

Life Philosophy of a Self-made Businessman MR. JOSEPH PANG

H O R A C E L O

First listen to a little unusual anecdote that happened in real life to a person in Hong Kong called Joseph.

Academically, Joseph was by no means a success when he was still young. He could not get a promotion once when he was in Primary Six owing to poor school results. Five years later, he was once again barred from promotion to Form 5. However, he still managed to graduate from Form 5 in 1966. As far as the rigorous standard of the education system at that time was concerned, he was not very fit for further studies in F.6. Therefore, he was compelled to leave the secondary school, a school in which you and me are studying - Wah Yan College, Kowloon.

Twenty years later, in 1992, one of Joseph's classmates, Norman So Chung Ping, is still in Wah Yan, being the Assistant Principal.

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And what has become of Joseph, surnamed Pang, in the meantime? Contrary to what we might guess, he is now a reputable accountant. He is also a director of a number of corporations including New World Paging Limited, China Harbour View Hotel, the China Paint Manufacturing Co. Ltd., City Bus Limited, as well as director of Yan Chai Hospital, a charity organization.

Whether or not one considers Joseph Pang a success, his attainment of the present status and position is indeed no fluke.

"You have to be persevering," Mr. Joseph Pang commented. "As I observed, there were numerous candidates who gave up the goal in



the midway for similar reasons. Most people had to work in the daytime, and attended evening courses with a spent body. The only period left in a day for revision of homework was the midnight hours. Therefore, when they went to sleep, it was already in the wee hours. In the long run, their candles were burnt at both ends. "

"I have had all these experiences also. However, it was the unfaltering determination and endurance that put me through all the difficulties as well as all those examinations. I was convinced that if I could stick it out, the odds would be in favour of me, and so it proved."

All these facts show one important thing: that academic frustration may not necessarily be a sign of hopelessness for a student's future career, which indeed depends on a lots of factors besides academic standing.

As Mr. Joseph Pang emphasized in the interview, success in studies does not necessarily imply or lead to success in work. It is more often to be the other way round. He reasoned that a lot of academically successful students have seldom faced any great failure in their school lives because there are always a



dozen of people around them with a suitable study atmosphere. In other words, it could be the external conducive environment, not their own capacity and intellect which contributes to their success in school. When they step into the real world, things become hard for them. They are at a loss when facing various difficulties and hardships. They are not exposed to grim reality.

On the other hand, frustration in school results, he pointed out, can serve as an effective spur to an open-minded student, making him conscious of his own shortcomings to be rectified. It humbles him. It indirectly encourages him to learn from others' merits and to make them his own. Furthermore, he will work more diligently to achieve and fulfil an envisaged goal. Above all, he knows how to cope with difficulties if they crop up. Meanwhile, these academically unsuccessful usually are more sociable, unlike those self-righteous, snobbish degree-holders. While the former are often in other people's good books, the latter treat others in such a patronizing manner that they are often rejected and despised.

He concluded the topic and at the same time encouraged the academically frustrated with a paradox: Many a time where the academic society deserts you, the real society welcomes and receives you, with extra warmth.

Then, Mr Pang talked about several things that often concern us.

The first thing is about our view to life. Mr. Pang saw that there are many people in Hong Kong who harbour lots of worries and grumbles that are unwarranted. For example, they are worried about the 1997 issue, and are displeased that they cannot get foreign passports because they are born in a poor family, and so on. In his opinion, in the 5 years time from now to 1997, if political and economic stability can be maintained, it is already an enviable achievement and an attractive thing to investors, as compared with other neighbouring Southeast Asian countries which are often plagued with riots, coup'detat, demonstrations, strikes, and natural disasters. Besides, he expected that with the resilient feature of Hong Kong people, the territory will finally get over the trouble in the transitional period. Once these disquieting factors are lifted, he predicted Hong Kong will be advancing in terms of economy and living standard in a much faster pace. As for all those grumbles, Mr. Pang said, "We should be grateful to God, instead, because it's lucky that we could be born at such a place in such an era. Supposing we were born in Ethiopia, we would not have sufficient food to feed ourselves. Supposing we were born in the former Soviet Union, we'd find our money





losing its value. If we were born in Vietnam, we might become refugees.”

Secondly, he talked about success and wealth. He stressed that we should not define one’s success in terms of wealth. He regarded a man of principle as a success. The man, according to Mr. Pang, is a person characterized by being able to (i) think twice before decision-making; (ii) set goals for himself; (iii) set priority for things to do; (iv) be full of determination; (v) consider different alternatives and means of doing things; (vi) have initiative; (vii) communicate with others and be sociable; (viii) learn from everyone he meets. Mr. Pang went on to say money was not everything. It is more often the root of all evils. He gave an example. There was once a billionaire in Hong Kong who cared very much for his money rather than his family and his wife. Driven to the point of despair, his wife jilted him to run away with his chauffeur, who was able to provide her with a sense of being cared for and security. Mr. Pang also explained many lawsuits between son and father, daughter and mother, sister and brother arise from scrambling for money. Being a rich person himself, he often does soul-searching so as to prevent himself from being ‘miser-minded’. For this reason he recently becomes a Director of Yan Chai charity group.



The third thing Mr. Pang mentioned is the proper distribution of one’s time. Proper allocation of time for the engagement in different activities of different nature enriches and adds colours to one’s life. Furthermore, it helps one to achieve a life of affluence. Everyone has 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week. However, if the time is not utilized in a systematic and healthy way or if the allocation of time for one particular activity is lopsided, the development of one’s mental and physical conditions may be handicapped and his life will gradually turn monotonous and meaningless. Here, Mr. Pang suggested we should allocate our time appropriately for the following elements of life: (i) school life; (ii) cultural life; (iii) sports life; (iv) family life; and (v) spiritual life – religion. He hoped Wah Yan students can follow the above guidelines in the distribution of time.



Finally, Mr. Pang reminisced about his school life in Wah Yan in the past. The biggest impression which is still deeply rooted in his mind was made by the Fathers in Wah Yan, he told us. He was touched by the fact that the Fathers left their own countries for a completely unfamiliar place, Hong Kong, and devoted their life to the mission of educating the new generation. Since they were all native speakers of English, they were particularly helpful to Wah Yan students in the improvement of spoken English.

