

# **MY SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT**

*Twenty Religious Study students went through an experiential learning journey to unleash their utmost potential and design their purpose of life!*

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## **Dedication**

*Twenty Religious Study students went through an experiential learning journey to unleash their utmost potential and discover their Purpose of Life!*

*This book is dedicated to all the young minds and all the generations wishing for a purposeful life!*



*To the pure-hearted students with a flourishing future, you are our hope  
for a brighter future*

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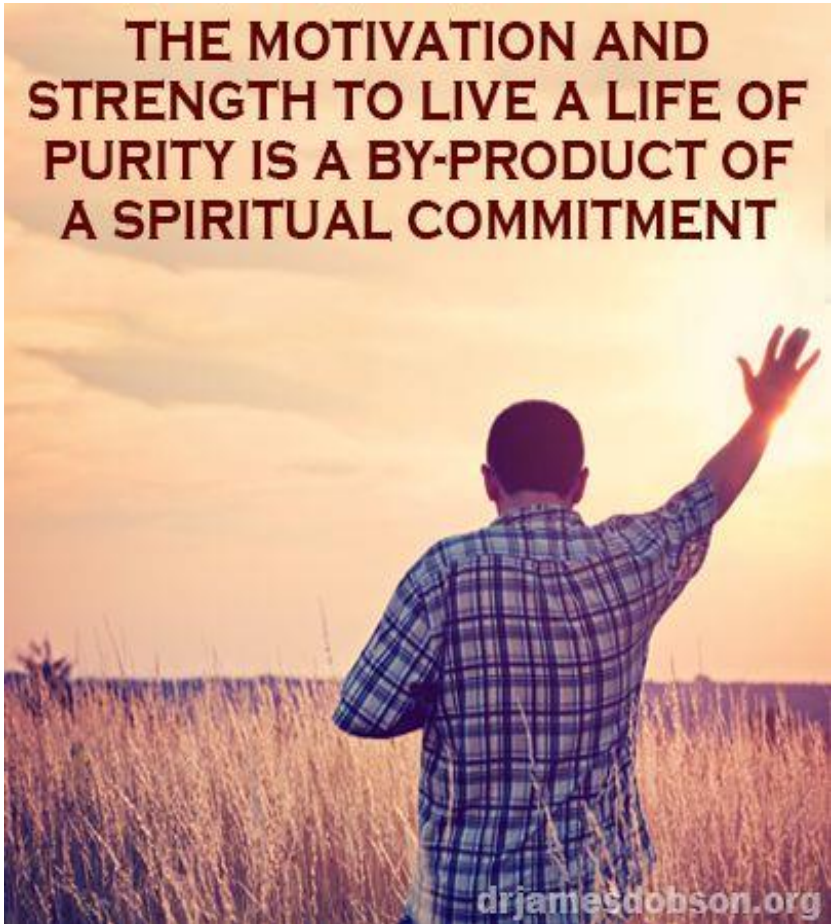
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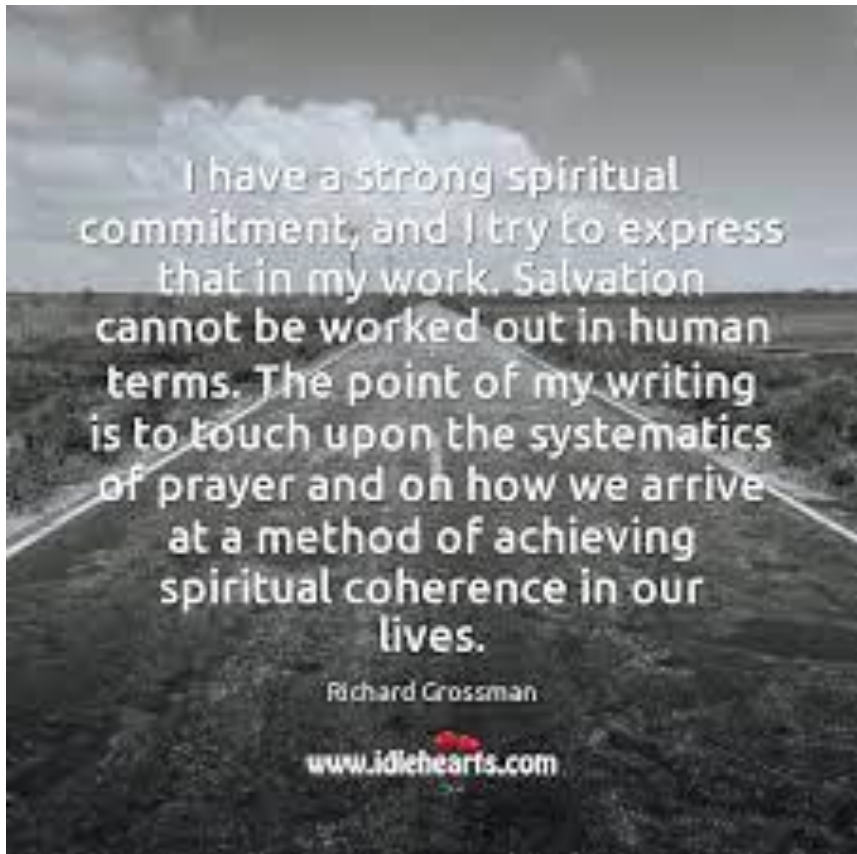
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**THE MOTIVATION AND  
STRENGTH TO LIVE A LIFE OF  
PURITY IS A BY-PRODUCT OF  
A SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT**



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**FOREWORD**  
**PROF. M. AMAN WIRAKARTAKUSUMAH, M.SC., PH. D**

**Executive Director Of**  
**IPMI International Business School**

The world has seen a lot of calamities, conflicts, and even catastrophes under the issue of political, ethnics, and religious belief differences. The conflicts that arise due to these differences are prevalent despite our belief in democracy. It tends to create a conflict and possible threat toward the unity of a nation, and create a menace of further segregation in the society.

The complexity of different political beliefs, religious beliefs, and ethnicities has created a lot of disturbances for peace in the world. As we can see from the news on the turmoil happening around the world for example in North and South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and other parts of the world. A similar situation is happening in Indonesia. We also hear the start of radicalism in campus life, when a campus should be a place of collaboration and developing synergy in diversity. This is a latent problem and could be a big threat to the unity of the nation.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) comes up with the philosophy of education to stop this conflict, where we need to develop a sound mindset, especially starting from the young minds. These require a solid mindset to respect

differences and a high focus on collaboration and creating synergy. The right education will prevent the conflict which may arise in society.

That is why education becomes really important, to create an ecosystem where the students will see diversity as being a blessing, and unity in diversity is a must, as stated in our national slogan “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). In learning, UNESCO comes up with the philosophy of four pillars for education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together, and through education, UNESCO is building peace in the minds of men and women.

Education should create young minds who long for peace, that solve the conflicts and avoid war, despite the reality that people have a different belief and different race/ethics or culture. We need to develop an understanding of being part of a global citizen and act as the steward of the Earth.

In Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia, the construction of the curriculum starts from the basic general lectures or MKDU (Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum ). One of these subjects is the religious study to develop a pious and wise future leader. We have an alternative to do the traditional approach where each student will be segregated into different religious beliefs, or offering an inter-religious study, and for several reasons, IPMI has chosen the hybrid approach between inter-religious study course subjects that subsequently combined with lectures from all respective religious beliefs.

IPMI international business school has a basic value of embracing inter-cultural and inter-faith belief so that it will create a harmonious living where everyone respects each other. This is why we designed our religious study learning experience in an inter-religious format to develop a human being with characters, values, tolerance, and respect toward differences. Once high respect and tolerance are achieved, parallel sessions are conducted by inviting religious experts from all the respective religious beliefs. This way each student also gets an adequate opportunity to ask specific questions concerning their specific religious belief.

This hybrid inter-religious study would learn in a way to respect each other students with different cultural and religious backgrounds. And these differences should not be an obstacle for a great collaboration. The approach is implemented in the curriculum and would be a good benchmark and reference for all of us to be able to evaluate the outcome of the learning process. This approach accommodates the differences to find a synergy. In the end, the method will become a good practice for Indonesian education to implement the slogan of our nation “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity). We in IPMI will embrace everyone for universal education to become part of a great quality Global Citizen.

I am really happy with this effort to implement the inter-religious study approach in IPMI and congratulate Dr. Amelia, our faculty member as the facilitator and initiator of this project, and all the students who are in her class. She had started a personal discovery learning process for each student to find the hero within themselves and at the same time to get ready to embrace differences in supporting each other to become the

change-maker for the better world, where she put these observations and findings into this wonderful book.

Jakarta, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

PROLOG

**IN THE MAKING OF  
THE FUTURE LEADERS  
DR. IR AMELIA NAIM, MBA**

It is my joy to see how each student goes to a personal discovery journey. This book is the second book on this spiritual exploration during a semester of personal discovery learning in a Religious Study class. In general, joining a Religious Study class will bring you to a series of Sermon and Speeches by the Ustadz, Rabbi, Pastor, or distinguished scholars on religious study subjects. This is happening in all schools be it local or in an overseas setting. If you are going to a Jesuit class, then this class would be teaching you the Ignatius Spiritualism approach for example. And for the Moslem it would be a further Islamic study and so forth. This is quite easy for a homogeneous class, for example in a class with a majority of a specific religious believer. But being an international class, IPMI students come from various cultures with a diverse background. These had created a challenge to develop mutual respect between the different believers.

The Religious Study class is offered as an opening for the first semester students. If we were to implement the segregation between different believers, we would have up to six different classes based on the six different religious beliefs in Indonesia. This would possibly create a segregation system in supposedly an international blend of diverse cultures. Hence to overcome the problem, Religious Study in IPMI is focusing on the inter-faith self-discovery process of finding everyone's

self-commitment for the spiritual development toward becoming an independent mature future leader and change maker.

Twenty students are going through the experiential learning of self-discovery. Some of them are Moslem, Christian, Catholics, Buddhist, and we acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of everyone in the classroom. One important rule in the classroom is that we have to respect and honor other people's belief and has no right to pressure our own belief toward others. Each one of these different beliefs has the ultimate liberty to believe that their own belief is the best one according to their own religious belief. There is no pressure of pluralism which tends to have the inference that all religions are the same. But we do believe in the pluralistic approach, where everyone is obliged to respect each other regardless of their different religious belief.

Instead of repeating the previous study on the fundamentals of each religious belief, each of the students is invited to explore their intra-personal religious journey. A self-contemplation of knowing who they are, why they were created by the Divine in the first place, and what are their purpose of life, and what are their spiritual commitments to become more pious as a committed religious believer.

### **The Life Journey Map**

Students have to go through a self-discovery process of understanding the big picture of their life journey. To ease the process, we are using the framework through the template of Life Journey as seen in the following figure. The Life Journey Map is used to understand the



big picture about the individual development level and is designed to focus on helping the individual student foster self-reflection and understand more about his or her values, spiritual principles, and sense of purpose.

The Life Journey was designed to help the students understand more about their purpose in life and the map was inspired by Ibrahim (2004). Of course, this is just a framework of thinking. It is giving the perspective, that our life would be a sequential journey of small steps, toward medium steps forming the quantum leap as the long-term vision. This template also envisions that everyone serves under multiple roles in their lives. For example our purpose in life could be seen through our different roles in life: As part of the family, as part of the enterprise once they become part of a business organization and as part of the society, etc.

The following spiritual commitments written by the students will have:

1. Each student will share their purpose of life. This would be according to their dream. For example “I would like to be an agent of change in serving the community. I specifically would like to help the farmers of Indonesia to be free of loan sharks by setting up an online business system connecting the farmers and the consumers.”
2. Writing the spiritual values. Each student should discover their spiritual values and how they will exercise their spiritual values in order to achieve their vision of life. The following is an

example “To exercise my spiritual value, I will engage in spiritual practices to guide me in achieving the noble purpose. The spiritual practices will be in the form of a moment of silence and meditation according to my spiritual belief, for example in Islam through at least the five-time prayers. In Christianity by joining a congregation. In addition, I also join the Youth Religious Friday and Sunday activities in the mosque/church.

3. The students should be able to envision the big picture of how they will leave their legacy. The objective is to start with the end in mind (Covey, 2014) and conduct a self-reflection of how they see themselves in the future in a variety of roles in life, such as a son/daughter, a businessman/woman, activist, social worker, change-maker, etc. Students are encouraged to look at themselves through a variety of roles simultaneously in the future. The development of one role will not sacrifice the capacity for the other roles, as the zero-sum game concept is not applicable in this setting. The spiritual values enable the students to look at all the simultaneous roles as equally engaging toward an integrated role of servanthood toward The Almighty. The religious belief of Islam as the major religion in Indonesia is looking at work, as well as other purposeful human activities (even including marital intimacy) as part of the act of worship (Beekun, 1997).

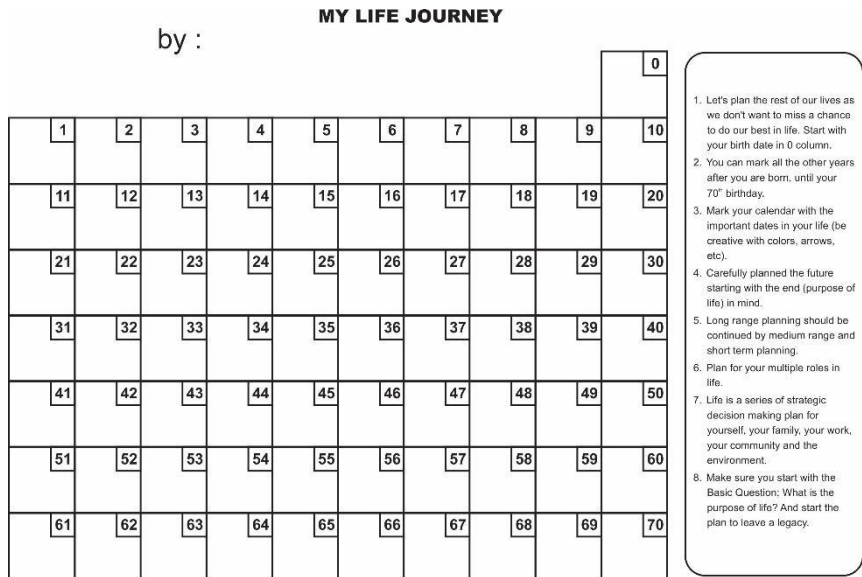


Figure 1

### My Life Journey Framework

Adapted from “Peta Kehidupan” (Ibrahim, 2004)

There is a tendency in our Indonesian Eastern Culture to embrace the future in a manner of following the flow, popularly said in the term of “just follow the flow”. This is just to flow wherever and whenever our destiny is taking us to, to let life flows. Unfortunately, this “just following the flow” manner is not suitable to the religious belief of a continuous optimum effort: A belief that today should be better than yesterday and tomorrow should be better than today. It is also not aligned with the active effort of religious prayer, a belief to always try and achieve the best. According to the religious belief “You are heading the way of what you

believe”. It is a great promise of the “Divine” if you believe then He will open up the path toward your Goal. In this class, we encourage the students to open up their horizons.

We talked about our “Area of control” and “Area of influence” to make a difference as a Change Maker. In filling up the “Life Journey” we use the framework of the Magic Wand. We imagine that the Divine is giving us the Magic Wand and we can achieve whatever we dream of and turn it into a reality, given our real commitments and perseverance toward the goals. It is a total commitment of faith and positive thinking to the foreseeable and unforeseeable destiny.

Classes are designed in an Active Learning Self Discovery Learning Process and Flipped Learning. In this method, students become the center of attraction, while faculty serves as the facilitator making sure that the learning target is achieved. And surprisingly sometimes in this flipped learning method, students were able to achieve even beyond the target of learning achievement. Active learning has proven to encourage high class engagements even though it was conducted during the pandemic era through Zoom. Moreover, there are no more physical barriers. We had guest speaker and joined sessions with faculty and students from around the world.

In a special class inviting guest speakers, there was a class with a homogeneous religious believers in each breakout room in the zoom, led by the expert of the respective religious experts. This class was held after we have established a level of appreciation and respect for diversity. This special breakout room activity was designed to enable the students

to fulfill all questions that they might have concerning their respective religions. The enthusiasm was high, this is shown through the active and intriguing questions coming from the students to the experts who are Religious Experts ( A Priest, an Ustadz and a Buddhist scholar).

### **Taking Advantages of The Technology**

The diverse religious background enables the students to have cross-cultural religious sharing and discussions between different believers and it becomes easier with the use of technology. In the learning process as a diverse group, we are having more fun and adventurous diverse experiences. Despite the covid 19 pandemic problem, technology had enabled us to experience things beyond our wildest dream. For example, we had the class aided by the Cardboard of Virtual Reality (VR) Goggles. This self-made cardboard kit was given away by Google at no cost in the first introduction. Now it can be bought for as low as approximately 80 cents USD or 10000 in IDR. By using this very low-cost cardboard VR, each different religious belief students were able to visit other religious' sacred places and points of interest.

The diverse religious background of the group will enable the students to discuss and share their different religious activities through Virtual Reality google. The low-cost (occasionally sponsored entirely by Google) and self-made Virtual Reality cardboard (see figure 2) enables the students to experience almost any Virtual Reality (VR) sites available through the internet. The first step is to let each student browse through several VR sites of sacred places. The students would then conduct a self-reflection and contemplation to describe the feel of various Holy places.

Students should be encouraged to be creative in finding high-quality VR sites for the locations on the internet. For the second step, students team up in a group and share sacred place sites in VR, offering their partners the opportunity to experience the look and feel of a variety of the sacred places of different religions available on the internet.



Figure 2.

### Virtual Reality Google Cardboard

Students could explore their similarities in terms of ultimate purpose, discussing their understanding of the essence and meanings behind the rituals. The team-reflection should encourage a conversation on the values behind religion-related sites and rituals. The team-reflection (reflection with others) process is an important part of the team development phase (Neal, 2013). The process would boost

understanding between different believers and different cultures and promote a culture of appreciation between different beliefs.

### **Spiritual Commitment**

The students are exploring their life journey and try to unleash their utmost potential through their spiritual commitment. The beauty part of it is the colorful story of their background and the honesty of their genuine life story. The diverse backgrounds make the story even more interesting and inspiring.

The students are showing a good effort in writing their hearts out through touching life stories. To me, this is surprising knowing that reading and writing are not the usual high-quality potential of the Indonesian students, especially when it is written in English.

These real-life stories serve as an in-depth written observation as part of qualitative research in management education specifically in exploring the role of the knowing, being, and doing approach through the spiritual journey in business and management education.

But more than a source of research observation these stories are touching and inspiring because it is written from the bottom of the heart of a pure heart ready to start their journey toward becoming the future business leader of Indonesia.

