

A person is seen from behind, sitting on a dark, rocky outcrop. They are wearing a light-colored, hooded jacket and dark pants. The background is a vast expanse of soft, white clouds that stretch to the horizon. The sky above is a mix of warm colors, including orange, yellow, and pink, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

L I V I N G
L I F E
M A G A Z I N E

LIVES

LIFE

LOGIC & EMOTION

LITERATURE

“Reflections on life and literature”
By Students of English Literature Eng 102
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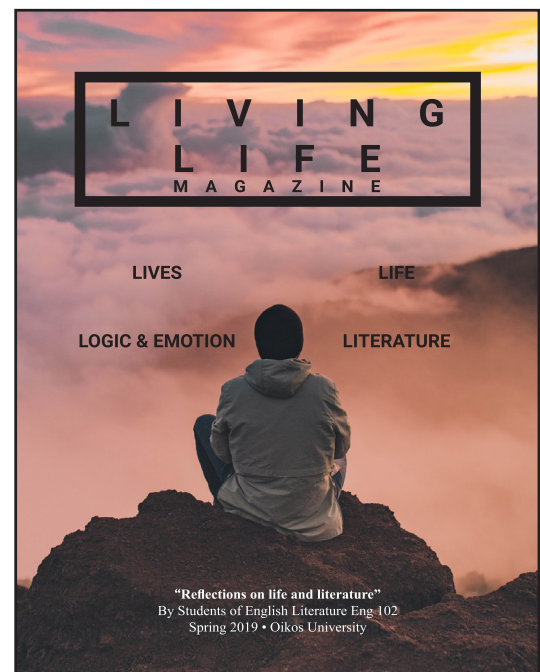
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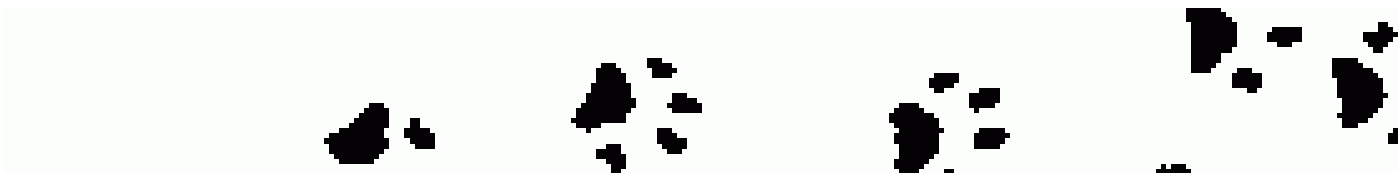


CRYING PUPPY

By Hajun Jang

I have a problem these days: my new puppy. His name is Max. When I leave him alone for a long time or if I disappear from his sight, he starts to cry loudly.

At first, I did not know he was crying. However, my neighbors next door complained to the apartment office, because my dog was crying so loudly. After this complaint, I thought I should solve this problem. So I looked up on the Internet for books about the problem and found a solution.



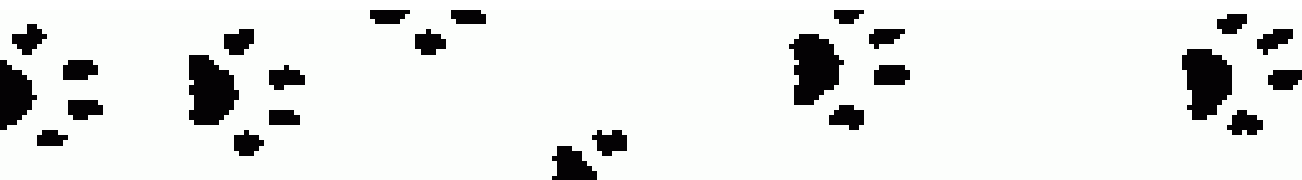


Do not
cry,
my
puppy!!!

The solution is turn on the radio so he can listen to a human's voice. Then the puppy will calm down soon.

The other thing is called "nose walking." For nose walking, you prepare some round ball, and then dig out the inside of the ball and make a space. Then, you put a treat in it. The puppy focuses on the ball to take out the treat, so he becomes quiet. However, this did not really help.

Because he is a Siberian Husky, he is so playful and energetic!!! I will look for a center that specializes in training only large dogs. Large dogs are like the Husky, Chow Chow, Greyhound, Retriever, Shepard, Malamute etc. Anyway, I really want to fix his bad behavior of crying when he is alone at home. I want to tell him my final hope and goal: Do not cry, my puppy!!!





MY LOVELY PETS ARE MY BEST FRIENDS!

By May C. Phirinya Chotchamit

We all know that pets are remarkable for their capacity to love. Pets for me are not just an animal. My pets are my friends. They can enhance my mood, entertain me, and help me control my blood pressure. Sometimes, I get mad about something, but when I come to play with my pets, they calm me down, and I can smile.

Cats are my favorite pet, but I did not have a chance to have one because my mother did not allow pets in the house. She thought we did not have time to take care of them.

One day I graduated from the university and got a job in Bangkok. I worked for a steel company for a year. After I had been working for a year, then I had my own money so I thought it was the time for me to be able to have and feed cats. I could afford taking care of the costs and everything.

I already had a cat in my heart. My cat is a Thai cat. I do not like Persian cats. They are not cute, and I think a Thai cat looks more beautiful, especially the Wichien Maat. That is the cat that I dreamed of for my friend. From the day I decided to find a cat, I started looking for kittens on the Internet and on websites.

When they came to home on the first day, they looked awesome. Today I have had my two cats for almost 7 years. I love them so much and I believe that they love me so much too. Getting cats is easy but taking care of the cat is more harder.

It took a little bit of time to find a Thai cat, but finally!!! I found a pet store where they sold the kind of cat I wanted. I couldn't wait to see them. The store was not too far away from my house. I went to see them at a pet store, and I fell in love with a male cat because it was very cute and friendly. Then after I chose the cat I liked, I thought I needed to prepare a lot of things for my cat, such as bowls of food, kitty litter and cat food, etc. And finally, I got these two cats with me. They have a white color, tall, skinny, and have blue eyes, and I call them Snow and Dumbbell.



>> Today I want to share some tips for taking care of my cats.

1. Feed them right: Food is the most important factor for the cat. You should choose the right food for each age and special needs of your cat. One simple guideline is to read the label next to the bag and see what is suitable for your cat. In the end, your cat is the best judge of taste.

2. Find a veterinarian: Kittens need more veterinarian care than adult cats. They need regular vaccinations and regular check ups every month. Please, do not wait for health problems to develop before you take your pet to the clinic.

3. Tag for safety: It's harder to take care of cats than to take care of dogs because cats can go out on their own and return only when they are hungry. Make sure your cat is safe when it is outside. My recommendation is that you put on your cat a collar and the identification badge when they are kittens. That way, if your cat gets out of the house, people will know where they are from. You should clearly label the name of the pet owner and how to contact the owner in an emergency.

For me, my cats are not just animals. They are my best friends and my family. I will always take care of them because all animals have feelings. **They have hearts like humans.**

Two tigers teach an important lesson: Change isn't always the best

By Knott Kittipong Chaya-ngam

Imagine that in a small town far away from civilization, there are grown male tigers. One of them has grown up in a cage and is fed by humans so he doesn't have to go out to hunt by himself. The other tiger lives in the forest and has to hunt for his own food. The tiger in the forest has his freedom and can go anywhere and do anything freely. However, sometimes, prey is not easy to find, and he has to postpone his meal. One day, the forest tiger comes to the village and sees the other tiger in the cage. He sees that the cage is full of food and is filled with food all the time by the human caretakers. He becomes jealous.

In fact, both tigers are not happy with their lives and envy each other. The one in the cage feels like freedom is most important. He could run anywhere and play with other animals. He could run as fast as he wants. He could eat and sleep anytime he wants. Life in the cage is boring, even if there's food ready for him at all time. In the cage, he can't run anywhere without barricades. Everything seems so fake to him. On the other hand, the tiger in the forest feels like life in the forest is too tiring for him. He has to hunt for all his food himself. Otherwise, he would be left hungry during the nights and sometimes the days.

One night, while everyone was sleeping, the cage was accidentally left unlocked, so both switched their habitat. At first, both felt happy with their new environment but not for long. They both ended up dying. Why? The caged tiger died in the forest because he didn't know how to hunt while the forest tiger died in the cage from depression because he was locked inside a small space and lost his freedom.

Now let's compare this parable with a story that might happen in real life. Consider two school friends, Sam Kim and David Koh. David was born in a wealthy family while Sam came from a poor family where he needed to work after school. The rich boy David saw that the poor Sam had his freedom after school. For David, freedom means that no driver is picking him up from school, no tutors are at home right after school. Sometimes, he feels like he wants to go home by himself like Sam or any other students. David had to go home and receive tutoring by special instructors that his parents had hired to meet their high expectations for him. David didn't like his life. He wanted to be like Sam.

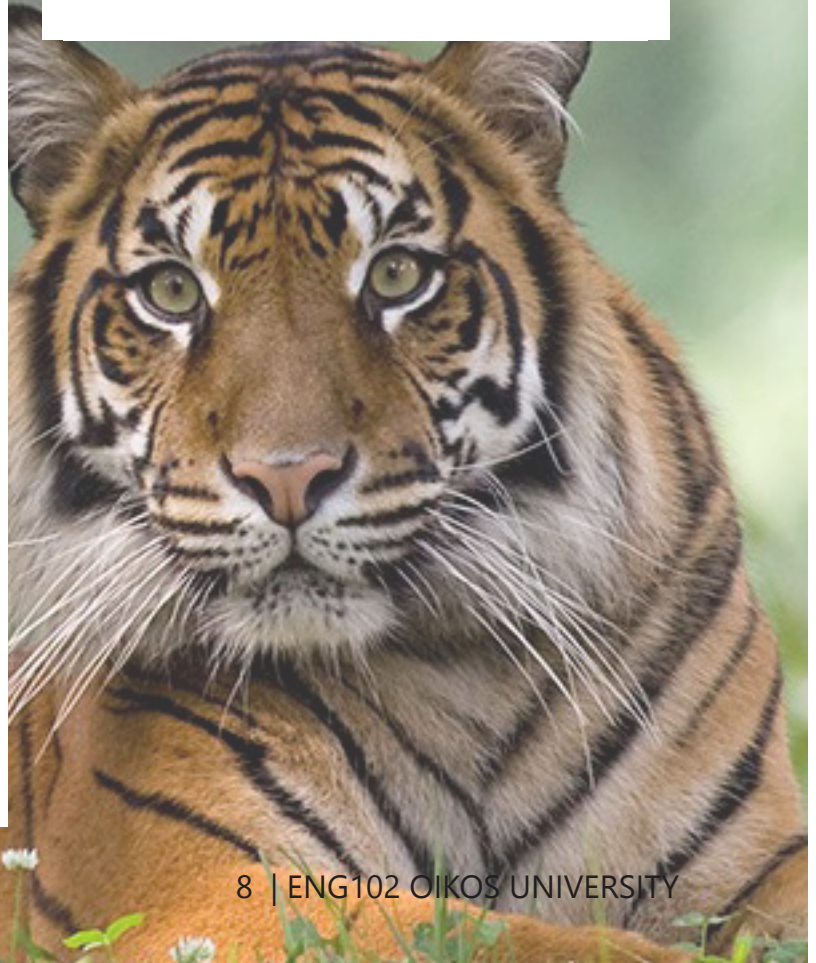
For his part, Sam felt tired of having to work just to take care of himself. One day after school, both of them talked and realized they wished that they could switch positions. They came up with a plan. While David's parents went away on a business trip in Europe for weeks, David gave Sam his unlimited credit card so Sam could buy as much as he wanted. For his part, Sam had to commit to attending the tutors after school for him. In turn, David would cover for Sam at work.

