

New frontiers of reading: from self-recognition to success

'Life is difficult, yet it is a fantastic gift.' This is my motto to push me towards my goal. Now, as a senior secondary student, I always have a question for myself: What is the meaning of a perfect life? How can I have such life? Through reading, I finally get the answers. Since I was 13, I started asking myself the above questions. Instead of searching the Internet, I prefer finding these answers for my life questions through reading. Books often encourage me to think critically, as they stimulate reflection on life. Furthermore, some stories do strike a chord with me. They resonate with me and my world view has been changed positively. Through substantial reading, I can learn how to read between the lines in the real world and this life skill greatly helps me to solve day-to-day problems by getting to the gist of an issue, especially when I am handling some torturous life situations. Moreover, great stories often teach me how to act appropriately in my life. Instead of rising to the bait, I should keep calm when someone provokes me if I do not want to make the situation worse.

Every time I walk on the street, I see many young people walking with a sullen face. They work relentlessly hard every day and they are exhausted. I start asking myself: what have they been working for? Many young people feel lost about their future. They are not sure what they are working for and how to succeed. Even middle-aged people, who have lived for more than half-century, still question the purpose of their life. For my part, I would recommend everyone to read the following two books to seek answers for their life questions.

The more pristine my room becomes, the more precise my life goals are. I believe that when I sort things in my room with fastidious care, I am also putting different life goals in order. Therefore, the first book I recommend everyone to read is “Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organising and Tidying Up” written by Marie Kondo. Marie is an influential tidying expert and she is a flat decluttering specialist. She believes in the simple living style and she spreads her philosophy through teaching her students to remove unnecessary belongings from their rooms. Before reading this book, I did not know how to start tidying my room; however, after reading it, I know how to tidy my closets and fold my clothes properly. After witnessing the massive difference of my room after decluttering, I have learned how to live a meaningful life by cherishing what I have, such as curbing my spending and buying things only when I need. This enables me to save more money as I do not squander it. When I see my room become immaculate, I can concentrate to work and study, and this helps me to be more productive as I can easily find things I need.

‘Until you value yourself, you won’t value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it’. Many people may find these words familiar. However, this quote is very important to me as it teaches me how to overcome difficulties when I pursue my life goals. Another book that deeply affects me is “The Road Less Travelled”, in which M. Scott Peck told me that the only way for me to live a perfect life is through ‘delaying gratification’, ‘accepting responsibility for my actions’, ‘self discipline’ and ‘making a determined effort at spiritual growth’. As a psychiatrist, Peck emphasises the importance of self-control and self-discipline as they play a key role in solving all problems in everyone’s life. This book begins with a famous sentence, ‘Life is difficult’, which is coincidentally the same as the first part of my motto, ‘Life is difficult, yet it is a fantastic gift’, and it explores issues like evil, love,

mental health and illness, and the writer's spiritual and mental health crises. There is a message which has an emotional effect on me in this book and it is related to discipline. According to Peck, 'Without discipline we can solve nothing. With only some disciplines we can solve only some problems. With total discipline we can solve all problems'. After reading this book, I think I know the secret of a perfect life: I should be disciplined enough to seize opportunities for upward mobility although such opportunities are very narrowing and meagre. When I am still a student, I should plan my career carefully so that I will know what to do in the future. Peck told me that 'discipline' is not only about accepting a code of behaviour, but also about the appreciation of a plethora of opportunities that are made available in front of me. Prioritise my life goals, plan my future strategically when I am still a senior secondary student. Life is difficult, yet it is a fantastic gift to all of us.

From ancient times to the present day, books are important to humans as they instill moral values into them and allow them to know what has been happening. I am grateful for having the chance to delve into these two books as they turn my life around by equipping me with the skills, values and attitudes that I need. Reading at the new frontiers, I know myself better and life is no longer difficult for me.