



Never Agreeing with Kids

Dad came home late from work and asked me to go to work. My work was to read the morning newspaper. Games like parking a vehicle in perfect manner and tipping the waiter were what he remembered and also often forgot. One day when he went to swim, he called the swimming trainer and handed 500 rupees—that he called working. He had to work all the time. Every bone in him had to rattle, every muscle had to be well exercised, and he did not care for the time. Anytime, everything must be cooking. He was a workaholic, who rested too often and would wake up to find any work incomplete. His home was bound by a rule that always celebrated the coming and also celebrated the going. Like a rehearsal that repeated. Not giving any interest in matters other than closing the gate and bolting the door after someone has left from the home. What happened in between was a life that could not hold any surety of secure future. The small revolutions at home felt by his son was against his dad's present.

To have impatience to succeed is like never really give attention to one particular domain in life. Attention in anything you do is the new self-help mantra known to all. Life moves forward with the push and pull, but the ground becomes shaky with it. To live a same life and more than that to build a life together a stable mindset is the base—which is equivalent to growing together with the kids. Dad was moving ahead in his life but with impatience. It affected his relationship. If there is no acknowledging that you have to be like kids sometimes, it became difficult to walk in their shoes. Continuous work is for building a machine with no heart.

My disagreement with dad had its own course. I was more keen on writing poems on my secret diary—a habit which I had cultivated

regularly since grade nine. I had written my first poem when I was in grade seven. Dad felt that I should also follow the trend of studying science and leave humanities to hoodlums.

In fact, dad had gifted me the diary to write. He had signed it with date, and a small note. I went to stay in the hostel because I was alone at home. My brothers were in the capital city for their Master's degree so I thought staying in hostel would give me company. Somehow I was fascinated by the idea of living in the school compound. I had to walk back home, but those hostel students did not have to walk, they were living in the school compound. I was fascinated by this idea of not having to walk back home. Dad somehow agreed to keep me in the hostel because I lied that I was in bad company outside. I had to lie for him to agree to keep me in the hostel.

After two years of hostel life (after school got over) my second disagreement with dad was regarding choosing best faculty for my college level education. I was interested in literature and I could never figure out what mathematics was. The answers at the back of the math book never matched.

Dad wanted me to join science faculty and I spent all of my holiday (three months) practicing math to clear entrance examination for Science College. Dad believed that only hoodlums study humanities and since there was no proper plus two college in Humanities in my hometown, I had to study science despite my interest. My life was unbearable but yet I had hopes of studying engineering. I studied a lot, but subject like Chemistry (especially organic chemistry, was a mystery for me). I struggled with my study, but I would study for long hours. I would spend my time studying *Pradeep's Physics*, hoping to become an engineer someday. However, I felt my career choice would go in the wrong direction if I continue studying science. My love for English language from a very young age was abandoned, and I was looking forward to give it a go. I was also turning into a workaholic studying Physics which was beyond my comprehensibility. My mind was looking in a different direction and I was constantly being drawn towards English literature. My English teacher in the science college was my role model, and I secretly adored the dream of obtaining masters in English literature. I had to study Humanities for that and begin from Grade 11. I had to leave my city and go to the capital.

Years later as I recall those instances, I have already mapped my vocation as an English lecturer with a Master's degree and an ability to pursue literature. I became a passionate workaholic unlike my dad, with numerous books, and a passion for being a bibliophile. My work schedule became motivated by the inner desire to create, to dream and to fuel my imagination. I bolt doors and celebrate the coming and going of people at my home but they do have similar interests in literature—some are writers, some are teachers and most of them are passionate about life.

I interacted with an interviewer about my writings and I now recall those days. This is my story. My name is Ray.

“Does passion make you a slave to your own desires?” I was asked in an interview.

“Passion is the act of creating in my case, and I think it drives me to expressing myself in better terms.”

“Don't you think social responsibility is more important than passion and a person should cultivate social responsibility?”

“A person will develop a sense of social responsibility, if he is able to express about the society after understanding it.”

“When do you interact with people? And when do you interact with books?”

“I interact with students and I go to a book club every week, I do the readings for book club.”

“I walk when I go to work and I get to see the real face of the society—people from different walks of life—common people and their day to day activity.”

“Life is more than tipping a waiter or swimming trainer and reading the morning newspaper at night.”

“I get to choose my life and I did make that choice to study humanities and to excel at it with academic excellence. I paused and reflected, I

filtered out what was causing me to sink. That is the life I choose—it fuels my passion and understanding of the world.”

“Your books have won awards. How do you feel about it?”

“I think I have learned to value the role of literature and it has awoken a true devotee in me.”

Back when I studied Humanities in the capital city I had to bring my answer sheets to home which was marked with feedback by my teacher. My teacher told the class to make a Xerox copy of my answer sheet and study, he liked the answers so much. My English lit teacher gifted me his book of edited short stories after I scored distinction marks in his subject. The real taste of studious success happened when I continuously topped the class with me only securing first division from the class in Grade 11.

To convince my dad to allow me to study Humanities in the capital I had to deliberately bolt myself in the bathroom of my home when the bus for Science College came to pick me up. I had to argue constantly. But now I argue in literature. I teach and am delighted. I still learn to tell a story in an amusing way to my class. I trust the process. I am Ray and I am your character. I learned how to pronounce words from a news anchor in the capital city where I studied Humanities. He taught us English. I learned how to seek submissions for a literary magazine. We ran a literature club. I enjoyed telling about the club by going to different classes and announcing the call for other members to join in the Humanities college where I studied.

One memorable incident happened when I was studying Humanities in the capital city. I was asked to choose a poem from a book by senior student and send it for poetry competition by the ECA in charge. I selected a best poem out of that book. And it got selected by the jury and I had to go to the event to recite the poem. I won second prize for that poem. Now, after a decade I have got prizes for my own book of poems. My first prize for poetry was not on my poem. I take this incident as inspiration. Maybe somewhere the zeal to excel and get awarded for my own poem was born in me. When intentions are pure success kisses your feat. The desire in me has never faded.

