

Summary

Something unexpected happened to the sole breadwinner of the family, Due to insufficient funds for a set of triplets who were studying their second year of university had only 2 choices, one is to defer and find ways to accumulate the funds for continuing their degree. Another is to stop studying and start working to help out the family. In order to achieve a win-win situation that will help out the family and get the best possible outcome of their future, they decided to go for the first option. They have been through hard times, but the values gained from that period of time are priceless.

Unexpected things happens

I still remember the date of when everything happened, 28th September 2021, it was a usual day with online classes for me. It all began from a call between my parents. My father, who is a chief engineer, was on a contract sailing, and he would usually call my mum, and have some conversation with her. That time I still remembered that I and two other triplet brothers has just begun our second year, second semester. One day, when we were doing our online class, my mum suddenly came to where we are having our online classes, and just sat there, waiting for us to respond. I then asked her like how a receptionist would ask a customer,

“How may I help you, Mrs Wong? “

There was a look on her face, like she was in a dilemma choosing words. I waited patiently for her. Then she sighed and asked us a question.

“Boys, what would you all feel if dad comes home now and stops working?”

During that time, my mind clicked, all the time when my mum was secretly talking on the phone with my dad, I assumed my dad had some problem with his work on the ship. I answered my mum,

“Well, if he wants to come back, why not? But why suddenly stop working, is he facing any problem with his job?”

“Dad says he can't handle the things on board anymore, he feels very weak. The food is not edible, literally like spoiled food, he couldn't rest well due to the workload also as there was problem with the engine, and higher up was bombarding him with emails, he couldn't handle things anymore, dad keep on saying he just wants to come home, but he is scared that you all will feel that he fail as a father.” My mum answered.

I was shocked by the fact he couldn't handle the ship, because he has 25 years of working experience as a marine engineer, and also him stating that we might think he is a failure.

"Failure as a father? I mean like all his life, he has been working to earn money for the family. If we think that he is a failure, think that he is worthless, we are not human anymore."

Aware of the fact that if my dad stops working, no one will be able to fund our education, and we assumed that they do not have enough money to fund our education if my dad decides to stop working. Even though we do have scholarship from the university and PTPTN(which all together covers 50% of each of our tuition fees), we still need to cover around RM12,000 each, which is a total of 36,000 a year for three of our tuition fees only(excluding food and lounging).

We didn't want to assume, so we decided to ask our mum to tell us how their financial condition is like. After countless persuasion, we manage to convince our mum. After she stated how much they have, we decided to defer the semester and find ways to accumulate funds because it was clearly just enough to cover 1 year of our tuition fees, excluding the commitment like car installment, the utility bills, food and lodging, etc. In addition, my father, who is the breadwinner of the family, stopped working. My parents too have to plan for their own retirement. Taking all the possible outcomes we could think of, the best solution to this problem is to defer and accumulate funds.

When we proposed this, my mum was strongly against it, only after we calculated for her to understand the situation, and also with some reasoning, she reluctantly agreed to take on our proposal. My eldest brother who was working in Canada, my aunt who stays just a walking distance from my house, even my dad also opposed this proposal. They were only thinking that education was so important, whereas we three thought further, knowing my parents seeing their account deplete will only make them more anxious, and what if after we only managed to study for 1 year, and we have already emptied their account, having no money to pay the commitment they bear, no money for food and lodging, etc. It was the worst thing that could ever happen. So we three were standing our grounds firmly, no one can stop us from deferring the semester, or how long it needs to be. Because in the end, it's the family's health that is more important than the education, it was a rational approach to only stop rather than continue studying.

The thought of being a burden to the family

The first thing we did was ask the university about the procedure of deferring, and deal with it as fast as possible before accumulating funds for our university. I still remember we were already 1 week into the semester, and the Xiamen university of Malaysia (the university we are studying in) policy for deferring was to be approved by the academic department of the university two weeks before the new semester start, or else you would have to bear a penalty, which is 50% of the tuition fees. We decided to write an email explaining our situation, hoping that they will void the penalty that we have to bear since this situation was completely unexpected. On that day after our classes were done, we three drafted the email together, since this was the first time typing an official-like email. It took us almost 2 hours, luckily the end product was acceptable, and we just sent it in to the university.

