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Photo of the actual location at mock-up house
Editorial

There is something about the cliche nature of topics on leadership that masks its true vitality as a pillar of societal progress. Just as we are easily turned off by didactic rants on the subject, we find ourselves in need of effective, humane and innovative leadership now more so than we have been in recent decades. While many are adopting more tribalistic and divisive methods of leadership, it is within the power of our collective consciousness to come to a place of integral understanding on the matter.

And what better place to discuss such an issue than within the pages of this edition of Traidhos Quarterly? Here, we observe leadership on stages as grand as a vast interconnected field (page 15), at the communal level (page 10) and at scales as minute as an ant colony (page 6). We recognise the responsibility of the individual to make effective leadership choices (page 20), and then warn of the dangers of relinquishing too much of that authority to external forces (page 7). The stage play of leadership is both dramatic (page 11) and robotically energised (page 14). With all of this, we hope that your form a new definition of leadership for yourself (page 18).

Leadership is one of the core values celebrated at Traidhos Three-Generation Community for Learning, and it is emphasized in both the everyday and long-term education of all the students engaged in its programmes. To benefit from this core value, a leader must be open to their surroundings and receptive to the changes occurring around them at all times. Only then can one lead their community — and each generation within it.

The Three-Generation Community is a unique educational centre. It offers Prem Tinsulanonda International School (an IB World day and boarding school), a dynamic Visiting Schools Program, the exciting Traidhos Camps, an artists’ residency program, an educational farm and a converted rice barge used for educational environmental studies on the Chao Phraya River in and around Bangkok.

Cover Image – The Traidhos community offers their condolences to the people of Thailand in remembrance of His Majesty the King, Rama IX of Thailand.

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by Roald Dahl
(based on "The Twits - Plays for Children" adapted by David Wood)

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Sailing Towards a New Leadership

Head of School Alun Cooper, recognising developments in technology, offers insights into how our leadership strategies should reflect an upcoming paradigm shift.

The concept of leadership is not a static one. Indeed, over time the very definition has been subject to almost constant change. If one considers for a moment the captain of a warship and contrasts the role of leadership over the course of the last three hundred years, we will quickly appreciate the almost despotic leadership of that captain. In this epoch, the captain was the outright master—the only person who effectively knew the mission. If we compare that reality with today’s captain of a warship, we find a completely different relationship with other members of the crew. The leadership is now distributed among each member of the team, as they all have a very clear idea of his or her role within the mission and could replace another team member if necessary.

In the example of the captain of the sailing ship, he would have received written orders that would probably not be changed until the end of the mission some many months in the future. His world was effectively limited to the physical dimension of his vessel. His communications were restricted to fellow officers, and his view of the world was, because of isolation on the high seas, iconoclastic. Loneliness was a constant companion, and fear of failure convinced him of the necessity to maintain a rigid code of discipline whereby all defaulters were made example of so as to maintain the status quo.

From the high seas to our schools

There are parallels in schools that are worth considering. Famous headmasters such as Thomas Arnold at Rugby School, or more recently Anthony Chenevis-Trench at Eton College, could easily be compared to this archetypal captain with respect to their autonomy and their almost despotic authority within their respective schools. Yet, they are not alone. Even in more progressive schools, “written orders” were made to convey specific content to students to ensure that when they were externally examined, they would achieve high scores upon which the school was judged to be successful or not. Teachers were chosen for their subject specific knowledge, as well as for their ability to prepare their students for high stakes examination and, more recently, to be successfully placed in “league tables.” Teachers largely worked in academic departments, and there was no real need for those departments to communicate with others, as each department’s content was so specific and unrelated to that of another’s. Pedagogy reflected the twin needs of preparing students for academic success and the iconoclastic structure of academic departments.

Our contemporary world has, however, changed and is continuing to change at an amazing speed. Two major developments have contributed to the creation of those changes: the Internet and brain research. The work in these areas is redefining what we believe while propelling discussions that are radically changing how we operate in schools as well as in other professions.

Today our world is connected as never before. The Internet has effectively changed our view of the world—no less so than in being able to readily access knowledge as fast as it is being published. Indeed, it is not now sufficient to read that knowledge, but now we are able to listen to experts discuss that knowledge through a variety of different lenses. Beyond that, we are able to connect with those experts and challenge their thinking with questions of our own. The potential for genuine understanding has been expanded and further enhanced with multimedia presentations that allow the learner to find the connections that will promote enduring comprehension. There is an increasing need for this when one considers how knowledge is growing exponentially.

The Knowledge Doubling Curve

Buckminster Fuller, who created the "Knowledge Doubling Curve", noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every twenty-five years. Today things are changing even more rapidly, but not as simple to generalise as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology knowledge is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every eighteen months. But on average human knowledge is doubling every thirteen months. According to IBM, the build out of the “internet of things” will lead to the doubling of knowledge every twelve hours.
Schools can play a part in either developing or neglecting students’ subjective well-being. They cannot do so, however, when they are locked into an instrumental mindset that views students exclusively in terms of their ability to produce a good return on society’s investment in them; i.e. to be solely judged on their ability to be “successful” at external examinations. Children and adolescents are not raw material to be used in such a way as they have their own interests that they want to pursue and their own personalities to develop. Educators must respect and nourish this spirited independence, which is why it is important that the school be a place where teachers and their students bring their whole selves to encounter one another with dignity and respect, so that students flourish in ways that reach far beyond whatever their test scores reflect. This is the existential imperative of educational change.

Faced with the evidence of such change, it stands to reason that the very concept of leadership must also evolve, and that leaders themselves must strive to embrace the new paradigm that is at play within our schools. How? Now that is the question.

Alun Cooper has been the Head of School at Prem since August 2014. He is a highly regarded international school educator with over twenty-eight years of leading schools worldwide. He has worked with the IB curriculum in the Americas, Asia and Europe, and also has extensive boarding school experience.

Sources

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Photos provided by Wikimedia Commons
Govern-ants, Guide-ants

Head of Community Lynda Rolph recounts an experience when ants lead her and a group of students to new insights about leadership.

A
nts. Look closely and they are there.

With over ten thousand species worldwide, they can be found on every continent except Antarctica and in almost every ecosystem, from temperate forests, to mountaintops, deserts and even human environments.

Ants.
As nature’s vacuum cleaners, they keep our planet’s waste under control.

