

Life Beyond Barriers

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Life won't always go as the way you want and due to the same reason, a few people succeed in life, while others not. It is very interesting to see how successful people tackle the problems of their life. When the lazy people find unconquerable barriers in life, successful people find it as challenges which could be overcome through diligent planning and confidence. This training session is intended to give the 'Theeranaipunya - Equipping Fisherwomen Youth for Future' trainees a few tips on how to manage a successful life.

Barriers of Life

It could be broadly described as any hindrance or obstacle that prevent a person from achieving success in their life. It could be physical, psychological, socio-economic etc. If you succumb to your obstacles, you fail in your life. If you overcome these barriers, you become successful in life. There is a saying that to win the war, you should know your enemy. Likewise, you should know about the barriers of life to conquer them and to achieve a successful life. It is said that the biggest obstacles in our lives are the barriers created by our own mind. The path trodden by a successful and an unsuccessful person would be most probably the same till a certain point. After this point, the successful person takes a path that is often difficult and mostly untrodden. But the lazy people do not have the courage to take this path and may lead despicable life. The road to success is tortuous and include lots of failures and each failure becomes a learning point contributing to the success. It is worthwhile to remember what had happened with Thomas Alva Edison, a great scientist. Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, "How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?" Edison replied, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps." Our former President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam once said, don't read success stories, by doing so you get only a message, but read failure stories where you will get some ideas to get success. It is always true that difficult roads leads to beautiful destinations.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to the creation of an environment where a person can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's life. Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependent. Empowering women is to make them independent in all

aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc. by leaving all the social and family limitations. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the future of the family, society and country bright. Women need more facilitating environment so that they can take their own decisions in every area whether for themselves, family, society or country. In order to make the country fully developed, women empowerment is a must. It is also a must to make them successful in their life.

There are legal frame work that support the women empowerment. The Article 14 of our constitution provides for equality before law, Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, gender or place of birth. Article 16 deals with equal opportunity in public employment. 108th Constitutional Amendment Bill (also called Women's Reservation Bill) was passed to reserve one-third of the seats for women in the Lok Sabha to make them actively involved in the nation building process. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 4 August 2009, (Right to Education, in short) deals with free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the act came into force on 1 April 2010.

The RTE was enacted understanding the importance of education on empowering the masses especially the women. When we educate a women, primarily we are empowering a women. Knowledge is the key to your empowerment and we acquire knowledge through education.

Optimist and Pessimists

Even after acquiring the basic skills to lead a good life, people still fail in their life. This depends on whether they are pessimists or optimists. Life does not unfurl as the way you like and success isn't the thing determined only by your mind set. The pessimists feel that the failures are produced by personal deficits beyond your control or that they are mistakes you cannot fix with effort. This attitude take them nowhere and they continue to lead their pitiful life. Optimists treat their failures as learning experiences and believe that they can do better in the future and ultimately succeed in their life. A parallel here is the story of Robert Bruce, the King of Scotland who failed six wars against Edward the First, King of England, who tried to annex Scotland to England. But, the optimistic Robert Bruce, on the seventh attempt, defeated the army of England and retained the freedom of Scotland. This success mind set requires emotional intelligence and maintaining the success mind set is not an easy task. There are seven aspects that could spoil ones' successful mind set and could form a barrier to our success.

I. Fear

The worst thing that can happen to you is allowing yourself to die inside while you're still alive. This is what exactly happens when your fear is unfounded. Fear is nothing more than a lingering emotion that is fuelled by your imagination. Danger is real, but



fear is a choice. There are fears like fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of not being good enough etc. Successful people always try to conquer their fears. They always make the initial steps, learn from the failures and proceed. But, the fear of failure always hold you back from making the initial steps, which is the starting point of any successful life

II. What other people think

How others see you is not important, but how you see yourself is more important. No matter what other people think of you at any particular moment, one thing is certain – you are never as good or bad as they say you are. Hence, always take people’s opinions with a grain of salt. It is almost impossible to turn off your reactions to what others think of you, but you don’t have to hold up your accomplishments to anyone else opinions. No matter what other people are thinking or doing, your self-worth comes from within. If you give more importance to know what other people think, it becomes a waste of time and energy and you lose your control over your destiny.

III. Age

Age really is just a number. Age is a case of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it don’t matter. Successful people don’t let their age define who they are and what they are capable of. They follow their heart and allow their passion and not the body they’re living in to be their guide.

IV. Toxic people

You are the average of five people you spend most of the time with. So always try to be in company with good people. They would help you to reach your full potential. For example the synergy between Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, who were from the same neighbourhood, was behind the phenomenal success of Apple Computers. But the negative people try to drag you down with them. They create stress and strife that should be avoided at all coasts. You can’t reach your peak until you engage yourself with right people. If you are unhappy with where you are in your life, just take a look around. Most probably, the people giving you company would be at the root of your problems.

