



Reach for the Sky

Stories that I.N.S.P.I.R.E.

Compiled by Amey Hegde

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*Stories that
J.N.S.P.J.R.E.*

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Reach for the Sky: Stories that I.N.S.P.I.R.E./ by Amey Hegde – 1st Ed.

This book is dedicated to
My daughters **Aditi** and **Reya**

Acknowledgements:

My gratitude goes out to the great achievers whose stories I have compiled in this book. A special thanks to Adv. Ann de Souza for helping with the editing.

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Images of Govind Jaiswal and Sandeep Bacche have been used with their permission.

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Introduction

As an inspirational speaker I am often amazed by the power that lies in short stories to transform one's thoughts and one's life.

Empowering stories "**I.N.S.P.I.R.E.**" us to reach for the sky. They:

I nspire us to dream big

N uture new ideas and visions

S ummarise complex concepts

P rovide us with a new perspective

I nfuse positive energy

R eveal the mindsets of successful people

E ncourage us in times of despair

This book is a compilation of handpicked stories from the internet that inspire us to reach for the sky and remind us of our inner strengths and abilities. None of the stories are written by me. I have taken the stories from the internet and tried to make them easy to read for children.

I wish you happy reading and hope the stories in this book will inspire you to reach for the sky!

-Amey Hegde

The Stories

Positive Attitude

The Shoe Salesmen



Many years ago two salesmen were sent by a shoe company to Africa to find out if there was a market for shoes.

The first salesman reported back, "There is no market there - nobody wears shoes."

The second salesman reported back, "There is huge market there - nobody wears shoes."

You can look at the same situation in two different ways - negatively or positively. The first salesman looked at it as a problem; the second one looked at it as an opportunity.

Next time we face a problem, let us ask ourselves "how can I do it?", rather than simply saying "it can't be done."

The Two Brothers



There were two brothers. One was a drunk who beat his family. The other one was a respected and successful businessman and was loving and caring towards his family.

How could two brothers from the same parents, brought up in the same environment be so different? When asked they gave the following answers. The first one replied "I became like this due to my childhood. When I was a little boy, I used to see my dad drunk and doing all the wrong things. So I became like this." The second brother replied "I became like this due to my childhood. When I was a little boy, I used to see my dad drunk and doing all the wrong things. I decided that that is not what I wanted to be."

It is not the situation that determines our life, but how we respond to it. What happens to us is just 10% of life. How we respond to the situation decides 90% of our life. We have no control over 10% of what happens to us. However, we have control over the other 90%. We can always choose how we respond.

Who is Happy?



A crow lived in the forest and was very happy. But one day he saw a swan. "This swan is so white," he thought, "and I am so black. This swan must be the happiest bird in the world."

He mentioned this to the swan. "Actually," the swan replied, "the parrot has two colours. I think it is the happiest bird in the world." The crow then went to meet the parrot. The parrot explained, "I have only two colours, but the peacock has multiple colours."

The crow visited the peacock in the zoo and saw that hundreds of people had come to see him. "Dear peacock," said the crow, "you are so beautiful. Every day thousands come to see you. When people see me, they drive me away. I think you are the happiest bird in the world."

The peacock replied, "Alas, I always thought that I was the most beautiful and happiest bird in the world. But because of my beauty, I am caged in this zoo. I have found that you are the only bird not kept in a cage. If I were a crow, I could happily roam everywhere."

That's our problem too. We compare ourselves with others and become sad. Let us stop comparing ourselves to others, which only makes us unhappy.

Before You Complain

Before you complain about the taste of your food—
Think of those who have nothing to eat.

Before you complain about your parents—
Think of those who are orphans.

Before you complain about how small your room is—
Think of those who live in the streets.

Before you complain about how long it takes the bus to reach—
Think of those who walk the same distance.



There is always something to be thankful for!



A man was in his study room. He picked up his pen and started writing:

-Last year, I had a surgery and my gall bladder was removed. I was stuck to the bed due to this surgery for a long time.

-I turned 60 and had to give up my favourite job. I had spent 30 years of my life in this company.

-My father died.

-My son failed in his exam because he had a car accident. He had to stay in bed at hospital for many days. The car was totally destroyed. Alas! It was such bad year!

When the man's wife entered the room, she found her husband looking sad. She read what was written on the paper. She left the room silently and came back with another paper and placed it at the side of her husband's writing. When the writer saw this paper, he found this written on it:

-Last year I finally got rid of my gall bladder due to which I had spent years in pain.

-I turned 60 with good health and retired from my job. Now I can use my time to write something better and of my interest.

-My father, at the age of 95, died peacefully in his sleep without any long illness.

-My son was blessed with a new life. My car was destroyed but my son did not get any major injury.

This year was an immense blessing and it passed well!

Let us remember that there is always something to be thankful for.

The Two Wolves



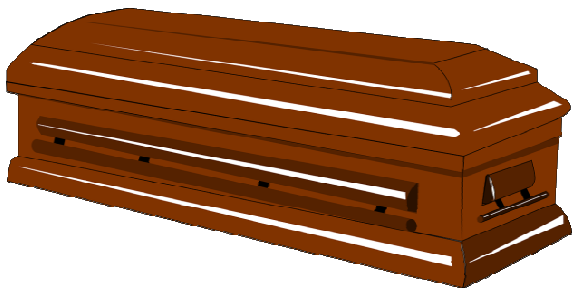
A wise old man was teaching his grandson about life. He said, "A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One wolf is evil—he is fear, anger, envy, sorrow, greed and lies. The other is good—he is joy, peace, love, sharing, kindness and truth. This same fight is going on inside you." The grandson thought for a minute, and then asked, "Which wolf will win, grandfather?" The grandfather replied, "The one you feed."

