

Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (26)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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2/15-2/23 2005

Kindness As Defined By Children

Hello my friends! Perseverance is the cornerstone of learning, so the method of learning is "to delve deeply into one subject and practice it for an extended period." In this respect, "practice" is rather important. I see that you all have a glowing complexion, which means that the "Chinese medicine" you've been taking is effective, that is, reading *Dizigui* once in the morning and once at night. When you've familiarized yourself with this classic, you may suddenly become awakened when we mention some of these phrases in class. So, it's still very important to be well-versed in it. We were explaining this phrase this morning: "I must stay away from rowdy places, and I must not ask about things that are heretical or unusual."

We also analyzed that the root cause of a child making bad friends and going to immoral places is due to his failure to discern right from wrong and between good and bad. If we want to solve this problem from the root, we must firmly establish his foundation of virtue from childhood. Then, he will naturally avoid immoral friends and chaotic places. There was a teacher who often brought her one to two-year-old child for a walk on the street. Every time they passed by some indecent and rowdy places, such as an arcade, she would tell her son, "Such places will corrupt your mind and make people become immoral. You must never enter this kind of place." As he was taught so since childhood, when he grew up, he never even glanced at such places. This is called: "The first impression will dominate one's thinking." It is indeed true of education that "Forbidding something before it happens is called prevention." You must prevent him from acquiring bad habits while he is still young. Once he has already formed the habit, it will be very difficult to correct him. It is called a preventative measure. The higher the sensitivity parents have in education, the better they can master the skill of prevention.

We have a few six and seven-year-old children studying classics together in Shenzhen. One night, the teacher asked them to explain the meanings of kind, wicked, good, and evil. These six children gave the following answers. Let me read them aloud for you all. How were the judgment and intentions of children who have studied classics for one to two years? Let's begin with kindness. The first student defined it as such: "When you give what you want to someone who also wants it." This is an attitude of concession. The second student said, "Being filial to parents, concentrating in class, and respecting others are all being kindhearted." Alright, filial piety and respect are the major foundations of a person's virtues.

When I gave the first lesson to the little students, I drew a picture and asked them, "My children, what is this?" Revealing a small part above water, I told the students it was called "the tip of the iceberg." The tip of the iceberg only accounts for how much of the whole iceberg? Five percent! I asked them, "Have you seen an iceberg? Where is 95% of it? It's under the sea, unseen. Human's potential is similar to the iceberg; most of it is covered. How

do you uncover 95% of it? Today, I'm going to give you two keys to unlock it." What are they? The first one is "filial piety" and the second one is "courtesy." In fact, the essence of courtesy is respect. I told them, "You see, the ancient Emperor Shun had great wisdom because of his filial piety. Not only was his wisdom great, owing to his wisdom and virtues, he won the love and respect of the whole nation, who also praised him and followed his example. He was able to develop his potential very well." The second key is courtesy and respect. I said to those children, "Since I'm courteous, I could get acquainted with Uncle Lu and obtained his wisdom and experiences, so I could develop my abilities."

After that lesson, what changes would take place in the students? Today even children are very interest-oriented. From that day onwards, they would give a respectful bow and greeting whenever they saw the teachers and other parents. My friends, don't set the moral standard too high when you impart virtues. You can't say that they're very interest-oriented and aren't sincere. As long as they are willing to bow, they will eventually internalize this respectful attitude. Many people say that some people do good deeds because they wish for good results. What's wrong with having that intention? At least what they do is helpful to others, and they are practicing "Upon seeing the good points of others, I should strive to be just as good." When they persevere in the noble cause, despite having an initial expectation, they will slowly and naturally uncover their innate goodness when they see more and more pitiful people around. If we only stand there saying that these people do good for a purpose, and we ourselves remain indifferent to others' needs, then how are we qualified to criticize them? When people are already doing good deeds, we should praise them and rejoice at the sight of their meritorious deeds regardless of their intentions. When they receive more and more encouragement, they will naturally be more genuine and happier doing it. So, I gave the students these two keys: filial piety and courtesy.

When can we unlock our potential? There's no age limit for these two keys; an eighty-year-old can do it too. On the fourth day of my lecture in Hangzhou, a seventy-year-old elder suddenly came up and said to me during the break, "Teacher Tsai, I just learned the first lesson of life, filial piety, at seventy." But it's never too late to start. he will have no regrets even if he dies in the evening. As long as we understand the truth and really practice it, our life will definitely not be in vain.

