

EOC File (March 2008)

Things We Do, People We Meet: Reflections in Brief

Ponder Before You Say No : In Memory of Li Ching (II)

Li Ching passed her HKCEE with flying colours despite her hearing impairment. At her interview with the media, the 17-year-old inspired readers with these words: “The only way for me is to go forward. The more obstacles I face, the harder I fight.”¹

Yet, just a decade later, she gave up her life. The grief-stricken father recalled how his daughter was shooed away at job interviews when the interviewers found that she was hard of hearing and how some potential employers simply said, “Sorry, no need for you to come (for the interview).”

Well aware of such difficulties faced by job-seekers with hearing impairment, rehabilitation groups have called upon employers to put aside their prejudice and give all applicants the equal opportunities they deserve. This is exactly the message which the Equal Opportunities Commission has been trying to drive home throughout the years. It is often the case that people with disabilities have to work doubly hard and be doubly determined before they can land a job. But we believe that with reasonable accommodation and proper equipment, people with disabilities can contribute just like any other member in the team.

Before saying “no” without second thoughts, perhaps employers should take the time to consider if the disabled applicants are capable of doing what is expected from them and contribute to the organization. It is only fair that they

¹ The original wording in Chinese is : “吾之所向，一往直前，愈挫愈奮，再接再勵”

be given equal opportunities.

The success of a community hinges on the collective efforts of its members. As part of the society, people with disabilities should not be left to fight on their own. In setting aside prejudice and providing equal opportunities to people with disabilities, employers get to benefit as well since these talented and often more committed staff will help their organizations achieve their business goals.

It is to our discredit that someone like Li Ching who had worked so hard to be a contributor to our society should find the door shut in her face. Perhaps we should ponder before we say no to the next disabled job seeker.

Useful Links

EOC YouTube Video: [“Between Hearing & Not Hearing”](#) - Father of Miss Li Ching and Miss Mandy Tang, one of the 20 Young Advocates selected to promote disability awareness and social inclusion for 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, share their stories of overcoming hearing impairment and attitudinal barriers.

For understanding the needs of employees with disabilities and taking steps to help them adapt and improve efficiency, employers can visit the website of the Selective Placement Division, Labour

Department: http://www.deaf.org.hk/eng/e_news.php and Skills Centres, Vocational Training

Council: http://www.vtc.edu.hk/vtc/web/template/level_5.jsp?fldr_id=957&lan

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For guidelines on hiring and employment matters, please refer to the Good Management Practice Series published by the Equal Opportunities

Commission: <http://www.eoc.org.hk/EOC/GraphicsFolder/Checklist.aspx>