



SRA & GAD Newsletter



Issue No. 1 March 2011

A monthly publication of the SRA and GAD Focal Point

SRA-GAD Strategic Planning Workshop Highlights Programs to Become More Gender-Sensitive

THE SRA-GAD held a strategic seminar and planning workshop on October 7-8, 2010 at the agency's Training Hall. Assessing the outcome, the event was a resounding success.

No less than SRA Administrator Regina Bautista-Martin delivered the very inspiring and encouraging opening remarks. Her presence was definitely a big boost to the morale of the participants, composed primarily of SRA-GAD officers and Technical Working Group from the Quezon City and Bacolod chapters.

In her message, the amiable lady administrator pointed out the vital role of women in general, particularly in the home front and workplace. For her, it is a must for every female to take pride with her self, avoiding insecurities in order to explore all her potentialities to the fullest and carry out her role as competently as her male counterpart.

She made herself as one concrete example. As SRA Administrator, she's working in a "sea of men". But nevertheless, she considers it a gift or blessing. She's comfortable with who she is and doesn't make her being a woman a hindrance to perform her duties flawlessly. Her pride as a woman she always brings regardless of who she's with, whether male associates or even her



When two powerful women figures meet: SRA Adm. Ma. Regina Bautista Martin (right) shares the spotlight with UPCWSFI's Dr. Carolyn Sobritchea (left).

husband.

Adm. Martin also clamored for equal opportunities among men and women in the farm, especially when it comes to salary. In general, men are paid higher but this doesn't mean women have less workload. On the contrary, there are instances when their load is heavier as compared to men's but because of lack of gender sensitivity, goes unnoticed. In this light, the soft-spoken lady administrator promoted for equal salaries for both sexes.

The soul of Administrator Martin's speech was clearly reflected in the topics presented in the two-day event. The invited resource speakers spoke on various gender concerns that would guide the SRA-GAD group in their future planning sessions. These were accompanied by



The SRA-GAD workshop attendees pose for a souvenir shot with resource speakers Atty. Leo Battad and Dr. Carol Sobritchea from the University of the Philippines.

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WELCOME to the first issue of the SRA and GAD Newsletter. Inside every issue, we provide information on various activities and initiatives of SRA in support to Gender and Development.

This newsletter also features some gender responsive legislations, programs and actions as they address some gender issues and concerns. This is to raise the level of gender sensitivity in and outside the workplace and further, knowledge on gender dimensions on current and emerging national and global issues.

It is hoped that you will find this newsletter educational, useful and enriching in your every endeavor. Thank you for your support as we encourage you to contribute articles and educational materials that can be shared with the entire SRA



EDITOR'S NOTE

THE workplace is like a busy highway where action is the key word. There are lots of things developing in split seconds. It can be

happy, sad, inspiring...everything. Chronicling such happenings in written form not only captures the moment, so to speak but more importantly, gives us something to always look back to and remind us of important moments.

Coming up with this newsletter weaves so much excitement on our part. SRA and GAD have so many activities worth publishing. In the four corners of the office, insightful things take place everyday. Whether big or small, it doesn't matter, as long as it contributes to the betterment of each employee. This newsletter is a tool to drive home essential messages.

It's our maiden edition and we hope to be your watchdogs in the workplace. We hope to highlight the voice of everybody through each of the pages. It's our goal to feature inspiring events and personalities worth-emulating each issue. Happy reading!



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If you are interested in receiving copies of the newsletter, kindly email- sra_gad@yahoo.com

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SRA-GAD OBSERVES WOMEN'S MONTH

IN line with the observance of March as Women's Month, the SRA-GAD recently held a series of lecture forums whose varied subjects appealed mostly to the agency's female employees.

Held every Monday at the SRA social hall right after the flag ceremony, said lecture forums were a success, attendance-wise. Active participation from the audience was evident every week, a proof that the lined-up topics were truly interesting.

Kicking off the series of lectures was "Anger Management in the Workplace" which took place on February 28, 2011. This was conducted by Mr. Joseph Peter R. Gonzales of the Extension and Technical Services Division. The attendees gained insights on how to control anger even before it could cast adverse affects in the workplace.



Joseph Peter Gonzales lectures on "Anger Management in the Workplace."

In the open forum, most of those who shared their personal

experiences were women. The examples they gave were a clear proof of how cool and stable they are in handling "hot" situations. They are also effective pacifiers when anger mounts between two parties, something which really needs to be avoided in a public place like the office.

