

正向親子教育——讓年青人活出自我

Positive family education: to let youngsters live as they are



吸引我訪問程沛玉的是其職銜——婦女基金會副總監及本地首間正向教育社企「昭悅教室」創辦人及校長。在社會情緒普遍低迷的今天，我特別希望每個人、以至每個家庭也能時刻把持「正向」的觀念。再看「昭悅教室」的介紹：本港首間「正向教育」社企，讓低收入家庭也有受惠的機會，透過以科學實證為基礎的「正向教育」進行功課輔導，將學習與生活結合，以提升孩子學習效能、正面情緒、抗逆能力，發揮個人特質；更重要是希望透過「正向親子教育」，建立快樂的家庭關係，繼而感染其朋友及整個社區。

What prompted me to interview Rita Ching was her titles – Deputy Executive Director of the Women's Foundation, and Founding Principal of Above & Beyond Education, the first social enterprise working on positive education in Hong Kong.

When today's society is clouded by a somber atmosphere, I especially hope that everyone and every family can maintain a positive attitude. Via a "positive education" approach that is based on scientific proof, Above & Beyond Education provides homework support which also benefits children from low-income families, and integrates elements of daily life in children's learning in order to improve their learning effectiveness, optimism and resilience, as well as developing their individual potentials. Most importantly, they aspire to establish joyful family relationships through "positive family education", and even influence the entire community.

在崗位上盡忠職守是一種層次，打從心底地熱愛自己正在做的事是另外一種層次，程沛玉是後者。我說程沛玉真心愛年青人，是因為她的關心不是單向的成年人對年青人「我為你好」、「我食鹽多過你食米」式的「填鴨式關愛」，而是願意從根基瞭解年青人的內心世界及需要，真正正地以他們為出發點，為他們設想。她主理的「突破T.E.E.N.才計劃」，原先的目標是性別教育，但參加的年青人不論在心靈發展、性格塑造及自我形象的建立方面皆大有裨益。當我問及程沛玉對年青人接受「正向教育」有甚麼期望時，她只簡單卻發人深省地說：「我希望透過計劃提供機會讓年青人自我探索，做回自己。」

It's one thing to carry out your duty responsibly, but it's another thing to thoroughly revel in what you're doing. Rita belongs to the latter case. I would describe Rita as loving the youngsters wholeheartedly, because her affection is nothing like the one-way "spoon-feeding" manner common in adults, who would remark "I'm doing this for your own good," or "I know way more than you do." Instead she is willing to explore youngsters' inner world and understand their needs at the core, truly thinking from their perspective. One of the projects she is in charge of is T.E.E.N. Programme, which started with the aim of implementing gender education, but has developed by now into a beneficial training for teenagers' mental growth, character shaping

不知從何時開始，要活出真正的自己已成難事。很多年青人根本不知道「真正的自己」是怎樣；有些根本不敢表達真實想法，可能是害怕成為焦點——答對了，被認為是愛出風頭，答錯了，又怕被人覺得自己太笨；更有一些，被「標準答案」的壓力同化——答「標準答案」才是對，答「標準答案」才能得到讚賞，已習慣了壓抑自我。程沛玉表示：「這個計劃給予我們很多反思。訓練營的最後一天，我們會邀請同學作公開分享。有一位女同學鼓起勇氣，站到大家面前說：『在這四天當中，我的話比在學校一年還要多。』」另外一位說自己經常被形容為『成熟世故』，但這卻非她所願，無奈早已習慣如此，慶幸訓練營提供了一個安心舒服的環境，令她終於可以做回自己。亦有人主動表白其實她的性格大情大性，但卻從不敢在人前表達自己。計劃讓他們明白到人無完美，視乎你是否願意接納真正的自己。」

過去一年，社會上發生一連串事件，除了政治議題之外，更反映了成年人與年青人之間溝通不足，以至互不信任。程沛玉認為，要解決這種矛盾，必須由瞭解開始。「要真正去聆聽及理解年青人的所思所想，作為成年人，我們的確比年青人多一點知識和經驗，但不代表當他們提出意見時，我們不應該自我檢討及主動縮短彼此間的鴻溝。」遠在雨傘運動之前，程沛玉已做過一項年青人調查，數條問題簡單直接，包括：「你不喜歡成年人甚麼」、「你理想的成年人典範」、「你希望成年人如何看待你」，以及「你的理想社會是怎樣」。

