

Yes, You Can

One Should Take Risks, But Should Not Do 'Big, Crazy Things' Too Often

Dear Friend,

Since your childhood, you must have been told about the importance of planning and playing safe. However, the talks of being enterprising in nature seldom turn into reality when you plan things too much in advance, not leaving anything to chance or luck. You may have seen your friends and other people who have it all figured out for themselves : which course they want to pursue, how they would get there, the job they would get after the course, their salary and what not. In contrast, you are sometimes even questioning the decisions you have taken and are in a state of quandary. There may even be times when you doubt your own abilities. This may happen to even the best and the strongest of people. However, is it really so bad not have it all figured out by now?

Every minute that you spend on something has the potential to throw open new opportunities for you. Before working on Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg had worked on a number of projects. Imagine what would have happened if he had settled with one of those earlier projects only, and not had built something new in the form of Facebook. When a good idea struck him he ran with it from that very moment. To realise his dream, he took a huge risk and dropped out of what was one of the most prestigious universities in the entire world. He made the most out of the opportunities provided to him by his institute and his peer group. In 2004, he founded 'Wirehog', a peer-to-peer file-sharing service, but it lost out to its biggest competitor i2hub and had to be shut down. Undeterred, Zuckerberg continued relentlessly in his efforts, and in 2007, he created a platform called Facebook, but needed finance to continue the forward march. There were corporations willing to buy his company, but he wanted investors so that he could follow his vision and create something unique. He struggled to find an investor and finally got it. Then, in 2012, when Zuckerberg saw opportunity he himself made a surprise acquisition of a small app, Instagram, for a hefty one billion dollars. He risked the hefty sum, because he foresaw a clear opportunity in it. Now, Instagram looks like one of the most brilliant tech acquisitions ever made. From this point on, there was no looking back. In 2013, in collaboration with Samsung, Ericsson, MediaTek, Opera Software, Nokia and Qualcomm, Facebook launched a project called internet.org. It provides a better and more affordable access to selected internet services in both the underdeveloped and the developing countries. In 2014, Facebook also acquired the mobile messaging app, WhatsApp.

The struggles, insights and calculated risks of Zuckerberg are a testimony that success actually depends upon how you take up the opportunities available to you. You have to have the insight, take risks and struggle to achieve your vision. You can find successful people in every imaginable field. Success is not limited to any particular field.

It is understandable that you want to make it big in life. Such has been our conditioning since our childhood by our parents and schools that aiming big in life is considered as a trait essential for success. But let me ask you—Is it a compulsion to aim to conquer the world? No, it is not! The end in life is not to conquer the world; the aim is to lead a happy and contented life. This end can be achieved through success. Thus, success is a means towards your end and not the other way around. The 'end' may also differ from person to person. The definition of a 'happy and contented life' differs for different people. You need to find your own definition.

One of the most common mistakes people commit is measuring their success parameters set by others. Most of us do things not because of our own initiatives, but because of 'what would others say'. Are we to fulfil the wishes of others? Even when we set our goals the reason is that we want to show to others that we are not behind, that we are also in the race, and perhaps can do it in a shorter time. We work on others' timelines but that only breeds disappointment.

Think for yourself—like Zuckerberg did. Explore potentials in you. Everybody has something special in him. Find out. That will bring you success. Success makes you happy, satisfied and proud. Sure, seek guidance, but take decisions on your own. Yes, you do not have an eternity to make it big. The time is limited but all you need is a single shot at success that will take you to big heights.



Following his dream was important to him than completing a degree at Harvard, forcing him to drop out of the best institution in the world.

Yours sincerely,

(Surendra Kumar Sachdeva)