

*Translations from inspirational articles entitled “**Life of Abundance**” by the late W. K. Wat, a successful entrepreneur and inspirational writer, originally published in the 1980’s in Hong Kong’s Sing Tao Evening News, now defunct.*

A Sweet State of Mind

In a school laboratory, students mixed two colorless, tasteless and odorless gases with carbon powder, which is black, tasteless and insoluble in water. After mixing, a complex chemical reaction took place, resulting in beautiful, white sugar crystals. Why some tasteless gases when mixed with the black stuff could result in white sugar, a chemical wonder apparently beyond comprehension? In life, we often find ourselves lost in monotony, devoid of taste, color, and meaning. In face of anguish hopelessness, we press on. After connecting with an array of factors, including conditions and opportunities, a miraculous change happens, ushering in a new life of hope, happiness and fulfilment, an inscrutable encounter with a life full of abundance. We may not understand how electricity works, but it drives our daily lives. We may not realize how a life of abundance may suddenly arrive, but we work, plan, persist towards a worthy goal. In the apparently tasteless journey, a change appears and our sweet dream suddenly unfolds. The esteemed Aristotle said, “Life is full of change and opportunities. With persistent, tireless, hard work, darkness could turn into sweetness and light.”

A Brilliant Future

On vacation in Holland, I saw many windmills in the fields, standing some 40-50 feet tall, their blades turning with the wind. These mills irrigate the wheat and barley in the fields, as well as the turnips Holland is most famous for. Generating more profits worldwide than the country’s wheat and barley, these flowers cover numerous fields in a sea of brilliant color. Some fields are already well irrigated. Their windmills are turning with the wind in vain as the blades are no longer connected to any machinery or cisterns. All the wind energy is wasted or futile. The turning mills are no more than a decoration. Sometimes when we work, we may encounter a feeling of futility. Our ceaseless activities round the clock may appear vigorous and forceful, but they are not connected to worthwhile goals in life. Blind efforts without any plan or aims only result in wasted energy, running around all day like disconnected windmills in the Dutch fields. Young people

should therefore conserve and concentrate their productive physical and mental energies. They should connect this valuable capital for success to life's specific goals of purposeful and meaningful enterprise or services. Like connected windmills, this will turn the clogs and wheels towards the realization of our life aims, ushering in a life of abundance and a brilliant future.

Keep Trying

In a big glass fish bowl are several gold fish, separated by a glass panel in the middle, one side for the fish and the other are tasty fish baits. The fish all lurch to reach the baits but without success. Having banged against the glass panel many times without avail except getting their heads knocked, the fish eventually give up trying, thinking that all they can do is look but will never be able to reach the other side. One day, the fish owner quietly removed the separating glass panel. But all the fish still remained on one side, not daring to challenge the invisible separation. All the fish baits remain intact as the fish have given up trying after so many painful and failed attempts. Fear of failure has turned into inertia. Even the barrier has eventually disappeared, the fish have lost heart for one more try. This is an important lesson. After nine failures, the tenth may well succeed, as the obstacles disappeared as circumstances have changed. Somerset Maugham said, *"He who loses heart with defeat will always remain a loser"*. Shakespeare said, *"Many fail for lack of perseverance, of lack of thoroughness. Oftentimes only a step away from success, they lose heart for one more try."* Hu Shih 胡適 said, *"Success always comes from trying."*

Ready to seize the moment

After a mission to Elephant Island, British Antarctic explorer Sir Henry Shackleton had to leave a group of scientists behind to compile a meteorological report on weather conditions. He undertook to return to pick them up the following spring. When spring came, Sir Shackleton sailed towards the Island in the Antarctic Ocean for the return-home pickup. However, ice sheets kept the sea frozen, blocking his passage. After waiting for days, a thawing occurred, allowing a very narrow creek for his ship to pass. On arrival at Elephant Island, he saw in the distance that his comrades were already fully packed and waiting on the shore. Without a single moment of delay, they quickly boarded the ship and commenced their return journey. After an hour, the creek got frozen up again. Sir Shackleton asked his comrades how they managed to identify this rare moment of possible passage and got ready for the pickup. They replied that without fail, they got fully ready every day for over half a month in the firm belief that the promised pickup will happen

someday. Otherwise, there was no way they could have made it in time. In our daily lives, we should likewise get ready every moment, in the hope that a life of abundance may one day beckon. When a rare and limited opportunity occurs, are our knowledge, abilities and health remain fully prepared to seize the moment? Frances Bacon said, “*A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.*”

Desert Flower

If you travel to the edge of a desert, apart from rare oases, tiny plants can sometimes be found to grow, thanks to some vapors in the air despite the aridness. These plants drop encrusted seeds which are hard to grow. However, once a while, when rain comes, the seeds' crust may get cracked open through hard sand while being washed down the dunes. Where well placed, these plants may indeed bloom. In life, we may have to face new and unwelcome circumstances which may break our body or mind, forcing us to adapt. Nevertheless, if we persevere, a new compatible environment may eventually arise where our hard-earned adaptation becomes in demand. We may then bloom again like a desert flower. So, never say die.