

KHAYAALON KA SHAHER

(The City of Thoughts)

ISSUE 5 | AUGUST 2021

Featuring teen
entrepreneur
Armita Hosseini

and social
entrepreneur
Bhagya Shree
Ram!

**PLUS
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DREAMS,
THOUGHTS AND
AMBITIONS!**

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INTERVIEWING

ARMITA

KKS recently had the opportunity of interviewing the incredibly talented and inspirational Armita Hosseini, who is a student entrepreneur. Her initiative, EmpowerEcon, focuses on financial literacy for teenagers, and she was even featured on Forbes!

We'll just begin with you introducing yourself.

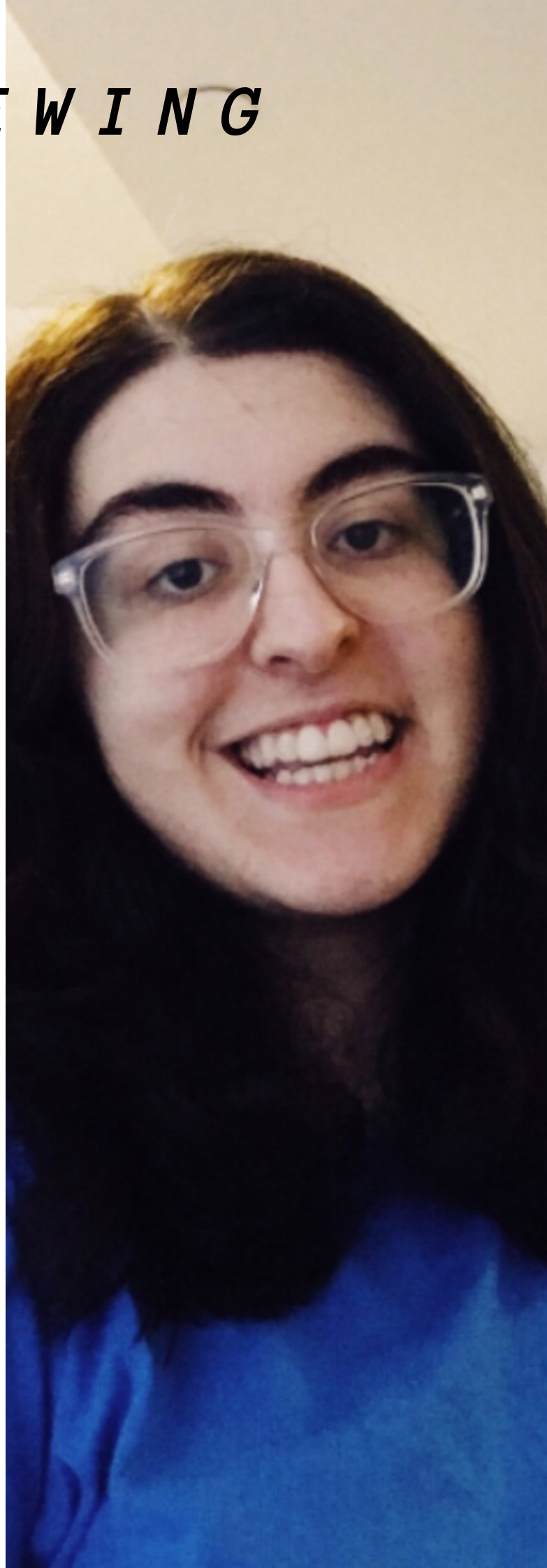
My name is Armita, and I'm currently a rising senior in high school from Toronto, Canada. I'm really interested in economics, finance and advocacy. I'm a financial and economic education advocate, so I do a lot of work related to that.

What are some of the things you like to do?

One of the first things I did is that last year, I wrote and published a book, 'Roadmap to Financial Literacy - An introduction to personal finance for teenagers', which is a relatively short book about personal finance concepts. After that, I started EmpowerEcon, which holds virtual financial and economic education camps for teens.

That's amazing! So for the book, how did you manage to take out time as a full-time student to write it and what kind of research did it entail?

I started to write the book when quarantine hit, so I had all this free time on my hands, because school was now online, and a lot of my curriculum was cut down. I really wanted to do something during that time, and that's kinda when I started to write the book, and I spent a lot of time during the summer working on it, so I think that's how I managed that.



As for the research, I learnt about finance on my own beforehand, so I did have that background knowledge, but then afterwards, during the writing process, I reached out to people to proofread the content, and tell me if I should have changed anything or added anything, so that was something that I did. I also just read a lot of articles online and consulted different sources to make sure that everything was the same across the board.

That sounds like a lot of work, and I see that you've made good, productive use of your quarantine time! What does a day in your life as a student entrepreneur look like?

I think that this can vary depending on the time in my life. Right now, during this past month, I've been doing the entrepreneurship program LaunchEx, which is a month-long program where people can start startups. I'm waking up at 6, 7 or 8 A.M. every day because that's when my classes start, so that's how I begin my day, and then in between, there are many different classes and then a lot of free time, so in that free time, I have meetings with other people, like how I'm having this meeting now, or I just do something in between, like work on my EmpowerEcon work that I have to do. So the classes take up the biggest chunk of my day, and then in between, I put other meetings, or smaller tasks that I need to get done, and then in the evening, I just work on some bigger projects that may take a longer time

Is there any productivity tool that you use, or any specific time management strategy?