V. Negativity

Life won’t always go the way you want it to be. When a setback happens to successful people, instead of complaining about how things could have been or should have been, they reflect on everything they have to be grateful for. They concentrate on the available resources and find the best solution possible, tackle the problem and move on. When the negativity comes from someone else, try to avoid it by setting limits and distancing from those negative people. A better way to stop complainers/negative people is to ask them how they intend to fix the problem they’re complaining about. They will either quiet down or redirect the conversation in a productive direction.

IV. The past or the future

Like fear, the past and the future are products of your mind. No amount of guilt can change the past, and no amount of anxiety can change the future. Successful people know this, and they focus on living in the present moment. It's impossible to reach your full potential if you're constantly somewhere else worrying about something and unable to fully embrace the reality (good or bad) of this very moment. You have to learn from the past, live in the present and believe in the future. To live in the moment, you must do two things: i. accept your past. If you don't make peace with your past, it will never leave you and it will create your future, for sure, which would not be good; ii. accept the uncertainty of the future, and don't place unnecessary expectations upon yourself. Worry should not occupy any place in your life as it is well said by Mark Twain "Worrying is like paying a debt you don't owe."

VII. The state of the world

When you keep your eyes on the news, it's easy to think the world is headed downhill fast. It may or may not be true. But you are not supposed to wait till the world become peaceful and start your business. But successful people don't worry about that because they don't get caught up in things they can't control. Instead, they focus their energy on directing the two things that are completely within their power, their attention and their effort. They focus their effort on doing what they can every single day to improve their own lives and the world around them, because these small steps are all it takes to make the world a better place.

Your success is driven by your mind set. With discipline and focus, you can ensure that these seven obstacles never hold you back from reaching your full potential.

Success Stories

1. Smt. K. Radha

She is the leader of a women collective that dig well in Ottappalam area of Palakkad district. Digging deep wells was seen a risky job requiring hard labour and special skills that only men possessed. But to beat the water scarcity and shortage of manpower, these brave women took up the task of digging wells in the area, thereby ensuring them earnings and saving the area from drought. These ladies who were working under MGNREGS, never had any experience of digging wells. But their collective spirit helped them learn the trick easily. Now they dig up wells as deep as 80 feet without any fear and to its professional perfection.



K. Radha coming out a well dug at Pookottukavu, Ottappalam. (Hindustan Times, May 07, 2017)

2. *Smt. Rekha K.C.*

K.C. Rekha and K.V. Karthikeyan, India's first fisher couple who has been venturing into the sea on outboard boat for around 13 years. They were felicitated by the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare Sudarshan Bhagat at a function organised by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on May 6th 2017. She ventured into the sea to support her husband and to ensure a reasonable income through fishing so that her family of 6 persons are well fed. Initially she faced lot of criticism from the community for venturing into the sea, but she persisted in the vocation for the sake of her family and eventually the criticism faded out. Moreover, she faced sea sickness during the initial years, but now she is fully hardened to handle the sea.



K.C. Rekha and K.V. Karthikeyan being felicitated by Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare Sudarshan Bhagat at a function organised by CMFRI. The Hindu, May 6 2017

3. *Smt. Uma Preman*

At the age of 18, she was the fourth wife to an ailing middle-aged man and after eight years of marriage, she became a widow. After becoming a widow, she submitted herself to the service of the destitute and ill. She donated her kidney to a total stranger and then took the initiative to conduct kidney transplantations and free of cost dialysis to poor patients. She started the Shanti Medical Information Centre, using the money she inherited from her deceased husband, on August 24, 1997 at Thrissur. This institution is aimed at giving details on treatment facilities for different diseases. She facilitated around 25,000 heart surgeries. Currently she is working in the tribal hamlets of Agali, constructing toilets and trying to improve the nutrition levels of the tribal inhabitants.



Smt. Uma Preman sharing a lighter moment with tribal people of Agali.
(Mathrubhumi, April 22nd 2015)

4. *Smt. Daya Bhai*

Daya Bai was born in Pala, near Kottayam. Her name was Mercy Mathew. Mercy joined convent at the age of 16 thinking that being a missionary would help her to work for the poor. But soon she felt that convent life prevented her from doing more for the poor people. So, she left the convent, worked in many places and finally settled in tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh. To identify herself with them, she changed her name to Daya Bhai and started to dress like them. She has a Nursing Degree and an MSW to her credit. Now she concentrates on the soil and water conservation aspects of the tribal lands and sustainable agricultural practices that they should follow to make their living. She also pay attention to the education of the tribal people. She has committed her life to the holistic upliftment of tribal communities.





Exercise

Based on the narrative and video clippings on these successful women in their respective fields, write down the barriers they might have overcome to be successful and how did they achieve it? What are the benefits derived by the society through their efforts?

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