

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

My understanding of Life from the tiny, yet great forest Ants

(Original)

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I preferred spending most of my time in a small forest near my home. I would run there to cool my frustrations whenever problems struck. The forest served as my only place to connect to the world and find comfort. I would always be fascinated by the harmony and the correlation of the forest environment.

One day, I sat at my usual place in the forest, this time having my breakfast. Suddenly, the aroma of the tea took me away to strangely ponder about ten ants, I saw carrying away a crumb of bread that had fallen from my hand onto the ground. Soon, there was a tree branch lying on their path. I carefully stared at these ants waiting for their next step but they seemed to be lost and helpless. To me, this was the end of their journey. But to my amazement, I saw these ants coming together again and with great persistence, hard work and focus, they lifted the crumb of bread over the tree branch.

At this instance, I became brave to know that life is never a smooth journey but the obstacles I encounter can always act as a stepping stone for success. I just need to stay positive like the ants, never giving up. Moreover life is all about co-existence. I need you, and you need me. Together we can carry that seemingly heavy weight, lift up the weak and give hope to the hopeless. It only takes selflessness and love. In Africa we have a proverb that says, if you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far go together. This is the secret as to why ants appear too small and weak yet when they come together, they carry several times their weight.

As these ants continued to scurry along the careful trail-leading to a crevice, I noticed something strange. There was neither a commander nor supervisor giving them instructions. Ants live by purpose. Ants work faithfully without requiring accountability. I realized that the essence of life is to live creating a self-led purpose that will help me

achieve my goals. I have to wake up from my sluggishness, be proactive and productive. On earth, we live and die. Therefore life is a chance and opportunity given to each one of us to make a difference in the world without thinking of any personal gain at first.

As this event drew to an end, I stared at one ant whose mandibles and antennas were moving in haste as though it was speaking to me. Eventually, the inaudible voice of this ant began to play in my mind. "What can I do to cherish and invigorate my life and all life on earth?"

"I can definitely team up with others and give back to my community no matter how small the good deed is, it can make me and someone happy."

Recently, with the outbreak of the dangerous Covid-19, I acknowledged that life and good health come in handy. I launched a jogging program in an open football ground in my community where young people and even the elderly gather in the evening hours to jog together. Living a healthy life is far better than living a wealthy life because life is a gift from God, wealth can't buy. Today, I feel so proud when I see the elderly who joined with worse health conditions looking stronger and happy again.

Life is all about appreciating everything around us and knowing that we are lucky to be part of the beauty. I believe nature contributes greatly in making life beautiful and hence I formed a group that takes care of the green environment. We have converted dump sites for rubbish into admirable flower gardens as well as planting trees along our community roads. I attach great significance to plant life just like any of my body organs. Green reflects life for instance, the oxygen generated from plants is key for us to live.

Finally, I appreciate the fact that I was meant to be in this world because the satisfaction I have got from performing the above small good deeds is both therapeutic and energizing.