They are talked about frequently in Thailand, where countless people have returned home to find a packet of half-eaten snacks overrun with ants, or marveled at a dozen ants aligned perfectly shoulder to shoulder around a droplet of sweet soda. And what about the nearly microscopic ants that appear from nowhere? You can barely see them, but you suddenly sense them as they navigate your arm.

Ants.
Pay attention, and they are ready to teach us. Environmental education looks to the natural world as its teacher, and ants, as ancient social insects around since the days of the dinosaurs, can teach us many lessons. Have you ever stopped to watch a line of marching ants kept in order by their ferocious soldier counterparts brandishing fierce mandibles, unperturbed by obstacles in their wake?

Ants.
Look closely and be surprised!

One such ant line caught the attention of our young students. It was breakfast time, one cool January morning. The winter sun was barely warming the dining area enough to sit outside, but the fresh air and bright light enticed us to eat there anyway. The children finished eating quickly and started playing until they became drawn to a line of ants making their way along the wall. At first they traced the pulsating artery to find where it had come from and then looked around to see where the ants were going. As interest in this waned, curiosity took over and someone wanted to know what the ants would eat for breakfast. By this point, all of the children voluntarily engaged themselves in the experiment, offering an ant-sized ham, toast and lettuce buffet. We counted how long it took for the ants to visit each new food offering and observed their behaviour wide-eyed as they worked together to lift and then carry away the smaller pieces of food.

Our spontaneous lesson had the students gripped. They were fully engaged with all sorts of questions concerning everything from ant anatomy to food distribution and consumption. With wonder, the students were transfixed by the way the ants communicated through knocking their antennae together.

Ants.
We found them everywhere that day.

As we became familiar with their different behaviours, we allowed them to teach us. We learnt that in order to move a piece of leaf or breakfast ham or dead dragonfly the ants worked together in order to achieve their task. We considered their organization and the frequency at which they communicated, and we concluded through our observations of the soldier ants the importance of having the right ant for the right job. Even the youngest children were willing to help and share responsibility with their own tasks when they realized that they were working like ants!

The adults got involved too. One mother mused that these ants knew exactly what job needed to be done; they did not need a leader to stand over them. Instead, they were empowered and well-trained (or was it just biologically programmed?) to take advantage of each new food source they came across and to navigate around obstacles along their original path. They never gave up.

As our teacher and leader that day, this ant colony taught us valuable lessons about teamwork, resilience, communication and the importance of knowing your job and committing to it. Those ants were just one example of the lessons the natural world is waiting to share with us.

Look closely and reflect: what is leading you to learn?

Start today, with…

Ants.
Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!
It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Proverbs 6:6-8, The Bible

Lynda Rolph is President of Traidhos Three-Generation Community for Learning and has been working with the company for over fifteen years. She is a highly respected environmental educator, with teaching experience in United Kingdom and Thailand. She is the former director of the Three-Generation Barge Program.

Photos provided by the author.
How Would You Like Your Path Served? (A Conversation on Maps and Our Surroundings)

Traidhos Quarterly editor Nick Reale discusses the subconscious influence maps have on our lives and our capacity to reckon with it.

Consult a New York state road map from the 1930s, and the tiny hamlet of Agloe will appear at the intersection of a dirt road and route NY-206 in the remote throws of Delaware County. Its significance stems not from its size, but from what it represents and how it came to be: birthed by the map publisher General Drafting Corporation as a fictional entry meant to protect its copyright. Map companies deliberately embedded these cartographic “fibs” as inconspicuous locales that could be easily identified if a competitor was caught in the act of plagiarizing their own published work. So when Rand McNally published its own map of New York in the 1950s, General Drafting was prepared to sue—until its rival protested that an actual settlement existed at the site, which was verified by county records. Sure enough, through a bizarre feedback loop, a general store, along with a few other houses, had been built and adopted the namesake that had been featured on the map. Fiction had informed reality; the map had influenced its own surroundings.

Today, the daily experience most of us share with maps is largely relegated to the digital realm, where we are unlikely to go beyond asking, “OK, Google. Where is...?” before moving on to our next train of thought. Our understanding of the world has become increasingly narrowed to the customized and discrete paths map applications assign to us, and we rarely bother to second guess their validity—that is, of course, until they fail to do their job accurately. But those cases are rare, and we are therefore allotting an ever-growing reserve of trust (and dependence) upon these maps to do the critical thinking for us.

The fail-safe tool

Why are we generally so passive to the commands of the map, and what has brought about the change in our relationship with them? Part of this comes from two major causes. Firstly, we are hardwired to understand the relationship between bits of information in a linear fashion: “If A, and then C, then B is in there too...” We call this a story, and in the case with maps, we believe in this story with such conviction because it’s built on the assumption that the chosen medium acts as an infallible tool. How could a document with such a clearly stated purpose to represent the world as it is allow itself to be vulnerable to distortion?

We are generally much more quick to scrutinize and question the validity of textual language rather than visual language, as evidenced by a range of cultural factors from educational norms to the dominance of verbal/textual language as the basis of communication in our society. As Nick Sousanis points out in his graphic novel, Unflattening, that, “The verbal is over-privileged as the only path to serious thought—a single strand narrows our thought. A thermometer provides but a partial view of the weather, we need other modes.” The map, though relying on both visual and verbal language, presents its visual information more prominently than its textual. The symbolism is presented as information there for the readers to arrange as they understand it best and is amenable to their own rationality, allowing the truth to become malleable.

Erasing the author’s name

One of the other major causes to our passive relationships with maps is the lack of notable authorship. To be sure, maps are copyrighted media, with a person or company having a vested interest in the rights to what the map has to say. But these rights have long been stamped with signatures that are not prominently displayed and in which the signatory is not an individual, but rather a corporation or a government agency. The publishing of a map is not always motivated by a priority to orient spaces for the common good. With the ubiquity of maps and their general accessibility on our smartphones and desktops, we regard them less as a media source and more as a personal tool. And this is precisely where their influence is derived from; the master who softly asserts their influence without having to remind its subjects who is in charge wields the true power.

