Reach for the Sky

Stories that INSPIRE

Compiled by Amey Hegde

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Motivational Speaker and Corporate Trainer
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This book is dedicated to
My daughters **Aditi** and **Reya**

Acknowledgements:

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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.

In this book, I have collected stories from the internet that inspire us to reach for the sky. I have tried to shorten and simplify the stories to make them easy to read for readers of all ages.

The stories in this book "INSPIRE" us. They:
Inspire us to not give up
Nurture big dreams
Show us how achievers deal with failures
Provide us with new ideas
Instil courage
Rekindle hope
Encourage us in difficult times

I hope the stories in this book will inspire you to face challenges with courage and reach for the sky!

Amey Hegde
Motivational Speaker and Corporate Trainer
Goa, India

The Stories

Positive Attitude

The Shoe Salesmen

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

The first salesman looked around and saw that no one was wearing shoes. Disappointed, he reported back, "There is no market here - nobody wears shoes." The second salesman looked around and reported back excitedly, "There is a huge market here - nobody wears shoes."

We 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?" Let us not simply say "it can't be done."

The Two Brothers

There were two brothers. One brother would drink and beat his family. The other brother was a respected and successful businessman. He 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, the first brother replied "When I was a little boy, I used to see my dad come home drunk. He would beat all of us. How could I become any different?"

The second brother replied "When I was a little boy, I used to see my dad come home drunk. He would beat all of us. I decided that I was going to be different."

It is not the situation that determines our life. It is 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. If we respond positively to situations, success will be ours!

Who is Happy?

A crow lived in the forest and was very happy. 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. He saw that hundreds of people had come to see it. "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, "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 find 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's stop comparing ourselves to others as this only makes us unhappy.

Count Your Blessings!

A man was in his study room. This is what he had written:
-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 publishing company.
-My father died.
-My son failed in his exam because he had a car accident. He had to stay in hospital for many days. The car was totally destroyed.
Alas! It was such a bad year!

When the man's wife entered, she found him sleeping with a sad look on his face. She read what he had written. Soon, she returned with a paper. She placed it at the side of her husband's writing.
-I finally got rid of my gall bladder that had caused me years of pain.
-I turned 60 and retired from my job in good health. Now I can use my time to write something of my interest.
-My father died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 95.
-My son was blessed with a new life. My car was destroyed but my son did not get any major injury.
This year was full of blessings and it passed well!

Let us look at the world with new eyes and give thanks for all the good things present in our life. Let us learn to count our blessings!

The Two Wolves

A wise old man was teaching his grandson a lesson on 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 and envy. The other is good—he is joy, peace and love. This same fight is going on inside of you too."

The grandson thought for a minute, and then asked, "Which wolf will win, grandfather?" The grandfather replied, "The one you feed."

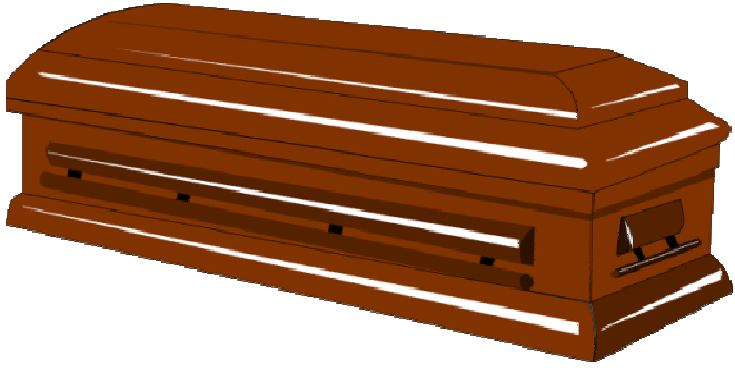
Which wolf do we feed daily? If we surround ourselves with negative minded people and talk negative things, then we are feeding the evil wolf.

On the other hand, if we spend our time with positive people, read good books, and help people, then we feed the good wolf.

