



Full Length Research Paper

The eye of the butterfly and success in life, leading and living

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Abstract

Everyone wants to be successful in their lives, in their sales/business or careers and in everything that they do; they really want to succeed. And in this paper, readers would want to find out what does the butterfly represents and how does it relate to success in life? Often the butterfly forgets that it was once a caterpillar. It was fat, ugly and clumsy but now, graceful and beautiful. In this study, some of the strategies uncovered through the eye and the way of the Butterfly include accepting change, knowing about time and timing (things have its cycle), being unhurried or patient, cool and calm; and living in abundance, as well as enjoying the moment.

Keywords: Butterfly, success, change, metamorphosis, abundance, free and easy, present moment, resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Each and every one wants to be successful in their lives and in their sales/business as well as their careers, in fact in everything that they do; each of us wants to succeed.

Paper's aims and objectives

The paper's aim and objectives are to find out the Old Chinese or Asian ways of living and being successful. It seeks out to uncover what does the butterfly represent and how does it relate to success in life, selling, doing business, leading and living as well as to identify and examine what key strategies to apply through the eye and way of the Butterfly.

What does the butterfly represent?

The Butterfly is a universal symbol of change (http://www.squidoo.com/butterfly_creations). Often the butterfly forgets that it was once a caterpillar. It was ugly, fat and clumsy but now attractive and beautiful. A metamorphosis has occurred; it is and should be enjoying its present elegant and beautiful state. True, there have been changes; change is unavoidable and change management must be subscribed and willingly or duly accepted.

This author believes that the Butterfly also represents something beautiful, a sort of gem or a treasure and it is to be much valued. It represents the zenith or potential of each person, and the life of each person and what each can accomplish, and indeed it is so precious. More often than not, human beings forget about their potentials and/or the spiritual heritage, instead succumbing to the dull routines, everyday life and living, societal conditioning and meaningless rituals.

Adopting the way of the graceful Butterfly would also raise a person's confidence as well as self-esteem. Confidence is a very valued commodity. Those who own it find it easier to learn or acquire new skills, make friends, enjoy happy relationships, adapt to change, and attain what they want in life (Davies, 2003).

Literature review

With easy, natural power and simplicity, the Tao de Ching highlights, one's actions can create energies. When one's actions are motivated by love, not by the desires of the ego, one generates excess energy that can be used to create anything one wants. This is what that has also been suggested by Chopra (1994) in his book: The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success. Contrariwise, should one be seeking power over others or trying to get their

approval, this consumes a great deal of energy. One is trying to prove something, whereas if one is acting from the higher self, one simply makes choices about how and where one will affect evolution and bring abundance.

The eye of the Butterfly represents the ancient (Chinese) way of looking at things, the universe and life; to this author, they are, in part, influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

Many of us, humankind are negative in outlook; fear is used; it is really a poor tool to create or sculpture tomorrow, and many of us view the future from the position of fear including uncertainty or worry. There is no need to be uncertain or worry; if we fear we are viewing the future from a position of weakness (which is not the correct position) and we worry a lot; and we paint monsters and impose unnecessary limitations. Likewise, do not fear God or the Universe – be God (Universe) loving; and the best way is to deal with the future is to leave it to the God (Universe); the Christians call it faith (Mason, 2003) and the Chinese wittingly or unwittingly call it fate or destiny. Be like the birds or the bees, they have no worries; we need to float or play like the Butterfly. Take what may come while doing what is humanly possible, and savor the moment (always trusting that the goodness and success in you will come out as it is destined – or assisted by the Universe), loving whatever you are doing.

The butterfly dream of the Taoist philosopher, Chuang Tzu (Zhuang Zi) is probably the most celebrated dream ever to be recorded in the history of Chinese Philosophy. Chuang Tzu spoke of having awakened from a sleep, and that he dreamt that he was a butterfly, flying about enjoying itself (Zhuang Zi says, 2009). He then expressed, “I do not know whether I am Chuang Tzu who I was a butterfly, or a butterfly now dreaming I am Chuang Tzu”.

