

“Well Done!”

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I grew up like many other children do. I was interested in studying, but more so in toys and in playing games. When I started school at age three, I was happy to go to school. The first day of school I raised a hue and cry. My teacher pacified me with toys and I settled in my school. Sometimes I would spend my time watering the plants with the school maid.

Thus passed my years in primary school. When I reached middle school my interest in school work was waning. I would come home from school and then go to the Qari Sahib (Quran teacher), only to be scolded and put down by him. My Math teacher at school was always angry especially if someone would ask a question. My Urdu teacher would not stop complaining about my hand writing being untidy. Instead of calling me by my name she had taken to calling me ‘unintelligent.’

When I reached grade nine I took arts and went to another school. Things only got worse. The principal was our Math teacher. It was for the first time that I saw a cane for beating children in class. The cane was not just kept in class. It was used routinely.

And then Ms. Lubna became my Math teacher as I was switched to another section. Gentle, soft-spoken and honest to her profession. The way she explained concepts, the way she appreciated me, changed my life. The mathematics that was no less than a curse for me now became a warm ray of light for me.

I got answers to all my questions. Ms Lubna quenched my thirst for knowing, for asking Why? How? When I answered a question she would say ‘Well done!’ On my notebook she would write ‘very good’. This ‘Well done’ had such a deep impact on me

that I started to gain interest in my studies. I now had the spirit to move ahead, to compete with my class mates. I was a Humanities (Arts) group student yet I was now competing with girls in the Science group. I was scoring 100% marks in my math exams now. In the grade nine exam I stood first while the Science student secured the second position. The joy this gave me cannot be expressed in words.

I became the class monitor and maintained my top position in class. For FA (Intermediate) I returned to my old school. I told everyone about my scores and positions, trying hard to erase from myself the painful label: unintelligent.

In this school I had never heard the phrase 'Well done!' These are the words that led me to success. After that I got very gentle teachers in the rest of my academic career.

The 'Well done' that helped me make it is the gift that I pass on to my own students today; they do have talents but to bring those out we need a generous dose of 'Well done!'

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