

Piece Number One: Age

Grandfather noted that time is an exquisite gift

Age is an extremely interesting phenomenon. Like so much of history, you can talk about it, visit its sites of trauma and battles, but never truly experience it: you just weren't there. So it is with time. You can hear its descriptions and attempt to create its images, but this is mostly nonsensical until you live through it. When I was young, the aged were distant and surreal. They appeared oddly out of place in a world filled with beautiful things. This included my grandparents.

In a time when a lack of ceremony was slowly "showing its head" at most non-holiday family dinners, Grandfather always dressed formally. Thus a meal with him was a study in proper etiquette and the correct usage of cutlery. He had been a sea captain and was used to a sense of discipline and order, one could say a severe sense. I always remember his command of the world. Things were extremely simple: either you were an individual who gave orders or you were one who received them: the rest of humanity was inconsequential. The "free spirit" who ran away to Europe to paint was not in his lexicon. He imparted this worldview to the automobile, as well. A car was to be controlled and directed, not driven. He drove with the speed of a battleship caught in a violent storm: "Fasten the hatches and full speed ahead."

It is to be remembered that the vehicles of this era were huge in comparison to our modern age. This, of course, was an epoch



that also distrusted seatbelts: for they could kill you. How could you possibly escape from an overturned car if you were wearing one? I always imagined his wife being catapulted out of the car right up to the stars: such is the level of adolescent imagination.

My grandmother was a diminutive woman who controlled my grandfather in an extremely effective way: he loved and idolized her. She therefore wielded enormous control over her household of 13 surviving children, which included my father. As I became older, I began to respect Grandfather more and more. He said to me just before he died, “Remember Leon, the world always respects a strong man.” For years, I naively thought he was talking about weight training to build your muscles. In the end, I discovered that he was talking about something far more difficult: the achievement of personal power.

Now that I find myself approaching 65, I am more than a little surprised at how well it has all worked out. Firstly, I don’t feel “old.” When is this disease called age supposed to begin? I suspect that the answer is “never.” You only become old when you finally acquiesce to the changes in your temple: the body. One would be foolish to claim that a 30-year-old body has the same physique as a 65-year-old one. That being said, there has not been a 100 percent change. More remarkably, you do feel more knowledgeable in the world and of the world. This leads to the rather startling discovery that you truly know nothing, relative to the corpus of human understanding: this realization is terrifying and yet freeing. You can now swim in the endless lake of knowledge without fear of failure, total enlightenment being only given to Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed or other gifted souls. Your task now is to be a synthesizer: to take as much as you can from

the world and turn it into a gentler, kinder message. I teach many, many young people. They are filled with energy and excitement. All they need is some compassion and a slight nudge in the direction of their future. And, they must be continuously reminded, whatever the age, to spend their time well. The great actress Goldie Hawn (b. 1945) has a thought: What helps with aging is serious cognition -- thinking and understanding. You have to truly grasp that everybody ages. Everybody dies. There is no turning back the clock. So the question in life becomes: what are you going to do while you're here?



第一片拼圖：歲月

爺爺曾說時間是個精美的禮物。



歲月是個非常有趣的現象。就好比很多歷史事件，我們可以討論它，甚至去參觀悲劇與戰爭發生的地點，但我們從來無法實際去體驗它。我們對時間的體驗也是如此的，別人在訴說他的人生故事時，你可以試圖在腦海中描繪出那時的影像，但在你還沒真正經歷之前，這些想像沒有太大的意義。年輕時，年老的長輩對我來說是遙遠而且不真實的，他們與這個美麗的世界顯得格格不入，而我的祖父母也是如此。

在這個儀式逐漸消逝的時代，爺爺在非節慶時的家庭晚餐中仍是盛裝出席。因此，與爺爺一起吃飯就像在學習用餐的禮儀以及如何使用刀叉。他曾是一位船長，習慣了紀律與秩序的生活，而且十分嚴格地奉行。我永遠記得他的世界觀，對他而言，凡事都能用極為簡化的方式分類：你不是發號司令的人，就是按照命令行事的人。其他人不屬於這種分類方式的人便不是他關注的對象。他的字典中沒有「不羈的靈魂」這個詞，他無法理解為何有人會遠赴歐洲畫畫。他也將這樣的世界觀套用到開車上。他認為，車子不是拿來讓人開的，而是讓人控制與指揮的。他開車的速度有如在暴風雨中航行於海上的戰艦：「關緊艙門，

