



閱讀



Read the World



## 初中組 Junior Secondary

中一 (S1) ▶ 中三 (S3)



### CHAN Yin Hei Rosaline

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)

#### Topic The Wisdom of Life

What is meaningful in life? Is it fame or fortune? Is it living in luxurious life? Is it finding your true love and being loved by your family and friends? To me, meaningful life is when I truly appreciate what I possess, friendships, family and love, etc. In my opinion, the wisdom of life means to live a meaningful life, we should always be true to our hearts and be nice to people. We should never do things going against our values and beliefs.

Charlie Bucket, the main character in "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory", really lives a meaningful life. The book is very simple written, though it really illustrates wise living in detail.

From the story, we found a great disparity between the rich and the poor. Charlie lived in extreme poverty, he rarely has enough food for meals, and he sleeps on the floor with his parents every night. In contrast, Veruca, one of the characters in the story, is absolutely wealthy. Her father uses a lot of money to secure Veruca a golden ticket, just to fulfill his lovely spoiled daughter's request. However, she is not satisfied and wants to get more. Is the rich living a meaningful life? Is money the most important thing to us? In my opinion, money is something very hazardous. It always draws you into a trap, making you chase blindly after it forever. It is more horrible when you start to use it unscrupulously. For instance, Veruca's family falls into such a trap. They are living a luxurious life, but, that doesn't mean they are happier than the poor ones. Instead, they will never be satisfied because of their wealth. So, is that how things should be? Although money seems to be very powerful, it cannot buy happiness, health, wisdom, nor any of much more important things in life. Even if you are poor, you can still enjoy your life just like Charlie. Although Charlie lives in extreme poverty, yet, his integrity, honesty and general sweetness afford him an opportunity to fulfill his dreams.

Besides, the phrase "What goes around comes around" rings true in the story as many of the characters are punished or rewarded according to their personality and capacity for obedience. As we can see from the story, the four kids, all receive painful punishments for their behaviour. Charlie, the good kid, is also rewarded. After all the hardships he had gone through, he finally gets

the chance to visit the factory and even wins ownership of it at the end. Charlie has good character and he is always grateful. When Willy Wonka gives him a bar of chocolate, his gratitude is perceptible. Gratitude is an important part of life. It indicates that we do not take things for granted but take the time to stop and value what we have. Gratitude is crucial in communicating and building relationships with others successfully. People need to be thanked and appreciated in order to feel good about themselves and their actions. I think we live in a world where some people just expect certain things and never take the time to be appreciative when they get them. The importance of appreciation is often overlooked. Just like Melody Beattie has said, "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend." Therefore, let us start learning to be grateful from now onwards and enjoy the fruit of gratitude.

Last but not least, the most important message is the importance of family love. Family is clearly the most important thing to Charlie. He is willing to share his birthday chocolate bar with all six members of his family, even though he only gets one bar a year. In family life, love plays the role of a magic bullet which helps you to overcome all the difficulties that come across your path. You are able to share all your sorrows and pleasures with people who really love you and care for you. The love of your family is your ultimate confidence and strength, it helps you survive through tough times and bring joy and happiness into life, so take care of your family members and truly love them like Charlie and his loved ones.

In conclusion, I believe wise living is extremely important as life is precious and the wisdom of life is to live a meaningful life, by treasuring happiness, gratefulness and our family.

#### Comments

- Able to highlight the key values, gratitude and family love discussed in the book and explain them with personal experiences. (HKPTU)
- The report is rich in language. Its main ideas are well supported by details from the book. (HKTLA)



### CHONG Yan Hei Kylie

Heep Yunn School

#### Topic Life Worth Living

In "The Giver" by Lois Lowry, a dystopian community is described - a place in which there is no conflict, inequality, divorce, unemployment, injustice or choice. No one thinks, asks questions, or has knowledge of the past, and it is peaceful. Everyone is identical - everybody but a boy named Jonas. Jonas is selected to become a receiver as his occupation, a receiver of memories. He receives memories of every kind, from memories of love to memories of war, famine and devastation. He alone has memory of the time before the community, when there were conflict, inequality, divorce, unemployment and injustice - but there was choice. Jonas is faced with a problem: should he escape the community in search of another place where he can live with choices? Or should he stay in this safe haven and not risk anything, in exchange for a lifetime of obedience and restraints?