The following Monday, March 7, Mr. Marco Soriano of the Legal Department spoke on "Magna Carta of Women." Here, he highlighted some interesting privileges contemporary women can avail in the workplace. One of these is the special leave benefits as stated in the Civil Service Commission's Memorandum Circular No. 25 series of 2010 which contains the guidelines on how to go about it.



Marco Soriano discusses the "Magna Carta of Women."

Under Republic Act No. 9710: An Act Providing for the Magna Carta of Women, the special leave may be availed for every instance of gynecological disorder requiring surgery for a maximum period of two months per year.

This is really good news to female employees covered by such health condition.

On March 15, a resource person from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) was invited to give a lecture about "Earthquake Preparedness." Mr. Erlinton Antonio Olavere proved to be an engaging speaker as he was able to inject humor, candor and warmth while pointing out accurate safety measures when an earthquake occurs.



Phivolc's Erlinton Olavere enumerates safety tips during earthquakes.

The audience was all ears to him especially that a few days before the lecture, the killer quake in Japan stroke. It was indeed an enlightening experience for everybody, most notably to women, who, when caught in natural calamities are the ones more devastated because of their physical limitations.

March 21 was exclusive for the ladies. Tagged as "Makeover

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(SRA GAD Observes Women's Month . . . from page 3)

"Magic", beauty concerns were tackled in the lecture. Ms. Cely Tolentino, a senior stylist from the FIX Bench Salon was invited to talk about hairstyling and makeup. Chosen as demo models were Ms. Lorna Bago of the Extension and Technical Services Division (for hair) and Ms. Abigail Flores of Admin and Finance (makeup).

All female employees truly enjoyed the activity as they learned a number of tips to further enhance their physical appearance. In doing such, they develop strong self-confidence and self-esteem. In contemporary times, when competition is stiff, looks matter. Other people's positive perception through physical looks spells a big difference. Looking good all the time is one success component for



Abigail Flores of the Admin and Finance Department served as demo model in the "Makeover Magic"

modern women.

Capping the month-long series of lectures was "Managing Your Personal Accounts." No less than former SRA Board Member Ms. Lutgarda Samaniego was the key speaker. A very apt subject during

these hard times, the audience learned a lot from Ms. Samaniego's practical tips. Many female employees could relate to the topic since in the home front, women are the money keepers. Doing the budgeting and saving is part of their role as a homemaker.



Former SRA Board Member Ms. Lutgarda Samaniego talks on how one can manage his/her personal accounts especially during these tough times.

Positive Realizations During SURECCO'S General Assembly

By Joseph Peter R. Gonzales

It was definitely one unforgettable affair. Especially for new members like this writer, attending the annual General Assembly of the Sugar Employees Credit Cooperative (SURECCO) on March 17, 2011 at the SRA Social Hall proved to be very encouraging. At least, we had better and clearer understanding of the fresh endeavor we entered. We were enlightened on a lot of things and felt that signing up with the club was a wise and smart move.

Listening to the accomplishment report of SURECCO Chair Fernando Corpuz, I realized the genuine importance of cooperatives. Coming from the private sector where in most cases cooperatives are non-existent, I was impressed with its over-all mechanics. Not only does it require you to save but can also be of great help in times of emergencies. So it's like shooting two birds with one stone.

Contemplating on this thought, I was convinced that actually the idea of cooperatives greatly contributes to women empowerment. Why? While it's true that cooperatives are there to serve the whole workforce, it's simply undeniable that it's the women who are more concerned in directing the proper use of money especially in the home front.



SRA Administrator Regina Bautista-Martin urges everyone to do their best in all endeavors they enter.

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SRA Joins GAD Exhibit In Line with Women's Month

THE SRA-GAD participated in the grand exhibit held at the Quezon City Hall in line with its celebration of Women's Month on March 7, 2011. Various government agencies also joined the momentous event. By-products, brochures, tarpaulins and fact sheets of said institutions were in display as a booth is assigned to each participant.

A day before the exhibit, Dr. Dina Padilla-Fernandez, Vice Chairperson, GAD Focal Point and her team comprised of Ms. Rebecca Mata, Ms. Evelyn Estanislao and Mr. Joseph Peter Gonzales set up the booth assigned to SRA.

Samples of the agency's by-products like muscovado, washed and refined sugar were displayed as well as cane wine. Fact sheets on sugar, muscovado and the Sugar Regulatory Administration were also made available to interested passers by or onlookers. A tarpaulin depicting successful GAD-related activities over the past years was also highlighted.

