

Mohnish Pabrai's session with students at JNV Lucknow on December 27, 2022

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Mohnish: It's nice to meet you. Please have a seat. It's so great to be with you. I haven't been to the Lucknow Center for a long time. I don't remember maybe five, or six years. Normally, I try to come to see the batch at least once, but because of COVID. It's good to be back here. Shall we start our Q and A? First question.

Pravin Kumar: Hello sir. Good morning. My name is Pravin Kumar from JNV Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh. My question to you is, even after having 140 crores population, the performance of Indian Sport is very disappointing. How can it be changed, sir?

Mohnish: That's a very good question. There was a book I read maybe two, or three years ago. The book was called The Bolt Factory. Usain Bolt came from Jamaica. Do you know where Jamaica is?

Jamaica is part of the West Indies, and it's in the Caribbean near the US. It's a very small country. It's a small island, and the Jamaican population probably is no more than a few million people. It might not even be more than the population of Lucknow and Kanpur combined, but they produce a lot of sprinters. Jamaica produces a lot of sprinters and, and general track and field. Also, they have dominated sprinting. The United States has a population, which is almost 70 times the population of Jamaica. In the United States, we have very good sports facilities and very good infrastructure to train athletes and sprinters. But when the Olympics takes place, Jamaica dominates. It does even better than the US does.

One of the things I've been doing with my family since 2004 is we have gone to the Olympics. In 2004, we went to Athens, in 2008 to Beijing, in 2012 to London, and in 2016 to Rio in South America. The one I couldn't go to during COVID 2020 was Tokyo. That was the one that got missed. When I go to the Olympics, I only get tickets for track and field because that's the most exciting. One time, I think when I was in Beijing, we had really good seats. When they were going to have the 200-meter final, Usain Bolt is getting ready to run, and I'm screaming at him, from the stand, so he looks. He actually looked.

Then I said, I better keep quiet, but when you read the book, The Bolt Factory, there's something unusual about the way humans get specialized. Like cricket is popular here, baseball is popular in the US. All kids, since they're really small, are playing baseball. Just like we have IPL in India, we have professional

baseball leagues in the US. More than 50, 60% have come from other countries, and they have come from very small countries like Jamaica. The Dominican Republic is a very small island. Why is that happening?

Why does Jamaica produce such great sprinters? Why does the Dominican Republic produce such great baseball players? Why does Brazil produce such great soccer players? Why does this happen? If you look at the example of Jamaica, what happens in Jamaica is that from the age of about 10 or 11 in the whole island and all the schools, they are running a lot of competitions for track and field. What they do is they have coaches in Jamaica who have gone to the Olympics. They have done well in the past and they're identifying particular kids who they think could have the potential to do that. What they're doing then is kind of like the Dakshana system. They're gathering the best kids who are 10 to 12 years old from the whole island. They bring them to one school.

The guy who's coaching Usain Bolt himself was a sprinter in the Olympics before. What happens is that when these kids are 13, or 14 years old, they have now been getting two, or three years of very strong professional coaching for sprinting with the best coaches. In Jamaica when there is a track and field meet, even a 14-year-old high school student track and field meet, it is in a stadium of 50,000 people. The whole country is excited to watch the best 14-year-old sprinters. These kids who are just emerging, are treated like rock stars. Then, 14, or 15 of the kids who are doing well, are further separated into one-on-one coaching with particular coaches. No other country in the world has this type of system specifically for sprinters. It doesn't exist.

If you look at a place like India, if Dakshana had done for sprinters, what we have done for JEE coaching in India. If the same system that we are using in Dakshana is used in sports. When I used to go to New York when I first went to the US. Okay, so New York is not part of India. It is separate. It's part of the US. Why were all the taxi drivers in New York sardarjis? The reason they were sardarjis first there were very few sardars who were cab drivers. Then some more sardars came. They thought, what should we do? What kind of work can we do? The existing sardars trained them, explained how it works, and then more sardars started taxi driving. Over time, it became so that more and more Sikhs went into driving cabs.

Similarly, in New York, almost all the laundries are owned by Koreans. The same thing happened. It's not like they are better at doing laundry. When more Koreans came, they were just looking at what can we do. They looked at what other Koreans were doing and they started to do the same thing. You end up in the world with all these kinds of specialized things everywhere, and these specialized things everywhere happen because humans are driven by peers. Every parent in Jamaica, when they have a 10-year-old boy or girl, the role models, all the Amitabh Bachchan of Jamaica are all sprinters.