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

Self-Confidence

Look Who Just died



One day, the students saw a big note stuck 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."

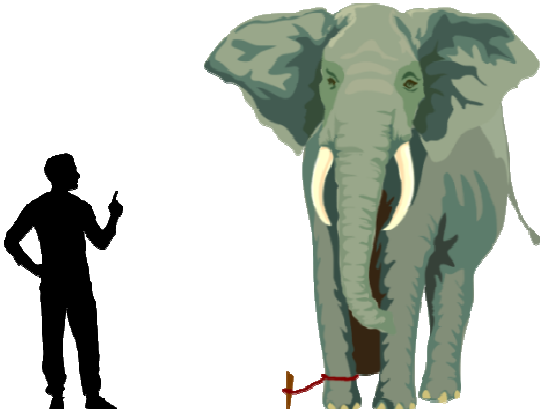
They felt sad to hear about the death of one of their school-mates. At the same time, they wanted to know who had been stopping their growth.

The students made a queue and went near the coffin one by one. Each and every student who looked inside the coffin was shocked.

There was a mirror inside the coffin. 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!"

There is only one person who is capable of setting limits to your growth; it is you! Let us stop limiting ourselves!

Set Yourself Free



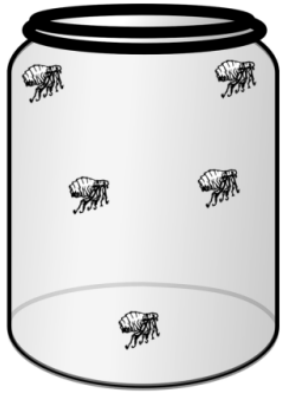
One day a man was going to town. He saw an elephant. He noticed that this huge animal was only being held by a small rope tied to its front leg. The elephant could easily break away from the rope. But it did not even try.

The man saw an elephant trainer nearby. He asked him why the elephant did not try to get away. The trainer replied, "When it is very young we use the same sized rope to tie it. At that age, it's enough to hold it. As it grows up, it continues thinking it cannot break away. It believes the rope can still hold it. So it never tries to break free."

The man was amazed. The elephant had the strength to easily break free from the tiny rope. It was stuck because it believed it couldn't. This belief holds it back from even trying to break free.

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

Fleas in a Jar



A scientist wanted to try out a small experiment. He placed some 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. Gradually, the fleas started jumping below the glass lid. They had learnt that this was the only way to avoid hitting it.

After a while, the scientist removed the glass lid. But the fleas continued jumping below the level of the glass lid. By now they had got used to jumping below 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.

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

The Frog That Refused to Listen

One day, some frogs arranged a climbing contest to the top of a very high tower. Many 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 frog 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!

Unless we are deaf to other people's opinion about what is possible, we can never reach beyond the limits they set for us. Let us be deaf when people tell us that we cannot fulfil our dreams!

The Millionaire's Cheque

A businessman owed people a lot of money. He sat in the park feeling very sad. He wondered how he could save his company. Suddenly, an old man came and sat near him. After listening to him, the old man gave him a cheque saying, "Meet me here one year from today. You can pay me back then." 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. But he did not deposit it in the bank. He decided to keep it in his safe and to use it only in case of an emergency. With changed thinking, he worked hard with great enthusiasm. Soon he got several big orders. Within a few months, he was out of debt and making a lot of 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 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 businessman was shocked! All year long, he had believed that he had a million dollars with him.

It's not money but faith in ourselves that gives us the power to achieve anything that we want. Let us have more faith in ourselves!

Never Give Up

The Frog Who Didn't Give Up

One day, two frogs accidently 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. Finally, the cream turned into butter and the frog simply climbed out of the bucket.

When you find yourself in trouble, never give up. Keep on swimming. 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

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States was born into a very poor family. He faced defeat throughout his life.

