



NOBLE GOALS ARE JUST THAT, NOBLE GOALS!

I had asked “Irene, so what’s your noble goal?” She mischievously replied, “I need to go home and start thinking about it carefully.”

Irene was a participant at our Certification workshop in June last year. I had posed the question half in jest to Irene during our EQ Practitioner Certification program after a discussion on Pursuing Noble Goals. A Noble Goal sounds so big, larger than ourselves, that we feel compelled to think if it is worthwhile enough before declaring it to the world. That was probably what Irene was thinking about then.

On 20 April this year, Irene Ong became the tragic victim of a senseless murder committed by two snatch thieves at Gasing Hill, a favourite spot for hiking and trekking in Petaling Jaya. Irene was with her teenage daughter when it happened. She was stabbed four times and died from her wounds.

News of her death shocked family and friends. Many were heart-broken and angry at the way Irene lost her life. She was much loved, respected, and admired by all who knew her. Her warmth touched the lives of others, especially those who thought themselves too insignificant to matter. CEOs, community leaders, teachers, janitors, stall operators, parents and, neighbours spoke of how Irene made them all feel that no one was unimportant to her.

Irene was Director of Kids Programs in a Kiwanis Club, an international non-profit organization involved in alleviating the plight of disadvantaged children. She was a CELTA-certified English Tutor as well as Relief Teacher at an international school in Kuala Lumpur. During school holidays, she led Vacation Bible School activities for children in her church. Irene was also very active in the Parents Teachers Association of her daughter’s school. As a member of an NGO called Safer Malaysia, she actively supported public safety awareness in the country.

As a wife and mother, she made sure her family needs were not neglected. And as a woman of faith, there was always time for God in spite of her many commitments.

Our love for the environment or community shouldn’t be an excuse to shirk our responsibility towards our family or for deepening spiritual awareness. Irene’s example testified to her priorities – God, family, work and, the community.

The pursuit of our noble goals is really about building a legacy for ourselves. We may never fulfill them all in our lifetime, but it’s what people will remember long after we are gone. There are many worthy causes such as saving the whales or fighting global warming, but sometimes simpler goals may be just as noble. Like showing love to others, those we know and those who happen to cross our paths, even a stranger asking for a drink of water. A noble goal is one that is not focused on the self but done out of love and commitment, often at the cost of personal sacrifice and inconvenience.

Learning from Irene, we see that the pursuit of noble goals is about being with people and making time for them. It means genuine listening when conversing, showing kindness and compassion, being generous and giving. It also includes caring for our community and environment, and being responsible for each person we meet on life’s journey. In this way our noble goals find expression as we align our intentions and purpose with daily actions.

In a word, Irene’s noble goal was in GIVING ... and Irene had given plenty indeed. In loving and giving towards her family and community, she impacted lives and contributed towards a better Malaysia. And what a noble goal it is for us all to emulate!

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