

IN CELEBRATION OF BEING ALIVE

- Dr. Christiaan Barnard

Answer the following questions in one or two sentences based on your understanding of the lesson.

1. What thoughts troubled Dr. Christiaan Barnard as he neared the end of his career as a heart surgeon?

Dr.Christiaan Barnard was troubled by the suffering of people especially of young children. He could not accept the fact that 12 million children are unlikely to reach the age of one and about 6 million children die annually before reaching the age of 5.

2. What were Dr. Barnard's feelings when he was hospitalized after an accident?

Dr. Barnard experienced **not only agony and fear but also anger**. He asked himself why they should undergo pain when they had other important things to do in life during that time.

3. When and where did the accident occur?

Few years ago, Dr. Barnard and his wife met with an accident while crossing the street, after a lovely meal.

4. How did the hospitalization of Dr. Barnard and his wife affect their routine?

There were **patients waiting for Dr.Barnard to operate on them, as he was a heart surgeon. His wife had a young baby**, who needed her care. Thus the hospitalization of Dr. Barnard and his wife affected their routine.

5. How was Dr. Barnard's attitude to suffering different from that of his father's?

Dr. Barnard's father accepted **Suffering as God's will. He also believed that suffering ennobles humans**. But Dr.Barnard **did not find any meaning in the agony and suffering of patients and especially of the young children**.

6. How was the unattended trolley put to use?

The unattended trolley was used as a car for a race. It was commandeered by an intrepid crew of two. One was a **mechanic, who provided power by galloping along behind the trolley and another the driver, seated on the deck and steered by scraping his foot on floor**.

7. What roles did the duo take up?

The duo took up the roles of driver and a mechanic of the food trolley.

8. Why did the choice of roles prove to be easy for them?

The mechanic, who provided motor power with his head to the trolley, **was totally blind and the driver**, who steered the trolley by scraping his foot on the floor, **had only one arm**. So the choice of roles proved to be easy for them.

9. Who encouraged them and how?

The rest of the patients in the hospital encouraged them. They encouraged them by the laughter and shouts of encouragement.

10. What does Dr. Barnard compare this entertainment to?

Dr. Barnard compares this entertainment to Grand Prix and Indianapolis 500 car race.

11. What happened in the grand finale?

In the grand finale, there were **scattered plates and silverware**. The **nurse and ward sister caught up with them**, scolded them and **put them back to bed**.

12. How does Dr. Barnard know the boy who played the trolley's driver?

A few years earlier, Dr.Barnard had successfully closed a hole in the boy's heart. As he had a malignant tumour, he came back to the hospital. Thus Dr. Barnard knows the boy who played the trolley's driver.

13. What was the profound lesson that Dr. Barnard learnt from the boys?

Dr.Barnard realised that **the joy of living** is the most important thing in the world. The children showed him **what we have lost is not important** but **what we have left is important**. This is the lesson that Dr. Barnard learnt from the two boys.

2. Answer the following questions in three or four sentences.

a. Detail the statistics Dr. Barnard has provided in his speech.

Dr. Barnard mentions that **125 million children are born that year**. Among them **12 million are unlikely to reach the age of one** and another **six million die before the age of five**. And, of the rest, many would end up as mental or physical cripples.

b. What happened when the doctor couple were crossing the street?

When the doctor couple were crossing the street, **a car had hit them and knocked him into his wife**. She was **thrown into the other lane** and **struck by a car** coming from the opposite

direction.

c. What injuries did they sustain in the accident?

Dr. Barnard had **eleven broken ribs and a perforated lung**. His wife had a **badly fractured shoulder**.

d. Dr. Barnard couldn't find any nobility in suffering. Why?

Dr. Barnard couldn't find any nobility in suffering. As a doctor, he saw nothing noble in a patient's thrashing around in a sweat-soaked bed, mind clouded in agony. He could not see any nobility in the crying of a lonely child in a ward at night.

e. Why does Dr. Barnard find suffering of children heartbreaking?

