

THINK SIMPLE - A KNOWLEDGE FROM THE DESK OF MUSTANSIR

THE GREATEST GIFT

Quote: *"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved"*
- William Jennings Bryan -

The greatest gift that humans have is the ability to think. Of all the creatures in the world, humans are physically the most ill-equipped. A human cannot fly like a bird, outrun a leopard, swim like an alligator, nor climb trees like a monkey. A human doesn't have the eyes of an eagle, nor the claws or teeth of a wild cat. Physically, humans are helpless and defenseless; a tiny insect can kill them. But nature is reasonable and kind. Nature's greatest gift to humankind is the ability to think. Humans can create their own environment, whereas animals have to adapt to their environment.

Sadly, very few people use the greatest gift – the ability to think – to its full potential. We never pay the price for success. We reap the rewards of success. We actually pay the price for failure.

"Failures are of two kinds: those who did and never thought and those who thought but never did. Going through life without using the ability to think is like shooting without aiming."

LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES AND COMPROMISES

At first glance it might seem that there is a contradiction in the statement, that life is full of choices and compromises. If life is full of choices, where is the question of compromise? But, even a compromise is a choice. Let's evaluate this.

How is Life Full of Choices?

When we eat too much, we make a choice to be overweight. When we drink too much, we make a choice to have a headache the next day. If we drink and drive, we choose to risk being killed or killing someone in an accident. When we ill-treat people, we choose to be ill-treated in return. When we don't care about other people, we choose not to be cared for by them. When we light up a cigarette, we choose to invite cancer.

Choices have consequences. The most important thing to understand is that we are all free to the point of making choices. But, after we make a choice, the choice controls the chooser. We have no more choices. What is success? Series of positive choices is called success and series of negative choices is called failure. We have an equal opportunity to be unequal. The choice is ours. Life can be compared to a pottery maker who shapes clay in any form he wants. Similarly we can mold our lives into any shape we want.

How is Life Full of Compromises?

Is everything within our control in our lives? Obviously not. Life is not just party and pleasure; it is also pain and despair. Unthinkable things happen. Sometimes everything turns upside down. Sometimes bad things happen to good people for no fault of theirs. What wrong did they do? Who knows? Some time, people are born deformed. What wrong did they do, who knows? We cannot choose our parents or decide where and when we are born. We cannot choose the cards which are dealt to us but we can choose how to play the game.

On a clear day, there are hundreds of boats sailing in all different directions in a lake. Even though the wind is blowing in one direction, the sailboats are going in different directions. Why? It depends on the way the sail is set and that is determined by the sailor. The same is true of our lives. We can't choose the direction of the wind, but we can choose how we set our sail.

We can choose our attitude even though we cannot always choose our circumstances. The choice is either to act like a victor or a victim. It is not our position but our disposition that determines success. And what is disposition? It is our attitude.

It takes both rain and sunshine to create a rainbow. Our lives are no different. There is happiness and sorrow. There is the good and the bad, dark spots and bright spots. When we can handle adversity well, it only strengthens us. We cannot control all the events that happen in our lives, but we can control how we deal with them.

An acorn cannot decide whether to become a giant tree or to become food for the squirrels. Human beings have choices. If nature gives us a lemon, we have a choice: either to cry or make lemonade. When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, you can react responsibly or resentfully – the choice is yours.

“A SMOOTH SEA NEVER MADE A SKILLFUL MARINER”