

25

LET THE CHILDREN LEAD

BRING PARENTS FOR FUN -
YING PAK KIN

“ The love of family is like a flame that gives you light and warmth, igniting a passion deep inside your heart and letting you spread the love. Bring Parents For Fun is about stories of love. When you first learnt to walk, your parents held your soft little hands and led you around; when they start to walk stiffly and slowly, are you willing to hold their wrinkled hands? ”

In 2016, 28-year-old Ying Pak Kin founded Bring Parents For Fun, a programme that encourages adult children to bring their parents to different activities, aiming to bring two or even three generations closer together. “As parents grow older, they encounter various psychological problems. They may feel as if no one understands them and feel disconnected from society. Can children do more to help them? The simplest thing to do is to take them out!” said Ying firmly.

After graduation, Ying joined the banking industry. While he went down a smooth and prosperous career path, he also decided to join the ranks of social innovators. “Banking” and “child-parent activities” are not related at all, so why was he suddenly concerned about

problems between generations? “I have a really good relationship with my family. I grew up seeing how my mother took care of the elders in the family. Her actions have influenced me.” His mother would accompany her mother to buy groceries and go for walks. Ying grew up watching her and saw it as the proper way to treat one’s elders. However, when children grow up and start working, work, friends, and partners often take up most of their time, so they would spend less time with their parents at home. One day, when Ying was working in his office as usual, the idea of “taking his parents out” suddenly struck him, and he started developing Bring Parents For Fun.

THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

When I met Ying on the day of our interview, he was dressed in a denim jacket and a sweatshirt with a shoulder canvas bag, preparing for a daffodil class. When the activity was about to begin, he took off his original clothes to change into a short-sleeved T-shirt with the logo of PaterMater, and stood in the cold wind to greet the participants. PaterMater is another social innovation programme that promotes child-parent relationship and provides information on elderly care. Through a friend, Ying met Solomon, who not only shares an Alma Mater with him, but also shares similar beliefs, resulting in instant friendship. However, in the early days of Bring Parents For Fun, he spent most of his time alone thinking about the development direction and handling work like registration procedures and promotion — he could only spend one day a week on the actual programme. He admitted that being both a bank consultant and the founder of the project, the most difficult part was time arrangement. But along the way, he was able to gather many like-minded people to join as volunteers and share some of the

work. “I want to do so many things, but I don’t have enough time. That’s why I need helpers to help me with the development direction, or handle operation-related tasks when I don’t have time. I’m lucky to have met people who are willing to join as volunteers.”

Besides the addition of volunteers, Ying admitted that he needed to understand his own shortcomings in order to seek appropriate help.

“I think many people are willing to help you, but the question is whether you know how to ask for help. Some people don’t know that they need help, but I know what I need help with,”

Ying smiled. In the development process, he needed to introduce the concept to different organisations and negotiate the forms of cooperation, making the abilities of expressing himself and thinking logically essential skills. “I’m really bad at expressing myself. Ideas keep popping up in my head and it’s hard to sort them out. My method is

to talk to different people — that helps me process my ideas.” At the beginning of the interview, after each question, Ying would purse his lips and look straight ahead with his eyes wide open. At first, I wondered if the questions were too boring, but then he eventually told me, “I always try to polish my words and think carefully before answering. Was my answer bad just now?” He said with hesitation.



ACTIVITIES AS A COMMON TOPIC

The love of family is the essence and starting point of Bring Parents For Fun. The love between other children and their parents drives Ying forwards. Since its launch in 2016, Bring Parents For Fun has held various activities, such as tea tasting, picnics, and art jamming. Ying has been deeply moved by the interaction between other children and their parents. “A three-generation family participated once. I asked the father why he brought both his son and his father to the activity. He told me that he wanted his son to bring him in the future. I was surprised to learn that what I did wouldn’t just influence him and his father, but also how his son might treat him 20 years later.”

On this day, most of the participants of the daffodil class were daughters and their mothers. While the mothers skillfully prepared the daffodil bulbs with a knife, the daughters were clumsier and not even sure how to hold the knife. Sitting among them, Ying shared a funny story about his mother’s experience in the daffodil class. “My mum was very efficient and I let her

have the moment. After the class, she looked at the daffodils happily every day, and she would tell me about them all the time.”

After starting the project, Ying began to spend more time with his parents, which has helped him understand their needs better. “We have more common topics for conversation. After my mum took the daffodil class, she started volunteering for it from time to time. The project has brought them closer to me, which is more satisfying than anything else,” he said with a content smile. Now that his parents are in semi-retirement, their physical and mental states are gradually changing, and Bring Parents For Fun is a perfect fit for these changes.

“I think it has given them more things to take comfort in and helped them develop their own interests. My dad even made friends with a father who sat next to him in the tea-tasting session and plays chess with him now. I’m glad he made new friends.”

From understanding his own shortcomings and the needs of his parents, to bringing other children closer to their parents, Ying described the experience as challenging and rewarding at the same time. “At the end of the day, a regular job will always give you a framework to follow, but this project lets me do what I really care about. There’s a lot I could do better, but the satisfaction is greater.” Working two jobs at the same time, he has never treated Bring Parents For Fun as a hobby or an “escape” from his work. “This project is about the meaning of life. Going to work is part of life for sure, but not all of it. I want to do something besides work to create value for society and give myself a sense of satisfaction. Therefore, this is something I must do,” Ying said slowly but surely.