There was a sixty-year-old who brought her son to listen to our lectures in Shanghai. On the first day, after the lecture about "Being Filial to Parents at Home," before lunch, she came to our table very excitedly. She said that she finally understood why she couldn't make further progress after decades of cultivation. Despite endless learning, she still couldn't find the reason why her intention was not sincere and respectful enough. It wasn't until she had listened to the lesson on "Being Filial to Parents at Home" that she suddenly realized that she had neglected the first level and had went straight to constructing the third level. Others might advise her, saying, "Come down and start with the first floor." Hearing this, she might reply, "I'm already on the third level, why are you asking me to go down?" Actually, when we're on the third level, we're only supported by two bamboo poles. Though we are now standing there, what could happen at anytime? When someone kindly persuades her, saying, "Come down!" she would say, "Your practice is worse than mine, how can you ask me to come down?" When this elder realized how important it is to establish a solid foundation and why she was still swaying, she finally found the underlying cause. "Only when people have understood the truth will they have peace of mind," and every step they take in the future will be steady and practical.

We just learned from this student that "being filial to parents," "concentrating in class," and "respecting others" are all forms of kindness. This is developing foundational virtues: filial piety and respect. The next student said that being able to practice *Dizigui* is being kindhearted. The next student defined it as being able to implement chapters one to eighteen of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, obeying teachers' instructions, and applying the teachings of *The General Etiquette Essentials for Daily Life*. They could even recite *The General Etiquette Essentials for Daily Life* by heart. A little boy went to look for his friend who happened to not be at home. He then folded a paper crane and put it at his friend's gate to indicate that he had stopped by. Don't underestimate children's ability to be flexible. They can take what they've learned and practice it in life. The next student said that having wisdom is being kindhearted. Another student said it is virtuous acts. Still another defined it as taking initiative in doing one's duty. My friends, such states of mind have reached the level of knowing how to introspect and examine whether their intentions are true or false. The next two students interpreted kindness as "doing what you know is good" and "understanding the truth."

Wickedness As Defined By Children

Let's look at "wickedness." How did children interpret this? The first student defined it as not helping people. The next said it is deceiving others and wasting things, such as electricity, water, life, substances, and time. From the answers given by this student, we can also infer that he has learned *Dizigui* pretty well, because he could analyze it from the aspects of time and life. The next student said that insulting others is wickedness. The next student thought that making cruel jokes is wickedness; he even added in parenthesis, "Misfortune arises from the mouth." They have already started observing their attitudes and consequences from their daily interactions with people. The next student understood wickedness as resenting people. One said being selfish, returning kindness with ill-treatment, being ungrateful, and biting the hand that feeds you. We copied their original words without adding anything.

One student regarded harboring grudges as evil because *Dizigui* teaches us "I must repay the kindness of others, and let go of resentment." The next student defined wickedness as being miserly and pointing out others' shortcomings while insisting on one's erroneous mindsets. For stinginess, *Dizigui* teaches us, "If I have talents, I won't be selfish with them." Another student understood wickedness as being unloving and harming others. Another said having no compassion and not doing the right thing despite knowing what should be done. The next student regarded treating Confucius' image with disrespect as wickedness. Because there's a portrait of Confucius hanging in their classroom. After taking a walk in the park that day, as soon as they entered the classroom, they said to Confucius, "Confucius, I'm back." This is practicing "I will serve the departed as if they were still alive."

There was an air defense drill held in Haikou to let children know what preparations they should make during an air attack. The teacher also seized this opportunity to teach them that at this time, they could only pick what they needed right away and should not take too many things. The teacher further guided them to bring some water because they might feel thirsty. They noticed that every child would take different things. Children who felt more insecure would bring a lot of things with them. One of them didn't bring anything; he ran to the table, opened the drawer, and took out a framed portrait. He had taken out Confucius' portrait and told his teacher that this should be taken. The teacher was moved to tears on the spot. Even in such a critical situation, since he could first think of Confucius' image, I'm sure he will definitely be able to think of Confucius' teachings when he encounters the tests of life in the

future.

