

When the Heart Petrifies

Recently, news from two friends shocked me as I heard that they both suffered massive heart attacks. At 42, both of them were relatively very young to have a heart attack in a highly developed and socially advanced part of the world. My attempts to talk to one of these friends immediately after hearing the news were in vain, further increasing my anxiety about his wellbeing. The fact that he was having a family of three young children, added to this anxiety and concern about him. A day later he returned my call and most of the time I could only hear him weeping, finding myself at pain to console and instill confidence to face the future with boldness and positivity.

I have known this friend for several years and he always appeared to me a victim of the high-pressure globalization that we have been praising about. A world always wanting to perform better, prevent losses, make more profits, downsize, rightsize the employees, resort to unethical business means just to live up to the expectations of the *others*. Thereby ignoring the crass reality that these *others* always remain the *others* without any emotional attachment to us. The greed for money and other material benefits had never so deeply gnawed into our lives like in the present. Comparisons to *have* more and *be* better than what the other one has or is appear to be ruling the world of work and life today. Whereas companies of great, apparent reputation are throwing out even million-dollar goodies like preserving the human eggs for future fertilization, there seems to be meager amount of consideration for those who are put in a kind of pressure cooker to perform and outperform. If he or she succeeds, we celebrate them. A fall, physical or psychological, leads to outcry and denouncement. The world today needs only performers. Performers who can perform better until the last layer of skin is removed.

Comparing the salaries and perks has become the most grueling thought for many in our new-age industries. Young people have started to give more importance to the pleasures that please their eyes and tempt their taste buds. The sense of happiness at having a higher salary or bonus or the pride gifted by a newly acquired vehicle erupts like a volcano in the heads. By doing so, we often care least for the most important organ in our body: the heart. An organ, that keeps beating irrespective of our mood swings, the climatic changes, the salary differences or the work pressure. Never complaining, never over-demanding.

Is it only the money that matters to us, today? A question well utilized or even exploited by umpteen numbers of organizations and leaders in various disguise, rightly sensing the high-pressure void inside us. Falling victims to the maddening world of materialism and worldly pleasures, millions around us spend sleepless nights, unwilling to admit that it is the stress that lies at the root of all troubles. Increasing financial independence sans gender inequality has not only created the freedom to afford more, but also led to the weakening or severance of relationships, thanks to the low amount of tolerance and understanding.

A generation that has made an electronic and virtual environment for their progeny, apparently seems unmindful of the value life gifts us everyday. By nurturing a *silent* progeny through tabs and mobiles devoid of any contact with the nature, we knowingly contribute to the formation and promotion of a future, where stress will surely dictate the day.

Our inability to limit the amount of work, our materialistic thoughts and wishes will continue to pump more and more pressure to our little heart, which has to beat 4,320 times an hour, 1,03,680 times a day, 3,78,43,200 times a year and if one lives a normal lifespan of 70 years, 264,90,24,000 times. If you have difficulty with these digits, it simply means approximately 2.65 billion times. That too without any battery back-up or software upgrades.

I wonder, how many of our little boys and girls today have ever physically touched the slush with their fingers! Whether they have ever experienced the smell of the soil as the first raindrops fall after some sunny days? How many of us do take a morning stroll to listen to the nature, so musically enriched by the birds on the trees? When first signs of any strike from the little heart appear or threaten to disrupt the way we have been living, we resort to a physical regime of morning walks and runs, pitifully surrendering to forces that are above every materialistic possession.

Does it make any sense to say “I have time” after this little organ has started its petrification?