

04 Understand how to learn and experience happiness

"In this era of knowledge and economy, unceasing learning is the only key to success".

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In December 2000, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States published an article with title "2015 Global Trend: A dialogue concerning the future with the unofficial experts". In it the situation of the variation of the future population was mentioned. It was estimated that the community population would increase from 61 billion in 2000 to 72 billion in 2015. Among them, 95% (about 10.45 billion) of the increase would be immigrants from the developing countries. Furthermore, by that time, the life expectancy of the majority would be even longer.

Would this number, besides causing us to express our heartfelt admiration, give rise to a flash of an iota of uneasiness and anxiety in these ever ascending living standard and optimizing social environment? After all, a more crowded population signifies a more intense competition. While facing the problems of globalization and "global village" in the numerical sense,

can we, as well as our next generation, perceive that our life will be much more struggling, making it even harder to survive?

Recalling the far back past, our first human ancestors' survival depended solely on their learning capacity to outscore their rivals to come to the fore and became the final winners while fighting for survival

among all things by the law of natural selection. In 1972, the International Education Development Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published a renowned report of their research of "Learning to Survive". In it, learning and surviving are directly related together so that we can see the importance of learning to human survival.

At present, in the midst of our rich resources, we have the chance and capability to pursue continuous education for higher qualifications and to collect more certificates and diplomas. However, in this present epoch, there are urgent requests for multidimensional as well as professional types of talents being "practical for all purposes". Amid bunches and bunches of competitors flocking into the manpower market, can such situation be well satisfied with the limited qualifications and certificates of ours? Let us take another point of view to see into the problem: How to pale others by showing our abilities and talents in this fighting for survival among all things by the law of natural selection of today? There is a common saying of "good steel is for the blade". In reality, what is the crucial point in the "value chain" of capability? If the answer is a person of abilities, what is the "nucleus" value of the great talents?

I remember when I was attending the final year of my university education, and as our institute was located within the London University campus in the capital of the United Kingdom, we often had the opportunity of inviting the "good hand" of the well-known British companies to give us lectures or seminars. There was usually no fixed schedule for these types of talks which bore no extra credits.

But, as the status of the lecturers or instructors were so special and the themes were so practical that there were almost a thousand students present leaving not any empty seat. Once the leading person of a biggest employment agency was invited to be the speaker and when he came to the theme of "competition of talents", he asked the students on the scene a question: "What is most important for a talented person of the twenty-first century?"

At once there was dead silence. Though everybody had his/her own lengthy answer, no one spoke up fearing to make a fool of himself/herself. Finally at the guidance of the speaker, all began talking at once with different ideas of "brilliant professional abilities", "solid general knowledge capacities", "wide human relationship network"..... . At last, a more close to the right answer appeared:

"Learning capabilities!" The guest speaker nodded smilingly and the rectified that solution to be: "Not only learning capabilities, but a fast learning capability". That boss, whose specific duty was to discover "gold mines of talents", explained to us that in the competitive market, time is money. In this commercial society of well developed information links and worldwide internets, the data one can obtain will soon be easily acquired by others. Therefore,

starting from almost the same situation, the one who knows thoroughly such "secret" will then be able to lead his/her company to hew one's way out of the heavy encirclement. Now we come to know that "learning" holds a meaning quite different from before. "Learning" is not just a phase in the school life and it does not end at the moment when one is graduated. Quite on the contrary, it starts from the minute when one leaves school.

"Learning" is not merely the traditional sense of "taking up the school bag to go into the classroom" type of schooling nor should it be just sparetime education and assessment. Today, learning is not only a target or a means of acquiring knowledge. In fact, it should be a practice or an attitude of life. "If three of us are walking together, at least one of the other two is good enough to be my teacher" is a many-thousand-year-old proverb telling us learning is available at anywhere at any time.

When learning becomes a habit, we shall find that we can absorb every bit of knowledge in our life. If we do acquire even the little among us, we shall benefit greatly. Let us begin by observing the trivial details of the facts in our life and treat everyone around us with modesty. If we do find ourselves more accomplished than yesterday we will sure be really happy.

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