



Hong Kong Social Entrepreneurship Forum

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Social Entrepreneurs Newsletter

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Identifying Your Life-changing Role Models

What is a Role Model? A role model is someone other individuals look up to, and aspire to be like, either in the present or in the future. A role model may be someone who you know and interact with on a regular basis, or may be someone who you've never met, such as a celebrity.

Why do you need a role model?

The simple answer is you **don't** necessarily need to have one. You are not required to have a Role Model; no one could force a Role Model onto you. Only you could decide whether or not you need or want to have a Role Model.

You need a Role Model only when you want to achieve something great and you want to be inspired by your role model(s).

So here is the starting point(s):

- You want to do something great
- You want to achieve something out of the ordinary
- You want to make a difference
- You want to address a burning social issue
- You want to create an impact on society
- You want to change the world

A personal sharing

Five years ago, I did not have any need for Role Models, as I did not intend to achieve anything *after retirement*. But in the past five years I have become fascinated by the power of social entrepreneurship in changing the world for the better and started to join the global civic movement to promote social entrepreneurship. Suddenly, I wanted to know how I could be more effective in doing my work. I wanted to learn from the best practices and strategies of the pioneers in this field. I wanted to find inspirations from others who have achieved outstanding results in this area. I wanted to seek out Role Models who could inspire, empower and support me.

Now, I would like to share with you how you could find your role model.

But before you read on, please pause and ask yourself these questions:

- What do you want to achieve?
- What major challenges are you facing?
- Why are you so passionate about what you want to do?
- Does it matter if you fail?
- What are your wildest dreams?
- How easy or difficult would it be to realize them?

Your responses to these questions would enable you to decide whether or not you should spend any time thinking about Role Models.

Let me continue with my personal example. Below is a list of five well known names. All of them might be role models for some people. I would like you to guess which one is my Role Model. And for the ones you don't choose, I want you to give some reasons why you do not pick them as my Role Model.

- Ⓒ Li Ka Shing
- Ⓒ Steve Jobs
- Ⓒ Nelson Mandela
- Ⓒ John Lennon
- Ⓒ Muhammad Yunus



You might have guessed that Muhammad Yunus is my Role Model.

What I would like you to consider is why the other four people are not my Role Models.

It is apparent that one's choice of Role Model has to do with...

- Ⓒ The nature of achievement of the person concerned – if you are looking for a Role Model in the business field, it is unlikely that you would choose a Role Model in the social sector, and vice versa.
- Ⓒ The values and character of the person concerned – you want to identify with those whose values are similar to yours.
- Ⓒ A source of inspiration for you – you feel inspired by the person, and want to emulate him/her.

Five crucial steps

In fact, there are five crucial steps in finding your Role Model(s):

1. Specify broadly your scope of intended contribution, e.g. professional excellence, education, art, social entrepreneurship, etc.
2. Search through multiple sources the leading practitioners in the field
3. Identify a small number (e.g. three) of outstanding practitioners
4. Find out as much as you can about them via books, articles, websites, commentaries, blogs, etc.
5. Crystallize on one or two who might be become your Role Model(s)

Insights for Jimmy Lai's story

Lai is a serial entrepreneur known for such enterprises as Giordano, Next Magazine, Apple Daily, etc. In one of his earlier books, he wrote about how he had learned from his role model, Steve Jobs. He was in the US working for a garment firm but he was fascinated by Steve's work at Apple. He did not know him and did not know anyone who could introduce Steve to him. He found out where Steve worked and waited him for days on the ground floor of the office. One day he approached Steve and said he would like to talk to him for a while. Steve was intrigued by this young man but said he had no time. So he asked Jimmy to walk with him to his car in the carpark.

In Steve's car, they talked for one hour and Jimmy was so inspired by him that years later when he launched his newspaper, he named it Apple Daily. Steve Jobs remained his Role Model to this day.

What could we learn from this example?

Do thorough research on your Role Model. Get to know him/her as much as you can so that you could feel like talking to him/her. Create opportunity to meet him/her and to learn from him/her in person. Become so identified

with your Role Model's work that his/her achievements feel like yours. Only then could you also feel that your achievement and contribution to this world is also part of their achievements.

Muhammad Yunus as my Role Model

I have read all his books, most of his articles, and numerous commentaries on his work. I have watched dozens of his videos and have shown them to numerous people. I have known many of the organizations set up to promote his work, especially his idea about social business. At the Nu Skin Master Forum in Hong Kong in August this year, I have had the chance to meet and talk to my Role Model at last. During the pre-Forum lunch with him, I told him something I had not expected to have the opportunity to share with him.



I told him that he is my Role Model. I said that I highly respect him, appreciate his work and achievements, admire his courage and talent in building a sustainable and scalable social enterprise. I also told him that I am so inspired by him that I am determined to make my own contribution to this world so that I would **exceed** his achievements.