There is a very deep interest the kids had. Even Usain Bolt was very interested in cricket. He was playing a lot of cricket and he could have been a very good cricketer. He's very athletic. But he said that in Jamaica, people don't care about cricket so much as they care about sprinting and he went that way. Now we get to India and we see that we have this very large population, 140 crores. I remember there was a journalist before you guys were born, some of the people in the back might know him, Kushwant Singh. He used to be the editor of illustrated Weekly of India, which doesn't exist anymore. I remember when I was a kid, I was maybe 10 years old or something, I was looking at this illustrated weekly that had come. At that time, India's population was maybe 70 crores. The title of that article was 70 Crores and not one bronze. What he meant a 70 crores population is there, forget track and field. We didn't get a medal in any field. We didn't even get a medal in hockey.

It is very easy for India to become a powerhouse in any sport it wants. The only thing that has to happen is Dakshana has to shift from JEE to sprinting. If we wanted to do it, it's really easy to, because all we have to do is just say sports. You have a sports day; you have all these things going on. We just have to look at who has talent, and then we have to bring that talent, give the infrastructure, and give the coaching. In India, parents are very happy when their kids are going for JEE coaching or NEET coaching. If we tell the Indian parents, we will take your kid and make them a sprinter, they will not be interested.

There would need to be some change in mindset. But in India, it has already happened. There is a lot of interest in cricket, right? India produces great cricketers, but the funny thing is that if you look at a place like Sri Lanka, or if you look at a place like Bangladesh, or even if you look at a place like Pakistan, these are much smaller countries than India. When India plays Sri Lanka, we should beat the hell out of them in cricket. But sometimes that doesn't happen. Sometimes they beat us, and sometimes Bangladesh beats us. The reason they beat us is, if you look at a place like Sri Lanka, they have a system for cricket in high school, which is just like sprinting in Jamaica. There are some schools in Sri Lanka where the school team, just one school team, may beat India Under 19 team because they're so good and they've come from all over and all that.

Your question is very good. Humans can get very good if there is a kind of acritical mass that comes together. If you look at the IIT system, the IIT system does not exist anywhere in the world except in India. What I mean by that is that if you go back to the very first IIT, which was being created, I think IIT Kharagpur was the first one, India needed a lot of help because we didn't have anything. They went to a few US universities, like MIT and a few other universities.

Those universities provided the initial faculty. MIT, Stanford, and a bunch of other US universities sent their professors here. The IIT system is a mirror of the

US education system, and it looks very different from other colleges. I'll give you some examples of how IITs are different. That came straight from the US. The Indian education system by and large does not trust the teacher or the professor. Let's say 10 standard board exams. Board exam papers are not set by the school, they are set by a central body. The grading of that paper doesn't also happen in the school's central body and everything is being controlled by the central body. The reason they're doing all that is that they don't have trust that if they give it all locally, it'll happen properly, so they have kept it central.

If you look at US universities, let's say MIT, the trust has been given to the professor. What happens is, if I take a class in computer science at MIT, for example, programming 101, there's a class, and the professor is going to set the curriculum. The professor is going to decide how the grading will be done. On the first day, what will happen in the US is the professor will come to class and he'll say, okay, there is out of a hundred marks that we will judge you on at the end of the semester, 10 marks is for attendance. If you attend all the classes, you get 10 marks. Every time you miss one class, you miss one point, then he'll say your final exam is 30%.

Then he'll say there will be two quizzes during the semester, which will have 20% weight each. We have covered 80% of the marks. Then he'll say that four times, there will be a surprise test each one having 5% weightage. He says that suddenly one day in class, I'll give a surprise test. You don't know when that test is going to come. All of these rules are set by the professor for that class. If you take the class the next semester with a different professor, he will have a different set of rules. He may say a final exam is 60%, right? The power has been given to the professor, and the system is trusting the professor.

When the IIT system came to India from the US, they completely imported that system. When you go to IIT, the same thing happens. Whatever class you take, the professor is going to decide everything. The professor is going to decide what book he's going to use, he's going to decide what he's going to teach you. If you take the same class with a different professor next semester, everything may be different, right? The trust has been given to the professor. It's really interesting to look at the IIT system. If I look at a place like MIT, the number one technical institute in the US, there is no such thing as JEE in the US.

