

# How to Achieve Excellence

*Paper presented by Prof. 'Tola Badejo*

*Vice-Chancellor, Wesley University of Science and Technology, Ondo*

*at the "Prof. 'Tola Badejo Education Summit" on Wednesday December 10, 2014.*

Perhaps the best thing that has ever happened to me in my life is my appointment as the Vice-Chancellor of a faith-based university. The foundation for this appointment was probably laid in 1971 when I was denied the position of **Head Boy** of my secondary school as a result of my age. There were people who were five years older than me in my class. This denial however earned me the portfolio of **Chapel Prefect**. As Chapel Prefect, I led students to the church in town every Sunday, taught children in Sunday School and organized Sunday evening Chapel Devotion in the school hall. So, my appointment as the VC of a faith-based school was a mere discontinuous continuation of what I started in my early life.

I told you last year that a compilation of my weekly admonition to Wesley university students have been published in a book titled "**My Commandments**" which was commissioned during our first Graduation Ceremony. "**My Commandments**" is an effort to fulfil the mandate given to me by **Methodist Church Nigeria**. I held on steadfastly to this mandate of "**moral regeneration**". I regarded it as sacrosanct, sacred and highly revered. I made it stainless, spotless, immaculate, pristine and gleaming. You won't believe it, I became reformed myself in the process of achieving all these virtues.

So when the immediate past executive of JCI ACE Chapter pleaded with me to deliver last year's lecture. I simply extracted The "**SHAI Principle**" as character building traits in youths from the compilations in "My Commandments". My thinking then was that the average Nigerian youth should be above average in character to be able to achieve something in life both for himself and for the society at large.

This year's theme "**Excellence in Academics**" may appear to be a departure from "moral regeneration" to the uninformed. By the time I am through with the lecture today, a good percentage of the audience will surely agree with me that the two mega-themes are inextricably interwoven.

All I have done in putting this lecture together was to select seven of my moral regeneration themes, which have one relationship or the other with achieving **Excellence**. They are:

- **Doing the Impossible** (February 2011)
- **Perfection** (December 2011)
- **Positive Thinking** (June 2013)
- **Self Creation** (July, 2013)
- **Splendid Failure** (October 2013)
- **Self-Discipline** (November 2013)
- **Secrets of Success** (December 2013)

## Doing the Impossible.

The theme of my Charge in February, 2011 was “**Doing the Impossible**”. The person I celebrated in that month was **Henry Ford**. **Henry Ford** was a prominent American industrialist, the founder of the Ford Motor Company, which revolutionized transportation and American industry. As owner of the Ford Motor Company, he became one of the richest and best-known people in the world (in his time). He is remembered for mass production of inexpensive goods coupled with high wages for workers. One of Henry Ford’s quotable quotes that made me celebrate him that month is: “*The only way to overcome obstacles is to forge ahead with the believe that they are not real.*” Doing the impossible is all about overcoming obstacles.

My concluding message on February 07, 2011 was in the words of **Marcus Aurelius**: “*Do not think what is hard for you to master is humanly impossible; but if a thing is humanly possible, consider it to be within your reach.*”

## Perfection

Perfection was the theme in December, 2011. We celebrated **Leonardo da Vinci** that month. **Leonardo da Vinci** was an Italian renaissance polymath, **painter**, sculptor, architect, musician, scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist, and writer whose genius, perhaps more than that of any other figure, epitomized the Renaissance (rebirth, new birth, resurgence, new beginning, revitalisation, revival, regeneration, recovery) humanist ideal. Leonardo has often been described as the archetype of the **Renaissance Man**. A man of “**unquenchable curiosity**” and “**feverishly inventive imagination**”. He is widely considered to be one of the greatest painters of all time and perhaps the most diversely talented person ever to have lived. He was born out of wedlock to a notary, Piero da Vinci, and a peasant woman, Catherina who lived in Florence, Italy. Leonardo is revered (sacred, holy, sacrosanct, untouchable) for his technological ingenuity. He conceptualised a helicopter, a tank, concentrated solar power, a calculator, the double hull, and outlined a rudimentary theory of plate tectonics.

