

Confucius' Teachings On Building A Happy Life (10)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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Persist with Aspiration and Be Grateful for People Who Help You to Succeed

Hello, my friends! Let's continue from where we stopped in the previous lesson, "I will maintain a daily routine and persist with my aspiration." We should manage our study, career, and family well so that our parents will have peace of mind. We also mentioned in the previous lesson that we should choose a suitable job and devote our efforts into developing it. We must not aim too high without considering our abilities. In this era, many people always think of getting rich quickly. However, no pain, no gain; there is no such thing as a free lunch. When wanting to become rich quickly, we will probably end up as an old proverb describes, "Haste makes waste." During the time of changing jobs, one's mind is usually restless. With such a state of mind, can we make the right decisions? It's very difficult! In addition, our parents will start to worry during the time we change jobs.

Furthermore, each job change will actually affect our social credibility; the social network built in the previous job will be impaired. For example, a well-known doctor of a hospital wanted to open a new hospital of his own. It is true that he was much sought after by many patients, yet let us think about it: His popularity is not just because of his good medical skills, but also due to the superb leadership and management of that hospital. We should feel grateful for the job stability that so many people have given us for such a long time. We should not be complacent with our own popularity, thinking of only developing our own career; so we open a new hospital opposite the old one in order to become a boss. With this way of dealing with matters, what do we possibly lose? The harmony amongst people. To make things worse, we might even encourage some of our colleagues to join us. We must maintain a steady mind and must not be restless when dealing with interpersonal relationships; a happy departure is more important than the good time of being together. Without a happy departure, the accumulated resentments would hinder our future career development. When we go steadily step by step, the opportunity will come in place naturally.

We must understand that one's wealth in his life is definitely not obtained by fighting for it. As an adage goes, "If it is destined to be yours, it will eventually be yours; if it is not within your destiny, don't force it." Importantly, we must understand 'You reap what you sow'. We have also learned in the previous lessons that the true cause of wealth acquisition is the practice of wealth-dana*. (*Dana, giving. One of the three donations for Buddhist practice: wealth-dana, Dharma-dana, and fearless-dana.) By contributing more to society through wealth-dana, we will naturally acquire wealth. For example, the richest man in Hong Kong, Mr. Kashing Li, donates enormous amounts of money every year. As he came from Shantou, Guangdong, he repays his hometown by helping to improve a lot of its infrastructure. We should perform

our job in a steady manner, restraining ourselves from being restless and setting goals too high; because our family members will surely be affected once we become restless. So, the steadier we are at work, the more at ease they would feel.

Do the Right Thing Even if It Seems Trivial

Let's move on to the next line and read it together, "Even though a matter might be trivial with little consequences, I must not do it based on what I like; for I would undermine the duty of being a child if I do. Even though an object might be small, I must not hide it secretly; for my parents' hearts will be grieved if I do." Even though a matter might be trivial with little consequences, I must not do it based on what I like; for I would undermine the duty of being a child if I do. In fact, many great virtuous acts begin with the practice of small good deeds, whereas a lot of grave offences are also accumulated from small misdeeds. That's why Liu Bei (*Liu Bei, 161-223 CE, was a warlord in the late Eastern Han dynasty in the Three Kingdoms period.) gave his children a very important teaching, "Don't stop doing a good deed just because it is insignificant; don't commit a bad deed even if it is puny." If we are too lenient with our children's speech and behavior at home, they would possibly commit grave offences when they enter society in the future. Of course, if we want our children to abstain from misdeeds, we parents should first lead by example. For instance, is it proper to put our feet up on the table when watching TV? Although it is a trivial matter, it gives our children a bad example of slacking off.

A Child Teaches His Teacher How to Drive?

Here is an anecdote. A teacher of our center in Shenzhen happened to drive a five-year-old child back home one day. She stopped her car when the traffic light turned red. The child then said to her, "Teacher, you don't need to stop, you can take a small right turn and drive across." Where did he learn it from? His mother is a policewoman. You see, we must not act based on what we like even though a matter might be trivial with little consequences. This teacher was very alert and felt that she needed to talk to the child's parents immediately. Before a child can discern right from wrong, we have given the wrong demonstration, how startling it is! This teacher was very skillful and tactful in her speech; she called the mother and said, "Your son taught me how to drive today." Upon hearing this, the mother instantly burst into laughter as she knew what the teacher meant. Dear friends, as elders, we must not wittingly make mistakes in front of children. This is certainly not good. We should raise our sensibility from many details to ensure a good example for children. When you adopt such a positive attitude, I am sure you will find that your virtues and wisdom would improve daily.

