarding the lawyer's robes and bands, entering into a new world in search of the meaning and end of life on this sorry planet. When he turned up, I saw an accomplished mature

Gautam after his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Gaya. I envied this transformation but I was not sure the change was going to last. After another long interval it was that he turned up with his book ready for publication. I have read it.

I have often wondered if Buddhism is a religion or just a form of wisdom, a system of metaphysics. The Dalai Lama is often asked this question. The compassionate saint jokes about the answer. "Poor Buddhism! Rejected by religions as an atheistic philosophy, a science of the mind; and by philosophers too as a religion; there is nowhere that Buddhism has citizens, rights. But that is its advantage. It allows Buddhism to build bridges between religions and philosophies. It is a metaphysical tradition from which a wisdom applicable in every instant and in all circumstances is derived. Buddha's teachings are like travel guides that show the way to enlightenment, to ultimate knowledge of the nature of the mind and the phenomenal world."

Ashok's personality went through a sudden change by the sight of suffering, in particular the rising rate of suicides amongst the young. In 2006 the figure for India had risen to six thousand. He cancelled his visit to Europe to attend a lawyers' conference and migrated to a village to live in the midst of young students through a summer of scorching heat and meagre conveniences of comfortable existence. He has brought knowledge to many and unlike Buddha who never wrote what he taught Ashok has produced a working manual of existence during every hour of life. The book is doubtless a compendium of useful instructions calculated to inculcate the spirit of social service along with techniques of extracting the last drop of joy from mortal life. Its dominant purpose is to prevent surrender to pessimism and paralysis.



Sir Edwin Arnold in his famous book *Light of Asia* summed up Buddha in the last stanza of his poem: “We are the voices of the wandering wind that moan for rest, But rest can never find; Just as the wind is, so is mortal life, a sigh, a sob, storm and strife.” Ashok repudiates this streak of failure and frustration.

It is a book of joyous existence to which the young can aspire and achieve but it is not a book of humour, though it extols sense of humour as a cardinal virtue. Humour is vivacious response to perception of the odd and incongruous, the stubborn individual, the kind only a robust democracy can produce. Ashok himself is one such human being blessed with a divine gift, no doubt induced by the grace of his mother. No wonder he fondly quotes the Urdu couplet:

*Mere Gunahon Ko Wo is taraha Dho leti hai  
Ma gusse main ho to woh ro deti hai.*

**(Ram Jethmalani)**

## About the Author & the Book

Imagine someone starting to read about child development even before the birth of his child; gracefully refusing the offer to become a high court judge, and giving up a lucrative law practice at the peak of his career to dedicate his life for the welfare of the student community! Mr. Ashok Arora, former secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association, is a well-known lawyer, who has done a lot of research and has practical experience of more than twenty-five years in child development, personality development and communication skills. He studied in Hindu College and Campus Law Centre, Delhi. He has been practising in the Supreme Court of India, as well as in different high courts and trial courts for the last thirty years.

Having been interviewed several times by many popular TV channels like BBC, CNN, Star, Aaj Tak, Zee News and Doordarshan, and also by journalists from prominent newspapers, Ashok is known for giving bold and wise comments on issues of public importance. Despite having achieved great success and renown in his field, he has never lost touch with his humane side and has always stood up for causes he believed in, and taken a courageous stand on many public issues.

Ashok has been deeply concerned about the growing violent and suicidal tendencies and falling standard of physical and mental health of the youth world over and the stress and strain they go through. He therefore resolved to sacrifice a lucrative law practice at the peak of his career. He is in the real sense like the 'monk who sold his Ferrari'! He has decided to dedicate his life to selfless service, especially to the cause of students. He is considered one of the best orators and motivators who inspire students to strive for excellence without putting undue stress on themselves.

Ashok's purpose of writing this book is to share his experiences of life; inculcating the moral values in a playful manner. His idea is to make the youth more confident, by assuring them that many people like him have succeeded in making a prosperous career for themselves, despite not having been born with a golden spoon. He wishes to convey that it's not necessary to be born in a rich, powerful and well-connected family to succeed in life. He himself was a below average student, studied in a Hindi medium school, belonged to a middle-class family and did not have any godfather to help him build up his law practice. Yet he succeeded, in spite of having to compete with people from affluent backgrounds. It was a long journey, but he realised that hard work, sincerity and honesty never go unnoticed in the long run, and ultimately it is our performance that matters.

Through this book the author has tried to impress upon the students the importance of cultivating their personalities to become complete human beings, so that they can enjoy life and achieve success. His opinion is that success in exams can only be ensured if students become aware of the importance of developing a complete personality and have a balanced physical, mental,

intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual health, so as to enable them to be an asset towards nation building and serving the cause of humanity.

*Live your life with simplicity, honesty, hard work, compassion and discipline:* the author firmly believes that everybody can fulfill his or her dreams with his simple tips for success, and this is what he wants to share with his readers in the course of this book. He believes that real success and failure are measured by assessing how we act or react while dealing with different aspects of life, different situations and relationships in our day-to-day activities. Exams and career are just two aspects of life, not the complete life. The author has dealt with many important aspects of life that determine our success and failure. It is very important to understand the ground realities, the truth of life; as it is to understand the true meaning of education.

Many people, who have interacted with Ashok, are of the opinion, that he is a rare mixture of wisdom, compassion and courage. He has refused to compromise with his conscience on many issues and hence has become a *role model* and great motivator for the next generation. His bold and wise criticism of the trial judge who acquitted the accused persons in the Jessica Lal murder case ignited a nationwide debate, and more than ninety-eight per cent of the citizens agreed with his views. In fact, the two-judge bench of the Delhi High Court later confirmed his stand. The acquittal was set aside and the accused were convicted.

He has worked with dedication and sincerity to become one of the most successful lawyers in the country. He has represented many prominent companies and business groups like the Tatas,

Birlas, Reliance, American Express Bank, Motorola, Apollo and the Hindujas. His clients also include union ministers, governors and chief ministers. He has been on the panel of the British high commission, the American, German and several other embassies. He cross-examined the famous lawyer Ram Jethmalani at such length that it continued for umpteen number of hearings. He created a history of sorts when he successfully argued for the summoning of a former prime minister of the country.

Ashok has written many bold articles criticising various judgments passed by the honourable Supreme Court. The most important of these, was his criticism of the verdict delivered by the constitution bench judgment, wherein the Supreme Court, while interpreting article 105(2) of the Constitution of India, wrongly held that members of parliament were immune from prosecution, even if they had taken bribes for raising questions or casting votes in parliament. He even criticised his own colleagues when they went on strike. He maintained that the strike was unfortunate and anti-litigant.

When he was a young lawyer just beginning his career, Ashok displayed signs of his deep social commitment. He observed an indefinite hunger strike in support of the process of bifurcation of courts in order to provide justice at the doorstep for litigants. After eighty hours of fasting, a full court consisting of twenty-five judges of the Delhi High Court was compelled to start process of implementation of bifurcation of courts.

In fact, even before he was registered as a lawyer after graduating from Campus Law Centre in 1979, Ashok took a courageous stand opposing many legal luminaries of the country who were advising the then President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy not to act upon the

advice given by the then Prime Minister Charan Singh to dissolve the parliament. As a fresh law graduate, he boldly advised the President to ignore the opinion of these legal luminaries and go ahead with the dissolution of the House, and this is what exactly happened.

Ashok has always advocated the abolition of the death sentence and believes that life and death should only be in God's hands. He successfully argued, without charging a single penny, in the Supreme Court for commuting of the death sentence of a young man where the Delhi High Court had confirmed the death sentence awarded to him by the trial court.

Despite being occupied with his important engagements, he has never lost sight of his commitment to common people: he helped to ensure the release of more than one thousand poor prisoners who had been languishing in jail for petty offences. He has been boldly declaring all along that the poor are discriminated against in our present legal system.

Ashok is a fine orator, having delivered more than a few hundred lectures on different topics like law, public affairs and motivation for the benefit of judges, senior police officers, principals, teachers, company secretaries, students, NGOs, foreign delegates and professionals from various fields. He has the special quality of being able to connect instantly with his audience, whether it is children, judges, police officers or college students. A melodious song or a couplet nicely mixed up in his speech or lecture is always the 'icing on the cake'.

So what prompted such an eminent lawyer to give up a flourishing practice and devote himself to the selfless service of humanity?

The turning point came during the court's summer vacation in May 2005. Mr. Ashok Arora was scheduled to attend two international conferences in Scotland and France with lawyers and judges from all over the world. All arrangements like ticketing, hotel booking, visa and payment of the conference delegate fee had been made. It so happened that he went to meet some less privileged children who were being looked after by a voluntary organisation. While he was on his visit, an enlightened soul suggested that instead of going abroad to attend a lawyers' conference, it would have been better if he had spent some time with those children, teaching them and playing with them. Being extremely fond of children, Ashok said, without batting an eyelid, "All right, I will not go on my foreign trip. I shall spend my summer vacation with these children."

This spontaneous gesture changed the course of his life. Ashok spent the entire summer vacation in the company of those lovely children, aged between three and fourteen, playing and singing with them. Instead of enjoying a vacation at an exotic place, he spent his days in the scorching heat of a village where there was no electricity. However, he really enjoyed the time he spent with those children. Within a couple of days they had warmed to him. He trained them to recite poems and sing devotional songs, patriotic songs or whatever songs they liked. After a few days their confidence grew so much that they began looking forward to the open session every evening, and those children who were earlier shy were now keen to participate.

This experience completely transformed Ashok's life. He resolved to refuse the offer to become a high court judge and give up his lucrative law practice to dedicate his life to the welfare of the student community.

It is hoped that this wonderful gesture of sacrificing a lucrative career to guide the next generation, so that they achieve great success by just following the simple tips mentioned in his book, will meet with great success. The book makes interesting reading and Ashok has attempted to address all relevant issues in an informal manner that is bound to appeal to his young audience

The real beauty of this book is that without spending any money or extra time, you can adopt the simple programme the author has formulated to look smart, enjoy to the maximum and score maximum. You just have to understand and be aware of the issues discussed by him. It is not a bad bargain to have a peaceful and successful life by just spending an hour every day as per his suggestions. After a couple of months you won't have to spend even an hour if you constantly feel aware of the issues discussed by him!

**- Publisher**





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*“Waves are inspiring not because they rise and fall but because each time they fall they never fail to rise again.”*

## Introduction

Let us be friends first. Life has been musical and blissful for me. I have received much love and affection from society, particularly from students of all ages. I feel indebted to life and especially to the student community, and therefore thought of sharing my views with you to do my bit for the younger generation. I want to share with you my experiences over the last few decades as a professional, parent and teacher, in order to suggest to you some simple formulae on how to look smart, enjoy life and achieve your goals with absolute ease and no expense. After reading this book, if you find it has changed your life in any way, I will consider my effort to have been worthwhile.

Lawyers normally do not make confessions, but I wish to make one—I have made more than my share of mistakes in life. At the same time I am glad to say that neither any mistake nor any tragedy ever stopped me from rising again. I learnt from my mistakes, and the journey therefore has been so wonderful that I felt the need to share it with you. My love for children and the love I have received from them reinforces my belief that ‘god manifests in children’.

I would be happy if you approached this book as a conversation with a friend rather than as a lecture. I would also appreciate if you shared with me through e-mail or telephone your views on any topic, without any hesitation whatsoever. I sincerely feel that life is teaching us every moment and it is highly probable that your perception or idea or thought might be better than mine, since after all we are all fellow travelers on this wonderful journey. I am convinced that wisdom is not an automatic byproduct of age. You must have seen many times that an elderly person may commit a blunder over a simplest of issues in life and a youngster may come up with a brilliant idea.

Kindly add me to the list of your true friends who would always be available to you whenever you need him. I sincerely feel that 'a relationship shines by shaking hands in the best times but it blossoms by holding hands firmly in critical situations'.

A friend in need is a friend indeed. Let me be your friend in need. You may contact me at [jeevanutsav2310@gmail.com](mailto:jeevanutsav2310@gmail.com) or on my telephone no. 011-23389095 any time between 2pm and 8pm.

Your ideas and suggestions would also help me in serving your fellow students better with new inputs from you.

Let me share with you a story on the bond of friendship:

Two soldiers who were great friends were caught in an ambush. As luck would have it, one was shot and badly injured. He called for help and his dear friend who was nearby, prepared to go to him. However, his senior said there was great danger and strategically no one should go near him. The friend therefore abandoned the idea but his soul was not at rest since his dear friend was in need of help.

After a while the injured friend called again and this time without waiting for the senior's approval, this friend went out to help him. After a while, he dragged his friend's dead body back to the camp. The senior remarked, "Look, I had told you there was no need to go." The friend replied, "Sir, there was great need, in fact. When I reached my friend, he was still alive and was very happy to see me. He said, 'I was sure you would come'. So now I am at peace because I could live up to my friend's faith and expectation."

This is the importance of a friend. That is why, dear friends, I wish to become your friend before we start this conversation.

My experience is that most students are leading normal lives and they are quite capable of handling the stress and pressure of exams and career. Few are doing exceptionally well but few are not able to handle the pressure of academics. In my opinion, this is either because they are not living a disciplined life or because they are not getting proper guidance.

On the other hand, I have known many young students who are so brilliant in their ideas and wisdom that you cannot help feeling proud of them. I really feel thrilled when I meet some students who are doing well in every field, be it studies, sports, debates, dramatics, singing, social work and what not. In the last forty years, I have had the occasion to meet many students who could make the universe a better place to live. Such wise and mature students can really be friends, philosophers and guides for many people much senior to them.

By profession I am a lawyer but I have been a parent and a teacher for about twenty-five years, so I can say with confidence that the

society cannot put the entire blame on the students who are not able to lead a normal life or those who are not able to handle the stress and strain of academic life. They need some guidance and society should take the responsibility of providing them with perfect health and the optimum environment to develop into complete human beings.

Life is not only about scoring high marks. There is much more to life than a good report card. Unless we have perfect health, which includes our physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health, we won't be able to deal with the world in a perfect manner. Our enjoyment and success depend more on our ability to deal with the world and the problems of life. That is why an enlightened soul said it beautifully,

*Dhoop mein niklo, ghataon mein naha kar dekho  
Zindagi kya hai, kitabon ko hata kar dekho.*

This couplet means, 'Come out in the sun, bathe in the clouds and see the world for yourself. To know the reality of life, look beyond your books'. Once we develop the ideal state of health and the right attitude, success would be assured.

We all know that world over, some students are not able to maintain their physical and mental health from quite an early age. Some students are not physically as strong and fit as they ought to be, which affects their mental health and their performance in examinations. The other day I read about a twelve-year-old student developing a heart problem. Many students suffer from lack of concentration and need psychological treatment very early in life. We have also been reading that incidents of violence among young children are increasing day by day. We feel sad when we read about some young

student committing suicide because of poor performance or lack of preparation for exams. Don't you feel we are all to take responsibility for this? It means no one told those innocent students the real meaning of life and the real purpose of examinations. Those lovely children had never been told that there is life beyond examinations. They had never been told the real meaning of success and failure.

Failure and success are part of everyone's life. No one born on this earth could ever claim that he never failed in life one time or the other. Success and failure are relative terms. If the world over, everyone including the presidents, prime ministers, judges, parents, teachers and qualified professionals can commit errors and fail some time or the other, how can we expect anything different from teenaged boys and girls? We should allow them to commit errors and learn from their mistakes. Many homes are curfew-bound areas when a child is appearing for an exam. The atmosphere at home is tense. No one can visit those homes and no one is leading a normal life. Students are not taught to relax and work hard at the same time. They are not told that unless they have a relaxed mind, unless they know the purpose and importance of exams they can't do well. Moreover, they can't understand the true meaning of life, success and failure.

I wish to share with you the story of my dear friend named Ravi. He comes from a humble background and had always been an average student. He studied in a Hindi-medium school. He committed more than his share of mistakes, and even failed once in the ninth standard. He did not have a godfather (as the term is used for the promoter of one's career) but he competed with the best in his field as a lawyer and as a responsible citizen. He was twice elected CEO, the chief executive officer of a prestigious institute of



the country. He represented many ministers, top people and top industrial houses of the world in several very important matters adjudicated in the recent history of independent India. He has already delivered more than a few hundred lectures for the benefit of judges, principals, teachers, senior police officers, and different professionals like lawyers, teachers, doctors, company secretaries, students and foreign delegates. He is appreciated as one of the best orators. In fact, there are several other people I know who, despite having humble origins, have done extremely well for themselves in their respective fields.

My idea of telling you all this is to convince you that if average students like my friend Ravi and so many others could succeed, it means each of you can succeed. We should throw this perception out of our minds that only people born with 'golden spoons' or from rich or well-connected families can reach the top. On the contrary, I assure you that people born with golden spoons will seek your company and advice once you have understood the truth of life, as reflected in different aspects of life mentioned in this book. You are bound to succeed in whatever you do if you have a relaxed mind, if you have resolved to be happy, if you have strong will power and if you simply follow the easy formulae mentioned in this book to look smart, enjoy life and to score maximum. Moreover, each of you is bound to cultivate a complete personality and attain the best of physical, mental, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual health, which is the most important factor to achieve great success in life.

Do remember that sky is the limit and there is always a place at the top for smart students like you.

Since I am a lawyer by profession, so by force of habit I have titled

many chapters like the title of a case in the court. I wish that you would enjoy and understand the logic behind that.

I have discussed many important aspects which are relevant for your joy and success. You don't have to take out any extra time to develop any of those qualities. Through the simple formulae mentioned, just understand the truth contained in these chapters, and be aware of it to be a winner all your life.

Wishing you all the very best, I would like to conclude this chapter with a quote: "The best things in life are free, like songs to sing, dreams to pursue, love to share and friends to cherish."

With lots of love,

Ashok\*

*\*Sir is very formal, so you can call me 'Ashok uncle' or 'dost' or 'friend', whatever you like.*



*“Success is  
measured by  
the number of  
hours you smile  
in a day.”*

# 1

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## Look Nice - Enjoy Maximum - Score Maximum

Having had the privilege of interacting with students for more than forty years, I know for certain that every student wants to *look smart*, enjoy life and do well academically. To achieve these goals, I have very simple suggestions, which everyone can easily practise without spending any extra money or time.

Let's first talk of looking nice. Why does it happen that some people with simple clothes and hairstyles look nice while some people despite wearing the best of brands do not look that impressive? The answer is very simple: *those who are relaxed and balanced in their approach towards life would always look calm and nice.*

When we talk of enjoying life, what do we understand by it? Enjoyment is when you feel good about every activity of life, like when you say, "I enjoyed the movie, I enjoyed the match, I enjoyed the play, I enjoyed going there, I enjoyed meeting him, I enjoyed attending that class, I enjoyed helping my mother and so on." We understand that anything that gives us happiness is enjoyment. So

## 2 Simple Tips for Sureshot Success

what should we do to enjoy life to the maximum? It is very simple. If we enjoy all or most of the activities we perform every day, we shall be enjoying life to the maximum.

You must have great fun in life. As one enlightened soul said,  
*Zindagi zinda dili ka naam hai,  
Murda dil kya khaak jiya karte hein.*

In other words, life is meaningful only for those who celebrate it with zest and fervour; those who have no spirit and fire in them are dead and dull. That should be the spirit, my dear friends! Live life to the fullest and enjoy every minute.

Entertain yourself by whatever positive way you like, be it watching a movie, listening to music, attending a concert, watching a play, watching or playing some sport or even reciting some poetry. Many times it so happens that while playing a game we are thinking of exams and we are thinking of a game or a movie while studying for exams. This is not enjoyment, but merely distraction. We must put our hundred per cent in whatever we do, whether playing a game or studying.

### **Stress-busting activities**

You must arrange picnics and get-togethers with your family and friends, or participate in workshops, debates, singing competitions or any sport. **These activities are not only stress busters, but they also enhance your knowledge of the world, give you insights into human nature and help your body and mind to relax completely. It does not cost much to arrange a picnic or a sports meet or group discussion. Through these activities, programmes or competitions you get to know other people, their habits, their culture and their ideas. It all**

adds to your growth as a person and **boosts your confidence level.** **Touring and seeing new places is always considered an enjoyable** way to enhance one's education. You learn so many things and get to know so much while travelling and while interacting with different groups and people from various institutions and backgrounds.

### **The importance of planning**

If we wish to go on a holiday together to a particular hill station, would it be sufficient to resolve that we are to go there and then we meet on the fixed day and proceed to our destination? Don't you feel it would be a major disaster if we just met on the appointed day without making any preparation? **Please appreciate that our holiday would be enjoyable *only* if we plan everything. We would have to discuss what is the best route to reach there; who would get the tickets booked; where would we stay there; who would get the room bookings done; for how many days will we stay; what is the temperature there and what type of clothing shall we need; what type of food can we get there and what do we need to carry with us.** So you see, even for a short holiday we have to plan a few things if we wish to enjoy it to the fullest.

Now if we wish to enjoy ourselves and do well in academics, is it not necessary to plan a bit in that direction? We do not need to plan too much, but if we just keep a few simple things in mind, we can be assured of a wonderful life ahead.

### **Enjoying responsibly**

At this point, I wish to say that enjoyment does not mean going haywire and being irresponsible in your actions. Every other day we read stories about some student killing himself and/or some **pedestrian/s killed in a road accident due to rash or drunken driving.**

There was once the news of a young man, who while driving his car under the influence of drinks, ran over about twelve people on the street. **Four of them died and others were seriously injured. Imagine the sole breadwinner of a family being killed or someone's loving son or daughter killed because of some youngster's rashness. Do you** think the family of the person who died can ever be compensated for this irreparable loss? Apart from the financial hardship caused to that family, the vacuum created by the loss of the loved one is very difficult to fill. Now who should take the responsibility for such grave and insensitive blunders?

Recently one young boy was convicted to five years imprisonment for killing four persons while driving in rash and negligent manner. Honourable Justice **Kailash Gambhir (High Court of Delhi) rightly observed while dismissing his application for bail that 'these boys driving rashly were moving like human bombs'**. Imagine also the plight of the parents of such young boys who are languishing in jail because of their rash acts.

But the problem is, **unless you stop for a while, do some introspection of your activities and analyse how crazy behaviour such as driving** rashly can be so painful to a family, you can't even feel the necessity to avoid such incidents or tell your friends, who are getting kicks out of rash driving, to avoid those stupidities. I don't say that you shouldn't have fun in life, but if your fun kills someone or ruins a family, would you ever be able to face your conscience? And wouldn't that also disturb your parents' peace of mind? They would have to go through the stigma of going to the police station and courts because of your carelessness.

If you have been driving without a licence, your parents may have

to spend their lifetime's earnings in order to pay compensation. They may even have to go to jail in certain circumstances, because of your irresponsible acts. So you have to sit back and resolve, once and for all, not to indulge in any activity, which may embarrass or put your own parents in any trouble. Enjoy life in a way that it does not disturb anyone, let alone kill anyone!

### **Be prepared**

It is a known fact that you can enjoy a sport or a movie only if you are done with your studies. It is very important to finish your studies well in advance for exams and not leave anything for the last minute. This is the sure formula to enjoy maximum.

Here is an interesting story I'd like to share with you about one of my very special friends.

Vinay belongs to a humble family. While studying in the tenth standard, he even took up some part-time jobs to supplement his family's meagre income. As luck would have it, since he was living in some unauthorized colony, his house was demolished just two days prior to his board exams. And Vinay was virtually on the roads just two days before his final exams! His employer was kind enough to permit him to stay at his place during the exams. In spite of this difficult situation, Vinay displayed exceptional mental courage and determination and appeared for his exams, and got distinction in four out of five subjects! What do you think led to Vinay's success? It was the simple fact that he had a relaxed mind and was fully prepared much in advance.

If you have planned and finished your studies well in advance, you certainly deserve to enjoy some time indulging in your favourite



hobby even during exams. This is possible only if you plan well and act accordingly. And believe me, it is very easy too. You only need to be mindful and aware of your time-table and follow it strictly.

**Make your plans carefully, set out your priorities clearly and work** according to your predetermined schedule. This will leave you with sufficient time for recreation like watching a movie or a play or playing your favourite sport even during exams. So go ahead and enjoy life!

\* \* \*

*“Gold shines only  
after burning in the  
furnace and diamond  
shines only after  
intense friction.”*

## 2

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# Discipline vs Exam

### **Why only one Sachin/Ronaldinho?**

Have you ever wondered why there is only one Sachin Tendulkar, despite the fact that millions of children play cricket with a dream to represent India some day? Why is chess player Vishwanathan Anand a world champion and a class apart? Why has Roger Federer continued to be the world number one tennis player for so many years, while millions of players throughout the world, having the best of the facilities, have not been able to match him? Why is Ronaldinho the classiest football player in the world?

The answer is simple. All these eminent players perform with a relaxed mind, and are focussed. They have put their heart and soul into their obsession. All of them have lived a disciplined life characterised by hard work and sincerity. They analyse their mistakes and work hard to correct them to become better players. They do not waste time in doing useless things. They enjoy life in a disciplined manner. They learn from the experiences of achievers in their respective fields. And most importantly, they are calm and focussed when they practise or perform.

So those of you who wish to emulate Sachin, Vishwanathan Anand, Roger Federer, Ronaldinho or any achiever you admire, remember that all you need is a *relaxed mind, complete focus all the time and strict discipline*. If you have a relaxed mind, and are calm and focussed, you are most likely to succeed.

### **No short-cuts**

But there is no short-cut to success. You have to resolve to make a success of your life. If you wish whole-heartedly to be successful, then you should also be willing to do all that is necessary to achieve your goal. Remember, there is no substitute for hard work, dedication and honesty. You have to evolve a disciplined and focussed approach if you wish to reach heights. But please remember, this relaxed mind and calmness would never come on a platter. No one got it like that. Those who reached heights in their respective fields got it with lots of discipline, hard work, dedication and honesty.

Just think for a minute, if Ronaldinho was not following the strict training schedule and diet advised by his coach and other great players, could he have become a world-class player? If you want to achieve heights in any particular area of life, you have to act accordingly. You have to be determined to work hard with sincerity and total discipline to become something special.

If you want to score good marks as well as enjoy life, you have to follow a routine. If you just want to be a run-of-the-mill or an ordinary performer, then, of course, no discipline is required.

You have to make a chart of what to do and what not to. You have to prepare a timetable of when to do what and how to do everything with great discipline. Without self-discipline, nothing can

be achieved. One thing we must realise is that those who are not disciplined not only fail to score good marks; they can't even enjoy life in the real sense. You can enjoy a movie or a match only if you have finished your study routine.

If you want to be the Ronaldinho of football, you have to act accordingly. You can't sleep at home or watch a useless movie to become a great player. You have to get up early in the morning, run a few miles, do all the required physical exercises and follow a strict diet to become great player. Similarly, if you want to score good marks and enjoy life you have to understand your subjects and finish your course well in advance before you can enjoy a good movie.

Only those who finish their studies well in advance can enjoy life in the real sense. In fact you must have noticed that those who top in studies can appreciate a movie or a match more than those who are careless about their studies. Many times they would be able to tell you some finer aspect or important thing in a movie or a play, which others might have missed altogether. The reason is that *our mental alertness improves if we are disciplined and focussed*.

So my dear readers, to enjoy life to the maximum and to score maximum marks in an exam, just resolve to be disciplined and work according to a timetable. You should be disciplined in your eating habits and thinking habits to excel in life. If you wish to be perfect in all aspects of life discussed in this book, you have to work on all those areas of life – which is easily achieved in a relaxed manner, provided you are disciplined.

Wish you all work as disciplined soldiers to conquer higher and higher peaks of life!

*“Love yourself  
to love life.”*

# 3

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## Love Yourself

Sometimes the simplest of truths stares us in the face, and we don't see it. One such basic truth is that to achieve anything worthwhile in life, it is very important to love yourself. When you love yourself, it shows: you look good, you have a glow on your face, you enjoy life and you find it easy to be a success in whatever you do.

Are you wondering how that happens? It is really very simple: if you love yourself you would feel confident. And unless you love yourself how can you love others?

Think of your positive qualities, *count your blessings* and feel happy. Keep in mind that no one was ever born perfect or can be perfect in all aspects of life. Everyone, irrespective of his status or position in life, be it the president, prime minister, judge, government official, professional, teacher, parent and even a spiritual master, has some positive qualities and his share of weaknesses. So to start with, enjoy your positive points, and have the strength to love yourself. It may be your singing or dancing ability, your patience, your calmness, your

voice, your sense of humour, your compassion, your handwriting, your sporting skill or your manners. Anything under the sun that brings a smile to your face or makes you feel good inside, is a quality to cherish and love in yourself.

There is a story I would like to share with you: Two friends, Kala and Rajmangal, met after a couple of years on a ship while going on a cruise. Kala prided himself on his intelligence and learning and tried to make his friend feel inferior by showing off his knowledge. Here's how the conversation went:

Kala asked, "Have you studied geology?"

"What is that?" asked Rajmangal.

"You don't know? It is the science of the earth," replied Kala with a smirk.

"No, I'm afraid I have never studied that."

"Then you have wasted a quarter of your life," declared Kala. "Have you studied oceanography?" he continued.

"No, what is that?" asked his puzzled friend.

Kala shook his head in disbelief and said in the tone of a person speaking to an ignorant child, "Oceanography, my dear friend, is the science of the sea."

"Oh, I have never studied that either," replied Rajmangal.

"My God!" exclaimed Kala. "You have wasted half your life. Have you studied meteorology?"

"Meteorology? And what is that?" enquired Rajmangal with an innocent smile.

“It is the study of the climate, the weather.”

“Is that so? I’m sorry, but I have never studied that,” said Rajmangal.

“Humph!” snorted his friend. “Honestly, you have wasted three quarters of your life.”

After some time Rajmangal asked his learned friend, “Do you know swimology?”

“Swimology? Now what is that?” It was Kala’s turn to ask in puzzlement.

Rajmangal replied, “It is the art of swimming.”

“Swimming!” exclaimed Kala. “Who has the time to learn all that useless stuff? I have so many important things to occupy my brain with,” he said scornfully.

“I’m sure you do,” answered Rajmangal. “But I think you need to know that the ship has struck a rock and is sinking. I may have wasted three-quarters of my life by not learning as much as you have, but I certainly can swim and save myself. But you, my friend, are going to lose your entire life because you have not studied swimology.”

So the moral of the story is that you should love yourself for what you know and should never ridicule others for what they have not learnt.

In order to love yourself it is also very important to *spend some time with yourself*. Try to *develop some hobby* or pursue some recreational activity that interests you – be it swimming, music, playing some game, listening to or reciting some nice poetry – anything which connects you with your soul, which makes your

heart happy, which makes you feel light and which gives you some opportunity to be with yourself alone in order to love yourself. Try to *spend some time alone*, develop a habit to go alone to different places for recreation, like watching a theatre, art gallery, musical concert or dance performance.

Let me tell you about an incident in my life. On one of my visits to Indore (in Madhya Pradesh, India) I happened to meet a masseur in a hotel. He told me he was earning just about two thousand rupees a month and had a wife and a young child to support; but he was at peace and very content with life. He told me that once he was walking down the road and saw a man selling parrots. He had ten parrots locked in separate cages and was selling them for fifteen rupees each. This masseur had only one hundred and twenty rupees in his pocket. He bargained with the parrot seller and bought all ten for the amount he had with him. After buying them, he freed the parrots one by one. He told me that he enjoyed this action so much that it has given him a lifetime of bliss. Even today he feels warm and happy inside every time he thinks of it.

