

Tracks

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I stepped out of the house and sat down to put on my shoes. I took the dusty white shoe laces and tied them together. I climbed down the stairs of the sitting area and then was on the road in my neighbourhood. As I walked down the main road, millions of thoughts and images went through my head and I thought about life as a whole. Life is very much like a road or a pathway and the path we take affects our whole life.

The Track we choose to take in life is a deciding factor for the rest of our lives. The meaning of life may vary from person to person and how much each person values or cares about his life also is of varied ranges. It is during adolescence that seeds sown during that time will reap fruit in later years.

In his book 'The Road Less Travelled', Peck begins with the profound statement that 'Life is difficult'. He says that life is akin to a battlefield, where we can either complain about the challenges we have to face or we take steps to solve them. In a tough situation, the challenge of confronting the problem can be managed by only a few. According to Peck, and rightly so, only those who take the track of discipline emerge as winners. To put it simply, it is only after we finish our homework, that we can truly enjoy our playtime. This discipline involves delaying pleasure so that work is completed. It is a sad commentary of our times, that many adolescents fail to understand this basic tenet of life and this often leads to unnecessary problems and confrontations with authority. Another important track to a healthy and sincere life is to be dedicated to Truth. Only truth is reality. If we don't accept Truth in our lives, then any Track we take is unreal and will take us far from our destination. The track of truth also makes our consciousness more aware and makes us grow spiritually, a trait which is much needed in all times.

As I continue with my walk, I wait for the car to pass at the road junction. I ponder- that this seemingly simple act of mine had a message for me. At the junction, there were two tracks that I could have taken. If I had not used my judgement and not waited for the car to pass, my life would have been different and I would not be writing this piece. At many stages in our lives, we are given two tracks – one good and one that takes you away from goodness. Your good judgement about situations, people and ideologies influence the way your life will be shaped. The path of goodness or truth is the path to submitting to the higher power. On this track, one develops a quite confidence that nothing will go wrong in life and even if does, there is the wisdom to tide over it with a feeling that ‘this too shall pass’. On another note, this also reminds me of the famous Robert Frost’s poem, ‘Road not taken’. This poem has been interpreted by literary giants in many ways but for me this poem gives me strength to believe that sometimes one can take the risk of not taking the beaten path. The last two lines in the poem says, “*I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.*” The way I interpret it is that there are times in our lives that you need to make choices that are not easy. It may be a calculated risk that you are taking. Here the difference that may have occurred in the poet’s life places emphasis on the choice made, not the opportunities foregone. It is here that your discipline, love for truth will help you make the right choices, even if there is an element of risk involved. This is only way that one can attempt new tasks and not get overawed.

I now reach my friend’s house and enter his garden. The garden has several stepping stones so that the grass on the lawn is not stepped upon. These stepping stones remind me that the track I take will have many such stepping stones that will help me grow in life. These stepping stones in my life are little nuggets that my parents and grandparents have told me over the years. My mother often quotes John Wooden, the famous basketball coach at UCLA, who motivated his team with inspiring words. There is one quote that which says, “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do”. This ‘Woodenism’ is very useful when you come across tasks that are difficult to perform. Another useful nugget that I try to remember at all times is to ‘Be happy all day, for no reason’. When one adopts this track in life, it is inevitable that you will be positive in

your outlook in life. Studies have shown that positive people express positive emotions are more resilient when facing stress and hardships.

Lastly, when one is on the right trail, there has to be a conscious effort that one is not stopped in their tracks. One requires to surge on - and this journey is an endless one and carries on till we pass on. But by developing the habit of being on the right track, that is, being disciplined, truthful, taking calculated risks and by being positive and confident this journey will only be pleasant and fulfilling.

What is life but a chance to grow our souls? Some people question the existence of God and this world being un real and a mere illusion. All the emotions and experience we go through , isn't this proof enough that there is a higher force somewhere and even if we have all the mortal power in the world , he can just pick you up and drop you down onto another road of life? We as humans should be open to everything and we just have to accept sometimes when Life isn't treating us to well that God is either punishing us for a past mistake or he is testing us for a brighter future he may have to offer you. This is an extremely deep topic and this is only the surface of it.

All men have sweetness in their life. That is what helps them go on. It is towards this sweetness they turn to when they feel worn out. Time is a companion that goes with us on a journey. It reminds us to cherish each moment, because it will never come again. What we leave behind is not as important as how we have lived.

I return home, and my shoes are even dustier. This dust is a reminder that along the way, the tracks that I have taken may have made me dusty but that is evidence of the fact that I am that much more experienced to face life and its myriad challenges.