Imagine yourself living in Jonas' society. You would have nothing to worry about, ever. You would be contented. You wouldn't even know anything of another way of life, wouldn't even remember that you had a right to make your own choices. You would obediently follow the choreographed dance steps that had been laid down for you before you were even born, oblivious to the fact that you were once able to improvise your own dance. An ideal world of order and peace - omitting, of course, the silly issue of not being able to make choices or remember your past. Would you live there? Is the promise of having everything decided for you enough for you to exchange your independence for? Of course not!

Lois Lowry, in "The Giver", highlights the importance of choice and past memories, both of which are also very important to wise living. Making choices helps you become an independent and wise person. Although you are sure to make the wrong choice at one point or another, mistakes, in fact, are the best deterrent to making mistakes once more. A personal memory of wrongdoing makes a much better lesson and leaves a much deeper impression

than a shallow warning from others. Your choices are what make you different. By choosing to blaze your own trail over the worn footpath walked by many others, you are thinking for yourself. You are living wisely and making the most of your independence, and that is what makes you a unique individual or stand-out. Without choices, you are nothing. You are simply one more of the brain-dead masses, identical to all others. Live wisely. Make your own choices.

Past memories are equally important as the ability to make independent choices. Pay attention to your past, for it is what will help shape your future. The ability to understand and learn from the past will eventually help you become a wise person. Do not dwell on your past though; what's done is done and there's no use crying over spilt milk. Move on, but don't blank the past out completely from your mind. Accepting and embracing your past will help you see where you went wrong and what you should have done. With the unique key of your past, you can unlock the shining door of your future. Hold on to your past memories. They are invaluable and unique, and will help you live wisely.

In conclusion, the ability to make independent choices and being able to accept, understand and embrace your past are both essentially keys to wise living. Be who you are. Learn from your past and make your own choices; and you will surely lead a life wisely.

#### Comments

- A thought provoking review with an in-depth discussion on the importance of making choices and past memories. (EDB)
- Well organized discussion with evidence from real life. (HKPTU)
- The report is well organized and written with a personal flair. It presents an insightful reading of the book with its emphasis on choice and memory. (HKTLA)

#### Book read

Title: The giver  
Author: Lois Lowry  
Published by: Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.





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## 初中組 Junior Secondary

中一 (S1) ▶ 中三 (S3)



### KONG Siu Chun

The ELCHK Yuen Long Lutheran Secondary School

#### Topic Dealing with Fears - One of the Key to Live Wisely!

What is your biggest fear? Heights? Darkness? Insects? Thunderstorms? Or even death? In human nature, fear is an essential part of our life. Fear will lead us to make wrong decisions, but also gives us superhuman speed to do work. Dealing with fears can be hard for us, but once we master it, we may have a better and a wiser life!

The book I picked up "Extreme Fear: The Science Of Your Mind In Danger" is a psychology book that explains how your brain is operating when you are struggled by fear. It made me understand the negative side of fear and the positive side of fear, and the key of dealing with fears.

According to the book, our brain consists of different cores, each cores works together in order to help us think and make decisions. This is what we called 'Self-Control'. However, when fear occurs, our brain cores will battle in order to struggle for control. Let's take skydiving as an example, the first time when you skydive, you will be panicked from falling from extreme heights. Your brain will struggle and battle in order to make decisions. However, since this is the first time your brain processes through a situation of sky diving, your brain don't know what do decide. This is where you will make wrong decisions, and controlling the parachute violently without remembering what you should do, and leading to an injury.