Suddenly I heard my mum's phone ringtone, it was the special ring tone she set for my dad's call, and then Siri (it was an iPhone) said, "Call from dad".

My mum, who had fallen asleep unconsciously on the sofa because my dad kept on calling my mum almost every 3 hours because he was scared of being alone on the ship surrounded by the colleagues he is working with, was woken up by it. She immediately picked up the phone and accepted the call.

That was the first time I heard his voice, he didn't sound like his usual self, he sounded so weak, so "soft spoken". Just by hearing, I know that he lost all his confidence, he lost his usual self. He was asking questions like what a child would ask a mother, my mom started the conversation,

"Hi, how are you feeling now?"

"Very bad, I just want to go home, but I am feeling tired now, I don't know if I want to go to sleep or eat now. I have let the boys down already."

"The boys say they understand, and it is fine to come back, we can deal with it as a family. They are also planning to defer their semester. And see how it goes first."

"Why defer? Don't defer. I still have the money for them to study. They don't need to worry, just focus on studying." my dad said.

I thought in my mind, are all parents like this, sacrificing so much for their children. For 25 years, you have been working for the family only, never once you spent a single cent for yourself. Without hesitation, you could just spend money for the children, but when it comes to my parents, they are always hesitant to spend money on themselves. \

Some flashbacks just came to me during that time, I still remember there was once we three and my mum was walking in Parkson (Ipoh parade) shopping mall. We walked past

a shop selling women's clothes, she stopped and look at a mannequin that was wearing a dress.

“Look at this dress! Isn't it so.... Pretty?” My mum suddenly asked us a question, she looked so happy and her eyes was sparkling.

“Just buy it then, spend some money on yourself.” I just answered her casually.

“It's too expensive.” She shook her head and said.

There are also times when I see them resting on the sofa, or even sleeping on the bed during the night, my eyes can just turn watery, I literally feel sad for them. I felt like I had to do something for them.

We decided to talk it out among all three first, and see if we each have the same opinion on solving this problem. And fortunately, we were all on the same side, it wasn't just me feeling like that, but all three of us are!

Few days have passed since we sent in the email for deferment, and finally we received an answer from the university. They were enquiring proof for my dad's sudden resignation from his job. Because it was really hard to get in contact with my dad due to the ship's bad phone line. My mum told me that dad couldn't even sleep, and is feeling really sick. The company has agreed for him to resign, and also sent him to the nearest available hospital. That time the ship was docking in Mexico. So we just waited for dad to call back, then we can have all the proof that is needed.

The next day, the familiar ring tone was ringing, my mum quickly picked up the phone and asked about his condition. My mum was worried sick of him, so she didn't get any chance to sleep.

“I'm feeling very scared now, there isn't anyone in the room, very quietly, can you fly here and bring me back to Malaysia, I don't think I am capable of sitting in the plane and coming back.” My dad said.

But it was impossible, because my mum has not renewed her passport, and if she did renew it now, it would take up to a month. The medical fees were not covered by the company also, so each day my dad spends abroad, all the costs are on him. And for him to say that he is scared to fly back to Malaysia himself, it was a double confirmation for me that his condition of what I thought is worse than that.

“You know it's impossible for me, you try to calm yourself down, and when you are ready then you board the plane and come back. We are all waiting for you at home.” My mum said.

“Okay. I will try. I feel bad to see the boys also. I disappointed them.”

“It’s okay, they understand. They are also waiting for you at home. Don’t worry about anything. Just come home”

I then walked up to my mum and said,

“Hi dad! Joshua here, we are all waiting for you. You have done enough for the family already, we are all big already, and we will handle it as a family. You don’t have to put all the burden on yourself, Ivan and Bryan also graduated already (Ivan is the eldest son, Bryan is the second eldest son. Ivan is currently in Canada, Bryan is currently in New Zealand).

“Ok. Dad will try to come back as fast as possible”, there was almost no confidence in his answer.

For the next one whole week, he would call my mum every 2 hours, telling her that he has disappointed us, asking her if she could fly over to bring him back. On and on is the same thing. Clearly my mum couldn’t even rest because of this. My mum, who is constantly worrying about my both brothers who were overseas, now adding up my dad having this problem, she was clearly not fine at all. It increased our resolve to extend a helping hand to the family now.

