

The Path to Growth and Maturity for Young Students: Embracing Independence and Self-Reliance

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Abstract: Young students are the future of our country and the hope of our nation. The healthy growth of young students must rely on independence and self-reliance. From the perspectives of family, society, and school, this article explores the cultivation of young students' spirit of independence and self-reliance, which should be grasped from three aspects: recognizing the situation, identifying the reasons, and taking effective measures.

Keywords: Young students; Self-reliance; Independence; Path

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1. Introduction

Independence is an important sign of individual maturity and the highest level of human development. The spirit of independence and self-reliance is the foundation for people's survival and the fundamental spirit for their development, especially as time progresses and society develops, the demand for this spirit has increased. Young students are the future of the country and the hope of the nation. To achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation ^[1], it is necessary to solve the problem of insufficient abilities of young students from the root, nurture new talents, create a positive atmosphere, and open up new opportunities. This study starts from the perspective of the relationship between student and society, student and family, and student and school, and studies the cultivation of the spirit of independence and self-reliance among young students, with strong practical and profound historical significance.

2. Recognizing the situation

No great cause can be smooth sailing. The quality of youth is related to the long-term development of the country and the nation ^[2]. The spirit of independence and self-reliance is the foundation on which young students rely for survival. It solves problems related to worldview and methodology, rather than knowledge or a

single skill. To master the fundamental ability and establish oneself in the world for a long time, it is necessary to possess good thinking habits and firm personality qualities, which are not innate and require cultivation. Thus, we need to cultivate young students' scientific thinking methods and habits through imparting knowledge so that they can master skills and learn to be good individuals. Once young students master the scientific worldview and methodology, within the limits of time, energy, and perseverance, they can contribute their own strength to society with scientific and technological means.

The spirit of independence and self-reliance is a reliable guarantee for achieving the two centenary goals and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation ^[3]. The report of the 20th National Congress of the CPC has clearly defined the grand blueprint for China's development. The realization requires enhancing the spirit of independence and self-reliance, overcoming great struggles, constructing great projects, advancing great undertakings, and realizing great dreams ^[4]. Standing on the sidelines will not bring our great dreams to fruition, nor will simply making noise with drums and gongs. Only by consciously embedding the spirit of independence and self-reliance into the entire process of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, adhering to the Party's leadership, serving the people, relying on the people, and uniting and leading the people to face challenges, persevere, and advance courageously, can we achieve the two centenary goals and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The spirit of independence and self-reliance is an inevitable requirement for solving contradictions and overcoming difficulties. The world is a contradictory entity, and people achieve personal and social development in the process of resolving conflicts. To achieve people's aspirations for a better life ^[5], it is necessary to solve contradictions and overcome difficulties with an independent and self-reliant spirit. We will embark on a path that meets mountains, build a bridge when facing water, and persevere towards the grand goal of people's happiness and national rejuvenation, because the spirit of independence and self-reliance embodies the qualities of liberating the mind, seeking truth from facts, keeping pace with the times, and seeking pragmatism. It is the driving force for people to move forward despite difficulties and be courageous. These spirits cannot be lost in the great struggle of Chinese revolution, construction, and reform and opening up, and are still significant in the great journey of China's prosperous, democratic, civilized, harmonious, and beautiful modernization construction.

The spirit of independence and self-reliance is the inherent driving force for solving the practical problems of contemporary young students. Overall, contemporary young students exhibit good qualities, but certain shortcomings still need to be addressed. For instance, many students lack the awareness and ability to learn independently and autonomously, often relying on others for basic self-care. They may also struggle to adapt to new environments, face new challenges, and explore unfamiliar situations. Additionally, some students do not prioritize a civilized lifestyle or daily physical exercise. This gap between their current abilities and the expectations of the times, family, and society underscores the importance of cultivating the spirit and skills of independence and self-reliance in young students. This task is vital for the prosperity of countless families, the continuity of the Party's cause, and the nation's future.

