

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



August 21, 2016

## Learning from Mistakes and Experiences

The world would not have advanced to such an extent if we could not take advantage of our own experience or that of others. We should have been still at the same stage of civilization where mankind in its early stages stood; for each succeeding generation would have gone on the same path that the preceding had trodden taking the same starting point, going through the same trials and errors, and coming to the same outcome. But it is not so. Each succeeding generation learned by the experience of the previous one; they came to their task better prepared than their predecessors, gaining the experience that their predecessors did not have, and when they departed, they left behind themselves a richer heritage of human knowledge, which those who came after them used as their starting-point.

Even though it is a fact that all of us learn something from the experience of others, there is still much that all of us have to learn from our own experience. While attaining this experience we must make mistakes as men are not born perfect, but it is practice that can make them so. All arts are to be learnt through our practices. A child will never learn to walk, if he is not permitted to walk. We should not have a superstitious fear of making mistakes; those who do so will never learn anything.

Those who make mistakes may be better than those who do not make any because those who try to learn something make mistakes; those who do not make mistake mostly do not try to learn anything and thus remain as ignorant as before. Nor should mistakes dishearten us from going on with the business we had once commenced.

In the beginning we should not think about how distant we are from our goal; rather we have to consider how much our second attempt is better than the first, and similarly the third than the second. This will encourage us. We should not be disheartened, if we make slow progress; in the beginning it is bound to be so. Time is an important factor in all practice; after some time if we recollect at the point from which we started, we will marvel how far behind we have left it, how far we have progressed since we started. We should keep in mind that the great masters whose works now make us wonder, and seem to have a charm and a perfection that we think we can never achieve, was one day making miserable efforts to copy some other model. If we could look at their first attempts, when they were beginners, and then at the perfection that they ultimately attained, we should wonder what a world of difference there is between them. We should always keep in our memory that the heights attained by great men were not through abrupt flight, it was the result of much laboring, endurance and determination.

A child's life is a good example of what perseverance and determination can achieve. His life shows us that impossibilities are made possible by ceaseless energy, by unrelenting enthusiasm, by resolute confidence in its own powers, an utter indifference to mistakes and failures. If a grown up were to be demanded to learn to utter sounds and to learn to speak for the first time, having not done so in his childhood, he would know how commendable is the perseverance of the child, how indefatigable is his industry, and how wonderful is his confidence. Nor should our errors in the start, our failure to cope our model make us think that we lack the capacity for that task or responsibility. It should be remembered that the difference between a great man and a mediocre one is more the result of difference in hard work, patience and determination than of disparity in mental or physical talents; it is persistence and industry that makes the difference between them.

Thus human beings can learn from others and can avoid their mistakes without undergoing their sad experiences. Here those who learn to avoid these evils from observing their sad consequences in others are wise: next to them in the scale of wisdom are those who learn from their own mistakes and reform themselves.

The mistakes of others being of no concern to us have not so much influence upon us as our own; in the former case we merely observe the evil consequences, we ourselves do not feel them; they are remote from us and lack that directness which our own experiences have.

Thus, our mistakes indicate our defects, correct our false guesstimates of our own capabilities, and make us capable of knowing what great potentials lie concealed in us. They put us on the road to hard work and call our powers of endurance and determination - potentials of which we ourselves could have remained ignorant but for them; they teach us a lesson that none else can teach, which is enduring and which we shall never disremember, and finally they bring about a reform in us so that we be like gold, and the dross of our impurities and failures have been burnt by passing through the fire of enticements.

# 10 Extraordinary Things I Like About Afghanistan

By Najeeb Azad

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook Afghanistan

Let's start with a comparison of fabricated and real/desired scenario about Afghanistan:

• Fabricated scenario: Daily news broadcast globally: "Due to Taliban attack twelve civilians were killed, and thirty injured. The clash between Afghanistan National Army and the Taliban is still on-going..."

• Real/desired scenario: "Afghanistan is the land of opportunities for investment, there is a lot of qualified human resources and labourers to support the investment. Though there are security concerns but no tensions Mr. Investor, keep your spirits high and enjoy the opportunities within the country"

Globally, people have different perceptions about different countries. From what I have personally experienced in some of the countries I have visited, people have different fabricated understandings about my country. There has been many occasions where I have introduced myself from China, Mongolia, and even from my district with newly-met people (I introduced myself from these Asian countries due to the similarity of my facial feature with the people of these countries), and then when real acquaintance had been made, truth would have prevailed about my real country, and my friends' perception would have positively changed about Afghanistan. Overseas, most of the people are afraid of my country's name - Afghanistan, they sometimes mistakenly call it Taliban. Amid serious fabrications about Afghanistan, I am a proud citizen of Afghanistan; excluding the political scenario I am proud of how the country is diverse in many ways, how gracefully Afghans live their life, and how radiant the future can be with the old generation/warlords gone.