Which wolf do we feed daily? If we surround ourselves with negative minded people and talk negative things then we are feeding the evil wolf. On the other hand, if we spend our time with positive people, read good books, and help people in solving their problems then we are helping the good wolf to win over the evil one.

Let us feed the good wolf. We will become more positive and happy!

Self-Confidence

Look who just died

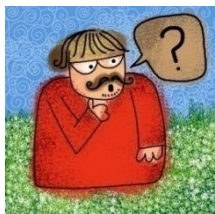


One day all the students saw a big note written on the door of the school. It read: "Yesterday the person who has been stopping your growth in this school died. You are invited to join the funeral." They felt sad to hear about the death of one of their school-mates, but at the same time, they were curious to know who the person who had stopped their growth was.

The students made a queue and went near the coffin one by one. Every student who looked inside the coffin was shocked. There was a mirror inside the coffin and everyone who looked inside could see himself. There was a sign next to the mirror that read: "The only person who can stop you from growing is you!"

Let us remember that only we alone can stop ourselves from growing.

Set Yourself Free



A man was passing by some elephants. He noticed that these huge creatures were being held only by a small rope tied to their front leg. The elephants could easily break away from the rope but they did not even try.

The man saw an elephant trainer nearby and asked why they did not try to get away. The trainer replied, "When they are very young we use the same sized rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they start thinking they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free."

The man was amazed. These animals had the strength to easily break free from the tiny rope but since they believed they couldn't, they were stuck. This belief held back the elephant from even trying to break free.

Are there any beliefs that hold us back like the elephant? Let us break free from such negative beliefs!

Fleas in a Jar



In an experiment, a scientist placed a number of fleas in a glass jar. They quickly jumped out. He then put the fleas back into the jar and placed a glass lid on top of the jar. When the fleas jumped, they hit the glass lid and fell back into the jar. After a while, the fleas started jumping slightly below the glass lid to avoid hitting it.

After a while, the scientist removed the glass lid. But the fleas continued jumping below the height of the glass lid. They had learned to stop themselves from jumping beyond the height of the lid.

Now, no matter whether the lid is there or not the fleas will stay in the jar forever. When the fleas get babies, their babies too will copy their behaviour and will not jump high either.

Just like the fleas, we too set limits to what we can achieve. We don't jump as high as we can. Think of those who have jumped high and achieved great things! Let us jump as high as we can and succeed!

The Frog that Refused to Listen



Some frogs arranged a climbing contest to the top of a very high tower. Lot of frogs gathered to see the race.

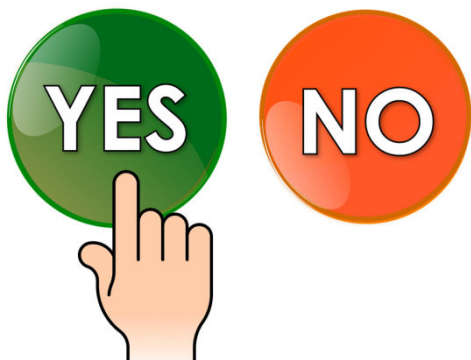
The race began. The crowd did not believe anyone would reach the top of the tower. They started shouting, "Oh, way too difficult!" "They will never make it to the top." "The tower is too high." The frogs began falling down, one by one.

The crowd continued to shout, "It is too difficult! No one will make it"! More frogs got tired and gave up. But one continued to climb and after a big effort reached the top!

All wanted to know how he managed to do it. It turned out that the winning frog was deaf!

Until we are deaf to other people's opinion about what is possible, we can never reach beyond the limits others set for us. Let us be deaf to those who keep telling us that it can't be done.

Continue Even When the World Says No



When Surendra was a young boy in school, he learned a lesson in self-confidence.

One day, his teacher called him to recite a poem in front of the class. He had hardly begun when the teacher interrupted with a "No!" He started over and again the teacher shouted, "No!" Ashamed, he sat down.

The next boy rose to recite and had just begun when the teacher shouted, "No!" This student, however, kept on going until he completed it. As he sat down, the teacher replied, "Very good!" Surendra was irritated. "I recited just as he did," he complained to the teacher.

The teacher replied, "It is not enough to know your lesson, you must be sure. When you allowed me to stop you, it meant that you were not sure. If the world says, 'No!' it is our business to say, 'Yes!' and prove it."

The world will say, 'No!' in a thousand ways.

'No! You can't do that.'

'No! You are wrong.'

'No! You are incapable

'No! You are too young.'

'No! You are too weak.'

'No! It will never work.'

'No! You don't have the education.'

'No! You don't have the background.'

'No! You don't have the money.'

'No! It can't be done.'

And each 'No!' we hear can reduce our confidence bit by bit until we quit completely. Though the world says, 'No!' to us today, we should be determined to say, 'Yes!' and prove it! "

Let the whole world say, "No, you can't!" If we believe in ourselves and say, "Yes I can!" and do it, success will be ours!

The Millionaire's Cheque



A businessman was deep in debt and could not see any way out. People, who he owed money to, were demanding to be paid. He sat in the park wondering if anything could save his company from closing. Suddenly an old man came near him and said, "Something seems to be troubling you!". After listening, the old man said, "I can help you". He wrote out a cheque and put it into his hands saying, "Take this. Meet me here exactly one year from today. And you can pay me back at that time". And he went away.