During the flag ceremony at the QC Hall on March 7, Ms. Dolly dela Cruz and Ms. Cora Boyero represented SRA while Ms. Rebecca Mata, Ms. Evelyn Estanislao, Ms. Lorna Bago and Ms. Roda Ann Marmol took turns in supervising the SRA booth which was a hit among the visitors.

Here are some photos taken during the successful event:

SRA Women at Work: Making Things Possible!



It was a working Sunday for SRA-GAD officers (from L-R) Joseph Peter Gonzales, Rebecca Mata, Evelyn Estanislao and Dina Padilla-Fernandez (not included in the photo) as they set up the booth on March 6, 2011 in preparation for the next day's grand exhibit at the QC Hall grounds.



GAD enables women and men to be fully aware of their rights, particularly to livelihood. GST cum livelihood trainings are provided in an effort to uplift their conditions. Here, Ms. Rosa Tan of SRA demonstrates Muscovado-making to Davao sugarcane farmers on Nov. 18, 2010.



GAD's thrust to empower women and men was what SRA employees experienced when they underwent training on balloon threading and chocolate candy-making aimed to create extra income and help for the upliftment of their economic condition.

(Positive Realizations . . . from page 4)

Budgeting is a major task. There are lots of monetary concerns: monthly bills, kids' enrollment, food, house rent, urgent hospitalization, etc. So, when there's shortage of fund, cooperatives are there to offer immediate solution. This is truly a relieving thought during these hard times, when every penny counts.

And speaking of women empowerment, the presence of SRA Administrator Regina Bautista-Martin to the event was a great morale booster. For one, her keynote address was truly inspiring. Culled from a speech prepared by renowned TV journalist Maria Ressa titled, "The Courage to Do What's Right", it aimed to motivate the audience to always give their best in whatever they do for a more meaningful life.

The following is the speech's highlight:

"Be excellent at what you do. Work hard. Everything begins there. Be self-aware. Ask yourself the tough questions and give honest answers. Be aware of how your actions affect others. Take responsibility for what you say and what you do. Will you act this way if everyone can see what you're doing? Statements like 'only following orders' or 'everyone else was doing it' abdicates responsibility. Remember, how you behave is completely under your control. Find your allies. Once you find the courage to say no and take responsibility for your actions, you reverse the tipping point for evil and begin to tilt the balance the other way. Fight the group that will drag you down. Find the group that will raise you up. You'll need help."

In-between discussions of some pertinent issues and answering queries from members, SURECCO sponsored cash raffles to everybody's delight. More importantly, attendees didn't leave empty-handed because upon registration, everyone received cash. On

top of that, dividends were distributed later in the day so the general ambience was light and joyous.

The election of new officers also took place in the afternoon. Venerable names in the agency made it to the list like Mr. Ferdie Corpuz, Atty. Raul Labay, Ms. Prescy Ordas, Ms. Emy Chu and Mr. Tony Santos for Board of Directors; Ms. Vicky del Rosario, Mr. Jay Adrias and Ms. Maricar Dunton for Credit Committee; Ms. Mariz Patatag, Mr. Ron Manjares and Ms. Rosa Tan for Audit Committee and Ms. Letty Gomez, Mr. Dodie Silang and Ms. Roda Ann Marmol for Election Committee.

Apart from our sincerest congratulations, we would also like to extend our good luck to this new set of officers. The following days are surely not without a stumbling block. May they overcome all challenges and work for the interest and welfare of the members! Overall, it was indeed a worthwhile and wonderful experience. The realizations I made are already enough reason for me to consider that SURECCO is a dependable ally whose help exceeds the four corners of the workplace.



SURECCO Chair Ferdie Corpuz (left) delivers the accomplishment report; Employee-members review the kits given to them upon registration (right).



SRA Employees Undergo Gender Sensitivity Training

The SRA-GAD sponsored a "Gender Sensitivity and Awareness Workshop" for its rank and file employees on October 11-12, 2010. A certified success, it was held at the agency's Training Room.

Ms. Leonora Lava, the event's main resource speaker proved to be very engaging since she was able to draw out from the participants their innermost thoughts and feelings with regards to gender issues as attested by their active participation in each group activity. Aably aiding her was Ms. Lilibeth Coronado. Both were from the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement.

