
Non-Profit Company (Reg. No. 2005/002546/08)
Registered as a Non-Profit Organisation: 062-354-NPO
PBO Number: 930 017 719

A word from the CEO

When we're in challenging times such as these it's always helpful to seek inspiration from people who have been through difficulties and learn from what they have experienced and the lessons they have learnt.

We're blessed to have had a number of people, such as Nelson Mandela, who have encountered many challenges in their life and not only endured these but made a positive impact on the world. Another is the Dalai Lama. For those who may not be familiar with his story, the Dalai Lama is from Tibet where he was born in 1935 with the name of Lhamo Thondup. At age 2, he was renamed Tenzin Gyatso and proclaimed the 14th Dalai Lama.

Tenzin began his religious education at age 6. In 1950, at the age of 15, Tenzin assumed full political power as the Dalai Lama. However, his governorship was short. In October of that year, the People's Republic of China invaded Tibet against little resistance. In 1954, the Dalai Lama went to Beijing for peace talks with Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders. However, in 1959, continued suppression of the Tibetan people by Chinese troops led to their uprising. The Dalai Lama and his closest advisers believed the Chinese government was planning to assassinate him. Consequently, he and several thousand followers fled to Dharamshala in northern India and established an alternative government there.

Since the Chinese invasion, the Dalai Lama has taken numerous actions in hopes of establishing an autonomous Tibetan state within the People's Republic of China. The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, and he has spent his life committed to benefiting humanity. He has written numerous books and conducted hundreds of conferences, lectures and workshops at major universities and institutions throughout the world, discussing engaging in wisdom, compassion and, more recently, environmental sustainability. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The following is an extract from one of the Dalai Lama's public lectures given in London in 1993.

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“So there are two distinct approaches to dealing with a problem. One is to simply avoid it by not thinking about it. The other, which is much more effective, is to face it directly so that you are already conscious of it. Generally, there are two types of problems or suffering: with one type, it is possible that, by adopting a certain attitude, one will be able to reduce the force and level of suffering and anxiety. However, there could be other types of problems and suffering for which adopting a certain type of attitude and way of thinking may not necessarily reduce the level of suffering, but which would still prepare you to face it.

When unfortunate things happen in our lives there are two possible results. One possibility is mental unrest, anxiety, fear, doubt, frustration and eventually depression, and, in the worst case, even suicide. That's one way. The other possibility is that because of that tragic experience you become more realistic, you become closer to reality. With the power of investigation, the tragic experience may make you stronger and increase your self-confidence and self-reliance. The unfortunate event can be a source of inner strength.

The success of our lives and our futures depends on our individual motivation and determination or self-confidence. Through difficult experiences, life sometimes becomes more meaningful. If you look at people who, from the beginning of their lives, have had everything, you may see that when small things happen they soon lose hope or grow irritated. Others, like the generation of people in England who experienced World War II, have developed stronger mental attitudes as a result of their hardships. I think the person who has had more experience of hardships can stand more firmly in the face of problems than the person who has never experienced suffering. From this angle then, some suffering can be a good lesson for life”.

Thought for the Day

“For a seed to achieve its greatest expression, it must come completely undone. The shell cracks, its insides come out and everything changes. To someone who doesn't understand growth, it would look like complete destruction.”

- Cynthia Occelli -