The question why Chuang Tzu dreamt of the butterfly and not any other creature, for example, can be said to the manner the mind functions and the role it plays in dreaming: what is within is manifested without; our personality is a representation of our inner-self. And that Chuang Tzu was the sort who enjoyed living in total freedom. The butterfly he dreamt of was, thus, him, or what he wished to be (<http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/butter.htm>).

Each of us has the freedom to choose what we want to be. The butterflies are free to roam and go anywhere. But of course, a butterfly should not fly too close to thorns for they tear its wings (Scevola, 1997). Here, the thorns can be taken as things or jobs that are not of our liking or interests for they may indeed drain us of our energies. Overall, one needs to embrace what Soichiro Honda (1996: 75) advised, that is, you must “be honest to yourself”, and “work for yourself, not for the company”, doing what you love and loving what you do, and in fact, this work principle would also help leaders when leading others forward.

How is success measured? This author believes that this is best put forth by Heider (1986: 25) which to this author appears akin to Taoism or even Chan Buddhism in approach. He has argued as such: When one measures success in terms of praise and criticism, one’s anxiety will be endless. Should one have a good reputation or becoming well-known for one’s work, this can be an obstacle to one’s further development. Fame is as troublesome as caring for a person properly. What is the problem with praise and criticism? If the group praises one thing one does, and then one feels good, one will worry if they do not approve or applaud as loudly the next time. If they are critical, if they argue or complain, one will feel hurt. Either way, one is anxious and dependent.

How can a good reputation be an obstacle? A good reputation naturally arises from doing good work. But if one tries to cherish one’s reputation, if one tries to preserve it, one loses the freedom and honesty necessary for further development.

How is fame like caring for oneself? In order to do good work, one should take good care of oneself. One must value oneself and allow others to value him or her too. But if one makes too much of oneself, one will become egocentric. Egocentricity injures both self and work. If one can live with the fruits of success and care for oneself properly, one will be able to lead well and foster success in other people. And this author believes the above is linked to success in life, leading and living through the eye of the Butterfly. Here, he would also add that appreciating the abundance given and being selflessness, one should still care for him(her)self properly, learn well and/or set an example, show care and concern to others. And then one will be able to foster success in other people too.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper relies on personal observations of seven Chinese traditionalists or experts on old Chinese wisdom and interviewing them.

In this research, the interview research method was used, and key informant interviewing was applied. Key informant interviews differ from other forms of interview principally because respondents are chosen because of their idiosyncratic, specialized knowledge instead of being randomly chosen to sample the issue the researchers are investigating, and this has important consequences for design (Jankowicz, 2005: 276 -279). The technique is believed to be useful since:

- Defining the basic characteristics of some issue by drawing on the personal experiences and understanding of the people and practices involved. The way in which such concepts as ‘mythological creatures of Ancient China’ or ‘Old Chinese key beliefs’, for example, are understood and interpreted

- in practice(s) in the given environment or setting.
- Identifying the boundaries, constraints and extremes within which these definitions are seen to apply.
- Increasing the researchers' knowledge of the butterfly, Taoism and the Chinese art of leadership itself.

This interview method is really useful since it enables much qualitative data to be collected from these practitioner-interviewees; they are also businesspeople as well as sales people who were successful. To get more information and data from the various interviewees, open questions were deployed (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran, 2001); and they were crafted as follows:

1. What do you know about the Butterfly in the Chinese cultural perspective? What does the Butterfly mean in old Chinese wisdom context? What does the Butterfly mean to you?
2. How does the Butterfly help you in leading your life? Or in your line of business?
3. What are the ways in which you are inspired or motivated by Butterfly?
4. What do you like about the Butterfly (the Chinese concept/thinking of it)?
5. Why is the Butterfly attractive and appealing to you?

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the interviewees' inputs, the Butterfly type of person can succeed or attain success because of these key characteristics; and they:

1. Accept change
2. Know about time and timing (things have its cycle)
3. Are unhurried, cool and calm
4. Live in abundance, enjoying the moment
5. Have a presence
6. Are free and easy
7. Love what they do
8. Are patient and learn well
9. Are of help or service to others
10. Be resilient
11. Representing feminine leadership

Table 1 below shows the interviewees and their comments on the eye and way of the Butterfly.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the interview findings, when applying the eye of the Butterfly, individuals can succeed if they adopt and practice these characteristics or qualities:

Accepting change

"Change is unavoidable"; "one has to accept change and move on that would help to make one a better leader" (several interviewees' inputs). The butterfly should not

stay put in one location; it has to move on, moving from flower to flower; and it gains much nectar.

