

The Power of Belief in One's students

By | Jan 11, 2018

"See the light in others and treat them as if that's all you see"

– Dr. Wayne Dyer

Mr. Ansal Scaria is a busy principal. Every day, he sits in his office constantly visited by parents, teachers, and students walking in and out every few minutes, discussing their issues and concerns. His role in the school is more than that of a principal. Apart from being a great problem solver, he is the navigator of the school who has guided it on the path of success.

A few days back, while I was in sir's office, a teacher walked into share issues she had been facing with some students. Ansal sir patiently listened to her. After giving it some thought, he asked the teacher to compile the list of students who had been struggling in their academics, across all the sections of grade 6. He called for an immediate meeting with the teachers and the students on the list. Teachers walked into the office and sat around the table, while the 15 students trickled in one by one. I could see those faces tensed and worried, wondering about the reason for the sudden meeting.

Once everyone was in the room, Sir asked the students if they could understand what was being taught in the class. Very few hands went up on being asked if they could read. Of the few that raised their hands, he asked them to read a small passage. The students who read could not proceed beyond the third word. He looked back at the teachers and said, **'We will need to plan something.'**

The very next moment he turned back to the students, and asked them 'Why do you come to school?' Many responded saying, 'to read', 'to study'. He nodded. He then threw a few word problems connecting them to daily life. A few students responded with the correct answer. He smiled and said, **'Each one of you is smart. See you gave me these answers.'** I could see the students' faces slowly lighting up.

He then asked the children if they were ready for a **CHALLENGE!** All the children replied **'YES, Sir!** with excitement.

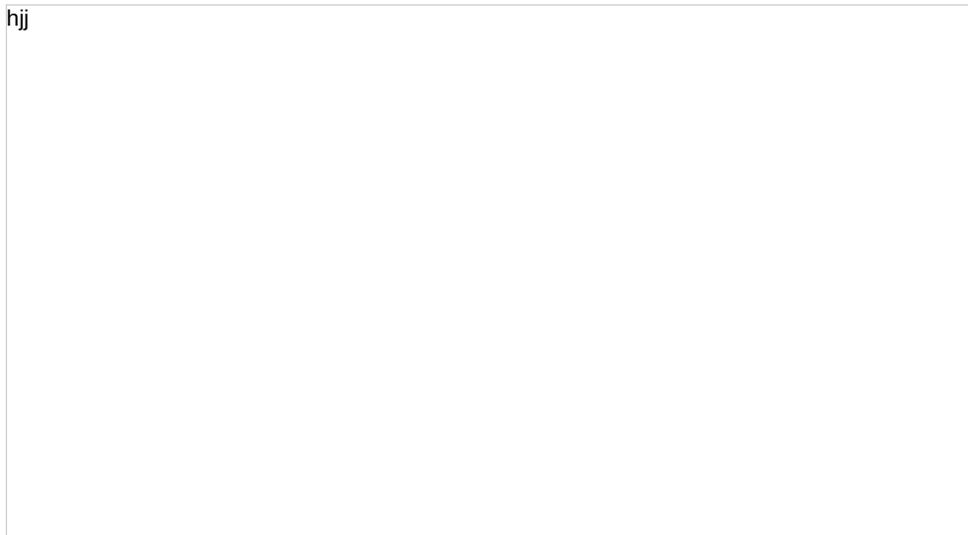
'I know each one of you is capable of learning the alphabets in Hindi and Kannada. You just showed me how smart you are! Do you think you are ready for the challenge? The challenge is to learn the alphabets in Hindi and Kannada for tomorrow, I will be asking you to write them. **Challenge accepted?**'

'YES, SIR!!'

'So go back home and I shall meet you all tomorrow. I know you will be able to write all the alphabets tomorrow.' With that he closed the meeting. The children left the room beaming with motivation.

The following morning, while I was discussing my plans with sir, the same group of children came rushing in to the office with notebooks and pens in their hands. They asked if they can show him what they learned. Sir was pleasantly surprised and asked the students to sit in the corridor and complete the task. Not only had they completed writing all the alphabets. Once done, they gathered around to show their work.

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Ansal Sir surrounded by the enthusiastic achievers!

This was not the end – they asked sir to give them one more challenge for the next day. Their next task was to learn the tables from 1 to 15. I was lucky enough to see how these very set of students came back the next day and write all the tables that they were asked to learn.

When they left the room, sir smiled and said, '**See, these are the very students who did not wish to study till yesterday. They just need people to believe in them and they can all achieve too.**' That day, the children learned to push themselves and I witnessed the power of belief. This is what a great leader does to a school. I am very proud to be associated with Swami Vivekananda Rural Education Society.

–Written by Ms. Aileen Chen, School Transformation Lead, [Mantra4Change](#)

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