

Creating Inspiration for Your Vision@

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The greatness of Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam is that he was a unique inspirer till his last breath. He had nurtured the vision of seeing a developed India in every respect. For achieving this vision, he counted more on the younger generation. And he used every opportunity to inspire the young India.

An important aspect of creating inspiration is sharing the vision. By sharing the vision and involving your team to build the action plan you inspire each member of the team. As young students when you grow up and take a career you have to remember that for your vision to be successful you need a team behind you. Your team must fully share the vision and involve in action plan and in action to achieve success.

I will tell you a story which you might have heard in a different form. There was a maidan through which a person was walking. He found a number of people cutting stones. He asked a group of them what they were doing. They looked at him and said, "Don't you have eyes, can you not see what we are doing? We are cutting stones and we are very tired and you are asking, what we are

doing?" They were a little annoyed with him. He moved on and went to another group and asked them what they were doing. They were also stone cutters and they said, "We are employees, and we are cutting stones and shaping as told. We have to do this job for which we get wages and sometimes the wage is not good enough and we fight for it". Then he went to a third group and asked what they were doing. They smiled and said: "We are building a beautiful temple". They brought a picture of a beautiful temple and said we are all part of this. They said they were cutting stones now to make the base, and then they would cut stones for making pillars, statues, etc. "Please come here after two years and you will find this beautiful temple here". They were all inspired and charged. They never spoke about their wages or fatigue. They had a vision on building the temple. They shared the vision of the architect and promoter of the project and so they were motivated. This is why we should share our vision and make the team feel that they are all part of the vision. Then it inspires people.

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Another important point to inspire the team and accomplish the mission for a leader is to accept everybody's competence and capability. God has given 24 hrs in a day for every one without any partiality.

But some of us are more intelligent, some of us stronger. In the society, in your team, there are different grades of intelligence, different grades of smartness and different grades of physical strength. We have to use all these abilities by not highlighting their weakness and criticizing but by encouraging them.

In Ramayana there is a story about building a big bridge across the ocean to cross over to Sri Lanka. The great army of monkeys were collecting boulders and putting them into the sea to build the bridge. There were a number of squirrels around; they were also trying to help by going to the beach, wetting themselves and then rolling on the beach sand and then they go back and shed the sand from themselves to help build the bridge. Monkeys made fun of them saying, "Do you think you can make a bridge like this?" On hearing the monkeys, Sri Rama told them, "The squirrels were contributing by doing what they can, so we got to encourage them". That is the story.

Everybody has to do their part. Matha Amritanandamayi, in one of her speeches said, "if any part of the water in a mighty river feels lazy and decides to go slow then the river will slow down and if they stop, the river will stop flowing. So every drop in the river counts. Thus, each one of us, however small even if it is a drop, every drop has to function. If every drop in the torrential rain does not function, the torrential rain will not

be there. So this is the power of every drop of us, so every member of the team counts."

Before I became Chairman of HAL, I was General Manager and I remember this incident vividly and I recorded it in my book called "Flight 99 – HAL – Story of transformation of HAL". Air Marshal Katre (who later became the Chief of Air Force) got posted as Chairman of HAL and one of our Senior General Managers was taking him around explaining things to him. During the course, the Sr. General Manager explained that "there are different kinds of workmen in HAL – skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workmen". When asked what type of work these men do, the Air Marshal was told that people working on sophisticated machines come under skilled workmen; people helping these skilled workmen come under semi-skilled workmen and the rest of the workers like gardeners, maali, cooks etc come under unskilled workmen. On hearing this, Air Marshal Katre said, "How can there be a good garden without a skilled gardener? Do you think you can have good food without a skilled cook? Everybody should be skilled in their profession. No employee should be semi-skilled or unskilled, everyone should be skilled. Your HR manual should be re-written".

That is the way; we have to consider everyone skilled and important. There has to be dignity of labour for whatever may be the work one does. The organization should inspire and train each employee to be skilled in their respective jobs and ignite them with the dignity of labour for organizational excellence. This is one of the lessons I remembered, and implemented in HAL. I would like everyone

here to remember this. You must empower, inspire and enable your team members, whatever their background is and whatever might be their capabilities. Through this you inspire and empower them for realization of the vision and missions.

