



The Image in the Mirror: Life without Purpose

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Abstract

Both living and non-living creatures in this world have a purpose for their existence, but life carries great purposes and meaningfulness to any living creature in this world. It is this meaningfulness of life that differentiates living and non-living creatures. Most living creatures struggle to keep alive as a solely reason for life. Yes, it may sound correct for other creatures but not humans. Humans possess many cognitive abilities such as reasoning, planning and a full-blown language capacity, these abilities cannot be seen in other living creatures. This suggests to me that, struggling to keep alive cannot be the solely reason for human life. Despite the fact that we are humans and all of us live in this world, some of us will be instantly forgotten when they have gone. However, some individuals will remain in people's memory ages, to them death will be achievement. Similar to the image in the mirror, some people's memories fade out instantly when someone gets away, this is what I call 'Image in the Mirror: Life Without Purpose'. Embracing those who have managed to cling on after they have gone, this paper employed a review of literature and focus group discussion methodology. Thus, ultimately the paper has discussed why some people have managed to leave behind a positive unforgettable mark in our society that, we're still psychoanalyzing and studying them, while other just fade away.

Keywords: Life without purpose

Introduction

Deliberately, some people want to cling on while others do not, looking back into history some people's life has rooted so deeply into our society for ages. Zaria Gorvett, the BBC journalist answering the question "How do you remain remembered for generations?" listed a long list of names like Alexander the Great a man of war, Julius Caesar, the master of self-promotion, Galileo, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein and Da Vinci the intellect, she also, mentioning Politian, musician, killers and religious; that are still remembered until today [1]. Some people have managed to leave behind a long lasting memory in this world. However, the problem of history does not separate the positive memories from the negative ones.

Therefore, the discussion in this paper has centered to only those people who have cemented a long lasting positive memory in the society like Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Albert Einstein to mention but a few, therefore, it is in built for human to be influential by leaving everlasting mark to others, fading away like an image in the mirror is a pure reflection that life has no meaning to some individuals.

The fact is that, most people want to remembered positively (in good way) after they have gone, has been reported in various literature; Nevertheless studies indicate that a few individuals want to be remembered; this then raise a question? leaving everlasting mark in the society is something done deliberately or not [1-3]. Considering the

list of the most remembered people from every corner of the global, it is observed that both situations apply. Those with deliberate attempt to be remembered like Julius Caesar, the master of self-promotion and those who just cling on like Albert Einstein and Nelson Mandela [1]. Considering both situations, this paper has discussed why some people are remembered positively and why others are not. Also, what should be done for individuals to be remembered positively in the society?

Methodology

This paper has utilized two methods to gather information on the topic in question "The Image in the Mirror: Life Without Purpose". The writer has gathered different opinions on past literature explaining, discussing and those giving history about individuals who have managed to cling on in our society. The information gathered from those literatures is about those individuals who have managed to be remembered positively, the reasons as to why they remain in people's memory until today and the strategies they have applied to leave everlasting mark in the society.

Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion is the commonly used method of data collection in qualitative research where by a group of people (six to twelve) purposively selected with common characteristics shared among them are promoted to make in-depth discussion about a topic in question led by well-trained facilitator (skilled facilitator) [4,5]. These common shared characteristics may be locality, or geography location, tribe, given experience or behavior, a given skill, livelihoods or occupation [4-6]. Focus group discussion approach is commonly used in a qualitative research to collect detailed information on certain social issue or issues [4,6]. It is a judgmental rather than probabilistic approach, which collects data from purposely-selected group in way of discussion, led by well skill facilitator [6]. The writer utilized focus group discussion by developing semi-structured interview guide that promoted in-depth discussion, active participation and full involvement in a topic of discussion [4,5,7]. The focus group discussion method assisted the writer to get insights into people's social practices and motivations; Also, it assisted to gather their perceptions or their experiences on why some people have managed to be remembered in our society till today while others just fade away and get forgotten instantly like image mirror [4,5,8]. Applying Stewart and Shamdasani recommendations on the number of individuals to form a focus group discussion of (6 to 12 people) eight individuals (academic staff from Mzumbe university – Mbeya campus) were chosen to form a single group discussion. The number was efficient and effective for discussion and it was easily manageable, the discussion was not bored and dull [5,8-10].