But this does not mean that the map’s power is absolute or that we are incapable of influencing our surroundings. For although a map tells a story about the real world, it nonetheless is an abstraction, a diagrammatic representation of the real world and not the world itself. In practice, maps may set the tone of a depicted space, but we have to be the ones holding the conversation by inhabiting and using that space. As artist/geographer Trevor Paglen points out, “The production of space says that humans create the world around them and that humans are, in turn, created by the world around them...Space is not a container for human activities to take place within, but is actively ‘produced’ through human activity.”
The creation of space is all around us

How, then, do we “make” our own lives? In what ways do we create space? Our commutes to and from our place of work alone is a creation of space of sorts. During the act of driving or walking or riding bike—any journey from one point in space across time to another—our minds create a new set of relationships as new information is presented to us. As we note details of significance to us, such as the (perceived) efficiency of the route, or how our mood is affected by stimuli around us (e.g., traffic), we build a mental map built on an odd mix of rationality and emotions that will dictate whether or not we will continue to use the same route in the future.

In truth, we do not even need to leave our house in order to produce space in a way that is meaningful to us. Simply settling in and populating it with particular furnishings, decorations, scents and appliances is also a production of space that directly reflects who we are through our tastes and attitudes. Whether we gravitate towards filling a space wholesomely or sparsely, we are applying to a space a bit of ourselves, which will affect our actions, how we interact with others and ultimately how the space is used in the long term. It is here, through our own actions and self-awareness, where we can maintain control of how we understand and impact our surroundings. The map is embodied in our actions, not an external physical tool that we must consult in order to guide our actions.

An increased dependence on mapping applications—and, to a larger extent, any technology that meddles with our ability to discern and reason on our own terms—threatens to negatively impact our ability to do these things. Are these cognitive advantages something we are truly willing to part with for the sake of convenience or expediency? For those of us so quick to blindly follow predetermined routes generally by Google Maps, we are doing two incorrigible things to ourselves: to our minds, we are replacing our critical thinking muscle with thoughtless flab, and to our hearts, we are abdicating the power of experimentation and the joy of adventure to the soullessness of routine.

If you were to drive to the intersection of the unmarked dirt road and NY-206 today, you would find nothing more than virgin woods and the now closed Agloe General Store. An ersatz town built on fiction can only last for so long in reality. But its effect on mapping lives on, both in the lure of mapmaking communities, and in the “actual” maps we use in our daily lives. A Google Maps search entry can offer you directions to it from any point on the globe. But you need not even go that far. Take a look up from this document and ask yourself what brought you here to read this, and watch as the map of your surroundings unfolds before your eyes.

Nick Reale is the editor of Traidhos Quarterly. He was born on a busy archipelago off the coast of America. He studies maps, draws maps, talks about maps to those who will listen, and when he gets tired of those things he writes and performs poetry. He’s all over the place, but for now he’s content with Chiang Mai.

Sources:


Illustrations provided by the author.
A Local Perspective on Leadership

The leaders of the Sangob Foundation discuss an example of humane leadership that reflects the communal values their team works with.

At Sangob foundation, we have been hard at work developing diverse projects aiming at preserving, through education, some of our most important cultural traditions such as natural building, local music and dance, herbal medicine, protecting the forest, ethnic weaving. Lately, one of those projects has been gaining considerable momentum thanks to the knowledge, dedication and leadership of a very special woman, Khun Sa.

Khun Sa is a young Karen woman we met a few years ago back in her village high in the mountains. As time went by and our relationship strengthened, we began designing an educational project now called The Karen Way of Life. This project has two main goals. First, it aims at exposing international students to an authentic example of sustainable community living. Beyond that, it gives the villagers the opportunity to proudly share their daily customs as well as their weaving skills with the students as they get a chance to practice this intricate craftsmanship.

A year and half later, the village has now welcomed school groups from Australia, Canada, China, Thailand and Singapore. Each visit sees a growing number of students and teachers purchasing hand-made Karen clothes, including bags, scarves, shirts, sarongs and much more. It was then that Khun Sa came up with a brilliant idea.

She faced a choice: personal benefit versus community growth.

As a workshop leader, Khun Sa gets a decent remuneration from our foundation. She could have chosen to sell her own clothes and get an additional income to provide for her family. She could have had more and could have wanted more. Instead, she called on the elder women of the village, gathering their clothes and chose instead to share the profits with the community. This might appear to be a simple gesture, but it shows that an individual decision based on fairness rather than personal gain can positively impact a community. This shows integrity and real care for the people. These are vital qualities our students need to develop as they prepare to become tomorrow's leaders. Khun Sa is a living example of how leadership can start with a “small and just” action.

Back at the foundation, we reflected on this anecdote and on the journey that took us from a simple “friend meeting” to what it has developed into. We realised that the success of this particular project is directly related to the communal decision making process: every voice is heard. We think, propose, reflect and adjust together with the villagers. Ideas grow as we brainstorm; we take turn at being leader as everyone has different ideas to offer. This form of “shared leadership” is quite a different approach and has helped us grow ethically.

Finally, the criteria on which we base our decisions are in fact the three pillars of modern permaculture: Earth care, people care and fair share. If properly balanced, they will result in a just and equitable outcome, ensuring a more humane tomorrow.

The Sangob Foundation was founded to preserve and transmit ancient artistic and cultural knowledge, both locally and internationally. Our projects are educational and help perpetuate endangered customs such as traditional music, dance, weaving, spiritual ceremonies, natural healing and natural building.

Photos provided by Sangob Foundation.
Why did you choose *The Twits* as your next production at Prem?

I have always loved Roald Dahl’s children’s stories. His characters delightfully represent human foibles and peccadillos, their fatal flaws often creating hilarious consequences for them. *The Twits* is a comic story of a husband and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Twit, who both think they have grown wiser as they have aged, but in fact they have become more stupid.

Roald Dahl’s ability to paint vivid pictures of these eccentric characters is beyond compare. As soon as I read the book I immediately visualised these characters coming to life in comic glory on the stage.

This production will also reunite the creative team of choreographer Agnieszka Wdowik and costume designer Erika Schmidt, who wowed Prem audiences with their combined creative genius in the productions of *Troy* (2013) and *Arabian Nights* (2014).

This has parallels to the Buddhist concept of cause and effect whereby our thoughts and actions influence who we become by what we attract to our lives. The ugly, selfish cruelty of the Twits’ lives stands in vivid contrast to the importance Thai culture places on *nam jai* (generosity of heart) and *kreng jai* (literally, “awe of the heart”, which is generally understood to be one’s desire not to disrupt another’s happiness).