「年輕人未受社會污染，就如同一面明鏡，更能反映出成年人的不足。問他們理想的成年人典範，答案不外乎是有禮貌和誠實等，但年青人質疑的是：為何成年人總是一副理所當然的態度諸多要求，自己卻不能以身作則？問到他們希望成年人如何看待自己，他們的回答亦很『大路』，例如能給予他們一定自由度及選擇權等，但反觀成年人，我們表面上似乎很尊重年輕人的意見，骨子裏卻總是嘗試左右他們的想法，何來真正虛心聆聽？我們習慣替子女安排活動，將時間表填得密密麻麻，卻鮮有問他們的興趣是甚麼，更遑論給予他們發展嗜好的空間。有時我們似乎給孩子很多選擇，但最終仍禁不住控制其發展方向，令他們日漸失去自我認識的觸覺，進而放棄自己並隨波逐流。其實年輕人可以感受到你是否真正關心他們，說話亦常常一矢中的，曾經有同學對我說：『不管在事業上有多出色，一個不會關心子女的成年人根本不值得尊重。』」

「很多家長問我，為何親子關係會越來越疏遠。其實他們不曾意識到，一句敷衍的回答或比較性的判斷，都是親子關係中的『死穴』。關係是從開心回憶中一點一滴地建構出來的，這比雪中送炭來得更好。道理正如儲錢箱般，每一件開心事都是一枚錢幣，遇到關係有裂縫時便用『盈餘』來進行修補；反之倘若關係經營不善，又從何談修補呢？舉個簡單例子，當孩子跟你聊天時，你會積極回應、敷衍回答、轉移話題、只管表達自己的偉論抑或是加以批評？其實孩子願意與你閒話家常，已經是主動釋出善意，你的漠不關心只會讓他們關上心房。」

很多家長關心的是，跟家中的年青人關係已開始崩壞，修補會否太遲？程沛玉表示：「修補親子關係從來不會太

and enhancement of self-image. When I asked Rita of her expectations for the youngsters in her "positive education" programme, her answer was simple yet inspiring, "I hope the programme can offer the young people a chance to explore themselves, and to be themselves."

Since when has "being oneself" become such a hard thing to do? Many young people don't even know how their "real self" is like, while some dare not to express their true thoughts, maybe out of the fear of becoming the centre of attention – giving the right answer might be seen as acting boastful, but answering it wrongly might give the impression of being stupid. There are also some who are assimilated by the pressure of "model answer", which is the only correct answer to receive praises, and thus become accustomed to self-oppression. Rita shared, "The programme has enabled us to have plenty of reflections. On the last day of the training camp, we invited some students for open sharing. One girl gathered her courage to step in front of everyone, saying, 'During these four days, I have spoken more than I did in an entire year at school.' Another student stated that she had been often regarded as 'mature and diplomatic', which was just a reluctant habit instead of something she wished for. She was grateful for being allowed to 'be herself' at the comfortable environment of the training camp. Someone confessed that she actually has a passionate personality, but didn't dare to showcase in front of others before. The programme allowed them to realize nobody is perfect, and the key point is whether you're willing to accept your true self."

Over the past year, a series of incidents in our society have revealed that apart from political strife, there is also a lack of communication and trust between adults and young people. In Rita's opinion, the solution for such conflict must begin by understanding. "We should try to truly listen to and comprehend the thoughts of our young people. Indeed as adults, we may have slightly more knowledge and experience than teenagers. However, it doesn't mean that we have no need to evaluate ourselves, or to make an effort in narrowing the gap between us and the younger generation when they propose some different opinions." As early as before the Umbrella Revolution, Rita already launched a survey with teenagers, asking them simple and direct questions such as: "What do you dislike about adults?" "What makes an ideal adult for you?" "How would you like to be regarded by adults?" and "What is your ideal society?"

"Since teenagers are yet to be tainted by society, they are like a pristine mirror to reflect the shortcomings of adults. When we asked them of their ideals for being an adult, their answers were typical virtues like politeness and honesty; what they challenged about was why adults have the rights



程沛玉獲邀主講「年輕人：教我如何看待你」的講座。Rita Ching was invited to give a talk on the topic "How we should treat young people".



「突破T.E.E.N.才計劃」的舊生畢業後仍會與程沛玉保持聯絡，甚至相約一同到野外露營。
After completing T.E.E.N. Programme, the students still keep in touch with Rita, and some even arranged a wild camp together.

