

怎样提高“高考/中考”分数

How to Optimize a Student's Performance in University/Senior High Entrance Examinations

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Acknowledgement

- Phyllis was instrumental in introducing Daphne to tutor a HuiLi J2 student English. This set of recommendations is an offshoot of that activity.
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- Jackie Shaw & Ada Law Ying (罗莹) for their input on how to study.
- Nasudin Marican for his input on how to study and exam strategy.

Introduction

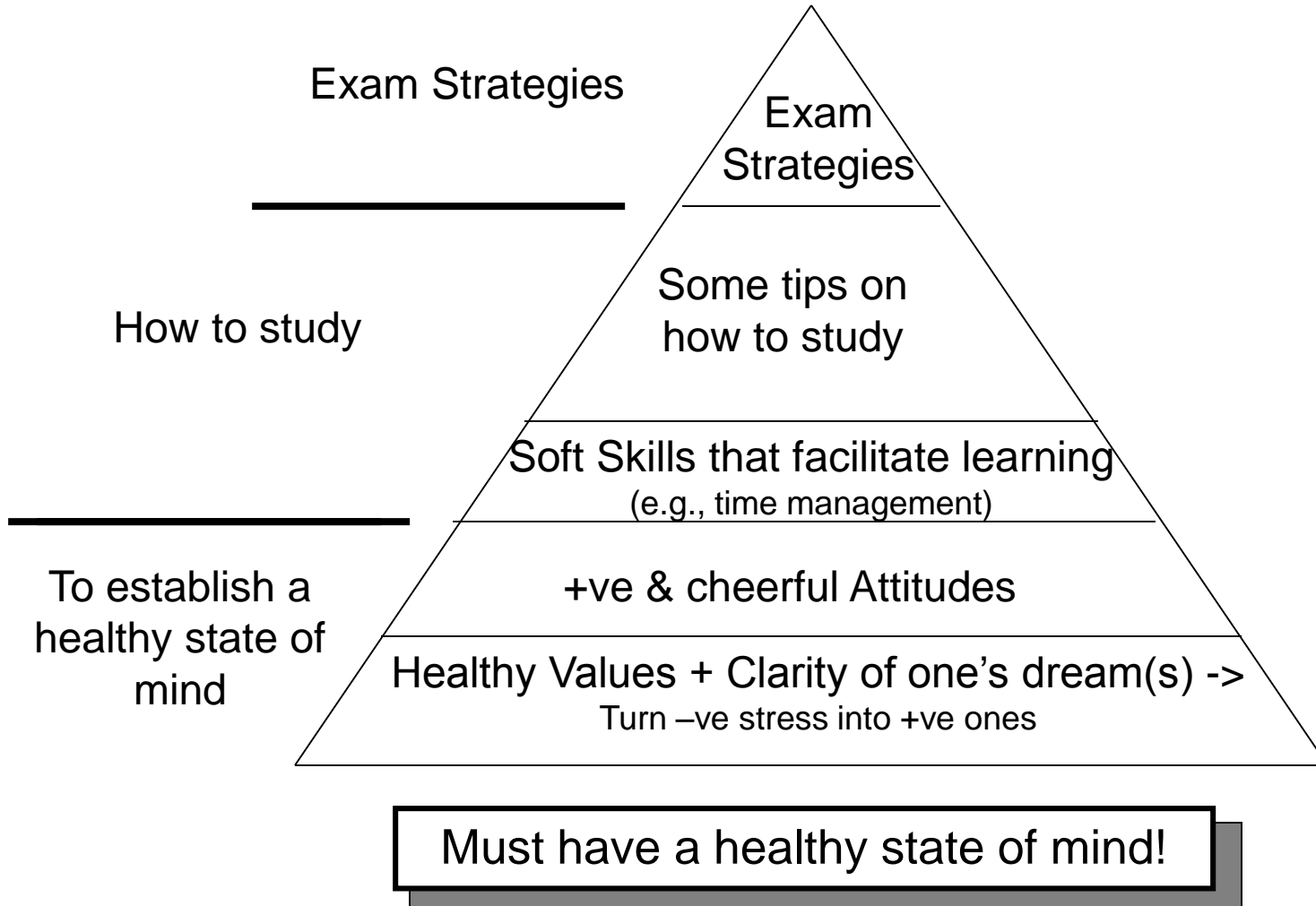
Aims to increase the exam marks of an average student by 5-25%*