The businessman saw in his hands a cheque for a million dollars signed by Warren Buffet, one of the richest men in the world. "I can solve my problems immediately," he thought. But instead of depositing the cheque in the bank, he decided to keep the cheque in his safe and to use it only in case of an emergency. With changed thinking he worked hard with full enthusiasm and got several big orders. Within few months, he was out of debt and making big money.

One year later he returned to the park with the cheque. Soon, the old man appeared. But just as the businessman was about to give him the cheque, a nurse came running and grabbed the old man. "I hope he hasn't bothered you. He always escapes from the mental hospital and tells people that he is Warren Buffet", she said and took the old man away. The surprised man just stood there, shocked! All year long, he had been working thinking that he had a million dollars with him.

It's not the money that turns our life around. It is our self-confidence that gives us the power to achieve anything that we want.

Never Give Up

Don't Quit

When things go wrong,
As they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.



The Frog Who Didn't Give Up



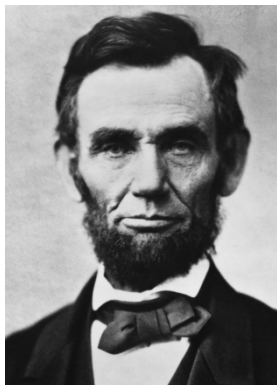
One day, two frogs accidentally fell into a bucket of cream and couldn't get out. They kept swimming around to keep from drowning, but they started getting tired.

One frog kept saying, "This is useless, we should just give up." But the other frog kept swimming.

Finally, the first frog gave up and drowned. The other frog was sad at the loss of his friend, but he didn't give up. He kept swimming and swimming and finally the cream turned into butter and the frog simply climbed out from the bucket.

When you find yourself in trouble, never give up. Keep on swimming and the cream might turn into butter, and things might just get better! When we feel like giving up, we may just be inches away from the winning line. Never give up.

Abraham Lincoln Didn't Quit



Probably the greatest example of a person who didn't quit is Abraham Lincoln, one of the most well known Presidents of the United States of America.

Born in a very poor family, Lincoln faced defeat throughout his life. He lost eight elections, failed twice in business and suffered a nervous breakdown.

Here is a sketch of Lincoln's road to the White House:

- 1816: his family was forced out of their home. He had to work to support them.
- 1818: his mother died.
- 1831: failed in business.
- 1832: ran for state legislature - lost.
- 1832: lost his job - wanted to go to law school but couldn't get in.
- 1833: borrowed some money from a friend to begin a business and by the end of the year he was bankrupt. He spent the next 17 years of his life paying off this debt.

-
- 1834: ran for state legislature again - won.
 - 1835: was engaged to be married, sweetheart died and his heart was broken.
 - 1836: had a total nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.
 - 1838: sought to become speaker of the state legislature - defeated.
 - 1840: sought to become elector - defeated.
 - 1843: ran for Congress - lost.
 - 1846: ran for Congress again - this time he won - went to Washington and did a good job.
 - 1848: ran for re-election to Congress - lost.
 - 1849: sought the job of land officer in his home state - rejected.
 - 1854: ran for Senate of the United States - lost.
 - 1856: sought the Vice-Presidential nomination at his party's national convention - got less than 100 votes.
 - 1858: ran for U.S. Senate again - again he lost.
 - 1860: elected President of the United States.

Lincoln could have quit many times - but he didn't and because he didn't quit, he became one of the greatest Presidents in the history of the United States.

Achievers who Didn't Quit

1. Wright Brothers



The New York Times once explained why all attempts at flight would fail. According to one editorial, building a flying machine would require 'the combined and continuous efforts of mathematicians and mechanicians from one million to ten million years.'

Eight weeks later, the Wright brothers became the first men ever to fly in a heavier-than-air machine.

2. Colonel Sanders



At age 65, Colonel Sanders received a \$100 cheque from social security as pension. He realized he had to do something. He remembered his mother's recipe for fried chicken and went out selling.

How many doors did he have to knock on before he got his first order? It is estimated that he had knocked on more than a thousand doors before he got his first order and started KFC.

How many of us quit after three tries, ten tries, a hundred tries, and then say we tried as hard as we could?

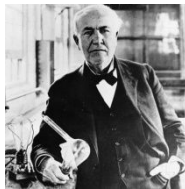
3. Walt Disney



Walt Disney was a young cartoonist. He faced many rejections from newspaper editors, who said he had no talent.

One day a minister at a church hired him to draw some cartoons. Disney started working out of a small shed near the church. One day, he saw a small mouse in the shed and he was inspired. That was the start of Mickey Mouse.

4. Thomas Edision



One day a partially deaf four year old kid came home with a note in his pocket from his teacher, "Your Tommy is too stupid to learn, get

him out of the school." His mother read the note and thought, "My Tommy is not stupid to learn, I will teach him myself." And that Tommy grew up to be the great Thomas Edison. Edison failed approximately 10,000 times while he was working on the light bulb.

When Edison was 67, his factory got destroyed due to a fire. The factory was worth a few million dollars. Edison watched his lifetime effort go up in smoke and said, "There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burnt up. Thank God we can start afresh." In spite of the disaster, three weeks later, he invented the phonograph. What an attitude!

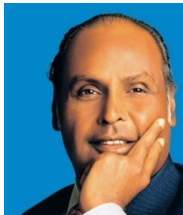
All success stories are stories of great failures. The only difference is that every time they failed, they bounced back. We need to learn from our failures and keep moving.