Next, another student thought that being afraid of hardships is wickedness, because every week their teacher would teach them a phrase. One states, "If you're afraid of hardships, you'll have to suffer for a lifetime; if you're undeterred by hardships, you'll only endure them for a while." Because if we work hard while we're still young, we'll enjoy blessings in old age. The next student regarded doing good superficially but bearing evil thoughts as wickedness. They know that our words must be consistent with our deeds. Another student said that being unfilial to parents is wickedness. Another said thoughts of causing destruction. The next student interpreted wickedness as saying your mother is stupid when she doesn't know something. Another two students defined it as "being unable to practice *Dizigui*" and "thinking negatively that something is unachievable when it is actually possible." "We must not be afraid of difficulty." Mencius said, "What kind of man was Shun*? What kind of man am I? He who exerts himself will also become such as Shun was." (*Legendary Emperor of ancient China, 23rd century BC) The next student regarded "Doing to others what you don't wish others to do to you" as bad. From this sentence, we can tell that this child has a good foundation in Chinese. These children are already able to take turns teaching *Moral Lessons*. Don't underestimate their savviness. Actually, studying Wen Yan Wen* is not as difficult as we imagine. (*The classical writing of ancient China, it contains timeless sage wisdom and has been vigorously advocated by Master Chin Kung.) In our next lesson, I will share with you my experiences in learning Wen Yan Wen.

One day, this child's mother told him that, "Learning is like a boat sailing against the current; if you don't advance, you'll retreat." He thought about it and said, "I can understand it, mom! Learning is like riding a bicycle on a slope; if you don't progress, you'll regress." So he experienced some truths from his own life. The next student said that talking loudly and disturbing people are bad. The last student said, "If I try to cover up my faults, I will be doubly wrong." So, from these children's interpretations of kindness and wickedness, we can deduce that they have "a ruler for measuring right and wrong" in their hearts. When they have practiced like this for three to five years, I'm certain that they will be able to establish a firm foundation. Only then can parents sit back and relax. So, we should know how to calculate the return on investment in life. The next phrase states:

"I must not ask about things that are heretical or unusual."

It teaches us to refrain from enquiring about evil and indecent matters as that will corrupt our own soul. We have to be very cautious about the people, environment, and even the television programs which children come into contact with. Because before children grow up, parents are their two very important teachers, two living bodhisattvas. We must properly protect children from exposure to negative influences. After they have become depraved, you have to spend more time and energy to erase their polluted mindsets. It's utterly important to make a cautious start and forbid things before evil can manifest.

Today, not only do adults follow the latest trends, what about children? What are the most popular movies now? Many horror movies, right? They're very scary, so after watching these films, what would happen to these children in the middle of the night? You see, people do a lot of things which are not at all helpful to their lives and even abuse themselves. This is called spending money to seek suffering. People aren't living the life of a human being now. We must guide and even initiate children to appropriate hobbies. When you let children engage in healthy entertainment that is very helpful to their physical and mental health, they

will naturally and happily accept it after a long time. Activities such as hiking, camping, and other experiences are pretty good. By getting involved in these types of leisure entertainment, children can gradually accumulate and grow their love for nature as well as exercise their willpower. We must first lead children in the proper direction.

Relationships Should Include the Families

Let's recite the next verse:

"Before passing through a door, ask who is there. Before entering a hall, I must call out. When people ask who it is, I will answer with my name. 'Me' and 'I' don't make anything clear. When using other people's things, I must clearly ask. If I don't ask, then it is stealing. When borrowing things from people, return them quickly. In the future if I have an urgent need, there will be no trouble borrowing it again."

"Before passing through a door, ask who is there." Before entering someone's room, we must first knock on the door or else it would be very rude to others if we were to open the door rashly and go in. We should first knock on the door three times. We also see in Korean dramas that they don't knock on the door, but first stand outside the door. Let's say the one in the room is their supervisor. He would say, "Master Dufang, it's Shangwo." He would first stand outside and let the person inside know. If that person is busy, he would say, "Please wait for a while!" If he's available, he would ask him to come in. Etiquette is the most beautiful distance between people because it lets you get along with others very comfortably, without any feeling of abruptness. This is the correct action to take before entering someone's room.

We can extend this point a bit: let's say we will go to someone's house as their guest. Based on this teaching, "Before passing through the door, ask who is there." Before visiting, we can first inquire about his family members, we would then know that he lives with his parents and elder sister for example. Since people often talk about their family situation when interacting with friends, we may further understand where his older sister works and that his mother caught a cold a while ago. Or you may even hear what kind of food his mother loves. You must listen attentively and keep it in your heart. Now that the timing is right, you might buy his mother some food she likes. "Auntie, I heard you like oranges" or whatever she likes to eat. What would be the first impression you give? It would be very good.