Jakarta,

23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2020





## CHAPTER ONE

# CONTINUOUS BLOSSOM



*We all have a spiritual purpose, a mission that we have been pursuing without being fully aware of it, and once we bring it completely into consciousness, our lives can take off.*

Everyone is unique. This is a fact. The reason for this sounds complicated but it is quite simple; the infinite different experiences we go through impact us, no matter how minuscule it may seem. Also known as we each have infinite different variables. What is inevitable is, we all go through struggles and blessings. Objectively, others' experiences are much worse than others, for example, the children in warzones who lack basic necessities cannot be compared to a spoiled child who didn't get the shoes that they wanted. Though this is an extreme comparison, I believe that struggles should not be compared when conditions are similar because everyone has the right to feel their emotions and their experiences are valid. Our experiences and circumstances do not determine our path and mentality but it has a substantial impact on us. If

my variables were ignored and my story was shortened to one word, my uniqueness would dissipate. With that being said, my story is **complicated** and unfinished, but here's a little bit more background to fill in some gaps.

My name is Shana Laras Piercy and my names all have different cultural references; Hebrew, Indonesian and English. The first represents my biblical connection and the last two represent my cultural identity. Firstly, Shana is Hebrew for *Beautiful* and *God is Gracious*. Although my name has spiritual connections, I was never taught much about religion and spirituality. I feared spirituality because the concept was too broad, intimidating and caused me uncertainty and confusion. But as some things are, my name was my destiny. Much like a self-fulfilling prophecy, I am now in touch with my inner spirit, my soul, and comprehend the graciousness of God. It was a long journey with many tumbles but here is how I became who I am today.

On August 8th, 2002, I was brought into this world in a large hospital in Singapore. With me was my father, an intelligent and objective engineer from Kent, England, and my mother, the strongest and most independent woman I know, my role model, from Java, Indonesia. Even from before I was born, when my being had just started to exist, things were already becoming complicated. You see, my parents did not have a great relationship, and this part of my life had the most impact on me. They split when I was only eight months old, and I flew back to Indonesia with my mum and I've been here ever since. It's believed by the masses that family is the foundation of a person. So as you can

imagine, an absent parent affected me heavily, and it still does now. My childhood was filled with sorrow and struggle, but it made me.

***Turmoil:***

My father was able to provide me with an education and food for my first 15 years. I was fortunate enough to spend my educational career in International schools, spending 12 years in British School Jakarta, and pursuing my IB diploma in Global Jaya School. Because of this, I was given the ability to explore different cultures and paradigms, as well as develop my character. I had many chances to learn from my mistakes and others, which led me to have an open mind. I owe most of my deeper learning to BSJ, where I was constantly reminded to practice 10 simple values; to be caring, communicators, inquirers, risk-taking, knowledgeable, reflective, balanced, open-minded, principled and thinkers.

I have always loved learning and was very competitive in all my classes. I have always been hard working and taking extra steps to be extraordinary and excel in every way I can so I could be ready for the world. Much like everything in my life, it was hard. For example, I was on my school competitive swim team because I spent hours before and after school practicing and perfecting my technique. I was disciplined and resilient, and sometimes, that made me seem troublesome. Since I was a young child, I've been independent, breaking norms and social rules. I liked being alone with myself too, often spending an hour after school on the swings or looking over the pond by myself. My mum and teachers could already see that I was complex and I'm proud of that. Once I moved

to secondary school, I was brought to the principal's office every year, not because I was bad but because the kids in my class were classists and bullied me.

Then my life changed. I had to move schools, the only school I have been in, the only one I remembered. Since I was a toddler, I was told I was going to graduate with my IB diploma there and I was heartbroken. But things just have to happen. I was resistant at first but I adapted and I am so thankful that I moved. My first big change. It may seem normal to many people, but the circumstances which caused it were abnormal and looking back, I was isolated and didn't know anything beyond my home and the gates of that school. Finally, I had new perspective, new opportunities. I learnt about the biases that I was conditioned to adopt. I didn't know it at first but this was when I started to learn and realize about unfairness, discrimination, ignorance and different "classes". This was the start of my global education. to lose the ignorance and experience more. It started my obsession with documentaries on global issues, thus, my passions and my promises to the world were created.

### **The thoughts within:**

I have considered myself a lost, hurt soul surrounded by negativity for the longest time. My life hasn't been easy, and I struggled to get through. As a result, I spent hours upon hours floating in my head, contemplating my life, the world, the universe. The most common question I asked was, "Why me?". Why did that happen to me? Why not someone else? Why was I the one to experience this event? Was I chosen

to go through with this because God knows I'm strong enough? I yearn to understand the universe and see past the physical aspect of our lives. To open my mind so when I grow out of this body of mine, I can accept the divine. My curiosity outgrew my mind and body. This is how my spirituality developed.

My understanding of spirituality is our connection to the universe and our deeper meaning of existence. Humans are a unique species because we have consciousness. With this ability, we can differentiate between our mind, body and spirit. Our spirit is the energy within us, the most important thing in our lives. Most people aren't aware of this yet because they don't dare to ask beyond what they see. Understanding your spirit can be the most difficult task in your life, but it is essential. It is our driving force and without understanding our force and our true strength, life is meaningless. Asking beyond the superficial is a gateway into learning our true potential and calling. Once we can ask and learn that every question has an infinite amount of answers, we can set the foundation to lead us to the destined path.

### **The foundation: beliefs and passions**

After years of doubt and uncertainty, I was able to see farther than the barriers society set on me. I was able to develop my spiritual belief through pondering and with the help of my mother. I am not a very religious person, however, I was taught by my mum to follow all of the biggest rules and to read the Quran so I can understand why life is the way it is. I have learnt to take everything with a grain of salt from my experience, and I applied this to the Quran. Although the Quran has been

re-written multiple times, translated and seems outdated to some, the lessons are timeless.

I have many beliefs and teachings from the Quran that I take with me daily and have made my own. My spiritual beliefs are the rules I have set for myself so I do not stray from my path again. I believe that these rules must be used to help us better the world around us.

With that being said, my most important beliefs are:

- Treat everyone and everything with human decency and respect
- Devote my life to better the community around you
- Dedicate myself to my happiness, wellbeing and God.

But there is more to my beliefs. An urge to create an impact on a large scale. To have a dream bigger than myself.

### ***The bigger picture:***

There are so many issues in this world that are larger than us. After years of development and self-education on global issues, I grew a passion for social issues and environmental issues. In my opinion, those who urge for change mainly focus on social issues, which is why I learnt to value and fight for our environment more. This does not mean that I have completely ignored our social issues. I've done a fair share of community service, even holding fundraising and donations to send school supplies and clothes to children affected by the 2018 Tsunami. I regularly donate to an orphanage too. But helping people in need is much easier than helping the animals and nature that needs our help. This is because people are much more accessible, and we are a community.

Although we are all God's creation (humans, animals and nature), we as a society have created a line, and in my opinion, this line must be erased.

I am known as exocentric, which means I have a nature-centered value system. I have a deep sense of responsibility to our Earth, and all of its inhabitants. I strongly believe that we, as people, must respect all of God's creation and protect beings that cannot fully protect themselves. This is why I have involved myself in efforts to help environmental issues. This led me to develop a passion for rescuing animals, specifically cats in Indonesia, and advocating for the decrease of food wastage. These are my two biggest commitments. The reason why I do everything that I am doing now; to be able to sustain myself and to open an animal sanctuary, as well as an organization that advocates for food shortage and wastage. I want to be able to create an impact on the environment, and society. Additionally, I would like to make my mother proud and this is how I plan to do it because these end goals I have created for myself, stemmed from my mum and her teachings. This is my commitment to God. To aid and respect his creations. This will be my legacy.

**Manifestation:**

Fulfilling my life's purpose will require much hard work and resilience, but I believe that I can do it, especially with the help of God and my spirituality. I constantly remind myself of my two biggest commitments, in hopes to manifest them into reality. I pray daily to Allah that day by day, I get closer to achieving my purpose. Every week, I routinely spend at least one hour meditating and another hour strolling and pondering in the park outside my home. This is how I maintain my

stress levels and relationship with God. I also regularly refer back to the Quran to remind myself of the important lessons I have learned and to strengthen my spiritual beliefs.

Outside of focusing on my spirituality to fulfill my purpose, I will work hard as a student in IPMI so I will be able to be a successful businesswoman. This is because I need to gain capital to create a sanctuary for animals, and my organization to advocate for food shortage and waste. I will leave a legacy that will make Allah and my mother proud, as well as inspire the next generation. This path that I have set myself has been satisfying enough, knowing my purpose. But once I fulfill this, my sense of contentment will allow me to share my spirituality. I conclude that for as long as your body is viable, your first purpose will not end until your body fails. But what happens after that? What happens to our spirit and what is our spirit's purpose beyond this Earth?



## CHAPTER TWO

### CARLOS' LIFE



*The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind. -Khalil Gibran*

#### **Introduction**

I was born in Jakarta and went to Bina Bangsa school. I was born in 2001, and am now 20 years old. My parents have always provided me with everything I've ever needed and I am grateful for that. I wouldn't say I know what my purpose in life is. But I want to work towards being able to give back to my family and loved ones for what they have done for me.

#### **My Childhood**

I was born as the first child in my family. I had a memorable childhood. I remembered always taking time out of my day to go on bike rides with my family, and also learning how to play sports. This allowed me to spend time with family, and also develop a bond that I consider very dear.

## **My Passion and Hobbies**

During the times I spent doing sports as a child, I had a liking towards basketball and started playing when I was in grade 8. I was overweight and did not make the cut for the team. When I did however, I still had a lackluster physique, and would always be the reason that my team had to run laps.

Although this was quite an unpleasant experience, I would not have become who I am today if it wasn't for adversity. A few years after I joined the team, I became captain of the basketball team when I was in grade 11. This is not something to be boastful of, but rather the opportunity to boost my team's morale, the requirement of being able to lead in matches was something that I was thankful to have developed due to the situation that I was coerced into.

## **Graduating High School**

I stopped playing basketball when I was in Grade 12. Because I decided to focus on studying for my A levels. The last year of my high school was quite rocky. I was working part time as a tutor for the last 2 years of my high school. I was also considering taking a gap year to open my own tuition center. However, I chickened out due to not wanting to take the risk, and decided to apply for a university. Having turned down most of the universities and scholarships that I applied to and had the privilege of receiving, because initially wanting to take a gap year, I had to look for another university that was still taking applications. It is already May of 2019, and First year university starts in September.

Thankfully, by the Grace of God, the University of Alberta was still taking applications and I managed to make it just in time.

Experience in Canada:

I was extremely grateful to be able to study abroad, even just for one year. It was eye opening and culturally very different to what I was used to back in Indonesia. I met many great new people and I also really enjoyed the teaching methods that the university classes had.

Post Pandemic:

Due to the Pandemic, I started taking Online classes from Indonesia, for my 2nd year of education in Canada. However, due to the time difference, I found myself struggling mentally and physically. This led me to decide to transfer to a local University in Jakarta.

### **What I want to achieve**

I remembered being extremely homesick when I was in Canada, missing home and family very much. But now that I am back here, I miss the friends I made there as well. Grass is always greener on the other side, and it'd be better to be grateful and focus on cherishing the present. I want to study hard, get a good job and be able to provide for my family with financial abundance to repay them for having let me live a very sufficient life thus far. If God is willing, by Faith I hope to succeed, and be able to fulfill my life long dreams of doing so.

Values, Faith and Religion:

I am a Christian and I have always had faith and religious values instilled within me. My parents have always been the perfect role models; their faith never wavered even in hardship. This thankfully led me to develop a strong foundation of faith. As for my long term vision, I hope to live a life that can bring blessings to others. Not only in the material aspect, but also in the spiritual aspect. I want to live life in a way where the people around me are reminded that in times of hardships and in dark times they can turn to God for guidance, strength and consolation.

As a future father one day, I hope to teach my children the meanings of compassion, sincerity and kindness, and to always remind them that God's kingdom is not meant for us alone, but also for our loved ones and people around us. For that very reason, the simple concept of being a blessing to others should continue to be passed on in my future generations.

As for my long term vision, I do strongly believe that I have a voice. I want to be able to continue speaking of God's grace and touch many souls. I have personally experienced miracles myself that I can speak of, in hopes to strengthen those in need and also move the hearts of those who lack faith. By speaking of His grace, it reminds me of all the good things he provided me in life to strengthen my faith. I consider it to be a gracious blessing to be able to perceive things in such a way.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TO INFINITY.....AND BEYOND!



*Life is like piano  
Black is for pain and White is for happiness  
We need both of them to play in order to create  
beautiful songs*

#### **My Parent as The Warrior!**

Everyone's a winner. Since the beginning of everyone's life, we have defeated millions of "competitors" in our mom's uterus which made us the best and the strongest individual to be born. I was born on October 22, 2002 in Vincentius A Paulo Hospital Surabaya.

Since my parents are Chinese therefore I have a Chinese name which is Yang Che Jiang. However, I also have an Indonesian name which is Malvin Yang. They chose Yang (杨) as my surname so that I could persistent and tough in life.

Growing up, I went to Saint Clara Surabaya for approximately 12 years which should be 11 years but when I was at kindergarten, I needed to add an extra one year because of my age. Furthermore, I went

to Saint Hendrikus Senior High School for 3 years. During my growing up process, there was a lot of struggle, happiness, sadness and loneliness. Despite those negative and positive things, I would like to be grateful because without those experiences I can't be who I am right now. I believe that I am valuable and there is only one me in the whole existence. I love attempting to break the limit even though I haven't done anything impactful for others.

### **Limitation**

Let's discuss the basic thing first, What is Limitation? Is it our hesitation? Is it our fear? Is it our fright? or the worst case Is it our laziness to try something new? I am sure that we aren't afraid of breaking through our limitations but the adverse effect that will occur once we fail. Failure is the most common thing that we as human beings are afraid of, sometimes our failure could be more serious than its meaning. When we fail and there is something at stake such as family, money, etc. then people will think thousands of time to try something new and break those limitations.

Can We Break Our Limitation? Everyone has their own limitation; we can't expect that everyone has the same limitation because at the end it depends on ourselves. What would we like to achieve? Breaking limitations is priceless, which can't be done as easily as flipping our palm. It requires effort, future consequences and many more therefore breaking limitations is not impossible but it needs failure and surely success will be found whenever we are ready. Regardless of failures that

we will experience in the future, we have to remember who you want to be.

### **My Purpose of Life is God**

I confess in the name of Father, and the son, and the holy spirit. By those words and its meaning, I admitted catholic to be my religion for now and the rest of my life. In my opinion, Catholicism is not just a religion but it is my purpose in life. I believe that God has assigned every existence in the world to work on their own part and pursue their journey and every drawback that we will experience is assumed as his test in order to make us stronger than before because God won't give us test that exceed our ability and what doesn't kill you make you stronger right?

Looking for God's plan hasn't been easy, I believe that my journey is his plan. There are a lot of challenges for me in life especially on establishing our very first business without anyone having a business background. Drawbacks and failures occurred during our operational days until today however I learned a lot of real business experience which is valuable for me in order to be better in the future and hopefully as soon as possible I could be an impactful businessman that followed God's plan.

### **Personal Plan Hypothesis**

In my opinion, a future plan is related to current self-personality and condition therefore what I am going to tell you based on my current situation.

To begin with, since I have a bakery business which is my family's main income ever since my father retired from Sampoerna Company. Bakery business is not an easy thing for us, especially because none of us has a business background, and all we know is we have to sell higher than the cost of goods sold. We didn't care about the family's withdrawal, operation cost, etc. However, by God's help suddenly I found an affordable online class which told me how to rule everything about business and fortunately we have found our way to sustain. I have a huge expectation which we are trying to achieve in the future which is to be a bakery with legal business entity status and known all over Indonesia.

Furthermore, personally I don't care how many failures or struggles that we will experience but I believe one thing, It may not be tomorrow, it may not be next month, it may not be next year, but the thing that I am sure is one day when I am ready, by God's will and my effort, I will exceed my highest expectation in God's name. Amen.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ARDI'S LIFE



*We suffer more in imagination than in reality*

*~ Stoicism ~*

#### **Introduction**

#### **Ardi's Life**

First of all, thank you for reading this book and I am really grateful that you came across my chapter. It means I can share a bit of a story of myself. My name is Lazuardi and you can call me Ardi. I was born and raised in Jakarta and I graduated from Highscope Highschool in TB Simatupang. Hopefully we can know more about each other and also embrace our diversity because as a saying said unity in diversity. As a kid I was born in a happy family with a lot of activities going on all day long because I have two older brothers and I am the youngest out of 3 boys. As kids we all love to play all kinds of sports such as badminton , football , swimming , and baseball. Growing up as a teenager I joined a baseball club called Prambors and I participated in several tournaments across the world such as in Vietnam , Guam , and also Singapore. It was

such a great and vivid memory. But I stopped playing baseball when I entered High school because I have a knee injury that is not good if I keep playing baseball. So after I consulted with my therapist regarding my knee injury. She wanted me to keep on exercising in order to have a healthy body and also mind so she advised me to do running and drink a lot of milk and also vitamins. Until now, I never stop running and this is one of my therapies to make me feel great and have a clear vision of what to do next.

I am also really thankful that I was raised in a strong religious believe as a Muslim kid because I was taught a lot of basics when I was a kid. Because my dad occasionally invited the orphanage around three to four times a year into our house to have a “pengajian”. This actually gave me a lot of insight to become a more humble person. Not only a humble person but also a person that has the values to live his daily life. Another memory that I also never forget is that back in the day my grandmother always liked to cook because she is a true Padang woman that loved to cook but sadly she already passed away in 2017. If an orphanage comes to my house then there will be no doubt that my house is filled with my grandma Padang’s food. The food that she cooked is filled with memories that always remained in our big family heart throughout all my relatives, cousins, and also auntie and uncle. Because throughout my childhood I ate a lot of Padang food that was cooked by my lovely grandma. I really want to open a Padang restaurant when I have enough money later in my early 30’s. Amin YRA.

### **Lovely Mother & Religious Commitment**

I also want to dedicate this paragraph to my parents, especially my mother, because she is a very lovely person and will always have a very special place in my heart, she always supports me through my ups and downs. I always pray for her to have the best life. My relationship with my mother is like a best friend because we spend a lot of time together and also we would talk about anything. She always believes in me that I will become somebody one day, hopefully when that day arrives she will be able to witness it. Thank You mom for always supporting me and believing in me throughout my life.