Indian Achievers who Didn't Quit

Here are some Indian Achievers who have made it big through hard work and determination.



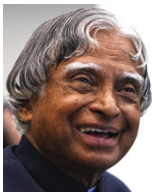
"I used to work as a train ticket examiner"
-Mahendra S Dhoni



"I used to work in a petrol pump"
- Dhirubhai Ambani



"At the age of 30, I was a bus conductor"
-Rajinikanth



"I used to sell newspapers"
-Dr. Abdul Kalam



"I started Infosys with my wife's savings of Rs. 10,000/-"
-Narayana Murthy

1. Mahendra Singh Dhoni

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, one of the greatest cricketers from India was born in a lower-middle class family. To support his family, Dhoni took up the job of a train ticket examiner in the Indian Railways from 2000 to 2003. He was selected for the Indian Cricket Team in 2004. Dhoni captained the Indian national team in all three formats of the game. He is the only captain to win all ICC tournament cups- World T20 (2007), Cricket World Cup (2011) and Champions Trophy (2013).

2. Dhirubhai Ambani

The late Dhirubhai Ambani was born in a middle class family. His father was a school teacher. Ambani moved to Yemen at the age of 16. He worked there as a petrol pump attendant and as a clerk in an oil company. He returned to India in 1958 with Rs 50,000 and set up a textile trading company. This company is now one of the largest business houses in India.

3. Rajinikanth

Rajinikanth, a very successful movie star was born in a poor family. He started doing small jobs in Bengaluru and Chennai, including that of a coolie, carpenter and bus conductor. While working as a bus conductor, he came across an advertisement offering acting classes and enrolled in it. During his acting course, he was noticed by Tamil film director K. Balachander and the rest is history.

4. Dr. Abdul Kalam

The late Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, faced a lot of challenges. He was born into a poor family. His father was a boat owner. To help his family, Kalam sold newspapers. With limited resources, he graduated in Physics and studied aerospace engineering. Dr. Kalam joined Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) as a scientist and went on to head the organization. In 2002, he became the 11th President of India.

5. Narayana Murthy

Narayana Murthy, who is called the father of the Indian IT Sector has not always been successful. His first venture, a company named Softronics, failed in about a year and a half after its start. After the failure of his first venture, Murthy joined Patni Computer Systems and worked there for five years. He then founded Infosys in 1981 along with six software professionals and Rs. 10,000/- provided by his wife Sudha Murthy from her savings. Now, Infosys is the second largest India based IT Services Company.

Govind Jaiswal: Rickshaw-puller's Son to IAS Officer



"I am very sure that all the youngsters who are living in deprivation and facing consistent difficulties can accomplish anything and everything provided they have the will and courage."

—Govind Jaiswal

When he was 11 years old, Govind went to play at his rich friend's house. Minutes later, he was insulted for being the son of a rickshaw-puller and thrown out. His friend's father yelled at him, "How dare you come here and mix with my son; don't you know who you are and where you belong?"

Insults and phrases like 'however much you study, you will still be a rickshaw-puller's son', 'what is your worth? You can only take your father's business a bit further', 'your father's one rickshaw can become two or three tomorrow with your initiation' were very common in his life. But these 'insults' made Govind Jaiswal's determination stronger. He started asking people, 'What to do so

that people respect me?’ Someone told him he would be respected if he became an IAS officer. So, he began his journey. Govind started spending most of his time studying with cotton jammed in his ears to stop the extreme clatter of printing machines and generators of his neighbourhood.

On completion of graduation, he was sent to Delhi with Rs. 40,000 that his father managed by selling his only remaining piece of land. Govind ensured his father’s investment didn’t go in vain and studied 18 hours a day. He often skipped one or two meals a day to save money and practiced rigorously.

In 2006, 23 year old Govind ranked #48 among 474 successful candidates in the Civil Services Exam. Unlike most of the toppers, it was his very first attempt.

“Anyone who can understand my hardships and circumstances will realize that I had no other option. Neither could I go for a lower government jobs as they are mostly fixed nor could I start a business as I had no money for it. I went for the option I was left with: worked hard on studies” said Govind.

Today, Govind Jaiswal is a respected IAS officer whose success story inspires and motivates thousands of youths across India.

Lessons from Govind Jaiswal’s story:

Don’t break down if someone tries to show where you belong to. Answer not by your words but by your actions. These people are ignorant about your worth and potential.

Don’t waste your energy on worthless and insignificant things. There were many times when Govind Jaiswal felt like hitting negative people who were continuously insulting him but he never lost his cool; instead, he used all his energy in pursuing his dreams.

From Disability to Super-ability

Wilma Rudolph



When Wilma Rudolph was four years old, she had polio. To make matters worse, her family was poor. Her father was a railroad porter and her mother was a maid.

Wilma had to wear a brace and the doctor said she would never put her foot on the earth. But her mother encouraged her. She told Wilma that with persistence and faith she could achieve anything she wanted. At the age of nine, against the advice of the doctors, she removed the brace and took her first step. At the age of 13, she entered her first race and came last. And then she entered her second, and third and fourth race and came last until a day came when she came in first.

At the age of 15 she met a coach by the name of Ed Temple. She told him, "I want to be the fastest woman on this earth." Temple said, "With your spirit, nobody can stop you."

The day came when she was at the Olympics. Wilma was matched against a woman named Jutta Heine who had never been beaten. The first event was the 100-meter race. Wilma beat her and won her first gold medal.