The moral of the story is that you should **always look for such wonderful opportunities, which would give you happiness** throughout your life; even the thought of which would relax your mind. It is important to do such **good deeds to love yourself** and to prepare yourself for the life ahead.

### **Never condemn yourself**

When you take stock of yourself, focus on the areas where you need to improve, but never condemn yourself. As we have discussed earlier, everyone, **irrespective of his/her status, has committed**



errors some time or the other. When you review yourself over the weekend, try to pinpoint the mistakes you may have made, and work out how to rectify them or avoid committing them again, but never condemn yourself.

I have seen many people being **unduly harsh on themselves after committing some error. This is an extremely negative reaction and can have serious adverse effects on their mental and spiritual growth** as well as on their personalities. You should just try to improve and not commit the mistake again.

### **Don't be a bore**

There is a difference between loving yourself **and being full of self-love. While** it is important for you to be aware of your positive qualities, you **need not boast about your achievements** or abilities. No one except your very dear ones would be interested in hearing about your impressive deeds. In fact, **humility is also a quality that should be cultivated: it is better that other people talk about the good things that you do or the wonderful person you are, rather than forcing them to hear you blow your own trumpet.**

At the same time, you should be **patient and willing to hear others when they talk of their achievements.** Nothing satisfies a person more than having an **attentive friend to listen to his achievements.** Often we are placed in an unavoidable situation when we are forced to hear someone boring us with his or her life story. You should not have an ego, **but should satisfy others' egos.** This would make you more lovable and would relax your mind.

However the rider here is that you should not waste too much time listening to the talks of such people. Just be a calm and patient

listener when you happen to be in such a situation. But do not make any effort to meet or encourage such people.

### **Laughter is the best medicine**

We all know that laughter is the best medicine, but how many times in a day do we really laugh? People **have forgotten how to laugh and that is why comedy shows on television are so popular today: we need external stimulation to make us laugh because we have lost the art of finding something humorous in the situations around us.**

**Mahatma Gandhi once said, "A man is not properly dressed if he is not wearing a smile on his face."**

We must **make a conscious effort to wear a gentle smile all the time. Some enlightened soul has stressed the importance of smile, saying it beautifully, "Fake it till you make it." You should make it a habit to laugh every day for a few minutes, be it in a park or a garden, during your morning walk in a group or even in your own room or in your bathroom. It relaxes your face muscles and is very good for health. It would also keep your spirits high. A smiling face is always a better performer in all spheres of life, be it studies, exams, sports, or music.**

**So keep smiling and never miss any opportunity to have a hearty laugh.**

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*“Success is possible only when your health is perfect.”*

# 4

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## Health vs Exams

‘Health is wealth’ is a golden rule because good health is the foundation of good personality. The choice between being healthy and unhealthy is a choice between freedom and dependence. If you have a slight headache, you don’t feel like doing anything and wish to relax. You tend to postpone even the simplest of work.

All achievers in their respective fields have very good health. They can not afford to fall sick. How many times have you heard or read that Sachin Tendulkar or Vishwanathan Anand or Roger Federer or Tiger Woods or Ronaldinho has missed a game because of ill health? Very seldom will you see them skipping a game because of bad health (we are not talking of sports injuries). It is really not possible to reach heights with bad health. But then it is also true that good or perfect health would not come on a platter.

### **The key to good health**

You must take care of your eating, drinking, thinking and sleeping habits, physical exercise and your breathing habits. You should also take care of **your attitude towards life, your day-to-day stress**

management and relaxation habits to achieve perfect health. It is said that we must practise what we preach. Let me assure you, that having practised for the last thirty years what I am preaching now and having enjoyed the benefits of fitness at this age, I feel I am entitled to advise you, to take very good care of your health.

It is the quickest and most certain route to **long-lasting success**. Good health makes you feel good, look good and act with confidence. You will find that in no time, success will be knocking at your door.

It is easy once you **develop a strong will-power**. You have to try **and do what you like, which would make you fit, keep you happy, make you an asset and not a dependent**. What happens if you are **not keeping good health? You would request your brother or sister or a friend to pick you up and drop you off**. This person acts as an **asset**. So your choice is to **become an asset and achieve freedom or become dependent upon others because you are not fit**.

I may seem a bit harsh here, but my desire is to improve your physical and mental health and engrave on your mind that there is no substitute for good health. This certainly does not mean that those who fall sick should not be taken care of. Rather, if you are able to serve anyone indisposed or unwell, that should be considered a great privilege. But if the indisposition is self-inflicted, because of your own carelessness, then in that case you should resolve not to become dependent because of your own fault. If despite taking good care of your health you are unwell, because of reasons not in your control, you should not feel guilty.

### **Be your own doctor**

**Check your weight regularly, test your flexibility and look out for**

any unusual symptoms in your fitness level. If you notice symptoms such as constipation, tiredness, stiffness or sudden weight gain, then you must get yourself checked by a doctor, but if there is no such problem, you are likely to be fit and fine.

### **Food habits**

Research has shown that those who have healthy breakfast are more attentive in their classrooms or offices. So first and foremost comes your diet. Our body tells us what suits it and what doesn't. If you feel that after eating some particular food or certain quantity of some food you do not feel good or energetic, you should avoid that food. Some people do not feel comfortable after having fried food, so they should avoid that.

You must have noticed quite often that whenever your stomach is full to the capacity or you have overeaten, you feel sluggish and do not feel like studying or doing anything that requires attention or energy.

If you feel heavy after having a particular number of chapattis or bread, you should restrict yourself to the comfortable quantity. The rule of thumb is that you should *never fill your stomach to its full capacity*, fill it two-third or preferably three-fourth capacity to feel at ease at all times. It is preferable to have small quantities frequently.

Your supper or evening meal should be as light and as early as possible. There should be a minimum of three hours of gap between your retiring to bed and having your last meal. Subject to your system, a glass of warm milk at night is always good.

You should avoid too much coffee or tea. Junk food, alcohol and smoking should also be strictly avoided to stay fit. Plenty of fresh

fruits, vegetables and milk would keep you fresh and energetic. You should also have plenty of fluids (including water) during the day. You must consult your doctor once in a while to decide upon your food habits. But do not be very fussy about it. Control over one's food habits is most important. As they say, 'Eat to live and live to eat'.

So my friends, right from this moment you must resolve to keep yourself light and fresh so as to keep yourself mentally alert all the time, which is very important in your campaign to look smart, enjoy life and be a winner.

### **Sleep**

Have you ever noticed how fresh you feel on Sunday mornings after a sound sleep? Why do you think there is a difference in your fitness between Sunday morning and a week-day morning? The answer is obvious: because of sound sleep and no hurry to rush to school/college, you feel fresh.

So the important thing next to food is, that every night you should have a sound sleep. To ensure this, it is advisable to fix your bedtime and retire at that time every night so that your body clock works efficiently.

'Early to bed and early to rise, makes you healthy, wealthy and wise' is a golden rule. Let us resolve to make full use of this wisdom. You must have noticed, that if you sleep for one hour less than your usual duration, your fitness level is not the same. So if you were careless about it, your body and mind would not be in perfect balance.

Lack of sufficient sleep causes imbalance in body and mind. You do not feel fresh the next day and will be irritated and exhausted

throughout the day. So what is the choice other than the relaxing experience of sound sleep? Sound sleep enhances your capacity and energy level. You feel more focused and relaxed. Your concentration to understand what is being taught in class improves multifold. Sound sleep not only provides you a good opportunity to relax, but also increases your immunity and rejuvenates your system.

There are a few things to remember that would ensure you have a good sleep at night. You should always avoid items like coffee, tea, alcohol, junk food, spicy food, oily food, pan masala and tobacco, etc. because they create imbalance in your system and disturb your sleep. You may have a warm bath and a cup of warm milk before you retire to bed. Some breathing exercises done in the morning and evening always help with sleep.

One must have at least eight hours of sound sleep to look good and do well in exams and in life. Those having sound sleep would have a greater chance of looking nice and fresh. Face creams or cosmetics cannot give you a better glow than sound sleep and a healthy diet.

**Remember to switch off your mind when you go to bed. All your anxieties, problems and pending work should be put in cold storage** till the next morning. The next day's planning should be done immediately after dinner so that when you retire to bed, you are fully relaxed. When you retire to bed after about three hours of your dinner, just switch on some nice instrumental or soft music and sleep with that soft and sweet melody to have a sound sleep. Just enjoy the music and mentally recite the single word you like the most—maybe 'Om' or 'Allah' or 'Waheguru' or 'Jesus' or 'Ma' or any other word that gives you peace. Strictly no planning when you retire to bed.

### **Physical exercise**

Never jump out of bed. We all know that during sleep our blood pressure drops to the minimum and there are instances when people have heart attacks in the morning because they suddenly jump out of bed and immediately start the day at a vigorous pace. It is of utmost importance to start your day with a relaxed mind. You should never jump out of bed when you wake up after a sound sleep. Both your body and mind take a little time to get active. So you should begin the day in slow motion.

Have you seen a cat stretching itself? Once you open your eyes, you should stretch your body like a cat does, and then relax it. Do it twice to start with. Then sit up gently, swing your legs off the bed and do some leg movements in this position to get the circulation going in the body.

Do some neck rotation exercises: Turn your head gently to the left and hold this position till you count to 10. Then do the same on the right. After this, look up and count to 10, then look down and do the same. Finally, turn your head in a circular motion a couple of times. Many students complain of headache and neck problems, particularly during exam time. This is because of long hours of hunching over books in a bad posture. So spending five minutes every morning doing these simple exercises before getting up from the bed can be extremely beneficial in the long run.

To have a relaxed mind throughout the day is not easy. It is not *part time or pass time* requirement. So right from the start of the day you should consciously relax your mind all the time till it gets into your system.



After getting up, you should gently massage your arms, legs and the whole body slowly for two minutes. You must drink a few glasses of water first thing in the morning. During winter, drink warm water with a spoon of honey. Do not rush to the washroom but walk slowly. You should be aware when you brush your teeth whether you are doing it in a rush or nice and slowly. It is not unusual for people to hurt their gums while brushing with speed because they are getting late.

I have known many people who are fit and fine just by going for a *morning walk* regularly. A morning walk is such a wonderful experience that there can never be any perfect substitute for it. In addition to exercising your cardio-vascular muscles, leg muscles and the whole body, it is so refreshing that you feel energetic the whole day. If you cannot go for a morning walk, you may try it in the evening or in your school time if there is any such opportunity during the games period or otherwise.

It is very important to exercise your cardio-vascular muscles. It can be a nice brisk walk for about forty-five minutes or cycling or swimming or jogging or if nothing else then spot jogging, aerobics or jumping at home, maybe with some soft music. After this, do some stretching exercises. To learn these, you may seek guidance from your sports teacher or any friend of yours who plays some outdoor games. You should also do some lightweight training to tone your muscles. You can get some tumbles/stretching rubber band at home to tone up your arms. It would strengthen your elbows and arms and would also give them a nice shape. You may do two to three repetitions of twenty each with tumbles: just three exercises like one in front, one above your head and one sideways arms up and down with light tumbles. Breathing exercises would also make you feel good.

Three things to be taken care of in your body are: the spine, stomach and weight. Do some forward and backward bends, both in sitting and standing positions, but do them very slowly, vertebra by vertebra. Do some exercises for your stomach and also take care of your weight.

It should not take you more than an hour every day to maintain perfect health, which would relax your mind too. I don't think spending an hour every day to achieve this is a bad bargain. Once you take care of these few things you would find yourself energetic and alert throughout the day. Your resolution to achieve physical fitness should be the most important issue of your life, as your mental fitness and alertness are heavily dependent upon your physical fitness. Your attitude, mood and energy to prepare for your exams and life would improve manifold by your physical fitness.

### **Attitude and behaviour**

Your thought process and attitude also determine your mental and physical fitness. We would explore in greater detail one's attitude towards life in later chapters but as of now, it is very important to understand that it is of great importance to have positive attitude to achieve a relaxed mind and perfect health. *Your attitude can change your whole personality.*

You must have noticed that some people are optimistic and see only the positive in everything whereas others may be pessimistic and see only the negative side of every situation. You must first assess where you belong in that spectrum and then try to become a more positive person. If you are generally happy and positive about life, you are bound to have better results in all spheres of life. So therefore, it is of utmost importance to have a positive attitude all the time.

I would like to share an interesting anecdote with you. A blind man was begging with a placard that stated, 'I am blind. Please help me.' A smart student passing by saw him, looked at his placard and watched people ignoring him. The passerby changed the placard and many people started donating generously. Guess what he wrote... 'Today is a beautiful day, but I can't see it.' See how expression and attitude can change things drastically in one's life!

**Never entertain negative thoughts towards any one. Love people genuinely and try to do your best in every situation. Your behaviour should be exemplary at all times. Speak only when required and weigh your words before you speak. Try to maintain silence as much as possible. It would make you a thinker and would keep your mind relaxed, which is necessary for great success.**

**Be happy and useful. Ultimately, you are the beneficiary of your positive approach in life. It would also enhance your capacity and efficiency. You must have noticed that people who are mostly happy, normally also keep well. So imbibe it in your system to be happy and positive all the time to enjoy good health.**

**The resolution, 'I cannot afford to be negative or fall sick,' would go a long way towards your success in life.**

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*“Savdhaani  
hati durghatna  
ghati-  
concentration  
lost, aim lost.”*

# 5

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## Button Your Shirt

Have you ever experienced that when you are in a great hurry or if you are thinking of some past or future event while you are putting on your shirt, you sometimes button it all wrong and in the process waste more time? If you have never experienced it, just try to button your shirt with great speed or while thinking of something else simultaneously. You are bound to do it wrong and it would, in fact, take a longer time. Please keep in mind that even the simplest of things needs presence of mind, or in other words it wants you to live in the present. You have to be hundred per cent with whatever you are doing. Problems arise when you are thinking of some past experience or when you are having anxiety about a future activity or plan.

The windshield of the car is large while the rear-view mirror is much smaller. It signifies that the past is of least importance and the present is most important. Most of the time, we are thinking of either the past or the future. We rarely live in the present, which is the biggest mistake. We lose the opportunity to enjoy the present by cribbing

over the past and being anxious about the future. If something bad happens or if someone says something insulting, we get stuck to that negativity, which is dangerous for us.

We should always keep reminding ourselves the golden words of wisdom: 'The past is killing and the future is uncertain'.

No doubt we should learn from our past experiences to avoid repeating our mistakes. Similarly it is certainly important to plan for the future. But it is essential that we maintain a balance and not go overboard by living only in the past or worrying endlessly about the future. The best state of mind is when you are enjoying whatever you are doing in life, and that requires you to live in the present.

### **Multitasking does not help**

Many times you will find that when you are playing a game or watching a movie, you are thinking of your homework or exams, and when you are studying you are thinking of something else. The end result is that your performance is not up to the mark. That is why people say, *put your hundred per cent* in whatever you are doing, whether it is something as simple as brushing your teeth or a complicated task like repairing an appliance. Multitasking does not help at all and often results in half-done work. It may look strange or difficult to put your hundred per cent while brushing your teeth but it would ultimately become your habit and not only you would start enjoying every moment of life, it would also improve your potential and sharpness manifold. Others too will notice the difference.

While brushing your teeth if you were thinking of taking a quick bath or felt you were getting delayed, you may even have hurt your teeth and gums. Even the simplest of activities like brushing your teeth

or buttoning of your shirt needs some sort of presence of mind. So imagine the amount of concentration required in understanding a new subject or concept!

Living in present or putting your hundred per cent in whatever you are doing means doing it in a relaxed manner and with presence of mind. Presence of mind means focusing the mind on the present and not thinking of the past or the future. That is why it is of utmost importance to maintain equanimity of mind all the time, and for achieving that, you have to give proper rest to your mind at regular intervals. Equanimity of mind is not a part-time requirement. It is of so much importance that this single factor makes the difference between the first and last in academics or in any competition, be it sport, study or music.

If you analyse the speed at which you brush your teeth or the speed at which you have your breakfast, you may soon discover that the level of your calmness and ability to focus the mind is of utmost importance for your performance in your exams and in other important aspects of life. Often, how you walk or climb the staircase also conveys the level of your calmness and equanimity. So try to be present hundred percent in whatever you do, whether it is a sport, studies, watching a movie or listening to music.

It is not easy to be perfect, but it is very simple to make a resolution and then slowly improve every day in order to achieve all your goals.



“Mind at rest  
is the temple  
of joy.”

## 6

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### Most Important

Stop for a while and say hello to yourself. You greet every one but do not greet yourself. Very few people in this world feel comfortable when they are alone. Most of us look for company all the time, whether while going for a movie or for shopping or even for a walk. That means we must be so boring that we cannot be with ourselves even for a short while!

One thing we must understand is that in order to have a relaxed and balanced mind all the time it is very important to maintain silence for some time, maybe for just five minutes, twice a day. *Keeping your eyes closed*, you can mentally recite any one word; say Om, Allah, Waheguru, Jesus, Ma (mother) or any word that relaxes you.

If you are determined to do that, you would get many such opportunities in your daily life, like while waiting for a friend or your turn somewhere or for the next class to begin. The best way is to do it at a quiet place in your home or with nature until it becomes a part of you. Then you can do it even at a railway station or a busy market.

Can you see your image in a dirty mirror? Unless you clean the mirror you cannot see anything. Similarly can you see the surface of a swimming pool when it is full of people and is full of activity? To achieve clarity of vision, certain stillness is essential. You need to have a calm and clear mind in order to observe your thoughts and plan your future course of actions. While observing silence and by being with yourself once in a while you will get the opportunity to observe your thoughts, know who you are and what you really want from your life.

To have a relaxed mind all the time, it is very important to maintain silence for at least five minutes twice a day and spend some time with oneself at least once a week. We waste so much energy speaking and listening to trivial gossip that it becomes all the more necessary to conserve energy occasionally by observing silence.

Some enlightened soul has said it beautifully:

“A quiet mind produces a more brilliant intellect.

The quieter the mind, the sharper the intellect.”

It is not difficult to do this if you decide to make it a habit. Once in a week you must go to some nice garden or choose any pleasant surrounding where no one can disturb you for at least an hour. You must spend this time in silence in order to review your activities and thoughts. For this one hour you can just observe nature and your thoughts. Just *be a witness* and let your thoughts flow freely. After all, your thoughts only activate you into a particular course of action and if thoughts are not observed how can you control your actions?

This would go a long way to build your personality and you cannot imagine the benefits. This one hour of self-analysis will give you a



chance to reflect upon your routine and see where you need to improve and where you are wasting time, what are the good things you are doing and what things you should avoid.

In the course of our busy lives, very often we can watch as to whether our thoughts and deeds are in the right direction of what we want to achieve in life.

Sometimes you may not realise that many of your thoughts and deeds are not in the right direction of what you want to achieve in life, or may be harmful towards what you want to achieve. So you must resolve to cut down or exclude those thoughts and activities. But this can happen only if you review your past activities while being alone once a week for at least an hour.

### **The benefits of silence**

You could also make it a routine to analyse and plan for the next day's strategy by spending at least ten minutes every day in the evening. In fact, you should try to be in silence for at least twice a day for five minutes, just being with yourself to conserve energy and to maintain a relaxed mind. With the passage of time you will discover that you have started enjoying being with yourself and would start loving yourself more and more. My own experience is that, if you start observing silence for a few minutes whenever you get an opportunity during the day, you would always feel rejuvenated and would feel fresh throughout the day.

Now hold your breath and count the benefits of observing silence. It relaxes your mind, which is most important for your exams. It enhances your memory, calmness, compassion, love, tolerance, reasoning power, fearlessness, quality to accommodate, perception,

confidence, voice, oratory skills, glow on your face, immunity level, communication skills, sharpness and reflexes, cheerfulness, capacity to use intellect in the right manner, energy level, capacity to work more, capacity to withstand adversities, bad times and sorrows... you see, the benefits are really uncountable!

I probably missed out on many that you will discover for yourself. You cannot imbibe or develop all these qualities just by reading books. But all these qualities are necessary towards cultivating ourselves as complete human beings, which is the main purpose of our lives.

All these are of great help if you want to look nice, enjoy to the maximum and score maximum. Can you not afford to observe silence and be with yourself for at least one hour in a week and at least twice in a day for just five minutes each? If you love yourself, it is also important that you make a constant effort to try and improve yourself. Tell me, my friends, don't you polish your shoes every day? Then is it any less important to keep your mind clean all the time, brushing away the dust of negative thoughts and filling it with positive thoughts? If you love yourself, won't you like to do your best in everything, be it dealing with your parents, teachers, friends or taking care of your health or studies or any extracurricular activity?

If you want to improve in all the spheres of life it is important to maintain balance of mind and have a relaxed mind all the time. The only solution is to be with yourself more and more, love yourself more and more, and observe silence as much as you can to sharpen your intellect.

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*“Manage your  
time for sure  
success.”*

# 7

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## Time Management vs Exams

Another very important aspect of life is time management. There are so many things to be done in a day that many times we end up making a mess of everything because of mismanagement of time. Then we get irritable, lose our cool and behave in an unpleasant manner.

It is vital to maintain calmness in order to perform to the best of one's ability. Yet it is really asking for the moon to expect us to maintain calmness all the time. Even the most even-tempered people lose their patience. But that does not mean that we should not try to maintain calmness. Do not be worried too much if you are not able to remain cool on some occasions. It is the law of nature to let off steam sometimes, but if you are usually able to maintain a calm manner, you will find you are more efficient and will be considered wise.

You may have noticed that on several occasions it is because of shortage of time that you lose your patience. In student life this

becomes more pronounced during exam time. You get annoyed with yourself if you are unable to complete your preparation satisfactorily or express yourself well in the exam. It is but natural that if your study of a particular chapter needs two hours and you are left with only one hour, you will be cranky and restless. You will not be able to even concentrate properly on the work in hand, due to the tension caused by the shortage of time. So I don't think there is much need to emphasise the great importance of time management any further!

### **How can I manage my time?**

Let us see what can be done to manage time. You know only too well that certain activities have to be performed on a daily basis, and there is no option but to set aside a fixed amount of time for those activities. For instance, you have to have proper sleep for seven to eight hours depending upon the requirement of your body. You have to spend time getting ready for school or college, having a bath, having your meals, travelling to and fro from your school/college and doing your homework. Now calculate how much time is left and allocate it accordingly.

Do remember to fix a time slot for physical exercise. That is an area of activity that cannot be sacrificed at any cost, except if you are ill or injured. I, once again, wish to stress the need for the relaxation of your mind, three or four times in a day for five minutes each. It would enhance your mental alertness. Your efficiency to learn and express yourself in your examination would also grow manifold.

Now coming back to managing the remaining time, the first suggestion is that you should *never cut it too fine* or leave preparations for the last minute. Leave some scope for emergencies (it is very important).

You may become unwell or someone near or dear may have to be taken to the hospital. Then what do you do? So prepare well in advance and have sufficient time at your disposal. If you are ahead of time, you would notice that your capacity to learn would increase greatly because a relaxed mind would adopt and grasp better than a tense mind.

If, within the same available time, some students are able to learn and do well in examinations and others are not even able to finish the course, then the latter must do some soul searching in order to amend this. Plan to finish everything a couple of weeks before the exams start, leaving enough room for revision and emergencies. Make a timetable by allotting the number of hours required for study per subject.

You may be aware of a Japanese scientist who even while swimming keeps waterproof paper with him to note down thoughts. It is important to *keep a note pad or even a plain paper handy in your pocket* to write important points and pending work. A sheet of paper folded a couple of times so that it easily fits into your shirt pocket is so useful that it ought to become your habit to note things. It also keeps your mind free of worry that you may forget some important point or pending work. You are free and organized all the time and are able to attend to everything important.

### **Avoid wasting time**

Never waste time on trivial talk or unproductive things. As far as possible, try to finish your own study before schedule. Many of you go to tuition centres for coaching and guidance, where you are expected to adjust to the time slots assigned by your tutor. So you must leave sufficient time to adjust accordingly.

### List your priorities

It is very important to fix your priorities and prepare a list according to those priorities, so that you don't miss out on some important subject or topic because you have spent time on less important things. It is also very important to have a weekly review of the timetable you have prepared, to see if things are moving in the right direction. Such a review helps you decide if you need to spend more time on a particular subject or need to cut down on your study of another less important topic. You should have separate timetables for Sundays, vacation time and preparatory holidays.

Here are a couple of sample timetables I have prepared for your guidance. You may make necessary changes according to your requirement.

#### TIMETABLE FOR REGULAR DAYS

##### **6.00 am to 7.30 am**

Wake up, get ready, do some stretching exercises, jogging/walking/spot jogging/cycling followed by a healthy breakfast

##### **7.30 am to 1.30 pm**

Attend school/college

##### **1.30 pm to 3 pm**

Reach home, have lunch, spend some time in a relaxing activity (chatting with family members or watching news or reading the newspapers)

**3 pm to 5 pm**

Prepare notes or complete home assignments/work on computer, study according to priority schedule

**5 pm to 6.30 pm**

Have a light snack, engage in some recreation (some sport, preferably outdoor/pursuing any hobby)

**6.30 pm to 8 pm**

Study time

**8 pm to 9 pm**

Pray for five minutes, have a light dinner, watch the news on television, go for a stroll and spend time with the family

**9 pm to 10.30 pm**

Study time, including reading motivational or personality development books for half an hour, planning for the next day and reflecting upon your thought and deeds.

**10.30 pm to 6 am**

Sleep

TIMETABLE FOR SUNDAYS

**6 am to 6.30 am**

Get ready, do stretching exercises

**6.30 am to 7.30 am**

Weekly review, talk with self at a garden or park, physical exercise

**7.30 am to 10 am**

Breakfast with parents followed by study

**10 am to 11 am**

Social service with an NGO (non-governmental organization) or volunteer work at any other place

**11 am to 1 pm**

Study time

**1 pm to 2 pm**

Lunch and relaxation

**2 pm to 5 pm**

Study during exams, otherwise free for recreation or rest

**5 pm to 5.30 pm**

Have a snack and get ready

**5.30 pm to 10 pm**

Evening out (movie/play/concert) and dinner with parents or friends

**10.30 pm to 6 am**

Sleep

The above timetables are given as general guidelines that you can modify according to your family's routine and personal commitments.

Above all, as we discussed in the earlier chapters, do not waste



time on unproductive, malicious or harmful activities. By giving undue importance to useless things, we not only waste our precious time, but we also drain a substantial amount of energy which can otherwise be put to positive use.

Once you have mastered the art of time management by following the tips in this chapter, you will find that you are performing better and better, and moving closer to your goal to be a winner in life.

\* \* \*

*“Usko nahi dekha hamne kabhi, par uski jaroorat kya hogi, e ma teri soorat se alag bhagwan ki soorat kay hogi—we have not seen god but there is no need for that since he would not be different than you, my mother.”*

## 8

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# Ma – Mother

Every religion and every enlightened soul has emphasized the great importance of showing reverence to the mother. You must be wondering about the relevance of discussing Ma (mother) in this context of achieving the best results in your exams, but just wait for a while and you will realise her great importance in your lives, let alone the exams and results.

You may have noticed that those who feel emotionally secure (or satisfied) perform better than those who are emotionally insecure or feel lack of love and care. Perhaps now you are starting to get interested in knowing more about mother, her love and her importance in our exams and results!

Please appreciate that right from your conception, she has been taking care of you. You must have learnt that she changed her eating habits, daily routine, diet and everything according to doctor’s advice to ensure that she gives birth to a healthy child – you. From the moment of your birth, her life revolved around you and still does.

She fed you, bathed you, clothed you, washed your nappies and spent many sleepless nights watching over you and some times playing with you whenever you choose to play even at midnight. As you have grown, she is there by your side at every step, ready to offer a helping hand if you need it. She is the epitome of love, compassion, sacrifice, surrender, will-power, strength, art, beauty, devotion and everything.

Many enlightened souls emphasise that your heaven is at her feet. Poets down the ages in all cultures have written verses in praise of mother. My dear friend Neeraj often quotes a beautiful couplet written by an enlightened soul. It goes like this:

*Mere gunahon ko kuchch is tarha dho deti hai,  
Ma bahut gusse mein ho to woh ro deti hai.*

It means that my mother is so large hearted that whenever she gets angry because of my mistakes, she just sheds tears to pardon/wash them away.

This is the beauty, strength and love of a mother.

Now do you still feel she is irrelevant or would you feel blessed to experience her love? If you are fortunate to have her around you, would you like to recite to her or sing for her what I quoted just now? I promise you if you just say this couplet to her, you would see her love pouring out, and this would go a long way for your relationship with her and your emotional security. It would, as mentioned earlier, not only enhance your performance in exams, but would also make you more confident and successful.

### **Father – the friend, philosopher and guide**

A father has an equally important role to play in a family. Everyone's father is different and unique: some fathers may be strict and unapproachable, others may be friendly and fun to be with, still others may be very indulgent and willing to give in to every wish of the child. But whatever the nature of the father, the fact remains that all fathers love their children and want the best for them.

It is up to you to decide the kind of relationship you would like to have with your father. If you share your hopes and dreams with him, it will build trust between both of you. He may even be able to guide you or advise you because, after all, he has lived in this world longer than you have, and his experiences could help you avoid making the same kind of mistakes that he may have made.

### **Elders in the family – a network of support**

Apart from our parents, there are other family members such as uncles, aunts, grandparents, older siblings and cousins, who are an important part of our lives. Although the joint family system has given way to smaller nuclear families, particularly in the cities, in India we still maintain relations with our extended family.

Charity, they say, begins at home. If you learn to value and respect your family members, you will find yourself showing love and concern for everyone you come across, be it your teachers, friends or neighbours. Remember: when you speak from the heart, there is a heart, which listens too.

Your reverence and love for your mother and other elders in the family would surely mould your attitude towards offering respect to everyone. Why only mother? You should have some nice couplet ready for your teachers, elders, sisters, and friends and even for your

nation and humanity. This would keep your spirits high and your mind emotionally secure and relaxed, which is very important to score good marks, as we have explored earlier.

I will share with you a few couplets and songs, which you can understand, imbibe and then recite on appropriate occasions. Why I say you must understand and imbibe is that unless you recite them from the core of your heart, it would not be appreciated by anyone. Remember, we talked about the fact that heart listens and heart speaks. We have earlier quoted a couplet in reverence of mother. Here are some nice ones for father, teacher and elders.

One enlightened soul said it beautifully. It goes like this:

*Yun hi chal kar nahin yeh sab kuch aaya hai,  
Paun daabe hein buzurgon ke to yeh sab paya hai.*

It means whatever I have achieved or learnt has not come easily. It is because I showed reverence to my elders that I got all this.

### **Have faith**

Please appreciate, my dear friends, that to have faith and respect for parents, elders and teachers is very important for your self-confidence and balance of mind. Do you ask the driver whether he knows driving before boarding a train or a bus or do you ask your doctor if he knows anything about medicine before taking medicine that has been prescribed by him? Do you ask the pilot if he knows flying before boarding a plane? You do not entertain any doubts about these people so you do not ask them these questions.

Similarly you must have *faith* in your teachers, parents and elders, and you must show *full reverence* to them to keep your mind relaxed at all times. Faith plays a very important role for your success in life

and helps you keep your cool.