I still remember there was a night, after dinner, I was sitting in my house’s garden with my two other triplet brothers. I still remember the scene of the sky, it was a clear dark sky, with just a few stars, and the bright moon. It was such beautiful scenery. Gazing at the moon, I just asked my two other brothers

“Eh, don’t you all think that we all three are a burden to the family? I mean like if it’s not because of us all three, if it is just one, or none, it would be a better life for the family also. Whenever we all need something that is necessary, it’s always multiplied by three. Especially when it comes down to something like education.”

Ben looked at Ian (Ben and Ian is the name of my two other triplets), and then they looked at me, we all just laughed until our stomach hurts. I know there is no humour in this, but we three just found it funny.

Yeah, it was a sign that we all three also think that we are a burden to the family. And we decided that we have to do something. Relying on my parents is not an option anymore, the earlier it starts, the lesser the expenses my parents have to bear. And we started discussing what we could do. We analysed what talent we have, we have been doing some cooking since MCO, we can play music, and we could start making some videos

on YouTube, start a food business or something. We also had some experience working in a Pizza restaurant, and we found that the desserts profit margin is good.

After 2 hours of discussion, we decided to start selling brownies. And here, our brownie business journey begins.

Nothing is ever smooth and all easy

We have never baked anything before, but we watched many tutorials videos on baking brownies and the end products were just not sellable as we ourselves did not achieve what we were looking for.

I remember in the first month of trial, we made 9 batches of brownies in nine days. However we weren't satisfied with the results until one day we decided to stop and think over what could go wrong instead of trial and error as the approach clearly was not working and also our fridge was full with several batches of brownies.

We sat down and discussed, cracking our heads on what could have gone wrong about the brownies, we studied a bit on the fundamentals of baking. A month has passed, my triplet brothers and I decided to give it another chance before we pivot on another food or dessert.

The brownies came out perfectly. We jumped around like the best thing in the world that could have happened, Ben said: "we should bake another one just to see whether it was mere luck." Feeling nervous and confident at the same time, we baked another one and it came out the same. On the same night, after eating dinner and tasting the brownies again, Ian started

"Now we got the product out, what can we do to make ourselves stand out from others to be able to sell?"

Ben then asked: "let's just stand from a customer perspective, what kind of brownies will make you come back for?"

We then came to a conclusion to prioritize quality first as people will always come back for quality food, and also did costing on the brownies and we realized that even with good quality ingredients, the profit margin is still high. Therefore we created our Facebook page with the name of Triplet Homebakers with the motto of "Quality is our Priority" and made our first post.

The turning point

The next day we started giving out our brownies to anyone we can think of that would buy, and it came to my mind that one of my childhood friend's father (Uncle Lee) is doing investment in stocks. And since we were in this kind of situation we thought that if we can learn about stocks from him, it will benefit us in the future, and so we approached him with some brownies with the intention of asking him to teach us about stocks. My mom was the one driving us around giving brownies, because during that time even though we already had our licenses, my mom still wouldn't let us drive, so we had almost zero experience of driving.

As we approached the familiar house of my childhood friend's house, the familiar road which we used to take, the gigantic tree that is beside the house (corner house), the field beside their house, it was all so nostalgic. It reminded me of the peaceful life as a child, a life when one has no worries at all.

We were waiting at the doorstep when uncle lee came opening the door while saying: "come in and have a seat la"

We went in, and saw them, my mother too followed, and started chatting with aunty.

There was a moment of silence when we sat down as we weren't ready for this.... Until Uncle Lee broke the ice by saying

"Umm, this brownie you all make yourself one ah, very nice eh. So what can I do for you guys?" he asked cheekily

I answered: "I still remember Kevin (my childhood friend) was saying that you earn a living by investing in the stock market. So if it's okay with you, we would like to get some tips on how we can earn a living in the stock market."

Uncle Lee then asked: "Okay.... Can I know the purpose of wanting to learn about stocks, I mean definitely it's to make money, but what for?"