I rely on my calendar to know what I am doing in a day and I like to use Apple Calendar. I have no idea about what I am going to be doing every day until I wake up and look at the calendar to get an idea of the meetings I have for the day. I also use a planner by Brendon Burchard (a high performance coach) to plan out my day. It has a lot of prompts that I answer every morning,

and that's how I begin most of my mornings.

What is one phrase that you strongly believe in, and that keeps you going?

I think there are a lot of phrases that I believe in. One of the biggest ones, and this is something that my Chemistry teacher told us to write down on the first day of 8th grade, is that 'You must make the choice to take a chance, if you want anything in life to change. This is something that I live by, because if I'm afraid to take action, then I just tell myself that if I don't, everything's going to stay the same and I'm not happy with that. So even if it's scary or it doesn't work out, I still want to take that chance. It's definitely gotten me very far.

Where do you see EmpowerEcon in a year's time?

With the pandemic coming to an end, we want to hold more in-person events since the organisation was founded during the pandemic and everything has been fully online. So creating more of those would be an exciting thing to do. Another thing I want to do is create more educational resources. That's something we've been currently working on as an organization and are creating a resource that we'll be releasing in the upcoming months and I want to take that and turn it into a program where every few months, we release a brand new resource that comes with practice questions and information that people can refer to. I think branching out of just events to provide more educational curriculum and resources that people can use year round, beyond just the events that we hold every once in a while.

How many team members do you have?

Currently, we have about 25 core team members, who come from a lot of different countries and regions. Then for all of our events, we get many ambassadors to promote the events. We have 70 or 80 ambassadors as of now.

How do you manage everything and organise everybody, because that's a huge team!

For the ambassadors, we have our marketing director manage and take care of that section of our work. I have different directors for different departments so I communicate and I am more involved in the micro, everyday aspects of the organization. I don't just communicate with the directors but with every single individual because I think that is effective. Having those directors who can take a more specialised approach into one area and to be able to rely on them and message them is very helpful.

I think I am quite involved in basically every aspect of the organization but it's not only me, it's the directors as well as the team members.

What are some of the societal issues you empathise with and would like to work on?

There are a lot of things that I'm interested in working on, it's not just one thing. In high school, it's really been education, and specifically financial and economic education, which is something that I feel like a lot of people don't talk about. A lot of the content out there is not catered towards teenagers, so that's definitely one thing. Another is activism and human rights, because I feel like that's another issue that's really important, not just in our own countries, but across the world.

What is one thing that you truly cherish about economics and finance?

I think that I am very interested in how it talks about the world and a lot of the events that happen in it.

When you understand economics, you can understand things better. Recently, with the pandemic we see how there are cycles of contraction or recessions in the economy and having that knowledge and being able to understand that it is healthy for this to happen in the economy every once in a while because if the economy was going up and booming the inflation rates would be extremely high. So having this understanding helps me better understand the everyday world. Another thing is that a lot of the concepts of economics are applied to daily life, for example the concept of opportunity cost or cost benefit analysis are things that I think about when I want to make a decision. I think it has given me a new way to look at my everyday decisions and that's what I really enjoy.

What are some of the challenges you faced as founder, and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge that I initially faced was just starting and managing the organization because before that I had never had a leadership position but this was something that I really wanted to do. So, I wanted to learn how to be an effective leader and not just tell people, "You need to do this." Instead, I wanted to create a positive working environment since a lot of people come into the organization wanting to improve in a certain area.

So I wanted to create that environment for them to be able to do that. I am really interested in personal development so I always listen to podcasts on that and leadership, which has been very





helpful as well as I was reaching out to a lot of student founders at the beginning and asking them a lot of questions because I wanted to understand how they worked. I think that one of the most important principles I have when I am approaching anything is that, “it doesn’t matter how well I know or don’t know now, but it’s about how willing I am to learn” Because I really wanted to do this so I was very willing to go out there and learn about the things I was not good at so that helped me improve the long way so I think that was probably the biggest thing.

How do you manage your time?

This is something that we’re always trying to figure out. I wouldn’t say I’m perfect at it, there are definitely times when I am less productive or more productive, but I think that the biggest thing is just knowing what I’m going to be doing in a day. Creating a list of things that I need to get done and then putting it into my calendar definitely helps, because thinking abstractly that ‘Okay, I want

to get this done today’ without putting it into your calendar or writing it down makes that task much less likely to get done. I’ve experienced that before, so just waking up in the morning and having a clear idea of what I’m supposed to do is important. I feel like sometimes we end up wasting a lot of time because we’re not clear about what tasks we want to do, so when I break it down and put it into my calendar, I have much more clarity.

What do you intend to do after school?

I am going in two different directions, not very certain at the moment. So in terms of career I want to either pursue a career as an entrepreneur or as a politician. In terms of what I want to study, I am looking to study a combination of economics and political science. So, maybe double majoring in the two, creating a major, or finding something at the intersection of the two.

Any book recommendations you have related to economics?

