

# SPEECH- Avishi

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I started my journey I Prakriya as a 6 year old, and I stand here today with the same emotions I had ten years back – excitement, apprehension and fear. It's quite strange, I entered this school in tears and it seems that I will leave it in tears.

My first day of school, and something I was completely unaware of was SHANTIPATH. So we passed the temple and everyone was suddenly quiet. But I did not know that so you can guess what happened. Then I came to believe that the teachers wanted some peace before and after 8 long hours with us. What had seemed so alien, so hard to uphold, comes naturally now.

Primary was a tsunami of emotions. Sitting on the dustbin as a punishment eventually escalated to eating the bitter neem leaves. Just as in one our best habbas, Alice in Wonderland, primary was like the rabbits hole for me and one of the many Wonders I found in this Wonderland was my first sports day. I won the race and stood on the podium eagerly awaiting the medal. But it was not to be, my prize was not one of gold but of glass- a pouch full of beautiful marbles. Initially disappointed, I soon came to cherish those marbles and do so to this day.

In middle school I derived happiness from the simplest things. Things that we would not have valued anywhere else: moving from pencils to pens, wearing shoes in the class and writing on desks. Most of us fell down over and over again rocking our chairs and still refused to learn.

Then came the promotion to high school, the highest honor, the final frontier. 8<sup>th</sup> grade had so much drama – countless long circle times and

the frequent visits to the coordinators room. We always ended up missing our precious games class for this

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> were just combined into one study filled trip of revelations – where we would take 5 minutes to walk to the washroom and 10 minutes to walk back to class. Where chalk was used to throw at one another rather than write on the board. Where the duster was dusted on each other and not the wall. Essentially we tried our best to turn all rules and conventions on its head and had a blast.

This was also the time when I really got to know myself and made friends for life. I will cherish the field trips, the projects, the Habbas, the games, the fights, the bumpy bus rides and may be even the canteen food.

None of what I say today would have been possible without our teachers. Through the years, we have been blessed with some great teachers who not only taught us but also shaped us for who we are as an individual. You were always there for us, encouraged us, and supported our choices. You helped me push my boundaries, and had more faith in me than I myself did. You ensured I gathered so much more in my small bag of marbles. A big thank you to all and a special shout to all my class teachers.

What we learn with pleasure, we never forget. You gave us your heart and soul; you gave us your sweat. How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.