

## HOW TO DEVELOP LOVE FOR ONE'S COUNTRY

To an average adolescent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the word patriotism doesn't really mean much. The days such as Independence Day and Republic Day conjure up memories of those countless men and women who faced immense hardships and sufferings in the heroic struggle for Independence. But gone are the times when even for an average citizen the days held a great importance.

Today these National days are seen more as a holiday. In reality our heroic fervor today is confined just to cricket field. We can literally fight and die for our country when it comes to cricket and in the process we are gradually losing our identity.

Now a vital question arises as to how can you and me help in improving this situation. Is it only the people who shout slogans and go on hunger strikes or those who die at the borders fighting for their countries- are only they patriotic. You and me and the common man-don't we love our country?

Don't we love movies like Chak De and Rang De Basanti? Why do we all stand in attention for the National Anthem? But we'll have to realize that this love and pride for our country has to step out of sheer words and seep into our day to day activities. We have to develop a patriotism that comes into action every now and then, which sees lying to customers, exploiting labourers, cheating on tax, paying bribes, adding sand to cement, oppressing the poor, paying obeisance to the powerful as acts of cheating.

Children, anyone who does one's duties well is a good citizen of the country. It is here in schools where the new nation is being constructed. It is here where most young people come together crossing to old boundaries of religion and caste. You all form the most important human resource of tomorrow. There is so much an individual can contribute towards the progress of the nation.

Begin today and just now-don't litter your corridors, your streets and your cities. Save electricity and water. Don't hurt anyone. If you wish to be a scientist then aim to find out ways to save your environment. If you wish to be an engineer or an architect then build homes and hospitals, schools and roads for those who need it the most. Why not wish to be an author, an honest politician, a good teacher?

Question your elders when you see them accepting bribes, not paying taxes, indulging in superstitious and castist acts.

Of course I can understand you are still children young and tender in age with many temptations around. But please remember that only the aware children of today will form an awakened country of tomorrow.

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