In this class I've learned lots of things about the value in life and also found many new insights that hopefully I can implement to my life in the future. The main value that I learned in this class is that being a genius person is not the most important thing but the most important thing in life is to be strong spiritually because it will build a strong mental health in the future. Rich with money is great but what makes life perfect is rich inside within our hearts, principles, and values. The last thing that I would like to add to this chapter is my spiritual commitment, I would like to commit in giving to others or in Islam we call it *sedekah*. This is a lifetime commitment that I want to have not only when I have a lot of money but also even when I don't have much money I still need to give to others. I believe in karma and also what I want to mention is that there is a therapeutic feeling that I couldn't explain after giving out to others, the feeling is like a calm and lots of peaceful energy coming in towards my body. Based on an article that I found there are 10 benefits of helping others which are helping others feels good, it creates a sense of belonging, it gives you a sense of purpose, giving helps keeps things in perspective, it's contagious, helping others can help you live longer, it will give you

sense of renewal you'll boost your self-esteem, you'll create stronger friendship, you become a glass half full type person (UCL UK 2020). These factors are really true and it's one of the reasons why I want to commit to this type of religious commitment because it really is a therapeutic feeling that can make us a better human being. Being a spiritual person and a religious person are 2 different things based on what I learned in this class. Being strong spiritually is also really important. By being strong spiritually, it will build a strong mentality for a human being. The practice to have a strong spirituality is to have a positive mindset throughout your life because by having a positive mindset it will actually help you attract all the good things in life. Meditation is also an important practice of having a strong spirituality because it will clear your mind and have a clarity in your vision of life. In conclusion, combining religious commitment and also strong spirituality is the best formula on how to succeed and have a balanced life. Hopefully by writing this chapter I can combine these two formulas in life and apply it into my life not only for a temporary time but for a lifetime commitment and also way of living. Amin Ya Rabb.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# DAFFA PRADIPTA



*Success does not belong to smart people. Success belongs to those who always try*

*-B.J. Habibie-*

### **Introduction**

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, hi everyone introduce my name is Daffa Pradipta, just call me Daffa. born in Jakarta august 3, 2003. I'm the 3rd child of 3 siblings, I like to organize and socialize, and I have hobbies like taekwondo and scouting I was born in a family that was very well off at first, was raised in a family not a member of the police but did live near the Brimob complex which made me have many friends whose parents worked in the police, my dream began to become a police officer who defends the weak.

But lately, there are many problems and happenings in society that are against it. The police, Because I am not a police family myself but have police friends I can see from both different perspectives and from within myself, I want to help the community with my conscience from small things to legal issues. The example of the incident where

grandmother Mirna was in prison for only removing 3 sweet potatoes was not even stolen, it's sad.

### **Disappointment Story**

My desire to become a police officer has died when yesterday's I failed the Police Academy test, maybe it's not God's will for me to be the police, maybe Allah wants me to be more successful and can I do help a lot of people.

As a human, I am sad because I can't achieve the goals I want, but what I can do, just pray and ask for the best. Multiplying worship will also calm us down, and at that time I felt that worship was very important for us to do. to not do bad things like in the hadis "Beribadah menghindari perbuatan yang buruk" because at that time it makes us calmer and can see the right and best path.

### **The Way is to Improve My Spiritual**

I think God made me try harder and always remember the situation, if the police are not the way, I have to let go and try a better way, God willing give the best way, to increase my spiritual value I always make time to sholat in the mosque and if it is not possible to go to the mosque.

At least I sholat on time, and after praying I must not forget to doa for what I want and to train my spirituality to guide in achieving noble goals, I will listen to Friday ceramah carefully and must get important points every Friday lecture and don't forget to at least 1 day read 1 sheet of the Quran to increase reading.

Don't forget to take a pengajian once a week to dissect the contents of the Quran so that I can learn according to the Quran, and understand its contents and stay away from the prohibitions. Besides that to calm the brain we can do night prayers, to feel calm and close to the creator, that we can be more aware that in life we have a purpose, and everything that God gives in the form of success or failure there must be lessons that we can learn.

### **Conclusions and Lessons Learned**

And my goals in the future, I want to make myself a successful entrepreneur and can motivate all circles, and guide people who need personal consultation, business, or life motivation. Because we cannot be separated from the social environment, then I will try to be useful for the environment. And always prioritize worship as a solution that helps.

### **Motivational sentence**

What you can learn from my story is how fallen you are, how broken you are, how disappointed you are, let yourself cry. Let out your emotions, if you need to cry all day do it, but after that day don't cry about your past because it's all gone and now it's time for you to see the future. Nothing is late, prayer will not be enough if you don't want to change, remember my friend God will give change for those who want to change, do it not just a wish that's all from me, thanks for reading my story.

Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh



*“Many Failures in life because people do not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”*



## CHAPTER SIX

### KARIM'S STORY



*“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”*

*Thomas Edison*

Hello readers, this time I will tell my life and before that let me quickly introduce myself. My name is Karim Ahmadian, you can call me Karim. I was born in 1999 in South Jakarta. I lived in Bintaro hall all my life, lol. In my opinion Bintaro is one of the best places to live, because the people are quite friendly and easy-going and there are some good places to do physical activities such as jogging, riding bicycles, and playing basketball. Anyway let's start my journey of my life.

Since I was a kid I love to make friendship with anyone, but I was too picky. I mean I would be friend with anyone has same hobby and interest. Although I wasn't interested in having a good friendship, I respect and be nice to them as best I can. I was studying in Budi Mulia Dua Bintaro. I had good vibes and bad experiences to. My worst experience one of my ex-enemy told me I'm the dumbest kid in front of my face. I smacked his face, unfortunately someone made a piece of us.

I took it personally with his words and I proved with my effort that we were friends by that time because he got wrong. From my experience if we would have friends as much as possible we would be open minded and give feedback to them.

Anyway I had studied in International University of Liason of Indonesia (IULI) in 2018. I was aviation engineering. At the time I was shocked to be a college student and the environment. Didn't know how to deal with any subject that it's so hard to be understood. Not just me who have this fate. Now I'm understand we can't work alone to face difficulties that may be beyond our understanding. No matter the ages, their hobbies or religion. Fun fact I had friend that he is Christian. We so close and one day he invite me to church at Christmas day in 2003 or 2004. I accepted it and when I was there I saw people including my friend sang of songs. I felt the song quit good so I sang it too. Fortunately i didn't know the lyrics meaning, yes I was innocent kid wkwkwkwk. I had friend that they are Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim too. So if you seek for friend to someone don't mind their religion because Muslim might be not better than other faith in personal quality and knowledge.

### **The Worst Feeling and 2021**

Let me take you flashback to 2015. It was worst year in my life. I had to leave all my best friends because we chose different high school, except one guy stay beside me. I had overthinking about my past why my spirit of education fell apart in the end my UN score big different with other but I knew could be just like them. It's so frustrating to think about

it and i was lack of society interest but love play game all day. Frustration and loneliness became me nobody and finally I can't continue to next grade. I felt ashamed to downgrade but I convinced myself it won't be bad to be part of younger batch. Anyway I felt in love with girl and we had good relationship for 3 months and our relationship worse one month to other. Eventually we broke, I felt anger, confused and sorry what I had done. At this point my mind just full of regretless and admit i just nobody who let down to whom I love. I got strange feeling that direct me to suicide.

In 2020 before Covid-19 Pandemic stricter the globe. It was my second year of being college student and I just cold adaptive to campus life, no matter how difficult the subject I was ready to deal with. Suddenly Covid-19 came and everything is work by home and full online class. In first and second month I had commitment to face full online class, but eventually I can't face this problem and decided to give up for a year. I was so frustrated and anxiety. All my friends are already in 6 semesters and they just need one year to graduate. I need time to motivate myself to back collage life. Now I have to accept everything during pandemic. Also I have done other activity such as physical exercise to keep me move forward. Oh yes one more thing I need to remind myself who am I, what are my strengths, what makes me different and keep think of big dream to stay away commit to end of life because if I will attempt suicide I believe whoever love me very sad, anxiety and little chance to go paradise in my religion believe.

**Big Dream Is Not Anything.**

If i gave choice by someone, first choice is do anything you like with everything you have now for decades or second you got chance being a star of a profession you dream about for 5-7 years I choose second choice. I have many dreams in my head but only 2 big dreams are still in my soul. I believe one of 2 them come true. So what my big dreams are? Basketball star like Jason Tatum, Kyrie Irving, and many more and a great race car and try some or maybe many legend car in these world such as *Nissan GTR R* lineup or maybe *Mercedes S65 AMG* with **V12 turbo** engine or maybe a legend *Audi Quattro S1* which won 23 races championship, 4 years in row dominated the races and it has four titles home to Ingolstadt. This big dream drives me to be better person and I should have a job with high salary and I should have right persons who support me. Also I think with big dream I have purpose of my life because I have goal to be achieved one day. Speaking about built a business sounds not easy but well it's still somewhere in my mind.

### **Me Still Fighting with My Parent Mindset**

Yes I've ever argued some moment with my parents. Most of fight speaking about how I am a successful man. My parents were born 1960 & 1964 respectively and both of them graduated from ITB so they believe their degree certificate saved and made them succeed. Thus they always tell me i have to be good student; good great so you can get occupation and i think that's how they realize I'm a successful man. Meanwhile me have totally different mindset with theirs but we I mean me and my parent agree that education made someone successful. I have thought education is not just theories, have good great in a academy because anyone who has a lot of experiences of one occupation or a

profession would be easy to win in an organization or in a workplace, etc. for me we can get education from experience, listening other story life and many more, but you will be success if you are compete in a profession you dream about and dream drives you to do anything to achieve it. In my opinion graduate from bachelor degree is important but not most important.

### **What's My Plan?**

Once i achieved my one of my dream i would share to my parents hope it makes them happy and glad I'm successful man although our thought are big different. I won't stop there because I would like to leave legacy I can share to anyone who dreaming my achievements, but life is tough anybody can be bad to you and need extra effort and strong mental to complete your goals. That's why I must learn how face this world, got good occupation, do all worship and do good thing to people so hope God give me goods like what He promised in my religion believe and make friendship to whoever one goal with me.

Speaking friendship, it is not always be good because choosing right person to completed our goal are quite difficult. Anybody could double-face on you, or just wants know everything your problem and leave you or give wrong advice. I ever made a accessories of motorbike business with 3 of my high school friends while I was college student. I knew one them was chief of batch 2018 in his campus. One person always busy and another friend is the person who had idea to build business

I made big mistake was that time. One I truly trusted on the person invites me to make a business because he wasn't organization

crew. Second we thought we can run business without special skill or any skill related to our business. Third it was too early to build a business with your friend. So if I would make a business I prefer alone or delayed until I find someone trustworthy person and has skill that might be relate to my business.

My main plan to catch my dream is I need good occupation and by time I have hired by a big company which company has good reputation and their finances is good condition while I work with them. Also I never forget to invest my money in property and other thing that good to be investing and have to do charity hope my charity rewarded with kindness by God.

### **Being the Leader of Own Family**

Speaking about who will be my love is still mysterious but if i have a wife, communication is number one. Sharing story, sharing thought is my way to understand my wife deeper. I willing to sacrifice anything to make her life easy, but I don't promise give anything she want because maybe what she wants are not necessary. I have tendency to watch someone I love silently. I mean I like to watch her behavior, what she like, and what she doesn't like.

Speaking have kid is not in my mind but if my fate that I have kid will give lesson how important saving money and invest them so they can buy anything they wanted one day with their own money. I would like to show if you want get anything you wish my kid should courage themself to face any problem and do sacrifice to catch dream. Also believe in yourself, forgive yourself, and respect to other are something

my kid have to understand no matter what problem they face in their life. Also I let them do anything they love and give them real arm not just promising give support to them in one condition; they have spirit of competition and do the best they can do. No matter what they dream even I though their dream is nothing but if they could prove me wrong I let them do their dream. I don't want to force them to become what I want they become and I want they could become independent when they are being adult. Although I let give them freedom but I won't they lack of morals, I don't let them apostate to my religion because it's my responsible. For me being father is tough, really difficult. In my heart I want they happy and be successful person with their dream, but I can't full depend on my wife to educate them also I have to teach them about my religion. Share any story related to my religion, remind them when they do wrong and give warning when they do truly wrong.



*We all have as much as we think we deserve. Lift your opinion of what you think you deserve and it's amazing what you'll start to attract!*



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### KEVIN'S LIFE



*Don't be afraid, because I'll always with you.*

*When you pass through the waters, I'll be with you.*

*When you cross rivers, you will not drown.*

*When you walk through fire, you will not be burned.*

*The flames will not hurt you.*

Hi everyone let me introduce myself. I am Kevin and you can call me Kevin. I was born in Jakarta, 03 Jan 2003 and I'm now 18 years old. I graduated from SMAN 19 Jakarta and now I'm a student in IPMI University. I like culinary and travelling. and This is my life journey. I hope you like to read my story.

First, I'm just a boy who likes to know about anything, and I like to try new things even though I never had any experience related to what I want to try. I'm happy to be like that, curious about all things, trying something new, feeling something that I never felt before.

#### **Loneliness**

I'm Extrovert. I like to meet people and it is easy for me to meet with new people, so I can say that I have a lot of friends. And every day I'll go to meet my friends and we are playing together, traveling together, and we like to try things that we never had together. But one day when I walked in the middle of a crowded situation, suddenly I felt lonely, I felt useless, and I had some thoughts that I'm not a good person, I don't know why but at that time I felt like everyone left me.

That time, I'm not walk alone. I'm with my friends but I don't know why, I felt everything that I never felt before. I still remember the feeling at that time. Loneliness. Maybe we think that's impossible because I have a lot of friends and that time I'm not alone. Maybe when I think about this with logic I agree with you, but it's real. The feeling came suddenly, even though I'm with my friends, we talked together, we made jokes together but I felt it.

When I felt that, I never talked about that, even with close friends. I do everything as usual, because I think that day I'm just tired. And after I take a rest everything will be fine. Like the other days, everything is fine.

### **Spiritual Journey Started**

I believe in God, but I never felt like I read the Bible because I want to know about it. I'll continue to tell you about my story. After I felt that feeling, I don't know why but suddenly one of my friends texted me and said that I'm not alone. I'm startled, because like I said before, I never talked about this with anyone. I replied to him, "why did you suddenly

tell me this ?” and he said “I don’t know, but I felt like I must tell you about this.” and I said “ok thank you”. The conversation ended.

We’re not close, and actually I’ve met him once. After a week of the conversation, he texted me again. He said “how are u ?” and I replied “I’m okay, why ?” actually when he texted me, I’m scared because I think he gay because I never got the messages like this from someone (boy) before. and he replied “do you want to go to my church ?” I don't know why but I said yes, I rarely go to church but I don't know why, that time I said yes.

That day, I met him in the church and I think I'll just follow the flow and after that I'll go to meet my friends. but when the preacher preached, he talked about the Bible related to loneliness. That time, I felt like this was destiny.

### **I’m Not Alone**

I know that I'm not alone, and you are not alone. When I heard the preacher preach, I started to realize that I have a purpose in my life, and from that day I have started to follow and do the purpose in my life. I never felt lonely again, but I felt loved. Maybe it's unreal, but this is my spiritual journey. and it’s real. Everyone has a purpose, and everything has a reason. We live in this world because we have the purpose. Everyone will know the purpose of life and that in different ways.

I had some quotes.

*Don't be afraid, because I'll always be with you.*

*When you pass through the waters, I'll be with you.*

*When you cross rivers, you will not drown.*

*When you walk through fire, you will not be burned.*

*The flames will not hurt you.*

I know that if I will never be alone, sometimes I feel this because I'm missing the purpose of life. We need to have a Spiritual Journey, or at least start to be curious about God and what we believe.

### **Future Plans**

I know my purpose, I found my purpose. I'll live by doing my purpose, and don't you ever follow your friends who taught you anything bad or toxic people.

But if I were you, I'd search for the purpose of my life, and start to do something that can make you feel peace and love. I had plans about my future. For example, how many daughters do I want? I always say to my friends that I want to have 3 daughters.

Sometimes I'm scared if my children feel bad because of me. It happened once in my life and I don't want many children to feel what I feel. Especially my daughters in the future.

My dad and my mom have been divorced since I was 3 months, but I never blamed one of them. What I know is that they were the problem, so I don't need to know about that even though I got the impact because of them.

I want to have a happy family, and I hope in the future I'll make an ideal family. The reason why I tell you about my family, I think this

is related to Loneliness, and from this we conclude that everything can be bad, you can feel lonely, not everyone is perfect. but God is perfect. God is everything. God never leaves us, when the others leave us, God stays.

Key of life, know your purpose and do everything that makes you happy and close with God. God will never disappoint you, even though your parents do.

My purpose in life is to help each other and be a role model for everyone. If we are close with God, everything that happens in our life will be good and smooth.

Don't ever think that you are late, because I believe that everyone has a different time to know about the purpose of life. Start now.

*This is my story, and* thank you for reading my story. I hope you can find your purpose in life soon. This is my spiritual journey.



*Don't underestimate yourself*

*We all have a special "something" inside us*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# LEARNING IS SOMETHING WE CANNOT STOP



*Life is challenging, I can be sad, angry, and happy. Life is interesting, I can learn from everyone and everywhere.*

*While holding on to the principle that I believe.*

### **When I was Young**

Everyone is born with a different family, situation and belief. As life goes on, anything can happen from good to bad one. All of that happens for the reason, Allah our creation wants us to reflect and learn from that. “If Allah gave someone *back*, then Allah just wanted it back from that person. If Allah gave someone BMW, you have to give BMW to Allah too. But if Allah gave Avanza but we gave BMW, that would make us better and Allah will give you more.” That’s what my mother told me when I was young. Everybody has their portion in this life.

I was born in Bandung 22 02 2002, Funny right? the coincidence that happened on my birthday. I was supposed to be born on the 21st, but

fate said otherwise. My mother tried so hard to give birth to me until I arrived in this world the day after.

When I came to this world, both of my parents were already running a business. The business that they are running is doing well and making a lot of money, until I was 2 years old. My father got scammed from someone and my parents lost everything. We moved to Jakarta and my sister was born at that time. I clearly remember when I was a child, I saw my mother learn about digital marketing and my father was busy with warehouses.

Yes, they start a new business and my sister and I sometimes help them with the packing. When the order is overwhelming my father will tell us “1 product is 100 rupiah, so if you can pack 20 products I'll increase your pocket money by Rp 2000.” Yes it's small, but when I was a child we could get a lot more snacks, so it still makes us happy. At first we make a lot of mistakes, but my parents are not mad and say that “it's okay to make a mistake at first, and everyone learns from mistakes.”

### **Emotional Changes**

Mood swings, cry, mad, even throw something. That happened to me when I was in 5th grade until 1st year of middle school.

