

KMM SESSION - Optimism

PART ONE

Introduction of 'What If?' and 'Then'

EXAMPLES:

- 1) What if I was as tall as Amitabh Bachchan?...then?
- 2) What if we could fly? ...then?
- 3) What if there was no gravity? ...then?
- 4) What if we were taking this session in Switzerland? ...then?
- 5) What if nobody had hair on their heads? ...then?
- 6) What if we didn't have the ability to walk, we could just run or dance? ...then?

PART TWO

Life story of well known Author J. K. Rowling*

Explain the 4 qualities required to be an optimistic person

- 1) Keeping the student in us alive
- 2) To seek solutions
- 3) To grab opportunities
- 4) To imagine positively and see a bright future

Narration of Personal Experiences

Summarization of the 4 qualities required to be an optimistic person

PART THREE

ACTIVITY:

- a) Students are paired. For e.g. Rahul and Raj
- b) Rahul makes a negative statement like "I lost my job!"
- c) Raj assists Rahul to turn this into a positive statement.

For e.g You've lost your job but now you have time for....

- d) Then Rahul is supposed to change his statement into a positive one.

For e.g I've lost my job but I now have time to take care of my health

Repeat the activity again giving Raj the opportunity to start with a negative statement.

Relevant examples for students

- 1) I loved someone but she ditched me
- 2) The sport teacher was partial, which is why I was not selected on the football team
- 3) My mother always agrees with my brother, she wouldn't have agreed with me had I said the same thing
- 4) My friend is not talking to me

PART FOUR

TOOLS

- 1) Jump for a few minutes
- 2) Eat what you love

ACTIVITY:

Write about an experience or an aspect in your life where you are not able to be optimistic

Answer the following questions

- 1) Could things have been worse than this?
- 2) Have others gone through a similar experience/situation in life?
- 3) Have they been able to bounce back?
- 4) Now, what is the one step you can take that will make you proud of yourself?

PART FIVE

BRAIN TATTOOS

- 1) Keep the student in you alive
- 2) Seek solutions
- 3) Grab opportunities
- 4) Imagine a good future
- 5) Jump for a few minutes, eat your favourite food to feel positive instantaneously

* J K ROWLINGS SPEECH AT HARVARD

Actually, I have wracked my mind and heart for what I ought to say to you today. I have asked myself what I wish I had known at my own graduation, and what important lessons I have learned in the 21 years that have expired between that day and this.

I have decided to talk to you about the benefits of failure. And as you stand on the threshold of what is sometimes called 'real life', I want to extol the crucial importance of imagination.

Half my lifetime ago, I was striking an uneasy balance between the ambition I had for myself, and what those closest to me expected of me.

I was convinced that the only thing I wanted to do, ever, was to write novels. However, my parents, both of whom came from impoverished backgrounds and neither of whom had been to college, took the view that my overactive imagination was an amusing personal quirk that would never pay a mortgage, or secure a pension. So they hoped that I would take a vocational degree; I wanted to study English Literature. A compromise was reached that in retrospect satisfied nobody, and I went up to study Modern Languages. Hardly had my parents' car rounded the corner at the end of the road than I ditched German and scuttled off down the Classics corridor.

I cannot remember telling my parents that I was studying Classics; they might well have found out for the first time on graduation day. Of all the subjects on this planet, I think they would have been hard put to name one less useful than Greek mythology when it came to securing the keys to an executive bathroom.

I would like to make it clear, in parenthesis, that I do not blame my parents for their point of view. There is an expiry date on blaming your parents for steering you in the wrong direction;

the moment you are old enough to take the wheel, responsibility lies with you. What is more, I cannot criticise my parents for hoping that I would never experience poverty. They had been poor themselves, and I have since been poor, and I quite agree with them that it is not an ennobling experience. Poverty entails fear, and stress, and sometimes depression; it means a thousand petty humiliations and hardships. Climbing out of poverty by your own efforts, that is indeed something on which to pride yourself, but poverty itself is romanticized only by fools.

What I feared most for myself at your age was not poverty, but failure.

At your age, in spite of a distinct lack of motivation at university, where I had spent far too long in the coffee bar writing stories, and far too little time at lectures, I had a knack for passing examinations, and that, for years, had been the measure of success in my life and that of my peers.

Ultimately, we all have to decide for ourselves what constitutes failure, but the world is quite eager to give you a set of criteria if you let it. So I think it fair to say that by any conventional measure, a mere seven years after my graduation day, I had failed on an epic scale. An exceptionally short-lived marriage had imploded, and I was jobless, a lone parent, and as poor as it is possible to be in modern Britain, without being homeless. The fears that my parents had had for me, and that I had had for myself, had both come to pass, and by every usual standard, I was the biggest failure I knew.

Now, I am not going to stand here and tell you that failure is fun. That period of my life was a dark one, and I had no idea that there was going to be what the press has since represented as a kind of fairy tale resolution. I had no idea then how far the tunnel extended, and for a long time, any light at the end of it was a hope rather than a reality.

So why do I talk about the benefits of failure? Simply because failure meant a stripping away of the inessential. I stopped pretending to myself that I was anything other than what I was, and began to direct all my energy into finishing the only work that mattered to me. Had I really succeeded at anything else, I might never have found the determination to succeed in the one arena I believed I truly belonged. I was set free, because my greatest fear had been realised, and I was still alive, and I still had a daughter whom I adored, and I had an old typewriter and a big idea. And so rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.

You might never fail on the scale I did, but some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default.

Failure gave me an inner security that I had never attained by passing examinations. Failure taught me things about myself that I could have learned no other way. I discovered that I had a strong will, and more discipline than I had suspected; I also found out that I had friends whose value was truly above the price of rubies.

The knowledge that you have emerged wiser and stronger from setbacks means that you are, ever after, secure in your ability to survive. You will never truly know yourself, or the strength of your relationships, until both have been tested by adversity. Such knowledge is a true gift, for all that it is painfully won, and it has been worth more than any qualification I ever earned.

So given a Time Turner, I would tell my 21-year-old self that personal happiness lies in knowing that life is not a check-list of acquisition or achievement. Your qualifications, your CV, are not your life, though you will meet many people of my age and older who confuse the two. Life is difficult, and complicated, and beyond anyone's total control, and the humility to know that will enable you to survive its vicissitudes.

So today, I hope that even if you remember not a single word of mine, you remember those of Seneca, another of those old Romans I met when I fled down the Classics corridor, in retreat from career ladders, in search of ancient wisdom:

“As is a tale, so is life: not how long it is, but how good it is, is what matters.”