



The Mantra of  
Success

**Be the change  
that you wish to  
see in the world**

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Most people, if not all, often express dissatisfaction or discontent with the way things are around them. This may pertain to the state of the society they live in, their immediate neighbourhood or their own family relations. It's not even, as if they don't have any reasons behind their griping. They do, but the thing is, griping is all they do.

This results in things continuing the way they are with only the complaining increasing. What this does is, needlessly spread disaffection between the person and the people he or she has issues with. Things don't have to be this way, but for that one has to come forward and let people around one know that things can be done in a better way.

Essentially one has to walk the talk. For example one can't expect one's children to be well behaved, if we constantly swear in their presence! By practising what one preaches, one often realizes that the shortcomings one sees in others exist in one's own personality or behaviour. When Gandhi took up the cause of his fellow Indians who faced discrimination under colonial rule in South Africa, he realized that he himself was prejudiced against the local black population.

This shook him up and on return to India the first thing he did was mobilise opinion against the millennia old discrimination the lower caste Indians faced from their compatriots.

Leading by example, he started living humbly among the people whose cause he espoused. If he could hold the moral high ground throughout his life, it was because people knew that he wouldn't have anyone do something that he himself wouldn't. How many people can say like him-that my life is my message.

Let's take a diametrically opposite example of that of the Armed Forces. Those who train to be officers are put through the grind learning all that there is of the art of warfare so well that they are able to inspire the loyalty of the troops they inspire. It is only when they are able to inspire their men that they will not ask them to do something they themselves can't do better than them, will the latter be ready to trust them with their lives.

If the troops are asked to go on a night long march, they will willingly do so if they know that the man ordering them will be walking beside them. This kind of spirit has a name well known both in the military and management circles- esprit de corps (fellow feeling and camaraderie among the members of a group). This is at the core of any professional army and differentiates it from a rag tag militia or a bunch of mercenaries.

If one were to study the lives of great leaders and inspirational figures, one will see that they did not achieve their exalted status overnight. It took them long hard years to get where they did. In the beginning they all faced rejection, scorn and even hatred, but by and by when people recognised what they were setting out to achieve, the same doubting Thomases deified them. When Hitler was advancing in Europe, the timid Prime Minister of Britain, Chamberlain capitulated in front of Hitler by legitimizing the German annexation of the Sudetenland province of Czechoslovakia, in order to avoid war. Churchill at that time who was not even part of the government felt outraged, as he knew that the annexation was only a prelude to further territorial expansion by Nazi Germany. Subsequent events proved Churchill right when Hitler invaded and annexed Czechoslovakia and Poland. When war did break out Churchill first became First Lord of Admiralty and later successfully led his nation through the course of the Second World War as a heroic Prime Minister.

Being the change that one wants to see needn't necessarily be on a global or epic scale. This is effective on any scale or any level. If for instance you are dissatisfied with the level of cleanliness in your apartment block, it would be far better to get together with a few

like-minded residents and yourself initiate a weekly clean-up. You will find that despite the initial hesitation or even hostility on the part of some, people will join in wholeheartedly, once they are convinced of the sincerity of your effort. Like Gandhi had once said, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win!"

Come to think of it there is a moral dimension to expecting only that of others that you yourself would do. This naturally puts you in a virtuous place, and gives you the courage and conviction to demand similar behaviour from others. Eventually our humanity is premised on the equality of man. If this were not so the mighty Roman and British Empires might still have been around and colonialism would have been here to stay.

But it is in the basic nature of human beings to be treated equally and fairly. You cannot presume that your way is better than someone else's just because you think it is. If you want to win over people to your cause, you have got to go ahead and demonstrate that doing things your way is beneficial for them. In Marketing Management one often, goes by the dictum, "What's there in it for me?" That forms the basis for any sales or marketing pitch that gets made. One has to show demonstrable benefit to the people for them to take to it.

So it is with life. You want people to agree with your vision of doing things; show them why it works for them as well. Nothing demonstrates this better than a group of mountaineers scaling the peak. The first man who goes up has to discover the easiest and safest way, up, but he has no one to assist him. He has to do it on his own. Though the rest of the team has it easy as they just follow the line tethered to his waist, the glory is all his, as he is the first man to reach the top.

**Lamees Alhassar**