Ben then answered: "We all three have been looking for a mentor to guide us in investing stocks, and we would like to learn about investing to help share our family financial burden."(We all thought that investing is quick money)

He then laughed and said

"Okay, first of all I would like to hear from you guys about your thoughts on the current situation. "

I voiced up and said

“ We all are well aware of how much burden we are putting on the financial situation of our family, so it’s definitely time to do our part rather than just waiting for the grownups to deal with it ,I mean we all three are not kids anymore... ”

Ben nodded and added,

“I sometimes do think that if we three weren’t born, our family would have a steady and stable live, my parents would have retired years ago and enjoy themselves”

Me and Ian shook our head and shot him down

“Uncle don’t bother him yah, this is only his thinking hahaha...”

But then Uncle Lee answered with a concerned tone

“Never think like that, I’m a father also and I wouldn’t feel good if my child thinks like that”

Then there was a moment of silence....

And again Uncle Lee broke the silence and said

“For today why not let’s have a chat and get to know each other more first”

So the chatters go on..., and since that day, my brothers and I would go over from 3pm to 6pm to seek knowledge and the wisdom of investing. And great news was that because they go on holidays really frequently, my mum also asked for advice from aunty, and she said there is airplane assistance for people who are not fit to board the flight, where they will guide you all the way till you reach your destination. After we arrived at home, it was almost 4pm. My mom called my dad, and told him about this. Then we drafted an email to ask the company that my dad worked for if they can provide some assistance for my dad. The company decided to extend a helping hand, and they sent an agent to my dad and helped with all the procedures that are needed for him to come back to Malaysia. Now my dad will be able to come home safely, it was considered a good progress. We felt relieved that he could come back, but we felt helpless at the same time as we do not know how we are going to deal with him when he is back.

Three months later ...

One fine day, after having our lunch, Ben asked a question abruptly,

“What do you guys think about investing, don’t you all think that it’s a little slow?”

After hearing that I got excited as I thought the same .Moreover ,I saw many advertisements on YouTube claiming that they made tenfold of their money overnight and then...

Haste makes waste

The biggest pivot point in my life is when I realized how little I thought about my own life, everything was about making money. I recall that for the early several months after deferring our studies, the moment I woke up every morning.

I would worry about how insignificant and how much of a burden we all three are to the family financially.

During the start of the pandemic crisis, many online scams were hot, just right then it hit us spot on, we lost literally all of our own savings and earnings (me and my brothers had to combine our savings as we spent most of it buying our first laptop and mobile phone as it was needed to further our studies) as we were anxious of making money.

Me and my brothers learned the hard way that there is no such thing as fast money, and worst of all we all three were in debt from our own friends.

One day I laid down and thought to myself,

“Okay so this is how hell feels like, I couldn’t pay what is lent to me, and I just couldn’t go to my parents to help me as my primary goal was to not be a burden”

But there was this inner voice telling me to end what I have started , we didn’t give up, instead we started everything slowly, we found a job on tiktok, to work as a recruiter for a talent agency, which is recruiting talents on tiktok online and some translating novel work to pay up the debt.

Then only I started to contemplate and look deeply at what we can do to change our financial situation. How can three undergraduates possibly achieve financial stability in the right way?

I brought this thought up to the table with my other two triplet brothers,

What do you guys think we all three can do to deal with the mess we made because of our own stupidity, and take it to our advantage to achieve financial stability?

Ben and Ian look at me, then they looked at each other, we just laughed it off as I am sure that we agreed one simple quote "if life were only that easy"

This brings me back to our first lesson with Uncle Lee...

The Lesson that Changed My Life.

I remember we even brought notebooks to write down the important things. He was surprised when he saw us with our notebook, and he said

"You guys don't have to bring a notebook la, I am just sharing my experience only, just like a chit chat, don't have to be so formal one. Anyway we won't be talking about stocks today, I will share with you guys three things that basically can be applied to any aspect in life" Uncle Lee chuckled

He then started with the Ancient Greek aphorism "know thyself" and asked us,

"Have you ever heard of it?"

We shook our heads.....

"Har, it's so famous, you sure you never heard of it?"

We shook our heads again...

"Know thyself means know yourself, do you know yourself?"

