

## The Maze

There are two mazes. Through one maze, you can go to places you never even imagined were possible, experiences which are unbelievable – bordering on the absurd and finally coming out the other side, to a place where you feel happy. The other maze, well the other maze is not really maze. Sure, it looks like a maze, smells like a maze, FEELS like a maze but it's not a maze. There are no unexplored paths, no voyaging to places unknown. Instead, there are a limited number of exits, almost like being at an airport. 'Final boarding for Accountancy, Law, Medicine and Dentistry' booms over the announce system. When they leave, that's it.

Sure, you can go home and your parents will say they love you but behind it, a cold message of disappointment rings through your body like being shot - over and over and over again. In the other maze, the parents and family are always happy. No disappointment, no lost sense of pride. Everyone wants their family to succeed, of course they do. Everyone also wants to be Brad Pitt but let me tell you from experience, that isn't going to happen. So then why? Why are some parents happy? Why are some parents not? Maybe they feel they're owed something. I mean they did raise you, feed you, clothe you. A sense of debt, where instead of money they want back something they can be proud of, someone they can be proud of. Wholly good intentions and it is for your favour. What if though? What if the debt becomes too much? What if you can't pay it back? Then what? In the first maze, there is no debt, just a sense of pride, wherever it takes you. In the second, the debt is real, chasing you like in a bad nightmare and wherever you turn you just can't get away and soon enough – before you know it - the debt become the maze.

In the first maze the maze changes. It changes because you can change it. Sadness, joy, fear, relief, anger. All these emotions can factor in. You can scream, shout and although the maze doesn't change instantly, over time it changes, to how you want it. In the second maze, there is no emotion. You learn to control it. Not because you want to but because you have to. You learn it just becomes an obstacle. There is no noise. You can scream and shout but you soon see that it gets cancelled out by the demands that you are given and it too becomes an obstacle. It soon turns into pin drop silence and you learn that that too is deafening.

Fear. In the first maze there is no fear. Around every corner there is only excitement. Only a sense of joy of seeing what awaits you around the corner. In the second maze there is nothing but fear. Fear of failure is drowned out by the fear disappointment. Should it be? I mean failure affects you as it focuses on you, not your brother, not your sister, you. Why then is the fear of disappointment the prevalent one. That's because it is not your maze. You may be running through the maze but it's not your maze. It's your parent's maze. They carefully lay the bricks so that you can't escape, they choose your path. Why? Well because of fear. They fear the worst for you. It is their fear that transcends to you, their fear is you and your fear is them. In the first maze no such fear exists, there may be the odd corner where you know not what lurks but it is not fear.

The pathways of the first maze are broad and long, allowing you the freedom to do whatever you want. The second maze, not so much. The pathways are thin and short making you duck and dodge the ever closing in walls. Religion is not so present in the first maze giving a reason why it is so broad. There is nothing that you cannot do, no real taboos. In the second maze it is nothing but religion. The way you dress. The words you speak. The foods you eat are all dictated by religion. It confines you, making the corridors narrower and narrower until there are no more corridors, just walls. And if you

are not careful, those walls will swallow you up, not because you accept them but because you can do nothing about them. Even if they don't swallow you up, they are still engrained in you and trying to escape it would be like trying to escape the maze, there's only one outcome, the same outcome that is predetermined for you.

You have friends, of course you have friends - everyone has friends. They're not in your maze though. They can't help you. They can't be the vehicle that gets you out of the maze because it's not their maze, it's yours. You can talk to them about their maze, ask them about their maze but it's no use. All they are is an escape, they may wow you with stories from their maze but when it comes down to it, it's no use. I mean in the first maze you can share your experiences, your emotions, whatever they may be. In the second maze though, just when your guard is down and you feel like you've escaped, you're dragged back down, almost as if a locomotive has hit you – full speed.

Just when you've reached your end goal though and you think you've escaped the maze, you find something out. You find out that the maze never ends, you may have achieved what your parents or you want to achieve but that is not how it works, not how life works because you see, the maze is life and life is the maze and whether you like it or not, be it in Maze One or Two, you never escape – you just learn to accept. In Maze One you can accept easily though, you are free, free as a bird to go and do whatever you want. Maze Two on the other hand forces you to accept and if you can't then the maze swallows you up and you lose yourself – if there was anything to lose in the first place.

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