In the evening of Friday at my middle school class. My friends and I chatted and joked around like usual. Suddenly someone played with my phone laughing, and gave a sight from my phone to everyone even i saw it myself. There is a contact line that I don't know and they are laughing because I am friends with that contact. I know that's just a joke,



but my mood changes really fast. I got up, took my bag and my phone then threw it in front of everyone who was laughing. Got everything back, I walked away to go back home.

When I got back home, I suddenly realized what I was doing and laughed at myself. Why do I do that? Then I told my mother about that. That is one example of what I did. Sometimes when anger got to me, I threw things and I could cry suddenly.

My mother then learned about child psychology, and everything related to education. That is what makes me change. Every afternoon I would have a snack/teatime with my family. We talked about everything, and my mother told us a story and always gave insight about anything that happened in my surroundings. If you saw it, maybe it would be like counseling. I joined yoga at that time too. Learning about how to compose myself and meditation. My mother would give a lesson about religion and spirituality. I learned about NLP and Law of attraction from my mom too. That changed me a lot when I was in my 2nd year of middle school. But, a person cannot change in just one night. I still threw things even when I was in high school, but not in front of others and that happens so rarely. But I won't do it again after I graduate from high school, after everything that happened.

### **Discovering About Myself**

I started discovering about myself when I was in my 3rd year of middle school. My plan at that time is to go to SAI Bless High school while doing art school. Because I plan to go to ITB FSRD, I want to learn

art before going to university. My plan is working, I went to Carrot Academy (art school) while I am still pursuing my high school.

I learned from both sides, and it will change my future. In High school I discovered that I really like to lead and became the chief to my team. I already knew I liked it when I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> year of middle school. That time I became the leader of my hiking team. I'm the only one who is senior in that team, so the facilitator chose me to become the leader. I had so much fun, although my team is not the best team. I ensured that my team had to go to the top and go down together, ensuring everyone was fine and nobody got sick. But I didn't actually catch it that time, that I would like to become the leader. Because that was the last time, I became the leader.

Until I became a high scholar. Because there are not that many students, we are rolling every part of the project in the first year. So in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year we will know ourselves more and we can choose to part ourselves. Café project in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, is the time I became the leader. We plan everything for just 5 members, and I had to plan for my team when I'm not around for 6 days because I have to go somewhere else. It's not the real café, the people who came are just our acquaintances. We rent some space near our school and establish a tent there. We open at night, even though it's not big it's always crowded and because we do all the work ourselves. Sometimes we just do the cleaning at 11.30 Pm and have a reflection, count our money and just get back at 12/12.30 am. It's not just that, we still have our class even though our time is different from others. Did everything go well? No, the biggest problem that I had to handle if someone is slack off. Sometimes he does not come / come so

late, I warned him and gave 3 days. But I cannot kick him because this is a team project, so I hired some senior and paid him to help us. Besides that, we had so much fun and did well. After that moment I often became the leader for the project.

Carrot academy, I'm so grateful I chose that one and am pursuing this. Although I have liked to draw since I was young, my basic art is so low. I enrolled in it and learned everything from the beginning, from the very basic how to do the sketch. Sometimes it's harder than I thought it would be, but I passed the final exam from pencil 1 – pencil 3. After learning the basics we can choose what we want to pursue. Digital, watercolor or fundamental and essential. Watercolor is what I choose, I like color so much it's my comfort zone. But after 3 months and passed the exam for watercolor 1, I have to choose again what I want to take? From everything that I do, what I lack is perspective and anatomy that is why I choose fundamental and essential. It's so hard and I progressed so slowly but I want to master this side so I become more patient learning it. Too bad, I had to stop just until fundamental and essential 1 because of the final exam in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school.

## **I Became to Know My Self**

After that, why did I change my mind and not pursue ITB FSRD anymore? I will tell you in this part of my story. It happened when I was 16 years old or 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school. Even though in Carrot Academy I don't choose digital art, I have a pen tablet and have been pursuing digital since beginning. I joined what you called a bazaar for artists to sell their work. I joined 3 months before the bazaar and searched for someone

who I could team up with so we can share the rent for the tent. I'm preparing my art, from searching what I will sell, drawing it and making it into things. The night before, I can say I'm so excited and nervous because this is the first time I became the one who sold it, not the customer. The day came and everything was not going well. In the morning we prepare the tent, decorate it and choose the shift. Until the day of the bazaar, I don't sell any one of my art at all. Am I crying? No, because I don't like crying in front of everyone and just joking with everyone else. Even when my partner is there to encourage me, I don't feel anything and brush it off. On my way home, I met another artist and she said "it was hard isn't it." And she is smiling at me. Ah, that one got me. I hold my tears at the station until I'm in front of my house door. "How is the bazaar shirti?" The first thing I heard clearly was from my mom. I ran to my room and cried so hard, even tearing up and throwing my art. I know, it's not like I'm bad at art. It's just that I don't research my customer in the first place. I don't know who my market is and what they like. After I calmed down, my mother came. "This is a good art shir, even though everything is not going well. Are you enjoying the event?" She smiled, "Everything Is by process, not everything gonna work from the first time and it's okay. Just enjoy the process and learn from that." In the second day I don't care about selling again. I just go around to other artist stalls and I'm happy I'm part of the event. I can see what other artists are doing in the background and I'm looking closely at that. After all the customers are going home, we exchange our art and it's fun. "Good work everyone!" There are 2 people who are running around when we are cleaning. I'm tearing up and said to myself, I'm doing great and learning a lot.

After that time, I always asked my mom and studied with her about talent and how that works. Talent is the gift that Allah gave to everyone in this world. There is a base, like are we left/right brain? Even in the right brain, which part of that? And that we can find through experience and childhood. For example, we have the base of sensing on the left side. But what are we going to pursue? Is it an athlete, soldier or something else? Even as an athlete, there is so much that we can pursue. Badminton, basket, soccer, archery, we will find that through experience. That is why when we do what they call a talent test, it should be above 17/18 years old. Because at that age you already have enough experience.

Guess what, the number one for me is commander. Not creation, even my creation is not high. What my right brain has is a synthesizer; it's not a musical instrument. Here is what they called combining every part into one. So I can make something new with my data/what I already saw. But not making something really the newest creation ever.

### **Turning Point**

My turning point to go to business in university is in November 2019. It was my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school and we had some projects from school. It is called i-journey or Individual Journey, we have to go somewhere we want for 2 weeks until 1 months but individually. That means we have to search for a destination, approval, money and go there on our own. I chose to go to the nature side and became a volunteer. After so much discussion with my facilitator, I chose kambas as my destination and the animal is rhino/elephant. In the end, I got approval for the elephant thanks to my school. I'm in ERU (Elephant Rescue Unit, private

unit) . The basecamp is in the middle of a forest. Am I scared? Kind of, but I'm so excited. I went to kambas in the middle of the night with 2 people, 1 is one of the directors in my school and my facilitator. It's supposed to be alone from the start, but I have to go with them. Because I will deal with government staff that need school people there.

Before going to the forest, I got to my guest house. I will rest there when I'm not in the forest and leave my things other than things related to going in. The family is so kind and I'm so happy until the departure time which is 1 days after I arrived. When I got there I'm so nervous, all of them were men and I'm in the middle of the forest. I have to live there with them. But it's not what I expected, they are so kind even they assure me that it's okay. Every morning and evening we have to get the elephant to take a bath then shepherd. I also joined them to go around a way Kambas using elephants to check the wild elephants. We have to document the life of wild elephants then investigate them. Are the amount in that crowd decreasing or increasing and everything else? I also learned that if the keeper of an elephant brings ganju it is not because they want to harm the elephant if they are not obedient. But because it's the keeper's safety. Elephants are wild animals and of course they can become vicious and become more dangerous when their periodic lust comes. Some of the keepers even don't bring ganju because of the personality of the elephant. But some of them bring it because of their personality or because they are new keepers. I don't just learning about elephants, but learning about human behavior a lot from here. At night, we will have a conversation about reflecting and what are we going to do. I always join them until it's done. Some of them who are not PNS just got paid 50.000 rupiah for 1

month. But why are they still there? Because they are concerned about the elephant, it's an endangered animal that can get harmed and killed in the second when the looters come. I learned about humanity there and when I moved to PLG (Pusat Pelatihan Gajah, government) one of them told me to watch them closely, be friends with the keeper and go to base camp every night so I can learn a lot from them. I'm so sad when I came to PLG and learned from the keeper that the food for the elephants in the night (because they were in a cage so the looters cannot get their ivory) got corrupted. That is why the elephant in PLG is skinny. There is a lot of something I can learn from them but I cannot tell it in here because it will be too long. But one thing that I'm sure that my mom is right is, I can learn from someone who you are not expected to.

After I got back home, I became more sure about what I want to pursue. I will have a gap year and I'm going to pursue business and can help many people.

## **My Lost**

Pandemic came, and I was already done with my high school. I'm choosing to take a gap year to learn business from my parents and have a business. But everything can happen, my family business is going down and I have to help them at first. Until my parents gave me one of the brand products that they are doing so I will do it as my case study. In 6 months I only slept for 4 hours a day and so focused on the business. I learned about basic digital marketing, how to handle e-commerce. Then doing the advertising in e-commerce learning to repair the advertisement. I learned how to catch customer attention through photos and

copywriting. But everything is not going well. After 6 months doing all the best that I can, the sale is stuck. It increased the first time I handled it but after 4 months it got stuck. I'm so frustrated, so I'm searching what I can do and what is the reason behind that. What I got is, I cannot beat the 2 big competitors and I didn't see it from the beginning. We have the same type of business, advertisement and even bottle packaging. What is the solution? I have to change the packaging and the place of advertisement. But, as I said from the beginning. My family business is going down, so I don't have much money to do that. Why 6 months? I have a reason for that. In the book called 'Scale up' it said, "if you are already trying so hard in that business and give it all for 6 months and it got stuck and you cannot do anything about that. Leave it. Before you get sucked in that business and you are not going anywhere. Learned from that 6 months and got up with your new idea."

Did I get up easily? Of course not. I separated myself from business and got depressed. But, I cannot watch my parents doing all out and I'm doing anything. So I got back, I learned again from zero. I attend some seminars and training about business. Until 3 months after that I started searching for a new business. But with a good start, starting from what I like and enjoy. The customer and what business that they still had a hole in Indonesia. Then I got my product, which is Jewelry and the material is Stainless steel and Sterling Silver.


### **Commitment Until Last Breath**

Achieving what I want for my business and life will not be easy. But I have Allah that can guide me along the way. I am always reminding



myself that if I work too hard but not including Allah it will be so hard and depressing. I have to see the end of my life, what do I want to pursue actually? It of course became khusnul khotimah, leaving everything that people will benefit from and going to Jannah. Even when I'm doing the business, it has to be Pahala that is not going to be separated from me until I die. I cannot be here now by myself without Allah Guidance. When I'm scared and don't know what to do, I always cry while praying and submit the final to Allah. I always tried my best fulfilling what my God Allah wants me to do. Even when I lost, Allah always stayed by my side that is why I'm so grateful until today.

When I'm writing this I'm tearing up because it reminds me a lot from the past and everything that happened. From the story that I'm writing in here and what I don't open here . But it was what made me right now and I will always be learning until my last breath. The business I want to pursue is jewelry, I know Indonesia has gifts from Allah. It has a lot of material here such as Gold, Silver, Stone and everything else. But it is still not delivered to the world even in Indonesia itself. A lot of Craftsmen are still not prosperous and I want to help them. Right now, I'm in IPMI and I will suck all the study in here. So when I graduated, I hoped I already became a better person. This is the path that I chose, to become a servant of Allah and came back to Allah when I died.



Every time we watch over one another, godlike qualities of love, patience, kindness, generosity, and spiritual commitment fill the souls of those we visit and enlarge our souls as well.

Bonnie D. Parkin

  
[www.idlehearts.com](http://www.idlehearts.com)

## CHAPTER NINE

# JOURNEY TO A LIFE BEYOND (OUR) LIMITATIONS



*I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful and i know it well.*

Hello everyone, my name is Esther Asti Febrianti but you can simply call me ‘Esther’. For those who wonder (or not), Esther is a biblical figure. In the Bible, she’s a Jewish woman who married a Persian king. Basically, she was a heroic person who saved her own people from a death trial even if she had to pay for it with her own life. Super inspiring right? Well, I kinda feel bad for my parents since I don’t think I want to be like her. I’m sorry Mom and Dad, I still love you though. I was born on February 29th 2004 and became the only child my parents have ever had ever since.

Cultural wise, it’s kinda complicated. My mom is Javanese while my dad is half Dayaknese and half unknown. I’d proceed with the unknown since my paternal grandmother grew up in a Dutch orphanage and we never really knew her cultural background. Technically, all of us were born and grew up in Jakarta so culturally speaking-we’re truly

Jakartans. I grew up in a Protestant Christian household, though some of my big family members are Moslems and Catholics. One thing that I can say is, I thank my parents for bringing me to our church since I learn a lot about my family's belief here. I learned to not just study the Bible, but also to become a faithful person, servant of God and the people, and simply living by His words. Speaking of which, I also came from a highly tolerant family in terms of religions. I always visited my other family members' houses when it's Eid Mubarak and then sometimes my mom would host a Christmas party in our house, it's a cool experience for me.

Enough with the self-introduction, instead I'm going to tell you my personal journey in finding my "true self" and gaining a growth mindset. Let me tell you something, it's not easy and it will never be. I mean, I'm only a 17 years old girl who is so clueless with life and the thought of reality is somewhat terrifying to me. However, I'm still thriving for life since we'll never know what will happen a minute from now or so.

Hmm... Come to think of it, thinking about what I want to do in life seem to be easy since I've had the bigger picture in my mind since I was only a primary school student. I remember saying thinking about my true purpose in life is easy when Ms. Amelia asked us in the class. However, once I gave a deep thought about it- I COULDN'T REALLY ANSWER IT. Apparently, I'm taking life for granted this whole time.

Suddenly I remembered how life brought me here to IPMI. I remember how it wasn't easy to live my high school life while involved

in a war with myself. That happened when I reached a phase in life called Life Slump. And here is my story.

### **When I Reached Life Slump**

Back to my self-discovery journey, I grew up as someone who trusts that God will provide what I really need in life. It's not a bad mindset since, at least for me, I'm just being grateful and faithful to God. As an example, I spent my grade 8 and 9 being a top 10 student in the class even though I didn't feel like studying that much (this can be very subjective though). But life isn't always about going up high above. This is what happened when the darkest nightmare hit me in 2017.

It was Sunday, right after my weekly church service, where this deadly thought started roaming around in my mind. It was that day, when I felt like God didn't do much for me. It was that day, where I thought I'd live a life without maps. I felt lost. So I spent my entire senior year in middle school dealing with final examinations and the pessimistic side of me. Really I wished I didn't need to remember a single thought in that year, I really hated it.

Only in a few months I became what my mind thought I was, a pessimistic loser. I couldn't understand anything related to school and my mind only thought about how others achieved their best result of their lifetime. Basically I wasn't wary about how deadly the outcome of negative thoughts could be.

Long story short, I graduated from middle school and got accepted into a public high school nearby my house-it's not the region's

top school but not the bad one either. I chose Social Science as my major since I didn't get accepted into their Natural Science major, although I was happy since I don't need to make my life even more miserable like before. Half of the first semester in high school was good, until I got into a motorcycle accident (it was on the first day of mid-exam). For the first time in my whole lifetime, I felt completely shattered. I'm not the type of person who likes to show excessive-emotions in public places, but I cried for the longest time (for about 3 hours) in the hospital. As if being involved (and became the victim) in that accident isn't enough, my scores in that semester really flunked to the point I thought I had reached rock bottom. It wasn't my best score, I mostly got 70s-80s while my classmates got 80s-90s. I thought I could gather some ambition in my high school phase, but then again my mind deceived me.

I spent the rest of my grade 10 not being myself. In a sense I didn't show people my real personalities, I acted unintentionally mean to strangers by the way I see them, and I mostly put on a fake smile or a poker face. How about making friends then? Well I did have close friends, we became close because they sat nearby me and we somewhat shared something similar: our lowly sense of humor aka receh.

Then, how about grade 11? I met new classmates whom I wasn't familiar with and I had quite a hard time adjusting with their unique personalities. Though I guess I was the only one, since the majority of my friends adept really well. Also, I'm not going talk much about the rest of my high school experiences since Covid-19 stroke when I was in the even semester of grade 11 and online learning still continues until I graduated high school.

Frankly speaking, there were many moments of me dealing with my own negative emotions. I struggled a lot in high school to respond to things in a positive way. Being under pressure and stressed out also did something bad to my body, I suffered from subjectively hair loss. I knew for sure something changed and it's out of my control. Anyway, psychologically speaking, all emotions we have are pretty much valid. Our task is to handle it pretty well to not let it lead to a bad outcome.

So far, have you analyzed the basic problem I had? Yes, it all began with my mind and my way of thinking. Even worse? I thought God wouldn't help me so I strayed myself away from Him. Have you ever wondered how it is to sail without an anchor and map? I'd say it's meaningless. That is the analogy of my personal life in the past 3 years. Being an ingrate was so far the easiest way for me to ruin my own life.

I truly hope and pray you guys won't repeat the same mistakes I did. Our brain is truly 100% responsible for all the acts we did. It's essential and plays a vital part in my life.

### **Soaring the Sky Like Eagle**

I remember the time when the pastor at the Sunday sermon showed us a video about an eagle and its choice to live longer or not. Eagle has a long-life span among other animals, they can actually reach 50-70 years old (super cool right?). Truth be told, they had to pay the price to reach that point. So basically they will go to the top of the rocky mountain and start crushing their beak and plucking their old feathers out. Before we proceed to the next step, can you imagine the pain that the

eagle had to go through? Indescribable yet very relatable with our daily life. On to the next step, after approximately 5 months, they'll regain their beaks and feathered wings and they'd just added an extra 30 years to their life span. Astonishingly beautiful if you want to forget about the pain they went through.

I suddenly realized that it has the same moral value as Ms. Amelia's lecture previously. In order to reach true (long-term) happiness, we'll probably have to sacrifice something in the short-term. But once you achieve it, you'll be set free and find your true happiness. If I want to connect the dots, I can say that the past three years of fighting my miserable thoughts are just me crushing my beak and plucking out my feathers that weigh me down. In order for me to truly set myself free, I need to let go of all of the things that weigh me down; all of my burdens.

I realized I went to high school without any proper goals; I've only dreamt about working in the financial sector in business and literally had no detailed job in my mind. Then in grade 12 I had guts about being an accountant, truth be told throughout the whole process of me learning accounting (since grade 7) I knew for sure I'm not gonna work in that sector at all. God granted me that wish, I didn't get admitted to the accounting major at my top choice university (I had 3 top choices and definitely IPMI is one of them).