The way you get admission to MIT is three or four things. The first thing is your high school GPA. High school GPA means the same thing is happening in high schools in the US. If I am going to a high school in California, the teacher in the high school is setting the curriculum, he's doing the testing, and he's giving the grades. There's no central body and the control has been given to the teacher, okay? The system that we have in IIT in the US exists even in the high school system. If I go to one high school in California and someone else goes to another high school in Texas, you cannot compare these two directly because one teacher may be easy, and the other teacher will be hard, but they take the

high school GPA, then they take a standard test, the SATs scholastic aptitude test, and then there's an essay. Then other things like your parents. What MIT does, if your parents went to MIT, let's say your father went to MIT, they'll give you some preference. The fifth is money. They will make it easier for my children to get admission, right? Look at the way MIT is admitting students. You have to write an essay, which means writing skills come in. Then, did your parents go there or not? Have you given any donations or not?

If you compare this to IIT it is just JEE, right? There are no other criteria. There's one criterion, the JEE criteria. That's it. The funny thing about the IITs is we took the system from the US and inside the IIT it looks just like the US system, but they wanted to create a system that was more rigorous and trustable in the Indian context. They changed the admission format to be based on a single test. What ended up happening is that when IIT is admitting someone, and when MIT is admitting someone, the IIT system of admission is better. It's a more objective, precise system. We end up with higher quality students in IIT than you would end up in MIT, right? Because we have higher quality students coming in, you have great quality students going out.

If I look at a place like MIT, the professors are very good. The infrastructure is very good. Everything is really good. If you look at IIT, I was just looking the other day on TV, and 40% of professor positions are empty. It was like 600 or 800 faculty positions across IITs are not even filled. This means that when you go to IIT Bombay and they need let's say 15 or 20 professors for computer science, there are only eight over there. That is a big problem. That means that classes will become bigger or they will have some teaching assistant or something else like that going on. That is not a good situation.

We don't have that situation at MIT. It's not going to have a 40% vacancy. They'll fill the roles. Part of the reason MIT doesn't have a problem filling the roles is they don't have to pay people a certain amount of salary, as India may. All the salaries are very precise. The reason why the IITs have all these openings is that they need very advanced skills to become an IIT professor, but they don't pay you much. Industry companies will pay you more than that, so people are not opting to become professors.

What I'm trying to say is that what happened with IIT in India is exactly what happened to sprinting in Jamaica. We created a system in India, which is creating great engineers, and we created a system that is creating better engineers than anywhere in the world. What happened is a system that was copied from a great system, the copycat has become better than the original, right? The quality of IIT professors is not that good. MIT has better professors, but incoming student quality is much higher. There's another thing that is happening about why IIT is doing so well, but I'll get to your situation there.

When a human baby is born, the brain comes out very underdeveloped because the birth canal is so narrow, you cannot have a big brain, and cannot

deliver the baby. The human brain goes through very rapid growth in the first five years of life. So first five or six years of life, the size of the human brain is growing a lot, and it's expanding a lot because it could not do that when the woman was pregnant. It happens after birth. That's why in the case of humans, the infancy and amount of care a baby needs early in life is very high. Both parents are required. A lot of care is needed because the baby has arrived very undeveloped.

The human brain goes through a lot of growth in the first five years. Then from the age of 11 to 20, in this age, what happens is that the brain starts specializing. The synapse connections start getting cut. What that means is that the human brain is perfectly set up only in this window of time. If you look at the entire human lifespan of 80 years or 90 years, it's only in these 10 years that the brain is completely open to specializing in whatever you want. For example, if Bill Gates starts programming at the age of 11, by the time he's 20 years old, he will become such a good programmer that if someone else starts programming at the age of 20, it'll take more than 30 years for them to even get the same level of skill.

What someone can do in 10 years over here, later in life will take even 30, or 40 years to have the same amount of expertise because whatever you are exposed to, the brain will put more of the real estate into that area. The education system around the world is from the age of 11 to 20 or at least from 11 to 18, where we are not allowed to specialize. We are told to study all subjects, right? What happens in India is after 16 they start separating commerce, art, and science. After 16, they start separating them. But for the most part, you are required to study all subjects.

If you look at a person like Michelangelo, a great sculptor, and painter, started sculpting statues when he was 9 or 10 years old. He didn't go to school. He was working full-time doing statue sculpting from the age of 10. By the time he became 20 years old, he became a really good sculptor and painter. Nobody else can match that because that's all he has done. He has not gone to school for that period. If I go back to the Jamaican sprinters, what they are doing is they have told those kids just do the bare minimum for other things, but focus on sprinting. In this 11 to 20 age band, for most of the world, people are not allowed to specialize. That window of time when you can become really good at something, that window closes and then people start trying to specialize later. Later the thing is over.

