

By Razzel Ann Vergara



The Qualities of a Truly-Educated Man

What really constitutes education? How can we tell whether a person is educated or not? Is being educated purely a function of one's ability to memorize or exhibit grammatical prowess? Are there certain books that you have to read? Does it mean graduating with highest honors in a very reputable institution? Or does it mean being prepared to join the work force? Do you need to have an advanced degree in order to be considered well-educated? These are some of the recurrent questions in intellectual scheme.

When you hear the word "educated", you can surely give your own different definition like academic, intellectual, literate or knowledgeable. But being educated does not necessarily mean having abundant general or specialized knowledge. It does not only mean having an undergraduate or advanced degree. As Ramsay MacDonald said:

"The educated man is a man with certain subtle spiritual qualities which make him calm in adversity, happy when alone, just in his dealings, rational and sane in the fullest meaning of that word in all the affairs of his life."

If we ponder on with this definition, we can see that education is not only about the accumulation of knowledge, whether professional or vocational, but matters of behavior or values. The acquisition of knowledge is valuable for it makes us virtuous and happy. But we should not use our knowledge merely for material success in life.

Then what are the qualities needed to be remarked as a truly-educated man? Let us elaborate MacDonald's definition.

An educated person remains calm in adversity. He is self-aware. He knows how to perceive and manage his own internal states of emotions. He has the ability to face and control unpleasant situations instead of being controlled by them. He remains calm even when mistreated by other people who dislike him. He has the ability to conceptualize and solve problems from multiple perspectives. He knows how to resolve conflicts with other persons. He has the flexibility to admit when he is wrong. He has the capacity to endure and persevere. He is not easily defeated by misfortune or failure. He knows how to withstand discomfort in the short term in order to achieve his goals.

An educated person stays happy even if alone. He is happy and joyful. He has a cheerful disposition most of the time and is willing to share his joy with others. He considers open-mindedness to be a virtue. He values being open to new ideas and opinions and entertain them. He can control his pleasures.

An educated person has ethical values and integrity. He is just in all his dealings. He has the ability and the discipline to do what is right. He is committed to the systematic pursuit of truth. He has the ability to discern truth from error. He does not become arrogant and corrupt by his success and glory.

An educated person is rational and reasonable. He has the ability to reason analytically and critically. He has the ability to think clearly and independently and has good judgment. He knows how to acquire knowledge and skills and make productive use of it. He is innovative and adaptable to changes. He is devoted to a set of principles. He defends his beliefs and if proved to be inconvenient, he is able to debate confidently and calmly. He does not blindly accept what he is being told and knows how to make his own decisions. He is not self-centered. He has equal esteem for everyone, without regard to gender, race, religion, country of origin and so on. He has the ability to see connections among disciplines, ideas and cultures. He understands human nature and able to maintain and improve relationships. He knows how to cooperate and collaborate effectively with others to get their trust and respect.

An educated person is also a persuasive leader. He has developed a personal philosophy that will allow him to be happy. He has the discipline to constantly improve and the ability to pursue lifelong learning. Summing up, an educated person is someone who has been educated in a holistic manner: spiritually, morally, physically and intellectually.

A person possessing these qualities is admirable but I was wondering if this can be adopted by the present world. Unfortunately, many of us would abandon this rational argument. But if we were better educated, we would know that an educated person has a commitment to the rational process of finding truth, and a commitment to self-examination

and articulation of truth. Lastly, we would understand our responsibility in helping to remedy the shortcomings of this society. We have an obligation to make this world a better place than when we found it.

Razzel Ann Vergara is involved in accounting for construction projects and taxation of Vinhar Construction and Marketing. She is a Certified Public Accountant.

This column accepts contributions from accountants, especially articles that are of interest to the accountancy profession, in particular, and to the business community, in general. These can be e-mailed to boa.secretariat@gmail.com