

Pacquiao and the art of war

IMMIGRANT LIVING: 101 AND BEYOND



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA
(Part 2 of 2)

One British writer likens the Pacman to a mild-mannered Clark Kent with a boyish smile and who seems harmless in his suits and hats, that is, until he steps into the ring. When the bell rings, he morphs into Superman, a fighter that goes to war, sizes up his opponents, executes a game plan and demolishes them promptly with blazing speed, brutal power and pin-point accuracy. Like Yoda who trained Luke Skywalker, Freddie Roach has transformed Pacquiao to become a complete fighter — lightning fast with his head, hands and feet and whose ferocity, aggression and impressive arsenal of boxing skills in the ring should give his challengers pause. He has learned well. The humble ones always do. Roach, whose slurred speech, belies a sharp mind claims, "He is my best work."

But above all that hype when the lights dim and when the silence descends, here's a fighter whose humility is humbling. Here is one who must deal with massive amounts of adulation, flattery and heady intoxication of fame and fortune and has managed, thus far, to remain centered on who he is and what his purpose is. "I'm just a fighter," he says, when asked about who he would like to do battle with next time, leaving that for his promoters to map out.

No ordinary fighter — this one. Few have the courage to wear their spirituality on their sleeves for fear of sanction in the ratings game, the mockery of the sophisticated, or the derision of the godless. Devoutly Catholic, he makes no bones about where he draws his spiritual strength and purpose and shows it for all the world to see. He doesn't go through the motions of his spirituality just for show.

So does his mother Dionisia who chose to pray the rosary in the privacy of her hotel room. The fruit doesn't really fall far from the tree. Pacquiao meditates in the silence, makes the sign of the cross between bouts, wears his rosary before and during the fight, kisses the crucifix of the rosary which his handler is instructed to hold, kneels at his corner, and just before engaging his opponent, tunes out, for just a few seconds, the raucous crowd while apparently tuning in to a much higher frequency. The more telling aspect is the post-fight when he looks heavenward after each victory, goes to mass and never fails to ascribe his victories to God and the Filipino people.

It is this aspect of the man that resonates with most Filipinos who are no stranger to adversity. In a small way, we see a bit of ourselves in him and vicariously live through him. Through his knockout punches, we also mentally TKO all things we struggle with and glory in his victories. Those who were born and lived in the battered island nation understand this wellspring of deep spirituality completely and without question.

"If you know both yourself and your enemy, you can come out of hundreds of battles without danger."

— Sun Tzu, "The Art of War"

He ascribes his string of successes and of his being to God. The politically correct pundits and sports analysts on the national level, who must cater to the biggest demographic chunks, are loath to dwell on this aspect of the man. I imagine a few squirm in their seats whenever Pacquiao does all that. After all, boxing is rarely for the humble or the deeply spiritual. Boxing is filled with self-absorbed, self-promoting blowhards that form part of the entertainment, right along Floyd Mayweather Sr.'s bluster and braggadocio. All that taunting is just part of the script and the hype of HBO's 24/7 to ring up public interest and profits.

Pacquiao probably views his bouts as spiritual battles. He is living up to his name. Emmanuel means "God with us." Or that Pacquiao, spelled "Pakyaw" in the vernacular means wholesale. He trains relentlessly, wholeheartedly physically but his spiritual muscles get a workout as well. It is hard to stay focused and on target with all the distractions that buzz about him like bees to honey. This may just be the part where Pacquiao, the pupil, shows Roach, his mentor, about how to tap vast amounts of spiritual reserves.

To the victor goes the spoils of war. Manny has become an Armani suit-wearing money machine with millions of dollars still to be made even during this brutal recession. Ironically, the tougher the times, the higher the need for distraction. The next mega-fight night may involve a \$50 million prize purse, the biggest so far, with grueling negotiations probably underway. Team Pacquiao has the upper hand and in the driver's seat. They will call the shots this fall.

No one should begrudge Manny Pacquiao his fame and fortune. We hope though that these do not corrode and change his core being overly much. The possibility he will throw his hat in the political arena is a little unsettling. We do hope he stays away from yet another blood sport— politics— where nearly everyone who dips his toes in its polluted waters, gets tainted somehow. His failed initial political bid should be a warning bell. Show business might be more fun, right along Mom Dionisia's alley. But in the natural progression of things and oftentimes, by osmosis from the company he keeps, the attraction of achieving political power may just be the next level. Sigh.

But what drives him aside from the obvious motivations? It is said that the Roman Emperor Constantine during the crucial Battle of Milvian Bridge in 1312 looked up to the sun before the battle and saw a cross of light with the Greek words that meant, "By this sign, conquer." Constantine commanded his troops to adorn their shields with the Chi-Ro Christian symbol and from thereon, became victorious in every battle. Christian sources record that Constantine, heavily influenced by his deeply religious mother, St. Helena, adopted Christianity which became the dominant religion in the Roman Empire and much of the world up to today, ending 300 years of religious persecution by previous Roman emperors from Christ's death.

Okay, I know. I know. Boxing to Christianity — it may be too much of a stretch to draw a parallel or build

a smooth segue. But it's fascinating to look back in the last two thousand years of recorded history and pick out discernible patterns in every battle fought in war and every other arena of human endeavor that has a dimension seemingly far above our minds to comprehend. After all, there's a cycle and a continuity to the human story in the larger sense that can be read in the micro-universe of the boxing arena.

