

GTI, May 14, 2020
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“The Dream is the Journey, Not the Destination” – Siddharth

Many don't dream or have given up dreams and dreaming. Some people dream and then few of them actually live their dreams. Today GTI will be sharing the inspiring story of a family of three, Siddharth, Smriti and Advait, and their journey.

Smriti and Siddharth conceived Soulify on 21st May 2017, an effort to encourage individuals to empower themselves by identifying and connecting with the creator within. In a short span of 3 years, they have facilitated more than 150 interactions reached out to thousands of participants from various socioeconomic backgrounds, homeschoolers and unschoolers, jail inmates, cyclone survivors, mothers of children with special needs, wives of army soldiers, village and urban school teachers, student and various adults waiting to express, explore and share their creative self.

Smriti is born and brought up in Patna and has always challenged herself to explore and create new dimensions of herself to understand her own potentials. “Braving The Unknown is Rebirth” says Smriti. This nature of exploring the unknown introduced her to mentor Manjul Bhardwaj and his philosophy – Theatre of Relevance (TOR) in December 2004, Mumbai. TOR envisions theatre which is relevant to the context of the society and owes its social responsibility, and not Art just for the Art sake. It caters to human needs and provides a platform for expression, to explore itself as a medium of change/development. This came out from the ‘limits of entertainment’ to a way of living. Since then she has been evolving with this thought process. It was on 17th May 2017 when Smriti discovered her purpose ‘To Build a Platform for Creative Expression’ in Delhi. Thus Soulify came into being with TOR providing a firm base to ground it's pillars. For a few months while Siddharth was still working as a Creative Director for an eminent film production house in Delhi, Smriti developed Soulify by hosting workshops under the facilitation of their mentor Manjul Bhardwaj. This phase was primarily an incubation period for them to evolve as visionaries committed to their dreams.

Siddharth comes from the Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmin community colloquially known as ‘aamchis’. He was born and brought up in Mumbai and took up formal studies and completed his Bachelors Degree in Microbiology. However it was his sheer passion and dream for storytelling, and animation, that empowered him to build a lustrous career in the field of animation and film making through the path of self guided learning. After two decades of serving the Indian animation industry, on 28th October 2017, Siddharth decided to listen to his soul's voice ‘Spread Happiness Through Storytelling’. The path was laid out. He dissolved his capitalistic dreams to channelize his skills towards humanity and spiritual progress as a creator.

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Nov 2017, Children's Theatre

Siddharth believes "Only when you take the leap of faith, The Universe gifts you wings to fly." Siddharth was invited by National Institute of Design (NID) to facilitate storytelling through 3D animation for their students. That was one of the turning points for the family. They decided to drive to Ahmedabad and share their vision and philosophy by branding their car with Soulify banners. The interaction at NID was not only groundbreaking in the field of animation education, but it transformed the students from competitors to compassionate learners. An inspiring book named *I'm Possible* was created and published. This book contains inspiring stories from the lives of each of the students.