However, fear also have it's positive side. According to the book, fear gives us 'superhuman' speed, strength, and power to respond to threats. When we find ourselves under intense pressure, our fear unleashes reserves of energy that shouldn't be accessible under normal circumstances. When our reserves of energy is activated, our bodies and brains can utilize their resources and we can do things much more faster and with more power. There is a good example from the book, a man called Tom Boyle was driving his car back home, on his way, a pickup truck in front of Boyle's car spun it's wheels, and jerked out onto the middle of the road. During the spun out, the pickup truck hit a biker, leaving the biker stuck under the truck. Boyle threw out of the door and ran to the accident scene. The biker's leg was stuck under the chassis of the truck. Boyle didn't even think about it, he reached under the frame of the truck and lifted the truck's chassis. With a sound of grinding metal, the

chassis raised upward a few inches. The biker's leg was still stuck, Boyle took a deep breath and lifted the truck's chassis a few more inches. Finally, the biker's leg was unstuck, and he pulled the biker out of the pickup truck's bottom. Normally, a person does not have the power to lift a truck, but during that situation, Boyle was panicking, his fear causes his "reserved energy" to unleash, allowing him to be a "superhuman" for a short period of time.

You may start to think, why is this related to wise living? Dealing with fears is one of the keys to wise living, because if we can make use of the speed that fear gives to us, we can do things more efficiently. However, we should also learn how to not let fear affect our emotions and our decisions, because once when fear takes place in our brain, we can lose control and make wrong decisions.

In order to not let fear affect our emotions and our decisions, the only way to solve this problem is to face the fear every day, and make this as your habit, so your brain will know how to deal with the fear every time and it will not be your fear afterwards. It sounds complicated, let's take skydiving as an example. Every skydiver first skydiving is always unforgettable, it's because this is the first time they face the fear of falling from extreme heights. It takes a lot of practices for professional sky divers to not be panicked from falling. Once your brain master the process of how to deal with the fear of falling from extreme heights, it will no longer be a fear of yours and you are free from struggling with emotions.

I didn't know dealing with fears is a part of wise living before, but after reading this book, I learned what should my attitude be when I am facing my fears, so I won't go out of control. This is a good book to people who have problems when facing fears, I hope they can learn something from it.

#### Comments

- An original essay with an interesting perspective on fear. (EDB)
- The report is well organized and clearly written. It offers a creative reading of the book with its association between fear and wise living. (HKTLA)

#### Book read

Title: Extreme fear: the science of your mind in danger  
Author: Jeff Wise  
Published by: New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.



### KWOK Yuk Lam

True Light Middle School of Hong Kong

#### Topic Be Wise: Be the First to Say Sorry

In "The Rules of Life", Richard Templar introduces 106 rules to advise readers of different roles, like the teenagers, the parents and the friends, how to improve their lives. These rules are divided into different sections according to the types of reader. For example, there are Chapter 73 'Be a good friend' in the section for teenagers and Chapter 88 'Give your kids a break' for parents. Besides, in each chapter, Templar uses one sentence for introduction and one to conclude, and adds some more detailed explanations in the content. It is easy to find out the main point of each chapter by reading the first and the last sentences; however, by reading the content readers can understand more clearly about the rule. Generally speaking, Templar's ideas in this book are well-organized, and the content is suitable for people of different backgrounds. This book is easy for everyone to read, and it helps every reader to deal with his or her difficulties.

The rules for teenagers advise me how to solve my daily problems, especially those about friends. Take the chapter 'Be the first to say sorry' as an example. According to the chapter, we should always be the first to apologize whenever we have quarrels with others because there may be some misunderstanding and we shouldn't continue arguing without making sure what has happened. Besides, neither of us may think that we are responsible for any mistakes; when we are angry, we may not be able to think clearly about the situation. Rules for teenagers, like 'Be the first to say sorry', have helped me deal with difficulties in a much more efficient way.