- This presentation provides a set of recommendations for you to consider:
 1. Establish a healthy state of mind:
 - Healthy value system + Clarity of one's dream(s)
 - +ve & cheerful attitudes
 2. How to study
 - Soft skills that facilitate learning
 - Some tips on how to study
 3. Exam Strategies
- The benefits of this go way way beyond your GaoKao/ZhongKao!
- The information in this package can/should be used to train students in lower grades so that they can form an appropriate set of habits which needs to be reinforced through the years.

*

- Author's opinion and that of a number of Senior 3 (高三) students in Huili – claim is yet to be proven ☺.
- “If a student understands your PPT file well and follows your recommendations, I guess the marks will rise about 5---10 points [out of 100] ”. [Jenny Zhao, a teacher in LiangShan (published with her permission)]
- “I think if a student of average performance follows this document TOTALLY from his/her first high school year, he/she should be able to enter 重点大学 [major universities] which is better than the one I 'm in. ” [Ada, graduated in 2014 from HuiLi Experimental School, was one of the best students there. She currently studies at SiChuan University 四川大学(published with her permission)]

How to Optimize a Student's performance in University/Senior High Entrance Examinations (Executive Summary)



To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 1 of 8)

Introduction

A complete set of healthy values is the foundation for a healthy state of mind. Most, if not all, people are already endowed with a fairly complete set of healthy values (e.g., honesty, loyalty, caring for others, hard work etc.) from their family, school, communities and country. Our objective here is to support you to :

1. pursue your dream(s)
2. correct a commonly misunderstood value concept so that you may have a better chance to live a happy and contributing life.



- Misunderstood Value: We often allow the outcome of what we did to determine our self-worth*! -> A common cause of major -ve stress
- What it should be: Though result is very important, we must not allow it to determine our self-worth. Who we are is to be determined by our intent and effort of our journey.

* For example: We often allow our academic performance/wealth/job position to determine whether we are a “success” or “failure”.

To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 2 of 8)

Healthy Values + Clarity of one's dream(s)

Why do we need to form a thinking habit of “*Though result is very important, we must not allow it to determine our self-worth. Who we are is to be determined by our intent and effort of our journey.*” ?

- minimize worry/fear -> change -ve stress  to +ve ones 
- minimize over-dependency on others' approval
- minimize the need to feel good about ourselves through looking good -> minimize greed and our over-dependency on materialistic return
- view others this way will help bring the best out of them
- enhance self-esteem and self-confidence
- optimize the chance of living meaningfully and joyfully all the way to the very end !
- can think and dream with minimal inhibition
- being able to enjoy one's journey would optimize the chance of reaching one's goal
- ...

A foundation piece of the “China Dream” (proposed 😊) !

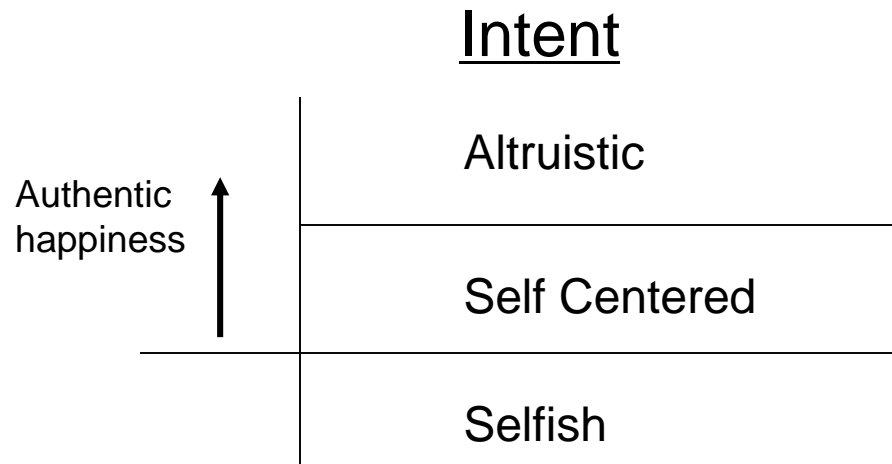
To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 3 of 8)

How to modify our thinking habit to include: “Though result is very important, we must not allow it to determine our self-worth . Who we are is to be determined by our intent and effort of our journey.” ?

