



The Lighthouse Guiding Our Children's Hearts

守護孩子心靈的燈塔

A Talk Given by Rita Yee at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on February 21, 2020

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My name is Rita Yee. I am the core teacher for the third and fourth grades at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB). Before coming here, I also taught sixth grade math, and prior to that, was a kindergarten teacher for twelve years in public schools in Texas. I would like to share some of my teaching experiences.

The first school where I taught was a high-needs school. Many of the students came from low-income, single-parent homes. Some of their parents were incarcerated, and yet others were in their grandparents' care.

I struggled the first few years of teaching. I didn't understand how five-year-old children could get so angry and violent. I had kids throw chairs, push others down, stand on tables, rip posters off the wall, throw materials, hit, kick, yell, and scream. It was shocking, because I had never seen behavior like this when I was in school.

Once, I even evacuated students from the classroom when a student had a violent fit. Later, I learned these children had experienced traumatic stresses, such as loss or absence of a parent, parents fighting, witnessing abuse, neglect, all of which affected their ability to self-regulate.

I vividly remember a little boy from my first year of teaching with blue eyes and blond hair. He was very intelligent, but he told me disturbing things. He told me that he wanted to go to jail rather than work. Plus, he could watch TV, and would have food to eat. I was appalled. I couldn't believe a five-year-old boy would have that mindset.

我的名字是余家瑩。我主要負責教授三、四年級，也教五、六年級的數學。到萬佛城之前，我在德州公立幼稚園任教十二年。我想和大家分享一些我的教學經驗。

我任教的第一所學校是一所特許/特別學校，大部分的學生來自低收入、單親家庭，有的學生家長正在服刑，有的則是由祖父母照顧。

我任教的頭幾年真的很辛苦。我不懂為何一個五歲的孩子會如此憤怒而粗暴。有的孩子會扔椅子、把別人推倒、或者站在桌上、撕掉牆上的海報、丟掉教材、拳打腳踢甚至大聲喊叫。這實在太令我震驚，因為這些行為都是過去我在學校時見所未見的。

有幾次，我不得不要求學生們離開教室，因為當有學生情緒爆發時，對其他人來說並不安全。後來我才了解到，這些孩子在生活中經歷了極大的壓力，影響他們自我情緒調節的能力。這些創傷性事件可能包括失去父母、雙親吵架、目睹家暴、甚至忽視等等。

我清楚記得班上有個小男孩，那是我教書的第一年，他有著藍眼金髮，相當聰明可愛。但是他對我說的話卻令人感到不安，他告訴我，他想去監獄，「因為你不需工作，有電視看，有東西吃。」我對他說的話感到震驚，完全無法相信一個五歲的男孩會有這種想法。

When he didn't get his way, he would have tantrums for over an hour. He also shared something very inappropriate with another student, which prompted that student's parent to have him pulled out of my class. I often think about him; he would be around eighteen years old today. I hope he has had teachers and mentors that have guided him in the right direction.

As I continued teaching, I had challenging students every year, some more severe than others, but I learned different strategies to help them. I learned that building a positive relationship with every child was the key to successful teaching. Even if children come from unstable homes, a safe school environment with caring teachers can transform their lives.

Building positive relationships with challenging students was not always easy. It was a test of patience, compassion and forgiveness, of looking past their behaviors, and finding their strengths. I had to find out what triggered these behaviors and teach them skills to cope with frustration. I had to learn their family backgrounds and understand the root causes of their issues.

I was not always supported by their parents, so I had to work closely with administrators, counselors and other teachers, to best support each child. A few years ago, I came across this quote by Nicolas A. Ferroni, and it still resonates deeply with me, "Students who are loved at home come to school to learn. Students who aren't, come to school to be loved." When a child doesn't have a support system at home, the school has the big responsibility of providing them with stability, structure, and love.

After teaching for seven years, I found another position closer to home. The second school was the complete opposite of the first. Many children came from two-parent families with working fathers and stay-at-home moms. These children had stable and loving homes. So, they came to school excited to learn. They were happy and curious.

These parents also fed their children balanced meals with lots of fruits and vegetables. They read to them every night, played with them outside, set limits on screen time, and were involved in their child's education. They volunteered at school events and were present in their child's life.

