

## THE HABIT OF READING – A GIFT FROM MY FATHER

### Description

My romance with books had its early lure of glamour when I was as young as ten years, forty years ago to get seduced to the internet, online and an era of smartphones menace, not by reading them but by paying attention to how my father was keenly browsing over the books conveniently spread in his lap. Early mornings and late evenings I used to find him leafing through heavily bound scientific volumes. He is a Doctorate in Physics, after completing his Post-Doctoral research at the North Carolina University during years 1964-68, family necessities bound him back to India.

Largely his study is applied to Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. I never preferred those complicated features as much. However, his serenity enjoying the reading expertise is what I got attached so staunchly by way of observing and appreciating: his discipline and the thirst to thumb through a chapter or an essay whenever during the free-time allowances. Inspired and influenced thus gaining a penchant for reading, I believed, is a sort of mental work out for me to forge a strong foundation for the eventful journey in the years to come. This gift, this habitude is the lifetime insurance and the legacy awarded by my father.

The second blessing I had relating to bookish leanings was solemnized at one of my friend's house. The friend now a well-known doctor settled in the US. His father had two passions; one for English literature and the other is for cigarettes. At an age of twelve, both the hobbies of him seemed esoteric and alien to me. The rich leather bounded books looked as if carrying a pious aura of its own as he placed the printed treasures before him and a pencil in his hand to underline the important paragraphs. In the evenings soon after returning from his office that was the relaxing frame, books featured, I admiringly recall even today. Holding a pencil in hand and marking the difficult words and interesting sentences, is one abiding, resourceful habit I have learned from him. You may find me without a wallet but I wouldn't go out without a book in hand and pencil in the pocket.

Thus my appetite for English literary works took deep root at an early age. I never knew then that this fervor for reading out would, later down the road, would go on to build an essential fountain for my survival policies and candidness much like protective emotional armor.

I have spread my net of selection of books wide and tight: which included exquisite writing genres and creatively inspired authors of English writing. I generally handpick my selection that suited my taste – fiction or non-fiction. I usually go on choosing historical, romance, biographical and all Indian new age writers.

I mostly delight in themes about human relations, emotions, language and nuances implied in expressing them. When I sit down with a book I believe it is waiting to nourish me with appetizing thoughts and captivating conceptions. I go about gleaning from the pages enriching expositions giving manna to mind and serenity to soul and well-being to the body.

I also ventured into choosing books related to parental and child issues, and a whole range of self-help books when I was in my forties.

I have a special inclination for "coming of age" novels that manifest a wide range of experiences and evolution of characters from childhood to adulthood beating all odds of trials and challenges. I favored them perhaps; for one reason, that deep down could connect with the impactful portrayals and the struggles. While reading them I would very well rousingly be impressed to guess a feeling that the writer might have abbreviated my very personal experiences and crystallized them into emotive words and expressions.

I consider my reading habit as "deep reading". Over the past three decades, I, poring over and interpreting what I read would have a specific focus and purpose. Each novel I select to unravel is like a bold new friend sitting across and taking on explaining his treatise of foresight and acumen. Some writings have helped gain to understand the approach and mindset of other people and a few others to decipher my immediate family notions and empathize with them. It's something close to that the books I read are the spectacles I wear to see the humankind. The habit helped to qualify me to collect a better perspective of the society and world at large and its inherent imperatives.

Reading fiction or non-fiction would transport me into a situation of characters, complex experiences, and complicated interplay of relationships essayed in any literary opus. It's like sitting in a lecture hall listening to the master storytellers expressing their insights, intelligence, struggles, strength, hopes, and wisdom. Serendipitously, the very book I'm holding, at any given time, is filled with needed energizers, motivators, restoratives, cordials, instructions, warnings, and prescriptions to handle capriciousness of life's ebbs and flows in a matured and active way.

Waiting in any form makes me mad, stupid and depressed. People who have authority, people who have power, money seem to have a quirky pleasure to have people wait as if the more the waiting time the more important would be his standing. Their intent might be to make you feel useless and disappointed. When waiting is unavoidable, and I'm at a receiving end forced to wait, a novel opened, a pencil sharpened is a placebo that comes to my rescue. hilariously, immersed in a chosen book, hours pass by, is a happy filter to check the seething slack and negativism for being thrown into such inescapable situation. I have faced countless situations, in the years gone by, that has caused me feel sad and sorry. Helpless and inescapable, in such places, books are my saving potions: acting like therapeutic agents, massaging fingers, hands around my shoulders, a warm lap to weep, endearing eyes, and a Wiseman's patience. An essential shower when the moods are dry and parched.

I'm stickler for time. Habituated to carry a book as a companion and I'm quick to grab a nuance of one unfamiliar word if I'm found stranded for few moments. For me, unanticipated waiting would present bountiful chances to finish through many pages to completion than sitting leisurely at my pre-planned venue. I self-consciously take care of to utilize the minutes "hundreds of them on any day, and the conclusion of reading voluminous tomes will take care of themselves.

This is my routine custom how I "time manage" my habit of reading in whatsoever available time "every minute is sacredly utilized. Adhering to this discipline to read as many books I can, have given me freedom, awareness, a mind to truly care about other people. And the confidence that I can attack any problem thrown at me and come out unruffled and undisturbed. It has nothing to do with the money, it is the strong-mindedness, which makes going keep going and going in life "a worthy road taken!

## Category

1. Uncategorized

**Date Created**

2017/11/25

**Author**

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