

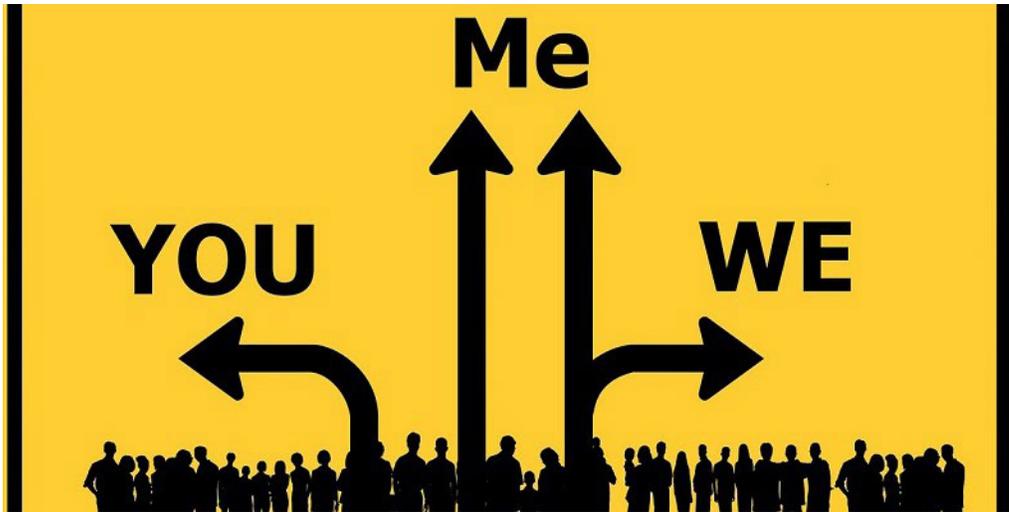
Pallikkutam

Pallikkutam, The Education Observer » August 2023

[Go to index page »](#)

Horizons

The 4 Ps of Life and Career Success



Seshadri Ramkumar

The author holds a PhD, CText, FTI (UK), FTA (Honorary) and is presently Professor, Nonwovens & Advanced Materials Laboratory, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, USA

Students' success is a collective mission involving students, parents,

teachers and the society. The world has changed after COVID-19 and the post COVID-19 era has resulted in stressful economic and geopolitical situations. Such scenarios necessitate the need to instill confidence, broader outlook and bring out diplomatic skills in younger generations. These life skills are not only needed for younger people, but also needed by all the members of the society. One's development is like a building built on four pillars (4Ps): 1) Personality; 2) Planning; 3) Politics (Diplomacy) and 4) Priority.

Personality Development

Personality is inbuilt and can be cultivated. Formal and informal education and experience will be able to develop personality. Given the competitive nature of the world we live in, building of one's confidence is vital. "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going," stated Toronto-based established physician, Dr. Manickavasagam Sundaram, MD, PhD. In my years of acquaintance with Dr. Sundaram, I am able to understand the importance of developing one's personality shaped by life experiences towards success. Being born in a humble background in a remote part of Tamilnadu, due to aspiration, hard work, looking for and seizing the opportunities, being aware of happenings in the society, Dr. Sundaram has risen to such an esteemed position in the society. There are many such role models we encounter on a daily basis. It is on us to find such personalities and seek their support. In Bhagavat Gita, 9 high quality attributes have been prescribed to achieve respectable personality such as control of senses, patience, knowledge, kindness, etc.



Dr Rangaswamy Ramalingam

Role models help with imparting life skills through active and passive mentoring. Such efforts are in fact tested and proven educational guides for passing life examinations. Students need to have excellent hard-working ethics and be open minded, says, 85-year young octogenarian Mr. Cho Kee Wong, Founder and President of Hong Kong based U.S. Pacific Nonwovens, Ltd. "India's youth have great potential," added Mr. C. K. Wong who has visited India over 20 times since the 2000s. Highlighting his own international experience of over 50 years, with the founding of U.S. Pacific Nonwovens in New York in the 1980s, he opined that next generation youth should cultivate entrepreneurial spirit. It is evident from the lives of many successful entrepreneurs, we understand that they have faced many failures before gaining first success. Start-

up creation and company building entails grit, perseverance and multidisciplinary skills. Mr. Wong stated, world travels and interacting with people from Australia to Americas enabled him to strengthen his personality and being broad minded. In my question to him recently on what makes him energetic and forward looking, Mr. Wong with a smile stated, “work is my hobby and makes me enthusiastic.”



CK Wong

“The most critical trait for any youngster who wants to enter into any profession is having an internal passion and drive,” stated Dr. Rangaswamy Ramalingam, Salem-based Pediatrician and Chairman of Ramalingam Hospital. Dr. Ramalingam was a pioneer in establishing Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Salem, which he achieved through his passion and hard work. Citing his own profession, he insists many professions these days demand hard work and dedication. Students have to be taught about the importance of work ethic right from school days. “Whether it be through monetary, medical, intellectual, or personal means, giving back to the society that helped shaped you is a key principle of life,” added Dr. Ramalingam.



Dr Manickavasagam Sundaram

Passive learning enables us to be successful. “Qualities like discipline, family values and ethics are not normally taught in classes, but are just as important for anyone to lead a fulfilled and successful life,” states Dr. Ramalingam. Associating oneself with successful persons in the family, neighborhood and society will help us to imbibe these qualities, which are equally important as quality academic learning.

Looking at these successful personalities, it is clear that learning through observations and mentor support from role models help with personality development.

Planning is the Path

Planning is a foremost component of life skills enrichment process. In this fast-paced world, career and event planning has become an industry in its own right. These days students are adept in planning; additional support in improving planning skills will be of great help. In the West, middle and high school students can seek support from school counselors in planning their time and career. Colleges and Universities have structured student support offices which are geared towards helping students to transition from school life to college life and greater society. Texas Tech University has a successful student planning and support called, "Mentor Tech." Such support initiatives are critical for students belonging to underrepresented groups and those are first generation college students.

Diplomacy, Politics and Art of Living

With the war going on in Eastern Europe now, the importance of diplomacy has come to the front burner. Diplomacy is playing important roles in sustaining the ongoing war, forming strategic partnerships, etc. In fact, Indian art of war dictates four steps such as: 1) Sama (Diplomacy); 2) Dana (Benevolence); 3) Bheda (Divide) and 4) Dhandha (Punishment). Out of the aforementioned four steps, three of them focus on diplomatic skills. Diplomatic and political skills are essential in every day life in dealing with family members, teachers and the society at large.

Prioritization

Life offers enormous opportunities and challenges. It is important to prioritize our acts to tackle these aspects in life. We need to be cognizant that priorities vary with our stages in our lives. We all normally set one goal and get upset if it is not fulfilled. As life throws unexpected curve balls, having secondary and additional goals are important. The acts towards achieving goals have to be targeted with priority. Such exercises are important for students to choose majors and career paths.

Recent happenings in political and economic landscapes demand soft skills such as greater awareness, compelling speaking ability, and confidence. Observations and experience are good tutors for enhancing the soft skills. By citing a famous Tamil cinema song with philosophical bent, "Nee Unnai Arindhil Ulagathil Poradalam," meaning, if you are aware of yourself, you can keep fighting in the world, Dr. Manickavasagam Sundaram always advises us to "Be Aware."

Given that these days, lifestyles have enormously improved, students should also contribute some time for the benefit of the society. "Professions are not only for personal gain," opined Dr. Ramalingam.

Globalized world offers grand chances as is evident in the migration of engineering and professional graduates from India to many

developed economies. Understanding 4Ps will pave smooth paths towards success in foreign lands.

4Ps are for success!