As I share with you these two vastly different teaching

當他不順心的時候，他會大發脾氣，足足超過一小時。他還和班上另一位同學講一些不當的言論，導致家長把他從我的班級轉走。我經常想起那個學生，他現在大概18歲左右，我希望能有老師或精神導師將他引到正確的方向。

在教學的過程中，每年都會遇到具有挑戰性的學生，有的比其他學生更棘手，但我學會使用一些不同的方式來幫助這些學生。我學會與每個孩子建立良好的關係，這是教學成功的一個關鍵。即使一個孩子來自不健全的家庭，一個安全的校園環境和有愛心的老師也能改變一個學生的人生。

與這些頗具挑戰性的學生建立正向的關係並不容易，這是對耐心、慈悲心和寬容心的考驗。我必須透過他們的行為來發掘他們的長處。我必須找出觸發這些行為的原因，並教他們處理挫折的技巧。我必須了解學生的家庭背景，理解這些問題的根源。

我並非常常得到家長的支持，因此我與其他行政人員、輔導員密切合作，作為孩子們最好的後盾。幾年前，我看到尼古拉斯·菲洛尼的這句話，至今仍深深地引起我的共鳴——「在家被愛的學生是到學校來學習；在家不被愛的孩子是到學校來被愛。」當孩子在家中得不到該有的支持，學校有為這些孩子提供穩定性、組織性和愛的重責大任。

在任教七年之後，我在離家較近的地方覓得教職，這是我教的第二所學校，與我教的第一所學校完全相反。多數孩子來自父親主外，母親主內的雙親家庭。這些孩子有一個穩定和有愛的家庭環境，因此，他們上學會積極學習。他們都是快樂而充滿好奇心的。

experiences at the two schools, you can see the difference a home environment makes on the emotional and social well-being of a child. Our students at IGDVS are very lucky because they have a great learning environment. The core virtues that are instilled in them will develop their characters over time.

I was talking with a Dharma Master and she asked how teaching at IGDVS compared to other schools. Immediately, I noted that the students are all animal lovers, and have been taught to cherish life.

Once in class, they saw a spider crawling. They all hovered around it to see how they could release it. After finding a cup and paper, they gently put the cup over the spider, slipped the paper under it, and released it outside. I asked where they learned that, and they told me in kindergarten and from other Buddhist families. They do this at home, too.

Also, I noticed the strong bonds between the third and fourth grade girls. Many of them have been together since kindergarten. They are always excited to see each other at school and have endless topics to discuss. They have formed lasting friendships, and often play together outside of school.

We also give many opportunities for the students to practice kindness. A few months ago, the third and fourth grade girls participated in the Global Art Exchange. They painted beautiful pictures portraying kindness, peace and friendship, and then exchanged them with Syrian refugees.

The Syrian children to whom they sent the art had to flee their country because of war. The art that they received gave them hope that other children from across the globe care about them. It also taught my students to be grateful they can learn, because not every child has that right.

In the high school, I was impressed with the girls' initiative for volunteering, and participated with their community service club when they served the homeless in November, and then again in February.

These girls worked together every step of the way for these events, and planned them entirely themselves including the ingredients, menu and, budget. Their leader delegated tasks among her peers. These girls used commercial kitchens and were professional as they cooked, cleaned, and served. Their teamwork and tireless spirits impressed me greatly. Everyone

這些父母會確保他們的孩子有均衡的飲食，每餐都攝取大量水果和蔬菜。他們每晚會為孩子讀床邊故事，和孩子們在戶外遊戲，限制螢幕使用時間，並且參與孩子的教育。他們會參與自願幫忙學校活動，陪伴在孩子的生活中。

當我與各位分享這兩所學校截然不同的教學經驗時，你會發現，家庭環境對孩子的情緒和社交關係起多大的影響。我們培德、育良的學生非常幸運，因為他們有很好的學習環境，在他們身上建立的核心道德觀將會伴隨著他們成長。

我與一位法師聊天時，她想知道我們學校的教育和外面的學校有什麼不同。我即刻發現的是，我班上的學生都喜歡動物，他們被教導要愛護生命。

一次我在上課的時候，學生們看到一隻爬行的蜘蛛，他們都圍上前看牠，設法想將牠放到外邊去。他們找到一個杯子和紙張，輕輕的將杯子扣在蜘蛛上，把紙張塞到杯子下邊，把它放出去。我問他們在哪學到的，他們告訴我是在幼兒園裡學會的。其他來自佛教家庭的孩子們告訴我，他們在家裡也會這樣做。