In brief, here is Lincoln's journey to the White House:
- 1832: Lost job; defeated in race for state legislature
- 1834: Elected to state legislature
- 1835: Heartbroken on death of sweetheart
- 1836: Had a total nervous breakdown
- 1838: Defeated in race for speaker of the state legislature
- 1843: Defeated in race for nomination for Congress
- 1846: Elected to Congress
- 1848: Ran again for Congress; lost
- 1849: Rejected for position of land officer
- 1854: Defeated in race for U.S. Senate
- 1856: Defeated in race for nomination for Vice President
- 1858: Defeated yet again in race for U.S. Senate
- 1860: Elected President of the United States.

Lincoln could have quit many times - but he didn't. Lincoln went on to lead the United States during the Civil War. He united the states and abolished slavery.

Today, Lincoln is considered the greatest U.S. President of all time!

Achievers Who Didn't Quit

1. Colonel Sanders

I had to close my restaurant at the age of 66.

Colonel Sanders used to sell fried chicken from his roadside restaurant at Kentucky. He had developed a secret recipe for cooking chicken which was loved by his customers. In 1956, he had to close his restaurant due to a new highway that bypassed his restaurant. Sanders was now 66. He only had $105 a month from Social Security to live on. He decided to travel across the US to market his chicken recipe to restaurant owners. He would beg the owner to let him cook some chicken for them. If they liked the chicken, they would make a deal. They would get his secret recipe. In return, he would get 4 cents for every chicken piece they sold using his secret recipe. This is the story of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Today, Kentucky Fried Chicken, is the world's second-largest restaurant chain. It has over 20,000 restaurants in 123 countries.

3. The Wright Brothers

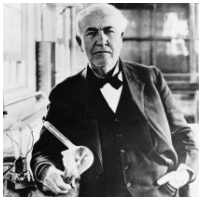
The world said it was not possible.

In August 1896, glider pioneer Otto Lilienthal died in a crash. The news of his death inspired the Wright brothers to solve the problem of flight.

They created their first glider in 1900, but it failed. They created an improved second glider in 1901, but that too failed. Finally, in 1902, they created a third improved glider. They flew over 700 test flights with it. This time, they were happy with how it performed. During the winter of 1902-1903, they developed a light, powerful engine.

In October 1903, a New York Times editorial tried to explain why all attempts at flight would fail. Yet nine weeks later, the Wright brothers became the first men ever to fly in a heavier-than-air machine.

3. Thomas Edision



I failed 3,000 times.

Edison failed about 3,000 times while he was working on the light bulb. In December 1914, there was a huge fire in Edison's factory. The factory was worth a few million dollars. As he watched the fire destroy his work, Edison said to his son, "It's all right. We've just got rid of a lot of rubbish." In an interview to The New York Times, Edison said, "Although I am over 67 years old, I'll start all over again tomorrow."

He immediately began rebuilding the next morning. After just three weeks, Edison's factory started running again. Edison and his team went on to make almost $10 million in revenue the next year.

Great achievers face failures with courage and bounce back. Let us try to be like them. We too will achieve great things!

Indian Achievers Who Didn't Quit

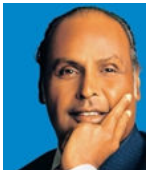
Here are some Indian Achievers who have made it big through sheer hard work and determination.

1. Rajinikanth

At the age of 30, I was a bus conductor.

Rajinikanth, a very successful movie star was born in a poor family. He started doing small jobs in Bengaluru and Chennai. He worked as 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.

2. Dhirubhai Ambani



I used to work as a petrol pump attendant

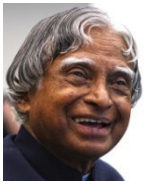
The late Dhirubhai Ambani was born in a middle class family. His father was a school teacher. Ambani moved to Yemen at the age of 16. He worked there as a petrol pump attendant and as a clerk in an oil company. He returned to India in 1958 and set up a textile trading company. This company is now one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

3. Mahendra Singh Dhoni

I used to work as a train ticket examiner.