There is a book I'm reading currently by Alvin E. Roth, who is a professor at Stanford, and it's amazing. It's called, 'Who gets What and Why?', and it's basically about market structures, so in the real world, if you go into a market, there's a buyer and a seller and there's a price that determines who gets what. So there's a price, and if it's good for the buyer, they're able to purchase it and the seller is able to give it. But there are a lot of markets in our everyday life, where price is not what determines who gets what. There are however, buyers and sellers on two ends, which is when you're applying for a job, or applying to college. There's someone who has the position and someone who is applying for the position, so learning about how to make better matches with everyday people that you meet - with friendships, with jobs. It uses that analogy of markets to describe everyday life, so I think that people get to learn about market structures, and also learn valuable skills, so I love that book.

What was the propeller for EmpowerEcon? Why did you start it?

I was not initially planning on starting an organization because I was only going to do one project in finance, but after I published that book I was still interested in continuing to do initiatives related to finance and economics. I did Kode with Klossy which is a two week computer science program in the summer, and I really enjoyed that experience because they brought together people from across the country and across the world, and they were so excited about learning a new subject for the very first time and they created this really amazing community. I remember thinking to myself during the program that I want to have this kind of impact. So that was when I was thinking that I want to do something like this, but I didn't know that it was gonna end up being so soon.

When I suddenly had this idea to create a camp teaching about economics and finance, I messaged a lot of people who already knew me for my book or who had expressed interest in what I was doing related to financial education. I asked them if they were interested, and they were! So we created this organization and since then we've been able to reach a lot of people and it's been a really awesome journey!

How has the response for your book and for EmpowerEcon been?

I think that it's been amazing! It exceeded my expectations in every way, because when I first started my book, it was like an independent project that I was doing, I barely told anyone about it and then suddenly one day, I announced the book. So everyone was really shocked, and the response I received was definitely really great and people have been so supportive and encouraging. I think that whenever you accomplish something, it's not just yourself, but it's because of everyone who supports you and helps you reach that point. So for me, it's been the support of teachers and friends and family members, and just people who participate in EmpowerEcon's events, and seeing that what we're doing is actually having an impact and people are enjoying it and it's being recognised has definitely been really amazing. I think it's really the support of everyone who's helped me get here.

When did you feel like you needed to write about financial literacy?

I initially didn't decide to write a book specific to finance, but writing a book is something I have wanted to do for a long time because I enjoy writing a lot and want to maybe publish another one in a year from now. I really wanted to write about any topic and I was going around what I could write about and I was having a conversation with someone about finance and they were talking about how hard it is to learn these financial systems and how difficult it was for them.

So that's when I realized that this is a great topic to write about, because other topics like math, english, biology, and chemistry are already taught in school, but finance and economics are subjects that a lot of people don't learn in their own high schools, even though it's something that everyone needs to know. Not everyone's going to want to know biology or chemistry, but finance is something that's going to apply to everyone. So I felt like it could make a unique contribution that maybe another topic couldn't and I already had this background knowledge because I am really interested in it, so I decided to take that knowledge and do something with it.

What topics does the book cover?

It has four main sections. The first section is on credit cards, building credit and why that's important. The second section is on loans, so it covers student loans, as well as mortgages.

The third section is on saving and investing, and it goes over two different investment types, which types of categories should you save in, investment strategies and those kinds of topics.

Finally, it ends with a chapter on budgeting, so it describes why it's important, different budgeting tips...It takes you step by step through the entire process of creating a budget, with an example to let readers know how it all works.

How do you manage to reach out to well-known and esteemed experts and professors of finance to conduct sessions?

It has just been through a lot of cold emailing and some of them I already knew beforehand because I talked with them or had been in a program with them so I just messaged them asking if they wanted to speak at our event. Other ones, I just cold email and if they respond to me that's great,

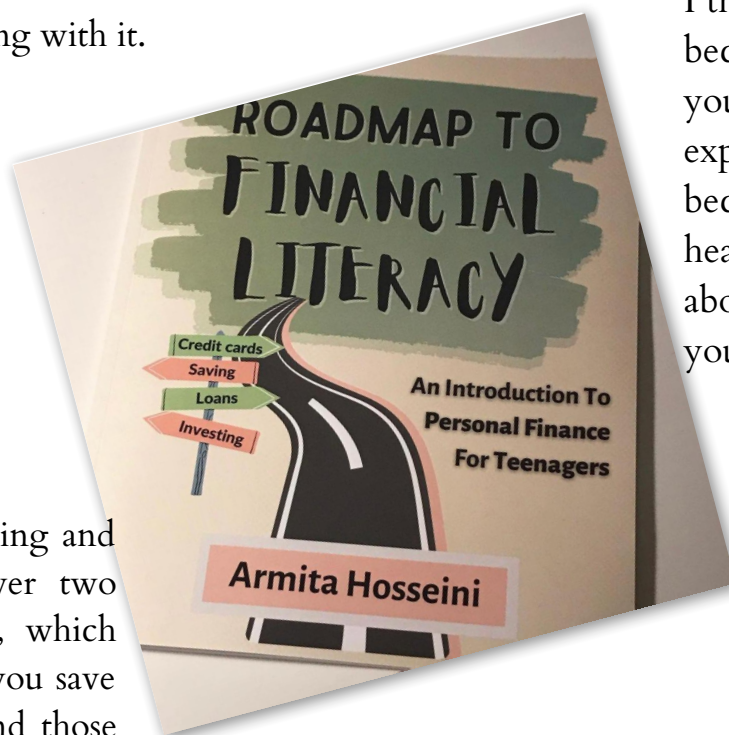
and if they don't then I move on to the next person so it definitely is a process. But I think that it is an important aspect of our events because whenever I read the feedback forms, some of the most memorable parts in the minds of the audience are definitely the guest speakers and being able to hear from them and ask questions adds a unique element to, so that is something I always focus on.