3. Identifying the reasons

3.1. Family factors

There is an insufficient understanding of the fundamental role of independence and self-reliance in life. The cultivation of independent and self-reliant spirit among young students is closely related to their families. A strong family tradition, a harmonious family environment ^[6-9], frequent communication, and shared activities are key factors in promoting youth education ^[10]. They play a stabilizing, structural, and foundational role in

the development of young students. Just as building a house requires careful planning—choosing the right direction, solidifying the foundation, and setting sturdy supports—cultivating good habits and constructing a strong framework for young students are crucial. However, with the deepening of global integration and the influence of multiculturalism and diverse thinking, the emphasis on family culture construction among the Chinese people has weakened^[11]. Neglecting the cultivation of good family education, rules, and traditions has led to a weakening of young students' awareness and ability to be independent and self-reliant. They often focus solely on academic learning, neglecting the comprehensive development of morality, intellect, physical fitness, aesthetics, and practical skills. This approach masks their developmental shortcomings by allowing one area of strength to overshadow many weaknesses. By ignoring the cultivation of independence and self-reliance and blindly following trends without fostering personal interests and hobbies, students may seem to be developing their abilities. However, in reality, this stifles their curiosity and leads them down the wrong path.

There is an insufficient ability to cultivate the spirit of independence and self-reliance among young students. Parents are primarily responsible for cultivating young students, and their awareness and abilities directly influence those of their children. As the ancients said, “like father, like son,” “when those above behave wrongly, those below will follow,” and “one takes the color of his company.” The good qualities and abilities of young students are built upon the words and actions of their parents. If parents neglect the cultivation of independence and self-reliance in their daily lives and fail to focus on small details, the outcome is likely to be unsatisfactory. Good qualities are developed over time through consistent practice, and neglecting the cultivation of daily skills reflects a lack of parental ability to foster the healthy growth of their children.

The cultivation of independence and self-reliance among young students is not adequately addressed. Treating this development solely as a family responsibility may be insufficient and fail to meet contemporary needs. Particularly, fostering ideals and beliefs in young students is crucial for the future of the nation. By nurturing their lofty aspirations, students can unlock their potential for progress. They need to align their personal ideals with the broader goals of the country and its people, stay in tune with the times, and share a common destiny with society. This alignment will help them better realize their life values and elevate their personal growth^[12,13].

3.2. Social factors

The civic consciousness cannot keep up with the requirements of the times. As the main body of society and the masters of the country, citizens must have a sense of ownership. Young students should consciously promote positive thinking, resist negative influences, and foster a culture of social unity and progress. The family and social environments are interdependent, mutually influencing and benefiting one another. If we focus solely on maintaining a positive family environment while neglecting the broader social context, our efforts may be insufficient. A strong social atmosphere is essential for sustaining a culture of independence and self-reliance within the family. To achieve this, it is crucial to integrate social education with family education, creating a harmonious environment in both spheres. As the social environment improves and civic responsibility is strengthened, individuals will contribute to upholding social morals and adopting new social customs, thereby reinforcing good family values and promoting positive social ethics.

The awareness of civic engagement often falls short of the times' demands. Unity achieved through struggle fosters genuine unity, while unity gained through concession can lead to its disintegration. In practice, the notion of merely being a good person can perpetuate formalism and bureaucracy. Without proactive measures to address these issues, establishing a positive social atmosphere becomes challenging. The absence of robust social organizations and effective public opinion mechanisms allows some individuals to prioritize

personal interests over societal well-being. This tendency to conform and follow trends undermines the principles of independence and self-reliance.

3.3. School factors

Schools play a crucial role in nurturing talent, with the direct goal of guiding young students' growth and meeting societal and familial expectations for their future. The ultimate aim of education is to develop students who are not only passionate about learning but also independent and self-reliant. However, current educational practices often fall short, lacking both the value concept of fostering effective learning and the educators who can implement this concept effectively. Without skilled mentors to guide them, students may face blind spots in their development, leading to prolonged cycles of exploration and practice. Mastering a wide array of skills within a limited timeframe can be challenging. Therefore, both scientific guidance from educators and the students' own proactive exploration are vital for their healthy development. With proper mentorship and a strong sense of independence and initiative, students can thrive, achieving comprehensive and unrestricted growth in the realm of knowledge.

