

# Consider Others First, Cultivate Your Inner Self and Never Blame Others

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**(Clearwisdom.net)** In ancient China, a businessman named Ma Wenan lived in Xinghua County, Jiangsu Province. Mr. Ma was well educated and had good manners. His wife, Mrs. Wu, was smart, pretty, and good at doing housework. But she was a little arrogant and critical of others. Mrs. Wu didn't get along well with Mr. Ma's mother, her mother-in-law. Every time Ma Wenan returned home from a business trip, both his wife and mother would blame each other for all their troubles and refused to listen to each other. This made Ma Wenan very uneasy. He knew that his wife did not respect his mother, and he wanted to change that. One day he came up with an idea to make his wife recognize her own faults.

One day, Mrs. Wu again started to complain about her mother-in-law in front of Ma Wenan. Mr. Ma said, "I know my old mother is talkative, so I have made the decision that we should move out. But our relatives and friends don't know that my mother is a difficult person. If we suddenly move out, people

would criticize us. (It is Chinese tradition that the younger generation help the older.) So I urge you tolerate her for a month or two. Before we move, you certainly must bear the responsibility to take care of my mother wholeheartedly. That way, everyone will know of your great filial piety and how unreasonable my mother is. Then we will move and no one will be able to say anything about it."

Mr. Wu was reluctant. Ma Wenan continued, "We will move out soon. During the next few weeks, you should treat my mother as a guest. Treat her with respect. Why is it so difficult, anyway?"

Mrs. Wu finally agreed. From that day on, she became very nice and obedient to her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law noticed the change in the daughter-in-law, and she was pleased. The mother-in-law was happy and became very considerate of her daughter-in-law. Naturally, the friction was gone, and the relationship improved.

Several days later, Ma Wenan noticed that his wife no longer bad-mouthed his mother. He asked, "How's my mother been treating you lately?" "Better," she answered. Mr. Ma said, "Now that she

is getting better, you should attend to her even more carefully. You must show everyone how obedient you are and how unreasonable my mother is. Only then can we can move out." Mrs. Wu nodded in agreement.

Several days later, Ma Wenan asked his wife, "How's my mother treating you?" Mrs. Wu said, "Mother-in-law treats me very well now. I don't want to move any more. I am happy to stay by her side and take care of her on your behalf."

Ma Wenan said, "I have to tell you that my actual intention was to have you take care of my mother, not to encourage you to move. Now that I have spoken my mind, I hope you can see my dilemma. In the past, you always complained about how talkative and difficult my mother was. I knew all along that you did not take good care of my mother. But since you were angry, critical of others, and not willing to admit your own faults, I did not want to point out your shortcomings, because you would not agree. I couldn't force you to appease my mother, so I had to come up with this trick to make you temporarily put up with her, hoping that you would change your

arrogant attitude. I am sorry for having lied to you; I didn't enjoy doing that."

Ma Wenan went on, "Ancient people said, 'A good daughter-in-law will never fail to bring out the good in her mother-in-law'. It is a proven fact. From now on, I hope you always focus on your own faults and don't always blame others. Ancient people also said, 'Love others, and others will love you; respect others, and others will respect you.' It is a principle that applies to human relationships in society; it is also true within a family." Ma Wenan told her about the great virtue and favor that parents give to their children. He also told classic stories about children respecting their parents in ancient China.

After that, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law got along very well. Everyone praised their family as a role model for mutual respect between the two generations.

Ancient people paid special attention to introspection; they believed in "correcting mistakes if you have committed them and guarding against them if you have not." During a conflict, if each side blames the other, the conflict would only intensify.

The virtuous and practical approach of Ma Wenan deserves our applause. But the story's inner truth of "self-examination and introspection" is more thought provoking. How should we conduct ourselves during a conflict?

"We have also said that if every one of us cultivates his inner self, examines his own xinxing to look for the causes of wrongdoing so as to do better next time, and considers others first when taking any action, human society would become better and ethical standards would again rise. The spiritual civilization would also become better, and so would public security. Perhaps there would not be any police. No one would need to be governed, as everyone would discipline him or herself and search their inner self. Wouldn't you say this would be great? You know that laws are becoming more comprehensive and impeccable. Yet why are there people who still do bad deeds? Why don't they comply with the laws? It is because you cannot govern their hearts. When they are not seen, they will still do bad deeds. If everyone cultivates the inner

self, it will be totally different." (*Zhuan Falun*, March 2000)

In the above excerpt from [\*Zhuan Falun\*](#), Master Li Hongzhi clarified the essence of "look for reasons within yourself" and "cultivate your inner self." This is why, after practicing Falun Gong, many practitioners changed into very tolerant people and their family relationships greatly improved.