In the 200-meter race, Wilma again beat Jutta and won her second gold medal. In the 400-meter relay the fastest person always runs the last lap and they both anchored their teams. The first three people ran and changed the baton easily. When it came to Wilma's turn, she dropped the baton. But seeing Jutta shoot up at the other end, she picked the baton, ran like a machine, beat Jutta a third time and won her third gold medal.

She became the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympic Game. Rudolph was called the fastest woman in the world in the 1960s.

Wilma retired from running when she was 22 years old, but she went on to coach women's track teams and encourage young people. She started the Wilma Rudolph Foundation to help children learn about discipline and hard work.

"Nick" Vujicic



Nicholas James "Nick" Vujicic was born on 4 December 1982 with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder where there is absence of all four limbs.

As a child, he struggled mentally and emotionally as well as physically, but eventually accepted his disability and, at the age of seventeen, started his own non-profit organisation, 'Life without Limbs.'

Despite being born without arms or legs, Nick's challenges have not kept him from enjoying great adventures and a fulfilling and meaningful career. Nick has overcome hardships by focusing on the belief that he was created for a unique purpose, that his life has value and is a gift to others. Vujicic presents motivational speeches worldwide which focus on life with a disability, hope and finding meaning in life.

Arunima Sinha



Arunima Sinha, 26, became India's first woman to conquer Mt. Everest on an artificial leg.

On April 12, 2011 she was thrown off a moving train for resisting a chain-snatching attempt. She was seriously injured, and to save her life, doctors had to amputate her left leg below the knee.

Arunima said, "When I was in the hospital, everyone was worried for me, and I realised that I had to do something in my life so that people would stop looking at me with pity. I spoke to my elder brother and my coach about climbing the Everest, and they encouraged me."

For her successful climb, Arunima trained under Bachendri Pal, the first Indian woman to conquer the Everest. Ms. Pal said: "The spirit, mental strength and will power of Arunima have been exemplary... she has defied all odds and will be an inspiration for millions throughout the world."

Arunima's courage, determination and dedication, played a major role in her extraordinary achievement.

Karoly Takacs



In 1938, Karoly Takacs of the Hungarian army was the top pistol shooter in the world. He was expected to win the gold in the 1940 Olympic Games scheduled at Tokyo. Just months before the Olympics, a hand grenade exploded in Takacs' right hand, and it was blown off.

Takacs spent a month in the hospital depressed at both the loss of his hand, and the end to his Olympic dream. At that point most people would have quit but not Takacs. Takacs did the unthinkable; he decided to learn how to shoot with his left hand! Instead of focusing on what he didn't have – a world class right shooting hand, he decided to focus on what he did have – incredible mental toughness, and a healthy left hand which could be trained.

For months Takacs practiced by himself. In the spring of 1939 he showed up at the Hungarian national pistol shooting championship. Other shooters thought Takacs had come to watch them shoot. They were surprised when he competed and were even more surprised when he won! The 1940 and 1944 Olympics were cancelled due to World War II. But Takacs kept training. In the 1948 London

Olympics, at the age of 38, he won the gold medal and set a new world record in pistol shooting. Four years later, Takacs won the gold medal again at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

Takacs had a right to feel sorry for himself, to stay down and to ask himself "why me?" for the rest of his life. But Takacs made the decision to pick himself up and to learn to shoot all over again.

Next time we get knocked down, let us decide to act like Takacs. Let us get up quickly, take action, and surprise the world!

Sudha Chandran

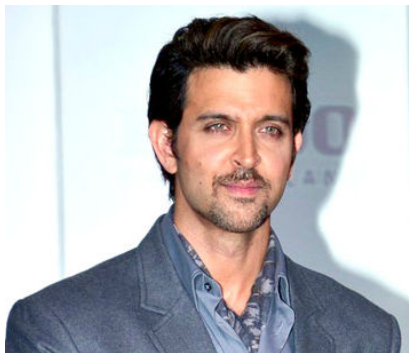


Sudha Chandran, a highly talented dancer started giving public performances at a very young age. When she was 16, she met with an accident. Doctors missed a small wound in her ankle and plastered it. This got infected and her leg had to be amputated.

She was in a state of shock for months. One day she heard of the famous Jaipur foot. She decided to restart dancing using this. After many visits to Jaipur and lot of dancing trials, she mastered dancing with the foot.

Her life story was made into a film called 'Nache Mayuri' in which she played her role. She is not into active dancing now, but is actively seen in various TV serials.

How Hrithik Roshan Overcame his Stammering



Hrithik - on whether he was bullied at school because of his stammering

Of course! Unfortunately, it is one of those handicaps that is made fun of. Especially kids, you can't blame them but they end up being mean because it looks funny! So the childhood of a person suffering from a problem like this is pure hell. From the time you wake up in the morning to night you almost dread some days... to wake up!

Hrithik - on what he used to do to avoid going to school because of his stammering

For oral tests at school, I used to bunk school, I used to fall sick, I used to break my hand, I used to get a sprain.

Hrithik - on stammering on stage when he went to pick up his first award

I was getting the Best Debut Actor for my first movie in Dubai and I wanted to say, 'I love you Dubai' in my speech at the award function. But I couldn't say 'Dubai'. I wanted to practice saying 'Dubai' but for that I had to scream 'Dubai' loudly. I couldn't do that in my hotel room because my voice was being heard outside. I went

to the bathroom and yelled 'Dubai' but even then, it could be heard by people outside. Thankfully, there was a big cupboard in the room. I locked myself up in the cupboard and practiced say 'Dubai'. Finally, at the awards function, I was able to say that with a flow.

