

# The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

## Theme for the week

The theme for first week back after the Easter holidays is “**Be a team player**”. I have written about it on the reverse of the newsletter.

## ISA Essay Second Prize



**Congratulations to Nerissa Patel in Senior 2 for winning the second prize in the ISA Essay Competition. With 150 essays submitted, it is indeed an achievement worthy of note. Below is the comment from Ewa Jozefkowicz, the adjudicator, on Nerissa’s essay - Fight or Flight?**

“I thought that Nerissa’s essay was a highly engaging piece on how the human body reacts in situations of tension. Journalistic in style, it addresses the reader directly through the use of a second person narrative. Nerissa used sentences of varying length and put rhetorical questions, such as ‘So what’s going on here?’ to very good use. She also effectively wove together biological descriptions

with real-life examples, which maintained the readers’ interest. I was impressed with the way in which she structured her arguments, and effectively returned to each one at the end, to conclude her thinking.”

## TSS Summer Fair

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

**Parents & Friends wishing to book a stall and banners should contact the school office.**

## Rotary Youth Speaks Semi-Final – Mr Wills writes...

Our Intermediate Public Speaking team have made their own contribution to the Shakespeare 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations by presenting a speech at the Annual Rotary ‘Youth Speaks’ competition entitled, *‘We are Such Stuff as Dreams are Made on.’* These words, spoken by the magician Prospero in Shakespeare’s play *‘The Tempest’* remind us that dreams – day dreams – make up a large part of our lives and this was the subject of our team’s bravura speech at the competition’s venue in Bedford last Sunday. In typical exhilarating fashion, our main speaker, Raghav Ahluwalia spoke about the many advantages of day-dreaming and how it benefits not only the dreamer but all of us since, *‘All the man made things we see around us began sometime, somewhere, in someone’s day-dream’*. Vanshika Sharma, in the capacity of Chair, administered the presentation with confidence and competence and our Vote of Thanks, Pari Parekh closed proceedings with charm and humour. Regretfully, we were pipped at the post by a team from the Perse School, Cambridge, but Pari garnered the prize for the best Vote of Thanks in the semi-finals - a splendid achievement! All the members of the Intermediate team deserve our warmest congratulations, having leapfrogged thousands of other schools to reach this stage in the competition. We are all proud of you. Bravo!

## Aditya Venugopal wins Scholarship in USA

In a week of high achievement, Aditya very humbly revealed to me that he had been awarded an annual \$4000 scholarship from Ohio State University. Having witnessed him flourish over the years, it is indeed well deserved. He joins an elite group of a handful of outstanding TSS students who have managed to achieve that honour for their university studies. Well done, Aditya.



## Fight or Flight?

By Nerissa Patel S2

It's midnight. You've had a little too much to eat, so you've decided to get some air by walking home. Halfway there, you hear footsteps behind you. You stop, and turn around. Nothing. You start walking again, a little faster. The footsteps behind you speed up too. You break out into a flat out run. After what seems like an hour, you make it back to the safety of your house. Never really knowing what it was that spooked you. Not really caring either, because you're safe now.

Fear. Useful in situations such as these, where fear gives you the energy you need to fight or flee. Not so useful in other situations.

It's 5am. You have your final exams to sit today, and you're not certain you are going to pass them. You have revised everything a hundred times over. All you can see are numbers swirling around in your head, consuming you. Unable to sleep, you let thoughts of impending doom float through your head. By the time you get to school, you are sweating so much that you can't even hold the pencil. Your mind suddenly draws a blank and you are unable to answer any of the questions.

Fear. Your mortal enemy and exam saboteur. How can one emotion help you fly through one situation as though you have wings yet be your downfall in another? Blame biology. Blame evolution. It really doesn't matter because at the end of the day all you have is yourself to blame for letting fear get the better of you.

So what's going on here? When we encounter a potential stressor, be it some drunk in a dark alley, final exams, or misplacing your keys, our bodies kick in to overdrive. Cortisol and adrenaline are released into the bloodstream to meet the threat or danger. Blood is rerouted to our arms and legs so we can fight or flee. This is called the General Adaptation Syndrome.

Here's the problem. Your body doesn't know the difference between the drunk in the dark alley and the student assembly starting in thirty minutes. A stressor is a stressor, and while all that adrenaline is an asset when running for your life, you can't run from a student assembly- well you can, but you probably won't make the best impression on your head teacher!

Don't despair. While your body can't distinguish between sources of fear, you can. It's called the process of appraisal. This is the second that you decide that this particular stressor is not something to be afraid of.