There are many matters which parents must frequently remind their children about. Especially involving safety issues, so long as the actions endanger lives, we must remind children often! Not only should we remind them often but tirelessly emphasize the importance of these issues. What aspects need to be reminded? Dear parents, what aspects must we remind children? Well, such as crossing the street! Firstly, this is to raise children's awareness on safety; secondly, to instill an attitude of obeying the rules. So, we must follow

the rules as long as they involve safety issues. During summer and winter vacations, some accidents often occur. It could be either a fire accident caused by children playing with firecrackers or children drowned while swimming without telling their parents. The ancients said, "We must not pursue pleasure to its extreme, for the highest degree of pleasure leads to sorrow." With things like this, parents should remind children often when they're young. If we often remind children to take safety measures, they would have a much higher awareness of safety. For instance, when a child is carrying a cup of hot water, parents should remind him to be careful with it. In doing so, we can reduce many avoidable accidents.

Abstain From Causing Danger for Others

Apart from teaching our children to look out for their own safety, we must also remind them to refrain from any acts that might cause danger to others. When they have developed such an attitude, they would constantly reflect on their words and actions to see whether they have caused any harm to others. I remember reading an article about a child who, just for fun, pulled out his classmate's chair right at the time when he was about to sit down. When that classmate fell straight down on the floor, his spine was badly injured and he became paralyzed for life. Paralyzed for life! I often use this example to tell my students, "You see, a small action has caused others such excruciating pain and suffering. How many people have suffered? Do you know how many decades this classmate has to endure the torment of lying in bed? My children, you can try to lie in bed, let's say for three days, I bet your whole body would feel very uncomfortable. Other than the suffering of this child, there are some people who suffer even more than he does; these people are his parents. They have painstakingly raised the child for over ten years, but he ended up like this. Every time his parents see him, I believe it is a great torture for them. Therefore, this incident has also ruined his parents' entire lives. Each of us are loved not only by our own parents but by our family members and friends, they will all be heartbroken. Dear children, a small action like this has caused so many people to suffer. This kind of thing should never be done." So, it is important to remember this teaching, "Even though a matter might be trivial with little consequences, I must not do it based on what I like." This is from the aspect of safety.

Observe the Rules and Regulations of Society

Regarding the aspect of rules and regulations, we should also tell our children to observe them. For instance, trivial things like throwing rubbish in public areas, we must not do it. Littering may seem to be a puny matter, however, once it becomes a habit, it not only brings shame to one's family but perhaps to one's country. I once heard a joke which says that when you go hiking and have no idea which trail to take... What should you do? You could simply follow the trail with trash. It sounds seemingly convenient, but when we think deeper, it is indeed the sorrow of human behavior. This phenomenon indicates that we not only lack a sense of shame but also do not cherish our Mother Nature. Over thousands of years of history, have humans acted like this? Have we? For thousands of years, people have learned to respect Mother Nature from receiving the sages' teachings. As the ancient Chinese believed, "Heaven is the Father and Earth is the Mother." We should cherish this

fertile land that has been nurturing us, and we must protect it from pollution. So, even trivial things like throwing rubbish, we should never do it based on what we like.

Once there were three pieces of news published on the internet. The first one was about a notice written on the lid of the trash bins in Pearl Harbor in the USA. It was written in Chinese, yet people in Pearl Harbor speak English, right? The sign stated, "Please throw your trash here!" Well, to whom was the sign written for? The second news was about a notice found in the restroom of The Grand Palace in Thailand, an international tourist spot. The note in the restroom went, "Please flush the toilet after use." It was also written in Chinese. Again, to whom was it written for? For Chinese people. Inside Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, there was also a notice written in Chinese, "Please do not speak loudly." Well, all of these seem to be small matters. One is about our speech, another is about flushing the toilet, and the third is about littering. The three small matters had turned into a great matter. What great matter is it? The Chinese people's reputation has been tarnished all over the world. When I told children about these news, some of them responded, "Teacher, just erase them." I said, "How?" When we have indeed done something wrong, they want to condemn us, can we stop them just by shutting their mouths? Even if we managed to shut one person's mouth, could we do so to everyone else? Impossible! We must raise our sense of shame and start the measure from ourselves to avoid our country's reputation being tarnished. Do not litter! We must do our best to maintain public hygiene and peacefulness at all times, in all places.