- Do our best to look for *every* opportunity to practice this way of judging
- Try to pay attention to how we feel after each judging incident. The good feeling would pull us to do more.
- Gradually this new habit of thinking will replace the old one

For example: With the focus on my intent and effort, without over relying on external approval, I would be able to feel good about myself. Examples: a) I passed compliments to deserving waiters/chefs in restaurants -> brought a bit of good feeling to this world, b) I transferred some paper scattered on the floor of a public washroom to its garbage can -> helped this world become a bit cleaner, and c) Improving this document ... Though with uncertainty about its outcome, I do have lots of hope & fun !☺ because I believe that I'm helping you to live a happy and contributing life -> provide a better chance for the “China Dream” to come true! -> help this world to become a brighter one! ☺

To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 4 of 8)



“If I don’t look after myself, who will? If I only look after myself, what am I? If not now, when?” [Hillel, 110 BC]

Authentic happiness comes from working on something meaningful while maintaining a balance between looking after ourselves vs looking after others (e.g., finding time to study with friends)

Starting with good intent, do the best we can, regardless of the outcome, we will enjoy our journey ! 😊

To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 5 of 8)

Healthy Values + **Clarity of one's dream(s)**

Why do we need to have dream(s) with clarity ?

- to discover opportunities otherwise missed
- to allow the universal “Law of Attraction” (i.e., often our passionate focus with good intent would attract support from around us) to work in our favour
- to bring forth our potentials and to hone what we are naturally good at
- to have more confidence and hope about our future
- to live with greater meaning and joy
- to have better clarity of what is really important to us and be focussed
- to have greater tenacity to stay on course & resilience to handle bad times
- to have greater clarity about our goal would enhance the chance of attaining it
- ...

Let our dream(s) motivate us!



To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 6 of 8)

If you've problem identifying a dream or lack clarity about your dream(s), you may consider the following questions ?

- If there are no constraints whatsoever, what would you like to do that you'll feel most happy about ?
- If you can assume the position that you're here on this earth for a purpose, would that likely support you to live a happier, and more meaningful life ? If yes, what do you think/assume your purpose is*?
- What is your epitaph (i.e., how you would like others to remember you by) ?

Do your answers to the above questions have anything to do with your dream(s) ?

If your answer is "no/not sure", it begs more thinking on your part! 😊



* I doubt that anybody "knows" what his/her purpose is. However, as one moves to actualize his/her "assumed" purpose, his/her feeling would guide him/her to gain greater clarity of it.

To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 7 of 8) +ve & cheerful attitudes

Your attitude determines the altitude of your exam results !

It is pretty much taken for granted that an average student going into GaoKao/ZhongKao is hard-working. One major distinction of a student who excels in attaining high marks, besides having a good method of studying & taking exam (to be explained later), is a positive attitude and the enjoyment of what she/he does, taking the challenge with enthusiasm and calmness.

Supported by a healthy value system, it is the clarity of your dream(s), that motivates you to focus, to work hard and to find joy in what you do! 😊

To Establish a Healthy State of Mind (page 8 of 8)

Examples of how a healthy state of mind relates to actualizing one's dream

Person

His/her state of mind

Dream actualized



Nelson Mandela, ex-President of South Africa

He didn't let his 27 years of prison life change his position of having peaceful co-existence with the whites.

Apartheid abolished



Helen Keller, a deaf and blind US scholar.

Her physical disabilities did not hinder her unbridled optimism about life.

Devoted her life for the benefits of persons with disabilities



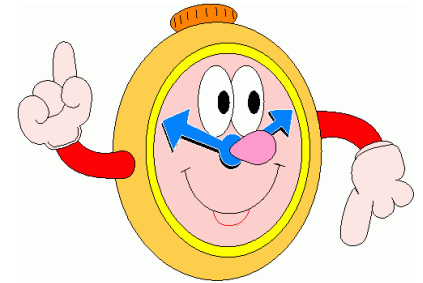
Jack Ma, Founder and Chairman of Alibaba Group.

He did not allow his many business failures to dampen his enthusiasm from trying new ventures.

