

# Train to be great

the columnist

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**Being an NCC or NSS cadet sets you apart. That comes with a training that begins early and stays with you all through. RSG – reading, service and gratitude – helps.**

Just a few days ago, I was invited to interact with the National Service Scheme students who were in Delhi to participate in the Republic Day Parade.

I was truly thrilled to see them. Their enthusiasm inspired me, to reach out to them, with a sense of parental care and concern. At the same time, I felt proud of them for their dedication and simplicity.

I could see, right before my eyes, what contributed to India's strength and vibrancy. The NCC (National Cadet of Corps) and the NSS (National Service Scheme) were clearly succeeding in instilling nationalism and patriotism in the youth. Even I owe my initiation into the Indian Police Service to my NCC days.

What I passed on to them as a concerned parent-teacher was in a manner that engaged them. I always let them feel they could be better than many I told them that if I were their age, I would have read even more than a student, and certainly as many auto-biographies as possible. I would have read Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography as early as possible, and followed it by others. I told them that this was one of the best ways to learn early.



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Hence "remember the 'R' for reading, the first essential to reach as far as you want."

"To reading I would add service. Give back to the community. Spend summer breaks in offering some sort of service to your immediate neighbourhoods. This is what the NSS teaches you and charity must begin at home. Do anything that is close to your heart. But serve. Learn to serve now. Prepare to become leaders of your communities through service. Many of you, who are from villages, pre-

pare to be the Panches and Sarpachos to make the difference in your own villages. So add 'S' (service) to the 'R' (reading).

Now, the last but the most important, is feel 'Gratitude'. All knowledge and service is of little value if we are not grateful for all that we have and all the opportunities we get to serve. So add to the 'R' an 'S' and a 'G'. That is to say develop habits of reading + serving + gratitude.

I concluded by anticipating their questions. What can they do in an environment of violence, corruption, bribery and now fierce competition?

I told them that in every society and in all of history, there have been the good and the bad. They will encounter both. But self-discipline will help them to make the right choices. "Just as you choose the channel on your TV, you will choose your responses. You are here to do exactly this. Each of you is a national asset. Train to be that. Now will you remember RSG?"

They all gave a full throated 'Yes!'  
To me this was the true *Jai Hind*.