Before the lecture proper, the participants lined out their expectations from the training workshop. Some of the prominent inputs include: to be enlightened and knowledgeable on GAD programs, discussion on work-related gender issues, to know the present situation on gender sensitivity and awareness in government and public service, to learn the respective role of men and women in the society and eventually become a gender-sensitive individual, to be abreast on the various forms of violence against women and its corresponding penalties, full awareness of women's welfare and rights, to have a better understanding of gender, to become gender-responsible to the government and the country as a whole and finally, how the new concepts learned can be applied in the workplace.

Ms. Lava's opening piece was about basic gender concerns, starting with the discussion of the gender situation in the Philippines. She highlighted pertinent facts and figures about contemporary Filipino women in aspects such as: population, health and nutrition, wage and public life. A statistics record depicting violence against women was also an integral part of her lecture. Participants found this very enlightening and informative.

The first group exercise centered on individual



Obviously, SRA employees who attended the workshop not only became informed but had a good time as well.

concepts on sex and gender where Ms. Lava observed clear shades of gender biases and stereotyping based on the responses they gathered. To address this, she defined the roles and relations of both sexes.

The second part of her lecture focused on the examination of the root causes of gender biases. The activities which followed made the participants go back to their childhood days and revealed who were usually with them when they were still kids, how they felt when they were with that person and what roles and qualities of men and women made an indelible mark in their minds then. They were also tasked to enumerate the hourly activities of their parents within 24 hours.

Before the workshop came to a close, the attendees were made to prepare recommendations to the SRA management on how to apply or practice gender sensitivity in the workplace and address certain issues concerning rank and file employees. The resolution they came up with was divided into four areas:

Company Policies on Gender

- To stop sexual discrimination due to sexual orientation and give equal rights and promotion to the one who's best for the job.
- Survey for sexual harassment grounds and guidelines.
- Management ought to create a task force/committee which would assess or monitor psychological and oppressive attitudes of

(Continued on page 10)

(SRA-GAD Strategic Planning . . . from page 1)

cerebral group activities towards the end of the lecture to apply the new concepts learned.

Ms. Betty Peña from the UP Center for Women Studies Foundation, Inc. (UPCWSFI) formally opened the event by introducing the workshop to the participants and spearheaded the sharing of expectations.

First to take the spotlight was UPCWSFI's Dr. Carolyn Sobritchea. She discussed the "Review of Gender Concepts and Standards in GAD Planning." To culminate the day's activities, a group exercise was implemented tagged as "Preparing a Results-Based GAD Plan" where each participant gave his/her respective share. Before wrapping up, a plenary presentation of the results of the group exercise was done.

Next to deliver her piece was Atty. Evelyn (Leo) Battad who is also from UP where she works as University General Counsel and Assistant Professor. She tackled the subjects, "Updates on Legal Norms to Promote Gender Equality in the Philippines", "Magna Carta on Women" and "Review of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law." With such interesting topics, a substantial open forum followed.

The following meeting (October 8), after the recap of the previous day's activities, Dr. Sobritchea took the floor once again. This time around, she lectured on "Harmonized Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation" followed by a group exercise called, "Application of the GAD Guidelines for Project Assessment". Just like the first day, a plenary presentation of the results of the group exercise was executed.

After this, it was the turn of SRA-GAD Focal persons to report their accomplishments. They thoroughly lined up their plans and programs for 2011 as well. ore the final activity which was the awarding of certificates to the participants, Dr. Dina Padilla-Fernandez, SRA-QC GAD Focal Person rendered the closing remarks. It was truly one insightful event worth-remembering all the time.

(Why is Women Empowerment . . . from page 12)

"Outside the home, women also shine. A concrete proof is our having two lady presidents already. They also rival the number of males in the political scene. Even in contact sports, our female athletes are able to bring honor to our country.

"Women are everywhere. They are well-represented in many areas of discipline, be it in social, communication and medical services. This is a clear proof that women empowerment has already sunk its teeth on contemporary society."

MERCY CASTRO
Supervisor, Licensing and Monitoring Division

"Women empowerment is very true in my case. As a wife of an OFW, the responsibility of running the house is on my shoulder. In the absence of my husband, I should be on top of everything. On his behalf, I do all critical decisions for the family. This I've been doing for 12 years now and I can say that it is with much aplomb!

"Another clear proof is the dominance of women in our barangay. Their voices are always heard in our community. Along with their male counterparts, they spearhead worthwhile projects that benefit each dweller. It's a nice feeling that they are being taken seriously in the community whose contribution cannot be underestimated."