How would you describe your directorial style?

I am predominantly a visual director. For me the ‘mis-en-scene’, which is a French phrase referring to the arrangement of design aspects of a production, is paramount. Eighty percent of the information we take in from our world comes from the sense of sight. As the saying goes, “A picture paints a thousand words,” and in the theatre that picture is a living, dynamic three-dimensional organism. Directing is also about manipulating audience focus; that is, getting the audience to look where you want them to look so that the message of the script is communicated with maximum power.

What leadership opportunities are there for students in production crew and how do you develop them?

Each role of the production crew on both the creative team and administrative teams has at least one student assistant allotted to each of the following positions:

- 1st assistant director
- 2nd assistant director
- assistant choreographer
- stage manager
- assistant stage manager
- sound operator
- lighting operator
- social media marketing leader
- social media marketing assistants
- assistant hair and make-up designer

What are some of the thematic takeaways from the play that your students could apply to their lives outside of theatre?

I love the concept that Mrs. Twit wasn’t born ugly, but rather she became so by thinking ugly thoughts each day.
Once the student has demonstrated competence in a particular area, he/she is given the opportunity to, for example, direct a scene or develop the choreography. The student stage managers take on more responsibility for running the show as the rehearsals progress and then take complete control of the production for all of the performances.

What is one of the most crucial components of the production process that generally goes unnoticed or unappreciated by aspiring thespians until they take on the responsibility themselves?

It is crucial to be able to transform the vision of a scene into a three-dimensional reality on stage. The creation of the ‘mis-en-scene’ is a skill that I begin teaching and developing with my drama students in their very first unit in Grade 6. In theatre, unlike film, there is no camera that can zoom in and take close ups of the actors’ faces and body gestures. The stage actor must be able to communicate with his body and his voice to the audience members sitting in the last row of the top balcony. This communication is not achieved solely by amplifying the voice but through careful and creative construction of the ‘mis-en-scene’ so that the picture itself amplifies the message.

How do you facilitate student-to-student collaboration?

Directing starts with a vision which is realized through the assemblage of an enthusiastic creative team. In the year prior to the production, I invite my Grade 9 and 10 drama students to make suggestions for the choice of play. In the early rehearsals I try to create a climate where the actors feel free to bring anything they want to their roles. Through improvisation and experimentation it soon becomes apparent what works and what doesn’t work for the creation of a particular character. Then comes the critical part of building the ensemble. The director must build trust, cooperation and collaboration with his team. This comes from empowering the cast and crew to take on the necessary responsibility for their own roles and then assist others, through role modeling, to focus their energy to realizing the production.

What are some pieces of advice you offer your students to balance their urge to take initiative with the need to share their responsibilities?

In an amateur production there is an overwhelming urge for any member of a production team to think they have a better way of staging a scene or creating a character. Rather than discarding these various ideas, I ask the students to put forward their ideas to the 1st Assistant Director who collates them and presents them at subsequent production meetings. If the ideas work well with the vision and the directorial concept of the play then they are incorporated and the individual is acknowledged for their creative input.

What are some invaluable lessons on leadership unique to the theatrical production process? How might they be applied elsewhere in the professional world?

A good leader attracts followers by leading through example and by earning the trust of their teams through collaboration and empowerment.

The students in the production crew must firstly demonstrate exceptional organizational skills and the ability to take on responsibility. They also need to demonstrate the ability to maintain focus in the face of the inevitable problems that any theatrical production presents. This includes multitasking and sharing the load when a student in the cast or crew is absent. Being adaptable at all times while keeping in mind the goal of achieving the vision of the production.

My response is always the same: "Adapt, adjust, keep calm and carry on."

The Twits will be performed at the Prem Auditorium on the following dates:
Thursday 23 February 7.00 pm
Friday 24 February 1.00 pm and 7.00 pm
Ticket prices:
Adults THB 250
Children under 13 THB 150

Borys Maciburko is a Drama, Theatre and mindfulness teacher. He has a degree in Educational Theatre from the University of Adelaide, Australia. In addition to many highly successful school productions, he has also been producer and director of professional theatre productions in Australia.
Independence (2016)
Amu Endo
Oil paint on canvas 110 x 80 cm

Amu is a Grade 12 student who currently leads the Exploria Arts program after school. She has led three groups: for oil pastels, for cartoon-style drawing and for painting. Her work featured here concerns press freedom issues in Japan.
Autonomous Robots Still Need Leaders

The Robotics Club of the co-curricula programme Exploria recently participated in a robotics competition at Payap University. Here is what one of their members has to say about communication and leadership.

Over the past six months, I have initiated and led the after school Robotics Club. We recently participated in the International Open SumoBot Competition hosted by Payap University, which was the end goal for starting the club. Participating with university students provided invaluable learning experiences. For the team’s hard work and effort, we were rewarded with second place in the autonomous robot class.

I believe, as Tom Peters says, that true “leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders,” and I feel that the way forward is forged through co-operation, sharing, flexibility and working together as equals. This has guided my approach in leading the robotics club for Prem.

I faced numerous challenges and grew from overcoming them when initiating and directing this club. Before the club was even organised, I had to inquire with ajarns at Payap University as to whether they would allow schools to compete, as it was originally formatted as a university-only competition. Following their approval, I then contacted my friends from other international schools to see if their schools were also interested in participating. In order to make the club an official component of the Exploria programme, I needed to find and coordinate with a full-time supervisor who would be comfortable supervising us while we used tools in the workshop, which proved to be a difficult task. Through these steps I realized that the most important aspect of leadership was communication.

Once the club was up and running, communication among the students continued to be a top priority. This was the most challenging aspect of leading the club, as I had to direct nearly fifteen other students, many of whom were much younger. The range of age, levels of experience and enthusiasm resulted in a dynamic group, with multiple subgroups demanding my attention at the same time. Despite this pressure during our weekly sessions, I still stuck to my vision of leadership and tried to use the club as an opportunity to teach them the necessary skills to become their own leaders, with the capacity to complete their own similar projects in the future.