My friends, let's think again, have you ever been to The Grand Palace in Thailand? Wow, so many of you have been there. You guys are so fortunate! Have you ever been to Paris? I believe the majority of the Chinese have not. What kind of people can afford to visit these places? They are students who are studying abroad, the considerably wealthy people, those with certain social status. Have you ever seen a Chinese rural farmer in the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris? Very seldom, right? Yet these people who have social status who are highly educated do not even adhere to the norms of daily life. It reveals that academic qualifications do not represent one's upbringing and their ability to conduct themselves properly. The most important role of education is to teach a person the right attitude of interacting with others and handling matters. If the schools could not feasibly teach these attitudes, then its foundation must be firmly established in the family. In fact, the school teachers are doing their best to teach, but it is indeed not easy for them because every teacher has to take care of so many students. Only when parents and guardians actively collaborate with school teachers, can children then easily learn to observe the rules and regulations.

Having a Sense of Shame

So, in the aspects of safety and rules, we must keep in mind this teaching: Even though a matter might be trivial with little consequences, I must not do it based on what I like; for I will undermine the duty of being a child if I do. We will also undermine our duty as descendants of Emperors Yan and Huang (*BCE 2719-2599, they united tribes and started the Chinese civilization). When I was little, I was most afraid to hear others commenting about me, "Your behavior shows that you had a poor upbringing." Whenever I heard this remark, whatever I was doing then, I would immediately behave myself for the fear that my behavior would

disgrace my parents. "When my body is hurt, my parents will be worried; if my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed." So, having a sense of shame is imperative to a person.

Even Though an Object Might Be Small, I Must Not Hide It Secretly

Let's see the next phrase. "Even though an object might be small, I must not hide it secretly; for my parents' hearts will be grieved if I do." Before a child acquires the ability to discern right from wrong, he would sometimes casually take others' things, thinking it is fun. As parents, we must pay more attention to raising our children. When a child has done something wrong, he would feel guilty and his feeling would immediately be shown on his face. A mother once noticed her child looked a bit different from normal days when he returned from school. She then went to check his schoolbag and found a few apples in it. She felt strange and asked her child right away. The child had done something wrong and was very nervous when being questioned by his mother. He stammered in the beginning, but confessed later. He said that he and his classmates were passing by a fruit stall on the way home and had casually taken the fruits. Actually, they were not really keen to eat the fruits but just took them for fun under peer pressure. Without a word, the mother immediately took him to the fruit stall. When they arrived, the mother bowed deeply to the shopkeeper and apologized to him. The shopkeeper was still busy with his work and had no idea what had happened. The mother said, "My child had taken a few apples of yours." The shopkeeper said, "It's ok, no big deal." The mother paid the shopkeeper money then asked her child to apologize to him. When a child makes a mistake for the first time and we stop him right away, he would remember it for the rest of his life and would never repeat it. When the child saw his mother bowing and apologizing to the shopkeeper, he actually felt very guilty and ashamed. The mother's exemplary deeds have awakened his sense of shame and guilt. It is impossible for a child to make no mistakes. Nevertheless, if we could appropriately help them rectify the faults when they made mistakes, it would become a very good teaching moment.

There was another mother who went to a bookstore with her child. There were many diaries in the store and some of them had keys attached to them. After they came out from the bookstore, the mother found her child holding a little key, so they went back to the store and returned it to a cashier. But the cashier said, "Well, I don't know which diary the key belongs to, you can just keep it." The mother did not think it was a big deal at that time and gave it to her child. After the child started schooling, the mother found that her child often took home some small belongings of his classmates. You see, if we did not correct children's bad behavior before they developed the ability to distinguish right from wrong, they would possibly get accustomed to doing it in the future. As parents, we should devote more time and effort to educate them before they are five or six years old. With careful guidance, our children are bound to establish a firm ability to discern right from wrong.

