

Making your child the leader of next generation

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Born in 1976. Graduated from Yale University. '99 Tokyo Office, McKinsey & Company, '05 Harvard University MBA, '07 present post. Author of 'Sekai ichi yasashii mondaikaiketsu no jyugyo - jibun de kangae kodoh suru chikara ga mini tsuku' (The easiest course on problem solving in the world – lessons on how to think and act by yourself)

Fortunately, my book 'Sekai ichi yasashii mondaikaiketsu no jyugyo - jibun de kangae kodoh suru chikara ga mini tsuku' (The easiest course on problem solving in the world – lessons on how to think and act by yourself) was supported by many people. However, I would like to stress that although it is unquestionably important to learn how to solve problems, this is only one of the many elements of the lesson. What we really need to learn is to have an idea, give it a shape in this real world, and to experience struggles to accomplish result.

As a start, I founded an educational project. We are now organizing workshop/courses for workers at major corporations and government staffs at one hand and providing education for children on the other. We provide educational programs on business that traditional school curriculums do not offer.

For example, we will have five 5th graders organize a team for food and drink business. We converted an old Volkswagen wagon into a restaurant. Children have to think and decide what products to sell, how to sell, the price, the decoration of the van, and how to promote the business. They are also responsible for actual preparation, selling, and calculation of profit and loss. I don't give any advice. I only give them advice after they have gone through the real business, making many mistakes as well as being successful—but when I do my advice would be very specific and many.

Since they have actually experienced how hard, difficult, and fun it is to run food and drink business, they will understand smoothly my lessons on problem solving such as designing of menu, teamwork for cooking, allocating roles – how important and necessary they each are.

The children are much more motivated and capable of understanding because they have first hand experience of the business. So, after teaching, I let them do the process once again. This leads to even more new findings.

Of course this 'process' is no limited to only food and drink business. Anything will do. It could be printing and distributing private newspaper at school, just to give another example. The essence is to try, act and experience change. Stand on your feet, sum up courage, start a business, continue it, improve it. How much experience can you accumulate in your childhood? This has a lot to do with your future. That's why I am helping children get this experience.

I once saw Warren Buffet, a leading billionaire in America, being asked “What is the most important factor to succeed in a business?” in a television interview, giving a very unique answer. “It’s how many business you started when you were young.” Buffet himself started a “business” of selling around coca—cola to friends at age 6, or more later fixing broken pin pole machines and installing them at barbershops.

Experience of making something new is connected to having courage to take a step forward.

I once had an opportunity to talk with a person who was involved in an activity of finding and providing support to “change makers” that had talents great enough to change the world. He said, “The number of change makers is too small to begin with, even by the basis of the whole world.” So we have to increase the parameter by giving children as much experience as possible that nurture potential to become change makers. To do this, the understanding of parents in having their children experience something other than regular school curricula would be indispensable. But from such children the leaders that make changes in the future will pop out. People who learn and act independently - this is the kind of people we need more and more as human asset, in Japan and in the world.