Khayaalon ka Shaher is a Hindavi sentence that translates to "The City of Thoughts". How important do you think it is to express your thoughts on a platform?&s.

I think it's incredibly important because not only does it help you gain clarity when you are expressing your thoughts because when it's all in your head maybe you are unclear about your thoughts, but when you are able to express it, every-thing becomes clearer in your mind. But also when you express your ideas, you are able to find people who can learn from that and be inspired by it, and it can also really impact them.

For me, when I am personally going through a challenge or I have encountered something I always think about how this is going to help me be able to help someone else in a similar situation. So I think that being able to put that out there can help you reach people who feel or think the same way as you do, they may have the same ideas as you do if it's maybe an idea for something that you wanna create. So I think it's definitely very important to express your thoughts because not only does it help you but also other people.

Armita was a delight to interview. Can you believe this interview took only 20 minutes? We're sure every single one of us will benefit from this treasure trove of information that she's uncovered.



Dreams, Thoughts, and Ambitions

Mahatma Gandhi once rightly remarked, “Man is but the product of his thoughts, what he thinks, he becomes”.

So, what are thoughts? Thoughts are an accumulation of the analysis our mind creates of several experiences overtime. Our thoughts impact every tiny thing we do. They are the building blocks of our mannerisms, they shape who we are, even give birth to our dreams, both in the literal as well as metaphorical sense. Our dream is an idea, a goal, a mindset that we would like to achieve in our lives, birthed by a series of similar thoughts that we are fond of.

However, we must remember, while dreaming and believing holds immense power, acting upon our dreams holds a greater one. As our faith in ourselves and our dreams keeps increasing, our passion and determination to achieve that dream does too. And finally, when a strong willpower and courage align in a true sense, we are ready to work as hard as we have to in order to achieve that dream, this is when our dreams turn into ambition. The important thing to remember is that each stage of this evolution is just as important as another in order to attain the final aim. Starting from the initial stage of our thoughts, we must understand that our mind will always have positive as well as negative thoughts.





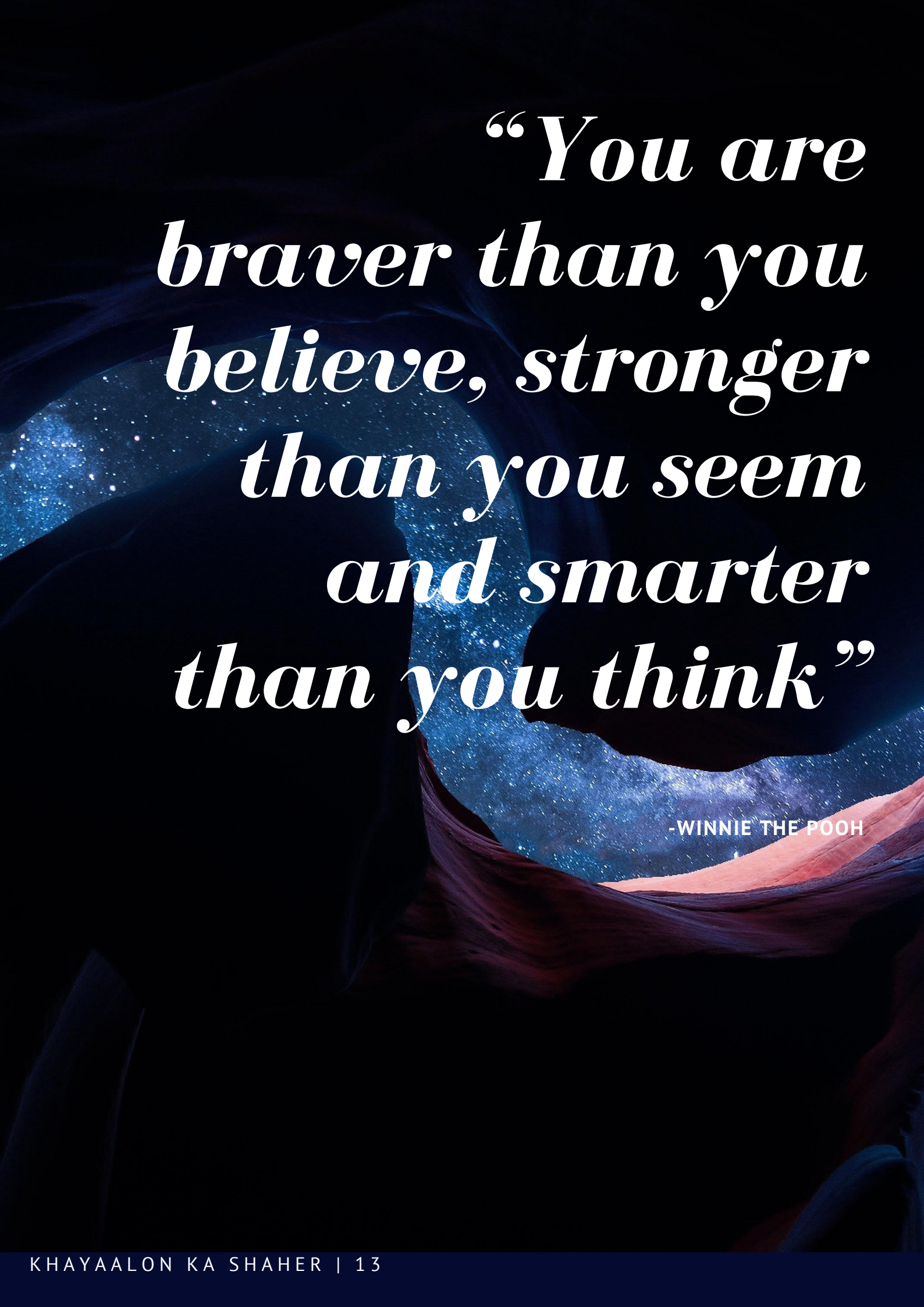
Not only is this due to basic human nature, but also because it is important to maintain a balance. So, we must do what we can on our part, that is to use the negative thoughts to our advantage. While often, they reflect our insecurities and fears we have, these very factors can also help us feel reassured if we try. If something tells us that we are not capable of achieving our goal, the best way to go about it, is to counter it, with a reason. Why is it that we feel we cannot, is it simply because of human tendency to overthink or does an actual problem lie therein? If it is the former, then we have no problem but, if it is the latter, we must work upon pointing out the exact problem now in order to solve it.. The first step to solving a problem is being able to figure out what it is, and thereafter, to every problem, there is a solution. Often we get stuck in this mesh of negative thoughts, but our problems are not synonyms of our capabilities . How we solve them is. Thus, our delivery of thoughts must always be clear, and proper communication with our internal dialogue plays a huge role in this. Secondly, we must work on our dreams. Dreams turn into ambitions only if we make them do so. Next, ambitions require dedication. So, if you notice, all along the way, it is you that is playing the greatest role of all. And unleashing our full potential is always the best we can do. It is what truly matters..