You can analyse yourself and see that whenever you entertain any doubts, you only stress yourself and we have, by now, established the importance of keeping the mind relaxed all the time. It does not mean that you do not clear your doubts. The only thing I am suggesting is that you should not start with negative feelings.

Now a couplet for your dear *sister* from an enlightened soul:

*Woh shakh hai na phool, jahan titliyan na hon,  
Woh ghar bhi koi ghar hai jahan bachiyen na hon*

It means trees and flowers have no value if they do not attract butterflies, so are the homes colourless if there are no daughters.

You should always be prepared for every occasion if you want to be relaxed and cheerful all the time. So here is a couplet for the *nation*. (We have discussed earlier that a relaxed mind is not a part time requirement so we must be prepared to bring life to every moment!) During some function on the Republic Day or the Independence Day, reciting from these songs would always be a hit, even if you do not sing.

One such verse is:

*E mere payare watan, e mere bichde chaman  
Tujhpe dil kurbaan,  
Tu hi meri arzoo, tu hi meri aabroo  
Tu hi meri jaan*

The other one is:

*E mere watan ke logo, jara aankh mein bhar lo paani,  
Jo shaheed huen hein unki jara yaad karo kurbaani*

(You can download the complete songs from the Internet.)

Even if you are not a singer, if you learn to recite a couple of couplets when there is a suitable occasion, it would always bring life to any gathering. A word of caution here, is that one should not overdo it and should feel the pulse and receptivity of friends or audience before saying anything.

You can make good use of your dinnertime. If you have dinner with your family, it can be used as a very congenial time for sharing and learning. As they say, those who pray and dine together stay together. These moments enhance your emotional security and one feels more confident and balanced in one's life.

You should always feel positive towards every soul. This positive attitude of love and affection for everyone, would ultimately develop in you, a great sense of wellbeing throughout the day and you would feel complete. (It would be no exaggeration to say that you would feel on top of the world with this attitude!)

It would also go a long way in enhancing your energy levels. In addition, it would sharpen your memory, increase your capacity to perceive and perform more efficiently in your exams. You must have seen that those who feel emotionally secure always perform better than those who feel negative and insecure with the world and people around them.

I wish you a feeling of fullness and completeness for your better performance!

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*“If your nature is sweet you would like all the people of the world, but if your tongue is sweet all the people of the world would like you.”*

# 9

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## Communication Skills vs Exams vs Public Speaking

Let us discuss the importance of communication skills for your exams, for looking good and for enjoying life.

Until he finished his law degree, Mahatma Gandhi was never comfortable speaking in public. Many people I have known were never good speakers as students or early in their careers. My friend Kush studied in a Hindi-medium school and was never a good speaker until he finished his law. But today he is one of the best orators around.

What I am trying to impress upon you is, that it is never late to learn anything in life, so start from today.

Once you make a resolution, it is never going to be difficult. Communication skill is such an important quality, that it goes a long way in your becoming successful. Communication skill not only makes you a better orator, it also helps you in scoring better in your exams. After all, an exam is nothing else but communicating answers



through the medium of writing! Communication helps you not only in exams and interviews but also helps with the shaping up of your personality and enhances your level of confidence.

### **Get yourself a head start – today**

You must have noticed individuals who got a head start over others just because they were better communicators/orators.

Even in the case of your day-to-day activities, whether it is buying vegetables or a shirt, if you are good at communication you would get a better deal, let alone appearing in an interview or participating in a debate or group discussion. Even during your routine discussions with friends, teachers, parents or any other members of society, communication skills make a lot of difference. But this will not happen just like that; you will have to make efforts.

If you put in some effort to improve this quality, I promise you that your level of confidence and overall personality would improve tremendously.

### **Learn to be silent**

The first thing which is most important in the quest to develop better communication skills is to learn how to maintain silence; you may be surprised to read this suggestion, and must be wondering how observing silence would make you a better speaker.

An enlightened soul said it beautifully,  
“Before you speak, it is necessary for you to listen, for god speaks in the silence of the heart.”

Another enlightened soul, Sant Kabir, said,

*Boli to unmol hai jo jane so boli,  
Liye tarazu tol ke tab mukh bahir kholi*

This means that words are priceless, and only the one who knows their true worth has the right to speak. Moreover, one must mentally analyse and assess the impact of one's words before uttering them.

The importance of silence is that it is not necessary to speak on every topic all the time. First you must become a good listener. Many times you will discover during a conversation that the point you want to make has already been made by someone else. Take the example of a discussion about a World Cup football match. Invariably you would notice that most of your friends would be saying more or less the same thing, like Ronaldinho played well, or so and so did not play to his potential, or someone was not playing for his team, or the referee was unfair. In such a situation, what can you contribute that has not been said already? It is not essential to score a point over others by making a statement that more or less echoes everyone else's viewpoint. Save your energy for bigger and more important issues.

### **Be a good listener**

While it is vital to learn how to speak well and communicate effectively, it is important to first become a good listener. Being silent during group discussions develops in you the invaluable habit of listening. A good listener absorbs and learns a great deal. Listening is a skill that enhances your concentration and perception.

You will be surprised to know that some students spend much less time on their studies at home but still get better marks, mainly because they are good listeners and they learn a lot while listening

carefully to the teacher in the class. You have to make a conscious effort to become a patient listener; and until it becomes your habit, you must develop a routine of sitting quiet for a while, just for five minutes, twice a day.

### **Prepare well**

It is very important to note that to learn and understand a subject, you have to study it with a focused mind in a peaceful atmosphere; and then reflect upon the knowledge gained, in silence. Unless you reflect upon that knowledge and try to understand all the issues involved and unless you are convinced about it, you cannot really make a good speech or talk with confidence on that issue.

When you know your subject thoroughly, you will find yourself speaking from your heart and once you do that, people will respond to you spontaneously. There would be too many occasions when people will compliment you, saying, “You really spoke from your heart.” Now, how can someone know that you spoke from your heart? It is because your heart listens and your heart speaks. Once you speak from your heart, others’ hearts would listen to what you say.

### **Master the language**

One very common problem I have observed in many Indian (Asian) children is that they are not very comfortable while speaking in English. Here I must tell you that in about three decades of public life and law practice I have noticed some very highly placed people using wrong words at times. I am not saying this to criticise them or to say that you should also speak wrong English. I am only trying to build confidence in you, so that you are not worried if you are unable to frame all your thoughts in English.

The best way to learn a language is to speak it. Never mind if it is not grammatically correct, what is important is that you must keep trying to converse in the language. Just ignore anyone who is ill-mannered enough to ridicule you for speaking incorrect English.

I have no inhibition sharing with you this truth that till date, many times my friend Ved has to ask his friends or consult the dictionary to know the correct meaning or pronunciation of a word. But at the same time, just because of his self-confidence, and his habit of speaking from the heart and working hard on his language, there have been many occasions during the last few years when he was appreciated as one of the best speakers in many functions that were attended by high profile people like lawyers, teachers, very senior officers, other professionals, students and public figures from India and abroad. I am saying this in order to make you feel confident that anyone can become a great orator. You just have to be aware and determined to become a good speaker.

Once you have made up your mind to learn the art of communication, you only need to focus on attaining fluency in English.

In order to speak correct and good English it is most important to *master the grammar* first. Do not ever feel hesitant to consult a grammar book or seek guidance from someone who you know has good command over the English language.

You should always keep a dictionary handy and should never be lethargic to pick up and use it to understand the correct meaning of a word. These days we can also make use of dictionaries available on the Internet and CDs to learn the correct pronunciation or meaning of any word. You should never be lazy about using

these facilities. It is better than feeling embarrassed on using a wrong word.

There is nothing wrong in consulting a friend or a teacher or any friend of your parents to improve your language. It is much better than having an inferiority complex or speaking wrong English. Every man, irrespective of his position, is learning every moment, so why feel shy while trying to learn? I know a friend who started learning music at the age of sixty-five. I started learning cooking at the age of fifty, and it is so enjoyable. I am trying my best to tell you to shed these inhibitions about learning the English language and public speaking.

### **Simple tips**

As I have stated earlier, communication is the most important quality to succeed in life, so free yourself of the shackles of inhibitions and resolve today to become a confident and fluent communicator.

Here are a few handy tips to help you start off:

- You must read an English newspaper every day to improve your knowledge and the English language.
- Tune in to BBC and other English news channels to imbibe correct pronunciation, speed and volume of your speech. You should also listen to and watch recordings of speeches made by great orators.
- Practise, practise and practise. It is very important to practise at home as much as you can, until you feel you are confident enough to face an audience or take part in a discussion. Stand in front of a mirror in a quiet room and make your speech or try to conduct a conversation with an imaginary friend. Pay

attention to your stance. Practise standing in an erect and smart posture, but take care not to look stiff and uncomfortable. You must convey the impression of being relaxed and confident. If you feel comfortable, you can do this in the presence of a friend, teacher or your parents to get their feedback on your effort.

- Pay attention to correct pronunciation and word usage. If you are not sure about the meaning of a word, or how to pronounce it correctly, replace that word.
- Use simple and straightforward language instead of trying to impress people by using difficult words. Simple is beautiful because it communicates with the masses.
- Try to modulate the tone and volume of your voice. Don't speak so softly that people are forced to say "I beg your pardon". At the same time, do not be so loud that people are put off by your conversation or feel uncomfortable.
- It is important to control the speed of your speech. Sometimes, the topic of conversation may be such that you become agitated or excited and your manner of speaking changes. That is acceptable in an informal setting. But in a formal speech you must speak slowly and clearly so that your audience is able to understand you perfectly. Your speech should not be too fast or too slow, you should look confident and not agitated. Remember to pause at appropriate places and change the tone of your voice at places where you want to emphasise a point.
- Be sure that you have learnt enough about your subject from all available resources like the Internet, your books, and people around you. It is said that little knowledge is a dangerous thing. You must take part in a discussion only if you are sure you have something interesting or worthy to contribute. I have spoken about the value of silence earlier. If you are not certain that

you know enough to take part in a conversation, stay quiet and listen. You will pick up valuable information that would help you discuss the same topic in the future on some other occasion.

- If you are preparing for debates or formal speeches, check during your practice that you are able to cover all the points within the allotted time. Your speech should never be too long because your audience will lose interest. You may use jokes and humorous anecdotes to make your speech lively and engaging. One nice joke stated below would always help you control your timing and length of speech.

A famous personality was once asked by his friend, as to how his wife loved him so much, even after fifty years of marriage? He was surprised and asked, "How did you guess that?" The friend replied, "I have seen your wife sending you flying kisses in public whenever you are making a speech." Hearing this comment, the celebrity had a hearty laugh. He said, "I must confess that it is not her love but a code that she uses whenever I speak in public, to make sure I do not bore the audience with my lengthy speech." He explained further that the flying kisses signified the code 'KISS' which meant 'Keep It Short, Stupid!'

So always keep the speech short. The time-tested principle is that your speech should be short enough to create interest and long enough to cover the subject.

- Another important point is to strike a rapport with the audience as early as possible, by speaking about a personal connection with their city, school, college, locality or institute. You may mention that your association with them goes back a long way

or express your sincere appreciation for that institute. Try to name a few people present in the audience, especially those who enjoy a good reputation or are well known there.

- Try to quote someone renowned in the field or cite any general quote, which gels well with the subject or point you are trying to make. You can also quote a nice couplet or a story or a poem—anything depending on the audience and the subject. Try to use quotes or couplets that are close to your heart, for those would surely be conveyed from your heart to their heart. You may have noticed that sometimes some people quote couplets that do not touch the hearts in the audience, whereas others use the same couplets, making your eyes wet. But you should be careful not to quote too many couplets or stories. Your original ideas and thoughts on the subject should be the striking point.
- It is never a bad idea to *practise* your speech in front of a mirror till you start feeling confident that you can speak on any subject at any platform without even a short notice.

One more thing: even if you are not scheduled to speak at any public debate or a function, always imagine that you may be asked to speak, and you must prepare yourself accordingly. It would serve two purposes: first, if you are suddenly required to speak, you would be prepared and confident; and second, even if you are not asked to speak, you would have some knowledge and preparation about the subject, which would surely come in handy at some point in your life.

- A common problem that occurs during debates, is that many speakers make the same points. So when it is your turn, you may have nothing new or different to say. Hence you should always



have an alternate or additional point ready, in the form of a real life story or anecdote or statistics on the subject, which will add an element of novelty to your speech.

- There is nothing wrong in saying something in approval of an important point raised by a previous speaker, but this should never be for the heck of it. If you agree with someone, mention it from the core of your heart, and if you disagree with someone, mention this in a gentle and firm tone.
- Do not look confused or indecisive. In case you are unaware about something and are asked to comment on it, you should be frank and say that you are unaware of the matter in question.

If you feel there are not enough opportunities for you to participate in debates or public speaking, make it your habit to select any topic of current importance or any subject that interests you, formulate a discussion point or topic of debate and prepare it as if you were to speak in a public meeting. Discuss and make your friends participate in that discussion to get more ideas and build your confidence.

Gradually, you will notice that you have become a skilled and confident orator and communicator. This will help your confidence grow manifold. You will be able to face exams and interviews in a relaxed mood and score better marks. After all, as we discussed earlier, an examination is also a test of your communication skills through the medium of writing.

\* \* \*

*“True religion is to feel answerable to your heart or conscience all the time.”*

# 10

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## Religion vs Exams

Everyone wants to enjoy a decent and peaceful life. Whether you wish to score good marks or achieve success or enjoy life, the most important factor is, that you should be calm and at peace with yourself. Now, to achieve that calmness or peaceful state of mind, it is very important to understand what gives you peace and what tears you into pieces.

Let me surprise you by telling you about the relevance of religion in your examination. So far we have already seen that having a relaxed mind is the most important goal in order to score well in exams. Now we must understand how religion helps in relaxation and concentration. If by spending just a few minutes at home without going to any religious institution, you can score good marks and also be a good Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jew or Sikh, then why should you not do it, my dear friends?

The word religion is derived from two Latin words ‘re’ and ‘ligare’. ‘Re’ means ‘back’ and ‘ligare’ means ‘to unite or bind.’ Religion

therefore means to unite with your pure self or your original self. Every religion preaches love, compassion, truth and selfless service. Mahatma Gandhi said truth is god. Many enlightened souls have said love is god. So the crux of every religion is the same: truth, love and selfless service.

So if you are a true Hindu or a true Muslim or a true Christian or a true Jew or a true Sikh or whatever religion you belong to, you should be true to the *fundamental* preaching of your own religion.

Even if you are a non-believer you must understand that relaxation and concentration of mind grow manifold if your heart is full of love and engaged in some selfless service. If you genuinely love others, you would automatically be more sensitive to their problems. You would not have any negative feelings like hatred, jealousy, anger or greed.

### **Listen to your heart**

Great thinkers, from almost every religion of the world, have stressed the importance of connecting with your conscience, your inner self through introspection and contemplation. They discourage the blind observance of rituals and have time and again declared that all you have to do is to just listen to your heart; it will convey to you what is right or wrong. They also stress the importance of silence and contentment.

In all religious texts the secret of achieving peace of mind is conveyed in just a few lines. But we must spend some time understanding and imbibing this. We need not go to any religious place if we understand the gist of our religions, which is explained in just a few words: love, compassion, peace and selfless service.

My revered mother used to ask me to sing a devotional song whose lyrics have always had a profound impact on me. The gist of this composition is that your heart tells you what is right or wrong. Your heart is your true god and your only religion. So just keep your mind and heart pure and listen only to your heart.

Try to understand the philosophy underlying this song and imbibe the same to feel at peace with yourself when you are stressed, not only during your exams but throughout your life. The song goes like this:

*Tora man darpan kehlaye*

(Your heart is your mirror)

*Bhale bure sare karmon ko dekhe aur dikhaye*

(It sees and it reflects all your good and bad deeds)

*Man hi devta, man hi ishwar*

(The heart is God, the heart is the divine spirit)

*Man se bada na koi*

(There is no force bigger than your heart)

*Man ujjyara jab jab phaile, jag ujjyara hoi*

(Whenever the heart spreads light, the world is bright)

*Is ujle darpan par prani dhool na padne paye*

(Beware of allowing this shining mirror to gather dust)

*Sukh ki kaliyan dukh ke kaantein, man sab ka aadhar*

(The heart is the basis of everything, the blossoms of joy and the thorns of sorrow)

*Man se koi baat chupe na, man ke nain hazar*

(Nothing can be hidden from the heart, it has a thousand eyes)

*Jag se chahe bhag le koi, man se bhag na paye*

(You may run from the world, but not from your heart)

*Tora man darpan kehlaye*

(Your heart is your mirror)

I have always found this song to be particularly inspiring because it cautions us about going against the dictates of the conscience and advises us to perform all our actions with the knowledge that the heart is watching and judging our every move.

My dear friend Col. Bakshi often recites a lovely couplet written by some enlightened soul that similarly expresses the importance of the heart. It says:

*Kitaben risale na akhbar padiye,  
Magar apne dil ko har raat ik baar padiye.*

This means you may not read scriptures or books or newspapers or magazines, but every night you must introspect with a clean heart and reflect upon all your activities pursued during the day.

If you just analyse all that you have done during the day, your heart will tell you what was right or what was wrong. You can then resolve not to repeat the wrong actions and improve upon your behaviour. So it is not important to go to any religious place or follow any rituals as long as you continue to chat with your heart, your conscience, about the nature of your actions. Your heart will tell you every moment what is wrong or what is right, provided you listen to it carefully.

### **How do we judge our actions?**

The best way to decide if your actions are right or wrong is by reflecting on the motivation behind them. If an action is performed with a desire for personal gain at the cost of others, it would be wrong. If it is for self-improvement or for others' benefit, it would definitely be right. If any action makes you happy after doing it, it is good. However, if the action disturbs your mind, do not crib or feel guilty but resolve not to do it in future.

Once you start listening to the inner voice of your heart, you will be incapable of doing wrong to anyone and will be kind, helpful and compassionate, which is the true religion. You will also find yourself always being cheerful and optimistic in spirit. Blissful peace will fill your soul and your relaxed mind will help you cope with all the stresses and strains of life. Let your heart become your friend, philosopher and guide. Then you will see things like exams and results in the correct perspective and not be overwhelmed by them. You will become more focused and better equipped to face the challenges of student life.

The problem in the world today is that students are not told: the importance of developing a relaxed mind, of working to achieve a state of calmness, and the need to have a heart full of love for all.

Someone has rightly said that the true religion is to become a good Hindu or a good Muslim or a good Sikh or a good Christian or a good Buddhist. Once this is achieved, life becomes wonderful. You are calm and at peace with yourself and people will be attracted to you because of this aura of serenity that surrounds you.

You are bound to look nice, enjoy yourself more and score better if you are at peace and have a pure conscience.

\* \* \*

*“If the only prayer  
you said in your  
whole life was thank  
you god, that would  
suffice.”*

# 11

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## Prayer vs Examination

The power of prayer and its relevance in scoring better in exams is important and must be understood. If you can score better marks by just spending a couple of minutes, it's not a bad bargain. You need not go to any particular place to offer your prayers. You may pray any time, anywhere, just for five minutes in the morning and five minutes in the evening. Close your eyes to convey thanks to god. Mentally recite Om or Allah or Waheguru or Jesus or any name that gives you peace.

If you are a non-believer you may choose any word that gives you peace. You may mentally recite 'Ma' to convey your gratitude to the one who started taking care of you even before your birth, the one who brought you into this world, and the one who has always taken care of you with dedication.

You must appreciate the importance of prayer. Prayer calms you and relaxes your mind so much that no other activity can be so relaxing. But prayer is not a way to beg from god. Prayer should be

used to convey your gratitude to your god, to all those who helped you grow as a human being, and for what you have in life.

You must have heard the story of a boy who was arguing with his father because he wanted to buy a pair of costly shoes. He fought with his father... until he saw a man without feet. It is necessary to understand that no one born on this earth ever got everything he desired, so it is better to be content with what you have and feel grateful to god.

My friend Sunil always says,

"If the only prayer you said in your whole life was 'Thank you, God' that would suffice."

### **Affirmations**

Apart from your usual prayer as per your own religion and faith, you should also make some positive statements to develop your personality. I assure you, it is very effective. You will yourself be amazed at their effectiveness. You may say, "I am happy and blissful," "I am peaceful and content," "I am a pure soul," "I am strong and healthy." You may also resolve to improve your nature by saying, "I shall not nurse ill will or hatred against any one," "I wish to apologise to all those whom I may have hurt intentionally or unintentionally at any time in my life," or "I will control my anger."

These affirmations are very helpful. After your prayer if you repeat these affirmations I assure you that you would subconsciously imbibe all these qualities.

You must be aware that just by reading books one can never imbibe the numerous qualities that a man requires to cultivate himself as



a complete human being. It requires something more; a conscious effort to develop compassion, fearlessness, contentment, gratitude, humility, passion, memory, love, affection, sensitivity and sharpness. Similarly, you cannot get rid of anger, ill will, hatred, greed, lust and ego just by reading books. So to acquire all positive and divine qualities you must reflect upon and introspect upon your thoughts and deeds constantly, without fail.

In its simplest form, your prayer should offer your gratitude to god and all those who helped you and loved you in your life, starting from your mother, father, teacher, siblings, friends and whosoever helped you anywhere, in any way.

So friends, let us shut our eyes for five minutes to convey our gratitude to our god, parents, teachers and all those who helped us at any time in our lives. Let us also offer our sincere apologies to all those whom we might have hurt intentionally or unintentionally; to relax our mind and to be at peace with ourselves.

Once you have got into the habit of praying for a few minutes twice every day, you will find yourself incredibly relaxed and at peace with yourself. This, in turn, will surely help you look smart, enjoy life and be a winner!



*“A successful life is one that is lived through understanding and pursuing one’s own path, not chasing the dreams of others.”*

# 12

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## Success vs Failure

Success and failure cannot be judged by the percentage of marks scored. The question goes beyond examination. A successful person is one who is at peace with himself and is helpful to the society. Now if you are at peace with yourself and are happy, you would surely be useful to others, which would give you real joy.

“The truly great are not the men of wealth, of possessions, not men who gain name and fame, but those who testify to the truth in them and refuse to compromise whatever be the cost. They are determined to do what they consider to be right. We may punish their bodies, refuse them comforts, but we can’t buy their souls, we can’t break their spirits. Whoever possesses this invulnerability of spirit even to a little extent deserves our admiration”

- S.Radhakrishnan

See how beautifully a great man, who was not only the President of India but also a great visionary and scholar, defined success.

Success is a measure of your overall development or level of evolution, your total personality, how you interact with the world and with your near and dear ones and how much you contribute to the society.

My friend Sanjay always says,

“Success is measured by the number of hours you smile in a day.”

Success is your happiness and calmness throughout the day. Success is your physical, mental, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual health.

### **Success is a journey, not a destination**

*Success is to fall and rise again.* If the world-class cricketer Sachin Tendulkar fails in one or two innings, or if world number one tennis player Roger Federer is defeated by some low-ranking player or if world class footballer Ronaldinho fails to convert some easy chance to a goal, would you say that they are failures? No, we will still say that they are world class because they always learn from their mistakes and try to perform better next time. So success is: not to be bogged down and feel low after committing mistakes, but to make sincere efforts to improve.

*Success is not to follow a herd instinct.* Success is to apply your mind to each situation and judge for yourself instead of blindly following others. Today all over the world people mostly follow the herd instinct. You may have heard of an incident in Turkey where fifteen hundred sheep jumped to their death by following one sheep, which by accident fell from a cliff into a fifteen-metre deep valley. The same may be true of human beings. Many times we do not apply our minds and just follow the routine and the path set down by

others. Success comes from applying your own mind and judgment and running your own race, of course after due consideration.

In this world people will never allow you to be yourself. They would always expect you to follow the masses. So you have to be extra strong to carve out your own route. But it should not be just for the heck of it. You must first analyse the advantages and disadvantages, take into account the relevant factors, examine your motives and then take the final decision, which can be termed as success. Success is not being different merely for the sake of it. Time-tested wisdom should be followed till you discover a more meaningful way and convince yourself about it.

### **Be self-reliant**

Success is to be a giver and not to be dependent upon anyone. I am not saying that you should never ask for help or guidance from anyone. What I am saying is that you should avoid asking for small favours, and must try to manage without asking for avoidable favours. On the other hand, you should always be willing to provide help to everyone. That is the true meaning of success.

### **Be pleasant**

Success is also judged on the basis of your interaction with the people who make up your world. It is dependent on how well you deal with the world and especially with the people around you: for example, your mother, father, siblings, friends and teachers. How do they feel when they interact with you? You cannot please the whole world, but if people generally feel nice when they meet you, it is an indication of your success.

Success means *taking a strong stand* on what you believe in,

even if the majority feels annoyed. Success is to *follow your heart* despite adverse circumstances. Success is to stand like a rock on your principles and not sway like a dry leaf in the wind, changing direction every moment. Everyone, irrespective of their position in life, is criticised for something or the other, and successful people are criticised the most, so success means the ability to withstand criticism and learn from your mistakes, without getting depressed and losing heart.

Success is *when you feel confident* under all circumstances and do not get nervous. Success is when you are of some help to the society; when you are strong enough to ignore setbacks. Success is when you are *calm and compassionate*, when you are sensitive to others' problems.

Success is when you notice that your tolerance is growing, your patience is strengthening, your compassion is deepening, and your sense of discipline is improving; while your anger and ego are shrinking, when people generally feel happy to meet you. Success is when most of the time you are cheerful and make others look forward to being in your company.

Success is not only about getting a good percentage in your exams. It is your overall success as a good human being.

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*“The really poor man is not the one who lacks money, but one who lacks the joy of heart.”*

# 13

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## Life is a Celebration

To do well in exams, it is very important to understand that life is a celebration if you feel happy and are useful. **Everyone, irrespective of his status, has one problem or another.** It is also true that there are many miseries in the world, **but only those who are happy with them would do well for themselves and would solve some of** the world's miseries too. For the one who has learnt the art of living happily in all circumstances, life is a celebration. In fact, if you are **happy you are bound to be useful.**

**The fragrance of flowers spreads only** in the direction of the wind, but the goodness of a person spreads in all directions, so keep spreading it forever.

If you are joyful, your friends and acquaintances are bound to look for your company, and they would like to share their problems and secrets with you. This would give you a great sense of satisfaction. It would also enhance your level of confidence and balance of mind. It would also, in a way, enhance your capacity to learn and perform better in your exams.

We have been discussing that ultimately, it is your equanimity and balance of mind, which is of great importance during all of life's activities. So our whole effort should be to make ourselves more and more contented, joyful and balanced. Once you resolve to take life as a celebration, you would find many opportunities to make life a wonderful experience.

### **Make people laugh**

**If you are in the company** of friends or relatives, it is always a good idea to tell a nice, decent joke and make people laugh. Even a prank is fine, but the thumb rule is that the prank or joke should not hurt anyone's sentiments. If you crack a joke on yourself or in general, without hurting anyone, your friends would laugh at the joke and would like you. But if you tell a joke or play a prank, which hurts someone, people will laugh at you, instead of laughing at the joke.

**Everyone loves fun, but it should be decent and not insulting to** anyone. Be careful and sensitive when you crack a joke. The best policy is to crack a joke on you own self.

Here is a popular single-liner, but how to crack it is important. The joke is: "**Ashok is playing chess,**" hinting that Ashok is so dumb that his playing chess is a joke. If I put it like this, you would enjoy the joke because I am trying to **ridicule myself**. But if the same joke were directed towards someone else, then that would be a hint that his intellect is so low that his playing chess is a joke. And he may not like it. That is why one should be careful and sensitive when cracking a joke.

I would like to share **another joke with you**.

A man who had been awarded a death sentence was summoned by

the jailor, who asked him, "What is your last desire?"

The man said, "Will you promise to fulfil it, if I tell you?"

The jailor declared confidently, "Of course. We always fulfil the last wishes of our convicts. Don't be afraid, I give you my word that your desire will be fulfilled."

The convict promptly replied, "You take my position and I will take yours."

**Why do we say laughter is the best medicine?** Because it relaxes you and makes you feel nice. A sense of humour is a great quality, but very few have the right sense of humour. It is not a joke to crack a joke. You must know what to say where. The quality of the joke is also important and should be considered with regard to the age and relationship with your audience. We should not look like a joker while narrating a joke. We should never overdo our jokes, anecdotes or poetry. A simple test to know the difference is: Do people ask you, "Why are you going?" or do they whisper, "Why is he/she not going?"

You must have heard this amusing quote: "The cultured give happiness wherever they go, the uncultured, whenever they go!"

A nice couplet or a song or a poem or an anecdote always comes in handy in making a tense atmosphere light.

My friend Ehsaan always recites a beautiful couplet written by some enlightened soul, which says,

*Fizaye arsh pe udna to koi baat nahin,  
Kisi ke dil mein utarna kamal hai pyare*

This means that it's no big deal to acquire worldly status; the real



achievement is to make someone feel nice or to touch someone's heart.

When you make others happy, it not only pleases them, but it also gives you a great sense of confidence. It makes you receptive, sensitive and compassionate and a complete human being, which helps you to perform better in your exams and career.

Quotes and couplets of enlightened souls help to understand the truth and philosophy of life.

There is no better form of communication than conveying the truth in a poetic manner. But you should first understand and be convinced about the philosophy of the same and try to imbibe its values, otherwise it would never impress or help others. The couplet or a quote, even if it contains the greatest of the philosophy and truth, would be pleasant to the ears only if you have imbibed it or are at least convinced about its message and are trying to imbibe the same.

Wherever you go, you should be full of life. Life is so uncertain so you should enjoy every moment. As a song goes:

*Zindagi ik safar hai suhana*

*Yahan kal kya ho kisne jana*

This means that life is a pleasant journey but no one knows what might happen tomorrow.

So it is better to enjoy every moment irrespective of what you are doing. Wherever you go, you should be full of life. You should share your laughter and joy and spread positive vibes to the maximum. That should be the spirit.

You should *genuinely love everyone*. Have you observed a child at play? **Children are always full of energy all the time**. The reason is very simple: they are innocent and have **no ill will, no worries and no jealousy**. So you should be childlike in your nature, but your conduct should not be childish. You should not have any ill will, hatred or jealousy against anyone. Life is too short and uncertain, so it is pointless to nurse grudges.

**Never miss a single opportunity to please or praise anyone deserving a pat on the back**. You should particularly look for an opportunity to genuinely praise in public, one who is angry with you. Do remember to be sincere in your praise, and genuinely appreciate people for their qualities and possessions. But do not overdo the praise to the extent that it sounds like flattery.

You should be the life of every gathering. You should be a **goodwill ambassador for everyone**. A goodwill ambassador is one who carries only positive remarks about friends and teachers. You should never convey negative or insulting remarks or indulge in any backbiting.

Another important point is that you should *never* **make anyone feel guilty for his or her actions**. As a true friend, you can privately correct a friend but never embarrass anyone by criticising him/her in public. Also avoid complaining about small issues such as their failure to keep in touch or take your calls. You don't know in what situation your friend might have been. So always presume there must be some valid reason for him to have behaved in that manner.

You may have noticed that sometimes, people enter a conversation without knowing exactly what it is about and what has been said so far, and in the process they come across as fools. It is a very bad habit. You should take time before entering into an ongoing

conversation. First you should understand what is being discussed. You should be a patient listener. You should participate only when you are sure that your suggestions are worth something, otherwise silence is also a great celebration of life!

