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The recipe for Success

Let's Begin

Our lives are deeply interconnected with others from birth till death. We cannot live and sustain (support) ourselves on our own. Our parents, families and communities have a direct influence on our well-being. And, in an indirect way, we live and enjoy life by utilising the fruits of labour of the human community all around the world. We even sustain ourselves through the animal and plant kingdom. Should we not feel very thankful to everyone and everything?

How often and how deeply do you feel and express gratitude to those who help you live and enjoy life—your parents/ family members/guardians, siblings, teachers and others?

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But people sometimes forget the contributions of those who sacrifice a lot for them. Answer the following two questions about your understanding of the word "Excellence".

Do not take people for granted

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1. What does the word 'excellence' mean to you?

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2. Grade the following items to indicate their mark of excellence, according to you. Number them from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest mark of excellence and 5 being the highest).

- a) Awards, certificates and prizes -
- b) Doing your best -
- c) Perfect results -
- d) Doing better than those around you -
- e) Completing a job somehow -

Professor Jackie Ying: A Leader in Nanotechnology and Education

Professor Jackie Ying is a trailblazer in the field of nanotechnology, renowned for her pioneering research and contributions to the medical and scientific communities. With a PhD from the University of Cambridge, she became a global leader in the development of nanomedicine, particularly in drug delivery systems for targeted therapy. Her work has opened new frontiers in the treatment of diseases like cancer, offering promising solutions for more precise, less invasive treatments.

In 2003, she founded the Institute of Bioengineering and

Nanotechnology (IBN) in Singapore, an institute dedicated to advancing the field of nanotechnology and transforming scientific discoveries into practical applications. Under her leadership, IBN has become one of the world's leading research centers, attracting top-tier scientists from around the globe to work on groundbreaking projects that merge nanotechnology with medicine, environmental science, and energy.

Beyond her research, Professor Ying is passionate about inspiring the next generation of scientists, particularly women in STEM. She has dedicated much of her time to mentoring young students, encouraging them to pursue careers in science and engineering. Her commitment to science education is reflected in her involvement with various educational initiatives and programs, where she engages with schools and universities to foster curiosity and excitement about science.

Professor Ying's scientific impact extends beyond the lab, as she has worked tirelessly to translate her research into real-world solutions. For instance, her work in developing targeted drug delivery systems has the potential to revolutionize cancer treatment by delivering medication directly to the tumor, minimizing side effects and improving treatment outcomes. This ability to combine scientific excellence with practical applications has made a lasting difference in the lives of many individuals.

Throughout her illustrious career, Professor Ying has received numerous prestigious awards, including fellowships with the Singapore Academy of Engineering and international recognition for her contributions to nanotechnology. However, it is her ability to inspire and mentor others that truly stands out. Through her leadership, both in research and education, she has proven that science is not only about discovery but also about making a tangible impact on society.

Professor Jackie Ying’s story exemplifies how science, when combined with a commitment to education and community, can lead to meaningful advancements in healthcare, technology, and society as a whole. Her journey continues to inspire countless individuals, especially young learners, to follow their passions and contribute to creating a better world through innovation and scientific exploration.

“Line up your head, heart and gut when considering future projects. Give back to the world, it will help your career and help make the world a better place. Never underestimate yourself (but never get above yourself), never be afraid to ask for help.”

- Professor Lyn Beazley

Think and Answer

1. What qualities does Professor Jackie Ying personify?

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2. How does Professor Jackie Ying’s life show that professional excellence and personal excellence go hand in hand?

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3. What are the areas in your life where you would like to pursue excellence?

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4. Why do you think excellence in your chosen field is an important quality to imbibe? How does it help you and how does it help the world?

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The Best in You

A student once asked a question to his teacher in class.

“What is the meaning of the word ‘excellence’?”

The teacher replied with a smile, “That is an excellent question and I would love to answer it. But I would also like to answer two more questions that you have not asked.”

