How clarity can build confidence

WISDOM: Sadhguru

‘CREATE A CLEAR VISION FOR YOUR LIFE AND IT WILL HAPPEN THE WAY YOU WANT IT TO BE’

Outside the clinic there was an advertisement which said, “A common antidote for all types of snakes, I know enough about snakes. I have lived with them, I have them all around me, I have been bitten by them and the number of times, and snakes me and have been very closely associated for a very long time. So, I know enough about them to know. Essentially in India, there are two basic varieties of venoms. One is a neurotoxin and the other affects your cardiovascular system; a very small number of snakes have both. These are two completely different kinds of chemicals, so there cannot be a common antidote. Today, because people cannot identify what snake is what, doctors are administering an antidote for both. I went in and asked him, “How did you choose this board to come up in your clinic? This is not right. Someone is claiming there is a common antidote.” He is a very wise doctor. He said, “See, almost 90% of the Indian snakes are harmless, and this antidote works 90% of the time.” Ninety is a good percentage for anything. Confidence is like that. If a snake bites you, just look up at the sky and say “DAMN-DAMN-DAMN” and the venom will go away. Actually, really! You must say it with enough vigor, it actually does go away; it works 90% of the time. People will get more confident because it works 90% of the time. That is a fool’s way to exist, isn’t it? What you need is clarity, not confidence.

If we want life to happen the way we want it, the first and foremost requirement is to be clear about what it is that we really want. Even simple practices can go a long way in creating this. Every day, when you wake up in the morning, sit up on your bed cross-legged, sit with your hands open, eyes closed and just look at everything you are not. Appreciate all that you have gathered — your home, your family, your relationships, your qualifications, your body, your clothes — everything. Be thankful for that.

At the same time, identify everything that is not you as “This is what I have gathered” and mentally keep it aside. What you gather can be yours, but it can never be you. Spend ten minutes in the morning and ten minutes in the night every day. This will bring clarity.

Q: I WANT to know the difference between confidence and clarity.

Sadhguru: Let us say my physical vision is not good — I cannot see clearly — and I need to walk through a group of people. But I am very confident. What will happen if I walk through? A lot of people are walking through their life like this because they are confident. They cannot see a damn thing, but it does not matter; they are confident. This is disastrous for you and for everyone around you.

If my vision is clear, I would walk through the whole group without touching anyone. If my vision is not clear, if I at least have the humility to see that I have no clarity, I would seek help and walk slowly. I may not walk as quickly as a man who has clear vision, but I would at least go gently.

People think confidence is a kind of substitute for clarity — it is not. Let’s say whenever you want to make big decisions in your life, either professional or family-related, all you do is get yourself a coin and flip it. “Heads, we will do this; tails, we will do that.” It will work 50% of the time. If you are right only 50% of the time, there are only two professions you can pursue — you can either be a weatherman or an astrologer. If you are in any other job, you would most likely be fired.

There is a city called Mangalore on the west coast of India. It is a beautiful, quaint, little town and I have been associated with this place for some time. I had not gone there for almost four or five years, and then I happened to visit. There was a homeopathic doctor there who was over 75 years of age, but he was still managing a small clinic. I went there to visit him, not as a client, but just to see him. The clinic is in the Malabar region — the land of the king cobra — snake bites are common.