We gave it hard thought, looking at each other hoping someone will say something when Uncle Lee laughed and continued

"To know one self takes time, as you will discover what are your strengths and weaknesses through self-introspection. And once you have discovered them, you will succeed in life."

There was a moment of silence as we tried to think hard on our strength and weakness when he said again

"Chill la, you guys are still 20 years old, you still have a long way to go la."

“ The purpose of starting with this aphorism is to tell you that learning how to invest in stocks might not be your cup of tea because there are many ways to grow your money, if in the near future you feel like investing is not your thing, you can just let me know and we can stop anytime , but there is one thing to bear in mind here, if your purpose of coming here to learn about stocks is hoping that you will be able to fund your education, then learning about stocks won't help you with that because you will never grasp the beauty of investing in stocks if you are so fixated on earning money .However, this will definitely help you in your future, so I want you all to think hard .”

Next, he continued, “You must always distill down the real purpose of everything, I will share story with you to help your understanding,”

“There was this one person named Ali, he lives in the village, and during that time whenever his father needs water, and his father brings him to the well to get water. But after 2 years, every household in the village was installed with a piping system, but every time Ali's father called him to get some water, instead of just filling up the water using the pipe in front of his house, he went to the well to get some water.”

“What do you all think about Ali's action?” he asked

Ian then answered: “He misunderstood the purpose of getting the water to go to the well, therefore he wasted a lot of time and effort going to the well to get the water.”

Uncle Lee then said , “ Spot on, so this story teaches us that if we don't know what the main purpose of doing something is, we will eventually waste a lot of time and effort, and disappointment comes along the way. So to prevent this, we must always differentiate the well and the water in the story mentioned just now.”

Uncle took a sip of water and asked

“So far so good?”

We three nodded our heads.

And then uncle lee continued:

And now the final one is always looking at the big picture. This story is an interesting one. One day, four men came across an elephant, three blind men and a man with normal

vision. So curiously, each of these three blind men touches different area of the elephant body, and each of them came up with all sorts of answers, the first blind men asked confidently

“Hmm, what is a pipe doing here?”(He was touching the elephant’s trunk)

The second blind men laughed and said “No, you got it wrong my friend, it's actually a wall, and “(he was touching the body of the elephant)

The third one shook his head after hearing both of the blind men judgment and said

“Come on lah, what’s wrong with both of you, it's clearly a brush... “

The man with normal vision looked at the elephant and slap his forehead with his palm, he said bluntly

“Ai yah, you guys are all wrong, it’s an elephant, that’s it.”

“Likewise in life, if we don’t see the big picture, we tend to miss out a lot of things or we might even get the wrong idea of what it is, so always try to look from all perspectives before making a decision or judgments, everyone has perception and biases, so be aware of it and always try to look things from more perspectives.”

Our first customer

We three usually go to a physiotherapist because we had some chronic pain with our body (due to improper manner and posture of exercising). He is a young guy, wears specs, fair skin, is someone we really look up to, despite his age, he is a really successful person. Knowing that working for people doesn’t pay well, he decided to open and run his own physics center, and now it’s doing really well. Going to the physic really helped us

out a lot with the pain. Unfortunately we had to stop the physic sessions. Sometimes during the session, we do have some small talk with him, and we were mentioning that we did work as part timers in a restaurant before. One day he just suddenly called me up, I looked at my phone dumbfounded, and accepted the call.

“Hey man, do you guys want to try cooking a meal for me to celebrate my fiancé's birthday, since now is covid, and we don't think that eating out is safe. I will pay you guys for the meal.”

“Err.... I will let the other two know and discuss it first. I will give you a menu also, so you can choose from there” I answered

“Ok, no problem”. He said.

