

## On Common Sense-2010

a g rao

Today I had an interesting idea for a course which ought to be taught in all schools. Title of the course is '*Common Sense*'...

In the course children will find out what is common 'common sense'. They can go to their parents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles and ask what is 'common sense'.

Coming to think of it what is common sense?

If it is so common, we wouldn't be talking about it. Whenever we are unable to explain or give a reason. We can get away by saying 'common sense'. Eating food everyday is not 'common sense' because even if you do not have such common sense you will end up eating because you get 'hungry'. But eating only when you are hungry is not just 'common sense', but '*wisdom*' as one Zen master put it. Somebody asked the Zen master who looked very young at the age of eighty as to what was the secret of his youthfulness. He replied, "I eat when I am hungry and sleep when I am sleepy". This 'Wisdom' we all have lost because of our 'common sense'.

Obviously we use our 'common sense' to eat at lunch time even when we are not hungry. We even eat dinner after attending an evening party where we have eaten a lot. It is possible one is afraid that he or she doesn't get food late in the night if one gets hungry. But kids have simple solutions to such problems. 'Natasha' was a kid who used to eat in our staff hostel because her parents had come for a short visit to the institute. They were taking food as guests. One day Natasha refused to eat. Her mother got very annoyed and left the dining hall. Natasha has many bachelor uncles to take care of her. We asked Natasha in Hindi, "Raat ko bhook lagey to kaya karogee?" (*What will you do if you feel hungry in the night?*). As they were staying in hostel guest rooms which had no fridge or storage facility for food. She said without an iota of worry, "Main rowoongee!" (*I will cry!*). How simple a solution! It is somebody else's problem to worry about. How fortunate to be a child where there is a 'mother' to take care... or you can be fortunate enough to be like Luis Kohn – the famous architect. I was a student when Luis Kohn gave a talk on his concept of 'Indian Institute of Management' at Ahmedabad which he designed at NID. HE explained his concept of '*People Facing People*' and faculty and students seeing and meeting as a his inspirations and he wanted an artificial lake in front of the building. Then somebody from the audience got up and asked, "What about the cost?" Luis Kahn simply said, "Well... it is somebody else's problem", and the entire audience laughed. What an uncommon sense!!

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