After two rejections in that university with the same major, I realized I'm not going to work in the finance sector through accounting. Hence, I decided to go to my number one plan: IPMI International Business School. Do I feel like a failure? To be honest, not really. I reap



what I sow. I was super chill in my senior year and I didn't even study as hard as I do now hahahaha. It's a bad sign since I only plan the goal without doing a proper execution.

Nevertheless, I learned from my past mistakes. I can't truly succeed without a proper mindset and good plan. I have strong motivations to endure all the pains I have in the current moment and thrive for the best. I also learned from a lot of people in my church that whatever I'm doing right now, I'm only doing it as a form of worship to my God. To be honest, it feels nice to possess materialistic wealth. But then again, for an emotional person like me, it would feel like nothing if my heart feels empty. Besides, being blessed by God doesn't always mean in the form of materialistic possessions. I'd find it intriguing that people don't count: health, gaining more faith in God, becoming more obedient to God, gaining more wisdom, and et cetera as blessings from Him too. Even in this current state of mine, I still couldn't really understand His plans. But He is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent. One thing that I know for sure, I can rely my life fully on Him.

My life phase in IPMI is definitely the process of an eagle regaining their beaks and feathered-wings. Let's see how shall I continue to live while regaining my knowledge, self-confidence, and becoming a responsible leader of myself and my pupils.

### Is Life Purpose Even Real?

Reader, now you've come to the end of this chapter-my life purpose. But before I tell you about my life purpose(s), let me begin with

my personal definition of “Life Purpose” itself. For me, life purpose is simply something that I truly wanted to accomplish in the long-term but still make a huge impact in the short-term too. It’s like setting up a vision and mission when you’re starting a business. That’s how I describe what it’s like to actually make and deep-think about life’s purpose.

I’d want to transform myself into a hardworking, responsible, rational-yet-recognized-emotional, empathetic person, and know how to set my priorities straight. Not going to forget one most vital thing: to love myself very deeply and willingly. Self-love is highly important especially in this fast-paced world, I want to value myself objectively and I know for sure it’s not going to be an easy journey of mine. I really want to go somewhere beyond my comfort zone because it imitates me to explore new things. Then I want to be a person whose existence isn’t a nuisance for her surroundings. Even better, I want to be helpful not just to myself but also to other people. One and foremost, I want to be wealthy! Not just in money (I mean, I got to pay taxes too), but also in wisdom and faith and have them shown through my words and actions.

How will I make those visions come true? I started to practice it in my freshman year in college. Firstly, I practice about being consistent with my plans and then evaluate my way of learning. This way, I can find a more suitable study method. I also practiced to make my plans more flexible on a daily basis; this helps me every time something really urgent messes up my structured plan for the day haha.

As for my middle-to-long-term goals, I want to speak Italian fluently. At least one day, I can order margherita pizza in Italian (that

sounds cool). Then, it's nice too to speak sign language-either SIBI or BISINDO or even ASL. Then, I want to take my parents to the Holy Land and also visit my grandfather's hometown in Central Borneo.

Lastly, about career choice. To be honest I'm still contemplating my future career path. Should I really want to be a Financial Analyst? Or a Beauty Product Developer? For now, I stick with my first plan. After a year of studying in IPMI, I'm going to evaluate whether Finance is still a part of my passion or not. One of the evaluating indicators for me is:

Do I feel like studying the related subjects is a huge responsibility?

Did I enjoy all of the process while learning about the related subjects?

Am I naturally curious about the related topics?

What's my grade in the past semester?

This is just a simple vision and mission I created in the first semester of university. One thing I'm ready to do now is to expand my knowledge and skills (especially those which are beyond my expectations).

Lastly, let's jump to my spiritual values and commitment. As a person who was raised in a Protestant Christian core family, I understood the importance of praying, completely understanding God's words (like

doing bible study and reading my daily devotions), and having faith in Him. But it's never enough, there's always a saying in the Bible, "Faith without deeds is dead." I was inspired by it! It stated a vital fact that to be able as God's workmanship, we can't just understand God only to the knowing level but to fully implement God's words through our life (action, verbal, and none other than controlling our mind too). I know that in fact, there are many religious people who thought of themselves so highly-and-holy because they knew a lot of laws in their religions but in reality they are practically a living hypocrite. My most important spiritual value is fully understanding and practicing the way of the truth. In order to gain even more faith in Him, I started to read daily devotions every day and even write it in a personal journal. Then, other than attending weekly Sunday service, I want to attend the Youth service at my church (usually it's on Saturday, but they also have the service on Sunday too) more frequently. Though Covid-19 pandemic makes it not effective for me. Other than that, I wish to start serving at my church. Not just that, I want to maintain both God-human and human-human relationship. Since I don't plan to become a hypocrite in life, peace.

Before I end this chapter, I want to say, growth isn't linear and it's full of ups and downs. Hence, you can't expect yourself to stay progressing in each step of your life. But you won't also stay at the rock bottom for a long time. Every time I'd have a hard time, I would whisper to myself, "Everything is in God's control. You'll be fine."



*When you are focused on your goals in life, you are keeping your hands  
on the steering wheel*



CHAPTER TEN  
**THE DYNAMICS OF A DEDICATED GIRL'S  
YOUTH**



*Everyone has their dream. The difference between them is whether they will work for it or do nothing to achieve it.*

**The Answers to My Quest**

First, I want to congratulate you for making it to my chapter because you came a long way. Let me share a bit about my identity. My name is Alayya and I was born in Bandung. I just graduated high school months ago. I am writing this chapter in university. I will not share more about my personal information, but you will know more about me through my stories. Let's do a flashback to my high school days. One day in December 2020, I sat on my bed and thought about my life. It sounds dramatic, but it makes sense when you are in the middle of a pandemic. Pandemic means lockdowns, no going out of our houses, no meeting people, etc. I had no choice but to stay at home. It was only about two

weeks after my semester one exams week. I tried to forget about lessons such as organic compounds, math equations, immune system, English essays, etc. The reason was that I wanted to put my focus on preparing for my future. On that day, I wondered about so many things regarding my future. Honestly, these questions already appeared inside my head before.

It was hard to find the answers at first, but thankfully I got my answers in the end with the help of Allah SWT. Mind you here that I did not make an abrupt decision of what I am going to do in the future by the end of 2020, but I kind of already prepared them beforehand. The problem with me was that I had doubts about which things were good for me. That afternoon, I was relieved when I felt that I found the answers to the questions that sooner or later will affect my future-which are my purposes in life. I went through a long process or journey to find my true dreams in life. In my chapter, you will know how I dealt with many challenges to find my purpose in life.

### **Religion and Culture as Parts of My Life**

I was born to a Minangkabau and Sundanese family. Truthfully, there were not many cultural rituals that I remembered throughout my life. But I do remember some traditional dishes every time I gathered with both sides of the family. I lived in Bandung when I was a kid, and I remembered the times when I slowly learned how to speak Sundanese from my late grandmother.

Usually, every year my family and I will visit Bandung and Lampung for Eid al- Fitr. It is always a great time spending Eid al-Fitr



with my big family. Typically when you go to your grandparent's house, you will find a lot of dishes. It happened to me too. I usually spend about 1 to 3 weeks before Eid al-Fitr at my grandparents' house in Lampung. I used to spend my Ramadan doing fun things with my cousins, and we did religious routines together. One of my favorite routines was waiting for after together in the afternoon while watching movies.

During Eid al-Fitr, I usually join the Eid prayers alongside my big family. Then we visit the cemetery to pray for our loved ones. Of course, the young people received Eid money from the elders. I bet that is one of the reasons why the youngsters love Eid. I love the gatherings that my big family usually had after having our Eid meals. In this gathering, we usually catch up with each other's lives. Since the pandemic had begun last year, we held it through video calls. One thing that makes me realize that I am on an Eid holiday is the language and dialect that my family members speak. Whenever I heard Sudanese and Minangkabau, I knew right away that I was home. I have always loved the Eid holidays because it is summer, and I can refresh my mind throughout the getaway.

### Inspirations from Amazing Tenants

From 2014 until 2017, I used to visit Bright spot Market and Market & Museum. I went to these events not because I wanted to post something on my social media but because I was curious about the business ideas. My cousin often participated in Brightspot Market. So, most of the time, she invited me to the bazaar. I got so many insights after I wandered around these two bazaars. Sometimes I would talk to the tenants, and they were willing to share their experiences in business.

Their age range varied, and they stunned me by their hard work and commitment to running their businesses.

Most of the businesses were available online, so I loved to check their social media accounts or websites when I finished strolling around both bazaars. I have once thought about being an entrepreneur, but I understood that I should have clear purposes. It means that I could not be one in the hope of only getting rich. I love reading articles about impactful startup founders. They all made me realize that success does not always come when you are young. Instead, you can be successful when you are already old.

Deep inside my heart, I would always love to have my startup. However, I do not plan to make one after I get my bachelor's degree. I studied business before I entered university. The subject was appealing to me, reminding me that I loved to observe small businesses grow larger over time. The unique part about this whole thing was that I decided to study science in high school because I wanted to be something else rather than an entrepreneur.

In 2019, I decided to become a science student in high school. After I went through tough times, I was convinced to choose science streaming. I prayed to Allah SWT to give me His guidance during the tough days. I was grateful that I had both of my parents supporting me in every decision I made. Before I entered high school, I was already passionate about science subjects. So, I used my opportunity in high school to expand my knowledge in science.

If I can be honest, science subjects are hard. I remembered how I thrived and how I felt when everything went tough for me. I sought help from Allah SWT to ease all of my hardships. I was grateful that I was surrounded by great friends and cousins because they were also the people who believed in me. I am sure it was the mentality of high school students that caused me confusion, sadness, and doubt during those days. Back then, I was very indecisive on what to pursue. I was a little bit lost and unsure about making my goals.

Let me tell you something; as science students, most of my classmates were very good at presentation and debate. I learned a lot from them. Through my journey as a science student, I got the opportunity to learn how to deliver and communicate my ideas in a proper way. I also gained some skills, and I realized I wouldn't experience them without being on this journey.

I have thought about my goals since grade 11. I started to list down the study programs that I was interested in, and I explored the ways of getting into my dream university. However, as I grew up, I started to think about other possible study programs I would like to pursue rather than science majors. It led me to my dilemma and confusion not long after that.

### Dilemma and Confusion Washed Over Me

A year before I graduated high school, I was in a dilemma because I wasn't sure what major I should take in university. I went through lots of events, and I learned a lot of incredible things during my days in the science stream. I somehow knew that science would always

be a part of me that I am proud of and grateful for. I was very thankful that Allah SWT helped me go through everything. I was content that Allah SWT guided me through my failures, happiness, and sorrows in high school. I knew that there were a lot of demands back then; we needed to be good at everything, never fail at anything, etc.

I had a realization when I discovered more about the majors that I previously wanted to get into. I listened to some of the current students at my dream university specifically about the major that I was interested in. I started to list down the positive and negative things from their information, so I can avoid the things that might be the disadvantages for me. I joined several webinars for several majors, so I can make a good decision for my future.

Later, I realized that I wanted to study business because all this time I've been interested in business. I wanted to understand more about many business aspects, so I had no doubts when I enrolled in a business school. When I wanted to apply to other programs, I had so many doubts thinking that I didn't fit into those programs. But when I applied to business school, I was eager and excited to study, instead of doubtful. I prayed to Allah SWT on whatever path that I am taking, He will guide me to the right way.

### It's Time to Turn My Dream into a Reality

Everyone has their dream. The difference between them is whether they will work for it or do nothing to achieve it. I choose to do the first option. For me, it is a waste of time if I keep it as a dream, instead of working to achieve it.

My first short-term goal is to do well in university. I will achieve it by managing my study time well and gaining as much knowledge as I could from various resources. My second short-term goal is to read more books. I will achieve it by allocating 30 minutes to 1 hour each day to read at least 3 book pages.

My first long term goal is to work in a company after I get my bachelor's degree. I will achieve it through sharpening my skills and knowledge for the field that I'm interested in (most probably finance). My second long term goal is I would like to create my startup one day after I gain a lot of working experience. I will achieve this by learning first how to handle a small business that I will create in my university years or after I gain my bachelor's degree. Then I will apply the useful lessons from that small business to my future startup.

For my religious commitment, I will always do my religious routines. I will achieve this by allocating 10 minutes every day for each of the 5 prayers. For my spiritual commitment, I want to be more content, wiser, and grateful in daily life. I will achieve those by being more proactive, instead of reactive. Then, I will try to handle my problems as best as I can without being emotional. However, I will remember to tell my close ones if I need some help. Finally, I will not waste money on useless things because I need to be grateful for what I have.

Here is my last message for you; we only live once, and we have the power to control our lives. But it won't be applicable unless we allow ourselves to control our lives. Opportunity comes and leaves, and you should be ready when you meet one because you will never know when

it will come again. Don't take things for granted, enjoy your life to the fullest, show your love to the people around you, and don't forget to involve God in everything that you do.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# **DISTORTED SPACE: A PERSONAL MEMOIR**



*“Be the designer of your life and not merely the consumer  
of it”*

The day I was born was the day I became a part of our distorted space. Yes, distorted people are the most prominent factor in altering the course of progression in whichever vector, but ultimately still contained within the space. It is within this space that we test the boundaries of rationality and irrationality. Along the way I begin to understand (or not), to rediscover myself, or more precisely, to unfold the many bits of me that I have not yet found, growing.

Time is perhaps one of the more significant fences to a being’s growth. I was merely an ordinary baby who was born on June 9, 2002, in Jakarta. My name is Jennifer, but everyone calls me Jen. I grew up with a religious family. We’d spend the most of our time at a temple, where we’d perform acts of service for the community. I am so grateful that I was born in an environment that led me to do good deeds since I was a kid.

## **Who am I?**

When people find out that you have graduated from high school, they will always have one thing in mind to ask you. "Can you tell me which university you attend?"; "What degree are you going to pursue?". That was a complex question for me to answer at the time, because it appears that taking a gap year is not something that is commonly done. I used to think taking a gap year would be a very shameful thing to do in my life. Apparently, I have a tendency to pay attention to what other people have to say about myself. Which is a complete waste of time because no one, not even myself, has any idea who or what I am at all. I think that is what it means to live a life. The things we don't know, we keep pursuing.

I learned this from someone that the way other people see you, and the actions they do in response to their perception of you, are completely out of our hands. The fact is, we have no control over it, and we bear no responsibility for it, either. We cannot discover who we are by simply listening to the words of others or by studying the information contained in books. We need to look at what is going on inside our heads and hearts. The answer is within you.

## **Pursuit of Life**

The uncertainty of the future bothers me from time to time. Will I be able to achieve the goals I have set for myself? What will I be when I finish my degree in IPMI? Is my favorite Mala Xiang Guo eatery going to close its doors?. But the truth is that no one can predict it with any certainty at this moment, the future is riddled with doubt. We do not know



what tomorrow will bring. We don't know if tomorrow will come at all. I was always thinking about what I wanted to do with my life and what I wanted to achieve. Was it a feeling of contentment? Does it mean to be wealthy? However, even if that is the solution, those things will not last forever. I came up with this after spending most of my gap year thinking about my life. Even if I travel around the world in pursuit of the answers, I am sure that I will not find them since the solutions to life's questions are not achieved by asking others and relying on them to teach me. The answers to life's questions cannot be expressed in words. That is a question that needs to be asked from our own hearts and understood through our own bodies. The opinions expressed by others are exactly that: opinions. In the future, I want to do something for my community and family, which is something I'm certain of today. For me, seeing someone else happy is extremely expensive since that real grin they offer is clearly something I cannot purchase with any money I had. I taught that good deeds are not to be done in hopes of receiving something in return and I will hold that principle throughout my life.

### **High School Life**

I spent my senior year of high school convinced that I was stupid and incapable of accomplishing anything. I'm sure we've all been there and done that at some point in our lives. Seeing how much better my friends performed than I did lowered my self-esteem at the time. I always consider myself to be average, yet there are moments when I believe I am significantly lower than average. I wasted my time back then by being negative and assuming that I was incompetent. That was my biggest regret: that I didn't give everything I had to give. I've learned from my

mistakes, and now I'm putting out my best effort to maintain good marks and do well in university

High school shaped me into the person I am now. A great deal happened back then, so much so that I'm not going to attempt to describe everything. I met this one person in my senior year. I was intrigued by her calm attitude at the time. She's a quiet sort of person. There's no reason why she couldn't make friends with another girl. So, I went up to her first. It was a bit odd at first because she seemed to be avoiding eye contact with me. After several months of awkwardness, we've finally become friends and are very familiar with one another. I became her human diary and I introduced her to my friends. She actually has so much curiosity and thoughts but apparently not everyone has the ability to shout out their true feelings in loud voices. I tried to listen closely so that I could understand what she was trying to say. If you become a listener, and become able to see things from the same point of view as someone else, only then you can truly understand what that person is feeling.

There are moments when I distance myself from my friends. They said I was misunderstood, so I took their word for it and left, trying to put things right with myself. They were friends of mine, which was foolish of me. One day I found out that they were trashing me and told everyone about what they were supposed not to say. Someone asked me "Why do you stop talking to them without an explanation?" Because they know what they have done to me. I am not about to address anything to a grown-person. They moved how they moved and I moved out their way respectfully. They said that I was too childish; but, why should I continue

to be a part of a toxic group of people when there is no sense in being with them again after what they have done to me?

## **Work Life**

At first, I was very foolish, believing that working in an office would be a very enjoyable experience for me to have. Well to be honest the fun part was just the payday. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine myself graduating from high school and heading right into the workforce. I get the distinct feeling that I still have a high school attitude, which is not appropriate for a professional workplace. Mistakes? There's nothing more to say! As I already mentioned, that high schooler mindset caused me a great deal of suffering. I had no idea that working at a job desk would be so different from what I had experienced in school. At school, we have a teacher who is responsible for pointing out every single mistake we make. Your coworker, on the other hand, seems unconcerned about what you are doing, regardless of whether it is right or bad. The part that took me completely by surprise was the never-ending disagreement amongst the staff. To be completely truthful, hearing them yell and trash one another was extremely stressful for me to witness. I am grateful enough that I have wonderful friends, and I went to tell them about this. As a response, one of my friends stated that we cannot let external influences dictate how we feel. As Stephen Covey said our life is 10% made of what happens to us and 90% how we react to it. I agree with this statement, but it seemed that this was something that was easy to say but difficult to put into practice.

