

Concluding Remarks

I remember reading an anecdote about JRD Tata being introduced. The speaker meant to say that words were not adequate enough to introduce JRD. The person in haste said, "Mr Tata, the less said the better!" If Miss Cooper were to hear me saying that I would have been put in detention right away and be given a cup of hot chocolate as punishment! Ma'am would punish me with kindness!

Most of you remember Ma'am from your school days. I had the privilege of knowing her not only as a school boy but also as a working adult. Miss Cooper retired and returned to her home in Lahore in the year 2000. I had the great pleasure to visit her and her sister Ms Perin in Lahore so many times that I admit I have lost count. While the political divide between both the countries get wider, thanks to Miss Cooper and her sister the people bridge gets narrower. I dare say that I was the first RkCian to go up and visit them at their home in Lahore. Sailesh Patel and Javed Pothiawala visited them later too.

Robert Fulgham wrote, all I really need to know I learned in kindergarten. I happily accredit and share with you that I learnt the foundations of my management lessons from Miss Cooper. Here are my five top Cooper Management Lessons that helped steer my career.

1. Others before self:

As you know Ma'am would never accept any gifts. However every time I visited her in Lahore she would request me to bring lots of Jars of Tiger Balms which she would distribute to those in need.

2. Lead with love and compassion:

Sherry Jassawala, the daughter of her physician would sometimes throw tantrums as she could not hear and speak.

Miss Cooper was the only person who could instantly calm her down with a hug.

3. In remembering others we are remembered:

She had a memory of an elephant. Most of us would remember her greeting us and our loved ones on important occasions.

4. That no success or achievement in material terms is worthwhile, unless it serves the needs or interests of the country and its people, and is achieved by fair and honest means.

We published two books on her birthday in which her pupils shared amongst others how they served others in the community with the blessings and privileges they have received. It gave her immense joy to read about RkCians in the service of others.

5. Strive for Excellence:

That one must forever strive for excellence, or even perfection, in any task however small, and never be satisfied with the second best. I met her and Perin for brunch at the Nadia Café, Pearl International Hotel in Lahore a few months before she passed away. She played Beethoven's Fur Elise and dedicated it to her RkC family. She later lamented to the PR Manager of the Hotel that the piano needed tuning and arranged for it to be tuned the next day. The resident Pianist at the hotel was visibly moved.

Now, let us all watch and listen to her message and gift to us.

May we continue to live our lives without dishonour to ourselves or hurt to others....

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