Besides having successfully built up Alibaba to where it is, he uses his platform to motivate youths to dream audaciously and to support them to actualize their dreams.

How to study (page 1 of 5)

Time Management (A)



Form a **habit** of posing the following questions before you start an activity :

1. *“What is the most important thing that I want to do now ?”*
2. *“Is it constructive ?”*

You don't have to always do what you *should* do. Cut yourself some slack sometimes ! 😊

How to study (page 2 of 5)

Time Management (B)

We all are well trained to do important and urgent things because if we don't, we will get into trouble 😞 And worse, we are often trained to do unimportant but urgent things (e.g., having difficulty to say “no” to requests/invitations or allowing trivial phone calls/text messages to interrupt when we are doing something important).

The key to form a habit of spending one's time optimally is to routinely maintain reasonable focus on doing important* but not urgent things. The benefits include:

- Enhancing our self control.
- Knowing that we're gradually and steadily making progress towards our goal -> Enhancing our enjoyment of being.
- Minimizing the need of fire-fighting.

* The clarity of your dream(s) allows you to define what is important to you

This habit would allow you to study with less time, better quality, more fun, and less –ve stress ! 😊

How to study (page 3 of 5)

Time Management (C)

Have the ability to say “no” clearly & respectfully

- Watch out that culturally we have been trained to accommodate others’ requests even if they distract us from focusing on important things.
- Say “yes” only if you really want to.

This habit would allow you to focus on doing important things with less –ve stress ! 😊

How to study (page 4 of 5)

Time Management (D)

Less is more ! 😊

Issue: We tend to provide long answers to questions because, often out of good intent (*also simply a bad habit!* 😊) we want others to know what we think they should know ... *and we have a lot to tell them !* 😊

How to talk less but deliver more by focusing on :

- what the other person wants to know (NOT what you think that he/she "should" know)
- what the other person can remember (*usually very little :-)*)
- tell what you want to tell in one sentence first before you expand on it – the whole answer should be confined to 30 seconds (at the end, tell what you told again if the answer is a long one). This is what the other person wants to know and likely to remember!
- while answering a question, maintain the awareness of "What was his/her question?" ... Sometimes, we are so intent on answering that we totally forget what the question was :-)

With time gained, you'll have more time to do the important stuff & improve the quality of your being !

Note: This approach is very useful and important in answering an exam question too!

How to study (page 5 of 5)



Some tips on how to study

- Write down your definition of success and post it somewhere you can readily see it!
- Let your dream(s) motivate you!
- Find study partner(s) to help each other. If you've a +ve and cheerful attitude, you should have no problem in finding a study partner ☺
- Must ask your classmates or teachers what you don't understand. Do that for each class, each topic – don't pile up what you don't understand!
- Be familiar with the structure and contents of each subject of GaoKao/ZhongKao exam paper.
 - For each subject, find out the exam pattern by going over the GaoKao/ZhongKao test papers of the last 4 or 5 years. Concentrate on the “key” (recurring) questions. [Nasudin Marican]
- Practice mock GaoKao/ZhongKao tests so that you're aware of your own weak areas.
- Form a habit of anticipating exam questions when reviewing your main points.
- Be proactive in learning: Skim through the lesson before each class to have an idea of what the teacher will be teaching. Note what you don't understand. Pay special attention to these points in class. Ask questions.
- Highlight key points of each topic in the subject (e.g., by making summarized notes). After each class, make sure that you understand them
- Q&A: Go over in your mind how you would group the key points to answer a question if asked
- Periodically go over the key points (e.g., once a week) during the academic term
- Review the key points on your summarized notes again the day before the exam ... *then relax and have fun* ☺
- “We must have our own correction note book, write down our mistakes from each test and write down the reason. (we must form this habit)” [Jackie Shaw, S3, HuiLi Experimental School]

Don't forget to have fun ! ☺

Exam Strategies (page 1 of 2)

Unless you may get penalized for providing a wrong answer, a strategy in taking a test/exam is to always provide an answer whether you know it or not 😊

- 1) Divide the total exam time according to the % marks of the questions e.g. a question that will get you 20% should get only 20% of your time. Move on to the next question if your allotted time is up even if you have not finished your answer.
- 2) Read the question very carefully first. Plan your answer with the main points before writing it down.
- 3) Do the ones you know/are sure first. You may then be able to find clues/answers for the remaining ones.
- 4) Stay calm. Take a few deep breaths. A clear mind will help good thinking. Trust you can do your best.