After a week, they both realized that they were not happy. It was hard for David to work and earn such a small income, while Sam didn't know how to spend the money wisely since he had never had these kinds of unlimited money before.

Living David's life burned Sam out. Not just that but living a high-society life also made Sam look very stupid. Most people might think a high-society life sounds great, but that's what it sounds like. High society means living with people with high dignity and formal manners, great positions in society, and values for a luxurious life. What he knew was only working in grocery stores and restaurants. He didn't shop at Neiman Marcus, didn't know who Vera Wang is, or what Creed cologne is. Sam felt very uncomfortable. He had always worked all his life without spending. So, David and Sam switched back to where they belonged and have lived their lives happily.

You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life:

You may be happier in your current life than you think!



A MOTHER'S SACRIFICE FOR HER BABY

By Kyung Ah Lim



I started to work at the age of 20 after graduating from high school in Korea. When I was growing up as a child, I lived without knowing how much my mom and dad were sacrificing for us. I understand now that my parents gave me a lot of things. In Korea, I was working until I was 24. Life has been so hard that I wanted to give up. Then I had the chance to work in the U.S. I did not believe it, and I was afraid to go to America.

When I arrived here, I had to live with a roommate and I was uncomfortable.

Without my parents, I had to solve my own problems and make choices. For myself, this was so difficult. It was my first time to do this on my own.

It took me a long time to adjust. I wanted to cry a lot.

I learned a little bit of American life, little by little, without my parents here. I cried a lot for two years and wanted to go back to Korea. I was very lonely, but then I met my husband in a difficult time.

My husband is strong and like a father. I became pregnant. I could not believe it at first. I was scared but also confident.

Could I do it? I had a lot of thoughts like this. I usually think that I am a coward. I worked during my pregnancy, and I spent so much time working that my whole body was swollen, and breathing was hard.




**" My mother
is like a
Superwoman,
a really strong
Superwoman."**



But I did not want to give up; I endured for my child. It was too much for me to touch a small child, but it was great to be a mother. But it was so hard to imagine. It's all for the first time. If the child cries, we can cry together. I did not know this until the baby was born. My baby's name is Isabella. My mother came from Korea for three months to care for me and my baby with my husband. My mother is really great when I had my baby. My mother is like a Superwoman, a really strong Superwoman.

I have been laughing and laughing for nine months, even though I have had a lot of difficulties. But when I see my baby, I am happy because I could not imagine having a baby. I am thankful for becoming a mother.

I wish my daughter could grow up as a happy child in the future.



**BEING
PRODUCTIVE
AND
SLOWING
DOWN**



By Songtai Sangtawweep

Some people believe that being productive means they have done a lot of things physically while some people believe that laying down on a bed for the whole day is productive for them. I, for one, always track and ask myself whether today I am productive or not.

In my perspective, I think that I am a very productive person. For example, I always plan ahead what I am going to do for the following weeks, and I follow my plan very strictly. I go to the gym more than three times a week, and I spend about 2 hours on weight training. I prepare my meals ahead everyday, so I can track what I eat.

Beside my body-building plan, I also spend time doing my business plan. I am going to open a Thai restaurant in the Bay Area, so I spend half an hour researching for a restaurant space to buy every day. I have to communicate with my sponsor and my attorney every day in order to inform and update new information to them.

With these two plans, I also have school and a part-time job which consume most of my time in my daily life. I feel tired, but I feel productive that I have done a lot of things on my plan. However, I get nervous and my stress becomes too much for me. I could not keep up for this routine for long. In order to relieve my stress, I need to take it slow. I need to add one day off to refresh and enjoy the moment. Now I have come to understand why some people stay in bed all day and say that they are productive. Sometimes, people need to pace themselves and slow their rhythm a little bit. As a result, they would be able to enjoy the perfect productive life.

- I N S P I R A T I O N -

By Sang Won Kim

I learned cooking in Korea.

I have a lot of confidence and interest in cooking in college.

I will continue to study cooking and if I can spare time.

I want to go around the world and see this and that. So my goal is to make my own recipe.



The interest in cooking was in the entertainment show "We Got Married" at the age of 14 to 15 in which the main character was cooking for the female character, which was the most touching scene. It was a surprise that the man, Alex, had secretly prepared food for a woman, Sinae. And it must be a scene where the woman is eating and crying. I thought about this, if I wanted to cook and provide delicious food for my wife in the future. So, I was interested in cooking while watching the program. From then on, I cooked one or two basic dishes and sometimes made and ate them for my friends and family on a weekend evening. When I chose a university, I checked whether there was a cooking course (restaurant) or the school was popular. There is a city called Daejeon in Korea, and I entered the university where the cooking department was the second best in Daejeon. So, there have been many ideas about cooking since then.



I thought about cooking easily before entering university, but when I came back to college, cooking was not easy.



Because the basic knowledge of cooking and the use of knives were set for each ingredient, and there were lots of sauce, spices, etc. So now I do what is basic and the dish I want to focus on is steak. The reason why I chose to cook steak is that I cooked steak for the first time in school, and I enjoyed the class so much and focused well. I have a lot of interest in meat, and everyone likes meat, and it comes out as a main dish at parties and festivals. Actually, I like steak food, so I have a big choice. My goal is to open my store at the age of 40 to 45 and to do business, and my ultimate goal is to make my steak restaurant serve the best steak.



“MY BABY TEACHES ME THAT LOVE HAS NO END”

By Natt Pornpimol Phasomsap

Mother is the great word. I heard everyone say that a mother is the strongest and most patient woman in the world. I have heard this sentence, and I agree, but I never felt how hard it is.



When I became a mother, every single word that I heard before came to my mind. It was true. Being a mother makes me willing to lose myself, sacrifice, and have patience. It made me realize that love has no end.



Seven months ago, I had my first son, Nathan, and he was born in San Francisco. When he came out, his father cried a little bit and his aunt was recording that scene in her cellphone. I was surprised and felt peace of mind because everything was alright.

After that my family and husband's family made video calls to me because they wanted to see Nathan. Our families live in Thailand, and it is hard to visit here because everyone has to work. We always keep up with them by video calls. My husband has been taking care the baby when I come to school. He is a good support and helps me a lot. I have good luck to have him as my husband.



I am so happy to be a mother. I think I can recognize what my son wants when he starts to cry for different reasons. If he wakes up and cries, I know he is hungry. If he finishes eating and cries, he wants someone to hold and hug him. If we hold him and he cries, he wants someone walk around with him and not stand still. He is very smart and self-centered because we spoil him! It is difficult to start being a mother, but you will be surprised that you will know how to do everything for your baby.

MY FOOD IS NOT MY TROUBLE

By Doe Priyakorn Jaykum



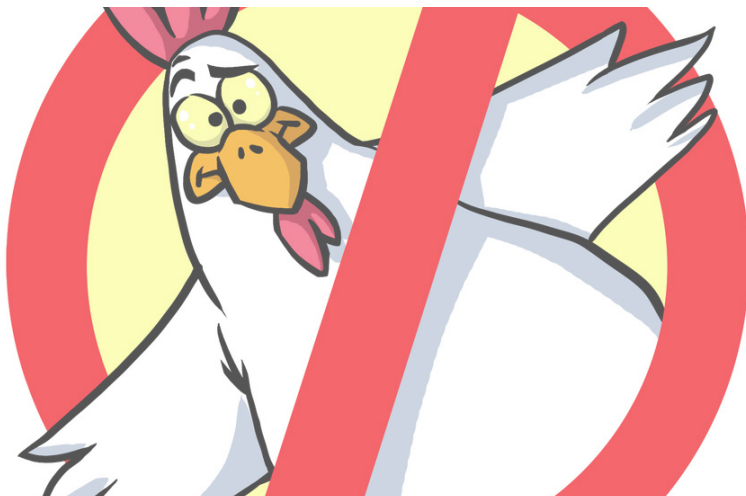
*“Why don’t you eat chicken!!
Do you know it is difficult to live
in U.S.A.??”*

“Why don’t you eat chicken!! Do you know it is difficult to live in the U.S.A if you still have a belief like this?”

There are a lot of people in Thailand who don’t eat beef because of their religious belief, including me, but not many people who refuse to eat chicken. So many people ask me like this.

I started not to eat chicken around seven years ago. Actually, it’s not only chicken, but all poultry. So I can not eat many things that I used to like, and I have to put up with the smell that is so tempting. When I moved here, people around me were curious about it, asked me questions and I had to give an answer again and again.

My story began seven years ago. One day, I found a newborn baby bird in my apartment backyard. It was so little with no hair. At first, I wanted to put it back in its nest,



but I knew its mother didn’t want it anymore and probably pushed it out of the nest. So I decided to raise it even though it might not have a chance to live long because it was so tiny. I had to feed it through a syringe and took it with me everywhere in a little basket. It liked to stay in my hand, and it fell asleep easily. We had a deep connection.

After a few months, its feathers started to grow longer and longer. Its body was getting bigger to the size that it could fly. It liked to stay on my shoulder, but it still needed to hide in the basket when it was windy and noisy.

One day, I went to the countryside and brought it with me as usual. But when I arrived at our hotel by car, I closed the door too loud, and it was frightened and flew away. This time, it flew too high, and the area was surrounded by a lot of big trees, so I couldn't see it. I spent three days looking for it, and I came back there twice to look. I asked people who lived around there about it. Some of them said they saw it because it was tame, and it couldn't join any local birds. Eventually, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't find it anywhere. I felt so sad and felt bad that I lost it because of my negligence. Since then, I have prayed for it to have a good life by not eating poultry all my life.



