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Horizons

Building Resilience, Overcoming Challenges and Achieving Dreams



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Life is interesting because it presents us with many challenges. It would be lull and dull without excitement and challenges. Who would have thought in this day of advances in technology that enable improved lifestyles, nations would

go to war with others. Children growing up in these stressful situations get to understand that nations exhibit confidence and grit to protect their interests and territories. Troubles can come from different quarters and training to face the difficulties will help. "Life is full of challenges; some are small and manageable; some are very large and can take a long time to overcome. A person will need to focus on getting through the challenges and not on the difficulty of the challenge," stated U.S. Airforce veteran Professor Stephen Bayne, Chair of the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Texas Tech University.

Agreeing with Stephen Bayne, Dr. Rangasamy Anand, a pediatric critical care physician at Covenant Children's Hospital, Lubbock, USA opines, "Challenges are inevitable in our human lives. Instead of avoiding them, we must face them head on. Avoiding them only makes it worse."



Dr Rangasamy Anand

While elementary to high school education can help with some soft skills, practical learning is most important. "Educational organizations should continue to focus on soft skills. In the Electrical and Computer Engineering

department at Texas Tech, we focus on soft skills by having our students give weekly presentations in our project design classes,” stated Professor Bayne. In this internet age and flat world scenario, as information is open and free, parents and elders in society should encourage youngsters to observe things happening in society. If chance permits observing achievers, motivators, and leaders in neighborhoods, academia and society will be the best path forward to gain confidence and gain leadership qualities.



Stephen Bayne

Dreams as Success Stories

We would have gone tired by listening to the phrase, “dream big.” This phrase is an oft used language to motivate youngsters in public settings such as school assemblies, annual day functions, university convocations and sport camps. It is not uncommon to encounter people who are high achievers who have gone through barriers, before they reach goal posts.

A good example is the recent soft landing of Vikram lander of the Chandrayaan-3 space mission. This accomplishment had made India to be the first nation to land near the Lunar south pole, becoming the fourth nation to land on the moon. This achievement did not happen overnight or without an

earlier unsuccessful mission. After the unsuccessful landing attempt by Chandrayaan-2, ISRO and the nation were not deterred, instead with the motivation and support of Indian government and the whole nation, went on to launch another mission.

In September 2019, after the unsuccessful result from Chandrayaan-2, Indian government and ISRO scientists took the incident as a learning step and in four years launched Chandrayaan-3 in July 2023. This mission was successful enabling India to be the first nation to land near the south pole of the moon.

Given the magnitude of the project, it is normal for the agency to pause the project after a failure. However, ISRO got tougher and faced challenges by focusing on improvement, that resulted in the soft landing on the moon on August 23, 2023. How was this possible from a humanistic point of view? Mass support from the Indian public, and encouragement from India and scientists in India boosted the confidence of ISRO to continue the project. ISRO has advanced in its technological capabilities, which alone was not responsible for this success. The enthusiasm and grit of ISRO scientists and administrators with motivation from national leaders with staunch support from the Honorable Prime Minister Modi gave the impetus to stand-up after Chandrayaan-2 incident. Science and human efforts with proper support enabled the success of the mission.

As Roy T. Bennett, the famous inspirational writer points out, "Surround yourself with people who believe in your dreams," the ISRO team went on marching to reach its goal. Support from the community is important with any successful effort.

Lesson from Chandrayaan-3

As Roy T Bennett points out that surrounding oneself with good people enables growth and success. Chandrayaan-3 project team surrounded themselves with people of great confidence, grit, and zeal to succeed. The

team was well equipped with necessary talents involving multiple disciplines such as electronics and communications, aerospace, mechanical and material engineering. This signals the vision of the founders of ISRO in the likes of Vikram Sarabhai and Satish Dhawan and the support of the government to build ISRO to a mega enterprise. These visionary leaders made an educated choice, and the consequences were positive in the long run.

Emphasizing the importance of teamwork in tackling complex projects and difficult medical problems, Dr. Anand states, “When a patient's healing is the goal, we let go of our ego and value the contribution of everyone in the team. Instead of the dogma of the past when doctors were considered as the top of the team, I consider everyone to be the spokes of a wheel to keep medical care moving in the right direction.”

It is important to have a good debate and deliberation before making a choice. Once choices are made and implemented, it is difficult to make a U-turn. “We all make choices and choices have consequences,” states Dr. Manickavasagam Sundaram, a compassionate and successful physician of Oshawa, Canada.

Right choices can be made if we have the support of thought leaders and experienced people. As the adage goes, “It takes a village to raise a kid,” meaning support from people and community is important. Support from family, friends and community will enable us to overcome troubles and move towards success. Helping others and seeking help for needs is a win-win situation. Citing his medical profession in saving lives, Dr. Anand states, “I feel blessed to be in a position to help others, especially when I am given the task of saving the lives of children.”

“The first approach to managing challenges is to define the challenge and identify the root cause of the challenges. It would be best to try not to postpone working on a challenge,” advised Dr. Bayne. Again Chandrayaan-3 project is a good example to counter challenges as advocated by Professor Bayne.

As a doctor caring for critically ill children, challenges are part of my everyday life. I create a "To-Do" list and start tackling the most pressing issue first, stated Dr. Rangasamy Anand. "Also, when it comes to resolving conflicts, I take time and effort to understand the perspective of others and try to negotiate to come a resolution than sticking to my ground," added Dr. Anand.

In the western world, people emphasize the importance of having someone to talk to, to overcome mental health issues, again emphasizing the importance of community support.

Life will throw curve balls, but association with positive and confident people will prove valuable for success.

Based on his experience in the U.S. military, Dr. Bayne states, "Don't be afraid to ask for and seek help when some challenges are overwhelming. Be prepared, work hard, and live a good life. Don't be discouraged if you fail or the project outcome is unexpected. We all have failed at some point in life."

Never get deterred by troubles and keep on marching to reach goals!

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