

## The Peril of Young People's Work Attitude Today

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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In recent years, we've been observing a phenomenon in which young people who are capable of working are not contributing themselves to society. Society calls them NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training). Instead of working to support themselves, they are living off of their parents. Such a mentality of shunning work in favor of an easy life is truly worrisome. It will bring about problems not only for the NEETs themselves, but also for our society.

Young people today like to take things easy. When they are looking for work, instead of thinking about contributing to society, they tend to go for the "easy" jobs: jobs that pay well, with minimum work hours and minimal responsibilities. Jobs that are considered hard, involving heavy labor, or "low ranking" don't even make it to their consideration list.

As such, we're seeing vacancies in many essential professions. But, for a society to function, we need all kinds of trades and professions. When there is a shortfall in certain professions or services, people's lives will be impacted. Take a look at jobs involving machinery. Skilled mechanical work is an example of a line that young people are not interested in but is central to everyone's needs. Nowadays, fewer people are taking up work involving machines and these trades are facing shortages. As a result, the demands of society cannot be met. We can see this happening at the Abode. We use many machines to make various products to support our livelihood. Those machines need maintenance; broken or worn out parts need to be fixed or replaced. Because those parts are custom made, and it is more difficult now to find people in Taiwan who have the skill to custom make them, we end up having to learn these skills ourselves. Jobs involving the making, operating, and repairing of machines are very important, because they help produce various goods that we use every day, such as clothing and food. Since many machines are heavy and bulky, heavy labor is involved. So, people are not choosing this kind of hard work. When people don't want to perform important work such as this, fewer of the goods that we need will be produced. Shortage of goods will lead to problems in our society.

While there are jobs out there lying vacant, we see a group of young people capable of working idling. Growing up in a society that is becoming increasingly complicated and filled with temptations, and being influenced by all sorts of messages from the media, TV, internet, etc., they cannot identify what is essential in life. Compare this to previous generations: young people in the past had a much clearer goal in life. They knew from an early age that life is about working and contributing to family and society, and they would start sharing their parents' burden of supporting the family when they were old enough and capable of working, usually in their teens.

Those youngsters would take an apprenticeship under a master craftsman to learn a trade. No matter how difficult or how many years it took, they willingly learned from their master until they

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had acquired the necessary skill and discipline. After they had successfully learned a trade, they could work and contribute to their family. When they started a family of their own, they would have the means to make a living to support themselves and provide for their family. Having a job meant survival to them. As long as there was work they could do to earn a wage and provide steady income, they would take it on no matter how much labor the job entailed.

Young people today lack this mentality. They are not thinking seriously about their life or taking responsibility for their future. As such, they continue to rely on their parents for support. If young people are not working and contributing, our society will slowly lose people to perform essential job functions. The fabric of our society will then slowly crumble because important services and goods will not be provided.

To prevent this from happening, young people today ought to stand up and make their own way; they should not be afraid of taking on hard work, and should learn correct life values. By contributing through work, they will add meaning to their life and keep our society functioning.

Written by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

Based on Dharma Master Cheng Yen's conversations with volunteers in Chinese