History has shown again and again that civilization's greatest achievements have come from people like **Leonardo da Vinci** who spent all their life striving for **perfection**. To buttress this point is **Lord Chesterfield’s** assertion on perfection: "Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable; however, they who aim at it, and persevere, will come much nearer it than those whose laziness and despondency (hopelessness) make them give it up as unattainable.“ My message on that day, December 05, 2011, was that **perfection** may not always be attainable. However, if **perfection** is your goal, you will definitely achieve **excellence**. That is the link between **perfection** and **excellence**. Relatively few of **Leonardo da Vinci’s** designs were constructed or were even feasible during his lifetime but he made important discoveries in anatomy, civil engineering, optics, and hydrodynamics.

A 2004 CNN profile on the success of Apple Computer was titled, "The **Steve Jobs** Way: A Relentless Pursuit of Perfection." One person whose story can also bear the same caption is **Bill Gates** the Founder of Microsoft. So also will be the story of those two young men (Larry Page and Sergey Brin) who founded **Google**, the most popular search engine on the Internet in 1998. The total equity of Google in 2013 was US\$ 87.309 billion (2013) with 55,030 employees all

over the world. When your own story is told, will it be described as a "relentless pursuit of perfection?" If the answer is yes, then it means you have achieved **excellence**.

For many people, the pursuit of perfection has evolved into "**perfectionism**", which The American Heritage Dictionary defines as: "*A propensity for being displeased with anything that is not perfect or does not meet extremely high standards.*" This definition has exposed 'perfectionists' to criticism backed by sayings such as this. "A man would do nothing if he waited until he could do it so well that no one could find fault." **John Henry Newman**. An American Psychologist Dr. Mardy Grothe once said "... *there are many arenas of life where the pursuit of **perfection** can degenerate into **perfectionism**. It occurs with great frequency in writing and other creative arts, where people who sense imperfection in their efforts are paralyzed into a kind of inaction ...*" . Think about how this applies to you. Are you in pursuit of perfection which, in the strict sense, can never be truly attained? Have you drifted into **perfectionism** in pursuit of **perfection**? It is dangerous to allow the pursuit of **perfection** to turn you into a **perfectionist** who would never be able to conclude any venture. Please note that **perfection** may be a **mirage** but if you pursue it, **excellence** will surely come your way.

## **Positive Thinking**

In June 2013, we celebrated a man called **Remez Sasson**. **Remez Sasson** is the author of several life transforming books with a wealth of information, advice and guidance. He is the Founder of [www.successconsciousness.com](http://www.successconsciousness.com), a website about self improvement and spiritual growth. He has exhibited great interest, from an early age, in self-improvement techniques, creative visualization, positive thinking, spiritual growth, meditation and Eastern philosophies. His desire to understand the human soul has led him to read many books, and practise and experiment with inner development methods for many years. At a certain point, he decided to quit his regular job in a bank, and devote his time to teaching and writing articles and books about positive thinking, creative visualization, mind power, inner growth and meditation. He says that, for inner harmony and balance, one needs to tread the paths of both self-improvement and spiritual growth. This is why he writes and teaches on self-improvement, positive thinking, motivation and success and also on spiritual growth, meditation and spiritual awakening.

His writing on spiritual growth shows his inclination toward the non-duality philosophy, called *Advaita Vedanta* in Hinduism. Based on Remez Sasson's teachings, I asked my students this rhetorical question on June 03 2013: Do you know that positive and negative thinking are contagious? All of us affect, and are affected by the people we meet, in one way or another. This happens instinctively and on a subconscious level, through our words, thoughts and feelings, and through body language. Is it any wonder that we want to be around positive people, and prefer to avoid negative ones? People are more disposed to help us, if we are positive, and they dislike and avoid anyone broadcasting negativity. I concluded on that day that since attitude and thoughts do not change overnight, some inner work is required in order to turn the mind toward the positive.

That inner work will entail the following:

- Ignoring what other people say or think about you, if they discover that you are changing the way you think.
- Using your imagination to visualize only favourable and beneficial situations.
- Using positive words in your inner dialogues, or when talking with others.
- Always thinking positively.

One of my favourite subjects in the secondary school was Literature. I was exposed to many literary works which include many Shakespearian stories. Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Taming of the Shrew, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, etc. Two of the non-Shakespearian novels I read then were “Jane Eyre” and “She Stoops to Conquer”. Jane Eyre was written by a British novelist Charlotte Bronte in 1847, a love story full of ups and downs in life. She Stoops to Conquer was written by Oliver Goldsmith and was first performed in London in 1773. I met the term ‘soliloquy’ in either or both of these novels for the first time in the 1960s.