So let's rewind. It's 5am, you have your final exams to sit today and you're not certain that you will pass. Stop! Before you work yourself into a frenzy, ask yourself: 'Is this going to kill me? Will I die if I fail?' This is known as the process of primary appraisal and because we live in relative safety compared to our ancestors, ninety-nine percent of the time, the answer is no. What a relief!

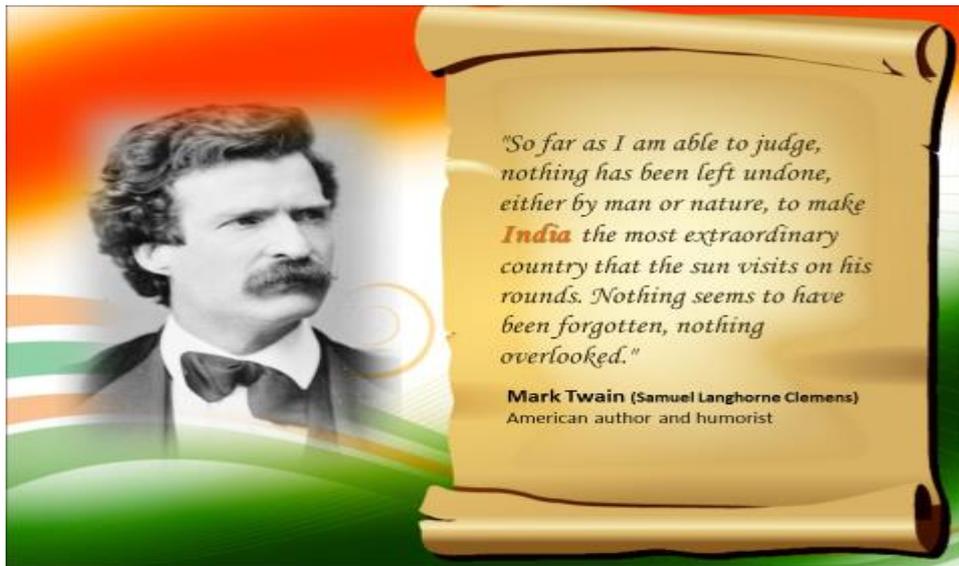
Now, once you've reassured yourself that you're not going to die if you botch your exam paper, it's time for a process known as the secondary appraisal. This is where you ask yourself if there is anything you can do to make the fear go away? No, pretending you are sick is not a valid answer. But there are a lot of other things you can do to alleviate your fear. Do some yoga or meditation. Get up and have a glance over your revision to make sure that you know everything you need to. Go for a jog to work off that excess energy. Do something, anything really, to keep your hormones from cascading into a sense of alarm and panic.

There. Wasn't that easy? Mission accomplished. Fear averted. And don't worry if it takes you a while for you to remember this every time. Give your body a break sometimes. It might take time to undo your own conditioned response to fear. But, like everything else, practice makes perfect. You can conquer your fear, or at least redirect it to a more positive outcome. Next thing you know- got an exam. Tomorrow? Yes, but so what? It's not going to kill me, so I'm not going to get all worked up about it.

In fact, I think I'll sleep until 7am.....

## Wisdom of India 2

This week a thought from Mark Twain on the *Wisdom of India*, so that our children can appreciate the strong sense of who we are, where we come from and the values inherent in our culture.



### Be a team player

#### Think

If you are a member of a sports team you will know that the success of the team depends on the trust and support you give to each other. Your school orchestra is an ensemble of many different instruments; each produces its own beautiful sound, yet left to play on their own, they will sound like a disjointed cacophony of tunes that will not be at all pleasing to the ear. It requires a conductor to bring everyone together at just the right time and produce music that you will want to listen to. This is also true for a pop group, where the singer must sing in harmony with the beat of the drums and guitars to produce music that you will want to buy. One raindrop alone can do little harm, but when they all come together and fall relentlessly they send a torrent that will break the banks of rivers and tear everything in their path. In much the same way, it only takes a small group of thoughtful and committed people to change the world.

#### Feel

If you are going to succeed in your life you will need the help and support of everyone around you. Yet before they can help you, they will need to know that you are willing to participate in the game. You cannot be a bystander if you want your life to mean something. You will need to join a team who thinks like you and wants the same things. Work with them in mutual support and learn from each other, show gratitude when it is due, forgive each other when mistakes are made and make sure that they do not happen again.

#### Do

You are a member of the human race and you are here to contribute to the common good of mankind, something which you will not be able to do alone. The success of a company is the result of the combined efforts of all employees, and the success of a football team is the result of all the players fulfilling their role, helping and supporting each other and trusting each other when passing the ball. When they come together the passing is so fluid, the movements so graceful and the final goal inevitable. The combined effort of many brains is more powerful than the brain of a single person, so learn

**Yours sincerely,**

**Nilesh Manani**