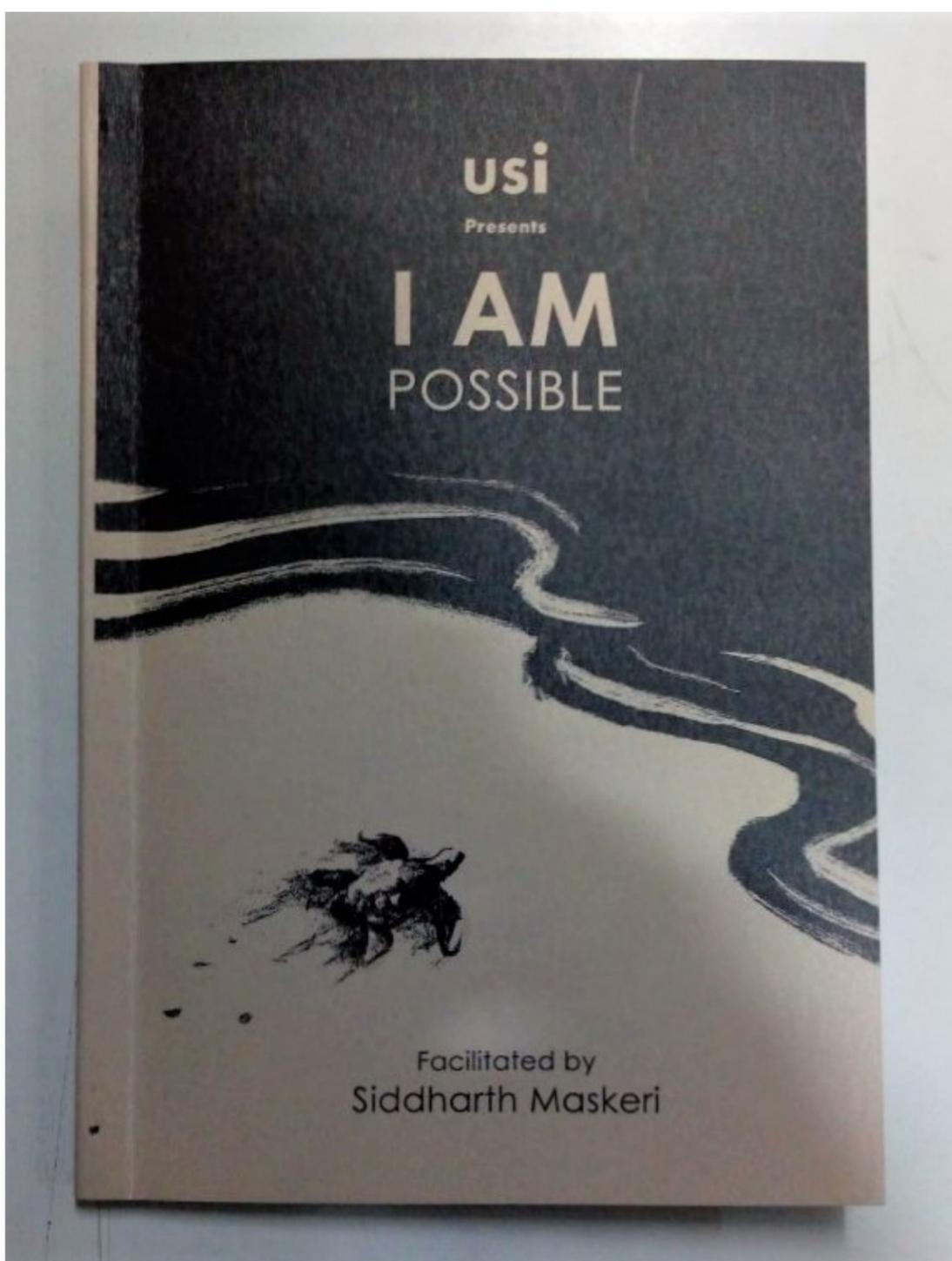


Jan 2018, Ahmadabad Road trip

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Jan 2018, with NID students



Jan 2018, NID

After returning from NID in Feb, the family began to host storytelling sessions every Sunday at their house by the name of Soulify – Creators Connect, where participants watched animated films from World Cinema, engaged in the art of film appreciation, shared stories of transformation, healing and seeing ourselves as a hero in pursuit of



our dreams rather than a victim of our stories. Siddharth told GTI that “We do not always have to look outside for motivation, we can be our very own role models.” Various creative processes were designed, developed and extended over the months in their home converted to a beautiful community space, in Saket, Delhi.