You must plan your schedule in such a way that you can attend to all aspects of your life. Unless you are responsible and particular about your studies and other moral duties, you cannot celebrate life. Celebration comes with taking responsibilities of your studies and your health. **Celebration comes when you are responsible and sensitive towards your teachers, friends and parents.** You can celebrate when you are sensitive towards nature, plants and animals. Once you become aware of your responsibilities, life would really become a celebration.

Even when you are alone, in your free time after completing your studies, you should **listen to some nice music or watch a movie or a play.** You should **play some sport or watch some interesting comedy** to celebrate life. Or you may sit at home or in a garden, recite or sing some melodious song or a couplet.

You must understand that if you are worried and sad, your performance would deteriorate drastically. Worry cannot help. “No hurry, no worry, make your life a nice curry!” If you are happy, you would have a relaxed mind to perform better in your exams and life.

Always remember that life is a celebration, and even when you are alone, you should celebrate every moment of it. So celebrate life, to look nice, to enjoy maximum and to score maximum.

*“Early birds  
would always have  
the best.”*

# 14

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## How to Avoid Examination Fever

Have you ever wondered why someone in the same class with the same teacher scores more than ninety per cent marks, while another person scores seventy per cent and yet another scores only twenty per cent?

### **Art of listening**

I wish to tell you about a friend of mine named Naren who is currently working at a very important post. He never studied too much. Rather, he used to participate in almost all extracurricular activities like sports, debates, singing, acting, etc. in fact everything under the sun used to interest him and he used to do well in all the activities. Yet he was a topper in class. He is a good cook, an excellent painter, and a good singer. He also possesses a reasonably good knowledge of most subjects. Do you know why? Because he was always very attentive when the teachers used to teach us.

So it is very important to remind ourselves that when we listen to the teacher, we should be completely attentive. It is not like listening

to a story for fun's sake. We must try to understand the point our teacher is trying to put across.

The easiest way to be fully attentive and understand a chapter better is to read the chapter one day earlier at home. If you have already studied the chapter you would enjoy it more when it is taught in the class and would be more attentive. You would have your questions and doubts ready to be asked. It is very important to listen very attentively, with a view to understand the subject. If you do that and then do a simple revision the same day at home, take it from me, the lesson would be engraved in your mind and even if you were woken up from deep sleep, you would explain it with great confidence.

### **What is examination fever?**

The subject of examination fever has attracted great attention in recent times. One often hears that during examinations, some students develop symptoms such as vomiting, headache or mild fever. Most homes are under curfew and there is a lot of stress because one member is preparing for exams. No one is allowed to visit their home and the students cannot go anywhere. Even mothers cannot go anywhere because they have to serve them tea and meals at their tables. This is what examination fever is. Why this happens is known to all of us. If we have not finished our course well in advance, we are bound to get tense and make everyone else tense.

### **How do I avoid examination fever?**

You must have noticed that if you were setting off to catch a train and leave home late by a few minutes, the whole journey from your home to the station would be fraught with tension. Every red light,

every traffic stoppage would make you tense because you did not start on time. The same is true for any situation in life. Whenever we cut it too fine or leave things for the last minute we are bound to get tense. In other words, we are bound to have examination fever. So the simple solution is to *prepare well in advance*.

We have already discussed the importance of preparing a chapter before doing it in the class, being attentive in the class while it is being taught, and revising it after the class. Once you do that, and plan to finish your revision well in advance, instead of leaving it to the last minute, you are bound to score well.

It is also important to understand that during the examination days, your capacity to learn and understand is reduced drastically because of tension. On the other hand, if you prepare well in advance, you would study without any tension, with a relaxed mind, and would do it much faster. Like if you leave for the station just a few minutes in advance, you would always find red lights and traffic jams easy to cope with. The same is true for every situation in life.

In an earlier chapter I have focused on the need to complete your course well in advance in order to leave scope for any unfortunate emergencies like an accident or illness. Being a smart and attentive listener and resolving to finish your course well in advance, are two important strategies to avoid examination fever and score better marks.

### **Handwriting**

One small but useful tip: take care of your handwriting. Many a time, it has happened that a student has lost precious marks because the examiner could not read or understand what was written.

To my mind this is a terrible tragedy: a child prepares well in advance and answers the question paper excellently, only to discover that he/she has lost marks because of illegible handwriting! Remember that examiners are overworked and underpaid; they have stringent deadlines to meet and have to finish correcting a certain number of answer scripts every day. Hence they will just not make the extra effort to decipher what you have written: if it is unclear, they will simply not give you any marks.

Now that you have learnt what examination fever is and how to avoid it, I hope you will apply these strategies to make a success of your career, and your life.

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*“The hardest challenge is to be yourself in a world where everyone is trying to make you somebody else. Be yourself.”*

# 15

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## A Genius is Not Born, but Made

We all know that no one was born trained in anything and we all possess the ability to become great. The most important thing is to recognise the potential within us and develop it to its fullest extent.

We all watch movies, don't we? What happens in a movie? A drama of emotions and situations is portrayed through a plot and the characters: sometimes there is love, sometimes there is sacrifice, there is justice or injustice, there is hurt, there is joy, there is tragedy, there is violence; but we all come out of the theatre unaffected in any major way. Most of the time we enjoy the movie, but for a few short spells of sadness in some scenes.

Why is it that we are not much affected by the tragedies and violence in the movie? The answer is very simple. It is because we do not identify with the characters and their tragedies. Don't you feel that life would be a complete mess if we started identifying with all the tragedies in the movies? We do not identify with the characters despite the fact that whatever an artist is showing is quite close to



reality. It is very sensible too. Then why should we feel disturbed if similar things happen with us?

Shakespeare very rightly said that life is a stage and we all are actors playing our roles. In fact we all are already playing too many roles at too many stages of life: sometime as students, sometime as sons/daughters, sometime as friends, sometime as teachers to junior students, sometime as players, sometime as social workers, and sometime as leaders or class representatives.

There is no problem if we just watch life like a movie; the problem arises when we identify too much with the tragedy. To be a genius you just have to be a witness and watch the events in your life like a movie or a play. You can't imagine how wonderful your life would be, if you were able to do that! It requires a genius to be able to do this, but once you resolve to do that, are aware of this and constantly practise it; gradually it will become part of you. It is not very difficult, but with practice you will improve every day, every moment.

Have you ever thought about how many good qualities you have in you? Hold your breath. I am going to tell you about your good qualities and you are bound to be astonished! Before I give you the long list of these good qualities, please appreciate that we all have these good qualities and the only difference is in how often we use them.

A genius is a person who most frequently uses these good qualities. An ordinary person is the one who does not use these qualities too often, but rather uses the opposite to disturb himself and others for short-term gains.

Does it not happen with all of us that sometimes we are able to control our anger even on the most serious issue, and sometimes we lose temper even on a small cause that irritates us? So sometimes you are a very balanced person and sometimes you have no control over your anger. The measurement of wisdom is not perfection, but how infrequently you fumble or lose self-control.

No genius or great man was ever born on this earth who used all these qualities on all occasions of his dealings with the world. I am saying this not to criticise any great man but to give you confidence that nobody is perfect and the only difference is that great men and geniuses use good qualities most of the time and they fumble only a few times; whereas ordinary men fumble more and make use of these qualities on fewer occasions.

I would now like to list out the good qualities that I believe should and do exist in each one of us. Read through them and try to recall an occasion when you have recognised the existence of this quality in yourself. Once you have realised that you do possess all these qualities in different measures, you only need to improve upon the frequency of usage.

### **Good qualities, which you all have**

A person should be humble, pure in his dealings, compassionate and should follow the path of non-violence. He should speak the truth. He should love all and should be free from all sorts of negative qualities, like anger, greed, lust, jealousy, hatred and egoism. He should be unpretentious, upright and fearless. He should be dispassionate towards sense objects and should have control over his mind. He should be thirsty to gain the right kind of knowledge and should observe silence as much as he can. He should do selfless

service and should not be attached to anything, not even to the fruits of his actions. He should accept results gracefully without any complaint. He should not be dependent upon anyone for anything but should himself be helpful to all those who can be helped by him. He should be harmless and forgiving. He should be pure and firm in his actions and thoughts. He should exercise self-control over all his senses. He should use his intellect to perform only good actions. He should constantly reflect upon all his thoughts and deeds in order to do his best.

Analyse the above-mentioned good qualities and you would discover that many times you have used them while dealing with the world. All of us have these good qualities latent in us. We only have to fine-tune and employ them more in order to be geniuses or great men – but without any burden on our mind to be perfect. Geniuses also commit errors, but learn and rise again.

We see many successful and brilliant people in their respective fields. If we just study their success stories, we would know that they all worked hard, with great discipline and dedication to reach where they are. We are all capable of reaching such heights, but only if we plan our activities and lives in a disciplined way.

How do you benefit from this knowledge and be in the category of the genius and brilliant?

Now if I want to become a world-class football player, would you not tell me to watch world-class players, study their routine, follow their training programme and diet plan and follow the discipline they maintain? Similarly, if you want to be great, is it not important to know and follow with dedication what all great men

have been doing? If you want to know the secret of greatness, read the biographies and autobiographies of great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King and all those you admire and wish to emulate. You must try to know what they did that was so special and unique, what made them so great, and which of their qualities you would like to imbibe.

Another thing you can do is read *motivational books* and books on personality development. Make a note of the things that appealed to you in these books and try to implement them in your daily life. Then in your weekly review, try to analyse how far you have progressed in that direction. You should specifically observe whether your thoughts and activities are going to help you score better or would be a hindrance in your preparation and performance in the examination. You must note down your weak points that you need to improve upon.

We must cultivate our intellect to distinguish between what is important and what is not, what is good and what is bad, what is wrong and what is right, and then we must act accordingly. If you wish to be a genius and great you must be like the *bird who smartly takes out milk from the water*. Just try to observe and adopt the best qualities from everyone. Do not feel shy to ask or clarify a point, even from a stranger. Just be aware and learn and understand life and its interesting chapters in order to do the best in academics.

Just observe the lives of some successful people who you feel can be your role models. Remember that there are no shortcuts in life and no substitutes to discipline, sincerity, hard work and dedication. You must observe how great sportsmen like Sachin and Rahul Dravid (cricketers), Roger Federer and Pete Sampras (tennis players),

Vishwanathan Anand (chess player), and Tiger Woods (golfer) play and conduct themselves in public. By watching them you would imbibe calmness and depth in your approach and activities in life. Your capacity to study and understand would improve, giving better results in exams and life.

If you are convinced that geniuses can be made, then train yourself to become one!

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*“Fragrance of the flowers spreads only in the direction of the wind, but the goodness of the person spreads in all directions. Keep spreading it forever.”*

# 16

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## Beauty of Soul vs Exams

We all know that every soul is fundamentally divine and human beings are basically good at heart.

If I gave you an example of a situation where someone was hurt by your actions or words, you would immediately clarify that you were upset at that time or did not understand the situation correctly or were not aware of the facts or perhaps got angry momentarily. The point I am trying to make is that there may be so many reasons for your committing a mistake, but it can never be intentional. *Fundamentally, the soul is divine.* This means that when one is at peace with oneself, one cannot commit any wrong. It is only because of negative qualities such as ignorance, anger, greed, hatred or lack of wisdom that people commit errors or spoil the atmosphere in the society.

Let me narrate one of the memorable experiences of my life. In the year 2000, during an agitation by the lawyers, many of them were attacked by the police and were seriously injured. As a result, the

lawyers went on a strike, which continued for quite a few months. Now if there is a strike by the lawyers, the poor litigants are the worst sufferers. Many people were going to jail every day because of the strike, while many of the young lawyers were facing hardships because of the loss of income. Not only that, the lawyers were being criticised and were being looked down upon for making people suffer by not appearing in the courts.

My friend Shashi really felt bad about this matter. He took a conscientious decision to oppose and criticise the strike, which according to him was against the interest of the litigants. He was particularly concerned about the fact, that the poor litigants were being kept in jail longer than necessary, simply because there was no lawyer available to take up their cases in the court. Although he strongly condemned the police action on the agitating lawyers, his view was that going on strike was not the right method of protest. He believed the lawyers could resort to some other method of protest and take recourse to the law, so that the poor litigants did not have to suffer.

You can well imagine the reaction of the agitating lawyers to this stand. Many of Shashi's colleagues criticised him in very harsh words and some of them even started attributing devious motives to him. However, Shashi was least perturbed since he had taken this conscientious decision after due deliberation.

Now here comes the interesting part. After a few months of that incident, Shashi contested for the post of secretary, Supreme Court Bar Association, and won the election of such a prestigious organisation. The very friends who were criticising him, voted for Shashi when it mattered most. It happened because basically they all were nice and did not have any ill will against Shashi. They criticised

him as per their perception of the situation at that time and voted for him because as per their perception he was the best choice that time. That is the beauty of the human soul.

It is very important for us to realise this truth, that every soul is fundamentally divine. It will help us cope when we are having problems in our relationships with people, and enable us to be at peace with ourselves. You must try and remember that if someone criticises you, it doesn't mean he/she is your enemy. You should not take criticism personally, but try to see the other person's point of view and work constructively upon the criticism.

In the example I just gave you, the lawyers who were criticising Shashi earlier were not his enemies, in fact, they were all very dear to him. It was their perception, that Shashi wrongly opposed the strike. But when it came to voting, many thought that Shashi deserved to be the secretary, and that is why they elected him. The point I am trying to make is that no one is your enemy; so do not have any ill will or bad feelings towards anyone. You should never feel sad or hurt just because of someone's perception about you. Just keep in mind the beauty of the soul.

How should you deal with criticism, particularly if there are untrue or unfair allegations being levelled against you? If there is an occasion to clarify your position, you may do so. But never bother too much to give an explanation on every issue. I am sure that in your dealings with the world, you will gradually understand when there is an important issue on which you need to clarify your stand and when you should just ignore the matter.

Generally speaking, remember these golden words of wisdom:  
“Never give explanations on irrelevant and unimportant issues.



Those who believe you, do not need any explanation and those who do not believe you, would not believe your explanation anyway.”

So where is the need for an explanation? Just relax your mind, which is most important for your growth.

You must have noticed that even those who are not considered ‘good’ by the society involve themselves in charity work of some sort. Many such people often donate millions of rupees for a good cause. This, what I say is the ‘Beauty of Soul’. A man hurts someone by irresponsible remarks because of his perception of a situation or a person. Similarly a man commits some crime or error because of greed, or hatred, or lack of knowledge, or lack of wisdom or lack of understanding.

So for your own growth and peace of mind, never carry any ill will or hatred against anyone. Negative thoughts disturb your mind and now since you are well aware of the importance of a relaxed mind for your exams and growth, you can’t afford to carry any such garbage of negative thoughts with you. This does not mean that you should not take a stand, or compromise with your principles. Be firm and sure when it is necessary to criticise, but remember to make your criticism issue-based and not targeted at an individual.

Many of us waste a lot of time and energy by carrying negative impressions about people, which ultimately only harms us. You may spend all your time cribbing about someone, generating negative energy in yourself in the process, while the person concerned may be merrily enjoying his/her life, unaffected by your concerns. So you see the futility of your anger! You will be surprised to discover that even in the case of your so-called worst enemies, if you, at some

time, try to make up with them or find an opportunity to genuinely praise them, they would invariably respond positively to you. You would realise that the person is not as bad as you had believed!

So be positive, and always believe in the 'Beauty of Soul'. Keep your mind relaxed all the time to look nice, to score maximum and to enjoy maximum.

\* \* \*

*“Every lock has  
a key.”*

# 17

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## How to Resolve an Issue

It is very important to learn how to solve a problem or resolve an issue. If you are not able to resolve something, it would keep your mind occupied and disturbed, which we know is very harmful to your peace of mind and towards your goal of enjoyment and scoring well in the exams. Many times it happens with us that a particular issue or problem keeps bothering us and we feel disturbed all the time. Such niggling issues can badly affect your performance in other activities of life, maybe in exams or dealing with friends or parents. So there can't be two opinions on it that we must resolve all disturbing issues as soon as possible.

### **Few simple tips**

Suppose you have an issue, which has to be resolved, or which is bothering you. Say you are not able to decide whether to go with your parents for a vacation or to join your friends, who are going on a holiday elsewhere during the same period. It is a good idea to compare the advantages and disadvantages of both the options and analyse their feasibility. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each option. For example, suppose you have

been on a vacation many times with your parents in the recent past, it is all right to be with your friends on this occasion. On the other hand, if you have been spending a lot of time with your friends of late, you can choose to be with your parents this time. If you have already visited the place where your parents are planning to go, you can explain to them that you would prefer to go with your friends, who are visiting a place you have not seen. The cost of the trip in either case can also be taken into account to help you decide your course of action.

Sometimes it is advisable to just follow your heart and take a decision if you feel there is nothing wrong in that option.

In your student life, you will often face this kind of dilemma. You may have to choose what subjects to study, which school or college to join, or what kind of extra-curricular activities you should participate in. Sometimes you may feel that the other choices are totally out of the question because of some practical difficulty. So rule out those options without wasting further time on what is not possible.

Whenever there is any confusion, just sit quietly with yourself and take out a paper and a pen to make a balance-sheet of advantages and disadvantages. Give points to each advantage and disadvantage separately, depending upon their importance in your life. Start discounting the options, which are too remote, impractical or nonsensical. By this process of elimination, you would always make a correct decision.

Sometimes you may take the help of a friend or a teacher or your parents, depending upon the issue and your comfort level in discussing it with them.

Once you get into the habit of weighing your options logically in this manner, you will find it easy to sort out all other unresolved issues. So start doing this exercise right away, basing your decision on not harming anyone; your heart would never fail you and you would always be free from any confusion. You would always have a relaxed mind to look nice, score maximum and enjoy maximum.

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*"If you care about peoples' approval you will be their prisoner. Do your best and enjoy sure route for serenity."*

# 18

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## Don't Be Caged—Fly Like a Free Bird to Score Maximum

One of the main reasons why we are never fully content in life is that we are far too concerned about moulding our behaviour and personality in accordance with society's expectations. We are easily affected by other people's comments on our activities, personality, style of dressing, attitudes, mannerisms, etc.

Please remember, each one of us is unique and entitled to his/her opinions. People will either comment positively or negatively about you, your family or your beliefs. But whether you receive praise or criticism, take both with a pinch of salt, because those are, after all, merely perceptions of others, which may or may not be true.

My friend Davinder often recites a nice couplet, which beautifully captures this philosophy propounded by an enlightened soul:

*Kuch to log kahenge logo ka kaam hein kehna,  
Chodo bekar ke baato mein, kahin beet na jaye rainaa.*

This means people will always comment; that is after all their job, as

they have nothing better to do. We should ignore all these useless comments and not waste our time worrying about them.

Even prophets and incarnations of God like Rama, Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammad, Guru Nanak Devji and Buddha, and great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela have been criticised by people at one time or the other. So how can you expect people to approve of you all the time?

I am reminded of a simple story that has a *deep* meaning:

In a village, once a man was riding a horse while his son was walking along beside him. Some passers-by saw them and commented, "What a heartless father! He is riding on the horse himself while his poor son is walking."

The father immediately got down and asked his son to ride the horse while he walked alongside. Hardly had they moved a few yards when some people standing nearby said, "Just look at that strong and healthy young man riding comfortably on the horse, while his poor old father is forced to walk!" Hearing this, the son felt so hurt that he got off at once and they both decided to walk, with the horse following them. When they reached the market, all the shopkeepers pointed at them and laughed, saying, "What fools you both are! You have a perfectly good horse to ride and yet you are walking!"

The moral of the story is that people will always make comments, regardless of whatever you do. Hence the best thing to do is to ignore negative and useless comments. Many students take remarks, made by others, to heart and brood about them, without realising the damage they are doing to their health and mindset. In the long run, it gravely affects their capacity to learn and understand, with the

result their performance in the exams is affected badly. So always be positive and ignore irrelevant comments.

This does not mean that you should not pay attention to positive suggestions or advice given by well-wishers or your parents or teachers. But comments like “you are not looking good in that dress” or “your hairstyle is out-dated” are useless remarks that are meant to be ignored. Your heart would convey to you the difference between genuine advice and mere attempts to ridicule you. So always be aware and simply throw away the negative comments completely out of your mind. Do not carry them in your mind even for a minute. Do not burden your mind with any nonsense. Keep your mind neat and clean like a basket of flowers, not like a dustbin of useless comments.

*If you care about people's approval, you will be their prisoner. Do your best and enjoy the sure route towards success.*

The other common trap we fall into is that we seem more concerned about what others are doing instead of focusing on our own lives. Either we waste time and energy worrying about what others are saying about us, or we waste time trying to find out what others are up to.

It is a very shallow and negative aspect of our personality and we should work on controlling this urge. Only those people who have nothing positive to do, waste energy on useless issues like discussing or trying to find out what other people are saying or what others are doing. People who have nothing better to do with their time and energy, waste it on idle gossip and speculation. Their concerns are restricted to who is looking ugly or attractive, who is friendly with



whom, which neighbour has quarrelled with his wife or how much money someone spent on his daughter's birthday gift.

What others do in their private or public life is not relevant to you, and is none of your business either. Of course if someone is an achiever in any field that interests you, then you may meet him/her to improve your skills and learn more, but no time should be wasted on discussing useless issues.

Another aspect of life that you must understand is that events, whether good or bad, will come and go. Everything is transient, and nothing lasts forever. So do not imprison yourself in a cage of lasting grief when adversity strikes. Life is made up of happy and sad moments. On one hand, India wins the T20 championship, and on the other, thousands of people die in earthquakes, floods or due to drought conditions. In both these cases, the celebrations and sadness would last for a few hours or a few days, and then people would find new issues to discuss.

Many great philosophers and religious leaders have preached the theory of impermanence, that *nothing is ever permanent* in life. So do not cling to bad memories or sustain yourself only with the glow of past joys and achievements. Live in the here and now, and when bad times overwhelm you, just tell yourself, *this too, shall pass*, to feel relaxed all the time.

Entertain only positive thoughts and keep only useful information in your mind. Do not be in the prison of others' opinions. Do not become a football to others' reactions. You must fly high at will like a free bird and let your spirit soar free, unburdened by the oppressive weight of public opinion.

*Engrave pleasant memories and events in your mind and write negative comments on sand.*

Make this your motto and I assure you that your mind will be relaxed, and your power of understanding, your memory, sharpness and intelligence will be enhanced. It would also improve the glow on your face. If you are positive, people would connect better with you, would like your company and would be more helpful.

Count the benefits of your being positive and tell me if there is any other choice but to be happy and positive! So do not be in a cage, fly like a free bird to look nice, enjoy maximum and score maximum.

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*“Troubles are like washing machines they twist and turn around but in the end we come out brighter and better than before.”*

# 19

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## Complaining vs Exams

The true depth of a person's character can be judged from the way he or she faces adverse situations. Those, who take adversity in their stride, without bemoaning their fate, show greater character; than those, who are in the habit of complaining over one issue or the other.

As I have stated earlier, no one in this whole world has ever got all that he or she has wanted in life. There is a famous saying by an enlightened soul that captures this truth beautifully:

*Kabhi kisi ko mukammal jahan nahin milta.*

This means that no one ever gets everything in life.

We see the most fortunate and blessed people missing out on so many things in their respective lives, despite having the world at their disposal.

I would like to share with you the story of a dear friend of mine. This person is very well placed in life. He lost his mother and then

within a few months also lost his brother. And this is not all. The shocking part is that within a month of losing his brother, he lost his father, and within a few months of that, he lost his sister too. Can you imagine someone going through that much pain within such a short span? Yet he was a man of such strong character that he never allowed people to know his pain. Instead, he became more helpful to one and all and no one could ever imagine that he actually went through so much pain because he was always bubbling with joy.

So, whenever you feel overwhelmed with the sorrows of life, think of those who must be worse off than you. No one ever remained free of miseries and difficult times. Even enlightened souls have gone through many adverse situations in life. Once you realise this truth, you would never complain about what you do not have or what you do not like.

The secret of a blissful life lies in always being content and enjoying all that you have been blessed with. This is a great quality to possess or develop. If you have some problems, try to solve them with the resources available to you. Otherwise learn to live with what you cannot change. As the saying goes, "Change it if you don't like it and like it if you can't change it." Try to reach a state where you accept everything that comes your way, enjoying the good times and coping bravely with the bad times. Never complain about your problems.

As one enlightened soul has aptly said:

*Khuddar parinde kabhi shikwa nahi karte,  
Har tooti hui shaakh pe basera nahi karte.*

It means that people with self-respect do not complain and do not depend upon weak people.

Be strong enough to face your own problems and develop the energy and self-belief to tackle whatever kind of adversity that may come your way. If you complain all the time, people will start avoiding you. Everyone has enough of their own problems, so no one is interested in yours. This does not mean that you should never share any problem with any one; just that it is not a good habit to complain all the time about every little problem and seek help to sort out minor issues.

Try to solve most of the problems on your own. Try to be self-reliant and avoid asking for small favours. It would go a long way in building your self-confidence and helping you achieve great success in life.

If you feel there is something important that is disturbing you then you may discuss it with someone. Now the big question is, with whom would you want to discuss your personal problems? You should never depend upon or even share your problems with a weak person who is not likely to be of any help.

There are three very important qualities you must look for in a person before you discuss or share any personal problems with him or her. The first and foremost is that the person should be genuinely concerned about your welfare. He should have the inclination, time and patience to listen to your problems carefully and sensitively. He should be totally involved while listening to the matter which is disturbing you or which is a very important issue for you. If you have a relaxed mind, your heart would convey to you whether the person is attentive and concerned about your problem or not. So you can decide accordingly, whether to share your difficulties with him or not. But do remember not to discuss your personal problems with too many people. It would make you

a laughing stock and you would exhaust yourself unnecessarily. Select a friend, philosopher or guide very carefully to discuss your personal problems.

The second great quality that your confidante should have is that your personal secret or problem should die with him. It is a great quality to refuse to share anyone's personal secret with others. It needs a great deal of maturity and involvement to be able to do that. If you choose a person with no integrity, you will find to your dismay that he or she is talking to everyone in town about your problem! Then your difficulties would only be compounded; so make sure to assess this quality in the person to whom you are going to confide your personal problem.

The last important point is that you should also ascertain whether that friend would be of any help. Help does not only mean that the person should have a solution to offer. Speaking for myself, I believe that even if a friend listens to your problem with total involvement and keeps it close to his/her heart, that is sufficient. In addition, if he/she is able to suggest a way to deal with the issue or actually manages to solve the problem, then it is a bonus.

In case you are unable to find a person with these qualities, there is no need to be disappointed. Just try to tackle the issue yourself. (We have already discussed how to solve a problem ourselves, earlier.)

You may be wondering once again how this discussion is relevant to your exams. You would notice that those who are content with what they have; who are self-reliant and helpful to others are more relaxed. If you complain all the time, your mental equilibrium

would be disturbed and you would not be relaxed. As we have noted earlier, a relaxed mind is crucial in order to achieve success in exams and in life.

So let us resolve to feel content with what we have, to be self-reliant, not to whine over what we do not have, in order to have a relaxed mind and be able to look nice, score well and enjoy life.

\* \* \*

*“You are  
your best  
teacher.”*

# 20

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## Be Your Own Teacher to Score More

Learning from mistakes and being your own teacher is the most effective formula to scoring well and enjoying yourself.

We all know of several cases where innocent children feel depressed or sad after committing an error or because of poor results. In the year 2006 there were about six thousand exam related suicides in India. That means, every day about sixteen flowers were crushed by examination stress. Imagine the state of mind of those innocent children when they took that unfortunate step!

I am sorry to say that society at large is to take blame for the loss of these angels. One thing is certain: either these children did not share the cause of their depression with anyone; and if at all they did, no one guided them or told them the basic truth of life that ‘no one perfect in all aspects of life was ever born on this earth’.

No one is complete and no one is useless. Everyone, irrespective of their positions, be it president, prime minister, minister, senior



officer, teacher, or parent, has committed errors or has failed one time or the other. If Sachin Tendulkar, after playing four hundred one-day matches and more than a hundred test matches, can commit a mistake and get out, does it mean that he is not world number one? If Roger Federer, despite being the number one tennis player, can lose in the first round to a low-ranking player, does it mean that he is not number one? Similarly if Ronaldino misses an easy chance to score a goal, does it mean that he is not a world-class footballer?

Waves are inspiring not because they rise and fall but because each time they fall they never fail to rise again.

It is important to remember that achievers do not sulk. They *learn from their mistakes* and try not to repeat them. They work hard to correct and improve themselves. If all those whom I mentioned above can commit errors, we must realise the truth that to err is human. An enlightened master wonderfully said that it is part of our nature not only to err, but also to fall prey to temptation. But that does not mean that we should develop a sense of guilt and go into a shell. The wise thing to do is to bounce back after every mistake and resolve not to commit that mistake again. Work on your shortcomings diligently and with dedication. That is the best way to grow. Till their last breath, people keep on committing mistakes. That does not mean they are not mature.

How often you commit the same errors and how quickly you learn from the mistake you commit, decides your level of wisdom and maturity. You can even learn from other people's mistakes. For example, if you see someone falling from the bus while trying to board or alight from a moving bus, you need not try it and fall yourself.

It happens frequently that people go into a shell or feel depressed on their committing even a small mistake. They do not feel like doing anything and are thinking of that mistake all the time. This is a very negative reaction and it can affect their performance and balance of mind. Successful people are not those who do not commit errors. They are the ones who learn from their mistakes and are ever ready to move forward in life, as confident as ever. If great performers like Roger Federer, Sachin Tendulkar, Tiger Woods or other successful people were to feel depressed after any error, they would not have achieved what they have and be at the top of their professions.

So dear friends, do not worry or take it to heart if you commit any error. Once you realise this truth that all great people have, at one time or the other, committed mistakes, you would have no reason to feel low or depressed.

You must *become your own teacher* and observe your performance in every sphere of life. Just observe your activities after dinner every day to analyse what you did right and where you went wrong. Note down the points where you need to improve. You should always keep a blank paper in your pocket where you could note down your pending tasks and any thought or important point which comes to your mind during the day. You may keep it even at your bedside. Quite often it happens that some important thought comes to your mind but you do not note it, and with the passage of time you lose track of that line of thought. After a couple of months or even years, something occurs that brings the same thought to your mind and you realise it was a mistake not to have noted down that thought and acted on it for so long. That is why I stress the need to *always have a paper and pen with you*. You should note down anything that you feel is important,

like implementation of ideas to improve your personality or chapters or points you wish to clarify from your teacher or a friend. You should note down every issue to be dealt with, to be more organised. It would help you avoid the trouble of trying to remember things all the time. As a result your mind would be more relaxed to score better in exams.

Once you start this habit of keeping a blank page and pen with you, you would really feel more organised and balanced. You should also keep one master diary at home where you periodically delete or make entries of your plans and pending projects.

It is a good idea to be flexible and open to alternate options. You may be firm in your viewpoint but you should never be rigid. If you are given some other point of view, do not dismiss it outright. Try to analyse it objectively and then decide what is wrong or right. Never feel shy about acknowledging the suggestions of friends, teachers and parents. But ultimately you have to take the final decision by yourself after sincerely considering everyone's viewpoint.

