Go Kiss the World

... By Subroto Bagchi

Go kiss the world is an inspiration to the ‘young Indians’ to those who come from small town India urging them to recognize and develop their inner strengths, thereby helping them realize their own potential. This is a speech by Subroto Bagchi to the class of 2006 at the IIM, Bangalore. Bagchi narrates his story from his birth and upbringing in a small town in rural Odisha.

Bagchi’s father was a District Employment officer in Koraput Orissa, he was their fifth and the last child. His mother was a refugee from East Bengal, she was a matriculate and was raised by a widow. In koraput there was no electricity, no primary school due to which his schooling was done at home. Since his father was a government employee he used to get transferred every year. He was given a jeep by the government, but he never used the jeep to commute to the office telling that it is an expensive resource given by the government. Instead he used it only to tour the interiors. Thus he learnt his first lesson. **The lesson to never misuse public facilities.** They were also taught to respect the jeep driver just like any other member of his office. **“Treating small people with respect”**.

Their morning routine started with tea. Subroto’s father had a habit of reading the newspaper daily. He and his brother
was supposed to read it aloud, though he did not understand much of what was written in the paper, he still contributed his good English to that habit. After reading he was taught to fold it correctly.

“You should leave your newspaper and your toilet the way you expect to find it”.

All the brothers used to ask their father to buy a new radio and a house of their own but their father never bought these things and they learnt “Not to measure personal success and sense of well-being through material possession”.

The house which the government gave them rarely had fences. He and his mother used to make the fences and decorate the house by planting seeds. People asked her what’s the need to beautify a government house, she replied that she has to create a bloom in a dessert and for that she has to leave every place given to her more beautiful than what she had inherited. “It is not what you create for yourself, it is what you leave behind that defines success”.

Subroto’s mother started developing cataract in her eyes. His elder brother got a teaching job in Bhubaneswar and was also preparing for civil services examination. His mother and he had to move to Bhubaneswar as a helping hand to his brother. In Koraput since there was no electricity, he had never seen a single fan running. The water did not flow out of tap. For the first time he saw electricity in houses and water
coming from taps. They discussed the daily news and built a bond with the larger universe.

He used to feel a sense of larger connectedness with the world that made up another lesson for him which meant to be connected with a larger world. During that time there was a war between India and Pakistan. Lal Bahadur Shastri’s words “Jai jawan Jai Kissan” sparked the entire country. He dreamt about catching a terrorist and to read his news on the newspapers. “Imagination taught him that if he can imagine a future he can create it, and if he can create it, others will live it”.

His mothers eyesight deteriorated in a very few years. She had to operate it and in a span of time she developed a corneal ulcer and she became blind in both eyes. But she never complained, she spent her thirty two years with her blindness. “I do not see darkness. I only see light even with my eyes closed”. She would perform yoga and would do all the house hold activities.

Subroto was appointed as a clerk in a government office, he was blessed with two daughter and settled in USA. His father was leading a retired life and had suffered third-degree burn and was admitted in the safdarjung Hospital. Even in his critical stage he was concerned about the overworked nurse than his own state. He lost his father, but his principles and the lessons taught by him made me become a successful person. His father was the believer of British Raj and
doubted the capability of Post-Independence political parties to govern the country, but mother believed the exact opposite. “Success is not the ability to create a dogmatic end state but a process of continuous thinking”.

His mother passed away at the age of eighty two, she had a paralytic stroke. He spent his time looking after his mother. While leaving he kissed her face, she replied “Why are you kissing me, go kiss the world”. She tells him to stay connected to a larger world existence and live his life instead of being sad for his mother.