

Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (17)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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The Way to Manage a Thousand-Person Family

Hello my friends, greetings to you all! Dear friends, we have just mentioned that Emperor Ming Tai Zu gave two large pears to Zheng Lian. If you were Zheng Lian what would you do? Cook them together, right? Let's give this friend some applause. Perhaps you know that pears are good for your throat after being cooked! Zheng Lian did almost the same way as you said. He took two big water vats, smashed the pears, then put one pear in each vat and let the pears blend in the water. Afterwards, he had everyone in the family each drink a bowl. Everyone felt that they were equally treated and were at peace. Although the emperor was not closely related to Zheng Lian, he felt this elder was worthy of respect.

Later, Emperor Tai Zu asked him, "How do you manage one thousand people? What method do you use?" Zheng Lian answered, "Do not listen to women's words." My lady friends, don't get upset by this answer and say, "I do not want to listen any more, I am leaving." Do not interpret the meaning of a phrase literally, because the implication of each saying is derived from the background of that era. We must understand that women in ancient times had fewer opportunities to study the saints' and sages' teachings. It is inevitable that they were more selfish since they did not understand the broad mind of the saints and sages. As long as they were selfish, wanting to keep more for their own children, it would cause others' complaints. That is why resentment arises from selfishness. When many cells in the whole family start to have contention, the entire thousand-cell family will break up.

But females today are educated, so they are less selfish in their speech. Nowadays, it is very likely that men are more selfish, only thinking of themselves. Such a man's personality will be more like a woman's. So, we must understand this phrase from its broader meaning. It means that we must never be calculating in the family because it will surely cause disputes that way. There must be a reason why Zheng Lian's family of one thousand people was able to live harmoniously. Why do people compete? Why? They think that what was obtained from fighting is theirs. The next phrase teaches us a very important method on how to let our siblings and family interact harmoniously and happily. "When I do not value wealth much, how can there be resentment? When I hold back, not speaking hurtful words, grudges will naturally die out."

The Bigger the Heart One Has, the More Blessings He Begets

In ancient times, there was a child named Kong Rong who was only five years old. When the family was distributing pears, to whom would he give the bigger ones? His older brother. In fact, this attitude is completely correct because he might have done less housework than his older brother. Nowadays people often talk about "equal" and even advocate that parents should be equal with their children! Is this concept correct? It depends on how you interpret it! It should be equal from the aspect of identity. You respect your children as an individual and not someone who is attached to you. But they are still little, would their life experience be equal to yours? Not equal! (*The audience replies) Correct! Since their wisdom is not equal to yours, you must guide and teach them. So, there must be an order of seniority. Only then would they have respect for you. Without these ethics, how would they give rise to respect for you? So, we must clearly understand the meaning of equality.

When children are taught to observe the order of seniority, they will then know "Whether I am drinking, eating, walking, or sitting, let the older ones go first then the younger ones follow behind." In the past, why did people have to wait for their father to come home before they were allowed to eat? That was a gesture of gratitude in recognition of their father's toil because who bore the brunt of the responsibility for the family? The father! So, it was through such an etiquette that children learned to be grateful for their father's toil at all times. If the father had not returned home from work, and the children had started eating swaggeringly without even using the utensils, what would they learn in the long run? They will follow their bigoted course. "Without proper education, one's behavior will deviate from his innate nature." So, it is rather difficult to teach children today. We must study carefully, why could hundreds of people observe due decorum so well in the past? What method did they use? What method? They used *Dizigui*! But we must genuinely practice it, only then can we derive the benefits.

Kong Rong gave the bigger pears to his older brother, so he "does not value material and wealth much." After receiving Kong Rong's big pears, his brother would love and care for him more. Knowing that his younger brother always thought of him, as the older brother, he would be more courageous to protect his younger brother. This is about knowing how to practice giving with materials and wealth.

