

Introducing life-saving “Life-Potty”



How do you feel if someone you longed for years all of a sudden approaches before you? I had the same feeling on Nov 26, 2016. It was the happiest day of my life I have ever had.

I hadn't been to library for about a week. It was a break time on Nov 26; something dragged me to the library in the school. On the front page of the daily newspaper, I saw a figure of an astronaut along with a space station. I was and am interested in the space research and I always read the news related to it. So I was attracted to this news “Scoop on the space poop”. Since English is not my mother language I had no idea what the title meant but I felt there was something in this title. I read the article. Wow! It was interesting. I felt like ‘Haven't they solved out this problem yet? Are astronauts still practicing what they used to practice in their babyhood?’

There was a feeling in me that this problem was specific to me, ‘I gotta solve this problem.’ There were my friends nearby me. I shared this news with them. One of them smiled and said “oh! I commented on this yesterday”. They knew about it but didn't inform me but they were not serious either. I doubted on them ‘Is it what we should comment on and leave on the social media?’ I read the news and found that deadline was on 20th December. I gasped. At least there were 24 days left for me to complete the task. I read this news thrice. I was in a plan to steal the newspaper from the library in order to get the article on hand. But it wouldn't be sincere and civilized culture to do so. Then, I thought “oh it's just Rs.5 (5 cents) for the newspaper. I could buy it. I felt mixed expression of hurry and nervousness. Some kind of current flowed from the foot and spread all over the body after I finished reading the news and identified my opportunity.

I came in the class-room after the bell. I again shared the news with my other friends. They said that they were not interested in such an interesting subject. Then I said myself, ‘I'm interested’.

In all the periods after the break, I was not in the class. Actually my body was but I wasn't. I wished as if the periods were gone faster but I noticed they were going slower than usual. I made the first design on the paper when mathematics teacher was teaching. It was my first design for the solution on the space poop. I was delighted to see my design. I saw future in it. I thought at first that it would be the winner. The design was simple; a large vessel with two separate cylinders. I was confident that the artifact could be fit in the buttock of the astronaut. I looked at the design for the whole other periods; everyone gave attention to the teacher. I wasn't the exception but my attention was a drama. I was in fact in a hurry to go home as fast as possible.

As soon as the final bell rang, I rushed to the shop for the newspaper. After purchasing the newspaper, I got on the bus and started reading it. I read word by word. I understood the challenges. Then later, I noticed that the design I had drawn wouldn't work in the zero-gravity space environment. I kept imagining the solution until I arrived at the bus station. After I arrived in my room I cut the news and separated from the main newspapers. I kept it safely in the file.

Our terminal examination was due to start from the 2nd January. I had to study well in order to pass the exams. When I found the news about incentive challenge, I felt I had two option to go forward with; whether to prepare for the humdrum exams that thousands students do or to take part in the incentive challenge which might help astronauts make life easier in the space. In our society, getting higher percentage in exams is credited much than his/her behavior and contribution to the society. If I followed the paths of other students, I would gain respect if I succeeded in my studies for a timing and if I would win the incentive challenge, I would gain respect that I wouldn't forget forever in my life. I had no other options but to participate in the incentive challenge.

The main reason behind choosing incentive challenge wasn't the respect I'd get if I won. There wasn't any probability that I'd win the challenge. I was and am interested in the space research. It is really amusing to understand how astronauts work, sleep and stay in the space station. I had always dreamt of working with NASA. It is very prestigious job if anyone says that he/she works in

NASA. Many students at school when asked about their aim, they pronounce as 'NASA scientist'. It was my field of interest too. So I was sure that I'd on one or other form work with NASA. And it was the golden opportunity that approached which I longed for years. I decided to grab the opportunity whether or not I would win the challenge. After I decided to accept the challenge I gave full time in the completion of it.

All of my friends were preparing for the terminal examination. I was indeed preparing for the examination but it was not terminal; it was lifetime examination which would never repeat unlike terminal examination.

Though I knew about the incentive challenge on 26 November, it took me 2 days to enter in the challenge. I had no money and I had to save my tiffin tips. It wouldn't cost me a dime if I had internet connections in my room. I had to pay Rs.25 (25 cents) per hour for using internet in the cyber. I signed up for the account and newsletter for the HeroX. I was amazed to see the contents and the challenges at the HeroX. I couldn't believe that websites like HeroX existed in the world. I was proud of myself that I found out the correct website that fitted to me. After my acceptance to the challenge, I began on the research of the space and spacesuits.

I made it everyday duty to imagine the solution to the management of the space poop considering all the facts about the environmental condition and the minimum necessities of the artifact that should be designed and embedded in. I used to hurry up after the school and rushed to the cyber before arriving home for the lunch. I downloaded as many as two hundred videos related to space, toilet, space suits and space environmental conditions. I evaluated each of the videos and articles and noted down the important points.