In the words of an enlightened soul:

*Ruk ruk ke chale, chal chal ke ruke.*

*Jo dil ne kaha woh hamne kiya,*

*Sab ki sun li par shaam dhale,*

*Jo dil ne kaha wo hamne kiya.*

This means, I walked after taking some rest and took rest after a walk. I listened to everyone's suggestions; but at the end of the day, decided to do what my heart said. So listen attentively to everyone's advice, and then with a cool mind, decide your future course of action by listening to your heart.

In order to be your own teacher the most important habit to be developed is the *weekly review* of your activities, thought processes, pending work, progress being made and mistakes being repeated. Those who keep a watch on themselves, progress by leaps and bounds. It may look cumbersome, but it is most important for anyone aspiring to become something special in life. It is very important for those who want to evolve as great human beings.

Weekly self-analysis, while sitting alone in a garden or at some secluded place, would tell you about the mistakes as well as improvements you are continuing to make. It would keep you updated about the status of your studies: which subject and which chapter is still pending; what makes you happy and what makes you feel disturbed. It would tell you what could enhance your capacity to learn and understand better, in order to perform to the best of your ability in examinations.

If you are not able to concentrate on your studies for some reason, you must sit by yourself and figure out why this is happening and what is the solution to that problem?

If you feel sleepy when you start studying after the evening meal, you should keep a check on how much and what you are eating. Try to exclude all items, which make you feel drowsy. Be very particular about your diet.

Similarly, suppose the sport you play is tiring and you find you are not able to concentrate after coming back from the game; it is advisable to exclude that sport from your daily routine. Think about it, if you notice that after any particular activity you do not feel like studying, nor do you feel agile and balanced to understand your assignments,

should you still continue with that activity?

Ultimately it is up to you to decide. You have to show the maturity to take decisions on your own. Whatever we have been discussing so far is just an approach, a theory, a path to achieve success. Feel free to experiment with this approach to see if it suits you. If you find it makes you happy and achieves your aim, continue with it, but if you feel it does not suit you, then just change the option without any inhibition.

You do not have to stock up knowledge; you have to *live knowledge*. That is growth. That is wisdom; which will equip you with a relaxed mind and enable you to look nice, enjoy yourself and score maximum in your exams.

So let us feel free and relaxed. Let us bounce back like a rubber ball after every mistake to learn from the same, and regain the confidence to do better next time.

\* \* \*

*“Nothing  
pleases a man  
more than a  
genuine praise.”*

# 21

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## Praise vs Criticism

*Never miss any opportunity to praise others.* When we are talking of the importance of having a relaxed mind all the time, we must realise that all positive actions relax the mind and all negative actions agitate us and make us tense. If you are thinking negative or having feelings of hatred or ill will towards anyone, you must be tense. Surely you cannot have negative feelings while you are smiling! Try to imbibe this into your system and do and think as much positive as possible. A positive attitude can move mountains, and a word of praise achieves much more than the strongest criticism. So whenever you get an opportunity to praise others, make the most of it.

When you show anger towards anyone, not only does that person feel bad, but the whole atmosphere gets vitiated and even you feel sad at the end of the day. But when you say something nice about someone, that person feels happy and the entire atmosphere becomes relaxed and filled with positive vibes. So never miss an opportunity to praise. But it has to be genuine praise. It may be a case of exaggeration if you tell someone that they sang better

than Lata Mangeshkar or acted better than Amitabh Bachchan! (Unless of course that person has actually done that.) Do remember, however, that it has to be genuine praise. Do not go overboard with exaggeration, but try to make favourable remarks like, “that was an inspiring performance” or “you really showed your class” or “that was a super game you played” or “you sang really well, your voice is very powerful.”

Once you resolve and make it your habit to talk nicely about others, you will find umpteen opportunities in day-to-day life to praise them. Having said that, I must also clarify, that I do not mean that you should unnecessarily praise anyone or refrain from criticising or avoid taking a stand in life.

You must express your viewpoint wherever you feel it is required. But never criticise for the sake of it. At the same time do not criticise people about small insignificant matters. Take a stand on something important. For example, if you are planning to have lunch with friends in a restaurant, you need not insist on going to a particular place. If you are going for a movie, you need not dig in your heels and refuse to go for any movie apart from the one you wish to see. You may suggest that a particular movie is good, but for these little things it is better to surrender to your friends' wishes.

The ability to be accommodating and flexible is a great quality. Surrender is not a sign of weakness. It requires strong will and courage to surrender to others' desires and preferences. You must develop the capacity to judge whether an issue is worthy of taking a stand. If it is, you should be firm like a rock. So remember to save your energies for taking a firm stand on major issues.

How do we decide whether an **issue is major or minor?** This reminds me of a joke that I'd like to share with you.

A lady with a nagging temperament told her friends one day that **she had stopped fighting with her husband** and they had settled all the troublesome issues between them. The friends wanted to know what kind of agreement they had reached. She replied, "I have decided to show some grace and have surrendered to my husband. I have given him full authority to decide on major issues and have asked him not to worry about or interfere in small things."

"What does that mean?" asked one of her friends.

The lady smiled mischievously and said, "I let him decide on the major issues, such as whether India should make nuclear weapons, what our relationship with our neighbouring countries should be like, how we should deal with the super powers and which aircraft ought to be manufactured in the next five years. I have firmly told him not to interfere in small issues like how much his pocket allowance should be, what meals should be cooked, when we should go out, where we must go, what we should wear, who should be invited to our home and which visitors should be avoided!"

I hope this little joke has helped you understand **which issues are insignificant enough for you to surrender with good grace**, and when to take a stand. Coming back to the point I am trying to make, we all know that **whenever someone talks rudely or harshly, the whole atmosphere is vitiated. Bitter words are more hurtful than the pain caused by a knife.** Sometimes the **hurt caused by cruel words takes too long to heal.** However, **whenever we talk sweetly or make positive remarks or genuinely praise others, in addition to making the atmosphere pleasant, we help ourselves.** We feel good about



ourselves and become confident. In the long run, this confidence translates into success.

Feeling nice and having a relaxed mind is essential to success in your exams and growth. So let us resolve to use nice words for a relaxed and balanced mind, to look nice, to enjoy maximum and to score maximum.

\* \* \*

*“A good parent is a friend philosopher and guide who tries to develop a child into a complete human being by conduct not by words.”*

# 22

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## One for the Parents

**This chapter is for the parents.**

I wish to share with you that even before my child was born, about twenty-five years ago, I had started reading about child development. I thought that if I was to have a child I must learn the art of bringing up a child and all the issues involved in it. This was in addition to my studies on personality development and philosophy of life. I am sure many of you must have read a few books and/or articles on these subjects. So as fellow travellers on this road to understanding child and personality development, let us share some notes. Let us discuss how to deal with our children, how to love them and how to take care of them.

There is no doubt that all parents are sincerely interested in the proper *upbringing, growth and career* of their children. But let us try and analyse why, despite the fact that every child is loved by his/her parents, few children are truly well adjusted, and why so many children have problems with their parents.

The answer is very simple and yet very complicated too. It is simple in cases where the child is taken good care of, with all love and affection, where he/she turns out well; and a child who is ignored or goes through some emotional problems, does not conform to the expectations of the parents. But the answer becomes complicated in those cases where, despite the best of care being lavished in bringing up the child, he/she goes astray; and in others, despite the parents lacking resources or the ability to give the child proper care, he/she turns out to be brilliant.

It is true that the development and growth of the child is not wholly and solely dependent upon the quality of parent care because there are other factors too which influence the mind of a child. But no one can deny that the *role of the parents*, especially through the teenage years, is *very important*. In fact, we can go to the extent of saying that it is the single most important factor contributing to the proper development of the child. So the question is, how can we do our best for our children after knowing the truth and some ground realities about child development and child psychology?

The *first five years* of a child's life are very crucial for his/her growth. But not many of us pay heed to the personality development of the child during the first five years of his/her life. Undoubtedly we all love our children and do much for them, like *playing with them* and buying new clothes and toys for them. But is that sufficient?

Having brought up a child myself and having interacted with so many children/students over the last thirty years, I would like to share my views with you.

Coming back to child development, I feel the first important point

is to take care of the *expectant mother* right from the time of conception. It is common knowledge that if a woman who is in the family way is properly taken care of, emotionally and physically, the chances of her giving birth to a healthy child are much brighter. So the husband and other near and dear ones of the expectant mother should resolve to take extra care of the emotional, physical and mental health of the mother, right from the time of conception.

When the eagerly awaited moment finally arrives and the baby is born, how does one plan her/his development and upbringing? It is quite often seen that in many orthodox families, the bringing up of the baby or taking care of her/him is the sole responsibility of the mother. Very few families or husbands shoulder any responsibility in this regard. Many husbands and in-laws, when asked to help the mother or the infant, feel that they are being asked to do what is rightly the mother's job. They do not realise that the personality of the child is being developed every day and it is their responsibility also to see that both the mother and the infant are in good health. If the mother is required to attend to all the needs of the newborn throughout the day, and then expected to be awake the whole night tending to the baby, we are really asking for the moon. It is just not possible for young mothers to maintain their calm and composure in these circumstances. On the other hand, some help from the father (many fathers nowadays have started doing their bit for the baby), goes a long way in ensuring that both the mother and the child are healthy and happy.

There are many ways in which a father can bond with his child. He can give him/her a bath occasionally or change his/her clothes, and put him/her to bed after giving him a cuddle. Besides helping the mother, this also helps in building a much-required strong bond with

the baby and plays a major role in promoting a healthy relationship between the father and the child. I have experienced it and feel that bringing up a child is so blissful that one would treasure those lovely moments all his life. So my request to husbands is to please start doing a bit in this direction in order to enjoy raising a child and to ensure a better future for your child.

When a child is very young, we tend to feel that he/she is unaware of the happenings around him/her. This is a misconception. Babies start imbibing things very early in life, many of them subconsciously; so parents should be very careful of their activities when children are around. We all have noticed children adopting a phrase, an action, a dialogue, a walking style or a sitting posture of any family member or even of a regular visitor to their homes. Many of us feel that the child is too young to understand, but that is not true. Children in their early years learn largely by imitation.

You must have witnessed or been part of the following situation: the child answers the phone, and when the caller asks for his father, the latter orders his son to tell the caller that he is not at home. Now can we still expect the child to follow his father's preaching, "Do not tell a lie"?

It is important to remember that rather than our teachings and preaching, it is our actions and habits that influence our children more easily and powerfully. We must learn to be very patient with young children if we wish to develop a strong bond with them. Many times children ask what we think are stupid questions, but we should not be impatient at such times. We have to satisfy the curiosity of the child. If we show anger or ignore the child, he/she would stop asking further questions. This is very harmful and leads

to a communication gap between the parent and the child.

Children seek a lot of indulgence, especially during their growing years. Your child needs your time and attention, not only the expensive toys or clothes you buy him/her. Young parents should take time out to be in the company of their children. They should play games that the children like to play and engage them in some playful creative activity so that they are happily occupied and also learn a few things in the process. They must tell children stories and more importantly, listen to their stories. Very often a child's innermost desires and hidden fears surface in the stories he/she tells, so make it a point to listen attentively to him/her and not make fun of his/her apprehensions or dismiss them as mere fantasy. That is the best way to develop a positive bond.

It is a good idea to send your child to a *playschool* for a year before he/she is to join her regular school. Playschools help children to learn to adjust to physical separation from their parents for a fixed time every day. Children also learn to follow a routine. Playschools instil a certain discipline in terms of behaviour and habits. The most important advantage of going to a playschool is that children get an opportunity to interact with their peers, which will be an invaluable asset when they go to a regular school.

In today's world, the joint family system hardly exists in the cities; so many children grow up without the company of other children. As a result, they are often unable to interact with their peers. Being with other children teaches them social skills. They learn to share, take turns and work as a team. However, it is important to choose a good playschool, which has plenty of space for children to play, efficient and caring staff and a safe and hygienic environment.

One important thing you must do is to try and instil in your child a brave attitude from a very early age. Fearlessness and bravery are the scarcest qualities in the world today because of which society is paying a very heavy price. It is vital that these qualities are instilled in our next generation.

*How can we make our children brave?* Well, to begin with, we have to learn not to panic at the slightest sign of harm to our children. Every child, during his first few years, is likely to stumble and fall regularly. Most of the times, the parents react strongly, crying out and getting panicky. The child may merely be confused or a little bruised by the fall, but not nervous. However, on seeing the parents react with fear and anxiety, the child begins to cry and learns the meaning of fear. (I have tried to do the opposite with my child, and I found that this strategy was very effective.) If you just pick up the child, saying “Brave boy”, and involve him in some activity of his choice, the child quickly forgets his pain and confusion, stops crying and starts playing again. This strategy makes the child brave and he learns not to cry at the drop of a hat.

In the long run, this quality of fearlessness will also help to shape his personality. This does not mean that we should not try to protect the child from potential harm. If he is playing with sharp objects or going near fire, you have to warn him and make him understand that he should not do these things.

*It is essential to inculcate love for music in children.* We have discussed earlier the importance of music in our lives. Children are full of energy and are eager learners, so it is not difficult to instil in them a love for music right from their childhood. The best way to do this is to listen to some good music in their presence. They

would surely imbibe this habit by seeing you enjoying the music. It is well known that music can be of great help on many occasions in life, whether joyful or tense. Music is easily available and can really uplift the soul. Moreover, one does not need any company to listen to music.

Life is so uncertain that we cannot predict what will happen the next moment. We all know that neither money nor power can give real happiness, nor can we enjoy wealth that is not earned by right means. We all know the true *purpose of life* is to be happy and useful. We have learnt that true *success* lies in being a complete human being. We have understood that *perfect health* means physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual health. So we must strive to give our children the gift of perfect health.

As parents, one of our top priorities should be to bring up our children in such a way as to make them *complete human beings* who would grow up and make a difference to the world. Why is it that so many people, despite having reached the top of their professions and possessing all possible material comforts, still indulge in corruption and continue to remain insensitive towards their social responsibilities? It is all because of defective upbringing.

Such people have never understood the true meaning of life, success and happiness. So let us plan to rear our children in such a manner that not only we but the whole society feels proud of them. There is no doubt that sometimes, despite the best of efforts, children go astray because of other influences, but that is part of life. The converse is also true: many children, despite being deprived of proper parenting or care, still manage to excel in life. So all we can do is try to make our children good human beings. This is more



important than focusing on providing the best of material things to them.

There is a wise saying that goes like this:

*Poot kapoot to kyun dhan sanche,*

*Poot sapoot to kyun dhan sanche.*

It means that if your offspring is spoiled, then why bother to accumulate wealth? He will blow it all up. And if your child is capable and worthy, then again there is no need to hoard your wealth for him, as he will anyway earn money through his intelligence and hard work. So the best thing to do is to provide them with *value education*.

*The ideal time to interact with children is dinner time.* It is believed that the family that prays and *dines together* stays together. You can make it a habit to pray together for just five minutes before the meal. Over dinner, you can share your thoughts with your children, enquire about how their day went, talk about their school or friends or about the latest happenings in the world. The idea should be to share your experiences and plans with them, so that they feel a part of your world. Then they will also want to share their hopes, fears and aspirations with you.

This is particularly important in the teenage years, when children tend to become secretive and obsessive about their privacy. You can earn their trust and respect by explaining the rationale behind certain actions or plans you have in mind. You may even ask their opinion on certain issues and act according to their suggestions if you find them viable. This will make them feel like they are valued members of the family. They will regard you as a democratic parent and not a

dictator who takes decisions unilaterally and expects unquestioning obedience. Such discussions also cultivate the intellect and will help them distinguish between right and wrong courses of action. They will learn how to deal with the world and how to handle different situations.

Never miss any opportunity to praise your child, especially in the presence of others. *Children should be praised in public but corrected in private.* Embarrassing children by scolding or criticising them in front of others undermines their confidence and can jeopardise your own rapport with them.

Unconditional love and acceptance brings out the best in a child so do not hesitate to shower your children with love and care. But be very firm about your principles and do not be afraid to say “No” when the need arises, so that the child does not feel that everything will be provided on demand, regardless of the importance and utility of the items. It is not necessary to demonstrate the depth of your love for your child by buying him the most expensive gifts and not refusing him anything. This kind of behaviour spoils children and makes them arrogant, demanding and selfish.

Let your children also understand the *value of money* as early as possible. They must know that money helps to afford a certain standard of living, but it is hard-earned and must be wisely spent.

It is important to try and understand the child’s way of thinking, and his/her likes and dislikes. We should be ready to guide them if they turn to us. If we are not able to help them on a particular issue, we should refer them to someone who can. It is not possible for parents to know everything about every subject, so do not feel hesitant if

you are not able to advise the child on some matters. It is better to admit you are not sufficiently informed about the subject and suggest someone who can guide them on the issue, rather than pretend to know or discourage the child from enquiring about it because you do not have the answers. There should be no ego in this regard, because ultimately it is the well-being of the child that is important.

Never discourage a child from pursuing any constructive hobby or activity. *Let them learn and experience* things for themselves. Do not kill their curiosity. Try to be friendly with their friends, especially the ones you feel would have a positive influence over your child. Encourage those children to visit you often. At the same time, do not openly express your disapproval of friends who you think would be a bad influence on your child.

Children, especially teenagers, tend to be rebellious and will not take kindly to advice in choosing their friends. If you try to force your views on them, they would perceive it as interference and would defy you. If you feel that certain children are not good company for your child, try to discuss the matter tactfully. Explain to him/her why you have reservations about them, and try to see things from his/her point of view. If he/she still does not agree, tell him/her that you have faith in him/her and you are convinced he/she will not indulge in any wrongdoing. Children develop a sense of accountability when they are entrusted with certain responsibilities, and it gives them a feeling of self-worth when they know their family has faith in them. Encourage your child to widen his/her circle of friends. You will find that gradually he/she herself will begin to realise who his/her true friends are.

In this busy world of ours, we often take our family for granted,

not realising that it is important to spend time with them too. One often hears parents lamenting that they were so busy with their careers and with trying to make enough money for their families that they were not able to be with their children during their growing years. Do not fall into this trap of hankering after more money in the false assumption that it will give your children a better standard of living. You will discover too late that all of you would have been happier with less money but more time to bond with each other.

Try and plan *weekly outings* regularly and a vacation once or twice a year with your children. This is the best time to discuss and share what is happening in your respective lives because everyone is relaxed and comfortable. Make it a point to watch plays or go to musical concerts or exhibitions with them to stimulate the artistic side of their personalities.

*Above all, remember to keep communication channels open with your child at all times.*

We must treat our children as our *friends* to have the best relationship with them. It is vital to reassure them that it is normal to err and they should never feel nervous or guilty about making mistakes. They should have complete confidence in us that we will take their mistakes in our stride. We should make them understand that mistakes are to be considered as learning experiences. Encourage them to capitalise on their strengths while working upon their weaknesses. Explain to them that despite the best of efforts, sometimes the results may not be favourable, but the performance would never go unrewarded. Make it a point to express appreciation for their smallest achievements.

In the process of bringing up our children, it is good to pause once in a while to re-examine our own philosophy of life. What kind of human beings do we want our children to be? Are we setting them a proper example by doing what we are telling them to do? We can teach our children to be complete human beings only if we are disciplined ourselves and are spending the required time on improving our physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual fitness.

In this success-driven world, the worth of a person is often based on how much money he earns, what position or status he has or what kind of material possessions he flaunts. Children should also be told that the purpose of life is not to make only money. These are shallow parameters and cannot be considered the true measure of success.

You must teach your children that failure and success are not measured only by the percentage of marks obtained in exams. The *meaning of success* changes from time to time and is different in different situations. Success is to try and improve every day. Success is to be disciplined, to be sensitive, to be responsible in life. Success is to function with a relaxed mind as far as possible. Success is to be healthy and in control of oneself. Success is not to waste time in useless activities. Success is to fall and rise again like a rubber ball, while failure is to fall like a rock. Success is to learn from your mistakes. Success is to make others happy and to help others. Success is to become an asset to one's family and close friends and finally to humanity at large. Success is to have lofty ideals and work according to them. Success is to keep smiling all the time and not to complain in any situation. Success is to know and accept that no one ever gets everything they want. Success is to *follow your heart*.

I am confident that if we try to instil and develop these qualities in our children, we are sure to be proud of them. Many of you must already be doing all the things we have discussed so far, or at least some of it.

It is important to make our children understand that life is not only about material acquisitions and enjoyment. It is much more than that. True contentment and bliss comes from non-material possessions such as love, trust and friendship, things which are linked with the heart and soul. Let your children first grow as wonderful and complete human beings. Success, recognition and the rest will follow automatically.

\* \* \*

*“The importance of music in our life is like the importance of our heartbeats, though not visible it silently lends us the gift called life/bliss.”*

# 23

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## A Date with a Musician

Music is such a wonderful thing that it can lift your spirits in no time. If you are in a terrible mood and you happen to listen to a beautiful song or a musical composition, have you noticed how it cheers you up instantly? Such is the power of music.

Life can be beautiful only if you are positive and have resolved to feel calm and happy, come what may. We have understood by now that everyone has problems. Everyone, irrespective of their status, makes mistakes, and no one gets what they expect, always. So where is the reason to feel depressed?

Still, whenever you are feeling low or depressed, make a date with the musician of your choice, and feel your mood change in a flash. Just switch on any cassette or CD and listen to some soul-stirring music. In fact, you must make it a point to listen to music of your choice every day.

The best thing about music is that you do not have to take time out to listen to it. You may listen to music during your morning walk/jog,

while getting ready to go to school/college, while travelling, when you come back from school/college, while having lunch, when you are enjoying your evening snack or dinner, or even during a stroll after dinner. Just make it a habit and you will find there can never be any better stress buster than music. Indeed, music is a great motivator too.

When you retire to bed, put your favourite music cassette/CD on and sleep with it playing in the background. Some soft, soothing composition, either vocal or instrumental, is better, since at the end of a long, hard day your body, mind and spirit need to unwind and relax. Listen to your heart and choose the music that lulls you to sleep every night.

There cannot be any *better company* than music. It is easily available, you do not have to spend too much money on it, and you do not need any company to listen to it. You can indulge in this hobby without having to waste time in travelling. Just imagine, sitting at home you can listen to the music of your choice!

My personal favourites are the immortal compositions of great poets like Amir Khusro, Bule Shah, Ghalib and Kabir, as well as recent poets like Sahir or Gulzar. There are so many magical voices to choose from: Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Jasraj, Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammad Rafi, Abida Parveen, Ghulam Ali or Jagjit Singh. As for instrumental music, you can listen to the sitar of Pandit Ravi Shankar, the flute of Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia, the tabla of Ustad Zakir Hussain, the sarod played by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan or the santoor played by Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma.

These musicians have contributed so much to soothe our souls that



we can never repay their debt. To my mind they are magicians, not mere musicians, because they really mesmerise you with their artistry. It is no wonder that they are the recipients of countless awards that honour their priceless contribution to society. They have put in their heart and soul to reach the level where their compositions or voices enthrall millions of souls. We are so fortunate that sitting at home, with the mere flick of a switch, we can listen to them over and over again. What more can one ask for in life?

Music knows no age, no boundaries, so go ahead and choose what music you would like to play to relax your mind, because this relaxation is most important for your growth and evolvment. That is why I say your best date is a date with any musician or maybe with many of them at the same time!

The best thing to do is to listen to some nice devotional or soft music during early morning when you are getting ready. Soft instrumental or vocal music is ideal when you retire to bed. Your preparation for the exams and your result are bound to be better if you keep your spirits high and mind relaxed with a regular dose of good music.

You must listen to some good music, especially when you feel low for whatever reason. This is a sure stress buster, and you don't need any company to listen to a great soul.

Now that you have learnt about the power of music and its incredible ability to transform our lives, make it a point to include it in your life on a daily basis. So remember to keep your date with the music of your choice for at least some time every day.

*“The best cosmetic for the lips is truth, for voice is the prayer, for eyes is the kindness, for hands is the charity, and for heart is the friendship.”*

## 24

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### Simple Living vs Exams

Let me tell you something interesting about Warren Buffett, who was listed by *Forbes magazine* as the richest man in the world. This man, despite having so much wealth, does not use a mobile phone and has been living in the same house that he bought forty years ago. He does not waste a single penny but donates millions of dollars.

Similarly Bill Gates donates more money than we can earn in a lifetime. This is called living life ‘simply and beautifully’.

Have you ever gone to watch Rahul Dravid, or Roger Federer, or Ronaldinho just because they were wearing a particular outfit? Have you even noticed what they were wearing, or did you focus on their game? What I wish to discuss here, is that dress and hairstyle do not matter at all. But this does not mean that you should not bother about your dress sense and hairstyle. It is, no doubt, important to be neatly dressed and properly turned out; but you should not spend too much of your time or the hard-earned money of your parents on fancy clothes and hairstyles. It is

far better to be known by your qualities and performance than by your clothes and appearance.

Be like a butterfly, as some enlightened soul has beautifully said: "A butterfly lives only for a few days but still it flies joyfully, capturing many hearts. Each moment in life is precious. Live every moment of it happily."

Mahatma Gandhi used to wear a simple *dhoti*, but till today he is revered all over the world for his sacrifice, courage and vision.

*The best cosmetic for the lips is truth*, for the voice is prayer, for the eyes is kindness, for the hands is charity, and for the heart is friendship.

All performers are brand ambassadors of one or the other world famous company. They have been selected, not for their looks or style, but for their performance and talent. So you must aspire to be chosen and sought by different brands to be their ambassador instead of fighting with your parents to buy some expensive brand of clothes just to impress others. Your simple dress sense shows your confidence level and it also keeps your mind relaxed and balanced. On the other hand, by fighting with parents or spending a lot of time to select dresses and hairstyle, you will make yourself tense, which is bound to affect your balance of mind and performance in exams.

It is important to figure out why wise men give so much importance to '*Simple Living, High Thinking*'. It is because if your living is simple, you are bound to spend quality and relaxed time thinking. If you spend quality time observing your thoughts, you are bound to think

positive and about high moral values. You are bound to generate new ideas.

So friends, from now on, you should not waste even a single minute more than what is reasonably required on your clothes and hairstyle. Let us be judged and acknowledged by our performance and not by the borrowed prestige of some costly brand. Let your style be a fashion statement!

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*“Each work has to pass through three stages — ridicule, opposition and then acceptance. Those who think ahead of their time are sure to be misunderstood.” - Vivekananda*

# 25

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## Original vs Copycat vs Exams

Would you like to be a copycat or would like to be original in your ideas and style?

Some enlightened soul beautifully said that:

“A successful life is one that is lived through understanding and pursuing one’s own path, not chasing the dreams of others.”

### **Be yourself**

The *hardest challenge* is to be yourself in a world where everyone is trying to make you somebody else. It is so easy to be a copycat and blindly follow others but so difficult to be original in your ideas and style.

Appreciating this fact would make your life wonderful, in addition to helping you score remarkably better in your exams. Just pause and think, why do we find only a handful of people who have original ideas whereas the masses are only following the herd instinct? The answer is very simple. Original ideas would come only when

you are at peace with yourself and tuned to your inner being in solitude. How can you get original and creative ideas while you are perpetually mingling with the world?

All of us tend to be busy interacting with people. Many times we even miss a good concert or play or seminar just because we could not find a companion to go with us. Friends are important, but do not become so dependent on them that you cannot live without them. It is just as important to enjoy one's own company. Once you start enjoying pastimes alone you would realise that you save so much time and energy. We waste a lot of time in planning with our friends, things like going out for shopping or for a movie or for dinner.

### **Why not try to spend time in your own company for a change?**

Is it not strange that most of us are not comfortable being alone, either at home or even while going out? This means that we are such boring personalities that we can't bear our own company for even a short while! It is just a matter of habit. You will discover that when you are alone, you are more relaxed and focused. You will be surprised to find that there is a fountain of untapped creativity within you. It is hence advisable to spare some time for yourself to get original ideas.

Is it not interesting that you can never dial your own telephone number from the same instrument? The line would always be engaged. This is symbolic of the profound truth that very few people have time to talk to themselves, as most of us are always busy talking to others. To talk with one's self is the most interesting activity that we tend to miss, because of various reasons.

What is very easy to understand is, that if you are with yourself for

at least an hour a week (and for ten minutes every day), preferably in some natural surroundings like a park or a forest or near a lake or maybe in your own room, and observe your thoughts/deeds it would be a great experience. You would gradually start enjoying this talk with yourself.

Observe as much silence as you can in order to enjoy talking with yourself and become special. Just observe the purpose of those thoughts and ideas, which you have been carrying around for so many years.

Just as we observe the purpose of each item in our home and keep discarding the useless items, we should start rejecting the useless thoughts that do not serve any purpose or are negative to our mission.

Once you start *emptying your mind* of useless thoughts you would automatically start entertaining original ideas. It is sheer logic and time-tested wisdom. Once you start getting original ideas you will discover a sense of purpose in your life and become more confident and content in life. You would have such a wonderfully balanced and relaxed mind that you would excel in whatever you do. Scoring marks would be simpler than you can imagine!

\* \* \*

*“Life laughs at you when you are unhappy, life smiles at you when you are happy but life salutes you when you make others happy.”*

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## Just One Hour a Week

Have you ever thought of the tremendous positive effect that selfless service can bring about on your examination results and enjoyment?

I will tell you about my dear friend Gaurav who is a well-known lawyer. He shared with me, that though he represented the high and mighty, ministers and top industrial houses in world famous cases, the fulfilment that he got by working for the release of hundreds of underprivileged prisoners languishing in jail had been immensely satisfying and blissful. That is the beauty of selfless service. One should always be sensitive to others' problems and sentiments. If one is scoring ninety per cent but is insensitive to others' problems, he is not a complete human being.

Do you know how many Indian farmers commit suicide every year? Millions of children die of hunger; millions do not get primary health facilities and drinking water. Millions of people do not have access to food and even basic education. Millions are unemployed



and millions of students throughout the world do not have perfect physical and mental health.

It is true that no one can solve all the problems of the world. I am not saying that you should lose sleep or peace of mind because of these problems. You should not even feel depressed about these problems. But surely you should be sensitive and aware of the problems. Do spare a thought for these unfortunate souls and count yourself blessed that you have access to all these things that you take so much for granted.

It is very important to develop a complete personality. I am not suggesting you leave your classes or neglect your studies in order to do social service. Just spend one hour a week doing some selfless work.

One enlightened soul beautifully said:

“Life laughs at you when you are unhappy; life smiles at you when you are happy; but life salutes you when you make others happy.”

Once in a while, if you can be helpful to a friend, or even a stranger, do avail of that opportunity. This is bound to enhance your overall capacity to do well in your exams. You will find so much peace through giving that no other activity can provide you even a miniscule of that.

All these activities *enhance your output* and focus by purifying your mind, which directly improves your capacity to do well in exams too. If you are sensitive to others' problems, you would get many opportunities to serve mankind, which would be a true religion. You could help in many small ways to make a big difference to the

person you are helping. There could be an instance when a friend is unwell and has not been attending school/college. If you just visit him and ask him if you could help by copying his notes, or keeping him updated on the work being done in class, or just spend time with him, it would be very satisfying for both of you.

I wish to tell you about Anup, a dear friend of mine. He has a great sense of responsibility towards his near and dear ones. He likes to spend time with a friend who has lost someone dear or a friend who is unwell. Anoop tells me that it provides a lot of solace to his friends and is very satisfying for him too.

