It was in September 2008; a catastrophe that started on Wall Street soon crippled the American economy and dragged millions of people out of their houses, jobs, and schools. On the other hand, a handful of rich people continued enjoying luxurious life styles with access to economic resources and cultural capital without paying a penny in taxes. Big American corporations, utilizing cheap labor, natural resources, and tax loopholes, focused solely on the "bottom line" and some of them were bailed out by our taxes. Capitalism has gone too far beyond competition, to such an extent that it brought about a moral corruption of people. The unfair concentration of wealth in a few, along with one of the largest inequality gaps in U.S. history, almost convinces us that the government is "Of the 1%, by the 1%, and for the 1%" (Stiglitsz). How could this happen and how can we solve it? The answer can be found in identifying the kind of flawed morality underlying this problem and finding a more humane kind of morality. I believe that early childhood education can be one way to start adopting the kind of morality that can transform this world so that everyone can have a fulfilling life. An alternative view is discussed as a solution to a main obstacle in achieving this goal, followed by a concrete example of how this idea can possibly be implemented effectively.

Morality and education are closely interconnected because morality is one kind of learning that can greatly affect one's outlook; hence, they need to be approached not as two independent areas, but as one aim simultaneously. Additionally, morality needs to be introduced to children with more clearness. There are many different kinds of morality. In general, morality is about what is good and what is bad and this is often the way morality is taught. It is this broadly vague idea of morality that allows education to be defined and interpreted in various ways, including ones with negative effects on our society. Meanwhile, education is often spoken

of with such associated ideas as academia or advanced degrees and the top priorities in education remain reading, writing, and arithmetic, by which children are tested, categorized, and labeled. Amid this obscurely taught morality and the prevailing shallow view of education, how are children supposed to make sense and take something out of what they learn, or even to see what there is to life? Some people choose to use their knowledge not for public good but only for their personal upward mobility and can still be perfectly justified in saying that it is subjectively good because they can become rich and have comfortable lives without mentioning at what expense it is done. We can see why morality as what is good and what is bad is insufficient. Morality in the form of further consciously and effortfully analyzing and specifying reasons why one thing is good or bad in the grand scheme of things is essential in developing children's character. This can certainly help people dismiss the conventional notions of education, or knowledge, and see them from a different viewpoint. Education in fact does have a much more profound end than just a simple process of unidirectional transmission of knowledge or passive input of information. To get educated means to have an experience of learning about the world and ourselves in it, reflecting on such views, thinking critically about what we learn, seeking meaning of learning, establishing a purpose in life, and empowering ourselves and others to achieve what we believe in. This is indeed a crossroad, of which consequence is crucial, because the impact it can have is not only on the level of fulfillment of individual lives, but also on the health of community, society, and humanity as a whole. This is precisely why morality should have the same as or higher priority than traditional disciplines in education today.

A main obstacle in having a moral life, or moral education, would be seen in a kind of virtue that is valued in this culture, which contrasts to the aim, or the underlying criteria required

for a moral life. A strong sense of freedom, liberty, and individuality is often emphasized, as the words "American Dream" or "academic freedom" imply. This distance between the starting point and the goal can be shortened by applying a different approach in viewing and understanding self and society, and the relationship between the two. This is not to negate values of individualistic culture or those of collective culture since, despite the fact that both have positive and negative aspects, every culture should be appreciated as it is. The approach needed here requires abandoning such a dichotomous way of thinking and instead integrating the both in a way that allows us to see ourselves, who do exist distinctly as unique and active individuals, yet always as a part of the society. Self emerges, develops, and changes as one engages in dialogical interactions with others, or any kind of social practice that is mediated by cultural tools (Stetsenko, 480). Self can be defined always and only in relation to others. Thus, the sense of isolation, alienation, or anomie can confuse or degrade our sense of self. This view, however, does not necessarily devalue individual success. One's intention, action and outcome can still be variable and praised, but we should not be oblivious of the fact that they always reflect many inseparable social contexts attached to them: our parents who gave us birth and nourishment, teachers who taught us how to write, friends who cheered us up, and even enemies who challenged us and made us stronger. Many studies from Positive Psychology, a relatively new field in psychology, have shown that having a purpose in life, which is a stable and far-reaching desire to "contribute to the matters larger than the self" (Damom, 121), is a pivotal indicator of psychological health such as happiness, self-esteem and satisfaction. This implies how important one's view on self and society is for the quality of life.

The most effective way to instill this kind of morality that is now specified here will be through everyday activities and routines. First and foremost, morality has to be learned with experience, rather than be taught with reasoning. This is not to say that we leave children alone and let them learn by themselves. We provide them with a minimal yet sufficient support so that they can learn and develop step by step with consciousness and reflection. Secondly, it is important to note that morality is in and about everyday life. Learning is often taken out of the social contexts and taught as if the subjects exist independently, which demotivates and confuses children. Discussing whether or not the death penalty and torture are morally defensible, though they are issues of morality, may not be necessary. This is not just because such a discussion is advanced, but because it is less relevant to children's everyday lives. Implanting morality through everyday activities and routines is age-appropriate and will lead to a fundamental, positive, and stable change. This otherwise mundane and usual educational setting can possibly be designed in such a way that gives opportunities for children to develop basic moral disciplines, such as cooperation, mutual charity, modesty, honesty, and consideration and respect for others. Based on these two criteria mentioned above, for instance, a practice of moral education can be as simple as making it a rule for children to clean the classroom together after school. Children will be able to have and consider perspectives of others, to reflect on themselves, to feel sympathetic for the suffering, and to take appropriate actions in a given context. No other learning setting can provide more relevancies between learning and everyday life than learning through everyday life. This is where the active learning and clear understanding, concrete and relevant life examples, and constant and immediate practice meet all together. This simplistic practice of moral education can break through the individualistic view and increase the awareness of connectedness.

Enough sacrifices have already been made for injustices and we cannot afford to keep paying any more for the illusory freedom and ill-defined democracy. Fixing this absurdly unjust and gone-too-far capitalistic system for the betterment of the society all comes down to mending people, who created it, who let it happen, who ignored it, and who lived through it. Moral education can be a beginning step towards this large task and will lead to a conclusive outcome. Children are the ones who will be transforming and shaping the world in the future. Therefore, it is extremely important and necessary to equip them with this crucial mental tool. Moral education in early childhood will give them opportunities to see themselves in the totality of the society and help them build meaningful life agendas. They will be able to go on to form a just society in which everyone can lead a fulfilling life.

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