During the period of Five Dynasties (*907-979), there was a scholar named Zhang Shi Xuan. Because his father died early, he was brought up by his uncle. When he was seventeen years old, his uncle told him, "Since you are already a grown up, we can now divide our ancestor's inheritance into two parts; one for you and one for me." Zhang Shi Xuan immediately said to his uncle, "Uncle, you have seven children, so the estate should be divided into eight parts." His uncle said, "No, you represent your father, so it should be divided into two parts." Zhang Shi Xuan was only seventeen years old then, he insisted that the estate be divided into eight parts. Did he suffer any loss because of his concession? What did he gain in return? He had further improved his virtues and brought happiness and harmony to his family, as well as broadened his big heart. As the saying goes, "The bigger the heart one has, the more blessings he begets." When he was on the way to the capital city for the imperial examination, he bumped into a fortune teller who noticed many hidden

merit marks on his face. This meant he had accumulated many hidden merits. The fortune teller told him that he would definitely pass and rank high in the exam. As expected, he passed and ranked high in that exam. I believe that his excellent example would be emulated by his posterity and his descendants would definitely develop well for generations to come.

You see, his concession corresponded to his innate nature. When we can understand this truth, that "One will sooner or later obtain whatever is within his destiny; if it is beyond one's destiny, do not try to obtain it by force," then our mind will be settled and at ease. We would not be worried about gains and losses and would not often think of competing with others. To understand the truth of destiny, we must read one very good book: *Liao Fan's Four Lessons**. (*A book presenting the principle of "Destiny can be changed through proper education and humility" written by Yuan Liaofan in about 1550, Ming Dynasty.) By understanding the truth, our mind would then be at peace and would not compete with others. When Mr. Yuan Liao Fan was young, he encountered a very skillful fortune teller named Mr. Kong. Mr. Kong was the successor of the direct line of the Huangji method*, (*A method taught in Huangji Jingshi Shu 皇極經世書, also known as the *Book of the August Ultimate Through the Ages*, written by mathematician and philosopher Shao Yong of the Northern Song Dynasty, 960-1126) so he was very accurate at calculating and predicting.

How Is One's Destiny Calculated?

Dear friends, you have experienced fortune telling before, haven't you? I heard it is now very costly to visit a fortune teller, isn't it? If your destiny can be calculated and foretold, then you have come to this life in vain. It indicates that you have made no dedication and have not fully utilized your life. How could one's destiny be calculated accurately? It is because one's good and bad karmas would manifest in his life. So, his destiny can be calculated accurately. Most people would feel that the fortune tellers could predict their destiny quite accurately.

But some people's destiny cannot be calculated correctly. Who are they? The destiny of the two types of people that cannot be predicted are: people who have performed significantly good deeds and those who have committed serious offenses. Most people do few good deeds, commit minor offenses, plus do not broaden their minds. All they think of are their children, grandchildren, spouses, houses, and money. Since they neither perform any major good deeds nor commit any grave offenses, their destiny can be accurately calculated. There are "addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division" in one's fate. For example, if you have ten million in wealth in your destiny and you have performed some minor good deeds, how much will be added to your ten million? Fifty thousand! Your destiny can be accurately calculated. If you committed minor offenses, and your wealth would become nine million nine hundred and fifty thousand, then this is very close to your fate of ten million, and can be calculated quite accurately as well. But if you performed many good deeds, your ten million would be multiplied by five which is equal to how much? Fifty million! Your destiny will definitely be inaccurately calculated. If you committed some grave offenses, your ten million would be divided by five which is equal to two million, your destiny would not be accurately calculated either.

From this principle, we can understand that even if a person had successfully gained two million by illegal means, that two million would actually be what he had in his destiny. He might still be bragging about his great ability to make this two million, not knowing that he had actually lost eight million. So, "The virtuous gentlemen are happy to be virtuous" because their minds are at peace due to understanding the *truth*. "Petty men are being petty men in vain" because it is uncertain if they will still have the blessing to spend the two million. Since he committed an offense that had violated the law, he would very likely be arrested and imprisoned soon. Are there many such people? Many! Due to the prevailing utilitarianism*, (*A theory that promotes actions to maximize happiness for most affected individuals, its consequences may vary.) many people would risk their necks under certain circumstances.