Susan and I were doing a project about 3 parts of speech in Primary 6. I thought it was difficult and was worried, but Susan promised to do the part about adjectives, the hardest one, leaving the two easier items, verbs and nouns, to me. When I finished my part at the weekend, I was excited and called her. However, she didn't answer, nor did she reply my messages. I wondered what happened. On Monday, the deadline, I learnt that she hadn't finished her part, and we could only submit the project two days later. When the teacher announced the results the next week, we discovered that we got a C, the lowest among all groups. I was angry and shouted at her after school in our classroom, asking why she hadn't done her work. Without listening to her explanation, I dashed out of the classroom and rushed home with a red face. However, when I thought about it again that night, I decided that I had been

rude. So, the next day I asked for her forgiveness. After she forgave me, she told me she had been injured during a horse-riding lesson and had been staying in hospital that weekend. From this experience, I learnt to think more from others' perspectives before making any judgment and always be the first to apologize in a quarrel, just like what this book suggested, 'Be the first to say sorry'.

Nowadays, there are many complaints about the teenagers not being considerate of others; they bully the weak and don't know why they should apologize. A piece of research done in 2009 by Hong Kong Christian Service, an organization providing services to the needy, pointed out that among 559 teenagers interviewed, about 13% of them had bullied others online. An interesting piece of news related to unwillingness to apologize comes from the Mainland. According to The Beijing News, when two lovers had some misunderstanding and thus quarreled with each other in a rented room in the capital, the girl set fire on the bed in the room when her boyfriend refused to apologize. The fire went out of control and killed two girls living next door. The case shows how dangerous quarrels are. Apologizing first is of paramount importance.

Some teenagers only consider themselves but not others, and they judge. They act in a certain way just because they like to. Yet others are harmed without them knowing it. While they are having fun, others are hurt. I recommend this book to them, so that they see how important it is to think not just about themselves; they should think about others, and in arguments, apologize first.

This book has taught me so much about how to solve problems like that which I experienced in Primary 6. It also tells me how to prevent danger similar to the quarrel of the two lovers, by being the first to say sorry and think from others' perspective. It helps me to live a wiser life. Therefore, I hope more teenagers, especially those who cannot solve their problems, can read this book, find answers, and improve their lives.

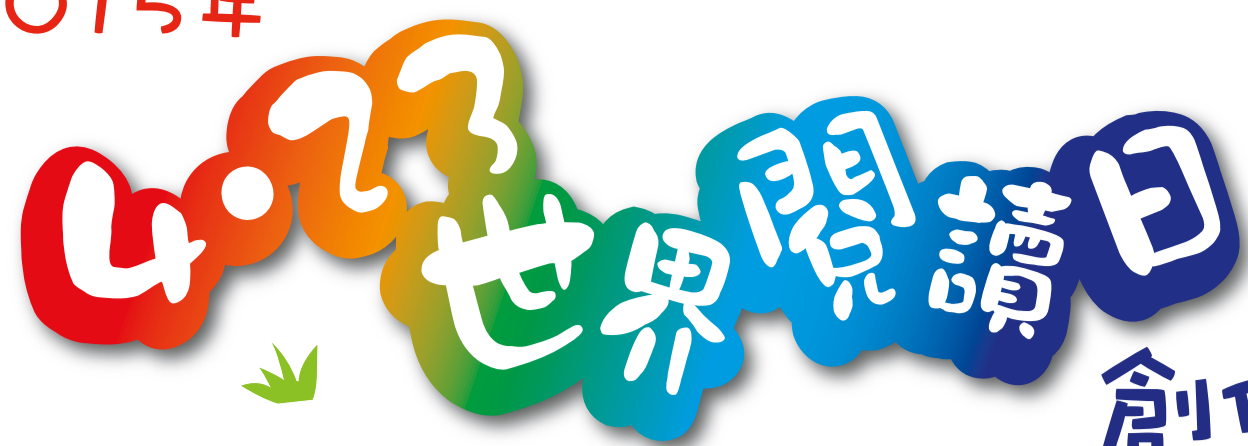
#### Comments

- Able to illustrate the theory with evidences including current issues. A resourceful and well-researched essay. (HKPTU)

#### Book read

Title: The rules of life: a personal code for living a better, happier, more successful kind of life  
Author: Richard Templar  
Published by: Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2006.