Not only did we have fun competing, our robot achieved far beyond our expectations in the autonomous class despite its simple design compared to the universities’ robots. Beyond that, our ultrasonic sensors, acting as the “eyes” of the robot, were not working properly for about half the time. We concluded that our robot was successful purely because of weight and brute pushing power. The silicone wheels that we made were infallible and slightly slipped just once in the entire competition due to some dust. Our remote-controlled robots were not as effective; KanyeBot-9000 performed well but broke down in its second fight, and the Wedge of Death was too weak and difficult to control with its small motors, which produced very low torque. As Ryan, one of the team members, ironically pointed out, “It was called the Wedge of Death because it kept dying.” On the bright side, KanyeBot-9000 won the trophy for “Best Robot Name.”

I also found myself unexpectedly under intense amounts of pressure while trying to fix our robots between rounds. This was challenging since I had to figure out the best way to work with others while many of them were highly excitable.

The experience of leading a club in the Exploria programme and participating in the competition has been wonderful for everyone on the team, myself included. We had a vision and were able to successfully bring it to life. I hope this inspires others to follow their passion and turn their ideas into a reality. In the words of Harry Truman, “You can accomplish anything in life, provided that you don’t mind who gets the credit.”

Kade is a Grade 11 student currently undertaking the Diploma Programme at Prem Tinsulanonda International School. He initiated and leads the Prem Robotics Club. When Kade is not busy with his studies, he is usually designing and building something for one of his many artistic/technology-based DIY projects.

Photos provided by the author.
We live in a world of infinite possibilities, and it is for this reason that we create our own realities, our own ways of being that conform best to what we need as individuals. How selfish! But guess what? The more we take what we need to thrive, the more prepared we are to give the best of ourselves to this world—and the more excited we are to do so. For each person on this Earth is a great and heroic leader who has come to this life to be nothing less than that.

Set your doubts aside, for they only stand between you and your potential, which is limitless. What use would there be in resisting my thesis except to hold to your own belief system, which you have come to treat as an organ more vital than your own heart! But what if it’s not an organ, but a tumor sapping the life from you?

Redefining the Concept of Leadership

It might be an intellectual endeavor in the beginning, but try to entertain the notion that the Life Path is designed to make leaders of us all. A world replete with leaders—not a single follower to be seen. How is this possible? How could we get anything done? It’s time to redefine the concept of leader as we move into an age in which the once steep slope of hierarchy is leveling out.

We will say that a leader is a pathmaker, but the path they make is, paradoxically, always waiting to be discovered. And no single path is traced in its entirety by more than one pair of feet. While nearly all paths converge with many others, the combination of intersections and convergences is unique to each of us. Each path that we overlap with changes us, just as our own footfall indelibly alters each path’s terrain. As navigators of our own path, we are guided along by all other paths and their own “makers” that we encounter. We need each other to become the leaders we are destined to be.

Before any of this can begin, we must realize that, for many of us, our paths overlap far too much; too many of us neglect ourselves by being tethered to the norm of conformity, a remnant of the now-decomposing archaic leadership system. Bound up in boxcars, we feel stifled by the recycled air of our prescribed reality. Haven’t you looked out the windows? The tracks of convention upon which our trains of thought have been conditioned to run are surrounded by a vast, Technicolor panorama—a formless field.

Imagine this as the field.

The Quest in the Field

Stepping out into the field can be quite terrifying at first because our path cannot be viewed in the conventional means. Where do we start? But then we realize that we are not alone. Someone—the perfect one—walks right up to us and takes us by the hand. Somehow, they know just where we should go, even if they are unaware that they perform this role of Wayshower. They lead by example in the way of a mentor. Apart from the Wayshowers, there are others we meet out in the field, others we swear had remained on the train. Before we disembark, there is a part of us, a fragment, which is already wandering the field. In our unconscious, we are always connected to it! If we weren’t we would never get off that train.

When we take that first step out into the field, we make inevitable our impending wholeness, and it is in that moment that our leadership role begins. Anyone can do this. Don’t
sell yourself short. Think of the person you admire the most. That’s you. When you see them you see your own path.

Now, to speak of we the leaders as Wayshowers. Out in the field, when we come across those fragments of the passengers, we can influence them—almost as if the complete entity were there. When we, the seasoned walkers of the path, find our state of wholeness out in the field, we can show to these fragments glimpses of the field’s beauty to help coax their corresponding bodies off the train. Unlike more traditional leaders, the Wayshower’s duty is not to create a dependency, but an independence. If we do not lead those in our care to self-mastery, then we run a great risk of straying from our own path, for the path of the Wayshower does not entail domination and control. The leaders themselves become dominated and controlled in this way and, before they know it, they are right back on the train.

What We Are Really After

The name of the game is self-empowerment, which is achieved through many systems, or many combinations of systems laid out, consciously or unconsciously, by other Wayshowers. But remember, the system is only a vehicle; it must lead you to your own system as you gather all your fragments together. The path and the system must eventually become one.

Be patient with the process. The truth is that there isn’t just one train—there are many. And so, there are many fragments that we must gather before we ourselves become whole. This process, while seemingly tedious, is a beautiful game that we all can win. The more of our fragments we gather, the more we understand our role as Wayshowers. Our lives will become an inspiration to other passengers. If you at all doubt you have any business working as a Wayshower, think again. You are an integral part of this reality and everything you do is important.

If you do choose to go deeper, know that this may end up being the most difficult thing you have ever done. Fragment retrieval is sometimes a painful process, and the field of infinite possibilities can be overwhelming to a mind that has grown so accustomed to the finite. Once you let go and trust that you are the pathmaker, however, the way will open up and, before you know it, you will effortlessly recognize fragments and give them just what they need to make that first step—even if it’s just a hug.

Brad Ward is an educator, yoga practitioner, the author of two novels (one upcoming) and the man behind the folk rock band, One Hand Clap. After living in Thailand for several years, he has recently begun traveling again.

Photos provided by Wikimedia Commons, Nick Reale and Indi Samarajiva.
GOOD CARE, GOOD LIFE

When somebody dear to you needs professional care, a decision can be difficult. A ‘care home’ can often be a lonely place. If however, a beautiful countryside resort with a carefree ambience is combined with qualified staff, it creates an ideal product. And such a place exists in Chiang Mai. It is called Vivo bene Village.

Here, nurses and occupational therapists blend unobtrusively with resident guests. Standards are high. In 2016, the Village received five stars in the “Long Stay” accreditation from Thailand’s Department of Tourism. This award demands high operational skills, and advanced levels of customer care.

