PUTTING BAHRAIN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Mohamed Isa, Bahraini entrepreneur and coach, co-authors 'Success Blueprint', a new motivational book, with international bestselling author Brian Tracy.

Mohamed Isa's story vows to inspire those pursuing their dreams with the odds stacked against them. How did a college undergrad whose first job was that of a janitor in UGB Tower go on to become the successful person he is today? "It started in 2002 when I decided to pursue my Certified Public Accountant degree in the US," he says. "I was working in Dubai at the time and had to take a break to prepare. I flew down to Bahrain so I could spend those few weeks with my family. Unfortunately, I procrastinated and ended up taking the exam unprepared. After my exam, I popped by a local bookstore where I bumped into '21 Secrets of Self-made Millionaires' by Brian Tracy. It focused on how one needs to realise the cause of one's failure and counter it to ensure success. I realised the reason for my failure was not preparing well—a choice I regret to this day. I corrected my approach and made the cut in my second attempt!" Mohamed has enjoyed reading Brian Tracy's work ever since.

"Recently, a PR agency was looking for authors interested to contribute to 'Success Blueprint' alongside Brian Tracy. I saw this as a great opportunity to expand my portfolio. It was not an easy process. We had to submit our credentials and published works. I sent everything much before the deadline, and the rest as they say is history." Mohamed expresses how thrilled he was when one of the editors who reviewed his contribution emailed him, "Very inspiring work!" He recommends the title, which focuses on how to succeed in personal and professional life, for high school and university students. "I'm sure it will be a bestseller," he says, adding that he

Mohamed Isa

was recently listed as one of America's "Premier Experts" and is now certified to contribute articles in his field of expertise to publishers.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

"I took up my first job as a janitor to fund my education and once I got a scholarship I resigned. My salary was BD100 and I used it to buy my first Carolina Herrera perfume. From there, I went on to work for Unilever for BD1,200." Mohamed recalls the words his uncle spoke to him— an encounter still etched on the tablet of his heart. "I got back home to find my uncle there. He greeted me, enquiring if I had taken up a cleaner's job and said, 'This job will be the job that makes you a real man.' During my stint there, I met a gentleman who shared words of wisdom I never forgot: Education is education, what you do with it is up to you." Mohamed is working on a book 'How I went from Sweeping to Speaking'—quite an appealing title, we think—which focuses on this experience. The doctorate student is waiting to get his PhD before he approaches publishers.

WATCH OUT FOR!

Mohamed asks us to look forward to 3 more books on public speaking, which he is currently writing. One is intended to serve as a pocket guide, the other focuses on how to deal with 21 speaking situations and the third analyses speeches by famous people. He spills the beans on '3 Weeks with God', a book inspired by his blog about his pilgrimage visits to Mecca, which is aimed to enlighten the Western world about the Holy Place as well as bust myths associated with it. I ask Mohamed if he has ever considered fiction. "Not really. I'm too realistic to read or write that genre but I would definitely like to complete reading John Grisham's work to learn from his writing style."

Tour Guide is another hat Mohamed wears. Where does he get time to do it all? "I'm proactive and disciplined," he says. "I jot down ideas for articles and books before hand and usually write

Mohamed Isa shares a candid moment with Brian Tracy

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during the morning hours. Sometimes, you look for inspiration and at other times, wait for it to come to you. Once, I was stuck in traffic and ended up penning down a 3-page poem sitting in my car!" When asked if he is a workaholic, Mohamed says he is just ambitious. "I believe in balance and always make it point to spend quality time with my family." Fitness is something that helps him unwind, as do Thai massages. "I also love taking long walks at the beach near Financial Harbour; I got few of my best ideas there."

"WHO WILL CRY WHEN YOU DIE?"

A lot of Mohamed's work revolves around self-help. Most of the books he reads are also by coaches and trainers including Robin Sharma, Stephen Covey, Tom Peters, Deepak Chopra and Gladwell

Maxwell. So, does self-help actually work or is it an excuse to put off doing what you already know you're supposed to do? "Self-help books are there to inspire. We all know what we're supposed to do but do we do it? When we read about others' success stories, we're motivated to pursue our own goals." We discuss how reading is scarce in this part of the world. "I always try to have a local context in my writing so people can relate to it and are spurred-on to read it." We all have great potential and should try to realise it. Life is more than just getting a degree, securing a job, building a house and dying. We must strive to leave a part of ourselves behind. Like Robin Sharma aptly put it, "Who will cry when you die?"

LIST OF TITLES BY MOHAMED ISA

In 2010, while he was pursuing his management degree, he took up the challenge to write a book on investor relations, which met success, making him the first in his batch to achieve the feat.

In 2013, he had his first collaborative, book-writing experience through the toastmasters network in the USA. The title focused on how anyone can be transformed into an effective speaker, and members were invited to contribute one chapter each.

In 2014, he, as part of a group of certified world-class speakers and coaches, co-authored a book, which was conceptualised and went on shelves in barely 6 months. Launched in May, the 40-chapter title became an Amazon-bestseller in only 4 and half hours.