

We started the series on keys to fulfilment in the last issue by discussing one of the important keys to gaining fulfilment in life 'making right choice(s)'. I mentioned that we are largely products of the choices we make and that people make bad choices due to ignorance and as a result of pursuing what they want rather than what they need. Long lasting fulfilment only comes from making the right choices and working towards meeting inherent needs as opposed to satisfying every whim. People, who always do what they want rather than what they need to do, rarely get to experience fulfilment in the true sense of the word. I am aware of the fact that there are people who are basically products or victim of choices made by other people. I am also quite conscious of the fact that such people may have a tougher time finding fulfilment in certain areas of their lives in view of their situation. Notwithstanding, every man has an inherent ability to rise above and thrive beyond the boundaries created by their situation. No one has a perfect situation; no one truly enjoys access to boundless resources, which is why fulfilment is pursued to escape the bounds and experience the satisfaction that can only be found outside of the boundaries. Regardless of what your current situation, what is ultimately needed is the courage to dream or aspire to rise above the constraints. When courage is lacking, fulfilment becomes a mirage.

Courage is therefore another very important key to gaining fulfilment in life, we need courage to dream beyond the current realities, we need courage to take steps towards making the dreams come true, we need courage to forge ahead in the face of discouragement and frustrations and most importantly we need courage to reach the finishing line. No courage, no achievement and of course, no fulfilment. There is no fulfilment in vacuum.

COURAGE TO DREAM

Dreaming is a way of pushing the boundaries of your reality. New realities keep opening up in the world because of the few people who would dare to dream beyond the incumbent realities. People whose minds have been enraptured by the situation they have found themselves may lack the courage to dream and conceive ideas which could form the bedrock for finding fulfilment in life. If you let your circumstances determine what you will be able to get out of life, your fulfilment will be limited to the usually limited opportunities available within the constraint set by your circumstances, and nothing will change for the better until you dare to conceive the idea (dream) of a better life.

It takes courage to conceive a dream when your circumstance is clearly not a good ground for such kind of dreams. When all the rules, principles and norms which represent your reality are

restrictive and negative, being ambitions and positive becomes 'wrongs' which must be courageously committed. It takes courage for you to think of becoming what your world or the world has consistently agreed you cannot become, however, fulfilment lies in proving your world wrong, breaking the boundaries and setting a new precedent. President Obama did not become the first black President of the United States by an accident of fate, he was courageous enough to dream of such 'strange' reality and today, he is living in the reality of it. You can achieve that feat you have been told no immigrant has ever achieved. Let your imagination run wild in a constructive direction, dream big, dreaming is free, you cannot get a ticket for being 'unreasonable' in the magnitude of the dreams you have. We all need to become more courageous, you need courage to consider positive possibilities that are crazy in light of your present situation. Dream of making it in the US even when it seems no one in your situation or with your present limitations has ever made it big, dream of graduating top of your class even if there is no precedent set by someone whose credentials or background is comparable to yours. Dream of getting your dream job even if all the statistics agree there is a nil chance of such jobs being taken by anyone in your category. Let your dreams challenge the definition of impossibility, engage your mind and your imagination by dreaming of a better life. Dreaming is not where the hard work lies, but it takes courage to dream in the face of adversaries and travails. Do not let self condemnation or poor self perceptions impede your ability to dream big. You can achieve whatever you can dream up.

COURAGE TO EXPRESS YOUR DREAMS

The first thing to do with a dream is to express it; there is no way to define a dream other than through expression. You all will agree with me that, if one can look beyond his or her constraints, it is not so difficult to dream but it can be a bit difficult expressing the dreams, especially where they are inconsistent with the realities on ground. 'I have a dream' that was the speech through which Dr. Martin Luther-King gave a vivid expression to his dreams of racial equality in the United States of America. Dr. King is long gone but the ideals expressed in that historical 'I have a dream' speech lives on. You can only ensure that your dreams outlive you by expressing them. When you summon enough courage to express your dream, you are giving it a life of its own. You do not have to discuss your strategies, you do not have to broadcast it to the world, but as much as possible, your dreams has to be expressed (voiced and or written) and people who could help to bring them to fruition should be made aware of them. If there is no dream you can be identified with, there will be no fulfilment you can be celebrated for. Your dream is an intangible expression of your motivation, direction and destination. If people do not know what you want out of life, they will not be able to draw your attention to opportunities which could lead to your fulfilment and no one will be able to caution you when you start drifting off the line.

COURAGE TO TAKE STEPS TOWARDS MAKING THE DREAMS COME TRUE

Talk is cheap; most people spend their entire life time talking about their dreams without actually taking steps towards pursuing the fulfilment. The real hard work is not in dreaming or in giving expression to the dreams, the real work starts when you start taking steps towards realizing your dreams. At the entrance of every walk towards dream fulfilment, the first and often the most conspicuous signpost one is likely to find is one having an inscription that looks like 'IMPOSSIBLE!!!' Many people never bother to start at all because of that often intimidating signage, it therefore takes courage to defy the negative notice and start the journey through the 'impossible' gateway. As those who have been through the road have always said, the further you go through the gate in pursuit of your dreams, the clearer the real message on the signpost appears, 'I'M POSSIBLE' (Achieving your dreams is possible). It takes courage to move close enough to realize your dream is realizable. If you do not take steps towards fulfilling your dreams, you will never be able to tell whether you stand a chance or not.

COURAGE TO FORGE AHEAD

If your dream has any inherent value, you can expect that your journey towards fulfilment will not be a smooth ride. It is likely you will find yourself in the middle of nowhere and your whole being will be crying to go back home, your spectators will 'boo' you, your coaches will curse you, and the system will attempt to frustrate your efforts, that is when courage comes in handy, you need courage to be able to keep walking and working towards the fulfilment of your dreams, against all odds. You need courage to be able to see the good in your difficult situations; you need courage to be able to keep keeping on in the face of discouragement. Courage will help you to develop resilience as you fight through the barricades standing between you and your dreamland. Whatever may be the case, keep going, keep trying and do not stop until you reach the finishing line.

COURAGE TO FINISH WELL

Leaving things uncompleted has never been a pathway to fulfilment. Lack of fulfilment in life and in every aspect of human undertakings is largely attributable to not being able to finish what one has started well. It is important that you note that fulfilment lies not in the finishing per se... but in finishing well. Strive to finish and be courageous enough to finish well. Nothing is ultimately impossible.