



# BE THE CHANGE



– Jissy Thomas, Baroda

There is a popular anecdote related to the heading of this article “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Once a mother brought her little son to Mahatma Gandhi and requested him to advise her son against eating too much jaggery. Gandhiji asked her to bring him back after a week. She brought her son once again after a week. This time, Gandhiji made the kid sit on his lap and told him not to eat too many sweets as it would spoil his health. The mother was surprised. She asked Gandhiji as to why he didn’t tell this to her son in the very first visit. Gandhiji said, “At that time, I too was fond of eating jaggery. When I myself used to eat a lot, how could I tell your son not to eat? Since the past one week, I have been controlling my craving to eat it. Now I have got the right to advise him.” I had read this anecdote long time back which has been retained in my memory.

I was diagnosed with diabetes two months ago. It’s amazing how this diagnosis changed my life. I would not have known about it had I not got a boil on my leg which just refused to

heal. It started to pain so much that I could not walk properly. When the doctor saw that huge boil, he was shocked. He asked me to go for random blood test immediately. The reading was very high. He advised me to undergo further tests for confirmation. And the result confirmed my fear. I knew I would have diabetes sooner or later as many members from my mother’s side (including my mother) have it. But I got it earlier than expected.

The first thought that came to my mind was how on earth would I control my diet? I do not have a sweet tooth but I love eating potato in any form. Moreover, I used to eat lot of bakery products made of refined flour (which is deadly for people suffering from diabetes). One of my colleagues who suffers from diabetes told me that I would be tempted to eat things despite the doctor’s advice. I had seen her eating fried stuffs and potato-based snacks in school.

I knew about the consequences of high and low sugar level. The father of a colleague of mine has the same problem. His toe had to be amputated because of

gangrene caused by high diabetes. And another colleague’s mother was admitted in the hospital because her sugar level went very low. On the other hand, my mother is able to control her sugar level by following a proper diet regimen, taking medicines and exercising every day. In fact, when brother and I go to school to work, she is all alone at home. But she has never eaten anything which she is not supposed to eat except occasionally. I thought of following her footsteps.

Initially, it was very difficult for me to control my craving. Whenever I went to buy provision, I was tempted to buy a packet of potato wafers which was displayed on the rack kept outside. I guess, they purposely kept wafers outside so that anybody entering the shop would think of buying those first. I used to look at that rack and get tempted.

Slowly, I trained my mind to stop thinking about my craving. Now I feel relieved, not deprived. And if I happen to eat things which I am not supposed to eat, I balance it by eating things which are beneficial. When I go to hotels or marriage receptions, I eat all the items but in limited quantity. I eat more of salads and drink butter milk or eat curd which, I heard, is good

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to control sugar level. And I have started eating bitter gourd which I used to hate earlier.

More importantly, I started waking up early in the morning and started walking for one hour. And walking in the morning has made me realise that the world is immensely beautiful. Now, I get to hear the temple bells ringing and the birds chirping which I had missed till now. Not only has it helped me to control my sugar level but it has also helped me to reduce my waistline. And I feel energetic too.

When the heart wants to give in to temptations, shouldn't the mind be able to control? I take inspiration from Gandhiji's anecdote. Now, I tell those who say they can't control their diet that if I could control my diet and change my lifestyle, anybody can do it. My colleague stated that in her house nobody likes to eat bitter gourd. It was suggested by another colleague that a pinch of salt be added to the bitter gourd and the water squeezed out later, to remove the bitterness. I told her that if the bitterness of bitter gourd is removed then one is eating it only for the sake of eating; all the nutritional benefits are lost. How much we pamper our taste buds! In the process, we tend to forget that taste buds are just one part of our body. I have learnt an important lesson. There's no harm in eating tasty food but one should not make that a habit.

I now appreciate the saying "Be the change you wish to see in the world" with much more confidence and empathy as I have myself followed this and have seen successful.

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deeply appreciate this project, as it prepared me and gave me the experience of being with none but the One in a unique scene of drama. Thank you Baba, 'Thank you' to the divine family and 'Thank you' to the organisers of the project! Thanks to sisters Dipti and Pratibha from South Africa! This scene also made me understand what souls go through when they are placed in detention. I now understand their pain and sorrow and of how they are ill-treated and denied of their human dignity during such times!

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Soon thereafter, he got a permanent job in transport department of a State government.

I salute the indomitable spirit of the blind person who realized his goal despite many hardships. The officer mentioned in the story is Mr. Ranjit Singh Fuliya, who was my immediate boss in that office. He became instrumental in helping me also, in very dramatic circumstances. Such stories of genuine help offered to really needy fellow beings go to prove that all is yet not lost and mankind can certainly hope for betterment.

(\*Name has been changed, to maintain anonymity.)

### MAKE THE BEST USE OF OPPORTUNITIES

Usually, we give a lot of excuses for not doing things. Our words are then 'if only...' or 'some other time'. So even if we have the capability to do it, our capabilities are wasted, as they are not used at the right time. And we don't really experience success at that time. Whenever a situation demands something, which we feel is beyond our capability, we need to tell ourselves that the situation has come our way as an opportunity in order for us to use our capability. So when we believe in ourselves and our capabilities in this way, we will be able to make best use of opportunities.