全速前進。」

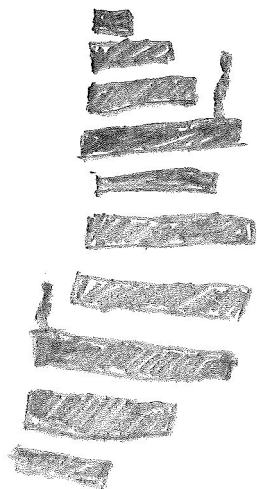
不得不提的是，爺爺那個年代的車與現代的車相比大多了。那年代的人不信任安全帶，他們認為繫安全帶反而會讓你喪命，因為如果翻車了，你怎可能在繫著安全帶的情況下逃出車外？我總會在腦中想像他太太被拋出車外並被甩到天上的情景。沒辦法，青少年的想像力就是這麼豐富。

我的奶奶看似矮小，卻能夠牢牢地掌控我爺爺，讓他對她又愛又敬。奶奶也因此對於她13個平安長大的小孩有極大的掌控權，對我爸也不例外。長大一點之後，我開始越來越尊敬爺爺。他在去世前不久告訴我：「利昂，要記住，只有強壯的男人才會為世人所尊敬。」多年來，我天真地以為他所說的「強壯」是指透過重訓來練肌肉。我後來才發現他所說的「強壯」有更深邃的內涵，是指個人內在力量的展現。

我現在快65歲了，很驚訝我人生過得不錯。首先，我並不覺得自己老。老化這個「疾病」應該是什麼時候開始的呢？我認為，老化「沒有」真正開始的一刻，只有在你最終接受自己身體的變化時，你才真的開始變老。當然我們不用想也知道30歲和60歲時的體格不會一樣，但老化也不是讓你變成一個截然不同的人。令人訝異的是，你確實



會覺得自己的知識與見識日益增長，但接著你會驚覺，與人類所知的一切相比，你所知道的不過是滄海一粟罷了。這樣的覺悟讓人害怕，卻也讓人鬆一口氣。現在你可以在漫無邊際的知識海中徜徉，而不必害怕所學到的知識有所不足，因為只有耶穌、佛陀、穆罕默德或其他天資聰穎的人才能真正達到徹底的覺悟。你現在的任務就是把自己當成一個合成器，盡可能地吸收新知，並將其轉化成正向的訊息。我有很多年輕的學生，他們活力充沛、充滿朝氣，就差一點同情心和人生方向的指路人。此外，他們也經常需要他人提醒，無論幾歲都應該好好運用時間。知名女演員歌蒂·韓認為：「在老化的過程中，多訓練思考力與理解力對你是有幫助的，你必須真的體認到沒有人能躲得掉老化和死亡，時光是不會倒流的。因此，我們這一生要思考的就是：活著的時候要做什麼呢？」



Piece Number Two: Gratitude

Grandfather remarked that the really powerful people are the most modest and the most thankful.

I often feel totally humbled in the face of the experience of other people. The other day, I had the opportunity to have lunch with a group of educators. They were a diverse lot and included a math teacher, a violin teacher, an English teacher, etc. I, quite naturally, struck up a conversation with the language teacher. She had recently volunteered at the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.¹ Mother Teresa (1910-1997) was the founder and the driving force behind its worldwide expansion. The young woman in the restaurant expressed great gratitude that she had had the opportunity to go and actually give of her time and her energy in the service of others.

She was expressing a unique form of gratitude: the knowledge that gratitude is based on the realization that the self gains wisdom by giving to others. This giving is unique because to be pure, it must be unconditional: it asks for nothing in return. As Mother Teresa appraises us, the greatest disease in the Western world is not some chronic or fatal physical malady, it is psychological isolation. Many people feel alone and rejected because they experience being unloved. We can pursue material wealth, purchase a large house or a sleek sports car, but this does not alter our isolation. She tells us that this is a unique type of poverty, a poverty of spirituality -- a poverty of the soul if you will. In the East, people are much more inclined to accept the art of conversation and the value of spending time with family and friends. This is a radically different concept relative to the



value of life in the West.

Eckhart Tolle (b. 1948), the Canadian/German philosopher, remarks: “Most humans are never fully present in the now, because unconsciously they believe that the next moment must be more important than this one. But then you miss your whole life, which is never not now.” An appreciation of just being alive, the “I think and therefore I am” of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), and your deep love for the people around you means that these two concepts are inextricably linked: both are unconditional. You must learn to truly love yourself. When you give love unconditionally, you are simply grateful that you are able to give. When your mother embraces you, she is grateful that you have grown into a healthy and vibrant human being, she is not (or should not be) expecting something in return.

The practice of gratitude, however, is not easy for we constantly live in the past or in the future, while gratitude requires that we exist in the present: “in the now,” to quote our above mentioned philosopher. Try this experiment: “Be in the present” for 60 seconds. Sit in a quiet place and focus on your breathing, empty your mind and contemplate the moment. When I initially tried this, of my 60 seconds, only 15 were actually free and uncorrupted with other thoughts. It requires practice, I am told.

