

The Key to Success: Justice, Mercy, and Humility

成功之道：公義、仁慈、謙卑

The Ethical Dimension of Employment - an employer's view



On November 21, 2003, HKU's Faculty of Business and Economics held its annual Prize Presentation Ceremony. The Guest of Honour was Mr Thomas Kwok, one of the most successful businessmen in Hong Kong, and Chairman of the Faculty's Board of Directors. In his Keynote Speech, Mr Kwok drew upon his long and varied experience as an employer. Above all else, Mr Kwok spoke about the ethical dimension of employment.

Your Time at HKU

"Your years at HKU will allow you to gain a great deal of knowledge. You may apply this to your future work both directly and indirectly. Hopefully, you have gained knowledge that will be put to good use in other areas as well. Whether it is your relationships with others, with charitable organizations, or with your community, I hope that you will be able to help not only yourselves but those around you as well."



The Key to Your Success

"But knowledge alone will not get you very far in life. In addition, honesty, integrity, and wisdom will be key to your success in the future. Without these things, your knowledge alone will not be able to provide you with what should be considered success."

Mr Kwok went on to illustrate his views with a quotation from the Bible: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6 v8). No ordinary quotation was this: Mr Kwok noted that almost one-third of all US Presidents had either quoted from this verse, or placed their hands upon it while being sworn into office. This, Mr Kwok believes, provides the key to living a balanced and successful life."

Justice

Justice, mercy and humility? What have these to do with today's employment situation? A great deal is the answer! Mr Kwok went on to describe justice as an essential part of our daily lives and personal relationships, but also as the "bedrock" of Hong Kong's success. "There is a legal system here which provides for a level playing field for all those involved. A dispute will be decided, not by who you know, but upon the rule of law."

Mercy

And what about mercy? According to Mr Kwok, the value of mercy is to have both compassion and to consider the other person's point of view. "This entails keeping the interests of the community at large at heart as well. Life entails much more than just getting up in the morning and earning a living. It's also about relationships. It's about your spiritual health, about your family, your relationship with your friends and with your community. It's how you make your life meaningful."



"If you do nothing else in this regard, treat others as if they matter, because they do. Where there is no mercy there is no hope. When dealing with others, if you try and take everything on the table and leave nothing for others, then both of you are losers at the end of the day. You need to allow others to prosper, to earn a living, and to provide for their families."

Humility

And humility? What role might this play in our lives? According to Mr Kwok, humility is being open to the realities of the world, about being flexible and willing and able to change. In a study of failure amongst American CEOs, Mr Kwok observed that -- at heart -- the reasons for their lack of success was their arrogance, the fact that they were closed to reality, blind to the future and deaf to the words of others. Humility, both in their personal lives and in their business ethics, might have saved them.

No Easy Answer

"Unfortunately, I've left you with no easy answers or shortcuts to success today. But in a way, that's the entire point. While one person may be wealthy in a financial aspect, that same person may be poor as far as integrity, wisdom, honour, grace, mercy and love. We suffer in this society because so often our priorities and perspectives have lost sight of what is truly important: such as health, family, spiritual health and harmonious relationships with others."

Wisdom!

Finally, Mr Kwok reminded the audience that justice, mercy and humility could all be summarised by the word: Wisdom. "Troubles will come, they come to all of us. But with wisdom you will be able to lead a life worth living."

Thank you, Mr Kwok.