When seeing such people, we feel a lot of pity for them. After all, they are people with great fortune. It is because they did not encounter moral education, so their lives were ruined. We should harbor empathy for such people. As *The Infinite Life Sutra* states, "The past generations committed evil deeds because they did not know ethics. No one had ever told them, so they should not be blamed." Neither his parents nor grandparents had taught them. Nowadays, just like when I passed the teaching exam, what is the first sentence my relatives and friends asked? "How much will you make per month?" So, they were not taught that we can create our own destiny as long as we broaden our mind. Since they were only taught to seek profits, they definitely would not be able to resist temptation. Having understood the principle about destiny, our mind will be at peace due to having acquired the *truth*; only then can we implement this teaching, "When I do not value wealth much, how can there be resentment?"; our family will then be harmonious and peaceful.

The Lesson from Eating Melon

When we come across students competing, what should we do? There was a student whose class happened to eat watermelon one day. When the watermelon was cut and served on the table, many of the students hurried to finish their meals. What were they intending to do? After finishing their meals, they walked as fast as a flying arrow to grab the biggest slice of watermelon. My friends, if they were your students, what would you do? You could see a chaotic situation at that moment. This teacher stayed very calm and maintained her composure when seeing this chaos. After the students had finished their meals and had taken their afternoon nap, she asked the students during the first lesson in the afternoon, "Dear students, if we grabbed the first and biggest slice of watermelon, what would be the resulting effect? What influence can it cause? Please tell me your opinion." Did the teacher point out which student grabbed the biggest slice? No, she did not. She was saving the face for them. Many students commented, "Grabbing the biggest slice, such kind of people are selfish." The teacher continued, "Would you befriend such kind of people?" They said, "Of course not!" Through this incident, the teacher let her students understand that their every move and deed affects their image in the hearts of others. Otherwise, "Desire makes one lose his mind." When driven by desire, they would only think of grabbing the biggest slice and would not realize the consequences they had already caused.

The teacher continued, "If this student was very happy grabbing the biggest slice and ate it immediately, his digestive system would definitely be negatively affected, right? Because eating too fast will result in poor digestion. Furthermore, how long would he be happy with the biggest slice he got? Only for a short while! When he saw how other people looked at him, his happiness would immediately turn into discomfort. Besides, when he managed to grab the biggest slice now, what would he want to get the next time? The biggest one still! If he failed to grab it next time, his happiness would turn into misery. He would think, 'So mad... I did not get it!' When a person always fights for the best, what would he do when he fails to get it? He might come up with improper ways to get it, even to the extent of stealing and robbing." After finishing saying it, the teacher did not draw any conclusion but let them discuss among themselves. As a result, the situation was different the next day; they intentionally picked the smallest slice. Indeed, students are very receptive to teachings as long as teachers and parents are willing to teach them. This is about "When I do not value wealth much, how can there be resentment?" Usually, a child who is willing to yield would earn the elder's special care.

Losing Temper Creates Obstacles

The next phrase is, "When I hold back, not speaking hurtful words, grudges will naturally die out." When people get together, the most conflicting situation is in speech. When there are conflicts in speech, you will easily lose your temper. It is said, "A thought of resentment opens up the door to a myriad of obstacles." Where is the door of obstacles? Let us consider first: what are the effects of losing one's temper with bad language? Millions of obstacles will appear. The door of obstacles opens up! What would be obstructed? The broad mind of oneself! It will also obstruct the good interpersonal relations of oneself. You may have lost your temper for only five minutes, but how long do you need to remove the negative effects from losing your temper? How long? So, we must "Think of the difficulties that anger may bring us." In his teaching of "The Nine Contemplations of Virtuous Gentlemen," Confucius reminded us never to unleash our anger, we must be prudent. Because once we get angry, it would be very difficult or even impossible to restore our original state. That is why we must "Think of the difficulties that anger may bring us."

A saying also denotes, "When the body is cut with a sharp knife, it is easy for the scar to heal." When there is a knife wound, it may take just one or two weeks to heal. But when we "use bad words to hurt others' feelings," how long would it imprint on others' hearts? "The grudge will be very difficult to extinguish." Life is so short, why not interact harmoniously? When we see such results, we must find ways to overcome our anger. And to what extent should we exercise our effort to control anger? To the extent that the Chinese character "forbearance" implicates. Let's analyze this compound ideograph character. What is the skill of "forbearance"? The top radical of the character is a "blade" and the bottom radical is a "heart". It signifies when people take a knife and stab in your heart, you have to remain unaffected. No matter how other people scold you, you just don't talk back. One hand clapping will not produce sounds, so nothing will happen. If you could practice forbearance to such an extent, you would definitely win great admiration from people around you. Indeed, "forbearance" is a grand subject to learn.