Therefore, gradually, if we try to instill certain values and principles in our mind that help us improve our strategies of analysing our thoughts, we will notice that change will come about. The change that we think of, speak of and most importantly, work for, will show. Expression of thought in the correct sense, has the power to make the world a better place. If the delivery and aim of our thoughts remains with pure intentions, we have the power to change the world through who we become.

Dreams and ambitions are not concepts that are meant to frighten us. Afterall, we create them for ourselves and when we do, we have a spark within us that makes us want to ignite a fire with it. We must not let go of this spark, the power of belief with hard work goes a long way. So remember, beauty forever lies in the eyes of the beholder, while it might not always be possible to convert the situation into the most favourable, best possible one out there, it is always possible to make the best out of what we do have at hand.

**BY JAYARTH
PRAKASH
COLUMNIST, KKS**

A person wearing a red cape is shown from the chest up, looking upwards towards a dark blue night sky filled with stars. The person's face is partially visible in profile, looking up. The cape is a vibrant red color. The background is a deep blue sky with many small, bright stars.

*“You are
braver than you
believe, stronger
than you seem
and smarter
than you think”*

-WINNIE THE POOH



TRULY BELIEVE IN THE CAUSE
YOU'RE ADVOCATING FOR, AND
BE DETERMINED TO MAKE IT

Work!

VIDYA VRIDDHI

1500+

THE GIRL WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE

What began as a small Saturday morning activity in my house rapidly materialized into a mega-scale project, involving 2 national non-profits, 60+ volunteers, and 1500+ beneficiaries!

Bhagya Shree Ram is a high school senior from Chennai, India. She is really interested in entrepreneurship and the use of technology to equalise access to education, and she aspires to one day create a company that combines the two! She also enjoys dabbling in journalism and is interested in cultural heritage.



THE IDEA

How did you come up with the idea of taking this issue as the basis of the project ?

When we were in 10th grade, my twin and I tutored 8 financially disadvantaged students in Math, Science, and English. They were the children of domestic help who lived in our neighbourhood, and most of them were first-generation school goers. In a span of mere months, we were amazed by the substantial improvement in not only their grades but also their confidence!

However, I was appalled that these students' academic performances depended on their socioeconomic status. I researched this further, and discovered some unnerving facts; In rural India, 48% of the students under the age of 10 cannot perform simple math operations like addition or subtraction. 68% of the students under the age of 16 end up dropping out of school because they lack the necessary academic support to continue.

I found tutoring these students to be absolutely gratifying, and I wanted to involve more volunteers so we could collectively have a greater impact. However, the pandemic limited my mobility. That's when the idea for Vidya Vriddhi was brought into being. We make math and English worksheets in our effort to equalize access to supplementary academic materials. These worksheets not only help children grasp the concepts more easily, but also master and strengthen their foundation in fundamental areas.