另外，我注意到三、四年級女生之間有很緊密的連結，因為她們當中多數人自幼兒園就在一起。她們在學校總是很開心見到彼此，有聊不完的話題。她們彼此間建立了長久的友誼，並且經常在校外一起玩。

我們還為學生提供了很多機會來培養仁慈。幾個月前，三、四年級的女生參加全球藝術交流活動。她們描繪了代表仁慈、和平或者友誼的美麗圖畫，並與敘利亞難民交換這些畫作。

敘利亞的孩子因為戰爭不得不逃離他們的國家，他們收到的藝術作品為他們帶來希望—全球各地都有人在關心他們。這也讓我的學生們學會感謝他們擁有學習的機會，因為不是每個孩子都有這種權利。

在高中部分，高中女學生對志工服務的高度參與讓我印象深刻。我在11月和明年2

communicated with each other respectfully. I could tell they had been given opportunities to develop these skills. It takes years to develop these skills in collaboration and management. Even adults struggle over teamwork in the workplace. These girls don't realize yet that these skills they have learned here will be so beneficial in the future.

Even though core virtues are taught in our schools, it is still very important that parents model these virtues at home too. If children see them at home and school, then they will make an even greater impact on our children. Children are keen observers watching adults, and then doing what we do. They observe how we treat other people, how we react when something goes wrong, and how we speak to others.

I hope that parents can take some time each day to spend quality time with their children whether that means going for a walk in the park, playing board games, cooking together, eating dinner together, listening to the radio with their children, reading a bed time story, and simply talking with them. More frequently when I go out, I notice children spending more time on their screens than talking to their parents. Recently when I went out to dinner, I noticed a mom and son at the table next to me.

They only spoke to each other once, and that was to order from the menu. After that, the mom and son looked down at their phones the rest of the time. There was no interaction, no conversation between them. The best thing parents can do for their children is to be present with them. Phones can wait.

Recently, I had my students take a love language survey to see how students receive love. Their results showed that they wanted their parents to spend more quality time with them, which is very important when they are young.

Finally, I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to teach here. I want to thank Venerable Master Hua, and all of the Dharma Masters, teachers, parents and students for their support. I have learned a lot these past six months, and hope to continue to grow as a teacher. ❀

月將與社區服務社團一起為遊民服務。

這些學生仔細分工，她們自己策畫整個活動，從購買什麼材料、做什麼菜、花多少錢，統籌者在同儕中試菜。這些女學生就像專業人士一樣的使用商業廚房，從作菜到上菜全部包辦。

她們的團隊合作，在烹飪技術上努力不懈的精神令我印象深刻。每個人都能相互尊重地溝通。這些團隊合作和管理能力需要多年的時間養成，可想而知，他們時時都有機會來發展這些技能；即便是成年人在職場上的團隊合作也是需要時間去適應。這些女孩們尚未意識到的是，她們在學校學到的這些技能將對她們未來的生活相當有助益。

儘管我們學校教導道德價值，但父母在家中強化它們更加重要。如果孩子們看到這些道德價值是家中和學校環境被展現，對他們會產生更強烈的影響。孩子們是敏銳的觀察者。他們經常觀察大人正在做什麼，模仿我們的行為。他們會觀察我們如何對待其他人。當事情不如己意，我們如何反應，以及我們如何與他人交談。

我希望父母們每天都能抽出時間陪伴孩子，到公園散步、下棋、一起做飯、一起吃晚餐、為孩子講床邊故事、和孩子說話。我外出的時候，我發現孩子們花在螢幕上的時間多過和他們父母交談的時間。我外出吃晚餐時，看到鄰桌的一對母子，他們僅為了點餐有過一次交談。之後，兒子與母親各自低頭看著他們的手機，沒有互動，沒有對話。父母為子女所能做到最好事情，就是當下陪伴他們。你的手機可以晚點再看。

最近我對我的學生進行調查，這是有關學生接受愛語的問卷。他們說，希望父母親可以多花一點時間陪他們，他們喜歡父母親能夠為他們挪出時間。這點相當重要，特別是孩子還小的時候。父母親多花一點時間陪伴自己的孩子，他們喜歡與父母共處的時光。

最後，我很感恩有機會在聖城教書。我要感謝宣公上人、法師們、教師、家長和學生的支持。在過去的六個月裡，我學到很多，做為一名教師我希望能持續進步。❀