Even if I tell my story, not many people will understand my reason. Most of them think that this is nonsensical. They ask me whether I know how it is difficult to live in the U.S.A. if you don't eat chicken and beef. Many people eat chicken and beef, and many dishes have them as an ingredient.

I admit that when I smell the chicken dishes that I used to love, I'm still fascinated with them and I know that they would taste good, but I don't want to eat them. I don't remember how they tasted anymore.

After three years in the U.S.A., I have found many kinds of problems and different kinds of people. I have to adapt, be patient, think, make decisions, and solve the problems by myself. I think that my commitment is a tiny step toward overcoming larger obstacles later. There are other things that we have to focus on and learn in life.

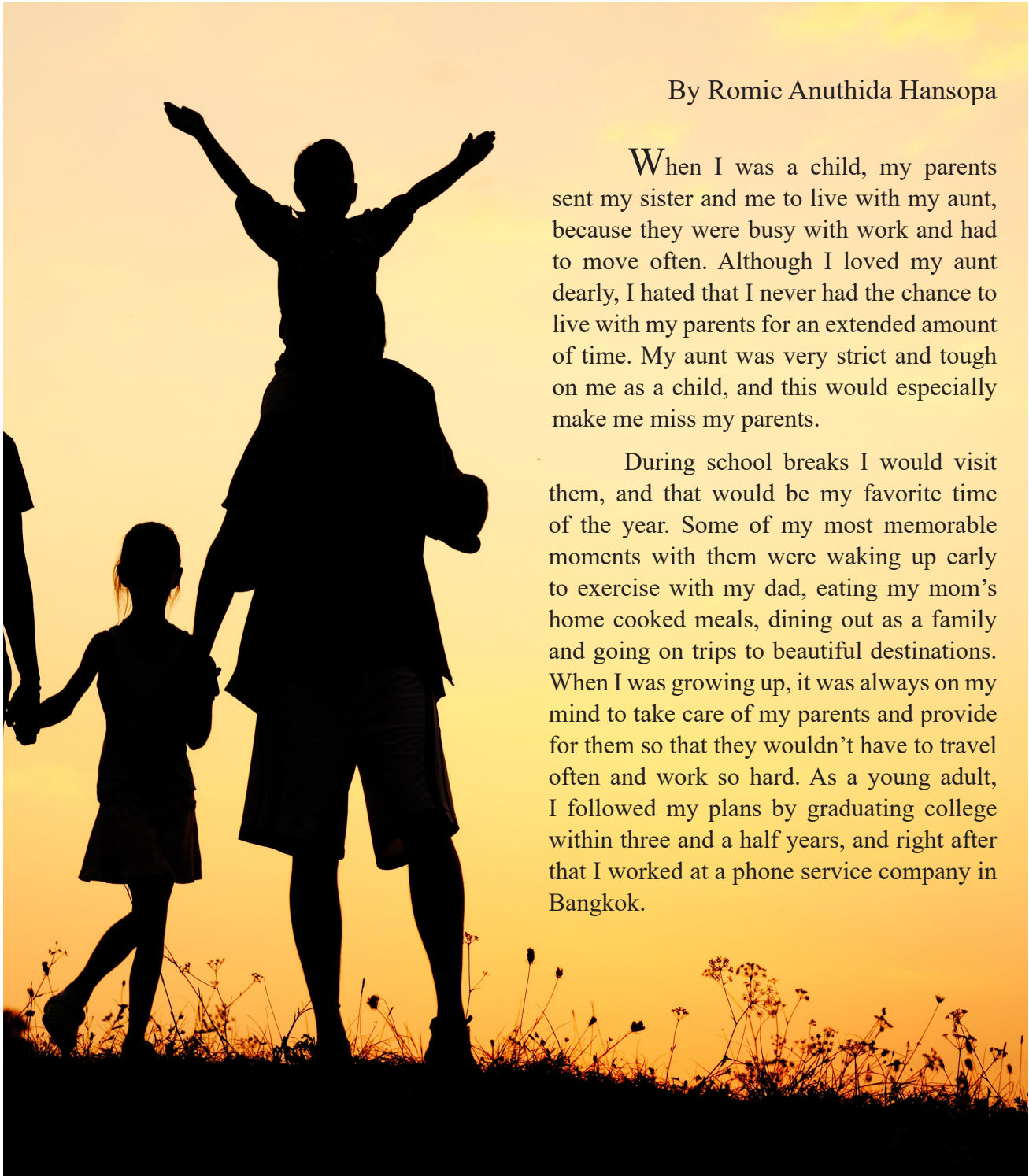
So I tell everyone who asks me that question that if you are intent on doing something, you should just do it, no matter how hard it is, Finally, you can do it well without any effort anymore. Choosing what you eat and living without eating chicken is a little thing in life. I can eat pork or seafood instead, or maybe I can finally become vegetarian, and now I know that there are no obstacles that I cannot overcome.

MY GOAL: CREATE JOBS TO HELP FAMILIES STAY TOGETHER

By Romie Anuthida Hansopa

When I was a child, my parents sent my sister and me to live with my aunt, because they were busy with work and had to move often. Although I loved my aunt dearly, I hated that I never had the chance to live with my parents for an extended amount of time. My aunt was very strict and tough on me as a child, and this would especially make me miss my parents.

During school breaks I would visit them, and that would be my favorite time of the year. Some of my most memorable moments with them were waking up early to exercise with my dad, eating my mom's home cooked meals, dining out as a family and going on trips to beautiful destinations. When I was growing up, it was always on my mind to take care of my parents and provide for them so that they wouldn't have to travel often and work so hard. As a young adult, I followed my plans by graduating college within three and a half years, and right after that I worked at a phone service company in Bangkok.





While working at the company, I thought long and hard about personal growth and development. I wanted new experiences so I decided to travel to America, where I hoped to study English and see a different culture.



I studied in the U.S. and worked part time, so I was able to send money back home to help my family business to build small rental homes. The cost of building rental homes in Thailand is not nearly as high as it is in America, so I was able to greatly help my family start this small business. I am extremely hopeful that my family will be able to own a small rental business within a year. I am also hopeful for bigger plans in the future if this small business flourishes. It would be my dream to create a factory in my village and provide jobs for the people and bring fame to our village. Once I have enough capital, I hope to gather the villagers and try to develop some type of product that is unique to our village. In the end, I hope that I can create jobs so the people in my village do not have to go through hardship of leaving to find jobs to provide for their loved ones. As a child it was always my dream to keep my family together, so I am extremely motivated and inspired to follow my dreams and help others. It would please me to see families together, children with their parents.

MY PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS -- AND MINE!

By Chutigarn Laithip

I'm the only child of my parents. For that reason, I'm the one who receives all their expectations. They grew up in a poor family, and they always tell me that they didn't graduate from the high school or the university because their family didn't have enough money to study. They said they were teaching me about living and studying, so that's why they had high expectations for me. Is it difficult for me? I might say yes because I don't know how to do well --- but I try to do my best. I do have expectations of myself, of course.

When I was high school, I heard the ads about exchange student programs in foreign countries. The first country that I visited was China for study and cultural exchange. I stayed there for

two weeks. I felt so excited and glad for my visit to China. Absolutely, I got more experience there.

After I went back to Thailand, I tried to take the exam tests of the Culture Exchange Program. If I could go, I would have to live in a foreign country for one year. I wasn't afraid of anything, but my mother was so concerned about me.

Exactly what country did I really want to go to? I wanted to go to the U.S, so I chose this country. The U.S. is the country that people want to come to. I hadn't graduated from my university in Thailand yet, but at that time, I really wanted to come here.





After I took the test, I knew from the exam results that I had passed. I was so glad. Then I told to my mother, but I knew she didn't want me to leave them. She also thought that I was too young to go abroad by myself. They would also have to spend more money. In the end, she let me go when the time came.

So, when I realized I would go to the U.S., I was really so excited and glad. It was too sudden for me to set myself up. I wondered: How can I live? What will I do when I arrive? Where should I go to travel?

Finally, when the day arrived for me to leave, I had to leave my parents and my hometown--but I really wanted to go! So, I came to the U.S. to study. When I arrived, I took photos in the airport until I arrived at my apartment. I tried to contact to my parents and my friends. I tried connecting to wireless and asked my landlord. Something like that. Later that day, I went to study at the English Language Institute first. I studied there for nine months to improve my English skills. I had a lot of foreign friends, like Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, Brazilian, Spanish. They were very kind and friendly.

After that, I changed my plan. First, I came here to improve my English. I didn't expect to study in a university here. But I changed my mind and decided to study in America because there is good, high-quality education here. It is a standard that society accepts. If I can graduate in the U.S.,

my parents will be proud of me.

So will I! Studying here is a very difficult thing and more challenging to me. If I can do it, I will stop having them give me a lot of pressure from expectations.

Now, my goal is to graduate from a university with a bachelor's degree and take it to my parents because they had no chance to receive this. Then I can give them pride in my success in college.

Why is it important for me to study here by myself? Before I decided to study here, I didn't know that much about Oikos University. I just knew that this university was Christian. Although I'm Buddhist, I don't mind because I believe in God. And when I was younger, I studied in a Christian high school for 14 years. My study at Oikos has made me believe more in God, and I believe that I came here because of him, 'God.' And after Oikos, I hope I will get more experience and success in my life.



OUR TRIP TO CHICAGO SHOWED ME THAT OUR LIFE IS WHAT OUR THOUGHTS MAKE IT.

By Wararad Luengthong

I never expected to go to Chicago, but once I did, it was a journey that I have always remembered. Fortunately, one of my friends, Bew, was going back to Thailand, and she wanted to go to Chicago before going home. At first, I didn't want to go, but I went there because she wanted to go. I just accompanied her. But finally, it was worthwhile and left me with good memories.

The trip was last year in June. We flew from San Francisco to Chicago. It was such a long flight! Then we spent three days and two nights there. On the first day, we arrived in Chicago early in the morning and entered downtown by train. We saw the life of people in the city. It's quite similar to San Francisco with traffic jams at rush time, and fussy. Transportation in Chicago was pretty convenient, like San Francisco. People are able to take the trains and the buses everywhere. The ticket price was not expensive. I paid only \$20 for three days.

On the first morning in Chicago, we went to the Field Museum. It is considered one of the finest natural history museums in the U.S. It was very fun and interesting. We saw the story about the dinosaurs and their various species. After that, we walked through downtown and went to a restaurant to eat. Then we stopped by the souvenir shops to get some gifts for our friends back in SF.

On the second day, we went to the Skydeck, an observatory located on the 103rd floor of Willis Tower. The Ledge offered our most spectacular view -- 1,353 feet straight down. The ticket price for adult is \$25 and youth is \$17. After a tour of the Skydeck, we went on the Chicago River Architecture Cruise. This cruise took 75 minutes along the Chicago River and passed by more than 40 structures and under historic bridges. This tour was very impressive for me.



