

INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS WHAT MATTERS

The young girl who chose an undertaker's career

Gender Talk



BY NAYOMINI
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Dinusha Kumari is just 22 years old, a pretty young girl one would not expect to see engaged busily in what most may consider a not so suitable career for a young lady; yet this courageous young woman from Ruwanwella single-handedly manages the only funeral home in her area.

A Facebook post on the surprise visitors got when they saw a young girl drive in the hearse with a dead body in it got me thinking on the girl's unusual career choice. Her father had been an undertaker himself and she grew up watching her father wash, embalm and dress corpses before getting them ready for viewing. To her, it became a natural choice of a career.

When young girls her age would have been happier shopping or tapping on their smart devices, Dinusha ran home after school to help her father embalm bodies and get them ready. Having seen coffins and bodies from an early age, when she chose to open her funeral undertaking business at their home, she or her father did not give it a second thought. Today, with her father running a garage in the village, Dinusha collects bodies from the hospital when she is called, takes them to her funeral undertaker area, which is located in her home, and gets them ready. Once done, she drives the hearse over to the funeral house and hands over the body. She often attends to the work alone – fear or dread is not something that occurs to her as she carries out various functions in relation to preparing the bodies for their final journey.

Forget the novelty of a young girl in a profession, which even the strongest of men, may shun often, let's look at the innovative value a courageous young woman has brought to the table here. Having identified a niche, in this case a funeral home service,



one that compliments what she knew and learnt in the company of her father, Dinusha was able to put it to work and succeed.

She didn't hang around, wasting time as most young people today maybe inclined to do, waiting for a favour, a job from the government or a recommendation from someone to get somewhere. She knew what she was good at, she recognized where a need was available and she chose to do something about meeting that need.

It also helped in Dinusha's case that others could not emulate her as they so often do. Someone starts a business – and soon enough, there are more than a few imitators. Dinusha may not have studied formal business education and

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not emerged a pundit but she sure knows what she is doing. And she is doing it so well – single-handedly, that you cannot but marvel at this young woman's courage and determination. But what makes Dinusha stand out is her exceptional commitment to her chosen path of entrepreneurship and her desire to excel at it. She has stuck

to what she knows best and has shown an absolute dedication to improving it. She is also driven by goals – she wants to better herself and make her business grow.

Entrepreneurship is not always about trendy ideas, hanging around in coffee shops surfing the net and waiting for the next best thing although that may define the concept to a few. It is about spotting a set of needs that is not being met and developing a strategy that is workable, to meet those needs. It is not about pie in the sky and grand plans. It is about practical and efficient ideas that have innovation at its core.

And once you have developed your plan to meet those needs, you must be able to have the courage to get your hands dirty –

as Dinusha has chosen to do. Many talk so well about starting on their own, but few would venture out and actually do it. Those who choose it must choose it with care and planning. Do your homework – study the subject. Along the way, start small – starting small helps you to grow. Starting too big may go the other way.

So the lessons we learn from a young woman in Ruwanwella are many. They are lessons we can apply to the way we think and build our businesses. They are lessons that hopefully will enable some of us to think differently and live differently.

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