For multiple choice questions, select your answers in three passes.

1st: On the first pass, quickly go through to select the answers that you're reasonably sure.

2nd: Now on 2nd pass, you can spend a bit more time on the ones that you were not sure. Leave out the ones that you are still not sure.

3rd: On 3rd pass, just randomly select an answer for the rest (if you will not be penalized for doing so).

After that, if you still have time, go through your test paper to review all the answers you selected. Do not hand in your test paper before the test/exam time is up.

Note: You may want to unobtrusively mark those answers that you're not sure so that you may efficiently go over them again towards the end of your test when you have time.

Exam Strategies (page 2 of 2)

- When providing descriptive answers, if applicable, follow the structure below (taught by Dale Carnegie):
 - 1st: Tell them what you're going to tell them (i.e., your point preferably in one sentence)
 - 2nd: Then tell them (i.e., the details of your point e.g., reasons/examples)
 - 3rd: Tell them what you just told them (summarize the point if it is a long answer).

This would help your examiner understand what you intend to tell him/her.
- Once you're handed a test paper, if you're allowed, write down in a blank space on the test paper the information that you feel you need and that you may forget later (e.g., formulae or equations or quotes). [Nasudin Marican]
 - This will free your mind to concentrate on answering the questions, knowing that you can refer to what you need there.

Note: To avoid being mistakenly perceived as cheating, write only on paper handed out by the examiner and is explicitly labelled for the exam.

Appendix 1

Ada's* (罗莹) Suggestions

“Having seen your ppt, I think it 's amazing ...

My input on 怎样提高“高考”分数

- 1.Take care of every minute in your classes. If you 'd pay all your attention on what the teacher is saying ,you won't feel sleepy or bored.
- 2.Remind yourself frequently. If you do feel sleepy or bored in your classes, remind yourself as soon as possible.
- 3.Take every exam you're having as gaokao. It does work if you always feel nervous. Some students didn't do well in gaokao because everytime they were having an exam,they told themselves "It's not gaokao", and when gaokao came, they got too nervous to perform well.
- 4.Take it easy. Some of my classmates got very nervous months before gaokao and couldn't fall asleep. Sure you need to pass the exam but you won't die if you fail. You may have more mental experiences and it means you get more colorful life. Trust yourself. You can change yourself from this minute. If you've done enough practices, you shouldn't be afraid of exams.”

* From Ada's email, 2014-11-29, published with her permission. Note: Ada, graduated in 2014 from HuiLi Experimental School, was one of the best students there. She is currently studying at SiChuan University 四川大学.

Appendix 2

Mr. Cheng's exam experience 郑爷爷的考试经验



“I recalled that when I took a multiple-choice (*or other formats*) exam in university, I generally went through the following emotional stages:

1st: I was usually a bit anxious/tense at the very beginning of an exam - "*Gee, so many questions to go through in 1.5 hour ... ummm, do I have enough time? ☹*"

2nd: After going through the first pass of quickly answering those questions that I was reasonably sure of, my anxiety would suddenly disappear and I could go through the 2nd pass of answering the more difficult questions calmly.

3rd: Now I actually started to enjoy myself in trying to answer the remaining difficult ones ("*If I've problem answering these, others may have the same problem too! Haha!*". *Thinking this way also helped to relax me!*). Regardless I knew the answer or not, I always provided an answer (*or a partial answer*) in such a way that would encourage the examiner to give me some points ☺

4th: Even if I finished my exam paper way ahead of the exam time [limit], I never (*or seldom*) handed in my exam paper before the exam time ran out ... *I would go over my answers again and again!*

FYI: I ranked first in my department (*Electrical Engineering, McMaster University (Canada)*) and ranked 3rd across the whole engineering faculty for all my university years. However, the truth was that I didn't learn that much book knowledge from university (especially for certain subjects e.g., *Differential Equations etc.*). Sometimes, I just didn't understand everything that I was taught !☺ Hence I conclude that I must have been pretty skillful in taking examinations ... possibly had a gift of getting marks for subjects I didn't even completely understand! ☺