How Hrithik overcame his stammering problem

When Hrithik decided that he had to overcome his stammering, he joined speech therapy classes. With determined perseverance and will power, Hrithik overcame his speech disorder. He used to repeat all the alphabets in different manners to have a strong grip on pronunciation thereby boosting his confidence levels.

He used to practice in front of a mirror alone in a room for long hours to improve his speech skills. He used to practice and still does for long hours. He is also quite open about his speech disorder and this openness without a feeling of shame or guilt has made him more confident in front of people.

Problems Make us Stronger

Strength from Adversity



A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. The man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and cut open the cocoon. The butterfly emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, wrinkled wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly. He expected the wings would enlarge to be able to support the body. But nothing happened! The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and wrinkled wings. It was never able to fly. The butterfly's struggle to get through the small opening of the cocoon forces fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings, so that it will be ready for flight.

Sometimes, struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If we sail through life without any obstacles we will not be as strong as we could have been. The obstacles that we face and overcome make us stronger.

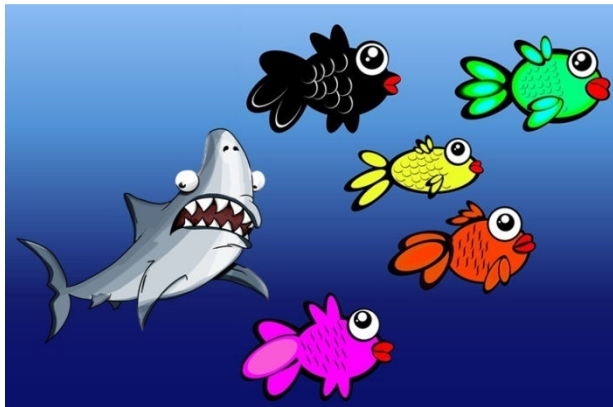
No Problem



The Great Barrier Reef, stretches some 1,800 miles from New Guinea to Australia. Tour guides regularly take visitors to view the reef. On one tour, a traveller asked the guide, "I notice that the lagoon side of the reef looks pale and lifeless, while the ocean side is full of life and colourful. Why is this?" The guide answered, "The coral around the lagoon side is in still water, with no challenge for its survival. It dies early. The coral on the ocean side is constantly being tested by wind, waves, and storms. It has to fight for survival every day of its life. As it is challenged and tested, it changes and adapts. It grows healthy. It grows strong."

That's how it is with people too. Challenged and tested, we come alive! Like coral pounded by the sea, we grow. Physical demands can cause us to grow stronger. Mental and emotional stress can make us emotionally strong and tough-minded. So, you have problems - no problem! Just tell yourself, "There I grow again; stronger and powerful!"

Fresh Fish (Japanese shark)



The Japanese love fresh fish. But the waters close to Japan have not held many fish for decades. So to feed the Japanese population, fishing boats got bigger and went farther than ever. The farther the fishermen went, the longer it took to bring in the fish and the fish were not fresh. The Japanese did not like the taste.

To solve this problem, fishing companies installed freezers on their boats. However, the Japanese could taste the difference between fresh and frozen fish and they did not like frozen fish.

So fishing companies installed fish tanks. They would catch the fish and stuff them in the tanks. After a little thrashing around, the fish stopped moving. They were tired and dull, but alive. Unfortunately, the Japanese could still taste the difference. Since the fish did not move, they lost their fresh-fish taste. The Japanese preferred the taste of fresh fish.

To keep the fish tasting fresh, the fishing companies added a small shark to each tank. The shark eats a few fish, but most of the fish arrive in a very lively state. The fish are challenged.

When we have no challenges to keep us awake and moving we feel tired and dull. New challenges are like sharks. We need them to keep us active and lively.

Shake it off and Step Up



One day, a farmer's donkey fell down into an unused well. The animal cried for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. The animal was old, and the well needed to be filled up. So the farmer decided that it just wasn't worth it to rescue the donkey.

He invited all his neighbours to help him fill up the well. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey cried horribly. Then, he slowly quietened down.

As the farmer and his neighbours continued shovelling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. Every time a load of dirt landed on his back, he decided to shake it off and step up! This he did, blow after blow. "Shake it off and step up, shake it off and step up, shake it off and step up!" he repeated to encourage himself. The old

donkey kept shaking it off and stepping up! It wasn't long before he stepped over the wall of that well! What seemed like it would have buried him, actually benefitted him. This was all because of the manner in which he handled his challenge.

If we face our problems and deal with them positively, the problems that come to bury us can benefit us and lift us up!

The Stone Idol



In an Indian temple, the idol of the lord and the stepping stone were having a discussion.

The stepping stone said, "What a good fate you have. We both were the same lump of rock for thousands of years. The sculptor carved an idol out of you and everyone worships you. And look at me, I am a stepping stone and every one stands on me and stamps on me. What kind of life is this?"

The idol replied, "Do you remember that when the sculptor set out to carve an idol, it was you he chose first. You were so impatient. In one blow, you broke into two. But when he tried on me, I grinned and bore all the hammers and chisel blows with patience. Now I am the worshipped idol and you are the stepping stone..."

The difference between success and failure is patience and persistence.

Make the World a Better Place

The Starfish



A man was walking on a beach. He saw a young boy picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and throwing them back into the water. The man asked the boy, "What are you doing?"

The boy replied, "I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, all these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the ocean, they'll die up here."

The man said, "But there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can't possibly get to all of them. And, don't you realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches on this coast? Can't you see that you cannot possibly make a difference?"