If I come to JEE prep, it's going on from let's say 16 to 19, right? You may sometime drop one year, but it starts at 16. In some cases it's starting at 14, right? You are starting in nine standard? Are you starting before nine standard?

Students: Yes. From class six.

Mohnish: The best time to start JEE coaching is class six. If you want a commercial for your coaching institute about why you should start in class six, just take the film from him. Okay? To have perfect coaching for JEE you start focusing on physics, chemistry, and math in class six. What happened in India, by accident, is the IIT system came to India. Because there was no trust in having a complicated admission system, they came up with a simple admission system that just had to be JE and because there is such a large population trying to get these seats there is a huge effort put to try to get a seat in IIT. We did a test we found the best of you, we brought you here, we are coaching you but actually, we are starting five years too late. We miss the eleven to fifteen window. If Dakshana wants to do it even better, we would start even earlier but one other thing that happened in the JNV system also by accident is there is a JNV selection test. That happens at the age of eleven. Ten-eleven is when you are taking the selection test. When you get selected in JNV, there are like 30 lakhs students. taking the test every year? These 30 lakhs students are trying one of 40,000 seats. In the 600 JNVs the total number of seats is 40,000. From 30 lakhs to 40,000 is like 1.3%. A very small number of kids who take that test get into JNV. One other thing that happens in JNV which is very good is at the age of eleven you are with other kids who are interested in almost the same thing.

Unfortunately, the coaching starts at 16 but 16 is still good. It is better than the rest of the world. When a kid goes to MIT, before he goes to MIT, he has not done any JEE coaching. He has not spent more time in physics or more time on math or any of that. He has not done any of those things. His focus on physics, chemistry, and math starts at 18 in the US. We are starting 2 to 3 years earlier and in some cases, we are starting at eleven. If you go to Bill Gates and you ask him what is the number one university in the world that you want to recruit people for Microsoft, he says IIT. The US has Stanford, MIT, and RPI. There are good schools. These are top-end schools. But he has found that Microsoft engineers who come from the IIT system in India are better than the engineers that are coming from MIT in the US. The reason they are better is that they started working earlier.

To go back to your question about why we are not doing well in sports, the answer is really simple. You have to start early and you have to have a focus system. The problem that happened is that a person like Mohnish decided, he doesn't care about sprinters. He cares about engineers. If I had cared about sprinters as much as I cared about engineers, we would go head to head. It would be some Bahadur Singh going head-to-head with Usain Bolt at the Olympics. What I have decided is I have left it to you. You now know how to create sprinters, right? What do you say?

Students: Yes sir.

Mohnish: Any sport you are interested in, like you know 32 teams go for the world cup. Has India ever made it to the world cup in football? Have you ever seen India in

the top 32 in the world cup? It has never happened in the history of India, zero. Okay. There are very small countries in Africa that are in the world cup. How can a small country of five million or something produce that much talent? India has so many people playing football all over the place.

A lot of countries play football, right? Why is Brazil great at football? Here is what is happening in Brazil. The top Brazilian football players all come from the slums of Brazil. The people who are the best football players in Brazil from the beginning from Pele onwards have all come from very poor families. They have not come from rich families. Why have they come from poor families? When you are growing up in a slum in Brazil, they don't have land. You know how the slums are, right? They are packed together. There is no land. You can't have a field in the middle of a slum where these kids can play and practice football. These top Brazilian football players when they are very small kids, they are playing football on a very small field. Not a normal soccer field. It is literally like 1/6 of the size. But you have 22 players on the field, right? Do you know what happens? They become incredible at dribbling. Because they, on per-square-foot bases, have many more people trying to stop them. They grow up playing football like this. Nowhere else in the world except Brazil and Argentina, they are only two countries where the kids grow up learning football like that.

Look at India also what happens with cricket. The matches take place on the road. Right? You will produce really good batsmen. If you look at someone like Tendulkar or you look at Virat Kohli. Let's talk about Tendulkar. Do you know what he does? He just spends about ten seconds looking around. You don't even notice it but you look at his videos he takes a very quick view of the field and in his head, he has programmed before he hits the ball he knows the location of the fielders. He knows in his head precisely where every fielder is sitting. Now after the ball is batted if one fielder changes position he has re-programmed his map. If you notice Gavaskar, Tendulkar Virat Kohli, and all these people, all have a map in their heads. I played with Amit, but I have no idea where the fielders are.

