

## ***The best house in the city***

The Vice President of a prominent infrastructure company was to retire in another 1 year. He had been in the company now for the last 35 years and had the reputation of creating some of the most aesthetic and luxurious houses in the city. His concepts were brilliant which were augmented by scintillating designs; superb elevation that were sparkled by the orientation of the building allowing the passage of light and air to circulate inside the entire building. By incorporating the contemporary designs and using traditional materials the luxurious buildings that he had created won several awards and featured in many architectural magazines.

Many times and on many occasions during different stages of his career he was asked this question as to why he was not considering to become an entrepreneur. His answer was simple and straight. I can't take risks !! He would always say that, "although I would like to have my own company I don't think I am cut out for becoming an entrepreneur." He was heard saying that he lacked the entrepreneurial spirit, besides, competitiveness, confidence and discipline to become an entrepreneur.

He had built several houses on ECR (East coast road) and his life time ambition was to own a sea face villa in an acre of land on ECR in a premium area, settle and spend his post retirement days with his family.. Wants are many but the means of satisfying them are limited. He did not have the means to buy what he wanted. He had an apartment in the city nevertheless but an apartment is an apartment, after all he would muse many a time...

He went and met the Chairman of the company and told him about his impending retirement in the next one year. He told him to limit the projects that were given to him and give the further assignments to the new General Manager who had joined recently. After a week the CMD called and told the VP, "You have sincerely worked for the last 35 years and you have been one of the keys behind the company's growth and development." As the last assignment, I want you to construct the "best house ever in the best area in the city for our company." The half acre plot has been identified facing the sea on ECR. I have already apportioned a large amount toward this. Spare no expense. Any further money that would be needed, you could get it from the Accounts department and they have been advised to pay you whenever you wanted funds. The VP was excited. He was thrilled when he went and saw the plot from where the sea was gleaming in the morning sun. Rows of casuarina trees separated the plot and the sea. As picturesque as it could get.

The VP came back to the office sat on the drawing board and began his work, His designers made sketches on the concepts perceived by him. The VP made sketches himself, made estimates and was all set to start executing the project when a thought occurred to him. He thought no one is watching, I can use it to my advantage. I can pocket a little bit of money. After all, he thought that since this would be his last project he could use the extra money which could come in handy considering his retirement, old age, low rate of returns and inflation. He justified his approach and set about his task of commencing the work. Since he was given a bottomless coffer which was always full, he went about doing the work

vigorously. He used some inferior materials and to cover up used certain other materials. As the project progressed his greediness increased. His thoughts were always how much for him and how much he had to put for building the house. At the end of the project which took about an year he announced to the CMD that the construction work was completed and the interiors were done. The CMD said that he would visit the house on the following day. The VP having pocketed such a large amount of money, was particularly pleased with his deftness in building a good looking house with some inferior quality materials as well as pocketing quite a bit of money.

On the following day when he went to meet the CMD in the best house ever, he was surprised to see that all his colleagues were present. The CMD was pleased to see the house, he went round the house along with his colleagues and other employees and everyone were all awed by the house. This was to them the best house they had ever seen, they were saying. After walking through the entire house the CMD assembled everyone in the foyer of the building, cleared his throat, complimented the VP and said to his employees," As you all know that the VP has been with us for more than 3 decades. This being his last project would also be his final master piece. He said," for all the years of hard work and for creating this Master piece, the best way to show my gratitude to him is to present the house to him. Here, take the keys, VP." All his colleagues clapped their hands, the VP stood there in stunned disbelief after his shameful act !!

Just as the builder was assigned the charge of building the best house we also have the best opportunity to create the best life possible. Our aim in life is clear: Build a great life, spare no expense. Just as the VP – Infrastructure, assumed sole responsibility and accountability for constructing the best house ever, we also have the full responsibility for the life building project from life to death. There is no supervision beyond what we impose ourselves. Since we are only interested in looking good on the outside, it doesn't matter if we are sloppy, careless and can lack character. The realization that all this time when the best house was being constructed we were thinking that we were working for others, we were infact working for ourselves. Character is who you are when you do what you do when no one is watching...

When wealth is lost nothing is lost

When health is lost something is lost

When character is lost everything is lost !!

Character is more important than the looks and aesthetics