My friends, do you know how to woo a girlfriend now? You shouldn't only court her, but what should you pursue? Please don't spread what I just said around. As the ancients said, "Finding the perfect match" in marriage is definitely not a matter involving only two people, but that of two families who can get along harmoniously. Most marriages that aren't blessed by the parents will not enjoy happiness. Nowadays, people who are getting married write on their wedding invitation: "The two of us will be married on such and such date." They only wrote "the two of us" on the invitation, but who should be the main hosts? From these words, we can see that the young generation is very disrespectful. Such a grand occasion, but they just wrote their two names, and their parents were not mentioned; this is what young people like us must carefully reflect on. What is usually the success rate of marriages like this? If they are happy, they get married. What happens when they become unhappy? So, respect is crucial.

When we go to a friend's house, we must also be able to care for his family members, as doing so will create a harmonious atmosphere. I also have this principle when I make friends, because when your friend's parents often hear your name being mentioned by their son, they

may wonder who you are since you are so close to their son. Would they have their thoughts and worries? "He is so close to Tsai Li Xu; what if Tsai Li Xu is an immoral person?" It's vital that we take initiative to give our friend's parents peace of mind. When did I start to have this attitude? In high school, I was incredibly close to a male classmate. I attended Kaohsiung High School. His mother was very worried because she had heard that there were already homosexual situations at that time. So, his mother was anxious that we were getting too close. From this matter, I realized that when we make friends, not only should we be close to our friends, but also to their family members.

I have two intimate friends in China who are husband and wife. It happened that I was to go to their house as we had agreed to go and set free captive animals together. Then I thought that young people like us now tend to interact with our friends, but rarely come in contact with the other party's parents, so I felt that this was improper. That day, I figured that my friend might wait for me at the gate, and we would set off right away before I had a chance to enter their house. So, I suddenly had a flash of inspiration to buy a basket of apples. What were they for? Since I was carrying the apples, they would surely invite me into their house. Was I cunning, or what? So long as we harbor kind intentions, it's alright. Sure enough, when I reached their house, three bicycles had already been brought out and they were ready to go. I said, "It's rare to have the opportunity to come to your house. It would be a waste if I didn't go in and greet your parents." So, I went upstairs with them and when I saw his parents, I felt a close affinity with them. I inquired about their life and well-being. After chatting with them for three to five minutes, they advised us to quickly set off on our journey since we had something on. Actually, these elders were very polite and considerate of others. So, the three of us left the house.

That night, my friend called me and said that his parents wanted to treat me to a vegetarian meal prepared especially for me. I have been a vegetarian ever since I learned that a vegetarian diet is healthier five to six years ago. So, the meal that we had together was all vegetarian. What the Chinese say holds true: "Meeting in person creates a better connection." The meal has made our relationship very close. Then my friend introduced to his parents that I was working at the Center of Chinese Studies for the Young, so I was more specialized in the study of children's education. His mother happened to be taking care of his little niece. Because the grandparents would inevitably dote on the child more, my friends often had to correct his parents, but his mother never listened. They felt that they were in a dilemma. Later, after the meal, his mother talked to me about the problems of educating children and I shared with her about whom we should serve food to first at a meal. His mother suddenly had an awakening. I discussed many ideas with her such as "tempering justice with mercy" when educating children. Every time I brought up these ideas to her, she would wholeheartedly agree. My friend, who was sitting next to his mother, said, "I've been telling you, but you never listen." He kept repeating this sentence right there. My friends, should he interrupt like that? No! At this time, silence is better than talking. When he talked like that his mother would feel very uncomfortable. We should not act too impulsively. As the saying goes, "A moment of silence has the impact of thunder." Sometimes when you keep quiet, your mother would feel that you're quite well-cultivated.

Set Aspirations to the Present

I had an enjoyable meal that day and I also came to understand that "it takes a village to raise a child." For instance, if your child is with you every day, he may neglect some principles because he is so familiar with them and regards them as cliché. It happens that your very

good friend also reminds him of this truth. At this time, he would definitely say, "Not only did my father say that, my uncle said the same thing." He will then foster that attitude. You need to have a group of good friends to help you educate your child. By having this group of good teachers and supportive friends, it will be much easier for you to teach your child.