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. Under his captaincy, India won World T20 in 2007, Cricket World Cup in 2011 and Champions Trophy in 2013.

4. Dr. Abdul Kalam



I used to sell newspapers.

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. Without much help, he graduated in Physics and studied aerospace engineering. Dr. Kalam joined Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) as a scientist and later became the director of the organization. In 2002, he became the 11th President of India.

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

When Govind Jaiswal was 11, he 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.

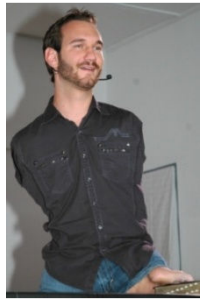
Insults like 'however much you study, you will still be a rickshaw-puller's son', 'what is your worth?' were very common in his life. He started asking people, "What should I do so that people will respect me?" Someone told him to become an IAS officer.

Govind started studying very seriously. He even put cotton into his ears to prevent the noise from his locality from disturbing him. On completing graduation, he was sent to Delhi with Rs. 40,000. His father had arranged this money by selling his last piece of land. Govind studied 18 hours a day. He often skipped one or two meals a day to save money. Many times he felt like hitting people who insulted him but instead, he used all his energy to pursue his dream.

In 2006, Govind ranked #48 among 474 successful candidates in the Civil Services Exam. Today, he is a respected IAS officer whose success story inspires thousands across India.

From Disability to Super-ability

Nick Vujicic: Life Without Limits



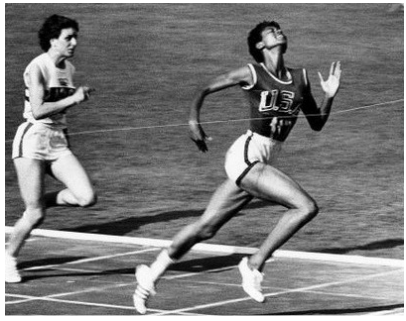
Nick Vujicic was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder where there is absence of all four limbs.

Initially, his mother refused to see or hold him but gradually accepted him. Vujicic was bullied in his teenage and young adult years. One day, his mother showed him a newspaper article of a man dealing with a severe disability. This helped him to eventually accept his disability. He started giving talks. And at the age of seventeen, he 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. He starred in the short film 'The Butterfly Circus'. He is married and has four children. His first book, 'Life Without Limits', has been translated into over 30 languages.

Today, he presents motivational speeches worldwide. His speeches focus on life with a disability, hope and finding meaning in life.

Wilma Rudolph: Polio Affected to Olympic Champion



When Wilma Rudolph was four years old, she had polio. She 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. 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. Then she entered her second, third and fourth race and still 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."

At the 1960 Olympics in Rome, she became the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympiad. Rudolph was called the fastest woman in the world in the 1960s.

Wilma retired from running when she was 22 years old. 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.

Arunima Sinha: Female Amputee Climbs Mt. Everest

On April 12, 2011, Arunima Sinha was thrown off a moving train by thieves for trying to stop them from snatching her chain. She was seriously injured. To save her life, doctors had to amputate her left leg below the knee.

While in hospital, she resolved to climb Mount Everest. She was inspired by cricketer Yuvraj Singh's successful battle against cancer. She felt that if he could get back into the Indian team, she too could do something with her life.

Arunima said, "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." Arunima trained under Bachendri Pal, the first Indian woman to conquer the Everest.

Arunima reached the summit of Mount Everest on 21 May 2013. She became the first woman in the world to conquer Mt. Everest on an artificial leg. She took 52 days to reach the summit.

Arunima's mental strength and will power helped her defy all odds. She is now an inspiration for millions.

Karoly Takacs: One Handed Olympic Shooter

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 to be held at Tokyo. Just months before the Olympics, a hand grenade exploded in his right hand.