When I was on the cruise tour, a lot of things came up on my head and my mind was changed. This city is incredibly beautiful that I was lucky to get a chance to visit. I was thinking: What if I had decided not to come? I would have missed all of this. I remembered that at first, I didn't want to go to Chicago, but what I saw right then made me want to have a beautiful condominium like those in Chicago.



The weather in August was very nice and made me enjoy our time there. Everything was nice and impressive. This trip was not only about how beautiful this city was, but it's my last trip in the U.S. with my best friend. We were so busy with our lives that we didn't have time to get together that much until she decided to go back to Thailand. I had such a wonderful time with her, and even though we will be apart, our memories and friendship stay forever.



This trip made me realize that life is something you can't predict, but you can make it happen. Just like when I thought I didn't want to come to Chicago but now I love this city. Just like when I thought I could see my friend whenever I wanted because we lived in the same city, but you never know what's going to happen. And now she's in Thailand. I feel like I have changed the way I think from this trip. If I think I can do it, I will do it. If I want something, I will do my best to get it. It is just a simple method. Our life is what our thoughts make it.

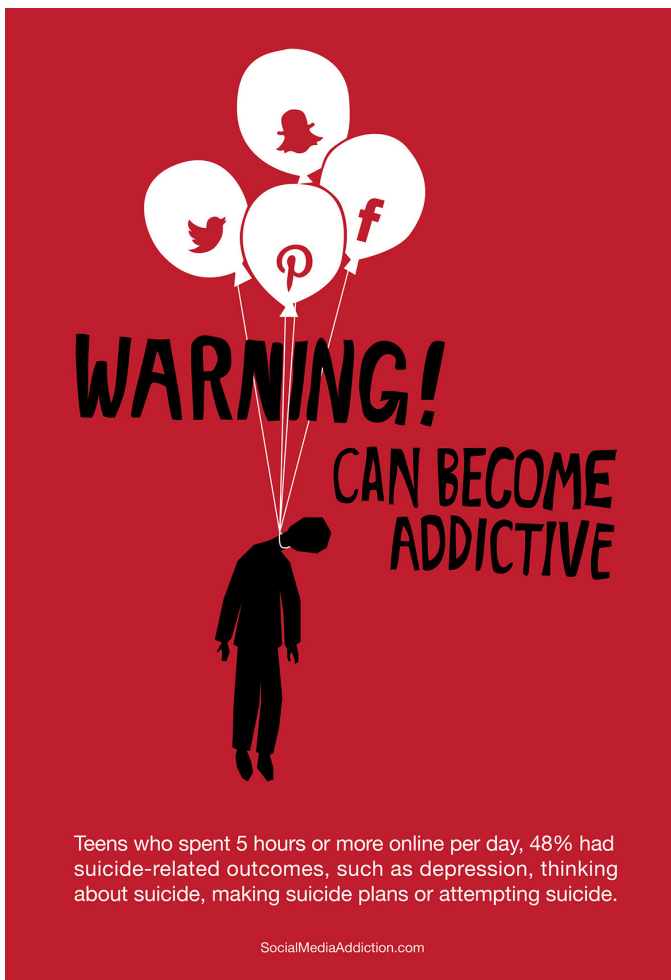
SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTS MY LIFE.

By Teeraput Wessapraweenwech

Nowadays, social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, are very important to our society. For example, almost every business advertises on Facebook and Instagram. Every teenager has his or her blog to present themselves. On the Youtube channel, they will describe what kind of pet they like or show their special activity like singing a song or reviewing the product, such as skin cream and cosmetic goods, to make their money.

Moreover, everyone can communicate or announce an event by posting on social media. For example, my friend posted the invitation for his marriage on Facebook, and I could let them know whether I could join or not. Think about it: It is difficult to live without associating with the social media because everyone spends time on their cell phone or laptop more than 4 to 5 hours a day and all the activity that is posted on Facebook or Instagram.

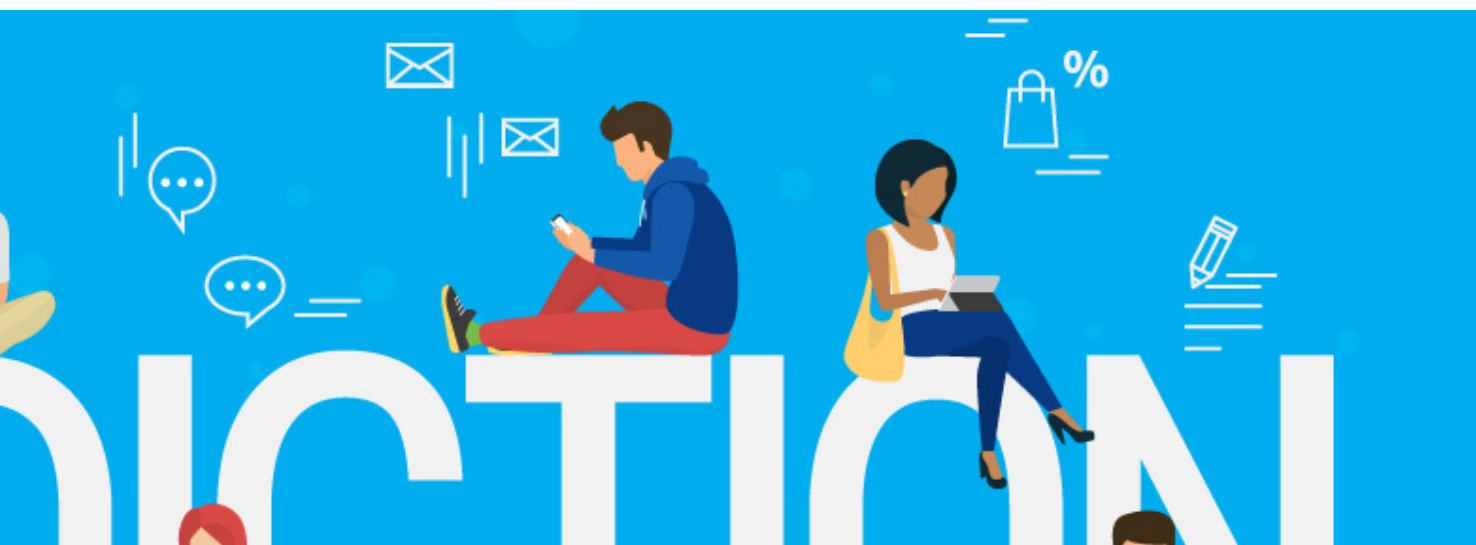
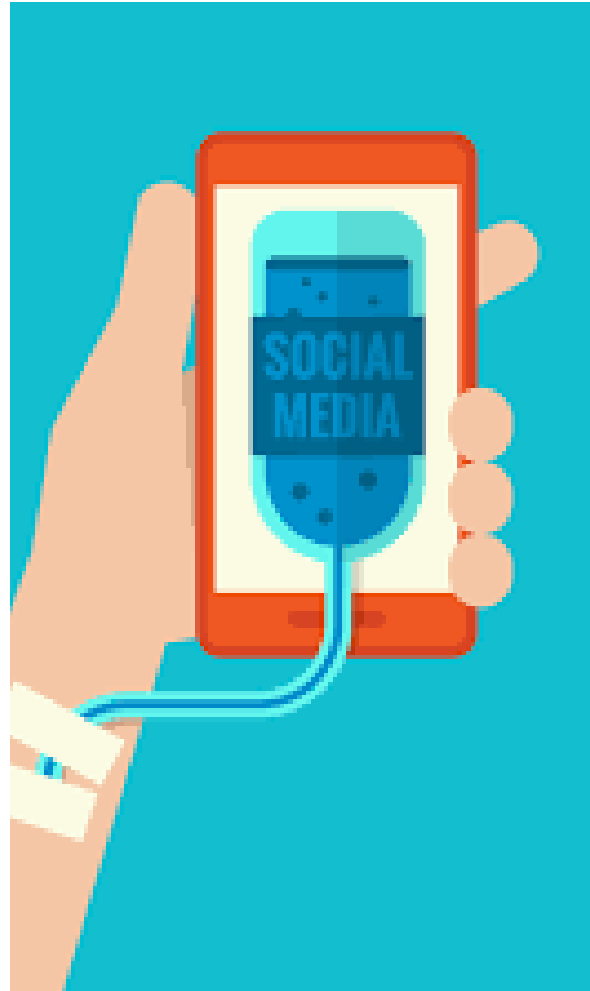
On the contrary, I am the one who doesn't like to play social media. Everyone around me, including my friends, my girlfriend, my brother and sister, are good at social media. I try to connect myself with Facebook and Instagram, but I think it does not suit my personality. I like to post my stories, but I just want to save it for myself. For example, I like to take photographs of buildings and portraits.



I always post them on my Facebook account, but I don't want to share them with the public. I feel privacy is very important for me. On the other hand, my girlfriend always shares her stories all the time. She likes to post her photos, and she wants me to comment on her post.

Sometimes, I feel uncomfortable when she asks me to reply to her post. I pretend to ignore it, but that makes us have an argument. Additionally, last week, I went to my sister's birthday party. After she blew out the candle on the birthday cake, people started to play on their cell phones because they had posted the photo and were waiting for comments. I was the only one who didn't post anything.

I waited for everyone to start talking again, but that took around 20 minutes. After that, they always checked their post every 5 minutes. Their actions made me feel a little bit frustrated. Moreover, I got the friend request from my employer. I had to accept her request, but I felt uncomfortable for this action. I think my personal life should not be shared with my boss. I don't want to associate my life with my job. I know social media is fun and very important to our society, but not everyone feels comfortable with that. I am the only one who doesn't totally like it, but I think I must learn and find the way to enjoy with it.





**SUCCESS
IS
THE FINISH
LINE**

By Natnapong Sitwaroj

I believe in my attempts to be successful and to strive to overcome obstacles. Of course, in the work, we have difficult problems that may cause us to be discouraged or fail again and again. If so, we must try to succeed someday.

For an example, what I have seen from my country in Thailand, an old Thai woman aged 62 years old who took almost 30 years to get her driving license. This woman started to study for her first driver's license in 1989 and had driving classes with more than 20 driving instructors, accumulating more than 450 hours of time driving. Still, she did not pass the driving test. But finally, she achieved a total score of 27 to get a driver's license.

The question is: How much are people willing to try again over a long time? We might get discouraged, but this woman had a strong mind and succeeded.



Success is like a finish line. There is a road that stretches to this finish line, but there are spikes and thorns on the way. If we want to reach the finish line, we also need to try to overcome the obstacles as well. If we want to succeed, we have to start by doing and trying to reach the end. Finally, no matter what the result is, at least we are proud to do our best. That effort will not be wasted.