But that is not how Virat Kohli is playing. He has a map in his head. So there are extremely few batsmen in the world who can do that because it is a very difficult thing to do. If you try to do it that you keep a map in your head of where every fielder is and then what you have to do is the ball is coming at far high speed you have to keep it in your mind where the fielder is because now you can't look at the fielder once the ball is coming, right. But you have to know that if I cut this way it will go at this angle and nobody is standing there. I can hit it high there is nobody to catch the ball.

What I'm trying to say is that we get these specialized things because of accidents. Brazil became a football powerhouse by accident. Nobody designed a system that the slum people will play in a small area and all of that. Even today, the funny thing is this is very well-known that is why Brazilian football

players are so good. In Europe, they can create a small field and they can force the kids to play in that small field. It is not as much fun. It is much more work.

We will continue to see Brazil and Argentina dominate. The other thing about Brazil and Argentina is that the way these guys play football is completely different from the rest of the world. When you look at someone like Messi, the way he plays is like nobody else in the world. Go back to the history of Messi. He was from a very poor family. I think that the question you asked is really good because basically, the answer is that any group of humans can get good at anything they want to do. All you have to do is design a system that is focused on that.

What happened in the last few years is that India has done reasonably well at shooting, you know, in the Olympics. We have got some medals in shooting. Once we get some medals, then people who are interested in shooting in India, there's a little more interest in supporting them. The Indian guy who does the Javelin, what's his name? Mr. Chopra, right? Now they will be more interest in high schools and schools for Javelin because of him, right? Role models are really important. It has to start with role models.

Jamaica had a bunch of role models, then they got to Usain Bolt. I enjoyed the book, *The Bolt Factory*. When I read the book, they had nicknames for these Jamaican sprinters. One of them was Donkey Man, okay? This Donkey Man, when the book was written, was 14 years old. He's just in like eighth or ninth standard. When Sprinting Sports Day is taking place, the stadium has around 50,000 people coming from all over the country. He is being treated like Shah Rukh Khan. Like he has a big fan, people following him and wearing his shirt. Donkey Man feels like he's at the center of the world, and eventually, he'll come to the Olympics and do well. Anyway, that gives you an idea about why we have no one in sports and why we could have people in sports. Why don't we go to the next question?

Akansha: Morning, sir. I'm Akansha Kushwaha from JNV Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh. I want to ask you if you were the education minister of India, how would you like to see the education system for the better future of students? Thank you, sir.

Mohnish: If you make me the sports Minister of India, India will do well in sports. Do you agree with that? Education minister, what do you think will happen? I wish they made me the education minister, but I don't think they're planning to do that.

If they made me the education minister, I will make some changes. The first change I'll make, I will ban private schools. What I will say is that no one can start a private school. When you ban private schools, what happens is some rich people want their kids to go to good schools. What will the rich man do? First, all private schools are gone. Second, wherever you are living, your kid has to go to school in that area, the school that is there, the government school that is there, your kid has to go there. The third is, parents can provide as much

funding as they want to that school. Let's say the country only has JNVs. Let's say every person has to go to a JNV, they can't go to any other school. There's no other school that exists. Some really rich guy, first he wants to kill me because he's pissed off. But I will have a lot of security, so they can't kill me.

Do you know what he'll do? He'll get 20 crores to the school. What will happen is that rich people will start pumping a lot of money into the school, not because they care about you. They will pump the money because they care about their kids. What will end up happening is that the school is going to become fantastic right? The simple thing to do, this would be an ideal situation, is ban the schools and go this way. We can also do it. The simple way to solve these problems is to look at what has already happened. Okay?

We have a case study of schools in Delhi. When the Aam Aadmi Party came to power, they put a lot of focus on the schools. If you now go and see the government schools in Delhi, they look better than private schools; swimming, volleyball courts, and the classrooms are very nice. They have put a lot of money into these schools. It is not the private people putting money. The government has put money into these schools because they wanted to make the schools better, but they also did one more thing. What they did was they did not ban the private schools, but what they told the private schools is you have to take underprivileged kids for free. The school doesn't want to do this. Okay? They told the Delhi schools every hundred students you have 10 have to be taken with no fees, and 10 have to be taken from a very low-income level. I have some relatives in Delhi, though I think it's a really good thing. Do you agree with this is a good thing that the government did? My relatives are pissed off.

