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ALIT-099-V27

23 Nov 2020

Our Lives Should Be Our Message

Living an exemplary life changes the way we live for the better. Living to provide a model for others gives us a sort of higher calling. Our lives influence others around us. This is especially important with our children, nephews and nieces, mentees, or simply those who follow us. We not only want them to heed our message, but we back it up and strengthen it when we're consistent with our lifestyle. With a clear conscience we want to be able to say, "Watch what I do and follow my example." This is what I learned while reading about ancient philosophers and touching on Zen Buddhism. I learned that our life should be our message while here on Earth and the message we leave behind for others to follow.

Philosophy is based on living virtues of life such as wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation. Philosophy teaches us, if nothing more, how to live better lives which leads to the overall message that stands out to me, which is, our lives should be our message.

I came across a quote from Mahatma Gandhi in which he says, "My life is my message." After that I also came across a quote from Zen Buddhist, Thích Nhất Hạnh, which says, "Our own life has to be our message." For Gandhi and Hạnh to think similarly about how they should live their lives, being from two different parts of the world, and having two different life experiences, for me, was outstanding to come across. Many philosophers seem to base their lives on modesty, humility, and also becoming one with the Earth and Nature. For example Epictetus who believed

that there is only one thing that truly belongs to an individual, which is his will or his purpose. So one shouldn't waste time trying to do things that are pointless. He also believed that philosophy is synonymous with life. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 12.20 writes "Don't act on impulse, never waste your energy, make action's purposeful." He believed that we were put here on Earth to make things better, and we should make the best of our time here.

In my own personal life I have had people come to me for advice on what they should do in a particular situation. And I always find myself comparing me to their situation to offer them the best advice. I didn't realize that I was actually almost living the life that I would describe to others. So that's one of the reasons why this particular message that out to me as a whole. I am by no means perfect but I'm still human put here by one higher than I.

The overall message in life and our way of life is and how we think those around us would benefit from living, is how we should physically live. As for the next generation or even others that might be passing through a rough time, they should be able to look up to us and realize that life is something you just go through. They should look at us and say they're not going to let any kind of obstacle get in your way of success. Anyone who crosses our path should see that we fight hard in life, take challenges on with courage, determination, and perseverance and we strive to be the best us that we can be. Today, we can look at award-winning singer-songwriter in music icon from million with the over 60 year career, Tina Turner. She considers herself a Buddhist. Turner states that she is inspired by inspirational philosophy and the wisdom of Buddhism. He recently finished a project, a book, titled *happiness becomes you; a guide to changing your life for good*. In the book she speaks about how philosophy and Buddhism

actually saved her life. We all know of the tough times and hardships that she passed through before and after her career. She also states how she is now living her life happily. She exclaims that she has left a good body of work as a rock singer and that it was because of her spiritual practice.

Dealing with situations that we are in today with losing loved ones, loss of income, the pandemic seems like the perfect time to learn new that may help relieve stress, and give a whole new outlook on life and the way it's normally perceived. Applying philosophic principles and the wisdom of Buddhism will surely set uneasy minds and hearts at ease and guide them towards joy, stability, and ultimately, happiness.