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## 初中組 Junior Secondary

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### LIN Bernice

Heep Yunn School

Topic Live Wisely, Learn and Dream

"Chicken Soup for the Soul" is a book that reminds readers of the important things in life, and it does so with one hundred and one simple, easy-to-understand stories. These stories cover a range of themes, such as love, parenting and learning. Although they may lack complicity, their straightforward style makes it almost effortless for people to comprehend and absorb the valuable wisdom hidden behind.

The stories lend credence to the morals and truths they try to bring out, while being simultaneously touching and stimulating. Readers might find themselves reflecting deeply over the inspiration and joy that can be obtained in life. The book is an enlightening key to wisdom - and wisdom leads us to happiness.

I think that one essential lesson that the book attempts to teach people is that learning is not just limited to memorizing facts and cramming in information. The book's 'On Learning' section allows us to rethink the reason why we have to learn. It is about building up self-worth. It is about building up a person's future. It is about building up the world to become a better place. Learning is undemanding in reality yet it seems to be a daunting task for most people. However intimidating learning is, it is crucial to everyone so we must find a way to master our skills of learning.

One story that demonstrates this is 'The Royal Knights of Harlem'. This story is about a bunch of boys who participate in a chess club at their school. They live in a rough neighbourhood, and their future prospects appear to be dim. However, gradually, the boys begin to assume responsibility for each other, help those who lag behind and share personal problems. Finally, after competing in chess matches against others in Russia, they gain a new, strong sense of conviction and competence, giving them the confidence and courage necessary to make career plans that they would not have thought possible before, hopefully ending up with brighter futures.

I agree with the author's perspective on learning. Without the process of learning, children could not ever fully get to know the wonderful world around

them, even when they become adults. Humans would not grasp how to do any tasks at all, nor would they make any interesting discoveries. In the process of learning, people establish personal qualities which are vital to success, such as responsibility, diligence and empathy. Most importantly, without learning, there is no way to achieve wise living. Although wisdom may be acquired through the many experiences people go through in life, it is impossible to achieve success unless you actually learn from the pitfalls and failures and do better in the future.

There are also other lessons that "Chicken Soup for the Soul" wants to teach its readers. One of them is to live their dreams. The book conveys that the path to achieving one's goals hinges on their mentality. People who try are people who can succeed. Those who genuinely make an effort in achieving their dreams by setting achievable targets and putting them all into a concrete plan can certainly accomplish their dreams eventually. However, there is a chance that people may unknowingly hinder themselves on the way to achieving their goals as well.

I believe that this book can make readers' realize that there is no one stopping them from reaching their dreams other than themselves. As long as people have faith in themselves and their own abilities, and if they have the bravery to aim for the skies, they will definitely accomplish what they set out to do. The world is a place of possibilities and opportunities waiting to be found, and humans are entirely capable of discovering them.

"Chicken Soup for the Soul" is a book that can lead readers onto the path of wise living. It encourages people to put their trust in themselves, and to learn, grow and live their dreams. With this inspiring advice, I think people can find a truly wise way to live.

#### Comments

- Thorough discussion of the importance of learning to achieve wise living with examples from the stories. (HKPTU)
- The report is organized and written in a logical manner. Its ideas are easy to understand and follow. (HKTLA)



### TANG Hoi Ling Helen

Heep Yunn School

Topic Feel Your Life with Love

An old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson

What is your most valuable lesson in life about? "Tuesdays with Morrie" is a book about fourteen lectures that Mitch has with Morrie, a professor Mitch respects the most when he is still in college. All messages conveyed in the lessons are about wise living.

From some lessons, I can really tell that Morrie is a wise man and a good teacher. Even though he is suffering from an incurable disease, ALS, he also intends to live his last days as fully as he can by spending time instructing Mitch on the meaning of life and how to accept death and aging quoting his own experiences. At last, his hard work does pay off, as Mitch who is once a man driven by material wealth has been transformed into a man who is motivated by a passion to love.

