

HEADS I WIN AND TAILS I WIN

It is fairly safe to assume that a coin has two sides. We will know that, traditionally, we call one side "Heads" and the other side "Tails". Now the big question always is: if we spin the coin up in the air, on which side will it come down? It obviously has to land on one of those sides but sometimes it comes down on the "Heads" side and on other times it comes down as "Tails". We might try to say, "Heads I win, Tails you lose" but we are not likely to get away with it!

If we toss the coin up really high, is it more likely to come down Heads? What if we spin the coin hundreds of times: is it more likely to come down "Heads"? If we spin the coin with our right hand and catch it with our left, is it more likely to come down "Heads"? If we spin the coin from higher up and catch it higher up, is it more likely to come down "Heads"? If we spin the coin up high, turn two times and catch it before it lands...? If I spin the coin but drop it on the ground...? The fact is that it does not matter how we spin the coin, there is no way that we can be certain that it will come down "Heads". Sometimes it will come down on "Heads" but at other times it will come down as "Tails."

Let us look at this coin and ask how much it is worth. If it has "One dollar" written on it, then its worth is one dollar (though that may not be so obvious to tell in Zimbabwe!) But let us be clear on this: how much is the Head's side worth? And how much is the Tail's side worth? The answer is a resounding "One dollar" for both sides. But is "Heads" not better than "Tails"? After all, the Head is at the top of the body, and the tail is at the back, or the bottom of the body, so does that not suggest "Heads" is more important? The Head is the boss-man, the top guy, in a school. No. We will no doubt agree that both sides are worth exactly the same? The two very distinctively different sides are worth exactly the same amount.

What if, as above, we toss the coin up really high, will its worth change? If we spin the coin hundreds of times, will it change how much it is worth? What if we spin the coin with our right hand and catch it with our left, will its value change? If we spin the coin from higher up and catch it higher up...? If we spin the coin up high, turn two times and catch it before it lands...? If we drop it on the ground...? No, obviously, as before, the value of the coin stays the same, no matter how we toss it. Even if it lands on "Heads" nine times out of ten, we will be relieved to know that its value stays the same.

The reason we should be relieved is that the same principle applies to our sports fixtures; sometimes we win and sometimes we lose. Like the toss of a coin, sometimes we have more wins; sometimes it comes down to luck even! The point is though that whether we win or whether we lose, the match (which is the coin) has the same value. The purpose of the match remains the same. The match does not become any less valuable because we happened to lose. What is important is that we learn from both the winning and the losing. Remember – the value of the coin does not change, so neither does the value of the match, whichever side it lands.

Most importantly, we need to realise and understand that the lives of each one of us is like a coin, with two sides. The two sides are called not "Heads" and "Tails" but "Success" and "Failure". Sometimes we land on the success side; at other times we end up on the failure side. We are not worth more if we land on the winning side; we are not worth less if we fall on the losing side. It does not matter if we reach great heights, hundreds of times or with great style and skill, the value of the coin remains the same, the value of our lives remains the same. As the coin has the same value on both sides, whichever way it ends up, so our worth remains the same, whether we succeed or fail. It is not a matter of "Heads I win and Tails you lose" but actually "Heads I win and Tails I win!"

So in the same way, we all have the same value whether we get a prize at Speech Day or not. Some pupils may land "Heads" up, by receiving prizes; some will not. It happens like that. We do not need to be disappointed if we do not get a prize. Most importantly though, we need to understand this; our worth as individuals does not depend on whether we win prizes or not, on whether we win matches or not, on whether we succeed or not. Our worth and value remains the same. And, let it just be emphasised, we are worth an awful lot more than one dollar!