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'Entrepreneurs are made, not born'

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Entrepreneurship is in blood" is a myth I believed in for years. I did not have it. I came from a family of renowned musicians of Indian classical music, my father Pt. Kiran Deshpande being one of the stalwarts of Indian drums named Tabla. It was music therefore and not business in my blood.

Yet, I was educated as a mechanical engineer and started my professional career as an employee. Blood also showed its effects as I made a mark as an artist of tabla in parallel. Over the years as I progressed in my professional life, I realized that entrepreneurship lies in restlessness, not in blood. One can be entrepreneurial in job too, but then there are natural limitations.

To start an entrepreneurial effort one needs courage of conviction and a restlessness which is driven by matters higher than mere financial. Pursue something akin to the famous "Star Trek" quote-"to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before." This drive gives the courage to let go the comfort of fat salary and dive into creating something from afresh. Mine however was a far humbler quest compared to the Star Trek quote. But it was certainly driven by the need to contribute something which will have a lasting impact on human life. Thus the brand VLife-"Adding Value to Life" was created. A person can take such a lofty idea to get into business only when, he or she has an unquestionable support from the family in general and spouse in particular. I am blessed in this aspect by God to have parents, who never questioned my acts and wife who did-constructively but always gave in to that restlessness I alluded to before.

In creating VLife Sciences Technologies and subsequently Novalead Pharma, I learnt some important "Gyan". Some of which I could internalize given my 'middle class' upbringing-the "Sanskar" as it is called in our philosophy and some I realized after feeling the after-effects of pursuing the contrary:

Ã¢â??Â Never take undue advantage of/neglect the family which supports you. Try to be contributive towards realizing their dream as you expect them to be in yours.
Ã¢â??Â Do not expect anyone to do what you yourself may not be willing to do. This includes customers, service providers, business associates and above all fellow employees.
Ã¢â??Â If you are convinced about an approach, stick to it. But, do not be afraid to question your own conviction and importantly, be ready to give in to superior argument.
Ã¢â??Â Acknowledge and respect others' contribution to your dream-that of investors, employees and critics. They are essential contributors to realizing a dream.
Ã¢â??Â Remember that there is nothing personal in business. Never let relationship at personal level be affected by business outcomes, which is very tough.
Ã¢â??Â When evaluating success, do not forget what caused the restlessness which put you on entrepreneurial path- money is important, but is not everything.
Ã¢â??Â Use money prudently while building the business, even if it is of investors. There is a selfish interest in doing so -your ownership of entrepreneurial venture depends on that.
Ã¢â??Â A captain is as good as his team-but it is the captain who can make the team excel. Never forget that this responsibility is yours and this cannot be delegated.
Ã¢â??Â An entrepreneur has to have passion and energy to stand up 101th time to make the same presentation after failing the previous 100 times. This energy only comes from one's conviction on the business proposition. Remember that it cannot be faked.
Ã¢â??Â Pray and pray and pray ... Pray by making your best efforts. The great hotelier, Mt. Conrad Hilton's autobiography says-pray always, it is the best investment one can make. An entrepreneur needs HIM on his or her side always-whenever in trouble HE sends someone to help an entrepreneur but only if praying is adequate (read efforts). An entrepreneur needs such visitors again and again.
Ã¢â??Â Never be afraid to accept that you do not know everything. But remember, neither do others.

Hence, listen, understand others' viewpoints but finally follow what your heart says-there is peace in doing so because then failure is yours and so is the success. It is this peace for which one becomes an entrepreneur; remember the restlessness we started with? None of these statements is novel and non-obvious. So, I claim no patent on any of them. These are mere collection of what great entrepreneurs have said and what I realized from my personal journey as entrepreneur.

A journey which started in 2003, has given many highs to me personally and a few lows which I experienced only momentarily due to the help and support of my fellow employees. I am glad that Novalead Pharma has now validated expertise in discovering new indications for the already approved drugs.The first discovery-Galnobax, which is a repurposed drug, is in phase I/II in India, USA and Malaysia. It gives me confidence that Novalead would be able to replicate the path of Galnobax

with its bulging candidate pipeline. On the other hand, VLife has not sat idle on its laurels of being the only end-to-end workbench for molecular modeling and simulation with its flagship product-VLifeMDS and QSARPro. It has kept innovation close to its heart and has demonstrated it with ViTAL, the genotoxicity prediction technology which has enhanced its relevance to a new customer segment-the generics and API manufacturers too.

I am waiting for the day when one of the discoveries using computational technologies becomes a remedy for a global unmet need and alleviates pains of millions. Galnobax has that chance-it can well be the first small molecule therapeutic in the area of dreaded diabetic foot ulcer, which is a global need. What better reward can one have than being a contributor to 'Adding value to Life' through a better therapeutic? Just one-earning while doing so.