I immediately brought it up to my two other brothers, we are clearly aware that this is the first time ever we are selling food to other people. And it's no ordinary meal, it's a birthday meal! We decided to make out a menu first, and see if it was feasible. After 10 minutes of cracking our brain, we made it out. At the very least, it looks like a menu with some choices. We divided the menu into 2 parts, Asian cuisine and also western cuisine, but our food is usually a fusion of both. As I myself am Asian, when we see videos of how professional chefs cook, we will still do some improvisation for it to suit our taste. We started cooking when MCO started, which was a coincidence. My mom hurt her hand, she couldn't even hold a fist. So Ben decided to take over the cooking at first. That time we were already having online classes, so we had to manage the time well. Later on, I and Ian see Ben doing all the cooking by himself, and we thought that we should help out too, since we are also eating. And this was the beginning of our culinary journey. We would also test out new elements with the food, try mixing ingredients together, analyzing their taste, creating new flavors, and discovering new things together. I really never regretted this decision. It was also the time when we really got closer as brothers.

The physiotherapist had so much faith in us, knowing that he is going to be our first customer, he gave us confidence that we could pull it off. We were really touched, and we decided to give it a try, to make the best dinner for him.

I still remember it was a dinner for four, his parents, him and his fiancé. And there was only one week for us to prepare the meal. He ordered our signature meatball dish, four plates of Spaghetti aglio e olio, a salad dish, four chicken chops, and mashed potatoes with cheese. Within that one week, we will have to perfect all the dishes. During the next few days, we were eating and testing every dish that we were going to cook for him. Sometimes it doesn't even turn out the way we want, and we were also thinking about how to pack the food, while keeping the visuals good. The sauce of the meatball dish was not coming out as we expected, and we were also short on the ingredients, coincidentally

the jalapeno's in aeon(a supermarket near our house) hasn't stock up them, we then went to parkson(another supermarket), but they weren't also. So we decided we will just have to be flexible, and we came out with a new sauce, unexpectedly without the jalapenos, we got some inspiration, and it was a success! We were satisfied with all the dishes. Now we were just waiting for the big day to come.

Finally the big day came, we woke up at 6am), and started preparing the meatballs, cutting the vegetables for the salad, and preparing and planning how we are going to cook them, dividing up the tasks. By 10am, we are done with preparation, just waiting for the time to start cooking. This part was really tricky, because the physiotherapist was about to come and pick up the food at 7pm, so we wanted to get the food still hot when they had it. We decided to start preparing the food at 4pm. We were really anxiously waiting for 4pm to come. We were also worrying that we might not make it. We sat down at the dining table at 2pm looking at the clock ticking slowly, occasionally looking at each other, and saying words like "we can do this", "we got it", then we would laugh it out. It was a really good time.

Finally the clock strikes 4pm sharp, we start to get the food ready, the meatballs are basically done, and we just have to fry the chicken thighs, cook the spaghetti, get ready the salad, and cook the mashed potatoes. But then things didn't turn out smoothly. When I tasted the meatball sauce, the taste was completely off as we had forgotten to buy one of the ingredients. We started panicking as the clock was already striking 5pm. After 10 minutes of pointing fingers and quarreling, it was going nowhere, so we decided to calm ourselves down and be proactive. We tried fixing the sauce, mixing the sauce with honey, soy sauce, anything we could think of to get the taste right. After several attempts, the taste was surprisingly good. We felt really relieved. But the race against time isn't over yet, we still have things to cook. It was already 6pm.

Fortunately, the salad was already done, what's left is the pan frying the chicken thighs, getting the mash potatoes done. At 6.15pm, we started cooking. We estimated that the timing will be just nice with the physiotherapist pick up time. Ben started pan frying the chicken thighs, Ian started cooking the spaghetti, and I started preparing the things for him to pick up. Things were a little rushed, but we made it just in time. By the time the food was all packed up, the physiotherapist arrived on time, but we were only slightly relieved, because if the food doesn't satisfy them, we are gone for good, as we sold the meal for RM 600, which was a lot of money.

The kitchen was a total mess, we spent half an hour clearing the kitchen, after that we had a simple dinner because we were tired of cooking already, and waited for the feedback of our food from the physiotherapist. After an hour, we received a text from him, and he said the food was really good, he wasn't expecting it to be this good also. His

compliment was a great relief to us, and we also had more confidence in our cooking now. It was a really good experience. Everything starts from the first step, if we didn't take the courage to cook for him, we wouldn't even gain anything, and we would have missed out on a great experience! Later on, he continued to order food from us whenever he had special occasions to celebrate. Every meal we cooked for him was a challenge, and the feeling of accomplishment each meal we succeeded to present was always great!