Our forbearance skills are being tested at all times, in all places. For example, listening to the lecture now is also a test of your forbearance, isn't it? You have to hold back, not letting yourself doze off. Once a lady said to me, "Teacher Tsai, traditional Chinese culture is good, but as for the forbearance, how long does one have to endure?" She seemed to feel helpless with "forbearance." I said, "If you have such a mentality, I guarantee that your forbearance will surely end up in an explosion." For example, after learning these lessons, you know that a husband and wife should be mutually considerate. So, you suddenly become very hardworking when you go home. You start to clean and tidy the house. But your husband does not notice because you are always looking at your husband when you are doing the chores. After doing it for a week, your husband still does not give any response. Suddenly you feel a surge of anger. Then you throw the broom on the ground and say angrily, "Can't you see I have done so much?" If you failed to forebear your grievance and exploded with anger, what would happen? All your previous efforts would go down the drain. Your husband would immediately give you a cold-eyed stare and wonder what you have learned from *Dizigui*. So, the skill of forbearance is to endure situations through a clear understanding of the *truth* and put the overall situation into consideration.

Because everyone, such as husbands and wives, come from different families, their living habits vary greatly. As the saying goes, "Three-feet of ice is not formed by one day's chill." Understanding this, we know that it is impossible to have an instant effect for a change. At this time, we must set our minds at rest. Whether others are right or not is none of my concern, I must do my part well. It is my duty, so I do it with peace of mind due to understanding the *truth*. Naturally, your exemplary deed would be passed on and you just need to let nature take its own course. When comprehending this principle, we would be able to accommodate others. So, when you go back now and request your children to be diligent, you can't get angry if they cannot meet your expectation right away. If you do, your children are not at fault, but who is? Our own attitude is not right! There must be a step-by-step process to form a habit. We must do things according to the law of nature. We must endure things with the overall situation in mind because if husband and wife often quarrel at home, and colleagues in a company often have disputes, the atmosphere in the family and company will be very bad and definitely decay eventually. Being able to endure is to be able to consider the overall situation. When we can practice forbearance in all situations, we will eventually awaken the other party's sense of shame. So, we must endure situations through understanding the *truth* and consider the overall situation.

A Tale of Two Sister's Grudges and The Wisdom in Chinese Characters

When we were giving lectures in Beijing, there was a lady in her 50s. After attending the lecture on Practicing Fraternity Outside Home, she called her younger sister on the very same day. Due to an old quarrel, both sisters had not been talking to each other for two years. After listening to the teaching, she realized that she was at fault and called her sister right away. When the phone was answered, she immediately said, "Sister, I am sorry!" She only said three words, "I am sorry." Her sister had already burst into tears. In fact, what had happened to both of them? They had held back their grudge in their hearts. Luckily, it was only for two years. If it continued, I can guarantee that both of them would be at high risk for cancer, because their circulation of blood and qi was all blocked. Why bother to create

suffering for themselves?! You see, it costs only one apology for all their estrangement has all resolved. The reconciliation not only dropped both sister's burden from their hearts, but who else's? Yes, their father and their mother. So, it is true that we can make our lives happier and happier as long as we can let go of certain bad habits and attachment.

Now we know anger needs to be restrained and stopped, but my friends, how do you deal with anger when it arises? What method do you use? Come! Let's discuss it, so everyone can manage to do the same when seeing a sage example. What method? This friend says, "Compassion and empathy." Very good! That is to broaden our mind and naturally the obstacles will be resolved. Any other methods? This method is very lofty, I may need to practice for another three to five years. It is indeed very important to tackle anger because when a person's anger is not eradicated, it will hinder his entire physical and mental state.

When I discussed this matter with a lot of friends in Shanghai, they said that they would call someone to complain and vent their rage. I asked, "How did you feel after venting?" They said they felt much better. I said, "You have felt much better but not so for your friend." Your friend would say, "Life is too short already, why are there so many conflicts?!" So, we shall not throw our "rubbish" to others. Many people become a trash bin for others, don't they? What will happen when one becomes a trash bin for others? The garbage will eventually overflow. You see, what happens to those who are specialized in giving others psychotherapy? So, we must elevate our state to a higher level, to become an incinerator; once rubbish is thrown into the bin, we can immediately burn it to ashes. This can be achieved through our virtues like this friend just mentioned: use a mind of compassion and benevolence.

