

IDIOT TO IDOL

PARADIGM SHIFT IN YOUTH

The Indian Youth in their quest to emulate heroes and idols now seems to have been hit by a storm – 3 Idiots, a new release from Bollywood. In the few weeks that it has run, it has grossed huge revenues to the delight of the producers. The teeming millions of India are crowding the theatres as Aamir Khan and company are laughing their way to the bank. For once, our education system, based on mediocrity seems to have been challenged by idiocracy. Truly as the famous Urdu poet Ghalib has said over 160 years ago,:

*Gadhon ki kya kami hai Ghalib
Ek dhoondo hazaar milenge*

(There is no shortage of idiots here. If you seek for one you'll find thousands.)

Now as the storm in the tea cups and coffee shops continue unabated, there seems to be renewed awareness and appreciation of letting the youth follow the call of their heart in pursuing careers, rather than choices thrust on them by their parents or outside influences leading to frustration. Viewed against the backdrop of a spate of suicides by youth, the joy of achieving success beyond the iron frame of the education system, leads to a rise of new hopes among the disoriented and directionless mass of students. Welcome to the world where we are hoping that Idiots would succeed!

But the questions engaging the minds of millions of students and their dotting parents still remain unanswered. As children struggle to cope up with the problems of confused teens and adolescents,

"taking the call of the heart" appears to be a difficult proposition for the parents. The age old practice of the sons and daughters following the footsteps of their parents in choosing their careers seems to have collapsed under its own weight. And what would happen to those who come from rural or tribal background as they have no lighthouses to guide their path. There is also a possibility of such youth ending up as losers at both the ends.

Therefore while we must complement Aamir Khan and his Idiots for producing a pleasurable film, we should not read too much in the message of the screen. In the formative years the students need a simple matrix for success, which should be easy to understand and emulate and should be delivered as a part of their learning. These should also be so simple that right from the urban higher and middle class youth to the rural and under-privileged students, everyone should be able to develop and absorb these competencies without any difficulty.

I believe that these seven "P's" listed below should form the foundation of a sustainable platform for the youth to excel in careers beyond the rigid education system. These are listed below in order of priority for the benefit of the students for their success in life:

■ **Plan to Prioritise:** Learn to prioritise the things you have to do. List everything everyday that you have to do, with the most important tasks at the top of the list, and the least important tasks at the bottom, and check it in the evening you are able to achieve this or else prioritise them the next day and the next day till success is achieved.

■ **Perform to Excel:** Everyone in every sphere of his life should work hard to excel in that field. If it is academics he should keep the performance at the highest possible level and excel in sports, arts and cultural programs. Once the student develops a passion for excellence, it will become habit.

■ **Positivity for Success:** There is no doubt that

success is hard to come by and every obstacle can form a reason to doubt oneself or even give up. But as is said try, try till you succeed because even through challenges one learns, as is said "the stumbling blocks a person meets, that make his going rough, can turn themselves to stepping stones, if he steps high enough."

■ **Patience and Perfection:** As it is easy to get disheartened by failure, it is equally simple to let minor victories go to one's head. This in fact stops a person from growing. It is important to therefore to realize that one has only to compete with oneself and what can be done can be done better; so one should strive for nothing less than perfection in what one does, which requires a lot of patience as continuous growth and perfection are hard task masters.

■ **Perseverance:** As the Gita says 'performance of duty is in one's hands, its fruits aren't. Keeping this in mind one should set high goals for oneself and strive with determination and effort to make them a reality. This task is bound not to be simple. But the thought that should drive one on is that after all nothing is impossible.

■ **Peer Networking:** Friends can be the greatest strength of support in difficult times. Friend well chosen would be able to frankly praise you and criticize you without fear or favour and so it is important to choose them wisely; if not they can serve as sources of pressure and misleading and therefore remain peers without really being friends. The attempt should be therefore to discard peers and retain only the friends even if they are few and far between.

■ **Power of Prayer:** Nothing is really possible without faith. Till one believes that something can happen it won't. And great changes require great support. It is thus important to believe in the power of prayer, a request for support, that is bound to prove to be the source of one's strength at a time when the pressures that one feels casts a dark shadow of doubt.

This simple formula can easily be adopted by the Indian youth – urban and rural – so that they lead successful professional lives as our former president Abdul Kalam exhorts the youth to excel we join in tempering the message of the film with self-introspection and adoption of the 7 P's for success to bring a smile to the face of the millions seeking their Idols instead of Idiots for a change.

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