

Assembly (2019 01 30): Family

This is the last assembly before the Lunar New Year. What is the Lunar New Year about?

- It's about endings and beginnings.
- It's about taking stock of the past and gathering hopes for the future.
- It's about new clothes and good food and lots and lots of snack, and of course Red Packets!
- But above all, **it's about family.**

Many people find that they have a **tricky relationship with their family, in particular, their parents, during their teenage years.** Some even experience tension with their parents.

- It is a period when your struggle to break free from parents is more important than your attachment to them (though you secretly know that you still rely a lot on them...)
- A period when your image among your peers is more important than your relationship with your parents.
- This is understandable because this is the period when you are searching for who you are and building up your self-worth and confidence, a period when you are cultivating your independence and finding your place in the world as you know it – especially that which is made up of the circle of peers.

These are all important, but still, please don't drift too far away from your family. No matter whether in good times or in bad, your family will always be there for you.

Yes, your parents may nag you nonstop about things you have heard a thousand times... but instead of irritation, how about:

→ **Putting in action what you have heard to demonstrate that you truly understand?**

Yes, your parents may appear to misunderstand you... but instead of annoyance, how about

→ **Making an effort to communicate your thoughts and feelings to them, and doing it in a manner that invites understanding?**

Yes, your parents may still treat you like a kid ... but instead of frustration, how about

→ **Trying to think and act maturely so as to change your parents' minds about you?**

Yes, your parents may still be very strict and unwilling to grant you much freedom... but instead of protests, how about

→ **Acting responsibly, thoughtfully and consistently to earn your parents' trust that you can handle your freedom well?**

Yes, you are beginning to find out that your parents are not perfect, and you feel that they act as if they are. But instead of disappointment, how about

→ **Reminding yourself that while they are imperfect beings, their love, as demonstrated by their sacrifice for you is perfect, in the context of their imperfection?**

→ **And furthermore, that you aren't perfect either even though you may also act as if you are?**

In fact, it is a test of your maturity – can you love someone as he/she truly is regardless of his/her shortcomings (like what your parents have done with you)? If you can do it – you'll gradually wake your parents up about your maturity and earn the respect you think you deserve.

So in the coming LNY, how about ...

→ **Spending more time with your family, be kind & serve one another? Make no room for regrets. Tomorrow is not promised & today is short.**

Is loving your family not a manly thing? Well, listen to what the manly icon Marlon Brando has to say:

"Do you spend time with your family? Good. Because a man that doesn't spend time with his family can never be a real man." – Marlon Brando

You think you are set out to do greater things? Well, listen to Mother Teresa:

"If you want to change the world, go home and love your family." – Mother Teresa

May I wish you and your family a remarkable Year of the Pig!