When actors talk to themselves in a play or movie, the situation is described as *soliloquy*. Usually, other actors on stage are not aware (pretend not to be aware) of what is being said. So, *soliloquy* is different from a **monologue** or an **aside**. I advise that you read more about *soliloquy* from literature. In real life *soliloquy* is a tendency that is suppressed by a section of the brain and, as a result, limits the person to a silent dialogue with the **inner self** whereby thoughts of all shades get into your mind and you respond or react without uttering any audible word. In fact, the difference between a **sane** and an **insane** man is the ability of the **sane** man to suppress tendencies to talk audibly to himself at free will.

Once a negative thought enters your mind, you have to be aware of it, and endeavour to replace it with a constructive one. If the negative thought returns, replace it again with a positive one. It is as if there are two pictures in front of you, and you have to choose to look at one of them, and disregard the other. **Persistence** will eventually teach your mind to think positively, and to ignore negative thoughts. In case you feel inner resistance and difficulties when replacing negative thoughts with positive ones, do not give up, but keep looking only at the beneficial, good and happy thoughts in your mind. The two key words to note here are **inner resistance** and **persistence**. **Inner resistance** is natural but negative. It can only be overcome by **persistence**. It doesn't matter what your circumstances are at the present moment. Think positively, expect only favourable results and situations, and circumstances will change accordingly. If you **persevere**, you will transform the way your mind thinks. It might take some time for the changes to take place, but eventually they will. And you will see yourself treading the path of excellence.

How many of us here have a list of **positive affirmations** aimed at helping their visualisation on who they should be? An **affirmation** isn't a statement that reflects your current state. An **affirmation** is a statement that you want and desire to reflect what you want to be. When you see an **affirmation** it should strike a deep chord that produces a response like: '**Yes! I want to be like that!**'.

Everyone is created differently and things that resonate with one person may not resonate with somebody else. So, everyone needs to create a personalised list of **positive affirmations** that he/she can use and take as his/her own. Each of the affirmations on your list should be continuously modified as your changing situation demands, so that they 'ring true' for you always.

A list of **positive affirmations** needs to be crafted in such a way as to remove any room for negativity. They may evoke a negative or positive response from your mind depending on which

nerve they touch in your subconscious. Always make a conscious effort to ignore negative thoughts on your affirmations and affirm **positive thoughts** regardless of any internal or external resistance. Always bear it in mind that a useful technique in **positive thinking** is the repetition of **affirmations**.

One of the leading Reggae musicians in the 1960s was Jimmy Cliff. **Jimmy Cliff** is a Jamaican musician, singer and actor. He is the only currently living musician to hold the Order of Merit in Jamaica, the highest honour that can be granted by the Jamaican government for achievement in the arts and sciences. Jimmy Cliff's songs focused on the philosophy of life. He also had to his credit, love songs and others which were not as many as the philosophical songs but were all laced with the essence of life and living. He began writing songs while still in the primary school. Jimmy Cliff perfected the art of positive thinking in his song titled: **"TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOURSELF"**

*Take a good look  
Take a good look  
Take a look*

*When you look in a mirror tell me what do you see  
Is it who you think you are or who you would like to be?  
When you look at your shadow tell me what do you see  
Do you walk like a giant or do you get shaking?  
We are nothing yes but what we think we are  
We can die in the mud while reaching for a star  
So we've got, feeling down and out  
Take a look at yourself my friend  
And if you're still in doubt  
Take a look at yourself my friend  
You've got it all inside  
You cannot run but please don't hide  
Take a good look  
Take a good look  
Take a look  
And when you are by yourself tell me what do you want  
Take a look  
Do you want the things you have or all the things you can't  
The heart was made to love, the mind to understand  
Take a look  
You can be a puppet or you can be a man  
We are nothing yes but what we think we are  
We can die in the mud while reaching for a star  
So we've got, feeling down and out  
Take a look at yourself my friend  
And if you're still in doubt  
Take a look at yourself my friend  
You've got it all inside  
You cannot run but please don't hide  
Take a good look*

*Take a good look  
Take a look  
Oh! Feeling down and out  
Take a look at yourself my friend  
And if you're still in doubt  
Take a look at yourself my friend  
You've got it all inside  
You cannot run but please don't hide*

*Take a good look  
Take a good look  
Take a look*

## **Self Creation**

In July 2013, the theme of my Charge to my students was “Self Creation”. The man we celebrated was **Louis Dearborn LaMoore**, one of the world's most popular writers, who wrote more than 100 books 30 of which were made into films. His strong views on “**Self Creation**” were expressed in a book he published in 1984, "**The Walking Drum**".

