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CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF

Managing disappointments

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Expectation can sometimes turn into a flight of fancy. How can you transform it into something attainable?

When expectations are unmet, they lead to disappointments. When I conduct training programmes, I often ask participants what is life's greatest gift? Many respond that it is hope. How true! It is because we have hope that we go about our day with cheer. Divorced of hope, life would be painful.

When we hope, we begin to expect. Sometimes, these expectations have no basis. For instance, wanting to be recognised as someone other than who we are.

What causes such a flight of fancy? My surmise is that such thoughts invade us because we think we have what it takes to be the person we desire to be. The consequence of such a desire begins, sadly, from a position that what we are is perhaps not good enough. What we don't realise is that, in aspiring to be who we are not, we forget what we have.

I'm not saying it is incorrect to want to emulate. However, this want must emanate from recognition of our uniqueness and gifts, not from the poverty of what we don't have. I'm not talking about wanting to emulate role models, but about expectations and the consequent disappointment that comes from wrongly-focussed intent.

To want to follow the footsteps of a role model encourages you to want to excel, but following another's footsteps must come from the realisation that you are fundamentally good and competent and because you have it in you. Then, you program myself to succeed. However, when your avowed belief is one of inadequacy, you falter and suffer disappointment.

Disappointment is not the preserve of a few. Most suffer it at some point of time. However, it is important to combat such a feeling immediately. When left to fester, it results in regret, resentment and, perhaps, frustration. The way forward is to learn to cultivate the habit of cherishing what one has. In doing so, we will first equip ourselves with the required arsenal to counter the feelings of paucity and poverty. So, discover the abundance you have. When expectations arise from wanting the best for yourself and others, there is a feeling of plenty. The seeking comes because you know that the catalogue that you are asking from is perennial.

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