CONCEPCION RUBY
Records Officer III, Records Section

"Despite the global acceptance of women as co-equal to men, there still remain pockets of resistance in some sectors that continue to uphold the medieval belief of the otherwise. This situation has somehow hampered the world's progress into one where there's real co-existence of both sexes in all aspects of life and living.

"Women empowerment is needed and is imperative to the attainment of the full level of this acceptance. Public declaration and loud social manifesto may only pay lip service to this aimed objective. Allowing and recognizing women as being apt to the whole universe of jobs, tasks, positions, responsibilities, etc. available could pave the way to completely harness the real and vast potential of women power."

FERNANDO H. CORPUZ
Department Manager III, RD&E Luzon/Mindanao

The empowerment of women occurs in reality, when women achieve increased control and participation in decision-making that leads to their better access to resources, and therefore, improved socio-economic status.



<http://www.merineews.com/article/what-is-womens-empowerment-all-about/15751346.shtml>

EVERY woman has a box. It is in this box where she often puts her emotions, standards, plans, time frame, dreams and conditions.



The Purple Box

By Mafi R. Ramos

Literally, it can also be a gift box or an ordinary box of any color and shape. In here, she may put anything she wants from jewelry, hair accessories, souvenirs, ribbons, documents, stationeries, intimate apparels, sweet notes, CDs, photographs and all kinds of female stuff.

"The Purple Box" is in contrast to Pandora's Box when opened. The latter lets loose all the negative forces except for one which is hope that lies at the bottom.

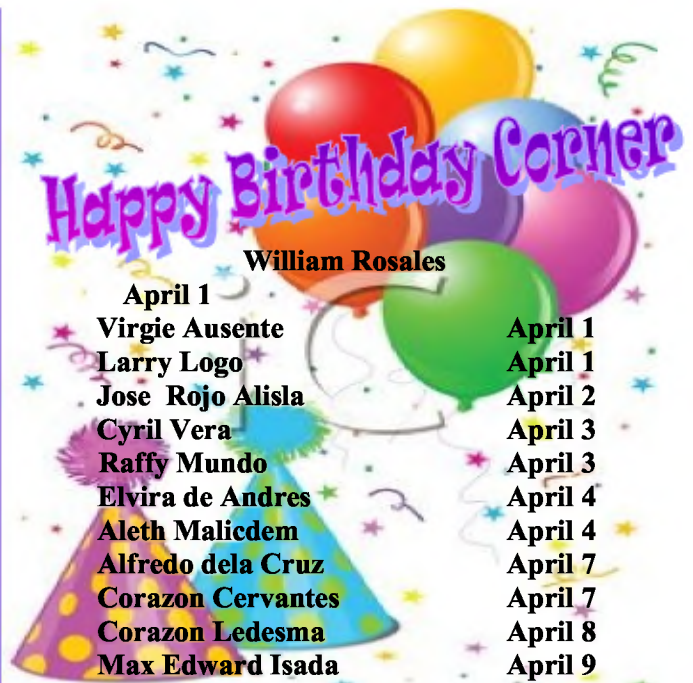
In a way, "The Purple Box" is quite like it. Not everything in this world is bad. If there are negative aspects about a certain thing, there is also a positive side to it.

This column aims to put into print everything that is light and easy; one which gives happy thoughts to keep and share.

For its maiden feature, "The Purple Box" begins with what every woman can have in her life. In spite of the many things she can possess, there's one great thing that her heart can hold for the rest of her life.

A Woman Can Have Too Many...

Pairs of shoes
 Clothes inside the closet
 Books on the nightstand
 Candles in the home
 Photos in the album
 Favorite songs she silently sings in her heart
 Private jokes with her circle of friends
 Fancy makeups
 Colorful bracelets
 Flowers in the garden
 Fat bank accounts
 Comfort zones
 Videoke spree
 White lies
 Sweet talks
 Food to share
 Thoughts to keep
 Worry warts
 Unwanted fats
 Summer escapades
 Whispering hopes
 Once-upon- a- time stories for the kids
 Dreams for her family
 Memories of the past
 And too many more to mention that she can have
 But she will always have one **GREAT LOVE...**



William Rosales

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Words of Wisdom

"The path to a dream is paved with sacrifices and lined with determination. And though it has many stumbling blocks along the way and may go in more than one direction, it is travelled by belief and courage and conquered with the willingness to face challenges and take chances."

- Barbara Cage

(SRA Employees Undergo . . . from page 7)

managers, division chiefs in dealing with their subordinates.