THE LESSON OF A PAINFUL CHOICE: TIME CANNOT RETURN

By Panpaporn Klongkankian

Some experiences fade over the time, and we forget that they ever happened. But every so often, we have other experiences that we always remember and will never forget, no matter how much time has passed. Some of these are the most painful experiences are about choices we must make, even if we don't want to.

I will never forget the choice that I made when I was young. To this day, I still remember and feel sad. I feel sad every time I think about it. At that time, I was studying in high school in the countryside, northern Thailand while my grandmother was living in Bangkok about 416 miles away.

I knew that my grandmother had kidney disease. My father and my mother lived in Bangkok with my grandmother and were taking care of her. They took her to the hospital for dialysis appointments every month.

When I had a summer break from high school, I went with my parents to visit my grandmother when she was having dialysis. Sometimes, the nurse could not find the blood vessels in my grandmother's arms, so she had to stab with the same needle into her arm several times. For almost two years, my grandmother had to have dialysis at the hospital every month.



Then one day, my father called me to say that my grandmother had been rushed to the hospital emergency room. My uncle and aunt who live in San Francisco flew back to Thailand immediately to see her.

At that time, it was during my final exams. I had to concentrate and study hard on this. I read the books and took notes to prepare for my exams. I was planning to go see my grandmother as soon as I finished my exams. In the middle of that week, my father told me that my grandmother was feeling better. I felt so relieved when I heard that. I thought that was good news, and she would get out soon. Then I called her and got a chance to talk with her a bit. I told her to get well really soon and wait to see me.

On the last day of my final exams in chemistry and mathematics, after I finished my last subject, my father called me. I picked up the phone, but he didn't say anything. Then, I could hear him crying. He let my mother tell me that Grandma had passed away because of kidney failure.



I felt so sad and started to think why didn't my grandmother wait for me? I felt like we made a promise, but this was unexpected. I wish I could stay with her during her difficult times in the hospital, but I wasn't able to. Due to my important final exams, I could not leave even if I needed to see my grandmother. My parents comforted me and encouraged me to concentrate on the exams. They told me that I did the right thing. "You have a duty that is right because you are a student. It is your responsibility," they said.

A few days later, I arrived in Bangkok and went with my parents to pick up my grandmother's body at the hospital for the funeral ceremony at the temple. The mortician took my grandmother's body and put it into the coffin. We invited the monks to chant. The chanting lasted for about an hour every night for seven nights of the ceremony. We kept my grandmother's body for performing the rites seven days in the temple. Then her body was cremated on the last day of the ceremony.

After losing my grandmother, I always remind myself that no one can wait. Time cannot return. When I'm lazy, I remind myself not to wait for anything or it might be too late. Do not procrastinate because we cannot know the future. Maybe tomorrow we will not have a chance to do what we want.

THREE PILLARS OF SUCCESS: DESIRE, BELIEF, AND RESILIENCE

By Juan Cleber Pio de Souza



Nowadays, most people want many things. They dream big, and they dream small, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Some people don't have many goals, or have shallow goals, or have no goals at all. This could be really bad because if you don't have any goals, you are basically on a road without direction.

Everything starts with a desire, something that makes you happy, something that you wake up thinking about and spend most of your hours thinking about. This desire is going to make you feel alive and make you work hard to accomplish the goal.

Desire is one of the three pillars of success in reaching goals. The second is belief. If you really believe that you can achieve something, you already have a big chance of accomplishing it. The last, but not the least, pillar is resilience. I believe that this is one of the most important pillars, not only to reach a goal, but for life in general.

I'm a Brazilian jiu-jitsu athlete. I started when I was about 15 years old, and I did not have high expectations about it, to be honest. I didn't know anything about it when I started. The closest that I had been to this kind of martial art was watching judo on the television which was not often. For some reason I liked the way they moved and the kimonos they wore. That easily kept my attention. At that time, my goal was to play soccer with most of the Brazilian teenagers.

I used to play soccer for years and that was what I loved the most, but for some personal reasons I had to stop playing soccer and that was sad for me.

Eventually, I started playing video games, spending hours and hours in front of a computer. I wasn't doing any kind of exercise, nothing at all.

One day a co-worker of my mother told her that my brother and I should practice Brazilian jiu-jitsu. My parents right away thought that we could take advantage of the martial art to improve as human beings and physically, so we started doing it.

Like anything in life, the beginning was not easy. We had to deal with so many things at the same time. For me it was harder than for most of the people because I was very introverted. To practice with many people around was way too difficult. Thank God I liked the sport, and I fell in love with it very fast.

Practice for the sake of practice -- I was loving it, but as I said in the beginning, when you don't have a goal, you may be going somewhere but don't know what you will find or how it is going to be. At that time I figured out that I could go into competition. This was the crucial point when my life changed. I started to train harder. That was when all those pillars started to appear for me, little by little.



I lost my first competition, but I came pretty close to a win, and that made me realize that I could win one day. I had my first competition with one month of training while most of the people compete for the first time after training for a year. I started competing here and there, gaining more motivation and aiming at bigger challenges. I traveled to many more places than I expected by doing jiu-jitsu, and I have met many people. Soon, my personality changed in a good way, and I left behind the very introverted person that I had been.

The three pillars are everything to win championships. I had to work hard, I practiced every day, sometimes twice a day, and other times three times a day. I had to watch videos of more experienced fighters. All this training meant that I had to abdicate many things that most of the guys at my age love to do. I have never got drunk, and I have never smoked -- none of those things that young people are "supposed to do." I am really thankful to God for this ability to block all those wishes. Hard work is and was everything for me, and putting in many hours, to be honest, is going to make a huge difference for me.

The second pillar is belief. My first big accomplishment was becoming the Rio de Janeiro state champion of the season. I could only accomplish that because I believed that it would happen, and my belief meant that if I worked hard, I would do win, And I did.

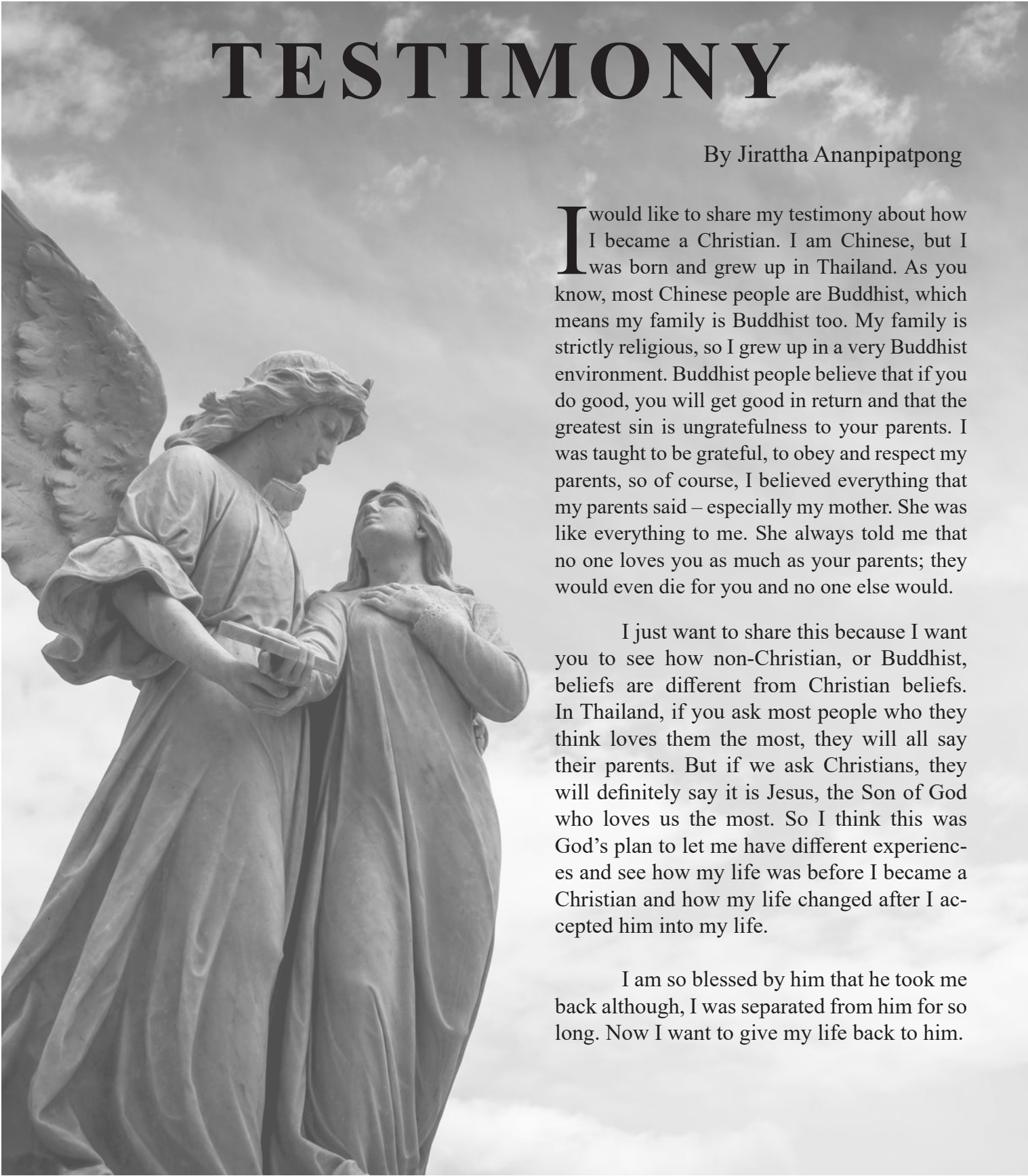
The third pillar of success is resilience. If you are not resilient, nothing will work out, because life has ups and downs, good and bad days. Frustrations are going to happen, and expectations are not always going to be reached. You must keep yourself strong, overcome the fears, and keep your dream alive. Resilience is like discipline. Discipline tells much about a person. If you are not disciplined, you are very likely to quit at the first tough moment.

As an athlete, I can tell that most of the time you are going to be tired and stressed. Sometimes, all you want to do is to sleep the whole day, or maybe just wake up and eat junk food and sleep again. Instead, you have to keep your regular routine no matter what. This is what you must do, if you really want to achieve something big.

This was a little bit of my life as an athlete. The journey is not ended yet. I am still developing myself, still working to improve those pillars, still trying to be a better human being. I have a dream, and I will never stop until I achieve it. Everyday I'm improving at least one percent in as many aspects as I can.