This was a huge motivator for me to start my own business so that I could establish my own office culture. As a result of my previous experience, it appears that having a poor working environment can affect our quality of work while also changing our attitude if we remain for an extended period of time. The quotes "Motivation is Overrated; Environment Matters More" on Atomic Habits got me thinking. It doesn't matter how many inspirational books we read—we still live in a horrible environment despite all of that. It's not just that designing our environment has an impact on how we interact with the world others have made for us. The surroundings where we live and work can be altered to improve our exposure to positive cues and decrease our exposure to negative ones. This is something we can do to help ourselves. Designing our environment gives us the power to reclaim control of our destiny and create the life we want. Be the designer of your world and not merely the consumer of it.

### **The Kind Strangers**

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for sticking through my tedious tale so far; I hope it didn't bore you.

When I was taking my grandmother to therapy, I happened to meet this one friendly stranger. She inquired as to what degree I want to pursue later in university. I said that I'm still undecided about what major I want to pursue. She inquired once again as to whether I had something on my mind that I was really interested in. What I had in mind at the time was psychology, to be precise. She thought it was fantastic, and she expressed her view, asking whether I would mind if she shared it with

me. She stated that she wished to be a doctor, and for some reason, she did not pursue the profession. Why did she say she wanted to be a doctor? According to her, in this life, we must help others and be kind to those around us, exactly right? You have a one in a million risk of getting it if you are a doctor. Any degree and career are excellent; it all depends on the individual; yet, she believes that some people appear to be merely going through the motions of their 9-5 work without actually having any significant purpose. Then I told her that getting a medical degree is not an easy process either. As if to prove her point, she continued, "you know nothing comes easily, and you are still young, so you can still do everything you set your mind to." This is true, I mean it. Her greatest regret is that she is not pursuing a medical degree, and that all of her children are architects rather than physicians. I believe she should be more appreciative of her good fortune because she has wonderful children. Consideration and reflection have led me to the conclusion that I can maintain my business administration degree while also providing assistance to those in need, because it is our feeling of humanity that motivates us to serve others, we do not require any particular degree. Because of that meeting, which was brief but extremely significant for me, I am thankful. We need more nice strangers out here, and we never know how much our good words will mean to someone else until we say them to someone personally. And if you couldn't find one, be one.

Zen Buddhist Master Hakuin Ekaku said: This very place is the land of the lotus, and this very body is Buddha. This means, if you think of the place you are now as the best place to be, then your life will overflow with happiness. Happiness is always right in front of us but we

tend to overlook it and take it for granted. We often complain how shitty our life is, because we are so used to our everyday comforts and expectations.

### **To Live: My Religious Belief**

I was raised as a Taoist. During my school years, I was introduced to Buddhism. I have several friends who practice Christianity, Catholicism, and Moeslim beliefs. I'd studied a lot of their Scriptures, and I can state that we're all taught to be respectful to one other. Teenage years were tough years for me. I got busy with school life and friends. And to be honest, it was more fun spending time with friends rather than in the temple to practice my act of service as a form of faith. My family, specifically my grandparents, were really unhappy with this situation. They want me to spend more time in the temple than I do with my friends, which is understandable. This made me feel a burden.

As a teenager, I always feel the need to be independent and to be able to express my own opinions about what I want to achieve. Having been informed that I needed to join a religious group was not something I wanted to do. Performing acts of service, in my opinion, does not necessarily indicate whether or not someone will go to paradise or hell after their death. What is the purpose of doing something if I am not completely committed to it? It's funny how people judge others. Meanwhile God himself does not propose to judge man until the end of his days. Why should you and I?.

As I grow older, I realize that this type of attitude will not get me anywhere. Acts of service can assist me in expressing my spirituality more fully. We may learn a thing or two through our own experiences, and we will quickly forget whatever theories we have previously heard. I consider myself extraordinarily lucky. This is what most People call "privilege". The fact that I have a comfortable learning environment, stable internet access, and latest equipment is something for which I am extremely thankful. I am able to do so because of my background and current privileges. In my opinion, this is an act of God's will, without his will I am nothing. No matter how much I resist coming to the temple, I will always have someone who will remind me of the necessity of coming to the temple.

I do have a long-term objective that I am now working on. I want to start a business that will benefit many individuals in addition to myself. People often tend to suggest, "Just start your business." But maybe not for me; I believe that my current situation disqualifies me from launching a business. I'm still debating a lot of stuff. However, I intend to take a position with a larger organization in Jakarta in the near future. This allows me to gain knowledge and become familiar with the actual steps involved in starting a business. I also believe that by working under someone's guidance, I will be able to discover my own identity as well as what I enjoy and dislike, what I am capable of and what I am unable to accomplish, as well as whether or not the things I am incapable of doing are due to a lack of willing to try.

This would be another long-term objective of mine to achieve. I'm hoping and praying that I'll be able to start working on my spirituality

as soon as possible. Participating in this class has raised my understanding of the value of spirituality in one's life, and I am glad for this opportunity. Every time I get a feeling that something is wrong with me, I begin to meditate in order to calm my mind and reason things out. With the help of my religious group, I began to attend religious services in a temple.

I sincerely hope that this memoir can serve as a stepping stone for me to think more deeply about my life and to go after my dreams. Things obviously will not be easy, but I believe that the best things don't come easy. Hardship and sadness is inevitable, that moments of sadness and hardship in life fall in their proper places. They fall exactly where they should. I am sure with the help of God I can do this and be something of what I have been dreaming of. In my life, I'll constantly keep in mind that not everything is perfect all the time. *C'est La Vie*, even if sadness continues, we can always try to turn them into positive experiences, and they can change into positive memories. To end this, live well. Don't waste the day that is today. This is what it means to live.





*How comfortable you are with yourself determines how much tolerance you have for people who are different from you. If you feel safe within yourself, there is no fear of the world around you!*



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Difference As a Blessing



*My dream is to see Indonesia talking about science improvement, technology, philosophy in the future, not to see bad news in the media about clashes, conflicts because of differences.*

Born in Jakarta, doesn't mean you are on the top level in this country. Living in a metropolitan area didn't make you special for another area. That was what I learned from being born and raised in Jakarta. My name is Alphin Immanuel, I want to share with you my experience. Everything still starts from zero, from the bottom. That is also what my parents have told me since I was a kid. My family is not a rich or a poor family, just a decent family. Gratefully, my father can afford me school until college. We are a religious family too, we go to church every sunday morning. Me and my younger brother are acolytes at the church, my father is joining the neighborhood church organization as the leader of them. Grandmother always told us to still be close to God.

We live in an average house size, not so big or small. Everything fits well at that house. The special is the neighborhood. Since my house is located near village houses at Tangerang, the neighborhood is still very close to togetherness. We all know each other, we all care for each other too. That's a thing that I think is rare in a metropolitan neighborhood, also our neighborhood never says that we live in a metropolitan area. Every morning there are still lots of greetings to start the day. Even though I am catholic, my house is very near to the local mosque. Every Eid Adha, we still receive our meat, ketupat, and opor from our moslem neighbors. It was a very lovely moment.

### **Turning Point**

Senior High School may be the first turning point of my life. I still believe there are many turning points that will come up in my life. Since I'm still a teenager, the Senior High School era gives me so many lessons. I went to SMAN 2 Balige, living in the boarding school side of the school. My school has two sides, the boarding student and the normal student. Since my home is so far from school, I joined the boarding school. This school was a legendary school at North Sumatera. In North Sumatra, we called this school "SMAN 2 Yasop", not SMAN 2 Balige. I can say this school is the best public school in North Sumatera. Since I joined the boarding school, I have had so many friends, from many different areas in Indonesia. Farthest, there's my friend who comes from Papua. So, I'm not too surprised to get acquainted with different people

Junior High School to Senior High School have many differences. That's why I called the High School era my first turning

point in my life. First, I live only with my friends in the Dorm, no parents, just me, my friends, Student supervisor from the army, and Dorm staff. We do our things by ourselves, we learn discipline, hard work, and be different from other high schools. Not only the intelligence, but also our attitude inside and outside the Dorm. We learned to respect each other whatever their age. We learned to quickly adapt to new conditions and situations. It was hard at first, but as time went by it became a habit for us.

Also, I learned about my hometown, North Sumatera. The people here are very different from the big city. The community here has a more homogeneous composition than big cities. This is what I think makes people here not too used to differences. However, tolerance is still very much maintained here. But this does not deny that the lessons about diversity here are still not as good as in big cities. Maybe because of the doctrine given from childhood, making them meet new people who come from different backgrounds makes them even more special than them because they have lived in the area for a long time. But these things only happen to some people, which I think is already very difficult to change, but I believe those people will change when they go to a big city to go to college,

### **Multicultural Awareness**

The experience in Sumatra made me realize and see that multiculturalism in Indonesia is still very minimal. Many people are still not aware of the multiculturalism that exists in Indonesia, which is caused by living in a culturally homogeneous environment. I believe that it is not

only remote areas in Sumatra that are experiencing the same thing, but also other areas that are still very far from the big cities.

Multicultural awareness really needs to be introduced and implemented in Indonesia, especially for youth. There are still many Indonesian people who see differences as black and white, there are still many who are easily provoked which cause divisions in society. Different views of the problems and conflicts that occur, many Indonesian people still see it only from one side, without even seeing the other side.

Whereas religion not only teaches the basic rules for life, but also how we see from many sides that exist in life. Many people do not understand how to carry out religious teachings by humanizing humans, there are still many who deify humans, do not make religious teachings a guide, but people who are considered righteous are used as instructions. Indonesian people are still too fixated on the existing text-books, regardless of the situation and conditions, people still see that what is different is wrong, even though the difference is not necessarily wrong.

### **Life Commitment**

Since I have experienced living in two different environments, reacting to differences, I am committed to treating differences as a blessing from God. I want to make an impact on the community about the awareness of multiculturalism, and the differences that exist. Even when I build a business, I want to build a community that will respond to differences as an advantage, not an obstacle to growing.

There are still many problems in Indonesia that are very difficult to handle apart from these differences. However, this problem of difference is a problem that is the basis and is very vulnerable to becoming a threat in this country. I believe that when the Indonesian nation understands differences, when the Indonesian nation responds to differences correctly, I believe that the Indonesian nation will become a strong nation in global competition.

We need to be together to achieve the goal. Start from myself, from yourself, everyone needs to stick together. We already have Pancasila as a unifying tool, as our basis for unity. My dream is to see Indonesia talking about science improvement, technology, philosophy in the future, not to see bad news in the media about clashes, conflicts because of differences. That's my commitment, and maybe, your commitment too starting from now. Together we are unstoppable.



*You are only a failure when you stop trying. Never, ever give up!*



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### NAZWA'S LIFE



*If you look at what you have in life, you'll always have more. If you look at what you don't have in life, you'll never have enough. -Oprah Winfrey*

On Tuesday, September 9, 2003, my parents' little daughter, weighing 4 kg, was born at a clinic in Jakarta. This little princess is called Nazwa Syifa Annisa, yes that's me. I am the first daughter of my parents and the first grandchild of my grandparents. When I was little until high school I was called Syifa but for this college I was called Nazwa. I'm known as a quiet child and not active enough. If I don't talk to him first, I won't start the conversation. That's what my homeroom teacher often says every time I take a report card. I also have not many friends, just a few, because I don't get along with many people easily.

From kindergarten to high school I always went to private Islamic schools, with a few students not as many as public schools. I never feel confident with people I don't know, but it's different with people I know. But since junior high school I was forced to be confident

by following the student council by serving up to 2 terms and holding the same position, namely secretary. Because I joined the organization, I began to dare to speak in front of people, even though I still didn't believe in myself. When I was in high school, I entered a private school that had fewer than 20 students in one batch, because the school had few students, each student would be controlled by the teacher, especially in high school I held many events.

In high school I also served as student council with 2 periods like in junior high school and held the secretary position. I was also forced to be an MC at the 12th grade graduation using Arabic. At that time I was afraid because I was not used to performing in front of many people, at that time it was possible to dance like the saman dance. But to become an MC, I have no experience especially using Arabic which is quite difficult. Finally, because I know how to be an MC at a formal event, I was assisted by my experienced partner. Maybe from there I can be quite confident in myself if I can, but sometimes I can because I have to.

## **Change**

I experienced many changes in myself, from self-confidence, attitude, nature, and from hobbies also changed. Actually, there are many more, maybe I was back in my naughty days, it's hard to say until I can keep fighting with my mother. Maybe at that time it was really time, yes, but now I realize that I used to fight just because of trivial things, I didn't obey when I was told or I always answered when I was scolded. But because of this pandemic, I'm closer to my family, and I know myself

better. Lately, I always pray to Allah so that I can be a dutiful child and can make my parents proud.

I try to always get closer to God, it turns out that God is really good. A lot has changed from me, I used to be stubborn, now I can slowly control it all. I'm the one who always asks God for anything and God loves it even though everyone must have their own process.

### **My Way to Make a Decision**

I am very grateful to be able to study at the current campus, because I know this is the campus my parents wanted me to enter here. I have hopes that I can enter PTN like my friends, but I know that my efforts are not optimal because I have just decided to change majors in H-1 month. I had entered the SNMPTN selection but it seemed like I didn't have any luck so I failed. I keep trying in this short time. I have a desire to major in Psychology, finally I tried through the SBMPTN route but still no luck. I didn't receive it.

Quite sad actually but it's okay, I'm confused which campus should I go to because I can't go out of town either. Finally I decided to pray istikhara several times and strengthen tahajjud, because I think where to go to college and what major to take is a pretty tough decision, especially when my parents and I have different desires. Because the PTN was rejected twice, I finally decided to apply to a private college, which my parents and I were looking for together. Finally I decided to register at IPMI because this is a business campus and also an International. My father really wanted me to enter a business college, because basically my

father's family already had a long-running business and a fairly large business.

I had failed the test at IPMI but was still given that opportunity again and I took advantage of the opportunity, not forgetting to accompany it with prayer and prayer of course. Before the second IPMI test, I was afraid, afraid that I would not be accepted because I knew my English was not good, while the interview test was in English. But I'm optimistic, I should be able to, and always remember what mom said, don't forget to read Al-Insyirah's letter if you're really nervous. Thank God I was accepted into this campus and I saw that my parents were very happy. But I don't feel satisfied to make my parents happy, because there are still many steps that I have to face in the future. Maybe from my long story, I conclude that if we want to make a decision, don't forget to involve Allah, because Allah knows what's best for us, don't be quick to despair and don't get complacent.

### **Religion and Habits**

I am Nazwa, a child who for 14 years studied in a private school. I don't know why my parents prefer me to go to private schools which are definitely not public private but like SDIT, SMPIT, MA. During school, I have never experienced how public school is, how their friends are, how they learn, and how their friendship is definitely more general.

Since I was in private school, I was required to wear a headscarf, in my religion I was also required to wear a headscarf. When I was in

grades 1-2 elementary school, I still often took off my hijab, I still felt hot like a normal child, so I only wore the hijab when I was in school and when it was time to go home I took off the hijab. My parents didn't force me at that time either, they just got used to it. Because they also know that at my age, it's still not a sin if I don't wear the hijab. I decided not to take off my hijab in 3rd grade because my mother invited me to recite the Koran, and coincidentally, the material for her Koran was about the obligation to wear the hijab.

I don't understand why at my age I can already feel the name being satirized even though at my age I usually only understand playing. Because I felt offended by the material for the Koran that day, I finally no longer took off my hijab since the 3rd grade of elementary school, Alhamdulillah until now I have not taken it off. But I'm tempted, the devil's whispers are definitely there, right? And I don't know why the clothes that are slightly revealing look more elegant, better but when the clothes are changed so that they can be worn with the hijab, they are not as good as the first one, that's the temptation to take off the hijab.

I was also born in a family that has a good religion, so around me, my grandmother, aunt, sister all wears the hijab. And it's a habit from my extended family. Every Friday we hold recitations together and that's the place where we move, from one relative's house to another, so it's fun, isn't it. We are learning and maybe we can go for a walk as well and surely meeting a big family is really fun.

There are some habits in my family, maybe it looks simple but it's a blessing Masha Allah. My family and I every Friday are like carrying out a blessed Friday, sharing food in the surrounding environment. Maybe what my family and I share is only a packet of rice but it turns out that the favors that Allah has given us many times over, because the wealth we have is not entirely ours, and the hand above is better than the hand below so it can be used for zakat, alms for people who really need it need and so on. Because my brothers and I were taught and used to it, Alhamdulillah, all of that was embedded by itself and became a habit.

Because during the 14 years of schooling in private schools I studied a lot of religion, starting from basic religions such as PAI which usually learned the procedures for ablution or prayer, when at MA I studied Fiqih, Al-Quran Hadist, History of Islamic Culture, Akidah Akhlak, quite heavy at first because it was divided into several parts. But Alhamdulillah also because of that I feel a lot of knowledge that I can also about the history of the Prophet and his companions.

## **Hope**

I used to live without hope, so just live what is already there. But since this pandemic suddenly I have very high hopes. I want to be a smart, independent woman, have a good career. But those who think "ngapain sih sekolah tinggi tinggi, nanti juga jadi ibu rumah tangga" but I think my children's first teacher will be myself, although it's definitely natural to

be a housewife but I can be a smart housewife, HAHA but it seems that it's far when talking about housewives. I want to be an independent woman, so I don't depend on other people because one day when I'm alone I don't have anyone I can still live for myself, I can still earn, I want what I can do myself I do it myself. Because I saw my mother she was a strong, great, independent, smart, beautiful woman and too many to explain one by one. I really want to have a good career too, why? Because I want to have my own business now, even though in the past I didn't even think about having a business, I thought about working with people.

But now that I'm getting older there are more choices for me and I have to really think about what to choose, I look at my family and I compare if I work in an office. Maybe I want to try to collaborate with other people because it's for experience, but for business I see that my now old grandfather doesn't have a retirement period because he owns a business even though it is now held by his children. But how he still contributes to the existing business, it makes me excited to have a business even though it's not that easy to build a business.

But I have many hopes for myself to be better, I hope that what I hope for can be achieved! Aamiin. My hope that will always be the hope until the future is to stay on the right path, protected by Allah SWT, I always want to improve the way I worship, the way I am close to Allah and one way is to do every obligation and charity is sunnah too, like fasting Monday-Thursday, prayer qibla and ba'da and other sunnah practices. May Allah protect me and my family always.





## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### RAYSHAN'S STORY



*"It may seem difficult at first, but all things are difficult at first"*

*-Miyamoto Musashi-*

My name is Rayshan Hanifah, my friend's used to call me Ray. I was born in Jakarta and went to Al-Azhar. I was born in November 2002, and am now 18 years old. My parents have always provided me with everything I've ever needed and I am grateful for that.

These past few months I've been thinking about my purpose but I still haven't found what I'm looking for. I think it's too soon if I already figure it out about my purpose in my early youth, and I think that is my purpose in this life, to truly find the purpose of life.

