

"I know of no better life purpose than to
perish in attempting the great & impossible"

Ever Tried. Ever Failed. No matter. Try Again.
Fail Again. Fail Better.

These words by Samuel Beckett
resonate well with 68-year-old Hungarian
scientist Katalin Kariko who discovered
the world of mRNA vaccines and have
revolutionized the medicine industry. For
over 40 years, she lived ^{as} an immigrant,
woman in the U.S.A., pursued an area
of research deemed 'impossible, without
any value' and been demoted four times

in University of Penn for 'wasting her
time and resources'. Yet she had a
conviction, a dream to accomplish.

By earning not more than \$ 60000

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a year, her work was finally recognized when the Nobel Committee this year saw the massive impact her research had in producing mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, the elixir for people worldwide. After 30 years of her gruelling work, she received the Nobel Prize in medicine, 2023. She never gave up because she knew of no better life purpose than to perish in attempting the great and impossible.

Human beings are always striving to work to lead a comfortable life, achieve accolades and find contentment. Yet, we fear the unknown. Most often we look up to role models, successful people and want to become like them. In the world of likes and swipes, we

want to follow trends and avoid anything which is difficult, unknown or rather impossible. The comfort achieved from a 40-hour work week, and some 'chill time' is what one aspires for these days. But there are a few, across space and time, who dared to imagine and achieve the impossible.

Well, what is impossible? Anything which is beyond the common foreseeable fat wisdom is generally termed as impossible. When Copernicus imagined a heliocentric model of our solar system, it was termed as 'impossible' or when Thomas Alva Edison, imagined the 'bulb', he was ridiculed badly. Yet, for the like of Mohammad Ali, "impossible is a

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big word thrown by small men who find it easier to live in a world they have been given than to explore the power, they have to change it."

It is only those who choose to look beyond the comfortable known, can see the greatness of the impossible. The limits to our imagination is often self-imposed. But for us to really break these shackles, we need to imagine and more importantly, know ourselves.

The journey of achieving something great begins with self-discovery, knowing the purpose of our existence. Aristotle says 'an unexamined life is not worth living'. One needs to look at the powers within to begin ascending the mountain outside.

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A journey of self-discovery instills self-belief. This belief in our innate abilities is the ~~for~~ crucial ingredient for the recipe of success. A 15 year old Greta Thunberg, had belief in our convictions and she started 'Fridays for future'. An initiative where she spoke about climate crisis at fridays outside Swedish Parliament. For those who believe, it is impossible for 'one' to ~~bring~~ contribute to climate change, a girl with Aspergers' syndrome showed the way. Her belief, resilience and fortitude gathered many and she initiated conversations of climate change worldwide.

Similarly, Stephen Hawking was told he doesn't have many years to live, yet with power of his sheer belief defeating his incapacibilities due to

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a neurodegenerative disease, he became one of the greatest physicists the world has ever seen.

Yet, the journey followed by faith is not easy. There are umpteen challenges one faces when they begin to seek the unknown. Savitri Bai Phule, who opened a school for educating girls, at a time when it was unimaginable, was bogged down with numerous challenges. She would carry a span saree everyday to school because people would throw cow dung at her. Yet, she never stopped. Ousted from their home, community, the Phules were indomitable.

When India came out of the dark era of colonization, the challenges before a new and young economy knew no bounds. Defence,

food security, communal riots, partition
wars and other unmet challenges
stood before us. Yet, our leaders embraced
every challenge and turned it into an
opportunity. From humble beginnings
as a self-sustained economy, we rose
to the world's 5th largest economy and
are ever rising. Our policies failed,
our scientific missions lost trails,
yet we were undeterred.

Nelson Mandela said, 'Don't judge
me by my successes, judge me by
how many times I feel down and
got back again'. In the journey of
achieving the great and impossible,
it is important to embrace failure.
It is important to learn from failure,
yet remain undeterred by it. Failure
teaches us the limits in our approach

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but does not limit our potential. When Edison could not make the electric bulb for trying hundreds of times, he said 'I have not failed, I just know of ways, it doesn't work.'