TESTIMONY

By Jirattha Ananpipatpong



I would like to share my testimony about how I became a Christian. I am Chinese, but I was born and grew up in Thailand. As you know, most Chinese people are Buddhist, which means my family is Buddhist too. My family is strictly religious, so I grew up in a very Buddhist environment. Buddhist people believe that if you do good, you will get good in return and that the greatest sin is ungratefulness to your parents. I was taught to be grateful, to obey and respect my parents, so of course, I believed everything that my parents said – especially my mother. She was like everything to me. She always told me that no one loves you as much as your parents; they would even die for you and no one else would.

I just want to share this because I want you to see how non-Christian, or Buddhist, beliefs are different from Christian beliefs. In Thailand, if you ask most people who they think loves them the most, they will all say their parents. But if we ask Christians, they will definitely say it is Jesus, the Son of God who loves us the most. So I think this was God's plan to let me have different experiences and see how my life was before I became a Christian and how my life changed after I accepted him into my life.

I am so blessed by him that he took me back although, I was separated from him for so long. Now I want to give my life back to him.

I am telling you this to you because I want you to see how amazing God is and how he worked on my life although I was in such a difficult place, coming from a Buddhist family. All of us here are blessed so much compared to those who don't know God.

Many years ago, I met a man named Tim Owens. This is how I heard about God. He was my English teacher but also a pastor at the Canaan Baptist Church in Thailand. It seemed to me as though God had already planned this for me. It was so strange because a short while before I got to know Tim, I received a book in the mail that told the story of Jesus. To this day, I don't know who sent it to me.

In fact, when I was a child, about 7 or 8 years old, someone had also sent me a book in the mail that turned out to be a comic book about Jesus. It didn't say who the sender was either. So I asked my mother who sent this to us and she said, "Oh, maybe it was your aunt's company," because my aunt worked at a printing press that distributed all kind of books to schools.

Even though I thought the comic book was from my aunt, I was not interested until I met Tim. He came to me with his secretary Pom and asked me if I was interested in going to the English Cultural Exchange Camp with them. I said yes because I wanted to improve my English and learn more. When I was at the camp in Pattaya, Thailand, there were 40 or 50 Americans. They told us that they came to Thailand to exchange cultures and teach English. They were very friendly, fun people and easy to get to know. When it was time for us to divide into small groups to exchange our culture, they started to talk about their religious beliefs and share the good news of God. I suddenly realized that the English Camp had another purpose.

They were missionaries and wanted to spread God's word.

At first, I didn't believe the things they shared with me at all. But after the camp, Tim and his secretary still kept in touch with me, and they asked me if I wanted to come to the church to study English – for free. They just wanted to help out because they knew that taking extra English courses outside of school was very expensive. So I was going to the Church every Sunday to study English and the people there started asking me to join the worship service after class. I went to church for a full year and a half, but I was not interested. I did not believe the teachings at all until one day when Tim's secretary came to me and asked me if I wanted to have a Bible study with them.



That day I joined them because I was curious about why those people were so nice to me and looked so happy and I wanted to know what made them really believe in God. I attended Bible study for a while, but I still had lots of questions and doubts. I just felt that I could not become a Christian because I didn't want my parents to be sad and disappointed in me. I definitely didn't want to appear to be an ungrateful daughter. But God is so amazing. He didn't leave me there but worked on me more.

I told Tim that I would like to know God more but that I couldn't because of my family. I was very confused and didn't know which way to choose, but I kept going to the church to study English. And then one day while we were studying the Bible, Tim's secretary said to me, "Do you want to know God more? If you really want to know him, you have to open your heart to him." Then she asked me, "Do you want to accept God in to your life?" I don't know how to explain what I felt at the time, but those words really touched me and I started to cry. That was the first time I prayed to God and decided to accept him into my life. So that's how I became a Christian.



After I became a Christian, my life changed a lot. I used to live and do everything for myself, but now I live for God. I mean, it should be like that, but it has not always been that easy. Most of my friends always make fun of me for becoming a Christian. Then my family told me not to think about becoming a Christian. They would not accept this, and I have not been brave enough to tell them until now.



Many difficult things have happened, which made me feel very tired of being a Christian at times. And I always have more questions about God – you know, sometimes it’s from the questions people ask me or other times they come from my own experiences. I had a very hard time being a Christian especially in the beginning. Many times, I was almost lost from God again, but I really thank God that he’s always with me and that he always tries to teach me and help me to know him more.

I always think about what Pastor Tim used to tell me when I had a hard time. He said that our whole life will be full of questions that usually come from experiences that we are having - so it would be good to learn how to get answers to your questions from God’s Word, the Bible.

Many times, our learning comes from the experiences - both good and bad - that God allows us to have. So, when I have a hard time with my life, I really need to have faith and humble myself before God and let him lead me, and not follow my own feelings. This can be very hard, but it is the only way to keep my relationship with God and not go the wrong way toward all the things that try to take us away from God. As I’m a sinner, I’m still tempted to many things in this world. I’m curious and have a lot of doubts. I like to have fun and still want to do whatever I want like partying with friends, cursing and not going to church on Sunday. But I am so thankful to have close Christian friends, this helps me to stay close to Christ.



WHY I AM IN THE U.S.



By Thippawan Tungsawat

In my life, I never thought that I would go far from my family, but sometimes, life places us in some situations that require us to make an important decision. For me, one influential decision was about choosing to go to the United States. Why did I decide to come? What things did I want to pursue for me to come? I will illuminate my reasons why I am in the United States.

The first of all, I actually want to improve my English skills. My English was terrible before I came here. I could hardly understand the international movies that I tried to watch. I did not know what actors were talking about. I always read the Thai subtitles in sound track movies. Furthermore, it is hard to me to speak and communicate with people from other nationalities. When I would talk with my friends, I did not know how to converse, or which words to use. Nowadays, my English is improving. Although my speaking skills are not excellent, they are better than before.



Figure 1: Melbourne

Second, the place is comfortable and convenient. Most people asked me why I chose the U.S. Why did not I choose other countries that use English in daily life, such as Australia, or England? I was confused after I had decided to study English abroad. I compared between Melbourne and San Francisco. I have been talking with my friends and my aunts who are more experienced in certain areas and can guide me. My friends, who live in San Francisco, said San Francisco is a convenient city with good weather which is not too cold and not too hot. My aunt, who lives in Melbourne, recommended that I choose a country which I like and is comfortable to me. She said the weather in Melbourne was as hot as Thailand and the cost of living mostly like San Francisco. My family definitely supported me and respected my decision. Then I decided to come to San Francisco, because if I want to become stronger as I grow up, I should live without my family helping. I might gain some experiences that would teach me to be courageous in making decisions.



Figure 2: San Francisco

Lastly, I hope to intern and get employment in the United States. I graduated in Environment Engineering in Thailand. I thought that if I had the opportunity to intern in my major here, I might get an excellent job in Thailand. Many companies there expect employees to have experience, and if you have some experience in another country, you might have a competitive advantage in your employment application. However, if I want to get good employment here, I will have to improve my English skills and work hard. For instance, when I was preparing for my English practice, I always postponed the date to practice because of my laziness, but as someone said, "Success does not come from laziness."

To sum up, we are in the free world where everyone's voice must be heard and considered whether we like it or not. We should make an important decision that help us get an opportunity and improve ourselves. I think that I made the right decision to come to the United States. Life is too short so we should not waste it and lose our chance to help us make a better life when life itself sometimes can be tough.

GENTLE

By Kanrawee Setsakhonkun

The word “gentle” for me is to be kind and careful in the way you behave or do things. You are aware of hurting other’s feelings. In order to be a gentle person, you should be careful and thoughtful. You must learn to channel your strength and control your impulses. Think before you act, reign in your anger and always consider the consequences.



I would like to share my story. I have been in San Francisco almost 3 years. I lived with my older sister when I first came here. My sister helped support me for my rent and school’s tuition fee. After 4 months, I could stand my own feet. Thanks to my sister, she helped me to find a job. She suggested me to work at Thai restaurant at first because there were so many Thai people working there. She said, it’s easier for me to communicate since my English was not good enough at that time. Another thing is her friends work there so that she could help me. I was so lucky because I got 2 jobs at the same time. My sister and her friends helped me. I worked as a waitress at a Thai restaurant. After a few months I could take care of myself and pay all my bills. For the next step, I have a plan to work hard to save money for the future. I work 6 days a week. I need to save money before I go back to Thailand. I want to have a business about design. I want to be a business owner. I’m interested in design after I graduated from college, but I did not get a chance to do because I didn't have money. I’m here in the United States now, I think I can make more money by working hard. I would like to own the clothes shop by my own design.

Two years ago, I had a problem with my co-worker. It was not about my co-worker but it was about me. I worked hard about ten hours a day. Sometimes more than ten hours. I worked all day. I started 7:30 am until 11:00 pm for breakfast and dinner shifts which made me very tired, and I got into a bad mood. I did not have enough sleep. It had an effect on my body. I just got upset very easily with some of my co-workers who were trying to talk to me during work. It was easy to get sick when the weather changed. Another thing, is that I get headaches. I spoke and did something inappropriate to my co-workers. I hurt their feelings and still I kept being quiet during work. I did not want to talk to anyone that made them wonder if something went wrong with me. All the things happened when I worked too much. I knew it was my fault, but I could not control myself. One day, my co-worker asked what happened to me. I did not answer to her. I still kept quiet. Later, we were only talking about work. We became cold to each other. We never made jokes or talked fun when we were at work anymore. I just concentrated on my job. No party or hang out after work that we used to do.



Now, I looked back and thought about the problem. I feel like I should be gentle with my co-worker or people around me. I have to be careful in the way I talk or act. I've been working here at the Thai restaurant for five days a week. I think I work too much.

So, if I have to work in the morning shift, I will not work for dinner shift. I should treat myself better and just do the things that make me relax like going shopping or go on a road trip. I also go to the gym to do exercise twice a week. I feel much better and happier. I've been getting enough sleep these days which makes me full of energy to go to work every day and have better relationships with my coworkers. I have learned from this lesson. I should treat people the way I want to be treated. And if I put myself in others' shoes, I will understand their feelings better.

"If I put myself in others' shoes, I will understand their feelings better."

L O V E S T O R Y

By Pakpimkarn Booncharn



On the weekends, I'm free all day, so I watch Thai or American movies. I binge-watch all day, and my favorite TV show is called, "You." It's on Netflix and my friend recommended it to me.

The story is a kind of love story about a man who falls in love with a woman whom he meets in a bookstore. It looked like love at first sight, and he tried to learn more information about her by Facebook and Instagram, etc. Finally, he found her house where she lived and always tried to look at her through the front window of her house every day. Since he had eyes on her, one day he found her fighting with her boyfriend and later trying to commit suicide by the train station. He saved her and took her home and sneakily took her phone. After that they kept in touch and had a stronger relationship until they became lovers.

