

李文昊：华尔街英语创始人

文/屠晓俊

前生我曾是中国人

生意场上没有50%

Q:您在17岁的时候找到了第一份工作,那份工作是什么样的?

A:我在一家工厂里每天工作12个小时,包括上夜班。非常辛苦。

Q:在您年轻的时候没有机会读大学,这会对你的人生带来影响吗?

A:我20岁的时候没有机会上大学,但我30岁的时候圆了大学梦。在那10年间,跟同龄人相比,我觉得自己处于劣势,但我从工作中获取了更多的经验。

Q:24岁时您放弃了一份高薪的销售主管职务,成为一名没有佣金的百科全书和语言自学课程的销售代表,您追求的仅仅是生活上的自

由吗?

A:是的,仅仅是为了自由。我不能没有自由。

Q:您总结了人生的6个教训,其中您把“寻找一个好的伙伴”排在第一位,您在这方面有什么经历和感触吗?

A:是的,生意伙伴选择不当将会给你带来问题和冲突。当合作股份是一半一半时,冲突就会出现。有一点很关键:永远不能是占据50%的股份,而是要么51%,要么49%。当你占据51%时,你有权利和义务占据主导地位,你是唯一的最终决策人。当你持49%的股份,你与伙伴意见不同的时候,不要制造麻烦,只能离开。

总有一天你要歇口气

Q:1972年,您开始研发一套独特的英语语言培训的教学方法和教学材料,当时您认为您遇到的最大的困难是什么?

A:我遇到了两大难题:1)缺少充足的资金来源。2)缺乏可以把我的教学法新点子加以开发的新技术。

Q:1985年时,你经历了人生的最低潮时期,是什么支持您坚持在培训行业中继续发展?

A:当你选择永不放弃,即使在战斗或战争中失败,你也是一个胜利者。我决心把英语培训业务发展下去,是因为我相信这项业务,也相

用“永不退休”的精神工作

Q:现代的社会流行的观点是“不懂生活,不会工作”,而您提出“永不退休”,您认为这两种生活态度有什么区别?

A:在工作和生活之间找到平衡是很困难的,

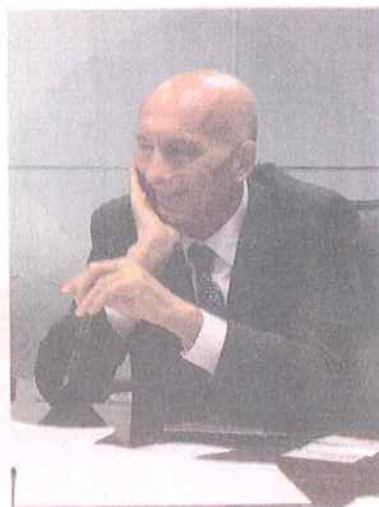
但我能在下一场战斗中获胜。

Q:在1988年到1995年间,华尔街成功进入了包括西班牙和德国在内的5个国家,当时华尔街学院基础稳固、组织完好,那您当时为什么决定将华尔街学院出售?

A:总有那么一天是该将你创建的事业传给别人。1996年这个时间到了。我的业务需要新的、大量的资金来源,才能进一步向前发展。只有一家跨国公司能做到这一点。同时我在“战场”上冲锋陷阵20余年,也该替下口气了。

但并不是不可能的。如果你野心太大,很贪心,那肯定是永远达不到这一点。事业成功当然是非常重要的,但是最重要的是我们作为个人发展。

李文昊,一个非常中国的名字。很难想象,拥有这个名字的,竟然是一个地地道道的意大利人。他是华尔街英语的创始人,他是中国道家文化的拥趸者,他说他和中国有着神奇的缘分。和许多第一代创业者一样,李文昊的成功也充满着神奇色彩。很难想象,这个把华尔街英语带向全世界的智者,竟然因生活所迫,不得不在17岁就开始工作。



老子思想让我着迷

Q:为什么您在出售了全球其他地区的所有华尔街英语机构之后,来到中国,重新开设英语培训学校?

A:1999年当我决定来中国的时候,对华尔街国际来说,中国市场的风险很大,我看到了中国市场上的风险,同时也看到了巨大的挑战。我一直是一个开拓者,因此我决定到中国来,不仅仅是为了做生意,也是出于文化社会原因。我开始钻研老子的思想的时候只有35岁,10年后我又开始研究佛教和风水。有一位风水先生看了我的生辰之后告诉我,说我前生曾是中国人。在中国生活我觉得非常舒服和愉快,我也许会在这里度过我的余生。

Q:您精通6国语言,同时也开设了一所成功的语言学校,所以想请教一下,在语言学习方面,您认为您的经验有哪些强于他人?

A:我不知道天赋是兴趣的结果,还是相反。我所知道的是我热爱学外语,现在是我再次做学

生的时候,从下个月起,我将开始学汉语,希望明年9月能再次与您见面,到时候跟您用英语和汉语一起聊。

Q:您梦想成为一个教育家,在您的历程中经历了各种各样的起伏,您认为这些经历对您教书育人有什么帮助?您在人生六课中提到“永不放弃”这一点是否和您的经历有关系?

A:错误和人生的起伏是朝着好的结果前进的学习历程。当然,如果你在失败后放弃,你将只知道失败,不知道成功。

Q:似乎您非常喜欢《道德经》,您觉得《道德经》中的思想对您在中国发展事业有什么帮助?