I was always a shy kid since I was a kid, it happened because I never wanted to be alone, I don't want people to see me as a freak. So, I wanted to do what others were doing, not what I really wanted to do. I

knew I was smart since I was a kid, but I didn't know back then that being smart is a good thing. When I was in kindergarten I easily understood everything the teacher said without asking her to repeat what she said. The other kids, they always ask the teacher to repeat what she is saying so they could understand the subject, and it got me thinking "why am I different? Why do these kids always ask questions or beg the teacher to repeat everything that she said? I was confused, I thought I was different in a negative way". After that day, I follow what the other kids are doing. Everytime the teacher is done giving us her material I start to ask the teacher to repeat what she is explaining even though I understand everything that she said.

## **Childhood**

I was a lazy kid back then, I always dreamed of being recognized as a smart kid, a kid that can fight like in the movies, a kid that is caring. But my actions don't get me anywhere, I'm stuck in that position with no direction. I'm not bad at school, but I'm just not at the position that I wanted to be in. Until I graduated from elementary school and went to middle school at Muhammadiyah 9 or people call it "Limau". There I am at culture shock because back when I was at Al-azhar all my friends were using cars to go to school, but in Limau almost all of the kids were using public transportation such as buses, angkot, or even Bajaj. Maybe at Limau the education is not that good, but I found something that I think is more important than academic education. In Limau, I meet people that were born in many different backgrounds and when I visit their home I am shocked. I realize that there are a lot of kids that are not as lucky as I

am. I learn to be grateful, I learn how to be humble, I learn that money is not everything and money cannot buy happiness.

## **Growing Up**

I think middle school is one of the most important years of my life. In the last semester of grade 7 I suddenly made a big move. I used to be a shy and fearful kid but then my mother told me to do some sport and she gave me two options and that is Muay-Thai or Golf. My heart tells me to choose golf, because in my mind if I choose golf everytime I get home from school I will see those golf fields, greenery, nice people's, etc. Meanwhile my brain tells me to choose Muay-thai so I could become a tough kid, but I will meet many rude and arrogant people there. My mom gives me two days to choose what sport that I want to do, and finally I choose Muay-Thai. After doing Muay-Thai for 4 months I started to lose weight, my confidence is rising, I started to be productive, and I started to be disciplined. And that affects my daily life, I start to be disciplined at my academic performance, which I get to be the class chief, student of the month a couple of times, and being the top four at my class from grade 7 until grade 9. Not only that, I've also become disciplined in my faith.

## **Youth**

I am a Muslim since I was born, but at the age of 13 I believe and I choose to become Muslim myself. That is the age where I found my faith, at that age my life was not that good, I had a view problem at home but my faith is keeping me strong. Believe it or not as soon as I held Islam in my heart I always achieve every goal that I have effortlessly. My final

goal in Limau is to have a bigger score than Putri, my female classmate who always gets the first rank in every subject and every class, so my goal is to have a higher score than her. In the end I did reach a higher score than her but I'm not at the first rank, the first rank belongs to the girl that I love. My faith kept me positive every day until one day I started thinking that I always do the how in my religion and I started to contemplate on why I had this faith.

### **Young Adult**

After graduating from middle school at Limau and achieving all my middle school goals, I'm heading to Al-Izhar high school to continue my study. There I didn't really feel any big improvement in my life, even though I realize that Al-Izhar is the perfect school to reach our full potential. But I didn't take my time there very seriously and I didn't really achieve anything great or become someone that I wanted to be. I'm stagnant. I'm not doing bad at Al-Izhar, I'm just back at my Elementary school mentality where I am becoming a passive person. In high school I met a couple of friends, and one of those friends became one of my most trusted friends or became my brother from another mother. Bach when I'm in Al-izhar I'm not really socializing with many people so I didn't really have that many friends but I still enjoy studying there. When I entered 11 grade, Covid began to rise and the world was in a pandemic. We went for a lock down for months. At that point I felt very lonely and I regret that in High school I didn't make as many friends as I could. So, at that time I started to approach people that I can meet during the pandemic so I could fix my mistakes by making more friends than before. 2020 is finally over and I'm looking up to the horizon and have my spirit

burning to be the new me at the new year, although I'm not there yet but I'm not giving up to be the best version of myself or become a true Muslim.

My main goal in this life is to leave a legacy that will affect many people. I don't need people to know or like me but my dream is to build something that is massive like a system or an Ideology and make the world a better place. I don't want to take more than I gave. I know in order to achieve that dream I have to become the best version of myself, and I know the way to be the best version of myself is to know who or what I am. I hope I can always improve my spirituality and become better and better everyday.



*We all have as much as we think we deserve. Lift your opinion of what you think you deserve and it's amazing what you'll start to attract!*

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### SULTAN ARRAFI'S STORY



*“Knowing others is intelligence, knowing yourself is true wisdom.”*

On November 20 in 2002, My parents have a son for the first time who was born in Bekasi, it was me. My name is Sultan Arrafi Nuryan Quevara which has many meanings from the name, “sultan” means a king, “arrafi” means high, “nuryan” is a combination from both of my parents name and the last of my name is “guevara” there is a unique story in my last name, when making a birth certificate a city council officer in my hometown wrote my name wrong, the original name was named by my parents “Guevara” changed to “Quevara” by mistaken.

Moreover, I was raised and born in Bekasi. in a city where people think is so far away and is like located in a different planet. I was raised in a simple family, not rich and not poor, I am a Javanese descent who is so thick with its culture, my family has various religions and I am a Muslim since i was born. I have a dream to be a businessman because I want to be better than my father who is also working in a medium scale

business field. I have a hobby in the automotive field since my childhood because my father also works in the automotive field. My father works as a salesman in toyota for more than 21 years and counting. My mother is a housewife, however my mother also does a small business selling goods such as rice, cooking oil, etc. I have two siblings, one little sister and one little brother. My little sister is currently studying at highschool level and my little brother is currently studying at elementary level.

### **My life story**

Since I was a kid, I was a quiet kid because I'm an introverted person. I only have a few close friends in elementary school. I was living my introvert life for 5 years. When i was in six grades, I want to be more open because I feel like I need more friends because i think it's important to have more friends in my middle school year.

At the start of middle school I tried to be more open to others and it worked. I have more friends than when I was in elementary school. When i was in the 7th grade, I joined school organization but i retired from the organization because it was too tiring and I feel like I'm wasting my time. When I was at 8th grade I tried to rejoin the school organization again, but I did not retire that time because I felt very bored by not joining any organization and not being socially active anywhere. In the 9th grade I started to be more focus because I wanted to become a doctor. I wanted to join science class for my high school year.

*The beginning of a great story begin,*



When I was in high school, I finally got to join science class, thanks to all of my hard work. At that time I joined the school organization again but I was too lazy at that because I was not chosen to be the leader of the organization. When I was in 11 grade, I started to think, if you want to be a doctor you need to study hard. I started to sell some foods when I was in 11 grade. I sold some chicken curries and I insisted my friends buy my curries or I will punch them in the face. Because of that, I got a good profit at my food business. I started this business because my parents helped me run the business.

### **My future plan**

On the beginning of the year I prefer to choose law school as my major at one of the most famous private law school in Indonesia which is the universitas islam indonesia. I went there for almost a year but I feel like I got into the wrong major. I feel very bored in class and have lost interest in the law field. However, to fill this boredom, I started to do some side hustle. I started to sell betta fish online. This happens because when I was playing at my friend's house I got really excited looking at one of my friends betta fish. Then I started to dig into the fish world and feel the joy of breeding and petting a betta fish. From there I started to sell some of my coolest fishes online and it felt really fun while doing so. However this type of business doesn't have a long term time so when the hype of betta fish trend went downhill I stop selling and breeding it. Besides selling betta fish online I also started another business which is a petshop. Before I started my own pet shop I initiated selling fried chicken but in the pandemic era it forced me to shut this business down and made me shift into the pet shop business. After a couple months of

doing my businesses I started to feel the joy of doing business. Then I switched my mind on continuing my academic study at a business school. After sharing my thoughts with one of my friends, who is also majoring in business he suggested that I follow my passion on doing business and learn deeper about it. He suggested that I join IPMI because he also went there and I feel like he guided me through my dilemma and after that and a lot of thinking I chose to enroll at IPMI and now I am currently at the first semester of the BBA program at IPMI. Now I have an ambition to be a great businessman by doing great at school. So that is how my story went.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### TIRTA'S STORY

“

*The best preparation for the future is to live as if there were none.*

*-Albert Einstein*

My father named me Tirta, because Tirta means water in some language that I don't know. He named me water in hope so in my life I have a water-flow like blessings and fortune from Allah swt. Aamiin. I was born on the 25th of June 2002 in Jakarta.

Some of my goals in life are: I want to be as rich as Elon Musk, as generous as Bruce Wayne, as loving as my mother, and have 5 daughters. Do as many good deeds as I can, and have lots of cars.

## **A Bit of My Story**

I have a lot of hobbies, I like doing some sports activities such as football and basketball. Since I was 9 years old I've been racing go-karts. Racing is kind of like the thing that I feel really stuck to my soul, because I love doing it so much. Every time I race or even if it's just a practice, I always do it with such a high energy inside my mind and heart. So actually racing for me was never just hobby, it was a part of my life, it's what I do.

I raced national and international championships of karting. In 2017 I finished 2nd in the championship for national and asian karting championships. And that year I represented Indonesia in the grand final in Italy, but it didn't go well in Italy. Out of 100 drivers I didn't even get to the top 80. It was because of all circumstances that happened, it felt like it was meant to be. To this day I still think that I can do better on that event. But in the end I moved forward even though it was disappointing and an embarrassing moment for me, it was also a lesson and learning experience for me.

Then in 2019 I raced my last race, I haven't raced again ever since that race. I finished 5th, which was disappointing for me but overall for the team I think it was pretty good with all the conditions considered. That year, I raced with a sponsor who pays for all the racing things, but unfortunately the sponsorship for me and our partnership just suddenly ended. I didn't even race the last round of the championship race. It felt like it was kind of a betrayal to me, because he (the one who sponsored me) said only good things to me after my last race. He even said next year

we will get you a new kart and everything will be prepared even better, but it didn't happen.

After a long time not feeling the atmosphere of the circuit, earlier this year in 2021 I got an offer to become a coach or a race instructor from one of my friends. And so I did it, I coached a bunch of kids and some were adults and it was going well. I enjoyed being a coach even though I'd prefer being behind the wheel every time but it was also fun being a coach. But then the corona hit again, I had to stop coaching because Sentul Circuit was going to close for some time, so I haven't coached again until now.

I still love racing, the love is never gone even if it fades a bit at a certain point of time, but it's part of me. At any time someone offers me a race I don't think I will ever say no.

So my racing career has not always been good, there were disappointments, embarrassing moments, and the expectation for me I've always felt, because my father was also a racer. He has been a racer since the 80s and he still even races in 2018 in his 60s. He was tough with me on races, but I know that it was all to push me to become better. But as a kid it wasn't easy at times for me to handle the pressure. But, alhamdulillah I always come through because of my family, my mom, friends, and I know I always have Allah swt with me at all times.

### **Life Purpose**

My mom always taught me that I need to always involve God in every problem, so I know that I am not alone and the problem will

become much easier. Because it was said that Allah will not give a problem that cannot be handled by His people. When you involve Allah Swt, it becomes easier to see the right and the wrongs, and easier to take an action or decision.

I have experienced some problems and things that made me feel down or sad in my life. Such as the bad things that happened when I was racing karts. When you involves God, no matter what it is, no matter how it makes you sad, no matter how scared you are, when you want to put the blame on others, when it doesn't makes sense, when you questioned why did it happen to you, when you involves God on your mind and heart, it will all makes sense and you will be able to accept those things that you hated. It will be easy to forgive, apologize, to let things go, and to be brave.

If you ask me about my purpose of life, I already told you about my goals in life, my purpose of life is to be a good muslim, be a good man in the eye of Allah Swt. I know I am not close to my purpose right now, but I want to be there. So I hope to look forward to it throughout my life. I want to do a lot of good things towards other people, help other people, and also make the people that I love proud.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### TRISTAN'S LIFE



*Experience is the most expensive thing in this world,  
Only owned by people who dared to try.*

*-tristan elfan z.r*

My name is Tristan Elfan Zulvanian Rifky. I was born on 5th March 2002 in a small village in Garut, Tegal Panjang. Even though I was born in a small village, I have a big dream. My father is an Entrepreneur, my mother is a housewife. When i was 1 y.o I moved to Jakarta without my parents because my mother was pregnant, not long after that I returned to Garut until I was 5 years old and then moved to Bandung to live with my parents until now.

Im graduated from SMA PGII 1 Bandung. My hobbies are playing football / futsal, watching movies / series, and I love many things about the business and political world. I have so many experiences in this

life, but I think I will tell you about my journey. Please don't waste your time reading this story, read if you have 'spare' time.

## **Intro**

The story starts from June 2014. I went to Boarding School in Garut named Ma'had Darul Arqam (DA). As usual like other boys, I feel very happy and excited for my first day. I came with my family to accompany me. They looked so happy and proud, I know that because I see their eyes, eyes can't lie. Long story short, my family back home, we say goodbye and then I see them getting further and further away from me. At that time, my tears slowly flowed.

At night, I got to know my bedmate called Redhi, he came from Depok. And then I get to know other people there. There are Salman, Elyas, Reksa, Salwa, Rizal, Rijal, Najmi, Azka, Hilmi, Fauzy, Wahib, Reyhan, Helvian, Adio, Redhi and Aqdam. Oh, boy named Aqdam, we've known each other for more than 15 years since my kindergarten. We were always in the same school until high school, but we chose a different path in choosing a university because he is interested in law, while I am interested in business.

For me at my first school in Boarding school it was very hard to fit in. Because I'm just a shy person and not sociable. But this forced me to change to be more open to others. And then I talk to myself, can I be more sociable or become a loser, a person that is afraid of the world? -

Day by day. I enjoy this boarding school system. Woke up from 4AM, got ready to study at 5AM-6AM, and then prepared to study again



from 7AM – 11AM, rest for 4 hours, do study again at 3PM-5PM, rest again for 2 hours, and study again from 7PM-9PM. Feels like forced labor right? If you think like that, then you're right, but sometimes humans need a bit of coercion to change to be better than before. Believe me.

Ah I think the introduction it's too long haha. **LET'S START MY JOURNEY, TAKE YOUR SEAT AND GET READY!**

### **Love, Lost, Lone**

I will talk about my journey to find my faith. The only one on my mind, I know I need to worship my God, Allah SWT. But, for what? Why do I need to worship a God that I can't see with my own eyes, did Allah SWT real or false? I have never told this thought and story to anyone in this world before, just me and ALLAH SWT, Al- 'Alim The All Knowing. But today, I will talk about my story. **I hope this story has a meaningful and useful value for you readers.**

Started when I was in the 1st grade of middle school. I have a passion to learn and gain knowledge from my Ustadz and Ustadzah. Learn more about my religion. Other than reading and memorizing Al-Quran, we are also required to learn As-Sunnah and *Kitab Kuning*. I can say that I'm one of the diligent students. it's rare for me not to be in the first shaf to pray. I also always do the sunnah of fasting Monday and Thursday. Never late to go to the school, always on time with white-black uniform.

What other activities do I do in Ma'had Darul Arqam? I really love to play futsal with my best friends, Adiel and Rey. We are always

on the same team. Beat all the existing teams, until they realize that no one and never anyone can stop this trio haha, and then they didn't want to play against us anymore. My other best friend is Yaisy, I know him very well. We love to take photographs and travel to another world, another galaxy. Even we make a funny group named Pacuweuh in OA (Official Account) LINE which at that time was trending. Just a little flashback, chill. :')

Now I'm in the 2nd grade of middle school in Ma'had Darul Arqam. I feel tired of this system of education. I'm out of my mind to learn and gain more knowledge about my own religion. At this time, the boy that loves to do study about his religion, rarely to be not in the first shaf to pray, always does the sunnah, never late to go to school with the neat and polite uniform. Slowly disappear. He lost his spirit, looks like a cat that 'lost' his owner, home. What will I do during that time? I'm just being lazy in my dormitory, alone, really alone. But I control myself to not smoke or 'drink'. World hit me hard, even without telling me why. Did I do something wrong? Did the world just turn back on me? Or did my own God don't love me anymore?

The World hit me even harder. I'm just a type of person that 'cold' I never tell anyone about 'something that happens to me'. My friends know me as a friendly and cheerful person, never look sad in his eyes and facial expression. Even though I'm in boarding school I'm very rarely go to the mosque to pray. Then I think, I pray or not, I'm still alive. That time I really felt that I lost my faith, but I didn't know what to do, what I should do. I didn't find the answer.

My grades and scores are very bad. Often skipped and absent during class. But did my parents know? No. They didn't know about this. The only one they know is 'their son is happy in Ma'had Darul Arqam'. I often lie to them if they ask me about "how it's going? What class do you like? etc.".

### **Ace**

Now I'm in 3rd grade of middle school. My last years in Ma'had Darul Arqam. Based on school rules, I should have studied here until I was in grade 6th and graduated from this boarding school. But I decided to end it early. Why? This time the world didn't hit me again, but I still got hit. From who? From my own self. My own self is asking many questions to me.

"Do you really want a life like this? Is this what you really want? Suffering pain, lost, alone? Even didn't believe and do worship to your own God, Allah SWT? Are you not afraid of Allah SWT? Where's your faith, spirit, passion, and love? Do you still love your parents? Do you want to become a loser? Afraid of the world instead of facing the world, just be a long-live loser then".

At that very moment, I try to analyze the best solutions for me. I really want the best from me to come back to life. That day I realized that Darul Arqam is my comfort zone. With my heavy heart I choose to leave Darul Arqam. Because I think I need a new environment, I can't see myself developing if I am still in this boarding school. Didn't mean to say this school is bad, no. This school is the best boarding school I have

ever known. This school produces the best graduates such as Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Irfan Amalee, Prof. Hilman Latief, Fahd Pahdepie, Raja Juli Antoni, etc. But this school didn't suit me, and I didn't suit for this school.

Long story short. I leave Ma'had Darul Arqam. I went to PGII 1 High School, Bandung and graduated from that High School. Remember my best friend named Aqdam? Of course he joined me at PGII 1 High School haha. Starts my new life, new habit, new friends, new environment. At first, I was scared about this choice. But it is what it is. I need to accept and be grateful for this fate. And then I feel successful and I choose the right answer. Now, I've already found my own faith, I found my own back 'home'. I know Allah SWT loves me. Why?