Dr. Barnard finds suffering of children heartbreaking. Because **he felt sympathetic towards them** and he knew about **their total trust in doctors and nurses**. They believe that the doctors and nurses are going to help them.

f. How did the boy who played the mechanic lose his eyesight?

When the boy was seven years old, his drunken mother threw a lantern at his father. It missed and hit the boy. Then he suffered severe third-degree burns on the upper part of his body, and lost both his eyes.

g. Why does Dr. Barnard describe the blind boy as a 'walking horror'?

He was a walking horror, with a disfigured face and long flap of skin hanging from the side of his neck to his body. As the wound healed around his neck, his lower jaw became gripped in a mass of fibrous tissue. The only way this little boy could open his mouth was to raise his head. So Dr. Barnard describes the blind boy as a 'walking horror'.

h. What were the problems the trolley driver suffered from?

The trolley driver had a hole in his heart. **Dr. Barnard** had successfully **closed the hole in the boy's heart**. **As he had a malignant tumour, he came back to the hospital**. A few days before the race, his shoulder and arm were **amputated**. There was little hope of his recovery.

3. Answer the following in a paragraph of 100 – 150 words each.

a. Give an account of the medical problems for which the two boys were hospitalized.

The choice of roles was easy because the mechanic was totally blind and driver had only one arm.

-Dr. Barnard

The author saw two boys driving a food trolley happily in the hospital. One of them acts as a mechanic. When he was seven years old, one night, his mother and father were drunk. His mother threw a lantern at his father. It missed and the lantern broke over the child's head and shoulders. He suffered severe third-degree burns on the upper part of his body, and lost both his eyes. He was a walking horror, with a disfigured face. The long flap of skin hanging from the side of his neck to his body. As the wound healed around his neck, his lower jaw became gripped in a mass of fibrous tissue. The only way this little boy could open his mouth was to raise his head. The other boy acts as a trolley driver. He had a hole in his heart. Dr. Barnard had successfully closed the hole in his heart. Again he had come to the hospital because he had a malignant tumour of the bone. A few days before the race, his shoulder and arm were amputated. There was little hope of his recovery.

*"The only disability in life is a bad attitude".
-Scott Hamilton*

b. "These two children had given me a profound lesson ..." Elucidate.

*Life is a gift from God. Learn to focus on
the Giver and enjoy the gift.*

-Joyce Mayer

Dr. Christiaan Barnard was the first doctor to perform a heart transplant surgery. In his "In Celebration of Being Alive", he narrates an experience which has changed his perspective of life altogether. He was troubled by the suffering of people. Dr. Barnard's father accepted suffering as God's will. He also believed that suffering ennobles humans. But Dr. Barnard did not find any meaning in the agony and suffering of patients and especially of the young children. One morning, he witnessed an incident in the hospital which opened his eyes.

The author saw two boys driving a food trolley happily in the hospital. One of the boys was a seven-year old, and he was blind. The other boy had a heart surgery. But the two boys were driving a trolley and scattered plates, cups and saucers on the way. It was like a “Grand Prix”.

All the other patients enjoyed the scene and laughed. Dr. Barnard realises that the joy of living is the most important thing in the world. This is the lesson he learnt from the two boys. He realises that as we are suffering, we don't become a better person. If we experience suffering, we will become a better person. If we don't know darkness, we can't appreciate light. Unless we suffer chillness, we can't appreciate warmth. Thus the children showed him what we have lost is not important but what we have left is important.

Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity and responsibility to give something back by becoming more.

-Tony Robbins

c. Describe the ‘Grand Prix’ at Cape Town’s Red Cross Children’s Hospital.

Find ecstasy in life; the mere sense of living is joy enough.

-Emily Dickinson

Grand Prix means International car race. Once Dr.Christiaan Barnard visited Cape Town’s Red Cross Children’s Hospital. There he came across a ‘Grand Prix’ of two boys driving a food trolley happily in the hospital. It opened his eyes to the fact which was full of solace for him. A nurse in the hospital had left a trolley unattended. This trolley was commandeered by an intrepid driver and a mechanic. The mechanic provided motor power behind the trolley with his head down. The driver seated and steered with one hand. He was scraping his foot on the floor. The mechanic was totally blind, and the driver had only one arm. The rest of the patients encouraged them by laughter and shouts. It was a better entertainment than the Indianapolis 500 race. Plates, cups and saucers were thrown around. After the Grand Prix, the mechanic of the trolley with laughter said to the doctor,

“You know, we won.” The grand finale of the Grand Prix taught not only our author a profound lesson but also the readers. I salute our author’s effort to bring out the fact “the business of living is joy” through the lesson, “In Celebration of Being Alive”.