A Good Civil Servant Must Have the Virtues of Filial Piety and Probity

In ancient times, a mother would always teach her child to 'refrain from any greedy thought for even a gourd or a fruit, and to be careful with even the most trivial matter'. We should never allow children to develop any greedy thought of taking advantage. A proverb goes, "A little child who steals a needle will steal gold when grown up." We must teach our children that 'even though an object might be small, I must not hide it secretly' and they must never take others' belongings because it will have far-reaching repercussions. Otherwise it is very likely that in the end, they would steal or rob unscrupulously because of greed. Therefore, nurturing children to be free from greed is to help them cultivate a sense of probity. Probity is very important! Ancients said, "The principle of recommending civil servants is to recommend those who practice filial piety and probity." Why do they use these two qualities, filial piety and probity, to assess if one can serve his country or not? Let's take a look. "Filial piety is the root of all virtues." (*A quote from The Classic of Filial Piety, one of the Thirteen Classics of Confucianism) So, filial piety is the root of being a human; and probity is the foundation of handling matters. When a person is of probity, only then would he not do things out of personal interests but serve the public with great impartiality and get jobs done well. That's why the roots of being a human and handling matters are filial piety and probity. From where can we see if the governance of a country is good or bad? From the presence or absence of probity in the government officials. Probity is the root of good government. If the officials had no probity, the people would live an excessively hard life.

There are many social issues emerging today. If we sit back and ponder, they are all due to the wrong direction of education. We have neglected moral education for a long while. It is useless to complain now. Instead, every parent and every teacher should take the lead to nurture children's probity by teaching them to abstain from greed. Only then would the social atmosphere get better and better in the future. When there is an upward trend of probity and filial piety in society, we can then have abundant blessings to enjoy in our old age. So, the efforts of every parent and teacher will surely not be in vain.

Sharing One's Wealth Brings People Together and Creates Happiness

This phrase 'Even though an object might be small, I must not hide it secretly' firstly refers to abstaining from greed; secondly, it also implies that we should not enjoy things by ourselves but should practice giving, sharing generously with others. If children were to selfishly hide things to eat by themselves, they would become more and more small-minded. Once, there were a few students attending our program staying in the same dorm. One of the students' mother came to bring him a few bottles of milk. Where did she pass the milk to her child? She took her son to a room and said, "These are all for you." She was afraid that other children would see the milk. And her son also had to drink the milk surreptitiously. It is true that her son had consumed all the nutrition, but how would this incident affect her son's moral character? I believe he would not truly enjoy drinking the milk happily, his absorption would not be good either, because he had to do it in secret.

The child's teacher was very observant and noticed this matter. That night, the teacher told this child, "Wow, you've got so many bottles of milk! Mencius said, 'Enjoying happiness alone is not as joyful as sharing it with others.' Good things should be shared with good friends. Would you like to share with other children?" The child was actually very innocent, he replied right away, "Okay." He poured all the milk into one big bottle and then shared with

everyone. All the children were very happy! A very interesting phenomenon happened when the child was pouring milk for his classmates. When a person is willing to share, it will rekindle many people's inner joy, and they would also be considerate of others. When he poured too much milk, they would say, "Enough! Enough! Save some for the other classmates." After all the classmates had their milk, they enjoyed the milk together. As people always say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This child felt elated because all of his classmates thanked him when drinking the milk. When he wrote his diary entry that night, he mentioned sharing his milk with other children; he felt the milk tasted exceptionally fragrant and delicious. His mother later happened to flip through his diary and found out that her son was so generous and was happy to share the milk with others, she suddenly realized that what she had done might not be appropriate. As stated in the classics, "Sharing one's wealth brings people together." Only when a person is generous can harmony be fostered among people; one's life and career would then have a good development. Our generosity and incorruptibility can become very good examples for our children.