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. He decided to learn how to shoot with his left hand! He did not focus on what he had lost – a world class right shooting hand. He focussed on what he had – a healthy left hand.

For months Takacs practised. In the spring of 1939, he went to 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, he won the gold medal and set a new world record in pistol shooting. Takacs won the gold medal again at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

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: Amputee to Actress

Sudha Chandran started dancing at the age of 3. She took part in her first stage performance at 8. By the time she had turned 16, she had taken part in 75 stage performances.

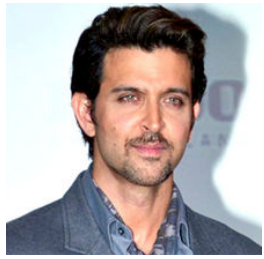
When she was 16, she met with an accident. Doctors missed a small wound in her ankle and plastered it. This got infected and her leg had to be amputated.

She was in a state of shock for months. One day she heard of the famous Jaipur foot. She decided to restart dancing using it. It was a painful journey. She had to learn each and every step again. There were moments when her leg would bleed. But, she kept on going. After many visits to Jaipur and a lot of practice, she mastered dancing with the foot.

A Telugu film 'Mayuri' was made on her life story, in which she played the lead role. The movie was a box office success and won the best feature film award from the state government. It was remade in Hindi with the name 'Naache Mayuri'.

Now, Sudha is a successful actress. She has acted in many films of different languages. She also acts in a lot of TV serials.

Hrithik Roshan: Stammerer to Superstar



Hrithik Roshan is considered to be one of the most handsome and cool film stars in India. But when he was a child he was bullied at school because of his stammering.

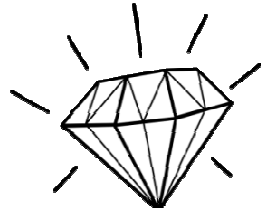
Hrithik was supposed to receive the Best Debut Actor Award in Dubai for his first movie. He wanted to say, 'I love you Dubai' in his speech at the awards function. But he couldn't say 'Dubai'. He wanted to practice saying 'Dubai' but for that he needed to scream 'Dubai' loudly. He couldn't do that in his hotel room or bathroom because his voice could be heard by people outside. Finally, he locked himself up in a big cupboard and practiced saying 'Dubai'. At the awards function, he was able to say the word smoothly.

When Hrithik decided that he had to overcome his stammering, he joined speech therapy classes. He repeated all the alphabets in different ways. This improved his pronunciation and increased his confidence levels. He practised in front of a mirror for long hours to improve his speech.

Hrithik still practices for long hours. He is also quite open about his speech disorder. This openness without a feeling of shame or guilt has made him more confident in front of people. With perseverance and will power, he has overcome his speech disorder.

Problems Make Us Stronger

Shine like a Diamond



Once, a piece of coal said to a diamond, "You look so beautiful!" The diamond replied, "I was once a piece of coal just like you. I only went through some changes."

The coal could not believe the diamond. It said, "How did you change into a diamond?" The diamond replied, "I spent years under very high heat and pressure. I did not have an easy time. But it helped me change from a coal into a diamond."

The coal replied, "I too would like to become a diamond. As coal, I will be used as fuel for fire. I will turn to smoke and be gone forever. As a diamond, I will live forever. People all over the world will value me."

The diamond replied, "Face the difficult times with courage. One day, you too will shine like a diamond!"

All of us have the potential to become diamonds. Just as a piece of coal needs to go through high heat and pressure to change into a precious diamond, we too need to go through the various challenges of life to grow. Let us decide to face tough times with courage and determination and we too will shine like diamonds!

The Man and the Butterfly

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. He noticed a small opening in it. He watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body out through that little hole. Then it appeared to stop making any progress.

The man decided to help the butterfly. With a pair of scissors, he cut open the cocoon. The butterfly came out easily. But it had a swollen body and small wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly. He waited for the wings to become big and support the body. But nothing happened!