They don't know what I'm thinking. They're complaining to me. Modern School Barakhamba is a top-end private school. Prime ministers have gone there, and ministers have gone there. My cousin was really happy when his son got admission to Modern School Barakhamba. He went there too. First what the schools did was ignored them. They tried to play games and not take these kids because they know that it was going to affect their reputation and different things. The Delhi government went to the school and said, if this is not fixed in two months, we will cancel your school license.

They did something similar to what I wanted to do. What I was saying is just ban the schools, right? What they said is, we're not banning it, but we will close you down. You will lose your license to run the school. Those schools got alarmed. All the schools learned that they cannot play games and that they have to take those kids. What the Delhi government did, they set up a hotline. They told any poor person if he goes to school and they don't let him come in the gate or whatever to give admission, he just calls that phone number and the guy is in the school the next day. What the government also did is told the school, you make us come enough times and we'll shut the school down.

What happened in Delhi now, which is stunning in India to see this happen actually, is all the schools have taken large numbers of underprivileged kids. I was talking to my cousin without telling him how, how I'm thinking, okay? His son is like seven or eight years old. He said, my son, Sabia has decided that all his best friends are underprivileged. He said it was his best friend. He said he likes these kids and wants to be friends with them. The parents don't know what to do because they're not able to control the kid in school, right?

It is beautiful. What has happened is the rich are mixing with the poor. The poor are getting a good education. I am not a guy interested in politics. I don't particularly care about Aam Aadmi versus the BJP versus whatever. But what I will say is that whatever their motivation, this was something really good that was done. If you make me an education minister, I will take the people who have done this in the Delhi School and tell them, let's do this in UP, and let's do this in Bihar. Let's start because the system has already been proven once in India that we can make that work. I don't need to come up with a new system. I think if you become an education minister, a sports minister, or whatever, look at what is already working in some place. Can you take that and use it somewhere else? Now Aam Aadmi party has won the state of Punjab.

The education system in the state of Punjab is pathetic. I am from Punjab. Even though I have no hair, I am 50% Sikh. I know you can't see it because there's no hair, but I'm 50% Sikh, both my grandmothers were Sikh, and both my grandfathers were not Sikh. Do you know what happens in India? Someone is from Andhra Pradesh; they want to help the people from Andhra Pradesh. Someone is from Bihar; they want to help the people from Bihar. Dakshana is the only place where the guy is from Punjab. But we have no scholars from Punjab. There are no selections from the Chandigarh region. In Punjab especially we get almost zero. They tell me, the guy who's from Punjab has no people from his own state in the Dakshana program, which I think is good. I'm excited about that.

So now the Aam Aadmi Party has won in Punjab a state where even the parents don't care about education. They're only concerned about money coming from outside India and going to Canada. The funny thing in Canada is there's a city, one of the large Canadian cities, Vancouver on the west coast. Vancouver has three Punjabi radio stations. There's no Hindi radio station. There are three Punjabi radio stations, and they have a Kapadi stadium in Vancouver with 40,000 seats. Only matches are held between Sikh teams in that place. One of the things I'm watching to see in the next few years is what happens in a place like Punjab with the Aam Aadmi Party.

I hope what they're doing is they're taking that team in Delhi, which has done this. The other thing that's happened in Dakshana is we go talk to all these non-JNV systems. We used to take kids only from JNV, but now we started taking kids at Dakshana Valley from all school systems. We have written so many letters to the ministers or the heads of education or heads of schools in

so many states saying, please, this is our program. You can send your kids and all that. No one responds to us. It's a free program, right? It benefits the children. There's no cost to the school. Nobody cares. We sent one letter to Delhi, and they immediately called us, and when we were taking some time, they called us again. Delhi was extremely interested in what Dakshana was doing. If you look at the whole of India, Delhi is a small place.

Mohnish: Every year we are getting more. A lot of kids are taking our test now. In Delhi, what has happened is, the good news with this Kejriwal guy, is he went to IIT, right? And so actually specifically the Aam Aadmi Party cares a lot about people going to IIT. Delhi government has come to us many times. They said all the other states, we cannot get any answer head or tail from them. We can see the differences in the states. I have plans when they make me the Minister of Education. I have plans, I'll let you know when they make the call, next question.

Ajay Kumar: Sir. I am Ajay Kumar from JNV Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh. My question to you is that you are doing a great job for the students of our country. Sir, are you satisfied with only this or are you have any other visits from your site? Thank you, sir.

Mohnish: That's a good question. I think that my view on Dakshana is that it has worked a lot better than I ever thought it would work. I'm quite surprised that it did work as well. If you think about it, I'm not in India. I'm usually in Texas wearing shorts, and I'm not running Dakshana. I had to rely on other people. We ended up with a really good team. Now we have a lot of alums, Dakshana alums who have joined us. They have joined as faculty and in management and so on. That worked out very well.