The young boy picked up another starfish, paused, and threw it into the ocean, saying, "It sure made a big difference to that one!"

Remember, no matter how small it is, a kind deed really does make a difference to the person receiving it. Let us make a difference today.

A Tale of Two Seas



The Dead Sea is really a lake, not a sea. It's so high in salt content that the human body can float easily. Due to all the salt there is no life at all in the Dead Sea. No fish. No plants. No sea animals.

The Sea of Galilee is just north of the Dead Sea. Both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea receive their water from river Jordan. But unlike the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee is filled with rich, colourful sea life. Same region, same source of water, and yet while one is full of life, the other is dead. How come?

Here's why. The water from river Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee and then flows out - and that keeps it healthy and full of life. For the Dead Sea the water flows in from the river Jordan, but does not flow out. There are no outlet streams. Over 7 million tons of water evaporates from the Dead Sea every day. This leaves it salty and unfit for any life. The Dead Sea takes water from the river Jordan, and holds it. It does not give. Result? No life at all.

Life is not just about getting. It's also about giving. We all need to be like the Sea of Galilee and not end up like the Dead Sea.

Let us make sure we give too and not just take. Make that a habit. To share! To give!

Sandeep Bacche: Do-gooder Rickshaw Driver



Sandeep Bacche's rickshaw is special. You can get the daily weather update, the stock market update, and the gold and silver prices written on a small yellow panel. You can watch movies on an LCD TV and use the payphone. You can also drink hot tea for just Rs. 5. You can even recharge your phone balance.

Sandeep keeps every network provider's recharge slips. He also has free Wi-Fi. There are hundreds of photos and stickers in the rickshaw of his various news interviews, his pictures with celebrities, his speeches at events and his TED talks.

He is also a do-gooder. His auto has a donation box for cancer relief. He donates Rs. 2 from every fare amount that he receives. On Sundays, he distributes breakfast among cancer patients. Bacche gives discounts to people with disabilities, pregnant women, and senior citizens. He gives free rides to cancer patients, to the visually challenged, and to everyone on his birthday.

Jadav Payeng: The 'Forest Man of India'



Jadav Payeng, the 'Forest Man of India', has achieved the unbelievable. The Padma Shri awardee single-handedly planted nearly 1,400 acres of forest in Assam.

Payeng's quest began in 1979 when he was only 16 years old. During floods that year, a large number of snakes were swept ashore on a sandbar. After the waters had receded, Payeng found the dead snakes on the shore. The snakes had died in the heat, as there were no trees to give them shade. Since then, he decided to plant trees on the sandbar and has not stopped even after planting several thousand trees. He planted, watered and looked after the plants to transform the area into a forest.

Assam government's forest department learnt about Payeng's unimaginable feat only in 2008 after a herd of some 100 wild elephants strayed into the forest. The area is now home to Bengal tigers, Indian rhinoceros, over 100 deer and rabbits, besides apes and several varieties of birds.

Payeng's story is truly inspirational, and inspires people to take up a cause even if one is alone.

Dashrath Manjhi: The Mountain Man



Dashrath Manjhi, famously known as the mountain man, single-handedly carved a path through a mountain in the Gehlour hills, Bihar. He did it so that his village could have easier access to medical facilities. People laughed and made fun of him but he just continued with his work. He gave 22 years of his life and made a big difference in the lives of the people of his village.

Here are some facts about the mountain man:

- The villagers had to travel 70 kilometres to reach to the nearest town to get medical attention
- In the year 1959, Manjhi's wife Falguni Devi died from lack of medical care
- In the memory of his wife, he carved the path in the Gehlour hills so that his village could have easier access to medical attention
- He worked day and night for 22 years from 1960 to 1982
- He shortened the distance from 70 kilometres to just one kilometre
- In 2015, filmmaker Ketan Mehta made a film on his life, 'Manjhi - The Mountain Man' starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the lead role.

Srikanth Bolla: Blind CEO of a 400 Crore Company



Srikanth Bolla was born blind. The villagers advised his parents, who were farmers to let him die. His parents did not listen. They choose to educate him. At school, he was pushed to the last bench. No one would include him in sports.

Later he was admitted in school for special children. Here he started topping his class and also played chess and cricket. He topped the class 10 board exams in his school. He wanted to opt for science at the higher secondary level but the Andhra Pradesh Education Board refused him permission. It said that the blind could only take Arts stream. Srikanth filed a case and after six months, he was allowed to pursue Science. Srikanth topped class 12 too.

He wanted to study engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). But yet again, he was rejected. Srikanth decided, "If IIT doesn't want me, I don't want IIT either!" He applied to schools in the United States and got admission in four of the top schools – MIT, Stanford, Berkeley, and Carnegie Mellon. He eventually chose MIT and became the school's first international blind student.

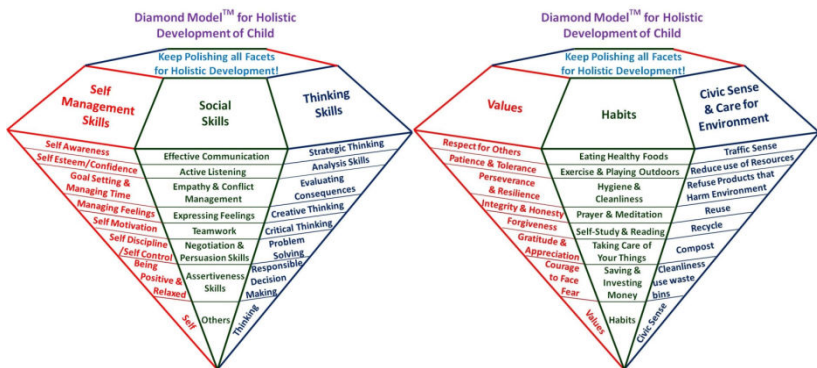
After graduating from MIT, Srikanth decided to do something about the problems faced by the disabled in our country. He gave up the opportunity to work for a high paying job in America and returned to India. He started Bollant Industries Pvt. Ltd., with the aim of providing employment to the physically challenged.