The business of living is the celebration of being alive.

-Dr. Christiaan Barnard

d. How did a casual incident in a hospital help Dr. Barnard perceive a new dimension of life?

Life is a gift from God. Learn to focus on

the Giver and enjoy the gift.

-Joyce Mayer

Dr. Christiaan Barnard was the first doctor to perform a heart transplant surgery. In his “In Celebration of Being Alive”, he narrates an experience which has changed his perspective of life altogether. He was troubled by the suffering of people. Dr. Barnard’s father accepted Suffering as God’s will. He also believed that suffering ennobles humans. But Dr. Barnard did not find any meaning in the agony and suffering of patients and especially of the young children. One morning, he witnessed an incident in the hospital which opened his eyes.

The author saw two boys driving a food trolley happily in the hospital. One of the boys was a seven-year old, and he was blind. The other boy had a heart surgery. But the two boys were driving a trolley and scattered plates, cups and saucers on the way. It was like a “Grand Prix”.

All the other patients enjoyed the scene and laughed. The trolley driver had a hole in his heart.

Dr. Barnard had successfully closed a hole in his heart. Again he had come to the hospital because he had a malignant tumour of the bone. A few days before the race, his shoulder and arm were amputated. There was little hope of his recovery. The driver informed him that the trolley’s wheels

were not properly oiled. It showed his confidence in the mechanic. He realises that as we are suffering, we don't become a better person. If we experience suffering, we will become a better person. If we don't know darkness, we can't appreciate light. Unless we suffer chillness, we can't appreciate warmth. Thus the children showed him what we have lost is not important but what we have left is important.

The business of living is the celebration of being alive.

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Dr. Christiaan Barnard was the first doctor to perform a heart transplant surgery. Barnard has written fourteen books and 235 scientific articles which have been published in Reputed journals. The prescribed lesson, "In Celebration of Being Alive", is an extract of his speech ,wherein he narrates an experience which has changed his perspective of life altogether. Few years ago, Dr. Barnard and his wife met with an accident while crossing the street, after a meal. He said this incident as follows,

" A car had hit me and knocked me into my wife. She was thrown into the other lane and struck by a car coming from the opposite direction."

-Dr. Barnard in the Lesson

Dr. Barnard experienced not only agony and fear but also anger. He asked himself why should this happen to them. Once Dr. Christiaan Barnard visited Cape Town's Red Cross Children's Hospital. There he came across a 'Grand Prix' of two boys driving a food trolley happily in the hospital. A nurse had left a trolley unattended. This trolley was commandeered by the two boys, an intrepid driver and a mechanic. The mechanic provided motor power

behind the trolley with his head down. The driver seated and steered with one hand. He was scraping his foot on the floor. The mechanic was totally blind, and the driver had only one arm. The appearance of the boys are described in the text as follows,

The mechanic was a walking horror , with a disfigured face..... and the trolley's driver had a malignant tumour of the bone . A few days before the race his shoulder and arm were amputated.

- Dr. Barnard in the Lesson

The rest of the patients encouraged them by their laughter and shouts. It was a better entertainment than the Indianapolis 500 race. Plates, cups and saucers were thrown around. After the Grand Prix, the mechanic of the trolley with laughter said to the doctor, "You know, we won". From this incident ,Dr. Barnard realised that the joy of living is the most important thing in the world. The children showed him what we have lost is not important but what we have left is important. Hats off to Dr. Barnard, for making us understand ,the real meaning of living. Yes, the business of living is the celebration of being alive.

Strength does not come from physical capacity,

it comes from indomitable will.

- Mahatma Gandhi