When a friend has faced some bereavement, such as the loss of a parent or a relative, your duty is to be by his side to see if you can be of any practical help. If that kind of assistance is not required, you can offer to keep your friend company through this difficult time. You need not discuss the tragedy; just being with him is an enormous source of support to him. You can talk about matters that he is willing to discuss, or simply sit with him in silent companionship.

As you reach out to more and more people and help them with your silent support, you will gradually develop the instinctive ability to talk about matters that the other person wants to discuss. This is a great quality that will make you special.

All of us have many problems but it is difficult to find someone who understands what we are going through and who can share our problems, at least in spirit. These are sensitive moments and you should know what to say. Many well-meaning people bungle their way through such delicate situations by making inappropriate comments or offering words of comfort that actually sound offensive.

This is a part of your personality that can be developed over time as you face and learn to handle difficult situations with compassion and sensitivity.

To start with, *just be aware* of the problems of your near and dear ones and try to *do your bit* to ease them. This will add a new dimension to your personality and make you a more complete human being. The *sense of satisfaction* you will get by doing this is a reward in itself. You do not have to make any extra effort or spend too much time on such matters.

The sense of satisfaction you get by spending time on such opportunities would also calm your mind. Once calmness dawns upon you, love and compassion for all would naturally be instilled in you. You would become an asset to the society, especially to people close to you.

As of now, your being aware of others' problems and doing your bit to help, is sufficient to make you happy and score well in examinations. Maybe later in life, after you finish your studies, you will be able to do something greater for humanity.

Spend at least one hour a week for any social service. You do not have to disturb your studies or disrupt your normal routine for this. You could participate in a discussion about some social problem. As mentioned earlier, it is important for you to be aware. You should be sensitive to problems and should do whatever you can. You may write an article, giving your suggestions or just send an e-mail to the concerned persons on some social issue, or organise a debate to discuss some problem. You could even go and watch a movie or a play to understand some social issue. You may visit some NGOs and

ask if you could assist them in their noble mission once in a week. You may teach some junior class student in the vicinity or spend time with those in need of company, for example with the inmates of an old age home, with special children/ students in need of care, or wherever you feel happy to spend time for any social cause.

Just do your bit to satisfy your sense of social responsibility. If you are not able to get an opportunity, just e-mail me and I will suggest how to spend just one hour in a week in your own area.

This is an oft-ignored aspect of life which, if taken care, would go a long way in making you confident and enhancing your efficiency.

Every religion talks of the value of selfless service, and equates serving humanity with serving God. So whatever religion you follow, be a good Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, Parsi or Buddhist, just by devoting one hour every week for selfless service. I assure you, it would give you a lot of happiness and would help you enhance your efficiency. It would definitely help you look nice, score better marks and enjoy more in life.

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*“Every king was once a helpless baby and every great structure was once a blue print. It is not where you are today but where you wish to reach, matters.”*

# 27

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## Do You Know What You Want?

### **Career options**

One very important aspect of life is to select the most suitable career, and many of you must be understandably concerned about it, maybe from the ninth or tenth grade onwards. It happens quite often that we end up in a profession which was not our first choice, and our goals change many times.

I have no inhibition in sharing with you my own experience in this matter. My first ambition was to become a pilot in the Indian Air Force. Later I thought of becoming a doctor. But then I left science and joined the arts stream in college. After that I studied law just because I wanted to remain in the university for some more years. When I completed my course, my uncle Jagdish Popli casually asked me if I was interested in practising law, since one of his lawyer friends was in need of a junior lawyer. Without applying my mind, I agreed to his proposal and joined the legal profession. And after having practised law for nearly three decades, I resolved to work for the welfare of children and students.

So you see, there is absolutely no harm in changing your career options. It is likely to happen many times in the course of your life.

Pause for a while and ask yourself what you really want or what you would like to be. What is your aim in life, your *purpose of life*? Just *follow your heart* and talk to the experts in the profession you wish to choose. Apply your mind to your strengths and resources required to reach there, and then make a final decision. Just think with a relaxed mind, in solitude, after getting inputs from friends, well wishers, parents or whosoever you feel like consulting. Once you have chosen a profession or career, work towards making yourself qualified for it accordingly.

You must spend sufficient time to take stock of the situation, like what are you planning to do in life, what do you want to be, what are your goals in your career and studies and whether your activities and level of efforts are in the direction of your objective, or do you need to improve or need to make changes in your habits and routine.

For example, if you plan to join your school cricket team, but spend your time playing table tennis or chess in your common room; would it help you achieve your goal of becoming a member of the cricket team? Likewise, if you wish to become a doctor, you have to put in the required effort to compete with the best of science students.

Every profession or career is good and you can excel in every field with hard work, sincerity, honesty and with your innovative ideas. You may become a teacher, doctor, engineer, journalist, management consultant, lawyer or anything under the sun but the most important

thing is to *become a good human being*; only then would you enjoy and be useful to the society in whatever you do.

A complete human being or a good human being or a balanced personality means someone who is not only good in studies but also has a relaxed mind and is cheerful, warm, compassionate, loving, courageous and sincere.

\* \* \*

*“A good teacher is one who understands the needs of his students and by his own deeds acts as a role model to motivate the students to develop as complete human beings.”*

28

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## For the Teachers

A guru or teacher plays a very important role in a student's life and in *shaping his personality*, and hence deserves utmost respect.

As one enlightened soul has said beautifully:  
*Guru govind dono khade, kake lagun payen,  
Balihari guru aapke, govind diyo milaye.*

This means that my teacher and God are both standing before me, whom should I bow to? I feel eternally grateful to my teacher, who made it possible for me to see God. Traditionally, this has always been the status of a teacher in our society.

Although by profession I am a lawyer, but I have been teaching students and other professionals for many years. I find it very satisfying and fulfilling to teach and share my views with young students who are the future of humanity.

I wish to share my concern here that today not many students show



due regard to their teachers. But I would attribute this trend to the overall degradation of values that is evident in our society nowadays, rather than a conscious effort on the part of the student community to devalue teachers. Many students, out of sheer ignorance, do not realise the importance of a teacher in their lives. Conversely, although it is true that not many students show due reverence to their teachers, we cannot entirely absolve ourselves of the blame either.

### **Treat your students as your friends**

It is also true that not many teachers in today's world treat their students as their own children or friends. It is well known that the best way to teach children, especially those in their teens, is to first treat them as friends. Once the rapport has been established, it becomes easy to teach them. I am sure you must have noticed that the teachers who are friendly and sensitive to their students' needs are not only more popular, but are most effective too, because students then start liking their subject. They feel more comfortable in the classes taken by such teachers, with the result that they imbibe more during these classes and feel more motivated to study that subject.

I am reminded of a real incident here. Once there was a theft in a school in Tamil Nadu, India. The principal of the school announced during assembly that whosoever had committed the theft should make a confession. She gave an assurance that no action would be taken against the perpetrator if he showed the grace and courage to admit his misdeed. However, no one came forward, despite the assurance. The principal was so distressed that in the presence of all the students of the school, she caned herself mercilessly. She said that she had failed in her mission to instil the virtue of honesty in her students, and she deserved to be punished for that.

That evening, three students came to her after school, and confessed that they were the culprits, and sincerely tendered an apology to her. The principal hugged them and told them never to do such a thing again. You see, this is the love and affection which an ideal teacher should shower on her pupils. We all know that love brings out the best in children. So let us show love and affection in our dealings with them.

Let us remind ourselves that it is our moral duty and responsibility to treat students like our own children or as friends. Interactions with students should not be limited to the classroom. We must make it a point to know them personally and *be sensitive* to their day-to-day problems and needs. We should try our best to keep the atmosphere comfortable. Occasionally, we must sometimes organise picnics or get together with them where we could teach as well as play.

My personal experience is that if teaching is done in the right spirit, it turns out to be a more satisfying and fulfilling experience. Many times, after a hectic day of court work I have taken a class, and believe me, it has always been more refreshing than a nap.

We should never take it to heart if some students are not very respectful, although we must also shoulder the responsibility of making them learn the importance of showing respect to their teachers. But we should not harbour any ill will or dislike for a student just because he/she is not respectful.

### **Teachers are role models for their students**

Quite often the performance of a teacher is affected or is not up to the mark because of personal problems and issues. All humans, irrespective of their status or position, have their share of personal

problems. As teachers we are expected to be role models in all spheres of life. We should never give the impression to our students that because of a personal problem, we are not able to perform our duty efficiently.

To be more effective as teachers, we have to work towards the evolvement of our inner self. I have a story to share with you in this regard.

A woman was quite worried about her son's eating habits because of which he was overweight and had developed diabetes. He had become lazy and was not able to perform well in academics or in other activities. The mother requested his teacher to convince her son, to control his diet and exercise regularly, to regain physical and mental fitness. The teacher listened to her but did nothing. On seeing no improvement in her son's habits, the mother went to the teacher again a couple of times with the same request, but the teacher never said anything to the student. The mother was disillusioned and stopped making any further requests to the teacher.

Suddenly one day, the son came home and informed his mother that the teacher had persuaded him to be particular about his diet and physical exercise and he had decided to take his advice. The mother was delighted and relieved, but she wondered why the teacher had decided to speak to her son only now, while ignoring her earlier requests. So she approached the teacher and asked him the reason. The teacher replied that when she had intimated her concern about her son's obesity, he realised that he himself was overweight and careless about his diet and physical fitness. He resolved to practise self-control before he spoke about it to his student, but could not summon enough will-power to change his

habits. That was why he did not act despite her repeated requests. It was only when he developed the will-power to control his diet and follow a strict physical fitness routine himself that he felt he had the right to convince his student to do the same. And he succeeded.

So unless we practise, we cannot preach. Once we realise and imbibe this truth of life, we would be better equipped to guide and influence our students even subconsciously. We all know that the students we are teaching today are the future of our society. We do not teach students just to enable them to pass exams. We are teaching future teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges, members of parliament, mothers and fathers. How they will perform in the future in their respective fields will largely depend upon their education and upbringing.

### **Sensitise students to the world around them**

We must convince our students that to score good marks is important, but it is not the only goal in life. Teaching is not merely about ensuring that all the students get their degrees. It is also our responsibility to make them wise. Wisdom cannot be gained just from reading books. Children need to be taught the meaning of life and the truths of life in all relevant spheres. They must be told that the purpose of life is not just to get a good job and earn a decent livelihood. It is much more than that. It is to learn the art of living a complete and fulfilling life.

Teaching is such a wonderful challenge and opportunity. We are given the responsibility to nurture and cultivate *complete human beings*. Along with equipping children with the skills necessary to build their careers, we should also sensitise them to the world around us, to the beauty and splendour of nature. They must be trained to

enjoy and appreciate the openness of the blue sky, the beauty of the moon and stars, the awesome power of a thunderstorm, and the wonder and ecstasy of a rainbow. They must learn to be sensitive and care for the animals they see around them. They should be taught to enjoy the carefree chirping of birds and the spontaneous smile of a little child.

They should be trained to *share the joys and sorrows* of fellow students and teachers. Students should be taught to be compassionate and concerned about others' problems. They should be told to be humble but fearless and bold. They should be generous and forgiving. They should entertain no hatred or ill will. All these values and qualities have to be inculcated not by direct lectures and sermonising, but by telling them interesting stories, anecdotes and couplets that illustrate these values.

They have to be trained to face their problems bravely and wisely. After all, they have to be trained to face life on many issues in the future. They have to be trained to compete in the world while living a purposeful and blissful life. They must be aware of the problems being faced by millions of children who do not get primary health facility and education. The idea is not to overburden them but to just make them sensitive and instil in them the idea that they must think of doing their bit for some cause, maybe just one hour a week, as their social responsibility.

### **The art of listening**

Above all, students must be trained to listen. They must understand the importance of the art of listening. Listening helps the pupil understand what the teacher is saying about a topic. Listening carefully is so important that if students listen attentively, they will

comprehend the subject more easily and there will be no need to read the chapter again.

Students must be *encouraged to ask questions* to try to understand the subject. We must be able to communicate and share our love for the subject we teach, so that they learn to love it too, instead of simply trying to memorise it for the exams. They should be told that even if they do not like a subject they should enjoy reading it, firstly, because that would help them in life at some point; secondly, because they have to pass in that subject as well; and thirdly because they would have the choice to not read it in the future if they do not choose that as a career option

As teachers, it is our responsibility to not merely teach a particular subject, but to shape the personalities of our students. We should encourage them to follow their hearts. We must instil in them the spirit of patriotism and encourage their creativity. We must teach them the importance of showing respect to parents and elders. We must train them to cultivate their intellect by observing silence, by using discretion, by remaining calm and having a relaxed mind.

### **Respect is commanded, not demanded**

Once we come to teach, we should love it as a wonderful experience every day and should leave all our problems behind, at least for those six hours.

Some times, it is very easy to connect with the students. For example, if a student was absent for a couple of days because his father or mother was unwell, the teacher, by simply asking him about the health of his father would definitely give emotional support not only to him but to all the students of the school. Such a caring attitude

will enhance your reputation among other students as well, and you will soon find some of them coming to you with their problems, because they would trust you and value your advice.

We must be aware to use natural opportunities to develop the much-needed bond between a student and a teacher. If we are sensitive, we would find many such opportunities to bring them closer to us. It would surely make them more comfortable and respectful. After all, respect is commanded, it cannot be demanded.

### **Students as teachers**

Just as child is said to be the father of man, there is much truth in the paradoxical saying that students are our teachers. We are being examined by them every day. The litmus test of our competence as a teacher is the amount of interest the students take in our class or subject. We can very well judge this from the attendance in our class and the body language of the students during the class. It is not difficult to gauge our success in earning their respect and love; it is evident in their expressions and behaviour.

Love begets love, and if we genuinely love our students, we are bound to receive their love and affection in return. Not only that, we also get evolved in the process and it gives so much satisfaction that we are able to deal with the world and our problems more efficiently. So where is the choice, but to love teaching and treat our students as the custodians of the future of humanity?

### **Let the spirit soar**

Students should be encouraged in all their constructive and creative activities, so that their spirit soars like a free bird. They should not be caged by worries about getting a better percentage in exams. They

should be reassured that everyone commits errors in life, so they should never condemn themselves if they make a mistake. They can, instead, learn from their mistakes. The sky is the limit for all and there is always space at the top for achievers.

Since a pupil spends the maximum part of a day in school or college, it becomes a second home for them. Hence, as teachers, we naturally take on the role of the parent and guiding force. Teaching can never be considered merely an employment; it should be our passion. Teaching is also in a sense a blissful adventure, because every year, we get to meet different children with unique personalities and character traits. All societies have traditionally regarded teaching as the noblest of professions, because there cannot be any better service to mankind than to train innocent young minds, and mould children into responsible citizens and good human beings.

Children learn by example rather than by mere preaching. They should be told about the lives of great human beings like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, which illustrate how the human spirit can overcome all odds by sheer determination and will power. This would motivate them not to be disheartened by failure. It must be done regularly, because just by reading a chapter in the class about some great human being, many students may not imbibe their values and ideals.

It is sad to know about millions of students who are not physically fit or have concentration problems. Every other day there is news about students committing suicide because of poor preparation for the exams or fear of bad results. Who is to be blamed for the loss of these innocent lives? It is clear that no one ever told these students about the importance of exams, and the true meaning of failure and



success. It means no one ever told them that everyone born on this earth, irrespective of his status, failed in life one time or another. I sincerely feel that we all must take the responsibility to see that no innocent student takes this drastic step or even feels depressed or tense because of exams.

The most important thing is to be friendly with students so that they feel free to share even their personal problems. We teachers and parents should keep the environment comfortable and light. We must assure them that we are all with them whatever their results might be. They should be told to love themselves for their positive qualities. Let them feel free and confident about life and exams. Let them understand that they are to work hard and sincerely and not bother too much about marks. Let them prepare with a relaxed mind so that they can score maximum while living a complete and fulfilling life.

Let the students feel relaxed all the time in order to understand their subjects better and perform to the best of their abilities. This is the most important task for us to do, and once we do it, nothing else is required to be done. We would then have all our students as brand ambassadors of our schools, colleges, society and nation.

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*“A relationship shines by just shaking hands in the best times, but it blossoms by holding hands firmly in critical situations.”*

# 29

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## Friends vs Exams

There is a famous saying, “A man is known by the company he keeps.” In Hindi also, the same wisdom is expressed in the proverb, “*Jaisi sangat waisi rangat.*” This means that your activities and nature are greatly influenced by the kind of friends you have.

There are innumerable cases where innocent students were arrested or faced criminal charges simply because they were in the company of some rowdy elements. During the last thirty years as a practising lawyer, I have witnessed parents of exceptionally brilliant and decent boys being embarrassed and humiliated at police stations because their children happened to be in the company of spoilt brats who had committed a crime. There are so many students facing trials in criminal cases because they were just accompanying their friends who had committed some crime. That is why it is important that you should be very particular in selecting the company you keep.

You must have noticed, that many times we do certain things in the company of friends almost as a reflex action. For instance, if someone

suggests going for a movie or going to a restaurant, invariably we all agree and set off. Similarly, we subconsciously adopt the habits, actions or phrases of people we are associated with most of the day. I wish to tell you my own experience in this regard.

Mr N. C. Chawla, a senior lawyer, whom I consider as my guru (teacher), had this charming habit of saying “*muaff karna*”, which means “I beg your pardon”, whenever he had to disagree with anyone. I don’t know when I picked up this habit and started using the phrase myself. It is a polite way of expressing disagreement, particularly in front of elders. When you begin your argument with, “I beg to differ, sir” or “I beg your pardon, madam”, you are showing respect even while indicating disagreement.

So you see, just as one can unconsciously imbibe a certain good habit or manner of speaking, one tends to pick up dirty and indecent phrases too. Hence it is very important to pay attention to the kind of company we keep.

*If a drop of water falls in a lake, it loses its identity; if it falls on a lotus, it shines: if in a shell, it becomes a pearl. The drop is the same, it is the company that matters.*

Have you heard the story about **the tiger among the lambs**? Once there was a tiger cub that was brought up in the company of lambs. He was always fearful, even more than the lambs. He never realised his strength until he met a real tiger, who made him recognise his true nature to become brave. This is the magnitude of the influence one’s friends can have on one’s personality. And the choice is yours.

I am not suggesting that you should hate anyone or show your

disapproval of anyone. You should simply be aware, whom to spend your time with, to discuss about your studies or other matters of life. Often you may notice substance and depth in a relative or your parents' friends or your own friends. So just be aware and spend time with learned people.

You should not be rude to anyone. Even those whom we consider bad company are likely to be good in something or the other. There is something to be learned from everyone. But it is advisable to avoid being frequently in the company of people who habitually behave badly or indulge in undesirable practices.

Good company is sought by everyone. Just as you may be looking for a friend who would have a positive impact upon your personality or would share your values and interests, other students would also be looking for friends who are *kind-hearted, sensitive and responsible*. You meet so many people in the course of your life, then why does it happen that you like only a few? A good friend is one who would be there when you need him, who understands your problems, who is sensitive to your views and feelings, who is essentially a good human being. So someone you wish to be friendly with, would also look for a friend having those qualities. Therefore you must have in you the quality to sacrifice, to be sensitive and to be faithful. You must have a great sense of responsibility in you to become and deserve great friends.

You should always surrender in friendship. You may give your opinion when it is required, but on small issues like where to go for lunch or where to spend some time together, you must try to surrender. However, you must share with your friend if there is any genuine difficulty. Friends are responsible for each other's wellbeing. They

need to make sure that none of them strays into wrongdoing. Even if one is betrayed by a friend on some occasion, the bond should be so deep that if your friend **calls you in times of need, you will run to help**, forgetting the past. That is the value of friendship.

I would like to tell you a nice couplet on friendship. An enlightened soul said something like this:

*Dhokha kyun khaya? Dosti mein.*

*Rote kyun ho? Phir bulaya hai.*

This means: Someone was asked, "How were you cheated?" He said, "in friendship." He was then asked, "So why are you crying?" He said that the same friend needed him again. So that is the value of friendship. I have always felt that it is a historic moment when a friend becomes a friend. That is why an enlightened soul thought of this great couplet; that even if the friend cheated him, he is determined to help him again.

**You can be a great friend only if you are sensitive to your friend's problems and know his/her nature through and through. Be a giver and not a beggar in friendship. Do all that you can and expect nothing in return. When you feel a friend has been neglecting or ignoring you, always presume that there must be a valid reason for such behaviour. Do not be quick to condemn without first knowing the facts, and avoid complaining about petty issues.**

Your friends should find in you **a patient listener, who not only listens to their problems with complete attention**, but also assures them that their secret would die with you. It is very important for a person to be sure that his problem is listened to attentively and **his secrets or personal problems are not made a laughing stock.**

The third important quality is the ability to give sincere advice, which would be a bonus for many friends. I wish to share with you a quote by an enlightened soul on the value of a wise friend: “One good book is equal to a hundred friends. But one wise friend is worth more than a library.”

We are not talking only about human company. Even the company of the books you read, the movies you see or the music you listen to, is very important and plays a crucial role in shaping your personality. Your intake of raw material, which is your food, things you read, ideas you think and listen to, would decide your output. These things influence your thought process in subtle but definite ways, and decide how you will react to different situations in life.

You must have noticed that soft music relaxes your mind whereas loud music tends to tire you, and instead of feeling relaxed, you feel exhausted. Similarly, if you want to go for a movie, try to find out what are the movies worth seeing. Do not just rush to see every movie in town. As discussed earlier, you do not have to make your mind a garbage bin where anything can be thrown in by anyone. Be very selective about the kind of movies you see. Often the reviews of movies can help you decide whether a film is worth seeing. It is better to spend a few minutes reading the review of a movie in a newspaper than waste a few hours in seeing the movie and then regretting your decision. This is not to say that you should only see serious movies. You are young and full of life, and watching a light-hearted movie in the company of friends is always a refreshing experience.

The same is true of plays. Often, you get a nice message from a play or a movie. So be attentive and appreciate the message the author

or director is trying to communicate. It is said that music and books are your best friends as they never desert you. So why not cultivate the habit of reading good books and listening to good music so that you have firm friends who will give you company for life?

You must read *autobiographies* and *biographies of great men and women who have contributed to the growth of mankind, and who have achieved phenomenal success in their respective fields.* Make it a habit to discuss a book that you have read and liked, with your friends, and ask them to keep you informed about any good books that they have recently read. Never try to finish a book with great speed. Try to understand what the author is trying to convey. You should also mark what you feel is important so that if you wish to consult the book again, it would be handy. You could also, after finishing each chapter, make your own notes on what you learnt or thought about the book or the important issues in it. Same should be true about your company of friends. If you like something in a friend you must try to imbibe that habit.

Wish you the best of friends, music and books to give you company!

\* \* \*

*“Best things in the life  
are free, like songs to  
sing, dreams to pursue,  
love to share and  
friends to cherish.”*

# 30

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## Make Your Mind a Basket of Flowers

You must make your mind a garden or a basket of flowers rather than a dustbin. Many times we keep piling up remembrances of sad times or bad memories in our memory bank. Someone says something unpleasant about your performance or clothes or hairstyle, and that criticism gets stuck in your mind and you go on feeling bad. As stated earlier, the golden rule to follow is that, “You should engrave good remarks and fond memories on stone and write bad remarks on sand.”

Don't we *clear* out our dustbins every day to keep the atmosphere fresh and healthy? We take a bath every day to keep our body clean and healthy. We wash and iron our clothes to look smart, but we don't clear our mind of stale thoughts and old useless memories! If a dead rat or insect is not thrown out at once and the area around not washed with antiseptic, what would happen? It would spread not only a foul smell but also some deadly disease. Similarly, if we permit the dead rats of negative thoughts and remarks to linger and disturb our mind for too long, it affects



our balance of mind. In the long run, this can even affect our behaviour and performance.

By throwing out negative and useless thoughts we sharpen our memory to a great extent. If some comment is negative and does not contribute in any way to your growth as a human being, it is garbage. So why take it to heart and make a dustbin of your mind? Keep only good memories and make your mind a basket of beautiful flowers which perpetually gives out a sweet fragrance for you and all those who come in contact with you.

If you have dumped your clothes in a cupboard and need to take out a shirt in a hurry, wouldn't you be irritated to pull it out only to discover that it is crushed? Similarly, if you keep stuffing your mind with negative thoughts, your mind would be burdened with unnecessary things. You must periodically clear your mind of negative memories so that it will be full of only positive and useful thoughts, and then your memory box would be well managed.

If someone is angry with you, *tender an apology* to make it a non-issue and keep the mind fresh and positive. If you feel that someone is feeling guilty or embarrassed because of his unfair treatment of you, assure him that you are not carrying a grudge in your mind and have forgotten about it.

Some students unnecessarily carry negative thoughts against their friends, even against their parents or teachers because of some useless incident or maybe because of any negative quality in them. This is very bad. No one perfect in all respects was ever born on this earth. If you look for perfection you would never be able to learn anything and would never be friendly with anyone. Negativity

merely pollutes the mind, so just appreciate and adopt the positive qualities of everyone you meet in life, be it parents, teachers or friends.

Your life will be blissful if you have only the wonderful flowers of pleasant memories in your mind. *Hum a nice song* or music whenever you get time and make life musical. Dance a little bit and see the life dancing.

*Laughing faces do not mean that there is an absence of sorrow, but it means that they have the ability to deal with sorrow.*

*Mould your attitude* and it would give you much peace and equanimity, which is bound to enhance your performance in your exams, and in all your activities. You would surely become an asset to the society, especially to your near and dear ones. So enjoy your basket of flowers and throw away the dustbin, in order to look nice, score well and enjoy life.

\* \* \*

“Sports create  
sportsman spirit  
for all activities  
of life.”

# 31

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## Sports vs Exams

Have you ever realised how important it is to play some sport for scoring good marks? You must be puzzled at the connection between sports and academics. Let us understand the benefits of playing a sport. When you play any sport you build up more stamina to undertake long hours of study. You also *develop a strong mental attitude*. Every sport needs concentration and alertness to perform better, so you develop concentration too. You learn to lose and you learn to win. While waiting for your turn in any sport you develop patience. You learn about sharing with friends. You learn discipline. You build up better physical and mental health.

Quite often we say that so and *so does not have sportsman's spirit*. Very seldom will you see a sportsperson acting in a childish or irresponsible manner. So we must agree that those who play sports usually develop a fair and broad-minded approach towards life. They tend to ignore niggling irritations. *Their experience with unfair selections and arbitrary decisions by sports bodies teaches them to cope with disappointment and failure.* They learn to fight for their

rightful place by improving their performance when they have been dropped from the team. They tend to take unfair criticism in their stride and learn to be cooperative and helpful because they often have to face unfavourable circumstances. Most importantly, playing a sport enables you to utilise your energy in a better way and you are not left with any time to think negative or about useless activities.

Generally speaking, students involved in sports are content with life and they learn to deal with the stress of any situation. They develop better mental alertness, which helps them understand a subject or a chapter better. All these qualities make them better qualified to prepare for and perform in an examination.

Apart from this obvious advantage, playing any sport or pursuing any hobby is a great stress buster, a good change from your study routine and a wonderfully enjoyable way to relax. And you certainly know by now the importance of having a relaxed mind to score better and to enjoy more!

So play any sport or pursue any hobby so as to look nice, score better and to enjoy life.

\* \* \*

“Be like a flower,  
give fragrance  
and happiness to  
all.”

# 32

## Never Hurt, to Score Maximum

Let us discuss the relevance of ‘hurt’ to our enjoyment, looking good and scoring better marks. Every religion preaches that we should not hurt anyone. We should love all and have compassion and affection for all. There is a great logic behind this. It is also very important for our performance in exams and other activities.

When we say, “Do not hurt anyone”, it does not only mean causing physical pain. Please appreciate the most important aspect of this chapter. Even if you harbour ill feelings towards someone in your mind, it is a form of violence. Jealousy, envy and hatred are all causes of emotional and physical pain. The most unfortunate aspect of violence in thought is that it does not affect the person to whom all this negativity is being directed; but you hurt your own conscience. You damage your own peace of mind and pollute your own thoughts.

Is it not foolish that you are disturbing your equanimity by thinking evil about a person who is enjoying a movie or having a party

somewhere, blissfully unaware of your thoughts? So for your own peace of mind, never entertain any negative thoughts against anyone, even if they have done or said anything to hurt you. Try to sort out the matter with the concerned person or ignore it altogether, depending upon the issue.

I wish to share with you a story about an elephant and a pig. An elephant, after a refreshing bath in the river, was walking gracefully in the jungle when a dirty pig challenged him arrogantly and said some harsh words to him. The elephant smiled gently and walked past without saying anything in reply. Some of the animals in the jungle were surprised as to why he chose to remain quiet and did not react to the insult inflicted by the pig, who was much smaller and weaker. The elephant replied that the pig was bitter precisely because of his weakness. He told his friends that one should never fight with a pig because one would only end up getting dirty and messy.

So the moral is that one should avoid fighting with those who harp on petty matters and needlessly ruin the atmosphere and disturb one's balance of mind. The choice is ours, whether to behave like a pig or an elephant. If you do not react to irrelevant and useless remarks, you strengthen your mind and develop a more balanced approach to perform better in your exams and life.

Do remember that to forgive is not a weak person's attribute. It needs a lot of courage to forgive, even more than it takes to pick a fight. But when you forgive, you are the ultimate beneficiary. The act of forgiveness takes away the burden of negativity that weighs the mind down and leaves it light and free. The choice is yours: either you decide to enjoy life with a carefree attitude or you opt to

carry garbage in your mind.

So let us resolve to have a totally non-violent thought process for a relaxed mind to score well.

\* \* \*

*“To read is to  
understand  
and live that  
knowledge. “*

# 33

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## How to Read a Book

The reading of a book is also an art. You should never try to finish any book or chapter with great speed. The course material and the books about philosophy of life are meant to be understood properly and should never be rushed through.

You should read one or two chapters every day. You should not try to just memorise. You should try to understand what the author is conveying. The best way to do so is to *make notes* of important points and your own views at the end of every chapter. This makes it easy to *revise* the book in a short time, when required to do so. It would also enable you to quickly refer to important data whenever needed.

Do keep in mind that too much of reading is not required. You must read as much as you can understand and assimilate; contemplate and reflect upon what is learnt. Reflect upon how much wisdom and knowledge gained is imbibed.



Regular revision of good books, until you imbibe the wisdom conveyed by them, is very important, otherwise reading all the time is of very little use.

\* \* \*

*“Your wisdom  
is judged in  
unfavourable  
situations.”*

# 34

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## Test Yourself

Is it not strange that we keep judging every situation and the whole world, especially our near and dear ones, but never stop for a while to test ourselves or to judge ourselves?

The easiest and the most effective way to improve ourselves, is to test ourselves in trying situations. For example, how do we react when we are stuck in traffic, or if we are getting late for school or college, or while getting ready at home, or when our notebook or book is misplaced...

Many situations in life give us opportunities to test our mental awareness and balance of mind, provided we are mindful and determined to improve ourselves. Real smartness does not mean being unmindful of our irritations, but to take control of our irritations. So judge yourself how frequently you get irritated and on what issues.

We can improve only if we are sensitive to our mental state during

day-to-day activities of our life. If we easily and frequently get irritated over small things, then it is very important to make some concrete efforts in that direction. The best thing is to observe silence just for five minutes twice a day to analyse the drawbacks and the solutions available to improve.