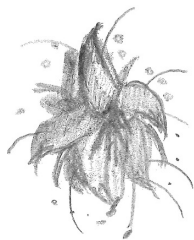
I believe that to really be grateful, I must acknowledge that I am unique and I have special gifts to give the world. With this, I ought to come to the realization that I am not a wage slave if I do not want to be. Work is a concept about extending yourself away from yourself on some type of concrete project: that could be intellectual work or physical work. Whatever task it is, once again, your efforts

must be 100% or not done at all because you damage yourself if you do something halfway. You know yourself, if you step into something and it is a "good-enough job," that is what it appears.

And I ask myself, because I'm an old man now, "Do I want to live a good-enough life?" And if the answer is "yes," tragic! Look at society: there are millions of examples of people who live good-enough lives. We do not have to, especially when we are young, especially when we do not have to become wage slaves. The great psychiatrist and philosopher Carl Jung (1875-1961) has a thought: One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.



第二片拼圖：感恩



爺爺說，真正有力的人最謙虛且最懂得感恩。

其他人豐富的閱歷經常讓我感到自己的渺小。一天，我有幸與一群教育工作者共進午餐，這群教育工作者來自不同的專業背景，有數學老師、小提琴老師和英文老師等等，而我自然而然地就與那位英文老師聊了起來。她最近在印度加爾各答的仁愛傳教女修會¹擔任志工。這個組織的創辦人是德蕾莎修女（1910-1997），她是促成該組織向國際發展的重要推手。用餐時，這位年輕的女老師表示她很感激能有機會到該組織當志工，並且投入時間與精力來服務他人。

特別的是，她對於能為他人服務感到感恩，因為她知道在付出的過程中能夠增長智慧。同時，無條件且不求回報地付出，這樣的動機才是無雜染的，這也正是這種無私奉獻的特別之處。德蕾莎修女說，西方世界最可怕的疾病並非慢性病或絕症，而是孤寂感。很多人因為覺得自己沒人愛而感到孤單、被冷落。我們可以追求物質上的財富，買一棟豪宅或酷炫的跑車，但是這並不會改變人們孤單的事實。她說這種孤寂感是一種精神與靈性上的貧乏。在東

方，人們比較願意與他人對話，也較重視與家人朋友相處的時間，這與西方的生命價值觀可謂大相逕庭。

德國出生的加拿大籍哲學家艾克哈特·托勒（1948-）說：「大部分的人從未全心全意地活在當下，潛意識總會認為下一刻比此刻來得重要，結果就這麼虛度了一生，因為人的一生就是由許多當下所組成的。」感恩自己能夠活著（即笛卡兒的「我思故我在」），並且感恩自己還有能力愛身邊的人，這兩者的關係密不可分，都是建立在無條件的前提之下。若你能無私地給予他人愛，你會對於自己有能力付出而感到感恩，這是真正愛自己的方式，也是我們必須學習做到的。當媽媽擁抱孩子時，她的心中不會（也不該）期望孩子能夠有所回報。相反的，她內心會充滿感激之情，欣慰孩子已長成一個健康且有活力的人。

然而，練習感恩對於我們而言並不容易，因為我們經常活在過去或未來。想要有一顆感恩的心，套句托勒的話，我們就必須活在當下。你可以做個小實驗，試著專注於當下，並持續60秒的時間。你可以坐在一個安靜的地方，把注意力放在呼吸，清空思緒，並開始冥想。剛開始這樣練習時，我只能堅持15秒，只有這15秒能自在地控制內心不去想其他事情。就我所知，這是需要練習的。

我認為，想要真正擁有一顆感恩的心，我們要認可每



個人都是獨一無二的個體，而且能對這個世界做出貢獻。我們必須體悟，除非你願意，否則沒有人能逼你成為薪水的奴隸。工作的觀念就是將想法付諸行動，去執行某個具體的任務，可能是要動腦的工作或是勞力活。無論是什麼工作，你都必須付出全部的努力，不然就乾脆不要做，因為做事半吊子的態度對你有害。你知道，如果你做事只是抱持馬馬虎虎的態度，那麼你就會深受其害。

現在我年紀大了，我會問自己是否想過「差不多」的人生？如果答案是想的話，那就悲哀了！看看我們的社會，有幾百萬人正庸庸碌碌地在過日子。我們不用像他們一樣。在我們還年輕、還不須為五斗米折腰的時候，我們更有權利選擇不過這種生活。偉大的精神科醫師兼哲學家榮格（1875-1961）認為：「想起以前那些很會教的老師，我們會心懷敬意，但是對於曾經觸動我們內心的好老師，我們會滿懷感激。學校的課程對我們的學習而言只是基本的要素，溫暖才是讓植物生長，讓孩子心靈提升的關鍵要素。」