Learning is very important ... but then getting marks for 高考 seems equally important! Right ? ☺”

[my email to Jackie Shaw, Nov 2014]

Appendix 3

Inspirational Quotations

About dreams:

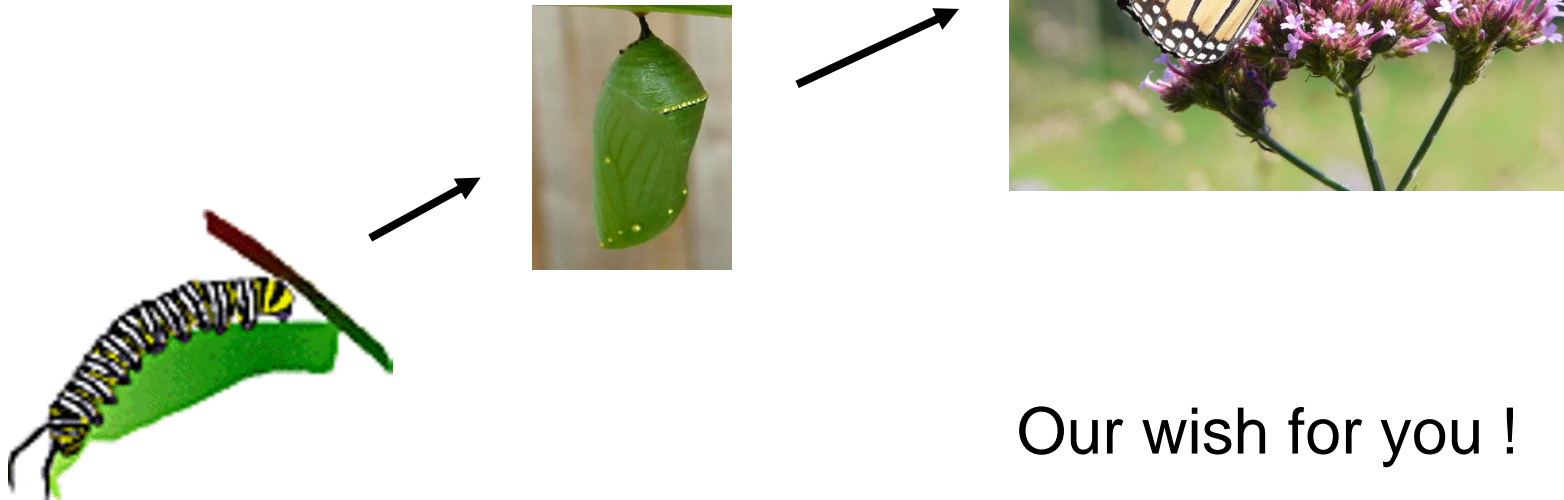
- Xi Jinping, President of People's Republic of China, stated that youths are full of vitality and dreams. If the youths are strong, the country will be strong.
- *"The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight, but has no vision."* [Helen Keller – American author, social activist, the first deaf-blind person to earn a bachelor of arts degree in US]
- *"It always seems impossible until it is done."* [Nelson Mandela – ex-President of South Africa]
- *"Never forget: where you came from, where you are going to, what you want to do, and what you should do."* [Jack Ma – Founder and Executive Chairman of Alibaba Group]



About living attitude:

- *"You must be the change that you wish to see in the world."* [Mahatma Gandhi – Father of India]
- *"Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm."* [Winston Churchill – ex-Prime Minister of UK]
- *"The only way to do great work is to love what you do."* [Steve Jobs - Apple's ex-CEO]
- *"Unless you are happy with who you are, you won't be happy with what you have."* [Zig Ziglar; US writer]
- *"People are just about as happy as they make up their minds to be."* [Abraham Lincoln – ex-President of US]
- *"If we take a man as he is, we make him worse; but if we take him as he could be, we help him become what he can be"* [Goethe – German writer]
- *"To lead a happy life, we need to experience the combination of both meaning and pleasure. For example, if I find my work meaningful but not pleasurable, I will ultimately burn out; if I find what I do pleasurable but it has little meaning for me, I will quickly lose interest"* [Tal Ben-Shahar; ex-lecturer of Harvard]

You are a miracle in the working ! 😊



Our wish for you !