Discussion

Is fame a Deliberate Attempt of an Individual to be Remembered?

Considering deliberate attempts to be remembered, history has given us some ancient iconic names like Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great; despite of their great work, these individuals wanted, planned and enforced for the fame name in the society, according to Professor Thomas Harrison historian at the University of St Andrews as cited by Zaria Gorvett, says that achieving fame name was a national obsession in ancient Greece [1]. Alexander the Great ensured statue of him was made in every public place [4]. Another ancient fame name that still comes in people's mind until today is that of Julius Caesar; he mastered the art of self-promotion, he used advanced propaganda of hiring historians who accompanied him on campaigns to write the events of his campaign in the books of Roman history [1]. According to sociologist Chris Rojek, at City, University of London as cited by Zaria Gorvett, the same deliberate attempt is still practiced even today; Presidents, Pop stars, Celebrities are deliberately marketing good image despite of number of critics surrounding them in the society.

From the focus group discussion, the same views were found. It was observed that it is a common practice for most political leaders to portray a good image to the society despite of their shortcoming. Naming schools, building, and structures after their name is common practice for Presidents particularly in Africa. These practices are similar to that of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. Leaders who want to be remembered positively use this strategy.

Is Fame not Deliberate Effort but Life of Achievement to be Remembered?

On other hand, some iconic names just cling on. These are names for those who didn't mind to build a fame name but the society and world still remember them; for example names like Albert Einstein and Nelson Mandela, didn't make effort to make sure their names remain in people's memory [1,11]. Considering the life of Nelson Mandela for example, his fame image wasn't his focus. He just lived his life to achieve what he believed, that was enough to take him to prison and in turn to give him honor, respect and strong positive lasting memory in the global [12].

From the focus group discussion it was found that, it is good when someone becomes remembered for his or her achievement in life not just because he or she worked hard for it. Someone should not live all his or her life focusing on fame image, though it may push someone to do better with his or her life. Believing that everybody is unique and has

something unique to offer in this world requires someone to be himself or herself in order to leave a life of achievement enough to be remembered for ages. For example the world remembers former marathon runner John Stephen Akhwari from Tanzania who finished last among the 17 competitors who finished the race, the runners were initially 79, he took almost one hour and five minutes after the Ethiopian winner in Mexico City 1968 Summer Olympics. So while others were struggling to win medals, to him finishing the race was the achievement enough to make him be remembered for ages and his statement "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race, but to finish the race" to become the motivational quote for running.

Why Some People are not remembered?

Like the image in the mirror, some people they just fade out instantly. According to Stephen Hart, most people are not remembered because they take much away with them than what they left to world, their lives were characterized by receiving than giving and they were selfish [13]. Also, he said the society has painted a wrong picture that money and fame is enough to guarantee lasting memories, which is not true [13]. According to Myles Munroe, the living without purpose is the greatest tragedy human life can have, Without purpose some one's life becomes an experiment, when someone's life purpose is not clear, abuse of time, natural gifts (talent), energy and other resources is inevitable; Without purpose life is test less and meaningless, Without purpose life is lead in wrong direction, Without purpose life has no achievement and has no legacy [14].

From the focus group discussion it was discovered that, most people live selfish life in such way that their lives lose meaning to the society surrounding them; therefore after they have gone no one may keep memory of them and nothing can remain to mark their life into the society. Heart touching life is what is required for someone to cling on for ages, if some body's life doesn't touch people's heart, he or she will be easily forgotten soon after his or her life in this world.

Conclusion

Every human life in this earth has to count and be remembered; Otherwise human life will not defer from animal life. Because human have managed to break free from both biological and social framework that govern other animals, passing away and instantly be forgotten like a chicken in poultry farm, should not be part of any individual's history. Everybody has a story to tell this world that may be enough the society to remember him or her; therefore everybody should carry a notebook with her daily,

documenting what his or her mind can give to the world. A child should be raised both at home and at school or college to help him or her to discover his or her life purpose; this is very significant for him or her mark unforgettable positive memory in this world. This is due to fact that life without purpose has no achievement, no output and also has no legacy. Also, everybody should improve or develop his or her life character to the extent that he makes his or her life touches people's heart. The character of giving more than receiving, the character of making his or her contributions to the society count and in turn will make him or her be remembered for ages.

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