



FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

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In high school, my best friend and I always repeated to ourselves and to each other certain sentences from a novel we had both loved. I am not entirely sure of the exact words, but they went something like this: Follow your dreams. Never let them go...and even if those dreams seem to be fading away, hold on to them, cherish them, continue holding them in your heart. Or something to that effect. Now, many, many years later, my best friend is abroad, enjoying her life as a TV network correspondent, and I am here enjoying what I have always loved doing since high school, no, elementary.

We all have potential early on in our lives—at least that’s what I like to believe. No good parent would ever admit that his child hasn’t shown at least a little bit of promise. Sometimes, parents read signals wrongly, but oftentimes, upon seeing a child’s potential, many parents encourage their child to grow further, reach higher. Ideally, that should be the scenario.

During my earliest years as a young parent, I was guilty of suppressing my eldest child’s potential. In fact, there are times when I still find myself doing that to his younger siblings. My eldest had always loved basketball like his father before him. My eldest had often come home with ripped pants and atrociously dirty shirts, and worse, a sprained ankle. Only last week, he came home from work, left the house soon after, and came back a little over an hour later with a sprained ankle from—you guessed it---playing basketball. He’s 21 years old, nearly 22 in fact. But I sure as hell raised my blood pressure anew by berating him for getting injured. However, young as he is, my eldest went to work Monday despite a still visibly swollen ankle.

I guess, if I had encouraged him more when he was little, he might have grown to become a basketball player. In his high school yearbook, he had been praised for his talent in the playing court. Even his late father had remarked to me once that my eldest was a strong player, and my husband loved basketball as much as he liked playing it. Looking back now, I can only ask myself: If I had been a more encouraging mother to my son, would he have turned out differently?

Presently, I can only rationalize that my decision not to push him to pursue his interest in the sport was the best decision I had made at that time, considering that I was a young mother. At that time, education was more essential to me than anything.

Hopefully, I will see greater potential in my son in his chosen career. After all, that’s what potential is basically about: promise and possibility. Only time can tell, surely.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is a “disaster waiting to happen?”
2. In this modern world, why is it important for a parent to recognize and encourage a child’s potential?
3. How can a child’s hidden potential be unleashed? Is the process easy?
4. What would you do if you had a child who showed great potential in playing a certain sport? Would you encourage your child to fully pursue that sport?
5. If you had a child whose potential pointed in a different direction to what you had planned for him, what would you do?