I used to be late for the lunch and my uncle always scolded me. He had never appreciated my any work since I had failed in an exam. He doubted on me that I was roaming around with my girlfriend. I had thousands words to defend him but I spoke not a single word. I feel awkward to state what he believed about me. He even said that I was influenced in the drugs seeing me not going anywhere. Sometimes I used to get angry with him but I didn't show my anger. I

controlled all of my emotions. I rejected all the unreasonable scandals he put on me. I had no ideas how could I keep his mouth shut. My only hope was to win the incentive challenge which was tough for any teenager like me. I had respect on him but he made me discouraged instead of encouraging me to move forward leaving behind all the failures of the past. I used to write my feelings and emotions within words on the paper and burn it. Usually, I wrote positive things of me and the bright future I would live in the future. Doing so would keep away tensions from me.

One day I left a drawing of an astronaut on the table. He might have had a glance at it. When I arrived home after school he scolded me “You’ll never make up to NASA. You won’t even get a thousand rupees job with that percentage. Don’t ever dream of NASA.” Then he made a bad scratch on the drawing. How would have I felt at that instant when he ruined my drawing? I couldn’t understand him. Why do society doesn’t give an individual live the life of his own interest? Why is there pressure upon the man from his birth to the death? Such queries arose in me. When my uncle made me meaningless I went on adding value in me without being heard by him ‘I can accomplish the task and I am important’. Incentive challenge was a hope and a way to settle all other tensions.

When I walked from cyber to the room, I often saw much juicy and tasty food in the shops. I felt like eating them all at once. I even made up my mind eating them. But I remembered the promise of my own that I wouldn’t eat anything bought on the market. If I would I would only do once I completed the incentive challenge. I used to arrive home with the saliva on my mouth for the hope to eat something after the completion of the incentive challenge. This also made me finish the necessary things for the challenge on time.

My participation at HeroX on the space poop solutions was a secret and it is still secret. I like to do things secretly. They bring surprises to other if I become successful in them. The main reason behind not telling my guardian about the incentive challenge at HeroX is secrecy. I want to complete my challenge by myself. I didn’t seek help from anyone in this incentive challenge too. It was my fight so I fought. There is always different kind of forces that helps me to

complete the challenge. My idea was not unrealistic and I didn't complete the challenge just to complete. I had the feelings that my idea could be helpful to solve the space poop problems.

Basically, my idea was to manage the space poop systematically. That artifact designed was to wear and integrate within the suit. I kept the name of the artifact as "Life-Potty". I found this name interesting and meaningful too. Managing the space poop is very vital for the astronauts. This saves their life and this artifact is worn within the body like a baby using diapers. 'Potty' is a small tool for the children to poop out and this name was easy to pronounce and remember. So, together the artifact was called as 'Life-Potty'.

Some of the main features and advantages of the Life-Potty were; it could be fitted in the body and within the suit in less than 5 minutes and it would only take 30 seconds for the astronauts to operate the system at any time once the system is worn. Operating the system was as easy as 1, 2, and 3. Astronaut could operate the system with just a rotation of the knob and a click on the switch. This could be easily done with the pressurized gloves. The most fascinating feature and advantage of Life-Potty was it didn't require oxygen gas to flush the waste. It used CO₂ gas thus by saving the pure oxygen by 100%. This system could be used both in emergency and general cases for more than 10 days.

I dreamt of very strange things that winning the competition would bring in my life. I feel awkward to mention some of them. But, I believe such dreams are often dreamt by all high school students. They have high expectation on small ventures which only few are fortunate to achieve.

I had no strong reason to dream about winning the competition but I dreamt. I thought my idea was the best of all because I had certain characteristics embedded within the solution (artifact). I felt as if everything were helping me to achieve the reward like me visiting the library, some days left to complete for the submissions, etc. At the beginning, I thought what the competition would pay for the winner i.e. \$30,000. It was really large amount for me to count. I thought I would be the winner and would give the reward to my guardians. I also decided not to give this reward to anyone but keep myself to continue my study and

license some of my idea to the companies. Thousands of such unrealistic dreams and the matter of probabilities rolled in my mind. I started to divide the money without knowing if I could win or not.

Money was prioritized by my mind in the beginning but later, I thought that it was my dream to work with NASA. It was a great opportunity to work with NASA on managing space poop. It didn't matter if I would win or not but competing in such big challenge was important. There would be millions of people who would submit their innovations, how could I be so selfish and foolish? These thought continued to appear in my mind.