Creators Connect Delhi



Creators Connect Delhi

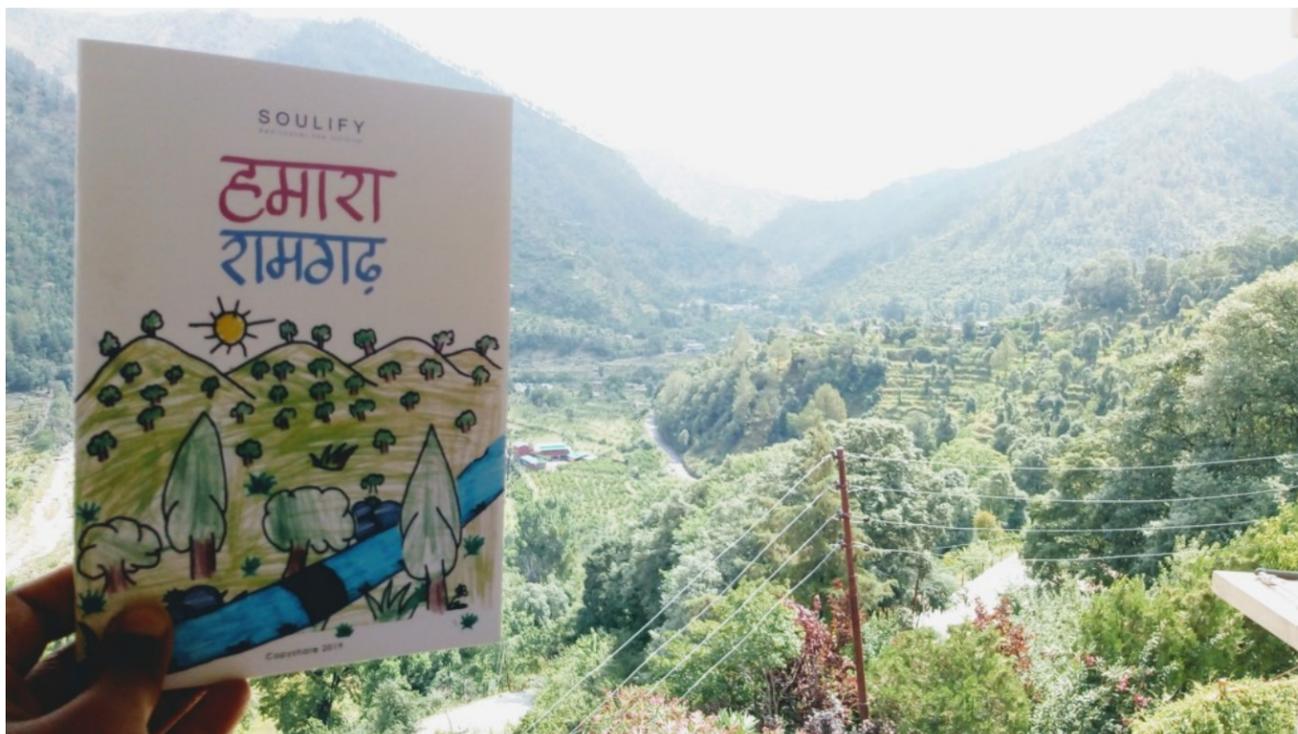
July 2018 onwards, their journey began to progress by leaps and bounds when their son Advait decided to walk out of a conventional school in Delhi to walk on the path of a self guided learner. At a young age of 8, he realised that structured schooling was actually dumbing him down. As a parent, Siddharth and Smriti understood the limitations of the current education system and its competitive nature that was deforming Advait's natural learning abilities. After adequate research on the various methods of schooling, it was a joint decision by the family to walk out of the structured system that believes in “one size fits all” and take learning out of the four walls that enabled unlearning, relearning and learning from life's rich experience. In February 2020 Advait was invited to share his passion and learning of aerodynamics with participants at an NGO called Manzil in Delhi. It was a moment of joy to experience Advait as a young, empathetic and confident facilitator. His radiant self-



belief inspired all apart from the knowledge that he shared. Some of the youth even stayed back to know him better. "Curiosity and Passion are the Wings of a Learner that enables one to fly and Advait was flying" says Siddharth.

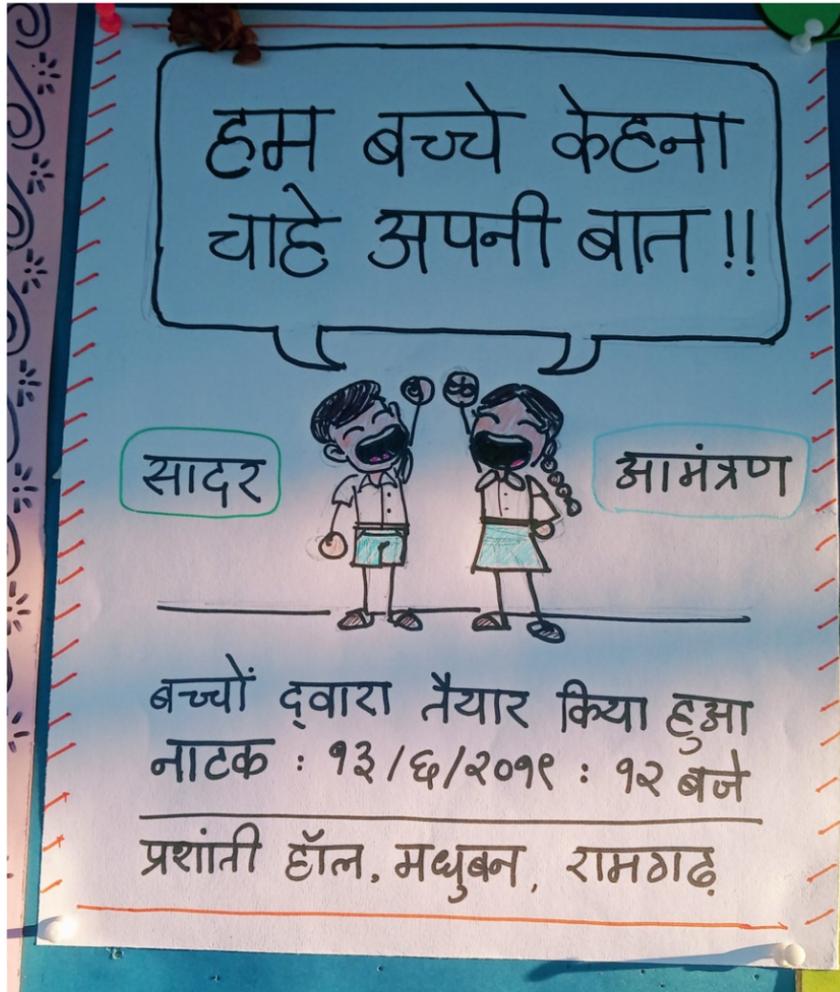
After a year of weekend sessions and workshops in and around Delhi, both Siddharth & Smriti decided to embrace a life of spontaneity, see the planet Earth as their home and live a nomadic life to travel across the country and share their philosophy and creative process of self transformation. "True progress begins only when we embrace co-existence and thrive as an integral part of the world community. सब रंग एक रंग संग संग रच दे उन्मुक्त तरंग...उमंग" says Smriti.

