

Book review: Good Luck By Hung Ling Cheuk

The appeal of the book is universal. Who doesn't want "Good Luck"? Who doesn't need it? I opened the book, and soon was following the footsteps of the Knights on a quest of my own. What an easy read! How inspiring! The comparison with *The Little Prince* is justified. Every chapter, every paragraph, every sentence of it is intended to be lucid and resonant. The story within a story design and the surprise twist at the end are purposefully designed. It also reminds me of *Aesop's Fables* – the meaning is so much a part of story that it has the vibrant feel of a well-crafted piece of Literature.

However, most readers of this book, different from the readers of *The Little Prince*, are not concerned with Literature. I suppose that most of them have a realistic goal in mind; they are after Good Luck (in capital letters to distinguish luck from "Good Luck"). But if you only want the outline, I can spill the beans in no time. However, that is not going to work. One of the important lessons of this book is not to trust people who sell you luck. In other words, Good Luck cannot be bought; for your own good, you have to do it yourself. It is both easy and difficult – easy in the sense that Good Luck is your own creation, difficult in the sense that "it was a lot of work." Both Max in the cover story and Sid in the main story say something to that effect. And both of them have succeeded eventually. Of the two, Sid in the main story is supposed to be our role model.

Every day for Sid is a mission. His goal in mind is clear, and he is working constantly towards that goal. With every passing day, he has to know more about what he is doing. As a rule, he sets to work promptly and at the end of the day he can always sleep well, because he is pleased with what he has done. Thus he is fresh for the next day, and the process repeats itself with growing understanding and newer discoveries for Sid. How does he get ideas? Well, he talks with various creatures in the Enchanted Forest, pays attention and asks questions. All the while, he is moving towards a clearer view of what his reward is going to be. He sees the happening before it actually happens.

Is the book merely preaching good work ethic? Not quite. So much more depends upon the character of the individuals. Nott, the Black Knight, is used as a foil to Sid, the White Knight. Talking to the creatures in the Enchanted Forest, Sid is respectful, asks relevant questions and always gets fresh insights. Nott, on the other hand, is brusque, impatient and easily disillusioned. Sid is goal-oriented and clear, while Nott becomes obsessed with the doubt whether he has any luck in life. The dominant emotion that motivates Sid is awe, an expansive emotion that takes one outside of one's limitations, while Nott is trapped by fear, an emotion that constrains and belittles.

The Enchanted Forest is like a school, but Nott, with his eyes blinded with self-interests, learns next to nothing. Sid, on the other hand, grows and learns steadily. In addition, Sid has a wonderful ability to imagine. Knowing more and more, he thinks of a glass that is filling up. That is where his motivation is coming from. He simply has to go all the way. This also keeps him on track to hunt for the "seemingly unnecessary but indispensable" detail. The power of imagination helps him to see the prize in advance. On the eve of the seventh day, which is the day when the magic clover is destined to appear, Sid feels that he can touch the clover and smell the clover with the sheer force of his imagination.

While most people associate "luck" with "chance," this book tells us that chance does not exist, and wonderful opportunities are always there for the one who does not give up, and who is persistent in creating the relevant conditions. With a cover story and a main story as well as the highlighting of the rules, this idea is echoed backwards and forwards many times over. God Luck can be plotted: you have to take the plunge (accepting the challenge), and the ensuing steps would include the following: doing something different, asking people with relevant experience and knowledge, thinking about what needs to be done next, taking required actions, and last but not least, going all the way.

At the end of each chapter, one rule is stated explicitly, and there are ten rules altogether. I can reduce them here to three 'keep's:

'keep working towards the goal,' 'keep creating new and necessary conditions,' and 'keep away from dreams about windfall.' The last word on *Good Luck* is "You." True to yourself, then you would not quit no matter how tired or weak. If you set a goal with full awareness at the outset, to change that goal in mid-course is tantamount to self-destruction.

After reading *Good Luck*, the logical question to ask is whether it really works for you and me. I would recommend that everybody give it a try. No matter what, read the book. Reading this book warms the heart and challenges the mind. Ask yourself: can I measure up to Sid, who has absolute trust in his mission, and who never wavers from that trust? No matter how grand the stature, *Good Luck* can have a humble start. The best of all possible world is merely for you to know one or two useful details each day, and put them to work without delay. *Good Luck* is in the genuine effort we make every day.

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