During my second year at the city college，I was told that the education department was offering a "free"course, called Thinking Chess, for three credits.I jumped at the idea of taking the class because, after all ,who doesn't want to save a few dollars? More than that, I'd always wanted to learn chess. And,even if I weren’t excited enough about free credits,news about our instructor was appealing enough to me. He was an international grandmaster, which meant I would be learning from one of the game's best.I could hardly wait to meet him.

Maurice Ashley was kind and smart, a former graduate returning to teach, and this job was no game for him: he meant business. In his introduction, he made it clear that our credits would be hard-earned. In order to pass the class ,among other criteria, we had to write a paper on how we plan to apply what we would learn in class to our future professions and,eventually,to our lives. I managed to get an A in that course and learned life lessons that have served me well beyond the classroom.

Ten years after my chess class with Ashley, I'm still putting to use what he taught me:“The absolute most important skill that you learn when you play chess is how to make good decisions .On every single move you have to analyze a situation ,process what your opponent(对手）is doing and evaluate the best move from among all your options.”These words still ring true today in my role as a journalist.