A:道家的思想是智慧的思想,使用道家哲学将帮助您的生活和工作。道家思想里最重要的原则之一是为别人服务,如果你真的要遵守这个原则,为别人服务,你就必须尽你所能,用你的能力、责任心和爱心去做事情。

Mr. Luigi T. Peccenini: Founder of Wall Street English

——I was a Chinese in the Pre-life

By Tu Xiao Jun

Li Wenhao is a typical Chinese name. It is hard to imagine the person with this name is a down-to-earth Italian. He is the founder of *Wall Street English*, a faithful follower of Chinese Taoism Culture. He said he has deep attachment to China. Like many first-generation business pioneers, his success is full of legendary stories. It is even harder to believe that this shrewd and intelligent man who expanded the business of *Wall Street English* around the world had been forced to work at the age of 17 due to poverty.

There is no 50% in the Business Circle

Q: At the age of 17, you got the first job? How is that job?

A: I worked in a factory for 12 hours every day including night shifts. It was quite backbreaking.

Q: You didn't have the chance to study in a university when you were young. Did this experience have any influence on your life?

A: At the age of 20, I didn't get the chance to study in a university. However, later, when I was 30, my university dream came true. During the ten years before I studied in a university, I felt I was at a disadvantaged position compared with my peers. Despite the disadvantage, I got more experience in real working situations.

Q: At the age of 24, you resigned a well-paid job as sales chief and became a sales representative of encyclopedia and language courses without any fixed commission. Did you do all these just in pursuit of freedom in life?

A: Yes, it is just for the sake of freedom. I can't part with freedom.

Q: You summarized six lessons in your life, among which, you put "seeking a good business partner" in the first place, do you have any special experience in this regard?

A: Yes, the improper choice of business partner will incur problems and conflicts for cooperation. When the ratio of shares of partners is 50% to 50%, conflicts will arise. 50% of the shares is not possible. There is only 51% or 49%. When you hold 51% of

the shares, your rights and obligations take the leading position. Therefore, you are the ultimate decision-maker. When you hold 49% of the shares, you have no choice but to leave when you have divisions with your business partners to avoid making troubles.

You'll have to Take a Breath Someday

Q: In 1972 when you began to develop a unique set of teaching methods and materials in English language training, what do you think is the biggest challenge at that time?

A: I came across to major difficulties: First, inadequacy of source for fund-raising; Second, lack of new technology which may develop my innovative ideas in teaching.

Q: In 1985, you experienced the nadir of life. What made you stand firm and continue to develop in the training industry?

A: When you choose not to give up, you are a winner even you may fail in competitions or battles. I was determined to develop English training business because I believed in the promising prospect of this business and I was deeply convinced that I would win in the next round of competition on the market.

Q: Between 1988 and 1995, you successfully introduced Wall Street English into five countries including Spain and Germany. And Wall Street Institute enjoyed stable developed in well-organized corporate system. Then, why did you decide to sell Wall Street Institute at that time?

A: Sooner or later, you will have to pass the business you started to others. The time matured in 1996. My business needed new and large amounts of capital to develop further. Only a multinational company could achieve this. Meanwhile, I had been working on the forefront for more than two decades and it's time for me to stop and to take a breath.

Work with the Spirit of Non-retirement

Q: One popular opinion among present society is "no life, no work". You put forward the idea of "never retire", what is the difference between the two attitudes towards life?

A: It is very hard to strike a balance between work and one's personal life. However, it is not impossible. If you are too ambitious and greedy, you will surely fail to achieve this balance. The success in career is definitely very important, but the most important is the personal development of us as individuals.

I am Captivated by the Thoughts of Lao Tzu

Q: Why did you come to China to re-establish English training schools after you sold Wall Street English Institutions in other places of the world?

A: When I decided to come to China in 1999, China's market meant greater risks to Wall Street International. Meanwhile, I also saw huge challenges. I have long been an explorer, therefore, I came to China not only for business concerns but also out of social and cultural concerns. At the age of 35, I began to dig into the thoughts of Lao Tzu. Ten years later, I began to study Buddhism and geomantic omen. Having observed my birth date and eight characters of horoscope, he told me I was a Chinese in the pre-life. I feel very comfortable and happy to live in China. Probably, I will spend the rest of my life in China.

Q: You are well versed in six languages. Meanwhile, you successfully established a language school. So I would like to know what unique experience that you have is superior to others in terms of language learning?

A: I don't know talents come from interest, or vice versa. What I know is I love learning foreign languages. Now it's time for me to become a student again. Starting from next month, I'll start to learn Chinese. I hope I can talk with you in Chinese next time when I meet you in September next year.

Q: You dreamed of becoming an educator. Did the twists and turns in your life help you in educating others? Does the spirit of "never give up" you mentioned in the six lessons in life have any bearing with your personal experience?

A: Mistakes and ups and downs in life are the learning process that will proceed towards better results. Certainly, if you give up after failure, you will only know failure and will not know success.

Q: It seems that you like Tao Te Ching very much. Are the thoughts expressed in Tao Te Ching helpful to the development of your career in China?

A: Thoughts of Taoism are full of wisdom. The philosophical thoughts from Taoism will help you with your life and work. One of the most important principles advocated by Taoism is serving the people. If you really observe this principle and serve others, you must do what you can and achieve something with your talents, sense of responsibility and a loving heart.