Through the eye of the Butterfly, one learns about change and leading change. Change cannot be avoidable, it is the only constant (Low, 2013).

Resistance to change is futile; there is no need to resist change. Just surrender to change. If one is in a bad situation, one does not have to worry or have any fear(s), it would change. If you are in a good situation, no anxiety, it will change (Jones, 2011).

The butterfly flirts and there is no attachment to things; there is no emotional baggage, addiction, fixation or obsession. Change is easily accepted, (s)he moves on and life goes on.

The successful Butterfly person stresses on what, to them, are solidly permanent; they anchored themselves on their core or spiritual values. They believe in what is beyond the physical world, perhaps the Tao or their faith. Chinese Buddhists go beyond the world of annicca (the temporal world) and strive to attain the Nirvana. "The Buddha taught that everything is impermanent – flowers, tables, mountains, political regimes, bodies, feelings... We cannot find anything that is not impermanent... We think the impermanent makes us suffer. It is not impermanence that makes us suffer. What makes us suffer is wanting things to be permanent when they are not." (Thich Nhat Hanh cited in Jones, 2011: 32).

Knowing About Time and Timing (Things Have Its Cycle)

There is a time and season for everything; timing is everything (Waitley, 1992).

"Everything has its time and timing"; "each of us must know what and when to let go"; and "not to hold on or be too attached to things" (several interviewees' inputs). This coincides with Brown, Jr.'s (1991: 199) "don't carry a grudge", that is, be detached; and Jones's (2011: 49 - 67) point on the wisdom of knowing what and when to let go. Rightly so, this is also connected to the earlier first point on accepting change. We already know that change in life is a given, and indeed there is no way around this fact.

"Fruit drops from the tree when it is ready. Staying too long, or moving too early, misses the mark. The mark is the appropriateness that causes the fruit to fall when it is ready... The process has its own timing, and it creates changes in your life when those changes need to happen" (Gary Zukray, cited in Jones, 2011: 49). While this speaks or appears more of one's faith or spiritual trust, likewise, at the more practical level, good negotiators also know when to ask and answer and when to pursue or let go; they choose the right time, timing and seasons (Low, 2010). He also cautions of being too attached to contracts and deals, and that in itself, the process, can lead one not to let go and can indeed be a

Table 1. The interviewees and their comments on the eye and way of the Butterfly.

| Interviewees' Comments | Number of interviewees/ Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| Interviewees perceived that the Butterfly type of person can succeed or attain success because of these characteristics that they possess: | |
| Accepting change | |
| "Change is unavoidable"; "one has to accept change and move on; that would help to make one a better leader" | 7/ 100 |
| Knowing about time and timing (things have its cycle) | |
| "Everything has its time and timing"; "each of us must know what and when to let go"; and "not to hold on or be too attached to things". | 7/ 100 |
| Being unhurried, cool and calm | |
| "It's nice to see the flight of the butterfly; butterflies are so unhurried even when chased after"; "life should be like that; there is not point succumbing to pressures and tensions and make ourselves miserable." "In the sea of change the Butterfly is cool and calm; we need to be level-headed." | 7/ 100 |
| Living in abundance, enjoying the moment | |
| "Flowers and nectars are everywhere, it is up to us to capitalize and make full use of them." "There are many opportunities." "Just take things as they come." | 7/ 100 |
| Having a presence | |
| "We take comfort and feel good when our leaders... siblings, parents, people who we love are around in the critical events of our lives". "Where and when we are, we should make our presence felt through our love, actions and deeds" | 7/ 100 |
| Being free and easy | |
| "One is free and easy to become creative" "One should feel the spirit, the essential free, flirting expression of the butterfly"; "one needs to be creative, free-wheeling in one's sales presentations in order to persuade and convince one's prospects and buyers to be" | 7/ 100 |
| Loving what one does | |
| "One has to like one's work; then, one would enjoy one's work." "One would also get job satisfaction, and would be very happy at work" | 6/ 85.71 |
| Being patient and learning well | |
| "Not many people would see this; the Butterfly can be said to be patiently gathering nectar, from flower to flower. We can follow like the way of the butterfly and be patient and learn well" | 5/ 71.42 |
| Being of help or service to others | |
| "The butterfly that helps to pollinate the flowers"; "the way of the butterfly involves helping others while showing them care, kindness and compassion." | 5/ 71.42 |