Swiss-managed with multi-lingual staff, the Village offers four inclusive packages including day care, convalescence and monthly arrangements. Other options and meal plans can be tailored to individual needs. Dietary requirements are a specialty, including weight loss, juicing and ‘detox’. The resort’s organic garden provides fresh pesticide-free vegetables. With excellent leisure facilities and lovely tree-shaded gardens, Vivo bene Village blends the pleasures of a tranquil rural resort with multiple aspects of wellness, and well being.

THE FOUR VIVO BENE CARE PACKAGES
For more detailed information please see: www.vivobene.co.th

dayCARE (9am-6pm) includes basic assistance, different activities, coffee break, snacks, and a Thai lunch. Price: THB 900.– per person per day. Home pick up or drop off can be arranged on request.

afterCARE includes overnight accommodation, breakfast and medical supervision (e.g. for injections, dressings, etc.) up to a total of 4 hours a day. Price per person per day/overnight: THB 2,350.– This package helps to ensure a safe and rapid recovery from illness or injury.

The following two arrangements are on a monthly basis. They offer different levels of care, plus a number of attractive benefits such as free laundry (see box) Full board is based on Thai cuisine, and optional western meal plans are available.

essentialCARE includes accommodation, full board, and up to an hour of essential care every day such as assistance bathing/getting dressed. Rates per person single occupancy: THB 42,000 per person per month. Extra person sharing room: THB 29,000 per month.

parentalCARE includes accommodation, full board, care assistance up to a total of four hours daily, Rates per person single occupancy per month: THB 59,000.– Extra person sharing room: THB 29,000.–

VALUABLE BENEFITS INCLUDED IN THE MONTHLY PACKAGES

- Free personal laundry - five items daily (not dry cleaning)
- Unlimited soft drinks, tea, coffee in accommodation
- A 20% discount on personal extras such as food & drinks
- Use of a fully equipped kitchen & Espresso coffee machine
- Use of a comfortable lounge, reading and dining area

- Use of a separate television/video lounge
- Occupational therapists and carers on hand
- Resort activities, e.g. exercise, yoga & meditation
- Advice on healthy eating, dieting and weight loss
- Free Wi-Fi 24 hours

To book, for more information, or arrange an inspection of Vivo bene’s facilities and services, please contact: info@vivobene.co.th or call 053 495000

Vivo bene (Thailand) Co., Ltd.
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Redefining H-E-A-L-T-H-Y for Leadership’s Sake

Dr. Angela M. Shuttlesworth discusses her method of effective leadership with a personal moniker she developed for her business and global project, Healthy Villages, LLC.

I am a social worker by training and most of all, at heart. I started this journey on a prayer call with my heart in dire pain due to police brutality committed against African Americans. I asked for Pastor Miriam Niles to pray for more leaders and what I interpreted from her response was, “No, we live in a world of abundance. We don’t need more leaders, we need leaders to actually stand and walk in their power.”

That conversation was one of the experiences that propelled me to start a business as homage to my abilities and a personal choice to create my own freedom. My mentor recommended that I merge my passion and my love of research, community, healing and leadership, and thus Healthy Villages, LLC was born. My goal is to heal the world one strategy at a time, which I have begun by facilitating the creation of healthy workplaces and organizations. In my quest to define things on my own terms, I developed a model using H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. as an acronym. Today, I will use this model as a guide to discuss HEALTHY leadership as an essential tool for progress:

'H' is to Honor Everyone’s Journey.

Oftentimes, we want to hear what someone says, and we may even listen to certain things as we seek understanding. However, to honor someone’s journey is to actually place yourself in their experience and seek to find a level of empathy. In that, we seek to know and understand where they are coming from, where they are going to and what they have had to go through. Thereafter we apply all of that to how they are showing up in a particular moment.

Connection often comes with judgment on the part of the listener and shame for the person who has shared. Neither are productive and only hinder our ability to connect and engage in a way that adds to our collective growth. As a leader it’s our duty to ensure that we are seeking “better” and that those that are connected to us are on a path to “better” as well.

In speaking of making our lives and the world around us “better,” I then began to think about quality. Considering how we had become a world that was accepting of and even celebrating mediocrity I wanted to push our envelope of expectation.

'E' is to Establish Excellence as Your Norm.

We must discover a deeper understanding about our "best", how our best shifts at different times and ultimately respecting that as truth. But we must also approach our work from the standpoint of excellence by giving our best, whatever it may be, at all times. We have to show up and be willing to commit, not just for others but more so for ourselves. We feel better when we show up and are allowed to show out as our best selves. When I walk away from a task, I want to know that I did it with all I had to give.

'A' is to Advance the Culture with Innovation.

During turbulent times you are blessed with an opportunity to truly assess the reality of what exists. Within that assessment, we must acknowledge the behaviors, norms and sometimes ugly truths and see them as a form of culture. By acknowledging it as such it gives us an opportunity to couple it with our strengths, abilities and power to truly move forward.

While moving forward we are able to fill the gaps of what was possibly missing. For some people it’s the simple fact that they’ve never been exposed to love and or safety. For others it’s much more complex. Whichever the case, we have to do so utilizing our creative genius, and thanks to technology it makes innovation and fulfilling individual needs much easier. By meeting individual needs we ultimately achieve collective success and advance the culture in a new way.

'L' is to Lead with Vulnerability and Joy.

Leadership oftentimes comes off in an abrasive way, with the individual proclaiming, “I’m here to give demands,” from a dictatorial standpoint. However, in reality leadership is about reaching a point where the leader can be vulnerable, but in a way that is authentic and serves the collective.”
and acknowledge the lessons learned from their mistakes. In past and current leadership roles, I have and will continue to allow my team to know that it’s okay to fail. In our ‘not falling alone’, we can get to the next space of opportunity and “better” together. We can learn from the obstacles that previously held us back and the strategies that helped us to move forward.

Per Brené Brown, “You share with those who’ve earned the right” to experience your vulnerability. But what if you feel that someone really needs the lessons resulting from your “vulnerability story,” even if they may not deserve it? In accepting delayed gratification, we can expose our vulnerability gradually, so that by the end of the interaction the other person will have hopefully earned it.