In this book, Louis Dearborn LaMoore wrote: *"Up to a point a man's life is shaped by environment, heredity, and movements and changes in the world about him; then there comes a time when it lies within his grasp to shape the clay of his life into the sort of thing he wishes to be ..."*

This is in sharp contrast to **Ulysses S. Grant's** claim that: *"There are but few important events in the affairs of men brought about by their own choice."* But it agrees with **Viktor Emil Frankl's** opinion that *"Man is not fully conditioned and determined but...is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment."*

The inspiration to be drawn from **Viktor Frankl** and **Louis Dearborn LaMoore** is that it is: Only the weak that blame parents, their race, their times, lack of good fortune, or the quirks of fate. Everyone has it within his power to say, “this I am today; that I will be tomorrow”. If you allow other people to determine what your life is, then you may end up becoming who you never wanted to be. There will be a recurrent conflict between your inner self and your acquired personality. In such a situation, success, satisfaction in life and achievement of **excellence** will remain elusive.

In the words of **Gabriel Garcia Marquez**, *"Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but...life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves."* “Complimentary to this is **Erich Fromm's** claim that: *"Man's main task in life is to give birth to himself, to become what he potentially is. The most important product of his effort is his own personality."* We should always remember that each man is potentially good or evil. It is up to him to decide by his own reasoning the type of personality he desires.

Regardless of where people stand on the age-old long debate on the degree to which people are able to alter their lives by choice and volition, few would deny the suggestion that there are specific moments in life that are especially pivotal times when people decide that life, as they had been living it, is no longer working for them, and a major change is necessary. Some people call this “**turning point**”. Many turning points in life are acts of **self creation**.

If you know somebody who might benefit from a personal transformation, please suggest he/she reads and takes a deep reflection on **Henri Bergson’s** quotable quote on Self Creation. *"To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."*

## **Splendid Failure**

**William Faulkner**, was an American writer and Nobel Prize laureate from Oxford, Mississippi. Faulkner worked in a variety of written media, including novels, short stories, a play, poetry, essays and screenplays. Faulkner’s only goal in life was to be a “**splendid failure**”

The essential idea of “Splendid Failure” was nicely expressed by **Dr. Samuel Johnson** in a 1753 essay: *"It is. . .reasonable to have **perfection** in our eye; that we may always advance towards it, though we know it never can be reached."* (Please note that this idea was expressed 144 years before William Faulkner was born.)

What is “Splendid failure”? “**Splendid failure**” is an **oxymoron** that I stumbled at in September, 2013 from Dr. Mardy’s postings on the Internet. According to Dr. Mardy, “**splendid failure**” is about people failing in their attempt to reach an ideal, but creating something excellent in their quest.

What is an **oxymoron**? Two colleagues in Literary studies described oxymoron as “... *a juxtaposition of two contrasting ideas in a statement. e.g. Wise fool; Rich pauper; etc.*” (Adeoti pers. com.) and “...*a contradiction that is placed side by side*“ e.g. *Bitter-sweet, Wise fool, Blessed madman, etc.* (Adekoya pers. com.).

In a 1956 "Paris Review" interview, **William Faulkner** described himself and his contemporary writers in a memorable way: *"All of us failed to match our dreams of **perfection**. So I rate us on the basis of our **splendid failure** to do the **impossible**."*

**Caitlin Thomas** once said: "Always aspire higher than you can. For, however high you aspire, you will never arrive more than halfway up the cliff of your aspiration."

Today, I am confirming to you that if you arrive more than halfway up the cliff of your aspiration, you are indeed a splendid failure. You should add this to your goal today if you want excellence to be the lower mark of your achievement!

## **Self Discipline**

Frank Herbert published an epic novel titled "**Dune**" in 1965. The novel is about an alien society in the distant future. This book won the best science-fiction novel of the year but failed to be a

commercial success for one decade after this award. It later became one of the best-selling science-fiction novels of all time. It was indeed a true science-fiction classic. One excerpt from Frank Herbert's 'Dune' is: "*Seek **freedom** and become captive of your **desires**. Seek **discipline** and find your **liberty**.*"

Do you know that people who do whatever they want in their lives often become a slave to their desires, ultimately losing the very freedom they crave? By contrast, people who are able to exert some control over personal desires and other human tendencies are those who generally achieve the greatest **success** and the most degrees of **personal freedom**. These are notions that have been established over many centuries and they cannot be disputed.