What began as a small Saturday morning activity in my house rapidly materialized into a mega-scale project, involving national non-profits, 60+ volunteers, and 1500+ beneficiaries!



How do you maintain a work-life balance?

It used to be pretty challenging in the beginning, especially when Vidya Vriddhi just began picking up momentum. There were days that I'd skip out on doing my school homework because I was too busy scheduling meetings with my team or drafting emails to send out to our partners! But through experimenting with different schedules, I figured out one that worked best for me and stuck to it. I'm definitely an early morning person, so I prefer studying earlier in the day. This gives me sufficient time during the week to work on Vidya Vriddhi!

Work-Life Balance



What does it feel like to be dedicated towards a social cause as a teenager?

It feels absolutely amazing! I'm a strong believer in the power of youth. As we've seen with the Fridays For Future, Team ENOUGH, Rotary Youth and so many other movements, when we youth put our minds to something, we can really shake up the world!

Young changemakers can really bring a fresh perspective to the table on how to tackle various problems. Many teens have strong opinions on societal issues, but often aren't given a platform to voice those opinions and take real action. Playing an active role in understanding and working to address social concerns is a pretty awesome way to spend time as a teenager!

“Set your eyes on a distant star, although it may seem ever so far. Step by step, day by day, you can go all the way.”

- Anonymous

What is a phrase that you strongly believe in and which keeps you going?

This is a bedtime quote my mother used to recite to my twin and I when we were younger. I found it a pretty profound statement then, but didn't completely understand it. I realized its relevance soon after founding Vidya Vriddhi, and have since been hooked to this mantra!

What advice do you have for students who are interested in starting similar initiatives?

To absolutely go for it. Vidya Vriddhi is an initiative that began as just a passion project at my house. We now have volunteers from all over South India!

Self-starting an organization or any initiative for that matter, as a high schooler, is extremely rewarding. You develop this invaluable skill set, because you learn to effectively communicate, persuade, write, network, lead and delegate. You can think of starting an organization as your own customized personal development course!

It's important to pick a cause that's important to you. It should be something that you can resonate with on a personal level. That's what's going to keep you motivated; that's what's going to keep you going. Have a goal and work towards it. If you don't have a vision, you're just drifting in different directions doing random things and you're not getting anywhere. Truly believe in the cause you're advocating for, and be determined to make it work!

What according to you was the biggest difficulty you faced while running Vidya Vriddhi?

My age was definitely the biggest barrier. I feel like people often underestimate the magnitude of the impact young people can make. To grow Vidya Vriddhi's outreach, I really wanted to partner with a national nonprofit organization that could connect us to more deserving, low-income students.

Everyone thought I was insane. A teenager led organization that didn't even have a website yet wishing to partner with a nationally recognized NGO? I decided to shoot my shot. I spent days making calls to get in touch with a decision maker from the NGO, who patiently listened to my (probably over enthusiastic) pitch. A few days later, I got a call from his team! Vidya Vriddhi has since officially been integrated under their flagship project.

Word to the wise: *It's very important to be respectful of your partner organizations. You've got to listen to their suggestions and take their criticisms in your stride to make your organization accomplish the most it can. Although it will be difficult to find partners/sponsors at first, it's important to remain true to your purpose, and not lose hope.*

How do you want to take Vidya Vriddhi forward?

At the moment, our partner NGOs are printing out the worksheets and supplying them to students in rural areas. For the foreseeable future, we're looking to partner with an NGO that supplies environment friendly paper, to print our worksheets on instead. We're also looking to scale our volunteer base, hopefully reaching 150+ volunteers towards the end of 2021. We're working with our partners to identify more deserving schools in rural parts of India, and we're really looking forward to meeting the students who have benefitted soon after the pandemic ends!

Envisioning something, executing it with the help of my team, and seeing the fruits of the results right in front of us is what's most fulfilling!

Scintillating mountains, glimmering skies, bestowing cosmos -GRIT

August 1 marks National Climbing Day, a day rendered to honour the patience, passion, perseverance and million untitled struggles and perspiring ounces of determination of the mountaineers Bobby Mathews and Josh Madigan. It doesn't fail to astound me how many Indian mountaineers have touched the skies of excellence and made the nation feel proud

Several Indian mountaineers have achieved great heights (no pun intended) and have made the nation proud. There won't be a better person than Malavath Purna to commence the list of our great conquerors. At the mere age of 13, she managed to make her way to the highest peak of Mount Everest, thereby becoming the youngest Indian and the youngest female in the world to have accomplished such a feat. After Poorna shared her motivation to climb the mountain people began to admire her even more. She wanted to prove that 'Girls can do anything'.



Picture Courtesy: Unsplash.com



Asim Mukhopadhyay is another mountaineer whose name never fails to impress. Although he is no more, he has quite evidently left his mark on the world by undertaking several scientific expeditions.

Oh, and how can we ever forget Bachendri Pal and Santosh Yadav and Premlata Agarwal in the count of these exceptional champions! Undeniably, Indians have a long record of mountaineers who have never let us down.

The list goes on, but the point of this discussion is not to share information about Indian mountaineers or their backgrounds. The purpose is to analyze what made them them, what made them successful.