The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and small wings. It was never able to fly. The butterfly has to struggle to get out of the cocoon. This struggle forces fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings. It helps it to get ready for flight.

Sometimes, struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If we go 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.

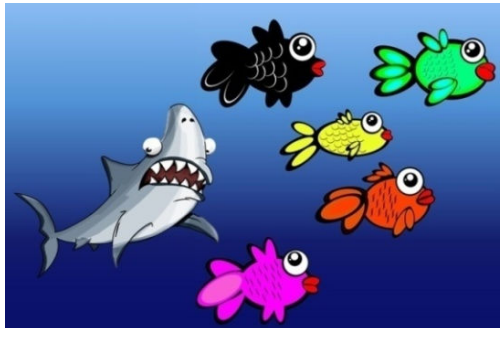
No Problem

The Great Barrier Reef stretches 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 on the lagoon side is in still water. It doesn't face any challenges for its survival. So, it dies early. The coral on the ocean side is constantly being challenged by wind, waves, and storms. It has to fight for survival every day of its life. As it is challenged, it adapts. It grows healthy. It grows strong."

That's how it is with people too. When we are challenged, we grow! Physical demands help us to grow stronger. Mental and emotional stress makes us emotionally strong and tough-minded. So, you have problems - no problem! Just tell yourself, "There I grow again; stronger and powerful!"

Fresh Fish



The Japanese love fresh fish. But the waters close to Japan do not have much fish. So, fishing boats got bigger and went farther out into the sea. The farther they went, the longer it took to bring in the fish. The Japanese did not like the taste.

Fishing companies installed freezers on their boats to solve this problem. But still, the Japanese could taste the difference between fresh fish and frozen fish.

Fishing companies went a step further. They installed fish tanks. They would catch the fish and put it in the tanks. The fish stopped moving after some time. They were alive but were tired and dull. Unfortunately, the Japanese could still find the difference.

The fishing companies added a small shark in each tank. The fish would move about to escape the shark. The problem was solved. It ate a few fish, but most fish arrived active and fresh.

Challenges are like sharks. We need them to keep us active and lively. With no challenges in our lives, we feel tired and dull. Welcome challenges!

Shake It off and Step Up

One day, a farmer's donkey fell into an unused well. The animal cried for hours. 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 was not worth rescuing the donkey.

He called 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 dirt on his back, a thought struck him. He decided, "Let them throw dirt on my back. I will just shake it off and step up." "Shake it off and step up, shake it off and step up!" he repeated to encourage himself. He kept on shaking off the dirt and stepping up! Soon he was able to step out of the well! It had seemed that the dirt would bury him, but actually it benefitted him. This was all due to the way in which he handled his challenge.

If we face our problems and deal with them positively, problems will not bury us but will lift us up!

Make the World a Better Place

The Starfish

A man was walking on a beach. He saw a young boy picking up starfish 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 are thousands of starfish on this beach. You can't save all of them. This is the situation on hundreds of beaches. Do you really think that you can 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 makes a big difference to the person receiving it. Let us make a difference today!

A Tale of Two Seas

The Dead Sea is not a sea. It's a lake. It's so high in salt content that the human body can float easily. No life can exist in the Dead Sea due to the high salt content. 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. 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. This keeps it healthy and full of life. But in the case of the Dead Sea, the water flows in from 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 river Jordan, and holds it. It does not give. Result? No life at all.

Life is not just about receiving. 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.

Sandeep is also a do-gooder. A few years back, his mother died of cancer. Since then, he has kept a donation box in his auto for cancer relief. He donates Rs. 2 from every fare that he receives. On Sundays, he distributes breakfast among cancer patients. Bacche gives discounts to people with disabilities, pregnant women, and senior citizens. He also 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 is known as the Forest Man of India. He has single-handedly planted nearly 1,400 acres of forest in Assam. In 2015, he was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India.

