

Teacher's Reference

Examples of Life Fighters

• Nick Vujcic [Inspire lives with life • Create opportunity with the right attitude]

- ◇ Nick Vujcic is a writer and a Christian evangelist. He was born on December 4, 1982, in Melbourne, Australia, with tetra-amelia syndrome. In 2005, he founded a charitable organisation "Life Without Limbs".
- ◇ Because of tetra-amelia syndrome, Nick has no limbs but a small "foot" with two toes. His parents had a hard time accepting this fact, but soon took it as "a plan of God for their child".
- ◇ His parents did not give up on him. Instead, they raised him with great care, wishing that he can learn and live like a normal person. When Nick was young, he was often bullied by his classmates due to his disability. It was a difficult time, but it made him stronger, more independent, and more capable of facing challenges in the future.
- ◇ He started giving speeches at the age of 19. He shared his stories of overcoming difficulties and his strong belief in life with others in a humorous way. He has also published many inspirational books and videos, encouraging those who see life negatively to "live the miracle of life".
- ◇ He called his small foot "chicken drumstick" and joked about his own body, "I can float in the water because 80% of my body is the lung. The "chicken drumstick" is like a propeller."

• Liu Hsia [Life is precious • Stay optimistic and positive]

- ◇ Liu Hsia (April 12, 1942 to February 8, 2003) was a Taiwanese writer. She used the pseudonym "Hsin Lin Tzu" ("Hsin Lin" stands for the medical profession) to commemorate her indissoluble bond with hospitals.
- ◇ At the age of 12, Liu Hsia developed rheumatoid arthritis, which gave her swelling limbs from time to time. The disease caused her a lot of inconvenience and pain, so she once held a negative attitude towards life. When she turned 16, she became a Christian and in that, she experienced the value and preciousness of life. Since then, she developed an optimistic and positive outlook on life.

- ◇ Liu Hsia had to drop out of school at 12 because of the disease. Her highest education on record was "graduating from Beitou Elementary school". Liu Hsia minded it very much at first, but gradually let go of it as it means "all the knowledge she gained afterwards is self-taught" (《感謝玫瑰有刺》, 九歌出版社). Liu Hsia did not give up on her education. She continued self-learning through correspondence school and education radio. A teacher had once published a piece of her work in a newspaper. As a result of her unflinching effort, "Central Daily" published her first contribution around 1961.
- ◇ Liu Hsia continued her writing, and the genres of her works had become more diversified. In addition to prose, she also wrote novels, scripts for radio, TV and stage plays and won many awards.
- ◇ Liu Hsia was a brave challenger of life who accomplished a lot, despite her disability. She inspired the society with her works. Thus, she was known as the most influential writer in Taiwan, and was elected as the Top 10 Outstanding Young Women at the 8th ceremony in 1980.
- ◇ In addition to writing, Liu Hsia was committed to serve disabled people, volunteering for those who, like her, have physical disabilities. Later, she founded the Eden Disability Welfare Foundation (later renamed as the Eden Social Welfare Foundation), showing the importance she attached to both "gospel" and "welfare".
- ◇ In her later years when she could barely write, she still continued to do her writings by oral dictation. Her works show a strong desire to live and are very inspiring.
- ◇ Liu Hsia's extraordinary experience gave her a deep understanding of the meanings of life. In one of her articles (《生之歌》, 九歌出版社), she wrote, "Life..... I can use it well or waste it for nothing. I can use it to live a meaningful life or waste it meaninglessly. It takes just one single thought. I have to be responsible for myself." Despite her disease, she stated, "I would never fail life or let it slip from my hands. No matter what the future is, be it good or bad, happy or sad, I am willing to fight for it, and live bravely." These heartfelt feelings should be her best interpretation of the meanings of life.



• Phan Thanh Vinh [Inspire lives with life • A new start]

- ◇ Phan Thanh Vinh's parents are both Vietnamese. He has congenital heart disease. The situation got worse and he was diagnosed with heart failure when he was in Form 5. His limbs got swollen, he felt tired easily and needed a wheelchair to move around. He even had to use an oxygen machine when sleeping.
- ◇ In 2018, he had a new life after receiving heart transplant.
- ◇ In an interview with HK01, he said, "After I received heart transplant, I have decided to plan my life ahead. Even if I only have 5 or 10 years to live, I should not just muddle along like before."
- ◇ A radio DJ Suzie Wong had invited him to produce a 5-minute programme (成機對話) weekly. In the hope of inspiring life of others with his own, he opened a YouTube channel (范成榮頻道：「成基分享」) to share some of his moments in life.

• Stephen Hawking [Pursuit dreams with gratitude]

- ◇ Stephen William Hawking (January 8, 1942 to March 14, 2018) was a renowned physicist. He was not an outstanding student as a child. But when he went to study at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Oxford University, he graduated with first honour. Afterwards, he moved on to Cambridge University to study cosmology.
- ◇ Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) at the age of 21. His doctor thought that he only had two years to live, but he survived. He lost his mobility and had to use an electric wheelchair to move around, a computer and a speech synthesizer to speak and write.
- ◇ Despite his disability, Hawking did not give up and attained great achievements in physics. He was enthusiastic about cosmology and had made remarkable accomplishments. He had made a lot of contributions to the development of physics in the 21st century. His book, *Brief History of Time*, was translated into different languages and more than 10 million copies were sold. It is a bestseller in popular science.

Famous quote by Stephen Hawking:

Someone asked Stephen Hawking, "Mr. Hawking, your disease has put you on the wheelchair permanently, don't you think fate has blocked you from many other options?" He replied, "My brain can still think. I have a dream to pursue in my life. I love my family and friends and they love me too. I am grateful to what I have!"