Table 1. Continue

| | | |
|---|--|----------|
| Being Resilient | <p>“Perhaps the ancient masters had observed this: the butterfly has to struggle to get out of the cocoon and this strengthens the butterfly” “The butterfly, the fact that it came out from the cocoon, is strong.” “The eye of Butterfly means one has to be strong and determined when selling and/or doing business – Never give up!”</p> | 5/ 71.42 |
| Representing Feminine Leadership | <p>“The leader by the way of the Butterfly speaks of the soft side of leadership”; “it implies a feeling and caring leader”. “such a person or leader promotes humaneness” and “tenderness”.</p> | 5/ 71.42 |

real disadvantage or a hindrance to good bargaining and negotiations.

Being Unhurried, Cool and Calm

The Tao is not in the hurry.

One projects true confidence when one likes and feels at peace with oneself (Davies, 2003) as well as being unhurried, cool and calm.

Unhurried means leisurely (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unhurried>) and just to name a few synonyms – at ease, calm, and carefree (<http://thesaurus.com/browse/unhurried>). Being unhurried is good; “being unhurried has advantages”. “One can think through, thinking cool and calmly. When there is no hurry, one can see things from various angles.” (several interviewees’ inputs).

Indeed as Mahatma Gandhi once said, “there is more to life than increasing its speed” (<http://www.quotedb.com/quotes/1872>). And here, interestingly, all interviewees commented that, “It’s nice to see the flight of the butterfly; butterflies are so unhurried even when chased after”; “life should be like that; there is not point succumbing to pressures and tensions and make ourselves miserable”.

Living in abundance, enjoying the moment

To the spiritualist, “You have everything. You are the whole world. Why? Because the Kingdom of God is within you.” (The Sivathondan Society, 1993). We should fulfill our spiritual heritage and our Godsend potential. Each of us has the seed of divinity, and we need to acknowledge, realize and grow it. While helping ourselves, we simply let go and let it flow. And enjoy each

moment of our living. Life itself is a prayer. And be thankful (Low, 2013; 2012).

Rabindranath Tagore once said that, “the butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough.” (http://www.squidoo.com/butterfly_creations).

“Just take things as they come.” “Flowers and nectars are everywhere, it is up to us to capitalize and make full use of them”. “There are many opportunities.” “We need to make full use of opportunities that are presented to us” (various interviewees’ comments). These coincide with comments that “the sales world is theirs who know how to take it” (Scevola, 1997: 74). And while doing this, instead of building castle in the air or creating one’s own anxieties – how to get the next contacts and contracts, one should simply enjoy the moment. There are thus less or no anxieties.

Having a presence

Normally, we love to look at or admire beautiful things such as a butterfly; it has a presence. The Universe has its presence in what It gives or creates.

Be there; do, and be where the action is. An old Chinese saying speaks of, “It is better to lend a hand than stay in a room burning joss sticks”. One would rather be in action, helping others and not staying in a room praying.

Having a presence is to give warmth or add a personal touch to others or those around us.

Additionally and more critically, often “we take comfort and feel good when our leaders... siblings, parents, people who we love are around in the critical events of our lives”; “likewise, where and when we are, we should make our presence felt through our love, actions and deeds” (several interviewees’ inputs). This affirms what Low and Theyagu (2003) have highlighted, that is,

leaders should be making their presence felt among their constituents, and that they then feel assured. And oh, yes, as individuals, “never waste an opportunity to tell someone you love them.” (Brown, Jr., 1991: 347), touching them at any possible time.