Wabisabi is the definition of living in this world

“There is nothing that is perfect in the world, likewise it's the same in life, never expect things to go smoothly as life is unexpected, fragile and suffering, so to live a better and proactive life, we have to practice wabi-sabi as it is all about appreciating beauty that is imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete in life” Uncle Lee said this on the last day of our life lesson.

From the moment he said it, it clicked our mind because we have been just looking at the negative part of the unexpected things that happened to us, but never once we thought of how it will benefit us .Since our dad stopped working, we knew that we cannot depend on them for our university expenses as it will only add up their burden, so since we have deferred, instead of blaming ourselves or wondering why such an unfortunate things that happened, we took it as an opportunity to become independent and try to get some experience of doing all sorts of things to together without our parents .We discussed together about how can we go about accumulating funds to solve it. And that is where our brownie business started. One fine day, when Ian was sending brownies to one of our regular customer, she asked

“What are you guys doing besides selling brownies?”

Ian answered,” Besides that, we are cleaning our aunt's house”

“Wow, you guys are so hardworking, I love the spirit of you brothers working hand in hand together, and it’s hard to see brothers now working so harmoniously “She said

And one week after that conversation Ian started receiving many messages (Ian manages brownie business orders while I and Ben focus more on the online work) on whatsapp to clean house as it’s 3 weeks close to Chinese New Year

So Ian got curious and asked the regular customer about it as he doesn't recall promoting the cleaning business as we never thought of cleaning other people’s houses other than our aunt’s house. To our surprise, she helped us promote our cleaning service on Facebook.

When Ian got these request from people to clean house, he told us about it

“Eh, one of our regular customers who buys brownies helped us promote our cleaning house, so what should we do about it? I have many people requesting for cleaning the house already “Ian asked with laughter

“Since she helped us promote already, and we haven’t been receiving brownie orders as the date is closing near Chinese new year, maybe we should stop the brownie business for Chinese new year and go clean house, since it’s on demand right now , what do you guys think?” Ben said.

“ Ya , I think we should give it a shot, remember we said that we want to try doing all sort of things, therefore this is a golden opportunity as we can earn money along the way cleaning people’s house” I Said with excitement

“ Okay, then let’s get our hands dirty and earn some money baby,” Ian then accepted all the request at first, and this is how the cleaning house business begins, we basically went around the whole Ipoh to clean people’s house, accepted every single request as long as

it's in Ipoh, and during the afternoon we were working a part time job, altogether we cleaned 22 house and ended the 3 weeks cleaning house journey with our physiotherapist's new house and we managed to accumulate RM 3000, and we basically earned the biggest angpao in our life hahaha. But it was undeniably tiring. We woke up at 7 am every day, got ready our breakfast which is just soaked overnight oats, with our staple lunch, which is hard-boiled egg, steamed egg pork, kimchi(we make our own kimchi), and edamame. After that we would workout and then only leave to clean people's houses. Usually it will be about 9am when we start our journey to clean house, and we will take about three to four hours to finish cleaning each house, have our lunch that we packed at the roadside, and then go home and work on the part time job. Later on we decided that we needed to have a break from working, which was why we stopped cleaning people's houses.

Everything happens for a purpose or reason

Every encounter, every obstacle, every hardship, every sweet and happy moment ,everything that happens , even every sweat you drenched is never wasted, as all this are building blocks to a meaningful life .

It has been almost 7 months since my brothers and I deferred our studies, however, the exposure and values we gain have taught us much about society and life. We realized that being the norm, just going to university, graduating and finding a job and work is clearly not what we would want in life.

So we three have made a pledge to ourselves , we will strive to make a stable income before graduating so we can avoid being financially stressed while looking for a job. It's

not an easy feat, but we will strive for it, just as every ending is a new beginning, the end of our one year deferment will be a beginning of the brand new us , the triplets working towards freedom .

Every encounter, every obstacle, every sweet and bitter moment, even every sweat you drenched is never wasted. No matter what happens, know that these are building blocks to a meaningful life .Last but not least, NEVER GIVE UP!

Life is simple; it's just not easy. — Steve Maraboli.