

ATTITUDE, NOT APTITUDE, DETERMINES ALTITUDE

(This speech was delivered by Chief Justice Yatindra Singh, Chancellor of the Hidayullah National Law University, Raipur on 22.02.2014 on the occasion of its second convocation.)

Hon'ble Chief Justice Sri Sathasivam, ladies and gentlemen
Jai Johar, Namaste, and a very good morning to all of you,

'खुदी को कर बुलन्द इतना, कि हर तक्रदीर से पहले,
खुदा बंदे से खुद पूछे, बता तेरी रज़ा क्या है?'

This was Sir Muhammad Iqbal (November 9, 1877 – April 21, 1938) also known as Allama Iqbal, one of the greatest poets of the Urdu and Persian languages; the one, who wrote the famous song,

'सारे जहां से अच्छा, हिन्दोस्तां हमारा ।
हम बुलबुलें हैं इसकी, यह गुलिसतां हमारा'.

But how can one put one's personality to such a pedestal that Gods themselves ask, what destiny you wish.

You are entering into new life today: from student-life to adulthood. Till today, you have been told that studies, academics, grades were important but these are secondary. The primary factor is the attitude. It is rightly said,

'Attitude, not aptitude, determines altitude.'

One should have right attitude. But what is the right attitude. Let me illustrate it with a real story from American life.

FIND YOUR LOVE

About sixty years ago, on 24th February, 1955, an unwed college student mother gave birth to a boy child in the US. She put him up for adoption; her only condition was that adoptive parents should be college graduates.

Initially, a lawyer and his wife wanted to adopt the child but decided to adopt a girl instead of the boy. But the boy was ultimately adopted.

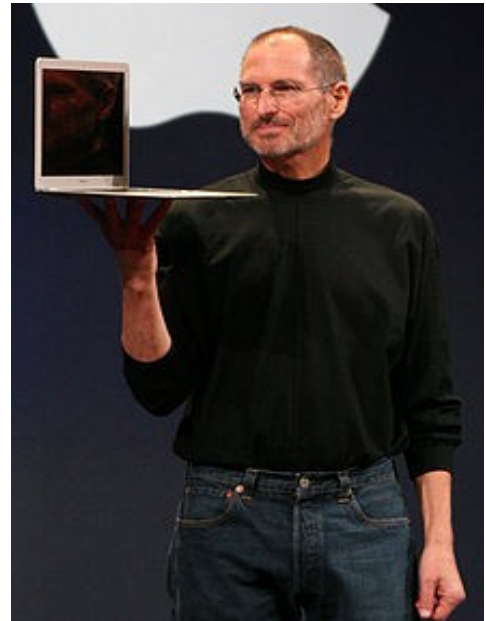
The biological mother later found out that the adoptive mother had never graduated from college and the adoptive father had not even passed the high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers but relented a few months later, when the adoptive parents

promised that the boy would be sent to college.

The adoptive parents were not rich but they gave their life savings to send the boy to college (Reed College) that was not an Ivy league but as expensive as them.

The boy could not complete the degree; he thought he was wasting his parents' money and he dropped out after six months. He didn't have any money; he started going to Ram krishan temple: *prasad* was his food.

In the temple, the boy learnt broken Hindi and came to India in search of truth but the experience was not good. He realised that Thomas Edison did a lot more to improve the world than Karl Marx and Kairolie Baba put together. He went back to US and started his own company.



When the company was doing well, the boy got thrown out from the same. But he was called back to pull up the company, when it was on the downhill.¹

Later, it was learnt that the boy had cancer of the pancreas and had only six months to live. He got himself operated and went on to live for about seven years before he died on 5th October, 2011.

By the time of the boy died, his company—the Apple Incorporated—was on top of the world; Mac laptops, iPods, iPhones, iPads are not only the World standard but trend setters as well: his name was Steve Jobs (b 24-02-1955 - d 05-10-2011).

How could Steve Jobs overcome the difficulties, achieve so much. He explained it in the commencement speech that he gave in 2005 in the Stanford University. This was the nearest that he reached a college convocation. He said:

1 After Jobs was thrown out, he started two companies. This is how he went back to Apple computers,

'During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar ... Pixar went on to create the worlds first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance.'

'The only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love ... the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on.

...

Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.'²

Like Steve Jobs, find your passion. The best thing in life is, to make your hobby—your profession. If this cannot be done then start enjoying whatever you do.

HAVE CONFIDENCE, BE OPEN, AND ACCEPT YOUR MISTAKES

I see many young ladies here. Let me tell you a real story of an Indian girl that happened about forty years ago. At that time, she was as old as I see them here.

There was an engineer girl, who saw an advertisement for a job however it limited the prospect to male engineers only. She was told the reason: women might not be able to stand the heat of the hot furnaces.



The girl protested and wrote a letter to Telco. To their greatness, Telco took her in their

² In the words of Steve Jobs after dropping out he took classes in Calligraphy (art of fine handwriting) that changed the computer world. This is what he said,

'Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backwards ten years later.'

fold despite their advertisement. She met her husband there and they continued there till they decided to make their own company.

The couple did not have the money to start a company: the girl pawned her jewellery to generate some fund. But the company that they made, went on to put India on the World map. Infosys is the company that they formed and her name is Sudha Murthy (b 19.08.1950).

Like Sudha Murthy, you must have confidence in yourself and express your views.

In the incident, the contribution of the first company can also be not undermined: despite their advertisement, they were open, they realised their mistake, and accepted her: the company was TELCO (now TATA Motors).

Let me sum up:

- Listen to your heart and find what you enjoy doing; in case you are unable to do it: enjoy your work.
- Be confident and express your views; in case you are wrong then accept your mistakes and correct them.

With these words I wish all of you—the future Gandhis, Nehrus, Saprus, Palkiwalas, Setalvaads, Judges, Chief justices and perhaps a Chief Justice of India—success in life. I hope that you will go on, to make not only your alma mater, this national law school, me as a Chancellor proud but this country as well. And we will again be able to say,

'जहां डाल, डाल पर,
सोने की चिड़ियां करती हैं बसेरा,
वो भारत देश है मेरा।'
जय भारती, जय हिन्द

Endnote-1: The photographs of Steve Jobs and Sudha Murthy are from Wikipedia.

Endnote-2: My daughter-in-law Swati Singh says that the speech reminds her of the poem Invictus³.

3 See at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invictus>