Where does all that jaw-dropping power, speed, timing, accuracy and laser-like focus few could withstand come from? And from such a deceptively looking compact package many of his opponents underestimated to their detriment ... Such things only happen in the movies. But more than that, how does one account for humility, decency and generosity of spirit in the face of victory except in Rocky movies? Pacquiao's story might be that of a gladiator character set in a 15th century morality play, tenacious in battle yet humble and magnanimous in victory. No wonder many find themselves rooting for him.

Though a sequel is rarely better than the original, this is one story definitely worth following.

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IMMIGRATION CORNER



ATTY. MICHAEL GURFINKEL

(Part 1)

MANY people had relative petitions filed for them by family members (such as spouse, parent, brother, sister, etc.). After waiting anxiously for several years (sometimes over a decade), the priority date finally becomes current, and they are called by USCIS for their adjustment of status interview. They may think to themselves that because they filed the Petition on their own, they can handle the interview themselves and save money, by not having an attorney with them for their adjustment of status interview.

However, filing a petition and getting it approved is relatively simple, compared to an in-person interview. After all, with a petition, you fill out the form, include supporting documentation, and mail it away to the USCIS. You then receive an Approval Notice from the USCIS in the mail, without ever seeing any Immigration Officer in person.

An adjustment of status interview puts you in an entirely different situation. This may now be the first time that you come face-to-face with an Immigration Officer. At your interview, you may be questioned in detail about your case or petition. This could include the facts about how you entered the US (i.e. under a different name or date of birth), what you have been doing in the US all these years

Why it's a good idea to have an attorney for your interview or hearing

(i.e. have you been working without authorization?), whether you ever applied for any other immigration benefit during that time (i.e. Political Asylum, CSS/LULAC, etc.)

The documents that you submitted when you first filed the petition, as well as the documents you bring to the interview, will be examined carefully by the Immigration Officer, who is highly trained to spot and detect fraudulent documents, such as fake birth certificates, employment letters, tax returns, etc.

Although Officers conducting interviews are courteous, professional, and fair, you could really mess up your case if you don't bring the proper or complete documentation, don't provide correct information, start contradicting yourself, start giving evasive answers because you're confused, tired, or scared. Even if you're "innocent," it may look like you are trying to hide something or you are lying (even when you're telling the truth). This could create suspicion in the mind of the Officer. So, even though you may be legitimately entitled to the immigration benefit being sought, you could find yourself being put under investigation, or even having your case denied.

A lot of times people think to themselves, "I'll just go to the interview by myself, so I can save money, and if things get messed up, then I can always go to an attorney." But, if you messed up the case, it makes it all the more difficult and costly (and your case gets delayed), as more time is needed to repair the damage! And you may mess up the case so bad, by saying the wrong things that the case may be beyond repair, and be denied.

I know some people tell themselves, "If I bring along an attorney, the US-

CIS may think I have done something wrong, I have something to hide, or I am guilty." This is a myth. If you are legitimately entitled to the immigration benefit you are seeking, then having an attorney assist you in preparing your case in advance and accompanying you to the interview, increases the chances of your case being properly analyzed and properly presented to the Immigration Officer. It is not a sign of "guilt."

There are many good reasons for people to be accompanied by an attorney to an interview or hearing. These reasons become even more critical with the expiration of Section 245(d). Now, there might be no "second chance" for most people, if the petition they waited for so many years is denied. What will they have to fall back on, if this happens?

In a future article, I will discuss some of the reasons why it is a good idea to have an attorney help and represent you.

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How to find the right babysitter for your child

JUNO CONNECTION



CHARMAINE TEODORO

A babysitter is your child's ultimate guardian when you're not around. S/he is the one who'll be looking after your son or daughter and responsible for their well-being for hours at a time. Your babysitter practically acts as a second parent to your most precious loved one. It is very important, therefore, to lay down requirements you'll need from a babysitter before you consider him/her as the person responsible for your child's safety, security and happiness when you're not there.

Get to know your candidate's character well

Skills are important and very significant when hiring a childcare provider, but character should have greater weight. It's your job to peek through this and have a concrete understanding of what type of person you'll be dealing with. It doesn't mean you'll need to have a 100-item questionnaire or a psychoanalysis worksheet when interviewing your prospective babysitter, but you need to be able to ask appropriately and inquisitively about his/her background and the reason, beyond money, for her application. You

should also get a good grasp of his/her attitude. When interviewing a candidate, take note of how s/he talks, and see how s/he carries the conversation. Listen to their tone and observe their body language keenly. This, alone, will tell you a lot about the person. Remember that your child will be exposed to this type of attitude and behavior for multiple hours/day, several days/week, and it could rub-off on your kid. Get to know candidates on a personal level and gather information about their background through character references. It's obvious that their attitude towards work affects the way they treat your child.

Evaluate skills and see if they fit well with you and your child's needs

After learning about their character, it's time to check if the skills your babysitter has is what you need. Seek information from a previous employer if they have one. Check if they've had any professional experience as a babysitter and if so, for how long? Ask what skills they have that makes them a good babysitter. If you're interviewing someone with zero experience, see if they've had any experience taking care of kids even in a voluntary setting (e.g., church, school outreach, relative, etc.). Regardless of their background, age or skill-level, your candidate should be well aware of what a babysitter does. S/he must know or be willing to learn how to change diapers, clean up after a child's mess, prepare food and provide activities to keep the child occupied amongst other things. Their schedule should also fit with