And it should be fun to lead. If you are not a passionate leader, you don’t need to be a leader. That’s something I had to learn over time. The more staff I acquired, the more I had to work beyond my expertise, which created an opportunity of vulnerability. Noticing this, my teammates made sure to provide for me in meaningful ways beyond their job descriptions. After receiving a promotion I was granted the new corner office, and I didn’t want to move. I was comfortable in my little office. I showed up to work one day, and they had “evicted” me from my old office as my transition was also a sign of their progress as well. I found more joy in them promoting me than I did from the piece of paper identifying my new title. Joy allowed me connect to my staff alongside their dreams. Aligning their vision to their work mattered to me, and they never questioned it.

'T' is to Thrive with Efficiency and Passion.

My favorite movie is The Life of David Gale. In one scene he asks, “What are you willing to die for?” Oftentimes, most people aren’t willing to die. Most will dance with the idea of a particular cause that they’re married to in the moment, as long as it’s convenient and gives them more status. But considering that question has gotten me to think about what I am willing to die for in order to give my life meaning while I am alive. It’s not about surviving, but making a choice to thrive with efficiency and passion.

'H' is Hearing with the Intention to Act.

Businesses often have a Q & A box that says, “We want your Feedback.” As a customer, I wondered if they really wanted to hear and listen to my experience, to do something about it.

In HEALTHY Leadership, you have to listen with the intention of considering resources that you will need to support someone’s goals and address their concerns before they ever provide a response. Those who are following us can hear our intentions through our words, and most of all they see it in our actions. We have to apply this in response to their verbal and nonverbal responses as it is necessary for long-term connection and impact.

'Y' is to Yield for the Awesomeness of You.

A good leader generally thinks about everybody else. However, we need to also ensure that we’re taking care of ourselves. We must also extend this sense of self-care to those who we are leading. They must feel that they too are okay; that they are in alignment; that their visions and missions are being fulfilled.

Using this model, let’s make a choice to shift the mere definition of leadership to include that which will create collective progress. That is my prescription for leading and living in a HEALTHY way.

Dr. Angela M. Shuttlesworth (DrAMS) is a leadership and engagement strategist, macro level healer and the founder of Healthy Villages, which operates worldwide. Her company is dedicated to healing the world, one strategy at a time.

Photos provided by the author.
Actions Speak Louder Than Votes

Travel writer and poet Mulv Jones contributes his take on the recent general election in the United States and the power individuals have to affect change in their world.

As the dust settles on recent world events, the current landscape seems more reminiscent of a desolate battlefield than the culmination of a democratic process. People are hurt. Not only on the side of the “losers,” but all around. The brutal two-year United States Presidential Election process, for instance, was fueled by billions of dollars, teemed with negative rhetoric, hate and distrust. And this hurt is not reserved for U.S. citizens alone. This hurt is felt globally. Our collective actions permeated much farther than our own borders.

While we lick our wounds and try to ease back into day-to-day life, I believe that there is no time better than the present to make effective, positive change. For two years we were told that if we don’t like what we see then we must vote. So we voted. Regardless of what happens beyond your control, someone will always win and someone will always lose. Some will be happy; some will be distraught. Yet, we all feel we all feel a common urge. We should use this energy and this thirst for change to create positive outcomes in our surroundings. Why rest these important desires on the backs of others, as opposed to continuing to stir the pot on our own terms?

Rather than lobbying for change, we should go out and be change. Imagine if we use our energy spent appealing to others to actually get some dirt on our hands, some sweat on our brows, and build those things that nurture and sustain society that we had been hoping someone else would build for us? If, instead of getting into the endless cycle of exchanging opinions and allow others to influence our beliefs, we used that time and our energy to right wrongs and help our communities? Things would certainly change.

Here is a simple list of things that, if done daily, would make a monumental difference.

Money

Your money is in a way a vote; your choice to buy something indirectly endorses the processes taken to produce and deliver that thing to you. Do your research; know the products you are buying and where they come from. Know if they are hurting others. Know if they are aiding your community’s growth. Buying locally makes a huge difference. Seek out those who have been marginalised but are still managing to run a business—and support them. One thing BLM has taught us is we must be more supportive of minority businesses. Put your money where your mouth is, and know where your money is going.

Environment

We talk a lot about climate change, but what individual steps are you taking to make a difference? Are you carpooling, taking public transportation, walking or riding a bike to work? Are you choosing reusable containers as opposed to plastic? Are you eating locally and staying away from beef and other foods that have massive carbon footprints? If not, today is a good day to change.

How one chooses to incite change is based on a variety of variables, since it is ultimately realised incrementally and subjectively. The trick is actually acting, in your own way, day after day after day. There is only so much within our control, so why not use that pent up energy in a proactive and profound way?

If you are uncomfortable, readjust. If you are agitated, move. If you are angry, pinpoint what it is that is making your blood boil, and use that fuel to make concrete action that positively affects your surroundings and those around you. Now is not the time to be silent. Now is not the time to be still. Now is not the time to roll over. Now is the time to move. Mulv Jones is a career Tumbleweed hailing from the great state of Colorado. His writing consists mostly of poetry and fiction. When his hand isn’t filled with a pen or, you can find him rock climbing, biking, or absconding in nature.

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Photos courtesy of Aljaz Zajc, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the author.

A rainbow gathering in Bosnia.

Healing

Call it hippie. Call it idealistic. Call it ineffective, but I can tell you the first actions we must take as a society should revolve around healing. When people of different social groups actively attacked one another for years, the effects are long-lasting and deeply ingrained. In the case of the U.S. election, people of color, LGBTQ, Muslims, immigrants and basically anyone deemed an “outsider” were constantly targeted. We need to reverse that process. Actively seek out your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and people in your community and let them know you are with them and will stand by them day-in and day-out, regardless of what happened yesterday. Your actions will resonate much farther than you can imagine.
Let me congratulate all of you on this very special day. A day that will stay in your memory for as long as you live as the day of your independence and empowerment, the day your adulthood began.

This day is very special to me, too. It was exactly 50 years to the day—May 29, 1966—that I stood in front of my own graduating class and spoke to my classmates as we looked forward expectantly to begin our new lives as graduated and guaranteed adults. What would I have said to my classmates had I known the real perils of life’s experiences, and would that be of any relevance to what I should be saying to you today?