The family then temporarily relocated to Patna, and from 6th March 2019, they began their road trip journey to mutually enlighten cities and villages as they went by. Over the past one year they have traveled across 14 states and have conducted workshops in alternative schools like L'avenir school in Gurgaon and well acclaimed schools such as Krishnamurthy's Rajghat Besant School Banaras, as well as vocational training and teacher training with Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi. Their workshops are designed as per the objectives of the organizers and participants where participants are the resource. In Mumbai, they facilitated a workshop for the mothers of specially-abled children who were searching for their creative identity other than that of a mother. In Leh Ladakh, with the support of the Superintendent Regzin Sandup, they facilitated a workshop for the liberation of the jail inmates living in guilt, dejection, uncertainty and pain struggling to see themselves beyond a criminal. In Ramgarh Uttarakhand, with the support of Sri Aurobindo Ashram Delhi, they facilitated a session at a village school where the children taught them about the treasures of their beautiful village. The children together came up with 18 descriptive features which they wrote and illustrated. Soulify then published their work as a book by the name of *Humara Ramgarh*. They also wrote and performed their own play "Hum Bachche Kehna Chahte Apni Baat". Sri Aurobindo Ashram contributed to our journey in many ways. We connected with Bharatiya Gyaan Vigyaan Sammiti (BGVS) who invited us to Puri in the month of July for the emotional upliftment of the cyclone survivors and self motivation of the BGVS volunteers. Many enriching workshops were facilitated by Soulify over the months publishing several thought provoking story books.



May 2019, Ramgarh





May 2019, Ramgarh



May 2019, Ramgarh





Sept 2019, Leh Jail

Siddharth said, "To be ideal, we often mask and hide our limitations. This leaves us in a state of incompleteness, never truly loving ourselves. We must learn to see our limitations as our gifts that make our story compelling rather than miserable and embrace ourselves." People often give up dreaming due to societal pressure, but that can be detrimental to our existence. Soulify inspires participants to not give up on their dreams as it is the only thing giving us hope, which keeps us alive. Dreams help us in creating our own identity which in turn help us learn more about ourselves. He said, "If I dream to learn to play the Ukulele, then I am creating an identity of myself as a musician. This creative process is important for unconditional happiness."

The greatest joy of choosing this path for the three of them is that they are able to invest their time and energy in what they love the most. The societal conditioning of insecurity, judgement and the pressure to prove themselves became irrelevant. This also dissolved the limiting structure of a so-called family and provided them an environment to learn and grow together as friends. There are many new challenges they keep facing and learning from and affirms that's an essential part of their evolution.

During the pandemic, they are currently writing a book on their magical experiences of the universe, facilitating online interactions on storytelling for self transformation and developing their website www.soulify.org.in (<http://www.soulify.org.in>) to be launched on their 3rd year anniversary – 21st May 2020.

We applaud their efforts and wish them all the success for their future endeavors.

You can follow their initiatives on:

<https://www.facebook.com/soulifyIdeas/> (<https://www.facebook.com/soulifyIdeas/>)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_zoPFgjNFkD_ZzOh1q0N2g
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