

## Blog 5: Rediscovered Joy – Searching Again for the Child Within

When was the last time you danced — without reason, without rhythm, just because you felt like it? When was the last time you laughed until your stomach hurt, tears streaming, like a child?

I look back at my past and see a little boy whose eyes shone with wonder. Who preferred swimming in the Narayani River to sitting on school benches, whose thighs thick with mud were a proud garment, and whose chocolate-stained cheeks were his medal of honour.

That boy grew up with the smell of hay and fields, and had the courage to walk to the neighbour's house in the dark to study under a lantern.

The youngest of five brothers, yet the first to receive formal education — that was his first victory in life.

But the older I grew, the farther I drifted from that boy. Life's voices — “Behave properly”, “Be serious”, “Speak less”, “Earn something”, “Work, don't play” — one by one silenced his laughter.

Studying and struggling on foreign soil, becoming the invisible pillar of my wife's political journey, taking my children all the way to America for a secure future — I locked life inside a wooden box labelled “responsibility”.

Then life struck an invisible blow — the very foundation of my life shook. Just when he was about to marry, at the age of 27 my son — my pride, my dream, my laughter — was lost in the silent storm of bipolar disorder. In that moment all my plans, my discipline, my walls of “success” collapsed.

Then that silent boy, who had not spoken to me for years, whispered in my ear — “I am still here. I still want you to play, laugh, and feel joy.”

So I turned inward again. I began dancing — not outwardly, but inside. I started painting — not only on canvas but in dreams, words, and actions. I picked up the harmonium — I had never learned, yet the moment I touched the keys my heart began to play. I started singing songs and bhajans — eyes welling up, completely immersed in emotion.

The moment I gave that child space in my life, miraculously the world began opening its arms to me. Creativity returned, the roots of laughter sprouted, and that old friend ease came back.

Now I still take responsibility — but with childlike curiosity. I still serve — but with a touch of playfulness. I still live — but fully present.

If you have ever felt tired, empty, or merely “alive” but not truly living — that is the child inside you knocking at the door. Open that door. Dance. Laugh. Play the colourful game of life again.

It is never too late — that child is still there, waiting to welcome you, exactly as he welcomed me at the darkest turn of my life and held me steady once more.