The teacher continued, “If we look at it simply, the word ‘excellence’ means ‘to be extremely good at something’. It means having great skill in any given job or task. We must pursue excellence in everything we do. But the two more important questions are: Why should we strive for excellence? How do we achieve excellence? Can anyone answer?”

One student raised her hand.

“We should always try to be excellent because only then will we get good results,” she answered.

“Excellent answer! To put it in other words, an excellent job done gives the best results to both the doer and the receiver. For example, an excellent surgery done by a doctor will save the patient and give a good reputation and satisfaction to the

doctor,” said the teacher. “Now can anyone answer the second question,” he asked.

“Yes sir, we achieve excellence by giving our best,” said one student.

“We must always give our best in whatever we do,” said the teacher. “When we give our best, it is called sincerity. And when sincerity meets ability, we get excellence.”

Saying so, the teacher wrote the following on the blackboard:

HARD WORK + TALENT = EXCELLENCE

The profession that matches your talent and interest is the one you will excel in. If you have identified multiple careers, you can choose among them based on family situation and other practical considerations. Remember that you have to balance existing realities with your dreams.

Start with a set of actions that create habits that enable excellence.

As Aristotle said, “Excellence is what we repeatedly do. It’s not an act but rather a habit.” In other words, it is a culmination of habits directed at a very specific goal for a definite purpose.

Activity A: Your Field of Excellence

You must be on the verge of deciding what career to pursue and accordingly choose your further course of study. Here is a quick activity that can give you an idea of possible careers you could excel in, based on the formula for excellence we just saw.

Write down your talents, interests and career choices. Then find if a talent matches an interest, and then match them to a career. You would most certainly excel in that field.

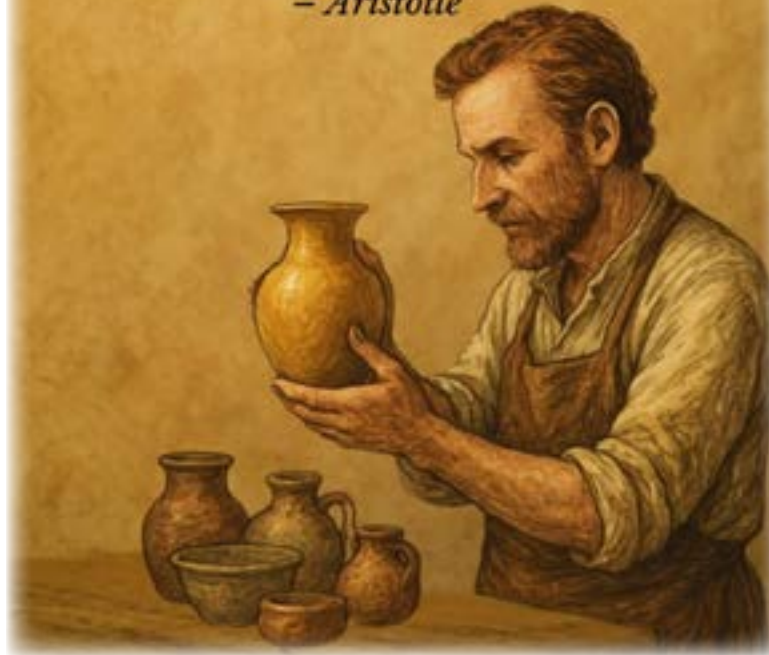
For example, have a look at Sheetal's table. Which career do you think she would excel in?

Things I love doing	Things I am good at/ My talents	Careers I am interested in
Sketching, painting Reading books Nursing injured animals	Painting, mathematics, dancing	Architecture, Journalist, Doctor, Fashion designing
Now do the same exercise and identify your most probable field or fields of excellence.		
Things I love doing	Things I am good at/ My talents	Careers I am interested in

ThrivingStudio

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

– Aristotle



Pursuit of Excellence: Giving Our Best

1. Excellence is the quality of being outstanding or extremely good at something. In other words, whenever we excel at something, we are performing at a level higher than what the average person is able to give to that particular skill or situation.
2. Excellence is born out of sincerity, dedication and hard work. It is the result of putting our heart and soul into something. A work done with this attitude produces the best results and creates maximum satisfaction.
3. The profession that matches our talent and our interest is the one we will excel in.
4. Let us have the right attitude. Our beliefs and empowering thoughts are just as important as our actions.

