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As William Powers states in *Hamlet's BlackBerry*, people are constantly trying to close the distance between them by inventing new connective tools and working overtime to improve them. This reflects a globalized and technology-influenced world while also illustrating the natural human inclination to continue to invent and create new ways to be more connected. Meanwhile, the question that we strive to answer in this learning society is, how can we make the best of our life in this "runaway world" that is signified by developments in globalization and technology? In analyzing Powers' philosophical strategies for living in an increasingly wired and networked world, there are some which are most desirable and practicable as resources for the leaning society. Meanwhile, some of the strategies can fail to be attainable because of their ignorance of applying human's strength: self-motivation.

By living within the "runaway" world, influenced by globalized and modern technologies, people are enjoying the benefits of gaining more intimacy, frequency of contact and connectivity. For example, instead of writing a letter and waiting for a postman to deliver it, which could easily take at least a couple of days, we now can merely type an email and hit the "send" button, which will instantly deliver the letter. However, at the meanwhile, we are also suffering from the drawbacks of the technology development. As Sherry Turkle states, "its counterpart in alienation (Turkle, *Can You Hear Me Now?*)." Because we are wired whenever and wherever we are, many of us are experiencing the exhaustion from a restless day that is full of numerous tasks that are never-ending. Therefore, striving to keep balance of connectivity while trying to avoid the downside of over-connected, has become the most desired approach. Socrates provided a perfect metaphor to describe this human challenge: driving a chariot pulled by a pair of winged horses, one of them stands for the good, and the other for the bad. "The goal of the charioteer is to drive the horses skillfully so the chariot soars up toward 'the place beyond heaven' (Power, p.91)." Followed this metaphor, Plato suggested that it was necessary to "restore some of that distance to everyday life (Power, p.88) in order to think more deeply.

I was born and grew up in a small seaside town in northern China. My family did not have a TV until I was in middle school in the year of 1991. That 14 inch black and white TV enriched our lives by providing us with information that we did not know before. I can still recall how excited we all were when we could actually "see" Beijing Tian'an Men Square! Our family certainly enjoyed the new technology that brought us a vision of a much larger and wider world than we had been exposed to. However, once we became used to the modern technology, we realized that our family play times had disappeared. Where we all had previously played together: our father played flute, the rest of us sang and danced with him, instead, every evening after dinner, we all sat in front of TV. There were not any other sounds and interaction but the ones from the TV.

Meanwhile, as an educator in a public middle school in China, I heard and shared many complaints from the students' parents that their children spent too much time and effort on their computer and video games. We were not against the idea of the children having fun and playing with their computers, there needed to be a way to keep the balance from playing with their computers and games while also ensuring that they were spending time with their families. More

Xin Wang

importantly, what and how can we help the children to learn how to keep the balance? The parents and teachers' complaints showed the urgent desire for the children to keep a balance.

Is there a way to attain this perfectly balanced status that Socrates and Plato idealized? Power takes Ben Franklin as an example to illustrate that there IS: the approach of philosophical self-denial. As Power states, "Franklin understood human nature, and he recognized that in order for a ritual to succeed, people have to believe in it (Power, p.168)." In order to change a ritual habit, people must believe that by changing, they will gain more than they would by sticking to their old ways. In other words, embracing the happiness and enjoyment from a new ritual is the key, because this belief "can't be imposed by the world at large or higher-ups in management. It has to come from within. That's what "philosophical self-denial" is all about (Power, p. 168)." In the reader's opinion, this philosophical self-denial approach can be the most practical and attainable strategy to apply in order to make the best of our life in the runaway world. In other words, without the internal realization and motivation, the outward seeming changes may be temporary and will ultimately disappear.

My professional and personal experience demonstrates how important and necessary it is to be motivated internally in order for a change to be effective and permanent. "To deny ourselves what we instinctively crave is absurd and wrong (Power, p.166)." When I was teaching in China, my students told me that they would be more focusing on classes and spending more time with their family because their parents took away their computers, video game players because, as their parents said, "it was good for their study and their family's quality time". The parents' forcing their children's behavioral changes was "effective", or at least, it appeared so in the beginning, because the children had to change their old ritual behavior without their tools around. But not long after, we found out that many of them were using public internet bars (we did not have age restriction at that time, and though we do now, many underground internet bars are still open to under-aged children). Nevertheless, a few of them found out that the internet bars could provide more freedom for them to do whatever at whenever, thus they used the internet and games even more frequently than when they had their own computers at home. This again proves that the essential knowledge for behavior changing is not from outside forces, but from the person's inner interests and motivation. While trying to finish this paper, I have been ignoring all the pop-up new emails that normally distract me. I could have just hit the button and checked out the updated emails and fun pictures as I would normally do, but I have been applying this philosophical self-denial strategy, which is in this case, keeping myself motivated with how fun it is to write something about my personal experience combined with my own critical opinion, which is not normally allowed at where I am originally from. Also, if I finish the assignment draft by lunch time, I can go to Chinatown—my favorite place- for a yummy lunch☺. The self-denial philosophical strategy has worked! Rather than wasting time checking things that I do not even need now, I have paid much more attention to the task I am enjoying of focusing on.

My professional and personal experience reflect that in order to live in a "runaway" world, it is necessary to identify not just the negative character traits we want to change but the positive, inward reasons is the essential knowledge to achieve the balance, because "the

conviction came first, and it made all the difference (Power, p. 161). In the previous example of the students and the video games: What if the parents had helped lead the children to discover the positive aspects from the outside world of computers and video games, once the children themselves are interested and motivated by the encouraging new ritual without computers and video games, why do they need to spend more time and effort to lie to their parents so that they can stay long hours in internet bars?

People seem to be crying out for the balance between their real life and the wired world. Applying the strategy of philosophical self-denial can be the most feasible and attainable approach of doing so because it hits people at an individual level. Without self-awareness and internal motivation, the strategy of keeping physical distance that is based on Plato's approach can fall short. Even if we physically escaped from modern technology, such as computers and internet, we would still have difficulty making any kind of change, getting space from our distractions and finding balance. Meanwhile, Power's strategy of finding inner space by the inspiration of Seneca can be unsuccessful if we were only disciplining ourselves to focus without realizing the positive elements from doing it. In my personal experience, if I try to focus on certain tasks because I feel that I should and have to, I would either make all the possible excuses to postpone it, or even worse, if I could, I would cancel it. For example, if I were only writing this paper because this is my assignment, without focusing on the real learning enjoyment from doing it, I would delay it to tomorrow or some other day, maybe even the day before the due date.

In conclusion, in facing a world that is globalized and technology influenced, how people make the best of their life is dependent on how we use our interior strength and interests to motivate ourselves for the outward ritual changes. This is the most fundamental and essential knowledge that can lead us to explore the idea of keeping a balance. Powers states that the point is not to run away from the crowd and become a hermit. For most of us, "the pure alpha life would be as unpleasant as the pure omega. The point is to find a happy balance (Power, p. 100)." Once we are learning to utilize internal motivation, we can either choose to make physical distance and get away from the busy world, or explore inner strength to set a space apart from busy mind, it is individual decision and approaches that depend on different people with different circumstance. In the ride of exploring and finding a perfect balance, the charioteer is going through a fluid and ever changing road, by mastering the tool of the philosophical self-denial, the chariot can be driven skillfully to the place that where the pure knowledge, as —enlightenment and happiness—resides.