
An Amos Yee in all of us?

(Article by guest contributor Ms. Carol Loi)

Through many forms of online media we can share anything, on any topic, anytime and anywhere but how should we exercise this power as twenty-first century citizens?

How would you react to the hypothesis that “There is an Amos Yee in all of us.”?

There is a part in each of our students, even each of us that wants to be heard. We want to be different. We think we deserve special attention.

With technology, we now have the power to do all of the above.

Through online and specifically social media, you can share anything, on any topic, anytime, anywhere.

So how can we guide ourselves and then our students to use that power appropriately?

Here is my five-point guide, using the acronym “**POWER**”, and I would invite you to share yours:

P – be aware of the Pressure that social media puts on us, even as we think it helps relieve the pressures of everyday life. When we see pictures of others going on holiday, partaking of nice food, celebrating their victories, we compare ourselves with them. It seems so hard to match up to them. What we don’t remember is that pictures may NOT speak a thousand words; behind those pictures are many more moments when our friends may be frustrated or anxious, just like us. It is that side of life that isn’t shared. On the other hand, there might be some of us who ‘follow’ people and sites online that just harp on the negative side of life. Be aware of the social pressure that we could get from social media, and how that shapes our worldview.

O – be aware of the urge to be Original. We often want to post the most original content. For some people, that may take the form of being provocative and outrageous to inject the “wow” factor into their online persona. Do remember that there is beauty too in the Ordinary; we don’t have to always strive to be extraordinary. Just be who you are, your true self, and work towards being the best that you can be. This is because we are all individually made, original masterpieces, the one-and-only in this world.

W – remember to be Wise on social media. Not everything in our newsfeed is true. Know how media affects our worldview. Always check the source, and don’t spread rumours or untruths. Instead, design a ‘mixed diet’ for yourself so that you look for balance, if not in one

article then several on the same issue. Some will point to facts, some just offer opinion, some will be generous enough to highlight the debate and different viewpoints for you to come to your own conclusion. Use social media for good, such as putting up encouraging posts or quotes, stories that give us hope in humanity, or things that can help us develop to be wiser people.

E – remember to have Empathy. Treat others the way you would want to be treated. Do we want others to shame us publicly on social media? Do we want our photos to be edited without our permission? Do we want to be captured on video & put on websites for public discussion? If the answer is ‘no’ then we need to remember not to do the same to others. Yes, sometimes we think the ‘bad’ guys deserve it but don’t join their club by being part of the public lynching. A wise word, an insightful nugget, the offer to suspend judgement and allow people to speak for themselves – it will demand more of us but we can do it.

R – remember that we need to take Responsibility for what we post. Our words have power, even when they are on social media. A careless comment could have dire consequences; there are people who have lost jobs because of an insensitive post, or have gone to jail because of it. Even if we post anonymously, we can be traced easily through technology. Each of us has a choice to make and others can take us to task for that choice.

So before you click to upload, remember the **POWER** you have to be different and to make a difference in uplifting your fellow netizens by what you share.

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