For the boy I was fifty years ago, the message was clear. I intended to warn my classmates—and most of all myself—of the dangers I sensed in wallowing in the complacency we had inherited from our comfortable childhood existence in a cozy Middle American suburb. In my speech I rallied my classmates to embrace the freedom we each had to explore the world and to create a future uniquely one’s own—to live an authentic life. In my speech I rallied my classmates to embrace their new-found “independence”—by which I clearly meant the freedom we each had to explore the world and to create a future uniquely one’s own.

Not only is the world a crueler place than I could have foreseen. It is also a place full of the noisy dogma of dangerous voices who want to exploit you to fulfill their ends— to live their lives, in the place of your own.

Since childhood, you have been well protected here within the walls of Prem. And through your schooling, you have imbibed the skills essential for your survival and success in the outside adult world beyond these walls—a world where prejudice, even violence, has increasingly become the norm. Where teenage boys are duped into becoming suicide bombers or stoned to death if they dare to be different. Where schoolgirls are shot in the face on the morning bus to school in full view and to the horror of their classmates. Where politicians in even peaceful countries call for the arming of schoolteachers to fight against who know what unknown terrors, real or imagined.

I don’t want to paint a gloomy picture of the world that you are about to enter. But it is essential that you do not begin your life’s journey with illusions about the uncertainties of what lies ahead. Rather, you must enter the adult world fortified with knowledge, armed with courage, but motivated by compassion. Your expectations of the world may be high, but the world’s need for you is higher still. The risk is great.

Risk, let’s talk about that word. Risk-taking has always struck me as the most intriguing and elusive attribute of the IB Learner Profile.

Perhaps this is because risk-taking can’t be taught in the classroom, but can best be learned through experience. Yet, learning to take productive risks may well be the most important skill you will need to master if you hope to make a success of your life and wish to impact the world for the better. It is through taking risks that you will find your unique, authentic self. Productive risk-taking involves more than moving out of your comfort zone, but rather is linked invariably to sudden bursts of knowledge that come as unexpected shocks to your whole being. These shocks force you to reassess and reorganise your relationship to the world. I call these shocks the Four Shocks of Life.

The first is the Shock of the Unpredictable Choice. It is the shock that comes when you risk making a choice, the outcome of which is unknowable.

Up until now, when choices have been necessary, they have been made for you by your parents, or by your teachers. Now you are embarking on a new phase of life, one where you will be forced to make choices on your own. How to do this? I remember well that this was one of the most difficult, confounding puzzles I grappled with as a young adult. The array of choices before me was bewildering; all options seemed equally valid.

We can think of choice as an “opportunity with the hope of a reward.” You will probably agree that the best choice is the one that will give you the most opportunities with the highest chance of rewards. But faced with an actual choice, how can you tell which option will give you the most opportunity, the best reward? The truth is: you can’t.
But what we can know is that the greatest number of opportunities will derive from the choice with the least unpredictable outcome. This is the Shock of the Unpredictable Choice. If you choose the path with the least predictable outcome you will open up new opportunities, with the chance to maximize your rewards beyond what you could possibly have imagined.

Following the Shock of the Unpredictable Choice, comes the Shock of Bewildering Confusion.

Having opened the door of opportunity that comes with making an unpredictable choice, you now must find a way to make the most of those opportunities. To do this you must dare to shock yourself all over again by descending into confusion. The more bewildering the better, in order to derange and mix-up all you have previously conceived of to be true, so that you can be ready to accept new realities and experience the new worlds that are now opening to you.

Luckily, to do this is easy. Seek out diversity. Spend time with people who are different from you. Arm yourself for the unknown by seeking knowledge from others’ lives and experiences. Learning about the lives of others, knowing their histories, struggling with them in their presence, allows you to understand the consequences of choices otherwise unknowable to you. This allows you to make better choices of your own. Getting better is a messy process, but it is an essential part of finding your own true authentic self.

And this leads me directly to the Shock of Committed Action.

This shock comes when you realize that all the knowledge you have accumulated, all the experience that the world has to offer, mean nothing unless you take the risk to use them and commit to action to change the world for the better. Fortunately, having weathered the two previous shocks, you will find that the courage to commit to action comes from knowing that you have chosen the best opportunity from the bewildering confusion of diverse options that the world has to offer.

You must not, however, expect immediate success to come from your actions. It won’t. Results are never instant. You have no choice but to commit to a lifetime of action. But act, you must. Don’t wait. Don’t hesitate. When the chance to act comes, you will know what to do, so do it.

Once you have achieved your life goals, you will find that the fourth and final shock is that you must let it all go. You must share what you have; you must pass it on. I call this the Shock of Total Surrender. If you don’t meet this risk head-on you will have achieved nothing lasting.

The value of your life will not be measured by how much you take, but by how much you give. So make yourself relevant to others, share your own originality and distribute the fruits of your labours to others.

Selfless giving is what keeps the cycle of life going. As an individual, ultimately you are not important. Only as part of humanity will you prevail. This is the biggest shock of this risky venture we call life.

One does not have to be a powerful political leader, a rich businessman or a famous movie star to change the world. You are part of the generation that has now inherited the world, and each of you is a potential leader in your own right. All of you can lead your friends, families, communities and eventually your nations if you are willing to take risks to live beyond the wall, to make the world a better place for yourself and for the generations that will subsequently inherit the world from you.

Looking back to myself as I was fifty years ago, I see that the imperative I spoke of then, to escape beyond the wall of childhood, to find one’s own unique self in the unknown outside world and to live an authentic, meaningful life, hasn’t changed.

Each of you must take seemingly impossible risks in the search for your own “truth.” I implore you to find the courage to take these risks. Find your passion and live it with joy, intention and purpose, and in the process make a difference. In doing so you will have become the Global Citizen your education at Prem has prepared you to be. And in fifty years from now, come back here, stand on this stage, and speak to a new class of fresh, bright, hopeful graduates, as the Prem Role Model of 2066.

Congratulations, ladies and gentlemen of the Class of 2016. I wish you a successful university education, an inspiring future career, and a life filled with meaning, hope and happiness for all.

Richard A. Englehardt, Jr. is a member of the Board of Governors and Honorary President of Traidhos Three-Generation Community for Learning, Chiang Mai Creative City Goodwill Ambassador and a member of the Chiang Mai Creative City Development Committee.

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Hair Mineral Analysis is a roadmap to help detect mineral imbalances and heavy metal toxicity in the body.

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