In the Absence of Others One's Integrity Is Revealed

During the Han dynasty, there was a governor named Yang Zhen. He was not only known as a scrupulous official, but had often recommended some talented people to the government. When he was the provincial governor of Donglai, he recommended a talented scholar, Wang Mi, to become the county mayor of Changyi. Wang Mi was very grateful to Yang Zhen. One night, he visited Yang Zhen with some gold as a gift to express his gratitude. Upon seeing the gold, Yang Zhen said to Wang Mi, "I know you well and recommended you as a mayor; but how come you don't understand me and brought me gold?" Wang Mi explained, "Well, this is only a little gesture of my gratitude. I guarantee you that no one else would know about it." Yang Zhen replied, "How can no one know? Heaven knows, Earth knows, you know, and I know too." Under what circumstances can we truly tell a person's moral integrity? Only in the absence of others can one's morality be revealed. After hearing what Yang Zhen said, Wang Mi felt ashamed and left.

Yang Zhen's probity has successfully influenced his descendants, his son Bing, grandson Tsi, and great-grandson Biao all became the Three Counsellors of the State*, (*Sangong 三公) which were considered the highest official ranks in ancient China. Yang Zhen's refusal to accept the gold had earned him even greater good fortune and merits. As *The Book of Changes** states, "A family that accumulates goodness is sure to have abundant blessings." (*Also known as I Ching) In addition to the reward of good fortune, the more important thing is that he had set a good example of morality for others. So, we should set a good example for our children.

Next, we should also teach children to cherish public property and they must not use it for personal matters. This is also a very important point. I have met many successful people who mentioned that when they were young, their parents, who were working in the public sectors, would never use the government cars for personal matters, even the phone provided by the government, their parents would never use it for personal purposes as well. The parents' probity left a very deep impression on their children.

All Taxpayers Will Be Your Creditors if You Damage Public Properties

I used to ask my students, "Who bought the chairs in your school? Who bought the public property in the school?" Children are very simple minded, they would say, "The principal bought them." I continued asking them, "Where does the principal get the money from?" Where? They were not thinking fast, but answered after a while, "The government gave it to him." I asked again, "Where does the government get the money from?" "From the taxpayers." "How many taxpayers are there?" So, children in China say, "1.3 billion." I said, "Actually, there are not so many. Are you paying tax yet? They said, "Not yet." Well, at least a few billion are the taxpayers. So, the properties in schools, such as a chair, how many owners does it have? Billions of owners. If you were to steal public property, you would be indebted to billions of people. In your future lives, it would be impossible for you to pay off the debt even if you worked as a beast of burden. So, we should teach our children that there are owners for every property, they must not take things as they please. This is the elaboration of the phrase 'Even though an object might be small, I must not hide it secretly; for my parents' hearts will be grieved if I do'.

How What Parents Value Impacts Children

Let's look at the next phrase and read it together. "I will make efforts to fulfill what my parents expect from me, and I will cautiously avoid what my parents detest. When my body is injured, my parents will be worried; if my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed. When my parents love me, it is not difficult to be filial; when my parents do not love me, my filial piety is then sacred."

I will make efforts to fulfill what my parents expect from me. What parents expect from us, for instance, is to see us excel in our studies, we should do our best to achieve what our parents expect from us. But we should contemplate one point: What exactly pleases parents nowadays? If parents like fortune and fame, what impact would this have on their children? What impact? Well, it is likely that their children would also pursue fame and profit. Once children have developed this attitude, it would give them a very negative impact for the rest of their lives. Therefore, as parents, we must also hold proper values and perspectives towards life.

Observing the Fall of an Empire from a Pair of Ivory Chopsticks

In ancient times, the King of the Chu* was particularly fond of women with slim waists. (*BC 355-BC 296, Spring and Autumn Period) Consequently, many women in the palace died of hunger. When a leader has a special interest, his subordinates would try to please him. This would lead to a bad social value and vibe. If a family started to create bad values and a bad vibe, the family would fall apart. By the same token, if a country's ruler led by bad example, the country would collapse as well. As stated in *The Great Learning*, "From the benevolent example of one family, a whole country becomes benevolent; by one family practicing comity, a whole country becomes courteous; while with a tyrannical and greedy leader, the entire country may be led into rebellious disorder." If a ruler of a nation was very greedy for

wealth, it is very likely he would eventually have conflicts with his people. In Chinese history, the last king of the Shang dynasty*, King Zhou, doted on his concubine, Daji (*BC 1600-BC1046). During that time, did he have any virtuous and wise ministers assisting him? Yes, there were many of them with great virtues and wisdom. One of them was Jizi who saw that King Zhou gave Daji a pair of chopsticks made of ivory, he knew that the Shang dynasty was about to perish. With just this one action, an ancient scholar could 'see what's coming from the observation of a small detail'. He knew well how this detail would lead to a negative future development.