Do not feel nervous or guilty, if once in a while you feel irritated over something, because that is bound to happen now and then. The only important thing is that you should be aware that irritation does not happen too often and that you are doing your best to improve.

*Taking stock of your irritations* would go a long way towards improving your overall performance in all the spheres of life. Also make it a habit to periodically ask someone close to you, maybe your parents, teacher or a friend, about your weak points, to improve yourself. It is better to know and improve upon your weak points than to be perpetually at a disadvantageous position.

The word of caution is that no one perfect was ever born and all of us keep committing mistakes throughout our life, so just be aware and do not take any mistake to your heart.

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*"We don't stop playing  
because we grow old,  
we grow old because we  
stop playing."*

—George Bernard Shaw

# 35

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## Always Feel Motivated

No one can boost your morale as much as you can do it to yourself. It is very important to feel motivated all the time, twenty-four hours a day, twelve months a year.

Put your hundred per cent in everything you do.

Do not think of wrong acts or unfavourable results at any time.

You should learn from the mistakes of the past, but never cry over spilt milk.

Take every day as a new chapter of life to start afresh energetically.

Never get depressed over anything, since we all know that the best and the worst of times are short-lived and every moment shall pass away. Therefore, no incident should disturb you for long. Just be motivated to do your best.

Make a new resolution every day to improve yourself.

Maybe sometimes you can make a resolution for a week, such as,

not to get angry, study for an extra hour, make up with an angry friend, not have aerated drinks or junk food...

Just make new *positive* resolutions to feel motivated. Keep repeating interesting resolutions.

Always keep your notepad ready to check reminders and to jot down new ideas. It would go a long way for your success in every field and would be a great stress buster too.

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*“One tree can make few million sticks but one stick can burn few million trees, never underestimate the small, little things in life. “*

36

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## Develop Substance Through Small Things

By being mindful of small little things, we can develop substance which is appreciated by everybody and which enhances our self-confidence manifold.

Do not say “I know”: While in conversation, whenever someone is about to say something which we are aware of, we often say, “Oh I know”. This puts off the other person, because everyone wants to be heard and by saying we know, we discourage that person. The right course of action would be to quietly listen to what the person is saying; maybe his/her version or perception of what we know is different. In any case, there is nothing wrong in just being a patient listener and satisfying the person’s desire to have his/her say.

Do not discuss trash: Many times we discuss irrelevant things with our friends. For instance, you may discuss about someone you met who was wearing something silly, or wasted your time, or bored you with something you don’t like... These are all avoidable discussions. We waste a lot of time and energy in discussing many

things, which are of no relevance either to us or to others. In turn we also invite some uncharitable comments from our friends: for instance, your friend might say that you were stupid to waste time with so-and-so or you were foolish to behave in a particular way. You would then feel bad about such remarks, which are actually self-invited. Your friend might say that you should have done like this or that, and you might carry a wrong impression about him/her or he/she may carry a wrong impression about you. Sometimes you may carry negative feelings while discussing all those irrelevant things. So the best thing to do is to be a listener and avoid talking too much or mingling too much, because each meeting involves some discussion, much of which is normally irrelevant.

*Always support the underdogs:* We should always support them because there are too many to support the favourites. One should also lend moral help to those who are not born with silver spoons. The other benefit is that once you support the underdogs, they become your great friends, because not too many people would have sided with them.

We should always be watchful about what we speak: Never make any loose comment about any one. Many relationships get spoilt and many careers get affected by insulting comments. Everyone may not be broad-minded or large-hearted to ignore the negative comments. Many people take these things to their heart and carry them for long, so the best is to avoid making comments that annoy the others. It would also improve your nature to be quiet sometime, the importance of which has been discussed earlier.

There is **no substitute to hard work and sincerity**: Unless you work hard with dedication, **complete planning and sincerity**, no knowledge or wisdom would be of any use. So you must resolve to work hard.

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*“When it rains all the birds fly for shelter but the eagle avoids the rain by flying above the clouds. The problems are common to all but attitude makes the difference.”*

# 37

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## What to Do Now

You must have often experienced that whenever something wrong happens, like if you miss the train, you start blaming the circumstances – you may blame the bad traffic in your city, or your driver who came late, or you start blaming yourself for getting up late. However, whatever may be the reason, ultimately you have to decide “what to do now”.

Let us take another example. Someone has failed in the examination or has got poor marks in some subject. These students, many times, feel depressed and carry on in that state of mind for many days, with the result that their performance in other areas of life and their dealing with other issues and relations also gets adversely affected.

In every situation, you have to ultimately come to the conclusion about “what to do now”. So why should you waste time and energy for so long? Why should you allow your peace of mind to be disturbed and other activities of life to be affected by one poor performance?

There is a common saying, “there is no use crying over spilt milk”. But how many times do we live this knowledge? If we really make use of the wisdom that “whatever happened has happened,” we would save a lot of time and energy.

We cannot put the clock back; we cannot undo whatever has happened. So the best way out is to forget the negative as early as possible and decide at the earliest about “what to do”.

We have discussed this as a separate topic because this is a common habit even with grown-ups. They waste a lot of time and energy complaining over what has happened.

So just remember, every time something wrong happens or whenever the results of any situation are not up to your expectations; decide at the earliest about “what to do now”.

\* \* \*

*“An arrow can be shot only by dragging it back so when the life is dragging you back, with difficulties it means that it’s going to launch you into great heights.”*

38

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## Be Prepared For Unexpected Results

The superpowers of the world are spending billions of dollars on arms and ammunition; but just imagine if these billions of dollars were spent for the welfare of millions of underprivileged children in the world, who do not get adequate food, primary health facilities and education. Imagine, with one sensitive decision, the lives of millions of children of the world would change for good!

Is it the fault of these innocent children that those in power are not sensitive to their plight? Is it their fault that they have been born into a family or society that cannot or does not assure them the basic rights and comforts that they should be entitled to as human beings?

Why is it that world-class cricketer Rahul Dravid scores a double century one day, and the next day he is out for a duck against the same team? Why is it that world number one tennis player Roger Federer is sometimes defeated by a low-ranking player?

What I wish to bring home to you is, that many times the events that occur in your life and the results are not in your control. You must have witnessed this so many times in the world of sport, where a good tennis or badminton player is pitted against some energetic young player in the first round, and he loses the match and ultimately a less trained player wins the championship.

The only lesson to be learnt from these events is that sometimes, despite your best efforts, the results may not be up to your expectations, and you should not worry about that. One thing that should always be kept in mind is that merit would never go unnoticed, and your hard work and dedication would be acknowledged sooner or later.

Someone once said, "A winning horse does not know why it runs in the race. It runs because it fears the pain of punishment. The more pain you experience, the stronger you become. In the same way, life is a race, and God is your rider. So if you are in pain, sustain yourself with the thought that perhaps God has picked you as a winner and wants you to win the race." The thumb rule is: If you work hard, with honesty and sincerity, you are most likely to succeed. And if you have not worked hard, then in all likelihood you would not be successful.

If you have planned a holiday and suddenly someone close to you falls sick, what would you do? You have planned to watch a nice movie and suddenly you get a call from a close friend, who is in some difficulty. What would you do?

My friend Vinay is a noble soul who enjoys giving happiness to all. He has a special place in his heart for those who are not very well

placed materially and financially. He firmly believes that a man's true character can be judged by observing how he deals with his subordinates and with people less fortunate than himself. During an IPL cricket tournament, he decided not to watch a single match and offered the passes he got to his domestic help and their friends. For all the matches, he gave away his passes to different people in the locality. However, since the number of passes was limited, he could not oblige the whole locality.

Later I learnt that some friend of his domestic help was talking ill of him because he did not get a pass to watch the cricket match. So you must remember that sometimes even your best intentions are criticised because of some wrong impression of someone who is not aware of the reality. So now are you convinced that you should always be prepared for uncalled for criticism or negative comments?

In life, you will come across many instances, which will make you realise, that often events and results may not live up to your expectations. The relevance of this truth to your enjoyment, looking good and scoring maximum is very obvious. If you were upset and sad because of some results, you would certainly not look nice and would not be in perfect mental state to study and enjoy yourself. However if you have realised this truth, you would be mentally prepared to take all events of life in your stride and would never feel upset or disturbed. If you were relaxed even in adverse circumstances, this would be a sure route to great success in life, what to mention scoring better and looking nice!

The real measure of your growth and wisdom can be taken only when you face adverse circumstances. As an enlightened soul has

said, "It is true that you cannot control the consequences of your actions or the behaviour of others, but you can control your reaction to them."

Developing this attitude and achieving a balance of mind cannot happen in a single day and you have to constantly evaluate your progress in this direction. Do not think of acquiring a perfect state where you do not commit any error. Just try to progress every day and enjoy the bliss.

You must consider adverse circumstances and *obstacles* as your *stepping-stones*. If you can maintain a relaxed and balanced mind, even in unfavourable circumstances, it is a great achievement, which many times people take ages to imbibe. Since we are trying to cultivate harmonious personalities, we must be aware of this great truth of life so that we are prepared for all eventualities in life. Scoring better in academics, looking nice and better enjoyment would automatically fall in line.



*"Happiness can't be travelled to,  
owned, earned or consumed.  
It is the spiritual experience of  
living every moment with love,  
grace and gratitude."*

# 39

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## Good Morning Until Morning

One day four friends were discussing a problem, that all of them despite being from decent background, doing well in studies, sports and extra curricular activities, were not able to control their habit of using bad language. They resolved to improve upon that, and decided that every day they should meet and honestly confess as to how many times each one of them had used bad language the previous day. To avoid any embarrassment in public, they decided to convey their confessions in a code language. They decided that when they meet every morning they would say good morning as many times as they used some bad language the previous day.

Next day the first friend came and said, "Good morning, good morning", meaning he had used some bad language twice. The second friend came and said it thrice, and the third friend came and said good morning five times, that meant they used some bad language thrice and five times respectively. Now was the turn of the fourth friend, and it is very interesting to note. He came and said, "Good morning until morning". On being asked, he confessed to

his friends that he had forgotten about the resolve and used bad language throughout the day!

What I am trying to tell you here, is that to be aware of your thought process and feel relaxed, is not a full-time or pass-time activity. We must realise that to have a relaxed mind to score better in exams and life, we are to be aware of it all the time. We must be aware of what we have learnt in life and how to live that knowledge to maintain balance of mind throughout the day.

Why do you breathe twenty-four hours? Why can't we avoid a few minutes or may be a few seconds to take a break from the monotonous breathing process? Don't you find this question silly? My question is simple. But to take it seriously, I must share with you my knowledge that I am aware that we breathe twenty-four hours because we know that to remain alive we have to do so. But is it only the breath which is essential all the time or is there something else too that may be equally or very important?

Make a guess and stop reading here.

Now we come back. What was your guess? Ok, let us take the cat out of the bag. It is your balance of mind and a relaxed mind, which you need all the twenty-four hours.

Whenever you commit some wrong, or whenever you are not attentive, or whenever you do not perform to the best of your knowledge and ability, or whenever you misbehave or get angry or do anything negative, what is common to all these situations? Definitely the answer is, that you do not have perfect balance of mind when you do not perform well in any activity of life. Even



your thought process is not normal when you under perform or do some wrong. So is it not important to maintain balance of mind all the time? Don't we sometimes say, "Please don't talk to me now, I am little upset"? Meaning thereby, that if your mind is not balanced you don't feel like talking or doing anything. But sometimes we are not aware that our mind is not balanced, and that is why we commit wrongs or behave incorrectly.

Don't we wash our clothes and body every day? So should we not wash our brain or mind every day to keep it neat and clean? If you speak for a while, you wish to give some rest to your vocal cords. If you walk or run for a while, you wish to give rest to your legs and body for a while. If you watch some movie, you wish to give rest to your eyes for a while. During all the activities whether it is watching a movie or playing or speaking, our mind is constantly working, but we do not give any rest to our mind! We do not realise that we should give rest to the most important component of our body, which is functioning all the time. If you have a battery operated torch and you keep it 'on' for a long time, don't you think it would discharge very soon? So, it is important to give the much needed rest to our mind.

I wish to tell you an incident to help you appreciate the importance of being attentive and alert all the time. My friend Kush, at the peak of his career as a well-known lawyer of the country, was sitting in Delhi High Court waiting for his matter to be called. Before his matter was called, a case came up for hearing where a person undergoing life imprisonment on some murder charge had requested for parole (temporary release from jail) to attend his sister's wedding. The judge was quite considerate and allowed him to attend the wedding, but under police security.

Now see the wisdom and promptness of Kush; he immediately got up and requested the court to modify the order to the extent that the policemen in charge of security should go in plain clothes and not in police uniform. He said that otherwise the convict, instead of enjoying the wedding, would spoil the event by going under security with policemen in uniform. The judge appreciated the point and added in the order that the policemen accompanying him for security would go in plain clothes.

Kush was alert and had the confidence to intervene in the matter in which he was not even a lawyer, just because he was sure that he was only helping the cause of justice. That is why we discuss the importance of having a relaxed mind all the time. Otherwise we would miss many opportunities to serve and grow in life.

We should never feel disturbed or agitated on small things. An important attitude we must imbibe is, *never expect more than what you get from a person or any situation. Expectation reduces joy.* We do not know in which situation the other person was placed in and start complaining or getting angry. We must put ourselves in others' shoes to realise the ground realities of every situation. We should always presume that the other person had some compulsion to behave in a particular manner.

One enlightened soul said it beautifully,

*Kuch to majbooriyan rahi hongii,*

*Warna koi yunhi bewafa nahi hota.*

This means that there must be some compulsion, otherwise no one can be unfaithful unnecessarily. If we have this attitude we can never disturb our balance or peace of mind.

'No worry, no hurry, make your life a nice curry' should be your attitude to have a relaxed mind.

I am sure once you resolve that, you would improve every day. Do not worry if once in a while you falter. Everyone born on this earth loses control once in a while, so just resolve to improve and enjoy life. It would also help you tremendously to look nice 'good morning until morning' and you would surely score better in exams!

\* \* \*

*“Charge your  
battery for  
constant  
network  
connection.”*

40

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## Ten-Minute Magic

Friends, it is very important to learn how to relax your mind and rejuvenate yourself in a short time, especially during exams.

You must remember to take a short break from studies at regular intervals to maintain a *high level of understanding*. You must have noticed that your capacity to learn and understand is not the same at all times. There is no point in continuing to study without a break when your capacity to learn has reduced drastically. It is better to take a short break of a few minutes every hour than to study with a tired mind. We really waste a lot of time while trying to study with a tired mind and in turn disturb the balance of our mind, which is very harmful to our capacity to learn.

A brief break gives your mind a much-needed rest, and you would find you can finish in thirty minutes a chapter which, with a tired mind, you would have taken two hours to finish. Besides, if you study something with a fatigued mind, your understanding of that chapter will never be thorough, and you may find yourself going blank during the exam.

You do not have to take out any extra time for a session of relaxation. You can do it anytime and anywhere once you have made it a habit. When you need a break from your study schedule, you may go and help in the kitchen or listen to some music. You can also just relax while sitting on your chair.

Make a cushion of your hands by interlocking the fingers of both the hands, and rest your head over your interlocked fingers. Close your eyes for a few minutes and relax your entire body.

The ten-minute magic mantra should be employed after every three hours during your exams and once a day on other days. It is very simple. Just lie down straight on your back, on your bed or on the floor and close your eyes. Just feel that your total weight is on your bed and you are very light and weightless. Just relax your body and mentally recite any one word, like Om or Allah or Waheguru or Jesus or Ma (mother) or any other word, which gives you peace. Just do not think of anything else but that single word. After about a minute, start relaxing each part of your body one by one. First focus your attention on your right toe and relax it consciously. Then imagine your right foot is relaxed. Slowly shift your focus to the right lower leg and feel this part relaxing. Then turn your attention to the right calf muscles and relax them. Spend a few seconds focusing on and consciously relaxing each part.

Move slowly to your right knee, right thigh and then your right leg as a whole. In the same way, focus on your left leg next, and relax it, part by part. Now turn your attention to your abdominal area and feel this part relax. Move up slowly to the chest area and focus on relaxing it for a few seconds. Do the same for each part of your body: the lower, middle and upper back, and the shoulder blades.

When you relax the arms, begin with the fingers of your right hand, and then move to the right palm, wrist and lower right arm, followed by the elbow, biceps and right shoulder. Now relax your entire right arm. In the same way, relax your left hand and arm. When you focus on the neck region, take special care to relax your muscles completely, because this is the area that feels the maximum strain when you study for long hours. After this, focus on your face and relax each part for a few seconds: the lips, chin, cheeks, ears, eyes and then the entire face. Move up to the temples and forehead and finally relax your skull and head. By now you will have begun to feel weightless, as if the whole burden of your body and all your problems have just dropped away from you.

Remember, do not think or plan anything during this time. *Give your brain some rest.* You will find after ten minutes that you are fresh and rejuvenated, ready to study with concentration for another few hours.

After every hour of study, you should shut your eyes for five minutes, relax your body and mentally recite only a single word of your choice to relax yourself. Relax your neck muscles by putting counter pressure on the back of your head with both hands and then by dropping your head on the cushion made of both the hands. Just in five minutes you would be fresh and alert again. Your concentration and understanding would increase multifold. You would grasp much better than what you would have, while studying continuously without any break.

Please understand, that to maintain calmness is most important. It is not a part-time job. So this exercise of closing your eyes for a few minutes, maybe for two minutes, while sitting must be performed

as many times as possible, whenever and wherever you get the opportunity, be it while waiting for your turn somewhere or waiting for a friend or travelling.

You must have noticed that achievers are calm most of the time. The calmer you are, the more would you be relaxed and successful. So let us take a short break for five minutes to practise the relaxation exercise stated above!

\* \* \*

*“Anger is  
madness for a  
few seconds.”*

# 41

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## Anger vs Exams

To know the negative effect of anger on your ability to enjoy yourself and on your exams is of utmost importance.

Some enlightened soul has said,

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored, than to anything on which it is poured.”

### **Why do we say that anger is such a negative thing?**

A brief moment of anger can have a lifetime of consequences. You must be aware of the incident when a world-class cricketer slapped a fellow player and lost millions of rupees as penalty in addition to facing a lot of public criticism. He is not a bad person otherwise; in fact, he is very popular. Sometimes anger may cost very *heavily* because when you are angry you are not balanced, and we have discussed throughout this book how important it is to maintain your balance of mind all the time in order to deal with the world and to score better in exams.

### **Why do we get angry?**

Whenever you expect a particular response from a situation or a



person, and do not get it, you get angry. So the best way to control your anger is by not expecting more than what you get from a particular situation or a person. I know it is easier said than done, but people have been able to control their anger quite a bit by just being aware of it.

### **Resolve to keep a check on your temper**

You may not be able to control your anger completely, but by resolving to keep a check on your temper and making conscious efforts in that direction, remarkable progress can be achieved in this area. Quite often you will find that if you just change your attitude towards a particular person or his nature, you can control your anger.

The first step towards anger management is *observing silence* for a few minutes whenever you find your temper beginning to rise. Silence connects you with your inner self, and once you are connected with your inner self, the anger will automatically subside. If you make it a habit to do this on a regular basis, you will find that subduing your anger in this way gradually becomes your nature.

I have known people who had a very short fuse and used to get angry at the drop of a hat. The same people are now so much at peace with themselves, just by observing silence, by being in the company of nice people and by reading motivational and spiritual books. I must confess that I too used to be very short-tempered, but with the above method, I have been able to control my anger quite a bit. I must make another confession to you that I have not been able to fully control it despite making constant effort for the last sixteen years. But since I have been able to control my anger for, say about seventy five per cent of the time, I thought that on the basis of that distinction I am entitled to guide you a bit on this matter!

You will discover that you feel good about yourself whenever you control your anger, and you will invariably regret it whenever you react in an angry mood to a situation which could have been managed with gentle tact and consideration. But do not be consumed by guilt if you do lose control of your temper. Just be aware that we are all fellow travellers in life's journey, committing errors and learning from them.

Why do people say that you should never take any important decision when you are angry, and never promise anything when you are in a celebratory mood? The answer is simple: in both these situations you do not have the right balance of mind to take rational decisions.

It is rightly said, "True heroism lies in the conquest of anger". Just remember this in order to become a hero. To control anger is such a great quality that it requires great wisdom and training of the mind. It can only be achieved through contemplation, reflection, silence and analysis of one's thought processes.

It is, however, very easy to improve if you just resolve and make conscious efforts in this direction. One nice quote would definitely help you control your anger, if you just remember and try to live with this pearl of wisdom. Some enlightened soul said it very beautifully, *A realised (balanced) person does not have to go to the temple, Wherever he bows, it becomes a temple. An angry man does not have to go to hell, Wherever he goes, he creates hell.*

You must have noticed that whenever we show anger towards a particular person, we not only hurt that person, but we also *spoil*

*the whole atmosphere.* Similarly, whenever we control our anger, we not only maintain our own peace of mind but we also influence others to be calm. Anger is madness for a few seconds, and if we just control our anger for a few seconds and try to count up to ten or just observe the situation like a witness, or if we defer our decision for just a few seconds; the anger would vanish for sure.

Let us resolve that to score better marks and to enjoy more in life, we must control our anger as much as we can. So just observe silence for while, to be with your pure self, so as to control anger and live a blissful life.

\* \* \*

*“You have enemies?  
Good. That means  
you have stood up for  
something in your life.”*  
—Winston Churchill

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## The Brave Score Better

Are you wondering what the connection between bravery and your exams is? It is very simple: if you are brave and fearless, you are bound to be more confident. And the one who is confident, would look nice, enjoy more and score more. That is very natural.

Those, who are not afraid to take a stand when the occasion demands, are the ones who live a full life. As they say, “It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.”

It is important to understand that you should never be impulsive, and should never take decisions in haste. If you really feel that some issue is worth taking a stand on, you must analyse it thoroughly, and decide whether it is for public good or for your own personal gain. The magnitude of the issue must be assessed, as well as its long term implications. If you start fighting on the streets with anyone who has annoyed you for some reason (as happens frequently in cases of road rage), you will end up exhausting yourself and disturbing your balance of mind over trivial matters.

You have learnt by now the importance of a calm and balanced mind to look good and to score better marks.

The wisest policy is to ignore all petty issues and preserve your energy for larger and more significant matters. You would be considered brave and fearless only when you take a stand on some major issues in life, not when you fight with the weak, or over small issues.

So be very careful to ignore small issues. This would make you strong and would enable you to maintain a perfect balance of mind for your success in exams and life.

\* \* \*

*“Confidence  
can move  
mountains.”*

# 43

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## Self-Confidence vs Exams

The most important aspect of your personality, whether for scoring good marks or for leading a great life, is self-confidence.

You must have noticed that many times students devoting less time to their studies score better marks than those who have burnt the midnight oil. Why do you think this happens? This happens because the people concerned are confident and sure of their abilities. Once you develop confidence in your ability, it goes a long way, not only in your exams, but in life too.

One enlightened soul said it beautifully that, “An atheist is one who does not believe in himself”.

### **How do we develop self-confidence?**

Nothing in life comes on a platter. You have to work for it.

We have already agreed that the purpose of education and our sole aim in life is not just to score good marks in the exams. I have

seen many studious and brilliant children leading average lives and many average students doing great in life. This is mainly because of the difference in their level of self-confidence. Those who are just bookworms and neglect all other aspects of life tend to lack self-confidence.

We all know that the main purpose of scoring good marks is to do better in life. Doing well in life means connecting better with the world. But just by getting good marks, you cannot connect better with the world. You must cultivate a harmonious personality to enjoy maximum and do well in life.

I do not think anyone would disagree with me, if I say that in a football match, one who has practised with dedication and discipline would perform better on the field and would be the darling of the masses. The one who has practised more, who has taken care of his health and fitness, who has watched great players, who has followed the advice of his coach and great players with total dedication, would perform the best.

The same is true for you to look nice, enjoy yourself, score well and achieve success in life.

Self-confidence is a very important aspect of our personality. One who has dealt with life in all its aspects or is aware of the realities of life would definitely do better than the one who has no experience of dealing with the world. If I asked you the route to your home from your school or college, would you take much time to explain? Now if I asked you, "Are you sure?" you would reply confidently, "Of course, I am sure!" Because you have travelled so many times between your school and home, you are able to explain the best

route with confidence. Similarly you would have the self-confidence to deal with only those roads of life on which you have travelled. You would be able to deal with people successfully only if you have had prior experience in handling people and difficult situations.

So when we talk about self-confidence while dealing with the world it is but natural that the one who has dealt with the world on more occasions, and who is aware of the nature of the world in different aspects of life, would be more confident.

It is sad to see students depending upon their parents and siblings for every little thing in their day-to-day life. When seeking admission into college, students travel with their parents and expect them to complete the formalities. It is fine if your parents are travelling with you to keep you company and to be on hand for any help you might need, but to depend upon them to take you to school when you are in a senior class or when you are in college is something the merit of which has to be examined in every particular case!

### **A complete human being**

We have discussed in this book different aspects of life that one has to deal with, so as to grow as a cultivated or complete human being. A complete human being is one who is physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually balanced. The most important thing to keep in mind is that you do not have to spend too much time in these activities. You can develop as a complete human being without missing your school/college and without missing out on time to study for exams. You just have to understand the truths mentioned in this book. You have to cultivate a mindset in order to be aware of and to attend to the truths of life, which will help you develop your self-confidence.



To develop a complete personality you have to deal with many issues and the first step is just *being aware*. Try to recognise the miseries in the world. It is true that you cannot solve all the problems. But if you are totally insensitive to miseries, you cannot develop a harmonious personality.

Similarly, you should be sensitive to the problems of your near and dear ones and do your bit to help them. Sometimes you should go to watch a nice movie or play to understand what the artist is saying about a particular problem of the society. You must read informative magazines to know the mindset of the society. Try to know what your fellow students are thinking and doing in their lives. Try to know how some particular problem like pollution is being dealt with. Try to know how the sports bodies are functioning.

Then, as discussed in earlier chapters, learn how to control anger, how to restrict your desires, how to relax your mind, how to maintain good health, how to look nice, how to enjoy life without causing harm to anyone, how to deal with someone angry, how to help a friend who is depressed. Now imagine, can you deal with all these issues, plus innumerable other such issues? You might find it too cumbersome.

But in fact, you would be surprised to know that you are actually dealing with most of these issues. You do not have to disturb your studies. Just be aware and attend to something or the other once in a while. To develop self-confidence, you must read some good book on personality development or philosophy of life every day for just half an hour. Go out to watch a nice play or movie, play some sport, listen to music, attend to others' problems, balance your life and become an asset to the society.

### **Take responsibility**

Quite often it is seen that in a class room or a social gathering or even at home, if students are asked to volunteer for some work, very few come forward. We do not realise that every such opportunity gives us new experience and confidence. When you volunteer to take on some responsibility, you get a chance to meet new people connected with your task, perform a variety of jobs and organise matters to achieve your goal. This, in turn, helps you assess your capability and analyse the areas in which you need improvement. There are other uncountable bonuses too: you get to learn new skills, improve your knowledge and learn invaluable truths about human nature. After all, life is the cumulative effect of your experiences. So never miss any opportunity to gain some experience.

The other important advantage is that once you start showing your willingness to volunteer to help out in projects, you make a favourable impression on those in authority, and you will find yourself being singled out and assigned tasks. People will start relying upon you and you will earn the reputation of being a dependable, efficient and willing worker. And of course, you will gain more and more valuable experience. You become amenable and popular among your fellow students, society and family. Then, often you will find that other people are there to help you as well. But a warning here is: never expect anything in return for any favour done to anyone. If it comes, you can enjoy it; if it does not, just ignore it.

That is why they say,  
*Neki kar aur kunye me daal.*

Which means, do good deeds but do not expect anything in return.

This attitude would keep you happy; otherwise there would be too many occasions in life when you would feel depressed thinking that those you helped were not there when you needed some assistance. Never expect more than what you get from a person or a situation. The sooner you understand this wisdom of life, the better it would be for your confidence and happiness.

We can sum up this issue with a nice quote, “People are happy with you so long as you fulfil their expectations and so long as you do not have any expectations from them.” So to gain self-confidence, just be a giver and do not expect anything in return.

The more you deal with people and their issues, the more you would be trained and experienced to deal with the world and would develop self- confidence, which would help you not only in getting better marks but would also ensure that you develop as a complete human being to succeed in your career and in life.

\* \* \*

*“Humility is more important than wisdom and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom.”*

# 44

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## Humility vs Exams vs Arrogance

It is very important to understand how badly arrogance affects your performance in exams. You must have noticed that whenever, whether intentionally or unintentionally, we behave in an arrogant manner, it affects our mental balance and we are tense, at least for sometime. Not only do we stress our minds, we sometimes also regret it for a longer time and wish that it would have been better if we were humble at that particular time.

The converse is also true. Whenever we act humbly, we feel nice and relaxed, which is very important for our performance in exams. I wish to tell you a story that illustrates the shallowness of arrogance.

There lived a king who was very benevolent but very proud. One day he summoned all his ministers and said, “We are all doing some work or another, but what is God’s work?” Everyone was surprised at this question, but he was insistent and demanded an answer. Everyone was baffled and finally they all suggested that they should consult the head priest of the kingdom. The head priest was summoned and

was asked the same question. The king, in his supreme arrogance, told him that he needed an answer to his query, "What is God's work in this world?" The head priest was worried and spent the next six days agonising over the answer. On the seventh day, while he was sitting outside his cottage in a pensive mood, a shepherd boy, who used to pass by every evening, saw him and felt concerned. He asked the priest what the matter was. The priest replied, "The king has asked me to find an answer to a question which no one has been able to answer so far. He will punish me if no answer is found by tomorrow."

The shepherd boy said, "Sir, you have always taught us to be happy and grateful to God for all that we have. I cannot bear to see you looking so unhappy. Why don't you at least share your troubles with me? What is this question that the king has asked?" The priest sighed and told him the question. The boy smiled mischievously and requested the head priest to let him answer the king's query. The priest was worried. He had no option but to take a chance, since he had failed to find any solution in the last six days.

The next day the priest took the shepherd boy to the palace and told the king that the boy would give the answer to his question. The king was not impressed, but agreed on the condition that if the boy was not able to answer his query satisfactorily, both he and the priest would be hanged. The boy asked the king to summon all his ministers, and this was done at once. In the presence of the entire assembly, the king repeated his question. The boy kept quiet for a while. All the courtiers fidgeted impatiently and murmured among themselves. The king got angry and roared, "Well, what is the answer? Why don't you speak?"

The shepherd boy said, “Your Majesty, you are asking the question to which only I have the answer. So that makes me the teacher and you the student. In that case, don’t you think you should vacate your throne for me and sit down like a student?”

The king had no option but to reluctantly agree to this fair proposition. He stepped down and sat on the floor while the boy climbed on to the throne meant for the king. He smiled naughtily, swinging his legs and admiring the richly-carved throne. The king was getting restless. He waited for a while and then shouted, “Now, why don’t you answer? What is God’s work?”

The young shepherd laughed aloud and said, “This is God’s work: see how he has put you down in my place and brought me up to yours!”

All the courtiers and the head priest burst out laughing at the boy’s audacity and the king realised how arrogant he had been.