We often have classes and exchange ideas with many teachers in Shenzhen, and their children also come to learn together. One day, our Teacher Li asked these children, "If you had 100 million, what would you do?" One of them said that he would do four things. First, he wanted to build a school to promote the education of Chinese sages. This was his first wish. My friends, have you ever heard of a child having this aspiration? It is not because this child is excellent; the main reason is that he was exposed to a good environment. Other than his parents, the elders and classmates whom he comes into contact with also share the same attitude and perspective on life. He is naturally and subconsciously influenced by them. When I was teaching in Shenzhen, these children were never absent from class. Don't think that they are so young and can't understand our teaching; they would laugh out loud while listening to the lectures. Then they said that they study because they aspire to be a saint or a sage. One of them said, "If not because of aspiring to become saints and sages, what is the purpose of studying?" Since you learn the saints' teachings, you must strive to become a saint. We must have aspiration in life. To become a saint does not require asking for others' help. As the saying goes, "It's difficult to reach the sky, and it's also hard to get people to help us." Learning to become a saint isn't as difficult as reaching the sky or seeking people's help. It's within our control.

The child's second wish was to build a hospital so that the suffering and sick could be well taken care of. His third wish was to set up a "Great Love TV Station" because I had brought a film titled *A Life Bounded for Two*, broadcasted by the "Great Love TV station" in Taiwan, to China for them to watch. They saw that Ma Wenzhong was still dedicated to education and running schools all his life, despite having crippled legs. When Ma started doing it, what would you tell him if you were his friend? Someone who wasn't able to move around easily wanted to educate and run schools, what would you say to him? Therefore, in order for a person with good aspirations to truly realize and put effort into his goal, in addition to his personal determination, he must have good relatives and friends to support him. Mr. Ma had a very good father who always encouraged him to achieve his ideal, and he did make it later.

Ma had devoted a lifetime to attesting a teaching in the *Doctrine of the Mean*: "Sincerity should be exercised from beginning to end in all things." Where does the success or failure of a matter lie? From beginning to end, it revolves around a sincere heart. If a person isn't sincere, he will surely accomplish nothing in life. As the classic states, "Without sincerity, there would be nothing." My friends, this verse is a truth. When you see many insincere people driving big cars and living in huge houses, does it indicate this truth is inaccurate? No! Perhaps their father or grandfather left some inheritance for them. But after they become insincere, their blessings will be exhausted bit by bit. Then this habit of extravagance will be transmitted directly to their next generation and their fortune will be lost in no time. We must be able to observe the sequence of events; we must use our wisdom. Only sincerity can withstand the test of time, so it's said that "utmost sincerity makes one like a deity." Later, owing to Mr. Ma's love of education for children, his girlfriend took a very long train journey to come and help him, and married him. He also gained more and more people to support his cause. A person's sincerity can awaken the sincerity in others.

As this child had watched this movie before, he particularly felt the need to set up a "Great Love TV Station" to broadcast good programs to educate people and improve the social atmosphere. Never underestimate children's judgment. He had heard Professor Chin Kung say that the country's leaders and broadcast media are the most powerful people who can save this society, because they can instantly transmit the saints' and sages' teachings to the whole world. Because children have already accepted these teachings since young, they are able to imprint them permanently in their mind. This was his third aspiration. His fourth wish was to become Teacher Tsai.

Dear parents, don't be too happy. If this was your son, would you be happy? yes. But when his mother, who had been away from home giving lectures elsewhere, heard about her son's aspiration, she called him and said, "Son, I'm delighted to hear that you have such lofty aspirations but you don't have to wait until you have 100 million to realize them." My friends, this mother is very sensitive. She doesn't want her son to just make empty wishes. Instead, he should start implementing them in his daily life with every step he takes. When she directed that question to him, he started to think about it. His mother then said, "Does Teacher Tsai have 100 million? As long as we are very knowledgeable and have very good intentions, even if we don't have 100 million, we can still make positive contributions to society." This mother was reverting her son's aspiration to the present, so that he could seriously improve himself now.