Payeng's mission began in 1979 when he was only 16 years old. There were heavy floods that year. When everything was back to normal, Payeng found many dead snakes on the shore. The snakes had died in the heat. There were no trees to give them shade. He took a decision. He started planting trees on the sandbar. He has not stopped even after planting several thousand trees. He not only plants the trees, but also waters them and looks after them. He has transformed the area into a forest.

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

Payeng’s story is truly inspirational. It inspires people to take up a cause even if one is alone.

Dashrath Manjhi: The Mountain Man

The late Dashrath Manjhi was famously known as the mountain man. He 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. This path has made a big difference to the lives of the people of his village.

Here are some facts about the mountain man:
-The nearest doctor or health centre was over 50 kms away
-In 1959, Manjhi's wife Falguni Devi died from lack of medical care
-In the memory of his wife, he started working on making a path through the Gehlour hills
-He worked day and night for 22 years from 1960 to 1982
-He shortened the distance from over 50 kms to a few kilometres
-Due to his efforts, villagers are now able to get medical help

In 2015, filmmaker Ketan Mehta made a film on his life, 'Manjhi - The Mountain Man.' It starred 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, to let him die. His parents did not listen. They chose to educate him.

He was admitted into a school for special children. 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. 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. He applied and got admission in four of the top schools in the United States – MIT, Stanford, Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon. He chose MIT and became the school's first international blind student.

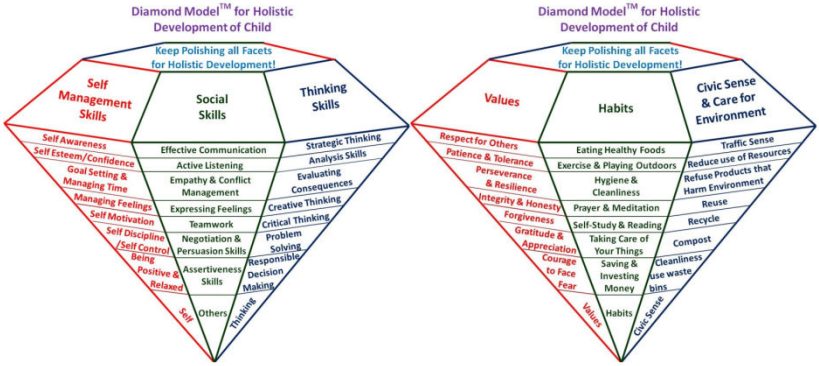
After graduating from MIT, he gave up the opportunity to work for a high paying job in America and returned to India. He started Bollant Industries Pvt. Ltd. to provide employment to the physically challenged. The company makes eco-friendly, disposable plates and cups. Bollant Industries is valued at over Rs. 400 crore.

Today, Srikanth has five factories and employs over 650 people. Nearly half of these employees are disabled men and women.

CHAMPS (Character, Habits, Attitude, Mindset & Personality for Success)

CHAMPS is a yearlong programme on Life Skills for kids aged 10-12 years with classes held once a week at Margao, Goa, India. It is designed, conducted and organised by Life Skills Trainer for students, 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 follow 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, etc.
- 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.

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:
-CHAMPS year long programme on Life Skills & Personality Development
-5 day Camps in school vacations on Life Skills & Personality Development

Amey can be contacted on ameyhegde@gmail.com.
Visit http://ameyhegde.in

REACH FOR THE SKY:
Stories that INSPIRE

About This Book:

Inspiring stories hold the power to transform one's life and thoughts. This book is a compilation of handpicked stories that inspire us to face challenges with courage and to reach for the sky. The stories have been simplified to make them easy to read for readers of all ages.

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 and 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 and Fortune 100 companies in Europe and India with a varied cultural exposure while working with teams from USA, Canada, Germany, Japan and 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 and for the Indian Army.

Amey was recently awarded at the World HRD Congress for outstanding contribution in Training and 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