遲，堅持和真誠是其關鍵。現今的『愛』有太多包袱，例如家長免不了著緊子女的生活和未來，然而對孩子來說，這些喋喋不休的叮嚀和功利的忠告會令他們不勝煩厭。我鼓勵家長找一個時間與子女真正相處交流，重質不重量。我喜歡問家長：『對上一次快樂的親子回憶是甚麼時候？』不少人需要費盡腦筋才能回想起來。正如上述所言，我們很多時候在無形中傷害了孩子的心靈，卻又對這些傷害不聞不問，變相『鼓勵』他們從親子關係中抽離。」

有關親子的正向溝通技巧，心態上的轉變是其根本。「正向心理學需要：『Learn it, live it, embed it.』——如何將知識在日常生活中學以致用，改變慣有思維，這才是問題關鍵。據統計，我們在日常對話中有四成是『慣性回應』。要從『慣性回應』轉變到『技巧性回應』絕不輕鬆，須經過反思和循序漸進的改變，為此，家庭必須建立一定共識。其實不只親子關係如此，夫妻和同事等關係又何嘗不是？此外，感恩也是正向溝通的要訣。例如我們是否只看到孩子身上的缺點，卻對其優點視而不見？透過改善人際關係，我們反過來亦在重新審視自己。我經常提醒家長，親子關係好比長跑，欲速則不達，我們應著眼子女短暫的表現抑或是長遠的發展？」

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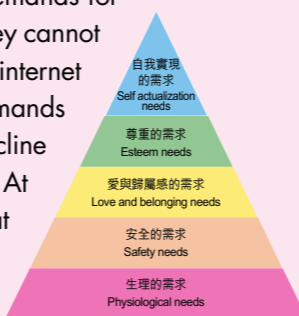
「越來越多家長意識到不斷催谷孩子成績非可行辦法，然而基於大環境的影響，令他們似乎別無選擇。因此我們更需要讓他們明白，情緒教育對孩子的成長以至學習效果舉足輕重。以抗逆力為例，馬雲曾說大多數成功創業人士都不是『學霸』，而正因為他們沒有學業成績的包袱，更願意挑戰新事物。這一點亦延伸到固有思維和成長思維的討論，前者表示不願嘗試、怕失敗和錯誤，而擁有後者的人不會怨天尤人，視失敗為學習的契機。」

「曾經有一個實驗邀請了兩批孩子接受觀察，第一批孩子在成長過程中沒有被過分介入，另一批孩子則經常被稱讚。結果發現後者在沒有成年人在場的情況下，不願意嘗試新事物，日漸養成固有思維，長大後的成就亦較遜色。要培養孩子成長思維，其實很在乎家長看重結果還是過程。比方說孩子取得好成績，與其稱讚他成績好，何不對其付出的努力表示欣賞？如此孩子的焦點亦會放在過程而非成績單之上，然後再一起檢討不足之處。換言之，稱讚的內容應越具體越好，亦應避免在公開場合稱讚孩子，以免造成孩子間的互相比較，畢竟每一個人都是獨立的個體。總而言之，良好的家庭生活從自己的反思做起，做回自己才能找到最舒服的平衡點。」

聽過不少人表示，不能理解現今年青人的想法及做法，甚至有人說，他們既從未貢獻社會，又如何有批判的權利？誠然，年青人的表現有太多值得改善的地方，但不願意去理解他們並非解決矛盾的方法。程沛玉借用馬斯洛的「需要金字塔」理論解構當今年青人的心靈需要：「在我們成長的年代，生活仍是艱難，滿足基本及安全需求是大前提；但對現今的青年人而言，他們對愛、歸屬感、尊重和自我實現的需求更大。如果他們在現實生活中不能滿足此等需求，便會求諸網絡，換言之，當一個人對自我實現的需求越大，越傾向利用網路做出一點成績。與此同時，亦有不少家長對子女過分呵護備至，更遑論鼓勵他們離開舒適圈追求理想，令年青人趨向安於現狀、得過且過。」

~ 許芷茵

I've heard quite a number of people saying they couldn't understand the thoughts and behaviours of young people nowadays. Some even question how they are entitled to criticize society before making their own contribution. While our young people do have a lot of room of improvement, refusing to understand them isn't a way to solve the conflicts. Rita referred to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs when analyzing the spiritual needs of today's youngsters, "Back in our time as youngsters, life was hard and our major concern was to satisfy the basic needs for survival and safety. However, young people nowadays have higher demands for love, belonging, esteem and self-actualization. If they cannot satisfy such needs in reality, they would turn to the internet instead. In other words, the more the person demands for self-actualization, the more he/she would incline towards the internet to reach some achievement. At the same time, many parents are so over-caring that their children have no motivation to step out of their comfort zone to pursue their dreams, and thus settle for a mediocre life."