The extraordinary things I like about my tangled country are listed below:

1- The state of being in the top list of youngest countries in the world Afghanistan is the 5th youngest country in the world, with 68% of the population under 25 (PassBlue covering the UN). Being in the top 5 of youngest countries has many opportunities and threats. Opportunities can only be created by utilization of the young task-force to contribute their share in development of the country. Utilization from these young resources can only happen when the leadership of the country is given to a policy-implementer geek, who creates jobs within the country so that the most productive task-force does not flee the country. However the current policy-making leadership of the government's most suitable decision is to stop giving passports to these young resources so that they do not flee the country.

"5th youngest country in the world"

I hope opportunities are created for the youth inside the country and they are given a chance to serve their desperate developing country, rather than serving the advanced developed countries. I like my country being the 5th youngest nation in the world, but unfortunately the youth are now more of a threat to the country rather than being supportive, due to high level of bad governance that has led to high level of unemployment. These jobless youngsters either illegally take the dangerous journey of reaching to the west, or join extremist groups, or gets addicted to narcotics and live on the roads/under the bridges - being a burden to their family and country.

2- Diversity

Afghanistan, with such a small geographical area is the home for diverse range of:

- Culture - from Ghaznavian reign in Ghazni (the Cultural Capital of Islamic World) to the Koshani reign in Bamyan (the 2015 Cultural Capital of SAARC);
- Languages - from Shighnani to Brahawi;
- Dialects - from a Pashtun's Kandahari Sha - meaning: okay/good; to a Nangarhari Kha;
- Food - from an Uzbeki Qabuli to a Hazaragi Wogray Ajay;
- Costumes - from long Uzbeki costume to the beautiful modern Kabul costume;
- Musical instruments - from Danbura to Rubab;

- Dance - from Atan to Qarsak;
- National games: from Buzkashi to toup-conda;
- Fauna species: from the beautiful snow leopard, Marco Polo, and yak to the jet-like snow finch; and

• Flora species: from rhubarb to giant hogweed (To be noted: There are over 3,000 plant species in Afghanistan, including hundreds of varieties of trees, shrubs, vines, flowers, and fungi which makes Afghanistan more diverse in flora species comparing to entire Europe)

"From an Uzbeki Qabuli to a Hazaragi Wogray Ajay"

Unfortunately diversity in Afghanistan is handled negatively by some high-level racist leadership which then leads serious impact on thousands of illiterate low-level racists; making the biased diversity national. I hope, someday, these all national days dedicated to some dead tribal leaders are dedicated to the events related to national diversity where national unity is strengthened rather than a specific tribal unity.

3- Hospitality

Afghans are hospitable, in the sense that they are simple and serve the guest as usual with the routine family food, and that's why we have the proverb: "Nan wa piyaz, qash waz" meaning: "Bread and onion be the food, with happy mood". Unfortunately our hospitality has no eligibility criteria; even world terrorists are served well, which then leads to global crisis and national conflict/decades of war.

"Nan wa piyaz, qash waz"

The hospitality of Mullah Omar (Taliban Leader) that caused keeping Osama Bin Laden (Al-Qaeda Leader) in the country during the time when he was exiled from his own country caused the worst tragedy in the history of USA and Afghanistan. I want to see the hospitality eligibility to be introduced in the country so that further tragedies are overwhelmed.

4-Public servants

Though Afghanistan has received many international awards for being one of the most corrupt countries in the world, which is partly due to corrupt public servants, but I still believe that there are public servants who have great ambitions of serving the country loyally - mostly coming from the new generation. One cannot judge hundred by one. More likely than the pen-moving officials (who sip tea in luxury rooms and sometimes move their pen for signing on a letter) sitting in their offices, I believe real hardship and suffering of the country is undertaken by lower-level authorities like municipality workers and brave security forces that serve the country with real hardship, in spite of getting the lowest payment. Pen-moving officials (in some cases) and real-hardworking officials (in most cases), we are proud of both of you; but in different ways.