Health Care and Medical Benefits

- Hire company doctor/dentist.
- Free medical health card.
- Conduct check-ups, vaccination and cancer prevention.
- Health care benefits, hazard pay and insurance to field workers.
- Provide shuttle service for employees.

Social Infrastructure

- SRA management should be sensitive and considerate to the grievances/needs/feelings of employees who'll be affected of the proposed

rotation/reassignment of workplace (for field workers).

- Consultations and sharing during decision-making process.
- Create a grievance committee to listen to the sentiments of employees and give solutions to their problems.
- Family day activities.

Skills and Capability Training

- Effective leadership training seminars for supervisors/heads towards a smooth-sailing relationship with their subordinates.
- Training to janitorial staff.
- Values and personality enhancement seminars.
- More in-house trainings and activities for both officers and rank and file employees.



The men's group finalizing their presentation.



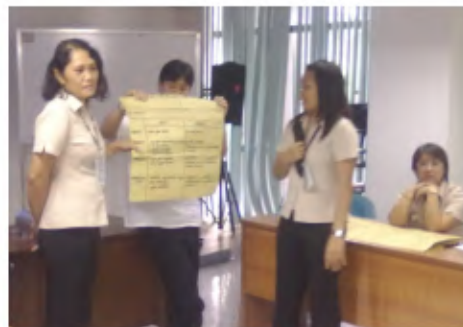
Female participants busy preparing their plenary report.



The men's team enumerating the resolutions they came up with.



Dr. Dina Padilla-Fernandez clarifying some gender-related issues in the workplace as raised by the participants.



Not to be outdone, the women also prepared a well-thought and substantial report.

“ ‘Gender’ is not the same as ‘sex’! ” - Roda Ann Marmol (GST participant)

Sex is determined by biological differences e.g. reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, breast and Adam's apple while gender is socially determined, based on social, cultural, political and economic expectations. These include the tasks, roles, obligations and privileges in public and private life of women and men as well as the relationships between them. This relation is where unequal power persists which has implications for women's capacity to benefit socially and economically.



By Joseph Peter R. Gonzales

Life's True Essentials

MORE often, we equate success with power, money, social status and influence. We feel that a fat bank account, branded clothing, jewelry, top-of-the-line car, model cell phones, or high position in the workplace make us a cut above the rest. Initially, we are convinced and it's understandable. As humans, we have the natural tendency to be attached to material possessions, which give us a feeling of security...and superiority.

But in the process, the clearer the picture becomes: that all these material things are just superficial. Momentarily, these fancy stuff will put a smile unto our faces, but what if we'll be instantly stripped off these tangible ornaments? Would we still feel happy or fearful of facing the drastic change since it's hard to embrace something we're not used to?

Actually, there's nothing wrong in acquiring material wealth. It is the product of our hard work. Especially if the

capital is our own blood, sweat and tears. It's a triumphant feeling and serves as a reward to all the efforts we exerted in order to better or uplift our lives.

It only gets complicated when we become too dependent on these things, when we solely base our happiness on them. It's dangerous if along the way, we lose touch with what's really essential in life: the things that make us whole as individuals but, without a corresponding price.

In contemporary times, how many of us pause and smile upon seeing a butterfly hopping from one flower to another? Or squeeze in time for a short conversation with our loved ones just to update on what transpired the whole day? Or listen with enthusiasm to the stories of our old folks and little ones no matter how inane they are to us? Or saying a sincere prayer of thanksgiving before retiring to bed amid our tiredness or exhaustion?

These are just simple things but its value is something money can't buy. The happiness it brings is not temporary. In fact, even if all

our material possessions fade away, as long as we know what real happiness is, there will be no void or empty space in our hearts. We would still feel complete.

Sometimes, we keep on searching for what can really make us happy. The higher we climb the ladder, the more it becomes evasive. It's not a guarantee that if you're up there, you will find it. Why not halt and reflect? Perhaps, it's already in your midst, only, you refuse to acknowledge it because your eyes are set on a different direction.

Experiencing life's simple joys is already success.

Appreciating even the minutest of blessings we receive everyday will bring us unparalleled peace. And if we're at peace with ourselves, everything follows. Genuine happiness isn't conditional. With or without the glitzy trimmings, we can still feel it deep within us.

At the end of the day, what would matter is not the monetary savings we have nor the state-of-the-art gadgets we bought nor the expensive things which surround us. These will definitely not last. It will still boil down to the basics: God, love, family, health, friends and appreciation of the beauty of nature. These things we can hold on dearly in our hearts for the rest of our lives.