The company makes eco-friendly, disposable plates, spoons, cups and trays out of natural leaf and recycled paper. Bollant Industries is valued at over Rs. 400 crore. Today, Srikanth has five factories, employing over 650 people, nearly half of whom are disabled men and women.

C.H.A.M.P.S. (Character, Habits, Attitude, Mindset & Personality for Success)

CHAMPS is a yearlong programme on Life Skills for kids aged 10-12 years with once a week classes at Margao, Goa, India. It is designed, conducted and organised by by Life Skills Trainer for kids, Dr. Jyoti Hegde (<http://jyotihegde.in>) & Corporate Trainer Amey Hegde (<http://ameyhegde.in>).

The CHAMPS programme covers topics from **the Life Skills Diamond Model**, a framework for the holistic development of children developed by Dr. Jyoti Hegde and Amey Hegde. The Life Skills Diamond Model has been designed using inputs from the 10 Core Life Skills identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Daniel Goleman's model of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and the competencies identified by CASEL, the leading organization in the US for the teaching of social and emotional skills. It also includes values, good habits, civic sense and care for the environment.



Sessions adopt a learning-by-doing approach.

Some of the learning methodologies:

- Activities
- Stage performances by kids to build confidence & public speaking skills
- Role plays & Simulations to develop social skills
- Audio visual clippings
- Decision making & critical thinking through Chess
- Storytelling by kids
- Puzzles to sharpen creative thinking and critical thinking
- Mindfulness techniques for improved concentration
- Puppet shows conducted by kids
- Problem solving through Scratch Programming
- Drama & skits
- Creative problem solving of current issues like Traffic, Waste Management, Conservation
- Book reading sessions to develop love for reading
- Practical projects like organising
- Board games for nutrition & good habits

What is a typical session like?

Sessions begin with preparation of learning charts where kids write and draw about their learning from last session. Kids then present the learning charts. This is followed by the topic of the day.

Application of Learning through Assignments & Projects:

Kids are given practical assignments/projects to apply the concepts learnt in the class. Examples: writing of daily gratitude diary, taking small responsibilities at home, "Food Ludo" game to eat healthy food, etc.

Periodic Reviews: Every quarter there is a review to enable parents to track their kid's progress. Here, kids present their learning charts, projects, skits, etc. on their learning from the sessions.

For details email ameyhegde@gmail.com or jyotiheg@gmail.com.

Trainings Offered by Amey

Here is a partial list of Trainings offered by Amey.

Training Workshops for Corporates:

- Positive Attitude and Self-motivation
- Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management
- Leadership Traits and Qualities
- Problem Solving and Creative Thinking
- Planning, Time management and Goal Setting
- Effective Communication and Interpersonal skills
- Team Building: Working Together as an Effective Team
- Presentation Skills: Speaking Effectively in Front of Groups
- Customer Service: The key to Customer Delight
- Effective Spoken & Written English at Work
- Train the Trainer

Training Workshops for Kids:

- C.H.A.M.P.S.** year long programme on Life Skills & Personality Development
- 5 day Camps in school vacations on Life Skills & Personality Development

Amey can be contacted on +91-9096938269 or ameyhegde@gmail.com. Visit <http://ameyhegde.in>

REACH FOR THE SKY: Stories that I.N.S.P.I.R.E.

About This Book:

Inspiring stories hold the power to transform one's life and thoughts. This book is a compilation of handpicked stories from the internet that inspire us to reach for the sky and remind us of our inner strengths and abilities. The stories have been simplified to make them easy to read for children.

About the Author:



Amey Hegde is an internationally certified Corporate Trainer, Motivational Speaker, Management Consultant and an internationally published Author.

Amey's academic qualifications include Post Graduate Studies in Behavioral Sciences Training (PGCPBST) from MIBS and graduate studies in Electronics & Telecom Engineering from Goa Engineering College. He has also been trained by eminent faculty from IITs and IIMs in areas of technology and management.

Amey has been trained to use international concepts of Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats® and Lateral Thinking™, Facilitation Skills to Crestcom® standards, and Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP). Amey has over 17 years of work experience in several MNCs & Fortune 100 companies in Europe and India with a varied cultural exposure while working with teams from USA, Canada, Germany, Japan & China and was last working at Wipro Technologies, Bangalore.

Amey has conducted trainings on various topics like Leadership, Motivation, Goal Setting, Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management etc. for top organizations like Cipla, Vedanta, Bosch, Raymond, Nestle, IFB, HCL, etc. Amey has trained innumerable participants – from workmen to Directors to enhance their productivity. He has also conducted inspirational sessions for staff of Sada jail & for the Indian Army.

Amey was recently awarded at the World HRD Congress for outstanding contribution in Training & Development. His journey as an entrepreneur trainer has been featured in a book "Driven by Passion" containing narratives of 24 first generation entrepreneurs from Goa.

For more details visit <http://ameyhegde.in>