

Dear Team

Management is about making people's weakness irrelevant; it is not about making people weak. Whether it is team management, case management, classroom management or neighbourhood management, this principle applies.

Ivan was the most loveable baby in our infant care programme that everyone wanted to fuss over. When he was transferred to our playgroup programme, he found the routine relatively impersonal. He had to share the teacher's attention with his classmates, learn to be part of a group and he had to forgo being the most lovable boy in the room. He found it a little difficult to wean off the individual attention he was accustomed to and always tried his best to get his teacher's attention. He was often successful but it was attention to put a disruptive student in his place.

It took us quite a while to come to terms with the view that attention seeking is a need and not a problem. Our challenge was to meet Ivan's need for attention while also meeting his need and that of his classmates to catch up with our curriculum. Hence, we decided to see Ivan's behaviours as enthusiasm and his desire to contribute to the success of the lesson. Ivan is now the teacher's assistant in charge of the first aid box and has the important duty of alerting the teacher whenever any of his classmates is hurt. Our teachers demonstrated much humility and wisdom in coming up with this solution and I am sure like the rest of us, the children and parents deeply appreciate their acumen in classroom management. **Happy Teachers' Day!**

We believe in an "Abundant Community" and from a management perspective, it means celebrating what we already have. What we lack is in itself a gift. A colleague, who was originally from India, addressed a group of neighbours sitting around the lift landing, 'As you all know, I am not from Singapore and I can't understand Malay so what is gotong royong?' 'There was no shortage of explanations as these neighbours from 15 different units across 2 levels of a rental housing block started sharing examples of how they had benefitted from community mutual help to illustrate the meaning of gotong royong. Even when an elderly man lamented that times have changed and people are more self-centred, he conceded with a laugh that the floor party they were enjoying was actually gotong royong. The chairs, the food, the music were all contributed by everyone present. As in an "Abundant Community," whatever they needed they did not buy; they produced everything together as neighbours.

On Monday evening we left the party feeling blessed that with the blessing of all present, a young man who had benefitted from our programmes volunteered to be the person-in-charge of co-ordinating the resources and events for levels 4 and 5 of his block of flats. Our next party will be at levels 5 & 6 as we endeavour to bring about a "Vertical Kampong."

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*"By mutual confidence and mutual aid - great deeds are done, and great discoveries made" - Homer*