Abdul Kalam has talked about failure. "How to deal with failure? In our mission there will be failures; everything cannot be smooth but we should have the dignity and humility to accept failure, to learn from failure and march on to success. Don't just be sad and depressed and pray to God, "please help me next time". There is a slogan which says, "Forget God and work hard". When you work hard with all your heart, the divine power will join you and help you to reach your goal. Dr Kalam in his autobiography "The Wings of Fire", narrates an example of failure. He was the team leader in charge of the SLV project, the first Satellite Launch Vehicle. It was about to be launched. Prof. Satish Dhawan was his boss. Lots of media people were there anxiously waiting to see the launch so that they can publish the news. For them success was not an issue, it was only the news that mattered. Finally the launch turned out to be a failure. After takeoff it did not go further, instead it splashed into the sea. Abdul Kalam was very sad, did not know how to face the media. Then Prof Dhawan came forward and asked Kalam not to worry because failure is part of Research and Development. Failure is a stepping stone to success. We must learn from that and improve the design and try again. Dhawan went on to face the media and told them what happened. Then Abdul Kalam and team went on to design the modified SLV and launched it successfully. ISRO went on from there to

launch ASLV, in later years PSLV and GSLV. Failure should not stop us, it should prompt us to work further and achieve success. What about success. Successes should be celebrated. Don't feel bad about celebrations. Celebrate success. That is a way of inspiring the team, inspiring the vision. When success is celebrated with humility, it empowers and inspires. But vanity is not good and do not make false claims of success.

Love for Nature is another important thing. How is it connected to the vision for India or for a developed world? There are two things. Nature is created by God and Nature with all its abundance is created for us and we can enjoy that without exploiting it. That is sustainable development. We should care for the Nature. While we use Nature we should also nurture, sustain and develop it. Let us be friends of Nature. When you are friends of Nature you can enjoy and learn from Nature.

We talk about pollution in Bangalore, how polluted is the world etc. Trees can help us. Trees are carbon sinks All the carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide which we release into the air are absorbed by the trees, converted into sugar, flower, fruits and fuel. We are cutting down millions of trees each year for our own use. Instead we should plant more trees. In our Vedas it is written that no man is worth his life if he does not plant at least 14 trees. They have even named the trees. We can and should plant at least one tree each year of our life and then we contribute to Nature. Polluted air will disappear and more oxygen will be generated. When we observe nature, we see the creativity in Nature. Ideas and inventions arise out of our observations. Nature mimicry is one of the important aspects of modern science.

Here is a great example. Dragon fly which we see during the rainy season can move forward, backward, sideways, can stand still and then move. After seeing this, engineers studied it and came out with the Helicopter idea. Dragon fly uses jet through its tail and wings. That's how the first helicopter was invented - by imitating nature.

Going back to history, in the field of aeronautics, people dreamt of flying by seeing the birds fly. Maharishi Bharadwaj, about 3000 years before, wrote a book with sketches of aircraft and even spacecraft. It is in Sanskrit and is translated into English which is available. It's not that they made aircraft those days but it's his imagination, foresights, visions. Much later Michael Angelo made similar such sketches which are more known to the people. Finally it is the Wright Brothers who made the aircraft and flew it in 1903. It was the man's dream seeing nature, to fly like birds; developing machines to fly, that resulted in the modern aircraft.

It's another story about a great Indian not far from Bangalore Mr. Venkata Subba Shetty. He was born a few years later than Wright Brothers. Wright Brothers, designed, built and flew the aircraft in the year 1903. Subba Shetty studied about it. He was a young mechanical engineer by that time and wanted to build an aircraft which was his vision. He felt that if they have designed and built an aircraft why can't I learn and build an aircraft of my own. There was nobody to support him in India and so he went to England and joined a new company called A V Roe [Avro].

Seeing his determination, A V Roe & Co. gave him a chance. He designed and developed

an aircraft in 1912. An Indian going all the way to London with a vision of developing one aircraft! There he designed and developed one but was asked to fly himself because they were not sure of how successful it would turn out to be. Then he learnt to fly, took the pilot license. Look at the vision and mission of this single individual! Of course he got support of others and they helped him because they knew that he was determined. He flew himself and rightly as others thought, he crashed but he did not damage himself. He said he knew what went wrong and so he wanted to improve it and A V Roe allowed him. He redesigned, built it and flew it which became successful. He was honoured with The Queen of England's specially minted gold coin for his success. He came back to India with a vision of building an aircraft but unfortunately then British Indian Govt. was not ready; neither was India ready to support. So he continued to work as a Professor. That was his story.

Later in 1940 it was Hirachand Walchand who fulfilled the vision with the support of the Mysore Maharaja building the first aircraft factory in Bangalore in December 1940

There are so many visions and missions which Kalam has himself talked about. Kalam has talked a lot about positive thinking in his first book and in his successive books and the book which he wrote when he was President of India.

When challenged by adversity we must be positive. Problems should be seen as opportunities - opportunities for positive action, new invention and new process and development. When there was continuous power shortage somebody said lets develop

a new UPS system and market it. That's an opportunity. So UPS business came because of frequent electric shortage. Here is another real time story. Two management students were sent to an island and asked to market chappals there. One came back and said there is no market there because there were no footwear users there. The other person came back saying that it's a fantastic market, nobody wears footwear there. Observation was the same but interpretation was different. It is just like seeing half filled glass of water and saying it is half empty (negative observation) or half full (positive observation). So let us be positive in our thinking. With positive thinking let us create visions and missions which will inspire all.