When you excel at your what you do, then success is but a natural outcome. So one ingredient for success is doing what you do in the best way possible.

“Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better.”

- *Pat Riley (NBA coach)*

Another very important ingredient that sweetens success is the attitude of gratitude. Why must we be grateful and what must we be grateful for?

Let us find out through the following story.

The Road Less Traveled

In the Westside of a sun-baked Singapore, nestled among HDB was a small, time worn house that Wei Liang and Wei Xing called home. It was a simple dwelling, with peeling paint and a tin roof that sang under the relentless midday sun. Inside lived a family bound by love, yet divided by the paths chosen by its youngest members.

Wei Liang and Wei Xing were born into hardship, their early memories infused with the sight of their parents' ceaseless labour. Wei Seng, their father, was a mechanic and worked in a very rundown garage. The clients were few and far between. Beside him, their mother, Wei Chun, juggled jobs between a local café and cleaning duties at the town school. Despite the fatigue that lined their faces, Wei Seng and Wei Chun's resolve never wavered; they were united in a singular dream: to gift their sons opportunities they never had.

As the brothers grew, their paths diverged sharply beneath the same sunlit sky. Wei Liang, the elder by two years, observed the quiet sacrifices made at the altar of parental love. He saw his father's hands, permanently stained with grease, and his mother's smile, often weary but ever hopeful. It wasn't wealth

that they chased, but a future bright with promise for their sons.

Wei Liang chose to tread alongside his parents, his young hands eagerly assisting in chores that grew him beyond his years. On weekends, he was by Wei Seng's side at the garage, handing tools and learning the trade. After school, he helped Wei Chun at the café, wiping tables and serving the occasional customer, his eyes always returning to his books late into the night.

Wei Xing, on the other hand, was drawn to a different kind of companionship. His friends, a rowdy group with little regard for tomorrow, filled his days with laughter and little sight of the future. He often missed class, and the dreams his parents harboured for him became mere whispers in the wind. Wei Xing's heart was chained to the immediate joys, blind to the slow poison of neglect seeding within his future. He scoffed at his parents for not providing him better clothes, better material comforts that he saw his friends enjoy. His parents were saddened at his display of ingratitude.



Years trickled past, each one widening the gap between the brothers' worlds. Wei Liang's diligence bore fruit; his academic excellence won him a scholarship to a prestigious university in Singapore. Tears of pride and relief streamed down Wei Chun's cheeks as they watched Wei Liang's train pull away from their little town, a vessel carrying not just their son but also their hopes.

Wei Xing's journey, stagnant and unchanged, saw him stumble into a space of unrealized potential. The absence of a Polytechnic diploma hung heavily around his neck, a result of his own making. Jobs were elusive, each rejection a mirror to the regret gnawing at his soul. The words of his parents, once ignored, now echoed in the silence of his solitude.

Time, as it does, continued its relentless march. Wei Liang's success was not just academic; he flourished in the world beyond, his career a testament to his hard work and the values instilled by his parents. It wasn't long before he was able to lift the financial burdens that had long shadowed his family. Wei Seng and Wei Chun's twilight years were comforted by stability and joy, their sacrifices recognized and repaid with love and care.

Wei Xing, watching from the fringes of his brother's accomplishments, felt the full weight of his choices. The rift between him and his family wasn't just about success; it was about the gratitude he failed to show, the support he took for granted. Reconciliation was painful and awkward, laden with years of unspoken hurt. But beneath the brambles of regret lay a path towards redemption.