The attitude of being positive, determined and learning better enables one to be closer to one's goals. For Bhawna Jat, 24-year old, India's first race walker to win in Asian games, this determination helped her being firm and fight all odds. She would wake up at 3 am in the morning to avoid being seen by her villagers and practiced her craft. This unflinching determination was also portrayed by Anirudh Khanna in Dangal (2016) when he said 'mhari choriyan shheron se kam hain ke'. This raised many

eyes, ostracised the family, yet the Progat sisters contributed the last shred of their dedication to achieve their father's dream because they knew nothing better.

Who would have imagined that a resource stined nation would send a space mission to Mars in $\frac{1}{10}$ th the budget, yet ^{it did it} in their first attempt. To achieve such 'greatness' it is important to innovate and chalk out the best path to-achieve it. Determination when combined with innovation gives unexpected results.

Gandhi ji, in his attempt to achieve independence, innovated his methods and showed us the way. Through truth and non-violence he took over the might, once-thought-undefeated British Raj. His belief, conviction, determination and innovation

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urged him to look beyond the comforts of a middle class life and achieve the 'impossible' freedom.

Yet, it is not the success which measures the progress of our attempt. It is the intent and the effort which determines our achievement. Narges

Mohammadi, shouts 'Zen-Zendegi-Azadi' [Women - Life - Freedom] from the jails of Iran to achieve women rights. She has faced over 31 years of jail term, yet she remains firm in her intent. Winning the Nobel Peace Prize this year was only a recognition of her efforts, which still ^{has} ~~goes~~ a long way to ^{go to} achieve gender parity in Iran. However, she knows nothing better than to perish in this attempt.

In making such attempts, one needs to channelize the in-
self and ~~think~~ strive to achieve
excellence. One need not make

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transformative contributions, yet the attempt of making the world a better place counts. A journey of thousand ~~steps~~ miles, begin with a small step (Lao Tzu). It is our persistence, discipline, self-belief and intent which carries our journey forward.

Kariko too had a faith and began small, yet she was ready to contribute her life towards this faith. As per Shrimad Bhagwat Gita, one should do this part, without worrying for the result. In the day of fast changing technology, it is important to keep our mind clear, ambitions strong and head high. The only thing we can do is to not be worried by the seeming impossibility but focus

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on the task at hand. Adorn your work with self-belief, willingness to learn, adjust, innovate and finally embrace failure. Everything seems impossible until it's done. Our attempt should be to make a dent to this 'impossible.'

In the words of Mohammad Ali again,

⁶ Impossible is not a fact, it is an ~~declaration~~ ^{opinion}. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary.

Impossible is nothing.'

13 pgs

Intro [1.5] - Ever Tried, Katalin Kariko.

- ① IMPOSSIBLE → what is it (Michael Jordan), limits, (rational analysis), introspection → knowing thyself. (Aristotle)/Rosa
 - ② Begin small + embrace failure
 - ③ Determination + spectacular results
 - ④ Be wary of limitations + [mental health]
- Conclusion [1.5]

~~SPICE/ICR/7~~ ^{guide}

- ④ impossible - ^{most seek known}
 - ① Copernicus
 - ② Steve Jobs
 - ③ Michael Jordan
- ⑤ self imposed limits + society's influence + think outside box → Stephen Hawking, Roosevelt
- ⑥ Introspection - self discovery / faith - belief. Examine i wanders not lost (Kariko) → Greta Thunberg (Friday for future, Asperger)
- ⑦ Begin small → Lao Tzu, Wu wei, India
- ⑧ Determination - Rhyle, Nargis Mohammedi, GR, Max
- ⑨ Embrace failure → Luther King, Thomas Edison, 10th → Bahgal / Gandhi
- ⑩ Spectacular results - MOM, Computer (DBT, ONOR), same sex recogn.
- ⑪ know limitations - mental health
- ⑫ Conclude - ① Michael Jordan court my ② Greta