When I accepted the challenge there were 12,000 people participating in the incentive challenge. So I thought I could also be the winner. My expectation was many people would submit their ideas but I found less than expected. But later, when it reached to 15,000, I thought 'It's already 15,000 let it not rise further.' But as days passed by, the number of acceptors rose above 20,000. I was surprised. Then I used to think that I had less chance to win. But again I would comfort myself 'Why should I care about the followers? All of them may not submit their ideas and if they will their idea won't be as compelling as mine.' Then I didn't give up wishing that I were winning. Again I thought that there might be excellent ideas to the solution of the problem submitted by the professional designers. At this time my assumption at winning the competition would be none. In this way my assumptions of winning the competition were sometime way high to 100% and sometimes low to 0%. But such assumptions never stopped.

On 13th December 2016, I was surprised and annoyed at the same time. I thought what would have happened if I didn't check emails on that day. I was noticed that the deadline for the submission was only on 15th December. This broke my heart. I had still many things left to complete. The whole draft was left for typing. I made a quick plan to stay all night on the next day and complete the typing. I stayed late at night that days to complete some sketching. On one hand I was preparing for the submission and on the other I was compelled to wish that the deadline for the submission were postponed. And indeed my wish worked. The new submission deadline was on 20th December as stated before. I had more

days to complete the necessary things. The proposed submission deadline scared me but it also made me accelerate the work at some extent.

Finally, I completed the work. When I checked out on 18th December, I hadn't missed the deadline yet. I clicked on the entry page on the website. On my God! I still had many things left to fill which I wasn't aware of. There were about 25 filling spaces. I wished I had made entry on other previous days. I filled some of the gaps and other I copied in my pen-drive to complete at home. I stayed straight four hours on the same chair and table. I had no enough money to continue for more than 4 hours in the cyber that day. All other students like me were playing online games. I felt as if I were doing something different in the crowd. Such feelings provided me with self-esteem and self-respect.

I managed everything on 18th and 19th December. At night I even dreamt about astronauts using my artifact. This made me happy and gave a hope that I could also win. On 20th December after the school I entered the cyber to make final entry. I was happy to complete the challenge. While I was filling some of the missed gaps, something teased me. The computer system went on and off. I prayed that my entries were not vanished. When the computer would switch on and I would find entries as it were before, I would feel happy. But sometimes I had to make the entries twice due to the failure of the computer system. But I didn't give up and stayed patience.

When I was ready to click on the final submissions, I doubted on one word of the entries. I checked the title. It was "Life-Totty". I didn't know what 'Totty' meant. I checked on the Google. I felt ashamed. It had to be 'Potty' instead of 'Totty'. On repetition of the word 'Potty' it turned to 'Totty' and it was mentioned everywhere on the submissions. There was limited time left to replace the word 'Totty' with 'Potty' especially when I had to rush to home. All my files were in PDF format so it wasn't possible to make necessary changes in the cyber. I did what I had to because it was the final day. When I was confident that all the changes were made correctly, I clicked on the 'Submit the entry'.

I took deep breathe when I received emails from HeroX which confirmed that the submissions were accepted.

After four days I had made my submissions, one of the HeroX members, Kathleen Russell sent me a message stating that it was wonderful and she accepted that. I was overjoyed. I thought she was the judge and she liked my idea. But later on conversation with her, I came to know that she wasn't appreciating my idea but the profile of the account. I was like "Oh, it's not her". However, I wasn't unhappy. I thought at least someone appreciated what I had done in those 20 days.

Now, I feel amazed that how did I come up with such wonderful idea for the challenging competition. How did I become so dedicated in the studies and research for the challenge not only to complete but also to provide meaningful and useful ideas? At this time I feel like I can't do any such challenges again. Feeling like this always appears in me when I complete some extra ordinary thing that I used to think I couldn't. I believe that there is certain force in the humans that allows them to accomplish the tasks once they begin and dedicate on. But later the doer himself/herself feels amazed of his own ability at watching his/her accomplishments. This is how ordinary people become the heroes in their life and in the lives of thousand others. I do believe every human has that secret power which I notice when I accomplish certain task.

Finally I can say open-heartedly through my unforgettable experience that once we think something is to happen it is sure to happen. It might take time but it will occur. If we stay calm, patient and dedicated for a long time on anything, it will approach before us saying 'Hi! I am here. I noticed you have been looking me for a long time'. Then there is our chance to step forward without hesitation. It is applied to every dream that a person believes he/she can accomplish. Submission of my own ideas was great achievement to me and it was time my dream came true though the winners are yet to be announced. Finally, I would like to say 'Grab the opportunities that approaches before you. It may not give you rewards and money but it will certainly strengthen your ability to deal with the problem in a limited time period. The greatest advantage of such incentive challenge is it provides you with confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. Once you complete the challenge you'll feel amazed that how you accomplished the task. Then the tears of happiness start to roll down your cheeks too. ****