In the quiet of a life re-examined, Wei Xing began to emulate Wei Liang, though the road was harder and his steps unsure. Small jobs led to steadier ones, and though the peak he chased was humbler, it was no less important. His efforts to mend the

fabric of his family were gradual but genuine. Forgiveness from his parents came like the gentle rain after a drought, reviving the bonds that had withered.

The story of Wei Liang and Wei Xing is a tale of choices and consequences, of paths taken and those forsaken. It teaches that while every day brings a new choice, not every choice brings a new day. In the heart of Singapore, under the vast, forgiving sky, two brothers learned that the true measure of success isn't just in the heights one reaches but also in the depths from which one is willing to climb.



Think and Answer

1. What sacrifices did the parents make for Wei Liang and Wei Xing?

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2. How could have Wei Xing shown his gratitude to his parents?

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3. What actions and qualities did Wei Liang display that made him excel in life, in career and as a person?

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Our efforts at excellence are reinforced by a nurturing ecosystem consisting of our family, friends and other support systems. Do you think it would be possible for us to achieve excellence and success without these support systems?

An attitude of gratitude recognises the contribution of those people and benevolent forces such as our community, society, etc, and strives to show this through words and actions.

This attitude is clearly reflected in the life of Professor Jackie Ying, isn't it? The combination of exemplary excellence sweetened with the humility of gratitude makes Professor Jackie Ying an inspiring role model for us all to emulate.

How are you at excellence and gratitude?

Activity B: Personal Fact Check

Put tick marks in the appropriate columns to indicate your response.

S. No.	Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Do you express your gratitude to your family?			
2	Do you help or sacrifice for the sake of others?			
3	Do you say thank you to those who work in your home or school?			
4	Do you feel bad when someone takes your help for granted?			
5	Do you give your best in everything you do?			
6	Do you take responsibility for a failure?			
7	Do you try again after a failure?			
8	Do you set realistic goals for yourself?			

Activity C: Be Grateful For

Identify and write down the people, situations, and other support systems that enable/will enable you to pursue and achieve excellence in your endeavours.

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Activity D: Show Your Gratitude

What can you do to show your gratitude to any of these support systems? Write down below. Do not forget to show your gratitude the way you have planned.

1. Gratitude means to acknowledge and honour the actions of others who helped you in some way. We can show gratitude by word or by deed or both.
2. We tend to show gratitude to strangers but forget our own family who do the most for us. We think it is their duty to serve us, but we forget that it is our duty to serve them too.
3. We must always be grateful to the person who comes to our rescue in times of crisis. The good that has been done to us is 'sacred' and we must express our gratitude to them.
4. Being in someone's shoes helps us to develop gratitude for their services. When we imagine being in the place of those who help us, we will see many things they do for us—which were not seen by us earlier. This will give us more respect for them.
5. A person who is thankful to others is loved by everyone and no one hesitates to help them when needed. Also, such people are looked upon as pillars of support by the society.

Activity E: Let's Summarise

Fill in the blanks.

1. We should help people who
(help us/need help).
2. Gratitude is an act of
for someone's help. (thankfulness/payment)
3. Excellence means to
(achieve perfection/give your best).
4. We should do our duties
(dedicatedly/half-heartedly)

Let's Remember

True success is a measure of excellence in all spheres of activity and the attitude of gratitude that comes from the understanding that your achievements are built on the contributions and sacrifices of others in your life.

My Space

What I liked most about this lesson...

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I learnt that

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Engage

with Family



1. Write down the contributions of the following in your life:

1. Your family
2. Your friends and teacher
3. Your country
4. The global community
5. Nature

How would you show your gratitude to each one of them? Discuss with your family and decide.

2. Give a surprise to your family by preparing a meal for them and giving your mother/father/guardian/family member some rest (make sure that an elder is there with you to avoid any accidents). Make sure to tell your family how grateful you are for the things they do for you.