Being free and easy

“One should feel the spirit, the essential free, flirting expression of the butterfly” (one interviewee’s comments) – ah, as compared to “the sad expression in the eyes of the caged bird” (Scevola, 1997: 73); the latter is restricted and confined.

“One is free and easy to become creative” (an interviewee’s comments), and as business leaders, one can change a caterpillar into a butterfly through creative selling and marketing as well as interacting with one’s clients to ensure that their needs are met. One needs to be nice to oneself to increase one’s creativity (Zabelina, 2010). Often one tends to criticize oneself, telling oneself that one is not good at this or that, that one does not have the skill or the talent, that one’s ideas are not worth pursuing, and impose many other self-censorship. One can thus build up one’s creativity, nurturing the caterpillar until it is time to come out of its cocoon. There is a need to adopt a self-compassionate attitude to increase or nurture our creativity; this would remove some of the barriers, and let our natural talents reveal themselves.

Another interviewee spoke of the fact that “one needs to be creative, free-wheeling in one’s sales presentations in order to persuade and convince one’s prospects and buyers to be”. Here, the author believes that one can indeed be creative in our expressions when we are not confined to routines or the tried and beaten pathway(s). One thus learns and unlearns (Low, 2011), and applies and flexibly or creatively makes various styles and ways of refreshing sales presentations to appeal to one’s audiences. This study thus supports Scevola’s (1997: 76 - 77) point that through the eye and the way of the Butterfly, business people can achieve sales excellence; they become good pleaders and work well with their hands, their heads, their hearts and their feet.

Loving what one does

Confucius once said, “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” (<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/confucius134717.html>). This author would certainly agree that when one likes one’s job, one will learn well, one’s job satisfaction and productivity would surely increase too, and in fact one can excel in what one does. It is really LOVE and PASSION that counts, that what makes job satisfaction. It is PASSION, not suffering: “My teacher told me being an artist is a lot of hard work, but he said it

was not suffering because he loved the art.” Architect Chia Lay Yong on the late artist David Kho’s approach to art. Mr Kho donated \$1million work of his works to NUS Museum. (The Straits Times, 22 Aug 2003, page H1.)

“One must be joyful in one’s work – though it appears commonsensical; that is the ancient secret of success”. “One has to like one’s work; then, one would enjoy one’s work” (one interviewee’s inputs). These fit in with the late Japanese corporate leader, Matsushita’s (1991: 90, 91; 1994: 49) words, “love what you do” and “if a leader does not enjoy his work, he is unfit for the job”. “Love what you do” also fits in with what Soichiro Honda’s (1996: 33) way of life/ work; he urged that “(you should) enjoy what you are doing and achieve satisfaction through your work”. The interviewees’ inputs also match with Low’s (2005) study which uncovered that in sales leadership, “selling is a joy and the sales person is happy with his job!” Always do what you love and appreciate your life as a wonderful journey (Campbell and Moyers, 1991; Pearson, 1986: 287).

The above also match with what Scevola (1997: 82) speaks of, that is, in having the eye of the Butterfly, “one never tires of working for oneself” and citing the Old Master, he indicated that one should choose a job that one loves; indeed every calling is wonderful when wonderfully pursued. And one feels great! And when one feels great, great delight comes; and greatness and/or excellence can also be achieved, tantamount to what H. Jackson Brown has pointed out, that is, “find a job you like and you add five days to every week”. (<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/hjacksonb100747.html>).

In terms of sales success, Scevola (1997: 81) further highlights that, “the only thing that keeps a salesperson going is sales energy. And what is sales energy but liking sales life?” In sales or for that matter in life and living; when there is passion, enthusiasm flows with accompanying excellence.

Being patient and learning well

“Not many people would see this; the Butterfly can be said to be patiently gathering nectar, from flower to flower. We can follow like the way of the butterfly and be patient and learn well” (several interviewee’s inputs). A good example is the late Japanese corporate leader Matsushita who was a very patient man; he listened to his people well (Hajime, 1994; Matsushita, 1994a).

One of the three treasures as pointed out by Lao Tzu is patience (Verse 67, Tao de Ching, Lao Tzu, 1990; Low, 2013; 2009). Lao Tzu (verse 29) highlights that:

“There is a time for being ahead,
a time for being behind;
a time for being in motion,
a time for being at rest;
a time for being vigorous,

a time for being exhausted;
 a time for being safe,
 a time for being in danger.”