~ Helena Hui

to impose so many demands on young people despite failing to serve as a role model themselves. When asked of how they would like to be treated by adults, their requests were also very usual: to be given certain freedom and rights to make their own decisions. In contrast, although we adults appear to respect teenagers' opinion, but if deep down we're always trying to manipulate their ideas, how can it be counted as sincere listening? We might be accustomed to cramming our children's schedule with lots of activities, but seldom do we ask them about their interests, let alone giving them the room to develop their passion. Yes sometimes we seem to provide children with many choices, but in the end we still couldn't help but take over the steer of their development. As days go by, children lose the sense of self-understanding, and eventually give up on their unique self to just go with the flow. In fact teenagers can sense whether you truly care about them. They often hit the nail on the head with their comments, as one student once told me, 'No matter how successful they are in their work, adults who do not care about their children do not deserve to be respected at all.'

"Many parents have asked me for the reason why they are becoming more distant from their children. Actually they didn't realize that an apathetic response or a comparative criticism can cause a crucial damage to their family relationship. Rather than occasional compensations in the low tide moments, it takes a continual instillation of happy memories to establish your relationship bit by bit. If we use a piggy bank as a metaphor, each happy event is like a coin, and in case a 'crack' appears in your relationship, you can always use your 'savings' to fix it. On the other hand, if your relationship has been poorly maintained, how can you possibly repair the cracked piece? Let's take a simple example from daily life – when chatting with your children, do you actively respond or reply uninterestedly? Would you move onto a different topic, only focus on giving your own comments, or even provide nothing but criticism? If children are willing to have a chat with you, it already shows that they intend to build a friendly relationship with you; however if parents respond indifferently, it would only make them hide their hearts behind locked doors again."

Many parents are worried whether it is too late to start mending the broken relationship with their children. To this Rita replied, "It's never too late to fix your relationship with children, as long as you're persistent and sincere enough. Nowadays the 'love' of parents often comes along with many other burdens, such as their concerns for children's future life. Nevertheless, these pestering or utilitarian reminders would only make children feel irritated. I suggest parents arrange some quality time to really interact with their children. One of my favourite questions for parents is, "What is your last happy memory with your children?" Quite a lot of people need some time to recall it. As mentioned earlier, it is common for us to hurt our children's feelings unknowingly, and if we stay unnoticed of their wounds, it somehow 'encourages' them to detach themselves from the family relationship."

As for the skills of positive communication between parents and children, the basis is the modification of one's attitude. "Positive psychology elements need to 'Learn it, live it, embed it.' The key is to turn the knowledge we learnt into something we use in our daily life, and thus alter our usual mindset. According to statistics, up to 40% of our everyday conversation is composed of 'habitual responses'. It isn't easy to convert from 'habitual response' into 'skillful response', as it requires our self-reflections and gradual changes. Therefore the family must reach a consensus. In fact not only does it apply to parent-child relationship, but it's also applicable between spouses or colleagues. Besides, gratitude is also essential in positive communication. For instance, would we only notice our children's weaknesses but miss out their strengths? By improving our interpersonal relationships, we're also having an opportunity to reexamine ourselves. I always remind parents that the relationship with children is just like a long distance race – you couldn't finish it in a rush. So shouldn't we focus on children's long-term development instead of their temporary performance?"

"More and more parents do realize that it isn't feasible to drill children for exams ceaselessly, but the influence of the general environment seems to leave them no other choices. Hence it is crucial for us to make them understand the importance of emotional education on children's growth and learning effectiveness. Taking resilience as an example, Jack Ma once mentioned many successful entrepreneurs were never elites at school, since they're willing to take risk and try out new things only because they are unburdened by their academic performance. This can be extended to the discussion of fixed mindset and growth mindset: the former is associated with the reluctance of new attempts and the fear of failures or mistakes, whereas those belonging to the latter group would never lament their fates, but treat every failure as a great chance of learning."

"There was an experiment in which two groups of children were invited for observation. The first group never experienced excessive intervention during their growth, while the other group was constantly praised. It turned out that the second group was unwilling to try out new things in the absence of adults. They also grew up with a fixed mindset and had lower achievement in comparison. To cultivate a growth mindset in children largely depends on whether their parents value result or process. For example, if children manage to get good results, instead of praising them for scoring high marks, why not appreciate their effort devoted? Then children would shift their focus from their report card to their learning process, so that you can review the things to be improved together. In other words, praises should be as concrete and specific as possible. Praising kids in public occasions should be avoided though, as it would lead to comparison among children. After all everyone is a unique individual. To conclude, a good family life should start with our self-reflection, and by being ourselves, we would be able to figure out the point of balance that we're most comfortable with."