'In the absence of love, there is a void that can be filled only by loving human relationships.' Morrie brings out that love is the essence of every person and every relationship. The importance of love is especially clear to Morrie as his final days are near. He does not seem too bothered by dying, as his greatest dying wish is to share his story with Mitch so that he may share it with the world. Taken from one of a recent news article, although King Jie the old lady has nearly used up all her savings, she has been feeding the stray cats every day after her stressful work. Her selfless love and care for the animals has clearly been shown, and her story has touched thousands of people. People inspired by her started to launch campaigns to save these cats. Therefore, as what Morrie says, "Love is how you stay alive, even after you are gone" because your love will be passed on to the rest of the world.

Every time when Morrie suffers from his violent coughing which comes with the possibility of his last breath, he derives his method from the Buddhist philosophy that one should not cling to things, as everything that exists is impermanent. Then, Morrie is able to step out of his own state of consciousness. Unlike others, Morrie wants to experience his detachment wholly, so that he is able to let go and embrace death. Talking about detachment, I can recall that a few years ago on a visit to the hospital, I saw my grandfather who suffers from a serious disease coughed violently; doctors and nurses rushed in immediately and people around me were so anxious. When I was so nervous that I stood to the ground, to my surprise, my grandfather smiled, and whispered, 'There is nothing to be afraid of, my dear!' This book reminds me of this scene, and I start to think that Morrie is a doppelganger of my grandfather. Both of them know how to embrace death as a part of life, perhaps only when we come to death we learn to love things that we always have taken for granted. Everyone knows that they are going to die one day, but nobody believes it. The better approach for death is to accept and be prepared for it, so that one would be more involved in life. We should always ask ourselves, 'If today is the last day, have we done what we want to do and be the person that we want to be?'

This book has definitely changed my views on life. Morrie is an inspiring teacher who has enlightened people around the world. The lessons of life given by Morrie are all about two words - love and acceptance, and this is what we need of a wise living. 'Death ends a life, not a relationship', so we have to live everyday of our life to the fullest.

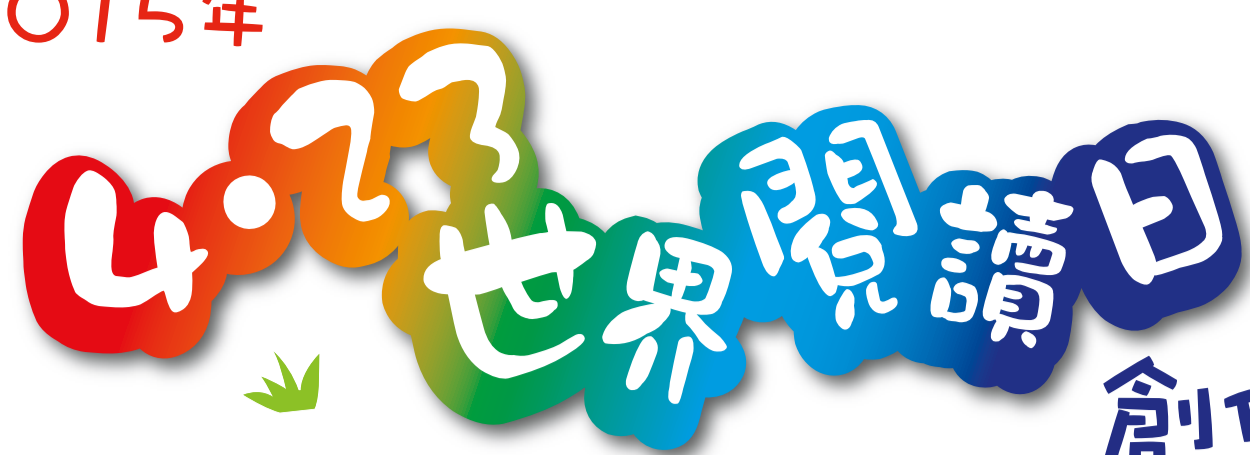
#### Comments

- Clear and logical discussion of values for a wise living and is able to illustrate each viewpoint with current issues and real life story. (HKPTU)
- The report is concise and well presented. The writer's critical thinking skill is demonstrated by the reference to social issues and personal experiences. (HKTLA)

#### Book read

Title: Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson  
Author: Mitch Albom  
Published by: New York: Doubleday, 1997.





