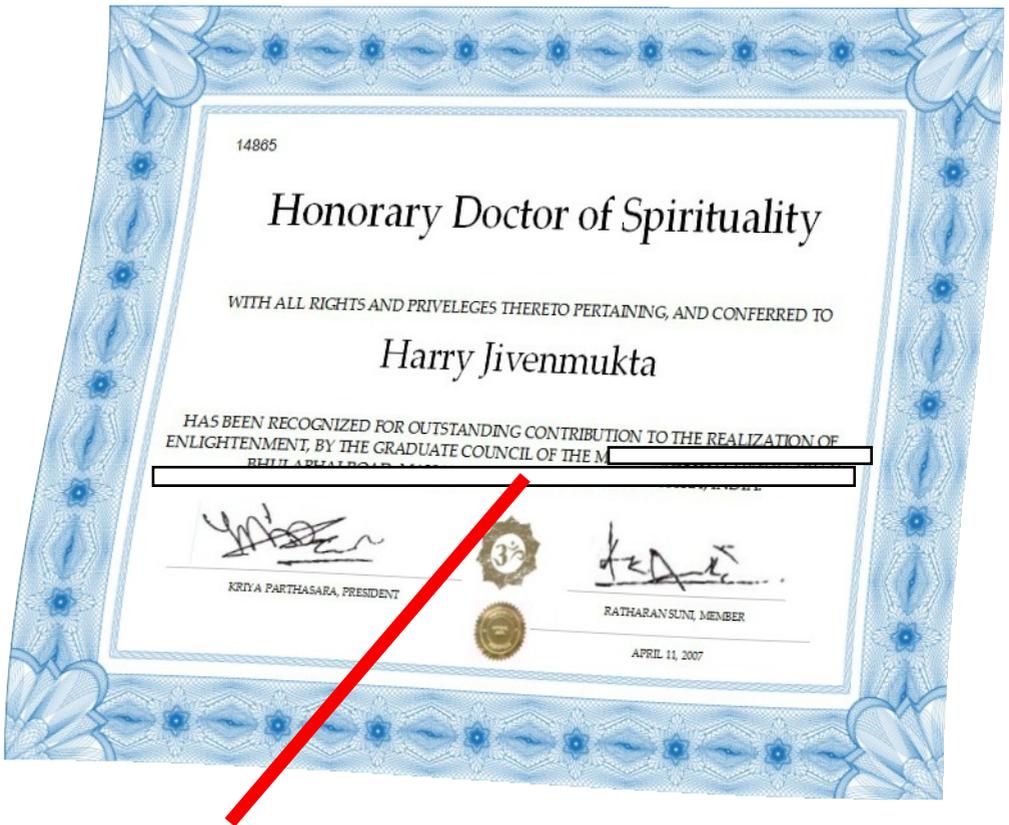


My Honorary Doctorate

I received it and also got banned from the university on the same day.



Name of university blanked out for contract agreement reasons

Introduction

I asked myself the question: should I be polite and lie to my audience or should I be frank and become even less popular. The truth always hurts but I decided, in 2007, to be frank with the audience at my honorary Master's Degree ceremony. I won't name the university in question because it got very messy in the days and weeks that followed my acceptance presentation. Anyway, here is what I said. This is not word for word because I never use notes. This is what I recall I said.

Thank you for honouring me with this award.....blah, blah, blah....

Imagine this:

I go to a buffet. In one hand I have a cup of tea, in a saucer. In order to drink this cup of tea, I need both hands; one to hold the saucer and one to lift the cup. However, life is never this simple because I have a biscuit in the other hand. So, I am standing there with a cup and saucer in one hand and a biscuit in the other; I am effectively locked up.

Helplessly scanning my environment, I see a plate of lemon slices sitting there on the buffet table. Now, I don't know about you, but I love lemon slices. But I don't want to put down my biscuit or my tea. I am a very clever man, and have previously managed to deal with similar situations. I can balance the biscuit on the rim of the cup and so free up one hand. So doing, I confidently pick up a lemon slice.

So, now, I have a cup of tea and a saucer in one hand, with a biscuit balanced on the rim of the cup, and in the other hand I have my lemon slice which I take a bite of. Lovely!

Being a gregarious type, I rescan the buffet table, and see, at one end, some triangles of pizza. It makes me smile, how I get repeatedly caught out at these events, when having selected some delicious items, I then notice even more delectable morsels. I fill my mouth with the rest of the lemon slice, almost choke, and reach for a pizza triangle. A helpful assistant quickly offers me a paper plate and I politely place the pizza on the plate and then pick up the plate.

I am really in a pickle now with both hands more than full.

This story is all about you. I am glad you are all here, turned out to fill this auditorium, but regret to inform you that all of you have failed in your spiritual quest. You are just like my example of the buffet table, only about a hundred times worse. Let me explain. Most people have, and I list these randomly:

A mobile phone and contract

Satellite or cable TV and contract

A car

Car insurance

Home insurance

Life insurance

Holiday fund

Addiction to at least one of, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, cakes, chocolate, etc., etc.

Children or dreams of a family

A partner with his or her own list

Places you want to visit

Gas bill

Electricity bill

Water bill

Loan repayment

Home improvement ideas

Courses to attend

New things to learn

Getting to work on time

Books that you must read

Clothes you must buy

Meditation every day

...there are probably another hundred or so I could add.

So, why on earth are you here, to listen to me? What more can you possibly do? In your busy schedule, where will you fit all the things required to attain enlightenment? Why are you wasting your time?

None of you will attain anything significant spiritually because you have too much to do already. It is not that you are incapable, but until you stop, drop everything, you cannot attain anything, not even the things you are trying to attain already. Never mind new things!

So you are wasting your time. Thank you for the accolade of an honorary Master's Degree, but I will not simply lie to you and say you can have it all. You cannot. In fact you cannot even have all of the material things you seek, let alone spiritual attainments.

You expect me to give you some tips on how to advance your spirituality but all I can say is that you are already doomed to failure by the mass of nonsense already going on in your head. If I offer you four more things to do, all I am doing is adding to the confusion.

So, thank you for the accolade and please don't hold this presentation against me. I think you probably will, though. If you ever seriously want to gain something in your spiritual development, first you will have to drop everything you are currently doing. You won't be able to do that, so there you go.

Thank you.

*PLEASE CONTINUE OVERLEAF
FOR AN ALTERNATIVE ENDING.*

Some of my comrades have been very unhappy with my frank and brutal presentation, and so I present an imaginary alternative to make them feel happy.

Doctorate – the alternative ending

This story is all about you. I am glad you are all here, turned out to fill this auditorium, but regret to inform you that many of you may struggle in your spiritual quest. You are just like my example of the buffet table, only much worse.

The solution is to go to the buffet and then stop. Don't choose anything until you have had the opportunity to wander up and down the buffet table. Then think. Then mentally make a list of your preferences. Rather than filling both hands like I did, why don't you just take one item at a time, and then go for the next one once you have finished the first one. You might need a drink though, to wash it all down, so choose something in a plastic cup that can easily be handled and drunk using just one hand. Perhaps, save the cup of tea till last.

So, with your spirituality, wander around and test out each religion, or spiritual offering. Don't be hasty to choose. Then, when you are sure, select one and stick to it. Don't chop and change every five minutes. You will surely succeed. Thank you (rabid applause)

Afterword

Of course, using the nice ending, no one will achieve anything significant spiritually, but they will all be happy in their ignorance, and love me all the more. I wish I could be so duplicitous, but unfortunately I have never got out of the habit of being honest.

A final comment: if you want to succeed in life, never tell the truth.

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