Just a pair of chopsticks made of ivory! King Zhou gave them to Daji! Dear friends, how could he determine that the Shang dynasty was about to perish simply from a pair of ivory chopsticks? We would say, "Is it really that serious?" Let us deliberate on this. When Daji had the ivory chopsticks, what kind of vessel do you think she would use to drink wine? Perhaps a vessel made of the rhino's horn and jade. With such a precious vessel, what kind of plates do you think she would use for dining? Perhaps plates made of gold and silver. My friends, do you think such priceless plates would be used to serve only plain food like tofu and vegetables? It must have been all kinds of great delicacies. Do you think she would wear a T-shirt when eating such delicacies? What would she wear? She must be wearing exquisite clothes made of either silk or brocades. Since she wore exquisite clothes and had great delicacies, would she live in a small hut? Where would she live? In a luxurious palace. All these luxuries need money. Where would the money come from? It must have come from continuously exploiting his people. In the end, people would rebel against him. That is why 'from a tyrannical and greedy leader, the entire country may be led to a rebellious disorder'. You see, the ancient sages were truly farsighted and sagacious, they could see the future development from analyzing a matter in detail.

Later, King Wu of the Zhou dynasty overthrew the Shang dynasty. In ancient times, the leaders of revolutionary armies were actually very benevolent. When King Wu overthrew the Shang dynasty, did he execute all of King Zhou's offspring of the Shang dynasty? No, he did not. Instead, he specially allocated another piece of land for them to lead normal lives. The ancient emperors put importance on bringing peace and prosperity to the world, so they always led people by benevolence and their virtues. They only resorted to war when they had no other alternative. Due to the ruler's broad-mindedness, the Zhou dynasty earned the people's allegiance shortly.

What is Real Wealth and Nobility?

Accordingly, when parents' liking is fame and profit, it will bring huge and very bad impacts to the whole family. Worldly people say, "The goal of life is to pursue wealth and status." But what exactly are wealth and status? What is wealth? Many people are busy working throughout their lives in the hope of enjoying wealth and status. However, have they really enjoyed real wealth and status? In fact, the lives of people today have been misguided. If we take a look at the books in the market, how do they define success? What is success? Many books with titles like *How to Make the First Five Million Dollars*, or even *Ten Million Dollars in Your Life* are all best sellers. The books like *How to Create a Harmonious Husband-Wife Relationship*, *How to Educate Your Children* are much less popular. The focus of people's minds in life is none other than money. They feel that life is all good so long as they have plenty of money. They do not realize that once they open the door for desires, they will not be able to see its bottom. As the proverb describes, "Desire is an abyss."

Many people think that having lots of money is being rich. In fact, the richer a person is, the more he will worry about the value of his money being reduced. When he sees others are

richer than him, for instance, someone has fifty million while he has only ten million dollars, he would regard himself as very poor. Wait till he has fifty million, he would still think of himself as very poor when he sees someone with one billion dollars. Can people who are like this be considered rich? Certainly not. What is the real meaning of 'rich'? As an old saying goes, "One who is content with what he has is truly wealthy." When one is content with what he has, only then can he be always happy. When one is not content, he will always feel poor no matter how wealthy he is.

The Poor Entrepreneurs Who Have Only Money Left

I once met some entrepreneurs who told me that if businessmen had never learned the sages' teachings, they would be truly poor, with only money left. When a person only has money but no wisdom, what is money likely to bring him? Misfortune! When one is rich and surrounded by many external temptations, he will begin to ruin his own life. Some surveys show that there are a few types of endings faced by successful entrepreneurs: The first type is that they have 'exhausted their mind and energy'; they worked around the clock each day, spending over 8-10 hours at work. However, when they reached middle age, they were suddenly diagnosed with cancer or other serious illnesses. After toiling for decades, they could not bring anything with them when leaving this world. This is called 'exhausting one's mind and energy'. As they lay in the ward bed in the hospital, would they be happy? Not at all. They might be thinking, "Which man would be taking over my large inheritance?" because his wife was still very young. How would they feel when they realized that they could no longer enjoy their hard-earned wealth? They would beat their chest and stamp their feet. Is this a good ending? Not at all. But many people nowadays are rushing towards this direction.

