Maximizing magic moments

That was a bright summer day of 1963. Martin Luther King Jr. stood at the Lincoln memorial in front of 200 thousand eager listeners. He was delivering a speech initially called ‘Normalcy, never again’. But at the end of the speech, an African-American gospel singer Mahalia Jackson shouted "Tell them about the dream, Martin!" Hearing this, King departed from his prepared text to a partly improvised version. He quoted "One day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today." ‘I have a dream’ went down in history as one of the greatest speeches ever delivered and soon civil rights were provided to all the coloured men and women in America.

Toastmaster of the day, President, fellow toastmasters and guests, there are moments in life which are more important than the rest. These include important exams, job interviews, client meetings etc. Today, I will share with you on how you, like Martin Luther King, can capitalize on those magic moments. I will tell you the secret on how one can seize the moment when it presents itself in front of you.

But before I let out the secret let me ask you a couple of questions - will it help to just perform when the magic moment arrives? Can we optimally choose when to give our best effort? Is success characterized by just identifying these moments? The answer to these questions is a big No.

In fact, many a times, we don’t even know when the magic moment has arrived. For example – a presentation that you had prepared for your supervisor could possibly be remembered by him and could be instrumental in deciding on your promotion. This leads us to another question - Did people such as Steve Jobs, Bill gates, Thomas Edison, who seized the moment, magically knew when the magic moment was? But here the late Steve Jobs would remark “One cannot connect the dots looking forward”, because nobody knows what life has to throw at us.

Now, let the drums roll as I reveal the secret. The secret to maximize on magic moments is to give 100% all the time and hope for the best. Yes, it is that simple. There are no short cuts for the path that will lead to success. Only when you give 100% all the time, will you be in a position to take advantage of opportunities that come along the way.

A legend’s example will prove this point beyond doubt. We all have heard of Lance Armstrong’s miraculous return to cycling. After suffering from near fatal testicular cancer he came back to win the toughest endurance race in the world not just once or twice but 7 times. He could achieve this level of performance because of combination of factors. He was totally aware of what the situation demanded as he had sharpened his athletic mind over several years of giving 100% attention to detail. He had become an excellent cyclist because of 100% commitment to have back-breaking practice. Above all he had 100% confidence to execute his plans to perfection. After winning the race the 2nd time, he remarked “I don’t win the Tour de France on the final day at the Avenue de Champs Elysees in Paris, rather, I win it when I am riding in the Alpine mountains when nobody else wants to.” This series of 100% is what led him to win Tour de France 7 years in a row. Lance’s story also tells us one more thing - Achievers are not born. They are self-made. So.....join the achiever’s club.
Yesterday, while preparing this speech, I saw a masterpiece of a movie called “Dead Poets Society”. Robin Williams plays an English teacher, who inspires young boys through the power of poetry. In his words he says “Seize the day”. That is what I seek for all of you. Let the series of 100% be the poetry that will help you to be ready when the magic moment comes along.