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Creative Competition in 2015

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## 初中組 Junior Secondary

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### TONG Ka Wai

CUHKFAA Chan Chun Ha Secondary School

#### Topic Live Wise - in the Days when Waste Problems Arise

With ever-growing human population and fast-paced development of cities, an increase in waste production seems inevitable. In the past century, as the world's population has drastically increased and become more affluent, waste production has risen tenfold. The situation is worrying.

I wonder, is there anything wrong with the way we deal with waste? Let's look at how waste management works. Rubbish generated from manufacturing processes and household activities is collected, part of it is recycled, but most is sent to landfill or incinerated. Everything looks perfect, right? (At least the waste vanishes from our sight) But the problem is, is there any more space for landfills and incinerators? Have we thought about the environmental costs these strategies involve (i.e. destruction of habitat and negative impact on biodiversity)? Not to mention that these so-called methods are energy insufficient and involve high economic costs.

It was then I understood why sustainable development is worthy of global attention nowadays. If we want to save the future generations, LIVING WISE seems to be the only way out. It is time for us to uphold the principle of the 3Rs - 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'. Here are some of the key ideas, as well as insights I've gained after reading the book - "The Top 10 Ways You Can Reduce Waste."

#### How to reduce?

I've heard of 'recycling', but the concept of 'pre-cycling' mentioned in the book is new and useful to me. Pre-cycling means planning purchases with recycling in mind. The writer encouraged us to always ask ourselves, are the items we buy biodegradable?

A very good example illustrated in the book is that of a housewife who may have a choice between two brands of eggs. They are the same price but one comes in Styrofoam packaging, and the other one in cardboard. The latter can be recycled, but not for the former. You know, it takes more than ONE HUNDRED years to break down Styrofoam. Therefore, in order to reduce waste successfully, there's one more factor to put into consideration when we go shopping from now on - an item's biodegradability.

Despite the above, the writer also prompted us to consider the following. Where can we put an item after purchasing it? Do we have a similar one at home? Do we really need one in our daily life?

I guess it's the issue of necessity. We should think twice before bringing a luxury item home. 'Buy what you need, and use what you buy.' A very simple concept but one that is often ignored.

#### Book read

Title: Reduce waste: top 10 ways you can reduce waste  
Author: Nick Winnick  
Published by: New York, NY: AV2 by Weig, 2011.

#### How to reuse?

To live smart, reusing is of paramount importance. According to the book, we are advised to repair or donate used items instead of throwing them away. For instance, we can repair a bicycle with a damaged tyre or donate old clothes to charitable organizations so as not to waste resources.

I'm sure that there're still plenty of ways to implement 'reusing'. Be inquisitive! Ask yourself, 'Can I still make use of this?' It can be as simple as, after using one side of the paper, asking yourself whether you can still use the other side for other purposes.

#### How to recycle?

In Hong Kong, most would link the concept of 'recycling' with blue bins for used papers, yellow bins for aluminum cans and brown bins for plastic bottles. I was no exception.

But finishing this reading journey, I've found out that more items can be recycled, for example, glass. Glass can actually be melted down and formed into new jars and bottles!

Moreover, I've learnt the importance of using or buying recycled materials. If we do not raise our awareness and support them, the recycling programs will surely be less effective.

#### The way forward

Some may argue that practising the 3Rs involves high economic costs, for instance, some waste management programs such as door-to-door collection of recyclable materials may increase taxes for property owners. Yet, are we still going to sacrifice the environment when it's on the same balance with social or economic costs? How much longer can our globe withstand excessive waste and the negative impacts it brings?