I admitted that it is highly unlikely that I will be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, but it doesn't mean that I would not be able to exceed his achievements. If I do an exceedingly good job in my current work at Education for Good to spearhead educational innovations to train up the next generation of social entrepreneurs so that one day a social entrepreneur in the Greater China region becomes the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, I would consider it a great achievement.

Here is the greatest insight about Role Modeling:

If you do have a Role Model, you should set your target at exceeding his/her achievement.

Why is this so important? I myself sometimes heard people say that they consider me as their Role Model. What do you think my reaction was? I would look at them and said: "If you really think that I am your Role Model, you should aim at exceeding my achievements. **I consider my greatest worth to you as your Role Model is being able to inspire you to become determined to exceed my achievements.**"

Summing up

It seems that Role Models are one of the most under-utilized resources in leadership development. It is freely available, and yet powerful and empowering. It takes hard work to identify your Role Model and be constantly inspired by them. But it is also most rewarding and satisfying as you would be mentally and spiritually connected to some great minds and doers of our times.

Before you proceed to identify your Role Model, ask yourself what difference would you want to make in this world. Only when you are clear about what you want to achieve would you be able to benefit from having a Role Model or Models. Once you have decided to find your Role Model, you could use my suggestions above to guide your journey.

Finding Your Life-changing Role Model –
An Open Access Seminar

Education for Good is experimenting with a new format of running a seminar.
Please see the next page for details.

Finding Your Life-Changing Role Model

An Open-Access Seminar

- What is a Role Model?
- Why do you need a Role Model?
- How would you choose your Role Model?
- How could you really benefit from having a Role Model?

These are some of the questions that will be addressed by this seminar.

Basically, no one is REQUIRED to have a Role Model.



You would have an urge to have a Role Model when:

- You are onto something big
- You have high expectations of yourself
- You have set some lofty and ambitious goals for yourself
- You are re-examining your life values
- You want to make a difference and impact
- You have no intention to waste your talents and potential
- You want to make the most out of your life

The challenge is to find the right Role Model(s). This seminar has been designed to guide you through the journey.

What is an Open-Access seminar?

A conventional seminar typically has two components: (1) Presentation of contents, and (2) Interactive exchange, including Q & A and open discussion. Participants who want to take part in the seminar have to attend it in person. The participant might not know too much about the subject matter until they listen to the presentation.

In an **Open-Access seminar**, the two components will be delivered in a different manner. After someone has registered for the seminar, the **learning materials** (such as PowerPoint, video links, etc) will be sent out to that person via email. The person could then view and study the materials at their own pace anywhere anytime, and might even share the materials with friends or associates. All these will be **free of charge**.

It is only when someone who has viewed the materials wants to have a **face-to-face exchange** with the facilitator that registration for the **interactive session** is required. At the session, participants could raise questions, share their own ideas, exchange views with the facilitator(s), and **consolidate their learning**.

Facilitators: Dr. K K Tse, Mr. Daniel Chan, and Miss Maggie Ho

Dr. K K Tse

Dr. K K Tse has many role models at different stages of his career. When he was a business executive, his role model was **Vincent Lo**, Chairman of the Shui On Group. After his early retirement in 2000, he was inspired by **Vivian Hutchison**, by far the most famous social entrepreneur in New Zealand. But the role model who has the greatest impact on K K has been **Wendy Kopp**, Founder and CEO of Teach For America, who was a fresh graduate from Princeton University when she first started her organization.

Mr. Daniel Chan

Daniel Chan had 4 years' experience in banking/ in-house investment department assisting management of investment portfolio of over USD1 billion. During that career, his role model was **Mr. Roddy Anderson**, Vice Chairman of the Dah Sing Financial Group and Council Member of the Actuarial Society of Hong Kong. At this moment, he is much inspired by **Mr. Zhang Yong** (張勇先生), Chairman of HaiDiLao Hot pot (海底撈火鍋), who has pioneered service excellence and innovation into a new level for the corporate world of China.

Miss Maggie Ho

Maggie Ho has over 20 years of accountancy experience in both Audit Firm and Insurance Company. She previously served as Head of Finance for HDI-Gerling Industrie Versicherung AG, Hong Kong. **Diana, Princess of Wales**, who was well known for her fund-raising work for international charities, was her first role model. Later in her study for "Who wants to be a Social Entrepreneur", **Dr. K K Tse** has become her role model, she was much inspired by KK in spearheading educational innovation in social entrepreneurship.

Register to the Seminar

You could register by completing the attached Registration Form either for

- a) presentation materials (free of charge), or
- b) both the presentation materials and interactive session.

Alternatively, you could register for (a) first, and decide on whether or not to register for the interactive session at a later date.

Interactive Session (face-to-face exchange with facilitators):

Date: 18 October 2012 (Thu)

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Venue: The Good Lab (L1, The Sparkle, 500 Tung Chau Street, Cheung Sha Wan, Hong Kong)

Registration fee: \$200

Registration: Please send the completed registration form to Mr. CK Tse at ck.tse@education-for-good.com

Enquiries: Mr. CK Tse (Tel: 3994 8630 / 6029 3514)

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