4. Taking effective measures

4.1. Emphasizing holistic development of young students

The development of young students is a comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, and is not solely based on intellectual education. Young students are rational entities with emotions, aspirations, and ideals. Regardless of whether we are considering family education, social education, or school education, all dimensions should adhere to the growth principles of young students. They should be nurtured according to the standards for developing new talents, emphasizing moral and cultural education. This approach aims to cultivate individuals who are well-equipped to take on the significant responsibility of national rejuvenation.

4.2. Establishing the concept of systematic and process education

In promoting the healthy growth of young students, while families, society, and schools may differ in their roles, responsibilities, tasks, and requirements, they share the common goal of nurturing young students into valuable members of the family, contributors to society, and assets to the nation. Each perspective contributes to the overarching objective of fostering well-rounded individuals, with all parties managing their respective roles, fulfilling their responsibilities, and collaborating to create an environment conducive to the students' development. This unified approach aims to meet the expectations of families, address social needs, satisfy the public, and fulfill school objectives in a timely manner.

To cultivate the spirit of independence and self-reliance in young students at different stages of their development, it is crucial to address their poor habits and insufficient abilities from the root. This involves starting with an understanding of their specific challenges, independently analyzing and identifying problems, and focusing on the key aspects to resolve them. A persistent and determined approach is essential for managing the process effectively and preventing issues from arising. By addressing simple tasks one by one and systematically working through them, we can prevent problems from overwhelming the students and ensure their growth and development.

4.3. Grasping the three key points

The first key point is parents. Family education is the first education for most teenagers ^[14]. Parents not only

give young students life but also impart crucial spiritual strengths such as habits, morality, perseverance, and physical well-being. The overall quality of parents directly influences the healthy development of young students. Enhancing parents' moral cultivation, cultural enrichment, personal qualities, and household management skills is essential for fostering good spiritual qualities and improving young students' behavior. Implementing systematic family education offers significant advantages over school and social education, especially during the critical period of growth for young students^[15]. The worldview, outlook on life, and values of family members profoundly impact the value orientation of young students^[16].

The second key point is teachers. Teachers play a leading role in the growth and development of young students. Respecting teachers and believing in their teachings is crucial for young students. Teachers' ideals, morals, profound knowledge, and emotional connections, along with their upright character and strict self-discipline, profoundly influence and guide students' healthy growth. Teachers use their personality, knowledge, intelligence, and courage to inspire young students. They offer sincere and unwavering care, demonstrate deep loyalty to the Party's educational cause, and continuously strive for personal excellence. With a steadfast belief in scientific truth and a passionate dedication to profound theories, excellent teachers set a powerful example through their consistent words and actions. They act as towering lighthouses, illuminating the path for young students and guiding them toward maturity and success.

The third key point is grassroots social governance institutions. Communities and village groups are the carriers of grassroots social governance, the bridge and link between families and schools, and the group autonomous institutions for self-management, self-education, and self-improvement of the masses. They play a crucial role in uniting people's hearts, resolving conflicts, guiding progress, countering negativity, enhancing public opinion, spreading positive energy, advocating new social trends, and fostering a healthy and progressive social atmosphere. Ignoring the role of these autonomous organizations can lead to the proliferation of unhealthy customs and practices, significantly impacting the development of social civilization. Since the 19th National Congress of the CPC, the Party and governments have emphasized the importance of grassroots social governance, recognizing it as an integral and effective component of modernizing the social governance system and enhancing governance capacity. Addressing the "last mile" of social governance involves creatively applying and innovatively developing the spirit of independence and self-reliance within the broader journey of social governance modernization.

4.4. Building a three-level linkage mechanism to ensure all-round education

The three-level linkage between family, school, and society influences, restricts, and interacts with each other. A positive family atmosphere fosters a conducive environment for a good school and social atmosphere. It is essential to delineate the functions of each party, clarify their respective tasks, and fulfill their responsibilities. Effective coordination among these parties, strict self-discipline, and the use of evaluation mechanisms and supervision methods are required to create a collaborative and constructive atmosphere for comprehensive education.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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