In one of Dr Kalam's interaction with school children one of the kids asked him when he can live in a developed India. Kalam has authored jointly with Mr Y S Rajan on a 'developed India' – "India 2020 – A Vision for the Millennium". We have done Moon and MARS missions successfully, we have our own satellites, circling around the MARS. The mobile telephone that we use and the multitude of TV Channels we can watch are because of the satellites in the orbit. We use satellites for tele-education, tele medical care, survey of water and mineral resources, agriculture, forests, satellite based navigation and guidance for air, ground and sea traffic through GPS and so on. We are even using our satellites for other countries. So, when we can do all this why can't we be a developed country. Why can't India develop fast? Poverty is the biggest enemy and why India is not able to eradicate poverty? The answer is in each one of us. What is missing? Technology can help us, knowledge can help us but they are two

edged weapons which can be used to destroy as well as construct. So it depends on the ethical human mind and our responsible behavior and actions. So we have to develop an ethical human mind which is very important. You may have many procedures, many technologies and many management techniques and procedures and systems for governance, Government and non-Government organisations. Our use of these and our actions must be guided by our moral values and ethical responsibility. Unless basically we can recreate or we kindle and develop ethical values embedded in us like embedded software, we cannot achieve true success. Every one of us possess divinity in us, righteousness in us, but we slowly forget these when we grow up, it is concealed beneath such that it is not used. As a result corruption, selfishness, laziness, lies and such negative traits are rampant in our Society and in Private and Public governance and in Institutions and even in our homes. We have to create righteousness, ethical behavior in every field we are in. But what is happening? A child is playing in the foreground and when someone has come to the house to visit her father who is inside, she informs her father. Her father peeps through the window and finds that the person whom he owes money has come to collect it. So he tells his daughter to tell the visitor that dad is not in the house. Now we are teaching the child to tell a lie. That's not what we should do, we should face the situation, meet the visitor and say sorry, I don't have the money now and give it later as soon as it is ready.

Dr Kalam told students that "you should develop righteousness in your heart, help all your friends, brothers and sisters, parents to have righteousness in your family.

“When there is righteousness in the heart,
there is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character
there is harmony in the house,
when there is harmony in the house,
there is order in the society
when there is order in the society,
then there is order in the nation,
there is peace in the nation
there is wealth and development in the
nation”.

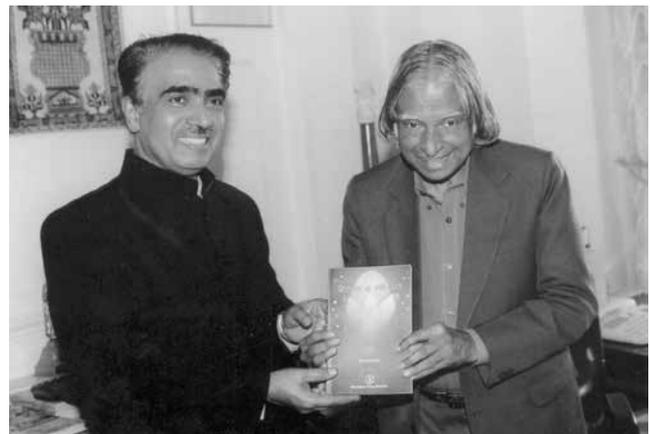
This poem he has written in one of his books. We can't create a developed India only by technology but also by developing a righteous mind.

Dr Kalam has told us, so has Swami Vivekananda that we are spiritual beings. We are spiritual beings taken a form for doing our Dharma. Each one of us may have different Dharmas' which we have to find out. It may be, to be a teacher to develop more responsible citizens or it may be to create an institution or it may be to build a big industry, develop employment and create wealth and welfare or it may be to become a national leader and

help the country. We have to find out what are the qualities or the strengths in us which God has given. First we have to discover our capabilities and in accordance we have to develop the role and play that role. Then all the divine forces will be with us to accomplish that mission. There may be failures here and there but like a river going around a hill, you have to go around when you face obstacles and move forward to your mission. The mission itself is the greatest inspirer of the vision.

“Work is worship’ so said Swami Vivekananda. When each one of us consider our work, not as a monotonous hardship to earn a living, but as worship, an opportunity to serve in addition to earning a living work will become interesting and energise us to succeed.

With that I conclude and appeal to each one of you to read some of Dr Kalam's books and live life upholding high moral values and be an example for yourself and others. And let us all work together to build a developed India, a peaceful India and peaceful world. Jaihind !!!



*Photo left Dr. C.G. Krishnadas Nair receiving Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam at the HAL Airport on one occasion;
Photo right Dr. Abdul Kalam receiving Dr. Krishnadas Nair's book "Growing up with Gods" (File Photos)*