Personal desires and human tendencies may sometimes be outrageous or incongruent with personal needs. A school of thought in the realm of ideology believes that people should be given what they need and not what they want. I charge you today to reflect deeply on your personal desires and human tendencies. Are they outrageous? Do they far exceed your personal needs? You must learn to control your desire. If you make it a daily conscious effort, **excellence** will not be far from your reach.

**Self discipline** is the root of all virtues. To be morally free, to be more than an ordinary human being; man must be able to resist his instinctive impulses, which can only be done by the continuous exercise of **self control**. **Self respect** generates **self control** which has more to do with **morality** which is the base of an individual's character.

If you master the art of not allowing emotions to overrule your reasoning, you will be consistent and people around you will be able to attest to your character. Afterall, **Marya Mannes** once said: "*The sign of intelligent people is their ability to control their emotions by the application of reason.*"

Can an unintelligent man achieve excellence? What **Marya Mannes** was saying is that even if you are intelligent, you must be able to place reasoning over your emotions to achieve excellence. This is the reason why not all intelligent people achieve excellence. One may be intelligent and still end up in the dustbin of history.

**Self discipline** is the most powerful gift of **self control** the seed of which develops a holistic power to subdue all our greedy, repressive and aggressive instincts and gradually teaches us to exercise control over our thoughts, speeches, and actions.

**Self discipline** is the art of resisting the temptations of life. How we discipline ourselves, how we control our emotions and how we manage situations are entirely dependent on how confident we are about ourselves and what idea we possess about ourselves. So, the higher the **self esteem**, the stronger is the possibility for **self discipline**.

Listen to Harry S Truman. US President (1945-1949-1952). *"In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves (by controlling their desires) **self-discipline** with all of them came first."* The message here is that **self-discipline** is responsible for the large interphase between **greatness** and **excellence**.

### **Secrets of Success**

"If one of the secrets of success is a resourceful adaptability, then resistance to change must be viewed as a formula for failure." **Mardy Grothe**. Who is this man, Mardy Grothe? Dr. Mardy Grothe is a psychologist who trained originally as an individual therapist and marriage counsellor. He expanded his practice to the business arena in the early 1980s when he helped business owners, business partners, and top executives resolve personal and interpersonal problems. In addition to his consulting work, Grothe is also an engaging and entertaining speaker. He has presented more than five hundred seminars on the topic of leadership as a popular speaker at the annual meetings of trade and professional associations. His seminars and speeches are on topics such as "Effective Leadership," "Forging the Leader-Follower Connection," and "Creative Conflict Resolution."

I picked on this theme in December, 2013 intentionally to assist my students in overcoming distraction tendencies, which are common in adolescents. I drew my inspiration, of course, from Mardy Grothe's quotable quote on the secrets of success. When an adolescent does not succumb to distraction, he/she will not accumulate a build-up of events that have disastrous consequences in the future. I will now proceed to intimate you with a few of the many "secrets of success" which can lead one into achieving **excellence** in any chosen profession.

#### **1. Think positively.**

Always be positive. Think Success, not Failure. Your belief that you can accomplish your goals has to be unwavering. The moment you say to yourself "I can't...", then you won't. It is natural for people's attitude to waiver from time to time. But always remember that **positive things happen to positive people**.

#### **2. Decide upon your Goals (Dreams?) and take action.**

Have you ever written down your goals in life and developed a plan to reach them? A New Year's resolution or Personal Credo that isn't written down is just a dream. **Dreams** are not **goals**. **Goals** are those concrete, measurable stepping stones of achievement that track your progress towards your **dreams**. What are your goals in life? Have you taken action towards these goals?

#### **3. Never Stop Learning**

One recipe for success is to become a **life-long learner**. Learning is not restricted to what your Lecturers teach you alone. Learning is not only the knowledge you acquire in your chosen

profession. The learning that is a recipe for **success** is acquisition of knowledge and skills informally from diverse sources. For those of us who are no longer students, you don't have to go back to school before you learn. You don't have to go back to school before you read books.

One opportunity I never allow to slip by is buying books at conferences, seminars, etc. I have in my library books waiting on a long queue of 'yet to be read' books. If you have more unread books in your library than read books, then you are on the right path towards achieving success and maintaining excellence, provided the unread books do not remain unread for life. They must be on the queue, waiting to be read. You learn from reading books as well as from listening to more successful people and acquiring skills both formally and informally.