It gives me a cold chill at the mere thought of the fact as of how many mountaineers have envisioned that sparkle of the towering summit in their eyes, the magnificent mountains bestowing them, millions of sand particles, snow, dirt and dust piled up beneath them, the sun never prouder on this gratifying event and as if the entire cosmos is giving its approval on a feat never so great. But for how many does this small line of cornea disappear and actually become a glimmering reality? How many Poornas do we count every year, how many Asims do we see? Not many, huh?

So what is it that defines the thin line between dream and ambition? Is it hard work? Is it determination? Well, while these are important factors, but what matters most is grit. Grit is that quality, that ability that enables one to remain courageous and determined despite difficulty and turmoil.

It's the quality that makes one motivated and resilient to face all obstacles that come their way. It's the ability to use mistakes as opportunities to get better, not as reasons to quit. Grit is the courage to push through. It's the mindset that motivation will not lead to action; action will lead to motivation. Simply put, it's the coffee for mental toughness. That's the difference between those who merely dream and those who attain success. Grit is one simple word but has a profound meaning.

Now, let's talk about you. Do you have a dream? Would you like to realize it? Where are your glimmering mountains and scintillating skies? Well, start now. Remember that nothing will fail you if you have grit. Not your IQ, not your demotivating friends or family, not money. Grit will make you unstoppable.

By Aarushi Garg



A full moon is visible in a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted branches of trees with some leaves, partially obscuring the view of the sky and moon. The overall tone is serene and contemplative.

Dreams and Aspirations

By Shradha Srivastav

Similar to many abstract concepts in one's life, there is a very fine line between what one dreams of and what one aspires to be. Dreams evolve into aspirations when you set your mind towards converting the dream into a reality. Every effort made towards the ultimate goal is another step in the direction of turning what you 'hoped' was real into something that wholly and truly exists in your life.

One may also perceive a dream as an innocent gift one truly wishes to be simply given to them, while aspirations are what one is genuinely willing to work for. Dreams might involve pleasing visuals of your future, mainly involving what you want or who you want to be ; but aspirations bring a strong positive connotation with themselves, the undertone of which makes you want to keep working harder each day.

They bring about a change that pushes one to strive and thrive in order to achieve. Dreams get you out of bed and aspirations keep your mind focused on the task at hand.

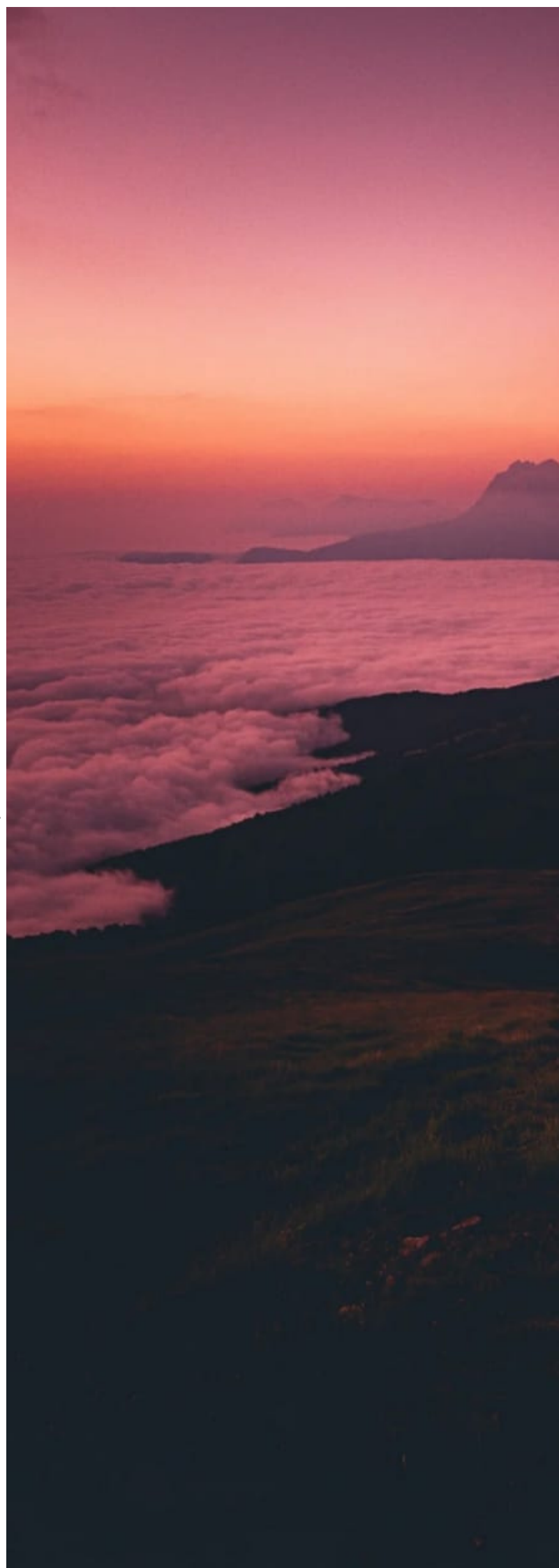
Dreams get the imaginative and the creative wheels of your mind turning whereas aspirations give you answers to the question "why?"