I have two gurus, Warren Buffett, and Charlie Munger. One of the things I learned from them, which kind of took me a long time to figure this out, is that if you want to do well in life, then what you should avoid doing is looking back. You should try to focus on looking forward. What I mean by that is now let's say someone takes the IIT entrance exam and they get a really good rank; rank 50 in India, their top rank, they did well, okay? They should not spend a lot of time thinking about that. What they should look at is, what is my next target? Don't look back and say, oh, I've done so well, this is great whatever, don't do that. Look at the next target, and then the next target, and keep going. I am not that good at this.

I'm trying to get better at it. I think one of the things I'm trying to get better at is a lot of people will come to me and say, Dakshana is doing great work. Dakshana is wonderful, this, that, it feels good to hear that. But the focus needs to be on what can be done and what can be even better. I've thought many times that maybe in five, or 10 years we should open the Sprinting Academy. That'll be so much fun. Open a sprinting academy and set up a good infrastructure because it's very easy to do. You don't need much money or

infrastructure for that. You start going and identifying the talent and bring them there. We know how to do all those things. Maybe we'll do that later, or maybe one of you can do that later. For my self-development, I think what is good for me to do is not look back, at what happened and to try to look forward. Next question.

Divyaraj: I am Divyaraj From JNV Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh. My question is what are the reasons that you decided to visit CEO Lucknow after five years? Thank you, sir.

Mohnish: Why did I come after five years? Okay, that's good. It's better to come after five years than to come after 10 years, right? So better late than never. I enjoy the visits and I think that what was happening is that many of the other locations of Dakshana were better connected by air. They were places where I could do some business work as well. Like, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, I used to go to Mumbai, so Pune was easy, and so on. But Lucknow now has become very easy because we have a lot more flights and a lot more nonstops and so on. I will try not to repeat the mistake, and I'm hoping I can come here more often but I do want to make sure I see all the Dakshana scholars at least once every time. I missed some batches, and that was not good. We'll try to make sure it doesn't happen again. How are we doing on time? Ravi?

Ravi: We can take one more question

Mohnish: That's it. One more. Okay. Next question.

Amit Kumar: I'm Amit Kumar from JNV Jalaun, Uttar Pradesh. My question is, how would you feel if you were a student like me and got less marks compared with your classmate and, what would you do to achieve higher marks in your studies? Thank you, sir.

Mohnish: Okay, that's a very good question. So I already explained when I talked about sports and different things, that we humans are very heavily influenced by our peers. People who are like us, who are doing certain things, we like to be like them. That's kind of how we are as humans. There is a gravitational pull. If your friends are better than you, you will get better. If your friends are worse than you, then you will get worse. You're going to move, the way your friends are. One of the easiest things that are possible to do is to look at your classmates, look at the people whom you admire. They have good study habits, and they're doing things well, and they're organized and different things, and you try to spend more time with them, try to become their friend and that sort of thing. That will help you develop better habits.

Let's say there are big goals. You have to break that problem down into much smaller goals. I'll give you an example. There was a guy who was at JNV, Bangalore Ashok Kumar, some of you may have heard of him. Ashok, I think got ranked 63 in the JEE exam. Now he works for Google. What Ashok would do is that he was trying to maximize all the time available to do the best he

could in the IIT exam. All these kids used to complain to make a PT is wasting our time in the morning. We have no time.

Some centers canceled the PT, which was good, but all these kids used to complain that we have so much to do and this PT is wasting our time. What Ashok would do is that the night before the PT, he would find some problem that he cannot solve. He has looked at the problem and he doesn't know how to solve it. Throughout the time the PT is going on, he's thinking about that problem, he's thinking about different ways to solve it. Even though he is doing some exercise or whatever, mentally, he's using the time for something else. He also did the same thing when he was in line for getting food. He had a lot of time efficiency. When he is doing PT, he's thinking. When he's in line for food, he's thinking, and he's trying to think about what is a way to kind of solve these problems.

At that time, when Ashok went to the program, all the kids used to be sent back to the home JNV. Two months after, before the exam, the coaching ended and people were sent back to all the JNV, which was a terrible system because last two months you need to focus and study. Ashok was telling me that he was very concerned that he'll forget everything he said. He spent two months taking the test for the last 30 years over and over. Every day he would take one or two tests, and then he would go through all the questions he didn't know the answers to and how to solve them and all of that. For the last 60 days, all he was doing was he was taking that test over and over, and over again. By the time the real test showed up, he was ready. He was completely ready for it.