The answer is actually in the Chinese characters. We must pay particular respect to Chinese characters from now on because our ancestors created the only symbols in the world that imply the philosophy of life. Only Chinese characters can achieve this! Except for Chinese characters, there are no others like them. Let's take a look the character "怒" (nu), an ideograph compound character. The top radical is a "slave," while the bottom radical is a "heart." It signifies when a person becomes angry, his heart has become the slave and he is led by the nose with his bad habits; he would not dare to go west when his bad habits drive him to the east. Let's observe: many people who have lost their temper would feel very regretful afterwards; "how could I be like that?" They would really regret it, right? But they would never be able to rewind time.

A Nail a Day Keeps One's Temper Away

There was a father whose son's temper was extremely bad. In order to teach his son, he said to him, "Now, every time you lose your temper, go to our backyard and drive a nail into that wooden post." Whenever the child lost his temper, he would go and drive a nail into the post. In the beginning, there were five or six nails a day. After doing that for several days, the child was shocked to see how dense the nails were on the post. He suddenly realized how bad his temper actually was. As a matter of fact, many people who have bad tempers would sometimes say, "My temper is considered good now, if I was like a few years ago, you

would have no idea how bad I would make you feel now." They are still not aware that they have a bad temper!

When this child realized that his temper was so terrible, he started to contain his rage. After a period of time, he did not lose his temper. His father then said to him, "As long as you don't lose your temper today, you can go and pull out one of the nails." His son went to pull out the nails with a great sense of accomplishment. Suddenly one day, he had finished extracting all the nails. Being delighted, he ran to report to his father, "I have pulled out all the nails." His father calmly took him to the pole and said, "Even though you have extracted all the nails, how many holes are left on the post?!" Can it return to its original look? No! It cannot! "When the body is cut with a sharp knife, it is easy for the scar to heal; when we hurt others with bad words, it is very difficult to extinguish the grudge in their hearts." No matter how you apologize later, the relation would not necessarily return to its original state.

Understanding this we must be more vigilant. Next time, when you are about to lose your temper, you must remember the teaching: when I hold back, not speaking hurtful words, grudges will naturally die out. This phrase is like a beam of light shooting into your head. Can you do it? I guarantee that you will receive this result if you read *Dizigui* once in the morning and once at night. There is a friend in Beijing who has been conscientiously reciting *Dizigui* twice a day. She said that the hardest part for her to practice is the teaching of "If a person has a shortcoming, I should never expose it." Since she has gotten used to talking about others's rights and wrongs, it is difficult for her to rectify her bad habits even though she has learned. However, when she is about to talk about other's rights and wrongs, this phrase in *Dizigui* would flash across her mind and she would quickly shut her mouth. It is very effective! We can memorize this phrase in *Dizigui* or "Think of the difficulties one will encounter after venting anger."

We must have aspiration in life! We must be the master of our own lives; do not let bad habits dominate our fate. Bringing forth such an aspiration to overcome our bad habits, we can transform our anger 怒 into forgiveness 恕. Do these two characters look alike? Yes, they look alike! By removing the sharp edges a bit, "anger" will turn into "forgiveness". The top radical is "accord," 如, and the bottom radical is "heart," 心, it is a compound ideograph character. The implication is to put yourself in other's shoes and think according to other's hearts and perspectives. When doing so, your anger may already be half gone. When I was teaching in school, some of the children's behaviors were indeed deviated. Sometimes we would wonder why they still behaved in such a manner despite their age. But we should not keep wondering and circling around the results. We should find out the cause. Often when we took time to investigate their family situation, we would develop empathy for them. Since no one took care of them, they then developed those bad habits! Your "anger" immediately turned into "forgiveness," the fire of rage had transformed into compassion.