Everything looked fine, but problems happened from his jealousy. He didn't trust her, so he checked out her old phone and followed her everywhere. He even kidnapped her ex-boyfriend and finally killed him.





One day she found out that he had followed her sneakily, so she wanted to separate from him. Soon, they got back together because he really loved her. Their relationship came to the end when she found his secret; she found the secret box which included her old phone, her ex-boyfriend's phone and teeth. She was very shocked and had to find the way out, but failed. She got kidnapped and finally got killed by him, who loved her very much.

It seemed like a true love story but had a twist at the end. It showed how love can make one person do anything. Love can make jealousy, destruction and make people crazy. In this story, love made the man become the devil.

I would say this story was very good and surprising for me. I had an experience with love like this. I spent all of my time with the one whom I loved. I would do anything that I could for my love.

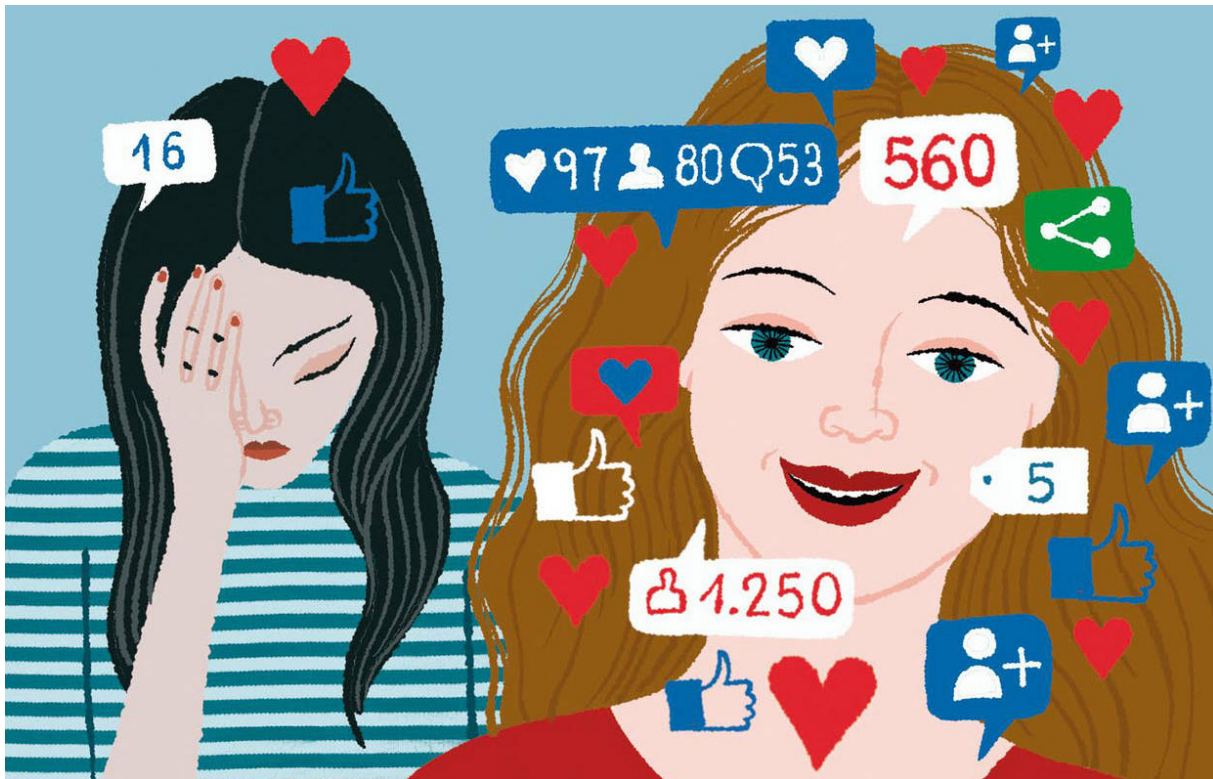
For example, I would take care of the housework like cooking, washing and cleaning. Or anything else my love wanted. I tried to make my life better, so we could make a future together. But we had a problem. I was a jealous person. I liked to check the phone, and follow her sometimes. When something went wrong, we had to break up because I didn't trust her, and we didn't figure problems out logically, but emotionally.

Since I watched this movie, I have learned that lovers should trust each other and work it out together reasonably. I will take this into my consideration for my love story in the future.



OVERCOMING JEALOUSY AND BEING YOURSELF

By Suparadar Munsak



Jealousy is one of the most common emotional problems.

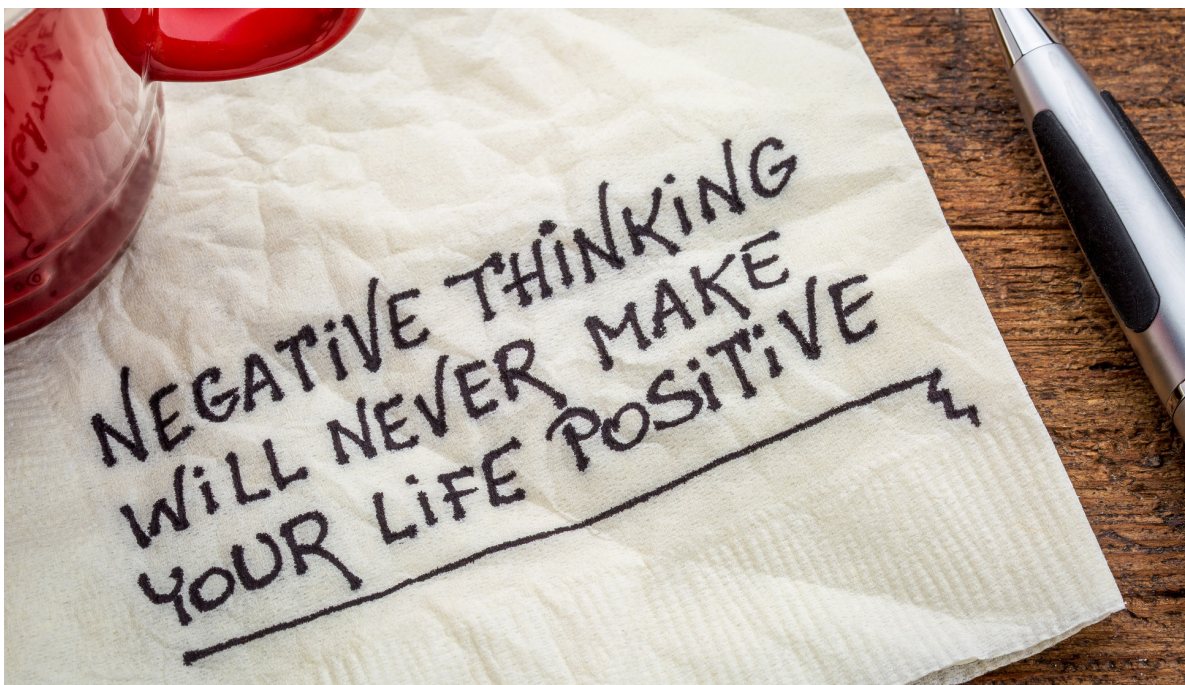
I think jealousy starts when you compare yourself to someone else. You should know where the jealous feeling is coming from, so you can learn how to control it in an adaptive way.

In Thailand, most of the younger people are always jealous of each other. They are jealous of grades, being beautiful, being an interesting person and things. It is the same for me.

When I was in high school, I was jealous of my friend who had a new phone. I wasn't satisfied with my old phone which I had at that time. I told my mother to buy me a brand-new phone, but she didn't agree. She told me it was unnecessary for me to have two phones at only 15 years old. But I didn't care. I still kept asking her until I got it. After that I saw my mother was working hard because of the more expenses in our family. I realized that it was from me also because of my phone. I felt sad that I made her feel tired and unhappy. I thought to help her by saving money. So I decided to sell one of my phones.



Nowadays, I'm learning and understanding how to control my jealousy. First, I stopped comparing myself with other people because everybody is different. Second, I should know myself, my style and my heart and what I want to be. And I found it. When I came to the United States, I got more freedom to think and decide for myself. Then I stopped being jealous of people because no one can be compared to another. If you don't care about the outside opinion, you can be yourself. Then you will be happy and love yourself because jealousy will not happen to you.





HOW OLIVE'S FAMILY SHOWED ITS LOVE AND COPEd WITH PROBLEMS

By Warangkana Chaowarakse

After I watched *Little Miss Sunshine*, I realized that some peoples' lives are difficult because they have to struggle so much. Not only me, then! In some part of our life, we may have suffering. It depends how we get through that and how we think of it. Besides, people have dreams that they really want to pursue, like Olive's family.

Olive wanted to compete in the Little Miss Sunshine beauty contest on stage even though it was about 700 miles away from her home. The long drive in the van showed us their dreams and how the family members coped with problems on their way. In the movie, all of them failed. Her brother Dwayne wanted to be a pilot in Air Force Academy. Eventually, he found out that he was colorblind, so obviously his dream was not possible. Frank, her uncle, was supposed to be successful, but had a failed love affair, became very depressed, and was now recovering from trying to commit suicide. Olive's parents wanted to do their motivational business.

Even the grandfather, who looked very fine and taught Olive how to perform on the stage, died from his overdose from heroin unexpectedly at their hotel. This could be very sad for them, but they still had to move on in order to pursue Olive's dream. Even though the mother was about to give up and go home, the others wanted to go forward for the little girl.

A lot of things happened which made them arrive too late at the *Little Miss Sunshine* contest, but they didn't give up until Olive could be in. Finally, she got to perform on the stage in her own way. Even though some people laughed at her and looked down on her, she didn't notice that and was very happy when her family came and was dancing by her on the stage.

We could see how they loved each other and helped each other get through everything. I agree with them that sometimes we should leave the past behind and move forward because we can't fix somethings that already happened.

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

We should not let the past ruin today and the future. We can just learn from it. When Dwayne found his color blindness and was stressed out, his mother tried to console him, but it didn't work out. The one who made him get up was his sister with her embrace. I know why he was better with that; he really felt good with her hug.

Since we could see when the mother was deeply sad, Dwayne, her brother, wrote down for Olive: "Go hug Mom." That meant he thought hugging would make the mother feel better. Therefore, when his sister came hug him, it touched his heart. One more solution I'm impressed is how they started the van by running and pushing it. Some difficulties or problems can be fixed easily when we work out as a team.

Apparently, all of them failed their dreams, but at least they tried. After they failed, they showed that the important things are love, family, how they get through it and how they live with it.



LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE **RECONCILES FAMILIES -- INCLUDING MINE**

By Hye Lan Cho



Figure 1: Hye Lan and her mother Mrs.Park in Danyang, Korea: The first trip with my mother.