There is a time for everything, and truly so, being patient is a virtue, and something to be appreciated. When you are patient, your eyes are wide open. . . You sharpen your human perception and sensitivity for all things beautiful too. Interestingly, Low (2008; also cited in Low, 2013) has pointed out that Singaporeans or for that matter, everybody need to hone or refine their perception for all things beautiful. Undeniably so, most people are so caught up in everyday matters that they simply do not see the beautiful things in life and in the world around them. No wonder many people only feel happy when something really unusual happens. But it is so easy to feel happy or contented – at least for a short while or just a little. One simply has to train one’s eyes to view the beautiful things around one, and look for the little pleasures in life. One simply has to count one’s blessings.

It is worthy to note that when one sees a person at the top of a mountain, he or she did not fall there. To excel, a person must learn. Here, Mason’s (2003) words need to be applied, if a person is to succeed and do well in life and living, he or she needs to get ahead of him or herself – break their own records. Learning patiently is a virtue. One, in fact, can learn anything (Tracy, 2004) and the spirit of learning must be kept live. Smart leaders adopt continual learning (Vlamiš, 1999); Confucians indeed stress very much on learning and continuous learning and improvement; not only one learns from others, but one also learns from one’s mistakes and failures (Low, 2013; 2010a; 2008a). In life and as a leader, the moment we give up certainty; learning begins. And we keep on learning. Learning is really vital and is the key (Low, 2009a: 126).

Being of help or service to others

Like “the butterfly that helps to pollinate the flowers” (several interviewees’ inputs), individuals who practice the eye and the way of the Butterfly also extends their loving-kindness and compassion to others, helping them (their clients, business associates and key stakeholders) in whatever ways they can (and almost in a familial way).

Both inside and outside the office, we can help others such as our colleagues and customers. We can truly help our colleagues to be more effective. One can be kinder than necessary.

“When the world is prevalent with Tao, he shares the prosperity with everything; when the world is without Tao, he nurtures his own virtue and lives a seclusive life” (Zhuang Zi says, 2009: 137). “He who shares his virtue with others is called a sage.” (Zhuang Zi says, 2009: 167).

Matsushita (1991) spoke of leaders dedicating their lives; he gave the example of Katsu Kaishu who applied “dedicating your life” quite literally and to great effect, brilliantly handling many crises at the time of the Meiji Restoration in Japan. And Matsushita (1991: 152) also spoke of putting people first. In contemporary sense and organizational equivalents of dedicating one’s life and to service, the author would cite Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2004); the latter spoke of the serving leader as keeping personal ego in check – and building the confidence and self-esteem of others – he or she makes possible for the team to work together. Serving leaders build teaching organizations to create excellence at every level. And serving leaders who teach become, in fact, consistent in their own performance – leaders learn to introspect, to articulate their knowledge, and to improve consistency; they also remove obstacles so others can succeed. (Jennings and Stahl, 2004).

Leaders and in fact everyone need to be humble (Matsushita, 1991), serving or helping others and one another. Success lies in giving to others (Low, 2012a). Mother Teresa, for example, was so happy and fulfilled when she led her life serving the poor and the unfortunate as well as even attending to the dying. Yes, it’s true, and at times, people may even feel as if there is nothing that they can offer or to put it more precisely: What often keeps them from doing (*servicing*) so is that they do not know how, or that they do not think that what they have to offer would be helpful. At this point, it is worthy to quote Morsch and Nelson (2006: 47-48, italics author’s emphasis) on the power of serving others:

“‘Everyone can do something,’ I told them. ‘Even if you don’t have a singing voice or a relief agency or a fleet of airplanes. Everyone has something to offer.’ Many students gave money, for which I was grateful. Pointless put together a benefit concert with all of the proceeds going to tsunami relief.