Using Patience to Accommodate a Deviated Student

I once taught in a school where a student had stolen \$100,000 NT, quite a big amount. Actually he had intended to take only a one-thousand dollar bill. That day our

colleague had collected some money, perhaps this student had overheard this news. So, we as elders must also be cautious with our conversation! As people often say, "Do not expose your wealth." Once money is exposed, it might cause others to have a criminal motive. So, he initially wanted to take only a one-thousand dollar bill but ended up taking all the money in a hurry. My colleague was also very alert; realizing this student was still in school, she quickly ran back to stop him and said, "You, come back here." In hoping that this child would learn this big lesson, my colleague arranged for the police to make a record.

After this incident, this student was sitting on the staircase. I happened to have no class for that period and passed by that place. In spite of seeing only his back, not his face, I could already feel his loneliness. I then walked towards him and sat down with him. At this moment, silence is more expressive than all words. I firstly let him calm down his mind. About one minute later, this student opened his mouth and said, "Teacher, I really want to die." Life is like a play; as teachers we must also be very good at acting. Upon hearing his intention to die, we must not say, "No, you cannot die." Don't do that! We must keep calm! I then asked him, "Why do you really want to die?" We should let children find out the reason. He replied, "Teacher, because nobody likes me, everyone hates me!" He was in a very bad mood, so it was time for us to comfort him.

I said, "Does your counseling teacher hate you?" Because there were two teachers in school who treated him quite well. One of them was the counseling teacher, who was the other teacher? Don't you know him? Ha, ha, ha... Of course, I should not mention myself first, it is not humble that way. So I first mention his counseling teacher. After listening, his mood was slightly better. I said, "Does Teacher Tsai hate you?" He shook his head. When his emotion was more stable, we could then talk nicely to him. I said, "Since you know that people do not like you, what is the cause?" He said, "Because I often hit people, I often yell at people." I said, "Then stop hitting people, stop yelling at people, won't you earn their liking?" At that time, this child said something which left a deep impression on me. He said, "Teacher, I really, really wanted to change myself, but I tried and failed." This is a sixth grade student. He had already felt that he could not control his life. So, we must not let our children develop their bad habits. When our children's lives have been dominated by bad habits, it's hard to imagine how ghastly their lives would be.

I then made an agreement with this student. I gave him a notebook and asked him to write "goodness" on the left side and "badness" on the right side. We adapted the "100 maxim for introspection." I said to him, "You can write down whatever good and bad deeds you have done every day in the respective columns; the goal is to request yourself to make daily improvements." Honestly, this student had been living with his bad habits for over ten years, if you can spend three years to rectify him, you can be considered a great teacher of the time already. Without a doubt, we must have patience to accommodate others, we can then broaden our mind to transform anger into forgiveness. When you can always forgive others, I believe your entire life will take a turn for the better.

Practice Serving Others to Orchestrate A Symphony of Life

Okay, let's move on. "The older children should be friendly and the younger ones should be respectful; when siblings get along harmoniously, filial piety already exists in their actions." Since we have learned many exemplary stories of past sages, do you feel there are any differences reading them now? "When I do not value wealth much, how can there be resentment? When I hold back, not speaking hurtful words, grudges will naturally die out. Let's continue to see the next phrase. Let's read it together. "Whether drinking, eating, sitting, or walking, I should let the older ones go first then the younger ones follow behind. When an elder is calling for someone, I will get that person for him. If that person is not around, I will put myself at the service of this elder."

Okay! "Whether drinking, eating, sitting, or walking, I should let the older ones go first then the younger ones follow behind." When children know that they must respect the elders first, their respectful mind will be implemented in every aspect of their lives. This phrase only points out a few actions: the first one is eating. When children see the dishes and serve the elders first, their virtue will be elevated during the process of serving food. We have a student who was only seven years old. He came to our class for only one week. All the while his grandparents had been serving him food. After attending the class for a week, he took the initiative to serve food to his family members. The family members were very joyful and agreed with traditional culture more. People nowadays are very realistic, hahaha... So, we must teach our children well because they will drive their parents to learn and to practice.