I think the movie, *Little Miss Sunshine*, is about family relationships, especially Olive, the young daughter in the family. I could totally understand Olive, her mind and her wish, and as I watched the movie, I compared her family to my own family

Olive's family was always far away from each other in their minds, but that did not mean they did not have any connection. They were just living together and did not understand each other very well.

The story focuses on Olive who wanted to be a pretty girl. So she tried to become first in the beauty contest, called Little Miss Sunshine. When I saw her dream, I was reminded of my childhood.

I thought I was not pretty because I was fat and had a small nose, so I wanted to become a Miss Korea. I thought that if I was a beautiful girl, I would be more confident and more loved as a person in my family or with my friends. That's what I thought at that time.

In the movie, Olive's family wanted to help her to attend the Little Miss Sunshine Beauty Contest. They lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but the contest was 700 miles away in Redondo Beach, near Los Angeles. To travel there, they had to drive a very old car.

They suffered many hard times on the road. However, Richard, Olive's father, wanted her to be a winner in the beauty contest.

He was very disappointed in his business, and always wanted Olive to be first and not fail as a "loser."

In addition, the grandfather got into a bad accident during the trip. In the night, he took an overdose of heroin and passed away. The rest of family members were very sad and didn't know what to do. So they stole his body from the hospital and kept going to the contest. They believed the grandfather wanted to see Olive in the beauty contest.

The scene that most impressed me was when Olive's father, her brother and her uncle all were dancing with Olive on the stage because they really wanted to encourage her, even though they all got in trouble. Afterwards, they all were in the police station and agreed that Olive couldn't attend any more Little Miss Sunshine contests again.

I was so impressed by this movie. I could see that during the trip, the family members began to change their relationships and help and understand each other more. They started to trust each other. It also reminded me about my family relationship and love and memories.

I grew up in a big family with grandparents, parents, two sisters, one brother and me. My grandmother was especially strict and conservative.

We had to listen to her and follow what she ordered and said. I think about my grandmother because she took care of me instead of my mother who had to work all day. I know my grandmother loved me so much and always took care of me a lot, but I was afraid of my grandmother when I was young.

When I often made mistakes, she taught me that I shouldn't make mistakes. I was trying to be careful and I couldn't complain about anything in front of her.

Often, when we were having dinner together, we sat together without conversation.

My grandmother always taught us table manners and good eating habits. But sometimes, I dropped my chopsticks or rice or something like that, and she scolded me a lot.

I was so scared and upset, and that is why I was not happy and couldn't enjoy the meal with my family. Just like Olive's family, we didn't communicate and talk to each other.

I think that this made me very shy and quiet person. I didn't say, "I love you," and "Thank you, so much, grandmother." I just felt it. Even though she passed away long time ago, I would love to express how much I loved her and really appreciated her help.

After watching *Little Miss Sunshine*, I made up my mind to make a phone call to my mother in Korea. I will say to her "I am missing you a lot. I am often thinking about you. Thank you for everything! I love you so much, and I am praying for you even if we are far away."

I have sent text to my mother. "I am doing well. Don't worry about me. I am missing you a lot! Thank you for your love and everything! Take care of yourself all the time, please."

I really would like to say "I love you, mom!" but it's hard to say now...I will try it!^^

Little Miss Sunshine really touched my heart and made me feel happy and smile.

It might even help me become closer with my own family.

Thank you very much, Olive and her family. ~^^



MY MOTHER'S WISDOM: “FORGIVE THE PRISONER -- AND SET YOURSELF FREE”

By Parisa Sunthrarathon

“FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN AND AGAINST YOU;

I AM NO LONGER WORTHY TO BE CALLED YOUR SON; MAKE ME

LIKE ONE OF YOUR HIRED MEN”- (THE GOSPEL OF LUKE 15: 21)

The son who was lost returns.

I like this parable a lot because the son shows his feelings, and he cares for his father even though he did wrong things to the family. The younger son asked his father for his share of the property before he dies. So his father agreed to divide the inheritance between his two sons.

The younger son took all the money and went a distance from home to get a new life and did with it as he wanted. When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he fell into need. He thought his business could make more money. The son tried to struggle in his life, but didn't succeed in his career. In his thoughts, the son accepted his mistakes and asked for forgiveness for the sin that he did to his father. He needed to come back home and do the right things.

In my life, I have one story about my younger brother from 10 years ago. At that time, he was not a good person. My mother always told him about school, but he did not want to go to school. He liked to travel, smoke, drink and play with girls. He did not want to study. He was also selling drugs, even to young people. He never cared about karma. He made money, but we were never proud of him. We were against him and told him to leave the house. We did not want to live with him.

One day, he got arrested and had to go to the jail for three years. Every month, we always went to meet and talk with him to make him feel better. After three years, he came back home, but just a few months later, he sold drugs again and got arrested again. He went to the jail for two years. He would not accept his mistakes. He did the wrong things twice.

In our family, we talked about him, that we were going to let him go and forget about him. We would not think about him or take care of him anymore. We had given him enough chances. Two years later, he came back home and asked for forgiveness. He said he wanted to make a new life. I said "NO" and did not want to help him, but my mother said "YES" and wanted to give him a chance. She said to me, "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you". She believed that my young brother had learned his lesson from being twice in jail and that any of us should give him a chance.

She gave him forgiveness without any expectation of compensation. In our table dinner,

she told us, life is too short and we don't live together for a long life. Giving a chance to someone -- that is a big thing to do in your life.

Now, my younger brother is a good person. He married a good woman; then he became a good person. He works hard for his family. After my younger brother left jail for one year, my mother passed away. That made him feel wrong, and he wanted to be a good person for our mother.

Clearly, forgiving doesn't mean forgetting. It just means that you have to let go of the anger or guilt you feel towards someone, or that I felt towards to my younger brother. Forgiveness was not easy. I learned a lot from my mother. Life is important, but knowing how to give a new life to someone, that is the most important of all.



REFLECTION

ON THE PRODIGAL SON: BE PREPARED FOR YOUR CHANCE

By Warintip Patarapatipat

I just want to find my own place in the world. I don't want to work on a farm like my father. Since I was young, my father always pushed me to work on the farm. I don't like it. I don't like the smell of pigs' feces. I don't like feeding chickens, and I hate milking cows. I don't like to stay under the sun all day long. My brother enjoys all these things. I admire him. He is the one who will carry that on. But I'm going to find my own way to live. It might take time and a lot of effort. I know it will. But it must be better than being on the farm and suffering from it for the rest of my life.

I remember it clearly when my father brought me to the farmer's market in town. There was a lot of food that looked delicious. It smelled so good and tasted even better. When I came home, I tried to make the food like that, and everyone tasted it. I couldn't wait until the next time that I could go to the market again. That was when I knew that I like cooking and Thai food became my specialty. It has its own signature, with specific ingredients that make it taste round and flavorful. I have kept practicing it all my life hoping that one day I can be a great chef.

I told my father about my dream and asked for his help. I'm relieved that my father understood me. He gave me my share of the estate. With all the money I have, I will invest 75% of the money in stock market, so that I can gain some interest. Then I will find a place to live, a place far away from the farm.





It's been a year now. The restaurant is getting busier gradually since many more people are getting to know that we are here.

A lot of people have tried our food, and they come back to us. We have many regular customers, and they bring their friends and family too. Of course, we have some problems and still have to improve many things in our restaurant, but we are doing very well right now.

Cooking is easy, everyone loves my food. Opening a restaurant is another story. You cannot do it all by yourselves. You have to count on a lot of people. You have to take care of customers, manage stock, and deal with money. Luckily, I have a friend who has all the knowledge. Krist and I have invested in the restaurant together. He is waiting for this chance to come as much as I am. I'm taking care of cooking and stocking. He does the rest.



I know you also have a dream. A chance will come to you one day. When that day comes, people who have everything prepared will be the one who can take that chance. The great opportunity might come to you just once in your lifetime: be ready for it.

"BE READY FOR IT !"



WE ARE BROTHERS, RAIN MAN

By Chang Woo Han



I saw many movies this semester. However, *Rain Man* was the most impressive for me. When I finished this movie, I remembered my brother.

In *Rain Man*, Charlie and Raymond were brothers but couldn't remember each other. I thought I knew my brother very well, even though we didn't meet each other for nine years. We had many good memories when we were young which compensated for the time we were apart in our adult years.

We played many games together and spent a great childhood together. We went to all the arcade rooms where people can stay all day to play. In the arcade, I taught my brother how to play some games that are his favorite games now. Sometimes now, we still play games together like we did before.

One of my brother's clearest memories was when he did his homework with me. One of my brother's homework assignments was to count how many steps he took to go from school to home. We counted the steps together, but before we finished, we saw the arcade room and got distracted. I suggested that we leave a stick where we last counted our steps and have a couple of rounds in the arcade. Both the homework and the walk home became more fun, and both of us enjoyed that time very much. We slept together, so I always told my story for my brother. Just as Charlie had a good memory of Raymond even though he couldn't remember their childhood, clearly, I thought my memory was very familiar to my brother.

Soon after those good memories, my brother went to America alone after he was adopted. Nine years later, I came to America to live with my brother finally. But I realized we had many differences due to the time we had spent away from each other. Also, our lifestyles had become unfamiliar to each other, because we had lived in different countries. The expression "nature versus nurture" really was true for our situation back then because different environments can make people different. The busy life we both had made us both slowly forget about our memories. For example, it is difficult to enter a university in Korea, and in the U.S. it is hard to graduate from a university. For a Korean native, we just have to make it to the acceptance letter to get a university education, but for my brother, who has become an American citizen, being accepted into a school is not all that it takes to get a degree.

I could not help with any of his schoolwork anymore like I used to or give advice to my brother because I never lived his style of life in America. I tried, but my help did not work. Different cultures and systems have made us both farther apart than we expected. We used to count the steps together, get derailed together, and returned to the same destination together.

But time, I think, is all it takes. The time gap was nine years to grow apart, but we have a whole lifetime now to grow closer. We have found ways to close each other's gap slowly. Maybe he also found it so we can come closer together like the story in *Rain Man*.



Chang Woo Han (Right) and Ho Yoon Han (Left)

One day, we were spending time together and suddenly found a piece of shared memory. Even as he was very young years ago, he still remembered counting our steps for homework. My brother is still my brother after all. He still likes to exercise so I learned how to ride a skateboard from my brother, go bowling, basketball, and hike together. I like to play computer games so we now play together again. We also talk about how to change our personality and change our habits. It was a way to get closer to each other and it was easy because it had the power in the name of family. If we meet each other in the middle every time and slowly, I believe we will have the ending of the movie - a happy ending! The most important thing is we are brothers and that will never change even if we are worlds apart

