

## A Boy, a Monkey, and the Nuts

Once a poor kid was given an assignment by a teacher on what he wanted to be when he grew up. The kid did not hesitate for a minute and wrote a seven-page paper about his aim to be the owner of a horse ranch. He covered many details, including an exhaustive plan of the house and the stables. The teacher returned his paper with a big “F”, and then explained to him that he had gone nuts—a boy with no money or resources can’t attain such ambitious goals. Then the teacher offered an opportunity to rewrite the paper with a more realistic attitude. The boy replied instantly, “Keep the “F”, and I will keep my dream.” Today the boy is grown up and owns a 4,000-square-foot house in the middle of a 200-acre horse ranch and still has that school paper—framed over the fireplace.

*Moral: Follow the calling of your heart. Unless we are nuts about something, how will we be all that we can be?*

But wait, there is a prequel. Once a monkey found a pile of nuts inside a box. The box had an opening at the top. The monkey slid in his hand and grabbed the nuts. Now his hand had become a fist. The monkey tried to get his hand out; the opening was big enough for the hand to slide in, but too small for the fist to come out. The monkey had a choice, either to let go of the nuts and be free, or hang onto the nuts and keep trying to get free. He chose the latter. For the monkey, the nuts held the same significance as the ranch dreams held for the boy. Unfortunately, the box had been intentionally placed there by some smart monkey-hunters who came and caught the monkey.

*Moral: Curtail the calling of your heart. If we keep going nuts about something, we will never be all that we can be!*

Similar stories, opposing morals. Why? Because we searched for the morals at a wrong place. You see, the lesson here was not of the heart, but of the head. While both the monkey and the boy held on to their nutty dreams, there was a fundamental difference in their pursuits: The monkey had little to gain and everything to lose, while the poor boy had everything to gain and little to lose!

Often, our professional or personal triumphs don’t lie in the dreams of the heart, but the logic of the head. On our ability to distinguish between an opportunity and a threat, between a permanent and a temporary gain, between reality and fantasy. And above all, in our knack to pinpoint the lessons surrounding the daily stories of our lives...