I believe in fairies

Do you believe in fairies? Do you believe in fairies? Raise your hands if you believe in fairies. You are so much like the father - the father whose child had created a painting. In the painting, the child drew a kingdom named “Never never land”, which had a beautiful castle, a river of chocolate, and dozens of fairies. Having a very stressful day at office, the father threw the painting away and shouted at the child “There are no such things as fairies”. Hearing this, the child got tears in his eyes and ran away from his father. According to James Barrie’s fascinating play ‘Peter Pan’, if one says “there's no such thing as fairies”, a fairy somewhere drops dead. How true it is in this case? The father successfully killed the creativity inside the child.

Toastmaster of the day, President, fellow toastmasters and guests, today, I will persuade you to believe in fairies. By this I mean, we must not try to build walls and cage our creativity and imagination. Let your creativity not suffer a fate similar to that of Anarkali’s after being in love with Price Salim.

One can think of creative process as the mythical churn of the ocean called ‘Samudra Manthan’ mentioned in Hindu’s holy text Vishnu Puran. Here Gods and Demons come together to obtain nectar of immortality. But during the churn they also had to consume poison. Similarly, to achieve anything substantial in life we have to go through some failures. For the nectar of success we have to taste the poison of failure.

Creativity is needed not just in the informal world of arts but also in the logical domains of sciences. Greatest discoveries have happened by the spontaneity of the brilliant minds. Jacques Hadamard, a famous mathematician, surveyed 100 of the leading physicists during early 1900s. He found that most of them discovered the ultimate truth in moments of vision and sudden spontaneity. Examples are plenty. Carl Fredrick Gauss, Albert Einstein, Robert Boyle and Charles Darwin are but a few examples who questioned the status quo for greater good of the society. These eminent personalities like Howard Roark, the protagonist in Ayn Rand’s novel ‘The Fountainhead’, had dedicated themselves to be the torch bearers who could navigate humanity through the darkness of ignorance. The choice is between people who make things happen, who increase the frontiers of human knowledge and the people who are nobodies.

Robert Frost in his famous poem ‘The Road Not Taken’ says “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I — I took the one less traveled”. We humans are programmed by Him to be curious. But over the years we reprogram ourselves to be like machines. Machines by definition are reactive. Rather than exploring new possibilities we stay in the realm of rationality. Hence we end up taking the safer route - The route that is not fraught with danger, the route that is predictable.

Let’s return to our story of the child and his father. Later that night the father couldn’t sleep. He remembered an incident in his childhood when he had written an essay for creative writing assignment. He too had showed it to his father. Busy after a hard days labour at the manufacturing unit, his father had torn his essay in fit of rage. This had crushed him. He always wanted to be a writer but ended up being a marketing executive.
He went to his son’s room where even he was not asleep. He caressed his hair and said “Son, tomorrow draw a picture with unicorns. Never never land would be incomplete without them.”

Do you want to be the father who tares the essay written by his son or the father who encouraged his son to draw unicorns? If you want to be the later repeat after me – I believe in fairies. Come again - I believe in fairies. I can’t hear you. Once more - I believe in fairies. As I promised, now you believe in fairies.