The Trilogy of Life: Being Busy, Being Blind, and Being Lost

I often describe the life phases of people today with three Chinese characters 'being busy, being blind, and being lost, which share the same pronunciation, mang. The first 'mang' is busyness, the first phase of life. This is a compound ideograph character, the left radical is heart, the right radical is death. It suggests that we are so busy every day that our heart has died and failed to feel the needs of our parents, spouses, and children. We simply cannot stop our busy pace of life. After being overly busy for quite a while, we would enter the second phase, blindness. We no longer see with our eyes and forget all our basic duties, leaving only making money to ourselves. When we reach middle age, we may wonder, "That's odd! Why has my wife stopped talking to me? Why am I not able to communicate with my children either? I've been working so hard, isn't it all for you? Why do I end up like this?" Then he will feel completely lost and think, "What on earth have I been doing?" This is the trilogy of life, being busy, being blind, and being lost.

Many parents are so busy that they do not even know what grade their children are in. Jackie Chan once went to school to pick up his son. That day, with no filming work, he went to the school to wait for his son. He was very excited, yet after waiting for a long time, he still didn't see his son come out. Suddenly he saw his son's ex-teacher who said to him, "Your son has moved on to junior high, why did you come to his primary school?" So, we must think carefully and find the real purpose of working hard in life. It is certainly not to play the money game; that is not your initial purpose of working hard. Wasn't creating a good family life your genuine purpose of working hard? We must remember our initial objective and must not lose our direction halfway through. Nevertheless, it is indeed not easy at all because there are just too many people in the current society who are obsessed with comparing with others. We can be easily influenced when others' clothes are more expensive or their cars are flashier than ours. We must not take the route of being busy, being blind, and being lost; this is the first type of ending for entrepreneurs.

Probity and Health Are More Important Than Money

The second type of ending for entrepreneurs is 'imprisonment'. During the process of making money, these people rush into dangerous situations, risk their necks, and violate the law. I remember there was one time when I was on a returning flight from Beijing, I read a story about Russia's richest man, he was still very young, around forty, and he was already locked up in prison. So in life, we must not be greedy. Instead, we should manage our business with sincerity and credibility, paying our efforts conscientiously. In doing so, it is believed that you can reap very good returns. If we do not want our children to run the risk out of greed in the future, the most important thing is to teach them, "Even though an object might be small, they must not hide it secretly", teaching them 'to uphold probity'. This is fundamental!

The third ending of entrepreneurs is those who have made money yet have harmed their health. They often had to entertain a lot of clients, thus damaging their health. When a person's health is at stake in middle and old age, would he still be able to enjoy his accumulated wealth? Perhaps he has to depend on all kinds of medicines for the rest of his life; this is surely not a good life.

Make Time for Family, Even in the Midst of Making Money

At last is the kind of entrepreneur who can strike a balance between his career and family. This is the most perfect type. There is an elder of mine, his last name is Lu, I call him Uncle Lu. He had considerable success in the business world. He was once the CEO of Yamaha and had a staff of about 80,000 under him; quite a successful entrepreneur. He is a man of principle. He mentioned that as long as it was a Sunday, he would always accompany his wife and children for lunch. When he persevered with it, what kind of feeling did he bring to his wife and children? A heartwarming feeling! They felt that their father, her husband, cared about the family very much. Thus, their family cohesiveness is particularly good. He would turn down all business entertainment on this particular day. In fact, when we genuinely recognize the importance of family, we will naturally do whatever ought to be done. Where there is a will, there is a way. We must not look for excuses like, "We can't do as we wish once we've committed to our pursuits." As long as you persist with it, your friends will adjust in accord with your principles. That's all for today. Thank you very much for listening.