"Great ambitions of development and commitment within the public servants"

5- Sense of patriotism / dire of independence Afghans are patriots; they have always fought for the independence of their country. Fighting for independence and against invasions is in their bloods and history. The British and USSR invasions, but both have been defeated by Afghans; though there has been some other foreign intelligence/support involved in these victories but still it would not have been possible without Afghans' sense of patriotism and dire of independence. Sometimes the sense of patriotism of Afghans are undermined when they just get lost after visiting developed countries in order to get the foreign country's citizenship; but as said earlier, hundred cannot be judged by one. Still I have a brotherly advice for my countrymen: "Your developing country needs you more than the other imaginary developed countries. Please stay patient, work hard, and rebuild your country for your grandsons." Patriot Afghans know how to unite in times of sorrow and despair, and they showed it during the Tabassum Revolution (Tabassum meaning smile. The revolution took its name from a 9 year old beheaded girl in Zabul province which caused national unity and one voice against terrorism and extremism throughout the country). I hope the Tabssum, like the Tudor Rose of England unite the people of Afghanistan and ensure a peaceful, prosperous, and developed future. (To be Continues...)

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## The Power of Writing

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Writing has the energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to hurt, to harm, to humiliate, to humble and to make think. The biggest benefit of writing is that allows to store and organize feelings, thoughts and ideas in a coherent manner as opposed to keeping them all jumbled in own mind. There is a reason why the best creative people carry notebook everywhere they go. If we are really not willing to share our writing publicly, the very least we can do is to write for ourselves, whether we prefer to carry physical notebooks or type in digital journals. Writing down own thoughts gives the ability to investigate our thought processes and stances on issues "from the outside" after some time has passed. It gives the ability to find the holes and flaws in logic and either change our stance, or reinforce the points being hold, or buttress the weak points in logic. Writing down our own thoughts is a fundamental part of self-analysis. It does not matter if nobody reads. The point of writing is self-expression - gathering an audience should be secondary. We cannot convince or connect to other people without convincing or connecting first ourselves. We cannot hope to sweep someone else away by the force of writing until it has been done to us.

Apart from the writing geniuses that form less than 1% of the total human population, I am pretty certain all good writing starts from bad writing. In fact, reading biographies of well-known writers it indicates that great writing only comes through endless, repetitive iteration. Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. In any case, so what if the writing is bad? Ultimately what truly matters is that we are writing something that matters to us, in our very own voice that expresses thoughts as a unique individual. There is no one else who can be you and write as you.

"I am never inspired enough to write" It is a common fallacy that we have to wait for inspiration before we start writing; If you wait for inspiration or a better chance to write; you're not a writer, you're a waiter. Granted there are moments of inspiration that sweep you away and let you pour your soul instinctively into your writing, but those moments are few and far in between. It is important to trust the process that once begin to write, the story will unfold by itself. You can not think yourself out of a writing block; you have to write yourself out of a thinking block. This is still missing the point; writing should not be an act of inspiration, but again, an act of self-expression. Wanting to write when you are inspired is almost equivalent to stating that

you will only speak when you are inspired.

Most think they have no time to write; I think most of us have trouble prioritizing time. Often we do not understand that in life we need to be able to carefully weigh tradeoffs. If writing enables us to be more conscious, thoughtful and creative, why are we not deliberately making time to write? Why is it not a priority? Making time to write is making time to think or connect with ourselves. With the exception of meditation, try thinking of a better way to connect to yourself. Writing in itself is a form of meditation. In the start putting some thoughts out there and we become acutely aware of who we really are and what we really think.

When you write and share it, it is an opportunity for an asynchronous connection between you and a virtual stranger. When you write about your fears, you are letting someone know that they are not alone facing those fears. When you write about overcoming difficult obstacles, you are giving some hope to someone out there that it is possible to do the same for themselves. When you write about your victories, you are making an example out of yourself - hey let's aim for the stars, they are possible to reach sometimes. You are honoring yourself and your experiences. What could be better than to chronicle them somewhere and sharing them with the world? Anyway, raise your writing, not your voice - It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder. We should not trivialize or underestimate your acquired experiences and knowledge. What you think is trivial may make someone's day. What you assume as common knowledge may be the exact information that someone else is trying to find. It may even change someone's life. You could unwittingly inspire someone to make a change. Try taking the first step, it is always the hardest to start. Try writing words that will turn into sentences forming paragraphs, which will become the very basis of a story which you may not even know exist within yourself. You may discover through writing, the stories of your life could be vastly different from what you have remembered in your head; that it would inevitably take on a life on its own once it is written and shared. But when write you need to be mindful, because the words you write or speak to others they can leave a huge impact and create a lasting memory - either good or bad - so it's super important to choose them wisely. Writing can make or break a relationship and your choice of words and the way you express yourself can accelerate or kill your success. Finally, your writings either plant the seed of success or failure in the mind of another.

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