Because the more I think again about this fate the more I realize that everything in this world has been planned by our God, by your God. We humans only follow command from our own God. Maybe our faith is different, but it doesn't matter. All religions have one thing in common, that is teaching kindness. In my religion, there is Pillars of Faith (*Rukun Iman*) no. 6 Faith to Qada and Qadar. Qada and Qadar talk about fate, there're *Takdir Mubram* and *Takdir Mu'allaq*. *Takdir Mubram* is a fate that can't be changed ex: changing day and night, *Takdir Mu'allaq* is a fate that can be changed by human itself with *ikhtiar* and effort ex: students that love to learn will get good grades. That's why I say Allah SWT loves me, because Allah SWT gives me a chance to change my fate. There will be 2 choices; You let fate change you, or you will change your own fate. It's up to you, life is a choice. it's like you're flying a plane, taking you to your destination or further away from your destination.

Like I said before, **sometimes humans need a bit of coercion to change to be better than before**. Now, I don't afraid or scared to face the world, because Allah SWT will be beside me, protecting and guiding me. *La Tahzan Innallaha Ma'ana*.

### *Mi Plan Futuro*

I love to watch movies. One of the favorite movies I ever watched is the Mission Impossible sequel. The actor Tom Cruise as Ethan Hunt. Ethan Hunt is a special agent for the IMF. His mission is to save the country and the world. With his smart, clever, and good at fighting. Makes me dream and aspire me to be a special agent too, like Ethan Hunt. And Hard to kill haha. I almost entered STIN, but then my friend named Zirji said to me "Then join them, but if you die, you die". After that, I canceled my intention to become a special agent because I don't wanna die.

World life is like a spinning wheel right? I know in life there are always situations where we are on top where everything feels easy, sometimes we are down where everything feels difficult. My dream is simple, I want to live happily with my family. But achieving a simple dream requires a lot of sacrifice, such as time, sweat, effort, failure, etc.

I aspire to be an Entrepreneur, Businessman, and Investor. I want to become successful before my 40s. I Live frugally with my happy family. I've prepared these life goals from now. I hope I achieved my goals faster than I expected. Aamiin .

I have many mentors in life. You need a mentor to guide you. One of my favorite mentors is Pak Andika Sutoro Putra. He guided me and gave me knowledge about being a good investor. He started his own investment business when he was 15 years old. He has a good personality, and is a kind and humble person. He taught me many things, one of them is financial intelligence. The thing that was never talked about in school. He also taught me how to make money work for me, not me work for money.

### **My Words**

Life is like constructing your own puzzle. It seems a mess but when it gets fixed it looks awesome. Even the hardest puzzle has a solution, right? The point is it all depends on you to put the pieces of the puzzle together in order to see the big picture. And when you get to the end of it, and all the pieces are in the right place, then you're happy. And if they're not in the right place, then you need to be sad? No, you need to rearrange them until you're happy.

Living, Giving, Sharing, Caring. I always wanted to help people, to help this country, to help every living creature in this world. We need to always be willing to lend a helping hand to others. Never ever have I heard that someone becomes poor by giving. There's no better way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in difficult times. The rule is the more you give the more you have.

## **Viewpoint**

After a long journey, a long way to go. I'll just say it is what it is. Based on my story, experience, nothing to be exaggerated, otherwise. In this part I will talk about my spiritual viewpoint.

I learn about myself. I know about myself. One of your strengths is to know yourself. Someone said you may find your best friend or your worst enemy in yourself.

My conclusion is to find your own faith you don't need to go to the Holy place, sanctuary, sanctum, shrine or whatever it is. Just look at the mirror and then ask yourself. The one who knows yourself is your own self. Ask it. Analyze, find what best suits you. There's no right or wrong in choosing faith. Everyone in this world will respect your own choice. If you still can't find your own faith then it's okay. No need to hurry. Just do it slowly but sure. It's just a matter of time for anyone to find their own faith. Sometimes you just need a break. In a beautiful place. Alone. To figure everything out. Remember I said Life is like constructing your own puzzle.

No-one will judge you and never let them do it. Just focus on your own. Remember life is a choice. No right or wrong, it's just a different perspective. Each person had their own perspective. And it's a normal thing.

I have a strong commitment to do my best to do command from my own God, Allah SWT. I never want to ever turn my face again. Those were the biggest mistakes I ever had.

I really hope my journey; my experience can give you a new insight, viewpoint, benefit and lesson. The cheapest thing in this world is to learn from the experiences of other people.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# VIRGINIA'S STORY



*“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”*

*-C.S. Lewis*

It was a cold night when I was born on 28th of September 2003 in Manado, North Sulawesi, but it was such a lovely night for my parents when they met me for the first time. I’m very grateful to say that I grew up in a loving family with my parents, my grandparents, and also my little brother that I met four years later after I was born.

Many people say that I look intimidating when they first meet or see me in person. I agree to say that I kind of look intimidating and quiet outside, but trust me, once I feel comfortable with someone, I will show the other side of me that some people find surprising. When I feel comfortable with someone, I will be very loud and over-share with that person even when we only meet like two or three times. I’m also an introverted person, so every time I go outside or talk to someone face to face, I will get tired easily. Usually after socializing outside my house, I

will go to bed immediately and then sleep for hours. Maybe that's one of the reasons why it's hard for me to find friends. Since elementary school, I haven't had that many friends, but to be honest, I'm comfortable with having a few friends in my life. It's less toxic.

### **My Self-discovery journey**

Because of all the movies I've seen on television since I was in elementary school, I've always wanted to be an adult. Adults in those movies appear cool, and I get the impression that they can do whatever they want at any time, but it turns out that being an adult is not easy at all. I always worked my hardest in high school to achieve great grades in every subject so that applying to university would be simple in the future. Unfortunately, my plan did not proceed as planned. I was one of my high school's top grads, but it didn't make the process of applying to universities any easier. I didn't get into the university of my dreams. That was perhaps the lowest period in my life. Seeing my friends get accepted into university made me reconsider all of my previous decisions; where did I go wrong? Why do I keep failing?

But I'm really grateful to have a supportive family. They still encouraged me to not give up and helped me look for other universities for me to apply to. And finally here I am, officially becoming one of the students at IPMI Business School.

After successfully dealing with failure, I feel that in the future it won't be easier for me either. There'll be a lot more obstacles, but as long

as I still have faith in God and myself, and also work hard, I believe I can face those obstacles.

### **Future Plans**

I've always assumed that our presence in this world must be significant. God has given my presence on this planet a meaning all its own. As a result, as long as I'm living, I want to do and leave something worthwhile in this world.

Since I was in middle school, I have always wanted to help orphans at the orphanage. I always dreamed of helping them and even building my own orphanage to accommodate and provide for their needs. I want to help all the children from around the world who need help, especially children in Indonesia. I want to provide food, clothes, and even education for those children because after all they are all the next generation of the nation just like me. I also want to help them to be able to learn and explore their respective religions, and to be able to do that, I have to be able to deepen and strengthen my own faith according to the religion I believe in.

I have to read the bible more because I feel like I read the bible less and less. Good thing there's a Bible Study Group at my campus and I already have joined the group. I hope by joining the group I can strengthen my faith in God by reading the bible more diligently.

For myself, I want to travel the world and see the beauty of all of God's creation and also to see all the beauty and uniqueness cultures from

around the world. I want to experience the adrenaline journey and I also want to capture it with both my eyes and also my camera.

God has always been very good to me, although I have occasionally let Him down and disappointed Him with my past decisions. Now, I'm hoping to restart my life in order to be able to accomplish something good for myself and others, as well as to make Him proud of me, so that I can have a happy ending.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### ZEFANYA'S LIFE



*Think that life is an adventure. Every problem that comes your way is a challenge that can lift your life. Every issue must have a solution, like Thomas Alva Edison, who had to try 1000 times to create objects that are useful for all human life. as well as all of us, we can undoubtedly solve our problems as long as we never give up and try to succeed.*

#### **The Start of the Journey**

AT 12 NOON AT WUSADA HOSPITAL, A BABY BOY NAMED ZEFANYA JETHRO ELISHA WAS BORN. HE WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 21, 2004, IN JAKARTA. MANY PEOPLE WERE HAPPY WITH HIS BIRTH, AND THE BABY BROUGHT MANY BLESSINGS TO HIS FAMILY. HIS GRANDFATHER AND HIS PARENTS GAVE HIS NAME. HER NAME IS TAKEN THROUGH THE BIBLE AND HAS A BEAUTIFUL, GOOD, AND LOVING MEANING. I WAS BORN IN A FAMILY THAT IS SUITABLE FOR ME. MY

PARENTS ALWAYS TAKE CARE, ALWAYS PROVIDE WHAT I WANT. I THINK I WAS BORN INTO A LUCKY FAMILY. IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND LEARNING, I FOUND EVERYTHING AND WAS FULL OF POSITIVITY. I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO GOD THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ME. I USED TO LIVE IN JAKARTA, FROM BIRTH TO GRADE 2 SD. HOWEVER, MY FAMILY AND I HAD TO MOVE TO PEKANBARU BECAUSE MY PARENTS HAD A BUSINESS HERE. SO I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME IN PEKANBARU RATHER THAN IN JAKARTA. I HAVE LEARNED A LOT FROM THIS LIFE AND HAVE HAD WONDERFUL EXPERIENCES, AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE GIVEN ME NEW THINGS AND ADDED TO MY KNOWLEDGE.

### **The Ideal life**

I've always wondered how I could create the life I wanted in terms of experience, field facts, and results. It makes me more able to create the life I want. The dreams that I used to think about are becoming a reality. Then I hope all of my dreams can be an inspiration and motivation to many people. I want to create a business that can benefit the environment, be widely accepted and used every day, and be an excellent example for the community. After that, I wanted to create a piece of musical art, namely a song that many people can remember and always listen to my songs. My dreams will come true one by one carefully and regularly. Another thing, I want to be able to create a foundation to help many people, and not only that, many young people can be allowed and develop from my help, and young or old who have talent but have living conditions below can be helped from myself.

## **There Is No Impossibility In Life**

Every human being always relies on his strength; forget who God is? And renounced his faith. So that every human being who does and does not care will feel his life is complicated and heavy. The primary key in this life to always feel happy, light, and full of positive spirit is to be close to God and increase your faith. The impossibility will be present if you believe in it and appreciate the process, and this life can be seen from 2 sides, like a sword that has two edges, depending on where you want to direct and which one you want. God never forgets and leaves you in this life. It's just you who have to remember yourself that you have to look for it and be loyal to it, not the other way around. Every plan he makes for you is sometimes/always beyond our understanding. If we do it alone, it will not happen unless we do it with him; that plan will succeed. Always be close to him, never leave or forget him.

## **Love, Dreams and Family.**

Warmth and love are one of the factors that enable me to be strong and successful. Every day I think, how can I get it? I always try to find it, and in the end, I find that point from family, god, and self-love. Love must be seen from sincerity and loyalty so that it makes me think carefully and thoughtfully; I don't want the love I have given and the sacrifices made to be in vain, I believe if there is a girl who can understand, appreciate, truly love about what I make it to her. She is the one who deserves to be my partner. All of that must also be allowed by God himself. I don't need luxury and materialism from my partner because this kind of thing will not be helpful in a relationship for now or

until you have your own family. I want to achieve a dream of mine to become a person who can have many colors in life, inspiration, and motivation for everyone. For now, I will focus on what I do and prepare for the future later. I will add, deepen and improve all in me. Every Holy Spirit and power from God always helps and has an essential role in my life. Nothing can replace it or be forgotten. And one more thing, most people should remember that family is one of the most critical things in life. Never forget your family, and this always reminds me, make your little family as good and beautiful as you want. Family and God are always there for me and always support me, so it makes me sometimes cry to them because I feel touched and proud, plus I have high respect that will never be replaced. Thus, do not forget and leave these two aspects family and God.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

### A BLOOMING EDELWEISS



*Edelweiss flowers bloom when the rainy season is over;  
there is always a phase, once a season of gloominess is  
over, bloom as edelweiss does.*

Not everyone gets to experience the things you do in your life. You live only once, so live and experience the life you wanted to live. The only guidance you need is from God above.

#### **The Form of a Star**

“You had the loudest cry in the hospital,” says everyone who came to see me the day I was born. “You made other babies cry to the point where the nurses had to move you to another place.”

I was born in Jakarta, December 26 2002. Rumah Sakit Pondok Indah was decorated with Christmas lights and Santa Claus when I popped out of my mom's tummy.

The third daughter, named after white flowers that naturally arranged in the form of a star, Nilover.

Growing up with a dad that has pretty solid and obvious anger issues, a mom that is extraordinarily loving and caring, 3 beyond annoying sisters probably summed up how pretty messed up my life is. There is never a calm, relaxing one day, there will always be someone to mess it up.

But however, that's the unique thing about my life. I was raised by the combination of anger and love, this results in having an extroverted kid, who has too much courage, never been scared of things that should be scared of— except the ocean, and a traveler. That isn't just it. What makes me who I am right now is also what I have been through a couple years back.

### **Phase in Life**

You know how people always say, “Life doesn't always go how you wanted it to be”? This phase in my life happened in 2014, the year I went to my middle school. I was surprisingly the only new kid, and the rest of the kids continued from the same elementary school.

“Look, it’s the new kid, Nilover,” I heard all the conversations as I walked through the corridor, “Why is her hair so curly?” followed by laughter.

“You know, I heard she likes One Direction, that *gay* music boyband.”

Those conversations mostly were made by the kids in 8th or 9th grade. I tried to ignore everything they said to me– or behind my back. But this doesn’t have any benefit to me– at all. The worst part of the day is when

“Choose your partner for the schoolwork!” Said my teacher. “Choose 2 to 3 partners.” I sat on my table, closing my eyes, every single time, waiting for someone to poke my shoulder and approach me. When it gets quiet, I open my eyes just to see everyone in the classroom has gotten their partner, except for me.

“Does anyone want to be with Nilover?”

Silence. Every single time.

I had to face this phase of life for one year straight, to the point where I unexpectedly have a mental health issue. My mom suggested I go to the psychiatrist, and after I did, I was told to have depression and be traumatized. Due to all the bullying I faced that year, I failed my 7th grade.

Even though I come to see doctors almost every week, I also pray to be guided by Allah SWT, and be shown by him on what I am supposed to do and whether I should stop or continue.

I decided to drop out of that school and chose to be homeschooled. I only had 3 friends for 3 years, but those years were the best years of my life. I had the chance to find out who I was and what's wrong with me.

High school was way more special, because I know who I actually am and I don't need to find out about my identity. I have had so many friends since then, and still do. I used to confuse my family on how I make so many friends as well.

### **Final Trial**

In my life, the hard phase only stays for a bit, Allah, God, has shown me more than I expected to be shown.

I have always loved traveling. By the age of 18, I traveled alone to 4 cities in Jakarta, and I really enjoyed it. Right now, I'm in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It is one of the most beautiful cities in Indonesia.

I feel like God has always shown me what I needed to see. Praying to Him has never disappointed me. Shalat for 5 minutes and repeating it 5 times a day can change the worst days to be the best days.

## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

### EPILOGUE

These stories came from a series of semi-structured questions developed to guide the students to explore their inner-self and discover their spiritual commitment. Instead of conducting in-depth interviews, the facilitator had challenged the students to have an intra-personal discovery learning process to reveal the deepest question in life, who am I? At the first glimpse, it sounds so simple. And some people would answer I am John Doe or Jane Doe. But this question is not about what you have. Because if you answer with a simple notion of your name, which means that you have a name, it is only answering what you have. And it is still not answering the deep question of who you are. If you answer it with your job, your position, your status etc., that, of course, is still the job, position, status etc. that you have, and still, it is not answering the deep question of who you are. That is why this question needs a spiritual discovery learning process through an intra-personal self-contemplation approach. And once the students become aware of who they are, then they will become closer to their Creator, and discover their deepest spiritual commitment.

In this process, students discover that they are the steward of the Earth, and their mission is to be the trustee and servant of God. At an early age, they have discovered that they are spiritual persons. No wonder, we are being called Human Being, with being as the spiritual part, and not Human Doing.

Students come up with a deep quote of life, for example saying that yesterday was history, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift, and that is why it is called present: The famous quote taken from the Kung Fu Panda movie. As a youngster, they are easily inspired by movies, for example, a student quotes a famous quote from the Spiderman movie “From a great role, comes the responsibility,” and they have witnessed the real experience by assuming the leadership role in their life. These are just a few examples that show these students are learning from all different sources just like a sponge, they are ready to absorb and learn from any sources of the life experience itself.

Furthermore, there is the question of “What is my purpose of life? This is another deep question. In order to answer this question, it would require a deep self-exploratory process. Of course, it is not easy to answer this question, especially when they have just graduated from high school. But surprisingly they have shown a strong commitment to be meaningful and to make their parents proud.

The students also share their cultural backgrounds and religious inclination and an overview of their journey of life. This has become an interesting part. Surprisingly, they have gone through a lot of life experiences. They have learned a lot and become wiser after going through all these real-life ups and downs of both hard and fun aspects of life experiences.

Interesting to ponder that the new ministry of education had stressed the importance of the liberty of learning, where discovery learning can come from any sources which is popularly known as the

concept of *Kampus Merdeka*. And these students already experience the liberty of learning by absorbing so much from their observations through social media, online information, friends from diverse backgrounds, and all other colourful facets of life. The Indonesian local wisdom would say “*Alam terkembang jadi guru*” (The universe is the fundamental Guru, once you are able to pause and observe and absorb the learning process from the wonder of the universe) which is the real root of the *Kampus Merdeka* concept, and which is a great part of our experiential learning here in IPMI International Business School.

These students had gone through very different cultural backgrounds ranging from a complete modern typical nuclear family setting to a full natural experience where the childhood was free from the technological addiction where there is no electricity nor private bathroom available. It is very interesting to see how they will enrich the lives of each other through these colourful cultural background differences.

The full scientific analysis will be developed further on these in-depth self-commitment explorations. The writer is hoping that this scientific research, later on, would reveal the pattern of which the students had come up with their commitment to becoming a change maker. Of course, it is aimed to enrich the scientific qualitative work which is not appropriate to address in this spiritual journey observation book.

It is safe to conclude, that the Liberty way of the Learning style of *Kampus Merdeka* is an on-going process here in IPMI International Business School. With the right form of experiential learning, the

students are learning not just from their facilitators, but also amongst themselves and the most important part of all from their intra-personal self-discovery learning. They are observing the universe and seeing that everyone is part of this gigantic puzzle of life where everything is interconnected, where human plays a very important role as the trustees of God to make sure all nature and living things are sustainable and flourishing.





*Thank You Young Change Makers!*

*With your spiritual commitment we are sure of our brighter future of  
Indonesia. Ameen.... May He grants our great wishes for a better  
future!!*