

2018 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Encashing Experience

(Original)

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A few years ago, the officials of the Kruger National Park, South Africa, were facing a problem: the number of elephants had drastically increased to more than what the park could sustain. To meet this situation juvenile males and females were shifted to other parks using helicopters. The problem was apparently solved but after a few weeks, a new problem arose in their new home. The juveniles were slaughtering other animals brutally. The young males were caught on camera chasing down the rhinos, knocking them over, and stomping and goring them to death with their tusks. This aggressive behavior was rare in elephants and something was terribly wrong. To test a theory of the officials, some mature elephants were brought from Kruger. All the problems were solved as the older bulls taught the juveniles, how to be an elephant.

My grandfather told us this story at dinner time.

By sending the aged to old age homes, we could be doing the same thing to humans.

As the time is passing, families are becoming smaller and smaller. A century ago living with the complete joint family was common but today it has become a modern marvel. The grandparents are sent to villages or old age homes while the parents live with their children in cities. Aged people, like endangered creatures, are encountered on special occasions or parties. The amount of influence they hold on the 'modern' families is decreasing with the passage of time.

The change I would suggest is to bring back the old to teach the new generation. After retirement, the aged should be given a chance and stage for them to teach children and teenagers. The subject may be decided by these persons and may vary according to the needs of the audience. They would not teach with a book in hand and syllabus on the wall, but they would provide knowledge to the students. The students would get this education for free on a common gathering place mutually agreed to by them. Classes would be held regularly as decided by the teacher. The difference between a cram school or private tutor and the elder teacher is that the former teaches for marks and money but the latter is

teaching for knowledge and with increased knowledge marks in examinations would increase too.

The society or government, for moral reasons, would pay the elder teachers a nominal fee. The students need not pay in terms of money but on their own may like to pay in kind. In my country, India, since antiquity there has been a concept of gurudakshina. After years of learning with their old guru, the students were supposed to give a fee to their mentor after completion of education based on their own free will. This fee is called gurudakshina. May I suggest a continuation of this concept in this modern world.

The lessons would not be limited to classrooms because activities are more fun especially for children. The mentor may use a park to teach children skills like climbing a tree, eating a fruit raw. They can be taught about flowers and trees. Physical interaction with nature is a need growing in this digital age. A day trip to the village fields on a holiday isn't a bad idea, is it?

Countless lessons can be taught by these millions of teachers. If someone is thinking, are they worth it, the answer is different for everyone and for it, they have to take these lessons.

These elder teachers would also offer life experiences and lessons other than those in the books. The students would also realize what the meaning of a teacher is. This little idea would change the life of elders as well. Their regular interaction with the children and young adults would keep them informed about the present times and situations. Their suggestions and advice would increase the influence of the older generation on modern life.