

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A KITE.

With small adaptations from the book of P. Ribes, s.j. "Foundry Workers or Gardeners" published by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash.

Intent of the story

- ✓ *Norms, rules, consistency and predictability are necessary to lead a fruitful and meaningful life.*
- ✓ *True education – especially education to responsible freedom – requires few and clear norms to be adhered to.*
- ✓ *Liberty is one thing, libertinage quite another.*

Target audience:

- ✓ *General public,*
- ✓ *Especially Parents, Teachers and Children.*

THE STORY:

I am a kite. Like all kites I love flying.

That's why it I feel so bored when forced to remain idle in a box during the long winter.

I want to fly.

At last, spring came, how happy I was! Now I could fly, yes, soar the skies, gliding, and drifting along the clouds.

I was happy, I longed to fly higher and higher and to reach the highest heavens.

Yet, there was a problem; the string, yes that blooming string!

Surely, I could float 1000 feet, even 2000 feet and more...high in the air, looking on herds, trees and houses far below.

But, I could go only as far as the string would allow me to.

My heart kept urging me: Higher! Higher! But, how high can a kite fly with a bloomy

It always held me back! string that ties him up to someone holding it at the other end?

I felt captive, robbed of my freedom, whilst someone was holding me tied on that string!

All I wanted was freedom; yes freedom to do what I liked, to fly higher and higher and go wherever I wished.

One day in tears, I cried out: I want to be a free kite, to do my own thing, to hold my own string! Then, and only then, I will be really able to fly!

Strings and ropes are not meant for free persons, but only for slaves and animals.

Fortunately for me, one day, the wind was fiercer than ever. The string as usual was still holding me captive.

The wild wind was swerving me, now to the right, then to the left. That day I climbed higher and higher. Yes, higher than ever.

The spool went on unbinding. I said to myself: 'I must have reached at least 2000 feet.'

Today, the skies look larger, more beautiful, more challenging!

Then, all of a sudden, a gust of wind caught my master by surprise.

The string snapped! I was freed at last from that bloomy string.

Finally, I experienced freedom! I was on my own. Yes; I had a few moments of wild freedom. It was exhilarating. I was mad with joy!

But alas! Very soon I found myself on the ground full of bruises and hurts all over!

(Adapted from: "The Adventure of a Kite" of Ruth Senter)

POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. What do kites like most? What are they meant for?
2. Why did our kite hate that blooming string?
3. Can kites fly without a string holding them tied from their tails? Why?
4. What does the master of the kite try to do by holding the string in his hands?
5. What happened to the kite when the string snapped? Why did the kite fall?
6. What does the string stand for in our lives and also in the lives of our children, pupils and trainees entrusted to us?
7. Can we compare ourselves to kites? How? What do we most long for?
8. Are strings necessary to be able to fly in life, to climb high and higher and still be safe? Mention some of the strings necessary in everybody's life?
9. If they would snap what would happen to us?
10. Do we like those strings? Do those under our care like them? Why?
11. Can we do away with all strings and enjoy of unlimited freedom in life? Why?
12. Can we, should we, cut all of a sudden, all the strings that hold our children, pupils and trainees dependent on us? Why?
13. For how long should we hold in our hands the strings binding those under us till they can fly by themselves? How should we proceed?

INPUT. SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

- ✓ Living in society restricts our freedom.
- ✓ We have to accept some constricting, even unpleasant laws and norms, that make life in common possible
- ✓ Rules and regulations are a must – may be a nuisance - I would call them lesser evils.
- ✓ Paradoxically, we have to accept a curtailing of our freedom in order to gain freedom
- ✓ Too many rules and laws stifle life yet, no rules and no laws would kill it.. .
- ✓ In education, for consistency and predictability, norms and traditions are a must.
- ✓ Educators and those being educated, have to know and accept and respect certain parameters of freedom and un-freedom.
- ✓ Freedom with minimal limitations is a necessity for education. Unfettered freedom would lead to libertinage.
- ✓ Authoritarianism kills true education as much as anarchy and lawlessness. .
- ✓ The best education we can give is education in "responsible freedom"
- ✓ No one can learn responsible freedom unless he is given freedom. Freedom feeds on freedom.
- ✓ Freedom to children, pupils and trainees have to be given progressively.

- ✓ Educating others into freedom is a messy thing. We have to allow others the freedom to do mistakes. .
- ✓ To learn how to be free is something like learning to walk. It's a matter of trial and error.
- ✓ Superiors and educators, however, should lovingly and encouragingly hold the strings for a while, to avoid fatal falls or errors.
- ✓ In a way, freedom has to be won by proving oneself capable of using it responsibly.
- ✓ One has to be willingly to have his freedom curtailed to prove himself free,
- ✓ Freedom and responsibility are the two side of the same coin.
- ✓ Freedom without accountability would lead to chaos.
- ✓ If one does not want to be held accountable, he should not ask for freedom.
- ✓

