

For a cowardly child



Written by: Mr. Leung Wing Lok, the Octopus Parent

Earlier during the summer vacation, I let my child participate in various extracurricular activities. My eldest son, Hei Gor, and his kindergarten classmates took part in an outdoor activity venue located in Tai Po called "Tree House," which has grasslands, farmlands, fish ponds, and more, allowing them to get close to nature. The highlight of the activity was climbing up to the 5-meter-high treehouse. Hei Gor, known for his timidity, would get weak in the knees and sweaty hands even when standing by the glass railings in shopping malls. Standing at a height of 5 meters, he said, "Oh... I thought there would be stairs to go down from the treehouse..."

Hei Gor was afraid to descend from the treehouse and was 'mocked' by the coach. Under the guidance of the coach, parents helped their children put on climbing safety gear, ready to climb up to the treehouse. As the parents climbed following the coach's instructions, the children felt reassured seeing their parents demonstrate and followed suit. After Hei Gor climbed up to the treehouse with step-by-step guidance from the coach, he began to regret it, not knowing how to get back to the ground. Having to hug the metal pole and 'play firefighter' to slide down (although he was suspended by a safety rope) was a huge challenge for him. No matter how I coaxed and instructed him, and regardless of how the parents and classmates on the ground cheered him on, Hei Gor just braced his feet against the tree trunk and refused to approach the metal pole.



The coach let the other children land first, one by one. Some were playing with smiles on their faces, some were crying out of fear, but all landed safely. Only Hei Gor was resolute in his refusal. The loving coach kept coaxing Hei Gor in his unique way, saying, "You are 100% emotional, be a little rational, and don't be scared." Hei Gor said, "No!" The coach suggested, "How about the parents below... (I thought he said: applaud to encourage him) How about raising money together to buy a refrigerator and air conditioner for Hei Gor to spend the night in the tree house." After hearing this, Hei Gor cried out even louder, "I don't want to spend the night here." I thought to myself, "Education is a sacred and solemn task. If you don't know how to teach, you're in big trouble."

Overcoming Fear, Parents Feel Relieved

The coach continued to Hei Gor, "You see, your aunt is heavier than you, and she landed safely. It's okay." Hei Gor laughed through his tears, "Dad is the fattest and heaviest!" At that moment, I wanted to jump down from the tree house. Despite several attempts, the coach talked about politics, Wong Tze Wah, the property market, and songs by Danny Chan, to which Hei Gor said, "I don't know what brother is talking about." When all the children had gone up and down once, and some had started their second round, Hei Gor and I were still enduring the high temperature for over half an hour, "watching". In the end, I lied that his brother would slide down with him, and let him buckle the safety belt, Hei Gor held the iron pole and slowly descended. The process and landing naturally involved continuous crying, and the first thing he did when he landed was to hug his mother.



Hei Gor took a rest and suddenly said to me, "I was really scared." I took him back under the tree and said, "You climbed up to the tree house all by yourself just now, which is very high, and you did a great job. Although it took some time to come down, you have succeeded no matter what, and there's no need to be afraid anymore. Would you like to climb it again next time?" Hei Gor replied, "Yes, I want to!"

Hei Gor, you are timid, but your courage to overcome your fear of heights certainly makes your parents relieved. However, it is your overcoming of fear and expressing the hope to climb up again next time that makes me proud. (Although you might cry and make a fuss again next time).