Eating nothing became something. Drinking nothing became something. Going nowhere became something. Everyone can do nothing and turn it into something... *...The interesting thing about doing whatever we can, regardless of how seemingly insignificant, is that this is often precisely what the other person needs”.*

Being resilient

In *The Little Prince*, Chapter 9, the flower said, “Well, I must endure the presence of two or three caterpillars if I wish to become acquainted with the butterflies.” (de Saint-Exupery, 1995).

Adversity brings benefits; problems and difficulties are “the price of progress. The obstacles of life are intended to make us better, not bitter.” (Mason, 2003: 93). Building resilience is good; one becomes strong in life, excelling, leading and living better (Matsushita, 1991). Five (5) interviewees pointed out these: “Perhaps the ancient

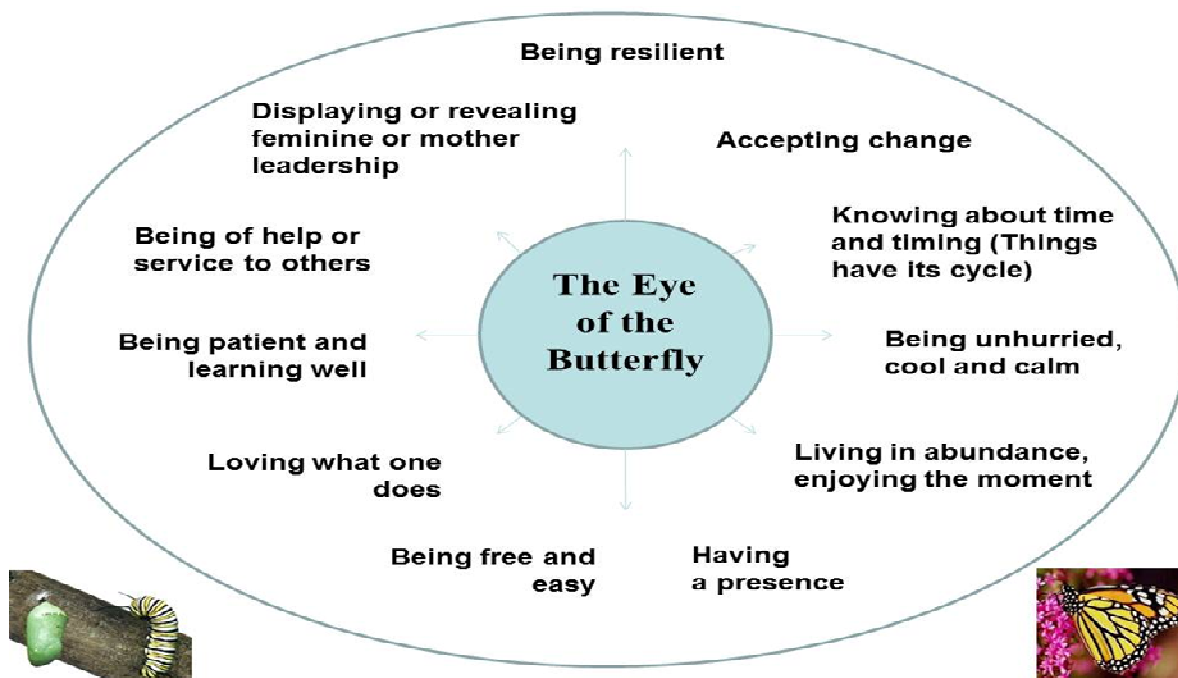


Figure 1. The eye of the Butterfly, and the key characteristics which successful people/ leaders should ordinarily possess.

masters had observed this: the butterfly has to struggle to get out of the cocoon and this strengthens the butterfly” “The butterfly, the fact that it came out from the cocoon, is strong.” “The eye of Butterfly means one has to be strong and determined when selling and/or doing business – Never give up!”

Confucius said: “The suffering is blessing to me and to you as well. I was told that *a king can’t become a real ruler without encountering difficulties*; one who values faith and justice more than life *can’t become outstanding without facing adversity*” (Zhou, 2005: 169, italics author’s emphasis). Truly “both failures and successes remain with us as valuable lessons” (Matsushita, 1994: 99), and the older one gets, the more experience he or she has gained. While experiencing either success or failure, the passage of time is meaningless.