Why do we study a particular chapter? Why do we need to relax our mind adequately? Why must we be aware of our own selves? Sometimes the answers to these "why?" questions are supposedly simple and might even be mundane but they are all tied to our aspirations.

We aspire to become better people than we are in the present and that strong, positive hope keeps the dreamer, the believer, the hard-worker in us alive.



Although to many, dreams might sound like virtual wants and imagination, they are actually the basis and foundation for most, if not all aspirations. The cradle that beholds the aspirations is occupied when you dream of something long enough, and want it hard enough. And that's what sets the sails in motion.



Kuch Khayaal

By Himanshu Rastogi

Main shayar toh nahi, Ghalib bhi nahi,
Main shayar toh nahi, Ghalib bhi nahi,
Mujhe toh shayari ke alfaazon ka bhi kuch pataa nahi!
Log aksar mujhse yeh poochte hain ke tum yeh sab likh
kaise lete ho?

Jawab mein bas itna kehta hun ki main dukh ke pal ko bhi
khushi se jeena seekh leta hun!

Lekin yeh dil bhi kitna naadaan hai mera,
Lekin yeh dil bhi kitna naadaan hai mera,
Ke sabke dukhon ko apna samajh leta hai
Yeh meri samajh nahi, mere dil ki kalaa hai, jo itna kuch
shabdon mai piro ke bas likh deta hai!

I'm not a poet, I'm certainly not Ghalib,
I'm not a poet, I'm certainly not Ghalib,
I don't know anything about the sweet words of poetry!
People often ask me how I write all that I do,
All I can say is that I learn how to live sad moments in a
joyful manner!
Yet this heart of mine is so naive,
Yet this heart of mine is so naive,
That it makes others' sorrows its own
This isn't maturity - it's my heart's talent, which I pour
into written words!

Expressing Thoughts

My mind juggled
Boggling with talks
Chatter of the long haired woman
wearing the tight sparkling dress
How beautiful she looks
Should I make her day
And let my thoughts about her beauty out?
Theories about the neon car
and its blinding radiance
Was the owner a hippie?
Or maybe a celebrity ?
Am I going to be starstruck?
Possible situations of the weather
The roaring silver rain oncoming, maybe
Forcing The bright sun to cower behind the
clouds
Or the wind rushing in
And carrying with it the the colorful caps
Of bustling heads
Should I let them all out
Let them soar through the wind
Or should I let them
Die in the place of their birth
Peacefully like an old soul?

By Aarushi Poddar

Poetry

steering the wheel

a poem about ambition and choices

Peddling in the stray direction,
wondering who made the map.

A constellation of ambition,
an oddity of fate or a trap.

Two cents of hope on the dashboard,
skim through the grounds on a test drive.
Finding fireflies on the long ride,
rewrite the levels of uncertainty and thrive.

Tonight I am lurking in the back seat,
to resist the inertia in my bones and uncover.
Singing to myself in the quiet,
turn on the rear lights for an unsettled maneuver.

By Ridhi Kawatra

Care

Care because that's what your grandmother taught you to do.

Care because you once looked out a train window and saw the yellow mustard fields straight for a mile and felt more at peace than ever.

Care because the little boy on the streets in rugged clothes feeds the puppies regardless of whether he has enough to eat himself.

Care because the lady standing just before the toll station on the highway sells popcorn in hope of returning home to her little girl with a small cake as a birthday gift in her hand that evening.

Care because your grandmother did by giving that little boy on the streets free meals every evening.

Care because those mustard fields you saw, they bloomed so beautifully because the daughter of the lady selling popcorn on the highway worked hard in the fields even on her birthday.

Care because giving back is humanity. Care because it puts a smile on someone's face, care because you have a heart and care because you can.

-BY JAYARTH PRAKASH



A Stranger's Thoughts

Last night I was taking a stroll through the brightly lit streets of the city. Walking under the night sky has always had a special space in my heart, in the absence of unnecessary noise, the presence of the full moon and the moonlight lighting the dim corners of the city. It's peaceful in its own way, and for once I don't crave the absence of human contact. Well, maybe I'm wrong on that part, as all of this boggles my mind. I saw a policeman talking on the cellphone... I assumed it was a call to/from a loved one judging by the ear to ear smile on his face. That smile of his became his entire entity, the sparkle in his eyes melted my thoughts and focused all my thinking ability on what the reason behind that smile could be.

Maybe it's his wife telling him about a hysterical incident that happened during the day, maybe he heard some good news, maybe he finally found the solution to a problem that has been boiling in his head for a long time, or maybe it was his friend who recovered from a long illness.

By
Maitreyi Sharma



That smile indicated that the issue at hand had a place in his head for a long time and has now finally been resolved. Maybe he dialed the wrong number but had a hearty conversation with a stranger. I guess chances of that happening are pretty bleak, but let's not rule out anything. That smile was mesmerising like the one seen on the face of a child whose empty stomach was filled today with food instead of water. It was a sight to behold.

I think that's the reason it caught my attention in the first place. As I was wondering the reasons behind that smile, the phone call ended. I thought of going up to him and asking him if any one of my assumptions were true but a voice inside me didn't let me move. Sometimes not knowing is the better option, and perhaps I would've lost a topic to think upon on my way back home. The smile faded just like the moon giving me a smirk from behind the clouds.



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