But for family education to really have good progress, it must begin with parents' elevation. In the beginning of the lesson, we mentioned that "To teach our children, we must teach ourselves first." This is all important because "The people below would emulate the people above." Let's say today your children practice *Dizigui*, but the parents do not learn and practice. For example *Dizigui* teaches us, "I will always put my hat and clothes in proper spots instead of carelessly throwing them all over the place and getting them dirty." Yet when the father comes home and simply throws the socks around and sits on the sofa to read the newspaper, the children would think, "How could this be? Only I have to do it, my dad doesn't?" Would they be reconciled? Of course not! If you were the mother, what would you do? My bad habit is showing up again! As a teacher, we like to give tests. In fact, such situations may happen! What should you do? Should you walk to your husband right away and say, "Don't you know that our son is learning *Dizigui* now? Quickly pick it up!" Your husband would surely say, "Do not learn those things!" There was a mother who said to her son, "Your father has been very tired working all day, please help your dad pick up the socks. You see, your father is so tired." Using this perspective, her son can accept easily! His dad was indeed just off from work! So, the son helped put away the socks. Seeing this, how would her husband feel? Right, isn't the ending perfect? So, we can create a symphony of life in everything if we can be sophisticated in interpersonal relations.

The Last Piece of Pie

Okay! "Whether drinking, eating, sitting, or walking..." This means whether sitting or walking, the younger ones should always let the older ones go first. In Haikou and Shenzhen, the students would practice this phrase after learning it; they would hold the door and let the teachers get into the elevator first. But we would tell them that they should go first

when it comes to riding the elevator. Why? If the child is still young, it can cause danger when the door is not well controlled at times. So, even though this is a principle, we must know how to accommodate to the circumstances. There was a student who followed teachers to Shenzhen for a lecture. This child is quite remarkable! He has studied the classics for several years. Judging from his round face and big ears, I can tell that he is someone with immense blessings. What is the greatest blessing? Being able to encounter the sages' teachings, this is the greatest blessing in life! When we were there to give lectures, it happened that someone gave us a box of ten pies. The pies were very delicious, everyone had eaten their share. This student ran out from his room and said, "This pie is really delicious! Is there any more left?" There was one more left as there were nine people. This child went to take the pie then walked towards me and said, "The final piece should be given to you, Teacher Tsai." Not only did he let the elders eat first, he also knew who should eat the last piece.

So you see, would students who learn courtesy become dull? Absolutely not! Children who learn etiquette will always respect others and will be considerate and adaptable. People today have misinterpreted the meaning of "liveliness." What is "liveliness"? Someone who cannot stop moving around for even three seconds is regarded as "lively." Sometimes when we line up at the airport, we can see that many children are unable to stand still, bumping into each other. Yet the passengers behind would say, "Ah, this child is so lively!" How could that be regarded as "liveliness"? That is called "arbitrary," and lacks family discipline. True liveliness is being flexible in thinking and always being considerate of others. This is a real liveliness! People who learn etiquette would definitely not be rigid in their learning.

Table Manners Can Affect Your Business

So, "Whether drinking, eating, sitting, or walking, I should let the older ones go first then the younger ones follow behind," this habit will influence children's respectful mind and will very likely affect their career development in the future. Do you believe it? Once, a principal of a kindergarten told me that he hired some teachers in their twenties to teach in his kindergarten. He said that one time he had a customer visiting from Guangdong. He then brought some of his teachers to have dinner with this customer together. Several of the teachers come from Hunan Province where people love spicy food. People from Guangdong Province do not really favor spicy food. What food should we order when we give the Guangdong client a treat? Of course Guangdong dishes! After taking the orders, they started to eat. While eating, the teachers were complaining that the dishes were very unpalatable. Why did the boss bring the teachers there? To help take care of the client for the boss. In the end, what did they do? They spoiled the atmosphere. Finally, a spicy food was served, the principal spun the turntable to the client. After the client had taken one bite, the teachers spun the turntable to their position and started to eat. The principal then turned it back to the client but the teachers spun it back again. Do you dare to use and trust such employees? They are unable to achieve anything but are good at messing around.

So, when children know the etiquette of when to move forward or backward, you can rest assured if you delegate work to him. So, when the

supervisor takes his subordinates out for a banquet, he will bring those who know table manners to serve others food and water, right? Correct! So, to serve food and drinks must be natural, it requires practice to treat elders this way from a young age. Okay! If you have such an attitude, you can then help your next generations pave a good path in their future. That's all for today. Thank you for listening.