Wan-Hau Zhu

I always say, “A dream often belongs to one person, but it cannot be realized by oneself.” Over the past 20 years I have been working in a job that strives for equal rights for artists.

Hello everyone, I am Wan-Hua Zhu from Arts Promotion Association for the Disabled, ROC (Taiwan). I am visually impaired from birth. After cataract surgery, I was able to see color, light, and blurred images.

I didn’t study in school. I only learned braille in elementary school for half a year, then I studied by myself. So, I coped by myself from an early age. At the age of 8, I felt more confidence because I had blurred sight after the operation.

I may get lost when walking but I can find the right way by asking. I need to remember things constantly to be familiar with the environment.

I have a sister who is four years younger than me, who guided me after I lost vision. She is my bright eye and leads me to appreciate many things. My first job was answering the phone in my sister’s massage station; then, I became a masseuse. If I didn’t have the experience of answering the phone at an early age, my ability to cope, communicate, and comprehend things may not have been as careful, clear, and distinct as now. And, I could not arrange so many things systematically.

But the skill of massage was too difficult for me in the beginning. Because my physical strength was not as strong as now. I was very weak then. I had difficulty handling the job. I am coming up roses after adapting for 7-8 years. I was rejected by clients often when first engaging in the masseuse job, so I would hide and cry.

I started to learn many things, such as meridian, acupoint, Chinese medicine theory and practical information about massage and physiotherapy in all respects and accumulated professional ability gradually.

This new job is the only recalcitrance in my life. Although my massage job has been very stable, my three children were born and the laborious stage of raising children began when I had an eager idea. The idea is that I wanted to change society’s mind about the visually impaired. They cannot only engage in massage jobs. Can’t we let those who learn music stand on the stage? I didn’t listen to my family’s advice and decided to put aside the massage work that I had worked for 20 years resolutely. My mom felt very sad and angry. She thought I was on the wrong track, and why did I do such a stupid thing. I have earned a little money from the art dealer job until now. What we pursue is the development of artistic equality. If we can help performers get enough income to live, give them reasonable pay – this is my goal. So, I am not the kind of agent who can draw a lot of commissions, but I still think that I am right to do this.

Arts Promotion Association for the Disabled, ROC, has incurred more than 2 million dollars in debt. No one is optimistic about this, but we will cross that bridge when we get to it. Hang in there!

The key concept is how one determines success or failure. If I look at my failures today, there are many. However, these failures are the key to my growth. I have to tell myself that I was great in the past. I chose to do the right thing, and it lets me be confident to do more meaningful things. So, I really love my past self.

There is nothing special to pay attention to when getting along with visually impaired people. In fact, there are no differences between visually impaired people and others. Only when visually impaired people require themselves to be able to compete is the condition complete. If we always require society to be equal, but we ourselves have not achieved the key of being treated equally, of course we well fail. So our professional competence must be strong; in other words, we cannot only engage in sheltered work, but need to engage in competitive work.

I think whether life can be wonderful is grasped by our own hands. If we are willing to do our best to learn and work, life must be wonderful; and we can look forward to it. So, everyone, keep going!!

I am Wan-Hua Zhu the only visually impaired art dealer in Taiwan.