This author has forgotten the source but well remembered that he once read this story in an email from a friend many years ago. The story speaks of a butterfly struggling out of the cocoon. As it struggles out, it builds its strengths. And recently while surfing the Internet for this study, he uncovered another version of it and it is worth detailing it; the story (adapted from <http://www.motivateus.com/stories/adverse.htm> / <http://www.doyoubelieve.org/Butterfly.htm>/http://www.affirmware.com.au/Sculptor-Private/the_butterfly.html) goes like this:

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly, and one day, he noticed a small hole; he then sat and watched the

butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it appeared to stop making any progress. It seemed as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. Then the man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly came out easily but it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It was never able to fly.

What the man in his helpfulness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle needed for the butterfly to get through the little opening were the Universe’s or God’s way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be prepared for flight once it attained its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles and efforts are exactly what one needs in one’s life. If Nature allowed humans to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple them. Human beings would not be as strong as what they could have been. And they could never fly or grow their potential.

Figure 1 above shows the eye of the Butterfly, and the key characteristics which successful people/ leaders should ordinarily possess.

Displaying and revealing feminine or mother leadership

“The leader by the way of the Butterfly speaks of the soft side of leadership”; “it implies a feeling and caring leader” (several interviewees’ comments/ inputs). This ties-in with the findings and analysis that one “dedicates one’s life with helping and serving others” (interviewees’ comments) (see pointer 9: Being of Help or Service to Others).

This author would argue as such, that is, the Butterfly sort of person (leader) – male or female – would display or reveal the soft, gentle or tender side; “such a person or leader promotes humaneness” and “tenderness” (interviewees’ comments), and take relationships importantly. They display part of, the essence, the core or the spirit of what this author labels as the quintessentially Phoenix or Mother Leadership ways, the wise ways derived from ancient Chinese or Asian ways of leading gently and being successful. Ordinarily, they are soft and kind, caring about their relationships, especially so, with those who are close to them or in other words, their loved ones. “Women promote humaneness and especially so after they went through child births” (interviewees’ comments), and have children of their own; and here, these tie-in with what Grzelakowski (2005: 72) has said, that is, “babies promote humaneness”. What more, Friedman (1992: 61–62) highlights that “humanness in a leader is a great attribute”, gentleness and “tenderness” (interviewees’ input) is always appreciated.

The key limitations and benefits of the study

The small number of interviewees seems to be an issue; it would indeed be good if the number of the interviewees was expanded to include more samplings.

Nonetheless, the fact that qualitative research method was relied upon, the interviews yielded much information from the interviewees. Having been assured of anonymity and confidentiality, the interviewees were very expressive; and as a whole, this is a worthy benefit of the study. Interestingly, it can be said that future studies can perhaps be conducted to further confirm the key findings uncovered and discussed here.

It should also be pointed out that it was never easy to search for and find experts in things Chinese, particularly on ancient Chinese wisdom, and for these reasons, this study is to be appreciated for what it is able to uncover or point to.

Before concluding the article, it is good to remind ourselves of the story told by Kopmeyer (2003: 257); best to quote, it goes as follows:

I stood quietly in the field of new-mown hay and watched a beautiful butterfly as it fluttered frantically about. . . searching. . . seeking . . . wanting. Only yesterday the butterfly had found the flower. And it had

become a very special flower to the butterfly. To be sought. To be near. To be gently caressed as only a beautiful butterfly can caress a lovely flower. But the flower had not been special to the mower. And it lay cut and wilting in the noonday sun, half-hidden in the cut grass. No longer lovely. Poor butterfly! Fluttering frantically about. . . searching . . . seeking . . . wanting. So we learn in life’s hard school that the goals which we cherished yesterday meant nothing to life’s mower today and we find them cut down and wilting among the cut grasses at our feet. But as the butterfly keeps searching. . . seeking . . . wanting . . . it will find other lovelier flowers.

Overall, one has to accept change, (un)learns, grows, and keeps on striving; that spirit must be kept alive so that one (un)learns, grows and succeeds.

CONCLUSION

The eye of the Butterfly signifies the old (Chinese) way of looking at things, the universe and life, and it can, as shown above, assist individuals to excel or succeed in sales and business, leading, life and living.

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