

Leadership 1: Purpose of Ambassadors

(This minutes the events of an introductory open-air session – near the Artwork –, involving interactive ice-breaking activities & games presented by Mr. Y and a dialogue/speech by Mr. A presenting the Ambassadors' purpose and HYC's direction.)

(10 min ice breakers)

Hi everyone, thank you very much for coming. Thank you to those who participated in the WALL, it means your experience was good enough to make you come again. And thank you to those who are coming for the first time – hey! Come to the front; so we make visual contact – this way I'll recognize you and say hi if we meet in the street, and also so you get a close look at this old guy who believes he can initiate change with you, with a community, and who knows, if we manage changing a community – then the world. 😊 laughter 😊

So today you're all here to participate in this Leadership Program. To be honest, I didn't know much about these activities until Mr. Y explained to me how useful they are for Ambassadors, and that they include all sorts of interactive activities like debates and fun games. Do you like games? Come on speak up!

- What do you mean like sports?

Any games. It can be backgammon or sport or anything whatsoever that you call a game.

- I like basketball.
- I like athletics.
- I like volleyball (short girl and she and all laugh at my look of surprise).

Sorry, don't worry I was a lousy volleyball player, besides you must have been the Playmaker.

Ok, with games, there is two kinds of games: games you play to win and games you play to play. These are completely different. In the games you play to win there's much planning and purpose. The same like travelling: you can travel to go somewhere, and you have a clear agenda and purpose, or you can travel, just to travel, and wander about with no particular purpose in mind. And if you like swimming, like me; you can swim in the pool and do laps – boom, boom, boom – or you can go in the pool or sea and mess about like a kid, looking at the fishes and the breaking of the sunrays on the seabed through the water, and splash about making bubbles and squirting water with your mouth. It's also a kind of swimming. And another thing: when you play to win, there is something outside you that you are concerned about, or focused on, but when you play to play, you are only concerned with yourself, you are home.

When I invited people to participate in this Artwork behind you, do you think I was playing to win, or just playing to play??

- Playing to play (2 people). Playing to win; you had a purpose in all this (one girl).

And you Mr. Y, what do you think? (He answers including both).

It's true, while playing to play, it is not so Black and White, like when playing to win. I was playing to play – bringing the participants to enjoy their free expression of thoughts and emotions regarding global issues – but somewhere in the back of my mind I had the goal and hope of bringing awareness to the community through the final result. And you too: you started off playing to play, enjoying this chance of free expression. But then your mind got you asking: what's this waste of time? There's no grade, no prize, nothing! And you got lazy. So I had to dangle in front of you the play to win carrot: your artwork will be displayed in the central square, and you will be famous, and we'll give you a "certificate" ... 😊

And all of this is okay, until the "Play to Win" games, turn to "Win at any Price". This is when all the trouble begins, and where people hurt people, families hurt families, communities and countries do atrocious things.

Going back to our Artwork: even though we didn't really "Play to Win", we managed, you and I, to bring Paralimni before a corrective mirror. The message on the WALL came loud and clear, with a little help during our event: Win at any Price equals killing your conscience and your heart and opens the door for all the horrors on this wall from Racism, to oppression, abuse, etc.

(10 min interactive games break to assimilate and regain attention)

Going back to our talk, you will say, but Mr. A, this is not something new. There is "Play to Win" throughout history, from the time of Caligula.

So what is new, today? Anyone? Ok, it is a difficult question.

If we want to give a name to the "New" problem, it is "The gap between technical and moral progress". Technical progress is way up there while moral progress is way down here.

I won't talk about big things like wars and crimes against humanity and all sorts of things that you can't identify with, so let me just speak about us: "you and me". When I was your age our information came from TV and newspapers, there was no internet then. And no telephones like today: as a kid living in Cairo, to call my mother in America, my grandmother had to go to the "Centrale" and book a call for the evening and we all wait by the phone. And we shout, because America is so far away 😊 and then we hang up and we're all crying. And with the newspapers and TV, images of extreme violence, sexual abuse, drug abuse, psychosis, etc., were very uncommon and whenever we saw them, they were disturbing; shocking. Even though we looked at them with wide open eyes and a great curiosity.

Naturally as the internet and communication developed, the world became more accessible. You guys like myself today, are so used to seeing all these horrors all the time. This should have made us become more humane; have more feeling and sympathy to all the terrible things and suffering in the world, but instead, it made us put a kind of emotional barrier and have less, and less, feeling whenever we see all these shocking things. Kind of like how doctors and morticians deal with sick or dead people without being affected.

We learn to say “it’s not really my problem” or “come on man it’s so far from me it will never affect me and those I care for”, and this is how we gradually lose something called our “Moral conscience”. I want you to remember this word, because that’s what you will be ambassadors of, because this is the most important function of the Heart. Once we get used to doing this we become emotionally dull like a blunt knife, and we lose our ability to be genuinely enthusiastic like children. We learn to “Calculate” everything and take decisions with our mind without consulting our heart.

In other words we become unbalanced, because in reality inside us there is three people: one who thinks, one who feels and one who acts. But we end up having only two of those people and we shut up the third until it stops talking to us.

This is 100% the case with most adults who live a daily routine struggling with all their obligations (driving you to school, worrying about the job, putting the wash in the machine.....). So, the reason I’m talking with you now, is because you’re still borderline; you still have dreams and a wild imagination, which means your heart is still pumping; alive! You can be Amazing humans who can change things, starting with yourselves.

For now, all this is given you as simple information, to put before you the problem and the eventual solution. So what is the Solution? Take a break with Mr. Y, and then I’ll tell you.

(10 min interactive games break to assimilate and regain attention)

So what can we do about this? Throughout history except in modern times there has always been an interest in educating the heart. In Greek times, early Christian times and also in the Middle Ages, but this got less and less until it stopped almost completely after the French revolution.

Around 100 years ago many great gurus and philosophers from all over the world, especially from the east warned about what is going on and gave fantastic teachings, and they all agreed that the world desperately needs to give birth to a new human type, a kind of psychological superman/superwoman, who is a Natural Leader because he/she has a completely balanced and stable psyche. This New being will seem to us like a super-being in the same way we modern people with our technology and machines appear for someone from the Middle-Ages to be super-beings.

This is what is needed in this hour from all those around the world, who understand the problem, like DA and HYC. To make programs – some at a small humble level and others with Teachers at a greater level – to engage young people in their emotive culture. In our humble Project, we do this through graduated programs especially in Art, Global Issues and Philosophy, because these can go straight to the core of the problem: the Heart.

Thank you all, and I am sure that once you start with such programs, you will wake up to things you did not imagine existed inside you. Thank you ☺ A big cheer to conclude.