What I can suggest to you is that it's a very tough program. Lots and lots of questions are very hard to answer, impossible to answer sometimes, so break the problem down. What we should all be trying to do is we should try to be the best version of ourselves. We cannot be the best person in school or in class or whatever, but we can be the best version of ourselves. Look at the situation, okay, JEE is big, it's too much. Break the problem down. This one problem, I'm not able to figure it out, but I think I can. Let me spend more time on it and take it from there. That's the best I can suggest, but also I think it's very important to have the right friends and so that you adopt their habits. Shall we take one more question? Okay, one more. Let's do one more question.

Ashish
Kumar:

I am Ashish Kumar from JNV Etah Uttar Pradesh. Sir, the thing is that I want to become a good engineer, sir, but my parents wanted me to be a doctor. Sir, my cousin is there. How would I convince them of this? Thank you, sir.

Mohnish:

Your parents know that? What do they want you to do? Do they want you to leave this place and go somewhere else? What do they want you to do? Do they want you to also take the NEET exam?

Mohnish: Our parents have a lot of ideas about what should happen to us. That's okay. They can have those ideas. I think that if you can talk to them and say that my interest is somewhere else, they will usually think that interest can be changed, right? I have two pieces of advice for you. If your parents are somewhat reasonable people, then you can just repeatedly state that you are doing things that are of interest to you, and medicine is not of interest to you, and that is that. The second is you can just be quiet. They're saying whatever they're saying, ignore what they're saying and just keep it going. Then as it is there, they're probably already given up because you are already in a JEE center, you're going to take a JEE test, and you're not learning bio at all. Already that path is being closed off.

There's a kid who went to school with my daughter. When we were in California, this family is a family of Sikh doctors. They're many brothers. They are all doctors. They're in very advanced fields. All his cousins became doctors. His brother became a doctor. It was expected in this family that the only thing you can study is to become a doctor. Nothing else is allowed, right? This guy, Kabir had no interest in being a doctor. He told them when he was in high school when he was 16, or 17 years old, I'm not going to become a doctor. I talked to Kabir, I said, Kabir, when you told your parents that you're not going to become a doctor, what happened? He said they were in shock. They didn't even know how to respond to me. They said, how can you even think about something else?

Kabir was very clear that he wants to be a software programmer. He went to college and became a software programmer, and he is really good. He got a job at Facebook, and now he left the job. He's at a start-up, and he is making a lot of money. He's making more money than all his doctor cousins because he's extremely good at what he does. I met him recently. I was in New York, and I went with my daughter for dinner and I ran into Kabir. Now it has been like five years. He's been working for over five years. I said, Kabir what's the situation now with the family? He said I showed them my tax return, and they don't say anything now. One of the reasons they were interested in people becoming doctors was doctors in the US make a lot of money. They do well. That's one of the reasons they were interested. They saw that Kabir makes more money than all the doctors. He says, now they don't care. They're fine. Everything's okay.

What'll happen is that maybe at 15, 16, or 17, your parents were very interested that you should become a doctor. I think once you start, you're already here, you're going to go to college and so on, they will realize that for whatever reason it didn't happen, and they're just going to accept it. Everything will work out okay in the end. Don't worry about it. It'll be fine. A lot of parents have a lot of ideas and not all those ideas are right, and we don't want to upset them. We can be quiet; we can just be more diplomatic and we can sort that issue that way. It was great to spend time with you. I am hoping that if I don't do it, you guys will open the Sprinting Academy then I go to the Olympics and

it'll be fun. One time I was watching the 10,000 meters where they run around a track. They're going 25 times around a 400-meter track. It was a final. Some guy named Bahadur was, was running for Nepal.

The funny thing that happened is he was about three or four rounds behind the leader. Not that he's like six, 400 meters behind, or 300 meters behind. He was like 2000 meters behind the leader, like five rounds he's behind. There's a lot of excitement because the leader is about to cross the finish line, but Bahadur is with him because Bahadur still has four more rounds to go, but he is with the leader at that point. Of course, then the race ended, and everyone left. Bahadur is still running, just trying to complete the race. I just found it funny that it looked like he was one of the winners because he was running with the winners, but that was not to be. Anyway, it was great spending time with all of you, and I wish you all the best. Stay focused on the exam. You have very few days and months left, and all the best. Thank you.

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