The issue is alarming. For a greener place, for our future generations, we must take action right now and live wise. It's only through sustainable development then our lovely planet can survive. I am looking forward to seeing everyone trying what has been suggested above and encouraging each other to do it. Please, live wise in the days when waste problems arise.

#### Comments

- A well-structured review providing useful solutions to the waste problems. (EDB)
- The report is structured clearly and easy to comprehend. It manages to convey the writer's environmental reflection on the book. (HKTLA)



### WONG Fong Ching

Heep Yunn School

#### Topic Follow your Heart!

Imagine you could get a treasure which is a hundred times of your wealth only if you were willing to give up half of your wealth beforehand and it's not guaranteed that you could find the treasure, would you do that? Most people would think it is too risky and reject the offer, but not Santiago, the young and adventurous shepherd boy in the book. He has to give up one tenth of his flock to the king of Salem, Melchizedek in exchange of the location of the treasure. During his journey, he meets a crystal merchant, who is unwilling to take risks in his business, and finds his true love, Fatima. On one hand, Santiago hopes to live with Fatima happily ever after. On the other, he wants to pursue his dreams and find the treasure, but then he has to leave Fatima. While he is struggling, he meets the alchemist, who has very special powers like turning lead into gold. Thanks to the encouragement of the alchemist, Santiago realizes the importance of listening to his own heart and pursues his Personal Legend. He leaves Fatima and continues to find his treasure with the alchemist. Finally, he successfully finds the treasure and learns something even more important than the treasure. He returns to Al-Fayoum, where his love Fatima awaits him.

'It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting.' That's what the alchemist told Santiago. Indeed, to live wisely, it's important to follow our hearts and be willing to take risks. Take the crystal merchant as an example. The fear of failure makes him unable to succeed. Life is full of risks and we have to be brave enough to take these risks in order to strive for success. I appreciate the courage and determination of Santiago, who sets a good model of how we should live our lives. It is not easy to leave our beloved ones and face the challenges in life alone, but Santiago managed to do that. In the end, he realized something more important than the treasure - his journey. The dilemma between Fatima and his dream, the challenges and the decision to pursue his Personal Challenge are way more important than the treasure. Santiago's experience actually tells us the secret of wise living - follow our hearts. In our lives, wealth and fame often make us overlook what we really want in our hearts, but follow the others blindly. In

#### Book read

Title: The alchemist  
Author: Paulo Coelho  
Published by: London : Harper, 2006.

the book, Santiago was so disappointed with his sheep, who didn't appreciate all the wonderful lands they discovered during the trip, but desired for mere food and water. Many people content themselves with material desires and social acceptances, failing to have a creative mind and grasp the opportunities to succeed due to limited perspectives. What is the meaning of life when we just follow the others blindly and don't do what we want to? People nowadays yearn for material possessions like money rather than happiness and love. In order to be considered as the 'more privileged ones', young people tend to consider doctors and lawyers as the best jobs since they are believed to be reputable jobs that help them earn the most money. But is material pursuit their real dream deep in their hearts? Apparently, it's not. To live wisely, it's important to pursue our dreams, but also to listen to our hearts. The journey of Santiago has made me realize our feelings are more important than social acceptance, the reckless desire of which could make our lives aimless. We can only pursue our dreams when we truly follow our hearts.

As a teenager, I can associate with Santiago's experience. It's difficult to overcome the fear of failure and follow our hearts to pursue our dreams, but Santiago did it. I found that nothing is impossible as long as we are willing to summon up all our courage and give everything a try. So take a risk, overcome our fear and follow our hearts, which are the secrets of wise living. Although I'm still uncertain and worried about what lies ahead of me in the future, I am going to live my life wisely, just as what Santiago did!

#### Comments

- A well-organised essay with interesting reflections. (EDB)
- Thorough discussion on the need to pursue personal dreams and following heart to attain wise living. (HKPTU)
- The report is rich in description and introspection. It provides a clear summary and an empathic reading of the book. (HKTLA)