Therefore, having a good environment is the main reason children have such a mentality and perspective to the value of life. My friends, we can find some virtuous teachers and supportive friends who share the same aspiration and learn together, or go hiking together so that we can deepen our friendship, and enable the next generation to have very good interactions. In this way, we can form an educational environment to mutually educate our next generation well. I believe you will feel more relaxed too, because it's different when you have a lot of friends to teach your kids, and not just the two parents alone.

Make Things Clear to Protect Your Credibility

"Before entering a hall, I must call out." We mentioned this phrase this morning; when you go to someone's house, if that person isn't at home, you must first call out, "Is anyone there?" You mustn't go straight in and look around, you must be cautious about this. Otherwise, if the family happens to have lost something, when they see you inside their house, you'll be in trouble because there's no way you can prove your innocence. In our lifetime, we must pay great attention to our reputation and credibility. It wouldn't be good if we stained them out of imprudence.

"When people ask who it is, I will answer with my name. 'Me' and 'I' don't make anything clear." This sentence applies to having conversations with people. For instance, when making a call, we must first introduce ourselves so that the other party would know at once who the caller is. Nowadays when we answer the phone and say, "Hello! May I ask who is speaking?" The caller would say, "It's me, don't you know me? Have you forgotten me?" We may need to deal with something and get nervous while answering his nonsensical questions. After a while, we still wouldn't be able to figure out who the caller is. This is being discourteous. When we make a call, we should say, "Hi, I'm Lixu. Is it convenient for you to talk now?" When we are always considerate of others, they will feel at ease. We should also teach children this proper etiquette. Let's say a child rings someone's door bell and the other party asks, "Who is it?" "It's me!" would he know who "me" is? How So, "'Me' and 'I' don't make

anything clear." We should remind children of these subtleties more often.

"When using other people's things, I must clearly ask. If I don't ask, then it is stealing." If you don't teach children this, they won't be able to discern right from wrong and between good and bad. For instance, a child may casually pick up something to take a look when he thinks it's very lovely. We should tell him this teaching of *Dizigui* in due course. There is a pair of sisters; one day the elder one scolded the younger one. After being scolded, the younger sister, feeling wronged, broke down in tears. While crying, she walked to the kitchen looking for her mother, and told her, "Sis scolded me." My friends, how would you solve this problem? You can't just tell off the elder sister without first seeing who is right and who is wrong. "Come here! Why did you scold your sister?" We must always be reasonable and should first figure out who's right and who's wrong. You can't just say, "You are wrong, the older should concede to the younger." Is such a statement correct? Not completely! You still have to judge between right and wrong first. But her mother did not respond hastily, still cooking, she asked the younger sister casually, "Why did your sister scold you?" She said, "I took her toys without telling her, so she scolded me." As the little girl had learned *Dizigui* before, her mother just said, "When using other people's things..." The little girl continued, "...I must clearly ask." "If I don't ask..." said the mother. "Then it is stealing," the girl said. As she finished saying "stealing," she started crying and said, "I don't want to be a thief." One crucial point is that we must share a common language and standard of behavior so that we can communicate well with our children. As this little girl is well-versed in *Dizigui*, having this phrase quoted in such a situation, how long will she remember it? She's only two to three years old, but she will remember it for a lifetime; it will bring immense benefits to her life.

When we teach children "When using other people's things, I must clearly ask," of course we adults must be able to practice it too. In the last lesson, we mentioned a foreign company in China which, out of many applicants, only shortlisted a few candidates for the second test. Then the boss said, "I must see to an urgent matter, I'll be back in ten minutes." Soon after he exited the room, these youths who had already gone through the initial test began to flip through the files. *Dizigui* teaches us, "When using other people's things, I must clearly ask. If I don't ask, then it is stealing." Later, all of these applicants were disqualified. These young people said that they were not taught about this since childhood, so they felt that they were treated unfairly. So, we have the responsibility to impart the saints' and sages' teachings to them.

Furthermore, when you want to use someone's things, you can't just pick up their pen for instance and ask if you can borrow it. Perhaps that pen was a gift from her boyfriend and is exclusively for her to use. But since you're already holding it, she can only say, "Oh, okay." We can't borrow things like this. It should be personally handed to you by that person. Only then are we being polite. Ask, "May I borrow a pen?" Let the owner decide which pen to lend you. We should also be considerate of others in these details. "When using other people's things, I must clearly ask. If I don't ask, then it is stealing." We'll stop here for today. Thank you everyone!