The moral is that the arrogant are pushed down by society and the humble ones are pushed up.

### **Why do people behave in an arrogant manner?**

We behave arrogantly if we feel that someone is inferior to us either in terms of wealth and status or because we feel we know more than they do about a particular subject. We fail to understand that there are millions of people having expertise in different spheres of life. Rich people should also remember that others may have more assets than them.

It is futile to boast of your achievements, because in the larger

perspective, they may seem very small and insignificant, as this story shows.

There was a man who was always boasting of his big bungalow to all his friends, till he met a smart boy. The boy asked him, "Uncle I have heard a lot about your bungalow. Can you please tell me where is it located?" The rich man tried to explain to him the location of his bungalow, but the boy was too smart. He said, "Sorry uncle, I can't understand it like this. Let me bring the map." The boy brought the map of the world and asked him, "Please explain to me on this map where your palatial bungalow is." The man got nervous and the boy got naughtier. He said, "Uncle, I will help you a bit, then you take over." He spotted his country in the world map and said, "Uncle, I have located the country." This was a miniscule portion of the map.

He pointed out the country on the world map and said, "This is our country on the map. Now, can you locate the city where we live?" The gentleman pointed to a tiny dot on the map and said, "Here it is." "And where in this city is your grand bungalow?" queried the boy innocently. "How can I show you that in this little dot on the map?" roared the man angrily. So the boy smartly said, "But how big is your bungalow if it can be fitted into this point, with millions of other houses small or big?" The rich man understood the wisdom of the boy and stopped boasting from thereon.

So is true about knowledge. The world is a great ocean of knowledge and one cannot acquire complete knowledge of even a single subject in a lifetime. So why be arrogant even on that count?

There is a nice couplet on this. Some enlightened soul said it beautifully,

*Zindagi ki asli udan abhi baaki hai,  
 Aage abhi aur imtihaan baaki hai,  
 Abhi to naapi hai hamne thodi si zamin,  
 Aage saara aasmaan abhi baki hai.*

In other words, the real flight of life is still pending, there are many more tests awaiting us. We have managed to take the measure of just a bit of the earth; the entire sky is still to be discovered.

Hence it is futile to boast about the limited knowledge and limited material possessions that we have. Arrogance is an undesirable trait, which can warp our personality and outlook on life.

We must realise that whenever we are humble, we have a relaxed mind and facial expression. However, whenever we act in arrogance we get tense. Why do we sometimes say that so and so looks very arrogant, even though we have not had much interaction with that person? It is very natural that whenever we act arrogantly we look arrogant. So to look nice you cannot be arrogant. Even if we are thinking in an arrogant way, we get tense. We have often discussed, that maintaining a relaxed mind for better results is a full-time activity. We should therefore try to be as humble as possible to maintain grace and a relaxed mind for better preparation for exams and life as a whole.

Now you know the relevance of humility to your exams. So let us resolve to be humble and avoid arrogance to have a relaxed mind so as to look nice, enjoy maximum and score maximum.



*"The weak can  
never forgive.*

*Forgiveness is  
the attribute of  
the strong."*

# 45

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## Ill Will and Hatred vs Exams

Ill will and hatred towards anyone can spoil your results and enjoyment. If you praise someone, you feel nice and have a relaxed mind. The converse is also true. If you develop any ill will or hatred towards anyone, it causes stress and tension in your mind.

People usually have feelings of hatred or ill will because someone said something insulting or did some wrong to them.

All of us, at some time or the other, say something or do something, which hurts our loved ones or the person we are dealing with. Now let us analyse this: Did you ever plan to say something bad to your friend or brother or sister or mother or father with any intention to hurt them? The answer would be a big 'no'. You would definitely say that you said that thing because that is what you felt at that time, or it was unintentional, or that you misunderstood, or that you were angry or were not in a good mood, or were tired. So it is clear that whenever you cause hurt to someone, you feel you had some excuse to do that or were not really intending to do it.

Similarly, whenever a person says something about you that you feel is negative or insulting, it can be for so many reasons. You say that you never try to hurt anyone, but still people, including your dear ones, are sometimes hurt by your utterances. Similarly, when someone says something hurtful that can be because of his perception or he may be angry or he may have used wrong words or it could be unintentional too.

There are more than six billion people in this world but no two persons have the same fingerprints. We all have different natures and come from different backgrounds; we are brought up differently, in different circumstances and different cultures. So how can we expect everyone to behave in the same manner or according to our own expectations? So you should never feel hurt or fight with anyone's perception. There could also be an instance where the person may be right and you could be wrong.

Even if you feel convinced that the person was wrong, you should remember that forgiveness is an ornament, which adorns both men and women. As they say, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

If anyone says something bad or negative against you or your family member, it may be because of his perception or level of wisdom. You can neither fight with someone's perception nor with his wisdom. So let go and ignore as far as possible. As we discussed earlier, we have to keep our mind decorated like a basket of beautiful flowers. We don't have to allow it to be used as a dustbin for negative thoughts or bad memories. You should therefore, never entertain any hatred or ill will against anyone.

If we entertain any ill will or hatred, then in the process we *only stress ourselves and disturb our balance of mind*. Since we have now understood that to enjoy maximum and to score maximum the most important thing is to have a relaxed mind twenty four hours a day; therefore let us laugh at all the comments, negative or positive, and let us not carry the burden of ill will or hatred towards those who made such remarks!

\* \* \*

*"Humility is the  
greatest virtue  
and the arrogance  
is the greatest  
weakness."*

# 46

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## Self-Respect vs Ego vs Exams

Let us now understand the importance of self-respect and ego to your exams and enjoyment. This is again directly related with your relaxed or tense mind.

Do not bother too much to distinguish between self-respect and ego because many of us are unable to do that despite having spent so many years in public life. There is a very thin dividing line between the two. But it is essential to know this difference and mould our actions and reactions accordingly.

A blow to the ego is superficial and temporary, and can soon be forgotten. An attack on one's self-respect, on the other hand, can have serious consequences and damage a person's psyche for life. Learning the difference between the two comes from constantly and honestly evaluating our behaviour and reactions. But as we discussed about certain other issues, we have to just be aware and try to improve ourselves in every aspect of life.

Throughout this book we have been discussing that we should ignore

negative and unwarranted comments so that we can maintain the balance of mind at all times. The only exception is that you should not allow people to run over you or treat you as they like.

If you cannot protect your self-respect, how would you protect anyone else, or humanity at large? If someone makes a comment that offends your sense of values or casts aspersions on your character or goes against the principles that you hold dear, it is your moral duty to express your dissent and uphold your self-respect. There is no need to take such attacks lying down. Just as a house owner has the right to confront anyone who dares to trespass on his property, you have every right to defend yourself against anyone who tries to trespass on your sense of self-worth.

But engrave it in your mind that there is a very thin dividing line between self-respect and ego. So you should be extremely careful. It is better to ignore a comment than to take a chance of fighting to defend your ego. Your reaction to protect your self-respect should be once in a while, just to prevent insensitive people from attacking you or insulting you unnecessarily.

It is also important to evaluate whether the person making such comments is worthy of your notice. If we begin defending ourselves against every negative remark, we would spend a lifetime doing this, and to no avail, because there would always be people waiting for an opportunity to criticise. You should develop the reputation that whenever you react once in a while, everyone must feel that you were justified. More than anyone else, your heart should feel convinced that it is not your nature to react on every issue.

So avoid reacting most of the time, but once in a while do not

allow people to run over you, and protect yourself from being hurt beyond a point. There is an interesting folk tale that illustrates this perfectly.

In a forest there lived a snake that was very dangerous. He used to bite anyone crossing his territory. Once a sage was passing by, and the snake asked for his help, since he was always very restless and disturbed. The enlightened master suggested that he should stop hurting people in order to restore his mental peace. The snake sincerely followed the sage's advice and stopped biting people.

Soon word spread that the snake had become harmless and was no longer a danger to anyone. Children became fearless and started pelting stones at him. The snake was badly injured and began bleeding profusely. Yet he did not retaliate because of the sage's advice.

A few days later, the master passed by on his return and stopped to enquire about the snake's welfare. He was surprised and horrified to see him bleeding and almost dead. Having learnt of his plight, the master explained that he had advised the snake not to bite without provocation. He did not say that the snake should not defend himself from assault. When one's very existence or self-respect is at stake, it is necessary to take a stand. "If someone threatens you, you must object at once. You need not bite, but at least you can raise your hood and warningly hiss at your attackers. That is enough to keep them at bay," explained the sage.

So the message is very clear. You should be sweet and nice to people but never allow anyone to run over you. You should maintain your self-respect but be watchful for there is a very thin dividing line

between self-respect and ego. But do not worry too much about this. With the passage of time and experience of dealing with the world, you would be competent enough to know the difference between self-respect and ego.

Be very careful to maintain this rule of thumb that you do not have to react most of the time to useless comments, and you should reserve your energy for bigger issues. Just maintain your balance of mind to look nice, enjoy maximum and score maximum.

\* \* \*

*“Master your needs/desires to become an architect of a great future.”*

47

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## Are You a Master Or a Slave?

This is the only question I wish you to answer every day, to yourself. The truth is that many of us are slaves of our desires, greed, nature, thoughts, and above all, expectations.

Are you the master of your dress style, hairstyle, balance of mind and happiness or is someone else your master? If by not getting a particular hairstyle you get upset, that means that your hairstyle is your master. If someone provokes you and disturbs your peace of mind, that means that person is your master, since you have given him so much of importance that he decides whether you would be happy or sad.

Hardly do we get time in our lives to observe our thoughts and analyse if those are going in the right direction. What we do not realise is that all our actions are born out of our thoughts. So once we take charge of our thoughts, we become masters of our actions and until we take control of our thoughts, we remain slaves of our desires, needs, thoughts and expectations.



It may sound rude, but sometimes we need a bitter pill to get sound health. Here it is not the question of only our physical health. Our whole being is at stake because it involves physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health. It is not only the question of scoring good marks. Scoring marks would automatically improve manifold once we realise the importance of not being slaves to our needs and expectations from other people and external situations. We spend most of our time following the demands of our needs and desires, without applying our mind to the real purpose of our lives or even our ambitions.

Until we stop for a while and analyse what is necessarily required and what is important to us, we cannot be balanced in our approach. No religion and no enlightened souls have ever taught us self-denial. All of them talk of self-control. The issue is to balance our personality so that we may grow as complete human beings with great hearts and minds.

If our actions and thoughts are involved in self-centred activities all the time, we just cannot be happy. We cannot even enjoy the fruits of self-centred activities if we are totally unconcerned about the happenings around our social responsibilities and us. You must enjoy whatever life has offered you, but with some sort of self-control.

The quality of our thoughts is the most important thing to be observed. As one enlightened soul said it beautifully,  
“The quality of our activities cannot be raised / improved,  
Unless we raise the very texture of our thoughts,  
And the depth of our understanding.”

Once we stop following our needs and expectations blindly, we

are sure to enjoy life more by just observing the thoughts and contemplating on the need to follow the same. So make this positive affirmation: "I am the master of my thoughts and actions. I am the master of my happiness and balance of mind. No one can disturb my blissful state. Nothing can disturb my relaxed mind."

You are bound to enjoy more and score more if you just reflect upon the need and the utility of following your desires and expectations. Take good care of your thoughts. Be the master of your thoughts, desires and expectations. Do not be a slave to any thought, need or behaviour of others.

\* \* \*

*“Truth is god — the biggest advantage of truth is that you don’t have to remember it.”*

48

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## Truth vs Exams

You must be wondering about the relevance of truth in your campaign to score good marks. Why did Mahatma Gandhi say, “Truth is God”? Many enlightened souls have declared that truth is the best religion. Honesty is the best policy, because truth is pure and truth is beautiful. Here is a lovely story that illustrates the value of truth.

There was a charming prince who was very popular and many girls in the kingdom were keen to marry him. Among them was a simple girl, called Preesha, from a humble background, who was longing for a chance just to meet him. As luck would have it, the king decided that it was time to find a bride for the prince. The custom in the kingdom was that the prince interviewed all prospective brides and then made his decision. So the announcement was made that whosoever wanted to marry the prince should come to the palace to be interviewed by him. Preesha was delighted to know this and decided to participate, just to have a look at the charming prince.

On the appointed date, all the girls gathered at the palace and the prince met them one by one. He gave a handful of seeds to all of them with the direction to sow them in a pot and show him the flowers after a few months. Preesha happily took the seeds home and spent the next few days reading up on gardening and the best way to sow seeds. She put her heart and soul into caring for the seeds but nothing grew in her pot. After a few months, all the girls carrying beautiful flowers in their respective pots, assembled at the palace. Preesha was sad, but consoled herself by gazing at the prince, once more to her heart's content.

The prince looked at the flowers brought by all the girls. Finally the king asked him, "Well, my son, whose flowers do you like the most? Which girl would you like to marry?"

The prince shocked everyone by announcing that he had decided to marry the girl who had brought the empty pot, because she was the only one who was honest and truthful. He then disclosed to the gathering that he had given barren seeds to all of them. All the other girls must have bought fresh seeds from the market to grow beautiful flowers. Only Preesha had tried sincerely to grow plants from the seeds given, whereas all the others had changed the seeds.

So that is the power of truth and honesty. It is very important to understand that the biggest advantage of truth is that you do not have to make an additional effort to remember it.

Suppose you get home late because you were playing some game, but you tell your parents that you had an extra class to attend. You would have to make up and remember all the details about the so-called extra class, like who was the teacher, what was the topic,

who else was there and so on. Imagine what would happen if a classmate of yours rang up and asked about you at the time you were supposed to be having a class! So not only do you have to plan your lies, you have to train all your friends to support them. Isn't this a waste of precious energy and time? Therefore, smart people do not lie because it is just not worth the effort.

Besides, when you tell a lie, you lose peace of mind and you can never be as confident and comfortable as you are when you are honest. You have understood by now, that to score well and be a winner, you have to be relaxed and focused all the time. Then why disturb your mind by telling lies?

Don't you say to your friends sometimes, "I don't believe you, you are telling a lie"? How does this happen? The answer is very simple. Your heart speaks and your heart listens. So if you can know when someone is telling a lie, the others also know when you are telling a lie. You must have noticed that whenever someone lies, his facial expression is tense or nervous. So if you want to look nice, you can't tell any lies.

Understand the time-tested wisdom that, "You can't befool too many people too many times." Not only that, if you tell lies in a casual way, then that could become your habit, and the converse is also true. If you are determined not to tell lies then that also becomes your habit. This applies even to casual statements like, "Ok, I will help you," or "I will definitely visit you soon". Do not get into the habit of making these offhand commitments unless you really mean to honour them. It gets into your system, so check yourself before you make any statement. You must realise that in the long run, your personality and your *reputation is at stake* if you continue to make loose statements in a casual manner.

Here is a famous story that underlines the importance of good reputation.

There was a very noble man called Baba Raj who was not very rich, but completely content with the simple life he led. He was always very helpful to his fellow human beings and particularly compassionate towards animals. His greatest love was his handsome and strong horse called Sultan. Baba Raj adored his horse and used to take very good care of him. He used to treat him like a friend.

There was a dacoit in the area named Kharak Singh who had heard about Baba Raj's splendid horse. One night he crept into Baba Raj's house and tried to steal Sultan. But the horse's frantic neighing woke up Baba Raj, who rushed to the stable. Kharak Singh demanded that the horse be given to him. Baba Raj replied that he would not like to part with Sultan because the horse was so used to his loving care that he would not be satisfied with anyone else's care. Kharak Singh went away in anger, but warned him that some day he would take the horse away, by hook or by crook.

One day Baba Raj was riding through the jungle and saw a beggar lying on the roadside, crying for help. He stopped his horse and asked him what the matter was. The man replied that he was lame and sick and wanted to go to the next village. The kind-hearted Baba Raj agreed to take the man at once, and helped him up on the horse. He himself started walking alongside, leading the horse by the reins. Suddenly the man on the horse sat up erect, snatched the reins and raced away with the horse. He shouted out that he was Kharak Singh and that he had kept his promise of stealing the horse.

Baba Raj was stunned for a few seconds, but then he called out to the speeding dacoit to stop and listen to him for a minute. Kharak

Singh slowed down and turned back. Baba Raj waited till he came up to him and then said, "If you want my horse so badly, you may take him. I have just one request to make. Please do not mention this incident to anyone else."

Kharak Singh was puzzled and asked him to explain further. Baba Raj replied, "If people get to hear that this is what happened when I tried to help a poor man, they would lose faith in humanity and would shy away from helping the poor and needy in future." Needless to say, Kharak Singh was so moved and ashamed that he quietly returned the horse the next night.

So the moral of the story is, that if you, by your conduct, show that you are not trustworthy, people around you would lose faith in you and would stop trusting you. This would have a negative impact on your future growth and career prospects.

The converse is also true. If you feel that people like you and trust you, you would have a more relaxed and balanced mind. You would be more confident and that would definitely help you in your performance in exams and life.

Always pay heed to what you commit to do and what you are asked to do. Be sincere and honest for your own sake. In our friends' circle we may have friends who are not trusted because they make casual statements, let us not follow them. Rather, we should try to correct them in private. We should not do this in public, as it is not good for their peace of mind. Also tell them the importance of truth and honesty for them to maintain a relaxed mind so as to look nice, enjoy maximum and score maximum.

*“If you salute your duty you need not salute any body. But if you pollute your duty you have to salute every body.”*

— Dr Abdul Kalam Azad  
*Former president of India*

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## Will Power vs Exams

We have realised by now what are the things we need to do in order to look smart, score well and be a winner. We also know that to develop a balanced and harmonious personality and to become a truly good human being, it is very important to follow a meticulously planned road map.

But can you reach your destination if the road map is in your pocket and you are walking on the road aimlessly, without taking it out and trying to follow it?

The problem in the world today is that we read and gain knowledge about many things, but not many people work on the knowledge gained. Wisdom lies in living life based on what we have learned. If we want to achieve something, but do not make any efforts in that direction, how can we expect to succeed?

Let me tell you a story that shows the importance of will-power. There was a rich man who was very well-connected and very popular as well. One day he fell ill. He promptly consulted the best



doctors available in the area and bought all the costly medicines they prescribed. He boasted of his connections to everyone who visited him. He told them that he had consulted the best in the field and procured the best medicines from all over the world. But he never took those medicines kept near his bed. As a result, his condition deteriorated day by day until he had to be shifted to the intensive care unit of a hospital. There the doctors came to know that despite having consulted the best of the doctors and having procured all the necessary medicines, he had not taken those medicines.

So you see, just knowing what steps are necessary to achieve success is not enough. You have to find within yourself, or consciously develop, the will-power and motivation to implement your plan of action in order to achieve concrete results.

Now, after realising the importance of dealing with many aspects of life and the importance of maintaining balance of mind throughout the day, is it not important to do something in that direction? It is not a part-time job to have a relaxed mind. It is of utmost importance to have a relaxed mind all the time.

We have also discussed in different chapters how to deal with different situations and issues of life. We have debated the importance of right attitude, silence, religion and communication skills. We have discussed so many things, which we feel are very important for our growth. But like having a *map in the pocket*, if we do not have the will-power and determination to work on that map, it would be of no use.

So you must *resolve to be disciplined* at least in following the principles and ideas on which you feel convinced and which are at least worth trying.

I am not saying you should blindly follow even a word from this discussion. All I am suggesting is that for your own sake, and to lead a successful and blissful life, read this book again and note down the points which you feel could be useful. Make a note of all that you need to do to imbibe these qualities. Just keep it handy and see it every day, for a few days at least, to learn how to work on those issues. Keep the notes, on what you liked and would try to do, on your table. *Experiment* with the ideas, which are worth trying for a few months. If you see any benefits, continue the same habit, but if you see no progress then drop that action.

The truth is that most people lose their balance of mind on different occasions. Rome was not built in a single day, so all of us would take time to imbibe all the time-tested words of wisdom. But what is important is to know that those who rarely lose balance of mind are more blissful and successful. That is where you should try to reach, not only for your exams but also for your greater journey.

This is the idea behind discussing with you all the relevant aspects of life where we tend to lose balance of mind. The purpose is to have a harmonious growth of all the essential aspects of our personality. Exams and preparations would automatically fall in the list of easy targets for you. But the most important necessity is to have the will-power and discipline to improve upon all aspects of life. Unless you have the will-power and constantly practise every suggestion with a lot of patience, no benefit would accrue.

Be strong enough to accept the challenges of life. Do not say to God, "Why me?" Instead say, "Try me." That is the spirit of life! Celebrate it.

What  
about my  
fee?

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## How to Help a Depressed Friend

Surveys show that about one million people committed suicide in 2008, out of which about 1.2 lac were Indians. Exam related suicides in India and abroad are increasing every year. The purpose of reading any book is best served, if we help the society through the wisdom gained.

Since by profession, I am a lawyer so by force of habit I am asking my fee from the readers. My fee is very interesting and hope that you would not disappoint me. My only request to you my friends, is that, you should always be aware of the people around you, and should help a depressed friend or anyone you feel has suicidal tendency, with the truth contained in the different chapters of this book.

I am sure, anyone being told about the truth and reality of life contained in this book, especially the chapters: Love Yourself, Life is a Celebration, Good Morning Until Morning, Success vs Failure, Don't Be in a Cage, Religion, Beauty of a Soul, Never Crib, Date With a Musician, Just One Hour a Week, and few more such things, would

never even dream of such an act. He would rather become an asset to the society and would guide the other similarly placed people.

But pause for a moment, and tell me, can you confide your personal problem or a depressed state of mind, anytime, in anyone? The answer would be an emphatic 'no'. And you may be right. Because it is not easy for anyone to share his difficulties or dilemma or depression with anyone else unless one feels hundred per cent comfortable with that person at emotional level and has full confidence in his wisdom and compassion.

So it must be kept in mind, that the privilege to help others and to be of help to a depressed friend would not come on a platter. Hence, the first thing is to train yourself and discipline yourself with the truth contained in this book and in other such books.

By your own conduct and discipline, generate confidence of people in you, especially friends and near and dear ones – about your concern and ability to deal with their problems. Friends should be sure about your wisdom and sense of discretion, that you would listen to their problem patiently and their secret would die with you. A word of caution here is, that although we should be aware and sensitive to others' problems and create a situation where they feel comfortable to share with us, however, we should never impose ourselves or embarrass anyone to share their dilemmas. Unless of course, we feel that there is something very important and the person should be told about it.

I am sure, once we resolve to dedicate ourselves in this direction, rest all would fall in place automatically. Take good care, and resolve to be a balm for your friends in need.

*“Constant introspection,  
contemplation and reflecting  
upon your thoughts, desires  
and deeds is the best route  
for ultimate success and joy.”*

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## Simple Formula

By now we all know that to achieve anything under the sun, be it looking nice, maximum enjoyment, scoring maximum or reaching the top of a career, one has to cultivate a harmonious and complete personality. One has to keep the mind pure and relaxed all the time. So let us understand the simplest formula to cultivate all aspects of a balanced personality, such as the physical, mental, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual sides. How to convert an out of control ‘*Monkey Mind*’ into an ‘*Elephant Mind*’ under full control? The real purpose of life is to achieve this state of mind, in which you are blissful and useful all the time.

The simplest formula is just spending *one hour* every day to become a complete human being. Looks, exams and enjoyment would follow automatically. Just make a note of all the important aspects and issues of life, which you wish to develop in your personality to become someone special. Make note of the important principles and truths of life discussed here or learnt from other sources, such as your parents, teachers, books, friends and happenings around you. You do not need to do anything else.

Just revise the notes on this book at least once a day for one month. Spend half an hour every day, to study the truth of life, from any book on motivation or personality development, and your own notes.

Every day, just after your dinner, spend ten minutes to take stock of your progress on those aspects of your personality. Judge for yourself where you have reached and where you need to improve. Also observe and analyse your activities undertaken during the day to examine your actions and thoughts. We have already discussed in the chapter on Religion vs Exams that reading your heart every day is the most important and truest religion. These ten minutes would guide you on your journey.

One enlightened soul has beautifully said: "You can cheat others, but never your conscience or your god."

Observe silence just for five minutes twice every day. These ten minutes of silence would open a new horizon for you.

Some enlightened soul said it beautifully: "A quiet mind produces a more brilliant intellect. The quieter the mind, the sharper the intellect."

*So thirty minutes study, ten minutes analysing your daily activities, ten minutes silence and ten minutes music when you retire to bed makes your one-hour simple formula for a blissful life.*

Retire to bed with some soft music at a fixed time so that you can have sound sleep for seven to eight hours and get up fresh and rejuvenated for 'Good Morning Until Morning' activities. I also assure

you that once these aspects of life are imbibed in your system, you won't have to spend any extra time for self-development.

Without spending any money, just for a couple of months, spend an hour as suggested above. It is not a bad bargain, and there is no risk. So resolve to be great and special.

On Sundays, say *hello to yourself* and spend one hour in some garden or at any secluded place to talk to yourself. Once in a week you must talk to yourself and analyse the motive of each thought and action, whether it is selfish or not, whether it is taking you towards your goals or taking you away from your goals.

Every week, analyse and keep notes on your progress: where have you reached and where you still need to put in more effort. It is time-tested wisdom that once you start observing your thoughts and actions dispassionately; you are bound to reach great heights and would surely feel blissful in whatever you do.

\* \* \*

*“The ultimate  
in life is to flow  
with life.”*

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## Ultimate Aim

Having read the book, you must be wondering as to what should be the ultimate aim of human life? We keep on running after position and other material things in life, without trying to know the ultimate purpose of life. So long we are alive, we would continue to face and solve innumerable issues; but the ultimate aim of life should be to reach a stage, where we are able to serve the society to the best of our ability and we are established in self, dealing with the issues day in and day out in a blissful manner without any confusions.

We must aspire to be happy all the time and in all circumstances. The ultimate stage is to be happy all the time and be useful to the society.

The ultimate state of mind is to be desire-free. However, it does not mean that you do not enjoy life and possessions in a balanced way. No one talks of self-denial or self-persecution; the only thing is, that it should be with rightful intentions and with a balanced approach.



The stage, where there is no confusion and the person is able to live and enjoy life as it comes all the time, is ultimate in life.

As one enlightened soul said beautifully,  
*Mein zindagi ka saath nibhaata chala gaya...*

This means, that I love life as it comes, I flow with life, that is the ultimate...

I am sure, this book and the truth contained in it would help all of us reach the ultimate stage in life.

I wish you all the best in your endeavour and hope that henceforth we will become true friends. I would really deem it a pleasure if you get in touch with me and like a true friend, share with me your experiences or ask for any help or clarification. After all, a friend in need is friend indeed. Let me be your friend in need!

All the best!

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**Note:** In case you have any questions/suggestions or you need assistance to work with any NGO or want to take up any cause in public interest, please feel free to mail me at [jeevanutsav2310@gmail.com](mailto:jeevanutsav2310@gmail.com) or you may correspond with me at my postal address: 4-C, Sagar Apartments, 6 Tilak Marg, India Gate, New Delhi - 01. And in case, there is any personal problem, kindly feel free to confide in me through my personal mail id [ashok@aroraz.com](mailto:ashok@aroraz.com).

*Ashok a twenty-first century Gautam Buddha has produced a working manual of existence during every hour of life. Ashok does not believe in failure and frustration. It is a book of joyous existence to which the young can aspire and achieve .*

**Ram Jethmalani**

Ashok's purpose of writing this book is to make the youth more confident, by giving his own example and assuring them that it's not necessary to be born in a rich, powerful and well-connected family to succeed in life. He has tried to impress upon the students the importance of cultivating their personalities to become complete human beings, by having a balanced physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual health, so as to enable them to be an asset towards nation building and serving the cause of humanity.

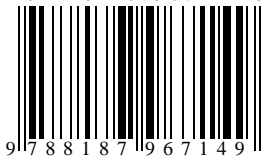
The author has dealt with many important aspects of life and the ground realities, the truth of life, to guide the next generation. The book makes interesting reading and has attempted to address all relevant issues in an informal manner that is bound to appeal the young audience. In fact the book would benefit every one since we all have our share of stress and strain in life and every event of life is an exam.

The real beauty of this book is that one has to just understand and be aware of the issues discussed and without spending any money or extra time adopt the simple tips the author has formulated to look smart and achieve maximum in a blissful manner. It is certainly not a bad bargain to have a peaceful and successful life by just spending an hour every day as per his suggestions.

**Ashok Arora**, a well-known lawyer, former secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association has done a lot of research and has practical experience of more than twenty-five years in child development, personality development and communication skills. Feeling concerned about the growing violent and suicidal tendencies and falling standard of physical and mental health of the youth world over and the stress and strain they go through, he resolved to sacrifice a lucrative law practice at the peak of his career to dedicate his life to selfless service He is in the real sense a 'monk who sold his Ferrari'! Ashok has a 25-year-old son, Kushagra and lives in New Delhi, India.

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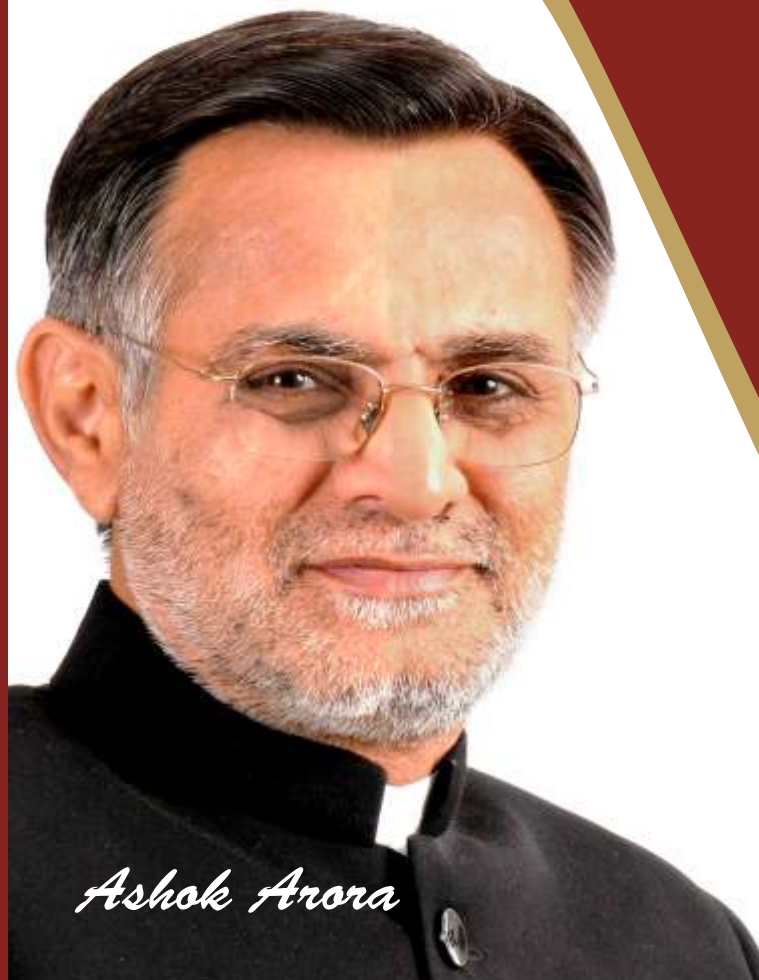


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Simple Tips for Sureshot Success

Ashok Arora

# Simple Tips *for* Sureshot Success



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