**The race for learning**

**By Iván Danaver**

Once upon a time, there was a village where the sun rays cross the cloud-shaped trees and when they reach the flowers, they bloom in an eternal colorful spring. On the hills, the ground had a green quilt and folk animals are everywhere. There is a rectangular red spot that can be seen from the volcano. If you zoom a little, you can see some people blending themselves as if they are getting prepared for a race. They are five and it is not difficult to tell they were different but alike. Their attitude was so remarkable that everybody could see they were struggling for something.

There was a boy who was preparing himself to win more than the rest, and he hops as if he wanted to show his new brand sneakers; but all of them wore special sportswear. One girl had a strange artifact on her hands it looked like a sophisticated thin block made of wood. There was one of them who seem to have many tools hidden on a pack on his back. A thin girl seems to be very confident on her sportswear. Another girl was wearing modest sport clothes.

“Hi” said another girl running out from the tall trees at the south of the field, “wait for me – Mary – I am here” she said, with word that sounded peculiar. Mary said “hello\_ join the group and follow me”.

The madam with blond long hair led them across a place full of fruit trees. They stopped to rest for a night in some cabins in the middle of trees, and went to bed just after they had some directions for the race that started the next day when the sun rises.

The next morning all of them sat down under an a-hundred-years-old tree with a log as wide as a building and with such wide branches that you could not see the sky standing up under it. “This is our reflective place… we will sit down under this tree twice a day, in the morning and in the evening” said a young woman whose eyes were the color of the sky in a sunny day on coconut beach. After some minutes, a young man said “let´s talk about the race” with a smile that shows friendship. “This race is not to win” said he, with a humble sight, “it is a race to learn”. Everybody was listening to him very carefully as they were thinking on what they will learn. “We will learn from each other until get the finish line” he continued. As they listen to him had different reactions without saying a word. “All of you brought different tools and special sportswear for the race which will be shared with each other” it was more remarkable the face language of some of them, especially those who had new devices for the race. “The race has three laps; no one can be left behind, but everybody has to get the goal in each lap. You have to help the ones who go slowly”.

A silence short period of time came before the young man started a group of questions like if he wanted them to repeat what he had already said. Then he chunked some other direction, but the last thing he said got their whole attention: “You have to take away all your devises and packed them in your backpack\_ there are some appliances and devices in this bag for you to use them in the first lap of the race” some of them complain whispering to each other, but only one boy dared to ask “Why?”. “Why what?\_ why do I use glasses?” said the young man with a laugh that followed. “Why do you want us to change our devices for yours?” asked the racer. “Tell me about yours” reply the young man. The boy started describing the benefits of using his tools. “Fantastic said the young man\_ you are an expert using yours and now I want you to learn to use new tools and help your friends to learn to use yours”. After that, the whole group picked up a different tool, device and appliance from the big bag that seems to be endless just as Santa Clause’s bag.

An hour later, and after they tried on different sportswear and tried out some devises, they saw a hand up of a lady wearing glasses with a maternal gaze; they understood that she wanted to capture their attention. “I’ll explain you the use of this device; it is called ECRIF and is the one you are going to use during the first stage of the race” showing another tool said “this one is for you to keep in the road, it is called SMARTA” is going to help you to walk easily. \_ the conversation continue and as she was talking the students were asking questions. Then she gave a sample of how to use the new tools. “Whenever you listen to a strange sound, you use the RAP devise and it will give the meaning. It can help you to communicate with nature”. After a while, she wished them good luck and gave them time to prepare for the start.

The time to start came when the sun rays were turning dark. They experience walking and running with their new tools and at first they looked uncomfortable but after a couple of hours it looks like they were getting used to them. The first lap was very irregular for them, because one of them was ahead from the rest, but after a couple of hours he started to feel very heavy and suddenly he sat down on a small rock on the road. His partners tried to help him to get up, but it was too difficult so they had to exchange tools and some pieces of clothes and give each other advises of how to use them.

After the first lap was over, they got together under the tree on a cloudy morning. The trainer with blue eyes said “time to shift to the second lap”, she looked at them one by one \_“I have new tools and devices\_ this is called PDP and is going to be very useful for this stage of the race” they saw a demonstration of how to use it and ask countless questions. “In this stage you are allowed to use one of the devices you brought from home”. She also told them about a specific device called DAPA. “This is for you to record your impressions right after something that helps you or hinders you on your way to the goal can happen in regard to your learning”.

As the sun went down at the horizon, they started the second lap of the race. This time they had new strategies and sportswear, but carrying their own on their backpack for the time they might need it, they looked more confident. It happened that a girl had some troubles to use a device she had on, and she was falling behind the rest she shout out “help\_ I need your help, please”. It was the first time she talked to her partners. One of them stopped and stepped back to help her. He said “let me tell you how to use this” and told her step by step what she needed to continue the race. They both started to walk again and gained practice on the new shoes they had today, they were walking so fast that they reached two of their partners. The one that got in troubles the day before was ahead and never did even a quick glance behind because he wanted to be first.

The day to start the last lap of the race began, and all of them looked really tired but expecting something new to learn. They sat down under the huge and old tree which today was decorated with colorful pieces of papers. They were so many that it was impossible to take it for granted. The young man with the white smile addressed them and said “take a small piece of paper from the tree and read it and talk to someone next to you about it”. After about 20 minutes He asked them if they were ready to see a demonstration of the use of some new tools useful for the third and last stage of the race. “This stuff is for you to get fluency in the race” said he, and very often he makes jokes out of everything.

Again, the time to start the last lap came quickly for the racers. They were exited to finish the race. Any of them was thinking on winning the race, rather they were trying to help each other. During this final lap they find out that the road was as easy to walk on as if they were in a paved trail. And they were using the trainer’s devices, tools and strategies. They looked exhausted but very happy for their harvest. In this final lap all of them were walking or running but one beside another, and they get the finish line all together.

In a photo of the last morning under the huge and old tree you can see many expressions of feelings. Everyone received a gift from everyone and all together said “**We woooooooon”**

**The end**

PST: any similarity with real life, it’s just a matter of coincidence…