Next time when you press the shutter, please say thanks

It was five in the afternoon. In the busy metro station, he stopped in the middle of the concourse, without moving a step forward.

He is a small guy in uniform. Stepping on the tactile guide path, he was trying to use his cane to search for the right direction. People just passed by him without making a glance. He was anxious, he frowned.

I came forward and asked, “Where are you going?”

“The Kwun Tong Line. This is my first time taking transit at this station. I just can’t find my way.” From his uniform, I guess he’s only around 15. His two legs are slightly curved. It seems to take him quite some effort for every single step he walks. For me, only with the tactile guide path, it’s hard to believe he can find his way.

“Just put your hand on my shoulder. I will show you the way” I told him.

There were loads of people in the station. He walked slowly behind me. After some time, we reached the platform finally. Before the train arrived, I grabbed the chance to talk to him. He told me he is a junior student of the Ebenezer School & Home for the Visually Impaired. And he was heading to Shek Kit Mei.

“Why are you going there?”

“Jogging.”

“You jog alone?” I never thought it would be the answer.

“No, I will be with someone. I am going to take part in the marathon this week. I must do more practice.”

I gave him a salute in my heart. How much extra effort will it take for someone with visual impairment to join the marathon? Not to mention whether or not he can finish the competition, it has already been a big challenge for him to get his way to the practicing court.

“I am very busy lately for my duties in the Students’ Association. Because of this, I spend less time practicing the marathon.” With a short pause, he continued with his friendly smile, “I am the chairmen of the Students’ Association. I was elected by other students.” His face was shining during our conversation. He told me he will obviously continue his studies in the future.

Marathon, Students’ Association… How much determination and effort does it take for people with visual impairment to strive for their lives?
On my way home, I think of Bruce Hall, a photographer with visual impairment.

Since he was a child, his vision only remains 5% of an ordinary people. He almost cannot see in his daily life, however, he insists to do underwater photographer. It’s all because he believes diving into the sea is the only way in the world to make him peace.

With his very poor vision, he has to bring along a magnifying glass and an imperial light meter whenever he does underwater photography. To view the photos at home, he also needs a 40” SONY HD monitor.

Bruce knows the limitation he has. His vision is limited to a very short distant. So he takes close shots to things which may not be noticed by other photographers. Every time when he reviews his photos on the HD monitor, the magnified parts, the colors, the details… all these invisible things in his daily life appear in his sight again. It’s photography which give him another chance to “see” the world.

Visual impairment is not the only challenge God imposes to Bruce. Bruce’s twin sons have profound autism. How can a dad who cannot see get along with his autistic sons? Bruce knows his sons love water as he does. So he jumps into the water with them with his camera, trying to record the bits and pieces of their life. And photography has formed a channel for the dad and sons to communicate.

The kids will never stay for Bruce’s camera. They just swim and swim when they get into the water. With the remaining 5% of vision, the sound, temperature and other senses, Bruce uses his own way to locate the kids. In this way, lots of beautiful shots are brought to live. Some of the photos are even chosen to be displayed in the museum.

As simple as taking a photo or jogging, there are many people in this world who has to pay extra effort to make it done. But they never give up. They even work much harder to make their achievements.

So, next time when you hold a camera, press the shuttle and delete the unsatisfactory shot without a single thought, please cherish your 100% of vision. And, please say thanks for what you have.

Caption:
With the remaining 5% of vision, Bruce Hall takes photos which move people’s heart. You think this is “by chance”? For every shot he takes, it’s more difficult than anyone else. And it takes him lots of determination and time.
Bruce Hall’s website: http://www.visualsummit.com/