**4. Be Persistent and Work Hard:** Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up. Every story of success entails long hard hours of work. Always remember that there is no free lunch in this world. If you are not paying for it, somebody is.

**5. Cultivate an Analytical Mind:** Get all available facts, all the input. Learn from your mistakes. Sharpen your wits, your intellect. Strike a balance between getting all the facts and making a decision with incomplete data – both are traits of successful people. Spend time gathering details, but never allow the disease called 'analysis paralysis' to infect you. **Never allow your analytical mind to go on recess.**

#### **6. Don't be Afraid to Innovate**

Deal and Communicate With People Effectively: No person is an island. This is a quotation from **John Donne** (1572-1631). It appeared in *Meditation XVII*, 1624. **John Donne** was a Christian but this concept is shared by many other religions. What it means is that: **Human beings do not thrive when isolated from others.**

#### **7. Be Honest and Dependable**

If you are not **honest and dependable**, all the tips on success I have given you in this lecture today will not matter.

I have not exhausted the long list of secrets of success from my source. There are many more which I implore you to find time to fish out and inculcate into your personal curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

You must have observed that I have carefully avoided laying emphasis on 'Academics' which should be the theme of this Summit. Based on the expectation that most of you are students, I asked myself a pertinent question. Are they all going to end up as academics? The answer is No. Why then should I limit myself to academics? This is the reason why I have leaned heavily towards 'Excellence' as a concept. It does not matter what your chosen profession is, as long as you achieve excellence, you will be successful and great. I have also approached excellence from

the moral point of view because excellence can be negative if it is not juxtaposed with high moral standards.

Three concepts that I have regretfully skipped so as to save time are **Integrity**, **Determination** and **Achievement**. I skipped **Integrity** not only because it has a considerable interphase with many of the concepts I have addressed (e.g. **self esteem** as a subset of **self creation**) but because I have addressed it comprehensively in last year's Lecture on **SHAI Principle**.

**Determination** and **Achievement** are reserved for another discourse in future but I would like to celebrate two achievers before I hang up. The first is **Albert Einstein**. He was a German-born theoretical physicist who developed the general theory of relativity, effecting a revolution in physics. For this achievement, **Einstein** is often regarded as the father of modern physics and the most influential physicist of the 20th century. While best known for his mass-energy equivalence formula  $E = mc^2$  (which has been dubbed "the world's most famous equation"). He received the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics. Einstein's quotable quote which is highly relevant to today's discourse is: *"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning."* I am assuring you all that this is a sure recipe for attainment and maintenance of excellence in all spheres of life forever and ever.

The second achiever is the 11 year old inventor of the **Kangaroo cup**, Lily Born, who decided to make a better cup for her grandfather. She noticed that her grandfather's Parkinson's Disease was causing him to spill his drinks, and she started dreaming of ways to fix this. She had an idea to put legs on his cup to prevent it from spilling. Using moldable prototyping plastic, she attached legs to her grandpa's tumbler. This is the beginning of the story of the **Kangaroo cup**.

Lily and her father embarked on the famous 'Kickstarter Campaign' to solicit funding for the **Kangaroo cup** project on May 9, 2014 and by July 8, 2014 (i.e. exactly 60 days after), the project was fully funded. Although the motive for this invention was to prevent somebody with Parkinson's syndrome from spilling drinks, it is now used by every healthy person, kids and adults alike in various settings and under various situations.

Lily named this cup after the Australian marsupial called Kangaroo. Kangaroos have large, powerful hind legs, large feet adapted for leaping and a long muscular tail for balance. Lily must have drawn her inspiration from the morphological features of the kangaroo that are responsible for its stability.

The highlights of the cup include the following:

- Stable on uneven surfaces
- Tip-resistant three-legged design
- Elevated base means no need for a coaster
- Contoured handles provide a comfortable one- or two-handed grip
- Stackable design saves space on the shelf

- Break-resistant, stain-resistant & BPA-free plastic (BPA is a chemical called **bisphenol-a** the main component of **polycarbonate**, a hard, clear plastic material commonly used to store water, beverages and food)
- Microwave & dishwasher safe
- Very light. Just 9-ounce i.e. 0.5625lb

The lesson to learn from Lily Born is that one doesn't have to be a professor to either be an inventor or achieve excellence in all fields of endeavour.