

The Need To Stand Out



Let us ask ourselves about one of the aspects that is most important for the human beings of our times: what are the different ways of achieving success, of standing out? There is one thing that is indisputable: all human beings, in one way or another, try to stand out, to succeed; it is like a vital necessity. It is the need to do something, but above all, something important; it is the need to act, but to act in a way that does not pass by unnoticed. It is about “being someone”, not disappearing into anonymity, ensuring that our name will be on the lips of the greatest possible number of people.

The natural law of life leads us to act. The whole universe acts, moves, is going somewhere, even if we cannot say exactly where. So the need for action should not surprise us, since the human being responds harmoniously to the universal laws. It is also natural that every action should have results, a response that is in accordance with the action. But today, action and its results are seen under the lens of easy success: the important thing is to excel, to stand out from others, rather than ensuring that the things that we do are done well; as long as they look as if they have been done well, that is enough.

In this unstoppable race to stand out, we can find different forms of action.

* There are those who make a personal effort and, within their possibilities, seek some appropriate means of standing out.

* Others also rely on their own effort and work, but do not focus on the means that will lead them to obtain those desired outward signs of success.

* And there are plenty of people who simply set about crushing others in order to seem taller themselves.

In one way or another, the results that are obtained, with some exceptions, are rather sad. The required condition of outer success produces dissatisfied human beings in the best of cases, or traumatized and neurotic ones; there are many others who are depressed, envious, brutal and aggressive, or vain, cruel and ruthless, without excluding the social climbers and opportunists and hundreds of other examples that would expand the above-mentioned fauna.



Let us ask ourselves, then: where is this race leading and what is its purpose? History, as the experience of humanity, and our own personal experience both indicate that all this glitter comes and goes with the wind. What is valid today is stigmatized tomorrow and what would have been subject to the death penalty yesterday is admired today.

Who do we want to stand out among and for what purpose?

This question that I am asking leads me to think that the desire to stand out is a natural impulse of the soul: it is natural for the human being to aspire to ever more and better things. But I also understand that to excel is essentially to grow, to truly grow, not to wear stilts; it is to stretch oneself inwardly to the highest and best point within ourselves. And it is to earn our own self-respect, our self-esteem, it is to be at ease with our own conscience.

There are ways of standing out that seem to be almost forgotten now, such as, for example...

- * knowing ourselves so as to better control our negative aspects and strengthen the positive;
- * taking as models, without any false modesty, those who have been able to succeed in the name of the good, the beautiful and the just;
- * forgetting about the demands of fashion or the psychological and pseudo-rational madness of a particular moment;
- * making life an exercise of daily self-improvement...

It is appropriate to remember that it is not good to stand out just for a moment, because this would lead to the same states of despair as are experienced by those who have not achieved the necessary symbols of prestige. On the other hand, it is worth making a serious and sustained attempt that will lead us to a solid, stable, uninterrupted inner growth, always in search of the greatest and the best.

That is why we asked ourselves about the need to stand out and the purpose of doing so; and about the means that exist to achieve it.

The need is clear. The purpose and the means depend on the choice which each person is able to make. In this case, there will never be too many questions to ask ourselves if we ask them as sincerely as possible.

This is one among a compilation of articles published as a book *The Everyday Hero* by New Acropolis Cultural Organization. To order the book, please write to info@acropolis.org.in